

MIRFIELD CRICKET CLUB

1862 - Birth of a new club

The Mirfield Cricket Club appears to have been formed sometime in 1862 but there is a great lack of evidence. The *Dewsbury District News* published some cricketer's tales in 1904 which according to some club members stated:

"The first field was laid out through the generosity of several local gentlemen who became guarantors for the expenses incurred. Amongst these were Armitage Rhodes, John Topham, John Holmes and James Crowther...John Eyres was the first secretary of the club and he was also stationmaster at Mirfield."



James Firth Crowther

James Firth Crowther was a very important and powerful man in Mirfield. He owned the maltings of JF & J Crowther Limited and ran a stud farm breeding shire horses.



JF & J Crowther's maltings in Station Road

The field or 'enclosure' as it sometimes referred to was sited at the top north eastern corner of the Blake Hall estate on the land of Joshua Ingham.



Blake Hall around 1862



Joshua Ingham

It can be found on the corner of the present Crowlees Road and Pinfold Lane. It is now covered in houses. The club played on this ground until 1895 when the railway forced a move to Park Bottom (now known as the Memorial Ground).

From the newspaper evidence available, namely the *Dewsbury Reporter* there appears only one reference to Mirfield Cricket Club in the whole of 1862, that being on 10th August:-

"The Mirfield Cricket Club versus The Thornhill Lees Church Institute Club – The return match between the above clubs was played on Saturday last, on the ground of the latter, which resulted in an easy victory for the Mirfield Club. In consequence of time being called before the completion of the second innings, the match was decided by the first innings. The first match, which came off a few weeks ago was won by Thornhill."

On 17th June there is a very teasing reference to a new club:-

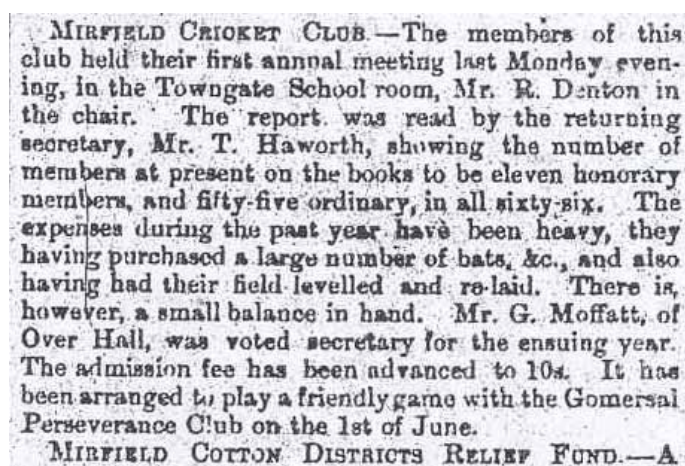
"We have received a report of a match played by a new club, but as neither the locality nor the names of the clubs are stated we cannot give them."

1863 – Allen Hill First professional

In January of 1863 the Yorkshire County Cricket Club had been formed on the 8th it was agreed *"that a county club be formed, the annual subscription to be not less than 10/6d."*

The *Dewsbury Reporter* dated 9th May 1863 reports on the first Annual General Meeting of the Mirfield club held on Monday 2nd May:-

"The members of this club held their first annual meeting last Monday evening in the Towngate School room. Mr R. Denton in the chair. The report was read by the returning secretary, Mr T. Haworth, showing the number of members present on the books to be eleven honorary members, and fifty-five ordinary, in all sixty-six. The expenses during the past year have been heavy, they having purchased a large number of bats, etc and also having had their field levelled and re-laid. There is however, a small balance in hand. Mr G. Moffatt of Over Hall, was voted secretary for the ensuing year. The admission fee has been advanced to 10s. It has been arranged to play a friendly game with the Gomersal Perseverance Club on the 1st of June."



MIRFIELD CRICKET CLUB.—The members of this club held their first annual meeting last Monday evening, in the Towngate School room, Mr. R. Denton in the chair. The report was read by the returning secretary, Mr. T. Haworth, showing the number of members at present on the books to be eleven honorary members, and fifty-five ordinary, in all sixty-six. The expenses during the past year have been heavy, they having purchased a large number of bats, &c., and also having had their field levelled and re-laid. There is, however, a small balance in hand. Mr. G. Moffatt, of Over Hall, was voted secretary for the ensuing year. The admission fee has been advanced to 10s. It has been arranged to play a friendly game with the Gomersal Perseverance Club on the 1st of June.

MIRFIELD COTTON DISTRICTS RELIEF FUND.—A

The Dewsbury Reporter 9th May 1863

The following week *the Reporter* stated that Mr Moffatt's address is Newhouse and not Over Hall.

A trial match appears to have been played between the Married and Single members of the club in early May. The *Dewsbury Reporter* just giving the scores. The Married team made 132 and the Single team 44 and 27.

On 14th May Mirfield entertained Church Institute Thornhill Lees in a two innings match. The *Dewsbury Reporter* gave an account which indicated that the Mirfield club was perhaps somewhat superior to that of their opponents but the result did not reflect that!

"This match, as advertised in our last issue, came off on Saturday last, on the excellent ground of the Mirfield Club, and attracted a considerable number of spectators. It is the first match of the season for the Church Institute players, and when friends and others heard of the challenge having been sent to the Mirfield gentlemen, they characterised it as a "piece of impudence", and prophesied that they would have to repent of their audacity. The contrast in appearance of the two elevens rather justified such opinions, but the result proved a victory for the Thornhill Lees players who beat their opponents with seven wickets to fall. The bowling of Hill and J.Wilson was very good, as was the batting of the later and Thompson. Smithson's bowling was "too impetuous" and of course did not do much damage."

The scores were Mirfield First innings 23 all out and Second innings 42 all out (65) and Church Institute First Innings 40 and Second innings 28 for 3 (68).

This appears to be the first appearance of Allen Hill as professional who later went on to play for Yorkshire and have the claim to take the first wicket and catch in Test cricket when he played for Lillywhites eleven in Melbourne in 1877. In this match he took three wickets in the first innings and one in the second and scored 1 in each innings.

Sam Smithson took five wickets in the first innings. The Mirfield top scorer was William Noble with eight in the second innings!

The *Dewsbury Reporter* added that after the game:-

"a single wicket match was played by Crabtree, of one eleven (Thornhill Lees) and Holmes of the other, which was won by the former in a "canter"."

On the Whitsun Tuesday, Mirfield appear to have played at Kirkheaton. Kirkheaton winning by 37 runs having scored 52 and 32. Mirfield in reply scored 20 and 27.

On Monday 1st June Mirfield entertained the Gomersal Perseverance club. This game appears to have been the place to have been seen! The *Dewsbury Reporter* commented on the match:-

“The weather being very fine, it induced a fair number of spectators to be present including the elite of the district. The bowling of Hill, Broadbent, Smithson and Boyes was very much admired. The batting of the Perseverance eleven was considered by connoisseurs of the game, to be superior to their opponents, especially that of Ripley, Gilchrist and Yates. Yates making two hits for four each and one three, amid the applause of the spectators. Their defeat is no doubt accounted for in a measure by the unavailable absence of four or five of their best men, and having a powerful eleven to contend with.”

The scores were Gomersal 44 and 47 and Mirfield 83 and 9 for 1. Mirfield winning by nine wickets. In the 83 Sam Smithson scored 18 not out and there were 18 byes and 12 wides. Unfortunately, there are no details of the bowling.

Between the 4th and 6th the Yorkshire County Cricket Club played its first match against Surrey at the Oval. The team contained three players from Huddersfield including John Thewlis of Lascelles Hall.

On 20th June Mirfield entertained Lindley and won by 44 runs. The *Dewsbury Reporter* commented:-

“The bowling of Hill and Broadbent was very destructive, also the bowling of Haigh for Lindley was very good.”

With the two innings combined a low scoring game showed Lindley scoring 47 including 7 byes and 2 wides with Mirfield scoring 91, Hill top scoring with 12 in the second innings with Henry Dransfield and B.B Hebblethwaite scoring 11 each.

The following week Mirfield travelled for the return game with Thornhill Lees Church Institute. The *Dewsbury Reporter* :-

“Smithson and Hill bowled exceedingly wellat the conclusion of the game the Mirfield gentlemen were 73 runs in a minority.”

The following week it reported on the unfortunate injury to Henry Dransfield:-

“Last Saturday, whilst the members of Mirfield Cricket Club were playing those of Thornhill Church Institute on the ground of the later, one of the Mirfield players , namely Dransfield had his finger broken with the ball, which of course incapacitated him entirely from further participation in the game.”

Thornhill Lees scored 33 and 89 and Mirfield 24 and 25.

The return match with Lindley saw a draw with Lindley scoring 73 and 60. Mirfield scored only 31 in the first innings and were set 103 to win. *“Mirfield trying again were succeeding much better, when time was called for play to cease.”*

An interesting side to this game was that a patron of the Lindley club J.B Walker promised a superior cane handled bat to the scorer of the most runs. This was won by William Bates of Lindley. This may have been Billy Bates who later played for Yorkshire.

The *Huddersfield Examiner* reported on an interesting challenge match played on 15th August between the club and a Gentleman's Eleven raised by Edward Ingham, the son of Joshua Ingham the owner of Blake Hall on whose land the club's ground was to be found. Edward Ingham would help the club move to a new ground in 1895. He was educated at Wellington College and at this time would have been on summer vacation. He later studied for a degree in Mathematics at Trinity College, Cambridge. It appears that he raised a team from friends staying at Blake Hall and they obviously underestimated the strength of the club team:-

“The Mirfield men were first to handle the bat against the bowling of Messrs H. Skelton, J.A Armitage, P.A Edwards and E.Ingham. The gentlemen had some difficulty disposing of their opponents, which after some spirited play was accomplished the score being 167. The Blake Hall party then went in to the bowling of Messrs Smithson and Broadbent. H.Skelton esq. exhibited some splendid play making a score of 23. The rest of the party was not so fortunate and at the close they had scored 51. They of course continued play for their second innings, but in this they were less fortunate, although there were some splendid batting exhibited especially that of Master Edward Ingham, whose handling of the willow was greatly admired. In this they only scored 43 leaving the Mirfield men victorious by one innings and 73 runs. The severe defeat is accounted for by the Mirfield eleven being much stronger than the promoter of the match was aware of.”

On 22nd August Mirfield played the return match with Gomersal Perseverance in a drawn game Gomersal scored 71 and 82 and Mirfield 43 and 52 for 1.

The highlight of the season though was the visit of a Manchester eleven. The *Dewsbury Reporter* on 22nd displayed an advert that read:-

“Grand Cricket Match – Mirfield v. Manchester. The above match will be played on the Ground of the Mirfield Cricket Club, between eleven of Cheetham Windsor versus Twenty-two of Mirfield, August 29th. Wickets pitched at half-past ten. Admission – Upper part of the Ground 6d; Lower part of the ground 3d. Refreshments will be provided.”

The match must have been a great event in the town and the Dewsbury Reporter the following week gave a very detailed account of the day:-

“The weather, which for some days previous had been very unfavourable for cricket, underwent a change, and was all that could be desired. It required no small amount of courage on the part of the Manchester eleven to encounter such a Twenty-two as went to receive them on Saturday last, but they met, and the game took place.

The match had been arranged some months previously by mutual friends of the players and was looked forward to with no little interest by both parties, the Cheethamites not knowing what material they had to deal with, and the Mirfield men hoping to astonish any eleven who dared to contest with their formidable team. Nor were they disappointed.

The Manchester team arrived at Mirfield soon after nine o'clock, and it was not long before they tasted Yorkshire cheer. A substantial breakfast is not to be despised at any time, but after a long ride and before a hard days cricket 'tis surely doubly welcome, and we need scarcely say that ample justice was done to the viands provided before an adjournment was made to the tented field.

Play commenced soon after eleven by Mirfield going to the wickets. The only score of note was that of Sykes, who alone reached the doubles. The fielding of the eleven was steady and good almost throughout. The wicket-keeping of G.S Dixon called for special notice; the style in which he took Moffat and Noble at the wickets was worthy of the illustrious Tom, of Surrey Cremone. The fielding of the twenty-two was no means bad. The last wicket fell for 89 runs, not a large score for twenty-two, but the Windsor men thought it rather a heavy one to obtain with so many fielders. Russell and Davies were the first were the first to represent Cottonopolis at the wickets and expectation ran high. Would they obtain the requisite number?

The first over of Hill's was slightly a damper to the hopes of the Manchester men. His pace was terrific not only requiring two longstops, but yet another two, auxiliary ones, at deep slip. Steady batting failed to do much towards averting defeat, for the bowlers at both ends were too much this time for Cheetham and the innings closed for 40 runs or 49 to the bad.

Luncheon having been discussed the Twenty-two again took up the willow. The captain of the Windsor team put on slows, and no reason had he to regret it, for no less than sixteen of the number retired through the agency of Hadwen, who bowled carefully, and showed excellent judgement varying his pitch constantly to suit his man. Joseph Barker's was the only stand made, and he ran up his score by "spooning". The last wicket fell for 74 leaving Manchester 123 runs behind and only an hour of play.

The second innings of the Windsor men commenced badly for them, Hill, with his first ball, taking Davies middle stump, and Street, in the next over, being run out. Two wickets but no runs. The brothers Dixon tried hard to play against time, but the old man with the scythe was more than their match, and their retirement was not long delayed. When time was called, six wickets were down for only 30 runs, and so ended the Mirfield match.

A pleasant evening was spent by the players and their friends in a room fitted up by mine host of the Bull for the occasion and his catering gave general satisfaction. Toast and song followed each other until nearly mid-night and then ended a most enjoyable day. The Manchester men became the guests of the Yorkshire players, and will ever have cause to remember their hospitality. Nothing was missing which would add to their enjoyment. No hitch occurred throughout, everybody being bent upon enjoying himself and increasing the enjoyment of his neighbour. Many thanks are due to Mr George Crowther who was the chief means of making the match and whose liberality will not soon be forgotten by the club of which he is the respected President. Alderman Day and Mr Crow officiated as umpires in the match, for particulars of which we refer our readers to the score:-“

MIRFIELD

	First Innings		Second Innings	
H.Dransfield	b.Hulton	3	not out	2
A.Hill	c.Davies b. Hulton	4	b.Hadwen	3
T.Beaumont	lbw b. Dixon	1	c.Hulton b. Hadwen	0
J.Maxfield	b.Dixon	5	b. Hadwen	2
J.Eyres	b.Hulton	0	b. Hadwen	1
P.Driver	c.Street b. Dixon	6	c.Russell b. Hadwen	0
S.Smithson	lbw b. Dixon	2	b.Hadwen	3
A.Walker	b.Hulton	0	c.Russell b. Hadwen	3
H.Haworth	c.Hadwen b. Dixon	9	b.Hadwen	4
W.Noble	c. Dixon b. Hulton	0	b.Hulton	0
G.H Terry	b.Davies	5	run out	0
P.Thornton	c.Chadwick b.Hulton	2	c & b Hadwen	0
J.Holmes	b.Dixon	4	c.Hulton b. Hadwen	8
John Barker	run out	3	b.Hadwen	9
J.R Moffat	c. Dixon b. Davies	2	c.Allerton b. Davies	5
Cpt Stansfield	b.Davies	0	absent	0
C.Sykes	run out	15	c.Russell b. Hadwen	0
Jos Barker	run out	0	run out	15
J.Ingham	b.Davies	0	b.Hadwen	3
S.Broadbent	lbw b. Street	3	st Dixon b. Hadwen	0
T.Haworth	not out	5	c.Allerton b. Hadwen	0
Jno Wilson	b.Street	0	c. Dixon b. Hadwen	3
	Extras	20		13
	Total	89	Total	74

MANCHESTER CHEETHAM WINDSOR

<i>W.Russell</i>	<i>b.Hill</i>	2	<i>not out</i>	2
<i>J.Davies</i>	<i>c.Haworth b. Hill</i>	12	<i>b.Hill</i>	0
<i>C.G Hulton</i>	<i>b.Smithson</i>	0		
<i>W.Hadwen</i>	<i>c.Jn Barker b. Smithson</i>	0	<i>not out</i>	0
<i>S.Street</i>	<i>b.Hill</i>	3	<i>run out</i>	0
<i>H.P Dixon</i>	<i>c.Ingham b. Smithson</i>	4	<i>b. Hill</i>	11
<i>C.Marwood</i>	<i>b. Smithson</i>	2	<i>b. Hill</i>	0
<i>J. Chadwick</i>	<i>b.Smithson</i>	4		
<i>G.Cooper</i>	<i>c.Eyers b. Smithson</i>	0		
<i>G.Allerton</i>	<i>c.Moffat b. Smithson</i>	6	<i>b.Driver</i>	5
<i>G.Dixon</i>	<i>not out</i>	0	<i>c.Terry b. Hill</i>	6
	<i>Extras</i>	7		6
	<i>Total</i>	40		30

A great day had been had by all and the report clearly demonstrates the camaraderie between cricket players that would continue for years to come. One thing however, should put this in to context. A report in the next column reports on the savages of the American Civil War:-

“Fort Sumter in ruins; the city of Charlestown was shelled; General Rosecrane has shelled Chattanooga; the Southern press calls for French aid and New York is quiet.”

The next few years there is little evidence as the *Dewsbury Reporter* records are missing. However, some evidence was found in the *Huddersfield Examiner* records.

1864 – Execution in Leeds cuts crowd at big game

In 1864, Allen Hill, the Mirfield professional was found playing for his home club, Kirkheaton.

On 3rd June Mirfield entertained Liversedge in what could have been the first of many local derbies. Liversedge made 17 and 28 as Mirfield won easily scoring 57 with Maxfield top scorer with 11. Remarkably, a score was found of a second eleven game played on Wednesday 8th June against Wellhouse. Mirfield scored 58 and 90 with scores of 33 from Yates; 23 from Leadbetter and 21 from Clarkson. Wellhouse made 61 and 78. Mirfield winning by 9 runs.

On 2nd July Mirfield were due to visit their friends at Cheetham Windsor, Manchester but the *Huddersfield Examiner* commented:-

“Eighteen members of the Mirfield Cricket Club visited Manchester, for the purpose of playing the return game with the Cheetham Windsor club but

unfortunately the rain poured down to the extent that it was found quite impracticable, so they had to return without the ball which they fully anticipated bringing with them. It is not definitely known when the game will be played or if it can be played this season."

From this it can be read that the victors in these time may have claimed the match ball as a prize?

On 10th September Cheetham Windsor visited Mirfield. As in 1863 they were entertained to breakfast at the Black Bull. The Mirfield Brass band played at the match, which Mirfield won on the first innings score as the game was incomplete when close was called. Mirfield had eighteen players and scored 102 (John Holmes 17 and Samuel Broadbent 14) and 87 (Sam Smithson 25). Cheetham Windsor's eleven scored 75 in the first innings with Smithson taking five wickets. In the second innings they were 48 for 1.

Entertainment of course was very different in 1864 compared to today. This was highlighted in the *Huddersfield Examiner's* comment regarding the low attendance at the game:-

"the latter were not so numerous as might have been expected owing to the execution in Leeds and the too high a charge for admission which is to be lower next year."



Poster advertising the hanging in Leeds

The execution in Leeds was the first and only public hanging at Armley Gaol. Two convicts James Sargisson and Joseph Myers had both been found guilty of murder. *The Leeds Mercury* described the event.

"even on the previous night, began to occupy the field in front of the gaol.....as the hour of the execution approached, the spectators continued to pour in large numbers until wide open space in front of the gaol and every available spot around were occupied. The roof of every house and mill, walls and even the

lamp-posts were thronged with those anxious to witness the execution and there could not have been less than 80,000 to 100,000 people present.”

A scene that can only be imagined today if a team wins the FA Cup or Challenge Cup!

The only evidence of cricket in late summer was a game played between Mirfield and Leeds Recreation on 24th September. After a well contested game Mirfield won on first innings score.

Mirfield made 36 (J.R Moffat 11) and 50. Leeds Recreation 34 with Samuel Broadbent and H Broadbent taking four wickets each.

1865 – Visit of George Parr’s All England eleven

The Annual General Meeting on 6th April 1865 at the Towngate School room reported the election of officials with J.M Johnson Treasurer and John Barker Secretary. It also told of the forthcoming big event – a game against the All England eleven set for June.

On 10th June Mirfield entertained Edgerton. One hundred and forty years later the club will again in 2006 entertain Edgerton. *The Huddersfield Examiner*:-

“It excited considerable interest, from the fact that several of the Mirfield eleven being selected to play against the celebrated All England eleven”.

Again, the match was decided on the first innings score. Mirfield losing having scored 36 against Edgerton’s 41. In the Edgerton innings E.T Barker and Spivey took four wickets each.

The match against George Parr’s All England eleven was played over three days on Monday to Wednesday 19th to 21st June. The Twenty-two men of the Mirfield district included several Mirfield men. The Huddersfield Examiner gave a very detailed account of the three days play. It is obvious that the wicket was not to the liking of the England eleven but everything else seems to have been to their taste:-

“The weather was beautifully fine, and the attendance, especially on Tuesday was very good. The grand stand presented a very gay appearance on Tuesday, being crowded chiefly with ladies.

The All Englanders complained of the bad state of the ground, and said it was the worst wicket they had played on for some time. In justice to the Mirfield Club, it is but fair to state that a considerable sum has been spent upon the ground, but on an account of an error in judgement of the persons employed to lay it down – ashes having been placed beneath the sods – it is not in so good a state as is

desirable. We believe steps will be speedily taken to remedy this defect and when that is done, it will be one of the pleasant cricket grounds in the kingdom. The situation is delightful, the prospect being one of the most extensive and charming in the district. The refreshment department was under the care of Mr A Rhodes of the Black Bull Inn, and was admirably managed. A brass band was in attendance and contributed its quota to the enjoyment of the visitors. Mr Rogers had also a printing press on the ground, from which were issued "k'rect cards," showing the state of the game at the fall of each wicket."

Oh how this cricket historian would love to get hold of one of those "k'rect cards" now!

England started badly having been put into bat and were 10 for 3. A stand between Rowbottom and Carpenter took England to 43 before Rowbottom was caught by Titterington off Smithson for 21. All England were dismissed for 115 with Carpenter top score with 27. The Huddersfield Examiner commented of the Mirfield bowling:-

"The bowling of Shaw was very good and that of Smithson was creditable and the fielding on the whole very fair."

The Twenty-two started their first innings shortly after five o'clock. Gilchrist and Holmes opening the innings. At close of play at half past six Mirfield were 69 for 10. Shotton had top scored with 27 made up of two fours, two three's, two two's and the rest in singles.

Play resumed at half past twelve on Tuesday. Mirfield twenty-two moved to 115 all out to tie the score. H.Mallinson had the distinction of hitting one ball clean over the refreshment booths much to the delight of the spectators. He was 19 not out.

The All England eleven started their second innings at quarter past three. At close they were 130 for 6. J.Jackson had scored 33 and G.Tarrant 53. Tarrant was awarded his talent money for scoring fifty at the end of the day. One unfortunate incident was reported by the *Huddersfield Examiner*:-

"Smith took his place at the wickets, and soon drove a ball for three, to the upper end of the field, where Driver was fielding, and who made every endeavour to catch the ball, but was baulked by the spectators, who were too near to the place where the ball alighted to allow the fielder sufficient freedom of action and the chance was missed."

The last days play resumed at half past eleven with All England scoring 146 all out. The twenty-two went in at five minutes to one. At one point they were 26 for nine with the bowling of Jackson and Oscroft being almost unplayable. They

were eventually all out for 51 with Jackson taking twelve wickets and Oscroft eight. The *Examiner* commented on the collapse:-

“a small number certainly, but not to be wondered at, when the bad state of the wicket and swift character of the bowling on a hard “bumping” ground, are taken into consideration.”

On 5th August Mirfield visited Edgerton in the return match and the bowling of Spivey, Smithson and Barker was too good for the home team. Mirfield made 63 with Gilchrist 23 and 61 in the second innings with Smithson 33. Edgerton were bowled out for 31 with Spivey four wickets and Barker and Smithson three each.

The only other game reported for 1865 was a second eleven game at home against Bradford Architects & Civil Engineers in which Mirfield scored 99 and Bradford 48.

In October the Huddersfield Examiner reported on the Annual Supper of the Mirfield club. It gives a fascinating insight into the club of 1865.

“The best and most enjoyable game of the season of the Mirfield Cricket Club came off in the large room of the Black Bull Hotel. There was a capital field, viz, the knife and fork took the place of the bat. The viands, served up by Mrs Rhodes, supplied as a ball and a good appetite took the form of the wickets. There was some capital play, about forty were engaged in the contest, and in about three quarters of an hour every wicket was knocked down. Goose, hare, fowl, beef, ham, pudding and pies etc (a good old England team) had accomplished all this. After the cloth had been removed Mr Joe Marshall Johnson took the chair, and Mr Alexander Walker the vice chair. Mr John Barker read the report, which showed that the club had played sixteen matches with foreign clubs; six matches were won, eight lost and two drawn. Fourteen were first class matches of which five were won, seven lost, two drawn. The reason assigned for this deficiency were – first, that they had played stronger teams; and second, that the members had not attended practice sufficiently well. The bowling and fielding of the members had been above average, but the batting was sadly deficient and was thought that if a professional be engaged, the batting would be greatly improved. A table showing the batting averages of the members was then read, when it was shown that Mr Titterington had scored the highest number of runs for the season. His name stood as follows :- seven innings, not out 2, total runs 114; average per innings 16. According to a minute adopted by the club last year, the highest scorer for the season was entitled to a new bat, and in consequence it fell to Mr Titterington. This gentleman being unable to attend on account of a slight illness, Mr J Chew Walker represented him. Mr Johnson presented the prize and remarked that he was sorry the gentleman was not present, as receiving the laurels was as much as the value of the prize. It consisted of a first rate cane handled bat and on the side was a

silver-plate, engraved with the words "Presented to Mr W. Titterington, by the M.C.C as head average scorer for season 1865."

During the evening reference was made to the All England match that came off in June; the committee of arrangement were sorry that it had not been financially speaking a success. With exception of the ground, the All England team had expressed themselves highly pleased with the arrangements; the pavilion was as good a one as he ever saw. It was thought best not to have another All England match for the present. The question of engaging a professional cricketer during the coming season was discussed and on being put to the vote, was carried unanimously. The statement of accounts showed that there was a balance in hand. The usual loyal and patriotic toasts were drunk, and the remainder of the evening was spent in songs, and all seemed to enjoy themselves thoroughly."



Black Bull Hotel

1866 – Club's first centurion, Ashley Walker

As seen from the 1865 report a professional was a top priority and the following season Henry 'Harry' Broadbent was signed as professional.

The first game of the season was played on Friday 11th May at home against Huddersfield Casuals who included one of famous cricketing family Thewlis' of Lascelles Hall. The Casuals made 54 with Sam Smithson taking seven wickets. In reply Mirfield scored 45 for 6 with John Gilchrist top scoring with 10. Harry Broadbent did not appear in this game. The Mirfield team included Gilchrist, Titterington, Hirst, Barker, Kirkland, Ibberson, Firth, Smithson, A Firth and Haworth.

On Whit Tuesday Mirfield entertained Dalton with Broadbent taking four wickets and Walker six as Dalton scored 65 against Mirfield's 64 of which E.C Bailey scored 16. This defeat was followed by victory over visiting Hunsworth on Monday 21st May. Again Bailey top scored with 30 in a total of 119. Hunsworth were dismissed for 101.

On Wednesday 23rd May the squire of Blake Hall whose land the enclosure was sited, Joshua Ingham was buried in the family vault at St Mary's Parish Church. The church was full for his funeral and one of the mourners was recorded as the Reverend James Armitage Rhodes who could have been one of the benefactors of the club in 1862.

On 9th June a game between Mirfield second eleven and Roberttown first eleven was played. Sam Broadbent was the hero taking eight wickets. *The Examiner* recorded

"S.Broadbent came to the relief and soon disposed of the Roberttown gentlemen for a score of 57. Mirfield took the willow and was fortunate enough in rubbing off the score for the loss of five wickets...T Haworth frequently elected the applause of the spectators, who made 20 and not out in fine style."

Mirfield entertained Bradford Architects & Civil Engineers on 30th June, Broadbent making 13 and Hodge 12 in a total of 51. The opposition making 43 in reply. It is interesting to note that in the same week the Examiner reports on a game played between Eleven Thewlis' of Lascelles Hall and Chickenley. The Thewlis' making 250.

A very exciting tie was played against the strong Morley Nelson club on Saturday 14th July. *The Examiner* gives details:

"after some spirited play with both teams the result was a draw both elevens obtaining 58 runs in one innings each. Much interest and excitement was evidenced by the spectators the Morley Nelson having obtained a tie with two wickets to fall. Thanks to the bowling of H Broadbent and JC Walker and to the expert fielding of the Mirfield team being so close, the last two wickets fell and saved the Mirfield Cricket Club from chronically a lose with the well known Morley Nelson."

From evidence of some of the opponents in 1866 the Club must have begun to establish itself. On Monday 16th July they played another match with the Huddersfield Casuals with wickets pitched at 11 o'clock. *The Examiner* states *"The Casuals although represented by first-class cricketers made a very poor start."*

Indeed they only mustered 22 in the first innings due to the bowling of Harry Broadbent with six wickets. Mirfield scored 58 gaining a lead of 36. The Casuals

faired a bit better and scored 57 leaving a total of 22 to win. *The Examiner* described Smithson's fine innings "The Batting of J Smithson was frequently applauded, he driving the ball into all parts of the field and closed a brilliant innings of 43." Mirfield winning and batting on to 83 for 8 at close.

The annual visit of the Cheetham Windsor side from Manchester witnessed the first recorded century by a Mirfield player on Saturday 21st July. The player in question was Ashley Walker who was probably playing as a guest in the game and a Trinity College, Cambridge contemporary of Edward Ingham. He had played for the Casuals against Mirfield and was indeed a Cambridge Blue between 1864 and 1866 and played several games for Yorkshire between 1863 and 1870. He later went to teach in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and was a major influence in the game taking off in that country. Anthony Woodhouse in his *History of Yorkshire CCC* described him as "a stylish free scoring batsman and useful slow bowler."

Cheetham scored 87 as Walker took six wickets and Mirfield scored a vast total of 225 thanks mainly to Walker's 126 before he was run out. Smithson scored 20. *The Examiner* gives us a great insight into innings and reveals aspects of the game at that time "Mr Walker defied the bowling, although it was changed several times, he drove the ball right and left, and never gave a chance till he had scored 86, which was not taken at long field off by Mr Thornton, his score comprised of one 5, three 4's, seventeen 3's, sixteen 2's rest singles."

Long field off could be deep mid off? Also a boundary as we know it today would be four runs but in 1866 it was only three. A four was scored by hitting the ball clear over the boundary as we would call a six today.

In the second innings Cheetham were dismissed for 75 with Broadbent taking five wickets.

An advert in *The Examiner* shows Edgerton due to play Mirfield on 28th July and states "admission free". There was no report however, the following week.

On Wednesday 8th August the Heckmondwike Casuals visited Mirfield. The teams are interesting described as the Heckmondwike Casuals with Burnham and the Mirfield Club with Broadbent obviously both clubs pros. Broadbent took five wickets as Heckmondwike made 119. Mirfield only mustered 43 with Gilchrist 12.

The growing strength of the club could be witnessed in a victory over Birstall Victoria on Monday 14th August. *The Examiner* commented "Victoria was congratulating themselves upon an easy victory on account of the absence of five or six of Mirfield's best players...Henry Broadbent however turned the scales in favour of Mirfield, he showed some excellent batting and was disposed of till he had played 22 to his credit then he was unfortunately run out. Smithson again

showed his usual and skilful ability in handling the willow by playing 16 and 36 to his credit.” Mirfield made 82 and 91 and Birstall were bowled out for 44 with three wickets apiece for Broadbent and Smithson.

Late August saw a victory over Clifton with Moffatt taking seven wickets in each innings as Clifton were skittled for 19 and 20 and a defeat away at Moldgreen against Dalton. Moffatt took four wickets as Dalton scored 97 but Mirfield scored 56 with 13 from Titterington and 10 from Gilchrist.

Mirfield a heavy defeat to Morley Nelson on 1st September making 30 *“the Mirfield players being unable to make a stand against the excellent bowling of W. Foster or Miles Hall’s slows.”*

The home game against Edgerton witnessed the wicket-keeping skills of John Gilchrist. *“Mr Heron after scoring 25, unfortunately stepped out of the popping crease before the ball became dead, and as the ever watchful eye of the stumper was upon him, he took the opportunity of disposing of him.”* It is of interest that any stumpings recorded in the scorecards don’t given credit to the bowler. Gilchrist throughout the season invariably had one stumping per game.

The last game of the season saw Broadbent take five wickets as Alexandra Club Brighouse were dismissed for 19 in reply to Mirfield’s 26.

The annual dinner and AGM was held at the Black Bull on 24th November at which Mr Marsden, a surgeon was voted chair and Mr R Hirst of Dewsbury vice chair. Mr J.R Moffatt read the report *“a very satisfactory document.”*

1867 – Three elevens at the club

The season commenced on Easter Monday with a real Mirfield derby against the Mirfield 41st Rifles, a game the club won easily making 74 against the Rifles 31 and 38. *The Examiner* stated *“The afternoon growing more genial than had been anticipated enhanced very considerable pleasure of both parties engaged...we must not forget the attendance of the Rifle Corps Band whose good and pleasing music had a most enlivening effect on both spectators and players generally.”*

A report of the exciting finish to the match at home to Clifton on 18th May shows the growing reputation of ‘the enclosure’ and the fact that the club was clearly running three elevens. *“The Mirfield ground which was in a splendid condition...H Broadbent bowled the last two Clifton men in consecutive balls, when they had only one run to get to make a tie. The fielding of the Mirfield eleven had slack comprised partly second and third eleven men.”* Broadbent in fact took eight wickets as Clifton were dismissed for 60 in reply to Mirfield’s 61.

The following week heavy snow was reported to have fallen in Mirfield but had cleared by the time Mirfield lost to Northgate House on Saturday 25th May.

Broadbent took five wickets as Northgate made 60 but Mirfield only scored 33. During the following week the annual Married versus Single match was played. The Singles winning for the first time by 17 runs.

The month of June witnessed victories over Brighouse and Bradford United and a defeat to Thongsbridge. Against Brighouse "*H. Yates played a very lively innings of 43 and the bowling of Smithson and Broadbent was something beyond the usual*". In the match with Bradford United Broadbent made 22 out of 109 but was shown as 'disabled' in the newspaper scorecard!

The only reference to a match in July was a trip to Edgerton, a defeat in which Broadbent scored 14 and took seven wickets.

August saw a return match with Edgerton which was drawn Broadbent taking five wickets and Moffatt taking four and top scoring with 16. This was followed by three other victories over the Huddersfield Casuals, Heckmondwike and Hunsworth. Broadbent was again amongst the wickets taking seven against Heckmondwike and four against the Casuals.

As in 1863 Edward Ingham brought an eleven to play the club. It is probable that this was an annual event that may not have been reported in some previous years. *The Examiner* commented about the strength of Edward Ingham's eleven "*we must mention that E Ingham esq was disappointed not to bring the team which he purposed to do otherwise the game might have terminated very differently*". Mirfield made 117 Gilchrist 26, Firth 36, Broadbent 29 and dismissed his eleven for 39 and 43.

The last game of the season was played against Mr W Titterington's eleven and Edward Ingham turned out for the club. Mirfield making 79 with Gilchrist scoring 14 but Mr Titterington's side scored 82.

The Black Bull once again hosted the AGM and dinner on Monday 13th November, *The Examiner* reported "*toasts of a patriotic and complimentary kind were drunk ad libitum and some good singing closed the season of 1867*".