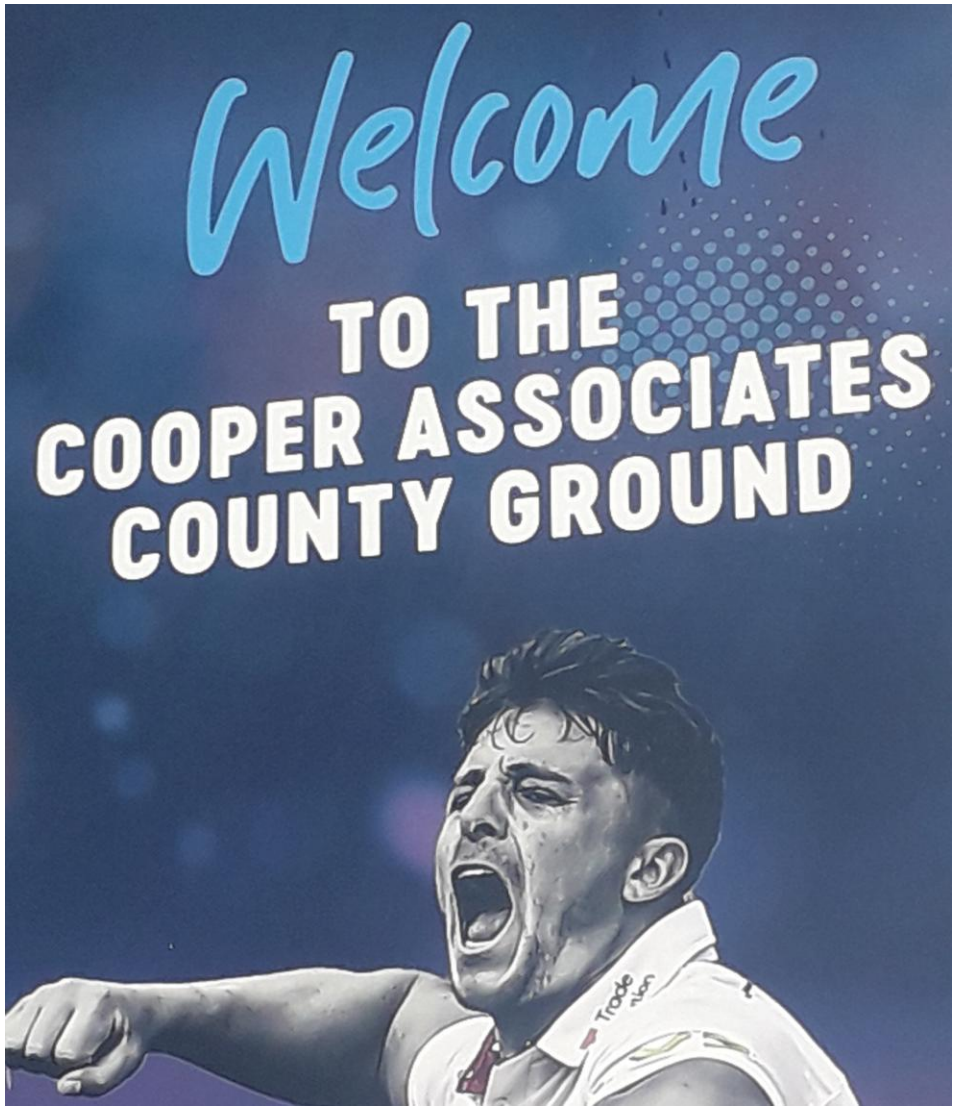


A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE COUNTY GROUND IN TAUNTON







The County Ground in Taunton was not always like that. None of the original ground survives, except for the grass! It has a long and varied history. This presentation shows you some of that history.

No need to follow it all in one go. Come back again!

1215 Magna Carta; 1258 Provisions of Oxford; 1314 Bannockburn; 1348/9 Black Death; 1461-85 Wars of Roses; 1492 Columbus; 1509 Henry VIII crowned;



The ground is located on the site of the medieval Taunton Priory. This was a house of Augustinian friars, founded during the reign of Henry I, about 1120. No records survive to indicate what the buildings looked like.

c.1120

Priory Barn was added to the monastery about 1415, at the time of the Battle of Agincourt. It probably served as a hospital, or accommodation for the monks. It is the only part of the monastery to survive.



c.1415



The Priory was disestablished in 1539/40 during the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The land was acquired by the crown (Henry VIII) and sold off to the highest bidders. Again, no records survive to show who these bidders were.

1539

1588 Armada; 1605 Gunpowder Plot; 1649 Charles I executed; 1789 French Revolution; 1815 Waterloo; 1837 Victoria crowned; 1861 US Civil War;

With no written records to guide us, we can only assume that the Priory lands became a mixture of landed estates and agricultural.

At some stage Priory Barn became exactly that – a barn. This is clear because of the two sets of floor to ceiling double doors, front and back of the building.



1540 - 1840





As the population of Victorian Taunton grew, housing encroached on the agricultural land, until all that was left was land owned by John Winter, known as Rack Field.

In 1880, John Winter leased Rack Field to Taunton Athletic Club for £50 a year.

1880

1881 First Boer War; 1881 Tottenham Hotspur FC formed; 1884 Siege of Khartoum; 1889 Birmingham granted City status; 1891 Sherlock Holmes makes debut

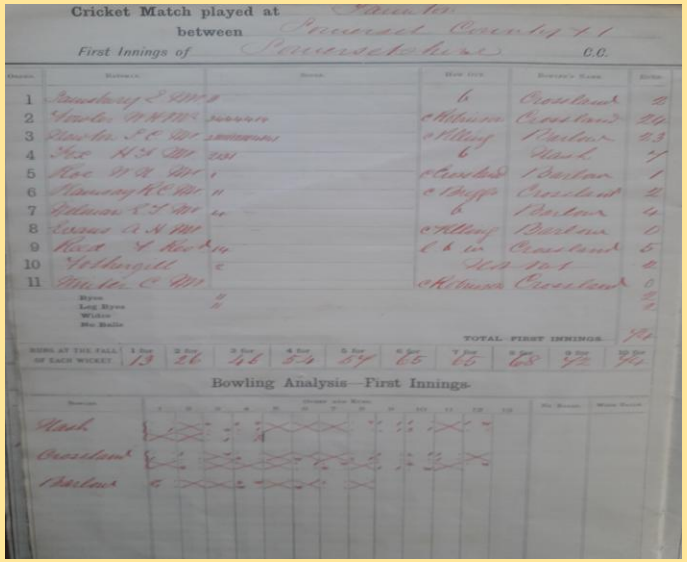


Taunton Sports Field opens with an athletic meeting on Whit Monday (6th June)

1881

SCCC plays its first match at Taunton against Lancashire, and wins.

1882



SCCC takes a 10 year lease on the athletics ground. From now cricket becomes the dominant sport in the town.

1886

SCCC gains first class status, but lost its first game in this new era – to Lancashire

1891



Lionel Palairet and Herbie Hewitt share an opening stand of 342 at the ground: a record that still stands.

1892

1894 Blackpool Tower opens; 1895 National Trust created; 1899 Second Boer War; 1903 Typhoo Tea makes debut; 1906 HMS Dreadnought launched

Archie MacLaren of Lancashire makes 424 at the ground, still the highest individual score.



1895

In the same summer, Ted Tyler takes 10 for 49 against Surrey, the best ever bowling at the ground.

Under the guidance of the Club Secretary, Henry Murray-Anderdon, SCCC completes the purchase of Rack Field for £2,000.

1896

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee



1897



The "Hen Coop" had been erected. This was a two tiered, covered stand that was used by Taunton's well-to-do cricket watchers.

By 1908

1912 Titanic sinks; 1917 Russian Revolution; 1926 General Strike; 1929 Wall Street Crash; 1935 Harold Gimblett's debut; 1946 United Nations makes debut

The County Championship was suspended in 1915 and restarted in 1919. For much of that time, the ground was used as a staging post for Australian troops heading for the Western Front. Needless to say, significant repairs were needed afterwards.



1914-1918



In August 1925, Jack Hobbs scores his 99th and 100th centuries at the ground. Here he raises a glass of champagne to the Taunton faithful.

1925

The Ridley Stand is opened. This will later become Gimblett Hill.

1926

The County Championship was again suspended in 1940; and restarted in 1946. Some matches were played at the ground in 1942/43. In 1944 it was taken over by the National Fire Service.



1939-1945

1953 Elizabeth II crowned; 1958 Munich Air disaster; 1963 John Kennedy assassinated; 1967 Sergeant Pepper released; 1969 Moon landing; 1973 Oil crisis



The original Somerset Stand is completed. This was financed by SCCC Supporters' Club. The stand was about one-third the size of the current one and was covered. The roof was taken off and the stand considerably enlarged over the years that followed.

1955





To help with finances, SCCC hosts regular greyhound races for nearly 20 years – despite opposition from local churches.

1961-1979

1979 Margaret Thatcher becomes PM; 1980 Iranian Embassy siege; 1981 1st London Marathon; 1982 Falklands War; 1995 World Wide Web makes debut

SCCC win both Gillette One Day Cup and John Player Sunday League.



1979



The old pavilion is demolished.

1980

SCCC win Benson & Hedges One Day Cup.

1981



SCCC win Benson & Hedges One Day Cup.

1982

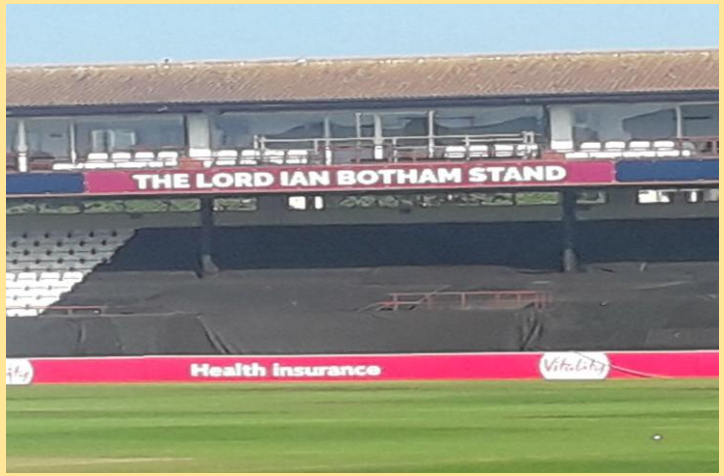
In September, SCCC plays West Indies under flood lights – only the second floodlit game in history.

The ground hosts Ladies ODI for the first time. England lost to South Africa, despite Charlotte Edwards' 118.

1997

1997 Tony Blair PM; 2000 Millennium Dome makes debut; 2001 Attacks on World Trade Center; 2003 T20 makes debut; 2007 BBC Grandstand finishes





Botham Stand opens.

1998

SCCC win the Gillette One Day Cup.

2001



The ground hosts Ladies Test match for the first time, England against India for whom M Raj scored a record 214.

2002

SCCC win T20 Blast.

2005

Elton John live! In front of 23,000 in 2006







2006

SCCC make their record score of 850-7 against Middlesex.

2007

2008 Heathrow's T5 makes debut; Boris Johnson is Mayor of London; 2012 Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee; London Olympics; 2014 Somerset Levels flooding

Baseball played at the ground – Trescothick's Bangers lose to Great Britain.



The River Stand is completed.

2008



The current iteration of the Somerset Stand is completed, with the Pegasus Court flats behind.

2009

The Colin Atkinson Pavilion originally opened in 1981 was reopened after extensive refurbishment.

2010





The Ondaatje Pavilion is opened.

2011

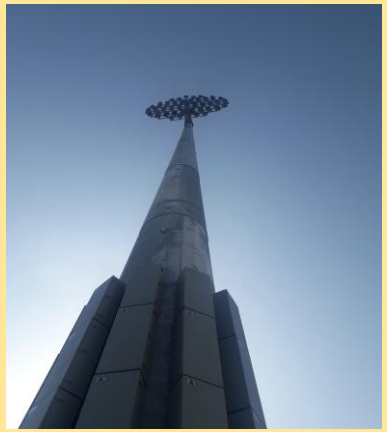


The Somerset Pavilion is opened.

2014

2015 UK inflation officially 0%; 2016 Hatton Garden robbery; 2018 Salisbury poisonings; 2020 Debenhams ceases trading; 2023 Charles III crowned

Permanent floodlights are installed – the first fully LED sports stadium lights in the Northern hemisphere.



The first T20 International to be played at Taunton South Africa beat England by 3 runs.

2017



Somerset win Royal London One Day Cup.

2019



The Marcus Trescothick Pavilion is formally opened.



The River Stand is renamed the James Hildreth Stand.

2022



Gimblett's Hill is reopened after improvements.



Somerset win the Vitality Blast T20 Cup and in 2025.

2023 / 2025

2025 Trump re-elected POTUS

Somerset Women's Cricket achieve Tier 1 Status and first professional team created.





Somerset win the Vitality Blast T20 Cup again in 2025.

2025 **2026** **2027** **2028**

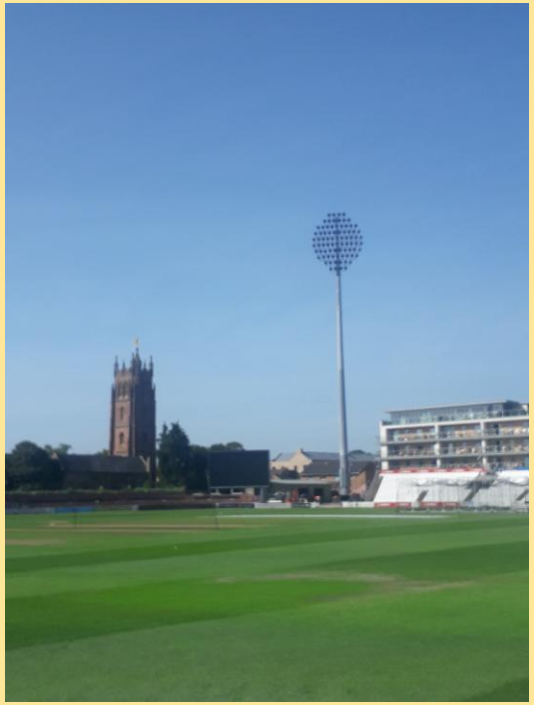
The ground today

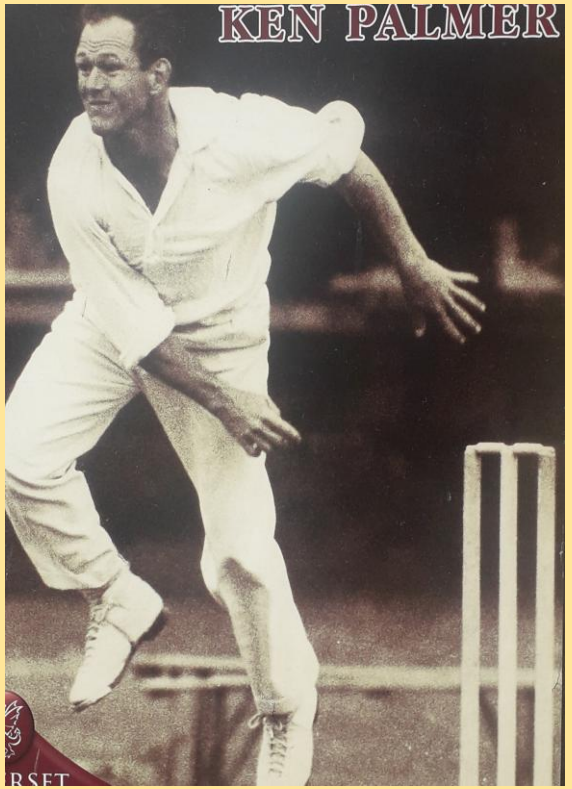













SURREY
65 / 2
16:51
THATCHERS
THATCHERS
KUKRI


THE ONDAATJE PAVILION
KUKRI

