

GROUND-SHARING AND NAME-CHANGING

Cricket, Football and Rugby – by Chris Knowles

For over 100 years now, Upper Lane has been one of the most utilised sports venues in the area after it was agreed in 1906 that Emley Clarence CC and Emley FC would ground-share the attractive sporting location. This timeline tells the story of how events have unfolded since that decision was made.



1884

The team become known as Emley Cricket & Football Club. This was the beginning of a fascinating relationship between the cricket and football clubs.

1894

The word 'Clarence' is mysteriously included in the official name of the club. They were simply renamed Emley Clarence CC.

1903

A huge year for both clubs as it signalled the beginning of the ground-sharing arrangement. Emley FC is founded and the two clubs agree to play on the same field, Upper Lane. However, the football team later moved to Chapel House farm and many other venues before returning to what was eventually known as the Welfare Ground.

1906

A local coal merchant and ex-Emley cricketer, George Stringer Snr, opens the new pavilion at Upper Lane, something which indicated a step in the right direction for the infant cricket club, who had previously relied on 'The Tent', a small wooden hut, as their only matchday facilities.

1909

It was reported that 10 of Emley FC's 11 players worked for nearby collieries.

1973

Emley FC entered the preliminary rounds of the FA Cup for the very first time.

1990

Clarence are awarded the H. Robinson Trophy for the most improved local cricket ground.

1991

The football club reach the 1st round of the FA Cup, something which they better seven years later when...

1998

They reach the 3rd round of the prestigious tournament and are drawn away against Premiership giants West Ham United, a fixture they subsequently lose 2-1.

August 2000

Emley FC agree a ground-sharing deal with Wakefield Wildcats RL club on the basis that rent is paid match by match. Emley FC Reserves continue to play their fixtures at the Welfare Ground. The decision to leave Emley was one which was decided in somewhat contentious fashion as the club's players (who were deemed members by FA regulations) attended the AGM for the first time in order to sway the vital votes in favour of the ground switch. Emley FC said the move was a difficult but necessary one in order to secure the future of the club (the Welfare Ground had been found to have 14 points of 'major concern' when inspected by UniBond League officials). The local press agreed the move had 'destroyed a local amenity.'

2002

Emley FC (of Wakefield) is renamed Wakefield & Emley AFC.

2005

AFC Emley formed and compete in the West Yorkshire League Division 1, playing their home fixtures at the Welfare Ground.

Summer 2006

Wakefield & Emley FC (of Wakefield) are renamed Wakefield FC, playing at College Grove (formerly home of Wakefield's rugby union club) in the Northern Premier League Division 1. The kit is changed from the traditional claret and blue to yellow and blue. This was also the year in which AFC Emley (of Emley) begin playing in the Northern Counties East League Division 1.

Present

Upper Lane is shared between Emley Clarence, who are currently busy designing a new clubhouse for their venue, and AFC Emley, who play their fixtures at the Welfare Ground to the left of the cricket pitch.