

Booth CC

Booth C.C. was founded in 1893. The club's debut match was against neighbours Luddenden Foot St. Mary's. Unfortunately Booth were dismissed for just 8 runs!

In the early years of their existence, Booth were ground-less and played in various locations. These included Tommy Lane and a field behind the Woodman Inn which was also inhabited by cows.

In 1895 a pitch was leveled at Carr House. However, it seems unlikely that it was ever used as the club were offered the Woodman Inn venue, where it remained until 1942.

In 1897 the Halifax Parish Cup committee carried out a report on the grounds of competing clubs. Booth's original ground, close to the Woodman, was described as an 'irregular shape and on a fairly steep hillside.' Its dimensions were 'about 100 yards x 100 yards' with a 'laid crease 30 yards x 20 yards.'

The report concluded that 'the crease is capable of being made a good one but needs well rolling. The outfield has a pretty good surface but the contour is uneven. There is a small pavilion but no seating.'

In 1900 Booth were Sowerby Division Champions and in 1906 they made their first Parish Cup final appearance. During the First World War the club was disbanded and the pioneering era of early cricket in Booth came to a close. Some of the early players moved to other clubs and others simply gave up the game.

The 1920s saw Booth CC get back on track. In 1921 Booth joined the Halifax Amateur League and 1927 saw them win the Hebden Bridge League. This was a major achievement as they had only joined the League in 1924.

Booth left the Hebden Bridge League in 1938 and joined the Halifax League. The club's ground had now reached the required standard for the Halifax League.

These improved playing conditions were made possible when permission to mow the outfield was gained from the farmer who owned the field! In 1943 the club felt the impact of global conflict. This time the Woodman Inn ground was requisitioned and ploughed up for food production – and used for allotments – to support of the war effort.

In 1946 permission was granted to construct a permanent headquarters at Broad Fold. Building work took place in 1947, which meant that all the club's 'home' games during that season had to be played away.

The new ground was opened on 24 April 1948, and Mr R.H. Murgatroyd, owner of the local mill, bowled the first ball on the new turf to Bob Midgley.

1951 saw Booth lose the Parish Cup final to King Cross, going down by 7 wickets. One Booth player had contracted mumps...and was therefore kept in isolation due to the rest of the team fearing for their own glands!

In 1957 the club held a special 'Booth v Booths' fundraising match. Players came from as far afield as Lancashire in order to take part in this one-off event. Via the match, a sum of £19 was donated to the Collinson Memorial Trophy competition.

Over the years, Booth have surely known how to have a good time post-match. One stalwart remembers: 'The licensee of The Sportsman filled the

Parish Cup on victory night with Guinness, beer and the contents of "lots of little bottles from the back of the bar that nobody asked for."

One post-war match at Northowram was abandoned due to thunder and lightning. The umpire was wearing metal glasses and said he 'didn't want them welding to his face'. Robert Midgley, who was batting, agreed. He was wearing a metal box!

The 1960s were a vintage period for Booth. They won the Parish Cup on five occasions and the Halifax League title twice. Surely this meant that Booth were the team of the decade in local cricket.

Today, on the club website, the president says: 'We are hoping to encourage new membership and volunteers to the club, where our bar and playing facilities are excellent. The clubhouse can be hired for private functions. Everyone is welcome whether you are a player or a spectator.'

Booth's ground at Broad Fold is set amid luscious greenery and is only a matter of yards from the bus terminus and the narrow, winding road that is Dean House Lane.

The playing area resembles a large, slightly sloping putting green, and the tall emerald green trees that surround the venue are handsome.

The sightcreens are sturdy and wheeled, and there's a lovely curved wall on the far side of the ground, on top of which hardy supporters congregate - even when it's raining. There's also a public bridleway running nearby.

In 1950 work was carried out to reduce the slope, and in 1972 builders started on the pavilion. Thirty years on, the kitchen is always busy, the walls are awash with team photos - from 1912, 1948, 1949, 1952, 1958 and later - and a blue club flag flutters from the building's roof.

There were further developments in the 1980s: the pavilion was extended, a new car park was built, and showers were installed.

Today, there's a BBQ by the changing rooms, pretty flowers in the hanging baskets, and cut-price teas available for kids on matchdays. The new scoreboard clock is dedicated to the memory of Rod Warhurst, a long-serving club member.

Booth may be a small village, with only a few rows of terraces, but its cricket ground is definitely worth a visit.

Club secretary Mike Barnett says: 'It's a small venue but very attractive. The ground is overlooked by a big manor house and, all in all, it's a lovely setting. The wicket has a tendency to keep low and I'd say that 200 is a decent par score. Our current groundsman has done a very good job.'