

# Chapter 1: The roots of Leeds AC

Leeds City Athletic Club was formed by amalgamation at the end of September, 1967, from three constituent Clubs. The oldest constituent Club was LEEDS St. MARK'S HARRIERS - and old it was, being the second Harriers' Club founded in Yorkshire, in 1880. As the name suggests, it typified one of the places where urban running started in Victorian times - it was a church-based club, and as late as the 1960s was still operating from church halls. St. Mark's had always been very traditional in its outlook - suggestions that the Leeds & District Cross-Country League should run more than one race a year were vigorously opposed in the 1930s. It did, however, produce two of the City of Leeds' outstanding distance runners of the 20th Century - Frank Aaron (active 1937-52), the only man in the 20th Century to win three consecutive English Cross-Country Championships (1949-51), and Mike Baxter (active 1962-82), for ten years an England International and a finalist in the European and Commonwealth 5000-metre Championships. It also founded the Aaron Trophy races, in memory of Frank's younger brother Arthur, Leeds' only World War II V.C. By tradition it had a strong connection with Roundhay School, and many of its members' including those mentioned above, were Old Roundhagians. By the 1960s it was still a reasonably active Club; a younger generation of runners was coming along, but it was, with few exceptions, still very 'harrier' in its ways.

The second-oldest constituent was LEEDS ATHLETIC CLUB, the only one of the trio which had any pretensions to do more than cross-country. It had been founded as Harehills Harriers in the 1880s (this leads to some confusion, as will be seen.) In 1890 the new Headingley Grounds were opened, mainly for Yorkshire County Cricket Club; as well as the Leeds St. John's Rugby Club (now the Rhinos), Harehills Harriers were invited to make Headingley their home. Leeds did not have a 'proper' public athletic track until the cinder track at Templenewsam was opened in 1950; such athletics meetings as there were took place on the cricket ground, and understandably there weren't many field events! The most notable name of the later years of Leeds A.C. was probably one of the best track runners the city has ever produced - Adrian Metcalfe, Olympic silver medallist in the 4x400m Relay in 1964. His achievement, however, came in the same year in which the Club was expelled, at very short notice, from Headingley, an event from which it really never recovered.

The third club was HAREHILLS LIBERAL CLUB HARRIERS - illustrating another focus for runners in the early days, pubs and clubs. (So what's new???) This was very similar in activities and attitudes to Leeds St. Marks - a close-knit local club with traditional ideas - but it had been singularly more successful than the others at high level. Between 1945 and 1963 it had twice won team medals in the English Senior Cross-Country Championship - "The National" - and had also won team medals at Youths' level. It had had among its members a National Junior Cross-Country champion in Desmond Birch and a Junior international in Stewart Dobson, one of the outstanding track internationals of the immediate post-war period in the miler Len Eyre, and International marathon runner Eric Smith. It also produced one of the founders, and for many years the only Yorkshire winner, of the Three Peaks race - Jack Bloor, who won the second race in 1954 and was still competing right up to his death thirty years later. (Literally - he dropped dead after running a leg of the Leeds University Relay!)

The last two were part of what at the time was somewhat unusual for a small Northern Club - a strong team of marathon runners. Led by Eric, and backed up by Ken Pawson, Arthur Cockcroft and Allan Lawton, the latter being good enough himself to have finished second in the A.A.A. Championship in 1953 they gained a considerable reputation in long events. Harehills had also been more active than St. Mark's in track competition after the War, though not in great strength by modern standards. In the 1960s Harehills was probably the most lively of the three in competitive terms.

When the writer first knew them (he joined Leeds A.C. in 1957) the three clubs were very typical of their time and their place - small, very local and very limited. One of the reasons that Northern athletics was by and large in a much less developed state were the attitudes of clubs at the time. The Northern tradition was almost entirely 'harrier' because it had developed as a working-class sport at a time when the working classes didn't have a lot going for them. Wages were low, working hours long, the mass of jobs manual and social facilities limited when the original harrier clubs formed; and the three that formed Leeds City were at one time only three out of anything up to a dozen in the City. The only survivor of those days is Bramley and District Harriers, and even that metamorphosed in the 1970s into Pudsey & Bramley Athletic Club, though it maintains more of the 'harrier tradition' than most clubs. Training at such clubs involved running round the streets of the area, seldom included any organised form of speedwork ('interval training' was a post-war invention) and weekend competition took the form of 'inter-runs' and mob matches with other clubs, often involving a 'paper chase.'

Track competition never developed strongly in Yorkshire, for the good reason that before the War there were precious few tracks. The use of Headingley has been mentioned; clearly there wasn't much prospect of developing throwers within reach of the Test Match wicket! Apart from the County Championships most competition took place on grass (and even they did sometimes); the main form of competition was the handicap meeting, usually promoted by bodies outside athletics, such as miners' welfare clubs or company sports clubs, than by athletic clubs; and they were either promoted to raise money or as a day's entertainment for the local community. They were usually described as 'sports meetings,' often held on a cricket field and almost invariably on grass, and included cycling events and races for younger children. The main interest was to 'work your handicap' by not finishing too well up until you were in with a chance. The star attraction, however, was often a two-mile team race. These lasted until the 1960s; the writer recalls taking part in a team race on Bradford Park Avenue cricket ground with 64 starters, and also outsprinting Roger Norton for third prize - a combined cigarette case and lighter! - in a mile handicap on Roundhay Arena. Spare money for travel was limited, and so the clubs had grown up with extremely parochial attitudes. The writer's father, for instance, was a member for a few years of Holbeck Prospect Harriers; he ran a couple of Yorkshire Cross-country championships, but never a Northern or National, and seldom even raced as far afield as Halifax. As far as the writer knows he never ran a track race.

The sport had developed differently in the South and the West Midlands. In London and Birmingham it was often an activity for the middle classes, and particularly for ex-public schoolboys and university students - who were vary much rarer then. Some clubs, such as Birchfield or Blackheath, had wealthy members who could afford to

back the clubs; Birchfield at one time owned its own stadium at Perry Barr. Track and Field played a bigger part. The only part of the North where such conditions in part developed was around Manchester, and even there it was limited. The writer recalls meeting with the 'culture clash' of athletics when he went up to Oxford; it was the first time he actually got to know any field-event athletes, and the shock of participating in a track meeting in November - to say nothing of finding himself lining up against Olympic champion Herb Elliott - was quite something.

By the time of the amalgamation, however, a change was coming about. All sorts of factors were involved, but above all others the Second World War and the 1944 Education Act were vital. People studying the history of the War tend to look at the military side, and forget its biggest social effect; military service stirred up the 'social classes' in Britain more than anything had previously done.

Furthermore it encouraged the feeling that if everybody had got stuck in during the War they should all get something out of the peace; and the string of laws passed in the five years immediately following the War by the Attlee government did a lot towards that. From 1945 onward the 'working class' were not going to be anything like as content with the sort of lifestyle they'd previously been stuck with; and a start was made towards the situation in which the overwhelming proportion of the people headed towards the home-owning, salary-earning, pension-paying middle class.

Of all the laws the Education Act had the biggest effect. It was in the writer's opinion this law which did more to change the face of Britain than any other, and in the process it pulled athletics with it. It threw open every area of education to anyone with the ability and will to make use of it; it opened 'white-collar' and professional jobs to a class of people to whom they had been largely out of reach before 1939; and in general terms it broke down many of the barriers which had made society 'parochial.' About a quarter of the population of the working-class areas of Leeds, for instance, were exposed to the 'Grammar School' type of education, which with all its faults - and it had plenty! - permitted huge numbers of people to enjoy social and economic advancement. In an extreme case - the writer's own - it allowed a kid from a house in a street off Burley Road (not a slum by any means, but certainly with an outside toilet) to graduate from Oxford University - and that, before the War, would have been an impossibility.

Among the social aspects it introduced a lot of people to sports they would never have considered participating in - like athletics; one of the motivations for Leeds City Council to build the Temple Newsam track was that more schools were running something like 'proper' athletics on their fields. The writer remembers as a primary school child going to Headingley cricket ground to watch an area 'sports day' which included such things as sack races and potato races; a few years later he was running half-miles in inter-school matches which had clearly picked up influence from the other great eye-opener of the period - television.

As well as seeing more of the world 'on the box,' the immediate post-war generation was more likely than its parents to have spent some time away from home. The 'young marrieds' of the 'Fifties would have seen war

service, often abroad, or been in organisations such as the Women's Land Army. The Grammar Scholars were increasingly likely to go away to University; and for the rest of the male population there was another activity that moved them around - National Service. The writer is not getting into the argument about the character-building attributes of two years' military service (he reckons it's hogwash!), but for some young athletes - if they fell into the right posting - it could have a lot of advantages. Certainly one of the older people connected with Leeds City - veteran Barrie Knowles - had a whole new athletics career opened up to him while serving as an officers's batman in Germany; he improved so much he almost 'signed on!'

Development of athletics had been held back in Leeds, as in many other places, by lack of facilities. At the time of amalgamation Harehills still trained in the winter from the Liberal Club on Seaforth Avenue, St. Marks had led a peripatetic existence around various churches (most recently St. Stephen's at Kirkstall) and Leeds A.C. was virtually moribund, apart from a group of sprinters coalescing around active sprinter and developing coach Ray Barrow. In summer everybody went to Temple Newsam Arena, at least after the pavilion was opened in the early 1960s. (Before that, the wooden hut which was used for changing accommodation was liable to disappear on polling days!)

At least Leeds had a track; the only other 'real' cinder tracks in Yorkshire the writer remembers from his early days were Horsfall Playing Fields at Bradford, the track round Castleford Cricket Club's ground (square, and on a slope), and Marley Stadium at Keighley. There was also Leeds University's at Weetwood; but the groundsman was likely to chase off any plebeian who set foot on the hallowed ground reserved for students!

By the time of the writer's university days, however, change was coming. The clubs were less insular in many ways; the younger members had taken to training together from each others' homes, as well as meeting up at Temple Newsam, and this trend intensified in the period the writer was working and studying elsewhere. When he came back to Leeds he began to notice differences; joint training nights had been arranged, and the question of one good club to put Leeds on the map was openly discussed. Perhaps the strongest influences of that time were the virtual collapse of Leeds A.C. after its expulsion from Headingley, and the close friendship between St. Marks' promising youngster Mike Baxter and Harehills' even more promising Clive Kingswood (who dropped out of the sport to make his name as a prominent Fraud Squad officer.) The latter broke down some psychological barriers; the former got Ray Barrow behind the idea.

The change was also part of a wider move. There were quite a lot of amalgamations among athletic clubs at the time; the older pattern of small neighbourhood clubs in urban centres, and not only in the North, were beginning to be seen by the younger generation as inadequate to further the development of the sport, or create worthwhile team competition. One voice raised in favour of such moves at the time was a voice to be heard on many aspects of athletics - that of Wilf Paish. A coach whose technical knowledge, particularly of field events, has been proved outstanding over many years, Wilf was in the 1960s just beginning his long association with athletics in Leeds, and with Carnegie College in particular; and in 1967 - in actual fact shortly after the amalgamation took

place - he gave his views on the matter. Considering the limitations of Track and Field as then practised, he wanted to see more graded meetings aimed at raising performance, more competition between inter-city teams, and the amalgamation of city clubs. He cited Sheffield as an ideal example (in fact, he picked the city where strong club rivalry has led to the greatest resistance to amalgamation ever since.) He called for greater imagination in competition and better use of facilities; and noted that hammer-thrower Hugh Richardson had never competed for Leeds A.C., in spite of being a long-term member, because the Club took part in few team competitions. Forty years on some people are putting forward the same ideas - and meeting the same resistance.

The writer is at a disadvantage about when the real impetus towards amalgamation began to grow, between 1965 and 1967; at the time he was resident in Darlington, and out of the action. A number of meetings were held during 1967 between delegates of the Clubs to discuss the matter; Ray recalls one taking place in the rather spartan surroundings of the Templenewsam track pavilion. The principal influences behind the move appear to have been Ray, Leeds St' Marks' fell-runner Dave Hodgson, and Harehills' youth team coach Arthur Cockcroft. In a communication with the writer Dave - still active in his 'seventies with fell-running club Horsforth Fellandale - mentions the above, and also Leeds A.C.'s former secretary George Stead, as leading spirits in the move; the writer recalls George saying years later that he wasn't really keen himself, but he felt that that was what the active athletes wanted, so it was right that they should have it. More will be said about many of these people later, as they remained active well into the new Club's formative years.

When towards the middle of 1967 things got sufficiently advanced to drawing up a new constitution, however, another name to be enlarged upon was called upon - Harehills' Jim Exley, whose expertise in all things connected with athletic laws, based on his long service as a Northern Counties' official, was ideal for the job. There was still plenty of 'traditional' resistance, however; indeed as late as four months before the amalgamation actually took place Leeds St. Mark's had passed a resolution that they would approve of the idea - "under our name!" When it did, in the summer of 1967, it was very swift. Only a few diehards voted against at all three General Meetings called by the clubs to approve the forming of the new Club; and to the writer's recollection only one active member, St. Marks' long-serving county runner Adrian Jackson, resigned in protest. The younger generation clearly did not want any of the three old names; Leeds City Athletic Club was decided upon. The Club was formally to come into existence at midnight on September 30th, 1967.

There was, in fact, a fourth constituent Club, but this was not absorbed until the early seventies. If in 1967 Leeds A.C. was moribund, Leeds Women's A.C. was dead. It existed, but had virtually no active members, and women's athletics in Leeds did not exist in all essentials. It was, as will be told later, the catalyst of outstanding young 800-metre runner (as she then was) Joslyn Hoyte being forced to join Dorothy Hyman Track Club at Barnsley through lack of local opportunities that persuaded the surviving officials to propose an amalgamation. Leeds Women's last outstanding member, in the late 1950's, was 400-metre international Lesley McKinnon - granddaughter of first Labour prime minister Ramsay McDonald. How the fusion finally came about is told later.

## Chapter 2: Steady beginning in changing times

The three 'old' clubs ceased to exist at Midnight on September 30th, 1967; some of the last hours were spent floating the memories away on a tide of ale at the Myrtle Tavern at Meanwood, a night immortalised for the present-day survivors (there aren't many) by the activities of javelin-thrower Dave Longley. (But that's another story.) The following day the Club, according to the Yorkshire Post; "made an encouraging start" with a team victory in its first road race, at Holmfirth; Ron Pannell, Mike Baxter and Richard Musgrave put the Club on the map, while Mark Willingham won the associated Youths' race. They weren't, however, wearing the new Club vest; the first prize was won in two different colours. They still didn't feature at Halifax the following week, when the Club finished second in a composite relay, or a fortnight later, when four teams turned out in the Hull to Hornsea relay, and the A team finished fourth - behind a Middlesbrough & Cleveland team with former Leeds A.C. member John Lunn on second leg. John, at the time teaching in Darlington, was to return to the city in the following April and reconnect his long association with athletics in Leeds; he had been Yorkshire Under-18 champion in 1959 and 1960, gained a Blue at Oxford and represented the Universities' Athletic Union (at, of all things, indoor running!) while at Manchester University.

The vest followed the fashion of the day of looking like an American college strip - plain royal blue, with gold trim and the Club's name printed on the front in gold. To be frank, it wasn't a good choice; for one thing, it looked too much like the Dorothy Hyman Club vest, which was later to produce a bizarre incident. In addition, yellow printed on blue is a poor combination, and even though Ray Barrow personally printed the first batch (as told the writer in an interview) the name quickly washed off. The writer's own vest was about the last to carry the name, as his mother had replicated the print in gold ribbon. However, it had the virtue of not looking anything like the old ones (Leeds A.C. had adopted a similar vest with reversed colours a few years earlier) and when they did arrive it boosted morale quite a bit.

The first Annual General Meeting of the Club took place on October 2nd; its main function was to adopt formally the Club constitution and elect a Committee. (Just one - the complexities of Club administration had yet to produce a structure.) For the first year the Presidency was held by Walter Pearson of Leeds A.C., a veteran administrator who also wrote for the sports' edition of the Evening Post under the name of Short Spike. His other main function was as local area handicapper, when handicap races made up much of the track programme; the standing joke was that anyone who got a good mark in a particular meeting had been "digging Walter's garden." Walter was, however, in the twilight of his administrative career; in 1968 he retired from the post of Honorary Secretary to the Yorkshire A.A.A. after a tenure dating back to before the Second World War. The key posts of Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer were taken by two people still at the time of writing around, but not now actively connected with the Club - Jack Lawton, of Harehills, took the former post, while Dave Hodgson, of St. Mark's, took the latter. Both held them for some years; Dave in particular put the Club on a sound footing financially from the word go. Both were also still competitive; Jack was to run, principally in road races, right into his seventies, while Dave continued his fell-running career into the next millennium. His record in this somewhat

esoteric branch of the sport was formidable, particularly in what's reckoned to be the pinnacle of long-distance fell-running, the Three Peaks' Race. He never won it, but he was runner-up no less than four times, and subsequently chaired the Association which runs the race for fifteen years; besides that he was the chairman of the England mountain-running selection committee for some time. He certainly looked the part; he ran with an angular action and high knee-lift that could best be described as 'craggy.'

The Committee was the sort of balance to be expected at the time - three sprinters, all ex-Leeds A.C. (Ray Barrow, John Cousins and Mick Gledhill), two young distance-runners (Mike Wells, St Mark's and Richard Musgrave, Harehills) and four veteran distance-runners (Dennis Wood, St. Mark's, and Arthur Cockcroft, Bernard Gomersall and Allan Lawton, all Harehills.) The Club had cash assets of £483, two-thirds of which came from Harehills, by far the most active partner in the last separate years.

Walter only held the presidency for a year, to get things going; he was succeeded by a figure not likely to be forgotten by that generation of athletes - Jim Exley. Jim was very much one of the old school; and while he would most certainly not have appreciated the language, the force of the description of him by an official of another Leeds club would probably have appealed to him - "You know just where you are with Jim; he's a b\*\*\*\*\*d, but he's a straight b\*\*\*\*\*d." A pillar of rectitude, Jim served as first-claims secretary for the Northern Counties for many years, and few ever got away with any sort of fiddling; as a track referee he went precisely by the rule-book, which like the Bible he knew from cover to cover, and treated with similar reverence. Jim could not be said to be a comfortable man, but in a sport where it is not unknown for people to take a yard if offered an inch, his firm and unflinching honesty was a pearl of great price; and his service to the Club was very considerable, though his heart probably remained with Harehills.

Jim's tenure of this office was also short - only a year - mainly due to his commitments with the Northern Counties' A.A. His replacement at the 1969 A.G.M., who held the office for a couple of years, was former Leeds A.C. secretary George Stead, one of the Club's more distinguished officers. George, whose athletic career went back to being a counter in the winning team of the very first Leeds & District Cross-Country League season in 1935, was, to the writer's mind, the epitome of a type of person who has vanished from the face of British society - the 'Respectable Working Class,' the kind of men and women of apparently limited education and social pretension who, when you really got to know them, showed amazing hidden depths. George spent most of his life working in a mundane job reading gas-meters, and living in a back-to-back terrace house in Harehills; he was undemonstrative, gruff, dryly humorous and in every apparent respect ordinary. Yet he was a lifelong Guardian reader, and the writer can recall, in his days as a pretentious young undergraduate, being loaned such books as Cobbett's Rural Rides and the pacifist writings of Fenner Brockway from George's remarkably sizeable library. Had he been born thirty years later he would probably have followed the children of his like to university and out into the professional lower middle classes - which is why they don't make Georges any more. It would be a fair description of both men to say he had the honesty and respect for the sport of Jim Exley with a much more human face; and he served the Club well and honourably in many capacities almost up to his death.

Athletics in Leeds in a state of flux in 1968; and much the same was true of athletics in general, as the period coincided with a number of changes which affected the very nature of the sport. One was the introduction of the all-weather rubber-surfaced or 'Tartan' track; the writer had forgotten just how rare 'plastic' tracks were in the late sixties and early seventies until he re-read newspaper articles of 1968 which reminded him that the Mexico City Olympics was the first event ever to be run on one, and Mike Baxter pointed out that the first time he ever set foot on one in competition was in the heat of the 1969 European Championships. Only those (very old now) members who have done a 5000 or 10,000 on a shale surface such as (say) Templenewsam, Leeds Road Huddersfield, or the Yellow Monstrosity at Hartlepool can appreciate just how much more comfortable it is to run on Tartan; the old tracks could be baked-hard, rutted, and dusty in a dry spell and too wet to race on in heavy rain. Surprisingly, one Yorkshire council was quick off the mark in this matter; Middlesbrough was reported to be considering a plan to lay a Tartan track at its Clairville Stadium as early as October 1968.

Combined with this was the introduction of the screw-in spike, which prevented the blistering or worse that runners got from spikes set in plates between the inner and outer sole, which tended to shift after use on hard tracks. The writer recalls with a shudder even now the state of his and the other finishers' feet after participating in a 25-kilometre track race in 1965, with a group of participants sitting in a pub mutually popping each other's blisters.

The change came out of considerable study about what the ideal shoe for the new Tartan tracks would be like. One shoe manufacturer had even invented a new 'spike' for the surface, a shoe with several hundred tiny spikes rather like a miniature scrubbing-brush to give better grip; the I.A.A.F. promptly banned its use.

On the field side the foam-rubber block landing area appeared at the same time; like Tartan, it first appeared around the time of the Mexico Olympics, because until it did the High Jump champion of that year, Dick Fosbury, would have been risking becoming a paraplegic landing on his neck even in well-raked sand. The foam landing area took some time to come in; in 1969 at a Home Countries International at Edinburgh the vaulters refused to participate because of the dangerous state of the landing area - sand, with timber sides!

Another change which affected matters regionally was the cancelling by the Northern Counties' A.A. of its rule which prevented athletes joining clubs more than twenty miles from their place of residence; there had been a long-running dispute over John Kirkbride, who lived in West Cumberland (which had no clubs of any strength) and had joined Blackpool & Fylde A.C., which had brought this issue to a head. As a later case involving Leeds City indicates, however, any athlete moving to a club more than twenty miles from his home would still be likely to have to serve a suspension of several months; and this, though modified, is still true at the time of writing.

Press coverage of athletics on a national scale around the time of Mexico shows that despite the considerable changes which have come about many of the 'problems' and controversies of the sport remain very similar. There was the continuing argument, which had gone on for years, about the amateurish administration of amateur athletics; a committee headed by Liberal life peer Frank Byers had just published a report

recommending the appointment of a professional administrator, which was meeting with resistance from some of the older generation on the A.A.A. and B.A.A.B. committees. Suggestions were also being bandied about that competition was inadequate because it was underfunded, and the A.A.A. was putting forward a scheme to make athletes pay a registration fee (ten shillings - 50p - for every athlete under 19) to fund improvements; that was also meeting heavy opposition, and not solely from the entrenched 'powers that be,' and Walter Pearson wrote a long article opposing it. It was probably, with personal computers a long way off (computers then took up a whole room) not a practical proposition, though cycling, a sport not dissimilar in its structure to athletics, already had such a scheme. Even in 1968 there was clearly a gap between the perceptions of national administration and 'grass-roots' athletes and officials about what the priorities of the sport really were.

The writer compiled a piece for a Club Newsletter some years ago about Leeds St. Mark's between the Wars in which he said that if the minute-books are studied the impression would be gained that the Club's main function was running whist-drives. On reading the first minute-book of Leeds City he discovered that the competitive aspects was still undermentioned, though to not such a great extent, and social and fund-raising matters seemed to concern the Committee more. Social matters such as Christmas dinners, and running raffles and Christmas draws, took up a fair amount of time. The Club even had a social secretary; John Cousins in the first couple of years, and then John Lunn, in his first administrative function. (Like many other offices later, he didn't stay in it long.) Coach hire to events was another major feature; even in the late sixties less people had cars, the motorway network was less complete, and to get to championships or distant events a coach was a necessity. The costs were by modern standards negligible - £21 to Blackpool, and £45 to London, for instance - but at the time a teacher with four years' experience was still earning less than £100 a month net.

According to former St. Marks' official Joe Mayne, the main reason for the amalgamation had been to strengthen the Club's cross-country reputation; like a lot of the older officials, Joe didn't really believe in track running. If that was the intention, it didn't show forth in the first few years. Of course, perspectives then were very different. The all-important winter competition was the Yorkshire Cross-Country Association Championship at the end of January; we MUST have a team out for that. The National mattered, unless it was miles away; even then, the Club's Senior teams in the first years of its existence don't seem to have ever been at full strength.

In the first two years we never finished in the first forty teams, and on each occasion at least two of a redoubtable trio of veterans, Allan Lawton, Jack Lawton and Dennis Wood, were counters. For some reason nobody took the Northern very seriously (the Club seldom finished well up in the Senior race) and the Yorkshire County Athletic Association Cross-Country Championship was in essence only a trial for the County's team for the Inter-Counties' Championship, with no team contest, and only taken seriously by those who fancied their chances of selection.

At this early stage in Club history the man putting the Club's name in front of the public was definitely Mike Baxter. A success at regional level as a youngster with St. Mark's, he was by the late sixties on the verge of

developing into something else - a regular and consistent international on the track and on the country. He was also very much the driving force behind the training done by the Club's distance-runners; it was Mike who instituted the Tuesday night fartlek sessions that saw an awful lot of fairly average 'hackers' blossom into something considerably better, and the long Sunday mornings from Templenewsam which, in many people's view, laid the foundation for people to train harder than they'd ever expected to. Mike set the agenda for Leeds City's distance squad for its first ten years; the presence, almost a quarter of a century later, of so many performances from that era in the Club's Senior ranking list is testimony to what he achieved. It would be a few years before Mike's performances, and his influence on Club distance-running hit its peak; however, the foundations for future team success were being laid as early as the first year.

The first regular competition the new Club found itself involved in was what was then the Leeds & District Cross-country League. It became the West Yorkshire early in the seventies, but even before that it covered a much wider area than merely the city; not only did Wakefield Harriers compete, but clubs from York and Harrogate, who didn't have much local opposition, had been members since before the War. Leeds City certainly beat Wakefield, the 1966 winners, in the first two League races, but these early results didn't indicate great strength. The first race was won by Mike Baxter, but the team success was accomplished with the aid of a second-claim member, former Cambridge Blue Roger Robinson, who was a lecturer at Leeds University; the other two members were former Harehills stalwarts Ron Pannell and Stewart Dobson. In the second fixture of three, Mike and Stewart were accompanied by another second-claimer, North-Eastern legend Lindsay Dunn, who was working in Leeds for a number of years. Lindsay was later to be much of the motivation behind the growth of Gateshead Harriers, and the career of Brendan Foster. At least the Senior team did enough to win the League, with Mike winning the third meeting and Stewart placing third.

There was also some success in the races for younger athletes, though to modern observers the descriptions of these can prove confusing. In the 1960s the definitions 'Juniors,' 'Youths' and 'Boys' were used respectively for Under-21s, Under-18s and Under-16s; within the first few years of the Club's existence the age-ranges changed to the present format, and the writer has, to spare confusion, used the modern definitions throughout. The winner of the first two League races for younger athletes (which were a recent departure from League tradition, and in which 'Youths' and 'Boys' ran together) was Mark Willingham, one of the team of youngsters that Arthur Cockcroft had been coaching at Harehills. To Arthur's regret most of the team didn't continue running for very long; Mark, however went on competing into the early 'seventies. Not far behind Mark in most of the League races was a younger athlete who can go down as possibly one of the Club's greatest disappointments; at this period Trevor Tuohey, was carrying just about everything before him locally in the Under-16 age-group. However, he was later to have the unenviable distinction to be the first of only two members of the Club to be formally expelled from it. His enormous talent was not to be able to overcome a family background that could best be described as unfortunate.

Mark, Trevor and the Senior team were all winners of their age-group races at another event which typified the time, but has now disappeared - the York Open Handicap (though at York the youngsters' races weren't handicaps.) There were three such races which had been regularly contested in the West Riding at the time - the York in October, the Leeds November, and the Bingley Handicap just after Christmas. Looking at the press reports of the time it's quite remarkable how few events there were, and how limited was the distance over which members travelled to race.

In the whole of the 1967-8 winter the Yorkshire Post mentions participation by Leeds City members in only two open road races - the Ferriby Ten at Hull in January, and a ten-miler at Scunthorpe in April which Mike won. The Handicaps therefore constituted a large amount of the competition which was available to distance-runners in the late 'Sixties outside the League and Championship events, and even leading athletes competed in them. In the 1967 'November,' for instance, Roger Robinson did fastest time running through to fifth, while at Bingley Mike Baxter was fastest man in fourth place, just behind young miler Malcolm Cox, and the winner was a future Bingley road star, Alan Spence.

Handicaps were supposed to give the lesser lights a chance of actually winning something, and in a sense they did; but the younger generation was beginning to find them unsatisfactory. The major criticism of them was that the handicapping was never 'fair' - either because whoever was saying so hadn't got what he considered to be a decent 'mark' or because somebody else had clearly been handicapped too 'softly' for his known potential. The reality is that handicapping is (as the writer, having done it for Club events, is well aware) a difficult art; there's more to it than looking at the times people have done and subtracting accordingly, even if you know all the performances of all the competitors - and the official Handicap Entry Form, now completely vanished, wasn't the clearest document in the world. The writing was on clearly seen on the wall when in 1969 the York Handicap was discontinued; and nowadays handicaps purely for Club members are virtually the only ones left, though these are often popular and a lot of Yorkshire clubs besides Leeds City run them.

The Club at first ran a number of its own handicap races, which filled in some of the blank weekends between the traditional fixtures. Most of them have now disappeared, pushed out by the growing number of open races both on the road and the country, and the ease of travel which has come about with mass car ownership - to say nothing of the change in traffic patterns which would now make it virtually impossible to run a Club race on public roads. A clear example of this is the Club's six-mile handicap, which was then run in December; a description of the course will give some idea the different culture, both of running and the surroundings it took place in. It ran from the Harehills Liberal Club - for long the winter headquarters - down Oak Tree Drive through the Gipton Estate, along Foundry Lane to the Melbourne roundabout, up York Road, through Seacroft Village to the Ring Road, along Wellington Hill, down the A61 and along Dib Lane and Foundry Lane to the foot of, and back up to the top of, Oak Tree Drive.

If you attempted that as a training run today, even on a quiet evening, you'd be having to watch the traffic with care; in 1970 it was raced round on a Saturday afternoon, with no marshals, no control at road crossings and no thought of seeking police permission. (It probably helped that Inspector John McKenna was a member.) In 1969 The Club's veterans had a field-day in it; Jack Lawton won, with brother Allan fourth and Dennis Wood third, and only John Lunn, who ran fastest time, keeping them from a clean sweep. The following year John was second again, this time to Pete Edwards - generally known by the lads, from his after-school job filling the toilet-roll counter in a supermarket, as Petal -, with Mike Baxter running fastest in third; but in the Youths race (twice round the Gipton estate - try that nowadays - second place went to a youngster from the new John Smeaton school called Graham Needham. 31 years on he was still to be found training and sinking pints at South Leeds.

Two handicaps, however, remain from before the formation of the Club, although one has changed its form, and both revolve around Christmas. Leeds A.C. had run a pre-Christmas handicap which was more of a social event, usually from a country pub with a meal afterwards Harehills Harriers, on the other hand, had since the 1920s run its Christmas Handicap on Harehills Park on Boxing Day. The latter has survived unchanged as perhaps the strongest link to the 'pre-history' of Leeds City; the combination of tough five-lap course, strong tradition and the quality of performances which have been done in the race make it an event which almost deserves to have its own chapter (indeed separate research on its history is being done). The former, however, has undergone several changes of venue, format and course, and was finally reinvented in the 1980s as the Deserter's Dash, which at the time of writing is run from South Leeds Stadium. Essentially, then, the Handicap has shrunk from being a major aspect of competition to a 'fun event' where the challenge for the handicapper is to get as close a finish as possible. In Club events nowadays it's often achieved.

The main sources of information about the activities of the new Club would be expected to be in the local press; but in fact coverage of athletics has always been rather thin in Leeds, tending to get crowded out, and not just by coverage of soccer, Rugby League and cricket. In the winter of 1969, for instance, the Yorkshire Post devoted about twice as many column-inches to foxhunting as it did to athletics, and the coverage it did give seemed more often to be slanted towards national events than local ones. The paper did not appear to have a regular athletics correspondent, and published things in a somewhat irregular manner. It might not be surprising, for instance, that in the autumn of 1968 it gave a lot of coverage to the Olympic Games in Mexico City; but that it featured more about times done in training runs there than about those done in races in West Yorkshire comes as a considerable shock.

Up to about 1970 Walter Pearson continued to write his 'Short Spike' column in the 'Green' Sports edition of the Yorkshire Evening Post, but Walter's advancing age showed pretty clearly in it. Walter was not a man who was receptive to changes; in much of his writing there was a tendency to sanctify 'tradition' and regard new developments as unlikely to be an improvement. However by 1970 the decline of coverage in the main local press prompted two people to contact the Yorkshire Post Group to complain about it; and the Group solved its problems by inviting them to take on the job of reporting athletics. One was the Hon. Secretary of Huddersfield's

Longwood Harriers, Granville Beckett, who already contributed to the Huddersfield Examiner; the other was another member of the same club, former Oxford Blue Roger Norton (known to the Leeds City gang, for a reason lost in the mists of Athletics Weekly, as 'Reader'), who was at the time a teacher at Leeds Grammar School. Granville began to write for the morning Post, and Roger took over Walter's column; they still suffered from over-zealous editing, but the level of coverage improved considerably. Much of the material for this History comes from their columns.

Some of the local weekly papers gave some space to local matters, if an interested individual was prepared to submit 'copy;' and from 1968 the Skyrac Express, which served east Leeds, Garforth and areas as far out as Tadcaster, began to print occasional reports sent by Dave Young, the assistant P.E. teacher at Temple Moor School, who had become a member of the Club about that time. At first they appeared rather sporadically, and after a few mentions of Club affairs in the first six months of its existence tended to concentrate on his own and other local schools. There was also a long gap in 1969 and early 1970 when nothing appeared; this was about the time when Dave was creating from scratch the Physical Education Department at the new John Smeaton High School which was about to open. From then on Club affairs began to appear more in the revived column, and by the summer of 1971 Club achievements became a regular feature of the paper. Dave's writings are also a major source of material.

The 1968 cross-country Championship season gave little indication that the new Leeds City was going to be a power in the land. In the first 'Yorkshire' the Club contested the Seniors could finish no better than fifth, with Mike Baxter in sixth place; Mike had earlier finished second in the 'Trial.' However, there were signs of future strengthening in this area in the early performances in younger age-groups, and in particular the Club gained its first two County Champions; Mark Willingham won the Youths' race, and Trevor Tuohey the Boys'. The Northern Championship that year was unusual in that the venue had to be changed at the last minute due to a serious outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease which restricted access to agricultural land. It should have been run at Hartlepool on a course including pasture and plough, but finished up being held on a public park - albeit the tough Graves Park course at Sheffield. The Senior team, which placed 9th of 20 finishers, was virtually an "old Leeds St. marks' squad' with the addition of a couple of former Harehills Harriers in Ron Pannell (32) and Bernard Gomersall (139); otherwise the counters were Mike Baxter (7), Adrian Jackson (112), Dave Hodgson (116) and in 147th place Pete Wadsworth, a reliable harrier and fell-runner who often discouraged other athletes with his unconscious habit of talking to himself in races - "Come on. Pete, get stuck in," et cetera. There was also a first team success at this level, when Malcolm Cox (7th), Huw Pryderi Rhys (17), Roy Bean (26) and Bruce Kilner (46) placed second of six in the Junior (nowadays Under-20) race. Mark Willingham placed 5th in the Youths, and Trevor Tuohy's bronze medal in the Boys' race was achieved only a few seconds behind one of the biggest names to come out of North-Eastern athletics in the past four decades - Elswick Harrier Mike McLeod.

In the first 'National' of the Leeds City era, the Senior team made little impact, though Mike Baxter had a reasonably good run in 28th place. However, a number of names appear who were to figure in Club affairs for

several years. The Junior team was by far the most successful, finishing 10th; it included Malcolm Cox (already building a track reputation as 'the Head Waiter' for picking off Mile fields at a late stage) who finished 13th, and former St. Mark's Harriers Huw Pryderi Rhys and Bruce Kilner. From the same source in the Youths (under-17) came Graham Towers, the diminutive Richard Spirrett and 'the famous artist' Len l'Anson; somewhere in the background was a gangling youth called Roger Parker, already noted for the handkerchief wrapped round his hand. Apart from Mark Willingham and for a short time Roy Bean, none of the former Harehills Youths' team figured greatly in the Championships. There was a 'hidden contribution' to Club successes, however; in the Leeds Grammar School team which finished third in the Northern Boys that year were three names to conjure with - Richard Brewster, Martin Dell and Simon (Sid) Richardson.

In the next few years this group were to become the engine-room of a growing squad. Several of these featured in what was then an event given some local importance - the Leeds & District Championship. The race fell a victim in the 1970s to changes in competitive patterns, but even as late as 1968 could produce competitive races; Mike Baxter could only manage second place to Leeds University's rising star and future international Frank Briscoe, and Leeds City were well beaten by Wakefield Harriers, with only Ron Pannell in the first six. In the other age-groups things went better, with both Mark Willingham and Trevor Tuohey winning their respective events, and the Juniors and Youths taking team titles. There were names which would last - Bruce Kilner and Malcolm Cox - but also names of promising athletes that went no further, such as former Harehills Harriers Roy Bean and Kevin Durkan. Mike won it by 2½ minutes the following year, when the Senior finished second to Wakefield again; the Club also provided the Boys' race winner in Alan Black.

It was a striking feature of the early period that while, with the exception of Mark, the former Harehills lads seemed to fall by the wayside, the ex-St. Mark's Harriers mostly kept running. It might not be a coincidence that they tended to be the more 'social' characters, and the writer puts a lot of the influence down to a man who at first sight appeared to be the very epitome of the 'plodder' - Dennis Wood. Dennis, who in 1968 finished 186th in the Northern, was already a sort of legend; he'd been running since just after the end of the War, and taken part in most things, from track races to marathons, with no great distinction; but he was always there, and always willing to give time. Huw Pryderi Rhys recalls him as "extremely significant as a coach" for the younger lads at this time, and he certainly seemed to get the message of enjoyment across. Quite a few of 'his lads' had long careers, and one, Roger Parker, is still around after 40 years. He had one characteristic which many members found useful; his remarkable consistency of pace when running. In his later years he wasn't fast, but would set off and keep exactly the same speed going for an entire run. A lot of fitter, younger and faster lads found it incredibly useful to go out with Dennis when they were coming back from an injury; somehow he prevented you from overdoing it and setting back your recovery. The writer was grateful to him for this more than once.

It was at about this period that he uttered his famous saying which led to the coining of the Dennis Factor. John Lunn always recalled it as, "You're all right if you're running more miles than you're drinking pints;" however, he has been corrected in this belief by Pryderi, who recalls the exact words as "You can't go far wrong if you run two

miles for every pint you drink." His 'disciples' seemed to do quite a lot of it. Indeed Pryderi recalls, in an e-mail to the writer, his predicament when he stepped up to 100 miles a week for three months, and found "it was impossible to consume the requisite seven pints a night." Not everybody approved of this 'ale culture;' indeed, in December 1970, John received an official rebuke from the Committee for his drinking, industrial language and bad influence on the younger members of the Club - some would say little has changed in over three decades! Sometime about 1968, at the time of the formation of the British Milers' Club and the like, it was decided that they needed a specialist club for athletes of their ilk - and so was born the British Irwin Club, a sort of disreputable alter ego for Leeds City which surfaced from time to time in University races and the like. It even had it's own vest, with beer-pot, motto, and curious inscription on the back. Dennis, who had his 'regular round' of pubs to be visited, was regarded by its members as their 'spiritual father.'

Pryderi also pointed to the other great influence on young runners, then and throughout the Club's history; indeed the contribution is probably not recognised enough because to the time of writing the man is still with us contributing. If George Stead was the epitome of the 'Respectable Working Class,' Arthur Cockcroft may be the last survivor in athletics; and anybody who wants to consider how big a contribution a very ordinary person can make to something they really want to see succeed could do worse than consider the little man. Arthur is a product of old east Leeds, of the generation who left school at 14 because they had little choice and considered an apprenticeship a step up in the world; he spent fifty years, apart from war service, in mundane jobs in the city, and to the world at large his life would make no mark. But talk to anybody associated with Leeds City; consider the stream of youngsters he has encouraged, coached and cajoled since his Harehills days, and listen to the respect with which the Club's star names of yesterday and today speak of him, and a different picture emerges.

Arthur is a distilled walking version of common sense; the writer and others have gone away and thought twice if any of their grandiose ideas hasn't appealed to him. Coaches with paper qualifications he doesn't possess have used him as a litmus test for their own ideas - and still do. Moreover, his writings for the newsletter reveal touches which say a remarkable amount for the 'elementary' education to be found in schools seventy or so years ago; certainly two Oxford graduates reading an account of one of them "going to St. James' and having two pints of John Smiths drained from his psychological knee" both looked at each other with the clear wish that they'd thought of it! The fact that there are other areas of the city - notably his local junior school - which are just as appreciative of his efforts speaks volumes for him. Long may he last!

One other event which was to become a major feature of the Club's efforts first saw the light of day in the spring of 1968; the Northern Counties A.A. organised its first official 12-Stage Relay Championship at Derby. This event was intended to replace the old Manchester-Blackpool race, which had become impossible to stage due to the growth of traffic; it had acted as a 'feeder' for the National London to Brighton event (which Harehills Harriers had done well in on several occasions). There had been at least one 'unofficial' predecessor of this event, probably in the previous year; John Lunn recalls running for Middlesbrough & Cleveland in it. In this first Leeds City were

second Yorkshire club to finish, in eighth place; but the race was mainly notable as being the last competitive appearance of Longwood's former world mile record holder Derek Ibbotson.

One area that in the early days didn't feature as much as it was to later were the long-distance road events; indeed road running was for many at the time either a fill-in between cross-country seasons or a break from the track. There was no standard short distance in the way that ten kilometres has become nowadays, and of course women didn't do it at all! The favoured distance for medium events was ten miles, with several regular ones which the Club tended to patronise; Longwood, Ferriby (at Hull, where Roger Robinson, Mike Baxter and Ron Pannell were first three home in 1968), and Redcar were among those regularly entered. The motorway network was just beginning to make trans-Pennine venues accessible, but something like the Derwentwater was quite an expedition.

The Club was also involved in promoting the Roundhay Ten-mile Road Race, run in conjunction with the Council-supported Printers' Sports and Gala on August Bank Holiday Monday. Up to the early 'seventies this was a very popular and classy race - it included the Yorkshire Championship, and in 1969 Mike Baxter finished second - but eventually the Club pulled out of running it. The reason was something which was to bedevil road running more and more as the years went on - safety. In the first place the course crossed the Ring Road twice - which the police would now not permit, though then they provided a 'copper' at each crossing-point. The growth of traffic since the 1970s would now put this out of the question. It also ran along major roads - today traffic would make racing up Wellington Hill on the A58 hazardous, but then the long drag on the fourth mile was seen as one of the race's challenges. Moreover, the country lanes around Shadwell, the middle section of the course, were not quite so full of executive homes or traversed by the 1960s equivalents of BMWs.

By far the most dangerous traffic to be met with, however, was the human traffic on the last mile through Roundhay Park, where the crowds at the Gala - most of whom probably had no idea that the race was going on - crossed the course between the fun-fair and the lakes with total disregard for weary runners bashing their guts out downhill. Whether anyone actually did follow the advice of one particular maverick member of the Club and shove anyone who got in his way out of it is doubtful; nowadays a runner would probably be sued if he collided with anybody, much less shoved them. As early as the summer of 1969 the Committee had "a great deal of discussion" over safety aspects of the course, and sought to contact the gala organisers about its worries; the Minute Book doesn't record whether a reply was forthcoming. Eventually in June 1974 the Committee told the Council it wasn't prepared to be responsible for the risks - and the Roundhay Ten died.

At that time there were few marathons, next to no half-marathons, and not a lot of other longer races. The Lawton brothers and Bernard Gomersall, out of the former Harehills marathon runners, were still competing, and still winning team prizes, as they did in both the 1968 and 1969 Longwood marathons, and the 1968 Liverpool marathon, which was the first that Bernard had ever actually won. He tended more to stick to the ultra-distances at which his name was even more illustrious. He was the first British runner to win the Comrades' Marathon (over

48 miles!) in South Africa, was a regular London-Brighton competitor (a race he also won in Harehills days), winning the race in Leeds City colours in 1968, and in 1970 set a Club record for 40 miles on the track which still stands. However, all the ex-Harehills lads were getting on a bit in years at the time - Jack and Allan were already veterans - though they continued to compete for some time into the Leeds City era. It was part of the 'mythology' of distance-running at the time that marathons were an old man's game, taken to when runners got too old and slow for shorter races, a view encouraged by the lower age limit of 21 which was then put on taking part in them. This view was beginning to be challenged; Walter Pearson was critical of Airedale's young international Dave Atkin for taking one on at the age of 21 in 1968, and the writer remembers Croydon Harrier Don Faircloth making an impression by entering and winning twenty-milers within weeks of his 21st birthday in the early 1970s.

Probably the most regularly successful runner at 'tens' in the early Club days was Ron Pannell, a hard competitor and an even more fearsome trainer. Ron was an expert at turning the screw on long training runs, staying half a yard in front of his companions and just going faster and faster; there was one incredible Sunday morning which Mike Baxter might remember with a shudder. Ron is Jewish (he represented Great Britain in the Maccabiah Games a couple of times); he didn't keep every festival, but he did keep Black Fast. This particular Sunday he went out for the regular fifteen-mile circuit from Templenewsam, and after 24 hours' fasting he wasn't feeling pain! Even Mike was hanging on like grim death; what the rest of us were like doesn't bear thinking about!

In the first two years of the Club's history Track & Field was very much secondary; indeed, this can be said of the North of England as a whole. Perusing the pages of Athletics Weekly for the time shows a mass of inter-club trophy meetings in the South, and barely any results outside championships from the North. Some of this was lack of reporting, but far more was lack of competition; the second A.G.M. report in 1968 mentioned only five track meetings altogether. In such Open Meetings as they were the 'popular' events - sprints and middle distances - tended to dominate; it was still difficult, especially in such events as hurdles, pole vault and some of the throws, to find much competition at all outside championship events. However, the Club was going with the flow towards more 'modern' levels of competition; in 1968 it paid the expenses of three competitors, - Senior Mike Baxter and Juniors Mark Willingham and hammer-thrower Ronald Rosenhead - to compete in the A.A.A. Championships.

Track and Field in the North, or in Yorkshire at any rate, was at this point at something of a cross-roads. The traditional form of competition, the handicap meeting, was falling out of favour with a younger generation of athletes more used to competing on 'proper' tracks and more concerned with times and distances. Mentioning the Swillington Miners' Welfare Sports in his column in June 1968, Walter Pearson bemoaned the small fields in most events - only five in the half-mile, won by Gordon Richards - and said it "makes one wonder what all the athletes do with themselves." He suggested that the poor turn-out at such formerly major events as the Bradford Police Sports on the Park Avenue cricket ground might dissuade organisations from promoting - and he was to be proved correct very quickly, as 1968 was the last year the meeting was held.

The club had inherited Leeds A.C.'s sprinters, of whom at the time the most prominent were short sprinter Glen Beaumont, a regular Northern finalist, former Leeds University student Eric Pape, who still holds a share of the Club 100-metre record after 30 years, and 400-metre runner Gordon Richards. The latter was a larger-than-life ex-airman who claimed a 47.9 clocking which the National Union of Track Statisticians wouldn't accept; in an interview Ray Barrow stated that he unofficially timed 'Ricky' in the race, at Oldham in the early 'sixties, and he was only three or four strides down on the great Adrian Metcalfe. Ray reckoned that when the latter was asked about the time by Southern-based statisticians, he claimed Ricky wasn't capable of it - and he was believed.

It also acquired the services of hurdler Dave Lyall, who became the Club's first County Track & Field champion, winning both hurdles events in 1969. Much of the success was due to the coaching of Ray, then still himself active in competition; he was also teaching at Allerton Grange School, and was instrumental in encouraging such people as middle-distance runners Malcolm Cox and Alan Black and long-jumper Alan Cattell to take up the sport. At an earlier stage he also influenced another long-time Club performer - half-miler Chris Hudson. The 1962 English Schools' champion, Chris also had a remarkable record in Yorkshire championships - runner-up over the half-mile and 800 metres eleven times at various age-groups without ever winning. His career happened to coincide with that of one of Yorkshire's middle-distance legends, Walter Wilkinson. Another educational influence at this stage was the presence of Roger Norton at Leeds Grammar School, from 1967 to 1971; though himself a member of Longwood Harriers, he pointed a large number of athletes towards the Club. His protégés included distance-runners Martin Dell and Simon Richardson, the three talented Brewster brothers; in addition high-jumper and hurdler Dave Warburton, current coach Mike Stayman, outstanding young 400-metre runner Dale Bluemink; and two still-extant Club record-holders - sprinter Andy Staniland, and discus-thrower Jonathan Hartley - came from that source.

A third, and long-lasting one, was provided by Dave Young. At first his influence didn't appear great; his first recorded contribution to Club business, in July 1969 was to advocate the first production of a Club Newsletter, which not untypically hadn't got off the ground some months later. However, already by then a trickle of lads had begun to flow from Temple Moor - and in later years, as head of P.E. at the newly-opened John Smeaton High School, he was to supply a conveyor-belt of youngsters over the whole range of events who were to contribute the first real boom in the Club's track and field performance. Arthur Cockcroft has described Dave as the best all-round athletic coach he ever met - no mean praise. However, the Club's first English Schools' champion came from none of the above; hurdler John Greenwood, who won the 1969 Junior 80-metre event, was at Cross Green in east Leeds.

Changes, however, were starting to come about on the Track & Field front. The Club had shown some enterprise in this direction as early as 1968, when it took part in meetings as far away as Warrington; but as recorded above it didn't take part in many of them. Bingley Harriers had begun to put on regular open meetings at the now-vanished Marley track at Keighley a few years earlier; at one of them in May Mike Baxter ran a fast winning three miles (14.11.4), Mark Willingham won the Junior 880 yards in 1.58.7 (which would be considered respectable

today) and a six-foot plus 14-year-old, Stephen Ward, ran an 11.2/ 25.2 'double' for 100 yards and the furlong which, converted, still sees him in the Under-15 Ranking lists.

The September Hardaker-King (Men) and Margaret Leighton (Women) Trophy meeting, which was Bingley's most important promotion, had almost gained the status of an unofficial Yorkshire team championship. The West Yorkshire League was founded in 1968 (though the Weekly never mentioned it); Walter Pearson, noting that the number of "traditional sports meetings" was no longer sufficient to "give a consistent programme of competition to athletes," saw the League as part of an effort by clubs to fill the gaps. Its first meeting was held on May 1st, and once again Mike was the most prominent Club name, winning the mile in 4.20.8. Mark placed second in the two-mile race that night, behind future distance-running coach Dennis Quinlan, going on to take the County Junior title over the same distance at Huddersfield ten days later at a meeting in which Len l'Anson won the Junior Mile. By this time some Leeds athletes were already going over to meetings at Stretford; it was there in August that Mark ran a mile in 4.10.8, at that time considered quick for a Junior.

None of these, though useful in developing the sport, gave the sort of all-round, all-events type of competition which would encourage clubs to cater for all aspects of athletics. The breakthrough into the modern era of track and field development spread from elsewhere in the country into the North at the end of the 1969 track season, but it came after a fairly lengthy period of gestation. Only a matter of weeks after the formation of Leeds City the Yorkshire Post carried an article about discussion by the A.A.A. of setting up a league for the country's 'top clubs;' the suggestion was for a league of 18 clubs in three divisions, with "promotion and relegation to local leagues." There was considerable opposition in some quarters, on the grounds that "it would mean the disappearance of many Saturday trophy meetings."

This may have been a consideration in the South, but Yorkshire had few such meetings to disappear; a fact which didn't stop Walter Pearson dismissing the idea in the Evening Post as "one of those schemes which looks wonderful on paper." In 1968 the Midland Counties had started the first Track & Field League in the country; a pilot National Men's League of twelve clubs in two divisions (with only one Northern participant, Sale) was launched in the same year, and the 'real' British Athletics League followed in 1969. A Yorkshire League could have started at the same time; in June 1968 the Committee discussed a letter from Sheffield University proposing such a move, but nobody could be persuaded to represent the Club at the projected meeting, and though the Committee asked to be kept informed nothing more seems to have come of it. A pilot league was, however, run in Lancashire in the summer of 1969; so that when the North looked to move forward into League competition, it had something to build on.

With no major League meetings yet, the main events reported on in the press in 1968 were the County and Regional Championships; and the new Club did make some impression in them. In the Yorkshire Men's Championship there was only one winner - Dave Warburton, still at the Grammar School, took the Junior High Jump, which at the time was his principal event. There were a couple of Senior silver medals, for Hugh

Richardson in the Hammer and Gordon Richards in the 440 yards, and five bronzes - Glen Beaumont (100), Paul Temporal (440), Malcolm Cox (Mile), Mike Baxter (3 miles) and Dave Longley (Javelin). In the Junior events former Leeds A.C. member Steve Kemp took two 440-yard medals, bronze on the flat and silver 'over the sticks,' while Mark Willingham added mile silver to his haul and Graham Towers, a solid journeyman runner late of St. Mark's, took bronze in the Steeplechase. One interesting controversy in the local press arose out of this meeting; 15-year-old Skyrac A.C. triple-jumper Peter Dale won the Junior championship and set a new record, under a recently-introduced rule that allowed 'Youths' to compete against older athletes if they'd achieved a certain standard. Almost inevitably Walter Pearson was opposed to the idea; ten years later 15-year-old Aamer Khan was to help Leeds City qualify for the British League in the same event. The controversy about 'over-exploiting' youngsters still rumbles on at the time of writing.

Mark added further to his collection of silver medals in the Northern Junior Championships, gaining one in each of the mile and 3000 metres (held at separate meetings, the latter with the Seniors), while Dave also took Northern gold; in addition Club members gained another of each when John Sneideris won the Junior Pole Vault and Simon Richardson was runner-up in the 2000m Steeplechase. There were a number of Open Meetings promoted by clubs; one at Rotherham featured Mike Baxter winning the three miles, Malcolm Cox the 880 yards, and Glen getting second places in both sprints.

The new West Yorkshire League was also setting out its stall, though it still invited criticism from Walter Pearson, who thought ten meetings was too many and "five would be enough" (for once he was probably right!) He also noted that Leeds City had thrown away the chance of winning by failing to attend one meeting at all, and suggested this showed little enthusiasm for the League; what it really showed was that athletes were less willing to accept such venues as Spring Hall, Halifax, where the competitive surface was not only grass, but on a slope, now they had more experience of 'real' tracks. The League ran a 'Championship' race at many of its meetings, and attracting some good athletes; Mike Baxter, for instance, was one of 22 entries for the three-mile race, and was beaten by Bingley Harrier Gordon McBride, who was having a good season. Others to win such events were Glen Beaumont (100), Malcolm Cox (880y) and Lindsay Dunn (2 miles). However, it's not always easy to find out how good the performances were; even Dave Young published few times in his reports at this stage.

The other area where Club members were heavily involved was in schools' championships; the Yorkshire Schools, which covered the whole of the old County, was a big event in numerical terms, and when Leeds hosted it the track events were held on the University track at Weetwood and the field events scattered around four adjacent schools' playing-fields. Members took three Senior and two Intermediate titles - Mark Willingham (three miles in a respectable 14.27.6), Dave Warburton (High Jump), Dave Longley (Javelin), Richard Brewster (1km 'Chase) and Ronald Rosenhead (Hammer).

And that was pretty well the whole track season for Leeds City in its first year, apart from handicap meetings which seldom made the press. The only ones the writer could find were a preview of Lumb's Sports at Castleford

(which included some of the Yorkshire Youths' Championships, which were then 'farmed out'), and a major one at a venue which was then one of Yorkshire's top sporting venues, but which has virtually vanished - Park Avenue at Bradford.

The article reporting this announcement coincided with the appearance in the Yorkshire Post of a critical review from coach Wilf Paish about the paucity of facilities in Leeds. It's interesting to re-read it now, from two points of view; it shows how long the problem (only finally alleviated, and then not entirely solved, by the Lottery-funded building of South Leeds Stadium) has run on, and it also indicates the writer's view that coaches, however talented, are not always very practical on organisational matters. Wilf pointed out, quite correctly, that the lack of a really worthwhile track anywhere but the University, and the lack of access to that one (anyone wanting to put an event on there "had to go cap in hand" to the authorities), but also claimed that while there were no winter training facilities in Leeds "smaller places like Billingham and Stockton had them." (If this was true, the writer never found out about them when he lived in the area!) His suggestion was a joint funding venture to provide a better one between Council, University and "local athletes and sports enthusiasts." It's hard to see, even allowing for the subsequent escalation of costs, who the latter group might have been; while experience in later years at Beckett Park was to reveal the sort of political minefield that joint control and funding tends to produce - and of which Wilf himself was often a victim.

The following year Wilf was involved in an exchange of views with Walter Pearson on the strength of Yorkshire athletics, both arguing from entrenched viewpoints; while Wilf pointed out that County records were being broken more slowly than elsewhere, Walter pointed to Yorkshire's team performances in the Inter-Counties. Wilf's solution was the building of a central high-quality facility for the use of all the County's athletes; at that early stage of motorway development it was none too practical, and tended towards the assumption that 'athletes' meant only the most talented. In any case, wherever in Yorkshire it was suggested that such a facility might be sited it would invariably cause ructions from somewhere else.

The Club's second cross-country season started as the Mexico games were getting under way, and as a result it's not easy to find much press coverage of the early part of it. The only early-season events even mentioned in the local press were a composite-age relay at Halifax (the team was 5th) and the Hull-Hornsea relay (third), of which few details were included; similarly the York Handicap only got a passing mention, and the only reason that the Club's team win in the first Leeds and District League match surfaces is that there was a preview of the second race.

The Club won all three to retain the title, but at the time only four runners counted rather than six, so it wasn't necessarily a pointer to Championship success. Mike Baxter certainly won two of the three races; his main support came from John Lunn, second in the second race and fifth in the third. In the younger age-groups Len l'Anson was regularly placed in the first six. Mike also took fastest time in the Leeds November Handicap, an event a putative international would nowadays not have considered; but Mike was the sort of runner who sought

out rather than avoided races. In fact 1969 was a particularly good season over the country for Mike. He won the Yorkshire individual County Championship was second in both the 'real' Yorkshire and the Northern, and sixth in the National, and gained his first England representative honours, running at Hannut in Belgium. He would in fact have been Yorkshire's outstanding runner - but for a fellow called Trevor Wright. The diminutive Hallamshire Harrier had an even more outstanding season, taking a clean sweep of County, Area and National titles; few other Yorkshiremen have equalled it. It also has to be said that Mike's one victory came in a race where Trevor was missing on international duty; and that fact was part of the story of an altercation of the sort which has been all too familiar in the history of Yorkshire cross-country running.

The problem was a complex one unique to the sport - what constituted the county of Yorkshire? Anywhere but in the North of England that would have been athletically obvious; but in the North there was a dichotomy between the Northern Counties' Athletic Association and the Northern Cross-Country Association. The former used the boundaries of the administrative counties, except in the case of Northumberland and Durham which were always 'federated;' the latter had four 'regions' which had been given 'county' names for convenience. The effect was that for Cross-Country purposes Derbyshire was in Yorkshire and Middlesbrough wasn't! To add to the confusion every other cross-country event was run by the English Cross-Country Union, while the Inter-Counties was run by the Counties' Athletic Union, which only recognised the 'athletic' boundaries. Of such wonderful accidents are the traditions of our sport made up!

This had led to the Yorkshire County A.A. picking the team before the Association Championship had been run; and that had produced so many arguments that the 'Yorkshire Trial,' as it was commonly known, had been instituted. This was all very well, if the Y.C.A.A. had then always picked the first nine finishers; but not infrequently, as happened in 1969, some possible candidates for selection might not be able to run the 'Trial.' On this occasion the Yorkshire selectors only picked the first seven in the 'Trial,' plus Trevor Wright and Gordon McBride. There was no argument about Trevor's selection, but Gordon was selected on the strength of the Bingley Harrier's track form of the previous summer; and during the winter Gordon hadn't been hitting the same peaks. Moreover, his absence was due to taking a school party skiing, which wasn't seen as a good enough reason by many. The real problem, however, was who it was who finished eighth - Walter Wilkinson.

At the time the York railwayman, regarded as probably the best miler in the country and no mean cross-country runner, was competing for Longwood Harriers, and his coach was the redoubtable former world mile record-holder Derek Ibbotson - who was not backward at coming forward. Walter hit the roof and threatened never to run for the County again; Longwood made a formal protest over his non-selection; "Ibby" also put in his two-penn'orth of objections, and Longwood's secretary Granville Beckett publicly remarked that "the trouble is the County Athletic Association is responsible to no-one" (unlike the more representatively-structured Cross-Country Association.) Long-serving County secretary Geoff Clarke, at the time new in the job, took Walter at his word and refused even to enter him in the fifteen permitted names. Meanwhile Bob Ellis (nowadays quite a familiar figure round South Leeds through his West Yorkshire Schools involvement), who had finished seventh, offered to stand

down in Walter's favour, an offer which Walter rightly refused. The situation became even more bizarre when Gordon returned from his trip, declared himself unfit, and withdrew. This incident may appear to have little to do with the history of Leeds City A.C.; but in fact it was neither the first nor the last such contretemps to surround Yorkshire cross-country selection, Moreover on at least one occasion, in the 1990s, it was a Leeds City athlete who missed out to an 'absentee;' and that happened after the two Championships were combined.

Meanwhile the Leeds City Harriers' team was taking some time to develop, though a sign of some progress was that in the Y.C.C.A. Championship both Senior and Junior teams came away with medals. The Seniors placed third, led home by Mike in second place and Malcolm Cox in 16th; the other counters were in the thirties.

Meanwhile the Juniors who took silver medals were an entirely ex-St. Mark's quartet; Huw Pryderi Rhys (10), Bruce Kilner (11) and Graham Towers (12) were a pretty talented trio, but needed a fourth man and the fourth man was one of a pair of brothers who served the Club very well in many capacities but were principally known for being among the slowest runners who ever turned out for Leeds City. In this case it was Graham Hartney, who finished 28th and almost certainly last - but the others couldn't have got the medals without him! There was one champion other than Mike; in what may well have been the first ever Northern Veterans' Championship former Harehills man Fred Wrigley combined with the Lawton brothers to take the team title, and Fred went on to win the European Vets' title over a 5-kilometre course in Belgium. In the major Championships, however, there was little team success, though at least in the Northern a Club team finished in every race bar the Boys'.

Mike's real breakthrough came in the '69 track season - he won the Northern 5000 metres title (which made him the very first Northern 5000 champion, as it was the first year the event went metric); finished 4th in the A.A.A.; set a personal best of 13.50.4 in his first international selection against France; and was chosen for the European Championships, in spite of being only seventh-fastest man in Britain at the event. The selectors set more store by his competitive record, which showed him having beaten at one time or another that year all the athletes who were passed over. He made the final in Athens, but after some early pacemaking fell away to last - still, most of us never get there. However, this was another 'first' for Mike - the Club's first participant in a major Games - and the Committee felt that Mike should have a tangible token of the Club's appreciation; and so it's with Mike that one of the Club's more pleasant traditions, of making presentations for international recognition, originates. The surprising thing - though less so in view of some of Mike's own comments quoted later in this account, is the number of times he turned out in 'minor' events; remarkably, he even put in five races at various distances in the month between the A.A.A Championships and his selection. Nowadays even fringe internationals aren't likely to be seen much in the equivalent of the Leeds & District Cross-Country Championships, a minor road relay in Bolton or the West Yorkshire Track & Field League - in all of which Mike participated in 1969.

To some extent, however, he had to; if he didn't there wasn't much else to race in. The summer of 1969, the last 'pre-League' track season, still showed a very patchy number and distribution of competitive events, and perhaps indicates why such good fields could be found in races at places like Marley Stadium and Temple Newsam. Indeed Yorkshire, and in, particular West Yorkshire, was still very short of even cinder tracks, and a 'Special

Correspondent' who took over Walter Pearson's column while he was in hospital compared the situation unfavourably with Lancashire, where according to him much money had been spent and good tracks abounded. The suggestion appeared to be that many of the Yorkshire tracks were also poorly maintained - which was certainly true of Templenewsam, Horsfall Playing Fields at Bradford and Leeds Road at Huddersfield.

There was, however, an accelerating change in the sort of meetings available; 1969 was, as far as West Yorkshire was concerned, the death-knell of the handicap meeting. The previous year there had only been five or six of them; but reporting in April, Walter Pearson stated that only two - the Roundhay Gala and Lumb's Sports at Castleford - were scheduled. In contrast, Bingley Harriers were planning to run six open meetings at Marley Stadium during the year, while the West Yorkshire League - reduced to six meetings, two on Saturdays rather than evenings - was to continue. Walter saw this as the clubs acting to take over providing competition form outside bodies, of which he approved; but he didn't like the growing trend of athletes being allowed to enter on the day. He saw this as making the sport "purely a participant activity" by giving the general public no idea who would be taking part; what he couldn't see was that the growth of television, car ownership and a wider range of activities meant that all spectator sports were (until the hyping of professional soccer by the media) going to attract less people. The picnic atmosphere of the pre-war Community Sports Day was simply beyond recapture.

Even so, it has proved hard to find evidence of members' participation in the meetings held. The press reports often only mention winners, and in the season's first meeting at Keighley, for instance, only young Stephen Ward appears on the list. This was also the last season when the majority of meetings were run over 'Imperial' distances, though the Mile still tended to be popular for some time afterwards; but County and Regional Championships, even when 'farmed out' to another meeting, had started to go metric. Typically, for instance, in a meeting at Keighley in May the Yorkshire 10,000m was run and Bruce Kilner won a mile. The 1969 Yorkshires were notable for not a single medal being taken by a Leeds City member; even Mike Baxter succumbed to illness and didn't take part. Locally, however, 'yards' were still run even in championships; Malcolm Cox (who narrowly failed to win the Northern 1500m) beat Dennis Quinlan and Mike for the West Yorkshire Mile title in June. Mike also took the West Yorkshire 3-miles title, and not with a half-hearted effort either, but a time of 13.21.3 - worth inside 13.50 for 5000m, and needed to get the better of John Waterhouse of Bingley. There was also one medal in the A.A.A Championships - not from Mike, who finished 4th in the 5000, but from Eric Pape, who sneaked a third in the 200m. Certainly some of the new sources of competition seemed to work; an open meeting at Huddersfield in August, for instance, attracted a whole host of star names, with Mike finishing second in the Mile behind Salford's international half-miler Andy Green.

In the midst of all this the Club was beginning to go through organisational developments which showed that even in the still fairly traditional 'harrier' environment that things were changing. In the autumn of 1969 there is a reference in the Minute Book of the Committee to John Lunn raising the topic of the "Northern Relay Fiasco." The event referred to was the very first Northern 6-Stage Relay Championship, held at Darlington in September. Whether the Northern clubs were ready for such an event is at least questionable, as only fourteen entered and

ten turned up; the event appears to have been organised at very short notice, and on a date that clashed with other events. It produced a protest from Salford Harriers, as the date chosen was the same as that of their long-established Hollingworth Lake relay, and caused Halifax Harriers to cancel the Senior race in their event. Quite what the 'fiasco' was isn't clear from the Minutes or from reports (Athletics Weekly merely gave the results), and so far memories are blurred, but it would appear to have been to do with the Club's organisation of the team, and the result was clearly not the sort of thing Joe Mayne had in mind. Far from the new superpower of Yorkshire athletics playing a starring role, the club finished tenth and last, over eleven minutes behind the winning Saltwell Harriers' team, nearly five behind Airedale, and almost three full minutes behind the host club, Darlington Harriers. The latter result gave particular pleasure to one Yorkshire exile on the Darlington team - a promising youngster called Brian Hilton.

John's recommendation to the Committee was that team managers should be appointed. It may seem odd to the present generation of athletes that this had never been done; but it was part of the move away from the tight, community-based, virtually 'single-discipline' clubs such as St. Mark's and Harehills. Members lived further apart; younger members were more likely to be at university; and not everybody trained together as they once did, though it was not a 'scattered' as the present day. Races were also at greater distance, no longer fitted so closely into a 'traditional' fixture pattern, and such matters as organising transport, even if only by shared lifts, were becoming considerations. As late as the 1950s teams could organise themselves; now somebody had to take responsibility for their organising. The new Club was moving, almost imperceptibly to some, into new times, and the old ways were having to be modified.

However, some problems never change - and the Club Minute Book, which if readers are interested can be consulted in the Local History Library in Leeds, gives a picture of recurring problems that haven't gone away. The question of a proper headquarters - which in essentials the Club still hasn't got - were discussed in the autumn of 1969, with the idea of putting up some sort of a building at Templenewsam; considering the possible problems of that isolated site, and its proximity to some of Leeds' social problems, it's probably as well that somebody pointed out we'd need a lot more money than we'd then raised. The question was to be aired several times in later years.

Another permanent question was enhancing the Club's public profile and raising members. One suggested answer in the 1960s was to organise races at half-time at the city's professional football grounds; but the Elland Road of the Revie years was considered by the Committee to be more conducive to barracking than support, and Leeds R.L. squashed the idea flat when approached.

Perhaps the most pressing matter, however, was the collection of subscriptions; athletic clubs are always beset by the odd member (or several) who manages to 'forget' to pay for a number of reasons. Some, it must be admitted, were of the Club's making; in 1969 future England Rugby manager Geoff Cooke, recently elected to the Club, replied when challenged over non-payment that nobody had told him his election had gone through. At this stage subscriptions were still the province of the Treasurer, and Dave Hodgson found himself, like other Club

officers, having to invent new solutions to the problems of a changing and developing Club. It was some years before a dedicated Subscriptions Secretary was to be elected; Dave claims that Mick Stark was the first to hold the unenviable office.

The winter season of 1969-70 opened with one 'odd' team success in an area in which the Club has only intermittently been successful; a Club trio, led by Dave Hodgson in sixth place, was second in the Burnsall Fell race. Fell-running is a discipline which tends to attract only a limited number of devotees, though both Harehills and St. Mark's had usually had a few such; however, they tend to congregate in particular clubs which have a reputation in the field, and locally Pudsey & Bramley (or Bramley & District Harriers as it was until the 1969-70 season, when it adopted its new name) has always been one of them - possibly because of the presence of Peter Watson, who is still connected with that club at the time of writing and must go down as one of the best 'pure' fellmen. 'Burnsall' has always had a particular regard among fell-runners as the 'purest' of races; it's very short, but absolutely straight up and down, and the best way to see what it entails is to go along one August and watch it. The 1969 race was special for Pete; he broke the record set by a professional runner which had stood for over forty years, and had been considered at one time unbeatable.

Before Christmas there was another, and sadder, connection between the Club and mountain running, though the incident had nothing to do with mountains. In November former Leeds A.C. distance-runner Eric Beard was killed in a car crash on the M6 motorway while on his way to run a 24-hour run in Liverpool; his connection with the Club by that time had become slight, though he was actually a member, but his death robbed it of one of its more remarkable characters. In the more standard realms of athletics 'Beardie' was a minor figure, but in long-distance mountain running he was a legend; he was the fifth man ever (after Bob Graham himself) to complete the 'Bob Graham Round' of 42 peaks in the Lake District (actually covering 57 in 24 hours), and held the record for the crossing of the Cuillins in Skye for many years. But it wasn't just that - Beardie was a legend in other ways, not the least of which being that he must be the only person from Brudenell Road (or just off it) to have his obituary written in a national newspaper by a Cambridge graduate and Olympic champion.

Eric's real love was the mountains. He left school at 14 as so many did with no 'paper' qualifications, but he was climbing by his teens as well as running, and even then he adopted a curious lifestyle of getting a casual job in Leeds during the winter (for a short time he was a tram conductor, and worked with John Lunn's father) and disappearing in the summer to climb somewhere in Wales, Scotland or the Alps. Legends grew round him - his reputed diet of sweet tea and honey butties, his getting by on the minimum of money, the occasion when he went to climb Mont Blanc and hitch-hiked to Chamonix from Leeds - in one lift! However, in the early 1960s he got a job at the outdoor pursuits centre opened by former international runners John Disley and Chris Brasher at Plas-y-Brenin in Snowdonia, and he found his real place. In the obituary he wrote in The Observer Brasher described him as "the finest natural teacher of climbing to young people" he had ever seen, welling the story of how Eric had "lead a group of children off a mountain after being out all night in the mist, and they were all smiling."

George Stead told the writer that the wake after the funeral descended into laughter as every group of people there knew a different 'Beardie Story' that none of the others had heard. They are no mean tributes.

The period up to Christmas is usually one in which competition is comparatively low-key before the Championship season, and in those days this tendency was even more marked. For Senior runners the major local competition was still the Leeds & District League, which in 1969 Leeds City managed to win; the major opposition came not from local clubs, but from Leeds University, which at the time had a particularly strong team. Just how strong is indicated by the fact that in the second League race both the team and Mike Baxter were beaten - though it did take Frank Briscoe to achieve the latter. Mike had won the first race at Harrogate, courtesy of Malcolm Cox, who had run with him and 'allowed' him the win because Mike had been 'favouring' an ankle injury on a course rough enough to lead to protests. John Lunn was third counter in 8th place; at Weetwood he went one better, and Bruce Kilner placed ninth. The last race was won by another student, but not from Leeds (yet at any rate); Halifax Harrier Dave Nicholl, running for St. John's College, York, beat John and Malcolm, who were backed up by Huw Pryderi Rhys in 5th place and Bruce in 7th. Mike and Frank were on representative duty in an inter-area match, and the University team were on vacation. The combined Boys' and Youths' race saw season-long battles between one of Ray Barrow's Allerton Grange pupils, a quiet, skinny, bespectacled youth called Alan Black, and a second-claim member from Gateshead Harriers, Ray Stirling, whose father was working in the area. They placed first and second in all three races, Alan winning the first two and Ray the last. Summing up the season, however, Walter Pearson noted that Leeds City was still showing "a lack of strength in depth, which the amalgamation has done little to remedy."

The Club made one small 'first' that year; along with a number of others, it was invited to take part in the Leeds University Relay, an event which was beginning to establish itself as a major part of the student cross-country calendar at a time when university teams tended to be pretty strong - a matter which caused controversy when University clubs entered open championships, as will be seen later. It's significant that although Mike Baxter did the day's fastest leg, the Club wasn't in the first six. Mike also did fastest time in the November Handicap, in which Bruce Kilner finished 6th and Alan Black won the Under-18 race. One thing the Seniors didn't run in was the Aaron trophy races; the Senior Relay had yet to be included in the meeting, and in spite of successes in the local League the Club had nobody in the first ten of either the Boys' or Youths' race. There was no success for Club members in the Bingley handicap in January; but there was to be a macabre connection with the winner, a promising half-miler from the promoting club called Michael Sams. Some twenty years later he was imprisoned for the murder of a young Leeds prostitute, Julie Dart - who in her schooldays was a cross-country runner and hurdler with Leeds City.

However, cross-country wasn't the only thing on athletic - and other - minds that autumn. Leeds City Council approved the production of a brochure aimed at 'selling' the city's possible application for a future Commonwealth Games; and the Yorkshire County A.A. was reported to be in discussion to revive the indoor meetings which in the mid-Sixties had been held at R.A.F. Leeming on a 200-yard unbanked track painted on a

hangar floor. (The original track at Cosford had been similar.) However, inspection of the state of the track ruled this out.

For Mike Baxter the 1970 Championship campaign was even better than his successful one of the year before. Although still the county's 'second fiddle' to Trevor Wright (first and second in the Yorkshire A.A. race), he won the more prestigious Y.C.C.A title at the end of January, placed 6th in the Inter-Counties in between, and in March at Blackpool ran probably his best-ever 'National' in fifth place. The strength of the England cross-country team of the time - before the East Africans really got into their stride - can be judged by the fact that Mike's contribution to its efforts was an excellent run in fourteenth place - which just got him a team medal as the sixth counter! The other five England runners placed in the first seven! The season proved an excellent build-up for his summer on the track - of which more later.

From the team point of view, however, the 1969-70 cross-country Championships were a disappointment. The Yorkshire Association Championships did see a second set of Senior team medals won; led by Mike, who to the approval of Walter Pearson had turned down a continental race to turn out, the team finished second. Malcolm Cox and John Lunn finished 8th and 13th respectively (in the Y.A.A.A they'd occupied 11th and 14th), while the other three counters couldn't have been closer; they were former Yorkshire steeplechase champion Kerry Brierley (31), a tough and craggy character who built houses for his estate-agent father to sell, Club treasurer Dave Hodgson (32) and Brwsi Kilner (33). Mike was missing for the Northern race (recovering from a stomach bug picked up while running in an E.C.C.U. team in Sicily - to the disapproval of Walter Pearson), and the team, placed 11th, had nobody finishing in the first 50. In the National we only finished five men, and if one or two of the notable missing people had turned out we could have made a reasonable show.

We did have a Junior team in the National, mainly of former St. Mark's lads (Len l'Anson, Richard Spirrett and Graham Towers, with the addition of Londoner Pete Edwards) which finished well down; the only other placing of note was third in the Yorkshire for Mark Willingham, now a student. In the Youths 'our' team was representing Leeds Grammar School, with Martin Dell finishing 15th in the National. Fighting for 'National' medals looked a long way off at that stage. The Club did manage two team wins in the Leeds and District Championships; in the Senior race Mike Baxter won and led home Stewart Dobson (5), Bruce Kilner (6) and Dave Hodgson (9), while Mike's younger brother David (who didn't run for very long) placed third in the Youths, leading home two equally fugitive figures in Neil Thompson (5) and Paul Balmer (6).

There was also a certain amount of road running in 1970. John Lunn ran into a bit of form on the tarmac, placing second in the Ferriby Ten-miler at Hull in January and running the fastest medium-length leg of the day at the Northern 12-stage Relay at Derby in April (by virtue of all the 'star' runners being on the 'long' stages at a time when three different lengths of leg was common). However the team, without Mike on international call again, only managed 11th. There was also one team victory in a ten-miler, when Mike (2nd), John (4th) and Ron Pannell (7th) won the Ernest Harper Memorial race at Stannington, near Sheffield; and the occasion is well

etched into the memory of all three of them! The course was beyond question one of the most fiendish ever devised for a road race; starting at 700 feet above sea level, it dropped 350 feet in the first two miles, crossed a valley and then climbed 700 in the next four - after which it dropped most of them in the next mile and a half, ran along the valley for a bit, and got back to the start with a last mile including the inside of a hairpin bend which must have been about 1 in 1½ ! The race was on an April Sunday; on the next day John had to have all his classes moved into a room where he didn't have to climb stairs, as every time he attempted to do so he went into a cramp spasm. Meanwhile Mike was out 'repping' in Bradford, describing himself as "walking along the street like Chester in Gun Law when I saw another guy walking towards me walking like Chester - and as he approached I realised it was Ron." (For those too young to remember, Gun Law was a television Western series - Chester was the sheriff's crippled sidekick.) In addition to these traditional winter activities there also one indoor track success when Eric Pape took second place in the A.A.A. Indoor 200m at Cosford in March.

All in all the Leeds City of April 1970 wasn't as yet a great advance on its ancestors; it had not yet had a vast impact on the Yorkshire cross-country scene, and had not yet had the opportunity to develop any improvement as a track club, for which opportunities were still lacking in its early years. It had produced a degree more cohesion, had got its own internal house into greater order, and taken the first steps towards developing a more sophisticated administration. The latter was just as well, as it was now standing on the verge of a new future; the following month League Track and Field came to the North of England, and Leeds City was in there from the start.

### **Chapter 3: The start of the new track order**

While the winter season of 1969-70 was still in progress the question of starting a Northern Track & Field League was finally faced. The Northern Counties' A.A. had been watching how the Midland and British Leagues had progressed, and had earlier in the year asked Ray Barrow to draw up a workable structure. On November 8th, 1969 a meeting was held at the Leeds Church Institute to found a Northern Athletics League; Leeds City were one of the twelve clubs represented, with Ray, Malcolm Cox and John Lunn the delegates. Two divisions were initially formed, east and west of the Pennines, for the 1970 season; but before it started six other clubs came in to make up a third, Trans-Pennine, division. The really new feature was that the league would, with the exception of the 10,000 metres, cater for all the standard track and field events on the Olympic programme. In 1970 was really taking a long step away from Northern, or even Trophy Meeting, tradition, where the events staged were either the more 'popular' ones or the ones where the host club was strong! It would give clubs the opportunity, and the incentive, to develop away from past traditions and turn themselves into all-round athletic clubs - if they had the will and determination to do it, the facilities to encourage it (though some, including Leeds City, managed it with less than ideal facilities for many years) and could find the people to lead the process. Ray clearly intended

that Leeds City should lead from the front; as soon as the League was formally inaugurated he set about collecting a team strong enough to participate well.

The formation of the League was not universally welcomed. There was the obvious fear that not enough clubs would be able to produce complete teams, and those that couldn't would be sidelined. There was, almost predictably, an article from Walter Pearson just before the Church Institute meeting, denigrating the idea on the grounds that League competition would not prove attractive to spectators; he didn't appear to have noticed that in their last few years of existence the traditional 'sports meeting' hadn't exactly been drawing the crowds, which was one reason for their demise. He noted that in its first season the British Athletics League had over-estimated the spectator potential of the competition and printed an unrealistic and expensive number of programmes; they had evidently made the same mistake about the spectator appeal of grass-roots athletics that he had! While he conceded that "if (it) is to provide competition where it has been missing, that is all to the good," he was, only five months later, expressing his pleasure at a proposal to revive the Swillington Sports meeting. It was one of his last articles; the following month a 'Special Correspondent' (who was actually Roger Norton) writing his column in his place, previewed the new League and made much of its potential to provide field event athletes with sufficient competition to make training worthwhile. Granville Beckett took up the same theme in the Yorkshire Post, stating that "providing the competing clubs make an effort to fill the hitherto empty spaces in their field event ranks (the League) might be an important step in the sport's development."

The first Northern Men's Track & Field League season, in 1970, was a successful one in competitive terms and a lot of a learning process. The latter was true of all the clubs - as the very first race, the 400 Hurdles, got on its marks at Cleckheaton on May 16th it was held up while Jim Exley pulled Wakefield steeplechase international Steve Hollings off the track to change into the proper vest! The Club seems to have learned pretty quickly; although it hadn't really been clear at the outset that it would be possible to produce a full team, it won all three matches in the East of Pennines division by gradually-increasing margins; 29 in the first match at Cleckheaton (16TH May), 32 in the second at Gateshead (7th June), and forty in the last at Derby (28th June).

At Cleckheaton the middle distances were solid; from 400 to 5000 only Andy Watson, John Lunn and Ron Pannell failed to win, and they were all second. Chris Hudson and Len l'Anson in the 800, Malcolm Cox and Mike Baxter in the 1500, and Gordon Richards in the A 400, all won. The Hurdles were similarly noteworthy; David Lyall and Dave Warburton monopolised the short event, and David Brewster took the 400m A race. By contrast, in the field, the Club had only one winner - Malcolm Edwards in the B Javelin. Among other field competitors was one who was to gain sporting distinction elsewhere; future England Rugby manager Geoff Cooke, then teaching at Temple Moor, threw Shot, Discus and Hammer. In the lesser placings decathlete John Saunders began to amass some of the 114 points he was to collect during the campaign. In general terms, however, the most gratifying feature was that the participant clubs, and not just Leeds City, appeared to have heeded Granville Beckett's comments; he noted with emphasis that "the six clubs (in the East Pennine Division) turned out more

athletes in the field events than one has come to expect at the Yorkshire or Northern Championships." In the long term this has been the League's biggest contribution to the sport.

The Gateshead match was enlivened by the failure of Derby to get there due to a transport foul-up - all save airman Keith Daykin, who did about nine events as a solo team. From a Leeds point of view it was another satisfactory day; Messrs Hudson, l'Anson, Cox and Baxter repeated the dose young sprinter Keith Boothroyd won the 200m, Gordon Richards took the 400m, John Lunn the 5000, Dave Warburton the High Jump and John Saunders had two wins - B Hurdles and A Vault, the latter a maximum-point affair with John Watson. The last match at Derby was slightly different as a lot of points came from the sprints - the simple reason being the presence of Eric Pape, who won both. Our only other track winners were Pete Bygate in the B 800, Ron Pannell in the B 5000, Dave Warburton in the Hurdles, and inevitably Mike Baxter in the 1500. (It will be noticed that Mike seldom ran his international distance in the League; he treated the matches as a sort of advanced speed-training for his 5000s, and the Club got far more points out of him as a willing 1500 runner.) In the field events we supplied only two winners; Mike Campbell in the B High Jump, and, another inevitable, John Saunders - who this time won the triple Jump. It looks as though on this occasion the Club won with a weakened team because everybody else was even more weakened.

This took the team into the play-off match, involving the first two in each Division, at Cleckheaton; and one where the weaknesses in the Club's squad came out. Short of a number of the regular-season side, the Club could only manage second place to Blackburn, just ahead of Stretford (as they then were) with a team where doubling -up appeared to be rampant; Gordon Richards ran a rare 800, Huw Pryderi Rhys doubled in 800 and 1500, Ray Barrow triple-jumped and javelin-thrower Bob Linton covered the Shot as well. Winners were very few; the only new name was Mike Gledhill who took the Triple Jump, while the other three were the familiar ones of Baxter (5000 for once), Warburton (Hurdles) and Saunders (B Vault.) Nonetheless this led to the Club being invited to participate in the British League Qualifying match - an invitation which the Club had already chosen to turn down before the match had even taken place, the Committee having debated the matter in the week after the Derby match.

There were those who thought this was a mistake; the League was expanding from three divisions to four, and six of the eight participants were guaranteed a place. However, the reasons, as set out in the Evening Post, were strong; the Club could only do well with a full team out every match, travelling would strain finances, a lot of promising youngsters weren't ready to be pitched into such competition, and above all the Club lacked a track in Leeds to promote home matches on. Some of these reasons were still to be cited fifteen years later! The decision in the event was probably justified - Stretford didn't make it, and Blackburn only just scraped into Division 4 in sixth place. One thing it did get the Club was, for a short time, a degree of local publicity.

The League, the West Yorkshire League and Bingley's Open Meetings give the 1970 season a profile much closer, though not yet anything like, the 21st-Century pattern of fixtures; the handicap meeting, as far as West

Yorkshire was concerned, was a thing of the past, and to be honest was missed by few. There certainly seemed to be plenty of West Yorkshire League action; two meetings were recorded in the early weeks of the season, with John Lunn winning the three miles at the first, at Huddersfield, and Mike Baxter (3000) and Gordon Richards (400) scoring wins at Keighley a week later. John also had a win before the League season over 5000 at Keighley, where Chris Hudson took the 800m. The West Yorkshire League certainly didn't lack enterprise; in 1970 it ran a relay championship meeting at which Leeds City won several events. However, it was the last regular competition in the area to stick to imperial distances, which it did in 1970 at least.

Mike Baxter's policy of running 1500s in preference to 5000s extended beyond the League in 1970; he deliberately chose to do the shorter event in both the Yorkshire and Northern Championships as part of his preparation for major events. In the former - which incidentally were the first 'metric' Yorkshires - he was the only individual winner the Club provided in either Senior or Junior events; in the latter he finished second and took the Club's only Senior medal. The move certainly paid dividends for his international ambitions for the 1970 season, which in terms of times, if not of competitive record, was probably his best. His aim was selection for the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh; the trial race for the England team was held on the Meadowbank track, during an international meeting, and Mike rose to the occasion with a vengeance, slicing a massive 11.4 seconds off his previous season's best with a 13.35.2 clocking that still, over thirty years later, stands second on the ranking list. At the time it was the fourth fastest ever 5000 by a British runner, and Mike himself says he was running "in the form of my life." Speaking to the writer, he recounted a tale of a training session with Ian Stewart, who won the title; "Ian was a phenomenally hard trainer," he said, "and that day he couldn't get rid of me."

However six weeks after the Trial he couldn't reproduce that sort of form; he qualified for the final, but in a race rated by many as a classic - the battle being between Stewart and Ian McCaffrey - he finished a disappointed last in 14.03.0. In reality he shouldn't have run at all. Shortly before the Games he went down with what his doctor thought was a bout of pharyngitis, but was subsequently discovered to be glandular fever; in the week before the event there were times when he wasn't even able to take solid food. That he actually ran at all speaks volumes for his spirit; and those who say it could be at the expense of his sense should think back to the number of times they've tried to ignore feeling 'off colour' or carried a minor injury into a race they've really wanted to do. At any rate, he took a break from running on medical advice, and came back strongly towards the end of the year. As well as his international exploits, he also set a Club record at 1500 metres with 3.47.7, and another over 10,000 finishing second in the Yorkshire championship to Bingley's John Waterhouse. He was subsequently to better both these times.

Nowadays, with many athletes at the higher levels able to make a living from their sport, there is a tendency to think that international athletes have a comparatively cushioned life. It might already have been that way for some in 1970, but for others there was the problem of combining international representation with a full-time job. A sidelight into the matter comes from what is believed to have been Mike's only foray into the correspondence columns of "Athletics Weekly" in the spring of 1971, a lengthy letter in which he pointed out that the 1969

European Games had cost him all his honeymoon except for one day, the 1970 Commonwealth had taken his holiday allowance, leaving wife Gillian "with her holidays and no-one to spend them with," and the 1970 International Cross-Country had only been possible because the E.C.C.U. had generously paid for him to travel late - all because his employer wouldn't give him more time off, even without pay.

The Editor (Mel Watman) commented that it might have been hoped that "an employer would be proud of, or at least interested in, an employee who is talented enough to represent his country;" whether it rang any bells with Mike's is doubtful. At any rate, some time later he moved from that company into the sports goods industry, where he cut out a successful career.

The tendency for road racing to go on between, and alongside, both Track & Field and Cross-country was continuing to grow in the early 1970s, and Leeds City didn't neglect this side of the sport. Ten miles remained the most common distance; John Lunn, Ron Pannell and usually Bernard Gomersall (still at the time good for 55 minutes or so) were quite frequent pot-hunters at the distance, taking the team prize at Ripon in July, for instance, when John placed third to Wakefield's John Newsome, an athlete who had only limited form on any other surface but was a most tenacious performer on tarmac. In April 1970, however, John started taking long road races seriously. Better known up to then as a reliable counter in cross-country teams, a fair track runner and a reasonably regular prize-winner in 'tens', he had some, but not much experience of the long stuff before 1970, having gained a County vest in 1966 after his first venture at marathons and most notably finishing second in the 25-kilometre track race in which Ron Hill set world best times in 1965. His first effort was the Huddersfield Marathon, in which he ran 2.19.48 - which doesn't appear on the Club lists as it was half a mile short! He remembers it for 'hitting the wall' with a vengeance and losing over four minutes in the last six miles to an athlete from the wilds of western Ireland called Mick Molloy.

This placed him second in the Yorkshire championships to the redoubtable John Newsome; a month later he finished second, again to John Newsome, in the East Hull 20-mile race, which gained him selection for the Yorkshire team for the Inter-Counties 20, and led to his best performance as a County representative. He finished fifth in the Inter-Counties 20 in a heatwave at Leicester in a team which only failed to win the team race by a point; John Newsome placed third, but the third man was unaware that there were team medals, and allowed Worcestershire's third man to pass him in the last two miles as he cruised to the finish. Bob Ellis has never been allowed to forget it! The race was run in a temperature of over 100 degrees (that's about 38o Centigrade); John's abiding memory is of the Saffron Lane treatment room afterwards, with a runner from Warwickshire who'd collapsed with cramp and couldn't be moved off a massage-bed without going into spasm, and an over-ambitious and inexperienced Lancastrian who'd led early, collapsed due to dehydration and couldn't stand when the Red Cross people tried to get him off the stretcher.

In July John took part in the first running of the heavily-sponsored Maxol Marathon in Manchester, recording a legitimate 2.26.26 which was at the time a Club record. His main memory of the race was of the official Japanese

team of three which took part, with very mixed fortunes; they all blasted off at the start (they were about forty yards up on the field going out of Albert Square after 250!), but while Akio Usami won and his compatriot Yoshiaki Unetani was runner-up the third man, one Suzuki, 'blew up' about as comprehensively as anyone he has ever seen. John passed him on the short finishing loop in Trafford Park with about 1½ miles to go, and beat him by seven minutes; he reckons that if somebody had come to the finish line on Manchester United's ground with a samurai sword Suzuki would have gratefully fallen on it!

The 1971 winter season was a bit better competitively than all three of its predecessors in some respects, but it didn't start out too well; indeed, perusing the local press before Christmas it's difficult to find many mentions of the Senior team, at any rate, doing much at all. A team did turn out in the Northern Six-Stage relay at the end of September, but finished 14th and well out of qualifying for the A.A.A. event. The main change to early-season competition was the expansion of the Leeds & District Cross-Country League to become the West Yorkshire League. It was a move that both made sense and made the league a great deal more competitive; however, it brought the Club into regular competition with what were then the two 'powers in the land' in West Yorkshire cross-country, Bingley Harriers and above all Airedale & Spen Valley A.C. The latter was another amalgamation, between the long-established Bradford club Airedale Harriers and the 60's creation Spen Valley A.C.; the leading figure in the latter club, Bob Tristram, was very much the engine-room of the combined club, coaching many of the early figures in its success. In 1970 its most well-known name was Dave Atkin, who had just moved into the Senior ranks after enjoying successes as a youngster, but before the season was out another schoolboy, Alwyn Dewhurst, was to emerge as a strong contender for local honours.

There are few details of the new League in local papers; both Granville Beckett and Dave Young, for some reason, rarely mentioned it, and Roger Norton's summaries deal more with individuals than teams. However, in both respects Leeds City rated few mentions; ASVAC won all three team races, and Dave Atkin won all the individual contests. The only Leeds City members who rated a mention in their columns was Alan Black, who won one youngsters' race (the first, at Templenewsam, at which Mike Baxter won the Senior race) and was placed in the other two. Alan was also involved in the only other pre-Christmas event to get a report, the Leeds November handicap; he was third in the under-17 race from somewhere near the back, while Dennis Wood (9th) was the only Club member in the first ten. The story taken up by the press, however, was the fact that Skyrac A.C. (which had changed its name from Airedale & Wharfedale after an abortive attempt to amalgamate with Pudsey & Bramley!) won the team race, but failed to take the prizes. IN those days a separate team entry fee was usually payable at such races, and Skyrac, still a new and inexperienced club, had forgotten to pay the necessary five shillings!

Even in the Championships after Christmas Club teams were not always firing on all cylinders. We did finish a Senior team in the National, in 41st place, but the significant thing about it is the missing names, consisting as it did of Mike Baxter (17th), Malcolm Cox, Mark Willingham and Bruce Kilner between 150 and 350, and Dennis Wood and Allan Lawton near the back. The Seniors did get its first lot of team medals that year, finishing second

in the Yorkshire C.C.A. at Bingley six weeks earlier; Mike won, with John Lunn 8th, Malcolm 16th, and Willingham, Ron Pannell and Kilner 26th to 28th. Passing time has clouded why John and Ron weren't at Norwich, but it did point to the hugely greater importance that the "proper Yorkshire" took on then. In the Northern there wasn't a Leeds City Senior in the first fifty; in part this was due to Mike, unusually for him, 'ducking' a Championship deliberately to prepare for a more important race, the National, though shortly afterwards he did turn out in the Leeds & District race.

At the younger end, however, we had a couple of outstanding performers emerging. Alan Black suddenly emerged as a real prospect; second in the Yorkshire, 9th in the Northern and 15th in the National was a fine Championship season from a first-year who had shown rather more than average promise as a Boy the previous year without hitting the heights. Even this, however, was overshadowed by the first real emergence of one of the Club's finest athletes and more remarkable characters - Martin Dell. At seventeen Martin was already showing all the signs of being one of the great eccentrics, though in this respect he didn't come into full flower until his University days; but the famous green track-suit and gabardine school raincoat were already in evidence (they would be for the rest of his Leeds City days), as was the total unflappability which also characterised his entire career. Once a race got going this rather odd-looking and slightly detached individual was transformed into a racing machine of high order; in 1971 he won the Yorkshire C.C.A. race, finished second in the 'other' Yorkshire and also in the Northern, and a splendid fifth in the National - and the measure of that is that the two who finished immediately behind him were one Barry Smith (who later did a bit for Gateshead and Great Britain) and a guy called Moorcroft. With Alan in second place and Ian Sanderson and Bill Ward in the teens, the Youths took the Yorkshire team title; and Alan and Simon Richardson gained places in the Yorkshire Schools' team by finishing 4th and 6th in that Championship. We didn't do much in the younger age-groups; the only interest there was in the Yorkshire Colts race, won by another very droppable name - Sebastian Coe, who also won the Junior race in the Yorkshire Schools. Those immediately behind him were also notable - runner-up, then representing Bingley, was Kim McDonald, while Hull's Malcolm Prince was third.

The Club may not have had a lot of success in championships, and didn't even send a team to the Northern 12-Stage Relay (which that year was notable for Hallamshire Harriers getting disqualified when some of their members did two legs!); but the popular four-man relays which then abounded (and were in the writer's view one reason why distance-men seemed to hit higher performances on the track then than they do now) were the scene of quite a bit of Leeds City pot-hunting. In April 1971, for instance, the four-man squad of Mike Baxter, John Lunn, Ron Pannell and Bruce Kilner were placed twice in eight days - third at Blackpool, with Mike doing fastest leg, and second at Rotherham, where only Trevor Wright was faster.

Of course, in a relay one outstanding man can make a lot of difference, but it wouldn't be altogether true to say the other three 'took a ride' on Mike; they had to be good enough not to throw away the advantage he gave them. John and Ron were of course County-class runners in their own right; while the contribution made by Bruce (usually spelt Brwsi, for reasons lost in the mists of time) should not be undervalued. He was very much a case in

point that association with Baxter made indifferent runners a great deal better; a fairly average schoolboy, he progressed to become a reliable first-team steepelchaser and steady counter in cross-country teams, though his particular forte was road relays. Put him on a three-mile leg with a few to chase, and he seemed to find a gear which never quite emerged in other events.

There were some road races between the Championships that winter. In January 1971 John Lunn and Ron Pannell, with Bruce Kilner as third counter, took the team prize in the Ferriby race on a superb course (now lost to traffic considerations) round the villages on the west side of Hull which encouraged fast times. John set a personal best in third place, but remembers it mainly for a losing battle down the apparently never-ending finish on the A63 with Hull Spartan's Peter Moon - in later years Bingley Harriers' team manager. The turn into the finish was just after a footbridge that could literally be seen a mile away, and John reckoned "the thing seemed to move backwards and thumb its nose at you."

Not long after the end of the 1971 season Joe Mayne died. If he'd been asked, he's probably have concluded that from the team point of view the Club hadn't lived up to his expectations. True, there were plenty of people, by the standards of the time, running, and a lot of youngsters coming through; but where was the great challenge to the likes of Bingley, Airedale & Spen Valley and Sheffield United? It frankly hadn't materialised - yet. However, people were certainly getting together and enjoying their running, and a few of them are still doing it.

Mike Baxter moved into the 1971 track campaign on the strength of a sound cross-country season, looking forward to another excellent season, culminating in the European Games of that year. (1969 and 1971 were an 'odd' period when the normal four-yearly sequence was disturbed - it was intended to have them biennially, but it never happened again.) In a sense he was successful, reaching what was possibly his highest track achievement; in another it was highly frustrating, because Mike became the British Champion That Nobody Remembers. The reason for this can be summed up in two words - David Bedford.

Bedford was probably one of the best, and certainly the most controversial, distance-runner of his day. He had got beyond the athletics press; indeed he was probably the first athlete made into a national figure by television. He was young, brash, and cocky; his training method was to do phenomenal amounts of mileage (200 a week was talked of); his racing tactics consisted of hitting the front and grinding the opposition down by sheer pace; and he had really hit the headlines as a Junior by winning the Southern Senior cross-country championship over nine miles by a street, and then twenty minutes later starting the Junior race over six miles and winning that as well. The year before he had cracked the world 10,000 metres record by a fair margin, and at the start of 1971 he seemed pretty well unstoppable. This was Mike's main opposition that year - and they were to meet in the A.A.A. Championships at Crystal Palace, moved specially, to attract a good first-night 'gate' to the event, to the Friday evening.

Mike's early-season competition had followed a not-uncommon pattern. He had run a couple of swift 1500s early on, winning the B race in the first Northern League meeting and finishing second to Malcolm Cox in the Yorkshire

Championships, and then somewhat unusually run the 10,000 for Yorkshire in the Inter-Counties, finishing 5th in 29.26.8; in late June he had followed this by running the fourth-fastest 3000m time done in the world that year. Again unusually, he had done the 5000 in the next League match, winning easily in 14.09, as well as doing the B 1500. He went into the A.A.A. as one of the likely ones in a large field, but none of them were much mentioned - the previews, even in "Athletics Weekly," were full of Bedford, and his stated intention to crack the British record for 3000 metres - on the way to breaking the great Ron Clarke's world record of 13.16.6. A 14,000 crowd, and the television cameras, waited for the dramatics. They got them all right - but not how they'd anticipated.

Bedford went off like the proverbial bat - 60.6 for the first lap, 3.06 after three, four seconds ahead of schedule after a kilometre, everybody but Alan Rushmer keeping a respectful distance (and he didn't last long) - all seemed to be going to plan. Mike set off far more steadily, but at three kilometres was nicely placed in a bunch of four some ten seconds behind the leader. And then suddenly the plot went wrong - Bedford pulled up, clutching a hamstring which had apparently gone (in fact it was an attack of cramp). Presented with a sudden chance, Mike seized it; he broke at four kilometres, established a solid lead ahead of Alan Blinston, and finished setting a championship record of 13.39.4. For all the majority of people noticed, he might as well have dropped out; the cameras did, as the writer recalls, cover the finish, but the focus was back on Bedford almost at once. Mike's finest hour became an instant afterthought.

There were questions at the time; there have been questions since. There was little doubt that the cramp attack was genuine - the look on Dave's face was enough to tell anyone that. However, one fact, reported in "A.W." and few other places, was that although he was still up on world record schedule at 2,000 metres, by 1.8 seconds, by 3km he was down by at least as much - and whatever else he was, Dave Bedford was no finishing kicker. Mike had, as his last kilometre shows, run almost a perfectly-judged race; he had five laps to pull back ten seconds, and he was a lot faster over 1500 than Bedford. Could he have punctured the biggest reputation around? We shall, of course, never know.

After that, the European itself in Helsinki was a bit of an anti-climax. The distance events were dominated by the one-week wonder that was Juha Vaatainen; and to be frank, the 5,000 competitors appeared to be hypnotised by that incredible 53.9-second last lap with which the fastest set of mutton-chop whiskers in athletic history took the 10,000-metre title. Mike's run in the final was described by "A.W." editor Mel Watman as "totally uninspired;" but the fact was that he was only four seconds slower than his A.A.A.-winning time (13.43.2) in eleventh place, and he'd qualified two days earlier in a heat (13.45.6) in which the last 800 metres was covered in a fraction outside two minutes, and in which Jos Hermens set a Netherlands record and didn't qualify. It was probably the best two back-to-back races Mike ever ran; but everybody in the field was waiting for Vaatainen to kick, and he duly did, with another 54-second scorcher. Only a Bedford might have had the nerve to take him on - and Dave had already been minced in that finest of 10,000s.

Mike had almost another decade of high-level competition ahead of him, but after 1971 he never made another major Games; so perhaps this is the place to ask, how good was he as a track runner? Undoubtedly in terms of the Club he was outstanding; only John Doherty challenges Mike's position (and Mike coached him), and the fact that one of his Club records still stands thirty years on is a testimony to that. However, his record in the three big Games he ran in is patchy, though illness obviously played a part in 1970. What is beyond question is that Mike was to a large extent a 'manufactured runner,' and even more a self-manufactured runner, as a letter to the writer makes very clear. He had little or no basic speed; as a 16-year-old his best times for 880 yards and the mile were 2.19.0 and 5.06.0, and while his own assertion that "most 11 and 12-year-olds would beat them" is probably a case of Mike being over-critical of his own abilities, they are little better than an average Under-15 Young Athletes' league competitor would do today.

The successes he achieved came from sheer hard graft, a determination to "set a goal each year," and consistency of effort. The latter factor was well known to his contemporaries, and can be seen from his training diaries. Mike was clearly well aware of his own weaknesses, which he also set out. He claimed that "I could not sprint - I could have joined in the 5000m final at Helsinki at the bell and still not got a medal!" His best mile, at 4.04, was nearly ten seconds slower than some contemporary distance-men; and his training diaries show the assiduous sprint training he did to try to improve his speed. He kindly supplied the writer with two extracts from his 1970 diary; one for the week before the Yorkshire Cross-Country, and the other a pre-season track week in April. They are set out in an Appendix, and are well worth studying by any young hopeful who wants to know what makes an international. Mike also quoted to the writer the opinion expressed by the impressive North-Eastern triumvirate of Brendan Foster, Lindsay Dunn and Stan Long that he did too much racing ever to get to a real peak.

He admits this is possibly right, but says that this was not due to anybody (such as the Club) putting pressure on him, but "the trouble was, I loved racing, 12 months a year, on all surfaces." The record of his career with Leeds City emphatically proves this point. He also feels that the unsympathetic attitude of his employer barred him from getting crucial experience of international competition in the three years when it would have been of greatest value to him - particularly in 1970, the year he was "flying." Perhaps the fairest judgement is that he was a worthy international, and got there entirely on his own terms without any Svengali of a coach, but he never quite had that little bit extra that marks out a Brendan (with whom he trained in the early seventies while Bren was studying at Carnegie), Ian Stewart or Dave Moorcroft. Anyway, to any such speculation on the part of people like the writer, Mike has the unanswerable rejoinder - "You never got there, mate; I did!"

As already mentioned, Mike played an active part in the second Northern League season - which was probably one of the most competitive we ever were in. Most of the six teams which had contested the 1970 Play-Off meeting were now in a First Division, and the first match, in late May at the long-departed Alderman Kneeshaw track in East Hull, illustrated what a battle would go on. Airedale & Spen Valley (144) and Longwood (133) were tailed off; Wakefield and Hull Spartan tied for third (203), and Leeds City and Stretford tied for first (267), with

Bob Linton sealing the tie with his last Javelin throw of 48.46. The Club scored very heavily in the middle distances, with the almost obligatory Cox/Baxter 1500 double, a John Lunn win in the 5000; Dave Warburton took the Highs, Pete Bygate the B 800, and Sid Richardson and Bruce Kilner pulled out an 18-pointer in the 'Chase.

We scored almost as many points in the second meeting at Stretford in July (262), but the home side got everybody out that day, and we lost by thirty points; this was to be the crucial match. We had plenty of people in second place, but only two winners - Mike in the 5000, and hammer-thrower Mike Carpenter with his best ever of 41.08. The third match was as near home as we got - the notoriously rough Leeds Road track at Huddersfield (even in '71 it could be hard finding three all-weather tracks in the North, and Leeds Road was considered good enough to stage the Yorkshire Championships that year.) We managed to win - but only by three points. Again we had few winners - Mike, in his last meeting before Helsinki, doubled in the 800 and 5000 and won both, Malcolm Cox took the 1500, and Dave Warburton the Highs. Even though we were a mere 27 match points adrift, the Club was not placed in the 'paper' match to fill the last places in the British League qualifier.

One person had absolutely no doubt where the root of the Club's problems lay, and did a lot of sounding off about it. On two occasions that summer Roger Norton had articles in the old 'Green 'Un' edition of the Yorkshire Evening Post in which he castigated Leeds City Council for the lack of facilities in the city. After the second League meeting he made a marked comparison between "the superb facilities at Longford Park, (where) changing, spectator and refreshment accommodation and above all the fine track and field facilities are first-class," with what Templenewsam had to offer. After the third he was even more scathing, citing a 'black list' of the worst 100 tracks in the country being compiled at the time by the Specialist Clubs' Committee, and suggesting that both Templenewsam and Thornes Park at Wakefield would be on it. Facilities at Templenewsam were rapidly dismissed - "Track surface - loose and badly maintained; winter lighting - none; changing accommodation - inadequate; spectator arrangements - none; refreshments - none; High Jump and Pole Vault pits - sand, which is no longer an approved landing area; water jump - none."

At the time there was talk, which had first been reported in the local press in 1969, of Leeds seeking the Commonwealth Games in 1978, with a stadium at Weetwood; Roger was dismissive, stating that if the Council "had a real interest in athletics at all levels, and were not merely concerned with the prestige value the Games would bring, they would surely be just as concerned with present facilities." Coincidentally Yorkshire Post sports columnist Richard Ulyatt, commenting on the proposal suggested it would make more sense, if the Council was actually serious about the idea, to "build the tracks and accommodation required, and if they prove good enough apply for the Games;" he anticipated that Leeds would have a good chance of obtaining them, but in 1982 rather than 1978. The message from both sources was clear - but was to fall on deaf ears as far as decent facilities were concerned for another decade or more.

On an individual level, outside the League, the Club had a fair bit of success - and one other national champion, at an event now long forgotten. Even as late as the early seventies the athletics authorities were far more protective of youngsters than they are now - or than many youngsters wanted them to be. Matters had gone beyond the belief that if 14-year-old girls ran such huge distances as 1500 metres fleets of ambulances would need to be standing by to haul them off as they collapsed; but steeplechasing for younger men was still regarded as something to be treated with caution. The standard distance for Under-20 runners had only recently risen from 1500 to 2000 metres; so when the A.A.A and the English Schools introduced the event to Under-17 competition the distance was set at a kilometre. It was significant that when this event produced the second-ever Leeds City English Schools' champion, the winner was David Brewster. David won the Yorkshire title at Sheffield in 2.55.6, in a race in which Dave Baxter was third; and then ran over twelve seconds faster at Crystal Palace to set a Club record that will now never be broken. The significance comes when Dave's later career is examined; as an Under-20 and Senior he appears on the Club rankings mainly in the 400 metres hurdles. The athletic authorities appear to have reached a similar conclusion, that the very short distance favoured hurdlers who could run rather than runners who could hurdle, and within a couple of years the present 1500-metre distance was introduced.

At County and County Schools' level the Club had a hatful of champions - Mike Baxter not being one of them, as stated above. In addition to "the Head Waiter" in the 1500 (Malcolm's ability to 'read' a last lap was remarkable), Dave Warburton took the High Jump, and Colin Lambert the Junior 100 - the latter partly because Keith Boothroyd moved out of his way to essay quarter-miling, and took the Junior 400 impressively. North of England medals, however, numbered only two, and both were bronze - Malcolm in the 1500m and Dave in the High Hurdles. When it came to the Schools', the club provided five other County champions besides Dave Brewster - Sid Richardson (Senior 'Chase), Jonathan Hartley (Senior Discus), John Greenwood (Inter. Hurdles), Tony Chapman (Junior 200) and Andy Lunn (Junior Hammer - he was to take a silver medal at Crystal Palace). Tony Chapman is interesting as being the first product of John Smeaton School, which had only been open a couple of years, to make an impact on the Club scene.

There was one other champion at both events - and it marked the next major stage of development in the Club. In March Roger Norton had written a report of Yorkshire team successes, and mentioned the recent and successful formation of a women's section by his own Club, Longwood; in contrast he pointed out the lack off such a section at Leeds City. About a month earlier Dave Young, writing about the Yorkshire Schools' Cross-Country Championships, compared the strong performance of the Leeds boys' teams to the poor showing by the city's girls, and suggested that things would only get better if and when Leeds City started a women's section. Whether either of them were aware that moves had actually been afoot for almost a year to start one isn't clear from the actual articles. The basic problem was twofold - the lack of anyone to organise it, and the existence but total lack of activity of Leeds Women's A.C. The first move, however, appears to have come in April 1970, and actually came from long-standing official Phyllis Pope, secretary of Leeds Women's, who wrote to the Club to offer to amalgamate the two bodies. The letter was read at the Annual General Meeting, and the Club cautiously

invited Mrs. Pope to "put her ideas to the Committee" at a future date. This transpired as early June, when Mrs Pope attended a meeting which approved the idea in principle, but resolved that "we must not rush into anything." In the meantime, any women and girls who came to train were to be encouraged as far as possible. They were as good as their word; nothing was actually done until the following April, after Roger's article had appeared. One of the main stumbling-blocks was that none of the older - and exclusively male - officials had much experience of dealing with women in athletic surroundings; and one or two who had were more than a bit misogynistic. In addition, organising a new section would stretch severely the resources of a Club that was only just building them. At the 1971 A.G.M., therefore, it was resolved that a Women's Section would be formed by amalgamation if Mrs Pope could find at least three people who would assist in running it. On receiving a reply that she'd found more than that, the amalgamation took place.

It was definitely a case of cometh the hour, cometh the woman - among the people who agreed to help with the new girls was Pat Brewster. Already well known within the Club, and the local athletics community, as the mother of three actively-competing sons, she was regarded by some members - in particular the "British Irwin" gang - as a typical middle-class "pushy parent;" it was to be a revelation to several of their number just how useful a well-organised middle-class lady can be, and an admirable lesson in not judging books by covers, nor (to be frank) letting prejudices get in the way of really knowing people. Pat was one of those approached (she recalls it being "someone from the Council" who did so, but can't remember who) and agreed to be the first team manager. In a phone conversation Pat recalled to the writer that there was a certain amount of resistance to the idea of a women's section from some of the "flat cap brigade," as she calls them; however she also recalled that the same people who grunted about it - the likes of George Stead, Harry Boddill and Arthur Cockcroft - were later to become among the staunchest supporters. Her contribution to the first years of the Women's section of Leeds City was enormous; without her it could easily have fallen flat.

Just how quickly the process was concluded can be judged by the fact that only weeks later', in the first week of June, Eileen Pitts became the Club's first Yorkshire Champion when she took the Intermediate Long-Jump title at Middlesbrough. An outstanding long-jumper and hurdler, already being coached by Dave Young, her presence was another catalyst pushing Pat into action; she simply didn't want to see another outstanding young Leeds athlete go outside the city to develop, as Joslyn Hoyte had been forced to do. In that first summer there were not many other girls around; it was to be a year or two before the section grew. However, it made its sartorial mark straight away; Pat insisted that the Leeds City men's vest looked too much like Dorothy Hyman Track Club's colours, so after 1973 for the first few seasons the women ran in different colours - yellow with a blue diagonal. Pat had obviously never heard of Jarrow and Hebburn!

An interesting local Championship race was also reported on that summer, which can be taken as an indication of the low standard of facilities or the high standard of middle-distance performances of the time, as the reader chooses. It came when the West Yorkshire League, which by now was well established, ran its 800m championship; it was won by Alan Gibson of Bingley Harriers, in a time inside 1.55, with Malcolm Cox and Pete

Bygate second and third, in 1.56.6 and 1.56.9. Not a bad standard race for any era at this sort of level; but the point is that it was run at Spring Hall, Halifax, on a grass track with a notorious slope.

There was also more activity on the road running front; in fact 1971 was to make a considerable mark on the performance lists for the longer events. A new name which appeared early in the year was that of, Phil Puckrin, like John Lunn a former Middlesbrough man, who had moved to Leeds in about 1970, and stayed for some time; in April he registered 2.32.40 on the Huddersfield course, a particularly testing one involving two big climbs in the Holmfirth area. John himself had from the time point of view his best year at the longer distances. He again ran the East Hull 20, and finished third in a very strong field, setting a personal best of 1.44.40, which he thinks is the fastest ever done by a Leeds City member (though records at the distance have not been kept); he recalls passing Bingley's Alan Spence with about a mile to go to make sure of County selection. Winner Keith Angus, from Sheffield A.C., was at the time ineligible to run for Yorkshire, having represented Worcestershire the previous year (but on the track rather than the road); so John, Alan and John Newsome formed a potentially very strong team for the Inter-County race. Unfortunately all three of them chose Spring Bank Holiday Monday to run their worst race of the year! John's other big improvement came in the second Maxol Marathon in July, which was the trial for the European Games, and consequently a high-quality affair; it was won by Ron Hill with a British best performance, while in second place Trevor Wright ran what was up to then the fastest time ever done by anyone in his debut at the distance. John wasn't quite in that company, but nonetheless he did himself justice, finishing 34th of over 500 and improving his Club record to 2.23.30, which stood for over a decade. The previous year he had experimented with carbohydrate-loading, and not been convinced of the result; on this occasion his pre-race diet preparation was more what present-day members might expect of him - he recalls it as "four pints and a Chinese meal the previous night. He also came close to dropping out with a twinge of cramp at 15 miles; but when he slowed down to get to a marshal it eased off, so he picked up again to beat John Newsome for the only time that year.

It's quite difficult to decide how strong the Club was in track and field terms after its first four years of existence; partly because you first have to decide what to measure it against. In one sense it was immensely stronger than anything there had been before in Leeds - but that was because there really hadn't been anything before in Leeds. It was probably the strongest club in Yorkshire - but that was again because very few of the rival clubs had any more tradition of track and field than Leeds had. Looking at the 1970 league results - the only ones, thanks to a notebook of Ray Barrow's surviving, that are available in full, the Club depended on a small number of individuals in a lot of events, and could be stressed if any of them were missing.

One possible source of insight into the level of performance is the Club's all-time ranking lists, but imperfections in the compiling have to be allowed for; the fact that recent research has filled a considerable number of gaps from the period doesn't mean that more gaps haven't been left gaping. The picture the Lists show at the time of writing (Spring of 2002) is that comparatively few performances from the period 1967-71 survive in the lists. Most of those that do are at Senior or Under-20 level; this isn't surprising, as there was no formal team competition

covering all events for Under-17s and below at the time. One major point of interest is that the only area in which there could be said to be any concentration of 'ancient' marks still standing is in the sprints - five marks in the 100 metres, three in the 200 and four in the 400 on the 25-deep lists. They include the only individual Senior record still standing from that time - Eric Pape's much-equalled but never certainly surpassed 10.5 at Blackburn in 1969. The pre-eminence of this discipline has to go down to Ray Barrow, who was already coaching and advising. It's also interesting that the sprinters came from a number of sources; Glen Beaumont inherited from Leeds A.C. as a Senior, Paul Temporal from Leeds Grammar School, Stephen Ward by contrast from Matthew Murray School, Keith Boothroyd and Colin Lambert (both Juniors at the time) moving from Wakefield Harriers to get better coaching from Ray, and Eric from Leeds University, not having been a club member in his native north-east.

Apart from this group, only odd performances still survive as good enough to rank - Mike Baxter and Malcolm Cox among middle-distance runners, David Lyall among hurdlers, John Saunders around most field events, Mike Gledhill in the lateral jumps, Mike Carpenter in the Hammer. It has to be remembered that most of the performances of this period, even including championships and league matches, would have been done on shale tracks. How much allowance can you make to compare, for instance, Malcolm's 14.33.0 5000, knowing it was done at Marley Stadium, Keighley; is it intrinsically better than (say) Simon Deakin's 14.25.8 in a specially-arranged event on tartan at Solihull in 2001? You could argue forever. This is in fact another reason why so few times survive from 1967-71 - many of the athletes, as all-weather tracks became more common after those years, went a lot faster. The lists also reveal the perennial problem of athletics - the promising youngsters who for whatever reason never make it. The only other Club record to survive from the period is the prodigious 54.90 Discus throw of Jonathan Hartley; no other member has got within eight metres of it in thirty years, but he doesn't ever appear to have thrown much as an under-20, much less a Senior. Sometimes the explanation is a very prosaic one - for instance in 1969 Len l'Anson ran an outstanding (for the day) 6.11.0 2000-metre Steeplechase as a Junior. The time ought to have indicated a great future in the event; yet the best that "Mister L.J." ever achieved in later years was 9.34.6. The reason was that he simply didn't like steeplechasing, and could only occasionally be persuaded to do one.

By the end of 1971 it's safe to say that both on the track and in the 'Harriers' events Leeds City had become an established presence, and that there was a feeling of progress being made. More importantly, the people were in place who had both the drive and the ability to contribute to further advance. What was certainly not in place yet was an adequate venue to build a club, a fact highlighted by an article in the Skyrack Express which quoted Dave Young. Dave had spent his summer holiday that year in Scandinavia, part of it watching the European Games to report on Mike Baxter's performance, and he made some cutting comparisons between facilities in Leeds and those in much smaller towns in Sweden and Finland.

He reckoned that even towns with populations as small as 20,000 in the latter country had well-maintained tracks, and contrasted that with Templenewsam, which he pithily described, picking up every unsatisfactory feature from the lack of spectator seating, loose surface and 'dead' jumping run-ups to the inadequate and often

inoperative showers. He noted that if the Club were to qualify for the British Athletic League it would only be able to stage a match in the city at the "privately-owned" Weetwood track, and was more likely - as it already had for the Northern League - to take its fixtures to Cleckheaton. The newspaper also published the response from the Council's parks Director, L. G. Knight, which admitted the shortcomings, blamed either lack of finance or vandalism for most of them, and promised improvements ranging from a steeplechase water-jump to a throwing cage - none of which were to emerge in the next few years. The Club was to receive many similar assurances and many similar cases of lack of performance over the next decade as it continued to battle to persuade the local authority to provide suitable facilities - and that struggle was to be, in the words of a song of the time, a "long and winding road."

## Chapter 4: The roots of Leeds AC

The winter season of 1971-2 was not to be one of the most distinguished in the Club's history, but it did start out with a landmark; in October Leeds City staged its first major championship. The Club had been awarded the Northern 6-stage Road Relay, and chose to stage it from Cross Green School, on a course that thirty years on would raise eyebrows in several directions. In recent years most such relays have been run on hard tarmac paths in public parks; anything else would be homicidal in modern traffic conditions. The course selected started in the Cross Green industrial estate, went into the socially-deprived (even then) Osmondthorpe council estate, cut through a number of back-streets into East End Park, and returned to the start by using the pavement on a notorious blind bridge over the railway by the now-closed Bridgefield pub. Today the combination of police disapproval and anti-social possibilities would render the course impractical; in 1971 it seemed to raise little comment.

In organisational terms the race went well; certainly it was well discussed at Committee meetings beforehand, though after the fashion of athletic clubs everything seemed to be discussed but the race. The vast majority of space in the Minutes of the preceding meeting were taken up with discussions about providing refreshments; the only organisational matter was a request from Arthur Cockcroft for nine marshals, which got almost a passing reference. Anyway, Roger Norton's Evening Post column described the conduct of the event as "a credit to the Club." It was certainly organised well enough to get the Club awarded the A.A.A. Championship on the same course the following year.

Competitively, however, it wasn't so good; the team which had been hoping to crown the Club's biggest day so far flopped disastrously into 13th place, not enough - in those stringent qualifying times - to gain a place in the A.A.A. event at Southport two weeks later. Mike Baxter recalls that he ran slowly - for him - due to having got back from holiday the day before; the only member of the squad who got a mention from Roger for running a fair leg was John Lunn - and he wasn't in the fastest dozen times. Bolton United won the race, with the strongest Yorkshire challenge coming from Sheffield United Harriers.

In fact, the 1971 winter was a disappointing season all round for the Senior cross-country squad. Perusal of the local press gives few mentions of any serious team success; while Longwood, Bingley and Airedale & Spen Valley fought out the local League events, Leeds City barely rated a mention. The Seniors actually finished 5th team overall, but were not only beaten by the three above, but on one occasion at least by Skyrac A.C. Perhaps this was less surprising than it appears at first; this was the period when Dave Slater first made his mark as a Senior, and a very considerable mark on West Yorkshire, and national, distance-running it was to be. Part of the problem, at any rate, seemed to be that athletes were for the first time being asked to pay an entry fee for League races; the old Leeds & District league had always been free entry, and by the sound of comments passed in Committee a lot of runners didn't like the change. The one moment of something like success appeared in the Club's own Aaron races, where a team of Bruce Kilner, John Lunn, Mike Baxter and Malcolm Cox finished within six seconds of Bolton; but two-mile blasts are little pointer to success in longer races, and there wasn't much of that.

One problem for the Club was establishing a winter training venue. From the beginning the lads had used Harehills Harriers' old stamping-ground at the Liberal Club; but while this was free, and had the benefit (for the more social members) of a bar with cheap ale, it had no showering facilities, and was pretty basic. The athletes changed in the Committee Room, around a large table, and it could be quite fun falling over all your mates on the way out! It wasn't particularly suitable for young kids, and as a female section developed it wasn't suitable for them at all.

Meanwhile out in the east John Smeaton High School was developing as about the first school in Leeds to have community-use sports facilities, and Dave Young in particular was anxious for the Club to use it. 1971-2 was the first season when some people did; but it had a number of disadvantages. It was right on the edge of Leeds; bus services, more important then, were infrequent; and above all people had to pay. The Club eased the matter by block-buying enough of the Council's Leisurecards to cover those who used it, but it never really took off fully; by the end of the decade it had become established that the younger athletes used Smeaton and the Seniors used the Liberal Club.

Yet in hindsight this period was to see the beginnings of the development of the Club's first outstanding period as a Senior Harriers' club, and the rise of a team which, until very recently, held the high-spots of its level of achievement in this area of the sport. Three indicators, in the same period, pointed the way. The first was the continued progress of the Juniors, even when they began to go away to University. Simon Richardson went to Sheffield to study dentistry; Alan Black to Newcastle, and Martin Dell to Cambridge; and that autumn reports of their university exploits appeared quite regularly in the Evening Post. In December Martin made history by becoming the Club's first Cambridge Blue, finishing fourth in the Varsity Race; Messrs Lunn, Rhys and Hudson had already represented "the other place," and Richard Brewster ran for Oxford in the same race as Martin. (In those long-gone days, the Varsity cross-country match was a significant enough fixture to make the back pages of the 'broadsheets.') A Junior team seemed to be in the building.

Lower down the ages, new names were also appearing. The Leeds Schools' League of that winter was dominated as Senior level by Bill Ward, an amiable former member of Harrogate A.C. who had moved to Temple Moor and was to be around the Club for a number of years, until his untimely early death from cancer in his early thirties. At a younger level another new name was appearing - in duplicate. The 'Smeaton Effect' was coming through strongly; Dave Young was building up a formidable spirit among the kids at that school, and seemed to be able to take them, as a team, all over the place (they regularly competed, for instance, in the Midlands.) Most of the better lads became members of Leeds City; and the Smeaton Name of 1971 was Cahill. At the Under-14 level Sean began winning events regularly; two years below younger brother Simon was also featuring, though not at first as highly. Both became Club members in January 1972. Other Smeaton youngsters who were to appear in Leeds City colours - Donald Robins, Martin Waterhouse and Brian Lazenby, for instance - all got mentions in the local papers. Dave was already looking for competition for his charges further afield; in 1971-2 several John Smeaton youngsters were reported as taking part in events as far away as Leicester, where Sean Cahill set what was then a Club Under-15 record for 3000m.

There was, however, a further Smeaton effect - from the staff. The Aaron report mentioned that Leeds City had not yet been able to field their newest recruit - Dave Nicholl. The former Loughborough College student had taken a job at John Smeaton in 1970, and was persuaded after a year to leave his previous club, Halifax Harriers, principally because of his coaching involvement with the youngsters who had joined Leeds City. Already a formidable performer over 1500 metres, Dave was to give Leeds City several years of good service on track and country; and he was the first in a number of athletes who were to come into the Club in the next three years or so. In 1972 they were joined by Chris Hudson, who survived the culture shock of moving from Ampleforth College to east Leeds; perhaps it wasn't such a shock as all that to a lad brought up about half a mile from Armley Town Street. Also in the seventies Huw Pryderi Rhys was on the staff at Smeaton; in fact, as Dave Young could also run a bit when he got stuck in, the staff could turn out quite a fair four-man relay squad.

It wasn't all Smeaton, though; the same meeting saw the election of Mike Sherman to membership, and he was to bring a fair few athletes across from Garforth over the next thirty years. In the early days the main names from that source was Martin Stoker and Gary Bell, both of whom figured prominently in Leeds Schools' events at the time. They were joined by Sean Garrity, from Dave's former school at Temple Moor, Richard Horsman from Matthew Murray, where John Lunn was teaching, and a Pudsey youngster called Neil Jennings - not the same Neil Jennings who was to figure some years later. This group had quite a bit of success in local races in the autumn of 1971. The Club wasn't the only thing Mike was elected to; in the same year he became Hon. Secretary of the Leeds Schools Cross-Country Association, thus beginning a connection with organising schools' athletics in Leeds which has remained unbroken since.

On an individual level Mike Baxter was continuing his success story; one change in it was that during the latter months of 1971 his name regularly appeared in English Cross-Country Union teams taking part in races on the continent. In November he finished fifth behind Lutz Philipp of West Germany in Bonn; the next month he was

second to the legendary "Tricky Gaston" Roelants in Luxembourg, ahead of two of the more consistent English distance-runners of the period, Andy Holden and Phil Banning. However, it is noticeable that all these trips were, comparatively speaking, near home; Mike's employers were no more generous with time off than in the Commonwealth Games year, and Mike could only manage trips where he could fly out on Saturday morning, race on Sunday, and get an evening flight back. His first major local success should have been the Yorkshire C.A.A.A. Championship at Hull; but he fell with two miles to go, and only managed third behind Slater.

Mike, in fact, did little turning out in Championships that year; he was looking for an Olympic place, being selective about his racing, and getting what international experience he could. There seems to have been some comment made about this by other athletes; at any rate Mike felt strongly enough to write to the committee complaining about comments that had been passed. He explained his reasons for not turning out in Championships, and asked that his stance be backed. The committee recorded its support of Mike, and the matter was not raised again.

His absence showed in the Club's Championship placings. The Yorkshire saw quite a reasonable score of 211 points in fifth, led home by Dave Nicholl (17) with Phil Puckrin (27) the only other finisher in the first thirty. The Club's performance, however, caused some of the older Committee members to be strongly critical of a "lack of team spirit," which in their view caused by "small groups training on their own and not training together as a team." There was no lack of spirit among the younger age-groups, however; three of the team (Martin Dell, Alan Black and Sid Richardson) had been selected for the Yorkshire Under-20 team, and at the Association Championships Sean Cahill took a bronze medal in the under-15s and led a team consisting of Nicholas Bailey, Donald Robins and Graham Needham to silver medals, while Sean Garrity and Alan Black took individual bronzes.

The Northern was not a good show all round on Leeds City's part, according to Dave Young's report. In the Seniors, with Dave 47th, Huw Pryderi Rhys 86th, and 634 points amassed in 14th. Clearly several leading lights were missing - no mention of Lunn, Pannell, Cox, etc (though a report in the Skyrack Express points out that John was injured). Among the youngsters only a fourth place in the Under-17s by Sean Garrity relieved the gloom, and Dave was pretty scathing about the poor turn-out. When it came to the 1972 National the Club finished 75th of 92 teams, and amassed, on the official result sheets at least, the massive total of 3,469 - the highest score in its history. But the story isn't quite as simple as that.

For whatever reason the writer missed the 1972 National, he is profoundly grateful he did! The race was held at Sutton Coldfield, and has gone down as possibly the most notorious National of the last half-century, for one reason alone - the weather! The course in Sutton Park was over fair country, but crossed several ditches and a ford; and like many 'National' courses it was some distance - about two miles - from the school being used for changing. The Youths' race (in which Bill Ward finished 112th) was run in wintry, but pleasant conditions, but rain

appeared to be in the offing; by the Junior race (of which more later) the rain was falling, but it wasn't particularly cold.

Many of the Senior field, especially the front runners aiming for speed, were wearing only singlet and shorts - it was March, after all. Nobody could have predicted at the start that within twenty minutes the rain would turn to wet, cloying snow and a nearly gale-force wind would be blowing down the last more or less straight mile. From then on it turned into an endurance test - which a lot of people didn't pass! The horror stories ranged all down the field as athletes were overcome by hypothermia; even such a redoubtable performer as Trevor Wright was caught out, slipping from fifth to 23rd and falling five times in the last mile, and Dave Slater suffered a similar trauma and finished up in an ambulance. He wasn't the only one; the Athletics Weekly report talks about athletes huddling in the officials' tent, weeping with cold, and frightened at what was happening to them - we knew less about hypothermia then. Many competitors suffered on the way back to the changing rooms, and most of Birmingham's ambulance fleet was called out to cope. The Club's performance was affected by one weather-related incident; our score should have been about 400 points less, but when the Club officials finally got a frozen Len l'Anson on the bus he was still clutching his disc in his clenched hand - so after all that he was never recorded as finishing. Mick Stark recalls Dave Nicholl sitting on the bus, covered in a blanket and still shivering half an hour after finishing, being fed whisky by one of the Club's Vice-Presidents.

For the record, the six who got through the funnel were Dave Nicholl (181), Richard Spirett (471), Peter Edwards (549), Dennis Wood (699 - it would take more than weather to stop him!), Allan Lawton (756) and Rod Futtrell (813). The Club also was to have a future interest in the winner - Thames Valley Harriers' Welsh international Malcolm Thomas, who was having probably his best-ever season. It could, however, have been significant that he was one of those who wore a t-shirt under his vest.

Somewhat forgotten amid all this, the Junior team had produced the Club's best performance of the day. They finished eighth in an excellent field, with the first three packing well up - Martin Dell 18th, Sid Richardson 22nd, and Alan Black 26th - and Richard, the eldest of the Brewsters, rounding off in 133rd place. The merit of the front three's performance might best be pointed out by looking at who else was in the field. The winner was David Black, who was already a track international; second and third were Ray Smedley and Julian Goater, who were to be fixtures on international teams for several years in the late seventies and early eighties; 11th and 12th were Bernie Ford and Dave Moorcroft; and one place behind Sid finished Charlie Spedding. Something of a Who's Who of the next fifteen years!

1972 was the beginning of a period of Track & Field development characterised by two things - the building-up of an underlying strength that had not previously been present, and the frustration of dominating the north but repeatedly failing to enter the British Athletics League. As with other aspects of the Club, it was also the period when the Women's side of the Club began to emerge slowly from its fledgling status into a serious contender in

local level competition at least. Frustration was to be evident in other areas too; the continued absence of anything resembling suitable facilities to develop the sport properly.

The theme was taken up (again) by Roger Norton in his Evening Post preview of the season, in which he contrasted the state of Temple Newsam with Cleckheaton, where "every effort is being made to ensure that (facilities) are as good as cinder tracks and run-ups can be." He dramatically juxtaposed this with a description of Temple Newsam stating that "athletes...would be risking injury by using...the jump run-ups," and noting that while steeplechase facilities had been promised the water-jump barrier was yet to be fitted. Cleckheaton was gaining a reputation as "the athletics centre of the West Riding," and had been awarded the Northern Senior Championships for the year; clearly much of the reason for this was the fact that Spensborough Urban District Council saw such events as one of the few ways it could gain regional prestige, and its concern to do so was sharply different from local government attitudes in Leeds - and for that matter Wakefield, where the track was in a similar state. It wasn't even entirely ours to use; for a long time the Centre was used for football, and in August 1973 the Committee reported a clash between footballers and hammer-throwers over its use. (With all the advances in facilities since, that particular problem is still around!) There was only one improvement at Temple Newsam; in the spring of 1972 a Tartan run-up was laid for the long- and triple-jump pit.

His prediction of the team competition for the season, in which the Northern League expanded from three divisions to five, was that both Leeds City and Stretford would be in the frame to take part in the British League qualifying match - not a surprising opinion after the previous year's close contest. However, the first match, at Cleckheaton in May, saw the Club start out on what was to be a 'clean-sweep' season with a 27-point victory; and confidence was such that at the next Committee meeting Ray Barrow was already suggesting that a coach be booked for the Qualifier in September. Clearly, something had given the Club an edge over Stretford they didn't have in the previous year, and the analysis of individual scorers reveals some of the causes.

The team had been boosted in strength, among other things, by an incursion from West Germany, as it then was, by recruiting a couple of language 'assistants' working in Leeds schools for a year. Both made an impact; Bernd Neef had already won an impressive 800 in the season's first Open Meeting at Keighley, and at Leicester in April claimed a share, with Malcolm Cox, Chris Hudson and Peter Bygate, in the Senior 4x800m Relay record which remained unchallenged for eighteen years. He was to win two of the three B-string 800 metre events during the season, but at the first match his compatriot Dieter Banz made a considerably bigger mark. He scored 36 points, including B-string wins in the 110m Hurdles and Pole Vault, combining respectively with Dave Warburton and John Sneideris for maxima. The only other full-pointer in the first meeting came in the Steeplechase, from Bruce Kilner and Len l'Anson, both of whom were late replacements; the sole A string wins were the 4x400 team and Chris Hudson in the 800, while B-string wins came from Mike Gledhill (Triple Jump, Mike Carpenter (Hammer), John Lunn (5000m) and Dave Nicholl (1500m). Some of the A-strings who didn't win were up against fierce opposition; Mike Baxter, for instance, lost the 1500 to Stretford's Andy Carter, who still holds the League 800m record after nearly thirty years. Two other newcomers appeared scoring well in the 440m Hurdles - David

Brewster set a personal best of 57 seconds, and Brian Scott, a newly-appointed doctor at St. James' also ran inside sixty.

Another formidable figure - in every sense of the word - emerged into more regular competition; second in the Hammer at Cleckheaton, and winner at Hull, was Hugh Richardson. Hugh was one of those slightly larger-than-life characters that athletics seems to throw up; a Cumbrian, a respected practising solicitor whose preferred mode of transport was a very large motor-cycle (not the Harley-Davidson that the writer had long thought, but according to Ray Barrow a shaft-drive B.M.W.), he was a mighty competitor, although already approaching the veteran stage. He was also possessed of a considerable, and occasionally volcanic, temperament, and was not a person to be trifled with. The writer remembers a memorable occasion at the Inter-Counties Championships at Leicester in 1970, when Hugh arrived in the afternoon, due to misinformation, to compete for Cumberland & Westmoreland in an event that had taken place in the morning. How he managed it was not clear - but somehow he took his six throws in splendid isolation before the rest of the field competition could continue.

Hull, in June, saw an even more dominant Leeds City, storming to a 56-point victory with four maximum-point events and three other wins. One was the familiar Baxter-Cox double in the 1500m, with Mike producing a 3.48.2 clocking which Roger Norton saw as part of "timing his Olympic campaign well." The others were in the 400m, where Pete Bygate was partnered by Leeds University student Andy Robertson, another new face in the team; the Hammer, with Terry Garrett backing Hugh up; and the 5000m, here yet another incomer, former Mitcham athlete Graham Mountcastle, made his first appearance behind, but not far behind, Dave Nicholl. Dave Warburton had another Hurdles/High Jump double, and Bernd Neef took the B 800m. With an 83-point margin of safety, it was going to take more than home advantage for Stretford to prevent the Club from reaching the Qualifier by right; and now the Committee was discussing selection trials, using the popular Hardaker-King Trophy meeting at Keighley for the purpose.

Between the two matches the Club had picked up its expected bag of titles at the Yorkshire Championships at Hull, though Mike Baxter once again wasn't among them; Malcolm Cox had the hex over him when it came to that particular event. There was a Hurdles double from Dave Warburton and Brian Scott, while John Sneideris took the Pole Vault, and Keith Boothroyd "caught the eye" taking the Junior 400m. Dave and Keith were to go on to take Northern titles later in the year. The separate Women's event at Rotherham saw the Club gain its first Senior medal from discus-thrower Gillian Anderson, who took silver with 31.96; Gillian was to reappear under another two names over the next few years. There was also an early female record when Eileen Pitts won the Intermediate Pentathlon with 3.230 points; she was to break it later in the year with 3,289 when she took one of her two W.A.A.A. Championship silver medals, the other being the Long Jump with 5.42. This still remains second on the Club list, and always will; nowadays Under-17s do all seven events. There was progress, but as yet there wasn't a women's team - when the suggested formation of a Northern Women's League was discussed by the Committee, it was agreed to vote in favour, but that there was little likelihood of the Club turning out in it in the immediate future.

One undoubted source of underlying strength was that some talented youngsters were beginning to appear; and one of the major names of the next few years was elected to membership in June. It was a name already well known around sporting Leeds - Staniland; Andy's father Arthur played centre for Leeds (no nasal horns then!) in the 1950s, and Andy himself combined a lengthy athletic career with playing on the wing for Roundhay R.U.F.C., achieving B international selection. He had, according to an e-mail he sent the writer, been competing for the Club in the previous season without actually becoming a member; but in 1972 he became part of a pretty formidable Under-17 sprint squad. In the days before the Young Athletes' League their main competition came in Schools' and Open Championships; and in 1972 Andy, Steve Rowley, Rowan Black and Bill O'Neill ran 45.7 at Cleckheaton in the Northern Championships. All four were to make some impact as Seniors, though Andy and Steve were to have the longest connection; Andy and Rowan still hold a share of the 100m Club record.

Andy, however, wasn't one of the eleven Leeds City members to take Yorkshire Schools' titles that year. Six of them, all Under-15s (Junior Boys in those days) came from John Smeaton, and all bar one were field eventers. Two left lasting marks; at Washington, Co. Durham in July Tony Chapman finished second in the English Schools' 400m and Cameron Davies occupied the same place, and both the 52.5 Tony ran in the heat and Cameron's 43.32 throw remain Club records thirty years later. The four others from what was becoming the Leeds Schools' engine room included shot-putter Paul Armstrong and Javelin-thrower Chris Harbage, Triple-jumper Tony Dean and pole-vaulter Paul Todd; while from elsewhere in the city came long-jumper Martin Coleman, Under-17 triple-jumper Steve McGuire, and on the female side Eileen Pitts and Gillian Anderson. As ever, some made only a brief mark on Club affairs, but several were around for long enough to perform well at Senior level.

The third league match at Stretford was chiefly notable for a blistering 5000m from Mike Baxter; just how blistering the writer remembers well. Mike was rated as a contender for the Olympics at one of the longer track distances; he had already achieved the qualifying standard for 5000m the year before at Helsinki, but was well aware this might not be enough with the opponents that were about at the time. For once, therefore, Mike abandoned his usual shorter-race tactic and asked to do the 5000, with the intention of replicating what he might have to do if he got to Munich - two hard races in a few days. In the week before the Stretford event he'd done 13.49 in Warsaw, and in the League match he set out with the intention of running the first mile as hard as he could. The atmosphere of the race seemed to be catching; for when Mike went through the first lap in a blistering 62 seconds, his second-string John Lunn was only two strides behind. They both paid for it; Mike ran out of steam over the last four, and came in with 14.02.6, while even though he set a personal best (14.39.4) that stayed in the Top 25 for another thirty years, John recalls the end of the race as a sort of red mist with Wakefield's Duncan Gaskell closing hand-over-fist. He - just - held on.

Thirty years on Mike could not recall his motivation for the race until he consulted his training diaries; but he recalled the outcome in the A.A.A. Championships a fortnight later, and reckoned he had probably made an error. He had been undecided about sticking with the 5,000 or moving up to the 10,000, an event at which he

hadn't thus far shown the same form but at which he should, if he had concentrated on it, done well. He stuck to 'known territory' - and found himself in another of the great races, in which Dave Bedford missed Ron Clarke's world record by 0.6 seconds (13.17.2), and Ian McCafferty and Ian Stewart ran two of the fastest times in the world that year. Mike trailed in 12th in a respectable but not (for him) outstanding 13.51.4; the following day's 10,000 (which Bedford also won) saw many of the field drop out in the heat and Dave Holt, an athlete Mike rated as one he could beat, get into the team with a comparatively modest time. Looking back, Mike is convinced he could have made it.

Again the Club won the match, holding off Stretford by a mere seven points this time; and again there were some formidable performances. Malcolm Cox stepped down to 800m, and performed his 'head waiter' act to good effect, with Bernd Neef making a maximum of it; Sid Richardson and Bruce Kilner did likewise in the 'Chase, and the only reason the 400m didn't follow suit was that Andy Carter stepped down to prevent Pete Bygate teaming up for twenty with Andy Robertson. The field wasn't quite as well covered, but there were B string wins for Mick Gledhill (long jump), Mike Spiers (triple) and Kevin Atkinson (pole vault.) The club's foot was in the British League door. Unfortunately, that was as far as it got in 1972 - and for another six years!

The Club was well aware that getting in the British League would require a full-strength team; but for the first effort circumstances were against it. For a start, the Qualifier was in London, at Crystal Palace; this meant that the Club had to travel a lot further than it was used to. Secondly, the Northern League, with its three-match structure, was over in July, and some athletes had clearly lost enthusiasm, whereas the Southern League had already, by that date, gone on to its 25-club, six-match divisional structure which meant that the League season extended to the end of August.

Allowing for all this, however, the fact was that in 1972 Leeds City lost its chance in the throws - because Hugh Richardson injured himself two days before the event, and three other throwers, in the Evening Post's words, "failed to turn up without any explanation." The fact that this left team manager Ray Barrow as the main thrower is indicative of the hole created; Roger Norton estimated it cost the Club fifty points, and with those we could have finished second and qualified.

Some people were certainly committed to the task; none more so than Mike Baxter, who not only ran the 5000m but for about the only time in his senior career turned out in the Steeplechase, and made a fair fist of it. His 9.03.4 for second place (behind another name not widely known at the distance, Luton's Tony Simmons) still, thirty years later, remains the fifth fastest in Club history; and he was well supported by Sid Richardson, who set a personal best of 9.23.4 winning the B race. B string wins also came in the 5000m, from John Lunn, and the 400m Hurdles, from David Brewster, and Chris Hudson and Dave Nicholl picked up a second place in the 800m and 1500m respectively; triple-jumper Mike Spiers set another PB, and Roger in his post-meeting article particularly praised pole-vaulters Kevin Atkinson and Jim Dugdale, both teenagers. Generally, however, it was a disappointing end to a promising season.

One aspect of future British League membership was already impinging on Club thinking - it was going to cost a lot in travel terms (the League was, as now but not as later, unsponsored.) Funds were going to have to be raised - and somebody had the idea, still quite novel at the time, of a Sponsored Run, of two hours round the Templenewsam track. The sum raised sounds fairly petty now - £222.78 - but at the time was well worth having; in those days you could buy a house for just under £4,000. (The writer knows - he did!) Quite a large number of members, old and young, covered as much distance as they could; one party, led needless to say by Mike Baxter and including most of the senior distance regulars of the time, kept going for the whole time, though not flat out. Ray Barrow recalls running further at a stretch than ever before or since in his life - "kept jogging and stopping for a bit, trundling on as best I could; I couldn't walk for the next three days!" The abiding memory, however, in the writer's mind is not of the runners - but of Harry Rose.

Every Club at some time has a Harry Rose. A veteran of the pre-war days of Harehills Harriers, Harry, a Vice-President of the Club in the days when that honour gave the right to attend and vote in committee meetings, was the classic Old Curmudgeon, or so it seemed; permanently questioning the bright, thrusting ideas of the younger generation, endlessly critical of anything too high-flying, and invariably wanting everything costed! To some of the Bright Young Things around the Committee - the Lunnns, Rhyses and Kilners among them - Harry was a bit of a pain in the backside - until the Sponsored Run. On that day Harry, who was in his seventies but always went out for his Sunday 'constitutional,' turned up with stout shoes, trilby hat and walking-stick and walked round Templenewsam track for two hours to raise his bit towards the funds. After that, as far as the writer was concerned, Harry could be as much of a curmudgeon as he liked! (He wasn't spared long to do so. One Sunday in March two years later he was out for his Sunday walk, and near the Red Lion pub in Shadwell waved a greeting as he passed Baxter, Nicholl, Pannell and a group of the lads out for their long Sunday run. They ran round the corner; he walked 100 yards up the road - and had a massive coronary that killed him. It was probably the way he would have wanted to go!)

The 1972-3 winter season was to see several more signs of the steady development of the Club's strength, though the start wasn't over auspicious. The Club warmed up for staging the National Relay by finishing a slightly-improved ninth in the northern event at Sefton Park, Liverpool, much of the credit going to Mike Baxter running the fourth-fastest leg of the day. It was something of a similar story at Cross Green; after a sound start by Dave Nicholl and John Lunn put the team on the edge of the first ten, and Huw Pryderi Rhys dropped a few to fast men, Mike ran the fourth best time of the day to hit ninth. Ron Pannell and an apparently of-colour Malcolm Cox only dropped a couple, for a fair finish. At least this time we were there - but as hosts we'd have been expected to be.

On the organisational front the event was a great success, again due to planning which has started early; Northern treasurer Gordon Wright was inspecting the course as early as the preceding April. Roger Norton, however, was very critical of the lack of general support for the Club's efforts. Today we're used to fifty or sixty teams at least in the equivalent race; but in 1972 only 23 turned out. In some part this was due to regionalism; only Reading appeared from the South, and City of Stoke (the winners), Tipton and Small Heath from the Midlands. Roger was quite scathing about the absence of clubs who would have had little difficulty getting to Leeds by motorway; but considerably more so of the leading Northern clubs, such as Sale, and even major local names of the time such as Longwood, who didn't show. It was still fairly difficult to get clubs to travel to any event outside their area except the 'traditional' Championships, and some areas - the North-East particularly - were much worse than others.

Early-season cross-country seemed to confirm that the Club was getting a bit stronger at Senior level, and also showed one reason why; a number of 'outside' recruits appear for the first time. The first West Yorkshire League race saw former Skyrac member Martin Brown turn out for the first time; he finished 15th as fourth counter in a team which also included Messrs. Baxter, Nicholl and Lunn ahead of him. Martin was around for a only a couple of seasons; not quite as long as another interesting recruit, whose first appearance was running in the Club's B team at the Aaron Relays, drew a prophetic comment from Roger Norton in the Green 'Un. He said the second-leg runner, newly moved from Darlington Harriers, "should be an asset to the Club;" even he would hardly have predicted that Brian Hilton would turn out for the Club in a national senior relay championship thirty years later! The Aaron that year saw the Club win everything in the relay - first A, first B, and first Vets' team. It certainly attracted opposition of a high quality; John Lunn, taking over in the lead, lost one place to "promising Loughborough student" Dave Moorcroft, and yet again it was Mike Baxter who fashioned a win. With a two seconds and a third in the three West Yorkshire League races, the Club's overall performance was a great deal more solid; in the second fixture the team of Mike (2), Martin (5), Brian (19) and Ron Pannell (19) did well to finish second allowing for the absence of Dave Nicholl, Malcolm Cox and John Lunn, who went to try their hand at indoor running at Cosford - on the then brand-new banked wooden track. (They all ran respectable 300m times.) Mike and Martin were ever-present, and both Dave and John appeared more regularly; behind them the likes of Phil Puckrin, Huw Pryderi Rhys and Richard Spirett gave increasing signs of solidity.

The other area where the team picked up strength was as some of its promising youngsters grew up. Though Alan Black ceased to feature in results, both Martin Dell and Simon Richardson were coming on apace. Martin's senior contribution was still in the future, but 'Sid' had graduated to the senior ranks, and in the early season was showing real promise. He won the Northern U.A.U selection race in November, and in January was second counter in the Yorkshire C.C.A. team (of which more shortly.) In February he finished 21st in the British Universities' Championship, five places behind Martin, who was to crown an outstanding season at Parliament Hill by finishing 7th in the 'National' and missing Junior International status by a narrow margin.

As far as Senior championships went, the story was similar, but with a major limitation - we never seemed to get the full potential team out. (Why, for instance, did John Lunn never figure as a counter, except in the Leeds & District, from January to March that year? From Newsletter comments the answer would seem to be a run of injuries, but he can't remember!) In spite of this, performances were more solid, except in the Northern, where Mike was taken ill during the race and had one of his rare drop-outs. He also missed the Yorkshire C.C.A. for an international call - Roger's Evening Post article shortly before pointed out that this was a calculated decision, as his presence, even if he had won, would not have led to the Club placing much higher. His one pre-National turn-out was to win the Yorkshire A.A.A. Championship just after Christmas from Junior Dennis Coates (in 12th Martin Dell was second Junior) and with Dave Nicholl (9th) gain selection of Yorkshire. In addition to Martin, Bill Ward in 6th place made the County Under-20 team.

Mike's decision over the Association race was proved right by the fact that the Club gained its second set of Senior County medals, beating Sheffield United by two points for second place. We were still a good distance behind the Airedale & Spen Valley team which in the early Seventies dominated Yorkshire cross-country running; and the closeness of the race for places can be judged by the fact that four of our counters were in the thirties. Dave Nicholl, rapidly reaching form ahead of that in his days with Halifax, finished third; Sid Richardson was 13th in his first Senior; and the 'engine-room' saw the lesser lights such as Brian Hilton (31), Phil Puckrin (32), Huw Pryderi Rhys (35) and Richard Spirett (38) take medals home. There were few youngsters near the front in the age-group races; only Sean Cahill (6th Under-15) and Garforth schoolboy Ian Howe (8th Under-13) made the first ten. In the Northern only Dave (38) and Brian (95) were in the first 100, and the team was for the only time that year placed lower than in 1972. Mike (2), Dave (5), Brian (6) and John Lunn (11) took the Leeds and District title.

The 'National' at Parliament Hill, London, was another memorable one, but for a very different reason; it was the year that the New Zealand international team were allowed to run as guests, and Dave Bedford, for all the hype, was hammered by a rising antipodean talent called Rod Dixon. The Club's improvement was marked, and at the time seen as encouraging; but when it's analysed the most striking fact was that we still had to rely on Jack Lawton's 829th place as a counter! 33rd, though, was a vast improvement, and 1,955 points a lot more respectable. Mike ran one of his better races, placed 10th (he actually finished 17th, but the New Zealanders were discounted) and was selected as reserve for the England team (he ran, as Dave Bedford was involved in a road accident, and was fifth counter.) In the Under-20 race this was paralleled by Martin Dell, who finished 7th. Dave Nicholl had a better run than in the Northern in 59th, while Brian Hilton (267) and Richard Spirett (494) were sound, and Huw Pryderi Rhys (296) had what was probably his best Championship run up to that point.

Pryderi was one of those guys who were always seen as 'fringe' members of the team, but who had more impact than sometimes given credit for; he certainly added a lot of character to the Club at the time. The son of a Leeds University philosophy lecturer (who was reputedly working on a project to translate the works of Lenin into Welsh), he was a combination of academic mathematician, widely-read and fairly left-wing intellectual, shifter of pints, and possessor to a high degree of the quality the Welsh refer to as *hwyl* - lively high spirits. He and John Lunn seemed to spend a lot of time and effort in verbal fencing and jesting, one form of which was the writing of pastiche lyrics to songs; their efforts included a parody of three tracks of the Beatles' Sergeant Pepper LP and a complete rewrite of Don McLean's American Pie featuring the Club personalities of the day. It tends to get forgotten by the older generation who remember him in this way that he also ran inside fifteen minutes for 5000m and a 2.32. marathon.

There was one unusual event after the end of the Cross-Country season; a Club team won a road relay without needing to call on the services of Mike Baxter. The Rotherham Relay was a popular one at the time, though again the course used, from Herringthorpe playing fields, would now be totally impossible due to traffic. A team consisting of Brian Hilton, Dave Nicholl, Sid Richardson and John Lunn were responsible, Dave doing the

damage after a sound start and John surprising himself by catching Sheffield United's Brian Barden on the downhill and hanging on.

The Club, however, still had a bit to learn about getting its organisational act in order; 1973 was to see one of its more spectacular debacles, though who was actually responsible for it has been lost in the mists of fading memories. The Northern 12-stage Relay was at Morpeth, and the Club was reckoned to be in with a fighting chance of qualifying for the national event. The team was selected - but somehow somebody (a Newsletter report suggests Bruce Kilner, who as team manager) forgot to tell Pete Bygate he was in it, and only eleven runners made the trip. Just how much of a blow it was can be seen by the fact that at two points in the race Leeds City was in the lead - on Leg 3 Dave Nicholl hit the front, and on Leg 7 the honour fell to John Lunn. He remembers it mainly for a reference to another, non-athletic, event - as he ran along the banks of the Wansbeck to finish, Bolton's international Mike Freary greeted him with, "Bloody hell, here comes Lunny, star of television!"

Earlier in the winter the Club had been approached by a television production company to appear as extras in a play about a middle-aged man who decided he was going to be the next Olympic marathon champion. More to the point, it was offered £10 a head for Club funds for 12 people to turn up. Quite how it grew from there is not remembered, but eventually a coachload of 28 Club members went out to Barden Bridge in Wharfedale for a day's filming; and the Club was paid £12 per head! The sequence was supposed to be a fell race, and it turned out to be an appropriately snowy, freezing winter's day for it. We got a bit wet - but with a catering wagon supplying hot soup on demand and a full lunch nobody complained too loudly. Eight hours' work produced about three minutes of footage, which showed a triumphant-looking John Lunn 'winning' the 'race' - in spite of being outsprinted by the family dog. Three of the lads who could take time off work went out during the following week (by taxi, all expenses paid) to film some 'race' shots. It was broadcast in the week before the 12-Stage - hence the witticisms! We even got a repeat fee when it was shown again.

It was possibly the 12-stage farrago which caused the A.G.M., held only a month later, to approve, for the first time, the setting-up of formal sub-committees to run the Track & Field and Harriers' sections of the Club. Huw Pryderi Rhys figured on both bodies; on the track side he joined Ray Barrow and Dave Young, while his Harriers' colleagues were John Lunn and vice-president Harry Boddill. This was one of several changes to the Club's administration which came in during 1973; the main reason for them was that the Club was changing its character.

The number who went to Barden Bridge indicates, for one thing, that it was getting very much bigger; and this was cause a new set of stresses. In addition it was getting more widespread; in March the Committee had approved paying a percentage of the fares of Martin Dell and Richard Spirett, so they could travel from Cambridge and Leicester, where they were studying, for Championship races.

At its inception the Club's administration had been closely based on the model of the clubs it replaced, but these were all small local harriers' clubs in essence; from his own memory the writer can seldom remember a time

when Leeds A.C. could field much more than the nine Senior distance-runners which in those days was the maximum that could be entered in a Championship; and it was considered remarkably strong in the late 'Fifties when it had six Boys (Under-16 then) to field a full team. Now the Club had well over a hundred members in all disciplines, spread throughout the city and beyond, and organising them was becoming a more complex matter. Moreover, administration costs were going up; it was no longer enough to expect to turn up at the Club a week before an event and tell everybody personally about arrangements. The Club had to move on - and as happens in every generation, the older generation didn't always like it.

The question of communication was beginning to be an issue; and one thing addressing it was the Club Newsletter, or as it was at first styled Bulletin. Dave Young had suggested the idea very early, but it had lain dormant until Roger Norton took it up - in spite of competing for a different club, Roger was always our first-line press contact from the off. The early editions are very basic; the oldest survivor, which can be found with the rest in the Local History Library in Leeds, dates from the spring of 1972. Like most of those produced in the first ten years, it was typed, either by Roger or John Lunn, on the old-fashioned Roneo stencils and then laboriously hand-duplicated. They often reproduced badly due to the typewriter keys clogging with wax from the stencil and not cutting cleanly; some editions can only be read with the greatest care. They also, if the typist didn't have handy a bottle of the 'correcting fluid' which looked like crude pink nail-varnish (and today probably wouldn't be sold as it's fairly 'sniffable') perpetuated the typist's errors; there was one memorable occasion when John had to overwrite a report that Ian Lindley had "produced a magnificent performance in the Shot" where his error was all too plain to see! (Those with keyboard skills can work it out for themselves!) However, it clearly did a lot for communication, and carried some surprisingly erudite articles on coaching, administrative and other matters.

The Committee also took another step into the future; at that meeting for the first time the Ladies' Section was given formal representation when Pat Brewster was co-opted. The section had grown sufficiently to justify representation. This, and the sub-committees, went through fairly smoothly, as also did the move to put the membership list on to a card index system; prior to that it was kept by the Hon. Secretary in a ledger. Not all the changes were as easily accepted; when Huw Pryderi proposed to post fixture cards and Newsletters to members, incurring a postage bill which he estimated would run to about £5, Jack and Allan Lawton were up in arms about the extravagance. There were also some changes of personnel; long-time supporter, committee member and former Harehills Harrier Harry Boddill had a spell as President in 1973, followed by Ray Barrow the following year, and at the 1973 A.G.M. Jack Lawton gave notice of wishing to stand down as Hon. Secretary, though he was prepared to do another year. Later in the year Roger Norton stressed the need in a Newsletter editorial to find a good replacement.

The above show that by the start of its sixth summer as a single entity Leeds City Athletic Club had gone some way beyond its founding constituents; its changes were in some part a reflection of the changing society around it. In the 1950s the membership of the constituent clubs still, from the writer's memory, contained a high proportion of workers in the traditional Leeds industries - engineers, printers, clothing industry workers - with a

comparatively small number of office-workers and salesmen; there were still plenty who left school at 14 or 15, dependent on their age, and though the number of people with more educational qualifications was growing, it was still a minority. By 1972 there was a higher proportion of 'professionals,' including a significant number of teachers. A younger generation used to travelling further afield - even continental holidays were beginning to be fairly common - familiar with the sport from television, and with rather more disposable income than their forebears looked for a better level of competition and were prepared, with the boom in car ownership, to go further to get it. The Club was much bigger, bolder and more diverse in its activities; but there was a lot to do yet before it could be a power in the athletic land.

## Chapter 5: Progress Maintained

As the 1973 season opened the Club to be about to get a shot in the track arm, or so it had seemed. In October Ray Barrow announced that three overseas students from what was then still officially Carnegie College were joining the Club - and one of them was an Olympic finalist. The man in question was Stavros Tziorzis, a Cypriot who had represented Greece in the 400m Hurdles at Munich, and finished 7th in 49.7 behind John Akii-Bua; moreover, the other two were his compatriot, near-international class sprinter Aris Messalides - and one of Akii-Bua's 43 half-brothers, Sam Ageta-Bua (No joke - their father was a polygamist with about six wives!), who was a Ugandan international at Long and Triple Jump. They should have been a formidable addition to strength - but the Club had reckoned without student politics. The secretary of the Carnegie College Athletic Club was a person with an agenda for his future curriculum vitae, and was also out to make use of the talents of his international members; and managed to arrange fixtures in such a way that the trio never actually turned out for a Club team. Their performances while in England remain on the Club ranking lists, as yet another of the might-have-beens of the Seventies. Sam at any rate was to win Yorkshire titles in Club colours; he took both the Long and Triple Jumps, the later with a County record of 15.23. He also provided something of a chilling insight into the politics of the time; the writer recalls Ray recounting a conversation he had with Sam, at the time when the East African Asians were being expelled from both Kenya and Uganda. "They're lucky," Sam said, describing the recently-installed President of his country; "he's only kicking them out. He's killing us!" At the time some of us thought it was exaggeration - we know better now!

Even without the Carnegie Connection, and for that matter an injured Mike Baxter, the Club took the first Northern League match of '73, at Derby in May, by a 30-point margin. The Club was well served in the Throws, with the massive Northern Ireland international Ian Mowat, who stood around 6' 6", taking the Shot and Discus, and Hugh Richardson the Hammer. On the track Paul Temporal came up from Oxford, (that year he captained an Oxford/Cambridge touring team which met Harvard and Yale) to win the 200m; our only other winner was Andy Watson in the B 800. Roger Norton reported a significant contribution from some of the Club's youngsters, who were clearly drafted in when the Carnegie group pulled out (his pre-meeting review had suggested they would turn out); Singled out were John Smeaton triple-jumper Tony Dean, high-jumper David Robson, and sprinter Otis Parris, later to make a bigger mark as a long-jumper but that day doing a relay leg. None could have been much more than fifteen. There was drafting in at the other end, too - Ray Barrow did the short hurdles, and Dave Young the 400 Hurdles (in a quite respectable 61.6!) One 'memorial' of this match exists - in the Club Newsletter of

Autumn 2003 a picture was published, to the amusement of younger members, of the 5000m pairing leading the race - brothers-in-law John Lunn and Brian Hilton!

That, however, was to be it for wins. The Club did not do badly in either of the other two matches; quite simply Stretford got an excellent team together, and got most of their lads out. Probably the athlete of the season was Hammer-thrower Barry Williams, who exceeded the British and Commonwealth record with 71.58 in the third match at Blackburn; the writer recalls the considerable furore when it was found that there weren't enough highly-graded officials present for the throw to be ratified.

We got a taste of what was coming at the second match, when on their own surface - still cinder - we were beaten by 41, and were pressed to hold Blackburn off for second. Oddly enough we had more winners than in the first round. Dave Nicholl made way for Mike in the 1500, moved up to 5000, and won, with John Lunn following home for maximum; Colin Lambert, by now at Loughborough, took the 100, Dave Warburton the Hurdles (and second in the High Jump) and Ian Mowat the shot. We also dominated the B events from 400 to 1500, though Andy Robertson, former Blackpool athlete Chris McGuire (running against his old team, which included his brother Frank) and Graham Mountcastle. Once again youngsters were called in - first-year youth Cameron Davies made his first appearance - in the Shot.

The Blackburn encounter was considerably closer - 21 points - and more exciting; the Club was only overhauled in the later stages having put up an early lead. There were two 'double' events; the 800m, with the formidable pairing of Chris Hudson and Pete Bygate, and the Pole vault, won by Kevin Atkinson, but marking the first appearance in Leeds colours of former Wakefield decathlete Tony Gummerson. A formidable talent - he had been Northern Champion at the multi-event - Tony made his mark that day with a 30-point personal haul. There was another near-double in the 5000m, from Brian Hilton and John Lunn - the latter winning the B race, which seems to have been his speciality about then. Young Otis Parris took the B 100m; Dave Warburton repeated his Hurdles success, and over other barriers the match marked the first Steeplechase appearance of Martin Dell. Those of that generation will remember the Dell barrier technique well - it simply didn't exist! Martin ran the races on sheer strength, clearing as best he could; on this day, on cinder, he ran 9.26.

At the end of the season the Club went into a 'paper' match - actually decided, in very advanced manner for 1973, by computer - to go into the Qualifier, and were successful in getting placed. However, the team did little better than the previous year - in fact, one place worse, although after Stretford and Coventry the competition was so close that Leeds City were only 32 points off third. The only winner of the day was Mike Baxter, who ran under 14 minutes in the 5,000, towing Brian Hilton to a personal best; Ian Mowat and Tony Gummerson put up a solid throwing performance, with three seconds and a third, and Dave Nicholl was second in a quick 1500m. However once again Roger's press comment after the match spoke of 15 absentees from the team for various reasons - some injured, some unavailable when the match was switched late to Saturday from Sunday, but other with excuses which he described as "flimsy or non-existent." In 1973 the commitment to get in wasn't quite there - yet. Dave Nicholl, writing a comment on the Qualifier in the Newsletter, saw a great deal of hope in the youngsters who had stepped in for the missing Seniors; he felt that this would ultimately be the making of the Club as a British League outfit.

The Senior team also took part in another innovation in 1973 - the first British League Knock-Out competition. The Club's first taste of one-a-side knock-out competition came at Nottingham's Harvey Hadden Stadium in early May, and the Club got comfortably through the first round behind Notts A.C., a B.A.L. club. Only three wins were recorded, two of them by Ian Mowat and the other by the 4x400m relay squad; but another six finished second, and that was more than enough. The Semi-Final; at Kirkby in July, was altogether tougher; the Club finished fifth, and only Dave Nicholl's valiant attempt to stick with international Andy Carter in the 1500m rated an individual mention in the Evening Post. From a team point of view, however, finishing fifth, and beating two B.A.L. clubs in

Liverpool and Notts, was seen as an achievement. The pattern set that year - easily through the early round, and out in the Semis - was to remain the Club's lot for many years.

The breakthrough to the top flight, wiseacres reckoned, might come when the younger generation really started to come through. The work of Dave Young and his gang at John Smeaton, and a steady influx from other sources - Leeds Grammar School in particular - saw the gradual strengthening of what was becoming a remarkably talented squad. Dave seemed particularly adept at finding throwers; he had already unearthed Paul Armstrong and Cameron Davis, the latter a prodigious potential multi-talent who hurdled as well as he threw; in the Northern Championships he set a record of 37.14 in the Discus and took the silver medal in the Hurdles. Dave had also, of course, found the Cahill brothers, who were beginning to make their mark on age-group times - though Sean had not impressed as an Under-15, he came through strongly in the Under-17 age-group. He seemed to be able to find people from other schools and persuade them into Club membership, too; from Wetherby, for instance, came another record-breaker, Andy Lunn, who set an Under-17 Club and County Schools' Under-17 Hammer record with 48.60; in thirty years it has been beaten only once.

However, he was also about to embark on the thing for which he is best known in British athletics as a whole - pole-vault coaching. If anything was to mark a real change in the development of athletics, it was the sudden appearance in the early 'seventies of a Pole Vault squad in a place where the event had been almost unheard of. (In the early days Ray had had to coax 1960 Yorkshire Schools' champion John Verity out of retirement to fill the event.) Kevin Atkinson and Jim Dugdale had started it; now the additional names were Steve Wright (also a fine high-jumper) and a chunky 14-year-old called Steve Denton. The merit of Dave's coaching could be seen thirty years on in 2002, when a somewhat more chunky 43-year-old Steve heaved his 17 stones over not far short of three metres - the waistline may have spread a bit, but the technique was still there! At about the same time as Steve joined he brought with him a slightly younger mate - Colin Hayton.

Leeds Grammar School almost traditionally provided sprinters; and were doing so in the early seventies. Andy Staniland was by now an established figure, though his real breakthrough came a couple of years later; but from the same source the Club picked up one of its most talented ever sprinters - Dale Bluemink. The first thing that hit people was, of course, the name; coincidentally a group called Blue Mink had a Number One hit at about that time, and a lot of people from other clubs thought it was a joke. Those who were burned off by a youngster who at 15 was breaking 51 seconds for 400 metres on cinder tracks didn't laugh for long! At the time he didn't have things his own way, though - Tony Chapman was still around - but both Andy and Dale, along with Paul, Andy, Steve Wright and high-jumper Beresford Herbert, took County Schools' titles in the younger age-groups.

In the Senior group we had only two ; Steve Rowley at 400m, and the first in what was to be an illustrious line - Grace Thompson became the first female middle-distance runner to take a title of any sort. Her time of 2.27.1 for 800, achieved on a very bumpy track at York, would not be negligible today. There would almost certainly have been another, but Eileen Pitts was sick and didn't turn out; the Yorkshire selectors, criticised heavily for taking a very small team and leaving good athletes behind, picked her on past performances. While there was as yet little opportunity, outside local league competition, for the fledgling Women's section to shine, a small landmark was crossed when the Club had a match with Carnegie College - for the first time ever a Women's team turned out. Unfortunately there is no surviving record of who the pioneers were; but obviously Pat Brewster and her helpers were starting to make things hum. One member who was to play a big part in the section's subsequent growth also appeared at this time; Garforth schoolgirl Julie Whiteley, a promising-looking distance-runner, was elected to membership in May.

All in all, 1973 had been a year of growth, and the Club could take pride in its members' achievements; but there was one area where the organisation not only hadn't yet got properly organised, but wasn't to do so for a long time. At the Annual general meeting in April 1974 every office was filled bar one - the post of Coaching Secretary was "held over" until a suitable person could be found. Over the next fifteen years or so it was an office the Club

was seldom able to fill; and it was symptomatic of the Club's ancestry and the state of coaching at the time. There was, supposedly, a A.A.A. Coaching Scheme; there were National Coaches; but at club level in general, certainly in the North, there was only anything like coaching if you had an enthusiast prepared to do it. The Club depended heavily on the expertise of certain people - notably Dave Young, Ray Barrow and Arthur Cockcroft at this period - and event coverage was therefore somewhat patchy. There was also, on the part of certain of the long-distance section, an indifference or even a positive antipathy towards formal coaching; one of the great weaknesses in John Lunn's athletic character, for instance, is his tendency to put down and mock coaching. He's grown out of it a bit in recent years; but his opinions of some well-known coaches are notorious, and frankly based on prejudice as much as thought.

Serious business started again for the cross-country season in September and October, for a winter which was to prove, in retrospect, a turning-point in the Club's history; it was the year we raised our sights. In one area at least it was muted; the Club appeared to make little impression on the West Yorkshire League as a Senior team, apart from Mike Baxter winning the third race. This was at least partly because, along with Airedale & Spenn Valley (still very much the dominant force in the area) we missed the first race altogether, to send a team to the A.A.A. Six-Stage Relay at Keele University. It proved worthwhile, as the team recorded an improvement on the previous year in ninth place; it was also unusual in the Mike was only the third fastest of our runners (was he just back from holiday again?) Dave Nicholl came through stormingly after a steady start from Brian Hilton, and then Martin Dell and Mike consolidated well to get up as high as seventh. The air was a little too rarefied for the last two men, who each lost a place, being Huw Pryderi Rhys and a newcomer - Edric Williams. Ed, a native of Cambridge and a English Schools' finalist over 800 metres, had moved to Leeds that summer; he was a good steady competitor for a couple of years until he moved on again. His prime characteristic was that he was possibly the most flat-footed runner the Club ever had; but it didn't slow him down that much. He also featured, with Dave, Brian and Mike, in the team that duly won the Aaron Relay. An additional new name, who made his mark later in the season, came from a different source - the Army. Mike Gue, a sergeant instructor stationed at the Army Apprentices' College at Harrogate, was attracted (by Ray Barrow, who'd come across him arranging a Junior track fixture) to Leeds City rather than the local Club, and was to prove another asset, though his appearances were restricted by service commitments.

We did have one West Yorkshire League success - Simon Cahill began to emerge as the youngster to note, winning two of the three races. He'd earlier won the then prestigious Philip Cup road race at Kendal the previous April, and was to go on to gain County Schools' representative honours in February. The younger age-groups continued to make steady progress, though they weren't often seen taking team awards just then; one individual win came from Martin Stoker in the Leeds November handicap, off a none-too-generous mark. In Leeds Schools' races a name familiar to the older generation was appearing - Roger Bloor, son of Jack who had been a leading Harehills figure (and was to emerge again as a veteran) was featuring in Leeds Schools races, fighting them out on occasion with a name for the future - Trevor Wilson. Both became members around this time - though Roger was to move on in his teens towards orienteering, while Trevor's career was to pursue a very varied course. A further direction in which the Club made progress was on the women's side. By this time some age-groups were taking part in the Northern Women's Cross-Country League which had been formed during the 1960s. This league was very dissimilar to the situation found on the men's side of the sport, where league competition is and always has been very local. It was eventually to succumb to the fact that travelling all the way across the North of England in winter with runners ranging in age from eleven up is none too practical a proposition, but at the time the comparatively small number of women distance-runners meant that it was the only way to stimulate meaningful competition. The League also ran a representative match with other regional leagues; and in December Garforth schoolgirl Julie Whiteley became the first Club member to be selected for the League's team, in the Under-15 age-group, finishing fifth in the event. She followed this in February by becoming the first female

member of Leeds City to win a title over the country, taking the Yorkshire Schools Junior Championship, and ending an excellent season by placing fifth in the Northern and sixth in the National Women's Championships in the same age-group.

The Men's Championship season began rather weakly. In the Yorkshire Individual event at Hull only Dave Nicholl finished in the first ten, and he didn't get a county place; 'his' spot was given to Mike Baxter, who justified the selectors' faith (he had missed the County race due to illness) by finishing 37th, just outside the count in a winning team. The Club's 'Yorkshire, at Holmfirth at the end of January, was not a good day for Club teams either, though it's not easy to find out, now, what happened. Results often appeared very late in Athletics Weekly at the time, but due to the Commonwealth Games in Christchurch happening at the same time the Yorkshire Association event got crowded out totally; and in the only local newspaper account Roger Norton only mentions the winning team (Airedale, not unnaturally.) The full story was eventually run to ground in the obvious place - the Club Newsletter.

For various reasons few younger athletes ran - Kim McDonald being one, though as he'd just moved from Bingley and wasn't eligible yet he got a medal in the Junior running for his school. The Seniors had a disastrous day. Mike Baxter aggravated an ankle injury and had to drop out, Brian Hilton managed to finish 19th in spite of falling and "head-butting a wall. (The wall is recovering.)" John Lunn was out of the count running on an injury, and the rest of the team was Dave Nicholl (7), Sid Richardson (12), Mike Gue (43), Richard Spirett (47) and Ed Williams (50). One odd feature of the races was a very early starting time; this was the period of the 'Three-Day Week' during Edward Heath's ultimately disastrous confrontation with the trade unions, and the chance of electricity being cut off to the changing accommodation had prompted the move. It also was one explanation for the non-appearance of the results in AW, which was having printing problems.

The Northern, however, saw a major turn-round. Held at Lightcliffe, near Halifax, on a course of almost unbelievable boggy, the Senior race produced several surprises - winner Bob Patterson, from Blaydon, was a notorious 'mudlark' who never won anything else - of which the most pleasant was the Club's seventh placing. Mike was not quite back at his best, finishing 9th; but the backing was solid, with Martin Dell (34), Mike Gue (63), Brian Hilton (69), Ed Williams (111) and Huw Pryderi Rhys (129). This was by far the strongest performance a Club Senior team had produced; alongside it winning the by now fairly moribund Leeds & District title (Mike 1st, Brian 6th and John Lunn 7th being the team) didn't assume a lot of significance. More significant, in fact was the Boys' race, open to clubs from outside the district, in which Simon Cahill won a duel for the title with a Halifax youngster called Adrian Howden.

There was no long trip for the 'National' in 1974 - it was held at Graves Park, Sheffield (one of the great courses which nowadays would be considered too small for the event in its modern form.) Perhaps it was the familiar ground, or perhaps it was just a good day - but Leeds City's Senior team took a further big step forward. 33rd in 1973 had been great, but 13th was something else - and for the first time no Lawtons, Woods or Gomersalls were needed to fill out the count. Mike Baxter led home in 28th, Dave Nicholl finished 43rd and Martin Dell 69th; and even though Mike's run was undistinguished in his own terms two in the first fifty and three in 100 was new territory for Leeds City. Backing up were another four between 200 and 300 - Brian Hilton (209), Sid Richardson (245), Mike Gue (246) and John Lunn (262); and Ed Williams (432) and Richard Spirett (522) completed a turnout that saw all nine finish around 300 places higher up than the sixth counter of twelve months earlier. This was another major change - when only nine per club could start, it was the first time when almost the best available nine had been got out; and it made some people believe what could be possible. It seemed that the new sub-committee was justifying its existence by getting people out. Joe Mayne's desire to see the amalgamation produce a strong harriers' club had begun to come to pass - but too late for Joe to see. It seemed that the new Sub-committee was justifying its existence. Much of the credit went to Huw Pryderi Rhys, who was team manager and did the job well; but the National as also his Club swansong. He moved from school-teaching

to college lecturing, from Leeds to east London, and from Leeds City to Ilford A.C.; and Leeds City was a less lively place for his departure.

The season wasn't over yet; and there were more steps towards the "Peak of '76" to come. The Club had one bad memory to erase, and at Blackpool's Stanley Park it was duly erased when the Club finished 8th in the Northern 12-Stage relay with a remarkably 'scratch' team. The make-up of the race was odd, with four short legs first, followed by five medium legs and then three long ones. The team manager took the risk - which produced some interesting newsletter comment - of putting some of his 'weaker' links first - a none-too-fit Len l'Anson on Leg 1, half-milers Chris Hudson and Pete Bygate on 2 and 4, and Brwsi Kilner on 3 - and was rewarded when they all, and Brwsi in particular, ran way above expectations. The medium legs were a see-saw, with Bill Ward dropping places in spite of a good run, Brian Hilton running a stormer to put the team fifth, Richard Spirett running his guts out and still losing all Brian's gains on a star-studded leg, Ed Williams picking back up, and near-veteran Ron Pannell dropping again running bravely on a creaking injury. The first two long legs were in the capable hands of Mike Baxter, who ran fastest of the day, and Dave Nicholl, who wasn't that much slower; but the writer remembers clearest of all who was on the last leg!

By now Martin Dell was well established as the Club's great eccentric; but his other great characteristic was his unbelievably calm approach to races, and the Club made use of this by putting him on a late leg, in the knowledge that (unlike, say, John Lunn, who would have exhausted himself cheering on everybody else) he would not be carried away. On this day he was preparing for his run in a not untypical manner - sitting reading beneath a tree, wearing the legendary green tracksuit and gabardine raincoat, when a policeman approached him with the intention of arresting him for vagrancy! He desisted when he looked over Martin's shoulder and noted the reading matter - an extremely erudite work on water pollution. He then got up, warmed up, and proceeded to beat his bogey-man Jeff Eley of Derby. Finishing 8th seemed a disappointment, as only six in those days qualified for the A.A.A. event at Sutton Coldfield; but that year the field was expanded, and for the first time Leeds City qualified. Times were:-

SHORT		MEDIUM		LONG
Len l'Anson	12.04	Bill Ward	22.47	Mike Baxter
Chris Hudson	11.35	Brian Hilton	22.00	Dave Nicholl
Bruce Kilner	11.38	Richard Spirett	23.55	Martin Dell
Pete Bygate	11.53	Ed Williams	22.42	Ron Pannell

Between the two events there were other relays. The Club staged its own cross-country relay on Soldier's Field (unfortunately it wasn't repeated) in which a team of Mike Gue, Dave Nicholl, Brian Hilton, Mike Baxter, Ed Williams and Martin Dell were beaten by the old Manchester & District Lads' Club - then a power in the land. It also took part in the Egerton Relay at Bolton (another course lost to growing traffic - you couldn't race up the main road between Bolton and Blackburn on a Saturday afternoon today!) where the team included another new name - Pete Stevens.

The former Thames Valley Harrier, who had moved to Leeds a few months earlier, was to make more of a mark on the track as a steeplechaser, but he became eligible for the Club just in time to step into the National 12-stage team.

The writer makes no apologies for giving our first appearance in this event a lot of attention. In the succeeding years there has been much controversy over the comparative strength of the team of the mid-1970s and those of the years following the Club's re-emergence as a major Harriers' power from 1989 onwards. There are very few ways to make a direct comparison - but one is the National 12-stage, which is run on exactly the same course now as then. In its first effort the team finished 18th out of the 28 teams; the performances of the individual members are tabulated below. A good start from Brian Hilton seemed to have been lost when Len l'Anson, Pete

Stevens and Chris Hudson found sound runs only indifferent against strong opposition; but Dave Nicholl had a fine surge, and Brws Kilner held it well, as he so often did in relays. Mike Gue then had a shocker, and Richard Spirett (probably the 'weak link' on the day) made little impression; but Mike Baxter certainly did, running the fifth fastest "long 'un" of the afternoon. Ed Williams made two more with our fastest "short 'un," but Martin Dell and Ron Pannell dropped one each. Times were:-

1	Brian Hilton	26.57	16	2	Len l'Anson
3	Pete Stevens	27.25	25	4	Chris Hudson
5	Dave Nicholl	26.23	20	6	Bruce Kilner
7	Mike Gue	28.34	26	8	Richard Spirett
9	Mike Baxter	25.29	18	10	Ed Williams
11	Martin Dell	27.03	17	12	Ron Pannell

How good this performance was could be indicated by putting it alongside the 2002 team which finished 15th, in an event which now regularly sees over 50 clubs start :-

1	Andy Beevers	28.14	38	2	Kevin Ritchie
3	Mike Burrett	28.08	33	4	Aidan Adams
5	Trevor Wilks	28.25	27	6	David Webb
7	Martin Farran	28.57	19	8	Andy Jones
9	Martin Hilton	27.21	14	10	Brian Hilton
11	Greg Hull	28.10	15	12	Tony Gill

This comparison must not be taken too seriously. The 2002 team was by no means the strongest the Club could have turned out; it included three Veterans (including the 54-year-old Brian Hilton, who had also run in 1974) and its two strongest members had run a marathon only a week before. It does, however, give some credence to the belief that overall standards are lower today in British middle-distance running when a team running twelve minutes slower places three positions higher. It also has to be said that overall 1974 was a particularly strong year. Mike's splendid time, for instance, was a full minute slower than Brendan Foster's superlative run on the same leg; one of those who passed Len l'Anson was National Youths' champion Mike Longthorne; Pete Stevens had Dave Moorcroft on his leg; and Cardiff could afford to put international 800 man Gareth Morgan on a short leg - he ran fastest of the day.

On the track 1974 was being looked forward to as a year of consolidation at least. After a winter where even some of the cross-country men had essayed the indoors at Cosford, we went into the Northern League's first four-round season knowing we no longer had to face Stretford, but with Blackburn a power in the land. Just how much of a power we were to see at the first fixture, on Blackburn's Witton Park track; a number of last-minute drop-outs had weakened the team, and the contest was enormously close throughout. The match ended in controversy, however, when Ray Barrow, acting as Team Manager, officially objected to one of Blackburn's relay team not wearing the correct vest - and the disqualification that resulted was just enough to give Leeds City a five-point victory. There were those who said that Ray's action was gamesmanship - he had not protested at two previous Blackburn offences - but as Roger Norton pointed out, he should never have been put in the position to need to do it.

On a more positive athletic note, the Club picked up its usual hatful of middle-distance points, though without many of the usual names. Dave Nicholl stepped up to 5000m, and scored a maximum with Brian Hilton, and Chris Hudson and Chris McGuire, the latter winning the B, took another 18 in the 800m. However, the star of the day was 17-year-old Kim McDonald, a Keighley schoolboy who had left Bingley Harriers the previous year to get better competition; already a heavy mileage runner, doing about 90 a week, he led the 1500m from the start, ran

3.56.7, and did what few others could at the time - ran the finish out of Malcolm Cox. The only other A wins were in the relays, and the 100m, which came from the improving Otis Parris. Roger's report, however, suggested the Club lacked a really class sprinter (Otis was only 17, and more of a long-jumper), and "rely too heavily on the versatile Tony Gummerson in the throwing events."

The second match was very different - on our "home" ground at Cleckheaton, now at last an all-weather track the Club won by a clear 37.5 points. The track events were a complete mop-up - only four points were dropped on maximum (The 'honourable droppers' being Pete Bygate in the B 800 - who made up for it in the B 400 - and his partner in the latter race, Dale Bluemink, who nonetheless ran 49.7 to set an under-17 record which was to stand for 29 years. The sprints were covered by York University student Dave Chapman and Colin Lambert, home from Loughborough; Chris McGuire took the A 800, the 5000 was the Nicholl-Hilton "mixture as before," and Mike Baxter paired up with Ed Williams in the 1500. Needless to say both relays were won; and the one big-scoring field event was the javelin, while teenage Chris Maltby won the B event but was beaten by a prodigious 53.06 throw from Chris Harbage - at 15 only just old enough to be picked.

By late June the Club was feeling confident, but there was no way to relax; the third match at Middlesbrough was as tight as the first. In fact, we had to wait after the relays for the over-running javelin to finish to be sure of winning - but the two Chrises turned up trumps with a maximum, and the Club's eleven-point win gave us a three-point cushion with one to go. The only other 'max' came from Dave Nicholl and Brian Hilton in the 5000 (again). Mike Baxter took the 1500 with a very fast clocking (3.46.4), while our other A win was unusual - Chris Hudson took the 400 - and B event wins came from Pete Bygate (800), Martin Dell ('Chase) and John Sneideris (Vault.) We couldn't manage an unbeaten season - Blackburn prevailed by 18 points at the last match at Derby - but in that defeat came one of the great legends of the Club. This was the match that above any other stamped Martin Dell on its history.

Martin had not travelled with the team - he was building a nature reserve near Doncaster - and came to Derby by train to discover the buses were on strike. Undeterred, he went into the station toilets, changed, put his clothes in the white plastic bin-liner he had brought his kit in, stuck it under his arm and set off to run the four miles to Osmaston Park. He'd given himself plenty of time, fortunately, but he arrived not long before the Steeplechase he was carded for; in spite of his efforts he produced a sound run for third in about 9.34. However, Brian Hilton's partner in the 5,000 hadn't turned up (the writer can't remember why), and Martin was prevailed upon to "trot round for a point." The race started; Derby's Jeff Eley shot into the lead, cutting out a firm pace, Brian hung in about fourth, and Martin was doing enough early on to finish second in the B race. Then, about half-way through, he started moving through. With a just over a lap to go he had moved up to Brian, with Eley and Pete Lynch of Blackburn fifty and thirty yards up; and at the bell he literally launched himself. Head back, arms pumping across his chest, uttering the characteristic "hoo, hoo, hoo" of Dell at high speed, he stormed past Lynch, caught Eley alongside the water jump and summarily dismissed him, and finished thirty yards in front in 14.37.0, covering the last lap in under 62 seconds. After which he jogged a couple of laps to cool down, picked up his bin-liner, and ran back to the station to get on with the serious business! Legend has it that Jeff Eley never smiled again! Brian won the B race in 14.50.4.

The rest of the afternoon was more orthodox. The Club wasn't at strength, but still supplied its share of winners. Chris Hudson and Dave Nicholl (in that order) maxed the 1500, while Pete Bygate and Junior Steve Sloper did likewise in the 800 (Pete also took the B 400); Dave Chapman took the A 100, Dale Bluemink the B 200, while the final B win came from an exotic source. Ron Ramos, an Army sergeant-instructor from the Apprentices' College at Harrogate, and undoubtedly the only Gibraltarian ever to compete for Leeds City, won the B Vault. Enough had been done - the Club had its first Northern League title, and the Qualifier, for once, was near home - at Kirkby.

The Club made an altogether better shift of this Qualifier, but although the team was a great deal stronger than in the previous two years, it was still not at full strength and missed out again, in third place. There was no quarrel with being beaten by Essex Beagles (not then with Newham), but there was a strong resentment in some quarters at the presence of Metropolitan Police, which might be formally an open club but was to all intents and purposes closed; even though he was ultimately to get on well with MPAC's officials in later years, the writer still feels they should not have been allowed to participate (any more than Achilles Club should have been invited to join the League originally). On the individual level Martin Dell ran probably his best -ever track race for the Club, winning the 5000m in 14.20.8; the 16-year-old Sean Cahill "ran with maturity beyond his years" to win the B 1500m; and the often unsung but immensely reliable and valuable Steve Rowley had his moment winning the B 400m. Ron Ramos covered four events and scored heavily, while Andy Lunn and vaulters Steve Wright and Steve Denton made valuable field contributions. Overall the Club could be pleased with progress; but the writer recalls coming away from Kirkby feeling very frustrated indeed.

Between the first two League matches the Yorkshire Championships had seen several scalps taken; indeed in the 800m there was the striking sight of Leeds vests in the first three places. (Inevitably Chris Hudson was second, with Chris McGuire in front and Pete Bygate behind.) Dave Nicholl was our only other Senior champion, in the 1500 - he went on to represent Yorkshire, and the conversion of his 4.02.5 Mile in the Inter-Counties still stands second on the Club 1500m list. At Junior level there were more successes, significantly all in the field - Otis Parris in the Long Jump, Steve McGuire (no relation) in the triple, Andy Lunn in the hammer, and in the Pole Vault the 16-year-old Steve Denton. We had no women winners, but an inaugural Club 800m record of 2.18.3 from the youthful Julie Whiteley.

The Club got few other Senior championship placings that year, but in contrast the efforts of its younger members read like a roll on honour for this developing period; standards were set which even thirty years on are there for the present generation to aim at. The Leeds Schools' championships in mid-May saw names appearing which were to figure prominently as the Club moved up. Armstrong and Harbage were already familiar as winners; two more who figured were Under-20 sprinter Paul Maney and Under-17 triple-jumper Walter Bronjewski, the latter in particular to put in a lot of service over the next few years. At the younger ages, besides the already familiar Bluemink and Cahill, winners among the boys were Paul Hutchinson (U17 100), Garry Ineson (U17 1500), and Joe Dyer (U17 800). Garry was to represent the Club regularly through his student days until he moved to the Midlands, while Joe came from another unusual background; he and his father were regular Beaglers, and in case you don't know the hunters who follow beagles customarily do so on foot rather than horseback.

There were also a range of winners on the female side, a sign of the rapid growth on the track wing of the ladies' section. The only senior was sprinter Helen Capstick, while at Under-17 level Janice Swan, the elder of two throwing sisters, won the Shot, and at the youngest level sprinter Vicky Hardisty, hurdler Madelaine Barber and distance-runner Paula Staiano all featured. One important figure didn't need to; she was selected for the Under-15 High Jump in the County Schools' without competing as the only entrant. However, it wasn't to be long before Tonia Phillpots began to make what has up to now been an indelible mark on the Club record lists.

When the County Schools' came round - at the unlikely setting of Swinton, near Rotherham - Club members took nine titles at least; with the exception of Under-17 hammer-thrower Jim Ferguson all were familiar names - Under-20 winners Steve Rowley (400) and Andy Lunn (Hammer), and at Under-17 Dale Bluemink, Sean Cahill, Walter Bronjewski, Steve Wright, Paul Armstrong and Chris Harbage. They were to have another distinction - they were the last Yorkshire Schools' Champions the Club was to have, as local government reform was to sunder the county into its three regions. Former County Schools' secretary Dennis Ward remembers the relays taking place in a thunderstorm, and thinking it was a judgement from the gods on the 'sacrilege' of dividing Yorkshire!

Three of the above went on to take English Schools' medals; Chris Harbage bronze in the Javelin, Dale Bluemink silver in the 400, and Paul Armstrong took pride of place as Under-17 Discus champion. Dale he had the misfortune to tangle virtually constantly, in all competitions, with Blackburn's equally talented youngster Martin Francis; however, he took the Northern Under-17 title, and Steve Wright took the vault at the same meeting. Paul and Chris were both runners-up in this event (Paul in Shot as well as Discus), a placing shared with Sean Cahill (1500) and John Smeaton hammer-thrower Graham Hogg, also a Club member. When it came to the A.A.A. Juniors, however, Dale lost out to his rival again; Sean Cahill also took silver, while Steve Wright and Walter Bronjewski were both only one place from a medal. The plethora of titles and medals, and the appearance of many of the winners in League teams, was a further sign of the rise of the first post-amalgamation generation. One additional title-winning athlete came to the Club at the end of the season, though most of the titles were won competing in his school's colours. Bradford Grammar School pupil Ian Lindley had never joined a club; he was snatched, probably by Ray Barrow, virtually from under Bingley Harriers' nose, and for the next six or seven years the Club had the services of one of the outstanding young shot-putters of the time. (He eventually did go back to Bingley many years and subsequent travels later, and was still throwing, and winning, in League competitions as recently as 2002.) Almost his first move after joining was to set a new Club record of 16.79 - it's still there.

As yet there were few female champions; as most of the growing section were in the younger age-groups this is perhaps no surprise. However, in July there was a sign of progress when the Club turned out a team in a trophy meeting at Cleckheaton, and while not finishing well up gave a sound account of themselves. This was the first real team appearance by the Club (as distinct from the odd 'straight' match and West Yorkshire League competitions), and the increase in activity and level of performance inspired Roger Norton to highlight the section in the Evening Post's sports edition in July. He highlighted the work of several people in getting the section under way in so short a time; Pat Brewster as chief administrator, Mike Sherman and Dave Young for their coaching efforts, and one person who thirty years on is still around - Moira Gallagher. Moira is nowadays better known as a top-graded official and for her long and tireless efforts with disabled athletes; but in her early years with the Club she also coached, administered, and even on occasion ran.

The Club was certainly looking to a national future; but another incident during the year was to highlight the fact that in many ways it was still a provincial organisation with less than extensive knowledge of the athletic world outside the North of England. It also illustrates well the problem that bedevilled, and continues to bedevil, athletics - the fact that many of its structures grew up by accident, and the unwillingness of anyone to remove the anomalies thus created and sanctified by the deadest hand of all - 'tradition.' These were the events that surrounded the Club's participation in the Pye Gold Cup - as it was then called.

The early stage was straightforward - the Club went to a first-round match at Sheffield, was well beaten by Sale Harriers, but finished comfortably clear of Hull Spartan to make the semi-final. When the draw came out, we were placed with a new venue for Club teams - Edinburgh. People were looking forward to competing in the Commonwealth Games Stadium at Meadowbank as a bit of an adventure; it turned into a farce. We selected a strong team, and not unnaturally it included several of our most talented youngsters, who had already turned out in League and Cup matches - Dale Bluemink, Walter Bronjewski, Steve Denton, and Chris Harbage. What we didn't know - and weren't told by the British Athletics League or anyone else - was that Scotland, athletically, is Another Country. The meeting was being held under Scottish rules - under which Under-17 athletes were permitted to jump, but not to run or throw, against Seniors - and the Club hadn't been acquainted of the difference in rules in advance. Ray Barrow recalls someone - he can't remember who - was waiting as the Club coach arrived at Meadowbank to inform us that neither Dale nor Chris would be permitted to compete. The Club team management made strenuous protest, but to no avail. It wasn't that the elimination cost us the chance of a Final place - the team was acknowledged not to be strong enough to beat the two Edinburgh clubs - but that the

two lads would have been allowed to compete in any other semi-final; and that even though the League paid Clubs some travel expenses for the competition they had paid a £16 contribution to their accommodation and travel costs - not a negligible amount in 1974. 'Progress' on sorting out the inequalities of rules (and other matters) can be adjudged by the fact that the same rules would apply today. For the record, we finished a very distant third, providing only one winner all; afternoon - Tony Gummerson in the Discus - and four second-placers - Steve, Dave Chapman (100), Pete Bygate (800) and Dave Nicholl (1500).

There were, of course, plenty of other competitive activities. Mike Baxter failed to make the European or Commonwealth Games' teams; but he was decidedly unfortunate in both cases. His failure to get into the Commonwealth event - run in the British mid-winter in Christchurch, New Zealand - he puts down to a bizarre incident; he was attacked while training in Roundhay Park by "one of a pair of large boxer dogs" in the summer of 1973, and suffered as a result for a painful injury to the pelvis, which was only diagnosed after some time as a cracked symphysis pubis - a distinctly rare injury. There was certainly a period when Mike was running badly; the writer remembers going for treatment from Dr. Ian Adams at St. James' Hospital for one of his own many injuries and finding Mike being tested to see if his pelvis was actually tilted out of balance.

The European Games was even more galling; the British Amateur Athletic Board had declared that there would be no doubling-up of distance events, so Mike had decided to go for the 10000 metres. He certainly hit form; in Germany in May he set the one Club record that still stands to his name, running a 28.16.0 10,000. The week before that he ran what he regards as an even better race, vying with his 1970 Edinburgh effort as the best of his career - a win in a ten-mile road race at Altrincham in 47.05, almost certainly the fastest in Club history. It wasn't just the time; the field he left in his wake that day reads like an Honours List of 1970s British distance running - Mike Tagg, Ron Hill, Ricky Wilde and Alan Blinston were only four of the field, and Derby's long-serving official Alan Domleo (who finished about tenth in just outside 48 minutes) recalled the race thirty years later in conversation with the writer as the hottest he'd ever been in. Moreover he had done all this on around 110 miles a week without his usual intensive speed training. Mike reckons he should have been a certainty - but then two things happened. First Dave Black - or his coach, managed to persuade the B.A.A.B. to allow him to double up - and Mike was the one who missed out. However, Mike wonders if he'd have gone as well as he had been going anyway; about two weeks later his daughter Caroline was born, and like any new father his sleep pattern was disturbed. He did, however, play a part in one world record - when Brendan Foster set a 3,000m best on the opening day of the Gateshead International Stadium, Mike was one of the pacemakers. It wasn't just a 'commercial' gesture - Mike and Bren had trained together (with Bren's 'guru' Lindsay Dunn) quite a bit while Bren was a graduate student at Carnegie College.

As a team the Club also participated in the Yorkshire League; and while it was always a bit of a gimcrack competition (leagues which try to cover all ages and both genders always finish up by leaving too much out) it was taken sufficiently seriously for the first-ten regulars such as Brian Scott, Paul Armstrong, Andy Lunn and Sean Cahill to turn out during the season. Some effort was made to improve the programme; John Lunn worked out a scheme which was submitted to the League's secretary, the Rotherham official Ralph Rowbotham, but nothing came of it. In the autumn of 1974 new Club secretary Mick Stark made some fairly cutting comments about this in the Club's Minute Book. Even the West Yorkshire League was still regarded as an event in which a Senior athlete might do times in a competitive event, though the limitations of its programme were also apparent. The development of the Club over the three years covered by this chapter can be clearly seen from studying the Club All-Time ranking Lists in comparison to the first four years. Instead of the forty or so performances dotted unevenly around the events, and confined with a minority of exceptions to the Senior and Under-20 lists, there are over 130 performances extant from the period 1972-4. Of these around 20 are female, which of course could hardly exist before 1972; the survival of so many not only shows the speed of development (though the next few years were to eclipse it) but suggests what might have been lost to women's athletics in Leeds by the lack of

opportunity before 1971. The Men's side shows a number of interesting patterns. In the Senior list the most important change is not so much the 45 performances as the range of events; every one of the twenty 'standard' individual events has at least one mark from this time, including the striking number of five in the 110m Hurdles. However, the only Club Senior records to date from then are Mike's 10,000m and Dave Chapman's share of the 100m. The other large area is in the Under-17 age-group, and again interestingly well over half of these are in field events. The Under-15 Boys were slower to develop, and the Under-20 age-group was in a period where most of its original members had moved up to Seniors and the younger lads would make a bigger impression in a couple of years.

By the end of the 1974 season, in retrospect, it was clear to see what progress had come about since the amalgamation of 1967. On the Harriers' side, an impartial commentator looking at the state Section at the end of April 1974 would probably be suggesting a considerable degree of progress over previous seasons on several fronts, and the need to do better on others. There were young lads coming through who were to make a name for themselves and the Club within the next few years, though as yet the solid body of youngsters had not really gathered. Some of the generation who were youngsters on the foundation of the Club were coming to the maturity for which their coaches had hoped, though as it the way with athletics some equally good ones had faded away.

The Women's section had made a promising start, and in the younger age-groups were stirrings of future success. The Senior team had started to make progress; training with Mike had made several reasonable athletes very good, and the Club had been fortunate in a couple of acquisitions. There was a platform for further advance - but even in 1974 few suspected how radical the progress might be.

Change in Track and Field had been even more radical; the Club had spread into events and areas of competition which had not been in evidence at all in 1967, and was providing itself with a strong base for further progress. There were vaulters, jumpers and throwers where there had been few before; and there were women, admittedly still few and mostly young, where there had been none. Whether the amalgamation had stimulated the change, whether the League was the catalyst that meant that competition was guaranteed several times a year in every event, whether it gave the impetus for people already working in the sport to do more, or whether the fortuitous emergence of Messrs. Baxter, Young and Sherman, Mrs. Brewster and others had been the trigger, could be argued about over several pints. What was clear was that the City of Leeds at last had an Athletic Club that seemed to be going somewhere, and if the wind held in the right direction, and the Council would give it a push, it could do considerable things. Its administration was becoming more sophisticated, its competitive ambition greater, and slowly its recruitment was coming from a wider range of schools. A lot, however, remained to be done; and on the track side a lot more heartache was to ensue before the Club got into the major league.

## Chapter 6: The team of '76

Leeds City came into 1974 with a new team in charge of its administration. Treasurer Dave Hodgson was the only one of the principal officers to continue at the A.G.M. in April; the Presidency went (deservedly, if it's considered as the highest honour in the Club) to Ray Barrow, who had done so much to build up its track side. Jack Lawton's replacement as Hon. Secretary was a crucial matter; fortunately the Club did have the ready-made answer that Roger Norton had seen as so necessary in Mick Stark. Mick (who at the time of writing is still around and active in Club and League affairs) was a product of St. Marks' long association with Roundhay School; a former cross-country runner who had at least once done the somewhat uncommon feat of the 1940s by running a

marathon, he had also served on the Committee for many years, and despite his mainly 'harrier' background was to serve the Northern Men's League for many years as a Divisional Secretary. The other interesting facet of the elections was the comparative youth of the Committee; there was still the older element among the Vice-Presidents, but the majority of the elected members were competing athletes.

The Harriers had ended the winter of 1974 on a high note, the next two seasons were to see anything the Club had previously done on the country eclipsed. A combination of the growing maturity of some of the runners who had come through the ranks, a series of fortunate acquisitions as people moved to Leeds, and above all the influence of having Mike Baxter around as a lead and inspiration had already created a situation where people in the Senior team were expecting more of themselves. Moreover, there was a growing base of younger boys who were adding to the Club's laurels, and an emerging group of girls who were beginning to make a mark; and while in many cases it would be some time, if at all, before they contributed to Senior performances, they all added to a growing atmosphere about the Leeds City Harriers' section that it meant business. Even so, the explosion that transpired in the 1974-5 season could hardly have been expected.

Around this period there were quite a number of changes affecting the traditional Harriers' scene; one was recorded in the Minutes of the September Committee meeting, when the Yorkshire Cross-Country Association changed the conditions of championship entry. Up to then teams had to be pre-entered, and only nine could run; if Leeds City wanted to run more than nine, it had to enter two teams, and specify which athletes were entered for which (although some duplication was permitted.) On many occasions clubs had been caught out when several A team runners got injured between the closing date and the championship, or somebody entered in the B team suddenly improved. In 1975 the Association agreed to accept block entries (at 5p per head), and the first six finishers would count as the team.

One symptom of the Club's growing strength was the decision to pay for the printing of a Harriers' fixture card. There had usually been one, traditionally, and for many years former St. Mark's runner Don Edmondson, who was in the printing trade, had generously donated them. The growing numbers required, and the growing number of races shown, however, had made the Committee feel they couldn't "impose on his generosity" any longer; and the 1974-5 card was the first for a while to be paid for.

1974-5 was to be a season of 'firsts' at several levels in the Club; and the process started early with the Northern 6-Stage Relay. It has to be admitted that by the standards of recent years the event was a bit lacklustre; Roger Norton commented that only twelve teams turned up for it, and a lot of 'leading lights' were missing, which was perhaps unsurprising. The Northern Counties' A.A. at the time believed in moving the race round the region, but the chosen venue, Cleethorpes, was then very much out on a limb; there was no M18, no Humber Bridge and not much of the M62, and the 80-mile trip on some pretty rough roads from Leeds was bad enough, let alone travelling there from somewhere like Gateshead or Liverpool. Nonetheless there were two Club firsts - the first set of Northern medals, and the first victory over the then formidable Airedale & Spen Valley outfit.

It was an up-and-down performance - the course was up and down the promenade, and the team were up and down the order. Ed Williams led off with a sound 19.25, but placed sixth as several clubs put their best man early; Leeds put theirs second, and Mike Baxter obliged with 18.42, which it looked as though only Steve Kenyon's 18.35 for Bolton would beat. It took the team to second, which was a bit rarefied for Brwsi Kilner, who dropped the four Mike had made running 20.13; but Dave Nicholl on four (19.08) got three of them back, and Pete Stevens (19.40) held it. That would have been considered a good performance - third behind Liverpool and ASVAC - but we had reckoned without Martin Dell! Setting off with 32 seconds to make up on Airedale's Richard May (no mean performer himself) Martin had one of his days - he started cutting into it from the off; and as the wit who wrote the newsletter report tactfully put it, "once the Flying Steamroller has got somebody in his sights he just doesn't let go." He caught Richard half a mile out and finished seven seconds in front - and ran two seconds faster than Mike. Life was never dull with Martin around! The Club, however, did not contest the A.A.A. race; the venue was switched at the last minute from Keele University (within reasonable travelling reach) to Wimbledon, which would have meant an overnight stop.

The increased level of commitment and expectation showed before Christmas in two facts - the West Yorkshire League was taken very seriously, with near full turn-outs at all three races, and the Club went out looking for additional competition. The first League race, "on our own midden" at Templenewsam, (which according to the Minutes was organised smoothly) saw the Club finish second to Bingley by only two points; in those days only four counted, and things might have been different if six had then been the rule. Mike Baxter duly won, the anticipated challenge from Dave Slater petering out when the latter found himself slithering in road shoes (he ran the last three miles barefoot); his closest Club attendant was Pete Stevens in fifth. The other two counters were Mike Gue (15) and Dave Nicholl (16). Ed Williams was right behind the pair of them (17); Brian Hilton had an off-day, finishing a place behind Ron Pannell in 29th. There was, however, a Leeds City win on the day, and as emphatic a one as they come; in the Under-13 race - then still called Colts - Gary Hayton, Trevor Wilson and Trevor Smith took the first three places, in that order, and with Robin Moran in 9th the victory was described as "overwhelming" in the Evening Post.

The second League race took place on Airedale's course at Judy Woods, Low Moor; but the event is surrounded in mystery for historians. Reports of it are difficult to find, due to its coinciding with a newspaper strike; Roger Norton has no record of it in his collection of clippings, and his otherwise comprehensive collection of Athletics Weekly has a four-week gap at that point. Consultation of the notes kept by the other main local journalist of the time, Longwood Harriers' long-serving official Granville Beckett, gave the basic information that the first three were Dave Slater, Mike Baxter and Airedale's John Temperton (now the North of England A.A.'s Development Officer), and that Leeds City won by nine points from Airedale. Two points further behind was a portent of future developments - it was one of the first times that Holmfirth Harriers, always regarded in his youth by the writer as a struggling village club, appeared in the frame. A study of the Club Newsletter - the only real source - reveals

that the counters were Mike, Dave Nicholl (8), Pete Stevens (10) and Brian Hilton (19), and that the Colts' team won again.

The third race, in December on an extremely tough course through the woods around Newmillerdam in Wakefield, saw the Club confirm its strength by not only taking the League title for the first time, but doing something it wouldn't have anticipated doing even the year before - winning a race without Mike Baxter, who was running and winning in the major sponsored event at Gateshead. The four counters placed in the first ten - Dave Nicholl was runner-up to Bingley's Alan Spence, who was something of a hard-courses specialist, Martin Dell finished fourth, Pete Stevens 8th, and John Lunn 10th. The Colts' team also took their league title, with Gary Hayton winning overall; on the day he was backed up by Trevor Wilson and Trevor Smith again, plus Neill Marshall.

Between the League races there was plenty of other action. On the road there was a good turn-out in October for the popular Batley event that Airedale's Bob Tristram organised - which started in the town's market square and featured one of the wickedest hills on any local road race courses. The four-man winning team was again unusual - Mike Baxter was third counter behind Martin Dell and Dave Nicholl, but as they were third, fourth and sixth it was pretty emphatic. Pete Stevens (15) made up the number, and John Lunn (18), and Brian Hilton (20) were lurking close behind. With Ron Pannell (29) and Richard Spirett (37) they took the award for first B team - another sign of growing strength.

Over the country the Club won the Aaron Relay from Loughborough the same four counters as at Batley made up the winning team, with Mike anchoring, while John and Brian teamed up with Mike Gue and Ed Williams to bring the B team in 6th. However, although everything went smoothly on the day, the Committee meeting after the event considered a couple of problems not unknown in events before and since - late entries, and athletes running under somebody else's name without being entered. The Club also got placed in the Harry Whitehurst race on Graves Park, Sheffield, though Roger Norton noted that the second place was the first time in five races that Leeds City had finished behind Airedale. There was good reason for this, however; both Baxter and Dell were missing, and the four counters who lost by only six points were Dave Nicholl (6), Pete Stevens (10), Brian Hilton (11) and John Lunn (15). The power balance at Senior level was clearly changing when a severely weakened Leeds team could hold its own.

There was even time for the Club - or its "disreputable alter ego" the British Irwin Club - to show its face in University events. In October a team, with none of the stars in it, turned out in the Leeds University 'Big Match' - one of the major pre-Christmas events for northern universities - led home by Mike Gue in 8th, with John Lunn (11), a visiting Huw Pryderi Rhys (18), Ron Pannell (21), Len l'Anson (27) and the by then somewhat portly Stewart Dobson (36) - and even there the lads finished ahead of Airedale! They also did so just before Christmas in the Leeds University Relay, in which event they continued another well-known tradition - the entire team ran under names which were not only false, but not in the best possible taste. (The few survivors are prepared to

reveal them in private between consenting adult members!) Usually the only people who noticed were those present; but whether the team was especially strong or the universities especially weak, in 1974 the Irwin Club finished fifth - and to the mortification of George Stead the full team was printed in all its glory in Athletics Weekly!

There is little report in that Autumn of the activities of the younger athletes, other than the successful Colts' team; but things were undoubtedly stirring. Sean Cahill, after a summer season that had seen him ranked second Under-17 in Britain over 1500m and third over 3000m, was having one of his better winter seasons; at Under-15 level brother Simon was prospering, but had a rival for pre-eminence in the Club in Phil Condon, picked up from St. Thomas Aquinas School in Meanwood (which later "mated with St. John Bosco next door and begat Cardinal Heenan," according to one Club wit!), Phil was to be around and make a considerable mark for about three years until his family moved to Manchester, when he had a few seasons with Stretford. They were to spearhead a good team, but in the first part of the season there was little mention of it.

There was, however, plenty of activity among the growing Women's Section. There was one apparent disappointment; after running 8th in the opening Northern League match at Rawtenstall the previous year's great discovery, Julie Whiteley, dropped out of the sport at the age of 15. Fortunately her 'retirement' - which the writer seems to recall had something to do with a boy-friend who also quit running at the same time - was very temporary; invited to the next Presentation Evening to receive an award, she decided to give it another go - and went on, as will be told, to international honours. However, there was already another name on the horizon; the autumn of 1974 saw the start of the legend of Sandra Arthurton.

The writer intends no disrespect to the Angie Hulleys, Veronique Marots and Lucy Wrights that have graced and contributed to the Club in succeeding years when he says that, in his opinion, Leeds City has never had a female distance-runner of such raw and unadulterated talent as the tiny, skinny, coffee-skinned youngster who emerged from Chapeltown and took Yorkshire, Northern and National distance-running by storm. When she first appeared Sandra looked as if a strong wind would carry her off; but the fact that almost a quarter of a century later no less than nine Club records, three of them Senior records, still stand to her name is testimony enough. In the first Northern Women's League race of the season she was so inexperienced she ran the hilly and sticky Rawtenstall course in plimsolls and still finished seventh in the Under-13 race. On that day she had only one team-mate; but Sandra Gent showed she was no mean performer herself by being only four places behind. 'The Other Sandra' was to be around for some time and make quite a mark on the Club scene.

By the second league race in November, nearer home at Cleckheaton, there was a foursome in the Under-13s; 'the Sandras' were 9th and 12th, in the same order, but with the support of Debra Henderson (76) and Tracy Fickling (103) the team was 8th - the first Club team to count in a League meeting. In early December at Stretford the numbers had swollen to six, thanks to some determined recruiting by Pat Brewster at the Leeds Schools; Sandra Arthurton placed third, Sandra Gent 9th, and the counters were Julie Dawson (51) and Susan Elam (60) with Debra (61) and Tracy (66) in close attendance.

More milestones were to be passed in 1974-5. The Yorkshire Women's Championships were held at the end of November on a course at Huddersfield described in the Club Newsletter as "more suited to mountain goats;" Sandra A set off steadily, but after about half a mile "decided the girls in front weren't running fast enough" and took off. Those watching saw the first demonstration of what was to become a familiar local sight over the next few years - Sandra Arthurton demolishing the opposition. Backed by Sandra Gent in a fine fifth place, Debra Henderson (37) and Tracy Fickling (41) our first female County Champion led the team home fourth, up to then the best finish of any female team. In January the West Yorkshire Schools' was held at Exley, just outside Halifax, on another course which gave Sandra the chance to show her command of hills; on this occasion the rest were running for minor placings from the gun. She just went up the fell-side (and it was!) like a lift. Sandra Gent (4) and Julie Dawson (6) also gained County selection that day.

There was more success to come after that. At Hull Sandra Arthurton picked up a silver medal, and led Sandra Gent (24) and the much-improved Julie Dawson (26) and Susan Elam (34) to fourth team spot in the Northern Championship. Julie indeed came on by laps and bounds that winter; and by the time the National Women's was held in late February (in chaotic conditions on London's Parliament Hill Fields) it was as much her day as Sandra Arthurton's. Sandra placed a splendid sixth, but Julie's run in 18th place was an outstanding improvement; and with Sandra Gent in 45th and Susan 64th the team completed a remarkable first season by finishing 6th. If a point has to be chosen when women's distance-running in Leeds City really started to take off, this was it; and it was to be the precursor of some years of success with Mike Sherman doing much of the coaching.

For the men the pace picked up after Christmas, starting with the County Individual race, from which four members were selected for County duty and one title was won. Oddly, despite a tough course at Rotherham, it went to Sean Cahill, even then regarded as a 'track man,' who "coped best" with the conditions to beat Halifax steeplechaser Adrian Howden, who was to appear again in the story. In the Senior race Mike Baxter and Dave Nicholl finished together in joint fourth place, with Mike "running just for a place in the team," and Simon Richardson finished 7th. Pete Stevens (11) missed out, and Martin Dell (17) had an off-day. Judging by reports almost all the Yorkshire team had one in the Inter-counties.

However, interest was principally focused on the 'real' Yorkshires at the end of January; in his preview the week before Roger Norton anticipated "one of the most open team races ever," and anticipated Leeds City, Bingley and Sheffield United all challenging to break Airedale's three-year run. As the day approached the Leeds challenge appeared to be about to evaporate; Dave Nicholl had dropped out of the Yorkshire team with stomach trouble, Pete Stevens had rejected a County call-up because of a back injury, Mike Baxter had been below form in the Inter-counties, suffering from the effect of his bizarre encounter with a boxer dog described earlier. A promising season seemed about to come unlaced at the wrong moment, and it looked as if Leeds City's first Yorkshire Senior title would have to wait a while.

What happened has stuck in John Lunn's memory ever since. John at 33 was having probably the best cross-country season of his career - and at Graves Park he produced what he regards as one of his better Yorkshires. In a star-loaded field he battled solidly for nine miles, and finished in an excellent 20th position - and he didn't even get a medal! There were six Leeds City men ahead of him! Even then the team only won by six points - it was every bit as close as Roger had predicted. Mike Baxter stormed back to form, and led for the entire race, with Martin Dell pursuing all the way to give a magnificent one-two. Airedale then put their first four in together between fifth and eighth; but Brian Hilton also shook off patchy form to finish right behind in ninth, and Pete Stevens was right behind him. In the early stages it had looked bad for Leeds, but Dave Nicholl (16) and Sid Richardson (17) - the former after an understandably cautious start - came through strongly in the last half. On top of that, such was the depth of Leeds' turn-out that a total of 22 Club members finished, and John led home a second six which included Ed Williams (27), Ron Pannell (37), Malcolm Cox (38), Mike Gue (40) and Richard Spirett (57) which placed a theoretical fifth - they didn't count B teams then.

It's just possible that the Seniors gained inspiration from events earlier in the afternoon - because Leeds City came back from Sheffield with not one team title but three. They'd started the day by winning the Colts' race without their pre-Christmas leader Gary Hayton; but he was well replaced by Roger Bloor, whose size and strength told on the hard course to take him to second place. Neill Marshall and Carl Blackwell occupied seventh and eighth, while Trevor Wilson made up the team in 19th, not as well up as early-season form would have suggested but principally due to a fall during the race. The second came in the Boys (Under-15s today) race, where Phil Condon took the individual bronze ahead of Simon Cahill (5), and Gary Ineson's younger brother Tony (10) and Steven White (18) made up the team.

Simon Cahill, however, saved his best effort for a fortnight later, when two more 'firsts' went down; on the flat and boggy Towneley Park at Burnley he became the Club's first-ever Northern Cross-Country Champion and led his team to the Club's first Northern team title. It was a different squad, almost; Phil Condon finished sixth, but the other two were a couple more John Smeaton products in Glenn Ogg (45) and Neil Turnbull (58). The team was 29 points clear of Gateshead. The Seniors had hopes of medals which proved to be a bit optimistic, but fifth was to be the best Leeds City placing yet - and although it was equalled the following year it was not to be exceeded until the 1990s. Mike Baxter led home in 6th place, with Martin Dell (24), Brian Hilton (37), Dave Nicholl (41), John Lunn (44) and Mike Gue (55) providing the backing and Pete Stevens (66) also in the first hundred.

Among the firsts there was also a last - the Leeds & District Cross-Country Championships was run for the last time, at Thornes Park, Wakefield (it was briefly revived in the 1990s, but never caught on.) It provided John Lunn with his one and only Senior title - ironically just ahead of his brother-in-law Brian Hilton. Ron Pannell and Martin Brown made up the winning team, and Phil Condon took the Boys' race.

There was some expectation going into the 'National' - could the team beat its 1974 effort - finish in the Top Ten - be near the medals? All pipe-dreams three years earlier - but on the magnificent Stopsley Common course at

Luton (possibly the very last time a 'National' course included a ploughed field, sweeping down an escarpment with a wicked climb through the woods) they very nearly came true! Leeds City's seniors finished sixth with 537 points (two years earlier, remember, their sixth man had been in the 800s!) - and this was despite some last-minute withdrawals reported by Roger Norton in his write-up, and one disastrous incident. One factor shown by the results is very significant; sixth in England, the team was also fifth in the North (Derby ran in the Midlands then), and third Yorkshire club to finish, behind Airedale (3rd with 508) and Sheffield United (5th with 530 in their last race before amalgamation.) If the 1975-6 team was good, it had to be; the opposition that it faced even in local competition was red-hot.

The disaster befell Mike Baxter. 16th in that field was good, but he'd fallen heavily when lying sixth, and Mike was always a 'puller-through;' the fall almost certainly cost him another international vest. Martin Dell improved on his previous year's showing in 47th place, while in 68th John Lunn had unquestionably the best cross-country race of his long Senior career, finishing only two places behind Northern champion and former Leeds University student Frank Briscoe. Dave Nicholl (95) was, however, down on his early-season form; Pete Stevens (139) and Brian Hilton (172) ran to expectations, and in Brian's case over thirty places ahead of 1974. Again we had a full nine finishing - Ed Williams (342), Brws Kilner (499) and Richard Spirett (511) were the others - but we were pipped by Sheffield for the Charles Otway Trophy, the 'pot' given for the first team to finish all nine. It's still given, and we've won it since.

There were two more team efforts to end an excellent year - one good, one not so. In late March a team victory was recorded for the first time in some years in a long-distance road event when John Lunn, Brian Hilton and Martin Dell contested the Spenborough 20-Miler. The race, which must be one of the toughest 'twenties' in Britain, saw the rare sight of John attempting to break the opposition from the front, in this case Bingley's County man Alan Spence, a 'hard nut' to take on. He led for a full lap, from five miles to fifteen, and then found himself hanging on in the last mile after the fierce descent from Roberttown, trying to hold off a fast-finishing Duncan Gaskell on wobbly legs. Brian ran a more sensible race for 5th; he was perhaps a bit fortunate, as Martin's run in sixth place included a detour to explore Cleckheaton bus station and the park next to it in search of a toilet. John's run gained him selection for the Yorkshire team for the Inter-Counties event, run on this occasion (possibly for the first time) as a stand-alone race; he placed 13th and gained his second team silver medal.

The less good one was the Northern 12-stage Relay at Liverpool - mainly because for about the only time that season the Club failed to turn out its strongest team. Roger Norton reported that three athletes were missing - he didn't say which three, but Brian Hilton had been ill and Simon Richardson was hoping to return from holiday and possibly didn't - who could have made four minutes' difference. Furthermore, Mike Baxter's bizarre injury, which had been mercifully quiet during the Championships, flared up again, so that he could only run a medium-length stage, and not as fast as usual at that. John Lunn recalls running a poor long leg; and one of the short legs had been entrusted to Sean Cahill, who was still inexperienced in such races. Two years earlier ninth would have been a satisfactory showing; now it was a severe disappointment.

However, as the Club members went into an active summer season of road as well as track, there were hints that great things were on the horizon. The team, already strong, was about to get two massive strengthenings. In February Dave Slater resigned from Guiseley-based Skyrac A.C. to join Leeds City; and suddenly Mike Baxter had a challenger, and a younger one, for Club primacy, as Dave came with international experience and county titles. That was a huge boost, though it was one that people had half-expected to happen for a while; Dave had seldom had the incentive of a team to run with at Skyrac.

In summer a second one came when Pete Stevens persuaded a mate of his from Thames Valley Harriers, then living in Sheffield, to move to Leeds City; the mate was no less a figure than 1972 National Champion Malcolm Thomas. Malcolm was perhaps not quite the lion of 1972; he'd had injury problems and put on a bit of weight (John Lunn used to refer to him, jocularly if somewhat unkindly, as 'Fatman') but he was still a regular in Welsh international teams. His arrival produced a pre-season quote from John which summed up the bullish mood of the Club - "If Gateshead want to beat us, Brendan Foster will have to run - and run well!".

Malcolm's accession to the Club is one of the rare occasions in its history where there is a case of, "now it can be told;" it was one of the few times when members of Leeds City set out to 'bend' the First-Claim rules. In those days these were extremely strict; athletes normally had to live, at the time of joining a Club, within twenty miles of its headquarters unless there was an exceedingly good reason, or face a ban of fourteen months (later shortened to nine) before they could represent their new Club. Moreover, Leeds City had every incentive not to try to cheat; at the helm of the Northern First Claims Committee was their own official Jim Exley, and everybody in Northern athletics knew how unbending Jim was over all matters pertaining to Club moves. Malcolm's address in Sheffield was outside the twenty-mile barrier; and so when he filled in his application form he gave an address in Huddersfield - which happened to be that of one of Pete Stevens' relatives! He got away with it; but the fact that the writer remembers it so vividly is an indication of what a rarity it was, and how clandestine the whole business had to be. What Jim would have thought of athletes resident in Leeds representing Birmingham clubs doesn't bear thinking about.

As the Club turned to track activity in the 1975 season, early reports drew attention to the continuing shortage of all-weather tracks; by their nature provision of them was slow, and for a long time Cleckheaton was the only one in the new county of West Yorkshire - or for that matter in the rest of the county. Unsurprisingly there was a tendency for everybody to want to compete on them as much as possible; certainly when Sheffield A.C. decided to put on a pre-season meeting in April it was staged there; unusually it featured a 10,000 metres, an event which distance-runners still, thirty years later, find few competitive opportunities for. The one that day left a mark on Club rankings; it was quick, and the times run by Martin Dell and John Lunn still stand fourth and fifth on the All-Time list.

There were also problems created by local government reorganisation, a move that had been shown to be politically desirable but upset 'traditionalists' in many places; and two of the places where 'tradition' is most

strongly ensconced are athletics and Yorkshire! The Broad Acres had been split six ways, on the grounds that the previous boundaries no longer represented the pattern of real, and particularly urban, settlement; many of the decisions were probably right, but caused huge amounts of opposition in some localities. Athletically it had considerable effects; schools' athletics went with the new boundaries, but the Yorkshire County Association resolutely refused to divide - with one big exception. The new county of Humberside determined to strike out on its own, which left athletes based in Hull who had strong Yorkshire affiliations somewhat out on a limb. On a smaller scale the formation of the county of Cleveland took Middlesbrough-based athletes out of the county; in the long term this, and the move of Saddleworth into Greater Manchester, didn't cause the same degree of ruction. Furthermore the boundaries cut across existing local competition; several member clubs of the West Yorkshire Leagues, both summer and winter, now found themselves in North Yorkshire. In that respect it changed very little.

The continuing development of Leeds City as a Track and Field club since the amalgamation was beginning to throw up its own tensions, and the start of the 1975 track season saw the Club make some attempt to overcome one which was to take a long time to resolve. Coaching is invariably a problem; the need to find people with the combination of interest in the varied activities which make up athletics and technical know-how is one that hasn't, and never will, go away. More important, the complexity of the sport means that it always requires somebody to organise the efforts and direct new athletes in the right direction; and finding such a person was to prove a perennial problem. The Club, as has been recorded already, fortunate in finding a number of outstanding individuals to coach in its early years; the co-ordination problem was always harder to deal with.

One figure who took on the task, for a time at any rate, was Alan Whitworth. He was at this time in the process of moving from Wakefield with the intention of developing his coaching work with a larger and more track-orientated Club, and in March 1975 became "the secretary of a new coaching panel" which attempted to bring some rationalisation into the proceedings. He proposed, among other things, setting up 'coaching clinics' at the Temple Newsam arena on Sunday mornings; their inception in the spring of 1975 got a considerable amount of coverage in the press from Roger Norton, who saw them as "an enterprising move by Leeds City (which) could go some way to alleviate the high drop-out rate...among (young) athletes." Roger wrote another article about further coaching initiatives at the end of the season, so thought was clearly being given to the problem; but it didn't seem to go away.

The Northern League season opened late in May, with Leeds City looking stronger than even the previous year; not only were their youngsters maturing and the distance squad as strong as ever, but there were several important newcomers, some of whom were to be part of the team for a considerable time. Ian Lindley had appeared the previous summer, though he had yet to figure in Senior teams; Roger Norton mentioned four others in his preview of the first match, at the Alderman Kneeshaw track in east Hull. High-jumper Steven Booth made his first appearance, as did Northern Ireland international Colin Beattie, a Leeds University student able to exercise his right to a 'mainland' club, and Kevin Walton, a young sprinter who was for several years to perform

well in spite of the handicap of being profoundly deaf. The fourth newcomer was one of the more remarkable characters to adorn the team, and possibly one of the few whose reputation for unusual characteristics can rival that of Martin Dell - Robin Murphy. The former Oxford Blue was head of Mathematics at Ampleforth College; he held a Ph.D in the subject, and contributed learned articles to the Mathematical Quarterly. However, athletically, he was a vaulter; and probably the finest practitioner of psychological warfare the Club ever possessed, with the possible exception of Steve Denton - and he learned most of the art from Robin. The writer remembers well such incidents as Robin practising chip-shots with an eight-iron across the track from where his rivals were struggling over low heights; and the tale of the Slithering Stands of Leicester will appear in a later chapter.

Certainly the first match indicated that Leeds City were likely to be out on their own in Division 1. The Club won by over sixty points, with Blackburn, their strong rivals of the previous year, appearing to be "one the decline" and only North Shields Poly. Offering much resistance. The Club's score of 289 points was the highest ever achieved in Division 1 up to that date. Five individual events gained maximum points, with Tony Gummerson participating in two of them, winning the B Shot behind Ian Lindley and partnering Paul Armstrong in the Discus. Dave Warburton and Ron Ramos took the High Hurdles, Robin Murphy and Steve Wright the Pole Vault (Roger Norton reckoned they would "not get the competition they needed" in this Division), and in the 1500 17-year-old Sean Cahill "ran a shrewd race" to win, with Kim McDonald in support. Three other B-strings won - Pete Bygate the 400m, Brian Scott the 400 Hurdles and Chris Maltby the Javelin - and the 4x400m relay rounded off a good day - or was it? In fact the Club had had a number of disasters - Ron Ramos missing the Long Jump because nobody in Hull seemed to know where the Kneeshaw track was, and Brwsi Kilner, steeplechasing on an injury, had a bad fall. And then there was what was to become a theme of this period of Northern League history - the organisation!

People inclined to quarrel with facilities and organisation in the early 21st century might read the review of the match from the Evening Post as a cautionary tale. The Alderman Kneeshaw track was 'out in the sticks,' a cinder track in a park with only a very 'basic' pavilion for facilities and no cover; and the weather for this match was foul. Furthermore the match clearly suffered, as so many have since, from lack of officials, especially in the field; and although the last track event took place at 4.30 the field programme took much longer to get through, with every single field event starting late. The idea of clubs helping to provide people to officiate hadn't yet percolated as far as the League's organisation. There is also another change which has revolutionised league athletics in the past thirty years without a lot of people noticing that it has - the development of technology. In 2004 the majority of meetings end with team managers going away with a full set of computer-generated and photocopied results within about ten minutes of the last event taking place. On this occasion Leeds City didn't leave until 6 p.m., while the results were completed, presumably by being typed on Roneo stencils and laboriously duplicated. Having used both methods - and hand-written result sheets - the writer knows which he prefers.

The pattern of results - with changes in the minor placings - was repeated in the rest of the League programme. North Shields put on the second match at Gateshead; they did slightly better, but the victory margin was still over

fifty points. Ian Lindley, Robin Murphy and Dave Warburton repeated their victories, Ian setting what was then a Club record of 14.92, while in the Steeplechase Martin Dell ran his fastest ever - this is believed by the writer to be the occasion when the displacement of water from Martin's passage through the pit covered the four inside lanes of the track! Tony Gummerson picked up an immense number of points, and there was an excellent second in the B Triple Jump from Bill O'Neill - the more surprising as he'd only volunteered to do it on the coach going to the match. If anything this match as organisationally worse; commenting in the Newsletter, Arthur Cockcroft went as far as to say that "if one was trying to wreck the Northern League, this was the way to do it."

At Huddersfield, where Longwood finished second on their home territory and the margin of victory was seventy points, Martin Dell forsook the 'Chase and partnered Dave Slater, making his Club debut, in the 5000, where needless to say they got maximum points, leaving Pete Stevens to pick up where he left off, and Tony Gummerson claimed another 31 points. This was also the scene of a Club landmark when Robin Murphy became the first Leeds City member to clear four metres. The organisation was for once markedly better, Dave Young being complimentary about Longwood's efforts, though not about the Leeds Road 'dust-bowl.' The last match was rather different - Leeds City won at Blackburn by only eight points, and only overtook Rowntree's on the last couple of events. It was clearly a much-weakened team that took part; and while injuries and holidays took their toll, and a misunderstanding led to two team members not being picked up by the coach, Roger Norton's review of the match puts forward a strongly critical note on two grounds. The most important was the question of commitment; he pointed out that several athletes had declared themselves unavailable without giving particular reasons, and suggested (though not in so many words) that if Leeds City got into the British League that level of commitment would see them out again very quickly. Another matter Roger took up was the absence of Mike Baxter for the whole of the season due to the long-term injury he was battling at the time; he had a lot to say about the current fashion for heavy-mileage training and a lack of attention to warming-up and stretching, questions which are still controversial thirty years on.

His other criticism was a more serious one. The meeting clashed with the semi-final of the Pye Gold Cup, for which the Club had qualified in May; and the decision had been taken to withdraw the team to concentrate on the League. Roger was less than impressed; in the first place by doing so Leeds City had denied Bingley (who finished third in the first round) the opportunity to participate, and again it reflected badly on the commitment of members - and of the Club's administration. He contrasted Leeds City's efforts with the commitment of Edinburgh A.C.'s Jim Dingwall (nowadays and for many years a veteran member of Kingston-on-Hull) who had represented Scotland in Wales on the Saturday and his club at Gateshead on the Sunday. Roger had a point; but such levels of success, and the accompanying pressures, were still a new thing to Leeds City then, and if errors of judgment were made and athletes weren't always perfect in their commitment, it was still part of a learning curve.

The Cup match in June offered an interesting and prophetic sidelight on the strength of Yorkshire Track and Field clubs, in which there had been one significant change since 1970 - the emergence of Sheffield A.C. Traditionally there had been strong rivalry in the Steel City between Sheffield United Harriers and Hallamshire Harriers; but in

about 1972 a third force, Sheffield City A.C., had been formed around Olympic medallist John Sherwood and his wife Sheila and former Longwood decathlete Mike Corden. In April 1975 Sheffield City and Sheffield United had amalgamated; the resultant Sheffield A.C. (some said the initials stood for Sherwood And Corden, who got a high proportion of their points) showed signs of becoming a power in the land. A clash between Sheffield and Leeds City was therefore of considerable local interest, spiced up by the presence of Bingley, Longwood, Airedale and Hallamshire.

In the event Sheffield won the contest by nineteen points; the two above-named athletes played a big part in the win, but were upstaged by triple-jumper Dave Johnson, who set a Cup record of 16.15 in spite of starting his run-up from boards placed over the long-jump pit. It was a precursor of future events, but also showed a very different approach by the two Clubs. While the Sheffield team consisted of only ten individuals, with Corden covering six events, Leeds City put out a full team including eight Under-20s and Under-17s. There were wins for Andy Staniland (100m), Dale Bluemink (400), Tony Gummerson (Discus) and Ian Lindley (Shot); but it was an indication that Leeds City were no longer the only 'big fish' in the Yorkshire pond. One other winner made a rare appearance for his club - Sebastian Coe took the 800m.

When it came to the Qualifying Match in September, at Warley in the West Midlands, the Club missed out again. In theory, finishing fifth as against third the previous year represented a backward step; in fact we put out one of our better teams, but 1975 was a particularly strong year. The qualifying teams were Brighton and Shaftesbury Barnet; the latter turned out the likes of Julian Goater, while for the former one Steve Ovett featured in four events - 800, 1500 and both relays. Just how much stronger was indicated by one comparison - Martin Dell's 9.31.1 to win the B steeplechase was thirteen seconds faster than the equivalent winning time of 1974. In his review Roger Norton reported on this side of the story, but missed out the other factor in the equation - The Tale of The Bus!

In those days we invariably hired our coaches from Godsons of Seacroft - a connection which Dave Young had set up when he used the firm for John Smeaton School teams. On this occasion a lot of people wanted to travel to support the lads, necessitating two coaches; for some reason David Godson had had to sub-contract the second bus out, and while Godson's own buses were always of a good standard this one wasn't. It was a second-hand Bedford VAL, a curious design of the late 1960s with twin steering axles, and whoever owned it hadn't been too good on the maintenance. The journey was described by John Lunn, with his usual excess of flowery words, as "an unbelievable mixture of high farce, stark terror and sheer bathos" - and for once he wasn't overdoing it! As we headed over the M62 in a rainstorm the over-light power steering was making the vehicle wander around alarmingly, while the 'skylight' ventilators were leaking all over the place. Furthermore it couldn't keep up with Godson's own vehicle, and there was every chance some of the team wouldn't get there on time; fortunately the first bus was still in the coach-park at Knutsford services, so we were able to transfer all the early-event performers. However, it had an effect on several athletes - Chris Hudson, for one, declared that he was getting off at Knutsford and hitching back to Leeds (he didn't - he was one of the 'transfers').

There was no shortage of good performances at Warley, but only one winner - Dave Slater, who took the 5000m (in exactly fourteen minutes) after tracking Julian Goater and Pete Standing for most of the race. Dave Warburton and Ian Lindley took second places in the 100m Hurdles and Shot, while the Pole Vault saw the highest event score, Robin Murphy placing second and Steve Wright winning the B event; in addition Sean Cahill had a good 1500 after showing the boldness of youth and taking on Steve Ovet from the gun. It was by no means a bad effort; but in commenting on the Club performance after the event Roger Norton made a valid point. He noted that Leeds City were pointing to the bright future offered by their very promising younger athletes; "but unfortunately Leeds City have been pointing to their talented Juniors since the League started in 1970." He then listed a whole string of promising performers "none of whom are competing now." It's another problem that hasn't gone away in the intervening years.

A report from the beginning of the season served to show another area of development in Club activities; in May the Women's team finished third in the Airedale Trophy meeting, which at the time, before regular league competition for women, was a major local event. The report mentions good performances by several younger athletes, including Valerie Biscomb in the Long Jump and hurdler Madelaine Barber; but the major new name to emerge was that of Karen Morley. Karen was to be around well into the Carnegie era of the Club, and has only recently had her pre-eminence in the throwing events in the All-Time Lists challenged; on this occasion she won the Under-15 Discus, and finished second in what was to be her main event, the Shot. Karen was to feature in Club teams for over a decade. The women were also 'dominating the West Yorkshire League,' at least in the younger age-groups.

As yet such women's team competitions were comparatively rare, but individual exploits continued to show how the Women's Section was growing. Another competition - the Bovril Cup at Cleckheaton - saw a record set that's still on the books after almost three decades - Tonia Phillpots' clearance of 1.75 in the High Jump, still the Under-17 mark. There were regular reports from local League meetings of wins for Julie Whiteley and Sandra Arthurton in the middle distances, not infrequently mentioning Sandra's diminutive physical stature - there was never any question of her competitive stature! One win for Sandra was in the Yorkshire Under-13 1500 metres Championship, which was farmed out to an Open meeting at Rotherham, not an unusual thing for the youngest age-groups at the time.

In the Yorkshire Championships the Club had a surprisingly low haul of Senior winners - only Ian Lindley and Eileen Pitts took titles (Eileen injuring herself in the process after coming back from a long lay-off), and Martin Dell, Brian Scott and Chris Hudson took silver medals, the latter for the eleventh time! The Under-20 Men, however, was a different story; seven titles came home, two of them to Steve Wright, who took both Pole Vault and High Jump titles - though he was really too young, being still an Under-17. The others fell to Dale Bluemink (400), Bill O'Neill (110H), Paul Armstrong (Discus), Andy Lunn (Hammer) and Chris Harbage (Javelin), while Steve Denton and Sean Cahill took silver. On the Women's side there was what must up to that point have been a record haul of medals in the younger age-groups, though no titles were taken; there was one Silver (Julie

Whiteley in the Under-17 800) and five Under-15 Bronzes - Sandra Gent (800), Madeleine Barber (75H), Karen Morley (SP), Victoria Ferguson (DT) and Regina Myers (JT).

Northern titles fell to a similar pattern; while Robin Murphy was the only Senior winner, Paul and Chris repeated their Yorkshire wins, and Steve Wright did even better - he won both Under-17 and Under-20 Vaults, and the Under-17 High Jump. Vicky Ferguson (2nd), Tonia Phillpots (3rd), and Karen Morley (3rd) all took medals in their specialist events to continue the tale of female success. The best performance raised in the A.A.A. Juniors was Paul Armstrong's fourth place; but this was good enough for him to be awarded an Under-20-international-late in the year.

The inaugural West Yorkshire Schools' Championships saw numerous Club members taking titles; most were familiar names Staniland, Bluemink, O'Neill, Lindley, Armstrong, Wright and Julie Whiteley - but an important new one appeared when Steve Burnage, running in Wakefield Schools' colours, took the 400m Hurdles title. Steve and his brother John were to be a feature of the Men's team for some subsequent seasons; originating from the Normanton area which was subsequently to be a fruitful source of vaulters, both were excellent hurdlers over both distances, and ran very fair sprint times.-Other titles fell to Peter Elliot (no, not that one) in the Junior 100m and Helen Capstick in the same event among Senior girls.-The only one who went on to take an English Schools' title was Ian Lindley, who won his fourth Shot title; but an interesting aside was Roger Norton's comments on schools' athletics.-He reckoned the reorganisation of County boundaries had ruined the atmosphere of both county and national events, in the former case by reducing severely the size of fields; conversely he thought that the E.S.A.A. Championship was that it was too big, too expensive to stage and conducive of "athletic indigestion;" and that a reorganised structure should have county, regional and national championships.-In view of the current fixture list congestion it's as well nobody took any notice; but it must be remembered that this was a year or two before the National Young Athletes' League spread to the North, and the schools' events provided a higher proportion of competition for the best young athletes than they do today.

However, facilities in Leeds for athletics were not getting any better; in February the Club Committee was discussing the decision by the Council to remove the groundsman from Templenewsam track.-The same could be said for the rest of West Yorkshire; the existence of the all-weather track at Cleckheaton seemed to discourage some authorities from spending money on maintaining even the cinder tracks that existed.-One press report, rather sadly, saw the writing on the wall for Keighley's Marley Stadium.-Dave Young criticised its condition when a West Yorkshire League meeting was held there; Dave had run a 1500 on it, and described it as "diabolical."-Others seemed to agree, and Bingley Harriers had already decided to move the Hardaker-King Trophy meeting to Cleckheaton that September.-It was a sad end to what had been a popular venue, noted locally for fast times; and it could perhaps be no coincidence that in 1974 Keighley ceased to be a borough in its own right and became part of Bradford Metropolitan District.-The newly-created Kirklees (which didn't have a single town as its definite centre) was more supportive of Cleckheaton.

The Hardaker-King meeting saw Dave Nicholl win the West Yorkshire 5000m championship with Brian Hilton third, Sean Cahill outkick Dave Slater over 1500, and Steve Harrison make his first recorded appearance, in the Under-17 sprints; and both the above meetings marked the appearance of an important name for the future on the female side, as junior sprinter Sarah Shipley was reported picking up wins; indeed in the Marley meeting she ran 27.5 for 200m on "a track resembling Blackpool beach," according to another competitor.-There was also a late-season West Yorkshire championship meeting, where several titles were taken; it never really took off, and in later years it became subsumed in the West Yorkshire League as its championships.

At the end of the season Leeds City acquired a number of new members from other sources; the most controversial were three members of Wakefield Harriers, who had considerable reputations over middle-distance events.-John Ashton had come within fractions of a second of qualifying for the European Under-20 Championships over 800 metres; Andy Hitchen was a 1500 runner who was good enough to take on the best of Yorkshire's Seniors; and Jonathan Metcalfe was one of the County's leading Under-17s.-The moves were initiated by their coach Alan Whitworth, who had also come to the Club; and the motivation was clearly to get a higher level of competition than Wakefield were at the time able to provide. However, it did arouse accusations of 'poaching' in some quarters; and Roger Norton, in noting both these moves and those of Dave Slater and Malcolm Thomas, rejected any such suggestion on the part of the Club, but noted the growing tendency for bigger clubs to become stronger.

Between track races that summer there was a fair bit of activity on the road. Road racing in 1975 hadn't attained the position it has now; there weren't hordes of tiny road-running only clubs (that came with the 'Marathon Boom' of the 1980s, and some put down the supposedly declining standards of middle-distance running to their rise), and the ubiquitous 10k had not yet swamped the ten-miler as the favoured distance. 1975 was Martin Dell's summer on the road, he had wins at Redcar and Ripon (in the latter leading Brian Hilton and Brws Kilner to take the team prize) and a second to the still formidable Bolton international Mike Freary at Burnsall. The team finished third, with Brian in 12th place winning the grossly under-advertised West Yorkshire Championship (they never bothered to organise one again); third counter was another 'acquisition,' Jeff Windsor, who had come from Harrogate A.C. some months earlier after moving to Leeds. Jeff was around the Club for a long time, but had other interests besides athletics; in later years he became an ordained minister.

In the early part of the 1975-6 winter season it was the girls, rather than the men, who began to hit the spotlight. For one thing Julie Whiteley was back in the fold, and running well from early in the year; and another name to conjure with appeared late in the summer. The successful Under-13 team moved en bloc to the Under-15s, and their first race was a win in the Frodsham relays. Sandra Arthurton and Sandra Gent made up two-thirds of the team, but the third member was a newcomer a year older - Carole Wood. It's quite enough to put Carole in her rightful place in the Club's middle-distance pedigree to point out that at Under-17, Under-20 and Senior level, wherever you find Sandra Arthurton's name on the Club Track Ranking Lists you seldom have to look far - in a lot

of cases only one place behind - to find Carole. Her forte was track - she was a lethal 800-metre finisher - but her record over the country and in road relays stands to compare with the best we've ever had.

Moreover it wasn't now a single team - by November there were two Leeds City teams challenging for Northern Women's League honours. The Under-15s started well in early October at Sale, with a second place to the home club; even with Sandra Gent having an off-day due to illness in 56th place, the rest - Sandra Arthurton 4th, Carole Wood 8th and Julie Dawson 27th - were well clear of the rest. Three weeks later they repeated the dose with a lower score in the same order, respectively 2nd, 14th, 23rd and 31st; but on this occasion the Under-17 team finished third. The returned Julie Whiteley, in third place, was supported by Christine Thompson (15), who had been one of the rare under-17s running the previous year, Carolyn Bell (33) and Paula Staiano (46 - though the Club Newsletter states she actually finished 25th and was missed by the judges).

The two teams took the same places in the Northern Women's relays at Rawtenstall. In the Junior race Sandra Arthurton led off on first leg - and despite being 'left' on the line came in thirteen seconds up; her time was third fastest, behind the two girls with whom she had a seasons' formidable competition - Sale's Pauline Clark and Hull's Janice Moody. Carole Wood, on second leg, recalled in a letter to the writer that she had been told how important it was to beat Sale Harriers, and as a result had gone off far too fast on the notorious Rawtenstall 'glue-pot; at the top of the biggest hill she stopped dead, but got going again after some encouragement and held on to second place, and Julie Dawson held off Janice Moody's challenge to hold it. The Intermediate race followed a similar pattern; a big lead (32 seconds) from Julie Whiteley, a fighting run from Christine Thompson, only passed by Derby's star of the time Yvonne Rowe and future international Sue Parker, and a heroic hanging-on last leg from Paula Staiano, who hadn't trained for a fortnight due to acting in a school play.

The Men's side started the year by staging the Northern Six-stage Relay, prophetically, in Middleton Park, with the start and finish half-way up the longer side of the hilly loop, to be as near the changing accommodation at what was then Parkside High School. It wasn't one of the easier courses; and the Club chose that particular day to be well below strength. With two reserves in the pack the decision was taken to put the stronger men off first and try to hang on; but basically it didn't work. In the early stages, with an excellent run in third place on the opening leg from Brian Hilton (21.07), it looked as though it might; even after Pete Stevens (22.03) dropped a bit, two more sound efforts from Dave Nicholl (21.32) and Martin Dell (21.21) kept the team in contention. But on the fifth leg was the very young Sean Cahill, and on the sixth the not too fit Len I'Anson; and Middleton Park wasn't the place to throw in tyros or 'good Club guys' with any hope of success. They lost about six minutes (24.33 and 24.05) on what first-choice runners would have done, according to Roger Norton's review the following week. Tenth, on our own course, was a real disappointment.

The West Yorkshire League season got off to a reasonable start - but partly because both Airedale and Bingley were competing in the National 6-stage relay at Wimbledon. (The Club could have gone as well, but only received the invitation about a week beforehand, and couldn't get a full-strength team out.) Dave Slater started

out on an unbeaten season in League races, winning the Bingley race from Holmfirth's Graham Ellis, one of the rising youngsters that club was beginning to produce. With Brian Hilton third, Pete Stevens 6th and Martin Dell 12th, the team was something of a formality. This wasn't the case at the next meeting - held, curiously, at Graves Park, Sheffield; at the time both the new Sheffield A.C. and Rotherham Harriers had been allowed to join to gain better competition than they could locally, just as 25 years later Scunthorpe and Kingston-on-Hull could be found taking part. Allocating a race to Sheffield had been controversial, and Roger Norton was highly critical of the actual organisation stating that Sheffield A.C. "didn't particularly want the meeting, as it was virtually ignored by their athletes and officials." The team that day, behind Dave, was made up of Dave Nicholl (8), Pete Stevens (an off form 25th) and Malcolm Thomas, in only his second race for two years. 41st showed that the former champion had a long way to go to get back to anything like his true form. On this occasion Airedale were at strength - and Leeds City were 59 points adrift. A small aside was that the Colts' race was won by a stringy-looking bespectacled lad from Rotherham called Peter Elliott.

In fact, Malcolm's debut was if anything even less auspicious; a week earlier he had run the first leg of the Aaron Relay, and been almost a minute behind Dave Slater, and over half a minute slower than the other members of the team, Dave Nicholl and Brian Hilton. Leeds were third, to Manchester & District Lads Club and Loughborough. The younger lads were out in some force, but not among the medals. In the Boys Chris Bennett, who was to be about the most consistent scorer for the club, finished seventh, backed by Terry O'Neill and Tony Hirst for fifth team; while a B team of Neill Marshall, Mark Clark and Roger Bloor were said to have "been ahead of many Clubs' first teams." The Youths team of Simon Cahill, Phil Condon and Tony Ineson suffered somewhat from being last year's Under-15s. The notable feature of this period was the complete absence of Mike Baxter, due to injury; he returned for the last League race, on a frozen course at Judy Woods, Bradford, and on minimal training finished fifth. Brian Hilton and Pete Stevens (11th and 17th) did enough to retain the title. The youngsters, who had featured well at Sheffield (though mostly Boys in the combined Boys/Youths races of the time) were not out in any numbers.

Again the Club appeared in University events as well (they usually involved ale afterwards!), and the Big Match saw Jeff Windsor have a good run in 5th place - his best since joining. He was supported by Brwsi Kilner, who in 12th was for once one ahead of John Lunn, Stewart Dobson (23), teenage Grammar-School lad Grahame Lunt (31) and Roger Parker (35). George Stead was not further embarrassed, however; at the Leeds University relay a team of Jeff Windsor, John Lunn, new acquisition Nigel Bailey, Brwsi Kilner, Grahame Lunt and Garry Ineson finished a respectable seventh, but did not appear in the Weekly!

Nigel had moved to Leeds from Edinburgh, and the Club had acquired another interesting character to add to its collection; an established steeplechaser who had British League experience with both Blackheath and Edinburgh Southern, he was also something of a character, two of his interests being home brewing and Scottish dancing. Due to injuries and family problems (he divorced during his stay in Leeds) he never quite fulfilled the promise he brought, though he was around for some time. He started promisingly, though, winning the Club's pre-Christmas

handicap at John Smeaton School, a race in which Dave Slater did the fastest time without troubling to take his track-suit off.

Meanwhile the girls went from strength to strength - and so, for that matter, did the Club's organisational experience. There was a little flurry on the road, where a mixed-age team of Sandra Arthurton (Under-15), Julie Whiteley (Under-17) and Christine Thompson (masquerading as a Senior) finished second at Batley; and two more best-ever placings for the Under-15s (7th) and Under-17s (11th) in the National Road Relays, the teams in question being Arthurton, Wood and Dawson and Whiteley, Thompson and Staiano. These two teams were becoming among the strongest in the North, and certainly showed themselves the strongest in Yorkshire, though in the Junior race Sandra Gent replaced Carole in the count. Both Sandra Arthurton and Julie Whiteley took their respective age-group titles; in the Under-15 Sandra Gent was 4th and Julie Dawson 7th, while in the Inters Christine Thompson was 6th and Paula Staiano 16th. Five County representatives also set a new standard for the Club.

The organisational challenge was to run the Northern Women's Championships for the first time - and at a venue which at first seems surprising, until it is recalled that Mike Sherman has spent practically his whole teaching career at Garforth Comprehensive School (or Community College, as now is.) The course was an interesting one; it must be the only Championship course in the past thirty years that crossed a main road! Not that the traffic on the A63 would have noticed - Mike used the disused Garforth-Castleford railway line which ran alongside the school field to take the course under the road and out into a farmer's land at the other side. The staging was good enough to gain Roger Norton's praises; though Mike recalled the school's Head of Physical Education refusing to have anything further to do with cross-country after being sworn at while acting as a car-park attendant. Unfortunately the Club couldn't manage to find a winner at its first Women's promotion, but the two leading individuals continued to show their good form; Julie Whiteley just missed a medal on home ground in the Under-17s, and Sandra Arthurton took the Bronze in the Under-15s. The good organisation was something of a portent for future activities; the Club was also staging the Yorkshire Men's Championship at Templenewsam in January, and the announcement had already been made that Roundhay Park was to be the venue for the 1977 Northern and 1978 National Championships.

In January 1976 yet another in what was proving a year of female milestones was passed; the first Leeds City distance runner donned an England vest. Julie Whiteley had had a splendid run in the Inter-League race just before Christmas, which led to selection for the Home Countries Women's International, run at what was then something of a hotbed of female distance-running - Rawtenstall in Lancashire. On a tough course Julie ran second most of the way, but was outkicked by two team-mates in the last half-mile; still, fourth in really good company showed that her return to competition had been no flash in the pan.

The Girls only got one medal in the Club's first Championship promotion; in the second, the Yorkshire Association race, the lads got a hatful - literally something in every race. The only one where there was no team

medal was the Colts, where Gary Hayton took third place; but the Boys and Youths, of whom little note had been taken in the press before Christmas, came up trumps with second places in both. Simon Cahill led the youths to a narrow win over Wakefield in 6th place, Neil Turnbull was 17th, Phil Condon 22nd in spite of an injured back, and Tony Ineson 26th. The Boy's team, however, did even better; Steven White (6), Chris Bennett (7), Terry O'Neill (12) and Tony Hirst (16) coming out as clear winners. Only Chris was to make much of a future mark; but Tony, who had run for the short-lived and essentially school-team New Farnley A.C. the year before, brought along his younger sister at some stage - and Wendy Hirst was to have a considerable impact. Remarkably the Club finished two more Boys' teams.

The Senior race was expected to be a cracker, and lived up to Roger Norton's expectations. On the form of the year the individual race was reckoned to be Dave Slater's, and so it proved; without ever being under pressure he left Alwyn Dewhirst twenty seconds adrift. The packing was equally impressive; Malcolm Thomas maintaining his improvement to finish fourth, Dave Nicholl 8th, Martin Dell back to form in 9th, all in before Airedale's second man. Mike Baxter, who played his usual captain's part by running in spite of a recent dose of 'flu, finished 17th, and Pete Stevens rounded off in 22nd, to give the Club a narrow win. It was probably about fair; Airedale were two men short, one the reliable John Temperton, but Mike's lowly position could be argued against that. To emphasise the point, Airedale's seventh man was in the late thirties, while Leeds City had Nigel Bailey 24th and Brian Hilton 26th. The Club's organisation was again commended, but there was one disturbing outcome when the headmaster of Temple Moor School wrote complaining of damage to the premises. It took some shine off things; the Committee considered stewarding at future promotions.

An outsider reading the Evening Post could have suspected that everything was fine with Leeds City; but there were aspects of the Club's organisation which were still causing concern. One had been the balance-sheet; in 1974-5, for the first time for a while, Dave Hodgson had had to report what was then a fairly substantial loss of £436. There was much talk of fund-raising - but as ever it needed somebody to do something about it. The somebody, remarkably as if he wasn't doing enough competitively and as a captain, was Mike Baxter, who during 1975 and 1976 organised several Discos with somewhat mixed support. Two of them certainly went well and made money; on, another occasion, however, Club members stayed away in droves, and it only made money because he flogged the tickets round friends and workmates - a matter which Mike was sharply critical about in the newsletter. With Mike's efforts, and a Summer Fair at a school in Halton, a corner was turned; and at the next A.G.M. Dave was able to report a profit of £636.

After the Yorkshire the Northern was, as wasn't uncommon, something of an anti-climax, but not in retrospect too bad a performance, considering Dave and Malcolm were missing - not surprisingly, with the Inter-Counties the following week. On a frozen and miserable course at Morpeth, a long way from the changing accommodation, the Seniors repeated their fifth place of the previous year. Mike Baxter had shaken off his 'flu, and led home in 16th place, and both Dave Nicholl (26) and Pete Stevens (36) had good runs; but Martin Dell (73) had a shocker in what was an up-and-down season for him, and both Brian Hilton (57) and Nigel Bailey (69) were in front of him.

The 'lesser lights' didn't have a bad day; John Lunn finished 101st, Jeff Windsor, in his first major Championship run, 129th, and Brwsi Kilner 136th. If the lack of improved placing was a disappointment, the Club could take comfort from its depth. The Youths team were even closer to the medals; they finished 4th, led by Simon Cahill in 12th place, with Neil Turnbull 38th, Tony Ineson 44th, and ahead of them a recruit from an unlikely source - Russell Varney (33), a student at Batley Grammar School. Former Thames Valley Harrier Bob Ellis, although a member of Longwood, usually sent the lads he taught up the road to Spenborough; why Russ came to Leeds is lost in the mists of time, but he was to be around for a while, making most mark as a steeplechaser.

1976 was a most peculiar cross-country season for the 'old-timers,' as the traditional programme was changed by moving the International Championship to an earlier date, before the 'National;' in a precursor of the future the Inter-Counties was to be used as a selection race. Club members had gained three places in the County teams after the 'Yorkshire Trial' in January; Andy Hitchen was sixth in the Junior race at (almost inevitably that year) Graves Park, while in the Senior Dave Slater didn't run (he was at a wedding) but was nonetheless selected; the only other vest went to Malcolm Thomas, who in fourth place showed clearly that whatever state of fitness he'd been in at the start of the season, he was now very much in shape. Martin Dell, 11th, had been the only other Leeds City man close up.

If the Inter-Counties was intended as a selection race, Dave Slater should have been selected straight off; he finished 8th, but the selectors in their wisdom had chosen to pick the non-running Brendan Foster and David Black. Their wisdom was called into question by Roger Norton, who pointed out that Foster had expressly stated that he did not plan to run any cross-country that winter - not even in the 'National' to help Gateshead defend the title. Roger not unreasonably asked why the selectors hadn't checked up first! Anyway, Dave got his place, and justified it by finishing third English counter at Chepstow in 15th, in a winning team. Malcolm Thomas, finishing 66th, was fourth counter for the Welsh team that closed in 8th on its home territory. Both Dave and Malcolm were to receive commemorative tankards.

The Girls rounded off their season in a very satisfactory manner. The last Northern League match at Derby saw not two but three Leeds City teams flourishing; the first record of the Under-13 team appears in the Club Newsletter. The aforementioned Wendy Hirst was third counter that day, finishing 30th to support Susan Elam (23) and another new name that was to leave a mark - Lorraine Holdsworth (20). Both Wendy and Lorraine can still be found high on the Ranking Lists. The older age-groups held their places; the Under-15s were second to Sale (again) with Sandra Arthurton second to Pauline Clark (again) and packing five in 32 - the others being Carole Wood (12) Julie Dawson (17), Sandra Gent (20) and Lesley Doyle - another new name that was to be around for some time. Julie Whiteley also took a second place, and led Christine Thompson (9) and Paula Staiano (31) to third place overall.

Two girls took titles in the West Yorkshire Schools', Sandra Arthurton in the Junior Girls' and Carole Wood in the Inters, with Julie Whiteley second in the Senior race (Simon Cahill took the Inter. Boys, our only male success.)

The National Championships saw Julie finish a slightly disappointing 12th in the Inter. Race - only disappointing alongside her magnificent earlier performances - and the Juniors finished 8th, led home by bronze medallist Sandra Arthurton - another Club first. Moreover, Sandra could have another crack at the title next year - but so, ominously could the runner-up, Sale's Pauline Clarke. Sandra Gent (80) had as good a race as she'd had all season; Carole Wood (104) probably had the opposite; and Julie Dawson (135) was pressed hard by Lesley Doyle, who finished 145th.

Whatever else had motivated the season, however, did not compare with the anticipation surrounding March 11th and Western Park, Leicester. So close in the previous year, and with new strength 'up front,' could a medal, or even a title, come home? Roger Norton outlined the team the week before - the strong-looking nine of Slater, Thomas, Baxter, Dell, Nicholl, Bailey, Hilton, Stevens, and Lunn, with Richardson, Kilner and Spirett named as reserves. It looked good - but even in praising their efforts and raising their hopes Roger was cautious. He pointed out that Mike had struggled with injury, Martin had been erratic, and John was unlikely to repeat 1975; he also noted that well though they were going there was no guarantee of them even being the first Yorkshire team home. Airedale had been beaten - but never by much, and any team containing the likes of Alwyn Dewhurst, John Temperton, Jim Todd, Richard May and Dennis Mayho couldn't be written off. Still, the team went down with every intention of doing itself justice - and it did all of that!

In terms of being competitive there can have been few better National Senior team races ever. In 1975 only thirty points had covered third to sixth places, but Gateshead had been 150 or so in front; in '76 they held their title, but by a margin of only 42 in a field in which exactly 200 points covered the first seven teams. And in the middle were Leeds City - an agonising FIVE POINTS short of taking medals, and only 82 points off taking the title, with a score 200 points less than the previous year. Furthermore, the club one in front of us was CARDIFF - who nowadays wouldn't be allowed to enter the ENGLISH Championship. Ironically, the man who probably cost the Club the medal was the man who'd probably done most to make it all possible - Mike Baxter.

On what could have been the day of days for Mike's illustrious Club career, he ran "the worst National I ever did" - his words, not the writer's. Mike was fifth counter in 87th place; if he had run to the same form as in the Northern (where he was one behind Liverpool's Roger Harrison, who finished 46th) the team would have beaten Cambridge & Coleridge for silver medals. It's impossible, however, to criticise Mike. For a start, he turned out with a creaking foot injury, and by his own reckoning limped about seven of the nine miles; writing in the Club newsletter Brwsi Kilner described his run as "an object lesson in guts." It could be said as well that the number of times he ran in these two years with injuries and illness to support the team, and the training he had missed as a result, took their toll at the wrong time. Even in its narrow failure he had driven, cajoled and inspired the team to a peak which would take over twenty years to emulate and almost thirty to better.

Mike was doubly gutted because the other five counters ran up to or even bettered expected form. Dave Slater was with the pace most of the way, and finished a splendid sixth; Malcolm Thomas showed just how far he'd

come back for a storming 13th place; and Martin Dell shrugged off all the question-marks over his patchy form when it mattered to get in the first fifty - on that day an achievement. Dave Nicholl continued his steady effort in Club teams in 77th; and Brian Hilton's 111th was the highest placing he had so far occupied in 'Nationals.' For the record, John Lunn was 230th, Pete Stevens 316th, and Nigel Bailey was badly spiked after only about 100 yards and dropped out. Overlooked in the euphoria and disappointment, a Youths team, without Simon Cahill and Phil Condon and consisting of Russ Varney (154), Neil Turnbull (172) Paul McKenna 183) and Carl Blackwell (316) finished 37th.

There were a couple of other team excellent team performances to come before the start of the track season. The Spenborough 20 team race was won for the second consecutive year, with Martin Dell finishing third, Brian Hilton 10th and Nigel Bailey 12th; and the team were, again, just outside the medals in the Northern 12-stage, run on a curious course at Gateshead, from the Team Valley industrial estate, in which the short leg was very short and dead flat, and the long leg was very long and went up a mountain-side. The team was short of Malcolm Thomas, carrying an injury, and Dave Slater had to be talked into doing a long leg the week before an international; Malcolm's replacement was a newcomer to the Club, and an interesting one. Pete Bradley had only joined the Club a matter of weeks before the race; although a Leeds lad, he had come from Medway A.C. in Kent, having just left the Royal Navy after several years' service in nuclear submarines. Some found Pete difficult to get on with; he was sometimes prickly, and more than a bit of a 'loner.' However, he was to give the Club five or six years of solid performances before he left in somewhat unusual circumstances - but that comes later.

The team was given a splendid lead-off by "probably the last man to make the team," as Roger Norton described him - Brwsi Kilner, who probably ran the best of his many good relay legs that day. One of the features of the team, in fact, was the consistency of the short-leg runners; Brwsi ran 10.50, John Lunn 10.57, Pete Stevens 10.55, Malcolm Cox also 10.55, Pete 11.08, and only last-minute call-up Mike Sherman (yes, he raced as well!) was a lot slower with 11.55. The long legs saw Dave Slater excel himself again, doing the fastest of the day with 29.15 for a pretty torrid six miles on the eighth leg; again there was consistency with Dave Nicholl doing 30.50, Mike Baxter 31.01, Brian Hilton 31.59 and Martin Dell, running into a hole on last, 31.48. Nigel Bailey (32.48) being the only slightly disappointing long-stager. However, the Club didn't contest the A.A.A. race for which it had qualified.

The Club has gone on to other triumphs at Senior level on the road and the country; but until recently the question has always hung around - were the '76 team as good as, or better than, the teams of the 1990s and the new Millennium? In 2001 the writer contributed a comparison to the Club Newsletter, which can be found as an appendix to this History; having reconsidered it when writing this account, he feels that his view - that while later teams were more consistent and won more things over a longer period, in terms of pure talent the '76 team was the better - is a fair one. Of course, he admits to prejudice; the days of the '76 team were his own good running days, and throughout history the old men will always tell you that the grass was greener, the courses were harder, the competition was tougher and the achievements were harder-earned in the long-gone, golden days

when they were young. He also admits that the younger generation have won more, won for longer, and got to higher levels than his team ever did; and if some suggest that the competition in the 'Seventies was tougher - well, you can only beat the opposition that's there, and the modern boys had no easier task defeating Bingley, Morpeth and Salford than we did defeating Airedale and Sheffield United. He has cheered on, enjoyed, and rejoiced in, all the successes the last fifteen years have brought - but in his heart the boys of '76 will always be 'The Team.'

The question we were asking, of course, in April 1976 was, where do we go from here? Surveying what the team had achieved, and looking at the personnel, there were plenty of high hopes. We didn't expect the answer to the question which actually happened - that the way we were going to go was down, into a trough in Senior Harrier activity at Leeds City which was to take the best part of a decade to climb out of. It was a great time - but regrettably, a short one. The torch of advancing the reputation of the Club was to pass, in those years, from the Senior Men Harriers to the track-men, the rising Women's section, and the growing body of young athletes - and they were to carry it well.

## Chapter 7: New directions and old frustrations

The 1976 and 1977 track seasons were both interesting, because each of them was to see an important stage in the history both of the Club and athletics in the North in general. In each of these years there was a major development in team competition. 1976 saw the Women's section moving into League competition, while there were signs in the same year of the emergence of league competition for young male athletes; in 1977 the Club first entered the National Young Athletes' League. The two came from very different routes; one had grown out of the major clubs, while the other came from a single spark. In the winter season between the two the Club also enhanced its reputation for promoting cross-country events.

League competition for men had developed at the Senior end of the spectrum; and if some people had had their way within athletic administration, would probably have remained so for much longer. Women's athletics, on the other hand, had tended to be weak at Senior level, but was developing rapidly among the younger age-groups. It was part - and an unsung part - of the increasing movement which is often described, somewhat inaccurately, as 'Women's Lib;' it was really much more a case of younger girls following older generations who had for fifty years before the Seventies been less and less willing to accept the gender stereotypes of previous generations. Whole books have been written on the subject from all sorts of angles; it would be possible to cite the rise of the 'teenager' as a separate socio-economic entity in the 1950s, a more adventurous approach in some schools' Physical Education departments from the 'traditional female' activities of hockey, netball and rounders, in athletics the appearance of role-models in the 1960s such as Ann Packer and Lillian Board, and even the steady reduction in the weight and complexity of women's clothing and in particular of underclothing. Remembering the monstrous whalebone corsets without which his mother didn't consider herself properly dressed, and even the much lighter 'girdle' of the 1960s which vanished when the appearance of tights made suspenders obsolete, the

writer feels it's no coincidence that young women became more likely to take up active sports such as athletics at a time when these changes took place.

At any rate, when women's league athletics had developed, with what was at first known as the Motorway League, the teams covered three age-groups - Under-15s, Under-17s and Seniors, as they would now be called. The Northern Women's League had followed the same format; and Leeds City had really had to wait until enough of its members were older than 16 to put out a worthwhile Senior section before considering going into League athletics. 1976 was the year they took the plunge; and it was a successful start, as the Ladies had an unbeaten record in Division 4B. Not that it was the strongest of Divisions; it started off with five clubs, but Middlesbrough only attended one of the three matches, and Sheffield A.C. gave the last one a miss.

The Club won the first match, at Sheffield in early May, by over forty points with no less than thirteen individual winning events; two of them would now be 'illegal' under UKA rules, as Sandra Arthurton won both the Under-15 800m and 1500m (which she regularly did - nowadays boys aren't allowed to do the double either.) There were also 'doubles' for Sarah Shipley in the sprints and Karen Morley in the throws; Tonia Phillpots won the High Jump, Carole Wood and Paula Staiano gained maximum points in the Under-17 800m, and Diana Greenwood, a staff colleague of Mike Sherman at Garforth, won the 400m Hurdles in spite of never having done it before. She was the first really effective practitioner of the event in Club history.

There was a delay of almost three months to the second meeting at Rotherham, where the margin of victory was 34 points over Sheffield and the three 'doubles' of Round 1 repeated the dose; There were also senior wins for Julie Whiteley (800), Christine Thompson and Lesley Doyle (3000), and Diana Greenwood (400mH and 100mH.) In the younger age-groups there were plenty of winners; among the Under-17s Carole Wood (800m) and Christine Clarkson and Janice Swan (Discus), while in the Under-15s there were doubles from Sandra Arthurton and Jane Rostron (800), Karen Morley and Diane Swan (Shot), and 13-year-old Angela Bruce and Jane Bottomley (Javelin), and a win for hurdler Philippa Peters. There was also a remarkable performance from Wendy Hirst, who won the B 1500m with a clocking of 5.09.1 - at the age of 12. Only a few Under-13s have beaten it since, and now they seldom get the opportunity.

Phillipa and Jane Bottomley were two of a group of girls who became Club members in somewhat odd circumstances. Alan Whitworth was best known for coaching middle-distance runners; the athletes he brought with him from Wakefield all fitted into that category. However, somehow (the circumstances have not been recorded) he'd established a connection with a school somewhere in Halifax or the surrounding area; and in 1976 Leeds City suddenly got an influx of girls from the area. Several of them made substantial impacts on the Club's performances for some time; they did so in the third league match of the year in August at Kirkby, when another 'Calderdale' hurdler, Janet Patchett, was part of a double with Christine Linton (who was a neighbour of Mike Sherman's) over the now-abolished distance of 200 metres hurdles. The winning margin was 61 points, but the meeting was extremely distorted by the participation of only three clubs; one sign of this was that Leeds City

didn't drop a single point in all the middle-distance events, and out of 62 individual events the Club provided exactly half the winners.

For the fourth successive year Leeds City's Senior Men's team was pretty well unchallenged in the Northern League Division 1, though the unbeaten records of 1973 and 1975 weren't emulated. The first match, at Cleckheaton in early May, produced a 29-point margin of victory over Longwood, whose performance was enhanced by decathletes Alan Shaw and Martin Maynard. The Leeds team was weakened (as first-round teams often were in subsequent years when the first fixture was on the first weekend in May) by a clash with the British Students' Championships; both Andy Staniland and Ian Lindley were taking titles in that on the same weekend. The Club scored maxima in four events - 1500 with Dave Nicholl and Chris Hudson, Triple Jump with Mike Gledhill and Walter Bronjewski, Discus with Paul Armstrong and Tony Gummerson (who also won the Shot) and javelin with Chris Harbage and his younger brother Colin; in addition Sean Cahill took the A 800 and Steve Denton the B Vault.

The second meeting, in early July, was held at the Kirkby Stadium, an important venue for many years, but one which had suffered from being sited in a huge and featureless 'new town' - for which read council estate with precious little other than pubs in the way of leisure facilities. It had suffered for some time from the attention of vandals (with on one occasion an international athlete's car being jumped on until the roof was flattened), and it has the doubtful distinction of being about the first all-weather track the use of which was discontinued. The meeting was also held on one of the hottest days John Lunn, who won the 5000m with Pete Bradley taking the B, can ever remember racing in; his recollection is of temperatures of "105 in the shade - and there wasn't any!" John Ashton (after what Granville Beckett described as "a swashbuckling first lap") and Sean Cahill in the 800, and Dave Nicholl and Mike Baxter in the 1500, ensured a clean sweep in the distance events, while Mike Gledhill and Ian Lindley won their specialities. There was also a mention of one of the odd people the Club has picked up from time to time who add interest to its history - long-jumper Alan Ainsworth, an acquisition from Leeds University. The very ordinary-sounding name hides the fact that he added another nationality to our list - Alan was, and clearly looked, a Hong Kong Chinese.

The League title was virtually assured with a victory by 51 points at Huddersfield in the third match four weeks later; maximum points were recorded in the Shot, Discus, Javelin and Pole Vault, and only dropped points in the middle distances in the 5000m and Steeplechase - and that in spite of a list of seven key athletes mentioned as being missing for the meeting. Indeed Roger Norton was at pains to stress how necessary it was becoming for Leeds City to get into the British League. He reckoned that even in the Northern League's top division "the overall standard is poor (and) offers very little incentive to any except the very youngest of the Leeds Athletes, who can get better competition in open meetings or in the Stretford League." He also criticised the organisation for shortage of officials, comparing it to the Gateshead shambles of 1975. The Huddersfield meeting also saw the first appearance of one of the most memorable sprinters the Club ever produced - Ron Small.

How Ron came to the Club, as recounted to the writer by Ray Barrow, is a tale in itself, which might even have got Ron 'banned' for 'professionalism' if it had come out at the time. Ray first heard from a colleague about a guy who was racing al-comers in Harehills Park and staking his car on the outcome - and who had according to his informant never lost. Ray went along to see, and persuaded Ron he might have a future in 'real' athletics. He became a team regular for several seasons - and those who saw "Thunderbird Ron" sprint seldom forgot it. There are those who say a runner's style is an outward indication of mechanical efficiency, though there is no such thing as a 'perfect style' for any event; some sprinters flow fluently over the ground, and some attack the event with muscular aggression. Ron's style defied all known description, and could only be fully appreciated, as the writer once did, by standing looking straight down his lane and watching him approach. Between his elbows and his knees, if you looked carefully, he was a normal sprinter of the 'chunky' kind; from there outwards his lower limbs rotated in circles! Combined with a pronounced backward lean, the result was like nothing else ever seen, and would have appeared comic - to anyone who wasn't trying to catch him! Ron's personal best for the 100 metres was 10.7, which the majority of present-day Club sprinters would be more than happy to equal! He was the classic instance of never judging an athletic book by the cover, and living proof that there's more than one way of achieving. Certainly the Club team was more than glad to have him in the squad.

It was significant that in the final match at Warrington - in which the Club finished second to Liverpool Pembroke - at least two 16-year-olds were given their first taste of Senior League action - John Burns who accompanied Club captain Pete Bygate ("making his first appearance in more than a year") in the 800m, and Simon Cahill in the 1500, partnering Kim McDonald who was on vacation from Western Kentucky University. Another two youngsters had good wins; Beresford Herbert, in only his second appearance, won the High jump and was second in the triple, while Chris Harbage advanced the Club Javelin record to 57.12. There were contributions from young decathlete Martin Waterhouse, who did five events, and a 'second-level' distance-running squad which included Nigel Bailey, Pete Bradley, Brwsi Kilner and John Lunn.

The fifth attempt at qualifying was probably the most frustrating yet. Not only did we miss out, in joint fourth place, but Sheffield A.C., who had been scoring ridiculous totals in Division 3 of the League, applied to be considered in the 'paper match' for the last place, were given it, and qualified in second place. Moreover, the Club's failure at Haringey was brought about principally by the non-appearance, without notice or explanation, of some of our better throwers; it was in a write-up in the next Newsletter after this that Arthur Cockcroft, usually slow to criticise, made a scathing reference to "Messrs Garbage and Hummerson." There were still some strong performances; the jumpers did particularly well, scoring 76 out of a possible 80 points, and besides vaulters Robin Murphy and Steve Wright (the latter winning with a 4.20 clearance in the rain), triple-jumpers Mike Gledhill and another promising youngster, Martin Stitch were singled out for mention. On the track Mike Baxter won both B 1500 and 5000, though not long back from injury, while Andy Staniland, Kevin Walton (now more often running 400s after opening his account in May by running 49.3 at his first try early in the year) and young John Smeaton School multi-eventer Martin Waterhouse, who ran the 400m Hurdles, were also mentioned by Roger Norton.

The Club's participation in the B.A.L. Cup followed a not untypical pattern. An all-Yorkshire first round at the Alderman Kneeshaw track in Hull was won by a reasonably comfortable margin from Wakefield and Longwood; the semi-final at Meadowbank saw a weakened team finish seventh of eight, with Wakefield 5th. At Hull Chris Harbage set a Javelin record (56.06) which he was subsequently to beat, while John Ashton, Robin Murphy, Mike Gledhill, Ian Lindley and Tony Gummerson won their regular events. There were only two winners at Meadowbank - John Ashton again and Dave Nicholl over 5000 - and only Simon Richardson in the 'Chase (3rd) and Pete Bradley in the 10,000 (4th) rated a mention in Athletics Weekly. It clearly wasn't a memorable effort.

Championships and open meetings added interest to the developing Club. Leeds City organised its own series of Open Meetings - at Cleckheaton, inevitably - and the spring one saw good sprinting from Andy Staniland and youngster Paul Richards, a fine 3000 from Dave Nicholl (among those he beat was Charlie Spedding of Gateshead) and good performances from Simon Cahill, Neil Turnbull and Russ Varney among the youngsters. Roger Norton claimed it had been successful in attracting numbers, but not in the field events, which he praised the Club for 'pushing;' Paul Armstrong had been the only competitor in the Shot, for example. The summer one was even more of a success; though the numbers showing up were in some ways an indication that there wasn't enough 'formal' competition to go round then. Earlier than that the Club had already seen a landmark, winning two age-group indoor titles at Cosford; Sean Cahill took the Under-20 3000, an event he preferred at the time, while in the Under-15 Girls 1500 Sandra Arthurton took the lead after 100 metres and was never challenged again. Her domination was such that her winning time of 4.50.3 was three seconds slower than her heat time - and in the heat she'd set a personal best - for the first 800 metres, covered in 2.22!. Sarah Shipley took a bronze in the Under-15 60m, and Phil Condon wasn't far off in the Under-17 1500m.

In County, Area and National championships medals were harder to come by than for some time. In the Yorkshires, for instance, only one title fell to a Senior member - John Ashton taking the 800m; and silver medals for Dave Nicholl (5000), Ian Lindley (Shot) and Tony Gummerson (Discus, with bronze in the Shot) were the only other 'takings.' In the Under-20 age-group there was more; Andy Staniland had a sprint double, and Sean Cahill (800), Steve Wright (Vault, with Steve Denton almost inevitably second) and Paul Armstrong took one each. We also had a claim on 110m Hurdles champion Derek East - but that day he was wearing his Army vest. On the women's side the only champions were among the Under-15s - Sarah Shipley, Sandra Arthurton and Karen Morley. Similarly, only one Northern Men's Senior title came the Club's way - Robin Murphy took the Vault, with Steve Wright third; Steve subsequently took the Under-20 title ahead of Steve Denton. There were also medals for Ian Lindley (3rd Senior Shot) and Paul Maney (2nd U17 100). The Northern Women's Championships introduced another significant new name - that of Alison Downie, who won the Under-15 Long Jump - and saw one of the great surviving Club records set when Tonia Phillpots cleared 1.75 to win the Under-17 High Jump. While no medals were taken at the A.A.A. Championships Club members did well enough in the Under-20s for three of them - Paul Armstrong, John Ashton and Sean Cahill - to gain age-group internationals at the end of the year.

The West Yorkshire Schools brought titles almost too numerous to mention - sixteen of them, with the 'usual suspects' well to the fore. Besides the familiar names of Armstrong, Arthurton, Bluemink, Cahill, Phillpots, Shipley, Wood and Wright and the increasingly familiar ones of Burns, Condon and Patchett there were some new ones; Vivienne Grant in the Senior Javelin (another of the 'Halifax contingent,' she was a member of the Scottish Clan Grant of Grantown-on-Spey), Paul Maney in the Under-17 200, and three Under-15s - spear-thrower Adrian Riggs, high-jumper Chris Lumb and sprinter Garry Yeadon. Of these Garry, a precociously well-built 14-year-old who like a lot of others was a Rugby winger, was to go on to become one of our two English Schools' champions of the year, setting a record that has only once been subsequently beaten; his Yorkshire runner-up Philip Griffin, also a Club member, took the bronze medal. The other winner was Sean Cahill, who took the Senior 1500m.

By the end in the season two names were missing from the team-sheets, and would be so permanently. Dave Slater abruptly left the Club in mid-season to join Bingley Harriers; and Martin Dell took a job in Hereford and within a matter of months wrote back to inform the Club of his retirement. He was deeply involved at that time with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and felt that his participation in this was more important than athletics; his final contribution to the Newsletter was a brief article about a meeting at York to try and prevent the starting of a race - "the Arms Race" - which had been address by former Olympic athlete Philip Noel-Baker, a strong C.N.D. supporter. He made the comment that it as "a pity that the £5bn spent...to keep Britain in the race couldn't be spent on athletics - or something." Nobody made the least disparaging comment, because Martin's commitment to such causes was well-known and well respected.

His departure did deprive Leeds of one of its more remarkable athletic sights; prior to his departure he'd been working for Yorkshire Water in Garforth, and was often to be seen running home through the centre of Leeds, often past the Central Bus Station, carrying a huge 'day-glo' back-pack, and wearing the inevitable green tracksuit and blue gabardine raincoat, topped off with a flat cap with a transistor radio beneath it! There'll never be another!

However, the history of the Club seems to be forever a case of, "as one door closes, another opens." This was the period - from 1972 to 1992 - when education in Leeds was organised on a three-tier system, and the Leeds Middle Schools held their own championships - usually at Temple Newsam - and a perusal of the winners shows a number of names who were to feature in Club teams. On the Girls' side Angela Bruce (Javelin) and hurdler Rita Panayi figured in the Under-13s, while the Under-12 800 (in 2.31.5) went to Wendy Hirst; while among the Boys Mark Johnson, who still holds the Senior 110m Hurdles record, gained his first mention. The 'headline' event was a clash between two Club members in the Under-12 1500 - Gary Hayton, younger brother of Colin, and David Holdsworth, whose sister Lorraine had already appeared in Club colours the previous season, and figures in ranking lists. Gary had two 'careers' at Leeds City - as a schoolboy distance-runner, and later as a multi-eventing 'filler-in' for the B team, along with Colin and Steve Denton, in the 1980s. He was also a successful local league footballer; and it was when returning from a football match that he was to be killed in a horrific crash on the

notoriously dangerous stretch of the A59 between Harrogate and Blubberhouses. The award for the outstanding young sportsman in the county's awards for disabled sportsmen is named in his memory.

Before the season had started, in April, there had been a serious Club attempt on the Three Peaks' Fell Race. There were strong Leeds associations with the race, besides the fact that Jack Bloor had won the second race in 1954; quite a lot of the older members had run it, Dave Hodgson and former St. Mark's secretary Harry Croft had been involved in the organisation, and Harry's son Douglas, though never himself an athlete, was secretary of the organisation's association for many years. On paper the Club had quite a strong team; besides veterans Dave and Jack Lawton, a quartet of younger members, Nigel Bailey, Brian Hilton, Brwsi Kilner and John Lunn, had entered, and the latter two had even gone to Horton for a week's holiday training over the course. In the event Nigel and Brian dropped out, and John, in spite of problems handling heights, ran the fastest time by a Club member on the second manifestation of the course with 3.06 50. There are two contrasting accounts in a Club Newsletter - the seasoned Dave reckoning the course isn't really that hard, while the tyro John presents a somewhat different, and more cautious, picture. The race wasn't ever one to take lightly, as event two years later were to prove.

Again the distance-runners were active through the summer; and their activities were clearly influenced by increasing car ownership and the improved travel opportunities the motorways had brought. They took part in more races in Lancashire and Cheshire that year than in Yorkshire, if the Club Newsletter is an indication. There were also not infrequent references to "practising the manly arts" - a euphemism for finishing up in a pub! Pete Bradley, Brwsi Kilner and John Lunn were regular participants, though occasionally others appeared; a race at Bolton, for instance, was Dave Slater's last outing for the Club. They were also noted at Hyde (for an eight-miler on a flat six-mile course which finished on top of a huge hill, Heywood, the fell race at Barnoldswick, and a relay in Salford; they also had a little flurry (with Mike Baxter and Brian Hilton) to the east coast to help the new Scarborough A.C. launch its first race.

However, perhaps the most memorable was a four-mile town-centre race in Congleton, for two reasons. One was the comment in the Newsletter about John Lunn's distress at "running four times round three sides of a Tetley's house without going in;" the other was the first appearance of yet another memorable individual - Joe Clancy.

There are often arguments about what the function of an athletic club - especially one of the size and with the competitive record of Leeds City - should be all about. There is the school of thought which says that our aim should be to produce Olympic champions, outstanding individuals and winning teams - and the writer wouldn't quarrel with that as being one of our aims. However, he and a lot of other people have also seen it as the job of athletic clubs of all sizes and pretensions to offer the chance to anybody who wants to take part, of whatever standard, to do so and gain enjoyment from it, and to encourage them to do it a bit better. Anyone who says that this is a waste of time, and we should only work with people who are 'assessed' as having 'talent,' should consider the story of Joe, which the writer told in a newsletter in 1977.

Joe first appeared with son John, who was then about eight, in the summer of 1975 jogging round the Templenewsam track. The Club wit who thought "he resembled unto an Irish brickie" hadn't got it quite right; he was in fact a carpenter and joiner, aged 29 and clearly looking as if he'd never done any serious sport for years. Perhaps it reflected the increasingly 'middle-class' attitudes of Club members that nobody expected him to stick to running, even when after a few weeks he asked Dennis Wood if he could go for a run with him. The 'star' Seniors were even more surprised when some weeks later he asked if he could go out with them; he lasted about two miles; and the wise heads reckoned that was the last we'd see of him. The wise heads got it wrong. Next week Joe was back - and lasted about three miles; and so it went on. Joe clearly "didn't seem to worry about being dropped, and if he was he was quite happy just to keep going at his own pace." As the winter went on he stuck for longer and longer, and in early 1976 he joined the Club and ran his first race, the Bingley cross-country handicap, "off a starter's mark which gave him no chance - and duly finished nowhere." Eighteen months later he was within thirty seconds of getting a first-class standard in the Three Peaks, and he was later to run in the British League as a steeplechaser.

Joe's attitude to training, as explained in the 1977 article, isn't a bad guide to anyone of any ability in any athletic epoch - "he has never expected miracles, his approach to training has always been sensible, but as soon as he has found himself able to push a bit harder he's done so." As to whether a Club like Leeds City should bother with such people, the writer recalls a conversation with Pudsey & Bramley's Pete Watson when that club started a 'jogging section' in the early '80s marathon boom, where he reckoned that if two similar 'joggers came along, and one trained with the jogging section and the other with the 'traditional' harriers they progressed at very different rates. If Joe had gone to one of the 'small, friendly running clubs' that sprang up around that time he'd never have done a 10.14 'Chase or a 2.37 Marathon; and Leeds City would have lost a lot.

The winter season was almost certain to see a shift of emphasis in the Club's fortunes, and the effect of the departures on the Men's side didn't take long to show. Roger Norton previewed the season with an article in which he contrasted Leeds City's weakened resources to the strength of the Airedale & Spen Valley team; this was particularly ironic in that the latter contained a whole list of present and former Leeds University students. Personal influence often has a great deal to do with deciding which club an athlete joins if he or she moves into an area; and the strong figure in Leeds University running in the late 1970s was an ASVAC member, Gary Smith. The presence of the likes of Tony Bird and John Fox (whose brother was a long-standing Sale Harrier) in the ASVAC squad was largely down to 'Big G.' There was still plenty of 'paper' strength about in Leeds City; but there was something of the feel of an era coming to an end despite this. Several of the 'regulars' were now either approaching or the long side of thirty - seen as pretty elderly in those days. The opening events of the year didn't do much to dispel this. The Northern 6-stage, at Derby (on a depressingly flat course) saw almost everybody, including Mike Baxter, have 'shockers' - and that was Mike's description of the first three legs and the last one, respectively by Brian Hilton, John Lunn, himself and Brwsi Kilner. Dave Nicholl and Pete Bradley restored things

a bit, but 10th after last year was a distinct come-down. A slightly stronger team of Andy Hitchen, Mike (who ran better), John Ashton, Dave, Pete Brad. and Pete Stevens fared better in the A.A.A. at Southport, finishing 14th.

There wasn't much more joy in the early rounds of the West Yorkshire League; in the first match we were behind Holmfirth as well as ASVAC, with Mike Baxter 4th, Dave Nicholl 12th, Pete Stevens 15th and Pete Bradley 16th, and while we rose to second at the second race (Mike 1st, Andy Hitchen 7th, Pete Stevens 10th and Brian Hilton 13th) the pendulum had clearly swung. A few individual efforts - Mike's win and David Holdsworth's second in the Under-13 in the second race, Simon Cahill finishing second in the joint U17/U15 race - lightened the gloom a bit. It lightened considerably more in the last race, where despite the absence of Mike a Senior win was recorded; the counters were Brian (6), John Ashton (9), Andy (10) and Pete Bradley (14). Mike was away representing the North; the result seems to indicate that some of the ASVAC lads were in the same team. Another lightener of the atmosphere was that year's Aaron Races, which showed that at least numbers could be got out; five Seniors and one and a half Veterans' teams turned out, and the A team of Andy Hitchen, Mike Baxter, John Ashton and Dave Nicholl finished second to a Loughborough Colleges' quartet which included Sebastian Coe.

There was even more joy about the younger Aaron races. The Under-13s and Under-17s both won; in the former Gary Hayton was first home, and David Holdsworth and Darren Marshall were 6th and 7th; Darren's brother Neill was our best Under-15 in 5th. The Under-17s also had the winner in Simon Cahill, and with Chris Bennett and Phil Condon 4th and 5th it was even more emphatic. The Club had already resigned itself to the fact that at the end of the winter Phil would leave; his family had moved to Manchester, though he intended to see the season out. There was, however, a replacement waiting in the wings; fourth counter in eighth place was a youngster making only about his second appearance for the Club. In this first season he was very much the fourth of a strong quartet; but more was to be heard, and before not too long, of John Doherty.

There was even the usual bit of University hilarity when the British Irwin Club, which the year before had set a course record for a team wearing the same hat, set a second for the fastest team ever to carry a pint tankard (empty, needless to say) round the course. The miscreants involved were Len l'Anson, Pete Bradley, John Lunn (who supplied the pot), Gary Ineson, Nigel Bailey and a newcomer, former amateur soccer player Paul Greenwood.

At the last West Yorkshire League meeting the younger athletes - except for David Holdsworth, who took an overall award - were conspicuous by their absence; they competed the next day at Worksop, in a young athletes' meeting of some quality, judging by the opposition the Under-17s beat - Tipton, Sheffield and Birchfield were all behind them. Simon Cahill won, Phil Condon finished 5th and Chris Bennett 12th, and even though John Doherty had "an off-day" in 34th hopes of a medal in the 'National' were being raised. However, the almost perennial comments about youngsters over-racing due to Club and school commitments, and the influence of this on the drop-out rate, appeared in an article by Roger Norton earlier in the year which also mentioned another phenomenon - the growth of interest among Veterans, which he said would bring "nothing but good to the sport."

John Lunn had a different 'moan' about cross-country matters in the Newsletter, and again it was one that had recurred - West Yorkshire League courses containing excessive numbers of laps.

There was certainly no gloom about the women's side of the Club, however. Opening the competitive season with a composite relay win at Sutton-in Ashfield - where the only challenge to Sandra Arthurton on the Junior leg came from Lorraine Holdsworth - the Club went on to a good season in the Northern Women's League. Julie Whiteley was placing well in Senior races; Carole Wood was usually near the front of the Under-17s (6th in the first race); Wendy Hirst never won any of the Under-13 races, but took the overall trophy; while Sandra seemed to have got the mastery of her earlier rival Pauline Clark from Sale, and won the all three Under-15 races. A Newsletter article of the time noted that the organisation of the Women's League wasn't quite up to the standard of 'slickness' that men's competition was noted for, but put it down to the comparative newness of women's cross-country. With Sandra running fastest leg of the day, Lorraine Holdsworth and the improving Fiona Worton, a good sixth placing in the National Relay in the age-group was achieved.

There were also successes in other open races, a number of which, to the Newsletter correspondents' obvious amusement, were in the North Midlands; was it significant that Julie Whiteley's future husband, who appeared on the scene at about this time, came from Derby? Certainly the Batley Road Races were enlivened by Julie's failure to get there from Derby due to the peculiarities of Sunday railway timetables - to say nothing of the fastest leg of all being run by an Under-15 competitor - Sandra Arthurton, who else! The Yorkshire Championships saw two individual titles won - Wendy and Sandra - and four other girls, Julie, Lorraine, Carole and Lesley Doyle - gain County selection. The three younger teams all finished second, and the Seniors 4th. It was also another feather in the Club's organisational cap; the Committee Minutes record thanks from Association secretary Margaret Midgley of the successful promotion at Beckett Park, which the Club was increasingly using for running events.

While all this was going on on the competitive front, there was another matter exercising the Club's mind. There was still a strong feeling that the Club was a collection of bits rather than an entity, and that a Club headquarters would be the catalyst for pulling it together. However, there was no chance of anything being done about Templenewsam, John Smeaton wasn't really satisfactory, and the University and Polytechnic were still student-only preserves. In the autumn of 1976, however, a proposal came up to buy "a defunct Conservative Club in Roundhay." (The Newsletter editor of the time was John Lunn, and his comment was "I didn't believe it, either!") Mike Baxter had much to do with the plan to borrow money from a brewery (one showed interest), do up the building by volunteer labour, convert part of it for weight- and circuit-training, train in Roundhay Park and on the recently-laid 300m cinder track at Allerton Grange School, and pay for it out of bar takings. Considering the sums involved - there was talk of borrowing £40,000 - the project now looks very much a flight of fancy; but it was seriously pursued until the brewery lost interest - which in retrospect was probably just as well. Not long afterwards there was another scheme on the table for a joint headquarters with Colton Cricket Club, which did have the virtue of being within warming-up distance of Templenewsam - but nothing came of that, either.

Another matter - which again still hangs around - was the question of Club finance, and in particular the slow payment of annual subscriptions. In December 1976 the Newsletter carried an article in which several people who were involved on the Club's financial side - Mike Baxter, who was running discos as well as races, Arthur Cockcroft, who was organising the Christmas raffle, and principally Treasurer Dave Hodgson - put in their two-penn'orth on the subject. The most telling point was made by Dave, who said that in the previous financial year the cost of running the Club was £1,600, which compared strikingly with the total receipt from Subs - £570! In fairness, it had been an exceptionally heavy year for expenditure on equipment. Fund-raising of various sorts made up the rest, which really made little economic sense. It made even less when a formidable list of people was mentioned, though not by name, as not having paid up; it included everyone from competing athletes to "FOUR MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE" (the capitals were in the Newsletter, and rightly so!) Something was done about it; it involved appointing John Lunn as Membership Secretary with instructions to rake the arrears in. It was a role which put his notorious bloody-mindedness to practical use; and by January, after four months, he was able to report to the Committee that only six people remained unpaid. Of these "three could be regarded as lapsed, two were away at college and the last was an unknown quantity." (He can't remember who the last one was - perhaps mercifully!) At a later date four members of the Club (again unnamed in the Minute Book) were suspended for non-payment.

1977 started a little better competitively on all sides. To the six female County representatives (augmented to eight when Fiona Worton and Paula Staiano got late call-ups) were added five male names after the Yorkshire 'Trial' - Mike Baxter and the entire counting four of the Under-17s, which gave John Doherty, who placed 5th, the distinction of "going from complete novice to County man in six months." (The other three occupied the first three places.) In the Inter-Counties Mike finished 17th, fourth counter in a winning team, while the youngsters made up three-quarters of Yorkshire's champion quartet. Phil Condon, in 34th, was the only one to run down on form; Simon Cahill was 8th, Chris Bennett 12th and John 29th.

The Women made a big contribution to Yorkshire's successes - none more than Julie Whiteley, who didn't get a medal but secured four for the rest of the Seniors by passing the fourth Greater Manchester counter on the run-in to give Yorkshire a one-point victory. Carole Wood's 24th in the Under-17 was a fine run after getting off a sick-bed (Lesley Doyle was 95th and Paula Staiano 145th); and Wendy Hirst was ninth in the Under-13s in her first representative race. And why leave the Under-15s till last? Why else but because the Club provided its first Inter-County champion, as Sandra Arthurton romped it, while Lorraine Holdsworth and Fiona Worton had honourable runs in 34th and 59th.

It really was Sandra Arthurton's year; there were two more 'firsts' to come, in every sense of the word. First she proved that Burnley's Townley Park was a happy hunting-ground for Leeds youngsters; on the ground where Simon Cahill had become the Club's first area champion two years earlier she became the first female area champion - though not before Pauline Clark had pushed her to a second! The team of Lorraine (13), Julie Dawson (28) and Jane Rostron (72) placed 5th, a place matched in the Under-13s by a team featuring Wendy

Hirst (5) and at least two other names set to play a big part in future years - Janine Midgley, nowadays better known as a one of West Yorkshire's leading sports-injury physiotherapists, who was 43rd, and Diane Burton, who was 52nd. Fourth member Amanda Taylor (44) was, however, only a member for a short time. Two weeks later on a mud-bath at Stoke Sandra exceeded anything any Leeds City member had done on the country before - she took an English title. She's also, to the writer's knowledge, the only Club member to have taken any title of any sort wearing only one shoe - the other one vanished in the mire. Wendy Hirst was a splendid 8th among the younger girls, while Julie Whiteley's 30th was a solid start to her Senior career.

The Men's Championship programme was certainly of interest to Leeds City in 1977 as the Club staged the biggest promotion it had ever handled - the Northern Championships - in the full knowledge that it was only a rehearsal for an even bigger effort with the following year's 'National.' It was quite interesting that three weeks before the event they were given an object lesson in how not to do it by the newly-formed, enthusiastic but inexperienced Barnsley Road Runners' efforts to stage the Yorkshire. The course was on reclaimed slag-heaps at Carlton, held together with tough grass (probably selected by Martin Dell's father, whose speciality this was.) Unfortunately the Barnsley club chose to mark the course with very little tape, and pale blue flags which were very small and virtually indistinguishable from the surrounding grass. This "game of 'hunt the marker flag,'" as Arthur Cockcroft described it, didn't stop the Club setting another small landmark by picking up medals in every age-group for the first time, including taking the two youngest titles; not hard in the case of the Under-13s when Gary Hayton, David Holdsworth, Steve Hardcastle and Darren Marshall came in between third and tenth. The Under-15s were just as emphatic (Neill Marshall 2nd, Richard Burrow 5th, Roger Bloor 10th and Gary Howarth 13th) in a race won by "the impressive Elliott of Rotherham." The Under-17 only placed second, but both Simon Cahill and John Doherty were out with niggles, so Chris Bennett and Phil Condon (3rd and 4th) were backed up by Steve White (21) and Paul McKenna (24) who both ran well for their medals. A Junior team was only possible because John Ashton had been knocked out of the 800 at Cosford on the Friday night; he rushed back and finished 4th, so that Kim McDonald (19), Sean Cahill (20) and Gary Ineson (50) could take a bronze medal home. The Seniors, even after all the traumas, still came within four points of the title, which went to Sheffield A.C.; Mike Baxter navigated his way round to win, supported by Brian Hilton (8), Andy Hitchen (11), Dave Nicholl (12), Pete Stevens (14) and Pete Bradley (18). A "below-par" ASVAC team finished third, its "only disappointment," according to the Evening Post, in an otherwise dominant season.

The Northern at Roundhay was an organisational triumph and a competitive disappointment - with one exception. Arthur Cockcroft's call for all hands to the pumps had received "replies in such superabundance that I was hard put to find jobs for everyone." The course was designed by Mike Baxter, though he had the help of the unknown landscape artist of the 1820s who first laid out Roundhay Park in its present form; from experience of organising later 'Nationals' on it the writer has often expressed the opinion that he must have known that someone would want to put in a three-mile championship lap, as all you have to do to mark it out is follow the copses and natural features. However, Mike was the first to use it, and his course, 'tweaked' slightly after the experience of running a

race on it, was so well done that in essence it's been used on each of the four subsequent occasions the 'National' has been run there.

It all proved a bit much for Mike, though - because in the Senior race, for one of the few times in his Senior career, he failed to finish. He put it down to the work and worry over getting the course right, and having done similar events the writer agrees with his conclusion; you use up too much energy organising to run well. The Senior team finished 7th in spite of his absence; Dave Nicholl led home 34th, with Malcolm Thomas 45th, Pete Stevens 49th, Brian Hilton 70th, Andy Hitchen 71st, and Pete Bradley 85th. The Junior team did themselves no favours by being caught getting their track-suits off when the gun went; the same quartet as in the Yorkshire finished in the first 100, but kicked themselves roundly afterwards. The only bright moment came when the Under-17s packed four in the first 20 (Simon Cahill 5, Phil Condon 7, Chris Bennett 9 and John Doherty 19) to take their title.

Clearly big things were now expected of the Under-17s; but "blessed is he who expecteth nothing, for he shall not be disappointed." When it came to the National, on London's Parliament Hill Fields, only Chris Bennett (24th) ran to anything like form; the other three all had their worst day of the season at once. It was especially a disappointing way for Phil Condon to end his connection with Leeds City! The Senior race was one of the most notorious in 'National' history; the huge start has never been easy to control, but on that day, for whatever reason (and the writer can't remember, because he was in the thick of it) the field was at least 400 yards up the course when the official starting gun fired - and you can't recall about 1,200 runners! Considering Mike Baxter was ill, Malcolm Thomas injured yet again, and Dave Nicholl (206) clearly had an off-day, 25th wasn't a bad finish; Brian Hilton (135) and Andy Hitchen (149) made up a bit for Dave, while John Lunn (276), Pete Stevens (289) and Pete Bradley (290) packed well. That had been the story of the year - good packing, but a bit further back down the field.

One other Club team picked up medals - a fine pair of 'bronzes in both Northern and National Veterans' Championships. The names were extremely familiar to Leeds City members; the trio of magnificent Over-50s consisted of Jack Bloor, Dennis Wood and Allan Lawton. Ten years on from the founding of the Club they were continuing to carry the flag, a little more slowly but with no less determination. At Rotherham they finished 5th, 15th and 19th, and at Perry Barr, Birmingham, they were 12th, 24th and 44th, in each case in the above order. At a younger level fifteen members - Mesdemoiselles Whiteley, Thompson, Staiano, Arthurton, Wood, Doyle, Dawson, Hirst, Holdsworth and Worton, and Messrs Simon Cahill, Bennett, Doherty, White and Neill Marshall - represented West Yorkshire in the English Schools' Championships; and here again for the first time Leeds City provided a winner - and not just one but two. Sandra Arthurton's victory in the Intermediate age-group might have been predicted; Julie Whiteley's Senior win was an unexpected but welcome bonus.

Road running also hadn't been forgotten, and was to see a good deal of activity throughout 1977. In January Pete Bradley won the 'Ferriby Ten' at Hull, while at the end of the winter Brian Hilton was second counter in the

Yorkshire team which for the first time ever took the Inter-Counties 20-mile team title; the race was of such quality that Yorkshire's fourth counter, Bingley's Bill Padgett, was inside 1 hour 48 minutes in twentieth place. Mike Baxter, Dave Nicholl and Pete had a sort of 'Easter tour' in Lancashire, winning the team race in the Salford 7 and coming second in a very strong field at the Chris Vose 10 in Warrington. Even the youngsters were to have a bash; in August the Junior Boys' team of Dave Holdsworth (who won), Steve Hardcastle and Darren Marshall took the team prize in their age-group at the Barnsley Road races, another major promotion by the newly-formed club in that town. It was a race which had a considerable vogue for a few years, but the writer can't remember whether the youngsters had to tackle the main feature of the course - the fearsomely steep Old Mill Lane.

The prospect for the 1977 track season had had a bit of a boost in the winter. Not only had several of our sprinters of all ages appeared 'on the boards' at Cosford, but a considerable addition to strength in this direction was the move from Dorothy Hyman Track Club of Charlie Beaumont. A tall, rangy quarter-miler who had already been well placed in County 400-metre championships as an Under-20, Charlie was to have a long career with the Club, and to be a fixture in teams through the late Seventies and early Eighties. He made his first appearance in Club colours in November 1976, when he ran a good 200m - but only slightly faster than the redoubtable 15-year-old Garry Yeadon at the same meeting. On the same day Ron Small ran a 7.2 60m, an event for which he was well suited.

At roughly the same time Andy Staniland was selected for a Junior Sprint Talent Squad, an early example of attempts to "nurture outstanding talent." In Andy's case it was probably justified, though he was never completely committed to athletics due to his equally successful rugby career.

The major development of the season, however, came with the decision of the Club to take part in the National Young Athletes' League for the first time, in the League's second season in the North. This League has arguably been one of the most important stimuli for the development of this and other clubs; and yet it was an area that the official athletics establishment ignored and in some cases actually discouraged. Clearly one stimulus for its own development was that with the development of the all-age Women's Leagues in most of the country an imbalance had been created; there was League competition for young girls, but not for young boys. However, there was the continual cry from administrators and certain coaches that there would be too much competition, and school competition would be enough. There had been no move from the athletics establishment to start leagues for youngsters, and the league really owes its existence to one remarkable man, to whom athletics should be very grateful but whom it has never honoured - Ron Sales.

A more unlikely athletic pioneer than Ron it would be hard to imagine. A chain-smoking middle-aged man from Essex, who himself had never competed (in later years he once threw the Hammer for Thurrock Harriers in a Southern League match), he came into the sport as the parent of a young athlete, as so many valuable people have; and realising the lack of regular team competition for people of his son's age, he organised a local league of clubs in the surrounding area in the very early Seventies. The fact that it caught on and grew very quickly

indicates that there was a clear demand for such competition; clubs from a wider area around London began to apply to join, and by 1974 it was becoming quite large. Word spread, and clubs beyond the South got interested; though the first Yorkshire involvement in it didn't come from a club at all, but from Malet Lambert High School in Hull, who actually travelled to the South to compete at one stage. By 1976 it had grown to cover most of the South and embrace a Midlands division; and when moves to start a Northern Area began, it was no surprise that Leeds City were quickly involved. There had been inter-school matches between Malet Lambert and John Smeaton schools for some time, and Dave Young was aware of developments. Leeds City had participated in Warrington's young athletes' competition for some time before 1976; a press report in June in Roger Norton's collection mentions double wins for two promising young members in their first season with the Club, sprinter Paul Richards (Under-17 100 and 200) and John Burns, who won the 400 and 800 in the same age-group. However, that was a mixed meeting, and the need was at first clearly on the male side.

One problem which had to be sorted was the need to find a team manager, and here Dave struck gold by persuading a candidate for the job - the parent of an athlete who himself was to have a remarkable career. He approached Eddie Linsell, who had a background in local football administration, but none whatever in athletics, but whose son Steve had recently started high-jumping at the age of 11, and whose nephew Paul, a highly-promising long-jumper, was a pupil at John Smeaton. Eddie was to embrace the job with success for several years, and embrace an interest in Leeds City for many more. You could draw parallels between Ron Sales and Eddie Linsell; and one of them is that they both, in their different fields, made contributions to a sport which was originally not their own, for which athletics on the one hand and Leeds City on the other should be deeply grateful. As for Steve Linsell, it's enough to say he holds two Club High Jump records - the Under-13s, set in 1977, and the Over-40s, set in 2004! In between he has, with one exception due to a season out with injury, cleared 1.80 or better in every season since 1980 - a remarkable record in an event where participants tend to go out young.

The structure in the early days was different from its present, Southern League-style 'round-robin' format; the Club was in a Central Division with five other clubs, and finished the three-match series in third place to Stretford and Longwood, largely because the team turned out in the first match at Huddersfield in May was significantly weaker than the other two. The team placed fourth in that meeting; in the other two it was narrowly second to Stretford, in the case of the second match only losing because the Under-17 4x400m relay team was disqualified.

At the first meeting, at Huddersfield in late April, the Club hadn't quite got its act together; the team had a fair number of holes in it, and could only finish third behind hosts Longwood And Malet Lambert. Nonetheless a large number of names appeared in this first team who still feature in Ranking Lists a quarter of a century on. In the sprints Garry Yeadon and Phil Griffin began a season-long collaboration which scored heavily, particularly as Garry scored the first of three 'sprint doubles', while the strong middle-distance section also scored heavily; the fast-improving John Doherty and Richard Burrow took maximum in the Under-17 Steeplechase, as did Neill Marshall and Karl Blackwell over 1500m, while Chris Bennett and Mark Clark just missed doing so over 3000m

and Stuart Newby won the 800m. Newcomer Steve Savage took not only his principal event, the Triple Jump (partnered by Neil Slater, who also won) but the B-string Hurdles as well, and Adrian Riggs won the Javelin. Among the younger lads future Hurdles record-holder Mark Johnson marked his first appearance with a win, and Steve Collinson was half a maximum in the High Jump. The other half was a precursor of future events; Steve Linsell scored his first points. There were also a plethora of young high-jumpers at the time - Gary Launder, Chris Lumb also rated a mention - principally due to the emergence of Bill Hodson, a school-teacher and 'also-ran' road runner, as a more than useful High-jump coach. Bill had 'come in from the cold' after previously starting a separate club, New Farnley A.C., based on the school he taught at; it only lasted about a year.

The second match, at Stretford, was a much closer affair - in fact the team would have won it but for a disqualification in the Under-17 4x400m Relay. Once again the sprinters were prominent. Garry Yeadon made his effort a triple by winning the Shot as well, while he was supported by B sprint wins by Ray Barrow's nephew Nicky George, a more than useful performer; while there appeared yet another Club 'oddball' in Leeds Grammar School quarter-miler Daniel Brown. Dan was one of those incredible talents who never actually seemed to train but still produced times, in addition to which he was a juvenile chain-smoker whose propensity in this direction earned him the nickname of "Dan, Dan, the Fag-Ash Man" in certain quarters. From Dave Young's account he appeared to be at the centre of the disqualification incident, after winning the individual event. With Gary Launder, Adrian Dobson and the Two Steves the Club had a High-Jump bonanza, while John Doherty doubled 800 and 1500, winning the latter in maximum partnership with Gary Howarth, and David Lambert and Neil Slater maximised the Javelin. The Under-15 Triple Jump saw another maximum when Mark Johnson (after winning the Hurdles) supported another newcomer - Aamer Khan, who remains one of our few 15-metre performers. He was to set a new record before the season was over.

The last meeting at Cleckheaton was not quite as close - Stretford won by five points rather than two! The Under-17 middle-distances and the High Jumpers across the board continued to contribute heavily; in the latter case Simon Mountford added his name to the list of event winners. The middle-distance highlight was a Club Steeplechase record of 4.36.8 from John Doherty; his second-string Richard Burrow also featured in a maximum-point 3000 with Mark Clark. Steve Savage and Neil Slater took Triple Jump honours again, while Garry Yeadon and Nicky George staged more sprint successes. Mark Johnson and Aamer Khan did likewise in the younger age-group, and yet another useful performer emerged at this point, after improving remarkably during the summer - Hammer-thrower Keith Burley, another John Smeaton product, who won his event.

It was a good season, but not quite good enough for the Club to make national Finals yet; in a Newsletter article Dave Young reckoned the team could do even better if the Club stepped up its recruitment before the following summer - and got a few more people interested in coaching them.

The Senior Men's League followed a predictable pattern; even though at the first match Ray Barrow was quoted as saying "This is the one where we fall apart," the smallest winning margin of the season was 38 points. The

opening meeting, with a weakened team on a foul day at Cleckheaton, saw Paul Armstrong double the Shot and Discus, Steve Wright win both B Vault and Long Jump, partnering Robin Murphy and Allan Ainsworth (2nd) respectively, B-string wins for Simon Cahill (1500) and Pete Bradley (5000) and a victorious 4x100m relay team of such youthfulness that "Ron Small at 25 (was) feeling like Grandpa."

At Kirkby in June there were another hatful of wins - Andy Staniland won the 200, Dave Nicholl and Simon Cahill doubled the 1500, and Steve Wright and Steve Denton did likewise in the Vault, the former with remarkable economy. He only took four vaults - a successful one at 3.50 and three fails at 4.00! The meeting also saw the A team debut of Joe Clancy as a Steeplechaser, only a couple of months after a more remarkable debut - in the Three Peaks, which he'd covered in half a minute over 3½ hours. He was quite slow at this meeting, but produced a dramatic improvement later in the year.

The last two matches were held on cinder tracks - illustrating the fact that even after ten years 'Tartan' was a rarity. On a baking hot July day at Hull Andy Staniland and Ron Small shared the sprints, each winning a B race and finishing second in an A, Dave Nicholl and Mike Baxter did their 1500m double-act yet again, John Lunn won the B 5000 (he claimed never to have lost one in eight years!), Charlie Beaumont and John Ashton took 400 and 800, Paul Armstrong doubled Shot and Discus, and Robin Murphy and Steve Wright took the Vault, Steve winning the B High Jump as well. The season closed at Huddersfield with the match in which Robin Murphy passed the time, while waiting for everybody except Steve Denton to fail before he started vaulting, practising chips with an 8-iron at the other side of the track. John and Steven Burnage doubled the 400m Hurdles, while Paul Armstrong and Ian Lindley put up a double maximum in Shot and Discus and Dave Nicholl did the B 800 as well as winning the 5000.

The team had had another new face when veteran track-runner Barrie Knowles took over from Ray Barrow as team manager; he'd had something of a rough introduction to the job, in a season with more than the usual share of last-minute drop-outs, and commented in the Newsletter that "I came to dread the sound of the telephone bell." It's one aspect that hasn't, and probably never will change; there's another which hasn't (and hopefully won't), and John Lunn had something to say about it. At Kirkby he was press-ganged into being a field official with Francis and Graham Hartney, and described the experience; they were all willing but inexperienced, and John commented on the way the competitors and "accepted our efforts with good humour and corrected our mistakes without complaint. It's nice to see there's still one sport in which you can find keen rivalry and friendliness at the same time." Barrie also commented on Ray Barrow's performances as an emergency Hammer-thrower in the later matches.

The Women's team started the season in Division 3 of the Northern League, but the rise in status didn't seem to cause any great difficulties for the girls; the first match, promoted at Cleckheaton, was won by over thirty points from City of Hull. The most remarkable feature of the match was the number of Club records that went down; indeed between this match, the County Championships and a couple of early-season competitions only two of

the Senior Women's records which existed in March had survived by the end of June. Pat Brewster put in a motion of thanks to Club officials and others who had helped run a successful meeting. The second meeting at St. Helens (both the glass town's two clubs were in the same Division) saw the team's first defeat in five matches, Hull winning by 4½ points. There were one or two surprising wins; Sarah Shipley took both Senior sprints and the 100m Hurdles, while Carole Wood won the Under-17 800, the Senior 400, and the B Long Jump! Sandra Arthurton was B string in two events - Senior 1500 and Under-17 800 - winning both, while Vivienne Grant (Senior Javelin), Karen Morley (U17 Shot) and young multi-eventer Angela Riggs (U15 Long Jump) were all winners. Hull beat the girls again in the third meeting; but second place in that event gained the team promotion for the second successive season.

The Girls had one further moment of glory. After qualifying for the semi-final of the Jubilee Cup by finishing second at Gateshead, they finished an honourable third at Kirkby, beaten only by two National League teams. While this didn't reflect the Club's growing depth, with only one competitor per event, it did reflect the number of talented individuals the Club had developed. There were two notable features about the performance; one was that the team didn't win a single event in either round, though there were good second places, to strong opponents, from Sarah Shipley, Carole Wood, Sandra Arthurton, Julie Whiteley, Diana Greenwood and Tonia Phillpots, and a Club Shot record for Karen Morley. The other remarkable feature was the team's average age - 17 years and four months.

With all the emphasis on major League competitions it might be thought the Club did little else - which would be a misconception. There were other activities by both teams and individuals, which were recorded in the Newsletter and the Club's minutes. One aside in the latter - a comment that a match against Leeds University had been "marred by lack of strong refreshment" - seems to indicate that the British Irwin Club almost developed a track section. Another was the setting of a record that still stands - founder-member Gordon Richards, in one of his last competitive appearances, took third place in the National Veterans' 400 metres championship in a time of 54.0. The Club was still involved in the Yorkshire League, but a report from Bill Hodson on a match held at a school in Hull goes a long way to explain why it went defunct.

Another area of competition which appears for the first time in 1977 was many years later to become a significant part of Leeds City's activities, but one which had hitherto not been a major feature of athletics in the North - multi-events. The limited nature of track competition before Leagues came along hadn't really provided a fertile environment for its development; the need to 'fill gaps' in League matches is sometimes blamed for causing youngsters in particular either to over-compete or even risk life and limb, but it does also provide an incentive for the athlete who's not brilliant at one event but competent at several to consider an outlet for such talents. Two people helped to encourage this around 1977; Dave Young had already taken several of his pupils to an event run by Sheffield Schools, and a recently-arrived figure, Tony Lett, had been suggesting the possibility to several of the girls. Tony's coaching background was interesting; he was a former R.A.F. athlete who'd got a job teaching engineering in Swaziland on leaving the service, and had drifted into becoming National Coach for the African

nation by virtue of being the only person coaching there at the time! He'd moved to a job in the Leeds area in about 1974, and was for a short time - a couple of years, until he moved on in employment - to be a valued coach.

In 1977 the first reports of a sizeable number of athletes taking part in multi-event competitions appear in the newsletter, including the name most strongly associated with multi-eventing in the Club for many years. Colin Hayton wrote an article about his participation, along with fellow John Smeaton student Martin Waterhouse (referred to throughout the article as "Bear") in the Northern Under-20 Championship at Kirkby in August. Colin's 5396 remained a Junior Record for a long time, and Martin chipped in with a sound 4895; and the Committee had been sufficiently impressed of the importance of their participation to part-fund their overnight stay in Liverpool. The following month ten members took part in the Yorkshire Women's Pentathlon Championships at Cudworth, where Alison Downie (2610) and Angela Riggs (2484) set Club record for Under-17s and Under-15s respectively. The event, according to Tony Lett, was now "much harder than it once was" by substituting the 800m for the 200m." In addition, a new Senior record for the Decathlon of 5,572 points was set at Loughborough by John Burnage.

County and Area titles came in profusion both on the Men's and Women's side. There were nine of each in the Yorkshire events, with seven of the Women's titles coming in the Under-17 age-group; they included a double in Discus and Javelin for new recruit Diane Rimmington, who had moved to Leeds City for a better level of competition from - Dorothy Hyman Track Club! Following Charlie Beaumont doing likewise, it was almost as if the Club was extracting repayment for Joslyn Hoyte! On the Men's side there was a double in the Under-20 800 and 1500 from Sean Cahill - with brother Simon second in the latter - and a win for Garry Yeadon in the Under-20 200m - at fifteen! The Northern featured a return to winning ways - and sub14-minute clockings - for Mike Baxter at 32, and another win - in the Javelin - for Diane. The best Championship success, however, came in the A.A.A. Under-20s, when Sean Cahill took the 1500m title in 3.48.0, which won him selection for the European Junior Championships.

The most remarkable title won, however, came in the West Yorkshire Schools' Championships at Cleckheaton. At the time facilities at the track were not fully developed; there was as yet no stand, and the public address was done from a portable plastic builders' hut parked on the infield behind the judges. The meeting was as usual scheduled for the third Saturday in June, a time of year when, even allowing for the British climate, there's a reasonable chance of a good day; but Cleckheaton also had a reputation -probably unfounded - for saving up its worst weather for its bigger occasions, and in 1977 it produced a storm so fearsome that something like half the field events had to be held over to the following day. It wasn't just rain, however - it started with scattered hailstones the size of golf-balls and went on to a curtain of hail of which the writer - who was announcing that day - has never seen the like. Retiring to the 'shelter' of the builders' hut produced an effect rather like being shut in a box and pelted with ball-bearings from a hosepipe; the noise was deafening. As the storm broke the Intermediate 3,000 metres had just started - and in these conditions, finishing on the last lap with the track ankle-deep in

hailstones, John Doherty set a personal best, a county schools' record for the distance, and achieved the English Schools' qualifying time! Dave Young's comment that he went faster to get out of the hail more quickly may well have had some truth in it!

However, the Yorkshire Men's Championships were to have an effect on the future appearance of the Club for a different reason, which came out of the Senior Sprint Relay. The team chanced to be drawn one lane inside Dorothy Hyman Track Club, who were reckoned to be one of our main rivals - and wore practically the same colours. At the first change-over Steve Harrison was passing to Andy Staniland, and on hearing the cry of 'Hand' from Steve Andy stuck his left hand back and received the baton perfectly. The only problem was as his right hand came back on the next stride another baton landed in it - the DHTC runner had picked the wrong blue vest! Not only did it cost the team the race - Andy understandably hesitated before throwing the extraneous baton over the perimeter fence - but created a serious debate about the Club's colours. In addition to possible local confusion of this nature, many members had never found it satisfactory that the Men and Women competed in different colours. In the summer of 1977 the matter remained one for discussion; but before the end of the Committee agreed to consider a change.

This wasn't the only matter on the Committee's mind; the election of a new member that summer was to bring world politics into Leeds City's orbit for one of the few times in its history. In July 1977 an application for membership received from a sprinter called Greg Colin caused considerable debate. His appearance in Leeds prompted an article in the local press in which he was built up as a possible Olympic hope, and a valuable acquisition for the Club. The potential wasn't in doubt; he had a reputed clocking of 10.2 for 100 metres, achieved at altitude, to his credit; the problem was where it had been achieved - Stellenbosch, in South Africa. This was the middle of the apartheid years, and for some time there had been a boycott of South African sports organisations by practically every sport across the world, which is now reckoned to be one of the major contributing factors to the ultimate end of that unpleasant political system. However, there were ways round it for a few South Africans - if they could establish dual nationality. Leeds City was to have two such applications; but the status of one of them, steeplechaser Julian Marsay was quite clear - he had been born in Leeds to parents who had subsequently emigrated but retained British passports, and had relatives in the city.

The case of Greg Colin was somewhat different. True, he had also been born in Leeds - but his father, Ronnie Colin, was one of a number of South Africans who had come over in the late 1950s to play Rugby League, and while he had played for Hunslet for several seasons he had retained South African nationality and subsequently returned. The press article pictured father and son running with Andy Staniland, whose own family Rugby connections were of course strong. Greg only applied for a British passport - which he received - when his talent had become obvious and the anti-apartheid blockade was beginning to bite.

There was a feeling among some members that his application was a form of boycott-breaking by the back door, and as we had a reasonable number of black members, and black sprinters in particular, it was also felt that they

might object to a white South African alongside them. There was an equally strongly-held view that politically-based decisions like this were none of the Club's business, and if Greg's dual nationality were deemed acceptable by the government we had no right to exclude him. In the event he was elected, but only had a short-lived impact on Club affairs, and never lived up to his theoretical promise; in Britain he never ran faster than a wind-assisted 10.6. His main success came in the A.A.A. Under-20s, in which he took two silver medals.

These 'off-the-track' considerations didn't detract from everybody's continuing belief that the Senior Men's team needed to get itself into the British League; this would be the sixth attempt, and it was beginning to be a worrying story since Sheffield had beaten the Club to it. However, not only was this to be another year of disappointment, but on the surface it appeared to be the weakest performance the Club had produced in the meeting, managing only sixth place. Not a single A-string event was won, and only four B events - by Andy Staniland (100), Ron Small (200), John Ashton (800) and Kim McDonald (1500). Dave Nicholl (1500) and Robin Murphy (Vault) took a couple of 'seconds,' but otherwise all Roger Norton had to enthuse about was the efforts of the younger members - including two personal bests, in his 'lesser' events of Long Jump and High Jump, by triple-jumper Martin Stitch and a good performance from the very young Adrian Riggs in the javelin - who were often outclassed by older opponents. He omitted to mention a Club record of 42.6 in the 4x100m relay.

Roger concluded that at the moment Leeds City were "simply not good enough for the British League," while being so dominant in the Northern League that the competition "no longer motivates them, and its main function has become to give promising young athletes a taste of senior competition." His conclusions were echoed in the newsletter by John Lunn, but he put a considerably more positive view on it. He noted the fact that on this occasion, compared to the previous year, there had been no 'missing persons' on the team bus; that several athletes, in particular Mike Baxter and Steve Rowley, had competed when not at their best due to injury; and that there was "no despair on the bus going home." He did conclude, however, that the weak areas of the team - Hurdles, Steeplechase, Jumps, Hammer and Javelin - were those in which the Club was "short of coaches and of depth. However, characters it was not short of; his report also mentions Robin Murphy "spending much of the time between vaults walking up and down the runway - on his hands!"

For the men it was a disappointing end to the year; it contrasted strongly with an article, written only a week after the above, praising the considerable improvement of the Women's section during the season, and mentioning both team successes and Sandra Arthurton becoming the fastest 14-year-old in British history over 1500m with a 4.31.0 performance in the Schools' International, Roger had plenty to say, throughout the year, on other athletic themes, one in particular being the 'old chestnut' of inadequate facilities in the city. He started the year by being critical of the continued lack of good competitive, and even training, facilities, lambasting Templenewsam's familiar shortcomings; he ended it with a suggestion that there was a site suitable for the development of a major sporting facility, which was already in the Council's possession. The site he had in mind was Quarry Hill, where the famous - or by 1977 infamous - Flats were coming to the end of their life. He sketched the idea of a major stadium, with "other outdoor sporting facilities" attached, at a 23-acre city centre site comparable in size with

London's Crystal Palace and with excellent communications. It is believed the Council at one point had the possibility of such a project in mind - Roger quotes a scheme prepared by the University School of Town Planning for a similar project on Wellington Street - but it never happened.

1977 saw another first appearance, though it showed its face in the Newsletter early in 1978; the first Club All-Time Lists. They were compiled, with considerable help from the likes of Ray Barrow and Dave Young, by John Lunn, and published along with a list of performances done in the previous season and a list of Club records, in the March 1978 edition. This first serious attempt at statistics covered eight pages of foolscap (the present edition extends to over 100 of A4) and only covered Senior events; it makes interesting reading nowadays.

On the men's side only two of the records still stand - the 100 Metres (Eric Pape, though it's been equalled) and the 10,000m (Mike Baxter); while all the Women's records have gone, almost half of them swept away in the holocaust of the following season. There are also a number of errors in the younger age-groups that subsequent research was to identify. There are, however, a fair number of survivors from the period in the present-day All-Time Lists; the pioneer list were compiled to pre-set standards, and only at the most went twenty deep. They show a remarkable unevenness in some events - the second-best Women's High Jump behind Tonia Phillpots' 1.75, for instance, was only 1.43, while the Men's middle-distance events, though with a much longer 'tail' than now, were more compact in performances.

However, the year did see one prediction of the future history of athletics in Leeds - but few would have noticed it, tucked away as it was in the results of the Leeds Middle Schools Championships in July and involving people who weren't yet members. The Under-13 Javelin was won by a lad called Gerard Murphy, who was to throw for a couple of seasons in the Young Athletes' team, with a throw of 33 metres. Behind him, in third place with a respectable but not outstanding 30.88, was a youngster from the Ireland Wood estate, in the north of the city. His name was Michael Hill.

## **Chapter 8: Finally in the National League**

Almost every organisation goes through periods of transition; in the case of Leeds City A.C. 1977-8 clearly was one such on several fronts. One was in the personnel of administration; in the autumn Mick Stark gave notice that he wished to stand down as Hon. Secretary at the following year's A.G.M. after four years in the post. His departure prompted the Newsletter Editor to review the state of the Club, and come up with a fair number of points that weren't too positive. He drafted a list of things which the Club needed to make more progress; one, the continuing lack of a central base, the Club could do little about, but the others were clearly calls for effort. He commented on the need to improve the way in which the Club was administered; the need for more people to take on jobs, and not leave it to a dangerously overloaded few; the need for better communication between the Committee and members; and the need for people in all parts of the Club to moan less and be more positive. It's

a litany that hadn't changed in the Club's ten years of existence - and some aspects were to take another ten or twenty years before real progress was seen.

Certainly not everything was negative; and there were some more people getting involved with running things. Tony Lett had considerably boosted both coaching and organisation on the Women's side; and a similar boost was to come from a parent who at first seemed an unlikely source. When he first came to the Committee's attention in about 1975 Arthur Riggs, father of the talented Angela, seemed like the sort of over-critical parent who wanted to storm in and change everything without thinking; but it didn't take long before he decided the best way to do so was to get stuck in himself, and the Committee came to realise he had been thinking, and thinking positively. With no real background he took to coaching and Committee work with a salutary burst of enthusiasm which did the Club no harm at all. John Lunn has never tired of quoting one saying of Arthur's which in his view says a lot about the problems and challenges of running a Club, and is worth thinking about by anyone of whatever experience:-

**“There's two kinds of people in this Club. There are the ones who say, 'This, this and this is wrong with Leeds City, and what are you going to do about it.' Then there are the ones who say, 'This, this and this is wrong with Leeds City, and what are we going to do about it.' ”**

For the comparatively short time he was with the Club - he died suddenly in 1979 from a heart attack after a lunchtime run - Arthur was emphatically one of the latter.

The Women opened the winter season with a bang. They visited their Derbyshire haunts to win just about everything at Kirk Hallam and Sutton-in-Ashfield, took composite relays at Frodsham and Batley (the latter on a new course away from the town centre, which didn't prove as popular as hoped), and in the first Northern Women's League provided two individual winners in a hailstorm at Rawtenstall in Sandra Arthurton (inevitable) and Julie Whiteley. The second race in the League, however, saw a rare occurrence - Sandra was beaten, by Hull's Janice Moody, but only because she was misdirected. The Under-17 team, with Carole Wood, Lesley Doyle and Sandra Gent backing Sandra, was formidable, but still found Sale hard to beat, while at Under-15 level Wendy Hirst, Lorraine Holdsworth and the rapidly-improving Diane Burton former the core of another powerful squad. An even younger team was building around Janine Midgley and a more than useful newcomer, Karen Jenkinson; while in the third race at Rawtenstall another newcomer, Sally Ramsdale, made an undistinguished start to what was to be a notable career by falling 300 yards from the finish. She was to do better later in the season.

The pattern in the Under-17s was set early; the team was second in the Northern League, second in the Northern Road Relay and second in the National relay, and each time to Sale. The Under-13s preformed consistently, finishing 6th in the Northern and 11th in the National; but while the Under-15s narrowly missed a Northern Relay medal, they had a collective off-day in the National due partly to unavailable athletes but also, according to the Newsletter report produced by Tony Lett, to an embarrassing disaster to one young lady, when what was

discreetly referred to as "the disintegration of a certain item of apparel" put her both at a considerable disadvantage and open to some predictable puns! Moreover the lady in question was a sprinter who'd only been press-ganged to make up the team.

When the Yorkshire Women's Championships came round in December the Club was almost completely dominant, winning every team title except the Senior and surpassing the previous year's record of supplying eight County representatives by three. There were individual wins for Janine Midgley in the Under-13s and Sandra Arthurton in the Under-17s; in the former Gail Addinall (3) and Beverley Bates (5) made up the winning trio and Karen Jenkinson (7) also made the County squad, while with Carole Wood second, Sandra Gent 4th and Lesley Doyle 6th the Under-17 was a formality. The two leading Under-15s, Wendy Hirst and Lorraine Holdsworth, were reckoned to be "rather below par" - in third and fourth places - while Diane Burton finished 9th in a gaggle of three all given the same time, just missing out on a first County selection. Julie Whiteley also got in, finishing 7th in a field so strong that nine internationals fought for eight team places. It was sometimes hard to recall amid what was becoming, at all levels below Senior at least, a picture of Leeds City domination of the Yorkshire scene that only seven years previously the Club didn't even have a Women's section, and five years earlier had only turned out one competitor in the equivalent race!

The Senior Men made a sound start at the Northern Relay, finishing 12th; but the real interest was that for the first time an Under-17 Championship was held, and a useful team of Jonathan Metcalfe, John Doherty, Russ Varney and Simon Cahill finished second. Moreover, John had moved up a gear in the summer, probably under the influence of Mike Baxter's training advice; on the second leg he ran one of the two equal-fastest legs of the day. The race also foreshadowed one of the two big personal duels that John would have with a pair of equally talented contemporaries; joint fastest with him was Blackburn's Mike Morton, a runner who looked, if his career hadn't later been blighted by injury, to be one of the future greats. Later in the autumn he was to tangle in the Aaron Races with another great name - Rossendale's Dave Lewis - and beat him; and another of his rivals, whom he usually beat in this season, who was to have an illustrious career was Bingley's Colin Moore. The only big disappointment was that the team lacked the main name of 1977; Chris Bennett became one of the many who over the years didn't come through to fruition.

There were some reasonable early-season performances from the Senior Men. A team consisting of John Ashton, Andy Hitchen, Dave Nicholl, Malcolm Thomas and Pete Bradley finished fourth in Sheffield University's popular Cutlers' Relay, behind three strong University squads, in spite of the whole team, plus Mike Baxter, having run the A.A.A. Relay the previous day. The team did reasonably well in the West Yorkshire League, finishing third in the first race at Huddersfield (on a course that brought more protests of excessive laps) with a team of Kim McDonald (5), Mike (11), Malcolm Thomas (22) and Andy (26). Kim improved to take his only win in a League race at the second race at Pudsey, while Mike finished 9th, but the team slipped to fourth. Team results of the third race have so far proved elusive, though individually Mike had a much better run in second place; but the team was clearly not challenging the powerful Airedale squad as it once had. The loss of Slater, Dell and

Stevens had knocked a big hole in it; and another was expected at the end of the season. While Dave Nicholl turned out in the winning Aaron relay team (along with Kim, Mike and Simon Cahill) he had recently moved to a new job in the Midlands, and was planning to join Wolverhampton and Bilston A.C. - then the great power in the track land - at the end of the season. The Club still had numbers - six Senior teams and a quartet of Veterans turned out - but the quality wasn't quite the same. Moreover, some of the best of the new generation were very much more middle-distance track runners rather than cross-country specialists.

The Club could derive some satisfaction, however, from the younger teams. Darren Marshall had regularly been near the front in all kinds of Under-13 races; he'd won two of the three League races to take the overall title, and he had a team behind him. Yet another collection of Dave Young's pupils were moving into the Club, the outstanding one at this age-group being Richard Walker, a diminutive youngster who showed a degree of fight in races in inverse proportion to his body-weight. He first appeared in the Young Athletes' League on the tack in the previous summer, but a couple of others came along early in the winter season to back this pair up. One, Darren Bottomley, didn't stay long, but two others did, and one made a considerable impression on the youngsters' middle-distance performances. Mark Hind, who first appeared with Darren and Richard in the runner-up team in the Aaron Races, was to be a sound member of both track and cross-country teams, while Chris Ryalls still holds, at the time of writing, the Club Under-15 3000 metres record. Chris was to develop into a fearsome competitor, with a penchant for sitting on opponents up hills and 'kicking' over the summit. That was a long way off when he made his first appearance, however; but his team were the centre of a controversy in an event which John Lunn described in the newsletter as "a shiny apple that most people ate to the full - (but) unfortunately like most shiny apples, there were a few rotten bits, and (I) got all those."

The middle seventies' distance-running scene in Britain was dominated, as the early Seventies had been, by one athlete - Brendan Foster. Having started his career as a talented North-eastern youngster, Bren had nearly drifted out of the sport in his student days, until his apparently declining performance was discovered to be due to an iron deficiency. From that point on, in about 1969, his career moved upwards, but really started to take off in the year he spent in Leeds doing teacher training at Carnegie College - and a fair amount of training with Mike Baxter. By 1978 he'd won a European title, a Commonwealth title and an Olympic bronze medal - but there was more to it than that. For a time he made Gateshead the Athletic Capital of England; the Council expanded the local football ground into the Gateshead International Stadium, major meetings were held there, an already strong Senior cross-country team at Gateshead Harriers was strengthened by migration of athletes from all over the North-East and beyond, and Bren could attract a crowd in Gateshead just by turning up. One positive aspect of the 'Bren Effect' was the staging by Gateshead Council of a series of major cross-country meetings on the 'Gateshead Bowl' - the landscaped area which had formerly held industrial premises next to the Stadium. The course was designed for television, with a small, tight but pretty tough lap including one fearsome hill, and a televised 'spectacular' race formed the centrepiece; but the programme included races for all age-groups, and for

a time it proved a very popular event. 1977 was Leeds City's first mass participation in it; and we found some of the realities behind it that were never seen on television.

The writer doesn't wish to start a 'turf war' with the many friends he's made in the North-East, but he's always reckoned, since the time he lived and worked there, that the standard of organisation of events between the Tyne and the Tees isn't as high as in some other places. It's partly due, he reckons, to the region's comparative isolation, and also partly due to the insular mentality that coal-mining areas in particular tend to breed (and he's worked in South Yorkshire as well), but the feeling he had about the Gateshead events were that they were a big meeting put on by people used to handling smaller meetings who couldn't see that something better was needed. Certainly that day there were deficiencies. Getting a timetable of events out of the organiser before the event had been difficult, and on the day, although the course was well marked, there seemed to be a serious shortage of marshals in crucial places. In the Senior race (in which Simon Cahill, after leading early on, finished 12th) a lot of competitors near the back were turned into the finish a lap short, much to the anger of those who were beating them. The Club came home with two prize-winners; the first was quite clear, when Dennis Wood finished second in the Over-50 section of the Veterans' race, with a sprint finish which elicited cries of wonder from the younger acolytes of the British Irwin Club. The other was harder to get, as the Newsletter report showed.

It was clear from an early stage in the first race that the Under-13 team were in the prizes. Darren Marshall was contesting third place from early on, and eventually only "lost it by a squeak," while "the tiny Richard Walker," who "found the daunting double hill no hardship at all," finished 12th. Chris Ryalls and Darren Bottomley finished 36th and 38th, in spite of the former being so 'raw' that he hadn't yet got any spikes, and it looked all set for at least third. However, "there was only ONE recorder for a field of 160-plus," and somehow a wrong number had been put down instead of Richard's. The result was the only time in his career when John Lunn made a formal, official protest under A.A.A. Laws (complete with £1 deposit) and demanded a recount. On finding that the number written down hadn't even been claimed, the referee upheld the protest; but the meeting organiser, Gateshead Harrier John Caine, proposed to present the prizes as per the original result sheet. He wasn't allowed to; a sizeable assembly of Leeds City parents and athletes, marshalled by John, made it clear that their protests would be vocal if he did. "It was, of course, no way for the Team Manager to behave," John pointed out; and he's glad to say that he's never known the need to repeat it.

The new developments in winter competition, however, went hand in hand with the disappearance of some old ones. In October the more or less moribund Leeds & District Cross-Country Association abandoned its long-established November Handicap race when it failed to find a venue for it. It would have been the fiftieth running of the race; but in fact it had been losing numbers of entrants for some time, and its demise came as no surprise. It was one of the three such races which had been prominent features of the local calendar at least into the 1950s; but the York Handicap had succumbed some years earlier, and the Bob Smith Handicap at Bingley was not to last much longer. Once the handicap races had served a useful purpose, giving 'lesser lights' a chance to win something; but the idea of handicap events, both on the track and over the country, had become an

anachronism with a generation where even such runners preferred to compete on equal terms and judge their improvement by time and finishing place. Walter Pearson was the last 'real' official handicapper in West Yorkshire; though Granville Beckett kept the office for some years, his services were seldom called on after about 1970.

The Championship season after Christmas proved to be something of an 'Indian Summer' for Mike Baxter. He set two records in January - he gained his twelfth County representative place, finishing seventh in the 'Yorkshire Trial,' and in the Association Championship he excelled himself by winning for the fifth time. Only two athletes, both Hallamshire Harriers, Ernest Glover around the First World War and Ernest Harper in the 1920s and '30s, had taken as many titles. The Evening Post described him as "Yorkshire's most consistent cross-country runner;" few would argue with that in historic terms. He also produced another superlative performance to finish second in the Northern at Birkenhead, in a race where a searing last half-mile belied some of his own opinions about his finishing speed - on the country at any rate. The team was out of the first three in the Yorkshire, but a sound 7th in the Northern thanks to Mike, Kim McDonald in fifth place, and a good run from another new name - Pete McGouran, who finished 29th. The other counters were Pete Bradley (62), Malcolm Thomas (69, after his hamstring gave out on him) and Bernard Hutchinson (197).

Pete, who had first put in an appearance in Club colours at Worksop in December, added yet another legendary character to the Club ranks; a Northern Ireland international studying engineering at Leeds University, he was to stay in Leeds for several years after graduation, and contributed well to the Club at a time when the Men's Harriers' section found itself struggling. A cheerful and sociable individual, he was at the time of joining courting his future wife Ursula, and the pair of them's chronic inability to keep their hands off each other in the pub after training led to the nickname by which he was generally known - 'Fondles.' He can also be said to have left more of a permanent mark on his adopted city than any other member of the Club. He worked in the Traffic Engineering section of the City Council, and was a member of the team which some years later designed the layout of the big cross-roads at the bottom of Chapeltown Road and Roundhay Road which replaced a notoriously choked one-way system and freed up the movement of traffic along a main artery. However, the legend that this led to his departure from Leeds before the city's Irish community found out that it was an Irishman who signed the demolition order for the old Roscoe Tavern on Chapeltown Road, the most famous pub in Yorkshire for Irish music, to carry out the design was, unfortunately, just that - a legend!

In the younger age-groups the Under-17s lost the Yorkshire team title to Bingley by a point, led home by John Doherty, who won the race by a street; support came from Roger Bloor (8), Stuart Newby (11) and Ashley Farnell (15). The most noteworthy feature of the Under-15 race was a "promising debut" from another product of John Smeaton, Wayne Aylesbury, while the Under-13 team of Chris Ryalls (6), Darren Marshall (12), Richard Walker (13) and Mark Hind (22) also took silver medals. John placed third in the Northern, behind Dave Lewis and Steve Cram, where Simon Cahill had his best run of the year in the Under-20 race, finishing fifth; but there seemed to be a lack of commitment from some of the younger members for this race. Arthur Cockcroft wrote a scathing

comment on the poor turn-out, and compared it to the level of willingness to turn out in all manner of competitions that John had shown. The writer can't remember if there was some particular reason why so few youngsters went to Arrowe Park; but it was a worrying sign for a Club which was making such a thing of its developing and promising young athletes. There was, for instance, no mention of Neill Marshall, who had earned a County vest in January, taking part.

The Women had their moments after Christmas, too. In January Sandra Arthurton gained her first International in the home Countries' event at Barry, and won the Under-17 race by about 100 yards. In the next fortnight she was equally emphatic in taking both the Inter-Counties race and the Northern title, and leading the Under-17 team to silver medals in the latter; behind her Carole Wood finished 5th, Lesley Doyle 22nd and Sandra Gent 24th. In fact the interest was building up as to whether Sandra could take a clean sweep of all available titles by taking the 'National;' but a formidable obstacle appeared to stand in her way in the person of Jo White. The Mitcham athlete was about as dominant in the South as Sandra was in the North; moreover she had the 'advantage,' according to the pundits who wrote in Athletics Weekly, of being coached by Harry Wilson, who also coached Steve Ovet and was along with Brendan Foster's coach Stan Long one of the principal 'gurus' of distance-running at the time. In addition she was over a year older, and a big, strong girl, in contrast to the almost waif-like Sandra. When the meeting came at High Wycombe, however, it was no contest; on a hilly section half-way round the course Sandra applied the pressure and simply drifted away to win by thirteen seconds. Once again Carole (35) Lesley (60) and Sandra (96) supported well enough to come away with team medals, bronze on this occasion. They weren't alone among the medals, however; the Under-13 girls also brought home bronze, with Janine Midgley (22), Gail Addinall (27), Sally Ramsdale (57) and Beverley Bates (97) scoring. The meeting was memorable in other ways; Mike Sherman mentioned the disorganisation of an event with over 2,000 competitors, changing accommodation 1½ miles from the course, and only TWO shuttle buses! That wasn't the end of Sandra's winter efforts; a fortnight after the National the young athlete who reckoned in a profile article by Roger Norton that cross-country was her real preference proceeded to set a personal best - and a Championship record and British Age-15 best - of 4.27.1 in winning the A.A.A. Under-17 1500m title. There were also bronze medals in this Championship over 60m for Sarah Shipley and in the Shot for Karen Morley.

The promotion of the 'National' at Roundhay Park brought considerable local publicity to the Club. Planning had gone on since the Northern of the previous year; a couple of features of that race's lap which had proved unsatisfactory - notably a sharp little climb off the bank of Waterloo lake - had been altered, Arthur Cockcroft and Mike Baxter had been working on getting Club members and other out to help, and Yorkshire Association president Eddie Hardy had been acting as liaison officer with the Council. Over the 24 hours before the race an immense amount of work was done; while Council workers did the main staking of the course, Leeds City members took on the host of menial jobs needed to get the event going, both on course and at Roundhay School, the base for the event. In what was to become a precedent the Club was not alone; people from Skyrac A.C., Longwood Harriers and Sheffield A.C. were mentioned as having given up time to help. At later Leeds

'Nationals' this was to be expanded into anything up to twenty local clubs taking part in the arrangements under the direction of the County Association. The organisers had certainly produced a course to remember; the writer recalls that for years afterwards the mention of Hill 60 was enough to send shivers down Southern cross-country runners' spines.

The local press also took up another aspect of the race - the presence in Leeds City's team of one of its more remarkable recruits. At that time Veterans' running was a small-scale 'fringe' activity, and athletes were seen as 'over the hill' once they got much beyond 30; Mike Baxter was described by Roger Norton as "the old man of the team" when he gained yet another Yorkshire vest in this season, and Mike was 32. People in general, and even people in athletics, didn't expect older people to take up a sport like athletics; so when John Lunn was asked by Pat Brewster one evening in the summer of 1977 at Temple Newsam if a rather bizarrely-dressed gent of apparently about forty years of age, wearing an old three-button leisure shirt and khaki shorts, could go out for a run with a group of Seniors he was a bit dubious. He was pleasantly surprised that the old fellow could keep up at a reasonable steady pace; pleased when the guy asked for a membership form; and utterly gobsmacked when he put down his year of birth as 1928! This was Leeds City's introduction to Bill Fielding.

In a Newsletter article the following summer John described Bill as 'a singular man;' he still reckons that's the best possible description. Bill's story was remarkable; a racing cyclist in his teens and twenties, he'd given up sport when he married, but decided in his forties he wasn't getting enough exercise. He began by swimming (which he swears, because a quarter of a century later he can still be seen walking and cycling round Middleton Woods, is the best way for any older person to return to an exercise régime), went on to hiking, and at about 47 returned to cycling. In 1976 he was out on a walk in the Dales when he happened to see the Three Peaks race in progress, and decided he fancied the idea; the following year he sent in an entry, which was rejected mainly because he was 'unattached.' The organisers clearly felt that a man of 49 with no previous experience could be a danger to himself and others. Bill proceeded to remedy the deficiency in his curriculum vitae by joining Leeds City; and within eight months, a month or two after turning 50, he was selected for the Club team for the National Senior Championships. He'd also acquired a nickname; somebody described him as "the father of the Team," and Father Fielding it was from then on - much to the embarrassment of one young lady from a Catholic school who thought she was training alongside a priest!

The 'National' of 1978 can really be said to be the last kick of the 1976 Senior team. The Club could still put five athletes well up in the 1,300-strong field, by the standards of most clubs; but there was definitely an 'over-the-hill' feel about the team that finished 23rd. Neither Mike Baxter (53) nor Kim McDonald (127) matched their Northern performance, though in Mike's case his organisational effort was probably to blame. Dave Nicholl (72) was running his last race for the Club, and while he and Brian Hilton (who in 84th had his best-ever run in the race) could be highly satisfied, and Pete Bradley (228) did all that could have been asked of him, we had to wait until 689th for our sixth man - the first of only two occasions in his long membership that Roger Parker counted in a 'National.' Joe Clancy (801) and an unfit Brwsi Kilner (989) were some way behind the remarkable Bill Fielding's

731st - indeed Roger was keeping an eye out for the old man - but whatever the merit of that run there had to be sympathy for the view that someone had expressed that things weren't good when a 50-year-old could almost get among the counters.

There wasn't even the consolation of a good performance among the youngsters that day. After winning both 'Yorkshire' titles, taking a medal in the Northern and leading a silver medal-winning Yorkshire team in 7th place in the Inter-Counties John Doherty might have been expected to feature well, but he dropped out of the Under-17s with an injury, and a team of Stuart Newby (80), Ashley Farnell (82), Neill Marshall (137) and Mark Clark (239) exactly emulated its Seniors in finishing 23rd. Moreover a further member of the '76 team passed into history; after battling with hamstring injuries for much of the season, and missing the 'National' due to them, Malcolm Thomas was forced to call it a day. There was one other feature noted in the Club Newsletter; the number of 'exiles,' former members of the Club who were competing at Roundhay Park for other clubs. The writer mentioned Ron Pannell, who had moved to Bristol due to a promotion at work, Richard Spirett and 'Petal' Edwards, now teaching in Leicestershire and St. Albans respectively, and Huw Pryderi Rhys, who turned out for Ilford and was beaten by his old schoolmate Roger Parker.

Bill Fielding had certainly made his mark in the Veterans' scene by then. He'd turned fifty around Christmas, and celebrated by almost holding off Mike Baxter in a Club Handicap. He contested his first serious age-group race in the Yorkshire Vets.' Championship, and won it handsomely; he'd only managed third in the Northern event, but led a team of Jack Bloor (12) and Dennis Wood (17) to medals. In the National Vets.', however, he found his form and won splendidly, and with Jack Bloor 19th and Jack Lawton 27th silver medals were taken; Dennis missed out by one place! At the end of April he ended his amazing opening season by showing the Three Peaks' organisers the error of their ways by breaking the First Class standard time of 3½ hours by just about a minute and being well clear in the Over-50 category. However, the organisers had more serious things to worry about than their rejection of Bill's 1977 entry; Blackheath Harrier Ted Pepper, an experienced distance-runner but a novice on the fells, went off course during the race, became disorientated and died of hypothermia. It was the end of the 'age of innocence' of the Three Peaks race; after this strict qualifying conditions for entry and stringent safety precautions became the order of the day.

The start of the track season coincided with the Club's Annual General Meeting, at which a major change in the Club's administrative personnel took place. After four years in office Mick Stark stood down as Hon. Secretary due to outside commitments, and John Lunn began the first of his three spells in the office. John has, indeed, held a very large number of offices within the Club over almost four decades, and opinion remains divided about what his influence on its development has been. He certainly has tended to bring enthusiasm and energy to the jobs he has done; but some would say that the price the Club has had to pay for this is has been having to put up with his bouts of egotism and lack of tact which have on occasions caused the Club severe embarrassment. The Club has also been landed with his outgoing - some would say outrageous - personality and appearance; there are few other officials who have held senior administrative posts in the sport - and John has held office at County,

Area and National League level - who have been in the habit of greeting other colleagues with a big kiss on the cheek, or turning out to compete at the age of 60 in flowered Lycra tights. As he's still active in Club affairs at the time of writing final judgment on his contribution has yet to be passed.

1978 was to be a significant track season in a number of other ways; but for the Senior men the key fact was the announcement before it started that in 1979 the British Athletic League was to expand to five divisions. Eight years earlier it had grown from three to four, and for reasons that seemed good at the time the Club had deliberately missed out; now, after six failures to qualify, there was a feeling of 'now or never' about it. With six clubs going into the League Leeds City could simply not afford to miss the chance again. Moreover, for the first time since Stretford had been promoted the Club appeared to be facing serious opposition in the form of Wakefield Harriers, who had a small coterie of extremely talented athletes. The Brothers Alan and Roger Bell were sprinters and hurdlers of high quality; Alan was to gain international honours over 400 metres, and they had the potential to win several events at a meeting. English Schools' Long-Jump champion Alan Slack was also a formidable sprinter, and supported by County Rugby Union wing and future England captain Mick Harrison, who could also produce a mean Triple Jump, gave another area of strength. There were enough other talented Wakefield athletes to back up this quartet, not least being the familiar name of Tony Gummerson, who had returned to his original club after resigning from Leeds City some time earlier over a clash of personalities. As the first meeting at Cleckheaton loomed the possibility existed in some minds that the Club could miss out on its best opportunity yet to 'go National' by failing to win the Northern League.

If that was so, the first meeting soon eased the nerves. The team went into the meeting, according to a Newsletter report, with cold feet, and came out with a 51-point margin of victory over Wakefield. Wakefield did indeed take five maximum points events, and at the half-way stage led by 19 points; but they suffered essentially from lack of depth, relying on Messrs. Bell, Bell, Harrison and Slack for 100 of their points, and as the meeting went on Leeds City moved further away. There were several bonuses - a return to action by Malcolm Cox in the 5000, the emergence from retirement of Dave Warburton, inspired by coaching youngsters to have a go himself, and the return from Australia of the mighty Ian Mowat, who suffered the trauma in the Shot of breaking the Northern Irish Shot record with 16.04 and not being able to claim it due to a lack of a steel tape. Moreover he didn't even win the event - Ian Lindley produced 16.12.

There were several 'old hands' out doing their bit - Messrs. Baxter, Hilton, Armstrong, Ashton, Murphy, Denton, Staniland, McDonald and Sean Cahill all contributed, in the case of Mike not long after his first effort at a Marathon. There were also some excellent returns from younger members - Otis Parris returning from basketball to set a best Long Jump, and Gary Launder and Chris Lumb scored well in the High Jump. Two Club records went down; the Discus, which Ian removed from Tony Gummerson's possession with 48.24, and the 4x400m relay, where the 3.20 barrier was broken for the first time. Another new name made its debut - that of Alwhille Macdonald, who competed in the Long Jump, his "third-choice event." "Ollie" was yet another larger-than-life character; those who were around between 1978 and his untimely death in 1986 (just as the Club were about to

try to persuade Jamaica to select him for the Commonwealth Decathlon) won't forget in a hurry the prolonged pre-meeting frisbee sessions involving all the clubs in a match, or the famous crawl across the pub floor to apologise for an accidentally-spilled dinner. He was also a Team Manager's dream; the number of occasions he was rung on a Thursday night to do anything from Hurdles to High Jump to Discus, and came up with the characteristic answer, "Why not?", was enormous.

The second and third matches, at Wythenshawe and Huddersfield, were a different story, but in their own way something of a comfort. Injuries and unavailability meant that weakened teams were turned out, and though Leeds City won both, it was by a seriously reduced margin - eleven points in the second, twelve in the third. At Wythenshawe the Club only provided two A-string winners, Ian Mowat and Ian Lindley winning Discus and Shot and taking maximum points in those events; however, there was a good supply of second places, and four B-string wins from Kevin Walton (400), Simon Cahill (800), Brian Hilton (5000) and John Burnage (110mH). Roger Norton complimented the Club on winning with "such a depleted team," stating that it showed "(the) sort of depth ... that Wakefield simply can't match," and emphasising the point by noting in the same article that Leeds City were also that day fielding a B team for the first time. The Huddersfield meeting produced the most serious attack of Club collywobbles yet, when after seven events the team was laying fourth behind Wakefield, Longwood and Rowntrees; however, later events were often strong scorers, and with Ian Mowat and Paul Armstrong (who in Arthur Cockcroft's words "would throw a fit if Barrie Knowles asked them to,") doubling Shot and Discus, Rowan Black (making one of his rare appearances on leave from the R.A.F., though it wasn't his only one that year) and Charlie Beaumont challenging the Bell brothers in the sprints, and a youthful 1500 pairing of Simon Cahill and John Doherty taking two seconds in the 1500, the team got back on track. There was also a major contribution from Martin Stitch, who for much of the season found himself covering all three jumps.

The Club had been considering a B team for a season or so, but took the plunge when the Northern League arranged to put on a couple of 'experimental' meetings for clubs which wanted to see if they had the strength to qualify for a place; the B team found itself up against such rivals as Hallamshire Harriers, Harrogate A.C. and East Hull Harriers. The first took place at Hull on the day of the Sale match, and was memorable for a number of bizarre reasons. It certainly showed that the Club had depth; our event-winners included at 10.9 100m and 22.4 200m from 16-year-old Paul Murray and a 13.22 Triple Jump from the even younger Amer Khan, and the Club felt strong enough to put the versatile Alwhile Macdonald in the 'stiffs' for the High Jump and Javelin (he expressed himself forcibly as "totally disgusted" when he fouled out in the latter) and Brian Scott, who had recently moved to a new job at a hospital in Lincoln, in the hurdles. It turned out to be just as well that Brian was there, as Gary Ineson suffered a unique injury in the Steeplechase, falling at the water-jump and breaking his shoulder-blade when he hit the side of the pit. Brian, warming up for the 'Highs,' got his race postponed for about half an hour while he stood by for the arrival of an ambulance and stopped anybody moving Gary and making things worse. He then lost a close finish. Other memorable happenings were the track debut on Roger Parker in the 5000 (he is believed to have run one more track race); the first appearance in a senior team, at the age of 15,

of vaulter Tony Matthews, who continued to compete for the Club well into the 1990s (his partner in a maximum-point event, Gary Briggs, was the same age); and a most curious incident in the 4x100m relay where the Hallamshire athlete running the first leg handed over to the similarly-clad East Hull runner - in spite of Hallamshire being in lane two and East Hull in lane five! After all that, the B team won!

No detailed account exists of the second B team match, on the same weekend as the last Division 1 meeting, but the writer remembers Brwsi Kilner describing how events were filled in; he ran the B 200, jogged to the start of the 5000 without changing his spikes, and on the way stepped in - literally - as B-string shot-putter! He was having to do an emergency job, as a number of those originally selected for the reserves were 'changed bus' before departure and whisked off to Nottingham, where Derby were promoting. This match was incredibly close; Leeds City won by 25 points, a safer-looking margin, but only seven covered the next four teams. The team was held up by the field events; seven of its nine winners, and all three of its maximum-points events, came from this area, with Robin Murphy and Steve Denton taking the vault and Ian Lindley and Paul Armstrong doing another Shot/Discus double taking one each. The three other wins came from Vince Smith in the B Javelin (the youthful Chris Rider was third in the A), Pete Bygate in the B 800 and Colin Hayton, who on that day was being used as a hurdler and won the B 110m. With Wakefield only finishing equal fourth this time the final league table looked a lot more comfortable than it really had been.

Meanwhile the Women's team found itself under new management, and the Club found itself without two important influences, when Pat Brewster (who had divorced her husband some time before) and Tony Lett married and departed to Kenya around Christmas; it was a compliment to what Pat had largely created that the loss of two such influential servants caused no serious disruption of the Women's section. The team continued in 1978 as it had left off in the two previous seasons, and achieved its third successive promotion since joining the League. It was beginning to find itself up against stiffer opposition, principally in the form of City of Hull; second was the best that could be managed in most of the meetings, but it was never too distant a second (although at the time of writing finding actual results for the first meeting has proved difficult.) Unsurprisingly from the first match on - which the team lost by 28 points - the middle distances saw an almost complete Leeds dominance, with Sandra Arthurton, Carole Wood (who showed her speed over 400 this time out), Julie Whiteley, Lesley Doyle and Lorraine Holdsworth to call on at Senior level, and Janine Midgley, Diane Burton, Wendy Hirst and Sandra Gent lower down. There was steady scoring in the sprints, solid throwing from the likes of Karen Morley and Diane Rimmington producing a number of wins, and Tonia Phillpots noted as much for Long Jumping as her specialist event.

The outstanding memorable event at the second match, which was even closer, had nothing to do with the competition; there were complaints in a Newsletter article about Sandra Gent "sending the ice-cream van to Huddersfield ('You'll get more trade at the Men's League') and depriving us of sustenance" on the only hot day of the summer. As Sandra was one of the co-authors of the article, however, the complaint wasn't too severe. The team was short, for once, of Sandra Arthurton, but still picked up huge points in the longer track events, Carole

Wood setting a Club record of 58.2 in the 400m. The throws section was weakened by Diane Rimmington being injured; but as it was merely a shoulder strain she decided that sprinting and jumping was possible, and managed a win in the B Long Jump. Diane Greenwood and Sarah Shipley had 100m wins in their age-groups, and the Dianes Rimmington and Greenwood doubled in the Senior Hurdles; Tonia Phillpots again had a jumping double, while Janine Midgley and Sally Ramsdale cleaned up in the Junior 1500m. The last match, at Rawtenstall at the end of the summer holidays, saw a weakened team out, especially in the Under-17 age-group; the number of events in the programme for these girls was limited, but basically Karen Morley and Diane Swan threw everything while multi-eventer Debbie Bussey, sprinter Sharon Flower-Ellis and distance-runners Sandra Gent and Jane Rostron did everything else. There was also a debut performance, but not to some people's surprise a Club record, over 3000m from Sandra Arthurton, maximum points in four other Senior events, and a fine performance by the Juniors with few wins (Angela Riggs' club record of 11.7 in the 75m Hurdles being one of them) but plenty of consistent seconds and thirds to score higher than Hull in this age-group.

For the first time both Men's and Women's teams progressed to the semi-finals of the G.R.E. Gold and Jubilee Cup competitions, though as usual got no further; and yet again there was serious complaint at the Club being 'saddled' with a trip to Edinburgh. This time it was due to a clash with the W.A.A.A. Championships at Crystal Palace, making it very difficult for any of our outstanding competitors to turn out on successive days if they'd wanted to. It was a greater shame since the First Round meeting at Hull the team put on one of its better efforts in winning. There were only three individual winners - "a tigerish Carole Wood ...an unperturbed Julie Whiteley ... and an almost disdainful Sandra Arthurton" - but the team was sustained by picking up second place in every field event and two or three on the track. There was, however, one ominous feature of the meeting - the new all-weather track came close to flooding after heavy rain.

The Men were involved in controversy of a different sort in their Round 1 match at Cleckheaton, where they once more beat the rest of Yorkshire and lost narrowly to Sheffield. There were five individual wins for the Club - one of whom finished second - and a sixth athlete won his event but wasn't credited with it. Charlie Beaumont (400), Dave Warburton (110H), Ian Lindley (Shot) and Ian Mowat (Discus) won, and Brian Hilton was placed first in the 10,000m. The race was actually 'won' by Sheffield's former Leeds University captain Peter Rawnsley (known since his student days as 'Romper'), who was disqualified for not wearing the correct Club vest; having lost his club vest at a race the previous week, he wore a yellow vest with a red hoop rather than Sheffield's all-yellow strip. Neither team managers nor athletes had objected, but the track referee that day was Jim Exley, who had "always been known for his strict interpretation of the rules." Not best pleased about this, Sheffield then objected that Jim Ferguson, who had won the Hammer, had not been wearing one either, and he was duly disqualified. In the semi-final a team described by Roger Norton as "weakened" did well to finish fourth, with Sean Cahill in the 800 metres and Paul Armstrong in the Discus the only winners; Roger suggested that there was "a degree of apathy" towards the event within the Club, although holidays also played their part. The major problem was the

choice of date; and in view of it the fact that Leeds City finished last of six in the Women's event is less important than the fact they got a team out at all - even if it was, in Dave Young's words, "an entire team of reserves."

The Young Athletes' team entered its second season with considerable hopes of success in a structure which saw it in a North Central division; the first three in this and the first three in the Northern Division would play off for a place in the National Final (only one then) at Crystal Palace. Dave Young had stressed the need for recruiting a strong side; and even though at the first match at Cleckheaton the team was "as full of holes as a gruyère cheese" it was far too strong for the opposition. A number of key names made early appearances; powerful 14-year-old rugby-player Andy Rivett made a mark over 400 metres, Dave Warburton's young hurdlers Stuart Moran and Andrew Heywood appeared successfully, and hammer-thrower Colin Gardner opened his account. Mark Johnson had an early and successful attempt at 400m hurdling, along with 800-metre runner Dean Hulme, and future steeplechase international Wayne Aylesbury, possibly the most smooth and elegant distance-runner the Club has ever had, set what was thought to be a Club record in the Under-15 3000m, partnered in a double by Richard Walker. The remarkable Dan Brown wiped up the Under-17 sprints, Aamer Khan's little brother Aasim scored heavily in the Under-15 jumps, with winning partners Steve Linsell (High Jump) and Radley Lowry (Triple Jump), and Gary Hayton and Steve Hardcastle equally dominated the Under-15 1500m. The report, however, mentions "a lot of people doing 'odd' events.'

Clearly, however, between that meeting and the second, at Hull in June, somebody had been busy, and "many of the holes have been plugged." Among the new names - sprinters Martyn Hart and Dave Fitzgerald and throwers Shaun Holdsworth and David Uttley were mentioned - were two of the greatest 'might-have-beens' in Club history. Francis O'Donnell was one of the few Under-17 discus-throwers to challenge the historic record of Jonathan Hartley (his younger brother Michael was no mean performer, either); he was English Schools' champion in 1978, but didn't keep throwing for long after leaving school. The other, in the writer's opinion, had the potential to be at least as good with the javelin as Mick Hill, and for a few seasons it looked as if he might be; and anyone who doubts the comment - which is made with no disrespect to Mick - should look at the pre-1986 rankings with the 'old-style' javelin and consider the performances of Jonathan Buckley.

At Huddersfield in July a further name first appeared; the Under-17 triple Jump was won by Wetherby-based athlete Mike Makin, who was to become one of the Club's handful of major games' medallists, with Aamer Khan taking the B event. The balance of the team appeared to have tipped somewhat; whereas early in the season the Under-17s were 'carrying' the younger lads, by this match the Under-15 were pulling their weight and then some. Martyn Hart doubled the sprints, Andy Rivett took the 400m and B 200m and Javelin, Stuart Moran and Andy Heywood scored another Hurdles maximum, and there were similar scores in the 3000m (Gary Hayton and Richard Walker), High Jump (Aasim Khan and Steve Linsell) and Javelin (Jonathan Buckley and Andy). The latter event produced a clean sweep, as Adrian Riggs and Chris Rider monopolised the Under-17 event. There was a lot of confidence, after this, that the single place in the Main Final from the North-East was there to be taken.

The play-off meeting produced one of the most serious attacks of jangling nerves in Club history - not due to events on the track but due to some architect's bad planning. The play-off was scheduled a fortnight before the Finals on the then brand-new tartan track at Costello Park, Hull; but the summer of '78 had seen quite a bit of rain, there was a downpour on the Saturday night, and whoever designed the drainage of the Costello track hadn't foreseen the possibility of the outflow getting blocked up by Humber silt. The result was that when the teams - including Border Harriers from Carlisle, who were the Club's strongest rivals - turned up they were faced with a lake! We could have taken warning from the Women's experience in May - but it certainly made the meeting impossible. There was much arguing about what to do, but the only real answer was a rearrangement the following week; from the Club's point of view this gave very little time for booking accommodation for a team of around fifty which might then fail to qualify. Anyway, with its heart in its financial mouth, the Club booked a University hall of residence and a coach, and then crossed its fingers that the kids would perform at Cleckheaton.

They didn't fail! Border, who fancied themselves for qualifying, were close for eight events, but once Wayne Aylesbury (who was a more than useful occasional vaulter) and Tony Matthews' little brother Phil had won the Under-15 Vault the team never looked back. There was a Club record for another new member, Andy Taylor (who had been "snatched from Bingley's very jaws"), in the Under-15 800m, and another for the Under-15 4x400m team of Allan Mowat, Andy, Julian West and Andy Rivett. There were doubles in the Under-15 200 (Martyn Hart and Andy), 400 (Andy and Allan), 80m Hurdles (Stuart Moran and Andy Heywood), Long Jump (Paul Linsell and Radley Lowry), Triple Jump (Paul and Aasim Khan) and Discus (David Uttley and David McBryde), and the Under-17 Triple Jump (Mike Makin and Aamer Khan). The athlete who caught the eye, though, was one who was around for a very long time - indeed is still seen in occasional road races at the time of writing - and yet another of the Club's many 'characters,' Mike Cheseldine. Mike, who even at fifteen was a well-known figure in branches of William Hill and Ladbrooke, carried on another great Leeds City tradition of 'rough steeplechasing;' his style over the barriers has been likened for grace and fluency to fellow ex-Grammar School pupil Martin Dell - which says a lot! The Club qualified with ease for the Final the following week - on the day after the promotion match for the British League.

The season's outstanding individual performance came in an event which didn't last long but was controversial at the time. There had been a body of opinion for some time that objected to the number of A.A.A. and W.A.A.A. titles that finished up going abroad; the argument was not so much chauvinist as the denial of opportunities for home talent to gain access to the event. In 1978 the authorities bowed to pressure and held a U.K. Closed Championship, on the same day as the second Northern Women's League meeting; and some excellent fields were assembled in most events. The Women's 1500m field was a pretty good compendium of the big names of the time - Hilary Hollick, Ruth Smeeth, Susan Harvey, Gillian Dainty, Angela Mason, Cherry Hanson and Wendy Smith (later Sly). And on the line with these big guns stood a tiny, skinny 15-year-old in yellow and blue, looking as if she'd got in with the big girls by mistake. Some mistake!

The pace was quick, but the field was still bunched after 600 yards, when Hanson and Smith collided massively and brought each other down. Some of the field seemed a bit disconcerted; but Sandra Arthurton, a couple of yards behind them, neatly skirted the chaos, set off in pursuit of Hollick and Smeeth, and held on. It could be said that her bronze medal was a stroke of luck; but there was nothing in the least fortuitous about the time, which at 4.17.9 was a British age-best by a considerable margin. The meeting was televised, and the writer's abiding memory of it is not the race, but when the cameras came back to the meeting after a break for some other sport. The presentation had just taken place, and the camera zoomed in on Sandra, clutching her medal in her hot little hand and staring at it as if she was afraid it would vanish like Cinderella's glass slipper. Overshadowed in both the public eye and the athletics press by Sandra's performance, Tonia Phillpots took a silver medal in the High Jump.

Sandra was one of three Club members selected for an Under-20 international against West Germany late in the summer, the other two being Simon Cahill and John Doherty; the trio would have company as well, as the match was the first in which Ray Barrow acted as an international team manager. However, the number of internationals should have been one greater; in June Carole Wood was selected to compete against Poland, but was denied the vest by a piece of wretched luck. She suffered what turned out to be a stress fracture of the ankle and was forced to pull out; a picture in the Evening Post showed an extremely disconsolate-looking Carole bathing the damaged foot in hot water to get the swelling down.

There were plenty of other Championship successes. The Yorkshire Men's saw the return of Messrs. Mowat, Cox and Warburton (the first and last taking titles), titles for John Doherty and Robin Murphy and a lot of both Senior and Under-20 medals, while on the distaff side Carole Wood, Sandra Arthurton (running as a Senior) Diane Rimmington and Tonia Phillpots took golds, the latter setting a Club record of 1.77 which at the time of writing still stands, amid a shower of other hardware. Sandra opted to take the Northern title in the Under-20 age-group, but could equally well have challenged for the Senior title; while among the men Ian Lindley, Robin Murphy and Kim McDonald were winners. Kim was at this point regularly beating Mike Baxter, in spite of the latter's good season over the country, but Mike had taken some time to recover from his first serious attempt at a marathon - about the one distance event he never mastered. In the younger age-groups Mark Johnson took the Northern Under-17 Hurdles title with six other medals coming to Club members, and with a squad of Carole Wood, Julie Whiteley and Sandra Arthurton the Women's 3x800m Relay (a regularly-contested event then) was won easily. The same squad, plus Lorraine Holdsworth, took the W.A.A.A. 4x800 title; their impressive 'split times' were 2.13.4(Carole), 2.13.3 (Julie), 2.22.2 (Lorraine) and 2.09.5 (Sandra).

Sandra and Francis O'Donnell took English Schools' titles and gained international places as a result; there was the usual solid number of West Yorkshire Schools' champions, many of whom were new recruits to the advancing younger end of the Women's section or to the Young Athletes' team. The burst of multi-eventing of 1977 was also built on, with Colin Hayton taking silver in the Northern Under-20 Decathlon and Angela Riggs doing likewise in the Yorkshire Under-15 Pentathlon; coincidentally the W.A.A.A had that year conducted "an

experiment at the request of the I.A.A.F.” and organised the first heptathlon held in the country. Finally in September there was another Yorkshire title to celebrate; Brian Hilton won the county Marathon Championship, and secured a bronze medal in the Northern, on a hilly course at Rotherham. It had been a good all-round competitive season; but the climax was to come in mid-September.

Qualification for the British League was to take the form of two meetings, with the winners of each going into Division 4 and the next two making up the new Division 5; Leeds City were allocated to the match at Saffron Lane, Leicester, with Bedford and County, Leicester Coritanian, Chelmsford and City of Stoke as opposition. On paper it didn't look too difficult; but the disappointments of the previous six years appeared to have eaten their way into the consciousness of Leeds City, and there was something of an air of foreboding about the meeting.

Needless to say in the fortnight or so before the meeting all the old fears began to come up. Injuries and other commitments put holes in the best possible team, with Dave Warburton, high-jumper Chris Lumb, the Northern Under-17 runner-up, and hammer-throwers Andy Lunn and Jim Ferguson out. There were weaknesses in crucial events; in particular the Steeplechase had been a worry all year. At least the team would have one thing it had never had before - a supporters' club. The Young Athletes' team, going to their Final at Crystal Palace, would be stopping off at Saffron Lane; as it turned out, four of those who went to watch finished up in the team! Writing about it in the Newsletter afterwards, John Lunn described the match as “the Rubicon;” and there certainly was the feeling that if it went wrong this time it might never go right.

At first everybody's worst fears appeared to be about to be realised. The early events were those where the likes of long-jumper Steve Savage and hammer-thrower Colin Gardner had to be pitched in against Seniors, and where Robin Murphy had to make a token run over 400m Hurdles to fill a gap. To add to the calamities Steve Denton did one of the few 'no-heights' he ever did for the Club. Things came round a bit with a maximum in the 800 from a tactical Sean Cahill “lurking like a two-legged cobra” and a muscular Pete Bygate barging through a half-existent gap; but some of the other teams had international sprinters and with seven events in the Club was struggling. Then came the real turning-point, in the event the Team manager feared most - the Steeplechase. In a howling gale, against half a dozen athletes with times of 9.30 or better, “what could Leeds offer? - Russ Varney's ten minutes, and an under-age debutant with no known form!” Hearts sank even further when after two laps 16-year-old John Doherty took the lead. “It was a maniac, brave, suicidal and stupid thing to do, we told ourselves, as John methodically and pitilessly ground a string of reputations into the Tartan ... and finished the length of the straight clear of his shattered opponents.” His time of 9.18.6 is likely to stand as a Club record for Under-17s forever, as these days League rules prevent such young runners doing the event; on that day it raised everyone's spirits.

The Steeplechase win coincided with the Shot result - Ian Mowat and Ian Lindley taking both - and with Ian M. and Paul Armstrong, in spite of a taped-up hand, doing likewise in the Discus, Charlie Beaumont running a superb winning 400m in the gale, and B-string wins for Simon Cahill over 1500m and Pete Bradley over 5000m

(Mike Baxter finishing second in the A race) things got back on target. Further contributions from Martin Stitch as the all-purpose jumper and youngsters Chris Rider in the Javelin and Amer Khan, at 15 the youngest competitor to appear in a Senior team, in the Triple Jump, made sure of third place. There had been some assistance from the fact that City of Stoke were even weaker than we were; the Newsletter article cites four missing athletes who could have made a fatal difference to our hopes. No matter - by the time we assembled two "scratch" relay teams the team was a clear third. At last we were in!

The following day the Young Athletes finished seventh of eight in their first Final appearance, which one parent who didn't know a lot about the standards involved suggested to John Lunn wasn't too good a performance; "in the nicest possible way," said John in his Newsletter report, "it gave me great pleasure to set him right." True enough, only three events were won; Jonathan Buckley took the Under-17 Javelin, Wayne Aylesbury "drifted away" from the Under-15 3000m field, backed up by Richard Walker, "one athlete who's definitely not on Dianabol," and Dan Brown, "looking as ever on the verge of expiring," won the B 200m. However, in the context of an event where some winning performances were better than those at Leicester the previous day the display of the lads was tremendous. There was a pair of silver medals for Gary Briggs in Vault and Javelin, a bronze and a Club record of 13.56 for Mike Makin in the Triple Jump, a silver for Francis O'Donnell in the Discus, bronzes for Wayne in the Under-15 Vault and volunteer B-string steeplechaser Chris Reid, and another Club record of 3.43.4 and silver for the Under-15 4x400m relay squad, with Andy Rivett clocked at 51.9 on the last leg. There were 32 personal bests throughout the team, in every age-group and a huge range of events. Athlete of the match, though, was Under-17 800m runner Mike Shaw, who had been carded for three events, including the 400m Hurdles, and a relay; on the night before he slipped on some steps at the hall of residence and turned his ankle, but with no reserves available did his full stint. The performance couldn't have been more timely; there was every sign that the seniors in the British League could look over their shoulders and see the new strength coming through behind them.

With these two performances the Club had enhanced its status; and over the preceding four years it had also enhanced its standards of performance by quite a bit. Perusal of the current (2004) All-Time Ranking Lists shows that from the years 1975-8 there are still over 300 performances listed among the Top 25 in the 'standard' events alone - 196 in the Men's Lists and 129 in the Women. There are significantly large numbers in the younger female age-groups - 38 Under-17 and 51 Under-15 - which reflect the strong growth of those areas, though preconceptions that the middle distances would dominate are not borne out; the Throws were an equally big 'growth area.' The youth of the Women's teams of the time is part of the reason that the Under-20 Lists are the smallest area of growth, but the lack of separate competition for Under-20s has meant that these Lists did not begin to be compiled until late, and may have more omissions than most. The Under-20 and Under-17 Male track events were the biggest area of growth on that side of the Club; again, the presence of a few individuals of the right age is significant. The surviving performances certainly indicate that on the track this was a strong period of development.

The Club was also about to change its 'image' in another manner when, just after the end of the season, the decision was taken to adopt new colours. Debate on the matter had been going on since the 'double-baton' relay incident in the 1977 Yorkshires; but the problem was clearly going to be selecting a design that would be acceptable to the majority of members. There was no argument about the colours of the vest; blue and amber has been a traditional combination for Leeds sporting teams since the late 19th century, having been used by Leeds Rugby League Club throughout its history and by Leeds United F.C. from its formation in 1920 until the adoption of white under Don Revie in the 1960s. The question was how to combine the colours, and needless to say there were almost as many preferences on this matter as the Club had members. It was clearly going to require somebody with taste and fashion sense to sort it out; which makes it all the more remarkable that the design eventually adopted came from the member who is generally reputed to possess the most notoriously bad sartorial taste in the Club's history - John Lunn!

John can't remember whether he was given the task by the Committee (the Minutes don't mention it) or merely, as is all too often his wont, took it upon himself; but sometime in the summer of 1978 he sat down and drew out about twenty possible (but in some cases highly improbable) vests in combinations of blue and amber, and passed them round members for comment. Two preferences immediately began to stand out, with a marked division of gender. One design suggested was the wholesale adoption of the Leeds R.L.F.C.'s 'cotised hoop' (for those unfamiliar with heraldic terms, that means that in a two-coloured design a broad band of the 'contrast' colour is separated from two narrower bands by narrow bands of the 'base' colour.) The younger lads strongly favoured this option; but there was an equally strong preference among the girls for retaining a diagonal design, as some of the (to put it politely) more substantially-built members considered that any design involving hoops would emphasise their girth.

John had his own agenda on the subject as well; since both the existing Men's and Women's vests resembled those of two other clubs, he intended the new one to be completely distinctive. Considering the above results, he came up with the idea of turning the Leeds Rugby design through 45 degrees and eliminating the lower narrow band. He described the resulting design as "royal blue with two asymmetrical amber diagonals," which remains the 'official' description registered with the athletic authorities; the proportions of the stripes originally being one inch and three inches. When he first described his idea to members, some of them found it a bit difficult to visualise; so he created a 'prototype' by persuading his mother (who was good at that sort of thing) to take an old red vest he'd 'acquired' at Oxford many years previously and sew on to it white strips of the correct proportions cut from an old blanket. Some members of the Committee weren't convinced at first - the design would be complicated to manufacture, and therefore comparatively expensive. However, as nobody could think of anything better, it was adopted; and the cost of the first examples (£2.75) wasn't in fact a lot greater than replacements of the old designs would have been. One aim was achieved; although one or two clubs (Mansfield and Macclesfield, for instance) have adopted 'contrast diagonal' designs since, nobody else has copied it. Leeds City retains its distinctive and unique look!

## Chapter 9: Advances, declines, disasters and new moves

The euphoria of qualification at Leicester was not entirely unrelieved; the Club already knew that when Kim McDonald ran the 1500m in the Qualifying Match it would be his last race in Leeds City colours. He had set up a sports shop in Keighley (advertisements for which began to appear in Athletics Weekly at about the same time) and was returning to Bingley Harriers. He did the Club one last favour, however, by arranging the manufacture of the first batch of the new Club vest by the famous Keighley sports goods company Litesome (well-known as the principal manufacture of a certain item of sporting attire which has almost vanished from athletics.) The arrangement was not without its problems; the first batch were returned because the proportions of the diagonals wasn't right, and some time after a correct batch appeared, apparently in January 1979, the 'rejects' appeared, to the annoyance of some Committee members, in a sports shop somewhere. Relations with Litesome got so strained that a wit in the Newsletter suggested that it had "nearly ended up with the Club declaring war on Keighley!" The transition was even accidentally documented on the cover of Athletics Weekly; the issue of March 17th showed Sandra Arthurton in action at Cosford in the old-style Women's vest, while four weeks later Bill Fielding appeared in the new strip winning the British Over-50 title.

The loss of Kim further weakened the Senior Men's Harriers team, though it didn't immediately show; in the first event of the winter, the Cutlers' Relay at Sheffield, a Leeds City team was victorious. However, analysis of the team shows the real position; the team consisted of a track man - Sean Cahill, two Juniors - John Doherty and Simon Cahill, the still-reliable Mike Baxter, and a comparative also-ran in John Dalby, a Liverpool University student who joined the Club after John Lunn spent a school parents' evening interview recruiting him rather than discussing the academic progress of his younger sister! The first four runners built up a lead of about 90 seconds; then John listened to advice not to panic, ran his own race, and had enough left to hold off A.S.V.A.C.'s fast-finishing Dennis Mayho. A truer picture is shown by two other early-season performances; the Club didn't send a team to the Northern Six-Stage Relay, and in the first West Yorkshire League the only Leeds City finisher in the first forty places was John Doherty -7th at the age of 17! In the second League race John finished 4th and Mike 5th, but the team, with Brian Hilton 17th and an apparently-returned Pete Stevens 25th, could only manage fourth. The third, promoted by the Club at Harrington High School, New Farnley, saw John finish second and Mike 6th, and still no team success; by this time the team race was counting six rather than four. John Lunn commented that "there is a solid pack of lads finishing in the thirties and forties;" a very different picture from three years earlier.

The saving grace for the male side of the Club in the winter of 1978 was the emergence of yet another fine tranche of youngsters, in particular among the Under-15s. Spearheaded by the apparently effortless Wayne Aylesbury, the team included Gary Hayton, at 14 a seasoned campaigner, the immensely strong and promising Chris Ryalls, and the gangling Steve Hardcastle; it was already strong enough to produce a clean sweep in the

West Yorkshire League, placing its four counters in the first ten in all three races; furthermore there were at least five other promising boys - Richard Walker, Kevin Earle, Martin Gilpin, Paul Walker and Cornelius Kelleher - mentioned in an early-season Newsletter review. Before the end of the winter the group was to be strengthened further when the highly-talented Andy Rodgers left Wakefield Harriers to join the Club.

The age-group above them also had its moments, "seeing off Longwood in a couple of League races;" the core of the Under-17s was Roger Bloor and steeplechasers Chris Reid and Mike Cheseldine joined by another Grammar School name in Alistair Adams, the son of Dr. Ian Adams, who had set up for a time the first real sports injuries' clinic at St. James' Hospital. The Club had a good Aaron meeting, the Senior team of Simon Cahill, John Doherty, Mike Baxter and Sean Cahill finishing third and the Under-15s packing five in eight to win easily. There were also some successes at other events, notably at the Batley races, where a composite team of Chris Ryalls, Alistair Adams and John Doherty showed that it wasn't only the Women's section which could win races of that nature.

The Women were doing their share of upholding the Club's reputation. They also won their composite relay at Batley, with Wendy Hirst and Carole Wood sandwiched between the fastest leg of the day - by Sandra Arthurton. Sandra continued her winning ways in Northern Women's League races, winning the first two with Lorraine Holdsworth third in one of them; Julie Whiteley, now commuting full-time from Derby and in her last season with the Club, was regularly placed in the Senior races, while the Under-15 team of Wendy Hirst, Janine Midgley, Diane Burton and Gail Addinall was clearly stronger than all opposition. When it came to the W.A.A. Road Relay Championships in November, the Club had teams in all four age-groups, and the lowest-placed, the Senior team of Carole, Julie and Lesley Doyle, was 11th. The Under-13s (Sally Ramsdale, Beverley Bates and Rachel Vevers) placed 8th, and the other two took medals; Janine, Diane and Wendy taking silver, and Sandra, Lorraine and Sandra Gent bronze. A similar string of successes came in the Yorkshire Women's Championships on the mud-bath of Lightcliffe; the Under-15s won and Under-17s won, Sandra Arthurton taking the latter title with Lorraine Holdsworth second, and the Under-13s finished third, with debutant Deborah Hirst getting a medal. There were also County places for Sally Ramsdale and Beverley Bates (U13), Janine Midgley, Wendy Hirst and Diane Burton (U15), and Julie Whiteley (Senior).

There was, however, one subject of controversy in cross-country running which came to something of a head at this time. There had been considerable correspondence about the domination of the Under-20 age-group by university teams, invariably composed of students who were also members of open clubs; Loughborough, Birmingham and Leeds had always been particularly strong, and on occasion clubs which thought they were in with medal chances in Area and National Championships felt aggrieved when their members turned out for their universities. There was a very considerable correspondence in Athletics Weekly on the subject, and it was far from one-sided; the writer recalls a forthright letter from South London Harrier and Leeds University captain Andy Evans, who pointed out with justice that it was often highly inconvenient or over-costly for students at universities some way from home to return, and that their commitment to their university was at least as legitimate as that to

their club. However, in 1978 the Northern Cross-Country Association had put the cat among the pigeons by banning university teams and other 'closed' clubs (but not schools) from their Championships. This brought both protests and a reaction from the English Cross-Country Union, which passed a more moderate change of rule requiring athletes who wished to represent their University to get written permission from their Club. The Southern Association also adopted it, and pressure was put on the North to conform; eventually they did so, and it proved to be a lasting and effective solution.

The main feature of the Championship season of 1979 had nothing to do with the running; from about Christmas Britain suffered one of the last (so far) of the real 'arctic winters.' It wasn't quite as bad as the legendary freeze-ups of 1946-7 and 1962-3, but racing was certainly disrupted. The Yorkshire A.A. Cross-Country Championship at Graves Park early in January wasn't too badly affected, though it was significant that Roger Bloor, always at his best on hard courses, got his first County vest in the Under-17s. Mike Baxter finished 7th in the Senior race, to add another to his collection of County vests; John Doherty won the Under-20 race, but principally due to the absence of Bingley's slightly older Steve Binns, who had emerged as the outstanding Junior that year. It puts things in perspective that in the Inter-Counties some weeks later John was a superb fourth into contribute to Yorkshire's winning team - but Steve was an even more impressive winner.

The Yorkshire Association Championship at the end of the month was a different matter. By then the blizzards had intensified, and promoting club Longwood Harriers were forced into making a late change of course to Newsome High School, on top of a bleak hill south of Huddersfield. (Arthur Cockcroft, however, was full of praise for their organisation.) The conditions were extremely difficult - as the afternoon wore on a furrow was trampled in the snow which made it hard to overtake opponents, as to step off it put runners up to their knees in the soft stuff. The Club had two winning teams among its youngsters. In the Under-15 race there were three well up all the way - Wayne Aylesbury in 4th, Chris Ryalls getting off a sick-bed to finish 7th and Steve Hardcastle 11th in spite of floundering a bit; they then had another three contesting the last counting place, with Kevin Earle (23) holding it much of the way ahead of David Holdsworth (18), only for Gary Hayton to find a stronger finish to end up 15th. Chris Reid lived dangerously in the Under-17 race, going off with Peter Elliott and Longwood's David Topham, but he managed to hang on to 6th, being caught late on by the more cautious but strong Roger Bloor, who finished one in front. Alistair Adams finished 10th, never being far from that place, and Mark Clark (23) got the better of Ashley Farnell (31) for the last medal. John Doherty had an off-day, finishing behind Bingley's Colin Moore and Peter Elletson of East Hull; in the Under-13s Richard Earle, Kevin's little brother, was an impressive 6th in only his second serious outing. The Seniors all struggled; Mike Baxter could only manage 13th, and the other counters were John Ashton (36), Pete Bradley (50), Gary Ineson (65), Roger Parker (80) and John Dalby (87), who just held off Bill Fielding.

The winter continued to affect things badly; the West Yorkshire Schools' in February was run on an icy Thornes Park at Wakefield, which didn't deter several members from placing; Chris Ryalls, Lorraine Holdsworth and Sandra Arthurton took their respective titles, Alistair Adams was Intermediate runner-up, Andy Rodgers was

runner-up to Chris, and behind Lorraine Diane Burton took fourth place. The Under-15 Lads took silver medals in the Northern Championships at Blackburn, not being put off either by the weather, arriving extremely late for the start (Wayne Aylesbury's granddad Reg had the wit to declare the team before the Club coach arrived) or by Witton Park's famous 'Saucer' (one of the few serious rivals to 'Hill 60' at inducing terror in Southerners!) Wayne placed 7th, Steve Hardcastle 14th, Chris Ryalls 33rd and Gary Hayton 34th. The Under-17s finished 6th in a good-quality field (Chris Reid 22, Roger Bloor 32, Mark Clark 33, Alistair Adams 36); the Seniors, however, were nowhere near the front, though they finished a full nine. Mike Baxter had a decent run in 13th, as he "could actually see where his feet were landing," but the rest were well back (John Ashton 120, Pete Bradley 134, Roger Parker 160, Gary Ineson 161, and "the geriatric" John Lunn 236 - "THREE PLACES AHEAD OF BRWS!!!!," as the Newsletter put it, complete with exclamation marks!

The course for the Northern Women's at Cleckheaton received a certain amount of 'stick' from Roger Norton, being not only severe but part of it having been rendered dangerous by sledgers; indeed conditions was so severe that most of the races were shortened. This didn't seem to trouble Sandra Arthurton any more than getting stuck on the way there; she arrived ten minutes before the under-17 races started and romped away with it. She was just as effective at Runcorn in the National Championships - run after a snap thaw on "that green stuff - which I believe is known as grass," in Mike Sherman's words - retaining her title untroubled. There was also a bronze medal for the Under-15 team, who packed three early on (Janine Midgley 20th, Diane Burton 27th and Wendy Hirst 35th) and then had a long wait for Tracy Rawnsley in 134th to close in. A Senior team finished for the first time in Club history (Julie Whiteley 23, Carole Wood 50, Lesley Doyle 177 and Christine Linton 212, team placed 17th), and Sally Ramsdale as a fine runner-up in the Under-13. The Men's 'National' returned to Luton (and spectators effectively prevented future use of what was one of the best National courses ever by running through a farmer's field of spring corn to cross the course and damaging it); again the Club bus arrived late, but as half 'our' Under-17s were representing Leeds Grammar School and the Seniors were below strength it didn't rally affect things much. The youngsters finished 33rd (Chris Reid 120, Ashley Farnell 202, Roger Bloor 250, and Mark Clark 259), while the Seniors were 57th - back over 3,000 points only three years after scoring under 350! Mike had another good one in 23rd, and Roger Parker his best ever in 482nd; the others were Pete Bradley (358), Garry Ineson (606), Steve Haywood (720) and John Dalby (841).

In spite of the apparent recession in its Senior fortunes, the Club did one thing it hadn't done in the preceding two seasons - it put out a team in the Northern 12-Stage Relay. Admittedly, it was more a case than usual of getting just about everybody capable of movement out on to the road at Roberttown, and the result was 'only' a 15th placing, but there was a certain lift in morale at actually being there. It didn't help that John Ashton, who would normally be put on a short leg, led off on a long one so that he could go to a Rugby League Cup semi-final, and suffered in 25th of 26; but Sean Cahill made two places, Mike Baxter ten with a run inspired by the close proximity of John Temperton, and John Doherty, returning from injury, made two more. Pete Bradley, then studying for A-levels to enter university in his thirties, dropped five, two of which Simon Cahill promptly

recovered; on the next two legs the "one-legged overweight geriatric" John Lunn held the place (though "in danger of disqualification for making a bidigital response to some remarks from Holmfirth Harriers") and Mike Sherman pulled one back each. The last four - Garry Ineson, Joe Clancy, who lost one, Roger Parker, who did likewise, and Steve Haywood - held the line competently. There was some confusion at the end over times, due to the large amount of lapping; and it was after this that John suggested that teams rather than individual should be numbered in relays, with distinguishing marks for the legs, which had been done in the Hyde Park Relay for students for some years. Over the next few years the administrators came round to the same idea.

There were a couple of end-of-season efforts in the Harriers' section which could be said to mark the end of one era and the beginning of another. The Northern Women's Road Relay was a fiasco for the Club, in that the M62 was impassable, so the Club teams were unable to get there - all except one athlete. It was the saddest possible way for Julie Whiteley to end her connection with the Club, prior to joining Derby on her marriage, to run the first leg of the Senior race in isolation. However, the Parker-Lep cross-country meeting on Stockport's Woodbank Park saw Sally Ramsdale win the Under-13 race, and a mention for another product of Leeds Grammar School making only his second appearance, a short "solidly-working" youngster with a penchant for jumping in puddles on Sunday morning training runs; his name was Phil Townsend.

Sandra Arthurton's Moment of the Winter, however, didn't take place on the snow or the mud - but on, the Cosford boards only four days after the 'National.' The coaches who nowadays talk about the need to "protect young athletes from over-competition" will no doubt be foaming at the mouth reading about a 16-year-old girl doing a full season of club and school cross-country championships and fitting in two indoor internationals as well, but Sandra seemed to thrive on it. She had already, after finishing third over 1500 metres in the W.A.A.A. Indoor Championships, had one outing in a match against France, where she also finished third; and then, in the middle of the week between the National and the English Schools', she was down to compete against what was then the mightiest of European opposition - East Germany. Admittedly it wasn't the strongest pairing the East Germans could have put out that she faced, but the leading opponent, Doris Gluth, was on paper four seconds quicker than Sandra. The race started at a reasonably crisp pace, but developed into one of those tight-packed contests where the lead changes a lot and there isn't much room for manoeuvre, with Sandra tucked in for the first 800. It was at about this point that Fraulein Gluth was "sufficiently ill-advised as to try a little gentle (!) elbow-fencing;" Sandra clearly didn't like it, and decided the safest place was in front - so in front she went, and simply shredded the other three. The picture of a radiant Sandra finishing which adorned Athletics Weekly said it all!

The Club had two other Cross-Country champions that winter. In the English Schools Andy Rodgers took the Junior title before he had had an opportunity to "wear the Club vest in anger;" Chris Ryalls had been unable to run due to an ankle injury, and the Newsletter considered the theoretical possibility of "two Leeds City lads fighting out a national title." At the other extreme Bill Fielding found himself with a formidable challenge to his British Over-50's title in the person of Rotherham's former international marathon runner Eddie Kirkup, who had been a force to be reckoned with among the younger 'Vets;' however, the frozen winter seemed to suit 'Father' a

great deal better, and he retained his title in style, as the cover of Athletics Weekly showed. The rivalry with Kirkup was to go on for some years, but ended in a remarkable fashion when it was discovered that at some point Eddie had surreptitiously 'added' a year to his age.

The Club opened its most important track season yet with a good second placing in the Leeds University-organised Yorkshire Bank meeting at Cleckheaton; the second place being behind Loughborough Colleges, which was anything but an inferior performance. There had already been titles and medals indoors for some of the Club's members; In the A.A.A. Under-20s Mark Johnson took a silver medal in the 60m Hurdles, and Amer Khan a bronze in the Triple Jump at Under-17 level, while Ian Mowat had taken the Northern Indoor Shot title at Bolton. The meeting, however, still had to take place outside Leeds; the question of suitable facilities to stage meetings in the city had not been addressed. In March the Yorkshire Evening Post had an article on the subject, not from Roger Norton for once but from its sports editor Mike Casey, inspired by the announcement that Leeds Polytechnic were planning to stage the British Polys' championships at Cleckheaton because "the track at Beckett Park is falling apart." It was possibly a useful means of alerting the general public to the shortcomings of facilities in general and Beckett Park in particular, and may have been the catalyst which was to start major moves before the summer was out; but in retrospect the main feature of it is the appalling ignorance of what was actually going on in athletics in the city displayed by possibly the most prestigious figure in local sports journalism. He wrote in his article about the problems facing "up-and-coming sprinter" Sandra Arthurton, and suggested that "perhaps there were other local youngsters capable of following in her speedy footsteps."

Two weeks after his article appeared Roger Norton previewed the Club's season in a manner which might have answered his editor's query. He pointed out that with the A team in the British League, a B team set to launch itself in the lower reaches of the Northern League, the Women's team in the first division of its Northern League, and a successful Young Athletes' team aiming for a second Final, there could be weekends when Leeds City would be turning out up to 150 athletes - "a formidable task for the Club's officials." He noted the large number of possible fixtures, with major Leagues, County and Area Championships, and the local West Yorkshire League, of which he was somewhat critical; he reckoned it was skewed towards the younger age-groups, that Senior athletes were more likely to "travel across the Pennines to the high-quality Stretford League competitions," and that the "most difficult and time-consuming events" such as hurdles and long throws were neglected. (Little has changed in a quarter of a century in this respect.) His comments were certainly being echoed within the Club; nobody was in any doubt that the growth and success of Leeds City was coming at the price of forcing a continuous review of its operations and administration. It was perhaps an appropriate moment for the last of the founding senior officers of the Club to step down; in April Dave Hodgson retired as Honorary Treasurer, to be replaced by another former St. Mark's Harrier in Roger Parker.

One thing never seemed to change. The A team approached its first British League meeting at Leicester with portents of doom hanging over it; fourteen first-choice athletes were missing, mainly due to injuries and a date clash with student championships, and John Lunn started his Newsletter article with a roll-call of absentees which

looked to be a fatal blow to the team's chances. "Had anyone suggested that we were actually going to WIN," he went on, "the Godson Wonderbus would have been diverted via Menston for his personal convenience." Nonetheless, win the team did, by a 26-point margin - and this was in spite of having to throw Aamer Kahn and Alwhille Macdonald into all three jumps (Olly managed to 'zero' in the High Jump due to some official failing to call him at his starting height) and have sprinter Paul Richards injured when volunteering to hurdle. The heart of the win came from the throwers - Ian Mowat and Paul Armstrong did three events each, Ian winning Shot and Discus, supported by Jim Ferguson and Adrian Riggs. On the track Kevin Walton had two wins (one A-string, one B), Charlie Beaumont repeated his Qualifier victory in the 400, young Stuart Newby had probably the best 800-metre race of his career in beating a good field on his Senior debut, Mike Baxter and Pete Bradley had another 'repeat show' to take 18 points in the 5000, and Simon Cahill, somewhat unusually, ran the Steeplechase and didn't do badly. There was also a farewell and a last appearance - Brian Scott ran his last meeting before joining Lincoln Wellington, and Ray Barrow made his final competitive appearance running quite a reasonable first leg in the 4x100.

However, the outstanding event in the writer's memory was the Pole Vault. Robin Murphy and Steve Denton weren't at their best, and were faced with a mighty Chelmsford pairing of Graham Eggleton (a 4.60 performer) and Adrian Ross. It should have been no contest - but Robin had competed against Ross before, reckoned he tended to 'lose it' if the competition was slow and he was hanging about waiting to vault, and he therefore set out to 'psych' his opponent out. Steve, in an interview with the writer, recalled him passing instructions; while John Lunn, who was officiating at the event, remembers mainly Robin's concern with the uprights. Now it's perfectly legitimate for vaulters to adjust the stands according to their style of vault; those who go 'straight up' tend to want them as close to the plant box as possible, while those who describe a more rounded parabola want to set them further back. However, never before or since has John seen vault stands being adjusted with such precision as they were that day at Saffron Lane; Robin and Steve were having them moved a matter of five centimetres. Moreover, it worked; they couldn't beat Eggleton, but Ross was duly beaten, even though the twosome cleared no higher than 3.05. Psychological warfare wasn't in the same street!

The fixture pattern in the 1979 season of the League was peculiar, with most of the meetings crowded together; the first match was at the beginning of May, the second at the end of May, and the third on the Schools' Championship date in early June. At least the second trip was a bit shorter - to Kirkby Stadium, where hosts Blackburn (who also didn't yet have Tartan at Witton Park) got almost all their strength out and beat Leeds City by six points. There was the usual massive contribution from the throwers, in spite of a clash with the Inter-Counties taking Ian Lindley away; Ian Mowat took the Shot, and Paul Armstrong won all three B heavy throws; There was also a fine sprint haul, with Charlie Beaumont winning the 400 again, Kevin Walton and Nicky George doubling in the 200, and Steve Harrison winning the B 100; while Mike Baxter and John Doherty respectively won the 5000 and Steeplechase.

This kept the Club in front in the Division; but the next test, a fortnight later, was to be a lot more severe. Not only was it the most difficult travel of the year - to Cwmbran - but the throws section of the team was decimated. Ian Mowat was on international duty with Northern Ireland, Ian Lindley was in the middle of exams at Loughborough, and Paul Armstrong, who had joined the police, had had twenty-four stitches in a calf muscle after lacerating it by putting his foot through a cold frame while pursuing a miscreant across some gardens. In addition, Mike Baxter, Sean Cahill and John Doherty were all missing for various good and sufficient reasons. The fact that the team, finished fourth, which kept them three match points in front of Blackburn going into the last match, was largely down to the sprinters; Greg Colin made his first appearance and duly won both 100 and 200, with Ron Small and Kevin Walton taking the B events, and Charlie Beaumont made it three out of three 400s. There were good points in the Vault, Steve Denton taking the B event and Robin Murphy second in the A; the pair of them also filled all the throws, and it was here, in spite of taking six last places, that Steve emerged as a semi-serious thrower. Another major contributor was Martin Stitch, who among other events won the B Triple Jump. There was one definite positive from the trip, however; with a long coach journey and an overnight stop, the team came together in a way it never had before. As a Newsletter comment at the end of the year put it, "there were team members who didn't know R.W.V. Murphy before June 9th - but not after!"

So Windsor, at the end of July, was one of the most tense cliff-hangers in Club history - and the team rose to it in spectacular fashion, beating the home side by eighteen points and taking the Division title and promotion. There were some splendid performances; Charlie Beaumont completed his perfect series on a double with support from Kevin Walton, Julian Marsay ran the 1500 and beat everybody bar John Doherty, and the throwers hauling in the points again - Paul Armstrong, stitches and all, winning the B Discus for an 18-point haul with Ian Mowat. The Two lans took maximum in the shot for the last time; this was Ian Lindley's farewell, as after getting a job in the Midlands he went to join the Club John Lunn unkindly referred to in the Newsletter as "Wolves and Bilious (or whatever!)", and at least he left us with a "17-metre swansong." He had set a Club record of 17.03, which has yet to be bettered, at the Inter-Counties earlier in the year.

Another eighteen came from the youthful triple Jump pairing of Aamer Khan and Mike Makin, while Ron Small produced some excellent sprinting against internationals and in his tenth season of League campaigning "the ancient Baxter" was still capable of sub-14½ minutes on a regular basis. Roger Norton commented that the team had gone into "unknown territory" and acquitted itself well; and there were no arguments.

The Women's team, under new management in the form of Karen Morley's mother Mavis, had also made a sound start in a higher Division, though in the first meeting the pattern was a pretty familiar one. For the previous two seasons they had been narrowly second to City of Hull; in the first meeting of 1979, at Gateshead, they were a mere six points behind the same club again. The opposition was, however, a lot stronger; in the same Division were Liverpool Harriers and Sale, both second-strings of National League outfits, and in the second match Leeds City found themselves down to third behind Hull and Liverpool. At Gateshead there was a massive domination of middle-distance events; Sandra Arthurton had a share in a double maximum in the Senior 800 and 1500, playing

second fiddle to Carole Wood in the former and partnering Wendy Hirst in the latter, while Janine Midgley took the Under-15 1500 and Diane Burton (Under-17) and Karen Jenkinson (Under-15) had B-string wins to complement seconds by Wendy and Sally Ramsdale. Karen Morley won the Senior Shot, Diane Rimmington the Javelin, and both scored heavily in the Discus; while Elaine Rey, in her first league competition, set a Club Under-15 Javelin record; Nicola Dawson also broke the old mark in the B event, and had two further wins in Shot and Hurdles.

The meeting was, poignantly, reported on by Arthur Riggs; three weeks later he collapsed after a lunchtime run and died. In his Newsletter obituary John Lunn reckoned Arthur had "done as much for the Club in 2½ years ... as some loyal servants get through in a lifetime." At Hull Sandra (over 800), Diane Rimmington, Janine and Nicola repeated their victories, Sally went one better in winning the Under-15 800, and Wendy had a good second in the Under-17 event. The third match is something of a mystery; John was unable to give the Women full coverage in his end-of-season review since "in spite of heroic efforts by several officials ... we have been unable to lay hands on a result sheet" for it. However, the team must have finished second, because that was where they ended the season. This had been achieved with a lot of people filling in events they didn't normally do; the classic being Sandra Arthurton's appearance as a High Jumper ("Don't laugh - she ranks sixth this season!") There was one important new recruit, though she played no part in team affairs that season; Tracey Collier, one of Yorkshire's leading multi-event athletes, moved to the Club from Rowntrees late in the season.

The newly-launched Senior Man's B team had an impressive start to its career, in spite of being given an arduous Division; there were three regionalised Division Sixes in 1979, and we 'caught for' the Northern one, which involved one match at Harrogate and two at Carlisle. We managed two seconds and a third, finishing as runners-up to Harrogate A.C., who at the time had a lively mix of youngsters and active Veterans, in spite of some calamities, the worst of which being a ruptured Achilles tendon for Nigel Bailey when he volunteered to hurdle (we didn't ask for volunteers after that.) Detailed results have proved hard to come by, but there were some interesting performances; it was in this year that Colin Hayton first started racking up points for Senior teams, being the highest scorer of the season. Several familiar Harrier names appear taking points - Brian Hilton, Brwsi Kilner, John Lunn, Joe Clancy and even Roger Parker figure in teams. There were also some youngsters to note; Mike Cheseldine did his first "full-length" Steeplechase in inimitable style, young jumper Radley Lowry and Javelin-thrower Chris Yates (who did other things as well) scored heavily, and Keith Burley, Andy Rivett and Gary Briggs came out of the Youngsters' team to good effect.

However, the most memorable and intriguing incidents took place on the second of the Carlisle trips, on which the Club saved expense by sharing a coach with Harrogate A.C. John Lunn, who was team managing, had been scratching around as usual to fill the last few places in the week before, and on the Thursday night somebody brought over a new member - a big lad who was reckoned to be "quite useful" with the Javelin, but hadn't yet thrown the Senior spear or turned out for the Young Athletes' team. As he was willing to have a go, John got him

to turn out - only to find out, somewhere on the top of Stainmore over half-way there, that in spite of being the long side of six feet tall he was actually still only fourteen years old, and therefore ineligible to compete.

For the only time in his team managing career John kept his mouth shut and fielded an illegal athlete - and in this fashion Mick Hill made his Club debut! The other was even odder, and concerned Border Harriers' then Hon. Secretary Phil Nash, who was acting as starter at the meeting; at the start of the 1500 he raised the gun, fired it, dropped it, and set off as B-string runner. It's probably illegal!

The outstanding team of 1979, however, in spite of all the above successes, was the Young Athletes; it could be argued that it was probably the best we ever had, and certainly finished higher in the National Finals than any other since. It turned out to have an advantage; unlike the Men, most of its fixtures were later in the season, in June and July, and this was emphasised when the first one, in early May, had to be postponed when the Leeds Road track at Huddersfield was flooded. In fact the first meeting to take place didn't happen until June 24th, at Hull; and by that time some serious recruiting around the schools by the likes of Dave Young and Eddie Linsell had seen a lot of gaps filled. The clubs were in an odd system (which was to be used for one season by the Northern Men's League twenty years later) of nine teams per Division with four three-club matches; it was only used for a short time because it produced so many one-sided fixtures, including one at Cleckheaton where Leeds City outscored the two opposing team put together by over 100 points, scoring 282 out of a possible maximum 308 and gaining maximum points in 18 events.

Few reports of the individual matches survive, apart from a newsletter article about the first, and the impression from that and a later review is the large number of participants over the season; it's also noticeable that several athletes who were to have an impact over a period appeared in this season. Surprisingly, the outstanding thrower of the season was Jeff Boyes, who was regular A-string Javelin for much of the year; until Gerard Murphy "went on a long holiday to Ireland" Mick Hill didn't get a look-in! Among debutants in the Hull meeting were long-jumper Jeremy Pilling, whose Junior record was to stand for many years, Richard Francis, a highly promising hurdler who eventually, like several others over the years, turned to Rugby League (his sister Sharon was no mean sprinter, as will later be seen), 400-metre runner Adam Hoyle and triple-jumper Ian Brameld; there was also a personal best of 1.75 for Steve Linsell. There was a powerful middle-distance presence, with only one point dropped over 3000m and Phil Townsend getting a mention for a double B-string win over 1500 and 3000, declaring himself for the latter on the line when he saw one athlete hadn't showed up. There were big scoring efforts from the Matthews Brothers in the Vault, from Wayne Aylesbury beginning his distinguished steeplechasing career and continuing his occasional vaulting, and from a plethora of hurdlers including Mark Johnson, who was having an outstanding season, and Andy Heywood.

As the next two months went on it got better. Further strength was added in several directions, through sprinter brothers Lloyd and Eric Olpherts, jumpers Darryl Dingwall, Gregory Ayrton, Matthew Greenwood and Phil Telfer and two particularly notable late-season captures in Ian Welch, a "superlatively smooth" 400-metre hurdler from

Morley who was “snatched by Mark Johnson from the jaws of Longwood” and “an incredibly precocious 13-year-old sprinter (who) tanked round 200 metres like a blond bull” called David Wild. There were strong contributions from Andy Rodgers, Chris Ryalls and Richard Walker in the Under-15 middle distances, from the previous season’s ‘old lags’ such as Andy Taylor, Mike Shaw, Gary Briggs, Chris Reid and Michael O’Donnell., and a Club record in the Triple Jump for Aamer Khan (he broke the one he’d set in a Senior match the previous day!) An analysis at the end of the year showed just how dominant the lads had been; out of 308 ‘event-spaces’ in the four matches the Club had had three blank spaces (all due to injury), 200 winners, and only one last place. The Regional Final at Middlesbrough was another easy win, by 51 points from the hosts, though again no results were ever received from the meeting; Jeff Boyes took fifteen throwing points, and Messrs. Olpherts (both), Wild, Welch and Khan (again both) were prominent. There was almost a Club 1500m Steeplechase record as well; but the groundsman who failed to put out the first barrier until the runners had passed denied Wayne Aylesbury his chance. The Club’s success in getting to a second Final produced some publicity in the local press; a picture of the youngsters outside the Templenewsam pavilion - possibly its last appearance - shows several of the above stars of the team, and one face that was to be familiar for many years - a gangling sprinter called Glen Reddington.

The Final got off to a dream start! Ian Welch had already set a Club Under-17 400m Hurdles record of 57.5 on his first outing; at Crystal Palace, after a slightly hesitant start, he “left a scorch-mark round his lane over the last five flights to pulverise the opposition, the League record, the Club record and the U.K. Youths’ record” with 54.8. In the ensuing 25 years to the time of writing only three people have beaten it. “After that,” said the Newsletter Review, “the adrenalin flowed like water, and personal bests fell like confetti.” The team’s fifth placing in the Main Final has never been equalled; the amazing thing, and the comment on the strength of the League, was that Leeds City could only provide two other event winners - Ian himself, winning the B-string 100m Hurdles, and David Wild in the Under-15 200m - his 23.8 must have been the best by a 13-year-old that year. There were so many PBs that only those who either broke Club records -Chris Reid (‘Chase), Mark Hind (U15 800), Chris Ryalls (U15 3000 - which still stands in 2004) and Richard Francis (U15 80m Hurdles) - or finished second in their events - Andy Taylor (U17 800), Phil Townsend (U17 3000), Steve Hardcastle (‘Chase), Richard Walker (U15 3000) and Jeff Boyes and Mick Hill (U15 Javelin) - rated an individual mention in the Review. There was one name that didn’t appear in the result sheets; but it got its own moment of glory later. The Club had some time earlier been given a trophy by British Home Stores, who were doing a promotion with Commonwealth champion and PR firm director Alan Pascoe, and had decided that the President should present it to the person making the outstanding contribution to the Club during the year. There were no dissenters when in 1979 it was given to Eddie Linsell for his efforts managing the Young Athletes’ team to its finest hour.

Individual titles started coming in early; at the Yorkshire Championships Robin Murphy, Ian Lindley and Ian Mowat all won their specialities (the last-named this time setting a Northern Ireland record with 16.22 in second place) while Sandra Arthurton beat Julie Whiteley (in unfamiliar white and green colours) in the 800m, with

Carole Wood fourth. There was also a clean sweep of both Pole Vaults, in conditions so bad that only four competitors - Robin Murphy and Colin Hayton in the Senior and Gary Briggs and Wayne Aylesbury in the Under-20 - actually registered a clearance. Sandra had an off-day in the Northern Women's, only finishing 4th in the 1500; but there was a title at that distance for Janine Midgley in the Under-15 race, and medals for Angela Riggs (2nd U17 Hurdles), Carole Wood (3rd Senior 800), Wendy Hirst (ditto U17, with Diane Burton and Lorraine Holdsworth immediately behind her), and Tonia Phillipots (3rd Senior High Jump). On the male side there were Six Northern medals; gold for Mark Johnson in the Under-17 Hurdles, silver for Mike Makin in the Under-20 Triple Jump, Aamer Khan in the Under-17 Triple Jump and Keith Burley in the Under-17 Hammer, and bronze for Steve Collinson in the Under-17 High Jump and Wayne Aylesbury in the Under-17 'Chase.

Fourteen Club members took West Yorkshire Schools' titles, including brothers Francis and Michael O'Donnell, Ian Welch (before he actually joined Leeds City - it was probably here that Mark Johnson, who also won, persuaded him) and inevitably Sandra Arthurton, who went on to add the English Schools' title to her collection. Julian Marsay, somewhat surprisingly, ran the 5000 in the UK Championships, but had already taken a bronze medal in the A.A.A. Steeplechase (again setting a still-extant Club record, of 8.29.5); however, he had a poor run in the European Cup event, and his only subsequent appearance in Britain was a run in the Barnoldswick Fell Race - which he did not enjoy at all! Similarly, no more was seen of Greg Colin after the end of the season.

The most interesting Championship, however, was the A.A.A. Under-20s, which for the only time was allotted to Cleckheaton. There was a remarkable display of talent on view, and though some considerable names won titles or came close - Colin Reitz set a British record in the 2km. Steeplechase, Peter Elliott won the Under-17 800, and Steve Cram was outkicked by Graham Williamson in an outstanding 1500m - some others who found greatness were among the also-rans. Sixth in the 100 metres, for instance was a young man from London Irish A.C. ("My father comes from County Cork," he told sceptical seeding officer John Lunn) called Linford Christie. The outstanding Club competitor was John Doherty, who ran 14.09.6 to take a silver medal in the 5000m and earn himself a place in the European Championships (Sandra Arthurton also competed in them); also well placed were Mike Makin (5th Under-20 Triple Jump), Keith Burley (6th Under-17 Hammer) and Mark Johnson (6th Under-17 Hurdles), but Simon Cahill found the second-best 2km 'Chase ever run by an Under-20 Club member not enough to make the Final.

However, a few weeks later the Cahill family produced an achievement which has never been approached since; in the Emsley Carr Mile Sean became the only Club member (so far) to break the four-minute barrier. He clocked 3.57.0 (according to Athletics Weekly at least; the Newsletter gives 3.57.4). There was also a Junior international for Carole Wood, against Canada and Italy (and this time she got there!) There were also further Club records; Sandra Arthurton set one in her first really serious 3000 metre race, winning the Yorkshire Championship, and Janine Midgley, Karen Jenkinson, Sally Ramsdale and Judith Southwell shared a new Under-15 4x800m record which has only twice been bettered.

One feature, however, had changed hardly at all. The only public facility for athletics in Leeds after twelve years was still Templenewsam, still cinder in the expanding tartan age, still with only rudimentary proper field event facilities, even more rudimentary changing and social accommodation, with no regular staff and precious little regular maintenance, and absolutely no spectator accommodation at all. It was still after all this time impossible for Leeds City's athletes to put themselves before the public of their own city; and groups of members, such as Arthur Riggs' young sprinters, were in the habit of going to Cleckheaton to train. Dissatisfaction at this state of affairs was compounded by reports that both Sheffield and the Dorothy Hyman stadium at Cudworth were scheduled to get all-weather facilities in the near future. However, events were to start moving in this direction; and were to be given a push by an incident well beyond the Club's control. The Templenewsam site had suffered from years of neglect; and while the Club had managed to get agreement to store its own equipment there, and provide such items as foam landing beds for High Jump and Pole Vault, security was always an issue when there was no staff on site for most of the week and only some fairly inadequate chain-link fencing (with the gates usually left open) to keep intruders out.

For all its imperfections, the article by Mike Casey appeared to have stimulated some thought in several places, not least at Leeds Polytechnic and among the City Council. Once again Arthur Riggs played a major part; he began to explore links with the city's first real Sports Development officer, John Hammond, and his deputy Mike Lewis, both of whom were to play a considerable part in developments over the next couple of years. Through this contact the Club was invited to place a petition before the City Council in the early summer of 1979; discussions between Arthur, John Lunn and the two Council officials led to John addressing the Council about the state of facilities and exhorting the Council to take action. (John's own view of who was responsible for this is plain from his comments in Arthur's obituary; "I was the one that spoke, but Arthur prepared the ground.") His address was politely received, but how much influence it actually had is hard to tell.

The other major move came from a change of attitude at Leeds Polytechnic, which centred around another figure who was material in developments - former international sprinter Nick Whitehead, who was a lecturer at Carnegie College, by this time an integral part of the Poly, and had not long before been appointed team manager of the British Olympic Games team for 1980. He was among those looking to widen the role of the body in community sports and away from its formerly somewhat elitist image as a specialist college for teachers of physical education. Several sports, gymnastics in particular, had seen links developing between Carnegie and public clubs; it was also beginning to be the way in which such institutions could attract government and other funding, and one item that the Poly. wanted to see funded was a replacement from the by-now crumbling 'tarmac' track that it had landed itself with in the early 1970s. Whatever the motivation, approaches began to be made for Leeds City to come to some arrangement to use the Beckett Park site as its future headquarters. By the autumn things had gone far enough for exploratory meetings to be held; the first was scheduled for November 30th. It was to be a timely date.

Templenewsam's other disadvantage was its position. To most of the public of Leeds the picture that the name conjures up is the Jacobean house, the surrounding parkland and golf-course and the country walks and rhododendron gardens which the public has enjoyed since the estate was bought by the Council; it seems almost an idyllic and ideal place for a track. What many don't notice was its proximity to one of the city's major areas of social blight - the Halton Moor and Osmondthorpe estates.

Leeds City Council has never admitted to operating a policy of using certain council estates as 'social dustbins,' where it tended to house the bad payers, the families who failed to maintain houses properly and those who caused trouble for other residents; but certainly in the 1960s and 1970s this appeared to be happening to some of the older council estates such as Middleton, Gipton, Wyther Park and Halton Moor. There were growing signs of neglect, vandalism and social problems; the worst example the writer can remember involved a feud between two extended families on the Halton Moor estate which ended with something very like a pitched battle in the Irwin Arms. The pavilion at Templenewsam had suffered from several attacks of minor vandalism over the years; but on November 29th, 1979, it was set on fire, and just about gutted, and most of the Club's equipment went up with it. There was no doubt it was arson; the *Skyrack Express*, the local weekly paper that covered the East Leeds area, quoted a police statement that "an incendiary device" was used to start it. The fire precipitated a first-class crisis for the Club; while hitherto it had had unsatisfactory accommodation at Templenewsam, now it had none whatever. The Club's equipment was covered by insurance, so as a financial disaster it wasn't complete; but the Council showed a marked disinclination to replace the pavilion or provide any alternative.

The immediate reaction, however, seems to have come from the Polytechnic; because in the Newsletter edition which came out in the following January John Lunn was already writing about groups of athletes using some of the indoor facilities at Beckett Park, and the cross-country runners training from the Pavilion. Ray Barrow recalled in an interview with the writer that other groups began to move into Beckett Park fairly soon afterwards; it appears, looking back, that the emergency did much to break down what had been expected to be considerable barriers. The tone of John's editorial was upbeat; agreement was expected with the Poly. authorities, and members were being made aware of both the opportunities and the added responsibilities. There was likely, he said, to be a financial commitment towards the restoration of the pavilion which stood alongside the track, and which was in a semi-derelict condition after the last member of the ground-staff had moved out of the upstairs flat. There was also the security question of members being on what was not only a teaching but a residential site, with several hundred students being present for much of the year; the idea of Club identity passes with a photograph was broached. He stressed that any move was a co-operative venture, and that co-operation would have to be two-way. By April a meeting was held for coaches, athletes and members to explore the site, and progress towards an agreement was reasonably rapid, though not always smooth. The Club, however, had one important ally on its side; a man who was without doubt one of its least talented members athletically, but in every other sense was a man of remarkable abilities - John Munkman.

Even in a Club which has boasted of a rich cast of characters such as Martin Dell, Hugh Richardson and Robin Murphy John stands out. The writer recalls first meeting him on joining Leeds A.C; even then, in 1957, he looked ancient (he was actually in his forties) and out of place. He sprinted very slowly, running with an up-and-down arm action which seemed all wrong; he only occasionally competed but trained assiduously; and his obvious public-school accent seemed a bit out of place at plebeian Headingley. As a person he was also decidedly odd; a bachelor, he lived alone in West Park, seemed to have little life outside his work and athletics, and spent solitary holidays walking and climbing in the remotest areas of northern Scotland. However, outside athletics John was a power in his profession; he was one of the outstanding experts (some would say the outstanding expert) on corporate law of the late 20th Century. He was a barrister who seldom actually appeared in court (not at all, according to his obituary, for the last 28 years of his life), and whose opinion of many other lawyers could be scathing to say the least; one Club member has told of him describing a certain judge as not being fit to preside in a court case, and the judge in question was Lord Denning! Yet his opinions were sought by companies and local authorities, who paid considerable fees for his legal opinions. John gave his services freely to Leeds City, and was instrumental in scrutinising and advising on the agreement which gave the Club entry to Beckett Park. His influence was considerable even when he wasn't there himself; the writer remembers a meeting with a somewhat offhand and patronising member of the Council's staff, whose attitude changed dramatically when it was pointed out to him that John Munkman was advising the Club.

While all this was going on the competitive winter season was taking place as usual, with continuing mixed fortunes for Leeds City. The Women's scene saw Leeds City continuing to dominate the younger age-groups with its growing and talented squad, and the early stages of a more solid-looking Senior team; when the two got together in composite relays the result could be as striking as it was a Kirk Hallam in September, when a team consisting of Sally Ramsdale, Lorraine Holdsworth and Carole Wood was good enough to beat everybody - except a team consisting of Janine Midgley, Diane Burton and Sandra Arthurton. The Club dominated the first Northern League meeting, with Sandra winning the Senior race and every other team winning; most of the names were familiar, but in the Under-17s Mesdemoiselles Burton, Hirst and Rawnsley were joined by a significant new figure in Nicola Porter. Another name coming to prominence was Southwell; elder sister Judith combined with Janine Midgley and Sally Ramsdale in the Under-15 team, and year-younger Fiona led home Deborah Hirst, Kirsten Scobie and Katrina Horncastle in a solid Under-13 win. The second match wasn't quite so well dominated, though Sandra won again and Carole Wood finished third; but several of the younger runners had off-days, and teams were placed rather than winning. Sandra duly made it three of three in the last match; and the Under-13s were overall team champions for the season, with the other two age-group teams finishing runners-up. Diane Burton had a particularly good season, becoming the latest member, after representing the League, to figure in the Home International races in January.

The Yorkshire Championships saw even greater dominance; indeed Roger Norton reported that if Julie Whiteley, who finished fourth, had still been a Leeds City member the Club would have had a clean sweep of team titles.

Sandra Arthurton finished third in her first Senior championship to Sale's Kathy Binns (a resident of Todmorden), with Carole Wood 6th; counters in the three winning teams were respectively Diane Burton (1), Wendy Hirst (3) and Nicola Porter (8); Janine Midgley (2), Sally Ramsdale (7) and Judith Southwell (10); and Fiona Southwell (1), Debbie Hirst (2) and Kirsten Scobie (4), with Aileen Sharkey 7th for good measure. There was the usual hatful of County selections, Janine and Sally featuring in a winning Yorkshire Under-15 team.

The Northern Women's Championships came to Roundhay Park in 1980, and produced one of the runs of the season. With a couple of leading contenders missing Julie Whiteley - by now Mrs. Laughton - was tipped by many as favourite for the Senior title, particularly as Sandra Arthurton was competing in the W.A.A.A. Indoor 1500 metres on the Saturday and in Roger Norton's words "even if she travels back to run the next day is unlikely to be at her best." On Monday morning Roger must have been suffering serious verbal indigestion at eating his words! Not only did Sandra take the W.A.A.A. title, and gain selection for the European Indoors; she came back to Leeds, turned out, and fought out a race-long ding-dong with Julie which was only decided in her favour on the last climb of 'Hill 60' - as a picture in the Yorkshire Post clearly shows. In 1980 Sandra didn't play by the ordinary rules! There was an individual silver and a team bronze for Diane Burton in the Under-17 race, the supporting counters being Wendy Hirst (15), Tracy Rawnsley (30) and Nicky Porter (55); and a bronze for Janine Midgley in the Under-15s.

This wasn't the end of Sandra Arthurton's achievements that year. She had another remarkable double to come; first winning the 1500m in the Indoor meeting against West Germany (after the previous year's win against the 'other half'), and then deciding, as her times weren't quite up to the stiff qualifying standard for the European Indoor Championships, to give further indoor running a miss and tackle the National Women's Cross-Country at Rugeley instead. She ran "a sound tactical race" in her first Senior 'National,' aiming for international selection rather than a win, and achieved it by finishing 5th; and rounded off the season by contributing to a silver medal performance from the England team in 14th place, in spite of miscounting the laps and thinking there was one more to go as she approached the finish. The 'National' produced to more fine team performances; the Under-17s gained bronze medals, Diane Burton finishing a "slightly disappointing" 14th, Wendy Hirst a gritty 25th, and Nicola Porter (52) and Tracey Rawnsley (56) running far ahead of their Northern form. Meanwhile the Under-15s missed out on the same by one place, with Janine Midgley 14th in spite of a contretemps with a stream bank and a knee which finished up "literally a bit of a bloody mess," Sally Ramsdale 27th, Beverley Bates 105th and Judith Southwell 152nd; younger sister Fiona was a fine 14th in the Under-13s.

The men' side started with a performance which seemed to augur for a possible revival of Senior fortunes; the Club took bronze medals in the Northern 6-stage Relay Championships at Liverpool. Moreover it was a performance of remarkable consistency, with the six legs being run in times which ranged over only 48 seconds, and the team never out of the first five. Sean Cahill (21.05) led off in fourth place, brother Simon (21.29) dropped one which Mike Baxter (21.14) promptly regained, John Doherty (20.51) ran the Club's fastest leg to go second,

Brian Hilton (21.39) held it and Pete Bradley (21.20) lost out only to a fast-finishing Bolton. Unfortunately unavailability of some of the team meant that the Club did not contest the A.A.A. event two weeks later.

The following day three of the gluttons for punishment - Messrs Doherty, Hilton and Bradley - teamed up with Stuart Newby and John Lunn to finish fourth in the Cutlers' Relay at Sheffield - and wind up in a slightly acrimonious affair. The race, organised by Sheffield University, was well sponsored by a local firm, and the pre-race publicity had stated that the first five teams would win prizes; no the day, however, only the first three were presented with them, and team manager Brwsi Kilner wasn't taking that lying down. He wrote a polite, but clearly aggrieved, letter to Sheffield University the following day, "expressing the Club's disgust" at this "breach of conduct," and suggesting that the sponsors would not be too pleased to hear of it. When the University Club appeared to have decided to ignore the problem in the hope it would go away, Brwsi wrote a second letter a week later, now with the official backing of the Club committee, threatening to involve the North of England A.A. and send copies of correspondence to the sponsoring company. The result of this was an extremely contrite letter from the University, citing industrial relations problems on the campus as the reason for not replying, and promising that the prizes would follow swiftly - as they in fact did. The team of Mike Baxter, John Doherty and the Cahill brothers also won the Aaron Relay in November, but the Seniors made little impact on the West Yorkshire League that autumn; though in the younger age-groups Chris Ryalls and Andy Rodgers continued to spearhead good performances, also winning their Aaron race with the support of Richard Walker.

The Championship season of 1980 saw the mini-revival of fortunes continue to some extent, though it didn't start all that well - and not just for the Club. That year's Yorkshire A.A.A. Championship was marred by large-scale absenteeism by the County's leading athletes; in Leeds City's case only Simon Cahill actually ran (3rd in the Under-19 race), and Mike Baxter was among a number of leading athletes who didn't turn out and were lambasted by County secretary Geoff Clarke. He stated that he had written to many of those who were absent asking if they wished to be selected; of these only Mike had had the courtesy to answer, and his letter had arrived too late for him to be considered. Clarke criticised several leading athletes for running in continental races in preference to representing Yorkshire, and the English Cross-Country Union for picking them; and he claimed the team that had been selected would be too weak to stand a real chance of taking back the title. After all of which, needless to say, Yorkshire won!

However, when the Yorkshire Association Championships were held at Beverley the Club finished a team in all the age-groups bar the Under-20s (John Doherty was exercising his Northern Ireland qualification that day) on a course which combined splendid open running on most of the Westwood common across the road from the racecourse with one fiendishly muddy stretch in the woods which "provided spectators with "a whole new vocabulary" as the Seniors churned through it. There were two sets of team silver medals, the honour going to the under-15's who not only supplied the second team but the first two finishers. It was always likely to be close between Chris Ryalls and Andy Rodgers, and it was the former's well-developed ability to 'put the boot in' with a wicked surge at crucial moments which gave him the edge; Richard Walker supported well in 10th and Martin

Gilpin (36) got the better of Paul Walker (46) for the last place. The Under-17s didn't supply the same fireworks; it was more a case of four consistent runs from Wayne Aylesbury (8), Steve Hardcastle (9), Chris Reid (16) and Alistair Adams (17) which gained the medals. The Under-13 team of Alan Livingstone (23) and three youngsters from the same school (St Michael's College), Colin Glacken (33), John Tuite (34) and Hugh Hegarty (48) placed sixth, one behind where the Seniors finished in their race.

Mike Baxter finished 4th on pretty well half training (a recent change of job had cut into his time); John Ashton (23) ran as good a Senior race as he ever did, while Pete McGouran (40) was overtaken late on by John Lunn, at 38 enjoying what was to be his last really competitive season - he finished one ahead of his age! Garry Ineson (52nd "dying 'orribly," in his own words) and Roger Parker (53) made up the counters. There was also a considerable controversy over Club colours when the Senior winner, Malcolm Prince of City of Hull (who at the time was working in Leeds and trained with the Club's Seniors) was disqualified for wearing a Loughborough Colleges' vest - in spite of the fact that it was the same shade of purple as City of Hull's colours. The incident was made more controversial when somebody later pointed out that Peter Elliott, who won the Under-17s, had run in a black Adidas t-shirt without Rotherham's seven-pointed star badge on it - and had not been disqualified. As a result everybody moved up a place - to Brwsi Kilner's slight annoyance!

The Northern Championships at Durham was one to remember for all participants; the writer has never experienced quite such a quagmire in all his years of cross-country, as competitor, official or spectator. It was so glutinous as to be positively farcical; and Leeds City added to the comedy by going to the wrong changing-rooms and Martin Gilpin being so late for the Under-15 race as to start without fastening his spikes - and finish 198th in bare and sore feet! Surprisingly, track-man Andy Rodgers (4) got the better of hard-man Chris Ryalls (5); Richard Walker (54) suffered, according to the Newsletter, from "immersion of the kneecaps." There was another upset in the Under-20s as Simon Cahill finished second to Blackburn's Mick Morton, while John Doherty, whose season had been outstanding, only managed 4th - principally due to falling flat on his face in the mud after only about 300 yards; with Roger Bloor (59) and Malcolm Brine (96) the team almost got medals. A Senior team of Mike Baxter (23), Pete Bradley (95), Pete McGouran (97), Garry Ineson (113), Roger Parker (156 after a bad spiking) and Brwsi Kilner (223) also finished, but didn't enjoy it much.

John Lunn, who dropped out at Durham, was meanwhile enjoying his 'second childhood.' He had managed to secure a year's secondment to Leeds University (on full pay!), and was revelling in being the oldest competitor in student athletics. He had two particular memorable moments during the winter, and both involved Loughborough Colleges. One came when he was first counter in tenth for the University's second team in the British Universities 'B race' championship and should, he claims, have had a medal; Loughborough's winning team containing an athlete who he reckons was older than him and a lecturer! The other came in the other major student event, the Hyde Park Relay, where he found himself running for the B team (again) and taking off on his leg shoulder to shoulder with Sudanese international Omar Khalifa, a 1.46 800-metre man. That day he really learned the

meaning of the phrase, "blown away!" Meanwhile another "elderly student," Pete Bradley, earned himself a British Polytechnics' representative vest.

The 'National' at Leicester was initially notable for Leeds City starting four teams in three races - in the Under-17 race the Leeds Grammar School team consisted entirely of Club members. The Club team managed to defeat its 'alternative' team, finishing 30th as against 34th, in spite of Wayne Aylesbury dropping from the early 30s to 211th on the last lap for some cause which was "drastic and connected with his guts." He finished one ahead of Chris Reid, and behind Gary Hayton (100) and Steve Hardcastle (176); had he held his place the team would have been in the mid-teens. The Grammar School counters were Alistair Adams (128), Dave Warner (185), Cornelius Kelleher (229) and "Opalong Phil Townsend" (285). The Seniors saw a distinct improvement over their placing of the previous year, finishing 26th; it also saw one of Mike Baxter's lowest-ever placings in 76th, though his work had prevented him training as he usually did. Even so he was "first counter for the nth year" in a team which saw Pete McGouran run his best race yet for the Club in 156th, Pete Bradley finish 242nd moving through and John Lunn 366th going back, and reliable regulars Brian Hilton (412) and Brwsi Kilner (491) making up the team; Roger Parker (683) and Steve Haywood (874 of 1,710) also finished.

However, the older and the younger lads were very much Leeds City's supporting cast that day; the fireworks came in the Under-20 race. The clash of the year had been expected to be between Steve Binns of Bingley and Mick Morton of Blackburn, the one the season's form runner and the other coming storming back from injury; but Steve suffered a hip injury, and the clash didn't materialise. It was then expected to be between Mick and Rossendale's Dave Lewis - but the clash that actually occurred was between Mick and John Doherty, and it produced one of the finest contests of all Nationals in the last half-century. Nor was it as simple as that - because, in the newsletter's words, "from the first sight ... there were five away, and two sets of amber diagonals among them." Mick, John and Dave were joined by Colin Reitz of Essex Beagles and Simon Cahill, and for the first quarter of the race they were all close; but even then "Messrs Lewis, Reitz and Cahill showed every sign of being the supporting players." For the vast majority of the six miles it was Morton and Doherty, literally shoulder to shoulder, except for one burst from Dave Lewis which proved to be his undoing, while an equally tight battle for third was going on behind them. The issue was only decided in the finishing straight, where "Mick ... wrung out of himself the final surge which was to be decisive;" Simon equally narrowly lost out on the bronze medal; and the silver that John took home was the first individual medal that a Club member had won in the Men's National since amalgamation. Back in the middle of the field Roger Bloor (255) and Malcolm Brine (279) ensured a team finished, in 17th place - equal on points with Leeds University, but beaten on the last counter rule; Mike Cheseldine backed up in 321st place.

There was also considerable success for Club members in the English Schools' Championships. The West Yorkshire team which won the Intermediate boys was half a Leeds City outfit, Wayne Aylesbury finishing 15th, Chris Reid 18th and Andy Rodgers 26th; with the support of the Bradford Grammar School (and later Bingley) pairing of Andrew Leach (who was to have a spell of carrying all before him) and Richard Nerurkar (who as to

have a distinguished international career) their success is not surprising. Diane Burton and Sally Ramsdale also gained Schools internationals on the strength of their performances in the equivalent Girls' event, to add to a growing tally of 'vests.'

For the second year a team was got together for the 12-Stage Relays, and for only the second time it qualified for the national event at Sutton Coldfield by finishing ninth in the Northern race at Derby, on a course based on Markeaton Park part of which has literally vanished under the A38. In both races Leeds City had a moment of glory; at Derby this occurred when Sean Cahill, on the short first leg, finished literally a dip ahead of Gateshead's international steeplechaser Dennis Coates. This left John Lunn 'in it' with a vengeance, but the old gentleman not only managed to drop only seven places but stayed ahead of Gateshead - as his University team-mate Geoff Turnbull took a wrong turning! Two more 'old hands' followed, Malcolm Cox dropping a further two and Mike Baxter picking four back up; on the next two John Ashton dropped one which John Doherty promptly recovered. Both the next two runners, Garry Ineson and Brian Hilton, lost one apiece; Neill Marshall held on to 8th, but Pete McGouran lost a further place, and Joe Clancy and Pete Bradley stuck with it. Ninth was a considerable improvement over the previous year's effort, and it was secured with an altogether more consistent performance.

When it came to Sutton Coldfield three weeks later, it was decided to give youth its head and put John Doherty and Simon Cahill on the first two legs. Whether this was a wise policy is debatable, but it did lead to a moment which was not to be repeated for another 26 years - after John turned in a storming run - still the second-fastest Club long leg ever at 26.00 - in eighth place Simon ran 14.09 on Leg 2 - still joint fastest Club short leg - and for a few heady minutes Leeds City led the National Relay! One member, however, wasn't cheering - Pete McGouran had to follow that! His run wasn't bad - indeed it was equal to the slowest long leg on the medal-winning team of 2005 - but he dropped seventeen places as a lot of clubs put a strong man on Leg 3. From then on the team was in the back end of the 28-strong field, and it had a longer and weaker tail than at Derby. Neill Marshall dropped another four, Mike Baxter - only half a minute slower than John - pulled them all back, but then it was slowly down - John Ashton one place, John Lunn another, Steve Hayward three, Brian Hilton, Mike Cheseldine and Alan Judd one each. At least Joe Clancy on the last leg held on to 26th place, and he also had the distinction of appearing on the front cover of Athletics Weekly - waiting to start his leg as the winning Bristol team finished!

In among all the Harriers' success some of the younger members also picked up medals 'on the boards' in the A.A.A. Championships, all in middle-distance events. Sally Ramsdale, who took silver in the Under-15 1500m, and Diane Burton and Wendy Hirst, who fought out silver and bronze in the Under-17 1500m, were familiar names, but one of the less familiar figures had his day when Stuart Bailey, who had been running second-string to Andy Taylor in the previous summer, ran above any form he had shown outdoors to take the bronze in the Under-17 800m, "in spite of running the last sixty metres on rubber legs and pure guts." Andy himself might have been 'in the frame' but for taking "one of the notorious Cosford 'dives';" while Aamer Khan set a personal best Long Jump and followed it with an off-day in the Triple. There also appeared to be a potentially good youngsters'

distance-relay team developing, as a trio of Chris Ryalls, Richard Walker and Andy Rodgers won two relays in March in short order - at Gateshead and Warrington. However, events were to bring this team up short.

There seemed to be a more optimistic outlook for Leeds City in the spring of 1980. The Newsletter that came out in April, which notified members both of the meeting with councillors on the Beckett Park site on April 22nd and the Annual General Meeting a week later, stressed the amount of work that needed to be done to get a successful arrangement in place, but also presented the message that it was likely that positive steps were being taken at last to improve the dire state of facilities for athletics in the city. In retrospect it was a 'watershed' period; because once the Club did start using Beckett Park not only did Templenewsam stop being part of the Club's life, but within a short time the Harehills Liberal Club ceased to be the winter headquarters, the only connection retained with that era being the Boxing Day Handicap, which still at the time of writing takes place on Harehills Park. Templenewsam, however, was to suffer probably the saddest fate - simply abandoned and left behind by all concerned, a ghost of an athletic past. Those who went up the hill to see, or take part in, the highly successful English Cross-Country Championships held in the park in 2004 will probably hardly have given a second glance to the overgrown shale track, still showing signs on the inside lane that somebody runs round it; and future generations certainly won't realise that the Club they have now had its formative period in that now apparently unprepossessing place.