

WEST END CC

HOME SWEET HOME

It was a decent ground but the wicket was a little unpredictable.

[Club official, Steve Fawkes]

The hillside ground that West End C.C. leased from Siddal Cricket & Athletic Working Men's Club was bordered on one side by South Halifax High School, and on the other by a housing estate centred around Backhold Drive.



The area of Halifax known as Siddal (meaning 'hillside', 'deep valley' or 'farmhouse') developed throughout the nineteenth century. In the early decades of the century, it was a village noted for its cottages; in the latter years, it gained its share of

textile mills and back-to-back houses, and emerged as something more than a simple village.



In this era, one writer talked of ***'isolated farmsteads, several factories, rows of workers' cottages, a board school and a Particular Baptist chapel'***. In the nineteenth century, the area was known for its soccer team, St. Mark's Siddal A.F.C.. It is also the former home of the historian and peace campaigner, E.P. Thompson.

The journey up from Halifax town centre to Siddal is a slow and meandering one, but when you alight at the school bus stop, an ascent of some height has been made.



The area has an interesting cricketing pedigree. Many years ago, Siddal County Junior School had an excellent team; and Siddal C.C. used to play their Halifax League fixtures at Park Lane.



As befits a relatively high venue, the views are impressive. Particularly striking is the Halifax town centre skyscape - churches, tower blocks and commercial buildings - which you are introduced to when you look downhill and through the housing estate from the main entrance to the ground.



The playing surface was reasonably sized and the grass is a very healthy green colour. There were no sightscreens - just a whitewashed wall at the Halifax end of the ground. Club official Steve Fawkes explains: ***'The groundsman worked hard on the***

field, but we were very dependent on the weather. When the 1st XI were playing, a par total was somewhere around the 120/130 mark; when the 2nd XI was in action, the figure dropped to about 40 or 50. The square was getting better and better and the playing area as a whole was a nice size.'

At the end of play, the cricketers used to take advantage of the adjoining Working Men's Club, where they do a decent pint of Stones bitter. And just to show its patriotic credentials, the Club flies a large Union Jack on its roof.



The players did not change in the Club, but rather in a small black hut at the school end of the ground. The white scoreboard stood adjacent to the dressing rooms.