

**Cricket Society (Formed 1972)**  
**Stourbridge and District**

**Officers :-**

**President :** Martin Horton  
**Chairman :** Dave Nicklin (01527 871835)  
**Hon. Secretary :** Mike Taylor (01299 825776)  
**Hon. Treasurer :** Ken Workman (01384 83088)  
**Prog. Secretary :** Terry Church (01384 292170)

**PROGRAMME FOR 2007/8**

<b>Oct 18th</b>	<b>ARNIE SIDEBOTTOM</b> (England & Yorkshire C.C.C)
<b>Nov 15th</b>	<b>JOHN STEPHENSON</b> (England, Essex & Hampshire)
<b>Dec 13th</b>	<b>MIKE SMITH</b> (England & Warwickshire)
<b>Jan 17th</b>	<b>JOHN GRIMLEY</b> (Curator of Bradman Museum)
<b>Feb 21st</b>	<b>KEVIN EMERY</b> (Hampshire C.C.C.)
<b>Mar 20th</b>	<b>SYD LAWRENCE</b> (England & Gloucestershire)
<b>Apr 10th</b>	<b>NEAL RADFORD</b> (England, Lancs & Worcs.)
<b>Apr 24th</b>	<b>AGM</b>

The Society is a member of the Council of Cricket Societies.

Our Society website is : [www.sdcs.councilcricketsocieties.com](http://www.sdcs.councilcricketsocieties.com)

**STOP PRESS!! STOP PRESS!! STOP PRESS!! STOP PRESS!! STOP PRESS!!**

At the AGM a decision made at the 2006 AGM was implemented i.e. Membership Fees were raised for individual members to £9 and for double membership to £15. The Committee is sure that members will continue to receive value for money.

The Committee members were re-elected en bloc.

The new Committee decided to make the December meeting a little more festive. Therefore from 7.30pm onwards there will be wine and mince pies for those attending the meeting.

Mike Taylor is open to suggestions for another trip in March 2008. Give him your ideas.

The profit from the monthly raffle is a valuable addition to our funds. Can you donate a prize? – wine; cricket books; cricket dvd's etc. are all acceptable and would be much appreciated.

Don't forget the competitions in this newsletter. Have a go!!

What a summer for bad weather. For Worcestershire it was catastrophic! For those of you who visited the County Ground it must have been very sad to see the playing surface in such a state. No wonder there were no end of season matches played there. Ironic isn't it that the controversial Sky money will aid Worcestershire's recovery!

### Gladstone Small

Many thanks to Norman Robins for this report.

**I**n Australia for the Ashes Tests Gladstone Small had the hard decision to make of returning home in January to speak at the Stourbridge and District Cricket Society or playing for England against Australia and West Indies in the beach cricket matches! He didn't think twice! England won, maybe inspiring the England Ashes squad to win the one-day series.

As it turned out Gladstone made the right decision, stayed, played and came to speak in February when the advertised speaker cried off at the last minute.

Given a warmly received talk and Q&A session Gladstone, born 45 years ago in Barbados, came to England and Warwickshire as a naive teenager. (As the story of the passport required to play cricket in Scotland illustrated). His ambition was to play for England, which he did, taking 55 Test wickets, reasoning that he had a better chance in England than with the West Indies at that time with their wealth of talent.

At home in Barbados he played beach cricket and came to Warwick as a batsman/offspinner but changed to pace by his experience of bowling on hard West Indian surfaces. Gladstone described a delightful picture of his 93 year old grandfather sitting under a palm tree sipping rum and coke and listening to cricket on his transistor radio and discussing cricket with his old friends. Registered for Warwick in 1979 one piece of advice from Richard Hadlee to the young Gladstone was to keep his head still when bowling. Playing for Warwick under captain Bob Willis he spoke of the Willis love/hate relationship with the Warwick supporters and later playing for England, again with Willis as captain and the latter's relaxed pre-test meetings at the Plough and Harrow, Hagley Road.

I counted seventeen or eighteen questions fired at Gladstone after a slow start and the Chairman's regular request for a Boycott story. (Gladstone: "He was impossible to bowl out"). Subjects covered in the Q&As included modern fast bowling, a balance was necessary between rest and play. (Gladstone bowled 600 overs in one season). David Graveney v Duncan Fletcher; bowling coach Kevin Shine and the England wicket-keeping position. For the World Cup Gladstone forecast Australia, England, South Africa and Sri Lanka for the semi-finals. (Was he right?)

Other items covered in the answers were the usual ones on umpires, overseas players but some new takes on Brian Lara's record score of 501; England undercooked for the Ashes Tests; Christmas celebrations in Melbourne; wives on overseas tours and on his annual return to Barbados the absence of youngsters playing beach cricket.

In a calmer moment, George and his wife were sitting at home. George was as usual reading some bowling averages. "Do you remember the day you proposed at the cricket match?" said she, romantically. "You were bold." "No I wasn't," muttered George, "I was caught and bowled!"

## **Autograph hunters united**

As with Stuart Richardson autograph hunting has been a large part of my life. It started on my eighth birthday in 1950 with my birthday present from my grandparents being an 8 x 5 autograph book which I still use to this day so it can be seen that my collection is nowhere near as large as that accumulated by Stuart.

My father asked Jack Flavell, who as well as being an aspiring fast bowler at New Road was also on the staff at West Bromwich Albion, if he would take my book along to the club and the first page is filled with signatures of who were then my heroes -players such as Ray Barlow and Joe Kennedy. Jack kindly did the same with Worcestershire so that was a good start for me.

For over fifty years the third page in my book contained only the signature of Alf Valentine from when he was Pro' at Walsall CC and even now I can pinpoint almost exactly where the great man was when he signed which was midway between the Stourbridge pavilion and the turnstiles. Two years ago I was able to obtain the signature of his 'spin twin' Sonny Ramadhin to rest on the same page.

Incidentally the fourth page is headed "Stourbridge and Aston Unity" and is signed by Dick Howarth, Dick Richardson, Norman Whiting and non other than our President Martin Horton and I am almost certain that it was the day that Martin had the incredible bowling figures of seven wickets for seven runs.

For many years I collected on a spasmodic basis and the signatures were mainly those of cricketers obtained during county games at Dudley and Stourbridge. Colin Cowdrey, for example, at Stourbridge and at Dudley where only Tommy Greenhough and Roy Collins (later to become the brother-in-law of Jim Cumbes) of the Lancashire team would sign after being pursued to The Station Hotel. Forever after they became two of my favourite cricketers and I willed them to get runs and wickets in every game.

A holiday in Blackpool in the early fifties netted me Stanley Matthews and Stan Mortenson leaving the ground after training. During the same holiday Ken Dodd signed as he left the stage door on Central Pier dedicating it "To Terry Yours toothfully Ken Dodd".

In later years Sporting Dinners were the source of the signatures of the Celebrity Guest Speakers and names added to my book included Geoff Boycott, Denis Compton, Fred Trueman and Frank Tyson as well as George Best, Jimmy Greaves and Dennis Law and from other sports Phil Bennett and Dennis Taylor and Roy Hattersley, Dennis Howell and Dennis Thatcher from the world of politics.

The one principal of a collector is to always carry something to write with and something to be written on and this allowed me to successfully approach Daley Thompson in Oxford Street in London as well as Kepler Wessels as he waited to leave the Lords pavilion to toss up with Mike Atherton on the occasion of South Africa's first Test at Lords after being readmitted to Test Cricket. In addition Kevin Keegan signed whilst at Kempton Park (and he gave us a tip that won!)

I wanted badly to obtain the autographs of England's 1966 World Cup Winners and over a period of several years I acquired those of the ten living legends that left me with the difficult task of tracking down the signature of the late Bobby Moore. I was eventually able to obtain it at auction at a cost of £114- well worth it in my opinion to achieve my goal.

The only other occasion that I have parted with money to add to my collection is when a friend of mine said that he had some autographs from a house clearance and would I be interested in making an offer. After a little bit of haggling we agreed a price of £120. Included was the Team Sheet of the Australian touring team of 1956, which was captained by Ian Johnson and included Ritchie Benaud, Neil Harvey, Ray Lindwall and Keith Miller. Also included was an autograph book, which had the Manchester United team of season 1949-50 together with that of the Manager Matt Busby, as well as those of West Bromwich Albion and Sheffield United for the same season. An added bonus was all the signatures of the England team for the Edgbaston Test of 1957 including Peter May, Trevor Bailey, Godfrey Evans Tony Lock and Peter Richardson. I think that I had a bargain

My collection is still being added to whenever the opportunity arises and when I book a speaker for Stourbridge and District Cricket Society I try to ensure that it will be a signature to be added to my collection (only joking!)

Incidentally my other anorak hobby is collecting programmes but I will leave that for another time.

Terry Church

## RICHARD ILLINGWORTH

**T**erry Church introduced RICHARD ILLINGWORTH as his 21<sup>st</sup> man.

That was how many potential speakers he had approached at the last minute after Gladstone Small preferred to stay in the Australian sunshine rather than visit Stourbridge on a damp January evening.

Richard opened by reminding us that he was born in Bradford in 1963 and recalls playing cricket on Filey beach with the family when 4 years old, and has been in love with the game ever since. Encouraged by his father, who already played in the Bradford League, he quickly progressed through the various youth stages playing representative cricket for Yorkshire and for the North versus the South. After leaving school and with no immediate prospects in the game he took a job in the local Employment Office where one of his customers was Steve Rhodes, looking for winter employment to supplement his Yorkshire contract. Forgetting the job they spent many hours discussing the joys of a cricketer's life. This only increased the desire to make the next step.

He continued to make progress until late in 1981 he made an appearance for Worcester 2nds and did enough for Basil D'Oliveira and Chairman John Morris to offer him a contract. In 1982 he played 3 Youth Test Matches against the West Indies and was on his way.

Twenty five years on he considers Worcestershire to be his home, even choosing to commute during his year at Derbyshire. At this point he did express his disappointment at being sacked by Worcester, he had complained many times about the type of wickets being produced feeling that they were not conducive to spin bowling.

He talked of the happy times at New Road, considering Tim Curtis to be the best captain he played under, developing a great team spirit, this was helped by a number of young players coming through at the same time.

Thank you, Gil Thomas, for this revue.

His career continued to prosper and in 1991 while still in bed with a sore head he was presented with a telephone and the voice said "Ray Illingworth here" immediate reaction was that one of the lads was having a laugh, but he soon got the message and was asked to report to Trent Bridge two days later.

So his test career began and the start could not be bettered taking the wicket of Phil Simmons with his first ball. He played 9 Tests in total finishing in 1995/96. He talked admiringly of Graeme Hick, and in particular of his innings of 405 at Taunton reminding us that Worcester were 132 for 5 and ended at 628 for 7 with contributions from Rhodes 56, Newport 27, and Richard with 31 not out, this was his part in an unbroken stand of 177. In the mid 90s he had a chat with Peter Willey who remarked that "'you have a good understanding of the game, you have a thick skin, and nobody likes you, the perfect credentials for an umpire'", and so the seed was sown.

After a couple of years probation on the Reserve List he was promoted to the First Class Umpires list at the beginning of 2006. He has already acted as 4<sup>th</sup> Umpire at Lords. That seems like a nice little job. Well not quite, first he has to attend to the Umpires every needs, supplying drinks etc. Then there's the pitch to be protected from any unwarranted intrusion from early morning and through every break. It started O.K. but then there is Nasser Hussain, who in his capacity as Sky commentator felt he was above the law and continued to enter onto the strip, and after being asked to back off, threw a tantrum with a tirade of abusive language ending with him being warned off by a higher authority. The whole episode only confirmed Richards previously formed opinion of Nasser from his playing days.

However, none of this has affected his great love for the game and he is delighted to be able to continue his involvement with the game at the highest level.

Richard turned out to be a most able substitute or 21<sup>st</sup> man contributing to a most enjoyable evening

## **TOM GRAVENEY**

Thanks to Brian Hilson for this comprehensive report.

**T**he April meeting of the society will stay in the memory of those who attended, as our guest speaker was none other than Tom Graveney who enjoyed legendary status as a player at Worcestershire.

Tom started his talk with a potted history of his early life: he was born in Riding Mill near Newcastle as one of five children and inherited his natural sporting ability from his father. Sadly, his father died at an early age and his life took a different direction when his mother re-married and his stepfather's job took the family to Blackpool and ultimately, Bristol. Tom attended Bristol Grammar School where he excelled at rugby and cricket. His best subject was Maths and the prospect of a potential career in Accountancy was sufficient motivation to propel him towards the Army. His nineteenth birthday saw him aboard a troop ship bound for Cairo and his subsequent Army career took him to Kenya and thence to Suez where he took the job of sports officer. It was during a period of leave in 1947 that Tom signed for Gloucestershire after playing in Charlie Barnett's benefit match. Tom was modest enough to point out that his first 20 innings yielded a mere 220 runs and he was dropped from the side on his twenty-first birthday!

The inauspicious start to his career was soon forgotten in a glut of runs that August and subsequent selection for the Gents v Players prior to an England call up in 1951 to replace the injured Denis Compton. Tom alluded to the dispute with Gloucestershire which was prompted by his replacement as captain and, after a qualification season playing for Dudley, he signed for Worcestershire. Tom recalled his early days at New Road with great fondness and enjoyed the company of some fine cricketers and some "great blokes". Tom took pride in the fact that he was instrumental in signing Basil D'Oliveira for the county at a whisky fuelled meeting in a hotel in Karachi and as much pride in reporting that he survived seven weeks of sharing a room with Bill Alley on that Commonwealth tour!

Tom regaled us with tales of Worcestershire's championship successes and opinions on the great players he knew and had encountered. There was much nodding of heads and contented smiles in the audience when Tom declared Don Kenyon to be the best captain of his experience. He paid tribute to the artistry of Les Jackson, Tom Cartwright and Jack Flavell and thought that the paucity of their England caps said more about the selectors than it did of the players' ability. Unsurprisingly, he considers Sobers to be the best cricketer of all time and a true sportsman. The latter description he did not ascribe, however, to Charlie Griffith with whom he had a full and frank discussion about his dubious action. The sad end to Tom's Test career was mentioned and involved his commitment to playing in his benefit match on the Sunday of a Test Match. It appeared that Alec Bedser had changed his story about granting permission to Tom to play in a lucrative benefit match and he was banned for three matches, never to play for England again.

Tom's views on the "Ashes debacle" were of interest and he pulled no punches in declaring that the preparation was almost non-existent and the selection policy

illogical. The presence of a coterie of “advisors” and “specialists” swelled the touring party to a staggering ninety- two. He was equally disparaging about the presence of wives and girlfriends. “My wife knew she wasn’t coming on tour”-Tom declared to much laughter.

We were told of his pride and great surprise in becoming President of the MCC and he was able to tell us that the image of “stuffed shirts” committee members is unfair. There exist on the committee many fine people who are committed to improving all aspects of the game especially in schools and universities. His time as the first professional cricketer to hold the post gave him the opportunity to view the game from a different perspective.

The first half of the evening ended with Tom’s personal favourite moments in sport as follows. First and foremost, winning the Ashes; second beating America in the Ryder Cup and third England beating Wales at Rugby Union.

**T**he second half was the usual question and answer session and a number of amusing and interesting observations arose.

- *Tom’s great hero was Wally Hammond.*
- *His “best” ever team would include Hutton, Compton, May, Underwood, Laker, Sobers, Richards, Lindwall and Evans.*
- *The player he would have liked to face is Shane Warne as he thought, as a leg spinner of some repute himself; he could “pick him”.*
- *The press was kinder in his day in that they were friends who could be trusted and there was Jim Swanton as well!*
- *Tom thought that technology should be used on an all or nothing basis and there was a danger of umpires ending up as ball counters.*
- *He thought the England Test team to be in the grip of Glamorgan (!) and could not understand why players were not released back to their counties in attempt to regain form. He thought that technically England were “awful at times”*
- *Tom was less than impressed with the ICC who had made too many basic mistakes in running the game and it was a worry that international cricket will soon be administered from the “sub-continent”*

**I**t was typical of Tom’s humour that he should end the evening with a story of overhearing the conversation of two schoolboys as they cycled past his house in Winchcombe. The year was 1966 and Tom was still playing Test cricket and the one boy called to his friend “An England player lives in one of those houses”. Which one?” his friend asked. “The one where that old chap is sweeping leaves”, came the reply... That “old chap” was the first person to score 100 centuries in the years after the War, whose name was synonymous with style and elegance and who proved to members of our society that it is possible to be a truly great sportsman and to be modest and courteous. He even thanked us all for attending and listening to him! The pleasure was all ours, Tom!



