

## Cricket at Strathallan, 1913-39

When Strathallan School was founded in 1913 at Bridge of Allan by Mr. Harry Riley, conditions were spartan, numbers were small and the initial school sport was association football. Within a year, however, Strathallan had a cricket side playing its games on the Strathallan Games Field where the School would eventually also play its rugby. Fielding in the outfield was said to have been an experience - the field was used to graze cows in the summer, leading to extensive laundry bills !

In the first years of its existence the side was a mixture of staff and pupils. Harry Riley and his assistant Willie Wilson thought nothing of donning their whites and competing with such sides as Strathallan had fixtures with. Willie Wilson also played on and off for the Stirling County side, outside of term.

For two years, 1915 & 1916, the Strathallan side was unbeaten relying, inevitably, on one or two stars for their performances to sustain this record. Jimmie Gowans was renowned as a slow bowler, but it was the contributions of the Mollison brothers, Charles [fast-medium] and George [wicket-keeper] that made the real difference. Charlie Mollison was reputed to have broken three stumps in one season, all with his wicket-keeper brother George standing up to the stumps ! Indeed, Charlie Mollison was something of an all-rounder in sports: over six feet tall, fourteen stone - once he left Strathallan Charlie played for the army at rugby and cricket, also winning his regimental boxing championship.

Eventually the unbeaten run came to an end with a defeat at the hands of a very good Morrison's Academy side led by McMillan and including the two Marr brothers. The scores that day - Morrison's 200 for 1 wicket, Strathallan 100.

By 1919, the Cricket club had evolved into a joint operation run by a committee of staff and pupils. Practices were held every summer evening with a Games master, trial games took place on Wednesdays and Fridays. Saturdays were reserved for 1st and 2nd XI games. In those days of no team photographs, colours blazers etc., 1st XI caps were relatively easy to win, so long as the pupil had played at least two consecutive games for the 1st XI.

Despite the dearth of scorebooks and records from the early years at Bridge of Allan, some scorecards have come to light for the 1914-1916 seasons in the local newspaper, *The Reporter*. Seemingly not all the games played were entered in the newspaper, although it may have been the case that the fixture list in these early days was indeed as limited as the newspapers suggest. What is perhaps unsurprising is that, although Strathallan played a variety of local teams, there seems not to have been a fixture with local rivals Stanley House. With Harry Riley having led a defection from that school in 1913, relations were always tense until Strathallan moved to Forgandenny in 1920.

*The Reporter: Stirling and Bridge of Allan, Saturday 9th May 1914*

**STRATHALLAN SCHOOL -v- ALLOA ACADEMY**

This match was played at Bridge of Allan on Saturday, when Strathallan won easily by 45 runs. Harley and Mollison batted well for Strathallan while Headridge was the only Alloa batsman to exhibit any confidence with the deliveries of the home trundlers. Scores: -

**STRATHALLAN SCHOOL**

C. Mollison	c. Penman b. Drysdale	20
A. Binnie	b. Ormiston	1
A. L. Harley	c. Garland b. Ormiston	24
J. Gowans	b. Ormiston	6
J. Stevenson	b. Drysdale	4
R. Boswell	c. Penman b. Drysdale	5
G. Mollison	c & b Ormiston	1
J. Wotherspoon	c. Farqueson b. Drysdale	0
A. Terris	not out	1
S. Bain and J. Kelly	Did not Bat	
Extras	.....	8
Total, for 8 wickets (innings closed)		70

**ALLOA ACADEMY**

Penman	b. Mollison	1
Harrower	b. Gowans	2
Lindsay	c & b Mollison	0
Ormiston	c. Boswell b. Gowans	2
Headridge	not out	14
Drysdale	c. Harley b. Stevenson	1
Garland	b. Mollison	0
Farqueson	c. Terris b. Gowans	0
Coldclugh	c & b Gowans	0
Haggar	c. Gowans b. Mollison	0
Extras	.....	5
Total,		25

*The Reporter: Stirling and Bridge of Allan, Saturday 16th May 1914*

**STRATHALLAN SCHOOL -v- MORRISON'S ACADEMY 2<sup>nd</sup> XI**

This match was played at Crieff on Saturday last, Morrison's Academy winning by 10 runs after an exciting finish. Scores: -

**MORRISON'S ACADEMY**

J. Young	b. Gowans	11
W. Alston	c. Kelly b. Gowans	22
W. Donald	run out	0
A. Glen	c. Kelly b. Mollison	10
C. McNee	run out	5
C. Robertson	b. A. Harley	6
Da Cruz	c & b Gowans	2
A. Faria	c. Mollison b. Gowans	0
J. McNeil	c. Terris b. Gowans	11
W. McIntosh	c & b Mollison	3
J. Ives	not out	0
Extras	.....	2
Total, for 8 wickets		72

**STRATHALLAN SCHOOL**

C. Mollison	c & b Alston	10
G. Mollison	b. McIntosh	10
J. Gowans	c. Glen b. Alston	5
A. L. Harley	b. Alston	1
J. Stevenson	run out	5
A. Binnie	c. Donald b. McIntosh	6
R. Boswell	c & b McIntosh	8
A. Terris	c. Donald b. Ives	7
J. Wotherspoon	b. McIntosh	7
J. Kelly	b. McIntosh	0
S. Bain	not out	0
Extras	.....	3
Total,		62

*The Reporter: Stirling and Bridge of Allan, Saturday 23rd May 1914*

**ALLOA ACADEMY 1<sup>ST</sup> XI -v- STRATHALLAN SCHOOL**

This match was played on the County ground, Alloa, on Saturday last, a draw resulting. The Academy batted first and scored 71, Mollison taking six wickets for 20 runs. With less than three quarters of an hour to bat, Strathallan compiled 27 for the loss of four wickets. Scores: -

**ALLOA ACADEMY 1<sup>ST</sup> XI**

C. Millar	c. Stevenson b. Riley	0
R. Wilson	lbw b. Mollison	9
R. Walker	c. Riley b. Mollison	19
J. McFarlane	c. Terris b. Riley	5
R. Stevenson	b. Mollison	4
J. Cuthbert	run out	4
G. Ormiston	c. Gowans b. Mollison	5
A. Richmond	c. Terris b. Mollison	2
T. Stewart	st. Wilson b. Mollison	6
A. Lamont	not out	9
W. Melvin	c. Mollison b. Riley	8
Extras	.....	0
	Total, for 10 wickets	71

**STRATHALLAN SCHOOL**

G. Mollison	b. McFarlane	1
W. Wilson	b. McFarlane	0
A. Harley	b. Stevenson	0
C. Mollison	c. Melvin b. Stevenson	10
J. Gowans	not out	7
H. Riley	not out	8
A. Terris	Did not Bat	
J. Stevenson	Did not Bat	
J. Wotherspoon	Did not Bat	
R. Boswell	Did not Bat	
J. Kelly	Did not Bat	
Extras	.....	1
	Total, for 4 wickets	27

*The Reporter: Stirling and Bridge of Allan, Saturday 30th May 1914*

**STIRLING HIGH SCHOOL 1<sup>ST</sup> XI -v- STRATHALLAN**

This match was played at Bridge of Allan on Saturday, when Stirling High School received their worst defeat up to date. Strathallan amassed 58, Allison having six wickets for 27 runs and MacEwan three for 27. So far, this was quite good, but Stirling collapsed at the wickets and were all out for 34. The Stirling fielding again was not what it ought to have been, and more attention should be given to this most important branch of cricket. Scores: -

**Stirling High School**

E. Owen	c. C. Mollison b. Gowans	1
T. Ferguson	b. C. Mollison	6
B. Reynolds	b. C. Mollison	5
W. Aitken	b. C. Mollison	0
J. McEwen	b. C. Mollison	9
J. Allison	b. Gowans	8
W. Crawford	c. Gowans b. C. Mollison	0
G. Walls	not out	3
R. Stalker	b. C. Mollison	0
J. Henderson	b. Gowans	0
W. Denholm	b. Gowans	0
Extras	.....	2
	Total, for 10 wickets	34

**Strathallan School**

J. Gowans	b. McEwen	3
G. Mollison	c. Ferguson b. Allison	3
C. Mollison	hit wicket b. Allison	12
J. Stevenson	b. McEwen	9
A. L. Harley	c. Owen b. Allison	2
A. Terris	b. McEwen	13
R. Boswell	b. Allison	1
J. Wotherspoon	c. Owen b. Allison	8
J. Kelly	b. Allison	0
S. Bain	run out	0
T. Dalrymple	not out	0
Extras	.....	7
	Total, for 10 wickets	58

*The Reporter: Stirling and Bridge of Allan, Saturday 20th June 1914*

**STRATHALLAN SCHOOL -v- ALLOA ACADEMY**

Played at Alloa on Saturday. Strathallan declared after going 68 for seven wickets. The Academy replied with 34 for five wickets. Scores: -

**STRATHALLAN SCHOOL**

**ALLOA ACADEMY**

C. Mollison	c. Penman b. Ormiston	0	J. McInnes	c. Boswell b. C. Mollison	2
J. Gowans	b. Drysdale	11	J. Ormiston	b. Gowans	4
A. L. Harley	b. Drysdale	10	J. Lindsay	b. C. Mollison	3
G. Mollison	lbw b. Ormiston	17	G. Headridge	b. Gowans	0
J. Stevenson	b. Ormiston	15	J. Harrower	b. C. Mollison	0
J. Wotherspoon	c. Headridge b. McInnes	0	A. Penman	not out	6
R. Boswell	c. Headridge b. McInnes	2	D. Drysdale	not out	17
S. Bain	not out	2			
G. Dalrymple	not out	2			
R. Kelly	Did not Bat				
K. Exham	Did not Bat				
Extras	.....	9	Extras	.....	2
	Total, for 7 wickets (innings closed)	68		Total, for 5 wickets	34

*The Reporter: Stirling and Bridge of Allan, Saturday 27th June 1914*

**STRATHALLAN SCHOOL v. AIRTHREY CASTLE**

Played at Strathallan Park on Thursday evening. Scores: -

**STRATHALLAN SCHOOL**

**AIRTHREY CASTLE**

A. Harley,	b. Walls	1	W. Robb,	b. Stevenson	11
G. Mollison,	c. and b. Hyslop	3	T. Ferguson,	run out	6
C. Mollison,	lbw b. Walls	2	J. Galloway,	c. Terris b. Stevenson	0
H. Riley,	b. Robb	15	W. Walls,	c. Wilson b. Riley	5
W. Watson,	c. Reed b. Robb	4	D. Bane,	b. Mollison	0
A. Terris,	Not Out	2	J. McKenzie,	b. Riley	1
J. Wotherspoon,	c. Hyslop b. Walls	0	W. Hyslop,	not out	2
J. Stevenson,	b. Walls	0	W. Warrior,	b. Riley	0
R. Boswell,	lbw b. Walls	0	J. Reed,	run out	1
J. Kelly,	lbw b. Wall	0	R. McWhennell,	b. Mollison	4
T. Dalrymple,	b. Robb	0	W. Goldie,	b. Mollison	0
Extras	.....	3	Extras	.....	1
	Total, for 10 wickets	30		Total, for 10 wickets	31

*The Reporter: Stirling and Bridge of Allan, Saturday 27th June 1914*

**STRATHALLAN SCHOOL v. MORRISON'S ACADEMY**

At Strathallan Park on Saturday. After having seven wickets down for under 20 runs, Morrison's ran out easy winners. Scores: -

**STRATHALLAN SCHOOL**

G. Mollison,	c. McIntosh b. Ives	0
J. Gowans,	b. McIntosh	3
C. Mollison,	b. Ives	11
A. Harley,	c. Donald b. Ives	3
J. Stevenson,	c. McMillan b. McIntosh	0
A. Terris,	b. McIntosh	0
J. Wotherspoon,	c. McMillan b. McIntosh	4
R. Boswell,	c. McMillan b. McIntosh	5
J. Kelly,	b. McIntosh	1
T. Dalrymple,	c. McMillan b. McIntosh	0
T. Bain,	not out	0
Extras .....		5
Total, for 10 wickets		32

**MORRISON'S ACADEMY**

Alston,	c. G. Mollison b. Gowans	1
Young,	b. Gowans	7
Ives,	run out	1
McMillan,	c. Stevenson b. C. Mollison	1
McNeil,	c. and b. C. Mollison	1
McNee,	b. Gowans	0
Donald,	b. Gowans	8
Glen,	c. Gowans b. Stevenson	9
McIntosh,	c. C. Mollison b. Stevenson	37
Fariea,	not out	4
McRobbie,	st. C. Mollison b. Stevenson	0
Extras .....		2
Total, for 10 wickets		71

*The Reporter: Stirling and Bridge of Allan, Saturday 27th June 1914*

**STRATHALLAN SCHOOL v. DOLLAR INSTITUTION 3rd XI**

At Dollar on Saturday last. Dollar batted first and knocked up 88 runs before their last wicket fell. The Strathallan boys played splendidly, and put up their highest total of the year - 89 for 5 wickets.

C. Mollison and Wotherspoon batted well, three hits from C. Mollison pitching clean out of the ground.

Scores: -

**DOLLAR INSTITUTION 3rd XI**

Seeck,	b. Gowans	13
Walker,	b. C. Mollison	7
Millar,	c. Wotherspoon b. Gowans	25
Wye,	b. C. Mollison	0
Driver,	b. Gowans	5
Campbell,	b. C. Mollison	0
Flett,	run out	4
Neil,	run out	1
Muckerise,	b. C. Mollison	6
McLearn,	b. C. Mollison	16
Watt,	not out	6
Extras .....		5
Total, for 10 wickets		88

**STRATHALLAN SCHOOL**

A. Terris,	run out	10
G. Mollison,	c. Walker b. Wye	8
C. Mollison,	c. McLearn b. Millar	26
A. Harley,	c. McLearn b. Millar	6
J. Stevenson,	c. McLearn b. Millar	3
J. Gowans,	not out	11
J. Wotherspoon,	not out	20
R. Boswell,	Did not bat	
J. Kelly,	Did not bat	
T. Dalrymple,	Did not bat	
T. Bain,	Did not bat	
Extras .....		5
Total, for 5 wickets		89

*The Reporter: Stirling and Bridge of Allan, Saturday 27th June 1914*

**STIRLING HIGH SCHOOL 1st XI v. STRATHALLAN SCHOOL**

This game was played at Williamfield on Friday when the Stirling boys avenged the defeat sustained by them earlier in the season by a narrow margin of 9 runs. Stalker batted splendidly for Stirling as did Harley for Strathallan. The last five Strathallan wickets yielded only 1 run each. Scores: -

**STIRLING HIGH SCHOOL 1st XI**

T. Ferguson	b. C. Mollison	0
E. Owen,	c. Wotherspoon b. Gowans	0
J. McEwen,	c. Boswell b. Gowans	2
B. Reynolds,	b. Gowans	10
J. Allison,	b. Gowans	6
D. Todd,	c. Boswell b. Stevenson	4
W. Crawford,	b. C. Mollison	4
R. Stalker,	c. Stevenson b. Gowans	26
G. Oswald,	lbw b. Gowans	1
J. Ferguson,	b. Gowans	3
R. Menzies,	not out	2
Extras .....		0
Total, for 10 wickets		58

**STRATHALLAN SCHOOL**

C. Mollison,	run out	1
A. Terris,	b. McEwen	0
G. Mollison,	b. McEwen	4
A. Harley,	c. Ferguson b. Crawford	26
J. Stevenson,	b. Crawford	8
J. Gowans,	b. Crawford	6
J. Wotherspoon,	b. McEwen	0
R. Boswell,	b. McEwen	1
J. Kelly,	b. Crawford	0
S. Bain,	run out	0
T. Dalrymple,	not out	0
Extras .....		3
Total, for 10 wickets		49

## Forgandenny: 1920s and 1930s

In the spring of 1920 Harry Riley bought Freeland House, former home to the Ruthven family. This was a great risk for a school that was then only seven years old. Not only was the young Headmaster inexperienced in the running of a large country House and estate, but also it was by no means certain that all the pupils from Bridge of Allan would come over to Forgandenny with him. It is a measure of the confidence which the pupils' parents had in Harry Riley that 120 boys made the move, and in September 1920 Strathallan opened its doors anew.

There were no sporting facilities other than for tennis, croquet and archery in 1920, so much laborious work was necessary to bring the school fields up to a standard fit for first-class school games. The main lawn to the south of the House was made into a cricket ground, although it was smaller than it is today - the area now occupied by the music practice rooms was once an ornate rose garden. The square was only ready for play by the summer of 1921. In those days there was no pavilion, changing being done in the main House, with tea for players and visitors in what is now the Music Room and Conservatory.



*The Lawn, pre-1930*

Many visitors often remarked then, as they still do today, that the Lawn was one of the most beautiful grounds in Scotland, surrounded by trees on three sides and the rhododendron bushes giving a splash of colour.

Regrettably, very little is known of the early days of cricket at Forgandenny from 1920-1926. Just after this period the *Strathallian* magazine was founded, and that has since become the greatest source of knowledge about the operations of the School. There are no scorebooks, no averages, no accounts of matches, only photographs of just about every 1st XI together with some 2nd XIs. All the photographs are named, with the exception of the 1920 side, captained by W. G. Finlay.



*W.G. Finlay's 1920 side*

We do know, however, that for many years after 1920 cricket at Strathallan was in the capable hands of Joe Anderson of Perthshire, who had played twice for Scotland before the Great War. It is said that he was remembered with the greatest affection for his patient and kindly criticism, and his perseverance with even the most 'hopeless' of cases. Anderson was responsible for turning out several boys who went on to make their mark in Scottish cricket, not least the all-rounder T. M. Hart.

With good fortune the story can be taken up in 1926 as N. G. Reid left his scrapbook from his year as captain of the 1st XI. This was a year of several astonishing performances, not least from one of Strathallan's first cricketing 'stars', the all-rounder T. M. Hart. This season's cricket team played seven school matches, winning five and was only once beaten. The best performance was against Hillhead High School, who were all disposed of for four runs, while Strathallan scored 79 for the loss of half its wickets. In this match T. M. Hart secured seven wickets without a run being scored off his bowling, while J. D. Reid had three wickets for three runs.



*The 1926 1<sup>st</sup> XI*



*N. G. Reid and T. M. Hart, 1926*

They also played eight matches against senior teams, and won four, losing two, with two drawn. Their greatest performance in this class was against Auchterarder, who was disposed of for a single run, Hart and Reid being practically unplayable. Hart had six wickets for no runs, while Reid had

four wickets for one run. Against H. B. Rowan's strong Western XI, the XI gained a clever victory by two runs, scoring 123 to their opponents' 121.



*H. B. Rowan's XI, beaten by the 1926 1<sup>st</sup> XI – the first victory by the school over this celebrated side.*

Against Edinburgh University Union, who were all out for 44, they scored 247 for the loss of nine wickets, Hart scoring 87 and securing seven wickets for 21 runs. T. M. Hart was the leading cricketer in the School and had a batting average of 29.3, while his wickets were secured at a cost of 5.85.



*Net practice, 1926*



*Net practice on the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI ground*

Here are some scorecards from the 1926 season:

### HILLHEAD HIGH SCHOOL -v- STRATHALLAN SCHOOL

At Hughenden

#### STRATHALLAN

N. G. Reid, c. Ross b. Lapsley	19
T. M. Hart, b. Bebbington	36
A. H. Porter, lbw b. Bebbington	12
C. H. Bowman, c. Aitken b. Bebbington	6
J. Wheatley, c. Aitken b. Bebbington	1
J. McFadyen, not out	2
Extras	3
<b>TOTAL (for 5 wickets)</b>	<b>79</b>

Innings declared. J. D. Reid, H. Reid, L. M. Fraser, S. Dow and J. Dow did not bat.

#### HILLHEAD HIGH SCHOOL

A. M. Aitken, c. H. Reid b. Hart	0
W. F. Smith, lbw b. Hart	0
A. Ross, c. J. Dow b. J. D. Reid	0
P. W. Allison, c. J. Dow b. Hart	1
J. M. S. Hendrie, b. J. D. Reid	1
J. D. McKinlay, b. Hart	0
J. M. Lapsley, c. and b. J. D. Reid	0
P. Bebbington, c. N. G. Reid b. Hart	0
J. Paton, b. Hart	0
J. Donald, not out	0
R. L. Low, b. Hart	0
Extra	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>

T. M. Hart had seven wickets for 0 runs, and J. D. Reid three wickets for 3 runs.

### STRATHALLAN SCHOOL -V- AUCHTERARDER

at Auchterarder, 23rd June 1926

#### STRATHALLAN

N. G. Reid	11
T. M. Hart	3
A. H. Porter	10
C. Bowman	1
J. R. Wheatley	0
J. McFadzen	1
J. D. Reid	0*
W. A. Lambie	0
J. Dow	0
R. Barr	1
L. Fraser	0
Extras	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>

#### AUCHTERARDER

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>
T. M. Hart	6 for 0
J. D. Reid	4 for 1
Excellent fielding, 7 catches in all. Batting display due to the pitch.	

The School's matches in these days did not include many of the large Edinburgh boarding schools or even our closest recent rivals Glenalmond but, looking at the fixture list, the 1st XI clearly had its work cut out given some of the venues in those days. By 1927 Strathallan played Hillhead High School, Heriot's College, Dollar Academy, George Watson's College, Daniel Stewart's, Morrison's Academy, Dunfermline High School, Aberdeen Grammar School. Of the club matches the more important were Clydesdale, Pitlochry, Brechin, Luncarty, Auchterarder, and H. B. Rowan's XI.

The 1927 season was another of crowning achievement for T. M. Hart. Not only was he captain, but he took 6 for 25 against Watson's College, 7 for 42 against Clydesdale, and scored 112 not out against Pitlochry, the first century on The Lawn ground. His overall figures for the 1927 season were 530 runs at 35.33 and 64 wickets at 6.5. The year 1927 also saw the institution of an Old Boys' match against the 1st XI. On this occasion Hart's side proved too strong, winning by 68 runs. Overall the 1st XI played 17, winning 10 and losing only 5 matches.

By 1928 Hart had left and the side performed adequately with no major performances from players other than from the spin bowler Sinclair (57 wickets at 9.2) and captain W. H. Reid, the most consistent batsman (341 runs at 22.7). The most outstanding performance of the season came in the return match with Auchterarder, in which Sinclair took all ten wickets for 11 runs, four clean bowled. Once again, the School was too strong for the Old Boys, despite the latter having a

formidable team. The team was unbeaten against other school sides. The playing ledger reads: played 16, won 9, lost 4.

In 1929 Harry Riley appointed a professional from Yorkshire, Vickerstaff, in an attempt to improve the overall standard of cricket at Strathallan and to work on The Lawn pitches, even at that stage amongst the best in Scotland. Clearly Riley had seen the upsurge in interest for cricket at all levels of the School, with increased competition for places in the 2nd XI and an Under 12 XI which had recently been formed. Perhaps this enthusiasm had been fired by the stirring deeds of T. M. Hart in the mid-1920s ?



*The 1929 1<sup>st</sup> XI*

The 1929 season saw a steady increase in victories. The 1st XI played 17, winning 11 games and losing 6. The strengths of I. MacEwen's side were the depth of batting, two players scoring over 300 runs (R. W. Dunn, 431 at 28.73; I. MacEwen, 329 runs at 29.56), as well as the bowling of the indefatigable Sinclair who took 60 wickets (at 7.15). For the third year in a row, the School proved too well-equipped for the Old Boys' side.

1930 was an important year in the annals of Strathallan Cricket in that it saw the tenth anniversary of the School's move to Forgandenny as well as the erection of the 1st XI pavilion. Here is how *The Strathallian* describes the donation by Mr. A. M. Melville of the India Tyre and Rubber Company Ltd. of Inchinnan: 'The Cricket pavilion, opened on Sports Day by Mr. Melville, is a great acquisition to the School amenities. So admirably does it fit in with the surroundings that the lawn's beauty is enhanced by it, if Man's work can ever be said to improve on Nature.' The Master i/c 1st XI at the time, the irrepressible J. P. D. McTyson-Jones commented that... 'We feel that the lawn has now changed from a mere lawn into a first-class cricket field.' At the same time Mr. Melville provided a cup to be played for in the annual inter-house cricket competition. It is still played for today.

The pavilion itself is still with us today, now a listed building. This caused some difficulty a few years ago when the Governors decided to refurbish the building for all-year-round use. The tea-room has been expanded, as have the changing rooms with the addition of showers and toilets, together with a storeroom, kitchen and visitors' toilet. Altogether, this extension is a worthy addition to our facilities.



*The Lawn today & (below) in the 1930s*



Almost in celebration of the new pavilion, the 1st XI was unbeaten in School matches, whilst the 2nd XI won every match played. The strength of A. Morrison's 1st XI was, once again, the batting. Highlights included W. G. Leburn's unbeaten century (100 not out) against Dunfermline High School and fast bowler C. Lacey hitting 58 in eleven minutes against the same opposition. This game saw the highest School total of 294 for 4 wickets, perhaps the more remarkable for only lasting two hours ! The bowling of this side was evenly shared amongst three bowlers, all taking more than 30 wickets for under 10 runs each. Wins were recorded over Dollar Academy, India of Inchinnan, Glasgow High School, Aberdeen Grammar School, Pitlochry, Hillhead High School and the largest win over Dunfermline High School (Strath. 294 for 4, Dunfermline 32 all out). Once again the Old Boys' side, despite being comprised of ex-1st XI players, was overcome rather easily. In many ways this side could go from the sublime to the ridiculous in that, against Dupplin at Forgandenny on 11th June, the 1st XI having bowled the opposition out for 92, they themselves succumbed to some good fast bowling for what we believe remains a record low - 16 all out !



*The 1931 1<sup>st</sup> XI*

The following two years, 1931 and 1932, were moderately successful. Both years saw some consistent scoring, although the strength in depth of the 1932 side both in batting and in bowling augured better for the future. An interesting feature of these years was the inauguration of a match against the Staff. In 1931 the School benefited from some dropped catches to score 243 for 9 against the Staff's total of 137 (Mr. Atkin, 81). The following year, the School scored 195 for 4 to which the Staff replied with an exciting 181 for 5 before time was called. In 1932 the School record partnership was recorded between the captain J. W. MacMillan and G. M. Dobson of 204 for the first wicket against Hillhead High School. This was MacMillan's first century (102 not out). Hillhead scored a paltry 83 all out in the first innings.



*J. W. MacMillan and G. M. Dobson, 1932*

The steady improvement in Strathallan cricket, due in no small part to the tireless work of the professional Vickerstaff, and the others members of staff coaching teams, continued into 1933. The XI won seven of the thirteen games, although they lost to three schools (Heriot's, Gordon's and Dunfermline High School). Six batsmen scored over 100 runs, with W. C. Roy scoring over 300; the bowling rather fell to the broad shoulders of captain W. W. Watt with an incredible 66 wickets at 5.8, and to the young J. G. S. Forrest with 22 at 17.00.

After an ordinary season in 1934 (played 12, won 4, drawn 6, lost 2), the XI began to pick up again in 1935 and 1936 through the leadership of J. G. S. Forrest, 'Springy' to his friends. There were two major highlights of 1935 – firstly the School's highest score of 120 by Robin Johnston against

Kilmalcolm (scored in an hour), and the appearance of the legendary Surrey and England batsman Jack Hobbs in H. B. Rowan's side. Hobbs scored a classic 44 before being caught by Forrest at forward short-leg off the spin of Aitkenhead. The rumour went around that Hobbs, when asked, had described the Strathallan pitch thus, 'Reminds me of Lords – a bit bumpy in places', much to the chagrin of Vickerstaff who was proud of his pitches and always kept the best one for the Rowan game.



*The legendary Sir Jack Hobbs*

Nineteen thirty-six was an outstanding year for two of the side, captain and vice-captain, John Forrest and Robin Johnston. Their performances easily eclipsed anything in the past. Forrest scored four centuries and Johnston three centuries, leaving records that we believe have yet to be beaten. Forrest scored 670 runs at 96.1, Johnston 667 at 60.63, although the latter eclipsed his School record with an unbeaten 150 against Stewart's College in a record total of 296 for 3 (Forrest, 104 not out). Out of fourteen games played, the XI won ten, losing three and drawing one.



*The 1936 1<sup>st</sup> XI*



*Cricket on The Lawn, some time after 1928*

After this 'golden age', the next three years were somewhat less successful with many more games lost than won. There were no more centuries, although G. W. Leburn stood out from his contemporaries as an excellent all-rounder taking 104 wickets with his spin from 1936-8, and scoring over 500 runs. The reports of these three seasons bemoan the lack of strength in depth as well as the lack of quality in the fielding of each XI. It may well be that Mr. Cole's observation of 1935 was coming true. In his report for *The Strathallian* he had remarked that the Juniors were handicapped by having to play on some very uneven wickets, thus not terribly surprising that '...few natural batsmen emerge from the lower school'. Despite the evident enthusiasm for cricket that many were showing in the golden summers of 1935 and 1936, inspired by the deeds of Forrest and Johnston, the batting indeed continued to be a cause of some concern.



*The 1939 1<sup>st</sup> XI*

The Master in Charge of the 1<sup>st</sup> XI tried to remedy this by picking ever youthful sides, acknowledging that this was a highly risky strategy, particularly in terms of the sides' experience. By the end of the 1939 season prospects were beginning to look up again as the side ended with four successive victories.

Vickerstaff, the professional engaged by Harry Riley in 1929, now left the School after a decade's service of coaching and working on the Lawn pitches.



He had felt that he could not take such an active role in the practices and so moved to Perth to become the groundsman at Doo'cot Park. Vickerstaff had transformed the Lawn square into one of the best in Scotland, despite Hobbs' disparaging comment in 1935, although it always was a matter of some regret to Vickerstaff that he never quite had the side to match the quality of his pitches. He was heard to remark upon his retirement that the 1936 side of Forrest and Johnston was very close to the ideal. This side was certainly the finest of the pre-war era, although T. M. Hart's 1927 XI may well have run it close.

RHF  
2007

## CAPTAINS OF CRICKET 1920-39

1920	W. G. Finlay
1921	J. Paton
1922	D. S. Smith
1923	J. B. Morrison
1924	R. S. Docherty
1925	W. R. Morrison
1926	N. G. Reid
1927	T. M. Hart
1928	W. H. Reid
1929	I. MacEwen
1930	A. Morrison
1931	W. G. Leburn
1932	J. W. Macmillan
1933	W. W. Watt
1934	R. W. McMath
1935	J. G. S. Forrest
1936	J. G. S. Forrest
1937	R. A. Houston
1938	G. W. Leburn
1939	D. H. McNaughton