

Earl Shilton Town Cricket Club
Keats Lane
Earl Shilton
Leicester
LE9 7DS



EARL SHILTON TOWN CRICKET CLUB

“HISTORY SHORTS”

No 1

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Club Historian



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OUR STORY BEGINS – The first hundred years 1815 to 1915. “from the early years to the golden years”

1815 – The earliest reported game of cricket played by Earl Shilton

It is hard to imagine what life must have been like back in 1815, but to get some idea of perspective, it was at the time of the Napoleonic War. (The Battle of Waterloo took place on 18th June 1815)

At the beginning of the 1800's there was only 249 inhabited houses in Earl Shilton, with a further 8 uninhabited. The population stood at 1287, 655 males and 632 females. Agriculture employed 118 villagers, while 716 were employed in trade and manufacture and showed the dramatic rise of stocking manufacture.

This was a period in time that not many years before, saw the first street lit with gas in Pall Mall, London on 28th January 1807, so no doubt the streets of Earl Shilton would have been very dark for many years before that luxury arrived in the town.

Stagecoaches passed frequently through the very poor rutted roads of the town, through Toll Gates at the bottom of Hill Top on the Leicester side and Belle Vue end of the town, it being on the route to Hinckley and Birmingham from Leicester. Coaches with the names Accommodation, Magnet and Alexander were all running during the next 15 years. Coaches stopped at a place near to the White House in Wood Street, beside the Lord Nelson Inn.

In 1807 the 'Slave Trade' was finally abolished, and in Barwell a game of cricket was being played against Coventry and North Warwick which became the longest continuous fixture in the history of world cricket, and still played to this day. Imagine these events taking place during this period yet the gentlemanly game of cricket being played out, what a contrast!

It's hard to imagine how Earl Shilton looked back then, but it's clear the place was steadily growing with the increase in the stocking trade and the population growing.

The Leicester Journal newspaper at the time carried the earliest report of cricket being played by Earl Shilton. George Pochin was designated 'Esquire' in the scorecard. The Pochins were a very well-known Leicestershire family in the 19th & 20th century.

The Journal dated Friday 11th August 1815 reported:

On Monday 31st July, and Tuesday 1st August, was played on Burbage Common a match at Cricket, between Thurlstone and Shilton Club against the Barwell Club, which afforded a great treat to the inhabitants of that part of the County, the game was well played, the following are the particulars:-



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Thurlstone and Earl Shilton

First Innings

Taylor,James	Caught by Dann	10
King,Thos	Bowled by Moore	7
Ball,Richard	Ditto by Ditto	12
Fewkes,Thomas	Caught by Dann	4
Hopkins,Thomas	Bowled by Cooper	12
Baker,Joseph	Ditto by Moore	12
Foster,William	Run Out	5
Pochin,G. Esq	Not Out	7
Moore,Henry	Bowled by Moore	0
Hall,William	Ditto by Cooper	2
Sansome,Wm	Ditto by Moore	0
	Byes	5
Total		76

Second Innings

King,Thomas	Caught by Moore	0
Taylor,James	Ditto by Lilley	19
Hall,William	Bowled by Moore	1
Fewkes,Thomas	Ditto by Ditto	7
Pochin,Geo.Esq	Ditto by Ditto	11
Ball,Richard	Ditto by Ditto	1
Foster,William	Beat down wicket	2
Hopkins,Thomas	Bowled by Dann	1
Baker,James	Run Out	5
Moore,Henry	Bowled by Dann	1
Sansome,William	Not Out	0
	Byes	3
Total		51

Barwell

First Innings

Power,Richard	Run Out	0
Lilley,Jesse	Caught by Pochin	12
Moore,George	Ditto by Foster	13
Cooper,John	Bowled by Ditto	0
Clay,Benjamin	Ditto by Pochin	1
Dann,Zeph	Ditto by Foster	4
Armstrong,Thos	Ditto by Ditto	4
Pebberdy,Thos	Ditto by Ditto	0
Rogers,John	Caught by Ditto	0
Loseby,Samuel	Not Out	4
White,John	Caught by Taylor	1
	Byes	6
Total		45

Second Innings

Power,Richard	Run Out	1
Cooper,Samuel	Caught by Fewkes	11
Moore,George	Bowled by Foster	7
Clay,Benj	Ditto by Pochin	7
Dann,Zeth	Ditto by Ditto	0
Lilley,Jesse	Ditto by Ditto	8
Armstrong,Thomas	Ditto by Ditto	0
Loseby,Samuel	Ditto by Ditto	2
White,John	Not Out	4
Rogers,John	Bowled by Foster	0
Pebberdy,Thomas	Ditto by Pochin	5
	Byes	5
Total		47



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Thurlston and Shilton

First Innings	76
Second Innings	<u>51</u>
	<u>127</u>

Barwell

First Innings	45
Second Innings	<u>47</u>
	<u>92</u>

Thurlston and Shilton won by 35

The writing as can be seen within the report is fascinating. The use and tone of the writing really brings alive the period of the time and creates the atmosphere for the reader, putting you back in history and experiencing the feeling of what it must have been like two hundred years ago.

This game being the earliest recorded report of a game by the Club was adopted as the founding year.

The next report found for the Club was in 1838.

However, an interesting report in the Leicester Chronicle dated 10th February 1824, refers to a game played on Burbage Common:

It reported that on 1st October (obviously therefore 1823) a friendly game of cricket was played on Burbage Common on Friday week, between eleven married and the same number of single men, which was won by the latter, with one wicket to go down. A new Cricket Club has been formed at Hinckley, and many persons of respectability have become members of it. Should the spring season open in as propitious a manner as the present has closed, it is not improbable that Hinckley may become as famous for the prowess of its Sons in the manly art, as any other place in this and adjoining counties.

Clearly this highlights the formation of the Hinckley Cricket Club, who would become like Barwell one of our great rivals and often a place that we would lose several of our own players to over the years.



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To get a greater understanding of what times were like back in this period and from this time onwards into the 1840's, it is useful to understand how the people of Earl Shilton lived and worked.

The economy of the village was based mainly on boot and stockings. A whole family would work from morning until late night at very meagre earnings. Stocking makers worked ten, twelve and even fifteen hours a day at their frames for seven or eight shillings per week. Frame rents were high and varied from one shilling to three shillings per week.

Poverty and disease were rife. In Hinckley there was a framework knitter strike in 1824. Two years later, disorder in the town was quelled when a detachment of lancers arrived killing one man.

The Earl Shilton village population had risen to 2017 by 1831. Many people in the 1840s became destitute and sought refuge in the Unison Workhouse in Hinckley locally known as "The Bastille".

Things had become very bad and are spoken of as the "hungry forties".

Queen Victoria ordered an inquiry into distress and sent in 1843 a commission headed by a Mr Muggeridge, and afterwards much valuable information was obtained from the interview with work people and employers.

Earl Shilton framework knitters and hosiers gave evidence at the enquiry of 1843.

Rich Wileman of Shilton described himself as the oldest stocking manufacturer in the kingdom and stated that many thousands of dozens of socks were sent to the American market every year.

At a time when a reasonable daily wage was 4/-, a report showed the weekly earnings in 27 parishes varied from 4/- to 8/- a week, Hinckley district being 5/3, Bosworth 4/6, Ibstock 4/- and Shepshed 5/6. Frame rents in the cottages were high and varied in different parishes from 1/- to 3/- per week.

This rent and the addition of the vicious Truck Act (1831), made poverty and disease rife in Leicestershire parishes. The Truck Act stated that goods had to be paid for in cash instead of kind and, as usual, hit the poorest the hardest. Had it not been for their allotment grounds, things would have been much worse, as it was many were close to starvation.

In the year 1844 there were in Shilton alone 650 stocking frames. Mr John Homer, giving evidence to the committee said that the whole of these were in the houses of the work people at that time. Neither the workshop, nor the factory system was in operation in Earl Shilton until after the findings of the commission were made public.

Stocking making in the home quickly died out with the introduction of the factory system.



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Both boot and shoe and the hosiery industry eagerly took to the new system of working and for the first-time people began to be regulated by time, as the factory needed villagers to work in unison. The last known stocking frame in Earl Shilton disappeared when its owner, a man called Mr Pratt, who lived in Wood Street died.

Earl Shilton saw its first hosiery strike in 1859. The employers involved were Messrs Homer & Everard. Almost 130 operatives took strike action, and an appeal was sent out to workers of three counties for aid for the Earl Shilton strikers to fight it.

There is no doubt that the 1840's were wretched times, and sheep stealing, highway robbery and burglary were common. It was not safe to go out after dark. If a man was caught sheep stealing, he was sentenced to fourteen years transportation. Fourteen years transportation was also the sentence for anyone who was driven by hunger to take a pheasant from the woods.

All this against the background of the subject of the history of cricket in Earl Shilton.

How did they get time to even think about fitting in a game of cricket, between trying to make a living and providing for the family and keeping off starvation?

Was this due to the game as in its beginnings, being played by the local gentry and not by the common man.?

Was our club made up of local business man and professionals who could afford to take out the time to play a game in the week, which clearly the many reports show how often that occurred, as against the norm of playing at weekends.?

Clearly this would be correct in terms of the reports that show games played for money. Who had the money? Certainly not the local working man!

As years went by and things no doubt started to improve, the ability to take out time to play the game became a little easier.

The year 1838 saw Queen Victoria crowned on 28th June and saw several Earl Shilton fixtures played.

Remembering at this time of course that the game was scored by 'notches' in a piece of wood. It really starts to give you a feel of the period.

Look out for "History Shorts" No 2

NB: Several local historical publications were consulted and referenced in the above. The author confirms that this is not all his own work and words.

