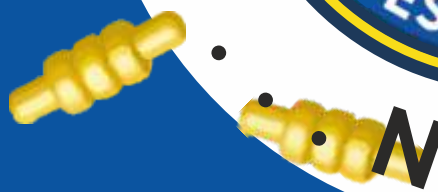


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A History of
**WOODLEY
CRICKET CLUB**

1924-2024



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A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

It is an honour for me to be president of Woodley Cricket Club in this our centenary year, and I hope you enjoy reading this celebratory booklet of cricket played at High Lane, Woodley.

I joined the club in 1967, 57 long years ago. Throughout this period, numerous players, the very good, the good, and the not quite so good, have played this game we all love at Woodley.

There have been many ups and downs. At present the club is emphatically on the up. The last 20 years have seen unprecedented success, with all the teams winning trophies. The committee is as strong now as I've known it and support for the club is coming from all sectors of the local community. Volunteers, willing to give up their spare time, have contributed nobly to the cause.

The club has always been very family orientated and it is wonderful to see, on a Friday evening at junior practice, young children and parents enjoying the open spaces and facilities of the new clubhouse, built in 2007.

Long may we continue to improve and prosper and to nurture cricketers at all levels

Thank you all

*Lloyd Hayes
President*



Lloyd Hayes with the Unsung Heroes Trophy

HOW IT ALL STARTED

It has been Woodley Hockey and Cricket Club since 1967. But it came into existence long before that, in 1924, under the auspices of the London North Eastern Railway. It was founded by workers employed at the LNER Gorton Engineering Works, known locally as the "Gorton Tank".

The ground is still the same ground. It was rented originally from the owners of the adjacent High Lane Farm and is still leased to this day. It was to be used by employees and their families and local people for sporting and social activities. A wooden pavilion was erected and contained changing rooms and a tearoom.

Work at Gorton Tank was tough, and dirty. Employees grafted in heat and smoke, serving the furnaces that cast the steel for engines and carriages and other engineering requirements. Against this background, any opportunity to take advantage of leisure activities, after cold winters and long hours at work, were welcomed by players and their families.



Train services from Gorton to rural Woodley made events at the ground even more attractive and so began the "family orientation" of the club a proud characteristic that it still treasures and strives to maintain to this day.

THE EARLY YEARS

The newly formed club was soon involved in competitive cricket and its only team went into the third division of the High Peak League in 1924. There were eight sides, all comparatively local, with Hawk Green, Whaley Bridge, Stockport Sunday School, Disley Wesleyans, Hyde Wesleyans, Hope Congregationals, and High Lane making up the division.

Success was missed by a whisker! The club finished joint top with Whaley Bridge but were beaten for the prize in a play-off.

Records for the development of the club for this period and indeed until after the Second World War, are scanty. We do have, however, a list of players who represented the club in that first season and it would not be unreasonable to assume that from them would emerge committee members, officers, and devotees and moulders of the future. W. Boothroyd, A. Heywood, A. Lee, W. Clipson, J. Skalley, F. Hoole, W. Leigh, W. U. Mellor, J. Bickerton, A. Commerord, A. Atkinson, H. Cocks and J. E. Bickerton were some of those pioneers. Woodley are grateful for the legacy they have bequeathed and honour their memory.

Top of the League in 1925 and promoted to Division Two, the club just about kept its head above water in 1926, finishing third bottom. For the next 13 years, however, until 1938, it remained one of the stronger teams in Division Two and were champions in 1932. In 1927, a second eleven entered Division Three and stayed there until 1938 winning the title in its first season and again in 1932 and 1937.

In those pre-war years the majority of matches (true of many leagues) were low-scoring, and it was considered a high achievement for a batter to make 50 or more runs. The scoring of 131 not out by P. Mallin in 1930, LNER's first centurion, was cause for celebration for batter and club, a genuine red-letter day. Many hundreds have been scored since, of course, but like Roger

Bannister, with his sub-four-minute mile, the first one is always special.

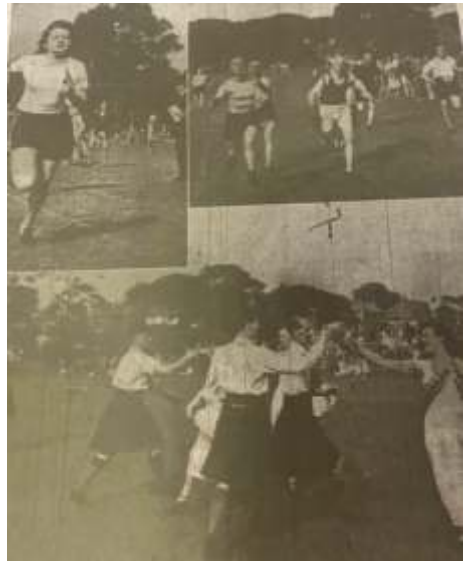


1936

Back row (L-R): J. Loynds, W. Grundey, unknown, S. Smith, H. Kirk, C. Gould, R. Middlehurst.

Front row: W. Banks, V. Parry, W. Yates (Capt.), E. Peach, G. Jones, D. Loynds (Scorer).

After acquiring use of the ground in 1923, the LNER Athletics Association organised various sporting and social activities there. Pride among them was the Annual Gala and Rose Queen Pageant. This took place every year from 1927 to 1939 and offered "something for everyone". Crowds came in their thousands and a particularly glorious day in 1932 drew a record attendance of 6,000 plus visitors.



No expense was spared, it would appear, and many local and railway dignitaries were present. Extra trains were put on from Manchester and called at all stations en route to Woodley. A truly wonderful occasion.

The threat of war in 1939 placed increased commitment on the workers of Gorton Engineering. In consequence the club were unable to field the two sides every weekend that the High Peak League demanded, and membership ceased.

Luckily, it was thrown a lifeline by the Denton and District League whose fixtures, First and Second Division, were played on alternate weekends.

Both sides did well, the second eleven finishing top of the division. Unfortunately, they were not crowned champions. The imminent threat of war meant that two late fixtures were not completed. In 1940, the Denton and District League was reduced to one division. The first team won their first five games but increased work demands and enlistment to the armed forces

brought about the side's abandonment. The lamps had gone out and "play" was not called again until 1945.

1945 saw the end of the war. Victories in Europe and, soon afterwards, in the Far East, brought feelings of relief and euphoria throughout the land. There was a determination to get back to normal as quickly as possible and to sporting competition.

The Denton and District League was open for business again. LNER fulfilled all its fixtures and finished just below mid-table. The following year, after a somewhat disappointing campaign, the first eleven left the Denton and District League and returned in 1947 to Division Two of the High Peak League. The second eleven was already settled in Division Three from the previous year.



1946



Season 1946 heralded the cricketing debut of the singular Bert Simpson. Later, for his unceasing efforts and skills as a "Jack of all Trades", Bert became an indispensable member of the club and over many decades was valued, respected and revered. Life Membership of Woodley was no more than he deserved.

Changes off stage were now taking place. The nationalisation of the railways in 1948 saw LNER replaced by British Railways Northeastern Region. The club continued to be run from Gorton Tank but did not change its name until it became British Railways CC in 1951, the last year that a LNER steam engine rolled off the production line.



Other than a second eleven championship win in 1947, the Fifties and early Sixties, though free of relegation worries, brought few rewards for either team, both finishing a succession of seasons around mid-table.

However, a sizeable bonus during the late Sixties was the emergence of new talent, talent that was to stand the club in good stead up to and beyond entry to the Derbyshire & Cheshire League in 1975. Among these players, whose exploits are celebrated to this day, were Brian Phillipson (whose first game for the first team was as a 13-year-old), Eddie Crompton, Brian Taylor, Ron Jepson, John Drew, Tom Sheridan, Lloyd Hayes and Mike Fielding to name but a few.

The death knell for Gorton Tank rang in 1965. All production moved to Doncaster as the BR North Eastern Region merged with the Eastern Region, thus severing all links with the cricket club. It was still titled British Railways in 1966 but in 1967 became Woodley Hockey and Cricket Club, and the lease of the ground was amended accordingly.

The new name had a revitalising effect on a cricket section which had struggled for many years in the second division of the High Peak League. In 1968, under the captaincy of John Drew, the club gained promotion and before the 1969 season, there was an influx of talented players from Robertson's, the South Lancashire League Club. They had won both first and second team championships, but had been forced to disband when, in their wisdom, the company decided to use the cricket ground for the storage of empty jam barrels.

The improvement was apparent immediately. In 1970, under Mike Fielding's captaincy, Woodley won the High Peak League first division title. In 1971, they won the Harold Bardsley Memorial Trophy beating Stockport Georgians in the final. Also in 1971, Denis Simpson won the vice-president's bat for the fastest 1st team century, 102 not out in 77 minutes. That was the start of a highly successful period for the club, and after winning most of the trophies on offer, the players felt they needed a fresh challenge.



1970

Back row (L-R):

*R. Hamilton,
T. Sheridan,
B. Phillipson,
D. Highley,
T. Mills,
L. Geldard*

Front row:

*E. Buckland,
E. Crompton,
M. Fielding,
R. Castrey,
D. Garlick*

1971

Back row (L-R):

*E. Buckland,
T. Sheridan,
D. Highley,
A. Dibsall,
B. Phillipson,
E. Crompton*

Front row:

*D. Simpson,
B. Hamilton,
M. Fielding,
J. Drew,
P. Williams*



JOINING the DERBYSHIRE and CHESHIRE LEAGUE

Woodley applied to join the Derbyshire and Cheshire Cricket League in 1971 but lost out to Mirrlees. They tried again in 1974, when the league elected to expand to fourteen clubs. This time, along with Buxworth, they were successful. By coincidence, Woodley and Buxworth's final matches in the High Peak League were against each other. Woodley won both first and second team fixtures and in doing so secured their respective championships along with the aggregate trophy.



*Back row (L-R): I. Potts, R. Jepson, M. Fielding, E. Jones, P. Fitzpatrick, J. Taylor, L. Hayes, K. Highley, K. Mullineaux, I. Taylor, T. Sherridan, B. Phillipson, J. Drew.
Front row: G. Hirst, A. Howard, E. Crompton, E. Buckland, G. Foy*

The club has always been surrounded by fields, a farm and a railway line. In 1973, the houses that now adjoin the ground on two sides were being built by Lomas' and Peter Lomas came to the club's assistance when he agreed to remove the steep incline at the clubhouse side of the ground. While his plant and equipment were on site, he said he would do the work free of charge.

Unfortunately, 1974 – 1975 was a long and very wet winter and the ground was not ready for Woodley's first match in the D & C league. As a result, their first two games, one first and one A team, were played away. The first team game should have been played at Hayfield on the Saturday but was washed out. The next day, the second team played at Hayfield and won handsomely with Paul Fitzpatrick scoring Woodley's first D & C League century.

In those days, although not winning anything, Woodley were among the League's stronger clubs and usually finished in the top half of the table, and in the early Eighties, under Tony Lancake's uncompromising captaincy, they achieved their best placing of runners-up. But that success coincided with an

exodus of good players, who were not adequately replaced, until recent times. While the juniors have enjoyed some success at all age groups, the struggle has been long and hard for the seniors. It was not until 1992 that the A team won the first – and only – piece of senior silverware, since 1974, beating Stockport S.S at Chapel in the Hawke Trophy final.

Hawkin takes first silver for Woodley

WOODLEY have picked up their first piece of Derbyshire and Cheshire League silverware with a victory in the Hawke Trophy final at Chapel.

And it was due to a fine bowling performance that they were able to secure the "A" team cup after restricting Stockport Sunday School to just 124 all out in 48 overs.

Only Steve Allwright could make a significant contribution for Woodley with 42, as man-of-the-match Mike Hawkin bowled his eight overs for a 4-T tally and received good backing from Paul Whitney (3-30) and Ernie Jones (1-17).

The total was never likely to be enough, and so it proved as Woodley reached 124 for four from 38-1 overs, though not without a few scares.

B.M. Singh made 31 and Bill Johnson 27 before wickets fell and doubts crept in, but the fifth wicket pairing of Ernie Jones (32 not out) and Graham Perry (26 not out) saw Woodley through to victory.

The weather was unable to stop the gallop of the league's leading trio of Birch Vale, Comptail and Hawk Green, however.

Top dogs Birch had an easy seven wickets win over Old Ghazsp and Comptail had all-rounder Richard Linsley to thank for their 36 points against Stockport Sunday School.

He top-scored on 54 in the home side's 185 total and then claimed 3-29 in leaving school on 114 for nine all attempts.

Phil Longhorn was the destroyer as Hawk Green dumped Chapel, with bowling figures of 4-35 as Chapel's painstaking 110 for six and then a quickfire 62 as Green raced to 136 for four in just 18-1 overs to

beat the threatening clouds.

New Mills always had the edge in a four struggle against basement boys Woodley, with John Marshall (3-25), Brian Higgins (4-18) and Charlie Soman (3-21) dominating Woodley for 111 and opener Alistair Stevens scoring 69 not out in the 112 for three reply.

Tintwistle and Hazel Grove both picked up points as they were beaten by the rain with an exciting finish in prospect.

Harris hit 78 as Tintwistle scored 141 all out in the face of a 4-38 spell from Miles and Grove were on 153 for time as the rains came, with Rowbottom 37 not out.

Division A leaders Hawk Green stopped the double century once again to maintain their grip on the honours chase by beating Chapel.

Ian Henderson top-scored on 89 as Green reached 293 for nine despite a long spell which returned 6-48 for Redford and then McClelland claimed 3-48 as Chapel could only collect 116 for eight.

New Mills also kept up the chase with a seven wicket win over Woodley, with Sean Coverley taking 559 as the home team were dismissed for 96 and Chris Hewitt 35 in the winning reply.

Bowlers were on top at Hazel Grove, where the home team's Salt (5-23) and Whitehead (3-10) saw Tintwistle back in the partition for just 73 in set up a seven wicket win.

Three batmen got into the act for Comptail, Homer (60), Smith (33) and McGibbon (33) as they beat Stockport Sunday School by four wickets.

Cutting credited to Stockport Express Advertiser.

Team :

D. Oldland W. Hobman
E. Jones J. Yates B.M. Singh
N. McHenry P. Witney
P. Taylor (Capt)
G. Parry M. Hawkin (MOM)
J. Livsley (wk)

From the mid-Eighties and all through the Nineties the club struggled, with both teams under achieving and finishing in the bottom half of the table frequently. On several occasions, they collected the wooden spoon, which is still in the possession of captain Tony Hayes, as he picked it up more times than the local baker !! On a positive note, in 1991, although playing in a poor side, Steve Reeves won the first division individual batting award putting him alongside such luminaries as Phil Longhorn, Alistair Stevens, Neil Bowers and Mark Laverty to name a few. In the same season, in the A Division, Andy Nixon won the individual bowling award and in 1994 Mike Hawkin won the same bowling award.

Over the years the club, which in 1991 became Woodley Cricket Club when the hockey section elected to go their separate way, has had many loyal servants none more so than Bert Simpson. In 1996, Bert completed 50 years at the club as cricketer, hockey player, groundsman and bar steward. He sadly passed away in 2001 leaving many a fond memory. On a happier note, where would the club have been without Sheila Hayes! Providing Woodley's famous teas for the best part of 40 years?

D&C League Juniors

One of the main attractions for joining the Derbyshire and Cheshire League was their junior setup. This encouraged clubs to produce homegrown players and bring them through all three of the junior age groups to the senior sides.

Although competitive, both senior sides failed to compete for honours. Under the guidance of Ian Taylor, the club concentrated on pushing the juniors at all age groups (Under 13s - Under 15s and the Under 17s) The club needed that core of home-grown talent to come through the system, which had not been seen since Brian Phillipson, Eddie Crompton, Billy Hamilton and Denis Simpson broke into the senior sides in the 1950s and 1960s.

The under 14s/15s won the Binns Trophy in 1976 and 1978.



1976 Binns Trophy

*Back row: J. Ford, C. Hayes, N. Ellwood, D. Palmer, I. Taylor,
Front row: J. Schofield, M. Cummins, T. Hayes, A. Hayes, C. Geldard*

Also in 1978, the under 17s won the Compstall Cup and the North Section of the League Structure, but narrowly missed out on the overall Under 17s title.

The team at that time consisted of Dave Nelson, Moby Rawthore, Amjad Butt, Mark Cummins (WK), John Ford, Nick Ellwood, John Wardle, Duncan Palmer, John Scofield, Steve Backhouse and Terry Hayes.

All played senior cricket at Woodley, five played in the 1st team and one later became a 1st XI captain.

33 years later Dave "Nelly" Nelson, took the final wicket on a wet, dark September evening to secure the third division title, meaning that Woodley

had the best 2nd XI in the Derbyshire and Cheshire Cricket League in 2011, justifying the time and effort invested in junior cricket at the club and their loyalty shown by home grown players.



1978.

Back row (L-R): L. Hayes (Umpire), C. Hayes (12th Man), M. Rawthore, J. Wardle, J. Schofield, N. Ellwood, T. Hayes, I. Taylor (Coach).

Front row: A. Butt, S. Backhouse, M. Cummins (WK), D. Palmer, J. Ford, D. Nelson.

FAREWELL TO THE WOODEN SPOON

Since Tony Hayes picked up his last wooden spoon in 2000, the club has won fourteen senior trophies.

We had an influx of juniors and had success with all age groups. Some of these players were beginning to be selected for the senior sides. And in 2004, when the 1st XI won their first trophy since 1974, winning the second division, we had a team including ten home grown players. Such young players as Jamie Kay, Neil Bradford and Gary Pickin, along with the vastly experienced Dave Hotson, who joined us from Compstall Cricket Club, complemented a bowling attack of Steve Jones and Pete Coffey. The batting line-up was good as any that a Woodley 1st XI had seen in 20 years

In the field we had a wicketkeeper in Steve "Rico" Richards, who was as good a keeper as there had been at Woodley since Barry Broadbent. "A top keeper is so vital to a fielding side; they keep you together for nearly 3 hours and Rico was one of the best" says captain Tony Hayes. Those players will have a bond that will never be broken.



2004.

Back row: S.G. Jones, D. Hotson, S. Jones, N. Bradford, G. Pickin, R. Hayes, P. Coffey
Front row: S. Richards, A. Hayes (Capt.), J. Kay, L. Goodwin

In 2010, Tony Hayes dropped down to the 2nd XI to guide some of the junior players making their way into senior cricket. They won the fourth division championship in this year, and the third division in 2011, bringing an unbelievable end to Tony's playing career.



2010

Back Row (L-R): D. Richards (Chairman), L. Hayes (President), T. Bartlett, J. Duggan, G. Parry, P. Harris, D. Hotson, T. Cleasby, D. Nelson, A. Brammer

Front Row: S. Richards, M. Walsh, J. Trowsdale, A. Hayes (Capt.), D. Baker, J. Hounslow, A. Wilson (Scorer)

Captain Tony Hayes says, "It was the most tense and dramatic finale to a season that I have ever known. Bringing Nelly back on at the farm end and David "Otto" Hotson from the houses end, I knew I had two experienced bowlers who could bowl full and straight in the fading light to take the wickets needed to secure the points to win the title. Otto took 2 wickets in an over, one of them the dangerous Craig Young, who was on 72 at the time; the other, B. Holme. With one remaining wicket to get and Hawk Green needing 33 from the last 3 overs. Nelly ran in and the third ball was smashed to the boundary for 4 runs by S. Holme. The tension rose as he started his run up, bowled the ball and that sweet sound of the ball hitting the stumps will stay with all of us forever. The mayhem then started with people running, shouting, cheering and hugging each other (not least my 75-year-old mother!). What made it ever more special, was that I knew this was going to be my last competitive game for Woodley Cricket Club, and to share the experience with my teammates, family and friends was priceless"

Hawk Green were magnanimous in defeat, confirming our special connection with them which goes back to the very beginning in 1924 and our first ever game - LNER vs Hawk Green.



2011

L-R: R. Billinge, P. Harris, L. Medina, T. Bartlett, D. Nelson, T. Cleasby, A. Wilson,
D. Hotson, R. Murphy, J. Hounslow, G. Parry, A. Hayes (Capt.)

Then all changed when Gary Pickin took over the captaincy. And in 2013 and 2016, the 1st XI won the 2nd division, which was richly deserved, as Gary had been part of the club from such a young age and given his time and support to make it the success that it is today.



2013

Back row: D. Richards (Chairman) P. Harris, N. Bradford, D. Kay, J. Trowsdale, P. Goodall, C. Wilson, A. Pannett, H. Webb, J. Yates (Secretary)
 Front row: D. Hotson, J. Duggan, C. Cranwell, L. Hayes (President), G. Pickin (Capt.), J. Kay, L. Medina



2016

Back row: D. Richards (Chairman) A. Rippon, C. Cranwell, D.A. Oldland, J. Trowsdale, D. Kay, B. Qasim, J. Yates (Secretary)
 Front row: D. Rathburn (scorer), R. Billinge, H. Webb, G. Pickin (Capt.) L. Hayes (President), J. Kay, P. Turner, J. Hounslow

Also in 2013, the 3rd XI won the Division 2 East, under the captaincy of Robin Harris, bringing more junior players into senior cricket.



2013

Back Row L-R: D. Downes, J. Hounslow, J. Tallentire, J. Duggan, A. Bristow,
C. Wilson, C. Hayes, B. Stokes, N. Cummins, W. Adam, A. Rippon, P. Pannett,
Front Row: T. Hotson, H. Webb, M. Parry, H. Rippon, D. Oldland, R. Harris (Capt.),
D. Baker, V. Downes

THE HOLY GRAIL

Pushing forward to 2017, saw the beginning of Danny Kay's reign as first team captain and what a six years it proved. With the foundations laid from the previous 13 years, lots of young players were coming through the juniors, 3rd and 2nd XI teams. Helped by the new clubhouse and a strong committee, it was time for these players to shine. Danny, a fine opening batsman, has progressed into an excellent captain, and has utilised the strengths of players who have come through the system, such as Conor Cranwell, James Duggan, Will Adam, Jake Hounslow, Jamie Kay and Harry Rippon to name but a few. The Holy Grail came, when Woodley won the first division title in 2020. What an amazing achievement for Danny, the team and the club. More was to follow and in 2022, the first XI did the double, winning the first division and the Bissenden Cup, with victory against Dove Holes in a low scoring game; Woodley 136 for 8 and Dove Holes 85 all out, with Conor Cranwell being named man of the match.

In 2023 the first XI won the first division again, having gained the services of the club's first overseas amateur from South Africa, Morgan Potgieter. Morgan, a fine all-rounder, complemented the team very well. He also helped with coaching the ladies and junior teams. Thank you, Morgan.

The 2nd XI were also cup winners in 2023, winning the Hawke trophy under the captaincy of Jarred Ince, with Rami Prince-Navaratnam being named man of the match.



2020 League Champions

*Back row: J. Ince, C. Cranwell, J. Trowsdale, D. Kay (Capt.), B. Heginbotham,
M. Mallett, P. Marchington (scorer)*

Front row: H. Rippon, J. Kay, J. Duggan, D. Millen, F. Heginbotham.



2022 League Champions

*Back row: J. Garde, D. Heginbotham, J. Trowsdale, B. Heginbotham, A. Pannett, S. Gibson
 Front row D. Millen, J. Duggan, C. Cranwell, L. Hayes (president), D. Kay, J. Kay, R. Murphy.*



2022 Bissenden Cup Winners

*Back row A. Pannett, P. Marchington (scorer), B. Heginbotham, D. Heginbotham, J. Kay, J. Trowsdale, S. Gibson
 Front row J. Duggan, R. Murphy, D. Kay (Capt.), D. Millen, C. Cranwell (MOM).*



Denis, Kath and Bert Simpson



Harry & Sheila Blackhurst



Gary Pickin and John Yates



Ernie Jones



Alan Brammer



Eugene Harris



Bryan Coole



John Billinge



Will Adam



2023 League Champions

Back row M. Potgieter, D. Heginbotham, B. Heginbotham, J. Trowsdale, J. Garde, C. Cranwell, M. Senior

Front row R. Prince-Navaratnam, J. Duggan, D. Kay (Capt.), L. Hayes (president), J. Kay, S. Gibson, P. Marchington (scorer)



2023 2nd XI Hawke Cup Winners

Back row R. Walsh (scorer), D. Hotson, W. Adam, A. Bickley, G. Pickin, B. Qasim

Front row T. Hotson, J. Duggan, J. Ince (Capt.), R. Prince-Navaratnam (MOM), J. Reid, H. Rippon

LADIES TEAM

Having previously played at Bredbury St Marks for several years, the women's team moved to Woodley Cricket Club in 2017.

Playing in the Cheshire Women's cricket league the team adjusted to the new club and ground slowly with a few mid table finishes. However, it wasn't long before captains Georgie Morton and Alex Wilson led the team to back-to-back leagues wins (2019 and 2021 - COVID prevented us from doing the hat trick).

2022 was the season the team moved to the second division, however they struggled to get much momentum to continue the previous year's success. With a few key players leaving, they struggled to field a team and ended up conceding many of the games. The highlight for that year was a guest appearance from the one and only Vicki Downes who got 42 runs.

This led to the team dropping back down to division 3 and a temporary merge with Ashton on Mersey who were also struggling to field a team. Then in 2023 we competed together, and whilst we didn't finish as high as we would have liked, it put us in a good place to be competitive for the coming years and hopefully gain promotion back up to division 2.



Left to right: F. Reeve L. Hughes M. Smith G. Gorman (capt.) N. Derbyshire
M. Kay I. Young (wk) E. Taylor A. Wilson A. Higham A. Barlow

Honours Since 2000

The 1st XI won :

The 2nd division in 2004 under the captaincy of Tony Hayes

The 2nd division in 2013 and 2016, under the captaincy of Gary Pickin

The 1st division titles in 2020, 2022 and 2023 and the Bissenden Cup in 2022 (man of the match – Conor Cranwell), under the captaincy of Danny Kay

And the T20 Offside Trust Trophy in 2023, under the captaincy of Jamie Kay.

The 2nd XI won :

The 2010 fourth division title under the captaincy of Tony Hayes

The 2011 third division title under the captaincy of Tony Hayes

the Hawk Trophy in 2023, under the captaincy of Jarrad Ince (man of the match – Rami Prince-Navaratnam)

The 3rd XI won :

The Division 2 East Cheshire League in 2013, under the captaincy of Robin Harris.

The Ladies Team won :

Cheshire Women's Cricket League in 2019 and 2021, under the joint captaincy of Alex Wilson and Georgie Morton

THE NEW CLUBHOUSE

Talk of rebuilding the clubhouse started way back in 1978. The old wooden structure was beginning to show its age. The floor had started to slope from one side to the other but at least it sloped towards the bar! Some parts were propped up by beer barrels

We were unable to gain a long-term lease, which would have allowed us to get some outside funding, so plans were put on hold until 1984, when we tried again. There was a new initiative through local councils for manpower services to assist amateur clubs such as ours, to improve their facilities. We put a plan in place to raise funds for the project where many club members joined a loan scheme which guaranteed a sum of money over three years or loaned a lump sum.

The new pavilion was to be built in three stages. Stage one began and everything seemed to be going to plan until the manpower services ran into problems and was put on hold.

Move forward 20 years: a new committee was in place after 15 years of struggles, both on and off the field. The committee was made up of a couple of players plus some parents of junior players, who had some success at different ages groups and were starting to make their way at senior level. One of these parents was Mr Bryan Coole, who was the club treasurer and pushed the club forward into looking at ways we could rebuild the clubhouse, which resulted in another plan being drawn up. We had recently renewed the lease but as we did not have any funds, we asked the landlords for permission to set the plan in motion, which thankfully they agreed to.

We engaged the services of Andy Northover Architects, Andy had previously played for our 1st XI and was the son of John Northover, an ex-1st XI opening bowler for 25 years. Andy drew up the plans and they were submitted to the local planning authorities, bearing in mind that we still had no money! We managed to obtain a £10K loan from the brewery in January 2004, so the committee decided to take the bull by the horns and go for it!!

The committee were : Dave Richards (Chairman) : Tony Hayes : Sue Wilson : Bryan Coole : Gary Pickin : Eugene Harris and Ken Eyles. We engaged the help of a local builder, Dave Bradford, who was a father of two of our players, who came through our junior setup. After 80 years of being in place, the old wooden building was reluctant to come down. Along with Andy and Dave, the committee began to source the materials needed to get the new clubhouse built. Luckily with players, their families and connections in the building trade, we did it.

A special thank you must go to:

Andy Northover (Andy Northover Architects), Tony Hayes (Project Manager), Phil Brown (Benchmark Building Supplies), Kevin Tottle (Cheshire Scaffolds), Tarmac plc, Paul Scully (Electrician), Dave Oldland (Plumbing),

Darren Hardy (Joinery Supplies), Dave and Danny Kay (Joinery Work), every committee member, all players, their families and friends who all donated their time and money to help complete the project

It wasn't just a team effort, it was a club and community effort that gave Woodley Cricket Club the foundation for the success we have had over the last 20 years. We are not just a cricket club; we are part of the local community.

It's amazing what £10K and a group of people with the determination, love of the club and the joy of seeing what their hard work and selflessness can achieve.



MY FOUR YEAR SEARCH FOR A CRICKET HOME

In 1967 Robertson's Jam works in Droylsden decided that empty jam barrels were a priority. Space had to be found to store them. "Perfect" thought some bright spark "the cricket field!" That decision brought a swift and sorry end to a very competitive and successful cricket club; and left a lot of cricketers looking for somewhere else to play.

I was one of those saddened individuals wondering where to go next. The supposition at the time was that quite a few would join English Steel, then in the Saddleworth League, whose (much larger) ground abutted Robertson's. As it transpired, no-one went there.

Somehow – I'm not sure how – I found myself playing for Gatley – Heaton in 1968. I have lived in Gatley since 1972 but at that time did not know the place existed. That experience brought such little satisfaction that in 1969 I did not play at all.

Come 1970, and my port of call was English Steel. My experience of that season was even more depressing than Gatley and I was left wondering: where did all my pals from Robertson's get to?

Towards the end of that season, I found out. I was at Old Trafford watching Lancashire when someone nearby piped up, "Fitzy. What are you up to?" It was Mike Fielding in company with Del and Ken Highley and Brian Lister, Robertson exiles, now established members at WOODLEY. It was nice to be asked; "Why not come and join us:"

Which I did, from 1971, and never regretted it. For the next 35 years or so, Woodley played a big and very rewarding part of my life. From the start, in stark contrast with my experiences at Gatley and English Steel, I felt at ease and affinity with the club and could see no reason why I should ever desert it. But I did desert it, for two seasons in 1986 and 1987 and went to Shell. There was no falling out though. I was 45 at the time. Some good juniors, under the guidance of Ian Taylor, of fond memory, were emerging and I thought – mistakenly – that my days at High Lane might be numbered. But like English Steel and Gatley – Heaton, Shell was not Woodley and it was good to come back.

One of the unexpected bonuses of joining Woodley came in making friends with Lloyd Hayes. Lloyd was then second team captain. I was a hard-up newlywed, married to a penniless nurse and Lloyd decorated our new home from top to bottom for £40! The bill would run into thousands today!

What of the cricket in the Seventies? It was pretty good for both first and second elevens, but practice nights were a bone of contention. They were a mess, shambolically organized, and offering little value but both teams possessed enough good players to get away with this glaring deficiency – just!

The first team had the League's outstanding bowling attack in John Drew and Ronnie Jepson; and they were complemented by high quality batters in Mike Fielding, Brian Phillipson, Billy Hamilton, Dennis Simpson and Eddie Crompton. The second eleven's batting could be a bit wayward at times, but Woodley seconds regularly surprised opponents with the depth of a bowling attack that included Ernie Jones, Kevin Mullineaux, Phil Marsh, Greg Hirst, Ian Potts and Ken Highley, all of whom would have been first team players at another club.

So, Woodley's final season in the High Peak League ended in triumph. Both sides finished as champions. The Derbyshire and Cheshire League beckoned and Woodley could anticipate – if they could, to meet the League's mandate, rustle up a junior side – good days to come.

Could I be allowed at this point to blow my own trumpet if I promise not to blow it again ?

Woodley's first XI fixture in the Derbyshire and Cheshire League in 1975 was postponed because the ground was unfit to play. The steep slope (a gradient of one in two !) at the pavilion end had been flattened – a huge job – during the winter. But because of the persistent rain (nothing changes) progress had been slow and the top part of the ground was an amalgam of mud and wispy grass.

The upshot was that Woodley's second XI were left to fly the flag the following day at Hayfield. And things could not have gone better for the newcomers. We made an impression.

Batting first, in a total around 230, I made 107 not out. Hayfield got nowhere near that total and in a resounding win, I had established a record no one could take from me. Woodley's first Derbyshire and Cheshire League centurion ! That was my first hundred and, sad to relate, my last!



Paul Fitzpatrick does a scoring stint.
Captain Tony Hayes makes sure the figures add up.

Paul Fitzpatrick played for Woodley from 1971 until 2005. He made quite a number of appearances for the first team but preferred life in the 2nd XI, which he captained many times. He was 65 when he played his final game and, to general amazement, the last ball he received, he hit for six. Paul was a former cricket (and rugby league) writer for The Guardian between 1966-1997, and covered England cricket tours to Australia, the West Indies and India, as well as four rugby league tours to Australia and New Zealand.

FEELING THE HEAT AT NANGREAVE ROAD

On June 2, 1975, the ground at Buxton, where Derbyshire were playing Lancashire, was covered in thick snow. The next day, more or less, the heatwave started and did not end until the autumn of 1976. Drought became a serious problem. Reservoirs were reduced to puddles and on cricket ground outfielders throughout the land there was scarcely a blade of grass to be seen.

It was during this period that things on one occasion got decidedly hot for Woodley (and indeed for their opponents.) The scene was Stockport Sunday School on Nangreave Road. The weather, as had become normal for that time, was roasting.

The details of the match are not relevant. Stockport Sunday School had batted first. Tea had been taken and Woodley went in search of their target.

Then for no obvious reason, the wooden pavilion burst into flames. Players from both sides made a mad dash to rescue their cricket gear and clothing before the flames got worse. The boundary edge quickly became a mass of jackets, trousers, shirts, shoes, underpants and vests, socks, jockstaps and "boxes".

The fire engine arrived, the flames were extinguished and, after a lengthy hiatus, the game resumed. But because of the interruption the match finished in near darkness and by the time the players came to get back into mufti, it was pitch black. Cries of anguish rent the air as players tried to find their clothes.

Paul Fitzpatrick had gone in early for Woodley and had got out early and was showered and changed before the flames broke out. He was one of the few people that night who went home in the clothes he had come in!

LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER

The first recorded instance of a side being dismissed for nought, according to Wisden, the cricketer's almanac, was in 1815, the year that Napoleon met his Waterloo. Wisden goes on to say that there have been a number of instances since but, possibly to spare embarrassment, does not list them.

If Charlie Lamb could have bowled at both ends this ignominious fate might have befallen Woodley one fine Sunday in May 1998 in a Cheshire Cup match at Poynton.

Lamb was Poynton's opening bowler, strong and quick and good enough to open for Cheshire in minor county games. In his first over he took two wickets and two for none soon became one for five for the hapless visitors!

By the end of his spell, Lamb had taken seven wickets without a run scored off him and Woodley were all out for SIX. By contrast, the bowler at the other end, Alvan Ikoku, had to bear the shame of conceding all six runs for his three wickets.

At issue was the toss. According to Poynton's records, Woodley won it and decided to bat; according to Woodley's (and this almost certainly is the correct version) Poynton won and put Woodley in. If Poynton did win the toss, it was a strange decision to put Woodley in because only the previous day, they has been dismissed for 50 and obviously could have benefited from some batting exercise.

(What did stand Poynton in good stead was the weather. The match was played in the dry, but later that afternoon there was a stark change. Storms swept in and lots of games were abandoned. But by then Poynton had long been home and dry.)

There was no disputing Woodley's batting hero. Graham Parry got a majestic three! Ian Roberts, Andy Northover and Daryl Smith got one a piece. (or is someone fibbing here, as Rob Hayes claims he scored a single?) Poynton sent in a couple of tailenders (one of them the bowler, Ikoku) to knock off the runs but, credit to Woodley, it took them 17 deliveries to do it and there was a dropped catch.

Obviously, this was not a day Woodley would wish to re-live. But there were mitigating circumstances. The side, for whatever reason, was cobbled together at the last moment and was no reflection of the real strength of the club. And mismatches in this competition, while not always as stark as this, were not uncommon. It was odd though, to start a game at 2pm and to be eating your tea an hour later at 3pm.

RICK'S DOG OXO FALLS FOUL OF THE LAW

Rick Bradshaw was one of the more flamboyant characters to represent Woodley Cricket Club.

His laugh came up from his boots in deep staccato bursts and could be heard well beyond the confines of whichever cricket club he happened to be playing at.

One of his curious traits came during tea intervals. He would transfer the salad from his plate to make sandwiches and then smother the whole lot in thick jam. It looked revolting, but then Rick was never one for conforming to convention.

He was a more than useful all-rounder. He bowled at a decent pace and batted, unlike much of the way he conducted his life, in largely orthodox fashion. He was an enthusiast and a "doer".

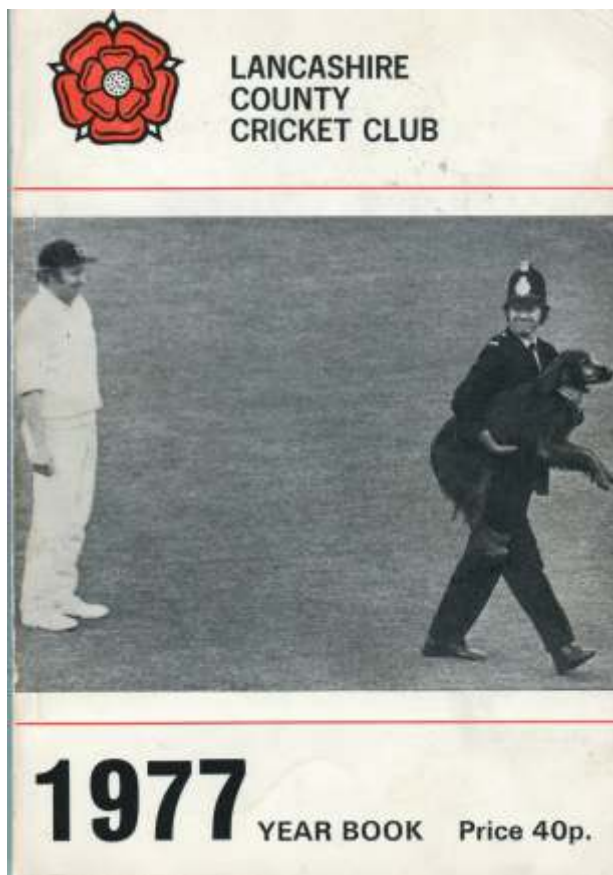
Ted Ray, long-ago comedian, said that one of the crumbling theatres where he used to appear was kept standing only by the deathwatch beetle holding hands. Woodley's ramshackle pavilion of those days fell into that category – and was further saved from collapse by the many empty beer barrels on which it stood



Rick, like so many of us, was desperate for something better. But while Rick never managed to get a new pavilion built, he was responsible for erecting one of the more impressive score boxes in the Derbyshire and Cheshire League – one that gave the scorers a panoramic view of the ground and was a marked improvement on the brick and concrete hell hole to which they have previously been confined.

Then there was Rick's dog! Oxo. A singular beast if ever there was one.

While Rick was batting, Oxo would sit patiently at the boundary. When he was out, Rick would hand his battered, grease-stained cap to Oxo, who would take it into his mouth and, with Rick a few yards behind him, trot off to the dressing rooms.



This endearing little ritual won Oxo many admirers. Lasting fame came when he appeared on the front cover of Lancashire's Yearbook 1977 (see pic above by kind permission of Lancashire County Cricket Club)

Oxo had fallen into the hands of the law during a game at Old Trafford in 1976. His likely offence was trespass. But after remaining in custody for a while, and after giving assurance that there would be no repeat of the offence, Oxo was released without charge – back into the grateful arms of his relieved master.

LLOYD HAYES

In a question-and-answer session, Lloyd, a Woodley stalwart, was asked to pick the three men who had most impressed him during his long career at the club.

An impossible task, of course, but Lloyd eventually settled on an all-rounder, Ronnie Jepson, a batsman-captain, Tony Lancake, and a fast bowler, John Hornbuckle.

Jepson was a stylish, orthodox batsman with a wide range of stroke and at his peak in the Seventies. But he was held in even higher esteem for his medium-paced bowling. On his day, Ronnie could make the ball talk and many a bewildered batsman would face an over from Ron wondering why no two deliveries were remotely the same. He was the most likeable of men, too. Good humoured, amiable but with ball in hand a magician and a committed competitor.

Tony Lancake, a heavy run-scorer, joined Woodley after a long, productive career at Denton St Lawrence. For two seasons in 1981/82 he was captain and Woodley finished second and fourth. "I liked Tony and got on well with him" says Lloyd. "But not everyone did." He could be a divisive figure and on days when things did not go too well it was best to give Tony a wide berth.

There was, however, no disputing Tony's single-mindedness, his batting prowess, or his astute, remorseless captaincy. Another remarkable trait: although only in the D & C League for two seasons at the end of that time there was scarcely a player in the competition he did not know.

John Hornbuckle, a powerfully built policeman, played for Woodley for a couple of seasons in the Eighties. He bowled with pace, bounce, and menace. Opponents did not like him at all, and Lloyd keeps to himself the name of one batsman, a good one, who refused to face him.

Unfortunately, John was a bit too good for a Woodley side not at their strongest at that time. A lot of chances with balls flying off the edges of bats went down in the slips, which was demoralizing for the bowler. John was one of only two bowlers, Steve Jones was the other, to take nine wickets in an innings for Woodley.

SHEILA HAYES

A special mention must be given to Sheila Hayes who provided the players for over forty years, with what can only be described as legendary teas, as well as providing other refreshment. On many occasions Sheila would have assistance from other club members, Sheila Blackhurst, Eunice Crompton, Jean Hirst, Anne Fitzpatrick, Brenda Jones and Katie Hotson (nee Hayes), to name a few. Many players from all visiting teams would look forward to the "away" fixture knowing that they would get to sample some of her amazing home made cakes.



UNSUNG HEROES

Harry and Sheila Blackhurst, Gordon Foy, Ernie Jones, B. M. Singh, Alan Brammer, Katie Hotson (nee Hayes), Sue and Dave Wilson, Eugene Harris, Bryan Coole, Paul Scully, John Yates, John Northover, Mike Hawkin, Will Adam and John Billinge.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Mr John Hawke	Hockey Section
Mr Ken Smith	Hockey Section
Mr Bert Simpson	Hockey and Cricket
Mr Eddie Crompton	Cricket
Mrs Sheila Hayes	Cricket
Mr Lloyd Hayes	Cricket
Mr Tom Sheridan	Cricket
Mr Anthony Hayes	Cricket

Club Management List 2024

President	Lloyd Hayes
Chairman	David Richards
Vice Chairman	David Hotson
Treasurer	James Duggan
Secretary	Jack Trowsdale
Ground	Conor Cranwell : Gary Pickin
House Manger	Daniel Baker
Junior Co-Ordinator	Will Adam
Women's Playing Rep	Charlotte Howard
Club Welfare Officer	Nicky Gillam
Fundraising	John Billinge
Bar	Nick Pendlebury : Eugene Harris
Sponsorship	Vinny Clarke
Junior Liaison	Daniel Rathburn
Membership	Bob Stokes
General Members of Committee	Tony Hayes, Ella Taylor, Vinny Tiernan, Matt Senior, Andrew Bickley, Danny Kay

A FINAL WORD FROM OUR CHAIRMAN



I am delighted and proud to be Chairman of Woodley Cricket Club in our centenary year. I hope you have all enjoyed reading our booklet covering our history over the last 100 years.

The club has witnessed many changes, certainly from when I first came here. The clubhouse was ramshackle with a floor so uneven that you would have to put beer mats under a leg of the pool table to level it up, and a stray cricket ball may have taken down the score hut! Despite all this, the lasting memory of anyone's visit would always be the fantastic family orientated atmosphere, great characters and friendly faces, all coming together for the love of the game.

We now have many teams representing Woodley CC, including a 1st, 2nd and 3rd team, junior teams, an over 40's and ladies' team, something that should be celebrated by the players and supporters.

In our centenary year, we now enter a new phase of growth for the club, as we compete in division one of the recently formed Greater Manchester Cricket League.

Dave Richards

Chairman



Notes and Acknowledgements

Over a period of 100 years, many people have played their part in establishing the Club and we apologise for any that you, the reader, feel we may have missed. But as you can appreciate, it has been difficult to condense the history of the club down to a few pages!!

We would like to thank the following for their help and assistance in the compiling of this booklet, Tony Hayes, Dave and Suzanne Downes, Paul Fitzpatrick, Steve Amison, Gary Pickin, Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre, St. Mary's Parish Church and Stockport Heritage Trust, Nicola Hayes and Phil Cheetham.



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