

The Macaulay cricketers

In the article about **The Macaulays of Slead Hall**

it was noted that there was one a professional cricketer on the 1891 census. Charles Harold Macaulay was born in Birkby on 16th September 1866. He married Ellen Horner on 3rd April 1897. Their son George Gibson Macaulay was born on 7th December 1897. Notice the repetition of Macaulay first names again.

1901 census

Charles H Macaulay	Head	34	Innkeeper
Ellen Macaulay	Wife	29	
George G Macaulay	Son	3	
1 servant			
Address Commercial Hotel, Sowerby, Thirsk			

A daughter, Ethel Macaulay, was born on 13th March 1903 before these obituaries for her grandfather appeared.

Leeds Mercury 08 September 1909

YORKSHIRE PLAYER'S DEATH

The death took place yesterday at Thirsk of Charles H. Macaulay, who a few years ago was a well-known throughout Yorkshire as a cricketer. He was a native of Birkby, near Huddersfield, and his cricketing career commenced at Healey, near Batley, after which he removed to Leeds, becoming a prominent member of the Leeds Albion club when he was acknowledged one of the best all-round cricketers in Leeds.

He played three times for the Yorkshire Colts, with such success that he was chosen to play for the county against Cheshire.

Cricket 16 September 1909

C.H.MACAULAY

Charles H. Macaulay, a well-known Yorkshire club cricketer, died at Thirsk on the 7th inst. at the age of 42, At one time he was associated with the Leeds Albion C.C. and afterwards was professional at Crighton and Wigan. He was a fast bowler and useful batsman.

Both children were away at boarding school on 2nd April 1911, George Gibson Macaulay at Barnard Castle School and his sister at Pengwern College, Cheltenham.

During the Great War George Gibson Macaulay served as a Gunner with the Royal Field Artillery enlisting on 11th December 1915 and being discharged on 21st January 1919.

The *Shields Daily News* 15 July 1924 tells you what he did next.

WORLD'S SPORTS

TOPICAL NOTES on events and Competitors

George Gibson Macaulay of Yorkshire, who was chosen for the English team to meet the South Africans at Leeds is 27 years old.

It was only four seasons ago that he had his first trial in county cricket. Yorkshire badly needed a fast bowler. Hearing of his achievements in club cricket they asked him to show them what he could do. His success was immediate, and he has played for the first eleven ever since.



And in glorious detail from the *Sunday Mirror* 13 September 1925.

**FROM BANK CLERK TO
CRICKET PRO.**

**Romantic Career of G.G.
Macaulay of Yorkshire
FUTURE TEST PLAYER?**

**By Pat HENDERN
(The Middlesex and England Cricketer)**

Very few players are able to get a place in the Yorkshire eleven without spending a probationary period in the second team. The champions like to catch their players young, train and develop them on the right lines, and elevate them to the county team when they have given absolute proof of their worth.

But George Gibson Macaulay, who has been one of the mainstays of the Yorkshire attack in recent seasons, was one of the fortunate ones. Into his early life there entered a little romance of the short story type.

ANXIETY OVER BOWLING

But Yorkshire, his native county, passed through a difficult period in the years that followed the war. Their bowling strength gave cause for much anxiety.

Major Booth had fallen in the war, Alonzo Drake passed to his rest early in 1919; and then, a season or so later, came the retirement, full of honours, of George Hirst.

Genial Wilfrid Rhodes remained, great hearted as ever, but by that time he had reached a stage when he could hardly be expected to go on bearing the heat and burden of the day. And Roy Kilner had not then developed the bowling abilities he has since shown.

At that juncture somebody let Yorkshire know something about a young bank clerk of twenty-two years of age, who was bowling fairly well in club cricket. He was not, perhaps, quite up to the best Yorkshire standard, but there was every indication that he would develop into something worthy of the traditions of the big shire.

And so it came about that Macaulay, the bank clerk, found himself with the promise of a more congenial career opening out to him. Ledger and cash accounts were tossed on one side, and he became a professional cricketer after a trial in 1920. He made his debut against Derbyshire in 1920, and in his first season he accomplished some very useful performances. Before May was out he had toppled over five Gloucester wickets for 50 runs, and followed it with six for 47

against Worcestershire. By the end of the season, he had taken 20 wickets in county games for 493 runs.

Thus, early he justified the opinions of those who had recommended him. Still, he was far from having reached the full development of his prowess.

George Hirst detected Macaulay's tendency to strain too much after pace in those early days, and the veteran gave him some prudent counsel, from which he was not slow to profit.

In characteristic Yorkshire fashion, Macaulay determined to ensure success, started practice on the lines Hirst had suggested. He spent the whole of the following winter, day in and day out, incessantly practising until he had mastered some of the mysteries of spin and swerve and learnt how to get suitable variation of length and pace without telegraphing his intention to the batsman.

NICE EASY ACTION

The result was that he developed a nice easy action, and in the 1921 season he made so big an advance that he was regarded as one of the best all-round men in the side. He made a century against Notts at Trent Bridge, took 94 wickets altogether and proved himself a smart slip fieldsman.

Honours have not escaped him, for he was given a place in the team that was sent to South Africa at the end of 1922; twice he was figured in Gentleman v Players matches at Lord's, and last season, when he topped the bowling average list, he was awarded a place in the Rest team against England in the Test trial match played at Nottingham.

There are probably greater honours still in front of him, for it is a big point in his favours that he, like Maurice Tate, is able to stand a long bowling spell without tiring. This in itself shows how easy his action is, for he could not keep on as he does if he were to attempt to force the pace of his deliveries.

Several writers on cricket have expressed the opinion that if Macaulay had been with us to support Tate in Australia last winter, we might have brought the Ashes back. Speculation on might-have-beens is not profitable; enough to say that the pair may be brought together next season when the players of the Commonwealth visit us.

In the season now nearing its end Macaulay has played a great part in the success of the champions, and last week took his 200th wicket of the season.

The cricketer's family also got mentions in newspaper reports which is useful in piecing together what George Gibson Macaulay had done after WW1.

Leeds Mercury 21 October 1926

CRICKETER'S SISTER WED

The wedding took place at Thirsk Parish Church yesterday of Miss Ethel Macaulay, daughter of Mr. J. Lee, of the Fleece Hotel, Thirsk, and the late Mr. Charles Harold Macaulay, to Mr. Jos. M. Lister, second son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Lister, of Topcliffe Mill, Thirsk.

The bride is the only sister of Mr. G. G. Macaulay, the Yorkshire County cricketer, and the bridegroom is a member of Thirsk Cricket Club.



George Gibson Macaulay

Leeds Mercury 20 June 1928

GRANDMOTHER OF OUR CRICKETER

(From Our Own Correspondent)

The grandmother of the famous England and Yorkshire cricketer, G. G. Macaulay, Mrs Ellen Macaulay, has died at the age of 89 years at 6, South Crescent, Sowerby, Thirsk, where she resided with her daughter, Miss M.H. Macaulay.

She was a native of the Huddersfield district, and her husband Mr George Gibson Macaulay, after whom the cricketer was named, died there over thirty years ago.

Mrs Macaulay with her family then moved to Thirsk, where for some years her son, Mr. K.W. Macaulay, with whom she made her home, was licensee of the White Mare Inn, which stood at the corner of the Sutton and York roads, and which has recently been demolished.

After about a year at the Surtees Hotel, Spennymoor, and a similar period at the Oak Tree, Northallerton, where Mr. Macaulay was also the licensee, they returned to Thirsk, and Mrs Macaulay after making her home with Mr Macaulay for a time, went to live with her daughter in Thirsk, and later in Sowerby.

Another son Mr. C.H. Macaulay father of G. G. Macaulay, died some years ago. He was licensee of the Commercial Hotel where the cricketer was born, and also of the Red Bear where he died.

A Cricketing family

He was a cricketer of outstanding ability, and was professional for the old Thirsk club, and also at Wigan. He was once selected for Yorkshire against Cheshire but owing to absence in Scotland was unable to play. While at Wigan he played for Thirsk, who at that time won the North and East Ridings Challenge Cup three times.

Mrs Macaulay is survived by three sons and a daughter, Mr. K. E. Macaulay in business as a grocer at Town End and Messrs. G. F. and T. B. Macaulay also live in the town. Mrs Macaulay had been in ill-health for some time and confined to bed for five weeks.

Leicester Evening Mail 17 June 1933

Being a Yorkshire, I refrained from mentioning Macaulay as a member of the England team. His remarkable “come back” – George is no chicken – has played a big part in the Champion’s firm grip on the County Championship this season, and the fact cannot be ignored that on present form he is without a superior as a fast to medium bowler of off-swingers on any kind of a wicket.

“Mac” has not the same pace and nip off the pitch as he had a few seasons ago, but still retains a perfect command of length and flight.

His match aggregate of 11 wickets for 34 runs again Northants further emphasised his claim to Teat match recognition. Still, I shall be surprised if he is selected. George has been a very unlucky man when international honours have been distributed.

“Then Hit It”

Macaulay was never intended for a professional county cricketer. After he left Barnard Castle School, he became a bank clerk.

The lure of the finest game of all, however, proved too strong for George, and he has now been a member of the Yorkshire eleven since just after the war.

Every year at the end of the season Macaulay takes a team, which usually includes one or two of his fellow countrymen, to play his old school.

His advice to the youngsters in these games is, “Forget George Macaulay is bowling, Just think it is Bill Smith, and then hit it,” and the young batsmen invariably take him at his word.

Dour, determined and possessed of a happy knack of smiling when things go wrong Macaulay is one of the finest professionals who ever laced a boot for the famous county he represents.

Lancashire Evening Post 22 June 1933

MACAULAY’S REVIVAL

George Gibson Macaulay, who probably will replace Clark, the Northamptonshire fast left-handed bowler in the England team against the West Indies at Lord’s, has been in the forefront of Yorkshire cricket for about a dozen years, and after his striking success this season, it was a surprise to most cricketers that he was not in the M.C.C. eleven when it was first announced.

It was Macaulay’s original ambition to bowl really fast, but he had scarcely the robust physique for this and so settled down to medium fast. His natural action and his ability to finger spin quickly secured him a permanent place in the Yorkshire eleven. Between 1921 and 1929 he always had his 100 wickets a season for his county. The trip with the M.C.C. team to South Africa in 1922-3 had greatly benefited his health. He also played for England against Australia at Leeds in 1926.

This season he has performed many wonderful feats with his fast mediums in length and spin, had he has been coming like lightning off the pitch.

Already his aggregate of wickets is 83, the runs against him only 326. Macaulay, too, is a fine forcing bat and a deadly field.

PILOT OFFICER

G. G. MACAULAY

Noted Yorkshire Cricketer

News of the death on active service of Pilot Officer George Gibson Macaulay has reached Yorkshire. Macaulay whose home was at Barkston Ash, was 43 on December 7. He played for Yorkshire from 1920 to 1935, toured South Africa with the M.C.C. captained by R.T.Mann in 1922, and played for England against Australis, South Africa, and the West Indies in this country.



Macaulay served with the Royal Field Artillery in the last war and joined the R.A.F. early this year.

He was a bank clerk when he first sought to qualify for the Yorkshire cap he gained in 1922. Between 1920 and 1921 he changed this bowling style, sacrificing speed for accuracy and variety, and he became so important a man in Yorkshire's attack that when he retired in 1935, he had taken 1,773 wickets for the county – more than any other bowler except Hirst, Rhodes and Haigh.

His Yorkshire wickets cost him 17.08 runs each and his average in all first-class cricket, in which he had 1,838 wickets, was only a fraction higher. In each of 10 seasons he took a hundred wickets or more for Yorkshire and in 1925, his greatest season, he topped the 200 mark. That was the season in which he made the ball go either way off the pitch with a kick that always had the batsmen in trouble.

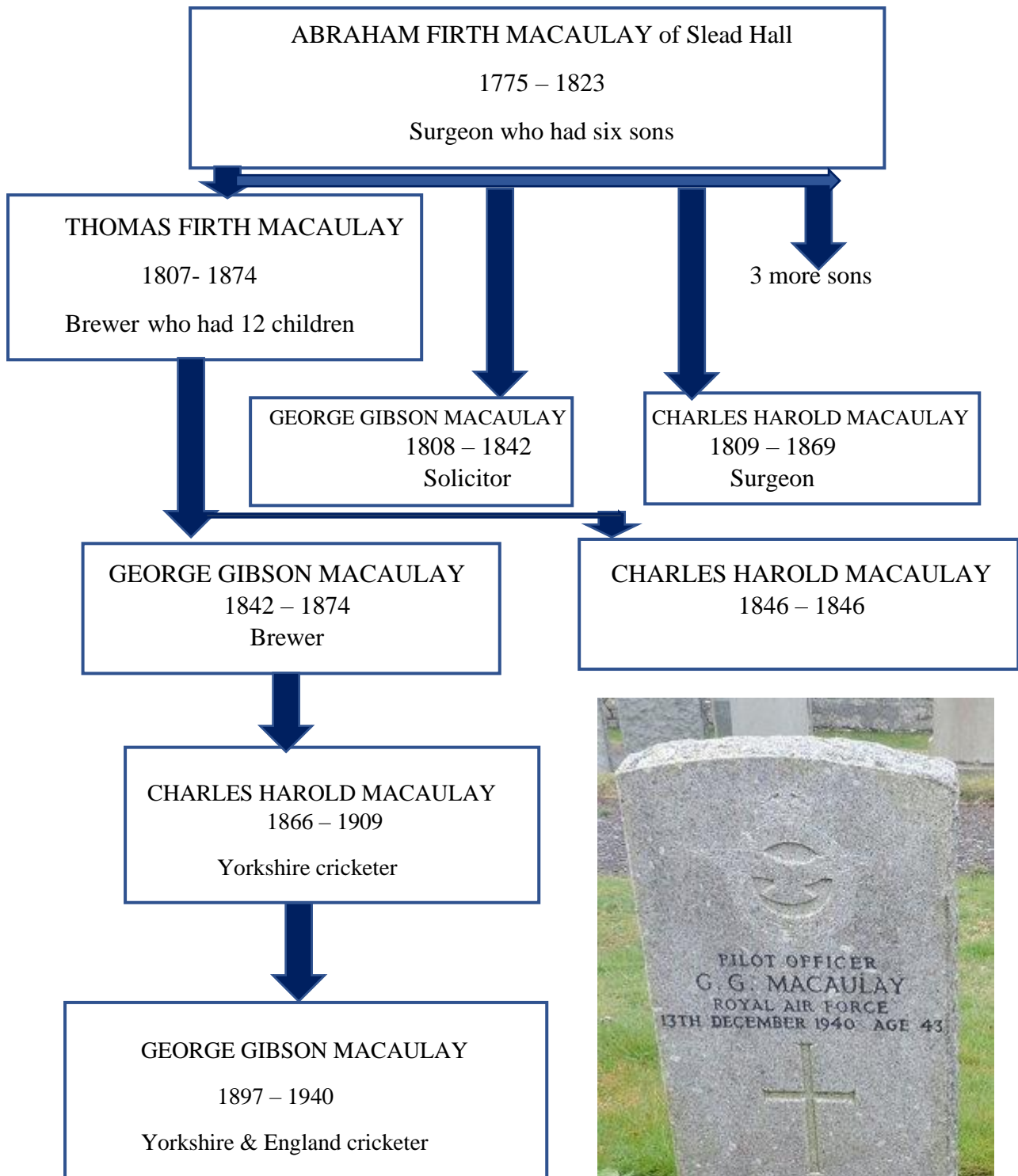
Hat Trick Record

On four occasions he claimed a hat-trick when bowling for Yorkshire – no other bowler equalled that record – and there were times, too, when his batting counted importantly, for he was one who might have given much to Yorkshire's batting strength had he not been required to concentrate on bowling.

He made three centuries for Yorkshire, scored 5,759 runs for the county and in Test cricket with the Australians stood with Geary at Headingley in a 9th wicket partnership which put 108 runs on to a modest England score.

Macaulay will always be remembered for the fierceness of this enthusiasm when there was a fighting chance of victory, and for the brilliance of his fielding to his own bowling. His keenness, in fact, had something to do with his departure from the county game in 1935, for then he was handicapped by an injury to his spinning finger – an injury received when attempting to hold a ball driven by Geary in a Leicestershire game at Headingley.

Macaulay played League cricket in Wales, Lancashire and Yorkshire with considerable success after he had left Yorkshire's ranks.



Pilot George Gibson Macaulay's
CWGC headstone in Lerwick New Cemetery



D.M.Barker
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