

A History of the Horsham County Cricket Festival, 1908 – 2007(by David Boorman, edited by Roger Packham with an introduction by Christopher Martin-Jenkins, published by Roger Heavens, 2 Lowfields, Little Eversden, Cambridgeshire CB23 1HJ, £20 + £3 postage, pp288, hardback, ISBN 978-1-900592-50-5)

I have to confess that I approached this book with a little trepidation. Club and festival histories can all too easily slip into a season-by-season formula of matches and scores, and quickly become tedious for the reader. I need not have worried. Only about half the book is devoted to accounts of the festivals and their matches, and the style is lively enough to recapture the games. The author has consulted not only *Wisden* but also the local and national press, weaving the information together skilfully. I particularly enjoyed the account of the end of the 1910 match against Surrey, which Sussex won by one wicket when Vincett struck a ball out of the ground in the last over.

Besides the chronological survey, there is some analysis of early cricket in Horsham, as part of the background to the move to play county cricket in the town, a move that owed much to a former captain of the local club, Arthur Oddie. There are also chapters covering the appeal of the ground itself, the pitch, the catering, festival programmes and theatrical and other extra-curricular attractions, and portraits of some of the key figures in the Festival.

The out grounds are one of the greatest appeals of county cricket, and Horsham is acknowledged to be one the loveliest on the circuit. Many of these grounds have now been lost to the county game, and while it is to be hoped that Horsham will not go the same way, its contribution to county cricket is admirably recorded here.

Richard Lawrence – verdict: 7