

# Picture postcard land

## Barkisland CC - Woodfield

*It's not the biggest ground, but it's got to be one of the nicest.*  
[A Barkisland batsman]

Barkisland - 'Bark' to those who know it well; 'Bark-island' to those who don't know it at all - is a small village situated to the north of Rishworth, to the east of Ripponden, and six miles south-west of Halifax. It is a quintessential Yorkshire community surrounded by luscious greenery, and in days gone by Barkisland was the name of an ancient township in the parish of Halifax.

Barkisland Mill and Barkisland Hall (which dates from 1638) are two of the most celebrated buildings in the village. Its most famous ex-resident is Richard Gledhill, or Richard de Barkisland, who met his death close by in 1644, fighting for royalist forces. Another claim to fame: the York-Chester Roman road ran through Barkisland.

The village has had a cricket club since 1899. In the early days, home games were played at Norland Moor, but in the 1920s the club upped sticks to Woodfield. At first, Barkisland were members of the Halifax Association; in the 1930s they moved into the Halifax League; and in 2001 they switched into the Huddersfield League. (The 3rd XI still play in the Sunday Section of the Halifax League). The club's traditional foes are Triangle CC and Stones CC, but the rivalry is not too intense. For a period, Barkisland and Stones were actually joint owners of a 1930s tractor roller.

The cricket ground is wedged between Stainland Road and Saddleworth Road. Close by lie the village church, the local school, housing both old and new, and two pubs regularly frequented by Barkisland cricketers: The Griffin and The Fleece. And all things considered - setting, pavilion, and the quality of the playing surface - the venue must be one of the most attractive in the Halifax area. It is no surprise to discover that Barkisland CC have taken part in the National Village Cricket Championship.

A young Barkisland batsman explains: 'The pavilion facilities are excellent, the teas are superb, and most important of all, it's a good

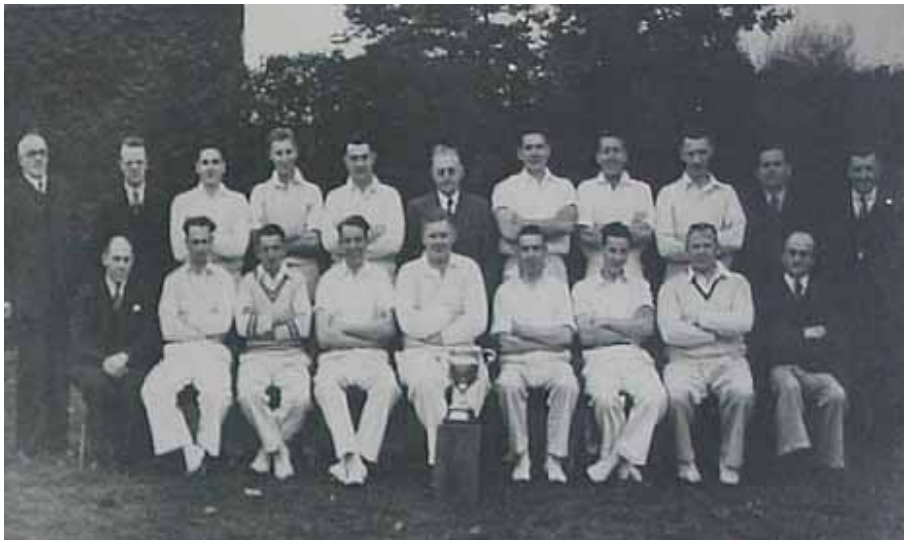
wicket to bat on - most of the time anyway. In one recent match, the team batting first scored 200, and the chasing side was all out for 11...'



**Three pairs of brothers**

From a distance, the ground has a picture-postcard quality about it. Close up, it continues to impress. Granted, the playing area slopes slightly down to the Scammonden Road side, but it is well kept and has a pristine look about it. The hanging baskets outside the pavilion add a touch of class, as do the handsome wooden benches dotted around the perimeter of the ground and the high-quality net facilities at the far end.

Originally, the Woodfield pavilion was a wooden construction sited where the scoreboard is now. This building was bought from Southowram CC - and then sold back to the same club. In the early 1970s, club members set to work on building a new pavilion by the main entrance, and in 1975 it was officially opened. One club official said: 'A builder provided the shell - we did the rest!'



**Barkisland in 1949**

But this is not the only sign that Barkisland CC is an extremely go-ahead organisation: the club tracksuit carries an array of sponsors' logos; two groundsmen tend to the field and the facilities; the sightscreens are excellent; and the enthusiastic Aussie pro mucks in with all the youngsters at Friday-night net sessions. And that's not forgetting the fact that, in 1983, the club became the first in Yorkshire to own a fully automated scoreboard. Again, club members did the grafting - erecting it and wiring it up.

Two other features of the Woodfield ground should not be overlooked either: the small 'stand' that lies to the left of the pavilion (it can house about four supporters!) and the cat's cradle that, when it's not being used for catching practice, doubles as a resting area for young spectators in need of a lie down.

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