

## **Origins of the Club**

There is no place called Bridgeholme, so how did Bridgeholme Cricket Club acquire its name?

The club originated directly from local industry. The cricket teams from JJ Tatham Ltd., Nanholme Mills, and Moss Brothers, Bridgeroyd Mills joined forces to form one club in 1950. The name 'Bridgeholme' was invented by combining 'Nanholme' and 'Bridgeroyd'. These two mills still exist today, although Nanholme is now re-named Springholme and is owned by Pickwell-Arnold.

Prime movers in the amalgamation were Mr R Tatham of Nanholme Mills and Mr Percy Sowden of Moss Brothers, who was also Chairman of the West Riding Education Committee. Initially players had to be employees of the two companies but qualification was extended during Bridgeholme's period in the Hebden Bridge and District League between 1952 and 1955.

This league was founded as a subsidiary of the Calder Valley Cricket League in 1893 amidst the rush to create leagues in cricket, football and rugby across the industrial north and midlands. These two local leagues continued to thrive through the first half of the 20th century but by the early 1950s their future was bleak. The advent of alternative entertainments, facilitated by the developments of television and motor car amongst others, caused a decline in the amount of cricket played across

England. The formation and survival of a new cricket club, even by combining the forces of rival teams who, incidentally continued to play in the Todmorden Works League, was remarkable at a time when Todmorden supported an unsustainable number of teams.

The club had no ground during its first season in 1951, its only year in the Todmorden and District League, and played all matches away from home. In 1952 Hill House, the Cross Stone ground was rented for the club's first season in the Hebden Bridge League and by early in the 1953 season the Eastwood ground, next door to one used from the 1890s to 1930s by Eastwood CC, was ready for action.

Bridgeholme moved still further a field in 1956, joining the Halifax League. Since then the club has played continuously in either the Halifax League or the Halifax Association.

Although the club is long-since independent of its industrial parents, Percy Sowden would be proud that his brainchild continues as the town's only all-amateur cricket club, and the last surviving link to the old Todmorden and District Cricket League.

As such, Bridgeholme Cricket Club is unique in Todmorden's sporting heritage - an institution which the town should be proud to cherish, support and preserve.