

Focus on - Stones Cricket Club

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

Village side goes from strength to strength...



Celebration match: at the pavilion opening in 1995

STONES Cricket Club, Ripponden, was formed through the local Wesleyan chapel. The first ground was situated in a field opposite the church. This can still be identified today, as a ledge where the wicket was leveled remains visible.

A number of other local teams were members of the Halifax and District Amateur League in the late 19th and early 20th centuries: Barkisland, Zion, Soyland Town, Rishworth and Ripponden Conservative Club.

In the early days, Stones fielded a side made up exclusively of cricketers with the surname 'Whiteley'!

Like many other local cricket clubs, Stones were affected by the Great War, and closed down due to the dislocation. They moved to Swift Cross in the immediate post-war period.

Up until 1924 the Swift Cross ground was rented. The opportunity then came to buy the ground for £100. Four club members acted as trustees, providing £25 each. The ground was bought from J.R. Whiteley at Great House.

In the 1920s and 1930s Swift Cross was not just the site of a cricket ground; there was also a putting green and a set of tennis courts.

Some time in the 1930s the club changed its name from Stones Wesleyans to Stones Methodists. Given that the club is now known simply as 'Stones', this means that it has had three different incarnations!

In the 1930s members erected a small tea hut near where the score-box stands today. They had brought the construction all the way from The Shay football stadium



Early glory: how the *Courier* reported Stones' 1938 Parish Cup triumph

in the middle of Halifax. In 1938 and 1954 Stones bagged the prestigious Halifax Parish Cup - an amazing achievement for a small village side.

A new pavilion was opened in 1971. In 1995 the building was extended and refurbished - the whole project costing £25,000.

Stones recently held a fundrais-

ing Sportspersons Dinner at the Cedar Court Hotel, Huddersfield, at which England Test selector Geoff Miller was guest speaker.

And the club is proud that stalwart David Normanton is currently president of the Halifax Cricket League.

Their home at Swift Cross remains one of the highest and

FACT FILE

Founded: 1884

Ground: Swift Cross

Former ground: Rochdale Road

Nearest landmark: Beehive Inn

Nearest other clubs: Triangle, Barkisland

League: Halifax

Former Leagues: Halifax and District Amateur Cricket League, Halifax and District Amateur Cricket Association League

Greatest moment: 1938 and 1954 Parish Cup wins

Local hero: David Normanton - current Halifax League president

Bizarre fact: In the 1930s a visiting club complained that too many local hens were laying eggs on the outfield at Swift Cross!

most interesting cricketing venues in the area.

● If you have any additional information, photos or documents relating to the history of Stones CC, please contact Dr Peter Davies on 01484 472405 or via p.j.davies@hud.ac.uk. See also www.cricketheritage.org.uk