

► CRICKET HISTORIES: Denby Dale – the first in our third series...

Funding rewards for forward-looking club

ACCORDING to local historian Chris Heath, Thomas Hinchcliffe, son of Zachariah, was instrumental in forming the village club in the late nineteenth century.

Today, Denby Dale Cricket Club's impressive pavilion is named after Zachariah, a pioneering local mill-owner of the nineteenth century.

Early on the club played in the Huddersfield and District Combination. It is fairly impressive that, excluding Denby Dale, six of the 12 clubs who were playing in this league in 1897 have survived into the 21st century.

Scholes came runners-up to Denby Dale in 1897 – and during this period the two clubs were fierce rivals.

When Denby Dale travelled to Scholes one season, the players had to show their versatility.

With facilities at a minimum, they were forced to wash themselves in a nearby dyke after the game!

Denby Dale took the place of Lepton Highlanders when they chose to join the Huddersfield Central League in 1922.

But in May 1927 there was controversy when the Central League executive, 'passed that J H S of Denby Dale...be struck off the list of league umpires and that the Denby Dale club had to find an efficient substitute.'

Local league cricket could not totally withstand the impact of the Second World War. Thus, in 1942, Denby Dale decided to withdraw from the Central League, and did not play any competitive games in 1942, 1943 and 1944.

Dale rejoined the competition in 1945 and they had a golden period in the 1950s, twice winning the 1st XI cup, three times triumphing in the 2nd XI knockout competition, and also tasting success in the league – claiming eight successive 2nd XI titles and one 1st XI crown. In 1950 they scooped the Holden Cup. Three years later, in 1953, they netted the Tinker Cup. Denby Dale finished top of Section B of the Central League in 1972 and also bagged the Tinker Cup.

Four years later, in 1976, they

doubled up, netting the Allsop Cup and the Tinker Cup again.

In November 1979, the Central League secretary 'reported that Denby Dale had indicated that they did not wish to participate in the Sykes Cup in 1980'. The club went on to win Section A in the same season.

Higham were invited to take Denby Dale's place, but no reason is given as to why the Wakefield Road club wanted to opt out.

Denby Dale's picturesque ground 'collapsed' in 1982 after severe flooding. Railway sleepers that had been used to cover the nearby river simply gave way.

In 1995 Denby Dale finished top of Section C and also bagged the Allsop Cup for a third time – an excellent double!

By 1997 the club had been successful in its application for a lottery grant – and the club's state-of-the-art pavilion was opened in 1999.

The *Yorkshire Post* reported: 'Funding from cricket and local government sources is being allocated to inner-city areas and into ethnic – particularly Asian, communities.'

'But sometimes the distribution falls victim to political correctness.'

'But Denby Dale Cricket Club – in an area where there are few black or Asian residents – was given Sport England funds because of the work they have done to develop the girls' game.'

And the forward-thinking Dale club has certainly promoted women's cricket to the full. They have specialist coaching sessions, and a successful women's team. As the club's website recently reported: 'It's now played four won four for the girls.'

Sunday saw Denby Dale take on Bradford and they romped home by five wickets, with only the weather causing a problem, but the rains held off until the winning run was taken, wetting the fielders as they left the field.'

Denby Dale won the Allsop Cup in 2002. Soon after the club launched its own newsletter.

■ The club also boasts an excellent interactive website.

AROUND THE WICKET

...with historian Peter Davies



HIGHLIGHTS: (Above, left) club stalwart Bas Lucas, whose club cricketing exploits are legendary (Above right) the transformation of the Dale club house facilities (Far left, bottom) An historic line-up - A Denby Dale cricket team (date unknown, but possibly the late 1970s-early 80s) and (left) - celebrations all the way as Denby Dale players and officials celebrate the opening of their superb pavilion facilities in 1999. The pavilion was constructed with the help of funding from the Government and various cricket sources. Awards were made because of the club's forward-thinking attitude, particularly towards promotion of the women's cricket game and development of juniors. Above: the Denby Dale club logo, featuring the area's most distinctive landmark, the viaduct, which looms large over the district.

