

# PRIDE, TRADITION, AND A HORSE TO CUT THE OUTFIELD!

## The Story of the Ground

By Ian Hodgson

As we look and admire the youth and talent of today we must look at how it all started, and how it was possible to lay the foundations that have been in place to aid the progression and development of Broad Oak CC.

The club's first match was played in 1880 at Barrel's Field at Well Oil, but the venue for home games did vary. For a while Broad Oak played their matches at an old school yard and a meadow near the rock. In their first season the club formed a committee and by 1883 were offered a new ground near Christ Church by Mrs Edmund Walker, the owner of Broak Oak Farm. Broak Oak have played at this venue ever since.



**The new clubhouse, opened by W.Beaumont Esq on 18 December 1937**

The weavers strike that took place in 1883 involved quite a few members of Broad Oak CC. The club was very lucky at this time that the striking workers had spare time to help preparing the new ground. They cleared the site, which included moving dead trees off the ground and preparing the wicket and outfield.

Following the preparation of the ground, neighboring clubs started to call Broad Oak the 'Roadsiders' and refused to play against them. One could speculate that their rivals may not have been happy with the work done on the wicket.

Local stonemasons certainly did their bit at the new ground, constructing a gateway to the arena, which meant they could charge spectators. This work was also done voluntarily with the entrance fee money being ploughed back into the club funds. In 1890 the debts of the club had been cleared, allowing the club to employ a part-time groundsman for 7s 6d per week. By 1901 the club employed

Walter Stubbing as their full-time professional and groundsman. Without the technology we have today, the club got a horse to cut the outfield!

The club owes a debt of gratitude to various people for helping to keep the club going in the 1880s and 1890s. Joseph Sykes, a publican at the nearby Th'Alma pub, organised a match which helped pay the club's annual rent. In 1903 the club could afford to build a clubhouse with a landlord being appointed. A year later the clubhouse was extended and in 1937 the club spent £1,200 on a new bar and clubrooms. In 1967 the most recent addition was a new bar and a modernised lounge in the clubhouse.

Over time, the club has grown and grown. The work of the past has given the club pride and tradition that it will never lose.