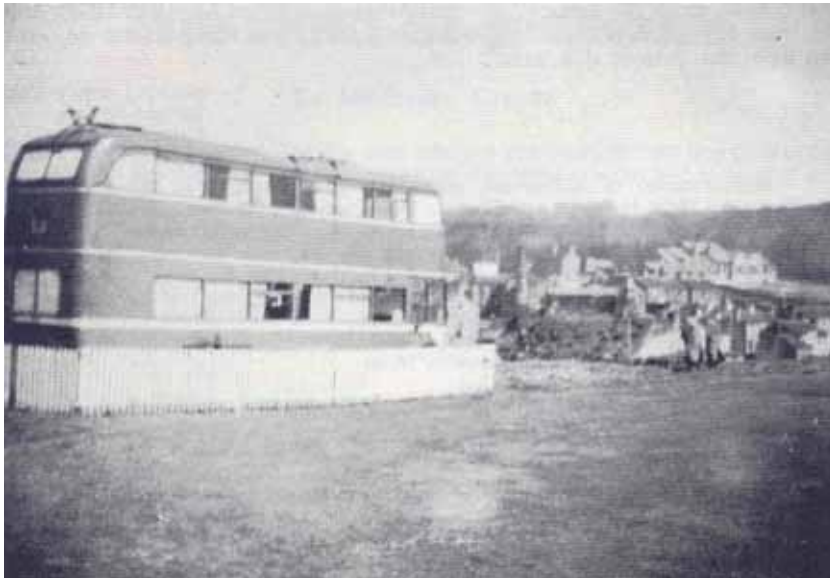


## 9. Transport



In the early days, cricket teams in this part of West Yorkshire travelled to away games in one of two ways.

They either walked or jumped on some kind of wagonette.

It appears that 1923 was a particularly interesting summer so far as cricketers and transport was concerned.

A fire at the local joinery works of Albert Gill was a major blow to Thurstonland CC because inside was parked the wagonette which used to convey the team and its tackle to many of its matches.

The fire occurred on the Monday morning, before the kit had been removed from the previous Saturday's match – so it was a double disaster.

By contrast, Paddock had a super year, winning the Sykes Cup.

The *Examiner* described the remarkable scenes which followed, as the team made its return home:

‘A huge crowd awaited the arrival of the Charabanc at Longroyd Bridge, and to the martial strains of *See the Conquering Hero Comes*, played *con brio* by the Milnsbridge Socialist Band, the party proceeded up the village.

‘The crowd increased as the procession went along and no road vehicle could stay its progress. The tramcar was compelled to creep sedately behind, and even the Golcar bus had to run out of its orthodox track at a later stage.’

Down the years, and in broader terms, there have been other interesting links and connections between cricket and transport.

Cricket is the ultimate community sport, and local clubs do not exist in isolation.

In the nineteenth century the Industrial Revolution provoked a sporting revolution, with games like cricket and football being embraced wholeheartedly by ordinary people.

Industrialisation also meant more cars, buses and trains. And ever since, cricket has not been unaffected by the development of private and public transport.

Many Kirklees clubs have come to be situated on busy main roads, like Holmfirth, Lepton Highlanders, Augustinians, Broad Oak, Mirfield and Moorlands.

There's also Birchencliffe CC at Ainley Top and Cleckheaton by the infamous Chain Bar interchange.

The proximity of grounds to roads has brought its own problems, like insurance: what happens if a passing vehicle is hit by a flying cricket ball?

Other clubs – Outlane, Blackley and Hartshead Moor - have been seriously affected by the coming of the M62.

Probably the best example is Hartshead Moor.

The motorway arrived in 1970, and three years later a service station was erected in close proximity to the cricket ground.

For the club, the knock-on effects were immense: a significant portion of the outfield was lost, only partly offset by a gift of land from Kirklees Estate.

The old pavilion also had to go, replaced by another one further round the boundary edge.

Rather than being fearful or worried about the arrival of the M62 and the service station, some club members were secretly delighted.

'At least it put us on the map!', was the reaction of one.

The revolution in public transport brought more buses to the area.

In the 1960s, new teams such as West Indians CC, Caribbean Youth Club CC and International CC were comprised almost exclusively of recently-arrived immigrants who had found employment as drivers and conductors.

Since then, buses have caused problems for cricket clubs, but have also had their uses.

In the early 1980s Holmbridge CC were embroiled in a long-running saga about a proposed bus turning circle close to their ground.

The authorities aired the idea in 1982 and, among other things, it would have meant a portion of the Woodhead Road outfield being annexed.

But three years of protests – including a letter of support from nearby Cartworth Moor CC – did the job and the plans were dropped in 1985.

One particular bus also features prominently in the history of the Kirkburton club.

In 1960 fire ripped through the Riley Lane pavilion...and for two years KCC were forced to use a defunct Huddersfield Corporation trolleybus as their clubhouse!

Likewise, local clubs have had to live with trains and railways.

In 1894 Mirfield CC had to switch grounds when the local line was built, while batsmen playing their shots at Bradley and Colnebridge's former HQ used to joke that a big hit could send the ball flying through a carriage window and on its way to York!

At Linthwaite you can see the TransPennine trains speed by from Huddersfield to Manchester.

And at Paddock, long before child-protection legislation came into force, local children used to clamber down the nearby embankment to retrieve the ball!

Other clubs have grown up in the shadow of magnificent viaducts.

Before they amalgamated with Huddersfield CC, Lockwood played their home games under the arches at Birks Bottom.

There they would see, and hear, trains on the Penistone Line pass by up above.

Denby Dale too. Their Wakefield Road HQ is not too far away from the viaduct that dominates the town.

And as if in homage, the cricket club have incorporated a silhouette of the giant structure into their club crest.