

# PEOPLE

## SAM FIELDEN

FOUNDER OF TODMORDEN CC

Eldest son of cotton manufacturer and MP for Oldham John Fielden, Sam developed his passion for cricket at public school.



On his return to Todmorden in 1834 he was put in charge of the Waterside Mill where he gave some of the factory workers time off with pay to play cricket with him on the hillside behind the mill, at Shoebroad Field, Longfield.

Here, Todmorden CC was formed in 1835. A fast underhand bowler and decent batsman, Sam was treasurer and effectively ran the club until it disbanded in 1841.

By then, the club had moved twice, to Old Shop Meadows in 1837 and, when this land was required for the railway embankment, to Eccles Holme (now known as Centre Vale and the club's current ground) in 1839.



In 1849 Sam inherited the Centre Vale estate, which had been extended to include Eccles Holme, from his father and immediately reformed the club.

Sam was often too busy to play. He was a millionaire industrialist, leading shareholder in the Lancashire-Yorkshire Railway Company and a leading light in local affairs (and national ones in supporting the interests of factory workers).

Despite his other commitments, he remained president of the cricket club, owner of the ground and followed the club's fortunes closely.



He paid for many improvements to the ground, including raising the Burnley Road wall in 1873 and, in 1874, a new tea pavilion in time for the prestigious match between the United North and the United South of England.

By the end he was more respected than loved in Todmorden but on his death, aged 73, in 1889, the town suffered a great sense of loss. Mills, shops and businesses closed, and the blinds of private houses were kept drawn.

The streets were lined with mourners for the funeral – the sombre mood of the town...far more eloquent than any words could be.'

# PERCY SOWDEN

FOUNDER OF BRIDGEHOLME CC

Percy Sowden was a great citizen. One could hardly enter any realm of public life without encountering Percival Sowden. One could not think of a man in the community whose interests were so varied or who, when engaged in any activity, did so with such thoroughness and efficiency ... the youth of the district have lost a great friend.

*Reverend WS Davies at the funeral of Percy Sowden, Wednesday 14 December 1955*

## PERCIVAL SOWDEN, J.P. Church worker and progressive educationist

MR. PERCIVAL SOWDEN, J.P., Bridgeroyd House, Eastwood, a prominent local industrialist, civic, social and church worker, died suddenly at his home last Friday night, shortly after returning from two meetings at Calder College for Further Education, Todmorden. He had been extremely active in many spheres. His death will leave a great gap in the life of the community, and his place at the head of many organisations will be difficult to fill.

Percy Sowden joined the staff of Moss Bros, dyers and finishers straight from college.

It was this mill's cricket team, playing in the workshop league hosted by Walsden, which spawned Bridgeholme Cricket Club.



The club was formed when Sowden instigated an amalgamation with the rival works team from Nanholme Mill.

Still in existence, Bridgeholme Cricket Club remains as a testimony to Percy Sowden's foresight and enthusiasm.

# THE WILKINSON FAMILY

## FRIENDS OF BLACKLEY CC

Owners of the local brickworks for most of the club's history, the Wilkinson family have enjoyed a long association with Blackley CC.



**Fred Wilkinson**

In particular, their generosity and endeavour has enabled the club to first become established at their ground and then maintain its tenancy.

The family donated a portion of land to the club as the ground was first developed around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Then, in 1948, club president Fred Wilkinson stepped in when the ground came up for sale.

As the club was not in a financial position to purchase it, he bought the ground himself and negotiated a 999-year lease with a group of trustees who acted on behalf of the club.



By 1974, when Richard Wilkinson had become president of the club, the facilities at the ground were in need of renovation.

He was a major figure at the club as the disastrous events of 1976 - when the almost-completed new building was virtually destroyed by winter gales - were overcome and the current pavilion built.

Tragically, however, Richard Wilkinson died shortly before the new pavilion was opened in 1978. In recognition of his contribution to the club, the new building was dedicated to his memory.



**Dr Gordon Wilkinson, father of Richard,**  
**became president of the club after his**  
**son's death**

# COLONEL MORRIS

## BENEFACTOR AT TRIANGLE CC

In 1927 Grassy Bottom, Triangle, was bought for £650 by local mill owner Colonel Tom H. Morris.

Morris then presented it to a board of trustees – see below - acting on behalf of Triangle CC.

