



Calderdale History 1950-79

- 1950 April Mr D.W. Standeven, who was president of Halifax RUFC, presented the ground to the club in memory of his late father.
- 1951 High Sunderland, built in about 1600 on the moors at Horley Green, overlooking Halifax's Shibden Valley was demolished. A highly ornate building, it is generally agreed that High Sunderland provided Emily Bronte with the inspiration for the physical appearance of Wuthering Heights in her famous novel - she had worked as a governess in nearby Southowram. An attempt was made to sell it either to the Bronte Society or Halifax Corporation but was decided that the cost of repairs outweighed the house's value

Work at Halifax Flour Society Limited, Bailey Hall ceased in April but the mill was almost immediately bought up by the confectionery giant John Mackintosh and Sons Ltd, which already owned the adjacent Albion Mills.

Speedway promoter Bruce Booth brought midget car racing to the Shay in November to boost funds. 15,000 spectators witnessed this one-off venture - 3 times higher than the average speedway gate.

The Lyric Cinema Queens Road, Halifax closed on 13th July capacity 540

- 1952 On 31 March, speedway promoter Bruce Booth announced the end of speedway 'while rates and taxation remain at the present levels'.
- 1953 All senior school pupils at the time of the Coronation received a Selsdon six-chamber propelling pencil. Juniors were given a Wyvern six-chamber propelling pencil. Infants and children under five not attending school all got a Coronation souvenir spoon.

Horse haulage finally ended and so did the golden age of canal traffic

5th November Halifax actor Eric Portman came to Halifax to open Mollett's store in Silver Street.

- 1954 Halifax RLFC draw with Warrington at Wembley 4-4 then lose in the replay at Odsal Stadium 8-4. Record crowd of 102,000 still stands today

Asquith Bottom dating from 1556 was demolished. It had the distinction of being one of very few timber-framed Tudor buildings in the area.

Million Dollar Diamond the first full-length 3-D film to be made in Britain. Written by Halifax author Maurice Procter

Cross Field Bus Station was opened

The Imperial café in George Square closed in October

The North Bridge passenger station closed

- 1955 "Have a Go" was broadcast from Warley, from the same church schoolroom, in fact, where the young Wilfred Pickles had made his first public appearance, reciting a poem. It was estimated that this edition of the show - the 250th - was heard by 23 million people.

- 1956 Halifax RLFC win at Wembley against Salford

Brookfoot mill was converted for use by the newly created Kosset Carpets Ltd. It had been occupied by Turner and Wainwright Toffee Manufacturers

Park Wood crematorium was completed at a cost of £90,000.

Marks & Spencer bought the Rose and Crown, from the Halifax brewers Richard Whitaker and Sons, at the corner of Cheapside and Southgate. This was a very old pub which the author Daniel Defoe is said to have stayed at during one of his visits to Halifax he came in 1704 and 1725

11th March Halifax actor Eric Portman brought the London company of Separate Tables to Halifax for a special production to raise funds for the failing Grand Theatre.

- 1957 Baitings reservoir was opened by Henry Brook, Minister of Housing and Local Government. Approximately 200 workers were involved in building work at any one time but turnover was high and during the nine years of construction more than 3,400 people were employed. Many of them were from overseas, especially Poland and Ukraine.

Halifax's ancient Moot Hall, where the district's medieval overlords meted out justice was demolished after a Government visit deemed that it could be saved for £500. The Ancient Monuments Board decided that "it was not of sufficient importance to warrant its preservation".

Webster's Silver Street cafe went self-service

The Halifax Gala started and took place in September, although it soon became a fixture of early June. It was organised by members of Halifax Round Table and their project was an instant success. Some 10,000 people attended Manor Heath for the first gala and the then handsome sum of £600 was raised to be shared among the charities that took part.

1958 Manor Heath Mansion built by carpet magnate John Crossley in 1852 and during the Victorian era it had many distinguished guests, including the Prince of Wales was demolished

Queen's Hall, at the King Cross end of Queens Road was put up for sale in June. The lower floor was known as the Arcadian Rooms, where smaller dances, suppers and receptions were held. Public and private dances were held in the larger Queen's Ballroom on the first floor.

Marks & Spencer opened in November

1959 Two years after Baitings reservoir had opened the old bridge Resurfaced.

Room at the Top adapted from John Braine's first novel was filmed in Halifax starring Laurence Harvey as Joe Lampton.

"King And I" performed in May before the Palace Theatre was closed. The best-known anecdote about the Palace is that in order to stop the mortar freezing while it was being built in the cold winter of 1902, sugar was added to the mix. Hence the oft-repeated joke that the Palace was built of sugar and that it was "Britain's sweetest theatre". The Palace attracted top stars, including Charlie Chaplin and George Formby

Halifax Technical High School Illingworth opened 5th May

1960 Holmfield Railway station closed

The Victoria Hall was bought by Halifax Corporation for £82,000, refurbished and renovations cost £200,000.

The North Bridge passenger station was demolished

The Grand Theatre at the town end of North Bridge was demolished by the end of April. "Coronation Street" actress Pat Phoenix, alias Elsie Tanner, was dubbed Britain's sexiest woman by none other than premier Harold Wilson had spent three years in rep at the Theatre and made a visit to Halifax to collect a piece of its stonework as a souvenir.

The Picture House (The Attik night-club) became The Gaumont in 1948 and closed in November.

"No Love For Johnny", Film starring Peter Finch included the famous devil's cauldron view in the opening sequence.

1961 In January, The Gaumont became a Top Rank Bingo and Social Club and it was reported that people queued round the block on opening night - 1,200 people played and £400 in prize money was paid out over the first weekend. Later known as Surewin, this club reverted to showing films in 1973.

The Regal Cinema changed its name to the ABC

March 15th, John Crossley and Sons Ltd opened its Elizabeth Shed, a structure that was in marked contrast to the half-mile long complex of 11 stone-built mills that constituted Dean Clough, one of the world's largest textile factories.

Kenny Carter was born. The Halifax Dukes speedway star shot his wife Pam dead, and then shot himself at their home in Bradshaw in May 1986. At the time of his death, he was British speedway champion

Mikado Cafe on Silver Street shut down.

Acker Bilk performs at The Victoria Theatre 19th of May.

Humphrey Littleton plays at The Charity Gala 10th of June.

Sonny Terry & Brownie McGee, Blues Legends, played at the Victoria Theatre on the 24th of September and later that same night appear at The Jazz Club.

The legendary John Schlesinger (Yanks, Marathon Man, Midnight Cowboy) made his feature film directorial debut with "A Kind Of Loving" a bittersweet and beautifully acted drama about a young draughtsman, Vic Brown (Alan Bates) with filming taking place in Halifax.

In November, The Halifax Industrial Society opened the Broadway Supermarket on Waterhouse Street. "Coronation Street" star Lynne Carol (alias Martha Longhurst) did the honours and the boast was the store would stand comparison with any supermarket in the country but it would close in 1972.

1962 At the end of February, the Shay was covered in two inches of ice and local skating experts told that this would be ideal for their pastime. Skaters were invited to turn up at the Shay, paying 2/6 for adults, 1/6 for children and one shilling for spectators. By the evening some 500 skaters were gliding around the pitch. For the evening session the floodlights were switched on and pop hits played from the loudspeakers.

Saturday, March 2nd, Halifax RL managed to get back into action away at Naughton Park, Widnes, home of the team known as the "Chemics" - a local chemical firm had supplied a special de-icing substance.

"This Sporting Life" directed by Lyndsay Anderson and starring Richard Harris as Frank Machin and William (Doctor Who) Hartnell was filmed at Thrum Hall bringing Rugby League to the silver screen.

Demolition of Castle Carr, a mock-mediaeval house built around 1860 by Captain Joseph Priestley Edwards, commenced. The latest owner was the Wakefield company J.E.Gillings, who purchased the dilapidated mansion at auction for a mere £4,200. The house and water gardens were a popular attraction and are currently open to the public once a year

The Halifax Co-operative Society joined up with the nationwide Co-operative Retail Services Ltd.

Middlesbrough promoter Reg Fearman made a formal application to Halifax Town for use of the ground to revive the sport.

Sylvia Plath, author of The Bell Jar and wife of Poet Ted Hughes, committed suicide in February and was buried at Heptonstall

Webster's café went out of business after 144 years.

1964 "Have A Go" was broadcast from Heptonstall Parish Hall. The jackpot winner was Surrey-born Mrs Doris Marsden who correctly replied that it was Halifax author Phyllis Bentley who had written the novel "Inheritance".

Actress Pat Phoenix - aka Elsie Tanner - sent the special golden ball, a Crown Jewel ball flown in specially from Chicago, down lane 13. It was the first of the evening and the Halifax Bowl was born February 6th.

The Beatles stayed at Holdsworth House, Holmfield on the 9th of October. The Pearson family had to vacate their own rooms in the house to accommodate the fab four and their manager Brian Epstein.

Other famous guests included Jayne Mansfield, Sir Alex Douglas

Home, The Small Faces, Cilla Black, Sir Cliff Richard, Sir Harry Secombe, The Searchers,

The high-rise flats, Albion Court and St James' Court, were completed

Whitakers Cock 'O' The North Brewery closed

Cosy Cinema Queens Road closed in May Halifax after being open for 50 years

The Victoria Hall became the New Victoria Hall

Elland's Rex switched to Bingo although it later reverted to showing films

1965 July 4th a gathering outside the house in Halifax where Bramwell Booth, son of Salvation Army Founder William Booth, was born

A youth theatre on West Grove Terrace, off Hopwood Lane, Halifax was destroyed in an arson attack

Theatre Royal cinema changed to Bingo, as the Essoldo Club. It would soon claim to be Halifax's biggest Bingo operation, with 10,000 players a week.

Work began on constructing the Shay ground and speedway returned.

Victor Brox makes the first of 10 appearances throughout the year at The Plebeians Jazz Club on 28th of February. The last being on December 31st

Wynder K. Frog (of Northern Soul "Green Door" fame) appear on 24th of July at The Plebeians Jazz Club returning again in October and November.

Rod Stewart appears at The Plebeians Jazz Club on the 5th of June.

Graham Bond appears at The Plebeians Jazz Club on the 4th of September.

1966 Clare Hall, a fairly substantial 17th century town house in the heart of Halifax, was demolished to make way for the new Swimming Bath

Halifax Pool opened in April after a 30 years saga.

Ministry of Transport approved Halifax's Inner Relief Road - Burdock Way

The Plebeians Jazz Club played host to Joe Cocker Big Blues Band on 22nd January.

Chris Farlowe & Thunderbirds appeared at The Plebeians Jazz Club on the 5th March.

The Plebeians Jazz Club hosted Steam Packet comprising Long John Baldrey, Brian Auger and Julie Driscoll on 10th September

1967 BBC cancel "Have A Go" after 21 years, hosted by Halifax born Wilfred Pickles.

The Drifters played at The Plebeians Jazz Club on 27th of April.

Jimmy Cliff & Shakedown Sound were at The Plebeians Jazz Club on 13th of May.

Clarence Night Club opens.

"Inheritance" written by Phyllis Bentley was shown on Friday nights beginning at the end of September. Among the stars were the young John Thaw and James Bolam. Filming also took place in locations such as Murgatroyd's Mill, Luddenden, and Spring Mill, Rishworth.

The council completed a £13,000 interim scheme at King Cross.

End of Hebden Bridge Co-op in, after the managing secretary was found guilty of major fraud.

Jimmy Saville started a 20 years connection with Cragg Vale. Members of St John's Church, Cragg Vale, needed to raise £7,500 to help them provide a new vicarage, so that they could appoint a new vicar.

Sowerby Bridge's Essoldo cinema became Regal Bingo

1968 The Plebeians Jazz Club closes.

The Pineapple Hotel a late 18th century Pub was demolished as was The Wellington, both situated at New Bank close to North Bridge

Halifax had its own M Cars.... a fleet of Mini vans which came into service with Halifax Police in June.

Halifax Bowling Alley closed in November just 5 years after opening

1969 The bridge peeps out over the Baitings lake, the water level 24 ft below normal

Crossley Carpets merged with the Kidderminster-based Carpets International and after a decade of decline, it was announced in January 1982 that Dean Clough, by then employing just 500 people, would close.

7th December Halifax born actor Eric Portman died of a heart condition
The council erected a Blue Plaque in his memory at 20 Chester Road, Akroydon.

Sowerby Bridge Co-op went into voluntary liquidation.

Copley Co-operative Society closed in March.

Halifax Dairies on Queen's Road bottled 14,000 gallons of milk a day but it would be closed in this year. Associated Dairies, based in Leeds, announced that it would be closing its Halifax bottling plant, where 100 people worked, dealing with 14,000 gallons a day.

The distinctive Brickmaker's Arms was demolished.

1970 Halifax Pop & Blues Festival takes place at Thrum Hall on Saturday 11th of April. Fleetwood Mac headlined along with The Tremeloes, The Foundations, Emperor Rosko and Dave Lee Travis

The Yorkshire Folk and Blues Festival was held between 14th to the 16th of August at Krumlin. The weekend proved a washout for 25,000 punters as rain continuously lashed the open field. Groups who played included Elton John, Atomic Rooster, Fairport Convention, The Groundhogs, The Pretty Things, The Humblebums, Juicy Lucy and Alexis Korner

Halifax Co-operative Society finally left its Northgate headquarters and concentrated its town centre activities on the Arcade Royale, which had been purchased by the Co-op in 1949.

The Salvation Army's Citadel, in St James's Road, opened and was named the Bramwell Booth Memorial Halls.

There were 2,732 incidents reported to the Police, a rise of 226 on the previous year.

1971 Booth Wood Reservoir opened at a cost of £2 million and able to supply Wakefield with an extra 2,540,000 gallons of water a day.

Ryburn dam opened in to boost water supplies to Wakefield at a cost of £1.4 million.

Harrogate-based firm called Intercon open Halifax's Bier Keller in the basement of a building in Silver Street in December.

Mitchell & Broadbent's Fat Refinery was charged with contravention of the Public Health Act. The smells kept coming into the town centre for most of the 1970s

1972 Piece Hall saved from demolition by a single vote.

The Victoria Hall became Halifax Civic Theatre

Barclay James Harvest play at Clarence Night Club on 27th February
This Town Of Ours - A promotional film about Halifax produced by the Halifax Ciné Club. The film records the changes which were taking place at a time when redevelopment was rife and immigration was having its first impact on the town.

Roxy Music play at Clarence Night Club on 1st of June.

Brighouse's Albert Cinema switched to Bingo.

King Cross Police Station was demolished

BBC TV play, "A Day Out" by Alan Bennett was shown. The play was about a group of cyclists who leave Halifax for a ride in the country. It was set in 1911 just before the First World War. The play was filmed at various locations in Calderdale.

1973 the opening of the M62.

Halifax Council was replaced by Calderdale MBC.

Burdock Way was opened in April by the Mayor of Halifax, Alderman Maurice Jagger and named after Alderman John Burdock, former Mayor and chairman of Halifax Highways Committee.

The Piece Hall was a matter of public debate and the market was moved out and refurbishment began.

September Halifax Building Society's new multi-million pounds headquarters at Trinity Road was opened.

Halifax author Maurice Procter died. Procter, a former Policeman, wrote several novels and short stories, many being made into movies.

The two-screen Astra opened, now The Attik Night Club.

1974 Sensational Alex Harvey Band play at Clarence Night Club on 3rd of March.

1975 Well Head House, built in 1761 was demolished.

The new county council revived the King Cross bypass scheme and after a continued period of uncertainty, the go ahead was finally given by 1979. It was not until 1982 that work began and the road, named Aachen Way, quickly took shape.

The Odeon, on Broad Street, built in 1938, stopped showing films to become a Top Rank Bingo Club, now the Mecca, Halifax's only remaining Bingo Club.

1976 Standpipes are erected but rain falls before they have to be used.

Paul Robeson, African American singer and political activist, dies at the age of 77. He had appeared at the Victoria Hall on Sunday, March 19, 1939.

Halifax Corporation Abattoir, built in 1929 was demolished.

1977 Phyllis Bentley, Halifax born author died, aged 82.

Sunday, April 10th, "It's a Knockout" came to Halifax and Wellesley Park was chosen as the venue. Halifax's Arthur Ellis was referee and the home team finish third, with 20 points. Wakefield scored 25 and Beverley came out top with 26.

1978 Wilfred Pickles died. Portman & Pickles Public House later named after him and actor Eric Portman.

The Jacksons perform at The Victoria Theatre on the 10th February

1979 Early 19th-century Kirby Leas, pulled down in.

Yanks, a film starring Richard Gere and Vanessa Redgrave was Directed by John Schlesinger who returned to Halifax to shoot some of the movie. Some scenes were filmed at Southowram Bank.

The Norland Children's Holiday Home, just below the ancient and mysterious Ladstone Rock on Norland Moor closed.

In April the buildings that once flanked the Tudor House in Woolshops were demolished, leaving the older building intact.

In Loving Memory TV series, starring Thora Hird, was filmed in Luddenden, Halifax & other parts of Calderdale until 1986.

Application for a Sports Centre at North Bridge was approved and the centre was opened in October 1981.

Shock Therapy, Halifax's own comic book was produced and later mentioned in the book "Nasty Tales – A History Of The British Underground Comic Movement".