CUMBERWORTH CRICKET CLUB: the 16th in a fascinating series of cricket histories...

AROUND THE WICKET ...with historian Peter Davies

Pub and bible class United in club sport

THE origins of cricket in Cumberworth are uncertain, but the village had a cricket club as early as 1876, when a fixture against Thurstonland took place.

The emergence of cricket in Cumberworth is an intriguing story.

We know of a team called the Young Men's Bible Class XI, which was linked to the Primitive Methodist church in the village and played at Dozing Field.

We are also told of the Foresters Arms, a pub side that played at Bromley Field, near Croft Head - a venue that sat on top of four acres of coal.

Apparently, in the 1890s the two teams merged to form Cumberworth United under the presidency of Henry Josiah Brierley, who owned Kirkstyles.

There was also a side called Upper Cumberworth C.C., who played in the Central League (alongside Cumberworth United), but who were suspended from competition in 1923 'until improvements were made to their ground'.

Phil Senior, club secretary today, says: "It's a bit confusing. At one point there may actually have been three cricket teams in the village, but the fact is that in the early twentieth century there was only one: Cumberworth United.

"And the United denoted the merger of two, or three, sides, not the merger of Lower and Upper Cumberworth, or teams from the two villages."

One of the earliest trophies won by the club was the Holmfirth Cricket Cup. After defeating Scholes in the semi-final (Cumberworth 74 all out; Scholes 52 all out), the final tie was contested against Thurstonland.

It was a very close fought affair and Cumberworth won by one wicket, scoring 85 for 9 to pass Thurstonland's tally of 82 all out.

Examination of the summarised scorecard in the local press suggests that the victory owed a great deal to a last-wicket partnership with both not-out batsmen in double figures when the winning hit was made.

The victory was celebrated in style and a local writer noted: 'Thurstonland were done. Hats and bonnets, umbrellas and sticks were flying all around, and children like young kittens rolled and tumbled on the ground.'

Cumberworth became Huddersfield Central League champions at the first time of asking in 1920.

Although they finished only 4th in the League, victory against Leymoor in the first play-off round was followed by a controversial second play-off match against Skelmanthorpe.

Cumberworth were awarded the tie when Skelmanthorpe had refused to finish the match after a dispute. In the final tie they easily beat Nortonthorpe.

In 1931 Friend Allsop scored 95 in Cumberworth's Holden Cup final triumph over Cartworth Moor. Cumberworth had claimed a huge win over Clayton West in the semi-final, scoring 309 (A Tarbatt 109 not out, F Allsop 70) and bowling out Clayton West for 31!

Friend Allsop (batting) and A Horn (bowling) scooped League awards in 1933. The club also netted the Holden Cup again, defeating Hall Bower by five wickets (W Auckland 104; A Horn 59).

The 2nd XI also bagged the Tinker Cup.

Although Cumberworth had claimed the 1931 Holden Cup by the huge margin of 278 runs, and although 1933 was 'another glorious year for this small village', historian Gordon Hinchcliffe says the 'great era of Cumberworth cricket' ended in the 1930s.

In 1937 it was announced that players would be allowed 8d (3p) each for fares. But this was rescinded in 1941 when players once again had to pay their own fares to and from matches.

In spite of the effects of World War II, the Cumberworth CC AGM decided 'that we carry on for 1942'.

After the conflict, the club returned to running both a 1st XI and 2nd XI.

In 1948 it was proposed that the groundsman's fee is £6 'for three men' and that a Ladies Section is formed.

The 'Friend Allsop Cup' was presented to the Central League in 1952 'to perpetuate the memory of a great sportsman' – and to honour one of Cumberworth's greatest-ever players.

The year 1969 was a busy year on and off the field: the club claimed the Tinker Cup – and also appealed to the local council against rate increases.

The Horn brothers (cricket field landlords) upped the ground rent from £25 to £85 in 1977. The 1st XI also scooped the Section B title.

In recent years Cumberworth have won their fair share of Central League silverware.

They have also erected a wonderful new pavilion after a terrible fire ripped through their Cumberworth Lane HQ.

Pavilion to rise from ashes

Real team effort gives club heartening boost

NEWS

Fire-ravaged pavilion being replaced

Lottery boost for village cricketers

❒ CUMBERWORTH MEMORIES: Top: the July 1960 Allsop Cup final side which took on Shelley. Above and Right: How the Express and Chronicle and Examiner reported the club's rise from the ashes and construction of a brand-new pavilion after a disastrous fire at the ground in 1995