

Shepley Bonfire Night: An Outsider's View...

By Dave Wooding

Having formed a link with Shepley Cricket Club through my degree in Sports Journalism at the University of Huddersfield, attending the local bonfire event seemed the perfect way of familiarising myself further with the village.

Stopping off at the Farmer's Boy on the way up allowed me to buy a ticket, meaning I could skip the queue that had formed just outside the ground. However, without a ticket it didn't look as though I would have been kept waiting too long, as the queue was moving at quite a pace.

Wandering around the Marsh Lane ground, I was amazed by the club's hospitality. The 'Wine Bar' at one end of the ground was full to the brim. With plenty of alcohol on sale and plenty of warmth too, this was the ideal place for the adults to escape to!



Being from much further south myself (Northampton), you always hear about how hospitable people in 'The North' are, and seeing the tea room full of smiling faces and seeing local people serving various stews and chillis certainly confirmed this rumour. By this stage I was beginning to wish I hadn't eaten just before I left home.

If the food on offer hadn't warmed me up on what was a cold but, more importantly, dry evening, then gathering around the impressive bonfire would certainly have done the job. By the time the fireworks were released just after 7pm I had recovered the heat lost walking from the train station.

It was great to see children of all ages enjoying the firework display. Indeed, time flew by watching the fireworks, and what seemed like a 10-minute show was in fact a display that lasted well over half an hour. Speaking to various villagers afterwards, one thing was definitely agreed: this had been the biggest and best of the village firework displays to date.

One other thing that I noticed: there were no injuries of any kind on the night. With lots of youngsters heading to the event it was good to see that Marsh Lane had been kept decongested, and the bonfire itself was very well marshalled. The last thing any of the organisers wanted was an injury as a result either of malfunctioning fireworks or coming too close to the bonfire, and it was a relief to hear that the first-aider present had nothing to do.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who helped make the night run smoothly and successfully. It was clear to see, even as an outsider, just how much effort went into the evening, and also how much the Bonfire Night meant to the residents of Shepley. I hope this event continues to grow and become even more successful, both for the village and the cricket club.