

LATER YEARS

BIG MOVE

1956 – INTO THE HALIFAX LEAGUE

Bridgeholme played their first match in the Halifax League at Blackley on Saturday 21 April 1956, losing by 45 runs.



After a second defeat seven days later, the *Hebden Bridge Times* explained their poor form:

It would appear that with so much work having to be done to get the ground at Eastwood into shape, the Bridgeholme players have had little chance of practice, and once this worry has been removed there will probably be an improvement in the side's performances.

Bridgeholme avoided defeat for the first time in a tie at Dean Clough, with both teams 131 all out. Encouragingly, Jack Horsfall was back to his best with a tally of 15 wickets in three games.

SEEKING HIGHER CLASS CRICKET

Bridgeholme Club admitted to Halifax League

BY 15 votes to 12, Bridgeholme Cricket Club were admitted to the Halifax League at the annual meeting on Tuesday evening. The application of the club was approved after a long discussion concerned mainly with travelling distances and the condition of the Bridgeholme ground at Eastwood, Todmorden.

For the past few seasons Bridgeholme have been members of the Hebden Bridge Cricket League, and at Tuesday's meeting their representatives stated that the club had been carrying all before it in this league and wanted to enter a higher class of cricket. It was stated that if elected to the league work would begin on the ground to bring it up to any standard set by the league. In addition, a new pavilion would be erected.

There were 40 to 50 playing members, and there were about 30 boy members, whom in the interests of establishing good club cricket in the village, they were anxious to cater for and retain. The ground measured 100 yards by 60 yards.

A proposition that the league remain at 20 clubs was defeated by 19 votes to 13, and Bridgeholme's application was approved by 15 votes to 12. It was decided that Bridgeholme's membership should be of 12 months and that its continuance should be dependent on how their intentions to improve the ground and its amenities were fulfilled.

EARLIER START OF GAMES

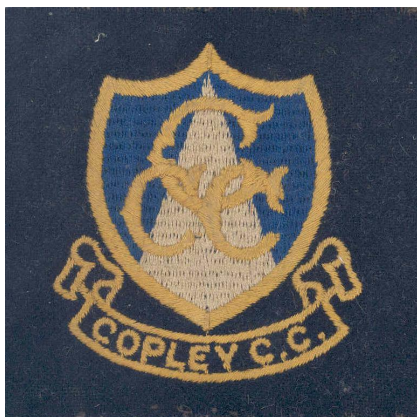
On the proposition of Bradshaw Cricket Club, it was decided that matches begin at 2-40 and finish at 8 p.m., allowing for an interval of 20 minutes.

King Cross wrote stating that they could not use the ground at Highroad Well Barracks next season for second team matches. They had been unable to find an alternative ground, and unless the league was prepared to accept second team fixtures on mid-week evenings they would have to resign from the league.

A proposition that King Cross should remain in the league, playing second team fixtures in mid-week, was carried nem. con.

Bridgeholme's ground was not ready until 12 May, the fourth weekend of the season, when the 2nd XI beat Dean Clough by 48 runs.

On the same day the 1st XI made their debut in the Parish Cup, a competition for which the Club was refused entry in 1954 because of the condition of the ground. A 13-run victory at Dean Clough saw Bridgeholme progress, but they were later beaten by Division 1 high-flyers Copley.



Copley's blazer badge of 1951

The 1st XI's home debut in the Halifax League produced a hard-earned draw against Mytholmroyd, Bridgeholme replying to 213 with 90 for 7.

Despite this poor start, the team gradually found its feet and rose from second bottom at the end of May to finish a creditable third behind the two Mytholmroyd clubs who were promoted. Jack Horsfall and Neil Whittaker both took 42 wickets, Horsfall at 9.17 to finish fourth in the League bowling averages.

Optimism was high for 1957, particularly when Bridgeholme signed the former Essex and Glamorgan batsman Richard Horsfall, to date the only first-class cricketer to play for the Club.

Horsfall had a frustrating time, making 58 runs in four innings - one not out, two run outs and one lbw – before returning to Todmorden where he had played in the Lancashire League Double-winning side of 1938.



It is typical of cricket's unpredictability that Horsfall scored more against the 1948 Australians (when he fielded through the famous day at Leyton where the tourists hit 721) than he did at Dean Clough where he was run out for 1.

A less auspicious but more effective signing was that of future Todmorden and Hebden Bridge bowler – and future Mayor of Todmorden – Stanley Hollows. Hollows, with 44 wickets, supported by Jack Horsfall with 39, spearheaded the bowling attack as Bridgeholme won promotion as champions of Division 2.

Halifax and District Cricket League
Division 2

Final Table 1957

	<u>P</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>Pts</u>
Bridgeholme	18	12	3	3	39
Siddall	18	12	1	5	37
Northowram	18	9	1	8	28
Stones	18	9	1	8	28
Blackley	18	8	1	9	25
Websters	18	8	1	9	25
Bradshaw	18	8	0	10	24
Dean Clough	18	6	3	9	21
HB Salem	18	6	1	11	19
Stainland	18	5	2	11	17



The wicket at Stones CC – they finished 4th

MIXED FORTUNES

1957 – HALIFAX LEAGUE

The *Hebden Bridge Times* was accurate in its prediction about Bridgeholme's first season in the Halifax League Division 1:

No doubt Bridgeholme will find the going harder in the senior division, but with their playing strength should be able to hold their own.



Mytholmroyd CC

The Club's first match was a rain-affected draw against Mytholmroyd and they secured their first victory in the top flight by 86 runs against Barkisland the following Saturday. Despite this promising start, Bridgeholme hovered just above the relegation zone until a late run lifted them to fifth place in the ten-team league.

Outstanding performances included an unbeaten 103 not out by Albert Leeder against King Cross and Stanley Hollows' 62 and 6 for 31 against Siddall which secured a semi-final berth in the Parish Cup.

Bridgeholme lost the semi-final by 54 runs after eventual winners Sowerby St. Peter's recovered from 53 for 8 to make 127. The Club's graph had nevertheless continued its upward course in a highly satisfactory first season in the top flight.

Performances by the 2nd XI, who were runners-up in the first division for second teams, and the newly-formed third team, gave plenty of cause for optimism.



The Ramsdens

Playing in the Halifax Junior League, the third team won the Websters Cricket Club Cup, topping their section ahead of Mytholmroyd, Booth and Hebden Bridge Salem before overpowering Sowerby St. Peter's in the final at The Ramsdens.

Doug Mitchell (4-26) and Graham Wrench (3-14) were instrumental in bowling Sowerby out for 52, and Brian Hudson and Michael Greenwood knocked off the runs without loss.

The first significant blip on the Bridgeholme radar came in 1959. Bridgeholme's form inexplicably fell away. In Ernest Travis, who hit 508 runs at an average of 36, the Club possessed one of the League's finest batsmen, but a fourth-from-bottom finish did not augur well.



Sowerby St. Peter's CC in the 1950s

Relegation followed in 1960. Only five points covered the bottom seven in the ten-team league and Bridgeholme's six wins and three draws would have seen them safe most seasons.

But they could hardly claim misfortune when, with issues to be settled on the final day, they could field only nine men in the first team and eight in the seconds. Inevitably, both teams lost.

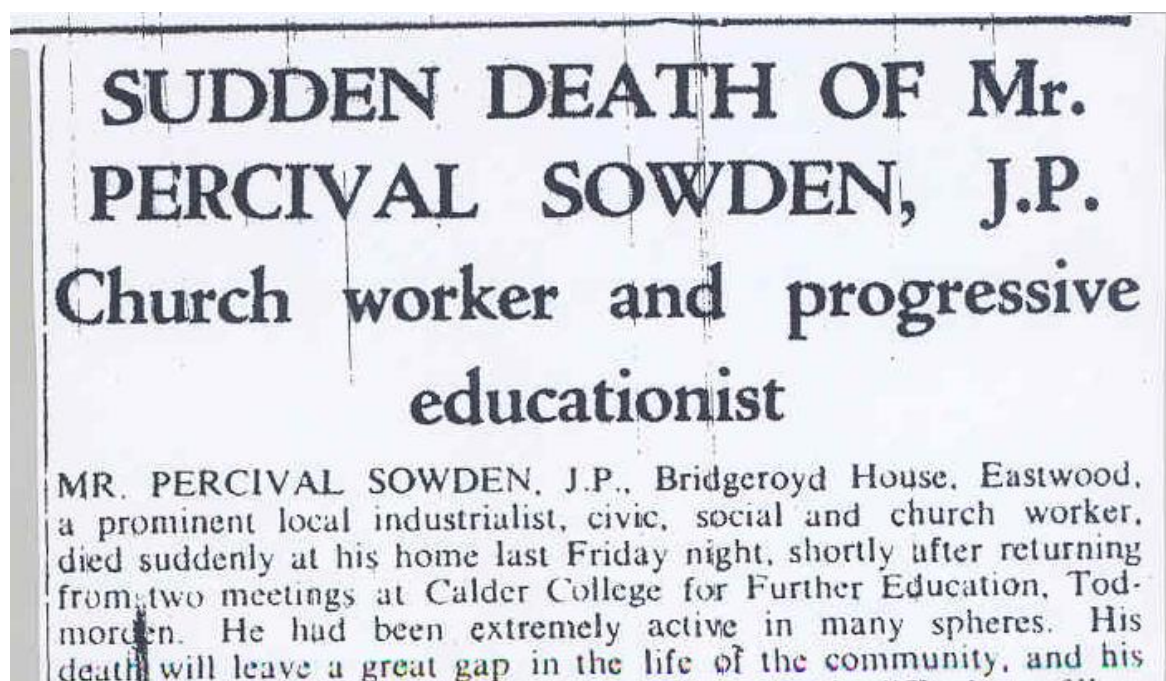
Club fortunes go in cycles and, after almost a decade on the rise, Bridgeholme were past the peak and falling. The next test of the Club's mettle had begun.

UP FOR THE CUP

1971 – SPECIAL TROPHY

The Sowden Trophy, a familiar artefact to those connected with Bridgeholme Cricket Club, has an interesting history.

The trophy was originally presented to the Hebden Bridge & District League in 1952 by Mrs Percival Sowden, wife of the founder of Bridgeholme Cricket Club.



The trophy was for the winners of Division 2, and its first recipient was John Martin, the Bridgeholme captain.

The Sowden Trophy was awarded only three times. By 1955 the Hebden Bridge League had contracted to one division and on 30 December 1957 it ceased to exist.

The League's trophies were held in the offices of Hebden Bridge District Council for almost 14 years for safe-keeping in case the League re-formed.



By 1971 it was clear this would not happen and the Hebden Bridge & District Cricket League committee met for the final time to distribute their assets. These included the Sowden Trophy, which was offered back to the providers and first winners, Bridgeholme.

The 53-year-old trophy continues to see good service and is awarded to Bridgeholme Cricket Club's player of the year.

THE BARKISLAND CONNECTION

2000 – LEAGUE SWITCH

How did sudden prosperity at Barkisland Cricket Club affect the cricketers of Bridgeholme?

In the summer of 2000 Barkisland Cricket Club had an unremarkable season, finishing eighth, one place below Southowram and one place above Booth, of the 12 clubs in Section 'A' of the Halifax League, a competition they had not won since 1985.



The Barkisland CC pavilion

Yet, with an influx of money and new players on the horizon, Barkisland resigned from the Halifax League to enter a higher tier in Section 'B' of the Huddersfield League.

The move has worked for them. Earning promotion in 2003, Barkisland finished fifth in Section 'A' in 2004, the highest standing in the Club's history.



Barkisland have a picturesque ground

Their resignation from the Halifax League in 2000 left a vacancy. Bridgeholme, who had left the Halifax League in 1984, applied and were willingly re-admitted. All the omens seemed right. Bridgeholme fulfilled all the criteria of playing on their own ground, having a decent pitch and running two teams.

With facilities being re-built after the flood in June of that summer, the time seemed right for a fresh start in a higher class of cricket. It has proved to be a wise move. The club has held its own in Section 'B' and the players have benefited from playing on better quality pitches.

PUBS & GRANTS

COMMUNITY LINKS

Bridgeholme's cricketers have traditionally frequented local hostelries for their post-match entertainment.

For many years they diplomatically supported their landlords at the nearby Station House Hotel. This has now closed and more recently the players have held their celebrations and post-mortems at the Rose and Crown, the Swan With Two Necks and the Shannon and Chesapeake.



With the construction of the new pavilion has come the opportunity to provide post-match hospitality, thereby earning much needed funds, at the ground.

It is a condition of the Lottery grant which funded the building that it is used by the community, and local groups and private individuals are taking advantage of Eastwood's first community building for decades.

CINDERS & THE CRICKET BALL...

CLUB NICKNAME

Bridgeholme Cricket Club does not have an official nickname but is often referred to as 'Todmorden's Cinderella Club'.



The last of the town's many all-amateur clubs, Bridgeholme is somewhat dwarfed by the town's other two clubs, Todmorden and Walsden. Todmorden, founded in 1835, is the town's oldest surviving institution after the church and National School and has played in the high-profile Lancashire League since 1897.

Walsden CC first played around 1856, and has been in continuous existence since 1870 and has played in the Central Lancashire League since 1893.

Both these clubs have employed professionals, who include some of the world's most famous players. Bridgeholme's Keith Hudson explains the pros and cons of the local competition:

If we develop a player who becomes particularly good, we're going to lose them, probably as an amateur to Todmorden or Walsden, although some have been offered money to play in Halifax. On the other hand, we are still developing our youth set-up and have been grateful to acquire players from the Todmorden and Walsden junior teams.



Walsden CC from the air

We know our place but we're a friendly club. We may not be the best cricketers around but we can play the game as sportingly as anyone else. Some clubs find it strange when we applaud the opposition but we are proud to play the game that way.

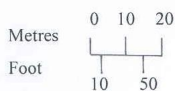
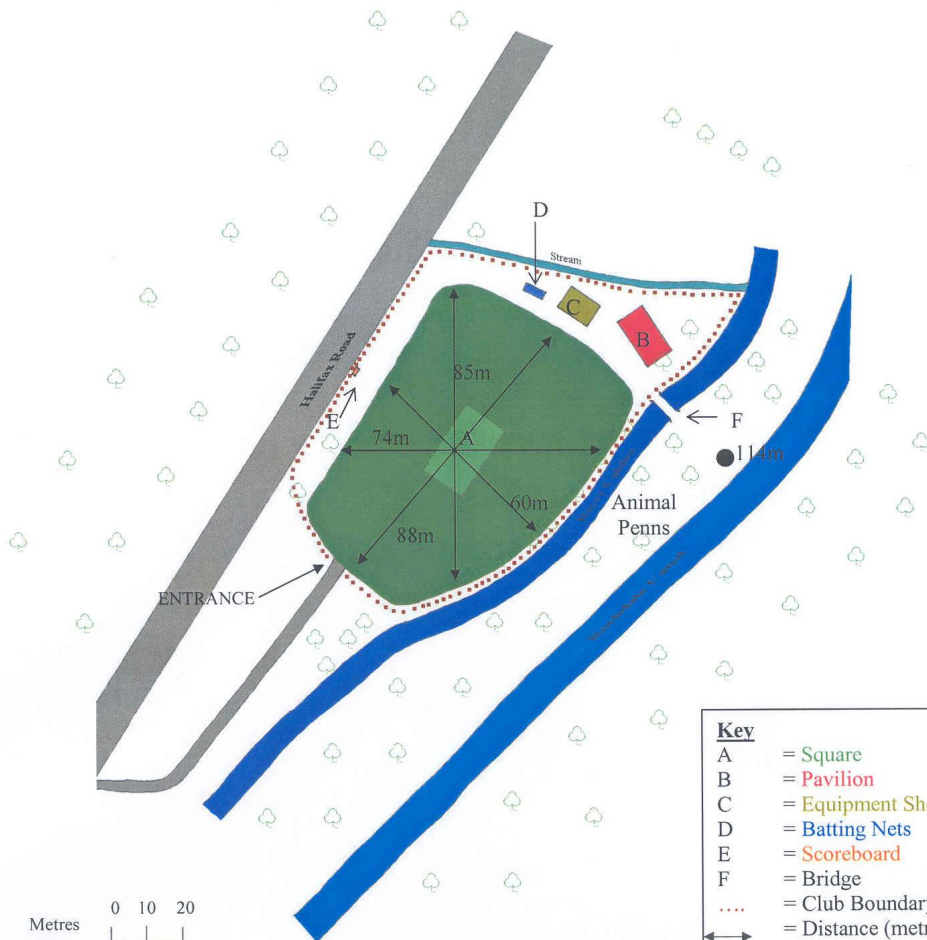
Cinderella club or not, there is clearly an important niche for Bridgeholme Cricket Club.

BRIGHT FUTURE

THE CLUB TODAY



BRIDGEHOLME C.C.
OL14



G. Clayton
GEORGE CLAYTON – UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD – 30/7/2004

Key	
A	= Square
B	= Pavilion
C	= Equipment Shed
D	= Batting Nets
E	= Scoreboard
F	= Bridge
....	= Club Boundary
↔	= Distance (metres)
🌳	= Trees
🌿	= Bushes
●	= Spot Height