

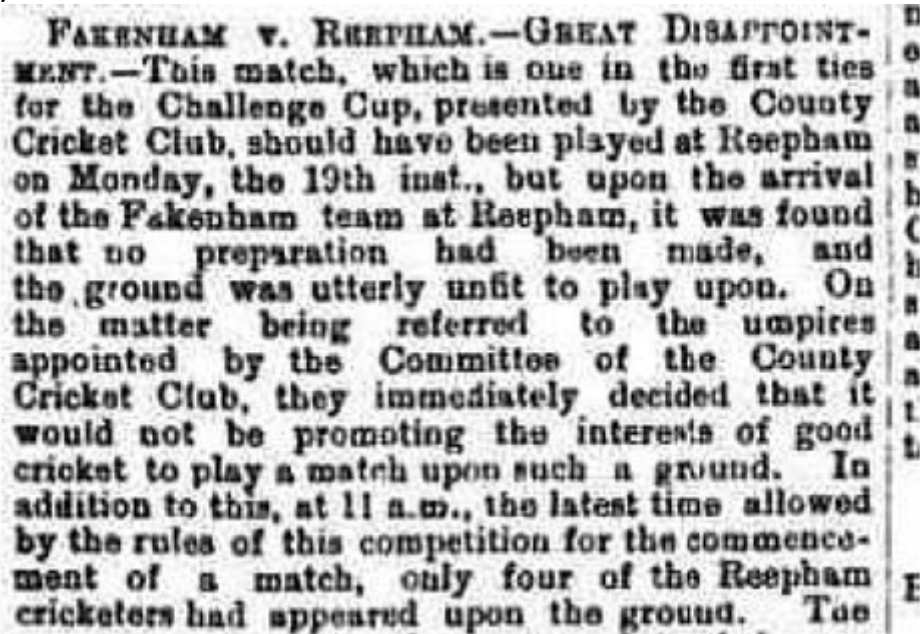
Cricket club's perennial search for a suitable ground

The May image in the Reepham Life Calendar 2018 shows a photo of the Reepham Cricket Club team in 1921.

Early information about a cricket club in Reepham is sparse, but there are occasional newspaper reports of a club based in the town as early as 1805.

In the 1850s and 1860s the club appeared to be thriving – in one season even hiring a professional bowler. However, the club must have run into difficulties and efforts were made to re-establish it, notably in 1875 when, in spite of funds being provided by Rev. Sir Edward Repps Jodrell, and a core of enthusiasts, a ground could not be procured. The club was later re-formed in 1881 after a break of 16 years.

Finding a suitable match ground seems to have been a perennial problem. In 1884, when the cricket club was again re-formed, the club resumed using a ground at Kerdiston, probably made available by Barnabas Seely. But misfortune lay ahead, hence this extract from the Norwich Mercury in May 1884:



**FAKENHAM V. REEPHAM.—GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT.**—This match, which is one in the first ties for the Challenge Cup, presented by the County Cricket Club, should have been played at Reepham on Monday, the 19th inst., but upon the arrival of the Fakenham team at Reepham, it was found that no preparation had been made, and the ground was utterly unfit to play upon. On the matter being referred to the umpires appointed by the Committee of the County Cricket Club, they immediately decided that it would not be promoting the interests of good cricket to play a match upon such a ground. In addition to this, at 11 a.m., the latest time allowed by the rules of this competition for the commencement of a match, only four of the Reepham cricketers had appeared upon the ground. The

In 1889 and 1890 the club was using Mr Brownsell's Meadow as a practice ground. (Thomas Brownsell was the farmer at Rookery Farm at that time, having previously farmed at Moor Farm.) And in 1891 "Mr B. Stimpson kindly offered a meadow at Sall, gratis, for the use of the club". The later-1890s seemed more successful as the team took part in the Junior County Cup and Samuel Bircham provided a ground free of rent – this may have been on land in Norwich Road opposite where Reepham Fishery is now.