

The return of football – Kildwick Old Boys in the 1919-20 season

Introduction

Almost as soon as WW1 started the call went out for able-bodied young men to join the forces. Alongside this came a move to stop league football. The connection between the two was made clear by the mayor of Keighley, W.A. Brigg, in an interview he gave to the Keighley News, headed “The Mayor and Football” which was published on 5/9/1914, just a month after the outbreak of war:

He said it was the duty of every young man who was unmarried and had no dependents upon him to enlist. In fact, in the present serious crisis he would go further and say that everyone within the age limit should join the colours. “Certainly,” Mr. Brigg went on, “the idea of paying men with no family ties and physically fit to play football when they ought to be fighting at the front is – well, let us say, it would be difficult to explain to our allies. It is ridiculous. I know there are many people who cannot enlist, and you must have some recreation on Saturday afternoons to divert their minds. At the same time we must realise the pressing need for more troops.”

With this condemnation in the press, and the draining away of players as they joined the forces, the local Keighley and District Football Association had no option but to cease operation at the end of the 1914-15 season.

The re-launch of the Keighley and District Football Association

The armistice, on 11/11/1918, came too late for league games to be organised for the 1918-19 season, and it would have been difficult to form teams when so many men were still under arms and not discharged until early 1919.

In May 1919 articles in both the Craven Herald and Keighley News announced that the Kildwick Old Boys team was to reform. The club, originally launched in 1908, had suspended activities during the war as members went to join the forces. By the end of the war all except one of the 40 club members registered in 1913-14 had seen active service; six had been killed and many others wounded.

In the summer, at its annual general meeting, the Keighley Association decided to restart fixtures in the coming 1919-20 season. Three divisions were created: a First Division, made up of 10 teams; an “open” Second Division of 10 or 11 teams, depending upon the demand; and an “average age 21” Second Division, of between 10 and 12 teams.

Initially, Kildwick Old Boys were given a place in the First Division, alongside: Keighley Gaelic, Keighley United, Keighley Munition Workers, Keighley Caledonians, Silsden, Steeton, Sutton United, Cononley, and Sladen Waterworks. However, just a week before the season was due to start Morton made a late application to be moved up from the open Second Division and they took Kildwick’s place.

Kildwick therefore found themselves lined up against Harden, Cowling, Steeton Reserves, Sutton United Reserves, Cullingworth Reserves, Silsden Reserves, Keighley Caledonian Reserves, Keighley Parish Church, and Demobbed Soldiers and Sailors.

Kildwick Old Boys 1919-20 season – as reported in the Keighley News

So, on Saturday 20th September, after a gap of five years, local league football resumed in the Keighley area.

The matches were reported in the Keighley News, albeit on the Friday following the Saturday fixture. Sadly, however, no league tables were included.

Reports on 13 of the 18 league matches played by Kildwick Old Boys have been found, and transcripts of these – along with reports of some local cup matches – are reproduced on the following pages.

Kildwick Old Boys vs. Sutton United Reserves – 20/9/1919

The Kildwick team get their season off to the best possible start.

Kildwick Old Boys turned out a fairly strong team for their home game with Sutton United Reserves and won comfortably. The young United players showed up well in mid-field play, but were very weak near goal. The Old Boys' defence always appeared to have the upper hand. The brothers Hargreaves were always prominent in the Old Boys' forward line, and each scored. Barrett scored one in each half and Johnson a single, the Old Boys winning by five goals to nil.

Kildwick HOME WIN: 5-0

Keighley Parish Church vs. Kildwick Old Boys – 27/9/1919

A good away win for the Kildwick team.

KILDWICK IN GOOD FORM

Kildwick Old Boys visited the Keighley Parish Church ground and succeeded in capturing both points. The home team scored first, but their defence was beaten three times before the interval and in the second half each side scored a goal and the Old Boys won by four goals to two. The scorers were Thompson, Kitson, T. and A. Hargreaves for Kildwick, and Hoyle and Asquith for the Church.

Kildwick AWAY WIN: 2-4

Kildwick Old Boys vs. Bingley United (Keighley and District Cup, first round) – 11/10/1919

KILDWICK SUCCESSFUL

Kildwick Old Boys qualified for the second round by defeating Bingley United by two goals to nil. The United opened smartly and fully held their own for a time, but failed to pierce the strong Kildwick defence, Thompson being very sound at centre half. The Old Boys took the lead before the interval, C. Barrett being the scorer. In the second half the teams were evenly matched, but the home defence proved the stronger, and a goal by A. Hargreaves made the result certain.

Kildwick HOME WIN: 2-0

Kildwick Old Boys vs. Cullingworth Reserves – 25/10/1919

EVEN GAME AT KILDWICK

Cullingworth Reserves visited the Kildwick Old Boys' ground and an exciting game was witnessed, with the result in doubt up to the last few minutes. The visitors took a two goals lead first half, K. Hould and [unreadable] scoring. In the second half the Old Boys did most of the pressing, A. Hargreaves and Barrett netting for them, and in the last few minutes T. Hargreaves scored from a penalty, the Old Boys winning by three goals to two.

Kildwick HOME WIN: 3-2

Keighley United vs. Kildwick Old Boys (Keighley and District Cup, second round) – 1/11/1919

The Old Boys go down to a crushing cup defeat by one of the First Division's best teams.

KILDWICK'S FIRST DEFEAT

Keighley United had quite an easy journey in their tie with Kildwick Old Boys. The Old Boys, who have an unbeaten record in the second division, were without two or three regular players and were no match for the United. The first goal was from a penalty, Butterfield being the scorer and before the change of ends Foster and Ball had increased the United's lead. In the second half the home team's inside trio, Foster, Butterfield and Holmes showed neat passing, and only good play by Bower in goal and Thompson at centre half prevented the Old Boys being much more heavily defeated. Goals in this half were scored by Holmes, [unreadable], and Butterfield for the United and J. Kitson for the visitors, who were defeated by seven goals to one.

Kildwick AWAY LOSS: 7-1

Kildwick Old Boys vs. Keighley Caledonians Reserves – 29/11/1919

Kildwick Old Boys kept up their home record with a victory over the Caledonians Reserves. The visitors gave a clever display, despite the fact that several of their most promising players have been drafted into the first eleven. The visitors drew first blood, Dewhirst getting a shot past Bower, and an equaliser resulted from a splendid shot from a free-kick by A. Hargreaves. The home team took a lead through Lister in the second half, but Barwick equalised, and a goal by T. Hargreaves settled the issue, the Old Boys winning by three goals to two.

Kildwick HOME WIN: 3-2

Kildwick Old Boys vs. Discharged Soldiers – 20/12/1919

Kildwick Old Boys maintained their unbeaten home record, beating the Discharged Soldiers by three goals to one. The home team scored all their goals first half when playing with the wind. A. Hargreaves netting twice and Johnson once. In the second half Brown scored for the soldiers.

Kildwick HOME WIN: 3-1

Sutton United Reserves vs. Kildwick Old Boys – 27/12/1919

Kildwick complete the double against Sutton United Reserves and go into the New Year well placed for the championship.

Kildwick Old Boys gained ground in the race for Second Division honours and accomplished a good performance by defeating Sutton United Reserves by four goals to two. The Old Boys really are the best placed team in the section at present, but have yet some stiff away engagements to face.

Kildwick AWAY WIN: 2-4

Kildwick Old Boys vs. Keighley Parish Church – 3/1/1920

Another good home win.

Kildwick Old Boys advanced another step towards the championship of the Second Division but they have still some stiff way games to face. In their home game with Keighley Parish Church they paved the way to success when they faced the wind first half and kept the Church from scoring. In the second half the Old Boys quickly got to work and were soon two goals ahead. N. Thompson being the scorer in each case. A. Hargreaves increased the lead and then Bradley, who had been playing a fine defensive game for the Church, scored from a penalty. The concluding goal was scored by H. Kitson for the home team, who thus won by four goals to one.

Kildwick HOME WIN: 4-1

Temperance Club vs. Kildwick Old Boys (Keighley Charities Cup, first round) – 24/1/1920

Kildwick easily defeat a team from the "Average age 21" Second Division.

TEMPERANCE CLUB FAIL

Kildwick Old Boys qualified for the second round by defeating the Temperance Club on the latter's ground. The game was very interesting, but it was obvious that the Old Boys were the more combined team and superior in tactics. The first goal of the game was secured by Johnson for the Old Boys, and this was followed by a second for them by A. Hargreaves. Following these the home team had a turn, and Petyt, who played splendidly at outside right and made the opposing backs look small at times, scored a nice goal. Before the interval A. Hargreaves and Thompson scored for the visitors. In the second half A. Hargreaves and Lister put on further goals for the Old Boys, who were winners by six goals to one.

Kildwick AWAY WIN: 1-6

Kildwick Old Boys vs. Discharged Soldiers (Keighley Charities Cup, second round) – 7/2/1920

Kildwick are out-gunned, at home, by the Discharged Soldiers.

A SURPRISE FOR KILDWICK

The one surprise of the round was the defeat of Kildwick Old Boys on their own ground by the Discharged Soldiers. In midfield play the Old Boys were quite equal to the visitors and they had a good share of the scoring chance, but they were very weak in front of goal, and Kitson at centre forward missed two glorious chances in the second half. The scoring first half was even.

Thompson netting for the home team and Brown for the Soldiers. In the second half the home team failed to score and after Brown had given the Soldiers the lead, Lyness added another goal from a penalty, and the visitors won by three goals to one.

Kildwick HOME LOSS: 1-3

Kildwick Old Boys vs. Cowling – 14/2/1920

Kildwick win the home derby game.

KILDWICK OVERTHROW COWLING

In the open second division the visit of Cowling to Kildwick attracted a good "gate", and the home supporters had the satisfaction of seeing their team gain two valuable points. Up to the second half Cowling were fully equal to their opponents, and twice during the game they took a lead. After the home team had equalised in the second half, however, the visitors fell away considerably. Their defence was overrun by the home forwards, and in the course of about twelve minutes' play four goals were added by the Old Boys, who eventually won by five goals to three. The scorers were C. Barrett (2), A. Hargreaves, Johnson and Harwood for Kildwick, and Robinson, Bolton and Emmott for Cowling. Harwood and Robinson were the outstanding players.

Kildwick HOME WIN: 5-3

Keighley Caledonians Reserves vs. Kildwick Old Boys – 21/2/1920

On a Saturday when the fixture-list was badly upset by the weather, Kildwick gain a valuable away win against Caledonian Reserves.

Kildwick Old Boys gained two valuable points in their away match with the Caledonians Reserves, and they have now the best position of any of the clubs in the open Second Division. There was very little to choose between the two teams, and the "Calleys" were only beaten by two goals to one. Kitson scored both goals for the winners, and Pakes netted for the Caledonians.

Kildwick AWAY WIN: 1-2

Kildwick Old Boys vs. Silsden Reserves – 28/2/1920

Kildwick close in on the title with an easy home win.

KILDWICK GOING STRONGLY

Kildwick Old Boys are making a bold bid for Second Division honours, and the issue may be narrowed down [to ?] the Old Boys and Cullingworth Reserves. In their home game with Silsden Reserves the Old Boys were easily the better team, and scored two goals each half, and won by four goals to nil. Alec Hargreaves was in good shooting form, scoring three times, once from a penalty. The remaining goal was added by the veteran of the team, Kitson.

Kildwick HOME WIN: 4-0

Discharged Soldiers vs. Kildwick Old Boys – 13/3/1920

Perhaps taking revenge for their defeat in the Charities Cup, Kildwick use all their fire-power against the Discharged Soldiers.

KILDWICK'S EASY WIN

Kildwick Old Boys surmounted a stiff hurdle and advanced another step towards the championship of the open Second Division by a smart victory on the Discharged Soldiers' ground. The Old Boys led off in fine style and had a stroke of luck when one of the home backs put through his own goal. The home team played up pluckily, but were no match for their opponents and before the interval A. Hargreaves and Kitson increased the Old Boys lead to three. Play in the second half was more even, but the visitors were never in any danger of losing their lead. Varley scored for the home team and Johnson and Barrett for the Old Boys, who won by five goals to one.

Kildwick AWAY WIN: 1-5

Cowling vs. Cullingworth Reserves – 20/3/1920

As often happens in league competitions, the likelihood of Kildwick finishing at the top of the table was put almost beyond doubt by another team who administered a drubbing to their only close rivals.

COWLING'S GOOD PERFORMANCE

Cullingworth Reserves' chances of winning the Open Second Division were rendered very remote by a decisive defeat at Cowling, and unless Kildwick Old Boys fall away in their remaining games the championship seems certain to go to that club. Cowling set to face the wind and slope first half, but even then they were the more aggressive and were a couple of goals up at half-time. In the second half the home team were easily the better team, some find play being served by their outside forwards. Cowling added four more goals and won by six goals to nil. Atkinson was in deadly shooting form, and had four to his credit, while A. and H. Binns each scored a single.

Cowling HOME WIN: 6-1

Harden vs. Kildwick Old Boys – 3/4/1920

Steeton Reserves vs. Kildwick Old Boys – 5/4/1920

Kildwick approach the Easter weekend games knowing that good results could secure them the championship ...

In the open Second Division the position of Kildwick Old Boys was rendered unassailable as a result of the holiday games. On Saturday the Old Boys visited Harden and a hard-fought game resulted in the Old Boys winning by one goal to nil.

Kildwick AWAY WIN: 0-1

A rampaging Kildwick then put the matter beyond doubt a couple of days later.

On Monday the Old Boys played their return game with Steeton Reserves, and won by nine goals to nil.

Kildwick AWAY WIN: 0-9

How the win was celebrated

A few weeks after the championship was secured, the victory of the Kildwick team was celebrated at two events in the village.

KILDWICK OLD BOYS' LEAGUE SUCCESS

Presentation of Medals

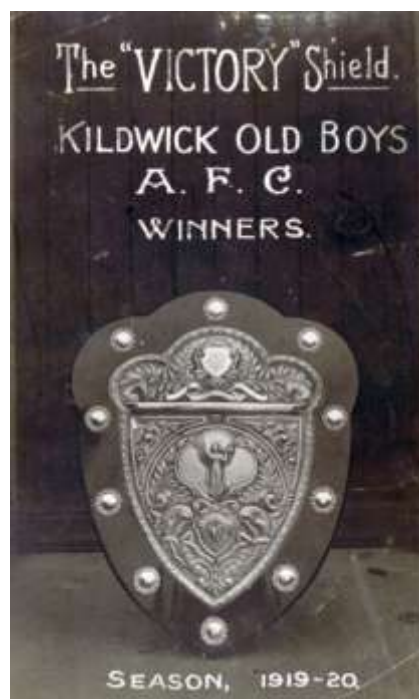
The members and players of Kildwick Old Boys' Football Club were entertained to a pie supper and social on Thursday evening in the Kildwick National School. About sixty members and friends sat down to supper and, in the course of it, Mr. John Hargreaves, on behalf of the players, presented Mr. T. Appleby with "a souvenir pie" in recognition of his work on behalf of the club. After supper the medals won by the club in the Second Division of the Keighley and District League were presented ... Mr. S. Shackleton (president of the League) congratulated the Kildwick Club on winning the Second Division championship, and expressed the hope that in the near future he would have the privilege of handing to them a very handsome shield which had been promised for the competition by Mr. T.W. Crabtree (The Towers) ... The Rev. C.E.V. Hodge thanked the League representatives and then handed the medals to the following players: Tom Hargreaves (captain), Alec Hargreaves (vice-captain), J. Kitson, C. Barritt, A. Barker, H. Kitson, N. Thompson, J. Brown, J. Harwood, C. Johnson, A. Barrett, S. Lister, R. Inskip, and C. Brent.

The same article continues:

The Club's fine record

The ninth annual meeting of Kildwick Old Boys' Football Club was held at the Kildwick Unionist Club on Monday evening, the Rev. C.E.V. Hodge in the chair. The secretary (Mr. Archie Dawson) reported that the season had been a most successful one. The first team had played in the second division of the Keighley and District League. Eighteen matches had been played, and of these fourteen had been won, two drawn, and two lost. The team had scored sixty goals, and their opponents thirty, and they had won the League by six points ... The treasurer (Mr. Eric Green) stated that the season started with a credit balance of £6 3s 3d, and closed with over £15 in hand ...

The chairman congratulated the first team on its excellent record. They had played a clean, straight game, he said, and had not adopted the professional attitude, having played throughout with their own members ... It was decided to enter the first team in the first division of the Keighley League, and the second team in the second division of the league next season ... A vote of thanks was rendered the retiring officers and the "Jester" (Mr. J. Hargreaves).



Playing members of the team identified by the project include Tom Hargreaves (captain) - centre, front row; Alec Hargreaves (vice-captain) - far left, front row; Albert Bower (goalkeeper) - third from right, back row; Richard Inskip - second from left, front row ? Others, whose position on the photograph we don't know: H. Kitson - probably Harry Kitson (b. 1897), rather than Herbert Kitson (who would have been in his 40s in 1920; b. 1877); J. Kitson; Charles Barritt; A. Barker; N. Thompson; J. Brown; J. Harwood; C. Johnson; A. Barrett; S. Lister; C. Brent. The non-playing "officers" of the club included treasurer Eric Green, who appears on the photograph - far right, back row.

