

# ROTTINGDEAN CRICKET CLUB

Founded in 1758 Rottingdean Cricket Club is one of the oldest in the country. Sussex, along with Kent and Surrey, were among the counties at the forefront of the evolution and development of cricket from a simple rural pastime to the game we see today. Earliest mention of cricket in Rottingdean appeared on a poster in Lewes: *"This to acquaint the Public that on Wednesday June 28th 1758 will be played at Rottingdean near Lewes a great CRICKET match for a guinea a man: Newick, Chailey, Lindfield and Hamsey against Lewes, Brighthelmstone (old name for Brighton) and Rottingdean."* The match took place on Balsdean Flats – along the valley just north of the village. It is very likely that the Club had been in existence some time before then.

Around 1803 the Club moved to Beacon Hill, near the windmill above the village. Perhaps not



the ideal place to site a cricket pitch, it did however witness a batsman making 67 runs from a single hit (a record?). With no boundaries in those days the ball was struck down the hill towards the village. Once retrieved at Hog Plat it was returned in relays to

the wicket keeper who threw the ball with force, missing the stumps, only to see it roll down the other side of the hill towards the Brighton Road; meantime the batsman continued to run!

For more than a hundred years, until the outbreak of the War in 1914, cricket was played on that ancient hill before transferring to the Club's present site off the Falmer Road.

Cricketers of Rottingdean will have seen many changes to the game over the years. In the early 1700's wickets were two feet wide and a foot high. The third stump was introduced around the 1750's and underarm bowling (without pitching) was the norm. The LBW law was devised in 1744; the first six-seamed ball made in 1775 by Duke, a family firm in Penshurst, and the bat's length limited to 38 inches in 1835.

In modern times Rottingdean Cricket Club has continued to flourish. The Club celebrated its bicentenary in 1958 with matches against Sussex and the MCC, and celebrated their 250th anniversary in 2008. In 2011 Rottingdean 1st XI were runners-up of the National Village Cup Final at Lord's. Today the Club fields four Saturday XI's, two Sunday XI's, a Mid-Week side plus mixed 6 to U15's. Cricket is very much alive and well in Rottingdean!



## ROTTINGDEAN HERITAGE

Conserving & Enhancing the Village

