

CRICKET

Focus on - Southowram

Young club's giant strides

Founded in 1977 and therefore much younger than most of its rivals, Southowram CC boasts an idyllic ground, excellent facilities and a trophy cabinet that contains the 2006 Parish Cup.

Of the various precursors to today's Southowram CC, the St. Anne's Church team had the longest and most chequered history.

The 'new' Southowram CC was founded by a group of local enthusiasts who had decided that it was high time a new club bore the village's name. Their base was the Cock and Bottle pub.

The new club applied to join Division Two of the Halifax Association and was accepted after a re-election application by the works team Peglers was rejected.

To begin with the new club had no ground in the village and played its 'home' matches at Calderdale Council-owned Roils Head and in the grounds of Spring Hall Mansion. Second team matches were played at Wainstalls.

One thought was uppermost in the minds of the men and women involved with running the new club - acquiring a home ground in



Champions: the 1992 side which won the Halifax League's second division title



On borrowed time: the old Southowram pavilion

Southowram itself.

Various possibilities were touted, including a field close to the parish church, where the original St Anne's team might have made its debut 100 years earlier. But in the end an unlikely solution was found.

Ashday Lane in Southowram was the site of a former quarry. Marshalls PLC gave Southowram CC a lease on the site and the ground took shape in the early-1980s. It was levelled, covered with topsoil and then grassed.

In 1988, at the fourth time of asking, Southowram were elected to the Halifax League's Second Division, replacing

RAFA.

Then in 1993 a handsome new pavilion was opened - a major landmark in the club's history.

In August 2000, Southowram met Outlane in the Parish Cup final at Copley and came away with a 13-run victory - another red-letter day.

The popular new Twenty20 format, which had drawn big crowds to county grounds, came to the Halifax League in August 2005 - and Southowram CC were the inaugural winners.

And then came last month's Parish Cup victory over Booth.

The 17th in a Saturday series on Calderdale cricket clubs by Dr Peter Davies of the Cricket Heritage Project at Huddersfield University

FACT FILE

Founded: 1977
Ground: Ashday Lane
Nearest other club: Halifax CC at Siddal
Greatest moments: Winning the Parish Cup in 2000 and 2006
Local hero: Peter Jowett - hardworking club stalwart
Bizarre fact: The club's old pavilion had been purchased from Barksland CC!