**L&DCC HISTORY**

**Although many of the district's clubs had met regularly as far back as 1850, or earlier, it was not until 1892 that a Liverpool newspaper began publishing a weekly table and calling it the Liverpool Competition in order to create more interest in the game.**

**The eleven senior clubs making up the original table were Birkenhead Park, Bootle, Formby, Huyton, Liverpool, New Brighton, Northern, Ormskirk, Oxton, Rock Ferry and Sefton.**

**Neston were offered first team fixtures in 1908 and, in 1919, Hightown and Southport and Birkdale joined whilst Wallasey took over the fixtures of the Rock Ferry club who did not resume after the First War. Boughton Hall (not then known as Chester) were invited to join in 1923.**

**The Competition continued until 1947 when it was decided to admit a sixteenth club and Preston were voted in. Two years later, fixtures were standardised by all clubs agreeing to meet each other and although there was no suggestion of a league, it was decided to regard the table as official.**

**Preston resigned at the end of the 1952 season to be replaced by St. Helens Recs in 1953.**

**The Competition remained in this format until 1996 when an expansion programme began with the election of seven clubs - Colwyn Bay, Marchwiel and Northop Hall from North Wales and Leigh, Newton le Willows, St. Helens and Wigan from the Manchester Association.**

**The Manchester Association suffered further when Bolton and Worsley were admitted in 1997. Widnes were elected as Associate Members to play third eleven cricket. At the end of the 1997 season, founder members Birkenhead Park, Chester Boughton Hall, Neston and Oxton resigned to join the Cheshire County League following the Lancashire Cricket Board's abortive attempt to 'cherry pick' clubs to form a Premier League.**

**Manchester Association champions, Lytham were elected in 1998, Oxton were elected as Associate Members, Sefton were renamed Sefton Park, Marchwiel resigned and Widnes were renamed Widnes Birchfield.**

**The top 12 in the 1st and 2nd XI tables at the end of the 1998 season were to form the new Premier Divisions the following season with the remainder in the First Divisions.**

**In 1999, the Competition was extended to 24 Full Member clubs with the admission of Fleetwood Hesketh, Maghull and Orrell Red Triangle from the Southport League. History was created this season with the formation of a two division system, 2 up and 2 down, at 1st and 2nd XI level. Widnes Birchfield became Birchfield Park.**

**Merseyside Competition champions, Caldy, were elected in 2000 to play in the First Division. Southport and District Amateur League side Highfield were similarly elected in 2001.**

**In March 2000, the 1st XI Premier Division was granted 'ECB Premier League' status and became known as 'ECB Premier League'.**

**1st XI matches start at 1:00 pm (12:00 noon in late August and September) with the last 20 overs beginning at 6:45 pm (5:45 pm in late August and September) thus allowing for the required ECB minimum of 110 overs at a bowling rate of 17 overs per hour.**

**Lancashire County Cricket Club use Liverpool, Lytham and Southport & Birkdale as out grounds for 1st class matches as does Glamorgan County Cricket Club with Colwyn Bay. Other grounds, are regularly used for Lancashire 2nd XI and Minor County (Cheshire and Wales MC) matches.**

**In season 2001, Liverpool Cricket Club staged three Benson and Hedges Knockout games at its Aigburth ground where Lancashire played host to Durham (Tuesday May 1st), Derbyshire (Friday May 4th) and Yorkshire (Sunday May 6th). It was the first time that Yorkshire had played there in a first class related match since 1957.**

**Bolton resigned at the end of the 2001 season. Southport & District Amateur League side Haydock were elected and took their place in the First Division in 2002.**

**With the feeder league system taking effect at the end of the 2004 season, Haydock, bottom team in the First Division, were relegated to the Merseyside and Southport Cricket Alliance with their champions, Ainsdale, moving in the opposite direction.**

**From the end of the 2005 season, a 'two down, two up' system began between the Liverpool Competition and the Merseyside and Southport Cricket Alliance, provided that the teams being promoted met the Liverpool Competition ground criteria and that the club wished to be promoted in the first place.**

**Caldy and Worsley were relegated to the Merseyside and Southport Cricket Alliance with Prestatyn and Southport Trinity moving in the opposite direction into the L&DCC First Division for 2006.**

**The ECB Premier League increased to 14 in 2007. Rainhill and Wavertree were promoted from the Merseyside Alliance into the L&DCC First Division. 2008 welcomed Rainford and Skelmersdale into Division 1 and also Burscough and Norley Hall into the 2nd XI structure as, for the first time, 1st & 2nd XI's moved independently between the Competition and the Alliance.**

**A new name to appear in the 2nd XI Competition in 2009 was Parkfield Liscard from the Wirral. They are included within the 9 Associate LDCC Members:- Alder, Birchfield, Caldy, Huyton, Norley Hall, Oxton, Parkfield Liscard, Southport Trinity and Wavertree.**

**From 2010, the Competition divided into three divisions of 12 at 1st and 2nd team levels. The membership totalled 36 Full and 4 Associate members and was the outcome of a decade of co-operation and negotiation with the Merseyside & Southport Cricket Alliance and previously the Merseyside Competition and Southport & District League. The membership is set out below in divisional format.  2011 full membership remained unchanged with 3 Associate members.**

**2012 welcomed the return of Birkenhead Park to Division 2 and also to that Division, Old Xaverians who moved up from Associate Members. There were now 3 Divisions of 12 with 2 Associate Clubs. However, just prior to the season the talks between the 2 St. Helens clubs failed to produce a satisfactory solution to a merger as such and St. Helens failed to continue which meant that the League Management had no time to recommend another club. Thus, the 2nd Division played with 11 clubs which was disappointing to all. St. Helens Recs decided to change their name to St. Helens Town - again too late for printed publications. At the commencement of the season, there was interest from clubs to fill the space and it is confidently expected to appoint a new club before resignation deadlines from their existing league. Merseyside Cricket Competition were offered the opportunity to join the L&DCC 'umbrella' as an Associate League but their clubs voted against the proposal which was recommended by the MCC management.**

**It has become almost a sporting truism that the seeds of victory are frequently sown in the seemingly barren ground of defeat. The players and supporters of Northern CC were exhilarated in the late summer of 2013 when they reached four knockout finals but deeply deflated when they won just one of them. As they sat glumly in their Old Trafford changing room after losing to Bamford Fieldhouse in a rain-affected Lancashire Cup final James Cole and his players pledged that the next summer would be different; and to the delight of the Moor Park supporters the cricketers made good their resolve.**

**The 2013 season was the most successful in Northern’s proud history. They secured the Liverpool Competition’s ECB Premier League title in some comfort, winning 17 of their 22 games and finishing 74 points ahead of runners-up Ormskirk; after losing five previous finals, they also won the Ray Digman Trophy, beating their rivals from Brook Lane by seven wickets in a one-sided match on September 22; and they captured the Lancashire Cup, albeit that the final, which was again contested against Bamford Fieldhouse, had to be settled by a bowl-out which Northern won 5-2.**

**“Team spirit is an illusion glimpsed in the aftermath of victory,” said the former Tottenham Hotspur striker Steve Archibald. James Cole and his players would probably wish to differ. The Moor Park squad was, for the most part, impressively united in 2014 and their success was testament to their collective will to win. Of the batsmen only the skipper scored more than 600 league runs but the bowling was dominated by the accuracy of medium pacer Stephen Cole, who took 62 wickets in the top division, and Tom Sephton, who bagged 67. Led by a captain who displayed tactical awareness and imagination a little beyond his years, Northern’s players confidently surfed the wave of success last summer and when they reached land, they had three trophies in their hands. Only the mean of spirit begrudged them their success.**

**Almost all of Cole’s players learned their cricket either at Northern or at other clubs in the Med Imaging Liverpool Competition. The league’s commitment to foster excellence among its young cricketers is impressively deep yet it is rarely paid adequate tribute. In January 2013 32 young cricketers benefitted from ten weeks coaching through the Competition’s Player Development Programme; in 2014 36 players from 27 clubs embarked on the programme and will receive the sort of guidance which will help them achieve their potential. Expenditure on the league’s junior and Colts cricket continues to rise and the representative match programme features games at Under 12, 14 and 17 levels, including a very successful three-match series against the Isle of Man Colts. The Comp’s own Colts will take part in the inter-league round robin this year and both the Under 12 and Under 14 teams will play in competitions organised by the Lancashire Cricket Board.**

**Northern’s success did not obscure the excellence on show at other Premier League clubs last summer and the Liverpool Competition continues to be the league of choice for very many Lancashire cricketers looking to maintain or extend their skills. Old Trafford wicketkeeper Alex Davies was the top division’s heaviest scorer, his 798 runs being garnered from only 13 innings for Lytham. Fleetwood Hesketh’s Neil Rimmer made up for a slow start to the season by plundering 781 runs and his return to form played a large part in the Sea Cop club avoiding relegation. In a summer when league matches were rarely disrupted by bad weather 11 players scored in excess of 600 runs and the leading all-rounder was Wallasey’s Neil Cross who buttressed the 51 wickets gained by accurate off-spin with 601 runs.**

**The battle at the bottom of the Premier League was more intriguing than the one-horse canter to the title. Going into the last few weeks of the season, five clubs were involved in this most unwelcome of struggles and Highfield were probably a little unfortunate to end the 22-match programme in eleventh place. The Billinge Road side are already hot favourites to make a swift return to the top division. Hightown’s fate is considerably sadder, though. Beginning the summer with a smart new pavilion following a disastrous fire, the Sandy Lane team struggled against the Competition’s powerhouses and finished bottom of the league. Over the winter it became clear to Hightown’s officials that they would find it hard to prosper even in the First Division and they have agreed to be placed in the league’s bottom tier in 2014, a move which means that Formby, who finished 11th in the First Division, avoid relegation.**

**Perhaps the most unfortunate side in 2013 were Ormskirk, although Ian Robinson’s battle-hardened players would probably shrug off any sympathy they were offered. Runners-up in the Premier League and beaten in the final of the league knockout, Brook Lane was still buzzing when the team reached the televised finals of the ECB National Club t20 competition at the Oval. However, persistent rain prevented Robinson’s men even treading the turf of the famous Test match ground and a victory over Chester-le-Street in the semi-final bowl-out offered only limited consolation. Ormskirk then lost to Wimbledon in a final which was settled by the same method and returned home to reflect on their damp anti-climax of a day. The ECB plan to introduce a reserve day for the final of this competition in 2014.**

**In the First Division Birkenhead Park won the title and completed a triumphant return to the league. Seamer Chris Stenhouse continued to impress the good judges by taking 68 wickets and experienced left-arm Robbie Houghton sent 71 batsmen back to the pavilion. It will be fascinating to see how the Wirral side fare against the very best on Merseyside and its surrounds. Thanks in some measure to Mohammad Aslam’s  (aka Qureshi) 106 wickets, Rainhill finished runners-up in the First Division and the former Merseyside Competition team will also face the challenge they have craved for a few seasons. As ever, it seems, the Competition’s second tier offered some of the most closely-contested cricket in the league and in 2013 it also provided perhaps the most remarkable individual achievement: in 14 innings, until he returned to India, Ainsdale’s Wasim Jaffer scored 1110 runs at an average of 100.9. However, what was most impressive about Jaffer, according to the accounts of his team-mates, was the manner in which he bought in to the team ethos Dave Newcombe was trying to build at Liverpool Road and his constant encouragement to those whose ability did not quite equal his own.**

**In the Second Division Sefton Park secured the title with 15 victories from 22 games although runners-up Wavertree pushed the former Premier League side hard and newcomers Spring View enjoyed a fine debut season and finished third in the table. While Barbadian Justin Greaves scored 742 runs for the champions, the heaviest scorer was Old Xaverians’ Ian Carroll who racked up 1030 runs, a tally which included three centuries and seven fifties. Sefton Park’s left-arm spinner Peter Kelly was the most successful bowler, taking 80 wickets at a cost of 12.45 apiece. Kelly’s success was all the more impressive because, after the frustrations of 2012, it was something of a batsmen’s summer in the Liverpool Competition. In the Second Division 17 batsmen passed 500 runs and washed-out Saturdays were rare. Cricket lovers on Merseyside have already ordered something of the same for the season just begun.**

**Season 2014**

**ECB Premier League: Birkenhead Park, Bootle, Fleetwood Hesketh, Leigh, Lytham, Maghull, New Brighton, Northern, Ormskirk, Rainhill, Southport and Birkdale, Wallasey.**

**First Division: Ainsdale, Colwyn Bay, Highfield, Formby, Liverpool, Newton le Willows, Northop Hall, Orrell Red Triangle, Rainford, Sefton Park, Wavertree, Wigan.**

**Second Division: Alder, Birkenhead St Mary's, Burscough, Caldy, Hightown, Old Xaverians, Parkfield Liscard, Prestatyn, St Helens Town, Skelmersdale, Spring View, Sutton.**

**Armstrong was one of five batsmen to score in excess of 700 Premier League runs in 2014 but any of the 15 cricketers who made more than 500 could be pretty pleased with themselves in a summer when the rain seemed to wait until Saturdays before bucketing down. Indeed, 15 of the Competition’s 36 clubs had three or more of their games abandoned or curtailed by the weather. There was still plenty to enjoy in every division, though. In the Premier League New Brighton’s Martyn Evans milked attacks for the 756 runs which helped his team secure the runners-up spot, although the Premier League Player of the Year accolade was awarded to Lytham’s Will Hale, who made four centuries in his 983 runs and opened the batting for Lancashire’s second team. New Brighton’s players had to be satisfied with lifting the Ray Digman Trophy after a two-wicket victory over Leigh in the final. Relegation was suffered by Maghull, who won just one league game all season, and by Fleetwood Hesketh, who were victorious in half a dozen matches yet failed to garner anything like enough runs in their other 16 games. Rainhill’s survival was largely the work of Mohammed Qureshi, who dismissed five or more batsmen in 11 of his 20 matches and finished the campaign with 94 wickets. Once again Wallasey’s Neil Cross (36 wickets and 631 runs) could lay claim to being the top division’s leading all-rounder.**

**The struggle to win promotion from the First Division was intriguing right up to the final Saturday of the season when five clubs had a chance of finishing in the top two and four of them were pitted  against a rival for the palm. Formby’s victory over Wigan clinched the title for Ian Cockbain’s side and Mike Farrell’s century at Colwyn Bay helped Highfield gain the bonus points they needed to confirm their return to the top division after just one season. The champions’ triumph was aided by Dale McKay’s 1042 runs and once again an Australian left Cricket Path with his new friends and former team-mates wondering in what class of match they might see him again. For the 2015 season, Cockbain has persuaded that outstanding professional cricketer Gary Keedy to join him at Formby, where he will be joined by Lancashire, England and Brisbane Heat’s Stephen Parry. A few miles away at Northern another pair of left-arm slow bowlers will be examining the skills of Premier League batsmen after Rainford’s John Dotters (the First Division Player of the Year with 67 wickets) opted to join forces with fellow spinner Tom Sephton at Moor Park.**

**Followers of Second Division cricket witnessed two pleasing renaissances in 2014. Both Prestatyn and St Helens Town have experienced fluctuating fortunes over the past few seasons but the pair can now regard the future with a measure of optimism after securing promotion to the First Division with teams that featured a good clutch of local talent. Danny Davies scored 623 runs for the Beach Close side who won the title by 48 points after a summer in which they suffered only two defeats. However, the combination of Sampath Perera (68 wickets at 7.01) and Second Division Player of the Season Kieran New (69 at 11.44) were even more instrumental in a season the Welsh club’s members will recall with pride.**

**St Helens Town finished second but their achievement was quite as meritorious as that of the champions. Only a few years ago it was very likely that cricket was in the propinquity of termination at Ruskin Drive. Now officials and supporters can look forward to the construction of a brand new facility in which the summer game will play a key role. Those excellent tidings were celebrated in proper fashion by Craig Woods and his players in 2014: the skipper scored 628 runs and St Helens pipped Skelmersdale, for whom Adeel Baig scored 722 runs and took 52 wickets, for the second promotion spot. The old timers who remember the now demolished refreshment kiosk and grand if rickety scoreboard at Ruskin Drive may have raised a glass to St Helens last September.**

**Season 2015**

**ECB Premier League: Birkenhead Park, Bootle, Formby, Highfield, Leigh, Lytham, New Brighton, Northern, Ormskirk, Rainhill, Southport and Birkdale, Wallasey.**

**First Division: Ainsdale, Colwyn Bay, Fleetwood Hesketh, Liverpool, Maghull, Newton le Willows, Northop Hall, Prestatyn, Rainford, St Helens Town, Sefton Park, Wigan.**

**Second Division: Alder, Birkenhead St Mary's, Burscough, Caldy, Hightown St. Mary's, Old Xaverians, Parkfield Liscard, Orrell Red Triangle, Skelmersdale, Spring View, Sutton, Wavertree.**

**Yet for all the publicity rightly attached to hard-earned cup wins, it is quite rightly by their performances in league cricket that most teams’ seasons are judged. And few would dispute the view that New Brighton were the Liverpool Competition’s best side in 2015. Skilfully led by Martyn Evans, the Rake Lane team bagged its first title since 1998 with a string of excellent displays which left them 59 points clear of runners-up Ormskirk. Many pointed to Ashraf Nawab’s 76 wickets as the most important contribution to New Brighton’s success; the slow left-armer was second only to Rainhill’s Mohammed Qureshi (97 wickets) in the list of Premier League wicket-takers. Others identified the Premier League’s player of the year, David While (630 runs and 45 wickets), as the cricketer who made the difference. But as Northern, Bootle, Colwyn Bay and a host of other teams found in 2015, success often follows when 11 cricketers commit themselves to pulling their tripes out for each other. Evans led a team in which pretty much everyone cou**l**d bat and which boasted no shortage of bowling options. The skipper insisted on a high standard of fielding. The result of all that effort can be seen reflected in the John Tristram Trophy which currently adorns the Wirral club’s trophy cabinet. In the Second Division Burscough began the season in irresistible form and ended it with the title comfortably secured by 66 points from Orrell Red Triangle. Jon Stone’s 72 wickets were enough to earn him the divisional player of the season award but Rob Glaysher was another skipper blessed in 2015 with no shortage of talent at his disposal. At the bottom of the Second Division Birkenhead St Mary’s managed only one league win and will be replaced by Southport Trinity. However, this most welcoming club on the Wirral is wished every success as it adjusts to its new circumstances.**

**Season 2016**

**ECB Premier League: Birkenhead Park, Bootle, Colwyn Bay, Formby, Leigh, Lytham, New Brighton, Northern, Ormskirk, Rainford, Rainhill, Wallasey.**

**First Division: Ainsdale, Burscough, Fleetwood Hesketh, Highfield, Maghull, Newton le Willows, Northop Hall, Orrell Red Triangle, Prestatyn, Sefton Park, Southport and Birkdale, Wigan.**

**Second Division: Alder, Caldy, Hightown St. Mary's, Liverpool, Old Xaverians, Parkfield Liscard, St Helens Town, Skelmersdale, Southport Trinity, Spring View, Sutton, Wavertree.**

**On the field, the** **men in white coats had few better sights in 2016 than watching Matt McKiernan play cricket. The Leigh all-rounder took 78 wickets with his leg-spin bowling and these successes, added to his 570 runs, ensured that he would be the ECB Premier League’s player of the season. Rather more significantly, of course, McKiernan played a leading role in ensuring that the Beech Walk cricketers could celebrate their first Liverpool Competition title in September.  That splendid achievement was also made possible by Ross Zelem’s 898 runs and by Luis Reece’s return of 655 runs and 38 wickets. Leigh were, indeed, fortunate that Lancashire did not require Reece’s services on many Saturdays last year and this fine all-rounder is wished every success as he seeks to continue his professional career at Derbyshire. However, the achievement of Foster’s team cannot be explained by the availability of one player, however talented; rather it was testament to the excellence of the best team in the Competition. Leigh didn’t have things all their own way, though. Formby were one of four teams who were also in with a chance of winning the Competition’s biggest prize but Ian Cockbain’s team had to settle for the runners- up spot, their disappointment being assuaged somewhat by their defeat of Colwyn Bay in the final of the Ray Digman Trophy. In the bottom half of the table slow left-armer Mohammed Qureshi ended a most distinguished career in the Liverpool Competition by taking 79 wickets and keeping Rainhill clear of the relegation places eventually occupied by Rainford and Birkenhead Park. Despite at one stage being in the hunt for six trophies, Ormskirk finished the season empty-handed but Josh Bohannon’s 807 runs constituted a formidable announcement of his talent, something which the coaches at Emirates Old Trafford also noticed. As is so often the case, the First Division offered spectators some of the tensest cricket in the Competition. Andy Barlow’s Ainsdale team clinched promotion with a week to spare and will play in the top division of the league for the first time in their history. However, the most gripping climax to the season was on view at Trafalgar Road where Southport and Birkdale’s one-wicket victory over Newton-le-Willows edged out Sefton Park for the second promotion place. Having beaten Fleetwood Hesketh earlier in the season, Richie Forsyth and his players were watching as S&B’s last pair, Chris Firth and Andy Warhurst, dashed their dreams; it was a fine way to end the summer. In the Second Division Skelmersdale, another young side overflowing with enthusiasm for the game, were prohibitive favourites for promotion from June onwards. Skipper Danny Edwards took 66 wickets at a laughable 6.72 runs apiece but has now returned to Lytham where he will also be first-team captain. Skem won the division by 114 points but the most heart-warming tale of the season came from Sandy Lane where the former Zimbabwe skipper Tatenda Taibu inspired Hightown St Mary’s to a late run which saw them finish second in the table barely 18 months after the future of the Hightown club seemed in doubt. A merger with St Mary’s Old Boys CC then proved just the tonic players in both clubs needed and they, like hundreds of other cricketers on Merseyside and in its environs will be greeting the ever-lightening evenings with the quiet smiles cricketers reserve for early spring.**

**Season 2017**

**ECB Premier League: Ainsdale, Bootle, Colwyn Bay, Formby, Leigh, Lytham, New Brighton, Northern, Ormskirk, Rainhill, Southport and Birkdale, Wallasey.**

**First Division: Birkenhead Park, Burscough, Fleetwood Hesketh, Highfield, Hightown St Mary's, Newton le Willows, Orrell Red Triangle, Prestatyn, Sefton Park, Skelmersdale, Southport and Birkdale, Wigan.**

**Second Division: Alder, Caldy, Liverpool, Maghull, Northop Hall, Old Xaverians, Parkfield Liscard, Prescot & Odyssey, St Helens Town, Southport Trinity, Spring View, Wavertree.**

**Ormskirk's amazing year!**

**No review of the 2017 season can be made without many references to the amazing achievements of the Competition's most recent successful club, Ormskirk who continued to fly the flag for the Liverpool Gin sponsored Liverpool and District Cricket Competition as they swept all before them both locally as well as nationally before finally coming undone at the final hurdle of the National Knockout competition.**

**Amongst the talking points to the run up to the season was whether the 2016 champions Leigh could become the first side since Bootle in 2007 to win back to back Premier League championships. Another major topic of concern was the implications to all clubs of the crack down by the Home Office on the Managed Migration Scheme for overseas cricketers.**

**The Managed Migration Scheme severely restricted the use of overseas born cricketers who were no longer considered as amateurs due to their playing records which classed many of them as on the pathway to Professional cricket levels. Many hours of discussion ensued between clubs and the Management Committee, the ECB and the Home Office with several proposed signings aborted as they would not meet the criteria and in at least one instance, a player not being able to play after arriving in this country.**

**On the field, the Competition continued to attract a number of highly promising players from the surrounding areas who wanted to test their skills in one of the highly successful Premier Leagues in the country.**

**The Liverpool Gin Premier League was dominated by Ormskirk. They moved ahead of the pack as early as the 6th round and never relinquished top spot losing just once in the first 15 games and having a 71-point advantage at one stage. Such was their early and mid-season dominance they could afford to win just one game of the final seven and still have the luxury of not having to play their final fixture to allow them travelling and preparation time ahead of their National Final.**

**The chase to be runner up was eventually won by Bootle after a topsy turvy competition within a competition as there were only 5 points separating second and sixth place after 14 rounds. The coveted runners up place changed hands nine times once Ormskirk had taken control. Rainhill just missing out as they more than compensated for the loss of their overseas bowling lynchpin with the excellent performances from their young batting line up.**

**Reigning champions Leigh found it difficult to replicate the previous season's success and finished mid table. Wallasey sprang a surprise and gained valuable publicity with the signing of ex England character and spinner Monty Panesar who joined the Oval club ahead of registration deadline day. Formby, rather surprisingly, struggled to keep ahead of the relegation dog-fight with their array of big name players. In the end the two promoted sides found the gap between Division One and the Premier just too much as both Southport and Birkdale and Ainsdale (who were bowled out for just 41 in their game against champions- elect Ormskirk) filled the bottom two places and return to the middle tier.**

**Congratulations go to Sion Morris, the Colwyn Bay stalwart who passed 12,000 competition runs during the season. Ainsdale's Fazal passed 1,000 runs in a struggling side.**

**In division one, having avoided relegation to the bottom division by just a single point in 2016, Highfield started off very impressively winning nine and drawing two at the halfway stage, yet they struggled to shake off Rainford who had lost just one their games as the same stage and trailed by just 14 points. Both were rather comfortably ahead of third place Orrell Red Triangle who were a further 31 points behind. The race for promotion appeared to be between just those sides with Newton le Willows struggling to hang on to their coat tails in fourth.**

**Late season rallies by Sefton Park briefly threatened to spice up the race but relegated Rainford bounced back as Champions as Highfield were thwarted by the weather in the penultimate round. Both sides could claim the honour on the last day but they both ended the season with easy 10 wickets wins as Skelmersdale succumbed to a season low of 35 all out as they dropped back into Division Two, ending the season with a whimper winning just one of the final 13 games. Fellow strugglers Hightown St Marys suffered the indignity of failing to register a single victory as they never recovered from being unable to play ex - Zimbabwean test player Taibu who fell-foul of the new Managed Migration rules.**

**There was a final day surprise in Division Two as Wavertree's last day victory at local rivals Alder propelled them into the second promotion place as long-time favourites Spring View were again thwarted by the weather (three of their last five matches were lost to the unfavourable climate) and the Platt Bridge side were left 5 points adrift. Champions were Matty Jackson's versatile Liverpool who remained at the head of the table from Round 5. Even with four rounds to play there were still four teams hunting down the second promotion place with two more looking for an unlikely winning streak to edge into contention.**

**Promoted Prescot & Odyssey found the jump in standard a little too difficult as they suffered from player availability and managed just the one victory. They will be replaced by Sutton (St Helens) who bounced back in style by retaining most of their squad of players and winning the Southport AD ACL by a canter.**

**Northop Hall managed the rare feat of having two of their matches tied out of three in the division that ended all square. Some notable achievements in this division with Southport Trinity's Australian overseas player Hayden Macrea having a remarkable debut as he scored an unbeaten 203 as his side amassed 318 for 1 declared. He then followed it up with an unbeaten 128 in the next game. He finished on1291 runs including six centuries. Khan and Carroll also passed the thousand-run mark.**

**Anthony Molloy of Maghull claimed all ten wickets taking 10 for 40 against Maghull. A feat also matched by Joe Harrison of Birchfield Park in the third eleven structure (his figures of 10 for 3 were surprising not the best in the country on that day according to the ECB Honours board).**

**On the Sunday after the season ended Ormskirk became the second LDCC side after Northern in 2015 to reach the final of Royal London Club Championship as they took to the field at the County ground at Chelmsford against Wanstead and Snaresbrook of the Essex league. En route to the final they had beaten Leyland (by 67 runs), Edgworth (who conceded), Blackpool (by 11 runs) and Furness (by 5 wickets) in the group final. They then travelled to York and recorded a 66-run win in the last 16 Round, before hosting and beating Hanging Heaton by two wickets in the QF before demolishing Wolverhampton who they bowled out for just 82 on their own ground in the semis to win by 8 wickets.**

**Fielding after winning the toss captain Matty Glayzer must have felt reasonably happy as they restricted the “home” side to 159 but sadly Ormskirk lost wickets regularly although they were still in with a chance until a late flurry of wickets meant they ended 12 runs shy.**

**Ormskirk also reached the Lancashire Cup Final but were thwarted by the weather and, after the original attempt to play the final at the Emirates was abandoned due to rain, the scheduled replay was also abandoned. Both teams will share the trophy. Previously they had overcome Ramsbottom away to win by 4 wickets in the semi-final. Colwyn Bay's attempt to record a second Welsh Cup victory in three years failed as they lost by six wickets against “home” side Cardiff in the final.**

**Domestically, Ormskirk's continued run in the above competitions meant that the Management Committee were forced to delay the remaining Semi Final of the Digman Cup and Ormskirk and Northern await to do battle to face Bootle in the Final early next season.  Spring View won the new Tyler Cup with a 3 – 0 bowl out against Orrell Red Triangle after the Final and the attempted replay were both victims of the weather. A small consolation for Jonny Broad's side after their disappointment of a weather affected promotion campaign.**

**At Second XI level, the team to dominate was again Ormskirk.  They took control of the league at the beginning of June and remained ahead of Sefton Park and Southport & Birkdale to claim the title from last year’s winners New Brighton. Other divisional winners were Orrell Red Triangle who finished ahead of Ainsdale and Old Xaverians who led Colwyn Bay in Division Two.**

**Northern gave the rest of the league some hope with a four-wicket victory over Ormskirk in the Chester Cup Final with Newton Le Willows beating Old Xaverians in the new Tittershill Cup. Formby won the 20 over Chrysalis Cup against Rainford.**

**Ormskirk thirds completed the league grand slam finishing ahead Birchfield Park in the Saturday Premier and also winning the cup double of the Leddy Cup against Sefton Park and by losing less wickets in their victory over New Brighton in the Embee. Goodlass winning the Saturday First Division with Birkenhead Park gaining promotion. Leigh the Sunday Premier title. St Helens Town and Prestatyn the regional winners.**

**Representatively it was another good year for the Competition with Andy Grice's senior side beating the Greater Manchester Cricket League representative side by three wickets at Prestwich CC as they successfully chased down a target of 199. They beat Ribblesdale League to progress.**

**The Under 21's were also successful as they beat the Northern League at Liverpool CC's ground. Restricting the visitors to 152 for 5, the Comp's youngsters overcame two early wickets to win comfortably by eight wickets.**

**LG L&DCC Review: Season 2018**

**ECB Premier League: Bootle, Colwyn Bay, Formby, Highfield, Leigh, Lytham, New Brighton, Northern, Ormskirk, Rainford, Rainhill,  Wallasey.**

**First Division: Ainsdale, Birkenhead Park, Burscough, Fleetwood Hesketh, Liverpool, Newton le Willows, Orrell Red Triangle, Prestatyn, Sefton Park, Southport and Birkdale, Wavertree, Wigan.**

**Second Division: Alder, Caldy, Hightown St Mary's, Maghull, Northop Hall, Old Xaverians, Parkfield Liscard, St Helens Town, Southport Trinity, Spring View, Sutton.**

**The 2018 Liverpool Gin Liverpool & District Cricket Competition produced another wonderful season with extremes of weather and plenty of talking points both on and off the field.**

**A very wet Spring seriously affected groundsmen's ability to prepare wickets and cut outfields to the extent that it was decided to reschedule the opening weekend's fixtures in their entirety which was delayed to the scheduled Cup weekend. There then followed a gloriously prolonged and hot summer spell which brought out the best from the Competition's cricketers before wet weather returned mainly affecting Cup competitions and causing fixture congestion for our most successful sides.**

**Premier Division honours went to Northern who saw off the challenge of last year's Champions Ormskirk and Formby to secure their first championship since 2013. The League's Player of the Year, Northern's consistent performer, Tom Sephton, claimed 93 wickets including nine five - wicket hauls and a best return of 9 for 60 against Leigh as Northern claimed sixteen victories.**

**Northern lost just one game of the first eight rounds and apart from a short three-week period, remained at the top of the league throughout. Considering the wonderful sunny weather, it was slightly ironic that the Championship was secured in the penultimate week when the rain decimated the entire programme. Ormskirk again were there or there about but a single victory in the last five rounds proved the difference.**

**At the bottom of the Division, New Brighton started off poorly and did not record a victory until the  11th round but improved enough in the second half of the campaign to hold off the two previously promoted sides Highfield and Rainford, who had struggled most of the season and will return to Division One. The top run scorer was Tyler McGladdery who scored over 900 runs**

**In Division One, Champions were Southport and Birkdale, who remained unbeaten until Round 15 to ensure a quick return to the top Tier. Bradley Yates scoring 800 runs to finish as the Division's top run scorer.**

**Joining them will be Orrell Red Triangle, who just four seasons after playing in Division Two, will be making their debut in the top level. At the half way stage Southport held a very healthy 78-point advantage over the third-place team. Ainsdale, Sefton Park and Wigan all hoped for a slip up by Orrell which was not forthcoming.**

**There was a swift return back to Division Two for Liverpool who despite winning their first game, went a further twelve games before recording another victory. Joining them will be Burscough after a three-season run in the division.**

**Division Two went to the final weekend before two of the three sides who had been contesting the leadership all season, recorded last game victories to clinch, in Old Xaverians case, their first promotion into Division One. They were joined by Northop Hall, regaining their status after being relegated in 2016.**

**Caldy, needing other results to go their way, lost at Sutton (St Helens) who finished an excellent season in fourth place, showing the benefit of retaining the bulk of their playing squad that had bounced back from relegation, in winning promotion from the Southport and Amateur District League last season, aided by a couple of important acquisitions.**

**Skelmersdale sadly found that a lack of playing members, forced them to realise early on the season that they would be unable to field two sides and, with the assistance of the Management Committee, decided to withdraw their first eleven from the division, and concentrate on fulfilling their second eleven commitments. We wish them well as they look to consolidate in the SADL in 2019.**

**Their place in the Competition will be taken by Norley Hall, the Wigan based side who are making their full debut in the L&DCC, after making good use of the dual registration system in use between the two leagues and seeing off the challenge of second place New Victoria.**

**The Division also saw the unusual occurrence of a game being called off on the advice of the Fire Service, when a fire in grassland overlooking Caldy's ground became dangerous.In addition, Maghull achieved the rare feat of ending up in in two tied results.**

**The Division's top run scorer was Maghull's Jonathan Ring who topped 900 runs, including three centuries while Northop Hall's Daniel Clubbe claimed 61 wickets aided by team mate James Hurlin taking 50 wickets.**

**In the National Cup Competitions, Northern carried the Comp's flag to the Semi Final of the Royal London Club Championship but fell to eventual winners Richmondshire CC featuring Leigh's old boy Mattie McKiernan.  The Yorkshire side had previously eliminated Ormskirk in a ten – over slog after weather had caused postponements and chaos with the rescheduled game starting at 10.30 am.**

**Both of these sides had crashed out of the Lancashire Cup in the semi-finals, but Ormkirk's Brook Road ground was selected to host the Final at Brook Road won by Darwen.**

**Ormskirk were successful in winning the L&DCC T20 competition for inclusion in Area Finals of the Vitality Club T20 and after beating Lostock in the Group 6 Area final, then travelled the following week to Nantwich but failed to progress to the Semi Finals.**

**New Brighton fell at the Semi Final stage of the Cheshire Cup to Neston.**

**In the Domestic Cup Competitions, the well documented drama surrounding the circumstances of the delayed and ultimately conceded Semi Final of the 2018 Digman Cup reflected poorly on both clubs and certain individuals and it is hoped will never happen again.**

**In the Final, Firwood-Bootle overcame hosts Rainford,  having previously lost to Northern in the held-over final of the 2017 edition earlier in the season.**

**Liverpool won the local derby final of the Tyler Cup against Sefton Park and Firwood Bootle beat Neston in the Final of the Echo Invitational Cup which was organised by the Management Committee for the first time.**

**In the Second XI Competition, the fight for the Premier division title went all the way to the last hour of the final day as Wallasey, who started the day in second place, played host to Ormskirk, However Ormskirk captain Jonny Glayzer held firm to see out the last few overs to deny Wallasey the victory they sought, and the game ended in a draw with Ormskirk having two wickets left.**

**New Brighton secured a last victory which saw them move away from the second relegation position and instead Firwood Bootle will play in Division one next season.**

**The two other divisional winners were Liverpool (ahead of also promoted Colwyn Bay) and Sutton (St Helens) in their first season back in the L&DCC family (ahead of Wavertree).**

**Ormskirk completed the league and cup double with victory in the Chester Cup against Sefton Park with Old Xaverians winning the Tittershill Cup against Sutton (St Helens).**

**At 3rd XI level, Ormskirk were again the dominant side as they again saw off the challenge of Birchfield Park to retain the Premier Division title with Wallasey (as champions) and Merseyside Cultural Sports taking the top spots in Saturday Division One.**

**There was a new format for the Sunday competition with four regional divisions replacing the previous Premier and two regional division ones. The format had a mixed review with some clubs enjoying the closer (distance wise) games but others feeling that the standard of the opposition was not as strong or that there were fewer games.**

**In the Play-off Final Formby defeated Alder with the lesser known players stepping up to overshadow those who were expected to dominate.**

**Ormskirk also completed the cup double, victorious in the Mike Leddy Cup beating Wallasey in a rain affected final and beating host club Newton Le Willows in the Embee final on another damp weekend.**

**The League representatives sides were not as successful as in previous years with problems affecting selection in the case of the senior sides and being outplayed by the stronger Greater Manchester League who won both the Inter League Under 12 and Under 14 levels. Again, thanks must go to host clubs, coaches and parents for their efforts and assistance.**

**The Management Committee also took control of the former Southport Junior League renaming it the Liverpool Competition -Southport District- Junior Leagues or LC-SD-JL and congratulations to all the successful sides in each of the four age groups. For many clubs, is there more……?**

**2019 L&DCC Season Review**

**ECB Premier League: Bootle, Colwyn Bay, Formby, Leigh, Lytham, New Brighton, Northern, Ormskirk, Orrel Red Triangle, Rainhill, Southport and Birkdale,  Wallasey.**

**First Division: Ainsdale, Birkenhead Park, Fleetwood Hesketh, Highfield, Newton le Willows, Northop Hall, Old Xaverians, Prestatyn, Rainford, Sefton Park, Wavertree, Wigan.**

**Second Division: Alder, Burscough, Caldy, Hightown St Mary's, Liverpool, Maghull, Norley Hall, Parkfield Liscard, St Helens Town, Southport Trinity, Spring View, Sutton.**

**The 2019 season was badly affected by the weather. Whereas 2018 enjoyed a long continuous spell of fine sunny weather, this time rain causing complete cancellations over several weekends and lots of frustration for players, officials and spectators. Nineteen games were completely abandoned in the Premier Division alone without a bowl being bowled, with another five games being curtailed as No Decision results. Elsewhere, across the divisions, the story was the same or worse.**

**In the games that were played, Firwood Bootle, under new captain Neil Williams, became worthy Premier League champions for the first time since 2009.**

**At the halfway stage, they held a 31-point advantage over New Brighton who had beaten them on the campaign's opening day, their only defeat until Leigh rather surprisingly held off their attempt to overhaul their total in Round 20.**

**Their recruitment of Hampshire pace bowler Keith Barker helped to cement their tabletop position. In his 8 games, he captured 25 wickets including a return of 9 for 22 against New Brighton as they bowled them out for 47. Bay's Saman Jeewantha also had a nine-wicket haul.**

**Ormskirk finished eighteen points adrift and runners up for the second successive year, ensuring that the season ran to the last weekend before Firwood Bootle could confirm their success. Ormskirk recovered from a slow start where they lost three of their opening games, including an opening day defeat to newly promoted Orrell Red Triangle in that club's first ever Premier Division game. Ormskirk remained unbeaten after their loss to Firwood Bootle in Round six, with the eagerly awaited return fixture between the top two falling foul of the weather and thwarting any chance of the top spot changing hands.**

**Last year's reigning champion's Northern took third place, while the relegation battle ended with Colwyn Bay (after a four year stay in the top tier) and Lytham (champions in 2012) dropping into Division One with Southport & Birkdale managing to remain a small advantage over these sides over the final weeks of the campaign.**

**The batting honours for the Division went to New Brighton's Clarke with 816 and Sephton (seemingly as usual) with 67 wickets for former champion's Northern took the bowling.**

**The Division One was again a close-run affair. Wigan, with Redmond leading the division's run chart with 741 and Yadav claiming 58 wickets aided by Richardson' 47 victims to go with his 600 runs, were the Champions. Long-time promotion contender's Newton le Willows saw the second promotion spot taken by Sefton Park who put together an eleven-match winning streak (interrupted by two Abandoned games) which included evergreen Houghton's 1000 league wicket for the club in his second spell at the club. At the halfway stage, Park were languishing in 7th position and became the first team to amass 300 in the division since 2013.**

**Highfield finished third, five points further back. Although Wavertree suffered a season to forget losing each of their completed games, the second relegation spot featured a battle between Prestatyn and Fleetwood Hesketh. The Welshmen could not match the late season surge that saw Fleetwood win three of their last six games to leapfrog their rivals.**

**The two promotion places in Division Two were claimed by a strong Liverpool side who remained unbeaten (winning sixteen of their seventeen completed games) and by runners up, St Helens Town who won all nine of their completed games in the second half of the campaign. Both sides relied heavily on their bowling attack with Kelly/Clubbe taking 122 wickets and Richardson/Davies claiming 87 although Charlton topped 700 runs for the champions. Clubbe with the division's best return of 9 for 37. Maghull's Ring with the season's top individual score of 165.**

**Alder experienced another difficult season with just a single victory to show for their efforts. They managed to avoid relegation to the Southport ADL following the decision of Burscough to withdraw from the Liverpool competition owing to difficulties in guaranteeing being able to field two sides in 2020.The top club from the SADL feeder league did not meet all of the necessary criteria to gain promotion. As a result there will be just 35 clubs in the structure for 2020 with the 36th club vacancy being advertised for the 2021 season.**

**In the Second XI competition, the Premier Division was won by Wallasey. Starting the campaign as last year's Runners up, they went one better with sixteen victories and a seventy-point advantage over Lytham taking second spot from previous Champion's Ormskirk in third just four points further back. Miles and Hughes each topped 500 season runs for Wallasey with Gill of Ormskirk managing top scorer with 646 and Hughes also claimed 47 wickets helped by Keogh's 35 victims. Cartmell of Lytham the most with 56 wickets in the division. The two teams to drop out of the division were bottom – placed Wigan and (to complete a bad year all around) previously promoted Colwyn Bay, who joined their first eleven counterparts in a lower division next year. Sefton Park who must have feared the worst as they went week after week without a win after an impressive start and Southport & Birkdale just did enough to avoid the drop.**

**In Division One, Newton le Willows took top spot at the beginning of August from Firwood Bootle who were looking to bounce back after the shock (by their standards) of the previous season's relegation, and never released their grip and confirmed their title success in the penultimate round when results went their way.**

**Promoted club Sutton (St Helens) found life a little more difficult in the higher tier and could not muster enough victories to climb away from the second relegation position. Maghull, who avoided relegation, by just three points in 2018,could do little better this year and ended up in bottom place. Ainsdale's overseas player McClure with 496 led the scoring table ahead of Wavertree's Daulby (442). Leading wicket taker was Ainsdale's Friar with 50, two ahead of Firwood Bootle's Meskell.**

**The two relegated teams bounced straight back with promotion led by Leigh's promising young second team, won Division Two with games in hand from Northop Hall. Prestatyn ended the season without a victory and in last place. Top spots in the batting stakes were taken by players from Welsh clubs with Northop Hall's Little (577 runs) ahead of Prestatyn's Taylor (486) who battled in vain. Black of St Helens Town claimed an exceptional 75 wickets with Graham of Leigh taking 43.**

**Best bowling performance across the three Divisions were by Parkfield Liscard's Courtney with 9 for 29 enabling his side to successfully defend a comparatively low total and Colwyn Bay's James Jones (again for 29 runs) who took all wickets in a drawn game**

**In the 3rd XI competitions, and despite a late scare, caused by the disruption by the annulment of previous results following the enforced expulsion from the league of a side who had conceded their fourth fixture, Northern 3 (led by Simon King), who were without a fixture on the final round could only wait while closest challengers and current reigning champions Ormskirk, were held to a frustrating (for them) draw as their opponent's last pair held out. Northern therefore, won the league by the small margin of just 3 points. Just 25 points covered the top four in a very competitive campaign. Two players scored 400 runs, New Brighton's London (404) and Wallasey's Bark. Northern SK's Doyle was the leading wicket taker with 53 including the season's best return of 8 for 21. Just one team (Firwood Bootle) was relegated.**

**The two promoted teams were champions Orrell Red Triangle and Formby (after some late confusion) ahead of Sefton Park 4. Orrell losing just one game. Sefton Park's pair led the individual honours, Kennedy, who scored 515 runs in Division One ahead of Wallace (Formby) 445 and their promising Under 13 player Burke topped the wicket table with 45 victims (with five 5-wicket hauls). Cheetham of Orrell Red Triangle including figures of 8 for 4 finished in second place.**

**In the Sunday set up, Liverpool beat Leigh into second place in the Premier Division. Northop Hall were relegated. Spring View were champions in the North East division in a very competitive division with any of the top six having the chance of winning with just a couple of weeks to go. Wallasey saw off the challenge of Rainhill in the South West. The revised format of small divisions led to frustrations for many clubs caused by weather and conceded games.**

**Seven players, led by Banerjee (454 runs), topped the 300 mark with Benish Shukla with an exceptional unbeaten 155 for Fleetwood Hesketh 3s in a North East game. Spring View's Nathan Ashford recorded most Sunday wickets with 24 as well as being part of the “300” club.**

**In the Cup competitions, the prize of the Digman Cup went to the side who could bowl straight when the Final between Formby and Ormskirk was abandoned due to rain before the completion of the required number of overs in the second innings. Formby coming out winners 2 – 1 in a less than satisfactorily way of deciding the Competition's Premier knock out cup. Liverpool retained the Tyler Cup (and league double) in a very low scoring affair having been dismissed for just 99. Those who expected Newton le Willows to cruise to victory did not allow for Kelly's return of 5 for 26 in a 33-run defeat.**

**Nationally, Ormskirk beat Firwood Bootle to progress to the area Finals thanks mainly to McGladdery's unbeaten 100 to win the L&DCC Rounds of the ECB Vitality T20. In the Area Final (again delayed by the weather), Ormskirk progressed at Lostock and Garstang's expense  and but fell, curtesy of the dreaded DLS method, in the Quarter Final when well set against Toft.**

**In the Royal London Competition, Ormskirk again carried the flag for the area, when they gained some sort of revenge in a Quarter Final victory over Richmondshire (who beat them in a ten over thrash the previous year). They, however, then lost out to Nantwich who progressed to the Final where they lost to Swardeston.**

**Locally, no club from the Competition managed to progress into the Quarter Finals of the Lancashire Cricket Foundation Knock out. Chester Boughton Hall beat Formby by twenty runs in a shortened Liverpool Echo Invitational Cup final.**

**Ormskirk made some sort of amends in beating Wallasey in the final and retaining the Chester Cup. In the competition's initial round Sefton Park amassed 400 to set a new competition record on a day when Ormskirk just failed by one run to reach that magical target. Leigh also completed a league and cup double when they beat Wavertree (on the DLS method) in the rain affected Tittershill Cup Final. Formby beat New Brighton to lift the Chrysalis Cup at the second attempt when rain prevented any possibility of obtaining a result on the initial finals day.**

**A strong Ormskirk team also retained the Leddy Cup with a harder than expected win against Liverpool. They maintained their monopoly of the Third XI cups by beating Newton le Willows in the Embee Finals day.**

**The newly createdWomen and Girls sub-committee made massive strides in promoting and organising a number of softball tournaments throughout the year. Many of the women and girls were playing organised cricket for the first time and many clubs have set up Women and Girls sections. Congratulations to Paul Bate for his recent award from the LCF on behalf of the magnificent work done in this field.**

**The Competition's Under 12 side are also to be congratulated for winning the 2019 Lancashire Inter – League Competition with victories over the GMCL, Wigan JL and Lancashire League with the game against the BCL abandoned. They collected the Alan Wright Trophy. Congratulations also go to each of the winners of the league and cup competitions of the various age groups in the LC-SD-Junior Leagues.**

**Off field,the year will be also be remembered for the failed challenge against the League Chairman and the Management Committee which was unsuccessful. One of the Comp's clubs found itself in the national media spotlight with an unsavoury on-field incident in an LCF knock out cup game with allegations of headbutting being spread around social media. The same club found itself penalised with a large points deduction when one of their players was caught playing under a false identity for another club in a final of a Southport & District organised cup.**

**A series of regional of Open Forums were held post season, which discussed many aspects of the problems (or otherwise) affecting (mainly) lower level cricket such as player eligibility, impact of conceded fixtures, league structures and produced a lot of lively discussions.**

**The L&DCC thanks Messrs Liverpool Gin, who ended their three-year sponsorship at the end of this year and we also warmly thank our other significant sponsors Messrs Icon Sports and Messrs Readers.**