

1962/63 - Return of the Good Old Hockey Team

So, after seven years the team finally came back out of cold storage on October 14, 1962 to participate in the newly launched Scottish League which was a fully amateur league that was founded by eight teams for the 1962-63 season. This was the first ice hockey league to be formed in either England or Scotland since the demise of the British National League in 1960. For the past two seasons, only home tournaments had been played throughout Great Britain.

The league's first season consisted of eight teams playing an inter-locking schedule by mid-November when the league was reorganised into a section A: Ayr Rangers, Flyers and Murrayfield Royals and a Section B: Paisley Mohawks, Durham Wasps, Glasgow Flyers, Perth Blackhawks and new addition Paisley Vikings. Only section A teams had ice available for public games and it was hoped that the following season a full Scottish league would operate.

It was modest in its outlook but it gave the players a chance to lace up their skates. Flyers' first squad of the new decade did include some seasoned professionals. The Montreal-born Harold 'Pep' Young, who first iced for the team in 1950, was back on board as player-coach. Young was a seminal figure in the development of hockey in Fife. He was joined by Bert Smith, Jerry Hudson, Joe McIntosh and netminder John Pullar. Added to that list was defenceman Vern 'Bones' Greger, one of the most popular players of his time. Others who were in contention for the opening night line-up were on defence Bob Chalmers, Pete Robertson, Don Maxwell, J Maxwell, Bill Brown and forwards Tom Hutchison, J Watson, J Thomson, Andy Napier and Dave Cook.

A junior league was also to be introduced and the junior games would be played between the periods of the senior games – it was often accused that the demise of the game in the mid 1950's and that there was nothing to fill the gap was because the junior game (development) had been ignored.

The first junior Flyers squad had the following names: K Horne, B Greenhorn, E Grant, R Munson, P Grieve, J Hepburn, A Cowie, G Taylor, J Campbell, W Coventry, G Stevenson, D Cowie, J Hunter, A Bisset

Paisley were to provide the opposition in the first league game on October 28th but before then, Flyers slotted in a pre-season challenge with Ayr Rangers. The game also marked the revival of the "Mirror of Merit" the club's traditional player of the year award which continues to this day.

The Flyers beat the Rangers 5-3 with goals from Young 2, Cook, Hudson and Smith with Young being awarded the first Mirror of Merit award of season.

The report by Canuck in the Fife Free Press read as follows:

"Kirkcaldy ice rink rocked to the cheers of 1600 excited spectators when the Fife Flyers met the Ayr Rangers in the first game of the new ice hockey season on Sunday evening.

The crowd was treated to a clean fast-moving brand of ice hockey which has not been seen at the Kirkcaldy rink for many years. Both teams were out to provide a thrilling opening to the new season and in this they certainly succeeded.

The Flyers began to attack the Ayr net within the first few seconds but their shots were too hurried and goaltender Laird was able to deal with them without too much difficulty. As the Kirkcaldy forwards slowly began to settle the shooting took on a much more dangerous character and at times it looked as though the goal judge had erred. There were a number of close calls certainly but over-eagerness prevented the Kirkcaldy team from opening the scoring.

Led by the two McCallum brothers the West of Scotland team tested Johnny Pullar in the Kirkcaldy net with a few dangerous shots.

When the Ayrshire line lost Hughes for two minutes for elbowing it looked as if Kirkcaldy would break through.

The Ayr team put up a solid defence however and just after Hughes re-joined the line they opened the scoring through W Campbell in the 13th minute.

Johnny Pullar had left his net to smother a loose puck but it was flipped over his head to Campbell in front of the open goal.

Reeling from the quick goal the Flyers lapsed and Alex McCallum added to the Ayr total 30 seconds later.

Kirkcaldy had another golden opportunity when Archie McCallum received a two minute boarding penalty but failed to make the power play pay dividends.

The second period was perhaps the slowest period of the game but the Flyers played with more authority and cut the Ayr lead with a goal from Pep Young in the 12th minute. Young was assisted by Hudson.

Ayr had a chance to increase their lead when the Kirkcaldy line lost Dave Cook for two minutes on a tripping penalty but failed to breach the flyers defence.

The third period was the fastest and most exciting of the game. In this final session the Flyers really came into their own and completely outplayed their opponents.

Jerry Hudson equalised from Bert Smith in the fifth minute and Harold 'Pep' Young put the Kirkcaldy side ahead with an unassisted goal five minutes later.

Cook added another from a Napier assist in the 16th minute then the Ayrshire team made a last-ditch effort to regain their lost lead.

Archie McCallum led the rush and for a time even the Ayr defencemen were shooting at the Kirkcaldy net. Archie McCallum pulled one back for the Ayr team before the Kirkcaldy side turned on the power to demonstrate the fastest hockey of the night.

Bert Smith's final goal of the game provided an exciting climax to a game which kept the spectators tense throughout.

Picking up the puck behind his own blueline he carried over centre ice leading the Flyers rush in a single handed effort. With two Ayr defencemen back checking he crossed the Ayr blue line and unleashed a tremendous drive which ended in the top left hand corner of the net. Laird didn't have a chance of making a save.

Although Jerry Hudson Bert Smith and Dave Cook all turned in creditable performances the Fife Free Press Mirror of Merit for this week goes to the player/coach of the Flyers Harold Pep Young.

It will be remembered no doubt that it was Pep who came up with the two crucial goals when the Flyers were down 2-0. Young opened the scoring, breaking Laids shutout and again when the score was tied it was Pep who broke the tie to put Kirkcaldy ahead. His whole performance gave confidence to the team

At the end of the first period with the Flyers down 2-0 I asked Pep what he thought about and the way the game was going and whether the opposition might be too strong. He replied "There are still two periods left. The game is not over by any means" That was his attitude throughout.

The manager of the team Mr Sandy Nicol said that he was "extremely pleased" with his teams' performance in their first game and I think this just about sums up the opinion of almost everyone who was present".

BlueLiners also noted: "If this match between Flyers and Ayr Rangers at Kirkcaldy Ice Rink on Sunday can be taken as any criterion then ice hockey is back in favour in Scotland.

Playing to a new generation of ice hockey fans the worlds fastest sport has a lot to offer and this Kirkcaldy line-up although of an amateur status played some extremely fast and intelligent hockey and considering that the majority of the players are home-bred the standard was encouragingly high. The directoriate and management of Kirkcaldy Ice Rink deserve to be congratulated on resuscitating this spectacular sport and with a league now established the rink should once again become a popular rendezvous with ice hockey fans.

As a writer who has covered the sport in pre-war and post-war years in my opinion everything is in favour of a revival and now to a great extent it simply depends on the support of the public whether or not ice hockey can once again command a prominent spot in the sporting calendar".

A fortnight later and the Flyers' opened with their first official game against the Paisley Mohawks at Kirkcaldy. Jerry Hudson had left to take up a player/coaching position in Vienna. Canadian Dave Johnston from Toronto who played Junior B for Lakeshore and Leaside was to debut. Another new

signing, ex Falkirk Lion Johnny Bayne would alternate with Pullar in net. The game ended 3-3 with Young getting his second to tie the match. Cook also scored and Greger took the Mirror award. It was announced that the Flyers had made an application to join the British Ice Hockey league – Southampton, Brighton, Durham, Ayr Paisley and Murrayfield - and they were determined to show their worth over the season in the amateur league. Were the Flyers getting ahead of themselves? In their next outing they beat Perth Blackhawks 10-6 in Kirkcaldy, yet another newcomer, Danny McGeever (formerly with Falkirk Lions) was on target. Bayne played his first game as did Bill Nicol who was promoted from the junior Flyers. For the Blackhawks ex Flyer Jimmy Mitchell was on defence along with the future “Perth Line” forwards Sammy McDonald, Ian Forbes and Jimmy Spence.

Murrayfield Royals inflicted the first defeat of the season, 3-1 in Edinburgh. Young resigned as coach due to business commitments but continued as player and Gregor took over coaching and returned Flyers on their winning ways, steering them to an 8-3 win over Durham Wasps at Kirkcaldy, Cook netted a hat trick.

A Challenge Game defeat, 3-1, to the Rangers away was followed by another 8-3 home win, this time the visitors were the Glasgow Flyers who had ex Flyers Canadian forward Scotty Reid in their ranks. Young netted a hat trick. On December 22nd there was a representative match in Ayr between a West of Scotland Select and an East of Scotland Select. Flyers Dave Cook, Danny McGeever, Andy Napier and Pete Robertson were included in the East Select that won 6-0. McGeever and Cook were then picked to play for the Scotland Select v Altrincham on Jan 11th.

The Royals visited Kirkcaldy on December 23rd and defeated the Flyers 4-3 with Young netting another triple. Perth Blackhawks were first footed in 1963 and the Flyers won 8-6. The following week, Jan 13th, the home game against Ayr Rangers was cancelled as their coach was caught in a snow drift, then a second bus had a puncture and then the petrol froze. Flyers were awarded the two points which brought them to within touching distance of their opponents at the top of the table. A select match was played featuring Flyers and promising youngsters with the score being; Blues 6 Yellows 5

McGeever was again picked for the Scottish Select to play Southampton and Brighton on 9 & 10 February. The Flyers title ambitions however suffered a significant blow against the Paisley Mohawks on Jan 27th. Despite the addition of newcomers Jimmy Spence and Ian Forbes they lost 8-6 at home. Paisley Vikings were then easily beaten 12-2 with Cook scoring four.

On Feb 17th the Flyers juniors played their first match against Murrayfield Royals in Edinburgh. The line-up was: J Bayne, M Crombie, G Taylor, B Greenhorn, T Hutchison C, Ken Horne, I Shields, D Pithie, P Grieve, Hugh Taylor, D Brown, J Hepburn, G Stevenson, D Cowie Smith as captain and Spence were selected to play for GB in World Championships in Stockholm March 7-17, Spence eventually didn't travel.

The Flyers league aspirations took another massive dent on Feb 17th as the Durham Wasps won 5-4 in Kirkcaldy.

The following Saturday an afternoon game was arranged against Murrayfield. As the big freeze continued to hit football it was requested by STV so they could film it and air it later that evening on Scotsport – this was the Flyers debut on TV but something they would grow accustomed to as the decade wore on. They won the game 5-4 and had Sammy McDonald as a guest from Altrincham. Murrayfield also guested Dorry Boyle from Paisley. The McDonald, Forbes, Spence line was born with the latter two both notching doubles.

In their next outing in a Challenge game against Paisley Mohawks they won 10-3 with Spence 4, McDonald 4, Forbes 2 scoring, it was an understrength Paisley side but “The Perth Line” was really clicking.

With the Flyers needing assistance from others to get back in the league race they beat Glasgow Flyers 13-1 and at the same time Murrayfield beat Ayr 10-4, this opened the door for Flyers league chances and this win took them into first place albeit Ayr had three games in hand and were only 1 point in arrears.

McDonald couldn't play in league games as he wasn't registered and with Dave Cook back after a disciplinary ban they won 11-2 at home against the Rangers on March 24th which took the Flyers back to the top but the games in hand still favoured Ayr and despite finishing their season with a 12-1 win against Paisley Vikings the Rangers hit the top when they won 6-5 against the Mohawks and stayed there.

On Apr 7th the rink hosted a charity game versus a West of Scotland Select for Clive 'Nipper' Millard who was injured in an English league match for Brighton Tigers versus Murrayfield after skating into a goal post which resulted in him having to have his foot amputated. The Flyers won 5-3 but more importantly raised £60. The season ended with a match against the Edinburgh Royals for the revived Jubilee Cup. Flyers annexed the trophy with a 5-4 win with goals from McIntosh, Smith, Forbes 2, and Young. The winner of the Mirror of Merit for the season was Pep Young.

1963/64 - A League Title

The Flyers unsurprisingly had a number of returnees for the new season. Goalie Johnny Pullar, defencemen Verne Greger, Joe McIntosh and Pete Robertson. The Perth Line of Forbes, Spence and McDonald was now all fully signed up. Ian Forbes was the new coach, prior to joining the Flyers midway through the previous season he coached the Altrincham Aces of the British league. Bert Smith who captained the British amateur team last season, Pep Young and Andy Napier were also due to return. New additions included defenceman Bill Sneddon (voted defenceman of the year in the British League previous season) and Andy Williams both ex Murrayfield Royals. Ex Falkirk Lions goalie Roy Reid and ex-Perth Blackhawks Graeme 'Pinky' Farrell. Joe Baird also joined up formerly with Glasgow Dynamos. Six teams took part and were divided into two groups of three teams.

The season opener on Sunday 13th Oct was a Challenge Match against the Paisley Mohawks at Kirkcaldy in front of a crowd of more than 2000. Larry Marshall of STV's One O'Clock Gang performed the puck drop. The Flyers won 5-0 with a Spence hat trick and a double from Baird. Hockey was to be on BBC TV with the introduction of the Grandstand Trophy – six games from England and three from Scotland with teams competing for the trophy on a knockout basis.

There was also talk of a possible continental tour in the New Year. Sandy Nicol still team manager advised that it might be to play the Austrian Olympic Team in Innsbruck, Austria. There would then be follow on games including Italian opposition. This never materialised with the Flyers citing a busy schedule against the English teams which left them without practical dates. A Team from Paris was also slated to visit Kirkcaldy in the latter part of the season but that also fell through as they could not arrange a two game schedule to help support costs.

The Flyers in Section A along with Durham Wasps were to make a clean sweep of their league games. A Scottish Select side were beaten 11-4 on October 20th before league wins against last seasons' League Champion Ayr Rangers 10-1, Glasgow Flyers 16-1 (McDonald with 6), Paisley Mohawks 5-0, Whitley Bay Warriors 10-3 and Durham Bees 4-2.

The undefeated run came to and end down south on the weekend of 23/24 November when they lost 8-4 at Wembley against the Lions and 9-4 against the Brighton Tigers. The Flyers were big draws as both games were sold out.

Normal service was resumed as the wins continued to be wracked up; Perth Blackhawks 13-2 (Laurie Lovell made his debut), Ayr Rangers 15-4 and 8-0, Glasgow Flyers 8-2 and then 19-1 in a game where goalie Charlie Huddlestone was said to have faced over 100 shots. Spence wrote his name into the record books with EIGHT goals and the Flyers scored four in 40 seconds which is possibly another record. By Christmas Spence already had 41 goals, Forbes 22 and McDonald 19.

A 5-3 win over the Durham Bees ended the year. The New Year started with another defeat to he Brighton Tigers, 5-3 with the travelling Flyers missing the Perth Line and no Roy Reid. Their dominance

in league games continued however with wins against Perth Blackhawks 17-2, Durham Bees 3-1, Ayr Rangers 11-3 and to complete the clean sweep Paisley Mohawks 11-7.

Group A

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Fife Flyers	14	14	0	0	141	21	28
Durham Wasps	14	7	2	5	83	54	16
Ayr Rangers	14	4	2	8	48	85	10

Group B

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Paisley Mohawks	6	3	0	3	52	24	6
Perth Black Hawks	6	0	0	6	14	63	0
Glasgow Flyers	6	0	0	6	7	71	0

A visit to play the Altrincham Aces saw a 6-4 win then a home 6-6 draw with Brighton where more than 3000 packed the Gallatown Rink before they finally broke their duck against the Tigers with a 4-2 win on the road which broke the Tigers 19 game unbeaten run.

Another new piece of silverware which pretty much would become the sole possession of the Flyers in the coming years, the Skol Trophy was introduced. Also known as the Averages League the Flyers started it off with an 8-0 win against the Ayr Rangers, Roy Reid now had three shut outs on the season.

The Scottish League playoff final was next with the Group B winners, Paisley Mohawks, the opposition. The one-off game played at Kirkcaldy was said to be a drab affair with Spence opening the scoring with a shot from the center red line, Farrell, Forbes 2, Lovell and another from Spence saw the Flyers crowned League Champions with a 6-3 win.

The Glasgow Flyers were overcome 5-0 in the BBC Grandstand Trophy and the following week in the semi-final the Mohawks were once again put to the sword 6-2 to set up a final appearance against the Wembley Lions at Brighton in the final game of the season. The Flyers trailed 4-3 with 30 seconds remaining and pulled Roy Reid to set up an equaliser from Forbes. Unbelievably there was still time for a Fife winner when Sneddon won the cup with a goal two seconds from the buzzer.

The "Grand Slam" for the Flyers was concluded after further games against Altrincham Aces D4-4 and W8-5, Wembley Lions W9-2 and L3-4, Brighton Tigers L5-8, Durham Bees L3-9 and W9-0 (which was Roy Reid's fifth shutout of the year and stood as a record until Stephen Murphy broke it with seven in 2007) and a shock 5-4 loss at home to Perth Blackhawks which ended the unbeaten home record of over 20 games. A win at home against the Brighton Tigers on 18th April would secure the Skol Trophy, goals from Young, McDonald 2, Farrell and Spence saw the Flyers win 5-3 and sweep all the competitions they entered.

Mirror of Merit winner was Roy Reid and top scorers were Spence with 84, Forbes 54 and McDonald 34.

Flyers featured heavily in the All-Star Team selections:

Team A: Glynne Thomas (Wembley), Art Hodgins (Wembley), Bill Sneddon (Fife), Sam McDonald (Fife), Ian Forbes (Fife), Jimmy Spence (Fife).

Coach of the Year: Ian Forbes (Fife)

1964/65 – Silverware continues

The season opened on 4th October with a challenge match against the Paisley Mohawks at Kirkcaldy. The Flyers team that won 7-6 showed a number of changes. Released were the two veterans Harold “Pep” Young and Verne “Bones” Greger, also gone was utility man Andy Williams who returned to Murrayfield Royals. These moves were made to conform to the SIHA ruling that each team must not sign more than five ex-national league players. Johnny Bayne who played two seasons was resigned to share goaltending duties with Roy Reid. Bob Church, a Canadian defenceman who had been signed in the summer was not going to appear and signed instead for Murrayfield. 21 year old, Dysart born Ian Shields was called up from the junior Flyers. The rest of the squad read: Defence, John Flynn, Billy Sneddon, Joe McIntosh, Dave McLaughlin, Forwards, Sammy McDonald, Jimmy Spence, Ian Forbes who remained as player-coach, Graeme Farrell, Bert Smith, Lawrie Lovell. The season saw only six teams participate after the Perth Blackhawks dropped out of the Scottish League.

In a season that was to yield yet another haul of silverware the road to those successes started as early as the 11th of October when the newly reformed Falkirk Lions rolled into Kirkcaldy and were soundly beaten 13-1 in the Directors Trophy. The trophy was donated by the Kirkcaldy Ice Rink directors for competition throughout the season amongst Scottish Teams. Falkirk had Jerry Hudson in their line-up, Spence top scored with five.

The following week the Flyers travelled to the south coast to play the Brighton Tigers in the Copley Cup first. They were shocked by their English hosts who ran up an 11-2 win – reported as the biggest ever Flyers defeat and the small ice surface was considered a factor. Scots Jackie Dryburgh and Les Lovell each scored hat tricks for the Tigers.

The blip was forgotten the following week as they entertained the Ayr Rangers and Spence helped himself to seven in an 18-2 win. The wins kept on coming with a 6-2 road win against the Murrayfield Royals and then home successes against the Brighton Tigers 8-6, Durham Bees 9-8 and Murrayfield Royals 5-2.

A pair of wins in the STV trophy, Ayr Rangers 8-6 and Paisley Mohawks 6-4 saw the Flyers advance to the Final.

A couple of additions to the squad were made ahead of the Paisley Mohawks visit on the 29th November. Bill McNab a 20 year old Canadian from the Junior A Toronto Marlboroughs took over in goals from Roy Reid. Also signed was 18 year old Brian Batt from Toronto who played right wing or right defence. The Flyers winning streak continued with a 5-3 victory.

December 6th and the Glasgow Flyers were next to be put to the sword as the Flyers won 18-5. The scoreline was only 8-4 going into the 3rd period. Spence equalled his record for goals by a British born player in a game for the Flyers when he notched eight.

Either side of that date three Flyers, Jimmy Spence, Ian Forbes and ‘Pinky’ Farrell played for the GB Amateur side that beat France 8-2 at Wembley. Spence scored four with singles from Forbes and Farrell. The return a week later in France saw GB lose 3-2 with Joe McIntosh added to the Fife contingent but they had qualified for World Championships in Finland in March. When Murrayfield visited Kirkcaldy in February a collection was taken that enabled a set of strips to be purchased for the tournament. Spence, McDonald, Farrell and McIntosh all went but Forbes could not due to business commitments.

The STV trophy final would be against the Murrayfield Royals after they defeated Durham at Kirkcaldy and the following night in the return leg of the Cobley Cup the Flyers were once again downed by the Brighton Tigers, losing 7-5 (18-7 on aggregate)

December 19th saw the flyers secure their first silverware of the season. In the STV Trophy Final with a 2pm face off in Kirkcaldy the Murrayfield Royals were defeated 4-3 and Flyers were the first ever winners of the trophy in front of the STV cameras thanks to goals from Forbes, McDonald and a double by Farrell. The following night they played the Royals in the league and won 9-2. It was in bizarre circumstances as no sooner had a bus carrying the Murrayfield team entered the car park then another coach entered carrying the Durham Bees who according to their fixture list were due to play at Kirkcaldy. After some consultation they sent the Bees packing and played the Royals. By late January Flyers topped the Scottish League Section A having lost only once in their 10 games. Murrayfield were second, Durham Bees and Ayr Rangers were not really in contention. Jimmy Spence was now on 60 goals for the season.

On January 23rd Flyers scored three in 25 seconds as they beat a Scottish Select 7-5. The game was hastily arranged as Brighton Tigers couldn't get a flight North due to a strike at London airport Spence scored for against the Durham Bees in a 5-2 win in a BBC Grandstand nationally televised game which saw the Flyers qualify to their old nemesis Brighton Tigers on Easter Monday in the Television Final. The following night they won 6-5 against the Bees in Durham.

Murrayfield visited Kirkcaldy on 13th February and inflicted the Flyers first loss at home to a Scottish side since the previous April when they won 7-5. It wasn't enough however to stop the Flyers winning Section A to meet the winners of Section B for the Scottish Championship.

Section A

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Fife Flyers	14	12	0	2	124	62	24
Murrayfield Royals	18	11	0	7	99	75	18
Durham Wasps	13	7	0	6	103	55	14
Ayr Rangers	11	2	0	9	47	101	4

Section B

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Paisley Mohawks	7	3	0	4	35	26	6
Glasgow Flyers	7	0	0	7	9	98	0

The match at Kirkcaldy on March 21st was expected to be a formality for the Flyers but the Mohawks pulled off a major upset and gained revenge for their defeat by the Flyers in the corresponding playoff game 12 months earlier and were crowned Scottish Champions with a 7-5 win.

The season ended with the Flyers competing for three further trophies. The Skol Cup was retained after a 9-6 win against the Durham Bees on 4th April. The following weekend they went down 7-3 at home to the Brighton Tigers in the first leg of the Grandstand Trophy which they were defending. A second leg 2-2 draw down on the south coast saw them relinquish the trophy in their final game of the season. A couple of days before that the inaugural Directors Trophy remained in Kirkcaldy as the visiting Murrayfield Royals were defeated 5-4.

1965/66 – Not sure what to call this season ?

The Flyers would be guided by Jerry Hudson, the former Dunfermline Viking who had returned from the continent and would take over as coach. Newcomers included Lawrie Spence, older brother of Jimmy who had played with the Murrayfield Royals and Perth Panthers and returning to Scottish hockey ex Falkirk Lion Tommy Paton who had been out of the game for the previous five years. The roster was: Roy Reid, Bill Sneddon, Joe McIntosh, Lawrie Spence, Andy Williams, Gordie Hughes, Bert Smith, Jimmy Spence, Sam McDonald, Jerry Hudson, Graeme Farrell, Lawrie Lovell, Joe Baird, Pep Young, Ian Shields

The Flyers would however be missing the prolific firepower of Jimmy Spence to start the season due to injury, Spence would eventually make a full return to the team in February!

For 1965-66, the Coca-Cola Championship, consisting of separate leagues comprised of English and Scottish teams, was set up. It was another classic UK hockey innovation that didn't quite work the way it was planned. The league lasted one partial season before succumbing, more than half of the games in Section B of the league were not contested. There was a notional "Scottish League" featuring teams from Fife, Edinburgh, Paisley, Ayr, Durham, Brighton and Wembley. This competition may well have been connected to the Coca-Cola Championship, however there was no recognised Scottish League Champion but there was an award of the Coca Cola Trophy, can you guess who got their hands on it ?

The season got underway with the Skol Trophy which the Flyers were trying to retain for the 3rd successive year since its inception. The Paisley Mohawks were defeated 3-2.

Next up was the return of the STV Trophy series where the Murrayfield Royals were humbled 11-5 in front of the cameras and highlights of the match were shown nationally on the World of Sports programme on the Saturday afternoon of 2nd October.

Murrayfield returned a couple of weeks later and lost 5-4 in the Skol Cup and Durham Bees were beaten 3-1 in whatever the league set up was to become.

Those pesky Brighton Tigers made their first trip north on October 23rd and this time the Flyers came out with a win in an 8-3 victory but that there was an unusual backdrop to the match. The game started three hours later than scheduled and finished after midnight as the Brighton plane had been diverted to Glasgow due to fog. What looked like a capacity crowd had many queuing to get their money back and the rink management tried to put on an impromptu musical concert, it was almost 10pm by the time the Tigers arrived and by the time the game finished the rink was almost empty. Tigers who were homeless following the demolition of their Brighton Sports Stadium rink were ordered to complete all travel to Scotland in the future by train.

October 24th and the planned visit by the Ayr Rangers was replaced by a fixture against the Murrayfield Royals who lost 5-1 after Ayr failed to raise a team. The Rangers did visit Kirkcaldy a couple of weeks later and were thumped 13-2.

The game gave rise to the following article in the local paper:

"Ice hockey is growing in popularity in this part of Scotland and the rink at the Galatoun is acquiring quite a reputation for staging some of the most exciting matches. However it is also acquiring a reputation it could well do without. Some of the language used by the players and being directed at the fans on occasion is downright objectionable and this is something which can do harm to the game.

Ice hockey is often described as the fastest game in the world and perhaps it is understandable that tempers become frayed in certain instances. Indeed, many fans do not think they have seen a good game unless there is the odd rough-house but surely there is no need for the language to get out of hand. It is only to be expected that the occasional word will slip out but there was an incident last weekend which was completely unnecessary. At one point there was a certain amount of interchange between a player and a fan which built up into rather an unsavoury verbal assault by the player concerned. Possibly the player felt he was being goaded by the fan but he would have done well to

have remembered that there were many women within earshot and they should not have been subjected to such an incident. It is to be hoped this will not be repeated."

Fifty plus years on you decide.

The 6-2 win against the Paisley Mohawks on November 14th resulted in the Flyers qualifying to meet the Mohawks in the Paisley a fortnight later in the final of the six game challenge series arranged by promoter Peter Keenan.

Wins followed away to Ayr Rangers 9-1 and then home to Durham Bees 4-3.

The weekend of 27th/28th November saw the Flyers add two pieces of silverware to the cabinet. The Saturday night at home to Murrayfield Royals in the Skol Cup Final saw them retain their grip on the trophy for a third successive season. A 9-3 win with goals from Hudson 3, Forbes 3, Paton 2 and Lovell. The following night they travelled to Glasgow to play the Paisley Mohawks in the Coca Cola Challenge trophy. Goals from Smith 2, Forbes, Lovell saw reigning British light heavy weight champion Chick Calderwood present them the trophy after a 4-3 win.

Soon after Laurie Spence and Gordie Hughes were released – Hughes moved to Ayr and Spence Murrayfield. On the plus side however Ian Forbes, coach last season, returned as a player.

Flyers were on TV against defeating Murrayfield Royals 5-2 at Kirkcaldy in front of the TV cameras and the following night at home they won 8-3 against the Ayr Rangers who struggled again with a team and borrowed Watson and Medd from the junior Flyers as well as a couple of players from the HMS Ottawa touring team.

The Flyers entertained the Polish International Team on December 18th. The game was delayed by one hour as the visitors waited on the arrival of their equipment and Roman Podalanski introduced the Polish team, he played for Flyers in 1951 (????????). Roy Reid had been struggling with an injury and had was hospitalised after an operation so Murrayfield's Willie Clark guested along with Penny from Ayr and Carlyle of Murrayfield. The Flyers lost 5-2.

On Christmas day Paisley Mohawks won 5-4, the Flyers first defeat of the season. The match again started 20 minutes later after the Mohawks were delayed. The locals were becoming annoyed by the regularity of this.

Although Medd deputised for Reid who was to be out for rest of season after his operation and Stuart also played in net the Flyers needed an experienced stopper and John Pullar returned to play his first game in three years on Jan 8th against the Paisley Mohawks in a BBC Grandstand Trophy afternoon game. Flyers won 3-0. He then shutout Durham Bees 9-0 and the following week against the Brighton Tigers with 11 minutes to go the score was 4-0 to the Flyers. If Pullar managed a 3rd successive shutout it would be a British Record. The game ended in a 4-3 win for the Flyers.

Ayr Rangers once again couldn't raise a team so Dave Medd, Hugh and Jimmy Taylor played from junior Flyers as the west coast side lost 10-2.

The last weekend in January was quite notable. On the Saturday the Paisley Mohawks were visitors in the final of the BBC Grandstand Trophy and they left victorious in a 4-1 win. It was said that Paisley didn't resort to their normal rough house game and surprised the Flyers. The following night the b Flyers played host to the Murrayfield Royals and won handsomely 12-2. The result proved to be the last game played by the Edinburgh side who disbanded for the remainder of the season. Dave Medd made his full Flyers debut appearance in defence on Feb 6th as the Paisley Mohawks proved that the game last weekend was no fluke and so there was no revenge for Flyers as they went down 6-5. The following weekend however Flyers returned to winning ways with a 6-2 win against the Mohawks in Glasgow.

Following the fallout in Edinburgh Flyers signed Willie Clark, Les Lovell brother of Lawrie and defenceman Glen Reilly who would of course be a well respected referee in these parts in later years. Another success against the nomadic Brighton Tigers, 8-4, was followed by wins against a Glasgow Select 11-3, the Wembley Lions 7-4 and the rest of Scotland 12-8

It was announced late February that Bert Smith would be retiring from competitive ice hockey – He played down in Altrincham, Wembley and Brighton when senior hockey packed up in Fife as well as

three years on the content. Sam McDonald took over as captain. Smith couldn't stay off the ice however and was back in 1966/67.

On Apr 9th they travelled to play a friendly against the Perth Blackhawks. This was Perth's first game for many years and they hoped to return to the league soon. They had 5 Mohawks guesting for them but lost 6-3 to the Flyers.

The domestic season concluded over the weekends of Apr 10th and April 17th against the Paisley Mohawks. The first leg of the League Trophy Final at home was won 5-2 and the return leg ended in a 4-4 draw. The Flyers had become the first winners of the trophy sponsored by Coca Cola. Yet they already had a trophy from Coca Cola? All very confusing. Jerry Hudson won the Mirror of Merit award for the season.

1966/67 – Another New League Set Up

A new season a new league set up. The Northern League (known also as the Scottish League) was launched. The League developed out of the far more limited Scottish League, established in 1962 and which by 1965 a regular but limited schedule had been established. That summer the better British teams, mostly in Scotland, agreed to form a league to provide matches throughout the season. Initially, seven teams joined. The Spring Cup served as the Northern League playoffs but would not be contested in the inaugural season.

The Flyers opened the season on Oct 9th at home to the Durham Hornets and got off to a fine start with a 7-1 win. Bill Sneddon was player-coach and then became team Manager following Sandy Nicol's resignation after four years in the job. The roster was: Roy Reid, Harry Young, Les Lovell, Bill Brown, Danny Brown, Bert Smith (who didn't retire but played intermittently throughout the season), Jimmy Watson, John Taylor, Joe McIntosh, Kenny Horne, Dave Medd, M Crombie, Hugh Taylor, Andy Napier and Ian Shields

Signs were beginning to appear that the Flyers halcyon period of the last few years was about to come to an end. They travelled to Durham on October 24th and remarkably returned with a point following a 3-3 draw with only six skaters.

In the early part of the season though they put together some solid results, a 6-3 win at home to Ayr Bruins was followed by a 2-1 semi-final win in the BBC Grandstand Trophy against the Paisley Mohawks. The Flyers would meet the winners of the Wembley Lions v Perth Panthers semi-final at Kirkcaldy in January.

Jerry Hudson returned to the team but the team hit the skids as the year drew to a close. The reformed Murrayfield Royals won 5-2 at Kirkcaldy and this was followed by the Mohawks winning 5-3 at home and then a 6-1 win in Fife. Norrie Boreham came back out of retirement to help but the crowds were visibly disappearing. A 6-2 win at home against the Glasgow Dynamos arrested the slide and after an 8-5 win against the Durham Hornets Les Lovell Snr took over as coach after Sneddon resigned. There were no games over Christmas period and hockey came out of cold storage with the visit of the Wembley Lions on Jan 7th in the Final of the BBC Grandstand Trophy.

The Flyers shook of their recent poor form and surprised the 80 Lions travelling fans as they did a lot of their own support on how fine a game they played. Goals from Les Lovell 2 and Bert Smith secured a 3-2 win as they captured the trophy for the second time. Willie Clark, Johnny Carlyle, Eric Grieve, Freddie Wood, J Inglis and Pep Young all made appearances in a changed team that looked more like a Flyers/Racers select. The following night a clearly jaded Flyers side lost 5-3 to the Durham Hornets in Kirkcaldy. A 9-1 walloping from the Dynamos in Glasgow was followed up by a couple of large wins against Perth Blackhawks 13-1 (five for Boreham) and Ayr Bruins 14-4 (six for Boreham) and then a 3-2 win down at Whitley Bay.

Inexplicably the goals dried up and they surrendered a 2-1 game at home to the Glasgow Dynamos but the quality of hockey was at least pleasing to the crowd. Murrayfield Racers then won 8-2 before

Roy Reid returned in a 6-3 win against the Perth Blackhawks. Perth had ex Flyers Forbes, McDonald, Farrell, John Flynn, Dave Ovenstone and Willie Clark – this wasn't a convincing win.

The next week saw a convincing win but unsatisfactory for those in attendance. The Paisley Vikings came in with a played 20 lost 20 (although the Vikings had no home, the same as Perth Blackhawks and Dundee Rockets who were above them in the table) iced in all of their games for double points so they had actually only played 10 games. Only points, not goals were doubled though so Flyers got four points from their 21-1 mauling which left the Vikings with a record of goals for 4 and against 144. They turned up short of two players of which the netminder was one. It was speculated that if Flyers could score 21 what might one of the top sides do, it wasn't a spectacle. Jim Taylor went in goal and another junior Flyer Drew Motion both helped out. The final league table, which saw an uncompleted schedule was:

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Paisley Mohawks	32	27	1	4	188	54	55
Murrayfield Racers	32	25	1	6	189	85	51
Glasgow Dynamos	30	19	1	10	161	106	43
Durham Wasps	30	16	3	11	142	111	35
Whitley Warriors	30	15	3	12	127	111	33
Fife Flyers	30	14	2	14	127	126	30
Ayr Bruins	32	6	3	23	66	180	15
Perth Blackhawks *	26	2	2	22	32	113	6
Paisley Vikings *	22	0	0	22	5	151	0

(* Perth and Paisley played all their games for 4 points each.)

After the final league game of the season Bert Smith was presented with Mirror of Merit.

The season was rounded off by a new competition, the Icy Smith Cup was a knockout tournament contested mostly by Northern League teams. In 1976, the Icy Smith Cup would become the national British Championship and saw teams from all leagues participate and the Flyers wouldn't fare well in the competition until that time. In their first outing they lost 5-2 at home to the Glasgow Dynamos. Retroactively, the tournament's played between 1966 and 1975 were recognized as serving as the British Championship during that time period.

1967/68 – the team was on the wain

Tommy Horne, father of Kenny was team manager and Joe McIntosh the British internationalist from Grangemouth was player/coach. Danny Brown, John Taylor and Ian Shields were to be the kid line for the season. Norrie Boreham, nicknamed the rocket and reputed to be one of the fastest wingers in the game returned as did Ian Forbes. Centre Les Lovell the former Edinburgh and Brighton and internationalist also joined. Joe Baird was ex Glasgow Dynamos who learned his hockey in Falkirk and the 2nd top points scorer last season. Kenny Horne a former junior Flyer now ready to do battle long with Dave Medd who like Horne was now gaining experience and both local lads had done well last season. In addition Bill Brown and Sammy McDonald said to be unpredictable but on his day the most polished wing in the country and another internationalist were in the line-up. The goalies would be Roy Reid former British internationalist from Falkirk and Jim Taylor the junior Flyers netminder. Bert Smith was still turning out and although Pep Young had hoped to play it would only be a few weeks into the season before he announced his retirement. Jimmy Spence resigned after a years absence from hockey due to work commitments but it was uncertain if he would get enough time to train and play.

An Autumn Cup competition was introduced with Home and Away games against Murrayfield, Glasgow Dynamos, Paisley Mohawks, Whitley Warriors and Durham Wasps.

Last seasons' Northern Ice Hockey League was said to be experimental and that the standard of hockey was "disappointing". Ayr, Dundee and Perth were asked to play in an intermediate league this year to help bring the standard of the Northern League up for the remaining six teams (as above).

The season opener was an Autumn Cup fixture at home against the Murrayfield Racers. The Lovell brothers opposed each other. Les and Lawrie matched each other with hat tricks but the Edinburgh side won 8-5 with the other Fife goals from Horne and Baird. Spence was missing.

A 6-2 loss against Paisley Mohawks in Glasgow was followed by a 15-6 win at home against Durham Wasps. Jim Taylor guested for the visitors in goal and John Taylor scored one against him. The club added two new signings, Peter Reilly and Mike Mazur.

There was then a run of defeats during which time Johnny Bayne was forced to deputise after a long absence from the game for the injured Reid. There were losses to Murrayfield 6-3, Paisley Mohawks 10-3 and Glasgow Dynamos 3-1 in the Autumn Cup and a 5-2 reversal to the Wembley Lions where Jimmy Mitchell suited up as he was now working in Coventry. Flyers were bottom of the Autumn Cup standings. A 2-2 draw away to Whitley Bay Warriors saw 'Pinky' Farrell rejoin the team but although he travelled he did not play due to an administrative error. The following weekend the Flyers got back on the win column when the Warriors were downed 12-7, Farrell did make his debut and notched two goals.

Flyers eventually finished 3rd in the Autumn Cup standings with Les Lovell setting the scoring pace with 19 goals, Joe Baird 11, Ian Forbes 8 and 'Pinky' Farrell 7 after only four games.

The Skol Trophy which possibly hadn't been competed for the previous season was in the trophy cabinet again after a one off game against the Glasgow Dynamos. Goals from Lovell 2, Farrell 2, Horne, Forbes and Baird in a 7-4 win.

A public enquiry into the Kirkcaldy Town Council proposal to build old folks houses beside the rink was put on hold, there had long been debate about the access into the rink being unsuitable off Rosslyn Street and that Pottery street should be used and that an exchange of land between the Ice Rink and council could facilitate this. Decide for yourself how this all played out.

The Flyers hosted the Royal Canadian Air Force side "The Lahr Arrows" from Germany and Jan 20th. This was only the 2nd foreign side to appear at Kirkcaldy in the last ten years following the recent Polish National. The Flyers lost 8-4 with three guests, Inglis, Reilly and Lawrie Lovell from the Racers, Pecker scored one of the goals. There was talk afterwards of Flyers travelling to Germany to play a return match. This never did come to fruition.

On Jan 27th the Wembley Lions visited in the British Cup and won 4-2 in a match described as a disappointment after the exciting game the previous week with the Lions being an ageing and slow paced team but the Flyers couldn't get out of the rut. The following night at Murrayfield with the Flyers behind 10-4 they walked off the ice minutes from the end of the game in protest at the standard of refereeing, 44 penalty minutes had been dished out Racers scored 4 in a 5 minute spell of which 3 were in the highly doubtful category with 2 from two line passes and the third where the clock had not ben started, at that stage the Racers were leading by a goal early in the 3rd period so it was as they same a game changer. Who said today's rivalries have everything!

With winter Olympic coverage widespread on TV a large crowd was expected Sat 17th Feb for No3 Wing of the Royal Canadian Airforce the Zweibrucken Raiders – Verne Gregor refereed the game which the Flyers lost 3-2 and again Inglis, Reilly and Lovell guested along with leading scorer International center Bob Stevenson.

A run of wins in which Farrell was banging in the goals followed, Glasgow Dynamos 10-6 (Farrell 5), Whitley Bay Warriors 8-3 (Farrell 4) and again Whitley Warriors 9-6 and Paisley Mohawks 8-5 saw the team qualify for the post season Spring Cup playoffs by securing 2nd spot. What better way for Roy Reid's final game to beat the league leaders with Johnny Bayne and Ian Nelson sharing duties for the remainder of the season. Paisley knocked the Flyers out of the Icy Smith Trophy in 6-2 before Whitley Bay Warriors were soundly beaten in the first leg of the playoff semi-final 12-7 at Kirkcaldy.

The second leg the Flyers were made to rue the missed chances in the first game and crashed out after an 8-2 defeat.

The final game of the season was an 11-4 defeat away to the Wembley Lions, which was notable for George Beach scoring his 1000th goal. Paisley Mohawks were the undisputed kings winning all Northern league competitions whilst the Wembley Lions went unbeaten in their 11 games against the Northern League teams.

The junior Flyers signed off their 8 game season with a 4-3 win at Murrayfield with 4 wins 1 draw and 3 defeats

All Star selections were made and Joe McIntosh was on the A team defence with Les Lovell and Sam McDonald on the B team. Les Lovell won the Mirror of Merit and was leading scorer, Joe Baird was 2nd.

1968/69 – A season in the doldrums

October 5, 1968 marked the club's 30th anniversary and a move from Sunday to Saturday night for home games. The switch was seen as a gamble in some quarters, and it came at a time when the team was about to struggle badly. They started the season with a 9-8 home defeat at the hands of Whitley Warriors, despite leading 7-4 with just ten minutes to play. Joe McIntosh returned as coach again. Jim Taylor and Ian Nelson who was on loan from Glasgow Dynamos shared the nets. The team had been rocked however on the eve of the season when it was confirmed that top scoring Lovell would be going to Murrayfield stating that whilst he enjoyed his time at Fife the travelling was an issue for him. This however set alarm bells ringing around the league as such a signing could potentially make the Racers too big a powerhouse. The top line of Lovell-Baird-Boreham was a huge asset from last season. New signing George Pearson signed from Whitley Bay would take over Lovell's role. The rest of the squad was Bill Brown, Dave Medd, Peter Reilly, Sam McDonald, Jimmy Hunter, Graeme Farrell, Norrie Boreham, Ian Shields, Joe Baird, Johnny Taylor, George Pearson and George Wylie

The juniors were to compete in the Northern Junior League and a junior coach to be appointed. The Autumn Cup was proving to be a disaster, defeats mounted, Paisley Mohawks 8-4 and 12-3, Murrayfield Racers 12-3 with Lovell getting three. Only a last second goal from Baird got them a point in a 2-2 home draw against the Glasgow Dynamos.

A Challenge match against the Three Wing Flyers Royal Canadian Airforce side based in Germany managed by Gerry Walker was played on a Saturday afternoon and televised live on Grandstand despite Raith Rovers playing at home against Falkirk. Guests were Bob Stevenson Glasgow Dynamos, Paisley Mohawks duo Alistair and Billy Brennan and Jerry Hudson who had been coaching on the continent and they helped earn a 2-2 draw.

Following the recent defeats Tommy Horne made a plea to the Northern Ice Hockey committee to hold a special meeting and help the Flyers out by assigning a couple of experienced players in particular forwards as the team had become demoralised and there was a real chance that they would have to withdraw. Attendances were now very poor. He wanted the players graded to make the teams more equal – sort of like the old pooling system that the Flyers were unhappy about 20 years earlier. A week later and William Kerr the manager of Edinburgh and Tommy Horne agreed that Les Lovell would rejoin the Flyers, if it suited the player to do so. An amazing position to put the player in but Les remained in Edinburgh and the Flyers struggled on. On December 8th there was a much needed 10-8 home win against the Durham Wasps in what was a bottom of the table clash. It was far from a classic, likened by one spectator as a pantomime – Cinderella on Ice. The attendance was again very poor and once again Tommy Horne gave a foreboding warning that if things didn't improve then hockey in the town could be ceased. It didn't cease but it took until the 22nd of March for the Flyers to pick up their only win in the Northern League when they beat the second bottom Durham Wasps 8-4 at Kirkcaldy. Jimmy Jack made his debut against Glasgow Dynamos in January. There was no awarding of the Mirror of Merit for the year.

1969/70 - Dejavu

The decade was to finish with a 10 team Northern League with the Edinburgh icing two teams the Racers and Royals as did Whitley Bay with the Warriors and Bandits who joined the Flyers, Dundee Rockets, Paisley Mohawks, Glasgow Dynamos, Ayr Bruins and Durham Wasps.

The team comprised of a much more youthful bunch: Jimmy Taylor, Kenny Horne, Dave Medd, J Simpson, Bill Brown (captain), George Pearson, Jimmy Hunter, Ian Shields, John Taylor, Rab Petrie, Angus Cargill, Jimmy Jack, A Dryburgh, Allan Crooks, Douglas Wilson, Hugh Taylor

The Autumn Cup yielded a couple of wins. There was the now customary exit from the Icy Smith Cup at the first time of asking when Dundee Rockets knocked them out, winning 4-2. The League campaign saw them finish bottom of the pile with the following record:

GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
18	2	3	13	63	118	7

Once again there was no Mirror of Merit award but better times were just around the corner into the new decade.