

These young fellows were taking a big decision to leave their home towns to come South to join the speculative professional football team, with no guarantee that it would succeed or even survive. They were dropping from a flourishing top-division club which had just nearly won the League-and-Cup double to what would have been regarded by many in the North as a third-division club. Indeed – as it was to turn out – they had actually joined what was effectively a fourth-division club.

On the other hand, as we have just observed, their careers at Newcastle were heading precisely nowhere, and they were now being offered the chance to immediately become full-time professional footballers. Their maximum-wage pay was more than double what they would have been earning in their ordinary manual daytime jobs in Tyneside. I have some advice for Palace’s 1905 directors: these men would have come South for much less than maximum wages, but Palace were not in a position to quibble.

I think we can see why the players agreed; they surely jumped at the chance. By the end of the first week, Jack Robson had signed three more men and now had a full team of eleven players.

Let’s have a look at a tabulation of those interesting wage statistics from Figure 181:

Crystal Palace FC Players’ Wages 1905/1906							
Name	Age	Date signed	Signed from	Winter wages p.w.	Summer wages p.w.	Signing-on fee	Transfer fee
Jack Robson (manager)	45	26 April 1905	n/a	£4 16s	£4 16s	n/a	n/a
Matthew Edwards	23	01 May 1905	Barnsley	£4	£4	£10	unknown
George Walker	28	07 May 1905	Wolverhampton W.	£4	£4	£10	unknown
Harry Astley	24	01 May 1905	Middlesbrough	£4	£4	£10	unknown
Dickie Roberts	27	01 May 1905	Middlesbrough	£4	£4	£10	unknown
Ted Birnie	27	01 May 1905	Newcastle United	£4	£4	£10	unknown
George Thompson	27	01 May 1905	Newcastle United	£4	£4	£10	unknown
Walter Watkins	25	07 May 1905	Sunderland	£4	£4	£10	unknown
Wilf Innerd	27	01 May 1905	Newcastle United	£4	£3	£10	unknown
Dick Harker	22	01 May 1905	Newcastle United	£4	£3	£10	unknown
Bob Hewitson	21	01 May 1905	Barnsley	£4	£3	£10	unknown
Archie Needham	24	07 May 1905	Sheffield United	£3 10s	£3	£10	unknown
Archie Grant	unkn.	03 Aug 1905	Kirkcaldy United	£3	unknown	£10	unknown
Edmund Goodman (sec)	32	1902 or 1903	n/a	£2 10s	£2 10s	n/a	n/a
George Woodger	23	14 April 1906	Croydon Wanderers	£2 10s	£1 10s	unknown	unknown
Adrian Birch (trainer)	33	02 Aug 1905	n/a	£2 10s	£1 10s	n/a	n/a
Robert Ross	unkn.	02 Aug 1905	Arthurlie (Renfrew)	£2 10s	unknown	£10	unknown
Charles Wallace	20	02 Aug 1905	Southwick (Durham)	£2	unknown	£10	£5

Figure 182 – Palace players’ wages as recorded in the directors’ minute-book

We already saw that manager Jack Robson had been engaged at £250 p.a. (Figure 134), far more than any of his players, but Edmund Goodman received ‘good-news and bad-news’ in May: his position as club-Secretary was confirmed as permanent, but his wages were to be at the opposite end of the pay-scale: £2 10s a week – barely half of Robson’s wages, and much less than the senior players:

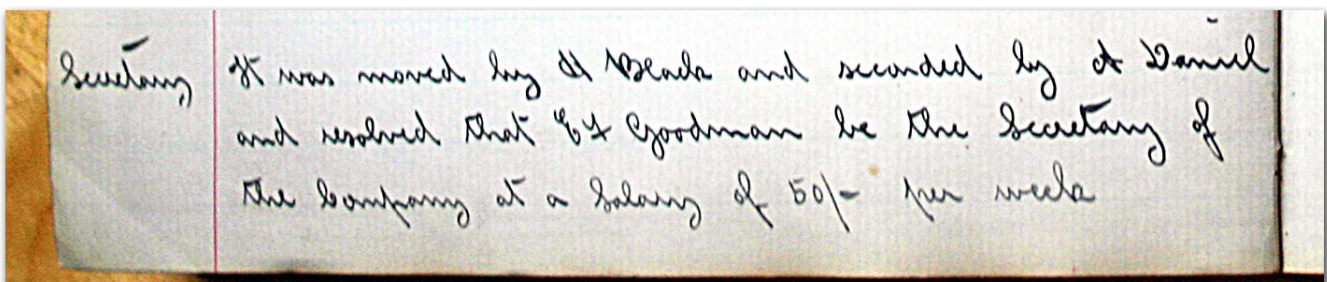


Figure 183 – Minute book of Crystal Palace FC, entry for 09 May 1905