

Ladies of the Lily

In the early days of Golcar Cricket Club there were no lady members, although ladies would have attended matches, possibly with free admission.

With the emancipation movement gaining momentum in the first half of the 20th century, Golcar's move to admit lady members in 1929 is consistent with the general pattern. A little later than most clubs, the move was also less immediately linked to the desire for a tearoom than elsewhere. It was, though, at least in part, motivated by a need to boost the finances after the considerable expense of purchasing the ground in 1928.

Membership for ladies cost 1s 3d, but the men retained areas of exclusivity, including a dinner to celebrate the ground purchase.

A Ladies Committee was formed in August 1932 and was immediately effective in raising funds for the club, primarily by supplying food at matches and other functions. By providing the food themselves the ladies save the club considerable expense.

The 1930s was a time of growth for women's cricket and a number of clubs briefly ran a lady's team. It was perhaps with the intention of forming their own team that, in February 1932, the Golcar committee proposed a Ladies Knockout tournament to be played on midweek evenings, similar to the Workshop Knockout for men. The idea was abandoned in June and the Ladies Committee was formed two months later.

There was, however, women's cricket on the ground in the 1930s. In June 1934 Huddersfield Ladies Cricket Club played a match there and a local ladies match was played in July 1936.

By 1946 120 of the club's 490 members – almost a quarter – were women, although this figure had reduced to 80 out of 420 by 1953, possibly influenced by an increase in membership of 1s 6d across the board in 1947. A playing membership increased from 8s 6d to 10s, but the percentages were much greater in the increase for women – 1s to 2s 6d.

Speaking in 1971, Andrew Taylor, one of Golcar's leading cricketers, speaks for all at the club when he referred to the

tremendous credit owed to the ladies for the excellent teas they have provided over the years. In his opinion the Golcar tea ladies were the best in the league.

Golcar's highest profile lady cricketer is Clare Taylor, former first team scorer, about whom you will find more elsewhere in this exhibition.

The profile of women's sport is small but growing and this is reflected in a slight increase in girl cricketers playing for junior teams across Huddersfield. At Golcar, a young lady called Emma Gill plays occasionally for the under 11s and it is hoped to encourage more girls to take up the sport.