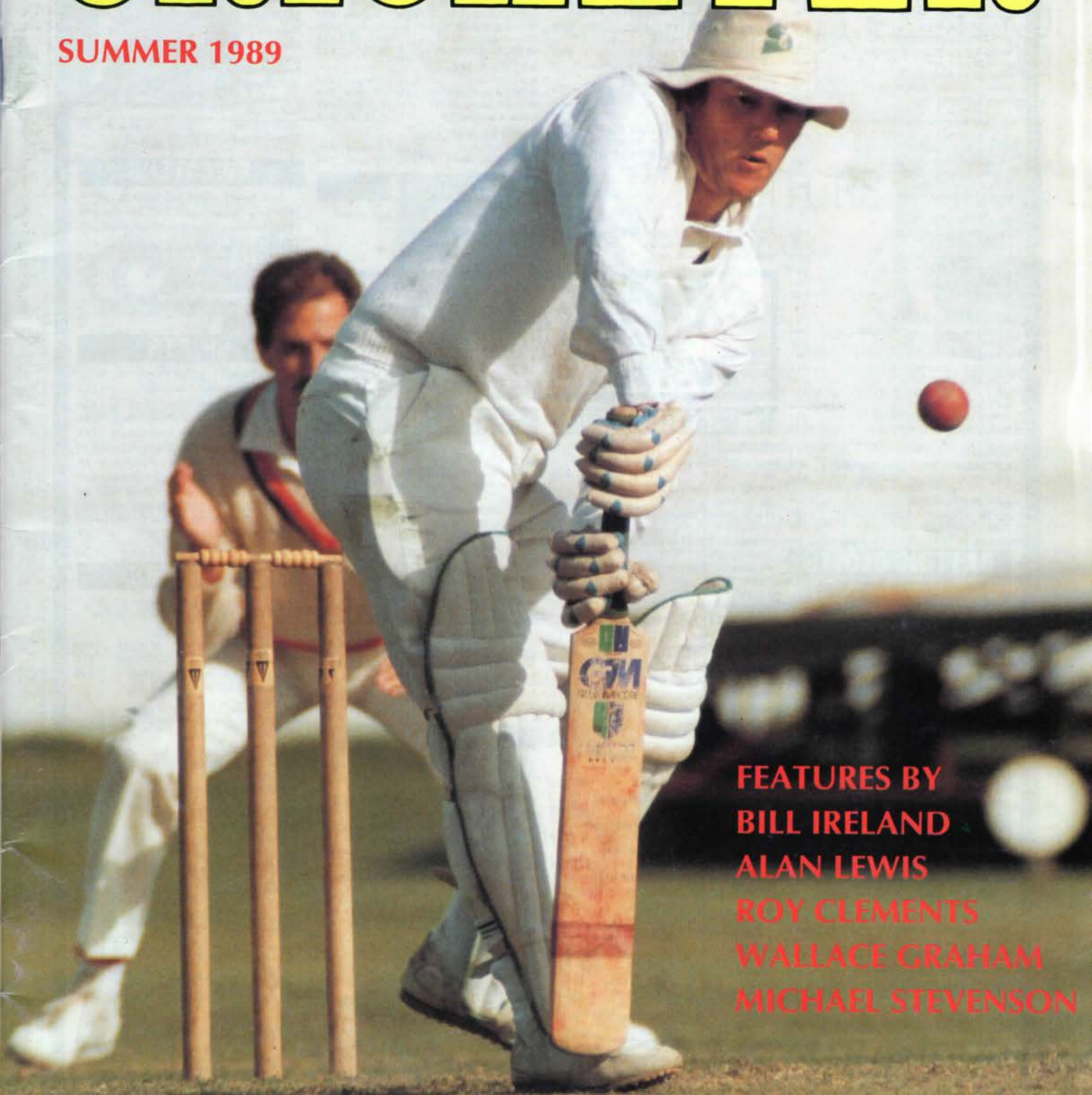


THE ULSTER

CRICKETER

SUMMER 1989



**FEATURES BY
BILL IRELAND
ALAN LEWIS
ROY CLEMENTS
WALLACE GRAHAM
MICHAEL STEVENSON**

EDITED BY CLARENCE HILES

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VOL.5 NO.1

SUMMER 1989

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FRONT COVER: Ian Shields the long serving
North Down opener fast approaching thirty
years in senior cricket. Photo Laurence Kirk.
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EDITORS VIEW



How often have we heard the 'Old
Hands' saying 'the standard has
dropped', 'the players are not as good
as in our day' or 'the characters have
gone out of the game'.

I suppose it's natural for comparisons
but really there's no way of doing it
accurately. The years tend to cloud
the judgements, well meaning as they
attempt to be. But our revered elders
have got one thing right... the
characters are going out of the game.
Not completely as yet, but a dying
breed. Every club had them, some
more than others, but wasn't the
folklore enhanced by stories about
them past and present? Tales of the
ridiculous, some hilarious, some in-
credible, many fictitious and all ravag-
ed or distorted by timeless repetition.
Characters on the field, characters off
it, all part of the colourful fabric of
local cricket.

I first realised their importance at the
start of the 1984 season. A particu-
larly severe winter and a combina-
tion of various mishaps had complete-
ly wiped out one of North Down's
vociferous 'critics' benches'. At times
we loved them, at times we hated
them, but when they were gone we
missed them badly. Somehow the
game had lost much of its character
and that empty bench on the bound-
ary was a ghostly reminder why.
Several weeks ago I enjoyed a
nostalgic evening at the Umpires' Din-
ner in the Lisburn clubhouse. The
'white coat brigade' has many colour-
ful characters while the Wallace Park
club has been endowed with more
than most over the years. It was a
wonderful evening of fun and revellry,
enhanced by many uninhibited
raconteurs. Sadly in a few years many
of them will be gone.

Preserve them while you can, they're
precious.

JCH.

TOUCHE OF CLASS

Chartered Accountants Touche Ross gave the NCU season a 'Touche of Class' in mid March by announcing the biggest sponsorship in Irish cricket when they took the Senior Cup into their portfolio. With old favourites Lombard and Ulster looking after the league campaign the Union is in a very healthy financial state for 1989.

Practically every season in the last twenty-five has started with Waringstown firm favourites to lift the top honours. Indeed the villagers have not disappointed, and as current league and cup holders, their status remains untarnished. Current skipper Alan Waite, has tended to play down the aspirations of Irish cricket's premier club, but most teams in the NCU acknowledge that Waringstown remain the team to beat. But they carry the pressure admirably, and none fare better when the odds are stacked against them. Last year's beaten cup finalists Downpatrick will add testimony to that statement!

Waringstown have tough opening games and will be without several key players. Perhaps the saddest absentee is doughty Derek Harrison, fighting once again to recover health after a major operation. The best wishes of all cricketers go out to him once again. Derek's brother Garfield had a magnificent 1988 season and his performances may hold the key to 1989. In tandem with the evergreen Ivan Anderson, few teams can match the versatility of these two fine all rounders. North of Ireland, North



Touche Ross Managing Partner Sam Goldblatt presents president Jim McMorraw with the Sponsorship cheque as Irish international batsman Stephen Warke looks on.

Down, Downpatrick and Lurgan will spearhead the challenge, and for the latter three, the performances of their professionals will be of ultra importance. Lamba had another prolific season in 1988, scoring over 1200 runs in NCU cricket, twice as many as any of his rivals. His dedication and total professionalism, will keep North Down in the title chase but a brittle middle-order and limited attack are problem areas for last year's beaten Schweppes Cup finalists. New skipper Ian Carser welcomes back opening bowler Kevin Copeland and new recruit Regent House batsman Billy Doherty, but a disillusioned Kenny Boucher

has gone to Lisburn and Angus Fergie has returned to Donaghadee.

Downpatrick show no changes in personnel with the canny Derek McCann still at the helm. Their bowling strength is their biggest asset, with Pakistani professional Kamal Merchant particularly lethal but their batting must improve if a serious challenge for honours is to be made. Last year Waringstown emphatically defeated them in a controversial cup final, but ironically the Strangford Road team has an immediate opportunity to exact revenge having been pitched against them in the first round at the lawn. The away venue will hold no terror



Alan Johnston - Still a fine performer at Pollock Park



Personal anguish for Downpatrick skipper Derek McCann who faces a difficult season at Strangford Road.



Another sweet boundary from popular Lurgan professional Subash Kscrisgar.

Pictured opposite: Downpatrick professional Kamal Merchant with Umpire Billy Taylor in close attendance.



for the team with the best record at Waringstown in the last twenty years.

Lurgan won the Schweppes Cup in style last season, but their league form was poor. Gary McCollum is captain for 1989 and has the difficult task to 'gel' a team brimming with talent, but not always playing as a unit. Although drawn away for all the rounds, Lurgan have a 'soft' run in the cup and should reach the final. This may prove their best chance of a trophy.

North fancy their chances this season and why not? Davy Napier captains a side full of experience and desperate for success. Simon Corlett remains their passport to that success, but it is not the bowling department which poses the major question mark at Ormeau. Last year their batting was inept and although Peter Law has returned to the fold, much will be expected from Dean Simpson, Charlie Beverland, Mark Napier, Davy Johnston and the skipper himself. Hugh Milling has gone to England but if Corlett is in his usual devastating form it matters little who bowls at the other end!

The RUC team did well last season and with Michael Blair joining them from Lisburn, new skipper Billy Gordan will have the strongest squad for years under his command. Ulster cricket's only team of 'full time' professionals, however, have a brittle batting line-up although big hitting Joe Campbell was a revelation last season and his aggregate 635 runs was topped only by Lamba.

Colin Magowan is back in charge at Bangor where the squad is strengthened by the recruitment of Ulster Town duo Paul Stafford (Queens) and Ricky Adair (Holywood). Last season was a dreadful one for the seiders, beginning with the loss of big John Elder and continuing with poor batting form from skipper Harte. Roger Monteith played a major part in the late season revival but it remains to be seen if the impetus is carried into 1989. Bangor has yet to win a major trophy but is unlikely to be put right this year!

Enthusiast Chris Davis has a stiff task trying to rekindle the Woodvale fire which has burned low for a long time at Ballygomartin Road. Even star international batsman Stephen Warke drifted into the 1988 gloom with relegation narrowly thwarted at the eleventh hour. Unless Woodvale get their act together from the outset they may go one better this time!

Lisburn also appear to have an uphill task but if they can lure the Kirkwood brothers back into the fold, resurrect talented Kenny Boucher's career, get the best of New Zealand professional Mark McKinnon and continue to maximise on the talents of resident 'evergreens' Davy McDowell and Eddie Lockart, then perhaps the winter player exodus will not be felt.

Ballymena fully deserved their return to the Senior section following a superb run of victories throughout last season. Adrian Goodrich has returned to the side after a few years working in London, and the ar-

rival of Allan Neill from Cliftonville will also boost the batting order. Section One bowling however demands much greater penetration and it is in this department that the 'braid' men may struggle.

With Holywood back in Section Two with a professional, the promotion race should be a keenly fought affair. Big John Kerstens will use Russell Adams as his spearhead for a speedy return to the hierarchy but he also has the promising David McCormick to boost his attack. Off spinner Michael Shannon is the ace in the Holywood pack and much will be expected from him if this is to be a successful season. Holywood can expect keen competition, not least from a revitalised Muckamore where new skipper Ivan McCombe has declared his ambition of promotion from the outset. Last year Armagh and Ballymena finished above the Moylena team and Armagh will again be to the fore. Cliftonville will struggle without Allan Neill, while Instonians, Laurelvale, Academy and Donacloney all lack the re-

quired consistency to be league winners. Newly promoted Donaghadee have Angus Fergie back 'home' and popular New Zealand professional Andy Wilson to score the runs. They should stay up if he repeats last year's heroics and someone stays at the other end! Queen's University flirted with relegation all last season and were very fortunate to avoid the drop. They may not be quite so lucky this time!

Ards were bitterly disappointed at losing out in the promotion stakes last season to a combination of beaocracy and manipulation. Sadly for them, their biggest asset batsman Billy Doherty has gone senior at North Dwon and Ards may well reflect on what might have been once again. Collegians, CIYMS, Cooke and Cregagh may well contest the promotion spot in this highly competitive section and newcomers Drumanness cannot be dismissed.

Civil Services and Portadown will start favourites in section four but in their jubilee season it would be wonderful to see little Millpark steal all the thunder. If cricket has romance why not the league trophy to Bannford Green in this special season?

Finally the weather forecast! It will rain in 1989 and clubs should be prepared to rearrange fixtures. They should do it in the spirit of the laws, forget all their historic bigotries and settle all the important issues long before the annual September deluge. Perhaps then the Winter Annual General Meeting can look forward into the nineties, rather than reflect on another late season of acrimony!

SECTION THREE 1988 FLASHBACK

Many thanks to hard-working CIYMS stalwart Jim Adams for supplying last season's league averages. Although a little late through no fault of Jim's, they should have plenty of interest to the players.



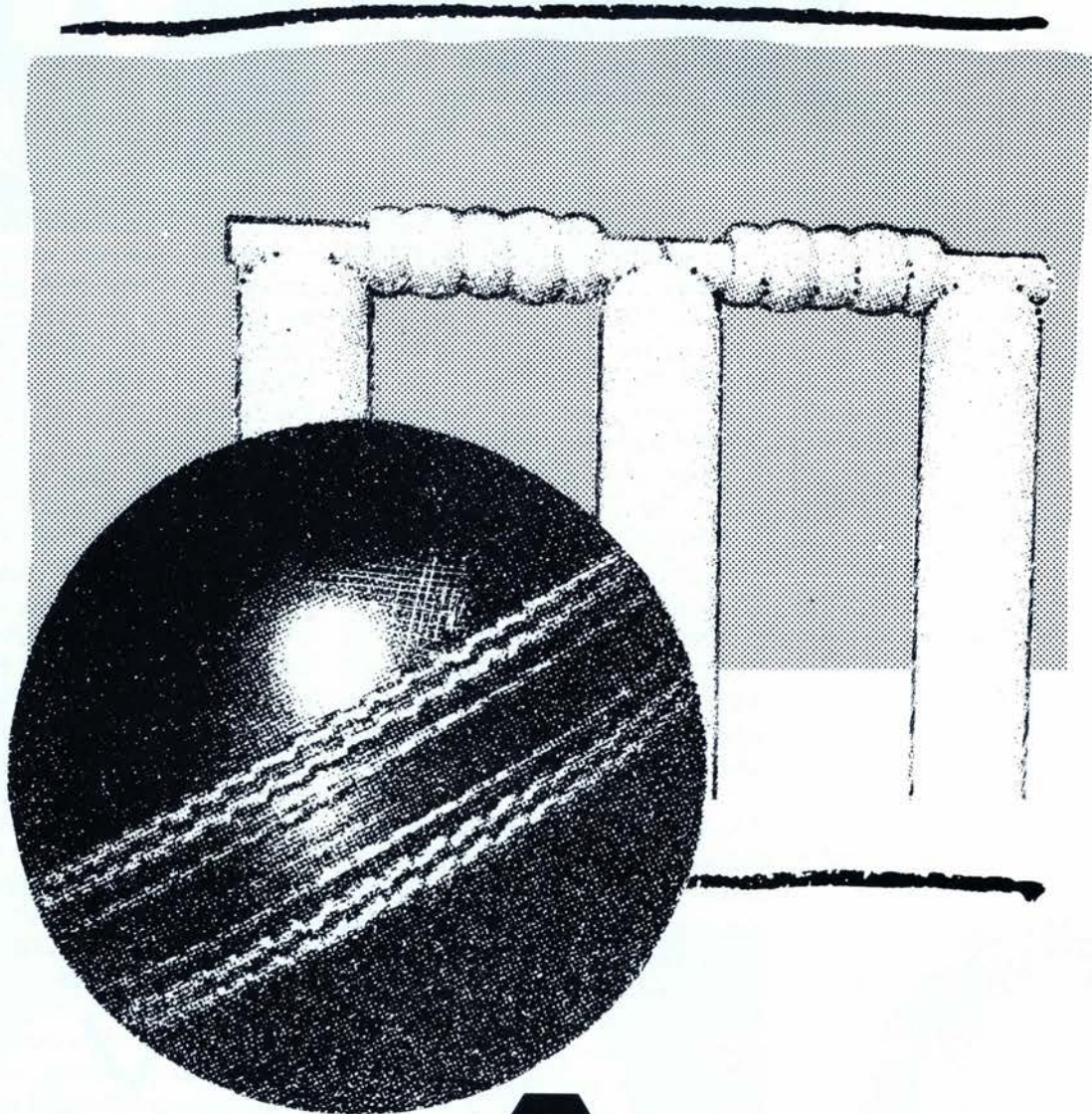
Woodvale's new captain wicket-keeper Chris Davis who will provide plenty of enthusiasm and effort to the Ballygomartin Road cause.



Alvin Spence one of the unsung heroes of the star-studded Waringstown team.

INN	NOTOUTS	RUN	H	SC	AVE
BATTING :					
ANDREW WILSON (Donaghadee)					
16	3	1057	164		81.3
MOHAMMED JAVED (Ards)					
15	3	955	143		79.6
SHEHAL PARIKH (Carrick)					
15	5	507	104		50.7
BILLY DOHERTY (Ards)					
15	2	508	91		39.1
MILAND GUNJAL (Derriaghly)					
14	3	406	131		36.9
MICHAEL McCORMICK (Cregagh)					
10	2	249	60		31.1
OVERS MAIDENS RUNS WKTS AVE					
BOWLING:					
BILLY DALE (Cregagh)					
127	31	295	36		8.2
PAUL DAVIDSON (Ards)					
154	48	282	32		8.8
GEORGE WILSON (Collegians)					
129	24	386	42		9.2
JIM ADAMS (CIYMS)					
161	22	413	43		9.6

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'STATUS QUO' TO REMAIN

Few changes anticipated in the Irish Team

Long before the Irish season got under way, several significant alterations in the administration spelt change for 1989. Michael Reith's resignation as Team Manager after only one year in office, fell like a bombshell on players and administrators alike, all of whom greatly admired the Waringstown man's quiet, effective and efficient approach to the job. His decision to stand down for business reasons, had barely sunk in, when the selectors announced that former Irish hockey team manager Joey O'Meara was to be his replacement. The surprise appointment of the dual international from Railway Union, heralds a much different approach to team management, as his high personal profile and outgoing personality, contrasts radically with his predecessors Kevin O'Riordan, Alfie Linehan and of course Reith. There had been speculation that former opening bowler John Elder might be appointed, but the selectors obviously felt that because he has just retired from playing in the team, his close affiliation with the players might affect his capacity to manage at this point in his career.

The selectors themselves show change. The retirement of Alfie Linehan after five years sterling service, has



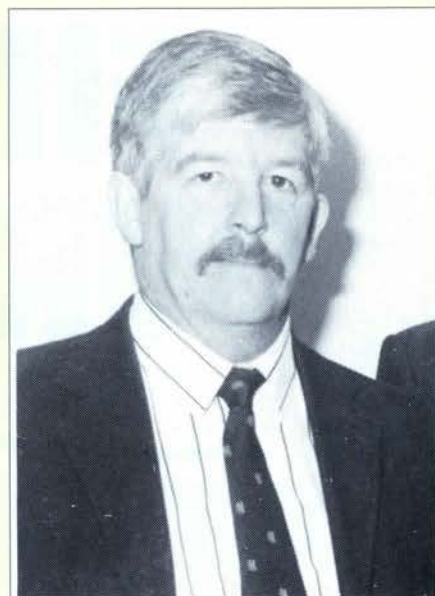
Retired Team Manager Michael Reith

opened the door for former skipper Dermott Monteith to return to the international scene. An entrepreneurial, and at times controversial leader, the former Lisburn doyen of slow bowlers, has lost none of his zeal for the game, and his curt, biting observations will add another dimension to the selectorial process. Carlisle's Stephen Molins, replaces long serving Dublin selector Denzil Tipping and joins former Irish captain Alex O'Riordan as the Leinster selectors. Ian Devine from Munster, and Clarke Nicholl of the North West complete the Committee for 1989.

Former YMCA batsman Ian Lewis dons the mantle of Presidency this season. Capped 20 times, he has given tremendous service to both the Leinster and the Irish Cricket Unions, in a wide variety of administrative roles. Father of current middle-order batsman Alan, Ian has been a regular follower of the Irish team for many seasons, and should be well acquainted with the international scene.

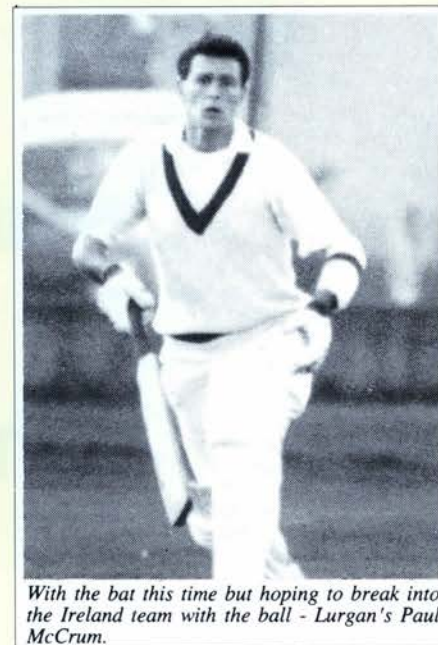
President elect is Gavin Craig from the North West Union. A former schools international, the ex-Woodvale man has been a tireless servant of the Coleraine club in recent years.

Change may be the characteristic off the field for 1989, but it is unlikely to be the nature of proceedings on it. Last year the selectors awarded four new caps, in sharp contrast to only one in the preceding two years, but it is unlikely their enterprise will extend into this season. Disciplinary action against Garth and Masood last year opened the door of opportunity for North West players Nigel Thompson and Paul Wallace, but the real 'find' of 1988 was Waringstown opening bowler Alan Nelson. The big Gilford man played his heart out, and fully deserved his success, but he does lack genuine pace at this level, so the necessity to have an effective opening partner in tandem is paramount. Hugh Milling benefitted much from several years in 'apprenticeship' with Simon Corlett, but with the great North man

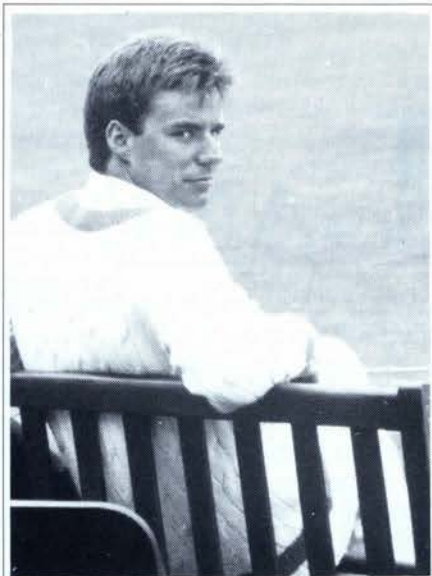


New selector and former skipper Dermott Monteith

in retirement he has not proved as penetrative in the senior role. Perhaps the selectors might continue with St Johnston left arm seamer Wallace, or now turn to Lurgan's Paul McCrum. The fiery Ulster Country pace bowler is genuinely fast, and finished prominently in the 1988 Interprovincial bowling averages. Indeed, there were many who felt he should have been capped before both Nelson and Wallace, but of course the fickleties of selection are wont to play havoc with well-meaning speculations! Caution will probably win the day, and with so few options available, it is unlikely there will be much variation from these candidates for the specialist pace positions.



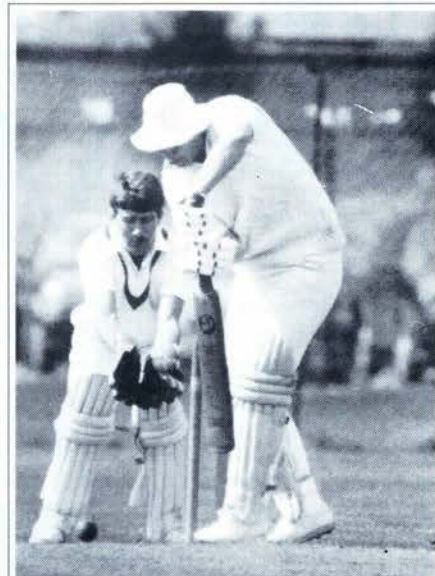
With the bat this time but hoping to break into the Ireland team with the ball - Lurgan's Paul McCrum.



Starting the representative season late due to exams - Michael Rea of Clontarf and Bangor.



Signing off the Irish scene - Hugh Milling now working in England



A rare defensive block from Ross McCollum!

The same situation exists in the slow department where veteran Phoenix off spinner Michael Halliday still reigns supreme. Now the acknowledged 'senior citizen' of the international squad, the experienced former skipper marked his fortieth birthday last year with a record 88th cap, spread over 19 seasons. A dogged batting performance against Scotland and an eleven wicket haul during 1988, will guarantee him his place, although Garfield Harrison continues to develop as a genuine off spinner. Supporters of Donemana's 'Junior' McBrine were bitterly disappointed when the North West man was left out against Worcestershire, but he did return for the Welsh match and appeared to be bowling better. Despite his aggressive late order batting, and superb fielding skills, he will have to contest with Halliday for the slow bowling position. Conor Hoey, the promising young Leinster leg spinner must win recognition at some stage, while Bangor's Colin Magowan continues to 'wait in the wings'. Good interprovincial performances are vital to the international aspirations of both.

Last season the average cost per wicket came down from 41.36 to 30.56, perhaps the most encouraging statistic for many years, but with quality county opposition being faced on an ever increasing basis there will be considerable pressure on the bowlers to

maintain this trend.

The batting line up should not pose any major problems for the selectors, with Cohen, Warke, Garth and Harrison automatic selections. Lewis, Vincent and Rea will be the others most likely to win favour with the deliberators, while Lurgan's Ross McCollum might get another opportunity if he can regain his confidence after a three match mauling against county attacks last year. Eglinton's Nigel Thompson will contest the genuine all rounders spot, although this position is something of a misnomer with Harrison, Lewis, Garth, and McBrine all capable of any claim to all-rounder status.



Ireland's star all rounder Garfield Harrison

The balance of the team should ultimately determine its personnel. Too often in the past, batsmen who could bowl and bowlers who could bat have won preference over the specialists, perhaps due to the increasing number of limited overs matches. However, the 1989 match programme, does offer more longer matches, and this will ultimately help the cause of the specialist. The selectors might therefore consider the merit of including both Derek Vincent and Michael Rea from the outset, at the expense of one of the all rounder brigade. They should certainly be prepared to adjust the team according to the nature of the match, because there is little doubt some players possess a better aptitude and have more adaptable temperaments to limited overs matches than others. The season will conclude with the biannual tour to England and Wales, but one suspects even at that late stage the selectors will not have introduced a 'new face' in 1989!

One position however remains automatic, that of wicket keeper and captain. Paul Jackson has reigned supreme in both departments over the past few seasons, and with 52 caps possesses a wealth of experience. He will need it all, if 1989 is to achieve the victory that eluded Ireland in 1988!



DOWN MEMORY LANE

All roads led to Limavady on Saturday 14th September 1968. It was a day to remember for five thousand spectators who witnessed "a fabulous exhibition of carnival cricket" (Belfast Newsletter) and an entertaining celebrity rugby match. However, despite the presence of a bevy of international rugby stars, it was the cricketers that most North West sports followers had flocked to see. They were certainly not disappointed. The occasion was to mark the opening of Limavady's prestigious sports complex, and their industrious President John Hunter, had done his club proud by recruiting the cream of West Indian cricketers to highlight the celebration. In return these distinguished visitors proved wonderful ambassadors with their adventurous style of calypso cricket and in a thrilling exhibition of power play, a total of 548 runs was scored.

The match featured some of the 'all time greats' of West Indian cricket spear-headed by the magnificent Gary Sobers and Rohan Kanhai. Other contemporary test stars included wicket-keeper Derek Murray, that elegant batsman Roy Marshall, prolific spinner Lance Gibbs, Kent's John Shepherd, and Clairmont Depeiza from Barbados. In total 14 West Indian stars travelled to Limavady that famous Saturday, split into two teams captained by Sobers and Kanhai, and joined by local stars Scott Huey, 'Ossie' Colhoun, Ron Collins, John Cochrane, Billy Miller, Clarke Nicholl, Aubrey Finaly and Irish opening batsman David Pigot.

The Sobers X1 set the scene when they batted first, although Brigade's Ron Collins was an early victim for the pacy Ramnarace. Murray and Depeiza rectified the damage but just as both appeared to be getting in to their stride, they joined another set of Scott Huey victims. Barker made a brief excursion to the crease, but the real buzz was created by the arrival of the enigmatic Sobers, probably the greatest cricketer of all time. This was his second visit to Limavady, having scored a century the previous year in

another exhibition match. That memorable feat was one of only three centuries scored at the ground in forty years, but sensational others were about to unfold. Sobers was belligerent brilliance. Allied to the stylish Marshall, he dominated the innings with a powerful array of flamboyant strokes which not only peppered the packed perimeter, but occasionally splashed into the nearby river Roe. The crowd

loved it, and a deafening ovation greeted his almost inevitable century. It took only 72 minutes and included 13 fours and four sixes. In one unforgettable over, bowled by current Irish selector Clarke Nicholl, he hit the first five deliveries to the boundary, then lifted the last ball sweetly into the Roe! A bemused Nicholl had the last laugh however, when he bowled the masterful all-rounder for a truly exhilarating 101. Not surprisingly, it brought a standing ovation as he left the field.

Understandably, the rest of the innings paled in comparison, and although Huey and Nicholl shared the bulk of the wickets, most people were still buzzing in the aftermath of the Sobers explosion. It would have satisfied any cricket enthusiast, but on this special day in Limavady's history, there was more to follow.

Trinidadian wicket-keeper Derek Murray took two early catches to remove openers, David Pigot and Gerry Sobers, the much underrated brother of Gary, as Kanhai's X1 set out in reply. But the drying wicket offered assistance to the slow bowlers, so Gibbs and Cochrane soon shared the brunt of the attack. Test star Gibbs accounted for Barker, but he may have regretted the capture a short time later, as Charlie Stayers and the greying Kanhai unleashed an unparalleled attack on the bowling. Stayers savaged Gibbs for 32 in one particularly explosive over, (664466) and reached his century in only 58 minutes. When Sobers and Marshall both entered the fray

they were scathingly despatched as the excited crowd warmed to the occasion.

Kanhai was just as lethal. He reached 71 in only 27 minutes,



Gary Sobers XI — Front Row: D. Murray, D. Barker, Gary Sobers, R. Marshall, L. De Piza. Back Row: R. Collins (Brigade), B. Millar (Limavady), C. Forbes, A. Finlay (Sion Mills), L. Gibbs, J. Cochrane (Donemana), W. Craig (umpire).



Rohan Kanhai XI — Front Row: D. Scarlett, J. Sheppard, R. Kanhai, Gerry Sobers, C. Nicholl (Brigade). Back Row: M. Stott (umpire), S. Huey (Eglinton), G. Ramnarace, O. Colhoun (Sion Mills), D. Carter, D. Pigot (Pembroke).

bludgeoning six sixes and seven fours en route. The 227 target was easily passed but sportingly both teams elected to continue to entertain the crowd. Gibbs, almost apologetically, removed Stayers on 109, after Depeiza stumped him going for yet another huge hit. Sobers accounted for Kanhai, but Kent all rounder John Shepherd weighed in with some useful runs as the 'tail' wagged. However, the doughty Cochrane stuck manfully to his task, despite the onslaught, and his four wickets were richly deserved, if hard-earned. Scott Huey did not bat, he had no need to, the innings closed at 321 for 8 and everyone privileged to have been at the ground on that historic day, agreed they had witnessed an unique exhibition of 'carnival cricket'. Although a little upstaged by the lesser known Stayers, the great Sobers was mecurial, and if he did tire at the hundreds of milling autograph hunters, few could have blamed him. Everywhere he went he was besieged by adoring North West fans.

Ironically, on the adjoining rugby pitch, another top Ulster cricketer was performing with similar aplomb. Former Lisburn and North Down pace bowler Laurence Hunter was the star of the league champions Civil Service's exciting 8-3 victory over a star-studded select X1, brimming with inter-

nationals. It was just another performance to savour on a day which will live long in the memories of the Limavady members. Yes, a day to remember in every sense.....

SCORECARD

GARY SOBERS XI v. ROHAN KANHAI XI
SATURDAY 14th SEPTEMBER 1968

GARY SOBERS XI

R Collins CT Shepherd B Ramnarace	4
D Murray CT Colhoun B Huey	26
C Depeiza CT Nicholl B Huey	21
K Barker CT Colhoun B Shepherd	10
Gary Sobers B Nicholl	101
R Marshall CT Colhoun B Scarlett	32
J Cochrane B Nicholl	6
A Finlay CT Stayers B Huey	8
C Forbes CT Ramnarace B Nicholl	2
B Miller NOT OUT	8
L Gibbs ST Colhoun B Huey	0
EXTRAS	9
TOTAL	227

ROHAN KANHAI XI

D Pigot CT Murray B Forbes	2
Gerry Sobers CT Murray B Cochrane	24
D Carter CT Depeiza B Gibbs	19
C Stayers ST Depeiza B Gibbs	109
R Kanhai CT Forbes B Sobers	71
J Shepherd ST Depeiza B Cochrane	27
R Scarlett CT Sobers B Cochrane	16
R Ramnarace CT Sobers B Cochrane	32
C Nicholl NOT OUT	10
O Colhoun NOT OUT	10
S Huey DID NOT BAT	
EXTRAS	5
TOTAL	321 for 8 WICKETS

RESULT:

CRICKET WON BY A WIDE MARGIN!!!



A rare offensive bat from the brilliant Sobers at Limavady, wicket keeper Ossie Colhoun waits in anticipation

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NO BANKERS IN ULSTER TEAMS! SOUTH LEINSTER TO HOLD INTERPROS?

With only one defeat in the Interprovincial series in the last three years, defending Champions South Leinster will be a formidable obstacle to any aspiring Ulster Bank Trophy ambitions in 1989. The Dublin team emerged from the 1988 campaign with 24 points in reserve, and won many admirers with their entrepreneurial but emphatic pursuit of championship honours. Much of the credit for their enthusiasm deservedly fell on the shoulders of international all rounder Alan Lewis, and with the talented YMCA man once again at the helm, South Leinster must start firm favourites. Ulster teams, have in the past enjoyed overall team strength in depth, but the winds of change have ominously switched direction, and the quality of northern teams, visibly weakened. Perhaps this was inevitable in the wake

of the retirement of such a bevy of seasoned internationals of the calibre of Monteith, Anderson, Torrens, Colhoun, Reith, Linehan, Elder and Corlett. It will take time for a new generation of Ulster cricketing 'elite' to establish itself at the highest level. In the interim, South Leinster should hold the edge, but Ulster Country may hold the key to causing their possible downfall. It was this meeting at Comber last year which tilted the balance heavily in favour of the Dublin team, after they had picked up vital bonus points and held the initiative in a drawn game. Lewis' sporting declaration on the day, proved inspirational, and if it did raise a few eyebrows from so-called experts, they had to eat their words in the end. On that occasion, it was the brilliant but temperamental Garth who stole the honours, with an undefeated 69 and three wickets. One of six internationals in the South Leinster



Ulster Town's John Gilliland made a late entry into the 1988 Interpro campaign but two quality performances have ensured he will figure from the start in 1989

take a much more concerted effort by their opponents this season to maximise on any possible flaws.

Ulster Country skipper Garfield Harrison worked hard in 1988 to create an enthusiastic team spirit within his side and was bitterly disappointed that rain played a significant role in two drawn games. With fellow internationals Alan Nelson, Ross McCollum, Jim Patterson, and possibly Davy Dennison alongside him, he will be confident of restoring the initiative. Despite their apparent overall club strength, it is ten years since Ulster Country won the Interprovincial series, something of a mystery to most observers.

In the past few years some established representative players have complained about excessive cricket, concentrated into an already packed domestic programme. However with the unpredictable vagaries of the Irish summer, this will remain inevitable, but hopefully entrepreneurial captaincy will eventually characterise this very important series. Certainly the removal of the old complex set of rules, has placed the overall responsibility for the conduct of each match, firmly with the captains. The pattern of last season seemed to indicate a more acute awareness of this fact and better matches resulted overall.

Both Ulster Town and North West are in the throes of rebuilding, so are unlikely to have the degree of consistency required to win the Ulster Bank Trophy. Alan Rutherford's late season century against North Leinster, brightened a disappointing 1988 campaign for the North West, which also saw disciplinary action taken against



Alan Nelson, Ulster Country's talented young fast bowler who has made the step to Irish cricket.



The closest Ulster Town and Ireland skipper Paul Jackson got to the Ulster Bank Trophy in 1988 was at the press release with Ulster Bank Executive Noel Kincaide.

line-up, Garth figured in a big partnership with Ian Burns who made the most of some appalling fielding lapses to score a half-century. Other stars in the formidable South Leinster line up, include the prolific Mark Cohen, evergreen 'Ginger' O'Brien, Rodney Molins and Tom McDonnell. If a weakness does exist, it could be in the bowling department, where much depends on the versatile Garth and the sometimes erratic leg-spin of Connor Hoey. However, this 'chink' in the armoury failed to emerge in 1988 and it will

several key players who refused to travel to Munster. Their continuing omission will obviously weaken any North West challenge, so much will depend on the legislators before the team even gets to the wicket!

Ulster Town has been the team of the Eighties in the Interprovincial Series, but although champions in 1987, their cam-

paign last year disappointed. Corlett's retirement blunted their attacking edge while the loss of John Elder through injury, and the poor form of international pace bowler Hugh Milling, removed the threat of their celebrated opening trio.

There are few new faces in the Belfast cricket scene and significantly no 'Town bowler' could break into the top ten of the averages last season. The selectors will do well to mould a team of sufficient strength to assist skipper Paul Jackson and his international understudy Stephen Warke, in pursuit of another championship.

Last season at Deramore, Derek Vincent hit an unbeaten 145 against a bemused 'Town' attack, and joined with Mark Nulty to establish a solid North Leinster opening partnership. However, like their Northern adversaries, the Dublin team is also in a transitional period with a similar vacuum in the bowline ranks. The return of Alf Masood to Phoenix should however add some spice to their challenge.

Unless there is a major upheaval in the Cork area, it seems unlikely that Munster will improve on their poor record of previous years. The men from the west will have a sting in their tails, in the wake of controversial rumblings regarding their continuing participation in a competition where they have been hopelessly out of

their depth for over twenty years.

However, unless there is a fortuitous combination of poor weather and complacency, it is unlikely their indignation will arouse other than heated dialogue.

Ironically, some would welcome the impetus an improbable victory might create, so perhaps destiny is primed to cause an upset!

With several changes on the International selectional panel, the 1989 Ulster Bank Interprovincial campaign will have an added edge as aspiring internationals stake their claim for recognition at the highest level in Irish cricket.

In recent years, bad weather, has had a detrimental effect on the outcome of several games and the quality of the wickets prepared. Players are anxious to play meaningful competitive cricket, so a greater emphasis must be placed on using the best grounds, and only those with adequate covers. If the Ulster Bank Trophy is to continue to be the most prestigious award in Irish cricket, the Irish Cricket Union, must ensure that only the best venues are used, the best umpires stand, the rules are conducive to entertaining cricket and only the top players in the country participate. Any weakening of these essentials will inevitably reduce the quality of the competition.



'Decker Curry' - An explosive North West batsman with true potential.

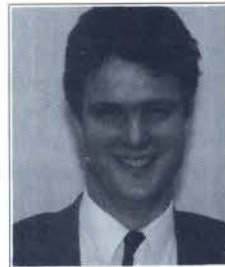


ULSTER COUNTRY AGAINST SOUTH LEINSTER LAST YEAR — WILL THEY GO ONE BETTER IN 1989?

TEAM: (From left) Back Row: Michael Blair, Peter Reid, Alan Nelson, Jimmy Ireland, Paul McCrum, Alan Waite. Front Row: Bruce Topping, Ross McCollum, Garfield Harrison (Capt.), Uel Graham, Brian Ferris.

JIM McMORRAN-

PRESIDENT OF THE NORTHERN CRICKET UNION



by Michael Stevenson

'What sort of a bloody shot was that!' A typical 'gulder' at Cooke Cricket Club, to those familiar with the dulcet tones of the current president of the Northern Cricket Union as he prowls the boundary. It's a voice which has become increasingly recognised over the last two years throughout the Ulster Cricket scene.

When Jim McMorrán succeeded Michael Rea as NCU President in October 1987 he was relatively unknown outside junior cricket circles.

Jim has taken to the office like a duck to water, after his initial misplaced concern about resistance from senior clubs to someone from the junior fraternity being at the helm.

However, the big man has nothing but praise for the hospitality he has received wherever he has gone. He makes particular mention of Chairman (perhaps that should read 'minder') Alfie Linehan for his help throughout his term of office.

Never in the top flight of local cricket as a player, he was nonetheless a solid opening bat. He played junior cricket for Ulidia and Cooke from 1943 until his last game in the 1975 Junior Cup Final against Downpatrick II.

His first involvement with the administration of the game was as a Ulidia Representative on the junior committee of the NCU long, long ago.

After the amalgamation of the junior and senior committees in the mid-sixties, he has served his time through divisional and executive committees and was chairman of Division 3 from 1980 - 1988.

As an administrator he has never been hesitant to express his opinions on the running of NCU business. With regard to the old chestnut of professionals in the NCU, Jim is of the opinion that if 'pros' are going to be used, they should be used properly, with coaching taking a higher profile.

He is totally against the use of 'pros' simply to dominate

matches, hiding some teams inadequacies. Jim cites Waringstown as an example to everyone to work harder at their game, in order to raise playing standards.

There is a feeling amongst some clubs that the 'profession' should be limited in the number of runs he can score, however the McMorrán view is either have them 'warts and all' or ban them completely!

One area which encouraged the president was the improvement in sportsmanship shown in the 1988 season, after his appeal at the 1987 AGM. He was disappointed though with the intransigence surrounding the Schweppes Cup Final venue, which forced the game to go to Dublin, depriving many local spectators of an important showpiece game in their own area.

Another area where Jim has noticed a major improvement is in the quality of wickets being produced. He contends that this may have a greater effect on improving the standard of play than the input from professionals.

The big man has been involved on ground inspection committees for many years and nominates the Collegians ground as being the best outside Section One.

Competition for sponsorship in sport is more intense than ever, and the President can take great satisfaction from the Touche Ross deal, securing the Senior Cup for the next three years.

Sponsors are, however, looking for a return, and whilst Jim believes the press coverage of local cricket is adequate, he is unhappy about television's lack of interest in the sport. 'Perhaps they are frightened to cover it, because it might expose technical weaknesses' he concludes.

The job of President of any cricket union is a demanding one, and Jim admits that whilst he has thoroughly enjoyed himself, it has taken up more time than he anticipated.

When he finishes his term in October, he will miss the round of formal engagements, but hopes to spend more time over his favourite pastime; watching cricket!



Cooke Cricket Club stalwart and current President of the Northern Cricket Union - Jim McMorrán

DIET OF THE TOURING CRICKETER



Sun drenched beaches, looping palm trees and crystal clear blue waters do not immediately conjure the ideal setting of a typical cricket match but more and more they are forming a major part of the considerations of a touring Ulster cricketer. Long gone are those antiquated horizons which limited club tours to Dublin or Londonderry and test match visits to London or Manchester. The modern cricketer is spoiled by choice and he has not been slow to take advantage. Nothing is beyond the enterprising traveller, far less the entrepreneurial travel agent.

In March the Ulster Grasshoppers Cricket team and supporters circled the globe to open new horizons when visiting California, Fiji, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia. Organiser supreme John Elder had barely recovered from jet lag when he announced that the next trip will include Canada, Australia and Hong Kong!

BARBADOS PROVES POPULAR

Over the past decade a large number of local cricket enthusiasts have travelled worldwide to such exotic locations as Barbados, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Bermuda, Israel, Cyprus, Canada, U S A and Europe. The diet of the touring cricketer is boundless!

Some clubs are more enterprising than others while the Irish Cricket Union, the Northern Cricket Union, and the North West Union have also organised prestigious tours. Ireland will tour Zimbabwe again in 1991 but for the ambitious Instonians club the need to travel has a greater urgency. The Shane Park boys toured Barbados in 1986 and after weighing up the merits of a trip to South Africa have decided to return to the Caribbean next Spring. The added bonus of seeing England on tour must have been a contributory factor although this is a busy air route and subsequently travel costs are highly competitive.

Numerous tour operators are peddling their 'Caribbean wares' and packages are very attractive. Individuals or parties can be accommodated with prices variable according to the quality of hotels required. Prices in parties start at £500 while individuals can obtain excellent packages starting at around £400. The Belfast flight is extra. Barbados has an appeal of its own not just because of its quality cricket pedigree but as a holiday island with no peer. Clear blue skies, white sand washed by crystal clear water and a friendly hospitable population which includes the legendary Gary Sobers characterise this idyllic tourist spot.

AUSTRALIA OR CANADA POSSIBILITIES?

Several tour operators are very experienced in Caribbean trips which can be spent totally in Barbados or split with another island such as Jamaica, St Lucia, Antigua or Guyana. However Barbados remains the most popular and when England troop out on to the Kennington Oval next Spring the crowd is sure to include a large number of Ulster cricket enthusiasts.

Gullivers Sports Travel organised the successful Ulster Grasshoppers tour to South Africa in 1981/82 and continue to offer packages worldwide for clubs, schools or individuals. They will be to the fore in setting up a wide variety of packages to the Caribbean next spring but also include several other imaginative trips in their brochures. For example what about some club cricket in Australia in 1991 for the 'Alternative Ashes'? This unique club competition was started in 1985 and the 1991 tour will begin on Boxing Day 1990 and last 22 days. Priced at £1495 inclusive of flights and accommodation, it is very attractive.

Perhaps the Golden Oldies cricket festival in Vancouver in 1990 might be more suitable to others? The July tournament lasts 7 days and prices start at around £400 each.



Local travel agent Raymond Parker of Ferherty Travel in Bangor has been involved in numerous sports tours over the years. His comments reflect a changing environment for the Ulster sportsman -

'Every year we are asked to price wider and wider horizons in travel for clubs or individuals. Nothing is beyond reach whether its a club going on tour or some couples wanting to combine a special holiday with a major sporting event of their choice'.

CALVIN STILL IN ACTION

Former test cricketer Graham Roope has been a regular visitor to the Caribbean and involved in setting up cricket tours for clubs and for individuals going to watch test cricket.

'The 1990 tour will see more British people in Barbados than ever before such is the attraction of this beautiful calypso island which is regarded as the mecca of Caribbean cricket.'

His company ITC sports specialise in Barbados tours but will arrange split locations for those wanting to see another island. Their Barbados representative is former Downpatrick professional Calvin Hope still playing regular club cricket for Wanderers.

It all adds colour to the local season. It may even stir some players into broadening their cricket horizons across the world. Nothing is beyond the realms of possibility evidenced by a match on the St Moritz ice during the winter, under the shadow of the snow-clad Alps. Yes, the diet of the touring cricketer is vast!

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D NEWS T DIGEST

OBITUARY

JACK BOWDEN

A double international at cricket and hockey, Jack Bowden was one of Lisburn's most famous sporting sons. In a distinguished career which spanned the second World War, he was the leading cricket personality of the era, and one of hockey's most dynamic forwards. Lisburn and Irish sport in general, will be much sadder at his passing.

LARRY WARKE

Former Irish captain Larry Warke, passed quietly from our midst in late January after a brave fight against the impossible. He was a superb all round sportsman, capped 34 times at cricket but equally talented at rugby, soccer, hockey and in later life, bowls. Father of Stephen and Ian, he was the pride of Ballygomartin Road for many years and the huge funeral was a fitting tribute to an outstanding sportsman.

JIM McCLURG

A gentleman in every sense, Jim McClurg was one of the unsung heroes of the Downpatrick administration. Quiet but authoritative, he was much loved in both the cricket and hockey fraternities where he gave unselfishly of his time and resources. A pillar of the Downpatrick Community, his loss will never be measured in only sporting terms because he also gave much to his church, his school and to the Boys Brigade. His friendly, easy going manner will be sadly missed by visitors to the Strangford Road this season.

ROBIN HAYES

Waringstown President Robin Hayes died suddenly after a heart attack in the early part of the year. In his early fifties, Robin was a tireless worker at the lawn and gave his life-long club sterling support.



EL PRESEDENTE

Bangor stalwart Michael Rea has succeeded Fred Brady as President of the Leprechauns Cricket Club. A former N. C. U President, Michael is keen to rekindle some of the 'Leps' former impetus, and has appealed to the members to contact him if they wish to play in any particular match. Last year the club celebrated its fortieth birthday with a North/South match at Malahide, and hope to continue the fixture this year, in addition to the traditional schools games planned.

The highlight of the Leprechaun's impressive fixture list will be the South-East tour in August to 'old faithfuls' Wexford, Bagnalstown and Mount Juliet.

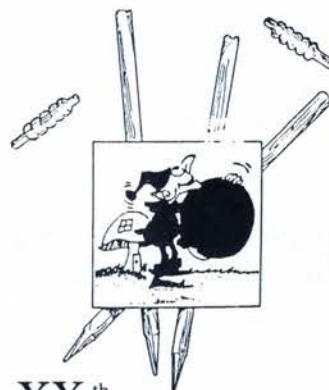
'GROUNDINGS'

Both Coleraine and Malahide have been relegated from 'Two/three day' status, to 'One day' status in the 1989 list of International grounds emanating from the Irish Cricket Union. The list is compiled annually for the Union by English expert Peter Dury, who has been a regular visitor to Ireland in the past decade. Both Downpatrick and Clontarf have retained their status for the longer matches, with the Strangford road square the only one rated as 'fast' by Mr Dury. The condition of the square is the only criteria used to determine the grading, although the Irish Cricket Union take various other factors into consideration when allocating international fixtures.

In addition to Malahide and Coleraine, Leinster (Rathmines), North of Ireland (Ormeau) and Trinity (College Park) have also been graded as 'suitable for one day international cricket'. The latter will please many Dubliners, who for some time have campaigned to return to College Park, idyllically situated in the centre of the city, and guaranteed to attract a substantial crowd.

Brigade's Beechgrove square, the subject of some adverse criticism following the Worcestershire match last year, has not been graded. North Down's excellent Castle Lane square is not included following the decision by club officials not to seek international status!

SION'S CELEBRATION



**XXth ANNIVERSARY
CHARITY MATCH DAY
JUNE 1st, 1989 AT SION MILLS**
It promises to be quite a year of celebration at Sion Mills this season, as the locals double their 125th anniversary with the memory of Ireland's most famous defeat of the West Indies just a mere twenty years ago! Herdman's Spinning Mill, so long associated with the famous Tyrone club, will fund a series of events which include a charity cricket match, a celebrity bowls tournament, a fishing competition, a football match, a village fete, and a charity dinner in the Everglades Hotel.

Big name celebrities include Clive Lloyd, Gus Logie, Graham Gooch, Jim Baker, David Corkhill and many others past and present. Various local charities will benefit from the proceeds of this ambitious programme.
Good luck Sion!

BACK ON THE AIR

The BBC has brought back its Saturday evening results service following one year off in 1988. The decision to stop it last year brought widespread criticism and led to many complaints. The new service will be on the air at 10 pm each Saturday evening.

D NEWS T DIGEST

ON THE MOVE

Kenny Boucher from North Down to Lisburn. Alan Rutherford from Bready to Brigade, ... Angus Fergie back to the 'Dee from Comber... Billy Doherty to Comber from Ards! From Laurelvale back to Lurgan - Tom Guy... to Bangor from Queens Paul Stafford and from Holywood Ricky Adair... Alan Neil from Cliftonville to Ballymena where Adrian Goodrich has also returned from London... Ian Tompson into retirement at Wallace Park and Michael Blair off to RUC... brother Gary to Waringstown ... Alf 'Masood' from Coleraine to Phoenix..



On the move —
Ken Boucher to Lisburn



Tom Guy back to Lurgan.



Larne Cricket Club's annual 'Christmas Feast' - 'Under 25' and 'Over 25' braced the elements!
Photo courtesy of the Larne Times.

SANTA CLAUS AT LARNE

Winter again failed to dampen the enthusiasm of the hardy Larne members who held their fourth annual Boxing Day fixture between the 'under 25 X1' and the 'over 25 X1'. Big hitting and vociferous appeals highlighted this entertaining exchange, which opened with the

'seniors' amassing 136 for 8. Peter Reeves (34) in particular, revelled in the festive bowling of David Swann, who was certainly no 'turkey' on this occasion. In reply the cavalier 'juniors' found the going tough, before Stephen 'spaff' Jameson launched into his five sixes routine.

Alas it was not to be, and popular chairman Scott McNally took the final catch to end the cricket and unleash everybody on his wife's hot soup and sausage rolls. Smiling faces all round, emphasised the fact that the real winner was the game of cricket. Happy Christmas lads!

ANOTHER ICU LOSS

For the third successive year, the Irish Cricket Union reported a loss on their annual financial statement published in January. Despite sponsorship totalling almost £53,000, the balance sheet remained £1266 in the 'red' and must raise serious question marks over the extensive programme of annual events. Every fixture and tournament organised, showed a financial loss, including the visit of Worcestershire to Londonderry and Dublin. The heavy dependence on the Nat West cup 'pay out', was again much to the fore, with almost £23,000 coming from this invaluable source.

Increased sponsorship and tighter budgetary control, must be top priorities to Union Officials or the hard-won 'reserves' will be swiftly eroded over the next few years.

Irish cricket club kingpins Waringstown have marked twenty five years of success with a special commemorative brochure packed with excellent features and photographs. Much of the editorial was compiled by historian par excellence Mike Maugeit while Barry Harrison's professional expertise is fittingly rewarded by the quality of the production. Priced at a modest £2 it can be obtained from any Waringstown committee member.

25 GLORY YEARS

LAMBRASTRO

Ardmore sprung an early shock on North Down's Indian Professional Raman Lamba when they registered him in the North West hoping to call on his services when he was not playing at Comber. The only problem was they never got round to asking him first! When the story broke an embarrassed Mr Lamba's first question was - 'Where

is Ardmore. I've never heard of it!'

Other 'nomadic' registrations predictably included Dean Simpson of North for his former Club Brigade, the Semple brothers of RUC for their former club Limavady but somewhat surprisingly Waringstown's Irish International batsman Davy Dennison has been registered by Strabane!

Britannia rules again!



The Britannia Cricket Awards will continue in 1989. For the third successive season, monthly individual and team awards will be made, culminating in the prestigious annual awards. The Staffordshire-based Building Society announced the

details at a press reception in April. Previous winners of the overall team award were Holywood and Donemana while Willie Wilson (Brigade) and Garfield Harrison (Waringstown) won the coveted individual awards.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

It was a case of 'never too late' for former Armagh stalwart Ivan Foster, when his performances as a youngster in the 1946 Graham Cup competition were recently recognised. The fiery fast bowler, who later played league cricket in Lancashire

and Gloucestershire, was a major factor in Armagh's historic cup success taking four wickets with successive balls on a day when he returned figures of six wickets for 2 runs against Lisburn. Perhaps the last word should go to the Armagh bard-

'I often heard that God above, loves the cheerful giver,
And even though I had to wait, it's better late than never!'

THE ULTIMATE ANSWER

One of the most exciting additions to cricket equipment in the modern game has been the arrival of the bowling machine. Gone are those days when flagging bowlers failed to provide the batsmen with sustained quality bowling, so vital to improve technique and skill under the supervision of the club coach. Priced at only ★825 the Bola machine on offer from Stuart and Williams is well within the financial reach of most clubs. The NCU already use one under the supervision of Regional Coach Ian Johnston and Nye Williams has confirmed their increasing importance- 'Clubs all over the country are now adding the bowling machine to their coaching equipment. Even in demonstrations players are very impressed with the range of consistent quality bowling the machine can produce. It can be set for spin, medium pace, fast or whatever and runs off a battery or mains. Once seen virtually all clubs purchase!'

In an age when professionals are increasingly used to promote coaching and develop the game with the younger players it seems illogical not to invest such a modest amount against the overall cost of the club coach. Indeed it may produce better results from his services and greatly assist his work. Perhaps the day is not too far off when a club registers its registrations the name of 'Bola Machine'. Now that should spark a hasty retreat to the rule book!

PROSE ON PROS

Barbadian Jerry Kirtan has not been re-engaged by Strabane leaving only Bobby Rao at Sion Mills and Hendy Wallace at Eglinton as the only overseas professionals in North West cricket.

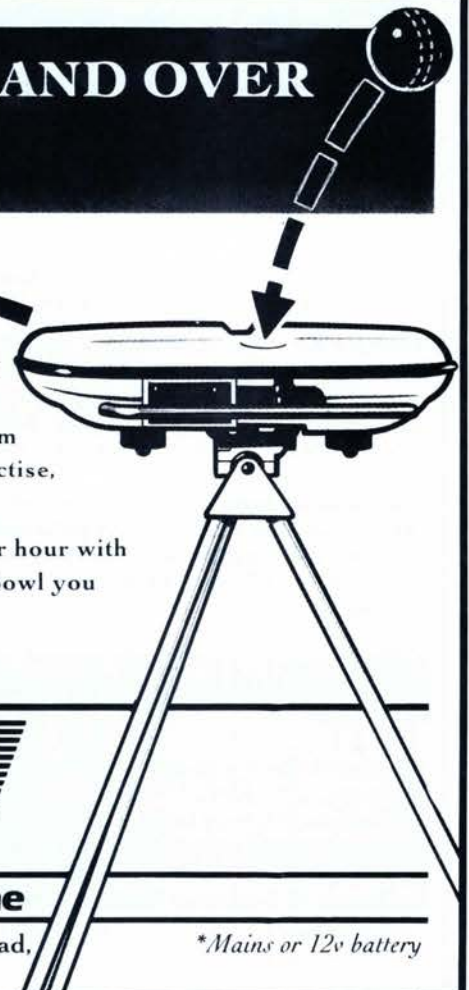
Harry Hariharan of Lisburn has been replaced by New Zealander Mark McKinnion while Holywood has joined the professional trail with Russel Adams being used in this capacity. Carrickfergus has also replaced Snehal Parikh leaving the total professionals in NCU Cricket in 1989 numbering twelve.

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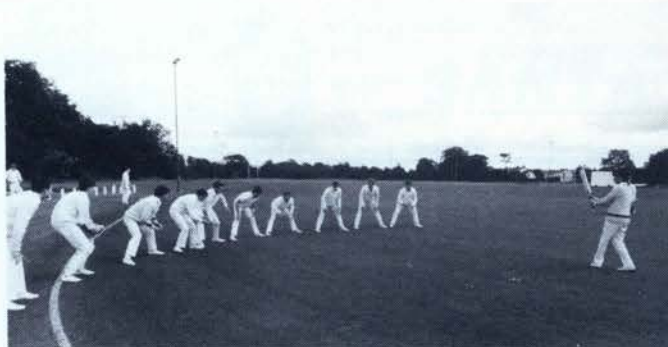
YOUTH/SCHOOLS ROUND UP



by Des Mc Call

1989 INTERNATIONAL YOUTH TOURNAMENT IN ENGLAND

It hardly seems two years ago when we were well advanced in our plans to host the 1987 International Youth Tournament. All that is now history but for this year's squad the trip to England from 4th to 14th July will be the culmination of many months of hard work. Last October the selectors named a panel of 30 players for winter nets under the supervision of joint managers Ian Johnston and Michael Marsh. Sessions took place in Dublin and Belfast but it will be the early season form which will eventually allow the panel to be reduced to 13 players in June.



Coner Hoey supervising pre-match catching practice at Ballymena in 1987

There are few certainties in the 1989 squad so the form-book holds the key to selection. We are perhaps not as strong as in previous years with only our fast bowling up to the past high standards. Eddie Moore (CYM) will spearhead the attack and may well create a unique club 'double' if he is named as captain in succession to club colleague Coner Hoey.

Once again the higher batting positions may be hard to fill adequately based on last year's Irish Schools performances. This state of affairs could be further aggravated if John Dunn (Merrion) is selected for the Lenister Schools Rugby tour of Zimbabwe, which coincides with the Tournament.

Lack of competition amongst the spinners, is not a healthy state of affairs, whilst there is little to choose between the three wicket keepers in the squad.

The players who will be eagerly awaiting the outcome of the Selectors' deliberations on June 11 are:

M Anderson, P Bates, J Craig, A Dundas, C Irwin, J Kennedy, D Neill, P Rainey, (Ulster Country), N McCall, M McCord, D McCormick (Ulster Town), D Cooke, S Hargan, L Hume, C McGettigan, F O'Doherty, D Reid (North West), A Canavan, J Fitzpatrick, D Streak (North Lenister), T Dagg, J Dunn, J Byrne, E Moore, B O'Rourke, G Taylor, S Taylor (South Lenister) C Banks and J Power (Munster).

Those selected for the final squad will travel with the best wishes of all cricket followers in the country and a determination to at least emulate the performance of their immediate predecessors.

THE CLUB SCENE

In the Colts Cup, which this year is being sponsored for the first time by Laurence Kirk Photography, Crossgar, the 23 entrants will be striving for a place in the Final to be played at the beautiful Mall, Armagh. Last year's winners Bangor, and runner-up Downpatrick are in the same half of the draw and could meet in the second round so one of the potential favourites faces an early exit!

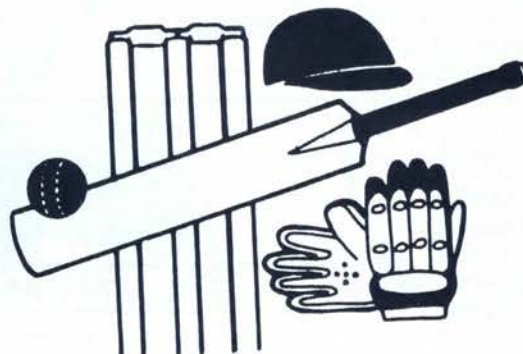
A similar situation prevails in the Graham Cup, which again will be sponsored by the Prudential Assurance Company with the holders Donacloney and four times losers in the final, Ballymena, find themselves in the bottom half of the draw. In the top half last year's semi finalists Bangor and Instonians appear the teams to beat if a place in the final at Hollywood on July 3 is to be gained.

The Under 15 and Under 13 leagues are now well established and prove a great benefit to those knocked out of the Graham Cup in the early rounds. In recent times the same teams have normally fought out the latter stages in both competitions. However these competitions also give the selectors of the representative teams the ideal opportunity to monitor the progress of players under consideration for higher honours.

THE INTERPROVINCIALS

On the domestic front, the Interprovincial Competition reverts to the Under 19 age group after last year's limit of under 18. This means that all those players who participated last year are eligible again. However the venues will be reversed. Last season South Leinster deservedly took the title, although the North West must have been unhappy at being piped on the post after their failure to take full points from the game in Cork.

Last year the Tournament was spread over a 4 week period but this year it will be condensed into the last two weeks of August, in what promises to be a busy season at all levels.



At Under 15 level, the action switches to Cork as the Munster Cricket Union hosts this 3 day Festival for the first time. Dermot Giltinan is the man at the helm and already has arranged the accommodation and venues in anticipation of another feast of cricket. The NCU team are the holders of the title and manager Ted Cooke, with the assistance of Ivan Anderson and John McClean, has been holding weekly net sessions throughout the winter months to make sure this charges are well prepared for this defence of the title.

THE SCHOOLS SCENE

Players, selected for the Schools Interprovincial to be played at Collegians, at the end of June, will be hoping to gain places on the Irish Schools side for the 25th fixture against Welsh Schools at Malahide on July 31st.

Ireland had much the better of things in the early days but in recent times have struggled as the standard of Welsh cricket has risen considerably. Last year's fixture was an evenly balanced affair badly affected by rain so with at least half of last year's squad eligible again and with home advantage a victory would be a nice way to celebrate this special occasion.

The Ulster Junior Schools squad will again be touring England with games against Lancashire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Cheshire and Derbyshire as preparation for their annual international fixture against the Welsh junior team at Muckamore on July 30 and 31.

SCHOOLS CUP

Twenty five other schools will be attempting to wrest the Schools Cup from Ballymena Academy. This year, six sections have been formed with the winners of each section qualifying for the Knock-out stages.

The North-West and Mid-Ulster section winners will gain byes to the semi-finals as the other four section winners compete for a semi-final spot against each other. Last year saw the demise of some of the more fancied sides in the league games and with the games played so early in the season, upsets are not uncommon. Nevertheless, I expect familiar names to be there in the final stages of the competition.



Start them young! Two of Andy Stovold's sons shows they intend to follow in dad's footsteps although Alan Lewis is not impressed!

IRELAND YOUTH TOURNAMENT 4 to 14 July at RADLEY COLLEGE, ENGLAND

ULSTER BANK UNDER 19 INTERPROVINCIALS:

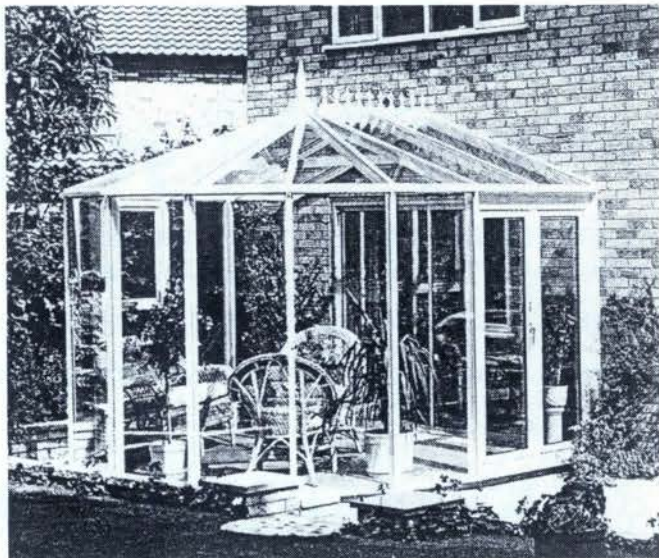
- Mon 21 AUGUST: NORTH WEST V MUNSTER, AT COLERAINE
 TUES 22 AUGUST: ULSTER COUNTRY V MUNSTER, AT BALLYMENA
 TUES 22 AUGUST: ULSTER TOWN V NORTH LEINSTER, AT STORMONT
 WED 23 AUGUST: ULSTER COUNTRY V SOUTH LEINSTER, AT LURGAN
 WED 23 AUGUST: ULSTER TOWN V MUNSTER, AT BANGOR
 THURS 24 AUG: ULSTER COUNTRY V ULSTER TOWN, AT MUCKAMORE
 THURS 24 AUG: NORTH LEINSTER V NORTH WEST, AT PHOENIX PARK
 FRI 25 AUG: SOUTH LEINSTER V NORTH WEST, AT CLAREMONT ROAD
 MON 28 AUG: MUNSTER V SOUTH LEINSTER, AT THE MARDYKE
 TUES 29 AUG: ULSTER TOWN V NORTH WEST AT WOODVALE
 TUES 29 AUG: MUNSTER V NORTH LEINSTER AT THE MARDYKE
 WED 30 AUG: SOUTH LEINSTER V ULSTER TOWN AT ANGLESEA ROAD
 WED 30 AUG: NORTH LEINSTER V ULSTER COUNTRY AT MILVERTON
 THUR 31 AUG: NORTH LEINSTER V SOUTH LEINSTER AT CASTLE AVENUE
 THURS 31 AUG: NORTH WEST V ULSTER COUNTRY AT EGLINTON

LORD'S TAVERNERS SUPPORTED UNDER 15 INTERPROVINCIALS:

- TUES 8 AUG: NORTH WEST V MUNSTER AT GARRYDUFF
 TUES 8 AUG: NCU V LEINSTER AT HARLEQUINS
 WED 9 AUG: MUNSTER V NCU AT THE MARDYKE
 WED 9 AUG: LEINSTER V NORTH WEST AT HARLEQUINS
 THURS 10 AUG: MUNSTER V LEINSTER, AT THE MARDYKE
 THURS 10 AUG: NCU V NORTH WEST AT GARRYDUFF

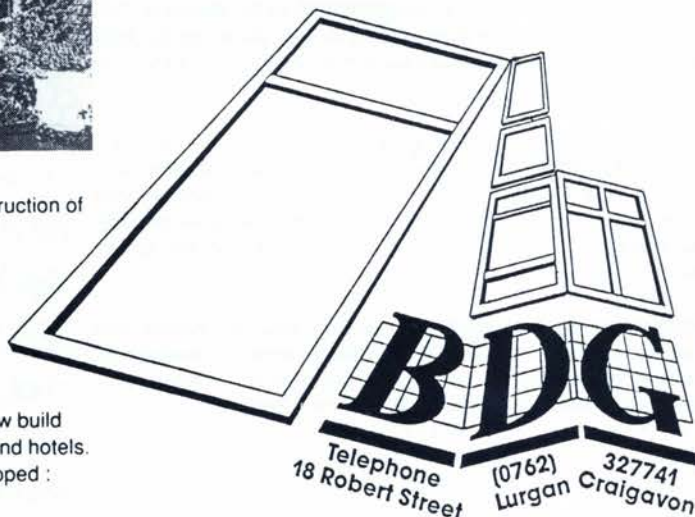


Not much different in Barbados! Colridge Parry first eleven practice just before the match under the careful watching eyes of Henry Wallace.



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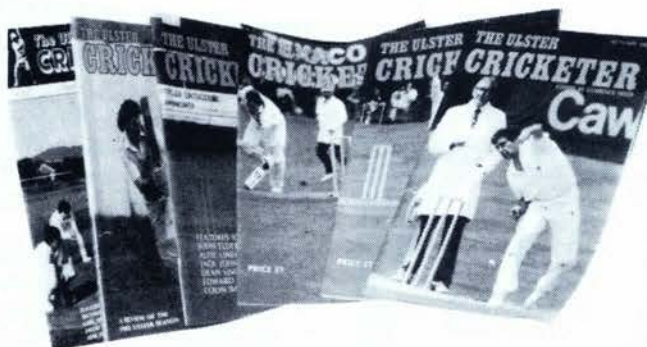


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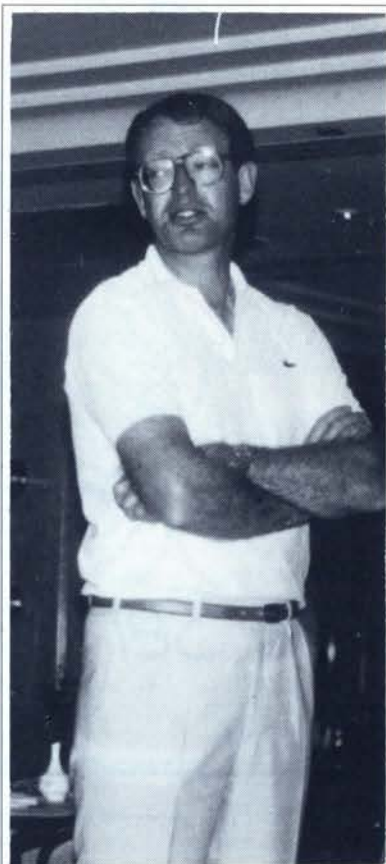
THE ELDER STATESMAN

Having just returned from piloting the cavalier Grasshoppers Cricket Club on a memorable round-the-world adventure, John Elder has had few moments to reflect on his latest cricketing experience. The former international pace bowler was quickly thrust into the fray of yet another Irish season, donning the mantle of a wide variety of administrative roles with a typical non-chalant ease. But 1989 will be very different from the twenty odd years which have gone before, a fact which will have no doubt occupied his thoughts many times in pensive moments of reflection in far off lands, while watching the Grasshoppers in action.

This year, the popular Bangorian will face a cricket season for the first time with the knowledge that at no stage will he don the whites and enter the action. He will assume many roles- administrator, spectator, critic, alickadoo and also, selector but sadly, not player. John's acceptance of the inevitable is a painful reminder of the aftermath of last season's Laurelvale fixture, when he awoke the following morning to discover a serious eye impediment. The following weeks can be aptly described as the most horrific in his life, as surgeons at the Royal Victoria Hospital, and later in Cambridge, fought tenaciously to save his eyesight. An immediate operation not only proved unsuccessful, but revealed a torn retina in three parts, and cast serious doubts about the other eye. Fortunately that eye was saved but the constant pounding of many years fast bowling had caused irreparable damage to the weak retina and left only blurred vision. John is philosophical about the cruel end to an illustrious cricket career —

'It was a horrendous experience and quite honestly in the end I was greatly relieved to retain 50% of my eyesight. Many things went through my mind during those months of nightmare, I could never risk jeopardising everything by playing again. I feel I was very fortunate to have had a great run prior to the injury, and although I'll miss playing a lot, I've plenty of happy memories and some wonderful cricketing experiences to look back on.'

Brave words from a brave man. John Elder was a tough competitor on the field, but always the sporting, ambassador off it. These qualities have moulded a solid character, so cricket will continue to reap the benefit. An imaginative, progressive administrator, his experience and expertise will play a major role at club and union level in the years to come. John's immediate commitment at club level is reflected in his position as club chairman, while he continues to act in a similar capacity for the cricket committee of the Irish Cricket Union, and the entrepreneurial Grasshoppers cricket club. This season he will also be an Ulster Town Selector, and many predict his advancement to a national role in this capacity relatively



Former Irish bowler John Elder - Now a committed administrator.

soon. As 'guru' to the Grasshoppers, he has been inspirational, piloting ambitious tours to South Africa (1981/2), Zimbabwe (1986) and just recently the most extravagant venture to date, to California, Fiji, Malaysia, and New Zealand. To date, yes, because already the big man has set the wheels in motion for another tour to Hong Kong and the Far East next year!

However, some of John's best work has been compiling possible methods for restructuring cricket at club and union level. Several years ago his imaginative blue-print for reorganisation of the Northern Cricket Union, was well received, but typically, side-stepped by conservative club officials. At Irish level the response has been better, although John feels provincial loyalties and bias usually procrastinate the decision-making process. He elaborates-

'At club level, decisions are taken by a simple vote and action follows quickly afterwards. At union level the decision-making process has a much slower build-up, and decisions are usually long drawn out. It can

be very frustrating although I appreciate the problems of trying to reconcile a wide variety of viewpoints.'

It must seem a long way from Bangor Grammar days, where the raw skills of a tall gangling young Elder, were moulded by the encouragement and enthusiasm of genial Harry Eadie. The success of the 'revolving shoulder' action, was later recognised by the Ulster Schools selectors, and John proudly played alongside the stars of schools cricket in the era, Ian Rankin, Alan McCully and Clifford McIlwaine. The move into the Bangor club ranks was a natural progression, and ironically, John remembers one of his earliest 'victims' with particular relish...

'Conn McCall was on 94 for Holywood against us, and got caught in the deep off my bowling. I was very pleased about that one!'

By 1971, John Elder figured prominently in an Ulster Country line-up dominated by many of the strong Waringstown team. Two years later, after several excellent performances in Guinness Cup cricket, the Irish selectors provided the ultimate accolade. It was to be the first of 37 International appearances during one of Irish cricket's halcyon eras under the mecurial leadership of the inimitable Monteith.

'Dermott's flamboyant individual style, created a unique team spirit in a side packed with talent. He taught me a lot about bowling at international level. I was also fortunate to have the support and encouragement of Ivan Anderson, Jack Short, Simon Corlett and Michael Reith. Mike was a tremendous guy to play alongside.'

In statistical terms, John's international career produced 70 wickets (average 24.67) over a fourteen year period. At interprovincial level he plundered 130 wickets, which, allied to his Bangor exploits takes him majestically over the thousand wickets mark, a marvellous record. Success in playing terms is easy to quantify especially for a player so rich in talent, but as an administrator the rewards will be much harder to define. John again accepts that situation philosophically...

'If, in five or six years time, the structure of cricket in Ireland has been improved or enhanced by my involvement at Committee level, I'll be very satisfied with the small part I've played in it. To effect change and better the system, is a huge challenge but there is a wealth of experience and expertise around. We must draw from it to go forward.'

Success however, must inevitably follow the Queen's University lecturer in Computer Science. An author of some repute in his chosen field, these systematic and organisational skills, have been much in evidence in the way John has entered the administrative fold. Much more lies ahead from the 'Elder statesman'.

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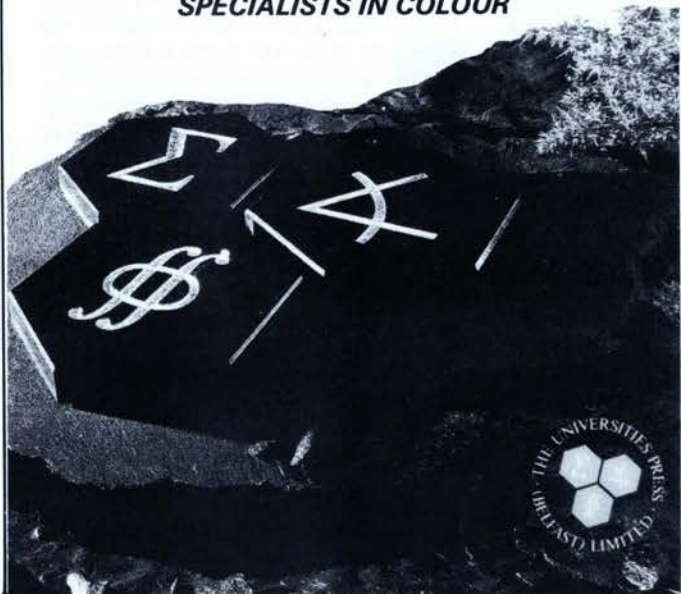
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ENTERPRISE, TEAMWORK AND AMBITION

E- the story of North Fermanagh

Enterprise, teamwork and ambition characterised the founder members of North Fermanagh Cricket and Association Football clubs when they agreed to merge in 1975. Previously both clubs had operated separately in the Kesh area but there was enough goodwill and imagination to visualise a much healthier organisation under a common banner. Those dedicated pioneers included Bob Kerr, Bob Stewart, Jackie Crawford, John Haselett, George McFarland, Wesley Wilson, Wills Brimstone and Seamus McCusker. They toiled and laboured in the early seventies to create a football pitch and a cricket square at their new ground at Rosculban, just a short distance from the small town of Kesh. A new clubhouse was built, then extended to provide playing and social facilities. Almost immediately it became the focal point in the area for the members and friends to combine both activities. From those humble beginnings the North Fermanagh club emerged to take its place in North West cricket and proudly 'draw swords' with great clubs like Sion Mills, Brigade and Strabane. Now some fourteen years later, many of those founder members are still heavily committed to the club cause and they can take immense credit from the fruits of their labour.

Unlike many contemporary clubs North Fermanagh has had to create a cricket tradition in a county where the sport has only sporadic representation. The game dates back to the last century at Portora School in Enniskillen, the county town, but it was not until 1960 that enthusiasts in Kesh organised themselves to compete in the Tyrone and Fermanagh mid-week league. Participation in this essentially rural cricket brought unparalleled success and the men from Kesh soon became the team to beat. A second eleven was formed and more success followed stirring the enthusiasm of the members and broadening their horizons to higher planes. Eventually a number of players combined to create a Western Counties team to compete in North West Saturday league competitions. Players like Wesley Wilson, George McFarland and Bob Kerr figured prominently at the higher grade while stalwarts like Bob Stewart worked unselfishly in the background to establish a club structure. Eventually discussions centred on an amalgamation with the local football club and after a series of constructive meetings general agreement was reached. Both clubs combined under a North Fermanagh banner and have never looked back!

Today the club boasts three football teams and five cricket teams, a marvellous achievement in such a short period of time. Three of those teams still play in the Tyrone and Fermanagh mid-week competitions and one is almost exclusively a youth side. It is in this area that several members have shown their mettle by combining their own playing pursuits with encouragement and coaching to the younger players. In particular the association with the local Duke of Westminster High School has been vital to the development of cricket in the area. Former player Denzil Glenn is now Headmaster, while current members John Haselett and Seamus McCusker are both pillars of the 'cricketing' staff.

Not all the imagination and effort was directed towards the local school. Bob Kerr and his ambitious committee joined Ulster cricket's gravy train by recruiting overseas professionals. Their philosophy was simple, a good overseas player would help consolidate the team in the North West league, stimulate the promotion of cricket in the area, and of course coach! The ground was also improved and a new square laid, closely followed by the erection of sight-screens.

Covers came later. However, few people outside Fermanagh raised their eye-brows at such modest developments until a professional was appointed. North Fermanagh aimed at the top and hit a jackpot. West Indies star batsman Everton Matthis was lured to the lakeland and suddenly the eyes of Irish cricket focused west. Matthis attracted widespread media coverage and stimulated considerable interest from both cricketers and sponsors alike. In his wake the committee also recruited Craig Stirk (South Africa), Aslam Ali (Pakistan) and Andrew Jackson (Barbados). Suddenly the club was amongst the elite of North West cricket and modestly holding its own.

Rising from junior to senior status in barely a few years placed a huge strain on the clubs leading players. It was a responsibility they accepted with relish and although overall team strength was limited both Wesley Wilson and George McFarland deservedly won interprovincial representative honours. A real coup was made when legendary Sion Mills batsman Brendan Donaghy was coaxed out of retirement to join the cause. The girth had visibly widened but the class remained and the former international was both an inspiration to his team-mates and a magnificent troupadour in the clubhouse. When Brendan held court either at the wicket or on the clubhouse stage, he was pure entertainment, a star! What a pity he couldn't go on for ever!

In more recent times another former international Sion Mills batsman has thrown his lot in with Kesh. Tommy Harper won many honours at every level of Irish cricket but surprised everyone when he moved to North Fermanagh. But few relish a challenge more than the combative Tommy and his grit and determination has served the club well. Now Captain he has experienced the 'ups and downs' of a growing club, having taken them up into the First Division then suffered the ignominy of immediate relegation the year after. But its still a learning process for the Fermanagh team and Tommy will need no tuition on how to get them back into the premier ranks!

North Fermanagh travel extensively in a normal season. The round trips often total over a hundred miles yet the players take it in their stride. Even the opposition don't complain. Kesh hospitality is renown, win or lose. Its that wonderful spirit which will ensure their continuous growth and prosperity, especially with officials of the calibre of Bob Kerr, Pete Keogh and Bob Stewart at the helm. Enterprise, teamwork and ambition effectively combined.



North Fermanagh 'A' squad in the early years of the club's formation. Winners of Tyrone and Fermanagh mid-week League 1977. Winners of Artt-Green Knock-Out Cup 1977. Winners of Tyrone and Fermanagh Saturday League 1977. Back Row L to R: Noel Irvine; John Kennedy; Will Noble; Frank Day; Brendan Keogh; Geoff Delap; Marshall Walter; Davy Phair; Stanley Allen. Seated L to R: Wesley Wilson; George McFarland; Bob Kerr (Captain); Tom Law; Bob Stewart.

NOSTALGIC NIGHTS

FOR NORTH WEST AND NCU

Former English Test cricketers David Lloyd and Geoff Miller were the principal guests at the two major dinners of the North West and Northern Cricket Unions during the autumn.

The North West dinner was the final event in celebration of the Union's centenary and the large attendance gave the year a memorable finale. President Judge Michael Nicholson was his own inimitable articulate self while David Lloyd was a highly entertaining guest speaker. Special presentations were made to the leading players of 1988 with Donemana's James McBrine deservedly winning the major award and Stephen Smyth of Foyle College the junior trophy.

At the Europa Hotel the Lombard and Ulster representatives were delighted that their sponsored dinner was so well attended and resulted in such an enjoyable evening. Geoff Miller proved an excellent principal guest and went out of his way to speak to many of the club members who attended the dinner. All the league trophies were presented to the winning clubs while a special presentation was made to Simon Corlett to honour his service to cricket, especially at representative level.



Enjoying the "crack" - Dixon Rose, John Craig, Ian Dickie, Wally Shannon, Bob Magee and Billy Whitley.



The Bangor ensemble! Michael Rae, Ian Houston, Tom Edgar, Maurice Moore and Robin Dixon.



North West leading players in 1988 Stephen Smyth and James McBrine



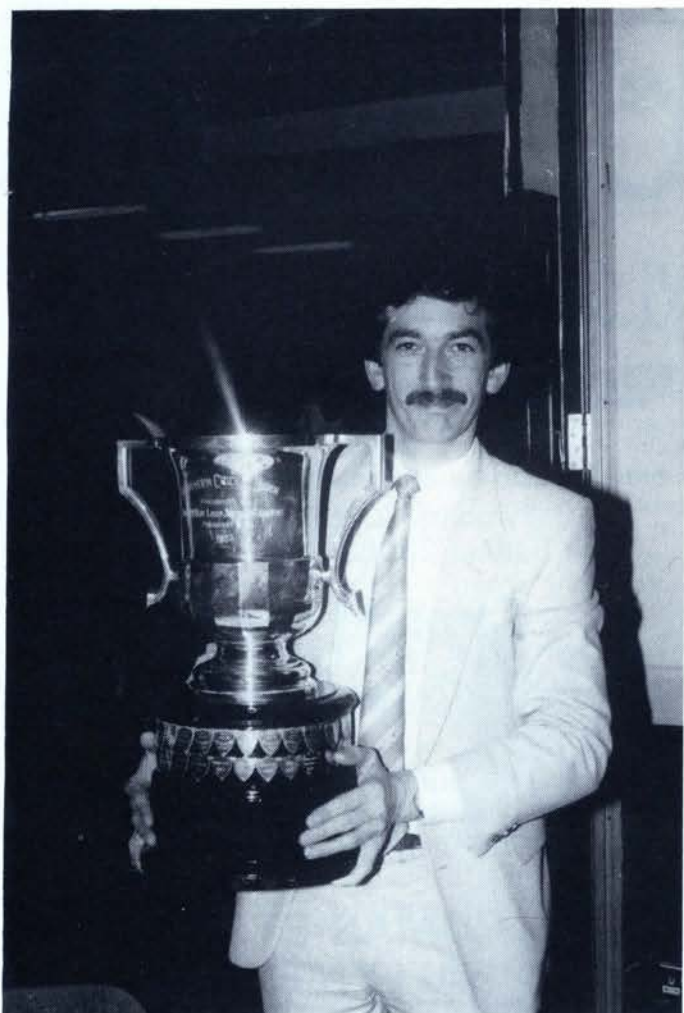
NCU President Jim McMorran with Lombard and Ulster representatives Gerry Simms, David Chapman and Tom Bunce.



A special presentation to former Irish International bowler Simon Corlett of a Rowel Friars original.



The triumphant Lurgan entourage! Gary McCollum, Billy Boyd, Graham Hunter, Dixie Maxwell, Jim Allen, Walter Sands, celebrity guest Geoff Miller, Wilson Briggs, Alan Johnston and Neil Hunter.



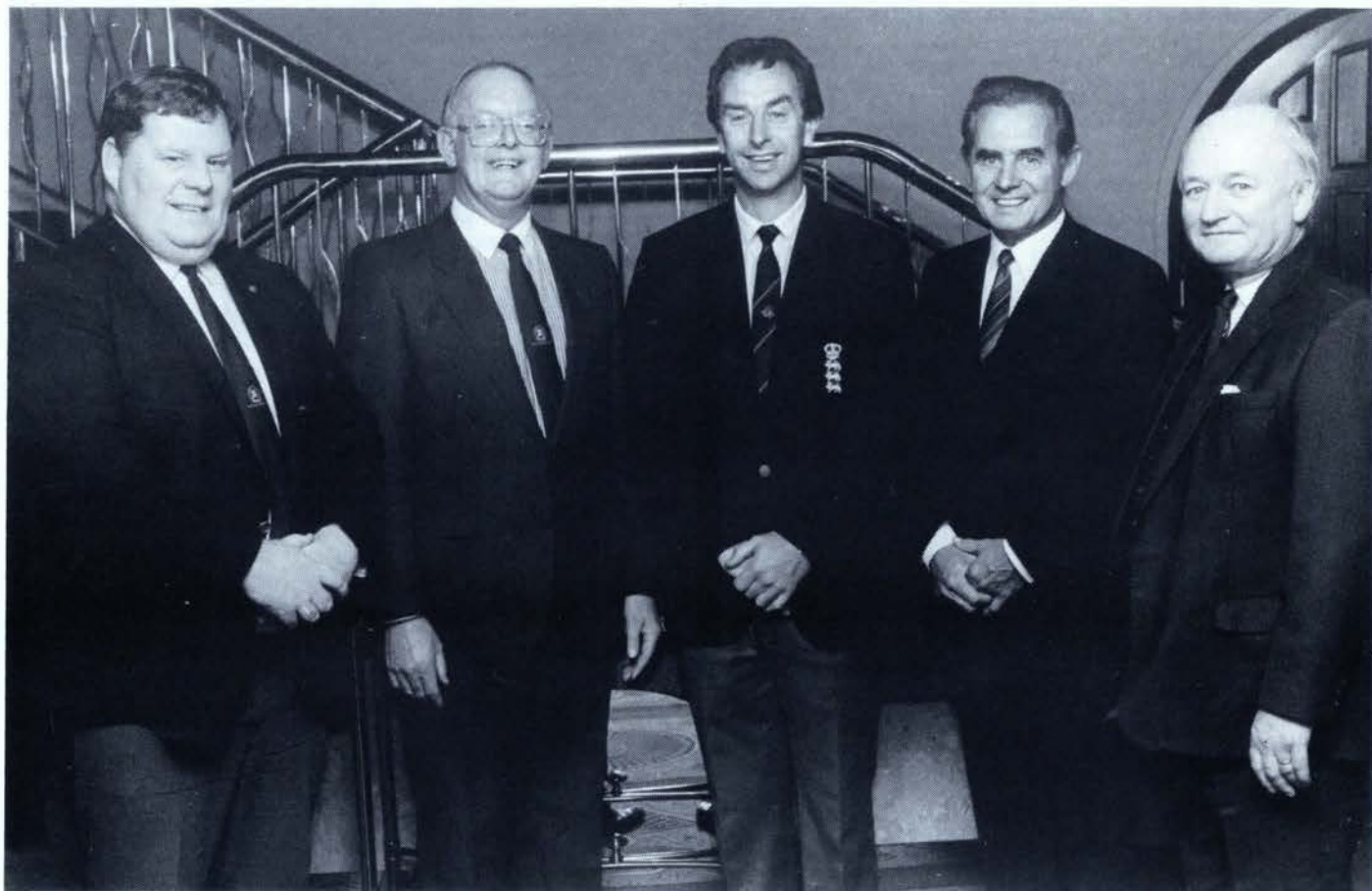
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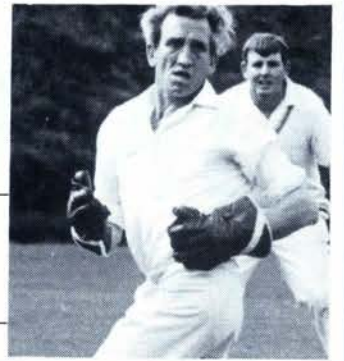
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'THE DOC' OF DONEMANA



While little Creevedonnell was unlikely to spring any major surprise on the mighty Donemana in the first round of the Northern Bank North West Cup, for the Dougherty family the game had particular significance. After all its not every Saturday that the 'old man' faces two of his sons on the cricket field! However for evergreen Ivor 'Doc' Dougherty it was just another game and typical of the North West's most exuberant character, his enthusiasm and commitment was no less evident. Now in his 26th Senior season at Donemana Ivor is still as fresh as in any that have gone before and his burning ambition is just as hot -

'I'll play as long as I enjoy it. I still love the game and the one trophy which I would dearly love to see at Donemana is the Schweppes all Ireland cup. That's one ambition which drives me on!'

In an age where they say all the characters have gone out of the game, Ivor Dougherty belies the fact. An honest forthright and talented wicket-keeper cum batsman on the field,

the 'Doc' is a wonderful ambassador in the clubhouse. Few players are held in such high esteem throughout North West cricket, certainly none more. The 'Doc' remains one of the games most colourful personalities and an important asset to the great Donemana club. Ivor's first introduction to cricket was at Glendermott then Creevedonnell not far from the family home. His uncle Willie gave him plenty of encouragement while Joe McCarter and Willie Wilson, father of the current Brigade captain, were also very helpful. The Doc's ambition to play at the highest grade took him to Donemana where at the tender age of 21 he took over from Ivor Parkhill behind the stumps and played alongside those Donemana 'greats' John Cochrane and Alex McBrine. By his own admission, Ivor learned little about the game prior to going to the Holm but once there, he gained a wealth of knowledge and experience playing with and against the cream of senior cricketers in



the North West. He was an aggressive wicket-keeper and if he lacked the silken skills of Colhoun he was not far behind the master in athleticism. Ivor bears no regrets at being understudy to the legendary Sion Mills 'stumper' for so many years.

'Ossie was the best ever, a terrific wicket-keeper. I have been in and out of representative teams since 1963 but I've never once regretted being left off for 'Ossie'.

He was a terrific player. Despite playing in the representative shadow of Irish cricket's most distinguished wicket-keeper, the 'Doc' has a long chronicle of personal achievements. A Senior Cup winner on nine occasions, league winner fourteen times, the popular veteran has also won a number of Interprovincial selections. A hard-hitting prolific batsman, his top innings of 149 was scored against Limavady while his best performance behind the stumps was the seven victims he captured against Ardmore in the semi-final of the cup during the seventies.

It was a performance however that Ivor didn't totally enjoy for one simple reason - they lost!

The 'Doc' has played with and against the best in North West cricket. Not surprisingly he lists Brigade and Sion Mills as the two clubs he has relished playing against most over the years.

Players of the calibre of Brendan Donaghy, Aubrey Finlay and Roy Torrens have won the 'Doc's' greatest admiration, but he is equally in praise of the current Donemana players -

'This is a fine all round side with some really good players like James and Junior McBrine. I also rate 'Decker' Curry very highly and if he applies himself he has the ability to play international cricket.'

....Young players with immense talent, but equally no doubt in praise of the 'Doc' Ivor remains an integral part of the Donemana team and one player always prepared to give 100%. Long may he continue.

UMPIRES CORNER

UNGENTLEMANLY CONDUCT

ANY COMPLAINTS?

*'Umpire! Umpire!
What are you saying?
Surely I'm not out LB
Why the ball hit my hip
On its way for first slip
As even a blind man could see.'*

*'Batsman! Batsman!
Pray do not linger,
My coat and my conscience are white.
I bedevilled by doubt
You think you're not out,
Just look in the 'Saturday night'!*



NCU leading umpires Pat O'Hara and Peter Lunney in deep conversation.

'NEW' INSTRUCTIONS TO UMPIRES!

1. Captains must toss 10 minutes before start of play.
2. Bell must be rung five minutes before start of play.
3. Umpires must report those players not available to start on time.
4. Umpires are not to discuss their decisions with the players during the game.

DATE: APRIL 1939!

That thorny issue of 'ungentlemanly conduct' raised its ugly head again at a recent NCU Umpires meeting. Although few cases are reported, it is a problem which has occurred at regular intervals over the years in Ulster cricket. Indeed, there are some colourful incidents speckled throughout the archives, emphasising that deficiencies in character are not just the hall-mark of the ultra-competitive modern cricketer! Administrators of yesteryear had to deal with similar problems, so it is unlikely to be an issue which is totally eradicated from the local game. The real loser however, is inevitably the game itself. For example, quite apart from the 'rights and wrongs' of Mike Gatting's infamous 1988 confrontation with Umpire Shanoor Rana, the whole incident was appalling, and unbecoming of an English captain. Gatting's 'ungentlemanly conduct' tarnished his reputation, and allowed ruthless critics unlimited scope to attack hitherto almost 'saintly' image of cricket.

The same principles apply in local cricket. Nothing is to be gained by abuse, swearing, gamesmanship or even cheating. Perhaps some momentary advantage may result, but the game itself will have lost much in the process. Quite often a quiet word is sufficient to defuse the potentially explosive situation, but Umpires do have a responsibility to report excessive acts of 'ungentlemanly conduct' and in the interests of bettering the game, they should exercise it!

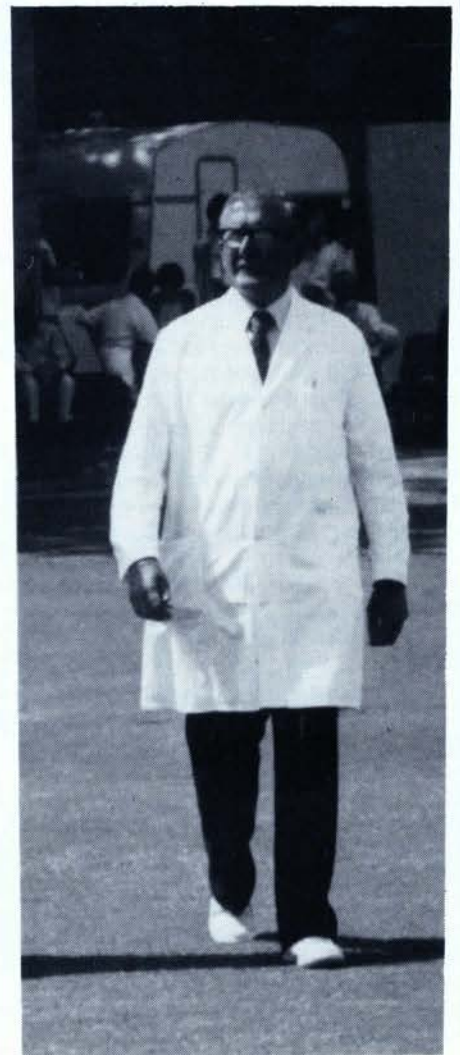
DID YOU KNOW?

Northern Cricket Union umpires might wish to reflect on how their predecessors were appointed between the war years

Prior to the start of each season, the Hon Secretary placed advertisements in the local press, inviting all those wishing to officiate during the oncoming season to apply. Even international officials had to comply with the dictum! The applicants then faced a somewhat harrowing interrogation by the Umpires Committee, guided and directed by the inimitable 'Big two' of the cricket establishment, Willie Andrews and Jimmy Picken. The 'interviews' took the form of a series of questions on the laws, after which the Umpires were graded for the season. Woe behold the official who had cause to reflect on any possible indiscretion to the detriment of 'big Willie' at Comber the previous season!

THE BIRTH OF NEUTRALS

It was back in 1922 that the concept of 'neutral' umpires in the Northern Cricket Union was first adopted in league cricket. An early pioneer of the idea was Willie Andrews, who worked admirably behind the administrative machine, to lay the foundations of the Umpires Association. Clubs were initially circulated, and following a favourable response, the inaugural meeting of the Umpires Committee was held on Friday 12th May at 4.15 pm in Bob Erskine's Rosemary Street office. 'Expenses' was the major issue on the agenda, and since it was impossible to otherwise secure the services of a sufficient number of 'neutrals' to cover all Senior League matches, it was eventually agreed to pay a fee of five shillings plus expenses. The 'professional' umpire had arrived! However, it was directed by the Committee that should a competent 'amateur' be available, he was to be given preference over the 'paid official'! All clubs were encouraged to participate in the scheme, so that the costs could be evenly shared. Initially each club was charged £6.10:0 for the season, but those which wanted to continue to operate outside the scheme had to provide their own officials. Clubs captains were warned that it was their responsibility to ensure that all nominations were of 'suitable quality'.



Still stepping out? international umpire Ernie Harkness

NCU APPOINTMENTS IN 1989

SENIOR CUP: BEATTIE ARLOW
SAM McCORMICK (JIM)

JUNIOR CUP: PADDY O'HARA
PETER REITH

INT. CUP: W S LONG
BILLY WILLIAMSON

LINDSAY MINOR: TREVOR MAGEE
BILLY TAYLOR

MINOR QUAL: JOHN CRAIG
JIM WISNER

ICU APPOINTMENTS

V NORTHANTS AT ORMEAU
M MOORE; P LUNNEY

V NORTHANTS AT DOWNPATRICK
B ARLOW; H HENDERSON

V LANCASHIRE AT RATHMINES
J DOHERTY; S MOORE

V SCOTLAND AT CLONTARF
L HOGAN; G ARCHER



The Spritely Gait of International Umpire George Archer

NEW FACES IN '89

The NCU Umpires panel has been increased by five this season, with the recruitment of John Boomer (Donaghadee), Scott McAlpin (Collegians), Bob Kane (Woodvale), Terence Kennedy (Bangor) and that old favourite of the junior cause, George Wilson (RUC).

Good luck lads!



UMPIRES DINNER AT LISBURN

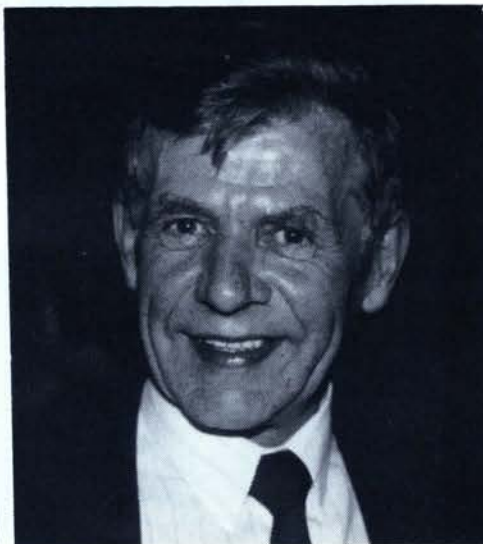
The Umpires Association held another of its highly successful dinners in the Lisburn Clubhouse in April. Officials from Dublin and Londonderry travelled to the dinner which was also attended by leading Union administrators including Irish Cricket Union President Ian Lewis.



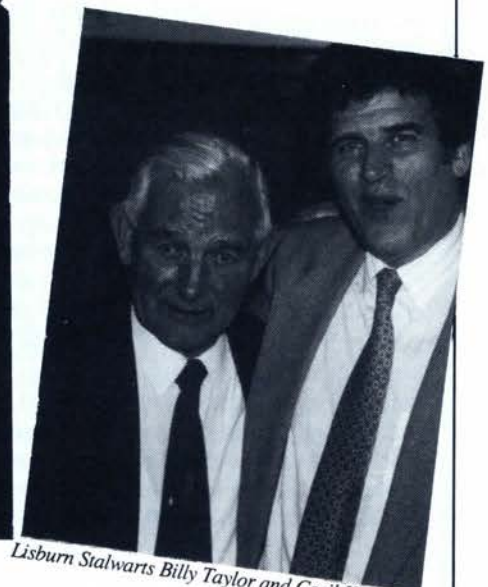
Arthur Thompson



George Archer welcomes ICU President Ian Lewis



A radiant Harry Henderson



Lisburn stalwarts Billy Taylor and Cecil Kirkwood

There's something very special about a visit to Laurelvale, and its not just the sweet smell of the Armagh countryside in this most idyllic of any rural cricket setting. Matches tend to finish late, very late in most cases, and many a marriage has been damned by the annual excursion to one of Ulster cricket's most celebrated outposts. 'Hospitality' is the name of the game at Laurelvale, and none do it better!

Journeys to this remote sleepy little country village, are planned with precision, journeys from it with gay abandon! The winding narrow roads surrounding the clubhouse, are littered with desolate cars, and the countryside peppered with cast-off AA maps. Nestling snugly in the back of beyond, somewhere between Armagh city and the metropolis of Portadown, Laurelvale cricket club holds unknown terrors for the unsuspecting 'rookie'. The clubhouse initiation will live longer in his memory than any cricketing exploit several hours earlier!

To the student of Ulster cricket, any attempt to research the history of this famous Armagh club is useless folly. Their history is enshrined in the clubhouse, its inhabitants, its incumbents, its temptations and inevitably its resulting hang-overs!! Venture in at your peril, depart full of spirit (or beer if you prefer!)

The character and mystique of Laurelvale, ouses from its beloved members. Few could fail to be moved at their eloquent and unashamed grasp of the little intricacies of the game, and its significance to the Laurelvale club. Much can be learned in the company of those loveable doyens of the clubhouse, Reggie and Gerald Thompson. Most however, should be quickly forgotten! The connoisseur perhaps could glean rick pickings in the company of a Vennard? There are plenty around, including fitness fanatics Cyril and Edward, two sportsmen from the top drawer of Armagh cricket (their words!) With the Vennards in total control of the

LAURELVALE'S SPECIALITY

tea arrangements, a sumptuous meal is guaranteed at their shoulder. Who said it was really Vennard Vale Cricket Club?

For the cricketing purist, an hour in the company of Tom Irwin is guaranteed to clear the head. A cantankerous doughty little terrier on the field, he is a most affable custodian of the Laurelvale cause off it! A 'hell uva player' the locals agree!

Erstwhile Lurganites, but now domiciled locally, (some said they could not find their way home), the 'smoothie' entourage (numbering two in total) is the domain of Tom and Denis, two of the nicest Guys is in the club. Their rendering of how many runs they scored a few hours earlier, is sure to increase the consumption rate, if only to ease the pain!

Brothers abound in Laurelvale cricket, a well-known grave-yard for aspiring scorers. An abundance of Irwins, Pearsons, Vennards, Thompsons and Haires, play havoc with the brain cells, as conviviality comfortably eases out sobriety. Fuzzy re-organisation of car-keys and transport arrangements inevitably signal that the music has started, and outside hopes of an early retreat fade ominously into the background. Significantly the installation of a telephone in the clubhouse was 'staved' off for many years, but still remains a major threat to visiting decadence and revelry!

It is reputed that Laurelvale is 120 years old and it is only when the dancing starts that some of the founder members spring from their hidden corners in the clubhouse. 'Old habits die hard' they boast, as their beloveds are caroused to the sweet tones of the 'Boys from the County Armagh'. Clean living has obviously been their elixir of life!

The quality of a Laurelvale 'performance' is usually guaged by Sunday dinner. If you made it home you probably had a good time. Certainly you are unlikely to remember it! Yes, there's something very special about a visit to Laurelvale!



Our Tam!"

LEWIS SAYS YES! L- BUT THE SELECTORS SAY NO?

Everyone loves to emulate their father. In my case it was of even greater personal importance since he had won twenty caps long before I was even threatening the international scene. When it came I was overwhelmed, it was the pinnacle of all my cricketing ambitions.

I've always regarded it as an honour to play for Ireland so I suppose it will shock a few people when I suggest we must pick an 'outsider' to assist us in the Nat West cup competition. I'm sure there will be horror in Waringstown or Donemana at the suggestion but really, it is the only way we can realistically expect to pull off a shock victory. Think of the boost Irish cricket would get from defeating a county side in competition. It would be tremendous.

I appreciate my views are radical but the swell of opinion to select one of the 'resident' overseas professionals is gathering momentum. After all we play a team of 'full-timers' so why penalise ourselves by not selecting the strongest team available? Last year the Executive Committee of the Irish Cricket Union recognised this line of argument and gave permission to the Selectors to pick an overseas professional if they thought it appropriate. In their wisdom the selectors thought otherwise, but the 1989 panel shows a couple of changes and I sincerely hope the issue is raised again. We must be competitive in competition, we must give commitment and genuinely life out game for this very important match.

The case against is a fair one. I recognise that because we are a national team rather than a county side certain residential requirements are essential to protect our identity and traditions. I'm conscious that if a professional is selected, one Irish player must stand down. I also appreciate that one professional will not win a match on his own. Perhaps it may even cause some resentment amongst the other players. All these points are valid



Alan Lewis

to a degree but they really belong in the past. Irish cricket can continue to stagger along like David against Goliath but without any real prospect of victory. We are beaten before we start and our ultimate aim is always respectability. Even the county sides approach our games without any serious threat because they know that in competition they hold all the aces.



Taking the high jump?

The modern influx of professionals in Irish Cricket has been with us for over ten years, yet I'm amazed that no representative team has asked for their assistance or advice. Test players in our midst, yet we never approach them before playing visiting tourists or county teams.

What a waste.

Surely Joshi, Sharma, Mankad, Blair, Kuggleign, Matis or Lamba had something to offer Irish representative cricket? Instead we continue the traditional way with coaches and managers who faced professionals in the past with similar limitations. Their tactics, and their approach cannot be other than what they have perceived in their day and ever since. Will we never lift ourselves out of the rut?

It has often been said that the barometer of Irish cricket is the annual Scottish match. Last year we got trounced by an innings and it was very noticeable that Scottish cricket is continuing to improve. They seized the initiative and recruited professionals like Desmond Haynes and Clive Rice. They entered the Benson and Hedges Cup and yes, they got their county scalp. I'm sure we could learn something from them.

Inevitably people will speculate about which professional would best suit the Irish cause. I personally feel he must be a top class player and prepared to play for nothing like the rest of us. He must want to play for Ireland and fit easily into our set-up. Personally Chris Kuggleign would have been an excellent choice, or even Raman Lamba, the brilliant North Down batsman. I also hear that New Zealander Bob Blair has been a terrific asset to Instonians as a coach, so why not recruit his expertise? We must move out of the dark ages and if I could use a well-worn political slogan in reverse, it is 'Lewis says Yes'. Sadly however I feel the selectors will follow the more traditional political viewpoint 'IRELAND SAYS 'NO''.

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COACHING CLANGER?

Embarrassed Northern Cricket Union Officials, voiced strong protests at the standard of examination results following the NCA Coaching Course last September. Although the protest was directed towards the Irish Cricket Union, the real targets of their complaint were recently retired National Director of Coaching Noel Mahoney, and his successor Vinny Sivino. The two prominent Leinster coaches, were the resident examiners at the two day course which included both written and practical tests. Local coaches participated in the course and several acted as observers. Many of the overseas professionals joined local players on this controversial course which was seen by the 'anti-professional' lobby as an instrument to legitimise some of the 'hired guns', following the rules change at the winter AGM. In essence, what the NCU Officials were really doing, was providing an NCA course so that the quality of coaching certificates could be standardised. Nobody expected the examiners to pass all the participants! In defence of the results, the affable Mr Sivino has subsequently detailed the extent of the qualification which he described as 'basic'. However, cynics in this controversial debate will be much more interested as to whether the newly-qualified NCA coaches exercise their expertise or not, rather than the status of how their certificate was obtained.

After all, the most bizarre array of documents masqueraded as coaching certificates during the 1988 season, and with only a few slight adjustments here and there, the personnel for 1989 will be much the same.....but there is one major difference. Most will hold NCA coaching certificates!

The winter AGM of the Northern Cricket Union agreed a proposal which will allow the coaching

committee extensive powers to monitor the coaching programme of each professional. They will have the capacity to approve or decline such programmes, and make visits to each club to see if they are in operation. There are also plans to stage a Senior Coaching Award Course in September. This is obviously a much more intensive qualification and the one which a large number of cricketers feel should be the basic requirement to coach in local cricket. Certainly, the coaching aspect of all professionals is now under much closer scrutiny than before, but it remains to be seen, if it will affect the type of overseas professional clubs employ. Excellent playing credentials remain the top priority of most!



Ramba lamba at the NCA coaching course with a very attentive audience

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ULSTER CRICKET'S LITERARY CONNECTION

by Roy Clements

Alan Ross, in his article titled 'The Test' describes how an interest in cricket is sustained:

'...The addiction to it, one would think, is an infection of the blood, an inheritance, the result of a long acclimatisation and apprenticeship beside which the labour of Zen masters dwindles into insignificance. Yet Americans fly the Atlantic for a Test Match, the Irish stop talking and down their tankards (perhaps only to take them up again in more justifying circumstances). Mr Samuel Beckett hastens to Lords (perhaps Godot is really a cricketing parallel?), and lovely dreamy girls who have never worn a batting glove sit entranced and uncomplaining for hours, even days on end.'

My own interest in the game began in 1945 when I went to Foyle College and shortly afterwards I joined City of Derry Cricket Club, never rising above 2nd XI standard for either institution. However the 'infection in the blood' as Ross calls it was there and I added to this a second addiction literature. So far the last couple of years I have combined both loves by investigating the connection between cricket and literature in Ireland.

Ross alludes to Samuel Beckett in his article and he is undoubtedly the most famous Irish literary cricketer. He appears in Wisden for 1926 and 1927 (I acquired a copy of the 1927 for ★20 recently), having played for Trinity College, Dublin, in first class games against Northamptonshire in 1925 and 1926. He wasn't particularly successful scoring 18 and 12 in the first game, 4 and 1 in the second, and his bowling analysis were 0-17 and 0-47. The country did not need a second innings on either occasion!

Beckett of course learnt his cricket at Portora and his coach's comments on his cricketing ability were...

'He has some really stylish strokes, but he ought to put more force into them. He is inclined to step across his wicket too much in playing long hops. His bowling is not up to expectation from last year's form, his length being erratic. An excellent fielder who tries hard'. (1921)

The following year he took 17 wickets

and scored 132 runs to finish first and third in the school bowling and batting averages.

I have searched his works from 'Murphy' through 'Waiting for Godot' to 'Krapps Last Tape' but the only oblique reference I can find to cricket is in his novel 'Molloy' about a man counting stones in pocket.

I wonder if he had an umpire in mind!

Oscar Wilde was another product of Portora, but he wasn't particularly keen on sports.

'I am afraid I play no outdoor games at all, except dominoes. I have sometimes played dominoes outside French cafes.'

He described cricket as a game of 'indecent postures' and yet in the 'Ballard of Reading God' we read about the condemned prisoner:

'He walked among the Trial Men In a suite of shabby grey, A cricket cap was on his head, And his step seemed light and gay; But I never saw a man who looked So wistfully at the day'

My own early cricketing exploits were 'condemned' by Thomas O'Canainn in his autobiographical reminiscence, 'Hornets Day',

'He had gone over the Crescent at the weekend and watched them playing cricket. Even that seemed to have changed. It was all about style and a high elbow and taking cover behind your pads with your backside in the air. He wondered what had happened to all the sport they used to have: it seemed to have disappeared with the home-made bats and the soft ball. Danny Guerin, who was at school with his in St Columbo's went in to bat. They tried to make him change his baseball style of holding the bat conform to the proper cricket style of Foyle College. Roy, who was bowling, asked him if he wanted middle and leg. 'I dunno, said Danny, 'just you toss them up here and I'll welt them.

He bounced the first one off the garage roof and lofted the second into the Rock field. He soon had the fielders running all directions to control his

vulgar Catholic display of non-cricket. Sean enjoyed it hugely; it reminded him of the happy times.'

I think he was right about my bowling (though I did once take 7 wickets for 1 run for Foyle College 2nd XI against Regent House) as I afterwards took up wicket-keeping!

The fine cricket tradition at Foyle College obviously worked better on others as Irish Schoolboy teams and clubs in the North-West can attest. I see names like Lapsley and Rankin in the St Johnston team which won the all Ireland Schweppes Cup in 1987.

In my day St Johnstone was the only team from Co Donegal playing in the North-West, but there was once a club in Moville. In his youth the Reverend H H Montgomery vicar of St Marks, Kennington, Bishop of Tasmania, cricketer for Cambridge and father of the Field Marshall, played for the team. He wrote several books including 'Old Cricket and Cricketers in 1890' and 'The History of Kennington and its Neighbourhood', from which the following is taken;

'Some 18 years ago cricket took root for a time in the extreme North of Donegal, and a match was arranged between Movill and Malin. A glance at the map, will show that Malin Head is the most Northern point of Ireland: and we, from Moville, were invited to drive over and meet our opponents on their own ground. We loaded two or more cars and had a wild drive of 14 miles over a bog road and arrived at the scene of the encounter, which was merely a field, never before used I think for cricket. Our opponents were a very fine set of men, some of them fishermen, very tall and strongly built, and very keen to win: but I think they had never yet seen round-arm bowling. I remember I went in first both innings and got a pair of 'spectacles'. Certainly on the second occasion the first ball I received pitched in a rut somewhere on the off-side and took the leg stump. The Moville Club scored 14 and 39: the Malin men got 34 and 3.

Some of the incidents also of the match were singularly unlike our usual English experiences. There was one immense fisherman, gigantic both in height and bulk, who got hold of me,

as the Captain of the Moville eleven, and took me into the booth and declared that I should drink with him, (presenting me at the same time with half a tumbler of neat whiskey). Somehow I managed to escape and run away before any serious results occurred. This same man later in the day was going about the ground asking where the Captain of the team was to be found, and desiring to fight him for the honour of Malin: upon hearing of his approach I discreetly vanished into the Squire's house and did not appear till the danger was over. But the adventures did not end here: the rest of the eleven were to go home the same day and they innocently hoisted a flag upon their car as they drove through Malin village as a sign of victory, but they had not driven many yards before they were surrounded by a furious mob, and the flag was torn down and dragged in the dust; nor did they attempt to unfurl it again until they were clear of Malin.'

Field Marshall Montgomery was born in the rectory near Kennington Oval when his father was incumbent there, and was a good cricketer himself. In his memories about his sporting exploits at St Paul's school he is typically brusque-

'I hurled myself into sports and in a little over three years became captain of the Rugby XV and Cricket XI.' He was top of the batting averages in his last term at school!

Before leaving the North West, I should not exclude Limavady, and Sir Patrick Macrory from Ardmore. He was a director of Unilever who wrote books in his spare time. These included 'The Siege of Derry' and a book of memories of his boyhood in Limavady, 'Days that are Gone'. This extract is taken from the letters;

'The object was to raise funds for the cricket club which Bill and I had founded in a fit of enthusiasm. Bill, being both older and a much better cricketer than me, was appointed Captain, I was the Hon. Secretary and Mereer, an ex-sergeant of marines who was Uncle Roland's gardener and odd job man, agreed to act as coach. With this nucleus we went out into the high ways and the by-ways and compelled the little country boys to come in. Not that much compulsion was

needed for they were dead keen, even though few of them had ever played before and many played in bare feet, having no suitable footwear. We played in the Lower Holme, where the outfield was remarkably bumpy and sprinkled with cowpats from the cows who grazed peacefully around us and occasionally lifted their heads to watch our antics with gentle wondering eyes. The pitch, prepared with a side-wheel mower and a roller far too light to flatten out the bumps, was not much better but we thought it pretty grand and we took our cricket seriously.'

In the same book he mentions E.D.R Shearer, not in a cricketering context, but acting with him in a mystery play called 'The Creaking Chain', at the Derry Opera House.

On our way to Belfast we might just top off in Monaghan (there was a club affiliated to the N.C.U in 1889/90) and meet Shane Leslie, third baronet of Glasborgh of Castle Leslie. He was a prolific writer, beginning with 'The Landlords of Ireland at the Crossroads' in 1908 and finishing with his last piece of autobiography 'Long Shadows' in 1966. In an earlier autobiographical work, 'The End of a Chapter', he wrote:

'Our neighbours across the county border, the Alexander family, occupied Caledon the finest Georgian house in Ulster. We were four boys at Glaslough and the Countess of Caledon matched the birth of each with one of her own. Only a few weeks separated the two primogenitives: Erik, the present Earl, and myself. Later we went to Eton and Cambridge together. The pride of each family emerged through the Army - my younger brother Norman who was destined to fall in October 1914, and Harold-or Tubby-whose career has become part of History. I first remembered him as a stubby, chubby urchin, the smallest but hardest hitter in the Caledon Village Cricket XI which sometimes defeated the Glaslough XI, although whenever one of our family was badly run out, the loyal James Vogan as umpire loudly shouted 'Home!'

Tubby became Field Marshall Earl Alexander of Tunis. Monaghan also produced Patrick Kavanagh the irascible poet, best known for 'The Great Hunger'. In his book 'Remembering How We Stood', about literary Dublin in the 1950's, John Ryan tells a story about Kavanagh in a pub in Sandyford. It was the day of one of the big Gaelic inter-provincial matches at Croke Park when little else is talked about in the pubs of Dublin. A young fellow, obviously the worse for drink, came up to Patrick and asked .. 'Who's winning mister?'

Paddy pretended not to know what he was talking about, and then played the part of the man who sees the dawn of understanding -

'Ah, the big match? Well, before stumps was drawn, Australia was 65 for 4 in the first innings!'

Needless to say this led to a fight! I thought this would be the only connection I could make between cricket and Kavanagh until I read this in Alan Warners biography of the poet, 'Clay is the Word'-

'In spite of the hardship of these war years in Dublin, he found a good deal of intellectual stimulus there, and he made friends. Through John Betjeman, then British Press Attache in Dublin, he was invited to many big functions. He even played cricket for Sir John Mahaffy's eleven, in a charity match, when he had to face the bowling of heavy Constantine.'

A poet who played in more than charity matches was Richard Rowley author of 'City Songs and Others', 'County Down songs' and 'Ballads of Mourne'. He was very popular in the twenties and thirties when people would recite poems of his, such as 'Thinking Long', 'The Stitcher' and 'Oul Jane'. One of his finest was 'The Islandman' beginning-

'Terrible as an army with banners
Through the dusk of a winter's eve,
Over the bridge
The thousands tramp.'

His real name was Richard Valentine Williams and he became managing director of the family business McBride and Williams, manufacturers of cotton hankies. He was a talented batsman and played for NICC. In a 1952 broadcast, 'Richard Rowley', Lynn Doyle said,

'The courageous spirit that he showed all his life came out. When half the team was out maybe for very few runs, and it would come Dick's turn without the slightest hesitation, not to be cast down by the wickets that had fallen, he simply tucked the bat under his arm and strolled out to make runs, and four times out of five he did it.'

He appeared batting at number eight for NICC in the three 1912 Senior cup final against Ulster and score of 14 in his only innings. North won by 7 wickets.

John Hewitt is a better poet and the quintessentially quiet Belfast and Ulsterman:-
'I write for my own kind
I do not pitch my voice
that every phrase be heard
by those who have no choice:
their quality of mind
must be withdrawn and still,
as moth that answers moth
across a roaring hill.'

He played for the first XI at Methody in 1924.

He remembered that year in a poem suitably called 'Away Match 1924'-

'We crammed our compartment and crowded the windows,
denying the master all hope of a place
the First Eleven with Tom as our scorer
the bags on the rack of leather and baize.
Exams all over, the summer term ending,
this was the crown of my halcyon days.'

John Hewitt is, I believe, an underestimated poet and so is Louis McNeice.

'I was born in Belfast between the mountain and the gentries
To the hooting of lost sirens and the clang of trams.
Thence to Smoky Carrick in County Antrim.'

His father was a Church of Ireland clergyman who became Bishop of Down and Connor. Louis was sent to school at Marlborough and his school friend John Hilton shows his enthusiasm for cricket.

'He was playing a lot of dab-cricket at this time with teams of classical authors against mythical heroes or Norse gods. (He was interested in all forms of cricket and had a backyard game at home which Graham Shepard entered into with zest and I didn't.)'

In his autobiography 'The Strings are False', he shows his passion for the game.

'And summer in Dorset was a series of Lyrics, the names of Hobbs and Hitch were scarlet stars. Nearly all of us were fetishist towards cricket, identifying ourselves with well-known cricketers. I was first the Rev. F. H. Gillingham because he was a clergyman; but Essex did so badly, I changed into Woolley, because he was left-handed and I liked the name.' He refers to cricket on several occasions in his poetry, and this taken from 'Ode' written in 1934 also shows the tinge of melancholy in his work-

'Watching the cricket from between
Slabs of green and slabs of blue and slowly ladled clouds
We looked at the sky through straw hats.
The sky was turned into black and white small stars.
Then came, southward as always, the angel
His song like the heat dancing on the gravel
High above the bat-chock and the white umpires
Moving south while the clapping of a run turns chill in echo
And his own drone is whittled to the point of a pin
So that doxing boys fumbled the ghost of sound.'

In a previous edition of this magazine, I read with interest about Charlie McCartney's visit to Belfast in 1928.

He was described in the following article playing in the Lords test in 1921-
'One can hardly believe that so feathery a touch can have made the ball travel so far. Yet it did travel. It travelled into every corner of the field except where a fielder was. His is the art of the Artful Dodger. He glances round under the peak of his cap to see where every fielder is, and with a turn of the wrist he has the ball running like a rat half-way between two of them, and two exhausted Englishmen charging after it to the boundary.'

It was written by Robert Wilson Lynd, a Belfast man who was a journalist in London and famous as essayist under the pseudonym YY.

This piece came from a collection of his essays titled, 'The Sporting Life'. I will end with a quotation from Pierce Egan who was an Irishman though not from Ulster as far as I know. He takes up the theme of the sporting life-

'And yet, although old Messieurs DEATH and TIME
Are sure to come off winners in the end!
There's something in this 'game of LIFE' that's pleasant;
For though 'to die' in verse may sound sublime,
(Blank verse I mean, of course - not doggerel rhyme),
Such is the love I bear for LIFE, and CRICKET,
Either at single or at double wicket,
I'd rather play a good long game-and spend
My time agreeably with some kind friend,
Than throw my bat and bail up-JUST AT PRESENT!

Nor have I! I still run a team which appears occasionally in Hampton in Middlesex called the Krapp XI named after Beckett's 'Krapps Last Tape'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DAYS THAT ARE GONE
PATRICK MACRORY
MOLLOY SAMUEL BECKETT
APOLLO IN MOURNE
ED VICTOR PRICE
HOME TO DERRY
THOMAS O'CANAINN
THE SELECTED JOHN HEWITT
BLACKSTAFF PRESS
THE TEST ALAN ROSS
CLAY IS THE WORD
ALAN WARNER
THE END OF A CHAPTER
SHANE LESLIE
THE HISTORY OF KENNINGTON
H H MONTGOMERY
THE STRINGS ARE FALSE
L MACNEICE
COLLECTED POEMS
L MACNEICE
THE SPORTING LIFE
ROBERT LYND

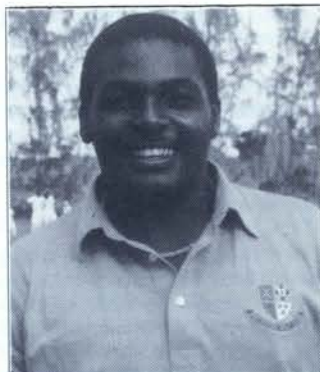
EGLINTON LEAD THE PACK!

...but Donemana still on the pedestal

In the wake of their centenary celebration, North West cricketers will move into the next hundred years of their cricketing evolution in a much healthier state than their predecessors. There are now many more clubs in their area and facilities the match of any contemporary in Irish cricket. Indeed, the International squad includes four North West players totally without precedent in bygone days. It is testimony to the character of the game in this sometimes forgotten corner of Ireland, where social and economic disadvantages have tended to cloud the quality of everyday life. Like all modern sports, cricket has met the challenges of a revolutionary 20th century with conviction and resolution and nowhere is that more in evidence, than in the North West. However, the 1989 players share one significant characteristic with their illustrious pioneers of the last century --- an emphatic 'will to win'. The fighting qualities of North West cricketers are unrivalled in Irish cricket and add another dimension to their local game. Its character has been moulded by numerous colourful incidents, some of which brought little credit to the leading participants, but generally those fighting qualities have ensured the healthy development of North West cricketing folklore. The 1989 season will be no exception.

With their centenary season running in tandem with the parent Union, Donemana swept all before them last season. Winning the league title for the eighth time in ten years emphasised their unparalleled consistency, while cup success was almost inevitable. Now the proud holders of the coveted Britannia 'Team of the Year Award', the only trophy yet to adorn the Donemana clubhouse remains the all Ireland Schweppes Cup. It is that spur which will see the men from the Holm step into the 1989 season, determined to continue where they left off last

September. And continue they will - it is doubtful if any other North West side can match their overall strength which effectively combines a blend of young and old, the mediocre and the brilliant, the impetuous and the composed. Donemana are on the pedestal and contemporary North West teams will have to be at their best to topple them.



Big Barbadian Henry Wallace - back to become the terror of North West batsmen

Much of Donemana's strength has been built on the talented McBrine trio of brothers, James, Junior and Roy. However, the team has other talented match winners in the form of 'Decker' Curry, Roger Kerr, Robert McGonigle and the evergreen Ivor Dongherty. The mighty 'Doc' will be as enthusiastic as any of those half his age, when Donemana step into the fray, and certainly none will be more committed. He has been a wonderful servant to the Donemana cause and remains one of North West cricket's most colourful exponents.

The threat to the champions should come from Eglinton, Strabane or Brigade. However, Sion Mills showed last year that they have turned the tide of fortune and in their celebratory 125th season, perhaps they will be the team to cause an upset. Bready showed the way in last season's Northern Bank Senior Cup competition, going through to the final before bowing to overall Donemana supremacy and an inspired Roger Kerr. However, they had a fine start to the season and with talented Mark Olphert now asserting

himself in senior cricket, perhaps the magnificent Magheramason clubhouse will sport a Senior trophy in 1989? Certainly they have the ability to return to another Beechgrove showpiece but their cup draw has not been kind and they face a difficult opener at Strabane. Although 1987 winners, Strabane's colours were unceremoniously lowered by unfancied Ardmore last season and without professional Jerry Kirton in their ranks this year, their task would appear to be uphill. However, it may be the platform on which the talented Gillespie brothers, Keith Finlay and John Callaghan will use to assert their prowess.

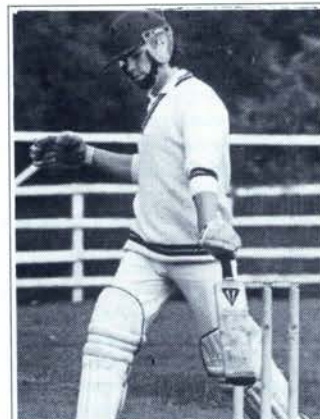
Terry Patton and Billy Henderson have the 'old heads' to make the most of their aspiring young proteges, so maybe, just maybe, Strabane will get their act together in 1989. A similar commitment will be needed at St Johnston where one week the best can be toppled, and the next week sees a return to lethargy. The 1987 all Ireland champions placed a heavy emphasis on retaining their trophy in 1988, almost to the detriment of all other games, but their progress was against a background of several of their leading 1987 players not being available. It showed, but they do have in Ian Rankin, one of the best players in Irish cricket, and in Paul Wallace, a promising debutant to the International scene. A heavy responsibility falls on their shoulders.



The Helm at Brigade Wille Wilson

Coleraine expected much from

'hired gun' Alf Masood last season, and were disappointed. The mercurial Pakistani has returned to Lenister cricket and it remains to be seen how the



Bready's promising Mark Olphert

Sandel Lodge establishment has emerged from the experience. It may prove another difficult season for Victor McDaid's men although home advantage in the cup may set up a similar success to that of 1986 when they won the trophy for the only time in their history.

The seasoned fighters of Ardmore have the 'last of the summer wine' in their entourage, namely Connie McAllister, George Brolly and Cyril Wad. All have experienced many ups and downs in their colourful cricketing careers! Now in the twilight of their prowess, those familiar fighting qualities have been harnessed to their younger colleagues, but it will surprise most if they manage to stay clear of the relegation issue. Ironically they will hold home advantage over newly promoted Fox Lodge, inspired by the superb performances of Leslie Jack in 1988, to go through their Division Two league campaign undefeated. The newcomers will do well to hold onto their premier status in 1989.

Inevitably most pundits will look to Brigade and Eglinton to forge the major challenge to Donemana's continuing supremacy. The Beechgrove team has absorbed the influx of several talented teenagers in



Chris Harte at the wicket in Eden Park

WALLY'S LONG HOP!

Grasshopper Wallace Graham started his 1989 season with an unforgettable round the world tour

On the 12th March I had the privilege of joining seventeen other members of the Ulster Grasshoppers Cricket club and fifteen supporters on a round the world tour which will live long in our memories. Founded in 1981 our club has previously toured Zimbabwe and South Africa but for tour manager John Elder this was by far the most ambitious venture. We flew to Gatwick and then to Los Angeles on the first stage of a four week cricket extravaganza around the globe. Our first two days were spent sight-seeing because it was too early in the year to catch the Americans at cricket! Tours to Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, Chinese Theatre, Beverley Hills, Marina Del Rey and Universal Studios set the scene for this epic trip. However we did experience a couple of early set backs when Ian Rankin lost his suitcase (and all his clothes) and Thom McCullough got badly sun-burnt on his ankles, the only parts of his body which were exposed!

From Los Angeles we travelled to Fiji via Hawaii and although our stop was only one hour it was sufficient for tour skipper Alan Waite to lose his visa card. It proved a bad financial blow to all of us! We also crossed the International Date Line and lost a full 24 hours. This posed a major problem to some of

the party who failed to grasp the significance. Our arrival in the tropical paradise of Fiji was in blistering heat but the pretty Fijian girls in their national costumes who met us presented each player with a necklace of shells. The heat was quickly forgotten.

Our hotel was beautifully set, surrounded by palm trees with mountains in the background. The building itself was wooden with a thatched roof. Floodlit tennis courts, a golf course, shops and a swimming pool added to our comforts and took our minds off the forthcoming cricket. The next day we cruised on a schooner in the Pacific to one of over three hundred deserted Fijian islands. We swam and relaxed for a few hours

in the company of the most breathtakingly beautiful coral, sipped a few beers, and enjoyed the music of the crew-men. That

fortably registered our first win of the tour. One feature of the ground was the boundary fence, two runs if you hit it and four if you cleared



When it rains in the Far East, it rains!

evening it rained heavily which meant the playing conditions for our first game were somewhat familiar. The hot sun quickly dried the Lautoka ground and we com-

it!
We also played the Fiji champions Suva and recorded another victory with some batting heroics by Davy Johnston who hit 18 runs off the penultimate over. It eased the paid a little from his less fortuitous bowling exploits!

We spent five days in Fiji before travelling on to Auckland in New Zealand, a four hour flight. Auckland was much cooler. It is a volcanic city spread over a wide area with two large harbours. Spotlessly clean it is known as 'the city of sails'. Since we were the first Irish team to play in New Zealand we were anxious to give a good account of ourselves in this game. Unfortunately we did not and lost heavily at the famous



The happy tourist at Waitomo Caves.



Deluxe cabin cruiser in Singapore!

Eden Park. At one stage we had the Auckland Invitation XI reeling at 40 for 4 but test players John Bracewell and John Reid rattled 183 runs off us to kill any misplaced optimism. Another test player Willie Watson completed the batting demise.

Easter Saturday was spend sightseeing. A boat trip across Waitemata harbour to Devanport provided magnificent panoramic views over the city.

before our journey to Tauranga in the Bay of Plenty. We lost both games there despite a defiant 59 from Peter Magowan and found the locals had a strong distaste for 'walking'! Regular number eleven Dick Forrest was promoted idn the batting order but lasted two balls to test bowler Richard Collinge. There were no further complaints from him about the batting order. We did beat the locals at golf but our lasting memorise of New Zealand will be their



Soaking up the beautiful scenery - Ivan Connolly and Colin Barkley.

We found the New Zealanders very friendly and hospitable but too strong for us on the field. In particular the district players who faced us at Seddon Park exposed major weaknesses in our side. Against Papatoetoe we fared no better and found the pronunciation just as difficult. But the scenery and the friendships were top class. We travelled from Hamilton to

friendliness and warm hospitality. The ten hour flight to Singapore ended in raging heat and unbearable humidity. Lionel Semple won the race for the injury list to avoid the wilting sun and revelled with the locals in bartering for the many bargains available. The junk boats provided excellent views of the busines harbour in the world with up to 300 ships



Golf in New Zealand. Ian Rankin had yet to take off his shell necklace recieved ten days earlier in Fiji while Tom and Davy scored high!

Rotorua calling at the Naitomo caves to see their famous 5000 glow worms. Mud pools, geysers and Maoris were the unforgettable features of Rotorua. Despite the strong sulphuric fumes from the geysers our hotel provided us with breath-taking views.

We registered a victory against the Fern Leaf XI at Smallbone Park heraldidng noisy celebrations

waiting to dock at ony one time. A short coach trip took us into Malaysia where we played the Jahor Bahru Cricket Association in a match which was included in the birthday celebrations of the King. The match was completely washed out after a torrential downpour but his Highness did provide a hot curry and a free bar. Nice chap we thought! The final match against the



Cool Tom returning from a spot of bargain hunting in Chinatown in Singapore.



Beautiful Nadi in Fiji



Not on the Foyle this time Billy!

Singapore Indian Association was also abandoned after a downpour which transformed the ground into a tropical lake. A short time later we were in the air en route to London leaving behind a host

of wonderful memories. The cricket may not have been very successful but we did show the brighter side of Ireland everywhere we went and hopefully our hosts respected us for it.

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MAJESTIC MILLPARK

BY
BILL IRELAND

It was one of those 'could only happen in Ireland' situations. A group of men huddled over a game of marbles in the heart of Co. Down became bored and decided to try something else.

They turned their minds to the more demanding game of cricket and in that moment Millpark Cricket Club was born.

The incident took place more than 50 years ago in the little hamlet which nestles snugly between Banbridge and Gilford, the first bat being literally cut out of the hedge.

From this small and unlikely beginning Millpark have grown into a club which currently fields two teams each week and has a membership of around 40, ground at Bannford Green being their accorded Section 111 status.

Millpark, who this season clock up their half century in membership of the Northern Cricket Union, have come a long way from the days when horse manure sometimes had to be shovelled off the square and outfield before they could get on with the game.

Millpark first entered the Northern Cricket Union leagues in 1939 and at the moment play in Section 111, their early days being spent in the West League which, sadly, is no longer in existence.

Millpark stalwart Billy McCart, the present chairman and no mean cricketer, recalls that in the thirties there were around 10 teams in the Banbridge district, 'We are now the only remaining club in the area', he reveals.

The first wicket on which Millpark played was created from grass brought from a location about a mile away. 'The club was actually based then in what is known locally as Millpark', says chairman McCart. The Millpark facilities, spartan as they were, provided a recreational outlet for prisoners of war, incarcerated in Gilford, and the men who guarded them.

Millpark 'moved house' to Uprichard's Demesne, which is to be found roughly between Hall's Mill and Laurencetown, staying there for four years before returning 'home'.

A season was also spent on the sports fields of Banbridge Academy before Millpark ended their somewhat nomadic existence by settling at the picturesque Bannford Green where they have been since 1968. The ground was originally owned by the Sinton family and has now been leased to the cricket club by the present owner, David Cook, who is a former Lord Mayor of Belfast.

On their own admission, Millpark have had an 'up and down' existence but they claim a unique distinction, winning the McCready Cup, a Mid Ulster Cricket Group trophy, twice in the same season.

The chairman explains with a wry smile, 'The final was held over from the previous season and we won the trophy, going on to retain it'. There was a glint in the

eye of Billy McCart when he talked about some of the characters who have represented Millpark down the years. For instance, Tommy Fry turned out wearing a dickie bow!

'He may not have been any great shakes as a cricketer but Tommy always looked well, he was immaculate and had all the gear', said Billy. McCart, known around the area as 'Mr Millpark', also produced a Press clipping from the first annual general meeting, the officers elected being, president, W F Uprichard, chairman, William McKinley, who just happened to be Billy McCart's grandfather, secretary, Mr William Brownlee, treasurer, Howard Dennison, committee, Willie McKelvey, William Hamilton, William Geddis.

'All of them did a great deal for the club and Willie McKelvey is particularly well remembered, being the groundsman before he went to live in Donacloney', says Billy.

He also mentions the contribution of Bobby Geddis and the fact that in the early days a scythe was used to cut the outfield and the club also had a 14 inch hand mower.

On their playing prowess over the 50 years, McCart reckons that Millpark always had a good bowling side but were never particularly strong in batting. 'They could always get the opposition out'.

Other names which rolled off the tongue of the Millpark chairman and some of his colleagues as they reminisced over a pint in their local hostelry were Ernie Gordon, Stanley Lindsay, Eddie Caulbeck and Jackie Harris and former chairman Joe Byrne. In the Thirties and through the Forties, Millpark travelled to Belfast for matches on the train, congregating at Robinson's Bar opposite the railway station.

'Some of them were known to imbibe before matches and I used to wait outside hoping that I would get a game', chats Billy McCart.

Few junior cricket clubs in Ireland can claim to have 'spawned' two Irish international players, a distinction which belongs to Millpark.

The Millpark internationals are Waringstown opening batsman David Dennison and his club colleague, Alan Nelson, capped for the first time last summer.

Millpark are convinced that they would have been joined by Robert Dennison if his footballing talent had not taken him into the full-time professional game in England.

Robbie is, of course, a soccer international and a member of the current Northern Ireland squad.

'It would be marvellous to see him become a double international but with his commitments Robbie just cannot fit in cricket', says Millpark chairman Billy McCart.

The Dennison brothers literally played for Millpark when they were in short trousers, being brought to the club

by their dad, George Dennison, who is still a stalwart at Bannford Green and played for the club over a long period of years.

Just to emphasise the family atmosphere which exists at Millpark, Alan Nelson and his brother Noel Nelson now with Waringstown, played their early cricket there. Billy McCart may be past his 50th birthday, but he is as impatient as ever for yet another cricket season to start.

McCart has been involved with Millpark since he was a schoolboy in his home village area, writing his way into the record books by scoring a century and taking all 10 wickets in a match.

Not many cricketers, even at the highest level of the game, can make such a boast.

McCart is one of four Millpark players to have hit the 'ton', the others being his own son Stephen McCart, Jim Burns and Lawrence Bramell. The McCart century was scored against Albert Foundry but he is not the only Millpark man to achieve the 10 wickets feat, Mickey Maguire bundled out Greenisland for a 10 for 18 return. The McCart figures, 10 for 13, were achieved against Carrickfergus in the NCU Junior Cup.

These are some of the players who have brought honour and acclaim to Millpark on the field of play but the club is anxious in its Golden Jubilee year to record the contribution down the years of their willing backroom workers.

Notable in this respect was secretary Kenny Orr, who died at a tragically early age. 'Kenny lived, ate and slept Millpark cricket. He was a tremendous worker for the club and we still miss him', said chairman Billy McCart.

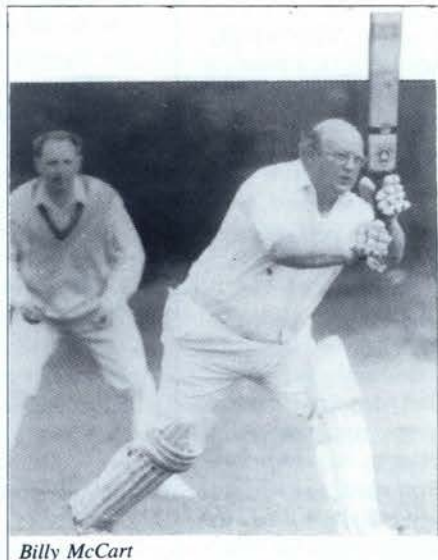
Incidentally, the present-day membership of Millpark Cricket Club costs a modest 30, minute books showing that the men who donned the whites at Bannford Green once paid 15 shillings a year for the privilege. Nowadays, constant ballots, 240 Clubs and sponsorship are required to keep the club solvent, equipment and ground upkeep being costly items.

Millpark will celebrate their Golden Jubilee by extending the present pavilion facility at Bannford Green, including toilets.

The plans have already been approved and the work is expected to get underway soon.

There will, hopefully, be a series of exhibition matches to mark 50 years unbroken membership of the Northern Cricket Union.

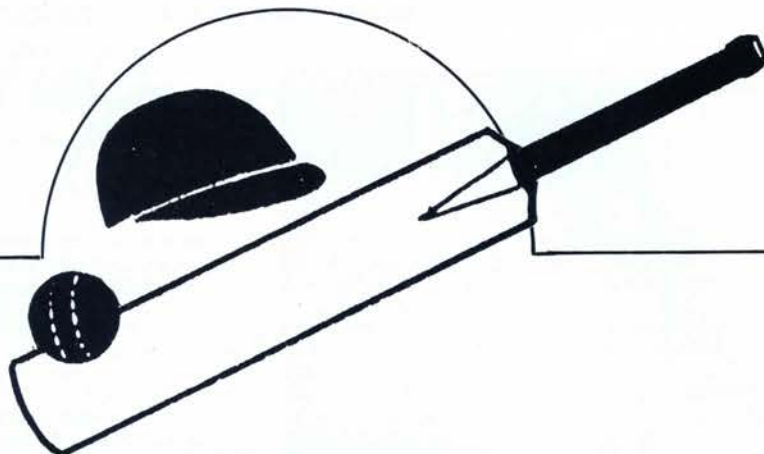
NCU President Jim McMorran has agreed to take a team to the Gilford bastion of Ulster cricket and a fixture is planned which will feature past and present Irish Internationals. Millpark hope to have the Dennison brothers, Robbie's football commitments permitting, and the Nelsons back in their ranks for these special occasions, which are a fitting tribute to a club which emerged after a dispute over a game of marbles!



Billy McCart



Back row: (L to R) Val Hamilton, Paddy Malcolmson, William McCart, John Ewart, Laurence Bramell.
Front row: Ian McCart, Douglas Barr, Alan Boyce, Steven McCart, John McDowell.



CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY

In his excellent book, "The art of Captaincy", Mike Brearley lists the major attributes of the successful captain as personal ability, common sense, leadership qualities and a willingness at times to take an unpopular line. The astute Brearley is well qualified to comment, being widely acclaimed as a master tactician and one of the all-time greats of captaincy. The former Middlesex and England supremo's rich legacy to the game he departed four years ago, is enshrined in this classic, filled with personal opinion and worldly experience. Like most test captains, Brearley lived continuously under the critic's eye, but he has been refreshingly honest about his personal blemishes, as well as his famous tactical triumphs. Purists of cricket will enjoy his meticulous assessment of this intriguing aspect of the game.

Brearley's analysis of the captain's role invited comparison to local cricket. Indeed does the amateur's role differ much from his paid associate? Who were the great leaders of local cricket, the "Captains of Industry"?

CAPTAINCY ERRODED IN LIMITED OVERS CRICKET

At the outset it must be distinguished between the limited overs captains and the timed cricket skipper. There are fundamental differences in the approaches of both, largely due to the presence of the declaration factor in the time game. A limited overs captain is, by definition a limited leader, and many of his cricketing decisions will be

determined by the nature of the overs restriction. His role as a tactician is vastly reduced and the pre-match selection will have essentially determined his bowling attack. In the field, bowling switches, field placing and motivation, will be the main focus of his attention, while his batting order will similarly have been settled by selection some days earlier. In essence, the biggest decisions he may have to make on match day will concern the toss, the use of the roller and who buys the first round of drinks in the clubhouse.

By contrast, the time match demands a greater degree of tactical appreciation, largely because a declaration will invariably be required to create a run chase and ultimately a result. Captaincy must keep an overall perspective of the time factor, especially when batting, so that sufficient time is made available to the opposition to entice them to attack the target. This intriguing exchange promotes vibrant healthy cricket, and allows the game to evolve with a better tactical appreciation of its finer points. It demands a higher calibre of captaincy

CAPTAINCY COMES IN MANY COMPLEX FORMS

But what measure can be used to gauge the captain? With so much limited overs cricket, tactical opportunities have been restricted to representative cricket in recent years. Perhaps the only true measure of success, but that in itself can be totally inadequate. For example the great Waringstown team of the last twenty years

have had a string of different captains, without in any way upsetting their unparalleled success rate. Perhaps their unified approach created captaincy by "concensus" and thus set them apart from contemporaries. However, nobody remembers the unsuccessful captain, so the leader must inject a will to win into his team, then carry it through to fruition. Age has to be an important factor - there are few young captains with the necessary experience or ability to man-manage. Indeed the great captains have taken many complex forms - the motivators, the thinkers, the brilliant players, the aggressors and of course the status symbols. Few, if any, have combined all these features!

GOOD CAPTAINS PROVE GOOD ADMINISTRATORS

Irish cricket's longest-serving captain was the legendary Willie Andrews of North Down, who held office for 39 successive seasons from 1910 to 1949, an amazing sequence unlikely to be matched in the modern era. A strict adherent to the best traditions of the game, the towering Andrews owed his hallowed position largely to the esteem in which his family was held in the local community. Status was his greatest asset, and in the era between the wars, it must have meant something, because North Down was the premier club in the land. Ironically James MacDonald was a member of his famous team, and although failing to dislodge the local dignitary at club level, he did captain Ireland at both hockey and cricket on many occasions! Significantly Willie Andrews was also a colossus of cricket administration. He served Irish cricket in a wide variety of leadership roles and his opinions were widely respected, if at times irksome.

In a similar vein Willie McGarvey (Brigade) and Dr A H Montgomery (Eglington), not only captained their clubs with distinction, they later became pillars of the North West administration.

Although not always a prerequisite for a successful captain, outstanding players have inevitably assumed leadership roles by virtue of the high esteem in which they were held by their fellow players. Both local Unions have been liberally blessed by fine captains of this mould. Jim Rankin (Strabane), Bobby Baird (Ardmore), Don Shearer (City of Derry), Andy McFarlane (Sion Mills) and Alex McBrine (Donemana) featured in bygone days in the North West. Perhaps Shearer was the better known and the fact that he captained many representative teams, including Ireland, confirmed his astute leadership and inspirational qualities. It is often said leaders are born, and significantly Shearer rose to high rank during the Second World War.

Woodvale produced two fine captains in George Wilson and Larry Warke but for many the great Bob Harrison was something special. Bob created a fine fighting spirit in his team, raising them from junior status to the best Senior team of the thirties. He took his job seriously, and instilled a similar approach on the players. In later years he served both club and Union with distinction, rising to the NCU presidency in 1968.

Jack Bowden (Lisburn) and Stuart Pollock (North of Ireland) were two distinguished international players, both highly respected for their ability and their leadership qualities.

Billy Webb was another fine captain from the Ormeau stable, more noted for his tactical approach. Cecil Walker followed in Bowden's footsteps at Wallace Park and guided the club through one of their greatest eras.

Like several other outstanding captains, he thrived on responsibility as player and Administrator. He is currently President of the Irish Cricket Union, the latest in a long line of honours.



Stalwart Club skipper Bob Harrison

DECLINE IN STANDARD

Few captains have stood out in the modern era by comparison, probably as a result of limited overs cricket. However, the increasing demands on time by today's Society in general, has probably had a major influence. Club captains have had to carefully manage their time to placate other important responsibilities such as family, job and home. The amateur game has placed increasing pressures on these responsibilities, so the modern trend has been to rotate the leadership role. As a consequence, leaders have tended to vary widely in quality and character and at club level get too involved in the many administrative functions associated with local cricket. Organisational qualities and availability of time have decimated the pool of aspiring captains in Ulster cricket to such an extent, that the annual ap-

pointment is often one of who is prepared to take on the job! Obviously the quality has suffered.



CHARISMATIC MONTEITH

One aspect of captaincy which the dapper Brearley has dismissed nonchalantly as a major attribute, is surprisingly charisma - "charisma seems to me a most limited asset as a captain ... it is not the same thing as leadership."

This opinion could scarcely have been applicable to the great Dermott Monteith, arguably Ireland's most successful captain. One hesitates to say "best" in the case of the former all-rounder, as many found his abrasive manner on and off the field disturbing. Monteith certainly had charisma, and it showed in his decisions and in the way he handled his players. He was an exceptional individual - arrogant, bold, confident, knowledgeable, respected, feared, loved, hated, antagonistic and much more, but he was above all an outstanding cricketer with a superb appreciation of the game. He may not have endeared himself to everyone, but he had style. He instilled in his players an uneasy confidence but they drew great strength from his imposing personality and individualistic approach. He was prepared to gamble and more often than not his



Irish skipper Paul Jackson

entrepreneurial approach was vindicated. Monteith was a rare cricketing breed, a charismatic captain, the like of which will probably never be seen again!

Of the more orthodox code, the most widely acknowledged better captains are small in number. Certainly some club skippers have had their moments of triumph, but quite often on the back of outstanding individual performances,

rather than astute leadership. North West teams are notoriously difficult to handle, probably a product of the combative approach of cricketers in this area. Ross Torrens (Brigade), Ossie Colhoun, Tommy Harpur and Ray Moan (all Sion Mills), will be regarded by most as the better captains of the past two decades, alongside the great Scott Huey of Eglinton. Huey was not only a brilliant player, he was a masterful tactician and deep thinker of the game, much respected by his contemporaries. He led the North West to Guinness Cup glory on two occasions and excelled as captain in every level of cricket.

REITH THE COMPLETE CAPTAIN

If popularity was to be the measure of the best captains, then Downpatrick's Alfie Linehan, North's Paul Jackson and Waringstown's Michael Reith would stand apart from all others.

The affable "Alf" skippered at every level of cricket in Ireland and remains today one of the games greatest ambassadors. Former Chairman of the Irish Selectors and Chairman of the NCU, his leadership qualities continue to serve local cricket admirably.



Michael Reith - A very successful captain

"Jacko" has made an immediate impact as Skipper of the current Irish squad with his vivacious, outgoing personality. A superb motivator, his tactical appreciation is improving, and he combines the many duties of this demanding role with characteristic panache.

Perhaps the most complete captain of the modern era has been Michael Reith.

The former Waringstown and North Down all-rounder combined many of the qualities associated with good leadership and achieved success in four different areas. He led North Down to Senior Cup glory in 1981 and on his return to Waringstown guided the villagers to further major honours two years later. He also captained both Ulster Town and Ulster Country to Guinness Cup success and but for premature retirement due to injury, he would surely have assumed the national captaincy. Reith was a shrewd tactician, excellent player and fiercely competitive on the field. He combined his cricketing talents with an acute appreciation of his players, skilfully inspirational on occasions and donning the mantle of motivator with consummate ease. Off the field he was excellent company and his recent commitment to Ireland has harnessed his talent at the highest level.

Ulster cricket has been gifted with some outstanding captains and it would be impossible to list them all. Equally, one could not with any conviction isolate those deemed the "best". They have all been leaders in their own inimitable style, "captains of industry".



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A 'BEST ELEVEN'?

REFLECTIONS ON A RAINY DAY ...

How many rainy days have we sat in the pavillion and romanced on the game of cricket? Certainly there has been ample opportunity to satisfy this particular pleasure and the range of topics endless. Perhaps the most speculative and controversial is to name the 'best' team of all time in Ulster Cricket!

Its a mind-boggling topic and always guaranteed to arouse argument, speculation, intransigence but above all a passionate indulgence. No team could ever be truly regarded as the 'best' since it is impossible to compare players with each other, the type of game in one era gainst another or the opportunities which one player has received in comparison to another. But we still speculate ... so who was the best team of all time in Ulster cricket?

STARTING POINT 1900

For the purpose of this exercise the captaincy should be left until the team is selected. Assuming most quality players have usually experienced the captaincy it seems predictable that the 'best' team would include a number of acceptable contenders. We should also define an

era and perhaps 1900 should be the cut-off date since records prior to then are incomplete and overarm bowling had almost completely replaced the underarm code. Let the music begin ...

There is no shortage of contenders for the opening bat positions. In the early part of the century Willie Pollock of Holywood and North of Ireland was widely regarded as the best batsman in Ireland while during the inter-war period Willie Irwin (Waringstown), T J Macdonald (North Down) Finally Jackson (Ulster and North) and R W Taylor (St Johnston and later Strabane, City of Derry and Eglinton) would all have strong claims. The immediate post war period produced that fine Woodvale team with Posnett and Berryman always guaranteed to set the innings off on a solid basis and G C Morrison (North of Ireland), Lloyd Armstrong (Armagh, Waringstown and Downpatrick), Tom McCloy (Lisburn), Simpson Robinson (Lisburn), Paddy Gallagher (Sion Mills) all deservedly winning widespread recognition. The modern era was dominated by the Roy Harrison/Michael Reith prolific partnership at Waringstown. But there were other fine openers in this era including Conn

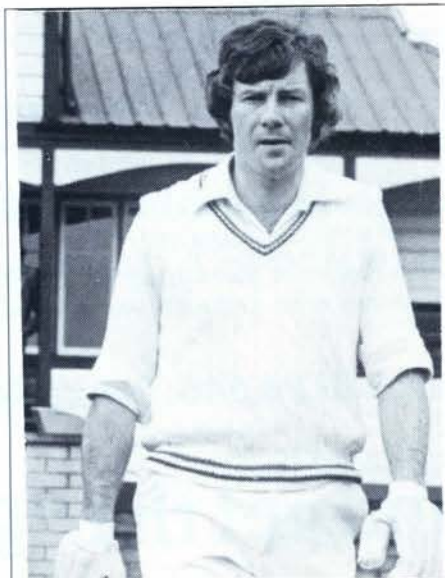
McCall (Holywood and Bangor), Charlie Corry (Cregagh), Noel Ferguson (Downpatrick), Stephen Warke (Woodvale) and two of Sion's best Aubrey Finlay and Brendan Donaghy, equally adept at batting down the order.

Obviously there will be others excluded in this little soiree to whet the debate so for the proposes of progress why not opt for a left and right handed combination in the guise of Pollock and Reith. Two top quality players of different eras and approaches. The correct and steady posture of Pollock complimented by the aggressive talents of Reith. A potentially brilliant combination.

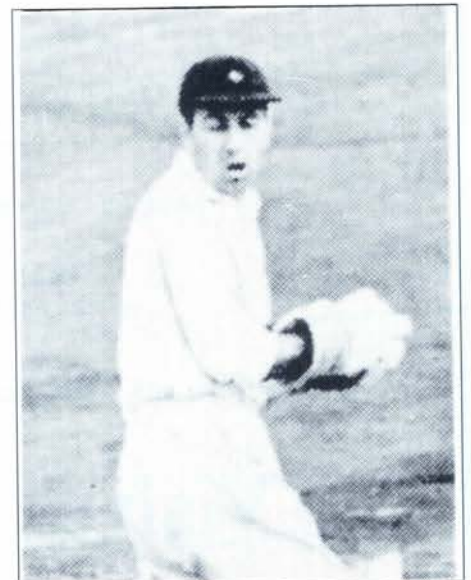
The top quality batsmen will not pose a major problem because the leading contenders have stood the test of time and hold hallowed positions in the folklore of both Ulster and Irish cricket. Ivan Anderson (Waringstown), Donald Shearer (City of Derry and North of Ireland), Andy MacFarlane (Sion Mills), James Macdonald (North Down) and Stuart Pollock (North of Ireland) are certain to be included in the deliberations of any aspiring selection committee from Derry to Donacloney or Saintfield to Strabane.



Ivan Anderson



Mike Reith



Ossie Colhoun

They were exceptional batsmen. When discussions are broadened many local preferences will have to be satisfied! The prolific exploits of Paddy McLoughlin and Jim Rankin of Strabane are legendary in North West cricket while strong claims must be made for Raymond Hunter (Lisburn and Lurgan), Larry Warke (Woodvale) Jim Harrison (Waringstown), Bobby Barnes (Armagh and Waringstown) and Oscar Andrews (North Down and North of Ireland). If the team has to include an all rounder then perhaps several of these outstanding players will warrant serious consideration in that role with perhaps the addition of the inimitable Archie McQuilken of Muckamore and Sonny Hool (North of Ireland). However there must be others who beg inclusion such is the span of time and opinion. What then of a batting order from three to seven of Anderson, Shearer, Macdonald, Macfarlane and the all rounder Oscar Andrews. Howls of disapproval at the exclusion of Stuart Pollock will surely abound!

COLHOUN REIGNS SUPREME

Wicket-keepers of the highest quality have coloured the Ulster cricket scene from 1900. Perhaps Jack Dearden (North Down) was the pick of the twenties with George Crothers of Lisburn setting an impeccable standard in the thirties. Victor Craig (Strabane) was highly regarded until the arrival of the legendary Ossie Colhoun of Sion Mills. Capped 86 times the doyen of wit and humour carved his own niche in Irish cricket with his consistent brilliance behind the stumps. Eddie Bushe (Waringstown) and current skipper Paul Jackson (North of Ireland) are also contenders but it would be difficult to pass the great Colhoun.

Ulster cricket has been blessed with quality bowlers, fast and slow. In the latter category the inimitable Dermott Monteith of Lisburn and Eglinton's Scott Huey have many outstanding achievements behind them. And a strong case could be made for that colourful character Johnny Flood of Sion Mills and Willie McGarvey's 'cutters' at Brigade.



Simon Corlett

Jack Bowden's records at Lisburn were top class while 'Sonny' Hool reigned supreme at North of Ireland. What of Frank Fee who had a surprisingly short international career but took 58 wickets for only 12.56 each and Woodvale's George Wilson? With Macdonald already selected a decision would have to be made as to whether two additional slow bowlers would be necessary. Certainly Oscar Andrews could be used as a pace bowler but perhaps two specialist opening bowlers must be deemed essential to the balance of the side. Monteith or Huey, what a difficult choice, but the abrasive Lisburn man must edge it, if only for his consistent brilliance at every level of cricket and the additional asset of his aggressive batting.

CORLETT AN AUTOMATIC CHOICE

Over the past decade North's Simon Corlett has established himself as one of the all time greats in Irish cricket. His inclusion would be automatic to most so the choice of a partner throws up numerous

- W Pollock
- M Reith
- I Anderson
- EDR Shearer
- J Macdonald
- A McFarlane
- O Andrews
- J D Monteith
- S Corlett
- C Billingsley
- O Colhoun

And what about the captain. Ah! The rain has stopped ... perhaps another day?



Oscar Andrews

possibilities. Big Roy Torrens of Brigade has been the pick of post war North West fast bowlers but prior to then Bobby Baird of Ardmore was a prolific wicket-taker with his 'slinging' action off a short run. In a similar style Noel Ferguson at Downpatrick was very effective while Big Stanley Hewitt at Ormeau produced blistering pace with sheer physical presence. For many Woodvale's Charlie Billingsley combined pace with style and was certainly the star opening bowler in the thirties. Pace is one of the areas in cricket where time and folklore has considerably distorted reality. For example how does one compare Waringstown's fine bowler between the wars Tom McKenzie with big John Elder of Bangor or tragic Tommy Martin and Jack Simpson of Lisburn with Woodvale's Armstrong and Newburn or Sammy Jeffrey in the North West.

Just another set of difficult considerations in this complex debate. Perhaps a Corlett/Billingsley combination is an acceptable compromise leaving a possible 'all time' team of:



Andy McFarlane

SELLING THE GAME

Two months ago Touche Ross the well known firm of Chartered Accountants announced the largest sponsorship in Irish Cricket when detailing their support of the NCU Senior Cup over the next three years. It will net the Union a figure of around £11,000 although the dynamic firm will enhance their financial investment with a progressive and imaginative support programme to maximise their commitment. Two weeks later the local hockey union announced a sponsorship package of £10,000 to cover a European Club Tournament at Blaris over one week-end in early May!

It was just another impressive sponsorship won by the hockey administrators who must be thanking the Gods for Great Britain's Olympic success and the participation of local stars Jimmy Kirkwood and Stephen Martin. The ensuing publicity has attracted widespread commercial interest and brought an unexpected boost to a game heavily dependent on financial support to meet the huge cost of participating at the highest level. How the cricket administrators must envy their hockey contemporaries at commanding such a high price. But is cricket being sold so short in the competitive world of sport sponsorship?

SPONSORS GET POUND OF FLESH

Commercial sponsors have always been quick to seize the initiative and capitalise on the publicity offered by the clean-cut image of sport. With similar venom they have been just as callous in switching direction, often to the detriment of the sport which allows itself to be totally dependent on one particular sponsor. Cricket has experienced the fickleties of commercial preference although major sponsors Texaco, Benson and Hedges, Cornhill, Nat West Bank and Refuge Assurance have huge commitments to the game at national level and much of this is filtered back to the game at grass roots level. Major media focus and all important mass television coverage ensure the sponsors get their pound of flesh therefore the task of selling the game at national



Brian Lyle from the Northern Bank making a presentation to Eglinton's Nigel Thompson.

level is considerably eased. Can Irish cricket learn at local and national level?

CALL TO CONSULT EXPERTS

'Selling the game' of cricket must be the most vital consideration for cricket administrators at every level if the game is to prosper into the nineties. Contemporary sports like hockey and bowls have already stole much of cricket's former media focus by promoting and developing their sport through increased media coverage and its associated sponsorship support. The Irish Cricket Union has already addressed the problem albeit on an 'ad hoc' basis by discussion at sub-committee level but the call to consult public relations experts has gathered considerable momentum over the past few years. The ability of amateurs to administer and develop and sport in the modern world is open to question when so much focus is placed on finance. It costs money to stage representative cricket, it costs lots of money to do it properly. The ICU depends heavily on a wide range of small sponsors and the annual hand-out from participation in Nat West Competition. In total it requires almost £60,000 to break-even for a programme which pales in modesty against the annual hockey razzamatazz. The need to consult experts in the



Lombard and Ulster Senior League sponsorship announced by Carl Gibney with NCU officials Alfie Linehan and Jim McMorran.

field is therefore not just a consideration but essentially vital to the promotion and development of cricket in the future. At present the Union plods along with amateur officials giving much of their time and resources while using business contacts from well meaning benefactors to support the cricket programme. How the union could benefit from a quality public relations firm selling the sport to major commercial interests. The potential is unlimited!

WARINGSTOWN ENTERPRISE

A similar situation exists at provincial and club level. Both are capable of maintaining their financial liquidity

on a year to year basis simply by balancing the books. Neither requires the heavy outlay that the national union has to face but equally both could benefit much from a public relations appraisal. In recent weeks the highly successful Waringstown club published a commemorative brochure to highlight 25 years of glory at the lawn. Forget all the flannel about history and folklore being recorded, this publication was a calculated business decision and must be highly complimented for it. The brochure is guaranteed to be a big money spinner and the Waringstown club has been smart to capitalise on their success. Other clubs may not have had the chronicle of victories to glorify but they do have the potential to reap a financial return from a similar exercise.

MAXIMISING COMMERCIAL SUPPORT

At Union level the game must be sold professionally to commercial interests. Big firms are aware of the clean cutimage of cricket but in many cases unaware as to how they can benefit from an associated sponsorship package. The role of the PR at Union and club level is to keep contact with the media and not to be confused with 'selling' the game. This is a much more sophisticated position and requires professional expertise. Nevertheless the PR is an intergral part of the system but amazingly few clubs appoint a PR and even fewer use him to any great effect. Not surprisingly the clubs with the good PR get the most publicity!

The Gilbeys administration has pushed the Ulster Games to a much higher profile than ever before by a demanding publicity awareness programme to max-



Touche Ross sponsorship - Managing Partner Sam Goldblatt with Jim McMoran and Paul Jackson.

imise their £135,000 support over the next three years. They are not alone in demanding a high level of return from the sports administrators but they are very professional about the way they achieve it. Both the North West and the NCU have loyal sponsors for their wide ranging competitions but neither has a consultant to liase with the sponsor to maximise and enhance the sponsorship package. In some cases a cheque being handed over is the extent of the relationship! What a waste to both parties!

Move into the nineties gentlemen or be left in the wake of contemporaries sports who had the vision to recruit the expertise to maximise commercial support!



Ulster Bank sponsorship adorning the North of Ireland clubhouse at Ormeau.



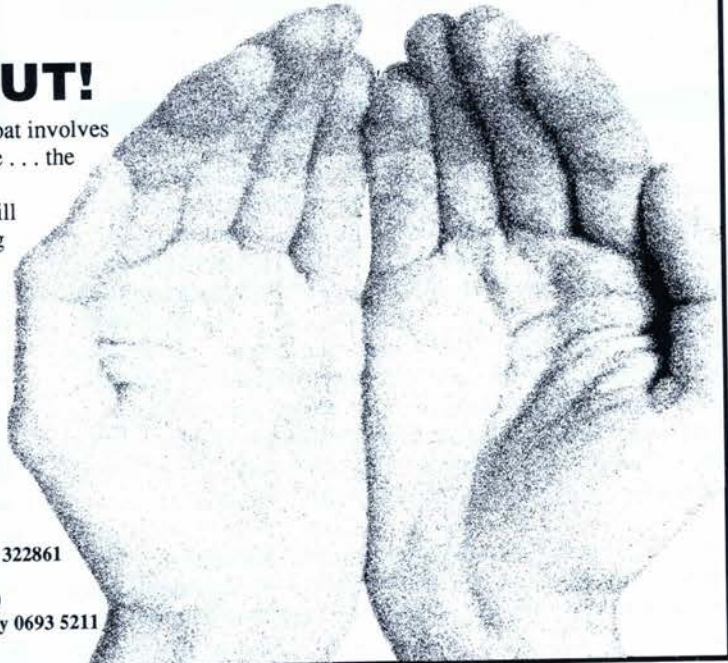
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'To be sure, to be sure...!'

Spare a thought for despairing Irish Cricket Union Secretary Derek Scott, who seems to be in a quandary over what to celebrate in 1990.

The normally meticulous Mr Scott last year assuredly informed his beloved Executive Committee that:-

'There is no doubt in my mind that the origins of Irish cricket date back to several meetings held in Dublin in 1890. We should be celebrating our centenary in 1990

Perish the thought! This historic year will mark the tricentennial celebration of King William's historic victory at the battle of the Boyne, and any 'celebration' of an Irish dimension is sure to raise a few eye-brows north of the border! The gods of history could never have been so provocative...

Significantly, Scott's assertion, is suspect to say the least! His foundations are based upon two meetings held in Dublin in July 1890 during the inaugural Inter provincial series. Indeed the demure statistician, and widely respected historian of Irish cricket affairs, has gone to some length to chronicle the period in an article he produced for the 1980 commemorative Phoenix Cricket Club sesquicentennial celebration brochure. Alas, however, he also detailed a meeting which took place in Dublin in 1884 and one which is documented in Northern Cricket Union archives:-

'On 17th April 1884, a letter was sent to Northern Clubs from J McCormac, the Hon. Secretary of the Northern Cricket Union, informing them of a meeting the following week in Dublin, to discuss the formation of an Irish Cricket Union. Mr McCormac subsequently attended the meeting but despite his assurances that northern clubs were interested, nothing concrete materialised.'

Indeed the whole period from 1884 to 1922 in Irish cricket is one dominated by Dublin overtures to the North, to form an Irish Cricket Union. Against a background of political unrest with the 'home rule' issue of paramount importance, the emphatic response was always 'NO'. However, Leinster officialdom obviously had an independent view and whether northern officials accepted it or not, decided they had an 'Irish Cricket Union'. Not surprisingly, acrimony and bitterness characterised relations between Dublin and Belfast for many years! Minutes of Northern Cricket Union meetings are riddled with references to Dublin 'ascendancy' and 'Irish' teams of the

period, noticeably selected few northerners! Indeed on many occasions, the team was selected without any northern representation!

But is this the Irish Cricket 'Union' which the current Secretary wishes to acknowledge? It must be, although at one time he obviously thought otherwise...

In Barclay's 'World of Cricket' first published in 1980 and later updated in 1986, an article on Irish cricket is attributed to Derek Scott and the late Stanley Bergin:-

'...the Irish Cricket Union, as it is known today, did not come into being until 1923. This followed a meeting between representatives of the Leinster Union and the Northern Union in July of that year.'

So why all the confusion?

Clearly the minutes of Northern Cricket Union meetings hold the key to Mr Scott's dilemma. Indeed, the history of Ireland holds the key, as it is barely conceivable that northerners, many of whom were prepared to embark on a course of civil war in the pre-1914 period, would have even contemplated any form of Irish unity. At one stage the North of Ireland ground at Ormeau was closed, to enable the local unit of the Ulster Volunteer Force to drill and prepare to defend Ulster!

The entire period, up to the outbreak of the 'great war' saw Leinster overtures for an Irish Cricket Union emphatically declined as 'inopportune' at the present time. There were also many northern administrators who had scant regard for the proposed format, and its financial requirements. The Autonomy of the Northern Cricket Union

was felt sacrosanct in any considerations! In instance, and security guaranteed, northerners appeared more receptive to an Irish cricket dimension. After several exchanges in 1922 a formal agreement was eventually signed in 1923, and the horribly titled Irish Representative Cricket Control Committee established. It had its first meeting in Dublin in January 1924, and formulated details of the interprovincial and international matches to follow that season. Willie Pollock and Willie Andrews, represented the northern interest at this historic meeting.

Two years later the very sensible decision was taken to rename the organisation, the 'Irish Cricket Union' and in 1927 it held the first meeting under this banner. Significantly in all discussions, the autonomy of the Provincial Union remained unaffected.

But back to Derek Scott...

Undeterred by these revelations, the perplexed cornerstone of the establishment has stuck loyally in defence of his crumbling 'celebration'. Perhaps 1890 signified the inaugural 'Irish' matches? Alas, no, 'Irish teams' had been playing since 1855.

Then what about first class matches, perhaps Scotland games?.

Once again, no, the centenary of those matches was celebrated in 1988!

Most historians recognise 1923 as authentic, although it is conceded that the constitution was re-written in 1933. That document remains in existence today, with only one minor alternation over 56 years.

But what can Derek celebrate?

The only authentic celebration for 1990 remains the Battle of the Boyne. Surely nobody doubts 1690? But wait!... don't forget those inaugural Interprovincials:- not surprisingly the dapper Secretary eventually honed in on them!

'We can celebrate the centenary of organised inter-national representative cricket in Ireland.'

Big deal! But why all the fuss at ICU level? Was it really true what the two drunks divulged at the end of Jury's Bar a few weeks ago?

'Seamus, I read in the Irish Times dat the Irish Cricket Union will be celebrating its cenetary six years late in 1990.'

'Be God, no Paddy! They're celebrating it turty-tree years early yer' oul' fool!'

'Be Jesus why, Seamus?'

'Oh, to be sure, to be sure, Paddy!'



was felt sacrosanct in any considerations! The Great War of 1914 to 1918 shelved the 'home rule' crisis in Ireland, and postponed the cricket issue which paled in to the background as the horrific conflict ravaged Europe. The post war period eventually produced the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland, thwarting any imminent possibility of civil war. With the Treaty in ex-

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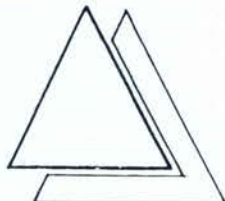
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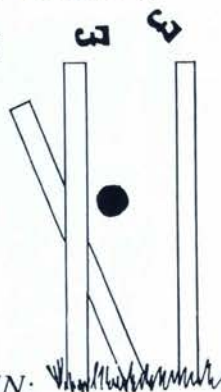
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