

# Pie-throwers?

## 35. Denby Dale C.C. - Wakefield Road

*Dates for your diary: 6<sup>th</sup> September - Coffee Morning including Tombola, Raffle, Cake Stall & Toy Stall. All contributions welcome (Pavilion); 28<sup>th</sup> September - Harvest Festival (Pie Hall); 25<sup>th</sup> October - Presentation Evening (Pie Hall); 1<sup>st</sup> November - Bonfire (Cricket Ground).  
[Denby Dale C.C. Gazette, Issue Number 2 - July 2003]*

**'Denby Dale - The Pie Village'** proclaims the sign as you enter the village along Wakefield Road. And as you wander down the main road, you come across the Pie Hall (built in 1972) - another sign of the history and heritage of the place. In 2000 a local website revealed some historic news: 'Over the first weekend in September the people of Denby Dale made a record-breaking meat and potato pie which fed 50,000. This was the tenth huge pie; the first was made in 1788 to celebrate the recovery of George III from mental illness...This year's pie was...the Millennium Pie. This Denby Dale Pie beat a previous record set in New York in 1995. The *Yorkshire Post* reported that the pie was forty feet by nine feet and three feet deep...It was well-received; unlike the 1887 pie, the stench of which was so awful it was feared it would poison anyone who ate it...'

Apart from pies, Denby Dale - once known as Denby Dike - does have other things to recommend it: a set of refined shops (some quite New Age), a legendary pub called the White Hart, and a 21-arch viaduct, built in 1880 and variously described as 'spectacular' and 'breathtaking'. It is also famous for Quakerism, its distinctive dialect, and its pipe industry (drains rather than tobacco or music). The cricket club is also central to the community. A DDCC spokesman says: 'We are in the heart of summer wine country and boast the largest pie in the world'; a website adds, 'Denby Dale enjoys its sports - cricket definitely takes a precedence in the summer months...with both an "A" and "B" team, under-13s, under-11s and a well supported women's team.' As if to emphasise its links with the village, the cricket club's badge features an image of the nearby viaduct.

**The cricket ground is the** ultimate village venue. It is sited on the main road adjacent to the bowling green; this means that on Saturday afternoons all passers-by get a taste of the action. Not only this, but they get an excellent view of proceedings because the playing area is 'down below' the road, sited

in an amphitheatre-type 'bowl'.

The Z. Hinchcliffe Pavilion is named after Zechariah Hinchcliffe, a pioneering local mill-owner of the nineteenth-century. It is a modern, double-decker building that owes its existence to the Sport England Lottery Fund and the Foundation for Sport and the Arts. It boasts a balcony, superb changing facilities and three hanging baskets on the front. Inside there are themed cricket tea-towels on display, 'fundraising' bricks, and posters (one publicises the club's 'sponsored tree' scheme; another shows a photo of the old pavilion in 1997 and the new one in 1999 - a kind of 'before-and-after' effect). There is also a newly-installed disabled stairlift, a spick-and-span kitchen (which serves super toffee cheesecake on 'Denby Dale Bicentenary Pie' plates), and a special room for scorers and umpires (plus assorted hi-tech gadgetry). There are three scoreboards: two electronic facilities (one in the pavilion, one directly opposite) and a small manual device.

So forward-thinking are Denby Dale that they hire out the pavilion as 'business space' during the week. As the roadside noticeboard puts it: 'Welcome to Denby Dale Cricket Club and Denby Dale Physiotherapy and Sports Injury Clinic - John Secker BSc (Hons) MCSP SRP, Chartered Physiotherapist - Tel: 07979 597289'. (Recently, the club has also put on a special training course for cricket scorers - six sessions plus an exam - and coaching sessions for local female cricketers).

As you look out at the playing area from the main road, you see not only a sporting arena but an area of dense woodland, some mauve-coloured heather, a selection of hand-crafted walls, a field of cows high above the village, and the odd house. The ground is a lovely round shape. The boundary is marked in white paint. There is no sightscreen at the bowling-green end, but there are a couple of small white fences at the other end. Directly opposite the bowling green there is a large sign saying 'Palace Tandoori: Indian Cuisine' - a nod to the club's chief sponsors. A copy of the latest teamsheet is pinned to the noticeboard near the main entrance and a set of benches line the perimeter of the field. Some of these have special significance as the following inscriptions make plain:

Dedicated to the memory of Dennis Padgett from his wife Joyce.

Donated to Denby Dale Cricket Club in memory of Arthur Lodge by his wife Edith - Happy Memories.

In memory of Selwyn Brian Simpson - Lifelong Supporter and Player.

Dedicated to the people of Denby Dale and the surrounding villages - From Doctors K & R Samanta.

In memory of their parents - From Doctors K & R Samanta.

**Denby Dale C.C. joined the** Huddersfield Central League in 1922, replacing Lepton Highlanders. But theirs has not been an unbroken membership of the League, for they withdrew during the Second World War and did not take part in 1942, 1943 or 1944. They had a golden period in the 1950s, twice winning the 1st XI cup, three times triumphing in the 2nd XI knockout competition, and also tasting success in the league - claiming eight successive 2nd XI titles and one 1st XI crown.

The club has also been in the news off the field. In May 1927 the League executive, 'passed that J.H.S. of Denby Dale...be struck off the list of League umpires and that the Denby Dale club had to find an efficient substitute.' Meanwhile, in November 1979, the League secretary 'reported that Denby Dale had indicated that they did not wish to participate in the Sykes Cup in 1980'. Higham were invited to take Denby Dale's place, but no reason is given as to why the Wakefield Road club wanted to opt out. Over the years, though, the great thing about Denby Dale teams has been their versatility. At Scholes one year the players washed themselves in a nearby dyke after the game!

In the first years of the twenty-first century, the club has launched a regular newsletter (the *Denby Dale C.C. Gazette* - full of news, announcements and sensible ideas such as a 'swap shop' for youngsters wanting to trade in kit they've outgrown) and a new website which recently announced some good news: 'We have formed an alliance between HTT Print (Europe) Ltd. and the Government's Business Sponsorship Incentive Scheme for Sport and Physical Recreation, Sportsmatch, to produce a grant capable of purchasing a bowling machine. This will be a tremendous coaching aid to coach Damms and his team and should give a boost to the women's coaching sessions. Many thanks to all concerned.' A few days later, the same website announced: 'The bowling machine has now arrived and is being put into good use most evenings.'

Extract from P.Davies, *Pennine Pitch* (2004)