

KIRKHEATON: the eighth in a second series of cricket histories...

# Cricket legends and rising costs

AROUND  
THE  
WICKET

...with  
historian  
Peter  
Davies



**THE club was founded in 1860, although this is a matter of debate (some commentators put it slightly later).**

Originally, it played on Horse Field at Whitley Hall.

Then it moved to Kirkheaton Moor - staying until 1870 - and from there it was on to Hole Bottom.

By 1883 the club had moved into its present ground at Bankfield (known originally as Fletcher's Croft).

Originally the club was called Kirkheaton Beaumonts (in honour of a nearby hostelry, the Beaumont Arms), but in 1880 they became Kirkheaton.

The early minute books reveal some interesting and bizarre details.

On 3 December 1873 it was 'resolved that the challenge of Meltham CC be left over until Dr Douglas enquires what kind of club it is.'

On 5 July 1876 it was decided 'that Henry Moseley mows the ground when required at 4d a time.' And on 18 June 1883 it was 'resolved that one 18-gallon barrel of beer to be in the field, price 14 pence per gallon. Mr Martin to have the key for it and Mr Alf Wortley to have charge of the beer. Mr J K Armitage has kindly consented to stand drinks round for the second team - if they win.'

By 1881 the club had a set of official rules including that the club 'be called Kirkheaton Cricket Club and that the Government of the Club be entrusted to President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, two Secretaries and a Committee of Thirteen. The President, or in his absence a Vice-President, shall preside at all meetings, and have the casting vote in addition to his own vote.'

It also stated that the Committee had power to expel any member whose conduct may be detrimental to the interests of the club, but such a member would have the right to appeal to the next Special or

General Meeting.

Entrance fees were 2/6 and the contributions of members 2d per week in the playing season - the entrance fee to be paid before playing. If any member's arrears exceeded one shilling he was barred from playing, practising or voting at any meetings, until arrears were paid.

If any member paid one guinea per year he was entitled to play in matches, and in practice to follow (on his entering the field) the first retiring batsman every evening. Any member paying 10/6 per year was entitled to play in matches, and in practice to follow as above on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Those paying 7/6 were entitled to play the same as any other ordinary member.

All Subscriptions to be paid before June 1st.

Members could have an inning of 30 balls each in practice but no more than three balls were allowed.

At the end of 1885 contributions were in such a state of arrears that it was inevitable that some alteration would have to be made, and so instead of the weekly contribution a yearly subscription was introduced. In the early days there were never more than about 80 members except in 1886 when there were 94. From 1880 to 1896 the club averaged about 66 members per year.

In 1889 Kirkheaton won the Lumb Cup, beating Cliffe End by five wickets in the final after dismissing them for 58. The heroes that day were opening bowling partners T Hallas and an 18-year-old G H Hirst.

In this era they also competed for the Heavy Woollen Cup.

By 1893 they had joined the Huddersfield & District League (in the previous year their application had been mysteriously turned down), and their debut game was against Meltham Mills at home (Kirkheaton scored 61; their opponents were all out for 41).



□ KIRKHEATON CRICKET CLUB: a line-up from the 1953 season

We are told that in this period subs were 2d per week (summer) and 1d per week (winter).

In September 1896 the *Huddersfield Examiner* explained that 'Kirkheaton have come with a rush at the end of the season.' This sudden upturn in form was due to the return of Yorkshire and England stars George Hirst and Wilfred Rhodes who had both finished their professional appointments for the season.

With these two bowling in tandem, Golcar were dismissed for 19 and Primrose Hill for 23.

Rhodes, who was just 19, had taken took 10-23 in the two matches.

By 1921 the club was able to purchase its own cricket field out-right.

Although the project to build a new pavilion at Bankfield began in 1937, it was not completed until 1953 due to the Second World War.

The building is dedicated to George Herbert Hirst and Wilfred Rhodes and they contributed heavily to the

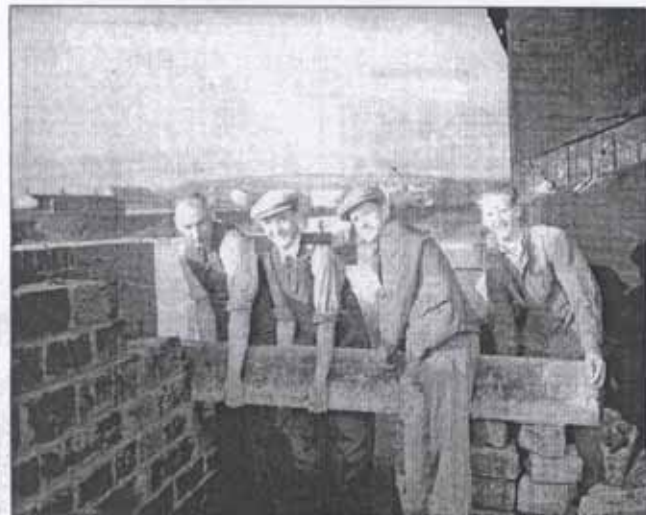
fundraising by producing a commemorative booklet. Hirst and Rhodes were also on hand in 1950 to lay the foundation stones.

Several difficulties had to be overcome to complete the structure, not least rising costs. Originally priced at £1,000, the building eventually cost £2,000. The rise meant that the ground had to be mortgaged to the Co-operative Permanent Building Society.

Lack of man-power and building materials meant that no new timber could be used in the structure and no building labour employed during working hours.

Since the 1950s Kirkheaton have consolidated their position as one of the most prominent, successful and historic clubs in the Huddersfield League, claiming the Sykes Cup in 1973 and 1974.

The pavilion has been extended and renovated and in everything it does the club pays due homage to the two giants of the game, Hirst and Rhodes, who learnt their cricket in the village and at the club.



□ HARD AT WORK: Volunteers get to grips with the 'new' 1950 club pavilion.



□ HISTORY IN THE MAKING: Kirkheaton Cricket Club memories from the 1950 season