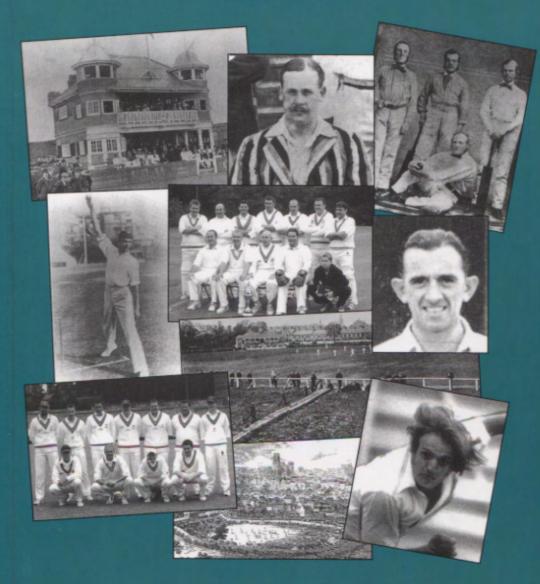
CREAM TEAS AND NUTTY SLACK

A History of Club Cricket in County Durham (1751-2002)



JACK CHAPMAN

A HISTORY OF CLUB CRICKET IN COUNTY DURHAM

Chapter One.....The eighteenth century

In the beginning

The first recorded cricket match in Durham was at Raby Castle in 1751. It was five years after the Duke of Cumberland and bayoneted Redcoats slogged through the county's mud on their way to the Battle of Culloden. Defoe's account of his travels through Great Britain had not long been published. Defoe found nothing remarkable in Darlington or Chester-le-Street except "dirt" but was impressed by Lumley Castle and acknowledged Lumley coal the best in the country. He thought Durham a "compact neatly contriv'd city" where clergy lived "in all the splendour and magnificence imaginable". Durham cathedral and Saint Cuthbert's remains were a shrine for pilgrims but the city was a vulnerable haven riding on a cut-throat sea. The poor lived in slums; the populace was prey to vagabonds, footpads and highwaymen. The Bishop of Durham bewailed "the scorn of religion". His flock scratched a living on the land or burrowed beneath it for lead and coal; their leisure centred upon drinking and blood sports like cock-fighting.

In 1742 John Wesley came across a village "inhabited by colliers only, and as such had been always in the first rank for savage ignorance, and wickedness of every kind. Their grand assembly used to be on the Lord's Day on which men, women and children met together to dance, fight, curse, and swear, and play chuck-ball, span farthing, or whatever came to hand." Somehow, sometime the game of cricket took root in these parts.

The first known match was played in an area consistent with cricket's rural origins. Stately surrounds, of course, but in a valley of meadow and pasture on the edge of what David Bellamy called England's Last Wilderness; a rugged tract of moorland and haven for merlin and rare blue gentian.

We hear that last Week a Cricket Match was played twice over by eleven Gentlemen on each side for a considerable Wager; his Grace the Duke of Cleveland espousing one Party, and the Right Honourable the Earl of Northumberland the other. The first Time it was played at Stanwick, the Earl's seat in Yorkshire, and the last at Raby Castle, the seat of the Honourable Henry Vane, in the County of Durham: at both which places the Earl of Northumberland's Party beat that of his Grace a great Number of Notches.

(Newcastle Journal, 10 August 1751)

One doubts if Duke or Earl took part. The Duke, 53, liked horse-racing and cock-fighting; the younger Earl was more famed as an archer who won the coveted Scorton Arrow in 1745. It is natural to assume their aim was simply to win the match and claim the wager. There may, however, have been deeper reasons; motives whereby the nobility publicly asserted political and social authority. "The strategies they employed were designed to portray themselves and their families - through sporting events, political occasions and great entertainments - as regional and national leaders who nevertheless shared the habits and assumptions of their country neighbours".

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¹ David Underdown: Start of Play (Cricket and Culture in Eighteenth Century England)

Aristocratic patrons already staged matches in the south, a fact that suggests cricket was 'imported' into Durham. Northern nobility spent time in the south. London season over they returned to their estates where their real pleasures lay. Did one carry a trunk of equipment and news of 'the noble game'? Henry Vane's father was an intimate of Frederick, Prince of Wales and Surrey patron, whose death is attributed to complications caused by a blow from a cricket ball. Indeed the Prince could have been at the forefront of Henry's mind for the Raby match followed hard upon the Prince's funeral. Their relationship prompts thoughts that cricket came to Durham via this Royal connection.

A romantic notion. But unlikely. There was already cricket in Yorkshire. The River Tees that divides the two counties was no unbridgeable barrier. Durham men met Yorkshiremen at markets and fairs where knowledge of cricket could be handed on. Southern patrons assembled strong teams to win wagers by employing 'crack' cricketers on their estates and hiring useful local men. Their northern counterparts may have been no different. Stanwick was three miles south of the Tees, Raby four miles to the north. The venues are close enough for some who played at Raby to be Durham men.

The match wager was common practice. The first unified Laws of Cricket in 1744 included a section on betting. Gambling was virtually a national weakness of Georgians. Horse-racing provided rich opportunities. Newcastle Races were a great social event on the sporting calendar. Those in June 1751 were billed as "the greatest Meeting of the Nobility and Gentry at our races that has been known". Northumberland, Cleveland and Henry Vane travelled from London to attend as usual. The Races and evening assemblies formed only a part of a social marathon. The Earl's entourage moved from stately home to stately home, three days here, three days there, "at which all places they were magnificently entertained". The cricket matches were no doubt part of the entertainment and further excuse to strike wagers after the wild gambling of Race Week.

The report contains few details but we can piece out the imperfections with the thoughts of John Nyren and James Pycroft, two indispensable historians of early cricket. Players wore wigs, white shirts, knee-length nankeen breeches and buckled shoes; umpires in frock-coat and beaver hat. The Earl's Party won by "a great Number of Notches" so there were no handwritten scores. To keep score in those days they relied upon "a trusty yeoman to cut notches with his bread and bacon knife in an ashen stick." Each wicket was twenty-two yards apart and consisted of two foot-high stumps, two feet apart and surmounted by a bail. Bats weighing as much as four pounds looked more like a club with a gradual curve at the toe. Balls weighed little less than those in use today. Bowling was underarm; fast, straight and along the ground. Some wore two pairs of stockings, the second pair rolled down to the ankles to protect against painful raps from the ball. Many a shin was so bloodied and bruised in the first innings that a batsman required a runner in the second.

² Rev James Pycroft : *The Cricket Field*

We do not know if today's level pitch, guarded by lordly trees beneath a magnificent castle backdrop, was site of the match. Raby's grounds at the time were undulating. So were cricket fields. However we do know that during Henry Vane's residence Raby "presented a warmer picture of ancient hospitality than ever witnessed, or might perhaps ever see again". Durham's cricket was cradled in comfort.

No stakes are mentioned in the second known match at Gateshead at the extreme north of the county. It, too, was staged just days after Lord Ravensworth and others travelled north for Newcastle Races. Ravensworth Castle was three miles from the Redheugh district of Gateshead.

Last week the great Cricket Match that has been for some Time depending, between the Gentlemen of Gateshead and those of Newcastle was played on the Haughs³ nigh the Redheugh, and won with great ease by the former.

(Newcastle Journal, 23 June 1753)

A third match is recorded on the Durham-Yorkshire border in 1773:

On Thursday, August 19th, was determined at Piercebridge the great Cricket match for 25 guineas a side, the gentlemen of West Auckland against the gentlemen of Scruton in Yorkshire, the best of three in-gates, which was won by the former, they getting the first two. The odds were greatly on the Yorkshire side before starting. West Auckland will play any town or parish within fifty miles round for the same sum. (Whitehall Evening Post)

Stakes are small compared with £1,000 staked on southern matches. Northern parsimony was no bad thing, however, since cricket debts were often subject of a lawsuit. West Auckland's win by the best of *three* in-gates [innings] is unusual. They may have been ignorant of betting rules that required matches to be *two* innings a side. In a fourth recorded match Durham Militia, mostly high-ranking officers from privileged backgrounds, played Nottingham Militia in 1798.⁴

Four newspaper reports are flimsy evidence upon which to form conclusions. Wisest to admit there was little cricket in eighteenth century Durham. That would be too hasty and oversimplistic. Durham's male population of 60,000 was scattered far beyond reach of the few newspapers available. The region is more notable for its oral tradition than literary. Absence of match reports does not mean absence of cricket. Not every birth was recorded as a baptism, nor every death as a burial. A match had to be newsworthy to rank alongside the rapes, robberies and murders that guttered down newspaper columns. Each report involves the gentry who are only a part of 'history', of course. The Piercebridge report appeared in a London newspaper read by fashionable society. It gives details of the wager but no scores. Society gambling made it newsworthy.

³ A *haugh* is a stretch of riverside meadow.

Answers to seemingly impenetrable questions are sometimes hidden in remote nooks of history. Two obscure references confirm that north-east communities played cricket among themselves. When the Tyne froze in 1766 "a sheep was roasted upon it and sold for 12 pence per pound to a numerous company, who afterwards played at Cricket". In 1785 schoolmaster James Coates informed the vicar that "on Sunday a large company of cricket players assembled, some from Barningham, [near Barnard Castle] and concluded their sport" without seeking permission. West Auckland challenged teams within fifty miles. Any crow that leaves its Durham nest and flies fifty miles in a straight line must cross the county boundary. In effect West Auckland challenged any team in the county. Cricket, like Christianity, spread northward from its southern origins. It seems reasonable to conclude that by 1766 cricket was played throughout Durham.

The game developed markedly in the south during the latter half of the century. The first Laws of Cricket show it to be a lusty game wherein "either of ye strikers may hinder ye catch in his running." The wicket became 22 inches high and six inches wide, then 24 inches by seven. The third stump was added around 1776. The width of a bat was set at four-and-a-quarter inches in 1771 after a Reigate player tried to use a bat as wide as the wicket. The Hambledon men constructed an iron frame of statutory width through which was passed any bat of suspect size to ensure it conformed to rule. History keeps secret when these changes were adopted in Durham.

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⁴ in G. B. Buckley: Fresh Light on Eighteenth Century Cricket

⁵ Felix Farley's *Bristol Journal*.

Chapter Two......Early-nineteenth century

A cricket club is born

As the eighteenth century drew to a close the Hambledon club declined; its brief, but glorious, reign at an end. London was now the centre for patrons of cricket. A similar, if less famous, transition from rural surrounds happened in Durham. The population of Sunderland increased as the harbour grew in importance. There was bull-baiting in open streets and cock-fighting in close innyards. It was in just such a tavern, perhaps, that a cricket club was born:

On the 12th inst. a grand match at cricket, for one hundred guineas a side, was played on Sunderland moor, between nine of the Sunderland cricket club, and two from the 3rd Lancs militia, against nine of the Durham militia, and Wm Beckwith, Esq. and H. F. Mellish, Esq. - The Durham won by 34 notches in one innings. Five to two against the Durham at starting.

(Newcastle Courant, 30 May, 1801)

Sunderland was a gentleman's club of fairly wealthy members. Stakes are the highest on record in Durham. Two months later there was a further report in *Newcastle Chronicle*:

On the evenings of Monday and Thursday last a Cricket Match was played at Monkwearmouth-Shore, between eleven gentlemen of that place and an equal number from Sunderland (the challenge by the latter.) the best in two innings, which was won by the former as follows:

SUNDERLAND 32 32 = 64 MONKWEARMOUTH-SHORE 34 54 = 88

Innings totals and set days point to improved organisation. Once-spectral figures assumed substance in 1808 when *Tyne Mercury* named sixteen Sunderland CC members. South Shields, five miles up the coast, lost to North Shields in 1811. North Shields travelled across the Tyne for the return match to find their hosts at practice. They "showed such superior ability and vigour both in bowling and in striking and blocking that [North Shields] forfeited their deposit of 5 guineas rather than play".

John George Lambton completed his studies at Eton in 1808. There, no doubt, he learned to play cricket. Lambton was six when placed in care of Dr Beddoes, a distinguished physician who said he "exceeded any child I ever saw in industry, intelligence and active curiosity". At 21 he was MP for Durham, an "over-bearing, vain, high-spirited, brilliant man" whose opinions earned the name 'Radical Jack'. He was also known as 'Jogalong' because, as one of the richest in the country, he said he could jog along nicely on £40,000 a year. He was later Lord Privy Seal, first Earl of Durham and governor-general of Canada. Lambton was an irrepressible young buck before parliamentary duties demanded his attention. When 17 he enlisted in the 10th Hussars but relinquished his commission after falling in love with beautiful Henrietta Cholmondeley, illegitimate daughter of an English peer

⁶ James Coates: *The diary of a country schoolmaster*. [Teesdale Mercury, 1980]

and French actress. Fearing family objections they eloped to Gretna Green to marry on New Year's Day, 1812. Henrietta is Durham's first cricket widow. In days of heady romance her dashing husband formed Lambton Cricket Club. The 1812-13 scorebook is the oldest surviving in Durham. The oldest known pre-dates it by only seven years.

To open the olive, leather-bound scorebook⁸ is to sense pastoral days in secluded woodland far removed from the spectre of Napoleon. Among sixteen members in 1812 are the architect Bonomi, who restored parts of Lambton Castle, and William Beckwith, perhaps he who assisted Durham Militia against Sunderland. Lambton captained a side that beat Mr Thurlow's side in twelve of 19 matches. So neat is the copper-plate hand on blank pages that scores must have been copied from loose sheets. The scorer's mode of listing batsmen reflects the gentleman / player distinction that characterised scorecards until 1962. Of fifty names, 24 are titled Mister, one Doctor and one Captain; surname or Christian name for the rest. Estate workers Robert, Charles and Ralph occasionally played alongside the gentlemen: early evidence of the game uniting men from differing social backgrounds. Matches were mostly on Fridays, anything from five- to eleven-a-side. With twenty-two available a oneinnings match followed a two-innings match. If numbers were short they played two two-innings matches. The scorebook was clearly valued. No doubt because the leading run-maker, with a poignant top score of 99 not out, was Mr Lambton. Motorists driving north through Durham may be surprised at sight of a half-size replica of the Temple of Theseum in Athens standing high on Penshaw Hill around which, according to local song, the Lambton Worm "lapped 'e's tail seven times". Penshaw Monument was erected in memory of Lambton.

Lambton was in parliament when eleven gentlemen of Stockton⁹ met eleven of Yarm in 1814:

Stockton	First innings	24	Yarm	First innings	45
Stockton	Second innings	<u>36</u>	Yarm	Second innings	<u>18</u>
		60			63

And Yarm had only one man out in the second innings - The Field, which was corded off, to prevent the populace from interrupting the players, was about half-way between Yarm and Stockton. The parties met at nine o'clock on Tuesday morning, and played the game agreeably to certain rules previously agreed upon, and each side had two umpires.

(Newcastle Chronicle, 24 September 1814)

Umpires and agreed rules indicate advanced organisation. Each umpire lived five miles from a neutral venue that ensured minimum travel for each side. Nor would either wish to concede ground advantage with £100 at stake for bowlers were adept at exploiting the ridges and hollows of their own field. The field was cordoned so cricket attracted sizeable gatherings. Henry Heavisides, one of the players, said

⁷ Sir Timothy Eden : *Durham* [County Books series, vol 2]

⁸ The scorebook is in possession of Lambton Estates.

⁹ Although administrative changes in 1968 transferred Stockton to the County Borough of Teeside, the author uses the old county boundaries of the Rivers Tyne and Tees to define the north and south boundaries of County Durham.

2,000 attended.¹⁰ As the match "came off in a large field opposite the Lord Nelson Inn" we can be sure the landlord staged it for profit. Nyren writes excitedly of Hambledon's high feasting. "What stuff they had to drink! - Punch! - punch that would make a cat speak!...The ale, too!...Ale that would flare like turpentine - genuine Boniface!"¹¹ It was little different at Stockton where matches with Yarm "were played by men who dared blisters in stocking-feet. They were unparalleled for intense excitement and not seldom ended in contests of quite another character."¹²

At their zenith the men of Hambledon drew crowds of "some thousands". Now, in one of the last corners of England to be converted, cricket attracted a comparable congregation. Those hurrying to the match along a dusty track off Yarm Road were jostled into hedgerows by a jerking procession of carriages and carts, equestrians on high-stepping horses and rustics on jaded hacks.

O! it was a heart-stirring sight to witness the multitude forming a complete and dense circle round that noble green...patiently and anxiously watching every turn of fate in the game, as if the event had been a meeting of two armies to decide their liberty.¹³

Tommy Marshall played that day, too. Born of Quaker stock in 1790, Tommy lived at one with nature, "had all the mysteries of woodcraft at his finger's ends". Marshall was 'The General' of the Stockton club, "indispensable hero of a thousand cricket matches". Tommy was groundkeeper, tutor and umpire and followed his beloved Stockton until he was 87. "He was part and parcel of its history. He saw it rise to a position second to none in the North; and he has seen it fall...into a state of comparative insignificance." Marshall's experience echoes Richard Nyren's at Hambledon. As distant church bells tolled nine on Tuesday, 13 September 1814, the ghost of Hambledon Past infused the cricket of Durham Present.

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¹⁰ Henry Heavisides: *The annals of Stockton-on-Tees*

¹¹ John Nyren: The Cricketers of my Time

¹² Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, 1876

¹³ John Nyren: The Cricketers of my Time

Overcoming prejudice

If the game vaguely resembled Hambledon cricket there was no Nyren to record it. A county that reared Bede, father of medieval historical writing, had not even a hack to chronicle local deeds. Not a word appeared in the dozen years after 1814. Post-Waterloo depression is likely reason although some said the game had died. It had not. Silence broken, it lacked status. Was disapproved in some quarters. One reader wrote to complain about a newspaper's "silly, inflated, egotistical account" of a match where once he read of Nelson's heroism. The Church voiced opposition. Surgeons diagnosed the game too violent, objected to treating cricket injuries. History, and a chill north-east wind, had hardened Durham hearts. They did not succumb to prejudice.

On the contrary. Interest increased. Not least through gambling. Bets were placed during matches rather like spread betting today. "Before pitching the wickets, the betting ran at from 15 to 10, and 7 to 2, in favour of Lumley; but after the first innings it changed to 6 to 4, and 2 to 1, in favour of Durham." Bishopwearmouth players lost all their money at Norton. The home secretary kindly offered to loan their coach fare home. "No, thanks. Our secretary will see us through. He always wraps his sovereigns in five pound notes!" Stakes of £50 and £100 are known but £10 and £20 were most common. Higher stakes indicate matches between clubs of better ability as well as greater wealth. A club's improvement could be gauged by a corresponding increase in amounts staked. Thus newly-formed Gateshead Borough crossed the coaly Tyne to play Newcastle Standard for £5 a side. Then downriver "past a grenadier rank and file of chimneys" to beat South Shields Independent. Next, the formidable Northumberland (a club not the county) for £10 before losing a £50 stake to all-conquering Bishopwearmouth. Vaulting ambition proved costly.

Neutral venues enabled clubs meet "strangers" from distant parts. Bishopwearmouth met Yarm at Castle Eden, mid-way between the 20 miles that separated them. Yarm had "challenged nearly all clubs in their neighbourhood without having been so fortunate as to meet with customers". Yarm's hustlers won and pocketed 40 sovereigns. Not all wagers were for cash. Bishopwearmouth played Durham City for dinner and a bottle of wine each. Stockton's butchers and publicans for Rumps and Dozens - beef steaks and a dozen clarets. The tipplers of Ryhope staged a Married v Single match for "a skinfull".

The opening of the Stockton-Darlington railway in 1825 signalled momentous social change. Speed and progress, symbols of the age. Horizons widened. Crowds increased. Clubs travelled further afield. As many as four booths were erected on the field to accommodate the various parties.

¹⁴ Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, 1876

Press references to 'rapid progress', to 'superior', 'scientific', 'severe and well-contested' play, suggest that techniques improved through playing different, often better, opposition. Press reports were more analytical - spiced with gems like "we would advise Mr Wetherell not to jerk his balls so much". All confirm growing zest for the game:

The note of preparation for the exercise of the manly and truly English game of cricket has been sounded and its hardy votaries are now lifting their bats out of lavender, looking at the state of their stumps, and examining the stitches of their balls.

(Bell's Life in London, 1838)

A carnival atmosphere awaited Gateshead at Alnwick long before the two were linked by rail. A band played before 3,000 spectators "of whom at least one-half were of that sex that lends grace to every scene." Alnwick Moor blushed with colour. Ladies in bonnets and glint taffeta; gentlemen in top hats, frock coats and gay, satin waistcoats. Dinner was served in a large marquee on the field. Gracious in defeat, the homesters led the victorious visitors in procession about the town with the band blaring *See The Conquering Heroes Come*.

A day at cricket meant a *whole* day. Bishopwearmouth rose with the larks to start at 9.30 against Newcastle Albion on the Town Moor in 1834. Match over, they made their way into the city to the Eldon Coffee Rooms where "the evening was spent with a feeling of good fellowship and hilarity, enlivened by some excellent songs from members of both clubs." On their first meeting that year 35 sat down to dinner at the Cottage Tavern, Hendon. Such gatherings were the rule rather than exception.

Until the late 1850s matches were staged on Mondays, a favoured day for sport, and Fridays. Often into late October. Stronger clubs met over two days. Matches were proposed by letters of challenge. Three Bishopwearmouth men travelled to meet Newcastle Albion a few days before their proposed match to finalise terms. Bargaining was hard to obtain the best possible advantage:

Resolved that the club play on their conditions, ie to debar the following members from playing - Messrs Coates, Moon, Clayton, Wray, Wells, Truss, Smith, Hall and Hudson but provided Mr Vaux is unable to play then to play Mr Moon or Mr Hudson in his place.¹⁶

During their arrangement, matches were said to be 'in treaty'; 'came off' when actually played. The terms highlight the complex logistics. Travel was onerous and expensive. Handbills had to be printed and displayed. Catering requirements had to be firm if an innkeeper was to kill the fatted calf and lease a field. It all took time and explains why few matches were played during a season. Their relative rareness, however, heightened anticipation and excitement.

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¹⁵ E. Watts Moses [ed]: *To Ashbrooke And Beyond*

¹⁶ Bishopwearmouth Minute Book (qv in Moses [ed] : To Ashbrooke And Beyond)

Only the worst weather could ruin such protracted preparations. If play *was* abandoned they could hardly wait to finish the contest and, more important, settle stakes that could not be given up until a match was concluded. Brancepeth met Esh in 1834 but "with night coming on" play stopped. They completed the match the following week and straightway commenced another. Their enthusiasm was stirred by wagers as much as passion for the game. Rain fell heavily throughout their first meeting that year. The drenched scorers slipped away unnoticed and a squabble developed over the result. Who could rule to settle the stakes? The umpires? MCC? Neither. They put their faith in the hands of the only sporting authority they trusted - the gambling fraternity. Match details were sent to the editor of *Bell's Life in London* who ruled in favour of Esh. *Bell's*, a Sunday newspaper first published in 1822, originally covered country sports and the turf. It later incorporated Cricketting [sic], became an accepted authority on betting and made a significant contribution to the game's popularity. Tommy Marshall, for one, filed every copy.¹⁷

Matters of dispute varied but money was usually at the root. Composition of an opponent's team caused much ill-feeling. Clubs wanted to field their strongest side, win the match and pocket the stakes. Bishopwearmouth arranged to play Cockerton for 20 guineas and dinner for both parties. The match did not even start:

The Sunderland gentlemen accused their opponents of having acted unfairly, in bringing to the field, from distant parts, some veterans who were not members of their club - this the Cockertonites indignantly denied, asserting that every man they had brought was a member, and that none of them lived at a greater distance than five miles from Cockerton.

(Durham County Advertiser, 3 Oct 1829)

Bowling actions caused controversy during the transition from under-arm. Hambledon barred their own Tom Walker for "throwing". John Willes' round-arm bowling at Lord's was condemned as "throwing". Further confusion followed the round-arm revolution led by Lillywhite and Broadridge. The Law was altered in 1835. "The ball must be bowled. If it be thrown or jerked, or if the hand be above the shoulder in the delivery, the umpire must call No Ball." All this was background to Robinson being no-balled for "throwing" by Bishopwearmouth's umpire in 1838. Darlington's umpire disagreed. An angry dispute ensued, the home players accusing Robinson of "pelting" and threatening "now for broken legs". The match was abandoned. Darlington "sneaked off the ground" with £8 expenses "which they had got possession of before the commencement of the contest". Bishopwearmouth later announced intention to appoint a joint referee whose decision would be final should umpires disagree.

Bowlers faced a rare dilemma during the transition to round-arm. They risked mocking cries of "No skittles!" if they persisted with under-arm, loss of effectiveness if they changed. Tom Hutton's under-arm was so fast some doubted its legality. In those days Durham City wore black waistcoats.

¹⁷ F. Hunter: *Reminiscences of Stockton*, 1892

Stockton insisted Tom's elbow be covered with chalk and, if his waistcoat was marked during delivery, he would be barred from the match. Tom took seven wickets. Not a speck of chalk on his waistcoat. Though disgusted by the affair Hutton immediately took up round-arm.

Press reports often complimented umpires on their control. Since each club supplied its own umpire and a club official supplied reports, the compliments probably contained an element of flattery, even fawning. When umpires' decisions went against them they usually objected "in a coarse and offensive manner". There were frequent accusations of bias and mistakes. Some with foundation. One match was completed without umpires noticing Gateshead had twelve fielders. Chester-le-Street were rather peeved with a Lumley umpire who sought the opinion of Lumley fielders before giving each verdict. With money at stake umpires were clearly pressurised by their own team.

Increased press coverage reflected, and stimulated, cricket's growth. *Bell's Life* printed the first known local scorecard, Bishopwearmouth v Yarm, in 1828.¹⁸ Within six years scoresheets were in common use and *Newcastle Journal* printed scorecards in full. Local scorers regularly began to credit bowlers with dismissals other than bowled in 1845, nine years after it was the custom nationally. An intriguing element of early scorecards is the absence of a regular batting order.¹⁹ A captain arranged his troops according to the state of battle.

...never put in all your best men at first and leave a 'tail' to follow...And take care that you put good judges of a run together...a good off hitter and a good leg hitter in together...A good arrangement of your men according to these principles will make eleven men do the work of thirteen.²⁰

Clubs had rules for order of batting and bowling, a convention strange to us when ability and form decide. Low scores meant 'form' was different to our understanding. To reach double-figures was invaluable on rough pitches and long outfield grass; scoring 25 was exceptional. During this period 60% of known team totals were under 50; only 20% exceeded 70.

Single wicket matches were played in the south long before recorded in Durham. They were long-drawn affairs. The ball had to be struck with at least one foot behind the popping-crease and no runs accrued for hits behind the wicket. Most were stern contests between prominent players although Hartlepool's George Treloar, a professional from Cornwall, had a chastening experience. The progave Mr Bulmer ten runs start in each innings, made only 3 and 1, and Mr Bulmer won without batting.

Darlington champion George Laws lost a major challenge to odds-on favourite Paul Smith who, with Harry Sampson, had just won 'the championship of Yorkshire and Lancashire'. Betting

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¹⁸ Bell's reported the match as Sunderland v Yarm but the names listed are Bishopwearmouth players.

 $^{^{19}}$ Students of old press scorecards should note that a batsman is often listed in order of his dismissal.

favourite William Williamson lost a clash of Durham stalwarts by an innings. He failed to score in his first 'hand'. William Mather made 15. Pride dented, Williamson objected to the width of Mather's bat and refused to bat a second time. He relented when Mather threatened to submit to *Bell's* for a ruling. Williamson registered another nought. Leaving nothing to chance Mather went in again and scored a single. To rub salt into open wounds he used Williamson's bat. It was an eighth-of-an-inch wider than Mather's. "North Country champion" Tommy Tilly met arch-rival Charlie Thompson in 1842 in a tense struggle at Plawsworth. Tilly marched to the field surrounded by boisterous supporters who were his umpire, scorer and fielders. Optimism ebbed when Tommy made nought between Charlie's two and five, rose as he inched to seven. A wide from Thompson ended the match, "Tilly carrying out his bat amidst the cheers of the Durhamites." His umpire, Joseph Atkinson, played in the first known single wicket match at Durham in 1829.

A challenger's money was always 'ready' at an alehouse. Indeed a surfeit of ale provoked many a match. George Renwick of Winlaton challenged "the great Smith of Newburn for £50. If he does not accept this challenge, Renwick will play any man in England." Two weeks later Renwick was challenged to a bare-fist fight for £100 because he had "barked so often without biting." Not a wise move. Renwick was a noted pugilist. A gentleman's courage was known as 'bottom'. Bottom challenged, spleen inflamed. Mr Beldon and Mr Hudson staged a slanderous skirmish via the press:

the friends of Mr Beldon would recommend [Mr Hudson] to mind his own business for the future, and not challenge gentlemen through the public papers, when he does not mean playing.

Most major clubs emerged during the first half of the nineteenth century. Particularly after 1832 when the Reform Act and local government reform loosed the power previously held in the hands of the privileged few. The rise to prominence of Bishopwearmouth, a team with a lawyer, schoolmaster and shipbuilder, owed much to far-sighted Thomas Coates. Coates left the south in 1824 to manage Low Street gasworks. Player and chairman for 36 years, he ran the club with integrity. A new constitution, drawn up on 10 May 1834, explains the order of batting and bowling.²¹ Appropriately, the constitution had 22 rules one of which shows that, like farmers, cricketers made the most of daylight:

- 2. That the times of playing be Tuesday and Thursday mornings and Tuesday and Thursday evenings.
- 3. That the hour of meeting both for morning and evening be six o'clock.
- 5. That the sum of 1d per game each person be paid for each morning, and on Thursday evenings the sum of three pence...
- 7. That persons go in, in the order in which they are chosen in the first innings.
- 8. That the two persons tossing for choice of sides be put at the bottom of the list.
- 9. That the two persons first chosen to be the bowlers for the first innings.
- 10. That the two persons last in the first innings to bowl and go in first in the second innings.
- 11. That at the second innings the list of players to be reversed so that those last chosen go in just after the bowlers.

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²⁰ Rev James Pycroft : The Cricket Field

²¹ Bishopwearmouth Minute Book (in E. Watts Moses [ed]: *To Ashbrooke And Beyond*)

Members' subscriptions were ten shillings and supporters five shillings. Players paid 13 shillings and were fined if late on 'field days'. Stakes won and lost were included in club accounts. Expenses rose from £24 in 1834 to £53 in 1836. Old balls were re-covered, a mobile score-box built and Mr Clayton purchased bats while in London on business. The batsman with the "highest average number of notches" was presented with a silver snuff box. There was nothing for the bowler. Coates adopted the traditions of the southern men. The club subscribed to *Bell's Life* and recorded the editor's cricket decisions in a book. Nyren's *Young Cricketer's Tutor* was studied and, just as Hambledon wore sky blue coats with black velvet collars, Bishopwearmouth's flannel jacket was trimmed with purple ribbon.

A revolutionary appointment in 1838 shows Coates' ambition. Two southern men appeared in their Married v Single match. One, Inwood, was designated a Given Man, a term for a player at a club where he was not a *bona fide* member. George Inwood, a "celebrated cricketer" in Hampshire, was engaged to oversee the Northumberland ground. The previous year he was at Camberwell where four Lamberts played, one, William Lambert, the greatest all-rounder of his day. The second southern man, also a William Lambert (**qv**), was engaged to develop Bishopwearmouth's ground as did Lillywhite at Brighton (1837) and Clarke at Nottingham (1838). The field was levelled and re-turfed for 1838 and, before long, was billed as Lambert's Ground, "perhaps the finest north of York".

There is no doubt that Lambert was a good bowler. In fact he was so good that opponents often barred him from playing. He was adept at round-arm, a skill so far in advance of local understanding it provoked an unseemly incident:

The citizens had four good wickets to fall with only six runs needed when Lambert commenced throwing three balls out of six almost above his head. The City umpire seeing this called 'No ball'. Lambert then threw down the ball and after indulging in very abusive language to the umpire and others around him drew the stumps without any authority and walked off the field with them.

PRO-FILE (No. 1)

WILLIAM WINDUS LAMBERT

(b. Ware, Hertfordshire c1798; d. Sunderland, 1852)

The first professional in Durham. Engaged to develop Bishopwearmouth's ground in 1838; played until 1851. That he was from the south may seem extraordinary but there was no local qualified for the rôle. It was a seminal development, a new social phenomenon in the county. He used cricket to prospect a new life at 40. Took over the 'Cottage Tavern' and £10-per-annum ground lease from Jane Sutton, his future wife. Lambert exhibited a 'catapulta' at the first match he promoted. This prototype bowling machine created great interest in the south a year earlier, proof he was well-connected among "the Southron folk". Played in prestigious single wicket matches and twice against All England XI. Set up as vintner. Manager of 'Wheatsheaf Inn' when he died.

Durham City claimed the match and both parties dined on friendly terms - without a piqued Lambert. Given his experience in the south one senses Lambert's frustration at local ignorance of the game's developments. He bowled in the first innings, without complaint, and may have wondered why City's umpire, George Pybus, waited until his third over in the second innings before calling 'no ball'. Nor did Darlington object to Lambert's action when he bowled in the match marred by the Robinson rumpus eight years earlier. Lambert had achieved a club professional's ambition as manager of a ground and tavern. He was a big fish in a little pond and entitled to expect little fish take heed of his knowledge.

Stockton formed in 1816. On re-forming in 1844 they made astonishing progress under ambitious president Dr William Richardson. The doctor, a towering figure in black frock coat and white stovepipe hat, shared an intense passion for the club with Tommy Marshall who angled a smaller white hat above Scottish tweed.

When all was going favourably, the doctor was brimful of smiles, while the veteran umpire would have his hat cocked at an angle of forty-five; but should Dame Fortune frown on the efforts of the Stockton team, then there was a transformation - the features of the doctor would wear a grim expression...while the old umpire would press his hat well on his head, minus the angle, and look severe.²²

Norton played on the green at the northern end of a lovely chestnut and elm leafed village. Probably as old as neighbours Stockton, they folded in 1840 but re-emerged seven years later. Formed in 1827, Darlington were known as "the fancy club", a term with pugilistic connotations. Also gaining prominence were Barnard Castle, formed in 1832; Chester-le-Street, more notorious for petty disputes than victories; and Hartlepool where in 1839 cricket was yet "a novelty" played within eight walled acres of the Town Moor. A Bishop Auckland side, said to be "all show", lost to Etherley, "all effect", in 1835.²³

Soon after Durham City formed in 1828 chimney sweeps were seen on the streets using a cap for a ball and their brush for a bat. City made rapid strides and cricket was all the rage:

Durham City has been dull so long,
No bustle at all to show;
But now the rage of all the throng,
Is at cricketing to go.

Huzza then for the Durham lads,

They've cast their dull array;

They'd not be known by their own dads,

They're now so bright and gay.

²² Michael Heavisides: Reminiscences of the old Stockton Cricket Club

Bold and fearless - there's the rub -With challenges to assuage; And conquer every rival club, -O cricketing's all the rage!

City overcame the Northumberland in 1844. Reputedly unbeaten in three years, the visitors blamed a ridge on the pitch for preventing them bowl round-arm to proper effect. Tommy Tilly, then 25 and "a devil of a bowler", found the ridge ideal for his fast under-arm and his "scientific bowling committed terrible havoc with the stumps." Tilly once claimed two wickets with one ball. When a batsman tried to steal a single off his bowling, gimlet-eyed Tommy ran out the striker then bowled the ball to the other end to run out a bemused non-striker. Shoemaker Tilly died in poverty aged 86.

The aforementioned town clubs would remain at the forefront and their success generated the birth of others. A patriotic plethora of Victorias, Crowns and Albions emerged alongside a convocation of church sides. Others sprouted in nearby villages. By 1836 cricket was reported close to Durham at Lumley, Brancepeth, Esh, Houghton and West Rainton; around Darlington at Heighington, Cockerton and Aycliffe; near Barnard Castle at Staindrop and Whorlton; and on the outskirts of Hartlepool at Stranton and Greatham. Seaton Carew's 1869 chairman claimed they had been in existence 40 years.²⁴ North Durham players watched Gateshead v Alnwick in 1840 but their official formation is 1864. As with Stockton and Norton, a club might fold after a few years and reform later. We can not presume these clubs had unbroken existence from the foregoing dates.

Bishop van Mildert founded Durham University, third oldest in England, in 1832. University soon had a cricket club. Harry Sampson was engaged in 1845 "for the purpose of instructing the young men in the system of round-arm bowling." Mighty Northumberland set a stiff examination that the students failed by ten wickets. Sampson proved an able tutor. Defeat was avenged on 9 June 1846 by virtue of a sensational feat that did not merit a single sentence in the press. University were all out for 84. The Northumberland were expected to slaughter their attack. This is what happened:

NORTHUMBERLAND CLUB

A. Grote c by Denning, b by Bolland	0
J. Moore b by Bolland	2
W. Clay b by ditto	9
W. Beldon b by ditto	4
J. Beldon st by Richards, b by ditto	0
Thompson c by Larden, b by ditto	0
F. Russell c by Ford, b by ditto	20
J. Baskett b by ditto	26
J. Peck not out	1
H. de C. Lawson st by Richards, b by Bolland	0
Harle c by Biggs, b by ditto	0
Byes 2, nb 2	4
Total	66

²³ Brian Hunt: 125 Not Out (Bishop Auckland Cricket Club: History and Records 1853-1978)

²⁴ D. Hornby: *History of Seaton Carew Cricket Club* (1829-1965)

No longer was the trundler an anonymous spear-carrier on stage. Now that scoresheets were widely used Bolland became the first known to take all ten wickets. John Bolland was the son of Sir William, a High Court judge from Surrey renowned for transporting early trade unionists. Bolland went to Eton and gained a MA at Durham. Ordained in 1850, he was curate at Morpeth where he lived "piously, soberly and honestly" before missionary work in Bucharest. He died at Hebron, Israel in 1857.

Life had changed since the Raby match, of course. In 1876 coal mines were suggested as ideal places to imprison convicts. Sixty years later mining communities were "emerging from the greatest possible moral and intellectual darkness". A new morality surfaced that owed something to colliers' wives fulfilling, what was then considered, their natural rôle: making better homes to make better men. Not for nothing were pits given female names.

An interim report in 1846 might have praised Durham cricket for its vigour rather than skill. Nevertheless the game was played at all age levels. At University; at Houghton School and Durham School, one of the oldest in England; and at clubs where some had memberships large enough to support two elevens. Durham cricketers were ready for secondary education. Their tutors would be the best in the land.

Chapter Four......Mid-nineteenth century

The All-England masters arrive

William Clarke founded the All England Eleven (hereafter AE XI) in 1846. Its effect upon English cricket was profound, not least in far flung Durham. Like green-fingered gardeners the All England men sowed seeds of willow and cherry, tended their saplings toward maturity. A conversation between Clarke and James Dark, owner of Lord's, neatly captures the ethos of the venture. Hearing Clarke had made a match against "some side in Newcastle", Dark scorned the idea saying the region "had no players at all fit to stand against the All England team."

"Never you mind," retorted Clarke. "I shall play sides strong or weak with numbers or bowlers given, and shall play all over the country too - mark my words - and it will be good for cricket." Hard-headed, businessman Clarke lined his pockets on the way. He negotiated guaranteed match fees of £70 as insurance against bad weather; paid each player a match fee of £4 to £6 out of which they had to find board and lodging. Entrepreneurs were alert to the benefits of the venture. Printers, caterers and traders in marquees and cricket equipment made sufficient profit to drop 'presents' Clarke's way. If a match was nearing conclusion on the second day they would draw stumps early "to leave something like a day's work" on the third to attract extra revenue. Cricket commercialisation had arrived.

AE XI's opponents could field up to twenty-two players but stronger sides were restricted to twenty, eighteen or sixteen. The match at Newcastle was against Twenty of Northumberland. Five days later, on 23 September 1847, AE XI took on Twenty-two of Stockton strengthened by Yorkshire 'cracks'. Men were employed for several weeks improving Murray's Field in preparation for a large crowd. Stockton Corporation donated £25 towards expenses. It was a social event of great moment, the elegant High Street a stately promenade. "Four or five hundred ladies in their gayest attire" were among 3,000 who attended over three days. Players dined on game, poultry and home-brewed ale, all available to the public at two shillings a head. Match profits enabled Stockton plan a new ground that would be stage for an era of marvellous success.

All England, if aging, were very strong. They had master batsmen Parr, Mynn, Pilch and the inimitable 'Felix'; great bowlers Clarke, Hillyer and William Lillywhite who once said: "If I was to think *every* ball, they would never get a run!" Interest in the match was high. Literally for young shoemaker Hutton who shinned up a flag-pole for a better view, clapped over-excitedly, fell and broke an arm. Asked to bowl uphill into a gale, 22-year-old Jonathan Joy responded heroically with match figures of 10 for 59 off 307 balls. Hillyer said that, in the conditions, he could not have maintained

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²⁵ Letter in *Bell's Life in London* (5 December 1852)

Joy's pace and precision. AE XI were 55 all out. XXII of Stockton replied with 56 and eventually needed 118 to win. Joy was absent on Saturday morning. He visited friends in Redcar the previous evening, missed the early-morning train and walked eight miles to the ground. Hillyer and Lillywhite "shivered" Stockton's stumps and AE XI won by 44. The scorecard had a lesson for the locals. AE XI delivered two wides, Stockton 33.

AE XI made two visits in 1848. Some 6,000 saw XXII Bishopwearmouth overwhelmed by 157 at Hendon. Parr thrilled spectators with trade-mark leg-hits. Harry Redshaw (Durham City) took three hours to score 4, illustrating his dogged resistance and high-quality bowling. Scoring was slow. AE XI rarely managed 25-an-hour in Durham. Of course pitches were poor and they were ringed by twenty fielders. Strokes safe against eleven fielders were risky against twenty. After the match each side nominated a player for a 'throwing the cricket ball' contest, the losers to pay for wine at dinner. Marsh, six-feet-four tall in stocking feet, threw for the hosts. He lumbered into his first ungainly throw and, it is said, hurled the ball 150 yards. AE XI conceded immediately and bought the wine.

Next day they met XXII Darlington. The start was delayed because AE XI, aggrieved by lbw decisions at Hendon, insisted two of their men be umpires. The hosts agreed. Just as well considering what happened on the morning of the match. Darlington saturated the uneven pitch to make it level but ignored the sun's intense heat. It created a bowler's paradise, and everlasting fame, for Mr Prince Stockdale whose left-arm lobs claimed seven of the first eight wickets. AE XI were 44 all out and Darlington gained a lead of 13. The giant Stockdale took his thirteenth wicket as AE XI succumbed for 79 and lost by nine wickets. Jubilant locals ended their day of glory jostling in the shadows of dim-lit market-stalls consuming pig's fry, pork pies and pickled herring. Then to Dennison's hostelry to toast their heroes with his celebrated bump Number Twenty.

AE XI played XXII Durham City in 1849. The county's great and good were match patrons of another financial success. Friday's sun encouraged 2,000 to attend. Tickets cost half-a-crown, rail parties of ten-or-more paid only single fare. The scene was engraved by an artist from Pelaw Wood. It accurately mirrors press reports so is the first definitive image of cricket in the county. Seven-feethigh canvas walled three sides of the field. Enclosure was completed by a ladies' stand and range of snow white marquees along the south ridge. Three tents flying colourful pennants and flags were for use of City, University and AE XI. A fourth housed Lillywhite's printing press that issued scoresheets at the fall of each wicket. Joy injured an ankle while bowling and needed a runner. Rev Ford "ran for Joy and very shortly ran out for him." The Twenty-two lost by 42.

All England were plagued by cholera and injury when visiting Stockton's new ground in 1849. Parr made 59 but XXII Stockton replied with 184 to lead by 23. Anderson, a young discovery from Bedale, took 12 wickets in the match, five stumped by dexterous George Morton, another Bedale man. AE XI "muffed" its batting and Stockton needed 55 to win. Locals were left crestfallen when

AE XI quit at six o'clock to catch a train to Birmingham for their next match. Clarke, his solitary eye roving for talent, signed up Morton and Anderson. Tall George Anderson, "clean as a new-scraped carrot", went to Australia with England XI in 1863-4. A final link was yet to be forged between Morton and Clarke. The last ball Clarke delivered ended a match in 1856 - the batsman stumped by Morton.

AE XI won emphatically at Darlington and Stockton before the notorious rift among leading professionals caused its demise in 1852. All England's influence went far beyond imparting the skills of batting and bowling. They stirred such excitement, "such holiday-making and high jinks", that matches were a major topic of conversation long before they took place. More important, they taught the value of 'headwork', a priceless ability to analyse strengths and weaknesses of opponents as well as one's own.

A break-away group was led by John Wisden, a tiny, fast off-break bowler who published his *Cricketers' Almanack* in 1864. For two decades United England XI (hereafter UE XI) furthered local education. Durham's cricket improved while touring sides weakened because leading pros were spread between two factions. A consequence of these linked factors is shown in the following summary:

	<u>Played</u>	Won	Lost	<u>Unfinished</u>
All England XI matches played in Durham 1847 - 1851	7	5	1	1
Touring sides matches in Durham after rift 1853 - 1873	15	5	6	4

UE XI endured a baptism of fire at Stockton in 1853. Already trailing by 19, Isaac Hodgson and John Berry shot them out for 32, the tourists' lowest in Durham. Stockton could afford to send in two local esquires to get the necessary runs. Next year Clarke's rival England XI beat XXII Stockton by 64. Clarke captured 17 wickets, his last on Durham soil. Strength failing, he did not bowl against XXII Durham City in 1856. Instead spectators saw Edgar Willsher and great, fast bowler 'Foghorn' Jackson, so named because he habitually blew his nose after taking a wicket. William Buttress captured nine wickets in the Twenty-two's 22-run victory. Organisers kept close watch on Buttress, notorious for heavy drinking during matches. Later that year Jackson and Willsher tore through XXII Stockton and England XI won by an innings.

Stockton ranked with the best in the North when they entertained England XI in 1857. They had Yorkshire bowlers Hodgson, Roger Iddison, and George Atkinson plus Morton and Tom Hayward. With Joy, Halton, Coates and 'The Three Toms' (Darnton, Hornby and Robinson) it was a strong side without a further eleven club men. If Tommy Marshall was delighted by their resounding 17-wicket victory he must have been ecstatic in 1860 after umpiring Stockton's most emphatic win against a touring side. 'The Three Toms' scored half of Stockton's 204, highest by a local Twenty-two against the tourists. UE XI suffered the humiliation of following-on and losing by an innings. It was no

meek surrender. Their totals of 66 and 107 were made from 673 deliveries.

Earlier that week rain saved UE XI from defeat against XXII Bishop Auckland. Joy's 43 was followed by a chanceless 78 against UE XI in 1863. An innings defeat signalled the beginning of the end for UE XI and they disbanded in 1869. Even with the help of imported 'cracks' there is no denying the locals' improvement. The pupils had learned well; now practised what was preached to the point of embarrassing their masters. A second feud among professionals resulted in the formation of United South of England XI. United South and the England XI each made four further visits. Superiority was restored partly by restricting the numbers of the opposition. Further testimony to Durham's rise.

Security men kept night vigil on the ground when Darlington hosted the England XI in 1866. As insurance against bad weather the club offered three-day tickets for five shillings. Shops closed to swell the attendance. Park Street was divided into first, second and third-class sections, evidence that cricket now appealed to a wide section of society. Clarke had died but his ideal lived on. The match was lost but the £100 profit helped obtain a new ground at Feethams. It was no small undertaking. Silas Usher was contracted for £75 to "par and level...stub and cut down all the ridge and all the trees and also cut away a hill on the south side of the ground next to the River Skerne and make that portion of the ground on a level with the ground to be played upon".

Sun-kissed Feethams was scene of England's last appearance in 1870. "Looking upon the whispering trees on either side, the fine old steeple of St. Cuthbert's, the bright costumes of the ladies, and the jolly holiday faces all around, one could scarcely help thinking that no better study for a picture of a cricket match ever offered itself." United South were next to visit Feethams. A day heightened by the presence of W.G.Grace. 'The Lion of the North' had padded purposefully to the wicket for All England in 1847, a thick-set, trim-whiskered farmer's son: George Parr, greatest batsman of his time. 'The Champion' strode imperiously to the wicket for United South in 1873, a muscular, short-bearded doctor's son: William Gilbert Grace, greatest cricketer of his time.

Harry Reynolds (43) and Harry Thompson (46) helped XVIII Darlington make 197. At a quarter past five silence fell upon the assembly awaiting Grace. It was high noon for Tommy Barnes, a heaven-sent opportunity for Darlington's pro to make his name. For a time W.G. "did not make much out of the bowling of Barnes". Spectators sensed a shift in control when Grace, "warming to his work, began to add to the score". He then aimed a big hit off Barnes and was caught in the outfield. Tommy was crowned with the crest of his career. United South trailed by eight. A larger gathering attended the second day. "He is almost certain to be in again this afternoon," the press assured. He was not. An even larger crowd filled Feethams on the third day in fevered anticipation. Darlington left Grace a target of 162. He made 57, mostly singles, but the homesters triumphed by 31. Fame was short-lived for 24-year-old Tommy Barnes. Four months later he died of typhoid taking his

heaven-sent glory with him. His passing coincided with a new phase in Durham's history. An era heralded in by Grace.

The flowering of club cricket

A sudden flowering of new clubs was proof All England's green fingers induced vigorous growth. Of course cricket did not blossom in a wilderness. Clarke was shrewd but could not foresee his venture would coincide with three major socio-economic factors in the north-east. The readiness is all. Durham's population trebled in the first half of the century. Wherever a coal-owner sunk a shaft 5,000 souls soon occupied a grid of grey-slated cottages within lurching distance of thirty beer shops. Strong economic growth was a second factor. The two provided clubs with natural resources: people and money.

A third factor, less easy to quantify, was the spread of evangelicalism. Firmly established by 1825, evangelicals were soon central to life in the coalfield. Their influence was considerable, a hewer of coal as likely to be converted as the colliery owner. Evangelicals actively promoted cricket, perceived it an ideal school in which to learn fair play and observe rules, a playground where society could mix. Integration was increasingly possible as a reduction in working hours made cricket more accessible to working men. One aim of Norton's 1847 reformation was to "bring together on one common and friendly footing the different classes of Society." Many of lower status were indifferent to the movement but accepted its moral code once integrated into cricket's ethos. Anglican influence, less marked, was manifest in the appearance on the field of 'muscular Christians'. Clergymen formed clubs, donated equipment, worked religiously in committee. Less altruistic, Canon Firth and Rev Lowes were match pros. Such pecuniary peculiarities apart, Gospel influence helped reduce gambling and improve behaviour. The term 'it's not cricket' became a euphemism for unfairness. There were still occasional outbreaks of unruliness but generally a more edifying spirit prevailed. Clergy and two army generals were among spectators at Bishopwearmouth in 1848. Twenty-five years later those watching Haswell play Lizzie Colliery were mostly miners whose conduct was "courteous and harmonious". A far cry from the "savage ignorance" of the colliers noted by Wesley.

Clubs began the season with a field day, usually a Married v Single match. Play in the 1840s began at nine and continued until eight. Two decades later ten until seven was the norm. By the 1870s it was mid-day until six. In twenty-five years the hours of play reduced by half. It became difficult to complete two-innings-a-side so incomplete matches were decided on first innings totals. A match might drift aimlessly when it was clear neither side could complete a second innings. Gradual acceptance of half-day Saturday working in the 1850s opened the way for Saturday cricket. Within a decade it was the norm.

Victorian leisure pursuits had to be uplifting and edifying; had to promote strength of character to serve the national need. When Stockton Institute formed one newspaper hoped they

would "eschew match playing, which is the bane of nearly all cricket clubs, and entails a great loss of time and money to no useful purpose". It urged them to concentrate on theory and practice so "the judgement and the faculties of the mind will be exercised and the health of the body ensured". Fortunately this stultifying concept did not prevail. However it is worth noting some Victorians believed you could play cricket without one side being pitted against another. There was still a random element about cricket, it had yet to establish a firm pattern.

A splendid welcome awaited a visiting side. On a bright morning in 1849 Thornley were met by their hosts on the leafy outskirts of Sedgefield. A brass band and banners led them to the 'Dun Cow Inn' where breakfast of chops, kidneys, ham and sausages awaited their attentions. Dinner was served in a tent on the ground at two. Food was a major ingredient of their day, particularly after an arduous journey. Take Darlington at Durham City in 1850. Having breakfasted at five, batted once and fielded through two City innings, they refused to go in a second time because they "wanted their dinner". (It was half-past five, after all.) On reaching a nearby tavern "all idea of coming to a lingering death by starvation was speedily dissipated." So, too, any idea of Darlington batting a second time. It was not unknown for over-indulgence to produce listless afternoon cricket. Match over, they gorged more food, quaffed more ale before the evening was given over to recitations, song or dancing if ladies were present. A *fracas* marred one evening at Bishopton when local roughs set upon a visiting player with fire-irons. The home players used their bats to repel the attack. A quaint example of the unifying influence of cricket.

Before the notion of the declaration was conceived improved batting skills (and a few pitches) resulted in sides batting all match. The Northumberland hunted leather all afternoon while Durham School amassed 353 in 1871. Arthur Bartholomew, a master at the school, made a "magnificent" 166 in three hours. Barnard Castle suffered more than most. Inside five years they conceded 465 for 9 to Middlesbrough, 402 for 7 to Darlington, and 359 for 9 at North Durham. Not a ball was struck in reply. It was dispiriting but with no concept of a declaration what else could locals do? In First-class cricket pragmatic captains foreshortened an innings by ordering their batsmen to hit their wicket. The trend continued until 1888 when the county committee, anticipating next year's MCC reform, passed a resolution to allow clubs declare their innings closed.

A comparison of pre-1847 totals with those in 1847-73 confirms improving batting skills and pitches that, until 1849, were neither swept nor rolled during a match. Totals of 30-or-less decreased from 24% to 19%. Three-figure totals increased from 6% to 25%. Stockton made 250 in 1850 which Darlington raised to 312 before Durham School's 353. Obviously, individual scores increased in ratio. The first recorded 50 was in 1836. "Dangerous hitter" Tom Darnton scored the first known century in 1856, Tom Hornby the second in 1862. Three weeks later William Halton took five hours to score 125, all run. Outstanding feats when only one side in eight reached a hundred. Bartholomew's 166 remained the highest for twelve years. It would take an England batsman to surpass it.

The concept of batting averages dates back to 1793.²⁶ Stockton's 1853 batting averages were printed in *Bell's* nine years after the newspaper began to publish them. The local press printed Durham City's 1868 batting averages. Not outs were deemed completed innings. Averages were not expressed as a decimal. After computing the average whole number, the 'remainder' was shown in a separate column. There were no statistics for the poor trundler.

Professionals advertised their services in *Bell's Life* and Lillywhite kept a register of those seeking an engagement. Pros were given a benefit, gifts and talent money. Their number in the north-east was sufficient in 1867 to form a Pro XI minus Stockton's 'cracks'. One club fielded four pros in 1850. This was too much for the high-minded. They did not mind a professional teaching the young. On the field, however, they dominated, stifled the involvement of club players and "destroyed the power of self-reliance so essential to a cricketer". Clubs sucked a professional's last drop of blood in return for his hire. Jack Jones, FA Cup medal winner with non-league Spurs in 1901, was paid £1 a week by Stockton in 1893. Apart from taking wickets, Jones had to cut and roll the field *as directed*, maintain fencing and seating. He had to ensure nets, practice wickets and quoits ground were in good condition each evening. He had to prepare match wickets, roll them during intervals, look after the bats and lay on fresh water, soap, towels, brush and comb for visiting teams and members. For away matches he had to pack players' bags and send them to the station. Oh, and look after the horse.

A number of Clarke's men were engaged. Tom Hayward, uncle of future England batsman of the same name, was at Bishop Auckland. Frail-looking Tom did not enjoy the best of health but he was the finest English batsman of his day, a graceful driver and quick on his feet. Durham University hired 'Foghorn' Jackson as tutor. Anderson and Iddison were at Stockton, Martin McIntyre at Sunderland and Luke Greenwood at Darlington. Other First-class cricketers included David Eastwood, William Copeland (both Sunderland) and Harry Reynolds (Darlington). David Buchanan, leading amateur slow bowler and a founder of Warwickshire, was at Sunderland in 1880.

Scores and Biographies states Joy was engaged for 18 years by Stockton, probably on a match basis. Born of farming stock in 1826 at Preston Bottoms, Knaresborough, Joy was six feet tall with classical features and dark hair sweeping to the nape of his neck. Clubs that barred him from playing against them were quick to invite him to play for them. Joy, who played eight times for Yorkshire, was a shrewd cricketer who dismissed the best with fast right-arm delivered from a low action. Seventy per-cent of his victims against touring sides were bowled. Joy could score quickly, particularly against slow bowling, was strong on the leg and drove powerfully. He once hit a ball such an immense distance downwind they ran seven. Joy retired when ironmaster Tom Vaughan, patron of Middlesbrough CC, appointed him keeper at Gunnergate Hall in 1865. Admirers presented "good old Jonathan" with £121 and a gold watch.

²⁶ Attributed to Samuel Britcher, official scorer of MCC. [Footnote not included in published text]

Engaging a professional was no affront to Victorian respectability. The work ethic was central to their thinking. Most were labouring men and ideal for arduous trundling. There was no shortage of applicants for they could earn more from a summer engagement than a year's mundane toil. Clubs were coy about payments and many engagements were cloaked under the term 'ground-keeper'. Bishop Auckland denied Kaye was pro but "being a working man the club pays for his services in a match". Professionals earned a reputation for squandering their wages on drink. Early Durham pros seem exempt from the charge though there were later exceptions. Barnard Castle terminated Jim Martin's contract "owing to his unsatisfactory and unaccountable conduct". South Shields sacked Dennison for going "absent without leave" and Colquhoun for "verbal assault on two members".

Few pros were Durham men. Darnton a notable exception. Of others Tommy Murdock's bowling, as mean as it was lethal, was "dreaded for many years". In 1876 he sent back seven batsmen in 25 balls to rout Durham City for nine. A mason by trade, Murdock's reputation for arrogance and vociferous appealing probably says more about his ability than temperament. Tommy Reah, "very useful left-handed bowler" at Durham City and Barnard Castle, got wickets with what local scribes termed 'peculiars'. Bob Proctor was expert at the north country game of knurr and spell, an even better bowler. City were forced to engage him in 1868 to retain his services.

What shall we say of Proctor? He is the perfect cure,
Who has won us many a victory by bowling swift and sure.
His fame has travelled far and wide; he won his spurs that day
When he played against All England, and hit Freeman's balls away.²⁷

Over-arm bowling was legalised in 1864. The introduction of boundaries twenty years later resulted in an immediate decline in fielding skills. When all runs had to be run out clubs practised fielding seriously. Absence of practice nets concentrates a fielder's mind wonderfully well for a well-struck cricket ball travels a long way if no hedge halts its progress.

According to Tom Hornby most fields were "rough, ragged and grass grown". Newcastle Town Moor was cut up by artillery and galloping horsemen. "Cricketers have to look all over the moor to find a suitable pitch, or one where they are not likely to get half-killed on account of the bumpy ground". Having found a good pitch it was used until bare. There were fearful injuries. When Rev W.A.Hunter was hit on the nose a piece of bone "was found embedded three-eighths of an inch in the leather". Gloves were not commonly used until the 1870s yet Darlington presented gloves to their top batsman in 1849. Keeping wicket was equally dangerous. Clubs unable to afford gauntlets had no specialised wicket-keeper. When a bowler finished his over he did wicket-keeping duties from a prudent distance. This explains why scorecards credit bowlers with wickets and stumpings. Long-stop was crucial to restrict the number of byes off balls that darted or lifted

²⁷ Extract from poem written and recited by a member at Durham City's Annual Dinner, 5 October 1869.

venomously. North Durham pro James Robinson bowled so fiercely that even two long-stops failed to prevent a large number of byes. Morton apart, other noted wicket-keepers were Edward Rake (Durham City), Blythe (Darlington) and Halton who, according to Lillywhite, "ought to have been at the top of the tree".

Players' subscriptions in the 1860s ranged from 5/6d to a guinea. Stockton had over 100 members in 1853 and Sunderland had 275 in 1868. Extra revenue was raised from sports meetings and concerts but clubs still relied heavily upon patronage. The nobility gave land or paid field rent. Quaker Charles Pease gave generously to Darlington, paid extra if no liquor was sold on the ground. Clubs, in turn, were charitable and compensated members out of work.

Wider public appeal forced clubs to adopt a broader, more liberal structure. Senior sides now fielded at least half who were skilled workers. When Chester-le-Street re-formed in 1865 the majority were working men and their rules were "slightly amended in favour of young members". Of course the affluent retained control in what Henry James called "the essential hierarchical plan of English society". Chester's match with Whitburn in 1867 provides example. It was staged at Lambton Park "by kind permission" of the Earl of Durham whose family sat alongside the family of Sir Hedworth Williamson, MP, captain and benefactor at Whitburn. Arrangements were supervised by "obliging house-steward" Mr Wrotton. Domestics and estate workers mingled among spectators. Sir Hedworth requested an extension of play. All agreed. Match over, Chester gave three cheers for Sir Hedworth; the whole assembly did likewise for the Earl. Order prevailed. Proceedings were ritualised and the dramatis personae knew their lines to perfection.

Clubs with professionals, if not always successful, at least maintained status. Stockton far exceeded that. Dr Richardson led a cricketing Odyssey on which they conquered clubs from Bradford to Edinburgh. Success was costly. The argosy foundered and sank into a sea of oblivion.

Stockton bred exceptional cricketers. Their Juniors (equivalent to a 2nd XI today) humiliated Hartlepool by an innings in 1853. T.W.Hornby, then 21, scored 69 and took all ten wickets.

The Stockton XI (eight being striplings) formed a great contrast to the tall, well-whiskered Hartlepool XI, and it appeared almost absurd for them to oppose such stalwart-looking men, but the match showed clearly what regular practice, on a good ground, will do.

Tom Hornby, an auctioneer, was one of the legendary 'Three Toms'. A slightly-built, free-hitting left-hander, he was master of the draw to leg and "wonderfully clever in placing the ball". Flaxen-haired Tom Darnton, who opened against UE XI when just 17, thrilled with bold batting. He was persistently criticised in Lillywhite for a favourite lofted shot and was mainly engaged as a bowler. Their career achievements ran parallel. Both played at Lord's against MCC in 1861 and for an England XI v

Surrey in 1864; both were born in Durham and represented Yorkshire. The third Tom was Robinson, a bluff, hearty butcher and powerful hitter. For all his bulk he was swift between the wickets and reputed to bowl as fast as 'Foghorn' Jackson. A fine innings at Edinburgh earned him an inscribed bat that Gilbert Robinson presented to the club in 1953.

All three were protegés of Tommy Marshall. So was Edward Barratt, slow left-arm with an immense break. Ted, not surprisingly as the sixth of eight children, was a late developer. He was 26 when he stunned AE XI with 7 for 24 in 1870. Hayward, Anderson, Tom Emmett and Bob Carpenter each succumbed to his guile, the latter brilliantly caught and bowled off "a regular burster". Barratt was engaged at Longsight, Manchester, then was taken onto Lord's ground staff. He had a sensational First-class debut with 8 for 60. He moved to The Oval and captured 790 wickets, 176 in 1883. Barratt was the first Durham cricketer to attain national acclaim by taking all ten Australian wickets in 1878, a feat that earned £5 out of the 'gate' receipts.

Success was inevitable with such high quality players. Oozing confidence bubbled into arrogance as Dr Richardson taunted Parr that Stockton "had licked Eleven of All England." The doctor ruffled more than Parr's feathers as success fermented into heady thoughts of infallibility. Stockton protested angrily when time was called when in a strong position against Yarm. Yarm were disgusted by the behaviour of "the principal supporter of Stockton [who] had bet a few paltry half-crowns on the issue". Stockton did not turn up for the return thereby leaving Yarm with a heavy financial loss. Matters came to a head in 1864 at Portrack Lane where fencing behind the bowler's arm was coated with tar. The Northumberland made 104 before dinner. They took the field to discover that, while dining, each end had been whitewashed so the home batsmen could get a clearer sight of the ball. Stockton were castigated for "this dirty business." Their decline coincided with that moment.

Stockton were snared by their own success. Local clubs were reluctant to play them so they sought matches further afield. The second of two single wicket matches against Cambridgeshire was for £200-a-side. More match professionals were needed to operate at that level. They cost money. As did extra travel. Dr Richardson spoke of club debts in 1857. Finances were said to be "healthy" in 1864 but little cricket was reported. The 'crack' players departed and the club was defunct in 1869. Brickmakers took over the ground. Eighteen months later Dr Richardson died.

Darlington began to dominate in 1862 when John Berry was pro alongside W.A.Chamberlain, the Waltons, burly Bill Smith and young Harry Thompson. When Reynolds was engaged in 1871 the side included three Mewburns, the youngest destined for fame. Durham City's early success did not last. Second Durham City emerged in 1862 through the initiative of Dick Weatherall, verger at Durham cathedral. The two clubs amalgamated as Durham United City in 1863. Proctor, Tom Hutton (jnr), Donald McLean and John Adamson ensured a brighter future. A 60-line burlesque on

"the doings of the cracks in eighteen-sixty-nine" was recited at the end-of-season dinner.

...To beat our wicket-keeper, all England will defy,

For the gloves are worn by Donald, so quick of hand and eye;

Tynemouth will long remember his score of eighty-four,

His prowess with the willow increases more and more.

A rising bat is C. E. Barnes, although without a doubt

Our 'Better late than never' friend too often has been run out.

Of maiden overs many a one bowled Adamson last year,

But now another maiden has bowled him off - that's clear.

In spite of this mis-chance, he's played when'er he could

And in the latest of our games last at the stumps he stood.....²⁸

"A feeble ditty" admitted the author yet it provides glimpses of their frailties and abilities. One imagines the 'Dun Cow Inn' and autumn sun sliding below a window vaguely discernible through a haze of tobacco smoke. A haze in which all sobriety will pall. At each successive line a face flushes with embarrassment. Ruddy cheeks fall back laughing like so many Toby jugs. Innocent pleasures of blushing boys in men's bodies, distilling forever the spirit of cricket. An elixir to warm the heart through old age.

Bishopwearmouth merged with, and moved to the field of, Hendon Terrace in 1850 to become Sunderland CC. Ground rent was £12 a year and it cost 25 shillings "to mow, chain and remove grass, and roll". Club strength lay with Paul Smith, J.W.Peacock and Tom Sharpe, said to be second-fastest in England when appointed pro in 1862 at thirty shillings a week. Yorkshire players Eastwood and Bob Clayton were match pros in the 1870s alongside John Cummings, Charles Jopling and Harry Squance. Eastwood, Harry Scurr and T.K.Veitch, later at Surrey, were selected for England Colts.

Sunderland left the Blue House Field, moved to Holmeside then Chester Road, one of many grounds built by Silas Usher who laid out Ashbrooke, the crown of a distinguished career. By then Sunderland wore the black, red and gold of I Zingari instead of blue. Holmeside was near a railway. Story has it²⁹ that players used to scramble through a hedge to take a short cut along the line to the station. Rumour reached the station-master they did this to avoid paying for a ticket. Indignant players resolved to scotch the lie. They arranged for the secretary to buy tickets for their next away match. They took the short-cut as usual and boarded the train at the last moment. When the engine chuffed into motion they leaned out of the window and jeered the station-master who immediately blew his whistle to stop the train. It reversed into the station. When he strode to their carriage, cheering heads popped out waving their tickets at him!

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²⁸ Extract from poem written and recited by a member at Durham City's Annual Dinner, 5 October 1869.

²⁹ E. Watts Moses [ed]: To Ashbrooke And Beyond

Clubs had to contend with varied problems to get established. South Shields formed in 1850. Early years were blighted by lack of funds and the nuisance of Durham Rifle Corps doing drills on their field. One arrogant officer galloped on the wicket after £200 was spent on re-turfing. Irate members hurled balls and strong language to drive him off.³⁰ George Stoddart handled negotiations for the move in 1868 to Westoe where his son Andrew learned to bat. The family left when Andrew was nine. Fifteen years later A.E.Stoddart was England's most stylish batsmen. Westoe lost £30 in its first season. To raise funds they let the ground for sheep-grazing but proudly refused a fee from the Rifle Corps to hold a parade on the ground.

Barnard Castle moved from the Albert Ground to Woolhouse shortly before cholera claimed 143 souls in 1849. After moving to Baliol Street in 1863 they took advantage of the new cross-Pennine railway to play annual matches at Kirkby Stephen and Appleby. The matches were later staged at Great Musgrave on the occasion of the village rush-bearing ceremony. "A great throng attended the match" once the floral procession was over. It was a wonderful country occasion spiced by traditional ginger-bread tea, wrestling, pony racing and dancing.

Chester-le-Street endured a sickly infancy. Laid-up for five years, they re-organised in 1856 and played spasmodically until 1863. Time enough for the club image to be tarnished by daubing Houghton's carriage with filth and pelting them through the streets with stones and dirt. Under the Earl of Durham's patronage they returned in 1865 to the enchanting surrounds of Lambton Park beneath the grandeur of Lumley Castle. They were successful, too. Late at night after one victory "a splendid band marched before [the players] up the street which was crowded with people". 'Cestrians' returned to Mr Lowes' old field in 1876 when their spectators were threatened with trespass.

Bishop Auckland had sufficient funds in 1857 to engage Tom Hayward, sufficient courage to challenge Stockton supremacy. It was an 'important' match and surprisingly omitted from Scores and Biographies but, of course, it was difficult to get match details from distant parts. Stockton swaggered in with seven who had defeated Bradford by an innings. Bishop Auckland called up reinforcements: a pair of warring Reverends, Daniel Hayward, Iddison and 'Tearaway' George Tarrant, one of England's fastest. They made 71 against Darnton and Joy. Stockton's fielding was tight; not a bye conceded. Hayward and Iddison dismissed the visitors for 36. Bishop's fielding was tighter; not an extra conceded. Bishop advanced toward checkmate. Stockton's agitated attack grew ragged, sent down 13 wides. Needing 189 to win, Stockton were a perilous 32 for 4 when time was called. The quality of the match was underlined three weeks later when all but two 'cracks' joined forces in XXII Stockton's emphatic win over England XI. XXII Bishop Auckland defeated Cambridgeshire by 8 wickets in 1861, the first time a 'crack' county met a Twenty-two. Next year Bishop Auckland folded. They re-formed in 1863, hell-bent on retrieving former glory, but went a shade too far against Durham

³⁰ Clive Crickmer: Grass Roots (A History of South Shields Cricket Club, 1850-1984)

United City. First they tried to substitute local registrar J.C.B.Hendy for a player who had already batted. City refused. Bishop countered by replacing their umpire with Hendy who, with his side facing defeat, promptly timed out incoming batsman, coroner Crofton Maynard. Not the behaviour expected of a gentleman. Bishop Auckland waited long to regain prominence.

An unusual artefact was presented at West Hartlepool's inaugural field day in 1855: a silver flange with eleven chain links. The flange bears the name of club president, Charles Ward Jackson; each link inscribed with the name of the club's first eleven quoits champions. It is now in possession of Hartlepool CC, the name adopted when towns and clubs amalgamated in 1967.

William Burn hit so many balls over the north hedge Whickham made a special ladder to retrieve them. Formed in 1860, Whickham were listed in Lillywhite's *Guide* of 1862 the year they spent £5 on equipment, twelve shillings on ale. A match with Winlaton that year provides the first reference to coloured shirts. "The gay dresses of the ladies, combined with the white and blue of the cricket, giving the field a picturesque appearance".

Cricket dress had changed considerably. Minor club players dressed little differently than for work. Senior sides wore neckerchiefs and ties to white or coloured shirts. Trousers were white, some with coloured piping down the seams, and the well-educated sported plain or striped blazers. A variety of headwear included bowler hat, barge cap and the indigenous flat cap. Rev Williams favoured a pith helmet. A short-peaked cricket cap, often with monogram, was common by the 1880s. Fourteen clubs listed their colours in Lillywhite's *Guide* between 1868-98. Most wore shades of blue while Sedgefield sported red.

A bizarre costume took the field in 1872. Reduced working hours provided some release from toil. The notion of enjoyment became 'respectable'. Sedgefield answered demand for entertainment with boomerang-throwing long before aborigine cricketers played at Newcastle. The Clown Cricketers were more popular. Various troupes enlisted pros like Emmett and Murdock. "Amongst their number are very good cricketers and poor clowns, and very good clowns and poor cricketers." An odd assortment. A one-legged bowler. Odder still, a one-armed wicket-keeper. Clowns played "in all the glory of their costumes and 'war paint' and the exceeding grotesqueness of dress gave a very interesting aspect to the ground. Their amusing drolleries and mountebank antics kept the large company in one continued roar of laughter." They would not have amused Lambert. Nor, one suspects, 82-year-old Tommy Marshall.

Profit was at the root. Spectators loved it. The club secretary clapped his hands along with spectators when 4,000 filled Ashbrooke. Crowds jammed Durham's narrow streets to see The Clowns led by a brass band to the Racecourse ground. Local tradesmen profited. At a price. Clowns leapt from their brake to 'blackmail' them. Edward Castle, butcher, was held to ransom for return of a lump

of liver deftly purloined on the end of a stick. Mr Welsh, clothier, forked out to retrieve three fully-attired, tailor's dummies. The Clowns always staged an entertainment after a match. The day's proceeds at Durham amounted to £128, a good balance going to the City club.

Historians judge the period relatively happy and harmonious. Mid-Victorians, or at least the more fortunate among them, lived in a world demonstrably getting more comfortable. Cricket was the better for new grounds, improved transport, protective equipment, and the telegram; made more popular by provincial newspapers and photography. Comfort breeds indolence. *Durham County Advertiser* was alert to the situation: "Whilst clubs are increasing in number, I don't think there is a corresponding increase in efficiency". Cricket was in need of a firm prod forward. Better still, a strong drive. Dilution of purpose was stifling the game's robustness. The combined influences of Grace and his forthright batting, the working man and his abrasive edge, would prevent Durham cricket being a vacuum of hollow contests as pleasant diversion from toil.

Chapter Six.....Late-nineteenth century

So work the honey bees

Principal among late-nineteenth century north-east inventions were Swan's incandescent lamp and Parson's steam turbine. Less inventive yet more vital to poor folk in dreadful, over-crowded slums was growing philanthropic concern for their plight by the well-to-do. Durham's men of power were linked through marriage, friendship, cultural and leisure pursuits. Cricket was a particular favourite and some were club presidents. Players also held influential positions as solicitors, coroners, magistrates and schoolmasters. Allied to the enthusiasm of the clergy, the whole was a fortunate affinity that benefited the game and improved its organisation. Sometimes directly via patronage, other times as by-product.

J.J.Bailey was the mutton-chopped headmaster at Barnard Castle National County School, one of the first established for sons of the working class. His boys were "rough, uncouth and troublesome". Bailey played for Barnard Castle and believed cricket could exert upon them a civilising influence. He re-organised the school day so teachers and boys rose with the factory bell to attend lessons from 6 until 7.30. This enabled him incorporate a long period of recreation during which the boys played cricket. "As a consequence," reported Bailey, "crime reduced, attendance improved, and moral and intellectual development advanced by leaps and bounds."

Durham was by no means an equal society. Nor deeply riven by conflict. "Most people seem to have felt that they had better things to do with their time...than to concern themselves with issues of politics." Their daily round was lightened by simple pleasures. Wives made 'clippy' mats while the bairns were 'crouping their creels', playing marbles, or whipping spinning tops and their men playing quoits or pitch and toss. The odd Saturday was enlivened by trips to Newcastle on the colliery cart. Such strong communal spirit was evident at Stanhope's giant picnic, an occasion climaxed by a triangular competition for nearby clubs:

The crown of the hill presented a capital table for the various amusements of cricket, quoits, leaping, running and wrestling, and afforded a capital view of the River Wear and surrounding mountains. The day was fine with a strong, health-giving breeze blowing, and a large number of people, old and young, men and women, assembled to witness the sports and participate in the day's enjoyments...

George Jackaman captured this spirit in a four-verse lyric he penned when the Staindrop club re-formed in 1877 :

For bat and ball, then let us call, Leg pads, gloves and bails, Away, away to the close mown fields, O'er hills and through the vales; Now hit and run, mind! watch the ball, Be careful of your wicket, There's nothing on this earth so grand As a manly game of Cricket!32

Rural lives fleeting the time carelessly as they did in the golden world liable at any moment to assume a holiday humour. As when Mr Brown staked £20 to £10 that Mr Piers could not bowl him out inside twelve hours with any ball he cared to use. Onlookers at Bishop Auckland saw Piers arrive with a 27ounce pottery ball. Brown, equally resourceful, produced a bat as wide as a wicket. At ten past eleven Mr Brown took shelter between bat and stumps. At nineteen minutes past his bat, wicket and nerve were all shattered. And he was £20 the poorer.

An equally wholesome ethos prevailed in different surrounds on Tin Mill Heap Rec. The pitch, devoid of grass, concealed menacing 'shooters' and 'bumpers' followed as surely as night follows day. A bowler's only requirement was length. No need for finger spin. Mother earth bestowed all the tricks of a good club trundler.

> What a glorious sight it was to see a youngster, his sleeves rolled up, shirt hanging out, braces broken, stockings askew, facing up to 'expresses' with his home made 'willow' and the dreadful 'Smash' Snowball behind the bricks. What a joy when that grand sportsman Percy Freeman sent up a broken bat for the Blackfyne lads. I have seen the sides of Dr. Renton, Godfrey, Tommy Lambert and Jake Siddle rock with laughter as they watched the budding Hobbs and Jessops from the edge of the square. 33

Throwing a cricket ball contests remained popular. A good throw in Durham was around 100 yards. Setting aside Marsh's apocryphal 150 yards, the best recorded was 113 yards by A.A.Mewburn. That is until a world record throw at Durham Racecourse on Easter Monday, 1884. It was an animated occasion with freak shows, shooting galleries and 'shuggy boats'. "The screams of boys and girls, the firing of pistols, ringing of bells, bellowing of speaking trumpets and the noise of a dozen barrel organs all playing different tunes." Amid the cacophony Robert Percival threw a cricket ball 140 yards, 2 feet. Percival, pro at New Brighton, hailed from Shildon. He was unbeaten in over 20 competitions all over south Durham until debarred at Barnard Castle to allow other competitors a chance.

Club spirit was maintained when summer was over. Frozen rivers followed a drought in 1878. There was cricket on skates on the River Wear at Durham. Six batsmen were 'run' out.

³¹ Norman McCord: North East England: The Regions Development 1760-1960 [Batsford 1979]

³² In *Teesdale Mercury*, 22 August 1877

³³ John W. Stokoe, letter to *Consett* Guardian, 20 August 1953

Winters were warmed by social gatherings and novel entertainments ranging from a simple spelling bee to a concert at Seaham Harbour climaxed by an exhibition of moving waxworks. Bishop Auckland staged *A Spanking Legacy*, a popular farce acted by Old Stagers during Canterbury Week. Barnard Castle organised a *conversazione*: tea and coffee while members sang, danced and played chamber music. Their pro, George Brass, was among those who put on a play riddled with dreadful puns. "Can yi tell me why Brass is laik gate sneck?" "Doan't know." "Cos 'e's allus on t'wicket!" Mr Brass, senior, then exhibited his birds' eggs. Next year, his coins and medals. Such functions helped raise a few pounds for equipment. It now cost six shillings for a bat made all of one piece, more for those with whalebone- or cane-handles; six shillings for a ball; eight shillings for leg-guards and batting gloves; twelve shillings for wicket-keeping gauntlets.

Meanwhile the men of power arranged matches on a grand scale. Four thousand flocked to Sunderland on a blustery September day in 1878 to see the first overseas tourists:

...shortly before noon on the first day a stream of vehicles and pedestrians made their way along Chester Road to the scene of the struggle...The fielding ground was roped off, numerous seats were arranged in the reserved ground by the side of the pavilion, and marquees every here and there told that creature comforts had not been forgotten...The different players came out and took their preliminaries, cutting and driving the balls of aspiring amateurs in all directions...But, where was Spofforth? Everyone was anxious to see "the demon", but when the eleven turned out the melancholy rumour that he was not playing was confirmed...

The Australians were exhausted. Spofforth had trundled incessantly for 326 wickets. With only eight of a twelve-strong party fit, three local men completed their side. XVIII Sunderland made 59 but Tom Emmett's 8 for 41 restricted the Australian's lead to eighteen. Warm sun attracted 8,000 next day to see the weary Australians lose by 71. Different in 1880. Spofforth's 17 wickets sealed an innings victory. When the 'Cornstalks' played Yorkshire in 1882 three of the party went to watch Hartlepool. Bonner turned out for the home side and clubbed 63. Darlington wisely refused to let the others play.

Many clubs date their modern organisation from this period. Grounds were levelled, enlarged and enclosed. New features were installed: pavilions; piped water and telegraph boards; cycle tracks, croquet lawns and tennis courts. Investiture crowned on 13 June 1887 by the opening of Ashbrooke, the first with a telephone and sightscreens on wheels. A "commodious competitors' house was erected with all conveniences". The whole cost a staggering £11,454. New pro Fred Butler (qv) baptised the wicket with 186 not out, 123 of them in an hour.

The names of minor clubs bear testimony to their origin: Mainsforth Colliery, Washington Ironworks and Norton Bricklayers; Cockerton Coffee House and Cornsay Raggy Lads; Stockton Wesleyans, Greenside Temperance and Shiney Row Blue Ribbon Army. Kelloe Zulus emerged after the Battle of Rorke's Drift. Boldon Mysteries remain so. Most were of limited ability. Bowlers held

sway on poor pitches; batting mostly 'tip and run'. Eight 'ducks' in an innings were not uncommon. Even at a higher level, the ball ruled. Tom Mowbray and William Burn each took five wickets in five balls for Whickham. Darlington pro, Irwin Smith, was first to record 100 wickets in a season in 1887. It is possible others did so before bowling averages were published.

Seventeen club representatives met in Newcastle to arrange fixtures for 1882. If the scene resembled Paddy's Market they arranged 250 matches in two hours. Centralised organisation clearly saved time and expense so the meeting became a fixture in its own right. Clubs used this forum to standardise matters such as expressing averages as a decimal and agreeing that matches in 1887 would last at least four hours. By then many clubs ran two elevens. So began the convention of 1st XI and 2nd XI club fixtures at home and away on the same day.

Pitches continued to improve thanks to the faithful, leather-shod horse pulling a roller. When Darlington hit a record 402-7 in five hours against Barnard Castle in 1885 it was the first time five 50s were recorded in an innings. Batsmen, now scoring at a-run-a-minute, gained some ascendancy over bowlers. The following table gives some idea of the change:

	RANGE OF CLUB TOTALS DURING THE 19th CENTURY							
	Per-centage totals recorded each decade							
	to 1829	<u>1830s</u>	<u>1840s</u>	<u>1850s</u>	<u>1860s</u>	<u>1870s</u>	1880s	<u>1890s</u>
0 - 39	64	40	27	28	24	24	21	14.3
40 - 69	28	44	44	35	39	36	32	24
70 - 99	8	10.5	22	23	21	20	19	22
100 - 149	-	5.5	6	11	12	15	17	23
150 - 199	-	-	1	2	3	3.7	6	11
200 - 249	-	-	-	0.5	0.7	1	3	4.2
250 - 299	-	-	-	0.5	0.3	0.3	1.2	1.06
300 - 349	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.4	0.27
350 - 399	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.2	0.16
400 and over	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.2	0.01

W.G.Grace revolutionised batting. "He turned the old one-stringed instrument into a many-chorded lyre," as Ranjitsinhji famously mused. A comparative, if mortal, figure emerged at Darlington in shape of Alfred Adolphus William Mewburn, 15 stones and six-feet-two-inches tall. Mewburn had played twice against All England as a teenager so he probably watched Grace at Darlington in 1873. Perhaps fired by ambition to emulate the great man Mewburn raised local batting skills to a new level. He reigned supreme for two decades after moving to Sunderland where the family ran a coal merchant business. A powerful cutter and strong on the leg, Mewburn was 24 when he scored three centuries and 1,000 runs in 1876. It took twenty-four years for another to reach that landmark. Mewburn hit the first century for the county in 1884 and was first to record ten hundreds.

He played against the Australians and appeared for United South of England. Mewburn often turned out for other clubs under the pseudonym, "A.A.Williams". An odd choice since he dropped the forename William and preferred to be known as A.A.Mewburn.

Mewburn was of that tradition of captains who utilised their skills only when they thought it necessary. On countless occasions he did not bat or else batted low in the order. Given a run-chase against tall odds, however, he would go in first and sweep his side to victory with ease. "His style was himself: cultured, confident and powerful."³⁴ Nor did Mewburn make full use of his bowling. In a match against Whitburn he took a wicket in his first over, a 'hat-trick' in his second then took himself off to allow them achieve a semblance of respectability.

Mewburn quit Sunderland for Seaham Harbour in 1889. Cordner, a local councillor, writes that Mewburn stood up at the AGM and said: "Gentlemen I am done with you. I will never play for you again." He was presented with a candelabrum "in appreciation of his efforts for 17 years" for Sunderland. Mewburn looked at the inscription and retorted, correctly, that it was *twenty* years since he first played for the club. Given the occasion and his standing in cricket, such an ungracious remark suggests rancour between the two. Cordner was also a local historian (some say gossip) and damned Mewburn "unpopular, a cad, and hideous to behold". Perhaps the councillor was party to information beyond a cricket field. True, Mewburn twice disputed umpire's decisions, once ordering his partner to depart after *he* had been given run out. Otherwise "there was nothing Mr Mewburn liked better than a good argument or a practical joke - except to win a cricket match". The cause of their estrangement remains secret but it might be significant that Mewburn was closely associated with the Marquess of Londonderry, colliery owner and president of Seaham. Whatever the truth, Mewburn and Sunderland were reconciled in 1893.

Batting records tumbled once Mewburn showed the way. He and J.B.Sparkes, "fit to have his name mentioned in the hearing of the great players of the south", added 242 for the first wicket in 1877. (Since they lived at 8 and 9 Clavering Terrace, might their partnership be the highest by next-door neighbours?) Bousfield (167) and pro Buckley put on 307 for Bishop Auckland's second wicket in 1887. Individual hundreds lost all rarity value. Eighteen are known in the glorious summer of 1887 when Joe Harrison and John Blenckley each hit a century in a match for Penshaw and, as we shall learn later, there were three hundreds in a massive Norton total in 1889.

Three other, big individual scores are worth mention. Scarborough skittled Durham City for 30 in 1883 so City pro Walter Sugg asked brother Frank to bolster their batting for the return. Frank went in at 8 for 1 and "hitting in the most brilliant manner" made 191 before being seventh out at 294.

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 $^{^{34}}$ R. Curry : unpublished personal memories of Sunderland cricket and rugby.

³⁵ The Cordner Manuscripts (in Sunderland Library) Handwritten observations and biographies of Sunderland notabilities.

Not for Sugg the quiet life. Earlier that year Frank made his Yorkshire debut, went on to represent Derbyshire, Lancashire and England. He played soccer for four League clubs and excelled at a dozen other sports from billiards and weight-lifting to swimming. Walter joined Derbyshire in 1884.

Sugg's score surpassed Bartholomew's record 166 that, earlier in 1883, was so nearly eclipsed by Ernest Bartholomew Brutton. Brutton was the archetypal *Boy's Own* hero, "the chap that lived at school nine schoolboy lives".³⁷ His exploits for Durham School were of epic proportions. He took 8 for 6 including a 'hat-trick' in the first over of a match against the University; went in at 16 for 6 in the return, hit 62 not out and took 7 for 15; then strode in at 17 for 5 against St. Peter's, York to flog 163 and almost surpass the record. All in the space of three weeks. Brutton, who later played cricket for Cambridge and rugby for England, was vicar of Aylesbeare when he died in 1922. Sugg's record was obliterated in 1888 by Bob Bousfield's mammoth 245 not out for Durham University in their highest total of 442. Sunderland did not bat. Within days the county committee ruled that clubs could declare an innings closed. A year passed before evidence of a club doing so.

Most prominent players were from the professions. Reliable Darlington opener, J.A.Pease, was educated at Tottenham Quaker School and Cambridge. Pease hit three hundreds in six weeks in blissful 1887, carrying his bat for 121 out of 168. He was a wonderful fielder. So brilliant was his catch off Grace in the outfield that W.G. made a detour on his way to the pavilion to shake his hand. Pease was still playing at 74 though appearances were limited after he entered parliament. Liberal Chief Whip and cabinet member, he was created Lord Gainford in 1916.

Rev W.B.Weighell took up a living at Leadgate shortly after hitting 197 not out for Brighton but rarely produced his "terrific smiting powers" for Consett. Weighell bowled fast round-arm for Sussex and did the 'hat-trick' in his first over at Lord's. He was in the light blue of Cambridge in the 1868 'Varsity match when Bartholomew represented the dark blues. John Adamson, J.P., was involved at Durham City for 69 years. He was an enthusiastic, exhilarating influence on the field, "the kindest friend City had ever known". Adamson was obsessive in his search for budding talent in surrounding pit villages. The best he unearthed was on his own hearthside.

Dr Arthur Abraham captained North Durham after opening a practice in Gateshead in 1876. A dashing bat, in fact a total all-rounder for he bowled fast round-arm, fast underhand *and* kept wicket. Abraham was a fiery character from Limerick, his pseudonym "Dr. Maharba" doubtless rooted in Irish whimsy. He was extremely popular; an effervescent showman who caught catches one-handed behind his back. Even his simplest acts proved entertaining. One day he saw Darlington dismissed cheaply so he telegraphed the news to Ashbrooke. "All out for 38. Sure win for Sunderland." Darlington won by eleven! He and his identical twin played for Limerick against United South. The doctor went

³⁶ W. R. Bell: Fifty Years of Durham County Cricket Club (1882-1931)

to the wicket after his brother was out to be faced by irate W.G.Grace protesting angrily that he was trying to bat twice.

C.W.Alcock and R.H.Mallett travelled in opposite directions to find fame as administrators. Indefatigable Charles Alcock was born in Sunderland. He devoted over 25 years each as secretary of Surrey, the Football Association and editor of Lillywhite's *Cricket Annual* and was largely responsible for the first meeting in this country between England and Australia. Alcock, a steady bat, has the quaint distinction of being the only Durham-born cricketer to captain France against Germany!

Charming, gentle Harry Mallett is central to this story. R.H.Mallett was born in Lincolnshire in 1858. He fell in love with his adopted county and became "the sun and centre" of Durham cricket. Mallett was a correct bat and intelligent lob bowler for Darlington and Seaham Harbour. A fitness fanatic, he once played a rugby match and FA Cup-tie on the same day. His banking career divorced him from Durham but not cricket. Mallett was the major force behind the Minor Counties formation; organised Australian and South African tours to England; and was manager of MCC in West Indies in 1929-30. He was also manager of four West Indies' tours, one of which indirectly caused a sensation in Durham.

In 1887, however, Mallett's thoughts centred upon cricket in Durham. Clubs were better organised but he was acutely aware that play lacked vitality. Harry mused upon this while playing his beloved cello. If soulful descending notes echoed the game's decline, Harry was far from melancholic. His mind whirled with reforming ideas. Ideas revolving around one pivotal word: competition. Competition, intrinsic to Victorian middle-class principles now that foreign nations challenged Britain's manufacturing supremacy. Durham's cricket was about to step into the modern age.

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 $^{^{37}}$ Epilogue delivered by E. Rudd, Brutton's chum, at Durham School Speech Day, July 1883.

Cup of forbidden whine

Cricket had lost much of its Georgian lustiness. The press wrote of "decadence" and "the languishing condition of the game". Mallett's solution was to introduce a knock-out cup competition. There were competitions in the south of the county already so his idea was not original. His vision was. Now Durham CCC secretary, Mallett opened competition to all clubs in the county. Twenty club representatives met in the 'Three Tuns Hotel', Durham on 28 November 1887. All but one voice were in tune with his proposal. Twenty-four names went into the hat for a zoned First Round draw of the Durham County Challenge Cup:

NORTH

Hetton Lyons v North Durham South Shields v Whitburn Consett v Philadelphia Jarrow v Ryhope Byes: Durham City

> Hendon Medomsley Sunderland

SOUTH

Stockton Clarence v Darlington
Sedgefield v Bishop Auckland
Crook v Barnard Castle
Coundon v Stockton
Byes: Norton
Ushaw Moor
Shildon St. John's
West Hartlepool

Competition was keen - but not the way Mallett envisaged. It was more cut-throat than the Whitechapel murders. An Appeals Committee arbitrated all summer on wrangles and protests. Clubs withdrew when ordered to replay drawn matches they looked likely to lose, others objected to the state of opponent's pitch. Philadelphia objected to the ground at Medomsley who refused to change unless granted £10 compensation. The Committee inspected the field, listened to both clubs before ordering the match to go ahead. Philadelphia won before 1,000 spectators. Freak thunderstorms on the eve of Round Three caused widespread flooding. Two ducks drowned at Fishburn! Barnard Castle travelled to West Hartlepool's Foggy Furze field to find the match off. It sparked unceasing discontent. Their hosts turned up an hour late for the replay. Barnard Castle needed 37 to win at stumps. West claimed victory but the visitors protested that matches had to be played to a finish and, as West were late, they had not played five hours cricket. Another replay was ordered at 'Barney' on condition West got the 'gate' receipts. When that was not completed the home side claimed victory as West were late again. A further replay was ordered, raising doubts if the competition would be finished by Christmas. Barnard Castle's patience was stretched to the limit. Seven of their 16 fixtures were cancelled owing to the chaos. Twice players got leave of absence from work to catch the 9 am train; twice they waited for West to arrive. Barnard Castle threatened to withdraw from the competition and West Hartlepool were disqualified.

After all that Barnard Castle lost the semi-final to Philadelphia (hereafter written frequently as Philly). Stockton won the other semi-final but not before Durham City appealed against the state of

opponents, Shildon St. John's, who saw F.J.Wright take 6 wickets with foot-high fast under-arm that "broke the width of the wicket". For the next three weeks they practised against under-arm. When the Shildon men turned up for the cup-tie Wright was absent. Instead they were bamboozled by Arthur Welch who bagged seven wickets with leg-breaks. Three were stumped, four caught at point. Welch, who knew about their spying mission, found it "amusing to watch their efforts to play another style of bowling they had not previously seen". The final on 22 September was not completed in a day. Welch grabbed another seven to dismiss Philadelphia for 80. "Terribly swift" W.H.Lee replied with 9 wickets for a lead of nine. Philly were 62 for 4 at close. Time yet for a bizarre end to the competition. On a bitterly cold October day Philadelphia won by 24. They were allowed to substitute a player who had batted in the first innings. Stockton's Dowson, perhaps hibernating for winter, failed to turn up.

Clubs adopted a self-centred attitude far removed from the notion of cricket as a refined, gentlemanly game. If Mallett was frustrated the events are no surprise to those who knew Durham folk. Hardship and dreadful pit disasters had bred a determination to fight for survival and an innate wariness against impending doom. Confined to a coal-face stall a pitman and his 'marra' learned independence. In essence cricket was little different to their daily hewing matches to ensure prices were held down. They "competed with each other in pride, for price, through a culture which celebrated the marks of manliness and skill as one". *Teesdale Mercury* called the Committee "a parcel of old women" but they dealt fairly with all appeals. Justice was seen to be done with honest openness, another hallmark of Durham men. Mallett was satisfied on two counts. Robustness of a kind was revived and necessary funds were raised for club and county.

Things ran more smoothly in 1889. The Committee strictly enforced a rule that a player must live or work within a three-mile radius of his club. Even Mewburn was not allowed to play for Seaham Harbour. Powerful Norton gained four crushing victories before defeating West Hartlepool in the final. Norton made history on their royal progress by scoring 549 in five-and-a quarter hours, the highest club total in Durham. They began at 2.15 pm, reached 100 in seventy-five minutes. Williams cut viciously until dismissed at 209. J.F.Whitwell then opened out in masterful style and Norton moved from 200 to 400 in a hundred minutes. Darlington bravely faced the onslaught, "taken altogether their fielding was very good". The outcome was anti-climax. The men in green and gold conceded the match. They were unable to continue the following Saturday because it was set aside for their professional's benefit.

NORTON

J.F.Whitwell	b Pease	165
H.S.Crosby	c Dixon, b Raps	25
R.Williams	st Dixon, b Pease	124
A.B.Crosby	c sub, b Spence	113
W.F.Whitwell	c Spence, b Raps	42
T.Laverick	b Spence	4
A.R.Mackay	b Spence	4

J.Rowntree	b Raps	28
T.Hill	not out	9
G.Newby	c Smeddle, b Raps	7
W.Laverick	b Spence	
	extras	16
	TOTAL	549

Sunderland were surprise absentees in 1890, conserving expense after laying out a fortune on Ashbrooke. This time the cup was rich in romance and drama. Norton were favourites. "It will be a long time before any other club in Durham can hope to defeat them," forecast the press. Darlington did so ten days later. 'Giant killers' West Stanley and Sherburn reached the semi-finals. The latter faced Whitburn and prolific T.K.Dobson. He got a 'duck'. Sherburn supporters cheered "loud enough to wake the seven sleepers. You would have thought they had got rid of W.G.Grace for hats, caps and sticks were thrown into the air...though they should try to use milder terms for it is not pleasant to hear such hearty English that one can almost fancy the air turn dark." Success was momentary. Whitburn met resurgent Stockton in the final at Norton. It was another triumph for Welch who hit a hundred and had match figures of 43.5 - 14 - 75 - 12. (Five-ball overs replaced fourball in 1889 but the Challenge Cup introduced six-ball overs twelve years before they were adopted nationally.) Again the match was not completed in a day. Norton were at home the following Saturday so the final was concluded 30 miles away at Ashbrooke. A bugler greeted the fall of each Whitburn wicket and trumpeted Stockton's win by an innings.

Sixteen clubs competed in all three years. Add Sunderland and we have a fairly accurate list of the leading clubs: Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland, Consett, Crook, Darlington, Durham City, Hetton Lyons, Jarrow, North Durham, Norton, Philadelphia, South Shields, Stockton, Ushaw Moor, West Hartlepool and Whitburn. Twelve would be involved in the next evolutionary development.

The Challenge Cup heightened public interest. At the end of the 1890 season the Durham Committee judged it time to extend competition. The Cup was given over to minor clubs. A further proposal lay on the table :

That a cricket league be formed of not more than six selected clubs in each division of the county (north and south) to play home and home matches, the winners of each division to play home and home matches for the championship of the county.

Brave new world

George Parr and Ted Barratt shuffled off this mortal coil in 1891, their deaths a reminder that on All England's first visit Durham was a cricket backwater. The formation of Durham County Senior League swept Durham to the mainstream of the game's advance. Durham Senior League, as it would become in 1903, is the fifth-oldest cricket league in existence.³⁸ Two sections comprised Durham City, North Durham, Philadelphia, South Shields, Sunderland and Whitburn in the north; Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland, Darlington, Norton, Stockton and West Hartlepool in the south. One point was awarded for a win, a point deducted for a defeat, nothing for a draw. Challenge Cup winners could earn promotion to the league if they defeated the club with the poorest league record. Clubs reverted to their traditional fixtures when not on league duty.

Mallet's venture was not guaranteed success. A Northumberland league had just foundered and many viewed a league system with disdain :

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...league competitions sap the existence of healthy cricket and deprive the competitors of all true sportsmanlike feeling. (Letter in Newcastle Journal, 6 June 1890) ...league competitions dislocate more legitimate cricket in the neighbourhood.

(Letter in Newcastle Journal, 8 July 1890)
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If those opinions provoked misgivings, one doubts if Mallett conceived his offspring illegitimate or unhealthy. It got a cold reception. Not from critics but hail, sleet and snow. Sunderland and Norton won through to the play-offs. The first was twice rained-off. Norton won the second and were champions. Seven clubs had a professional. Norton recorded the first league 300; H.S.Crosby the first century; Fred Butler and A.B.Crosby each exceeded 300 runs. Welch was the most successful bowler and Charlie Sharp (North Durham) did the first 'hat-trick'. There was much to encourage Mallett. The quest for league points persuaded clubs to declare more often, attendances increased and the Challenge Cup stimulated competition among minor clubs. It was won by Consett but the challenge match to replace bottom club Philadelphia was cancelled.

Sunderland, again defeated by Norton in 1892, lost a third play-off when Darlington amassed 442. E.S.Laurie made 149 and forceful left-hander Jim Brown, on vacation from Eastbourne, hit 127. Son of a Gainford stone-mason, Brown played for Sussex in 1890. In 1894 Brown hit 194 in another huge Darlington total of 392 for 6. This was sheer purgatory for Coundon who endured the leather hunt after being dismissed for 12. Eight of their regulars had opted to attend a 'fives' match.

³⁸ Birmingham and District League formed on 30 November 1888. Bolton and District Association formed in the same year followed by North Staffordshire and District League in 1899 and Lancashire League (formerly North-East Lancashire) in 1890.

For all its growing popularity the game was beset by damaging social factors. Rapid rise in urban population and consequent need for housing land made it difficult for clubs to find town fields. Some had to disband because it was costly to re-locate out of town. It did not affect village clubs as rural population rose less steeply and kindly landowners leased fields. The 1892 coal trade dispute brought more hardship and reduced club memberships and 'gates'. Drunkenness increased as public houses multiplied. Unruliness spewed onto the field. Though not alone, Philly's followers got a bad name. Their "eccentric old men and empty-headed boys" lashed out with sticks and tongues against South Shields. On another occasion they threatened an umpire, "even the women" pelting him with mud. It was upon such unsavoury elements that the influences of clergy and Temperance Movement were of ultimate benefit.

In 1893 Mallett introduced a pyramid structure for the county's 76 affiliated clubs: 12 in the Senior League, 24 in a Junior League and 40 in the Challenge Cup, now organised on a league basis. All were integrated into a system of promotion and relegation. The Junior League comprised four geographical centres. North and south winners could challenge, and replace if they won, the bottom club in the relevant geographical section of the Senior League. The same applied for centre winners in the Challenge Cup and bottom clubs in the Junior League.

League cricket stimulated intense fervour. Philly's fanatics gained notoriety but there was no doubting their enthusiasm. All week their field swarmed with men preparing for a local 'derby' with Sunderland. Latest scores were relayed by telegram. Competition was keener as the skill-gap between clubs narrowed. Of eight title / relegation issues in 1894-95, five were decided on average-runs-per-wicket after two clubs finished level. Norton and Durham City were joint top in curious circumstances in 1894. West Hartlepool's innings came to a halt at 39 for 4 when the rest of that tardy team failed to turn up. West promised to concede the match if Durham City would continue when the

PRO-FILE (No. 2)

FREDERICK BUTLER

(b. Radcliffe-on-Trent, 29 Dec 1857; d. Sailors' Snug Harbor, Staten Island, New York, 26 Feb 1923) 45 matches for Nottinghamshire (highest 171), many in their championship years and a number while at Sunderland (1887-92). Accomplished bat who inherited the leg-hitting style of his uncle, George Parr. He stroked the ball "as though the bat possessed sensibility, his cuts and drives appeared to be just flicks which found gaps in the field". Rose to the big occasion, hitting 186* in opening match at Ashbrooke and taking 10 for 18 in 1892 benefit. Returned to Sunderland (1900-06). Was paid *all year round* as groundsman and coach, earning great reputation in latter rôle. Pro in New York (1885-86) where he returned in 1908 to join his brother.

Sunderland record: over 8,000 runs (av 30), 8 hundreds

others arrived. City agreed but failed to get the required runs for victory. City won after losing by six runs! However Norton won the group by virtue of superior average and beat Philly in the play-off to regain the title.

Sunderland were champions at last in 1895. Darlington and North Durham were reprieved from the relegation play-offs. Before leaving the area Mallett proposed a single division to enable the best compete regularly. The majority feared increased travel costs so the motion failed. It so angered Norton they resigned. As events turned out Mallett's plan was implemented because Stockton and Darlington were elected to North Yorkshire League. With Durham clubs added it was re-named North Yorkshire and South Durham League (hereafter NYSD).

Arthur Welch admitted a league system was more business-like but noted subtle defects. "It cuts short the career of many a cricketer who otherwise would continue the sport. The want of success for a few matches compels the Committee to leave out a player, or he drops the game rather than meet the critical spectators, and this is not good for the game." In other words it pruned out the 'duffers'. Welch regretted the loss of traditional fixtures at pleasant village grounds. Understandable, for it seems man and nature could co-exist amicably on a rural cricket field: "A cow was listlessly grazing on the high side when Jim took the ball in one hand extended over the animal's back."³⁹

The advent of league competition coincided with what became known as the 'Golden Age'. A period held in awe by cricket historians. A period when stylists learned the game on excellent public school pitches; when matches at Norton had "the character of a cricket garden party". Norton's fame was fanned by four men powerful in mind and body. Each educated at public school; each represented Durham, three as captain. The Crosby brothers were educated at Sherborne and Cambridge. Arthur Burgess Crosby, solicitor, Mayor of Stockton and NYSD president, usually headed the club's batting. Hugh Stowell Crosby was a fine off-side player and clever bowler. The Crosbys were at the hub of the county hierarchy. They embraced all that was new in cricket yet found it hard to relinquish old habits. Like Grace, these imperious amateurs believed spectators came to watch *them* bat. A year after the declaration was introduced A.B.Crosby did not declare when Norton amassed 549 in the Challenge Cup. Even six years after it was introduced the pair hogged the crease all afternoon while Norton made 414 for 7 against hapless Barnard Castle. A.B. hit 30 fours in 168; H.S. made 109. *Teesdale Mercury* condemned the run orgy as "a performance which can hardly be looked upon as sportsmanlike at the present day, when the object is to endeavour to win matches if possible".

The Whitwell brothers were educated at Uppingham. William Fry Whitwell, fine athlete and brilliant cover-point, hit freely and bowled fast right-arm. W.F. had undoubted class. He was another Stockton man to play for Yorkshire; he topped the bowling for Lord Hawke's side in the United States

³⁹ Consett & District Cricket Club handbook 1907: description of a catch by James Oliver on Consett's old field.

and represented the Gentlemen v Players. Joseph Fry Whitwell, a stubborn accumulator of runs, took his own life in 1932. Others prominent at Norton were bricklayer Joseph Rowntree who took all ten wickets in 1881, dashing Reg Williams and Dr H.E.Hoffmeister who made 693 (av 49) in 1895. Hoffmeister, house surgeon at Stockton Hospital, married Mary Page, sister of the Norton secretary.

Sunderland could not match Norton's honours but lost only five of their first 50 league games. Butler and Mewburn were remarkable talents; a third, Alleyne Burn, in the ascendant. Burn was tall and angular, a perfection of self-conscious good breeding. Fine rugby footballer and oarsman, there was a negligent air about all he did. He batted with leisurely poise, never better than during a lordly, undefeated 184 when he out-scored Elliot two-to-one in an unbroken partnership of 296. Effortless, seductive bowling lured unsuspecting batsmen to a *lorelei* doom. Away from the action Burn strolled languidly about the ground, hands in pockets, pipe aglow. Detached, distant, contemplative.

This sovereign trio was ringed by fine players: deceptively quick pro Davy Nichol, lightning stumper James Chrisp and H.S. 'Squashy' Squance, a gusty gale of humanity who hit sixes with a roar of triumph. Each segment of this elite circle was a personality and law unto himself, each performing in a manner intensely his own. Watching their lordly progress were the sons of Thomas Elliot, MP, one destined to be the club's greatest cricketer. Sunderland eventually, and reluctantly, granted membership to the less well-to-do. Exposed by their motley, men like shipyard-worker Isaac Robinson found the cost, the priggishness and the club's exclusivity a strain. Determination and love of cricket carried them through and, in time, they conquered feelings of social inferiority.

Left-armer Jenneson Taylor's lively sense of humour did not prevent him fretting for a decade over the words of brusque, Australian captain Warwick Armstrong: "You have a ground fit for a Test match, but you have not a pavilion." Taylor exorcised Armstrong's words, and at the same time honoured his mother's memory, by financing the addition of two wings to the pavilion. It was opened with a golden key in 1931 by H.D.G.Leveson-Gower who captained a team of England players with unforgettable initials: L.E.G.Ames, A.P.F.Chapman, F.E.Woolley, K.S.Duleepsinhji and R.E.S. Wyatt. Wyatt and 'Duleep' were largely responsible for a total of 541 against a Durham XI.

Chapter Nine.....Late-nineteenth century

Country House cricket

Vanes had been associated with cricket since the Raby match and the link continued, through the Vane-Tempest family, with the 6th Marquess of Londonderry. Londonderry, patron of many a club, hosted country house matches on a grand scale at Wynyard Park in the 1890s. Friends were invited to relax, socialise and play cricket in sylvan surrounds. A drive through golden gates led to Wynyard Hall and its majestic Corinthian portico and lavish interior. The grand hall was paved with polished marble, mirrors in the pink drawing-room almost reached a cream-and-gold panelled ceiling and a chandelier in the dining-room weighed over a ton. The family coat of arms was emblazoned on a £1,000 carpet in a pale terra-cotta billiard room. Oranges and lemons grew in the conservatory where, for winter balls, Chinese lanterns cast a warm, romantic glow.

Roaming among house guests were princes, peers, politicians and privileged ladies. Swelled in August by another coterie: the Crosbys, Whitwells, Dr Abraham, Bousfield, Mewburn, Mallett and Pease. An elite dominating local cricket as Lord Harris, Stoddart and Grace did the First-class scene. The odd professional was invited to do the trundling. A cricketer mingling among the *beau monde* needed more accomplishments than dexterity with a bat. It required impeccable behaviour to merit a second invitation. Londonderry and Pease were Conservative Association colleagues. The host was a member of I Zingari, the oldest wandering club invited annually to play Durham Gentlemen captained by Pease. IZ included brilliant England batsman T.C.O'Brian, C.F.C.Clarke and Prince Christian Victor, a grandson of Queen Victoria who once hurriedly left Wynyard to join his regiment and score one of the first double hundreds recorded in India. Carlos Clarke loved the country house environment where sylph-like Abigail served tea and strawberries to cricketers reclining in wicker chairs. Clarke, actor and musician, was ever at the heart of the entertainment: dances, games, music, "a bevy of nice girls and perchance a flirtation as hot as it is hopeless." No whispers of romantic trysts at Wynyard. Only visits to York races.

Mewburn was also invited to Mr Calverley Bewicke's matches at Close House,
Northumberland. On one occasion a professional was injured. Bewicke telegraphed Lord's.

Demanded A.J.Fothergill be sent north at once. Fothergill played his early cricket across the Tyne at Ryton. The left-arm fast bowler was Somerset's leading wicket-taker in 1880-83, twice played for England and coached C.B.Fry at Repton. After traipsing all the way to Close House, Fothergill broke two fingers while batting.

The Park was thrown open to the public but Wynyard week was first and foremost a society

⁴⁰ H. D. G. Leveson-Gower: *Country Life* (volume on cricket)

occasion. Head gardener Mr Gribble had to prepare a pitch good enough to prevent injury but not so good that large totals produced drawn matches. Cricket was serious but not so serious as to bore the ladies. Balance had to be maintained, particularly between the sexes. Thus the Marchioness adopted the rôle of 'mother' to the players and photographed them "in and about her ladyship's rustic pavilion".

Wynyard's glamour faded after I Zingari's last visit in 1898. Or at least the glamour on the field faded for Edward II insisted on holding a Privy Council meeting at Wynyard Hall when the 6th Marquess was made Privy Councillor in 1903. It was the first held at a country house since 1625 and, what is more, in the intriguing presence of Mrs Keppell, the king's favourite mistress. Cricket continued but at a more plebeian level with matches against clubs at Londonderry's collieries. The Marquess, said to be on friendly terms with his workers, sent brakes to the railway station for the players and personally welcomed them on arrival. But the social ambience changed. It was no longer dinner and *canapés* in regal style but lunch *al fresco* under canopy for rank and file. As Londonderry rose in Government subsequent Wynyard house parties were for royalty and the nation's elite. For *their* sport they shot three thousand rabbits a day.

Tall oaks from little acorns grow

Winds of change altered the shape of league cricket at the turn of the century. Shifting sands undermined Mallett's pyramid system. West Hartlepool and Norton joined NYSD. Bishop Auckland, Tudhoe and Craghead were temporary tenants until Eppleton and Burnmoor took up permanent residence in 1898. Minor clubs formed into leagues with a Wednesday League for those who worked Saturdays.

A single-division Durham County Senior League proved unsatisfactory. Geographical and financial constraints prevented each club playing every other so the 1896 championship was decided on per-centage points gained. A flawed system. Some played more matches than others; some had more difficult programmes than others. Second from bottom North Durham played 18 matches, champions Whitburn just ten. It was a fine achievement by a village club that remained a force for the rest of the century. Whitburn were runners-up in 1897, when they changed colours from navy and amber to navy, and undefeated champions next year. Thomas Kell Dobson and his talented brothers learned to play in streets near the ground. "Morning, noon and night; in season and out of season; now with the back door as stumps, again with wickets chalked upon the wall". A dashing stroke-maker, Dobson's ability to fashion an innings set him apart from the rest. He topped the club averages in eleven consecutive seasons. His career was twice interrupted by serious illness. T.K. retired in 1912 but at the age of 56 scored a century on his only league appearance in 1920. Standing on a railway platform with his son a year later he threw himself into the path of an oncoming train.

Leg-spinner H.P.Child sensationally captured eight wickets for no runs in 14 deliveries in 1896. The Chester-le-Street pro did the 'hat-trick' with the first three balls of the innings, ended it with 4 in 4 balls. Bishop Auckland were all out for 11 in twenty balls. Child later joined South Moor. Not called upon to bowl in the first five matches of 1908, Henry Percy "took the pet" and refused to play. South Moor won North West Durham League (hereafter NWD) but did not award Child a medal. He took the club to court. NWD had introduced prize money for the winners as well as the championship flag. South Moor used their £7 in 1908 and 1910 to buy 14 medals in November 1910 but Child had ceased to be a member in July. Acerbic Mr Aynsley, defending, asked Child if he thought he was entitled to a 14th share of the flag, too? His Honour, a conciliatory Robb Wilton, droned: "Mr Child is giving me credit for having a great deal more power than I have. I have no power to distribute the medals. That rests with the committee of the club, and there is no evidence they have acted in bad faith or anything of that kind. They have some reason, I suppose, and it is not necessary for me to enquire what it is. It may be rather hard on you and, if I had the power, I might have given you a medal. However, I have not, and I cannot interfere."

Bonfires illuminated the county for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. A crocodile of Tudhoe schoolchildren snaked past the ironworks to collect their Jubilee mugs. Ten weeks later there was further cause for celebration. Cricket was reported at Tudhoe in 1884. Fortunes rose after they unearthed Cuthbertson Snowdon from the pit. 'Cud' was six-feet-tall, quick and had a deadly 'yorker'. His all-round deeds helped Tudhoe gain senior status after admission to the Junior League in 1893. Slow bowler Jack Gregory was engaged in 1897. Together they propelled Tudhoe to a shock Senior League championship win after being bottom the previous year. 'Cud' succeeded Gregory as pro then had wonderful seasons at Chester-le-Street and South Moor in his forties.

Philadelphia powered to the title in 1899 with slow bowler Jack Terry, ex-Nottinghamshire groundstaff, as pro. For party piece Terry could "hit a three-penny bit placed on a length and bowl two balls simultaneously, making them cross twice, once in the air and again off the wicket." He was pro at numerous clubs and won a Mid-Durham Senior League medal at 60 with Etherley where a publican gave talent money when he did well. A strange old cove, Terry lived rough in the coke ovens at North Bitchburn.

Philadelphia's success provoked questions about illegal payments to players. These were days when the national press were using the word 'shamateurism' in relation to expenses paid to amateurs like Grace and Stoddart. Minor clubs, too, were muttering darkly about their players being bribed or poached. The League held an enquiry; asked clubs to fill in a questionnaire giving details of players, their status and any monies received. All complied except Philly. An extension was granted. To no avail. Request became demand. Neither Philly nor its questionnaire turned up at the January meeting. In their absence the Committee ruled the 1899 championship null and void. Furthermore, Philadelphia were exempt from the League in 1900.

Stung by the slur, Philadelphia fought to clear their name. Tension rose in a summer heatwave. Philly canvassed sufficient support for an extraordinary meeting. The Committee insisted they had acted properly; said the decision was final. Philly argued that six months had elapsed (five really) before the championship was declared void. The Committee said it was a question of whether they or Philadelphia ruled the League. Answer came swift. Philly's motion was carried by 14 votes to 11 and the crown restored.

The League's suspicions, though never proven, were probably well-founded. Circumstantial evidence appears convincing. Philadelphia spent the previous year busily raising money. Terry, Dick Clarke and Fred Simpson were the most successful of their championship side. Terry was retained in 1900 but Clarke and Simpson left the club. Clarke captured 529 wickets in six seasons at Raby Castle where he was pro *either side* of Philadelphia's 1899 title season. Odd, too, that Simpson left Philly for

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⁴¹ David Wilson: The History of Etherley Cricket Club (1850-1992)

the year of suspension but returned when they resumed league action in 1901. Speaking at Greenside's 1902 dinner Tom Lambert made "some very pointed remarks" regarding the paid 'amateur'. Clearly the problem was endemic.

While Philadelphia played friendly matches neighbours Burnmoor stole their glory. Burnmoor, formed in 1873, were promoted to the Junior League in 1894. Their field was only 40 yards square at the time, "several cricketers not knowing its geographical situation". Under patronage of Mr Stobart of Biddick Hall the field was extended and a pavilion built for £235. Burnmoor engaged John Butler (qv) and were champions only three years after promotion to the Senior League. Butler apart, the side was made up of colliery men born and living in the parish. T.A.Bulmer topped the batting on debut and passed 1,000 in all in 1904. Bulmer was 40 years Durham CCC secretary, Wisden crediting him with "a longer period of service than any other secretary of a First or Second Class county."

Durham County Senior League extended to an unwieldy nineteen clubs in 1901: Burnhope, Burnmoor, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Craghead, Crook, Durham City, Eppleton Church, Hendon, Medomsley, North Durham, Philadelphia, Seaham Harbour, South Shields, Stanley, Sunderland, Tudhoe, Wearmouth and Whitburn. Each could choose their opponents for a minimum of ten matches. Naturally they chose those involving least travel. In effect the League was two geographical leagues in one. South Moor in the west and Philly in the east played two separate groups of clubs apart from a common fixture with Chester-le-Street. It was only a matter of time before two leagues evolved.

Philadelphia were convincing champions on re-admission in 1901. Pro Arthur Stoner (qv) was one of the few to consistently take wickets in a batsman's summer. Twice as many hundreds were scored than in 1887 yet Consett struggled to reach double figures. They were all out for less than 30 in nine of 14 matches and were three years without a win after victory on 29 July 1899. Liabilities of £345 forced them dispense with their professional and Saturday pro Tom Lambert. Consett eventually beat Burnopfield on 24 May 1902 after been under siege for the duration of the Boer War.

PRO-FILE (No. 3)

JOHN BUTLER

(b. Ruddington, Nottinghamshire, 26 Sept 1874)

Professional at United Services, Portsmouth when 18. All-rounder for Notts colts, later groundsman at Stoke-on-Trent, had a miraculous effect on fortunes of Burnmoor (1896-1904). Extremely consistent, his 672 runs and 120 wkts (1896) helped Burnmoor reach Junior League play-offs. "Few clubs have entered upon a better engagement," concluded the press.

Over 2,500 league runs (av 25); 4 hundreds. Almost 1,000 wkts in all matches.

Meanwhile an upstart neighbour created another championship sensation. South Moor formed in 1884. Their pavilion, a disused outhouse in the yard of Bleak House, was reputedly haunted. Their umpire was Geordie Nicholl whose oft-questioned decisions brought sublime reply: "My motto is let bygones be bygones. I never discuss the past." In 1902 South Moor gained senior status and half of Burnmoor's team, A.W.Gowland included. A fascinating title race with Philadelphia ended in a dead heat. Jack Freak took 6 for 43 against his old club in the play-off to gain a famous championship for South Moor. Six of the bottom eight clubs had no professional.

Durham County Senior League decided to form two geographical divisions for 1903 but the move was sabotaged by seven neighbouring clubs: Burnmoor, Hendon, Philadelphia, Seaham Harbour, Sunderland, Wearmouth and Whitburn. Their representatives aired dissatisfaction with the proposal on a train while returning from the League meeting. The gang of seven invited North Durham and South Shields to a meeting. They disapproved of the League's plan but stopped short of proposing a new league "so that we might go to the league meeting with a clean hand". Nothing emerged to alter their view so the breakaway group, plus Eppleton and Durham City, formed Durham Senior League (Eastern Division). Alf Grundy was chairman, W.R.Bell secretary. The constitution pointedly stated clubs could engage only one professional, that players had to reside or work within a 3-mile radius or have been members for at least a year. Knowing critical eyes were upon them the Committee were relieved the first season "passed off happily". Sunderland won the first two Eastern Division (hereafter DSL) titles at the start of a decade of near-invincibility. Chester-le-Street remained loyal to the League and joined Burnhope, Burnopfield, Consett, Craghead, Medomsley, South Moor and West Stanley in a Western Division that lasted only two seasons. Chester-le-Street and South Moor were champions. Aggrieved by the split, western clubs harboured resentment for some long while.

PRO-FILE (No. 4)

ARTHUR STONER

Ex-Surrey slow bowler engaged by Philadelphia (1901-03) to restore credibility after their expulsion from Durham County Senior League in 1900. The "diligent, unpretentious cricketer" repaid that faith handsomely. Philly were champions in his debut season and twice runners-up. Released for economic reasons. South Shields had fair success during his engagement (1904-9). Having set a club record of 93 wkts (1907) Shields dispensed with his services after secret ballot *held in June*. Attacking bat remembered for heroic innings when Shields faced defeat on 119-9. He carried his bat for 134 to pass Philly's 186 and was hoisted shoulder-high to pavilion - in sharp contrast to the insensitive manner of his dismissal from the club.

South Shields record: 2,016 runs (av 20) 469 wkts (av 11)

In an effort to emerge from the shadows of their county neighbours, Northumberland clubs formed Tyneside Senior League (hereafter TSL) in 1904. The word 'Northumberland' could not be incorporated as Chester-le-Street and North Durham were founder members. Northumberland clubs won every title before the war except for Chester-le-Street's inaugural triumph. Pro 'Midge' Marsden and Jim Bewick, who next year took 10 for 35 against Boldon, formed an incisive attack. Fluent Jack Bewick, 50 years a member, hit 14 hundreds. The Middletons had given long service until Bill, better known as 'Pep', died in 1897 and Tom retired in 1901. Jim, the youngest, was in England during Chester-le-Street's championship year - playing for the South African tourists. Jim served in the Boer War and was bought out of the army by Cape Town CC in order to become their professional. He settled in the shadows of Table Mountain, represented Western Province and played six Tests for South Africa

Durham clubs won the first nine NYSD titles, Darlington claiming the first in 1896. Next year Welch took all ten against North Ormesby to enable Stockton draw level with Middlesbrough and win the play-off. Darlington's success owed much to 'Midge' Marsden and 22-year-old leg-spinning pro Jack Bucknell who later had a leg amputated after injury. Time devoured the heart of Darlington at the turn of the century. Marsden went to Chester-le-Street, George Turnbull ended three successful years as pro and Harry Thompson died after 49 years service. Lord Hawke was so impressed by Harry's work as groundsman that he made him a Yorkshire life member. Willie Tolson lifted the gloom. His first five seasons as pro produced 2,369 runs and 384 wickets in all matches. Willie had another two seasons as pro in 1912-13, settled in the town, opened a sports outfitters and played as amateur until 1923. C.L.Townsend was in no doubt that Tolson was the main reason for Darlington's 1904 success. Champions again in 1906, Willie almost achieved the ultimate feat with a century and 9 wickets against Thornaby. The 1913 side included Alf Common and ex-Leicestershire all-rounder Bob Turner, the first two footballers to be transferred for a four-figure fee. Darlington's revival coincided with the appointment as president of devout churchman E.D.Walker, later Sir Edward.

PRO-FILE (No. 5)

THOMPSON SMITH

(b. Horsforth, Yorkshire, 1868; d. West Hartlepool 27 May 1944)

Stout-hearted bowler who ensured consistent success for his employers. In 13 seasons at West Hartlepool (1901-6, 1913-14) and Bishop Auckland (1907-11) his club always finished in the top four. West Hartlepool won NYSD title in his first season and shared the title in 1902 when he set a club record of 117 wkts. Had a slinging, square-arm action, "the fastest bowler NYSD had seen". West were champions when re-engaged in 1913. Resumed after the war then was groundsman at West Hartlepool and Greyfields. Stood in at last moment (age 60) in 1928 title season and took 8 for 32. The old war-horse was playing bowls when he died.

Record: 457 wkts at Bishop Auckland; 800-plus for West Hartlepool.

Through his business acumen Feethams was virtually secured and adorned with a graceful new pavilion.

Stonewalling 'Pusher' Yiend helped successive pros Wadsworth and Bishop to nudge West Hartlepool to prominence. Progress accelerated with the engagement of 25-year-old labourer George Middlemiss in 1894. Middlemiss learned a groundsman's skills at Hartlepool St Aidan's and perfected them at West Hartlepool. West were all out for 34 on NYSD debut in 1899. Bob Stonehouse took 7 for 15 next match and they won the title without further reverse. Shipyard plater T.B.Robinson and Harry Salmon ended the season in style with an opening stand of 200. All-conquering West Hartlepool would have won four successive titles but for a share with Norton, champions on *their* NYSD debut in 1898. Salmon and Robinson were followed by A.B. and M.H.Horsley and polished, attacking left-hander Dr A.V.McGregor who was later to discover Beresford Horsley's gassed body in an attic seven weeks after he was reported missing. Powerfully-built, fast bowler Thompson Smith (qv) gave the attack razor-sharp edge. Smith was so devastating that one club proposed NYSD should do away with pros. The strength and social standing of West and Norton was evident in their inconclusive play-off in 1902. Fifteen were county men.

Norton won a congested race in 1903 when further strengthened by 26-year-old Charles Lucas Townsend who joined Crosby's chambers. Just four years earlier Townsend was arguably the world's best left-hander when scoring 2,440 for Gloucestershire. He immediately demonstrated his class with 164 not out; confirmed it by topping the club's batting 15 times. His 18 league hundreds contained many a huge six over the railway station. C.L. also topped the bowling four times with leg-breaks. Between times he made the odd double hundred for Gloucestershire. N.S.A.Harrison, who played alongside W.G. in Grace's freelance side London County, made frequent hundreds. Other talented players included Rev Gerald Wreford-Brown and L.V.Lodge who played cricket for Hampshire and soccer for England.

Townsend came north with a southerner's misgivings about the merits of league cricket. He expected to encounter "bickerings and squabbles...to be bound by unaccustomed rules which raise bad blood...and, worst of all, to be bawled at by a prejudiced mob!" Within three seasons he was "the most ardent supporter of properly managed league cricket":

What makes this cricket the most perfect of its kind is the real genuine good fellowship that exists amongst us all for, keen as we get, great as is the rivalry between us, yet we do not fall out with one another...I can honestly say that I never heard a cross word used by one player to another during the three seasons in which I have known league cricket intimately, and only once have I heard a player hinting at unfair play...Indeed, the players here can be called sportsmen in the truest sense of the word⁴²

Townsend was convinced that north-east cricket flourished because of the league system

rather than "the innate keenness of the native".

Five hours is a very limited time to finish a match in on the really good wickets that generally obtain...To take a high place in the League table you *must* win matches...Thus it is that every match is played with an object. It is immaterial that one side is much stronger than the other on paper, the question every Saturday is: Can we win? If you do not finish you are equal on the day, and the strong side feels that it has lost a point, while the weaker side rejoice at having made one. Thus every match is of equal importance. There are no such things as slack games. ⁴³

Quite. The 'native' would not tolerate them. Townsend had one reservation:

There is a grievance, a serious grievance, that seems to attach itself to every game...The crowd have taken upon themselves to "barrack" the players, as if, having realised that they are essential to the well-being of a club, they mean to show that they will do what they like, and behave as they like...Such spectators may be sporting, but they are certainly not sportsmen!...On several occasions their behaviour has been disgraceful and quite ruined the game...Educate your crowd, and do away with the grievance, and Saturday league cricket is the best in the world for those who toil all the week.⁴⁴

C.L. believed the barracking stemmed from the behaviour of football crowds. Had he thought more deeply he might have realised a link with his observation that "the majority of players are workers in this great manufacturing district." What has already been said about flannelled miners applies equally to iron spectators. Their partisan behaviour had shallow roots for they experienced little beyond furnace or factory to form fair-minded opinions.

⁴² C. L. Townsend: A Word For League Cricket (in Fry's Magazine, 1906)

⁴³ ibid.

Chapter Eleven.....Turn of the century

Paint the meadows with delight

Industrial profits soared, coal production increased and *Mauretania* sailed out of the country's largest shipbuilding region to win the transatlantic Blue Riband. Yet one in twelve was out of work, pawn shops proliferated and men endured the humiliation of being on 'the parish'. For all the financial uncertainty club amenities dramatically improved. Townsend noted considerable improvement during three seasons. Tom Hutton (jnr) looked back on 37 summers to elaborate on the difference. "When we played on the old ground there were natural wickets, bowlers had to rely in the main on pace. Since then they have had to cultivate spin." Hutton made no mention of marl. Introduced at the turn of the century, it was not readily trusted. When North Durham dressed their field with marl in 1912 their opponents refused to play their league match and would only play a friendly.

League cricket changed the landscape like a shattering earthquake. Several new grounds; old ones extended and enclosed. Tea rooms were added to cater for increasing crowds. Re-development cast ambivalent light on the lot of well-to-do and less fortunate. In late summer squalls of seagulls skimmed over half-a-dozen women hand-weeding Ashbrooke. Men on strike or out of work occupied their time improving grounds where generous patrons like J.W.Pease, J.J.E.Backhouse, Sir Charles Furness, Sir Thomas Richardson, Sir Thomas Wrightson and Sir Lindsay Wood supplied the means. The names are a reminder of the contributions from commerce before the forces of democracy and socialism altered the sources of clubs' revenue.

Three examples need suffice to illustrate the sweat spilled on re-generation. When Consett's field was required by the ironworks £200 was spent laying out Blackfyne. The ground was enlarged twice in the 1890s and the valley side extended in 1909 by removal of "that objectionable feature, the Bankside". Consett Iron Company provided a railway and four tubs, South Moor Collieries loaned two iron tip-bogies. They removed 3,750 square yards of clay to level the west side, thereby doubling the width of the ground, and laid 4,000 square yards of turf. The club was rewarded with a county match.

Tom Watson supervised the re-laying of Park Street's turf at Feethams. Cricket was but one of Tom's pursuits. He completed a remarkable feat in 1870. Setting off at midnight he scaled Scafell, Helvellyn, Saddleback and Skiddaw, left a soda bottle on each peak to mark the ascent, and sat down to breakfast in his hotel at 9 am. "Nourished by the blood and sinew" of Harry Thompson, Feethams was the best wicket in the north. "Is anyone ever bowled out on this ground?" asked Bobby Peel who took

⁴⁴ ibid.

100 wickets in a season eight times for Yorkshire. By the end of the century eight of the ten highest club totals had been made there. Thompson was mortified to hear Feethams was offered for housing in 1896. Townspeople secured its future by contributing toward the £5,500 purchase. The last mile home proved the longest. Final payment was not made until 1903. Feethams hosted an annual Cricket Festival that immediately followed Scarborough Festival to attract the best English cricketers. Jack Hobbs made 175 in 1911.

W.J.Nimmo, who hit a few hundreds in his day, founded Castle Eden in 1906 on land provided by Nimmo's brewery. Nimmo engaged Charlie Judson, ex-Sheffield United CC, to lay out a field that sloped six feet from north to south. Judson created a batsman's paradise, "an Elysian retreat in the Durham coalfield". Castle Eden scored 325 for 1 in 1908. Hardly a ball passed the bat as Stonehouse (152) and Nicholson (172) added an unbroken 324. Twenty years later Judson's son, C.J., hit 176 not out during a first wicket partnership of 289 with F.W.Heads (110).

Fortified by liquid assets, Castle Eden had few financial worries. The less fortunate struggled to raise money for equipment and maintenance. Sports meetings remained an valuable source, profits at North Durham rising from £80 to £200 in seven years. Most lucrative were the bazaars organised by lady members now moving toward emancipation. A monster bazaar at Sunderland raised £2,240 over three days. Together with £1,257 from the estate of late president Charles Lilburn it was a massive contribution to Ashbrooke's £10,000 debt. Other bazaars raised £900 at Darlington, £806 at Stockton and £400 at Chester-le-Street. Blinkered male chauvinists voiced ingratitude. Robert Spence Watson, solicitor and influential educationist, condemned North Durham men for their hostile criticism of ladies who raised funds to lay out their field. Women's contributions to cricket for too long have been taken for granted, too often unsung. Many clubs owe their very existence to them.

Chapter Twelve......Turn of the century

Women in cricket

Bowen justifiably argues that women's cricket is not a separate object of study in cricket history. After all, women played cricket long before the Raby match and are an integral part of cricket's family. Players marry and have children. Wives, sisters and daughters take interest in their recreation and interest sometimes turns to participation. Yet Victorian dogma held it undignified and hoydenish for women to play.

Little is recorded of Victorian women's cricket in Durham. Like Cesario, their history is a blank. R.S.Watson recalled seeing "many a match between two elevens of ladies". Mrs Dales, wife of an industrialist and Darlington benefactor, remembered being *taught* to play by her father in the 1850s. There is not much description of women on the field except most were single and few bowled over-arm. Of names in the press, we might muse idly upon Miss Jack King or Miss F.E.Mail; ponder the potency of Miss Mitton's 'yorker' or Miss Booth's "steady blocking game". Whatever their characteristics the essential point is that the same cricket terms are used for women as for men.

Shortly after the issue of women's suffrage reached parliament Ladies of Gateshead played Gentlemen of Gateshead. The sexes met during the remainder of the century. To redress any physical imbalance women used cricket bats and men used broomsticks or pick-handles depending on the locale. Men had to field left-handed or incur a penalty of 3 or 4 runs. Press reports waxed lyrical about ladies "in their pretty costumes of pink and white" who "whacked away with might and main". More often their endeavours were disparaged. Thus, when bowling, "not one ball was more than three or four yards wide of the wicket" or when retrieving a big hit, "the ladies formed themselves into columns and threw the ball to each other and it usually reached the wicket after four or five runs had been made." One journalist, condemning it unhealthy when men turned out in sweaty, mud-caked flannels, caustically added: "From the washerwoman's point of view it denies her the opportunity of giving idle hands something to do."

The Original English Ladies Cricketers, all professionals, featured on the frontispiece of Lillywhite's 1890 *Guide* and an editorial added: "There is no legitimate reason why they should be debarred from playing cricket matches". Next year they played at Sunderland, Reds against Blues, anticipating by a hundred years the coloured 'pyjama game'.

Early-twentieth century progress was more cohesive. Girls' schools played cricket. Coaches noted women's increasing ability to hit the ball harder. Sunderland Ladies, some related to

⁴⁵ Rowland Bowen: Cricket: A History Of Its Growth And Development

Sunderland cricketers, practised two afternoons a week in 1907. Darlington Ladies included Harry Thompson's daughters, Alice and Dollie. Wilfred Rhodes gave Dollie a bat he used in Australia. Women's teams played at Blaydon, Consett, Cornforth, Coxhoe, Haswell, Haughton-le-Skerne, New Brancepeth, Medomsley, Shotley Bridge and Wolsingham, venues that suggest more was played in rural areas than in towns. Women wore long-sleeved, white blouses fastened high at the neck. Skirts, often white, were full at the ankles and gave room for movement. They often played bare-headed but wore hats for team photographs.

Emily Davidson, who lived in Northumberland, gained lasting fame at the height of the suffrage movement by throwing herself under the King's horse at Epsom. On the Friday previous, during the night hours preceding a league match, a "suffragette bomb" was placed in the pavilion at Chester-le-Street. It failed to explode.

Chapter Thirteen......Early-twentieth century

The Golden Age

Cricket reached a degree of perfection during the Golden Age. The game was positive and pulsating, eventful and exciting. If there was a considerable volume of watery milk the cream was rich. Batting ranged from delicate pastels of elegant fluency to garish hues of thunderous hitting. A battery of pro bowlers took up the challenge. Bowling was more varied. Leg-break and 'googly' cast a spell on batsmen and crowd alike. Fields glistened with brilliant fielders. A rich tapestry to captivate both humble labourer and, occasionally at Norton, W.G.Grace and the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII.⁴⁶

Hitherto only Mewburn had scored ten centuries. Bob Bousfield surpassed that landmark followed, in less time, by E.W.Elliot, C.Y.Adamson and C.L.Townsend. All four scored twenty or more hundreds. A sublime quartet who lit five golden summers from the year Townsend arrived until Elliot departed in 1907. Five gilt summers when spectators luxuriated in half their combined output of 87 centuries, seven of them over 150, one a triple hundred. Yet none seemed particularly concerned about statistics. Adamson once declared on 99, confessed he was unaware of his score. It was a romantic period for cricket. Adamson followed two league hundreds for Durham City with another in the same season for Norton on return from honeymoon. Such their eminence, such their desire to play purely for love of the game that next year Charlie flitted back and forth like a gay Lothario to play for both. This the man who provided City's teas on Saturday and bowled W.G.Grace mid-week.

Except that he wore long-johns under his creams, Charles Young Adamson was an all-rounder of Olympian stature. He made his City debut as a 15-year-old at Durham School. Fleet of foot with splendid eye, Adamson was a dashing stroke-maker whose exhilarating pull shot drew gasps of wonder from the crowd. He made eighteen league hundreds, 23 in all He was an artful slow left-arm bowler ("Charlie had them fairly up a tree") and not afraid to concede runs in quest of wickets. A century and 9 for 43 in one match demonstrates his all-round ability. C.Y. played First-class cricket for Queensland while touring with British Lions. Rugby tour over, he joined Queensland Mounted Infantry and served in the Boer War. Adamson fell at Salonika just days before the Armistice. Doubtless the Graces on nearby Olympus echo still the deeds of his matchless spirit.

Teenager Bob Bousfield revealed rare brilliance during innings of 167 for Bishop Auckland and 245 not out for Durham University. 'Durham's Ranji' made 3,103 flawless league runs for Bishop Auckland from the age of 37. At least another 6,000 are known earlier at Bishop and Barnard Castle but both clubs were so long out of league cricket that only eight of his 23 centuries were in the league.

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⁴⁶ William Bielby: A History of Norton Cricket Club (1847-1997)

Bousfield took all ten wickets for King James I Grammar School where he later returned as headmaster. Bob loved teaching, particularly at Barnard Castle School. The Robert Bousfield Memorial, a bequest from his daughter's estate, financed recent modernisation of the school dormitories. Bob played full-back for Bishop Auckland and won a FA Amateur Cup medal in 1900. He was a choirboy at Auckland Castle, church organist and an archaeologist integral to the excavation of a Roman camp at Binchester.

Edgar William Elliot was prince of the palatinate. Tunnicliffe rated him one of the best bats in England. An athlete of magnificent physique, the idol of Durham cricket fields towered over his contemporaries for a decade. 'Tegger' Elliot's potential was transparently obvious. In 1896 he scored a hundred for Wellington v Haileybury. Within days of leaving school he made a "masterly" 59 for Sunderland and followed up with 145 and 87 in the first two matches next season. Elliot dominated bowling, shaped it to his will. He loved taking on the fast men. They ruffled his antagonism, fired in him an uncompromising response heightened by audacious risk. "He lifted us out of our utilitarian selves. We admired his work for its beauty and power, not merely for its value in runs."47 Having missed a season while on service in South Africa, Elliot scored five hundreds in 1903, one in 35 minutes. Next year he made 1,107 for Sunderland (av 85) and 1,369 in all, including an undefeated 96 against a Norton side strengthened by Bosanquet, inventor of the 'googly', after openers Bousfield and Adamson were out without a run on the board. In an age when First-class triple hundreds were frequent Elliot scored 332 for Borderers in 1905 at Jesmond. He faced only moderate bowling yet hit 13 sixes and 44 fours while 496 were added during his three hours at the wicket. Elliot was 28, had made 6,263 runs (av 52) and 16 league hundreds for Sunderland, when he took up an appointment in Chile. He died at 53 but his aura lived on. Years later, after watching a county opener crawl to 90 by tea-time, a contemplative remarked: "If Elliot's body was now being wheeled in its coffin across the Town Moor, every bugger in the ground would leave at once and go and see it!"

Two other stroke-makers merit mention. Tom Coulson refused to let league cricket alter his philosophy. "Play the game and hang the points" was Tom's motto. Tall and athletic, Coulson scored 6,164 handsome runs for South Shields including the first league double hundred in 1903. Five years later he sustained an eye injury and his batting was never the same again. Frank Hay Gillingham, born in Tokyo and educated at Dulwich, briefly illuminated Durham University cricket with glorious front-foot driving. One of his three centuries was at Lord's against MCC. Frank made 203 not out against Durham Gentlemen on a red-hot day prior to ordination in 1899. He was curate at Leyton where he qualified for Essex and made the first outside cricket broadcast in 1927. Canon Gillingham was a scintillating after-dinner speaker and his eloquent sermons filled churches to overflowing.

This elegant feast was garnished by mighty hitters with Salmon supreme. Big Harry Salmon

⁴⁷ R. Curry: unpublished personal memories of Sunderland cricket and rugby.

hit the ball vast distances to save trouble of running. Townsend cleared Norton station but Harry cleared the station and a field beyond. About a fifth of Salmon's innings were 'ducks' yet he hit eight centuries including 200 not out, 170, and 162 in 71 minutes with 8 sixes and 23 fours. He might have had more but batted himself ridiculously low in the order when captain. Jim Welford was no slouch, either. Jim was born in Barnard Castle where he hammered 211 and 1,040 runs (av 86) in 1894. He was at Stockton until they declined to pay him £1 a week then hit a hundred for Warwickshire in 1896. Welford, who appears in the claret and blue of Aston Villa against Sunderland in Hemy's evocative painting that dominates the foyer of the Stadium of Light, was the first Englishman to win English and Scottish FA Cup medals. Ambrose Winship Gowland made his debut for Penshaw in short trousers. The gateman thought he was trying to sneak in to watch the match. 'Ammy' Gowland developed at Burnmoor then moved to South Moor where he discovered the art of making hundreds. He hit 17 in ten seasons. Put a bat in his hand and gentleman Gowland turned assassin "slashing the ball in all directions". He was at his zenith in 1909. He carved 149, 150, 38, 173 not out and 128 in successive innings, three-quarters of them in boundaries. Gowland became the first to score 1,000 league runs in a season when a fifth century took his aggregate to 1,275 (av 75).

Arthur Welch, the best all-rounder of his day, stacked 1,420 victims alongside 7,300 runs. As befits a solicitor and chess player of national standing, Welch was a studious batsman and probing slow bowler. Captain, secretary and president of Stockton, he topped the club's bowling in twenty seasons including over 200 victims in all in 1889. Rev Hindle persuaded Hunslet-born Arthur Newsome to take up a teaching post near Eppleton where he was secretary for 30 years. Punishing off-side strokes accounted for most of Newsome's 8,000 runs and he exceeded 600 wickets.

These men, most from public schools, were the stars in the firmament. There were lesser mortals. Fascinating characters who lived for the game without nearing the sublime heights of Elliot. Men like John Blenckley who helped found Philadelphia in 1866 and hit three centuries in a fortnight when over 50. Crafty bowlers like Joe Harrison, reputedly 19 'hat-tricks' for Philly, and Ryton's Tom Graham whose leg-breaks claimed 15 'hat-tricks' and over 1,000 wickets in eleven seasons. Tom got drunk as a newt on his wedding day. In the afternoon he turned out for Ryton but his legs buckled in mid-delivery and he sank in a sozzled heap. A local killjoy called the police but the kindly bobby refused to lock-up Tom and deny him his fuddled nuptials.

Billy Harding symbolises those without privilege who tenaciously trod cricket's bumpy road. The left-armer took 5 for 6 on debut in his native Cumberland. His effort and shabby appearance so touched a local toff that he bought Billy a blazer and flannels. Harding crossed the Pennines, settled at Langley Park where he was a joiner until his death in 1928. Harding was quick, said "If I had to pay for all the stumps and bails I've smashed I would be in the Bankruptcy Court." In a county trial match he destroyed the Colts' batting. He was approached by John Adamson. "This will never do, Harding. We are not going to see what they can do. You can't bowl in the second innings." At 51, Billy was

still bowling twice the overs of the club pro. His spare frame was shrouded in shirt buttoned to the neck, flat cap atop bushy eye-brows and moustache; the embodiment of all those haunted faces that stare from old, sepia photographs on pavilion walls.

The outstanding pros, Morris, Smith and Milam, were paid around £2 or £3 a week. Shipyard machinist Alf Morris got £1-4-0d when signed by Sunderland, £2-10-0d plus talent money in 1907 then £4 at Hendon. Given their transitory employment the impact of many pros was brief. A number were ex-county men. Charles Dench joined Darlington straight from Nottinghamshire, Fred Kitchener left Hampshire to perform wonders for Boldon either side of the war and Frank Harry (ex-Lancashire) took a wicket every 21 balls for South Shields. Frank's successor was Sid Lohmann, brother of England fast bowler George. Lohmann did well on the field but was fond of his ale. Shields cancelled his contract after Tom Coulson had to pay a fine to obtain his release from a police cell on the morning of a match. Mark Cox was allowed to brighten his league benefit match with a sprinkling of ex-Northamptonshire colleagues among both teams. Spectators flocked to see such attractions. Five DSL clubs reported record individual match 'gate' receipts in 1912. Ashbrooke hosted the Australians that year. Takings for the two days amounted to £480 compared with £250 for Australia v South Africa the year before.

A circle of clubs round the county perimeter dominated Edwardian cricket: Sunderland, West Hartlepool, Norton, Darlington and South Moor. Sunderland won 129 and drew 51 of 206 matches while winning seven titles in 1903-12. Skipper Bertie Brooks, patient and reliable for 28 seasons, cut and drove eloquently to make 9,728 runs and 11 centuries. Elliot, Butler and Burn plundered 2,000 league runs and 8 centuries between them in 1903. Morris (qv) succeeded Butler. Excalibur in place

PRO-FILE (No. 6)

ALFRED MORRIS

(b. West Hartlepool, 11 Sept 1886; d. Lancaster Moor, Lancashire, 29 March 1961)

Medium-fast swing bowler with easy delivery. Protege of Thompson Smith. Bespectacled Morris did not look a bowler. Never judge a book by its cover. Took 8 for 0 v Guisborough II in nine explosive deliveries when 17. At Burnmoor (1905-06), Hendon (1914). Made a powerful Sunderland side virtually invincible (1907-13). They won 47% of matches in two seasons *before* he was engaged, 63% *during* his engagement. Subtle variation his greatest asset. In county trial he captured several wickets with vicious cut and late away-swing; others with 'a slow off-break', 'yorker', 'slow ball' and 'peculiar ball'. Rated Durham's greatest bowler. Took all ten wkts v Yorkshire II in 1910, bowling virtually all innings "under a broiling sun" for 3½ hours. Took 100 DSL wkts six times. Frequently compared with S.F.Barnes. Figures of 24-7-50-4 and 11-4-25-3 for England XI v Australians (1912) suggest the comparison was justified. Prolific pro for several clubs in Bradford League until 1929.

League record as professional: 2932 overs 730 mdns 7312 runs 890 wkts (av 8.2)

of cutlass. Morris, "fast and deadly", had impressed when at Burnmoor by bowling Elliot for a 'duck' and 3. With 98 league victims in his debut season Sunderland were quick to re-sign him for four years on improved terms. Behind him crouched Isaac Robinson, his "howzat" more statement than request. Elliot's replacement was lazily assured Eustace Lawrie Squance, perfumed and immaculate, a man of many caps and mannerisms. Thrusting drives and dynamic hooks were a feature of nine cavalier centuries. When Squance walked out to bat he would glance back at the pavilion clock as if mindful of Time's winged chariot. Lawrie was killed when a passenger in a sports car that collided with a Northern bus. Durham City opener Fred Scott witnessed the accident.

Wearmouth and Durham City each briefly interrupted Sunderland's decade of dominance. Wearmouth signed Harry Clode after winning only one league match in 1902-03. Clode instilled such teamwork that seven players hardly missed a match in the next ten years. They were champions in 1906. Two more followed in 1913-14 when stylish, ex-Yorkshire bat Bill Rothery replaced Clode as pro. Rothery made 1,039 on debut, first to score 1,000 DSL runs. Clode continued as amateur until 1930 but Wearmouth returned to the foot of the league once his powers waned.

Charlie Adamson was at his peak during City's 1907 championship season when he shared the attack with tall, debonair pro Charlie Milam (**qv**). Needing victory in the last match to finish level with Burnmoor, the pair skittled Eppleton for 26. Milam grabbed 7 for 41 in the play-off to clinch a first DSL title. Whenever Milam took a wicket he flashed a smile and swung a right-hook at the air. More reserved than Stanley's Jimmy Benfold who always celebrated with a somersault. Denis Hendren was pro in City's 1910 championship side that contained four Durham School boys alongside 52-year-old Tom Hutton (jnr) who served City for 66 years. Tom was at his most productive in his forties. He stroked the ball along the carpet and had 10,000 runs to his name when he retired in 1913.

Guisborough halted Durham's domination of NYSD though West Hartlepool and Norton each won a title before war broke out. West Hartlepool moved to Park Drive in 1912 during the club's most successful period. West won five titles in 15 years, shared another and were five times runners-up. Smith and Morris were fearsome. Runs flowed in the twilight seasons of Robinson, A.B.Horsley, Alf Longhurst and wicket-keeper J.R.Brown. C.P.Faucett was on 97 in the second of successive hundreds when he was felled by a blow on the nose. Bleeding heavily, Faucett staggered to his feet, clubbed the next ball for four, and tottered with his ton to the pavilion. Tommy Kinch, who joined from Seaton Carew, had few equals at cover-point. With superb technique and judicious shot selection, Tommy powerfully peppered the palings with off-drives and cuts. With only two titles during Townsend's 24-year career, Norton under-achieved. In one sense their batting was *too* strong. Townsend, Harrison and Heavisides scored heavily but they over-indulged before declaring and 40% of league matches were drawn. It might have been different had not Cecil Parkin, son of a station-master, sought fame beyond various, county boundaries.

North West Durham League formed in 1906 from remnants of Durham County Senior League (Western Division). Enthusiastic secretary Percy Freeman built a competitive organisation that stood four square against the elitist East. Consett, Craghead and South Moor waged annual dog-fights for supremacy. South Moor were 'top dog'. Champions six times before the war, only defeat in a playoff in 1909 prevented six in succession. A new scoreboard stocked a rich run harvest. 'Cud' Snowdon garnered a late crop in the autumn of his career; Gowland's store swelled; Joe Swinhoe, Alf Hodgson and the Fairleys reaped plentifully. South Moor fielded two excellent wicket-keepers. Lees Radcliffe was rated England's best by Archie McLaren whose ex-Lancashire colleague, Arthur Lees, was "sharp as a needle". Joe Fairley was captain. As colliery manager he persuaded South Moor Collieries to build the club a beautifully-proportioned brick pavilion in 1910. South Moor won a thriller that year against challengers Burnopfield whose followers found defeat hard to take. They mobbed an umpire on the field and stoned him on his way to the station. This was shabby reward for retired Co-op manager Curry Wood who had just given his life's savings to save the club from extinction and engage Ted Solly. At least the ex-Worcestershire left-armer repaid his faith. Solly bowled "liked greased lightning", often to six slips, and exceeded 100 wickets in each of five seasons.

NWD was a colourful mix of skill and rustic vitality with intense, frenetic support.

Boisterous spectators sang popular songs when their heroes were on top. Eastern men disparaged NWD grounds as "enlarged back-yards" yet crowds of 3,000 cycled or tramped over fields to stand spellbound, six deep, when Consett locked horns with South Moor. Nine of their first 18 meetings were drawn; only one emphatic victory. The rest, by wafer-thin margins, generated animated agitation. "Excitement was at fever heat and many ordinarily sane persons seemed to be afflicted with St. Vitus' Dance as keep still they could not." Deafening shouts signalled a release of tension at the moment of victory. Hats hurled high rained upon umbrellas and walking sticks joyfully prodding the skies.

Two stars glittered in the north-west. If a Hugh Dales' innings burned brilliantly, one by Jack

PRO-FILE (No. 7)

CHARLES RICHARD MILAM

(b. New Hampton, Middlesex, 7 Jan 1881; d. Durham, 8 Apr 1949)

Left Middlesex ground staff to join Durham City (1907-08 and 1913-14). City were champions in his debut season and South Moor won NWD when they engaged him (1910-11). At Burnmoor (1909) and Craghead (1912). Served in Royal Artillery (1914-18). Tall away-swing bowler who did not make most of height. Of 5 centuries, three were plundered in under an hour, including a "fantastic" 154* on a rain-affected wicket (1913). Returned to City as amateur (1919-30) where he took 823 wkts in all. Coach at Durham School for 25 years. Blessed with the good looks of a matinee-idol: tall, slim, with a striking moustache. He was landlord of 'Buffalo Head' and 'Colpitt's Hotel'.

League record (Craghead figures not known): 5,838 runs (av 24) 1,042 wkts (av 12).

Carr (qv) flashed like a meteor. Dales began at Medomsley, hit a maiden century at 17. As a lad he batted right-handed but, after a fracture, his right arm was shorter than his left. Dr Renton diagnosed an end to his career. T.D.Dales would have none of it. The cheery all-round sportsman, who once hit 164 not out for Consett, knew too well the joys of recreation. He coached his son to bat left-handed. Quick of eye, H.L.Dales drove magnificently. Mature innings of 155 and 173 earned a county call in 1913. Time and circumstance determined Carr and the elder Dales trod different paths. Each earned a living at Leadgate: Dales up at the school, Carr down the pit. As Carr began to dominate club attacks, Dales made his Middlesex debut. The year Carr turned pro, Dales hit a maiden First-class hundred. A year after Carr's minor county debut, Dales toured West Indies with MCC. Carr was still regarded the undisputed star of Durham cricket when he died. Born under a different constellation, what might Jack have achieved?

New leagues launched into uncertain waters. Clubs eddied to and fro in search of amenable harbours. Schoolmaster Tom Ryding formed Derwent Valley League in 1907. Tom's club, Blaydon, won it thrice in six years. Sixteen clubs competed intermittently up to 1913 when only three originals remained. Next year Derwent Valley folded. Half the clubs were incorporated in a Tyne and Derwent League and competed for a rather splendid trophy donated by Dr Abraham. The league lasted only one season. Administrators slaved to keep organisations afloat but were constantly disillusioned as players and clubs ebbed to other leagues. Derwent Valley founder members Blaydon, Whickham and Shotley Bridge were joined by Lintz in 1908. With the drift of time and tide the quartet were re-united in NWD in 1951 and again in TSL in 1992. Durham County League (hereafter D.Co) had over forty clubs up to the outbreak of war.

PRO-FILE (No. 8)

JOHN CARR

(b. Leadgate, 29 May 1894; d. Hartlepool, 15 Nov 1967)

Legendary hitter at Chester-le-Street (1923-30), Blackhall (1931-39) and Stockton (1945), a hero who was "cheered for his sixes and sympathised for his ducks". Hit 24 off an over against the Australians. When 16 hit a ball over the railway that bounded through the open door of Leadgate Co-op. The butcher continued to wrap a startled customer's Sunday joint and casually remarked: "I see John Carr's in". At least 12 club hundreds are known, most made in under an hour and some batting at number 7. Right-arm medium, later off-breaks. Twice bowled Jack Hobbs for 0. On one of those occasions was reprimanded for dismissing Hobbs near close of play thereby reducing the attendance next day.

Chester-le-Street league record: 136 inns 11 not 3,554 runs HS 129* (av 28.4)

2421.4 overs 547 mdns 6055 runs 448 wkts (av 13.5)

Blackhall record: over 7,000 runs; 1,398 wickets (av 9.8).

League cricket did not dominate entirely for 'rough' cricket spawned unlikely tales. A leg-side smite at Stanley bounced down the hill to a farm. The fielding side claimed a 'black ball' but the umpire ruled the fielder could see the ball and was chasing it. The batsmen had run 31 by the time he returned it. A 'duffers' match was pure farce. "The ball was taken up by a dog, who raced round and round the field with it in his mouth, the two batsmen being the only people on the ground who did not join in the chase." They scampered 14 runs before the playful mutt was caught. Then there was the novice who walked to the wicket with just one pad on his right-leg. Advised by an umpire that it was on the wrong leg for best protection the novice replied: "Sorry. I thought he was bowling from the other end." An earlier mystery solved, too, when Joseph Robson slaughtered one of Lord Durham's steers and found a cricket ball in the beast's stomach.

Cricket reached a degree of perfection in the Golden Age. The flawed perfection of Eden.

Adam, his club and followers ate of the forbidden fruit. Some maggot-ridden. Notices were posted at NYSD grounds warning spectators against unruly behaviour. A North East Durham League play-off was twice abandoned owing to crowd trouble. TSL felt need for a rule that gave power to suspend any club, player or member found guilty of misconduct. There was deep-seated rivalry between Sunderland and Durham City. Two disgruntled City followers shouted abuse at Elliot and Isaac Robinson as they walked along a lane to the station after one match. Elliot handed his pipe to Isaac, slung both into a ditch, rekindled his pipe and calmly walked on his way. Medomsley accused Consett's spectators of barracking and using filthy language. A volley of letters ricocheted between clubs and League. The letters of Consett and NWD were signed by Percy Freeman, secretary of both. This further enraged Medomsley who refused to play the return. When battle was rejoined at Consett in 1912 police were called to eject spectators. The cost of gatemen and police accounted for two percent of Consett's 'gate' receipts.

A calming, beatific voice was faintly discernible above the discord. "Cricket has taught men to be true sportsmen," intoned Rev Hindle, generous benefactor to Eppleton and a founder of Sunderland & District Teachers football team, later Sunderland AFC. "There are fewer disputes than at any time in my 40 years playing". Meet and right the Reverend should be charitable but he held the telescope to his blind eye. His own club had just had one player suspended, another cautioned for disorderly behaviour. In the next door parish, Philadelphia were ordered to issue a circular advising members and followers at Bunker Hill not to make demonstrations against umpires' decisions.

An untamed wildness pervaded Bunker Hill. Unsuspecting innocents were sucked into a maelstrom. An agonised shriek foretold the death of 14-year-old 'Scorer' Watchman who, belying his name, fell unnoticed from a heavy roller and had his head crushed. Ruby Black was fatally struck on the temple by a cricket ball while wheeled round the field in a pram. Neither tragedy induced a more temperate climate. Far from it. Philadelphia captain James 'Kellett' Kirtley was an aggressive batsman and fine wicket-keeper despite whispered tales of bails dropping mysteriously to the ground.

Cantankerous Kirtley constantly waged war against opponents and umpires until blackening his name *almost* forever. Animosity between Philadelphia and South Shields is said to be rooted in their differing class structures.⁴⁸ Nor was friction eased in 1912 by a miners' strike or Shields dismissing Philly for 11. A fractious air hung over Bunker Hill for the return. Spectators grew restless as Philly slumped to 72 for 9. All hell broke loose when the last man's leg-bail fell, almost apologetically, to the ground. Kirtley led his side and supporters in vociferous protest that the wicket-keeper had knocked off the bail. It was like Bedlam as Shields ran for the safety of the pavilion. Umpire Linnet heard the howling rabble, changed his ruling to 'not out'. Shields braved the mob and returned to the middle to capture the last wicket. Tom Coulson was sickened by the affair. He refused to send anyone to bat, said Philly could have the match and points. An enquiry was held and Kirtley was banned from DSL and exiled from Bunker Hill.

C.L.R.James said cricket alters in response to changes in society. A claim too far, perhaps, yet one senses that club cricket is shaped by the social circumstances of the times. Certainly the individual characteristics of player and spectator conspire to a behavioural mosaic. Considering the past can pose problems separating reality from nostalgia. The Golden Age of cricket, in this corner of the world at least, was no decorous tea-party. Yet the eye of memory forgets. Remembers instead "a cultivated scene of smooth turf, blazers and summer dresses... days of carefree enterprise, days of quality and affable manners."

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⁴⁸ Clive Crickmer: Grass Roots (A History of South Shields Cricket Club 1850-1984)

Those who have their innings give way to others

OMINOUS WAR CLOUDS predicted *Newcastle Journal*. Spring 1909. A new season beckoned. The Bishop of Newcastle was about to open a bazaar. The headline triggered a metaphor for his sermon. "In Life we have to pass through vicissitudes. The man who takes up the game of cricket and becomes proficient in it, becomes proficient in that which is extremely useful for this purpose. We do not always have our innings in life. Those who have their innings, at times, give way to others; and it is only by the exercise of patience, endurance and skill - I might add cheerfulness - that they get another innings to follow."

Fifteen miles away boys at Durham School were at the nets. Focussed solely upon the *first* innings of summer. They began wonderfully well with an opening stand of 111. W.E.Maynard (223) and B.S.Cumberledge (140) raised the total to 424 for 1. Peter Gedge captured five victims to crush Northumberland Fusiliers for 60. The season proceeded serenely. Cumberledge and Maynard passed 500 runs; Maynard's 15-year-old brother, Alfred, made 275.

Blaydon's ground on the banks of the Tyne often became waterlogged so they moved uphill to Denefield in 1913. Durham Light Infantry were first visitors. A new flag flapped above green military tunics surrounding the field. Far away in the Balkans sabre-rattling was heard. Somewhere beyond the boundary, sickle in hand, the Grim Reaper cast a shadow over the occasion. War was about to call 'Time' for two men in white. Fred Lennox caught Lieutenant Bettison off a skier. For a moment batsman and fielder were unified in suspense as they gazed at the heavenly orb. Were they able to look into the future they would have seen, not a red ball, but a spinning world dripping with their blood.

Charlie Adamson made a heroic 109 out of 134 against South Shields in May 1914 before national duty called halt to his season. His place was taken by Cambridge graduate Alfred Frederick Maynard whose 119 against Chester-le-Street was said to be one of the best witnessed at Durham City. Bill Rothery could not repeat his wonderful form of 1913 but still headed the DSL batting.

Many had enlisted when war was declared on 4 August. Thousands more, including 267 Wearmouth members, answered Kitchener's appeal for volunteers. The War Office requisitioned North Durham's field and others. Clubs soon found it impossible to raise teams. West Hartlepool bat Theo Jones was one of the first civilians killed on home soil when the town was raided. Then the carnage. Millions fell facing rapid-fire weaponry. The brunt of battle was borne by junior officers

⁴⁹ R. Curry: unpublished personal memories of Sunderland cricket and rugby.

drawn from public school and university. Durham School's class of 1909 contemplated a life of fulfilment laced with halcyon days on a cricket field. In reality they lived a nightmare of war bandaged by terrifying days on a battle field. Lieut. P.Gedge, killed in action in 1915; Lieut. A.F.Maynard, killed in action, 1916; Capt. C.Y.Adamson, killed in action, 1918; Lieut. Bettison, killed in action, 1916; Lieut. F. Lennox, killed in action, 1918; J.W.Rothery, died 1919 from injuries received while on active service; Capt. W.E.Maynard, died 1928 from injuries received while on active service. There were others.....

Gentleman farmer and stylish left-hander Tommy Bradford hit 17 sixes in an undefeated 207 as Chester-le-Street ran up 309 for 2 in only 90 minutes. It was one of the great pre-war innings. He and three brothers, 'The Fighting Bradfords', answered the call to arms. Two earned a Victoria Cross. Captain T.A.Bradford, DSO, was the lone survivor. War wounds put an end to his cricket.

"This very grave crisis has silenced our spirits in cricket." The tone of South Shields' annual report was echoed nation-wide. Major leagues were suspended. Clubs donated their credit balance to War Relief Funds. Those not on military duty played friendly matches. It raised an ethical dilemma. W.G.Grace was one of many who thought it immoral to play cricket while kith and kin were slaughtered abroad. Others believed it had no affect upon military recruitment; anything that raised spirits was welcome. The latter view prevailed when it was clear the war would not "be over by Christmas". No such dilemma at the battle front:

Had a cricket match on Saturday - our fifth. We get no practice and use our opponents gear. Horses, mules, baggage waggons, ambulance waggons form the boundary line. The guns booming, four or five aeroplanes overhead, and anti-aircraft shells bursting, all form a grand setting for a cricket match.⁵⁰

Club guardians faced major difficulties. Grounds had to be maintained, rent and rates paid. With no income, debts rose steadily. Beresford Horsley gave £50 towards West Hartlepool's debts of £384. Brother Matthew, now Alderman Horsley, gave £100 and took over the ground mortgage free of interest. Burnhopeside was ploughed up for food production. Stockton allotment holders usurped a patch of Grangefield to grow cabbages and potatoes. Myopic Alf Morris played all over the county to raise funds for bereaved families and food parcels for men at the front. A match at Sacriston financed a field hospital bed in France.

On 11 November 1918 the county awakened to an explosion of sound as freed spirits left the dungeons of war. Flags flew, bonfires burned, fireworks flashed and church bells tolled news of peace. People forgot, for a moment, the silent space where a generation of youth should have stood.

Chapter Fifteen......1919 and after

The dead with charity enclosed with clay

Two neatly-dressed women sat talking in a railway carriage. "Jack is coming home tonight! Poor boy, he'll be tired. I am going to have the kettle ready and give him a warm welcome with Rowntrees Cocoa." This newspaper advertisement showed cosy disregard for Jack's plight. He was returning from war mentally scarred, physically exhausted. In days to come Jack would meet pals who were shell-shocked, blinded and crippled. Three-quarters of a million of his contemporaries, a third of all men aged 20 to 24 in 1914, were dead.

Due time was accorded to elevate the fallen on monuments raised in the towns and villages of their mortal existence.

I, that on my familiar hill,

Saw with uncomprehending eyes
A hundred of thy sunsets spill

Their fresh and sanguine sacrifice,
Ere the sun swings his noonday sword,

Must say good-bye to all of this - 51

Solemnities over, cricketers gradually gravitated to the field. Of seventy-nine South Shields' members who went to war, 19 did not return. Long-serving treasurer Tom Wilson's £1,000 legacy provided almost half the cost of purchasing the ground as memorial to the fallen. Prince Consort Road triggered nightmare flash-backs to the Somme. The ground was a battlefield in miniature, gashed with trenches and scarred with barbed-wire. North Durham had to wait three years for War Office settlement before reconstruction could begin. Park Drive was in good trim but few West Hartlepool cricketers had been liberated owing to inadequacies in the demobilisation process.

Those who despaired of seeing cricket again were soon assured of its existence. Order of a sort was restored. NYSD and NWD recommenced, DSL operated on a per-centage basis without pros and no trophy was awarded. Insurmountable difficulties prevented a start in TSL. Some grounds were still in possession of the military, the secretary was not demobbed and failure to up-date club officials and addresses caused further administrative problems.

Dressing-rooms resembled the out-patients' ward of an infirmary. A wound in Albert Howell's back could cradle a cricket ball. Fred Lincoln batted for Horden minus his left arm. Tom Howarth was in poor health after Army service and did not resume at Medomsley until 1921. A

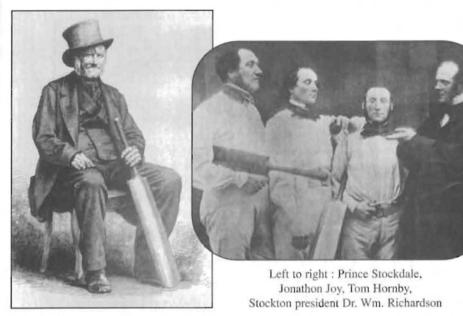
⁵⁰ Private Jim Laws (of Beamish): Letter in 1915 from "somewhere in Belgium".

surprising number of clubs were able to parade most pre-war players. On the one hand this was reassuring. On the other it magnified the silent void left by Flanders fallen.

An Arctic blizzard provided familiar welcome to a new season. One other incident caused no surprise. His suspension lifted as a token of peace, 'Kellett' Kirtley appealed for a stumping *without removing a bail*. Cricket was back in Durham.

 $^{^{51}}$ Lieut. W. N. Hodgson, MC (ex-Durham School, who died at the Battle of the Somme): $Before\ Action$

Mid-nineteenth century cricket



Tommy Marshall, "indispensable hero of a thousand cricket matches"

Lambton Cricket Club scorebook 1812 - 13 Oldest surviving scorebook in the county



'The Three Toms' Hornby, Robinson and Darnton. Seated: William Halton

GRAND CRICKET MATCH,

BETWEEN

"ELEVEN OF ALL ENGLAND"

AND

TWENTY-TWO OF THE TOWN AND NEIGH-BOURHOOD OF DARLINGTON.

THE Nobility, Gentry, and Public are respectfully informed that the above Match is fixed to come off in the

Park Street Cricket Ground, at Darlington,

On the 14th, 15th, and 16th days of SEPTEMBER next.
The "All England" Players will be selected from among

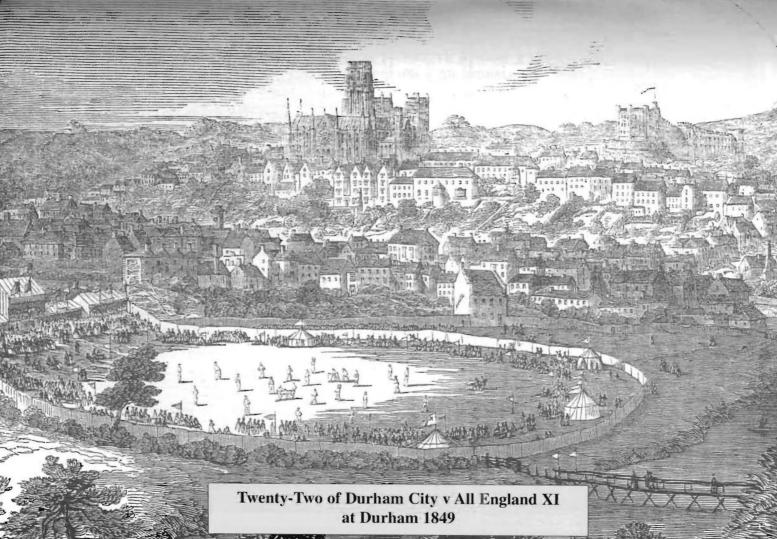
the following Gentlemen:—
MESSES MARTINGALE,
MYNN,

MYNN, DEAN, PARR, FELIX, PILCH, CLARKE. MESSES LILLYWHITE,
HINKLEY,
DORRINGTON,
GUY,
HILLIER,
BOX,
SEWELL.

Ladies will be admitted free, if accompanied by a Gentleman holding a Match Ticket,

Tickets of Admission to the Ground for the Match, 20 6d each; Day Tickets, 1s each.

May be had on application to Mr Richard Benson, the Secretary; of Mr Wrightson, Sun Inn; of Mr George Raper, Crown Inn, Skinnergate; of the Printer, all of Darlington; and at the Entrance to the Ground, in Park Street, on the day of Playing; at Bishop Auckland, at the Office of J. W. Peacock; at Barnard-castle, at Mr Dent's, Ship Inn; and at Stockton, at Mr Turner's, at the Greyhound.—Darlington, August 23, 1848.





[Photograph by kind permission of Norton CC]

Norton Cricket Club 1889 Durham Challenge Cup winners

Standing: W. Barker (scorer), W.F. Whitwell, W. Laverick, J.F. Whitwell, T. Hill, J.H. Heavisides (umpire)

Seated: J. Rowntree, H.S. Crosby, A.B. Crosby (captain), G. Newby, W.G. Strother

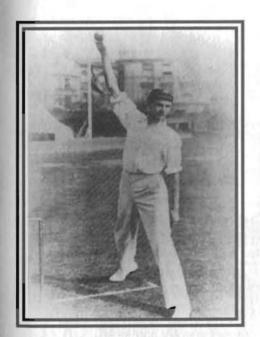
On ground: T.H. Laverick, R. Williams



A. Coxon
"Strode the scene like a Colossus"



E.W. Elliot
"reminded us that the essence of a
game is risk"



C.L. Townsend
"Saturday league cricket is the best in the
world for those who toil all the week"

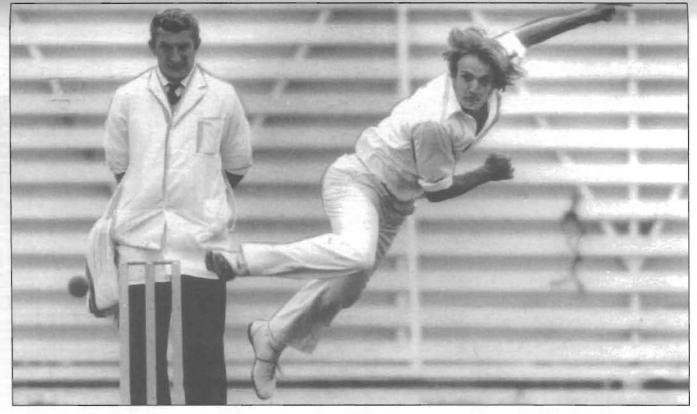


A. Morris
"can be compared to S.F. Barnes"



Cartoonist Dudley Hallwood delighted readers, players and members with his Monday morning impressions of a match.

(Whitburn v Sunderland, in Newcastle Journal, 6 June 1966)



[Photograph by kind permission of Newcastle Journal]

J.S. Wilkinson

"fearsome, raw-boned pace"



[Photograph by kind permission of Durham City CC]

Durham City Cricket Club 1972

Durham Senior League Champions

Standing: J. Minto, T.J. Hughes, J.S. Wilkinson, S.C. Walford, J.V.W. Darling, D.R. Parsons

Seated: J.G. March, S.G. Sweet, M.P. Weston (capt), B.R. Lander, T. Moffat



[Photograph by kind permission of Durham County Council]

Country House Cricket at Wynyard Hall c1895

The 6th Marquess of Londonderry is leaning on a stick on the left



Fred Butler



A.A. Mewburn



E.W. Elliot

Six Stars of Sunderland



E.S. Levy



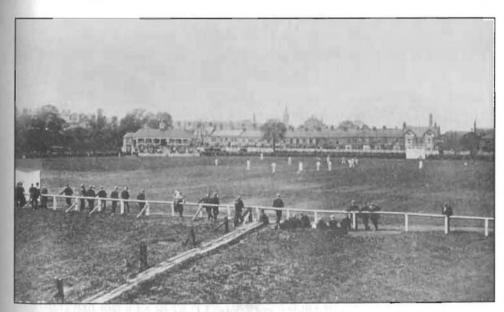
Hubert Brooks



E.L. Squance



Opening of Chester-le-Street Cricket Club's Pavilion 1904



Darlington's Feethams ground c1906

DAWDLERS

DASHERS

& DEMONS



Jack Carr



Charlie Milam



Harry Turner



Dr. A.A. Abraham



Albert Howell



C. L. Adamson



T.K. Dobson (snr)

This weak and piping time of peace

Once cricket got back on its feet there was just a hint of pre-war excitement. The number of centuries reached a new high. Fifty are noted most seasons between 1923-35, a level not reached again until the 1980s. Two towering Townsend 'tons' helped Norton wipe off 251 and 267 in successive weeks. Etherley schoolmaster Bill Franklin caned 12 sixes and 6 fours in a 24-minute century and Bill Donkin hit a 40-ball hundred for Craghead. Cambridge freshman J.G.Askew hit 16 sixes while belting 149 not out in a charity match. In 1923 Crook needed just 29 overs to make 314 for 4 and Consett reached 300 in three successive matches.

Representative matches conjured carefree days of old with Learie Constantine a star attraction at Stockton. Wandering sides The Rooks and Durham County Pilgrims treated spectators to a feast of runs. W.J.Nimmo was Pilgrims' founding father so it was hardly surprising Nimmo's ale was supped on the field *between* overs. No doubt bowlers were grateful. Pilgrims scored 501 at Castle Eden in a two-day match in 1933, Frank Smith making 149. Prolific W.H.R.Alderson (West Hartlepool) oiled his golf swing during innings of 173 not out v Cryptics and 203 not out v Borderers.

Cricket was back but its ethos was changed. Golden Age alchemy was inverted to lead.

Transition from war to peace was not smooth. The upper class had lost a lot of its stock and much of its status. Horizons widened; class-barriers were breached. Trade Union membership increased; workers were more intransigent towards employers. A brief post-war boom was followed by doubled unemployment and the humility of the 'means test'.

Cricket could not escape these social tremors. Principled Durham miners prolonged their stand in the General Strike until the end of the year. Picket cordons overturned vehicles so travelling teams sat with bats and stumps ready to ward off would-be attackers. The plight of Distressed Areas was extreme. Dole was paid on Friday so Thursday was a day of fasting. Hard-up players turned out in work clothes or could not afford to play. The number of players registered by NWD dropped from 2,033 to 921 in seven years. It was increasingly difficult to balance the books. Clubs got little change out of a £1 for bat or ball, leg-guards or gloves. They were forced to dispense with pros owing to lack of finance and the burden of Entertainment Tax. Annual deficits were commonplace in the years up to the Second World War.

The availability of Newcastle Brown Ale in pubs was just about the only hint of the Roaring Twenties. Growth in welfare amenities was more resonant of north-east life. South Hetton Welfare

invested £4,420 on a sports ground⁵² and £1,175 on a pavilion. Councillor Goulden relished the task of opening Eppleton Miners Welfare on the site of Hetton Hall. "This ground was once the home of lords and knights. It is now the sports home of the workers." Ironic shift from days of Raby. "I dreamed dreams," confided union secretary George Peart when performing another opening. "Now Horden is the most progressive Welfare Scheme in Durham." Only a mile separated two welfare grounds in Hebburn. Reyrolle had "every mechanical contrivance to achieve perfection" and Hawthorn Leslies was tastefully laid out with flowers, shrubs and lawns. Of more practical use was the communal bath installed at Leslies when few houses had a bath. Peart exuded socialist pride in the Welfare ideal. "When I look round and see all classes catered for and many hundreds enjoying themselves I can tell you it did my heart good to see the sight when I entered the ground".

All was change. Welfare clubs scurried from league to league like a colony of ants: chaotic to human eyes yet with purpose. They moved to save on travel or if unemployment altered circumstances. In 1926 Durham Coast League (hereafter D.Coast) formed and Mid-Durham Senior (hereafter Mid-D) re-formed. Durham County League formed in 1936. TSL clubs north of the Tyne, disgruntled at losing 'derby' match revenue every other year because they played each club only once, broke away to form Northumberland League in 1934. It echoed the Durham schism of 1903. "Several representatives expressed their disapproval at the underhand method adopted by the resigning clubs." 53

Tom Bulmer attempted to restore Mallett's pyramid structure by suggesting a grouping scheme in 1934. DSL rejected it; NYSD and TSL showed only passing interest. Jim Etchells then proposed a modified version for D.Coast, NWD, Mid-D and North-East Durham. That, too, was rejected because clubs feared increased travel and loss of 'derby' revenue. Etchells' words were prophetic: "Whether you do it now matters little. You will have to do it some day if we are to progress...."

NWD introduced limited-overs cup cricket in 1919. George Hemsley hit 198 not out in 80 minutes in Langley Park's 415 for 8. Within a decade most major cup competitions were in operation. Cup cricket was so popular NWD considered scrapping time cricket. The press led a campaign for 'brighter cricket'. Not surprising after a dishwater end to 1927. Eppleton dismissed Durham City for 118 then crawled to 58 for 9 in 2½ hours to gain a draw and first DSL title. The brothers Barrowcliff stood either side of the ensuing debate. Faithful Frank felt spectators wanted excitement and spectacle. Principled Percy professed that "cricket should be protected from the interfering hands of people who would make it a more spectacular game for the purpose of attracting crowds. The chief concern was to maintain the spirit of the game and its appeal to youth as a form of sport and recreation."

Increased drawn matches prompted Bulmer submit proposals to halt the trend. One captain

⁵² W. A. Moyes: *Mostly Mining*

had batted for 3¾ hours so he suggested no points be awarded for a draw. While the number of draws in the 1930s increased by 6% over the 1920s a graph showing the per-centage drawn each year simply mirrors the days lost to rain. It *is* true scoring rates slowed but by how much it is now impossible to calculate. Batsmen were more circumspect; bowlers positioned nine fielders on the off to save runs and pros used leg-theory. Were there psychological reasons for the trend? Was a depressed society less likely to sport with carefree abandon? Had war bred inhibitions? In fact spectators were witnessing an emphasis on risk-free technique manifest in the pad-play preached by coaches. Nimmo had set up a County Coaching Scheme in 1922 with Clode (qv), Joe Galley and Walter Lees, all from First-class counties, as district coaches. Their experience was beneficial and six years later the scheme had its first major success. Maurice Nichol hit a hundred off the West Indians on debut for Worcestershire.

Two novelties were ultimately significant: overseas pros and the advent of Sunday cricket. Eppleton engaged Singhalese spinner Holsinger in 1914. Seaham Harbour sensationally signed West Indies fast bowler George Francis during the 1928 Oval Test. Ex-Seaham skipper Harry Mallett was manager of West Indies. Crowds flocked to see Francis destroy batsmen unaccustomed to such speed. He removed 343 of them in four seasons until Seaham could afford him no longer. Francis was paid £513 in 1930 though he frequently donated half of any collection to a children's hospital. Darlington controversially staged Sunday matches in 1935, the 'gate' shared with several charities. A Sunday league match was played in D.Coast in 1939, a private arrangement by two clubs after rain the previous day. South Hetton protested but no rule existed to prevent it. In fact Sunday cricket was not 'new' to the county. James Coates, it will be remembered, complained about cricket on the Sabbath in 1785. There was second-hand report, too, of cricket on Sundays in early-nineteenth century Durham "with the full cognisance and permission of the bishop, mayor and corporation". 54

Other changes included the introduction of the smaller ball in 1927. Major leagues adopted today's larger stumps in 1932. Minor leagues did so next year. The practice of drawing stumps after

PRO-FILE (No. 9)

HARRY PILE CLODE

(b. Paddington, London, 7 Sep 1877; d. Sunderland, 19 Oct 1964)

Ex-Surrey all-rounder who sensationally revitalised Wearmouth (1904-12). Forceful right-hander who once hit a ball so high that two runs were scored before it landed. Off-break bowler who, remarkably, increased his seasonal wicket tally after turning amateur (1913-30). Played major role in Durham CCC coaching scheme. Harry's ashes were scattered over the Carley Hill ground.

DSL record: Exceeded 9,000 runs and 1,300 wkts. 7 club hundreds.

⁵³ Minutes of Tyneside Senior League meeting, 13 October 1933.

⁵⁴ Letter from Samuel Longstaffe to *Durham County Advertiser*, 26 June 1885



Durham County Cricket Club 1973

The first Minor County to beat a First-class county in the Gillette Cup

Standing: R. Inglis, S.R. Atkinson, S. Greensword, J.G. March, A.G.B. Old, P.J. Crane, J. Iley (secretary) Seated: N.A. Riddell, D.W. Soakell, A.A. Johnson (12th man), B.R. Lander (capt), J.S. Wilkinson, R. Cole (w-k)



[photograph courtesy of Sunderland Echo]

Burnmoor Cricket Club 2002

Durham Senior League Champions

Standing: I.E. Conn, B. Dews, M. Robson, N. Young, A. Linsley, I. Miller, B. Embleton

Front Power M.P. Penfield, I. Tindele (cont.), S. Bakinger, S. Hanner, I.

Front Row: M.R. Benfield, J. Tindale (capt), S. Robinson, S. Haywood



[photograph by kind permission Shotley Bridge CC]

Shotley Bridge Cricket Club 2002

Northumberland & Tyneside Senior League Champions

Standing: P. Peel, W. Gibson, D. McCabe, I. Heslop, D. Love, N. Burdon, T.H. Peel
Sitting: J. Collingwood, D.C. Jackson (pro), L. Murray (capt), I. Archbold, M. Rourke (scorer)

(Insert: P.K. Collingwood)



[photograph by kind permission Hylton CC]

Hylton Cricket Club 2002

Durham Coast League Champions

Standing: L. Barnett (scorer), S. Robinson, S. Emmerson, G. Hewitt, J. Carney, A. Rackstraw, D. Batty, J. Bittlestone

Kneeling: D. Rooney, O. Williamson, D. Hanson, K. Trotter, S. Gleeson



[photograph by kind permission Evenwood CC]

Evenwood Cricket Club 2002

Durham County League Champions

Standing: C. Peareth, C. Dargue (capt), J. Maughan, W. Teesdale (jnr), D. Wallace, N. Teesdale, D. Priestley (scorer)

Kneeling: C. Rutherford, K. Watson, J. Gill, D. Butler (pro), P. Watson



Philadelphia v Chester-le-Street - 2002

The new pavilion at Philadelphia, opened in 1999, against a backdrop of Penshaw Monument, erected to the memory of John George Lambton, the first Earl of Durham, who formed Lambton Cricket Club in 1812. Philadelphia was named after the American city during the War of Independence.

the winning hit was adopted in 1926. Women's Cricket Association formed, Durham being one of the first in 1930. A women's Northern League followed. Because of their smaller hands, women were allowed to use a ball weighing 5 ounces.

Whitburn were first to win three consecutive DSL titles outright. Rain denied a fourth when in a winning position in the 1927 play-off. They were led by Percy Ashley who was at Durham City before taking up a headship at Whitburn. A.P.Ashley was a cautious batsman of sound judgement who made 18 league hundreds and twice topped DSL batting. He once scored 362 in five successive league matches without dismissal. Whitburn blended dash and discretion in the varied styles of Ashley, Kelsall, Shiel and brothers Jack and Tom Smith and W.A. and T.K.Dobson (jnr). Their success was the more remarkable for being the only DSL club without a pro. They engaged Jimmy Milne in 1931 and were champions in his second season. T.K.Dobson (jnr) was the most accomplished all-rounder of his day. The gifted left-hander hit 13 hundreds and thrilled for over a decade until retiring on medical advice. In 1928 he hit a century off Constantine and his West Indians and his 972 runs was a DSL amateur record. T.K. carried Whitburn's attack, captured 750 league wickets and twice topped DSL bowling.

Durham City finished in the top three in all but three seasons between the wars. Born leader H.C.Ferens, who pioneered the city's schools league, captained them to four titles and a share in 1926. Ferens succeeded Fred Scott who would happily sit on the splice for any team. Fred's warmth even appealed to the black cat that strolled to the crease to nuzzle around his pads. Fred gently carried it to the ropes and got the day's only 50. Ferens began at Durham School. As did C.L. and J.A.Adamson, J.G.Askew, R.W.Smeddle and F.A.Youngman who each scored freely in the School's 408 in 1924. All six were in City's 1928 title side alongside Charlie Milam who won a first medal with City in 1907. Ferens pulled and drove crisply with strong wrists. A taut batting stance and wicket-keeper's crouch seemed to possess coiled energy awaiting release. He gave up the gloves to make way for another fine exponent, Jack Iley. Mayor of Durham in 1947, Cecil Ferens retired with over 11,000 runs for City.

Charles Lodge Adamson played in all five title sides in a formidable opening partnership with Ferens. Patience personified, his deflections were timed with the precision of a metronome. He should have been christened Dislodge, so often did he carry his bat. Adamson was on the field the duration of half City's league matches in 1932-33, slicked black hair undisturbed by each vigil. Awakened from slumbers he could force. In successive weeks he was involved in stands of 188 for the first wicket in 95 and 81 minutes. C.L. compiled over 10,000 runs for City and twice topped DSL batting. He followed the footsteps of father and grandfather as City captain. His brother John, brilliant fielder, Oxford rugby 'blue' and master at Denstone, took terrible toll of wayward bowling in the vacation.

Whitburn were batter-balanced, Durham City better-balanced because they had bowler-pros

from First-class counties. Harry Austin (Warwickshire) was succeeded by Joe Galley (Kent ground staff). Breezy bat and fast bowler Bill Sadler (Surrey) was one of the highest-paid pros in the area. Stan Ellis was a firecracker of a cricketer. Small, cocky, off-spinner Ellis captured 315 league wickets (av 8.9) in four seasons for City after previously topping DSL bowling twice at Eppleton. Ellis fired out 196 batsmen to ignite Horden Colliery in 1936. His piercing appeal rent the Durham air for thirteen summers when claiming some 1,500 victims. In his Lancashire days Ellis had two 'hat-tricks' while taking 10 for 26 for Barrow. Stan also took all ten for City and for Horden in a cup-tie.

Army captain Hubert Brooks, demobbed at last in 1920, led Sunderland to further success and was leading scorer in the 1921 title side. Major E.L.Squance, MC, continued in cavalier style, most memorably during a glorious 170 not out against Shields. Opener Harry Gibbon asserted mastery from the first ball. The popular pro, clean driver and strong on the leg, hit 825 runs in the 1930 title year and averaged 40 over five seasons before signing for his first club, Eppleton. Gibbon emphasised his class with an undefeated 103 against a Yorkshire attack boasting Rhodes, Macaulay and Emmott Robinson. A.H.Parnaby was just 16 when he hit a century in his 1933 debut season. Next year he forged a famous opening partnership with E.S.Levy. In 1936 Parnaby equalled Elliot's league aggregate of 940 and Levy made 776. The pair raised 100 on five occasions, another six over 50. Alan Parnaby, seemingly incapable of a tasteless stroke, made 4,554 stylish league runs (av 45). He rose to Lieut.-colonel during the war and was awarded MBE. Parnaby was a leading cricketer in the Army side and played First-class for Combined Services. Levy was shrewd, patient, but never dull. Spectators loved to watch his bespectacled head bobbing up and down in time with the strides of the approaching bowler. Sunderland were champions in 1936 with off-spinner Emmott Robinson as pro. At 53 he lacked penetration. His 58 wickets cost 15 apiece but he bowled 400 overs with his customary control.

Marriages are made in heaven but an unlikely earth-union brought celestial bliss to Westoe in 1929 in shape of a first DSL title. Forster Coulson was appointed captain while Albert Howell (qv) was pro. It was an attraction of opposites: Coulson "loud, forthright and gruff"; Howell "incapable of a spurious appeal or underhand tactic". An elopement of sorts. Each was escaping: Coulson from a domineering mother; Howell from the shadows of a brother with five England caps. Coulson, stern captain, courageous batsman, brave close fielder, did not miss a league match in eleven years. His best season was the 1929 title year and he led a second success in 1935. Coulson's father made his debut in 1887, father and son appeared together in 1914, son played until 1944. His mother watched this family saga unfold from a window of their home overlooking Wood Terrace. Forster Coulson bequeathed £5,000 that partly financed the present scorebox so, in a sense, the family is still active at Westoe.

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⁵⁵ Clive Crickmer: Grass Roots (A History of South Shields Cricket Club 1850-1984)

Lyndon Herbert Weight was pro at six Durham clubs. Sought by many a First-class county, the Welshman is best remembered at Ashbrooke and Westoe where historians reveal subtle differences in Weight's worth. Sunderland fears "he was always in the grip of a mechanical technique, while he batted and bowled the game drifted"⁵⁶ Shields probes his psyche, concludes "he would defensively counter four or five deliveries before 'stealing' the bowling...indicative of his single-minded and conscientious application".⁵⁷ 'Len' was a patient, correct bat, strong in the arc from cover to third man. For all his caution, Sunderland supporters contributed £128 to Weight's benefit, "much of it in coppers and carried in his cricket bag to a taxi". His career figures attract respect and fascination. Fourteen pro summers produced 7,258 league runs (av 34) and 772 wickets. But no championship medal. He turned amateur at 41. It seems only then did he fully integrate into a side. Weight made a further 4,413 league runs (av 31.5) for Shields and gained the elusive medal at the age of 46.

Chester-le-Street won a first DSL title in 1920. Two years undefeated from 13 August 1921, they were again champions in 1922. Jimmy Thackeray (qv), then 40, shrewdly exploited the damp conditions to top DSL bowling. Runs came from Tom Swinhoe, then at his best, and future stalwarts George Crichton, C.F.Gowland and Jack Wake. 'Cestrians' 1923 pro, an echo from the Golden Age, was destined for fame. It took just 17 minutes for a tall, lean pit-lad with cap at rakish angle but no 'box' to reach 50. He was back in the pavilion 28 minutes later with 115 to his name. Jack Carr smashed the ball to all corners of the county for 37 seasons. Not the most graceful. But eagle-eyed. Almost regardless of length Carr extended a long left leg down the wicket, swung his bat in a pendulous arc. Sometimes the ball sliced towards third man. Mostly it sailed over extra-cover, midwicket or straight. A long way. One towering six at Feethams cleared a goalmouth on the adjoining football field and came to rest on the half-way line; another smashed a Norton station window. A mighty six at Blackhall crashed through the pavilion roof. A second into the press-box scattered pressmen and pencils. The next ball landed in a nearby wood. Carr then captured 9 for 15, three

PRO-FILE (No. 10)

ALBERT LOUIS HOWELL

(b. Birmingham, 26 Jul 1898; d. Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 26 Jul 1958)

Coach at Uppingham (1919) and ex-Warwickshire. Testimonial after 15 years (1923-37) at South Shields. Of rugged build with stamina and genuine speed from a flowing action. Six 'hat-tricks'. Strength and quick eye made him a dangerous, if unorthodox, batsman. Engaged at Birtley (1938-39) where he took 107 TSL wkts (av 10.5). Returned to his roots and ended his cricket at Westoe in 1941.

League record at South Shields: 4,655 runs (av 22.1) 987 wkts (av 12) All matches at South Shields: 5,780 runs (av 20.5) 1,271 wkts (av 11.8)

⁵⁶ R. Curry: unpublished personal memories of Sunderland cricket and rugby.

⁵⁷ Clive Crickmer: Grass Roots (A History of South Shields Cricket Club 1850-1984)

snapped up by his short-leg pick-pocket Billy Brown. Billy's grandson recently appeared on television's *Antiques Roadshow* with the watch Brown received when he played for West Ham United in the first Wembley Cup Final in 1923. Though teetotal (he enjoyed the odd glass of port) Carr turned publican. His languid nature was not ideal for the job but his ex-barmaid wife knew the trade backwards.

Carr was great box-office. He earned a collection of £3 when a youth at Leadgate. Six years later 3,000 hero-worshipers at Chester-le-Street gave £52. Carr was idolised like the screen stars of the day. Modest and unassuming, Jack remained faithful to his admirers. He once broke a toe but batted with a slipper on his foot rather than withdraw from a charity match. He was equally happy to turn out for the Wednesday XI alongside brothers Tommy and Bob. Locals were shocked in 1932 by rumour he had been killed in a car crash. The Leadgate lad even made the pages of the London *Evening Standard*:

His terrific hitting astonished even the strongest Australian Test bowling. Like the great Sidney Barnes, Carr has preferred a lifetime in Minor County Cricket. But what a draw he would have been at Lord's or The Oval.

PRO-FILE (No. 11)

JAMES THACKERAY

(b. Hebburn Colliery, 23 Nov 1881; d. Hebburn, 5 Nov 1968)

Left-arm fast bowler with smooth action. Extracted 'devil' from the pitch, especially bowling round the wicket. Took 150 wkts at South Shields (119 bowled) after being spotted by Tom Coulson at Hebburn Colliery, topping DSL bowling in debut season (1904). Pro at Chester-le-Street (1908 and 1910-13). At Middlesbrough in 1909 where he played soccer alongside Steve Bloomer. Amateur at Chester-le-St. (1914-25). Appointed groundsman at Leslies in 1926 when he took 9 for 1 v Eslington Park and reached 100 wkts before end of July. For a man who bowled at Grace in 1907, played soccer with the greats, he was modest to a fault. Never indulged in nostalgic tales of the past, always talked of the present and the state of Saturday's wicket. When the author was captain of Leslies he was closely associated with Jimmy and often wished, while writing this narrative, he could sit down with Jimmy over a pint and relive the Golden Age of Durham cricket.

DSL record: 3701 overs 895 mdns 8879 runs 909 wkts (av 9.8)

Retired in 1941 after taking 1,350 league wkts for Leslies.

Attacking left-hander Bill Barron experienced the thrill of those famous grounds after title wins at Philadelphia in 1934 and 1938. First of a succession of Durham men signed by

Northamptonshire, he was regarded the best slip-catcher in county cricket. Syd Ellison returned to
Philly in 1930 where he was 30 years secretary and his slow left-arm claimed 1,000 league victims.

Supremely accurate, Syd conceded only 674 runs from 420 overs in 1934. Harry Robson, another slow left-armer, was pro at Chester-le-Street where he ran a plumbing business. Harry was a master of flight and spin and twice topped DSL bowling. His last engagement was at Boldon where H.W.Hardy compiled at will and great Sunderland and England inside-forward Charlie Buchan batted handsomely. Buchan's best year was 1939 when he hit two consecutive league hundreds and topped DSL batting with an average of 68. Eight years earlier Edwin Clarkson died. Clarkson came to Boldon to join contractors constructing a railway and noted there was no cricket field. Within a month he and Mr Nicholson collected £200 and laid out a ground. It opened in 1876 and before long Mewburn was turning out regularly for the club.

Air-raid sirens mourned the end of Hendon. Formed in 1887, they were elected to DSL in 1901. Norman Dixon hit 3 hundreds, one when six-man Hendon gained an astonishing, last-match win over leaders Durham City to deny them the 1919 championship. Hendon engaged Weight, Morris and Hendren (qv) but their top placing was third. They may have had more success had they been able to retain their best batsmen. G.H.Williamson and E.N.Randle did well at Sunderland and W.T.Charlton took his impeccable technique to Wearmouth where he averaged 45 overall in DSL and set an amateur record of 975. Horatio Stratton Carter, brilliant Sunderland and England inside forward, stayed faithful until transferred to Derby County. Appearances for Derbyshire justify his belief he could have been a regular if born in a First-class county and properly coached. 'Raich' confessed to feeling more inner tension playing amateur cricket than professional football. He was a studious slow left-armer, athletic cover-point and a batsman blessed with natural talent: timing, power and fleet footwork. "By nature I belonged to the fireworks of Durham League and cup-tie cricket." One sparkling league hundred took just 50 minutes and he smashed windows in four houses when blasting 135 in a cup-tie.

Darlington won NYSD four times in succession in 1920-23, indeed seven times in eleven years. Polished right-hander Dick Healey cut, drove and was strong off his legs. Dick's outstanding captaincy was a vital element in this most glorious period of their history. When disciplinarian Stockton captain C.P.Barrowcliff said Darlington "played with such fine spirit as to make the game *enjoyable*" take it as biblical truth. Healey's comment that Darlington's batting was "consistent but nothing startling" says more about his own high standards than the value of patient Percy Blaylock or forceful Jake Dobson. No doubting the ability of his younger batsmen. It was impossible to subdue Harry Moon's smile or gloriously uninhibited strokes, a high proportion of them boundaries. Reg

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Raich Carter: Footballer's Progress

Hunt drove beautifully and hooked powerfully. Norman Doggart's 170 in 85 minutes was one of his many blistering innings. Norman's father established a chain of stores and begat a sporting dynasty. Two of distinction. A.G., Norman's brother, hit a century on debut for Bishop Auckland, represented Middlesex, played soccer for England and was FA chairman. G.H.G, Norman's nephew, scored 215 not out on debut for Cambridge University, established a record English second-wicket partnership of 429 with J.G.Dewes that stood until 1974 and twice played for England while at Sussex.

Healey said having slow-left-arm Ashley Goodrick and pro Harry Turner in the side made the job of captaincy a sinecure. Goodrick's dangerous, late-swinging 'toe-trapper' accounted for many of his 574 league victims. His unerring accuracy was the equal of the pros he supported. Turner helped win three titles by taking 346 league wickets in four seasons with medium-pace off-cutters. He was just as successful at Bishop Auckland where, at 47, he was first to take 100 NYSD wickets.

A.C.Williams, pro in two title sides, was one of the fastest in the league even at 34. Tall, medium inswinger George Higgins made a huge contribution to the 1930 title with 104 wickets for 980 runs in 480 overs and ex-Northamptonshire fast bowler, George Johnson, had four successful years. By the time the Jarrow Crusade marched through town the 'Quakers' were in decline. They plunged to the bottom of NYSD where they remained, without professionals, until the outbreak of war.

F.R.Smith's sparkling strokes earned 913 league runs in 1929. Next year Smith just missed a third consecutive league century when dismissed on 99. He later achieved the feat for West Hartlepool, hit a cup hundred in between for good measure. Frank, ex-Lancashire II, scored over 10,000 runs and 20 centuries in all matches. Smith had a set to with Blackhall skipper Tommy Elliott when the colliers were hanging on for a draw. Elliott, fine tactician, could be "a bit of an awkward sod". Tommy went in at nine and ordered Norman Herron take all the bowling of pro Jack Curtis (qv).

PRO-FILE (No. 12)

DENIS HENDREN

(b. Chiswick, London, 15 Sep 1882; d. Paddington, London, 29 May 1962)

Ex-Middlesex and brother of 'Patsy' (Middlesex and England). Nomadic wanderings at Hendon (1907-08, 1921-22, 1925-28), Durham City (1909-12), Burnmoor (1913), Sunderland (1914, 1930), Seaham Harbour (1923-24) and Wearmouth (1929). All except Hendon contended regularly for honours. Voluble, if temperamental, character whose runs were made "without passion, sweetly and thriftily; one here, one there, and then the sudden effortless lash and the ball among the crowd". Cleverly mingled spin and flight. It was said "his mannerisms were many and strange" Most were coded signals in collaboration with his wicket-keeper. War service in Egypt with Durham Light Infantry. Coach at Harrow (1919).

DSL record: 6,413 runs (av 24.8); 4 club hundreds 850 wkts (av 14.5)

Elliott would not run even when the ball was hit to within a foot of the boundary. Curtis decided it

was futile to run in, delivered the ball standing at the wicket. Frank thought it a farce. His patience finally snapped when he saw Elliott standing several yards behind the wicket in defiant demonstration of his refusal to run. Smith led West Hartlepool from the field in protest.

The *contretemps* had underlying social implications easily detected from Smith's post-match comment: "We have not been used to this sort of thing in NYSD". Smith was a businessman whose years at Darlington and West Hartlepool were in company of men far removed from Blackhall miners. The colliery club was only four years old. They paid a pro and a groundsman; had been investigated (and exonerated) by NYSD for allegedly paying an assistant groundsman. Moreover, colliery manager Ernie Chicken enlisted players from far and wide. "If yi can play cricket or in the band, see Chicken an' 'e'll give yi'ra job." In Smith's view Blackhall were little more than upstarts. Now these miners "who could hardly use a knife and fork properly" had upset the old order. Worse still, they were top of the league. Blackhall audaciously signed Jack Carr on a three-year contract at £5 a week in 1931. His impact was immediate and dramatic. Blackhall won D.Coast, two cups and lost a third. Carr hit 1,000 runs (av 37) and took 145 wickets at 7.7 each. They had so much batting talent in 1932 that Carr was rarely needed after Joe Craggs, Bob Cowan, Herron and Jack Fisher. Blackhall won a second successive title, were elected to NYSD and straightway were champions. A second title in 1936 confirmed an astonishing rise.

Norton slumped after Townsend retired but son David led them to three titles in 1935-38. D.C.H.Townsend was educated at Winchester and Oxford. His 193 in the 1934 'Varsity match earned selection for the West Indies tour. Townsend played three Tests and was the last to represent England without having played for a First-class county. Responsibilities in his father's legal practice forced him to decline two later tours. D.C.H. was modest to a fault: "I didn't have any great ability. I just practised and trained endlessly." All-rounders George Carter and Edgar Manners were brilliant close catchers and kept constantly in action by paceman Harry Barker and leg-spinner Fred Harker. Fred's curious habit of knocking off a bail on his way back to his mark kept umpires busy. Manners was

PRO-FILE (No. 13)

JOHN STAFFORD CURTIS

(b. Barrow-upon-Soar, 21 Dec 1887; d. Leicester 8 Mar 1972)

Ex-Leicestershire off-spinner who took over 500 NYSD wkts at West Hartlepool (1932-6). Took 100 league wkts in season three times, first West bowler to do so in an auspicious debut season (157 in all). Known as The Hat-trick King, his accuracy is illustrated by figures of 18-17-2-7wkts v Normanby Hall.)

² Conversation with Ernie Chicken's son, Alan.

signed by Darlington RA and took 5 wickets in five balls against his old club in the Kerridge Cup and in the same year took all ten against Normanby Hall. Edgar's career was threatened when two fingers progressively curled into the palm of his hand. Fast bowler Dr F.I.Herbert cured the problem. Handy to have a doctor around in an emergency, particularly the day he retrieved a batsman's testicles when they imploded into his pelvis after being hit by a thudding ball. Dr Herbert's *modus operandi* was at times ambivalent. He once felled a batsman with bouncer then drove him to hospital to treat the injury himself. M.M.Walford hit the odd hundred on his infrequent appearances, another on Somerset debut. Walford, triple Oxford 'blue', was a master at Sherborne where he taught David Sheppard, later captain of England and Bishop of Liverpool. Sheppard acknowledged a debt to Walford's coaching.

Johnny Prest kept wicket in the championship years until displaced by R.T.Spooner. Jimmy Grigor tested their skills to the full with legerdemain more suited to the stage. The Scot's 'chinamen' were cunningly flighted, each one different. Batsmen grew feet of lead trying to counteract prodigious break. Grigor took 735 league wickets, many with balls pitching a yard outside off stump. Some beat leg stump! Even great Australian batsman, Stan McCabe, hit his wicket trying desperately to keep out a Grigor fizzer. Among Jimmy's amazing conjuring feats were two 'hat-tricks' when taking 7 for 1.

High-class wicket-keepers teemed out of south-east Durham. Dick Spooner rose rapidly to fame after RAF service. The left-hander was first to score 1,000 league runs for Norton, was 'capped' by Warwickshire in 1948 and kept for England in 1951. He was succeeded at Warwickshire by another Norton stumper, Jack Fox. Harold Stephenson was ever grateful for Stockton's scholarship system, "something my parents could not afford." Unable to displace A.W.Austin, Harold moved to Synthonia and made his Somerset debut in 1948. Arthur Austin was a brilliant 'keeper, particularly down the leg, whose consistency kept Spooner and Stephenson out of the county side. He had a distinctive method of returning the ball to the bowler. He lobbed the ball right-handed under arched left arm like a skater on one leg. Arthur went straight from school into the family's Wensleydale cheese business. Secretary and chairman of Durham, he helped the county attain First-class status. Arthur, equally proud of his work at Stockton, fondly recalls boyhood autumn mornings kneeling on a sack to pick dockings off the square with a pricker. In the nets he stood in the confined space behind the stumps to improve his ability to stand up to fast bowling in the middle. "In my day there were no bumpers. They bowled line and length at the stumps." Arthur is envious of modern equipment. "Except for a little reinforcement, my gauntlets were little better than ordinary gloves. Now they are like buckets. You can throw yourself through the air and catch with three fingers."

Austin improved his technique to slow bowling by keeping to Sid Dixon "who spun it", rather than C.P.Barrowcliff "who did not but got wickets from balls tossed so high that batsmen made stupid errors." The epitaph of many a successful slow bowler. C.P. twice had 4 wickets in 4 balls, took 5-or-more league wickets twelve times in 17 matches in 1920, exceeded 1,500 in his career. Percy thought he could trap Harry Heavisides every ball. Time after time Harry's muscular forearms hoisted

him over the trees. He once straight drove Percy, knocked the umpire off his feet, then rushed to his aid. Over-zealous Percy thought Harry was stealing a single and ran him out. The incident was believed to hasten Harry's decision to take up fishing. Barrowcliff did not court popularity: "Cricket's greatness is measured by its contribution to life rather than by its popularity". In fact C.P. was very unpopular and once stoned off a ground for appealing persistently. Percy thrived on the notoriety. The bossy captain ruled for 22 years, handy for a man who would bowl at both ends had rules allowed. Tiny Tom Olver was Stockton's chief run-maker, a faultless stylist with nimble footwork who ran like a lintie between the wickets. Olver topped the club batting eleven times and was first to score 1,000 NYSD runs. He made over 10,000 in all and hit 12 hundreds before work took him to Burnley to which club he was recommended by Learie Constantine.

A dramatic late run earned Bishop Auckland a first NYSD title in 1934. There had been a Proud in the side ever since 1860 in the days of J.T.Proud. Not in 1934. His eldest son, E.B., retired in 1921. His youngest, E.L., was at Durham City. Grandson R.B. was at Winchester. Each captained 'Bishops'. Resolute Wheldon Curry, 13 on debut for North Bitchburn, symbolised Bishop's success. In 29 years at Kingsway he scored 7,874 batting left-handed, took 615 wickets with legbreaks. Not even a career-threatening injury could prevent Curry returning to North Bitchburn after the war. He was 65 when he took 10 for 8 against Bank Foot. "It should have been 10 for 4 but somehow a catch went astray." Three years later, and still working, he took 9 for 19 against Tow Law.

It was a bitter-sweet year for slow left-arm pro, Ralph Nichol. 'Bishops' could not afford to retain him but he continued as amateur. Ralph began at Eppleton with brother Maurice who made a 2nd XI century when 14 and later hit a brilliant hundred for Durham against Leveson-Gower's XI. Jack Hobbs was playing and recommended him to Surrey for trials. Maurice moved to Worcestershire and was twelfth man for England in 1927. That winter he caught pneumonia. In 1933 he collapsed when travelling to a match at Leyton. An enlarged heart was diagnosed yet he scored 2,085 runs and three successive centuries. During a match at Chelmsford next year Maurice was found dead in his hotel room. When the awful telegram arrived Ralph withdrew from the game with Stockton. Summer warmed and the championship momentarily lightened his grief. Happier days lay ahead. On 12 June 1937 Ralph became a father, did the 'hat-trick' and hit his only century for 'Bishops'.

Consett, Craghead and South Moor continued to battle for NWD supremacy. Between them they won ten of the eleven post-war championships. Craghead's attack was spearheaded by pro Bob Cairns, one of the fastest in DSL in his youth. On debut as Horden pro he shattered Rev W.L.M.Law's forearm. Cairns took over 500 wickets for Craghead, including 6 for none to rout Burnopfield for 11. After the war he was joined in attack by Jack Coulson who exceeded 500 wickets as prelude to greater deeds at Consett.

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³ Stockton CC handbook 1931

South Moor's batting was formidable on their beautiful Quaking Houses wicket. They had fine openers Jackie Dodds, whose 186 remained the club's highest, and cheery Billy Akers who had all the shots but favoured a thumping square cut. Patient Ernie Collins contrasted with ex-Southampton footballer Billy Turner who hit 8 sixes and 23 fours as he flayed Leadgate for 167. Wilf Naylor never forgot the day in 1930 when he took 8 for 3 to dispatch Langley Park for 10. South Moor were 4 for 2 when rain washed out the match!

Consett unveiled new pavilion and pro in 1921. C.G.Whetton took 9 for 11 in front of 5,000. The dapper little Cumbrian revitalised Consett. They won four championships in his first seven seasons. Celebrations were so common that jovial Joe Eltringham, their president, refused to take the trophy to a presentation "because I'll only have to carry it back again". Cyril Whetton delivered "mixtures" at military medium. He took all ten against Medomsley and against Shotley Bridge in 1923, his best season with 124 league wickets. A late run in 1933 clinched another title. Whetton bagged 37 scalps in the last six matches to extend his tally to 900. Cyril could bat, too, and scored 151 not out on two successive Saturdays. If shift-work allowed, crane-driver George Moon would help Whetton on the ground. In return, Cyril would doff his overalls and coach George for half an hour. As a result Moon became a capable opener, part-time groundsman and grass culture expert. Moon went full-time when Consett Iron Company took over the ground in 1948 and prepared every county wicket until 1967.

Consett engaged lean-featured leg-spinner Jack Coulson on election to TSL in 1928. Jack kept an immaculate length during a beautiful summer to take 107 league wickets and Consett were runners-up. Next year they ran away with the title. Coulson took 10 for 18 in his benefit and set a TSL record with 115 wickets. Coulson knew the value of a good wicket-keeper. One of the best, Billy Howgate, was integral to Jack's success at Craghead and Consett. Whetton maintained the momentum on return until replaced by majestic Jack Latchford (qv) who delighted with fleet footwork, deft timing, exquisite late-cuts and off-drives. Hugh Dyson, Les Ayton, Syd Unsworth, Willie Foggin and Tom Ellison completed the nucleus of a powerful side. Consett won three consecutive titles in 1935-37 and were undefeated in the league for two-and-a-half years.

Albert Elsdon raised Medomsley fortunes when he joined in 1929. Elsdon, a colliery overman, started at Langley Park as an opening bat. Albert became one of the best leg-spinners in the county and 650 victims in five seasons helped Medomsley to four successive NWD titles. A sequence beginning in 1930 coincided with the arrival of penetrative George Hurst, one of a number of Durham cricketers who later found work at Keresley Colliery, Warwickshire. The first, Lintz bat and Halifax footballer George Hickman, played for Warwickshire in 1929. Elected to TSL in 1934, Medomsley ran away with that title, too. Elsdon topped TSL bowling, snared 477 victims in six seasons. His 1,300 wickets in all matches in the eleven seasons prior to the war was just the start of an extraordinary career.

Ryton Willows is eloquent a name for a cricket field as you could find in nineteenth century industrial Tyneside. The riverside meadows were home to several sides from 1860 when cricket began to flourish up-river from Gateshead. Ryton played at the Willows before acquiring a ground and winning West Tyne League. After election to TSL Division B they were champions of Division A in 1925. Leading bowlers were Billy Bateman and 'Jocka' Clark whose 10 for 8 in 1920 remained the best in TSL.

A Swalwell team played in 1861. The present club, formed in 1880, was pioneered by Arnie Fletcher who negotiated with Sir Henry Clavering in 1892 to secure the Avenue Ground, Swalwell's home until 1998. Arnie was presented with a gold watch in 1930, his 50th year as player. Swalwell languished in NWD except for three years either side of the war when they won North Durham Senior League. Joe Bruce, most successful of a large cricketing family, hit a maiden hundred before moving to Elswick Works where he topped TSL batting three times. Bruce returned in 1934 to extend his TSL aggregate to 10,000. Next year they engaged Billy Bateman and the pair transformed Swalwell from wooden-spoonists to champions in 1938. Billy spent his boyhood in New Zealand then joined Blaydon in 1914. He was the classic slow left-arm bowler, wily and accurate, and trapped 2,000 victims in 28 summers. Bateman took 864 TSL wickets (av 8.7), including 100 in a season three times, and bagged 5-or-more on 103 occasions.

Gateshead Fell had a club in 1867. The present club formed in 1878 and moved to Dryden Road two years later. A chequered existence in NWD ended in expulsion in 1913. Success proved equally elusive in TSL despite the efforts of two professionals. Jimmy Towler, born in Giggleswick, schooled in Gateshead, captured over 450 league wickets in 1923-29. George Tait was coached by Clode at Burnmoor. Gateshead Fell was the fourth of seven engagements during which Tait exceeded

PRO-FILE (No. 14)

JOHN RICHARD LATCHFORD

(b. Delph, Yorkshire, 16 Jun 1909; d. Omagh, Ireland, 30 Apr 1980)

Popular ex-Lancashire all-rounder at Consett (1934-39) and Leadgate (1946-47). Majestic strokemaker; penetrating quick off-cutters. Peak season in 1935 with 1,412 runs and 130 wkts in all matches, including a century and 6 for 9 in 296-run win over Ashington. Topped TSL batting averages four years in succession and TSL bowling twice in that period. Took all ten wkts twice in 1936. No hundreds for Leadgate because, it is said, he would get himself out soon after reaching 50 to check how much was in his collection. Amateur at Consett until 1949. Before returning to Lancashire in 1966 admirers arranged for him to play in a farewell match - on Consett rugby field! He scored 30 and was presented with a scrapbook of his local deeds.

Consett record: 4,040 league runs (av 49.3) [over 6,500 in all matches]
398 league wkts (av 8.1) [almost 700 in all matches]

1,200 league wickets. Fell's fortunes rose as war approached. Left-hander Laurie Handy thrilled with magnificent batting. In three successive matches he hit 27 sixes and 30 fours during knocks of 81 not out, 102 and 167.

The elevation of NWD clubs to a re-organised TSL left vacancies for emerging clubs. Crook formed in 1875 although there had been earlier, important cricket. Crook was where Tom Hornby launched his ill-fated North of England XI in 1863. The venture lasted one match. Crook moved to Dawson Street in 1891, scene of five Mid-D titles. 'Tucker' Taylor and Arnie Close powered them to the NWD title in 1934-35 when they won 21 successive league matches. Arnie's swing bowling earned over 600 wickets in 1933-37. Short, stocky and with neat moustache, pipe-smoker Taylor made up in pace what he lacked in size. 'Tucker' worked in the family fishmonger business and later in life was a welcome caller at north-west upland villages in his bakery van.

Sacriston moved to their present ground in 1874. The south side was extended following demolition of Staffordshire Rows, home to migrant miners from that county. *Sporting Life* noted a resurgence of betting in 1882, the year Sacriston lost a match for £20 to Burnhope in one of the last in the county played for stakes. 'Seggy' gained league status in 1897. They won North Durham Senior League three times in the late 1920s before election to NWD in 1931. Tommy Lowerson, red socks flashing in mid-delivery, was pro in 1935-49. There was cricket at Kimblesworth in 1877. Founder members of NWD, Kimblesworth and Sacriston fought grim struggles for local supremacy. Eight successive 'derby' matches were drawn. Kimblesworth were champions in 1936-38 by a hairsbreadth, twice denying their rivals by a point, once by three points. Between them they lost only three of 60 league matches in that period and both were undefeated in 1936.

Village cricket retained its charm. Harry Wharton fondly remembered Waterhouses playing at Browney, Broompark and Quebec. "It was not uncommon for clubs to use only one wicket throughout the entire season. When a hole or bare patch appeared on the pitch it was replaced by a freshly cut sod from another part of the ground. We journeyed on foot when visiting neighbouring clubs and players shared the duties of carrying the cricket bag to the ground and back home again."

Minor cricket produced the unusual. Humble surroundings maybe, but for participants every game a Test match. A bad wicket, a mismatch of adversaries or stray 'visitor' might prelude moments of rare drama. Joe Proud bowled leg-breaks for Willington II while Fred Dover crouched behind the sticks "in braces and football boots whitewashed for high season". Oblivious of Elsdon, Fred thought Joe the best 'leggy' in the county. An opinion no doubt coloured by the day Fred stumped seven Dean Bank II batsmen, six off Joe. Four years later Dean Bank collapsed again - with laughter. A Shildon batsman, aiming a mighty blow, succeeded only in clouting himself on the back of the head with the

⁴ Mike Amos in his Backtrack column in *The Northern Echo*.

bat. He retired hurt. Hard as nails, Shildon Man resumed his innings, repeated the stroke and was carried off again. Wolsingham were 47 for 9 when Ian Burns joined J.W.Dent. Dent made 169 not out in a monumental last-wicket stand of 163 to pave way for a 106-run victory over Stanhope.

Herbert Trenholm and 'Kit' Raisbeck were outstanding administrators. Raisbeck's vision vastly improved TSL organisation. The ex-Greenside all-rounder was so diligent TSL had to dangle an honorarium to get a satisfactory replacement. Trenholm, 40 years a player, laid claim to 2,000 wickets. Alf Thomas, however, does not list him among those with 1,000 for Stockton firsts. "Herbert was an avid student of his own career and knew how many wickets he had taken from his earliest days". Prodigious work as secretary and treasurer of NYSD ensured its smooth running for 48 years. Herbert, club treasurer and Football League referee, was made MBE for services to northeast sport. Stockton raised the Trenholm Memorial gates as tribute to his selfless dedication to cricket.

⁵ Alf Thomas : unpublished history of Stockton CC

The primrose way to the everlasting bonfire

Cricketers' attentions were deflected in the spring of '39. Ironing flannels took second place to more pressing needs like preparing for their children's evacuation in event of war. Leslies' players concentrated on building *HMS Kelly*, a destroyer destined to go down famously in sea history. Evacuation started at dawn on 1 September. At sunset, welcomed only by lovers and criminals, the 'black out' began. Queues formed at Registry Offices as marriages increased four-fold. The expected news was broadcast on 3 September: "This country is at war with Germany." The government banned outdoor sport so championships were abandoned with a couple of matches to play.

W.G.Grace passed away at the beginning of World War I. His namesake quit this life at the start of World War II. Finding his name and initials on scorecards, the pulse of many a historian has quickened at the notion of W.G. playing in Durham. Not so, of course. William Grace Grace was born at Hallgarth Hall, Winlaton and educated at Repton and Durham University. Passionate about cricket, Grace needed no excuse to get up an eleven. When work took him to Yorkshire in 1938 he expressed a wish to be buried in Shincliffe cemetery. One June morning, having first acquired a length of piping, Grace drove his yellow car from a Pontefract hotel to a country lane near the cemetery, penned farewell and fulfilled his wish.

New Year's Eve awakened intimations of mortality. Followed by a trivial thought. Would there be any cricket? Despite doubts about finance, scarcity of vehicles and petrol rationing, leagues resolved to soldier on with first teams only. Overs replaced time cricket. Veterans and boys stood in for men on active service. Sunderland drafted John and Denys Witherington into their side. Denys, "something of laughter dwelt in him", scored 159 not out against Whitburn. The brothers seemed destined for a bright cricket future. As did Arthur Townsend who hit 152 not out for Norton.

War-time privations reshaped the game. Factory sides downed bats to work on the war effort. Other teams turned out short. Shift-work forced Latchford to scamper off the field to 'clock on'. The game lacked vitality but spectators were grateful for play of any kind: "It was a cricket match, and we almost forgot for a few hours." The overhead drone of Blenheim bombers brought them back to earth. NYSD ruled that, in event of an air-raid, "the game should continue until danger actually threatens and resume as soon as the danger ceases." Defence Regulations controlled entry into coastal areas and five miles inland. Coastal clubs could only host coastal clubs or else play away. Ration books controlled life's essentials. Clothing coupons could not be 'wasted' on cricket whites. The words 'plain teas' had new meaning. Slivers of spam cowered between grey slices of the National loaf; cakes were baked with dried egg. Cricketers walked home to boil water on the fire then carried it to the field to serve tepid tea. Ground maintenance was hampered, the use of hosepipes banned. Petrol shortages

immobilised cutter and roller; fields were cut with domestic lawn-mowers. The horse-drawn roller creaked into use again, heaved manually. Yet Durham City remained in excellent condition. Jack Harrison's toil was one reason, his ingenuity another. A Royal Canadian Air Force unit was stationed nearby. Jack 'came by' some 73-octane petrol used to fuel Tiger Moths and City's machines fairly flew over the turf. In sum it was a remarkable effort by smitten souls to keep spirits and cricket alive until normality resumed.

First-class cricketers emerged from nearby camps. Jack Robertson at Durham City; Maurice Tremlett, Jim Bailey and Bill Roberts at Barnard Castle; Test cricketers at Feethams. Herbert Sutcliffe played for Darlington and for Catterick Garrison with Hutton, Leyland and Verity to raise Red Cross funds. Verity's last appearance in England is believed to be at Darlington on 31 August 1940. Captain Verity died from wounds received in the invasion of Italy. Private Denys Witherington fell in Italy, too. Flight-Lieutenant John Witherington perished in 1941. Arthur Townsend was killed in a flying accident a week after his big innings for Norton. In the final test it mattered not whether combatant played for Easington or England.

Survivors returned battle-scarred. Alan McQueen needed more than his grit batting for South Shields to endure the horrors of a Japanese Prisoner of War camp. He never played again. Charlie Wright moved to Burnopfield the year Jack Milburn, "the hitter from the hill", needed all of 45 minutes to belt 17 sixes in a club record 164. Jack, father of Colin, was to receive a commemorative bat next match at the tea interval. The presentation was somewhat diminished when Charlie hit 169 *before* tea. Years later I got a couple of wickets as a young second-teamer. "The next man's a hitter," warned the skipper. A burly batsman limped to the crease only to hole out tamely and limp lamely back to the pavilion. He was Charlie Wright, crippled in an aeroplane crash on a mission in 1942.

"Except under grave emergency, there would be no interference with private cricket grounds" promised the Ministry of Agriculture. The Luftwaffe, less considerate, bombed North Durham's ill-fated ground which was again occupied by the military. Fifteen looters ended up in court for stealing wood and scrap metal from the pavilion. Tudhoe's pavilion was wrecked by a 'doodlebug' and even poor Daisy, Etherley's horse, was killed during a raid.

A Royal Australian Air Force XI landed at Ashbrooke before hostilities ended. Keith Miller hit 75 for a side containing evocative names that schoolboys recited with pleasure: Carmody, Cristofani, Pettiford, Sismey. Miller came on to finish the tail. Jack Carr was batting. Romantic confrontation. Legendary, grey-haired pitman who rocketed the ball like a meteor with a bat seemingly no bigger than a match-stick. Debonair, black-maned Mosquito pilot, who propelled the ball like lightning off five paces should he wish. Miller had Carr caught for nought. That battle over, the war ended.

Victory in Europe was declared on 8 May 1945. Bomb-scarred streets transformed to arcades of red, white and blue. A deformed crocodile of tables proffered the best available food at a Victory Tea. Children played games, ran races for treasure called chocolate. At dusk, flaming bonfires consumed effigies of Hitler. Adults usurped the night. Naked bulbs illuminated the streets. Both twinkled and danced till dawn to sounds of accordion and harmonica.

The flower of Peace

Winter AGMs declared war-time cricket over. War-time austerity continued. Clubs had to get a permit from the league secretary to buy equipment. A blazer cost £5, a bat £2, a ball ten shillings. Demand for balls was so great that manufacturers were instructed to supply half orders only. Rubber grips were scarce so bat handles were wrapped with padded tape. Restoring neglected grounds was a daunting task. Scythes were needed to clear Blaydon's wilderness. Coal extraction damaged Quaking Houses. "It was saucer-shaped and dropped eight feet from the stone wall to the square." The War Office granted North Durham £3,000 compensation towards reconstruction of their ground. They did not stage a home match until 1950.

On 26 July 1945 Britain woke to the promise of social change under a Labour Government. Change in cricket, too. Durham County League reformed in 1948. While geographically convenient for clubs in central Durham it had a knock-on effect for other leagues. D.Coast lost six clubs out of 14, NWD lost three of 10, Mid-D two of 13. NWD and Mid-D adopted overs cricket. Mid-D and D.Co introduced evening matches. TSL allowed works' sides to re-arrange holiday-week fixtures as two-night matches, 150 minutes each night. DSL introduced two-night matches to accommodate the extra fixtures when extending to 14 clubs in 1961. They were eventually switched to Sundays because players found them "loathsome".

An increased number of Sunday matches in 1946 caused bitter controversy. Iciness between entrenched factions outlasted the winter freeze that followed. Opponents held the Sabbath sacrosanct. Clubs with tenancy agreements that forbade Sunday play were fearful of losing members who threatened to withdraw financial support. Advocates believed Sunday cricket would increase public interest without preventing Lord's Day observers following their ideals should they wish. Committee men and pragmatic professionals scented financial benefits. Sunday friendly matches at Shotley Bridge realised £80 compared with £52 for league matches.

North Durham and Jack Wiper led the Sunday crusade. When 'gate' receipts increased from £150 to £420 in one season they knew they were on to a money-spinner. Wiper pushed the boat out. He arranged matches between the top local players and a Commonwealth XI of pros of the calibre of Sobers, Worrell and Ramadhin. Some 2,000 attended. Sport attracted large crowds in the immediate post-war years. Durham City announced record 'gate' receipts of £400. Seaham Harbour took £100 for one match. It did not last. Within four years both were in deficit. Announcing a loss in 1960 the president declared NYSD "in a precarious position".

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⁶ O. Barrass: A History of South Moor Cricket Club

In 1947 Jack Hayes became the only amateur to take 100 DSL wickets in a season. "Wickets are easy to get nowadays," he said. "Batsmen are not half as good as they used to be and are mostly too old." Jack, 43 himself, had a point. The number of hundreds in the immediate post-war decades is the lowest since the 1890s. The average age of the county side was 30. Hayes might have made allowance for the effects of a World War on club cricket. Five Test men and a dozen county cricketers had lost their lives. By 1951 six post-war Durham men filled their place: Alan Townsend, D.G.Harron, Stephenson and Walford together with Spooner and Jim McConnon who would both play for England. Little did Mrs McConnon know how far baby Jim would go when he used to crawl into Burnopfield ground through a gap in the fence.

Hayes was concerned for the future. "Teams nowadays don't put enough faith in young blood." Again, he could have allowed for lads on National Service when they might have been in the 1st XI. Jack repeatedly asked to play in the Seconds to help youngsters develop. Coaching was indeed a priority. Clubs heeded Bradman's advice and laid concrete practice wickets. An indoor school was built at Wolviston at a cost of £2,500 largely financed by substantial grants from the Ministry of Education and Durham CCC and £100 from NYSD. Bill Coverdale (qv) took charge of winter nets at Horden and Durham engaged ex-county men Tom Collin and Frank Booth to coach boys in the school holidays. C.L.Adamson groomed a successful Bow School side to maintain private schools' reputation for good coaching. Junior leagues were introduced for under-18s.

Obviously it took years for these innovations to bear fruit. Veterans seized the limelight. The Parkinson brothers and 'Elly' Richardson were largely responsible for Greenside taking the TSL title in the sublime summer of 1947. The season began sensationally against North Durham. Richardson took 10 for 10 with knifing 'nip' off the wicket. In the two previous seasons Richardson and Joe Parkinson demolished North Durham for 13, 14 and 5, the lowest TSL total. Philadelphia won three DSL titles between 1948-51 the guile of Ellison, cartoonist Bob Lowerson and bespectacled Scot W.K.Laidlaw who rolled leg-breaks and googlies from a low, square-arm action and twice topped DSL

PRO-FILE (No. 15)

WALTER WILLIAM COVERDALE

(b. Romford, Essex, 30 May 1912; d. Gateshead, 6 Oct 1972)

Graceful ex-Northamptonshire right-hander and medium-pace bowler at Horden (1946-50) and North Durham (1951-63). Topped DSL batting in 1947. Consistent bat, his dominance shown in innings of 84 in 1951 when seven others failed to score. A picture in creams with weathered, walnut complexion and silvery hair. Valued employee at currency manufacturers De la Rue and played a few matches for Swalwell. Immense contribution as coach and groundsman. Discovered brown patches on Horden's square. Bill dug up a sample and had it analysed by his doctor who diagnosed the cause as arsenic.

League record: Over 9,000 league runs (av 35)

bowling. Leading scorers were Joe Ord, Bobby Fisher, Jack Welsh and Stan Robertson who made 1,004 in all in the warmth of 1949.

Reyrolle won a 'hat-trick' of TSL titles in 1948-50. The core of the side was assembled from technicians in 'reserved' war-time occupations, the rest as the workforce swelled to 10,000. Handsome stroke-maker Billy Pickering was pro. In 1946 he just missed a third successive league hundred when dismissed on 92 and hit 1,016 in all. Diminutive, pale Pickering opened with ruddy and rotund George Baston. The middle-order bristled with three free-scoring all-rounders. Russell Pickering grunted in with groin-aching strides, Ernie Broome was poetry in motion. Dynamic post-graduate Peter Molloy bowled 'chinamen' and was the first 'Aussie' to play for Durham. With little wag Harry Hudson's high-flighted leg-breaks Reyrolle had a bowler for all seasons. They attracted big crowds with rarely a spare seat in their double-decker pavilion.

Nine of Norton's 1938 title team enjoyed another success in 1946. D.C.H.Townsend and Grigor were still match-winners. Two further titles in 1949 and 1951 made it six in 11 seasons. C.L. Townsend urged the club to buy the ground as it was being eyed by housing developers. Son David conducted negotiations, acquired a further twelve acres in the process. The new land was cleared by members and the present sports complex began to take shape.

India's appearance at Ashbrooke in 1946 symbolised the return of peace-time cricket but the 1948 visit of Australia was the more memorable. Overcast skies did not deter 17,000 squeeze tight in anticipation, men and women in their 'utility' suits, most in hats. The invincible 'Aussies' had recently amassed 721 in a day against Essex. Heaven help the best available in Durham. Within minutes the Australians were 3 for 2. Don Tallon and boy wonder Neil Harvey the victims. Electric excitement. After half-an hour they were 22 for 3. Frenzied excitement. Dr F.I.Herbert and T.K.Jackson the war-torn heroes. Tall, left-arm Fred took 3 for 80 despite war wounds. Mediumpaced Keith, after years in a POW camp, captured 5 for 76. No cricket cap peak jutted more defiantly than that of T.K.Jackson. (Re-christened 'tea-cake' that day in my euphoric, infantile humour.) Offspinner N.W.Owen, nearly 700 league wickets while pro at Wearmouth, Sunderland and Bishop Auckland, conceded just 34 off 14 overs. Miller and McCool took toll of Laidlaw's leg-breaks and the Australians totalled 282.

Durham opened with Dawson Harron, in fine form for Durham City, and Gordon Thompson, three post-war hundreds for Darlington but, of course, Miller and Loxton were a different proposition. At 25 both openers and Stan Robertson were back in the pavilion. W.A.Buffham and D.W.Hardy stood firm and Durham were 93-5 at close. Rain washed out the second day. Wally Buffham was a delightful stroke-maker for Stockton either side of the war. Tall with sleek, jet-black hair, he cut a dashing figure as war-time lieutenant with the Green Howards. Wally, a county regular, never owned a bat. All-rounder Don Hardy succeeded his father as club captain and R.B.Proud as county captain.

Teak-tough Hardy was a law unto himself, ruled with a rod of iron: "I demand ability, concentration and, above all, guts and determination". Hardy's furrowed brow, echoing crinkly auburn hair, was testament to his own concentration. "As far as I am concerned," said Hardy, "you can burn all records and averages." Just for the record he made over 10,000 league runs for Boldon.

'Bill' Proud towered over Lindsay Hassett as they walked out to spin the coin. Proud hit 87 for Oxford in the 1939 'Varsity match and played a few matches for Hampshire. He made his Bishop Auckland debut at 14 and scored 5,896 runs for the Kingsway club, imperious straight-drives a feature of his dashing approach. Arthur Austin completed the eleven.

Prominent footballers donned flannels for the summer. The seasons were virtually separate so they were able to combine both sports. Few were flannelled fools. Bobby Robson, now Sir Bobby and adulated 'Magpies' manager, played for Langley Park. When Wearmouth pro Len Shackleton opened with late swing to Sunderland team-mate and Yorkshire left-hander Willie Watson the 'gate' was £230. DSL barred Watson from playing as amateur. 'Raich' Carter took his place! Other DSL pros included Lindy Delapenha (Middlesbrough) and Ted Purdon (Sunderland). Charlton Athletic manager Jimmy Seed who played cricket for his village club Whitburn recommended they sign his inside-forward Syd O'Linn, a left-hand bat. Syd brought along fellow-South Africans Stuart Leary and Ken Kirsten and the trio transformed Whitburn from wooden-spoonists to champions in 1950. Next year O'Linn and Leary began successful careers at Kent and O'Linn went on to play seven Tests. One trivial event illustrates both the keenness and consideration engendered by war and the scarcity of money after it. Rain prevented a start at Wearmouth and spectators were refunded their entrance money at tea-time even though play had not been abandoned. The players waited patiently for the rain to cease. Play began at six and Whitburn were only three short of victory when time ran out.

Freed from war work (and all need to bake seagull pie) women's cricket forged a stronger base. Girls' schools played more cricket. An Equipment Loan Scheme was set up to help new teams. Clubs were affiliated to Northumberland & Durham Women's Cricket Association. Durham Women's Cricket Association re-formed in 1950. These were encouraging developments but it remained difficult for women to establish a strong foothold and there was an element of self-consciousness in women's attempts to promote their cricket: "Women shine particularly at fielding, are very eager, waste no time when changing over, and are always cheerful players".

Blossom of fresh colour

The 1951 Festival of Britain was "reaffirmation of faith in the nation's future". New plastics and paints were exhibited to a hard-pressed society. Durham clubs showed faith by revealing colourful professionals to add much-needed gloss to the scene. Those affording a pro hired quality. Alex Coxon and C.S.Nayudu were Test cricketers as might have been Ron Aspinall (ex-Yorkshire) but for injury. P.A.H.Carey (later Dobree-Carey which might have been too high-falutin' for Darlington) had played for Sussex after war-time cricket in India. West Indies were represented by Dick Fuller and Stan Goodridge "who had arms down to his ankles and terrified everyone with his speed".

The DSL title winged to and fro like a shuttlecock over the River Wear separating Sunderland and South Shields. For five successive seasons they, and pros Coxon and Nayudu, fought battles royal. Shields won it in the even years, Sunderland the odd. Coxon retired from Yorkshire after taking 131 wickets in 1950. "Two matches at the end of the season, when I bowled non-stop for three-and-a-half hours, virtually sealed my decision." Alex coached in Rhodesia, kept his eye in with a spot of big-game hunting. Willie Watson advised Sunderland to sign him. Coxon (qv) strode the scene like a Colossus. A combative attitude riled opponents and their followers but his drawing power was immense. Quick and supremely accurate, Coxon was unplayable on helpful wickets. A wonderful, groin-bruising leg-cutter brought tears to many a batsman's eyes. Coxon bagged five-or-more wickets in 14 successive league matches in 1953, averaged 4.7 wickets per league match for Sunderland. He, Norman Pigg and Arthur Stephenson benefited from Ken Brown's wicket-keeping. As with West Indies, runs came from their three Ws: Wheatley, Washington and Westcott. Westcott's sound judgement and deft footwork were the basis of his fine stroke-play. 'Mandy' Mitchell-Innes, ex-Somerset and England, made stylish runs when work as secretary to Vaux Brewery allowed.

PRO-FILE (No. 16)

ALEXANDER COXON

(b. Huddersfield, Yorkshire, 18 Jan 1916)

Ex-Yorkshire and England fast-medium bowler at Sunderland (1951-58), South Shields (1959-64) and Wearmouth (1965-66). A few matches for Boldon in 1967. Fine, consistent bat who twice topped DSL batting. Hostile with the ball and with great control - 30% of overs were maidens. Equalled Alf Morris' feat of taking 100 DSL wkts in three successive seasons (1953-55). In his first 11 seasons his club was never lower than third. In same period he topped DSL bowling three times, was never lower than fifth and his cost-per-wicket was always in single figures.

League record: Batting 291 inns 46 not 6,856 runs (av 27.9)

Bowling 1,271 wkts for 11,673 runs (av 9.2)

Tales of Coxon are as much part of Durham cricket lore as those of Trueman in Yorkshire. Coxon was rarely punished but it happened once at rainy Old Trafford. Alex called for sawdust. It was carried by an inexperienced lad who asked the mid-pitch huddle where to put it. "Put 't bugger there," scowled Alex, motioning where he stood. The lad took him at his word and dumped the sawdust in the middle of the wicket. It was Coxon's last game for Durham. Alex was a fine coach. Few under his tuition failed to express gratitude. He even took time with the less gifted. I remember him trying to get beefy Ken Danby to punch the ball with his weight. "Heet it, Ken, heet it," implored Alex from mid-off. After each "Heet it" and feeble pat Coxon crept closer to a disconcerted Danby. At last Ken "heet it" perfectly, smashed the ball on Coxon's ankle and knocked him off his feet. Doubled-up with laughter, we feared a tirade. Grimacing in agony, Alex raised his head and hissed: "That's better, Ken". Despite the fiery outbursts Alex always gave credit where due.

There was a frosty *frisson* between Coxon and Nayudu (**qv**) as northern grit tried conclusions with eastern mystique. It stemmed partly from intense 'derby' rivalry before of crowds of 5,000, partly from desire to be "cock of the walk". Nayudu, brilliant fielder and slashing stroke-maker, bowled leg-breaks. To purists his action was ungainly and a dipping left shoulder betrayed his googly but his quick flight and wizardry mesmerised locals. It is doubtful if he bowled better than against Wearmouth when taking 9 for 18 in the warmth of 1957. He captured all nine in 32 deliveries, sent back seven in 11 balls.

8th over	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th
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Batsmen faced a searching investigation of their ability to play spin when Nayudu was joined in attack by slow left-arm Malcolm Scott. Brilliant stumper Dick Hornby completed a prial of predators. Precocious Scott played for Newcastle United and was 11 years at Northamptonshire where he joined Colin Milburn, Peter Willey and wicket-keeper George Sharp. Ken Land punched belligerently through the off, savagely pulled anything short. Ken Thompson, tall and well-built, drove handsomely off the front foot. Following work in Germany, Thompson played for Stratford-upon-Avon where his batting is remembered still. Coxon was 43 when South Shields signed him. He had lost some zip but none of his accuracy and bowled 25% more maidens than at Sunderland. Shields were champions in 1961 after an agonising miss the year before. They pursued Wearmouth all season, gradually eating up a 9-point deficit until trailing by just a point when the two met in the final match. Wearmouth needed only draw to be champions so Shields declared at 147. Opener Tommy Moffat watched helplessly while three batsmen departed for 3 runs. Tommy relished such predicaments. Moffat defied Coxon for 96 minutes, made seven insignificant runs. The rest blocked eternally. After 68 agonising overs Wearmouth were 47 for 8. And champions. The Shields Gazette

pressman considered it "an outstanding display of still life".

Coxon-Nayudu dominance was interrupted briefly by burly Dick Fuller when Seaham Harbour were crowned in Coronation year. Fuller's speed claimed 356 league wickets (av 7.7) in four seasons, heading DSL bowling in 1952-53. Pacy Frank Forster was his chief ally.

Denis Dempsey set a new record of 116 league wickets when Swalwell were TSL champions in 1951. Denis maintained he got 117, said "I have a plaque to prove it". Dempsey returned to Swalwell after a season as Chester-le-Street's pro and Swalwell regained the title in 1954. Fred Gregory led with 791 league runs supported by Ken Halvorson and Harry Clasper. Clasper once called a young partner for a suicidal single. With fatal consequences. Sharp Harry, ever blunt, quickly absolved himself from all blame. "That's the trouble with young lads today - too stiff in the arse!"

Reigning champions Gateshead Fell had to settle for runners-up in 1953 for all N.G.Loraine and W.M.M.Robson fully exploited a wet summer. Nev Loraine's fluid action concealed spiteful 'lift'. His matchstick frame and red helmet sat incongruously atop the tiny moped he rode to matches. Once, surely with a tail-wind, he was fined for speeding. After trials at Warwickshire, Loraine signed for Kimblesworth where his 158 wickets in all (av 6.5) ensured the NWD title. He sent back 641 batsmen in eight seasons as pro at Horden and Whitburn. After a spell at Reyrolle he joined neighbours Leslies as amateur, not least to succeed against Reyrolle after they sacked him. For all his hostile reputation on the field Loraine was quite diffident and once sulked off a disco floor "because the strobe lights up everybody's shirt but mine". Dentist 'Pat' Robson extracted batsmen, rotten or not. Robson had an unorthodox action, both arms cart-wheeling at point of delivery made off the 'wrong' foot. Late in-swing veered toward three short-legs who helped him pocket almost 1,000 league wickets (av 7.4). Spectacular success at Durham University culminated in 9 for 6 for English Universities. Durham were UAU champions in 1953 when lightning Frank Tyson petrified opposing

PRO-FILE (No. 17)

COTTARI SUBBANNA NAYUDU

(b. Nagpur, India, 18 Apr 1914; d. Indore, India, 22 Nov 2002)

Very popular all-rounder at South Shields (1953-58). 'Discovered' by Jack Hobbs when a guest of Maharaj Kumar of Vizianagram. Hobbs made Nayudu aware that he was bowling googlies. 11 Tests for India; toured England in 1946. Delivered a record 917 balls in a match in 1944. Twice topped DSL bowling and was second twice. Third bowler to take 100 DSL wkts in three successive seasons. Dangerous batsman at club level with unconventional brand of stroke-play.

League record: Batting 111 inns 8 not 2,322 runs (av 22.5)

Bowling 1,939 overs 404 mdns 4,832 runs 565 wkts (av 8.6)

freshmen. Eighteen months later 'Typhoon' Tyson was terrorising Australia's best.

Fell's fine batting featured Loraine, Robson, Jack Adamson, Ted le Jeune and Peter Carr who drove with blistering power. They were succeeded by a rich crop of youngsters who included forceful Derek Cowell, speedy Tom O'Connor and sparkling G.C.Lamb whose father George devoted his life to Dryden Road. I first encountered Charlton Lamb in a school match when, knee-high to a grasshopper, he came in at a critical stage and feathered three exquisite late-cuts to win the day. 'Charlie' eclipsed Rothery's DSL record with 1,041 runs in 1964 and had made 9,000 league runs (av 36) when work took him south. Gateshead Fell engaged Ron Aspinall in 1957 after his whole-hearted endeavours at Durham City. Aspinall's off-spin was the final jig-saw piece to a talented young championship side.

Consett won TSL five times and were four times runners-up in 1953-1964. All without a pro except for Cliff Wilson (ex-Worcestershire) in 1953. Roxby Surtees conjured wins shrewdly and urged the last ounce out of his side. Match-winning spinners Alan Moore and Harold Bitting gave chunky George Perks opportunity to execute brilliant stumpings. Woe-betide any side if A.R.J.Steward got going on Blackfyne's track. Steward, a thunderous driver, hit a memorable hundred on return from honeymoon in 1953. Dark clouds threatened Consett's title dream. Rain twice interrupted their reply. Bert's lightning century was made out of 129 without loss. It won the crown and, literally, capped an extraordinary year. His performance earned a county cap just three months after his club cap came off and dislodged a bail. Steward was in the Crook side that won the FA Amateur Cup in 1954 and five years later experienced the thrill of holding aloft the cup at Wembley. Bert was one of five cricketers to win Amateur Cup medals between 1954-64. Jimmy McMillan (Kimblesworth) won four, Arnold Coates (Crook) two, one each for Ken Williamson (Norton) and Frank Clark (Lintz).

Darlington dominated NYSD for a decade. Champions in 1950 and 1953-55, they lost only 22 of 220 matches. Rev G.E.Holderness, later Dean of Lichfield, captained the early successes. His was no passive role for his experiences as war chaplain in Burma stiffened the side's resilience. Paul Carey took 8 for 10 in 1952 to send back Stockton for 19 in time for everyone to watch the second half of the Cup Final. Carey was succeeded as pro by Harry Clarke who played soccer for three League clubs and was pro at six cricket clubs. Clarke, who turned out as amateur for Darlington between engagements, was a fiery bowler and his sharp wit enlivened the dressing room.

Darlington's strong batting, dismissed only 28 times in those 220 matches, was led by three schoolmasters: openers A.W.Sanders and J.M.Camburn and Fred Robson an elegant stroke-maker who left to take up a headship in Berkshire. John Camburn scored 9,791 league runs with front-foot drives that left cover-point helpless. Hattersley⁷ dedicates his history to 'Hank' Sanders, 50 years as player,

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⁷ Robert Hattersley: Darlington Cricket Club from 1827

coach, captain and secretary. "A giant in stature and integrity...a caring and generous individual with a deep and genuine social conscience." Cold figures reveal 6,810 league runs, most leg-side. Sanders, "the last Darlington player to bat in braces," inspired local scribes to purple prose. Hattersley recalls Hank's braces snapping as a catch sped towards him. "He grimly palmed the ball against his chest with one hand - and grabbed his trousers with the other". Sanders was forever fidgeting with his wardrobe at the crease although in one rapid innings he was "too busy to pay more than a perfunctory attention to his cap. Even the nautical hitch to his trousers lost its customary rhythm as he ran some fine singles." Mostly he was less animated. "Sanders measured run-getting in terms of geological epochs. At 3.15 the Ice Age began to disperse. The mastodon thawed out and a perfect cut past third man added four to the score."

Darlington's 1950 success climaxed a thrilling race with Norton and Redcar. All three were level with five to play. Darlington beat Redcar in the penultimate match to pip Norton on run-average. Yet Norton were strong in batting. D.C.H.Townsend and Harry Thompson twice rubbed off huge totals to win by 10 wickets. Thompson's placement was supreme "bisecting fielders as accurately as if he used a slide rule." University and Northumberland cricket claimed C.R.M.Atkinson. His leg-spin was seen at Norton in only three seasons before he followed team-mate Tom Birtle into county cricket. Atkinson left Somerset to concentrate on teaching but later took up the captaincy. He returned to Millfield as headmaster and was chairman and president of Somerset. Ken Williamson's remarkable career began in 1947. Educated at Barnard Castle, he excelled at football and squash and represented Durham at rugby and cricket. Williamson claimed 651 wickets, scored 10,500 runs (av 38) and 11 hundreds. Early runs accrued quickly with minimal back-lift before executing strokes of rapier deftness or the murderous finality of the broadsword. It was said runs came so easily to Williamson that he did not always give of his best. If true, bowlers must have been grateful for his audible, self-congratulation after a good shot did nothing to temper their annoyance.

Formed in 1931, Beamish and East Tanfield won NWD four times between 1953-60. Scoring runs on their postage-stamp field was no problem, stopping the opposition not so easy. All the more incredible they should sign a leg-spinner who tossed the ball high. But then W.R.Roxby, gentleman of cricket, was an incredible bowler. Roxby began at South Moor at 15 and represented Durham Colts before army service. By 1950 he had passed 1,000 wickets. He pocketed 350 when pro at Burnmoor and Langley Park, 940 in eight years at Beamish where one-legged Billy Embleton kept wicket. Roxby was almost 50 when signed by Annfield Plain. He rewarded them with 610 scalps in five years. Bill could account for 2,947 dismissals when he took a well-earned rest in 1966. George Linsley impressed Roxby at Burnmoor and was at Beamish for the duration of Roxby's engagement. The last of Linsley's eight hundreds was the best. He opened against Annfield Plain and stroked 19 fours in a magnificent undefeated 165 out of 197 for 8.

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⁸ William Bielby: A History of Norton Cricket Club (1847-1997)

J.G.Keeler was a 15-year-old tot with a Harrow-size bat on debut for South Moor. Keeler joined the Royal Navy. In Sydney he was persuaded to turn out for St. George's. Sensitive to grim events, Jack felt a deep sense of guilt about playing in war-time but it made him realise how much he loved cricket. He wore St George's ringed cap for much of his career. As county opener Keeler came to the notice of Coxon to whom he expressed gratitude for improving his technique. As consequence Leicestershire offered a contract. Without guarantee of a house 'Chipper' declined. He accepted terms at Burnmoor and Chester-le-Street instead. Keeler was a classy, little bat with wrists of steel. He rose to the big occasion, most memorably with 90 and 97 against the West Indians. Mention of rising to the occasion, Jack was at work at 6 am the day he made a brilliant 135 v the Indians.

Twelve-year-old Colin Milburn got a 'duck' in his first three league innings yet the chubby-cheeked 16-year-old was youngest to score a century for Burnopfield. Even then he had all the attributes: sound technique; powerful cover drives that clunked against the club's corrugated iron fence; effortless pulls that soared over it with an audible whirr. Milburn marked a last home appearance with a hundred. Chester-le-Street was next on the road to fame where a century was followed by 156 not out and 7 for 4 in a match against Horden. It earned county selection as opener. Colin, now 15 stones, gorged on Indian spin and hit 101 before being stumped. At close he was hunting autographs in India's dressing-room. Next day he was at his desk at Stanley Grammar School.

Milburn made his Northamptonshire debut in 1960. In 1966 he hit a century before lunch on three occasions, was one of *Wisden's* Five Cricketers of the Year. He opened for England. Was run out for nought. A concerned father went to the dressing-room to find Colin smiling. "What *you* grinning at?" asked Jack. Grin turned to laughter. "Hang around long enough and you might see me bag a pair!" England appearances were agony for mother Bertha. "He wouldn't let me watch when he was a little lad. Now I can't bear to watch *him*." Fame did not turn Colin's head. Down-to-earth parents saw to that. The devil-may-care psyche had yet to surface. When it did Bertha was perturbed, more than once said to me: "I just wish he could find a nice girl and settle down". Colin never forgot a name or face from his club days. I last shared his company at Shotley Bridge's centenary. Ale and cricket talk flowed freely. Half way through the day Milburn, the man who belted 181 between lunch and tea at Brisbane, telephoned his mam for permission to stay. The rest of his, ultimately tragic, career lies beyond this story.

Dean Bank were Deerness League champions in 1924-25. Johnny Gurkin took 100 wickets each year. Dean Bank moved to the ground of Chapter Colliery before the war, emerged from it with a new ground as Dean & Chapter. They were D.Co champions in 1949 and George Allison bagged 102 wickets. Tall and well-built, Allison was 47 years a colliery blacksmith. For relaxation he performed outstanding bowling feats notably 10 for 36 against Castle Eden when pro at Wheatley Hill, champions of D.Coast. Allison signed for Coxhoe where he continued as amateur. The club's headquarters was the back room of the 'Victoria' where no social evening was complete without

George singing *Frankie and Johnny*. Dean & Chapter won D.Coast four years in succession. It was nearly five. Unbeaten in 17 matches in 1962, they were well clear with four to play. Three were lost, the last to Shildon BR who were champions. In those five years Dean & Chapter won 80% of matches and dismissed 80% of opponents for under 100. Tommy Swainston regularly took 5-wicket hauls in a match-winning combination with Bobby Brewis.

Ushaw Moor formed in 1881. They lost to Consett in an 1891 Challenge Cup Final that took 28 days to complete owing to rain and difficulties obtaining a ground. Billy Harding took ill on the first day but recovered in time for the resumption three weeks later. Ushaw Moor were elected to Durham County Junior League in 1893, scored 382 against Crook yet were defunct before the year was out. The colliery gave "substantial aid" but subsequent appearances were spasmodic. Entry to Deerness & District in 1921 began a nomadic journey into four leagues. Ushaw held sway in Mid-D after engaging Gordon Thompson who often reached 1,000 runs. McDermott and Jimmy Wood bowled them to three titles in 1956-61. Esh Winning clattered their corrugated iron fence to the tune of 328 when crushing Croxdale by 241. So many sixes sailed into a garden that an irate housewife threatened to keep the ball if it landed there again. "You will be doing us a favour, missus," replied a weary fielder. The incident had its humour but was prologue to serious complaints of cricket balls landing on property.

Cricket was reported at Hylton in 1864 and Hylton Colliery were in existence at the turn of the century. Champions in 1937, they dominated D.Coast after the war and won three titles each alternate year from 1948. Prolific pro-batsman Harry Bell set them on their way. His successor, W.G.Charlton, built on the foundation. Bill Gowland and 19-year-old Tommy Thompson shot out Washington for 12 in 1957. Their partnership sparked three successive titles in 1959-61, another in 1964.

The dullness of our blinded sight

Cricket failed to match the tempo of the Swinging Sixties. The vitality of the Coxon-Nayudu era turned to tedium. *Newcastle Journal* cricket correspondent Alf Greenley damned 1962 the dullest season since the war. Outstanding individuals still shone, of course, but in the year of Miss Monroe's death the game's future seemed as fragile as a candle in the wind. Greenley was no sensationalist; his words a cry from the heart. Four years later he was seized by acute pessimism: "League cricket as a major spectator sport is dying." Alf had done his sums. In ten years Westoe's annual 'gate' receipts fell from £1,000 to £100; Ashbrooke's weekly 'gate' from £100 to £30. While government and sports' bodies considered a relaxation of Lord's Day observance laws, Greenley advocated that leagues of 20 be formed in two divisions with promotion and relegation and matches be played on Sundays.

League committees ignored Greenley's ideas. Ideals rooted firmly in the past, they lamely concluded that "rapid social change had created difficulties". True, life had changed. The film *Get Carter* is considered a faithful picture of the racketeering and feuding of the time. There were more night clubs and betting shops per head in the two northern counties than elsewhere. Unemployment in south-west Durham reached 6.8% when the national average was 2.4%. At the end of the decade Durham had only thirty collieries. When it needed action proportionate to Dr Christiaan Barnard's heart-transplant surgery myopic league committees could hardly see the optician. They were blind to a contracting coal industry that was losing 1,000 miners a week and whose voluntary levies were lost to colliery sides. Players found work elsewhere and a dozen clubs folded. With five of 16 clubs in 1960 now defunct, D.Coast was reduced to twelve. Blackhall went 48 league matches without a win from August 1964, a decline partly attributable to Coal Nationalisation. Deprived of his autocracy, Ernie Chicken no longer could 'acquire' cricketers to work at the pit.

Pros commented on the dearth of good players. Successive NWD annual reports listed other problems, notably the cancellation of matches owing to shortage of umpires and players. Chairman Matty Selway was further concerned by an old spectre. "During the past three seasons I have heard whispers and suggestions that illegal payments were made to certain players. I advise all clubs to stamp it out otherwise the rich clubs will flourish and the financially weak will go to the wall." Surprisingly, NWD announced plans to increase to 20 clubs with promotion and relegation "to eliminate the apathy which creeps in with the season two parts over". As in 1934 and 1962, the scheme miscarried.

Support dwindled. Lack of funds meant the virtual disappearance of big-name pros, Lance Gibbs and Nasim-ul-Ghani excepted. That Whitburn engaged both simply magnified the scarcity of money elsewhere. Harold Macmillan, who in earlier days turned out occasionally for Thornaby,

donated a cup for clubs in his Stockton constituency. Macmillan's 1959 general election victory owed much to the votes of the young and more affluent. Now, ironically, the affluent young took up pursuits other than cricket. The vocabulary of the Permissive Society spoke of mini-skirts, Beatles and drugs. Austin was alert to *that* particular wind of change. "Don't neglect your cricket," Arthur pleaded. "Go all out to keep the game alive."

Change was inevitable. Controversially, clubs installed bar facilities. Old timers were quick to cite time spent bending the elbow, instead of keeping it up when batting in the nets, as further reason for decline. Realists said "Brown Ale and bandits were the best hopes for a more prosperous cricketing future". Some leagues introduced overs cricket. Older organisations continued with time cricket but introduced a bonus point to the side scoring faster in a drawn match. Even that system was abused by NYSD title aspirants in a tense finale to 1967. Thirty overs had to be bowled before a bonus point could be awarded. When leading clubs met the side batting first prolonged its innings well beyond three hours then contrived to bowl less than 30 overs to deprive rivals a chance of a bonus point. This shabby state of affairs, plus the financial flop of a once-successful Kerridge Cup, prompted NYSD to hold crisis meetings to consider how to woo back spectators. DSL secretary Colin Orr accused clubs of petulance, petty niggling and lack of adventure. "Too many adopt a you-put-usin-you-get-us-out attitude." All were symptoms of modern pragmatism. TSL ruled that either side could claim five extra overs after 'time' if they thought victory possible. This system considerably reduced the number of draws but was abandoned in 1969 in favour of 45-over matches. NYSD tried overs cricket the same year. DSL introduced Sunday league cricket in 1966 as did NWD, TSL and NYSD by 1969.

One team scorned Sunday cricket. Having lost the previous year's final, Durham Clergy won the *Church Times* Cup in 1965. Rev T.E.Simpson hit a vigorous 74. Eric played for Chopwell where he was vicar for 29 years and where his understanding flock never asked to be married on Saturday afternoon in summer. Same with Clergy skipper, Rev F.S.M.Chase. Greenside brides thought Frank dressed in keeping with a white wedding when they knelt before him on Saturday mornings and spied white trousers peeping below his surplice. Frank was ready for the afternoon match. As the *Church Times* final was held in London, Eric left his children at his parents. The Reverend arrived in the big city to discover his case contained nappies not cricket whites. Eric liked his football. He staggered to the ground with cricket bag and portable 'telly' to watch the 1966 World Cup Final. He fielded all afternoon! More north-east clubs turned out short that memorable day than ever before.

Ashbrooke deserters missed Sunderland's four successive DSL titles in 1965-68 during which skipper Mike Westcott formed part of a quintet with a *combined average* of 32. Sheet-anchor Gordon Fairley forged a productive opening partnership with stylish left-hander Frank Greenshields. Brilliant close catcher P.C.Birtwisle showed maturity beyond his years. Peter could handle the best even on difficult wickets; drives of pedigree proclaimed an emergent talent. Alan Burridge resumed as

amateur to score 6,213 league runs (av 42) in 1959-71. The left-hander enthralled with scintillating shots, scandalised with outrageous pulls. 'Budgie' could spoil a good game, witness a murderous 182 not out when pro at Horden. He reached 100 in 45 minutes while adding 253 for the second wicket with Ed Corfield. Burridge later smashed 112 not out off 49 balls. Birtwisle contributed 4 to a century stand. Peter was less passive in a cup-tie when the pair added 162 in 56 minutes. Ken Biddulph, ex-Somerset fast-medium, was pro; John Beresford, Chris Storey and H.B.McLaren his chief allies. Sunderland's lead eroded in 1967 when Biddulph went down with mumps. Temporary replacement Alex Johnson (ex-Nottinghamshire) soon had the ship back on course. Ashbrooke's run machine ensured an eighteenth outright senior title in 1971, more than any DSL club.

Frankie Forster trundled tirelessly during Sunderland's triumphs, twice topping DSL bowling. Forster began as a fast out-swing bowler but reverted to in-swing "because that's what the pro's game demanded". In 17 years as pro he won a lone championship medal at Wearmouth in 1960. Even then he endured ten harrowing matches until Moffat's last stand at South Shields. Frank should have been canonised for unremitting accuracy and stoicism in adversity. He had the first nine Whitburn wickets when Tommy Milton skied him to mid-off. Philip Raine dropped it. Philosophical Frank simply said "Hard luck, son" as he passed the blushing youth on his way back to his mark. For once Fate smiled. Forster got the tenth, the last seven in 31 balls.

Off-spinner Gibbs was nearing world-class standard when signed by Whitburn. With turn and subtle change of pace Lance pocketed wickets as easily as taking pennies from a blind man's tin, claimed 271 (av 9.3) in three nail-biting seasons. Whitburn led the table but slumped when Lance fractured his right hand in July 1962. They lost ten of their last 12. Gibbs returned in 1964 to smash the DSL record with 126 wickets and Whitburn were champions. Leading by a point next year they lost the penultimate match to Sunderland who took over as leaders. It was Sunderland's last game so Whitburn had to win their final match to win the title. Rain washed out the final Saturday.

Chester-le-Street won handsomely in 1969. They reached top spot as man set foot on the moon then rocketed to seven successive victories. It proved to be a lone championship for Russell Inglis (qv), one of Durham's greats. Inglis played at Shotley Bridge when 13, Durham City at 17. A man of sense and sensitivity, humour and humility, he credited City coach Tom Collin and Benfieldside schoolmaster Hilary Beck as major influences upon his career. Inglis scored 603 league runs in his first full City season, a total he improved consistently until 1971 when he set a new DSL record of 1,200 runs (av 80). Russell was a fitter and turner at Consett ironworks and, in days when it was allowed, turned out for Consett before the DSL season started. City were without a match on the first two Saturdays of 1960. Inglis got his eye in with undefeated innings of 145 and 126. He returned for the last match, made 14 and finished with a TSL average of 285.

Flamboyant dashers live long in the memory but top sides need the grit personified in Tommy

Moffat. Tommy kept wicket and his histrionics behind the sticks put pressure on batsmen. "I've no delusions about being an unpopular cricketer. I play to win and enjoy a bit of needle in a game," he once admitted. Much of it was play-acting to uphold a diabolical reputation. Moffat's meaningful memories are more touching. Take his match-winning 87 in front of hostile, opposing supporters. "I remember hitting a four. There was a lot of barracking but above the jeering I heard a voice shouting 'Good shot, dad'". Dedication is Moffat's middle name. He was D.Coast treasurer, won DSL titles at three clubs and played his part in Durham's elevation to First-class. He rose from colliery electrician to chief engineer and awarded MBE for services to small businesses. 'Cestrians' had contrasting left-handers in aggressive Norman Allison and studious Freddie Allen. Plus George Bull, fast bowler and eternal pessimist. George got on his high-horse one day when an umpire turned down every appeal. Bull constantly badgered him about the Laws. George went in to bat, demanded 'two legs'. "Why ask me?" replied the ump. "You seem to know everything!" Billy Wake wore 'sand shoes' all his career. Never short of sardonic comment, his leg-breaks and googlies snared over 1,200 league victims. Billy was a fine bat and the all-round form of Wake, Inglis and Allen were key to Chester's success.

Greenside reigned longer than any club in Durham history. Including a share with Shotley Bridge in 1967, Greenside won eight TSL titles on the trot, in fact ten between 1966-76. Jim Watson captained a side that won 188 and drew 44 of 272 league encounters. Bill Jones spearheaded a five-pronged pace attack. At point of delivery Jones glanced ominously at the non-striker, heels clicking like a prairie rattler. Fast, late swing tickled many a batsman's ribs. Length of an innings against Jones could be gauged next day by the number of bruises on a batsman's cadaver. Some were intimidated by his reign of terror. In fact Bill was fairly shy but he did speak his mind in company of those he knew. When Ryton were champions in 1965 Jones scored a quarter of their runs, took half their wickets. It was Ryton's misfortune Jones should take 9 for 35 and 6 for 16 against Greenside. Next year he was Greenside's pro. When an amateur he spent many summer Saturdays shooting yet still bagged some 900 wickets and 13,000 runs (av 36) in the league. Tall, wiry and broad-shouldered,

PRO-FILE (No. 18)

RUSSELL INGLIS

(b. Blackhill, Consett, 13 Jun 1936; d. Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 28 April 1982)

Modest, popular pro at Chester-le-Street (1962-73). A most destructive batsman. Wonderful timing, brilliant cutter, compulsive hooker. Rejected contract with Leicestershire. Minor Counties regular against tourists. Topped DSL batting four times. 19 league hundreds. Became genuine all-rounder and topped DSL batting and bowling in 1968. Taken ill in last match of 1973 and forced to retire.

League record: Durham City 127 inns 11 not 3,652 runs (av 31.5)

Chester-le-Street 254 inns 46 not 9,880 runs (av 47.8)

Cup and league at Durham City and Chester-le-Street: 19,329 runs (av 39.5)

Jones cleared the line with ease. One hit at Carlton, Edinburgh, was stepped out at 140 paces. Bill could change a game dramatically, most memorably when he blasted 96 off 42 balls (8 sixes and 7 fours) in a cup-tie at Durham City.

Greenside pace was unrelenting. If Jones didn't get you others did. There was Alan Smith, all cut and swing and butcher Ian Wishart heaving the ball from oxen shoulders. With Tommy Johnson and Ernie Bewick to follow, Peter Carroll had to look elsewhere for glory. Ronnie Platford and Allan Murray, each technically sure, were contrasting opening partners for John Stevenson who cut and pulled with all the subtlety of an axe-man at the block. Stevenson was nick-named 'Coffee Johnny' because his throaty 'a-hem' deposited spittle on the pitch. While Alan Clark provided stability, Jim Watson's regal strokes told of time spent batting at Fenner's. Jim set out as a vengeful quickie delivering off the 'wrong' foot. In one day's carnage 16-year-old Watson claimed 9 for 30, caught the tenth and broke wicket-keeper Hammond's finger. Gentle, soulful Bill was a devout churchman who metamorphosed into a rat-catcher with gloves on. Victims would stare incredulously at the fallen bail that betrayed his sleight-of-hand. Hammond's career coincided with distinguished stumpers so he was neither fortunate enough (nor fashionable enough?) to gain county recognition.

J. D. Robson, leader of Durham County Council, cut his cricketing administration teeth at Greenside. Don didn't nibble. Each project he bit large. Time was when Greenside's field was fairly mountainous. That is to say a cover boundary fielder, ten feet above the wicket table, could just about see long-leg's head in a hollow. Don sliced it flat, designated the 1923 wood pavilion Critics' Corner, and raised a two-storey club-house. The ex-teacher was a builder in business and metaphor. Chairman of Greenside, TSL, National Cricket Association and Durham CCC he steered each on a tide of progress. The Don Robson pavilion at Riverside is magnificent tribute to the man who led Durham to First-class cricket.

Consett, twice champions before Greenside's reign, relied on fine bats Bert Steward, Tommy Nichol, Joe McCabe and brilliant slip Barry Bromley. When Ryton won the title their captain was 61-year-old Albert Elsdon. It was the fifth club at which he won a league medal. Still able to turn the googly, Albert sidetracked questions about aging with twinkling eye and mock-serious "My action is now mechanical, of course". He had fine lieutenants in Jones, pallid Don Scott and wicket-keeper-batsman Tommy Thompson whose strong butcher's forearms pulled powerfully through mid-wicket. Including ten seasons as Tynemouth's pro Elsdon took some 3,500 wickets in all.

Shotley Bridge posed most threat to Greenside supremacy, even had the temerity to share the title in 1967. J.S.Wilkinson, who topped TSL bowling, Neville Telford and Jim Smith made most of a sporty wicket that Shotley batsmen overcame in various ways. David Collingwood relied on placement and fleet running; brothers Bill and 'Boxer' Stokoe favoured the long handle, the latter's bat encased in gaudy, yellow electrician's tape; and Barry Hicks hoisted high over the Derwent into

Northumberland. Dr Renton sowed seeds of cricket in the neighbourhood in 1863. Shotley Bridge formed six years later at a meeting in Leybourne Urwin's workshop, a building used by seventeenth century German sword-makers who settled on the banks of the Derwent. (Hence crossed swords on the club badge.) Re-formed in 1888, Shotley were galvanised by sometime poet Joshua Lax who was not averse to giving players "a dreadful wigging" if they did not follow his precepts. In 1910 they moved to The Spa, a heavenly hollow where ailing Charles Dickens took the waters of Hally Well. Sylvan isolation was barrier to league status until railway and Derwent Valley League provided a lifeline.

Stuart Wilkinson ranks with Durham's greats. Good enough to dismiss Geoff Boycott twice, good enough at 38 for Lancashire to propose a contract. Educated at Newcastle Royal Grammar, Stuart did *The Times* crossword in five overs. Fearsome, raw-boned pace surged from immediate, long strides; a whirl of arms arrowed ball and body towards batsmen. One sensed scarred turf but finely-tuned rhythm and balance left the pitch unmarked. Wilkinson got steep bounce. One ball to Ken Land pitched between crease and stumps and reared over middle. After uprooting 500 TSL batsmen he joined Durham City. Jagging, late away-swing was honed to perfection at Philly where he took 10 for 43 against Horden. Jones' hostility was gauged by bruises; Wilkinson's recorded by nurses at a nearby hospital. Stuart maintained his peak long after genuine fast bowlers are a spent force. During one week-end of carnage at 37 he ripped out fourteen batsmen for 19 runs, including Jones and Watson for nought. He destroyed both sides in the return, too, taking 29 for 61 in the four matches. A freak fall and fractured skull in 1992 left Stuart at Heaven's gate for forty-eight hours. Happily, St. Peter did not fancy facing him so 'Wilk' returned to cricket, not too worse for wear, to astonish younger generations with speed and swing until he was 55.

Barry Hicks was promptly styled "Hurricane Hicks" after a breath-taking, undefeated 152 in 51 minutes in a cup-tie when pro at Beamish and East Tanfield in 1967. He hit 14 sixes and 13 fours in a display worthy of Jack Carr who died seven months earlier. Rain washed out six early matches that year yet Hicks had 952 runs and four hundreds by July 8. He then lost interest and totalled 'just' 1,073. Deep down, Barry missed playing at Shotley. Not one for personal records, the trophy that Beamish presented was the only one he kept. Hicks plundered in swashbuckling style. Like Carr he planted left leg down the pitch and launched the ball far. The subsequent sheepish grin from bowed head and ruddy cheeks was pure Breughel. Deceptive image. Barry was an astute cricketer, a captain with uncanny, sixth-sense ability to gamble successfully. Hicks was Shotley's heart. Rumbustious, fun-loving, candidly honest and never lost for a pertinent quip. Hicks' wisdom was once questioned by a veteran who suggested he should bat before a young pup. The revolt was quickly quelled by that disarming grin: "Look, owt the lad gets above a 'duck' is a bonus". Barry will be remembered long as one of the great characters of north-east cricket.

Measured in NYSD championships this was Durham clubs' least-successful decade. Having

won 38 of the first fifty-three, they gained only three in the Sixties. Darlington remained a force and with Camburn compiling relentlessly were in the top three 16 times in 1950-69. They were champions in 1962 when Stuart Young (**qv**) gained one of only two league medals in 17 distinguished years as pro. Great club fast bowlers do not guarantee titles, of course. They lack the support of top-class catchers and their best deliveries are often too good for batsmen to get a 'nick'. This was true of Young, one of the finest English fast bowlers not signed by a First-class county - although eight tried. Tom Graveney rated him one of the best he faced. At 6 feet, 3½ inches, Young posed untold problems. He had a smooth, almost floating, approach and was 'onto' batsmen very quickly. He could also belt a ball in the opposite direction and his hitting turned many a match. S.H.Young's initials spell out his nature. Mild-mannered, well-mannered Stuart was ever willing to help develop others.

Young's new ball partner was strongly-built Alan Johnson, three inches taller with an ungainly action. The press said: "He advanced in a series of diagonal runs, the progress of an agitated crab". Brian Dobson's leg-breaks and googlies added variation. Each benefited from the brilliant wicket-keeping of sprightly Bobby Cole. Small in the mould of classic 'keepers, he stood up to the fastest. Cole set new standards at Feethams, stumped half of his 319 victims. Dobson was adamant that "If Bobby hadn't had such a good job, Alan Knott would never have played for England".

P.J.Kippax, lovely left-handed stroke-maker and aggressive leg-break and googly bowler, was pro in West Hartlepool's 1964 championship side. 'Kippy' left Yorkshire when 22 yet when he was 45 leg-spinners were so rare that *Test Match Special* commentators voted him the best in England. Peter was weaned onto cricket by Yorkshire legends. Coxon lugged him in a carry-cot round the streets of Huddersfield; Herbert Sutcliffe gave later encouragement. Kippax is now a successful bat manufacturer and wanders the countryside in search of willow. His tendency to worry is still evident in his concern for cricket's future. "I've got thousands of trees on my books but whether all get used is another matter." Kippax was not the only West player with pedigree. Harry Bailey was their batting mainstay 30 years either side of the war. He could also keep wicket, did not concede an extra

PRO-FILE (No. 19)

STUART HARRISON YOUNG

(b. Blackhall, 6 Jul 1938)

At Horden (1957-58), Chester-le-Street (1959-60), Blackhall (1961), Darlington (1962-69), South Shields (1970), Philadelphia (1971-72) and Bishop Auckland (1973). Gentle giant who was extremely fast. Had little use for the bouncer. Attacked the stumps and 65% of his wkts were bowled or lbw; 65% of his victims were in the first five of the order. Forcing left-hand bat who hit a hundred for Durham as well as winning two Gillette Cup 'Man of the Match' awards for his bowling.

League record as professional: 850 wkts for 9859 runs (av 11.6)

in one total of 266. Harry laid a concrete wicket in his garden to coach sons John and David. Both were educated at Malvern, both followed father into the county side. All-rounder John won a Gillette Cup man-of-the-match award in 1967. David played less for West because Lancashire claimed his batting and athletic fielding. The title was a wonderful 32nd birthday present for skipper Jim Kennedy and spurred his batting to greater authority.

Bishop Auckland inched past Middlesbrough by a point in 1966. The clubs were level after 19 matches when they met in a rain-affected match. Neil Riddell and Keith Hopper rescued 'Bishops' from 54 for 5 and they battled to 167 in three hours. 'Boro' slumped to 32 for 5 and defied a ring of carrion close-catchers to gain a draw but the bonus point effectively gave Bishop Auckland the title. 'Gus' Williamson and Barrie Clark earned plaudits for their batting but Alan Campbell delivered the *coup de grâce* with 26 of their last 38 wickets.

Lintz and Annfield Plain rose to prominence and secured first major titles. Formed in 1906, Lintz were elected to NWD in 1921. They won Division II three times and in 1928 were promoted to Division I. Their stay was brief. Things looked rosy while the footballing Hickmans twice helped them exceed 300 (Joe 151, George 147). NWD reduced from four to two divisions in 1931 so Lintz joined Stanley & District League for its six-year existence. They then won Northern Combination three times, were re-elected to NWD and four times champions in 1958-62. Bob Cromarty deserted the sea breezes of Holy Island in 1907 for Friarside pit, the chapel and cricket club where he cut the wicket with hand-shears. Sixty years on he supervised Bill Carradice's plans to renovate the ground and erect the present pavilion. It was Bob's belief that, unless to better himself, a player should remain loyal to the club that nurtured him. His ideal formed the basis of Lintz's philosophy never to employ a pro.

John Cromarty took on his father's mantle. Successful coach and batsman, Cromarty hit 164 not out in the thirty-third of 38 seasons. Maurice Kemp and Brian Little were leading wicket-takers. The club's football links continued through Frank Clark, David Elliott (Newcastle United) and Joe Jacques (Darlington). Clark won a European Cup medal with, and was later manager of, Notts Forest. Fred and Ralph Nevin, brothers with disparate batting styles, were descendants of another Lintz dynasty that stretched back to the club's early days.

Annfield Plain began at the turn of the century on the Store Field, upon which the Co-op's dray horses grazed, and spent a few years in NWD (Division II) before World War I. The club reformed in 1944, were elected to NWD in 1946 and, with Roxby as pro, were champions in 1963-64. They were champions again in 1966 without a pro then engaged Joe McCabe and won three more titles in four years. Annfield Plain were one of many to build a new clubhouse in the Sixties. Most were of brick but South Shields and Preston opted for Scandinavian-style 'log cabins'.

There was cricket at Ryhope in 1832 and a club established by 1876. Ryhope won North East Durham League in 1922 in days when they paid a shilling annual ground rent to Ryhope Coal Company. Founder members of D.Coast, Ryhope were champions in 1958 largely through the bowling of Fred Fagan and Bill Wolfendale. Ryhope, Marsden and Chilton Moor were involved in a gripping climax to 1962. Ryhope made a sluggish start but Fagan hit a purple patch and they led with two to play. They lost the first and needed 122 to win the second but collapsed to 22 for 8. Fagan and Wolfendale staged a recovery but only one was added after they were separated at 113. Uniquely, all three clubs shared the title for no rule existed to decide the outright winners. Ryhope were champions in 1963 and 1965.

Ushaw Moor enjoyed phenomenal success throughout the Sixties, winning 155 of 222 league matches. Opponents rarely reached three figures against George Delap, Brian Walker and pro Jimmy Dodds. Only crucial defeats by 1966 champions Shildon BR prevented Ushaw winning six D.Co titles between 1965-70. Formed in 1850, Etherley had an unparalleled record as Mid-D champions in 1960. They won all 24 matches, dismissed all 240 opposing batsmen. Harry Allen's medium pace claimed a major share, Fred Thompson's slows not far behind. Harry, who played for 47 years, is the club's most successful all-rounder with 1,560 wickets and 12,960 runs. Fred almost matched Harry's longevity and captured 942 wickets.

The incidence of hundreds began to rise again in the Sixties. Of those not mentioned, Norman Jones, Clive Lumley, Maurice Wilkinson and George Crawford regularly savoured the magic moment. Bill Brown's fierce hitting lost little in comparison with Milburn, his friend and team-mate, and Neil Hewison was a third who belted the ball out of Burnopfield's small ground. Tommy Clish drove so powerfully the ball ricocheted off boundary fences as if fired from a gun. Tom was pro at Easington where he hit 50 and did the 'hat-trick' twice while taking 10 for 18 in a cup match.

Pros were nearly all local men. Two born in Gateshead were among the fastest in living memory. Ken Earl, engaged by Gateshead Fell on election to DSL in 1961, was at his peak in the immediate post-war years at Jesmond. A long *glissando* run-up generated pace that thrilled. The England selectors were impressed. A dearth of fast men forced them to consider Earl for the 1950-51 tour of Australia. Tom Angus, explosively quick with a new ball, had an exceptionally high strike-rate at Philadelphia and Horden after days at Middlesex. Three had remarkably long careers. Footballer Keith Hopper, who hit hundreds to help Shildon BR win D.Co in 1962 and was successful at Craghead and Crook, returned to 'Bishops' and played until 69. Jack Watson (qv), another golden oldie, did the 'hat-trick' for Bearpark II when 70. No pro travelled farther to further cricket than Doug Ferguson. Once in a while a cliché is accurate. Ferguson *did* have more clubs than Jack Nicklaus. In one seven-year period he was pro in every senior league except NWD. Left-hand bat, right-arm medium and later off-breaks, Ferguson's game was a study in correctness. Playing days over, Doug trod a metaphorical road to Damascus spreading the gospel. He was National Cricket Association coach,

then coach to Denmark, Bermuda and Italy. He scouted for Northamptonshire with Peter Willey, George Sharp and Simon Brown among his choicest fruit. Ferguson is a latter-day Clarke but where Old Clarke used green-fingers, Ferguson eventually embraced modern technology: Andrea Corbellari, a South African of Italian descent, joined Bishop Auckland via the internet.

PRO-FILE (No. 20)

JOHN MARTIN WATSON

(b. High Spen, 17 April 1921)

Powerfully-built all-rounder, fine catcher at Shildon BR (1955-7), Blackhall (1958-60, 1970), Swalwell (1961-2) and Burnmoor (1968). Also pro at 1963 champions Normanby Hall and in Northumberland. Made 4,528 runs and took 613 wkts in 128 appearances for Durham; 67 matches for Northumberland. Began at Blackhall Mill then others before gaining prominence with 67 wkts at Durham City in 1947. Dominant at Blackhall with masterly control of off-cutters and powerful batting, never better than his aggressive 159* (6 sixes, 21 fours) out of 229-2 dec in 1959. Taciturn and generous in turn, his indomitable resolve was illustrated at Swalwell when, having scored 40, was hit above eye. Had five stitches and a headache yet rushed from hospital to take a 'hat-trick' in 6-51. Transformed Swalwell from a side in bottom four in previous four years to 4th then champions. Celebrated 50th birthday by helping Shildon BR win D.Co in 1971.

Come unto these yellow sands

Britain groped for a new identity in the Seventies. A search, from a north-east angle, faithfully captured on television in the disparate life-styles of *The Likely Lads*. Oil production exceeded coal output. The Beatles split up; Punks, hot pants and kinky boots dazzled the eye. Tenbob note, tanner and three-penny bit were lost to decimalisation. A brash, money-driven society of rampant inflation and package holidays. Transport developments again changed the face of Durham cricket. The arrival of Jumbo jets and subsequent 'fare wars' reduced the cost of long-haul travel. Test men jetted in from all corners of cricket's globe: O'Sullivan and Nasim-ul-Ghani, Shillingford and Clairmonte Depeiza, Armarnath and Wasim Raja. Of ten DSL pros in 1977 only one was English. In the ten years following O'Sullivan's arrival in 1974 over 60 overseas pros landed, half of them Test or future Test players. Bar profits dispersed overseas as consequence. Nayudu paid his own air fare out of a fee of £575. Twenty years later it cost South Shields twice as much to engage Armarnath.

Overseas pros quickened interest, slowed the exodus of spectators. In the company of Test men players grew in confidence. They absorbed some of their skills but as by-product rather than tuition. Social change presented fresh drawbacks. Presence of a pro always restricts the opportunities of amateurs. The difference now was that a player disillusioned by lack of opportunity could turn to any number of sports that took up less of his time. Cricket was forced increasingly to cede ground to soccer as the winter game ate deeper into summer. Cup Final Saturday illustrates the change. When Sunderland won the FA Cup in 1937 the only match postponed was Sunderland v Philadelphia. Almost every league played when Newcastle United won three finals in the 1950s. In 1973, however, only TSL and NYSD players were unable to watch Porterfield score Sunderland's fairy-tale winner on the 'telly'.

A professional's rôle had altered from the days of Lambert and Butler or even Coverdale and Coxon. All were hired to coach as well as dominate matches. That remained the ideal but pros now did less coaching. They were perceived as reinforcements to help win trophies and generate return on expenditure. Such pragmatism provoked justifiable objections. Given the alternative of Greenley's scenario, however, it was short-sighted to condemn it on principle.

The early invaders had minimal success if championships are a yardstick. Of 40-odd overseas pros in the 1970s only three helped a club win a senior title. Judged on statistics, however, few failed. One or two were accused of half-hearted commitment but the charge was easily countered by the sweat of others. Boldon's slow left-armer D.D.Parsana, for one, bowled 594 *league* overs in 1976.

When clubs laid on ale in the Sixties it was served from a convenient corner of the pavilion. Vast improvements in the Seventies, a lot carried out by members, elevated grounds to undreamt status. Purpose-built clubhouses replaced old wooden structures. Darlington added lounge bar and kitchen; billiards, television and function rooms, all with the added comfort of central heating. Norton's sports complex included extra rugby pitches and a floodlit soccer field. If necessity required the past be buried it did not dim memories of gas-lit cricket talk in a tiny hut. At least not until luxuriating in the showers on Saturday after a hard-earned fifty.

Any sense of well-being was jarred by alarming events within ear-shot of the ground. As clubs built inside their field, others built outside. Five years after Lintz built their pavilion a row of houses appeared beyond the north boundary wall. John and Brenda Miller moved into 20 Brackenridge. "Neither paid any particular attention to the fact that the garden was bounded by a cricket field. Their only concern was that the house was bounded by an open space which precluded other premises being erected and the house from being overlooked." Lintz's field is small enough to invite the lofted hit. When flying balls descended on roof and garden of Number 20, complaints flew, too. Of 29,000 balls delivered in 1975-76 one in a hundred was hit for six. Of those, 110 went out of the ground and fourteen fell on or about Number 20.

An inconvenience tolerated by nearby residents for decades now assumed critical proportions. A High Court Writ was served on Lintz for "negligence and nuisance" on 4 July 1975. By then the club had offered to remedy all damage and pay all expenses; fit moveable shutters and unbreakable glass to all windows. They spent £700 on a 16-foot wire fence above the north wall, a further £400 when gales blew it down in 1976. Half of all northward sixes still sailed over the fence. The Millers sought an injunction "to prevent the playing of cricket on the ground until steps are taken to prevent balls being struck onto the property". Here was heavy irony. If cricket *was* stopped the ground could fall into the hands of builders who would soon fill the open space cherished by the Millers. Although alarmed by events National Cricket Association felt it was beyond their responsibility to intervene in legal issues. Justice Reeve eventually ruled in the plaintiffs' favour and an injunction granted.

The decision staggered the club, stunned the village. Lintz lodged an appeal and set up a Survival Fund. Cricket and non-cricket organisations and private individuals responded generously. No longer was it a lone crusade. Women, many unconnected with the club, held at-home functions to raise funds. The Cricket Council agreed to underwrite the costs of the appeal. It was heard in London on 6 April 1977 before Lord Denning, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Geoffrey Lane and Lord Justice Cumming-Bruce. Lord Denning expressed surprise that developers were allowed to build houses so close to a cricket field, emphasised the ground was there first. "The club has spent money, labour and love in the making of the cricket ground and they have a right to play on it. It has provided

⁹ Lord Denning, 6 April 1977

great benefit to the community as a whole and to the injury of none....Does it suddenly become a nuisance because one of the neighbours chooses to build a house on the very edge of the ground in such a position that it may well be struck by the ball on the rare occasion when there is a hit for six? To my mind the answer is plainly 'No'." The injunction was refused and the appeal allowed by two to one, Lord Justice Lane dissenting. Lintz's future was saved. So, too, the future of other clubs, a point unwittingly confirmed by K.R.Souter, acting for the plaintiffs: "I have had enquiries from all over the country from people in the legal profession considering taking up similar cases."

Barnes CC, London, was in such a position. Chairman Graham Turner's letter to Lintz, in all its simplicity, captured the unique spirit of cricket. "I don't suppose you have heard of Barnes and, with respect, we have to say that until the last few months we had never heard of Lintz. But now we feel rather closer to you than the many miles which separate us geographically."

So Lintz became the Champions
Of village cricket clubs,
News of their famous victory
Cheered many inns and pubs.
But heroes all that they might be
They must have lost the fight
Without the funds that flooded in
From folk that thought them right.¹⁰

That first line took on added meaning when Lintz were champions in 1982. Deserved reward for tireless pacemen Bob Cook and Robert Bainbridge. Bainbridge captured countless wickets with a slinging, some said suspect, action. Cook, lean, spare and side-on, moved the ball late. Typical of Cook that he should seek sponsorship for each wicket. His penetration and the generosity of friends and members enriched British Heart Foundation by £500. Heart-warming, too, in an age when league cricketers aped the unsavoury antics of their First-class brethren, that one of mild nature should end an unstinting career with more TSL wickets than all but great Northumberland spinner George Milne.

Out of the trauma endured by Lintz, its members and the Millers, one thing was clear. Club cricket beats with emotional fervour deep-rooted in English soil. This celebrated legal case revealed a strength of will, a spirit of togetherness rarely witnessed outside times of social crisis. Only when deprived of God-given rights do we fully appreciate what we have. It falls upon today's youth to heed that lesson and preserve what their forebears created.

Cup cricket increased in pace with growing car ownership. The formation of Durham Cricket Association helped rationalise an overfilled summer calendar by consolidating competition dates, interleague matches and Sunday play. The number of senior league fixtures rose by 25% between 1962-70.

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¹⁰ Poem written by a Lintz supporter.

Extra cup competitions increased players' work-load. Stuart Young would not re-sign for Philadelphia because cup commitments were too heavy. I averaged 26 matches a season as a youth in a moderate team but played 70 matches in a successful championship side 25 years later. It was common to play eight matches in ten days in early season, paradoxically on soft wickets and often in poor light. The reason was simple. More matches generated bar sales to meet rising costs and aid solvency.

Increased fixtures coincided with a shift in balance between bat and ball. Snow blanketed all junior cricket on the evening of 31 May 1976. For the rest of the summer a red ball shone in the sky with an intensity not felt for 75 years. It heated batsmen's ambitions, warmed brain and muscle into realising the day had arrived to spend time at the crease. If anyone 'cashed in' it would be Greensword. He was the first for four seasons to record 1,000 league runs in either DSL, TSL or NYSD. In those leagues alone 14 batsmen reached 1,000 runs in the 1970s. There were fifty-two in the 1980s; 126 in the 1990s, 40 of them in the peak years 1993-94. By the end of the Eighties it was as common for a batsman to score 1,000 league runs as score a century a hundred years before.

Presence of quality pros was part reason for the progression. Of the 126 who reached 1,000, 85% were professionals. This ran parallel to a decline in penetration owing to better wickets and the effects of increased cup cricket. Bowlers are not always at their best after a day earning the family crust, nor at their peak every Saturday after numerous mid-week cup-ties. Batsmen fed on their weariness. Of 47 at Durham clubs who took 100 wickets in a season in DSL, TSL or NYSD, 75% did so before 1976 and 90% were pros. If the statistics fall short of proof they strengthen the hypothesis. Bowling is hard work. It calls for skill, determination, strength and mental resilience, requirements less attractive than thunderous hits or elegant strokes. Nyren's "aristocratical playmates" and gentlemen down the ages realised this. So, too, the youth of today.

Rapid decline in mining, shipbuilding and heavy engineering resulted in the respective demise of Seghill, Leslies and Vickers-Armstrong. The laudable history of welfare clubs was at an end. Some were rescued by local authorities and a few colliery clubs defiantly retained 'CW' after their name to honour the welfare ideal. TSL replaced the defunct trio but it had repercussions elsewhere. Their replacements were from NWD. They, in turn, admitted teams from Mid-D that was left with only eight clubs in 1974. Crook and Langley Park quit NWD that year so the composition of NWD changed radically in three years. More accurately, the League's strength was heavily diluted.

It had compensations for Whickham who languished in the bottom four in most of the previous 24 seasons. Steve Gamble's pace helped Whickham win NWD in 1974-75 and 1977. Sacriston signed Tommy O'Connor in 1969 and sparked a revival that coincided with the launch of *Esso Northumbria*, at 253,000 tons the largest ship yet built in Britain. It was the swan-song of Tyneside shipbuilding but not Sacriston cricket. They were champions in 1972-73 when Fred Hilton's 'leggies' and Jack Wrightson's pace supplemented O'Connor's heroics. Tommy, now with

disconcerting late swing, took 100 league wickets in three successive seasons, the last yielding 151 in all. Sacriston's first defeat in 1972 in late July brought double disappointment for Wrightson and Hilton. They were due to go on holiday after the match but returned to the dressing room to find their holiday money stolen. After a quick 'whip-round' in the club they proceeded on their way.

Leadgate won five successive titles under Brian Farley in 1978-82. Leadgate cricket dates back to 1873. Matches were spasmodic. Not surprising, perhaps, with the club "unable to keep its engagements owing to the fact that most of the members have been converted by a lady evangelist and being inclined, object to playing at cricket". Leadgate had two reformations. The first, as Leadgate Temperance in 1898, rooted in the Methodist church; the second six years later as Leadgate. Elected to NWD (Junior Division) in 1910 they won two titles and promotion to Division II. Election to Division I after the war was a prelude to conflict not peace.

All was smooth on the surface: new pavilion, Jack Carr flourishing. Closer scrutiny reveals festering sores. Leadgate were trying the League's patience. They had fallen behind with the ground rent, were dissatisfied with the make-up of the Committee and vehemently opposed its decision to appoint neutral umpires. "Any rate," they added smugly, "there is no such thing as a neutral umpire". When their spectators abused an umpire, NWD vowed "their next appearance before them would be their last". After more wrangling the Committee threatened to resign if Leadgate remained members. They were expelled in 1922. NWD proffered an olive branch after the club's committee resigned, said they would be re-admitted if they agreed to a three-year period of probation during which they had to submit annually the names of their committee for approval. Leadgate thought that an insult to the great and good on the new committee. In a bid to shame NWD into submission they hung out dirty washing at a public meeting in the Co-operative Hall. Only one voice dissented so, perversely, Leadgate upheld their own expulsion. Re-admitted to Division II six years later, they were champions in 1930, but not promoted, so they joined Stanley & District League which they won in 1933. Next year the hatchet was buried and they returned to NWD. This time the end of war did bring peace. With Latchford as pro Leadgate were champions in 1946 and again in 1951 when pro Albert Atkinson was in devastating all-round form. They won a third title in 1957 when Norman Pearson grabbed 162 cup and league wickets in tandem with Eric Topham. For all his square-arm action Pearson was quick. Later engagements at Craghead (best 163) and Beamish (best 179) were sandwiched by a year at Sacriston curtailed by a football injury necessitating a plate to be inserted in an ankle. The injury caused his retirement after 23 seasons in which, Norman reckoned, he captured over 2,500 wickets.

South Hylton and Hetton Lyons dominated D.Coast. South Hylton won four successive titles after finishing runners-up to Vaux Welfare by half-a-point in 1971. All-rounder Bob Markham was key to the success and the bowling Andrews brothers were on song. Hetton Lyons formed in 1865.

¹¹ Newcastle Journal: 23 April 1888

The name honours William Lyons who attempted to sink a pit shaft through limestone. Lyons provided stiff opposition for the best in the north of the county and gained league status in 1893. Pit deputy William Bamborough captured countless wickets until his right wrist was crushed in a pit roof fall. Matt Storey was at his best when Lyons were inaugural champions of D.Coast. They won it again in 1947 then had two spells in D.Co and were champions in 1957. The ambitious club raised £1,500 towards an indoor cricket school at Lyons Boys' Club, opened by the late Queen Mother in 1960, then bought their ground from Bowes Lyons Estates for £500. Hetton Lyons returned to D.Coast in 1966 to conserve on travel costs and Trevor Walker led them to six successive titles in 1977-82. The first campaign had started when David Alexander strolled onto the field looking for a game. David came to England with Gordon Greenidge to try his luck at Hampshire. Free-scoring 'Alex' hit 93 in his second match on 28 May. From that day Hetton Lyons were infallible for four years and unbeaten in 87 league matches. Walker led with the ball, Billy Kent with the bat. Lyons were later strengthened by pros Stewart Lowery and Desmond Collymore, lissom West Indian and explosive fielder. A Horner Cup final perfectly illustrates their fighting qualities. When Horden needed just five to win with 7 wickets to fall the Cup Committee wrote a cheque in their favour. Hetton Lyons knocked over all seven for two runs and the cheque had to be countermanded in their name.

Elsdon announced his retirement in 1969. Then spent five years at Medomsley. Bottom in four of those seasons, they collapsed so often that his legs were not unduly taxed if they batted first. Quiet and unassuming, Albert had a boyish desire to play for ever. He bowled on at 67 despite seeing his captain drop dead on the pitch. Figures of 2 for 91 at 69 reveal remarkable stamina; 6 for 24 at 70 emphasise lasting skill. Elsdon faced bowlers in his twilight years, mere boys by comparison, with the same heart if not art: Steve Brettwood, Fred Brownless, Keith Fleming and Geoff Mason; James Teare, Ken Stephenson and 'Bulldog' Billy Teesdale. Each toiled 20 years and more and frequently produced amazing analyses. Most were rewarded with a league medal. Two had shorter careers before entering parliament. Jack Dormand, later Lord Dormand of Easington, hit 50s for Burnmoor; Gerry Steinberg produced startling bowling figures for Durham North End.

Seven different champions in the 1970s emphasised growing competition in D.Co. Batsmen included rich characters like village constable Joe Cushlow and lay preacher Jimmy Cook who alternated between religion and drink. Shildon BR's 1971 title side had Tom Kilcran, irrepressible Jack Watson and Harry 'The Talk' Taylor whose bat, judged on his centuries, could talk too. Contrasting openers John Baker and Alan Chapman were prominent in Etherley's 1972 success. Baker savaged many an attack and once completed a cup hundred by the 13th over; Chapman's sound technique fashioned 1,000 in all. Chapman, who had already won a medal with Shildon BR, gained two more at Evenwood and Willington where he found a staunch ally in Keith Fleming. There are no more partisan followers than Crook's. One doubts it was necessary to combative Roy Coates but they urged his team to keep ahead of a hungry, chasing pack to narrowly win the title in 1974. Roy led the

way with belligerent hitting aided by Arnold Coates, Gordon Pratt and match-winning bowlers Stephenson and Alec Dolphin.

The decade ended with Langley Park and Evenwood (in the odd years) each gaining two titles. Langley rarely needed to look beyond Keith Emmerson, Alan Reeve and Jack Wilkinson for wickets in 1976. Gordon Hunter was pro. Raised on Blackfyne's fine track, the left-hander was strong on the back foot, drove sweetly through the off. Gordon later returned to his roots to raise his Consett league aggregate to 15,000 before injury ended his career after 34 years in the first team. Of Park's 1976 regulars, only Reeve and Gordon Pratt played in 1978. David Jackson returned to his first club to replace Hunter. Evenwood, more settled, were well served by Chapman, Stuart Land, the Teesdales and Gills. An Evenwood side played Raby in 1887 and they operated in Auckland & District League at the turn of the century but these were the club's first major league honours.

Concerned by the number of drawn matches, but reluctant to ditch the 'honourable draw', DSL and NYSD increased the award of bonus points and limited the side batting first to a maximum of 55 overs. It had little effect. Draws in NYSD rose from 34% in 1970 to 61% in 1976, the year Norton drew 80% of matches. Rising temperatures in 1975 and the sweltering heat of 1976 were contributory factors but, in truth, too many sides batted overlong to make a match 'safe'.

The captain of Durham and heir apparent expressed opposing views during the ensuing debate. Brian Lander, no doubt recalling that four years earlier Seaham Harbour left his side eight overs to get 152, believed the high proportion of draws warranted the introduction of overs cricket. Neil Riddell vowed his club would oppose such a proposal: "We don't want a system which would produce negative bowling. That's what 'sudden death' cricket would do." Kippax added that, in his experience, the tempo of NYSD was more purposeful than Bradford League. "Fixed overs cricket is too stringent. It takes away a captain's skill to manipulate a game." Not all captains had that skill and, in reality, it was the captains who resorted to pragmatic methods in tight situations.

NYSD increased to 16 clubs in 1971. The additions were from Yorkshire so reducing the mathematical chances of Durham clubs winning a title. Four did so but overall achievement, compared with past dominance, was an oasis in a desert of decline. For the first time since 1896, no Durham club finished in the top three in 1971. In fact none in the top six. Durham sides filled the bottom five places for the first time in 1977, an indignity experienced again in 1984.

Bishop Auckland were stylish champions in 1973 with depth of batting stretching to infinity. Harry Smurthwaite had Barrie Clark, Neil Duckworth, Ralph Beadle and Riddell, first to score 1,000 league runs for Bishop, plus all-rounders Hopper, Tim Haggie, Graham Smith and Geoff Wilde who each exceeded 500 in all. Stuart Young spearheaded the attack while brisk Tony Hawthorne seamed it both ways. Sixteen-year-old Paul Romaines played occasionally before joining Northamptonshire.

Paul's father George, well-known local broadcaster, played for 'Bishops' and Shildon BR. Grandfather Billy was pro for railway sides Shildon LNER (as they were before Nationalisation) and Darlington RA. Released after a couple of seasons, Romaines remained determined. He made 1,000 league runs when pro at Synthonia, scoring 22 out of 28 the day Johnny Johnston took 8 for 21. After two seasons at Darlington, Romaines successfully resumed his First-class career with Gloucestershire.

Sturdy, blond left-hander Neil Riddell, 7,583 in all for Bishop Auckland, won a second medal at Feethams where he amassed 10,750 league runs (av 42) in 1977-91. The statistics are impressive. The manner of their making more so - once past an initial, ugly forward prod. Each major innings accelerated with the power of 'Mallard': emphatic strokes, then momentum unstoppable. Riddell was undefeated in thirteen of his 15 league hundreds. In his first for Darlington (9 sixes, 7 fours) he reached fifty off 53 balls; a century 20 balls later. Neil dominated the best, witness a century for Minor Counties against a Northamptonshire attack containing four Test bowlers. Left-hander Tim Haggie, educated at St. Peter's (York) and Cambridge, gained a second medal when captain of Darlington in 1977. Riddell again passed 1,000 in all matches; pro John Waring and Tim Wellock spearheaded the attack.

Stockton were joint top in 1974 in a photo-finish decided in Saltburn's favour on matches won. They were level after seven matches and, though the lead changed three times, the gap never exceeded 3 points. Next season skipper Gordon Lake popped championship champagne. Attractive right-hander Lake topped Stockton's batting seven times in a distinguished career that included 18 years as secretary. Bill Webster, Mike Thomas and 17-year-old Ian Richards impressed with the bat, Barry Jeffells with the ball. All-rounder Nasim-ul-Ghani was outstanding and a frequent matchwinner. Nasim, who went to Lowerhouse for a reported offer of £2,500 plus benefit, was replaced by Irving Shillingford. The Windward Islander averaged 57 over three seasons including a club record 1,258 in 1978. It says much for Tom Olver that it required 43 years and a Test batsman to surpass his previous record.

Hartlepool re-engaged Kippax for 1978 after being third bottom the previous year. Seventh at half-way, they went 19 matches undefeated to thread past the leaders and win at the post. Kippax's strokes were complemented by Michael Gough's obduracy; his leg-breaks by Johnny Johnston's pace. A league medal was welcome consolation for David Olaman who found runs scarce at Park Drive after dominant form at struggling Blackhall. Ken Gardner, 33 years an administrator, played in both Kippax-inspired title sides. Memory man Ken, "he even knows the time it started to rain", talks knowledgeably about the game and is an excellent after-dinner speaker. Ken maintains an intense, boyish enthusiasm for the game as President of NYSD and Durham CCC Board Member.

Philadelphia twice won three successive DSL championships during a glorious decade. At no time did they rest on their laurels, continually strengthened the side. The 1973 title coincided with the

signing of Steve Greensword (qv). Given few opportunities at Leicestershire, and in search of financial security, Greensword joined South Northumberland as pro. He helped Gateshead Fell win DSL in 1970 then raised South Shields' hopes of a title. Secure in defence, Greensword drove with masterly judgement. He bowled straight and got movement. Metronomic accuracy from a robotic action tried batsmen's patience. His miserly bowling enabled Philly derive full benefit from free-scorers Bobby Johnson, John Robertson and Tom Clish who gleefully belted the ball over the 'choppy house', as locals termed the old abattoir. A second championship was won with the addition of George Bull's pace; a third with Stuart Wilkinson's speed. Philadelphia's march was halted by Eppleton. After a damp start Eppleton were becalmed mid-table but won their last six and raced to a first title in 50 years. Kiwi Test spinner David O'Sullivan captured 96 wickets. The arrival of the slow left-armer put an end to Ken Ferguson's illustrious career but he managed to snatch his 1,000th DSL wicket in the title year. Philly then strode to three more successive titles. Left-hander Tom Harland arrived in 1978 with lugubrious moustache and his Eppleton medal in his back pocket. Harland's partnership with Greensword, as opener and wicket-keeper, was integral to a line-up that, by then, included seven county players.

It is not possible to compare players of different eras. Safe to say, however, the achievements of Coxon and Greensword over a long period mark them the pre-eminent pro all-rounders of the last 50 years. Coxon was confrontational, Greensword less so. Greensword could 'sledge' but with vitriol diluted in banality: "Me muther can bowl faster than thu." If Greensword was slogged to cow-corner he would mutter "Thu cannot bat" but if *he* slogged to cow-corner any derogatory comment was countered more rationally: "State of the game, young 'un". Coxon's clubs won four titles in 16 seasons; Greensword's seven in 26. At the start of their respective engagements Coxon had played 142 First-class matches compared to Greensword's 39. Coxon was then 35, Greensword 26. Greensword, more sedate, made three times as many runs as Coxon; Alex, more penetrative, took almost twice as many wickets as Steve. They never crossed swords in battle although their clubs met in 1959. Steve, a lad of 15, had just made a maiden league 50. Alex was absent with a damaged finger.

Whitburn were bridesmaid at three Philly celebrations. A.A.Johnson deserved better. In all but a twitching energy in his walk, Johnson called to mind Keith Miller. Alex was a dynamic opponent. A powerful hitter endowed with a cricket brain and a bowler with searing pace. After each lightning delivery his boyish good looks disappeared behind a dishevelled mesh of hair. Pro in 1972-75, Johnson twice took 100 DSL wickets, never less than 94. Stylish opener Peter Freeman and breezy Wilf Barker are Whitburn's most prolific amateur post-war batsmen. Gordon Lamb, a consistent, busy right-hander in TSL, enjoyed further success before premature retirement. Chester-le-Street also trailed the bride in three successive years, once by two points, once by four. 'Cestrians' could score runs but lacked depth in attack. It was the same with Durham City despite John Darling's 8 for 1 against North Durham.

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John Darling's bowling analysis v North Durham, 26 June 1971

North Durham's form was as dreadful as their war-time tribulations. From 11 July 1970 they lost 37 times when going 50 league matches without a win. In a third of them they were all out for under 100.

Durham City's eighth placing in 1970 mocked the pedigree of a side with five county men. A sixth righted matters in 1972. Stuart Wilkinson added sword edge to their attack. Chester-le-Street chased City all season, trailed by a point on the final day. Weston's generous declaration left Horden to get 201 in three hours. Wilkinson needed but 80 minutes to skewer the title with 8 for 29.

B.R.Lander was in prime form. Tall, lean Lander maintained tight control from a high-stepping approach. In one of such amiable nature one sensed a Judas-kiss behind his violent movement off the pitch. Brian gained everlasting fame as captain of Durham in the defeat of Yorkshire in 1973, the first Minor County to beat a First-class county in the Gillette Cup. Lander's 5 for 15 earned the Gold Award.

M.P.Weston was captain of England and British Lions. At week-ends before an international he slept nights in his car, spent the day pounding punishing dunes on the coast of Northumberland. A high level of fitness was one benefit, stumbling upon the house of his dreams the other. A competitive all-rounder, Weston got the best out of City's talented side. He fulfilled the first duty of a captain, winning the toss fifteen times in the first 17 matches of 1972. Appearances were restricted by business and rugby but he found time to sire two county cricketers who gave Mike marvellous moments as they

PRO-FILE (No. 21)

STEPHEN GREENSWORD

(b. Gateshead, 6 Sep 1943)

Burst onto scene at Philadelphia, aged 15, then joined Leicestershire. Supremely-consistent all-rounder at Gateshead Fell (1969-70, 1993-94), South Shields (1971-72), Philadelphia (1973-80, 1989-91), Hartlepool (1981), Whitburn (1982-83; 1987-88), Sunderland (1984), Eppleton (1985-86) and Wearmouth (1992). Game is based firmly on the fundamentals, techniques perfected to such degree they guaranteed his employers constant success. Topped DSL batting 8 times. First to score 1,000 DSL runs in successive seasons (1972) and the only batsmen to do so in four successive seasons (1979). Reached 1,000 DSL runs a record 8 times. Set new DSL record of 1,212 runs in 1972 and raised it to 1,274 in 1977. Final league record of 23,000 runs (av 55), 36 hundreds and almost 1,400 wkts is unsurpassed in Durham club cricket history. Of some 10,000 league overs, 35% were maidens. Regular for Minor Counties.

grew. Philip hit an undefeated 173 to smash his dad's Bow School record 153 not out. Philip, then 12, added 239 with ten-year-old Robin. When Robin hit 103 not out in Bow's 141 there were 30 extras and the next highest score was 2.

South Shields went thirty years without a title from 1961. Surprising considering their quality pros and rich crop of youngsters. Bill Parker was consumed with passion for the game almost to the exclusion of all else but work. "I did enjoy ale and women," adds less pious Parker. Bill hooked, cut and drove as well as any diminutive bat to score 16,101 in all for Shields. Peter Crane, if sometimes unassertive, pierced the leg-side at will. Crane retired as the club's leading scorer with 852 more than Parker. Ricky Stephenson's accuracy earned more wickets than any Westoe amateur. Unfortuantely Dave Parnaby's aggressive pace was too soon lost to the pro ranks. Therein lay Shields' problem. Too often the attack lacked penetration except when Stuart Young topped DSL bowling in 1970.

Burnmoor were in the same boat. They possessed batsmen as good as most in Vic Hanson, Bill Routledge, George Ryder, Jim Weeks and Ian Linsley whose consistency throughout the 1970s put him in the top five DSL openers. Burnmoor sensibly opted for bowler-pros until signing Paul Hibbert in 1977. He scored 1,000 league runs and played a solitary Test for Australia but Burnmoor dropped to fourth bottom. Somehow the side lacked the balance to really tilt at the title. Fast bowler George Bull began to knock castles over in 1965; Ian Conn had yet to emerge. Had they been contemporaries operating alongside pros Frank Forster, or later John Glassford, Burnmoor may have been champions.

Greenside's TSL reign ended in 1977 when the waning powers of Smith and Jones coincided with Consett's 15 wins on the trot. Consett won another title in 1978, successes based on fluent Billy Gibson, all-rounders Donald Brown and Walter Armstrong, and seamer Peter Curtis. Their fourteenth title in 1981 is the most in TSL. In between times the title rolled downhill to Shotley Bridge boosted by the signing of S.R.Atkinson and return of Stuart Wilkinson. Atkinson represented English Schools and played in Durham University's 1972 UAU championship side with Richard Mercer, Tim Hughes and Tim Wellock. His education was further broadened when opening with Inglis for the 'Cestrians' and the county. Tall and broad of shoulder, Atkinson was sure in defence, strong off his legs and pulled mercilessly anything short. Majestic front-foot driving and his power off the back foot left bowlers no margin for error. Atkinson did not look out of place against First-class bowlers. Only a dubious lbw decision ended a beautifully-crafted 76 for Minor Counties against a West Indies attack of Courtney Walsh, Winston Davis and Roger Harper. His style called to mind Graeme Pollock, a comparison made possible in 1983 when each hit a century in the Callers-Pegasus Festival at Jesmond.

To label Atkinson 'professional' is misnomer. A juvenile spirit rather who accepted a few bob to supplement his existence as 'permanent' student. If Atkinson's off-field life had about as much

order as Fenwick's sales his composure at the wicket suggested he would bat serenely through an earthquake. Steve is a frustrated Thespian. Clubhouses rocked with his boisterous performances of songs from the shows climaxed by the inevitable *George and the Dwagon*. Steve was a superb mimic of bowlers' run-ups and spoken accents - as a team-mate discovered when duped into a long telephone conversation supposedly with Australian batsman Graeme Wood. Atkinson finally began work at 30. He taught in Holland and Hong Kong and made runs for both, most notably 162 for Holland against Israel. His undoubted class and infectious enthusiasm rejuvenated Shotley. Atkinson exceeded 1,000 TSL runs in each title year, 4,125 in three seasons aided between the wickets by selfless, telepathic, opening partner David Collingwood. Innings over, no matter his score, Steve always returned to the hutch with a smile.

Atkinson and Qasim Omar raised TSL individual scoring to new heights. Qasim Omar, born in Kenya, was raised in Pakistan for which country he played 26 Tests. Pro at Sacriston and Annfield Plain, he was first to reach 1,000 TSL runs in a season and did so four times while making 5,461 (av 60) and 13 hundreds. A diminutive, wristy stroke-maker, he whipped the ball off his legs with the authority and crack of a circus lion-tamer. Such was his command at the crease it seemed his only likely mishap would be his cap falling on his wicket from its perilous perch atop thick Afro hairstyle. Qasim loved a good time, too, as his fall from grace at Test level was to prove.

Sterling qualities

For many it was a time of the fast buck, even faster life-style. Husbands hurried to work at sunrise industries like Nissan. Wives winged on speedy Metro rail system to Gateshead Metro Centre, largest shopping complex in Europe. On the town at night. Their children pent with computer, video and Nintendo 'Game Boy'. Less often now did their sons hurry to the nets.

For the less fortunate, except when graceful Tall Ships sailed into the Tyne, the past vanished overnight. Consett was laid bare after the ironworks was dismantled. Shildon railway workshops hit the buffers, devastating township and cricket club alike. Pits were sunk - without trace. Close-knit communities endured agonies as unemployment soared to an unprecedented 3.3 million. In 1913 there were over a million miners in 3,000 British mines. By 1984 there were 183,000 in 171. North-east coalfields, once the region's pride, had 201 pits at Nationalisation. Now there were 17. Soon it would be six. Arthur Scargill could tolerate no more; a miners' strike began on 12 March 1984. Pitmen and their family were served free lunches in Miners' Welfare halls. This was an advance on the old soup kitchens where gruel was ladled from zinc baths that had been used by hewers the night before to scrub coal dust off their backs. Tensions rose amid ugly, primitive scenes. David Jenkins, new Bishop of Durham, controversially used his enthronement speech to express political views on the issue.

The strike had bizarre repercussions at Wearmouth. Groundsman Colin Dobson occupied a detached house within the ground. The Welfare Committee told Colin to join a trade union. He chose NUM. Then, because he was entitled to the benefits of membership, the Lodge secretary ordered him to join the strike. The ground was left untended. The longer the strike lasted, the longer the grass grew. Club members, many of them retired miners, had to look elsewhere for a game of bowls. Wearmouth played all league matches away from home, did not win a single one. They had struggled in the lower reaches for 15 years but, with nightmarish Orwellian undertones, 1984 was the beginning of the end. Wearmouth were bottom in four consecutive years. Only in their penultimate DSL season did they climb out of the bottom three. Even so the club's eventual resignation came as a surprise to Andy Robson since he was re-engaged for 1999.

Unemployment had hit cricket before. This time, ironically, clubs found the means to spend money at will. If they adopted one strand of Thatcherite philosophy (few in a socialist stronghold would express it so) it was commitment to personal responsibility. Realising they must swim, or sink like the heavy industries that once helped provide resources, they dog-paddled or crawled furiously depending on the extent of their ambition.

Sponsors provided welcome aid. Previous interest was spasmodic. New fencing at

Feethams in 1884 served as temporary advertisement hoarding: "Although Bryant and May matches may be seen outside for nothing, cricket matches must be paid for." *Fairy Soap* sponsored the 1904 Tyneside Minor Cup. Eventually the popularity of cup cricket attracted sponsors in numbers. NWD was the first league to be sponsored in 1981. Fittingly by Dixon Sports. By 1986 TSL was the only senior league without a sponsor. Invidious to single out one of many generous sponsors but nostalgia demands mention of Vaux Breweries. Cuthbert Vaux opened a brewery in 1837. (Interestingly, a C.Vaux turned out for Bishopwearmouth in 1834.) Vaux introduced Maxim ale to honour the gallantry of Major Ernest Vaux, commander of a Maxim gun detachment in the Boer War. Landlords complained Maxim was too strong as customers nodded off after a single bottle. Vaux patronage began in 1984. They sponsored half of Durham's six senior leagues in each of seven years before its emotive closure in 1999. Darlington Building Society began its thirteenth year as NYSD's sponsor in 2002, the longest association with one league.

Clubs still relied mainly on bar sales to pay an increasing number of professionals. Some 60% now had a pro. The proportion of overseas pros rose from 42% in 1980 to about two-thirds in 1988. A few earned sizeable fees but money was not sole reason to quit Caribbean sun and sand for cool North Sea beaches. Clayton Lambert found NYSD "very competitive", liked it enough to return 13 times. "I am not a city boy," said West Indies opener Desmond Haynes, "so the friendliness of Blackhall suits me". Haynes, who exceeded 1,000 NYSD runs in 1981-82, could joke at his own expense. Dismissed twice for a 'duck' in one season in cup-ties against Blaydon, he signed his autograph for the club inside a gigantic nought. Jimmy Adams makes no secret of his affection for the area. "The people of the north-east are something else. They remind me very much of the people back home. They speak their mind and are easy to get on with. I grew up with people like that." Jimmy, who replaced injured Nehemiah Perry at Blaydon in 2002, thought nothing of the weekly 600-mile round trip: "When you're going home you don't really mind". These and others forged lasting friendships, brought excitement, glamour and considerable skill to an appreciative audience.

Less wealthy clubs tried to ban overseas pros, reasoning that fees would be better spent on facilities. More likely this thinking concealed suspicions that some engaged speed merchants and let their pitch deteriorate. Ian Bishop signed for Evenwood. He had just made himself cosy at the home of skipper Billy Teesdale when he was called up by West Indies. Even though helmets were now in common use Mainsforth secretary, John Irvine, felt it could have been dangerous. "On our wickets he would have killed someone." Irvine admitted it a dilemma because overseas pros helped improve standards. Roy Coates was in no doubt about that. "They're well liked, are good ambassadors, bring in revenue over the bar and coach youngsters." Roy's parting shot was typically brusque: "If you want village cricket, you should join a village league." A proposal to ban overseas pros in D.Co was defeated but D.Coast banned them in 1989 so Hetton Lyons resigned to join D.Co.

Other concerns surfaced such as the registration of overseas men who just happened to be in

the area 'on holiday' or were 'friends' of current pros. It helped those unable to afford a pro but, with England's future prospects in mind, gave promising overseas players experience of English conditions. Damien Martyn played for North Durham just three years before his Test debut. In time DSL allowed clubs to register one player not qualified to play for England. Rumour, too, that clubs paid "expenses" to attract amateurs from other clubs. It was, indeed is, the worst kept secret. Herbert Trenholm voiced criticism. "Certain D.Co clubs have spoilt cricket by poaching players through offers of payment." Harry Allen was more explicit: "There is no doubt that some players are paid backhanders. I have talked to players who admit it. One professional told me he was paid more to stay on as an amateur when his club engaged a new pro the following season." The brashness of the age. Etherley tried to tighten control by proposing new players should live within 15 miles of their club. They were defeated. The Northern Echo cricket correspondent Tim Wellock left NYSD to play in D.Co. Hearing much talk of money, Tim tried valiantly to bring matters into the open through his columns but admitted: "It did not go down well at all". Accusations were not confined to D.Co. A D.Coast club was said to pay for a player's holiday in return for his fleeting services. It was becoming an auction and not uncommon for some to change clubs each season. "The old amateur ethic of playing purely for relaxation and pleasure is dying out," concluded Wellock. So, too, was gentlemanly conduct judging by the increasing number of players suspended for using abusive language to umpires. Youngsters, as ever, modelled themselves on the idols of the day but unfortunately they were disfigured by the warts of the First-class game. A brighter facet lay hidden under the names of late-1980s debutants destined for everyday entry in Wisden: W.P.C.Weston, D.A.Blenkiron, J.A.Daley and precocious Q.J. Hughes.

Wellock pulled no punches, cited Crook and Esh Winning among those under most suspicion. Each denied contravening league rules. It did not stop the rumours. Fine bat John Cranney tells of the day Leadgate parked their cars in Crook market place and walked to the field. Noticing an attendant in a kiosk, a young player asked why he was there. "He directs the home players to the ground," quipped Brian McNally. Roy Coates was vigorous in Crook's defence. "We don't need to offer money to attract players. All our players are local lads apart from two from Northallerton. The reason for all the rumours about us is that everyone is jealous because we are successful." There was no denying that. Crook won 173 of 250 league matches in the 1980s, won four successive titles in 1980-83, two more in 1986-87. Indian Test all-rounder Suru Nayak was dominant during the first two successes; 24-year-old Guyanan Andrew Lyght more so until struck by illness mid-way through 1986. Lyght's impact is measured by 2,600 runs and 112 wickets in all on debut. Left-hander Gordon Pratt scored heavily while coaching his talented sons. Bill Whithorn, John Gregory and slow left-arm Colin Robson took the wickets. Esh Winning challenged Crook's domination but rarely beat them in the league. Esh won a first major title in 1985 when Ali Zia of Pakistan Railways was in sparkling allround form. They beat Ushaw Moor in a crunch match in July and held them off during a relentless finish in which each won every subsequent match started. Esh were again champions in 1989-90 with Javed Hayat as pro. He set a D.Co record with 102 league wickets in 1989, 201 in all. Javed moved

to Tudhoe and Ushaw Moor, claimed 774 league wickets in ten seasons and consistently improved his batting. He reached 1,000 league runs at Tudhoe in 1993.

In 1983 Durham was drenched by the wettest April since records began. Tudhoe could be forgiven for thinking they would never play. They did - on 19 June after ten matches were washed out. Mid-D completed a first full league programme that same week-end. As if by command, the rain had stopped two days earlier when Tony Blair was elected to Sedgefield. Sun over his constituency ignited a Vesuvian explosion of runs. Records melted. Shirlon Williams hit 7 centuries in a season for Shildon BR, Gary Ireland 11 in two seasons at Tudhoe. Clint Yorke clouted 177, 210 not out and 145 not out in his first three league innings for Evenwood. Tom Moody, perhaps unlucky to play just eight Tests for Australia, flexed young muscles while scoring 1,500 league runs for Hetton Lyons. Tom's reach posed problems for bowlers. A good length ball to Moody was little better than a half-volley. Anyone over-compensating by bowling shorter was severely punished.

M.A.Harper topped the Shell Shield batting with Guyana before signing for Blaydon in 1986. Harper made TSL batting history with 1,863 runs (av 109.5) and 8 centuries. If we count a pre-season friendly, he hit 3,013 and 12 hundreds, one off 63 balls. Mark was no slogger. A major Harper innings contained up to twenty dot-balls before he struck a boundary. To tabulate his statistics would lead from stunned incredulity to numbed tedium. Suffice to say he scored 40% of Blaydon's runs. Harper was a clinical surgeon specialising in amputating bowlers' reputations. Few who saw it will forget a breath-taking innings against Shotley Bridge. The visitors made 275, sufficient to win 99 matches in a hundred. This was the hundredth. Wilkinson and Wasim Raja claimed four early wickets. Harper responded with an unbeaten 176 off 129 balls to secure a memorable victory. For the next four seasons Harper was pro at Peterlee where he made 40% of *their* league runs and 20 league hundreds, eight in 1989. Without him in 1991, Peterlee were bottom.

Dynamic, muscular all-rounder Wesley Thomas replaced Harper. Thomas was from Grenada and admitted that, on occasion, he had to pinch a few bananas to get by. When West Indies' fearsome pace was at its peak the islands' press dismissed Thomas as "a slow bowler in a hurry". He was quick enough to send 857 locals packing in six-and-a-half seasons and he also belted 536 sixes in his 11,621 runs off 11,755 balls. Thomas hit a TSL individual record 215 not out off 100 balls in 1991 three hours after attending a church service to celebrate the club's centenary. He had the day of his life on 15 May 1988. Thomas strolled leisurely to the crease at 3.18 pm, pushed a single off Bob Cook's first delivery, and reached a hundred in 86 balls. Blaydon made 256 for 8 and took the field at twenty-five to six. Lintz were all out for 55 an hour later. Thomas took 10 for 27, the only record of a hundred and all ten wickets in a club match in Durham. He captured the first 9 in the return, induced the last man to edge to the wicket-keeper but he dropped it. Ian Reid got the tenth to deny Thomas all ten twice in a season against the same club. A shy, young man on arrival, Wes left as a giant. He was diagnosed terminally ill in July 1993. In hindsight, an examination of the scorebook could have told

as much. A whirlwind who blasted 536 sixes did not hit a boundary in a third of his innings that year, nor score a 50 until his nineteenth visit to the wicket. The tempest was spent. Adams, Baptiste, Butts, Lambert, Simmons, Mark and Roger Harper defied all to play in a testimonial. Grown men cried during Wesley's brave, farewell speech. Three times the club got him to the airport; three times he was too ill to board the flight. Thomas died in Grenada in February. But not before he was visited by Clyde Butts who, with no mention of terms, agreed by telephone to return to Blaydon in his place.

West Indies Test opener Richie Richardson was the highest-paid pro in the north-east when he made 1,000 league runs in each season at Gateshead Fell. Obviously the standard of bowling was way below his class yet Richie accorded it every respect and took 27 minutes to get off the mark on debut. That he made only four hundreds is explained by the remarkable fact that Fell's 18 victories were gained batting second with Richardson undefeated in eleven of them. Michael Roseberry, future Middlesex opener and captain of Durham, was MCC Young Cricketer of the Year in 1982. Next year he hit 216 for Durham School. He joined Sunderland in 1984 and with Greensword raised the hundred for the first wicket on five occasions. Mike was still at school when he turned pro at Ashbrooke in 1985.

C.B.Lambert (**qv**) smashed 1,733 NYSD runs in 1986. Commonplace aggregate for the complex, deep-thinking Guyanan. At times exuberant or humorous, at others silent or brooding, he always appeared 'laid-back'. Except he was scared when he first saw snow, Clayton felt at home in the north-east. He was good at cards and dominos but declined Brown Ale for his favourite Bacardi and coke. When batting he had an engaging, if disconcerting, habit of chanting Reggae to the rhythm of the bowler's strides. Surely a myth that he concealed a walkman in his helmet? Clayton's shots ranged from classic to outrageous, as rich as his festoon of gold jewellery. Ray Baker is more lyrical. "Watching Lambert bat was like visiting the National Gallery, his shots an array of masterpieces so monotonous in their regularity that spectators failed to appreciate the beauty of each moment."

Derek Soakell resumed as amateur at Shildon BR after half-a-dozen successful engagements. Good cricketer, too nice to be pro. Soakell celebrated the Millennium by turning out for 'Bishops' with his elders Smurthwaite and Hopper. Opening with a young whippet one day, Derek cut a ball toward a vacant third man boundary. They ran one, ran two, as the ball revolved sedately. Derek was happy to note he kept pace with the whippet. A third was completed; Soakell still up with the lad. They began a fourth when, mercifully for breathless Derek, the ball trickled over the line. "Just as well it went for four batsman," said the umpire at the end of the over. "How's that?" "Because you ran two short." "Never," Derek denied, "I grounded my bat over the line." "You grounded your bat over the five-foot line marking the danger area for a bowler running on the wicket!"

Chester-le-Street and Durham City dominated DSL. Chester were champions in 1980-81 and 1983 with three different pros, upsetting the establishment along the way by refusing to release them

for county duty. Allison, Alan Bell, Ken Flynn and wicket-keeper Robbie Harrison scored consistently. The flowering of David Jackson, who averaged 40 in league matches between 1980-84, was particularly influential. George Bull shared the bowling honours with pros Wasim Raja, D.D.Parsana, and Suresh Shastri. Left-hander Wasim Raja endeared himself to Durham enthusiasts for 15 seasons with some colossal innings. Wasim (**qv**) made a memorable 155 in his first knock for Shotley Bridge in 1984 and 202 off 133 balls (14 sixes, 14 fours) in his last.

Wasim won a second medal at Durham City, champions by large margins in 1982, 1984, 1986-87. City had seven county men and an incisive opening attack in Gary Hulme, who passed 2,000 first team wickets in 2001, and Lander who counted 1,979 alongside 10,656 runs. Strong batting featured Graham Hurst, Birtwisle, Weston, Hughes, Jonathon Bland and wicket-keeper Mercer who had 640 dismissals for City. Birtwisle, competitive and not short on confidence, was supremely correct only lifting the ball when hitting square. He made over 13,000 stylish league runs in an impressive career, topping DSL batting in 1974. Hurst compiled relentlessly for a decade making 8,000 league runs at 38, a high average for an opener, and continued in like vein at Esh Winning. He is remembered for a rare, selfless act in the last match of 1986. City were already champions. Hurst had passed Ron Leathard's amateur record and was 130 short of Steve Small's DSL record 1,284. When Graham reached 125 he declared in the interests of winning the match. City won by 55. A succession of Sunderland pros reduced Small's total to pygmy proportions. Kirti Azad hit 1,293 in 1987, Gary Brown made 1,318 and 1,445 in successive years and Philo Wallace set the current record of 1,667 in 1996.

A pit was sunk at Horden in 1890. Before long ,terraced housing raked a square mile of bleak moor within moan of the sea. Horden had only 1,000 souls when the club gained league status in

PRO-FILE (No. 22)

CLAYTON BENJAMIN LAMBERT

(b. New Amsterdam, Guyana, 10 Feb 1962)

Ruthless left-hander who hit 1,000 league runs six times and 30 league hundreds, 51 in all, at Blackhall (1984-91). Reached 150 nine times, the most in Durham club cricket, plus two more at Redcar (1992) and Normanby Hall (1996). Scored a record 69 hundreds in NYSD. Of 5 Tests, one was against England when called into West Indies touring side mid-way through his last season at Blackhall. Declined to rejoin Blackhall as he did not want to confine his talents to one NYSD club. Nor were his talents confined to batting for he often achieved startling bowling feats and brilliant catches. Reached 1,000 NYSD runs each season at Normanby Hall (1994-97) and Redcar (1992-93) where his 1,938 runs in 1993 remains the record aggregate in NYSD.

Blackhall league record: 182 inns 28 not 10,036 runs HS 202* (av 65.2)

NYSD league record: 320 inns 66 not 19,611 runs (av 77.2)

1905. Acrid, yellow smoke drifted across the colliery ground when the wind blew nor-east. J.C.Matthews, 45 years in the first team, made his debut before World War I. He hit 200 not out in 1933, the only double century in D.Coast and its most neglected record. The press proclaimed four lesser scores in the 1980s as new Coast League records. Horden were three years without amenities in 1932 when they raised a new pavilion and flag. It was unfurled by vice-chairman T.G.Mulgrew who confessed to dreams of flying another kind of flag. They came true. With Stan Ellis as pro, Horden were champions of D.Coast, D.Co and Mid-D.

Horden jacked-up their pavilion and rolled it to its present position on a narrow-gauge railway. They signed quality pros from election to DSL in 1946 until 1980 but finished no higher than third. In fact Horden were in the bottom three 15 times, six times wooden spoonists. Success was the sweeter for that. Off-spinner Derick Parry (qv) arrived in 1981. It proved a fairy-tale signing in the year of a fairy-tale Royal Wedding. Parry played twelve Tests for West Indies but was permanent twelfth man once they opted for sheer speed. Parry believed he could improve his batting at Horden and regain his place. That he never did was to the club's benefit for he influenced the development of Stuart Wilson, Gary Purcell, Paul Patterson and Colin Spanton then Paul Hill, paceman Steve Ward and wicket-keeper David Sherrington. They won 35 of fifty-one cup finals in 20 seasons and Spanton played in all but a losing final. Parry predicted Horden would win the title in 1984. He was four years premature but, when they did, they led from start to finish. As did Eppleton, champions in 1989 with Jimmy Adams and a blend of experienced players Graham Johnson, Tony Birbeck, John Smithson, Dale Froud, the Andersons and 16-year-old Jimmy Daley. Daley made his First-class debut in 1992, the year he shared a first wicket stand of 219 with Adams.

Clyde Butts succeeded Parry as West Indies' off-spinner. Butts (**qv**) enjoyed TV Westerns, rode into town in 1983 to shoot Blaydon to a first TSL title. Blaydon played at Ryton Willows in 1876

PRO-FILE (No. 23)

WASIM HASAN RAJA

(b. Multan, Pakistan, 3 Jul 1952)

Popular, bearded all-rounder at Chester-le-Street (1977-80), Whitburn (1981), Durham City (1982), Shotley Bridge (1984-86), Philadelphia (1987-88) and Sacriston (1989-90). Mercurial, entertaining left-hander who hit a six into a garage and smashed a Crypton tuning machine. Sacriston were billed for the damage. Modesty underlined by his self-derisory "I'm just a slogger". In June 1982 left City to join Pakistan squad in England. Tour over, he hurriedly returned for last match to help City clinch the title. Classic front-foot drives were completed with knee bent and left leg parallel to the ground; back-foot shots ended in a poised pirouette on the left foot. Opted for accurate, whippy seam-up in club cricket but leg-breaks whenever he bowled in 57 Tests. Now an international Test panel referee.

League record: Batting 245 inns 37 not 9,243 runs HS 202 (av 44.4)

Bowling 879 wkts for 12,091 runs (av 13.8)

but prefer to date formation from 1891 when they had a ground in the village, a pavilion and generous benefactor Sir Henry Clavering. Fired by ambitious schoolmaster Tom Ryding and spearheaded by fast bowler Robson Thompson they won Derwent Valley League three times in 1909-12. Thompson was lethal at that level and 60% of his 760 wickets were bowled. Blaydon were champions of West Tyne League and NWD before election to TSL in 1972, their goal since 1908. Batsman Tony King designed, and members built, the present pavilion. It was home to growing success. While Butts was hero, the title was just reward for David Richardson, first to score 10,000 for the club, and prodigious in-swinger Peter Carroll who left the shadows at Greenside and emerged Blaydon's leading wicket-taker with 1,353 victims. Ian Somerville and Paul Veitch formed a most productive and destructive opening partnership.

The classic combination of left-hand and right: Somerville serene, Veitch violent. They still exhibit their everlasting skills. Somerville stroked 159 for Blaydon in 2002 on the same Saturday that Veitch blasted 162 for Chopwell.

It took a hundred years for the area's cricket to gain prominence before Felling won Tyne & District League three times to earn admission to NWD. Bottom in 1973, a meteoric rise via D.Coast peaked at TSL's summit in 1987. Three successive titles followed in 1989-91 and they were elected to DSL. Determined, combative, lean fast bowler Dave Parnaby was major reason for the transformation. Parnaby ignited the rockets; all-rounder Madan Lal, completed an astonishing flight. All four TSL titles were won during Madan Lal's eight-year engagement. A most resolute batsman, he was dismissed only six times in league matches in 1987 and was undefeated in 82 of 181 league innings for an average of 74. His nagging control frustrated batsmen and his Test experience with India brought a competitive edge to the side that was not always appreciated on the circuit. Fast bowler Chris Pleasants began his career at Felling in 1974. He returned in 1987 and laid claim to his 3,000th wicket for the club in 2001.

PRO-FILE (No. 24)

DERICK RECALDO PARRY

(b. Nevis, Leeward Islands, 22 Dec 1954)

One of finest pros in Durham. Highly influential all-rounder whose engagement at Horden (1981-1991, 1993-96) is one of the longest at one club. Reliable, thoughtful batsman who tailored his game to the needs of a strong batting side. Not a classical stance and unhurried at times but an explosive hitter when required. Scored 15 league hundreds. Brilliant outfielder who, even at 48, made an incredible caught-and-bowled. High-class off-spinner. Quick through the air with a lovely loop and a lot of turn. Took 5-or-more wkts in league matches 63 times. Missed half of 1989 season through illness.

League record: 325 inns 90 not 10,736 runs HS 130* (av 45.69) 15 hundreds 994 wkts for 14,014 runs (av 14.0)

Swalwell won three titles between 1985-88. Robert Stokoe, pro in the first two, cut his teeth in Consett's title sides in the late 1970s. He turned pro after topping TSL bowling and scoring a club record 155 not out. Stokoes bred at will. Rob's father Bill was a distinguished batsman and brother Shaun was pro at Greenside where the aggressive left-hander had 15 hundreds in his 9,000 league runs (av 41). Lesser twigs of the family tree were decent players. Swalwell's leading batsmen included unrelated Ian Stokoe, Don Robson's son Ian, and Neil Burdon who later scored heavily for Shotley. Neil Pickering, Alan Dumighan and Brian Taylor were the pick of an all-seam attack.

Leadgate followed up five consecutive NWD titles with a D.Co title in 1984, a marvellous period for inspirational pro Ernie Bewick together with Brian Farley, Dave Steadman, Austin Lee, Jeff Shield, Brian McNally, Joe McCabe and two more Stokoes. McCabe was the key to success. With 15 years as pro behind him Leadgate had two pros in all but name. McCabe was an outstanding cricketer. A mite parsimonious, perhaps, but single-minded with great belief in his ability. A small, compact bat who conceded his wicket grudgingly; not flamboyant but clinically effective. A miserly left-arm bowler with rhythmic, economical action. He captained Durham Schoolboys, graduated through Leadgate's ranks and won three league medals at Consett. McCabe made such rapid progress that Roxby Surtees criticised county selectors for not picking him until 1962, a common enough experience for one or two in unfashionable TSL. Signed by Beamish in 1965, McCabe passed 1,000 runs and took 148 wickets in all. Pro at Annfield Plain in 1967-76, he exceeded 900 runs and 90 wickets in all each year. Blaydon came closest yet to a TSL title with McCabe as pro in 1977-79. Joe returned to Leadgate and played long enough to see his two sons bedded alongside him in the first team.

Kimblesworth rekindled pre-war NWD glories with four successive titles in 1988-91. Having re-joined in 1974 they languished near the basement until Bobby Orton signed in 1986. Orton's "fiery pace" proved too much for most and Coxhoe in particular when he destroyed them with 10 for 20.

PRO-FILE (No. 25)

CLYDE GODFREY BUTTS

(b. Demerara, Guyana, 8 July 1957)

Popular pro at Blaydon (1983-85, 1994-97), Hartlepool (1991-92) and Bishop Auckland (1993). Youngest of ten children who came late into cricket owing to cost of travelling from up-country 33 miles to Georgetown. Married Marlene on the rest day of debut Test, the first of seven for West Indies. Laid-back, soft-spoken off-spinner with mesmerising control of flight and change of pace. Over a quarter of league overs were maidens. Blaydon were thrice champions in his 7 years at the club. His batting was not utilised quite so much in NYSD but, against their stronger batting, his accuracy commanded the utmost respect.

League record: 204 inns 53 not 6,273 runs HS 187* (av 41.5) 736 wkts for 10,383 (av 14.1) Nine were clean bowled, five with successive balls; seven got 'ducks', six of them bowled first ball. North Bitchburn enjoyed even greater success in Mid-D. They were champions in five successive seasons and undefeated in 1980-83.

Durham clubs regained some NYSD prestige despite Trenholm devaluing the minirenaissance by saying standards were "lower than at any time in my 47 years as secretary". Bishop
Auckland were champions in 1980. Crowds scurried back to Kingsway to see the rollicking
entertainment provided by big-hitters Lance Cairns, Bill Blenkiron and stocky Graham Smith. Cairns
in full flight was spectacular. Signed in 1980 at a reported £4,000, the New Zealand Test all-rounder
despatched the first two balls he received in NYSD for six and hammered 34 off an over later in the
match. Next year he hit a whirlwind 153, the last 53 off 13 balls. Cairns' fast-medium in-swing
wreaked havoc, a third 8-wicket haul on 21 June 1980 sent Bishop to the top and an eventual title.
Three weeks later he passed Harry Turner's club record 122 in a season and his final NYSD tally of
120 was a new record.

Bishop Auckland and Hartlepool fought a thrilling battle in 1988 when Cairns set the current NYSD record at 123 wickets. 'Bishops' were top when the two met in July. The match began explosively with David Jackson given out 'handled the ball'. The appeal was withdrawn but not the intensity. Tommy Fountain's six wickets restricted 'Bishops' to 125. Hartlepool scrambled home off the second last ball to go top. Fast bowler Ashley Day confirmed his potential, Mike Gough continued his prolific form and Andy Holland scored freely but it was Ashok Patel's purple patch that kept Hartlepool's nose in front to win the title. Over half of the left-hander's 1,139 league runs came in the last eight matches. Ken Gardner still talks of Patel's professionalism and attacking flair while passing 1,000 league runs in four of five seasons at Hartlepool. Patel (qv) has been 23 years a pro, a marauding crusade putting bowlers to the sword. There is no better accolade than compliment from a fellow pro. In Greensword's modern parlance "Patel is something else." When Hartlepool were champions in 1982 Rakesh Shukla hit 1,280 league runs and posed problems with leg-breaks and googlies in an effective, contrasting partnership with Johnny Johnston's pace and accuracy. Johnny-on-the-spot raised Cairns' NYSD record by one in 1984. Shukla, pro at Stockton and Thornaby either side of four seasons at Park Drive, hit 19 NYSD hundreds.

NYSD increased the length of matches in 1977 by introducing two o'clock starts and requiring 20 overs be bowled in the last hour. When the number of matches were increased to 28 in 1982 clubs played more league cricket than ever. Consequently long-standing batting records faded from memory. Riddell and Haggie were first to reach 10,000 runs for Darlington and the opening partnership of Haggie and Lister rivalled that of Parnaby and Levy fifty years before. John Lister returned from Derbyshire to score 1,112 and surpass F.R.Smith's club record. The run feast brought two further titles in 1985 and 1987, each by handsome margins. Mike Hatch, then at his peak, went on to exceed Goodrick's record club aggregate. He and pro new ball partners, Andrew Scott and Johnny

Johnston, were grateful to Andrew Fothergill's slick wicket-keeping. A forcing bat, Fothergill later played First-class for Durham. Johnston reverted to amateur in 1990 and captained Darlington to a twentieth NYSD title, six more than Guisborough and nine more than the next best Durham club.

Synthonia gained an unexpected, and ultimately nervy, first title in 1983. Wellock described it "a transformation from doormats to front-runners". Billingham Synthonia (a contraction of Synthetic Ammonia) formed in 1923. Industrial mergers spawned ICI Billingham and a monstrous, overhead pall of smoke. Synthonia were elected to NYSD in 1930. Next year ICI built a ground close to the works at Belasis Avenue. So close it was bombed in 1940. All-rounder and groundsman-pro Bert Morgan ensured a promising start but even with Crawford, Wilkinson, wicket-keeper Vin Evans, Lenny Govan and Colin Metson subsequent seasonal form was as about reliable as the English weather. George Linton brought a sunny interval from Barbados. With all-rounder Linton dominant and seamer Barry Jeffels back to form the 'Sinners' were champions despite winning only two of the last eight matches.

Ryhope staged a remarkable revival after finishing bottom in 1977-78. They twice won three successive D.Coast championships in the space of seven years, each by ever-increasing margins except for the last when defeating arch-rivals Hetton Lyons in a play-off. The powerful nucleus of the side came together at the start of the decade: Keith Trotter, Ian Hauxwell, Alan Dick, Ken Rudd and the Borthwick brothers. Young David Borthwick was not too fond of fielding. It was even said he would pretend to pull a muscle to get off the field. Someone suggested he put on the gloves and, problem solved, he developed into a fine batsman-wicket-keeper and had trials with Nottinghamshire. Had he been in a 'fashionable' league David might have played more Minor Counties cricket. D.Coast was

PRO-FILE (No. 26)

ASHOK SITARAM PATEL

(b. Nairobi, Kenya, 23 Sep 1956)

Prolific all-rounder at Burnmoor (1980-3), Hetton Lyons (1984-5, 1994), Hartlepool (1986-90), Seaham Harbour (1991), Whitburn (1992-3), Darlington (1995-7), Philadelphia (1999-2000) and South Shields (2001-2). Toured West Indies with Young England alongside Mike Gatting after they were together in school representative and club cricket. They were also together at Middlesex. Patel studied at Durham University, married a Durham girl and took up a teaching post in the county when Middlesex offered only a one-year contract. Attacking left-hander whose 41 league hundreds is the most in Durham club cricket. Brilliant gully fielder. Captured countless wickets with slow left-arm. 'Ash' can be gritty on the field, a will to succeed rooted in his Middlesex days. Virtually every club that signed him improved on previous year's performance. None more startlingly than South Shields, transformed from wooden-spoonists to runners-up in 2001.

League record: 18,000 runs (av 45)

improving but their best were overlooked. Borthwick's successful seasons at Whitburn (1,121 league runs in 1993) proved he was capable in the best company.

Ryhope went 63 matches undefeated during a second 'hat-trick' of titles in 1987-89. Their delightful ground was now a batting paradise and in 1988 they amassed 405 for 5 against Dawdon, the highest league total for 95 years. Joe Bittlestone's 178 capped a memorable season in which he set a D.Coast record aggregate of 1,353 runs. A high proportion of the opener's 24 league hundreds were big ones, three over 150. Joe may not have the widest range of shots but has that rare skill of precise placement and once scored 155 off only 75 balls. He was another thought only capable of 'easy' runs when not confronted by high calibre bowling. Joe knocked that theory on the head when averaging 45 in DSL in 1990. Ryhope rated Alan Dick the best bat in D.Coast. Initially inclined to play overfreely, he developed a more secure technique when pro on a sporty track at Seaham Park. Alan worked hard to become a gun-barrel-straight bowler whose form helped Seaham Park retain a respectable position.

Cricket, batting in particular, now bristled with purpose and aggression. Traditionalists still fretted about illicit payments and bowlers' lack of penetration and, of course, some sides were weak. However the weak struggled through their difficulties to earn credit for guts and determination. Not for them the glory of medals and cups. Success was avoiding the 'wooden spoon' and survival next year. Gary Purcell's later career provides illustration. Gary crept into Horden's slumbering side in the 1970s. He missed out on their first DSL championship but had the compensation of two D.Co titles in 1986-87 with the star-studded Lyght brigade at Crook. By then he was an established opener, studious foil to aggressive Andrew Lyght and Ian Williams, and useful change bowler. Following a third title in 1991, schoolmaster Purcell moved to less frenetic surroundings at Mainsforth who had languished near the bottom in four of the six preceding seasons. Purcell averages 30 over the last ten seasons and has exceeded 500 league wickets. His story has no fairy-tale end. Gary is simply an example of those who give their all, week after week, for teams unlikely to win a title but whose consistency and reliability make their club competitive rather than candidates for the wooden-spoon.

There were diverse developments beyond the league scene. Durham appointed Pauline Peel to invigorate women's cricket. Michael Potts gained the support of Durham City Council to organise a Festival for European clubs. It was notable for its enthusiasm, particularly the photographer who stood at third slip to snap the action, and expanded into a successful World Club Cricket Festival in 1997. Durham University's growing reputation owed much to the vigorous direction of Grenville Holland. The University now stood comparison with their traditional Oxbridge betters and supplied the core of the Combined Universities XI in 1989. Tim O'Gorman had already made his Derbyshire debut and James Boiling, Jon Longley and Martin Speight later earned contracts at Durham. A fifth, Nasser Hussain, whose father played for South Shields, is England's current captain.

The darling buds of May

The 1990s began with the Gulf War, were punctuated by the wasteful death of Diana, Princess of Wales, and ended with the tragedy of Kosovo. Other than a disturbing bomb explosion in the Metro Centre events in the north-east radiated rather more optimism. Durham applied for First-class status, Jonathan Edwards shattered the world triple-jump record, Nissan built its millionth car and National Lottery balls bounced a fortune into a few bank accounts. The nation finally accepted that 'Geordie' had doffed his cloth-cap image. Newcastle was officially declared a party city, Durham Cathedral a world heritage site and the Angel of the North earned critical acclaim. A transformation replete with the sublime Millennium Bridge, a tilting, curving, arched footbridge dispelling for ever the notion that Gateshead was a dirty lane leading to Newcastle.

A portent of change in club cricket, too. Indeed a sense of *déjà vu* with George Alberts, manager of D.Co sponsors Millburngate Shopping Centre, the latest to advocate a pyramid system. Alberts proposed two structures: one for Tyneside & Northumberland, the other for Durham & North Yorkshire. The latter's Division One would comprise the top five in DSL and NYSD plus D.Co's top four. The next three in those leagues and D.Coast's top two would form Division Two, and so on to make four divisions. Surprisingly, in light of his league's proposed exclusion from the elite, D.Coast chairman John Lowery was reported to favour the scheme. "If the county succeed [in their application for First-class cricket] the whole league structure will have to be overhauled." Northumberland County League chairman, Alan McKenna, agreed. A voice from NYSD knocked the idea of a pyramid league system for six in characteristic style. "It won't strengthen cricket in the area," boomed Riddell. "The game is all about history. Cricket is parochial and the game is ninety-nine per cent amateur. Loyalty is a priority. A pyramid can only lead to movement of players and illegal payments. Shamateurism would be rife. There will be no stability. We'll end up like soccer, supporting a side half of whom you hated last year." Riddell need not have worried. Alberts' plan was lost in the long grass but notion of an elite league still hung in the air.

At Lord's, meantime, Don Robson and the county hierarchy sipped champagne to celebrate Durham's entry into First-class cricket. All possibility of a combined Durham & Northumberland joining the elite had vanished in 1985. Frustrated, yet encouraged by the success at other counties of lads like Michael Roseberry, Durham resolved to go it alone. Determination and astute planning won the day. A solid base was strengthened by bonding Durham Cricket Association and Durham Schools' Cricket Association with Durham CCC. Sadly, Jack Iley would not live to see his beloved county compete at the top. Durham secretary for 45 years, and only the third since 1894, Jack sweated and

¹² qv in David Lamont's Kick Back column, Sunday Sun, 30 Sept 1990.

fretted for club and county for 60 years. Musing on the past, Keith Andrew surely had Don Robson in mind when he spoke of "people in Durham with dreams and pride in their heritage; people who have a social conscience with a will and vision to do something about it." No doubt Don believed he was simply upholding the beliefs of countless Durham social consciences down the years. Andrew analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the recreational game: was content that more youngsters were taking up the game under better tuition; was satisfied with the comprehensive range and variety of cricket in a competitive structure. Junior participation in Durham was increasing when, nationally, numbers were down 3%. On the debit side Andrew was concerned about the minimal amount of cricket in schools, the lack of opportunity for women, and for clubs facing an uncertain future owing to growing economic pressures.

Those pressures increased throughout the Nineties and when they collided with other developmental forces the decade ended in ferment. NWD folded along with half-a-dozen clubs. Only three-quarters of senior clubs that began the summer of 1990 were in the same league at the Millennium. In fact only three-quarters were in a senior league. The amount of senior league cricket decreased by a fifth so now it is exceptional to score 1,000 runs in a league season and nigh on impossible to take 100 wickets. There was radical change when it was known four Northumberland sides would form part of a revolutionary North East Premier League. Left with only eight clubs, Northumberland County League held talks with TSL and the two leagues amalgamated. The wind of change whistled into other corners. In an individualistic age ex-players were less willing to take up umpiring or administration. Youngsters wanted to spend Saturday night 'on the town' so hours of play were altered to enable matches finish earlier. Re-living a game over a pint became an increasingly outmoded pleasure, particularly in light of the drink-driving problem.

A craving for *la dolce vita* persuaded some to join a vicious circle that brought, indeed still brings, economic difficulties. Thirsty for success, clubs over-reach themselves to find means to grease a player's palms for his services. A folly magnified by players spending half the winter playing abroad while their clubs struggle to balance the books. Much 'unspoken' evidence confirms Riddell's fear of 'shamateurism'. Players are no longer secretive about it. How else could D.Coast suspend a player *sine die* for an alleged illegal cash offer to a player? Now the only surprise is the amounts involved. It is said one club recently found means to pay for a player's Jamaican honeymoon. Another, offered a chance to join a Premier League club, said: "I will for £3,000. I already get £2,500 from my club." His club, incidentally, an ex-Colliery side. How changed the welfare ideal.

For entirely different reasons, Castle Eden's financial fortunes fluctuated so alarmingly they faced economic ruin. It began when the local council condemned their pavilion. Castle Eden applied for, and were awarded, a National Lottery Sports Grant of £221,000. They raised a further £25,000, hired architect and contractor and were justifiably proud of a splendid, new clubhouse. As the

¹³ A Plan for Durham Cricket 1993-96

building was used as a centre for the whole community Castle Eden believed the work was zero-VAT rated. On Christmas Eve 1999 the club received a VAT demand for £43,000 from Customs & Excise. So began chairman Hughie Teasdale's nightmare. Hughie, 50 years a member, signed the contract on behalf of the club. If the bill was not paid he would forfeit his home in lieu. *The Northern Echo* publicised his plight. Darlington accountant Barry Brain considered, and solved, the problem. He negotiated 'a special method' with Customs & Excise to recover £48,000. Hughie could sleep nights in peace.

North West Durham League was a casualty of the times. In 1949, long before closure of pit and ironworks, a North-East Development Area Plan foresaw no alternative to large-scale migration from north-west Durham. The area was over-populated in relation to its resources; its landscape, much of it charming, unlikely to attract other industry. NWD clubs migrated, too. Half of ten members, and four replacements, were in other leagues by 1975. Kimblesworth clinched a fourth successive title in 1991, moved to D.Co, signed Dennison Thomas (qv) and were champions in 1994. Meanwhile NWD faded fast. Fourteen clubs in 1987 dwindled to ten in 1992 and eventually NWD ceased to be a viable organisation. Three were left at its death in 1994. Don Robson feared some might go to the wall so, before the burial, discussions were held with a view to amalgamating NWD and TSL into two divisions with promotion and relegation. A motion, agreed in principle, failed to win the backing of TSL clubs. The Executive saw it as a vote of no confidence and resigned *en bloc*. Robson was made Life Member; close colleague Bob Jackson, secretary since 1971, was elected President. Each considerably enhanced TSL's standing and organisation. Each continued their significant work with Durham CCC.

The drive of Robson and Jackson was reflected each Saturday in TSL. Matches sparkled. Batsmen ascendant. None more than S.R.Russell. Synthonia signed the 21-year-old West Australian, coached by Bob Massie, in 1989. Next year he hit 1,048 league runs and 4 hundreds. Sacriston

PRO-FILE (No. 27)

DENNISON THOMAS

(b. St. Andrews, Grenada, 3 March 1968)

At South Moor (1991-93) and Kimblesworth (1994-98). Hit 134 on debut on opening day of 1991 while brother Wesley (Blaydon's pro) was hammering 215*. The taller Dennison adjusted to an 'English' length and got a lot of movement. In 1993 Dennison became the only player in TSL history to achieve the league 'double' of 1,000 runs and 100 wkts. At Kimblesworth topped NWD batting in 1996, NWD bowling in 1997. Took 107 league wkts in 1994, only 22 runs short of a NWD league 'double'. First-class cricket for Windward Islands.

League record: 168 inns 23 not 6,352 runs (av 43.8)

703 wkts for 8,950 runs (av 12.7)

engaged Russell in 1992. A shared title next year led to outright success in 1994. Steve topped TSL batting with over 1,000 runs all three years. He hammered another 13 hundreds including, unique in Durham, two double hundreds in a season in 1992. The first (15 sixes, 19 fours) was part of a TSL record total of 406 for 9; the second took just 95 balls. Incredible if Carr could hit further than Russell. "Park your car half-a-mile from the ground, wear body armour and, if you're an opposition bowler, don't bother turning up," wrote George Caulkin. Advice too late for Steve Lishman as Russell hit him for 36 off one over in 1992. At six-feet-seven Russell's pace and lift could be a handful though he was often content to contain after his phenomenal hitting. Nor were Sacriston a one-man team. David Metcalfe had thumped the ball, and anything else in his way, ever since belting 216 not out for the Juniors in 1980 and openers Phil Shield and Marc Hopkinson ensured a busy start.

Blaydon were in the top three eight times in the Nineties and champions in 1995 and 1997-98. They were led by elegant, left-hander Somerville who compiled runs relentlessly as a supermarket cash till. Ian registered his 20,000th for the club in July 2002. Assorted run-machines followed: belligerent 'Biffa' Marshall, exciting all-rounder Stephen Humble, classy stroke-maker Mark Drake. Clyde Butts completed a free-scoring quintet. Butts scored 9,875 and took 917 wickets in seven years. Tightened work permit regulations prevented his return and a notable club 'double'. All but Butts came through the ranks. A fifth fast bowler Colin Campbell, earned a county contract. Michael Urwin and Ian Reid gathered wickets with the new ball before off-spinners Butts and Johnny Walker strangled the game.

Annfield Plain almost folded at the end of 1992 yet were champions in 1996 and 1999. Sweeping changes in personnel prompted TSL to conduct a fruitless search into club affairs. Plain's revival began when Donald Brown was engaged in 1995, his third spell at the club where he began. Totally illogical, of course, but Donald's fierce determination seems greater reason for his six league medals at three TSL clubs than his 1,200 wickets and 8,000 runs. He gained a seventh at Leadgate in 1981. Shoulder damage curbed his pace yet he twice topped TSL bowling after reaching 35. Brown was the perfect revivalist, his drive exhorted a side with good all-rounders Phil Mosey, Gary Steadman and Tony Halliday. Bruce Armstrong, when available, added class to the batting. Neil Killeen burst on the scene with 8 for 13, hitting the stumps each time. Though batsmen dominated the county looked to TSL for its future bowlers. They found Killeen, Campbell, Melvyn Betts, Ian Hunter, Ian Jones and all-rounder Paul Collingwood. Small wonder Paul's bowling was a major factor in his establishment as an England One-Day International. He had Brown and Wilkinson as models when he made the 1st XI in time for Shotley's outright title and share in 1992-93. Paul took many wickets but his powerful stroke-play impressed more in his brief time at The Spa. Shotley had other fine batsmen in left-handed openers Charlie Stephenson and Neil Burdon and wicket-keeper Tommy Peel. Collingwood's elder brother Peter, a forceful, attractive stroke-maker, recently reached 5,000 league

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¹⁴ Sunday Sun, 10 July 1994

Sunday Sun inadvertently omitted North Durham from their printed league table on 18 August 1990. A prophetic oversight. Their history ended four matches later. North Durham are the only 1891 County League founder member to perish. It says much about strength and tradition, more about perpetuating the establishment. North Durham were also founder members of DSL and TSL and twice won the latter. They were a major force, particularly when Lord Northbourne was patron, and built a magnificent pavilion in 1898. The ghosts of Dr Abraham and Bill Coverdale are now homeless.

The unthinkable happened at Ashbrooke in 1988. Sunderland, "debts running into thousands", were bottom of DSL for the first time. They hovered near the bottom for the next seven years despite a mass of runs from their pros. Four Sunderland batsmen set a new DSL record aggregate in 1987-96 yet their best placing was sixth. Current holder Philo Wallace had a flashy, hitor-miss start to his debut season until he realised "the secret of getting runs in DSL is patience." The Barbadian hit 5,106 in four seasons (av 64). Wallace was one of over thirty Test or future Test players engaged in the 1990s. It is a measure of Durham's advance and shows how much overseas pros enjoy playing in the county. They included emerging Michael Bevan and Damien Martyn, controversial Ajay Jadeja and Ata-ur Rehman, swashbuckling Ridley Jacobs and fellow West Indian quickies Tony Gray, Nixon McLean and Patterson Thompson. Thompson was met at the airport by Whitburn wag Wilf Barker. Wilf offered to show him the village ground before driving him to his lodgings - took him to Durham's Riverside ground instead. "Back home we play Test Matches on grounds like this, man!" phewed flabbergasted Thompson. When Whitburn engaged Australian Keith Burdett in 1999 he immediately etched his name in the record books as the first in Durham to score four successive league hundreds.

Burnmoor or Horden, often both, were in contention for the DSL title in all but three of the last 15 seasons. Burnmoor won it in 1990, 1996 and 1999. In 1990 R.B.Richardson stroked another 1,000 league runs, Joe Bittlestone was in prime form and openers Gary Brown and Bill Johnson raised seven century partnerships and eight over 50. South African pro Andrew Hall was major reason for the other two championships. Substantial contributions from Brown, Michael Richardson and Graeme Weeks ensured Burnmoor's batting rarely failed. Ian Conn continued to increase his haul of wickets, many snapped up by leading DSL wicket-keeper Graham Sherburn. If *anno Domini* has claimed a bit of pace Ian still has admirable control and passed 1,200 in the league in 2002. Horden's successes in 1991, 1993 and 1995 were firmly based on a settled side and cohesive teamwork in support of a high-quality pro. They retained the nucleus of the side nurtured by Parry plus Paul Watson and Gareth Smith. Parry proved irreplaceable. Champions in four of his last seven seasons, Horden lost more league matches in the three seasons after his departure than in the previous seven. They found increasingly difficult to bowl sides out even though spinner Nadeem Khan, their new pro, performed extremely well. He would do so with telling effect after the Millennium.

Eppleton were champions in 1994 with future West Indies off-spinner Nehemiah Perry as pro. Perry was dominant but any club would miss Jimmy Adams' phenomenal consistency. His experience, alertness and shrewdness of thought were of enormous benefit to the development of Michael Barnes, Ashley Thorpe, Tony Birbeck and his brother Shaun who twice scored 1,000 DSL runs. Eppleton gathered more points in the 1990s than any DSL club yet won only one title. It could be argued that, over the decade, they lacked the consistently penetrative bowler other champions possessed. Conn rarely failed to take 40 a season, Parry always exceeded 50. Slow left-arm Glen Riddle, flat arm-darts nagging at leg-stump, enjoyed a couple of successful seasons while Adams played only half the decade and in two seasons kept wicket. Glen Froud came nearest. Originally seam-up, a back injury forced him to turn to spin. Glen was disappointed to fall two short of 100 league wickets in the title season. Since Perry took 83 that year it adds weight to the point about penetration.

Four batsmen scored a hundred in a match for the first time when Philadelphia visited Boldon in 1991. Needless to say Greensword was one. Next year rangy fast-medium Barbadian, Vic Walcott, helped South Shields to an eighth championship. Walcott was the twenty-second, and last to date, to take 100 DSL wickets. Vic's DSL career came to a halt after topping the league bowling in 1996 with his 415th league victim. Walcott landed in 1997 to be told that recent strict requirements disqualified him from a work permit. Furthermore, the authorities issued a deadline for his departure. A title was just reward for stalwarts John Dunn and Philip Stonehouse, Westoe's fourth and fifth highest scorers. Dedicated Stonehouse travelled from Glasgow for league matches before business took him from the area in 2001. Philip, a painstaking batsman who drove powerfully through mid-on, was first amateur to score 1,000 DSL runs for Shields.

DSL extended to 15 clubs in 1997 to accommodate newly-formed Durham Cricket Academy. Cricket Executive Geoff Cook, ex-Northants and England, captained the side to enable him guide his young charges on the field. They included Michael Gough, Ian Hunter, Marc Symington, Andrew and Gary Pratt, all destined for First-class cricket. The Academy were second then champions in 1998 with another three future county players Graeme Bridge, Nick Hatch and Mark Davies. Curiously, of three defeats, the county's rising cream were soundly thrashed by Wearmouth in their final senior season.

Three Durham clubs won NYSD. Hartlepool, with a fairly settled side and clutch of top pros, were disappointed not to be a fourth. They came within a whisker in 1997 in a rain-bedevilled tussle with Normanby Hall. The two matched each other win for win, never separated by more than ten points, until Hartlepool lost at Guisborough at the end of August. They finished level but Normanby won more matches so were champions. Play-offs apart it was the eighth tied NYSD championship decided on matches won or superior runs-per-wicket and the fifth by a Hartlepool side. Class act Graham Shaw passed 1,000 league runs three times and hit 12 hundreds during a four-year

engagement. Shaw, most of his career at Yorkshire clubs, has most NYSD centuries after Lambert Gary Tebbett, Jeff Lamb and all-rounder Andy Holland performed consistently throughout the decade and Des Playfor claimed some 250 victims behind the sticks. Penetration was the missing ingredient, a theory reinforced when Holland, Hornby and Ian Jackson all hit form in 1997. Michael Gough's son broke into the 1st XI. When Mike senior moved to Blackhall in 1996 it opened the way for a memorable confrontation. After watching his son's first two balls disappear for four, father mentally rubbed his hands and thought "son or not, I fancy a bit of that". A single brought them face to face. Son bowled father first ball!

Darlington were handsome champions when unbeaten in the last 20 matches of 1990. Despite a tentative start, a bout of malaria and being ordered home early by Pakistan, Masood Anwar snared 73 victims at 8 apiece. Andy Fothergill demonstrated slick skills with stumpings off pacemen Hatch and Johnston as well as slow left-arm Anwar. Batting was solidly based on Riddell, Gary Moody and sparkling David de Silva. New kid on the block, 15-year-old Mark Stainsby, made a maiden league fifty in 1993. Next year he reached 1,000 league runs with a remarkable 13 fifties.

Norton led in 1997 until losing to Stockton on 2 August, the 150th anniversary of their first meeting on Norton Green. Norton displayed the original 1847 Minute Book, old scorebooks, cap and tie in nostalgic hues of cerise, cream and chocolate. Lord Cowdrey was guest of honour at an aftermatch dinner. Ben Usher's fine century and Sairaj Bahatule's all-round dominance capped a memorable day. Bahatule, a beguiling leg-spinner, equalled Cairns' record 123 league wickets and averaged 58 with the bat before India re-called him to play two Tests. His predecessor, India Test batsman Sanjay Manjrekar, scored 3,319 majestic league runs (av 75) and 15 centuries in two seasons. Norton's blend of youth and experience tasted championship success in 1998 after a wait of 47 years. It was a career highlight for Chris Thomas, who "came into the team like a whirlwind and has batted like a whirlwind ever since," and worthy reward for persevering pro Chris Mason. Kenny Gresham came to the fore and Usher stamped his all-round presence sufficiently for Norton to engage him in 1999.

Bishop Auckland ended the decade in style only losing once to win a fifth title. Elegant and powerful, Steve Chapman was only nine short of 1,000 league runs. Chapman began at Crook, joined Bishop where he was pro in 1996-98 and 2000 either side of a season as amateur in the championship year. Steve passed 1,000 runs in 2001-02 when pro at Hartlepool to reach 11,000 in NYSD in twelve seasons with 22 hundreds. Andy Bowman and Chris Hewison, who had impressed with 1,000 league runs at Burnopfield, shared an unbroken opening stand of 263. Corbellari, the internet import, was NYSD's leading amateur bowler. Pro Graeme Angus was top overall. His pace added spikiness to the attack and he far exceeded his achievements as pro at Shotley Bridge. Andrew Kelly exceeded

¹⁵ William Bielby: A History of Norton Cricket Club (1847-1997)

anything he would ever do again, or anybody had done in Durham, by taking 10 wickets for 0 runs in 27 balls for Bishop Auckland Juniors on 23 June 1994. All ten were clean bowled. Kelly's feat did not spark a famous career. A few 1st XI matches, then to Tudhoe and Etherley where a little finger was shattered in seven places. If dreams of fame dissolved, Andrew sleeps peacefully in the knowledge his figures can never be bettered at any level of cricket.

Improving standards in D.Coast and D.Co drew frequent comment. Thrilling title races were a feature of the 1990s though the ideals of each league differed. D.Coast barred overseas pros whereas D.Co was temporary home to some 50 from every cricket nation including Etherley left-hander Reuven Peires, first in D.Co from Sri Lanka. They brought glamour and uninhibited ability to smash the ball far. All but one D.Co record wicket partnership were set in the Nineties including an unbroken 314 by John Pollard and Paul Maughan for Evenwood in 1991, second-highest stand in Durham. There were 57 centuries in 1994 alone. Pollard, from Tobago, hit 20 hundreds in four seasons, Amir Akbar made 29 in seven, Peires 11 in two. Shahid Anwar (qv) raised the record individual aggregate to 1,758 in 1994. D.Coast was awash with runs, too. Bill Quay's small ground, home since 1866, was scene of their D.Coast record opening stand of 306 in 1989 and three years later when Peterlee scored 311 for 4 to pass the home side's 310 for 2 declared.

BILL QUAY	<u>PETERLEE</u>
M. Strange c Yorke, b Burrows 23	I. Grint lbw Robinson 18
J. Tudor not out 147	D. Burrows c Basham, b Greaves 42
K. Haynes c Yorke, b Hall 9	D. Young c and b Greaves 16
I. Gutteridge not out 118	D. Nesbitt c Tudor, b Robinson 94
extras 13 TOTAL (2 wkts) 310	W. McKenzie not out 84
	M. Garrighan not out 29
	extras 28 TOTAL (4 wkts) 311

Cutting and pulling from the first ball, Jeff Tudor was undefeated on 187 and 147 in the two matches. Tudor and Michael Strange may resemble Laurel and Hardy in stature but are a murderous opening pair. Murton openers Richard Lowes and Phil Coxall each made unbeaten hundreds twice in 1991 when adding over 200 in two successive matches. Fred Napier and Graham Flaxen repeated that extraordinary feat for Houghton in 1993. The target of 1,000 league runs in a season was reached increasingly after 1986 when Moody set the record and Norman Riddle (Eppleton CW) was first amateur to reach four figures. Easington pro John Glendenen (**qv**) was first to do it in successive seasons. Glendenen, a delight to watch, made batting look ridiculously easy at that level.

Followers of Crook and Esh Winning gnawed fingernails to the wick as Esh Winning shaded a fluctuating D.Co title race in 1990 and again in 1991 when Crook took revenge with victory over Esh in a dramatic last-day decider. Needing 236, leaders Esh looked winners at 183 for 5 but their title hopes disappeared when aggressive Peter Maddison was struck in the face and retired hurt. It was cruel on subtle Pakistan Test spinner Nadeem Ghauri. Slow left-arm Nadeem tormented batsmen all season, took '5-for' nineteen times, set a D.Co record of 134 wickets but was tamed that fateful day and 'went' for 1 for 103. Crook won a twelfth D.Co title in 1992, six more than any other, in the first

of Santosh Jedhe's five seasons as pro. Jedhe topped D.Co bowling but seven hundreds and 1,290 league runs in 1994 (av 67) confirm hard-hitting his stronger suit.

A first senior title brought rare joy to Sedgefield in 1993. Purely coincidental, of course, but A.C.L.Blair was elected Sedgefield MP that year. First established in 1849, Sedgefield declined in 1887 owing to lack of interest but re-formed in time to compete in the first two years of Durham Challenge Cup. Announced intention to fence their field in 1893 followed by a lengthy press silence suggests they had ground problems, a theory confirmed perhaps when they openly thanked Hon Hamilton Russell for free use of Hardwick Park in 1900. Sedgefield joined South-East Durham Combination in the 1920s and flitted between the Combination and Darlington & District until accepted by D.Co in 1983.

John Bryant recalls that the decision to apply was not taken lightly. "A lot of people felt we would lose the village cricket feel, the cream teas and so on." It skewed Wellock's decision to seek the quiet, sequestered life. Tim knew a popular NYSD image of Darlington & District was a league where players "step out in whitewashed wellies, dodge the cow pats on the way to the crease, and shovel up the droppings before taking guard". He judged it a minor inconvenience for the pleasure of playing in such a splendid setting. Except that, after one season, he was back in a competitive league. Opening day rain missed Sedgefield and they won their first match (Wellock 6-42). He continued in like vein for three seasons while the club adjusted to a higher standard. Ali Zia's 3,000 runs in 1989-91 raised their sights but next year the good work seemed undone when Sedgefield were third bottom. All was forgotten when they won fifteen of the first 17 matches in 1993. Forgotten, too, the village cricket feel, buried under the Antipodean deeds of Richard Power and Paul Hodder, a Kiwi armed with a British passport. David Craster and the Burnetts provided the runs, usually when most needed.

After a first D.Co title in 1988, Tudhoe were in the top three eight times in the 1990s. Naz

PRO-FILE (No. 28)

SHAHID ANWAR

(b. Multan, Pakistan, 5 July 1968)

Right-hand opener at Tudhoe (1988, 1990), Shildon Railway (1994-96), Leadgate (1997) and Crook (1998-2001). First season curtailed when called into Pakistan squad v Australia and had played just six league matches in 1996 when called into the tour of England. Dominant start to 1994 with 3 hundreds in first 4 league matches before setting D.Co individual record aggregate of 1,758 (av 92.5). Hit 7 centuries, 10 fifties and dismissed only four times for less than 25. Many valuable performances with the ball. Given the length of his engagement we can respect his opinion that "the standard of D.Co has improved all the time since I first came over". One-Day International for Pakistan in 1996. League record: 208 inns 26 not 9,874 runs HS 179* (av 54.2) 21 hundreds

Ahmed took all ten wickets in successive seasons as prelude to championship wins in 1995-96 and 1998. Pakistani all-rounder Umer Rashid, pro in those years, topped D.Co bowling in his first and last seasons. He was succeeded by Stephen Ball who returned to his home club after gaining four medals elsewhere. Ball was a regular at Tudhoe once the rain stopped in 1983. Impressive form earned the left-hander a move to Philly in their 1985 title season and next year he enhanced his reputation with 976 league runs. Stephen won a medal on return to Tudhoe, two more at Crook in 1991-92. He was then engaged by Murton and has been pro ever since. Ball is a value-for-money pro. The precocious brilliance of 1986 has been overtaken by a level of consistency that tells of maturing days batting with Paul Burn. No coincidence that Ball is undefeated in a quarter of league innings that have produced over 13,000 runs (av 44). He earned over 750 wickets with persevering rather than penetrating bowling.

Ball was joined in the 1st XI by free-scoring Robert Chismon and Gary Cummings. Such is the lure today to move clubs they were at Tudhoe together in only four of Ball's ten seasons in D.Co. Their careers bear remarkable similarities. Chismon made headlines after a first wicket partnership of 271 with Gary Ireland in 1986; Cummings caught the eye with 1,000 in all in 1988. Each had three impressive seasons away from Tudhoe: Cummings at Esh Winning, Chismon at Crook. Each had a season in NYSD: Robert hitting two league hundreds, Gary less successful. Cummings returned to dominance on return to Tudhoe in 1993 with 1,000 league runs and 1,421 next season. Chismon rejoined Tudhoe in time for the 1995 title and the pair were re-united in celebration for the next two. Both are now D.Co pros and, strange to say, each scored 819 league runs for their clubs in 2001.

Hetton Lyons have an enviable reputation for producing promising talent. It is nothing new. The club staged an Under-16 tournament in 1893, the earliest mention of competitive youth cricket in Durham. They set up an Under-13s section in 1979. They were champions in 1997-98 and in fact the

PRO-FILE (No. 29)

JOHN DAVID GLENDENEN

(b. Middlesbrough, 20 Jun 1965)

Right-hand opener at Easington (1990-1) and Darlington (1998-2000). Debut for Middlesbrough at 15, joined Marske in 1986-89, pro at both in 1993-95. Scored 9 league hundreds at Easington, topping D.Coast batting in second season. Hit 200* for Durham CCC in a Britannic Assurance Invitation match in 1991 against a Victoria attack including Test bowlers Merv Hughes, Simon O'Donnell and Damien Fleming. At the time only E.W.Elliot (twice) had made a double hundred for Durham. Spent 1992 with Durham CCC. Scored 3 league hundreds as amateur at Darlington in 1996-97 and 13 when pro during next three years, 25 league hundreds in all for Durham clubs.

League record : pro at Easington & Darlington 109 inns 18 not 5,386 runs (av 59.2) as amateur at Darlington 46 inns 4 not 1,726 runs (av 41.1)

1997 side were North Regional champions and fifth in the national finals. In 1997, too, the seniors won a second D.Co title when Sajjad Akbar (qv) was in scintillating form. Hetton Lyons applied to DSL in 1979 and were accepted in 2000 three years after spending £160,000 improving their ground. Lyons were runners-up, indeed would have been champions had they defeated leaders Horden on the last day. Jamaican all-rounder Brian Murphy was in fine form but Ashley Day was the ace in the pack. Day was previously pro at Easington where, to a degree, a slow wicket blunted his sharpness. Of lithe physique, Day is a brilliant fielder and genuinely fast. His twentieth over is as quick as his first and he puts the ball on the spot. "Day is like a metronome," says Allan Worthy. "Like an Angus Fraser but quicker; like a Glenn McGrath but not as good." Day now tests his ability at the highest possible level with Chester-le-Street in the Premier League.

South Hetton are the third to bask long in sunny Coast dominance in the last 25 years. Seven championships in the last nine seasons include an extraordinary triumph in 1997 when they won just five of 24 matches - only two more than Seaham Park who were second from bottom. South Hetton were elected to DSL in 2002, remarkable given their social circumstances. They pay a peppercorn rent to the council for use of a ground that is open and vulnerable. One year the wicket was twice sabotaged with weed-killer. Bobby Steel's fabrication firm manufactured sightscreens and covers that need constant repair after vandalism. These old colliery grounds were showpieces in their heyday and tended with maternal care. Now, with no qualified groundsmen, committee men like Billy Bennett spend hours of their retirement rolling the wicket to ensure it is playable. While pitches are not dangerous they tend to be slow because they are under-prepared and have plenty of grass to prevent them breaking up.

Steel and Jim Smith turned South Hetton into a decent side but it lacked an extra ingredient to bind a side of locals into championship material. Flame-haired Paul Burn was that missing ingredient. Burn began at Sacriston and scored 895 league runs in his second season. He returned as pro in 1988 between successful years at Philly and Burnmoor. Former colleague Worthy would choose Burn to bat for his life. He might need the last rites during Paul's unconvincing starts. Once in, Burn accrues with the inevitability of a Steve Waugh as 15,700 league runs (av 53) and 20 league hundreds testify.

PRO-FILE (No. 30)

SAJJAD AKBAR

(b. Lahore, Pakistan 1 March 1961)

Brother of Amir Akbar (Etherley). Two One-Day Internationals for Pakistan; Pakistan Cricketer of the Year in 1994. Highly-consistent all-rounder. Exceeded 1,000 league runs each season at Hetton Lyons in 1995-98, a major reason for their rise from the lower reaches to champions in 1997.

Averaged a 50 every other innings and twice topped D.Co averages. At Langley Park in 2001.

League record: 107 inns 25 not 5,126 runs HS 155* (av 62.5)

If low grip and dominant bottom-hand limit his range of shots, Paul is master of those he elects to play. He tailors an innings to the needs of the side though a burning desire to be not out (he is undefeated in 30% of his league innings) occasionally consumes that flexibility. Many think Burn should have played First-class for Durham but at that level the county opted for the more secure technique of Glendenen.

Openers Worthy and Steel were chalk and cheese. Worthy, a pale, slightly-built youth with little belief in his ability to hit the ball, was frequently criticised for slow scoring. With Steel and Smith to provide aggression it was an affordable, proven team tactic. Steel, then, is the *grande fromage*. A burly man with Graham Gooch back-lift who relies on timing rather than force, Steel pierces the off in the grand manner, murders anything loose on leg. Docile wickets or lesser sides offer scant challenge. Stronger opposition tempers Steel's hardness and there are few better sights than Bobby skipping down the wicket to loft for six. He has 12,500 league runs (av 45) for South Hetton where he exceeded 700 in each of 15 seasons and hit 23 of twenty-seven league centuries.

With no overs restriction on first innings, D.Coast gained notoriety for wars of attrition. You could smell smouldering friction in 1990. Ryhope's lordly rule roused antagonism and they were set stiff declaration challenges when chasing a seventh title in nine years. Matters enflamed when, with no chance of the title, Silksworth batted 88 overs and left Ryhope 12 overs to get 241. A conflagration engulfed leaders South Hetton in 1994. Marsden skipper Colin Marshall arrived at South Hetton an hour before the start. He inspected the wicket and returned to the pavilion. Twenty minutes before play Marsden were four men short. The umpires were using the home changing-room. At 1.55 pm Steel asked the umps if he had power to enforce the toss. Given their assent he knocked on Marsden's door: "Colin, I've been on the field twice waiting for you to toss up. Your lads are not here yet so I'm asking you to bat." A heated discussion terminated with Marshall's terse "Right!"

Marshall opened the innings, fired shots all around, and Marsden reached 60 in ten overs. Runs dried up on his exit. Temperatures rose after an incoming batsman waited almost two minutes before ambling out carrying pads, thigh pad, gloves and bat. Emotional thermometers boiled as Tony Shields blocked for three hours and seven minutes for 4 runs, the most sterile innings in Durham history. It was no longer a question of 'needle'. It was a stand-off at crazed corral with branding irons at two paces. A dozen adjectives might describe the inertia but where the word to sum up such driven, blind obstinacy in the name of recreation? Shields suggests 'cussedness'. "We were not happy with the situation from the start. I've been around a bit and once the abuse started flying I dug in, determined not to get out." Probably more so when he was batting with his 14-year-old son. Tony Shields and Bobby Steel have not spoken since. They will soon have opportunity as Shields will captain Whitburn in 2003 and spin the coin with Steel in June.

At five-past-six Marsden declared on 136 for 6, got changed and went home. They were

charged with bringing the game into disrepute, deducted 15 points and fined £500. Marshall was banned for six matches, Tony Shields quit the league, one umpire retired and the acrimony sickened Paul Burn of D.Coast. While South Hetton fumed in the field eleven other Durham cricketers endured hell-fire at Edgbaston as Brian Lara blazed 501.

Silksworth delayed another declaration against Ryhope in 1992 though they were leaders at the time and trying to stave off defeat. Silksworth clung to their lead to win a second successive title going 33 matches undefeated in the process. Neil Mulvaney and David Hanson were prominent with the bat and medium-fast Keith Trotter headed D.Coast bowling both years. Trotter's ability is best judged by his success on Ryhope's graveyard. For consistency and longevity, Keith is pre-eminent in D.Coast and has topped the League averages in three of the last 11 seasons with over 800 wickets. "He is a lovely, lovely bloke who always tries to do things with the ball: leg-cutters, off-cutters and big off-spinning slower balls. His dismissals are genuine because he bowls straight." Trotter still wheels away though years of constant pounding have left him hobbling.

There was cricket at Silksworth in 1875. Silksworth Colliery entered Durham Challenge Cup in 1891 and were a founder member of D.Coast. Success beckoned once Colin Orr stiffened the batting and James Teare added penetration with the ball. Both were in the 1955 title side. Teare took 10 for 71 and continued his exploits until Silksworth were next champions in 1976. Ronnie Orton was then batting mainstay in a career lasting almost as long as Teare. Colin Orr meanwhile turned his energies to administration. An outspoken traditionalist, Orr was also alert to the needs of progress. He valued pros' contributions, condemned those who did not coach. He was DSL secretary for 22 years until resigning when the committee refused to re-instate two ex-pros as amateurs. Sadly, as chairman of Silksworth, Colin's passion for the game landed him in trouble after their pitch was badly damaged by vandals before a junior match. The umpires deemed the pitch unplayable. Two days later the same umpires allowed a 3rd XI match to go ahead without incident, as did the following 1st XI match. Silksworth were suspended for two months for not fulfilling the junior fixture. Orr thought the decision outrageous. "This was a club with over 70 years' unbroken membership of the league and the light of cricket in Silksworth was going to be snuffed out." Colin sent a barrage of letters to cricket officials, local and national, and ended up in court. He was subject to a restraining order and given a two-year conditional discharge. Acting for D.Coast, Cecil Emmerson said: "All this stems from Mr Orr's love of cricket and all things to do with the game, but he loves to view it through his own spectacles." Another legal case that provides evidence of the deep-rooted feeling cricket generates when a club's future is threatened. Silksworth completed their league programme without winning a match. The club gradually recovered and were runners-up to South Hetton in 2001.

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¹⁶ Conversation with Allan Worthy, January 2002.

¹⁷ The Daily Telegraph, 18 September 1998

Cricket featured at Houghton Annual Great Feast in 1834. Modern Houghton were elected to D.Coast in 1989 and shock champions next year. Graham Flaxen and pro Dale Froud led their strong batting line-up. Murton beat Eppleton CW in a play-off to win D.Coast in 1986 with Keith Chapman an admirable foil to pro Donovan Malcolm. Champions again in 1998, Murton were the 'nearly men' of the decade. They gained more points than all but South Hetton and finished in the top three eight times. Their free-scoring batsmen were reason for the consistency but, even allowing for the fact that few remained at the club above three seasons, might have earned more success with better bowling support for Chapman and Stephen Ball. Chapman was fastest in D.Coast until the advent of Day. Keith's quick wit and dry sense of humour were necessary qualities given his workload at Murton where he claimed his 1,000th wicket in 1999. Ball was first to top D.Coast batting and bowling in the same season in 1997. Then 32, Stephen was another who believed standards in the north-east had declined during his career.

Ball's opinion was at odds with the fact that Durham were producing highly-promising, young talent. Yet many agreed with him. In spring 1998 Newcastle Journal declared GAME'S FUTURE IN DOUBT. Cricket correspondent Malcolm Pratt feared cricket's grass roots were shrivelling. Malcolm was not only apprehensive about the effect a proposed Premier League might have on leagues with a hundred-year history. He perused obituary columns, noted South Moor had died. Hebburn (previously Reyrolle) resigned from TSL at the end of 1996 and D.Coast had lost South Hylton, Vaux and Eppleton CW in the last ten years. Pratt was not to know Wearmouth would resign from DSL before winter set in. Together with the combined social predilections of a nation's youth and some of their insular elders, the decline and fall of these clubs persuaded Pratt and a growing number of stalwarts to predict a future without many of today's clubs and with others unable to support two elevens. Cricket had had false obituaries before. Lord MacLaurin was studying the evidence....

Raising the standard

England and Wales Cricket Board formed on 1 January 1997. Lord McLaurin was chairman. The former Tesco boss set out his stall to sell the game, slogan ready to hand: "No change is not an option for cricket". ECB's blueprint, *Raising the Standard*, aimed to raise standards of playing and management; to increase income, interest and the game's profile. It would affect every level of cricket from Test arena to school field. More youngsters had to be introduced to the game, better links forged between club and school with County Boards more closely involved. Of seventeen key proposals three had particular implications for club cricket:

- Bridge the gap between recreational cricket and the First Class game and provide the opportunity for all the most talented cricketers to fulfil their potential.
- Give talented cricketers the opportunity to progress seamlessly through club and non-First Class representative County cricket to the First Class game.
- 3. Establish a national network of Premier Leagues for the top club sides by the start of the 1999 season.

Premier Leagues would "bring about a quantum leap in standards"; would enable batsmen play long innings and encourage bowlers to attack rather than contain. Matches, preferably in two-day Australian 'grade' format, would be played at grounds with the best possible facilities. A "limited element of promotion and relegation" would provide incentive to the ambitious (Premier clubs would receive an annual grant from ECB) and increase excitement in 'feeder leagues'. ECB would consider prohibiting overseas players in Premier Leagues and perhaps stipulate a certain number of under-25s be included in each side. Second, Third and Youth XIs would be expected to find their own levels locally. That freebie was a give-away. In other words the majority of clubs would remain where they had been for the last hundred years. Not in a supermarket but like corner shops struggling perpetually to remain solvent. The plans provoked sharply divided views. Some thought them a great opportunity, others considered them little more than wanton vandalism. Reality lay somewhere in between.

So toward the Millennium and formation of a North-East Premier League (hereafter NEPL). "Whether you do it now matters little. You will have to do it someday if we are to progress," predicted Etchells in 1935. Echoing Bulmer before him. And Mallett before both. NEPL would have twelve clubs: eight from Durham, four from Northumberland. Durham Cricket Academy would be elected as of right and exempt from relegation to protect ECB's aim to groom players for the county side. It took some organising. ECB issued guidelines and requirements for a successful application. Seventeen applied. Over a year was wasted trying to agree a system of feeder leagues to facilitate promotion to NEPL. It was a barren exercise. Leagues cherished their autonomy and their own estimation of their standing and esteem. With a century of history behind them, chairmen adopted

entrenched positions. "I don't want to be remembered as the chairman who presided over the break-up of DSL," vowed Tommy Clish. Ken Gardner stood resolute as Horatius on the bridge: "We have not guaranteed a club relegated from the Premier League a place back in the NYSD."

Geoff Cook, intelligent Durham Cricket Executive, was clear in his direction. His précis of the imminent revolution echoed Rome's fear of the Tiber filling with blood. "Cricketers in the North-East are particularly proud of their leagues, their history and the rôles clubs play within their communities. The principle of the idea in terms of providing the best cricket and the best facilities is wonderful. It will help to bridge the gap between the recreational game and the First-class game. From our point of view we want to have the best possible path for any player to progress into the full county side." Ah, there's the rub. Unwittingly, Geoff assumed the mantle of Harry Mallett, once the "sun and centre" of Durham cricket. Except that Cook's mantle was potentially divisive, rather like that of Prospero who "bedimm'd the noontide sun" and set roaring war between sea and sky. Geoff was wise to that possibility: "Whether through politics, money or history, there will be a lot of blood spilt." We have yet to discover how much. Some wanted no part in the revolution. Clubs that would happily coach lads and take pride if they made the county side were less happy at the prospect of coaching the best for hours then losing them to NEPL without guarantee of making the grade. Bob Scott's raised hackles were not uncommon: "The county is not going to dictate Eppleton's future."

The long debate over feeder-leagues allowed time for clubhouse discussion about NEPL's make-up. Individuals made lists, changed them *ad infinitum*. My list of Durham clubs was elemental, contained seven of eleven still in existence from the 1891 County Senior League. (Barnard Castle, no longer a major NYSD club, were not considered.) The reasoning was equally simple. History and tradition would prevail down a hundred years.

NEPL announced its twelve disciples in March 1999: Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Darlington, Gateshead Fell, Norton, Stockton, Sunderland, Durham Cricket Academy plus four from Northumberland. Five of the seven Durham clubs were 1891 founder members, a sixth was elected in 1893. If the final selection seemed to snub modern, go-ahead clubs it understandably included three with facilities that served as First-class out-grounds. Recent league success was clearly not a major consideration. Gateshead Fell and Sunderland had not won a title for almost 30 years, Stockton for 23. At least Norton were reigning champions even if it was 47 years since their previous success.

Meetings were held to formulate a constitution in line with ECB requirements and to consider local needs. Clubs could register one overseas player and hire one Durham contract player at £75 per match. There was no bar on payments to others. No club would be relegated in the first two seasons so the matter of feeder leagues lay idle on the table. Nothing has since been resolved beyond a list of nine feeder leagues and provisos if the situation arises. Two economic factors were ignored: neither the interests of spectators nor consideration for clubs without limitless funds who depended on sales of

amber nectar. Both points centred upon hours of play. A majority desire to start play as early as practicable posed problems. Travel was one. Teams had to be at the ground an hour before start of play. Would players in 'a 24-hour society' always be available for an early start? Would spectators used to watching in the afternoon change lifestyle to attend at 11 am? If not, they might arrive at their usual time to find the match almost over if a side was dismissed cheaply. If matches finished early clubhouses could be half-empty on Saturday night when clubs generally sold most beer. Such factors appeared not to concern the majority. In time their significance could be real.

The potency of those factors diluted when NEPL's structure was thrown into confusion by NYSD's refusal to guarantee re-admission to a relegated club. Stockton re-affirmed its application; Bishop Auckland and Darlington withdrew; Norton wavered. NYSD was a complex, integrated structure of 26 clubs with first, second and third teams spread over five divisions. Norton's uncertainty centred on concern for the status of their 3rd XI that NYSD refused to accommodate. NEPL had no alternative but to exclude them and they were replaced by reserve club, Blaydon. Norton then changed tack, said they would join if their 2nd *and* 3rd XIs could play in Division B. NEPL agreed. Not the most forthright way to launch a flagship league.

Sunderland won the first title. Fitting it should go to Durham's oldest club and a long-awaited present for 85-year-old president Tom Bowmaker. Ever resplendent in club sweater, the ex-Ryhope bowler has followed Ashbrooke's fortunes for 50 years. Sunderland struck the front in mid-July and gradually increased their advantage. West Indian pro Cameron Cuffy and long-serving skipper Adam Applegarth were a formidable new-ball combination. Applegarth's value to the club is enhanced by the funds he generates. Not only was Cuffy one of the highest paid local pros but the club could afford to register ex-Durham all-rounder Darren Blenkiron to bolster the side for the last ten matches. Experienced Simon Old and fine prospect Lee Rushworth were pick of the batting.

Matches were 120 overs, the side batting first restricted to 65 overs. Declarations were rare. Understandably, clubs were uncertain of the strengths of new opponents but the first aim of most was to avoid defeat. Sixty per-cent of matches were drawn. Only one in four sides was dismissed as bowlers found it difficult to prise out batsmen mainly intent on survival. Stockton provides example. Not that survival concerned Dawnley Joseph. The West Indian pro savaged four big hundreds and was first to score 1,000 in NEPL. However Stockton's bowlers conceded nine of 25 centuries scored that season. Only Cuffy averaged more than two wickets per match, reason perhaps why his club were champions. The aim for batsmen to play longer innings was achieved but spectators yearned for a little adventure and the odd imaginative declaration. Players expressed satisfaction with the cricket and the format. Nationally it was different. At the end of 2000 ECB dropped opposition to the 50-50 overs split if individual leagues so wished but insisted a draw must still be possible. Of 24 Premier Leagues in 2001, NEPL was one of only seven to retain ECB's preferred quota of 120 overs.

Chester-le Street sent out a virtual new team from 1999. Risky from the point of view of club morale, perhaps, but they were champions in 2001. The new men were top quality. They ranged from England Under-15 batsman Daniel Shurben to shrewd captain Tony Birbeck and experienced Thorpe, Worthy and Quentin Hughes when he came down from Cambridge. 'Q' arrived after scoring the last century in a three-day 'Varsity match at Lord's. It was his second successive 'Varsity Match hundred, a feat matched only by Majid Khan. Ashley Thorpe made his reputation as an attacking left-hander at Eppleton. He scored 179 not out in 2000, highest in NEPL, and shared an unbroken second-wicket stand of 283 with Shurben, the tenth highest partnership of all time. Next season he hit 1,000 NEPL runs and 5 centuries. Born in New South Wales but qualified by residence, Thorpe earned a Durham contract in 2002. Allan Worthy, no longer a tentative opener, averaged 50 over three seasons as TSL pro. Moreover, he had recovered marvellously from broken tibia, fibula and damaged cruciate ligament sustained playing football. Allan drives powerfully through the off, despatches anything legside far over mid-wicket. That he is now back to his best was confirmed when voted *Sunday Sun* Cricketer of the Year in 2001 and 2002. An articulate, perceptive student of the game, Worthy has reservations about NEPL's superficial tinkering with rules and the 65/55-overs split.

Blaydon demonstrated that a homespun side can live in elevated company by finishing third in the first two seasons. Under the inspiration of pro Nehemiah Perry, Mark Drake's class batting and Stephen Humble's late swing impressed against tough opposition. As did Durham Academy's Marc Symington, Gary Scott and Gordon Muchall who scored 254 for England Under-19s in 2002. Scott serves as example of how Durham's youngsters now develop. Educated at Hetton Comprehensive, Gary is a product of Hetton Lyons' youth coaching. He graduated through all youth levels for Durham and England and hit a century for England Under-15s. Given a fair wind under the old set-up he would tread the same path as Milburn. He would leave Hetton, gain DSL prominence, represent the county and perhaps get a chance in First-class cricket. That will not happen now. He will skip the club branch line and be fast-tracked to distant stations, his fate a heady mix of excitement and disappointment. If his contemporaries follow the same scenario it seems inconceivable there is substance in the headline GAME'S FUTURE IN DOUBT. The game will change but club cricket will endure. While Scott, Symington, Muchall suffer the slings and arrows of cricket's fortune their peers and successors will perpetuate the club game to the last syllable of recorded time.

The not-so-secret diary of Nicky Peng, aged 17¾. 2 May 2000. A classy on-drive takes me to 98. There's a cool breeze and bright sun. They match my clear temperament. I tuck my bat under my arm, adjust my gloves while awaiting the next delivery. It is a bit too close to my body. I try to cut. Aah! I'm out. Caught behind. Peng walked off to sympathetic applause from the crowd and empathetic pats from Surrey fielders. Nicky, who hit a double hundred between lunch and tea for England Under-17s, was within a whisker of becoming the youngest to score a century on championship debut. Paul Collingwood, who hit a handsome 66 that day, scored 91 on First-class debut in 1996. Such near-misses are the stuff of reminiscence. More pertinently, their achievements

define the advance of north-east cricket. Of those who took the field on Durham's Championship debut four were Test cricketers, six (including Simon Brown) had played for other First-class counties. Glendenen and Brown were the only locals. Of the eleven against Surrey only four had played First-class elsewhere. Collingwood, Peng, Brown, Daley, Killeen, Betts and Stephen Harmison all graduated from local clubs. Brown gained a lone Test cap at Lord's in 1996 and Harmison made his England debut in 2002.

One event that year highlighted another major influence upon Durham cricket. Some have questioned the value of overseas pros but few have been more welcome than Jimmy Adams (qv). Jimmy was born as Greenley mourned the end of club cricket as a major spectator sport; played his first match for Jamaica when the grass at Wearmouth grew tall as his island's sugarcane; and made his Test debut during his engagement at Eppleton. How thrilling, then, for Adams and local enthusiasts that he should captain West Indies v England in a One Day International at Riverside just half a dozen miles from his adopted club. That chain of events represents an evolutionary thread entwining two distant cultures converging on a common point. An integration rooted in days when estate hands joined the gentry on a cricket field at Lambton. Durham men met with the best of All England in 1847. They now unite with the best in the world.

TSL was under no pressure to amalgamate with Northumberland County League. Blaydon had joined NEPL but TSL still had twelve clubs, now the norm in the north-east (NYSD apart) and as it was in the 1950s. Forming Northumberland & Tyneside Senior League (hereafter N & TSL) had merit. If it seemed a backward step to resurrect the 1933 membership it added the spice of promotion and relegation. With 20 clubs the League was strong, more so with 12 in two divisions in 2002, and it rescued Northumberland from an uncertain future. Durham's elevation to First-class status had unified the two northern-most counties, a bond further strengthened when NEPL and N & TSL formed.

PRO-FILE (No. 31)

JAMES CLIVE ADAMS

(b. Kingston, Jamaica, 9 Jan 1968)

Articulate, gracious, popular left-hander at Eppleton (1989-93, 1996). Fitness fanatic. Lightning cover-point who bowled and kept wicket. Exceeded 1,000 league runs each season, hit 16 league hundreds and topped DSL batting three times. At Nottinghamshire (1994). For all he played 54 Tests and captained West Indies he said that spending his spare time washing cars at a Sherburn Hill garage was "better than sitting at home watching TV". Jimmy Daley was one of many grateful for Adams' high coaching commitment to youngsters. Replaced injured N.A.Perry at Blaydon, July 2002.

League record: 143 inns 55 not 7,395 runs (av 84.03) 16 hundreds 239 wkts for 3,818 runs (av 15.98) realistic aim was to finish in the top ten that would form Division One. Northumberland club Tynedale were champions and chairman Brian Taylor pronounced the new set-up "a great success both on and off the field". The cut and thrust now began in earnest. Ashington, another Northumberland club, took the title in 2001. A system of 3-up-and-3-down maintained optimum interest. Benwell & Walbottle (ex-Northumberland) were promoted with Lanchester and Burnopfield. Whickham were relegated but Shotley Bridge and Tynedale were reprieved so each division had 12 clubs when the League extended. There are weak sides among so many but Division One is highly competitive.

Shotley Bridge were quick to sign D.C.Jackson when he left neighbours Consett. Jackson matured into a quality batsman alongside Wasim Raja at Chester-le-Street and Lance Cairns at Bishop Auckland. Neither bequeathed their ability to bludgeon the ball far so Jackson remained an archetypal opener: rock-solid, reliable and a pain in the backside to bowlers. He compiles runs with the certainty of Doomsday. His nine years as pro at Consett, aged 40-48, are an intriguing part of David's career. Secretly, he cherished a title, strained every nerve to achieve it and scored 7,156 league runs (av 49). The close-cropped, steely-haired 'Silver Cowl', now bowling medium pace with pin-point accuracy; ambled through 3,500 overs for 666 league wickets. The figures bear comparison with the two preeminent pro all-rounders, Coxon and Greensword, at the same age. One perverse oddity somehow epitomises David's single-mindedness. Even allowing for his famed pad-play, it was extraordinary that in 1998 he could open the batting and not get off the mark until the twenty-second over. That unwanted statistic was forgotten when at last Jackson gained a TSL medal with Shotley Bridge in 2002.

You need a road map to follow Ian Stoneman's career. Since Ian left Burnopfield in 1980 he has had ten clubs, most as pro. Stoneman, who wields a bat vigorously as a mad village blacksmith, once made a 43-ball league hundred. Swing bowling is his forte, however, and though 'Rocky' has put on weight he always gives his all. Heart problems could not blunt his determination nor did the latest attack dull his optimism. His one regret was not being able to turn out with his son who had just made the 1st XI. When medics brought forward an operation by a day Ian considered telling his wife but decided not to in case it gave undue concern. Two months later he was back in harness alongside his son. There have been better cricketers than Stoneman but few more brave.

The loss of four clubs to NEPL seriously affected DSL. Left with ten, they admitted Hetton Lyons then enlisted Marsden and South Hetton when Philly moved to NEPL in 2002. The amputations seriously weakened DSL and marred its centenary year. A league with 210 fixtures in 1998 reduced to 110 in 2000. The number of batsmen averaging 25 to qualify for the published averages dropped by half. It certainly lightened DSL's statistician's workload. Where once he tabulated 70,000 runs it was now 33,000. Damned statistics, it is true, but they put the reduction in vitality in sharp perspective. Each match has its own context but overall there was less to cheer, less to marvel or savour.

DSL had the compensation of two fluctuating title races won narrowly by Horden before pro Mark Benfield, leading DSL scorer, helped Burnmoor breeze home in 2002. Ian Conn bagged another 77 wickets in tandem with Martin Thursfield. Neil Young, Barry Dews and John Tindale made valuable runs and Gary Brown recorded a 14th league 'ton' on a rare appearance. Horden began sluggishly in 2000 but lost only one of the last eleven to get their noses in front before rain diluted the season's end. Next year they lost only once and gradually pulled away over the last five matches. Handsome stroke-maker Adrian Hedley was leading batsman. Spinner Nadeem Khan's 98 wickets underlined increasing attacking potency. Andrew Robson bowled with admirable consistency at the other end. Robson made his debut in 1986 and graduated to Surrey and Sussex. He returned as pro at Ryton and Wearmouth to build an undeniable reputation for removing the top-order. Whole-hearted Andy bends his back and never misses a match. His determination is a model to modern fast-bowlers who seem to pick up injuries with apparent ease.

Durham clubs had little joy in NYSD apart from Blackhall being runners-up in 2001 thanks to sparkling Imran Jan and ever-reliable John Darby. For the second time in history there was no Durham club in the top six in 2000, a lack of success highlighted by Bishop Auckland's extraordinary decline. NYSD formed a Premier Division and four lower divisions with promotion and relegation in 1998. Bishop Auckland, runaway champions in 1999, were bottom next year. They escaped relegation only because facilities at Barnard Castle, winners of Division One, did not meet Premier Division standards. 'Bishops' problems mounted when the core of their title side were lured to other clubs, two admittedly as professional. Pro Aaley Haider made 943 runs but his heroics came to naught; week after week the win column showed nought. There was a lone victory as autumn approached. Inexorable nemesis. After being in the top division since 1906 Bishop Auckland were replaced by Wolviston, relegated in turn after one season. Darren Blenkiron's class shone like a beacon in the lower division to give promoted 'Bishops' an opportunity to recapture former glories in 2003.

PRO-FILE (No. 32)

DAVID CHRISTOPHER JACKSON

(b. Alnwick, 29 June 1953)

At Langley Park (1977-78), Annfield Plain (1984-87), Bishop Auckland (1991), Consett (1993-2001) and Shotley Bridge (2002). Began career at Langley Park where he hit 164 at the age of 17. Moved to Chester-le-Street (1973-76) where he returned in 1979 to refine an almost infallible batting technique. A single-minded approach emphasised by the fact that he remained unbeaten in all but six of his 32 hundreds 1,000 league runs five times. Best 1,212 at Consett when topping TSL batting in 1995. Made himself into an extremely accurate seam bowler culminating in a record 120 TSL wkts in 1998.

League record: over 22,000 runs. 32 hundreds.

The formation of NEPL had little initial effect upon D.Coast and D.Co but the vibrations shuddered in 2002. D.Coast was reduced to twelve clubs, D.Co to thirteen and promising talent was lost to NEPL. South Hetton won a third consecutive title in 2001. With so many capable of rising to the occasion they always had enough in hand to maintain control. They kept Hylton at arm's length in 2000 and next year held off Silksworth's challenge in a last-day title decider. Steel was still dominant but with a new, free-scoring opener, Dean Burrows, whose career underwent a curious transformation. Burrows burst onto the scene at Hartlepool in 1984 with a string of impressive performances. The sixfeet-three-inch tall fast bowler, though not so fast as to prevent Des Playfor standing up and making stumpings, was whisked into Gloucestershire's side alongside Paul Romaines. Burrows made only two more appearances. He was engaged by home club Peterlee where he began to hit hundreds rather than stumps. Dean continued to do so at South Hetton where skipper John Pendlington topped D.Coast bowling in 2000. Pendlington made Horden's side in 1987 in time to pick up three league medals. It might have been four in 1995 had he not been engaged by South Hetton after his batting flourished dramatically enough to raise thoughts of 1,000 DSL runs. Pendlington has not always used his batting to the full yet averages 48 over seven league seasons at South Hetton. Inspired by allrounder Calvin Stephenson, Murton set the pace in 2002 until suffering their only defeat in July. By then Hylton were on an 11-match undefeated run, most successfully when batting second as Gary Hewitt, David Hanson and Joe Bittlestone made light of substantial targets. Hylton held off Peterlee, more reliant on the penetration of brothers Keith and Neil Hewson, to win a first title for 38 years.

Five years after being D.Co champions Leadgate sank to the bottom in 1989. Recovery began in 1994 when all-rounders Tony Halliday and David Nevin lifted the side to the upper reaches despite frequent changes in personnel. Leg-spinner Harry Hubber was engaged and Richard Hawthorne arrived from Bishop Auckland. Leadgate ended Tudhoe's domination after an exciting duel in 1999. They gained outright lead by thrashing Tudhoe at the end of May but fell foul of June rain and Tudhoe assumed command. A spectacular run of 13 successive victories earned the championship. Hawthorne had success with the ball but the fact that there was no Leadgate bowler in the leading D.Co averages underlined their strength in depth.

Leadgate retained the title in 2000 with Pakistani all-rounder Bilal Rana as pro. Slow left-arm Rana was pro for three seasons at both Chester-le-Street and Felling, topping DSL batting three times and bowling once. Rana was not short on confidence. Interviewed while steering Felling to the title in 1997 he could not understand why he had not yet played Test cricket and said 'Cestrians' did not win a title because "they did not have many good players". That must have been music to the ears of players of the calibre of Shaun Stokoe, Steven Peel, Ian Plender, John Tindale and Mark Blunt, particularly as the latter two moved to Felling with Rana. That said, Rana's league figures in the last nine years (6,634 runs at 56 and 632 wickets) place him among the most successful recent pros. Leadgate's unhappy knack of offending the establishment muffled elation at winning successive titles. Hearing N & TSL was to extend Leadgate applied for admission. League Cricket Conference

requirements place clubs in a cleft stick when changing leagues. They must resign from their league in mid-season before applying to join another. Leadgate failed to resign so D.Co threw the rule book at them. They were fined £50 and both 1st and 2nd XI were kicked out of the League Cup and handed a 100-point penalty for season 2001. Leadgate's depth and determination is clear from the fact that, even with a further 20-point deduction for playing an ineligible player, they were 'just' 79 points behind champions Kimblesworth. Ex-Consett youngsters Gary Hunter and Stuart Graham, sons of fine Consett players, headed D.Co batting and bowling respectively. Graham's wickets were taken at the lowest cost in D.Co for a very long time. Leadgate's troubles were compensated by winning N & TSL Division B1 by the proverbial mile to gain promotion to A1 in their first season. South African Sean Ackermann was in irresistible form, topping B1 batting and bowling. Ackermann, an accomplished bat who bowls seam-up and orthodox left-arm, had impressed earlier at Annfield Plain. In three seasons as pro he has scored 2,387 runs (av 79) and taken 194 wickets at 8.9 apiece.

Players' increasing 'mobility', and an inevitable, accompanying wink-wink-nod-nod curiosity, is in sharp focus today. It is a concern that haunts local cricket and could spell the end of many a club if followed to an obvious conclusion. The problem was unwittingly illustrated by Kimblesworth secretary Malcolm Bartle immediately after his club's convincing triumph in 2001. "We have spoken to most of the players and they've intimated they want to return next summer. If we can keep everyone together we will be confident of again challenging for honours." As events turned out Kimblesworth had to be satisfied as runners-up for all the fine form of their batsmen and leading wicket-takers Farukh Iqbal and Masood Mirza. Australian Michael Fishwick, free-scoring righthander who twice made 1,000 TSL runs at Whickham, was in his fourth year as pro. Leading scorers Mirza and Andrew Kelly were pros at previous clubs and prolific Steven Meek was at his seventh club in the last seven years. Long gone the days when Kimblesworth nurtured schoolboys like Bobby Davison and Jimmy Kelly. Kimblesworth and Evenwood fought a fascinating race. The leadership changed frequently and Evenwood held the upper hand with two to play. The first was lost. It set the scene for last day heroics by local lad John Maughan who hit an undefeated century as Evenwood knocked off 236 at Tudhoe. Mike Amos excused their boisterous merriment in 'The Swan' because they "celebrated what sport is about". Of twenty-three who made appearances 19 had progressed from the juniors. They included Billy Teesdale, Neil Teesdale and Jonathon Gill, sons of Billy and Alf Teesdale and Rodney Gill who each played in the Evenwood title sides of 1977 and 1979, together with Kevin and Paul Watson, nephews of Denis Waistell, a founder member of the 1965 reformed club. Local lore has it that Denis's late dogs, both called Rex and infallible retrievers of cricket balls, are more famous than Denis. Evenwood's success is a timely reminder that a club's most wholesome rewards come from within.

An outbreak of foot and mouth in 2001 was a national disaster and heart-breaking for rural areas whose clubs felt the side-effects. D.Co had the minor inconvenience of a two-week delayed start but Darlington & District was severely affected by enforced restrictions. Half-a-dozen Durham clubs

and several in North Yorkshire had their season obliterated. Younger players were lost to NYSD and a number of rural clubs folded The history of minor leagues like Darlington & District and North East Durham has not received due credit. As their clubs constitute a quarter of those affiliated to Durham Cricket Association they are integral to the local scene. They have been temporary havens for senior clubs fallen on hard times enabling them recover and strike out on more optimistic futures. Willington is a current, prime model of rejuvenation. The leagues are well organised by silent men who devote a lifetime ensuring cricket flows in beck and rill as well as mainstream. Their labours were recognised in 2002 when Norman Sturman won *The Northern Echo* Local Heroes Award sponsored by npower. That Sturman should dedicate 50 years to Haughton as player, administrator and fund-raiser and enjoy personal fulfilment at the same time is laudable. Yet the profound, immeasurable worth of Norman and his like lies with the golden key they offer to others to open the door to a lily white brotherhood fleeting time on a cricket field.

Transport developments had considerable influence upon cricket. More profound than simply enabling teams travel farther afield. With every improvement in transport and communications cricket grew more skilful, more diverse, better organised. It is no coincidence that one of the fastest growth periods was during the fifty years following the opening of the Stockton-Darlington railway in 1825. The High Level railway bridge spanned the River Tyne twenty-five years later so, in 1856, mighty Stockton could pursue their glorious odyssey as far north as Edinburgh.

The gentry of 1751 had a bumpy ride in post-chaises when travelling the seven country miles between Stanwick and Raby Castle. The Great North Road, recently-turnpiked, was "broken into holes like an old pavement; sufficient to dislocate one's bones." Common folk used 'shank's pony', the oldest form of transport of all. Joseph Eltringham remembered walking from Consett to Hexham and back for a match in the 1880s. Cricket gear had to be carried, too, although Stockton's accounts for 1880 show the cost of cabs to transport the gear to and from the station.

Nineteenth century transport was horse-drawn. Clubs travelled in two or more traps, mining sides used colliery wagons. Durham City took three-and-a-half hours to reach Norton in 1834. They left at 6am, began playing at 11 and got home at midnight. When Darlington went to Constable Burton in 1869 they "escaped from business and its cares, and were exhilarated by a 20-mile ride behind four horses. The party were charmed by the beauties of the scenery and had a happy day of it." Eppleton Church's return from Penshaw in 1894 was less serene. The horses took fright and their brake overturned outside the "Swan Inn" at Shiney Row causing nasty injuries. Young lads accompanied Crook Wednesday to Staindrop. "Finding the inside vehicle filled with eleven players, the boys climbed to the top of the coach." As the coach rattled homeward, young Coulthard grabbed an overhanging tree branch and was catapulted to earth. His friends raced back to his limp body but there was nothing they could do. He died the following day.

Third-class travel was available in certain areas some fifteen years after the opening of the Stockton-Darlington railway. As the rail system spread, composition of leagues was part-determined by the nearness of clubs to the railway line. Rail travel enabled clubs travel further afield but caused problems for Bishop Auckland. A match in 1892 was delayed while they waited for Huddersfield-based pro George Hirst and George Tyndale who "lost a train at Leeds". Bishop Auckland eventually cited inconveniently long rail routes and bad connections as reasons for not entering a league. They joined NYSD but had to forfeit a match in 1909 because they had to catch the last train or spend the week-end in Guisborough. It even cost them a share of the title in 1919. They were denied certain victory when two hours' play was lost because Guisborough's train was held up at Darlington station.

Swalwell experienced all manner of trouble at Consett in 1908. They were not only dismissed for 32 but then the home side replied with 353 for 7. Swalwell reached Blackhill station in good time for the last train at 9.26 pm. Six went for a stroll, probably to slake their thirst after a gruelling day. They returned to find the train in the station but the platform gate was locked. Station staff were deaf to their frantic shouts. They walked the 12 miles to Swalwell, arriving at two in the morning. They travelled by brake for their next away match. This time they were late for the *start* because a horse cast a shoe and it took an hour to find a blacksmith to have the horse re-shod.

For the 1926 inter-league match between DSL and NYSD arrangements were made for the Sunderland-Middlesbrough express to stop to pick up players and spectators at one or two intervening stations. Consett's followers travelled to South Moor in such large numbers in 1911 that a 'relief' train was added. Others cycled or used pony and trap and hundreds tramped over fields via Charley Pit. Coastal clubs were reached by boat. Hinderwell sailed to Jarrow from the Grinkles, near Whitby, for a match at Wardley Colliery in 1876. The venture extended over two days. 'I Gingeriferi' set sail to coastal grounds in 1875. They anchored three days at Seaton Carew and after the match their captain carried his unfurled flag down to the beach. "The last that was heard of the Gingeriferi was a parting solo by Jamieson on his horn across the waters."

Motorised-buses began to replace horse-buses in the early 1900s. After the war toffs like Joseph Eltringham owned a motor car giving him the advantage of being able to return to Consett to pick up a player when one short at Medomsley. Consett's Jack Wheatley travelled by motor-cycle with George Hurst on pillion. Increased mobility enabled clubs to arrange cricket tours. South Shields toured the Scottish Borders in 1878. West Hartlepool went to the Fens in 1896 and played a match at Old Trafford during a tour of Lancashire in 1901. Yorkshire provided a convenient, popular itinerary. More prosperous clubs toured the Home Counties, Kent and the Cotswolds and Reyrolle organised annual trips to Northern Ireland.

Petrol shortages created difficulties during the Second World War after which public transport disputes caused matches to be cancelled. Punctuality and reliability are obvious benefits of travelling by car although four Kimblesworth men were injured in a crash in 1978. It happened on the outskirts of Durham, ironically near White Smocks, the uniform that tended upon them at Dryburn Hospital. Car dependency may present future difficulties for cricketers if roads become so congested that measures are taken to curb its use.

GROUNDS

Raby Castle provided a regal setting for the first known match. Other venues were less grand and usually on the outskirts of towns and villages close by a tavern where astute landlords profited from sub-letting fields and providing dinner and refreshments. Pitches were prepared using forks, watering-cans and turf-beaters. Siting a wicket was a subtle art whereby home bowlers took advantage of the ridges and hollows. Outfields received less attention and, unless leased for sheep-grazing, long grass made scoring difficult.

The first known *cricket ground* at Bishopwearmouth "commanded a beautiful marine view". Facilities were added for the "comfort and convenience of their opponents." Colourful tented pavilions and booths circled the field. They were treated with Margery's patent anti-mildew preventive, a solution used by yachtsmen. Darlington built "a large wooden erection" in 1837 for serving dinners and Sunderland built a ladies' stand in 1848. Tom Hornby handled the purchase of Grangefield and noted its smoothness compared with the "rough, ragged grass" in his days at Stockton. Turf from an old ground was often transported to the new. Shotley Bridge used turf from the fells above the River Derwent. New grounds were laid out for around £1,000 and pitches were cut and rolled by a horse with leather over-shoes attached to its hooves. One grey nag at South Shields dropped dead just three days after purchase. Another was put to different use by Mr Nash, the Seaton Carew groundsman who rode off on it and was never seen again.

Grounds were at the prey of property developers. Darlington's Park Street was acquired for high-density housing; Sunderland's Holmeside annexed to make way for a railway. Consett had to cede their ground to the iron works; Stockton's field became a public park. Whitburn were in danger of losing their ground in 1995. The loss of their ground on the site of Whitburn Hall would have been tragic. One senses its original beauty. The boundary is edged by the remains of a Grecian column terrace where Sir Hedworth Williamson and his house-guests watched the cricket. Entrance to the Hall was through iron gates embellished with delicate wrought-iron tracery of rambling roses, thorns, leaves and berries.

Timber-built pavilions were the next major development. South Shields paid £450 for a pavilion with balcony, veranda, changing rooms and scorebox high in a corner turret. Smaller clubs used converted railway carriages, old army huts or simple structures built by volunteer members. Many went up in flames, destroying precious club records in the process.

They were replaced by brick buildings. North Durham's pavilion, designed by club member Robert Snowdon, also cost £450. It measured 62 feet by 22 feet, was faced with best red-dressed Birtley brick and had a wrought-iron roof and cast-iron support columns. Cladded throughout, the

ground floor contained three dressing rooms. The upper storey had an office, ladies' cloakroom and a refreshment room with French casement opening onto a veranda. Ashbrooke's red-tiled pavilion was designed by James Henderson. The home dressing-room and a ladies' room were on the ground floor. Visitors changed upstairs next to the committee room. The attractive frontage had a white-painted balcony, a clock below the eaves, and a round carillon perched on the ridge tiles. Two wings were added in 1931. Opened in 1906, Feethams was constructed on a five-tier concrete grandstand. The ground floor contained rooms for the committee, refreshments and cloaks. The first floor had changing rooms and function room with sliding doors opening onto a balcony. An upper balcony was added in 1909 to hold up to 80 people.

The next stage was to enclose grounds, add scorebox and seating, and lay on water and lighting. Barnard Castle and Seaham Harbour were among the first to provide teas for spectators in the 1890s. It was a popular innovation. Spectators scurried to Consett's tea-room, sixpence in hand, for "fragrant tea and delicious cakes provided by the fair sex". Within half-an-hour only bread and butter remained. Stockton's lovely tea-room is still used today. When September sun filters through its window tracery the atmosphere is delicate and redolent of a bygone age. The heart aches to think that in 1914, after all the toil, grounds were in the hands of the military. North Durham was sliced open with trenches. The match on 3 June 1922 was the first at Prince Consort Road for 2,854 days.

It is one of cricket's ironies that umpires only gain prominence in controversial circumstances yet they are quintessential to cricket's reputation for fair play. The original concept of the umpire is unknown, although players down the years have offered their own theory! One line of thought is they came into existence after a veteran player was asked for a ruling during the course of a match. In 1706 William Goldwin writes that "some grey veteran intercedes". Umpires were an integral part of the 1744 Laws in days when they carried a bat that had to be touched by a batsman to signal completion of a run. No doubt the bat was a symbol of authority. Might even have proved a useful weapon in moments of extreme dispute.

The earliest local reference is when Yarm and Stockton each had *two* umpires in 1814. By 1828 each club provided its own umpire and they were often complimented for their control. Human nature being what it is, however, there were also accusations of bias and mistakes. Most famously when the Lumley umpire sought the opinion of Lumley fielders before giving his verdict. Two umpires were substituted in 1866 following two lbw decisions and six years later Hetton wanted the Chester-le-Street umpire removed after one of their players was given out lbw. Hetton walked off the field after he refused to go.

DSL recently demoted two umpires to 2nd and 3rd XI matches only. President Ray Pallister cited as reason the pressure upon umpires when surrounded by players of Test Match calibre. The two umpires had consistently received poor markings and it was hoped they might improve away from the spotlight. The decision caused an umpires' strike in 1995. North-East Umpires Association chairman, Peter Brown, accepted their poor ratings but he opposed their demotion and criticised the League for dragging its feet in the matter. All but one of their 36 umpires refused to turn out on May 6 so the Appeals Committee was forced to convene an emergency meeting. They reinstated the two umpires and the deadlock was broken.

Players' injuries assumed critical importance once umpires could be held liable if an injury was caused when it was deemed conditions were unfit for play. NYSD, on the other hand, got embroiled in lengthy and costly litigation after a ball ricocheted off a non-striker's bat and fractured an umpire's right index finger. The League's insurance covered only loss of earnings but even though the umpire was unemployed he sued NYSD because the injury prevented him bowling leg-spin. Even more absurd, he had retired from the game but said he still played the odd friendly and furthermore claimed he had pain when shaking hands. He claimed £5,000 compensation and £1,600 legal costs. "It was an experience I could have done without," said secretary Stewart Clarke. For three years he wrestled with claimant, two solicitors, insurance companies and brokers. Finally, after waiting all morning and sitting through a hearing all afternoon, the claim was dismissed. NYSD's legal costs

were £800; the claimant's considerably more. It is a far cry from days when club administrators set out to ensure their members continued to enjoy cricket. Cricket authorities have to be so wary nowadays. If we are honest, given that posts are accepted on a voluntary basis out of love for the game, officials are not fully equipped to deal with legal minefields.

Neutral umpires increased with the introduction of league cricket and were common after World War I. They had to pass an examination to be appointed. For no apparent reason standards of umpiring have fluctuated over the years. League reports usually highlight negative aspects of umpiring. DSL received 130 adverse reports in 1925, 108 in 1926. The umpire who never made a mistake has yet to be born but how strange, in a game vaunted for fair play, so many have been mobbed by spectators who disagreed with a decision. Lighter moments highlight their famed eccentricities. Mr Milburn did not return after going home for tea during the interval. Mr Essert contravened rules in 1896: he was tipsy and charged one shilling more than the NYSD fee of five shillings. He later apologised and refunded the shilling.

Fees gradually increased but were reduced in times of hardship like the depression. NYSD reduced the fee to three shillings and sixpence in 1940 and the number of umpires dropped immediately. North-East Umpires Association had 84 members that year. They agreed a war-time fee of two shillings and sixpence but claimed an increase from seven shillings and sixpence to ten and sixpence in 1947. Twenty years later, other leagues followed DSL's lead to increase fees to £1. DSL immediately raised their fee to thirty shillings, an action that emphasised a shortage of umpires.

By then umpires wore the 'shortie' coats favoured in Australia. At the time of the first match at Raby, umpires wore frock coat and beaver hat. They continued to dress in the fashion of the day until the long white coat was adopted when league cricket began. The only notable change since then is to headgear. Bowler hats were not uncommon but the flat cloth cap was favoured in Durham until the advent of the white cap made fashionable by Dickie Bird. Tom Fiddes remained faithful to the flat cap until his death in 1997. Lovable and well-respected, Tom stands as symbol of the great characters in white coats who, on top of their necessary arbitration, added enormously to the game. Tom was an efficient organiser and extremely funny after-dinner speaker. It was sad to hear him say in his last days that he no longer could remember the punch lines to his endless fund of stories.

Among rarities, brothers Cecil and Leslie Knox umpired in tandem for twenty years from 1948. NWD players referred to them affectionately as 'Nervo and Knox'. The first woman umpire was Anita Hood in D.Coast in the 1970s. A second, Mary Price, umpired with husband Ray in D.Co., conceivably the first couple to officiate in league cricket. Stockton-born Sharon Lewis umpired in Langbaurgh League in 1987. Terry Just stood for 25 summers. For 23 of them he travelled from Oban! He left home on Friday morning, caught the first train to Glasgow, and arrived in Darlington in time for tea. He umpired in NYSD on Saturday, took a 'C' Division match on Sunday, and got back to

Oban in time for Monday tea. In his last season the 700-mile round trip cost almost £200 for hotel accommodation and travel. Travelling expenses could have been prohibitive but, Just in name and nature, he claimed only bus fares from his native Durham village to the ground. Terry decried notions of dedication: "It's just my hobby. It's what cricket should be. I do it for fun."

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¹⁹ Mike Amos in his Backtrack column (*The Northern Echo*)

Durham Club Cricket Records at 2002 and published in Cream Teas And Nutty Slack.

Many instances have been recorded since. Where no league is stated the match took place before league cricket began or is a club match. A few notable performances in cup cricket are included.

RA	T	LIV	JG.	RE	CC	RI	DS

High inc	dividual scores		League	Year
332	E. W. Elliot	Borderers v Newcastle Garrison		1905
245*	R. B. Bousfield	Durham University v Sunderland		1888
223*	W. E. Maynard	Durham School v 6th Northumberland Fusiliers		1909
215*	W. L. Thomas	Blaydon v Lintz [highest score in a league match]	TSL	1991
212*	J. Pollard	Evenwood v Ushaw Moor	D.Co	1994
210*	A. Peart	Burnopfield v Reyrolle	TSL	1988
210*	C. Yorke	Evenwood v Sedgefield	D.Co	1988
207*	T. A. Bradford	Chester-le-Street v Philadelphia	DSL	1911
204 ret	J. W. Huggins	Castle Eden v Durham School		1914
203*	F. H. Gillingham	Durham University v Gentlemen of Durham		1899
203*	W. H. R. Alderson	Durham County Pilgrims v Borderers		1924
202*	C. B. Lambert	Blackhall v Normanby Hall	NYSD	1989
202	Wasim Raja	Shotley Bridge v Ryton	TSL	1986
201*	D Watson	Blackhall v Darlington RA	NYSD	1998
201	S. Russell	Sacriston v Reyrolle	TSL	1992
200*	H. Salmon	West Hartlepool v Redcar	NYSD	1910
200*	J. C. Matthews	Horden v West Hartlepool Res	D.Coast	1933
200	T. Coulson	South Shields v Wearmouth [first 200 in a league match]	DSL	1903
200	S. Russell	Sacriston v Greenside	TSL	1992

Most hundreds in career

[League hundreds only except for careers started before league cricket began where league hundreds are shown in brackets]

- A S Patel
- J A Daley, S Greensword 36
- 35 R Steel, S Davies
- 34 D C Jackson
- 31 S Meek
- 30 C B Lambert, N Pratt
- 29 Amir Akbar
- 28 M A Harper, S Chapman, A L Worthy
- Shahid Anwar, J D Glendennen 25
- 24 J Bittlestone, S D Birbeck, A M Thorpe
- 23 22 C Y Adamson (18 in league), R Bousfield (8 in league)
- N J Mulvaney
- 21 E W Elliot (16 in league)
- 20 C L Townsend (18 in league), F R Smith (17 in league), P Burn, J Pollard, J Tudor, Steph Ball
- 19 R Inglis, S A Walker
- A P Ashley, D Borthwick, P K Collingwood 18
- 17 A W Gowland, A J Hedley, S Russell, C Ellison, C Hewison
- 16 J C Adams, Rakesh Shukla, R P Waite, Andrew Smith, I Pattison
- S R Atkinson, M B Fishwick, S V Manjrekar, D R Parry, N A Riddell, N Riddle, Shaun Stokoe, P Craig

Most league hundreds in a season

8	8 M. A. Harper (Blaydon)	TSL	1986
	M. A. Harper (Peterlee)	D.Co	1989
	R. Dreyer (Bill Quay)	D.Coast	1990
	J. Pollard (Evenwood)	D.Co	1994
	S. V. Manjrekar (Stockton)	NYSD	1995
	J. D. Glendenen (Darlington)	NYSD	1998

Most league hundreds in successive matches

	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
4	K. Burdett (Whitburn)	DSL	1999

Fast hundreds

134 in 22 mins	G. Craig (High Spen) v Thermal Syndicate	Tyne & D 1	1952
105 in 24 mins	W. S. Franklin (Etherley) v Esh Winning	Mid-D 1	1929
118 in 30 mins	J. Carr (Footballer's XI) v Cricketer's XI (at Leadgate)	1	1923
113 ret in 35 mins	E. W. Elliot (Sunderland) v Wearmouth	DSL 1	1903
104 in 35 mins	J. Carr (Darlington R. A.) v Norton	NYSD 1	1943
103 in 40 mins	H. Pratt (Crook) v Leadgate	NWD 1	1934
115 in 45 mins	J. Carr (Chester-le-Street) v Hendon	DSL 1	1923
119 in 47 mins	R. B. Proud (Bishop Auckland) v Preston	[Horner Cup] 1	1951
100 in 40 mins	J. Carr (Chester-le-Street) v South Shields	DSL 1	1926
137* off 51 balls	S. Elliott (Bill Quay) v Craghead	NWD 1	1987
103* off 40 balls	W. Donkin (Craghead) v Kimblesworth	NWD 1	1926

	Fast 150 152* in 51 mins	D. Hielra (Dannich & Fact Tenfield) v. Dhi	ladalmhia [Tom Dum Cunl	1067	
	198* in 80 mins	B. Hicks (Beamish & East Tanfield) v Phi G. E. Hemsley (Langley Park) v South Mo		Tom Burn Cup] [NWD Lge Cup]		
	207* in 90 mins	T. A. Bradford (Chester-le-Street) v Philac		DSL DSL	1911	
	162 in 71 mins	H. Salmon (West Hartlepool) v Castle Ed			1908	
	167 in 75 mins	L. Handy (Gateshead Fell) v Seghill		TSL	1939	
	170* in 85 mins	N. A. Doggart (Darlington) v Stockton		NYSD	1932	
1	Fast 200					
	200 off 95 balls	S. Russell (Sacriston) v Greenside		TSL	1992	
	Slow scoring					
	4 in 187 mins	A. Shields (Marsden) v South Hetton		D.Coast	1994	
	7 in 96 mins 8 in 90 mins	T. Moffat (Wearmouth) v South Shields F. Westcott (Sunderland) v Philadelphia		DSL DSL	1960 1945	
	13* in 121 mins	J. Charlton (South Shields) v Sunderland (batted throughout innings)	DSL	1947	
	18* in 45 overs	D. Collingwood (Shotley Br) v Blaydon (b	patted throughout innings)	TSL	1987	
	16 in 120 mins	J. D. Claxton (Seaham Harbour) v South S	hields	DSL	1931	
1	Uighast laagua s	ganogatas				
	Highest league a A. A. W. Mewburr	(Sunderland) was first to score 1,000 runs in a	season in 1876.			
		275 in NWD, 1909) was first to reach 1,000 lea				
		arper (Blaydon)		TSL	1986	
		mbert (Blackhall)		NYSD	1989	
		Anwar (Shildon Railway)		D.Co	1994	
		anjrekar (Stockton) mbert (Blackhall)		NYSD NYSD	1995 1986	
		allace (Sunderland)		DSL	1996	
		mbert (Blackhall)		NYSD	1990	
		kbar (Etherley)		D.Co	1993	
		anjrekar (Stockton)		NYSD	1994	
		nynes (Blackhall)		NYSD	1982	
		on (Blackhall) ayyar (Kimblesworth)		NYSD D.Co	1998 1993	
		arper (Peterlee)		D.Co	1988	
		d (Evenwood)				
		u (Eveliwoou)		D.Co	1991	
	1,502 Amir A	kbar (Etherley)		D.Co D.Co	1991 1991	
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	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear	cbar (Etherley) bolds NYSD record: 1,859 for Redcar in 1992 hips han (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) ber (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle	D.Co	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL	1989 1929 1988
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 275* R. D. Ja	cbar (Etherley) bolds NYSD record: 1,859 for Redcar in 1992 hips han (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) ber (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) bobs (151*) & M. Old (111*)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn	D.Co way iery	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL DSL	1989 1929 1988 1994
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 275* R. D. Ja 271 G. Irela	cbar (Etherley) bolds NYSD record: 1,859 for Redcar in 1992 hips han (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) ber (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle	D.Co way iery	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL	1989 1929 1988
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 275* R. D. Ja 271 G. Irela 270 G. Lidd 2nd wicket	cbar (Etherley) blds NYSD record: 1,859 for Redcar in 1992 hips than (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) ber (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) bobs (151*) & M. Old (111*) and (168*) & R. Chismon (89) be (186*) & C. Boddy (114)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn Tudhoe v Willington Bill Quay v Coundon	D.Co way iery	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL DSL D.Co	1989 1929 1988 1994 1986 1984
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 275* R. D. Ja 271 G. Irela 270 G. Lidd 2nd wicket 325* T. M. S	cbar (Etherley) colds NYSD record: 1,859 for Redcar in 1992 hips than (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) cr (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) cobs (151*) & M. Old (111*) and (168*) & R. Chismon (89) e (186*) & C. Boddy (114) onehouse (152*) & C.Nicholson (172*)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn Tudhoe v Willington Bill Quay v Coundon Castle Eden v Old Novoca	D.Co way iery	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL DSL D.Co NWD	1989 1929 1988 1994 1986 1984
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 275* R. D. Ja 271 G. Irela 270 G. Lidd 2nd wicket 325* T. M. S 314* W. E. M	hips han (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) er (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) ebs (151*) & M. Old (111*) dd (168*) & R. Chismon (89) e (186*) & C. Boddy (114) onehouse (152*) & C.Nicholson (172*) eaynard (223*) & B. S. Cumberledge (140*)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn Tudhoe v Willington Bill Quay v Coundon Castle Eden v Old Novoca Durham School v Northum	D.Co way iery strians sberland Fusiliers	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL DSL D.Co NWD	1989 1929 1988 1994 1986 1984 1908 1909
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 2775* R. D. Ja 270 G. Lidd 2nd wicket 325* T. M. S 314* W. E. M 307 R. B. B.	hips han (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) er (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) ebs (151*) & M. Old (111*) hd (168*) & R. Chismon (89) e (186*) & C. Boddy (114) onehouse (152*) & C.Nicholson (172*) aynard (223*) & B. S. Cumberledge (140*) busfield (167) & B. Buckley (119*)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn Tudhoe v Willington Bill Quay v Coundon Castle Eden v Old Novoca Durham School v Northum Bishop Auckland v Middle	D.Co way iery istrians iberland Fusiliers esbrough	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL DSL D.Co NWD	1989 1929 1988 1994 1986 1984 1908 1909 1887
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 275* R. D. Ja 271 G. Irela 270 G. Lidd 2nd wicket 325* T. M. S 314* W. E. M 307 R. B. Be 296* A. Burn	hips han (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) er (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) ebs (151*) & M. Old (111*) dd (168*) & R. Chismon (89) e (186*) & C. Boddy (114) onehouse (152*) & C.Nicholson (172*) eaynard (223*) & B. S. Cumberledge (140*)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn Tudhoe v Willington Bill Quay v Coundon Castle Eden v Old Novoca Durham School v Northum	D.Co way iery astrians aberland Fusiliers esbrough am	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL DSL D.Co NWD	1989 1929 1988 1994 1986 1984 1908 1909
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 275* R. D. Ja 271 G. Irela 270 G. Lidd 2nd wicket 325* T. M. S 314* W. E. M 307 R. B. Be 296* A. Burn 291 C. Albo	cbar (Etherley) colds NYSD record: 1,859 for Redcar in 1992 hips than (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) er (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) cobs (151*) & M. Old (111*) ad (168*) & R. Chismon (89) e (186*) & C. Boddy (114) conehouse (152*) & C.Nicholson (172*) aynard (223*) & B. S. Cumberledge (140*) cusfield (167) & B. Buckley (119*) (184*) & E. W. Elliot (112*)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn Tudhoe v Willington Bill Quay v Coundon Castle Eden v Old Novoca Durham School v Northum Bishop Auckland v Middle Sunderland v North Durham	D.Co way iery istrians iberland Fusiliers esbrough im	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL DSL D.Co NWD	1989 1929 1988 1994 1986 1984 1908 1909 1887 1903
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 275* R. D. Ja 271 G. Irela 270 G. Irela 270 G. Lidd 2nd wicket 314* W. E. M 307 R. B. B 296* A. Burn 291 C. Albo 283* D Shurt 269* C. York	cbar (Etherley) colds NYSD record: 1,859 for Redcar in 1992 hips han (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) er (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) cobs (151*) & M. Old (111*) dd (168*) & R. Chismon (89) e (186*) & C. Boddy (114) onehouse (152*) & C.Nicholson (172*) aynard (223*) & B. S. Cumberledge (140*) ousfield (167) & B. Buckley (119*) (184*) & E. W. Elliot (112*) ne (122) & D. Thomas (184) en (100*) & A M Thorpe (179*) e (176*) & J. Longstaff (83*)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn Tudhoe v Willington Bill Quay v Coundon Castle Eden v Old Novoca Durham School v Northum Bishop Auckland v Middle Sunderland v North Durha South Moor v Seaton Burr Chester-le-Street v Stockte Evenwood v Mainsforth	D.Co way iery istrians iberland Fusiliers esbrough im in	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL DSL D.Co NWD DSL TSL TSL NEPL D.Co	1989 1929 1988 1994 1986 1984 1908 1909 1887 1903 1991 2000 1990
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 275* R. D. Ja 271 G. Irela 270 G. Lidd 2nd wicket 325* T. M. S 314* W. E. M 307 R. B. Br 296* A. Burn 291 C. Albo 283* D Shurt 269* C. York 262* J. Tudor	cbar (Etherley) colds NYSD record: 1,859 for Redcar in 1992 hips than (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) cr (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) cobs (151*) & M. Old (111*) ad (168*) & R. Chismon (89) e (186*) & C. Boddy (114) conehouse (152*) & C.Nicholson (172*) aynard (223*) & B. S. Cumberledge (140*) cusfield (167) & B. Buckley (119*) (184*) & E. W. Elliot (112*) en (122) & D. Thomas (184) en (100*) & A M Thorpe (179*) e (176*) & J. Longstaff (83*) (147*) & I. Gutteridge (118*)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn Tudhoe v Willington Bill Quay v Coundon Castle Eden v Old Novoca Durham School v Northum Bishop Auckland v Middle Sunderland v North Durha South Moor v Seaton Burr Chester-le-Street v Stockte Evenwood v Mainsforth Bill Quay v Peterlee	D.Co way iery istrians iberland Fusiliers esbrough im in	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL D.Co NWD DSL TSL NEPL D.Co D.Co	1989 1929 1988 1994 1986 1984 1908 1909 1887 1903 1991 2000 1990 1992
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 275* R. D. Ja 271 G. Irela 270 G. Lidd 2nd wicket 325* T. M. S 314* W. E. M 307 R. B. Br 296* A. Burn 269* C. York 262* J. Tudor 253 E. Corfi	cbar (Etherley) colds NYSD record: 1,859 for Redcar in 1992 hips han (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) er (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) cobs (151*) & M. Old (111*) dd (168*) & R. Chismon (89) e (186*) & C. Boddy (114) onehouse (152*) & C.Nicholson (172*) aynard (223*) & B. S. Cumberledge (140*) ousfield (167) & B. Buckley (119*) (184*) & E. W. Elliot (112*) ne (122) & D. Thomas (184) en (100*) & A M Thorpe (179*) e (176*) & J. Longstaff (83*)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn Tudhoe v Willington Bill Quay v Coundon Castle Eden v Old Novoca Durham School v Northum Bishop Auckland v Middle Sunderland v North Durha South Moor v Seaton Burr Chester-le-Street v Stockte Evenwood v Mainsforth	D.Co way iery istrians iberland Fusiliers esbrough im in	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL DSL D.Co NWD DSL TSL TSL NEPL D.Co	1989 1929 1988 1994 1986 1984 1908 1909 1887 1903 1991 2000 1990
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 275* R. D. Ja 271 G. Irela 270 G. Lidd 2nd wicket 325* T. M. S 314* W. E. M 307 R. B. B. 296* A. Burn 296* A. Burn 298* D. Shurt 269* C. York 262* J. Tudoi 253 E. Corfi	cbar (Etherley) colds NYSD record: 1,859 for Redcar in 1992 hips than (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) cr (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) cobs (151*) & M. Old (111*) ad (168*) & R. Chismon (89) e (186*) & C. Boddy (114) onehouse (152*) & C.Nicholson (172*) aynard (223*) & B. S. Cumberledge (140*) susfield (167) & B. Buckley (119*) (184*) & E. W. Elliot (112*) en (122) & D. Thomas (184) en (100*) & A M Thorpe (179*) e (176*) & J. Longstaff (83*) (147*) & I. Gutteridge (118*) eld (86) & A. J. Burridge (182*)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn Tudhoe v Willington Bill Quay v Coundon Castle Eden v Old Novoca Durham School v Northum Bishop Auckland v Middle Sunderland v North Durha South Moor v Seaton Burr Chester-le-Street v Stockte Evenwood v Mainsforth Bill Quay v Peterlee Horden v Philadelphia	D.Co way iery strians berland Fusiliers esbrough m	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL DSL D.Co NWD DSL TSL NEPL D.Co D.Co DSL	1989 1929 1988 1994 1986 1984 1908 1909 1887 1903 1991 2000 1990 1992 1963
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 275* R. D. Ja 270 G. Lidd 2nd wicket 325* T. M. S 314* W. E. M 307 R. B. B. 296* A. Burn 291 C. Albo 296* A. Burn 291 C. York 262* J. Tudo 253 E. Corfi 3rd wicket 255* W. Bro	cbar (Etherley) colds NYSD record: 1,859 for Redcar in 1992 hips than (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) cr (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) cobs (151*) & M. Old (111*) and (168*) & R. Chismon (89) e (186*) & C. Boddy (114) onehouse (152*) & C.Nicholson (172*) aynard (223*) & B. S. Cumberledge (140*) ousfield (167) & B. Buckley (119*) (184*) & E. W. Elliot (112*) ne (122) & D. Thomas (184) en (100*) & A M Thorpe (179*) e (176*) & J. Longstaff (83*) (147*) & I. Gutteridge (118*) eld (86) & A. J. Burridge (182*) vn (173*) & E. A. Sandell (64*)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn Tudhoe v Willington Bill Quay v Coundon Castle Eden v Old Novoca Durham School v Northum Bishop Auckland v Middle Sunderland v North Durha South Moor v Seaton Burr Chester-le-Street v Stockte Evenwood v Mainsforth Bill Quay v Peterlee Horden v Philadelphia Seaham Harbour v Cheste.	D.Co way iery istrians iberland Fusiliers esbrough im i	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL DSL D.Co NWD DSL TSL NEPL D.Co D.Co DSL DSL	1989 1929 1988 1994 1986 1984 1908 1909 1887 1903 1991 2000 1990 1992 1963
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h * C. G. Ju 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 271 G. Irela 270 G. Lidd * C. Lidd *	cbar (Etherley) colds NYSD record: 1,859 for Redcar in 1992 hips than (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) cr (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) cobs (151*) & M. Old (111*) ad (168*) & R. Chismon (89) e (186*) & C. Boddy (114) onehouse (152*) & C.Nicholson (172*) aynard (223*) & B. S. Cumberledge (140*) susfield (167) & B. Buckley (119*) (184*) & E. W. Elliot (112*) en (122) & D. Thomas (184) en (100*) & A M Thorpe (179*) e (176*) & J. Longstaff (83*) (147*) & I. Gutteridge (118*) eld (86) & A. J. Burridge (182*)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn Tudhoe v Willington Bill Quay v Coundon Castle Eden v Old Novoca Durham School v Northum Bishop Auckland v Middle Sunderland v North Durha South Moor v Seaton Burr Chester-le-Street v Stockte Evenwood v Mainsforth Bill Quay v Peterlee Horden v Philadelphia	D.Co way iery sstrians sberland Fusiliers esbrough m on	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL DSL D.Co NWD DSL TSL NEPL D.Co D.Co DSL	1989 1929 1988 1994 1986 1984 1908 1909 1887 1903 1991 2000 1990 1992 1963
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h * C. J. J. J. C. J. J. J. C. J.	hips than (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) er (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) cobs (151*) & M. Old (111*) ad (168*) & R. Chismon (89) e (186*) & C. Boddy (114) onehouse (152*) & C.Nicholson (172*) aynard (223*) & B. S. Cumberledge (140*) ousfield (167) & B. Buckley (119*) (184*) & E. W. Elliot (112*) ne (122) & D. Thomas (184) en (100*) & A M Thorpe (179*) e (176*) & J. Longstaff (83*) (147*) & I. Gutteridge (118*) eld (86) & A. J. Burridge (182*) vn (173*) & E. A. Sandell (64*) d (155*) & J. Maughan (96)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn Tudhoe v Willington Bill Quay v Coundon Castle Eden v Old Novoca Durham School v Northum Bishop Auckland v Middle Sunderland v North Durha South Moor v Seaton Burn Chester-le-Street v Stockte Evenwood v Mainsforth Bill Quay v Peterlee Horden v Philadelphia Seaham Harbour v Cheste Evenwood v Leadgate	D.Co way iery sstrians sberland Fusiliers esbrough m n on	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL DSL D.Co NWD DSL TSL D.Co DSL D.Co DSL D.Co	1989 1929 1988 1994 1986 1984 1908 1909 1887 1903 1991 2000 1990 1992 1963
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 275* R. D. Ja 270 G. Lidd 2nd wicket 325* T. M. S 314* W. E. M 307 R. B. Be 296* A. Burn 291 C. Albo 283* D Shurt 269* C. York 262* J. Tudor 253 E. Corfi 3rd wicket 255* W. Bro 235 J. Pollan 232* C. E. Ci 231 C. Y. A 4th wicket	cbar (Etherley) clds NYSD record: 1,859 for Redcar in 1992 hips than (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) cr (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) cobs (151*) & M. Old (111*) dd (168*) & R. Chismon (89) e (186*) & C. Boddy (114) conehouse (152*) & C.Nicholson (172*) caynard (223*) & B. S. Cumberledge (140*) cusfield (167) & B. Buckley (119*) (184*) & E. W. Elliot (112*) ne (122) & D. Thomas (184) en (100*) & A M Thorpe (179*) e (176*) & J. Longstaff (83*) (147*) & I. Gutteridge (118*) eld (86) & A. J. Burridge (182*) vn (173*) & E. A. Sandell (64*) d (155*) & J. Maughan (96) eek (121*) & H. Johnson (100*) damson (158) & E. R. Sarsfield (71)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn Tudhoe v Willington Bill Quay v Coundon Castle Eden v Old Novoca Durham School v Northum Bishop Auckland v Middle Sunderland v North Durha South Moor v Seaton Burr Chester-le-Street v Stockte Evenwood v Mainsforth Bill Quay v Peterlee Horden v Philadelphia Seaham Harbour v Cheste Evenwood v Leadgate Darlington v Summersons Durham City v North Durha	D.Co way iery sstrians sberland Fusiliers esbrough m n on	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast TSL DSL D.Co NWD DSL TSL NEPL D.Co D.Co DSL DSL DSL DSL DSL DSL DSL	1989 1929 1988 1994 1986 1984 1908 1909 1887 1903 1991 2000 1990 1992 1963 1925 1991 1945 1903
	1,502 Amir A * C. B. Lambert h Wicket partners 1st wicket 314* P. Maug 306 R. Drey 289 C. G. Ju 289 A. Pear 275* R. D. Ja 270 G. Lidd 270	hips than (157*) & J. Pollard (145*) er (187*) & J. Tudor (98) dson (176*) & F. W. Heads (110) (210*) & M. J. Brown (79) cobs (151*) & M. Old (111*) dd (168*) & R. Chismon (89) e (186*) & C. Boddy (114) conehouse (152*) & C.Nicholson (172*) daynard (223*) & B. S. Cumberledge (140*) cusfield (167) & B. Buckley (119*) (184*) & E. W. Elliot (112*) ne (122) & D. Thomas (184) en (100*) & A M Thorpe (179*) e (176*) & J. Longstaff (83*) (147*) & I. Gutteridge (118*) eld (86) & A. J. Burridge (182*) via (173*) & E. A. Sandell (64*) dd (155*) & J. Maughan (96) eek (121*) & H. Johnson (100*) damson (158) & E. R. Sarsfield (71) (153*) & D. Abdy (79*)	Bill Quay v Seaham Park Castle Eden v Hylton Coll Burnopfield v Reyrolle Philadelphia v Whitburn Tudhoe v Willington Bill Quay v Coundon Castle Eden v Old Novoca Durham School v Northum Bishop Auckland v Middle Sunderland v North Durha South Moor v Seaton Burr Chester-le-Street v Stockte Evenwood v Mainsforth Bill Quay v Peterlee Horden v Philadelphia Seaham Harbour v Cheste Evenwood v Leadgate Darlington v Summersons Durham City v North Durl Whitburn v Sunderland	D.Co way iery istrians iberland Fusiliers esbrough im n on	D.Co D.Coast D.Coast D.Coast TSL DSL D.Co NWD DSL TSL NEPL D.Co D.Co DSL DSL DSL DSL DSL DSL DSL DSL	1989 1929 1988 1994 1986 1984 1908 1909 1887 1903 1991 2000 1990 1992 1963 1925 1991 1945 1903
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6th wicket				
194 C. G. Stephenson (90) & T. H. Peel (108*) 152 G. Sharp (120) & W. Bolton (62)	•	ridge v Hebburn Sunderland	TSL DSL	1996 1928
7th wicket 174* C. Sharp (124*) & A. M. Brown (23*) [in 62 mins] 166* G. Spitty (104*) & W. Hepburn (92*) 152 W. Webster (79) & D. Parr	Craghead	rham v Durham City v Kimblesworth v Middlesbrough	DSL NWD NYSD	1900 1924 1990
8th wicket 164 G. E. Hemsley (198*) & E. Hall (36) 161 Rev R. P. Moorsom (81) & F. S. Laverick (82*) (The partnership ended when Rev Moorsom return	Sunderlar	nd v Durham City	/WD Lge Cup] DSL at "handled bal	1902
9th wicket				
157 J. D. Lott (68) & R. Cook (116) 140 Rev G. W. Anson-Firth (95*) & C. E. Barnes (38) 10th wicket	Lintz v I Durham (Ryton City v Norton	TSL	1978 1888
163 J. Dent (169*) & I. Burns (17) 132* M. Soppitt (104*) & W. Wilson (33*) 123* J. A. Wheatley (108*) & A. Colling (64*)	Philadelp	am v Stanhope hia v Seaham Harbour ey v North Durham	Mid-D DSL TSL	1932 1910 1936
BOWLING RECORDS				
5 wickets in 5 balls				
W. Burn (Whickham) v Benwell				1874
T. Mowbray (Whickham) v Tyne Dock E. Manners (Darlington R. A.) v Norton		F.2	Karridaa Cunl	1886
S. Balmer (Middleton St. George) v Aldborough St. John		[I	[Xerridge Cup] Darl & D	
R. Orton (Kimblesworth) v Coxhoe			NWD	1989
The orion (Timeses World) + Cosmoc			1,,,2	1,0,
4 wickets in 4 balls 29 recorded instan	ces. Amo	ong the most recent in leagu	e cricket :	
B. Hodgson (Stockton) v Darlington		ong the most recent in reaga	NYSD	1961
T. Angus (Horden) v Whitburn			DSL	1963
T. Atkinson (Tudhoe) v Hetton Lyons			D.Co	1964
J. Howard (Crookhall) v Tantobie			M-D	1974
I. Stoneman (Consett) v Reyrolle			TSL	1988
R. Orton (Kimblesworth) v Plawsworth			NWD	1988
	d on his reti			
Two 'hat-tricks' in an innings:				
H. P. Child (Chester-le-Street) v Bishop Auckland	1 1 1 .		DSL	1896
(Child did the 'hat-trick' with the first three balls of the innings	and ended t	the innings with 4 wickets in 4		1000
J. Urwin (Croxdale) v West Auckland			Wear V	1909
L. D. Scott (Gateshead Union) v Cooper's XI			D.Co	1911 1913
E. Mitchell (Coxhoe) v Brandon Village J. Grigor (Norton) v Middlesbrough			D.Co NYSD	1913
T. B. Clish (Easington) v Vaux Welfare		[Matthew	Oswald Cup]	1963
1. D. Chai (Easington) V Vaux Wellare		[mainew	Oswaia Cupj	1703
'Hat-trick' that wasn't: R. W. Hopper (Sunderland) dismiss Sandell was bowled and caught off successive no-balls, then caug			e successive ba	alls. 1928
The state of the s				
Ten wickets in an innings				
106 documented instances. Among the best statistics are:				
O M Wkts Runs	a			40.50
10.3 5 10 for 5 G. Robinson (Annfield Plain) v	•	ridge	NWD	1958
10 for 6 E. Ord (North Bitchburn) v Wo			Mid-D	1958
11 9 10 for 7 A. Smith (Chilton Moor) v Do 10 for 8 J. Clark (Ryton) v Old Novoca			NED TSL	1971 1920
13 3 10 for 10 J. E. Richardson (Greenside) v		nam	TSL	1947
10 for 11 R. W. Clarke (Greenside) v Wi			IDL	1901
9.1 5 10 for 11 J. R. Latchford (Consett) v Seg			TSL	1936
10 for 11 A. Hodgson (Stanley) v Deaf I				1957
[Note: A. Kelly took 10 wickets for 0 runs for Bishop Auck		s in 1994		
Among the most recent instances:				
10 for 43 J. S. Wilkinson (Philadelphia) v Horden	DSL	1976		
10 for 18 I. Ross (Brancepeth) v Harton Moor	Mid-D	1981		
10 for 49 D. L. Nevins (Peterlee) v Shildon BR	D.Co	1982		
10 for 70 Tahir Naqqash (Synthonia) v Saltburn	NYSD	1985		
10 for 45 C. Matthews (Whickham) v Coxhoe	NWD	1985		

10 for 27	W. L. Thomas (Blaydon) v Lintz	TSL	1988
10 for 44	S. G. Lishman (Greenside) v Lintz	TSL	1989
10 for 16	P. Hockaday (Burnhope) v Bearpark	NWD	1989
10 for 20	R. Orton (Kimblesworth) v Coxhoe	NWD	1989
10 for 25	Anwar Khan (Wearmouth) v South Shields	DSL	1990
10 for 60	P. S. Hodder (Stockton) v Normanby Hall	NYSD	1990
10 for 67	D. Beach (Ryhope) v Boldon CA	D.Coast	1990
10 for 38	Nazir Ahmed (Tudhoe) v Langley Park	D.Co	1993
10 for 40	Nazir Ahmed (Tudhoe) v Etherley	D.Co	1994
10 for 70	A. Worthy (South Hetton) v Ryhope	D.Coast	1994
10 for 59	R. Whiteman (Whiteleas) v Belmont	N-E D	1995
10 for 21	M. Hayman (Lanchester) v Swalwell	TSL	1998
10 for 27	S. Ball (Murton) v Peterlee	D.Coast	1998
10 for 34	E. Seery (Etherley) v Shildon Railway	D.Co	1998

Eleven wickets in an innings

11 for 72 Alf Morris (W. R. Bell's XII) v XII Northumberland Fusiliers 1917

Outstanding analysis

9 for 1	J. Thackeray (Leslies) v Eslington Park	NDSL	1926
9 for 2	R. Rennison (Bill Quay) v North Durham Wanderers		1913
9 for 4	F. Livesey (Raby Castle) v Stainton		1892
9 for 4	C. G. Whetton (Consett) v Kimblesworth	NWD	1925
9 for 4	King (Graswell) v Hawthorn	Pen & D	1932
9 for 4	S. Turnbull (Dean & Chapter) v Crook	D.Co	1952
8 for 0	H. P. Child (Chester-le-Street) v Bishop Auckland	DSL	1896
8 for 1	N. Park (Rise Carr) v Carlton	Darl & D	1904
8 for 1	J. Darling (Durham City) v North Durham	DSL	1971
8 for 2	Raine (Gateshead Fell) v Wallsend		1880
8 for 2	Cass (Shildon St. John) v Aycliffe		1903
8 for 2	R. Fuller (Seaham Harbour) v Durham City	DSL	1952
8 for 2	J. Livingston (Kibblesworth) v Medomsley	NWD	1993
8 for 2	K. Trotter (Silksworth) v Houghton	D.Coast	1993
7 for 0	T. Stewart (Hendon Wednesday) v Birtley Wednesday		1910
7 for 0	P. Featherstone (Wooley) v Southill (in 6 overs)	Deer	1931
7 for 1	W. J. Nimmo (Castle Eden) v Hartlepool Tower		1908
7 for 1	H. Pollard (South Shields Y.M.C.A.) v Corinthians		1909
7 for 1	P. Lumley (Hamsteels) v Neville's Cross	Cox & D	1937
7 for 1	R.Paisley (Eppleton C. W.) v Belmont	NED	1946
7 for 1	G. March (Blaydon) v Kimblesworth	NWD	1953
7 for 1	P. Teah (Kimblesworth) v Sacriston	NWD	1955
7 for 1	J. Wood (Ushaw Moor) v Crookhall	Mid-D	1957

100 wickets in a season The first recorded (J. B. A. Bailey, Durham School, 1860) probably included internal cricket. The first recorded in senior cricket was Irwin Smith's 110 for Darlington, 1887. Alf Morris, who took 100 DSL wickets on six occasions, was first to take 100 league wickets in 1908.

The highest documented totals in league cricket are:

134	Nadeem Ghauri (Esh Winning)	D.Co	1991
126	L. R. Gibbs (Whitburn)	DSL	1964
124	C. G. Whetton (Consett)	NWD	1923
123	B. L. Cairns (Bishop Auckland)	NYSD	1988
123	S. V. Bahatule (Stockton)	NYSD	1996
122	R. Orton (Kimblesworth)	NWD	1990
121	J. Johnston (Bishop Auckland)	NYSD	1984
120	B. L. Cairns (Bishop Auckland)	NYSD	1980
120	D. C. Jackson (Consett)	TSL	1998

ALL-ROUND CRICKET

A century and all ten wickets in a league match

110	and 10 for 27	W. L. Thomas (Blaydon) v Lintz	TSL	1988

A century and 9 wickets in a league match:

117*	and	9 for 43	C. Y. Adamson (Durham City) v South Shields	DSL	1904
105	and	9 for 50	W. Tolson (Darlington) v Thornaby	NYSD	1906
114	and	9 for 48	R. Harrison (North Durham) v St George's	TSL	1909
109*	and	9 for 29	L. H. Weight (South Shields) v Seaham Harbour	DSL	1921

$1,\!000$ league runs and 100 league wickets in a season

1,207 runs and 123 wickets	S. V. Bahatule (Stockton)	NYSD	1996
1,009 runs and 108 wickets	D. Thomas (Kimblesworth)	TSL	1993

High te	eam totals				
549			Challenge Cupl	1889	
501		Durham County Pilgrims v Cryptics	3	1933	
448		Durham County Pilgrims v Cryptics		1931	
442		Durham University v Sunderland		1888	
442		Darlington v Sunderland (play-off match)	DSL	1893	
432		Darlington v XVI Darlington & District		1887	
431 for 4	4 dec	Old Dunelmians v Durham School		1930	
425 for 1	1	Durham School v 6th Northumberland Fusiliers		1909	
415 for 8			[NWD Lge Cup]	1919	
414 for 7	7	Norton v Barnard Castle	. 0 13	1894	
410 for 8	8 dec	South Shields v Tynemouth		1905	
408		Durham School v Sedbergh		1924	
406 for 9	9	Sacriston v Reyrolle	TSL	1992	
405 for 5	5 dec	Ryhope v Dawdon	D.Coast	1988	
402 for 7	7	Darlington v Barnard Castle (Barnard Castle put Darlington in to ba	it)	1885	
.02 101	,	Zamington + Zamina Casac (Zamina Casac par Zamington in to ca	•,	1000	
	am totals	****	g 0.5	1001	
1		Hylton Alma (the run was an extra)		1901	
	3 Hartlepool Gasworks v Paragon		Hpl & D	1929	
4 Seaton v Carlton (Stockton)			1860		
	4 Whorlton v Barnard Castle			1863	
	4 Birtley Wednesday v Hendon Wednesday		ъ.	1910	
4 Southill v Wooley (Wooley dismissed Oakenshaw for 7 two days earlier) Deer		Deer	1931		
4 Alington House v Sherburn [there were 3 extras]			1952		
5 Durham City v Middlesbrough			1868		
5 Wingate v Sedgefield		1879			
	5 Burnopfield Methodist Free Church v Causey British		Ъ	1880	
5			TSL	1932 1946	
		NED			
3	Encsson s	8 V Harraton C.W.	NED	1957	
High a	ggregate in	a one-innings match (does not include sides batting on after w	inning)		
664 for	19 wkts	XII Borderers 353-9dec; XII Durham County Pilgrims 311-10	-		1935
632 for 1	11 wkts	Old Barnardians 313-6dec; Tynemouth 319-5			1933
630 for 1	11 wkts	Ryhope 405-5 dec; Dawdon 225-6		D.Coast	1988
621 for	6 wkts	Bill Quay 310-2; Peterlee 311-4		D.Co	1992
603 for 1	13 wkts	Eppleton 329-6dec; South Shields 274-7		DSL	1913
602 for	7 wkts	Evenwood 314-0; Shildon Railway 288-7		D.Co	1991
Large v	victories				
343 runs		South Shields 410-8dec; Tynemouth 67		1905	
307 runs		Coxhoe 354-6; Brandon 47	NWD	1988	
300 runs		Eppleton 336; South Hetton 36		1896	
296 runs		Consett 333-3dec; Ashington 37	TSL	1935	
290 runs		Consett 343-5dec; Backworth Percy 53	-DL	1910	
285 runs		Sacriston 406-9; Reyrolle 121	TSL	1992	
283 runs		Blaydon 343-4; Reyrolle 60	TSL	1992	
283 runs		Evenwood 328-6; Langley Park 45	D.Co	1994	
		, 6 - , -			

Abbreviations for names of Leagues:

Cox & D Coxhoe and District League Darl & D Darlington and District League

Deer Deerness and District League (sometimes called Deerness Valley League)

D.Coast Durham Coast League
D.Co Durham County League

DL Durham League (formed 2013)

DSL Durham Senior League (and predecessor Durham County Senior League)

Hpl & DHartlepool and District LeagueMid-DMid-Durham Senior LeagueN.CombNorthern Combination LeagueNDSLNorth Durham Senior League

NTSL Northumberland & Tyneside Senior League (formed 2000)

NED North East Durham League NEPL North East Premier League NWD North West Durham League

NYSD North Yorkshire and South Durham League

Pen & D Penshaw and District League
Sun & D Sunderland and District League
Tyne & D Tyne and District League
TSL Tyneside Senior League
Wear V Wear Valley League
W.Tyne West Tyne League

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Davis Underdown: Start of Play (Cricket and Culture in Eighteenth Century England) [Allen Lane 2000]

Social and economic history

Norman McCord: North East England: The Regions Development 1760-1960 [Batsford 1979]

Retired schoolteacher JACK CHAPMAN is vice-chairman of Blaydon C C and statistics secretary of Northumberland & Tyneside Senior League and published "One Hundred Years of Cricket at Blaydon" in 1991, the club's centenary year. A batsman, of sorts, with Leslies, Shotley Bridge and Blaydon in the Tyneside Senior League, he has combined his love of the game and position as Head of English to write a definitive history of club cricket in County Durham.

A common image of Durham is an area of grimy coalfields inhabited by hardened drinkers in flat caps with a passion for pigeons, whippets and football. It was true of days gone by but it is worth recalling the reputation came at a harsh price measured in human hardship and tragic loss of life. While it hardly applies now this thoroughly researched narrative is ever mindful of these social developments as it traces the game's roots from days when Durham was a cricket backwater through 250 years to its maturing position in the game today. Such standing was not earned by boors swilling beer but by people of principle, pride and perception. This narrative records some of their names as insurance against fickle memory and to honour their resolve to provide the wherewithal for any who wish to be part of this wonderful game.



Jack Chapman (right) in conversation with Colin Milburn

CREAM TEAS AND NUTTY SLACK A History of Club Cricket in County Durham (1751-2002)

If records were available and someone could be found to write the history of local cricket I am confident in saying that a very thrilling story would be unfolded.

So wrote 'Old Timer' in a letter to the Consett Guardian in 1953. JACK CHAPMAN has taken up the challenge and "Cream Teas and Nutty Slack" is a readable account of how club cricket evolved in County Durham.

Even today some have an image of Durham as an area of grimy coalfields inhabited by hardened drinkers in flat caps with a passion for pigeons, whippets and football. The reputation had truth in days gone by and came at a harsh price measured in human hardship and tragic loss of life. Little applies now but this thoroughly researched narrative is mindful of those social developments as it traces the game's roots from days when Durham was a cricket backwater through 250 years to the formation of a Premier League and its maturing position in the game today. Such standing was not earned by boors swilling beer but by people of principle, pride and perception. "Cream Teas and Nutty Slack" records their names partly as insurance against fickle memory, partly to honour their resolve to provide club cricket for any who wish to be part of this wonderful game.

"Cream Teas and Nutty Slack" relives the tales, warts and all. The nobility who put Durham cricket on the map, the county's first cricket widow, visionary Harry Mallett, the first professional who promptly upset the locals in 1838, cantankerous 'Kellet' Kirtley causing a riot and Dr Richardson jibing the great All England XI. The gambling and wrangling, the court cases and the nod-nod-wink-wink question of money. Deaths at Bunker Hill, sad suicides, spectators mobbing umpires and tarred fencing mysteriously white-washed during the tea interval.

Who was the one-legged spinner bowling to the one-armed wicket-keeper, who was the first overseas pro, who scored 332, who took 10 for none and who scored a hundred and took all ten wickets in a match? Which club won after losing by six, which club scored 549 and which one was stripped of a title?

Players range from the duffer who apologised for having just one pad on the 'wrong' leg because he thought the bowling was from the other end to local lads Colin Milburn and Paul Collingwood who 'made it' for England. From Albert Elsdon, who had a boyish dream to play for ever, to today's dreaming boys like Nicky Peng, Gary Scott and Gordon Muchall. Exciting overseas professionals like Clayton Lambert. Lance Cairns, Wasim Raja, Richie Richardson and Steve Russell and legendary Englishmen Alf Morris, Jack Carr, combative Alex Coxon and phenomenal Steve Greensword.

JACK CHAPMAN is vice-chairman of Blaydon CC and Northumberland & Tyneside Senior League's statistics secretary. His One Hundred Years of Cricket at Blaydon (1991) was favourably reviewed in Wisden Cricket Monthly and The Cricketer. A Tyneside Senior League batsman, of sorts, with Leslies, Shotley Bridge and Blaydon, he has combined his love of the game and former rôle as Head of English to write a definitive history of club cricket in County Durham.

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