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Stourbridge & District Cricket Society is a member of the Council of Cricket Societies.
Our Society website is : www.sdcs.councilcricketsocieties.com

Programme for 2006/7

October 19 th	DAVID GRAVENEY	Chairman of England Selectors.
November 16 th	DAVID RAYVERN-ALLEN	Cricket writer.
December 14 th	CHRIS BROAD	England and Nottinghamshire C.C.C.
January 18 th	GLADSTONE SMALL	England and Warwickshire C.C.C.
February 15 th	ASHLEY METCALF	Yorkshire C.C.C.
March 15 th	DAVID GREEN	Lancashire and Gloucestershire C.C.C.
April 12 th	TO BE CONFIRMED	

Meetings take place in the Pavilion at Stourbridge C.C. on Thursdays at 8pm

To prevent long queues at the first meeting our Treasurer, would appreciate early payment of Membership Fees. Please send cheques (payable to Stourbridge & District C.S.) BEFORE our first meeting to Ken Workman, 15 Ridge Road, Kingswinford. DY6 9RB

PLEASE READ ON FOR MEMBERSHIP FEES!!!!!!

At the AGM in April it was agreed to increase the Membership Fee by £1 to £8. To encourage more ladies to attend our meetings there will be a new category of membership. This will be a joint Husband /Wife membership fee of £14.

To maintain the high level of speaker that we have managed to bring to Stourbridge in the last few years we felt that a small increase would be accepted by our members. Our outlay for speakers for 2006/7 is well over £1000.

At the time of compiling this newsletter the County team are doing well - second place in Division 2 of the Championship and the PRO40 League and looking good for promotion. I shall say no more!!!

MIKE VOCKINS, who retired in 2001 as Secretary of Worcestershire and was the most 'senior' chief Executive in first class cricket after 30 years in the post, led us on a 'gentle ramble through cricket' at our January 2006 meeting. A most refreshing start to a new year with not an 'f' word in sight, nor an apology to our lady members needed for a tale in bad taste. In the course of his time at New Road Mike was invited to manage five overseas tours for England Under 19, England 'A' and an English Counties XI tour of Zimbabwe – his first overseas trip. The experience brought him into contact with many young cricketers who were subsequently to play for England at the highest level. – Nasser Hussain, Dominic Cork, Jack Russell and Mike Gatting to name but a few. He was also privileged to meet Don Bradman (twice) and Harold Larwood on two visits to Australia as well as Robert Mugabe and Ian Smith, both of whom were interested in talking cricket rather than politics.

Among his many and varied achievements Mike was involved in the development of 6-a-side indoor cricket, the transformation of the TCCB into the ECB and the introduction of first class umpires and 3 day cricket into the 2nd XI competition. His contribution to the game was recognised with the award of an OBE in 1996.

Among his many achievements Mike identified the purchase of New Road from the Dean and Chapter of Worcester Cathedral in 1976 and his role in bringing Graeme Hick to the county was personally significant. The most successful time was under the captaincy of Phil Neale when the County won 6 titles in 5 years – the Botham and Dilley era!

The only occasion when the job conflicted with his vocation as a clergyman was when cricket was played at New Road on Easter Sunday! What a daft idea.

Thanks to Ken Workman for his thoughts.

PAT MURPHY was our popular speaker at the February meeting . He gave us the full benefit of his vast experience in journalism over the past 35 years, first in local papers, then for BBC TV in the Midlands, and now for the last 25 years for BBC Radio Sport specialising in football and cricket. He is also Five Live's cricket reporter covering all England's home Test matches. Speaking to a fully attentive capacity audience for two hours, giving firstly his personal impressions of the recent Tests series against Australia, and then answering numerous general questions, he was still in full swing at the end of the meeting.

He talked about each of the five Test matches in turn, admitting that he had written two newspaper articles prior to the Tests, anticipating that England would lose the series. He was also able to report on Radio Five that during an interview, Glen McGrath had stated that he expected a 5 - nil clean sweep by Australia in the Tests, later Matthew Hoggard gave a very measured response to this claim, which the Press then reported as " HOGGARD SLAMS McGRATH OVER THE HILL"

Pat stated that England had received a very noisy and enthusiastic reception at Lords for the first Test, but later the players were truly devastated by their defeat .The selectors kept their nerve, however, and the team regrouped for the second test at Edgbaston.,which England won. On the first day England scored 407 , and Andrew Flintoff hit five sixes . This was wonderful for the England supporters, but Pat recollected that a few of the England players confessed to having nightmares after the two run victory . If the last ball had been a little wider of the wicket-keeper, it would have gone for 4, giving Australia victory Thankfully it was caught and the last man was out.

The effect of this win was to create tremendous enthusiasm for the third Test at Manchester. This really got to the players, some of whom even had difficulty getting into the ground on the first day, because of the crowded streets around the ground. Pat felt that Michael Vaughan was able to give his team a psychological uplift at the end of the match, by pointing out the great relief in the Australian dressing room, after they had just managed to save the draw .

The final Sunday at Trent Bridge was to be savoured with Giles and Hoggard batting for England and sealing the 3 wicket victory, the latter disclaiming his normal defensive instincts and hitting an off drive for 4 . Pat believed that the result confirmed that Vaughan had won the tactical battle over Ponting. The last Test at the Oval, with England one up in the series, became the social event of the season in London, with ticket touts everywhere. Pat described the grand comedy on the Sunday, with dampness and bad light prevailing, and England starting their second innings late in the day. Their supporters, eager for the umpires to take the players off for bad light, and to stop Warne doing any damage, opened their brollies against the imaginary rain. The Australian supporters responded by taking off their shirts, to enjoy the imaginary sunshine, and the Australian players joined in by wearing a variety of sun glasses as they came out to field. Pat further noted that Michael Vaughan had impressed upon Kevin Pietersen the need to soak up the applause, and to enjoy the atmosphere after scoring 158 in this match, since it might be a once in a lifetime experience. Pat concluded his talk by praising the England Ladies team for winning their series against the Australians.

After the break, there was an extended period of time allowed for the numerous questions that the audience wished to ask Pat.

During this time he said that Michael Vaughan had outwitted Ponting tactically during the series, and had had the support of a successful bowling unit. He admitted, however, feeling that Australia were still the best team in the world, but that England had faced up to them and were not talked out of winning.

Like us all, he was unhappy about the T.V. arrangements for the coming tour of India and felt that the Government shared some of the blame by not really wishing to get involved. He was somewhat sceptical about the size of the audience that Sky would attract for the Tests, especially in their unwillingness to declare figures, compared with the large numbers who watched the Australian series on Channel 4 last summer.

Commenting on the Indian tour, Pat felt that England should do well, but must aim for big totals if they were to win matches. Pietersen had been successful on previous visits there and Tendulkar appeared to be in decline. England were suitably focused for this series and should benefit from their strong quick bowling attack..

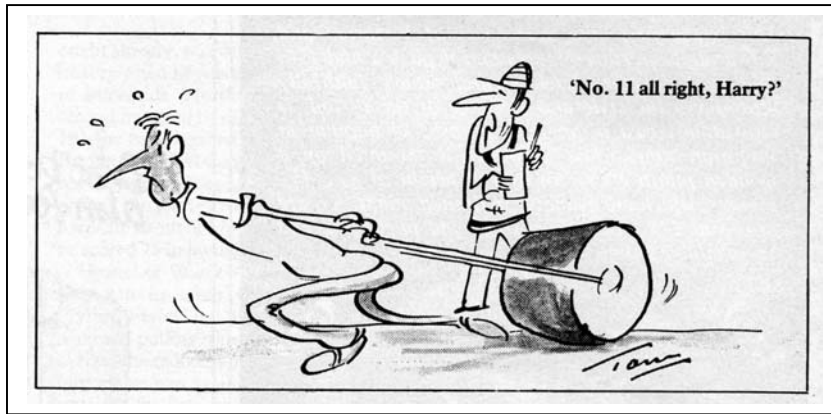
When asked about Test match grounds, Pat said that he had reservations about the enclosed press accommodation at Lords, partly because of the exclusion of the sound of crowd reaction to the play. He spoke of the unbearable heat at Columbo , and of his somewhat humorous experiences, after being relegated to sitting in the spectators area at Karachi, to report on the play. He felt that England's failure in Pakistan arose from a lack of intensity by the England squad , as a reaction against the "high" of the Australian series , but that this would not be a factor in India.

He agreed that cricket reporting in newspapers had deteriorated, and that some of them were more interested in projecting celebrities than in fair analysis of the play. He suggested that county cricket was best reported in local newspapers.

Pat spoke with affection about his friend, the late Brian Clough, giving some humorous vocal impressions of his comments and opinions . He also referred to his warmth and kindness.

To conclude a fascinating evening, Pat gave some details of his career to date, and stated that he regarded himself as the luckiest man alive.

Many thanks to Ken Rimmer for an interesting review of Pat Murphy's visit.



A mistake on the part of the Editor gave us two Pat Murphy reports! Never mind, it's always good to have two points of view. Thanks to Richard Greaves for this next report.

THURSDAY 16TH FEBRUARY PAT MURPHY

allocating TV rights and the obvious political agenda running along side the process.

The February meeting, which was very well attended, saw the visit of the sports journalist and broadcaster PAT MURPHY. He gave us all a very enjoyable evening regaling us with anecdotes and facts delivered with characteristic wit and candour on a variety of sporting subjects

Being a journalist Pat had had the privilege of visiting most of the major sporting venues in this country and indeed all over the world, but still claimed that perhaps his favourite spot to watch cricket was the old press box at Edgbaston; with it facilities allowing work and sunbathing to go hand in hand. His least favourite?- Cherie Blair's mouth, alias Lord's brand new technological innovation full of heat and enclosed with glass towering over the Nursery End.

The evening began with Pat's recollections of the Ashes triumph of last summer seen through the privileged eyes of the man with contacts to the inner workings of the establishment (spin doctors permitting) - the British press. He recalled the build up of the hype being generated especially by the Australians in the form of McGrath suggesting a 5-0 walkover and his decision to obtain an opinionated rebuttal from a member of the Ashes squad - Hoggard! What sticks in my mind however is the image of a totally drained Fred Flintoff sitting in the pavilion when all was won with a bottle of beer in one hand and a colleague's child sitting on his lap. Pat showed us he has that vision to paint the telling picture with one short yet brilliant observation. Again aboard the open-topped busses on the journey to Trafalgar Square he picked up on the small details of a phone call on his mobile after being recognised from the crowds below by one G. Hick and again by Gladstone Small.

Question followed question throughout the evening with Pat giving honest opinions or prompting thought from the questioner on a variety of topics. He even gave us a potted history of his own journey to the dizzy heights of Radio 5 Live. How he graduated from the boring prospects of the legal profession to local news at Peterborough-with a £10 note to cover expenses after hitching from London - then to local radio in the Midlands with Tom Coyne and Nick Owen.

The spoken word is definitely Pat's forte: preferring to stimulate the listener's imagination through the medium of radio rather than state the obvious or have to keep quiet or 'entertain' with the crass cliches of the TV presenter

In response to questions Pat showed that he had very definite views on why test cricket would not be on terrestrial TV in the future; expressing disgust and disdain for the present system of

I think we could say that Pat painted us a few pictures and stimulated our imagination in a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Four personal anecdotes, irreverently recounted by "*Roley*" *Jenkins*, that successful all-rounder and cricket raconteur of the 1940s and 1950s will be found throughout the newsletter. *Jenkins*, a cunning purveyor of the leg-break and googly, and an ambitious batsman, twice performed the double of 1,000 runs and 100 wickets in a season during a lively career for Worcestershire and England.

1) We were playing Scotland. Their team included that prolific scorer of runs, Rev. J. A. Aitchison who, I recall, scored hundreds against the Australians and South Africans, among others.

On this occasion, I bowled three beautiful overs to him, beating the bat about 10 times. Twice he shouldered arms to the "wrong-un" and lbw appeals were turned down. I said "sorry" to the umpire for appealing — I forgot we were playing under Scottish Law.

When I had bowled the last ball of those three overs, I ambled up the wicket and addressed the batsman :-
"I am told you are a parson"

"Yes, that's right, I am"

The moment was too good to lose. I looked hard at him and said: "If I had your b dy luck, I would be the Archbishop of Canterbury".

THURSDAY 9th MARCH, 2006 --- *our visit to the Oval and Stamford Bridge.*

Our annual day out did not start too well. The weather was not very promising and our coach arrived 30 minutes late. The driver had been delayed by a road accident

We were unable to make up time, and were about half an hour late arriving at the Oval. However, we were soon into our stride and after a brief history and look at the Hobbs gate we entered the complex.

First we were in a picture gallery. One item was a conversation piece by Jocelyn Galsworthy commemorating Surrey's 150th anniversary. It shows a number of Surrey players, members and notables. Individual portraits can be added to this for £500 each. Our guide did not know what happens to the £500 but my research reveals that it provides coaching for youngsters from deprived areas of London.

Next into a room devoted mainly to Jim Laker showing amongst other things his England and Surrey blazers.

On to the Press room and a room previously used by Channel 4. This is called 'The Brian Johnston Room'. Unfortunately there was no cake here. An interesting fact was imparted here. Surrey are contemplating staging baseball matches but the baseball 'diamond' would probably impinge onto the cricket square.

Moving on we were shown a small hospitality room which would accommodate about 20 people. Then onto the England and Australia rooms. Here large numbers of folk could watch the game in very luxurious surroundings but at a price!! We finished our tour in the shop. Here I was offered Graham Thorpe's autobiography at a cover price of £18.99. This made my day. Last week I bought a copy in a remainders shop in Worcester for £3.99! I believe other Worcester members are now heading in that direction.

Quickly moving on to Chelsea the first thing we saw was a moving display to the late Peter Osgood. Although not one of my heroes I think he was a great player deserving far more than the four England caps which he actually won.

We now had an hour to spare in search of refreshments. Some of us fed in a Harry Ramsden's branch which is part of the Chelsea complex.

Our tour started bang on time and here we missed the presence of our beloved Chairman (Dave was absent due to an unfortunate illness). Just imagine his comments on the recent altercation at the Hawthorns as a result of the WBA/Chelsea match!

A brief history of the ground revealed that it really should be called 'Stanford Bridge' after a nearby brook. There is no connection with 'Stamford Bridge' where King Harold fought a victorious battle in 1066 prior to his mishap at Hastings. The ground is actually in Fulham but as a club of that name was formed about 25 years before our hosts Fulham F.C. was out. London F.C. was suggested but as this would not go down well with 13 other clubs in the London area this also was a non starter. It came down finally to a choice between 'Chelsea F.C.' or 'Kensington F.C.' Luckily they chose the former thus avoiding the embarrassing use of the initials 'KFC'!

Moving into the museum we found along the walls chronological tables of the various divisions of the Football League in which Chelsea had been playing in any particular year. There were a number of TV screens showing various Chelsea matches in all of which they appeared to be winning. Asking our guide why there were no matches showing where Chelsea lost he informed me 'They are very hard to find'. My retort that the last time I personally saw Chelsea play was during 1974/5 at Molineux, Wolves 7 Chelsea 1. This did not go down well!!

One of the most unusual items in the museum was the overcoat worn by Jose Mourinho during the last season. Their trophy cabinet was much more extensive than that which we saw at Nottingham Forest last year.

Very pleasing to read that Ray Edwards enjoyed his day out!

2) I was happy to take part in a charity match for a church restoration fund.

When the local vicar came in to bat, I realised that, as we should all have to report to him at the FINISH, I would bowl him a few easy tosses. That, I argued, should ensure my place for the future. It quickly became apparent that he was not an accomplished batsman. Whenever he succeeded in making contact with the bat, he would dart off towards the other end like a demented greyhound, even though the shot was going straight to a fielder.

Twice the ball was returned to me and I could have run him out by yards. Instead, I held the ball threateningly near the bails.

The third time he did this, I observed: "Vicar, you run up the wicket as if the Devil were after you". "He is — he is" came the breathless response.

Not long afterwards, he made an appearance elsewhere — accused of embezzling the church funds.

Should it be my good fortune to meet the Boss of my Holy friends, I trust he will raise his finger in the manner of the umpire and say "Vade in pace" (Go in peace).

Visiting the dressing rooms we saw how mind games play a big part in today's game. The away room was pretty basic with player's lockers situated underneath the seats. The home room was much more opulent. Here the lockers were built into the walls above and behind the seats. There were vents in the back with air conditioning!

Plans are being considered to increase the ground capacity. The club have room to do this but a problem exists over emergency evacuation. Health and Safety regulations rule that the ground must be capable of being cleared in 10 minutes. The last annual inspection cleared the ground in 7 minutes, but increasing the capacity would raise some questions.

Some players have superstitions. John Terry driving to home games counts the lamp posts en route. Our guide informed me that David Beckham was first introduced to his wife at Stamford Bridge following a Chelsea/Man Utd. match. He was very close to signing for Chelsea in the January 'window'.

Starting home around 5.30 pm we were caught in the usual London traffic chaos.

We arrived back later than expected but we had at least missed all the bad weather that was inflicted on the Midlands.

Mike — well done again — another excellent day out.

The Chairman and Programme Secretary had predicted 'something different' for our March meeting. Our guest, LANCE PIERSON, gave us a most enjoyable and interesting evening. It was so different to our usual evening's entertainment. He gave us a cricket match, Ancients v. Moderns, on a Sticky Wicket!

All his material, 22 extracts of prose and poetry, was provided by well known writers e.g. John Betjamen, P.G. Wodehouse and some not so well known e.g. John Whitworth and Imogen Grosberg!

In the 'Ancients' innings Lance (dressed in whites) used his presentation skills – humour, timing etc with great skill to bring to life W.G. Grace and his poor after dinner speeches; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle on how he dismissed the 'Great Man' and the Village Match by A.G. Macdonell from 'England their England' – surely one of the funniest cricket stories ever written.

The audience, not quite knowing what to expect, were often left open mouthed. Perhaps this inhibited them when Lance requested some audience participation!

After the break, during which time Lance sold various CD's and cassettes, the innings of the Moderns began.

Now we came to prose and poetry extracts from the middle to late 20th Century. Lance had by this time changed into coloured clothing. Words from Lesley Garrett, the popular opera singer, were used to illustrate her strong Yorkshire background. She even has a photo of 'Sir' Geoffrey in her room. Whilst John Cleese's words explained how he had managed to dismiss the great Denis Compton twice in one innings with not much help from his team mates!

Lance also showed skill in his command of local dialects/accents. This was especially so with his portrayal of Fred Trueman as a man living in the past. It also came to the fore with the Motivational poem often used by Duncan Fletcher. The South African accent was almost perfect.

Our guest used the presenter's prerogative to include one of his own pieces of prose. Here he used the examples of substitute fielders from the recent Ashes series to explain how it would be possible to retain the Ashes next winter. These ranged from cloned versions of Colin Bland and Jonty Rhodes being used as sub. fielders to Ann Robinson ushering Matthew Hayden on his way as 'The Weakest Link' from first slip! Even a stray ball was a sub. fielder at silly mid off so that Glenn McGrath could fall over it when batting, damage his ankle and so prevent him bowling.

The innings concluded with 'The greatest of all games devised by man' – an excellent comparison of war and peace by Lances's son Robin.

Although no result was announced the match probably finished in a 'tie'.

As Lance acknowledged there are thousands of extracts that could have been used such is the plethora of cricketing literature – Charles Dickens and the cricket match in Pickwick Papers comes to mind.

Lance chose well and gave all present a thoroughly unexpected but enjoyable evening.

3) When the Rev. David Sheppard was playing for Sussex, I had him playing and missing so many times in one match that I let rip a few choice adjectives.

At lunch, I apologised to David and enquired if there was any chance of redemption.

With a kindly smile, he said he fully understood how frustrated I must have felt and excused me.

Later in the day I did get him out — stumped, an experience he was to make use of when preaching a Sunday morning service on the radio. He told his listeners that Christianity was similar to batting against "Roley" Jenkins, the Worcestershire leg-spinner. If you decide to go forward, you must go all the way — not half way. How many leg-spinners have got a mention on a Sunday service? Or, indeed, how many leg-spinners listen to Sunday morning service?

Year of the Aussies Demise

By Douglas Winterborn

The Aussies are here to take the Ashes away
Thrash us at cricket that's what they say
Is there speak to make us fear
We haven't beat them in many a year
No need for England to turn up they say
Cause they will be the winners at the end of the day

First match at Lords seems they were right
England did not put up a fight
Second test, England won, just in time
Losing this would have been the end of the line
This time we see the Aussies demise
England's support seems to be on the rise

Third and fourth game
Were hindered by rain
Sessions were lost
To England's cost
Aussies just hung on for a draw
Series even, one, one that's the score

Now to the Oval, final test
Which teams fortunes will turn out best
Petering out into a draw
But England win to a tumultuous roar
Record books will show a two to one score
But morally, it was, Aussies ONE, England FOUR.

Our visiting speaker in April was JOHN STERN, the Editor of the Wisden Cricketer Magazine. He provided us with the journalistic view of cricket. It is hoped that a full report of his visit will appear in our next publication.

4) Visiting a local garden shop, a man stood admiring the potted plants. He had his back to me but I noticed he was wearing a dog collar.

Being a friendly sort of chap, I said "Good morning Vicar. Seeing you here reminds me of the Black Country story of Enoch and his garden".

As I spoke, he half turned and I could see he was a *Chief Vicar*.

Nevertheless, I still regaled him with the story of Enoch's garden which he transformed from a wilderness into a vista of beauty. Visitors flocked to see it, including a gentleman of the cloth.

"Enoch" he said, "you and the Lord have done a wonderful job here".

"Ah, but he didn't make much of a job of it when he had it on his own, did he?" enquired Enoch.

I returned to the shop the following day and the owner told me that, after I left the previous day, he revealed to the *Chief Vicar* that I happened to be R. O. Jenkins, a Worcestershire and England cricketer.

"Tell him" he said, "the next time you see him, that he was talking to the Bishop of Worcester".

LORD'S – A SPECIAL DAY OUT & THE C & G TROPHY FINAL

3RD SEPTEMBER 2005

The day starts the night before when the picnic lunch is prepared in readiness for an early start and the carefully selected bottle of red wine is chosen.

The day arrives with the shock of the clock radio announcing the unearthly hour of 5.00am. One hit of the snooze button and ten minutes later and the shower beckons. Once dressed, it's a light cereal breakfast and cup of tea (still not woken up) and then the cool box is packed and the flask of coffee is prepared.

Six o'clock arrives with a light tap, tap on the front door (must not wake the kids yet!) and my lift has arrived (glad it's Terry driving today and not me!).

Over the next 2 hours, the conversation is about past cricket memories, family, friends and our expectations for the day's play ahead. Usually, the weather plays a big part with the early hour cloud cover giving rise to the question, "what would you do if you won the toss". The hourly sports news bulletin also gives updates for the day ahead.

The M1 was quiet today and we had a good run down to London - off the motorway and along the North Circular Road down to Swiss Cottage and then onto St. John's Wood. Fortunately, today is Saturday and there is no permit holder parking. The car is parked and then a good stroll to the ground visiting the newsagent in St. John's Wood High Street en-route. On arriving at Lord's, the gates open today at 8.45 am. The member's queue is not too bad and at 8.50 am we enter the ground via the north gate entrance off Wellington Place after safety checks in our bag/cool box and quick body scan. Extra security these days has become necessary and inevitable after the July bombings. We walk past the Nursery ground net practice area and work our way round to the Pavilion where we display our red member's pass to the steward and are ushered through, climbing the steps and then walking through the world famous Long Room out through the doors and onto the concourse where we locate our preferred unreserved seats – usually 2nd row from the front and across to sit down at about 2nd slip position.

There is something quite unique and special about Lord's and there is a great feeling of anticipation always at the start of the day before play commences. As the ground starts to fill with enthusiastic cricket lovers, it doesn't really matter who you support, the sense of what is to come and the

spectacle of being part of an occasion comes across strongly with friendly rivalry and banter and 'cricket' as the winner. This was certainly even more prevalent in what was an "Ashes" winning summer where the final match of a fantastic series was still to be played.

Anyway, having selected our seats for the day ahead with the time just after 9.00am, the next ritual of our days at Lord's begins – the search for the bacon sandwich (this is only a fairly new departure for us over the last two years!). This can usually involve a walk around the ground to the Nursery End where there are outside catering vans set up. However, today's jaunt is just a stroll back into the Pavilion, into the Member's bar area where today we can purchase a sausage and bacon roll! The big screen television has the news channel on and there is the faint rumble in the background of members chatting and enjoying coffee, croissants or even a full English breakfast.

Having refuelled, we take a walk around the ground. For those who have not been to Lord's, the ground is enclosed by walls but there is a complete circuit to walk round between the stands and the outer perimeter. There are bars/food stations behind the stands; the main external food area adjoins the Nursery Ground and Indoor Cricket School. There is the Lord's shop, Harris Memorial Garden and Coronation Garden. On the south side of the ground is the "Grace Gate" named after W G Grace providing access off St. John's Wood Road.

We visit the Lord's shop and afterwards the adjoining Nursery Ground net practice area where today's teams Warwickshire CCC and Hampshire CCC are warming up to do battle for the C & G Trophy. It's a glorious early September day and the ground is now heaving.

A crowd is gathered around the perimeter of the practice area and there is entertainment provided by a colourful 6 piece steel band. After a while we move over to below the Nat West Media Centre where a host of International Cricket Stars are arriving to ascend the lift, no doubt to provide comment on the day's play for radio and television, from the dizzy heights of this spectacular building which resembles a sliced through UFO.

As the start of play fast approaches, we make our way back to the Pavilion and take up our seats. Captain of Warwickshire CCC – Nick Knight and Captain of Hampshire CCC Shaun Udal meet in the middle and the toss is won by Knight who elects to field.

As we look out from our seating position, you start to get the impression of the sloping Lord's pitch which again is in absolute pristine condition and like a carpet of green velvet with a chequered pattern. The ground staff really do their part in producing a wicket and outfield fit for purpose.

To our immediate right is the Allen Stand followed by the Tavern Stand (hence the name "Lord's Taverners") and then the Mound and Edrich Stand. Straight ahead is the dominant Nat West Media Centre. To our left, the Warner Stand, Grand Stand and Compton Stand.

The five minute bell rings and salutes the arrival of today's Umpires, Allan Jones & Neil Mallender.

This article will be continued in the January newsletter.

Thanks to ANDREW JACKSON for his thoughts so far.

(Andrew played for Romsley and Hunnington for many years. He has edited the MCCC Yearbook since 1995. He is the son of Mike Jackson who made such a significant contribution to Midlands' Club Cricket.

Thanks to Long Stop for this gem :- A stand of 36 off 31 balls between Klusenor and Wessels for Northants against Warwickshire saw Wessels hit a huge six. Lost ball. Play was held up for some time when it emerged that a thief had stolen the box of replacements. Officials were forced to search through players' bags to find a suitable substitute!

