

## **Luddendenfoot CC**

General opinion dates the formation of Luddendenfoot St. Mary's C.C. - predecessor club of the current Luddendenfoot C.C. – to some time in the 1880s. There was an obvious link with the local parish church, perhaps with a group of local choirboys.

However, local cricket historian Andrew Hardcastle has discovered that cricket was being played in the village as early as the 1860s.

In 1862 a Luddenden Foot C.C. played some matches in 'the meadow near the railway station, kindly loaned by Mr N. Whitworth'.

A match also took place in 1863 between Luddendenfoot Rising Star and Luddendenfoot Jolly Boys, who met in a field loaned by Mr W.H. Thompson.

These teams were no longer in existence when the current club was formed.

However, by the 1890s another local club, called Luddenden Foot U.M.F.C., had begun to play matches at Top Shuttles, and from 1895 to 1901 appeared in the Sowerby Division League.

In 1892 the first cricket league in the Halifax area was formed. It was called the Halifax & District Amateur Cricket Association League and remained in existence until 1922.

Luddenden Foot St. Mary's took part in the first season of the competition - and were successful in the series of regionalised play-off matches which ended the season.

In 1895 the club made its first appearance in the prestigious Halifax Parish Cup competition.

In order to enter the competition the club had to pass a ground inspection. At this time the club played at Ellen Holme which was situated next to the 'footbridge at Cooper House Mill.'

In 1898 – following on from its on-field success – St. Mary's graduated to the Halifax & District Cricket League, which contained most of the area's leading clubs.

The club had also moved to a new ground – 'The Holmes'.

On the eve of the Great War, St. Mary's joined their fourth different league competition in 22 years. This time it was a move closer to home as they joined the Hebden Bridge League.

Little is known of the club in the years after the Great War had ended. But in 1926 – the year of the General Strike – St. Mary's once again appeared in the Hebden Bridge League.

Unfortunately, the successes of the pre-war era seemed to be a distant memory. By mid-season the club were bottom of Division 1, and had just been dismissed for 30 by Eastwood.

The wanderlust of Luddendenfoot St. Mary's C.C. was in evidence again at the end of the 1920s. In 1929 the club left the Hebden Bridge League and joined the four-division Halifax Amateur Cricket League, where it stayed until 1937.

Like many other clubs, Luddendenfoot appear to have gone into hibernation during the Second World War.

But the club was re-formed in 1949 and resumed competitive cricket the following year, joining the Hebden Bridge League.

The new sense of optimism that came with a return to peace saw the club working to develop its facilities.

Herbert Fisher remembers that, along with other members such as Lewis Jackson and Wilf Warhurst, he helped to re-lay the square in 1948.

In 1950 a new pavilion was opened and three years later the ground at High Lea Green was levelled and reseeded.

By this time, Luddendenfoot St. Mary's were finding church involvement to be a major hindrance. At the club's 1955 AGM President E.E. Cockroft commented: 'The running of a cricket club in this district...is becoming increasingly difficult'.

Until this time an individual could only become a member of the club if he or she had a connection with the church.

At the AGM twelve months later, on Monday 10 December 1956, it was decided 'to alter the name of the club...and allow unrestricted membership'.

The newly-named Luddendenfoot C.C. joined the Halifax Amateur Cricket Association League in 1956 and won the Second Division the same year.

In 1956 things must have been pretty desperate because, as a cost-cutting measure, the club tried to abandon their ground at High Lea Green.

By March 1958 Luddendenfoot had more cash in hand than at any time since the club re-formed in 1949, and the committee was looking to raise further funds for a new motor-cutter and new cricket tackle.

The 1960s proved to be an exceptionally successful decade for the club's 2nd XI. After the Collinson Cup had been brought to High Lea Green in 1960, the Mackintosh Cup, the 2nd XI championship trophy, was netted on six occasions between 1961 and 1970.

Luddendenfoot C.C. made their final change of league in 1973. This time the club joined the Halifax League, the premier local competition. The move was made possible mainly by the work of Herbert Fisher, and followed two successful Halifax & District Amateur Cricket Association campaigns.

In 1984 the club made its first and only appearance in the Halifax Parish Cup final, losing to Barkisland.

It was just over 10 years before Luddendenfoot C.C. became established in the Halifax League and began to push for a place in the top flight. The first promotion came in 1986 when the Second Division title was landed.

In 1997 the club made further improvements to the facilities at High Lea Green by extending the pavilion. The work was made possible by a grant from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts and the new extension was opened with a match between Luddendenfoot C.C. Past & Present v a Calder Valley XI.