

= West Hendford Cricket Ground , Yeovil =

West Hendford Cricket Ground was a first @-@ class cricket ground located in Yeovil , Somerset . The land for the ground was first leased by Yeovil Cricket Club in 1874 , and was also used for a range of other sports , most significantly hosting Yeovil Rugby Club in the 1890s , and then again from 1935 until the ground was closed . Significant improvements were made to the ground during the 1930s , including the opening of a new pavilion , jointly funded by the Rugby and Cricket clubs . The ground was demolished in 1944 when Westland Aircraft extended their factory , and both Yeovil Cricket Club and Rugby Club moved to Johnson Park .

Between 1935 and 1939 , the ground hosted five annual Somerset County Cricket Club matches in July or August ; the first of which nearly broke a county record for ticket sales on the gate . Somerset only won one of the five matches , the 1936 contest against Worcestershire .

= = History = =

Yeovil and County Cricket Club was formed in 1865 , and was the first attempt at setting up a county cricket team for Somerset . The attempt was unsuccessful , and the club broke up . In 1874 , the club was re @-@ formed with the lesser remit , as Yeovil Cricket Club . As part of the club 's resuscitation , the committee purchased the use of a field in West Hendford in Yeovil , from a local farmer , Mr Brook . The field , part of Key Farm , was leased for £ 10 . There is record of a match being played on the ground the following year between two sets of members of the Yeovil Cricket Club . During the late 19th @-@ century , the ground was used for other sports as well as cricket ; it had a grass athletics track , and also hosted Yeovil Football Club , who at the time played both association and rugby football . The football club played at West Hendford on an irregular basis during the late 19th @-@ century , but returned in 1935 , by which time they only played rugby , and had changed their name accordingly to Yeovil Rugby Club . In 1895 , the cricket club committee announced that there was provision for a longer lease , of five or seven years , and that they would make improvements to the ground to enable it to host first @-@ class cricket . The ground was also used for field hockey in the early 20th @-@ century , hosting a Yeovil Hockey Club .

Somerset County Cricket Club played their first of five annual first @-@ class matches on the ground in 1935 . The match , against Surrey , was a significant event in the town , and a series of festivities were arranged to run alongside the three @-@ day contest , including a dance and a smoking concert . Entry for the match , which took place from 17 to 19 August was one shilling , and attracted over 5 @,@ 000 people , raising around £ 400 . Surrey won the match by eight wickets . The takings from this match helped the Yeovil Cricket Club make further improvements to the ground , expanding it and adding further seating . The following year , Somerset played Worcestershire at the ground , in what the Western Gazette described as " Yeovil Cricket Festival " . The captain of Yeovil Cricket Club , Richard Southcombe , was included in the Somerset team , which won the match by 170 runs . The takings were slightly lower than the previous year due to poor weather , but still described as " gratifying " .

In 1937 , Sussex beat Somerset at the ground , in a match that once again drew a crowd of around 5 @,@ 000 . The Yorkshire Evening Post described the wicket as " crumbling " towards the end of the match , favouring the bowlers . In 1938 Hampshire visited , and the report in the Western Daily Press lamented the state of the wicket , which meant that the game , like the three first @-@ class matches at the ground before it , was completed in two days , rather than the scheduled three . That winter , a new pavilion costing £ 550 was erected on the ground for the shared use of the cricket club and the rugby club . The final first @-@ class match on the ground was played in July 1939 against Lancashire , but torrential rain limited the match to only three hours of play . The takings for the full three days of the match were only £ 87 , and the Taunton Courier estimated that the losses for the match could be hundreds of pounds . Despite the weather , almost 2 @,@ 000 people attended the match , and the Taunton Courier report praised the alterations that had been made to the ground ; the removal of a hedge made the ground lighter , while the ground itself had been well looked after , and drained quickly . The Second World War suspended the County Championship

from 1940 to 1945 , and during that time , Westland Aircraft took over the ground to expand their factory , and informed Yeovil Cricket Club that it was no longer available , forcing them to search for a new ground in 1946 . They eventually relocated to the newly opened Johnson Park in 1948 . The rugby club also moved to Johnson Park , amalgamating itself into Yeovil Sports Club . After a short break , Somerset County Cricket Club returned to Yeovil , playing fourteen fixtures at Johnson Park between 1951 and 1970 , and eight matches at Westlands Sports Ground from 1971 to 1978 .

= = Records = =

During its limited use as a first @-@ class cricket ground , only one century was scored on the ground , by Jim Parks . During the 1937 match , he scored 140 runs for Sussex . The most wickets taken by a bowler in a match at West Hendford was achieved in 1938 , when Hampshire 's Stuart Boyes took twelve wickets , including nine in the first innings . Somerset 's only success on the ground was in 1936 against Worcestershire , who they dismissed for 60 runs in the first innings , and 77 in the second .