

## EDGBASTON CRICKET GROUND (AREA 4)

### DAVID MOORE

---

I never really thought of this site as a significant landmark until recent years. It was an eclectic mix of buildings that had evolved over a number of years as the status of the cricket club has grown. It reflected a cautious approach to expansion taking one step at a time with almost a different agenda or plan at each step. It was a real Heath Robinson bits and pieces stadium that had evolved over many iterations of no particular style and no particular long term plan.

This is understandable when you take into consideration its long history. Situated on the banks of the River Rea, Edgbaston in Birmingham has been the home of Warwickshire County Cricket Club since 1885. It had a long period of just being a cricket club, seeing out two world wars. The first piece of development in the post war era was the construction of the Rea Bank and the Thwaite Memorial Scoreboard in 1950.

This big step gave the site a new status as it was then considered to be one of England's leading cricket grounds right after Lord's. This new-found status triggered a chain of other developments. In 1956 an Indoor Cricket School was built, and the Pavilion Suite was completed in the same year. In 1967 the William Ansell Stand opened to cheers and hoorays. Executive boxes were added in 1989 before the capacity of the ground was increased to 17,500.

Edgbaston has hosted some notable international matches. The final match of the first Women's Cricket World Cup was played here in 1973. It was also the venue for a thrilling match in the 2005 Ashes, considered one of the best of all time. It saw England win by 2 runs (England's narrowest Test victory in terms of runs). It hosted the first senior game under floodlights in English cricket in July 1997 between Warwickshire and Somerset in the then AXA Life Sunday League and the first day/night Test match in England in August 2017 when England played the West Indies.

More recently, the Pavilion end underwent a makeover in 2010 at a cost of £32 million which saw the capacity of the ground rise to 25,000. Five permanent floodlights were also installed in 2011 to allow 15 days of day-night cricket annually. The first test to be played at the ground following the development was England vs India, which saw England rise to the number one ranking in the ICC Test Championship. However, this is only one of a number of notable moments that have occurred on the hallowed turf at Edgbaston.

*Continued*

These most recent developments have given Edgbaston a true identity of its own. It is now a mixed-use destination with cricket and community at its core, realising the legacy of the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. It combines elite sport, conferencing and events with community assets aimed at improving health and social care, education, employment, and social cohesion in the area. The iconic design has a striking bright blue clad exterior with full height glass panel windows which give it a distinctive presence and with its 'e' (for Edgbaston) flood lighting it now proudly holds the status of a landmark.

---

© David Moore

12th September 2023