

## Chapter 8 Sport



The football team of 1950. C. Ashton, C. Wade, N. Birch, H. Moase, L. Garder, M. Jenkins, W. Hart, J. Guy, L. Philp, G. Martin, L. Gorrell

As with many villages, sport has played a vital part in rural life over the last century, although it was restricted in the early years by work and travel facilities.

Bradworthy, *'The Horniwinks'*, has gained a reputation for tenacity and determination which is retained whatever sport is involved.

As far back as the early 1800's James Thorn, a visiting preacher, reported that his religious meeting was disrupted by a group of *'hurlers'*. Hurling, an old rugby type sport with Cornish origins was apparently played in a field in the north of the village, opposite Tuckers Park.



Cricket team outing in 1922 outside the Bradworthy Inn. Rev. A.E. Dobson (standing), John Grant (landlord of the Bradworthy Inn), the Walter family (of Churston Manor), Douglas and Norman Betts, Rev. C.D. Jenkins, Miss Mullins (housekeeper at Churston Manor), Arthur Oke (driver).

A remarkable record in running was revealed at Kilkhampton, when Mr. George Cleave of Higher Alfordisworthy, Bradworthy, was defeated in the veterans' race by Mr. J.P. Cleverdon of Bideford. Mr. Cleave, who is 64, had won this race for 17 years in succession. (August 1946)

With the opening of the Men's Memorial Institute in 1923 facilities were provided for snooker or billiards, skittles, darts and, later, table tennis. Such was the interest that Joe Davis, 15 times World Snooker Champion, visited the Institute in the

1930's to demonstrate his skills. In more recent times Terry Griffiths from Wales, who was World Snooker Champion in 1979, played a group of local players in the Memorial Hall.

With the demise of the Men's Memorial Institute the snooker table was stored before being reassembled in the old stables adjoining the Bradworthy Inn. For many years three teams competed with some success in the Bude and District League, winning both the league and Fred Mortimer Cup. Pool has however become more popular in the 1990's, and now teams compete from both the Social Club and Bradworthy Inn.

At one time *'Wade's Room'* also operated as a snooker room and refuge for veteran

players. Youngsters were occasionally invited to 'make up a four' but were advised at all times to play safe!

Robert Morley, the actor-gourmet, on a visit to the area remarked that he will always remember two old men 'determined to pot the pink on the most dilapidated table he had ever seen'.

Skittles was keenly played and inter-village competitions were a regular feature before the last war; the numerous trophies won are now on display in the Social Club. After a lapse of many years these are now being played for again. As many as five teams regularly compete in both the

Holsworthy and Bude leagues, and regular skittles tournaments are held throughout the year.

Bradworthy was again represented in the Lands End Trial, motorcycles being ridden by the brothers Stanley R. and Wilfred E. Jennings. (April 1954)



Fred Dymond took part in the Lands End Trial in the 1930's.



The football team of the 1920's. Back row: Mr. J. Clark, J. Bond, L. Everson, F. Everson, C. Piper. Middle row: S. Cory, ? Grant, P. Bond. Front row: F. Slee, M. Westaway, L. Symons, J. Cory, A. Oke.

Darts, a traditional pub sport, still remains a serious social pastime for both men's and women's teams.

Evidence exists from an early Church magazine that cricket was played at the end of the last century and was revived between the Wars, but it has never re-established itself, probably due to a lack of suitable facilities. A group of enthusiasts have recently played for a number of years at Crooklets, Bude in a Summer Evening league.

Paul Jennings ran in the Torbay marathon, finishing 214th out of 458. He raised £322 in sponsorship for the North Devon District Hospital. (September 1987)

A tennis club was formed in 1963 which flourished briefly. The club used the school playground, until the court was requisitioned for the building of new classrooms.

Berridon Country Club at one time in the 1970's held promise of sporting facilities, with swimming pool, golf driving range, tennis and squash courts. The whole

complex fell into disrepair when the owning company was liquidated.

#### Speedway Rider's Trophies

Plans for an 18-hole golf course were approved but remain on the drawing board.

Fishing is available at both Tamar Lakes, at numerous

venues where

farmers have stocked their own lakes with carp, tench and roach, as well as on the two famous Devon rivers that border the parish - the Torridge and the Tamar.

Mr. Arthur Oke, jun., is to be congratulated on his brilliant achievements as a motorcyclist and speedway rider in the Middle East. During his two years in Egypt, with GHQ, Royal Corps of Signals, Arthur became a celebrated figure on the sand tracks of Cairo and Alexandria carrying off many coveted prizes. Now demobbed, he has returned to Bradworthy with the tangible evidence of his many successes - silver cups and other trophies to the number of twenty. (May 1947)

Sailing takes place on the Upper Tamar Lake, where a thriving sailing club has become a veritable weekend attraction.

Before the 1939-45 War, Jack Wickett and Fred Dymond took part in the *Lands End Trial*.

In 1970 Keith Prance competed in his first Lands End Trial in a vehicle that he had built himself - and promptly won in his class!



The football team of 1964. Back row: N. Trewin, A. Johns, D. Headon, M. Sparry, B. Stevens, G. Yelland, J. Colliver. Front row: F. Johnson, R. Neal, A. Cann, R. Clarke, W. Colwill, K. Shadrick.

### Amateur Football Club

The early days of the *Horniwinks* still remain a mystery, although it has been established that local derbies against Kilkhampton and other villages were fiercely contested in the later days of the 19<sup>th</sup>

Century. Hob nail boots and little respect for the rules, however, meant that these games often developed into a brawl and would make today's games pale by comparison.

Over 200 whist players attended the annual poultry whist drive organised in support of their funds by the local Association Football Club. (January 1967)

### Barnstaple Police 0 Bradworthy Res. 5

No official referee arrived for this re-arranged N.D. Div. III match, but to get out of a difficult situation the Police agreed that the only person available, the Bradworthy substitute, should take the whistle. By the interval Bradworthy were leading by five goals to nil. The Police then suggested that as there was no official referee the game could only be regarded as a friendly one. Bradworthy objected and the Police would not take the field for the second half. (October 1972)

Church magazines published around 1900 referred to the need to establish both football and cricket teams for the young people of the village, but it wasn't until 5<sup>th</sup> January 1920 that the club was officially formed.

The School log of the day records 'poor attendance this afternoon - several children attending the first match of the fully fledged football team (Bradworthy). An association formed during the Christmas holiday'.

The moor became the home of the club until the 1950's. Exposed to the westerlies and at times rutted by farmers wagons it nevertheless gained a reputation



The football team of 1920. Bernard Bryan, Fred Dymond, Fred Bond, Ned Turner, Jack Wickett, Gerald Bond, Charles Johns, William Harris, George Gorrell, William Trewin, Val Jennings

as one of the best playing surfaces in the County with its free draining, springy turf.

In the 1920's the team was built around the powerfully built centre half John Grant, the local

Bradworthy AFC were judged by the North Devon Area Committee to be the most sporting side in North Devon and were awarded the Holsworthy Cup presented in 1949 by Mr. Tom Kivell of Holsworthy for the team generally considered to have set the finest example of sportsmanship in the conduct of its games during the season. (July 1954)

publican, a colossus of a man whose league experience with Grimsby Town gained him the title 'Pick of the League'.

Gerald Bond, the oldest survivor of those early days recalls how players with rubber strips nailed to hob nailed boots used to jog to local games behind the lorry and jingle of the cafe owner.

It would appear that Bradworthy played in the Kingsley League and at times in the Bude and District League, joining with Sutcombe in the 1930's when the Ham and Quance families provided six of the team.

Prior to the Second World War young players like *Marty Jenkins* and *Whip Moase* began to show promise and although the war years robbed many

### Farcical 18-0 win for Landkey

Eleven cup matches were lined up on last weekends North Devon soccer programme, and heading the list was the clash between last seasons top junior sides, Landkey and Bradworthy, in the Braunton Cup.

Yet it all ended in a farcical score line of 18-0 in Landkey's favour.

Bradworthy had hoped to send their first-choice team, but were unable to obtain their release from a Kingsley League engagement in Holsworthy. So the Kingsley League champions had to send a scratch side to face the North Devon Junior League title holders.

Ironically, it is questionable whether Bradworthy needed to send their first team to Holsworthy. The Champs won that encounter 11-0. (October 1965)

players of their youth they were to form the nucleus of the side which in 1951 saw the club win Division II North of the Kingsley League and then beat Kilkhampton to secure the first club trophy.

The club had been reformed in June 1946 with *Bill Hart* as club captain, who had played with Watford during the war years, and were to travel to away games in some style by courtesy of *John Bromell's Rolls Royce* which he had rescued from an orchard and converted into a shooting brake.

A most successful whist drive and dance, organised by the Bradworthy & District United Association Football Club, in aid of an injured player, took place in the Assembly Hall on Thursday week. Nearly a hundred players occupied whist tables. The large attendance at the dance included members and supporters of various clubs in the Kingsley League. Music was by Jack Bromell's radiogram. (March 1947)



Kevin Nancekivell

During the war all League soccer had been suspended but as part of the 'Save a Soldier Week' the Home Guard played the Forces Team and, remarkably, at the end of the war the village raised



The bowling green was opened in 1986. M. Furse, W. Taylor, M. Harris, D. Ackland, M. Martin, M. Taylor, ?, M. Taylor, R. Taylor, M. Ley, H. Ley, R. Harris, C. Wade, M. Rowe, E. Colwill, P. Jennings, Q. Vanstone, R. Ackland, R. Clark, G. Brown, T. Cann, M. Adams, B. Slee, W. Adams, M. Slee, D. Harris, R. Wade, T. Petherick, R. Colwill, A. Hockridge, F. Petherick, J. Cann

a team to play the German Prisoners of War - a team which contained some ex-professionals and inflicted a heavier defeat than Hitler was able to manage, winning 10-1.

In 1955 the football club changed their strip from red to white.

The club really came of age in the 1960's first winning the Subsidiary Cup and in 1964, under the captaincy of *Alan Cann*, won the Kingsley League and the Pickard Cup, a feat repeated the following year also adding the Launceston and Holman Cups. These years also saw the emergence of the *Clarke* family whose influence was to remain unbroken until the present day.

Three successive visits to Holman park meant a regular Easter Monday trip for supporters rewarded with success at the second attempt beating Landkey 2-1. The team left the coach at Bideford and triumphantly carried the trophy across the bridge to fulfil a pre-match vow that they would carry the cup across the Torridge if they won it.

In the 1966-67 season the first team entered the Premier Division of the North Devon League.

They were relegated two seasons later but in 1970-71 won their way back and in 1975-76 took the step of appointing *Keith Hayler* as their first player-manager.

In 1976-77 the club achieved the ultimate in North Devon Soccer circles with the Cup and League double. Only *Keith Shadrick* and *Alan Cann* were survivors of the 1964 side but the present manager *Micky Clarke* was beginning to exert his influence playing alongside the dominant *Derek May* and with *John Jenkins* in goal conceding only 20 goals and in 1978 again won the Premier League.



The Bowling Club's clubhouse was opened in 1989.

Between 1978 and the present era the only success was the Brayford Cup in 1987. But with the appointment of long serving player *Micky Clarke* as manager and with another generation of players developing, Bradworthy have again become the dominant force in North Devon soccer, winning a record equalling three successive league titles in 1991-92, 1992-93 and 1993-94. Now with three teams and its own changing rooms and club facilities the club has truly come of age.



Bradworthy's Pam Ham, Devon President in 1996.

Kevin Nancekivell, playing for Tiverton Town, won the F.A. Vase at Wembley in 1998. Later he played for Plymouth Argyle.

### Bowling Club

For a number of years there was a feeling that a bowling club would be an asset to the parish, something that all ages of ladies and gentlemen could use. A public initial meeting was held in 1980 to discuss the issue. In 1984 it became possible to obtain a site in Langdon Road. Various methods of fund raising took place, including sponsoring a square yard of the green, dances, and safari suppers. Funds were also augmented by a number of free loans. Mr. Tom Cann was elected as the first chairman in December 1982.

The green was laid in 1985. It opened for playing on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1985 by Mr. C. Metherell, who was president of the Devon Bowling Association. A luncheon was held in the Memorial Hall. For the next couple of years a caravan served as the club house. In 1989 members erected a pavilion in memory of the late Mr. Claude Wade, one of the founder members who had played a great part in the formation of the club.

The club has some 130 members and boasts one of the finest greens in the county. It has made rapid

progress with both men and women representatives at county level. In 1993 the club hosted the Devon County Finals, and in 1995 is the venue for the Devon and Cornwall inter-county Cup competitions. In 1994 Pam Ham was elected as the Ladies' County Junior Vice-President and was President in 1996.

### Short Mat Bowling

The Short Mat Bowling Club was formed in 1992, meeting twice a week and competing in the local league. It is regarded as one of the finest short-mat bowling facilities in Devon and is regularly used for County competitions.

### Athletics

Several villagers have also taken part in the London marathon with some success in the early 1990's.

### Boxing

At various periods considerable interest was shown in boxing.

William John Stedwill used to train local enthusiasts in

A programme of boxing was staged in the Assembly Rooms by Hartland Boxing Club (May 1954)

an outbuilding at the back of Lyles, in North Road. In the 1920's and 30's there were a few local amateurs around, boxing in the shed in the school playground. Among these were the late Stanley Bond, Frank Ryan and occasionally the Vicar's son, Frank Dobson.



Local lads built this dragster in 1965. Dave Johnson, Malcolm Wright, Keith Prance, Alan Balsdon, Colin Dayman, Ray Vanstone (in car), Mr. H. Wright

## Badminton

Bradworthy Badminton Club was formed in the early 1970's. Dot Clarke, Pete Millman, Margaret Millman, Doug McNeil, Diana Philp, Peter Philp,



Winning horse Golden Surprise with owner Stan Bond in the 1950's.

Pam Ham, Sandra Wonnacott, Nigel Balsdon and Mary Arnott have been leaders at various times. In 1976 a Junior Club was formed. In 1981 Mike Birch and John Sampson won the Bude Area Men's Handicap Tournament. In 1984 Mike Birch and Denise Trewin won the North Devon and West Cornwall League Mixed Doubles Tournament.

The Club pulled out of the league in 1987 and currently meets on Thursday evenings purely for enjoyment.



Nigel Bond

## Horses

There has always been an interest in horses and racing. A locally famous pony in the 1920's and 1930's was *Nipper*, owned by the late *Mr. W.J. Cory*. It won hundreds of prizes, particularly in show jumping and polo-bending, including a second prize award in national competitions at the Royal Agricultural Hall, London, when it was ridden by the late *Mr. Bert Facey*. *Mr. Stanley Bond* was well known in the horse world, as owner of the pedigree stallion, *Golden Surprise*.

## Motorcycling

A motorcycle club was started in 1980's. Mr. R. Pomeroy kindly let them use one of his



Nick Wellington

small fields on the left of the Bradworthy to Atworthy road, where an undulating cross country track was made.

## Shooting

Nick Wellington and Nigel Bond both represented county and country, Nick in 1996 and 1997, Nigel in 1997 and 1998.