

CRICKET

Focus on - Stainland

Long and rich history

Although local cricket historian Andrew Hardcastle has found references to cricket being played in Stainland during the 1870s, the current club traces its roots back to 1884.

By 1886 the club's fixtures and officers were being printed in the *Halifax Courier*.

Fixtures included matches against Hartshead, Outlane, Halifax St. Thomas, Elland 2nd XI, Crosland Moor, Colnebridge, King Cross, Lightcliffe, Paddock Congregational, Hopwood and Longwood.

The club also had an entry in the *Athletic News Cricket Supplement and Directory*.

For the best part of 40 years - 1884-1922 - Stainland played their home matches at Drury Lane, a venue famous for its bandstand.

In 1894 the club became founder members of the Halifax & District League.

Stainland enjoyed their first Halifax Parish Cup success in 1901, beating Lord Nelson by 7 wickets in a low-scoring final. Gate receipts at Thrum Hall were more than £24, which suggests a healthy crowd.

In 1922 the club received their current ground, on Stainland Road, as a post-war present.

The working men of the village had a new recreation area, and the folk at the British Legion were named as trustees. It was christened the Memorial Ground.

Under the captaincy of E. Longbottom, Stainland scooped the first XI Second Division in 1959.

Another superb year for Stainland seconds was 1968. They won the Crossley Shield



Blast from the past: Stainland's 1960 line-up

under the captaincy of J. Lewthwaite - and also netted the Division Two title.

Some at the Memorial Ground argue that the club has been unlucky.

Like all local cricket clubs they have been on the lookout for young cricketing talent, but recently they have been scuppered by the fact that, for all the modern housing going up in the village, few new residents

have knocked on the club's door wanting to play cricket.

In 1998 Stainland's pavilion burnt down. The council provided the club with some temporary changing facilities and a portakabin to use as a tea room, but the club had to think long-term.

They decided to go it alone, and by May 2001 a handsome new pavilion had been erected and officially opened.

The 13th in a Saturday series on Calderdale cricket clubs by Dr Peter Davies of the Cricket Heritage Project at Huddersfield University

FACT FILE

Founded: 1884
Ground: Memorial Ground, Stainland Road
Local Landmark: Red Lion Public House
Former Grounds: Drury Lane
Greatest Moment: Winning the Parish Cup in 1935 for the second time in three

years
Local Hero: Len Norcliffe - veteran player and club stalwart
Bizarre Fact: Officials complain that in recent years most families connected to the club have given birth to girls rather than boys!