

Stourbridge Cricket Society

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A Member of the Council of Cricket Societies

Christmas 2011

From the Chair

The final September cricket fixtures and the season, which commenced in the first week of April, now seem a long time ago. Worcestershire survived and remain in Division One. Warwickshire did much better with their unsuccessful challenge for the title going right to the last game, in what turned out to be a very interesting summer.

We must ask ourselves though, is cricket going in the right direction, both at Club and International level! The ECB are listening and reducing the T20 games accordingly, after all, the bottom line has to be attendances. Supporters, or the lack of them tell the story, as do the PCA who have for sometime asked for less One Day cricket with more opportunity for rest, practise and preparation.

A matter for concern must be the lack of spectators at Newlands during a highly entertaining South Africa v Australia Test Match only last week. The ICC must be pro-active and reduce the clutter of one day matches especially across Asia although, in fact, the problem exists right across all cricket playing countries. The ICC, as custodians of world cricket, must ensure that test cricket, the purest form of the game, remains fully intact.

England are at saturation point with the number of tests we play. We are the best, but will spectators continue to watch in numbers next summer? The South Africa tests over here clash with the Olympics and revenue will be down because of the diversity of choice, exacerbated by the lack of media coverage.

It is more important than ever before, as cricket reaches another crossroad, that the ICC endorse test cricket and encourage each country to moderate its one day structure.

Finally, there was hardly a dry eye at Worcester Cathedral on Wednesday 9th November when the congregation paid a final farewell to Graham Dilley at his Memorial Service.

It is a sad month for Worcestershire fans as the following day Graeme Hick and his family emigrated for a new life in Australia. The pair plundered wickets and runs along with other very talented players in what became an extremely formidable County side, winning six titles between 1987 and 1991. New Road membership increased overnight by four thousand and the sun seemed to shine throughout each season. They will be sorely missed.

Mike Tomkins
Chairman

Future Speakers

| | |
|-------------|--------------------------------|
| 19 January | Gary Lambert (Chance to Shine) |
| 16 February | Paul Smith (Warwickshire) |
| 15 March | Henry Olonga (Zimbabwe) |
| 19 April | William Powell (Author) |
| | 7.30pm start |

Views expressed in this Newsletter are those of individual contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor or the Committee of the Stourbridge and District Cricket Society.

The Newsletter of Stourbridge and District Cricket Society

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40th Anniversary Lunch

This will be held **THURSDAY 15 MARCH** when our speaker will be the former Zimbabwe pace bowler Henry Olonga who as well as being an extremely brave and highly principled human being is also an entertaining speaker. In addition he has a very fine tenor voice that he will prove at the end of his talk. Coffee will be served at 11am and a buffet will be available at the end of Henry's talk. We are very grateful to Lynne who has kindly agreed to prepare the buffet at a cost of £6 (and, yes, that does include coffee!).

Please book early with payment in full required to Mike Tomkins.

Subscriptions 2011/2012

By the October meeting 89 members had paid their subscription for this season, compared with a total membership of 86 last year. As we have several new members that means that there are a few members who have not yet paid.

We need your money! Please pay Ken Workman at our next meeting.

Incomprehension

"When I got my 90th international century nobody said anything. Even before my 99th century nobody said anything. So why now? I don't understand"

Sachin Tendulkar

Society on Tour

After a lapse of a year we will again be organising a trip in 2012, the date being **THURSDAY 15 MARCH**. A little more local than in previous years with a visit to Edgbaston to see the results of their £32million pound "investment" during the morning followed by a viewing of The Hawthorns, in the opinion of some the home of the area's premier side, West Bromwich Albion (I know there isn't much to see in the Trophy Cabinet!) We anticipate that the coach will depart from Amblecote at about 9.30 am and we will be back at about 5 o'clock. Arrangements for lunch are at present not finalised. Cost will be in the region of £23 plus meal.

Deposit of £10 to Murray George will reserve your place on the trip.

Murray George Secretary

Midlands Club Cricket Conference Quiz

Our team of Murray George, Brian Hilson, Dave Nicklin and Ken Workman did not bring home the trophy but finished a creditable fourth in the competition held in September. It is hoped to enter a team (or two) next year – if you are interested in representing the Society please have a word with Dave Nicklin.

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Where are they now?

"I'm more likely to be down on the allotment discussing the problems of black fly than watching the cricket at Taunton," the Chairman of Rowbarton Allotment Society told me. A surprising statement you may think as the words are spoken by **Peter Robinson** who spent over fifty years involved in county cricket beginning with Worcestershire in 1958 and concluding with Somerset in 2008.

Upon leaving Christopher Whitehead School Peter was due to start a "proper job" at Eltex until his uncle, Roly Jenkins, asked him if he would like to a job at New Road on the ground staff and his duties would include turning out for the Club and Ground side. During his time at Worcester he also turned out for both Stourbridge and Kidderminster in The Birmingham League.

Long before the advent of luxury-sponsored cars Peter recalls Bob Carter taking him in his Reliant Robin to York to attend Bob's wedding. Unfortunately his path to a career as a left arm spinner at New Road was blocked with competition, initially from Bob Berry and Brian Spittle and later by Norman Gifford and Doug Slade. Deciding to seek pastures new he joined Somerset in 1964 where he contentedly remained until his retirement during which time he did virtually every job with his adopted county.

In 1978 he became County Coach and in the late 1980's he coached the 2ndX1 and Under 19 sides, when first Jack Burkinshaw and then Bob Cottam assumed the senior role. Following the appointment of Dermot Reeve as first team coach Peter oversaw Health and Safety as well as the Indoor School.

Opting for semi-retirement in 2003 Peter tended the pitches at Taunton Vale as well as coaching the Somerset Ladies team, guiding them to promotion to the Premier League. With the advent of laptops as an aid to coaching Peter decided to call it a day, fearful of paralysis instead of analysis taking over. In 1966 Peter had married Elizabeth Powick from the village of Shrawley, near Stourport, and their marriage has been blessed with two daughters and five grandchildren.

Coincidentally his daughters married names are Caddick and Trego but not of the cricket variety! Sandwiched between Richard Devereux and Basil D'Oliveira Peter's Worcestershire colours number is 312, which Elizabeth says is easy to remember, as it was the number of the Midland Red bus that ran between Worcester and Stourport!

For those of our readers interested in numbers Peter's career statistics are:

4936 runs
297 wickets
170 catches
2 allotments

Terry Church

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Who am I?

- 1 I played cricket for Dudley and soccer for Middlesboro, Plymouth and Walsall
- 2 Born in Ceylon- a talented lad?
- 3 Well seated local who became Governor General of New Zealand
- 4 Slow left arm ex Yorkie now standing as a 1st class umpire
- 5 South African from Transvaal played Birmingham League cricket and one game for Worcestershire in 1988
- 6 Old Malvernian from Barbados, A high flier?
- 7 Old Elizabethan, Oxford Blue and captain. Preferred to play by the sea
- 8 Fred now specialises in organising travel for cricket tours
- 9 Naval officer who also played for Combined Services, Free Foresters and MCC

A bottle of something for the first all correct answer drawn at our MARCH meeting. Answers please, to Ken Workman by 15 March

CLUE; You may have noticed that the first letter of each answer makes the name of a former Worcestershire player whose name has recently been in the news..

Ken Workman

Council of Cricket Societies

Your Chairman and Programme Secretary represented our Society at the half yearly meeting held at Derbyshire CCC on 5 November. Twenty Societies were represented in a total attendance of approximately sixty. Interestingly six new societies have been formed in the last few years that is encouraging in a time when several societies are experiencing a fall in membership. More encouraging news was that several societies reported an increase in members and in many cases members had welcomed an increase in the annual subscription rate! The average annual cost is about £15. After lunch the speaker was Luke Sutton, captain of Derbyshire, who was very honest about the county's turbulent season. A well worthwhile meeting with like-minded people coming together to pool ideas for the furtherance of all societies.

Terry Church

Message from Hoggie

Hi mate. Hope yr all good. We can play now. Watch out.

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Who's Who in Stourbridge Cricket Society

President Dave Nicklin

Chairman Mike Tomkins 01384 288868

Secretary Murray George 01527 576524 janeandmur@hotmail.com

Treasurer Ken Workman 01384 830881

Programme Secretary Terry Church 01384 292170 terrychurch@btclick.com

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Murray Hedgecock, our speaker from "down under"

Thanks for a truly enjoyable evening (and the entire visit), even if the football crowd rather suggested at first sight an enormous assembly for the cricket society. You didn't too badly anyway – you might have squeezed in about three more people, and that would have been that.

Yes, Mike was kind enough to tell me more about all sorts of matters local and cricketing en route to the station – where as I hopped into the train a chap in front of me turned and said; "I enjoyed your talk last night". Don't know who he was, but he was headed for a funeral at Solihull. (Please pass to Mike my appreciation all round).

It's great in an age of twenty/20 to be with like-minded enthusiasts for real cricket, as the quality of the questioning proved. It was great fun, and very stimulating.

I bought the Stourbridge News (and other papers) this morning, and so was able to read all about the significance of the Cup draw; good luck to the locals. I appreciated all the arrangements, the hospitality and general feeling of goodwill. Now back to ordinary life.

All the best - Murray

Cricket with the Headleys

I was lucky enough to have played my cricket career at a time when one of the most famous cricketing families of all time were involved with the Birmingham League. I don't think it is that well documented but the **Headleys** are the only family where three generations have all played test cricket, **George and Ronnie for West Indies and Dean for England.**

George, born in 1909, played test cricket from the age of 20 until 1954, aged 45. He has the second best batting record of all time, surpassed only by Don Bradman. He was the first player to score a century in each innings of a test match at Lords. Ron, born 1939, played only twice for West Indies, failing to get selected on a regular basis because for that to happen he would have needed to spend winters playing in competitions in the Caribbean. Ron's son Dean played in many games for England before he was forced into early retirement through injury.

My first contact with George was in 1951. I had joined Dudley Cricket Club aged 13, introduced by my school sports master Tom Palmer, who was Dudley captain in 1949. I played regular league cricket from 1952 and my love for the game intensified after George arrived, and I spent most summer evenings at the cricket ground listening to him in the nets. I had never heard of George Headley before he came to Dudley but I learnt everything about him within a few weeks of his arrival. cont.....

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He was so charismatic and interesting and I couldn't wait for school to finish so that I could get down to the nets. He was always willing to spend time with me and encouraged me to think of different ways of outwitting batsmen. George played at Dudley for four years, and Dudley won the League in 1952. He broke the league batting record in his first year, averaging nearly 80. He was incredible, no bowler ever seemed to trouble him.

It wasn't long before Ron came on the scene. I think he first played for Dudley 2nd team in about 1952 aged 13, making an immediate impact. This was the beginning of a friendship between us that has lasted 60 years, He made his debut for Worcestershire while still in his teens and was a most attractive attacking batsman, brilliant fielder and one of the quickest ever between the wickets. This came as no surprise as his younger brother, Lindy, won an Olympic 100metre sprint medal in the seventies and is currently the 100metre over 60's world champion. Ronnie played two or three seasons in Dudley 1st team as a teenager whilst on the staff at Worcester, prior to becoming a regular in the county side. He was one of the main reasons for Dudley winning the League again in 1957. After a long and distinguished career with Worcester it was Ron's ambition to return to Dudley as the club pro and try to win the league again, just as his father had in the 50s. Everyone connected with the club was delighted that it did not take long and in 1981 Dudley were once again champions of the Birmingham League. What a shame that within 2 years there was to be no more cricket at Dudley.

Dean I have known since his birth. From a very early age it was obvious that he was going to be a cricketer, though with his background one would expect him to be a batsman, not the fast bowler he became. He had a few early injury worries and, I think, poor handling at Worcester. Luckily Middlesex and later Kent realised his potential and it was not long before he made his debut for England. He had a few memorable games for England but none better than bowling out Australia almost single handed at Melbourne to win. Unfortunately he had to retire at a fairly young age due to injury.

Just one final anecdote about George Headley. In late 1986 I was fortunate to meet Gary Sobers at the launch of the new sponsor for the National Knockout competition at Lords. Stourbridge had won the final that year and I was invited along with our team manager, John Huband, to the Cockspur Rum luncheon. During our conversation it cropped up that I had played with George Headley, Sobers was silent for a moment and then said 'so you have played with the great man – I never did and feel very jealous' What a comment, coming from probably the greatest cricketer of all time.

Probably the unique fact about my connection with the Headleys is not only that I was lucky enough to play with all of them but I also played against all three. It's a long story and maybe one day I will reveal all.

Gordon Smith