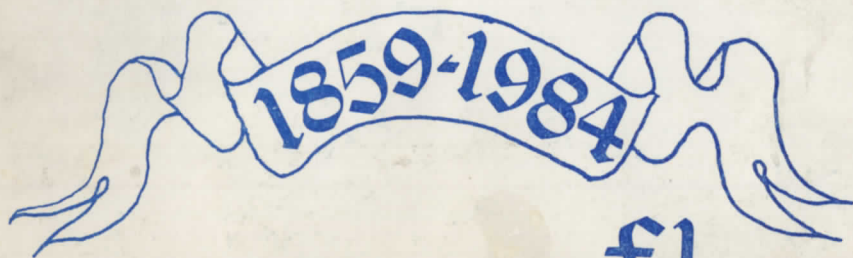


125 Years of Cricket
in the
Primateal City.



Armagh Cricket Club.



£1

Letter from President I.C.U.

I was very pleased this year as President of the Irish Cricket Union to be asked to bring a team to play at the Mall to celebrate the Club's 125th Birthday.

The Club is steeped in history and yet is forward looking and any Cricketer who has had the opportunity to play in such a superb setting as the Mall has been indeed fortunate.

I have many fond memories of games against Armagh and I am sure that when wishing the Club future success and enjoyment I express these sentiments on behalf of all Cricketers who have also known the hospitality and pleasure of cricket in Armagh.

DIXON ROSE, President I.C.U.

Letter from President N.C.U.

On the occasion of the 125th birthday of the Armagh Cricket Club, I am honoured that I have been invited to take part in the celebrations of such a well-known Club in the cricket world and to contribute a few words to the souvenir brochure.

My association with the Armagh Club is of many years standing. I first played on the Mall in the early thirties and since then, I have enjoyed its hospitality on many occasions.

When the Armagh Club was formed, the Northern Cricket Union did not exist, it was not until the year 1886 that organised cricket under the N.C.U. took place. In 1986, it is the intention of the N.C.U. to hold a Centenary Year. This will be marked by special fixtures, functions, brochure and souvenirs. A history of the N.C.U. is at present being compiled, and I am sure the Armagh Club with such a long history would have something of note to contribute.

Having been connected with cricket administration for such a long time, I would stress that the healthy state of the game at present, is entirely due to the efforts of Clubs (like Armagh) improving their facilities, playing standards and co-operation with the governing body.

May I wish the Club a successful 1984.

GEORGE ORR, President N.C.U.

Message from Our President

To-day, as we celebrate 125 years of playing Cricket in Armagh, I am very pleased to extend a warm welcome to the Irish Cricket Union President, the N.C.U. President, players, officials, visitors and members to participate in the celebration.

As a member of Armagh C.C. for only 15 years it is a great honour to be your President on this historic occasion. I am grateful for the opportunity to thank all those who worked so hard to produce this souvenir brochure, and everyone else for their efforts to make the day a success.

I look forward to meeting all my cricketing friends and extend good wishes and thanks to one and all.

JOE VAUGHAN, President.

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We also wish to acknowledge the work of Mr. Gordon Speers and
The Portadown Male Voice Choir who recorded the Club Anthem.

Greetings from the Famous

Here we have a full house of greetings from former England Test Captains. The first three were obtained by that indefatigable collector of autographs, Glenn Ewart. The Rt. Rev. David Sheppard, Bishop of Liverpool, responded to a request made to him when he was in Armagh early in the year for meetings with Irish church leaders. To all of them we are goth grateful and honoured that they took time off to write to us.

20a Broomhall Road,
Sheffield.

Dear Mr. Ewart,

I am writing to thank you for your letter and to congratulate Armagh Cricket Club on its 125th Anniversary.

I have many happy recollections of playing cricket at Armagh, Londonderry and Strabane, amongst others.

My battalion, 1st Green Howards, was stationed at Armagh and one of our first priorities was to find a Cricket Ground, which we did at the local Asylum.

Our Commanding Officer, the late Lt.-Col. A. L. Shaw, was a cricket fanatic, and, also a very good batsman who played for a representative side against the M.C.C. captained by D. R. Jardine in India in 1934. Also, of course the great Hedley Verity, sadly killed in action, so together with some good club cricketers we had an attractive side and so had no difficulty in landing opponents.

Among the more pleasant memories was, of course playing on the Mall at Armagh and I would like to conclude by wishing the Armagh Cricket Club a very happy and successful 125th Anniversary.

Yours sincerely,

NORMAN YARDLEY.

Ebor House,
1 Coombe Neville,
Warren Road,
Kingston Upon Thames.

Dear Glenn,

Thank you for your letter. I am delighted to hear that the Armagh Cricket Club will be 125 not out in 1984.

My most sincere congratulations to the Club and to all the members. May you all prosper in the years ahead. I wish you all well and much enjoyable cricket in the coming years.

Yours sincerely,

LEN HUTTON.

Lord's Cricket Ground,
London.

Dear Glenn,

Congratulations on your Club's 125th Anniversary. Here's wishing you every success and a very happy season.

Yours sincerely,

COLIN COWDREY.

Church House,
1 Hanover Street,
Liverpool.

Dear Mr. Duffy,

I promised you that I would send a greeting to Armagh Cricket Club for your celebrations this year. I greatly enjoyed my visit to Armagh during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: it wasn't quite the weather for cricket that freezing cold night, but I was greatly heartened by the warmth and hope for peace which I saw in so many people.

I send my very best wishes to all involved with Armagh Cricket Club that you may have a successful, enjoyable and peaceful season.

Yours sincerely,

DAVID SHEPPARD.

Cricket in Armagh —

The Early Days

As with many other facets of local history in Armagh, the researcher into the story of cricket owes a deep debt of gratitude to the indefatigable researches of the late T. G. Paterson, Curator of Armagh Museum. What follows is a result of his labours.

The game seems to have been introduced to the citizens of Armagh through the frequent quartering of English troops in the city, probably in the last quarter of the 18th or early 19th century. As regards the actual date we have no definite information, but we have evidence that it was a recognised local past-time 140 years ago.

For instance, we learn from the *Armagh Guardian* of July 29th 1845, that "Mr. Wiltshire, the proprietor of the Beresford Arms Hotel, had leased the large central field on the Mall, and with his characteristic good nature had opened it to the public for their amusement", and that during the previous week "several spirited games of cricket" had been played thereon.

On September 15th of that year the *Ulster Gazette* records a military cricket match at Charlemont between eleven of the Artillery and a like number of the 46th Regiment from Armagh. As both the *Gazette* and the *Guardian* were founded the previous year we cannot very well hope to find earlier references, but we may accept these two matter-of-fact accounts as proof that cricket was then a game with which their readers were already quite familiar.

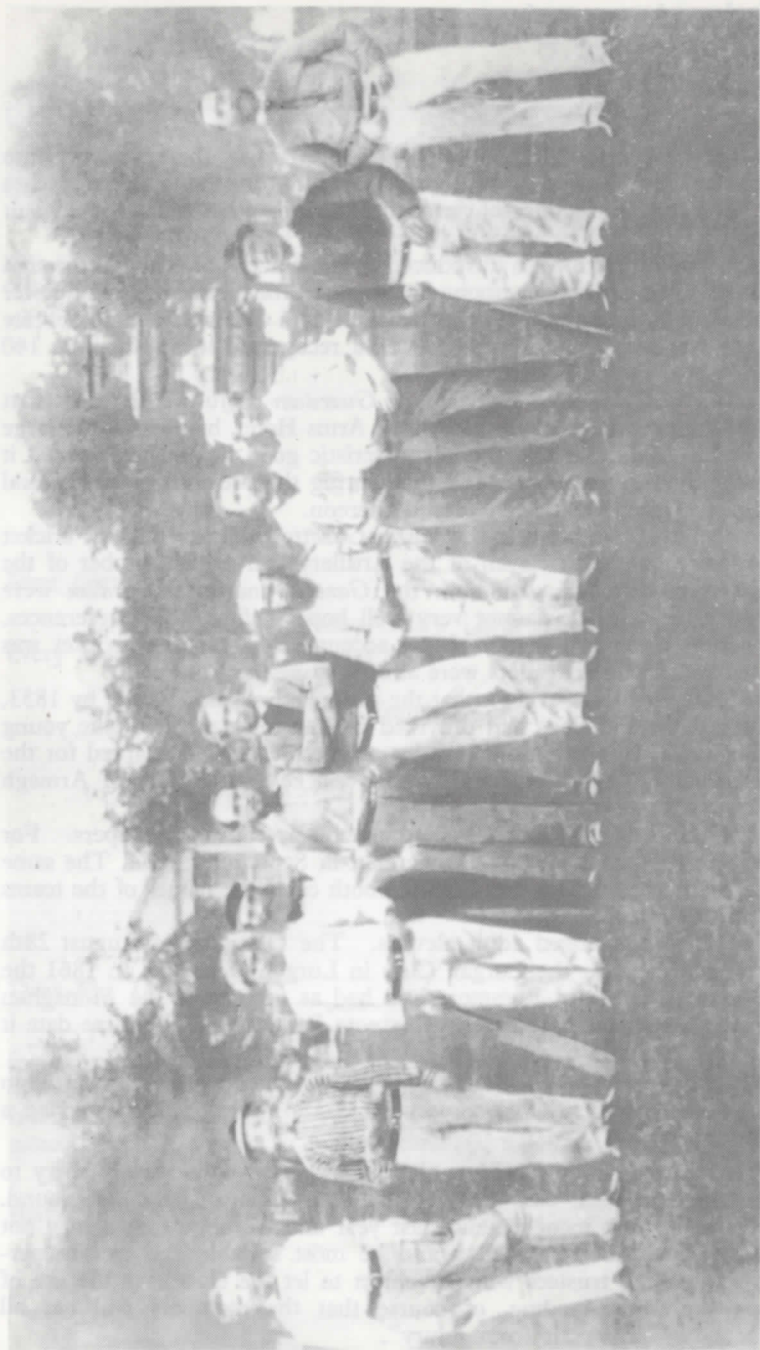
From the local press it is evident that the game had reached Keady by 1853, and that William Kirk and Sons had provided ground for a pitch for the young men of the firm, who were fitted out in a "special costume well adapted for the game and furnished by Armstrong and Wynne", a celebrated firm of Armagh tailors.

From 1854 the Royal School takes up much space in local papers. For instance, we find the School playing Dungannon in September 1854. The same schools played each other in October 1855. In both cases the names of the teams are given in the *Guardian*.

The School also challenged adult elevens. The *Guardian* of August 28th 1858 records a game against the Lurgan Club in Lurgan Demesne. In 1861 the team was entertained by Lord Rossmore and had as opponents the Monaghan County Club, the match taking place in Rossmore Park. About the same date it played against the Armagh Club on the Mall.

For the first couple of years after its foundation the Armagh Cricket Club was a guest on other pitches. On February 22nd 1861 the *Guardian* carried a news item as follows:—

"As the season for the cricket playing will soon open we are sorry to learn that our local club find it difficult to obtain a suitable ground. This was a great inconvenience last year and we hope that it may not occur at present. The Mall would be most suitable and we are persuaded that the trustees will not object to let the club have the use of it on the understanding, of course that the members will use all diligence to protect it from injury".



ARMAGH CRICKET TEAM 1861

This reproduction of an old photograph of the First Armagh Cricket Team was presented to the Armagh City Club by Thomas Sinclair of Lisburn, 1928.

FROM LEFT—Bob Turtle, T. P. Hudson, J. A. Allen, Jack Hefron, John Boyd, G. C. Cochran, D. Thackery, R. Matthews, H. J. Harris, Revd. J. H. M. Strangeways, O. Kidd.

About twelve weeks later we find the Armagh Cricket Club actually in possession of its present pitch and involved in the prosecution of a trespasser thereon. From the court evidence it would appear that the Club had obtained the use of the central portion with the proviso that none but members should be permitted upon it. The reason for that order was the fact that the rights of the public were restricted to "the walks"—they were, in fact prohibited from the central portion!

The first meeting of the Cricket Club was held in the drawing room of the house occupied for many years by the law firm of Monroe and Anderson. And it would appear that the first game was played in 1859. On September 2nd of that year the *Guardian* carries a report of a game against the Monaghan Club in Caledon demesne, which Armagh won. The Armagh team was named as: Prentice, Allen, Turle, Darley, James, F. T. Foster, Bampfield, Stanley (J), Foster (A), McMatters and Kidd.

In 1860 they played Lurgan in the Lurgan Demesne. Lurgan were successful on this occasion. The Armagh Eleven was: T. W. Stanley, H. James, W. McClintock, J. A. Cuppage, T. F. Hudson, J. Allen, R. Turtle, C. Edmondson, G. C. Cochrane, J. Boyd and H. Harris. In the same year Armagh defeated Castledillon on July 27th.

In 1861, when the Club found its home on the Mall, matches were played against Banbridge and Monaghan, both games ending victoriously for Armagh. From that date on 'cricket, glorious cricket' has been played on the Mall, the only interruptions being during the two World Wars.

The records show that cricket was a very popular game in Armagh and its neighbourhood. In the Armagh Museum there is a scorebook of Loughgall Cricket Club covering the period 1868 - 1879. From it we learn that there was an Armagh Cathedral Club, drawing its members from the Cathedral Choir. Teams also existed in Portadown, Richhill, Markethill, Monaghan and Killyman.

This has been but a brief outline of the early days of our Club. To complete the story of Cricket in Armagh would be a major work. However, within the pages of this souvenir brochure we shall attempt to give a flavour of the exploits of Armagh Cricketers down the years, the triumphs, the failures and the near misses.

The Great Years

The period 1928 to 1939 was undoubtedly the most successful in Armagh's first 125 years. The League Championship was won three times with teams of exceptional merit. Seldom in those eleven years were Armagh not challenging for the highest honours.

The first league title to come to Armagh was in 1928. In the fifteen matches it took to win the championship only one was lost—the first one. Lurgan were victorious by 12 runs on May 5th. From then until the end of the season defeat was a stranger. Victory after victory was reeled off, some more spectacular than others. For instance on May 26th North Down so often Armagh's bogey in the Senior Cup, were trounced by 139 runs, in a game that saw Armagh run up a total of 247, with the great Bobby Barnes undefeated on 93.

On June 2nd that defeat by Lurgan was avenged by a four wicket margin in a game that saw Barnes score 83. On June 16th Queen's Island were the victims of the Armagh run machine—135 runs being the gap between the sides at the finish. Barnes did not play that day. He was on Ulster duty and had an innings of 73. For Armagh Wilfred McDonagh scored 88 just to prove that Armagh was no one-man team.

On July 23rd Harry McAuley, who was to grace the Mall and thrill spectators for many years scored 21 against Ulster in Armagh's tenth match of



Senior League Winners 1928

BACK ROW—R. J. McDonald, J. Morrow, J. J. McCaffrey, R. J. Barnes (sen.), R. F. Forbes, J. P. Best.
MIDDLE ROW—R. J. Barnes, J. Welsh, G. Livingstone, A. E. Dent, N. Beggs, H. McAuley, R. Scott.
FRONT ROW—Dr. H. A. Gray, S. W. McDonough, C. Raynor, R. McKinley (Capt.), Capt. M. Sinton, Lt. Ryland, H. G. Harris.



Senior League Winners 1931

BACK ROW—T. Kernoghan, T. McKinley, H. McAuley, W. J. McKinley, Dr. J. A. McMahon, Rev. A. Bennett, R. McKinley, R. Scott, R. J. McDonald, P. J. O'Hare.

FRONT ROW—J. J. McCaffrey, H. G. Harris, G. Livingstone, D. Thompson, S. W. McDonough (Capt.), R. J. Barnes, J. McCaffrey, Capt. M. Sinton, R. J. Barnes (sen.).



Senior League Winners 1939

BACK ROW—R. J. McDonald, J. Cummings, J. Briggs, G. Leyburn, J. Allen, J. Morrow, J. P. Best, R. F. Forbes.

MIDDLE ROW—A. Richardson, C. R. Carter, D. Carson, S. Scott, J. Dawson, H. McAuley, J. Ellis, J. J. McCaffrey, R. J. Barnes (sen.).

FRONT ROW—T. Neill, J. Clarke, J. Barnes, R. McKinley, W. Dawson (Capt.), Capt. M. Sinton, Miss E. Carter, W. McKinley, G. Livingstone.

the season. So it continued until the end of the season and the Senior League Cup was Armagh's for the first time.

In 1929 Armagh finished in fifth place in the League and reached the semi-final of the Cup where they lost to Lisburn by three wickets. In 1930 they again finished fifth in the League, and Wilfred McDonagh played for the Gentlemen of Ireland.

In 1931 the League Championship was won for a second time with much the same side that had been successful in 1928. The highlight of 1932 was a thrilling Cup run with successes over North, in a game that began on July 2nd and didn't finish until July 13th, and Lisburn in the semi-final. In the game against North Armagh amassed 208 runs and North's reply was a meagre 66. The semi-final against Lisburn was a thrilling affair, with Armagh winning by just 12 runs at the end.

In the Final North Down stood between Armagh and a first Cup success. But as happened on more than this occasion the Comber men prevailed in a low scoring game. Armagh made 121 and 118, while North Down replied with 137 and 107 for 5. That season also Armagh finished in third place in the League.

The League positions in the following years were: 4th in 1934, 6th in 1935, 8th in 1936, and 6th in 1938. That fine side had one more shot in their locker and in 1939 the League title was won for the third time.

P. J. McCaffrey, who played both cricket and rugby for Armagh well remembers those great years. Now well into the autumn years of a life rich in sporting memories, Paddy in a letter to Mr. Harry Reid recalls those days.

"Bobby Barnes and I played cricket together on the Mall as schoolboys.

Those were the glory years of Armagh cricket, five Gentlemen of Ireland cricketers in those years. Bobby Barnes supreme with both bat and ball, Wilfred McDonagh (wicket-keeper and opening bat) and Tom Ward, fastest bowler in Ireland at the time. Ward afterwards created a record by uprooting all ten wickets of the Leinster Cricket Club team when playing with Pembroke Cricket Club.

Harry McAuley who hit four 'sixes' and two fours in one over. Three of the sixes ended up at the bottom of Russell Street hit from the Pavilion end.

I remember partnering Bobby against NICC on the Mall in the semi-final of the Senior Cup. I got instructions to hold up my end (POKE) and let Bobby do the scoring. Bobby collared the bowling and I counted each ball and signalled to Bobby to hit a single off the last ball in each over so that he would be facing the bowler at the other end of the next over. When play stopped due to bad light Bobby had scored 184 not out and I had scored 14.

Bobby was chaired shoulder high off the field and I was booed by the crowd on the Mall wall".

Yes, it must have been fun in those days!

The Graham Cup Story

Of all the trophies competed for under the aegis of the Northern Cricket Union, the Graham Cup for Under-15's is one of the most sought after. Armagh has had a fair measure of success in this competition. To Leslie Spearman we are grateful for the information on the success of 1946, when he played, and for 1963, when he was manager. For an earlier victory the files of the *Northern Whig* provide the statistics.

Armagh reached the final of the Graham Cup in 1930, when they were defeated by Lisburn by five wickets. A year later the Armagh Boys had phenomenal success. A photograph shows them as Ulster Schoolboy Champions, though the trophy shown does not seem to be the Graham Cup. Of the twenty matches played only one was lost.

In 1934 the coveted Graham Cup came to Armagh for the first time when Lisburn were defeated, thus avenging the disappointment of 1930. In the Final, Lisburn were bowled out for 50, with V. McConnell taking 6 for 24. Armagh



Armagh Boys Cricket Club, Ulster Schoolboy Champions 1931

BACK ROW—B. P. Glancy, John Hughes, A. Waddell, R. H. Pinkerton, J. Brownlee, M. O'Sullivan, George Campbell, John Ellis.

MIDDLE ROW—S. Barnes, M. G. P. Green, S. C. R. Bell, C. H. W. Wheeler, J. A. Nicholson, J. B. O'Hare, N. Gamble, W. W. M. Gray.

FRONT ROW—T. W. McClelland, Wilson Macartney, M. A. Bell, J. H. Barnes (Capt.), R. A. J. Rayhill (Hon. Sec.), Eric Armstrong, D. R. Tarleton, C. C. Ensor, H. A. Berryman.

INSET—D. V. E. Browne, S. B. Gillespie, E. H. D. Ward.

passed that total readily enough and were 86 for 2 at the close. Stanley Barnes was 41 not out.

It was not until 1946 that success was again achieved. Armagh began their campaign with a victory over Lisburn on the Mall. Batting first the boys from the Primatial City were all out for 170 with Leslie Spearman top scorer on 72. Norman 'Butch' McKinley made 35, and Alex Edgar 36. The *Ulster Gazette* report of the game continues:

"At 6.30 the Lisburn team went into bat, and by 6.55 had returned to the pavilion with a meagre nine runs against Armagh's total of 170. Credit for this speedy elimination goes to I. Forster and N. Church. Church opened the bowling, took a wicket with his first ball, and alternately Forster bowled five maiden overs and claimed two wickets. Confidence and wickets were shattered in the sixth over when Forster again went into action. This unruly haired medium-fast spin bowler slung up deliveries which compiled a gruesome trial for the Lisburn lads. He dismissed four players in succession to achieve the 'hat trick' and there is a rumour that he may be presented with a crest-mounted ball".

For the record Church took 4 for 7 and the redoubtable Forster 6 for 2!

In the semi-final Armagh trounced Portadown. The latter were tumbled out for 31 with Forster and Church once more the angels of destruction. Church had 3 for 14, and Forster 5 for 16. 'Butch' was not out 20 when Armagh passed their rivals total with seven wickets to spare.

Excitement was at fever pitch as the day of the Final approached, with Cliftonville providing the opposition. This chronicler can do no better than let the *Gazette* take up the story.

GRAHAM CUP COMES TO ARMAGH

First Time in Twelve Years

Let everyone, at least everyone with the slightest tendency to follow the development of the game of cricket, give three lusty and resounding cheers for the champions of the Graham Cup, the young Primatials, who retained their unbroken line of successes at Belfast on Friday, and in glorious victory captured the coveted trophy from the outstretched hands of Cliftonville in the final phase of four hard-fought and terrific battles. Practically every cricket fan in Armagh speaks with admiration of these boys, and little wonder when one truly considers the earnestness, gusto and good spirits displayed. Eleven bodies worked as human machines in unparalleled harmony throughout the season, and, without exaggeration, the boys lived just for the game in their off-time.

At Ormeau on Friday, Armagh lost the toss, and the Cliftonville captain decided to let Armagh bat first. The two "contemptibles", N. McKinley and L. Spearman, opened as usual, and on their way to the wicket were photographed by a Press cameraman (filling the boys with much pride). McKinley faced the bowling and fared well, but in the first ball of the second over Spearman was run out for duck due to an error of calling. Halpin went in to assist McKinley, but the subsequent stand was rather poor and produced only ten runs.



Armagh Boys, Graham Cup Winners 1946

BACK ROW—A. Kingston, D. Halpin, J. McCutcheon, M. Grainger, A. Edgar, E. Kingston, S. Compston, J. Davidson, C. Nesbitt.
 FRONT ROW—L. Lee, G. White, N. McKinley (Capt.), J. P. Best Esq., L. Spearman (Vice-Capt.), N. Church, I. Foster.

Upon Halpin's dismissal Church filled the breach and contributed his average steady game, while McKinley, as always prolific, piled on the runs. White followed Church, and then McKinley met his Waterloo when bowled by Allen after hitting an indispensable 36. Fate donned the jester's cap, and in the opinion of the Armachians poked ridicule as the next few wickets fell irresponsibly. The game was not lost, however, as Edgar and Lee—a brilliant fielder and enthusiastic—controlled fate and settled in to a confident innings. The inevitable break-up did not come until another thirty runs had been added, and then Edgar made way for Grainger, who continued the partnership for the addition of seven runs.

Moments were tense when Church opened the bowling overture for Armagh, to be followed by his bosom pal Foster. Cliftonville made little out of their introduction to the bowling, and the first few overs were maidens. Foster injured his arm, however, and was not in as lethal a mood as when warming up for the final offensive. He did take three wickets and these were for an average of 17 runs. We understand he took 20 wickets for 70 runs in the four matches, and Church also had a good average. Church was in top-notch form on Friday and caused havoc with his deliveries, taking 5 wickets for 25 runs. Herron was a sparkling bat on the opposition, but he met his "cricket demise" at 20 when Church threw up a snorter. When Cliftonville's last wicket fell at 58—Armagh winning by 30—there were exultant cries from the

spectators, and many rushed out on to the field bubbling with congratulations, especially for McKinley, Edgar and the bowlers.

It was an excited captain—N. J. McKinley—who received the Graham Cup from the hands of the Secretary of the Northern Ireland Cricket Club. We do not want to rub it in, but as he returned thanks he toyed with the base of the trophy and the Cup rolled off its stand and clattered down the steps. Do not take it too hard, N.J.McK., it was too good to miss.

Incidentally, the captain travelled from Portrush, where he was on vacation, to play in the game, and when he returned that night he was warmly praised on the success of the team and was practically feted. Mr. G. Leyburn, M.B.E., J.P., and a representative of the Cliftonville team spoke at the conclusion of the match, and the boys were afterwards entertained to a “slap-up feed” in the Lido, but McKinley was not there.

The Armagh boys were met at the railway station in Armagh by several hundreds of people and had a vociferous welcome. The Vice-captain, L. Spearman, was hoisted to the roof of the cab of a lorry after being chaired from the station, and with the remainder of the team sitting on behind the lorry drove slowly up through the streets



Armagh Boys, Graham Cup Winners 1963

BACK ROW—W. Neville, R. McMahon, L. Spearman, B. McWilliams, J. Campbell.
FRONT ROW—O. McCreesh, J. Ellis, W. Williamson, W. Ervine, J. McDonagh.
SITTING FRONT—J. Fry, A. Stinson.

preceded by Armagh C.L.B. Pipe Band. Cheering crowds followed to the Museum, where several speeches were made. Mr. Leyburn referred to the outstanding game played by the boys and of the support given by the Armagh spectators. He hoped the Cup was in Armagh to stay. Mr. J. P. Best, Chairman of the Cricket Club, Mr. A. Kingston and C. Nesbitt spoke in similar vein and the proceedings closed with the band playing the National Anthem.

It would be sheer carelessness, as one young cricketer said, to omit the name of Mr. A. Kingston from those to whom praise has been accorded. He was an irreplaceable element in assistance to the boys, and was to be seen night after night on the Mall giving of his best to boys so that the team might be a fine combination. Mr. A. Richardson also manifested great interest in the betterment of the team.

In 1963, under the management of Leslie Spearman the Cup was won again. Cregagh were the opponents in the Final which was played at Wallace Park in Lisburn. Armagh batted first, and good innings from Billy Williamson and John McDonagh helped Armagh to a score of 129.

This was thought to be a match winning score, but when the Cregagh openers started to hit the Armagh bowlers all over the field, it looked as if the Cup would not be coming to Armagh.

With the score in the eighties and no wicket down, Waring Ervine, who bowled slower than slow was brought on and immediately removed both openers at a cost of six runs. Waring didn't take any more wickets, but it was his breakthrough that allowed Billy Williamson to finish with six wickets to his credit, and Armagh victorious by 16 runs.

That, alas, was the last occasion that the Graham Cup came to the Primatial City. Here indeed is a worthy challenge to our young players of to-day—21 years is a long time!

A Club Anthem

We are grateful to Ivan Forster, poet, cartoonist and bowler of no mean merit for composing a Club anthem which does both author and Club credit.

THE LEATHER AND THE WILLOW

Sung to the air of—'The Holly and the Ivy'

*The Leather and the Willow
Is a game of renown,
When it's played upon the lovely Mall
Armagh surely bears the crown.*

Chorus—

*O the rising of the Sun,
And the sound of Bat and Ball.
The playing of sweet Cricket
Neath a steeple standing tall.*

*The Mall trees bear blossoms
As white as any seen,
And the memories of McAuley,
As he struck them from the green.*

Chorus—

*The Mall bears a history
Of great players now passed by,
If Saint Peter keeps his finger down
They'll be playing in the sky.*

Chorus—

*The Leather and the Willow
Both reign with renown,
Of all the grounds that are in the land
The Mall surely bears the crown.*

By IVAN FORSTER

Irish Internationals from Armagh

Down the years quite a number of Armagh players achieved international status. The following are brief pen-pictures of those whose records can be traced.

IVAN J. ANDERSON, born Armagh 13th August, 1944. Ivan is the holder of the highest Irish score in all International matches—198 Not Out against Canada in Toronto in 1973. He is also the only Irish cricketer to score two centuries in an International Match. This great feat was achieved against Scotland in 1976. Ivan has played for Armagh, Queen's University and, presently, with Waringstown.

R. LLOYD G. ARMSTRONG, born Donacloney 22nd May, 1914, died in Downpatrick, 9th April, 1959. Lloyd is regarded by many knowledgeable cricket followers as one of the all-time great all-rounders of Irish cricket. His Irish career spanned just five seasons from 1948 to 1953. He played for Donacloney, Waringstown, Armagh and Downpatrick.

JOHN H. BARNES, known to all as Jackie, he was born in Armagh on the 14th November, 1916 and was tragically killed on active service with the Royal Air Force at Kneesall, Notts on 22nd April, 1943. Jackie played for Ireland in 1937. Besides Armagh he also played for City of Derry.

ROBERT J. BARNES, a brother of Jackie, Bobby was born in Armagh on March 25th 1911. He belongs to that exclusive club of double internationalists in Rugby and Cricket. He played Rugby for Ireland against Wales in 1937. His cricket career in the Irish sweater stretched from 1930 to 1947. Bobby played for Dublin University and Waringstown as well as for Armagh.

S. WILFRED McDONAGH, Wilfred McDonagh was born in Armagh on August 8th 1889. He died in Bangor in 1983 at the great age of 94. Wilfie was one of the great stalwarts of Armagh cricket, and his reminiscences appear in another part of our book. He played for Ireland as wicket-keeper in 1930.

THOMAS FITZGERALD WARD, born Armagh 1905, Tom Ward played for Pembroke as well as Armagh. His Irish career stretched from 1936 to 1939.

Two other Armagh natives played for Ireland in games for which caps were not awarded. Charlie Raynor and William Irwin achieved international status in 1926. The latter played most of his cricket with Waringstown, but he also played for Armagh. Desmond J. Murphy was born in Armagh in 1900. He played all his cricket with Pembroke in Leinster and was capped for Ireland in 1920.

Several other noted exponents of the game cut their cricketing teeth at the Royal School. Ivan Anderson, and the Barnes brothers are alumni of the Royal. A. C. Bateman was at the School from 1913 to 1914. He played for Pembroke and Ireland. A. F. G. P. Hollick was at the Royal in 1957, played his cricket with Instonians and gained representative honours.

The legendary Dickie Lloyd was at the Royal in 1911 - 12. His feats on the rugby field are well known. He also was a cricket internationalist and his clubs were Dublin University and Phoenix. Wallace W. H. Sproule attended the School in 1923. Sproule was also a noted rugby player, who played cricket for Dungannon, Downpatrick, Dublin University and N.I.C.C.

Charles Stowell Marriott was at the Royal from 1909 to 1912. A native of Stockport, he was born in 1895. After his time at the Royal he went to Trinity College and from there to Cambridge where he became a cricket Blue. Marriott, known as 'Father' was a skilful right arm, leg-break and googly bowler. A school-master, he played most of his cricket for Kent in the month of August. He was chosen for the Gentlemen of England against Australia in 1919, and for the Gentlemen against the Players in 1921 and 1922. He played once for England—against the West Indies at the Oval in 1933. His performance in that game was little less than spectacular, as he bagged 11 wickets for 96 in England's innings victory. Marriott toured India with MCC in 1933/34, performing a hat-trick against Madras. His first class career stretched from 1919 to 1937, during which he took 724 wickets with an average of 20.04.

Recollections of Cricket in Armagh

by Wilfred McDonagh

Wilfred McDonagh was a dedicated member of Armagh for many years, both as player and official. He penned these recollections in 1979, a few years before his death. The footnotes are provided by his lifelong friend, Harry Reid.

"After the 1914-18 war—I am not sure which year—the Club was again in operation. R. J. McDonald, Manager of the factory of McCrum, Watson and Mercer, and Arthur Webb, Rate Collector, were responsible. I first played in 1922. At the Annual General Meeting in 1923 it was reported that the finances were not good; a dance was held to help and it was very successful. As a "thank you" a second one on a more elaborate scale was suggested and this was even more successful.²

The members of the first Committee included J. P. Best, R. F. Forbes, Dr. H. A. Gray, J. Morrow with R. McDonald as Hon. Secretary and Arthur Webb, Hon. Treasurer. Some of the playing members were the brothers, S. C. L. Walsh and C. R. Walsh, J. R. Fanning, M. Livingstone, J. Sloane, R. J. McDonald, W. H. McDonagh, C. Foster, G. A. Edwards, R. Leeman, Rev. F. Bennett and R. McKinley. I was the youngest member.

Although our playing strength was weak our results were moderately good and we filled all our fixtures in the Senior League and Cup, neither of which, needless to say, we won. N.I.C.C. had a very strong team skippered by William Pollock, father of Stuart who later played for them. We surprised ourselves by defeating them on the Mall in the first round of the Senior Cup and credit for this must go to C. R. Walsh for some excellent bowling. Another outstanding performance was a fine century by Rev. Frank Bennett against Banbridge. This player, on another occasion—after losing his wicket to the first ball—was on his way back to the pavilion and could be seen to be upbraiding himself when someone shouted "say it out your Reverence", and he replied "I daren't".

In time, with an increase in playing strength, we were able to field a 2nd XI. We had some boys from the Royal School, J. Exshaw and the brothers Kenny, also a few Army Officers, Lieutenant G. Ryland, Captain W. A. Roscow and others whose names I forget. With these additions and C. Raynor we were more successful. At a later date we were joined by Col. J. A. Meldon (Retd.) who came to live at Killynure House. In his earlier days he had played quite a lot in Dublin and the Army. During his time with us he acted as Captain. He took some members of our side to London as his guests in order that they might see the Varsity match which he thought might help our cricket, and this was a week of pure enjoyment; amongst other things we were delighted to meet the distinguished English batsman, J. B. Hobbs. The Rev. J. Alcorn who was retired took a keen interest in the Club and was responsible for the addition of new toilet facilities in the Pavilion.

There are two fixtures I must mention. (1)—North Down. In the early days this was an all day event in June and our ladies did the catering in the hall of the building occupied by the Special Constabulary. The menu was good: I remember seeing some of the accounts, one of which was for fresh cream costing 5/-, while the bill for the hire of a car to collect it at Tassagh Creamery was 15/-! The strawberries tasted better. Our return game at Comber was on the

same scale. (2)—Lisburn. In our games with Lisburn there was always a lot of barracking by both sets of spectators. To aid our finances when we went to Wallace Park the Lisburn Club sought and obtained permission to close the public park and a Brass Band was engaged. We opened the batting, and as the first ball was bowled our batsman, J. R. Fanning, walked away from the wicket refusing to play the ball. His excuse was that if the Band played a wrong note it would destroy his concentration. This incensed the spectators, but the Band did not perform while play was in progress.

With the passage of time our playing strength was increased by the addition of A. E. Dent, R. Scott, R. J. Barnes, T. F. Ward, W. McKinley and H. McAuley and later we were able to engage a Yorkshire man as Professional. We won the Senior League twice, once under the captaincy of R. McKinley and again under the guidance of W. McDonagh. We never managed to win the Senior Cup—North Down always seemed to be our bogey, although we did defeat them in the League. Our home games attracted many spectators. A nice sunny Saturday afternoon with good cricket on the Mall in its beautiful setting is indeed very enjoyable.

In two consecutive years in the period about which I have written there were Sports Meetings on the Mall which were supported by leading athletes and attracted a very large attendance of spectators. The difficulty of control of the crowd and preventing encroachment on the ground was overcome by the good work of the Special Constabulary and the Army. R. J. Barnes Senior, was the prime mover in these projects, which were very successful”.

Footnotes :

(1) It was at an ‘Emergency General Meeting’ of the Armagh Cricket Club held on the 22nd March, 1920 that it was decided to revive the Club. Mr. H. J. Harris was in the Chair. Mr. William McCrum was elected President, Mr. Arthur Webb, Treasurer and Mr. Robert McDonald, Secretary. A subscription list was opened at the meeting and the “handsome sum of £60 was realised in a few minutes”. (The quotation is from the Minutes of the meeting). In addition to those listed by Mr. McDonagh as members of the Committee then appointed were J. R. Fanning, J. McCaffrey, H. M. Chapman, F. Maxwell, S. Walsh, T. R. Tarleton and J. Darroch.

(2) At a Committee meeting in February 1923 gratitude to Mr. McDonagh is recorded for the energetic way in which “he worked the two dances in aid of Club funds” which were, apparently, instrumental in allowing the Treasurer to present a statement of account showing a credit balance. Mr. McDonagh’s name appears frequently over the subsequent years’ Minutes both as a prominent batsman and also as an energetic worker for the good of the Club. H.W.F. REID

Gleanings from the Minutes (1913-1930)

When the A.G.M. was held in April 1924 a Mr. H. J. Chippindale was in the Chair. Fourteen members were present. Apparently the local drama group had given a performance of 'Jedbury Junior' in aid of the Cricket Club funds, but they had neglected to pass on the receipts. Among other fund-raising efforts were benefit nights at the Cosy Corner Picture House and People's Picture Palace.

And in case anyone thinks that the engaging of Professionals is a recent innovation the minutes of 1913 record: "Proposed by Mr. L. M. Anderson and seconded by Mr. William McCrum that a 'pro' be engaged for the season and selection of same be left to committee. Mr. L. M. Anderson undertaking to get applicants".

From a meeting of 18th April, 1913 in the Beresford Billiard Room we learn that the Secretary, Arthur Webb, was instructed to write to the secretaries of those Clubs wishing fixtures "that at present Armagh C.C. could not guarantee any friendly fixtures as the 1st XI were participating in the Senior League and if it was found later on in the season that the Armagh C.C. could organise a 2nd Eleven that we would write offering dates."

A week later we read that a committee had been appointed for engaging, paying, and discharging the Professional. J. R. Riding was appointed Professional and groundsman at a wage of 33/- per week.

In 1914 there was some doubt about the Club continuing in the Senior League due to shortage of players. However, the A.G.M., meeting on March 24th, decided to carry on. At a meeting of 6th April, Sam Gibson was engaged as groundsman at a rate of 15/- per week.

On March 3rd 1915 it was decided that cricket be suspended for the season. On the 24th March the Ground was offered to the Royal School on the condition "that Mr. Hirsch will undertake to keep ground in order". In October 1916 the ground was handed back to the Mall Trustees, and that was the last meeting until March 1920 when the Club was reformed.

In May 1920 a Second Eleven was formed with Mr. B. Best acting as secretary. On June 22nd, with Mr. T. R. Tarleton in the Chair, it was agreed to count the forthcoming cup tie with N.I.C.C. as a league fixture also. A hospitality committee was formed which included four ladies, Mrs. Webb, Mrs. Fanning, Miss Walsh and Miss Maxwell.

In September of the same year plans were drawn up to improve the pitch. It was to be a case of all hands on deck. The pitch was marked in sections and members were to turn out and weed one section each!

A meeting in March 1922 was told that the Club was £42 in the red, owing to quite a few members not paying their subs! Despite that, it was decided to carry on in the Senior League and Senior Cup. William McCrum was congratulated on being appointed one of the vice-presidents of the N.C.U. In May a notice was posted in the Pavilion barring those who had not paid their subs from practicing on the Mall.

At the 1923 A.G.M. the Secretary, Mr. R. McDonald complained about the lack of interest displayed by some of the playing members. The Club had played 17 league matches and finished up perilously close to the bottom of the

table. In the Cup they had overcome Lisburn in the First Round but then were beaten by Waringstown, the eventual winners.

The next season does not appear to have seen much of an improvement. Only three out of eighteen league games had been won. The Minutes record: "Although a Professional had been engaged at considerable expense the playing members had not taken the keen interest necessary to win matches and to make the Club a success".

At a meeting on 19th May, 1924 it was agreed to accede to the request of some ladies and gentlemen from the city that tennis be permitted on the Mall. At the same meeting members were informed that the Attorney General, Rt. Hon. R. Best, was prepared to present a cricket bat to the player who scored the most runs in the season, provided he played in at least ten matches. A cricket ball would also be presented for the best bowling averages.

The 1925 A.G.M. was informed that more interest had been generated in Cricket, Armagh had finished 5th in the Senior League, Charlie Raynor had won the Attorney General's bat with an average of 29.22 and Bob McKinley had won the cricket ball for the second year in succession.

At about this time the union of Cricket and Rugby Clubs was proposed, but at a meeting on the 22nd June, 1925 it was thought better to let both clubs remain as they were. The A.G.M. of 1926 was informed that for the first time in the history of the Club a 2nd Eleven had entered the 2nd Division of the Senior League.

In October 1926, Miss Gray the Secretary of the Ladies Hockey Club applied for the use of the ground during the winter. This was granted at a rent of £4.00 with the proviso that the season ended on March 31st.

The Secretary's Report to the A.G.M. of 1927 was a pleasant one. The previous season had been one of the most successful in the history of the Club with the First Eleven finishing in the runners-up position in the Senior League. Bob McKinley had again won the Cricket ball, but the Club decided to make up the difference and give the man a bat instead.

An interesting tit-bit appears in the minutes of the meeting of August 27th 1927. It was decided to set aside the game against North Down as a benefit match for the Professional, Harry McAuley.

At the A.G.M. of 1928 the secretary reported that "from a weather point of view the season 1927 left much to be desired, rain on many occasions spoiling or stopping play, also the new arrangements made by the N.C.U. re league matches proved very unsatisfactory. Our First XI were successful in retaining their position as runners-up in the Senior League for the second season in succession and with a little luck should have won the League outright". That feat was not long delayed. Charley Raynor with 53.1 topped the batting averages, and Tom Ward with 38 wickets the bowling averages.

With great joy the Secretary, R. J. McDonald, reported to the A.G.M. in 1929 that the Senior League had been won for the first time, with a percentage of 88.33. The semi-final of the Senior Cup was also contested, but North Down proved a bogey once again.

At a Committee meeting held on September 17th 1929, the Secretary was instructed to write to Milford C.C. congratulating them on winning the Junior Cup and Qualifying League. In the Minute Book for 1913 - 1931 the following interesting letter was found.

4 Dunkirk,
Derby.
January, 24th 1930.

Mr. R. J. MacDonald,
Secretary, Armagh C.C.

Dear Sir,

Yours to hand for which I thank you. I have not been successful in finding a Professional to suit your requirements up to the present.

I have looked up quite a few but I could not recommend them as a coach, and I believe you stated you wanted a good coach as well as a pro. with playing abilities. But anyhow I am in communication with an ex-County player and I will let you know something definite before the end of the month.

Wishing the Club every success,

Yours faithfully,

J. Horsley.

It's interesting to note that then, as now, the Club put the coaching ability of a Professional above his playing ability. It would appear that the salary requested by coaches was too high, for no Professional/Coach was engaged for the 1929 season. At a Committee Meeting of 10th March, 1930, Harry McAuley was appointed Groundsman at the princely salary of £2 per week.

The 1930 Annual Meeting was held on February 18th in the Imperial Hotel. The Secretary reported that "owing to a spirit of slackness after being defeated in the semi-final of the Senior Cup our First XI lost a few matches towards the end of the season with the result that our position in the Senior League Table is fifth with a percentage of 48.33".

As the 1930's began the President was Mr. M. Sinton, R. J. MacDonald was still Secretary and Mr. Russell Scott was Treasurer and Captain. When they ended the League Title had been won twice more, and the Graham Cup had made its first visit to Armagh.



"Nice catch, but next time watch the boundary fence".



'Forsters's Cricket Capers.



A cricketing duck called Jack
Was heard many times to quack
Everytime there is rain,
It means batting again -
In wellington boots and a mack.



"Hope you're wearing a
box - from all reports
they have a fast bowler
who could ruin your
matrimonial prospects".



Lousy wicket-
keepers, always
doing something
behind your back.

Ivan Forster



I propose, that those members
not stumping up their annual
subscriptions should be
'run out'.

The Cups that Got Away

It is one of the mysteries that baffles many followers of Armagh cricket that in spite of all the great sides Armagh has had down the years victory in the Senior Challenge Cup always eluded them.

Here are the stories of two near misses, both told by players who took part in the respective campaigns. First the Rev. Stuart Redpath recalls the near miss of 1947, when Sion Mills, then enjoying a sojourn in the N.C.U. competitions, thwarted Armagh's ambitions.

ARMAGH v. SION MILLS

This was a match which lasted four days and was favoured with beautiful sunny weather—indeed it proved to be so warm and the ground at Ormeau so hard, that some members of both teams decided to discard footwear while they were fielding.

To reach the final, Armagh disposed of Donacloney in the First Round, scoring 323 for 9 wickets. Donacloney scored 158.

In the Second Round they beat Cregagh by 90 runs.

This took Armagh to the semi-final which proved to be a very close game against N.I.C.C.—a margin of 17 runs separating the two teams. The game was a personal triumph for Lloyd Armstrong who scored 126 runs in Armagh's total of 199 and took 4 wickets.

In the Final at Ormeau, Armagh batted first and scored at a very fast rate—the first five wickets putting on 217 runs, thanks to Rev. R. G. Craig who scored 82, T. Wherry 56, and S. Scott 42, but alas the tail did not wag as the last five wickets fell for only 17 runs.

In reply to Armagh's total of 238 Sion Mills scored 319 runs which was chiefly due to splendid batting by A. McFarlane, who scored 117, and J. Flood 87. Thus Armagh were 81 runs behind on the First Innings—due to lapses in the fielding, particularly with dropped catches at critical moments.

In their Second Innings Armagh again got off to a good start, the first three batsmen scoring 84 runs between them. However, the remaining batsmen could only bring the score to 206, leaving Sion Mills 125 to get in their second innings.

When the opening batsmen of Sion Mills went to the wicket there was only half-an-hour's play before stumps were drawn. During that time 2 wickets had fallen for 14 runs, and an air of tension and excitement had crept into the game. At that stage Armagh had an excellent chance of victory. As the players were retiring to the Pavilion, an ardent supporter of Armagh—viz. Dudley Ensor—was heard to say to one of the Armagh team: "We'll see about getting a band to welcome our team home to-morrow".

On the following day when play resumed Sion Mills began losing wickets. Eight wickets went down for 112 runs. The Cup now seemed to be on its way to Armagh—fielding became very sharp and the batting very dour. Single runs were the order of the day as Sion Mills drew level with the Armagh total. Then Boothe hit what seemed to be a boundary, but Wherry retrieved the ball just short of the boundary line and flung it in. McFarlane, who was at the wicket with Boothe, was out of his crease and the wicket was broken. Immediately he was given "out". Also, to add to the excitement, the Umpire declared "a short run",

which left the scores level. The winning hit was scored off the third ball of the next over. It certainly proved to be a most thrilling finish.

It is interesting to note that Lloyd Armstrong, who batted and bowled so successfully in every round of the Cup, left after the match to play for the Gentlemen of Ireland against the M.C.C. at Lords.

Also it was rather extraordinary that three Clergymen were members of the Armagh team—one of whom, Rev. R. G. Craig, was later to become Moderator of the General Assembly. The other two were Rev. S. Finlay and Rev. S. R. Redpath.

The Armagh team was as follows: T. W. Grainger (Capt.), L. Armstrong, R. G. Craig, S. C. Scott, S. Finlay, T. Wherry, H. Eadie, W. McKinley, J. A. Dawson, W. Irwin and S. R. Redpath.

Leslie Spearman remembers vividly the 1952 series when Woodvale defeated Armagh in the Final, which lasted for almost a week.

Lurgan were the first round opponents, and, as Leslie says "did not offer much resistance" as Armagh won by 71 runs. In Armagh's total of 173, Derrick Halpin and Billy McKinley were top scorers with 34 and 56 not out respectively. The great Lloyd Armstrong took 5 for 33, Harold Baxter 2 for 10 and Harry Eadie 3 for 28 as Lurgan were bundled out for 102.

Leslie continues: "We were not expected to be able to cope with North in the following round, but good bowling backed up by terrific umpiring helped us to dismiss what seemed to be a formidable batting side for 95 runs". Davy Carson was Armagh's top scorer with a sparkling 50 in Armagh's 121 total. Armstrong with 5 for 41, and Ivan Forster 2 for 19 were the chief agents of North's destruction.

Downpatrick were Armagh's opponents in the semi-final and were defeated by the comprehensive margin of 123 runs. A superb century by Spearman (113) was the cornerstone on which Armagh's innings was built. Johnnie Elliott, Derrick Halpin and Billy McKinley weighed in with 39, 27 and 24 respectively. Ivan Forster with a magical display of bowling which yielded 6 for 57 was the rock on which Downpatrick's ambitions perished. Armstrong as was his wont was also among the wickets—3 for 48. The century maker Spearman had this to say about that win: "We had very little trouble with Downpatrick. The match was played the day after we came back from Cork and was continued the following Wednesday". The city by the Lee must have had a beneficial effect on morale!

A disastrous first innings which saw Armagh dismissed for only 65 runs was the decisive factor in the final against Woodvale. Only Lloyd Armstrong and Davy Carson made any shape with the bat. Woodvale made 221 in their first innings. Armstrong took 7 for 76 and Forster 3 for 84.

A spirited fight-back by Armagh in their second innings saw them make 240. Spearman hit an immaculate 93, Armstrong 34, Carson 23, Jack McClelland 27 and McKinley was 30 not out. That gave Armagh a lead of just 84 runs. How they cherished it however! Only Woodvale's Berryman with 50 got into double figures and seven of their wickets had fallen before the winning runs were struck. Armstrong with 4 for 25 and Forster 3 for 47 made sure that Woodvale would sweat a little before they could claim the Cup. Summing up the game Spearman says: "The final was something of a marathon, lasting on and off for almost a week. We put up a good fight after being dismissed for 65 in the first innings, and indeed almost pulled it off in the end". Indeed they did!

Decline and Resurgance

That 1952 Cup Final defeat seemed to knock some of the heart out of Armagh. Even while they were progressing to the Final a rearguard action against relegation was being fought. Leslie Spearman calls 1952 "a season of mists and mellow fruitfulness", and with justification.

The campaign began with splendid league victories over North, Lisburn and Lurgan. Against Lurgan, when Armagh won by five wickets, Lloyd Armstrong took 5 for 25, and Ivan Forster 4 for 26. North were skittled out for 64, and once again the great Armstrong was to the fore taking 4 for 20. Derrick Halpin did even better with 4 for 12. Against Lisburn on the Mall, a three wicket margin sufficed to see Armagh to victory. Need we say it? Armstrong 7 for 42 was aided by McKinley's 3 for 18 as Lisburn were tumbled out for 113. Armagh had declared at 180 for 7, with Spearman 44, Armstrong 47 and Davy Carson 30 the run-getters-in-chief.

That series of victories turned sour as defeat followed defeat, and Armagh soon joined Holywood and C.P.A. at the foot of the table. Leslie Spearman takes up the story:



Senior Qualifying League Winners 1961

BACK ROW—A. H. Quinn, J. Spearman, Rev. W. G. H. Williams, W. J. Nixon, R. M. Dawson

MIDDLE ROW—J. A. Edgar, G. A. Elliott, R. G. Neville, A. Dodds, D. J. Kelly, H. McNally,

FRONT ROW—J. Elliott, L. G. Spearman, N. D. Graham (Capt.), H. McDonough (President), H. Ewart, J. H.

Baxter, J. Graham.

SITTING FRONT—I. J. Anderson, T. Orr. INSET—N. Flannigan.



3rd XI, Winners 2nd Division League (Section H) 1962

BACK ROW—C. Ervine, J. Lester, J. Kingston, W. McDonough (President), R. Cummings, C. Parr, R. Auld.
 FRONT ROW—W. Nixon, W. Somerville, J. Carson (Capt.), N. Nelson, R. Moore.
 FRONT SITTING—D. Mercer, D. Somerville.

“It seemed as if we were bound to be relegated as two teams were to go into the Qualifying League. Owing to bad light, it became very difficult to finish matches. Cregagh appealed against the light when we were beating them. However, we beat Lurgan, the match starting at 1.30 p.m. and by appealing against the light at Downpatrick on 29th September we remained in the Senior League”.

It was a narrow escape, however, and a portent of eventual relegation.

1954 saw Armagh in the Qualifying League. It was a mixed bag of a season with many matches not being played due to rain. Spearman topped the batting averages with 24.5 from eight innings, and Ivan Forster returned the best bowling figures—29 wickets at a cost of 6.72 runs a wicket. In 1955 Armagh made a return to the Senior League finishing in sixth position in a twelve team league. John Dicks was top of the batting averages with 59.2 from eight innings. Leslie Spearman, showing his versatility, had the best bowling figures 37 wickets at 15 runs each. A note in the Report to the 1955 A.G.M. is worth repeating:

“The standard of cricket however was surpassed by the teas which were once again provided by Mrs. Deans and her willing band of helpers. We are indeed very lucky to have such a keen and obliging worker in our midst and she is worthy of all the support we can give her”.

A deserved tribute indeed to a great lady of the Cricket Club. We have been fortunate in having such willing helpers down the years. This writer would also like to include Mrs. Joe Magwood in that tribute, and the equally dedicated ladies who have followed her.

Spearman was back atop the batting averages in 1956 with 23.92 from 15 innings and Harold Baxter returned the best bowling figures, 34 wickets at a cost of 15.85 runs. The judgment of the writer of the 1956 Report was:

"The team as a whole has the ability to do better, but is often only too willing to give up hope rather than fight it out to the end".

That was a bit harsh, perhaps. But events in the next season seemed to justify the censure. The 1957 Report painted a gloomy picture. Relegation was inevitable and could only be staved off "by a miracle in the form of an alteration in the Rules of the Northern Cricket Union". No miracle occurred and it was the Senior Qualifying League for Armagh in 1958. After a disastrous start, they recovered dramatically and under the unrelenting captaincy of Johnnie Elliott they raced to second place in the final League Table. Once more Spearman topped the batting averages with a very commendable 51; 37 in 11 innings. Harold Baxter with 29 wickets for 9.37 again returned the best bowling figures.

The 1959 season began with a fair degree of confidence that promotion would be obtained. It was not to be, and with five matches rained off a third place was a meritorious performance. The Report for 1959 records that the 2nd XI, composed mainly of young players, had a very successful season, and at one time were challenging for league honours. The writer of the Report notes: "Perhaps the most promising members of this team is Ivan Anderson who excelled with both bat and ball". How well that promise was fulfilled!



2nd XI, Minor Cup Winners 1972

BACK ROW—J. Scott, N. Gordon, J. Shaw, J. Graham, A. Courtney, D. Lyttle, M. McConville.
FRONT ROW—D. Cardwell, P. Corr (Capt.), W. Elliott (President), W. Parr, J. Elliott.



2nd XI, Winners Intermediate League 2nd Division Section IV 1978

BACK ROW—H. Deane, R. Neville, J. Graham, J. Waugh, A. Courtney, B. Edgar.
 FRONT ROW—R. Hill, J. Campbell, R. Elliott (Capt.), J. Elliott (President), G. Parr, H. Edwards, N. Gordon.
 INSET—J. Rhodie.

In 1961, for the first time in twenty-two years the Club was successful in winning an N.C.U. trophy—the Senior Qualifying League Cup. Senior status was thus regained. Circumstances turned against Armagh in 1962 when a determined effort to win Section Two was thwarted by events not within their control.

During the remainder of the 1960's the only rays of hope in a continuing struggle were the Graham Cup victory in 1963, and the success of the Third Eleven, that won their League Section in 1962. The 1970's began on a hopeful note when the Minor Cup came to Armagh in 1972. Strange as it may seem, that was the first time that an adult knock-out competition was won.

Deep depression hit the Club soon after that success when we were relegated to Section Four. A couple of years in the basement led to a new determination and under the captaincy of Reggie Stinson we escaped to Section Three in 1978. For three years in a row we finished runners-up in that Section. Then, in 1982 promotion was won again, and Section Two status attained. Meantime the McCready Cup, played for in the Mid-Ulster Cricket Group competition was won twice in a row.

Under the captaincy of Ronnie Elliott the Seconds won League Cups in 1979 and 1981. The Third Eleven with Jim Wright as Captain won their League in 1982, and reached the Final of the Minor Cup in 1983. So success has not completely eluded the lower divisions.



Winners Division IV and McCready Cup 1979

BACK ROW—A. Weir, S. S. Duffy, B. Weir, W. Hill, N. Humphries, T. Barnes, W. Edgar, M. McConville, P. Homan, A. Morrow, H. Ewart.

FRONT ROW—G. Breakey, A. Stinson, K. McAuley, H. Baxter (President), R. Stinson (Capt.), K. Gordon, G. Elliott.

During the period 1969 to 1973 Armagh had as President a man who did trojan work for the Club. Billy Elliott, a victim of the terrorism, that has stalked our country for too long, did not know the meaning of the word defeat. Assisted by a tiny band of helpers, he succeeded in keeping the Club afloat in difficult times when men of lesser dedication might have given up. Billy should be remembered as we celebrate our 125th Birthday. We should also remember John Martin who served as Club Secretary, and Gilbert Johnston our Groundsman, who were also victims of pointless violence.

The hard work of the few is at last beginning to bear fruit, and since our friends in the Rugby Club left for the Palance Grounds, the fact of having our own premises has resulted in the Club prospering as never before. The number playing cricket has grown apace, and we are now in the happy position of being able to field four adult teams and six boys teams from Under-19 to Under-12.

In 1982 we took the crucial decision of employing a Professional. The man we first had in our side, Uday Joshi, captivated the crowds with the supreme artistry of his bowling. Ashok Malhotra was an excellent batsman who made run-making look easy. I would venture to say, however, that the man we have in our ranks now, Ashok Mankad, combines the talents of his predecessors with the gift of being able to impart his vast knowledge of the game to others.

Some decry the use of Professionals in Ulster cricket. None can deny, however, that they have brought excitement to the game, and when they combine their playing skill with coaching ability, then it is a worthwhile investment.

So, as we look back on 125 years we can justifiably be proud of our Club. Cricket has always held a special place in the affections of the inhabitants of the Primatial City. The great exponents of the game who have graced the Mall, from those early giants of 1859, through the heroes of the 1930's the gladiators of more recent times, right down to the players of to-day—all in their turn have received the acclaim of the Wall, and criticism too! For Armagh the first 125 years have been fun.

Officers 1984



President : Mr. J. VAUGHAN

Patrons :

Mr. J. ELLIOTT Dr. T. A. SPENCE

Executive Committee :

W. Edgar J. McCord G. Elliott J. Graham R. Elliott
P. Homan K. Gordon H. Ewart H. Baxter

Hon. Officers and Club Captains

Hon. Secretary : S. S. Duffy

Hon. Treasurer : A. Morrow

Capt. 1st XI—R. Stinson

Capt. 2nd XI—J. Briggs

Capt. 3rd XI—J. Wright

Capt. 4th XI—W. Williamson

Club Professional/Coach :

Ashok Mankad (India).

Acknowledgements

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To all those who have sponsored pages in the brochure, our thanks.

Finally, to all those who have contributed in any way to make today a reality, may I express the gratitude of the Club.

S. S. DUFFY, Editor.

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