

LEPTON HIGHLANDERS: the 21st in a fascinating series of cricket histories...

Cup winners — but never on a Sunday

AROUND THE WICKET

...with historian Peter Davies



MEMORIES: Above: Yorkshire Ladies' Bev Nicholson (right) loses up with Sussex skipper Clare Connor in 1995. Right: the 1st XI Holden Cup winners in 1930. Below: A Junior XI, Section C champions in 1955 and a Member's Card from 1988.



THE origins of the club are unknown. However, prior to the club purchasing the ground in 1953 it formed part of the Beaumont Whitley Estate and was originally leased to the White Horse Inn.

One possible date of formation is 1854, with the pub playing a key role. This would make Lepton one of the oldest clubs in the area.

During the 1860s and 1870s the club became linked to the local parish church. This church was St John the Evangelist and was built in 1868.

The club's link to the church meant that cricket matches were not allowed to be played at home on a Sunday.

In 1893 the Highlanders became inaugural members of the Huddersfield & District Alliance League.

By 6 May they had played three matches and won one in this league. They had also entertained Holmfirth side Scholes at home.

In September 1906 Lepton Highlanders were presented with the Huddersfield Association League Cup.

Captained by E Shaw, they did not lose a match during the season, and were said to have 'worthily won' the cup.

In the same year, Lepton's ground was used for the 'Rest Match'.

Minutes of the Association reveal that a Mr Moorhouse was designated to 'make arrangements to meet the players at Waterloo not later than 2.30pm'.

In the year that the Great War broke out, 1914, officials of the Huddersfield Central League snubbed Lepton's application to join their competition — a major setback.

Captained by a man named Brook, the Highlanders won the Huddersfield Cricket Association League title in 1922.

In 1926 — the year of the General Strike — the club's success continued, but this time in a different league.

More silverware followed. Then in July 1953 Mr E Brook (Chairman), Mr B Ellis (Treasurer), and Mr J M Yelland (Secretary) wrote a letter to be sent out in order to raise funds to help the club buy their ground.

Support was gained and approximately 12 acres of land were bought from the Whitley Beaumont Estate in that same year.

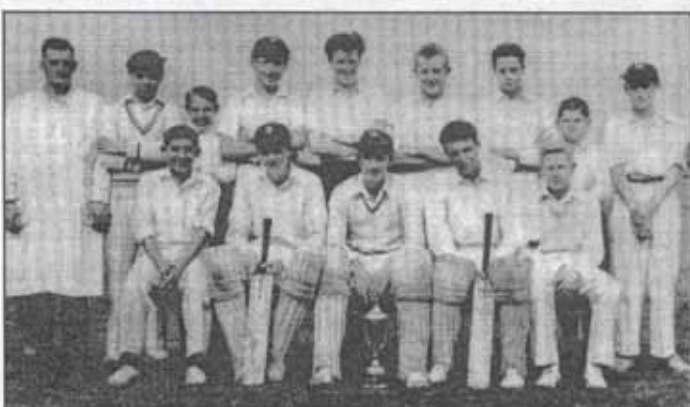
From this point on, the club owned its own headquarters.

The purchase of the ground heralded a successful spell for the Highlanders. The 2nd XI won Section B of the Huddersfield Central League in 1954 and again in 1958.

In the 1970s the Highlanders began recruiting more and more youngsters.

By 1975 the club had around 50 junior members between the ages of 10 and 14 years.

Carnivals were used for many years in order to raise funds for



the club. In 1974 the club's ledger shows that an amazing £185.80 had been raised via the carnival event of 'egg-throwing'.

Two club members managed to throw their eggs 200 feet! And fundraising efforts were rewarded in 1975, when the Juniors were able to afford their own mini-bus.

In 1977 the Lepton club were awarded the H Robinson Trophy for the most improved ground in the Huddersfield Central League — a significant achievement.

Another way the club raised funds was via the 'Friends of Lepton Highlanders'.

In the Summer 1978 edition of club newsletter Highlander, there were calls for low, or interest-free, loans from club supporters. Members who helped would thenceforth be known as 'Friends'.

During the 1970 and 1980s, the club began to diversify and offered its members the opportunity to play football and table tennis.

A football team was formed to keep the Under-13 cricket team together in the winter months. The parents of these youngsters formed themselves into a committee and helped to generate funding for a junior section.

This interest culminated in the establishment of two open-age, and six junior, teams.

In March 1987 the club's management committee held a meeting and discussed a burglary that had happened on the third of that month.

As well as obvious items such as money, other things such as chocolates, a set of pool balls, and a clock which was up for raffling for the Blind Institute, were also stolen.

An important cricketing event was held at the Highlanders' ground in August 1995. An Under-20s women's county cricket fixture between Yorkshire and Sussex ended in a six-wicket victory for the home side.

And in 1997 local taxi driver Mark Hemmingway had his body pierced 20 times at the Highlanders' ground in order to raise money for the club!

In 2000 Lepton Highlanders gained entry into the Huddersfield Cricket League. By 2001 they had achieved promotion into the top flight, winning the Ballcraft Trophy as champions of the Cedar Court Conference.

Throughout, Lepton's ladies have aided the running and funding of the club significantly over the years. Occasionally too, a Ladies Committee has been established to help with fundraising.

In 2003 the Highlanders Sports Club was awarded a £340,000 lottery grant to redevelop their facilities. This grant would also be of great benefit to the cricket club.

And the new clubhouse building at the Wakefield Road complex — now completed — bodes extremely well for the future of the club.

Around The Wicket returns in the spring.

