

CRICKET

Focus on - Northowram HT

Church roots for Hedge Toppers

NORTHOWRAM Hedge Top CC were originally known as Northowram Wesleyans CC and, as the name implies, were linked to the local Methodist church.

The club was originally founded in the summer of 1919, only months after the end of the Great War.

They played their fair share of friendly matches, but from 1920 also competed in the Halifax & District Nonconformist League which existed from 1908 to 1939.

One year they reached the final of the Nonconformist League's Mackintosh Cup and beat Pellon Baptists.

Home games were played in a farmer's field north of Heywood Chapel and close to Upper Lane.

As far as can be ascertained from newspaper reports, there followed a period of inactivity.

The club was re-formed in 1926 - the year of the General Strike - and the club moved to what would become their permanent home in Hedge Top Lane at around that time.

The first name change occurred in the mid-1930s when the Wesleyan and Ebenezer churches merged, and 'Methodists' became the generally adopted title.

The club's second name change took place in 1952.

In an attempt to raise funds, members decided to organise a Christmas raffle.

Unfortunately, the Methodist Church took a dim view of gambling and also alcohol on church premises. So connections with the Church were severed and the club adopted its current name.

In the same year as the club gained a new moniker, its ground, which had hitherto been rented, was purchased from the Coley Hall Estate.

Hedge Top reached the final of the Parish Cup in 1965 and upset red-hot favourites Triangle at King Cross.

In 1968 the club was able to erect a new, covered 'flush' toilet.

The construction of a new brick pavilion followed in 1980. This was later extended to include

showering, toilet and bar facilities.

A new purpose-built scoring unit was erected in 1998.

A further extension to the Hedge Top Lane pavilion and social facilities came in July 2002 - to make the venue one of the best-appointed in the Halifax League.

FACT FILE

Founded: 1919 as Northowram Wesleyans CC

Ground: Hedge Top Lane

Local landmark: Coley Church on the skyline

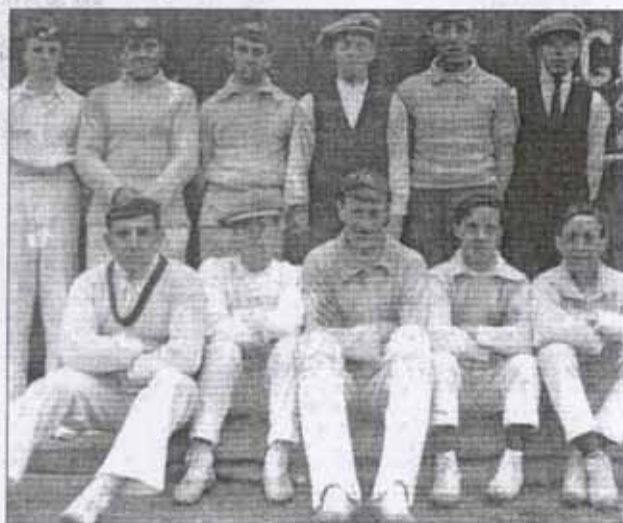
Greatest moment: Winning the Parish Cup in 1965 - and the league the year after.

Local hero: Classy opening batsman Alan Butterworth, the trophy-winning skipper in the 1960s and 1970s

Bizarre fact: Spectators can watch two games at once on a Saturday with Northowram Fields CC playing over the wall



Trophy heroes: Northowram Hedge Top's Parish Cup winning side of 1965



Ready for action: the club's 1921 side

The second half of our series on Calderdale clubs, produced by Dr Peter Davies of the Cricket Heritage Project at Huddersfield University, resumes tonight and will continue every Saturday through the summer.