

1 ground, 3 sports

45. Emley Clarence CC - Upper Lane

Brian Lodge - Former President 1975-1992 - Died 17.9.95 - Aged 69 Years.

Stuart J. Chapman - Former Player and Chairman - Died 2.12.95 - Aged 40 Years.

Andrew Ramsden - Former Player and Scorer - Died 28.12.95 - Aged 38 Years.

Rodney A. Chadwick - Former Player and Groundsman - Died 10-11-98 - Aged 57 Years.

John Lund - Former Player and Life Member - Died 29-11-99 - Aged 61 Years.

[Dedications on the brick scoreboard]

Emley is an archetypal West Yorkshire village: high, isolated, but also attractive and charming. It is situated six miles south-east of Huddersfield, close to Flockton, Clayton West, Skelmanthorpe, Shelley and Kirkburton - so this is very much cricket country. It also has a long history. As Rev. Robert Pym wrote: 'Emley has been an old-fashioned place, For it was built in ancient days.'

The place is famous for one landmark: Emley Moor Television Mast. A local poem talks about the 'shadow of the mast', and this is ever-present. The telecommunications facility - which beams signals into over five million homes - is visible from most vantage points in Kirklees. It is ultra-tall (900 feet, with a 180-foot aerial on top) and ultra-thin, but even so it has a certain grace and poise (unlike its predecessor, which collapsed in 1969). It is built on the 750-foot contour so the top is roughly 1,834 feet above sea level, which makes it Europe's tallest free-standing structure. The poem quoted above also describes the Mast as 'a welcoming beacon'.

Emley Mast is also a symbol. When the village's all-conquering football team reached the latter stages of the FA Cup in the mid-1990s, and earned a mouth-watering away tie with West Ham United, all those who went down to London to support the team seemed to carry with them a portable model of the Mast. But since that time, a lot of water

has passed under the bridge, and Emley F.C. is now no more. It merged with another team to form Wakefield and Emley F.C., and the new club now plays its home games at Belle Vue, the home of Wakefield Wildcats. Lest we forget, the place is also noted for other things. It is recalled that in 1253 Henry III stopped by at Emley and granted the village its charter, and that in 1807 a grand total of 11 locals turned out to vote in elections.



1st XI, 1932

On three sides the cricket field is tightly enclosed - by houses, back gardens and trees. On the fourth, we have an 'open' side. In the latter years of Emley F.C., the footballers played on the same plot of land as the village cricketers did; their 'bit' was called the Welfare Ground. In fact, when the boundaries were marked out, the two pitches overlapped - so the idea of a cricket match and a football match taking place at the same time was a non-starter. Now the cricketers share the site with Emley Moor ARLFC. Today, the Welfare Ground is looking a bit run-down, but the yellow seats in the main stand still gleam, five floodlights still stand, advertising hoardings still line the perimeter, and there's still a lot of claret and blue (the colours of the old Emley C.C.) in evidence.

Upper Lane is not far away from St. Michael's church (whose tower is visible from the ground), the post office, the pub and Market Cross, the starting point for the 'Boundary Walk', a longstanding Emley tradition, as another poem makes plain:

At the old village cross the workers did all meet,
With thick heavy sticks and goodly shod feet,
For they knew it would take them all their time,
Without everything serene, to walk the Boundary line.

Of course, 'boundary' is a cricketing term but it would seem that this walk circled the perimeter of the village rather than the perimeter of the cricket ground!

Down the years, the local economy has been based on coal mining - which started in the 1890s and finished in 1986 - plus iron smelting, sheep grazing, and tan pits (for tanning leather). But Emley has other claims to fame: its choir, its ploughing and hedge-cutting competitions, its brass band, its nine-hole golf course, plus Emley Hall, Emley Band (formed in 1870), Emley Show (first held in 1877) and Emley Feast (a thirteenth-century festival). And that's not forgetting the Oddfellows Club, the Band of Hope, the First School, the Whit Walk and the well known folk song, *Old Emley*.

Emley C.C. was formed in the late nineteenth century. We know that in 1884 'Emley Clarence Cricket and Football Club' had a set of membership cards printed (the 'Football' bit probably meant rugby rather than soccer as Emley F.C. was only founded in 1903). From these documents we know that the cricket club's patrons were Rev. J.A.S. Bandinel, Rev. E.W. Warren, A. Savile Esq. and W.M. Lipscomb Esq., that its president was Rev. C.E. Greenside, that it had three vice-presidents, two secretaries and a treasurer. In addition, the club committee was made up of 12 members. Interestingly, there were at least three 'Scargills' and three 'Armitages' involved at the club. We also know that Rev. E. Sutton, village rector 1886-1900, featured on some team photos.

In the early years, the cricket club and the football club both played in the same field in Upper Lane (as they would also do later on). But the soccer players moved to a ground near Chapel House farm - leaving the cricketers in sole possession - and went on to play at several other fields before ending up at the Welfare Ground. In 1906 the local coal merchant, George Stringer Snr. (an ex-Emley cricketer himself), opened a new pavilion at Upper Lane. This was good news for the cricket club, who up to this point had had to rely on a simple wooden hut known as 'The Tent'. We are told that in 1909 the Emley soccer XI contained 10 miners from the Park Mill and Emley Moor collieries, so it would not be surprising if the cricket club also attracted its share of miners.



Team Photo, 1972

At the start of the twentieth century, there is also evidence of another cricket club in Emley - 'The Noncoms', a group of chapel-goers who were members of the Nonconformist League. They played their home games at a laid ground at the bottom of Kirk Hills (the Tyburn Lane side) in a field farmed by Albert Parker. A number of local men starred for this outfit, including Henry and Herbert Hardcastle, Thomas and Earnest Mathewman, Joe Parker, Hugh and Ashley Pattison, and Harry Stafford.

By the 1950s Emley C.C. was well established as a key village organisation. So much so that during the Coronation celebrations of 1953 the club was one of three local sports bodies asked to man a special float that travelled round the village.

Today, Upper Lane is a pleasant cricketing venue. The pavilion is a modest white building surrounded by trees and new housing at the back. The changing rooms are located either side of the kitchen 'hatch' and the authorities at Emley are obviously pretty firm. A notice says: 'AUTHORISED PERSONNEL ONLY ALLOWED IN TEA ROOM'. A special plaque nearby pays tribute to the 'memory of George Wm. Scargill' and his '53 years loyal service to Emley C.C. - 1920-1973'. Next to the scoreboard is a curious little 'stand' that houses just three seats. Seven more benches are dotted around the ground, there are two wheeled sightscreens, and the views out to the east are spectacular.

And from 2004, Emley will be playing in the Huddersfield League.

Extract from P.Davies, *Pennine Pitch* (2004)