

SBCI CC

Founded: c.1878

Ground: The Astleys

Former Grounds: Norland (just below the Blue Ball), Pye Nest, Holmes (later Sowerby Bridge Sewage Works), Burnley Road (behind the Bay Horse), Albert Road (now Milton Avenue), Sowerby Bridge Grammar School

Nearest Landmark: The Friendly Inn

Nearest Other Clubs: Warley, Sowerby Bridge, Sowerby St. Peters

League: Halifax

Former Leagues: Sowerby Division League, Halifax Amateur League

Greatest Moment: 1999 – the opening of the new pavilion

Local Hero: Alan Jowett – long-serving player, official and stalwart

Bizarre Fact: In the 1930s the SBCI pitch was re-turfed 'using sods from our own field' - and bitter objections were raised to an invoice for 13 hours rolling over two days when the committee had only requested eight hours rolling on one day!

The earliest mention of Sowerby Bridge Church Institute (SBCI) CC comes in 1878 – a 2nd XI away match at Elland St. Mary's.

The cricket club was linked to the Young Men's Class of Christ Church, Sowerby Bridge.

During a financial crisis at the Institute in the early 1930s, brought about in part by economic depression, the cricket club was told it would no longer receive financial support.

The members responded by making the club financially independent from the church, and since then the club has grown apart slightly from its roots.

The first SBCI CC fundraising whist drive & dance was held at the Victoria Assembly Rooms on 2 February 1935. The five-piece New Astoria Band was booked at a cost of 50 shillings, and a profit of £2 14s 6d was recorded.

War hit the club hard: there was no committee meeting between March 1940 and September 1941, at which point the club ceased to function and the ground fell into five years of neglect.

In the early 1950s SBCI Under-18s dismissed Siddal for 12 - and lost the game when they were bowled out for 11, losing by one run!

After overcoming Division 1 league leaders Triangle in the semi-final, the odds were stacked against SBCI when they met big guns Booth in the 1964 Parish Cup final. SBCI won by 1 wicket in a thrilling game.

The SBCI Ladies' Fund-Raising Committee held their first meeting on 15 January 1965 - their stated aim 'to raise money for the Cricket Club'.

Their first event was a hair-dressing demonstration, but bazaars, bring-and-buys, jumble sales and dinner dances became the annual core of their activities.

By 1970 the ladies were expanding their horizons into more social activities. A trip to Bradford to see the Black and White Minstrels was minuted as 'most enjoyable', and a raffle was held which made a profit of £1 17s.

In recent years SBCI have been one of the most pro-active clubs in the Halifax area in encouraging women's cricket.

And the club's future was secured in 1998 when they scooped £160,000 to build a new pavilion – and also help them promote women's and youth cricket.