

# ALBERT'S 'TEN-FOR' WERE CLUB-MATES

OLD Town CC was formed as far back as 1885, although they temporarily disbanded between 1891 and 1894.

Originally, they played their home games at Middle Nook Farm on the far eastern fringes of the village. In time, the farm became the site of a house called "Stalheim", now known as "Burnside".

In the early days, Old Town elevens competed in the Calder Valley League and the Hebden Bridge League, and in 1895 five members of the local Greenwood family turned out for the first team.

But times were hard in 1906. In another match Old Town came up against local rivals Cragg Vale. After travelling to the game in a specially-hired wagonette, the Old Town first eleven was skittled out for a paltry total of 11!

In 1895, the club moved to Old Laithe, in the Chiserley area.

**Peter Davies** of Huddersfield University has spent much of the past three years researching cricket clubs in the Calderdale and Kirklees area and co-authoring the three volume book '180 Not Out', including a fascinating selection of memorabilia and history from all the upper Calder Valley Clubs. In the latest in an occasional series he turns his eye on Old Town Cricket Club

Old Town, playing in the second division of the Hebden Bridge League, were the visitors when Birchcliffe played their first match at Nell Carr on Saturday, April 11 1896.

"It was altogether too cold for the game, and at that altitude the breeze was something shocking...under the circumstances, the match hardly lends itself to criticism," commented the Hebden Bridge Times.

During the Second World War, "Old

Laithe was requisitioned by the National Fire Service - with compensation duly paid to the club.

In 1956 Old Town Cricket Club introduced a Ladies membership category. The subscription rate was 2/- 6d and in the first year 28 Lady members joined adding £3 10/- to club funds.

Ground improvements were essential to the survival of cricket clubs throughout the Calder Valley in the 1950s. The most ambitious venture was at Old Town.

In 1957 the club relocated to Boston Hill. The Hebden Bridge Times and Gazette stated: "The (Boston Hill) ground, in an ideal setting and surrounded by trees, is in marked contrast to the bleak exposed field at Old Laithe, which has the unenviable distinction of being one of the highest cricket grounds in Yorkshire."

Boston Hill was christened on 27 April 1957, with Old Town second eleven taking on Stones second eleven.

The new ground not only hosted cricket but also the Whit Monday Gala - a big local event - and various functions and dinner dances, many of which were fundraisers for OTCC.



Fifties chic, the Boston Hill pavilion in 1957 on the day it opened



As you were, a team shot from the 1930s

Old Town's first season at Boston Hill (1957) was also the last season of the Hebden Bridge League.

At Old Town's Annual General Meeting on January 6, 1958, President Raymond Ashworth revealed that the club had made firm its application to join the Halifax Cricket Association.

Old Town played only one season in the Halifax Association, 1958, winning the third division. In that season, Albert Harding achieved the rare feat of taking all

10 wickets in an innings - and they were all Old Town batsmen!

The first and second teams were in the same league and Albert's performance came in the match between the two. The first eleven were all out for 132 and Albert took 10 for 43 as the seconds were dismissed for 73.

Today, the club runs three senior teams in the Halifax League and two junior sides. Mytholmroyd Methodists and Booth are the traditional local rivals.

By Peter Davies

ALTHOUGH the first recorded match played by Todmorden Cricket Club was against Littleborough on Monday, August 20, 1839, we know that a fledgling club had been in existence since at least 1835.

In 1837 the club moved from its first home at Shoebroad and for a brief time played at Old Shop Meadows.

However, in 1836 an act of parliament had approved the Manchester to Normanton railway line, which included a viaduct that ran right through the new ground.

A new venue was quickly found and in 1839 the club moved to its current location at Centre Vale.

At a special meeting of Todmorden CC in 1841 it was passed, 'that this club be broken up'.

Although the demise of the early club is difficult to explain, events over the next decade were to secure the long-term future of cricket in the town.

They revolved around the Fielden family who purchased the Eccles Holme Estate, which included Centre Vale, in 1843. The purchase was made by John Fielden who, after piloting the 10-hour bill through parliament in 1847, died in 1849.

The Fielden Estate then fell into the hands of his cricket-mad son Samuel who immediately set about reforming Todmorden Cricket Club.

In 1864 the ambition of Todmorden Cricket Club was demonstrated when, on April 19, a decision was made to form 'a special committee for the management of an All-England match'.

Staging this type of 'big match' cricket, against leading touring XIs, had been a common way of attracting prestige for clubs in the area since the 1840s.

In 1874, this sequence of major matches led to Centre Vale hosting its only first-class match when the club staged the North versus South fixture.

Despite a phenomenal run of scores over the preceding month, it was the bowling of W.G. Grace that inspired a South victory by an innings and 30 runs.

He took seven for 25 as the North were dismissed for 46. The early finish,



A match is played on Todmorden's ground in the 1890s

## Fires, floods and trophies

at 1pm on the final day, could have meant a financial disaster for Todmorden. But a second match was hastily arranged for the afternoon...and a surplus of £57 1s 2 1/2 d. was made for the club.

Although it was one of 13 clubs that formed the first North East Lancashire Cricket League competition in 1891, Todmorden did not compete in the league's inaugural season.

This was the forerunner of the current Lancashire Cricket League (the competition was renamed in 1892) and it was formed following a meeting at the Bull Hotel, Burnley in 1890.

Joining a league was now paramount if the club was to maintain a prestigious list of fixtures, and consequently Todmorden became a member of the new South East Lancashire League.

By 1896 the South East Lancashire League had become the Central Lancashire League, and in that year, after finishing in second place for the previous three seasons, Todmorden became champions.

The 1896 season was also Todmorden's last in the Central Lancashire League.

In 1897, seven years after being involved in the birth of its predecessor -

the South East Lancashire League - the club played its first season of Lancashire League cricket.

The club celebrated its 30th season as a member of the Lancashire League in 1927 by winning the championship for the first time.

In 1954 Todmorden First XI completed the Lancashire League and Worsley Cup double for a second time. On this occasion the club's professional was Jim Burke, an Australian who played for New South Wales and represented his country in 24 Test matches.

After some disappointing seasons, Todmorden were rejuvenated by two events in 1971.

The first was the adoption of the limited-overs format by the Lancashire League, and the second was the appointment of Lancashire and Leicestershire player Peter Garner as pro.

In the 1990s Todmorden Cricket Club were plagued by a disastrous run

of fires. In 1990 the tackle shed, which had been originally built when the club staged a match against the United England XI in 1874, was burned down.

And an accident at a bonfire, being held at Centre Vale, took place in 1997, before the pavilion was set alight the following year. This last fire was caused by an electrical fault in the kitchen and smoke damage meant that virtually the whole building had to be refurbished.

In 2004, after years of painstaking research, a unique and wonderful book chronicling the history of Todmorden cricket from 1835 to 1896 was published. It was written by long-time Todmorden CC devotees - the Heywood family, Malcolm, Freda and Brian.

● With grateful thanks to Brian, Freda and Malcolm Heywood for their research on Todmorden CC.



The 1954 league and Worsley Cup winning Todmorden CC side, (back, from the left): B Fielden, M Heywood, J Walkstone, J Burke (pro Australian), J Ingham, R Crabtree, and (front) K Walker, J Crowther, H Dawson (cpt), F Saul, C Sunderland.

Right - a report of a flood which hit the club in 1982

### DEVASTATING BLOW TO CRICKET CLUB



FINANCIAL AND moral support from the Sports Council in a strong preliminary bid to save the club from being liquidated. The club's financial situation is dire, with a deficit of £10,000. The club's assets are being sold off, and the club's future is uncertain. The club's members are being asked to contribute to the club's survival. The club's history is being preserved, and the club's future is being secured. The club's members are being asked to contribute to the club's survival. The club's history is being preserved, and the club's future is being secured.

LEFT-MEMBER Luke Forster is wicket-keeper for the club. Flooded cricket field.

## CRICKET

# Club was forged from industry: Now Bridgeholme takes its proud place at the heart of town's leisure

By cricket historian Peter Davies

THERE is no place called Bridgeholme, so how did Bridgeholme Cricket Club acquire its name?

The club originated directly from local industry. The cricket teams from J.J. Tatham Ltd., Nanholme Mills, and Moss Brothers, Bridgeroyd Mills joined forces to form one club in 1950.

The name 'Bridgeholme' was invented by combining 'Nanholme' and 'Bridgeroyd'. These two mills still exist today, although Nanholme is now re-named Springholme and is owned by Pickwell-Arnold.

The club had no ground during its first season in 1951 - its only year in the Todmorden and District League - and played all matches away.

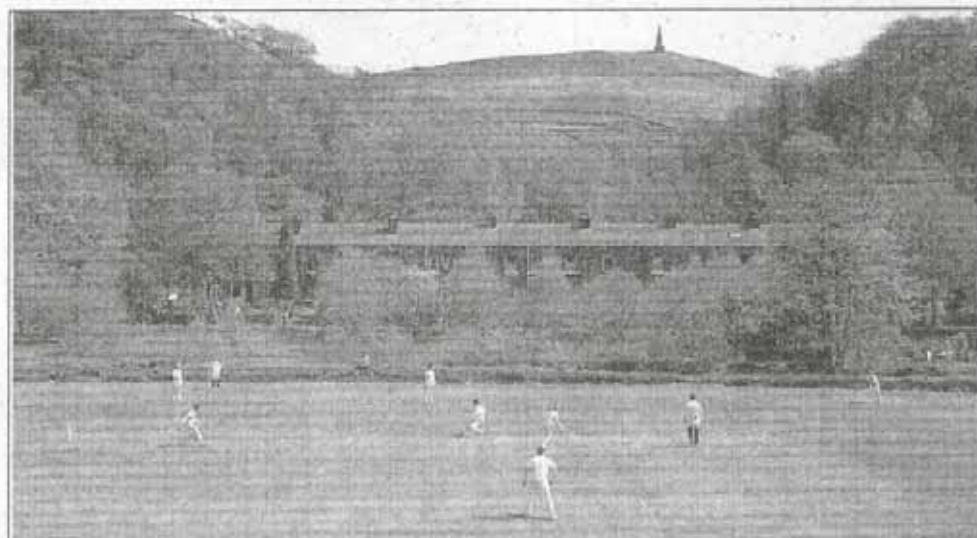
Preparation of the Station House ground on the Hebden Bridge-Todmorden road had been underway since the summer of 1952. Drainage, levelling and the laying of the square had been the priorities.

In January 1954 an application to enter the Halifax Parish Cup was rejected, in part because the ground was deemed 'unfit', yet five months later Bridgeholme were selected to host the Hebden Bridge League's knockout final between Heptonstall Slack and Birchcliffe.

Further improvements saw the club admitted to the Parish Cup and Halifax League for 1956.

Bridgeholme played their first match in the Halifax League at Blackley on Saturday 21 April 1956, losing by 45 runs.

The first significant blip on the Bridgeholme radar



## Hebden Bridge Cricket League Winners



Right: A perfect setting: action at Bridgeholme around 1994.

Left: Hebden Bridge League winners, 1953

came in 1959. Bridgeholme's form inexplicably fell away. In Ernest Travis, who hit 508 runs at an average of 36, the club possessed one of the league's finest batsmen, but a fourth-from-bottom finish did not augur well. Relegation followed in 1960.

For most of the next four decades, Bridgeholme played in the Halifax Amateur Cricket Association.

But the resignation of Barkisland from the Halifax League in 2000 left a vacancy.

Bridgeholme applied and were willingly re-admitted. All the omens seemed right. Bridgeholme fulfilled all the criteria of playing on their own ground, having a good pitch and running two teams.

Bridgeholme do not have an official nickname but they are often referred to as 'Todmorden's Cinderella Club', with Todmorden and Walsden long-term dom-

inant cricket forces in the town.

But in Keith Hudson they have one of the hardest-working stalwarts in the Halifax League and in Station House one of the most attractive and well appointed cricket grounds in Calderdale.

It is also a busy social centre too, with strong links with the recently formed Eastwood Residents' Association.

Another dedicated player and member of the club, Peter Brennend, is also one of the former winners of the Todmorden News Ron Wild Trophy for services to sport.

The future looks very bright.

● With grateful thanks to Brian Heywood for his research on Bridgeholme CC.

# A sport that's at the heart of community

Success on field and off at Mytholmroyd Cricket Club

**Peter Davies** of Huddersfield University has spent much of the last three years discovering more about local cricket clubs in the Calderdale and Kirkstall areas, recently co-authoring a three-volume book, '180 Not Out', which features a fascinating selection of memorabilia from all the upper Calder Valley clubs. In the first of an occasional series looking at the clubs and their vital links with community, he turns his eye on Mytholmroyd Cricket Club

**THE** origins of Mytholmroyd C.C. remain uncertain. However, by 1894 the club had two teams, one of which played in the Calder Valley League.

During the 1895 season the 1st XI were joined by local rivals Mytholmroyd Wesleyan Sunday School C.C. in the Hebden Bridge League.

Around the turn of the century we come across the Sowerby Division League. It looks like Mytholmroyd also entered a team into the competition.

The club joined the Halifax Parish Cup competition in 1899 and were included in a grounds inspection survey carried out by the authorities.

By 1914 Mytholmroyd had joined the Halifax & District League and that year saw the 1st XI crowned champions for the first time.

The presentation of the trophy was followed by a social evening at which the 'cup was filled with a palatable beverage and the success of the club was drunk all round'.

Just after the Great War, Mytholmroyd joined the Halifax Parish League. The 1st XI won the Halifax Cup for the second time in 1923 and retained the trophy the



Mytholmroyd success on the field...the 2005 Parish Cup winning side

following season.

In 1930 the club surpassed the all-round success of two years earlier. As well as winning both 1st XI and 2nd XI Halifax Cricket League titles, the Parish Cup was also claimed after the final against Thingley at King Cross.

On 25 April 1952 the Hebden Bridge Times and Gazette reported: 'At Mytholmroyd the field is in fine condition and once again the

club is hoping to form the finest wicket in the league. There have been a few renovations made during the close season, including a new eight-footed. Extensive improvements have been made to conveniences'.

In the same year, on 3 November, L.H. Picken, club secretary, announced at the AGM: 'To all former players...It would appear that to cease playing means

to end all association with the club. Surely this is wrong. There are the men we look to for future guidance on committees and to give advice to the young cricketer'.

Sunday sport was a contentious issue at the late 1950s. Sowerby Bridge District Council had repeatedly refused to open its bowling greens for Sunday use, yet leisure was beginning to stomach the Sabbath.

The Halifax League was one of the first local competitions to experiment with Sunday play and it was a success.

At the Mytholmroyd C.C. AGM, at the White Hart Hotel, Mytholmroyd, on Monday 28 October 1957, secretary N.D. Turner commented 'During the past season Sunday cricket has been introduced and the new venture has made a substantial success as the club's income'.

Mytholmroyd's first batsmen entered themselves in the summer of 1957. They struck 294 all out against Barlborough and followed that with 291 all out against Booth.

A new clubhouse arrived in 2000 - an event that acted as a spur for many other improvements and developments.

In 2002 the club organised a special trip to watch Yorkshire play in the C&G trophy final at Lords. It proved a successful day as the county side defeated Somerset by 6 wickets.

And in 2005 Mytholmroyd won the Parish Cup - a remarkable achievement.



...and off it, a community barbecue in 2004, with the club's new pavilion, opened in 2000, in the background. Picture: DAVID EVANS

# Walsden CC: Established 1870, and still doing the village proud in 21st Century

LIKE many cricket clubs, Walsden have not had a continuous existence since their first formation in the 19th century.

The current club, which has existed continuously since 1870, had at least two forerunners. There is evidence that a club was formed in 1856 and re-formed in 1862.

It is rumoured that prior to 1856 a club called White Scar existed in the village but no evidence has been found to substantiate this. Walsden's first recorded match was played on the land in front of the bandstand on what, since 1910, has been Centre Vale Park.

This was an away match against the second eleven of the Todmorden club which had been re-established in 1850. A double innings match was completed in one day, Todmorden 2nds (65 and 88), beating Walsden (42 and 26) by 85 runs.

Walsden have played on their current ground since 1870, but apparently had two former grounds in their



The legendary Frank Scott

By cricket historian Peter Davies

earlier incarnations in the 1850s and around 1862.

These were at White Slack and at Heights Houses. The latter was still used as a ground in the Todmorden and District Cricket League until it folded in 1959.

The current ground was formerly the site of Inchfield Mill dam and was leased to the club by E. Smith of Inchfield Villa. Back then, 137 members enrolled at that time and the ground was opened in a 16-a-side match on 23 July 1870.

A feature of cricket as popular entertainment in the 19th century was travelling troops of clown cricketers.

As Walsden's major fundraising event of 1871, 'XI Gentlemen of Todmorden and Walsden' played Mr Dan Rice's 14 Clown Cricketers at Walsden on 21, 22 and 26 July.

The clowns had little skill as cricketers but entertained the crowd with their witticisms and contortions at the fall of every wicket.

Walsden Cricket Club has been an integral part of the village community throughout its existence. Many local groups have used its facilities, including Todmorden Gun Club, who met monthly through the latter part of the 19th century.

The first ladies cricket match in Todmorden was played at Walsden on June 6, 1893, at a time when women were just beginning to strive for greater independence.

The match, between women of the Walsden district, provoked a predictably chauvinistic response from the male preserve of local journalism, the Todmorden Advertiser, which stated: "Whether those of the feminine gender are as fit to indulge in the good old English pastime as those of the opposite sex I do not care to argue, but evidently the fairer sex in the Walsden district... seem to think they are, as a match was played on the Walsden Cricket Club's ground...between members of the 'Petticoat Club'".

Strangely, Walsden's men have not played Todmorden in a league match since 1896. But often since then there has been a challenge match between the two and, until the last decade, these have been very competitive.



The 1962 side completed a triumphant double of Central Lancashire League title (shared) and Wood Cup

Rivalry was never more fierce than when the clubs were both in the Central Lancashire League between 1893 and 1896. After a Todmorden victory in 1894, one Walsden supporter was moved to verse:

"Play up, Walsden, heed not defeat;  
Think not that Todmorden cannot be best;  
The tide may turn when next you meet;  
And bring you joy - entire, complete."

Local cricket clubs pulled their weight during the First World War.

Walsden played Todmorden to raise funds for the War Relief Fund in 1914, and in support of the Centre Vale Military Hospital in 1915 and 1916, the latter match realising the considerable sum of £50.

In 1916 the players were asked to forgo their usual half-pay broken-time payments for wages lost while playing. In the same year the pavilion, tea room and bowling green pavilion were insured against damage by air raid.

The club staged its own functions, including whist drives and dances, and in 1939 a 'gramophone concert' was held.

Arguably the most dominant per-

sonality in Walsden's history is Frank Scott, the local signalman.

In a long career he scored 6,175 runs and took 966 wickets, and his 1921 benefit fund raised £109 - a massive figure for the time and not bad for an amateur! His obituary claimed: "He never bowled a wide or a no-ball".

Frank began a family trail (initially through the Scott and then the Barker families) which continues to the present day. His son, grandson, and great-grandson have all captained the 1st XI while his two great grandsons have both recently made their first-team debuts.

The legendary Scott inspired both the name of the road alongside the ground - Scott Street - and the name of one of the three blocks of flats which overlook the ground - Scott House.

During the Second World War, the Home Guard, ARI and Air Training Corps all played games on the Walsden ground and the club provided a 'Don Bradman bat' to be raffled as part of the 'Todmorden Wings for Victory Week'.

A minute for 25 March 1946 states:

"That the secretary write [to] the Borough Surveyor re - seating from air raid shelters."

In 1954 the Walsden 1st XI, inspired by West Indian sub-pro Everton Weekes, claimed their first major trophy, beating Middleton by 3 wickets in the Wood Cup final.

'A double of sorts' was the Todmorden News and Advertiser's understated verdict on Walsden's triumphant season of 1962. The club won the Wood Cup and became champions of the Central Lancashire League for the first time, sharing the title with Stockport after a dramatic final day.

Over the decades, Walsden's women members have made a massive contribution to the club's wellbeing. Likewise the club's overseas professionals, including Australian Trevor Chappell and Pakistani Mohsin Khan, Walsden have also entered the twenty-first century with an excellent website:

[www.walsdencandbc.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.walsdencandbc.fsnet.co.uk).

●With grateful thanks to Brian Heywood for his research on Walsden CC.