

## BRIGHOUSE CC

# Past Tense: Bradford Road



There was always something wonderfully circular about Brighouse's old ground on Bradford Road. It was also, surely, one of the largest cricket arenas in Calderdale.



In high summer, when the square was heavily parched, the groundsman could be spotted rolling his wicket barefoot, helped by two assistants with wheelbarrow and maintenance equipment in tow.





The pavilion was an authentic cricket pavilion, complete with Union Jack flying from the roof, a plethora of flowerpots, and an atmospheric beer garden.

Inside there were two full-size snooker tables, lots of notices about forthcoming events and a superb oil painting of the ground.

Club spokesman Stuart Watson explains the background to the move:

**The old ground was great. The town centre at one end, parkland at the other. The pavilion and terracing were very traditional and the track was super to bat on. But to be honest, it was becoming a bit dilapidated and everyone was in favour of the move.**

Supermarket giant Tesco purchased the old ground from Brighthouse CC.



Up to September 2002, the BCC matchday programme featured an aerial photo of their 'old' town-centre ground on the cover.

The setting of the ground was put into clear focus: trees, bushes and extensive greenery in the foreground, industrial complexes in the top left-hand corner and a residential area in the top right. (The Ritz Ballroom didn't make it onto the photo, but it was just across the road from the main entrance). It was a fine photo - one that put the former BCC HQ into real-life context.

For 1st XI fixtures, Brighouse attracted a decent crowd at their ex-ground, with VIPs and the more vocal elements sat in front of the dressing rooms.

Smooching couples felt at home on the grassy verge to the left as you looked out from the pavilion, and elderly spectators sat in their deckchairs or vehicles in the shade to the right.



In their last season opposite the Ritz, there were definite signs of enterprise), the ticket-sellers wandering the boundary's edge trying to promote the Saturday-afternoon raffle, the four advertising hoardings near the bowling greens and the two large ads on the green-and-white scoreboard front (for Tesco and Shabab, a local Indian restaurant).

Incidentally, the scoreboard was dedicated to the memory of John A. Cheetham and James Cheetham.

The front-cover pic also showed two bowling greens adjoining the cricketing arena, a reminder that the cricket club was, and is, just one arm of the multi-dimensional Brighthouse Sports Club.



Back in the early part of last century, the Sports Club also specialised in cycling and other dangerous sports.

As historian Reg Mitchell says: **'It was...customary in winter to flood the field so that during frost it was possible to have skating on the ground.'**