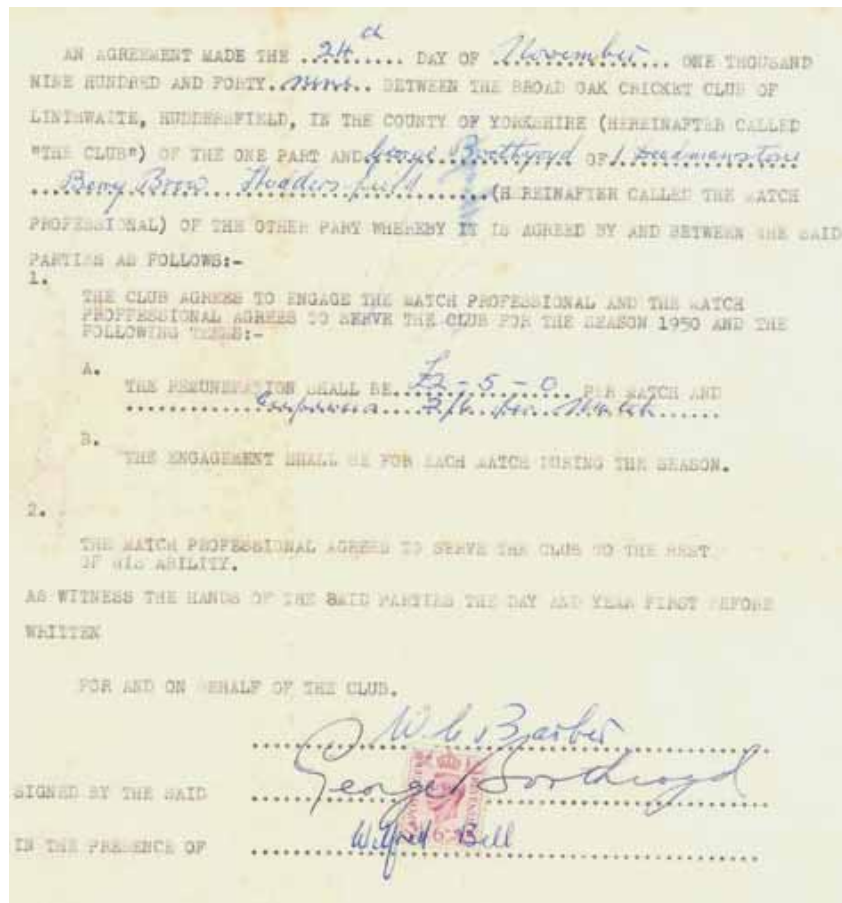


PLAYER CONTRACTS: PAST AND PRESENT

By Ian Hodgson

Through the years cricket has always been a mixed-class sport. The amateurs have generally come from the middle and upper classes, playing cricket as a pastime and hobby, and the professionals have mainly come from the working classes and have been paid by the clubs to play sport.

In 1949 Broad Oak agreed to sign a professional player and gave him a contract. The conditions were that: the player gets paid "£2-5-0" per match and he has to play every match as long as he is picked and fit. Decades ago, players were poorly paid and most of them had to fend for themselves during the off-season, which would last for around eight months. Today, players are perhaps slightly better off.



Nowadays, sportsmen are among the top earners in the country. We are now seeing a trend where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. First and foremost, sport is a leisure activity -and a way to make money, second. Cricket can be proud of the way that it has kept its traditions by and large and retained the 'fun' side of the game. Other sports have been taken over by money and have become big businesses.

By looking at the contract we can make out roughly how old it is. The type of paper that it is written on gives the impression that it has been passed from pillar to post. We can see that the 1949 contract is handwritten, and was created well before typewriters or computers were invented. Players today would probably be paid a fixed salary with possible bonuses, rather than paid per match.