

Cross Bank - the club the Rumbolds built

CROSS Bank Wesleyan Chapel was opened in March, 1871, 'a neat and handsome building according to the local Batley newspaper.

Two years previously, the Sunday school building had been opened. Around 600 young people attended the Sunday school.

The chapel building was paid for by the Brearley family (£4,000), and dedicated to the memory of Robert Brearley, the founder of the local worsted manufacturer's, based at Queen Street Mills, Bradford Road.

The first minister at the church was the Rev Frederick Friend.

The church had been built during a boom time for Methodism in the districts of Cross Bank and Carlinghow.

Before it closed down, Cross Bank Methodist Church was home to a mixed Bible class, a ladies fellowship, Scouts and Cubs, and a youth group.

Little is known about the origins of Cross Bank Methodist Cricket Club but 1904 is a possible date of formation.

The year 1921 witnessed the birth of one of the most important figures in the history of CMCC, Kenneth Rumbold - and a plaque, pinned to the wall of the Lea Road pavilion, commemorates this fact.

Ken's father Alf had been a dedicated member of the chapel - and had sung a 'bass solo' in 1919 as part of the Sunday school jubilee celebrations.

Both men played a vital role in the development and survival of Cross Bank Methodist Cricket Club - hence the official title of the Lea Road ground: The Rumbolds.

The inter-war years were dominated by the phenomenon of Sunday school - and church-linked cricket clubs. So much so that the Batley and District Sunday School League was a buoyant local competition, with a full fixture list every weekend.

Cross Bank played their cricket in this competition.

CROSS Bank Methodists CC is the next club in our special summer feature on cricket and the community in Batley. The series of articles has been written by DR PETER DAVIES, project leader of the Cricketing Heritage of Calderdale and Kirklees, which has been running over the last two years.



For two major reasons, 1953 was a big year for the club. Alf Rumbold purchased the ground... and Yorkshire and England legend Len Hutton visited Lea Road to do a spot of coaching.

In 1956 the club were league cup winners - and a famous team photo from the occasion hangs proudly in the Lea Road pavilion.

Note the fact that in the 1950s there were still enough local church-based teams to make a Sunday school league viable. Club benefactor Kenneth Rumbold was a member of the victorious 1956 side.

In 1968 and 1971 Cross Bank bagged the Dewsbury and Dis-

trict League Challenge Cup, and in 1979 the current pavilion was constructed.

Sadly, in 2000 club president Ken Rumbold died. 'A great servant to Cross Bank Methodists Cricket Club' is the tribute paid to him in the Lea Road pavilion.

His widow Joan is still connected to the club and watches the occasional match at The Rumbolds.

Today Cross Bank Methodists Cricket Club have a lovely ground, a hard working set of members, and a thriving junior set-up.

The club is proud of its heritage. The Methodist link may have disappeared - a product of various factors, including the amalgamation of local chapels - but in the words of one senior figure at The Rumbolds, the club will never change its name.

● Dr Davies and Rob Light have written three books about the history of local cricket and the series is called *180 Not Out*. They are part of the £50,000 Cricket Heritage Project sponsored by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Copies are available from Dewsbury Books at Crackenedge Lane, Dewsbury. The books are published by Sigma Press. Call 01484 472405 for more information.

Cross Bank are trophy winners



Left: Cross Bank Methodist Church centenary celebration. (NS)

Right: Newspaper report of Cross Bank's victory in the Marsdin Trophy. (NS)

Below: A team photo from 1956. (NS)

