

TCC Match Reports 2002

SUNDAY APRIL 28th

Versus Crossbank Methodists (away)

Navigational aids seemed to function much better for the players this year on their trip to Birstall. Last year's plaintive calls on mobile phones were this year the lot of the official umpires who did not arrive until the game was in progress with your correspondent and an official of the home club in charge of proceedings. Just as they were getting ready to take over, the heavens opened again after nine overs of brisk scoring by Mick Ingledow and Martin Oldham, returning after missing most of 2001 through injury, had seen the total reach 48.

The former scored 33 whilst Martin proceeded to 57 before being given out lbw. With further stoppages for rain the game became a little featureless and lacked continuity. The answer to any potential drought would seem to be to arrange a cricket match and the irony of the first significant rain for four weeks falling was not lost on the well insulated players who also had to endure the coolest temperatures for quite a while.

Apart from an authoritative 32 not out from captain Lee Booth, no other batsman made a significant contribution although Martin Oldroyd managed a huge six over midwicket which rather astonishingly was briefly signalled as a four. The innings eventually closed on 148 for 8.

There was a new experience for your correspondent and scorer as the Crossbank innings began at 6.50. I was enduring the chills with studied stoicism whilst my colleague, the eleven year old son of the home team captain, negotiated successfully for a rather splendid wall mounted electric fire to be switched on in the scoreboard. Being seated next to it I had full benefit of its warmth and was able to view with equanimity the now distinctly chilled looking players and officials.

Just like Thurstonland, the home batsmen were quickly out of the blocks and both Dan Peace and first team debutant Michael Eastwood looked a little in need of shoulder lubrication as finding a consistent line and length was not easy. Forty came up in six overs but the all spin attack of Lee Booth and David Rishton put a stop to the early season indulgences. Time was called just ahead of another downpour at 7.50 with Crossbank on 52 for 3 from eighteen overs.

In spite of the indifferent weather it was good to get going again in defence of the championship and not many conclusions could be drawn from such a fragmented game but the feeling was that the depth of our bowling strength might be called into question if the usual stalwarts were not able to exert their usual influence in games.

Final scores: Thurstonland 148/8; Crossbank Methodists 52/3 (RSP).

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Michael Eastwood; Nicky Hoyland; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; Neil Booth; Daniell Peace; David Rishton; Jordan Halliday.

SATURDAY MAY 4th

Versus Ruddlesdens (home)

The first home game of the season saw a visit from newly promoted Ruddlesdens, relative newcomers to the league. Their name is that of the works which founded them and which has been retained. They had sealed the runners up spot in Section A almost at the death and last season's record showed that they won many games outright but also conceded the full points on offer quite frequently as well. It seemed likely, therefore, that plenty of action would be seen and so it proved.

A relatively circumspect opening few overs for the home team laid the foundation for later acceleration. S. Bismillah bowled a tidy length with his medium pace swing bowling and only conceded ten off his first eight overs which included four maidens. Both Mick Ingledow and Martin Oldham then decided to book in for bed and breakfast with runs coming at a fair pace from the other end and the start of the 26th over saw them post a century opening partnership.

Mick eventually succumbed for his second score of 33 for the season, lbw to second change D.Martin. The arrival of John Eastwood at the crease brought no respite to toiling bowlers and Martin Oldham with twelve fours and four sixes arrived at a well deserved century. At this point ambition waned as thoughts of resting wearying limbs, and the creaking knee giving reminders not to push luck too far, led to him walking for an lbw appeal with his total on 106.

A lavishly aimed drive which failed to connect brought about the demise of John in the next over for 38 and the innings rather quickly and unexpectedly subsided from the Olympian heights of 194 for 1 to the troglodytish nether regions of 207 for 7. A few no nonsense blows from David Rishton (17*) who went to the wicket like an Arthurian knight to the lists made the final total 227 for 7. Dan Peace (2*) viewed proceedings with relaxed equanimity at the other end.

After tea, Dan Peace made a quick breakthrough when Mick Ingledow caught opener Richardson for a duck with the score on 11. Meanwhile Damien Pawson was having trouble getting his run up right and several spectacular wides resulted which tested Nicky Hoyland's arm extensions and gave him the chance to display his agility on the ground reminiscent of international gymnastics. Opposing captain W. Trueman had the misfortune to be run out without facing a ball and the score reached a scarcely credible 69 for 4 after a mere twelve overs. Our visitors certainly were advocates of brighter cricket and only gradually were the spin pairing of Lee Booth and David Rishton able to rein in the potential stampede.

J.Hiscocks batted with a judicious mixture of defence and trenchant attack and struck seven fours and four sixes in an entertaining innings of 74 which ended when Nicky Hoyland stumped him off the persevering Lee Booth. He ended with 3 for 64 and David Rishton with 4 for 68. The latter brought an end to matters when Jon Brigg made the last of his three excellent catches to dismiss veteran T. Mather at no.10 in the 41st over to conclude the innings as, sadly, Ruddlesdens had only ten players.

Final scores: Thurstonland 227/7; Ruddlesdens 185 all out.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Nicky Hoyland; Lee Booth; David Howarth; Neil Booth; Daniell Peace; David Rishton; Jon Brigg; Damien Pawson.

SUNDAY MAY 5th Versus Cawthorne (away)

With our involvement in the Sykes Cup (Drakes Huddersfield League) the following Saturday, this was our league fixture brought forward from that date. A delightful spring day saw the surroundings at Cawthorne at their best and proved that, whatever happens on the field of play, the setting of many cricket grounds adds to the enjoyment of the game. The clash was between the top two teams in the Premier Section in 2001 and was eagerly awaited with the new season still in its infancy.

Dan Peace was partnered by Ashley Coldwell, making his seasonal debut in the first team, in opening the attack. Ashley's potential is readily apparent and his left arm over style is one which requires adjustments from batsmen. Both D.Skelly and R.Nicholson began steadily and Ashley was unlucky as the batsmen played and missed on occasions. His tendency to undo

good work for five balls by conceding a boundary off the other one continued although on another day a couple of wickets might have come his way. His seven overs conceded 28 runs when he deserved better.

Dan Peace was given a rest after 15 overs with the total on 48 without loss and the spin twins of Booth and Rishton were once again in harness. The Cawthorne openers continue their steady progress and the thirtieth over saw that rarity against Thurstonland of a century opening stand. Both openers reached their respective fifties within a couple of minutes of each other until Skelly (50) fell to a good running catch at midwicket, taken by sixteen year old Ian Short making only his second appearance in the first team alongside sixteen year old debutant Jon-Paul Mulrooney who joined the club from Hoylandswaine at the start of the season, closely followed by Nicholson (55) who was caught by Mick Ingledow off David Rishton. Their stand had realised 115.

The last twelve overs saw Cawthorne add only 45 runs thanks to the efforts of Lee Booth (3-43) and David Rishton (2 -57) and a second spell by Dan Peace who ended with 3 for 20, taking all his three wickets in the second three over stint at a cost of only five runs.

Two excellent return catches by Paul Osborne saw the dismissal of Martin Oldham for 6. Had this not been taken then the bowler might have resembled one of the abstract Henry Moore sculptures with the hole in the middle at the relatively close by Bretton Park whilst John Eastwood (28) hardly lifted the ball off the ground when the bowler twisted athletically in his follow through to take the catch inches from the ground. Ian Short also fell to a flying leap catch in the gully without troubling the scorers, other than by having to write down details of the dismissal.

A score of 89 for 5 after 29 overs put the game in the balance. Captain Lee Booth came to the rescue in best US cavalry mode aided by faithful lieutenants David Rishton, pushed up the order, with 13 and Dan Peace 15. Three fours in the penultimate over by Lee from opposing captain Mick Holling brought the scores level with the eternal Frank Kilburn to bowl the last one. Even your correspondent remembers playing against him. The first three balls were defended by Dan Peace but the fourth was fatal as, with pressure mounting, a attempted forcing shot to leg only succeeded in lofting a return catch. Nicky Hoyland went to the non-strikers end as the batsmen had crossed and the next to last ball was dispatched authoritatively to the boundary by Lee who ended on an excellent 62 not out, a real captain's innings to secure five points to Cawthorne's one.

Final scores: Cawthorne 164/8; Thurstonland 168/7.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Ian Short; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; David Rishton; Daniel Peace; Nicky Hoyland; Jon Paul Mulrooney; Ashley Coldwell.

SATURDAY MAY 11th Versus Meltham (home)

Yet another sortie into the Sykes Cup as one of the ' non league ' teams was the challenge on a pleasant May afternoon. Our opponents had been defeated by us at the same stage of the competition in 1991 whereupon they were winners of the trophy in each of the next four seasons. David Cocking and Chris Berry of Meltham and the Thurstonland triumvirate of David Howarth, Neil Booth and David Rishton were the survivors of that fixture.

In the absence of Mick Ingledow on a short holiday break and of Martin Oldham who was resting his knee after the exertions of the previous weekend's two games, it fell to David Howarth and Neil Booth to open the innings. The former avoided the first ball of the match

dismissal he had endured on the previous meeting between the clubs. A steady start was made although run scoring opportunities were at a premium against a steady opening attack.

After the departure of David for three, John Eastwood greeted former county bowler Paul Booth with a sumptuous square cut for four but it took 31 overs to post a total of 56 for 1. Manufacturing runs against a quality attack was not an easy matter and when the only two batsmen to post a significant score departed, Neil for 27 and John for 22, only Martin Oldroyd (12) managed to reach double figures. A much changed batting order never really came to terms with the stern demands made of them and the final tally of 94 all out was a reflection of the persistent accuracy of the Meltham attack as much as any serious shortcomings on the behalf of the Thurstonland batsmen.

The banquet like proportions of the tea gave some consolation as prospects were discussed realistically with a sense of resigned realism in the face of probable defeat being readily apparent. Initially, Dan Peace and debutant Philip Torbett kept openers M.Gee and the vastly experienced Glen Collier on a fairly tight leash but a breakthrough never came in spite of the best efforts of the bowlers. The former nearly played on twice but that was about the extent of any faint whiff of success in the wicket taking department.

After making relatively sedate progress to 50, the final runs came in a flurry with M.Gee hitting a couple of forthright sixes. Proceedings came to a close shortly after six o' clock but not before a relatively rare cameo over of gentle swing bowling from Martin Oldroyd who only conceded a single run.

On reflection the performance did not quite match the effort put in and we, perhaps, were worthy of a little better than a ten wicket defeat. Nevertheless our Premier Section Drakes Huddersfield League opponents were always well in command with too many strings to their bow. The prospect was thus a return to our own league action with dreams of a giant killing act over, at least for another year.

A second debutant was Under 15 player Kristian Thackray who already has quite a bit of second team experience. In a statistical curiosity, Jon Brigg made his third appearance in the first team, two of which have been in the Sykes Cup as he made his debut almost exactly twelve months ago against Lascelles Hall.

Final scores: Thurstonland 94 all out; Meltham 97/0.

Team: David Howarth; Neil Booth; John Eastwood; David Rishton; Martin Oldroyd; Daniell Peace; Nicky Hoyland; Lee Booth; Jin Brigg; Kris Thackray; Philip Torbett.

SATURDAY MAY 18th Versus Edgerton (home)

After the high summer like heat of Thursday's practice night, reality returned on a chill damp afternoon with plenty of what is locally called ' moor grime ' to create a heavy dew on the out field. It looked briefly as if no play at all would be possible but at about 2.15, a quarter of an hour after the scheduled start time, the mist lifted and play began in what had become a 38 overs match just after 2.40.

Neither Dan Peace nor Philip Torbett found running up easy. The latter bowled six wides in his first two overs and Zubair Mohammed and Muheeb Rehman went positively for their shots. A brilliant diving catch behind the wicket by Nicky Hoyland dismissed the former off Philip Torbett but runs continued to come at a fair pace. Lee Booth was in action by the tenth over with 50 runs following not long afterwards. After the dismissal of No.3 Javid a period of quiet followed and it took six overs for Edgerton to advance from 57 to 60.

By this time three wickets were down and almost half the overs in the reduced allocation game had gone. It seemed as if Thurstonland were getting on top. It proved to be false optimism. The usually reliable Mick Ingledow dropped Muheeb on 27 from a skier at mid on off Dan Peace and he went on to 51 before finally being dismissed. Opposing captain Roger Massiah then played an innings of great value for his side but of extreme frustration for ourselves. With the field widespread, he mixed some authentic drives and pulls with chips into spaces between fielders and slightly fortuitous snicks past his wicket. When nearing his fifty he was dropped off a skier by John Eastwood at deep mid wicket and his eventual score of 70 was probably the key factor in Edgerton reaching 173 for 8. This had seemed rather unlikely at the 18 over point. Both Dan Peace and Lee Booth took three wickets with David Rishton only bowling 4 overs to take 1 for 29 at the height of the opposition onslaught.

After tea the sun made an appearance although it was still quite cool. Mick Ingledow (41) and David Howarth (25) made significant contributions against what seemed an earnest and determined, if rather limited attack. The bowlers persisted, however, and Ramzan from the pavilion end, whilst being a little erratic, ended with commendable figures of 5 for 36. Both John Eastwood (0) and Neil Booth (20) were victims of decisions which either Hawkeye or the third umpire might have found in their favour but those aids are not available at this level of cricket.

Runs became harder to come by and the asking rate increased to nearly eight an over at the 30 over mark and five wickets had gone down. In the end it was left to Nicky Hoyland (6*) and the less likely figure as a batsmen of Ashley Coldwell (1*) to bat out the last four overs to salvage a single point compared to the five gained by our visitors. The latter showed great determination in defence during two tense overs and even managed to leave a couple of balls outside the off stump in true test style. The only time he was beaten, and bowled, the umpire called a no ball.

This was a disappointing performance and certainly not one expected of defending champions. No 'get out of jail' was available. Three out of the four league games have seen our opponents get off to a flier and this is at least one area which needs to be looked at in the weeks ahead.

Final scores: Edgerton 173/8; Thurstonland 125/8.

Team: Mick Ingledow; David Howarth; John Eastwood; Martin Oldroyd; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; David Rishton; Daniel Peace; Nicky Hoyland; Ashley Coldwell; Philip Torbett.

SATURDAY MAY 25th Versus Emley (away)

Although grounds like Emley's which have a boundary going on to an adjacent football field may lack focal points, there were no complaints about the high standard of the playing area. A lush late spring green was a significant catch the eye in the outfield whilst the wicket had a straw colour in marked contrast. It had a rather variable bounce at the pavilion end but generally the scene was set for a good game on a clear but rather cool and blustery afternoon.

Mick Ingledow succumbed unusually early, adjudged lbw to Jon Lee in the second over, and with John Eastwood soon following for 4, in marked contrast to his century here last year, Emley were on top with Thurstonland on 9 for 2. Martin Oldham and Martin Oldroyd steadied the ship somewhat before both departed in quick succession for 26 and 18 respectively leaving a lot to do at 54 for 4.

Dean Rickson had settled into his usual rhythm and only delivered six scoring balls, two fours and four singles in his first sixteen overs. It was hard to imagine him cast in the role of benevolent uncle doling out the presents at a lavish family celebration. The arrival of David Howarth in the unaccustomed batting position of No. 6 did not promise any profligate strokeplay but his 36 not out held the innings together when penury beckoned and ably assisted by Neil Booth (26) before his run out following the completion of two runs on his own and a cameo of 13 from Nicky Hoyland eased the final tally to 155 for 8.

The tentative nature of the innings seemed to encapsulate the whole season so far. No batsman had looked in good form consistently and the loss of early wickets relatively cheaply was in marked contrast to the riches of the championship winning season of 2001.

David Rishton opened the bowling and continued unchanged throughout the Emley innings. His final figures of 3 for 56 from his 23 overs were no more than he deserved and his variations in flight and length were never mastered by the Emley batsmen. Their struggles were similar to those of Thurstonland and only P. Moors (32) and J. Lee (31) hinted at building a significant personal tally.

Ashley Coldwell found greater consistency in opening the attack and he had S. Lewis caught by David Howarth for a duck. David's catch enabled him to equal his tally for 2001 and his dive and roll at extra cover were reminiscent of footballers trying to influence the referee. Marks for artistic impression were not recorded.

In the end it was Lee Booth who whittled away the middle and lower order to end with 5 for 37, just short of a personal best in the first team. Simon Capewell and the vastly experienced Mick Onions played out the last four overs to deprive Thurstonland of maximum points.

It had been a rather dour encounter with runs hard to come by for both teams who were the most recent champions of the Huddersfield Central League in 2000 and 2001. On this form both sides looked to have a lot to do to be up amongst the challengers in August and September.

Final scores: Thurstonland 155/8; Emley 116/9.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Martin Oldroyd; Lee Booth; David Howarth; Neil Booth; Nicky Hoyland; David Rishton; Jon Brigg; Ashley Coldwell.

SATURDAY June 1st Versus Old Almondburians (home)

The current season is the twentieth in succession that Thurstonland has played in the top section after winning promotion in 1982. Today's opposition, Old Almondburians, followed us up the next year and so are our longest standing rivals. They are also our nearest neighbours so the friendly rivalry has spice added to it by nature of the fixture being a local derby.

Our visitors arrived in confident mood in second place in the still embryonic table. Sixteen year old Ian Short opened with Martin Oldham who had had fourteen years in the first team when Ian was born. Several flamboyant drives were unleashed much as the young knights of Arthurian legend might have tried to impress the greybeards at the lists in Camelot.

An excellent back foot four and a slightly fortuitous thick edge got Ian to 8 before another ambitious shot resulted in a lofted drive to cover which was well caught to end his innings. He has undoubted potential but needs to be a little more circumspect at the start of an innings to maximise his opportunities. Martin Oldham was bowled soon afterwards and with the out of

sorts Martin Oldroyd going for just a single it was left to acting captain Mick Ingledow (20) and David Denton, making his first senior appearance of the year, with 18 to give support to Neil Booth in re-building the innings.

The latter is always happier higher up the order and his patient 41 helped the home team to achieve a final tally of 138 for 8 in their allotted 45 overs. The gluttony of runs of the last few seasons has largely been absent so far this time and both David Rishton and Dan Peace have already almost reached their total number of innings for 2001. Ian Tunnacliffe returned the best figures for our opposition with 4 for 40 in 11 overs.

The Old Almondburian innings followed a curious pattern. Wickets fell in bunches and were followed by determined graft as their batsmen inched the total forwards. The prolific Steve Slack was caught behind for 2, the second of Dan Peace's three wickets in as good an opening spell as he has produced for quite a while and at 14 for 3 the Thurstonland total assumed more significant proportions.

It was, however, 73 before the next wicket fell. This was M.Taylor who was caught behind off the persevering David Rishton for 41. Old Almondburian captain A. Pearson was the next to depart bowled by David Denton for 23. He was quickly followed first ball by Mick Hall so 81 for 6 renewed hope for the home team. Tom Cliffe, however, had other ideas and he and Shaun Sykes (33) moved the score along with a mixture of watchful defence and sudden dramatic hitting. When the latter succumbed, bowled by Denton, the total stood at 125. Another young player, opening bowler M.Woods, joined Cliffe and without too many alarms they reached their target in the 42nd over.

Yet again we appeared to be on the back foot from the early stages of the game and, determined though the efforts were, there was no way back in spite of one or two hints of a significant breakthrough.

Final scores: Thurstonland 138/8; Old Almondburians 141/7.

Team: Martin Oldham; Ian Short; Neil Booth; Martin Oldroyd; Mick Ingledow; David Denton; Nicky Hoyland; David Rishton; Daniel Peace; Jon Brigg; Ashley Coldwell.

SATURDAY June 8th Versus Cumberworth (away)

Four overs gone, the usual lively Cumberworth wicket and a confident home team.....11 for 3 and the sound of frantic bread buttering from the tea room in anticipation of early doors and feet up at home and it was still barely quarter past two. The ladies knitting at the foot of the scaffold as the guillotine fell on aristocratic heads in the French Revolution would have had smoke issuing from the ends of their implements such was the speed of dispatch of the Thurstonland batsmen like that of their eighteenth century counterparts.

Neil Booth summoned a helmet and dug in for the long stay as did Martin Oldroyd who found form at last. He looked uncertain at the start but slowly but surely began to assert himself in what was ultimately an innings of great obduracy and no little determination. After the early horror show the score edged up to 44 before Neil struck a short ball on the off with great ferocity to long off only to be caught right on the boundary edge by Chris Kilner. A yard either way and a six would have resulted as well as a register on the Richter scale as the ball fell to earth.

David Rishton (10) and Adam Fowler (10), on a rare first team appearance, were the only other batsmen in double figures. Damien Pawson achieved the unwanted distinction of being run out without facing a ball to bring in last man Simon Burgess. He fended off five deliveries

before the heroics of Martin Oldroyd were finally ended by the last ball of the 43rd over when he was bowled by the persevering Richard Greaves for a valuable 45. In all he batted for just short of two and a quarter hours and faced 134 balls.

This was the first occasion on which the senior team had been bowled out in a league game since July 15th 2000 at the same venue!

Dan Peace (2/54) again bowled with determination and Damien Pawson regained his rhythm after one or two difficult outings. The latter ended with 3 for 22 from 11 overs and Martin Oldroyd got into the act again with his occasional slow medium wobblers and even picked up a relatively rare wicket. David Rishton was again a master of variation with 2 for 17 off 11.

No Cumberworth batsman got beyond the 22 of James Senior and at 50 for 5 and 92 for 7 there was hope for a Thurstonland victory. Glen Senior (21*) and Martin Kilner (5*) had other ideas and took nine overs to reach their target, the winning runs coming from the last ball of the penultimate over.

Shortage of runs was again a key factor and the riches of the last season or two seem a long way off at the moment. Already, for a variety of reasons, twenty-two players have appeared in the first team with only Neil Booth, David Rishton and Nicky Hoyland being ever presents. Mid table respectability or anonymity depending on the outlook is the lot at the moment but a return to something like form from a few batsmen could improve matters dramatically. Small totals are hard to defend and with less experienced bowlers having to share some of the burden the reasons for the relative struggle are there to see.

Final scores: Thurstonland 112 all out; Cumberworth 113/8.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Neil Booth; Martin Oldroyd; David Rishton; Nicky Hoyland; Daniel Peace; Adam Fowler; Damien Pawson; Simon Burgess.

SATURDAY June 15th Versus Higham (away)

After further glory in the World Cup with England's defeat of Denmark it was hoped that the recent slump in form would be halted when play got underway, with league permission, half an hour after the scheduled start to allow for the end of the game to be watched. Captain Lee Booth returned to action less than 48 hours after his own return from watching the group games in Japan.

Yet another cloudy and rather blustery day greeted the teams. Mick Ingledow and David Howarth made a steady start with the early traumas of last week's shutter of wickets being comfortably avoided. A promising opening stand only ended when David tried for a rather brisk single. Inevitably reality outran fantasy and an innings which was just hinting at fruition was cut short at 15. John Eastwood only scored nine runs in two innings against Higham last season and they must have wondered how he had won the Premier Section batting prize with close on 800 runs at an average of over 60. He came to the crease with several low scores behind him but, paradoxically, he hit a dominant 55 and was back to his best form.

The persevering Mick Ingledow was bowled for 33 but then wickets began to fall at regular intervals in what has become a familiar pattern this season. Only Neil Booth of the later batsmen managed any sustained resistance as he reassumed his 'have bat will go in anywhere' role. Having gone nearly two years without being all out in a league fixture, the feat was accomplished for the second successive week when Dan Peace was adjudged bowled in a rather confusing fashion with both umpires having to consult over a moment which involved a

flourish of the bat, at least one ricochet and the wicket broken. Eleven balls of the 45 over allocation remained with the final total 150.

After two overs of the Higham innings a streaker appeared, probably a first such occurrence in the annals of Huddersfield Central League cricket. Proceedings were held up for a minute or two for the delectation or otherwise of those present before the entertainment ended with the retreat of the unscheduled male intruder, possibly for more amber fluid in the adjacent Engineers Arms.

Both Higham openers departed relatively cheaply and optimism began to grow but all was foiled by an Australian debutant Paul Smith. There was no doubt that his batting capabilities were comfortably of good village standard and his extended working holiday in Britain was also intended to take in some cricket with remuneration somewhere along the line.

His eventual 85* was undoubtedly the key factor in Higham reaching their target at 153 for 7. Only P.Wroe (11) stayed for any length of time with him until captain A.Roebuck batted sensibly when he went to the wicket with nearly fifty still required. Their partnership remained unbroken until victory was achieved. Estimates of the number of chances put down varied between five and seven. They were of different degrees of difficulty but probably all would have been taken last season and two at least were relatively easy. Seven fours and five sixes tell their own tale but had the last chance he offered, with the home team still over twenty runs from their target, then it is likely that the eventual result would have been reversed.

Whilst the team's descent from the heights of last season's championship does not quite mirror that of Yorkshire if the first third of the season, points need to be picked up to re-build confidence. Successive losses by three wickets (twice) and two wickets are not thrashings but reveal a lack of consistency in batting. Last year's huge totals often demoralised the opposition but they seem like the riches of Croesus at the moment.

Final scores: Thurstonalnd 150 all out; Higham 153 for 7.

Team: Mick Ingledow; David Howarth; John Eastwood; Martin Oldroyd; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; Adam Fowler; David Rishton; Daniel Peace; Nicky Hoyland; Ashley Coldwell.

**SUNDAY June 16th
Versus Almondbury Wesleyans (home)
Allsop Cup - Round 2**

This was the second attempt to play this cup fixture after the previous Sunday's deluge washed out play completely. A hot, sunny morning and early afternoon gave way to cloud at teatime and the almost inevitable rain arrived five overs into the visitor's innings. Both teams carried on in damp conditions for nearly twenty minutes with a suspension of play looking likely when matters improved and the game was played to a conclusion.

Both sides had reached the second round, not having had to play in the first! On that occasion neither of our respective opponents had been able to raise a team, a rather sad state of affairs and one which it is hoped is not going to become a trend.

We had not met in competition since a cup game in 1993 and our paths had diverged in the league since our visitors were relegated from the top section in 1990.

Neil Booth was restored to the opener's slot with Mick Ingledow and a good stand ensued. Another half century stand got the innings off to the desired start but, just when there were signs that the Wesleyans were beginning to lose heart, wickets began to tumble. Mick went for

32 and Neil for 33 but once again, after his excellent innings of the previous day, John Eastwood made only four and this led to a collapse to 104 for 6. Only Lee Booth (22) showed any prolonged resistance. David Oldham, making a surprise first team appearance away from his duties as second team captain, sadly departed bowled for a golden duck.

Just when it seemed a rather disappointing total might be the order of the day once again, the US cavalry in the shape of Martin Oldroyd and Dan Peace came to the rescue. Several forceful boundaries were combined with good running between the wickets and it was only as the last over approached that Martin was bowled for an invaluable 33. The innings closed on 160 for 8 with Dan not out on 24. He had again given a glimpse of some excellent strokes, particularly drives on the off side, and hinted at genuine all round status.

It was good to see Ashley Coldwell pick up a couple of early wickets in the Almondbury Wesleyan reply. One was to an excellent catch behind the wicket by Nicky Hoyland who has already got 18 victims to his name. The other was bowled and suddenly 22 for 0 became 23 for 3, the third victim being run out by a direct hit from Lee Booth whose speed of action obviously owed something to his recent visit to Japan and the example of the bullet train.

Apart from a brief flourish from I.Hales (10) and A.Khalid (13), the rest of the visiting batsmen got drawn into an oddly attritional frame of mind for a cup tie. Both Lee Booth and David Rishton churned out the maidens and the latter, as well as taking his first catch of the season, a good one at deep backward square leg, ended with the remarkable figures of 5 for 5 from 8.2 overs. This brought his career tally in the first team to 724, fifty-one behind Phil Brammall who currently holds the record for most bowling victims.

Although our visitors were second in Section A and amongst the early front runners for promotion, they seemed to find the task a little daunting although it was a closer affair at one stage with only the late stand between Martin Oldroyd and Dan Peace providing the necessary late impetus in reaching a decent total.

Final Score: Thurstonland 160 /8; Almondbury Wesleyans 55 all out.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Neil Booth; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; David Oldham; Martin Oldroyd; David Rishton; Daniel Peace; Nicky Hoyland; Adam Fowler; Ashley Coldwell.

SATURDAY June 22nd Versus Denby Dale (home)

Midsummer, the longest days of the year and the Thurstonland ground bathed in sunlight...even the most hard hearted of souls would turn unashamed romantic. The proceedings were to be supported and enlivened by match sponsors, the Colne Valley Connection. They were connected with the high school as have been many members and supporters of the club. Five had clubbed together, not only to pay the standard £25 fee but also to provide a guest beer which was tackled with relish. Their worthy efforts in drinking just left enough for sale to others later. Several former players and their partners attended at various stages of an idyllic afternoon.

Dan Peace was missing because of illness but that loss was minimised by yet another sterling bowling performance from both Lee Booth and David Rishton. The former bowled his first nine overs in his old medium pace style and when he switched back to his off spin, several in the ground, including the young visiting scorer, thought that there had been a bowling change.

Lee made an early breakthrough by having his opposing captain caught behind by Nicky Hoyland. No Denby Dale batsman ever got settled and only N.Lammyman with a patient 22 hinted at permanence. Wickets fell at regular intervals although there were only a few balls to

spare when the last one fell. It was fitting that David and Lee shared the wickets with the former having 5/24 and the latter 5/61. The final total was 116.

Tea was taken in the knowledge that six points were there for the taking if we applied ourselves and the importance of this was evident as there had been no league win for a month. It had been quite a long time since the Thurstonland first team had had this experience. The leading group of four teams in the Premier Section were beginning to get away and our 19 points left us well adrift of Hoylandswaine on 41 and a mere eight in front of bottom placed Edgerton to whom we had lost a few weeks previously.

The vast experience of Martin Oldham on his 599th first team appearance and Mick Ingledow was called upon to start the task. Neither of them rushed matters and periods of languor in studied defence were punctuated by well crafted boundaries but there was scarcely a hint of a chance.

The Denby Dale attack was changed with regularity but even the experienced Vic Reed could make no impression. At the end of the 30th over their partnership had reached 71 and it seemed as though there was no wish to leave the field in a hurry on such a pleasant summer's day whose charms were tempered only by a persistent breeze. In the end the final 46 runs came in a hurry in just seven more overs. The race to personal fifties ebbed and flowed with Martin Oldham well ahead for most of the time but Mick Ingledow's late flurry of forceful shots saw him there first but the former had just enough time to hit a final two boundaries and they remained undefeated on 54 (Mick) and 53 (Martin).

This had been the most dominant league display of the season and everyone was in better heart after the game although an early re-match with our opponents on June 30th on their ground in the quarter finals of the cup will mean that everything has to be done again. Rather like football's World Cup there have been plenty of giant killing acts in the 2002 Allsop Cup and only three top section teams remain, one of whom must go out in the June 30th encounter.

Final score: Denby Dale 116 allout; Thurstonland 117 for 0.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Martin Oldroyd; Lee Booth; David Howarth; Neil Booth; Adam Fowler; David Rishton; Nicky Hoyland; Ashley Coldwell.

SUNDAY June 23rd Versus YMCA (away)

The weather was again favourable for the second fixture of the season's only double league weekend. Our opponents had been promoted in 2001 for their first campaign back in the top flight for the best part of ten years. They had made a strong start and were in the top four after nine games although defeat at Cumberworth the previous day had been a setback. They had at least managed to pick up a point after avoiding being bowled out.

Martin Oldham had John Eastwood as his opening partner as he made his 600th senior appearance. It had all begun as a 14 year old in August 1972. He is the only batsman to pass 10000 first team runs in the period since 1954 when reliable records begin although it is doubtful if any earlier players reached that landmark playing fewer games for the most part and on generally less well prepared wickets and longer outfields. Throw in a matter of twenty second team games as well and this is a remarkable record of commitment. There are hints that this might be his last season and a lot of cricket lies ahead of anyone who hopes to emulate his figures.

To put matters into perspective, only his brother David, now captaining the second team, with 558 games comes anywhere near. This was David Rishton's 467th game and then we have to go back to Phil Brammall, now retired, on 337.

After the previous day's fifty his 8 might seem small rations but he again took part in a long opening stand and saw less of the bowling. John Eastwood was back to his best again and had his second fifty in three innings. Several searing covers drives, the product of perfect timing, were a pleasure to watch. Mick Ingledow cranked himself into action at no.3 and scored 28 before succumbing to a shooter which he chopped on to his wicket. Martin Oldroyd played several forceful shots behind square to force the pace at exactly the right time and his 34 was a valuable contribution.

It was, however, John's 71 which stole the show. It was a virtually faultless display until he was bowled by another ball which did not rise much off the ground. A total of 184 for 7 was the YMCA target.

Ashley Coldwell made the initial breakthrough. His left arm over brisk medium pace can be disconcerting to batsmen and there is a hint that he is an unlucky bowler. Several examples of playing and missing come to mind and he is trying hard to cut down on the four balls. Opener Wilson was well caught by David Rishton off a mishit hook and it was encouraging to see him end with figures of 1 for 22 off his nine overs. His enthusiasm is without question and his fielding energetic and few batsmen take liberties with him.

Only the other opener, R. Reed, caused any major problems with a forceful 54 before he was bowled attempting an extravagant heave off David Rishton who again was into action like a perpetual mobile. He finished with figures of 6 for 43 and so had a tally of 16 wickets in the last three games to bring his career tally to 735, just forty behind the club record held by the redoubtable Phil Brammall.

A few lusty blows from the YMCA lower helped their cause a little but their innings closed on 120, well short of the target. Lee Booth bowled steadily in support of David without quite looking as convincing as on the previous day. Twelve points in the weekend certainly improved our league position and next Saturday's game at home to Hoylandswaine marks the halfway point of the season. Do summers get shorter?

Final score: Thurstonland 184/7; YMCA 120 all out.

Team: John Eastwood; Martin Oldham; Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldroyd; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; Adam Fowler; David Rishton; Nicky Hoyland; Jordan Halliday; Ashley Coldwell.

Saturday June 29th Versus Hoylandswaine (home)

The game marked the end of the first half of the league programme. Our visitors were in second place and currently providing the only sustained challenge to leaders Cumberworth. Their form over the last four or five seasons has tended to be rather mercurial, alternating between a comfortable top half position and one in the lower reaches of the top section. The departure of Darren Lockwood to Shelley meant that one formidable opponent would be absent.

Steve Webb, who had one season at Thurstonland in 1991, opened the attack accompanied by B.Stocks and the first six overs were uneventfully negotiated by Mick Ingledow and Martin Oldham before the former got a ball which lifted off a length and a smart catch was taken by Steve Hardwick standing up to the wicket. David Howarth batted in his usual circumspect

fashion against one of his former clubs without suggesting fluency and he departed bowled for 3 with the total on 39. Martin Oldham was into his stride, however, and mixed watchful defence with some typical textbook drives to the boundary.

John Eastwood played a cameo innings which yielded him 16 runs and it was a surprise when he was caught at the wicket after a stay of almost three quarters of an hour. Both Webb and Stocks proved hard to get away and the latter, having conceded 19 from his first seven overs, then bowled five successive maidens. Martin Oldham departed with the score on 96, having made 62 of them, skying the ball to Ryan Copley off change bowler R.Greenwood, a new face in the Hoylandswaine ranks.

It was left to Martin Oldroyd to try to push the score along and his 37 not out contained many positive shots as well as several quick singles which took their toll on Neil Booth's hamstrings and left him unable to field. Twelve year old Jack Oldham did the honours after the interval. Considering that five wickets were left, the total of 153 was a little disappointing and it became part of a developing pattern in contrast to the run feasts of the last couple of years.

Ashley Coldwell made two quick breakthroughs in the Hoylandswaine reply having R.Greenwood caught by David Rishton off a mistimed pull shot and Ryan Copley well taken by young second team wicketkeeper Matthew McDonagh. With Chris Illingsworth departing to a relatively rare John Eastwood catch off Dan Peace, the visitors were 21 for 3. The decisive part of the game was to follow although there was an unexpected twist in the final stages.

No further wicket fell until the 31st over as Steve Hardwick settled in for his usual run feast against Thurstonland. A hard chance was offered when he was 10 but he and J. Ibbotson added 76. He eventually departed caught at the wicket for 34, the second of three catches in a generally tidy display by Matthew McDonagh. The latter gave David Rishton his second catch of the innings off Lee Booth when the total had reached 131 with his own tally on 52. It was, however, now the 42nd over. The running out of Dominic Lynn (30) and wickets for David Rishton and the recalled Dan Peace meant that the score stood at 147 for 7 at the start of the final over. A single off the first ball was followed by two wickets and then a dot ball (148/9) until the penultimate delivery from Dave Rishton was sent soaring over the long on boundary for six by N.Bramhall.

This was revenge for Hoylandswaine after they had accomplished mission impossible in a similar position in the 1999 Allsop Cup semi-final and meant that four defeats this season in the league had been by one wicket, two wickets and three wickets (twice).

Final score: Thurstonland 153/5; Hoylandswaine 154/9.

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

Sunday June 30th Versus Denby Dale (away) - Allsop Cup

This was the second meeting between the clubs in eight days. The league encounter had seen a comprehensive win for Thurstonland by ten wickets so confidence was reasonably high. David Rishton was diagnosed with a broken thumb after the previous day's game which would mean an absence of anything up to six weeks and he and Mark Hill, the second team vice captain, gave a passable imitation of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. With Neil Booth being hamstrung there was a recall for Adam Fowler and a surprise reappearance for Andy Booth.

Sound innings for Martin Oldham (20) and John Eastwood (23) gave great support to Mick Ingledow. He was short of his ground when on seven as the wickets were broken but survived after a sporting gesture from Denby Dale when it was pointed out that the wicket had been broken before the ball arrived. Mick benefited fully and scored an increasingly authoritative 116*. The in form Martin Oldroyd provided great support in an unbroken third wicket stand of 126. The final score of 212 for 2 meant that inside barely a week we had totalled 319 for 2 against our opponents. There had been a short rain delay of eight minutes near the end of our innings and skies were examined anxiously at the start of the Denby Dale reply. No-one likes having to return to complete a cup tie unless conditions are absolutely impossible.

After 15 overs our opponents were 28 for 3 thanks to two wickets for Dan Peace and the run out of opposition captain D.Firth from a direct hit from a Mick Ingledow throw. If then it seemed like a case of waiting for the inevitable, expectations were soon to be shattered in dramatic fashion.

It is difficult even in hindsight to say where things got away from Thurstonland but get away they certainly did in what ended as perhaps the most disappointing first team display for a number of seasons. The rain set in after about the fifteen over mark and, although never heavy, it was persistent and did no favours to either bowlers or fielders. The temperature was also more like that of late March or early October rather than a day from the supposed height of summer.

Andy Booth, having bowled seven overs in his typical metronomically accurate style, had to withdraw from the attack. Stuart Geldart and John Beaumont made a calculated assault on Lee Booth who, for once, in spite of his best endeavours, was unable to stem the tide. His first ten overs went for 68, double his usual RPO concession. Dan Peace kept charging in and was eventually rewarded with an lbw decision against John Beaumont whose 54 contained eleven boundaries.

Richard Tyas (22) then added 92 with Stuart Geldart whose day this was rapidly becoming. He was missed when on 70 but he continued to a deserved century to see his team home in the 43rd over in spite of a few small alarms late on with the target well in sight. Ashley Coldwell never bowled a ball whilst the introduction into the attack in the 37th over of Martin Oldroyd produced a tally of 2 for 27 but it was too little too late. This had been a remarkable turn around from only eight days before and full credit goes to Denby Dale. The knowledge that, Cumberworth apart, the teams in this game were the only Premier Section sides left in the cup made defeat all the more frustrating. A chilly and chastened group of players and loyal supporters made a subdued exit into what had become an autumnal evening.

Final score: Thurstonland 212/2; Denby Dale 214/7.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Martin Oldroyd; Lee Booth; Nicky Hoyland; Adam Fowler; Daniel Peace; Jordan Halliday; Andy Booth; Ashley Coldwell.

Saturday July 13th Versus Ruddlesdens (away)

After the break for the Village Gala the first team made its initial appearance at Ruddlesden's Thornhill ground. Its park setting belied some of the comments made about it beforehand although it was a busy scene being close to a main road and a well used pitch and put course. As things turned out the golfers were to be in greater danger of being interrupted by a cricket ball on the putting surface than were the cricketers by any wayward tee shots or mishit nine irons.

It was certainly the week when anyone standing was considered for a place in the team. Various injuries meant that David Rishton, Mark Hill, Neil Booth, Martin Oldroyd and Andrew Booth were out of action. By the end of the game Dan Peace was the victim of ligament trouble and with captain and vice captain in London and several others on holiday, no fewer than twelve players were unavailable. The fact that two full teams turned out was a matter of pride and reflected well on our investment in the junior teams as well as the loyalty of old stalwarts who helped out in the second team.

Our hosts were at the bottom of the league and the cobbled together team from Thurstonland was delighted by a determined opening burst from Ashley Coldwell who had three wickets in four overs to reduce the opposition to 15 for 3 in the eighth over. That, however, was as good as it got as the depleted attack was then hit with unseemly regularity to many of the bushes surrounding the ground. James Armstrong, making only his second appearance in the first team since his debut in 1993 at Dodworth after which he lived out of the area for quite a while, conceded 30 runs in 3 overs as home captain D.Mather in partnership with J.Hiscocks who had scored 74 at Thurstonland took full advantage.

Martin Oldham, having bowled fewer than ten overs in the last decade, was called into action as was acting captain Mick Ingledow who had previously delivered just 2 overs in nearly 160 first team games. Indeed it was the latter's individualistic gentle slow right armers which broke the stand at 158 in the 27th over when Hiscocks was caught by Simon Burgess for 77. Martin Oldham followed quickly with his 133rd senior wicket, seven years after taking his 132nd!

Any thoughts of damage limitation were quickly dispelled as M.Haley (23), Z.Hussain (13) and A.Mather (14*) gave support to D.Mather as he ploughed on to his century, remaining undefeated at the end on 121. Ian Short took a deserved 2 for 23 after a wayward initial over whilst Jordan Halliday bowled six overs at the death and his good action impressed many and he suggested that his bowling problems were behind him. The final tally of 276 for 7 was by a considerable margin the highest total conceded by the first team in the last fifty seasons.

To compound the growing sense of the fates being against us on a pleasantly sunny Saturday, Martin Oldham, a century maker against our opponents in the first fixture, departed for nought, bowled by one which kept low. Young Ian Short quickly followed and although fifteen year old Kris Thackray resisted determinedly for almost half an hour he was deceived by a slower ball from Z.Hussain having scored only a single. Hussain's figures were a remarkable 5 for 4 after eight overs and there were nervous thoughts of appearances in column fillers of the national press. He eventually took 6 for 21. A succession of zeroes and ones gave the scorebook the appearance of binary maths. Luckily Mick Ingledow ploughed on gallantly until he fell for 44 with the total on 64 for 6. Dan Peace (11) and Jordan Halliday (9) made more prolonged resistance but it was only some amazing pyrotechnics at No.10 from James Armstrong who hit four sixes and two fours in a 19 ball 34* which enabled us to reach 117.

Final scores: Ruddlesdens 276 for 7; Thurstonland 117 all out.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; Ian Short; Kris Thackray; Adam Fowler; Nicky Hoyland; Daniell Peace; Jordan Halliday; Simon Burgess; James Armstrong; Ashley Coldwell.

**Sunday July 14th
Versus Crossbank Methodists (home)**

This was the second re-arrangement of this fixture because of the Village Gala, the original date of June 2nd having been taken up by a cup fixture. Our visitors also had their second

team in the semi-final of the Tinker Cup and so team selection was a problem for them. In the end they played with ten men, including the eleven year old son of the captain, P.Ratcliffe.

Our own problems had eased only slightly from the previous day's drubbing at Ruddlesdens and former stalwart John Crosland was prised off the golf course for his 311th senior appearance after retirement from competitive cricket at the end of the 1998 season. He had made two or three cameo roles in the second team in the intervening years.

After Martin Oldham had departed lbw for 13 with the total on 31, John Eastwood joined Mick Ingledow for a very productive second wicket stand. Runs came at a rapid rate and the partnership of 72 was posted in only seventeen overs. It was something of a surprise when the former was bowled by change bowler Kalash Punjabi for 39. Perhaps over confidence was the cause as neither batsman had looked in much trouble. As so often seems to happen after a good stand, the other batsman departed soon afterwards when Mick Ingledow (45) was caught by Ian Chambers who seemed to find an extension lead to haul in the ball when it appeared to be well over his head.

John Crosland found his way to the wicket to join Lee Booth without needing the help of a grid reference with the score on 107 for 3. His first few balls revealed a lack of match practice but suddenly a trademark drive for four unlocked the restraining chains. He then batted purposefully before being well caught for 23. This left him just 25 short of 6000 first team runs so further appearances were hinted at in an effort to reach that target and so join Martin and David Oldham and David Howarth as the only batsmen to reach that landmark.

Lee Booth (23), Chris Bray (12) and Nicky Hoyland (13) all kept the score moving with Ian Short and Jordan Halliday facing the last few balls which brought the score after 45 overs to 191 for 7, a welcome relief after the traumas of 24 hours earlier.

Experienced openers Firth and Whittaker got the Crossbank reply off to a flying start. Ashley Coldwell conceded 16 in the first over and 37 in four before being replaced by Jordan Halliday. It was to Ashley's credit that he later returned at a crucial time and delivered six more overs for only ten runs as well as picking up a crucial wicket when Chris Bray caught Ian Chambers (41) from a skier.

The third wicket had fallen at 70 but with only sixteen overs gone, the target was well within range. Captain P.Ratcliffe gave Chambers dogged support but slowly the flow of runs was stifled. When Chris Bray took the previously mentioned catch at 144 the asking rate was just under five an over.

Lee Booth bowled unchanged with a mixture of medium pace and off spin and ended with career best figures after 22 overs of 6 for 73. Wicket keeper M.Benson kept the momentum going with a hard hit 21* but the lack of a full team told in the end and it was to the credit of Ratcliffe jnr that he helped to play out the last four overs to secure a point for his team. Once again it had been a rather nervous performance but the five points were welcome with several demanding fixtures on the horizon.

Final scores: Thurstonland 191 for 7; Crossbank Methodists 175 for 8.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; John Crosland; Chris Bray; Nicky Hoyland; Ian Short; Jordan Halliday; Simon Burgess; Ashley Coldwell.

**Sunday July 20th
Versus Cawthorne (home)**

The clash of last season's champions, ourselves, and our visitors from Cawthorne who were runners up saw both teams in more straitened circumstances. Whilst we clung a little tentatively to a place in mid table, our opponents were in one of the relegation spots. So it appeared that Yorkshire CCC were not the only ones to experience contrasting fortunes in successive years.

After a well driven four from Mick Ingledow from the second ball of the game and a single two deliveries later Martin Oldham faced the bowling. His second ball left him a little and an intended cover drive took a thick outside edge. All did not seem lost initially but Paul Osborne in the gully brought off a fine low catch which would have been worthy of a much more elevated level of cricket.

This early loss did not deter either Mick Ingledow or John Eastwood. The latter hit four boundaries and both batsmen kept the score moving along with singles. Clouds had begun to gather ominously after about 45 minutes play and as the 19th over began just on three o'clock the first drops of rain began to fall. A sumptuous on drive for his final four by John off the last ball of the over proved to be the end of action for the day. Heavy rain set in for a time and, although everyone hung around and took an early tea, the match was abandoned just before half past four when it was only too obvious that any mopping up possible would not guarantee play until well into the evening.

Mick Ingledow ended on 22 not out whilst John Eastwood was undefeated on 32 and a promising stand was cut off in its prime. The total was 60 for 1.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; Neil Booth; David Howarth; Chris Bray; Nicky Hoyland; Jordan Halliday; Ashley Coldwell.

Saturday July 27th Versus Edgerton (away)

The weather for this game could hardly have been in greater contrast to what had prevailed on our only previous visit in 2001. Then we had been the only game in the top section to finish in bitter winds and under scudding clouds but this year an astonishingly hot and, at least initially, humid afternoon greeted us.

There was the relatively rare sight of Lee Booth opening the innings accompanied by Mick Ingledow. The second ball of the game brought a hint of tragedy or pantomime depending on how one judged a moment of pure theatre. It was to be the first of several talking points during the afternoon. The ball in question saw Lee complete two runs whilst Mick watched in detached fascination determinedly fixed to his crease suggestive of the disdain with which a high primate might view the upstart cavortings of an over ambitious dragonfly.

At one point it appeared that Lee had resigned himself to what seemed his inevitable fate as the ball arrived at the bowler's end from which he had set out so optimistically quite a time earlier. It then, however, eluded the grasp of the bowler and nearby fielders enabling him to reach an unexpectedly safe haven to the consternation of the home side and the general merriment of the Thurstonland team who celebrated the escape in the manner of one relieved from the gallows because the trapdoor has failed to open.

Whatever breakdown in communication had occurred was apparently soon put right as a stand of 94 followed in 27 overs before Mick fell to a catch off the recently introduced spinner Steve Avery for a polished 47 in what was becoming another productive season. Lee was eventually out in the 37th over for 64 with Eddie Haigh on his first senior appearance for two years after

working away from the area contributing a quick 17 in the middle order whilst Chris Bray included a huge six in a cameo innings of 15* as the innings neared its close on 195 for 8.

Home captain Roger Massiah and M.Ali made their intentions clear from the outset. Anything wayward was despatched forcefully and the former showed a good array of shots although at times he found a space with lofted drives frustratingly often. He eventually fell to a catch in the covers by John Brigg to give Jordan Halliday his first wicket in the senior team. He bowls with a smooth high action and it is hoped that he will be able to become an increasingly important part of the attack. Final figures of 3 for 47 were well earned.

It was just after his entry into the attack that the next remarkable incident occurred. Lee Booth, having reverted to spin after opening that attack with his medium pace, bowled a ball which M.Ali tried to cut. A resounding noise followed instantly, of what material was later open to discussion, as the ball struck wicketkeeper Nicky Hoyland in the centre of the forehead. Urgent attention was given but he managed to walk off appearing to be in need of stitches. A visit to the nearby infirmary proved that this was not necessary and he returned in time for the final few overs as a spectator. Martin Oldroyd took over behind the wicket and Trevor Peace rolled back the years as he tried, along with everyone else, to stem the growing floodtide of Edgerton runs. The final noteworthy moment came when Eddie Haigh at long on caught a huge hit from A.Rehman virtually off his toes. He did not take the ball cleanly but knocked it into the air and, remarkably, caught the rebound. This was rather controversial but, with no third umpire to adjudicate, Eddie's word was taken that it was a fair catch and a somewhat incredulous batsman had to depart.

J.Ahmed who had spent the best part of 50 minutes scratching around for 7 runs suddenly, after imprecations from his colleagues, hit boundaries galore and the winning runs were struck with seven balls to spare.

Final score: Thurstonland 195/8; Edgerton 196/6

Team: Mick Ingledow; Lee Booth; David Howarth; Martin Oldroyd; Eddie Haigh; Nicky Hoyland; Neil Booth; Chris Bray; John Brigg; Jordan Halliday; Ashley Coldwell.

Saturday August 3rd Versus Emley (home)

A glimpse of warm summer sunshine was a welcome change for the game against visitors who have done well since their return to the top section in 2000. Jon Lee and Simon Lewis opened for Emley with the latter having returned during the morning from holiday on the south coast. He certainly did not seem to be affected by the long journey as a 49 run stand was posted by the tenth over. This has been a recurring feature of the season, in spite of the best efforts of our opening attack and it was a pleasant surprise when Lewis holed out to a catch by Martin Oldroyd off Lee Booth for 24.

Jordan Halliday had joined the attack in place of Ashley Coldwell and induced the often free scoring Craig Stratford to mistime an intended drive off the last ball of his first over. The steeping catch was taken confidently by Ashley Coldwell. Jon Lee looked set for a deserved fifty but perished one short with the total on 88 and when Will Appleyard departed for 12 scored in over an hour in the 33rd over, the score of 128 for 4 looked better at that stage than had seemed likely after the meteoric start.

Ken Taylor remained, however, and an increasingly assertive innings which included five fours and four sixes only ended for 77 in the 43rd over when he was caught by Mick Ingledow off

the persevering Lee Booth. At tea the Emley total was 196 for 7. Lee Booth recorded his second successive bowling century with figures of 4 for 104 off 23 overs.

Whether the heat was a factor or not both Martin Oldham and John Eastwood had departed within five overs, both for ducks, to leave us rather precariously placed at 7 for 2. Emley's Will Appleyard was the catcher on each occasion off Ken Taylor. It was almost as if he was being tested to make sure that the first one was not a fluke. This flurry of action had Lee Booth summoned to the colours rather sooner than he might have expected after his marathon bowling stint.

He helped Mick Ingledow to raise the score to 24 before giving Jon Lee his first victim when succumbing for 10 to a catch to young wicket keeper Wilson. Martin Oldroyd made an unusually subdued 7 and Neil Booth stayed a while without ever really getting into his stride and also departed for 7, both batsmen bowled by visiting captain Lee who was having a significant influence on the afternoon's proceedings.

During all this Mick Ingledow soldiered on like the loyal subaltern unwavering under fire as the officer class vanished around him. David Howarth, batting uncharacteristically low at No.7 indulged himself in a relatively rare six before trying to turn a single into two. his over estimation of his sprinting prowess as well as a bat flourished aloft rather like the lance of a knight at the lists inevitably left him short of his target, run out for 14. After two and a quarter hours of faithful toil Mick Ingledow offered a weary shot to young David Stratford and was bowled for 77 and, in spite of a brief flurry of runs from Chris Bray and Jordan Halliday' the innings closed on 148 with three overs remaining.

Final scores: Emley 196/7; Thurstonland 148 all out.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; Neil Booth; David Howarth; Chris Bray; Nicky Hoyland; Jordan Halliday; Ashley Coldwell.

Saturday August 10th Versus Old Almondburians (home)

After rain had commenced at the end of practice on Thursday evening it continued virtually without a break until Saturday morning, some 36 hours later. Ark manufacturers appeared to be the only ones doing good business.

The game was called off at lunchtime and few fixtures were played in the Huddersfield area. For the record the selected team details appear below.

Team: Mick Ingledow; David Howarth; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; Eddie Haigh; Chris Bray; Daniel Peace; Nicky Hoyland; Jordan Halliday; Ashley Coldwell.

Saturday August 17th Versus Cumberworth (home)

League leaders Cumberworth were hardly the team to play with confidence at a rather low ebb. A mixture of injuries, genuine bad luck and a lack of consistency in both bowling and batting had led to the worst sequence of results for a considerable time. It was good to

welcome back David Rishton after a seven week absence because of a broken bone in his hand and then for holidays and it was hoped that his usually accurate bowling would help to stem the cascade of runs which had been a feature of opposition innings in recent games.

Although Martin Kilner was not quite his usual accurate self for the visitors, Richard Greaves soon settled into the groove and runs had to be eked from him like coins from a miser's hoard. After conceding 8 runs from his first four overs, the next five were maidens. He bowled Mick Ingledow for 12 with the total on 22. David Howarth, restored to his opening slot, and John Eastwood then had an uphill struggle to give the innings momentum and after 25 overs the total was only 50. The former was then adjudged lbw for 22 and the latter soon followed , bowled by Bower, for 14 which took 52 minutes and included a six.

Lee Booth and Martin Oldroyd then had the task of rebuilding the innings. The persistently accurate Cumberworth attack kept run scoring opportunities to a minimum and boundaries were as rare as gold nuggets in the pans of the gold prospectors in late 19th century Yukon. By the 37th over the score had only advanced to 88 when Martin was caught for 16 with lee following not long afterwards for 28 to make the score 99 for 5.

Chris Bray (17*) and Neil Booth (13) managed to add 26 which included a drive for six over the covers by Neil and some three attractive shots for four by Chris but the interval score of 129 for 6 was not one to worry the digestion of the visiting team in their current form.

Peter Hird set off in his usual manner and he arrived at 24 in no time at all. Having demolished the hors d'oeuvres he had just settled back for the main course as David Rishton came on for his first bowl since the end of June. A single to young opening partner M.Dolley brought him to face the left arm spinner and, to Thurstonland's delight and his own puzzled disappointment, he fell to his first delivery. James Senior fell soon after to a smart stumping from the helmeted Nicky Hoyland off the bowling of Lee Booth who welcomed the chance not to have to bowl through the innings.

Proceedings had, however, an air of inevitability about them as all the Cumber worth batsmen called upon played in an uncomplicated fashion, hitting the less good balls for boundaries and the end came just before seven o'clock. A sequence of five overs from David Rishton and Lee Booth seemed to encapsulate recent fortunes. Three leg byes were scored but the bowlers delivered 25 dot balls. The others went for three fours and two sixes. An accurate spell, the likes of which in terms of scoring opportunities most bowlers would settle for, had nevertheless conceded runs at over five an over.

In the old expression, someone told the sexton and the sexton tolled the bell. Nine games had now been played, including the quarter final against Denby Dale, and only one victory had resulted. Ten league points from eight games was relegation form and the eighth place in the league was the lowest at this stage of the season since 1983.

Final scores: Thurstonland 129/6; Cumberworth 130/4.

Team: David Howarth; Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; Chris Bray; Neil Booth; Daniel Peace; David Rishton; Nicky Hoyland; Jordan Halliday.

Saturday August 24th Versus Higham (home)

Yet another showery day meant that the start was delayed until 2.30 so turning the game into a 40 over contest. Our visitors came in the unusual circumstances in recent seasons of occupy having accumulated 43 points after 18 games to Thurstonland's 41. After not having lost to

Higham since 1981, although this includes some years when we were in different sections, two successive defeats had ensued. The first was in the final fixture of the 2001 campaign when the priority was to bat out 45 overs for the point which brought us the unexpected but welcome championship and then in mid June on the day of England's triumph in the World Cup game against Denmark we were beaten largely thanks to Higham's Australian debutant Paul Smith scoring 85* and surviving more offered catches than those involved care to remember.

David Howarth and Mick Ingledow, captain for the day, opened the innings against Andrew Danks and Alan Roebuck and made reasonably purposeful progress. Trademark pulls for four got Mick well underway whilst both batsmen took singles wherever possible. Thirty eight had accrued by the 14th over when David was lbw for 13 to a short ball from Danks which did not get up as much as expected. Eddie Haigh took his place at No.3 in the absence of John Eastwood and, after a cautious start, hit three confident fours, one a sumptuous on drive which defied all attempts by the damp outfield to delay its progress. Mick Ingledow departed, also lbw to Danks, for 44 with the total on 67 and it was a disappointment when Eddie Haigh picked out with unerring accuracy the only deep fielder on the leg side to be out for 18 just when he was looking set for a much bigger personal tally.

Ian Robinson came into the attack for Higham and his off spin slowed the scoring rate although he remained without a wicket in his six overs. Chris Horbury (4/32), returning after a two year absence from the game, then became an unlikely source of difficulty as the innings faded away. Only Martin Oldroyd with 20 reached double figures after the first three. Neil Booth (9) was bowled by a ball from S.Bamforth (3/8) which turned in Shane Warne fashion and 100 for 3 subsided to 121 for 9. Only a brief flourish of thirteen runs for the last wicket which included four byes and a huge hit for six by Nicky Hoyland (9*) added a little respectability before Jordan Halliday drove a ball into the hands of A.Danks in the covers on the third ball of the final over to leave a total of 134 all out.

David Rishton and Daniel Peace opened the Thurstonland attack and for almost the first time this season the opposition, quite confident of victory at teatime, were put in a stranglehold from which they never really escaped. I.Robinson and M.Dixon departed for 2 and 6 (half a crown in old money!) respectively. Paul Smith who has had such a positive effect on Higham's batting this year threatened briefly with a well struck 28 but after that wickets fell at regular intervals. David Rishton tested the patience of all opposition batsmen as he delivered 20 overs unchanged to take 6 for 36, his best figures for the season so far. In only one over was there more than a single scoring shot and it was realised how much his ability, with the rarest of exceptions, to tie up an end had been missed in recent weeks.

Dan Peace bowled with no luck at all and I feel that one day a six or seven wicket return is within his grasp. He played a full part in establishing Thurstonland's grip on the game and 2 for 48 from 16 overs was no more than he deserved. Jordan Halliday bowled the final four overs and bowled S.Bamforth to set up the possibility of a full six point return but the last pair, captain Alan Roebuck and veteran wicketkeeper Paul Bamforth played out the last six overs although the latter survived a perilously close shout for lbw off Jordan in the last over. This was a welcome win after the largely unavailing toils of recent weeks.

Final score: Thurstonland 134 all out; Higham 93/9.

Team: David Howarth; Mick Ingledow; Eddie Haigh; Martin Oldroyd; Jon Brigg; Chris Bray; Neil Booth; Daniel Peace; David Rishton; Nicky Hoyland; Jordan Halliday.

**Saturday August 31st
Versus Denby Dale (away)**

The customary 2002 summer clouds over the ground gave way after an hour or so and the rest of the game was played in pleasant sunshine although by the end a chill on the breeze gave a reminder that this was the final Saturday fixture of the season and that autumn was approaching. This game was the third meeting of the year, the home league game resulting in a resounding ten wicket victory whilst the Quarter final at Denby Dale only eight days later had seen fortunes reversed when we failed to defend a total of 212 for 2. In some ways that game seemed to set the tone for some uncharacteristically anxious performances in subsequent fixtures.

Martin Oldham returned to partner Mick Ingledow in opening the innings and Paul Wilkinson in particular was hard to score from. Martin looked a little ring rusty after his absence on holiday and succumbed to the thinnest of edges to wicketkeeper Firth from Stuart Geldart for only a single. David Howarth was bowled for 19 after helping to raise the score to 47 and Mick Ingledow (27) was adjudged lbw, perhaps a little harshly.

Both Eddie Haigh and Neil Booth were dismissed in slightly bizarre circumstances, both sadly without troubling the scorers. The former received a juicy long hop, the jackpot bells rang, trumpets sounded only for the ball to go high in the air almost directly behind the keeper. Paul Wilkinson, contemplating the meaning of life at fine leg made about fifteen yards before diving to snare the catch. This was Eddie's second dismissal in a row to a ball which could have been hit anywhere for a boundary. A due period of mourning followed his return to the pavilion. Neil advanced purposefully up the wicket to Wilkinson but then missed the ball and delayed going back to safety of the crease whilst developing a crucial point of abstract thinking. When he came back to reality he was disappointed to find that he had been smartly stumped as utilitarianism defeated romantic idealism by some distance.

John Eastwood had been batting authoritatively for 39 when another smart piece of glove work brought about his downfall. A brilliant take and appeal for a stumping was turned down but he was given out caught behind when his bat appeared to make no contact with the ball. The required text was from the Lamentations of Jeremiah.

A meek end to the innings seemed in prospect until Nicky Hoyland produced his best innings for some time at No. 10 when his well struck 26 helped Lee Booth add 33 for the ninth wicket. He was bowled in the 44th over. Jordan Halliday hit a good four before taking a single off the penultimate ball whereupon Lee was stumped by the proverbial country mile leaving the Thurstonland total on 147 all out.

Denby Dale captain D.Firth survived a chance to mid off in Jordan Halliday's opening over when Eddie Haigh reacted to a fiercely hit drive by dropping it so swiftly that the reaction might well have been the one to give inspiration to the red hot coal metaphor. he soon departed, lbw to David Rishton, but Stuart Geldart, our nemesis in the cup game at the end of June, and Richard Lammyman took the score to 109. The former was then also adjudged lbw for 46 to Lee Booth with Lammyman (45) following caught behind by Nicky Hoyland off the persevering David Rishton. He had survived a very confident appeal for a stumping only a few moments beforehand. The redoubtable James ' Pieman ' Peace soon fell to a Lee Booth catch but there was again an air of inevitability about the eventual result as R.Tyas and V.Reed scored the remaining runs with fourteen balls to spare. Chris Bray made a rare appearance in the attack in the closing moments.

Final score: Thurstonland 147 all out; Denby Dale 149/4.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; David Howarth; John Eastwood; Eddie Haigh; Neil Booth; Chris Bray; Lee Booth; David Rishton; Nicky Hoyland; Jordan Halliday.

Sunday September 8th Versus YMCA (home)

The penultimate fixture of the season saw our visitors in something of a slump. After the first seven games they were in third place but arrived having fallen to eighth although in no danger of relegation after their first year in the top section since the mid nineties. David Denton made his second appearance in the first team in 2002 and opened the attack opposite Dan Peace.

The young opening YMCA partnership of J.Priestley and S.Ullah played steadily for over half an hour without really threatening a run feast and both were eventually victims of Dan Peace's persistence. The former was caught and bowled off a sharp drive to the left of the bowler's follow through whilst the latter was taken at cover by David Rishton. This was his 200th senior catch. A duly modest celebration ensued.

YM captain Riaz Iqbal briefly caused a stir amongst those gathered as he helped himself to three well struck sixes which cleared the boundary by quite a distance but a sharp catch at the wicket by Matthew McDonagh, standing in for the unavailable Nicky Hoyland, brought a second milestone for David Rishton as this was his 750th victim, leaving him only 25 behind the tally of Phil Brammall. He was to add two more victims before the end of the innings.

The second of these was a catch on the long off boundary by Neil Booth who gave a gallant rendition of a dry land triple salchow before raising the ball triumphantly aloft only a couple of feet from the boundary line. A quick call to the bookies would have found short odds in favour of the ball proving Newton's theory of gravity as only four balls earlier a relatively simple high catch had found its way with inconsiderate ease to the grass. The triumph at taking the harder offering was all the sweeter as a result.

John Eastwood had also been delighted to haul in an awkward offering on the bottom boundary when even he confessed a saving side bet on the ball as it approached. Such pessimism happily remained unfounded.

The only other alarm in the innings was given to your correspondent, the scorer, who had to find space in the name of batsman column in the scorebook for young twins Kiran and Kirty Nandakumar who batted at ten and eleven. Lee Booth and David Rishton both bowled 15 overs and conceded 34 runs with the former taking four wickets and the latter three.

Tea came almost apologetically after a gentle afternoon in the sun with a YMCA total of 115 for 9.

Eighty seven minutes later it was all over as Mick Ingledow and Martin Oldham knocked off the runs with hardly a sniff of a chance being offered. Three occasional bowlers were used in the later stages but this was a comprehensive victory. Mick ended on 59 and Martin 48. The final stroke was a hit for four after three gallant attempts to hit a six which would have brought his fifty. The rest of the team enjoyed relaxed conversation near the pavilion as the inevitable win came nearer. This was the second ten wicket triumph of the year.

Final score: YMCA 115/9; Thurstonland 119/0.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; Neil Booth; Chris Bray; David Rishton; David Denton; Daniell Peace; Matthew McDonagh.

Sunday September 15th Versus Hoylandswaine (away)

Twenty weeks earlier the campaign had begun in the bitter cold at Birstall against Crossbank Methodists. It ended on a pleasantly mellow end of summer afternoon at Hoylandswaine. Although the lengthening shadows gave reminders that we were really at the start of autumn it was good to anticipate a conclusion to the season free of anxieties about the weather when temperatures were still friendly enough to permit spectators to sit in comfort to enjoy the game.

Our hosts had lost their last lingering chance of the championship the previous weekend when they went down to Cumberworth who won their first title since 1928. This meant that the result was largely a matter of pride for the two teams and a last chance to improve statistics for individuals.

Once again Mick Ingledow and Martin Oldham got matters off to a confident start with neither being in too much trouble against W.Storey and N.Bramhall. Fifty came up in 16 overs and it was only with the introduction into the attack of Steve Webb that more searching questions began to be asked. His in swing was proving hard to get away and Martin was bowled by one which cut back from outside the off stump with the total on 58 and his own tally on 31.

Mick was second out at 81, lbw to a ball which he felt he had hit, but his score of 35 brought his season's total to 836 to follow the 858 last year. A single duck together with a one an eight and a twelve were his only innings under 20 during the season when he made 23 trips to the crease....a model of consistency.

The middle part of the innings became rather a struggle as both Steve Webb and second change bowler R.Brocklehurst restricted scoring opportunities. Lee Booth (3) and Martin Oldroyd and Chris Bray for ducks all perished in this period and it was only John Eastwood who managed to keep things going until a confident looking knock of 43 was suddenly cut short when a fatal hesitation over a quick run with Neil Booth led to his run out. Neil followed his gymnastics of the previous week when taking his catch by developing his repertoire. Both his initial scoring shots, a two and a single, ended with dives to beat the throw which were not so much Olympic high board as much as the return to earth of a failed and overpriced November 5th Bonfire Night rocket. Onlookers were suitably amused. Eventually he emerged from a rather tortured period to strike several lusty blows including two sixes, the first of which gathered enthusiasm after an unpromising initial trajectory and distinct lack of height in the lift off phase. He fell to the second last ball of the 45 overs for an eventually well hit 34 and left David Rishton not out on 11. The score had got to 167 for 7, below what had seemed likely after 15 overs but better than expected after 40.

Hoylandswaine's reply also gave little hint of what was to follow later. A studied beginning brought 21 from 9 overs before Dan Peace struck with both openers clean bowled. Chris Illingsworth then set to work and soon had the score mounting. After 13 overs had been used in getting to 31, the next four added 41 and the balance of the game changed. J.Ibbotson (20) fell to a catch at long off from Lee Booth who celebrated his 50th wicket of the year as Mick Ingledow made purposeful progress to position himself under the ball and the 51st wicket followed two balls later as M.Wilkinson was bowled. This brought Steve Hardwick to the crease and once again batted as though he had been on starvation rations for some considerable time. He raced to his fifty in only 37 balls and 35 minutes with the previously rampant Illingsworth seeing little of the strike. Only Jordan Halliday in an accurate spell of seven overs kept scoring within bounds and once again he deserved at least one wicket for his endeavours. Just as the season seemed about to end in a formality a final twist saw both Illingsworth (62) and Hardwick (57) dismissed and Brocklehurst depart for two but the final runs came without fuss shortly afterwards.

Final score: Thurstonland 166/7; Hoylandswaine 168/7.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; Martin Oldroyd; Neil Booth; Chris Bray; David Rishton; Daniel Peace; Jordan Halliday; Matthew McDonagh.