



# DRAKES

## HUDDERSFIELD CRICKET LEAGUE



Official Souvenir  
by Alec Lodge

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**ALEC LODGE** has devoted his life to Huddersfield and Yorkshire cricket.

A right-arm medium pace bowler, Mr Lodge began his career in the Huddersfield Cricket Association with Rowley Hill as a 14-year-old.

After two years at Lepton Highlanders he joined his beloved Lascelles Hall in 1935 and played with them until 1958, winning every team honour in the League. He is an honorary life member at the Hall.

He was the first winner of the Huddersfield League's Lady Sykes Candlesticks award in 1945 and has since become a legend for his administrative service to cricket.

Alec Lodge served the Huddersfield League as president for ten years from 1968. He was a League Council member for 22 years and is currently the League's senior vice president.

He has spent over 40 years on the Huddersfield Junior League executive; nineteen years as a vice president of the Joe Lumb Cup committee and has also served as president of the Huddersfield Under 13 League.

A founder member of the Yorkshire Cricket Association, he was instrumental in persuading Yorkshire to start the White Rose Trophy competition and he was also a leading figure in the successful launch of the John Smith's Yorkshire Leagues Knockout, for which he was the first chairman.



**ALEC LODGE**

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*Congratulations to the  
Huddersfield Cricket League  
on its Centenary*

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We are now entering our Centenary Year and it is a great privilege to be your President at such an auspicious time.

On March 26, 1891, a band of cricket lovers met in a hotel in town to formulate what is now the Huddersfield Cricket League. One wonders what their thoughts were on that eventful night. One of great satisfaction no doubt.

Here we are now 100 years on preparing to celebrate that wonderful occasion and with this book to record our sincere thanks to those gentlemen of wisdom and foresight who made this League possible.

Not only the forerunners, but the many, many cricket lovers who have dedicated their lives to promoting cricket and the League for a century of time.

Secretaries, treasurers, groundsmen, committee-men, umpires, scorers and the ladies who have made the Huddersfield League one of the best leagues in England.

Many sporting and varied events are planned for 1991. Please join us, and with your support we will make the Centenary Year of 1991 a year to remember.

Jan and myself wish the League and all the clubs every success in the future; to the old ones thanks for the memories; to the younger generation — look after our League and help it be just as good in 2091.

JIM DAWSON  
League President



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KT2 7HW

My congratulations to all who might be associated with the Huddersfield Cricket League.

The Huddersfield League has done a great deal for cricket, particularly Yorkshire cricket over many years. We have seen George Hirst, Wilfred Rhodes, also Schofield Haigh and Percy Holmes, local men who were to grace the cricket grounds of England and the world.

I knew all of these great cricketers, what nice men they were too. When you look at Wilfred Rhodes' record it is really wonderful that all started on the delightful Kirkheaton ground.

Not only did the League produce men of outstanding ability but many fine cricketers who were devoted to their local clubs and gave much pleasure to countless supporters of the game.

My congratulations to the officials of the clubs for their efforts to uphold the high standards of the League. They have given their time, valuable time too, in the interest of cricket — my congratulations to all of them.

In conclusion, I would just like to mention George Herbert Hirst, who fired my ambition to become a cricketer. George was a delightful man who did so much for Yorkshire cricket and indeed England too. He remained a very modest man, a great credit to the Huddersfield Cricket League.

My congratulations and best wishes to all connected with Huddersfield League cricket.

LEN HUTTON  
President, Yorkshire County Cricket Club

*This tribute was received a few weeks before Sir Leonard Hutton's untimely death*

***Congratulations to the  
Huddersfield Cricket League  
on its Centenary***

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## INTRODUCTION – ARTHUR SHAW

**T**he Huddersfield and District Cricket League was the brainchild of Mr Arthur Shaw. There is no doubt whatsoever that he was a dedicated sportsman with a particular love of cricket. He was connected with the Golcar Club, first as a player and later as a keen committee man. He was also associated with Huddersfield Rugby Club.

In 1886 he took an active part in the formation of the Huddersfield and District Cricket Association. He was the treasurer for three years and afterwards he served on the committee.

In 1891, largely, if not solely, through his efforts the Huddersfield and District Cricket League was formed. During the first year he was secretary, in the following two years he was president and later he was again the secretary. He was also the League's auditor from 1898 until his death in 1916.

He had a keen, practical interest in county cricket. It was he who introduced to the county the great trio, George Herbert Hirst, Wilfred Rhodes and Schofield Haigh. Mr Shaw was also asked to supply information to be included in the biography of the great W G Grace.

Arthur Shaw was only 28 years old when he was involved in the birth of the Huddersfield and District Cricket Association. He was a remarkable man, a man of great vision, and five years later came his greatest triumph – the formation of the Huddersfield and District Cricket League.

His death was tragic. In his 58th year he was found dead in the River Colne. It was thought he had missed his train to Golcar and had taken some form of transport to Slaithwaite. He was apparently walking to Golcar when he had to use a bridge to cross the River Colne. He probably stumbled, banged his head and fell into the river where he drowned in only a few inches of water.



MR ARTHUR SHAW



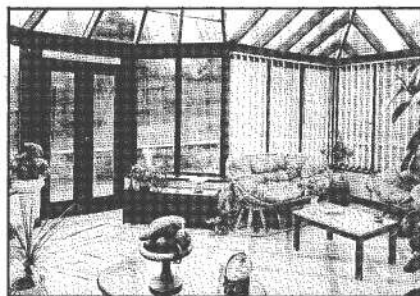
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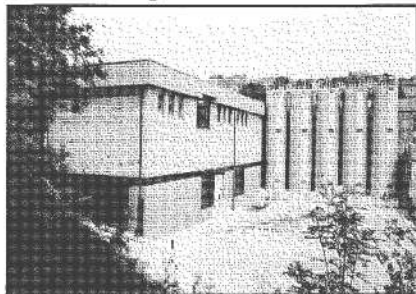
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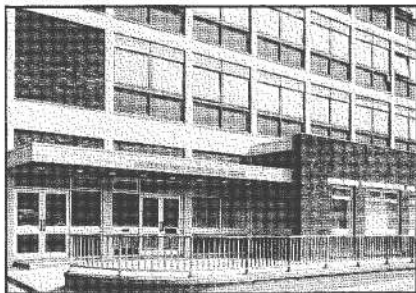
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## ORGANISING CRICKET IN HUDDERSFIELD

**I**t has been well recorded that cricket was played in the Huddersfield area many years before clubs became interested in establishing associations and leagues.

The oldest club is Lascelles Hall. Cricket had been the sport of the villagers many years before they obtained a field of their own in 1825.

1980 saw the last of the then 24 clubs in the Huddersfield Cricket League reach their centenary. It is doubtful if any other league is able to claim such a record.

The legendary feats achieved by Lascelles Hall in the second half of the 19th century are now part of cricket history. Indeed, we are given to understand by cricket statisticians that the Huddersfield area has produced more first-class cricketers than any other town or city in England.

Organised cricket was created in 1886 when the Huddersfield and District Cricket Association was formed. The first president was Mr E Woodhead, of the Huddersfield Examiner, the secretary, Mr A Mayall, of the Cliffe End Cricket Club and the treasurer, Mr A Shaw, of Golcar. Members of the committee were from the following clubs: Almondbury, Armitage Bridge, Linthwaite, Kirkburton, Thongsbridge, Lockwood, Meltham Mills, Delph and Dobcross, Rastrick and Honley.

It is interesting to note that included in the Association at the time were the following clubs: Colnebridge, Crosland Moor, Friarmere, Helme, Linthwaite Hall, Netherthong and St Andrews.

For a few years previous to 1886 it was noticeable that the matches between rival village teams were not always played in the sportsmanlike manner desirable. Many cricket enthusiasts expressed the opinion that much of the friction arose through each club providing its own umpire, which in many cases was the equivalent of having a good 12th man.

In August, 1886, as a result of an advertisement in the Huddersfield Examiner, a meeting was held at the Paragon Inn, the outcome of which was the formation of the Huddersfield and District Cricket Association.

In addition to being able to appoint neutral umpires, club secretaries were enabled to meet and arrange fixtures, thus saving a mass of correspondence.

It must be emphasised that the Huddersfield and District Cricket League was established within the framework of the Huddersfield and District Cricket Association. In this booklet other senior leagues are mentioned and they all originated from the Association.

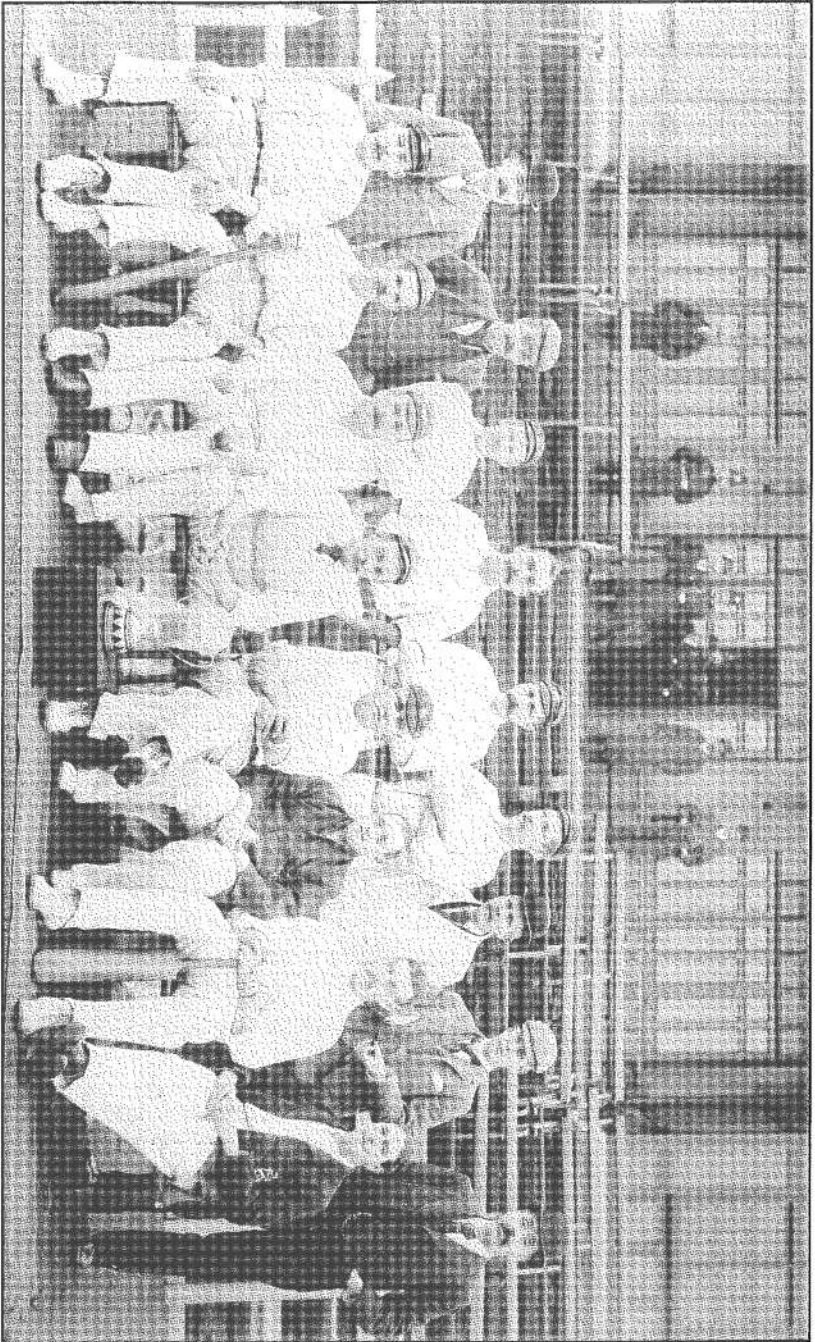
The Association, in the beginning, was not a league but rather an administrative structure within which the leagues operated. Technically it became a league in 1905, as explained below, and as such is still flourishing.

When the Huddersfield and District League came into being in 1891, clubs in the League were the cream of the Association but were still members of that body. In 1893, in what can be described as the next tier, other clubs within the Association established the Alliance League. The clubs concerned were Almondbury, Broad Oak, Dalton, Delph and Dobcross, Friarmere, Honley, Holmbridge, Kirkburton, Marsden, Meltham, Saddleworth and Thongsbridge.

When the Alliance became a league, yet another league was formed at the same time in 1893. This was the Combination League, comprising clubs from Crosland Moor, Colnebridge, Bradley Mills, Denby Dale, Helme, Hall Bower, Lepton Highlanders, Linthwaite Hall, Netherthong, Paddock, Scholes and Skelmanthorpe.

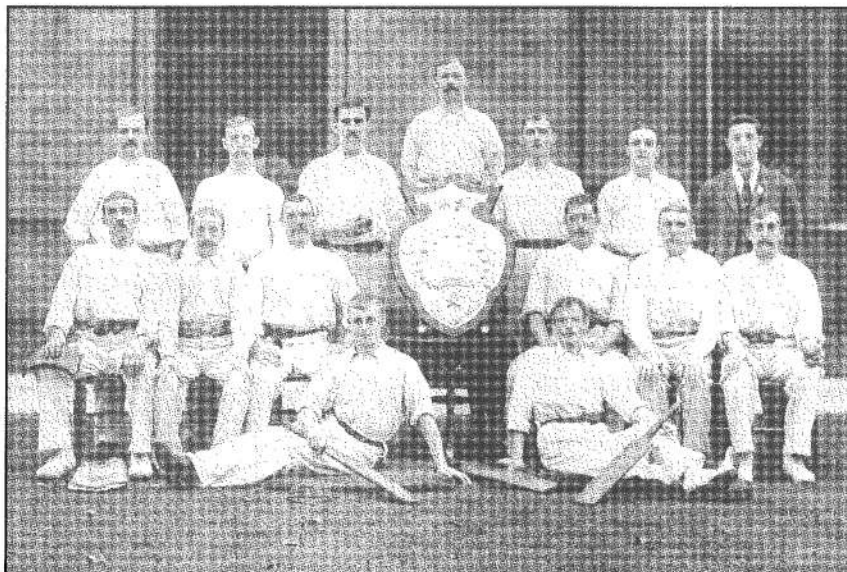
It was by far the weakest of the three leagues at that period, although there was soon a vast improvement both in playing standards and amenities. Indeed, it is interesting to reflect that five of these clubs are now established members of the senior League.

In September 1895, the Alliance League pressed for representation within the Association on equal terms with the District League. Throughout its existence the Alliance appears to have had uneasy

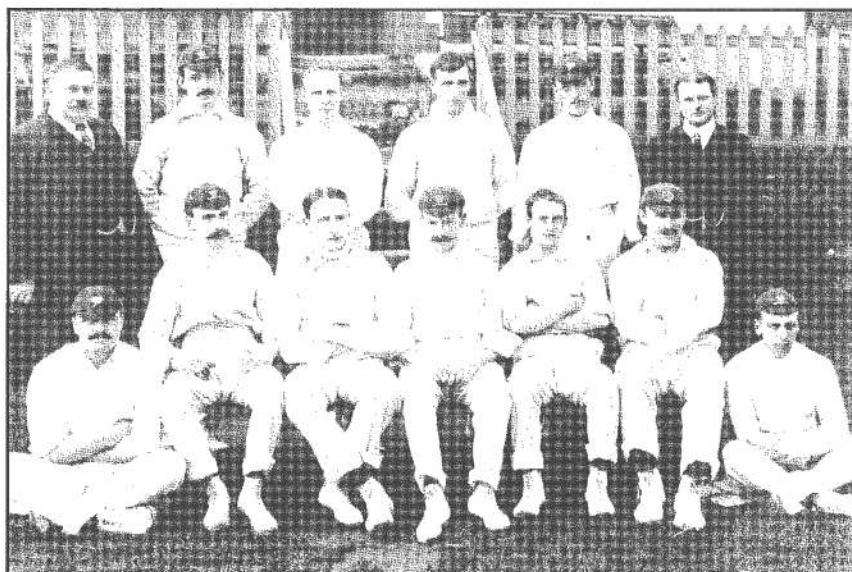


HUDDERSFIELD A.C. & C.C. CRICKET TEAM, 1896

Back row (left to right): H Gelder (Scorer), F Leonard (Secretary), H Theobald, W Stubbins, H Johnson, J Jessop, T H Kitching (Umpire), F A Brook, D D Shircliffe (Hon Secretary)  
 Front row (left to right): W Jessop, W Emmerson, G H Hirst, A P Crossland (Captain), J Stubbins, C A Bradley, S Kilburn, A E Nield



MELTHAM MILLS 1898



**THE HUDDERSFIELD WANDERERS**

Back row from left: Lawrence Hirst, Hubert Smith, Leonard H Beaumont, Scorer, W E D Shaw, Wilfred W Rhodes, Joseph Hall (Umpire)  
 Front row from left: Schofield Haigh, Tom Hudson, Harold Shaw, Harry Schofield (Captain), Edgar Walker, George H Hirst, Harold H Ramsden  
 PLAYED AT GOLCAR SEPTEMBER 26th 1903

relationships with other bodies and in November, 1898, following a dispute with the Combination League, it severed its connection with the Association.

Clubs in membership of the District League had also left the Association in November 1896. With League matches by now being played every Saturday from mid-April to the end of September there were no dates available for matches in the Lumb Cup competition. By severing their connection with the Association, clubs were no longer eligible to compete for this trophy, a development which undoubtedly dealt a severe blow to the prestige of the competition.

One consequence was a considerable reduction in the donations hitherto made by the Association to the Huddersfield Royal Infirmary from funds generated by the competition.

The Combination League, however, continued to work closely with officials of the Association for some years, the League organising League fixtures (for which the Combination Challenge Cup had been secured in 1897) and the Association administering the Lumb Cup competition. Eventually, in December, 1904, the two bodies merged, the Association thereby becoming a league in its own right for the first time. The Combination Challenge Cup was retained as the League Championship Trophy.

Outside the Association, relations between the District League and the Alliance followed a somewhat uneasy course. In 1901 the Alliance adopted most of the District League rules. As a kind of follow-up they then asked the senior League if they would consider a system of promotion and relegation with the Alliance and Combination Leagues.

Nothing much was recorded on this proposition until the end of 1905 when Armitage Bridge, the top club in the Alliance, was admitted to the District League. However, Honley Wesleyans, the top club in the newly constituted Association League, declined the offer of a place in the Alliance League.

It would appear that there was continued friction between the District and Alliance Leagues on the promotion and relegation issue. In 1907 two clubs tied for the bottom place in the District League. Attempts to determine who should be relegated by a play-off failed, so the League decided that no club would be relegated but that two would go down the following year. It is understandable that the Alliance was not amused.

The really critical dispute, however, was the amalgamation issue in 1910, a detailed account of which is given later, in the history of the League's first fifty years. Briefly, a joint meeting, called by the senior league, had been held, and to all intents and purposes a decision was taken to disband both leagues in favour of a new body comprising 29 clubs. After reconsidering the matter, however, the District League rescinded its earlier decision and curtly informed the Alliance that it would not be proceeding with the merger.

Little is recorded relating to this unfortunate episode in the Huddersfield League minute book but the Alliance minutes are scathing. It does look as if the merger was approached in a most unbusinesslike manner by the Huddersfield League. Clubs had not been properly briefed and representatives attended the meeting without a mandate from their clubs.

In February, 1911 the Alliance, no doubt intent on making a fresh start, changed its name to the Huddersfield and District Cricket Council. Even so, it is apparent that the bitterness of 1910 remained deep-seated. At the annual general meeting of the Council held on November 4, 1913 it was resolved "that any club whose application to join the Huddersfield and District League is allowed to go forward for consideration by the League shall not be re-admitted to the Council".

Later that month Bradley Mills and Primrose Hill defied the Council and applied (unsuccessfully, as it turned out) to join the Huddersfield League. They paid the penalty. They were expelled.

The vote in favour of expulsion was not, however, unanimous, and while the precise reasons for what followed remain obscure, the decision clearly had an unsettling effect on many of the remaining clubs. At the next meeting, held on December 9, 1913, Almondbury, Hall Bower, Honley Wesleyans, Salendine Nook Baptist and St Andrews all resigned from the Council. The meeting was then adjourned for a week to allow time for the situation to be discussed. At the reconvened meeting Armitage Bridge resigned, to be followed by Meltham on February 17, 1914.

As a result of these defections the Huddersfield Central Cricket League was formed on December 8, 1913. At the first meeting, held on that date, Mr F Oldfield (Honley Wesleyans) was elected president and Mr J Wilson Senior (Primrose Hill) secretary-treasurer. The following seven clubs were represented: Almondbury, Hall Bower, Primrose Hill, St Andrews, Salendine Nook Baptist, Honley Wesleyans and Bradley Mills. Armitage Bridge were admitted to the League at the next meeting, held on December 18.

The Cricket Council was clearly shaken by this turn of events, and on January 8, 1914 Mr R W Freer and Mr G Walker, respectively president and secretary of the Council, met representatives of the new League to see whether the breach could be healed. They pleaded for the Central League and the Council to "bury the hatchet", to end the present unsatisfactory state of affairs and re-unite in the interests of the game.

The chairman of the meeting said that he had great sympathy with the objectives of the two gentlemen and expected his organisation to give careful consideration to their plea. Later, however, he had to tell Messrs Freer and Walker that the clubs in the Central League were not prepared to rejoin the Council.

Thus depleted, the Council struggled on for one further season, the remaining few clubs playing each other "twice round" to make up a full season's fixture list. This only delayed the inevitable however, and on December 1, 1914 the Council, after a somewhat stormy history, disbanded.

The Central League, on the other hand, continued to prosper, and is today of course a major force in Huddersfield cricket.

Other leagues of a much lower standing and outside the Association were the Huddersfield and District Junior League for Sunday School clubs (which operated in 1893), the Huddersfield and District Junior Alliance League, the Lockwood and District Junior Alliance Cricket League, the Colne Valley League, the Colne Valley Junior Alliance League and the Sheepridge and District League. Clubs in these leagues played on fields with only very limited amenities. In other words, they simply managed to have a game of cricket. Basically that should be what the game is all about – playing for enjoyment.

With the advent of the District League forming second elevens, many players from the very junior leagues joined the senior clubs to try their hand against famous county and international cricketers.

**Note:**

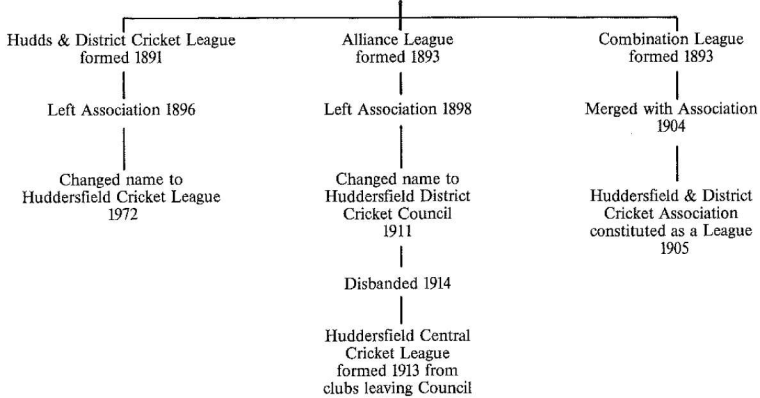
To avoid any possible misunderstanding it is perhaps necessary to point out that in the early days it was customary to describe the various Leagues as follows: Huddersfield and District Cricket Association League, Huddersfield and District Cricket League, Huddersfield and District Alliance Cricket League and Huddersfield and District Combination Cricket League. The Central League has always been the Huddersfield Central League.

Once established the different Leagues were usually referred to as the Association, the District League, the Alliance, the Combination and the Central League. By season 1900 the composition of the different organisations was as follows:

- The District League: Dalton, Kirkheaton, Paddock, Primrose Hill, Lascelles Hall, Golcar, Slaithwaite, Holmfirth, Honley, Lockwood, Marsden, Linthwaite, Meltham Mills.
- The Alliance League: Broad Oak, Kirkburton, Almondbury, Hall Bower, Holmbridge, Thongsbridge, Bradley Mills, Skelmanthorpe, Linthwaite Hall, Meltham, Denby Dale, Lindley.
- The Combination League: Section A – Cartworth Moor, Thurstonland, Shepley, Netherthong, Shelley, Cumberworth, Hepworth, Scholes.  
Section B – St Andrew's, Lepton Highlanders, Almondbury Parish Church, Oakes Baptists, Netherton, Helme, Farnley Tyas, Sheepridge, Deighton.

A Sunday School League was established in 1900 with most of the matches being played on established club grounds.

**HUDDERSFIELD & DISTRICT CRICKET ASSOCIATION  
FORMED 1886**



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## FORMATION OF THE LEAGUE

Once clubs became organised it was apparent that even better arrangements could be formulated to improve the standard of play along with an increase in spectator interest, which tended to wane once the cup-ties had been completed. In short, if a more competitive type of cricket was played, necessary finance could be generated from a larger membership.

The first meeting called to discuss the formation of a Huddersfield League was held on February 24, 1891, the following clubs having been invited to send delegates — Lockwood, Armitage Bridge, Lascelles Hall, Holmfirth, Meltham Mills, Cliffe End, Slaithwaite, Golcar, Linthwaite and Huddersfield United. All these clubs were, in fact, represented, with the exception of Holmfirth. Mr F W Lewis (Linthwaite) took the chair and called upon Mr Arthur Shaw (Golcar), on whose initiative the meeting had been convened, to explain his scheme.

Mr Shaw said that in other parts of the country football leagues had been formed, and now cricket leagues were being considered. He had corresponded with the Football League, the Midland Counties Cricket League and the Hallamshire Cricket League (later disbanded) to obtain information and suggested rules.

He explained that he had spoken about his scheme to several local gentlemen who were interested in cricket. They had considered the proposals for a long time and then come out in favour. They were of the opinion that the clubs he had suggested should form the league were within a reasonably short distance of each other and that each possessed a good ground. Nothing they did, he hoped, would conflict with their loyalty to the Huddersfield and District Cricket Association of which they were all members.

Regarding the matches, he proposed that the home club should be responsible for taking a gate and paying all expenses. On the playing side, his idea was that each club should have one professional, if it thought fit to engage one, but no player, either amateur or professional, would be allowed to play for more than one club in the same year. Furthermore, no professional who was engaged with another club outside the League would be eligible to play with any club in the League. It was envisaged that there would be two points for a win and one for a draw. Matches were to be played on the basis of a voluntary declaration by the side batting first, rather than a division of the time available between the teams.

Mr Shaw was of the opinion that the League should consist of twelve clubs with the bottom four retiring but being eligible for re-election. He again stressed that they should remain faithful to the Huddersfield and District Cricket Association.

Prior to the next meeting, held on March 10, 1891, several anonymous letters had appeared in the local Press suggesting that not everyone approved the choice of clubs invited to the inaugural meeting. It was thought that the Kirkheaton club, in particular, should have been represented.

At the meeting on March 10, Slaithwaite proposed, and Cliffe End seconded, that "A Cricket League be formed for Huddersfield and District". It was then proposed by Armitage Bridge and seconded by Lascelles Hall that "a sub-committee be formed to select the clubs who shall form the League". After some discussion it was agreed that the League should consist of 10 clubs.

It was further resolved, on a proposal by Armitage Bridge, seconded by Holmfirth, that three representatives of the Press, viz, Mr E Woodhead (Huddersfield Examiner), Mr R Milnes (Huddersfield Chronicle) and a representative of the Weekly News, together with Mr Herbert Lee (Lockwood) and Mr Arthur Shaw, be a sub-committee to decide which clubs should form the League. On the face of it, it was an astute move to involve the Press at this stage. It will be noted that The Huddersfield Examiner have had a keen interest in the League from the very beginning.

Even so, The Examiner, although describing Arthur Shaw's scheme as a "happy thought" criticised what appeared to be happening. Mr Shaw had apparently envisaged that his scheme, when fully applied, would involve far more clubs and certainly more than one league. The Examiner suggested that any restriction would probably injure rather than help local cricket. They were of the opinion that if only 10 clubs were involved it would be seen to help those clubs to line their coffers without doing anything to

help cricket as a whole. They would, therefore, prefer to see a league of 30 clubs with some form of grading. The writer inferred that an incomplete or partial scheme may help a few clubs, but it must hinder others and give rise to much ill-feeling and injury to clubs left out.

On March 26, 1891 the Huddersfield and District Cricket League was officially launched with Mr Milnes and Mr T H Eagland taking the place of a representative from the Weekly News on the selection sub-committee. The merits of 14 clubs had been considered, a possible 15th, Dalton, having intimated that they had decided against joining the League. The Dalton decision was probably due to their loyalty to one of their benefactors, Mr Lumb, the donor of the Lumb Cup, the assumption being that clubs in membership of the League would no longer be entering this competition.

Interestingly enough, the clubs finally chosen were in fact the same 10 clubs who had been invited to the inaugural meeting. This appeared to vindicate the soundness of Mr Shaw's initial judgment, notwithstanding the criticisms which had been made.

Five of these original clubs – Golcar, Holmfirth, Lascelles Hall, Lockwood and Slaithwaite – have unbroken membership of the League to the present day. In all, 35 clubs have been members of the League at one time or another.

The Huddersfield United Cricket Club, original members of the League, was a club founded by staff at the Huddersfield Examiner, and the club officials played a prominent role in League administration.

In the Victorian era it was customary for new organisations to describe their aims and objects. The Huddersfield and District Cricket League followed the trend.

The first page of the handbooks in the 1890s announced: "The objects of this League shall be to promote the best interests of local cricket and club matches, consistent with loyal support to the Huddersfield and District Cricket Association and to County cricket.

- The promotion of a greater interest in the game.
- The fostering and development of amateur talent.
- The controlling of professionalism."

Once a definite break had been made with the Huddersfield and District Cricket Association in 1896, only the last three items were described as objects of the League.

As fixtures for the 1891 season had already been arranged inside the Cricket Association it was decided that the first League matches would be played in 1892.

FROM THE MAYOR OF KIRKLEES, CLR T P O'DONOVAN



As Mayor of Kirklees I welcome this unique opportunity to contribute to the Centenary celebrations of the Huddersfield Cricket League – a League which is an important part of the lifeblood of the Yorkshire Cricket scene.

For generations the Huddersfield League has been a consistent training base and provider of Yorkshire County cricketers. With its continued commitment to play only Yorkshire-born players, the County, unlike other competing counties, relies very heavily on its leagues for its success and team-building.

Over the years the Huddersfield League has consistently seen its players progress to County and even national honours – from Wilfred Rhodes, through to the likes of Ken Taylor and Chris Balderstone, and to the present day capped players, Richard Blakey and Stuart Fletcher.

Kirklees Council places a very high priority on the provision of leisure and recreation facilities in the pursuit of assisting talented sports teams and individuals to achieve excellence in their particular field. The authority will continue to do everything within its resources to aid the development of sports at all levels, and for all sections of our communities.

## THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

**D**uring the early years the League remained within the framework of the Huddersfield Cricket Association, its clubs played in the Lumb Cup competition and umpires for all matches were allocated by the Association.

Although, when the League began, it had fewer than 20 rules and bye-laws, it was not long before additions were being made. An early addition was a residential or business qualification rule for players.

A player had to have an actual bona fide residence or be in business (for not less than one month immediately preceding any league match) within five miles of the ground of the club for which he played. There were exceptions, but this basic rule, with periodic changes in the qualifying distance, continued to apply until just before the Second World War.

During the formative years many suggestions were made relating to the constitution of the League. The largest number of clubs in membership was 15 until 1920 when the League was enlarged to 20. In spite of the initial criticism, League matches were duly played in 1892. The administration, with Mr F Lewis (Linthwaite) as president and Mr Shaw as secretary-treasurer, coped well with the teething troubles.

Looking at the results and records for the first season, one gains the impression that scores were generally on the low side. Armitage Bridge and Slaithwaite were joint champions, yet they could muster only 1,833 and 1,314 runs respectively during the whole season. However, it must be taken into account that the hours of play were usually 1.30 pm to 7.00 pm and that sometimes matches finished at 6.00 pm. Also, as will be noted later, boundary hits could be worth only two runs.

With a certain number of games against non-League opposition continuing into 1892, League matches during that season were played spasmodically, and not always on the same date. The first ever League match, between Armitage Bridge and Lascelles Hall, took place on Easter Tuesday but had to be abandoned because of rain with the Armitage Bridge score standing at 46 for three.

The first game to be completed was played at Lascelles Hall the following Saturday, when the home team gained what was described in the Press as a "sensational victory" over a strong Lockwood side.

It took Lascelles Hall very little over an hour to make the required 114 runs, and one of the officiating umpires later said of the performance: "it was the most rapid hitting I have seen in a local match for a good many years". For the record, the details of what might fairly be called the League's inaugural match are reproduced below:

### LOCKWOOD

C A Dawson b Pollard .....	2
J Dawson b W Bates .....	11
D Lodge run out .....	18
F Dawson b W Bates .....	0
T Hallas run out .....	24
D Beaumont b J Ambler .....	23
G H Lee c and b W Bates .....	4
H Blakeley c Broadhead b W Bates .....	14
D Townend c H Bates b J Ambler .....	7
B Lee not out .....	4
G Lee b W Bates .....	1
Extras .....	4
Total	112

### LASCELLES HALL

Herbert Thewlis not out .....	58
C H Milnes b T Hallas .....	19
W Bates not out .....	28
Extras .....	9
Total	114

Another sensational match was played at Linthwaite on May 14 when, in reply to Golcar's 73, Linthwaite were all out for 10 (P Pullan six for 2 and T Hanson four for 4) in 39 balls. In that first season T E Ashton (Golcar) scored 525 runs and P Pullan (Golcar) took 86 wickets at 6.79.

At the annual meeting held on September 23, 1892 Mr Lewis, who had been president from the beginning (i.e. for two years), retired and Mr Arthur Shaw replaced him for the 1893 season. Mr H Johnson (Huddersfield) was appointed secretary-treasurer in place of Mr Shaw.

In 1893 the League had been increased to 12 clubs with the admission of Primrose Hill and Kirkheaton, but once again scoring appears to have been low. There was no record of a century being scored by any batsman.

The first complete set of fixtures played on one day was on May 6, 1893 when six games were played.

Armitage Bridge, joint champions in 1892, were sole champions on this occasion. When available for Kirkheaton, George Herbert Hirst made his presence felt.

One outstanding player was the professional at Golcar, P Pullan, an all-rounder from Grimsby of whom little had been heard previous to researching this book. In 1893 he made 689 runs for an average of 53.0, plus a bowling average of 10.3 with 75 wickets.

It would appear that the first century to be scored in the League was made by T H Ashton, of Cliffe End, versus Meltham on May 13, 1893.

It may also be worth mentioning that in 1893 W A Oldfield, of Armitage Bridge, played an innings of 236 in the Lumb Cup competition, a score that has never subsequently been equalled in any sort of cup-tie.

George Herbert Hirst had begun his professional career at Elland in 1890 but he was available to play for his village club, Kirkheaton, against Meltham Mills in 1893. Kirkheaton were disposed of for 61 but George Herbert then took over to oust the opposition for 47. His figures were eight for 18.

Scores in the early days were usually small as there were no six hits and on some grounds boundaries counted only as two or three. The Golcar total of 205 for 7 against Linthwaite on May 6, 1893 was considered most unusual. As Armitage Bridge also made a score of 250 off the Linthwaite attack a few days later it suggests the Linthwaite bowling was not too good that particular season.

At the annual meeting held on October 13, 1893 it was announced that the Cliffe End Club had been disbanded. They had apparently been required by their landlord to leave the ground and had been unable to find alternative accommodation. It is a sombre reflection on the state of affairs at the club that they were able to raise a team of only six men for the last match of the season.

Changes to the League's rules were also discussed at the meeting. It was reported that the meeting "separated at a late hour", but there was no enlightenment on what kept them so late.

The 1894 season was one of atrocious weather and at the closure only eight points separated the top 10 clubs in the league table. During the season Sam Malthouse, of Meltham Mills, scored what was probably his club's first century, and he also took 76 wickets in all matches.

On Whit Tuesday at Primrose Hill, Fred Dawson, bowling against Golcar, delivered 19.2 overs with 16 maidens and took six wickets for 5 runs. In the Monday game P Pullan took seven wickets for 15 runs.

On Holmfirth Feast Day, Holmfirth dismissed Lascelles Hall for 29 but were then skittled out themselves for only 23.

On August 23, 1894 the first century stand in the League was recorded. It was worth 118 runs and was made by H Stead and H Thewlis for the fourth wicket when playing for Meltham at Kirkheaton. Thewlis in this match went on to make what was then the highest individual score, i.e. 118. This was bettered on June 5, 1897 when T E Oldfield, of Armitage Bridge, made 131 against Honley.

Two days later Meltham were involved in the first tie in the League when playing Lockwood. The scores were 32 each. In that match J W Brook, of Meltham, took the first recorded hat-trick.

During the season there were reported to have been some “unseemly disturbances” aimed mostly at umpires. T’was ever thus!

The Examiner, commenting on a decline in the performances of the Slaithwaite team, gave as the reason “a sad absence of practice”. The writer at the time had no doubt that this was the true reason – probably as true then as it is today.

At the end of the 1894 season Huddersfield United were unable to agree terms with the landlord of their ground at Luck Lane, Marsh, and suffered the same fate as Cliffe End a year earlier by having to disband.

At the annual meeting held on October 5, 1894 Mr J H Preston (Meltham Mills) was elected president with Mr R Cadwell (Meltham) appointed secretary-treasurer for the 1895 season. From appointments made at the Huddersfield and District Cricket Association annual meeting held the same week, it could be seen that officials of the District League clubs were still prominent in the administration of the Association.

Lockwood fielded three teams in 1895, such was the new enthusiasm. During the season one team had points deducted for “disobeying umpires’ rulings”.

On June 4, 1895 Meltham Mills with 271 for 5, versus Linthwaite, had the then highest total. On the same date, playing for Meltham Mills against Armitage Bridge, C J Johnson scored 114 not out and S Malthouse 103 not out, but there is no evidence of them being part of a double century stand.

At the annual meeting held on October 19, 1895 Marsden were admitted to the League, making a total of 13 clubs. The president for 1896 was to be Mr B Langrick, of Armitage Bridge, and Mr Shaw took over again as secretary-treasurer.

At the following annual meeting held on October 3, 1896 the Dalton club were admitted to the League, and Mr T H Eagland (Slaithwaite) and Mr J Berry (Lockwood) were elected president and secretary-treasurer respectively. When rules were discussed there was an attempt made to prevent County players from taking part in League matches, but the proposal was lost on the casting vote of the chairman.

On October 17 the annual dinner was held at the Brown Cow Inn at Kirkheaton, the village team having won the championship for the second time. It was an excellent evening. Tributes were paid to George Herbert Hirst by Mr G Hey, of Kirkheaton, who was deputising for the League president at the function. He said that “George Herbert” had scored 1,000 runs and taken 100 wickets for the County champions, Yorkshire, and had played for both the champions of the West Riding League (presumably Huddersfield) and Kirkheaton, the champions of the District League.

He said that although he was a professional, everyone knew that the game was more important than any financial consideration for George Herbert Hirst. He also predicted that the young Wilfred Rhodes would have a great future. Mr Hirst, replying, said that he had “never had such a job in his life”. He spoke highly of Lord Hawke, saying what a help he was to young cricketers. He concluded by saying “It’s over”, which caused much merriment.

On April 4, 1897, as a further development of the League’s activities, it was decided that a second eleven competition be launched.

The first double century stand was on June 5, 1897 by T E Oldfield (131) and R Moorhouse (80) for Armitage Bridge against Honley. They made 205 runs in 100 minutes. Armitage Bridge totalled 269 for 2, and Honley 154 for 6.

In October 1897 Mr Arthur Shaw, who at the time was not in office, wrote a long letter to the Huddersfield Examiner saying he was concerned that the League had now grown too large, with the season stretching from April 17 to September 29. He was of the opinion that six matches too many were being played. He thought there were enough clubs in the area of a sufficiently high standard to enable the League to be extended into two sections with the addition of six clubs.

He suggested that two sections be formed, calling one the Holme Valley Division (comprising

The Lascelles Hall club was fined £10 and severely censured for making an illegal approach to a player in another League. The Rastrick club denied a rumour that it was about to join a Calderdale Premier League.

Mr H France (Broad Oak) retired from the League Council after many years' service for the League and as secretary of the Junior Leagues.

In 1979 the League won the White Rose competition, and Elland won all the League's major trophies.

The Huddersfield club made an objection related to having lost a ball at Dalton. The Dalton representative explained that the householder in whose garden the ball had landed made a practice of keeping all such balls until the end of the season. With a bit of luck Huddersfield would get their ball back in September!

In the 1970s Holmfirth, at times, looked unbeatable. Champions of Division "A" five times, four times winners of the Sykes Cup, was quite an achievement. Even more remarkable was the fact that another team, probably just as good, could have been selected, consisting of former Holmfirth juniors now playing with other clubs.

Elland, as usual, were always in contention, while Meltham, with Madan Lal, and later with Nirmal Nanan, had a good run. Kirkheaton won the Sykes Cup in 1973 and 1974.

In 1972 the Meltham club had to play every match except the last second eleven match on other fields. During the previous winter they had treated the square with a worm killer, followed by a sprinkling of soil. The worm killer caked under the soil, preventing the grass from germinating.

The club representative described it as being like a "paddy field". The first eleven played on the grounds of their opponents. The second eleven played on any ground available.

In 1971 Glyn Jones, of Kirkburton, took the last four Elland wickets in consecutive balls.

V Mylett (Elland) performed the hat-trick when playing for the League team against the Bassetlaw League. The match was in the League Cricket Conference Cup in 1974.

N Nanan (Meltham) won the League batting prize in 1977, 1978 and 1979.

On July 30, 1977 Allan Lamb, a young South African (later an England Test player) playing with Holmfirth hit 149 out of 228 for 3 against Elland at Holmfirth. This was eight runs short of the 157 made by the Kirkburton professional, S B Minhas, also against Elland, in 1959. At the time 157 was the highest individual score since the introduction of limited overs cricket.

Also, on July 2, 1977 Allan Lamb hit five sixes and a four in one over for Holmfirth against Lascelles Hall at Lascelles Hall. The unfortunate bowler was Stuart Greaves and the hits were 4, 6, 6, 6, 6. Lamb scored 95 in 70 minutes and 90 of his runs came in boundaries. Holmfirth, 150 all out, Lascelles Hall 144 for 9.

On July 7, 1979 Brian Collier (Rastrick) in a game against Primrose Hill equalled the 157 by S B Minhas but N Nanan (Meltham) had made 158 against Lascelles Hall in 1978. This was the new record score.

\* \* \* \* \*

**I**n 1980 Huddersfield played all their fixtures on the grounds of their opponents due to the termination of their tenancy at Fartown by the directors of the Huddersfield Cricket Athletic and Bowling Club.

For probably the first time the County club showed some direct interest in the activities of the League, when Raymond Illingworth, manager, attended a meeting at the Almondbury club to discuss matters of mutual interest and to increase the involvement of the League in County affairs.

In 1981 the League gave permission for clubs to enter a team in another league always on the understanding that it did not conflict in any way with the commitment of the club under Huddersfield Cricket League rules. The reason for the innovation was an application from the Paddock club to be allowed to enter a third team in the Association League.

The League has always had a keen interest in schools' cricket. Problems were arising for the Schools' Cricket Association due to a severe cut-back in many facilities. Clubs were asked to encourage

The annual meeting being nicely out of the way, the fun started. First of all Armitage Bridge, who had been one of the leading clubs, resigned from the League. No explanation was offered.

Following closely on this resignation a special meeting was called by the president. An alteration to rule had been passed at a poorly attended meeting, making it compulsory for a player acting as a professional for another club to get special permission to play for his own club in the League.

It was obvious that this was aimed particularly at Hirst and Rhodes, with Kirkheaton, and Haigh and Moorhouse, with Armitage Bridge, all of whom had professional contracts with the County club. It could, of course, explain why Armitage Bridge had left the League in such a mysterious manner. They had probably heard some rumours.

At this special meeting, Mr Hey, the president, who was from the Kirkheaton club, said he would certainly never have accepted the presidency if he had been aware that a rule of this description was in the offing. He then formally moved from the chair that the rule be rescinded.

Members of the committee aired their views. Some said it looked silly that so soon after raising the spectator admission fee to threepence it should be decided to prevent outstanding players from playing. Others confirmed that the best gates they took were when the teams they played included County players.

The Lascelles Hall representative said they had seven or eight players who went out as professionals to other areas. They all paid subscriptions to the club. If they had to tell them they were no longer wanted the club would lose their subscriptions and this they could not afford.

As the meeting went on, it became apparent that when the rule was changed members had voted on the basis of their own personal opinion and not on a club mandate. The president called for a vote and the Slaithwaite member seconded his proposition. As a result the new rule was rescinded, with Holmfirth, Lockwood, Golcar, Marsden and Meltham Mills voting in favour of its retention.

During this period, when harsh words were being said and letters written to the local Press, the Lockwood club suggested that the League should be disbanded as they thought it had served its purpose. The Dalton and Lascelles Hall clubs had called special meetings at which their members had voted strongly in favour of support for their professional members.

Season 1899 was a very ordinary year, with few performances worthy of special note being reported, except that the first all-10 wicket performance was recorded. J T Slater for Paddock (115) v Kirkheaton (38) on May 27 bowled 10 overs, with three maidens to take 10 for 13.

At the annual meeting Councillor Joe Berry (Lockwood) became president. Mr E Flint, who was responsible for the umpires' appointments, said he was pleased that it had been a most peaceful and satisfactory year. He was promptly given one guinea out of League funds. That takes a little bit of understanding.

Generally speaking, it did look as if the League was becoming more stable. There were no new applications to join the League, so the retiring clubs were re-elected.

Only two changes were made to the rules. A boundary must now count as four runs on every field. It seems a boundary had had different values on different fields in previous years. It was also decided that monthly meetings should be held from April to October and that a meeting could be called if requested by at least five clubs or at the discretion of the president or the secretary.

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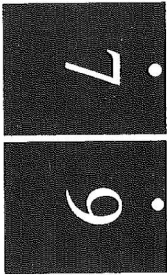
I'm sure that in the celebrations of your Centenary we will hear many tales of drama, humour, tragedy and achievement in the 100-year history of the League. These tales are not just part of the League, but belong very much to the history and development of Huddersfield and the surrounding area.

The contributions made in a spirit of friendly rivalry have drawn players and families together across the whole range of human experience, thereby enriching all our lives.

Well done, go on doing it and congratulations.

FREDERICK R STALLARD CBE DL  
President, Huddersfield Evening Cricket League

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*and still batting*

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On June 16, 1900 the Huddersfield club made an early application to join the League for the 1901 season. The secretary at Fartown was also secretary of the League. He made an eloquent speech on behalf of his club, stating that the demise of the West Riding League had left them in an awkward predicament. There was no objection to the club being accepted, in fact the opposite was the case as most delegates looked forward to a club possessing such facilities joining the League.

During the 1900 season there was a dispute at the Paddock v Golcar match. The Paddock club objected to the result because the umpires had lifted the stumps at twenty-nine and a half minutes past seven, instead of half past. At the subsequent inquiry one umpire said he didn't possess a watch and when questioned by the Paddock captain he said he thought his colleague would do the right thing.

The umpire who had a watch said the match had started before 3 pm anyway and he couldn't see what all the fuss was about. The Paddock captain claimed the umpire had said in the pavilion that if he had known Paddock required only four runs to win they would have had another over. Paddock lost their case but had their deposit of ten shillings returned, less three shillings and sixpence for the expenses of the umpires. Rough justice!

Dalton had an excellent season, being worthy champions, yet they had some unexpectedly and inexplicably poor performances in between some outstanding matches.

In September, yet another application was received to join the League when Armitage Bridge asked to be considered. They sent a deputation of three including Mr Langrick, a former League president, and a Mr Taylor who said he was the oldest club member. The deputation said they now realised they had been hasty in resigning over the professional dispute. Their annual gates when in the League were usually £16 or so, but of late they were only in the region of £3. This had placed the club in a difficult situation.

The president said he could envisage problems with two extra clubs (Huddersfield having already been accepted) and he asked Mr Shaw if he had further schemes in mind. Mr Shaw said he had not, so the matter was left for delegates to consult their club committees.

The Press were then treated to another "carnival" meeting when the request by Armitage Bridge to re-join the League was discussed. The president started the ball rolling by saying that if Armitage Bridge were admitted the League would have to be re-constituted.

A Mr Townend then moved a point of order saying the three bottom clubs should be asked to leave the room. The president said they should remain because the constitution of the League was being discussed. Mr Preston, of Meltham Mills, said he thought it was up to the chairman to decide. Several members thought it was time they proceeded with the business so the chairman gave the three clubs permission to stay.

The president then suggested that the voting should be by ballot. A representative said his club would not like that as they would not know how he had voted. Another said it would cause ill-feeling. Someone else said that it didn't matter so much because they had had plenty of that in the past! An open vote was eventually taken and the decision was in favour of the constitution remaining unchanged.

The Armitage Bridge application was then discussed. The president said it should be left to the next meeting. Mr Townend said it should not. Someone else said that if they admitted Armitage Bridge before the annual meeting they would break a League rule. Another member pointed out that they had already broken a rule by admitting Huddersfield. The three bottom clubs were asked to leave the room. A proposal was then made and carried that the League be as it was in 1900.

At this point the three clubs were asked to return. They came back and thanked the meeting. Everyone then went home. It was all good clean fun.

At the 1900 annual meeting Mr Borwell (Honley) was made president. There was a long debate related to the number of drawn games. Out of 312 matches played 158 resulted in a draw. It was generally accepted that the prescribed starting times were not adhered to as rigidly as they should be.

One delegate complained about the decision to allow four runs for all boundaries (as reported previously, on some fields it was only three). He said his club was concerned because more talent money was involved with the higher scores being made.

There was some good cricket in 1901. Huddersfield, in their first year, earned the championship by beating Kirkheaton at the end of the season when their opponents had Hirst and Rhodes in their team.

In September a letter appeared in *The Examiner* suggesting that professionalism was creeping into the League via the back door. The writer deplored the system of paying talent money. Some clubs were paying five shillings for a fifty while others offered fifteen shillings. He considered that this was a blatant attempt to poach players.

At the annual meeting Mr J C Broadbent, of Lascelles Hall, had the honour of being appointed president. He was a Nottinghamshire man and in his acceptance speech he said he was beginning to learn the hard way what cricket really meant in this area. Apparently he went to Lascelles Hall for practice and was told it was customary to place a florin on each wicket when batting. Any bowler knocking the coin off the stump then claimed the money. The professionals at Lascelles Hall reaped a rich harvest.

At the meeting the secretary said that in the forthcoming season the Factory Act would be law and mills would close at noon on a Saturday. He thought matches should start at 2.15 pm in an effort to reduce the number of drawn games, of which there had been 162 in 1901. There was, however, no support for his suggestion.

Perhaps, at this point, I should pause to take a look at what had occurred during the first 10 years of League cricket. The more one investigates the 1890's the more one appreciates what a debt we owe to the pioneers of league cricket in the Huddersfield area. We should be grateful to Arthur Shaw, whose idea it was. Messrs Johnson, Lewis, Flint, Preston, Hey and Langrick were all involved in the more difficult decisions in the early days. They provided such solid foundations that administrators who followed them have had a much easier life.

The problems they had to face are probably not fully recognised. Due to many circumstances they were not able to play to national rules. They had to make rules as they went on, sometimes week by week, but they were the architects of a firm base, a base still in use today.

Transport was a major problem. Imagine an umpire walking to Marsden from the other side of Huddersfield, probably eight miles away. He stood for the duration of the match and then had to walk home (usually an extra mile or two as the ale was fairly potent). He more than likely could not afford a watch. That in itself posed problems, particularly if his mate was in the same predicament.

Huddersfield being a nursery for the County team, and also the provider of club professionals all up and down the north of England, presented officials with having to find answers to difficult questions. What happened when these players were at home and available for selection in the village teams?

I could go on and on. It is obvious that our predecessors were dedicated men – and wise men. Looking back, some of their meetings do appear to have been hilarious, ours certainly will appear so in 2091.

In Press reports of the early meetings the words “Hear, hear”, “Applause”, “Polite clappings”, “Loud cheers”, and “Groans” were a regular feature. Happy, happy days.

By 1902 the giving of talent money was becoming quite a problem. The writer of the cricket column in the Huddersfield *Examiner* was critical of some aspects which he termed as “thinly veiled professionalism.”

Different clubs used different means to reward outstanding performances by their players. Some had a simple talent system, giving a modest reward, while others allowed collections in place of talent money, although the odd club permitted collections as well as talent money. The real criticisms were directed at those clubs who had very generous schemes. The writer suggested that this was tantamount to professionalism.

Over the years League officials had been of the opinion that players desirous of a move from their local club should have to attend a League meeting to request such a move. On this subject a problem arose with a player named Balmforth, who was born and lived in Slaithwaite, had learned his cricket at Linthwaite Hall but played for Linthwaite. Slaithwaite registered him and when Linthwaite heard rumours that he had been offered money they objected. What ensued was a real star chamber effort.

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It seemed that the team likely to win expected the match to go on after the normal finishing time to make up for time lost earlier. The umpires decided otherwise. Many letters appeared in the Press. Another instance of a situation which former committees had to resolve for our benefit in later years.

In the Golcar v Slaithwaite match on May 27, 1905, batting first, Slaithwaite made 134 runs. All seemed won and lost when Golcar were 104 for 2 but S Fletcher had a second spell with an analysis of 5.1 overs and seven wickets for 7 runs. His final figures being a match-winning seven for 48.

At the end of the season Golcar, Lascelles Hall and Paddock were level on 33 points. Nothing like this had previously occurred. A special meeting decided there should be a series of play-offs and who should play which professional.

The first game between Paddock and Lascelles Hall at Kirkburton must have been pretty awful. The Examiner reporter said he preferred to say "the worst team lost rather than the better team won".

Golcar became eventual champions. The presentation evening appears to have been quite a night. It was reported that the entertainment was of a high order. Miss A M Sykes, who was in excellent voice, sang "Dear Heart" and "A Dream of Home" for the first of which she was encored, and replied with "The Swallows". Mr F Whiteley sang "The Death of Nelson" and Mr W R Sykes sang "Two Little Boys and the Apples". A quartet then rendered "Here's Life and Health to England's Queen" and "A Catastrophe". A conjuring exhibition followed and then, at long last, the presentation.

It would be interesting to attend such a presentation in 1991.

At the annual meeting Mr Jas Schofield (Paddock) was elected president. New rules were proposed. It was agreed that a club could not register a professional after May 31. All clubs would be allowed to register the previous year's players and no player could transfer without providing a good reason for leaving his present club.

1906 was a remarkable year. No disputes and no troubles at all. At the annual meeting Mr H Johnson, of Huddersfield, took over as president. He also held the secretary-treasurer position. The presidency had now been held by representatives of all the clubs, a different official having been elected at every annual meeting since the League was established.

During 1907 bad language and disregard for the decisions given by umpires took up much time at League meetings. Not until the end, or near the end, of the season did more serious problems arise. There was a tie at the bottom of the League and a meeting decided that there should be no relegation to the Alliance and consequently no promotion. The Alliance, quite legitimately, were upset at this peculiar decision.

A deputation from the Alliance met a full League meeting to express their feelings. After a long debate it was resolved that the top club in the Alliance be admitted to the League, but the relegated team would be selected at the annual meeting.

The annual meeting was held on November 2, 1907 when a lengthy letter was read from the Alliance deploring the attitude of the League on the promotion and relegation issue. After a long discussion it was resolved that a club should be admitted to the League and that in 1908 two clubs be relegated to the Alliance from the League.

During the 1907 season complaints had been made that a regular feature at one club was that at one end of the wicket the surface had been bone dry, even dusty, while at the other end it had been sodden wet. One delegate suggested that even on the Pennines this was a little unusual.

So, in came another rule — "wickets shall not be watered or in any other way tampered with for two clear days preceding a match".

In 1908 a letter in the Press suggested that the introduction of League cricket had degraded the game. The writer said the teams with good professionals were obviously the most successful. These professionals were being paid by extra revenue over the bars. He therefore described their policies as "The Drinking System".

At one meeting during the season it was suggested that one action above all others was resulting in arguments on the field of play. Many umpires, it was said, insisted on giving a reason why they had made a

decision. It was thought they should be told to make a decision and then “shut up.”

In the early days the umpires really did have a hard time. There are various reports of them being mobbed, stoned all the way to the station, etc. One can only assume that they were in a difficult situation because in many instances rules had not been introduced to cover some of the incidents happening in the matches.

At the annual meeting the Kirkheaton representative successfully proposed a rule to end once and for all the promotion and relegation problem. It provided that the bottom club “must retire and the top club of the Alliance fill the vacancy”. This effectively restored the arrangement made in 1904 and left no room for argument.

1909 was the benefit year for Schofield Haigh, the Armitage Bridge, Yorkshire and England player. A goodly number of great cricket players, including Hirst and Rhodes, attended a meeting at the Cherry Tree Hotel to launch the fund. Mr Charles Sykes (later to be Sir Charles Sykes, donor of the Sykes Cup) was elected chairman. Many local businessmen were co-opted on to the committee.

On August 14, 1909 in the Dalton v Meltham match H Bates, for Dalton, made 141 runs with 31 fours. In those days there were no sixes. In 13 seasons from 1902 to 1914 Bates scored 22 centuries.

Problems arose this year with slow play. Players were having a knock before the match began and were not in any hurry to start, but if a tight finish seemed possible unpleasantness crept in with the poor old umpire being the target of abuse. Arthur Shaw, the instigator of the League, wrote a letter to the Press to say it was high time the League took drastic action.

At the end of the season the Thurstonland club were champions in the Alliance. They gained automatic promotion but not before there was a heated annual meeting, when Colne Valley clubs objected strongly to them being admitted, due chiefly to the inaccessibility of their field and lack of facilities. A proposal that the club be not accepted was, however, easily defeated.

\* \* \* \* \*

**A**pril 9 was the opening day of the 1910 season. Definite results were arrived at in all matches. For the second time in the League’s history the season ended with a triple tie at the top of the table. Golcar, Holmfirth and Slaithwaite had to play off with Golcar being the eventual winners.

H Wallace (Slaithwaite) took the first four wickets for no runs, versus Linthwaite Hall, on August 27, 1910.

A meeting was held on October 28 between the League and the Huddersfield Alliance to see if the various league competitions could be made more interesting. This really did stir up a hornet’s nest. After further discussions it was resolved by 21 votes to 7 that the two leagues should combine. A system would be evolved whereby a club could more or less select which other clubs they wished to play.

The Alliance having a majority of the clubs, it was obvious that the vote would favour the new set-up. In those days important issues such as this did not necessarily wait for an annual meeting or a special general meeting. This particular situation simmered for many weeks.

Once again the local Press was full of letters, mostly against the new scheme. One derisive writer said he could hardly wait to see his Sunday paper to find the result of the Huddersfield v Honley Wesleyan or the Golcar v Lepton Highlanders games. Another correspondent observed that if the League took out all their professionals and the Alliance claimed all the players who had transferred from their clubs, the overall standard would be very much the same.

It must be said that this issue was by far the most serious the League had encountered. A notification had been sent to The Examiner by Mr Arthur Shaw (who was held in high esteem in the cricket world). He said a sub-committee of the League and the Alliance had requested him to furnish details of the new scheme.

Briefly, it said the two leagues would combine as one body, the maximum number of matches to be played being 20 and the minimum 16. All League clubs would have to arrange not fewer than two matches with Alliance clubs. The top four clubs would then play off for the championship.

It was also intended to inaugurate a cup competition starting on the first Saturday in July.

As stated earlier, the League committee did not always wait for the annual meeting or call a special general meeting to discuss and decide issues which could upset the constitution of the League. A really serious situation developed when an article in *The Examiner* took it for granted that the League had disbanded. No official denial was made and there was no notification of an annual meeting, which usually took place in October or November.

In November, 1910 a meeting was convened by the Marsden club at the Harp Inn in an attempt to form a Colne Valley League. The following clubs were represented — Marsden, Slaithwaite, Linthwaite Hall, Linthwaite, Broad Oak, Paddock, Meltham, Golcar and Meltham Mills. No resolutions were passed but it was decided to ask the Huddersfield and District League to make alterations to its constitution.

Very little concerning these meetings can be found in the League minute books. Indeed, most of the information has had to be gleaned from Press reports. It seemed that the usual annual meeting had not been called because the officials themselves thought the League had ended.

Christmas, 1910 must have been a hectic time. On January 10, 1911 the League secretary wrote to his counterpart of the Alliance to say that the new scheme did not meet with the approval of his clubs so the League would continue "as per former rules".

Once this kerfuffle had settled down it was business as usual. The annual meeting was held, somewhat belatedly, on February 7, 1911 and Mr H Denton (Slaithwaite) was elected president. All other officials were chosen en bloc.

In correspondence there was a letter from the Alliance but it was quickly moved that it lay on the table. This is a pity, as it could have made interesting reading. The residential qualification for amateurs was again changed, this time to five miles. It was changed frequently. A new rule provided for a registration limit of 60 players, to be received by the secretary early in the year, with one shilling and sixpence having to be paid to register a player after the season had begun. This rule has stood the test of time and has remained virtually unchanged throughout the years.

The annual meeting of the League was held on a Saturday and a meeting of the Alliance took place the following Tuesday. The latter was a bitter meeting at which the League came in for some severe criticism. The criticism was justified as they had, after all, asked the Alliance to have discussions on the bringing together of the two leagues.

The following resolution was passed: "That the representatives of the late Alliance protest against the unfair and unsportsmanlike action of the League clubs in withdrawing from the position brought about entirely through the initiative of the League; that this meeting is of the opinion that, after the resolution passed at the combined meeting adopting the new scheme, the League had no power on their own authority to say that it is at an end without being put to the vote at a meeting of the new League. Also that this meeting further deprecates the action of the League in refusing to meet the whole members of the new body to explain their action."

The only defence the League could possibly have was that once again representatives had voted on a major issue without a mandate from their clubs. A sad result of all this was that promotion and relegation with the Alliance ceased.

At the annual meeting held on October 31, 1911 the Golcar club tried to get the League to bring in a rule to the effect that umpires should have to pass an examination. It was rejected, but the League did instruct clubs to send in names of persons who were qualified to stand.

A special dinner to celebrate the "coming of age" of the League had Mr George Herbert Hirst as the chief speaker. It was a delightful evening and as usual "George Herbert" made his point on the necessity of net practice.

In 1912 a much larger function was held as a complimentary dinner to Wilfred Rhodes on his successful Australian tour. Playing colleagues, Hirst, Haigh, Bates, Drake and Booth, were present, along with many noted administrators. The chairman said that the benefit fund for Rhodes had "panned out" better than expected.

The toast of the evening to "Our Guest" was made by Mr A Shaw, who as League secretary had been instrumental in bringing Rhodes to the notice of the county.

He recalled Rhodes's early career when he played for the Gala Club at Galashiels in 1896 and 1897. His records were 77 wickets at 6.98 runs and 93 wickets at 7.23 runs.

His first appearance for Yorkshire was in 1898 against the MCC. In this, his first first-class match, he secured six wickets for 63 runs. At Bath, later, he took thirteen wickets for 45 runs. His record that year was 142 wickets at 14 runs each, taken in 29 matches. In 1899, at Scarborough against the Australians, he finished the season by taking nine wickets for 24 runs.

In 1900 Yorkshire were unbeaten largely due to Rhodes and Haigh, the two bowlers taking exactly 400 wickets between them for the county, Rhodes's share being 240 at 12 runs each. In 1901, against Notts, he took six wickets for 4 runs when Notts were dismissed for just 13.

Mr Shaw continued with feat after feat to an appreciative audience. He recalled Rhodes's many successes with Hirst, his team-mate from Kirkheaton, successes never equalled by two men from the same small village club.

In responding, Mr Rhodes said he felt highly flattered and honoured. He could not find words to express his thanks.

It is understandable that in the early years the administrative side occupied much attention. The League had been finding its feet, so to speak.

The accomplishments of clubs in the first 20 years or so are difficult to assess as a statistical exercise. Armitage Bridge, Dalton, Kirkheaton and Lascelles Hall were all exceptionally strong clubs when they could select a team from their total membership. These clubs were usually decimated by the County and other clubs for whom many of their players were acting as professionals. It is recorded that it was not unusual for Lascelles Hall to have as many as 20 of their members engaged by clubs as professionals throughout the north of England.

Trophy-wise Huddersfield were the leading club with four championships. Armitage Bridge won the League twice and they also won the Lumb Cup in 1893 and 1895.

In July, 1904 Joshua Heap, of Holmfirth, accumulated 201 not out in the match versus Kirkheaton. This was the record score in the League before a time-limit was imposed on the team batting first. The previous highest score had been made by G Goulder, of Marsden, with 168.

The Crosland family, of Lascelles Hall, had a remarkable prize-winning run. In 1903 F G Crosland won the League batting prize. In 1904 his brother, R W, won the batting award and in the same season another brother, S W, won the bowling prize. R W Crosland won the batting prize again in 1905.

In 1908 and 1909 Herbert Thewlis, of Lascelles Hall, won the batting prize in successive years. His average of 75.44 in 1908 was the highest until 1981 when R Dexter (Elland) averaged 78.20.

\* \* \* \* \*

**A** match of great importance on April 23, 1911 was when Slaithwaite entertained Huddersfield, needing one point to become champions. The visitors were dismissed for 89. The home team were struggling at 40 for 6 in failing light and an appeal for bad light was upheld. The visiting spectators were not amused. One of them happened to be a porter at the Huddersfield railway station and in the following week when announcing Colne Valley trains he shouted "Longwood, Golcar, Bad Light and Marsden".

Slaithwaite won both first and second eleven championships in 1912.

Also, during the 1912 season, it was first discussed that teams should bat an equal number of overs. This had been brought about by the slow scoring.

Letters to the Press had suggested that something would have to be done to re-ignite the enthusiasm of the 1890's. At the annual meeting the overs scheme was discussed but gained no support. An alteration was made, however, in the hope that it would be a means of reviving interest. Previously rule

9 had said two points be awarded for a win and one point for a draw. This was changed to read one point for a win, losses and drawn games to be ignored.

The 1913 season was one of the quietest on record. The Press had for some time deplored the lack of interest in the game, both local and national. Presumably this was the reason for the change in the points awarded.

In 1913 not one ball was bowled in the first five matches.

In 1914 an attempt was made to reconcile the differences between the League and the Council. No headway was made, but a new league "The Huddersfield Central Cricket League" was established. It had some excellent officials and the first secretary was Mr J Wilson Senior, of Primrose Hill, who eventually took over as secretary-treasurer of the Huddersfield and District League.

Herbert Haigh, professional at Lockwood in 1914, scored 1,264 runs. This was before time limit cricket (i.e. before a time limit was imposed on the team batting first). It was unbeaten until Jeff Senior made 1,267 for Lascelles Hall in 1986.

A special meeting was held on March 15, 1915 when it was decided that the League should continue to function in spite of the severe war conditions. Elland applied to join the League but their application was rejected.

On March 27, 1914 a sub-committee had decided to recommend that in season 1915 clubs should play 22 matches each, to begin the third Saturday in April and finish the last Saturday in August. The top four clubs would then play off for the championship. This proved to be a good move, interest was keen to the end of the season when Lockwood came out the winners.

On January 18, 1916 a special meeting was called at which representatives were asked to consult their committees on the following points:

- (1) Due to war conditions should the League continue?
- (2) If it did, should there be any medals awarded?
- (3) Should professionals be engaged?
- (4) If professionals were engaged, what should be the conditions?

On February 1 the committee met again and decided to continue more or less as usual.

In the immediate pre-war years, just as in a similar period before the second world war, there were many talented players to provide some fine cricket. Arthur Schofield, of the Almondbury club, began his professional career with Kirkburton in 1911. He was one of the most prolific wicket takers ever to play in the League.

In 10 seasons he took 890 wickets, all 10 wickets on three occasions, v Lockwood on August 10, 1918, v Holmfirth on September 5, 1915 and v Lascelles Hall on June 1, 1915. The latter feat included the hat-trick. On two occasions he took four wickets in four balls and had seven hat-tricks to his name. In a match against Lascelles Hall in 1913 he took eight for 12. Schofield had a long career and took well over 1,000 wickets.

On Whit Monday, 1912 Schofield, for Kirkburton v Dalton, took one of his four wickets in four balls in his eight for 56. In the same match, E Booth (Dalton) took four for 3 including the hat-trick.

That Whitsuntide the hat-trick was performed three times at Kirkburton as E Armitage, of Lascelles Hall, did it on the Tuesday.

On August 9, 1913 H Wallace, of Slaithwaite, took seven for 8, versus Kirkheaton. In June, 1914 Herbert Haigh and David Roebuck, of Lockwood, put on 301 for the first wicket against Linthwaite. Haigh 149 not out and Roebuck 138 not out. In that season this pair scored nearly 2,000 runs for Lockwood.

W Ellis, of Linthwaite, hit 183 not out in Linthwaite's 326 for 3 against Lascelles Hall in 1915.

Schofield Haigh was eligible to play for Huddersfield against Slaithwaite in the 1916 League championship play-off although he had only played one match before the semi-final. He took seven for 29, all clean bowled, completely demoralising the Slaithwaite team who made only 44 and lost easily.

On March 23, 1916 Mr Arthur Shaw was found drowned in the River Colne following a tragic accident.

War conditions were by now really beginning to bite and a letter appeared in the Press asking if the League might consider the possibility of distributing available players to the various clubs in order to have more competitive matches. The writer said he could not see the sense of a team including two or three international players opposed to a team consisting of a few youngsters under military age and novices from the spectators.

Registration rules were changed to enable players to register as late as the Thursday before a game. The second eleven competition for 1916 was cancelled. The Honley club disbanded as nearly every player had volunteered for military service.

Due to the new Amusement Tax gate charges were increased from 3d to 4d, ladies and boys to be charged 1d including 1/2d tax.

Most of the Whitsuntide games this year were cancelled due to a shortage of players.

As there had been great difficulty in completing the fixture list it was resolved that the League positions be decided on a percentage basis to determine clubs for the play-offs. These games were in complete contrast to those in 1915; they were a disaster.

A very despondent annual meeting was held on October 31, 1916. Grave doubts were expressed regarding the possibility of having a competition in 1917. It was thought that there would be no registrations and no professionals, but a player would not be allowed to play with more than one club. Many new rules were contemplated to legislate for war conditions. Linthwaite Hall resigned from the League. They indicated that they intended to become a bowling club.

The 1917 season was designated for the game to be used as a form of relaxation for munition workers and similar types of employment. The Lancashire League was practically extinct but the Bradford League had taken on their discarded mantle to play spectacular cricket with expensive County professionals.

In June, 1917 Kirkburton played David Denton, the Yorkshire County player, against Linthwaite. He scored 82 not out in 'Burton's 136. Linthwaite were all out for 116 but they objected to Denton and won their case.

The championship was again decided by a play-off. It did seem unfair that Slaithwaite went through the season without losing a League match but lost the championship in the play-offs.

A meeting on January 29, 1918 decided that the League should continue in a similar way to the previous year. A plea was made to all sports people to help if only in a small way, to keep clubs functioning. There was a request from the Press for clubs to keep them informed of results and any matters of interest, as they had ample evidence that men in the forces looked forward to reading reports on League cricket.

In the Lascelles Hall v Kirkheaton match on August 10, 1918 Herbert Webster, of Lascelles Hall, took eight for 32 but A Douglas, of Kirkheaton, took seven for 8 and was the matchwinner.

The play-offs for the championship had to be abandoned due to a spell of bad weather. This was unfortunate as in the circumstances there had been some good games late in the season. As Linthwaite headed the League table the committee in their wisdom decided that they should be declared champions. Slaithwaite objected but to no avail.

The annual meeting held on November 19, 1918, shortly after the Armistice, was understandably a jovial affair. Only one resolution was passed, that being "That we revert to pre-war conditions as near as circumstances will allow."

A League meeting held on April 8, 1919 decided that the champions should again be decided by a play-off, and that the times for matches should be from 2.30 pm to 7.00 pm.

A letter was received from the Central League proposing a merger between the two leagues. It was turned down as it was thought that all clubs could not be accommodated. However, a further meeting of the League was called and this resulted in Almondbury, Armitage Bridge, Bradley Mills, Broad Oak, Friarmere, Meltham and Primrose Hill being admitted.

In 1919 a unique method of electing a president of the League was suggested by a correspondent in The Examiner. He thought the president of the club winning the Byrom Shield should become League president the following year. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the proposal failed to find any support.

It was decided that admission fees should be increased to 6d for men, 4d for ladies and 2d for boys.

Season 1919 produced a better standard of cricket. In the early part of the season there had been complaints that not enough planning for post-war cricket had taken place. Now that players were returning from the forces there was much criticism on the number of better players who were being lured into the Bradford League.

At the annual meeting in 1919 it was announced that Sir Charles Sykes M.P. had offered a cup to the League to be played for on a knock-out basis, with the proceeds to be donated to the Royal Infirmary. The cup was first played for in 1920, Friarmere being the winners.

\* \* \* \* \*

**T**he Colne Valley teams were the major performers in the years leading up to and including the Great War, Slaithwaite winning the championship three times and Linthwaite being in command of the position in 1917 and 1918. Huddersfield were also prominent during this period, however, and managed to take the title on two occasions. There was, of course, no cup competition.

In nineteen seasons for Huddersfield, W Bedford took 1,366 wickets for 15,440 runs. In the 1912 season as the Huddersfield professional he returned some remarkable performances. He completed the season with 814 runs at an average of 50.87 and took 108 wickets at 8.02 runs a piece.

Looking through the minute books for 1920 it is really startling to note the number of meetings in comparison to previous years. Previously, and during the war years, meetings appeared to be called when business warranted it. Directly after the war meetings were held frequently, sometimes every week.

It was interesting to note a special meeting on June 26, 1920 when Linthwaite objected to two Slaithwaite players as they alleged they lived outside the five mile limit. The Linthwaite representative brought a large ordnance map to the meeting. On behalf of the committee, representatives from Friarmere, Dalton and Linthwaite examined the map and reported that the two men in question were well within the business qualification provided for in Clause E of Rule 15.

The Sykes Cup final was a real eye-opener. Important games had usually brought gates of £20 or so. On this occasion, the first final between Friarmere and Almondbury, the gate was £102-17-0. Lady Sykes presented the cup to the Friarmere captain.

At the annual meeting held on December 11, 1920 an interesting new rule was accepted whereby the first round of the Sykes Cup should also be counted as a League fixture.

In 1921 G H Hirst (Kirkheaton president) was given permission by his club committee to buy the field on their behalf for £375.

There was great rejoicing up the valley in 1923. Linthwaite had taken the unusual step of engaging a professional from Somerset, a J W Case. The first match of the season was abandoned. The following Saturday, April 21, Linthwaite played at Almondbury. A highly respected local bowler, Tom Stringer, summarily dismissed Linthwaite for a miserable 19 runs. To cheer up his new colleagues, Case said "Never mind chaps (he was obviously a southerner), we shall do better in the second innings".

At a meeting held on August 2, 1921 it was decided that Fartown should always be the venue for the Sykes Cup Final.

In a match in 1921, Harry Swift, aged 17 years, playing for Linthwaite against Lockwood, when batting was struck above the temple by the first ball he received. He was medically attended but died the following morning.

The following year on July 15, 1922 another tragedy at the Slaithwaite v Holmfirth cup-tie. Players were knocking up before the match when a young boy, aged 13, was hit on the head by a ball. He died the same evening.

During 1921 an attempt was made for the League to have direct representation on the Committee of the Yorkshire County Cricket Club.

In the early 1920s the Central League again made approaches to become part of the League but the application was not entertained.

Also in the early 1920s it will be noticed that more committee work was being spent on administration and less on the rules of the game. In 1922 a meeting was called at Linthwaite to discuss the possibility of forming a Colne Valley League. One or two clubs up the valley had always been in favour. The suggestion was in the offing even as late as the 1940s.

Another item which appears regularly in the minute books is the ball question, i.e. price and quality. The League has always pursued a policy of bulk buying to enable them to dictate to some extent both quality and price.

A problem to rear its head was the question of irregular payments to players. It had been rumoured that some clubs were making expense payments for players attending practice nights. This was banned.

Due to the increase in the number of clubs in the League various suggestions had been made to change the fixture formulae. Clubs finally agreed to split the League into three groups, enabling each club to play eighteen matches. For the first time Whitsuntide matches were agreed and mutually arranged between clubs. The president said he hoped the League would now have a chance to settle down, as he thought too many changes were being made.

During this period it was revealed that some clubs had been excused fines although they had admitted playing ineligible players. It was resolved that in future anyone playing ineligible players would be fined no matter what the circumstances might be.

Two matters related to fixtures were that if any match had a delayed start due to inclement weather the time should not be made up at the end of the match, and that if two or more clubs tied for second place in the League they should play off for the right to challenge the leaders. This latter provision was however, rescinded the following year.

Also for the first time it was decided that four runs, in place of two, be given for a bye reaching the boundary.

The Huddersfield League has always been to the fore regarding junior cricket. It was reported that every club in the League, except Bradley Mills, allowed school matches to be played on their grounds. Bradley Mills had never been approached.

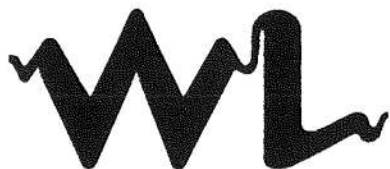
On May 17, 1922 F Webster for Slaithwaite v Golcar took seven for 12. In 1924 for Armitage Bridge v Honley H Booth took seven for 1. On August 29, 1925 F Webster for Slaithwaite v Dalton took eight for 3. On June 5, 1924 G Kay for Kirkburton took six for 2 versus Almondbury. Although he had no exceptional performances one of the class players at the time was T E Sheard of Almondbury.

In 1924 Slaithwaite became the first club to win the Sykes Cup and Paddock Shield in the same season.

Six years after the end of the First World War Entertainment Tax was removed from admission charges.

Although some kind of unofficial organisation had functioned in former years 1925 saw the official establishment of an Umpires' Association.

The League had settled down and the administration appeared to be running smoothly, but protests had been made that some clubs were acting with undue haste in cancelling matches on a Saturday morning.



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1925 was the year when Percy Holmes scored 315 runs at Lord's against Middlesex. A letter of congratulations was sent from the League.

The League again expanded when Elland and Thongsbridge were admitted in 1926. This was the year when it was decided to play Sykes Cup semi-finals on neutral grounds.

Once again Huddersfield was the leader when the Colne Valley and Kirkburton areas formed Junior Leagues.

On August 28, 1926 Lockwood played Cecil Parkin in a match after they had on two occasions been told by the League that he should not play. Parkin was a player who played for Yorkshire, although born in Durham. He followed his spell with Yorkshire by playing county cricket for Lancashire and also played for England. This provoked one of the most awful rows the League has ever had. The club was fined £50 but they refused to pay. After many meetings they eventually toed the line and the fine was given to the Huddersfield Royal Infirmary.

In 1927 it was agreed that a new size of ball be adopted. It was also decided that the League continue to purchase its own balls to conform with MCC rules. In fact, for many years, up to the Second World War the League had its balls specially stamped with its name on the case.

Domestic instructions were given when the League had printed, and forwarded to every club, cards saying "Batsmen must pass on the green". The League also told the clubs that it was now compulsory for all pavilions to have a well stocked "Ambulance Box."

In 1929 the League became founder members of the Yorkshire Cricket Federation with W H Bolt and J Wilson Senior being involved.

Friarmere in the twenties played the role usually associated with the Elland club in the eighties. Champions three times, thrice winners of the Sykes Cup including the first two years of the competition, the League and Cup double in 1921 and 1927 goes to show what a powerful club they were at this time.

But for Friarmere, Huddersfield would have been considered to be the major club. They also had a League and Cup double in 1922. Winners of the Sykes Cup again in 1923, they added the championship to their record in 1925 and 1928. League and Cup doubles were popular in the twenties as Kirkheaton also completed the feat in 1926.

During the 1921 season there was a bad spell of unemployment up the valley. The Slaithwaite Cricket Club put on meals for as many as 300 children at a time.

Mr J Wilson Senior, playing for Primrose Hill in a home game, dropped two catches. A customer in the Crimea watching the match through a window, ran out of the pub, picked up a refuse bin and left it in front of Mr Senior in the field.

Wright Jessop (Paddock), a renowned big hitter, used to smite the ball some enormous distances. It is said that he then ran to see how far the ball had travelled.

Norman Kaye, a professional with many local clubs, could bat, bowl and keep wicket – all above the average.

In a match at Kirkburton in 1927, E W King (Elland) hit 114 not out and then took six for 25. The Kirkburton club presented him with the match ball.

During this period, anyone performing a hat-trick could go to a gentlemen's outfitter (Masons, of King Street) and they would be given a bowler hat.

Workshop cricket was popular in the late 1920s and early 1930s. It was played on a knock-out principle with the matches being curtailed to usually 20 overs per team. The teams were from clubs, pubs, works teams, church teams, in fact from all walks of life. The matches were in the evenings. The players were mostly termed "novices." Indeed at one time it was called "novice cricket" until registered Saturday players were allowed to play, sometimes two or three in each team. The winners in some of these competitions received fairly expensive prizes.

When most popular, "Workshop Cricket" was a lucrative affair for cricket clubs. Another spin-off was the odd cricketer who was persuaded to take the game seriously.

\* \* \* \* \*

**O**n August 15, 1931 R Hollingworth for Honley, playing Lascelles Hall, had an analysis of 8.5 overs 7 maidens 3 runs 7 wickets.

About this time I was lucky. My uncle, Frank Hill of Kirkheaton, was a contemporary of George Herbert Hirst and Wilfred Rhodes. Father played against the great men. And so it came to pass that at an early age yours truly was taken to Headingley for the great George Herbert to assess his capabilities.

We travelled together. Nothing was said at Headingley. Nothing was said on the tram from Headingley to Leeds. On the train from Leeds to Huddersfield father lit his pipe, George Herbert did likewise. After a few puffs father said "Well George, what do you think of him?"

George Herbert replied, "Well Joseph, this lad of yours is chockfull of runs", and then with a twinkle in his eye he added "But I don't think many will come out of him".

So from that day your scribe changed from being an indifferent batsman to being an indifferent bowler!

After some years of relative quiet all hell was let loose in 1931 when the League opted for a time limit on the team batting first. For many years there had been rumblings of discontent when some clubs took up to 80% of the match time at the crease. I can just remember the diehards saying it would never be the same again. The team batting first was allowed two and a half hours and their opponents two and a quarter hours.

At the end of the 1932 season Friarmere resigned and Shepley took their place. Clubs were apparently in a kind of "let's have a change" mood. A rule was proposed that the League be extended by another two clubs followed by introducing two divisions. It was rejected, but a proposition for two leagues of 12 clubs was accepted and operated in 1932. At the same time the residential qualification rule for players was increased from five to seven miles.

Just to show they were human the League Council was again first in the field when they introduced white caps for the umpires.

In 1934 Mr E Flint (Dalton) retired after 36 years' service to the League, chiefly in relation to umpires' appointments.

A long-running dispute arose in 1934 when Slaithwaite made a special charge for an enclosure in a cup-tie against Golcar. Nothing like a local derby for clubs to get the bit between their teeth. They were told to share the whole of the gate with Golcar, which they refused to do. There were then several weeks of "you will", "we shall not" until eventually "they did."

On August 31, 1935 F Sykes for Slaithwaite v Lascelles Hall bowled 5.2 overs with two maidens and five wickets for 7 runs.

In 1936 a Benevolent Fund was launched via a series of Sunday concerts at the Ritz Cinema. Originally every player and the umpires at each match they were involved in paid one penny per game into the fund.

The Marsden pavilion was destroyed by fire on October 18, 1936. Superhuman efforts were made and an excellent replacement was built and opened the following year.

Four times in the Holmfirth innings on May 29, 1937, F Barlow of Paddock took two wickets with consecutive balls.

Always showing their Yorkshire stubbornness the clubs voted against the new lbw rule, the larger wickets and the eight ball over. Just to show there was no ill-feeling, however, they elected to accept the six hit.

The Umpires' Association disbanded in 1938. In the same year Mr Wilfred Rhodes was engaged to coach at the Winter Shed in Marsh.

In the 1939 season the clubs, feeling more amenable, agreed to introduce the eight ball over.

In 1940 Meltham Mills became a casualty of the war, and Hall Bower replaced them in the League.

The two division scheme was still played in war time, but each club missed playing two other clubs to curtail the season. It was also ruled that only one ball (not necessarily a new one) be used in each match, the ball to be supplied by the home club.

The 10 years before the second world war is generally recognised as being the time when the Huddersfield League was at its peak. There would have been no difficulty in selecting at least half a dozen players to walk straight into the County team.

Just as every young County cricketer dreamt of playing at Lord's, local players dreamt of playing at Fartown in a Sykes Cup final, in front of a large crowd. Only slightly second best was the thrill of playing at Elland or Slaithwaite.

At the turn of the century, Dalton, Kirkheaton and Lascelles Hall was the area for the best cricket. Now it was the Colne Valley. Broad Oak, three times winners of the Sykes Cup, with Paddock, Golcar and Slaithwaite always in contention for the championship.

These were indeed halcyon days for the Colne Valley. No wonder several attempts were made to form a Colne Valley League. It wasn't roses all the way, however. In 1938 Golcar and Paddock, both in Section A, won only one game each, Golcar only lost three but drew the other 18.

In 1935 Albert Sykes (Huddersfield) was the first batsman to score 1,000 runs in a season during time limit cricket. His figures were 1,042 runs, average 61.29.

In 1938 the Meltham Mills professional, Geoff Carter, had already taken 10 for 37 against Bradley Mills. He followed this with nine wickets in a derby match at Meltham. Playing Kirkheaton he had figures of nine for 55 when the last man arrived at the crease. The last man also happened to be the Yetton skipper. As he passed Carter, the bowler said "Bet thee a dollar I get thee". "Tha'd better pay up" said the batsman, "I'm declaring".

Kirkburton went the whole of the 1933 season without defeat in the League. They made what was then the record score of 355 for nine in time limit cricket against Almondbury.

H Hinchliffe, professional at Broad Oak in 1937, when bowling out J Thewlis of Thongsbridge, sent a bail to the boundary, a distance of 40 yards.

On September 10, 1938 Jack Crum (Armitage Bridge) threw a cricket ball over the Lockwood viaduct. Gordon Sample, of Rastrick, later also performed the feat. In August 1946 Crum threw a cricket ball 130 yards 2 feet.

Joe Brook, of Meltham, took 10 wickets for eight runs against Bradley Mills in August, 1938.

In each of the years 1935, 1939, 1940 and 1944, Tom Hirst took 50 wickets and scored 500 runs.



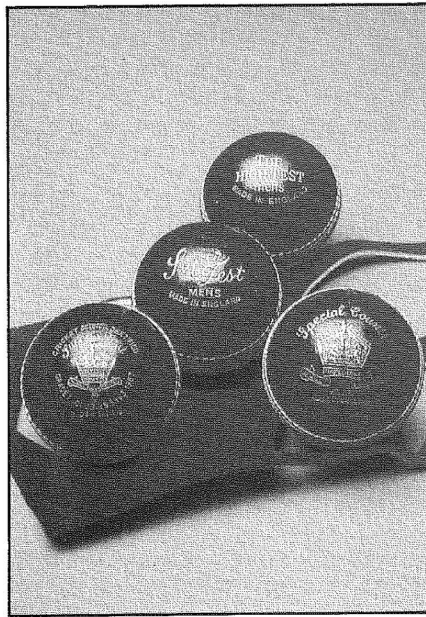
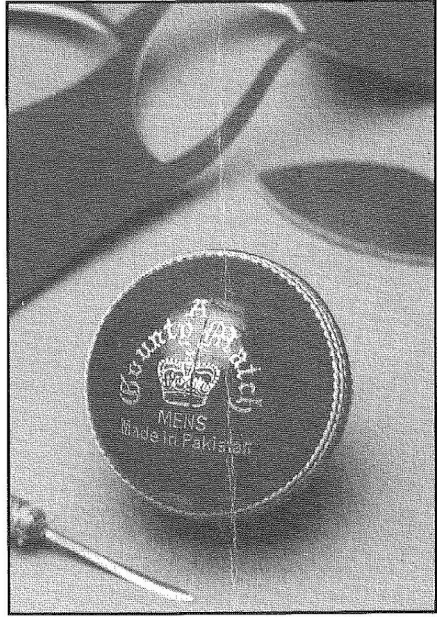
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Huddersfield means, to many of us who live south of Watford, its Choral Society and its cricket. Both have a deserved reputation for excellence.

The Huddersfield Cricket League is one of the oldest in the County and has been the nursery which produced George Hirst, Wilfred Rhodes, Schofield Haigh, Percy Holmes, F E Greenwood and Willie Watson, not to mention Richard Blakey and Stuart Fletcher.

Congratulations on your century and may you go from strength to strength.

HUGH GRIFFITHS  
President, MCC



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*A. Reader*  
ALFRED READER

## THE SECOND FIFTY YEARS

### PREFACE

The start of the second 50 years coincided with the end of a period when it was generally thought Huddersfield League cricket was at its best.

As a boy, I remember the 1926 General Strike and its aftermath. Day after day young men, especially those from mining areas, spent their time in cricket fields. It was a glorious summer, ideal for cricket, and a blessing in disguise for young men with no work and no money. The wickets and practice wickets were nigh perfect. Old cricketers passed on their knowledge and experiences to younger players.

Junior leagues were formed and everything in the garden, so to speak, was lovely. Many of these young players became the mature cricketers of the late 1930s.

Came the war in 1939 and, at the risk of being described as an old fogey, I must say that things have never been quite the same since. The cream of cricket talent went to war, some sadly never to return, others losing the best part of their cricketing days. Directly after the war, when players returned, the standard, which had obviously deteriorated during the war years, rose again. The League supplied a stream of players in the post-war years to play for the County.

Unfortunately, after three or four years it became apparent that other interests were beginning to attract young men who had previously placed cricket at the top of their priorities. There is no doubt that the motor car was the number one problem. In former years a trip to the coast was something of an event; now such outings were commonplace.

The League went through a difficult period. In the 1960s it was thought that second eleven fixtures might have to be reduced. Administrators were aware that junior cricket was as popular as ever, but once out of the juniors, and with far more money in their pockets than their predecessors, young players were leaving the game.

Good players were still available. We shall always have a nucleus of good players but clubs simply did not have the strength in depth as in former years.

In chronicling the first 50 years I have repeatedly remarked that we owe so much to the officials in the early days. Forming a League from a hotch-potch of clubs was a task to daunt the strongest of men. Some clubs in the formative years were exceptionally strong, e.g. Armitage Bridge, Dalton, Kirkheaton and Lascelles Hall. They provided professionals for clubs many miles from Huddersfield, but cricket generally was badly organised and these players were available for their parent clubs on many occasions. The problems arising are obvious.

Transport must have been horrendous compared to the present day. It is a remarkable fact that even in the early 1930s it was quite an event if a car was seen in a cricket field.

Legislation had to be introduced to cover incidents happening on and off the field of play. Careful thought leads one to appreciate what it must have been like for the poor old umpire in the early days. Sometimes the umpires were changed half way through an innings, and it was not unknown for a spectator to take over after an unsavoury incident.

In the first place the League had just 17 rules. One stated that in September the matches should start at 3 pm and finish at 6 pm. Any club failing to fulfil a fixture was summarily dismissed from the League. Rule 16 appeared to cover all eventualities. It said that any incident not covered by the rules would be dealt with by the committee.

By 1911 only one extra rule was included but eight bye-laws were added. Bye-laws were fashionable, so much so that by 1922 there were still only 21 rules but a large increase in bye-laws plus a special section for the Sykes Cup and Paddock Shield. Ten years later the rules were pretty much the same, but still more bye-laws were included with a similar trend throughout the thirties.

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## THE SECOND FIFTY YEARS

**D**ue to the uncertainty brought about by the war conditions, at the annual meeting held on November 30, 1940 it was agreed that there should be a further meeting in February, 1941 to decide if the League should continue as in former years. At the later meeting it was confirmed that cricket should be played.

At the outbreak of war the last three matches had been cancelled and the League tables frozen. This meant that there was no promotion or relegation. Although some people thought it a little unfair on clubs at the top of 'B' Division, the clubs concerned, to their credit, did not complain.

Full fixtures were arranged for 1940 and they were played but as the war progressed in seasons 1943, 1944, 1945 each club missed playing two other clubs in their section.

As many members of HM forces were being stationed in the district, registration rules were relaxed to enable clubs to register players up to the first post on the Saturday of a match.

Learie Constantine, the distinguished West Indian Test cricketer, was engaged as a deputy professional by Holmfirth in 1940.

The League council must have been feeling "more matey" because in 1941 they accepted the larger wickets and the new lbw rule. The two rulings had applied in the first class laws before the war but what was good enough for the counties was not necessarily good enough for the Huddersfield League. Probably the MCC should have asked for our opinions!

Lack of players due to the call-up, and much overtime work, plus civil defence commitments brought about the abandonment of the Paddock Shield competition in 1941.

Some striking performances were recorded in 1941. On July 19 Fred Haigh, playing for Marsden against Huddersfield, took all 10 wickets including a double hat-trick, yet he was still on the losing side; Huddersfield 148 Marsden 78.

Another Fred Haigh, this one of Dalton, took all 10 wickets for eleven runs, including a hat-trick. He dismissed every batsman himself. He clean bowled eight, caught and bowled one and had the other leg before. The match was Dalton v Thongsbridge on May 3.

Bob Blackburn, of Kirkburton, at the age of 57, won the League bowling prize in 1941. He took 91 wickets at an average of 7.43.

On April 26, 1941 the Lascelles Hall v Broad Oak match was abandoned after the Broad Oak innings because of the intense cold.

By 1942 difficulties due to war conditions were really beginning to bite, clubs were asked to supply lists of spare players to enable the League officials to allocate them to other clubs who were in dire straits. Travel, also, was not easy and clubs agreed that home clubs should supply all tackle except bats.

A war-time decision whereby only one ball was used in a match had been a thorny problem. This was now discontinued, and each club from 1942 had to provide its own ball, though it need not necessarily be a new one.

The odd club did begin to come across some situations which to them appeared to be insurmountable. Marsden, for instance, in 1942 said it was impossible for them to raise a second eleven. The League said they must — and they did.

On May 9 the Paddock captain (who happened to be Herbert Robinson, later to become League president) took his team off the field at Shepley as he thought the wicket was unfit for play. The umpires apparently were not unduly perturbed, but then, as Herbert said, they had not to face the bowling. He was severely censured by the League Council and there and then he was presented with a suggested epitaph by the Lascelles Hall representative which said:

*"Here lies the body of Herbert Rob,  
Against Shepley bowlers he forgot to bob.  
Where he's gone he'll need no sweaters,  
He had to go, to avoid his debtors."*

Again, in 1942, it was virtually impossible for clubs to field reasonable teams at Whitsuntide due primarily to war work. It was agreed that the Whit matches be postponed but that they should be played later at a date arranged mutually by the clubs.

On June 27, 1942 Fenton Brook for Almondbury scored 200 runs against Lockwood. He hit 13 sixes and 20 fours. This was the highest score in time limit cricket.

By this time a lot of normal standards had been relaxed. Sunday sport in the Huddersfield area, and certainly organised sport, had been unheard of before the war. Events of a sporting nature were creeping in with proceeds being donated to war charities. The Paddock club asked for a ruling on Sunday cricket but the League Council, after a long debate, again showed what wily old birds they were by telling Paddock to ask the Huddersfield Corporation the same question as they had no desire to become involved in politics.

A so-called "Ginger Group" of prominent cricketers and administrators livened up matters considerably by publicly accusing the League officials of allowing the League to stagnate. Their leader was no less a person than Herbert Robinson. A meeting was held between a deputation from the "Ginger Group" and the League Emergency Committee to discuss the problems.

One outcome was a decision to re-write the rules of the League, which had become disjointed over the years due to various additions and cancellations. Herbert Robinson and myself were given the job of rewriting the rules, with the local Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr Waldo Briggs, helping with the legal niceties.

After months of hard work the two scribes made their way to see Mr Briggs with the documents under their arms, (in similar manner to Moses many years before). Herbert, after allowing Mr Briggs ample time to peruse the new rules asked Mr Briggs what he thought about the old rules. "They were pretty awful weren't they?" was the reply.

"And what do you think about the new ones?" asked Herbert. "Well", answered Mr Briggs with a twinkle in his eye, "They don't appear to be much better". Back to the drawing board!

About this time there was another upsurge of enthusiasm for cricket in the Colne Valley. Yet again, meetings were held to discuss the formation of a Colne Valley League. On this occasion it very nearly became a reality.

In 1943 a Hall Bower player, Frank Lodge, met with a serious accident in a match at Rastrick on May 1. The outcome was that he eventually lost the sight of one eye.

Selecting teams was becoming a problem. In 1943 Lascelles Hall asked permission to play ladies in their second eleven but the application was turned down.

On the field of play Lockwood bowled out Kirkheaton for seven runs on April 24. In a Lascelles Hall match against Primrose Hill, L Haigh took four for 3 in 1.4 overs. Over the years he was a useful change bowler for the Hall.

On September 4, 1943 Holmfirth bettered the Lockwood performance when they dismissed Huddersfield at Fartown for six runs. The Holmfirth professional, Arthur Noble, took six wickets for 3 runs.

Just to show that not all the peculiar decisions were made in the early days of the League, in a 1943 first round Sykes Cup match Paddock played an ineligible man against Almondbury and the League Council decided that the match must be replayed.

It was obvious that Paddock should have been expelled from the competition, so in an attempt to gain some credibility the Council decided that the gate should be given to the Red Cross. Mind you, it was a good meeting with the usual proposals, amendments and riders to amendments, etc. All in all, an excellent evening's entertainment – the writer was there.

One of the outcomes of this incident was a letter to the League from Mr Francis Bedford, representative of the Almondbury club and a real club man of the old type. In his letter he suggested the

League was being run by a set of "old fogeys" and it was about time they resigned to let in some "new blood". At the next meeting he was suitably chastised. He apologised for one or two of his explicit remarks.

The new version of the League rules was available in 1944. The batting time for each team was reduced from two and a half hours to two hours and twenty minutes. As younger players were playing in the second elevens it was agreed that it was feasible to resume the Paddock Shield competition.

During the war the Yorkshire Cricket Federation had proved its worth. It was the vehicle by which each League had been allocated tackle. In 1944 our League was allowed 48 bats, 140 balls, nine pairs of pads, 27 pairs of batting gloves and three sets of bails. The Federation had also been held responsible for the distribution of petrol and clothing coupons for umpires' smocks, tea towels, etc.

1944 was the year of heavy flooding in the Holme Valley. The fields at Lockwood and Thongsbridge were particularly badly affected. These fields were unfit for play for several weeks.

Older members of the League Council, having long memories, remembered the criticism of the League in the years after the first world war. It was said that planning for post-war cricket had been non-existent. This time the League was not going to be found wanting so a "Post-war planning cricket committee" was elected.

An interesting occurrence was the broadcasting in 1944 of a Sykes Cup semi-final at Paddock between Kirkburton and Paddock.

When the League rules were being revised, Messrs Robinson and Lodge made a suggestion that an attempt be made to re-form the Umpires' Association. At the time the umpires had a nucleus of men who had served the League well for many years. In fact several of them met throughout the year at the old Field's Cafe in Westgate every Saturday morning to discuss cricket.

An Umpires' Association was formed and has gone from strength to strength. The Association was allowed representation at League meetings but without voting rights. In passing, it must be said that over the years the League has enjoyed some outstanding devotion to duty from the umpires. No League has better umpires than the Huddersfield League.

Tom Hirst playing for Thongsbridge against Shepley in 1944 made 128 not out, took three for 9 and held four catches.

For Slaithwaite v Kirkheaton, W Newton made 64 and took nine for 11 in 1944. Also in 1944 we had more remarkable individual performances. Once again Tom Hirst was in the news for Thongsbridge. Against Kirkheaton he scored a century and took six for 16. Fred Haigh for Elland versus Honley took eight for 10, including another hat-trick, and Fenton Brook for Marsden against Lockwood took eight for 8.

Clifford Walker, the Golcar professional, at Golcar on May 20, 1944 against Honley accomplished a hat-trick with three lbw victims.

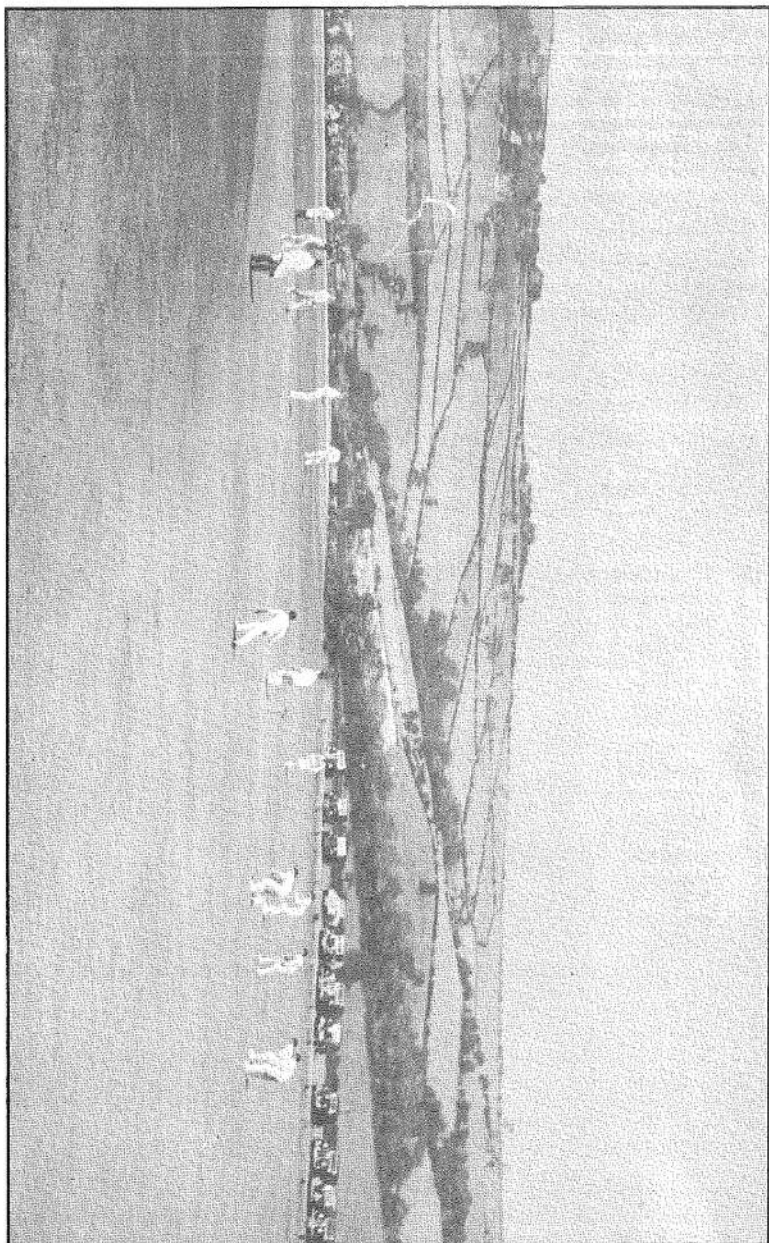
It was considered to be something of a disaster in 1944 when, owing to catering difficulties, the League had no choice but to cancel the annual dinner.

At the annual meeting that year one representative was accompanied by his dog. Unfortunately every time the president spoke the dog began to bark. Eventually a long-standing member suggested it was hardly proper to bring dogs to meetings.

The dog's owner (who had been unlucky in some of his propositions) said he thought there might be some more sensible decisions if everyone brought a dog and let the dogs do the voting.

Mr HB Atha, who had been involved in League affairs for many years and was a representative of the Lockwood club for 20 years resigned the position. A letter of thanks for his faithful service was sent to him.

As the League had been prominent in the running of the Yorkshire Cricket Federation it was thought the time was ripe to form an Area Cricket Council—a branch of the Federation. Approaches were made to neighbouring leagues.



LASCELLES HALL CRICKET GROUND - JUNE 5th 1946  
LASCELLES HALL v YORKSHIRE - YORKSHIRE FIELDING

The work-load attached to the position of League secretary was becoming more than one man could carry out in a part-time capacity. As the Umpires' Association had developed into a really efficient organisation it was decided to ask their officials if they would undertake the appointments for the umpires. This they agreed to do.

As the war progressed, outcrop coal was being worked in the surrounding districts. There was some alarm when it was announced that the Lascelles Hall cricket field was scheduled to be outcropped. The news provoked a nationwide outcry. The League offered help to the club. An appeal was set up to enable the club to purchase the field, thus leaving them in a better position to fight the scheme.

The appeal was a colossal success with money being sent from all over the world – especially from men in the services. The objective was achieved and the club became owners of the field in 1944.

During the war, the League had been instrumental in raising large sums of money for various charities. Many special matches had been arranged and every club had participated in one way or another in the fund-raising activities.

In 1945, for the first time, a bill had been sent to the League from the Borough Police to pay for the attendance of a policeman at the Sykes Cup Final. There was a long and heated discussion at the next League meeting. Members enquired who on earth had thought it necessary to have a policeman at a cricket match. It was left for the president to speak to the Chief Constable. Those were the days!

Early in 1946 Mr H Robinson, the League president, proposed a three division scheme. He hadn't done so for two or three years – we thought he was losing his touch! It fell by the wayside.

The first season after the war, the League was more or less back to normal. A full set of fixtures was played and the second and third rounds of the Sykes Cup were played in the evenings on a trial basis.

In the immediate post-war years Mr F Bedford, of Almondbury, had conjured up a bunch of youngsters who played some superlative cricket. Chockfull of confidence and youthful endeavour they took on and beat teams of mature players. Only Edric Leadbeater progressed to county and international fame but they were a glorious example of what a good junior policy can achieve.

In 1946, Tom Hirst, who began his career at Dalton and later served several clubs in the League as a professional, took his 1,000th wicket in the Huddersfield League. When he eventually retired his total bag was 1,057 wickets and 7,725 runs. He was one of the League's great all-rounders.

During 1946 Mr W Davidson completed 50 years' service as an umpire and Mr Arthur Beaumont of Thongsbridge retired from the Council after 21 years' service.

After a few expected upsets the League had settled down again so it was only to be expected that in 1947 Mr Robinson popped up again with his three division scheme. On this occasion he had a bit of support. Six clubs voted for and eighteen against.

In 1947 when Charlie Sutcliffe, of Kirkburton, hit a century for his club he was the third generation of his family to do so.

Life-styles were now changing, and more and more the continental Sunday was taking over. It was certainly more popular than the continental breakfast. Attempts were made to have organised Sunday cricket but the League would have none of it.

Going up-market, for the first time fixtures were made copyright of the League. I still don't know what it means!

After an incident in the 1948 Sykes Cup final the League was made responsible for the provision of the balls in the semi-final and final ties.

Another long-serving stalwart of the League, Mr Albert Wood of Golcar, retired from the Council after nigh on thirty years' service. He had been the key figure in launching the Benevolent Fund.

In the late 40s clubs found themselves having to make good many repairs left undone during the war years. Some faced immediate financial problems so the League made funds available at a low interest rate to clubs in temporary difficulties.

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The death was announced of Mr S Abbey, the donor of the Johnson and Senior Cups. Mr W Waddington (Kirkheaton) retired from the League Council after 22 years. He was one of the old characters.

A hornet's nest was disturbed when the chairman of the Holmfirth club described cricket clubs as "drinking dens." The president, secretary and treasurer of the League were all staunch teetotalers so it was a little bit like a red rag to a bull. Several of the League Council had been known to indulge in the odd tittle so they were not unduly concerned. The president jumped in with both feet but after a few apologies on both sides things reverted to normal.

Two outstanding performances in 1948 came from Ken Schofield for Huddersfield, who made 187 runs against Holmfirth on May 27, and George Harrison, of Almondbury, who took nine for 14 against Meltham.

In his 15-year spell at Broad Oak, Harry Hinchliffe took 1,151 wickets at an average of 11.43. He also scored several thousand runs from 1934 to 1948. He was one of the best and certainly one of the most popular players ever to grace the League.

In the Rastrick v Broad Oak match on June 19, 1948 a tight finish saw some confusion when the umpire at the bowler's end called over when only six of the eight balls had been bowled. In spite of a strong protest from the Rastrick club the Council had little choice but to let the result stand. The umpire in question was reprimanded.

In the 1940s, of the well-established clubs, Elland clearly were superior. Champions five times, runners up twice and Sykes Cup winners requires no explaining. They were undefeated in 1941 and 1946, and in 1947 won 18 of their 22 games. Huddersfield proved powerful competition. Paddock and Rastrick also proved to be strong contenders for the trophies. Paddock had 19 League wins in 1949 but this was in Section 'B'.

It was something of a shock when Hall Bower, replacing Meltham Mills in the League, gained promotion at the first time of asking. Relegated the following season, promoted yet again in the succeeding year, they then took the championship of Section 'A'.

Slaithwaite were Sykes Cup winners three times in four years.

Lascalles Hall and Almondbury, throughout the years, had never been looked upon as potential champions or Sykes Cup winners. In the late 1940s they asserted themselves, Almondbury with the nurturing of young talent via their juniors. The Lascalles Hall team was more mature with a particular strength in the batting line-up.

Bradley Mills had the wrong kind of record when in 1943 they went through the season without a victory.

It seems strange that in this period batsmen did not appear to score as many runs as in the 1980s. An individual total of 800 in a season was as rare as 1,500 plus today. In fact, during 1946 there were only four centuries scored, funnily enough they were all at Meltham. In the same year eight bowlers claimed the hat-trick.

As if to prove the point on low scoring, it was in 1943 when Huddersfield had the record low score of 6 after skittling Holmfirth for 30. Kirkheaton scored only 7 against Lockwood, Bradley Mills 18 against Honley and Dalton 19 versus Thongsbridge.

There is always an exception to this kind of occurrence and on May 25, 1940, Bradley Mills v Slaithwaite, J K Senior and S Beaumont added 150 runs in just over 30 minutes to win the match. In seven overs and two balls 136 runs were scored off the bat, Senior hit five sixes and 10 fours (82 not out) and Beaumont had five sixes and 13 fours (106 not out). Result, Slaithwaite 241 for 8 declared, Bradley Mills 245 for 2.

Johnny Wardle, of the Yorkshire County Club, played several games with Bradley Mills as a deputy professional in 1948. At the time he was having a bad spell with the County. When he became a Test player he said his spell in the Huddersfield League was the real start of his career.

In the 1949 season R Hollingworth, of Honley, batted 13 times, was not out 12 times, scored a total of 50 runs with a highest score of 15 not out, for an average of 50! Two of his innings were in the Sykes Cup competition so, much to the relief of the League officials, he did not qualify or he would have won the League batting prize.

For the 1950 season clubs decided to revert to the six ball over. The eight ball over had been a success time-wise, but leagues had discovered that on some occasions it had a part to play in young players not being bowled because an eight ball over did seem an awful long time if an experienced batsman set about an immature bowler.

The first tour to Ireland took place in 1951. Not much was said about the cricket but the social side of the trip was a great success. Unfortunately the following year the tour was a complete wash-out with no play being possible.

All the Junior Leagues came under the jurisdiction of the Senior League in 1952. The arrangement was not accepted without a great deal of controversy. The Kirkburton area, or 'C' Section, applied to join the Yorkshire Cricket Federation but they were not accepted. No wonder really, as the senior League had three or four members on the Federation executive committee.

The Huddersfield Education Committee suddenly showed interest in the game. They suggested a coaching scheme should be run in conjunction with some of the officers attached to the Physical Training department. This offer was not accepted, mainly due to the fact that the majority of the clubs had organised their own coaching systems.

The Huddersfield Cricket League has always had a bee in its bonnet relating to cricket balls. While other leagues appear to have accepted the regular price increases our lot have talked and talked, examined and examined and then talked and talked again about cricket balls. In the very early days, the League had its name stamped on balls and only balls with this distinctive identity could be used in the League.

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**I**n the 1950s still further extensive tests were carried out. Balls were dissected, they were placed in water, they were dried. Various grades of balls were used on different types of bats and at the end of the examination it was proved, not surprisingly, that the best value for money was the most expensive ball, i.e. the Grade A.

Time marches on, new materials and new methods of production may be used but over the years this League has decided time and time again that the Grade A ball is the cheapest in the long run. It was found that this ball could be used for the first and second elevens, the juniors and right down to net practice. The only way to reduce the cost is to bulk buy and that has been the League policy for many years.

Due to a bit of sharp practice the League issued warnings and asked clubs to include full Christian names in their registrations.

The Lascelles Hall representative caught a bit of a cold when, speaking to a Shepley dinner, he suggested the League should join the Yorkshire Council "lock, stock and barrel" to enable clubs to play teams such as Scarborough, York, Sheffield, etc.

At the following League meeting he was torn to pieces. What had not been reported was that he also said the League should keep its identity, split into three divisions of eight and play the extra fixtures inside the Council structure.

In 1950 eight matches were abandoned, four of which were in the first seven matches, because of inclement weather.

In the middle of the 1950s the headmasters of the Holme Valley Grammar and Colne Valley High Schools objected to pupils playing cricket in our Junior Leagues. The headmaster at the Colne Valley school relented but a strong letter of complaint was sent to the West Riding Education Committee concerning the attitude of the headmaster at the Holme Valley school who prevented his scholars playing league cricket. Eventually an agreement was reached and they were allowed to play, always on the understanding that the school came first. And so it should.

A memorable annual dinner was held on December 8, 1950. The chief guest speakers were Messrs D R Jardine and H Sutcliffe. Messrs G H Hirst and W Rhodes were also present.

The League was saddened in 1950 on hearing of the death of Sir Charles Sykes, the donor of the Sykes Cup and the Lady Sykes Candlesticks.

A new rule was introduced in 1951 whereby a team batting second, when its normal time had expired, could claim an extra half hour's play if it was within 30 runs of winning the match. Similarly, the fielding side could claim the extra half hour if it had taken seven wickets. However, a team winning the toss and asking its opponents to bat first could not claim the extra time.

A Flannel Dance was held at the Town Hall as part of the League's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. When volunteers were requested from the League Council to act as stewards at this function, the average age of the volunteers was in the region of 68 years. The Council, in its undoubted wisdom, decided that no admission would be allowed after 10.00 pm.

The Diamond Jubilee Celebration Dinner was held at the Drill Hall on January 18, 1952. Four hundred sat down for the meal. The speakers included Messrs F R Brown, H E Dollery, M Leyland, N W D Yardley and A A Thomson. Also present were Messrs G H Hirst, W Rhodes, L Hutton, A Hamer, C Walker and F Jakeman. Arnold Hamer, Clifford Walker and Freddy Jakeman, all products of the League, were at this time regularly scoring 1,000 runs per season for Derbyshire, Hampshire and Northamptonshire respectively.

It would be taken as a sign of the times when, in 1952, a coaching class was arranged with the County coach, Mr Arthur Mitchell, being engaged as the instructor to prospective coaches. In other words, the day had arrived when old, retired players were no longer prepared to carry out these duties.

It is becoming a little monotonous, but it must be reported that Mr H Robinson again proposed a three division formula. Again it failed.

During this period Bryan Shaw, a left arm medium fast bowler, was prominent, first for Lascelles Hall and later with Rastrick. Some encouraging bowling figures for the Yorkshire Colts suggested he could have made a career for himself in the game. He decided to continue in League cricket and has been a good servant to local cricket.

Modern day cricketers think a yarn is being spun when old-timers speak about the speed of the game compared with 50 years or so ago. Serious complaints were being made in the 1950s and umpires were asked to enforce strictly the rule whereby batsmen cross on the field of play. The problem is even worse today and it is a very serious problem.

Another innovation by the League was to include umpires' appointments for a full year in the handbook. With the continued increase in postal charges this produced a considerable saving.

Rules introduced at the 1953 annual meeting were that clubs were compelled to use Grade A balls in all matches. There had been instances when a mysterious Mr A N Other had presented a club with a dozen balls and the club felt obliged to use them. Mr A N Other never seemed to cough up Grade A balls.

Another successful League dinner was the function when Messrs Neville Cardus and A A Thomson were the chief guest speakers. A A Thomson had a great love for Huddersfield cricket. Indeed, on many occasions he sat in the Lascelles Hall cricket field, looked across at the Kirkheaton cricket field and said it was his idea of heaven. Not to be outdone, in the same year – 1953 – the Umpires' Association had the Bedser twins at their annual dinner.

It was a season of cricketers with furrowed brows. The reason? There was a strong rumour that the government was going to place a tax on talent money collections – and benefits.

1954 was the year when the League contributed some silver plate to the collection of the Huddersfield Borough Council in the Town Hall. This was in memory of the "Great Triumvirate", Hirst, Rhodes and Haigh.

During the 1954 season there was a match at Fartown against a South Australian touring team. The match was followed by a dance in conjunction with the fixture. The match and the dance were financial

disasters. The League secretary, on one of the rare occasions when he made a public statement, suggested that the Huddersfield public was interested only in competitive cricket.

A new rule caused much ill-feeling. Clubs voted that capped County players should no longer be considered eligible to play for their original clubs even if they received no remuneration for their services. On two occasions County players had played in matches at the end of the season and been a party to securing valuable points to avoid relegation. There were valid arguments both for and against the ruling.

The instruction course for coaches was beginning to pay dividends. Coaches were now taking an active part in organised coaching. Incidentally, not everyone agreed with the coaching schemes. Some of the older supporters were rather vitriolic. They claimed that we would have a stereotype player without any natural flamboyancy.

At the first meeting after the start of the 1955 season the secretary reported that 30 unregistered players were in action in the opening fixtures.

The Lascelles Hall v Broad Oak match on July 9, 1955 resulted in heated discussions at the next League meeting. The secretary reported that he had received a telephone call on the Saturday night from a gentleman who said that the match had finished as a tie, but that it had been a "twist". At an inquiry it was reported that, as two points were given for a tie and only one for a draw, the two captains had connived at fixing a tie to obtain an extra point each.

The Lascelles Hall captain asked how he could possibly have connived at ensuring a tie when he had been in the changing room after his dismissal early in the innings. The Broad Oak captain denied the accusation but the umpires appeared to be a little bit uneasy about the whole matter. The decision was that each side be awarded one point and that Broad Oak be fined £3.

At the end of the 1955 season Mr J W Senior retired as secretary. He had held the position for 35 years, was treasurer for 25 years and for 22 years the umpires' appointment secretary. He was also a founder-member and the League's representative on the Yorkshire Cricket Federation, and was for many years an active worker for schools cricket.

When umpires' appointment secretary he sent out 48 postcards each week to umpires, all hand-written. League Council and sub-committee members received a notification by post for every meeting. He was truly a remarkable man.

The Hirst-Rhodes Memorial was erected at Fartown in 1955. Perhaps it may be of interest to explain the history of this monument.

We all know of Hirst and Rhodes. In the 1950s, the president of the Huddersfield club was Mr H V Wood, a businessman who was renowned for his generosity to sporting organisations. He and his friends at Fartown hit on the idea of building a lasting memorial to the two famous cricketers. A committee was formed which had on it representation from the League. An appeal was set up but sadly it was not as successful as had been expected. The ever-generous Mr Wood made available the money necessary to complete the job but unfortunately there was no balance and consequently nothing in reserve for maintenance.

It is appalling that a structure of this description should be vandalised to the extent that it has been.

Normal maintenance on the clock was carried out and paid for by the Huddersfield club but once the damage grew to such an extent that major and very expensive work was necessary, the League became involved. Estimates were obtained but it was thought that to have the clock replaced was inviting even more attacks.

An attempt was made to have the whole structure moved to Kirkheaton where many thought it should have been in the first place. This was at a time when things were not going too well at Fartown and permission was not given for the move.

When the late Mr Tony Ramsden, who had been elected as the County representative for Huddersfield, showed some interest, an appeal was launched in an attempt to raise enough money to rebuild the monument. The appeal was given a good send-off with a generous donation from the widow of the late Johnny Hunter, the popular Australian RL full-back at Fartown in happier days.

The appeal was a dismal failure and eventually, after Mr Ramsden died so tragically, all the monies were returned to the contributors. At the time of writing the memorial remains derelict.

The Huddersfield League had been involved in the development of the Hospitals Broadcast Association from its inception. Commentaries from Fartown for both rugby and cricket were a feature. Also they had a half-hour spot from the headquarters every Tuesday evening in the summer months.

In 1956 a new version of time limit cricket was introduced when it was decided to play 45 overs per side in League matches. An extra four overs replaced the extra half-hour in League games. There had been criticism of the time rule as some teams were bowling as many as 46 overs while others managed only 35.

The president was congratulated on being invited to broadcast an "Appeal for unmarried mothers" by the BBC. The president was quick to reply that there was no truth in the rumour that "he was keeping them going".

This year, 1956, was the time when the Central and Association Leagues were invited to join the Sykes Cup Competition. The decision was not made without some argument. It was another idea from the president and though every club agreed with the suggestion, some members of the League Council had a feeling it was Herbert's way of achieving a three division scheme via the back door.

The League Council was having a busy phase. They worked out a good agreement on the purchase of cricket balls in bulk when there was a feeling a "cricket ball price ring" was in force. There was also a suggestion that a season without professionals would be interesting.

June 9, 1956 was a day of "family matches". The home club wrote to invite their opponents to bring their families, i.e. wives and children, to be guests of the home team.

During the holiday period the Paddock club found themselves unable to select a second eleven. It has been mentioned that the League president had a knack of jumping in with both feet, and on this occasion he promptly formed a team of friends, mostly old crocks, to fulfil the fixture. At the next League meeting, capital punishment was nearly restored, but he got off with a severe caution and the Paddock club had to pay 1/6d for every unregistered player who took part in the match.

The extra time allowed for teams to make an attempt to win a game was discontinued. It had been four overs and previous to that it was known as "the extra half hour". This was in 1957 and in the same year Slaithwaite Brass Band was engaged to play at the Sykes Cup Final.

Not everyone applauded the new points scheme introduced in 1958. Three points were now awarded for a complete victory (i.e. the defeated side having lost all their wickets), two points for an incomplete victory and one point for draw due to inclement weather. This change was considered revolutionary at the time. In past years there had not been an incomplete victory award.

Mr S Livesey (Linthwaite) completed 50 years' service as a club official and Mr H Booth (Holmfirth) completed 50 years as a scorer.

Due to changes in the Rating and Valuation systems some clubs decided to take a collection in place of a "gate" in 1958.

A new bye-law was approved whereby the home club should be responsible to organise a search for lost balls.

The Area District Council was established in 1959, something the League had desired for many years.

At the annual meeting it was re-affirmed that Readers' Grade A balls should be the standard ball to be used in all League matches. The League discontinued the policy of supplying balls for the Sykes Cup semi-finals and final.

Meltham and Meltham Mills Brass Band played at the Sykes Cup final.

For the first time since they were first awarded, the Lady Sykes Candlesticks had recipients from the same club, i.e. C Horsfall and J T Barron, from Hall Bower.

The 1950s saw the disintegration of the young Almondbury side so carefully brought to be a power by Francis Bedford in the late forties. This young team won the championship in 1950 and 1951, was fourth in 1952 but then the team broke up.

Elland won the Sykes Cup on three occasions and the championship once. Huddersfield for the second time had a League and Cup double in 1958.

Bradley Mills had a rare moment of glory when they were runners-up in the League. No team ran riot throughout the decade.

Ken Taylor at 15 years of age was a regular opening bat for Primrose Hill. His average for 1950 was 42.00. As a bowler, on May 9, 1949 he took eight wickets for 37 runs against Shepley while still a pupil at Stile Common School. He later played for Yorkshire and England. He also played soccer for Huddersfield Town.

In 1951 Bob Rae (Huddersfield) bowled 14 consecutive overs (89 successive balls) without conceding a run.

In the Marsden v Dalton match in 1953 sixteen wickets fell for 14 runs. The last six Marsden wickets fell for 2 runs and Dalton were all out for 12.

A Exley (Hall Bower) took all ten wickets twice in 1956.

Although Linthwaite did not score 100 in any Sykes Cup game they still won the trophy in 1956.

In 1955 J Hulme (Bradley Mills) took a hat-trick with his first three balls of the innings against Almondbury.

Other notable feats at this time were:-

In 1950, P Mellor, for Armitage Bridge against Dalton, took six for 11 and took four wickets in four balls, in a Sykes Cup first round tie.

On August 17, 1955 Linthwaite put out Paddock for 7.

In June, 1957 L Haigh (Lascelles Hall) took three for 1 in five balls against Almondbury.

On August 23, 1958, against Almondbury, B Dodgson, of Lascelles Hall, had the following analysis – 9.3 overs, 6 maidens, 6 runs and six wickets.

On May 2 1959 Lascelles Hall dismissed Armitage Bridge for 11 runs, the innings lasting 20.4 overs.

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**A**s some dissatisfaction had been expressed on the awarding of points in League matches, four points in place of three points were given for a complete victory in 1960. At the same meeting the clubs decided to play 45 overs per innings in the Sykes Cup.

Mr R Stewart, of Shepley, gave a trophy for distinguished service by an umpire. This is an annual award. The recipient must have given long service to his Association and the League.

Tragedy struck the Kirkburton club when their pavilion was completely destroyed by fire. The League president (Mr H Robinson) organised an old omnibus for use as a pavilion and several clubs gave or loaned the club some equipment. The League also provided an interest-free loan. A new pavilion was built, which is a credit to the club and the working members.

Primrose Hill complained that in a recent match at Paddock four of their balls were lost in the railway cutting. The chairman said that in no circumstances could they insist on anyone going down the railway cutting as it was both dangerous and illegal. He suggested that Paddock should study Rule 62, section xvii, and that they write to British Rail. The Primrose Hill representative was not amused.