

Northern Counties Cricket Club was formed on 26th August, 1864 at a well attended meeting held in the Town Hall, Inverness and presided over by The Right Reverend Robert Eden, an Essex man, who was Episcopal Bishop of Moray and Ross (1851 - 1886) with the seat of the diocese in Inverness. The meeting was called "for the purpose of taking the necessary steps for the formation of a cricket club which should embrace the whole of the northern counties".

In the first 25 years of the club's existence many friendly games were played against service and civilian sides with much success. The very first match played by Northern Counties was a two-innings game against Nairn Union C.C. (later to become Nairn County C.C.) on Saturday 16th June, 1865 at the Northern Meeting Park which Northern Counties won by 13 runs. In 1893 the club became a founder member of the North of Scotland Cricket Association and won the league title in the first three years of the competition. Since then Counties have won the title outright a further ~~twelve~~^{THIRTEEN} times up to 1998⁹⁰ and were joint champions three times in the year 1933-34-75. Northern Counties have also enjoyed considerable success in the Senior Knock Out Cup since its inception in 1933 winning it on 15 occasions and having been runners-up on numerous occasions. Their best run of cup wins in succession were the five years from 1947 to 1952 during which period they also won the league in 1950 and 1951. Many will claim that these seasons were ~~some of~~^{SOME OF} the most exciting periods in the club's history when large crowds attended the top games providing an electric atmosphere in many of the close encounters.

In addition to league and cup cricket and local friendlies Counties have brought many famous teams to play at the Northern Meeting Park during the years prior to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. These included two-day matches with an Australian Forces XI, Dr W.G. Grace's XI, Leicestershire, Kent, Learie Constantine's XI, (later Lord Constantine), Oxford Authentics and many others in one day fixtures.

Generations of Invernessians, by birth or by adoption, have enjoyed playing for Counties throughout the club's 125 year history. Many have performed fine individual achievements such as winning the North of Scotland Cricket Association trophies for best batting or bowling averages and many from the 1920's to the present time have been chosen for the Association's representative matches. The most successful player of the 1920's was Frank A. Bowden who won both the Association's batting cup three times (in 1923, 1925 and 1927) and the bowling cup (in 1921, 1922 and 1925). Frank was a versatile sportsman, as are many other cricketers in the north, and was an outstanding goalkeeper for Inverness Caledonian Football Club for several years in the same period. One other rare feat was accomplished in July 1929 when K.J. (Busty) Whitton and P.D.C.R. (Carmie) Clark ~~both~~ scored centuries of 128 not out and 106 not out respectively in the same innings against the Seaforth Highlanders at the Northern Meeting Park. Their partnership also established a record of 205 runs for a fourth wicket stand. The only other time in the club's history that the feat has been repeated was in 1947 when Jim Innes and ~~Malcolm~~ ^{murdoch} MacDougall both scored centuries in a game against R.A.F. Milltown. Northern Counties scored over 300 runs that day in 1 hour 50 minutes.

During the 1930's such notable names as John R. Braid, ~~who~~ won the bowling cup in 1932, and ~~also~~ ^{was} had the distinction of bowling out the great Don Bradman in an Association Select against Australia, ^{in 1934} Duncan Dallas, W. Bennett and L. Dixon each of whom won the batting cup in 1933, 1934 and 1937 respectively contributed much to several successful seasons of this era. Others who are remembered for sterling service to the club included Kenny Whitton, a fine batsman/bowler who played for over 30 years for Counties, Alan G. Hamilton, A.G. (Ack) Stuart, Norrie MacLennan, Leslie Watson and the /

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* 205 certainly a club record, probably also a league record.

the younger element of Malcolm Murchison who was ^{later} to win the bowling cup in 1954 and ^{PDCR} (Carmie) Clark, an outstanding wicketkeeper as well as a hard hitting bat. Malcolm and Carmie were also fine footballers and both played for Clachnacuddin Football Club.

Sadly three members of the 1939 team, J.H.M. (Huntly) MacKinnon, Joe Duthie and Angus MacKay, a son of Captain William MacKay (a former player and long serving official of the club) were killed in action in the Second World War. During the war years of 1939 to 1945 restrictions on travel curtailed the opposition to service sides based around Inverness. As time went on and more players were called up the gaps were filled by guest players and schoolboys some of whom, e.g. Hamish Gray (now Lord Gray of Contin), Bill Hutton and Stanley MacDonald became regular members of the successful period of the 1940's and 1950's.

Counties had the nucleus of a good team in 1947 which when added to later with youngsters returning from military service produced very successful sides in the highly competitive league and cup matches of the late forties and fifties. Two players who generated a great influence on the team at the time were Jim Innes and Malcolm Murchison. Jim, an Aberdonian, whose work took him to Inverness was a feared fast bowler and a thrilling hard hitting batsman, regularly striking enormous sixes over ~~the park~~ ^{THE TREES AT THE NORTHERN MEETING G PARK. X}. Malcolm was a fast bowler/batsman who had very fast reflexes and held many brilliant catches in the slips. Others of this era were opening bat, Hamish MacDonald, whose runs were made very quickly, all-rounder Hamish Gray, Gordon Stewart, ^{winner} who won the batting averages in 1956; Jack Connell and Ian Munro both opening bowlers of contrasting styles who won the averages cup in 1959 and 1960 respectively. Players who scored centuries in this period include Jim Innes, Malcolm MacDougall, Stanley MacDonald and Ian Munro.

The 1960's and 1970's saw the emergence of other newcomers to the team. Bill MacKenzie a useful all rounder and his brother Calum a fast bowler who won the bowling cup in 1972 and 1974 both prominent as were the Leckie brothers Duncan, an opening bat, and Alastair a wicketkeeper/batsman /

* In those days ~~the ball~~ ^{the ball} had to be hit clean out of the ground ^{for a six} this changed about 1952 to the normal mode of hitting ~~the ball~~ ^{the ball} clean over the boundary line

batsman. Other successful youngsters included A.P. (Sandy) Borrie, a slow medium bowler and consistent wicket taker over many seasons, Stewart MacKenzie, remembered for his ferocious hitting and Mike Evans who won the MacRae Cup for the highest batting aggregate in the league. After leaving Inverness Mike played for senior clubs in the south of Scotland, including Dumbartonshire, and ~~in~~ Edinburgh.