

IN THE MIDDLE

PLAYERS & UMPIRES

One of the first recorded women's fixtures in the geographical area now covered by Kirklees was staged at Thornhill in 1887.

THORNHILL.

A novel cricket match was played on the Thornhill cricket club ground on Saturday afternoon last between teams consisting of ladies, Miss A. Senior and Miss E. Shackleton being the respective captains. The result of the game was a tie, each side scoring 37. On Miss Senior's side Mrs J. E. Wood raised 15, and in the other team Mr L. Oates 13 not out. There were five players on each side and out of this number no fewer than seven lost their wickets through being too ambitious to run. It is only fair to mention that Mrs W T Oates was absent from Miss Senior's side and therefore did not perform with the willow or the result would probably have been different. A great amount of interest was taken in the match.

LADIES' MATCH AT THORNHILL.			
Played at Thornhill on Saturday. Score—			
MISS A. SENIOR'S.		MISS E. SHACKLETON'S.	
Miss E. Oates b Mrs. Kaye	4	Miss E. Shackleton run out	2
Miss A. Popplewell run out	0	Miss E. Oates b Mrs Wm. Oates	1
Mrs R. Sowerby b Mrs Kaye	0	Mrs G. H. Oates b Miss Senior	1
Miss L. A. Milnes run out	0	Miss A. Oates b Miss Senior	4
Miss M. Tankard run out	1	Miss Rowley run out	3
Mrs O. Oates b Mrs Kaye	4	Miss L. Oates not out	13
Mrs J. E. Wood b Mrs Dunford	15	Mrs Dunford run out	0
Miss E. A. Shackleton not out	3	Mrs Kaye run out	2
Mrs W. T. Oates absent	0	Mrs G. Gooder b Mrs J. E. Wood	1
	37		37

Twenty-seven years later, in 1914, we come across this women's XI at Gomersal:



The 1930s was a time of growth for women's cricket and a number of clubs briefly ran a ladies team.

There were women's teams springing up at Brighouse, Rastrick, Huddersfield, Holmfirth, and Lascelles Hall.

Women's cricket was particularly thriving in Brighouse with a host of schoolgirl sides including Technical School Girls, Rastrick New Road Girls, Carr Green Girls, Hove Edge Girls, Brighouse Secondary School Girls and Victoria Central School Old Girls.

And crowds were good. When Brighthouse visited Lascelles Hall in July 1931, the local paper stated: ***'The lack of "atmosphere" seemed to affect the Brighthouse side somewhat, and compared with the enthusiasm which their matches arouse at home, they found the...Hall spectators almost unnervingly quiet.'***



On 28 August 1931, under the heading LADIES' CRICKET MATCH - FIRST AT ELLAND - A GOOD HOME VICTORY, the local paper reported that: ***'Elland staged its first ladies' cricket match on Tuesday, and so successful did it prove that there is every possibility of it being made an annual event.'***

And by 1932 the Yorkshire Federation had set up its own Inter-City and Towns League (Brighouse plus Bingley, Bradford, Dewsbury, Halifax, Holme Valley, Horbury, Huddersfield, Keighley, Littleborough, Liversedge, and Sowerby Bridge all entered teams).



In February 1932, the Golcar CC committee proposed a ladies knockout tournament to be played on midweek evenings, similar to the workshop knockout for men. The idea was soon abandoned, however.

There was, though, women's cricket on the Swallow Lane ground in the 1930s. In June 1934 Huddersfield Ladies Cricket Club played a match there and another local ladies match was played in July 1936.

Thus, the inter-war years witnessed a remarkable blossoming of women's cricket.

This development threatened one of the major assumptions about sport, and cricket in particular; namely, that it was very much a male preserve.



Ladies XI, Festival Week, Yorkshire v Cheshire, July 1949

Men were seen as the natural athletes, while women, on the whole, were assigned a minor, supporting role.

Even as late as 2002, it was reported that female participation rates in sport were 56 per cent – compared with 71 per cent for men.



Ladies XI, Festival Week, Yorkshire v Cheshire, July 1949



A ladies team from 1954. Can anyone tell us which team it is?

In the 1960s we encounter an array of women's cricket teams in the Holmfirth area. Can anybody tell us who photos 2, 3 and 4 are of?



Low Mill Ladies CC





The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) reports that there has been a 33 per cent increase in the number of new women's cricket sides since 2003.

And there are now more than two million girls actively participating in the game nationwide.



Kirkburton staged a special women's cricket festival in 1976

Here in Yorkshire various coaching and training initiatives have been set up for young female cricketers.



On the ball. Mrs Beever (left) and Gail Jackson.

Women answer the cricketers' appeal for help

THE struggling cricketers of Denby appealed for help when they were stumped to raise a team.

But the players who came to their aid were not the usual village cricketers — they were women.

Mother-of-four Mrs Carol Beever and seventeen-year-old trainee metallurgist Gail Jackson volunteered to make up the numbers for the match against Thurstonland.

"We'd gone to watch one of my sons play," said Mrs Beever, "but when they had

only nine men we volunteered."

Gail, who has played regularly in the junior team this season, got a chance to show her prowess with the bat. She faced one ball, got a run and then ran out of partners as the side were out for 88.

Mrs Beever would have been next woman in, but missed her chance because she had to pick up another son and daughter from riding school.

"I don't know who anybody should think we might be frightened," said Mrs Beever. "We pl

Denby CC, 1976

The main difference between men and women's cricket is the difference in strength between the two genders.

In women's cricket the fastest ball will be about 65-70 miles per hour – equivalent to a medium-pacer in the men's game - while sixes are a very rare occurrence.



Susan Fisher, of the Valley Bingo team, puts in some practice before the start of the 4th annual ladies' six-a-side cricket competition, held at Holmfirth Cricket and Athletic Club.

Winners were the Cricketers Arms, Deanhouse. The Post Card, Holmfirth, were the runners-up and the other semi-finalists were the Butchers Arms, Hepworth, and Rose and Crown, Holmfirth.

Eleven teams from clubs and pubs in the area entered the event.

Holmfirth CC, 1970s

Test matches are only played over four days and one-day run rates are typically about four an over as opposed to the men's version where run rates can be as high as six or seven an over throughout an innings.



Kirkburton Ladies Section, 1979

The profile of women's sport is low but growing, and this is reflected in a slight increase in the number of girl cricketers playing for junior teams across Huddersfield.

At Golcar, a girl called Emma Gill plays occasionally for the under-11s and it is hoped to encourage more girls to take up the sport.

Women's cricket has been on the rise in recent years with the national side reaching the semi-finals of the 2005 World Cup and recording an Ashes series win over Australia, the same as the men achieved so famously the same year.



Yorkshire Ladies' captain Bev Nicholson (right) tosses up with her opposite number Clare Connor before the start of the Under 20 county cricket match against Sussex at Lepton Highlanders ground. Connor hit 60 of her side's 94 and Yorkshire went on to a six-wicket win with Morris and Robinson scoring 31 and 30 respectively.

Yorkshire Women v Sussex at Kirkburton, 1975

David Thorpe, a junior coach at Golcar CC, says: ***'We haven't really had many girl cricketers here. We had one girl who played a couple of years ago as her elder brother played, but she's given up now because she's moved through and out of the age groups – she concentrates on swimming now.'***

Don't be stumped, girls — try cricket

GIRLS are being encouraged to give cricket a try by a Holme Valley club.

Holmbridge Cricket Club is recruiting youngsters for its junior sides — and wants girls to come along as well as boys.

Club committee member Dave Travis said: "There is nothing for children to do round here. We have a cricket club with a pitch which is basically just used once a week.

"Committee members felt it would be a way of getting more out of the club and offering

something for youngsters to do in the evenings."

And if there is a good response from girls to the appeal Mr Travis said the club would organise some friendly games for next year.

Mr Adrian Whittaker, president of the Yorkshire Electricity Huddersfield Central Cricket League, said girls were allowed to play junior league games.

A number of clubs around the area — including Thurstonland, Cumberworth and

Shelley — have some talented young female players.

Mr Whittaker added: "I am sure it is only a matter of time before we have ladies' teams or a lady good enough to make it into a local side."

At senior level mixed and women's teams would only be allowed to play friendly matches.

Clare Taylor, the Huddersfield-based cricket and soccer international, is trying to set up a local all-girls team.

Holmbridge CC, 1997

There is also another girl who has been playing over the last two seasons, but David finds that ***'they [the girls] find it very hard, because they're on their own. It's not to say the other kids don't treat them well, because they do. I know the girl who was playing last year was trying to get a couple of her mates to play but they weren't really interested.'***

Historic day at Denby Dale



George Wilby cut the ribbon at the new facilities



The impressive clubhouse and pavilion



Above and Below: England's Jane Cassar in classic batting action

England ladies help launch superb cricket club facilities

WHEN the history of Denby Dale village is written, August 22, 1999 should have a chapter all of its own.

The weather was a perfect Summer's day for the visit of the England women's cricket team. They came to play Denby Dale men's first team and help celebrate the official opening of the new facilities at Denby Dale Cricket Club. The result of the game was incidental to the day, which could not have gone better. What an idea for an opening ceremony — and what a story the Dale team and committee will have to tell their grandchildren, all thanks to a Christmas card sent to Richard Hob-

where in the pavilion, upstairs or down and all round the ground — something he could not previously do. Finally, George Wilby of Z Hinchliffe and Sons cut the ribbon to open the Z Hinchliffe Pavilion and Mrs Kenyon, the late John Hinchliffe's sister, released 200 balloons to start the match.

Credit to head groundman Trevor Rowley, and his assistants, for getting the ground in the best condition it has ever been in. Melissa Reynard, captain of the women called correctly and decided to bat first.

A crowd of nearly 1,000 saw the usual opening bowling partnership of Wilkin-

sons over the score was a testing 135 for 7.

After a superb tea, Greig and Firth set off in pursuit of victory. They had reached 43 before Greig was beaten for pace and was out low. Firth soon gave Goddard a chance to read a novel while waiting for the ball to come down and guest Damms didn't last long, falling for one. Reed, Peace, Geldart and Bentley added comfortably to the score before Taylor and Collyer ripped the heart out of the Dale middle order with some hostile bowling.

This brought Richard Tyra to the wicket, who said he would not be able to show his face around the village if he got out to a mere woman! He lasted two balls.

son over two years ago. To begin, there was a brief but important opening ceremony. Stephen Gould from Sport England, the major contributors of funds, made a short presentation, saying how impressed he was by the facilities. Danny Collington came from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts to say their contribution to the strengthening of the river roof had been so skilfully incorporated in to the ground that he could not see where the money had gone! Councillor Chris Harpin presented project manager, Dave Firth, with The Way Ahead award in recognition of provision of facilities for the disabled.

He explained that now he could get any-

one still Geldart treated disdainfully by openers Jane Cassar and Clare Taylor, who scored mainly in boundaries, being particularly severe on Geldart. Taylor (21) twice in one over cover drove him stumpously through the covers for four. Geldart had his revenge, bowling Taylor shortly afterwards.

Reed, Swift and Damms put the brakes on the scoring and took important wickets, but could not stop Mandy Goddard playing the innings of the day, a superb knock of 51 not out.

North, Firth and Peace were taken to the cleaners towards the end of the innings with Arran Thomsson hitting Peace clean out of the ground. After their allotted 40

the first over from starry coolyer whoose put his nose and the second flattened middle stump. Ask him how many he got if you see him in the village, but then again you probably won't see him!

Collyer also got Swift out in the ball of the day and Taylor knocked all of North's stumps out of the ground.

Order was restored as Wilkinson and Reed saw Dale through to victory, but only just — a suitable way to finish a historic day. A shirt swap was offered but not taken up. In short, this was a close game played between two well-matched sides in the right spirit on a facility to be proud of — testament to four years hard work by all at the club.



Dale's Paul Wilkinson sends down another delivery

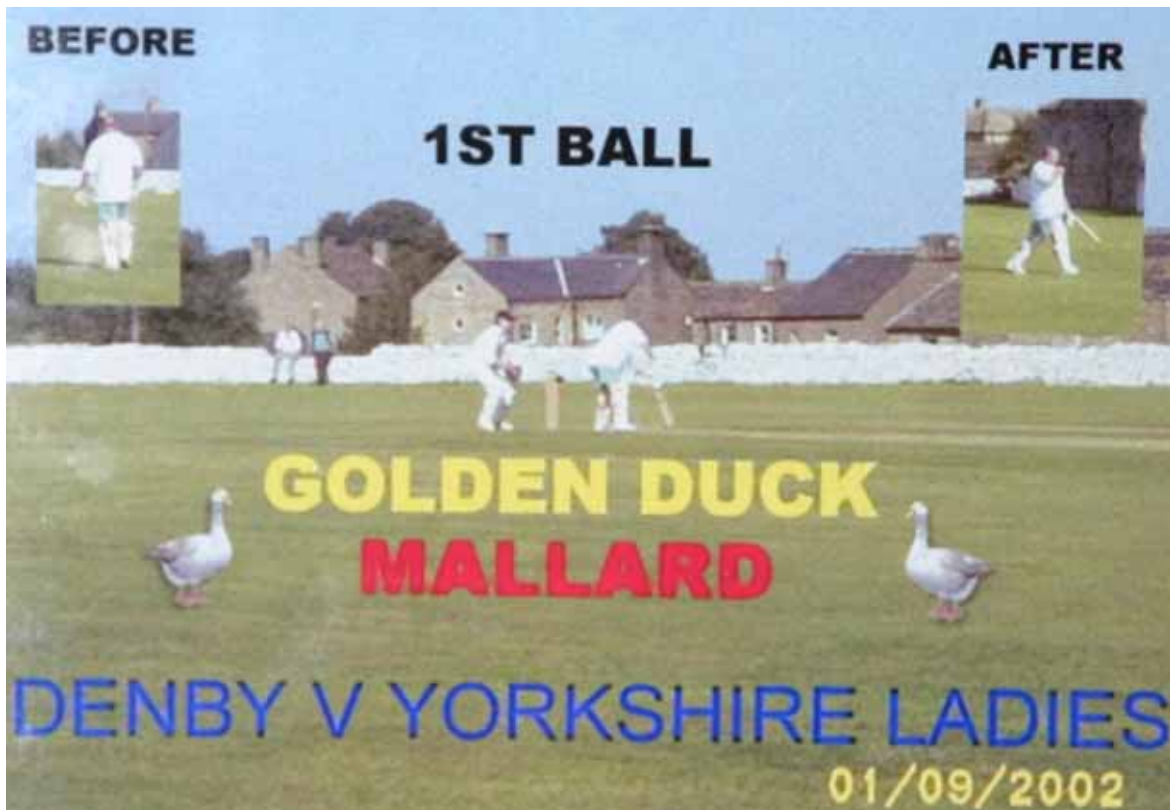


Denby Dale chairman Brian Howell (second right) is pictured at the official opening of the club's new pavilion, with (from left) Trevor Rowley (groundman), George Wilby, chairman of local sponsors Z Hinchliffe and consultant groundman Bill Cocking.

In 1999 the England Ladies team helped to celebrate the opening of the new state-of-the-art pavilion at Wakefield Road

In Yorkshire itself, various coaching and training initiatives have been set up.

A recent example is the start of a series of girls coaching sessions that are taking place at the Bradford and Bingley Cricket Centre.



Denby CC, 2002

What is available though to those girls who can't make it to Bradford every week? Local sides like Golcar do offer the chance for girls to play, although there aren't any adverts directly targeted at girls.

‘We don’t go out deliberately to try and get more girls,’ says David, ‘but we don’t discourage them. But all the publicity we put out to schools or the Examiner says “girls welcome”’.



Denby Dale CC

One area where there appears to be a problem is the progression into the girls county side.

While there is a girls team at Denby Dale, there is no actual 'Huddersfield Girls XI', leaving a massive jump from village side to county side.

Kirklees' most famous woman cricketer is Clare Taylor.

Born in 1965, Clare Taylor was a student at Moor End School, Crosland Moor, in the 1970s when her enthusiasm for cricket came to the attention of Geography teacher and Golcar's leading batsman at the time, John Cooper.



Clare agreed to become Golcar's first team scorer and showed a great deal of ability in knocking up with the team before matches. Scoring and mixing with cricketers helped Clare to develop a sound understanding of the game.

A very accurate medium pacer, Clare became a reliable and economical member of England's one-day attack.

In 1993 she was in the England team which beat the New Zealanders in the World Cup final at Lord's - still the only England cricket team to win a World Cup.



In 2000 she was the second highest wicket-taker in the World Cup in New Zealand.

By September 2004, Clare had played an England record 99 one-day internationals, 20 more than anyone else, and held the national record of 96 one-day international wickets.

Recognised as one of the world's most talented sportspeople, honours have flooded Clare's way.



She was awarded an honorary MA for her services to sport by Hull University, and in 1999 was made a Sport England Sporting Ambassador to promote healthy lifestyles.

The following year she was awarded the MBE for her services to women's sport in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. She commented: ***'Anything I do, I do it because I simply love playing sport. Recognition like this is a bonus, and it stands for recognition of women in sport in general'***.

In November 2004 Clare Taylor was awarded an honorary degree by Huddersfield University.

Clare is now coaching in New Zealand. This is a recent interview she did with Peter Redding:

So Clare, when did you arrive in New Zealand?

I played in New Zealand for the first time in 2000. It was just after the World Cup that was played there that year and I decided to stay on and play for the Otago state team. I enjoyed it so much that I have been back every winter since then. As far as this winter gone by is concerned, I arrived at the start of October last year and I'm going to be here indefinitely.



What convinced you to move to New Zealand to pursue this challenge?

It was too good an opportunity to turn down. I was player/coach last year and they then offered me the job of Women's Cricket Development and Coaching Officer. It is a great opportunity; I feel there are more opportunities for women in cricket in New Zealand, so that is why I am here.

How long will you be in New Zealand for?

I have accepted a three-year contract so I will be there for that period of time and after that we will have to wait and see.



How do the participation levels for women compare in England and New Zealand for women's cricket?

The participation levels are a lot higher in England than in New Zealand because of the population. The game is certainly very popular here though and it is one of the most popular sports that women are involved in.

I enjoy seeing young players enjoy the game and it is always nice to see them progress and improve their skills. Coaching gives me the chance to stay involved in the game and pass on knowledge.

It would be fair to say that there haven't been that many female umpires in local cricket, but one who did make the headlines was Elsie Cummings...who was asked to officiate at the last minute by Moorlands CC, Mirfield, and ended up giving her husband out!

The Wife Again Has The Last Word

What would cricket be like if we had women umpires?

No doubt the decisions made would be no less controversial than those made by male umpires.

This was proved recently, when Mrs. Elsie Cummings, an enthusiastic cricket fan, of Princess Road, Chickenley, was asked to umpire a Dewsbury and District league match between Moorlands second XI and Birstall Carr Mills second XI because the appointed umpire failed to arrive.

Very few women, I should imagine, can boast of having umpired a friendly match, let alone a league match.

But perhaps if women umpires became popular some batsmen might refrain from making wild gesticulations and glaring stares when given out by a shapely blonde umpire.

A MAN'S JOB

But Mrs. Cummings has no desire to become a regular umpire. "It's a man's game, and umpiring is a man's job, so leave it to them," she said.

A scorer for many years for Moorland's second XI, Mrs. Cummings has umpired once before, but she tells me that although she is very keen on cricket and watches games quite regularly, she has never played cricket and never will.

"I do not like to see women playing men's games," she said. "They can be just as useful making teas in the background, rather than playing on the field," she added.



When did she start taking an interest in cricket? When she met her husband, Mr. Gilbert Cummings, 18 years ago, and began to support his cricket team. "At first I used to take my knitting," she said, "until I was asked to be scorer, and now I wouldn't miss a match for anything," she added.

An official of the Dewsbury and District League told me this week that Mrs. Cummings had done exceptionally well and both sides had been quite satisfied with her decisions.

Footnote.—I do not think Mr. Cummings, who was playing for Moorlands 2nd XI, will give such glowing reports on her performance. She gave him out.