

The Halifax & District Cricket League (1894-1922)

Extract from *Lost: The Former Cricket Clubs and Cricket Grounds of Halifax and Calderdale* by Andrew Hardcastle (Cricket Heritage Project Publications, 2006, £5)

This was designed as an exclusive league, just seven clubs at the start. It expanded to two divisions in 1908, encompassing 20 clubs, but suffered a devastating blow when the Parish League clubs broke away in 1913. It closed down during the First World War, only returning in 1921 and with just nine clubs. It then amalgamated with the Amateur League to form the Amateur Association for 1923.

43 teams were in membership at one time or another, of which 28 are now defunct. The 15 surviving clubs are King Cross, Sowerby Bridge, Greetland, Lightcliffe, Triangle, Stainland, Mytholmroyd, Illingworth, Booth, Copley, Elland A, Sowerby St Peters, Barkisland, Northowram and Stones.

The defunct clubs, several of which were former Amateur League teams and have been covered in that section, were:

St Thomas's (1894-96). Inaugural league winners. A team of this name had been playing at Claremount since at least 1874. Their field was originally on Horley Green Road, but in 1887 they moved to a new one at Lister Road, near New Bank Top. It measured 120 by 95 yards, had a good pavilion and seating for about 130. The team folded in 1896, but the name reappears in the Church League, 1911-15.

Dean Clough (1894). Dean Clough Mills C.C. had been around for some time, playing at Page Hill, Clover Hill and Hopwood Lane (at Craven Lodge, above People's Park). In 1891 they acquired what remained of the former Halifax Cricket and Football Club ground at the top of Hanson Lane, now reduced in width to around 90 yards following the building of a railway line. They finished fifth of seven teams, but then folded, not reappearing until 1932.

Holy Trinity (1895-96). Previously in the Amateur League, where they had won the play-offs (Free Press Cup) in both 1893 and 1894. They had moved a few hundred yards to a new ground in 1894 opposite the then Technical School (now Calderdale College), at the junction of Hopwood Lane and the newly created Francis Street.

Luddenden Foot St Mary's (1898-1904). Another former Amateur League side, they had also appeared in the Sowerby Division League (1896). They

later returned to the Amateur League and also had spells in the Hebden Bridge League (1914-15 and 1926-28) and the Halifax Association (1929-37). The current Luddenden Foot team began life in 1950 in the Hebden Bridge League.

J. & J. Baldwin's (1898-1901). Baldwin's was a wool-washing and cloth-fulling business at Clarke Bridge Mills, under which name the team had previously played. In 1897 they had been in the Ovenden and District League, but had that year acquired the former St Thomas's ground at Lister Road. They later changed name to **Paton & Baldwin's**.

Lord Nelson (1898-1903). Former Amateur League side playing behind the Golden Pheasant Inn at Pellon. The field, 200 yards by 90 yards, encompassed all the land apart from the inn (which was used as a pavilion) between Spring Hall Lane, Dyson Road, Pellon Lane and Long Lover Lane. They reached the final of the Parish Cup in 1901, but lost to Stainland.

Siddal St Mark's (1900-13). Former Amateur League side who had been play-off winners in 1898.

Birchcliffe (1901). Previously in the Calder Valley League and Hebden Bridge League, to which they returned, playing on until 1957. Their ground in 1901 was at Nell Carr.

Thornfield Free Church (1902). Played just the one season in the 2nd teams league in place of Booth. They had earlier been in the Amateur League, 1898-1900.

St Augustine's (1903-05). Formerly in the Amateur League, they had a good quality ground at Sandhall Lane. They finished bottom of the league in 1903 and 1905.

Ovenden (1904-13). A well-established team who had previously played "ordinary fixtures" rather than league cricket. Their ground was at Forest House, Cousin Lane. They were league winners in 1907, reached the Parish Cup Final in 1908 (losing to Stainland) and in 1913 were elected as founder-members of the Parish League, but became defunct before it commenced.

Elland Upper Edge (1904-13). Formerly in the Amateur League, of which they had been winners in 1901 and 1903, though in 1902 they had been in the Brighouse League. In 1914 they took the place vacated by Ovenden in the Parish League.

Elland Tradesmen (1905-15). Amateur League winners in 1904. They reached the Parish Cup Final in 1907, where they lost out to Sowerby Bridge.

Clifton Britannia (1906-13). A long-established club, operating since at least 1870. They had been in the Brighthouse Cricket League throughout its existence, 1895-1902, and later appeared in the Parish League and Council League. They won the league in 1910 and the Parish Cup in 1910 and 1913, having been runners-up in 1909.

Halifax 'A' (1907-10). 2nd XI of Halifax C.C..

Warley Young Men (1908-15). Had been winners of the Amateur League in 1907, to where they returned for season 1916 before folding. Changed their name in 1908 to simply **Warley**, under which name they reformed in 1933 as the current Warley club.

Norwood Green (1908-13). Former Amateur League side, winners in 1906. They had opened a new ground at Upper Rooke Farm in 1907, with a new pavilion for 1908, and became founder members of the Parish League in 1914. They were league winners in 1911.

Pellon Church (1908-13). Formerly Amateur League, playing at Albert View. Joined the Church League for their final two seasons, 1914-15.

Drakes Ltd (1908-10). Formerly Amateur League, playing at Nursery Lane, Ovenden. They had finished bottom of Division 2 in 1910.

Oates & Green's (1908-14). Formerly Amateur League, playing at Hollin Grove, Claremount. Became defunct at the start of the 1915 season through lack of support.

S. Whitley & Co (1914). Formerly Amateur League, playing at Victoria Road, Hanson Lane. Resigned before the start of the 1915 wartime season as the field was required by the firm, a cotton-spinning firm in Hanson Lane, owned by the Whitley family.

Coley (1914-15). Formerly Amateur League and Church League.

Rishworth (1921-22). Formerly Amateur League side who became Association stalwarts between the wars.

Caddy Field Wesleyans (1921-22). Formerly Amateur League, playing at Long Lane.

Southowram St Anne's (1921-22). Formerly Amateur League and Church League, playing at Pinnar Lane, Southowram.

Heath Old Boys (1921). Later appear in the Halifax League's 2nd XI League, 1930-34. They finished bottom of the league in their only season.

Luddenden Parish Church (1921-22). Ground usually at Turn Lea. Formerly Amateur League, 1919-20, but before that in the Sowerby Division League 1896-7, and the Church League 1908-15. Moved on to the Halifax Association 1923-30, Hebden Bridge League 1931-8, and then back to the Association for a final season in 1939.

Norland (1922). Formerly Amateur League, but Parish League in 1921, where they had finished bottom. They fared no better here, again finishing bottom.