

Stourbridge Cricket Society

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A Member of the Council of Cricket Societies

Christmas 2009

The Things They Say

"I felt like it was biblical times and I was about to be stoned at any moment"

Steve Rhodes, the Worcestershire coach after some members called for his resignation.

"I'd love to be given a chance to play against England in the forthcoming series in South Africa"

former Hampshire overseas player Imran Tahir has qualified for South Africa having previously represented Pakistan "A".

"Steven Jones's action is flawed and he won't last"

Arnie Sidebottam speaking at Stourbridge Cricket Society on the day that Steven signed a contract with Worcestershire.

"Twenty20 can only be a sideshow. It has no subtlety"

Robert Powell
"You need strong characters in the England side, people who will grab the game by the scruff of the neck. So why the hell is Ian Bell still in the England side?" **Andy Caddick**

From the Chair

It was most encouraging to see a good turn out on a wet October evening to welcome Mike Watkinson to our Society meeting, the first of the winter.

The questions you asked were varied and interesting. We all enjoyed Mike's humorous side, which I thought at times masked the sharp mindful approach he possesses and applies to the problems of coaching a first class county.

The evening was a perfect start and a real taster for the evenings to come.

Our November meeting saw Peter Bowler take centre stage having travelled from Taunton to be with us. His Anglo-Aussie accent was a surprise to some. His discovery of Ricky Ponting in faraway, Tasmania, the technical analysis of Hick's batting technique and fierce fast bowling stories were enough to make your hair stand on end, with facial scars thrown in! All this and more could have filled two cricket evenings. This was certainly a night worth leaving the fireside for!

I must say we do need lots of support and I am only too aware looking around the room that we need to encourage younger people and probably more female members! We are not an over fifty's club and I appeal to everyone to try and introduce a new member.

I do hope that by the time this is printed, England have made a good start to the South African Tour. A good performance overseas is guaranteed to encourage and promote young and old to follow and take more interest in our great game.

Thank you for your continued support.

**Mike Tomkins
Chairman**

Our Speakers

21 January 2010
18 February 2010

**John Morris
Wasim Khan**

Derbyshire and England
Warwickshire and
Chance to Shine

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Where Are They Now? John Aldridge

John's two finest moments in his cricketing career were signing for Worcester CCC and playing at Lords - every cricketer's dream!

Within a year of leaving Worcester CCC in 1960, he was invited by Clarence Cricket Club, Tasmania to join their club as player/coach. However on his arrival at Hobart Airport, amongst the officials welcoming him was a group of representatives from various Tasmanian Soccer Clubs. This rather surprised him until he was told that an article had appeared in the local press stating that John Aldridge was arriving and that he had played in goal for England. It was hoped that he could be persuaded to join one of their clubs and he was told that he would be playing in goal for Tasmania against Polonia (the Victoria State champions) in three day's time. Although John explained that they had been misinformed, he was still expected to turn out on the day and in his own words "totally disgraced myself and was never invited to play soccer again!"

Whilst in Tasmania, John played cricket at Clarence Cricket Club and represented Tasmania against S. Africa, M.C.C. and Australia. He also played Australian Rules football for two clubs, during which time both won their Premierships. His main occupation during that time was as Physical Education teacher at Clarence High School. Following the introduction at the airport on arrival in Tasmania, John was also asked to coach the Croatian Soccer Club who won the inaugural State Cup and he also played basketball for the University of Tasmania.

Then, in 1964, Kidderminster C.C. invited him to become their professional for the 1965 season. John recalls "After much consideration, I returned to the UK in 1965 to take up the post. During my time with Kidderminster, I vividly remember the match against Stourbridge, when my opening

partner took all ten wickets leaving me, the professional, with a considerable amount of egg on my face."

John also played cricket for Worcestershire Ramblers, Walsall, Stafford and the Perrywinkles. He was fortunate enough to go on tour to Los Angeles in 1973 with the Perrywinkles, which he says was a marvellous experience. However his cricketing career ended rather ignominiously in a village match, being bowled out for 4 by a 17-year old, who later turned out to be a girl wearing a baseball cap!! Needless to say after that he gave up!

John now retired from a post cricket career in sales, lives in Gloucestershire with his wife Rhona (just over the Worcestershire border). He has two sons Jonathan and Rychlund who have both represented their country at hockey and tennis respectively. A third son, Alexander, who died aged 16 in 1984, played football for the county. Jonathan has recently won a gold medal for England Vets in the Hong Kong Masters hockey and Rychlund is a tennis coach in Jersey. He has a grandson and a granddaughter who will no doubt be following in grandpa's sporting footsteps. John now enjoys visiting New Road and a regular game of golf.

God's Squad

Test players mentioned in The Gideons International Bible – **Border, Flower, Fowler, Hill, James, Lamb, Law, Lock North, Old, Shephard, Sleep, Snow, Thomas, White, Young.**

Well, what else is there to do on your own in a Hotel bedroom? !

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Member's Column - Yorkshire Get It Wrong Again !!!

It seems that the ECB Central Contracts may prove to be a mixed blessing so far as the Counties are concerned.

A player whose Central Contract has expired, but is still a capable County cricketer may find his County deal way below his expectations. This is thought to be factor in the Matthew Hoggard situation, where, at the time of writing, early November, he has not yet decided on a new County.

Whatever the case it does seem that once again Yorkshire appear to have handled the situation quite poorly, bringing forward the usual Media criticism.

The County does not have a good record in such matters, and the list of questionable sackings, releases and resignations is quite extensive.

STOP PRESS !! CEEFAX 8PM 9
November M.H. 3year Contract
and Skipper at Grace Road.
Good Luck to him!

Back to the past..... In 1958 Johnny Wardle was sacked for putting his name to a ghosted newspaper dotty without permission of the County. This was following Yorkshire's appointment of an amateur captain with no First-Class experience. Over his twelve year career Wardle had taken 1539 wickets at 18.13 and for England 102 at 20.39. He finished his career in The Lancashire League and for Cambridgeshire. His sacking put paid to his place on the winter tour to Australia for which he had already been selected!

In 1968 Ray Illingworth looking for a better contract informed the County Secretary who then told the Chairman, Brian Sellers, that "Illy" was possibly looking at another County. Sellers' response, via the Secretary, was that "he could bugger off and anyone else could go with him!" Illingworth went to Leicestershire as Captain bringing them success and their first Championship title and he himself regained

the England captaincy. In 1982 he returned to Yorkshire as player-managerby that time Sellers had gone!

In 1970 Brian Close was given ten minutes by chairman Sellers either to resign or be sacked. It was said that certain of his policies did not match those of the Chairman. This was following a twenty-one year career at Yorkshire, including four Championship titles in the sixties and his brief spell as England captain where in seven matches he had six victories and one draw. He went on to successfully captain Somerset until 1977 when he was awarded the CBE for "Services to Cricket"

There is no space here to record the long-running and divisive Boycott Affair but suffice to say that "love him or loathe him" it seems that he was the first to stand up to the Establishment and now has become a pillar of that same Establishment!

Significantly Wardle returned to the County as a bowling coach; Boycott, Close and Illingworth have all been made "honorary Life Members" and Close himself is now the County Chairman!

Bearing in mind that Yorkshire was the last County to introduce Players Contracts how many of their Employee-relations decisions would in Commerce or Industry today be viewed as unfair or constructive dismissals?

I hope my native County gets it right for once. I am looking forward to seeing results from the next overseas player who is a 31 year old Aussie he will have to be good to replace 32 year old "Hoggy"!

Mike King (Yorkshire follower since 1946)

Editor's Note. Quote from Matthew Hoggard himself " Other players who knew that they weren't going to be around next year were given a handshake and a send-off in front of the fans. All I got after 15 years at the club was a cup of coffee in the Chief Executive's office"

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Mike Rowley 50 Years Service Is Honoured

Mike Rowley was born in 1935 at Sandfield Hospital, now the defunct Wordsley Hospital, and spent his formative years living in Wollaston. He was one of five children. Mike's father was a well-known engraver working in the local glass industry and was also a great follower of cricket, which is where Mike inherited his own love of the game.

After a few outings to watch cricket at Amblecote, Mike decided to join Stourbridge Cricket Club. Never a great cricketer himself, although he top scored with one not out in a team score of 13 all out in his only cricket match, Mike found his niche in scoring. His first match for the first XI was against Walsall in 1960 where was "invited" to score by team captain Norman Whiting after the regular scorer failed to turn up.

Now, fifty years on, Mike has had to call it a day as far as scoring is concerned although he still enjoys taking up the pencil on a Sunday. During his illustrious score box career, he has scored for the WCA Under 19's who later became WCB Under 19's and was also a regular visitor to Devon with Worcestershire Marauders only missing the first tour.

Mike's achievement of scoring for Stourbridge for 50 years was recognised by the Club recently with a presentation of a SCC blazer at an evening reception at the clubhouse attended by many of his old "scorebook victims".

Keith Jones

Geoff Harper Still Going Strong

I was recently asked if I would accept the 1936 and 1937 issues of the now defunct local newspaper *The Dudley Herald*. I have now passed them to The Black Country

Museum but before doing so a report in the publication dated July 25 1936 caught my eye. It was an account of the final of the cricket competition played between elementary schools in the Brierley Hill Urban area. The match took place at The Labour-in-vain ground, Brockmoor between Hawbush Road and Wordsley schools and resulted in an easy win for Hawbush Road whose innings totalled 93 with Kitson making 55. When Wordsley batted they were dismissed for 14 with Kitson taking seven wickets for five runs although he could not dislodge G. Harper who went in at number three and was undefeated at the end of the innings, being four not out. The Dudley Herald reported the "Harper, one of the smallest players on the field, shaped very well for Wordsley". Why the interest? Harper is non other than Geoff Harper a long-standing member of this Society! Note: Geoff's brother Lew also played for Wordsley, contributing three runs to the total. The brothers went on to give many years of sterling service to Stourbridge in The Birmingham League.

Why ?

Did ECB use Duke balls in Division 1 of the County Championship and Tiflex in Division 2.

Did You Know ?

In the game between Worcestershire and Glamorgan at Stourbridge in 1960, after Jack Flavell had bowled one over he questioned the width of the bowling crease and it was found to be six inches too narrow. Apparently the same marking frame had been used for several seasons without anyone noticing the error.

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Nottinghamshire's Future In Worcestershire Hands – Chris Tolley

As a player I was fortunate enough to be involved in professional cricket for 13 years, firstly with Worcestershire and latterly with Nottinghamshire but at the back end of the 2000 season I was approached by our then Chairman Albert Bocking to set up the Academy at Nottinghamshire as the ECB was to be introducing them across the country.

It was a difficult decision to turn my back on my playing days but seemed like the perfect role for me with a background in teaching and a sport science degree from Loughborough. This hopefully makes me ideally suited to act as a tutor to our potential future stars and I have drawn on my experiences in schools and knowledge from my university days quite a lot since embarking on my current role.

The last eight years have seen big changes in the way the Academy is run. The biggest change is the age range of the players which was originally 13-18. This has moved up to 15-19 years of age now with the advent of firstly a Nottinghamshire Sub Academy system and now an ECB Emerging Players Programme. We have also reinstated a side in the local leagues as of this season which saw us win an easy promotion from the Bassetlaw League into the Notts Premier League.

With having a side in the League we have kept numbers high on the Academy and to do this from a small county like Notts we have recruited from minor counties such as Staffordshire, Lincolnshire and even Cornwall. This has caused some difficulties in getting access to the players but on the whole it has worked well for us with players such as Andy Carter coming through this year to play first class cricket.

Since we formed the first Academy intake from a group of emerging players previously run by Lyndsey Walker the Academy system at Notts has produced eleven players who have played first team cricket, six who have played Minor counties and one of the three women that we have had on the Academy, Jenny Gunn, has represented the England Womens team. Samit Patel has played for England in the one day team and Bilal Shafayat and Mark Footitt have been on the England Academy programme.

There is now an even greater emphasis on developing home grown talent and we are fortunate to have a good group of players coming through at present with players such. Akhil Patel, brother of Samit, had a great season in the seconds and earned himself a contract. He along with Jake Ball and Ben McGuire made first team appearances as non contracted players in the Pro40 whilst Sam Kelsall averaged 37 and Brett Hutton took five wickets on debut in the seconds this season. Both of these players were only just sixteen.

It is an exciting time for me as Academy Director and the other coaches to see how this next crop of Academy players develop over the next two years and hopefully emulate some of their predecessors in pulling on the three lions for England?

Chris played for Worcestershire from 1989 until 1995 being capped in 1993. He played in 107 First-class matches taking 189 wickets and scoring 6623 runs. He moved to Nottinghamshire in 1996 and was awarded his county cap in the following year.

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The Greater Draw Of Two-Division Cricket

The idea seems to be to make the county championship more competitive; with two divisions and now a massive increase in the prize money. More like football, perhaps. The prize for finishing second was increased this year from £40000 to £225000 and Nottinghamshire (with 4 wins out of 16) pipped Somerset (3wins) to the money.

What a different world it is from 1955 when Yorkshire finished second with 21 wins out of 28. Those were the days of uncovered pitches and of great spin bowlers like Laker and Lock, Appleyard and Wardle.

More disturbingly, it is also a very different world from 1995. Four -day cricket was in its third summer, each of the counties played 17 matches in one division and four wins was just enough to take Durham off bottom spot, ahead of Kent (with 3). That summer 81% of matches ended in a positive result. By 2008, in cricket's football-style Division One, it had fallen to 44%, now this summer to 40%.

Maybe cricket should not try to ape football.....or maybe it should. In the first 65 matches in this year's Premier League there were just four draws.

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From The Scorebook

Yorkshire has played four first-class matches on the Amblecote ground resulting in two wins for each county. In 1936 Worcestershire inflicted a "pair" on Len Hutton. In the first innings he was run out and in the second he was lbw to a ball that must have pitched outside off stump for the scorebook reads Hutton lbw Jackson. This was one of the seasons of the experimental lbw law. It was the first Worcestershire win against Yorkshire since 1909 although in the following year the same venue saw a Yorkshire victory by an innings and 81 runs.

Sudoku

			V		T		O	
N			I					
	D	O	R					
		E					N	
		D	O		E	T		
	V					P		
				O		V		
					I		E	N
	T		D		R			

Each block of 3 x 3 must contain the letters to make the word PROVIDENT.

Answers to Dave Nicklin no later than the February meeting.

Bottle of wine for the winner drawn at the meeting.

Who's Who in Stourbridge Cricket Society

President Dave Nicklin

Chairman Mike Tomkins 01384 288868

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