

Burnley v Todmorden, 1878

by

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In 1878 there were no 'limited overs' cricket matches and teams were not allowed to declare their innings closed. To win, teams had to bowl the opposition out and score more runs than them. Time spent taking lunch would leave less time to achieve a positive result and make a draw more likely. This would favour the weaker team.

Despite being the home team, it was the Burnley players who were late and responsible for the late start. Todmorden was the team which insisted on stopping for lunch at the arranged time, which was less than an hour after the game started.

The day was a fine one and terribly hot,
The ground in condition for runs to be got;
And master and man, and parson and squire,
Might be seen on Turf Moor, to watch and admire
The match to be played; and the team of each club
Were wishing, of course, the other to drub,
The hour for commencing was fixed for twelve,
But, as usual, the fix'd time 'twas managed to shelve;
And, not to be captious, the game was begun
We may put it, about, or a little past one.
The waiting, you know, for pitching the stumps,
Is a thing which in some folks produces 'the dumps',
And grumbling, and grunting, and trial of patience –
More so when (at two) there is talking of 'rations',
Or what is among the *haut ton* termed 'lunch' –
'Tis something to sour our facetious friend '*Punch*';
And ill-natured critics would say 'it's a ruse
For securing a "draw" if you're likely to lose
Should the game be played out;' – but we say 'not so,
If a luncheon you need, to lunch you must go;
To be "bowled out of one's feed, and short of his "twist" –
No thank you, - *I* wouldn't at this point be missed'.