



LEYMOOR CRICKET CLUB: the 17th in a fascinating series of cricket histories...

Cricket survivors are still ale and hearty!

AROUND
THE
WICKET

...with
historian
Peter
Davies

THERE is uncertainty as to when the Leymoor club was actually founded, but in 1899 they were competing in the Colne Valley League.

There were many such local leagues in this early period. What is significant about this set of teams is that only one still exists today - Leymoor United!

By 1906 the club had two teams competing in the Huddersfield & District Association Cricket League.

In this year the 2nd XI won their competition and received the prestigious Lumb Cup. The cup was given to the Association 2nd XI competition winners in 1906 and 1907 after interest in the original knockout competition had decreased as a result of various phases of local league restructuring.

By 1911 it seems that Leymoor were competing in the Alliance League (after winning the Association in 1912), which soon changed its name to the Huddersfield & District Cricket Council.

1914 - the first year of the Great War - turned out to be the last year of the Council competition, with only a quartet of clubs remaining after various organisational disputes. The four teams played each four times each!

Leymoor joined the Huddersfield Central Cricket League in 1915. This was just two years after the league itself was formed.

The local cricket scene was pretty fluid during the First World War, and Leymoor, together with Meltham, Thongsbridge, Scholes and Holmbridge, benefited, entering the league at a difficult time for everyone.

In later years the club stopped and started, and also had a period in the Huddersfield Association.

By 1921, the league had become large enough to split into two, with the winners of each section playing for the championship at the end of the season. Leymoor were put into Section B.

The minute book of the Huddersfield Central League - 2 August 1921 - shows that a complaint was made by Holmbridge regarding the Leymoor umpire.

Holmbridge had written a letter about the umpire, who had officiated in their match with Hepworth.

It was proposed and passed that the man in question should be struck off the umpires list. Soon after, the Leymoor club went into hibernation... only to return after the Second World War.



LEYMOOR MEMORIES: Above an undated team line-up; Top left: players at the club's pavilion and right: a major asset - the Walkers Arms on the boundary edge!

The 'new' Leymoor CC emerged in the early 1950s and did well in its first decade.

The 1st XI won Section B of the Central League twice (1953 and 1959) and the 2nd XI won their championship in 1959 and Section B on a hat-trick of occasions (1953, 1955 and 1956).

Off the field, the club was involved in lots of interesting goings-on. The Central League minute-book tells us that on 13 June 1958, 'Leymoor's chairman (was) suspended from all cricket under the jurisdiction of the Huddersfield Central Cricket League until the end of the season, for pulling up the stumps in a Tinker Cup tie, stating that it was unfit to play. Leymoor's opponents, Clayton West, were awarded the match.'

In 1959 Leymoor achieved the Huddersfield Central League 'Double'. Leymoor's 1st XI saw off Denby Dale in order to finish above Penistone in the league, while the 2nd XI emulated this performance with an away win at Scholes in the final play-off.

The club had a purple patch in the late 1970s: the 1st XI winning Section B in 1978 and the 2nd XI netting the Section E

title in 1977 - the year of the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

In an effort to raise funds, the club organised a sponsored 'wellie-throwing' event in 1978. Letters were sent out to local firms to request donations for prizes. Some firms responded positively to the request, like Sportsgear in Huddersfield, meaning the event was an overall success.

The Central League minutes are also interesting in the 1970s:

On 8 August 1978, 'Dodworth, Penistone and Clayton West representatives all complained about the state of the wicket at Leymoor.'

On 5 September 1978, 'A letter from Leymoor was read to the meeting giving the action being taken by their club to improve their wicket. The meeting was interested to hear of their action and approved their letter.' In the same year, Leymoor turned up trumps in their search for funds to buy a new mower.

Leymoor Under-18s recorded a milestone victory against Lepton in order to take the Armitage Cup for the first time in 1983. At around this time, and after a great deal of

deliberation and fundraising, plans were unveiled for the construction of a new structure housing a tea room and changing facilities.

This announcement was warmly welcomed by Leymoor members who had long awaited the replacement of the existing facilities.

Due to the red tape of brewery licensing policy, in 1984 Leymoor were forced to sell sporting equipment by mail order in the hope of raising the £12,500 needed in order to build a new pavilion and changing rooms.

Today, on the local cricket circuit, Leymoor's ground is celebrated for one thing: the proximity of the Walkers Arms, the local pub.

The links between village cricket and the pub trade are legion. The origins of the game are intimately bound up with the Hambledon club, in deepest Hampshire, and the local watering hole there - The Bat and Ball Inn. Since that period, cricket teams have emerged out of pubs (literally and metaphorically) and landlords have often sponsored or played for teams (or both at the same time).

With Leymoor we see another side to this relationship: a geographical one. Club secretary Graham Parr explains the situation: "Our ground is linked to the pub because the brewery - Punch Taverns, and before that Bass North - own the cricket field."

"We have a great relationship with the current landlords, who help us tremendously. Recent summers have been so good, weather-wise, that on some Sundays the playing area is virtually ringed by sunbathers - folk who had popped into the pub and who had ended up at the cricket."

"The pub also has an Evening League side, which plays its home games at Parkwood Road on Monday nights."

Leymoor is a healthy and happy club. Parr says: "We'd like to think of ourselves as a friendly organisation. We enjoy our cricket and put a lot of time into our junior teams."

The geographical location of Leymoor CC is interesting. Parr puts it into perspective: "We've got good relations with Golcar CC, but I suppose we serve two different parts of the village."

"Obviously, they play in the Huddersfield League, so we never cross swords on the field. That said, we did play a one-off friendly against them about 15 years ago."

"The fact is also that a lot of players start at Leymoor and move on to Golcar, or vice-versa. In general I'd say the two clubs get along very well."