

## The Round Hill of Rastrick

By Mark Whitcombe

It is a strange phenomenon this round hill at Rastrick. A bizarre landmark that dominates the cricket club. I see it and think of the cross that was once planted on the summit. It acts as a beacon for those lost. I remember climbing the small hill once and was struck by the view. You feel as though you are on top of everything, looking down at the world below.

Pink flowery bushes grow up the slope and present a pretty picture. They add an attractiveness to the oddity. The more I look at it I see the hill as a particularly peculiar feature. It sits at hand as if it has no business being there. And yet if there is one thing you will remember when visiting Rastrick Cricket Club it will be the round hill.



So let me describe it to you in more detail. Though I've called it a hill such a title is ornately flattering. It is more like a mound rising out of the ground. The shape is its main asset, for it is largely round and small enough to be admired without being daunting. Directly below it sits the outfield, while at the point where it begins to incline a row of benches have been purposely placed for a good view of the wicket. The green slope then gently rises up towards the symmetrical line of bushes halfway. The added greenery and use of pink transforms the little hill into something worthy of a good photograph. Even without the pink it would certainly not be a boring feature before us, but the colourful shrubbery gives it a rare beauty.

Then beyond we travel up. Up towards the peak. A bare top devoid of grass. It is bald. Imagine the hill as wallpaper. It is green at the foot and then sandy brown at the top. The bushes, with a stroke of pink, act as the border. One can only imagine what it looks like in winter when most life has left for warmer seas. No colour. Just a round grey knoll waiting for spring and the coming of cricket.

Wait for the blue skies and it will become the gathering point for fans and supporters. This hill is not just a hill. It acts as a stand. The Round Hill Stand. It is totally irregular and yet strangely gripping. If it is not a creation of man then it is a very unnatural wonder. And it is a wonder. An anomalous sensation that looks quite abnormal given its surroundings. That is why it is so unique. That is why I write about it now. It has no business being there at Rastrick Cricket Club. But there it is. And with it the round hill becomes the defining feature of the ground. It is here that we can sit and marvel not just at the cricket, but at the pastoral features surrounding the club. Cricket is a spectator sport but the Round Hill of Rastrick transforms the beloved game into a bucolic art form.