

CRICKET

Focus on - Old Town

Coming in from the cold

Home from home at Hill

OLD Town CC was formed in 1885, although it temporarily disbanded between 1891 and 1894.

Originally, home games were played at Middle Nook Farm on the far-eastern fringes of the village.

In the early days, Old Town elevens competed in the Calder Valley League and the Hebden Bridge League, and in 1895 five members of the local Greenwood family turned out for the first team.

Old Town came up against local rivals Cragg Vale in 1906. After travelling to the game in a specially-hired wagonette, the Old Town 1st XI was skittled out for a paltry total of 111.

In 1895, the club moved to Old Laithe, in the Chisley area. One player said: 'The wicket was good but you did tend to lose the ball in the long grass.'

During the first half of the 20th century Old Town were stalwart members of the Hebden Bridge League.

Then, between 1939 and 1945, Old Laithe was requisitioned by the National Fire Service - with compensation duly paid to the club.

After the war, the club announced the formation of a special sub-committee, 'for the purpose of securing a field more convenient'. The feeling was that Old Laithe was too small and the pitch too uneven.

In 1957 the club eventually relocated to Boston Hill - an amazing logistical achievement.

FACT FILE

Founded: 1885

Ground: Boston Hill

Greatest moment: Preparing the new ground at Boston Hill during the mid-1950s

Local hero: Groundsman Keith Pittengill

Bizarre fact: In 1958 Albert Harding took 10-43 in a fixture between Old Town's 1st XI and 2nd XI!

The Hebden Bridge Times and Gazette stated: 'The ground, in an ideal setting and surrounded by trees, is in marked contrast to the bleak exposed field at Old Laithe, which has the unenviable distinction of being one of the highest cricket grounds in Yorkshire.'

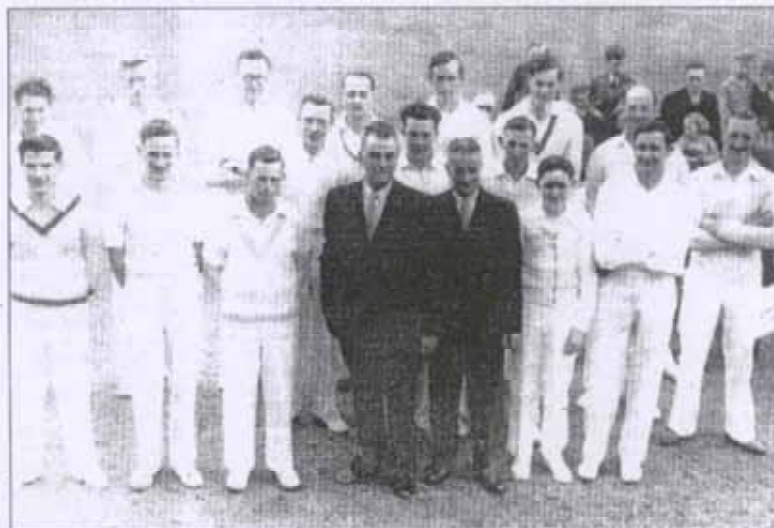
Boston Hill was christened on 27 April 1957, with Old Town 2nd XI taking on Stones.

The new ground not only hosted cricket but the Whit Monday Gala - a big local event - and various functions and dinner dances, many of which were fundraisers for the club.

Old Town's first season at Boston Hill was also the last season of the Hebden Bridge League.

They joined the Halifax Association in 1958 and the Halifax League in 1959.

Today the club's ground is renowned among local cricket-watchers for its beauty and picturesque views.



Proud moment: players and officials at the opening of the new Boston Hill ground in 1957



Double winners: Old Town's 1948 side

This is the latest in our series on Calderdale clubs, produced by Dr Peter Davies of the Cricket Heritage Project at Huddersfield University. It will continue every Saturday through the summer.