

Boundary View

Autumn 2016 - No. 13

The Newsletter of Stourbridge & District Cricket Society

Founded 1972

FROM THE BOUNDARY

A disturbing and radical change to the game of cricket is scheduled to come into effect in 2018.

The England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has announced that the game's structure will be overhauled.

The ECB's controversial proposal is to start an 8-city franchise T20 competition in 2018. This will result in counties being re-grouped into areas, centred on the location of the nearest Test venue.

This move could well be the thin end of the wedge. It is likely to lead to the centralisation of cricket and poses a threat to the future of small county clubs, grounds and ultimately cricket as we know it.

What can be done? I suspect not a lot, as far as T20 is concerned. But, **you can express your support and concern for the future of the game by signing the national petition.** The address is:

www.saveourcounties.com

Stourbridge CC will celebrate its 175th anniversary in 2017 and our Society plans to mark the event in a very special way by compiling a book about the fifteen cricketers who have played for the club and also represented their country.

We invite S&DCS members to participate by writing a pen portrait, a personal memory or a favourite anecdote about any of the fifteen - more details on the back page.

Sadly, *Backspin* seems to have come to the end of its all-too-brief innings.

The retro-magazine's editor, publisher and chief bottle washer has to be applauded for his efforts, but the title could not survive on sentiment alone, especially as it carried no external advertising or sponsorship in any of the issues. Added to which, the nation's chief newsagent demanded a hefty £10k for shelf space.

If there is any chance of a revival, members of cricket societies must surely be the target audience!

It is simply too good a publication to lose!



Don Kenyon and Martin Horton

walk out to face the Australians in 1961.

A framed full colour photo will be presented to Stourbridge CC, in recognition of the fact that Don and Martin both played for the Club.

They later became first and second presidents respectively of our cricket society.

Smaller-sized framed copies will be given to Mrs Jean Kenyon and Mrs Margaret Horton.

Copies of the picture are available to members!

2016/17 SUBS OFFER!

Annual subscriptions are now due and remain unchanged for the fourth successive year!

Members are again offered the chance to renew in advance of the new season at a reduced rate.

INDIVIDUAL Membership fee:

£12 if received by 18 Oct. £15 if paid after that date

JOINT fee: £15 (2 adults at same address)

Cheques, payable to Stourbridge Cricket Society, to be sent to: Ken Workman,

15, Ridge Road, Kingswinford, DY6 9RB

Membership cards will be available for collection at the October meeting.

If you wish to make a voluntary donation to the Society, please add your chosen amount to your cheque.

[Persons who have not paid by 31 December 2016 will be removed from the membership list]

CHAIRMAN'S VIEW

I have enjoyed this summer watching Club, County, and Country.

It's late August and the cricket surgeons have their knives ready to dissect and rearrange the game we love.

I am certainly not in favour of the changes that are about to happen in our game.

The ICC has many areas of concern and none of us want to see empty Test venues. However, if we concentrate on this country, the Club and Academy County structure with its passionate support and membership, which is the feeder and life blood of cricket as we know it - surely this should be maintained at all cost. I have previously said they must not change the ingredients - has Kraft improved Cadbury?

I witnessed recently a young girl with her score book at one of our local club games keeping an immaculate record of the match. When I asked her how she became interested in cricket she replied "my grandfather and father had both played". She had been told the basics of the game and as a result begun to understand and enjoy, wishing nothing more on a magnificent sunny afternoon than to be at cricket.

Cricket must never fall out, or take its basic structure for granted because of its failure to advertise the game. BBC Sport treats cricket with total contempt, along with many more potential avenues of promotion. There is, however, a glimmer of light emerging with many of Asian origin joining and playing club cricket.

This winter will be most interesting to say the least with all that is happening both at home and abroad. England's tour to Bangladesh and India will be a significant examination of how good they are.

Mike Tomkins

Stop Press: So far only one entry received for the hypothetical Gents v. Players match! (See last issue) It's not too late to submit your teams!

Dave Nicklin (President)

Committee Members:

Mike Tomkins (Chairman); Anthony Collis (Secretary / Editor); Ken Workman (Treasurer); Terry Church (Programme Secretary)

DAVID STEELE

Northants, Derbyshire & England

Wisden (1976) correctly described David Steele as ‘a bespectacled, grey-haired, 33-year-old batsman from Northamptonshire’, almost as if each feature was unworthy of a player on his Test debut.

David Stanley Steele was our penultimate guest of our 2015/16, having been our guest fourteen years before.

The specs are still worn, the grey hair has whitened and the hero of 1975 is now aged 74, but the bulldog spirit remains. Steele by name; steely by nature; the description befits the man who stood defiant and cocked a snook against the fastest and most hostile bowlers of the past forty years.

Born into a Staffordshire mining family, Steele’s early cricket was influenced by his uncle Stan Crump, who coached and taught him the rudiments of the game. At the age of 16, he was playing for Staffordshire and three years later, Steele was pro for Hartshill CC.

“How did you get from North Staffs down to Northampton?” a member asked. “Down the M1” rejoined Steele. Brian Crump, David’s cousin, recommended him to Ken Turner, who persuaded him to join Northamptonshire in 1963 where he stayed 18 years.

When Tony Greig took over the England captaincy in 1975, he asked various umpires to name the best uncapped batsmen on the county circuit. David Steele was the unanimous response and so he came to Lord’s for his debut against Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thompson who Eric Morecambe famously referred to as ‘the great Australian female, Lillian Thompson’.

Steele recalled the dressing room tension until “Eric came in to wish us good luck. He took one look at the hairy torso of Dennis Amiss and exclaimed, ‘You weren’t born – you must have been trapped!’”

Steele was called into action, when Barry Wood became the first of Lillee’s four lbw victims. However, he very nearly was out before he was in! He made his way down the stairs and kept going until he reached the bottom where a groundsman redirected him back upstairs and through the Long Room.

“As soon as I got onto the pitch, I felt the anticipation in the crowd. Far from being overawed, I thrived on the atmosphere, set on the challenge ahead.”

Wisden noted: ‘Three times Steele hooked Lillee and he also cut effectively, but above all he played in a calm and calculating manner’. Greig came in at 49/4 and Steele repaid his skipper’s faith by sharing a partnership of 96 and reached 50 before being bowled by a Thompson thunderbolt. “Thommo was deadly quick; what he lacked in consistency, he made up with aggression. He had me caught twice, but both were no balls. He was deranged!”



Steele and Lillee shared mutual respect. “Dennis never let up. He was always on target and never gave any down the leg side.” In turn, Rodney Marsh told Steele that he was driving Lillee round the twist because he always got into line, didn’t flinch or show fear as others did.”

Away from that match, David recalled other notable cricketers of his day. He admired Brian Close for his courage. Against the West Indies his body was red raw. He brushed sympathy aside by telling people to look at the state of the ball. “Close believed he could do anything until, in one Somerset game, he took over as wicket-keeper. He realised his limitations as he conceded 63 byes.”

Of the other bowlers Steele regarded most highly were Sylvester Clarke, ‘mean with lethal intent’; Mike Procter ‘whole-hearted despite bowling off the wrong foot’; Flavell and Coldwell, two of the best, both ‘crafty and aggressive’; his Northants’ colleague David Larter ‘very fast, but injury prone’; and, of course, the West Indians. Steele must have had a death wish as he enjoyed halting Griffith in his run-up in order to wipe his glasses!

“They were all spectacular, Marshall, Roberts, Holding, Daniel, Garner, they just grew taller!”

David recalled facing Bob Willis after a night out with Bedi and Mushtaq who introduced him to the delights of curry. He not only had the runs, but next day got the runs, by way of a century!

On the county circuit, Steele admired Tom Graveney most of all. “Mind you, at Worcester in 1964, Keith Andrew dropped him on 32 off my bowling. He went on to get 132, which was his hundredth hundred.”

He had a great regard for Colin Milburn. “Despite weighing 17-stone plus, he was remarkably quick on his feet. He was an excellent close fielder at short-leg where he caught many catches in one of his two stomachs. He batted superbly, particularly if he had had a skin-full the night before. At Eastbourne, we needed 199 to win; Ollie and *Mister* Prideaux (David stressed the Mr) opened and made 201 for no wicket – Milburn 141, *Mr* Prideaux 51.”

David admitted he had run out many of his partners. “I was a good judge of a run – for me! I moved to Derbyshire and in 1981, I was batting with Geoff Miller. I called for a run, but there was a mix-up in mid wicket. In the interests of self-preservation, I dived in, just before Geoff, who was going to the same end. The wicket-keeper shook his head and said ‘you’re in, but your mate’s not happy’. By close of play I had 54 and returned to a dressing room in stony silence. To make matters worse, a noose was hanging from a beam. I tried to cheer Geoff up by saying I did it for the team, as I would get a hundred next day, which Miller would not have done. I duly kept my side of the bargain.

“A few weeks later, we met Northants in the NatWest Final at Lord’s and Geoff was batting and we needed one run to level the scores off the very last ball. The ball was hit, the batsmen ran, the throw came in and Miller dived to make his ground and win the match by losing fewer wickets. I congratulated him, ‘You deserved that!’ and added, ‘You’ve gained a yard of pace since last time!’”

Finally, David recalled his benefit season when he persuaded a local butcher to sponsor him. He ended up with 1,756 lamb chops – one for every run scored. “It took us 3½ years to eat them!”

17 March 2016 Att. 82

The toast to cricket at The Cricket Society’s Spring Dinner in London recently was made by Pat Pocock of Surrey and England. One of his finest performances was against Sussex, who needing just 5 runs to win lost the match due to Pocock taking 7 wickets in 11 balls and 5 in the final over – he said he didn’t turn any of them. He told many humorous anecdotes including one about the great Arthur Jepson, who as an umpire often gave out batsmen if their talking irritated him! [More opposite]

DAVE HOUGHTON

Zimbabwe

with Dave Bradley (BBC H&W)

Our final guest of the 2015/16 season was born in 1957 in Bulawayo, the former capital of Matabeleland in Southern Rhodesia.

David Laud Houghton made his debut for Rhodesia (so-named after U.D.I.) against Transvaal in November 1978 and recalled that Graeme Pollock also played his first game for the opposition following his relocation to Johannesburg. In his next match, Houghton took over as wicket-keeper and kept for the rest of the season. His team mates included Barry Dudleston, Brian Davison, Paddy Clift, Duncan Fletcher and John Traicos.

Dave admitted that he didn't get on well with Fletcher, who, in the following season became captain of the team, now clumsily renamed Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. In a match against Transvaal, Houghton injured his hand and Fletcher sent him into the covers when Graeme Pollock was batting. Dave admitted that the captain knew what he was doing as the hits Pollock made were so well placed, Houghton was rarely called into action.

Houghton's early career as a wicket-keeper was partly due to his time as his country's hockey goalkeeper. In addition, he kept goal at football and was proud that he kept Bruce Grobelaar, the future Liverpool 'keeper, out of his club team in Bulawayo.

At the end of the 1979/80 season, Z-R left the South African Cricket Union, in order to further their application for Test recognition. They were granted affiliate status, but would have to wait 13 years for 5-day cricket.

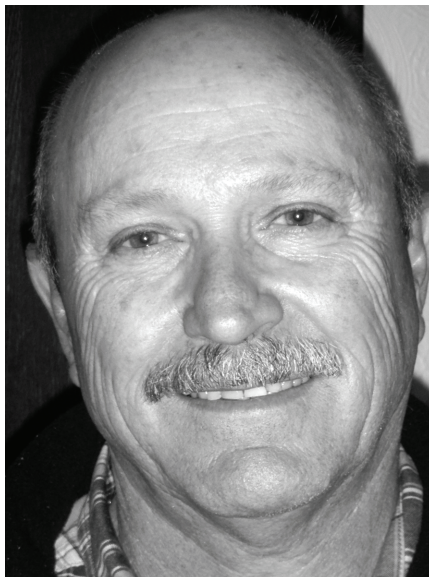
"During that period, cricket stagnated as many players such as Graeme Hick took up other more immediate chances. The facilities deteriorated as unemployment grew to a staggering 90%. The country is still suffering from a chronic lack of foreign investment. Consequently many excellent sports clubs, offering many sports, quickly deteriorated through lack of funds due to a vast number of members simply not paying their subs."

When Test cricket status was granted in 1993, Zimbabwe met India at Harare. Nobody gave them a chance, but Houghton played a captain's innings with an innings of 121 to boost his side's total to 456 all out, off a whopping 214.2 overs.

He admitted that the team's tactics

unashamedly were to occupy the crease, which they did until after lunch on the third day!

Houghton recalled the dismissal of Sachin Tendulkar who was out for a bronze (third-ball) duck. Egyptian-born, 46 year-old, off-break bowler Athanasios John Traicos was the man responsible, who included the scalps of Azharuddin and Kapil Dev in his figures of 5/86 off 50 overs.



India replied with 307 after which Zimbabwe had reached 146-4 (Houghton 41*) by the end of the match. All but one of the Zimbabweans were making their Test debuts; Traicos had played for South Africa in the 4-0 trouncing of Australia in 1969/70, though he did not influence the outcome. He thus holds the unique record of having played for two different countries, over twenty years apart.

Dave was Zimbabwe's first Test captain and scored a total of 1,464 runs (av. 43.05) in the 22 Tests he played during 1992-97. He was never out in Tests without scoring. His highest score of 266 was made against Sri Lanka in 1994/95 on his home ground at Bulawayo.

After leaving his homeland, Dave Houghton came to England and took up coaching. He confessed he would like to have played County cricket, but all the overseas spots were taken, due to the rule then in force of only one overseas player per county. The nearest he came was when Duncan Fearnley invited him to become captain and coach of the county's second XI. On his second day in post, Dave was elevated to first team coach after the county parted company with Kevin Lyons.

Dave enjoyed playing Birmingham League cricket with West Bromwich Dartmouth. He had other coaching assignments with Derbyshire, Netherlands, Somerset and most-prized of all, he was lured back home to coach the national team.

Now back in England he coaches Middlesex, where he admires Nick Compton, who is determined to regain his England place.

Compton shares Houghton's dislike of the shortened game, notably T20. Until now Dave had responded politely to Bradley's prompts, but on this issue, he did not hold back. "Middlesex retain a baseball guru simply for T20 batting. Afterwards, I then have to teach them to bat properly. T20 is in danger of killing the golden goose. T20 is as close to cricket as squash is to tennis."

In the second innings, Dave responded to members' questions. He rates Yorkshire very highly and likely to dominate English cricket for some years. Their biggest problem will be keeping their large squad happy. The best of the rest are Notts, Middlesex and Warwickshire.

Asked about the decision to reduce the number of teams in the top division, Dave was vehement in his opposition to the change and claimed, "Most coaches hate the idea. There have been so many changes in the last 20 years that the public are getting fed up with the way cricket is being run. It is no longer a game; it is just a way to make money. The new system will lead to a two-tier system whereby the strong will get stronger. Worcestershire have already proved the point – too good for Division 2, not strong enough at the higher level."

One member wondered why fitness coaches had not identified James Taylor's serious heart condition earlier. Asked if he had faced Allan Donald, our guest replied that he regarded Donald as "a pretty decent bowler". He lamented that Hick had not been able to succeed at Test level, but admitted that the West Indians exploited his vulnerability early in his innings.

A very enjoyable meeting ended at 9.45pm and with it a highly successful 2015/16 season was brought to a close.

Sincere thanks are extended to Terry Church for yet another varied and highly entertaining season's programme.

14 April 2016

Att: 74

[Continued] Pat finished his speech by saying how important it is for touring cricketers to have some knowledge about the countries they visit, which is not always the case. Phil Tuffnell, while on tour to New Zealand, went down to breakfast one morning in his hotel and was told there was no bacon available. Aghast he commented, "I just don't understand it, you've got 10 million sheep in this country so how come there's no bacon?"

[The Cricket Society News Bulletin #573]

- Oct 20 David Smith** (Warwickshire) David played 197 matches for Warwickshire during 1973-85. He served as CEO for Leicestershire and latterly for Northants. His younger brother, Paul spoke to the Society in 2012.
- Nov 17 Mike Newell** (Nottinghamshire) Now Director of Cricket of Notts CC, Mike played 102 games for the county during 1984-92, and also served as coach.
- Dec 15 Tm Jones / Ken Workman** Tim will tell the story behind his biography of Don Kenyon, who served as a national selector while still an active player. Ken will recite some of his own and other cricket poems.
- Jan 19 Paul Pridgeon** (Worcestershire) Wall Heath-born, right-arm fast-medium bowler, Paul played 240 games for Worcs during 1972-89. His BB was 7/35 v Oxford University 1976. He played for Stourbridge.
- Feb 16 Derek Brewer** (MCC CEO) He played for Warwickshire 2nd XI, before 'forging' a career in finance.
- Mar 16 Dennis Breakwell** (Somerset & N'hants) Brierley Hill-born, Dennis played 231 f-cc matches 1969-84.
- Apr 13 Annual General Meeting (at 7pm)** followed by Valuation Event **(8pm)** (Further details below)

SOCIETY ON TOUR – LORD'S AND THE EMIRATES

8 am 10 March 2016 and everyone is on time! However, three unavoidable "drop outs" meant that forty nine members and friends embarked on this year's trip. A brief comfort stop on the M4 and although heavy traffic meant that we crawled the last few miles to St John's Wood we were, nevertheless, right on time for coffee in The Tavern.

Divided into two groups we were then led on a conducted tour of Cricket's headquarters. Both knowledgeable and amenable our two guides were excellent. Unfortunately the Media Centre was out of bounds due to maintenance work but we were able to watch as the new Warner Stand was being built. An all too brief time in the Museum was followed by the customary visit to the Lord's shop but soon sandwiches were being scoffed on the coach as our driver battled with the almost gridlocked streets en route to The Emirates, home of "The Gunners".

First impressions were not immediately favourable but once inside and on our tour the mindset changed and some areas can certainly be described as opulent. For "the anorak" there is always a fascination with dressing rooms and, as with the Etihad, no comfort had been overlooked in the home-quarters whilst in the visitors section minor irritations were noted such as the table in the centre of the changing area being higher than in the home dressing room, so that players on opposite sides were not visible to each other. Petty but all part of the mind games. Marketing forces meant that at the end of the tour the exit was through the club shop or as it is now known "£Marketing Experience".

A thoroughly enjoyable day with both tours giving a wonderful insight into the workings of two top sports clubs with a very different fan base. My thanks to everyone who came, for your support and also for your adherence to the timetable, which meant that we arrived back at Stourbridge at the anticipated time of 8pm.

Terry Church

VALUATION EVENT 13 April 2017

Members are invited to bring items of cricket memorabilia for expert valuation at the above meeting.

After the AGM, Mark Hannam (Fielding's of Stourbridge) will talk about various areas of collecting before appraising members' own items after the interval.

First, we need to ascertain the level of response to the idea. We ask members to submit a list of items for valuation on the form (available at the season's early meetings). Alternatively, forms can be obtained on request to the editor at the address below. If you have no email, a S.A.E. will be appreciated.

Please bring the completed form to the next meeting or send to the editor. Updated info will be shown in the Winter edition of *Boundary View*.

MATCH REPORT Worcs 2nds v. Durham 2nds

After an absence of 26 years, the return of Worcestershire 2nd XI, was warmly welcomed by members of both Stourbridge CC and our Society.

The visitors proved too strong as, batting first they declared at 450-8 and then dismissed the home side for 188 and 167, to win by an innings & 95 runs.

Two positives for the hosts emerged from the match. Chris Russell took 5/90 including the wickets of Hickey (80) and Muchall (108) who shared an opening stand of 189. Zen Maliq, top-scored in each innings with 57 and 38. The hosts missed Rhodes and Hepburn, both away with the senior squad.

At Amblecote: 7-9 June 2016

STOURBRIDGE TEST XV Urgent action required!

We have identified fifteen Test players who will be the subjects of our Society's tribute to the 175th anniversary of Stourbridge CC.

The names are: Ted Arnold, Tip Foster, Dick Howorth, Roly Jenkins, Don Kenyon, Martin Horton, Peter Richardson, Dick Richardson, Jack Flavell, Glenn Turner and Imran Khan, who all played for Worcestershire. Four others, who played for the club, but not Worcs., are Willie Quaife (Warwks), David Larter (N'hants), Phil DeFreitas (Various) and Simon O'Donnell (Northumberland).

If there are any omissions, please let us know urgently as the clock is ticking!

The committee invites members to get involved by writing a pen portrait (**please do contact the editor beforehand**) or sharing an anecdote or two. **For further information email** adcollis@blueyonder.co.uk

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Deadline for receipt of copy is for each *Issue* is (Last Friday of Month)

Autumn (August) *Winter* (November) *Spring* (February)

Preferably all articles should be typed and emailed to the address below

The editor reserves the right to edit or refuse the publication of any material submitted without further reason.

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