

HALIFAX CLARENCE CC

The Early Years

The first dominant cricket club in Halifax was Halifax Clarence, probably named after King William VI, formerly Duke of Clarence before his coronation in 1830.

They are the first local team to appear in the pages of the Halifax Guardian, the first local paper which was established in 1832. The match in question was against Fairweather Green from Bradford in June 1834, although there is no suggestion that this is the club's first game. Playing most of their matches in midweek, Halifax Clarence probably followed the pattern elsewhere as a domain of better-off members of society – gentlemen of means, employers of labour or the self-employed.

Halifax Clarence played at Skircoat Moor and used the Crown and Anchor at Bull Green for hospitality. By 1839 they had established a new ground in a field on Hopwood Lane now occupied by Park Road and People's Park. They played their first match there against Bradford.

Also in 1839, the 'second rate members of the club' played home and away matches against the first eleven of the fledgling Todmorden club but were soundly beaten in both games.

In 1843 Clarence moved to a new field at King Cross Lane but they were back at Hopwood Lane for 1844.

The club folded in 1850 and revived in July 1852, playing at West Hill Park in Gibbet Street, a site now occupied by a row of houses known as West Hill.

The club moved again in 1855, playing in a field adjoining Halifax Jail in Hanson Lane, but they folded for a final time at the end of the season.

Although no direct link has been established, in some respects this club can be regarded as a forerunner to Halifax CC. Halifax Trinity, which evolved into Halifax Cricket Club, first emerged in 1856, the year after Halifax Clarence folded, and by 1862 had succeeded Clarence as the town's dominant cricket club.

Like Clarence, Trinity began with a few inauspicious encounters on Skircoat Moor. They moved to Pellon Lane in 1861 and then to the former Clarence ground on King Cross Lane in 1862.

They employed a professional and, like clubs of similar standing such as Rochdale, Bradford, Huddersfield, Dewsbury Savile, Todmorden and Burnley, organised matches against the travelling All England Eleven to raise the profile of the club.

On 1, 2 and 3 June 1863, XXII of Halifax and District, including guests from Bradford, Sheffield and Todmorden,

beat the All England XI by 54 runs, Halifax 188 and 95, All England 152 and 77. A crowd of over 5000 attended the second day of the biggest sporting event Halifax had ever seen. The fixture was repeated in July 1864 when All England had the better of things, hitting 58 to Halifax's 22 and 69 for 8.

Further matches were arranged against the rival United England XI and in 1868 Halifax played against the touring Aborigines.

The club moved to another former Clarence ground at Hanson Lane in 1876 before settling at Thrum Hall in 1886, by when 'Trinity' had been dropped and the name changed to Halifax Cricket Club.

Adapted from the following sources:

Cricket in Halifax by Andrew Hardcastle

Cloth Caps and Cricket Crazy: Todmorden and Cricket 1835-1896 by Freda, Malcolm and Brian Heywood. Upper Calder Valley Publications.