

## Accounts - The Changing Times of Golcar CC

By Peter Redding

One of the most important aspects of running a local cricket club is managing the finances to safeguard the future. Upon analysing the accounts it is clear to see that the game has changed over the years in a way that has mirrored the professional game. Some things have remained the same however, the accounts have shown that bar sales have continued to be one of the main sources of income right through the decades from the 1920s to the present day! The accounts for the year ending 1928 certainly show this to be the case with refreshments accounting for £651 worth of income, a considerable amount of money at the time.



The most noteworthy pattern that the accounts display is the steady increase in the payments made to players. This was very limited in the early decades, bonuses were paid to players in the way of talent money. The fees paid in 1928 only totalled £9, in 1936 the total was only £20 and the total in 1943 was just £52 for players wages. This is a far outcry from the finances today, in 2003 cricket expenditure at Golcar totalled £4,483. As far as player wages go the pattern increased steadily after the Second World War. In recent decades we haven't seen the International cricketer's we saw in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s where players like Sonny Ramadhin and Sir Garfield Sobers plied their trade in the Huddersfield League. The way that players are recruited has changed an awful lot in recent times though, it is a much more complicated and cost worthy process.

Maintaining the facilities at the club has also been a much more expensive proposition. The pitches nowadays are much better than the sticky uncovered pitches that were the norm on a rainy day prior to the Second World War. Payments for the groundsman and the equipment that he or she used only totalled just over £100 in 1928 and 1936. The costs of ground maintenance in 2003 were in excess of £2,500. This is one of the most significant ways that the game has changed over the years. Prior to and just after the Second World War it was accepted that pitches were going to be poor if the weather wasn't very good, covers were not available and neither were most of the other materials that groundsman are equipped with today, this was accepted as a fact of life even in International Cricket, where the players just had to get on with it. There is the famous old tale of the 1968 Ashes Test match at the Oval where members of the crowd came onto the pitch to assist the ground staff in their efforts to clear the surface water so that England could square the series.

In recent times the Swallow Lane Ground has undergone extensive refurbishment with new changing facilities built and a new score box. There is a big emphasis on ensuring the facilities are as good as possible to create a winning environment. The wickets at the ground have also improved a lot and this was mainly after the 1994 and 1995 seasons where the wickets had derteriated somewhat and extensive investment needed to be made. Over £5,000 was spent on the ground in 1994 and

1995 and it was only in 1996 that these investments bore fruit and the wickets started to improve and slowly become as true as they are today.

As far as the income is concerned the membership subscriptions have increased in recent decades with the total reaching £1,077 in 1995 and £1,323 in 2003. In the 1920s and 1930s the membership fees were less than £150 with totals of £83 in 1928 and £125 in 1937. This reflects that not only have the prices increased but the interest in the club has spread further afield. This may be due to the increasing amount of player movement within the local clubs in Yorkshire.

Cricket has become an entertainment industry as well as a sporting one and this explains this is why there is much more entertainment laid on on match days. More money has been brought in and spent on catering in recent times, in 2003 catering income totalled £858 compared to £16 in 1928 and £30 in 1959.

Although many of the patterns reflected by the accounts are down to changes in time, price and technology it is also fair to make assumptions about the way that income and expenditure has changed. Having analysed the accounts from 1928, 1936, 1944, 1959, 1962, 1981, 1995 and 2003 it is clear that expenditure has increased in many areas you would expect such as ground expenditure, player salaries and equipment expenditure. It is also apparent that other areas of expenditure have emerged in recent times that weren't featured in earlier accounts. Expenses like printing have increased and this reflects the fact that events are more widely advertised. In times gone by players would play for their local town's club, now there is more player movement and with regards to attracting youngsters to the club, the advertising needs to be spread further afield than just Golcar itself. Sponsorship has also increased with more firms being willing to sponsor the club. While times have changed a lot other things have stayed the same. The 1928 and 1936 accounts show that fundraising events were just as important back then as they are now in financing the club.

Above all else the nature of the game has changed and there is more of an emphasis on winning than ever before. More money is raised to try and help to make this possible. It is then spent on new players and improving facilities to give the club the best possible opportunity to achieve success. Cricket at Golcar has changed and the club's accounts reflect this.