

HALL BOWER CC

HOME SWEET HOME

Hall Bower's ground can be spotted just a few fields down from Castle Hill as you look upwards from anywhere in the near vicinity of Huddersfield.

It is a spectacular location, a fantastic place to play and watch local league cricket, and is only yards away from the local watering hole - the Victoria Hotel.



From afar, and when cricket is not being played at Hall Bower, the field just looks like yet another piece of neatly-mown farmland, surrounded by tracks, dry stone walls, overgrown moors and bushes sprouting purple-coloured flowers.



But when you draw up close, you realise that *this* particular field boasts a pavilion, a scoreboard, and several garage-style buildings. Yes, this is a cricket ground - and a high-quality one at that.



What differentiates Hall Bower from other venues is its setting - the backdrop of Castle Hill is very special - but also its sense of isolation.



Granted, there are a couple of rows of semi-detached houses nearby, a set of farm buildings, and a stand-alone Sunday School (once upon a time this was all the rage, and unaffiliated Sunday Schools started emerging everywhere), but when you are sat on one of the many benches surrounding the playing area, you are struck by the quietness and tranquility of the place - it is calm and serene, even when the bowlers or the batters are in aggressive mode.

On the clubhouse walls we see photos of vintage Hall Bower sides (1934, 1943 and 1946 to name but three) and other cricketing momentos. The clubhouse also houses a cosy bar area (Tetley Ales are on tap), a TV that always shows the Ceefax cricket scores, and a set of windows that look pretty well protected from six-hitting batsmen.





And if you arrive at the ground in mid-afternoon, slightly hungry, you can often grab a tuna roll and jam tart - without even having to hand over any money. Clearly, the folks at Hall Bower are very kind.



The playing area has a professional feel about it. There are no sightscreens, but at both ends of the ground the dry stone walls are whitewashed. If it wasn't for Castle Hill looking down on you, you might actually feel that you were on a plateau at Hall Bower. It is an exposed location - which is great news when the sun is shining, but in mid-April and early-September it probably gets very cold and windy (and that's probably why so many kite-flyers head to Castle Hill to pursue their hobby).

Because of its location, the views from the ground are exceptional. On one side, you can see right through the Pennine valleys and over to Saddleworth and Manchester; on the other, you can almost make out Leeds and towns beyond.



When Club publicity says that 'delightful country air' is one of the 'six best reasons' to visit Hall Bower Lane, no lie is being told. The panoramas from on high are simply breathtaking.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s the Club made 'various alterations' to its premises - extending the tea room, erecting boundary walls and putting down paving stones and new seating. In 1970 it put up a prefabricated building to act as pavilion (and a set of showers came with it).

Hall Bower's HQ has captivated many an observer.

In 1951 a local writer called it a 'delightful spot' and went on: ***'Few clubs possess a ground with such a panoramic view and towering majestically above it is the Jubilee Tower which, in itself, is a historic landmark.'***



And the people who run the Cricket Club are proud of what they offer. In the 1969 League handbook they inserted a special message: ***'Come to "The Bower" - enjoy a good game, delightful air and tea served with a smile at all matches.'***