

Elland CC

Cricket teams were appearing in Elland from 1859, and that included the side that went on to become Elland CC. In fact, the birth of the club provides one of many examples of participation in organised sport being made possible via the involvement of a local church.

A cricket XI was formed of teachers and scholars linked to Providence Independent Sunday School in 1860, and it was out of this side that Elland CC came into being in 1863.

Little is known about the reasons for the name change, but the involvement of leading members of the local community such as John Wilson Esq. and William Dewhirst Esq. suggests the club came to be viewed as an 'opportunity' to project the town's profile.

The subsequent move to a ground with greater possibilities for improvement was accompanied by a fixture list based on matches against other local teams.

In the late 1870s and 1880s the rising status of Elland CC was reflected in a series of major matches which were played at Hullen Edge.

Staging this type of 'big match' cricket, against leading touring XIs, had been a common way of attracting prestige for clubs in the area since the 1840s - leading players came together to form teams which could be hired to play matches against local and district sides of varying numbers.

Not surprisingly, these matches were the major events of the season. The 1846 All England XI, which was the first to tour the country in this way, played at Leeds during their initial season and regular annual matches were played by this team, and others that followed in its wake, in other Yorkshire towns.

The most famous of these 'big matches' to be staged at Elland was the first one, against the mighty 1878 Australian tourists. The club also played against a team of touring Clowns.

In 1886 the Indian Parsees joined the list of prominent touring sides to visit Elland. The match, which took place on the 18th and 19th of June, was drawn, with Elland scoring 162 and 125 against the Parsees' 116 in their only innings.

Apparently, the exotic nature of the Parsee players and their surnames proved memorable to the locals. The pronunciation of names such as D.D. Khambata, S.M. Bhedwar and J.D.P. Pochkhanavalla was particularly challenging for the nineteenth-century Yorkshire tongue, much to the amusement of the spectators.

In 1916 Elland played Staincliffe in the Yorkshire Cricket Council Play-off Final. Elland scored 260 for 9, Staincliffe a mere 62.

This was one of only two occasions when the club reached the final of this prestigious competition (which covered the whole of the county and included many of its leading clubs).

In 1935 Elland won their first Sykes Cup (this was the Huddersfield League knockout competition), beating Huddersfield by 38 runs.

Before motorised rollers became commonly available, the arduous work of rolling the pitch was never popular amongst players. This was evident in the following minute, which was recorded at a meeting held on April 7th 1952.

There was a proposal the middle and practice wickets be rolled by voluntary labour.

An amendment was moved that Messrs Mitchells of Halifax should be engaged to do the work.

On the vote a stalemate was reached.

A further amendment was moved that it be done by volunteers and at this point Mr D.C. Andrew (Messrs Conways) intervened and said he would lend the club either a Roller or a Tractor of theirs to save the expense.

He was warmly thanked.

The club used the money it was left by Earnest King, after his death in 1959, to buy its first motorised roller.

As the twentieth century came to a close, Elland Cricket Club's proud tradition of staging premier cricket matches was still going strong.

In 1978, exactly 100 years after the visit of the most prestigious touring team of all, the Australians, Yorkshire County Cricket Club began to play regular 2nd XI Championship matches at Hullen Edge. In all, 21 matches were played before the last, in 1999.

Elland are now one of the premier clubs in the area, with an impressive ground and plenty of silverware in the trophy cabinet.