

Belhus

Cricket Club

50th Anniversary



Part A

Belhus CC

1960 - 2010

Foreword

"I am very honoured to be asked to provide a short foreword to this 50th anniversary commemorative booklet. The recreational game in the county is the lifeblood of the game, and from a county perspective it provides us with the platform to produce our next generation of Essex and England cricketers.

There is no doubt that much of our development work would be impossible without our close links with those working at the grass roots level.

Running a club in these challenging times is no mean feat, and to have reached an admirable 'half century' is a testimony to the commitment and dedication of Belhus Cricket Club members and committees.

You should all be congratulated on this achievement and I wish you the very best of luck for the future".

David East

Chief Executive, Essex County Cricket Club



Introduction

Marylebone Cricket Club was founded in 1787, Sevenoaks Vine CC in 1734, Essex County Cricket Club in 1876 - and Belhus Cricket Club as recent as 1960.

So at a mere 50 years of age, a comprehensive history of our club is not quite due. This booklet, therefore, is simply to commemorate our anniversary and briefly explain a little about our origins, development and achievements. It will also reflect on some of the more memorable moments and playing performances that have occurred whilst our members have been gracing the cricket fields of England.

‘...our members have been gracing the cricket fields of England’

The name 'Belhus' derived from Nicholas de Belhus who was the fourteenth century owner of the Belhus mansion - one of the great manor houses of the era. Its park and grounds extended to 300 acres with a circumference of 3 miles, and was landscaped by 'Capability' Brown in the 18th century. Famous for its deer and heronry, it boasted the finest pack of foxhounds in Essex and was used for falconry.

Queen Elizabeth I stayed at Belhus mansion in August 1588 on her way to Tilbury to inspect her troops as they were assembled to repel the Spanish Armada. Her carriage may well have crossed over what was to become the First XI cricket square.

For many years, the mansion was the home of the Barrett-Lennard family and was used as a training camp for troops and army postal staff in the First World War. Demolished in 1957, some interesting remains and photographs of the mansion are on display in the Thurrock Museum. Edward Barrett-Lennard emigrated to Western Australia in the nineteenth century and his grandson, George, established a winery in the Swan Valley. Belhus is also a suburb of Perth but yet without a cricket club.

‘...Queen Elizabeth I stayed at Belhus mansion...’

Aveley Cricket Club was one of the oldest clubs in Thurrock but, sadly, disbanded in the 1970s. Its matches were played in Belhus Park where the earliest recorded match was in 1803 when the "Gentlemen of Essex" played the "Gentlemen of Kent" - for a sum of 100 guineas. Belhus Park Cricket Club was founded in 1954 and shared the pitch and facilities at Belhus Park with Aveley CC.

The first pavilion in Belhus Park (built in 1929) was no more than a little green hut that provided a windowless changing area for use by both teams. With a splinter-ridden floor and a small corner sink, it doubled up as a fragrantless tea room.

Belhus Association CC, the cricket section of the Belhus Community Association, was formed a couple of years later and played its home fixtures at Ockendon Courts School in Garron Lane, South Ockendon. After numerous discussions between the two clubs they agreed to merge: quite why is not entirely clear. Cynics claim that the Park club was keen to acquire the much newer cricket equipment of the Association side. Others recall that the Association club wanted a better pitch. But whatever the strategic rationale behind the merger, Belhus Cricket Club came in to being in 1960 (the year of the first showing of Coronation Street) and the first match was played by the First XI on 30th April.

Forget about Harold Macmillan's 1957 speech, "*.....never had it so good*", the late fifties/early sixties were not prosperous times. Few people enjoyed the luxury of a telephone and fewer families could afford a car. Most of our matches were played against clubs that could be reached on foot, by bicycle, motor bike or public transport. Members didn't possess their own bats, pads or gloves and a large bag was used to transport the 'club gear'. So players carried their boots, flannels, and shirts in a simple small bag, often a shopping bag. And they may have taken a towel and bar of soap too, but in days when shower facilities were rare.....

'...carried their boots in a shopping bag'

The inaugural season for the First XI was quite successful. Out of 40 matches played, 21 were won, 10 were lost and 9 drawn. Most of the matches were low-scoring affairs (as was the norm in the '60s), and in their 40 innings, they exceeded 100 on just fourteen occasions. Even more remarkable was that on only five of those occasions did they exceed 110, with the highest total being 133. By contrast, the Second XI had a miserable inaugural year. Of 24 matches played, they won only 4, lost 19 and one fixture was abandoned - a season best forgotten.

'...80% of his victims were either bowled or lbw...'

Welshman and 1st XI captain Don Pegler topped the bowling averages in that first season, bagging a total of 115 wickets at just 7.30 runs apiece (unlikely today). And if Don's season was impressive, consider that of Bob Prickett. In taking 48 wickets (he only played on a Sunday) at an astonishing average of 5.60, 80% of his victims were either bowled or lbw. Now any bowler, be he fast or slow, will tell you just how good that is. Not only was Bob one of the quickest bowlers in the club's history, he was arguably the most accurate. For the Second XI, Albert Braybrook was the season's star performer with 39 wickets at a cost of 10.10.

During the 1960s, the club was packed with fine bowlers who were aided by the pitches (sometimes quite dangerous) on which we played. They certainly weren't conducive to attractive stroke play - in fact, the bat was used as much for protection as it was a run-making tool. Sheer bravery was often the order of the day. And during this decade, our records show that a first innings total of 100 gave us a competitive match; a score of 120 would usually lead to a win; and 150 on the board ensured that we wouldn't lose. How times have changed.

'...the bat was used as much for protection...'

I made my debut for the 2nd XI on 9th May 1965. We batted first and were dismissed for a paltry 43. But we then proceeded to bowl out the opposition (Noak Hill) for 37. I soon came to learn that such scores and results were not uncommon.

In 1974, a reduction in membership numbers caused a couple of difficult years for the club. But the ground-breaking tour to Barbados in 1976, the winning of the local district KO Cup in 1978 and the development of the youth section triggered an influx of new players and fortunes returned. Over the next twenty-five years, the organisation of another visit to Barbados and more domestic tours sparked a heightened spirit of optimism that enabled the club to enter a new golden age.

'...an age-old ambition to own our own ground...'

After thirty-seven years at Belhus Park, we moved our headquarters to North Stifford Village Green in 1997. And in 2004, with an age-old ambition to own our own ground, we signed a long lease of the Green to mark the most significant event in the club's history. Since then, we have created one of the finest cricket pitches in Essex, and made remarkable progress in enhancing our facilities and developing every other aspect of the club.

A new clubhouse will complete our ambition. This is a big challenge, but the drive and determination that members have displayed in recent years will ensure that the vision is achieved. It must be remembered though - Romford wasn't built in a day!

Since the club's formation in 1960, more than forty cricket clubs in the district of Thurrock have disbanded - today, only six remain. And not only has Belhus Cricket Club survived - it has positively thrived.

Denis Reed

Editor

Our Presidents

Various members have served as President since 1960 (see page 103), and we are grateful for their generosity and wise counsel that has helped to make the club what it is today. Below is a snapshot of a few Presidents who have held high office.

David Sayer was our first President. Born in Romford, he played for Kent, MCC and Oxford University between 1956 and 1976, taking 613 first class wickets at an average of 23.45. One of the quickest bowlers of his generation, he helped dismiss New Zealand for 45 whilst at Oxford, and admitted to bowling a beamer at Brian Close of Yorkshire and England "Because he was getting on top of me!"

Bill Brooks served for ten terms. A founder member, Bill also served as Treasurer between 1960 and 1963 and Chairman in 1978. He played in the club's inaugural match against South Ockendon Hospital on 30th April 1960 and was a member of the Northern Ireland tour in 1967. Bill is a Life Vice-President.

John Lewis Snr served for seven consecutive terms as well as stints as Chairman and Captain of the Second and Third XIs. He made his playing debut on 14th July 1962 against Great Burstead and scored, uncharacteristically, a six with his first scoring shot. He took 7 wickets in 14 deliveries for the 2nd XI against Tilbury on 6th June 1982. John sired four sons, all of whom have played, or still play, for the club.

Ken Merton was a founder member who served four consecutive terms and was Patron in 1970 and 1971. Bill Line served for five terms (between 1974 and 1978) and also acted as Chairman and Second XI Captain. He was a member of the tour parties to Northern Ireland in 1966 and 1967 followed by Barbados in 1976.

Richard Marns served for six consecutive terms (between 2000 and 2006) and has been a popular member of many domestic tours. Richard has also served as Youth Chairman and is a Life Vice-President.



John Lewis Snr (1975)



Bill Line (1985)



Richard Marns (2005)

From Don Pegler

Founder Member. First XI Captain 1960 and 1972.

Congratulations on reaching your 50th birthday and on having developed into such a successful club. Reading between the lines, much good work has been put in by many individuals over the years to get to the present position. Well done to them all.

I can hardly believe that it is 50 years since I was asked to take on the captaincy of this newly established club, in its first season after the merger between the Belhus Park and Belhus Association clubs.

My appointment was made on political grounds, and after much arm-twisting, for I had only recently moved into the area and had played but one game for the Association. I knew nothing about the players. I was therefore seen, I think, as a 'neutral' who had no baggage or preconceived notions about the players. This had some merit, but many disadvantages when it came to affairs on the field of play.

In subsequent years, and to my relief, others took up the captaincy baton. I believe that having a bowler as a captain is not a good idea; they rarely see things as they are and tend to either underbowl or overbowl themselves.

'...no preconceived notions about the players'

Memories abound from those early days. The first Secretary was John Britton who managed to keep wicket despite limping badly as a result of suffering the effects of polio. He was a businessman with many irons in the fire including property and clothing. The latter business he used to good effect in producing a club cap. It was green, circled with a gold hoop, and he took much delight in presenting it to players who scored a fifty or who took five wickets in an innings. It wasn't long before I was presented with my cap! I've searched everywhere to find mine but to no avail. Has anyone still got one? It could take its place among memorabilia in the clubhouse.

'...to players who scored a fifty or took five wickets...'

I'm sure it will be mentioned elsewhere, but one of the occasions when Belhus crossed the water to Northern Ireland will never be forgotten. The match against Armagh CC was watched by a number of spectators, including the astronomer Sir Patrick Moore who was then Director of the Armagh Planetarium and keen to view the Belhus stars! We didn't disappoint; shining brightly and recording our first victory on overseas soil. An extremely convivial evening followed with much banter, singing and drinking.

After closing time, the landlord of the inn asked if we wanted to stay on for a while. On receiving an affirmative reply, he proceeded to telephone a local magistrate, who was a close relative, and a verbal extension was duly granted. We left in the small hours, but not before the inn was drunk dry, bereft of draught and bottled beer.

'...the inn was drunk dry...'

One of the other captains, in 1970, was the young, then, editor of this booklet. I hope he will not censor what I now write. We were having, as I recall, a very successful season and Denis, in his youthful exuberance, decided to experiment. The experiment was to give the batters a chance to bowl and vice versa for the bowlers. The outcome was that, in the first match, we batted first and the bowlers produced a total that required little contribution from the batters. Success so far. But the second half of the experiment was less successful. You've guessed it, the batsmen as bowlers were dismal failures and the captain had to call upon the 'real' bowlers to finish the job. This goes to show that bowlers win matches! A word of caution though: don't believe the editor if he says that I exaggerate.

On another occasion I was standing as an umpire. The batsman on strike was the tall, handle-bar moustached Major P A Pooler-Williams. He tapped the ball into an open space and called for a single. He made his way down to my end: he was in fine form and wanted to retain the strike. As he rested on his bat, his partner, Mick Patrick, made an appearance alongside him. "What are you doing here?" gruffly enquired the Major. "Get back to the other end" he commanded.

"What are you doing here?"

Mick set off towards the other end with brandished bat and flapping pads. Meanwhile, there had been a fumble in the field and the bails at the other end were still intact. As Mick neared his destination with outstretched bat, he flung himself at the crease and emerged from a cloud of dust even more dishevelled than ever. My fellow umpire, impressed by this performance, ruled that Mick had regained his ground. However, dear old Mick was dismissed by the very next delivery he faced.

Mick went Greyhound Racing at least once a week. In an optimistic mood, he once bought a greyhound, named 'Bread Pudding'. I believe the animal raced at the track in Rayleigh. To mark the occasion, many Belhus players went along to support its endeavours and with hope of making a quick buck: but they came away disappointed! What with kennel/training fees eating into Mick's limited resources, I think the animal might have become 'brown bread' for we heard little more about it.

When I left Essex in 1974, I played one or two games and called it a day. I still watch some cricket at Edgbaston, but with decreasing frequency as the years go by. I like the one-dayers, but only when the weather is good. As for the four-dayers, I make occasional visits, but find more satisfaction, perhaps sadly you might think, in conversation with friends than in the cricket.

In the longer form of the game, it seems that most bowlers bowl more in hope than in expectation (and at an increasingly sluggish rate as the years go by). If it wasn't for the scoreboard, you wouldn't be able to distinguish batters 3, 4 and 5 from batters 7, 8 and 9. They all seem to play the same strokes to the same dietary bowling. Ah, how different from earlier days! I have kept in touch with a few players from the early days but would like nothing more than to hear from any other of the survivors. I heard recently that one of the old guard, older even than me, was still playing. Quite extraordinary - what has he been on all these years?

We don't know what the next 50 years will bring, but let us hope that Belhus Cricket Club survives and continues to thrive. Let's also hope that a fair number of young members who read this booklet today will be around to read and make a contribution to the centenary booklet and celebrations. Remember, fifty years can flash by - I know - so enjoy yourselves and make the most of today.

Don Pegler



Andrew Merton and Don Pegler (2009)

Founder Members

From Andrew Merton

Founder Member. Chairman 1976, 1977. Secretary 1964-1969. Captain First XI 1976. Captain Second XI 1970, 1973, 1974. Captain Third XI 1969.

“Belhus Cricket Club”. Those words transport me back to my youth and days without worries or cares: just the concern of the weather and if it would rain before the match!

In those far off days, club players didn't have to worry about preparing the wicket or mowing the outfield at Belhus Park because there was a permanent groundsman. Can you believe that? He was there five days a week and spent most of the time in his hut reading his newspaper. In between reading and tea-drinking sessions, he would sort out the grass and the pitch. His departure quickly came though, and his replacement was a grass cutter once a week - I think it was on a Thursday - and a roller. I watched the pitch being rolled on one occasion. The roller was attached to a tractor. It went up the pitch once, turned, and came back down the pitch for a second roll. Then it, and the driver, went away to the next job.

‘...reading and tea-drinking sessions...’

In the pre-1960 days of Belhus Association CC and Belhus Park CC there was intense rivalry between the two clubs. My memory tells me that the Association side was the stronger of the two, but Park was also a fairly strong outfit, so upon the amalgamation of the two it was the theoretical belief that the new Belhus Cricket Club would be difficult to beat - but, of course, beaten it frequently was!

Characters such as ‘Pooler’ - Major (oh yes, he insisted on that) Patrick Pooler-Williams - would have us in fits of laughter. He was, without any doubt, a very good cricketer, but he was also very obstinate. On one occasion he was bowling (to a Cranham batsman, I think) and he set a packed off-side field with only a square leg fielder on the leg-side. He promptly sent down long hop after long hop and was, consequently, carted all over the leg-side boundary. The reason? Well, according to the Major, the batsmen were not playing the correct shots to his bowling!

‘He was without any doubt, a very good cricketer...’

Another character who played in the 1960s was an overweight vicar who always looked as though he could play a bit despite his baggy flannels and plimssoles. But he couldn't field (neither did he score too many with the bat). In one match at Belhus Park, he fielded a ball near the boundary. When he attempted to return the ball, it came out of the back of his hand and went over the boundary for four!

Belhus played many all-day matches in those days, and in one against Theydon Bois they were kind enough to supply a keg of bitter, which they stood near the boundary edge. One of our team (now, sadly, departed) made good use of their generosity from the moment we arrived, and played the rest of the game in something of a daze!

'...played the rest of the game in a daze'

We were always a social team and spent most Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings in 'The Archer'. I am sure the cricket was sometimes a secondary consideration. At closing time, 'The Archer' landlord would lock the main front doors and invite us all in 'the back room' until two or three in the morning. Those of us in 'the back room' included a policeman who played for Aveley CC - our strong local rivals at the time.

Cricket is not just a game of playing and winning (or, perish the thought, losing sometimes!). It is a game of memories. I have many happy memories of playing for Belhus and the friendships made - some of which continue to this day. Long may Belhus prosper and continue to play this wonderful game of cricket.

Good luck to everyone in this 50th anniversary year.

Andrew Merton



First XI in front of 'the little green hut' at Belhus Park 1962

Back: Les Perry Don Pegler Pat Pooler-Williams (Capt) Andrew Merton Bill Brooks Tony Price
Front: Jim Rounce Dave Francis Danny Carroll Dick Bignell Bill Rowell

From Bill Brooks

Founder Member. President 1970-1973, 1980-1985. Chairman 1978. Treasurer 1960-1963. Life Vice-President.

Hearty congratulations to Belhus Cricket Club in reaching its Golden Anniversary and for becoming such a successful club. Club cricket in Belhus is actually 60 years old, with today's Belhus Club carrying the banner inherited from early, post-war pioneers. In 1949, contractors for the Belhus housing estate, the Unit Construction Company, started a works cricket team, a 'wandering' side, having just a practice strip on what is now the site of Somers Heath School. In 1952, enrolling as an associate member of the team, I added weekend cricket to my weekday school cricket.

'...carrying the banner from post-war pioneers'.

Another member, Major Patrick Pooler-Williams, subsequently led a group of about fifteen of us from the works team to develop a truly local cricket club. Extensive lobbying of Thurrock Council resulted in agreement to share the council-owned ground in Belhus Park with the existing tenants, an initially reluctant, Aveley Cricket Club. Thus, Belhus Park CC was born.

The first match was against S. Pacey's XI on 1st May (Mr Pacey was a friend of founder member Danny Pearce). The second match, against Estric CC was won comfortably, due to Patrick Pooler-Williams playing a captain's innings, scoring 100.

In 1955 I departed for two years national service with the RAF in Germany. There I met Dave Sayer, the Kent CCC bowler who, 5 years later, become the first President of Belhus CC. Returning from the RAF in 1957, my brother Bob persuaded me to help form a new club under the umbrella of the Belhus Community Association (Belhus Park CC had rejected overtures from the BCA to join them). Thus, Belhus Association CC was formed, midway through the 1957 season. Without a ground, Ockendon Courts School permitted the club to use its cricket pitch and facilities.

The first game, away against the Hertfordshire village of Willian, was a nightmare. Cows were driven from the pitch to an adjacent field before the game could start and the rough wicket was a bowler's paradise. Fortunately, rain soon stopped play and, with some relief, both teams departed to the local pub. Belhus Association and Belhus Park overcame their differences and merged as Belhus CC in 1960.

Tales of the cricket, memorable games and memorable members, are adequately covered elsewhere in this commemorative booklet.

But what was so different in those early years compared with today? Well, consider this: annual membership, £1.5 shillings (£1.25p); match fees 2 shillings (10p); teas 1 shilling 6 pence (7½p). Few members had cars and sometimes teams travelled to away games by bus, heaving the 'club bag' on and off the running board. For the first five years, the facilities in the pre-war pavilion (hut) were primitive, without showers and with 'interesting' toilets. Thankfully, a new pavilion was built in 1965.

'...without showers and with interesting toilets'.

In the early years, many clubs played on council-owned pitches with minimal preparation, thus usually favouring the bowlers. Consequently, the records confirm that the worst scores came from the 1960s and 1970s and most of the best scores came from the later years, beyond 1980.

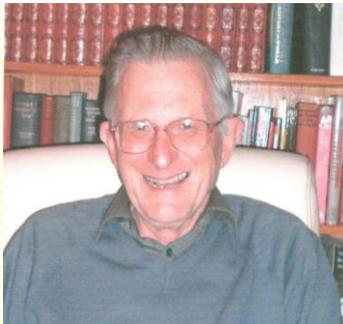
I played for Belhus until I moved from the area with my job in the early 1970s. I returned after four years and played again until I hung up my boots in 1984. Sadly, I failed personally to capitalise on the improved grounds of the 1980s.

'...hung up my boots in 1984'.

My wife, Rosalind, shares some of my cricketing memories, although hers are primarily centred on helping Mary Pegler to prepare the teas, especially to contain the costs within one shilling and sixpence per head!

Belhus Cricket Club, long may you prosper.

Bill Brooks



Bill Brooks (2010)

Founder Member

The Inaugural Weekend

The first Belhus match took place at Belhus Park on 30th April 1960 when the First XI played South Ockendon Hospital. Major Patrick Pooler-Williams opened the Belhus innings with Bill Brooks, but their partnership reached only 4 before P-W was adjudged lbw. The decision against Pooler-Williams was probably given by a Belhus player/umpire and it is likely that the Major would not have been best pleased. The innings closed at a feeble 52 all out from 22 overs.

After an early tea, fine Belhus bowling saw us dismiss our hospital visitors for just 25. Pooler-Williams and George Dow took five wickets apiece to secure a Belhus victory in its inaugural match. It should be noted, however, that South Ockendon Hospital was, at the time, one of the largest psychiatric institutions in the country. A handwritten note in the scorebook states, 'Practice Match', but it is not known if this script was inserted before or after the dismal Belhus innings!

'...one of the largest institutions in the country'

The following day, the Second XI played its first match against London Graving Dock at the Grange Farm ground. With what must have been a delayed start, LGD declared at 103 for 4. In reply, and at 80 for 3, we were coasting to victory until a procession of our batsmen returned to the pavilion as we lost seven wickets for just seven runs. We were dismissed for 90. This match marked the origin of the famous 'Belhus Collapse' - an event that was to occur on oh-too-many occasions.



Treasurers, Secretaries and Captains at the 'Orsett Cock' for the Thurrock and District Cricket Association 'Stag Evening' in 1967

Left to Right: Graham Cunliffe, Danny Carroll, Les Perry, Stan Page, Andrew Merton

Old Friends

Sadly, many of the clubs that we played in the early years no longer exist. However, Horndon-on-the-Hill is the one club that we played against in our very first year, and who we continue to play to this very day.

Our Second XI travelled to Horndon Recreation ground on 29th May 1960 for their fifth game of the season and John Vereker, the current President of Horndon, played on that historic day. We took first knock, but only Dick Bignell managed to reach double figures in our paltry total of 54, and our number eleven batsman, Jim Smith, was dismissed 'Hit Wicket'. To add to our embarrassment, the Horndon openers knocked off the required runs in just eight overs and we were trounced by ten wickets.

For the return match at Belhus Park on 10th August, we fielded our First XI to regain some lost pride. This time we could muster only 95 all out - a reasonable total given that the average number of runs per innings for the 1st XI for the entire 1960 season was 84.15. And we bowled out Horndon for 61 to square the books. By coincidence, their number eleven batsman, Lucas, was also dismissed 'Hit Wicket'.

So with honours even, we arranged fixtures for the following season and for the past 50 years we have continued to enjoy hard-fought matches, always played in a sporting and friendly spirit. In wishing Horndon well for the future, we hope very much that we shall continue to enjoy friendly rivalry for many years to come.



First XI at Horndon-on-the-Hill CC August 1962

Back: John Lewis Snr Mike Willett Danny Carroll Andrew Merton Frank Peters Mick Patrick
Front: Dick Bignell George Dow Pat Pooler-Williams (Capt) Graham Cunliffe Roger Dalby

Most Ducks in a Belhus Innings

7	3rd XI v Great Burstead	7th August 1960
7	2nd XI v Corringham Social	3rd July 1966
7	4th XI v Orpington	12th May 2007
7	2nd XI v Dartfordians	22nd July 2007
6	1st XI v Tennyson	2nd May 1965
6	2nd XI v Roydon	13th August 1966
6	2nd XI v Benfleet	15th July 1973
6	Tour XI v Lodge School (Barbados)	26th November 1976
6	2nd XI v Little Thurrock	9th July 1977
6	1st XI v Noak Hill	17th July 1982
6	3rd XI v East Ham Manor	20th July 1985
6	4th XI v Cranham	6th June 2004
6	4th XI v Bexley	28th July 2007

Albert the Great

A bowler can only dream of taking all ten wickets in an innings. It is perhaps the rarest and most difficult of cricketing feats. But we are delighted to report that one, and only one, of our bowlers has ever achieved the ultimate in cricketing performances. Albert Braybrook was his name. 'Albert the Great' said some.

The 2nd XI's final game of the 1961 season was played on 24th September at Belhus Park. Our opponents, Heathcotians, took first knock. Albert opened the bowling and proceeded to take every opposition scalp for just 18 runs in 18 unchanged overs. The legendary Don Pegler couldn't get a wicket in his 6 overs, but he helped Albert to glory by taking two catches. Six batsmen were clean-bowled as Heathcotians were dismissed for 87 off 36 overs and Albert's amazing bowling analysis read:

18.3 overs - 8 maidens - 18 runs - 10 wickets

After tea, skipper Dick Bignell must have felt pretty confident when he opened our innings with Mick Patrick. And at 78 for 5, with just 10 runs to win, it was all over bar the shouting. But the remaining batsmen contrived to perform a 'Belhus Collapse' with five wickets falling for five runs including two run-outs. Classic Belhus of old! We were dismissed for 83 and poor old Albert finished on the losing side. Oh dear.

BELHUS CRICKET CLUB

Income and Expenditure Statement for Year Ended 30 September 1971

	<u>1971</u>	<u>1970</u>
<u>Income</u>		
Subscriptions - Playing Members	£ 79	£ 82
- President & Vice Presidents	26	22
Match Receipts - Match Fees	104	121
Other Income	4	3
Total Income	£213	£228
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Match Expenses - Ground Rents	£ 70	£ 71
- Equipment	85	48
- Gratuities	7	6
- Dover Trip Loss	3	-
Other Expenses - Postage, Stationery etc	25	24
- Subscriptions Payable	6	6
- Insurance	12	12
- Sundry	6	3
Total Expenditure	£214	£170
1971 Loss For Year (1970 Profit)	£ 1	£(58)

The Income and Expenditure Statement for 1971



First XI 1970

Back: Bill Brooks Denis Reed (Capt) Brian Allen Dennis Clayton Andrew Walker David Medlock
Front: Dick Bignell Vic Davies Don Pegler Steve Solari Keith Clayton

The Most Memorable Match

Belhus First XI
Tennyson

14
15 for 9

The first match of the season for the First XI in 1965 was on a cold 2nd May. Our opponents were Tennyson (a club we had played in our very first season) and the venue was Central Park, East Ham. Our Captain was the convivial Les Perry, a founder member who enjoyed after match festivities as much as the cricket itself. A handwritten note in the scorebook states, 'it was a rain-affected pitch and the start delayed until 3.15pm'. We no doubt lost the toss and were put in to bat.

Don Pegler opened the batting with Patrick Pooler-Williams on a pitch with 'uneven, but not dangerous', bounce, and they took the score to eight before Don was bowled. And the score remained at eight whilst the next five batsman came and went, taking the score to 8 for 6, then to 9 for 7 and then to 14 all out (the same score that Surrey CCC made against Essex CCC at Chelmsford in 1983). This performance surpassed any previous 'Belhus Collapse' and was a disappointing start to Les's first season as captain. The Tennyson bowlers E. Harris and J. Polybank claimed 7 for 4 and 3 for 10 respectively, and our innings lasted for a mere 12.3 overs.

Now even Don, the club's most prolific wicket-taker, couldn't have been optimistic about our chances - 14 is not exactly a lot of runs to defend. But our other opening bowler, Keith ('Plod') Davis, ripped through the early order batsmen and Tennyson were wobbling at 10 for 6 when tea was taken. After the resumption, we took three quick wickets and Tennyson were trembling at 14 for 9. A tie would surely have been a just result. But with one run to win, Tennyson scraped home thanks to a dropped chance by a Belhus fielder. According to a note in the scorebook, 'the fieldsman shall remain nameless'. Tennyson's innings of 15 for 9 lasted 15.4 overs. Don took 5 for 1 from 8 overs (7 maidens) and Keith 4 for 13. Amazing.

The statistics in this extraordinary match were:

29 runs scored

7 Belhus 'ducks'

19 wickets fell

7 Belhus batsmen clean-bowled

28.1 overs bowled

14 maidens

1 boundary scored

The team on that memorable day was (in batting order): Don Pegler, Patrick Pooler-Williams, Doug Bradley, Bill Brooks, Graham Cunliffe, Les Perry (Capt), Jim Reed, Keith Davis, Dave Francis and Andrew Walker. God bless them all.

All Belhus Batsmen Clean Bowled

The Sunday First XI visited Orpington in Kent on 20th September 1998. Orpington chose to bat first and declared at 207 for 7 - a target that was well within our reach. We raced to 104 for 1, but as pub opening time loomed, we crumbled to 190 all out. Cliff Cansdale was the last man out - clean bowled - to join our other batsmen who failed to play a straight bat. They equalled the other occasions when all Belhus batsmen were clean bowled - against Pinchin Johnson (1966) and Norwood (1982).

Record Ninth Wicket Partnership

According to the scorebook, 4th September 1999 was a sunny day and the pitch at the small Havering-atte-Bower ground was hard and cracked. The Second XI got off to an inauspicious start, and at 113 for 8 they were staring down the barrel of defeat.

But fortunes can change quickly in a game of cricket. Francis Baptiste (No.9) and Richard Dopson (No.10) carved a brilliant club record ninth wicket partnership of 162 (exceeding the record ninth wicket partnership in one-day internationals), enabling us to declare at 275 for 8. Francis scored 70 not out and 'Dobs' 84 not out (a club record for a number ten batsman). Skipper Brian Edwards deployed eight bowlers in his quest to force a win but, sadly, to no avail. Havering held on for a draw.

One Run Nail-Biter

The last match of the Lancashire tour in 1996 was against Formby - and a nail-biter. We batted first and reached 198 all out in our 40 overs, thanks to Paul Stone (77) and Richard Day (38), and a quick 25 from David Stone who smashed three consecutive sixes. At 158 for 5, Formby looked set to win but then wily Gary Plane took 3 for 23 to leave Formby perched on 197 for 9. With two runs required from the last ball, Richard Day run out their last batsman to secure victory by just one run.

The Good Old Days

At the AGM on 20th November 1972, adult annual subscriptions for 1973 were increased to £2.50. Match fees were fixed at 25p for adults and 15p for juniors.

200 x 3

On 6th May 2006 the First XI scored 274 v Hawks, the Second XI scored 208 v Harlow Town and the Third XI scored 295 v Fords. This is still the only occasion when all three of our Saturday XIs have exceeded 200 on the same day.

Largest Victory Margin by Runs

294	2nd XI v Downshall	341 for 6 47	22nd July 1989
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Highest Opposition Totals

406 for 6	Barking v 3rd XI	3rd June 2006
398 all out	Eton Manor v 2nd XI	9th April 2003
376 for 2	Offham v 1st XI	23rd May 2004
348 for 7	East Ham Manor v 1st XI	26th August 1990
348 for 9	Dover (Barbados) v Tour XI	21st October 1991
341 for 8	South Woodford v 1st XI	25th April 2009
335 for 6	Wickford v 2nd XI	3rd September 2006
322 for 8	Fords v 2nd XI	11th August 2007
316 for 7	Barking v 1st XI	2nd July 2006
314 for 3	Southend-on-Sea v 1st XI	8th May 2005
311 for 2	Clacton 1st XI	23rd May 1998
311 for 8	Goresbrook v 1st XI	5th July 2009
310 for 6	Eton Manor v 1st XI	27th July 1974
306 for 5	Bairds v 4th XI	31st May 2008
305 for 6	Noak Hill v 1st XI	20th August 2005
304 for 9	Fords v 1st XI	4th May 1996
302 all out	Noak Hill v 2nd XI	3rd June 2006
300 for 5	Norwich v Tour XI	7th July 2008



First XI 1976

Back: Bill Taylor Denis Reed Bill Line Glenn Martin Jim Donovan Ken Lewis
Front: Ron Smalley Dick Bignell Andrew Merton (Capt) Mark Naretti Cliff Cansdale

Record Tenth Wicket Partnership

The 22nd July 2007 was a memorable day for Alan Maidment and Danny Chandler and an historic day for the club. Our Second XI travelled to Dartfordians and batted first, but they found themselves in trouble at 85 for 9. Seven of our batsmen made ducks to equal the club record. Thankfully, Ian Wright made 51.

But then our number eleven batsman Alan joined number nine Danny to share a magnificent last wicket stand of 73 to take us to 158 all out, setting a new club record tenth wicket partnership (previously held by Bob Young and Jim Graham with their 62 for the Second XI against Tilbury in 1967). Alan and Danny both scored 31 with Danny the not out batsman. Dartfordians could manage only 131 for 8 from their 40 overs against our tight bowling to give us a well-deserved win. Unforgettable.

Remarkable Recoveries

At 48 for 6 in the match against Pegasus on 26th June 1988, it was pretty quiet in our First XI dressing room. But smiling faces returned when number eight batsman John Forrest (who made his senior team debut on 18th June 1978) joined Steve Huckstepp (who made his senior team debut on 29th August 1981) at the crease. They set about building a club record seventh wicket partnership of 145 to take our total to 193 for 6 off 40 overs. John's 82 not out contained only three singles. Our bowlers skittled out Pegasus for 50 in 35 overs (and 3 wickets for John) to win the match. Wonderful.

Against Pitsea on 12th July 1993, we restricted the opposition to 198 for 7. In reply, our First XI batters struggled and found themselves in trouble at 97 for 7. Then tail-ender Robert ('Jacko') Waters marched to the wicket to join Jim Banner, with a view to ensuring that we at least scrape a draw. But they went one better than that. They frustrated the Pitsea bowlers and built a magnificent partnership of 104 for the eighth wicket to see us home to one of our greatest victories when batting second. Jim finished on 56 and Jacko on 41. Superb.

316 v 308

When Barking rattled up 316 for 7 in the 45-over league match at North Stifford on 22nd July 2006, the First XI didn't much fancy their chances. Chris Didd had taken 3 for 64, but the rest of our bowlers had spells they would want to forget. But it's surprising how, with a few snicks here, and a few glances there, then a couple of extras thrown in, runs can be put on the board without risky biffing and bashing. So we batted sensibly. Aussie Danny Hyndman hit 125, Martin Guilbert and Colin Adams contributed 40 and 41 respectively. And we were very close in reaching 308 for 8 - still the club record score when batting second. A commendable effort.

On 16th June 1979 at Belhus Park in a Green King League match against Billericay, we weren't too concerned when the score stood at 14 for 1, but panic soon spread when a classic 'Belhus Collapse' (6 wickets fell for 6 runs) took us to 20 for 7. Coming in at number nine, David Webb joined Dick Bignell at the crease just as skipper John Rowell quipped, "This could turn out to be the best game in which you've ever played." Little did John know what was to unfold.

Senior statesman Dick and young gun 'Tiger' dug in deep for a gritty partnership of 38 to take our total to 61 all out - scored off 44 overs - not the most exciting batting display by a Belhus First XI. At tea, Mark Winter's 17th birthday was celebrated with a surprise birthday cake, while spaghetti bolognese was served instead of sandwiches. Our opponents must have wondered.....!

Having earlier been bowled for a duck, our opening quickie, Bob Clarke, clicked in to angry mode that rewarded him with 3 for 15 from 14 overs. Even at 42 for 5, victory was still very much in Billericay's lap - but cricket can be a 'funny old game' as they say. A couple more wickets fell and then a magnificent throw from the boundary by Jim Donovan gave us a run out and the ninth wicket. With their score standing at 60 for 9, Vic Davies (5 for 18) gobbled up the last batsman with an agile caught-and-bowled to dismiss a stunned Billericay in 36 overs. We won by one run. Terrific.

This great match produced 81 overs - 121 runs - 20 wickets



First XI v Billericay CC 16th June 1979

Back: Vic Davies Bert Freeman Bob Clarke Dave Hewitt Jim Donovan John Rowell (Capt)
Front: Dick Bignell Denis Reed Mark Winter Bill Taylor David Webb

Highest Innings Totals

341 for 6	2nd XI v Downshall	22nd July 1989
337 for 7	1st XI v Midland Bank	27th August 1988
332 for 5	1st XI v Pegasus & Corringham	27th July 2008
324 for 7	2nd XI v Norwood	24th June 1984
320 for 6	2nd XI v Sidcup	10th September 2005
320 all out	1st XI v Stork	10th August 1986
306 for 6	1st XI v May & Baker	4th August 2007
305 for 2	1st XI v Rainham	8th August 1998
305 for 7	1st XI v Noak Hill	23rd August 2003
308 for 8	1st XI v Barking	22nd July 2006
300 for 3	2nd XI v Little Thurrock	8th July 1989

Like Father Like Son(s)

It's not often that a father and two sons play together in the same match, but there have been a few instances over the years. One such occasion was against Henfield in Sussex in 1983. Dad Alan Cayless (a career high score of 117) and his sons Andrew (a stylish opener who made a number of centuries) and David (an able all-rounder), were all dismissed for ducks. And they were all clean-bowled. That's certainly a club record - and a story for the grandchildren.

Wides in the Extreme

The Third XI league match against Eastwood at Belhus Park on 15th August 1998 produced some astonishing statistics. In our innings total of 180, there were 46 extras - of which 31 were wides. We dismissed Eastwood for 144 - and 31 came from extras, of which 20 were wides. Extras comprising 23.6% of the total score is unusual, but for 51 wides to be bowled in a match really does take some beating.

Most Golden Ducks in a Belhus Innings

3	2nd XI v Buckhurst Hill (Mick Patrick, Gordon England, Darren McNally)	29th July 1962
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Most Catches in an Innings

10	1st XI v Chadwell Heath	5th September 1976
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Our Bowlers

Recreation grounds, and cricket squares in particular, had been neglected during World War Two, and it was to be many years before new equipment and dedicated groundsmen were able to produce 'proper' pitches on council grounds.

Apart from sports grounds that were owned by local companies - e.g. Thames Board Mills - cricket clubs in Thurrock played on council recreation grounds that were not of a standard that aided batsmen. On the contrary, they provided easy pickings for bowlers as many of the pitches on which we played in the early days were positively dangerous - and batsmens' helmets were a quarter of a century away.

In 1955, playing for the legacy club Belhus Park CC, Patrick Pooler-Williams took 122 wickets at an average of 10.60, and in 1957 he took 99 wickets. He was a medium-pace seamer who moved the ball both ways, often placing just two fielders on the leg-side - testament to his accuracy. And the Major maintained his guile in the first season of Belhus CC, taking 55 wickets for the First XI at 8.80 apiece.

The club's reputation for its bowling prowess was sparked in our very first year. In 1960, Don Pegler, a teacher at Culverhouse School, began a remarkable career with the club. Strolling in off around ten paces, with a light but controlled grip, his languid, windmill-like action resulted in delivery off the 'wrong' foot.

As in-swing was his stock technique (sometimes demanding three short-legs) he didn't rely upon uneven wickets to assist his performance. 1960 saw Don capture 115 wickets at 7.30, and in 1961 he claimed 102 wickets at 8.87. Exceptional.

'...a light, but controlled grip, his smooth, windmill-like action...'



Don Pegler (1966)

100 wickets in a season on 6 occasions



Bob Clarke (1979)

Hat trick and very quick - occasionally a little wayward



Bill Taylor (1975)

9 for 15
A knack of breaking partnerships

During his career with the club, Don took 100 wickets in a season on six occasions and twice finished with 99. His best return of 8 for 18 against Stork in 1960 was achieved, at the time, on by far the best batting pitch in the district.

Unfortunately, one of our quickest bowlers, Bob Prickett, played for only two seasons, taking 48 scalps in 1960 and 36 in 1961 with staggering averages of 5.60 and 5.94 respectively. In addition to speed, accuracy was his key. 80% of his victims in 1960 were clean-bowled or lbw: Any bowler will tell you how good that is. But the highlight of the 1960s was Albert Braybrook's 10 for 18 in September 1961.

'80% of his victims in 1960 were clean-bowled or lbw'

Bert Freeman (he with the open shirt and curling run-up who took 9 for 23 against Marshalls in 1969 when, at one point, the opposition were 0 for 7) and Graham Cunliffe were the only other true, fast men of the 1960s. Graham topped 50 wickets in each of the seasons 1962, 1963 and 1964, before a shoulder injury forced an early retirement with the ball and a career move that took him off to Africa in 1969.

For the Second XI in the 1960s, Bob Mead twice exceeded 50 wickets in a season, and Dave Francis took 63 scalps in 1966. Bob Garner topped the bowling averages in 1976, taking 139 wickets (131 for the Second XI and 8 for the First XI) - still the record number of wickets in a season. Another regular wicket-taker was John ('Mr Lew') Lewis Snr, the thinking man's bowler, who topped the Second XI averages in 1971 and took 7 for 10 from just 14 deliveries against Tilbury in 1982.

The policy of attracting youngsters to the club in the 1960s began to pay dividends with the emergence of the likes of bowlers Keith Davis (a hat trick in 1969) and all-rounders Vic ('Spider') Davies and John ('Orgy') Rowell, as well as paceman Andrew Walker who topped the First XI averages in 1972 with 66 wickets at 13.68.

We had a number of slow bowlers in the first twenty five years, but we were never really blessed with a true spinner. Terry Rampling was perhaps the closest we came. He was remarkably consistent and accurate with his off-spin, and in 1969 returned one of the club's best performances by a spin bowler (7 for 15 off 15 overs) to defeat Stanford-le-Hope after our First XI had been bowled out for 57.

'...had the knack of breaking partnerships...'

Bill Taylor had the knack of breaking partnerships and taking wickets 'at the right time'. In 1972, he took 9 for 15 for the Second XI against Great Burstead.

Other bowlers of note during the 1970s/early 1980s included Richard ('Henry') Harvey (who took 101 wickets in 1981 as well as a hat trick against Little Thurrock), Tom Waters, John Lewis Jnr ('Son o' Lew') and Brian Adams. The consistently accurate John Forrest, who could produce a well-disguised 'slower ball', took 101 wickets in 1983 - the last occasion a Belhus bowler took 100 wickets in a season.

Another impressive performer during this period was Bob ('Johnny') Clarke who, at times, could bowl very quick indeed although, on occasions, he could be a little wayward. His liking for bodyline bowling at varying heights frightened many batsman in the days before the use of protective helmets. 'Johnny' took a hat trick in 1978.

'...very quick indeed although, on occasions a little wayward...'

The late 1970s/early 1980s witnessed the arrival of a new clutch of young bowlers who were to make their mark over the next 20 years. Robert Waters (who made his senior team debut for the Second XI on 26th July 1975) showed his class when he took 9 for 31 in 1977 against Rettendon, and Jim Robertson took the first of his two hat tricks in 1983. David ('Biff') Cayless was beginning to learn his trade that would see him develop into a fine bowler who took 76 wickets in 1986 at 12.03 apiece.

As we moved into the 1990s, our batting prowess began to exceed that of our bowling apart from, primarily, Jim Robertson (who returned 9 overs, 4 maidens, 7 wickets for 9 runs against Fairlop Oak in 1988) and Robert Waters. Unfortunately for bowlers, more batsmen were starting to wear protective helmets, and the increase in limited overs matches brought a restriction on the number of overs per bowler.

These two factors sparked the beginning of the shift in the balance of power from bowler to batsman. And when we moved to North Stifford Village Green, the excellent batting strip became another hurdle for our bowlers to overcome. A memorable moment occurred in 1995 when Vic Davies, for the First XI against Young Internationals, dismissed the Pakistan Test players, Moin Khan and Basit Ali. 'Spider' immediately announced his retirement - a fitting time to hang up his boots.

'...dismissed two Pakistan Test players...'

Regular five-wicket hauls were becoming feats of the past. The scorebooks show that just seven eight-wicket performances were taken during our second 25 years compared to around forty in our first 25 years - evidence of the difficult task that bowlers began to face, and continue to face to the present day. The 2009 season saw just six individual achievements of 6 and 7 wickets across all of our teams.

Mat Lewis Snr could bowl quite fast when he was in the mood, and Scott Bayford, when injury-free, could also generate spells of genuine pace. Steve Liddiard is mentioned by many as capable of regularly bowling a nagging line and length, but his statistics don't serve him credit. His consistent accuracy tended to help bowlers at 'the other end' to pick up wickets. Since the days of the legendary Don Pegler, Keith Hall was regarded as our best swing bowler who effectively employed 'reverse' swing. His 7 for 12 against Snaresbrook in 2001 is particularly well remembered.

We have had plenty of slow bowlers over the years, but few genuine spinners. Vic Davies and Terry Rampling in the 1960s/1970s; Dean ('Stingers') Bettles in the 1980s/1990s; and Dave Aldridge in more recent times can all lay claim to such a badge. But it is Cliff Cansdale (a hat trick against Pitsea in 1993 and a career best 9 for 34 v Snaresbrook in 1991) who holds the club record for most wickets by a true spinner. Michael Cansdale is also a genuine spinner who, along with leg spinner Owen Jefferies (the youngest bowler in the club's history to take 50 wickets in a season), were the club's top wicket-takers in 2009.

Most Runs Conceded by a Belhus Bowler in an Innings

105	Ryan Lucas 1st XI v Offham	23rd May 2007
102	Eddie Ryan 3rd XI v Basildon	6th July 1985
100	Tony Udell 3rd XI v Grays & Chadwell	19th July 2003



Jim Robertson (2009)
Hat tricks in 1983 and 1997



Robert Waters (1998)
9 for 31 in 1977



John Forrest (2009)
101 wickets in 1983