

Harry Hustwick lives on

Illingworth St. Mary's CC - Alloë Field

A dozen wheel barrows, picks and shovels were borrowed from the Halifax Corporation [to aid us in leveling the field]...At a meeting held in October it was resolved that we get some paraffin oil and lamps from Wilson Stocks of Queensbury so as to enable us to work in the evenings.

[Club minutes, 1906]

In the nineteenth century, Illingworth ('Illa's enclosure'), located to the north of Halifax in the ancient township of Ovenden, was famous for its cooperative society. Originally a hamlet, it soon evolved into a village, and is now a sprawling suburb of the town. Illingworth is home to St. Mary's church, from which the cricket club takes its name, and significant amounts of modern housing. One visiting player says: 'It's located amid a maze of houses; as a result it's very hard to find.'



Early Team Photo

Known variously as 'The Ainleys', 'Jammy Green' and 'Th'Alloe Field', the home ground of Illingworth St. Mary's Cricket Club is certainly

impressive. The handsome green Latham Lawton Gates that greet the visitor at the main entrance set the tone. It is a big ground, surrounded by trees, houses and flats - and some local residents get together to watch the cricket from the comfort of their back gardens.

Cricket was first played in Illingworth in the 1850s - Tom Emmett was the most celebrated performer - and there was always a very strong link between the club and the local church (the vicar was president of the club and there was a pretty strict ruling about cricketers' attendance at church services). The club's first ground, Pharaoh Lane, had a notoriously bad square, evidenced by the fact that the top batsman in 1885 (Ellis Hellawell) averaged only 9.7. Hence the move to the Alloe Field in May 1888 after unsuccessful efforts had been made to improve the Pharaoh Lane wicket. The church continued to act as landlord. The key dates in the history of Alloe Field are:

- 1902 - Relaying of playing surface (job done by John Waterfall 'at 6d per square yard').
- 1906 - The 'stupendous task' of leveling the field began.
- 1921 - Boundary alterations made.
- 1926 - Tea tent erected.
- 1938 - New tea tent bought for £125.
- 1940 - Gas installed.
- 1950 - Ground bought for £500; club becomes a limited company.
- 1951 - Extra land purchased off Halifax Corporation.
- 1957 - Stone wall constructed.
- 1961 - Erection of new £3,000 Hustwick Memorial Pavilion (named after Harry Hustwick, a long-serving player and administrator who is viewed as the single most important person in the club's history).
- 1975 - Building of new scoreboard (dedicated to Ernest Rothera).
- 1976 - New practice wicket created.
- 1979 - New kitchen built in pavilion, plus fire escape.
- 1980 - New bar and lounge built in pavilion, plus parking area.

Illingworth St. Mary's CC joined the Ovenden & District League in 1896 (and thus crossed swords with Mountain United, Bradshaw Mills, Lee Mount Baptists, Ovenden St. George's and Ovenden Albion), and went on to play in the Halifax Parish League and Yorkshire Council. They are currently members of the Airedale & Wharfedale League.

In recent years, their professionals have included demon Australian batsman Stuart Law and Yorkshire all-rounder Gary Fellows, and for obvious reasons, Illingworth have strong connections with the ex-

Worcestershire and England spinner of the same name (his signed shirt is displayed inside the double-decker pavilion).

There are numerous signs of the club's history at the ground today: the superb mural that greets all visitors to the pavilion (painted to commemorate the club's Centenary in 1984), the framed photos of victorious Parish League and Cup XIs (1903 and 1906), and the maintenance garage dedicated to the memory of Fred Hardcastle ('Player and Member 1923-1993'). It is also a fact that the club has gone on tour to France and Belgium!

Club historian Anthony Woodhouse states on the ICC website (<http://homepages.tesco.net/IltingworthCC/lcc>): 'Much progress has been made over 100 years...Slowly but surely, piece by piece, the story has developed. Successive improvements have been built upon to stand the club in good stead.'

Extract from P.Davies, *Home Soil* (2003)