



# Princes Risborough Cricket Club



## HISTORY OF CRICKET

### What is cricket?

Cricket is a game played between two teams, generally of 11 members each. In essence, it is single combat, in which an individual batsman does battle against an individual bowler, who has helpers known as fielders. The bowler propels the ball with a straight arm from one end of the 22-yard pitch in an attempt to dismiss the batsman by hitting a target known as the wicket at the other end, or by causing the batsman to hit the ball into the air into a fielder's grasp, or by inducing one of a number of other indiscretions. The batsman attempts to defend the wicket with the bat and to score runs - the currency of the game - by striking the ball to the field boundary, or far enough from the fielders to allow the batsman to run to the other end of the pitch before the ball can be returned. At least two bowlers must take turns, from alternating ends; also, there are always two batsmen on the field, each to take a turn as required. When all but one of the batting team have been dismissed - or after an agreed period - the teams' roles are reversed. After all the players required to bat on both sides have done so either once or twice (which can take from a few hours to five days) the total number of runs accumulated determines the winner. But sometimes there isn't one.

### Origins of the game

The origins of cricket lie somewhere in the Dark Ages - probably after the Roman Empire, almost certainly before the Normans invaded England, and almost certainly somewhere in Northern Europe. All research concedes that the game derived from a very old, widespread and uncomplicated pastime by which one player served up an object, be it a small piece of wood or a ball, and another hit it with a suitably fashioned club.

How and when this club-ball game developed into one where the hitter defended a target against the thrower is simply not known. Nor is there any evidence as to when points were awarded dependent upon how far the hitter was able to despatch the missile; nor when helpers joined the two-player contest, thus beginning the evolution into a team game; nor when the defining concept of placing wickets at either end of the pitch was adopted.

Etymological scholarship has variously placed the game in the Celtic, Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon, Dutch and Norman-French traditions; sociological historians have variously attributed its mediaeval development to high-born country landowners, émigré Flemish cloth-workers, shepherds on the close-cropped downland of south-east England and the close-knit communities of iron- and glass-workers deep in the Kentish Weald. Most of these theories have a solid academic basis, but none is backed with enough evidence to establish a watertight case. The research goes on.

*[the above and the dates in cricketing history extracted from Wisden ©]*

## About PRCC Today

We would dearly love to be able to trace a continuous line back to 1774 when a club in Princes Risborough was first mentioned, or even to 1838 when Princes Risborough Cricket Club presented a silver tankard to Mr Philips. Unfortunately we can't ... unless someone knows something we don't.

Today we are a modern club which tries hard to bring credit to this town and we are particularly keen to encourage youngsters to try this wonderful game.



# Princes Risborough Cricket Club



## Dates in cricket history

- e. 1550 Evidence of cricket being played in Guildford, Surrey.  
1598 Cricket mentioned in Florio's Italian-English dictionary.  
1610 Reference to "cricketing" between Weald and Upland near Chevening, Kent.  
1611 Randle Cotgrave's French-English dictionary translates the French word "crosse" as a cricket staff.  
Two youths fined for playing cricket at Sidlesham, Sussex.
- 1624 Jasper Vinall becomes first man known to be killed playing cricket: hit by a bat while trying to catch the ball - at Horsted Green, Sussex.  
1676 First reference to cricket being played abroad, by British residents in Aleppo, Syria.  
1694 Two shillings and sixpence paid for a "wagger" (wager) about a cricket match at Lewes.  
1697 First reference to "a great match" with 11 players a side for fifty guineas, in Sussex.
- 1700 Cricket match announced on Clapham Common.  
1709 First recorded inter-county match: Kent v Surrey.  
1710 First reference to cricket at Cambridge University.  
1727 Articles of Agreement written governing the conduct of matches between the teams of the Duke of Richmond and Mr Brodrick of Peperharow, Surrey.  
1729 Date of earliest surviving bat, belonging to John Chitty, now in the pavilion at The Oval.
- 1730 First recorded match at the Artillery Ground, off City Road, central London, still the cricketing home of the Honourable Artillery Company.  
1744 Kent beat All England by one wicket at the Artillery Ground.  
First known version of the Laws of Cricket, issued by the London Club, formalising the pitch as 22 yards long.
- c. 1767 Foundation of the Hambledon Club in Hampshire, the leading club in England for the next 30 years.  
1769 First recorded century, by John Minshull for Duke of Dorset's XI v Wrotham.  
1771 Width of bat limited to 4¼ inches, where it has remained ever since.  
1774 LBW law devised.
- "The Gentlemen of the Risborough Club" to play the Gentlemen of Bucks on Wycombe-Rye on 27 July for "A SILVER CUP, value Five Guineas, given gratis by a few Innkeepers of Wycombe ... it being the third Match played between the two Parties."***  
*[To put this into context the Hambledon Club was only founded 7 years before this and Five Guineas would be worth about £605 in 2008 - probably more if the cup was silver]*
- 1776 Earliest known scorecards, at the Vine Club, Sevenoaks, Kent.  
1780 The first six-seamed cricket ball, manufactured by Dukes of Penshurst, Kent.  
1787 First match at Thomas Lord's first ground, Dorset Square, Marylebone - White Conduit Club v Middlesex.  
Formation of Marylebone Cricket Club by members of the White Conduit Club.