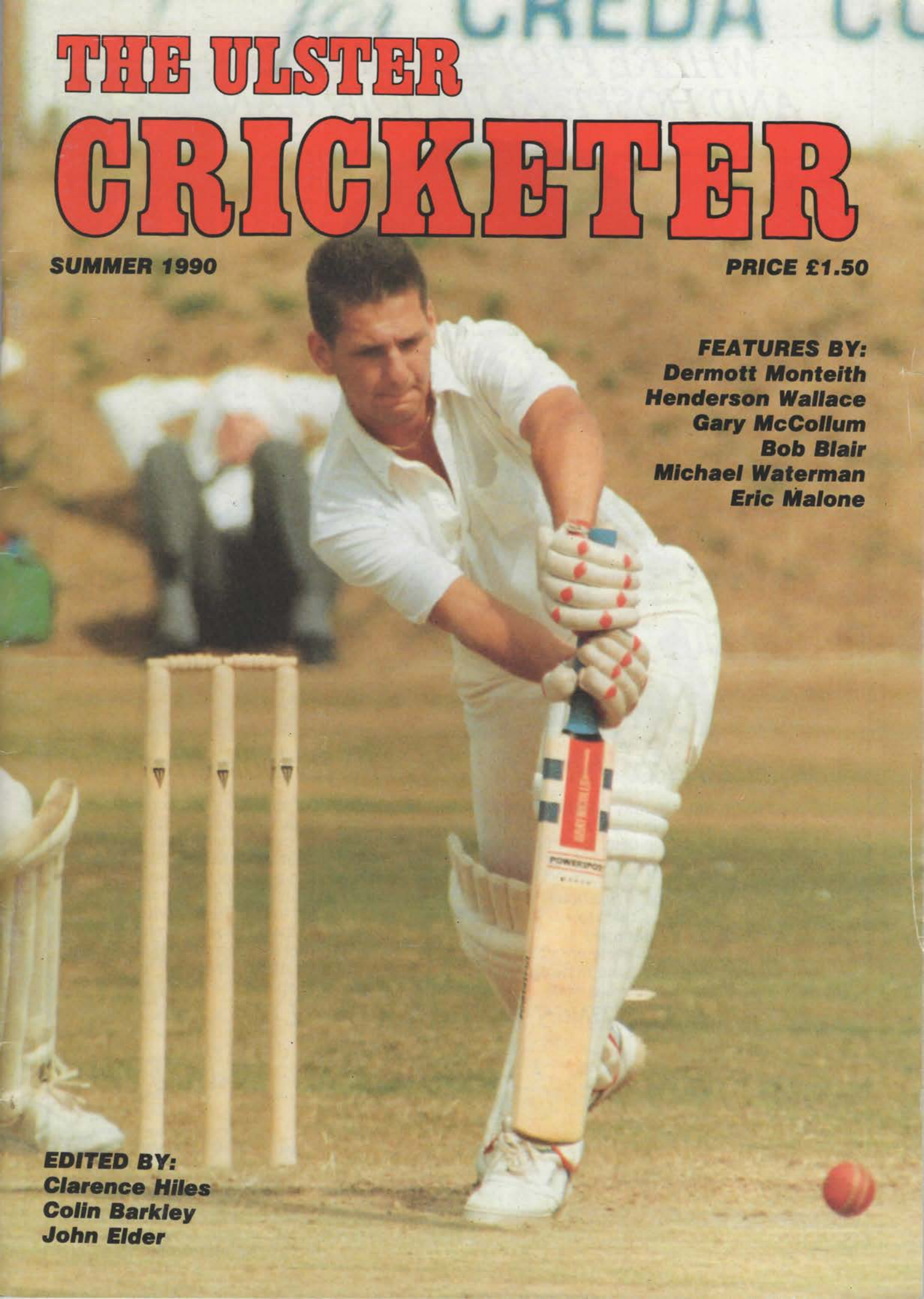
THE ULSTER CRICKETER

SUMMER 1990

PRICE £1.50



FEATURES BY:
Dermott Monteith
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Gary McCollum
Bob Blair
Michael Waterman
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Clarence Hiles
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Preview of the NCU season 1990
By Gary McCollum Page 5
Year of the Underdog?
Henderson Wallace looks at the North West season Page 8
Gamesmanship
What is acceptable in cricket? Page 12
Ulster Bank interprovincial championship 1990 Page 14
33 Not Out Page 16
Indian Sign at Greenisland
Raman Lamba at Cliftonville Page 18
Kiwis look at the Springboks
Bob Blair on the strength of South African cricket Page 20
News Digest Page 23
Gentleman Jim Page 26
Testing Times Ahead
Ireland in 1990 Page 28
Prose on Pros Page 30
The Grasshoppers on tour in Zimbabwe Page 32
Opportunity and Incentive
By Dermott Monteith Page 33
New Zealand's visit Ireland Page 34
People in Places Page 38
Demise of the 'Grub Bowler' Page 39
Quirks of Age Page 40
Larne Cricket Club in profile Page 42
Ulster's first trip to Munster Page 45
Downpatrick in the Forties
By Eddie Malone Page 47
Umpires Corner Page 48
Youth & Schools Page 50

FRONT COVER: Waringstown's talented all rounder Shane Harrison in action for Ulster Country at Comber. Photo Laurence Kirk.
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Clarence Hiles



Colin Barkley

EDITORIAL COMMENT

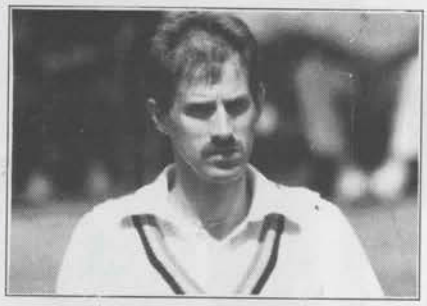
It was a winter of much debate fuelled by North Down's controversial recruitment of Paul and Charlie McCrum on professional terms. The purists were horrified, the realists resigned to it's almost inevitability. Whether you like it or not, the top players of the future will expect to be paid and who can blame them?

The Irish international selectors took a decisive step towards professionalism by picking Raman Lamba for the two New Zealand matches, although ironically both Paul McCrum and Peter O'Reilly are also paid to play at their respective clubs. Not surprisingly several established international players have asked for clarification of the renumeration terms and it would be difficult to deny any reasonable claims.

Top players sacrifice much in personal resources to perform at the highest level and should be compensated. Time off work, travelling to cricket grounds, renewing equipment, maintaining fitness and attending regular practice are heavy demands on personal resources. The players of the future will only give such a committment if compensated financially. There is a cost to improving the level of performance and it will have to be recognised if the progressive and imaginative plans afoot for Irish cricket are to materalise.

J.C. HILES C.J. BARKELY





BIG TWO FACE CHALLENGE

LURGAN SKIPPER GARY McCOLLUM PREVIEWS THE NCU SEASON

On the face of it, the 1990 Lombard and Ulster Section 1 League title would appear to be a two horse race between last year's joint winners North and Waringstown.

I believe however that both Downpatrick and North Down are capable of breaking the dominance of the 'big two' who have won or shared every league title since 1984.

North have undoubtedly strengthened their already formidable line up with all rounder Colin Magowan's move from Bangor.

Indeed I would expect North skipper Davy Napier's hardest tactical decision each week to be who to leave out of his team, which on paper at least, appears to be the best balanced in the country.

I feel a lot depends on North's early season form, as they are traditionally slow starters. It may be significant however that they play two of the less fancied sides, Ballymena and Holywood in their opening league encounters and are unlikely to be over stretched on either occasion.

ANDERSON THE KEY WARINGSTOWN PLAYER

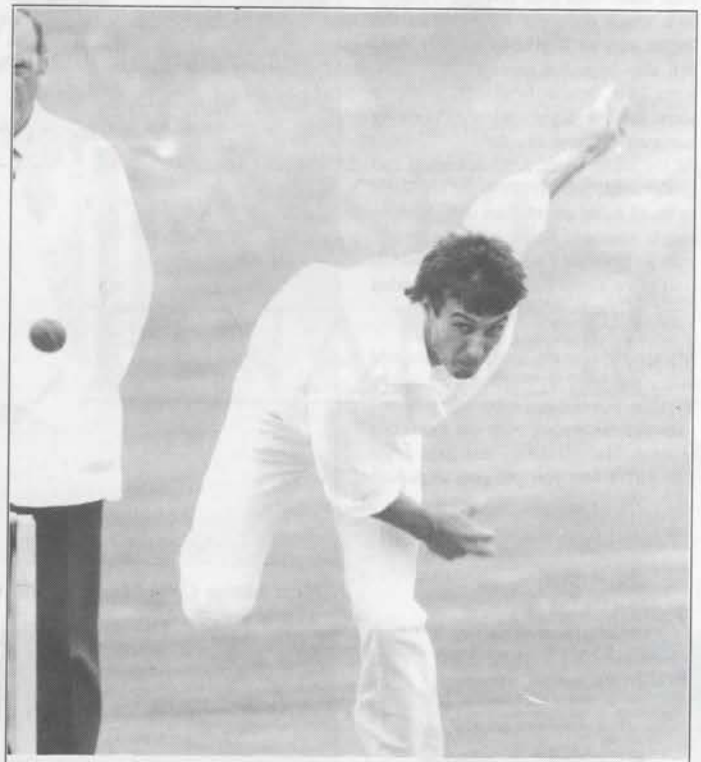
Waringstown, captained again by Alan Waite, will be keen to improve upon what was by their own high standards a mediocre 1989 season.

Although current Irish internationals, Garfield Harrison, Alan Nelson and Alvin Spence all have the individual ability to change the course of a game, I see Ivan Anderson as the key player in the side.

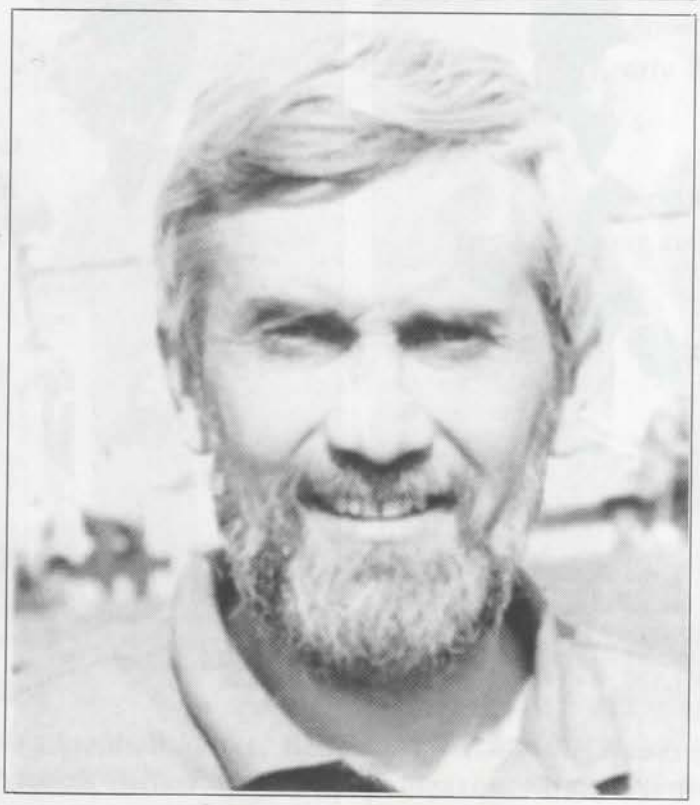
The 'Goat's' beard may have turned a shade whiter over the winter but his appetite for the game is as healthy as ever and his contribution with bat and ball along with his influence in the field, will be vital if the villagers are to retain the title.

Downpatrick, are always likely to be a threat due to the vast experience of players such as Derek McCann, Brian Ferris and Geoffrey Ferguson allied to the outstanding abilities of Jim Patterson and Kamal Merchant, who is still the most economic wicket taker in the league.

Young opening bowler Perry Moore is also quick and will have learned a considerable amount from sharing the new ball with Kamal last year.



Charlie McCrum — One of the three paid players at North Down.



The evergreen Ivan Anderson

OPPOSITE — Paul McCrum's move from Lurgan to North Down sparked off a lot of controversy.

McCRUMS BOOST NORTH DOWN AMBITIONS

North Down are the club who have thrust themselves into the limelight following the McCrum saga.

Both Paul and Charlie are fine all round players who have proved their worth in the Lurgan side over the past few seasons. However I wonder how they will cope with the added pressures of playing for financial reward rather than club loyalty or enjoyment?

Should they perform to their capabilities then the Comber side whose confidence must still be high after last season's Schweppes Cup victory, must stand a realistic chance of finishing in the top three.

While the Raman Lamba era has ended at the Green, the arrival of new professional Asjit Jayaprakasham along with the McCrums should minimise the loss of the league's most prolific run scorer and at the same time strenghen North Down's bowling attack.

Woodvale captain Chris Davis must take a great deal of credit in leading his side into fourth place last season and he will obviously hope to improve on that position this time.

If Chris's enthusiastic approach continues to extract the best from players of the calibre of Stephen Warke, Akram Raza and Robert Wills, then Woodvale could surprise a few of the more favoured sides.

In the bowling department the recuitment of Mark McNeill from Queens will provide greater support for Raza and Kyle Fitzsimmons.

YOUTH TO SHINE AT BANGOR?

Colin Magowan's departure may give Bangor's new skipper Brian Miller the opportunity to introduce one of the many young players who have helped them dominate youth cricket at various levels over the past few seasons.

On the bowling front both Jeremy Stewart and Paul Stafford are capable of bowling long economic spells whilst the evergreen Chris Harte is likely to be their main run getter.

RUC's league aspirations are so often thwarted by the unavailability of key players and their inability to field a settled team. Unfortunately for them I would not expect circumstances to change much this year.

The Semple brothers and two of the leagues most powerful hitters, Joe Campbell and Michael Blair, will once again from the nucleus of their side.

Ballymena who finished one from bottom last year will be hoping that the more regular availability of Adrian Goodrich will help them improve on that position.

Ulster School's opening bowler Johnathan Craig will have learned much from his first full season in senior cricket and looks a useful prospect to improve on it this year.

Holywood's aim is likely to be section 1 survival, although their cause has already been hindered by Gary Moore's unavailablity and Stewart and David McCormick's move to Cregagh.

South African professional Russell Adams is reported to be as quick as any bowler in Ulster and with Michael Shannon will shoulder much of the responsibility in their fight to retain senior status.

REBUILDING YEAR FOR LURGAN

It is surprising how adversity can very often stimulate others to perform above themselves. That thought leads me to examine Lurgan prospects of league success this season. To say that the playing contribution of the two McCrum's will not be missed at Pollock Park would be untrue - of course it will.

However, like Bangor, it will open the door to some of last years Colts Cup winning side and enable younger players like Alan Woods and Peter Maxwell to gain valuable senior league experience.

The Touche Ross Senior Cup is a different story! Although we have avoided a top side in the early round, I know how keen Armagh will be to topple the holders. We have no illusions and will treat them with total respect. The cup is a much different format than the league and we'll give it our best shot.

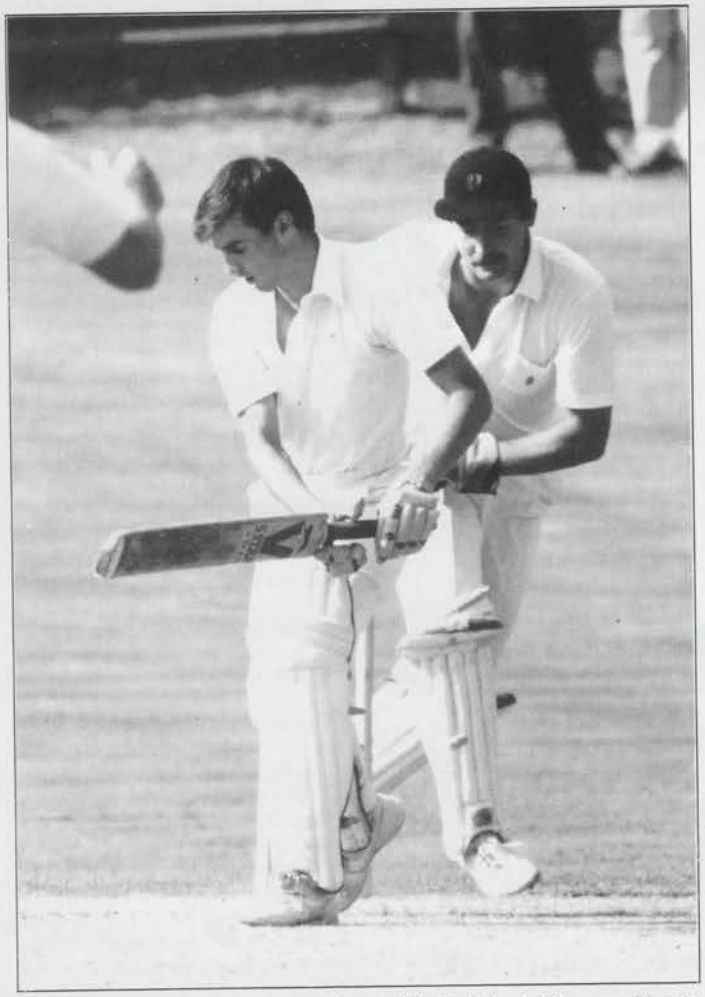
We also hope for greater consistency from 'little' brother Ross and a return to form for our highly talented opening batsman Graeme Hunter.

At the same time, Alan Johnston and professional Subash Khrisigar are likely to bowl more overs than they have in recent seasons. Being a realist rather than an optimist I would consider a top four place a major acheivement in what I see as a rebuilding year for us.

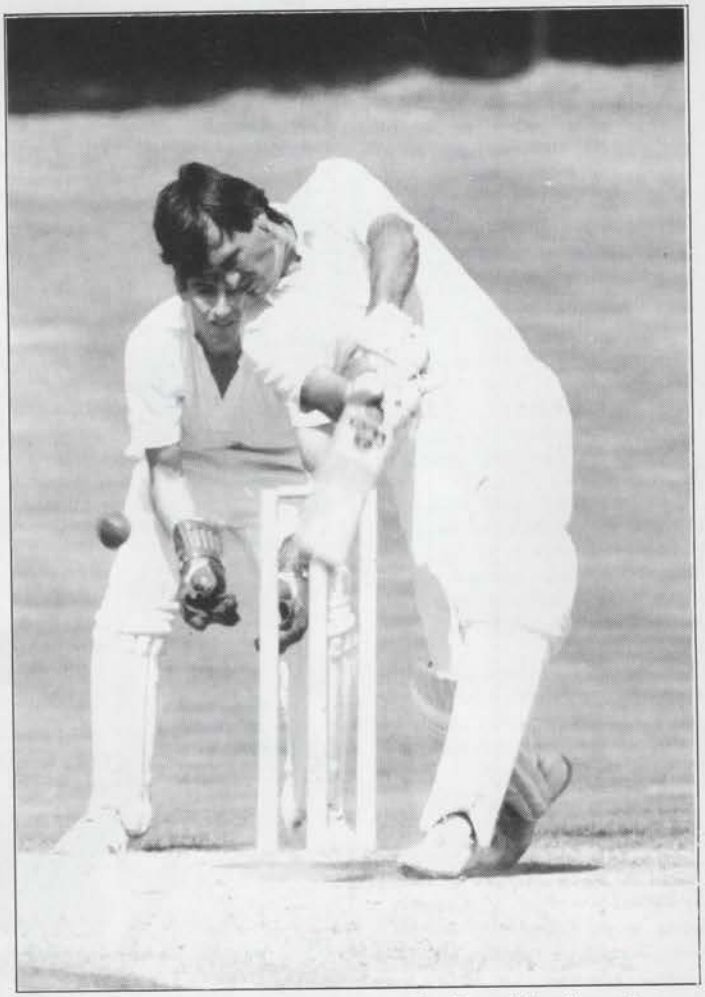
My apologies to anyone I have offended in this article by writing them off before a ball is bowled and who will proceed to prove me wrong over the next four months. Unfortunately that's the price you pay when you put pen to paper!



Hard hitting Colin Magowan will hope to make an impact this season



Lurgan will hope for a return to form of highly talented Graeme Hunter



Former international Simon Corlett, North's stylish all rounder

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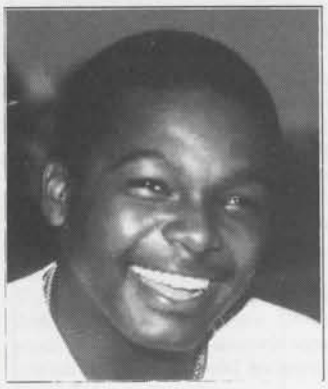


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THE YEAR OF THE UNDERDOG?

EGLINTON'S WEST INDIAN PROFESSIONAL HENDERSON WALLACE PREVIEWS THE NORTH WEST SEASON

WATCH OUT DONEMANA!

This year began with the mighty Mike Tyson being toppled, then England humbled the great West Indies at Sabina Park so I'm convinced it must be the year of the underdog! That's how I see the North West season because the champions are obviously the team to beat and we all know that if it happens, it will be the shock of the year.

DONEMANA, THE TEAM TO BEAT

Ever since I came to Ireland, the county Tyrone team has dominated the North West scene and I don't expect 1990 to be any different. They are the best all round side in the country and it's so difficult to match them in cricket ability and team committment. They have very few weaknesses and you can never be sure they're beaten until the last man is out. James and Junior McBrine are their best players, but I've the greatest admiration for their brother Roy and of course their wonderful wicket-keeper and character Ivor Dougherty. We all start each season fired with enthusiasm and optimism but in the end it doesn't matter whether you play at Eglinton, Brigade or Strabane, you know that if you are going to win anything, you have got to topple Donemana. That's why we are all underdogs, and that's why we are all biting at their heels to make 1990 the 'year of the underdog!' I know on their own ground their vociferous supporters are worth at least two extra players but I've a hunch their bowling is not as strong as it used to be and that they can be beaten if teams attack them. Time will tell!

NORTH WEST HOSPITALITY

I love playing at Donemana because its like a cup final to Eglinton. North West cricket is full of small communities and everyone wants to see the local team do well. It's one of the features of Irish cricket which greatly appeals to me because no matter where you go, there is always someone bantering you about their team or the game in general.

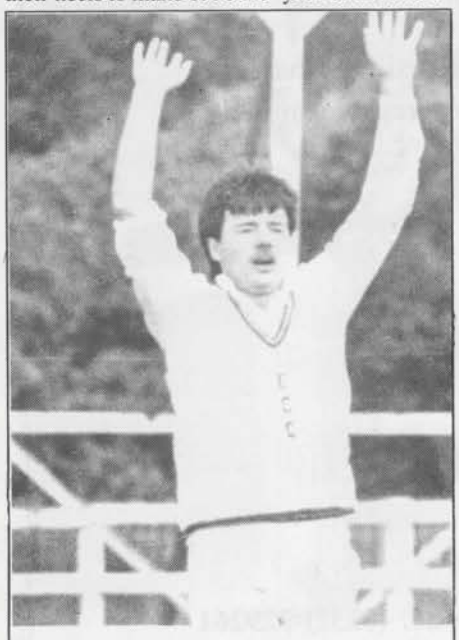
North West people are so like Bajans with their warmth of hospitality and colourful characters. I believe life is short so you should live, laugh and love and I think many of the locals have the same philosophy. Despite the hot climate in Barbados I'm also glad to get to Ireland because its cooler and of course to renew my love affair with Black Bush whiskey! There's nothing to compare with it anywhere!

EGLINTON LEAD THE CHALLENGE

My priority this season will be to win a trophy for Eglinton. I have no personal ambitions because to me cricket is a team game and it matters little how well you are doing personally if the team is not successful. We've done well over the past few seasons up to the half-way stage but Donemana always seem to win the vital games and stiffle our challenge.

We have some excellent players like Nigel Thompson and Ivan McMichael but we still need a couple more to give us the strength in depth which is so important in the crucial games. We also need to see a couple of other teams doing better against Donemana to make the competition more interesting so I'm looking to Brigade, Strabane, and possibly Ardmore to spring a few surprises. Brigade have some good young players like Stephen Smyth and Keith McCrory, with plenty of experience to support them, while Strabane can beat the best on their day but unfortunately seem to have lost a few of their most promising young players. I have always respected Ardmore because they fight hard but they have not always been given the credit they deserve.

Few of the other teams have the consistency to win a league title. Bready is a typical example. They reached the last two cup finals but did little in the league campaign and were swamped by Donemana in the show piece. St Johnston and Fox Lodge are limited sides while Limavady will find it tough going on their return to the top division.



Eglinton's fine all rounder Nigel Thompson



The effervescent Ivor Dougherty



Bready's prolific wicket-taker Geoffrey McConnell

MORE WORK NEEDED AT YOUTH LEVEL

I was pleased to hear Ireland will play an overseas player in some of their matches this year. I can speak for all the professionals I know when saying we would all regard it as an honour to be selected. Everyone wants to play at the highest level and we are no exceptions.

There are some people who want the professionals banned and I respect their opinion but I'm certain the Irish selectors are making the right move because they want the game to progress at national level. Even Donemana love the challenge of facing the 'Pro' - I know from experience!

The critics must also accept that the overseas players have created a lot of interest in the game and in many cases raised standards. However there is a long way to go especially at schools level.

Back home in Barbados a lot of effort is put into coaching with the younger players and two schools teams compete in the Senior League championship. Here they play against test players on the best wickets and this does a lot to blood them early. It is impossible to compare standards but most of the top clubs are comparable to county teams and we all know what Barbados did to England in April! I feel the North West should appoint an official to administer youth cricket and push to promote the game better at this level. It may result in an Irish schools team playing in the full interprovincials which to me is a positive step. An experienced player/coach should captain the side.

A RESPONSIBILITY TO SET AN EXAMPLE

Professionals seem to be on the increase despite the annual cry to ban them. I tend to look at all the positive advantages rather than be negative and feel they should be used as much and wherever possible to improve Irish cricket. I'm always well received in Ireland and love the local people. Like all my fellow visitors I go home and tell everyone what a wonderful place it is so I suppose I'm probably the North West's ambassador to Barbados!

I'd like to think we all set an example on and off the field, especially to the youngsters. I feel it is a big responsibility which should also be borne by the local players and their supporters. Unfortunately some people don't always see it this way.

NORTH WEST PLAYERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

I'm really looking forward to the 1990 season which will hopefully be a good one for everyone. I'd like to see some recognition for players like 'Decker' Curry, Gerard Brolly, Keith McCrory and an international run for St Johnston's Paul Wallace. Nigel and Junior would always be in my Irish team so all things considered the North West has a lot to offer. Let's hope it's a season of enjoyment and perhaps a memorable year for at least one 'underdog'!





Two players on the international fringe — St. Johnston's Paul Wallace (above) and Eglinton's Ivan McMichael

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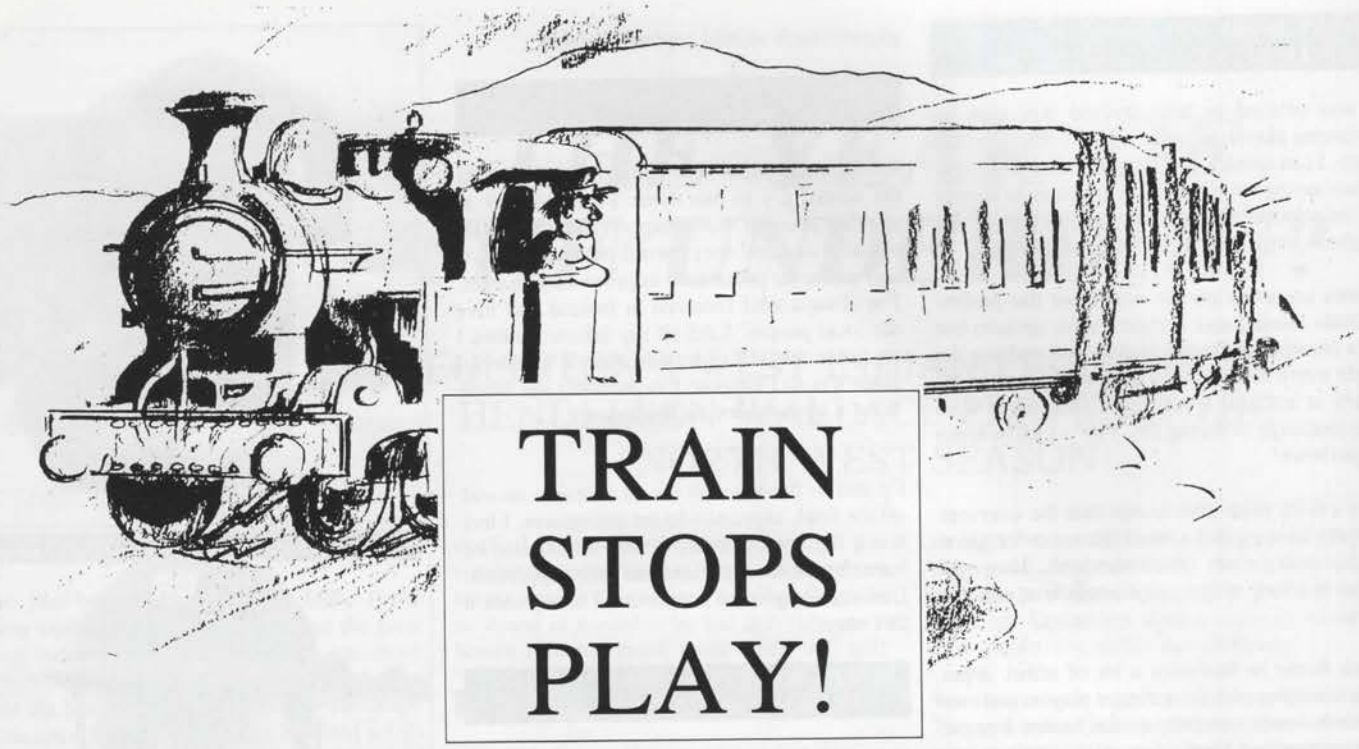
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TRAIN STOPS PLAY!

The first meeting of the newly founded County Derry Cricket Union and their much vaunted neighbours in the Northern Cricket Union was a disaster in every sense!

Billed as a great advertisement for local cricket, the 1890 exchange in the maiden city yielded a paltry 163 runs from four innings. It all started to go wrong with the choice of venue which ironically backfired on the local Derry officials. Hoping for a bumper gate the match was staged at St Columb's Court but after travelling by train and changing in their hotel, the NCU players were horrified at the quality of the ground when they arrived just after 1pm on Friday 13th. 'Black Friday' it was in every sense!

BATSMEN CRUMBLE ON SUSPECT WICKET!

Heavy rain in the preceding week had not helped preparations for this prestigious match although the critics were less than smpathetic in their comments. One leading reporter for the Northern Whig described the scene, 'The ground was not even 2nd class. The outfield was rough and uneven while the pitch was soft, sticky and also uneven. But at least the softness reduced the risk of injury from fast bowling.'

The poor wicket obviously did not deter NCU skipper Willie Vint who elected to bat on winning the toss. His misguided optimism rebounded immediately as his much acclaimed squad was shot out for 57 runs with only North Down's hard-hitting John Andrews (18) posing any serious problem to the local bowlers. The Derry batsmen fared little better! Despite recovering from 6 for 5 they capitulated on 41 which was ironically the same score reached by the NCU visitors on their second visit to the wicket. The two 'Willies', Turner and Vint were once again the NCU's best performers and were also instrumental in bringing this amazing match to an abrupt conclusion a short time later. Set 58 to win, the Derry batsmen mustered only 24 runs to end a nighmare performance from both sides!

RETURN GAME IN BELFAST

Two weeks later the following advertisement appeared in the local post:

> This day cricket
> Northern Cricket Union
> v
> County Derry Cricket Union
>
> This important fixture will take place at Ormeau on Friday and Saturday 4th and 5th inst beginning each day at twelve o'clock
>
> Admission 6d. Ladies free. Schoolboys 3d.

There was little doubt that after the St Columb's Court debacle the NCU was keen to flaunt Ormeau in its grandeur for the return fixture. The North West men were also enthusiastic and indeed travelled with support to the 'Headquarters' of Ulster Cricket. As a prelude to the match the Gentlemen of Derry faced North Down at Comber the day before and with six of the County team on display recorded a moral boosting 26 runs victory in a low-scoring exchange. The following day they were immediately inserted by skipper Vint after a rain delayed start to the big match. Memories of the previous game rang loud as three cheap wickets tumbled early but Woods (11) and McFarland (18) stretched the total to 95 before Combe and Mitchell finally put them down. The NCU also started badly although they could not claim too much familiarity with their opponents, since only three had survived from the previous encounter!

McCULLAGH GRINDS FOR A DRAW

It was the North of Ireland duo of Vint ant Summers who steadied the boat, the latter's entertaining 49 including three fives and three fours. The 'tail' failed to wag but the 131 runs total ensured a healthy 36 runs lead when play resumed on Saturday in beautiful sunshine. On this occasion the visiting batsmen finally got their act together although the healthy accumulation of runs was punctuated with regular falls of wickets. Dour batting by skipper McCullagh (32 no) prolonged proceedings to the disgust of both spectators and fielders because at 4pm the North West team announced their departure to catch the 5pm train! At 140 for 9 they were certainly leaving nothing to chance!

CELEBRITIES OF THE PERIOD

Both teams paraded the best players in their area although several cry-offs caused a late reshuffle in the NCU ranks. The Derry team was drawn from seven clubs and included Sergt G McCarthy, the Limavady skipper who was a Northwest Cup winner two years previously. It also included P Boyle of Ballymoney who returned to Ormeau in 1892 and took 3 wickets in the cup final against North Down. Sadly on this occasion there was no train lurking with a safety net and Willie Turner's 11 wickets, allied to George Combe's 93 secured an emphatic innings victory for the Comber men. Turner was widely recognised as one of the best bowlers in Irish cricket although his Holywood colleague J Reid was the player in the news at the time having taken 10 for 19 against the Black watch in the previous week.



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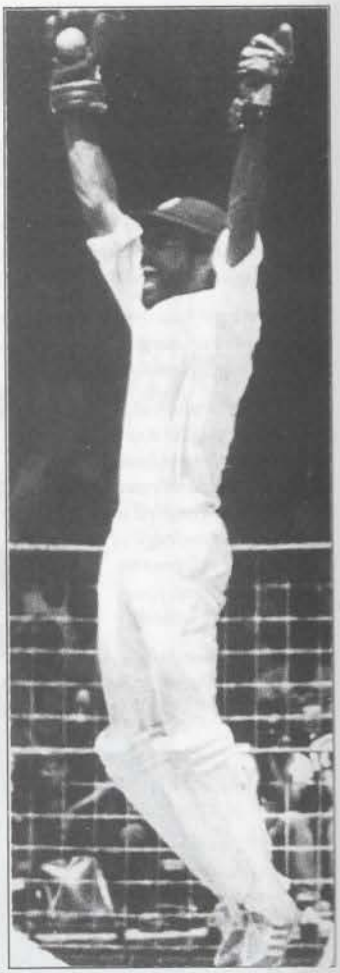
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GAMESMANSHIP

THE ART OF COARSE CRICKET IN THE MODERN GAME

At best gamesmanship can be tolerated, at worst it must be banished. It undermines the very ethos of sport and personifies the art of coarse cricket in the modern game.



Jeffrey Dujon

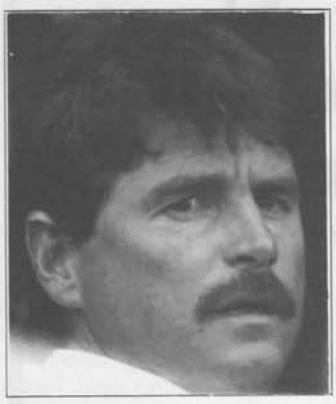
FABULOUS MATCH OVERSHADOWED BY CONTROVERSY

The West Indies magnificent victory over England in the fourth test in Barbados stemmed a tide of English euphoria, levelled an enthralling series and provided the platform for the ensuing clincher in Antigua one week later. Hitherto it was all England in a series of unparalled surprise, rampant excitement, electric atmosphere, colourful spectacle and not least controversy. That Curtley Ambrose's career-best 8 for 45, centuries from Lamb, Haynes and local boy Best, entertaining sortees by Richards and Russell etc etc should have been overshadowed by events loosely termed gamesmanship, and a furore from the British press, did little to promote a fabulous match. Of course there were distasteful incidents which warranted criticism, and the players must accept a lot of the blame, but ill-advised reporting and poorly chosen words fuelled an already explosive situation. The incidents and the participants were seasoned exponents in the whole charade but the wind which fanned the poisonous flames was undoubtedly the high stakes at risk. England had to protect their one win advantage, the West Indies simply had to win. When victory rises above the game then inevitably standards disintegrate. Players cheated, journalists cheated but perhaps of even greater insult an umpire was placed in the invidious position of being branded in the same category. One wonders why it had to go that far?

BARKER THE INNOCENT VICTIM?

The incident which sparked the Bridgetown controversy occured late on the fourth day when England was desperately trying to survive 45 minutes of declining light. Orchestrated by local calypso king Mac Fingall, the Kensington stand exulted a crescendo of vociferous fanaticism which stirred the West Indies pace attack and placed the English batsmen at their peril. Larkins fell quickly but it was the decision against Bailey for a leg-side catch which heralded the furore. Umpire Barker delayed his decision several seconds allowing skipper Vivian Richards the opportunity of a frenzied charge in his direction. In the noisy cauldron of Bajan clamour, the highly respected official then raised his finger and immediately all the venom of the English media was unleashed upon him. As to whether he was influenced or not by the Richards charge, only umpire Barker can say, but the delay from an official normally swift and authorative in his judgement, invited conjecture.

But was he really the 'guilty' party or indeed the innocent victim? Was Richards not intimidatory in his frenzied surge down the wicket and what action does one expect from the batsman? Did he hit it and if so should he walk? Certainly Umpire Barker felt so with the benefit of hindsight, stating the following day he delayed raising his finger because he was expecting Bailey to walk. If such was the case then he must be essentially naive and certainly a rare breed in the umpiring code. Nobody walks when the stakes are high!



Allan Lamb

OLD SORES RE-OPENED

In a hard-hitting condemnation of the decision highly respected BBC commentator and leading cricket correspondent Christopher Martin-Jenkins criticised the 'win at all costs' attitude of the modern players and in particular the orchestrated appeals of the West Indian players led by skipper Richards. He drew particular attention to the loose line drawn between gamesmanship and professionalism as opposed to cheating but ill-advisedly implicated Umpire Barker by saying he was pressurised into changing his initial decision. Sadly the ensuing furore from a loyal West Indian community and the legal action taken by the official to 'protect his integrity', opened up all the old sores... Geoff Boycott agreed with Martin-Jenkins and characteristically added his own little bit of aggro by calling local CBC commentator Andrew Mason a 'bastard'! Former West Indian batsman Maurice Foster voiced his objections to both Boycott and Tony Creig's comments on Sky television. Richards joined the debate saying 'these guys





are talking a lot of rubbish over our airwaves.' Manager Clive Lloyd defended the cheating allegation with skilful diplomacy which could not be said for some of the suggestions which jammed the switchboard of local radio station Voice of Barbados. One caller said the English commentators should be gagged, another thought banned from Barbados and perhaps as testimony to the sensitivity of the issue a final call to have them shot! Politicians also joined the fray accusing the British 'gutter press' and steadfastly defending umpire Lloyd Barker. Former West Indian test umpire Stanton Parris even went to the trouble of listing all the infamous blunders by English umpires in recent years although one wonders if this was to support his colleague or to draw attention to hs fallibility. Even poor old Christopher Martin-Jenkins had second thoughts hopelessly trying to give a qualified apology the following day. However he did repeat his charge against the players and for this he must be commended. No matter how much criticism can be levied at umpire Barker, the fact remains that it was the West Indian players who placed him in the embarrassing predicament of having his judgement questioned.

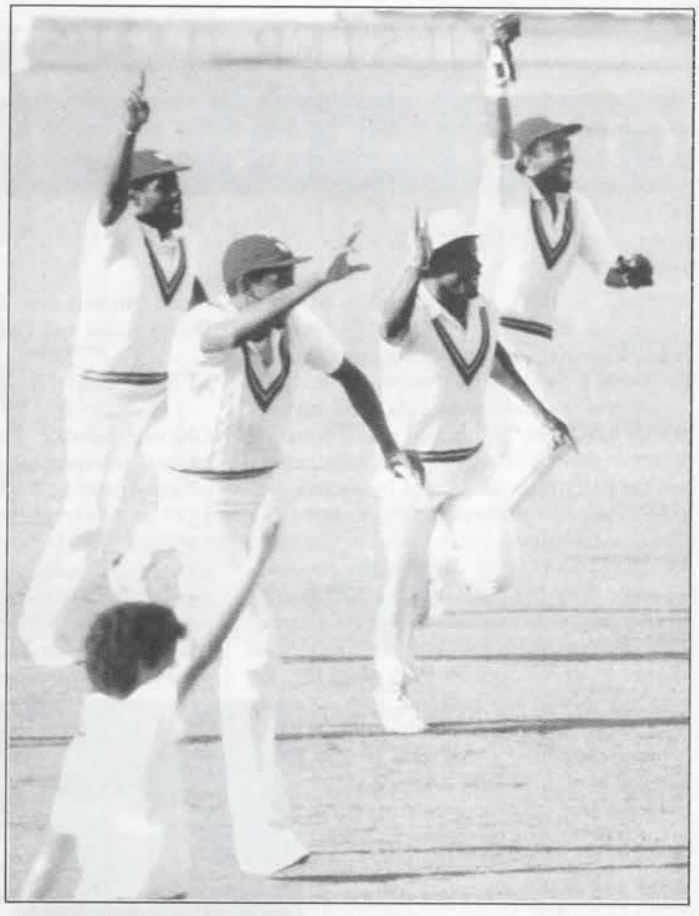
SOME PLAYERS GO TO ANY LENGTH TO WIN

All umpires make mistakes, even the best. However the modern game has allowed a higher degree of intimidatory behaviour and therfore placed much more pressure on beleagured officials. Pillored by television kangaroo courts, a poisonous media and now flagarant cheating cloaked in the guise of gamesmanship or professionalism, they simply cannot win. Umpire Barker was to many, the innocent victim of an impossible situation and the real culprits the players themselves. Take for example some of the incidents which preceded this sordid affair...

- *The slow play of the West Indian bowlers in Trinidad controlled by acting skipper Desmond Haynes...*
- *The Lamb/Haynes/Stewart verbals so exquisitely transmitted to all Sky viewers...*
- *The open baiting by the players at the wicket...*
- *The Greenidge/Small scuffle at the end of the one day match...*
- *The slow play by England controlled by Lamb in Barbados...*
- *The series of bouncers to all batsmen by both teams...*
- *The 'clenched fists' baiting of excited fans by the batsmen...*
- *The orchestrated appeals and the frenzied catapults of skipper Richards around the square...*
- *The numerous stoppages for drinks, changes of gloves, and protective cream which were essentially team briefing sessions...*
- *The dissent by batsmen over shadowns in the declining light...*
- *Logie's intimidatory swaying in the short leg position...*

The list is endless. However what it does illustrate is that some players will go to any lengths to win. Most of these acts are common to the local game and indeed a few others could be added. In last year's Schweppes Cup final a ball hit against the boundary wall at Rathmines rebounded back into play and was picked up by the fielder and thrown to the bowlers end. The unsuspecting batsman was fortunate to make his ground as a vociferous appeal was made for a run out decision. After some deliberation the umpire turned down the appeal oblivious to the boundary confrontation between opposing supporters who witnessed the ball hitting the wall.

One wonders if this was gamesmanship or professionalism, or simply the art of coarse cricket?



Orchestrated appealing has become part and parcel of the modern game at test level



High five!

ULSTER BANK IN ON 100 YEARS

CENTENARY OF INTERPROVINCIALS

Founded in 1890, the interprovincial series reaches a historic milestone this year by celebrating 100 years of internal representative cricket in Ireland. The game may have changed much of its character over 100 troubled years which have seen two major world wars and sporadic periods of internal civil disturbances, but the unifying bond created by annual competition amongst the best players throughout the country has done much to bind the Irish cricketing community. In the early days only Munster, Leinster and Ulster participated but in later years the North West gained recognition in their own right. The most significant change however came in 1966 when the present day format was initiated, with six representative teams competing under the sponsorship of Guinness. This association continued until 1988 when the Ulster Bank became only the second sponsors of the Inter-Provincial series with a three year arrangement which is due to expire at the end of this centenary year.

NORTHERN PLAYERS RARELY RECOGNISED FOR MANY YEARS

Representative cricket had humble beginnings at the end of the last century when the two major Unions in Belfast and Dublin agreed to join Munster for the first interprovincial series in July 1890. It was widely accepted that the best players in Ireland emanated from the South and the strong Leinster team was the clear favourite to win the inaugural series. Prior to 1890, geographical isolation had meant many of the best players in the north had few opportunities to win recognition at Irish level, and those who did were rare intrusions into a domain almost exclusively reserved for players from Lenister. This was a thorny problem which haunted Irish international cricket for many years with some of the best northern players never capped and those who were, not always making themselves available. This was perhaps understandable, because although the majority of the better cricketers favoured some form of union, there were many others in the clubs who were less enthusiastic. Indeed political uncertainty may also have been an underlying element, which restricted players' availability and curtailed the visits north and south for many players. There was also the geographical problem especially in the rural north, and it was not until after the Great War that North West players gained any significant recognition.

Indeed this particular issue was never fully resolved until 1966 when the Guinness Cup format provided the platform to international cricket. How could a player of Andy McFarlane's ability win only 8 caps and those so late in life? Why did Sion's legendary Johnny Flood win only one? And what of Jim Rankin, Bobby Baird and Paddy McLaughlin?

LEINSTER SUPREMACY VINDICATED

Glorious weather was the feature of the inaugural interprovincial series when Munster played Ulster at Rathmines on the 16th July 1890 but bowlers held the upper hand in a low scoring match. Describing the Ulster batting as 'primitive' the Dublin Freeman's Journal did exempt North of Ireland's Willie Vint and gave patronic credit to North Down's Willie Turner who produced 'modest' match figures of 13 for 37! However the reporter did capture the spirit of the occasion by commenting -

'The match just lasted the one day, and without being brilliant, it fully fulfilled its mission as a medium of cordial intercourse between the representatives of the Northern and Southern provinces.'

Although Munster were skittled for 64 and 25, Ulster fared only marginally better with 54 in their first innings, and just scrambled home at 36 for 8 to win by two wickets. However there was no similar escape in the match against Leinster two days later when the batting was described as 'shocking'. The Ulster batsmen had no answer to the slow-bowling of W Booth who took 6 for 16 and 9 for 61 as the northerners were routed for 26 and 109. There was some consolation for the bowlers, especially Tarlton who took 5 for 22, when they dismissed Leinster for 100 in their first innings because they were facing the best batsmen in the country, but in the end southern supremacy was emphatically confirmed. It was to prove the beginnings of an intriguing series of representative exchanges, full of controversy, acrimony, excitement and entertainment.

NORTH WEST WIN FIRST GUINNESS CUP COMPETITION

For today's cricket enthusiasts the interprovincial series really came of age in 1966 when the present format came into being. In practical terms it recognised the two traditional strongholds of Irish cricket namely Leinster and the NCU, by allowing them two participants, and included Munster and the North West in a league format totalling 15 matches. Each team was allowed one selector at national level and at long last the dual bogey of geographical isolation and limited opportunity was finally laid to rest. Not surprisingly the North West felt they had much more to prove and Scott Huey proudly led his team to their first all Ireland success in the inaugural year. With quality in the presence of Donaghy, Finlay, Colhoun, Torrens, Miller, Nicholl and Huey himself, it was arguably the finest ever North West side and the match of any interprovincial winner since.

McCRUMS STRENGHEN TOWN

Ironically the North West enter the 1990 Ulster Bank interprovincial series as champions having gone through their 1989 programme unbeaten and clinching the trophy after a memorable runs chase at Malahide against North Leinster. Although the format has once again been altered to concentrate 9 of the 15 matches over a single weekend at the end of May, it should not adversely affect the North West champions who will still be the team to beat. Led by Brigade stalwart Willie Wilson their formidable armoury includes the exciting all round talents of James and Junior McBrine, Nigel Thompson and fellow Irish internationals Alan Rutherford, Alan Jeffrey, Paul Wallace and veteran Raymond Moan who had such a splendid 1989 season. Both NCU teams are on home territory which should assist their campaign but the switch of clubs by the McCrum brothers Paul and Charlie must detract from Ulster Country to the obvious advantage of Town. Both are quality representative players and will certainly solve the pace bowling problems felt in the wake of the loss of Corlett, Elder and Milling over the last two years. Coun



Alan Rutherford established himself as Paul Jackson's international understudy last season

try will do well to mount a serious challenge and might benefit from the short term advantages of luring the retired Ivan Anderson into their ranks for the interpro weekend. There are certainly no better players around than the Waringstown veteran, whom many felt left the representative stage much too early in 1986.

SOUTH LEINSTER POSE ONLY THREAT

South Lenister were champions in 1988 and with the talented Lewis, Garth, Bailey, Cohen and Nulty in their line-up, much was expected from them in 1989. However they disappointed with only one win, against North Leinster. Of perhaps even greater significance their bowling was mauled by the North West to the tune of 313/8 and their batsmen floundered to 44 for 5 chasing 181 against Munster before rain saved their blushes. North Leinster also had a poor 1989 season with veteran skipper Halliday's only success against lowly Munster.

Batting appears to be their major problem although their attack is also limited and one doubts if they can sustain a serious challenge to the strong northern teams. Munster will certainly not win the championship and if they can force a victory, it must surely be the result of complacency by their opponents. Their continuing participation in a competition where they are so obviously out of their depth does nothing to enhance either Munster cricket or the representative cause. The solution might well be to allow Munster to compete in the Lenister League and replace them in the interprovincials with an Irish schools, Irish Univerisites or Ireland Under 23 team! However such a move is not imminent.



Mark Napier had a brilliant 1989 season



The Ulster Town squad

CENTENARY FLAVOUR TO THE INTERPRO' WEEKEND

For one man the interprovincial week end will mean nothing but hard work and the culmination of many hours of endeavour. NCU official Dessie McCall has master-minded the organisation and deserves the greatest praise for his efforts. The hosting clubs must also be congratulated for placing their facilities at the disposal of the the Irish Cricket Union and hopefully the media and the public will give the occasion the support it deserves. Sponsors Ulster Bank have gone to some length to ensure the centenary is especially marked by hosting a prestigious dinner at the Culloden Hotel on the Sunday evening and producing a special commemorative brochure.

Centenary celebrations allow time to reflect. The world of 1890 was a much different place to the world of 1990. In the early days, cricket in Ireland was in its embryonic stages but there were many fine players who would have graced any cricketing platform and the top cricketers who visited this country knew they were going to receive healthy competition. Today the strength of Irish cricket has noticeably moved north following a marked decline in Lenister and a serious decline in Munster. But the real comparison is that Irish cricket is very much a minnow in the modern cricketing world which has seen professionalism emphatically widen the gap to the extent that meaningful competition at representative level is almost cosmetic. That is the true measure of 100 years of internal representative cricket in Ireland!



The strong North West winning team of 1966. Front row: R. Faukner, O. Colhoun, Dr. A.H. Montgomery (Pres.), S.S.J. Huey (Capt.), C. Ward, B. Donaghy. Back row: W. McGarvey (Sec.), W. Millar, C. Nicholl, R. Torrens, J. Beattie, G. Brolley, A. Finlay, W.S. Fyfe (Chairman).

1990 ULSTER BANK SENIOR INTERPROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIP FIXTURES

Saturday 26th May
Ulster Town v Munster at Ormeau
Ulster Country v North Leinster at Lisburn
North West v South Leinster at Ballymena

Sunday 27th May
Ulster Town v South Leinster at Woodvale
Ulster Country v Munster at Deramore
North West v North Leinster at Comber

Monday 28th May
Ulster Town v North Leinster at Lurgan
Ulster Country v South Leinster at Waringstown
North West v Munster at Laurelvale

Sunday 3rd May
Ulster Town v North West at Newforge

Sunday 1st July
Munster v South Leinster at the Mardyke, Cork.

Sunday 8th July
North West v Ulster Country at Strabane
North Leinster v Munster at Phoenix Park

Sunday 15th July
North Leinster v South Leinster at Clontarf

Sunday 22nd July
Ulster Country v Ulster Town at Comber

33 NOT OUT

A PROFILE OF MUCKAMORE STALWART, JOHN McCORMICK

John McCormick first played for Muckamore 1st X1 in 1957 and after 33 seasons in senior cricket, he is well placed to consider the changes in the local game over the recent and not so recent past. He remains as enthusiastic as ever, even if, with recurring back trouble, he is no longer able to contribute so freely, especially in the field. He is an articulate advocate of the important standards in the game, of proper technique and is as convinced as ever that attitude, concentration and dedicated preparation are vital ingredients for success.

SENIOR DEBUT

That first match, in the Senior Cup at Wallace Park, against mighty Lisburn was a revelation to the young McCormick. Only 15 years of age and never having even played for the club's 2nd X1, he was promoted, along with several others of immense potential, to the senior team. That one match against players such as Simpson Robinson, Tom McCloy, Raymond Hunter, Lindsay Woods, and Jack Bowden made an indelible mark on an impressionable young man. He still considers that Lisburn team to be the greatest collection of cricketing talent against which he has played and he learnt his lesson well.

FAMILY TRADITION

His father Paddy first played for Muckamore in 1914 and played his last game for the club in 1968, although he had retired from regular competition at the ridiculously young age of 55, some 13 years earlier. It is no surprise, then, that for John, the cricket club was the focal point of his young life as indeed it was for many of his generation, especially those from a village environment such as Muckamore. Every summer afternoon and evening was spent on the ground and whilst he accepts that social changes make it impossible today, he feels that this was an important ingredient in the cricketing careers of so many.



John McCormick — A loyal and devoted servant of the Muckamore cause

THE GLORY DAYS OF THE 60's

John's introduction to senior cricket came at a transitional time for Muckamore, but, if they struggled for a few years, the first seeds were being sown of the club's glory days in the 60's. Probably the biggest single difference between then and now, according to John, is attitude.

'In those days we were a young and inexperienced side, but we had such pride in playing for our village that nothing was too much trouble if it meant retaining our newly found senior status'.

The guiding light in those days was, of course, the 'wee man', the incomparable Archie McQuilken, so tragically killed in a road accident in 1985. Archie was a totally dedicated self taught cricketer who made the most of his natural ability and drew from others standards they had not thought possible. 'I always remember Archie walking to practice bouncing a tennis ball on the face and then the edge of his bat... for 1½ miles!' recalls John. ' Today I think young players are happy to score 20 or 30 and take 2 or 3 wickets. They don't seem to be prepared to put the work in, to stretch themselves to the ultimate.'



McCormick Senior — John's late father Paddy who gave him much encouragement

STRONG BELIEFS

In those days before overs limitations, the Muckamore attack was a formidable one and every batsman had to work for his runs. Jimmy Reid of the stylish action and nagging accuracy was the perfect foil for McQuilken and his spin twin, in fact his nephew, Archie Campbell. Nor was it left to chance, recalls John, 'In those days our scorer Peter Campbell used to keep a chart of every opposing batsman's runs so before every match we were able to see where they liked to score their runs and plug those gaps. Of course we were fortunate enough to have bowlers who could bowl to their fields, but too often today bowlers want third men and fine legs in case they spray the ball. As captain, I would always insist that fielders were in positions to take wickets and although occasionally bowlers were punished they very quickly improved. Even today when I go in to bat, I love to see fine legs and third men because I know there will be gaps elsewhere and runs will be all the easier to score because of them. It's just another example of people stretching themselves - sometimes it takes a 6/3 or even a 7/2 field to concentrate a bowler's mind, remove the margin for error, make them bowl to their field.'

DOWN MEMORY LANE

From his early days, John remembers many epic battles against people like Eddie McMullan, Stanley Hewitt, Sonny Hool, Raymond Hunter and Lurgan's Graham Douglas who John considers to have been possibly the fastest bowler he has faced in local cricket. He may be influenced by Douglas' 7 for 14 which helped to dismiss Muckamore for just 17 when chasing a victory target of only 53, in 1961!

It says much of the team's attitude though that they bounced back from that debacle to score 204 for 4 exactly one week later, at that time their highest ever total in the senior league. He has the greatest respect for the 'amazing' Noel Ferguson, and considers the 'meanest' bowlers he has faced to have been Lawrence Hunter and Michael Reith, although as a wicket keeper himself, he cites the importance of Eddie Bushe and Dennis Artt in allowing Reith to bowl his tight leg side line.

Nor could any batsman, however well settled, feel comfortable facing Ivan Anderson, Dermott Monteith or Simon Corlett, a trio whose performance in Ulster cricket is an accepted fact.

...AND THE BATSMAN

In batting terms John has the utmost respect for Charlie Corry 'a magnificent cricketer', Ronnie Berryman, Bobby Matier, Jimmy McKelvey and Jim Harrison but rates the best technical player he has watched to have been Michael Reith. 'Michael's balance was so good and he was equally comfortable on the front or back foot. I sometimes wondered how the ball was ever going to beat his bat!'

THE FACTS OF THE MATTER

The top run scorer in Muckamore's history, John had scored no fewer than 9239 runs for the club up to the end of the 1989 season, with his highest single aggregate being 698 in 1984. Although five times getting into the 90's, John, a hard hitting right handed batsman, has yet to notch a senior century, which is perhaps surprising for such a prolific run scorer and he has no doubts that his 93 against Waringstown on the Lawn in 1971 was his best ever innings. Thanks to the spinning talents of the 'Two Archies' he has a much higher than normal per centage of stumpings in his total of just under 500 dismissals.

QUIRK OF FATE

John played in four Senior Cup Finals, in 1962, 1963, 1967, and 1972 and winning the 1963 game against Downpatrick and sharing the Senior league with Waringstown in 1970 are particular highlights in his distinguished career. Interestingly it was in the 2nd innings of that cup final of 1962, that he kept wicket for the first time. Regular keeper, Geoff Hanley, was needed to bowl following an injury to Jimmy Reid and skipper Robin Gray looked around the dressing room and threw John the gloves - a fortutious decision indeed. As with everything, John worked hard behind the stumps, emulating Ed Marks as an attacking wicket keeper and whilst he has the highest regard for Tom Guy and Eddie Bushe, he feels that Carson Rose was the best two handed keeper he has seen in the local game.

THE CURRENT GAME

John admits to being 'an old fashioned cricketer' and whilst accepting that the present frenetic format of the game has improved fielding standards beyond recognition and has produced many excellent attacking cricketers like Garfield Harrison, Alvin Spence, Charlie McCrum and Ross McCollum, he wonders if it has allowed them to learn the art and the skill of batting which will make them great cricketers for Ireland, in a three day context.

'It is a difficult position for the administrators but I would certainly like to see more discussion on the proposals of John Elder's think tank of a few years ago. Should we increase Section 1 to 16 teams, giving time to teams to settle at the highest level and allow smaller clubs to hold on to their young and ambitious players? I'm not sure, but I know that we must do something. Clubs must be persuaded to improve their pitches, to spend their time and their money on the ground will have much greater long term benefits than the employment of professionals.'

HEAVEN ON EARTH

As a Muckamore man through and through, for whom playing at Moylena is still as great a thrill as ever, John is genuinely optimistic about the current crop of young players at the club. 'We have a number of players from around 17 to 23 years of age who I honestly believe can take the club into Section 1, maybe in two or three years time. This is why we have decided this year for the first time to employ a professional, Australian Geoff Spotswood, although I stress that it is for his coaching credentials that he has been selected.'

John is now willing to drop down to the 2nd X1 to allow the youth to come through. Amazingly, he has only played one game for the 2nd X1 thus far in his 33 years at the club - and has yet to score a run for them, a second ball duck against Bangor being his 'contribution' on that occasion.

Whether or not John emulates his father and plays until his mid fifties remains to be seen. What is certain, however, is that as long as he is able John will continue to commit himself to his club and will spend many more Saturdays at Moylena, outside, if not inside, the boundary line.



In the role of skipper John is flanked by two of Muckamore's finest stalwarts - The great Archie McQuilken and current President Billy Boyd. Also included in the back row is that fine slow bowler Archie Campbell and umpires association Chairman Paddy O'Hara.

INDIAN SIGN AT GREENISLAND

Cliftonville and Lamba move to pastures new

Section 2 of the NCU Senior League continues to be a highly competitive league, with many of the teams, at the outset, appearing to have similar strengths. What makes the 1990 season even more fascinating is the arrival at Cliftonville as professional of the prolific Indian Test batsman, Raman Lamba.

In five incredible seasons at North Down, Lamba topped the NCU averages four times while amassing an amazing 5240 runs at an average of 51.49, with a top score of 203 not out. It does not require a crystal ball to anticipate the havoc he may wreck among Section 2 bowlers this season and his presence alone elevates Cliftonville, after a long and hard struggle for survival in 1989, to likely front runners for promotion this time around.

PERSONNEL PROBLEMS

What is the background to the appointment of Lamba? Is it simply Cliftonville bringing in a hired gun, to 'buy' promotion to Section 1? Club stalwart, Roy Miller, captain yet again for the incoming season, is quite open in his admission that Section 1 cricket is Cliftonville's motive. But he stresses that the reason behind this aim is simply the number of defections from the club by players with personal ambitions to



Opening bowler Mark McNeill has decided to join Woodvale this season.

play at the top level, in the hope of winning representative honours. *'It appears to us that the only way of keeping our players is to offer them senior cricket,'* says Roy. *'Last year Alan Neill opted to play for Ballymena and this year Mark McNeill, after his spell at Queens, rather than coming back to Cliftonville, will open the bowling for Woodvale. Section 2 is a very tight league and you cannot continue to compete if you keep losing your best players.'*



Raman Lamba

It is a trend which concerns Miller greatly. As a Development Officer with the Irish Football Association he is ideally placed to make comparisons, and he genuinely fears for the future of Ulster cricket. *'We are now down to less than 50 cricket clubs in the NCU, compared with 2500 clubs affiliated to the I F A. The smaller clubs will soon become disheartened if their top performers are lured to the brighter lights and you only have to look at what has happened at Saintfield in recent years to realise that this trend could force clubs out of existence. We could end up, in the not too distant future, with 6 or 8 top clubs and very little else'.*

1990 promises to be an exciting time for Cliftonville and the most difficult period in the club's long and distinguished history appears to be at an end.

NOMADIC EXISTENCE

As well as Lamba's arrival, the club looks forward to settling into its new home at Greenisland. After over 100 years at their home on the Cliftonville Road, the club was forced to move, when their ground and clubhouse were maliciously damaged beyond recall in 1972. What followed was a nomadic existence, playing first at Stranmillis and then Mossley before settling temporarily at the Belfast City Council grounds at Mallusk, thanks mainly to the efforts of Parks Director, Craig Wallace.

Their stay at Mallusk has been longer than intended and during the 15 seasons there, several options have been investigated, including at one time, the possibility of amalgamating with the Academy club.

Their plight at losing their ground was exacerbated at the end of that 1972 season with the abolition of the 16 team senior league, when Cliftonville became a section 2 side, a status they have proudly retained ever since.

The recent exodus of the club's best players to the top teams is nothing new. At that time, people like Billy Kirk who is still going strong at North, Rex Gilliland and Robert Heslip moved to pastures new and Miller accepts that without the determined efforts of a few individuals the club could easily have ceased to exist.

'Frank Thompson, our Chairman and Sam McCombe, especially, deserve great credit for keeping the club going at that most difficult time' says Miller, modestly avoiding mention of his own role.

Slowly things began to improve and new talent began to come to the fore. Between 1982 and 1984, Cliftonville employed the services of Indian professional Sanjev Rao and with people like Hugh Milling, later to become an Ireland opening bowler, in the team, regularly occupied one of the top places in the league, without ever gaining promotion. A change of policy for the 1985 season saw the arrival at Mallusk of John Solanky and this appointment has met with tremendous success. Solanky as well as playing a vital and solid role in the team itself, has developed an excellent relationship with local schools and now has a vast number of kids, with great potential, under his guidance.

NEW ROLE FOR SOLANKY

Now teaching at Hopefield High School and resident in Northern Ireland all year round, Solanky himself suggested that he should step down as club professional although abviously he will continue with his playing and coaching involvement. Miller saw this an an exciting opportunity, which shouldn't be missed, to press forward and Lamba's appointment has created great excitement and anticipation at the club.



Cliftonville captain Roy Miller

But Miller also cites Jimmy Munn's return from a one year sabbatical at Ballymena as vital. *'With two slow bowlers, in Sam McCombe and John Solansky, it is vital to have a competent wicket keeper and I'm afraid, when Jimmy left us last year, we really had no one to replace him. So his return, along with hopefully the continued development of younger players like Alistair McKeown, Mark Patterson and Michael Turington and Jonathan Irons being available full time after his university studies, will give us a good squad from which to select.'*

THE MOVE TO GREENISLAND

Equally exciting from Cliftonville's point of view this season will be their long awaited move to what will be their permanent home at Greenisland. It has taken longer than had originally been hoped to make the move to their large and picturesque new ground, with its views over Belfast Lough, but the time has been well spent.

A new square has been laid a pavilion and bar are proudly in place. The first senior match to take place there was the Touche Ross Senior Cup 1st round tie against Queen's on May 5th and Miller hopes that in the years to come the venue will be graded for representative fixtures. Meanwhile, plans are already under way for an official opening of the ground on July 18th, when Cliftonville, strengthened by the presence of a big name player, plays host to an NCU President's XI

THE SEASON AHEAD

So, the script has been written by Cliftonville for their 1990 season, but what will have happened when the curtain finally falls in September? Will 1991 bring Senior 1 matches to Greenisland or will 'interlopers' step in to spoil the party?

Miller accepts that as usual it will be a very tough league to win. *'There has been a pattern in recent years of about half a dozen teams beating each other, so close are their relative standards. Lisburn will be very keen to regain their senior status at the first attempt and Armagh with Yashpal Sharma and Reggie Stinson will be hard to beat. In Alfie Conn and Andy Clement, Muckamore has two of the top players in the league to assist their new professional and Jimmy Carson alone will win matches for Donacloney. Instonians and Laurelvale are capable of beating anyone on their day,*



Alan Neill, now at Ballymena

but are perhaps too inconsistent and Derriaghy with their pro are a bit of an unknown quantity. Queens will miss Mark McNeill and I fancy Donaghadee may struggle, but who knows? It will be very interesting! Everyone expects Lamba to score stacks of runs, but his bowling will also be useful - so let's just say I am quietly optimistic about our chances', he concluded with a grin!

We're on the ball...
one call does it all....



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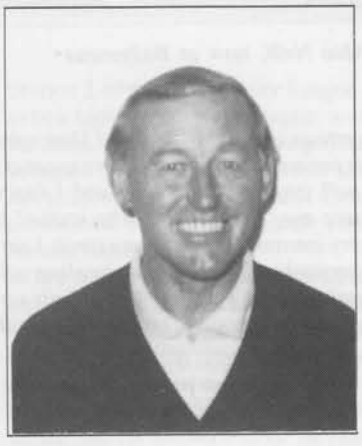
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A KIWI'S LOOK AT THE SPRINGBOK



Bob Blair

Former New Zealand opening bowler Bob Blair is in his third season as Instonians coach and has spent his recent winters coaching the Springs Old Boys in the Transvaal. Here he considers various aspect of the game in South Africa...

Of the 19 Test Matches I played, 9, including my first and my last,were against South Africa and so it is fair to say that I have had more than a modicum of exposure to the cricket and the cricketers of that lovely country.

Now, having spent the last two winters coaching in the Transvaal, I feel I have a better insight into their playing systems. Living in their environment has also helped me to develop a much clearer picture of things as they really are.

South Africa's continued exclusion is in my opinion, a great loss to world cricket. I have always considered Australia's Sheffield Shield competition to be the toughest in the game, but I would now rate the Currie Cup as being on a par. South Africa would undoubtedly be a major force in world cricket.

Having spent seven years coaching and playing in Zimbabwe and having been involved in the selection and coaching of the national team, I have seen all that has been done in that country. South Africa would at present defeat Zimbabwe comfortably and yet it is Zimbabwe who have qualified for the last two world cups, while South Africa has not been invited to participate.

During this period, Zimbabwe has lost the services of three of its top players, with Graeme Hick, undoubtedly the greatest batsman in modern cricket, having opted to play for England and Peter Rawson and Kevin Curran now playing in Natal, for the betterment of their game. It appears that the only winners from the present situation in Southern Africa ironically are England who will soon have Hick, Allan Lamb and Robin Smith in their ranks.

There is much being done in South Africa to encourage black school children to play and enjoy the great game of cricket.

I was privileged to attend as a guest of the South African Cricket Union their centenary celebrations last year, during which we visited Parys, a large town on the Orange River, in the Orange Free State. We witnessed at first hand the full extent of the coaching of coaches, who were returning to their schools to teach the fundamentals of the game to black school children. It is a very efficient coaching school and I only wish that something similar had been available during my time in Zimbabwe. There I spent most of my time on dirt pitches except where I was fortunate enough to acquire black rubber conveyor belts from the Wankie Colliery for some of the luckier schools. Such a contrast to be driven to Soweto and to see literally hundreds of children of all ages being put through their paces, both in the middle and in nets - astro turf, no less!

RUSSELL DOING WELL

Omar Henry, the first black cricketer to play provincial cricket in South Africa, is well known to Ireland for his performances for Scotland in recent years. Rodney Malamba has now also graduated to this level, opening the bowling for Natal during this last season, replacing Collis King on the team, Malamba has several brothers who also play top club cricket and they all coach for the Natal Cricket Union.

Progress can be seen to have been made and with the amount of money being spent on the coaching scene I sincerely believe that this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Holywood's Russell Adams impressed greatly last year in his club's

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successful drive for promotion to Section 1 and he is certainly one of the quickest bowlers I have seen in Ireland. It puts South African cricket into perspective to realise that he only bowls first change for Western Province Colts. Indeed, in their match against a South African Schools X1, at which I was honoured to be a guest, their opponents' strike bowler, a left arm genuine quickie by the name of Schultz, bowled unchanged for 20 overs, taking 6 for 29... but then it was only 30 degrees on that particular day. Any clubs considering the employment of a professional would do well to note the names of Schultz and Rodney Malamba for future reference.

POWERFUL STRENGTH OF SOUTH AFRICAN CRICKET

One of my most pleasurable moments last winter was to sit against the oaks at the Newlands ground, with Table Mountain in the background and watch the Western Province Currie Cup team, for whom incidentally Russell Adams was 12th man, play Transvaal. I have played on many grounds around the world and if there is a nicer place to play cricket than Newlands I have yet to see it. And yes, I did think of Mallusk before making that sweeping statement!

There has been much said and written about Mike Gatting's team's tour to South Africa. I believe that despite the results, it was the strongest of the three England teams to be playing in various parts of the world at that time. To be objective one has to look at the stength of the opposition. South Africa had at their disposal Jimmy Cook and Alan Donald (the leading batsman and bowler respectively on the English county circuit last season) as well as Roy Pienaar, Clive Rice, Kenny McEwan, Peter Kirsten and Keppler Wessels, to highlight only some of those whose names will be familiar to cricket followers here.

Gatting's team had considerable problems getting adequate pre-tour practice due to the English winter and because facilities at various centres were denied for political reasons. I for one would have been fascinated to see them gain match practice in South Africa, prior to the commencement of the official tour, against an international X1. The sort of team they could have expected to face from those playing in South Africa last winter was:

Steven Smith *(Australia and Transvaal)*
John Hardy *(Somerset and Western Province*
Mike Haysman *(Australia and Northern Transvaal)*
Kim Hughes (capt) *(Australia and Natal)*
Collis King *(West Indies and Natal)*
Kevin Curran *(Zimbabwe and Natal)*
Emerson Trottman *(West Indies and Border)*
Peter Rawson *(Zimbabwe and Natal)*
Sylvester Clarke *(West Indies and Northern Transvaal)*
John Maguire *(Australia and Eastern Province)*
Rod McCurdy *(Australia and Eastern Province)*

I would suggest that this line up could match most Test teams!

There is much happening in cricket in South Africa and I am more than happy to be part of that scene. Cricket is my business and my life and my sincere wish for the next decade would be that the game should be played irrespective of colour of skin or place of birth.

How ludicrous that a very dear cricketing friend of mine is to be banned and placed on the international black list for having the audacity to tour and play in South Africa. But then, I suppose, a 72 year old MCC member ought to know better!!

Touche Ross



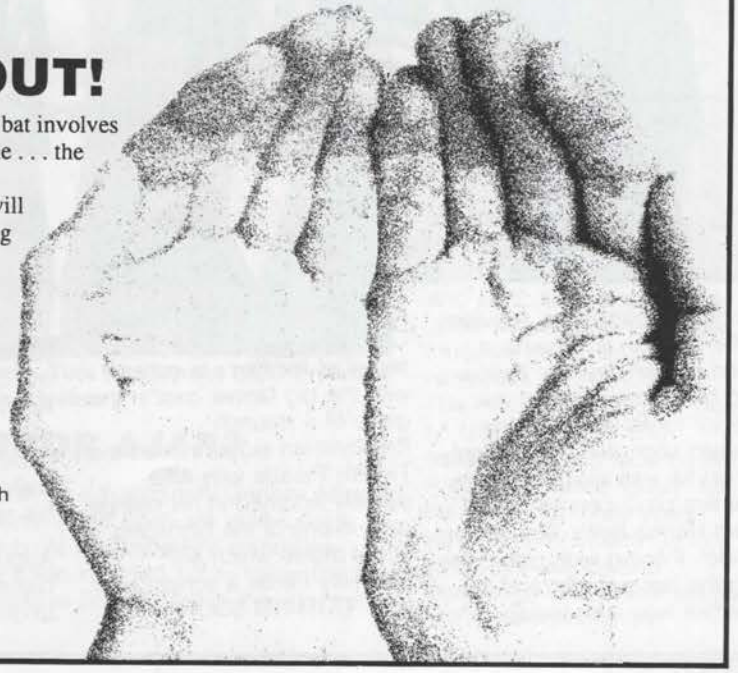
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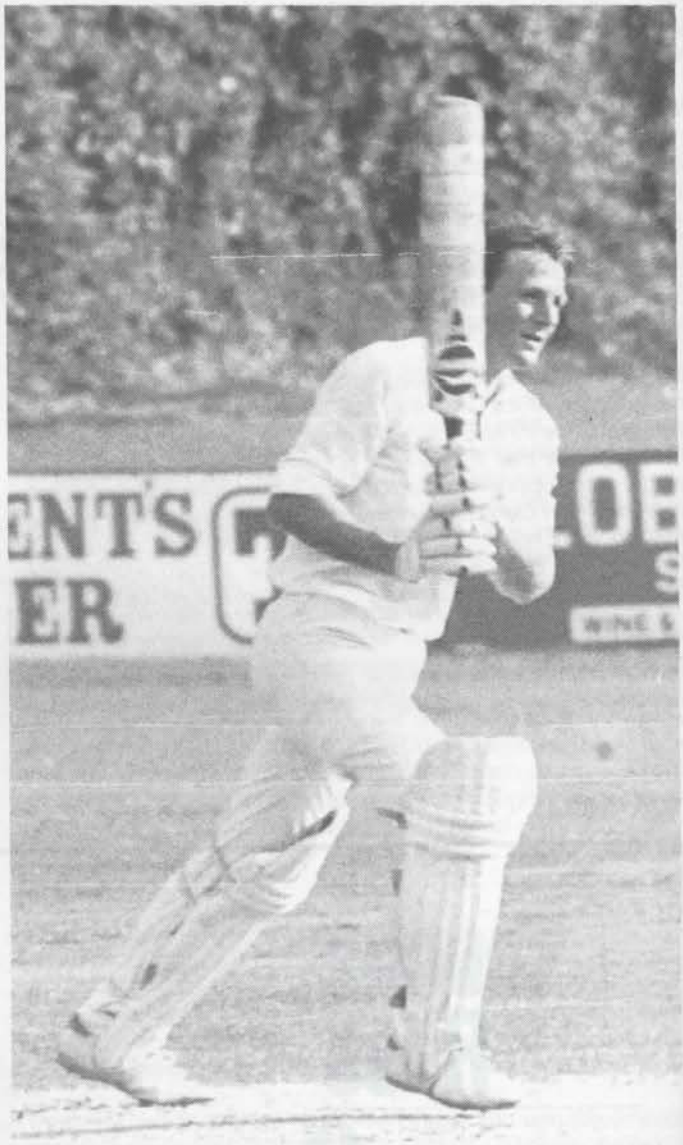
DIGEST NEWS

EMOTIONS RUN HIGH AT AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Irish Cricket Union in late January aroused some heated debate as NCU officials attempted to reduce the power of the Chairman in the new constitutional format. Eoin McCann of Munster accused his northern colleagues of 'cattle dealing' prior to the meeting as the tempo reached such a fervour that President Ian Lewis adjourned proceedings for an early lunch.

In a hastily arranged informal lunch-time meeting, the NCU delegation took 'stock' of the situation and later retracted what they regarded as constructive proposals in the best interests of harmony within the Union.

Frank Malin was subsequently unanimously elected as Chairman with Coleraine's popular Gavin Craig the 1990 ICU President. Another significant appointment was that of Dr. Murray Power to the position of Hon Treasurer in a pointed attempt to get the Union back onto sound financial base after several years of significant if not substantial losses.



MOVIE MAKER ALFIE



Popular Downpatrick stalwart Alfie Linehan is certainly a man of many talents! Following his retirement from the Senior ranks last year, the reason soon became evident when he was snapped up by the film producers to star in Sam Hanna Bell's 'December Bride'. Filming took place during the last summer and the premier was successfully packed out in early February. Casting appears to be the secret of the film's success with the big farmer cast in the guise of a staunch Presbyterian elder. Indeed the Twelfth Parade with Alfie suitably adorned in his orange sash is one of the highlights of the movie which will hopefully be on a screen near you - COMING SOON!

NORTHERN BANK AWARD FOR JIM

Popular Downpatrick all rounder Jim Patterson won the coveted Cricket Trophy for Northern bank employees at the annual dinner of their sports club in March. The big Ballynahinch official marked his recall to the Irish team in August with two excellent batting performances on the English tour. The Northern Bank has a particularly strong team made up entirely of Senior cricketers. They defeated the Bank of Ireland in the All Ireland Inter-Bank cup final to secure the trophy for the tenth time in the past eleven seasons. They also won the Industrial League with Jim recording the first century in Northern Bank cricket in the final.

DIGEST NEWS

APPOINTMENTS

North Down's Clarence Hiles was elected Chairman of the NCU at the Annual General Meeting of the members during the Autumn. Loyal Lisburn stalwart Tom McCloy was elected President with Brian White the President elect.... Up in the North West Jim Simpson moved from Hon. Secretary to Chairman to fill the breach left in the wake of the late Michael Bannigan. Donemana's Bob Logue is the new Hon Secretary.... Former President of the ICU and NCU Cecil Walker has taken over the Chairmanship at Wallace Park and already there are promising signs of a return to former glories for the Lisburn club....

SHORT HOP TO PARIS?

A busy 18 months of travelling for the Grasshoppers will conclude with a four day visit to Paris in September. Jack Short, fresh from his victory as captain of the French X1 against the MCC, has thrown down a gauntlet which the Grasshoppers were only too happy to pick up and there should be no shortage of volunteers for the two matches planned.

PARTHA RETURNS

Former Instonians professional, Partha Sharma makes a welcome return to these shores in July, as part of a UK tour with the Golcha Gymkhana team, which is made up of players from Rayastan.

They will play two matches in the Province, against the Ulster Grasshoppers on Sunday, July 22nd and against his old club at Shane Park on Monday, July 23rd.



Pictured at the Britannia reception were the Earl of Shrewsbury and Managing Director Michael Shaw who joined Stephen Warke in welcoming Raman Lamba to the Irish team

BRITANNIA SPONSORSHIP INCREASES

The popular Britannia Cricket Awards will again attract considerable interest during the season after the Society announced an increase in funding to over £3,000. Details were announced by the Society's Managing Director Michael Shaw in April, who confirmed the Society's support of the local game.

For the past two years Garfield Harrison of Waringstown and the Donemana club from the North West have won the top two annual awards.

The Society will continue to make monthly awards culminating in the major presentations at the end of the season.

CARRICK'S 'DOWN' UNDER LINKS

Full marks to Carrickfergus for their enterprise in sending two of their most promising young players Michael McIlroy and Alister McCalmont to New Zealand during the winter on an exchange scheme with the Birkenhead City club. With test players John Bracewell and Dipak Patel in their ranks, Birkenhead certainly gave the two lads an experience to savour in the years to come.

Carrick's link with Birkenhead is their former New Zealand professional Peter Hounsell and that link will be continued this season when 23 year old all rounder Michael Clark arrives from Auckland to be player/coach.



George Glasgow pictured with Tom McCloy the NCU President and former Chairman Alfie Linehan

INSTONIANS DOOR AJAR?

The historic decision taken, at an extraordinary General Meeting of the Instonians club in March to go open will at this stage apply only to the Rugby club. At a subsequent committee meeting of the cricket club it was decided not to follow this lead and so the status quo remains at Shane Park in the summer months at least.

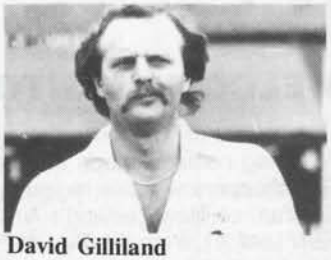
ON THE MOVE...

Gary Blair from Waringstown to whence he came - Lisburn!

Last year's Bangor captain Colin Magowan to 'headquarters'!

The McCrum brothers, Charlie and Paul from Lurgan to North Down on 'expenses'...

John Curlett the short journey from Dundrum to Downpatrick...Colin O'Neill even shorter journey from Dunmurry to Lisburn...to North Down from Ards Jonathan Montgomery and to Ards from Civil Service Colin Adams...wicket-keeper John Hiles from Comber to Donaghadee...Mark McNeill from Queens to Woodvale and down the same route Brian Boyd of Academy...Keith Thompson from Muckamore to Ards...the Dundas brothers Alan and Stephen from the Lawn to the Mall....David Gilliland to Armagh from Cregagh.



David Gilliland

RETIREMENT OF GEORGE GLASGOW

The Director of the Sports Council for Northern Ireland, George Glasgow retired in March after 35 years service to sport. An excellent administrator, George was a good friend to all local sports and particularly cricket. The good wishes of all cricket enthusiasts go to him in his retirement.

The new Director is J E 'Dusty' Miller who has long associations with local cricket. A popular choice 'Dusty' has the benefit of many years service in the Sports Council so his experience and knowledge will be vital assets in this demanding role.

DIGEST NEWS

OBITUARY

Tom Edgar

Cricketers throughout the Province were shocked by the sudden death of Bangor favourite Tom Edgar in January. The popular bowler graced many Holywood and Bangor teams but will be best remembered for his genial personality and comradship. He was a raconteur with his many friends in the Uprichard Park clubhouse. Sadly it will never be the same without him.



Former Bangor favourite Tom Edgar



The late Dai Jones

DOUGLAS 'DAI' JONES

Dai Jones was a great servant to Ulster Cricket and a most popular individual. He bore a long illness bravely and kept in regular contact with his fellow umpires, despite the anguish of declining health. He was 72.

Dai married a Ballynahinch girl and settled in Ulster just after the war. A useful wicket-keeper/batsman his love of sport never waned and many a top footballer owed much to the devoted Mersey Street Vice-Principal. His service to the Northern Cricket Union as an International Umpire, Umpires Appointments Secretary and Grounds Committee member was recognised in 1985, when the members elected him an Honorary Life Member in appreciation of sterling service to the local game.

A forthright man, Dai loved the company of his fellow cricketers and his passing removes one of the games most popular ambassadors from our midst.

IVOR MARNO

Former St. Mary's and Academy batsman Ivor Marno passed away in the spring. A doughty combative character Ivor will be remembered by his opponents as a man who never sold his wicket cheaply. A product of timeless cricket may of his feats of patience and endurance were legendary. In one infamous encounter with Muckamore, he opened the batting chasing 195 to win as was still there some 54 overs later with St. Mary's on 64 for 8. His modest contribution of 14 runs was quite remarkable and singularly characteristic because he failed to score a run in the last 23 overs!

WELCOME VISITORS

Following contacts made on last year's world tour, the Grasshoppers will give reciprocal hospitality to a team from Rotorua, on New Zealand's North Island, this summer. The Fern Leaf X1, from the Bay of Plenty Cricket Association, will play two matches here and will also visit England and Scotland. They are scheduled to attempt to gain revenge for the Grasshoppers only win in New Zealand on July 24th and will also play a local select side.

McCRUM'S MOVE TO COMBER

North Down sprang a major shock during the winter when they recruited brothers Paul and Charlie McCrum on professional terms for 1990. The move sparked widespread condemnation and much media focus on the internal situation at Comber, but Chairman Sidney Elliott, who negotiated the coup, successfully quelled the opposition from a majority of senior players and the McCrums will spearhead North Down's challenge in 1990.

See the Top Stars in action at the invitation

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FOCUS ON THE NORTH WEST CHAIRMAN



No chairman of the North West Cricket Union could be allowed the luxury of underestimating his position. After all in one of the most competitive and passionate cricketing areas of Ireland controversy and acrimony have often gone hand in hand with the cricket. However, it's all part of the fabric of North West cricket, so rich in character, so full of incident.

Thankfully the Union has been blessed with strong authorative legislators and the present incumbent will be no exception. Jim Simpson assumed his position during the winter following in the wake of Michael Bannigan's untimely and sad death. It's the only regret Jim harbours because for many years he was Michael's right hand man and together they formed an effective and respected administrative team.

MAJOR DECISION LEADS TO EGLINTON!

Jim Simpson is regarded as an Eglinton man although it will surprise most to learn he was actually born in Dunmurry. However he was barely out of nappies before a business appointment for his father took him North West to Limavady where he was to spend a major part of his life. Jim's now a North West man in every sense, an instinct instilled in him during his school days at Limavady Grammar. As an opening bowler and left-handed batsman he showed enough ability to captain the 1st XI and enthusiastically contribute to the intermediate team's fortunes at the Limavady club. By his own admission his playing achievements were modest but the real value of his endeavours was to bind him closer to the game he loved and to which he has given a lifetime of subsequent service. But cricket was not his only love and a courtship with Mary not only took Jim down the matrimonial path, it also took him to Mary's home village of Eglinton in 1960. Of all the major decisions Jim has taken or indeed will take in the future, none will be more significant. Mary has been a loyal and devoted support in all Jim has achieved and of course bore him a son Dean, who later achieved so much in club cricket.

LOYAL SERVICE TO EGLINTON

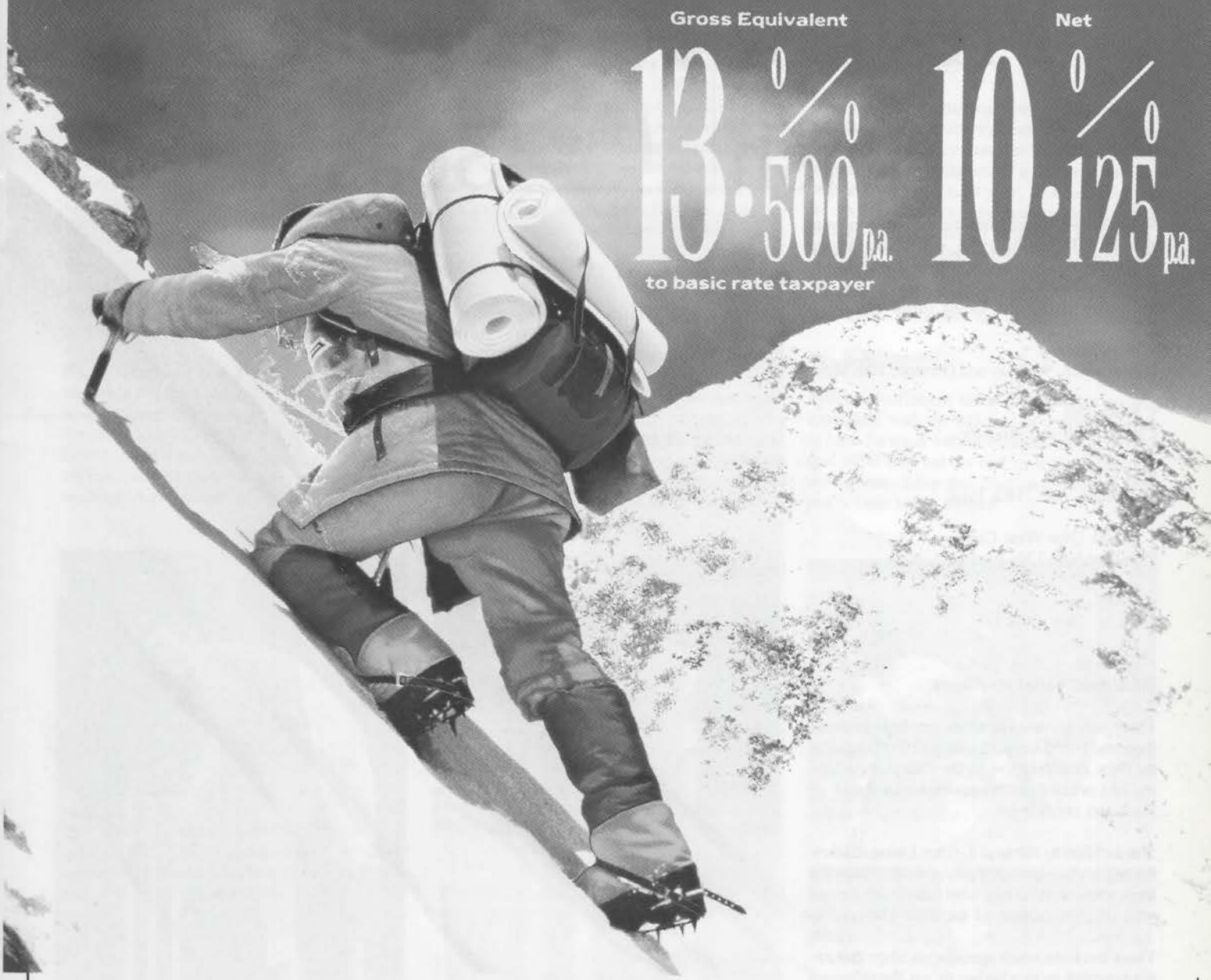
Jim's move to Eglinton was not confined to the playing ranks as he quickly accepted his role in serving the club administration. He takes immense pride from the achievements of Eglinton over twenty odd years but tends to play down his personal contribution by paying tribute to fellow club officials Tommy Allen, Dr Montgomery and Billy Henderson. Those were great days at Eglinton highlighted by the playing exploits of two fine North West players Scott Huey and Sammy Jeffrey. It was also particularly pleasing for Jim to see Dean successfully come through the youth teams. Indeed as Dean matured into the Senior team, Jim's proudest moment in cricket was reserved for the day he watched him captain the Irish Schools team. Indeed Dean has gone on to attain many honours in local cricket and in no small measure owes a lot to a loyal father who encouraged and cajoled a blossoming career.

DRIVE, DIRECTION AND EXPERTISE

In 1977 Jim Simpson succeeded Joe McCarter as North West secretary when Davy Todd was in the chair. It was a demanding role but one which was gradually brought under control by experience and discretion. Jim worked well with Davy before he moved into higher office as President of the Irish Cricket Union. His successor Michael Bannigan was to not only become a cricket colleague but a close personal friend. Jim cites Michael and the late Jack Semple as two of the closest friends he met through cricket and his elevation to the Chairmanship of the Union is tinged with some regret that his two great pals are not around to share the honour.

Jim is now a Brigade man having moved to the Londonderry club in the early eighties. However, as chairman of the Union he has no illusions as to the importance of imparticility and most of his energy will be directed towards the betterment of cricket throughout the area. He has welcomed a lot of general improvements especially in better clubhouses and the quality of grounds and hopes that this trend will continue. On the playing side he feels relegation over three years might allow teams to develop their younger players and that careful usuage of a professional as a coach must help promote the game with young and old. The major highlight of his administrative career was the highly successful centenary celebration of 1988 but modestly he plays down the huge part he played in that success. No doubt many more successes lie on the horizon because Jim Simpson in his role as North West Chairman will give the Union drive, direction and expertise. He may not be around for the bicentennial celebration but the chairman who is will certainly appreciate that contribution.

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TESTING DAYS AHEAD

Preview of the Irish Season

What can we expect from Ireland in the months ahead? Will they, in 1990, record the victory which has eluded them for over two years? Certainly the fixture list will show very quickly the difficulty of the task facing them.

v New Zealand
Downpatrick, 9th May and Ormeau, 10th May.

v Worcester
Clontarf 8th and 9th June

v M C C
Coleraine, 16th -18th June

v Sussex (Nat West Cup)
Downpatrick, 27th June

v Wales
Carlisle, 29th -31st July

v Scotland
Edinburgh, 11th-13th August

There are no easy matches for Ireland these days and it will be particularly difficult against the New Zealanders, with the Irish players having had precious little opportunity to build up form and confidence.

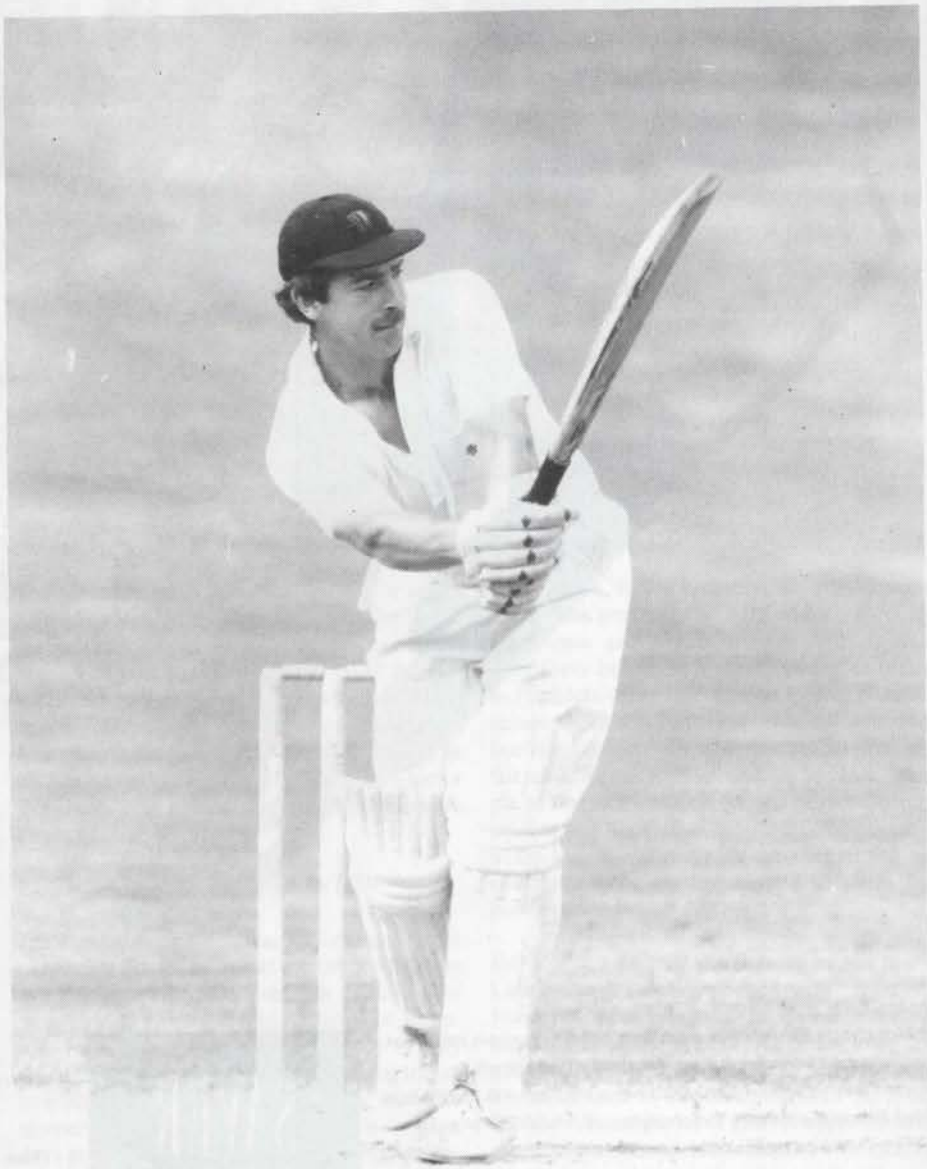
The decision by the Irish Cricket Union to allow the selectors to include a professional within the Irish team comes only after much debate but with the full support of the Irish players.

There has been much speculation since that announcement as to whether or not the selectors will avail themselves of the opportunity and, indeed, which professional should be chosen, both from a playing and from a team spirit standpoint.

Cliftonville's Raman Lamba, of course better known for his exploits at North Down and Kamal Merchant of Downpatrick have both played in the Province now for several seasons and would appear to be front runners, with Woodvale's Akram Raza and Eglinton's Barbadian fast bowler, Herderson Wallace as outsiders. It will be interesting to reflect at the end of the season in the success or otherwise of this initiative, but, in advance, it should be said that the ICU is to be congratulated for grasping this particular hot potato.

THE RUN GETTERS

If we look at the Irish Squad it is reassuring to see such an established opening partnership.



Current Irish Captain Paul Jackson

Ireland has been well served by openers in the past 20 years, with Stephen Warke and Mark Cohen suceeding Michael Reith and Jack Short as automatic selections.

With Garfield Harrison's place in the side assured and, presuming that Lamba gets the nod of approval from the selectors, it would appear that initially Mark Nulty, Alan Lewis and Jim Patterson will be competing for two batting places. The other most likely candidates to come into contention as the season progresses are Alvin Spence, Michael Rea, and Deryck Vincent.

BALANCED ATTACK?

Harrison's batting has improved steadily and, when he is in full flow, he is a glorious, clean hitter of the ball. If as seems likely, Michael

Halliday's long and distinguished international career has ended, with 192 wickets from a record 93 caps, Ireland will look upon Harrison's off spin as a vital part of their bowling attack. 'Junior' McBrine's return to the fold would greatly improve the balance of the attack, but, if he remains unavailable, the selectors may yet turn to Colin Magowan, Ian Scott or Conor Hoey to find that much needed victory!

SO IT WOULD SEEM!

Alan Nelson has been Ireland's most successful bowler in the past two seasons and he has quickly earned an excellent reputation, but the gaps created by the retirement from international competition of Simon Corlett and John Elder have never been satisfactorily filled. It is, of course, impossible to replace such stalwarts of the game overnight, but it is important that Alan Jeffrey, Paul McCrum or perhaps Paul Wallace establishes himself as Nelson's regular new ball partner.

Nigel Thompson had a satisfactory first full season in the Irish team in 1989 and will hope to consolidate his place, with Jonathan Garth the other likely front-line bowler. Lamba and Lewis could provide the captain with some alternatives with their medium pace, should the main bowlers let him down.

The Irish bowling attack is unlikely to run through any team, especially of county standard or above, so it is imperative that they bowl to a pre-arranged plan, with accuracy and consistency.

BEHIND THE STUMPS

Paul Jackson remains unchallenged as Ireland's premier wicket-keeper, although Alan Ruther-

form performed competently when called in as a late replacement last year, for the two one day games against Northamptonshire. Keith Bailey will also come into contention. Jackson is now in this third season as Ireland's captain and his experience has greatly improved his grasp of the demands of captaincy, which, at this level, are extremely taxing especially for a wicket keeper constantly in the thick of the action.

NAT WEST GLORY UNLIKELY

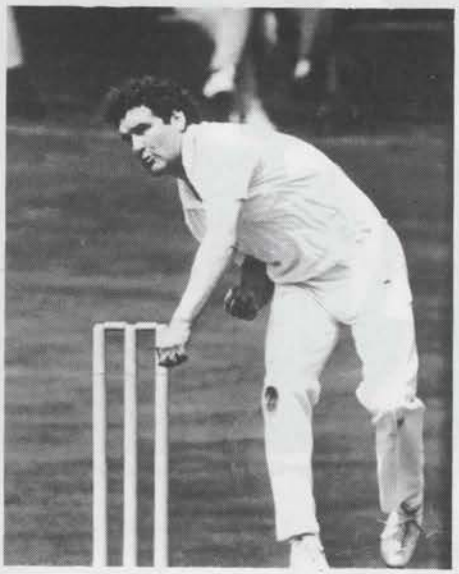
The match which will attract the greatest attention is, of course, the Nat West Cup tie against Sussex at Downpatrick. This is Ireland's first home draw in the competition for seven years but, although Sussex is one of the weaker counties, an Irish victory will still be considered a shock result. With entry to the Benson and Hedges Cup a possibility in the not-too-distant future, Ireland must ensure that there is no repitition of the Hove disaster of 1985, when they were dismissed for just 39 runs. Sussex 1990 does not have the pace of an Imran Khan or a Garth Le Roux but they do have several quality players, especially in the batting line-up, where people like David Smith, Paul Parker and the Wells brothers, Colin and Alan are quite capable of taking any attack apart. Yes, June 27th should be interesting for all sorts of reasons.

THE AULD ENEMY

The three day fixture against our oldest rivals, Scotland, will be keenly contested. Two years ago in the centenary match at Dumfries, Ireland suffered the humiliation of a defeat by an innings and 43 runs. Last year, in a superb game of cricket, honours were even, with the match ending with Ireland 20 runs short of victory, with just two wickets in hand. This is Ireland's only 1st class fixture of the summer and it is the ideal opportunity, coming as it does late in the season, to assess the team's progress.

ON ICE

There is sufficient talent in the Irish squad, especially with the addition of a professional, to look forward with confidence and to expect that 1990 will see an end to Ireland's recent dismal run. Keep that champagne on ice, for just a little while longer!



Junior McBrine - An outstanding talent in the one day game



Steady Irish opener Stephen Warke



Early season injury problem for Alan Nelson



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Prose on Pros

Over the past decade the most controversial topic in local cricket has been the involvement of the overseas professionals. Depending in which camp you pitch your tent they have been either the biggest boost to post-war Irish cricket or alternatively the most contributory factor to the decline in standards of local players. Eloquent and charming arguments have characterised this colourful debate but diehards at each end of the issue have rarely budged. You either want them or you don't - it's as simple as that!

PROBLEMS FOR LEGISLATORS

Despite all the controversy, there can be little doubt overseas playershave attracted more people back to cricket and stirred a previously lethargic media. Suddenly cricket with its clean-cut image was attracting new sponsors and despite the heavy outlay in financing the overseas recuit, most clubs appear to have been able to successfully balance their books. The issue has also played havoc with the legislators. Recent Annual General Meetings of all the major Provincial Unions have had their share of motions to ban or restrict the overseas players. The Lenister Union banned them for three years but has rescinded that decision for this year. The North West Union has voted for their continuing participation despite the presence of only a couple in the last few years. The Northern Cricket Union debate typifies the complexities of the argument with a rule now in force limiting each club to 'only one overseas player not normally resident in Northern Ireland.' Even that was not enough to curtail the entrepeurial cheque-book-swinging rich clubs. Attractive inducements to local players have added a new dimension to the professional debate guaranteeing a lively Annual General Meeting in October! The Irish Cricket Union appears to have authoritatively made up its mind by instructing the national selectors to pick one overseas player when facing professionally paid opponents. Just to remove any doubt as to the status of the 'pseudo Irishman' his renumeration will be £100 per match.

AMBITIOUS CLIFTONVILLE AND NORTH DOWN

When all is said and done, the game is buzzing when the overseas contingent arrives. Members are hastily setting up coaching sessions, harassed club officials deal with the sometimes complex domestic arrangements. The media as always is on their heels - how many runs did you score in the winter? Why didn't we see you in the test team? Is this your last year in Ireland? When the dust settles its down to the serious business of cricket. This year there will be a total of fourteen overseas professionals and at least three of the home-bred variety. One suspects there may be more if all the facts were in the open!

The major surprise during the winter was the switch of Indian test player Raman Lamba from North Down to Cliftonville at a reputed summer salary of a staggering £6000. With veteran John Solanky, now domiciled in the province, continuing to remain at Cliftonville, there can be little doubt of the Greenisland club's priorities. Lamba's onfield achievements at Comber were phenomenal but his legacy to the club was a playing resources disaster which



On the Indian front? Cliftonville's Raman Lamba and Derriaghy's Miland Gunjal



On the Pakistani front? Woodvale's Akram Raza and Downpatrick's prolific wicket taker Kamal Merchant

panicked the Comber Committee into hiring three paid players to fill the gap! Asjit Jayaprakasham's return to the green where he played in 1986 was widely welcomed because the popular little Indian is an excellent coach but the cash incentive to lure Lurgan's Paul and Charlie McCrum brough widespread condemnation. In monetary terms it will mean a financial outlay of at least £6500 and only the winning of a major trophy will justify value for money. However the whole scenario of cash incentives to local players has not surprisingly once again opened up all the old sores of professional players. One should add that there is no distinction between amateur and professional in cricket as they are all players. In practice however the situation is somewhat different.

OLD FACES AND SOME NEW

Returning to their former clubs for the 1990 season are Subash Kshirasagar. (Lurgan), Kamal Merchant (Downpatrick), Yashpal Sharma (Armagh), Miland Gunjal (Deriaghy), Henderson Wallace (Eglinton), Akram Raza (Woodvale), Russell Adams (Holywood) and Bob Blair (Instonians). New faces include Australian all rounder Jeff Spotswood at Muckamore, Martin Clarke of New Zealand at Carrickfergus and a return to Lisburn of Vijay Harharran. Bobby Rao is now domiciled in the North West and will continue at Sion Mills while former Holywood bowler Stewart McCormick, an acknowledged critic of the 'hired gun' syndrome has surprisingly joined Cregagh..... as player-coach!

If you can't beat them join them! Perhaps Stewart and Cliftonville in their own different ways have added another ironic twist to the professional issue? Certainly the point will be lost on New Zealander Mark McKimm (Lisburn) and volatile Pakistani Javed Mohamhed (Ards). Neither will be back this year.



Big Barbadian Henderson Wallace who is back again with Eglinton



Lurgan polished all rounder Subash Kshrisager



Grasshopper's Successful African Safari

by Gordon Scott

The Ulster Grasshoppers completed a second tour of Zimbabwe last month with an impressive playing record and a host of new acquaintances in the Southern African republic.

The highlight of the three week tour came on the last day at Harare South when a convincing seven wicket victory was gained over the Mashonaland County Districts XI which included Grant Patterson and Dave Dolphin who are included in the Zimbabwe national side which will shortly contest the I.C.C. Trophy in Holland. North's David Johnston took the bowling honours with a brilliant spell of 4 for 17 while North Down's John Gilliland dominated the Grasshopper's reply with a splendid innings of 57.

Other noteable victories were recorded against Hwange where a feast of runs resulted in victory for the Grasshoppers by 44 runs with Ian Rankin (St. Johnston) contributing a rapid 60 and at Inyathi where Michael Halliday (Phoenix) turned in a superb exhibition of off spin bowling with 5/64 on a perfect wicket and Nick Johnston (Bangor) guided the Grasshoppers to a four wicket victory and a well paced innings of 50 not out.

Nick Johnston had the highest individual score of the tour with 80 against the M.C.D. Bridges XI, an under 25 representative side and skipper Ivan Connolly (North Down) weighed in with 33 as the pair set a new Grasshoppers 8th wicket mark of 62.

Overall a playing staff which has been generally regarded as somewhat below strength rose to the occasion in impressive fashion. The batting performance of Sam Beckett who aggregated 274 in 6 innings was particularly commendable as Sam played his cricket for Bangor II in 1989. Andrew Rose, who was added to the party only 24 hours before departure, was an excellent asset with bat and ball while Michael Halliday highlighted what a loss he will be to the international side this season with some masterful displays of off spin bowling. Ian Rankin, who with Paul Wallace represented the North West with some distinction, once again illustrated what a fine striker of the ball he is and his leadership of the side was a fine example to the younger players in the side. In Ian's absence during the final week of the tour Ivan Connolly took over the reins and, despite a reluctance due to lack of experience in the role, deserves credit for his enthusiasm and positive thinking.

Off the field the party were in extreme debt both to their excellent manager John Elder whose attention to detail throughout was quite superb and to the organisational skills of John Hick whose expertise and contacts made the entire tour operators extremely smooth. In addition the tremendous hospitality afforded to the party by Trelawny C.C. was quite simply outstanding and it is opportune that the Grasshoppers will have a chance to repay their generous hosts next month when Trelawny C.C. will be visitors to the Province. The highlights of the social side to the tour were two marvellous days on Lake Kariba, a short visit to Victoria Falls, one of the wonders of the world and a successful defence of the Rhino Golf Trophy at Trelawny where Messrs. Stewart and Blair surely qualified for 'Sony' ranking by recovering from 4 down at the turn to win their match on the 17th!!

Throughout the magnificent hospitality of the Zimbabwean cricketing fraternity only guaranteed that the Grasshoppers will be determined to make a third visit to the Republic in the not too distant future.



Bangor Captain Brian Miller facing the Turk mine attack

OPPORTUNITY & INCENTIVE FOR IRISH PLAYERS IN 1990

BY DERMOTT MONTEITH



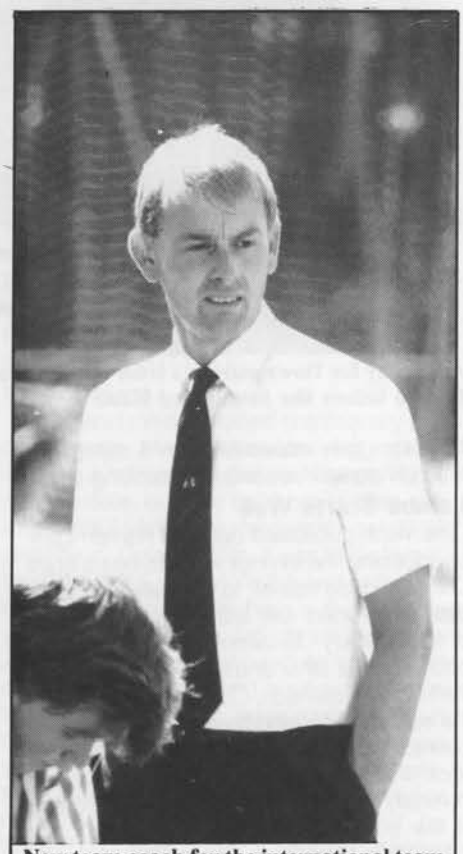
Current Chairman of the Irish selectors Dermott Monteith

The last few seasons for the Irish Cricket X1 have been a rather downbeat period. A lot of very good, experienced players, for one reason or another had to stop playing and while young players have had to take their place, the last two or three years have constituted their period of development. Hopefully this time had now passed and we can look forward to something a great deal better in the near future.

I also feel that the management of Irish cricket has been upgraded recently and the fruits of the more professional attitude should begin to make itself felt in the playing of the game at the highest level. Some years ago the senior Irish players, who generally attended the AGM of the Irish Cricket Union, felt that too much time at ICU level was spent on such matters as finance, politics and in just hearing oneself speak. Cricket was rarely mentioned. We therefore proposed the setting up of an ICU cricket committee. This, to begin with, was a rather toothless body, but with the advent of John Elder as chairman and a more enlightened attitude from the ICU executive, the efforts of the cricket committee have begun to bear fruit in many directions.

The first of these, I feel, is in the new format of the inter-provincial Ulster Bank Cup. The nine games which previously involved the most travelling will be played this season in the Belfast district over the weekend the 26/27/28th May. Each of the six teams will play three games and there will be a dinner sponsored through the kind auspices of the Ulster Bank for all the players and officers in the Culloden Hotel on the Sunday evening. This new format has many advantages. The players will have opportunity of three eight hour games back to back, the selectors in their search for 3-day cricketers, will see who can withstand the rigours of concentrated cricket (at a higher level than normal) and players who don't play on Sunday can play in the inter-pro competition for the first time in many years. The concentrated nature of the event should also be much more attractive to the genuine cricket fan, the press and public, therefore, not least, to the sponsor. Also on a trial basis will be batting bonus points as well as bowling which was already previously there.

'Hopefully...we can look forward to something a great deal better in the near future'



New team coach for the international team Ian Johnston

Another fruitful effort of the cricket committee is in the previously neglected field of coaching. This season Ian Johnston has been appointed coach of the Irish team. He is an advanced NCA coach who has played for Ireland and has looked after many school and under age teams. Players will be encouraged to go to him for advice and in reverse he will go to them to offer assistance. All players on the Irish team will be videoed in action and can refer to him at any time. By the time you read this, Les Lenham, a top UK coach will have seen the players in their videos and will have passed his views to Ian.

Each of the inter-pro teams will, for the first time this year, have their own coach and with pre-season net sessions will be looking for improved performance. The recent England tours in West Indies and Zimbabwe have shown the benefit of fitness, hard work and intensive coaching. In addition moves are afoot to appoint a full-time test class player-coach to the Irish team in future years - an exciting development.

The cricket committee have also suggested that Ireland's fixtures need revitalised. Instead of inviting county sides over here in the early part of the season when it would appear they arrive with half a side for what they seem to consider to be a holiday, would it not be better to have meaningful matches in the Benson and Hedges competition? To this end the ICU has applied to enter and would appear to have been favourably received. However we will probably have to wait until Durham are permitted to enter the county championship when a split of the four existing groups of five zonal teams will have to be reshaped anyway.

Thoughts are also being cast on entry to the ICC World Cup in 1995. Add this to the tour of Zimbabwe in March 1991 and one sees that there is a lot for aspiring Irish players to set their mind on. Therfore I see the opportunity and the incentive for a successful 1990 season.

KIWIS PROVE

After a 25 year absence, Ireland played host to New Zealand in two one-day matches, in early May, which were integrated in to the Gilbey's Ulster Games, with British Midland and Northern Bank Financial Services as secondary sponsors.

Unlike some other major Test playing countries and indeed some first class county sides of late, the Kiwis did Ireland the honour of bringing their full touring party to the Province and indeed all, barring John Bracewell, who had unfortunately injured a finger a few days earlier at Arundel, played in at least one of the games.

Excellent Television Coverage

The crowd at Downpatrick was slightly disappointing, which may have been due to the uncertain weather conditions, but the match was televised by BBC, who brought over their experienced commentator, former Glamorgan star, Peter Walker. He was ably assisted by Mark Robson and former Irish stalwarts Michael Reith and Simon Corbett, both of whom seemed to slip with ease into their roles as expert analysis.

The camera work and coverage was excellent and hopefully this will be the forerunner of many more Irish games being televised. It would be a great boost to the game in this country.

Warm Reception

The New Zealanders proved to be extremely popular and affable tourists. Nothing was too much trouble to them and they seemed to relish the excellent and typical Irish hospitality afforded them throughout their stay.

They were welcomed by Irish Cricket Union President, Gavin Craig, at a reception on Tuesday 8th May at the Europa Hotel, sponsored by F11 Fyffes and were guests of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Brooke, at Hillsborough Castle following the first match. The Secretary of State and the Minister for Education, Brian Mawhinney, were both welcome guests at Downpatrick.

The ICU continued the trend of inviting school parties to attend the matches free of charge and particularly at Ormeau, this swelled the gate and increased greatly the atmosphere in the ground.

Jimmy Boyce, happily recovered from his recent illness, was match Manager for the two games and is to be congratulated for the efficiency with which his team organised the visit.

Downpatrick, 9th May

Had the glorious sunshine of the previous week continued, it is unlikely that New Zealand captain, John Wright, would have deliberated so long after winning the toss, before eventually inviting Ireland to bat.

Unfortunately rain over the previous few days, which saw the abandonment of Downpatrick's Senior match against Woodvale, had slowed the wicket down considerably and batting was always going to be a struggle, especially with a damp outfield giving little reward for attacking shots.



A Big day for Downpatrick's Irish international Jim Patterson when he chatted to Richard Hadlee before the Strangford Road match.

Lamba Starts Well

The much publicised debut of Raman Lamba, opening the innings with Carlisle's Mark Cohen, added interest to the early play. Both batsmen coped well with the pace and life of the willowy Jonathan Millmow and, of course, at the other end Richard Hadlee was the focus of attention, Cohen, however, with the score on 25, and having failed to make contact with 3 previous attempts at the cut shot, finally got one in the middle of the bat, ironically to find Hadlee make a sharp catch in the gully look ridiculously easy. Dublin Y.M.C.A.'s Mark Nulty, perhaps surprisingly batting at Number 3, ahead of regular opener Stephen Warke, played one of two extravagant shots before falling to an ambitious drive off Millmow which brought together Lamba and Warke for Ireland's best stand of the match. Lamba was content to push singles and indeed proved to be an excellent judge of a run. He seemed to strike an early understanding with Warke as he had done with Cohen and this is one area in which his presence seems sure to benefit the side.

Disputed Decisions

At lunch, Ireland haved moved on to 92 for 2 with 20 of their 55 overs remaining - a sound platform had been built. Lamba had passed a maiden 50 for Ireland in his debut match, but not without incident. When he had scored 21 he survived a raucous appeal for a caught behind to the obvious disgust

POPULAR VISITORS

of the New Zealand fielders, only 3 of whom eventually acknowledged his 50. Whether or not he hit the ball is conjecture, but it was unfortunate that shortly after lunch, when he was given out to a catch behind the wicket, Lamba chose to make it very obvious that he disagreed with umpire Louis Hogan's decision. He had played well and had fought so hard that it was a pity that his departure was not more gracious.

Early Afternoon Collapse

To Ireland's great disappointment. Warke fell in identical fashion in the same over and with two new batsmen at the wicket Ireland's acceleration, which had been much anticipated at lunch, was never-to-be. Hadlee was bowling his second spell, this time from the Strangford Road end, in overcast conditions and there is no better bowler in the world to exploit such opportunity.

Ireland lost wickets regularly, first Garfield Harrison, then Alan Lewis who had played confidently for his 19 and then Nigel Thompson fell. Jim Patterson, the local hero, was just getting into his stride, when he was run out going for an ambitious second run and, following a few typically lusty blows from skipper Paul Jackson, the innings closed on a somewhat disappointing 151 for 9.

Victory Stroll

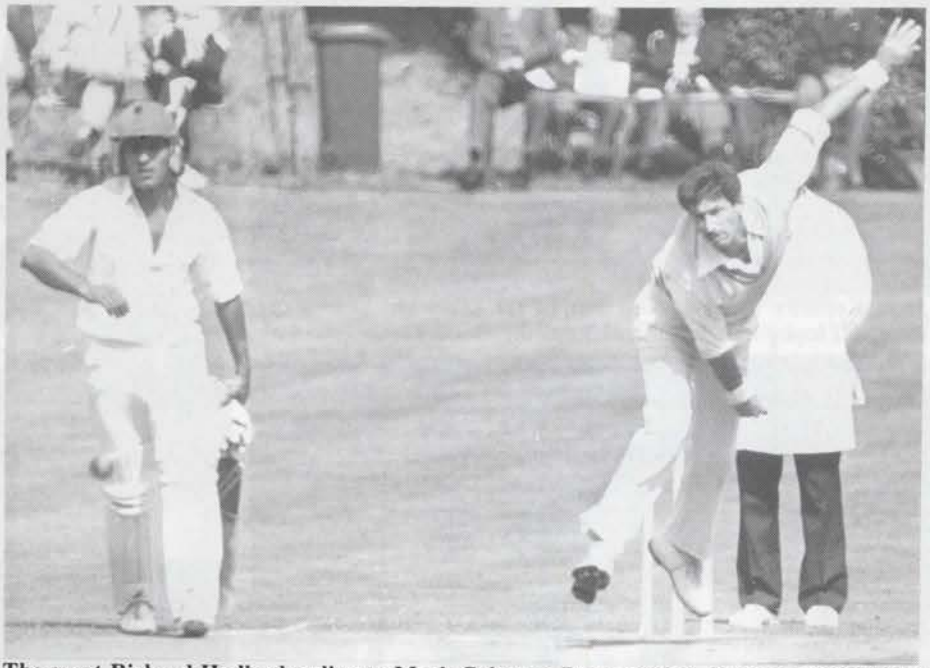
The early loss of Lamba and Warke after the restart had removed any impetus which Ireland might have expected and the New Zealanders were able to cruise to a comfortable victory, with almost 20 overs to spare.

Paul McCrum, in his comeback match, will be pleased with his performance whereas poor Peter O'Reilly, recalled to the team after a 6 year absence, following the withdrawal of Alan Nelson, could never get any sort of rhythm and his 4 overs cost 22 runs, giving the visitors the ideal start. John Wright, showing excellent technique and Trevor Franklin added 71 for the first wicket and after their departure it was left to Martin Crowe to provide the fireworks. He was finally out for 48 with just 2 runs required for victory, having hit two mighty sixes off Garfield Harrison, one over extra cover on to the roof of the pavilion and the other clearing the score box comfortably as it sailed out of the ground. Despite this late onslaught, though, Harrison still finished with great credit, his initial 9 overs having cost only 23 runs.

Stephen Warke was named as Ireland's British Midland man of the match for his gritty 23, which helped Ireland to such a solid start.

Ormeau, 10th May

The torrential rain which threatened, but thankfully didn't materialise at Downpatrick, hit Ormeau on the afternoon prior to this second one day game. The water which seemed under the covers, at one time seemed to put the match in jeopardy, but eventually, with the total and typical co-operation of the New Zealanders, the game started just 30 minutes late, with a reduction to 50 over per side.



The great Richard Hadlee bowling to Mark Cohen at Downpatrick. Raman Lamba looks on anxiously

Batting first at Ireland's request, the tourists started cautiously in the face of an accurate spell from Paul McCrum and Raman Lamba. John Wright seemed more at home than his partner, Jeff Crowe, and was able to lift the tempo when required, before falling to Harrison for an excellent 44. Mark Greatbatch, and following Crowe's dismissal, Andrew Jones adapted well to the conditions. Garfield Harrison's excellent spell brought richly deserved figures of 2 for 25 off 10 overs, backed up by a superb stumping from his captain (incidentally Jackson's 100th international dismissal) and some keen out cricket. When Greatbatch and Jones departed, the scene was set for Richard Hadlee to show his capabilities with the bat, which he did with great effect in a delightful little cameo of an innings. Despite the sharpness of the fielding and O'Reilly's two late wickets, the tourists were able to finish on a creditable 203 for 7.

Early Drama

The Ireland innings started dramatically and disastrously. Mark Cohen decided against wearing a helmet, on what had been a docile pitch to date, but one ball from Hadlee and one painful blow later, he quickly called for protection. Unfortunately it was to do him little good, because before the end of the first over he was on his way back to the pavilion, yorked by the record breaking New Zealander. Mark Nulty fared no better than on the previous day and his position in the team is now under serious threat from Clontarf's Michael Rea. When Lamba was snapped up in the gully by Hadlee in an action replay of Cohen's dismissal in the first match, things looked bleak indeed for Ireland. But from 20 for 3, Stephen Warke, so solid and dependable wherever he bats for Ireland and Garfield Harrison put together a high quality partnership which steered their team to respectability, if not success.

Harrison completed a fine all round performance and just pipped Warke for the Irish Man of the Match award, Warke eventually being run out by a superb piece of atheletic fielding from New Zealand's reserve wicket keeper, Adam Parare, for a polished 44. Jim Patterson enjoyed a few late blows as the innings came to a close, giving New Zealand their second victory, but one from which the Irish side can take much heart and credit.

Richard Hadlee was a popular choice as Man of the Match for the tourists.

Dismal Run Continues

Ireland's first two matches of the 1990 season may have seen their sequence of defeats continue, but there was enough on view to suggest that the tide should soon turn.

The inclusion of Raman Lamba adds that touch of class to a solid batting order. Cohen, Warke and Harrison are established international players, each with over 40 caps to their credit and Lewis and Patterson have both showed that they are capable of scoring runs at this level.

The major problem seems to be in attack, where Nelson's injury left the selectors with little option but to gamble on O'Reilly, a decision which, in retrospect, backfired. Ireland has come to rely heavily on Nelson's accuracy, but Paul McCrum will be pleased with his two performances, which should secure him an extended run in the side. Nigel Thompson continues to contribute competently, while Jackson remains a class wicket keeper and improving captain.

All in all, the visit of New Zealand proved to be an excellent early season exercise for the Irish team and gives cause for cautious optimism for the months ahead.



John Kennedy (Bangor) and Jim Lester (Armagh) shared the League Trophy and Jack Newell did the Honours



Top all rounder Charlie McCrum receives the Jack Bowden trophy from Lisburn Chairman Cecil Walker



A joke shared between celebrity speaker Derek Randall and Armagh's Hammy Ewart



Derek Randall presented Muckamore's Andy Clement with a cricket bat for winning the ballot

NCU GALA NIGHT AT EUROPA

The Lombard and Ulster sponsored Northern Cricket Union annual dinner in the Europa Hotel during the winter was and unparalleled success. Chief guest of honour was former England batsman Derek Randalll and the bouncy Notts player admitted he was just as nervous getting onto his feet to face the august gathering of over 300 club representatives, as he was going out to bat at Lords! Typically however, after a few cautious 'singles' he was soon in his stride and delighted the gathering with many amusing stories.

The dinner was highlighted by the presentation of all the major awards in the NCU season, although it was also an opportunity for the Union to say thank you to its principal sponsors. There was a large turn out of the sponsors including Touche Ross Managing Partner Sam Goldblatt who congratulated the administrators on another fine season and endorsed his company's support of the Senior Cup competititon.

There were three new individual awards presented by the Warke, Hool and Bowden families in memory of Larry, 'Sonny' and Jack, three of local cricket's most distinguished servants who had sadly passed away during the previous year. Jim Patterson won the batting award, Paul McCrum the bowling award and his brother Charlie the all rounder award respectively. There was also a special ovation for the Belfast Telegraph 'Young Players of the Year'. Billy Adams of North Down and Jonathan Craig of Ballymena. Popular sports editor Malcom Brodie made the presentation which included a week of intensive coaching at Lords.

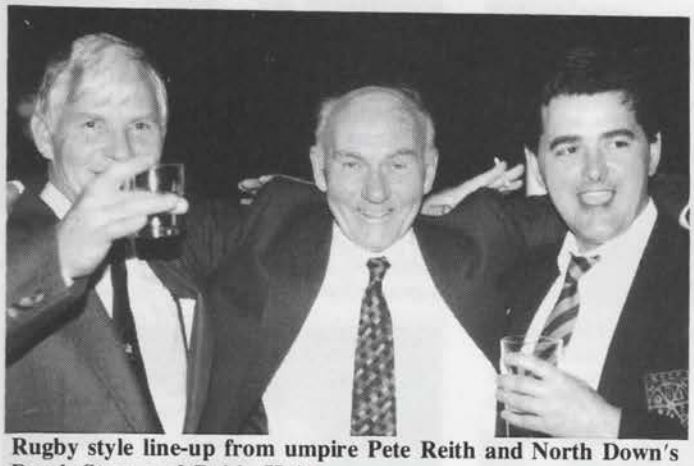
Retiring NCU Chairman Alfie Linehan expertly orchestrated the numerous presentations and as the wine flowed the evening continued long and late as old acquaintances were renewed, matches replayed and boundless predictions for the future got more ambitious by the glass!



Third eleven success to North's Tony Lemon from league Chairman Jack McNeill.



Jim Boyce chats to Jack Torney the Chief Executive of Lombard and Ulster and Company Secretary Tom Bunce.



Rugby style line-up from umpire Pete Reith and North Down's Derek Steen and Robin Haire



Belfast Telegraph sports editor Malcolm Brodie pictured with the Belfast Telegraph Young Players of the Year Billy Adams and Jonathan Craig

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PEOPLE IN PLACES



Billy Taylor's not 285! He just feels it walking round the boundary!.



The suave and sophisticated look? International opener Stephen Warke off duty.



NCU President Tom McCloy discussing the finer points of high finance with Touche Ross supremo Sam Goldblatt.



Even Chris Harte is struggling to get a word in as NCU Vice President Brian 'Commander' White holds court. Michael Shannon doesn't even try.



Planning an overthrow? An administrative big three of Jim McMorran, Ian Lewis and dapper Bangor favourite Conn McCall.



Singing their little known hit, 'My love is like a big, big pint' popular raconteurs Neil Hunter of Lurgan and big Raymond 'Sangster' Moreland of North Down.



One of the reasons why Newforge always looks so good. Quiet man Wally Shannon is one of a small group of dedicated club officials.



Doyen of the badminton code - International bowler Paul Wallace shows his versatility.



Early season worries for Lurgan President Dickie Maxwell - Perhaps the birds have flown Dickie?

THE DEMISE OF THE 'GRUB' BOWLER

From the early part of the nineteenth century, as cricket evolved and spread its sporting gospel throughout the world, the most significant technical change was the gradual replacement of underarm bowling by the overarm variety. It was not a welcome evolution and indeed created considerable acrimony and controversy in its early stages, but by the dawn of the twentieth century the best exponents of the bowling art were in the main overarm. The transformation is therefore of great interest to students of Irish cricketing history since the local game mushroomed and spread throughout the island. When this controversial development was in the melting pot, however, as in England, the overarm school slowly established precedence and by 1900 the underarm code was fast disappearing. But what a great pity! After all, Ulster cricket had some brilliant 'grub' bowlers and their peculiar skill added much to the entertainment of the game.

EARLY DEVELOPMENTS

Although the earliest bowling was essentially along the ground, cricket historian GB Buckley has suggested that the use of the word 'thrown' in the first recorded match between Kent and England in 1744 implies an airborne traject. If this is accepted it follows that the bowler had added the formidable variables of length and direction to his armoury and therefore posed a tougher opponent to the batsman. The technique was gradually improved and within the next twenty years was universally accepted. It was an era of development and experimentation but when Thomas Walker of the famous Hambledon Club tried out a form of overarm bowling there was uproar.

However Walker was not alone in seeking to establish the bowler's superiority and with large sums of money being waged on the outcome of cricket matches, the motive was self evident!

BATSMAN EVOLVES TO MEET THE NEW CHALLENGE

Most of the cricket in England at the end of the eighteenth century was centred around Kent and Surrey. Formed around 1760 the Hambledon Club on Broadhalfpenny Down was the first great centre of English cricket. The Marylebone Club was formed in 1787 and gradually asserted its control over all cricket although the men from Hambledon hold a special place in the development of the game. High stakes were common place and large crowds attended the matches to bet heavily on the outcome.

Bookmakers littered the boundary calling the odds and adding another dimension to the match atmosphere and to the performances on the field. Edward Steven, nicknamed 'Humpy' was the finest bowler around in 1770 until David Harris entered the scene. Both developed a technique



Round arm action from the legendary W.G. Grace

beyond simple pace and made greater use of length, direction, spin and in the case of Harris, pace off the wicket. The radical change of bowling technique inevitably brought a similar response from the batsman who now had to consider moving towards the ball and developing a wider variety of shots on the off side. Of course this was really what early cricket was about - the battle for superiority between batsman and bowler. As the inventive bowler widened his scope and introduced a variety of deliveries, the skilful batsmen soon adapted to the change to gradually regain his dominance. This intriguing encounter was the backbone of cricket development throughout the nineteenth century which began with the underarm bowler and his variety of deliveries, moved to round arm and then eventually to overarm as each time the batsman mastered his innovative endeavours.

WINDS OF CHANGE CONTINUE

Resentment to the round-arm delivery brought legislation in 1816 to prohibit it although it was not until 1822 that John Willies of Kent became the first bowler to be no-balled. However the winds of change were blowing in favour of invention and by 1835 the law was altered to allow the delivery below shoulder level and thus round-arm was legalised. But is was still not enough for some and when Umpire John Lillywhite no-balled Kent's Edgar Willsher for overarm bowling in August 1862 the legislators were again in turmoil. The issue was eventually resolved on the 10th June 1864 when the laws were again amended to permit overarm bowling, although it was not until twenty years later that the technique could have been described as prevalent. By that time scoring runs had become more difficult and the next era was one where the batsman systematically developed his technique to combat the vastly improved bowling.

It was against this background that Ulster cricket was established in Belfast and Lisburn shortly after 1830, and it developed with the great boom in club



Edward 'Lumpy' Stevens - the great Surrey bowler of the 18th century whose ability to bowl consistently between the stumps without hitting either was eventually rewarded when the third stump was added.



North Down's "Grub" bowler at the turn of the century Samuel Turner

formation from 1850 to 1890. The same controversial actions in England were copied in Ireland and similarly by the end of the nineteenth century the overarm code was in the ascendancy. This was much lamented by enthusiasts of the day as most teams retained a 'grub' bowler to give variety to their attack. The outstanding exponents of the art in the latter half of the eighteenth century were Tom Hanna (Ulster), Frank Williams (Cliftonville), Willie Vint (North of Ireland) and Sam Turner, one of the famous brothers who starred at North Down.

The 'grub' bowling technique was essentially an underarm delivery pitched a few yards down the wicket with a skilful twist of the wrist to curl the ball towards the right handed batsman. Hanna was probably the finest of this underarm quartet having won widespread recognition in 1877 by taking 124 wickets, 118 of them clean bowled! He also performed the hat trick on his Irish debut against I Zingari, the only Irish bowler to perform such a feat.

However, like his contempories, he was to become history as the overarm code gradually asserted dominance by the turn of the century, although by that time his playing days were long passed. It is barely conceivable in 1990 that an underarm bowler could pose any serious threat to the modern batsman, but that in no way should devalue the huge contribution the early underarm exponents gave to cricket.

An art gone, but not forgotten...

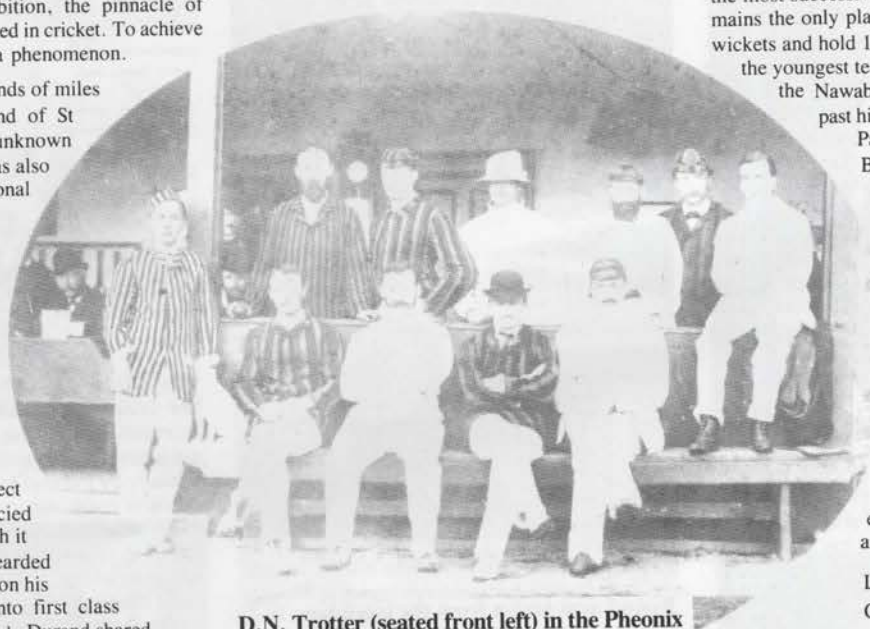


William Lillywhite (1792-1854) - the Sussex bowler who pioneered the fight to legalise round arm bowling

QUIRKS OF AGE

Last November a previously unknown sixteen year old Indian batsman made a sensational test debut against Pakistan in Karachi. For Sachin Tendulkar it was the ultimate in ambition, the pinnacle of achievement in a nation steeped in cricket. To achieve it so young, something of a phenomenon.

Several months later thousands of miles away in the Caribbean island of St Lucia another previously unknown cricketer Mervin Durand was also launched into the international limelight with similar aplomb. Although at 29, somewhat late in the debutant stakes, the small West Indian left arm spinner created total havoc in the touring England batting line- up with mercurial figures of 7 for 15 in 19.4 overs. This amazing performance from a 'rookie' set up an unexpected victory for the unfancied Windward Islands although it remains to be seen if the bearded Durand will go on to build on his dramatic if belated entry into first class cricket. Ironically, although Durand shared the cricketing spotlight with someone thousands of miles away and almost half his age, it is one of the strange quirks of cricket that age and experience can mean so much and yet so little in the game. History has thrown up some amazing examples to colour this intriguing facet of the sport...



D.N. Trotter (seated front left) in the Pheonix 1st XI of 1882. He is the youngest Irish debutant

'BABES' OF THE FIRST CLASS STAGE

The youngest player to appear in first class cricket was Charles Robertson Young (15 years 131 days) who made his debut for Hampshire against Kent in June 1867. George Frederick Grace, younger brother of the legendary 'WG', was a mere 28 days older when he first appeared for the Gentelmen of England against Oxford University the previous year. However the youngest test debutant remains Parkistan's Mushtag Mohammed who was just 124 days past his fifteenth birthday when he made his historic test entry against the West Indies at Lahore in 1959. Yorkshire's Brian Close is the youngest English test debutant on record after making his debut against New Zealand at Old Trafford in 1949. He was 18 years and 149 days old at the time. Although both were to later receive many celebrated acholades their debuts were less cellubrious. They were both dropped for the next match!

Another Yorkshire legend holds the record of being the oldest man to play in a test match. The great Wilfred Rhodes was a spritely 52 years and 165 days young when he made his 58th and last appearance for England at Sabina Park, Jamaica in April 1930. His amazing test career spanned 31 years 315 days and even in his farewell to the test arena he remained one of its star performers. With typical northern frugality his 44.5 overs yielded a paltry 39 runs and produced two wickets. This was an incredible match and because it was timeless, its priceless statistics will enthuse the cricketing connoissuer. New records were set for the longest match (3rd -12th April), the highest team total (England 849 in their first innings), the highest individual score (England opening batsman A Sandham 325), and the highest aggregate of runs (1815). Not surprisingly the match was drawn! Rhodes carried his bat in both innings but it was a relative 'youngster' who set yet another batting record. Later to be dubbed the 'Black Bradman', twenty year old George Headley scored a superb 223 runs in his second innings to become the youngest double centurion of all time. The record stood for 46 years until Javed Miandad scored 206 against New Zealand at Karachi in 1976. He was just 141 days past his nineteenth birthday.

SOBERS STILL THE GREATEST

Mushtag also holds the record of being the youngest player to score a century and indeed the only test batsman to score two centuries before his nineteen birthday. He was just 17 years 82 days old when he scored 101 against India at Delhi in 1961. At the other end of the scale the great Jack Hobbs was 46 years 82 days old when he became the oldest test centurion by scoring 142 against Australia at Melbourne. This record has remained intact after some 51 years.

For many Gary Sobers will always be regarded as the greatest cricketer of all time. He was the youngest triple centurion following his record 365 not out at Sabina Park in 1958 aged 21 years and 216 days. Sobers holds many records in test cricket including the most successive matches as captain (39) and remains the only player to score 1000 runs, take 100 wickets and hold 100 catches. However, he was not the youngest test captain. This honour is held by the Nawab of Pataudi (Jun) who was 77 days past his 21st birthday when he captained Pakistan against the West Indies in Barbados in March 1962. In sharp contrast W G Grace was the oldest test captain having led England in the first test match staged at Trent Bridge in 1899. The legendary Doctor was 50 years 320 days old when he led the England team for the last time a team which ironically included Wilfred Rhodes, making his test debut. The Yorkshire man scored only 6 runs but took 4 for 58 and 3 for 60. It was the end of one remarkable test career and the beginning of another.



Godfrey Graham. The only seventeen year old debutant in last sixty years.

LATE DEVELOPERS IN IRISH CRICKET?

Irish cricket has its own peculiarities in contrast of age and performance although in more recent times the record books have been rarely threatened. At international level the increasing physical and mental demands in a game which is still essentially amateur, tends to delay debut until early twenties but stretch careers into late thirties. In the cases of Ivan Anderson, Michael Halliday, Brendan O'Brien and Dermott Monteith the forty bench-mark was even comfortably passed! In Monteith's case, the possibility existed of going as far as fifty such was his reputation and esteem but tragically as a result of a hit and run accident his career was prematurely ended in early 1985. Although one of Ireland's finest players his development took a fairly predictable pattern. He was first capped at 22, and assumed the captaincy at 33.

In sharp contrast, former chairman of Selectors Alec O'Riordan was only 20 years 361 days old when he became Ireland's youngest captain in 1961. The former Old Belevede ace was an exceptional cricketer whose talents were recognised and harnessed early in his career. He made his international debut in 1958 as an eighteen year old having first played senior league cricket at Clontarf four years earlier. However the big all rounder was still older than a spate of Irish debutants, seven of whom were capped prior to their eighteenth birthday. D N Trotter of Dublin University and Phoenix holds the honour of being the youngest at 17 years 115 days when he won the first of his 18 caps against I Zingari in 1875. Armagh's R J 'Bobby' Barnes was a mere 23 days older when he made his debut against MCC in 1928. The brilliant rugby and cricket international was one of Armagh's finest sportsmen and won 14 caps in a distinguished career which spanned the war years and eventually ended at Waringstown.

Surprisingly of the seven seventeen year old Irish debutants only one has acheived the honour in the last sixty years. The popular Dublin leg-spinner Godfrey Graham won his solitary cap against Scotland in 1954 and although never again regcognised at national level, he has been a wonderful ambassador to the game as player and administrator.



R.H. Lambert - Age, experience and brilliance

TEENAGE DEBUTANTS

There have been very few teenage debutants since the war although Aubrey Finlay (1957), Charlie Corry (1959), Raymond Moan (1970), Peter O'Reilly (1982), Michael Shannon (1984) and Michael Rea (1985) were noteworthy exceptions. At the other end of the scale there have been several over thirty, including former Irish captain Alfie Linehan (1972) and Lenister spinner Gerry Kirwan who was 41 when he entered the international fray in 1983. However all remain well outside the record books....

The oldest Irish debutant was H C O'Hare - Moore who was 112 days short of his fiftieth birthday when he made his solitary appearance against the MCC in 1930. Four years earlier H H DeBurgh won his only cap at 47 years 113 days old in a match against Oxford University but for many northerners the legendary Willie Andrews of North Down is long remembered as one of the oldest active participants in the game. Capped once in 1928 at the age of 42, the inimitable 'Mr Willie' played for his club while in his seventies and produced as straight a bat as any fifty years his junior!

In competitive terms the ageless David Pigot of Phoenix might prove his equal. Still playing in his sixties the authorative Dublin solicitor would shame most modern sportsmen with his boundless enthusiasm and fitness.

A late debutant to Irish cricket at 36, he played for 12 years scoring 1513 runs including eight half-centuries. Last year he made a nostalgic return to Sion Mills to play in a special celebration charity match to commemorate Ireland's great demise of the West Indies in 1969. However even the dapper Pigot is somewhat short of the Irish record. That honour goes to another Phoenix stalwart, the legendary R H 'Bob' Lambert. One of Ireland's all time greats he was well past 56 when he played his last Irish game in 1930 against the MCC. His 52 caps spanned 28 years and at 53 years 22 days old, he also holds the record of being the oldest Irish captain (v MCC in 1927). He holds a very special place in Irish cricket both as player and administrator. In 1908 at College Park he scored 116 not out and took 7 for 45 and 3 for 29 against the touring Philadelphians. Even at 51 in 1925 he was still good enough to produce the excellent 1925 figures of 10 for 72 against the MCC at Lords.

It all goes to emphasise that age and experience can mean so much and yet so little in cricket.

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ENJOYING THE GAME – LARNE CRICKET CLUB

by Michael Waterman



The Larne 1st and 2nd teams of 1958 - Kneeling: B. Clarke, R. Warwick, J. Apsley. Front: S. McNally, J. Heron, A. Girvan, J. Snoddy, B. Lawn. Back Row: A. Seaton, M. Lawson, K. Moore, A. Lemon, S. Eland, J. Campbell, M. McQuicken, B. Patterson, B. King, J. Logie, D. Rodgers, B. McFeterige

The first Larne team to appear on official records was Larne B.L who played in the lower divisions of the Northern Cricket Union Junior League from 1933 to 1937. By any standards their playing record was abysmal which probably explains their disappearance after only five years of competitive cricket!

Several years later as war spread its ugly path across Europe, the Larne Times of 23rd March 1940 detailed the possible resurrection of the old club in an article entitled the 'Editor's Notebook'.

'An invitation from the Secretary of the Northern Cricket Union has been received by Larne cricketers to take part in some of the cup competitions during the coming season. There seems to be no real reason why the town, which is one of the best centres in the Province for all outdoor sports, should not participate in at least one of the cricket competitions and a meeting will be held tonight in the Technical College to talk over what can be done as regards accepting the invitation.'

EARLY OFFICERS OF THE CLUB

The meeting itself produced enough encouragement for another gathering on 6th April and the Times Editor, T L Price took a leading role by becoming Club chairman. Other officers included the Major of Larne, Sir Thomas Dixon, who was elected President, H J Griffiths (Hon Secretary), R A Gray (Hon Treasurer) and Irvine McGraw the club captain. Mr E S Stevenson also gave the club sterling service and was later made an Honorary Member in gratitude for his support of the local team and his work in the Northern Cricket Union.

GIRVAN'S 'GOLDEN YEARS'

Success was modest in the war years. Armagh Seconds in the 1948 Junior Qualifying Cup final gave the club a huge morale boost. It was to prove our only cup success although the heroes of the hour deserved a much richer succession. Two prominent figures in that historic team were the Rev Alan Buchanan, later to beocme Bishop of Clogher and Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin, and Aubrey Girvan who became Mayor of the town some years later. Aubrey was a fine servant of Larne cricket and led the team from 1950 to 1965 in a period dubbed the 'Girvan years'. These were indeed great years for the club and three successive league triumphs saw Larne move from Qualifying 'D' section to Qualifying 'A' by 1958. The following year the firsts made an unsuccessful challenge to Dungannon in the Intermediate Cup final while the seconds were not to be outshone and also secured league promotion in 1957.



Larne skipper Aubrey Girvan in action with the ball

RICH BLEND OF PERSONALITIES

Aubrey was not just the captain, he was the club's best batsman and a fine all round sportsman. He skippered Junior Ulster on several occasions and played soccer with distinction for Larne, Cliftonville and Ballyclare Comrades. He was also a noted table-tennis player!

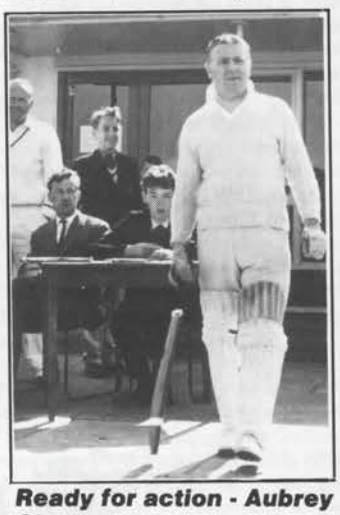
The spearhead of the bowling during the 'golden years' was seamer John Apsley whose tricky deliveries left many visiting batsmen short of runs on their long visit to Larne. Other stalwarts included Michael Lawson, Maurice McQuilken, John Heren and Scott McNally. John and Scott have given much to the Larne cause and presently hold the important offices of President and Chairman respectively. They are still enthusiastic and capable members of the Third Eleven.

The Larne team of the Sixties was a motley crew from a wide variety of backgrounds. It also included Joe Pink, the manager of Ballylumford Power Station and the talented Robin Walsh, now a top BBC executive in London.

DEMISE IN THE SEVENTIES

The Seventies saw the inevitable retirement of the 'old guard' of Aubrey and John and some lean years for the club. Despite the emergence of a younger generation in Jim Seymour, Ian Heron, Mac Lilley and Liam 'the Sheik' McAllister, the club faced the ignominy of a possible disbandment in 1980. This would have been a tragedy for the Larne area and in particular for Rodney Newell who was the club's best player over the decade and our first centurian in NCU competition.

Our darkest hour came at the beginning of the 1980 season when down to one team and struggling to get players, the Union issued a final ultimatum following two matches in which we could not field a team at all. 'D Day' saw us pitched against the now defunct Loopvale at Cherryvale in Belfast, a round trip which started by train and ended with black taxis taking seven dedicated enthusiasts up the Ravenhill Road.



Ready for action - Aubrey Girvan

The fixture was fulfilled, albeit with a depleated team but some hard-earned time had been won to take stock and hopefully save the club.

AMAZING TRANSFORMATION

Ironically it was the Larne Times which again came to the rescue. When the club's sad plight was highlighted in the local paper, a flock of youngsters joined the ranks. Under the guidance of dedicated stalwarts Joe Moore, Dessie McFaul, Clive Glass and Larne's own 'pop star' Elser Burke, the club rose like a phoenix from the ashes.

Within a few years three Saturday teams were back in existance but perhaps of even greater significance under 19 and under 15 teams had been formed. It was an amazing transformation from the depths of despair and a great tribute to some loyal club officials who refused to allow cirket to die in the Larne area. Their reward can be measured in the success of a new genera tion of yourg players, three of whom have represented Ulster at Under 15 level. Mark McNeill and the talented Craig brothers, Johnathan and Colin, have all won representative honours and Johnathan has matured into a fine senior league player at Ballymena. Their success is also shared by those seven dedicated enthusiasts who saw the club through its darkest hour and laid the platform for a celebration of 50 years of cricket since the club was resurrected back in 1940. But what of the next fifty years?

Of course our members want success. Possibly a new clubhouse and a new ground. But Larne is not traditionally a cricketing stronghold so the members are realistic enough to appreciate what they value most - enjoyment of the game. If that enjoyment equals the first fifty years, then it will prove just as successful, with or without the trophies.

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ULSTER'S FIRST TRIP TO MUNSTER

Ulster's first visit to Cork in June 1925 sparked a revival in the fortunes of Munster cricket following the traumas of the Great War and the civil unrest throughout Ireland which ultimately saw the withdrawal of the British military from the South. It was to prove the beginning of a series of popular exchanges which did much to foster close sporting ties between north and south and promote the game of cricket in the two areas. Several years later Munster returned the compliment with the first visit north and the hospitality and entertainment so freely provided at both locations fully emphasised the spirit in which the matches were played. The cricket was hard and competitive but at a leisurely enjoyable pace. The hospitality embracing!

WARM WELCOME IN CORK

Despite the long journey to Cork the Ulster players made the most of the trip with a relaxing overnight stop at the Four Courts Hotel in Dublin. Catching the 7am train posed no major problems and a civilised breakfast was enjoyed as the party slowly passed through the beautiful rural countryside. Although not Ulster's strongest, it was a formidable team, admirably captained by North Down and NCU stalwart, the inimitable Willie Andrews. For most it was a first visit to the deep south but any lingering fears of uncertainly were quickly removed by the cordial welcome of Captain J C Hart and his fellow Munster officials at Cork station. The popular former Irish international, dubbed the 'heart and soul' of Munster cricket, gave unselfishly of his time and resources to ensure his visitors had a memorable stay in Cork and was visibly warmed by their praise of the beautiful Mardyke ground, resplendent alongside the River Lee. One of Irish cricket's most idyllic settings it had been manicured to perfection by willing members to prove a fitting platform for the occasion.

HISTORIC ORIGINS

Although this was Ulster's first visit to Cork this was far from an exhibition match. The origins of cricket in Ireland were rooted in the South with matches at the Mardyke dating back to 1874. A strong military presence did much to develop and promote the sport in its formative years and there were many distinguished cricketing visitors, including the legendary W G Grace. The two local clubs Cork County and Bohemians shared the Mardyke with their enthusiastic members dividing the workload in the absence of professional groundsmen. Sir George Colthurst and his family established the Cork County club and generously promoted cricket in the area. He later captained the Irish international team and remains one of a rare group of father and son international combinations. However the greatest Cork player was Sir T C O'Brien who starred for MCC and Middlesex at the end of the 19th century. His impressive record at all levels of top class representative cricket has no peer in Ireland and his 167 against Oxford University in 1902 was the highest score by an Irish batsman until 1973.

BATSMEN REVEL IN SUNSHINE

The 1925 match aroused considerable interest in the Cork area and gave cricket a welcome boost following a general decline over the preceding decade. The visit of the northern players attracted many former Munster players back to the fold and enthused new recruits. Captain Hart was a willing and most sporting host who did much to create the perfect environment for a sporting spectacular. He was not to be disappointed.

The Ulster batsmen revelled in the beautiful sunshine and the fast outfield provided runs in abundance. North of Ireland opener J C Walton (72) led the way, ably supported by an excellent fifty from a young James Macdonald. There were also entertaining contributions from Willie Irwin (40), Jack Dearden (39) and AC Douglas (22), who later in the season won his first Irish cap. The Ulster team reached a formidable 286 but the Munster reply was equally impressive with Parry (95 no) and Hall (53) the backbone of an entertaining 231. The 55 runs advantage allowed the canny Andrews the luxury of a declaration at 146/4 after Douglas (91) had thrilled the crowd with a masterful batting display. However his heroics with both bat and ball were not sufficient to win the day and an inspired Hall (60) saw Munster hold on at 108 for 7 for a well deserved draw.

With over 770 runs scored the winner in this historic interprovincial match was the game of cricket. Played in a wonderful sporting manner, the friendship and goodwill created by the visit was much in evidence. Cordial hospitality from the Munster Union was warmly received by the visitors who throughly enjoyed the Tuesday evening at a local music hall show. That it was surpassed in excellence the following evening was a further measure of the quality of the hospitality. Almost immediately after stumps were drawn private cars whisked the players off to Crosshaven for a sumptuous meal overlooking Spike Island and the beautiful Queenstown harbour. The after dinner revellry was followed by a 15 mile dust-covered retreat to Cork which saw goats, donkeys and even courting couples dive for cover as the local drivers sported their driving skills in an impromtu race to get back to the Metropole Hotel first! Thankfully all made it safely.

MEMORABLE TRIPS

The 1925 trip will be long remembered as the first of many visits to Munster by northern teams. In one of his after-match speeches Willie Andrews captured the spirit of the exchanges when he said 'the northern players vied for selection for these memorable trips.' That same spirit was echoed several years later at the Waring household in Waringstown, when the Munster team was cornered following its first visit north and distinguished skipper Sir George Colthurst totally agreed with the Ulster captain about sport bringing about a better understanding amongst the people of Ireland'. Appropriately his toast was 'the Ulster team' coupled with the name of their hostess Mrs Waring, one of the kindest benefactors to local cricket and whose name is indelibly enshrined in the Waringstown club. Grand old days they were for Irish Cricket.

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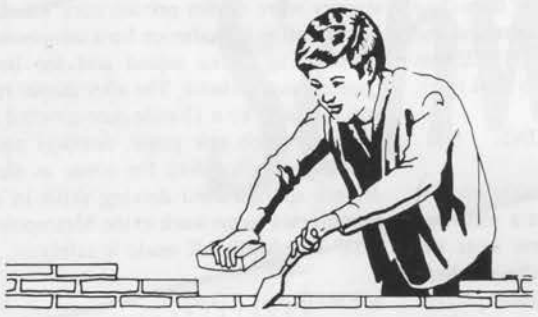
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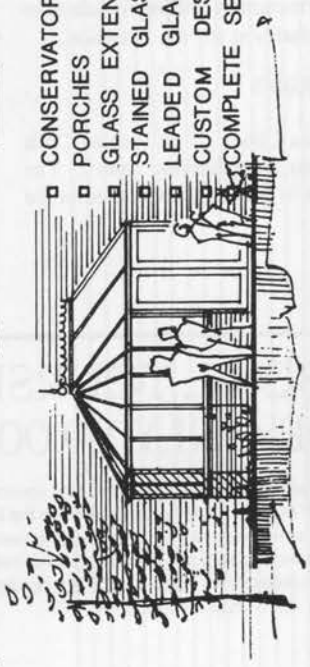
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DOWNPATRICK IN THE FORTIES

By Eric Malone

It's as nice a ground in Ulster as one could wish to see. Situated just outside the town and flanked on two sides by country roads, it offers an unparalleled view to the passerby. Tall trees on one side will cast a lengthy shadow across the playing-pitch as evening draws nigh. The colourful pavilion stands proudly on rising ground overlooking the prized square and the club flag hangs limp at the top of the flag-pole. Such is the scene on a Saturday afternoon at the approach of 3 o'clock. Nothing but the stumps guard the sacred turf which has been carefully groomed by the groundsmen for the past week. Spectators reclining on seats ring the boundary although some are still arriving while others are content to watch play from the hedges. That is the setting for today's match in Downpatrick.

You are certain to see a small-set man with a nervous cigarette in his hand parading the boundary-line. He once played cricket himself, then promoted the game and nursed the club into the Senior status it enjoys today. In a word, only for him, cricket in this town would have died a natural death. He has retired from organising now but is still as keenly interested as ever. In fact, he hasn't the slightest doubt that his team will win.

The groundsman too was a cricketer himself. He knows what a plumb wicket is and how to prepare one. Every pitch he nurses with meticulous care and if he's not seen working in the playing arena, he's busily engaged elsewhere on the ground. In his heyday he had a 'gift' for taking the short 'un and he could get a nip out of the pitch with his spinners. As a batsman, he was the devil to shift!

The team is a varied selection. There is a research worker, a clergyman, a schoolteacher, a sanitary officer, an insurance official, a transport clerk, a postman, a lorry-driver, a carpenter, a cattle dealer and a farmer. But when on the field of play, they are completely united in showing their prowess with both bat and ball. This year the captain is also our wicket-keeper. He is very popular among his mates and can make the ball soar to the country if the occasion demands it. The young school-teacher has been promoted from the second eleven to strengthen the batting, and also shows promise 'in the field'.

The sanitary officer has played for his country before today and by nature is an opening batsman. He uses his feet to good advantage and knows how to despatch the no-ball. As a 'silly' mid-on he has no equal. His opening partner is usually a player who has mastered the art of 'digging in' and if his compatriots are being 'bombed out', he masters the bowling through sheer determination and will power.

Then there is the action player, very alert in fielding and going in to bat at number 5 or 6, he has the 'gift' of getting runs when most need ed. He can also send down an accurate over with the ball if needed and has the reputation of breaking a profitable partnership. Next we have the stylish batsman from whose bat large scores have often originated, though he's out of form lately. There is also a player who has shown his ability in the role of batsman and spin bowler since his schooldays.

As a point fielder he has taken many snappy catches. Then we come to the stock bowler who keeps a very accurate length, and when his turn comes to bat, the home spectators expect the 'fireworks' only he can produce.

The worker in wood by trade aims to strike the woodwork with the ball. As an opening bowler of some pace, he is hardly equalled in the province, and when runs are needed, he is most likely to get them. The team also includes a prolific scorer who until recent years was always good for a fifty. His batting ability was recognised when in his teens but with him it is either a feast or a famine. As a slip fielder he has no equal. Last but not least, mention must be made of the player picked for bowling of slow left-arm spinners although he can 'keep up his end' too. So that's our fine team and here comes the umpires going out. We can now sit back and enjoy another afternoon of Downpatrick cricket...



Pitch preparations by Jimmy Telford, Gerald Kelly and Eddie Malone - June 1949. Photos courtesy of Eric Malone.



The Downpatrick 1st XI in Eric Malone's team of characters - Back row: J. Telford, N. Ferguson, E.V. Malone, J. Shields. Front row: J.E. Malone, W. Ferris, R. Hutton, F.G. Kelly (Capt.), M. Bell, J. Calvert, S.R. Adams

UMPIRES CORNER

LESS TIME TO TOSS

NCU captains will have less time to toss following a change in bye-law (a) during the winter. At the request of Umpires Association Chairman Paddy O'Hara, the 20 minutes stipulation was reduced to 15 minutes in line with the general laws of cricket. The motion was unanimously accepted.

MIXED FEELINGS ON 'BANDING'

The NCU Umpires Committee's move to band Umpires into four categories and only allocate the highest graded to the top matches has not won widespread appeal (excuse the pun!). Some have felt it might generate 'elitism' and possibly de-motivate aspiring officials. However the concept of the scheme appears fair although the problem of trying to accommodate ambitious recurits must be faced with the delicate balance between experience and relative inexperience. Perhaps after a season of the new system a compromise will be agreed with the benefit of hindsight?

POWER OF THE UMPIRING CODE

The name of W S 'Willie' Corken will not be rembered as one of the most outstanding players in NCU history, but he will always have a special place in the history of the umpiring code.

Prior to 1924 'home' umpires were the order of the day and it took much discussion and lobbying to get a neutral scheme introduced. A native of Lisburn, Willie Corken was an excellent administrator and the devoted committee member who was elected to act as the first Hon Secretary of the 'Official Umpires Scheme'. Clubs were asked to recommend suitable candidates and fourteen applications were received, eleven of whom were professionals. The three amateurs were highly respected former players A Reid, (Muckamore), W G Loughrey (Ulster) and T McDowell (CPA).

Tuesday was always an important day for Umpires. The morning post usually brought news of Saturday's appointment and for the 'professionals', payment for services rendered the previous Saturday! Indeed their terms were regarded as quite generous by 1924 standards - 'All expenses paid, tea provided free, lunch costs defrayed and the opportunity to travel all around the countryside!'

A tireless servant of the administration cause, Willie Corken still found time to be Hon Secretary of the CIYMS Sports Club, captain the 1st X1 and be Hon Treasurer of the Amateur Football league! A busy man by any standards!



With time on his hands; Umpires Chairman Paddy O'Hara.

BIG 'THREE' IN LISBURN

The 'Big Three' of the Umpiring World, Sheila Hill (Chairman of the Association of Cricket Umpires), Martin Reed, (Editor of 'How's That?') and 'Robbie' Robins (Deputy chairman of the A C U Training Board) were welcome guests at the February monthly meeting of the NICUA in Lisburn.

Another popular visitor was Leinster President John Heavey as were leading NCU officials Tom McCloy and Clarence Hiles.

The evening was well attended and the lively spirit in the umpiring fraternity much in evidence. Chairman Paddy O'Hara skilfully orchestrated the many awkward questions fired at the celebrity panel with a panache which would have graced the High Court.

NCU President Tom McCloy paid a handsome tribute to the Association for all their enthusiam and for their part in promoting local cricket.

Alwyn Orr and Eileen McGuire laid on a fine supper and the evening continued late with the usual revelry associated with Wallace Park hospitality!

1990 INTERNATIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Wednesday 9th May
New Zealand - (Louis Hogan and Maurice Moore)
at Downpatrick

Thursday 10th May
New Zealand - (Beattie Arlow and Harry Henderson)
at Ormeau

Friday 8th June
Worcester - (Louis Hogan and Beattie Arlow)
at Clontarf

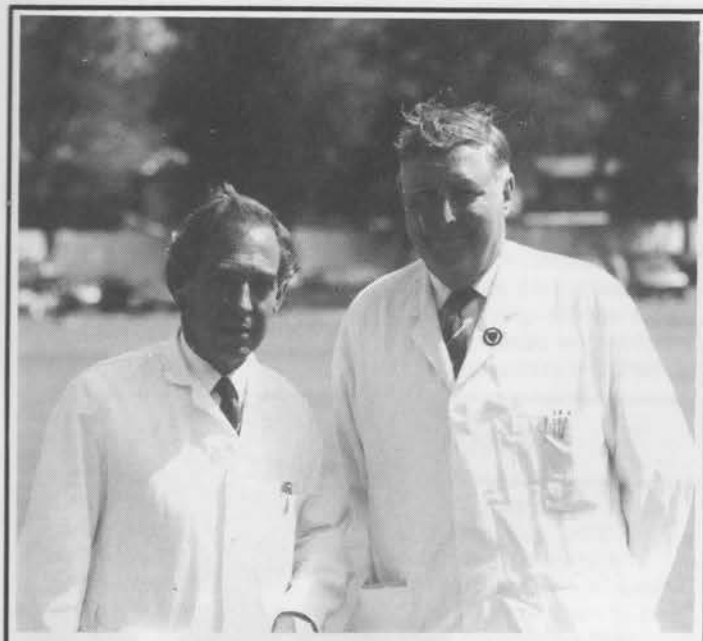
Saturday 9th June
Worcester - (Harry Henderson and Maurice Moore)
at Clontarf

Saturday/Sunday/Monday 16/17/18th June
MCC - (Beattie Arlow and Harry Henderson)
at Coleraine

Sunday/Monday/Tuesday 29/30/31st July
Wales - (Louis Hogan and Maurice Moore)
at Carlisle, Dublin

NCU Touche Ross Senior Cup Final
Peter Lunney and Paddy O'Hara

NCU Isherwood and Boyd Junior Cup Final
George Archer and Trevor Henry



NCU international umpires Maurice Moore and Peter Lunney

INTERNATIONAL FURORE!

In their wisdom the Irish Cricket Union Executive Committee delegated the appointments for the 1990 international fixtures to the Cricket Committee in an attempt to ensure that the people directly involved in the playing of the game, could best judge the quality of the officials. In particular it was felt the interprovincial captains and several leading players, would be most suitable to perform this function since they were closer to the action that spectating officials. But how the theory backfired!

When Committee Chairman John Elder announced the appointments only one official from Dublin was favoured and one from the North West. Another snub was directed towards the NCU nominations where seasoned international umpires Peter Lunney got a solitary one day appointment and George Archer none! Quite clearly the cricket committee rejected the opinions of the Provincial Unions but must have anticipated the furore their decisions brought in both Dublin and Belfast. In defence of the NCU situation John Elder did point out that their officials were standing on 10 of the 20 days international cricket. He also said the decisions were essentially the combination of the last three years match reports on interprovincial umpires and the opinions of the four interprovincial captains present. However such platitudes are unlikely to quell the bitter reaction from the umpiring associations whose members felt short-changed by the controversial allocations. Nor surprisingly both the Leinster and the Northern Cricket Union Executive Committee wrote to the Irish Cricket Union expressing their strong disapproval.

CONGRATULATIONS



Looking for a leg up the ladder? — George Archer

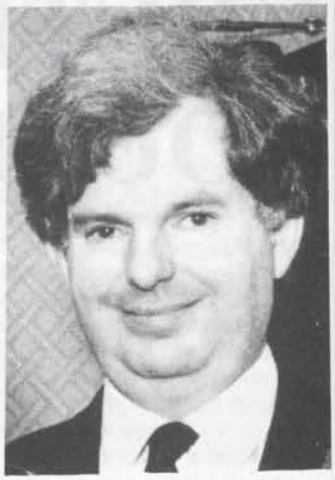
The three distinguished ACU officials did not get a quiet week-end when they visited Ireland but had to 'work' for their money! In their capacity as the Instructors Assessment Panel they ruled their thumbs over George Archer, Stanley Long, Paddy O'Hara and Leinster's 'Paddy' Tuffrey with a view to their elevation to Grade 2,Instructor status. Happily all four were successful and deserve the heartiest congratulations.

CELEBRITY TEASER

Umpiring doyen Murray Power provides our celebrity 'teaser'. In his dual guise as international scorer his tester is ---

'The first three balls in a match produced an amazing sequence. Batsmen numbered one, two, and three were all clean bowled. How come?'

Answer on page 54



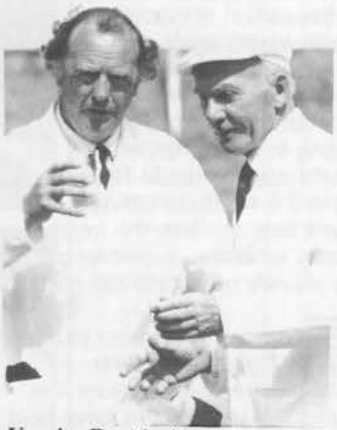


Still going strong - popular Armagh official Joe Vaughan

LIFE IN THE 'OLD DOGS'!

Without giving away state secrets, it could be said that even by Umpiring standards, seasoned campaigners Joe Vaughan, Stanley Long and George Archer are approaching 'veteran' status. However any thoughts of cruising through the winter would be misplaced with this active trio. All three have been willing and enthusiastic instructors to their aspiring colleagues and would shame many senior players with their committment and dedication. Keep up the good work boys. After all, Sam McCormick (Sen) still sees you as youngsters!

GROUND REPORTS



Umpire Beattie Arlow combines his official duties with associate Peter Reith and no doubt runs his eye over the ground!

NCU Umpires will be invited to submit ground reports to the convenor of the Grounds Committee Beattie Arlow, following a change in the administration during the winter. After considerable criticism of the previous method of assessment, most of it unwarranted, future gradings will be determined by reports from visiting captains and the officiating Umpires. It is hoped that this method will produce a more accurate assessment since the assessors will be in the thick of the action and best qualified to comment. Although clubs will be fined if reports are not received a similiar penalty was felt unnecessary in respect of the Umpires!

YOUTH/SCHOOLS ROUND UP



by DES McCALL

NORTHERN BANK SPONSORSHIP

The Northern Bank has kindly agreed to support youth cricket with a three year sponsorship package for the Senior Schools Cup. The Bank has a long association with cricket over the years and this move into the schools game is a welcome boost.

The balance of power in Senior Schools has moved from the North West to Mid-Antrim over the past couple of years with Ballymena Academy capturing the league title in 1988 and 1989. No doubt all challengers will be striving to prevent them for achieving the 'hat-trick'. I wonder, who will be disappointed at the end of term - Ballymena or the rest? Time will tell.

Limavady GS holders of the Under 14 league title will have a tough fight to retain their title. Not only will they have to overcome local rivals in the North-West but they will have to play three games in the knock-out series, having been drawn out of the hat to play in the only quarter-final tie should they win Section C in the Round Robin series of games.

SCHOOLS IN ACTION

The highlight of the schools season will be the Senior Schools Internationals against Wales at Trysygerwyn and England at Winchester in the week beginning 23 July. Ireland Senior Coach, Ian Johnston, has already been appointed to look after the squad and with a high proportion of last year's Ulster and Leinster interprovincial sides available again this season, newcomers will have to perform extremely well to gain recognition.

The Schools Interpro returns to Malahide on 9/10/11th July and with the last two games ending in draws, hopefully it will be a case of 'third time lucky' for a positive result. Ulster Schools are, again, participating in the Northern Schools Festival and once again because it overlaps with the Internationals, there will be the opportunity for some players who may not have otherwise had the chance to sample top class representative competion.

At Under 15 level, 'Ted's team' will have an extended tour this season, taking in games against Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Cheshire, Lancashire and North Wales before their international fixture with Wales on 23/24 July. Wales have held the upper hand in recent years but Ted and coach John McLean are determined to reverse the trend this year and already have begun to make plans for the downfall of the Welsh.

INTERPROVINCIALS

Those eligible for the next year's (1991) Under 19 competition have the incentive to perform well this season and so put themselves in the frame for selection for the International Youth Tournament, which will be held in Canada. At this early stage there would appear to be a number of talented players available and the selectors will be watching with interest to see how those who have just left the Under 15 ranks in the past couple of years have developed and how they have handled the transition to the next grade of representative cricket.

The Northern sides will be keen to re-capture the Under 19 title currently held by North Leinster. Ulster Country with their great strength in depth would seem to be best equipped for the task, although you can never under-estimate the raw talent of the North-West.

Munster will again be hosting the Under 15 Tournament and again the NCU and the North West squads will be attempting to wrest the title from Leinster. Who wins could well depend on which Union benefits most by the change of age limit and is therefore able to call upon the services of most players who have experienced this competition before.

CLUB SCENE

The draws for the Graham and Colts Cup have resulted in last year's finalists in both competitions in opposite halves of this year's draws; so the way is clear for repeat performances. However this is unlikely, as changes in line-ups at this level are ongoing and the loss of even one player can make a significant alteration to the strength of a side. One thing is sure, neither competition will be won without a great deal of effort, committment, enthusiasm and skill of the players and prolonged bouts of nail-biting and worry by parents and officials.

The names of Bangor, Ballymena, Lisburn, Lurgan and Donacloney, who are traditionally well to the fore in these competitions, are again expected to feature in the latter stages of the competitions.

The Under 15 and Under 13 leagues give boys more opportunity to play competitive cricket and extend their season through the school holidays. Like the cups, games are competitive - (what boy likes to finish on the losing side?) - and these competitions have played a part in raising the standard of the game at this level and helped prepare players better for the game at representative and adult levels.

SCHOOL AWARDS 1990

Early last year the Board of Directors for Britannic Assurance decided to renew until 1992 their contract with the Test and County Cricket Board of the "Britannic Assurance Championship". In conjunction with the North West of Ireland Cricket Union and the Northern Cricket Union Britannic Assurance have extended their School Awards to cover Northern Ireland. Mr. Moore, District Manager of Britannic Assurance, Londonderry, says that "We consider School Awards to be one of the most valuable aspects of the Sponsorship Package; after all it is in the schools that the future of Irish Cricket will be decided. We are particularly anxious to help schools for whom the prizes will represent a welcome addition to their sporting facilities. By doing our bit for the game through the sponsorship, we hope to encourage talent right across the North West."

This years North West recipient, St. Mary's Boys Primary School, Strabane won cricket equipment in excess of £200. The awards are aimed at schools catering for 11-15 year olds. Of prime consideration is schools where equipment is in short supply but enthusiasm and effort are not.

Mr. Jim Simpson, Chairman of the North West of Ireland Cricket Union, "I welcome the sponsorship of Britannic Assurance in making School Awards available to the North West Cricket Union, and look forward to an even greater response next year from any schools who feel they will wish to be nominated."

This year's Northern Cricket Union recipient was the Royal School, Dungannon whose prize was also cricket equipment in excess of £200.

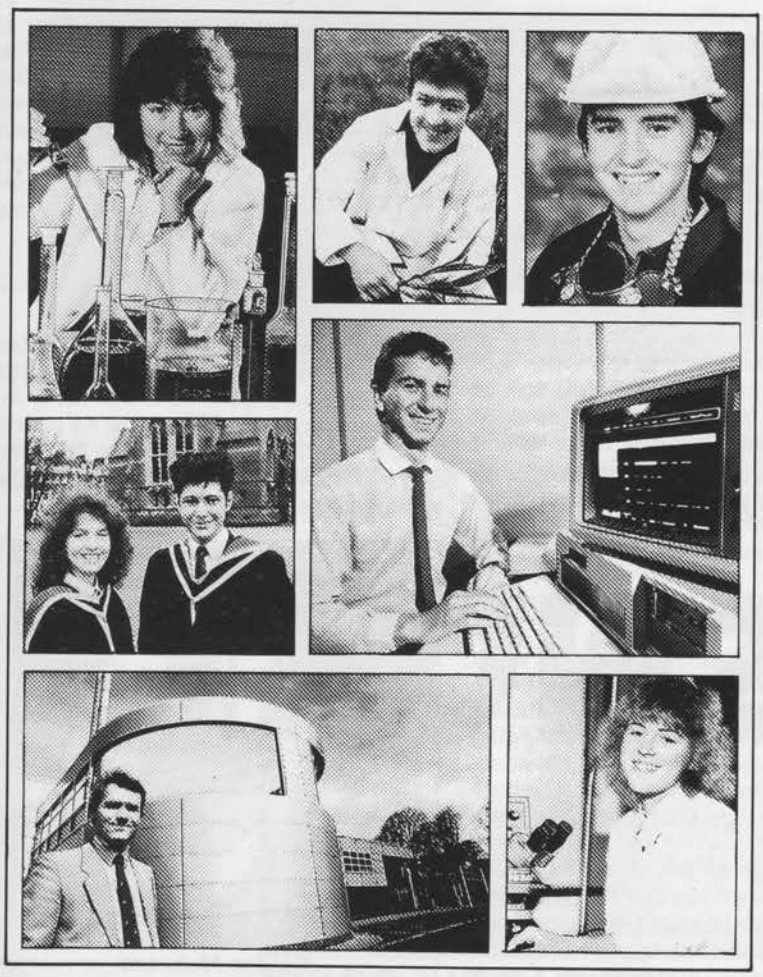
Accepting the Cricket Prize, Royal School Dungannon's Headmaster, Mr. Paul Hewitt, himself a former Senior League cricketer with Instonians and now playing for Coleraine in the North West Union, thanked Britannic Assurance warmly.

"The support of a firm like Britannic is a great boost to cricket in Northern Ireland and especially to our schoolboys where the enthusiasm has developed enormously in recent years" said Mr. Hewitt. "The magnificent West Indies Test Series being seen here on Satellite Television by some of our pupils, together with the prospect of this season's local leagues and County Championship have whetted our young cricketers' appetites greatly and should help to make 1990 a great summer of cricket."

NEW REGULATIONS

The legislators for the Youth Competitions have decided to move towards the rules and regulations applied to the Senior Interprovincial Competition. For the coming season, the Under 19 and Under 15 Interprovincials will be played as 'time' games and bonus points will be awarded for taking wickets. As in the senior competition the points system will hopefully encourage captains (and managers) to seek a positive result. This significant move, hopefully, will improve the standard of the game at this level, produce thinking captains and attacking bowlers, free batsmen from the mental constraint that they only have 'X' overs to bat and allow them to concentrate on building their innings.

In addition the age limit for Under 15 club competitions has been put back six months to bring the qualifying date into line with that applied to Schools cricket. This will erradicate the anomalous situation whereby boys in the same class at school could play for the same school eleven but not necessarily do likewise in the club set-up.



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DOWN MEMORY LANE

TOM McKENZIE AT WARINGSTOWN

Although founded in 1859, Waringstown Cricket Club never made any impact on the Ulster scene until after the turn of the century. The club's first senior success was in the league in 1911 following many years of lowly positions. However, it was to mark the beginning of an era of improving fortunes and one which was highlighted by the performances of their brilliant left arm spin-bowler Tom McKenzie.



QUIET UNASSUMING INDIVIDUAL

A member of one of Waringstown's most celebrated cricketing families of the period, Tom was one of four McKenzies in the club when he first came to prominence in 1909. His bowling prowess hit the local headlines in a Junior league match against neighbours Lurgan when he took 7 wickets for two runs which soon elevated him to the senior ranks. Local cricket enthusiasts will also be aware that two of his grandsons Michael Reith and Gordon McKenzie, later distinguished themselves in the Waringstown colours. Michael is widely acknowledged as one of the best Irish international post-war opening batsmen.

Tom was a quiet unassuming individual who took an active part in the club's administration in the role of Hon Treasurer in 1914.However it was his achievements on the field which brought greatest praise. In 1913 Waringstown reached their first Senior Cup Final but were mauled by the formidable North Down giants of the period, by an innings and 97 runs. The final will be best remembered for a noteable Willie Andrews century although Tom's solitary wicket and seven runs gave him an education of the big occasion. It was a lesson sweetly learned which was ironically put into practice the following year when both teams again graced the NCU showpiece. Tom's first sortee into the North Down batting reaped four wickets for 26 runs to give the villagers a 48 runs advantage, but his second attack was devastating. Even the great 'Mr Willie' succumbed to the mercurial McKenzie spin as eight batsmen fell for 42 runs to produce memorable match figures of 12 for 68 and secure the first of many Waringstown cup successes. Sadly the Great War intervened so it was not until seven years later that Tom returned to the central stage of local cricket.



Michael Reith

BRILLIANT CUP FINAL PERFORMANCES

The 1921 season saw Tom McKenzie at the height of his form. He took a weekly bevvy of wickets and was Waringstown's star player in a team which included outstanding players of the calibre of Hampton, Harwood, Williamson and Irwin. In the cup final he once again ruled the roost over North Down with six victims in a two wicket success but it was his performance at the same stage the following year which has enshrined his name in the NCU record books. On this occasion Cliftonville provided the opposition but the wily Tom dampened their drive with 7 for 47 in the first innings and 6 for 29 in the second, including the hat-trick. It deserved better but sadly chasing 100 to win, Waringstown were inexplicably shot out for 32 by Bowers and Walker. He made a fifth cup final appearance against the 'old' adversary North Down in 1924 but lost by only one wicket although his 3 for 33 and 3 for 53 almost clinched victory. This was the historic 'nail-biter' which was controversially continued after North Down's Hill appeared to have been run out!

REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS

Tom also gained Ulster representative honours although surprisingly not full international recognition.
He took 6 for 66 against Lenister in 1922 and 4 for 79 the following year including three international batsmen of the day. One of his finest honours was playing against a strong West Indies X1 and he had the satisfaction of taking 3 for 49 in the drawn game.

Tom faded from the playing ranks during the thirties, although he always maintained a strong support for the club. He had five children, three sons and two daughters, all of whom were influenced by his love of cricket. His son, Martin, Gordon's father, was a fine club player who now lives in Downpatrick and continues to do his bit to liven up the boundary exchanges when the locals entertain Waringstown. Not that cricket was the sole domain of the three sons because Michael Reith's mum Elizabeth was reputed to be a useful cricketer in her own right. Perhaps that kills the myth that father Pete was the mentor of one of Ireland's finest?

WONDERFUL LEGACY

Sadly Tom died in 1950 at the age of 58 but the annals of Waringstown cricket hold treasured memories of his finest hours. Indeed, the name of Tom McKenzie will always have a hallowed place amongst the best, and this wonderful legacy is a fitting tribute to a gentleman of Ulster cricket.



Gordon McKenzie

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Answer to Murray's Teaser

Batsman number one is bowled and at the other end his opening partner slips and falls. Both leave the field and are replaced by batsmen numbers three and four. Batsman number three is bowled first ball and number two then returns only to suffer a similar fate!



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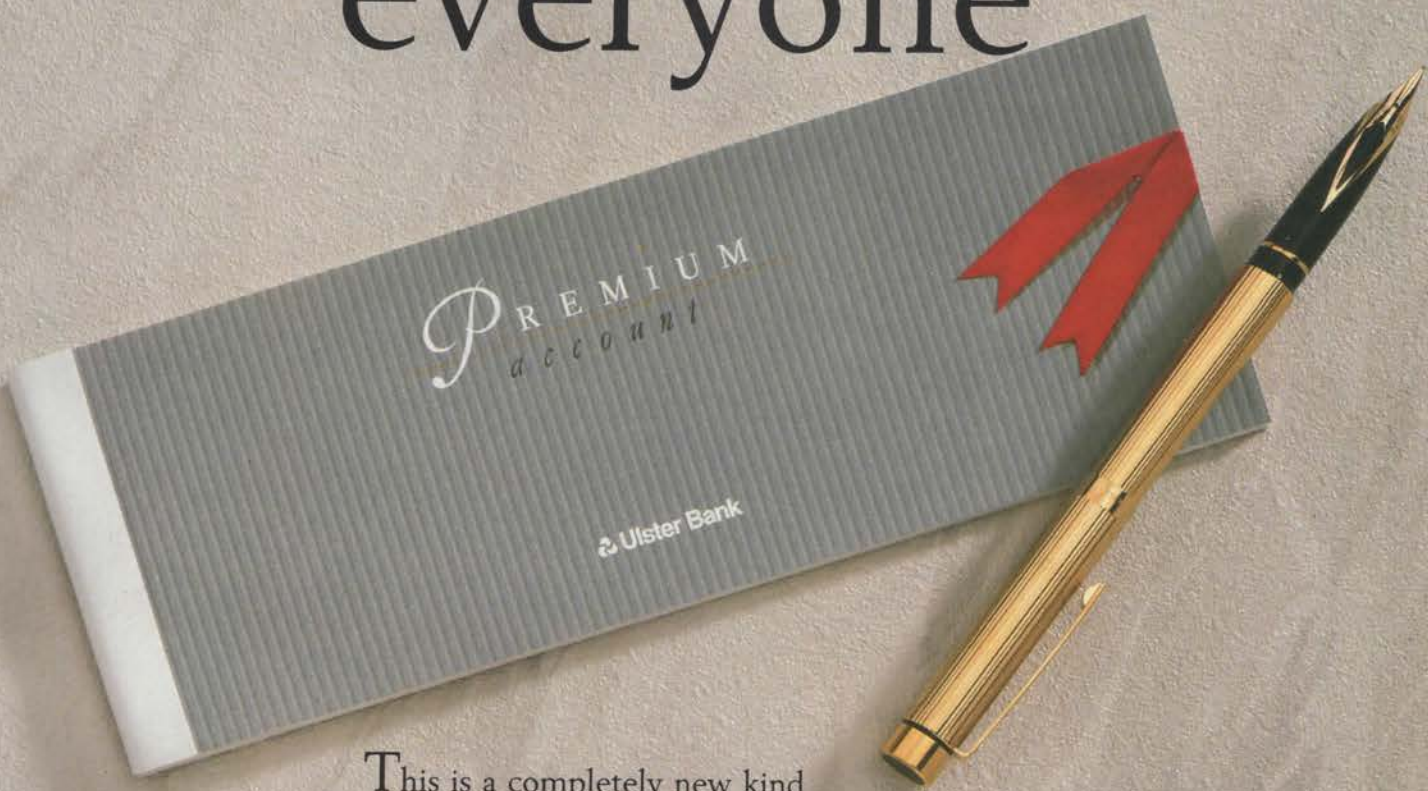
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