



CRICKET MATCHES

of the
1850's

by DAVID TYLER

During the 1850s the England cricket 11 spent much of each season touring Britain for matches against various provincial towns, and a regular feature of such tours were visits to Lincolnshire for games against local teams. These matches were not so one-sided as might appear for the England 11's opponents were generally permitted to have 22 players and, as this alone was not always sufficient to balance the sides, were often lent two or three regular England players for good measure.

On 2nd-4th August 1855 the England 11 visited Spalding for a match against 22 men of that town. The home side batted first and it was not long before the brilliant bowling of E. Willsher began to take its toll. Spalding openers C. E. Alpe and A. Percival were both dismissed fairly quickly by Willsher for 2 and 3 runs respectively and were followed by three batsmen who failed to score at all. Some of the later batsmen were able to get off the mark but the highest score of the innings was the 10 runs made by W. H. Woodham. No fewer than 11 Spalding men left the wicket with "ducks" and this was reflected both in the team's meagre score of 51 and in the bowling average of Willsher who took 17 wickets for 23 runs.

England replied with a good batting performance. Opener H. H. Stephenson made 30 runs before he was bowled by E. Hinkly, who was to take seven wickets for 52 runs. The highest scorer for England was a gentleman calling himself Julius Caesar; he ended his innings not out with 31 runs to his credit. Hinkly was able to take his revenge on Willsher, whose batting was evidently less sound than his bowling, by having him caught by G. Armitage for 0. England's total of 125 left Spalding with the task of scoring 75 to save losing by an innings.

Unfortunately Spalding's second innings was only a slight improvement on their first. Only two batsmen, J. H. Foster and C. Reader, broke into double figures and there was the inevitable crop of "ducks" resulting from Willsher's bowling, which was as consistent as ever and caused the fall of 12 wickets for 19 runs. The home side's second innings total of 54 left them still some way behind England's first innings score so the visitors were victorious by an innings and 20 runs.

The following year, 1856, the England side travelled again to Lincolnshire for a game against Sleaford. On this occasion the home team of 22 included C. E. Alpe, F. Tinley and E. Hinkly, who had represented Spalding the previous year, as well as W. Buttress, who had played for England in the earlier match. The teams in this game were very well matched.

Sleaford batted first and, although only seven members of the side failed to score, those who were fortunate enough to do so made very little impression upon the scoreboard. The highest score was seven by F. Tinley and only four batsmen knocked up more than three

runs. Willsher was again in fine form taking 10 for 28 but was almost overshadowed by J. Jackson, who had played for England in the Spalding match without bowling well; he took nine wickets for only 10 runs. Sleaford's total for the innings was 46.

Tinley and Hinkly bowled effectively for Sleaford and between them sent four England players from the wicket with "ducks". The other batsmen, including A. Diver who made 15, were able to compensate for their fellows by scoring 55 runs which, with 1 bye, took their total to 56. There was little between the teams at this stage.

Probably encouraged by the prospect of beating England, the local team performed well in the second innings. C. Foster made 13 runs before being bowled by Willsher, while J. Hogg (bowled for 1 in the first innings) was able to score 23 to boost Sleaford's second innings' total to a very respectable 85.

The responsibility of dismissing the England batsmen for less than 75 was placed on the shoulders of Hinkly and Tinley but, try as they may, they were unable to make any great impression. J. Joy scored 20 before Hinkly bowled him and A. Clarke proved to be a further problem to the bowlers as he made 32 without the loss of his wicket. R. B. Earle was run out for 0 but by that time the match was all but won for England, who made the required 76 runs to win by five wickets.

In 1857 England revisited the Fens, this time for a match against Boston which took place on August 6th-8th. This was an eventful occasion even before the first ball was bowled, for three England players, including Willsher, were telegraphed at the last minute by Lord Stamford, who had engaged them as bowlers for the season, and were obliged to miss the match.

The home side batted first in this game too. Opener A. Crossland was able to score 17 before being stumped. The remainder of the team did not produce any substantial scores. Twelve of the side were dismissed by G. Parr who, it is recorded, had shortly before taken to bowling slow underhand lobs! Boston's first innings total was 68.

H. Parr, who was chosen to replace one of Lord Stamford's three players, did not arrive at Boston in time to bat in the first innings but the ten others were able to exceed Boston's total, albeit by only 4 runs. W. Jackson and R. Gibson bowled creditably for the home side to take five for 32 and four for 23 respectively.

The unsophisticated bowling of G. Parr had further devastating effects during the second innings. However, he did not take the wicket of A. Crossland, who scored 32 before he was run out. J. W. Morley with 13 runs was the only other Boston player to pass 5 runs during the innings and no fewer than 16 colleagues scored

either 0 or 1. In all, Boston made 69 runs; just one better than their first innings effort.

England made no mistakes in their second innings and found no real difficulty with the bowling of R. Gibson, who took just one wicket for 26 runs. W. Jackson was in finer fettle and took four wickets at the expense of a further 26 runs. The visitors' score was enhanced by the addition of 14 extras, including 10 byes, and the 66 runs needed for another victory were soon made. England again won by five wickets.

Although England were the victors in all three matches described it would be incorrect to assume that this was always the case. In June 1855 a Sleaford team beat England by eight wickets. Results aside, it is certain that the matches were played and watched in good spirit, as would be expected during an age when it was once said, "Cricket, the most innocent and best of games, is the breath of life to thousands".



A shower of frogs

Now I know some on ya will saay this is a rare owd stitherum; a load of bellywesh yar'll saay, but its reight 'cos I see'd it wi' me own eyes.

I wur a nipper at the time, mebbe 9 or 10. We wuz livin' at Maadenwell, near Lowuth, if ya can call it livin' in n oal like that; mind ya, I reckons them wuz me 'appiest daays.

It wuz a 'ot summer's daay, me an' me sister wuz sittin' on the gress in front on our 'ouse. 'Ot it wuz, not a cloud to be seen. Sudden like it begun t' sile down, sort o' thunder sterm, onny thur wasn't noa thunder.

Us kids 'ed t' rush indoors an' put wood int' oal t' keep raain out. It onny lasted a few minutes then sun caame out. We oppened the door an' the gress in front on 'ouse wuz covered wi' frogs, tharsans on 'em, teeny little things wi' beady eyes. I picked 'em up in me 'ands an' they wuz code as ice. Mam 'ed t' git brush an' sweep 'em off step else they'd a'bin in t' 'ouse.

In less 'an aaf an hour they wuz gone, not a frog t' be seen; gone t' the big pond over the waay, I reckons.

"Shower o' frogs," I ears ya saay, "doan't gi' me that tarrydiddle." Anyway, there wuz noa frogs afore it raaned so whear did they cum from? Ya doan't know, neither do I.

Cyril Glenn



None for One

*Open the window! The summer sun assaults the
room,*

The garden drowzes, reeking of roses in full bloom.

Ah, peace at last, I think

And sigh content,

Taking a sip of ice-cool lemon drink.

Feet up, I settle down to dream,

My itching pen impatient and in my brain

A cobweb of tangled words, a scheme

Just waiting to fling itself abandonedly in ink

Upon this virgin page,

When suddenly my mood is shattered into rage,

Someone has touched that hated switch;

A crowd invades with noise my precious hour,

Trooping white-clad across the smooth green pitch

With click and crack of willow and leather,

The commentator's gravelly voice debating whether

It was outside the line, offside, a six or four,

And who's at point and who's at silly mid-off;

The score is high, high too my blood-pressure,

And what a bore for those not anxious of the score.

Anonymous voice from out the crowd

Is heard. "Git on with the game".

I feel it is a shame

The muse must muted be, and ask myself

What happened to my quiet time?

All thoughts are scattered like a flock of sheep,

Or scattered fragments from a broken glass,

Or when awakening in the night

From the light-fingered touch of sleep.

Another wicket down,

Run out, the silly ass,

Yet I could weep in sheer frustration.

But let it pass,

Throw down the pen and gracefully give up

And, to the kitchen check again

What later we shall eat and sup.

It might decide to rain or be too wet for play,

Then I shall sit and contemplate

In peace, without a sound, without delay

The things I need to write, and need to say.

Stella M. Bee