

► CRICKET HISTORIES: Flockton – the sixth in our third series...

Long history – but true date unknown!

ALTHOUGH the origins of cricket in Flockton are uncertain, a team representing the village was playing matches as early as 1868.

But no-one is absolutely certain of the formation date of the club – and that is why Flockton CC have never felt able to celebrate their centenary.

In its early years, the club played its home games at a venue called The Rough – just 200-300 yards to the north of the current ground.

The Rough doesn't sound like the ideal kind of venue, and the search was soon on for something better.

In June 1893 the Wakefield Express stated that, 'The Water Superintendent had reported a water spill in Common End, Flockton, last Saturday but the Water Watcher was nowhere to be found. On being questioned he stated he was playing cricket. It was decided that any remuneration that the watcher received from the cricket club should be paid to the Council.'

Apparently, it was in 1895 that the parish magazine, The Lamp, reported that the village church – St. James the Great – had made a special grant of one and ninepence to the embryonic cricket club.

Thus, in the early days, maybe there was a relationship between church and club?

In 1909 the cricket club staged a successful carnival in association with Flockton Brass Band; and in 1922 the ground was given in trust to Flockton Cricket Club by the West Yorkshire Joint District Miners Welfare Committee.

This was in order to establish a village recreation ground for the use of miners and their families.

In the years that followed, the club authorities had plenty of work to do on the ground – and the players and their friends in the village did all the hard work.

They literally made the ground themselves.

In this, however, they were helped by the fact that 1926 was the year of the General Strike, and so most local people



WINNERS: Flockton, with club president Joshua Haigh, celebrates a Denby Grange Shield success back in November 1935

had plenty of time on their hands.

The Wakefield Express report explained how: 'Immediately afterwards, Flockton players made their way home in their conveyance, with the shield in front. At the top of School Lane, Flockton, they were met by the local brass band, who played the team to the Angel Inn.'

Here three cheers were given for the winners, and in return three cheers for the band. Later in the evening the band again played the victors through the village.

In the late-1950s the club's links with the Miners Welfare organisation remained strong.

The club was still a member of the Denby Grange League in the early 1960s.

Unfortunately few records remain from this competition and no list of league winners seems to have survived. However, a receipt dated 1963 indicates that Flockton CC were again among the silverware in that year.

While they were members of the Wakefield & District Cricket Union, Flockton won almost everything in sight.

In 1972 ownership of the cricket and recreation ground passed from the

Miners Welfare to Kirklees Council; and in 1977 Flockton joined the Huddersfield Central League, entering a pair of teams at the same time as Almondbury Westleyans were admitted.

At the Central League committee meeting of 1 July 1980, 'A letter was read from the Flockton representative apologising for not attending the previous meeting, but he had to take his wife to hospital to have a baby.'

In 1984 the club received a £1,000 grant from Kirklees Council to help to re-lay the square; and in 1999 Flockton 2nd XI amassed a record 408 for 3 against nine-man Bradley and Colnebridge!

Adrian Wilford also bagged a massive century in another match, against Dewsbury Moorlands.

In mid-summer 2005 Radio 4 broadcast a special documentary about village cricket in West Yorkshire. Thurstonland was the setting – but the home side just happened to be playing Flockton when the BBC were at Marsh Hall Lane. On air, Harry Marsden was asked various questions about Flockton CC and the nature of local league cricket.

AROUND THE WICKET

...with historian Peter Davies



Flockton win cup

Flockton 1st XI won the Wakefield Cup. They secured a large total of 100 runs in the process of their victory. This was the club's first win at College Green.

At the top of the order was the batsman, who scored 100 runs. He was supported by the bowler, who took 10 wickets.

The club president, Joshua Haigh, presented the cup to the captain, who was accompanied by the rest of the team.

The match was played on a fine day, and the crowd was large. The club is proud to have won the cup, and will be celebrating the victory for many years to come.

WINNERS: Flockton 1st XI

LOSERS: Wakefield 1st XI

SCORES: Flockton 100, Wakefield 100

WICKETS: Flockton 10, Wakefield 10

TOP SCORERS: Flockton 100, Wakefield 100

BEST BOWLERS: Flockton 10, Wakefield 10



SUCCESS STORY: Pictured from top: Flockton win the Wakefield Cup in 1974, the team line-up from that year. Below left: a 70s' line-up featuring back row: R Dodgson (groundsman), G Renshaw, S Parker, R Craig, G Craig, J Wardle, G Smith, G Parker, front: H Marsden, A Pawson, K Woodhams, R Wilcock, N Rainford and scorer S Woodhams and below right: a junior team photo from the 1950s featuring: Barry Watson, Gerald Smith, Roy Mountain, John Dobson, Colin Booth, Melvyn Cook, Stuart Atkins, Joe Stacey, Geoffrey Dodgson, Peter Firth and Brian Dodson.

