

## AROUND THE WICKET

with historian  
Peter Davies

UPPERTHONG CRICKET CLUB: the eleventh in a fascinating series of cricket histories

# Wasps, moles and an amazing match

THE 'original' Uppertong C C emerged around 1977 and played friendly fixtures and also appeared in the Huddersfield Evening League.

In the early years Uppertong played an annual fixture against another local village, Netherthong, with a special trophy up for grabs.

In 1982 the cricketers of Uppertong were featured in a local newspaper article about the village.

A year later, Uppertong joined the Huddersfield and District Evening League. The league was originally founded in 1937.

In 1993, 1994 and 1995, Uppertong played their Evening League home games at Gill Lane, home of Cartworth Moor.

But in 1994 the club was given the go-ahead by the local council to develop the cricket ground on Wickens Lane.

In February 1999 the 'old' Uppertong Evening League side merged with Barker Sports Cricket Club to form the 'new' Uppertong CC.

The new side made a successful application to join the Huddersfield Central League. This meant that the village of Uppertong was now home to a local league cricket club with a regular fixture list, rather than a club playing occasional friendly and Evening League matches.

Barker Sports cricket team had been founded in 1980. Their HQ was Marsh Liberal Club and they played their home games on a field adjacent to New College, Salendine Nook.

They competed in the Association League and had enjoyed some success in the late-1980s and 1990s, winning the Huddersfield Cricket Association Section B title in 1987 and the Sharpe Trophy in 1994.

They scooped the Indoor Six-a-side crown in 1985. The Salendine Nook-based side also reached three Lumb Cup finals - 1985, 1992, 1995 - but failed to win the famous old trophy on each occasion.

Barker Sports had previously played their home fixtures at Salendine Nook, but had become disillusioned with their lot.

This was the background to the 1999 merger, with Barker Sports joining with the 'old' Uppertong C C to form the 'new' Uppertong C C and playing at Uppertong.

The newly-merged club bagged its first piece of silverware almost immediately, winning the Huddersfield Central League Section C championship in 2000.

Distance seems no obstacle for the club's dedicated players. One squad member travels from Westhoughton in Lancashire (35 miles and at least an hour's drive) to get to matches. Another member comes in from Leeds.

There have also been funny moments.

Club spokesman John Williams recalls: "The 2nd XI were playing Ruddlesdens. We were in a nail-biting game that we eventually won but at one point Andy Swindells was running around from deep mid-on to behind the bowler for a skied straight hit attempting a catch.

"As he ran around the tree-lined boundary, he went down like a shot pigeon. We were more gutted by the missed catch so no-one gave him any sympathy until we found out that he had been stung in the eyelid by a wasp. No commitment that boy!"

Uppertong were ahead of the game with their impressive website - featuring all kinds of information about the club and an interactive messageboard.

The club also has its own 'home page' on the excellent Huddersfield Central League website.

In 2002 Uppertong's cricket ground was used as a helicopter pad. As part of a unique wedding day, the bride landed on the square as the band started to play!



On the field there have been amazing moments. One terrific game at Flockton saw Uppertong emerge with a tie.

Uppertong struggled on a wet track to arrive at 79 all out, having been set fine at 40-2. A good Flockton partnership saw them climb from 30-odd for 5 through to 79-5 and, with scores tied, Uppertong took the last five Flockton wickets for no runs. What a match!

In 2002 the new club celebrated 25 years of cricket in Uppertong - since the original Uppertong club was founded. A fixture between 'Villagers' and 'Comer-Iners' was staged to mark the occasion.

An interesting relationship has developed between Uppertong Village Hall (once the Sunday School, built in 1837) and Uppertong CC.

The cricket teas are served in the hall - and it is also used for the club's AGM every February.

Uppertong have gone from being a club that played Evening League and social cricket only a few years ago to a club with Huddersfield Central League 1st and 2nd XIs, Under-13s and Under-15s.

A number of their younger players have represented the Central League, Huddersfield Schoolboys, Taverners and also Yorkshire. They also believe that their Yorkshire Colt holds the record score at Under-13 level for a batsman!

There are now plans afoot to build a new clubhouse. The only problem is moles: 51 were caught at Dean Road during one recent season!

● Readers are asked to contact Peter Davies on 01484 472405 or via [p.j.davies@hud.ac.uk](mailto:p.j.davies@hud.ac.uk) if they have any more photos or information relating to local cricket history.



Alan Kaye (right) a member of the NCL Central League's management board presents the Section C trophy (Halden Cup) to Uppertong skipper Darryl Morris, while his team-mates look on. Formerly Barker Sports in the Association League, the team is now based on a relatively new ground in the Holme Valley (2002/03).

□ RURAL IDYLL: Top: drinks, good weather and good cricket high above the Holme Valley. Above: the 'new' Uppertong claim the Section C title in 2000 and Below: the distinctive changing rooms/club house in winter.

