

Cyril Wilkinson CBE

Cyril Wilkinson's life was one of considerable achievement. The extent of his contribution as a Hampstead Hockey Club member to the world of hockey is unlikely to be surpassed. It culminated in the award of a CBE for service to hockey in 1954.

Frequently referred to as CTA, he joined the Club in 1911. He was one of four Hampstead players to win an Olympic gold medal for hockey at the 1920 games. He was a county cricketer and then an international hockey umpire and member of the International Hockey Board from 1938-1955. He was President of the Southern Counties Hockey Umpires Association from 1952 until 1960. He also held a high ranking post in the High Court from 1936 until 1959.

Cyril Theodore Anstruther Wilkinson was born at Elvet Hill, Durham on 4 October 1884.

His father, Anthony John Anstruther Wilkinson had also been born in Durham in 1835 and he, too, was a cricketer. He played for Middlesex for a decade from 1864 and then for Yorkshire from 1865 until 1868. He scored 1,351 runs in total, over 103 innings and his best first class bowling performance was 6-52, with a bowling average of 22.62.

Cyril was educated at Blundell's School at Tiverton in Devon and represented the school certainly at cricket in the 1st XI in 1902 and 1903. No records are readily available concerning his hockey prowess at that school. His first class cricketing debut was when he represented Gentlemen of England in 1908, opposing Surrey, whom he later joined as a player in 1909.

His captain in that game was W G Grace with whom he batted in the second innings, when they followed on. Wilkinson, coming in at number 4, when Grace opened the innings, scored 39 in a total of 130, handing a win to Surrey by an innings and 41 runs. He had once opened the batting with W G Grace on his own admission but this is not believed to have been classified as a first class match.

His first game for Surrey was in the 2nd XI against Wiltshire at the Oval in June that year. He went on to play for the second team between 1910 and 1913.

His hockey playing at club level started with Norwood. When they disbanded, he joined Hampstead in 1911.

He was elected to the Committee of Hampstead Hockey Club at least in September 1914 when the season's fixtures were cancelled owing to the state of war and "the absence of nearly all the members of the club serving their country either in Lord Kitchener's Army or in the Territorials or in some other equally useful capacity" and at the time of the reconciliation of the Club's gift, valued at £6-4-5, to Gerald Logan, on his departure to the Far East, in respect of which there had been a shortfall of £1-4-3.

He represented the South and Surrey. He won four caps for England and went on to represent Great Britain in the Antwerp Olympics, along with Stanley Shoveller, Jack Bennett and Sholto Marcon (all Hampstead Hockey Club members, eventually in the case of the latter) each winning a gold medal.

This is what *Hockey World* had to say in its *Mainly Personal* column in the edition of 26 November 1926

C. T. A. Wilkinson, the captain of the Hampstead H.C., and who has played for England against Wales, has been a well-known figure in both hockey and cricket for many years.

At one time he captained Surrey and is a member of Beckenham Cricket Club for which club he has registered some high innings in his time. His earlier hockey days were spent with the old Norwood HC. and when that club became defunct, he joined the Hampstead HC and always plays at left half.

He has been one of the masters of stickwork, "scooping", and rolling in, etc., and the latter is a real object lesson to youthful players



Back row: 5th from left Cyril Wilkinson,

And he was mentioned in another report: this time not a game to stay long in the Hampstead annals, when Oxford University defeated Hampstead by 10-1

The Oxonian side just now are going great guns with the forwards, a fine, fast, bit of attacking machinery. Hampstead lost at Oxford on Saturday by 10 – 1. Fore and aft, the Dark Blues gave an amazing display of hockey; their place and combination in attack revealed a fine understanding and they quite overplayed the strong Hampstead defence.

C. Kirkpatrick played well at outside right, scoring four goals; he has never been more effective, while other goals were hit by N. Kirkpatrick (2), Maturin (2), and Chilman (2). Hewetson, introduced at right-half for Oxford, played quite well.

Bennett and Wilkinson worked hard for Hampstead, but they were rather overwhelmed with work; Norton scored the goal for Hampstead. The Dark Blues will be at Wimbledon Park to-morrow, Saturday, but Wimbledon, on current form, will not be able to hold them



*1920-21 Hampstead 1st XI v Cambridge University
[Cyril Wilkinson fifth from the left,
with Stanley Shoveller to his left and, to the left of him, Jack Bennett]*

In 1927 it was discovered that the hockey Club Rules that were believed to have been drafted in September 1895, were nowhere to be found. A Sub-Committee consisted of Messrs. Wilkinson, Wyatt and Trotman (shortly afterwards the 1st XI Captain for a season) was appointed to draft new rules. They were accepted at the Annual General Meeting of 1928. These rules, with necessary amendments from time to time, served the club until 1966, when they were substantially re-written to suit modern conditions and changes in practice over the years.

As a cricketer, Cyril Wilkinson captained Surrey when they won the County Championship in 1914 and again in the first two seasons after the First World War, in which he signed up for military service. He also had to miss a number of games owing to business commitments.

In 1914, in which he was awarded his county cap, *Wisden* said of him that “he proved himself a real leader, keeping the side under firm control and managing the bowling with sound judgement”. It has to be remembered that Surrey’s team included Jack Hobbs as well as Andy Sandham and Percy Fender, both soon to be capped by England against Australia, and must have required some skill and fortitude.

Cyril Wilkinson's highest first class score was 135, scored in two hours only, with 19 fours and a six against Middlesex in 1914 at the Oval. Surrey scored 544 in the first innings. Middlesex replied with 267 and followed on, with J W Hearne hitting 191 not out in a total of 393-5, to avoid a loss.

In 1920, he passed 1,500 runs in first class cricket, when he scored 106, coming in at number 8, against Hampshire, also at the Oval. He followed this up with 56 not out in the second innings, to secure a win for Surrey by two wickets.

Overall, his first class record was 1,773 runs scored in 78 innings at an average of 25.32. He took 23 wickets with slow left-arm orthodox bowling at an average of 31.47.

In 1919 Wilkinson scored a rapid 100 against the Australian Forces in a famous stand with J N Crawford.

He represented MCC at Lord's in 1921 against Buckinghamshire. Having dismissed the visitors for 66, CTA opened the batting with 127 in a total of 403. He then took 5-126 in the County's second innings of 434. He went on to open the Club's second innings with an undefeated 59 out of 100-1 in 17 overs, to win by 9 wickets.

His final (recorded) game (not ranked as first class) was against the West Indies in 1928, when he represented the Civil Service in a two day game, which was drawn, Wilkinson scoring 42 out of 197, to which the tourists replied with 330.

He later became a member of Refreshers Cricket Club that was founded in 1935 but disbanded du the War, to be revived in 1945 under Lord Griffiths, a future President of the MCC. This was a team predominantly of barristers. Cyril Wilkinson is recorded primarily as a bowler with the club but played only occasionally.

Cyril did not stop there. He retired to Devon and was known as great club cricketer. Every August turned out for Sidmouth Cricket Club. In 1953, at the age of 69, he scored 50 and took all ten wickets in a match against The Nondescripts.

In his professional life he was a Registrar of the Probate Divorce and Admiralty Division (as it then was) of the High Court from 1936 until 1959. During this time, he was joint editor of the Seventh Edition of William Rayden's *Practice and law in the Divorce Division of the High Court of Justice and on appeal therefrom*, published in 1958 by Butterworth. The volume ran to 1,311 page, the standard text of the procedural workings of what became the Family Division of the High Court.

He was also a consulting editor of *Tristan & Coote's Probate Practice*, a volume that had started life as *Coote's Common Form Probate* and *Tristan's Contentious Probate*.

He also found time to sit on the Advisory County Cricket Committee between 1929 and 1933.

As well as sitting on the International Hockey Executive Board for 27 years, he was a Vice President of the Hockey Association. He was the President of the Southern Counties Hockey Umpires Association from 1952 until 1960.

This all led to his award of a CBE for services to hockey in 1954. He died, aged 86, in Honiton.