

CLAYTON WEST CC

HOME SWEET HOME



The recent history of the Back Lane ground is interesting.

A new (small white) scoreboard replaced the old one in the 1980s, and there was a succession of wooden pavilions before the current prefabricated structure was erected in 1990.

This has recently been extended, and further improvements are also planned.



In the mid-1990s the Club was able to put down an artificial wicket.

The Yorkshire Cricket Association helped fund the development, and Yorkshire and England fast bowler Chris Silverwood was present at the official opening of the strip.



In recent years, the Club has also been forced to erect a 25-foot high 'fence' around two parts of the ground to protect nearby houses from flying cricket balls.

Ex-players Ian Rank and Mick Sellars put a lot of time in as Club groundsmen, and Firth is delighted with the state of the Back Lane wicket: ***'It's a very good batting track. I'd say that in 50 overs a par total is somewhere around the 220 mark. But saying that, we set a Huddersfield League record in 2001 when we scored 411-7 against Dalton. It should be noted, though, that the opposition only had nine men!'***



Traditionally, batters at Back Lane have had to take account of 'local rules', which used to state that a ball hitting the boundary fence on the full was a four rather than a six. (For the umpire to signal six, the ball had to *clear* the fence).

This was local custom up until the 2002 season, when Clayton West eventually fell into line with League rules regarding boundary hits.



Clayton West C.C. is one of only two sports clubs in the village (the other being the bowling club). It has a 1st XI, a 2nd XI, and junior teams at under-13, under-15 and under-17 levels (and look out for Jonathan Butterfield, star of the Yorkshire Under-12s side).



Previously, the ground was owned by the local colliery, but when this closed in the 1980s leasing arrangements changed. Today, the Cricket Club sub-lets the field from a local farmer, and it is very proud of what it offers. ***'A warm welcome awaits all First and Second Elevens, and their supporters, visiting Back Lane,'*** says the Club's publicity in the League handbook. And it goes on: ***'Excellent teas provided.'***



Back Lane is a compact and square-shaped venue. It is located to the north of the village, not too far away from Park Mill, the River Dearne, the local school and the old colliery. Within walking distance are Emley's ground at Upper Lane and Nortonthorpe's, in Scissett, just down the main road.

The immediate surrounds are interesting: a field of horses (of different colours), a couple of new housing estates, a caravan, a bit of light industry, a crane, an *ad hoc* building site, lots of bushes, and a farm. In the far distance you see Emley Mast; in the near distance a neat white fence marks the perimeter of the ground.



You can enter the ground in a variety of ways. The pavilion (no spikes!) is tucked away in the corner: it's a white one-storey building, with the letters 'CWCC' protruding in one of the windows.



A notice says that junior cricketers must wear protective helmets at all times; another that the exercising of dogs is forbidden; and a third declares that all cars are parked at the 'owners' risk'. There are benches, bins and a BBQ facility on the side of the ground linking the pavilion and the scoreboard.

In fact, this side of the ground boasts a fine line of tall hedges - with adverts pinned to the netting in front of them. There's excellent publicity for Nuswift, ABM, Timber Specialists, Solarshade Ltd., Fawcett Electrical Ltd., Ernest Bedford & Co., Braithwaite Excavation, Mills, Kemp & Brown Solicitors, Close Consumer Finance Ltd., Victoria Kitchen Company, CMAS, N.G. Wright & Son Ltd., and Dolce Vita Restaurant.



In front of the hedging and the ads are several benches with poignant inscriptions:

Gibby's Seat - Peter Gibson - Former Player and Supporter 1932-1995.

Harry Whittaker - Chairman, Clayton West Cricket Club 1957-1970.

Greta Whittaker - Supporter of Clayton West Cricket Club for many years.

