

FROM CHARLADIES TO CHAIRLADIES



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WOMEN & CRICKET
IN KIRKLEES: INTRODUCTION

This exhibition tells the story of women and cricket in Kirklees. 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.



Broad Oak CC, 1931

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.



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.

Here are some testimonies from women involved in local cricket:



Yvonne Collins (Joint Match & Registration Secretary, Huddersfield League, & Kirkburton CC scorer):

I became involved in cricket in 1983 with Lockwood when my boyfriend, now my husband, was playing for them. They needed a scorer because their scorer had not turned up. The club knew that I used to sit in the car and watch the games, so they came and handed me a scorebook and pen and I learnt how to do it on the spot. Once I started I was hooked!

Hilary Holmes (Linthwaite CC secretary)

I love working at the club, everyone is so friendly. It has got better over the years though. I mean improvements that have been made to the ground have helped us to develop as a club; it has become a nicer place for us to work in. Also the emergence of junior teams and having a first and second team is a great asset to the club.



The guys treat me very well - they always have done. There has not been much female input at the club. I mean most of the men at the club are married to the sport! At the moment we have a young tea lady and every one gets on very well with her.

Claire Woodhead-Turner (Golcar CC secretary)



Dealing with the correspondence is one of the major jobs as well as minute-taking, which can be quite strenuous. It is also about making sure that all the fundraising events are organised during the off-season and ensuring that the club is well prepared for matches during the season.

Julie Walker (Hopton Mills CC secretary)

I think female interest in cricket has increased at Hopton Mills from when I first became involved. There are more girls coming down and actually playing cricket which is a very positive thing and we are trying to encourage female coaches as well. With the junior section we get a lot of interest from the mothers.



We are on a long road but it is gradually getting better for women to become involved. To begin with women were pretty much ignored in most aspects of the cricket club but women are playing much more of a role at the club both on the field with girls teams and also behind the scenes.

THANK YOU!

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