

In the sixth of his features on Cricket and the Community in the Spen Valley Dr Peter Davies looks at the history of Liversedge CC

# Team at heart of village

**I**N THE 1960s there was a cluster of teams in the Liversedge area, including Hightown Heights, Roberttown Star of Brunswick, Littleton United, Littleton Young Alma, Hightown Young England and Roberttown All Saints (the parish church-connected club generally viewed as the precursor to Liversedge CC).

The club has always played at Roberttown Lane. The ground is sited on an odd tip linked to an old gasworks. The land was probably made into a cricket ground around 1900, soon after the birth of Liversedge CC as successor club to Roberttown All Saints CC. In the early days, the

ground had a big slope. The Dymond family of the nearby Dymond Pit, in Headlands Road, arranged for rails and tubs to be used, and a band of volunteers from the village shipped tons and tons of earth from the top end of the field to the lower regions, and so negated the slope to some extent.

In 1919 three local men bought the ground for the club, but on condition that it was used exclusively for cricket. Today, Roberttown Lane is an attractive venue that has hosted many set-piece cricketing occasions, including many Heavy Woollen Cup finals.

On matchdays, practice nets are put up on the outfield to aid the players in their quest for a last-minute workout. On November 5 each year, the

**PARTY TIME:** Liversedge were the 1966 Heavy Woollen Cup winners.

field is put to a totally different use, with the local firework display holding centre stage. In 1906 Liversedge were founder members of the Spen Valley Cricket League. They won it in the first year – and the second!

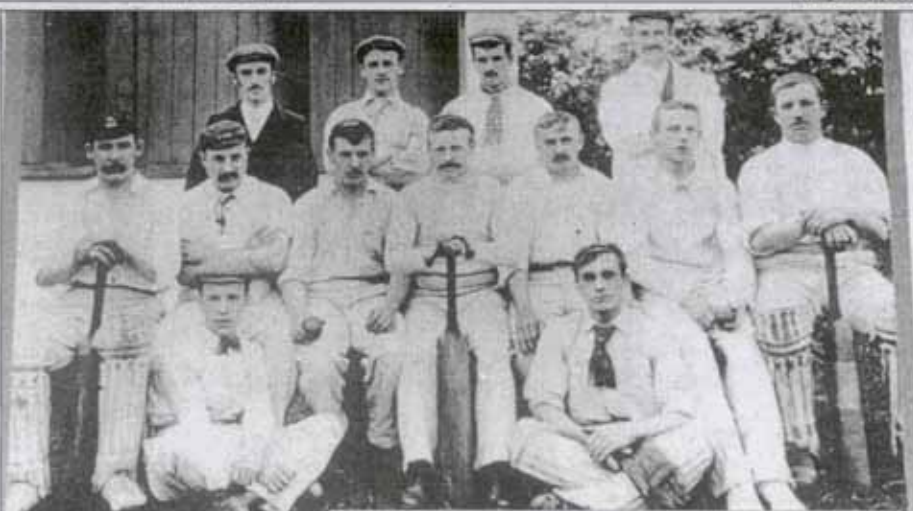
Roberttown All Saints had entered the inaugural Heavy Woollen Cup in 1883 but had lost in the first round against Scholes. Until the beginning of the First World War, Liversedge's best achievement in the competition was to reach the semi-final on one occasion. Successive finals were reached in 1916 and 1917 but in both cases Ossett were triumphant.

In 1920 Liversedge joined the Heavy Woollen

League but suffered a disastrous debut year: played 16, won 2, lost 10, drawn 4, points 2. They finished bottom, and only gained two points (clubs got one point for a win – nothing else counted).

Liversedge's first final triumph in the Heavy Woollen Cup came in 1929 against Morley. A further cup triumph followed in 1933, with Heckmondwike the beaten finalists.

After spells in the Spen Valley League and Heavy Woollen League, Liversedge joined the Central Yorkshire League for the 1938 season. Heartbreak followed in 1943,



**ABOVE:** 1897 team photo. **LEFT:** Allan Trevitt who recorded an incredible bowling performance for Liversedge 2nd XI against Batley 2nd XI on June 20, 1981. He bowled seven overs, for seven maidens, no runs and nine wickets.



Once upon a time, Heckmondwike were the local rivals. After all, it is walking distance from Roberttown Lane to Cemetery Road, home of 'Heck'. And the 'big match' was usually scheduled for Whit Monday in May.

However, once Heckmondwike switched leagues, it was the annual encounters against Mirfield Parish Cavaliers that set hearts racing in and around Liversedge. Today, the club boasts an attractive and well equipped clubhouse and a colourful and informative website.

added to insurance monies, and in the end the club was able to build a large new building.

This has survived until today, with a dressing room extension arriving in 1996.

West Indian spin bowler Sonny Ramadhin starred for Liversedge as they scooped the Heavy Woollen Cup in World Cup year, 1966.

Throughout the club's history, women have played an invaluable role, as the LCC committee minutes make plain:

□ April 1907 – 'Ladies Committee were granted permission to purchase more crockery for the tea.'

□ Dec 1907 – 'The president gave special thanks... to the ladies of the club who had once again done an excellent job.'

□ Dec 1907 – 'It was discussed as to the format of a social committee and a suggestion that some of the ladies be approached was agreed.'

□ Dec 1907 – 'The ceiling in the ladies' toilet had been repaired and permission to pay was granted.'

□ January 13 1908 – Mrs T Hallsworth became club treasurer. The minute book records that on 27 January, 'Mrs Hallsworth said that she had not expected the position to be as difficult as it was going to be and hoped that some recognition would be made to our ex-treasurer for doing the job for 14 years.'

□ Oct 1906 – 'Pointed out by Mr Gomersal that lady members

were not allowed by rules to hold office unless they became full members and paid full subs.'

□ Nov 1906 – 'Mrs Hallsworth would become a full member.'

□ Nov 1906 – 'Presentation night was all fixed and it was decided that all ladies who were helping with food arrangements would not be required to pay. Flowers would also be purchased for the ladies.'

□ Mar 1909 – 'The pre-season get-together on April 15 was organised and ladies would be providing the buffet.'

□ Nov 1909 – 'Passed with thanks to all the ladies for an excellent buffet on presentation night and for their efforts throughout the year.'

□ Mar 1900 – 'Ladies thanked the committee for their bar snack evening which was enjoyed very much.'

**Dogs have also been a perennial issue at Roberttown Lane:**

□ 'The steward asked if he could build a kennel and pen for his dog at the rear of the club. Passed.' (Mar 1908)

□ 'Mr Newsome asked if we could have a word with a member who brings a dog in that tends to run about. Secretary to have a word.' (Aug 1908)

□ 'The case of dogs being on the field was raised and a suitable notice should be put at the ground entrance.' (Jun 1909)

when Batley overcame Liversedge in the final of the Heavy Woollen Cup.

At one point in the post-war era, Liversedge CC sponsored a Workshops Competition. This was played for by an array of local mill and factory sides.

In fact, the actual trophy awarded to the winning works team was the special trophy won by Roberttown All Saints in 1885, 1886 and 1887 (all we know about this competition was that it was an early Spen Valley cricket tournament).

The old pavilion at Roberttown Lane burned down in the 1960s. Most of the club's archives were destroyed in the process. The club had to appeal to villagers for funds to rebuild the structure, and money came flooding in. This was



Dr Davies and Rob Lights have co-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 and copies are available from Dewsbury Books at Crackenedge Lane, Dewsbury. The books are published by Sigma Press. Call 01484 472405 for more information.