

Plenty of burrowing, but not much alcohol

Badger Hill CC - Badger Hill

The strangest day in the history of Badger Hill CC? Easy! A few years ago we had to call a game off after a fortnight of bright sunshine. The reason? There was a leakage at the nearby filtration plant. A valve was opened - and all the water ended up running onto our field!

[Club official, Graham Wilkinson]

Badger Hill is one of two cricket clubs in Rastrick. The other is Rastrick CC, based at Round Hill. Even though Rastrick is a part of Brighouse, and is located within Calderdale, and has strong links with both Halifax and Bradford, both clubs play their cricket in Huddersfield-based leagues: Rastrick in the Huddersfield League and Badger Hill in the Huddersfield Central League.

The ground is situated just inside Calderdale's south-eastern boundary, close to Elland Lower Edge and Elland Upper Edge. It sits below the B6114 - Dewsbury Road - and to the rear of the Sun Inn public house. It is located straight opposite a small housing estate known also as Badger Hill, and is close to a major crossroads which connects Dewsbury Road with New Hey Road (heading towards Ainley Top), Crowtrees Lane (heading into Rastrick) and Clough Lane (heading into the Huddersfield suburb of Fixby).

Badger Hill CC were formerly known as Rastrick New Road Sunday School CC. The original club was formed back in the mid-1890s and was attached to New Road Sunday School, which was linked to a local non-denominational church. The fact that the club was connected to a church, and had links with the Band of Hope - a temperance society - meant that it was unable to install a bar.

It was in the mid-1980s that RNRSS CC evolved into BHCC. For various financial and legal reasons, the church ended the connection with the cricket club. When it came to choosing a new name, there was really only one option. On account of the local wildlife, the area where

the cricket ground is sited has always been known as Badger Hill - and so Badger Hill CC came formally into existence.

In the mid-1990s, the new club opted to join the Huddersfield Central League after decades in the Huddersfield Association. At one point in time, the club ran two senior teams, but today there is only one. But it's a successful one - it has won promotion two years running in the Central League.



Rastrick New Road in 1921

The ground is sited in what used to be a quarry. When you view the arena from on high - from Dewsbury Road - this historical fact becomes obvious: the cricket field fits nicely into the large, cavernous space where quarrying once took place.

The playing area is surrounded by grassy mounds, trees, and houses on the Crowtrees Lane side. In the late-1960s, efforts were made to level the playing surface. Graham Wilkinson, a stalwart of Badger Hill CC, explains: 'There are a few dips, but the ground has served the club well ever since the nineteenth century. We've only got four tracks, so when we had two teams, we really had to work hard on the square.'

Disaster struck one day in August 2002 at 2.45am when vandals set fire to the old pavilion. This building had been erected in the early years of the twentieth century. It was a wood hut with changing-room space and a scoreboard built on top. Prior to the building going up in flames,

the club had applied for National Lottery money. Their bid had been accepted, but eventually fell foul of the rule which said that all successful bidders had to have at least 10 years to run on their ground lease. Unfortunately for Badger Hill, they couldn't gain a lease extension and the ambitious pavilion plans had to be scrapped.

After the fire, the club was left with no option but to erect a portakabin as a substitute pavilion.



A team photo from 1964

The area of Badger Hill is famous not only for its badgers, but also for its water feature. On 27 November 1957, Brighthouse Corporation opened a new reservoir at Badger Hill, Rastrick. Today, it is overlooked by the M62 and the small Badger Hill housing complex. The district was also home to one of the most famous mills in Rastrick - Badger Hill Mill, which in 1873 started to manufacture tweeds and serges.

In terms of geography, the cricket club's main rivals are Birchencliffe CC, Outlane CC and Rastrick CC. Badger Hill crossed swords with Birchencliffe and Outlane frequently in decades past, while their relationship with Rastrick has evolved into new directions in recent years. The two teams have met in a regular fixture to commemorate the life of Trevor Bottomley, who died tragically while playing for Badger Hill in the late-1980s.

Badger Hill CC owes a lot to the Bottomley clan. Not only was Trevor a pillar of the club, but on one occasion a young female member of the family turned out for both the 1st XI and the 2nd XI.

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