

TCC Match Reports 2001

SUNDAY APRIL 29th

Versus Crossbank Methodists (home)

'And the rain it raineth every day'
(Shakespeare - As You Like It)

Cricketers appearing after the dampest twelve months on record put one in mind of the earliest land creatures emerging from primordial swamps. Whilst plenty of enthusiasm was in evidence, practical reality soon set in with the opening game of the 2001 season being called off as soon as the scheduled start time had been reached.

By a stroke of fortune the outfield had been mowed ten days before the scheduled season opener. This was lucky as the following week the saturated ground meant that it was a case of ten yards forwards and five yards sideways. The prospect of doing the whole field on foot was quickly rejected and so, had play been possible, cultured cover drives searing over the boundary would have been at a premium.

At least the cancellation meant that hopes were still in tact and personal targets leading to, in baseball parlance, a career season were not called into question. All was still to play for.

Phil Brammall was missing from the teamsheet with a cartilage operation imminent. His part in the successes of the past fifteen years cannot be underestimated and it is to be hoped that he is able to make a contribution before too long and add to his 775 wickets in the first team.

The unavailability of newcomers Michael Eastwood and Jon Brigg led to a recall to Andrew Booth who had figured mainly in second team cricket in the last ten years or so. Simon Burgess was also drafted in. His excellent fielding is always a feature of his game and memories of the 36 he scored in the final second team game of the 2000 season should give him confidence with his bating. He has more ability in that area than his scores sometimes suggest.

The second team soon arrived back from Woolley, also victims of those promoting ark building skills amongst Noah's descendants, and so many enjoyed a session in the bar giving a much needed boost to finances after the quiet winter period.

Let us hope that the weather at last relents and that we do not spend too much time off the field as, sadly, was so often the case in 2000.

Team selected v. Crossbank Methodists: Lee Booth; John Eastwood; Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; Neil Booth; Andrew Booth; David Denton; Nicky Hoyland; Daniel Peace; David Rishton; Simon Burgess;

SATURDAY MAY 5th

Versus Hoylandswaine (away)

'...tired with labour of far travel we have come to our own home and rest on the couch we have longed for. This it is which alone is worth all these toils. ' (Catullus 87 - 54 BC)

A chaste May wind greeted players at Hoylandswaine where the view from the pavilion seems to take in half of West Yorkshire. The power stations near Ferrybridge and Selby were very distinct although well out of the range of even the most determined six hitter. At least the fine weather meant that the season could get under way in earnest with Martin Oldham and Mick Ingledow opening the innings.

Despite the early loss of the latter for 2, steady progress was made against an accurate opening attack. John Eastwood (8) was run out just when seeming to get set but David Howarth (37) gave valuable support to Martin Oldham who gradually gained in confidence. He has occasionally had rather a slow start in terms of run scoring but a well deserved fifty was characterised by several trademark drives. On reaching 66 he eventually was bowled by the second ball from youngster J-P Mulrooney who then proceeded to take 4 for 24 in four overs of mixed quality but no-one got settled in the late innings run chase.

The 45 over total of 155 for 7 seemed adequate but there were always doubts about whether it was enough with Darren Lockwood back in the opposition ranks after missing all the 2000 season after sustaining a badly broken leg when playing football.

The tea interval scarcely seemed long enough to do justice to the buffet provided. The first over was bowled by Daniel Peace who struggled to find a consistent length and his radar system was a little out of order. By the end of proceedings he had bowled four wides. In contrast Andrew Booth, having only his second spell in the first team for several years, was very accurate and runs had to be accrued like retrieving gold coins from a miser's pot. The young Hoylandswaine opener Lee Dickinson dragged one on to his wicket from outside off stump and his equally youthful partner followed when playing down the wrong line to a ball from Ashley Coldwell looking to make his mark in the first team after winning the bowling honours in the seconds in each of the last two seasons.

In hindsight this was not to Thurstonland's long term advantage. Steve Hardwick, who often seems to score runs against us, immediately went on the attack, ruthlessly punishing over pitched deliveries. He was lucky to survive a chance offered in the deep when only 10 but from then on, in partnership with Darren Lockwood, the score was taken from 64 for 3 to 156 and a winning margin of seven wickets.

There was an air of resigned inevitability about the proceedings and the result once the 100 mark had been passed and even the wiles of David Rishton's slow left arm and Lee Booth's off spin only delayed matters, hard though they tried.

All in all then, a slightly disappointing team performance but with individual highlights. Hoylandswaine are an enigmatic side who often seem capable of challenging for major honours. They certainly have several talented players but consistency is sometimes lacking. It was a tough opener and the prospect of Emley, the 2000 champions, on the following day certainly concentrated the mind.

Team: Martin Oldham; Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; David Howarth; Nick Hoyland; Neil Booth; Lee Booth; Daniel Peace; David Rishton; Andrew Booth; Ashley Coldwell.

SUNDAY MAY 6th Versus Emley (home)

'You have deeply ventured; But all must do so who would greatly win ' (Lord Byron)

Both teams had several young players making appearances with the visitors fresh from a last ball outright win the previous day against Old Almondburians. Winning the Premier Section title and the Allsop Cup in 2000 would not have been a common forecast when the season started but, having won promotion only the previous year, they were the only team to achieve season long consistency and so achieved their commendable record.

A pleasant afternoon, although once again rather cold, saw Martin Oldham and Mick Ingledow open. A drive through mid off for four from Martin to take his score to 5 also brought up his 10,000 runs in first team league and cup cricket. He is the first player to reach this notable

landmark and he once again anchored the innings only falling two short of a second fifty in the weekend. Mick Ingledow looked in no trouble until a slightly expansive heave failed to make contact with his score on 8.

John Eastwood moved to 17 with little problem until, for the second time in twenty four hours, he was run out. Both occasions were probably misjudgments on his part so his calling skills might not, for the moment, meet the required standards of the National Guild of Bingo Operatives. Similarly a brief course in sprinting from a suitable coach (David Howarth do I hear ?) might also be of benefit.

After reaching 80 in 22 overs and only two wickets lost, there were thoughts of a total approaching 200. Tighter bowling and early season lack of fluency on the part of the batsmen suddenly saw things slow down. It was left to Lee Booth and brother Neil to set about the rather inconsistent deliveries of spinner Simon Lewis. His introduction to bowl four overs at the end seemed a little surprising in retrospect but possibly the gamble was to take quick wickets. The final 45 over total of 161 for 5 seemed thirty or so too few, given the good start, but was probably what would have been settled for during the mid innings siesta.

Bowling options were few given the absence for various reasons of Daniel Peace, Andrew Booth, David Denton and Phil Brammall. Cometh the hour, cometh the man goes the saying and this applied to Thurstonland.

Ashley Coldwell bowled seven overs of brisk left arm over and took the key wicket of Ken Taylor (8). It was good to see confidence grow and the verbal encouragement was also helpful. David Rishton bowled 22 overs of unbroken slow left arm from the pavilion end and finished with the excellent figures of 3 for 34. Lee Booth took over from Ashley after his opening burst and returned 4 for 72. In only a couple of overs, when already behind the clock, did the Emley batsmen really get after him. Their success is yet more ammunition for those who support the cause of good spin bowling.

Emley opener Simon Lewis scored a patient 34 and Will Appleyard and Dean Rickson made a belated assault, bringing the disinfectant buckets into use when fielders retrieved the ball from the farmers' fields, but it was too little too late and the final score of 124 for 8 was short of requirements. Ian Short, still qualified for the juniors, was a first team debutant and he acquitted himself well in the field although not having a chance to bat.

As well as the tight bowling, good fielding was also a major factor in the win with several good stops being made, a stumping by Nicky Hoyland and four catches, two of which by Ashley Coldwell and Jordan Halliday, another young player, were of particular merit.

Team: Martin Oldham; Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; David Howarth; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; Nicky Hoyland; David Rishton; Ian Short; Jordan Halliday; Ashley Coldwell.

SATURDAY MAY 12th

Versus Lascelles Hall (Home) - Hills Supplies Sykes Cup

' It's all that the young can do for the old, to shock them and keep them up to date. ' (George Bernard Shaw)

A day of high summer suddenly made its appearance, all the more startling after the seemingly endless winds, rain and the inevitable soggy ground. Once again we were to have the challenge of being one of the Huddersfield Central League entrants into the Sykes Cup.

Team selection was not easy with several players being unavailable for various reasons and only five of those who had been chosen to play on the first weekend of the season took the field. Three were making their first team debuts, Jon Brigg, a recent arrival in the village, along with current juniors, both sixteen, Damien Pawson and Matthew McDonagh. With the latter keeping wicket and the former opening the attack there was concern about lack of experience.

Fears proved unfounded as both the prolific scoring Matthew Fraine and Australian professional Tim Cox both departed c McDonagh b Pawson for 5 and 1 respectively. When the ever improving Ashley Coldwell had Craig Horner well caught by David Rishton, the score of 24 for 3 opened up all sorts of possibilities. David Rishton and Lee Booth both bowled tightly in long spells and it was only in the last twelve overs that Lascelles Hall were able to move the score along a little more freely. They were indebted to patient opener Sykes (55) and middle order batsman Thackray (44) for their ability to reach a total of 156 for 6. Damien's figures of 2 for 46 were very creditable and were only spoiled a little when he was attacked in a four over second spell during the run chase.

It was an excellent performance with 50 overs being bowled in two and a half hours, a feat regarded as likely as setting up a snowboarding business in Saudi Arabia in Huddersfield League circles, and some excellent fielding supporting the determined bowlers. Everyone played a part, not least the energetic Ashley Coldwell and Matthew McDonagh who kept wicket very tidily, particularly when standing up to the spinners.

It was always going to prove demanding, particularly at the start. Cox and Horner bowled aggressively and Peter Mason found the sheer pace demanding on his sudden recall to opening duties. Martin Oldham also departed early and it was left first to Neil Booth (26) and then captain Lee Booth (68) to lead the fightback. Lee's innings was probably his best in the first team with scarcely a false shot and a text book cover drive for four and an effortless six over long off being particular highlights. David Denton made 17 and Jordan Halliday, although unlucky to end up with a duck, held on for nearly half an hour in a sixth wicket stand which eked out 25 runs. The high points were 127 for 5 and then 132 for 6 but three wickets in four balls flourish from the persistent if rather anxious Craig Horner polished off an inexperienced tail to end our innings at 133. Our Huddersfield League Section A opponents were certainly relieved at their relatively narrow victory.

There was widespread satisfaction at the performance and delight at the contributions made by young players who were not overawed by the occasion. Whilst they cannot be expected to perform miracles each week, it is good to see the next generation of players starting to make its mark. It was certainly the youngest first team fielded for some considerable time.

Team: Martin Oldham; Peter Mason; Neil Booth; Jon Brigg; Lee Booth; David Denton; Jordan Halliday; David Rishton; Matthew McDonagh; Damien Pawson; Ashley Coldwell.

SATURDAY MAY 19th
Versus Denby Dale (away)

'All is for the best in the best of possible worlds.'
(Voltaire 1694-1778)

Openers Dyson and Geldart made measured progress at the start of the Denby Dale innings against a tidy spell from both Ashley Coldwell and Damien Pawson. Although wickets were not easy to come by, none of the batsman really threatened to take the initiative until a hard hitting 37 late on from James Peace.

Six bowlers were used in all so there was certainly variety on offer and signs that, even when a breakthrough seemed unlikely, matters were not allowed to drift. Martin Oldroyd, on his seasonal debut in the first team, made a relatively rare appearance in the attack with his teasing slow medium floaters whilst the spin attack of David Rishton and Lee Booth set problems in the middle of the innings.

In the end a total of 152 for 8 for the home team seemed reasonably respectable after the quiet early part of the innings. John Eastwood took a good catch in the gully whilst Lee Booth comfortably held a skier at square leg as the overs began to run out.

The ground and facilities at Denby Dale have been improved greatly, helped by a grant, and a pleasant tea was enjoyed before beginning the reply.

David Howarth (10) succumbed to a good catch at the wicket by the evergreen Peter Bentley, standing up to the medium pace of Paul Wilkinson after a stand of 27 for the first wicket. Martin Oldham continued in his rich vein of form accompanied by John Eastwood. With scores of 68 and 48 already this time he once again fell just short of a deserved fifty when being dismissed for 47. Neil Booth played a useful cameo knock and captain Lee Booth (24*) kept John Eastwood (44*) company to the end as victory was achieved with a score of 156 for 3 in the fortieth over. After four league games a total of twelve points represented a reasonable return and gave Thurstonland a place in the leading group of teams in the embryonic Premiership table.

The victory had been fairly routine in the end with Denby Dale not quite able to secure vital wickets at key moments. One or two catches went down and full advantage was taken of this by the Thurstonland batsmen. The amply proportioned Paul Simpson caused most problems with seven overs of deceptively gentle slow medium pace bowling but he came into the attack a little late in the day and patient watchfulness from the well established batsmen meant that the odd bad ball could be waited for and duly punished without taking risks which could have provided the home team with some much needed wickets.

Team: David Howarth; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Neil Booth; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; David Denton; Nicky Hoyland; David Rishton; Damien Pawson; Ashley Coldwell.

SUNDAY MAY 20th

Versus Heckmondwike & Carlinghow (home) - Allsop Cup Round 1

'Either he's dead or my watch has stopped.'

(Grouch Marx 1895-1977)

Gallant underdogs against Lascelles Hall eight days previously became firm favourites against first time opponents who only joined the Central League four years ago. Our visitors are a relatively new club formed from two separate teams in the mid nineties and they have worked their way into Section A after three promotions. They were looking forward to the challenge.

An early wicket for Andrew Booth, standing in for Damien Pawson who was finishing the long drawn out junior football season, in a very accurate opening spell seemed routine enough. Runs were never easy to come by for the visitors and when 39 for 3 was the total at about the 20 over mark, everyone seemed to be following the prepared script. How wrong that impression was.

From the arrival at the crease of Heckmondwike captain John Hudston fortunes turned although the full significance of his innings only became apparent later. he made a controlled attack on the bowling and in a good display of clean hitting, which necessitated the use of the

disinfectant bucket on four occasions when retrieving the ball from neighbouring fields, he turned the game with a score of 55. He was well supported in a sixth wicket stand by opening bowler S. Orme (20), more of whom later, and a late flourish from the veteran wicketkeeper and leg spinner Adam Cooper, with the Paul Adams action, meant that a total of 161 for 7 was reached at the end of 45 overs.

This was not in the game plan although it was not a total to cause too many nightmares given our batting capabilities. A refusal to be overawed on the part of our visitors had helped them to achieve their total and some indifferent catching and slow motion fielding had helped them along.

S. Orme was accompanied by sixteen year old relative T. Orme and if their names might have suggested the grand but immobile namesake at Llandudno, illusions were quickly shattered. The latter picked up a single wicket in a tidy eight overs but it was the former with 7 for 47 who was the key factor. From first to last he bowled spiritedly, getting movement both ways, and no Thurstonland batsman ever really came to terms with him.

We arrived at 17 for 3 in no time and only determined resistance from Neil Booth (18), a brief flurry from Martin Oldroyd (16), all scored in boundaries and another score of 16 from David Denton got the total as far as 84 for 8. Leg spinner Cooper also proved a handful as the visitors sensed an unexpected but thoroughly deserved success.

David Rishton (25) gave the final score some respectability helped by some dogged defence from Andrew Booth and an unlikely 8* from Ashley Coldwell who equaled his career best total in a brief but breezy last wicket stand. Even the dropping of a simple skied chance from David Rishton only delayed the end for a few balls as he succumbed to a running catch near the boundary when going for a big hit off Cooper.

The final total of 125 left us well short of requirements and it was a well chastened team who acknowledged the well deserved win of our delighted opponents. As the cliché has it...we can now concentrate on the league!

Team: David Howarth; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Neil Booth; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; Nicky Hoyland; David Denton; David Rishton; Andrew Booth; Ashley Coldwell.

SATURDAY MAY 26th Versus Bretton (home)

'They are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing.' (Shakespeare - Merchant of Venice)

A good batting track and a modest, at least on this evidence, Bretton bowling attack led to full use being made of the disinfectant buckets whilst retrieving the ball from the neighbouring farmers' fields after the latest hit for six. A relatively quiet start was most noteworthy for the bizarre run out of Neil Booth. Opening the first team innings for the first time for quite a while. Slipping over after failing to square cut a fairly wide delivery, what seemed like several seconds elapsed before he engaged in anguished lamentations with teammates walking round the boundary about the state of his footwear. The ball in its journey past his bat had ricocheted from wicketkeeper to first slip. The latter, having had time to ponder on the meaning of life in general, observed Neil's frustrated perambulation outside his crease whereupon he threw down the wicket leaving the anguished batsman a forlorn trek back to the pavilion seeking consolation in the biblical Lamentations of Jeremiah.

This wicket fell at 10 but then followed a run scoring indulgence led by Mick Ingledow (60) and John Eastwood (97) whose second wicket stand of 152 was only 7 short of the club record. Captain Lee Booth also weighed in with a quick 56 not out and other smaller contributions from Martin Oldroyd and Nick Hoyland resulted in a club record score of 272 for 5. The previous record had been set as recently as July 2000 against Emley when the figure was 264 for 4.

In the course of their innings John Eastwood and Mick Ingledow moved into ninth and tenth places on the aggregate run scoring list in the first team.

The huge total was never likely to be beaten but the final Bretton reply in their 45 overs of 161 for 2 meant that the game became the seventh highest aggregate since reliable records began in 1954 with a total of 433 runs scored and, remarkably, only 7 wickets taken in the afternoon. These were riches indeed for those enjoying the sight of toiling bowlers and scampering fielders but games such as this are rather like cream cakes, one is a treat but several clog the palate. At least occasional bowlers such as Martin Oldroyd and John Eastwood got a taste of the action but even they could not tempt opposing batsmen into indiscretions.

The result put the team in fifth place on 17 points, five behind early leaders Cawthorne, the opposition on June 9th.

Ways of bowling teams out need to be found if a realistic attempt is to be made on the championship. The dropping of points in the so called winning draw could prove costly in a season where several teams might be capable of mounting a challenge for the title.

Team: Neil Booth; Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; Nicky Hoyland; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; David Denton; Jordan Halliday; David Rishton; Damien Pawson; Ashley Coldwell

SATURDAY JUNE 2nd Versus Holmbridge (Away)

'Now who will stand on either hand, and keep the bridge with me?'
(Lord Macaulay)

The picturesque Holmbridge ground, overlooked by St. David's church at the head of the Holme Valley, is for the most part a one or four ground. Part of its charm or eccentricity lies in its shape. In length it is not noticeably small but its narrowness can give a claustrophobic feel. The cover and mid-wicket boundaries are barely forty yards away and fielding on the edge, particularly by the mesh fence protecting the ground from the river, gives a sense of affinity with the defenders of the Alamo or the besieged pioneers in the covered wagon circle so much a part of B movie Westerns.

For the first time for a while the rains returned and held up play for twelve minutes in two spells before tea and then for half an hour afterwards. In spite of this the game was played to a finish.

Batsmen always feel that runs are to be scored on this small ground and A.Haigh certainly set off briskly for the opposition with a rapid 32 inside the first twelve overs before falling to a steepling catch near the embankment boundary. Damien Pawson continued to show his promise with a nine over opening spell yielding 1 for 24 with 7 of those runs conceded resulting from wides. These were a curiosity as he bowled very accurately. Ashley Coldwell also bowled energetically but tended to deliver a boundary ball each over which did not flatter him. His excellent fielding was a feature of the game and a direct hit gained the run out of a

startled Craig Furze, a former junior at Thurstonland, who also played four first team games before having three or four seasons at Cumberworth before joining Holmbridge for 2001.

Spinners do not usually look forward to the small ground but David Rishton put in a masterly display of left arm spin to finish with 2 for 32 from 17 overs, having conceded only 4 from his first 11! His miserly bowling would have won an approving nod from Ebenezer Scrooge himself.

It was also good to see Daniel Peace back in action and picking up a couple of wickets from a lively spell in the unaccustomed role of second change. Only D.Holroyd (30*) rally provided any sustained resistance after the opening run flurry and the total of 115 for 7 was an unusually low one for the ground.

A second successive fifty from Mick Ingledow (51) and a solid 44* in his 250th first team innings from David Howarth saw victory gained with relative ease. A late flourish from Nicky Hoyland saw Thurstonland home by eight wickets with the best part of twenty overs to spare.

The scorer, your correspondent, also survived for another year the ascent of the narrow toeholds of the vertical wall face to the scoreboard to complete a satisfying afternoon. Perhaps the shock cup defeat has had its desired effect and next week's encounter with Cawthorne should set the scene for the rest of the season as the league table begins to take shape.

Team; David Howarth; Mick Ingledow; Neil Booth; Nicky Hoyland; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; David Denton; Daniel Peace; David Rishton; Damien Pawson; Ashley Coldwell

SATURDAY JUNE 9th Versus Cawthorne (home)

'Fortune aids the brave' (Terence, Roman writer c. 190 - 159 BC)

The last over of the game should have carried a health warning so that those of a nervous disposition could look away. After the previous two rather low key encounters, this match, although relatively low scoring had enough excitement and fluctuating fortunes to keep even the most cynical satisfied.

League leaders Cawthorne were naturally confident after their fine start to the season but a purposeful start by David Howarth and Mick Ingledow saw 37 runs on the board by the tenth over. The latter scored his 24 with uncharacteristic fluency until being bowled trying to hook a ball in the direction of Emley mast and failing to make contact. There then followed a period of attrition as the introduction of slow bowler Gary Kilburn supported by Mick Holling and Darren Lindley saw only six runs added in a nine over spell. Neil Booth compiled a patient 16 before holing out following a checked drive.

David Howarth soldiered on before losing his middle stump after scoring 42. Lee Booth (13) and Martin Oldroyd (15) made cameo contributions but it was left to good running and a few lusty blows by youngsters Jordan Halliday and Damien Pawson in the last two overs to raise the score to 137 for 8. The relatively low score was also brought about by some fine Cawthorne fielding, particularly in the area of point and deep gully where something like twenty runs were saved.

Damien Pawson had a lively spell of six overs at the start of the Cawthorne innings and was probably unlucky not to get the wicket of Darren Lindley who was ' caught ' at short cover of a fierce drive by Mick Ingledow only for it to be adjudged a bump ball. David Rishton had a rare chance to open with his left arm spin and, indeed, he bowled unchanged from the pavilion end

to finish with figures of 4 for 64. A smart catch and quick stumping from young stand in wicketkeeper Matthew McDonagh were two of his victims, including the reprieved Lindley for 26.

After a sound start the Cawthorne innings looked in danger of folding but determined resistance came from Stephen Thorpe in the middle order and his 42 brought relief for the visitors who recovered from 66 for 5 to reach 99 without further loss. David Denton then came on the scene like a one man version of the US cavalry riding to the rescue. The last pair needed 13 when they came together and had three overs available. Martin Oldroyd, inches from the boundary line, caught a potential six and, almost in the same split second, flung the ball back into the field of play to avoid carrying it over the boundary, turning the shot into two.

At the start of the last over seven were needed to win and eventually two to tie off the last ball. This was cut to backward point where Damien Pawson advanced purposefully on it. The batsman turned for the tying run as the throw came in with unerring accuracy for Matthew McDonagh to break the wicket with the batsman two yards short of the crease. A great finish to a closely contested game which proved that vast totals do not always provide the most excitement.

Team: David Howarth; Mick Ingledow; Neil Booth; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; David Denton; David Rishton; Jordan Halliday; Damien Pawson; Matthew McDonagh; Ashley Coldwell.

SATURDAY JUNE 16th Versus Edgerton (away)

'From winter, plague and pestilence, good lord, deliver us.'
(Thomas Nashe 1567 - 1601)

It was something of a surprise that play began at all half an hour late and even more remarkable was the fact that it then continued uninterrupted. Only a mile or two away games were abandoned without a ball being bowled. In the end the result was academic as ours was the only match to finish in the Premier Section when a minimum of two out of six have to be completed for points to count. At least we managed to play although conditions were more like those of a mid October day even though we were less than a week from the longest day.

Our opponents, relative newcomers to the Central League and playing for the first time in the top division, had a half century opening stand in a match reduced to 40 overs after the late start. They were aided by several wides from Damien Pawson who found the damp run up a problem and a spate of dropped catches. There was an air of quiet detachment in the first stage of the game as if players could hardly believe they were in a game given the weather conditions. David Rishton, again on from the beginning with his wily slow left arm teasers, kept things in check with a second successive game where he bowled through. His final figures were 3 for 55 and his first wicket took him past Frank Harrison (670 victims) on the all time wicket taking list to end on 673 chasing Phil Brammall's 775.

Captain Lee Booth (3 for 36) made a breakthrough with his first ball and an all spin attack wore down the opposition with David Denton (2 for 43) also amongst the wickets. Nicky Hoyland was making his 50th appearance in the first team.

Edgerton were quietly confident that their total of 155 for 8 would be enough but a good opening from David Howarth (23) and an unusually flamboyant innings from Mick Ingledow (70) meant that we soon had the initiative. Some cultured off drives from John Eastwood (45*) and a brisk 13 not out from Lee Booth saw Thurstonland home with three overs to spare

on 159 for 2. In the end, however, both teams ended with a single point because no other game in the section was even started.

Lee Booth leads the batting averages so far with 223 runs at an average of 74.33, aided by 5 not outs in his 8 innings, followed by John Eastwood with 213 runs averaging 53.25. The leading wicket taker is David Rishton with 18 followed by Lee Booth on 14 and David Denton on 12. They have been the mainstays of the attack so far but it is important that support comes from elsewhere.

Damien Pawson is a good prospect and at 16 is still learning the ropes. He has probably deserved more than his three wickets so far but must try to develop more consistency at the start of a spell. Ashley Coldwell's left arm medium often shows life and the less common bowling style in itself can cause problems but short pitched deliveries often result in boundaries and undo previous good work. His unbounded enthusiasm and lively fielding make him a valuable member of the squad.

Team: David Howarth; Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; Neil Booth; Nicky Hoyland; David Denton; David Rishton; Damien Pawson; Ashley Coldwell.

SATURDAY JUNE 23rd Versus Cumberworth (home)

'Summer afternoon - summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language.' (Henry James 1843 - 1916)

The first of the two games of a league double header weekend against Cumberworth promised a to be a genuine test of the recent good form and the rise to joint second in the table of the in form senior team. Over the last four seasons the visitors have had a series of wins against us whilst never quite managing to become league champions which their form has at times suggested was well within their capabilities.

Lively fielding and good catching, one spilled offering on the boundary excepted, always kept the visitors in check. The dangerous Chris Mosley, a heavy scorer against us in recent seasons, fell to a sharp chance at second slip when just getting into his stride and the return of Daniel Peace to the opening attack allied to a high level of accuracy meant that Cumberworth were never able to score freely. A patient 38 by young league Under 21 player Mark Dolley held matters together but it was a typically forceful 47 from James Bower batting at number 7 which helped the visitors reach 171 for 9 at the end of their 45 overs. David Rishton was his usual accurate self in taking three wickets and received good support in the later stages from David Denton and Daniel Peace who returned for one over at the end.

A rare duck for Mick Ingledow, bowled in the second over, was not the most auspicious of starts to our reply but a long partnership between David Howarth and John Eastwood gradually turned fortunes Thurstonland's way. The accustomed studiously correct approach of the former made a stark contrast to the confidently flamboyant strokes of the latter and a century stand was the result before David's innings was ended on 34.

Martin Oldroyd then kept the free scoring club treasurer company as his century approached with a seeming air of inevitability. Yet again, however, the nervous nineties struck. Having gone for 97 a week or two ago he arrived at 99 and then fell to a hard low chance at mid wicket, one short of what would have been his third century for the club. He did record his fifth score in the nineties and, of course, his second this season.

After his departure it was left to the Booth brothers, Lee 9* and Neil 13*, to see us home with confidence high on 172 for 4. At the moment things were looking good for a serious challenge for the title although games against Hoylandswaine and close rivals Emley in early July would appear to be key factors in establishing a pecking order as the second half of the season gets underway.

A humid afternoon turned a little cooler at teatime with, amazingly, a few drops of thundery rain, but all was well for the barbecue afterwards. None had been possible in the rain soaked summer of 2000 so that was a welcome bonus. It was hoped that energies would be duly fortified for the visit to close neighbours Old Almondburians the following day.

Team: David Howarth; Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; Martin Oldroyd; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; Nicky Hoyland; David Denton; David Rishton; Daniel Peace; Damien Pawson.

**SUNDAY JUNE 24th
Versus Old Almondburians (away)**

'No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feathered grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.'
(John Keats 1795 - 1821)

A hot humid afternoon, the likes of which had even the more venerable sages searching their memories for the last such occasion, greeted those assembled for the second half of the weekend's fixtures. The trees around the attractive ground were still as the game began and the chance for your correspondent to keep score in the open air was a welcome one.

The heat in the atmosphere was unexpectedly matched by a frenzy of runs and crashing wickets on the field. A brilliant leg side catch behind the wicket saw off David Howarth for 4 whilst opening partner Mick Ingledow, having hit a trenchant four to get off the mark, was unfortunate to be given out, also caught behind, off a delivery which he seemed to miss by several inches. Neither Martin Oldroyd nor in form captain Lee Booth lingered long and a score of 24 for 4 after only a handful of overs was certainly not in the script.

A recovery of sorts was begun by the near century maker of the previous day, John Eastwood, again looking in confident form and Neil Booth. The former fell to a fine slip catch after driving a little flamboyantly at a wide half volley for 31 to set the scene for an excellent stand of 95 between Neil Booth and David Denton. Neither looked in any kind of trouble from the bowling although the demands of the stiflingly hot afternoon were another matter. Drinks breaks were very welcome.

David's trademark leg glances and pulls enabled him to reach an excellent 47 before being bowled as the end of the innings loomed but Neil stayed to the end to finish with 65*, one short of a personal best in the first team, and even managed a three in the final over although odds against his legs lasting out on the final one would have been very short. Given the poor start to matters, the final score of 181 for 7 seemed very respectable and confidence was reasonably high at tea.

When the first of the host's wickets fell at 17 optimism grew but that turned out to be the best of times as Steve Slack in his usual accomplished way and the rather less likely figure of Paul Hirst dominated bowling which in the first ten overs at least was decidedly generous. A rather large number of wides did not help and it was only the wiles of David Rishton that pegged back the increasingly confident opposition. When Slack was eventually bowled for 52 and Hirst

reached what was for him a rare fifty (51) the remaining Almondburian batsmen were always in the driving seat aided by a quick fire 23 from Tom Cliffe. They reached their target with four balls to spare, which was later than had seemed likely after the whirlwind opening, and ended on 182 for 4.

It had been the second highly entertaining game of the weekend but the Thurstonland team was a little chastened after recent positive performances and results and a chance to go joint top of the table had been lost. The last game of the first half of the season now awaited with Higham the opposition.

Team: David Howarth; Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; Martin Oldroyd; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; David Denton; Daniel Peace; David Rishton; Matthew McDonagh; Damien Pawson.

SATURDAY JUNE 30th Versus Higham (home)

'I don't think I can be expected to take seriously any game which takes less than three days to reach its conclusion.'

(playwright Tom Stoppard as a cricket enthusiast writing about baseball)

I reminded Ian Lake the long serving Higham scorer that it was twenty years since Thurstonland had last lost to them. He had been lamenting the fact that he could never remember coming away from our ground with a victory. Two wins over the past weekend had taken them out of the bottom two and an easy victory over our conquerors, Old Almondburians, made them optimistic.

An early wicket when they batted having won the toss was not the best of beginnings but a forceful 31 from Ian Robinson and, after a tentative start, an accomplished 37 from Robert Cherryholme batting at number three promised better things. The returning Ashley Coldwell was unlucky not to take an early wicket when Neil Booth was unable to hang on to a well struck drive, just getting his fingertips to the ball. The all spin attack of David Rishton and Lee Booth slowed the scoring and runs were eked out like money from an unenthusiastic Victorian philanthropist.

A low point of 99 for 7 was reached before a late rally by Paul Wroe (17*), batting surprisingly low at No. 9 and veteran wicketkeeper Paul Bamforth (14*) gave a final tally of 147 for 8. This seemed a little low given the speed of the outfield which at last looked dry after the storms and tempests of last summer and most of the autumn and winter.

David Rishton returned excellent figures of 4 for 35 and he and Lee Booth were aided by two excellent stumpings from Matthew McDonagh standing in for the unavailable Nicky Hoyland. David Denton once again bowled tidily towards the end and picked up two well deserved wickets.

Part of Higham's struggles stem from the fact that a lot depends on opening bowlers Danks and captain Roebuck. David Howarth and Mick Ingledow played three maidens at the start and a curiosity was that only ten balls were scored from in the first twelve overs but six of those went for four so the scoring rate, in spite of that, was reasonable. Gradually the rate picked up and a half century opening stand developed with good hooks and pulls from Mick Ingledow and studied drives and nudges from David Howarth.

The former eventually fell for 42 whilst the latter made 30 before being run out after another yes/no interlude involving John Eastwood. His unlucky lbw dismissal for 6 broke a sequence of good scores but the real hero was Martin Oldroyd who had so far had a quiet season with the

bat. After starting nervously he discovered his timing and the final runs accompanied by Lee Booth came in a rush with the batsmen undefeated on 43 and 11 respectively.

Neither of last week's run scoring heroes Neil Booth and David Denton were required so there was a feeling that matters were back on course after last week's disappointment on the Sunday. The second half of the season now lies ahead.

Team: David Howarth; Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; Martin Oldroyd; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; David Denton; Daniel Peace; David Rishton; Matthew McDonagh; Ashley Coldwell.

SATURDAY JULY 7th

Versus Crossbank Methodists (away)

'Follow the yellow brick road.'

(E.Y.Harburg - US songwriter of the famous lyrics from The Wizard of Oz)

The picturesque Crossbank Methodists ground near Birstall proved as difficult to find for some of the Thurstonland team as did the long sought for route to see the wizard by Dorothy, the Cowardly Lion and the Tin Man in the perennially popular 1939 feature film.

The Thurstonland innings began with the last of the team arriving with tales of woe about map reading skills and tales of adventure more associated with a trek into the Australian outback with only the stars as guide rather than a drive through urban West Yorkshire.

The early overs proved a challenge with an uneven bounce causing problems and David Howarth succumbed to a lifter which caught his glove for a catch behind when he had made only one. Mick Ingledow, after taking a while to settle, suddenly began to take a heavy toll on anything short or over pitched. Accompanied first by John Eastwood (22) and then Martin Oldroyd he compiled a vigorous 88 with powerful blows all round the wicket with no fewer than sixteen fours. The very quick outfield helped batsmen throughout the game.

Wickets were hard to come by for our hosts. After a start when hopeful wafting outside the off stump was a notable feature of Martin Oldroyd's innings he suddenly blossomed into some dismissive stroke play and he was run out in the last over for 47 when Neil Booth, having called for a risky last over single, ignored multiple shouts of ' no ' and proceeded to the other end like the returning Greek sailors to the calls of the Siren temptresses. Six bowlers were tried by Crossbank but a demanding 202 for 7 was the total set at the end of our 45 overs.

Three first team landmarks are worthy of mention. This game was the 100th time Martin Oldroyd had been selected in the senior team whilst both Mick Ingledow and John Eastwood reached career totals of 3000 runs.

Damien Pawson, recalled after the late withdrawal of Ashley Coldwell with a foot injury, took the first three wickets to double his season's tally. Good deliveries and the necessary luck worked in his favour and his final return of 4 for 34 was just reward for a young bowler feeling his way in first team cricket and should give a great boost to his confidence. A pleasing feature of his usual determined approach was the good control he had from the outset.

The opposition innings was hectic to say the least with boundaries mixed with a clatter of wickets and 62 for 6 was the result at one stage. Ian Chambers at No. 4 battled hard to hold things together and he was last out, the second stumping by Nicky Hoyland off David Rishton, for a well deserved 48. Imtiaz Akhtar, batting at No. 9, had scored a century from that position a week or two earlier and had a reputation as a big hitter. His only scoring shot before being caught off a steeper by Damien Pawson was a colossal six which soared over the mid

wicket boundary having threatened in its progress to greet the Hubble telescope in deepest space. The ball landed with unerring accuracy to shatter the rear window of a home player's car so his dismissal a couple of balls later ended any worries of a late rally and prevented a further rise in insurance premiums. Only 34 overs had elapsed when the last wicket went down for 141 giving Thurstonland its second full six point return of the season.

Team: David Howarth; Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; Martin Oldroyd; Lee Booth; Nicky Hoyland; Neil Booth; David Denton; Daniel Peace; David Rishton; Damien Pawson.

SATURDAY JULY 14th Versus Hoylandswaine (home)'

Before you let the sun in, mind it wipes its shoes.' (Dylan Thomas from Under Milk Wood)

A short silence was observed before the game in memory of Gerald Oldham who had died ten days previously. He had served the club successively as player, chairman and president for fifty years and hardly ever missed a first team fixture. Although a little on the cool side, the clear light of a mid season summer afternoon and early evening seemed fitting as a tribute to someone who had spent countless happy hours on the ground.

Daniel Peace was a late withdrawal because of illness and his place was taken by Jordan Halliday. This meant that there were fewer bowling options, particularly given the presence of Steve Hardwick and Darren Lockwood in the opposition line up, both of whom have scored lots of runs against Thurstonland in recent seasons. In the end, however, there were relatively few worries. Damien Pawson, with the slow left arm of David Rishton as his partner, made the early breakthrough . The latter should have had the wicket of Steve Hardwick when he had scored only 4 when he top edged an attempted sweep but the ball went through the hands of the fielder at backward square leg.

Yet again the left hander proved to be the chief stumbling block, going on to 70 before falling to a stunning catch at long on from a flat batted drive. The fielder was Neil Booth who held on with one hand about three yards from the boundary to bring off the catch of a lifetime. A few overs earlier there had been another remarkable effort to get rid of the other left hander, Darren Lockwood. He had made 11 when a shot off his legs facing David Rishton soared towards the bottom boundary where Mick Ingledow appeared initially to have come in too far. At the last moment he stuck up his right hand and, to his astonished delight and that of his teammates, the ball stuck.

With the exception of a late flourish from Wayne Storey (21*) and the usual painstaking 13 in over an hour from opener Ged Lockwood, the rest of the Hoylandswaine batsmen never really got going and three run outs in a late run chase saw them end on 154 for 9. David Rishton ended with the excellent figures of 5 for 50 from the 22 overs he bowled from start to finish of the innings.

There had been a fairly comprehensive win for our visitors in the second game of the season but the ease of our victory in turning the tables was something of a surprise. A quiet start by David Howarth and Mick Ingledow against Wayne Storey and Darren Lockwood set the scene for some cultured strokeplay in the mellow evening sunshine. Several changes were made in the attack but a stand of 125 brought the target well in range before David Howarth was bowled for 66, a first fifty of the season in which he took obvious delight. The stand briefly threatened the club record opening partnership of 154 set by David himself partnered by Glen Wood in May 1989 against the same opposition. John Eastwood came to the wicket and quickly scored 15* from a by now unusually subdued Hoylandswaine. Mick Ingledow's excellent 67* was his second fifty in succession and his fifth in his last nine innings.

The victory kept the team at the top of the Premier Section although Cawthorne closed the gap to one point with their own win gaining the maximum six points for bowling out their opponents. It is to be hoped that the dropping of one point for not dismissing all the other team will not prove costly as the season progresses.

Team: David Howarth; Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; Martin Oldroyd; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; Nicky Hoyland; David Denton; Jordan Halliday; David Rishton; Damien Pawson.

SATURDAY JULY 21st Versus Emley (away)

'.....from the table of my memory I'll wipe away all trivial fond records.....' (Shakespeare - Hamlet)

This was a game to delight the statisticians as well as the team which gained a valuable win against close rivals Emley. Although mild, clouds were never far away, urged on by the breeze which is not often absent on our host's ground barely a mile from Emley TV mast itself. Rain was falling in the Wakefield area on and off throughout the game but , luckily, only a six minute interruption, just after seven o'clock as the game reached its final stages, affected proceedings.

David Howarth and Mick Ingledow made a cautious start against tight bowling from long serving Emley all rounder Ken Taylor and Dean Rickson. Twenty - one was the score when the latter made the breakthrough with David Howarth (2) steering the ball to gully off a rather half-hearted cut. In the next over Mick Ingledow fell lbw to Taylor for 16 and Martin Oldroyd, who narrowly avoided being caught for what proved to be his only run, was beaten and bowled by Rickson when only half forward to a ball which clipped his off stump. A score of 24 for 3 brought reminders of a similar total a month ago at Old Almondburians.

Enter Lee Booth to join in form John Eastwood. This partnership began tentatively with the home team understandably on top after their early wickets and drinks were taken after 23 overs with the total advanced to 61. The patience then proved to be worthwhile as a series of change bowlers were increasingly hit all over the field in a succession of fours from both batsmen and three sixes from John Eastwood who just survived an attempted catch right on the boundary from one of them but young Emley player Pat Moors, although getting both hands to it, fell over the boundary with the ball and, indeed, dropped it as he did so.

A total of 167 was added so breaking the existing club record partnership for the fourth wicket by 24 runs. The stand was ended when Lee Booth was LBW for 67, one short of his highest first team career score. Only a handful of overs remained and Nicky Hoyland, Neil Booth and David Denton all kept John Eastwood company as he reached a well deserved century in the penultimate over. His score of 105* was his third career century for the club after totals of 97 and 99 in earlier games this season. The target set was 228 for 6.

It was hoped that the excellent chocolate and cream cakes at tea were not going to handicap the bowling and fielding. Dan Peace after conceding 10 in his opening over had the potentially dangerous Simon Lewis caught behind by Nicky Hoyland for a duck and John Lee, after looking in good form, fell to a catch at deep mid off by Mick Ingledow off the ever reliable David Rishton just when it seemed he was getting into his stride. Ken Taylor also fell with his score in the twenties to a catch by Martin Oldroyd. This was the other notable statistic as it marked Lee Booth's 200th first team wicket.

When Ken Brown at number 9 joined Dean Rickson with the score on 128 for 7 and over 30 overs gone, the result looked a formality. After an over or two of relative indecision they

decided to have a go to see what runs were on offer and, very briefly, it looked as if a surprise might be on the cards. Immediately after reaching a well struck fifty, Dean Rickson was bowled by the persevering and ever resourceful David Rishton and it was left to the remaining Emley batsmen to hang on for a point with Mick Onions defending the last two balls after Simon Burgess had caught Simon Morley in the gully off David Denton.

David Rishton had his second successive five wicket haul ending with 5 for 54.

Team: David Howarth; Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; Martin Oldroyd; Lee Booth; Nicky Hoyland; Neil Booth; David Denton; Daniel Peace; David Rishton; Simon Burgess.

SATURDAY JULY 28th Versus Denby Dale (home)

' A man must make his opportunity as oft as find it. ' (Francis Bacon 1561 - 1626)

If players, spectators and officials had melted into the liquid shapes associated with a Salvador Dali surrealist painting then few would have been surprised. The enervating heat was of a degree not experienced for several seasons. The wicket was bleached white and promised a feast of runs which duly arrived but a minor sensation was caused when Thurstonland were put in to bat as Lee Booth lost the toss for the twelfth time in sixteen attempts.

Fifteen year old debutant Shaun Alderson opened with Mick Ingledow in the absence of David Howarth and soon got off the mark with a single and square cut for two for his first runs in the senior side but the thinnest of inside edges to the wicketkeeper saw his departure for three. His relatively brief stay, however, showed plenty of promise and he looks a bright prospect for the future. John Eastwood came to the crease and Denby Dale's torments began in earnest.

Both he and Mick Ingledow ruthlessly punished anything wayward and soon boundaries were arriving with increased frequency. Veteran Vic Reed posed a few more problems when he joined the attack but it was still a surprise when the latter was bowled for 61. An almost inevitable fifty, given the rich seam of form he is in at the moment, soon followed for John Eastwood and cameo innings from Lee Booth, Martin Oldroyd and Neil Booth kept the score hastening along with the strike being given to the prolific number 3 batsman as often as possible.

The 200 came up in the 39th over and 62 more were added before the 45 over close. This was the second time in three games that Denby Dale had been on the wrong end of a daunting Thurstonland total and the 262 for 7 followed the 252 scored in the final game of the 2000 season. Vic Reed (5 for 71) was the only bowler to set any sustained challenge to the batsmen. An excellent catch from the penultimate ball of the innings ended John Eastwood's knock on 137, only four short of David Howarth's record first team score of 141. It was his second century in successive games and brought his season's tally to 628 with seven games remaining. This means he is already eighth on the list of record run scorers for a season. Glen Wood leads that list with a massive 887 with David Oldham's 806 the only one remotely close.

Damien Pawson made the breakthrough with the visitor's reply on 17 and Daniel Peace weighed in with two wickets along with one for David Rishton to put the visitors even more on the back foot. A sensational catch at mid off by Damien from a fiercely struck drive from Peter Bentley was a highlight and seven wickets had gone by the end of the 29th over for 120. A determinedly fluent response was to the credit of Smith (41) and Wood (17) made it seem as if the full six points were to go begging again. Last man Wilkinson joined captain Tyas with five overs to go and, with the latter surviving a sharp chance in the gully to batting hero Eastwood, it seemed that five points would be the eventual reward. After hitting a defiant four

form the fourth ball of the next to last over delivered by Lee Booth, Tyas steered the following delivery into the eager and safe hands of Damien Pawson at third slip and the innings closed on 186.

Yet again there had been a high scoring game and the florid countenances of the players as they left the field paid tribute to a hard earned win with the six point reward and gave due testimony to a summer's day the likes of which, particularly during the benighted summer of 2000, few thought they would experience again, global warming or not.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Shaun Alderson; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; Nicky Hoyland; Neil Booth; David Denton; Daniel Peace; David Rishton; Damien Pawson.

SATURDAY AUGUST 4th

Versus Bretton (Away)

' The ploughman near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe'
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.' (John Milton 1608 - 1674)

Signs of early harvesting were in evidence as the journey was made to Bretton's picturesque ground adjacent to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in the grounds of Bretton Hall. The cricket ground itself has the atmosphere of an eighteenth century landscaped estate with trees, horses and cattle providing a satisfying backdrop. It is not easy to credit that the M1 is barely a mile away.

This was a game of top against bottom although our hosts have proved to be durable customers during the season having been bowled out only once but never able to force the run rate sufficiently to give their earnest but workaday bowling attack a chance to defend worthwhile totals. Damien Pawson got an instant breakthrough in his first over, the second of the innings, thanks to a catch at square leg by David Rishton to dismiss promising Central League White Rose representative Blake Kershaw for a duck.

A short rain delay soon followed and then a war of attrition set in with veteran opener Ian Lund and home captain Armeson proving obdurate customers. Neither found scoring easy off Damien Pawson, Daniel Peace, who was to bowl well without the encouragement of a wicket, and the season's workhorse David Rishton who was introduced into the attack in the eleventh over. Perhaps Lee Booth suffered the most frustration as he induced several false shots, particularly from Armeson, without any reward. That having been said, both Bretton batsmen stuck to their task and were not parted until the score was in the seventies. Both played some cultured strokes as well as enjoying the fortune referred to.

The stand was eventually ended when Peter Mason, on what is now a relatively rare first team appearance behind the wickets, produced a smart stumping to dismiss Lund for 35 after the batsman had produced elegant footwork to advance upon the bowler but then failed to make contact. Armeson eventually fell to a return catch to David Rishton on 49, thus narrowly failing to reach fifty in both games against Thurstonland this year, having made 55* in the high scoring encounter at the end of May.

A late flurry of activity accompanied by resourceful running between the wickets saw almost sixty runs from the last seven overs and a final tally of 153 for 5 with David Rishton again the chief wicket taker with 4 for 41.

Mick Ingledow and David Howarth then proceeded to knock off the runs without being separated and had the best part of eleven overs to spare at the end. Their total of 154 equaled the existing opening partnership record set by David himself along with Glen Wood against Hoylandswaine in May 1989 but this achievement takes precedence being unbeaten. It was the second record partnership in a fortnight. They rarely looked in trouble with a late flurry of boundaries from David Howarth (71*), including two sixes, enabling him to almost catch Mick Ingledow (73*). John Eastwood at No.3 had, therefore, no chance to go for a third successive century. Six games to go and a six point lead at the top of the table with Cawthorne and Old Almondburians second and third and both to be played before the end of the season.

Team: David Howarth; Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; Neil Booth; David Denton; Daniel Peace; David Rishton; Peter Mason; Damien Pawson.

Saturday August 11th Versus Holmbridge (Home)

' Away! the moor is dark beneath the moon,
Rapid clouds have drank the last pale beam of even;
Away! the gathering winds will call the darkness soon,
And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of heaven. '
(Percy Shelley 1792 - 1822)

A murky afternoon with scudding clouds made play doubtful at the scheduled starting time of 2.00 but only five minutes were lost before visitors, Holmbridge, began their innings. Lee Booth managed to win the toss for only the fifth time this season. A rather wayward opening salvo from Damien Pawson was duly punished by Ian Wood and Duncan Clough to get the scoreboard moving. Daniel Peace dismissed the latter thanks to a Mick Ingledow catch off a fierce drive at extra cover to bring in Chris Earnshaw and it was not long before an all spin attack was in operation with David Rishton from the pavilion end in tandem with Lee Booth.

After the initial run burst scoring was pegged back but all players found matters difficult in weather conditions which saw fitful sunshine but for much of the time a persistent drizzle which eventually drove everyone off in the 33rd over. A quarter of an hour delay followed and then five more overs were bowled before heavier rain meant an early tea was taken.

A stunning catch by John Eastwood with the ball over his head was a highlight and for once Lee Booth had the lion's share of the wickets taken by spinners, ending up with the well earned figures of 4 for 54' including two stumpings by Nicky Hoyland. David Rishton's solitary victim at a cost of 55 runs did not, perhaps, do him full justice but that wicket was significant in that it was his 700th in first team cricket in his 450th game. His debut had also been against Holmbridge back in 1983.

After tea the Hombridge total advanced to 151 for seven in the remaining overs and there were now to be ten minutes between innings with the early tea. This stretched to an hour and a quarter as heavier rain began just as players were taking the field after the interval. For a brief period it looked as if that could be the end of proceedings as clouds continued to drift in from over the nearby church. The umpires were a little over cautious about resuming when the rain did stop but play eventually resumed at 6.25. the light was going to be a factor as it was likely that fewer than 45 overs would be bowled.

David Howarth departed relatively early, caught behind after appearing to be trying to let the ball go. He only succeeded in scooping the ball to Ian Wood and departed for 7. John Eastwood joined Mick Ingledow and looked in excellent form after his recent centuries but he fell for cameo of 14, caught off an uppish drive at mid off.

Lee Booth began confidently but appeared lucky to survive a confident appeal for a catch at the wicket when only three but he rode his fortune to hit a stylish 24 before being dismissed. With the light deteriorating, Martin Oldroyd was determined to play his shots which included a huge scythe for four over the slip area. Mick Ingledow also was looking to push matters along and was particularly severe on anything short. An unbeaten partnership of 73 saw the winning runs hit at 8.10 when it was probable that, at most, only four or five more overs would have been possible because of the light. Mick Ingledow ended on 68 not out with Martin Oldroyd on 34.

Team: David Howarth; Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; Neil Booth; Nicky Hoyland; David Denton; Daniel Peace; David Rishton; Damien Pawson.

SATURDAY AUGUST 18th Versus Cawthorne (Away)

' Don't look back. Something may be gaining on you.' (Leroy ' Satchel ' Paige 1906 - 1982, American baseball player).

A one run win over our hosts, Cawthorne, in June had been a factor in the top of the table position as the season entered its last phase. Victory here would open up a gap which would be difficult to close. Cawthorne also had the following day's Allsop Cup Final to think about and it was essential for them to win if they were to entertain thoughts of the championship and possibilities of the double. Rain was threatened for later in the afternoon and it did, indeed, arrive although fitfully and never really much more than an irritating and intermittent drizzle so the game proceeded to its conclusion. In the later stages the light was not good with the gloom accentuated by the trees surrounding the park-like ground, always one of the most scenic in the league.

Thurstonland elected to bat and the low, slow bounce of the wicket, well remembered by more venerable players such as your correspondent, was soon in evidence. The recently prolific Mick Ingledow departed early for just a single, lbw to a ball which kept low, and David Howarth was bowled round his legs for seven. Lee Booth joined John Eastwood and batted patiently for over twenty minutes before departing to a ball which swung late and bowled him for nought.

It was fortunate that John Eastwood continued his good form as runs had to be eked out of an accurate attack, particularly from Mick Holling and the evergreen Frank Kilburn. Martin Oldroyd played with restraint and managed to unleash one or two powerful drives before succumbing when going back rather than forwards and being bowled for a hard earned 14. His almost primeval shout of anguish as he departed showed his disappointment, just as the innings was getting back on a more even keel, having moved matters on from 27 for 3 to 61.

Neither David Denton nor Nicky Hoyland lasted long and 82 for 6 was workhouse rations after the rich pickings of recent weeks when fifteen year old Shaun Alderson made his way to the middle in his second first team appearance. John Eastwood reached yet another fifty and encouraged his young partner who hung on well once he realised that playing forward was essential for survival. He eventually departed for 60, caught behind off a ball which left him late with the total on 103. Daniel Peace hit a mighty four before being caught off a skier a couple of balls later and a relatively rare appearance at the crease by David Rishton, possibly under used as a batsman, saw matters to their conclusion at 125 for 8. He ended up not out 11 with Shaun Alderson, after nearly fifty minutes of graft, undefeated on 6.

David Denton opened the bowling with Daniel Peace in the absence with back trouble of Damien Pawson. Nicholson departed quite soon but Darren Lindley compiled a patient innings of 28 and, as so often this year, the all spin attack of Rishton and Booth was in tandem. The

former was very accurate and runs came slowly and Lee Booth picked up a couple of wickets to keep the pressure on.

In the end, however, some lusty hitting from Gary Kilburn at No. 6 turned matters Cawthorne's way. He ended with 31 after surviving a run out when Nicky Hoyland in a sitting position contrived to miss the wicket with a throw from all of four yards. Nine were still required from three overs when Mick Holling hit a skier to Jordan Halliday at long on. He appeared to see the ball late in the gloom and only succeeded in palming the potential catch over the line for six. A four next ball ended matters to enable Cawthorne to close the gap to six points with four games to go.

Team: Mick Ingledow; David Denton; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; David Denton; Nicky Hoyland; Shaun Alderson; Daniel Peace; David Rishton; Jordan Halliday.

SATURDAY AUGUST 25th

Versus Edgerton (home)

' Never take anything for granted.' (Benjamin Disraeli 1804 - 1881)

The pertinent comment of ' we played our get out of jail card today' summed up proceedings after a game which for periods looked beyond the reach of the would be league champions. Much still needs to be done in the final three games after this narrow escape.

Newly promoted Edgerton have not quite maintained the challenging league position achieved at the halfway point of the season but remain motivated opponents as the playing year draws to its close. Mid table respectability is a worthy achievement for a club relatively new to the Central League and in its first season in the Premier Section. A marathon 23 over spell of 6 for 60 from M.Ali spoke volumes for their commitment on a humid afternoon.

John Eastwood was David Howarth's opening partner and a solid stand of sixty for the first wicket gave little indication of the struggles ahead. Their respective scores of 28 and 42 were, in the long run, to prove invaluable. After they had been parted, no other batsman in the top of the order could achieve any fluency and wickets fell with unsettling regularity. Only determined cameos from Shaun Alderson (15), and David Denton and Daniel Peace, both with twelve, enabled the final score of 137 for 9 to be reached at the end of the allotted 45 overs. It was left to David Rishton (1*) and Matthew McDonagh (2*) to play out the last few balls to guarantee at least one point for not being bowled out.

Lee Booth elected to open the attack accompanied by Dan Peace. This gave a rare opportunity to see Lee bowling in his old medium pace style as opposed to his off spin of more recent times. Runs were never easy to come by for Edgerton but the score mounted inexorably albeit rather slowly. Daniel had his usual share of ill fortune although taking one wicket and Lee struck with a couple. Only three wickets had been lost by the visitors as the score reached the sixties with captain Massiah beginning to look dangerous.

He was eventually bowled by David Rishton as he and David Denton took up the attack for Thurstonland. Overs were beginning to dribble away but two sixes from middle order batsman K.Rehman caused nails to be bitten once more. Two wickets in two balls from David Denton, who was to finish with 4 for 27, tilted the balance in Thurstonland's favour and with Rehman losing the strike on the last ball of two successive overs the final wicket was taken with the Edgerton score on 114, just 23 short with 4.5 overs remaining.

For significant parts of the game Thurstonland were on the back foot but in the end dogged determination by the bowlers, supported by some good ground fielding, enabled a hard earned victory to be achieved.

With three games to go the top three positions are as follows: Thurstonland 79; Cawthorne 73; Cumberworth 66. It seems likely that the championship rests between the first two but the next game away to Cumberworth will not be easy coming on the back of a recent run of good form by them, including victory against Cawthorne in the Allsop Cup Final.

Team: David Howarth; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldroyd; Neil Booth; David Denton; Shaun Alderson; Daniel Peace; David Denton; Matthew McDonagh.

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 2nd Versus Cumberworth (Away)

' Great contest follows, and much learned dust
Involves the combatants.' (William Cowper 1731 - 1800)

It was recognised that a stern test awaited us at Cumberworth who had just won the Allsop Cup and remained unbeaten since early July. This good run of form had taken them from mid-table into third position. The ground was one on which we had had little joy in the last five years or so.

John Eastwood was absent so the No. 3 spot was taken by young Shaun Alderson. He was quickly in action as David Howarth departed for just 4 and he also was an early victim, for a duck, as he was deceived by the quicker pace of the experienced Richard Greaves. His attempted pull shot only succeeded in sending the ball high in the air and Matthew Dolley from short leg had the easy job of making the catch. Martin Oldroyd managed just 8 before he succumbed to leave three wickets down for not many runs.

Having failed to open his account in his previous two innings, Lee Booth started rather tentatively and almost gave a catch in the deep from his opening scoring shot for a single. The introduction of spinner Ashley Littlewood saw a confident cover drive for four and a full toss next ball was duly despatched for another boundary. Batting became altogether easier after that.

In the meantime Mick Ingledow continued his rich seam of form and eventually reached his century by hitting a six in what was quite a venomous innings at times. Several powerful straight drives were particularly hard hit and the partnership with Lee Booth blossomed and turned matters Thurstonland's way. The latter eventually fell for 64, something of a bogey score, after surviving a huge skied chance to wicketkeeper James Thackra whose obvious despair saw him propel the ball with his foot towards cover, nearly offering the chance of bizarre extra runs. Touchingly, Mick Ingledow (105) recovered his cap and proffered it to him, butler like, at the end of his bat.

A late flurry of 12* by Nicky Hoyland in the company of first team debutant Mark Hill saw final total reach 211 for 5.

In reply Cumberworth relied heavily on the hard hitting opener Peter Hird who has often tucked in with relish to many a bowling attack, including ours. The score had only just passed the hundred mark when he was fifth out for a score of 73. Never afraid to go for his shots, he tends to give a feeling that he can be out at any moment but he often manages to make significant scores at an excellent strike rate. It took an excellent catch at wide mid off from David Rishton to remove him.

For perhaps the first time this season, the latter, although bowling tidily, did not look like making a breakthrough and he ended wicketless. It was left to David Denton (5 for 48) supported by Lee Booth and Daniel Peace, who again bowled with little luck, to reduce Cumberworth to 147 for 8 in the 33rd over. For a couple of overs or so it seemed that rival captain Martin Kilner and Chris Wilks were going to play out the overs but suddenly an assault was launched on anything remotely off line or length. The score mounted to 198 before Wilks fell to David Rishton's third catch and the innings closed on 199 when last man Thackra was bowled by David Denton. In the end it had been a fairly close run thing but the asking rate in the later stages was always a little beyond the batsmen, particularly as so many wickets had fallen. Yet again, however, it had been an entertaining game which finished with the first hint of autumnal chills in the air.

Team: Mick Ingledow; David Howarth; Shaun Alderson; Martin Oldroyd; Lee Booth; Nicky Hoyland; Mark Hill; Neil Booth; David Denton; David Rishton; Daniel Peace.

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 9th

Versus Old Almondburians (home)

' Let us go then, you and I

When the evening is spread out against the sky

Like a patient etherized upon a table.' (T.S.Eliot 1888 - 1965)

The visit of Old Almondburians for the penultimate game of the 2001 season also brought one of only three teams to have defeated Thurstonland in a league fixture during the campaign. This came on a sultry day of high summer in late June which was a contrast to the much fresher and early autumnal feel to this September day. Our visitors had had a good season with familiar faces being augmented by one or two useful newcomers and with them for this fixture were a young Australian Tim McMahon and Mick Hall who played four first team games for Thurstonland about five years ago.

A solid opening partnership started proceedings. The prolific Mick Ingledow was quickly into his stride although accurate spells from both McMahon and the veteran Martin Tunnacliffe meant that no liberties could be taken. David Howarth showed great patience as he received few loose deliveries and his 21 was an unspectacular but vital contribution to an opening stand of 82.

When John Eastwood came to the crease there was the sight of two batsmen in supreme form. Mick Ingledow, eventually dismissed for 73, passed 800 runs for the season and ended on 823, second only to Glen Wood's tally of 887. John Eastwood made a quick 57 and unveiled the full panoply of fluent strokes which is his trademark and which would be one of the enduring memories of 2001. When out his job was not over as he acted as a runner for Nicky Hoyland, suffering from calf trouble, as the latter bludgeoned his way to 24* leading to a 45 over total of 214 for 4.

None of the Old Almondburian batsmen built on the solid start that many of them made to their innings. Daniel Peace's figures of 3 for 46 were just reward for another spell of consistent medium pace bowling with his ball to dismiss Steve Slack for 28 being a particularly good one. Lee Booth deceived two opponents into giving return catches which helped to bring him the deserved figures of 4 for 33. David Rishton again shouldered the burden of the attack, delivering 21 overs for figures of 1 for 30. His wicket was his 50th of the season and the 705th of his Thurstonland career. With rain threatening, although never materialising, the slow bowlers were in tandem in the later stages in order to get through the overs. This meant that last week's hero, David Denton, only delivered two overs of his medium pace.

At the end there was a brief flurry of wickets but the last few balls were negotiated safely by the later Old Almondburian batsmen to leave them on 119 for 8. Phone calls to Emley brought the news that Cawthorne had gained five rather hard earned points. This left Thurstonland six points clear with one game remaining away to Higham and our ability to win the championship in our own hands.

Team: Mick Ingledow; David Howarth; John Eastwood; Nicky Hoyland; Martin Oldroyd; Daniel Peace; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; David Denton; Shaun Alderson; David Rishton;

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 16th

Versus Higham (away)

' If the wild bowler thinks he bowls,
Or if the batsman thinks he's bowled,
They know not, poor misguided souls,
They too shall perish unconsolated.
I am the batsman and the bat'
I am the bowler and the ball'
The umpire, the pavilion cat'
The roller, pitch, and stumps, and all.' (Andrew Lang 1844 - 1912)

The season, rather like TS Eliot asserted about the end of the world, finished ' not with a bang but a whimper'. A single point was all that was needed to win the championship for only the third time in the club's 82 year membership of the league. It was duly obtained after scarcely a blow was struck in anger during our 45 overs. A final total of 80 for 4 was in marked contrast to some of the pyrotechnic displays which had been such a feature of many games during the summer.

The departure for a duck, steering an innocuous widish delivery from Chris James into second slip's hands, by David Howarth to the eighth ball of the game probably accentuated the note of caution already felt. When the prolific John Eastwood was a little harshly adjudged lbw for three the distant ringing of alarm bells was evidently a wake up call. Mick Ingledow and Martin Oldroyd adopted a safety first policy as the overs rattled along on what began as a deceptively calm early autumn afternoon.

The occasional boundary was struck and almost thirty overs had been bowled when Martin (21) pulled a short ball backward of square only to pick out the sole fielder who, after a brief juggle, completed the catch. Mick Ingledow followed in the next over, bowled in a bizarre fashion as he appeared to attempt to shoulder arms only for the ball to run up his body, fall behind him and then gently trickle on to his stumps with barely enough energy to disturb the bails. His 35 took his season's run tally to 858, second only to Glen Wood's 887 in 1990. Incidentally, John Eastwood's final total of runs for the season of 790 placed him fourth on the record aggregate list since reliable records began in 1954.

It then remained for brothers Lee and Neil Booth to negotiate the last fourteen overs, taking no risks on a wicket which had a slightly uneven bounce. The 45 overs had been bowled in three minutes under two hours with tea taken before some lunches had settled.

A purposeful start was made by our hosts who needed points in their battle against relegation and the rain which had threatened during the break for tea duly arrived in a heavy downpour after ten overs with the score on 43 for 1. An interruption of about fifteen minutes followed before play resumed. Shaun Alderson bowled three promising overs of off spin with great variety of loop posing problems so that only five runs were conceded by him. Chris James hit four boundaries as the clouds approached again and, with rain in the air, Mick Ingledow came on for only his second first team over in 145 appearances. His fourth ball, with the rain now

falling heavily, was short but an attempted pull to settle matters only succeeded in propelling both ball and bat in the direction of short square leg where Nicky Hoyland, managing to avoid the unexpected challenge from the descending bat, made the catch. With only two needed the players stayed on with the winning hit coming in the next over when, even allowing for the state of the game, probably only two or three more balls would have been possible. Celebrations then began.....

Team: Mick Ingledow; David Howarth; John Eastwood; Martin Oldroyd; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; David Denton; Nicky Hoyland; Shaun Alderson; Daniel Peace; David Rishton.

THURSTONLAND CC FIRST TEAM END OF SEASON REPORT - 2001

It was felt at the start of the season that a good league position was a possibility but to become champions was a little unexpected. David Oldham, so long a key member of the first team, had indicated his intention to concentrate on second team cricket and help to develop the promising set of young players who are coming through. In addition, the years of unstinting toil by Phil Brammall had not done his knees any favours. Surgery meant that he missed the entire season, leaving his career total of 775 wickets the target for the years ahead. His explosive batting in the lower middle order would also be missed, although not by our opponents.

The end of May saw us in fourth place. Emley, champions in 2000, had lost a couple of key players and Cawthorne set the early pace. A single run victory over them in mid June turned out to be crucial in our eventual success and it was then that we took over in first place and never relinquished our grip. The only defeats, although a single point was gained in each of them, came in the first game actually played at Hoylandswaine, at Old Almondburians on a stiflingly hot Sunday at the end of June, at Cawthorne in the return game in mid August and in the final fixture at Higham when 45 overs were batted for a mere 80 for 4 to ensure the single point needed for the championship was obtained.

Cup involvement was, for once, very fleeting. A creditable effort against Section A Drakes League Lascelles Hall gave brief hopes of a win as one of the two non-league teams in the prestigious Sykes Cup. Chasing 156 for 6 we reached 127 for 5 before subsiding to 133 all out. Would be giant killers one work turned into the slain the following when a determined Heckmondwike & Carlinghow from our league's second section scored 160 for 7 and then reduced us to 84 for 8 in the Allsop Cup before a late rally saw us to 125 all out. These were the only two games in which we were bowled out in 2001.

A personal assessment follows of individual contributions to the cause in 2001. Players are dealt with in alphabetical order.

Shaun Alderson: Only fifteen, he made his debut at home to Denby Dale at the end of July. He scored over 200 runs in the second team and impressed with his temperament. He should be one to look out for in the future as a good all rounder.

Andrew Booth: He made an unexpected comeback to first team cricket and bowled with metronomic accuracy in the two innings where he was called upon. Even the best Castrol could not lubricate aching joints and muscles thereafter and he disappeared from active play until three cameo appearances in the second team at the end of the season. He showed, however, why he has been one of our best bowlers in his brief periods of action and the feeling persists that he could have achieved even more than his not inconsiderable figures show.

Lee Booth: Captain for the third year in succession, he enjoyed a good season. His 438 runs were his highest in a first team season and he often scored them stylishly and at a time of need. His 68 against Lascelles Hall was appreciated by teammates and opposition alike whilst he shared in a club record fourth wicket stand of 167 with John Eastwood at Emley. His off spin was determinedly resourceful, often in tandem with David Rishton, and his 35 wickets were well deserved. Although finding winning the toss a problem, he captained the side thoughtfully and sympathetically with good tactical awareness.

Neil Booth: After several seasons in the second team, many as captain, he reclaimed his place in the senior side. Often called upon to bat at No.6 with relatively few overs left, he went for his shots in the team cause and occasionally sacrificed his own wicket as a result. His 65* at Old Almondburians was an excellent innings with a wide range of fluent shots and his boundary edge catch to dismiss Steve Hardwick against Hoylandswaine at home was one of the best seen in recent years.

John Brigg: A newcomer to the team returning to competitive cricket after a break, he made just one appearance against Lascelles Hall in the Sykes Cup. He was a reliable member of the second team and, although only in his early thirties himself, provided experience in a youthful side. He has already become very much a committed clubman.

Simon Burgess: Simon has never quite managed to develop batting consistency to go with his excellent fielding. He is essentially a second team stalwart although making one or two cameo first team appearances each year. His catch in the last over at Emley ensured a full six point haul in the run in for the championship.

Ashley Coldwell: A pacy left arm medium quick bowler who bowls with hostility. He did a sterling job in the Sykes Cup in taking an early wicket and keeping runs down. He needs to be more consistent as four or five testing deliveries are spoiled by the appearance of a boundary ball. He has boundless enthusiasm and is an excellent catcher and ground fielder and few liberties are taken with him in the field.

David Denton: David has been on the scene now for approaching twenty years and it is sometimes hard to credit that he has not always had a regular first team spot. His 222 first team wickets are deserving testimony to his efforts but he has also taken 388 in the second team. This year he won the first team bowling honours with 30 wickets at 16.60 each despite often bowling in the late innings run chase. His lower middle order batting is also valuable at times and his 47 in support of Neil Booth at Old Almondburians was a fine effort.

John Eastwood: Always one of the most stylish of left handers, a true village David Gower, he had a career season, scoring two centuries as well as a 97 and a 99. He fell only ten short of 800 runs and his 56.43 average won him the club batting award for 2001. His usual position of No.3 is a key one and the speed with which he scored enabled high totals to be achieved in many games. To his own amused delight he also achieved a personal best of seven catches. As vice captain he gave valuable advice and support to Lee Booth.

Jordan Halliday: An 18 year old product of our juniors, Jordan made six first team appearances last year. He had few chances to show his batting capabilities but made significant advances in the second team. With the right kind of encouragement and a little more self belief he could be a long term prospect for the senior side. He batted for twenty minutes for an undeserved duck against Lascelles Hall and showed great determination against demanding bowling.

Mark Hill: Made his first team debut at Cumberworth at the beginning of September and performed without praise or blame, scoring 0*. He made significant contributions to the second team in 2001 with 428 runs and 20 wickets.

David Howarth: During the season he became only the third first team batsman to go past 6000 runs in first team league and cup games, finishing on 6330. Only the Oldham brothers, David (9642) and Martin (10099) are ahead of him. He was nominally the second team vice captain but played the entire season in the senior side. A perfectionist at the crease, he was a key wicket for the opposition without quite having the consistency of recent years. His 449 runs were, nevertheless, a valuable contribution.

Nicky Hoyland: Kept wicket consistently and was valuable in support of the spinners David Rishton and Lee Booth. He made seven stumpings and produced several of his trademark hard hitting appearances at the crease when called upon. Always an enthusiastic competitor, he was a key member of the championship winning squad.

Mick Ingledow: When looking at his final tally of 858 runs at 50.47 per innings it is hard to believe that by the end of May he had just 10 to his credit and he was selected three times for the second team. Only Glen Wood with 887 in 1990 has exceeded his final tally. A patient period of playing himself in and minimising risks was often followed by some brutally controlled hitting and his dominance of the opposition opening attacks paved the way for those who followed. He always played to his strengths and sold his wicket dearly. His fielding and catching were also of a high order.

Matthew McDonagh: A sixteen year old reserve wicket keeper who contributed well in the six games in which he was called upon. He gained experience in the art of extended concentration needed when standing up to slow bowlers and pulled off three stumpings. He was not overawed when making his debut against Lascelles Hall in the Sykes Cup in May. He is a product of our junior teams.

Peter Mason: Work commitments limit his Saturday availability and he appeared in half of the second team fixtures in 2001. He played twice in the first team with his usual efficiency during the past season and is only four short of 150 first team games.

Martin Oldham: His season came to a premature close at the end of May when lingering knee problems required treatment. He returned for the final second team fixture. Although only having five innings he scored 168 runs and got the year off to a flying start and this, arguably, was a factor in later successes. Even though appearances were so limited he had time to become the first senior player to go past 10000 first team runs and he now has 10099 to his name from 592 selections since his debut as a fourteen year old nearly thirty years ago.

Martin Oldroyd: A sensational piece of fielding at long on to prevent a six in the one run home win over runners up Cawthorne was a candidate for champagne moment of the season. Without that effort it is possible that the final league positions might have been reversed. He was a worthy winner of the fielding prize in the first team and of the Keith Shaw Trophy for fielder of the year. Often a hesitant starter, he tended to get out just when getting set and so his run production was a little below expectations in 2001, although two innings of forty plus showed him at his most fluent.

Damien Pawson: Another sixteen year old product of our juniors who made his debut in 2001, once more against Lascelles Hall. He opened the bowling with great determination and took ten wickets with 4 for 34 at Crossbank Methodists his best figures. With more experience his genuine pace will continue to cause batsmen problems and with a little more control he can surely look forward to taking many wickets in the first team.

Daniel Peace: Early season injury problems meant that it was into June before his season really kicked into action. His 27 wickets were an important contribution to the season and he is a realistic candidate for the unluckiest bowler. On many occasions he beat the bat, missing the outside edge and the stumps by the narrowest of margins. He reached the personal landmark of 150 first team wickets by the end of the season, ending on 151. He had few chances with the bat.

David Rishton: The workhorse of the bowling in 2001, he was often used to open the attack and only rarely did anyone get the measure of him. He took 50 wickets at 16.94 and just short of one third of his 329.1 overs were maidens. Ever resourceful in flight, length and variation of pace he became the second bowler to go past 700 first team wickets and ended the year on 705 behind Phil Brammall's tally of 775. His fielding was still of a high standard and in such a strong batting line up his skills at the crease were only rarely used.

Ian Short: Another junior debutant in 2001, aged 15 against Emley in early May, he is a promising batsman who is making good progress in the second eleven and will be one to watch in future seasons.