

History on your doorstep  **Kirklees COUNCIL** FREE

Bringing history and heritage to your doorstep - July - December 08



Ay up - It's Yorkshire Day




will end on 5th October 2008 but for visitors, the learning and thinking has no closing date.

Crow Nest Park, Heckmondwike Road, Dewsbury, WF13 2SG tel: 01924 325100

Howzat!

The £50,000 Cricket Heritage Project at the University of Huddersfield is on a roll.

After initially focusing on the history of individual cricket clubs in Kirklees, the project has now moved on to important historical themes – both social and geographical. This summer it has been tackling religion and the heritage of cricket in the Colne Valley.

Project leader Dr Peter Davies says of this summer's events, "There are important themes in the history of local cricket and we wanted to do them justice. We have researched and designed an exhibition about religion and cricket, which is being staged at Huddersfield Parish Church. And our display at the Colne Valley Museum tells the distinctive story of cricket in that area."

Dr Davies received a grant of £50,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the University of Huddersfield in 2004 to explore and reconstruct the history of cricket in Kirklees. The public outcomes of the project have included over 100 community exhibitions, a cricket archive at Huddersfield library, a huge electronic archive at www.cricketheritage.org.uk, activity packs for schools, cricket-themed heritage walks, and a bank of oral history interviews with local cricket folk.

The two major exhibitions in 2008 are designed to complement and supplement these outcomes. "Obviously, the first step was to research the history of local clubs," said Dr Davies. "But cricket, and sport more generally, is an important aspect of social history. It doesn't exist in a vacuum and actually plays a crucial part in community life."

The Parish Church exhibition spotlights a key social theme: the relationship between religion and cricket. In Kirklees today there are still three clubs who advertise their church link in their name: Almondbury Wesleyans, Mirfield Parish Cavaliers and Crossbank Methodists. But Dr Davies says, "Many other clubs – like Honley – originated as church teams, but for various reasons threw off this link. Vicars founded clubs, played for them and saw cricket as an excellent way to boost church membership and nurture Christian and sportsmanlike behaviour."

The exhibition at Colne Valley Museum has a geographical remit. It focuses on the shared experience of the area's eight existing clubs – Golcar, Leymoor, Paddock, Linthwaite, Broad Oak, Slaithwaite, Marsden and Meltham – and their many interesting and important community links.



1905 Golcar Sing staged at Golcar Cricket Club



Paddock CC 1962 1st XI inc Sir Gary Sobers

The Kirklees Cricket Heritage Project also has big plans for the future. Dr Davies explains: "In the next few years we would like to focus on the relationship between cricket clubs and mills, and also between clubs and public houses. It is a fact that many cricket clubs came into being on the back of relationships with textile barons and pub landlords, so we have more exhibitions planned on these important themes. "We also have more project publications in mind, more community outreach events, and we are constantly updating the project website, www.cricketheritage.org.uk, with archive images, documents and interviews."

Dr Davies can be contacted on (01484) 472405 or via p.j.davies@hud.ac.uk.

Let us Play: Cricket and Religion in Kirklees circa 1850 - present day. Huddersfield Parish Church, Website: www.huddersfieldparishchurch.org.uk Tel. 01484 427964 May - September 2008.

"Bat and Ball". Cricket in the Colne Valley 1850 - 2000, Colne Valley Museum, Website: www.colnevalleymuseum.org.uk Tel. 01484 659762 June - 3rd August 2008.