

Warning: Fog and snow!

33. Cartworth Moor C.C. - Gill Lane

We've added some loam to the wicket and it seems to have done the trick. It's now a better wicket to bat on.

[Co-groundsman, S. Clayton]

Cartworth Moor is not so much a village, but rather a collection of hamlets high above Holmfirth and Holmbridge. As one history book puts it: 'At the time of the Domesday survey, five vills or townships were comprehended under Cheteuured (Cartworth)...It is remarkable that the township of Cartworth has no ancient village of the name, although it contains several populous hamlets. A place now called Cartworth was in the seventeenth century a single messuage surrounded by a considerable plot of land, which was then owned by a family of the name of *Castell*. This place in old writings is sometimes styled "Cartworth House".'

In the eighteenth century the area was noted for two types of race meetings (horses and humans) and locals' penchant for cock-fighting. In the nineteenth century it got its own Wesleyan chapel (1879). It is famous for textiles, quarrying and farming. It is also a bizarre fact that ex-Coventry City captain Brian Kilcline used to manage Cartworth Moor F.C., a team that regularly crosses swords with many local villages that also do battle with CMCC on the cricket field: most notably, Upperthong, Flockton, Holmbridge and Cumberworth. The area is also a favoured spot among local ramblers. One well-known trek - 'Around Cartworth Moor' ('A pleasant walk with field paths, tracks, woodland, reservoir and offering excellent views') - takes in the Gill Lane venue *en route*.

We are told that in 1931 Cartworth Moor covered 1,906 acres, while the population was 1,169. Thus, the person-per-acre ratio was 0.6 - the lowest in the Huddersfield/Holmfirth district, and a figure that has probably stayed pretty constant ever since. In the 1930s the cricket club was run by Messrs. Liversedge, Armitage and Dickinson - president, treasurer and secretary respectively. It was in safe hands then, and it still is today.

Cartworth Moor C.C. was founded in 1894 and started life in the Huddersfield and District Combination and the Huddersfield Association. The club featured heavily in the minutes of Association meetings:

3 July 1906 - Moved and seconded that the match, Lydgate v Cartworth Moor, played on June 16th stand as a win for Lydgate and that the lost ball count 6 and not 9 as scored and Lydgate be written to as regards the swamp in the field.

12 August 1913 - 'Suggs' bat received in payment of advertisement was put up for auction and knocked down to Cartworth Moor for 8s.

21 September 1915 - That we pay Cartworth Moor sixpence for having the Lumb Cup box repaired.

Today, Cartworth Moor do not have any junior sides, but their 1st XI and 2nd XI play in the Huddersfield Central League. Over the years the club has had its moments of triumph. It lifted the Tinker Cup in 1935, 1959 and 1974 - and also produced Freddie Jakeman, who went on to play for Yorkshire and Northamptonshire, before becoming a first-class umpire and returning to Gill Lane for his swansong in middle age.

The club owns its ground, an archetypal Holme Valley venue located at the intersection of Gill Lane and Cartworth Moor Lane. It is rural, isolated and open to the elements. Round about there are sheep, several farmhouses and the odd caravan. S. Clayton, co-groundsman at Gill Lane and a veteran club member, says: 'In the old days it was local farmers and quarrymen who turned out for the club. Our players today are still pretty local, but it's a bit more of a struggle to keep things going. There are still old photos from the 1920s knocking about, and to be honest, nothing very much has changed at the ground over the decades.'

The one change that has been made was forced on the club by the fire which burnt down the nearby pub, The Rising Sun. A close relationship had developed between cricket club and the hostelry, and every Saturday afternoon, when the umpires signalled the end of the first innings, both sets of players would wander across to the pub for refreshments. After the fire, the club had to organise things themselves. So, a portakabin was brought in to replace the old shed - and the sandwiches and cakes were thereafter served in this new facility.

The cosy changing rooms are located in the adjacent pavilion building. This is an interesting structure in itself. It was built out of two converted railway carriages - but its strange history is certainly not obvious to the first-time visitor. The pavilion also boasts a mini-loft, which on matchdays is inhabited by the home and opposition scorers. The letters CMCC are emblazoned on the roof in 3-D plastic.

On the local league circuit, Cartworth Moor's reputation is an unenviable one. Without a shadow of a doubt, it is deemed to be the coldest venue in the area. However, club stalwart Clayton is not quite so sure: 'I certainly wouldn't put it like

that. Rather, I'd say that we get the extremes: it can get very windy up here - and I've also played in fog and snow. But, to be fair, when the sun is out, there is no better place to be than Cartworth Moor. There's even a nice gentle breeze to cool everybody down. And we don't have the midges you get down in the valley!

The local council helps with the mowing of the outfield. And, in general terms, Clayton is pleased with the current state of the wicket: 'We've got a big square here and, as a result, there are plenty of tracks to choose from. Expert groundsman Ray Horrocks has helped us a lot in recent years. Granted, it can still be a little lively, and there's always a bit of irregular bounce, but it's now a pretty fair track.'

There are two distinctive things about Gill Lane as a cricketing venue: its height and its excellent array of seating. It is no exaggeration to say that when you arrive in Cartworth Moor, you think you have landed on top of the world. The views out towards Holmfirth and Holmbridge are deep and breathtaking: layer upon layer, mile upon mile of Pennine farmland. The peaceful panorama gives you such an interesting and helpful perspective - you can follow the course of the Holme Valley from east to west, and gain a real insight into the topography and architecture of this part of West Yorkshire.

There are only a handful of seats, but three in particular have profound significance. Two are sited in front of the pavilion. IN MEMORY OF HARRY ARMITAGE - 58 YEARS OF SERVICE TO CMCC, reads the inscription on both. Close to the main entrance is another seat, so new and gleaming that it looks like a throne. The dedication tells all: IN MEMORY OF HAROLD HINCHCLIFFE 1920-2002 - A HAPPY MAN, WHO PLAYED CRICKET HERE AS A BOY, HE LIVED PASSIONATELY AND IS REMEMBERED WITH LOVE.

Extract from P.Davies, *Pennine Pitch* (2004)