

THE GOLDEN YEARS

Barkisland's 1977-9 Parish Cup Triumphs by Mark Edmonds

The Barkisland team of the late 1970s and early 80s has made a major impression not just on the history of BCC itself, but on Calderdale cricket as a whole. They were the first and only team to have won the Parish Cup in three consecutive years, from 1977-79, as well as contributing to the club's record for most Parish Cup wins overall with a total of ten.

What's even more remarkable about the 77-79 achievement is that the vast majority of the Barkisland side were Barkisland born and bred, and those that weren't almost always lived in the village itself. "We had a really good team spirit at the club," says Barry Tennyson, club captain at the time. "We used to socialise together, go drinking together and we weren't just teammates, we were all friends as well."

The club's first Parish Cup win was in 1950 when they defeated Illingworth (who would go on to be regular rivals in the cup for years to come) by five wickets, but it was another 21 years before Parish Cup number two came along. Like the win in 1950, it was a crushing victory with a 127-run demolition of Sowerby St. Peter's.



How the Courier reported the 1979 triumph

Barkisland won the cup in 1977 against Blackley, followed by their second win in two years after defeating Luddendenfoot. The 1979 win was perhaps the sweetest, though, with victory over rivals Illingworth. "Many people have said that that Barkisland side was the best that ever played in the Halifax League,"

says Tennyson. “No-one could live with us because we were such a strong team; we weren’t relying on just one star batsman or bowler, you see. We had strength throughout the line-up.”

So how important was Tennyson’s role as captain in that triple Parish Cup-winning side? Was it down to him being a master tactician and did he have to study his opponents closely? “I can’t say I really had to do much with the team to be honest! The team was so good that I could just set the fields the bowlers wanted and just let them get on with it.”

However, Tennyson’s role as skipper was not to be undervalued. He recalls one particular Parish Cup game against Illingworth: “We knew that they had one batsman who opened and if you didn’t get him out early he would go on to get a big score. With that in mind, I thought I’d start with a slow bowler to mix things up a little. Being used to fast bowlers he had no idea how to play spin and was promptly out first over! They were all out for no more than 60 or so.”

After failing to win the 1980 Parish Cup, BCC did regain their title in 1981 – coinciding with Botham’s legendary performance at Headingley - as well as winning in 1984 and 1987. Although there have been two more cup wins in 1995 and 1997 thanks to a win over Sowerby Bridge, Parish Cup triumphs are now a thing of the past due to the club’s move into the Huddersfield League. What will never be forgotten, though, is that treble-winning side; forever a part of cricketing folklore in the region.