

CHAPTER TWO

WILLIAM ADAMS LEMONADE The first 25 years (1893 to 1917)

1893 - Playing for points *Debuts E Attack, H Attack, Bill Bryan, J Moore, J Hargreaves*

Nine Keighley-centred cricket clubs constituted the Keighley & District League during the 1892 winter and the first League fixtures took place on Saturday 15th April 1893. The League comprised the two Oakworth clubs and teams from Keighley St Peters, Eastwood Wesleyans, Upper Green & Utley Congregationalists, Keighley Friendly, Holy Trinity, Albert Street Baptists and Haworth Wesleyans; all church based teams! 1893 saw the formation of the West Bradford Cricket League, including amongst others Ingrow Cricket Club.

The Wesleyans opened their League account at home against Eastwood Wesleyans, a match easily won by our lads. The scores were Oakworth 75 and Eastwood 41. Two further wins versus St Peters and Albert Street saw the Wesleyans joint top of the league with rivals the Church team. However, by mid-season the Wesleyan record had slipped and stood at 4 wins and 4 defeats. The Church team remained unbeaten at the top looking every inch the inaugural Champions. The Church success owed much to the bowling of Stephen Nicholls and club captain Joe Brown. Saturday 1st July 1893 brought together the two Oakworth clubs for the first league derby. As their respective league positions indicated, the unbeaten Church team started as favourites, but in local derbies the formbook means nothing. The Wesleyans batted first and totalled a modest 41 runs with J W Bryan top-scoring with 10. An obviously tense, close match resulted in the Church failing to meet their target as they in turn were bowled out for 40 runs. It was the narrowest of victories for the Wesleyans and the first league defeat for the Church. Or was it? The defeat was not received with good grace by the Church team who lodged an appeal with the league claiming that the scorebooks were wrong and that the result should have been a tie. The League Committee met to examine the appeal and later secretary Arthur Bartle confirmed that the original result would stand and therefore the Church team's deposit was forfeit. If local rivalry needed any fuelling such an incident was bound to spice up future relations between the two Oakworth clubs!

Before significantly losing their penultimate match against Eastwood, the Church team took part in what must rank as one of the most unusual matches ever recorded in this area. On September 2nd their home game against St Peters resulted in a narrow win for the home side by 1 run, in itself unusual but more notable for a match aggregate of only 13 runs. The Church had been well skittled for only 7 runs in 9 overs. However, Captain Joe Brown with 5 for 4 and Stephen Nicholls with 3 for 2 had the last laugh as the Keighley side were in turn dismissed for only 6 runs in 4.3 overs! A team of only 9 men obviously contributed to St Peters' downfall. The whole match lasted only 81 balls for that magnificent aggregate score!



The ironies of the fixture list then decreed that the Church's final fixture was to be the return match with the Wesleyans! In the event the Church also needed to win to claim at least a share of the Championship with Haworth Wesleyans. The match ended in a convincing revenge win for the Church as their bowlers restricted the Wesleyans to a meagre 19 runs in reply to their own 52 score (S Nicholls 18).

Haworth also duly won their last game to set up a play-off with the Oakworth Church C.C. for the title. The Championship trophy had been purchased by public donation, the leading donor being Sir Isaac Holden with £2 and 2 shillings; ironically he was Oakworth's leading

Wesleyan! History records that on 23rd September 1893 the Oakworth Church C.C. became the first Keighley & District League Champions as they soundly defeated the Haworth Wesleyans by six wickets. The twin star bowlers Stephen Nicholls (4 for 21) and Joe Brown with 5 for 21 including a superb first ever hat-trick proved far too good for the opposition. Indeed Brown actually outshone Nicholls to take the League's bowling prize, which he received along with the League Championship trophy from the League secretary.

The pioneering squad of Wesleyans who brought League cricket to Oakworth in 1893 comprised: JW (Bill) Bryan, J Moore, Joe Nicholls, J Hargreaves, Elijah Attack, Horace Attack, F Moore, W Shaw, W Jones, John Berry, M Hartley, H Hartley, G Page, A Cockroft, A Sharp, G Hudson & D Berry.

Despite the obvious disappointment of finishing their first ever league season in the shadow of their League Champion rivals, the Wesleyans could draw consolation from holding their own.

Team	League	Captain	Played	Won	Tied	Drawn	Lost	Position
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1 st	KDL	J W Bryan	16	8	0	0	8	6 th of 9
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1894 - Play off lost

The 1894 season was to be run in two sections (A & B) the winners of each would meet for the overall Championship. Unfortunately, 7 of the Wesleyans 16 matches went unreported. The other nine were all won and this time the Wesleyans finished top of their Section A. The bowling of J Moore was of major importance and Bill Bryan set a new club record individual high score of 39 not out in the match with Upper Green & Utley. The ubiquitous Stephen Nicholls decided this year to turn out with the Wesleyan XI. For the Wesleyan club the season also produced one outstanding result on 5th May when Worth Wesleyans were reduced to 5 all out in reply to Oakworth's 46. Moore with 6 for 3 was the main destroyer. He was ably backed-up by Nicholls with 3 for 2. The Worth side contributed seven ducks to what is still, over a century later the lowest total recorded against an Oakworth first team.

Keighley Rovers Old, who qualified to meet Oakworth Wesleyans in the final at Ingrow on 8th September 1894, won section B of the league. In the final The Rovers made 65, with J Moore taking 3 for 23 and Bill Bryan 2 for 10. The Wesleyans, bidding to retain the Championship for the village, replied with only 43 runs. Rovers Old T Leighton was Oaks destroyer with 15 runs and 5 for 19. W J Slater was the only Oakworth batter to reach double figures, as the club finished their superb second season as Runners Up. The after match supper was held at Blakey's Refreshment Rooms where Mr. N W Schofield awarded the league prizes.

1 st	KDL	J W Bryan	16	10	0	0	0	6 missing, 2 nd of 9
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1895 - Missing results Debut

William Adams

In 1895, a year which witnessed the birth of the Craven Leagues under the auspices of the Craven Cricket Union, the Wesleyans lost in a KDL semi-final play-off with Cross Roads St James to finish joint third in the Championship. It is evident that the club again had a good season as witnessed by two scores in excess of 100 for the first time. 112 runs were scored against Lees Wesleyans and 139 against Oxenhope Parish Church. Both matches however finished as draws as the Wesleyans left insufficient time to bowl out the opposition. There was however a further five missing results and the Sports Editor of the Keighley News was moved to pen this lament at the time.

"To attempt to keep pace with the progress of the multitudinous leagues which have lately sprung into existence were to spend one's strength for nought, since the process of extracting information from honorary secretaries is almost as unsatisfactory as labouring to purloin butter from a dog's throat"

Perhaps the seven shillings and sixpence League Fees were dwelling on the mind for 1895!

Happily for the village if not the Wesleyans, the Church team, with Stephen Nicholls once again back in their ranks, returned to 1893 form to win their section and ultimately they defeated Cross Roads by 8 runs to regain their Championship.

1 st	KDL		16	6	0	2	3	5 missing, 3 rd of 9
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1896 - Craven League Debut

Joe Brown

The first three league seasons had proved to be enormously successful for the village with 2 Championships and a Runners-Up spot, an indication of the sporting dominance of the village at that time. Oakworth Wesleyans opted to join the new Craven League competition for the 1896 season, including former Church Captain Joe Brown for the first time. This accession to the new League was seen as a step to "senior" higher quality cricket and the club also decided to provide League cricket for its up-and-comers by entering a Second XI in the "junior" status Keighley & District League. Oxenhope YMCA's W Baxter amply demonstrated that higher quality with 33 not out and 6 for 13, the most devastating match double against Oaks to date and the first time Oakworth had lost a match by over 100 runs, albeit to the Champions.

1 st	CSL		12	5	0	3	4	4 th of 7
2 nd	CJL		12	4	0	2	6	5 th of 7

Farewell

John Berry

1897 - Back to Keighley Debut

Edmund Feather

This new league was however not seemingly to Oakworth liking and they reverted to junior status in the Keighley & District League to rejoin their Church rivals for the 1897 campaign. The Second XI did not fulfil any League matches. The local derby matches against the Slack Lane Baptists produced a tense May draw with the Wesleyans needing only 2 to win with 4 wickets in hand when stumps were drawn. In July the Wesleyans triumphed by 6 wickets. Oxenhope's G Crabtree was the first of our opponents to take 7 Oakworth wickets with 7 for 14 in our 25 all out. Bill Bryan and Elijah Attack remained our leading batsmen.

The Champions were recorded as Oxenhope Church, who went on to beat The Rest by 2 runs in the annual end of season match. Mr. J W Hartley from Oakworth presented the medals.

1 st	KDL		8	2	0	1	2	3 missing
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1898 - Boer War

There was only Sunday school league cricket (which now included the Slack Lane Baptists) in 1898 due to the worsening situation in the war with the Boers in South Africa.

1899 - First fifty *Debuts* *E Berry, B Sugden*

The Wesleyan club tried again in 1899 with the Junior League, this time a Craven variety. Wesley Place provided Oaks with opportunity to defend a score of only 27 on 6th May and this they managed, bowling them out for 22 (W Adams 6 for 18). It remains the lowest total defended by Oakworth. On 29th July that year Oakworth batsman Elijah Attack made a piece of history by scoring the club's first half-century with 54 not out vs Bingley & Gilstead Primitives. The last season of the 19th Century also featured an increasing number of excellent bowling performances notably from G Hudson, J Charlesworth and spinner William Adams. Hudson's 7 for 4 vs Haworth PC eclipsed J W Bryan's record, which had stood since 1893. Charlesworth's 7 for 7 against Bingley and Gilstead Prims ensured their score of 13 entered Oakworth' record book as the lowest recorded in the Craven League. C Wildman of Haworth Methodists claimed 8 for 21, at the time the first 8-timer for our opponents, to help his club secure a League double over our lads and the Championship.

Oakworth also tried their hand at Cup cricket. A 1st round defeat by 8 wickets at the hands of Keighley Congs in the Craven Cricket Union Cup ensured the experience was short lived.

1 st	CJL		14	6	0	4	4	4 th of 8
2 nd	KDL		16	12	0	0	4	3 rd of 9

1900 - Ties *Debuts* *J W Whiting, Dan McParland*

The twentieth century saw the Wesleyans hop back yet again to the Keighley & District League and this season brought their first tied match, with Wesley Place and 92 runs each (E Berry scored 40 for Oakworth). J Bartle of Haworth PC, one of the League's leading batsmen scored a mammoth 74 not out in a 132-7 total on 11th August; the first individual half-century conceded by Oaks. E Berry topped the club batting averages whilst Charlesworth added to his growing reputation with some sterling efforts with the bat as well as with the ball. He went on to represent the Rest in the annual match against the Champions, Keighley West Lane.

1 st	KDL		14	7	1	1	5	4 th of 8
2 nd	KDL		14	7	1	1	3	2 missing

1901 - United *Debut* *George Lee*

The winter of 1900-1901 was momentous if uncelebrated because most of the players of the Wesleyans C.C. and others grouped together to purchase the playing equipment and players tent from the Wesleyan Church and transformed themselves into Oakworth Cricket Club, independent of the Methodist Church. The new name, intended to represent the whole of the village, did not create conflict because the Church team had mysteriously regressed to junior status and incredibly it soon disappeared from the scene. Just why this was so is not totally clear, but I suspect that the continuous attempts to poach players and in particular Stephen Nicholls to join his older brother Joe at the Wesleyan Club had more than a little to do with it.



Oakworth Cricket Club
Craven Senior League 1901

The 1901 season began with a declaration from the Keighley News that the new club at Oakworth had the makings of “*a good village team*”. Unlike today the KN did take an interest in pre-season prospects of all the area’s clubs. The next few years would reveal if that prediction were to be accurate. The League hopping continued when the new club opted to re-join the Craven League this time with the big boys in the Senior Division (southern section).

Oakworth Cricket Club took to the field for the first time in their new guise in an away friendly warm-up match with Sunday School League side Lund Park. On 20th April 1901 Captain J W Whiting and his lads soundly sent the opposition packing by 66 runs to 23. J Charlesworth (pictured above far left) and E Anderton (ex Church) did the damage each with 5 wickets for 11 runs and Vice-captain Dan McParland claimed 26 runs when Oakworth batted. The first league match one week later brought the club somewhat down to earth as they went down to an 11 run defeat by Silsden IIs by 47 runs to 36. Top-scorer this time was B Sugden with a more modest 14. McParland in fact also excelled with the ball returning what is still the most dominant bowling return of 5 for 1 in a 93 run victory over the Wesleyans from Haworth. The final match of the season decided the section when Oakworth failed to beat Haworth Parish Church who won by 5 wickets to top the section by 2 points from our lads. The Haworth team went on to beat Kildwick, the northern section winners, by 9 runs to gain the overall Championship. The remainder of the summer was made up with 5 friendly matches perhaps to please the die-hards who objected to league cricket. E Berry topped the club batting averages with 112 runs from 6 innings and Charlesworth led the bowlers with 18 league wickets. The outstanding performance came from Anderton who took a then club record of 8 Haworth Wesleyan wickets for only 34 runs in an early season win. There were 3 half-centuries, one each for Charlesworth, Berry and Sugden, whose 56 was a new club record.

1 st	CSL	J W Whiting	8	4	0	1	3	3 rd of 5
2 nd	CJL	B Sugden	12	7			5	3 rd of 7

Farewell

J Charlesworth

1902 - Great Cup Match Debuts *Stephen Nicholls, J Hey, Albert Wright*

For the 1902 season the ground sported a new fence and seats and the committee decided that admission charges would have to be made. I wonder how long this remained a club policy?

An enlarged section of 9 teams commenced duty on 12th April and included some sterling efforts in a limited number of appearances by Keighley player Arthur Lancaster. The one really bright note was the club’s progress to the Craven Union Cup semi-final thanks to a magnificent 79 not out by Lancaster in the previous round against Bradley. Oakworth had rattled up an astonishing unprecedented 195 to crush Bradley by 155 runs. Bradley in fact formally lodged a complaint about Oakworth’s inclusion of Lancaster. The League rejected this complaint, as Oakworth resident Lancaster was still an amateur. Oakworth lost the semi-final by the narrow margin of one wicket in the evening gloom to Keighley Congs. Little did they know that it would be well over half a century before the next step was made!

Oakworth bowling was again bolstered by none other than Stephen Nicholls, who continued to grab some of the headlines for his new club as he gathered 4 five-wicket hauls on his way to taking a club record 65

wickets at average under six. His best performances were 7 for 10 vs Harden and a hat trick in that Cup match with Bradley. Dan McParland also contributed a great then record league score for Oakworth of 69 in a comfortable win over Haworth Wesleyans. He went on to take the club's batting prize with 138 runs from 10 knocks.

The Oakworth committee sensed that progress might be accelerated if they joined the stronger West Bradford League and their application was heard on 27 the September 1902. It was rejected along with that from Haworth Wesleyans.

1 st	CSL	J W Whiting	16	5	0	3	8	7 th of 9
2 nd	CJL	J Craven	10	4	0	1	5	5 th of 6

Farewell Arthur Lancaster

1903 - St Anne's Year *Debut H Lancaster*

In 1903 Keighley club, St Annes emerged as Champions. St Annes humiliated Oakworth in the first match of the season when our boys were dismissed for only 12 total; however they did themselves lose 6 wickets in getting 13 needed for victory.

1 st	CSL	E Attack	12	5	0	1	6	4 th of 7
2 nd	CJL	H Scargill	10	3	0	1	6	

1904 - Hey' records *Debut Hiram Hey*

1904 was to prove a most successful season for Oakworth with over 1,000 runs scored for the first time. Pride of place in team performance was a 115 run tanning (1st over 100 runs) for Keighley West Lane on 21st May by our resurgent XI. The challenge for honours was really thwarted by Oxenhope Meths who sent us packing by a first recorded 10 wicket hammering (Oaks 55 all out).

The season was notable for the dominance of J Hey with bat and ball as he topped Oakworth batting and bowling averages. He set a club bowling record of 69 victims at an amazing average of 3.40. Seven times he took 5 or more wickets, twice taking 8, for only 4 runs against Eastburn (club record) and for 13 runs v Champions St Annes. At last the club had another star bowler to team up with the ageing Stephen Nicholls who was now in his 16th season of local cricket. With the bat Hey totalled 165 runs at an average of 11 and had a season high personal score of 32. Both the Attacks and H Lancaster gave admirable support with run getting.

1 st	CSL	J W Whiting	18	9	1	1	7	2 nd of 10
2 nd	CJL	F Gurnett	14	11	0	0	3	2 nd of 8

1905 - Wright stuff *Debuts Ellis Wilkinson, Percy Moore*

The Craven Cricket Union, an umbrella organization, had constantly played around with the league composition as clubs jockeyed to gain entry to higher status leagues such as the West Bradford, as indeed Oakworth unsuccessfully attempted in 1902. In the winter of 1904-05 the Keighley & District League reformed and Oakworth once again decided to switch back to their original allegiance. This League hop was to prove one too many for Horace Attack, who hung up his boots after his 11th season of League cricket. Hey and Nicholls failed to continue their brilliant 1904 form and only the consistent batting of Albert Wright gained attention as he won the League Batting Average Prize with 235 runs at 19.58. H Lancaster, J Hey and Bill Bryan provided frequent support. Amazingly Albert's best performance was a relatively modest 36 against Cavendish Street, but 6 not out innings helped him to the coveted prize as the first Oakworthian to score over 200 runs in a season.

1 st	KDL1	D McParland	22	10	0	5	7	5 th of 12
2 nd	KDL2	J Blenkiron	22	3	0	6	13	

Farewell Horace Attack

1906 - Second best *Debut Norman Whitaker*

A strong squad of players, but one without Elijah Attack who had joined his brother in retirement, produced an eight match unbeaten run to the end of 1906. It was one of Oakworth's top ten all-time seasons thanks

to the bowlers, amongst them Nicholls and Hey, who captured a record 107 wickets in their 11 match home programme. H Lancaster continued to give all round support. Lancaster and Berry represented The Rest but vice captain Bill Bryan's form dipped alarmingly in what was to prove his last season with the club.

1 st	KDL1	S Nicholls	22	13	0	5	4	2 nd of 12
2 nd	KDL2	E Deeming	22	12	0	2	8	

Farewells J W Bryan, H Lancaster

1907 - Seconds out Debut Alfred Broadbent

The predictions of further progress turned out to be fanciful indeed. For 1907 saw the club in dire straits as many players left the club for pastures new and the names of Hey, Nicholls, Lancaster and Bryan all failed to appear on the team sheet. Just why was this? Was it that they were brassed off with the constant switching from League to League? Hey, not surprisingly had joined West Bradford League club Ingrow to test his talents in the higher echelons.

Each of the 3 previous seasons had seen over 1,000 runs scored but this year's aggregate fell to less than 700. Ever-present William Adams took 7 Sun Street wickets for only 14 runs in their innings of 27 and then saw our batters surrender with a score of 15 all out. Edmund Feather did manage 54 against the Wesleyans from Haworth as our only half-century. The situation was so bad that after nine seasons since its birth in 1896 a second XI could not be fielded, although they did manage friendly matches with Temple Street and Mytholmes Mission. A season to forget without doubt for President Mr. A L Haggas and all connected with the club.

1 st	KDL	E Feather	22	4	0	8	10	9 th of 12
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Farewell Dan McParland

1908 – Union dispute Debut Willie Anderton

At a meeting on 7th September the 20-years old Craven Cricket Union disbanded. The Craven concept had completely fallen apart with Skipton area clubs breaking away to form a Skipton & District League and therefore most Keighley area clubs remained in the Keighley & District League or opted to apply for the stronger West Bradford League. Just so with Oakworth who decided to remain with the KDL for 1908. They were to operate without batting record holder Dan McParland as he had joined the exodus to pastures new. Not surprisingly another miserable season followed and it was 20th June before a first victory was recorded. Young Ellis Wilkinson was Oakworth leading scorer but he was the only batsman over 100 runs (137) at an average just under 10, whilst Albert Wright and B Sugden both played last matches for Oakworth this year.

The club probably didn't know it but the first real golden age of Oakworth cricket was about to rise phoenix-like from the ashes of the two previous fruitless seasons.

1 st	KDL1	A Wright	20	4	0	5	11	9 th of 11
2 nd	KDL2	E Sugden	20	1	0	2	17	

Farewells Albert Wright, B Sugden

1909 - Unbeaten Debut Herbert Moore

1908 captain Albert Wright was replaced by long-serving William Adams who started his career as the most successful Oakworth captain with an 11 run win against Keighley West Lane IIs in a yet again much altered KDL line up. Wright didn't appear for Oakworth again. After a season of sheer dominance Oakworth ran out comfortable League Champions, remaining unbeaten throughout the entire season. The Oakworth club's first ever League Champions were: William Adams (Capt), Joe Brown (vice-captain), Herbert Moore, Hiram Hey, J W Pullan, Norman Whitaker, Ellis Wilkinson, Stephen Nicholls, Percy Moore, Andrew Coulton, Alfred Broadbent & John Whitaker.



New recruit from Ingrow St Johns J W Pullan led the batting with 106 runs to finish second in the league lists. In 3rd place came Oakworth's Alfred Broadbent (172 runs) who had a marvellous top score of 61 v Haworth Wesleyans. Herbert Moore emerged as a genuine successor to Nicholls and finished 3rd in the bowling lists with 27 wickets at only 4.03 runs. Captain William himself contributed 13 wickets (at 5.61 each) with devilish spin to also make the list in ninth place. A fact made all the more remarkable as William only had just one eye.

The League's then practice was to finish the season with a "Champions versus the Rest" game, but this was thwarted through rain on 11th September. Nevertheless the league presentations went ahead and Captain Adams gratefully received the Championship trophy from the league president and promptly started the celebrations by filling the Cup with LEMONADE! The old Wesleyan influence still persisted! Adams commented, "It has been a pleasure to meet so many wonderful cricketers on the way to winning the Trophy". A celebratory tea was held in the Mechanics Institute (now Holden Hall) at the expense of the Oakworth club.

1 st	KDL1	W Adams	12	10	0	4	0	Champions
2 nd	KDL2	J Chapman	18	5	0	3	10	

Farewells Joe Brown, E Berry

1910 - Hey again Debut Tom Smith

Oakworth were very strong favourites to retain their hard won Championship in 1910. The change of real significance was the return from Ingrow to the Oakworth ranks of J Hey, effectively replacing former Church man Joe Brown. The club entered the newly inaugurated Charity Cup competition and was drawn against the Skipton & District League winners, Kildwick Parish Church. A ten-wicket defeat ended our progress at the first hurdle. The two Heys, Broadbent and Percy Moore made enough runs to stay in the hunt but once again excellent Oakworth bowling kept us right at the forefront in the hunt for honours. On 6th August Heber Street batsmen folded to 26 all out and soon succumbed to Oakworth by a margin of 10 wickets; the first time Oaks had managed the feat. Oakworth needed to win their last two matches to again take the title and the first of these games was against Championship rivals Bingley An XI (Bingley third team). Oakworth gave Bingley a real drubbing, bowling them out for only 23 runs and then knocking them off with the loss of only 3 wickets. That man Hey produced wonderful figures of 6 for 7. This victory brought Oakworth to a joint leadership position with the Bingley club and a win in the final match against Sun Street Mission would ensure at least a play off for the League trophy. A superhuman effort by Hey, with 8 for 21 in restricting Sun Street to a total of 76, failed to achieve the desired result. The Oakworth batsmen failed, including Hey who was given out Lbw for 16, and were all out for 68, just 9 runs short of the target and we had to settle for the runners-up spot for 1910 as Bingley won their last match.

1 st	KDL1	W Adams	16	10	0	2	4	2 nd of 9
2 nd	KDL2	W Fryer	18	9	0	2	7	

1911 - Top man Hey

Under the leadership of Alfred Broadbent, Oakworth, mysteriously without Norman Whitaker, were again amongst the pacesetters for 1911. In fact Alfred used only 13 players, the lowest in our history. Oakworth finished only 1 point adrift and their two defeats at the hands of the Morton club obviously determined the destiny of the league title. One new club record was set this year, a new high match aggregate of 302 runs in

a 4 run Charity Cup defeat at the hands of the West Bradford League's Ingrow club. J Hey and Herbert Moore dominated the bowling finishing first and second in the league bowling averages, Hey with 39 wickets at under 4 and Moore with 38 at just over 5. For good measure Hey also finished third in the league batting averages with 134 runs and rising batsman Tommy Smith ably backed him up with 126 runs to finish one place behind.

1 st	KDL1	A Broadbent	12	9	0	1	2	2 nd of 7
2 nd	KDL2	J Brown	14	6	0	3	5	

1912 - West Bradford Debuts *Willie Pickles, A Hartley*

The previous three amazing seasons had brought Oakworth a total of 29 victories from the 42 contests undertaken, a fact obviously not lost on the Committee who this time successfully applied to join the West Bradford League for the 1912 season. Tom Smith and Herbert Moore led the team in what was clearly a most difficult baptism in higher status cricket. Alfred Broadbent decided that entry to the new League was his signal to retire but the side was boosted by returns to the club for Norman Whitaker, and after a six-year absence Elijah Attack. It was to be late May before the first win was chalked up. The season ended with only 3 relatively narrow wins; a 1 run win over Keighley West Lane, a 2-wicket margin over Kildwick Parish Church and a 4 wicket result against neighbours Ingrow. Only Norman Whitaker and Hiram Hey enhanced their reputations as batsmen. Elijah Attack just pipped J Hey to become the first Oakworth player to bat 100 times for the First XI.

A Stoddart of Riddlesden just missed out on becoming the first to score the magical three figures against Oaks, when falling short by 1 run with an amazing record 99 in a 122 run defeat for our shell-shocked lads in May.

1 st	WBL1	T Smith	18	3	0	8	7	7 th of 10
2 nd	WBL2	H Green	18	4	0	2	12	Last of 10

Farewell J Hey

1913 - Norman conquest

The Committee, in looking at those 1912 performances, must have been very disappointed after the three previous almost all-conquering seasons and they decided that victories really do go a long way to maintaining interest. They resolved not for the first time to return to the "junior" Keighley & District League. Wilkinson, the Heys and the Moores did not appear in 1913, possibly seeing the move as a retrograde step for the club.

However, over the last few years the young Norman Whitaker had been steadily developing as a promising all-rounder and on 17th May 1913 his development was completed. Oakworth racked up their highest ever KDL score of 157 for 8 and Norman contributed a magnificent 70, also then a club record high individual score in league matches. Norman was superbly supported by George Lee, who also made 60 in that drubbing of Devonshire Mills (the wicket stand unfortunately not recorded but almost certainly the first Oaks century stand). Only Arthur Lancaster's Cup score of 79 in 1902 being a higher score. Mills' luckless batsmen were then skittled for only 27 runs and so helped produce another record for Oakworth; a winning margin of 130 runs. A new club bowling performance also came Norman's way when he skittled nine Heber Street batsmen for only 8 runs; the club's first nine-timer. This eclipsed J Hey's previous all time best of 8 for 4 set in 1904. Norman went on to finish third in the league bowling averages with 39 wickets at 4 runs each and one better with second in the league batting averages with 170 runs at over 15. George Lee ran Norman close in the batting also with an average over 15, and newcomer Willie Pickles actually edged Norman in the bowling with an average of 3.26 for his 38 wickets. 13 wickets for only 37 runs was the H Beecroft fantastic 1913 contribution to Knowle Park's two matches against Oaks.

1 st	KDL1	T Smith	16	5	0	4	7	6 th of 9
2 nd	KDL2	W Anderton	16	2	0	1	13	Last of 9

Farewell Elijah Attack

1914 - Champions

Clearly the squad still had potential and the Committee again approached William Adams to lead the team. William had led them to a fabulous unbeaten Championship in 1909 and if anyone could bring out the best from the talented team William could. He persuaded most of the previous year' absentees (and Alfred Broadbent) to return so optimism was high. Defeats in the first 2 games however did little to support the thesis despite great bowling from Willie Pickles and the Moores. A crushing victory over Bingley Hill Street on 27th June, the club's 8th in the next 9 games saw Oakworth hit the top and never look back. 15 matches, including the last 10 in a row, were won with only 3 lost and the club's second Championship was secured with 30 points.

Oakworth's 1914 League Champions were: Willie Adams (captain) George Lee (vice-captain) Norman Whitaker, Hiram Hey, Willie Pickles, Tommy Smith, Ellis Wilkinson, Allan Wigglesworth, Alfred Broadbent, F Hymas, Percy and Herbert Moore.

Continued brilliance from Norman Whitaker, tremendous support from Broadbent, Wilkinson and Percy Moore and Pickles fine bowling all contributed to taking the title. Whitaker produced yet another milestone in the club's history on 29th August when he became the first Oakworth player to perform the double (50 runs & 5 wickets in a match). He followed his 54 out of a team total of 114 with the taking of 7 Haworth Baptist wickets for only 17 runs. Norman racked up 61 wickets (3.67) during the year and finished fourth in the League bowling list to add to his 5th in the batting. Alf Broadbent was runner up in the League batting (18.27) whilst Tom Smith was 3rd with his bowling (3.40).

The minutes of the Committee meeting of 10th September show the comments that the club organize a celebratory tea (for the Championship) with the added note and that we beg the tea as before! No mention of lemonade though!

1 st	KDL1	W Adams	18	15	0	0	3	Champions
2 nd	KDL2	W Anderton	18	7	0	0	11	8 th of 10

1915 - Back to back

The Oakworth club went into the 1915 campaign with tremendous confidence although an altogether different campaign on the fields of Flanders was occupying the thoughts of most. Unfortunately J Hey would not be able to continue his brilliant career; he passed away during the winter to leave the Oakworth club numbed at his loss. His all round ability had been a major factor in Oakworth's earlier dominance. On 19th January 1915 the Committee voted a subscription to provide a commemorative medal for Hey's relations.

The KDL decided to continue despite the background of the Great War and 11 teams made up the league including both Oakworth and Oakworth IIs. The Seconds as you would expect were duly crushed twice (6 & 9 wks) on the way to yet another tremendous season. The club's first hat trick in a league match went to Herbert Moore in a return of 5 wickets for 1 run against Long Lee. Whitaker again excelled with both bat and ball and he received backing from Hiram Hey, George Lee and H Keighley. 17 wins, 1 draw and only 2 defeats had led to Oakworth's finest ever season to date. William Adams magic had worked yet again bringing a third Championship in only seven seasons under his captaincy with runs/wkt dominance over opponents by a massive 65%. To cap off the season Norman Whitaker became the first Oakworthian to pass 1,000 runs in a career in his 95th innings, a remarkable achievement.

The 1915 team, which won the club's 3rd Championship, was: Willie Adams (Capt) George Lee (vice-capt) Norman Whitaker, Hiram Hey, H Keighley, Ellis Wilkinson, F Brown, Alfred Broadbent, Percy and Herbert Moore, A Hartley & F Beverley.

The celebrations were held at the Mechanics with dancing to the Oakworth Orchestra (Philharmonic?). The League trophy was presented by Secretary Mr. Dickie Bird (I didn't realize he was that old!) to a beaming Willie Adams after earlier the team had lost the traditional end of season game to the Rest.

1 st	KDL1	W Adams	20	17	0	1	2	Champions
2 nd	KDL1	H Ambler	20	6	0	2	12	9 th of 11

1916 to 1918

The storm clouds over Europe worsened and the KDL was suspended for the years 1916 to 1918 and no league cricket was played at Oakworth.