

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK — THREE MEN AND A CRICKET SEASON 2006 (£6 including postage from Cricket Heritage Publications, University of Huddersfield)

This is another enterprising booklet from Peter Davies and his team at Huddersfield, who are putting other publishers to shame. **Michael Bourne** was a teacher, **Tony Hutton** a proof reader, and **Brian Senior** an insurance agent. Now they have the time to just

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watch cricket — which they do, from January to December, with a passion.

There is a mine of information in these 136 pages about the smaller clubs, a tranche of informed criticism on Yorkshire's teams at all levels, a traveller's eye for detail about journeyings up and down the county, and a delightful selection of colour pictures — Arthington, St Peter's, York, Ampleforth, Sedburgh, Blubberhouses — to evoke nostalgia. Imagine *Last of the Summer Wine* devoted to cricket, and containing as much information and erudition as humour, and you'll get the flavour.

It's not all sweetness and light. There are sad stories of little clubs paying the council £600 a year rent, and finding their facilities vandalised, left dirty and totally uncared for — and this in Bradford, home of what has been claimed to be England's premier league.

The trio acknowledge their inspirations to be Peter Snape, Tony Woodhouse and John Featherstone, three recorders of Yorkshire's history who are all sadly missed, but whose memory will live in books such as this, a treat.

Derek Hodgson

180 NOT OUT — By Peter Davies and Rob Light (Sigma Books)

These three paperback volumes, covering as they do the pictorial history of league cricket in Calderdale and North and South Kirklees, are little gems. Peter Davies is a Senior Lecturer in History at Huddersfield University, with several cricket books on his CV, while Rob Light is graduating in cricket at Leicester de Montfort University, and has published articles on 19th Century cricket in the West Riding.

They know their stuff. The first cricket club in Calderdale was the great Lascelles Hall, founded in 1825 and who, at one time, contributed no fewer than six players to the Yorkshire XI, and defeated in various fixtures between 1820 and 1860 All England, Yorkshire, Sheffield, Surrey and Yorkshire Gentlemen.

Mighty men were they, ordering for the first day's play against Harrow Wanderers "a gallon of brandy, half-gallon of scotch, half-gallon of rum, 30 lb of beef, two hams and 12 dozen pies". There is no mention of the condition of the Wanderers on the second day. Not

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surprisingly, when **Sir Stanley Jackson** visited Huddersfield his first reported question on leaving the railway station was: "Which is the road to Lascelles Hall?" Not least among this extraordinary club's claim to fame is their choice of colours — purple, cream and black, as exotic as I Zingari.

These books were started in 2005 — hence the title, and the pictures, taken over the years and embellished with reprints of newspaper cuttings, cartoons and linking text, are a delight to all lovers of nostalgia...e.g. Elland invited Ugandan dictator Idi Amin to open their new pavilion — and represent the very bone of life in the old West Riding. That very name reminds us all that tradition and history are vital to retaining identity, no matter how often Whitehall try to alter the boundaries and the BBC and ITV tell us that the Uniteds of Leeds and Sheffield are the county's senior football clubs.

How about Middlesbrough?

Actually, it's not all Yorkshire. Walsden were in the Central Lancashire League when I last visited, and Todmorden, for all their proud affiliation to the white rose, have long embellished the Lancashire League. But the Lankys aren't a bad lot, really. We could have worse neighbours. Names changed, often to circumvent conditions imposed by the original owners that prohibited play on Sundays, badges changed, grounds changed, and there is the inevitable flow of new faces though the pages.

Great names from the county's past, too. **Tom Emmett**, **Louis Hall**, **Hirst** and **Rhodes**, both from Kirkheaton, **Will Barber**, **Willie Watson** and **Chris Balderstone** from Paddock, **Ismail Dawood**, and the sadness at the departed glories of Savile Town, Fartown and Park Avenue. My favourite picture must be of **Learie Constantine** visiting Slaithwaite in 1933, guarded by two very chuffed local constables.

In 1938 Armitage Bridge's Jack Crum somehow managed to throw a ball over Lockwood Viaduct, a feat worthy of Superman. The trilogy also pays proper tribute to the ladies, smiling from a hundred tea-rooms, fresh and pretty in their summer dresses, smiling and determined in their cricket gear.

Whatever cricket's vicissitudes in the last 50 years, however deformed the first-class game may become at the hand of marketeers and television, these books make a confident assertion that at the grass roots, at village club level, the game will survive and, if current indications are borne out, even prosper and expand.

Derek Hodgson

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