

FROM CHARLADIES TO CHAIRLADIES



Supported by the
Heritage Lottery Fund

WOMEN & CRICKET
IN CALDERDALE: INTRODUCTION

This exhibition tells the story of women and cricket in Calderdale. And as such, it is a multi-dimensional display, focusing on the many and various ways in which women and women's influence has shaped the game in this area.



King Cross CC, 1882

In the early days - from the mid-nineteenth century through to the early twentieth century - women are almost 'invisible' in local cricket. They do not get mentioned in club minute books; nor do they appear on team photographs.

But, as if mirroring changes in society at large, women gradually acquired a higher profile at local cricket clubs.

They made the teas - they were probably doing this in the early days as well - and they supported their team. On matchdays, dressed in quite formal clothes (as if they were attending church), they would sit on the boundary edge and spectate.



Booth CC, 1954

They might also accompany their men folk on special cricket club outings or day trips.

By the 1950s many local clubs had 'ladies committees', semi-autonomous bodies that prided themselves on their hard work, support for the club and fundraising initiatives.

In the last couple of decades we have witnessed the elevation of women on to the main committees that run cricket clubs. They have become secretaries, treasurers, child welfare officers, and chairmen - or chairladies.



Throughout all this time, women have also played the game. The first organised women's teams seem to have emerged in the 1930s, though there were probably occasional ladies elevens turning out before this.

Now, in the modern period, we see special efforts being made to coach young girls and to make cricket as inclusive a sport as possible.

This timeline about major changes at Todmorden CC highlights the ascendancy of women in the world of local cricket:

1913: Todmorden Cricket club admitted Lady Members.

1933: Todmorden Cricket Club ran its first Ladies' cricket team.

1946: Dr Stella H. Brown became the first woman Vice-President.



Freda Heywood

1957: Dr Stella H. Brown and Mrs H. Sutcliffe became the first women Patrons.

1978: Mrs M. Holmes became the first woman to be awarded Honorary Life Membership - awarded for exceptional service.

1988: Alison Parker became the first girl cricketer to play alongside boys in the club's junior teams.

1989: Mrs P Cooke, Mrs J Mitchell and Mrs S. Whitehead became the first women to serve as members of the General Committee.

1993: Mrs Freda Heywood became the first woman to serve as secretary of the club.



Blackley CC women cricketers, 1969

Julie Pearson (Blackley CC) says:

We have about a dozen or so women working at the club whether that be doing the teas or volunteering at fundraising events. We also have the girls that work behind the bar too.

We try to get as many girls along to play at junior levels, I think we have four signed on at the minute but they really only joined because their brothers played, but we would welcome any girls that want to join.



Brighouse lady cricketers from the 1930s

The male members of the club were all very respectful towards me when I first started and because many were friends of my late husband's they have supported me and respect the job I do.

Freda Heywood (ex-Todmorden CC secretary) explains:

Most clubs have a few girls who play in their junior teams, but I think that most women tend to fill the roles of workers and spectators. However, if there was a ladies team who were forthcoming about playing I do not think that the club would turn them down; in fact there was a women's team in the 1920s.



The Todmorden CC tea room

I think that the sport has evolved around men and it is men who seem to enjoy the game more than women. I suppose that's just the way it is, but I think a woman would always be welcome to get involved in any capacity they wanted to given the opportunities.

THANK YOU!

Sincere thanks to:

- The Heritage Lottery Fund and the University of Huddersfield for financing this Project.
 - **Halifax Swimming Pool for hosting this Exhibition.**
- Everyone who has helped us with the Project so far: league officials who have given us their support; club administrators who have supplied us with official records and artefacts; club webmasters who have publicised the Project on their site; and individual members of the public who have donated memorabilia. It is much appreciated.



- **Everyone who has visited the Exhibition.**
- 11 Year 2 BA (Hons) History students who are currently working on the Project and helped research and design this Exhibition: Daniel Barton, Harriet Brooks, Richard Crouch, Ruth Gibson, Charlotte Hudson, Tom Minnis, Muni Rashid, James Robinson, Gareth Thompson, Mark Whitcombe, Mark Williams
 - **Rob Light, Brian Heywood and Alex Heywood**