



Historic: cricket researcher Dennis O'Keefe

Picture: Jim Fitton

Dennis plans to bowl them over with history

A MATURE student will be hoping to hit his audience for six when he gives a presentation on the social history of Illingworth St Mary's Cricket Club.

Dennis O'Keefe, 54, of Hillview Gardens, Northowram, Halifax, will talk about research he has done while studying for an MA in history at the University of Huddersfield.

The club formed in 1884 as a way of attracting more working men to St Mary's Church.

Initially only those who attended Sunday school or were church

members could play.

There will be anecdotes about 19th-century players being fined for smoking during games. It will look at some of the earliest matches the club played.

Mr O'Keefe, a part-time teaching assistant at Old Earth Primary School and former wicketkeeper for Illingworth, said: "I wanted to do some kind of social history from Halifax and I'm a huge cricket fan so this seemed a good idea.

"To start with I was worried I wouldn't have

enough material but now I don't know how I'm going to fit it all in."

The talk forms part of the third annual Pennine Cricket History Conference to be held at the university.

Three other speakers will entertain an expected 60 guests.

Organiser and history lecturer Peter Davies said: "The history of an area's cricket club is often intertwined with the history of the area itself so it can be very revealing."

The conference is on Saturday at 10am. Entry is free.