

This sporting life: early club professionals...

G.W.Littlewood was the first professional cricketer to be employed by Honley Cricket Club. He was engaged in 1884 and paid 35/- per week. The following year Herbert Lodge became both professional and groundkeeper for the club. His contract has survived in the club records and the very rare document can be seen below.

Memorandum of agreement made this first day of March One thousand eight hundred eighty-five between France Whitwood of Honley acting on behalf of the members of the Honley Cricket Club hereafter called the Secretary on the one part and Herbert Lodge professional cricketer of Armilage Bridge on the other part.

Witnesseth that the said Secretary agrees to engage the said Herbert Lodge as professional cricketer and ground-keeper to the said Honley Cricket Club and the said Herbert Lodge agrees to accept such situation from the first match One thousand eight hundred & eighty-five to the twenty-sixth day of September One thousand eight hundred and eighty-five and the said Secretary agrees to give and the said Herbert Lodge to accept the sum of thirty-eight guineas weekly (paying his own travelling expenses) and a benefit match in payment of services rendered to the said Honley Cricket Club as professional cricketer & ground-keeper - such duties to be as hereinafter stated viz: to be on the cricket-ground every afternoon from 2.30 to 4.30 and every evening except Saturday at 6.00 ready for practice to play in all matches whether day or afternoon matches, and so soon as a cricket match is over, the ground played on and damaged during such match must be repaired; to mow the whole ground once every week or oftener if required; to roll the whole ground at any time when it requires it, and to do any other work necessary for keeping the ground in proper playing condition; and at the close of the season, the ground must be left as may be satisfactory to the said Secretary, and also to take charge of all balls, bats & other crickery material, the property of the said Honley Cricket Club. —

And the said Herbert Lodge wish to be away from his duties at any time he may wish with the permission of the said Secretary, but should not wish to be away at any time when the said Honley Cricket Club are playing a match he must make application to the committee.

Witness the hands of the said parties.

Professional Cricketer & Ground-keeper *G.W. Littlewood*
Secretary *France Whitwood*
Herbert Lodge *Herbert Lodge*

...and the demands of their job.

Lodge was paid 38/- a week and given a benefit match by the Club and, as you can see below, he certainly earned his money. He was required:-

- ***to be on the cricket ground every afternoon from 2.30 to 4.30 and every evening except Saturday at 6 'o'clock ready for practice,***
- ***to play all matches, whether day or afternoon matches, and no soon as a cricket match is over, the ground played on and damaged during the match must be repaired;***
- ***to mow the whole ground once every week or oftener if required, to roll the whole ground at anytime when it requires it,***
- ***to do any other work necessary for keeping the ground in proper repair and condition, and at the close of the season, the ground must be left as may be satisfactory to the said Secretary***
- ***should the said Herbert Lodge wish to be away from his duties at any time he must ask permission of the said Secretary,***
- ***should he wish to be away at any time when the said Honley Cricket Club are playing a match he must make application to the committee.***