

BURTON LIFE IN 1851



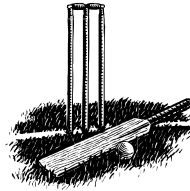
It was Thursday 16th May 1851 and the Burton Cricket Club met for the first practice day of the season in the park below the Hall. The pitch had been well prepared by the groundkeepers under the supervision of David Middleton the estate steward, but the outfield was perhaps a little slow with the grass growing strongly in the spring sunshine .

Members would enter the Hall grounds at the Lincoln Lodge entrance where they would be greeted by John Briggs the gate keeper. The imposing ride to the hall was along a series of wooded terraces dropping down to the stable yard where horses and carriages were left to be attended by the grooms Benjamin Fieldsend, Samuel Cooling and his son John. Although the Lord Monson was seldom in residence, the parkland leading to the hall was kept in immaculate condition by a large force of groundkeepers and labourers.

The club established in 1849 by the Rector the Revd Edmund Larken, his brother Arthur and the Hon William Monson, the eldest son of the 6th lord, was becoming a formidable force in local cricket. The 60 x 40 yard square which was drained and levelled in 1849 at a cost of £16/18s/11d, was now playing well and the pitch was regarded as one of the best in the county. Larken recorded in the accounts for that year that he purchased two cricket balls at a cost of 14/- and wicket keeping gloves for 12/-.

The 23 members of the club including the sons of the local landed gentry, the Jarvis family of Doddington Hall, the Craycrofts of Hackthorn, Waldo Sibthorp of Canwick, Ellison of Sudbrook and no less than 6 Reverend gentlemen from the Cathedral and local parishes, paid an annual subscription of £1 plus other expenses to cover the entertainment of the visiting teams. With the wages of an agricultural labourer being no more than 10/- a week, it was an exclusive club and open to only those of independent means and with plenty of time for leisure activities. The President was Lord Monson, with Edmund Larken as the club secretary.

Although a cricketer of modest skill (his career best was an innings of 5) he was an invaluable administrator who had established a network of contacts not only within the Church, but also as a political agent for the Liberal party in North Lincolnshire under the patronage of Lord Yarborough.



The members took their cricket very seriously. A practice day was held every Thursday with stumps at 11am with lunch and beer costing 2/6d taken at 2pm. The season's games included home and away fixtures against Louth and the Deepings, each played over 2 days, with single innings games against local clubs. In the match against Louth in July, Burton scored 171 runs in their first innings of which 44 runs were extras from 21 wides and 23 byes. In reply Louth scored 90 and 98 leaving Burton to score only 20 runs to win the match for the loss of 2 wickets. There were few byes conceded so the purchase of the wicket keeping gloves was a good investment. The Deeping game was a very social occasion with marquees erected on the park to entertain the guests and their ladies. Probably dinner would be taken in the Hall, and the additional cost of entertainment amounting to around 10/- a head would be collected from the members at the end of the season.

Nothing could be more contrasting to the relaxed lifestyle of the cricketers to that of the farmers and the labourers on the estate who had to work for their living. The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 had halved the price of wheat on which the prosperity of Lincolnshire farmers depended. Farm rents were now too high and even the most efficient farms in the parish were running at a loss. John Evens aged 37, who farmed 508 acres had written to Lord Monson asking for a reduction in rent. John Allison who was regarded as one of the more progressive farmers in the parish, employing 14 men and a boy, had invested £200 in new buildings and was now seeking repayment from his landlord. After a struggle, Allison received £180 from the estate but maintained he was owed the full amount. Later he was slipped a cheque for £20 by Lord Monson with the request that he kept quiet. Tact was a not one of Allison's strengths (he also enjoyed a tipple) so within a week the settlement was known to every farmer in the community.

Over the previous 40 years little had been spent on the estate so the underinvestment in buildings and land was now becoming critical. All the farmers in Burton and Carlton were demanding reductions in rent and investment in land drainage so that the low lying cold land on Burton Fen could be used to grow crops such as turnips for winter fodder.

Evens, Allison and John Farrow together employed 45 men and 10 boys so their prosperity was of great importance to the community. Reluctantly Lord Monson agreed to a rent reduction of 10% but politically they remained at odds with their landlord who supported free trade while they were demanding the return of protection.

The land agent William Brown of South Carlton reported to his master that Mary Graves of Cliff farm again failed to pay her rent on Ladyday. Lord Monson was not unsympathetic to her plight but pointed out that the land on the ridge was in good heart and not affected by the drainage problems of the lowland farmers.

He refused permission for her to plough more grassland as this required additional investment which she did not possess. He also politely refused her request for one of her farm labourers to take a short cut across his land to Riseholme which would shorten his journey by 3 miles. But Mary Graves was a survivor, and despite economic and family problems (a nephew died in the Lincoln Asylum) she remained in business, finally ending her days at the grand old age of 85 in the bedehouses.

Thomas Fatchett the blacksmith kept aloof from the politics of the estate. He had a large family of 2 sons and 6 daughters with their ages ranging from 16 down to 4. He had a thriving business serving both Burton and South Carlton from his forge on the cliff. While shoeing the farm horses was his main income and the Burton Hunt kept him busy during the hunting season, the agricultural revolution with the greater use of farm machinery was giving him additional work.

At the bottom of the social scale were the farm labourers, waggoners, shepherds housemaids and general servants that formed the bulk of the village population. Poor housing, unsanitary conditions, large families, childhood illnesses and general poverty were their lot. Many were confined men, hired for the year at the May Day fair and living in a hayloft at the farm where they were employed. And yet the village was free of many of the problems affecting other Lincolnshire communities; other than reports of poaching, village life was happy and well regulated, no doubt the absence of a public house contributed to good order and the sense of wellbeing. The long established Burton families such as John Cooling the gamekeeper, George Stamp at Burton Fen Farm and Daniel Ormsby, even David Middleton the steward all kept pigs to provide salt pork for the winter and some families had small plots of land to grow potatoes and vegetables. Clothing for the poorest families was provided by a Clothing Club administered by the Revd Larken who was adept at extracting subscriptions from the wealthy members of the community.

But sadness and tragedy was not far below the surface. Mary Ann Fuller the wife of George Fuller of Burton, died aged only 31 in April 1850. Her headstone in St Vincent's graveyard reads:

*"Goodbye my dear I'm gone before
My love for you can be no more,
No tears no sorrow for me take
But love my children for my sake"*



Her son Edward Fuller aged 4, was now living with his grandfather, James Willson aged 73, a retired huntsman at Bridge farm. No doubt bedtime stories would revolve around tales of the Burton Hunt, the great chases across the fields and heathland to the north of Burton and the wily foxes that lived to tell the tale of

how they outwitted one of the most famous packs of hounds in England.

He would hear stories of the eccentric Hunt Masters such as Lord Henry Bentinck who rode daily from his family seat at Welbeck Hall to hunt with the Burton and Sir Richard Sutton who inherited £300,000 and spent it all on hunting. But for George Fuller, bereft at the loss of his wife, the harshness of life was unremitting. He moved to London to seek employment but in the 1851 census he is registered as a prisoner in the debtors gaol in Newgate – one of the most notorious prisons in London.

We may have expected some comfort for the family from the rector but despite his godliness and his left wing views, he was neglectful of his pastoral care. Lord Monson wrote in a letter to his son that he detested dissenters and Catholics, "but if there is an excuse anywhere it is under our rector who does no parochial duty and never sees any of them. It is thoroughly disgusting"

Perhaps it was an unfair criticism of Larken who unlike many Rectors of Burton before him, remained in residence and did not employ a curate to perform his duties. His circle was one of privilege but perhaps it was the fault of the established church that had long lost the support of ordinary people. The Methodist movement was gathering momentum and it must have come as a surprise to him and the Church wardens when Robert Cottam took over as miller from William Holdern - he was also the local Methodist preacher.

It was now August, and the village children could earn a few extra pence for their families by helping with the harvest. Steam driven threshing machines were now in use on some farms and there was a glimmer of hope for the farmers with an increased price of wheat. The indefatigable Larken had arranged with Lord Monson for a fete to be held in Burton Park to raise funds for his charity, the Penitent Girls Home.

Fairs and fetes were always well attended with games and races for the children, bowling for a pig and no doubt had a beer tent with locally brewed ale. Even some of the poorest families could afford to travel to London on an excursion train to visit the great Exhibition. Despite the rantings of the MP for Lincoln Colonel Waldo Sibthorp, the exhibition was a huge success attracting visitors from the villages and towns across the country.

In mid August Thomas Leverton and his family who lived in Haltho cottage at Odder would have been amazed to see huge excursion trains steaming along the Great Northern railway line on the other side of the Fossdyke bound for London and the Great Exhibition. The Peterborough to Doncaster section of the GNR had yet to be completed so trains to London from Leeds and the North were routed through Lincoln to Spalding, joining the London line at Peterborough. At 11am a train carrying 1000 passengers passed by followed at 1pm by two huge trains, each with 80 carriages and carrying a total of 3000 passengers. No doubt the arms of his wife and 5 children ached from waving to the passengers who raced by at 40mph. The *railway intelligence* in the Lincoln Chronicle recorded that a total of 5600 passengers passed through Lincoln on that day and total rail receipts from January to August were £8,250,064 up by £1 million on the previous year.

Leverton would have noticed the changes more than most for since the rail route was completed in 1846, the stage coaches to Gainsborough, Hull and the North no longer clattered past the farm.



September 25th 1851, the chill of autumn was in the air as the Burton cricket club members assembled in the Park for the annual Smokers v Non Smokers Cricket match. The smokers batted first and they made a steady start until both the Revd

Bassett and the Revd Mathews were out with the score at 11. When the 5th wicket fell with the score at only 27 the non smokers were celebrating, but then Arthur Larken came to the wicket. He had something to prove as his association with his housekeeper, Sarah Smith of Billingborough, had been the subject of much rumour and criticism.

His brother Edmund had defended his relationship but as the tenant of a rented cottage in Burton, his landlord could not overlook the scandal so Lord Monson had given him notice to quit. Arthur set about the bowling and when he was last out for 23, the team had scored 62.

After a leisurely lunch, Mr W Golden and Mr Wright walked out confidently to open the batting for the non-smokers. Wright was soon back in the pavilion but the Revd Burton (21), Mr Luard (7) and Mr Smith (2) assisted by 10 wides and 7 byes, meant that when the Honourable William Monson batted, he needed to score just 3 runs for victory with 4 wickets remaining. Monson was dismissed for one but the Revd Burnside, Mr Golden and the Revd Edmund Larken failed to score a notch, leaving the Smokers as victors by 1 run!

The Cricket Club went from strength to strength and in

THE STORY OF ELLISON'S QUAY

The Fossdyke canal was of major interest to the city of Lincoln as it gave access by way of the Trent, the Humber and Yorkshire rivers to the great corn and wool markets of the West Riding and Manchester. In 1741 the Lincoln corporation, unable to raise the funds to improve the canal, granted a 999 year lease to Richard Ellison of Thorne. A second Richard Ellison developed the navigation to the benefit of the city and his own great gain. It was the city's means of communication with the rest of the world. It brought 40,000 tons of coal annually to the city from the Nottingham coalfields, with wheat, flour and wool exported to the great northern industrial cities. Hundreds of sloops and keels used the Brayford wharfs to load and unload their cargoes.

Income from the canal dues were considerable and the Ellisons bought Sudbrook Holme as the family seat, while another branch of the family later resided at Boutham Park. In 1846, faced with competition from the railways, Richard Ellison (the fourth) sold his interest in the Fossdyke by means of a sub-lease to the Great Northern Railway. This enabled the GNR to build the railway along the bank of the canal to Saxilby and on to Gainsborough.

1853 and 1854 Burton Park was chosen as the venue for a Lincolnshire 22 against an All England XI, an honour of which the Revd Larken must have been justly proud. From 1855, the club employed a professional bowler during the season to play for the team and act as groundsman on 2 days a week. He was paid £1.1.0d and entitled to a free lunch and dinner on match days.

In 1862 the club made national news scoring 462 runs



against Southwell the highest number of runs in a club game that season. Arthur Larken moved out of his cottage and he and Sarah married and set up home in Balderton, Newark. In 1856 he wrote to Lord Monson apologising for any distress he may have caused his lordship over the affair with Sarah. Monson replied in affectionate terms, My dear

brother..... In 1861 the Larkens are living in the High St in Balderton with 5 children and employing 3 servants. He is described as a landed proprietor.

Of the fate of the Fuller family we have little information, but my thanks to Julian Fisk of Lincoln who is researching the Fullers and brought the sad epitaph to Mary Fuller to my attention. It was this request for information that set me on the research for this fascinating period of Burton History

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The sale of the lease gave Ellison and the shareholders an income of £9500 a year from the GNR - the equivalent of £2m today !

The Ellisons were prominent in local life – an Ellison was MP for Lincoln, another High Sheriff and the Smith – Ellisons bank was the foremost financial institution in the city in the 19th C. The Ellisons orange apple was first grown in the Boutham Park gardens.

Sadly Sudbrook Hall was demolished in 1930 and Boutham Hall in 1960 – now the Ellison family are spread far and wide. The sole remaining member of the family living in Lincoln is Mrs Anne Faulding.

In recognition of the connection between the Fossdyke and the Ellison family, Beal Homes agreed to name the new development at Burton Waters as "Ellison's Quay."

At the invitation of Richard Beal, Mrs Faulding accompanied by her nephew Mr Richard Ellison, opened the new development on Thursday 13th September. For further details of the Ellison family go to:

www.homepage.ntlworld.com/peter.fairweather/docs/index.htm