

Over the past two years Dr Peter Davies from the Department of History at the University of Huddersfield has been reconstructing the history of local cricket as part of a pioneering £50,000 Cricket Heritage Project being sponsored by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the University of Huddersfield. Working in tandem with research assistant Rob Light, he has been unearthing old photographs, archive documents and other sources relating to the rich local history of the sport. See www.cckcricketheritage.org.uk for further details. Contact Dr Davies on 01484 472405 or via p.j.davies@hud.ac.uk if you have any more information or images for the Project archive. This week the spotlight falls on Brighouse . . .

ALTHOUGH it is generally recognised that the current Brighouse Cricket Club came into being in 1873, this date actually marks the year in which the club was re-formed and moved to the ground at Clifton Road.

In fact, cricket had been played in the town for many years before 1873. During this time matches were commonly played on a ground behind the Parish Church and the sport was fostered by a number of influential local gentlemen including C. Jessop Esq, J. Milnes and J. Grinerod who formed a club called Brighouse Alexandra.

The club was re-formed in 1873 when the old Brighouse Alexandra Cricket Club amalgamated with the Brighouse Working Men's Institute.

The result was that Brighouse New Alexandra CC (later Brighouse CC) was born, and the new club rented a new ground, which was situated in a convenient location behind the Working Men's Institute's clubhouse.

Clifton Road was to become the home of Brighouse cricket until the beginning of the twenty-first century. It was rented from Messrs J.B. Sugdens, and was later re-laid 'for cricketing purposes'. The first match was played on 30 May 1873.

The club's first professional was William Shotton from Lascelles Hall. He was engaged in 1876, 11 years after the

first of his two first-class appearances for Yorkshire.

His association with Brighouse proved to be long and successful. He played 12 seasons for the club as both professional and amateur, scoring 3,011 runs and taking 318 wickets.

Derby matches with Rastrick were always keenly fought affairs, especially in the 1870s. The first 2nd XI encounter took place in 1873.

In 1893, Brighouse became founder members of the West Riding League, which was recognised by Athletic News as 'the chief organisation of its kind in the county'.

In the last summer of peace before the Great War, Brighouse CC hosted a special workshops competition, with local works teams fighting it out for supremacy on the pitch.

Teams like Turner & Wainwrights, Mill Royd Mills, Beacon Dyeworks and Co-op Decorators took part in the special tournament.

The Brighouse club's first major successes in both league and cup competitions came in 1918 when the Yorkshire Council Championship and the Halifax Parish Cup were both claimed.

In the 1930s women's cricket was all the rage in Brighouse and surrounding towns. The Brighouse & Elland Echo featured adverts for games, match reports and

action photos in its pages - and Mona Greenwood, who went on to play for England, became the pin-up girl of local cricket.

In winter 1958 Brighouse pulled off a major coup by signing Frank Lowson, the former Test batsman who had been released by Yorkshire.

Lowson, who scored 15,321 runs in his nine-year career with Yorkshire, had an immediate impact. In his first season Brighouse won the Bradford League Division 2 title and the Waddilove Cup.

After the initial success which had come with signing Frank Lowson, the 1st XI strode out with confidence to begin the 1960 season.

The Yorkshire Colt David Pickles, who had begun his career down the road at Sowerby Bridge, had joined the club to strengthen the bowling attack.

By September that confidence had turned to euphoria, as, for the first time since 1932, the Bradford League title came to Clifton Road. The team had achieved the remarkable feat of ending the season undefeated.

In the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s the club bagged a handful of Division 2 titles, and a few individual batting awards into the bargain.

Brighouse eventually sold their ground to Tesco and left Clifton Road at the end of the 2002 season.

Club with a proud past - an exciting future



Brighouse scrapbook : Clifton Road, league champions and a match programme

