

PADDOCK CRICKET CLUB: the 20th in a fascinating series of cricket histories...

Early cup win leads to wild celebration

AROUND THE WICKET

...with historian Peter Davies



MAKING THE HEADLINES: Pictured left: Paddock 2nd XI line-up in 1921. The following season they were winners of the Paddock Shield competition. Above: spot the famous face — West Indian Test cricket legend Sir Garfield Sobers lines up for the club in the early 1960s as substitute professional. In the Sixties, Paddock were a real power, claiming the Sykes Cup in 1963, 1967 and 1968 and the 1st XI Byrom Shield in 1964 and 1965.

PADDOCK Cricket Club was formed by a group of young men from Paddock Methodist Church in 1872.

The club was originally called Paddock Rangers and only played rugby. But, by the middle of the 1870s, cricket had been introduced. This caused the problem of finding a field which was suitable for the new sport and three grounds were used before the club moved to its current home in 1882.

Paddock won their first league championship in 1908 and their first Sykes Cup in 1923.

The *Huddersfield Examiner* described the remarkable scenes which followed the 1923 triumph:

'A huge crowd awaited the arrival of the Charabanc at Longroyd Bridge, and to the martial strains of See the Conquering Hero Comes, played con brio by the Milnsbridge Socialist Band, the party proceeded up the village.

'The crowd increased as the procession went along and no road vehicle could stay its progress. The tramcar was compelled to creep sedately behind, and even the Golcar bus had to run out of its orthodox track.'

The newspaper went on: 'The effects of all this upon the smaller inhabitants of Paddock was similar to the music of the Pied Piper of Hamelin and it is doubtful that he had more children following him than the Paddock team...

'After all, winning a cup is a thirsty job, and it was not surprising that a further halt was called at Paddock Head, to the great confusion of the Golcar bus service. By this time the crowd was tremendous and the general enthusiasm to which was added the merriment of the team's mascot donkey, which can both eat ice cream and ride a bicycle, will cause Paddockers to remember for a long time the occasion when their cricket team won 'a' cup.'

A league and cup double followed in 1937, but one account has it that the club was in debt to the tune of £350 during the 1930s. A framed document in the clubhouse today reveals that four trustees (H Robinson, A Teal, A Clay and W Noble) helped to clear the club mortgage during the period 1937-47. In time, the club was given the option of further leases on the ground.

On 17 November 1947 the club staged a

special ceremony at which the deeds of the new pavilion were presented.

The history of the West View ground has been littered with controversy, and 1957 was a particularly significant year.

First, the club appealed against the assessment of £100 rateable value for the ground and premises.

It claimed that this figure was too high, and that it should be reduced on account of the fact that the club acted as a key community organisation; it wasn't just a cricket club but a 'youth club' and an 'old people's club' too.

The club felt that the assessment of £100 would be a burden greater than they could bear, and they asked that the present £67 assessment should continue.

Paddock eventually lost their appeal!

In August of the same year, the club had to respond to criticisms of their ground.

The case against Paddock was that no wicket had been prepared for a particular fixture and that there were other problems too.

The club claimed that they had experienced difficulties with a key piece of machinery and that the authorities should offer them a 'helping hand' rather than pointing out

defects.

But things changed for the better, as the *Examiner* reported on 5 September:

'Further improvement in the condition of the Paddock Cricket Ground was reported to the meeting of the Huddersfield and District Cricket League at the Pack Horse Hotel last evening by the president, Mr. Herbert Robinson.

'He said that, in accordance with previous decisions, a small sub-committee had again been to see the ground that evening.

'"We can say," he said, "that there has been even greater improvement and the ground is looking more like its old self and it gives us a lot of joy."

Over recent decades, the club has remained in the news.

In 1962 West Indian Test superstar Gary Sobers played for the club as substitute professional, and 10 years later, in 1972, the club celebrated its centenary. Another international star, Pakistani batsman Mansoor Akhtar, signed in 1985.

The club has experienced its share of ups and downs, but it remains one of the most famous names in Huddersfield Cricket League.



CLUB STALWART: Right: The Paddock team takes to the field for the 1947 Sykes Cup final (they won!). Above: an aerial view of the ground.