

CROWN-ING MOMENT

History of Holmfirth CC

By Sam Hollis

Holmfirth Cricket Club has been at the heart of the local community in the Holme Valley for over 150 years. It is located close to the centre of Holmfirth, a thriving Pennine town some eight miles from Huddersfield.

The club proudly boasts a picturesque ground, with a glorious layer of trees overlooking a lush turf.

Known for its *Last of the Summer Wine* tourism, Holmfirth has had its ups and downs in recent times – both on and off the pitch. Denis Marshall, cricket secretary at the club, explains: 'In the old days, Bridge Fold was the centre of attention in Holmfirth. The ground was regularly full and collections would raise a lot of money.'

However, dedicated committee members and passionate players and parents ensure Holmfirth is still an important part of the local area. The club is taking steps to ensure it has a bright future, with the junior set-up very much a priority.

Our aim is to ensure that all our members are given the best opportunities to achieve their full potential in the beautiful game of cricket. If you have any queries, comments or questions, please do not hesitate to contact the club.

The Early Years

Holmfirth CC was founded at the Crown Hotel in 1850, and the club moved to their home, Bridge Fold, in 1862, where they remain today.

In 1880, the club entertained the United North of England side. The United North was one of many popular professional teams which toured the country at the time, and boasted both England internationals and Yorkshire players. It is believed that over 6,000 people witnessed these enjoyable events at Bridge Fold.

The club also issued some tough rules during this era, one of which included: 'No fielder be allowed to smoke or lie on the ground during play; any member violating this rule will be fined one penny for each offence.'

After the club's first Bryom Shield victory in 1897, a special anthem was penned. Dedicated to the club captain. Mr A. Robinson, the first verse read:

Come all ye folks in Holmfirth Town,

Just gather round me while I tell

The story which has brought renown

To all who love our district well

After a victory in the same competition in 1910, the club thought up a nice gesture to repay a faithful set of supporters, most of whom had spent most of the season complaining about the team. This seven-man group of dissatisfied fans was known as 'The Grumbling Committee' by the club, and each received a 'Grumbler's Medal'.

This is just one example of the excellent local community Holmfirth is a part of, as the story was unearthed in 1986 when the granddaughter of one of the 'Grumbling Committee', Mrs Mavis Broadhead, contacted the *Holme Valley Express*. She still had the medal, which her grandfather had been proud of, and wondered if there were other descendants of the 'Grumbling Committee' still in the area.



Picture: <http://www.ckcricketheritage.org.uk/docs/100808HF2431910GrumblersTP.pdf>

1900s to today

One of the most remarkable events at Holmfirth CC was the setting of a record that remains to this day. In September 1943, Holmfirth dismissed a strong Huddersfield XI for just 6 runs. A.H.Noble took 6 wickets for 3 runs, and F.Battye took 3 wickets for 2 runs, the other run being a no-ball. Remarkably, Holmfirth themselves only managed a dismal 30 runs. A plaque was placed in the clubhouse to commemorate this event.

In 1966, John Sullivan produced one of the best-ever all-round performances in club colours, scoring 173 not out with the bat and claiming 6-66 with the ball.

A year later, in 1967, West Indian cricket legend Clive Lloyd recorded a duck in his only innings for Holmfirth. Aaron Gales' profile on Lloyd states: "He was truly one of the greatest players ever to play the game. He was a batsman who quite simply dominated bowling attacks and scored over 7,000 Test runs at an average of over 46. However, few people know that he once turned out for Holmfirth." Lloyd is currently the manager of the West Indies cricket team.

It should also be mentioned that local hero Harry Booth, club scorer for more than 50 years, never ever set foot in neighbouring cricket village Thongsbridge because he was such a proud 'Holmfirther'.



This picture of Bridge Fold was taken in 1977 - Silver Jubilee year - and little has changed since. Significantly, perhaps only the advertising boards surrounding the pitch are missing, which highlights the importance of sponsors to local clubs in recent decades.

Holmfirth have a good record of attracting household cricketing names to the Holme Valley - most notably, Trinidad and Tobago international Tony Gray, England's Allan Lamb and even popular television pundit David Lloyd.