



The day W.G. graced Centre Vale

FOR WELL over a century the biggest names of the cricket world have been attracted to Todmorden, particularly to the Centre Vale ground where membership of the Lancashire League has been a major contributing factor in ensuring top-line professionals.

Quoting the biggest names is like reading out a Who's Who of Cricket. The three W's, Worrell, Walcott and Weekes, the majestic Vijay Hazare; Australian Ray Lindwall; Gilchrist, Wes Hall and Charlie Griffiths; Mankad, Phadkar, Chappell, Gupte and what about George Tribe, Bruce Dooland, Cec Pepper, Bill Alley and more—the fantastic Learie Constantine who...

...000 people to Centre Vale and then the man whose name is synonymous with cricket, Dr W. G. Grace.

August, 1874, saw a three-day match featuring Grace playing for the South of England versus the North of England. At the time it must have been a real scoop for the town and the gate receipts were £258 19s 5½d.

In the event it turned out to be a one-sided affair with Grace taking 10-77 in the two-innings match. Grace only scored one run but the South won by an innings and 30 runs. The match was over well in advance of schedule and on the third day, a one-innings match was played—South were bowled out for 128 (Grace making 37 before retiring) and the North made 158-8. It was a memorable day for Todmorden with Grace's distinguished appearance being the first of many well-known cricketers to grace the Centre Vale ground.

Todmorden have had many really top-class professionals—Root, Hitch, Macauley, Denison, Burke, Frank Tyson, and of course former England skipper Brian Close.

At Walsden there have been many notable cricketers including Basil D'Oliviera, Gillie, Ramadhin, the volatile Depeiza, and the greatest of them all Garfield Sobers.