

## **Mirfield CC**

An early newspaper cutting – wedged in between items relating to Mirfield Prosecution Society and Mirfield Cotton Districts Relief Fund – from 9 May 1863 tells us that club membership stood at 66, the cricket field was being 'levelled and re-laid', and Gomersal Perseverance Club were soon to be challenged in a friendly fixture.

Mirfield Town Hall was the venue for one of the cricket club's big events of 1882 – a fundraising 'Entertainment'. This sounds like an evening of variety and cabaret, with all proceeds going to a cricketing cause.

In 1895 the club's annual report revealed that a Mr Ingham had paid £370 to build the club a new pavilion.

He had also come to the club's rescue when, at the end of season 1894, the club had been forced to re-locate due to the construction of Heaton Lodge and the Wortley Railway.

In this early period, the club played in a variety of leagues: the Spenn Valley, West Riding and Heavy Woollen.

But the Great War took its toll and in 1919 the 'old' Mirfield club was forced to disband.

The 're-formation' of Mirfield CC in 1952 was due to the efforts of a group of local businessmen and councillors.

They all saw the potential in a 'new' Mirfield CC. They were also helped by the fact that there was a 'vacancy' at the Memorial Ground.

For, in 1951 the lease held by the Craven Gentlemen - another local cricket team - had run out, and new cricketing tenants were being sought.

And local folk were pretty confident that Mirfield CC Mk II would be given the green light: the new club was admitted to the Heavy Woollen Cup on 29 September 1951, prior to the official re-formation actually taking place!

The town was very enthusiastic about the re-formation and in this formative period the club was particularly indebted to its female membership.

1952 was thus a milestone year in the history of Mirfield CC – and on the club's 50th birthday, club stalwart Pat Neal produced a fascinating study of the 'first season'.

Key personalities around this time included Charles Buckley – a public schoolboy who skippered the 1952 side; he was a right-hand batsman and off-spinner who dropped down to the 2nd XI and then became a committee member and vice-president; outside cricket he was MD at Buckley's Brush Works and was the son of the founder.

Wilf Barber, Yorkshire and England cricketer, joined Mirfield at the age of 51 from Halifax side King Cross; he averaged 41.18 and 45.89 in his two seasons at the Memorial Ground and won the Division 2 Batting Award in both years. He scored 15,315 runs for Yorkshire and gained two Test caps.

Ex-Holmfirth player Hurst Barber made his name as an excellent fielder and a fixture at the top of the order, scoring the new club's first-ever half-century (79 in the opening game); between 1958 and 1960 he led the 1st XI to a hat-trick of Central Yorkshire League championships and also starred in the 'Double'-winning side of 1963; he went on to skipper the 2nd XI, manage the Under-18 side and become life vice-president.

In 1962 Mirfield won the Heavy Woollen Cup for the first time. In the same year the 2nd XI won the championship under the captaincy of Cyril Spencer.

More silverware was accrued in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, and Mirfield also hired an array of impressive professional players including Indian Test batsman Ghulam Parkar.

Between 2001 and 2004 the club locked horns in the Bradford League, but due to a financial crisis, and an accompanying exodus of players, Mirfield were forced into a life-saving merger with Harry Lime CC in 2005.

The new club plays in the Huddersfield Central League.