

T H E U L S T E R

# CRICKETER

Spring 2005

## FEATURES ON

ICC Trophy  
2005 Season  
Twenty20

## GUEST ARTICLES BY

Billy Henderson, Alan Jeffrey,  
John Elder and Michael McNamee



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The 2005 season promises to be the most momentous in the history of Irish cricket. Hosting the ICC Trophy competition in itself is a daunting task, but with so much expected from the players on the field, the burden of responsibility off it pales against the burden of expectation on it. Quite frankly Ireland must not fail to secure a place in the 2007 World Cup in the West Indies, and if that puts huge pressure on the players and officials to deliver, then that's what comes with the territory. If you run with the big boys in competition you have to deliver, or the back-slappers can quickly become the backstabbers in the fickle world of competitive sport.



**editorial**  
**CLARENCE HILES**  
**PETER SHIELDS**

Thankfully the Ireland squad is up for the task, and all the hard work put in by Adrian Birrell and his players over the winter should come good when it matters most. We wish them well and the carrot of a trip to the Caribbean should be a tremendous incentive.

Two of our leading cricket personalities have suffered tough times over the winter, and it brings home the message that life is full of highs and lows.

We all wish Dickie Maxwell and Dermott Monteith happier times and our best wishes in their fight to regain health and fitness.

It would be easy to forget that there are also plenty of trophies to be won in both the NCU and North-West. Don't expect any shock winners of the major leagues and cups but it will be interesting to see who comes out on top in the new Ulster Shield and Twenty20 competitions, welcome additions to the calendar.

Best wishes for the season.

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**COVER PHOTOGRAPH** Irish opening bowler Adrian McCoubrey.  
 Photo: Rowland White

Spring 2005 Vol 1 Issue 3



North Down's Taimur Khan (Left) hits out, closely watched by Johnny Bushe

- 2 ICC Carnival Comes to Town** A look ahead to the ICC Trophy in July.
- 6 Exciting Times** A look ahead to the 2005 North-West season.
- 10 NCU Preview** Clarence Hiles challenges the local players to end the dominance of overseas players in the NCU.
- 16 The Fast and the Furious** Former international opening bowler Alan Jeffrey shares some thoughts on quick bowling.
- 24 Civil Service North is Born** Can the new club bounce straight back into the top-flight? Section 2 previewed.
- 28 Irish cricket: on the brink of greatness or at the crossroads?**  
 A look back to 1980 and an examination of how things have changed in Irish Cricket in the intervening 25 years.
- 30 2005 Calendar** All the fixtures for the coming season.
- 32 Caribbean Welcome** Clarence Hiles examines the potential opposition and venues in store for the five World Cup qualifiers.
- 36 Dinosaur or Match Winner?** An investigation into the demise of the specialist wicketkeeper.
- 40 Twenty20 Vision** Peter Shields looks ahead to the newest competition in the NCU, Twenty20.
- 46 Back to Basics** Billy Henderson tells the story of a return home for a famous North-West cricketing family.
- 50 Life on the Bottom Rung** BBC correspondent Michael McNamee shares his thoughts on Section 4 cricket.
- 52 Greatest XI's** Clarence Hiles selects his fantasy XI's from Limavady and Bangor.
- 58 Umpires Corner** For all things involving white coats.
- 60 The Last Word** Cricket Webmaster John Elder tells it the way it is.

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# ICC carnival comes to town

The local season will take on a decidedly international flavour in July, when the eleven best associate cricketing nations and Oman, the only remaining affiliate nation, will be hosted by the ICU as they take part in the ICC Trophy to find the final five qualifiers for the World Cup in the Caribbean in 2007. **PETER SHIELDS** reports.

**F**or the NCU in particular this is a massive undertaking, as the largest union will host 27 games in the first week. Fifteen clubs and one school will all play their part in one way or another, indeed North Down and Bangor will host three matches each. Ireland will play at both these venues, and their other group games will be at Waringstown, with two others at Stormont.

In the North-West, Eglinton, Drummond and Limavady will fly the flag, and play host to the remaining three fixtures in phase one of the competition.

For the first time ever, almost all of cricket's developing nations have had the chance to qualify and compete for cricket's most coveted trophy – the ICC Cricket World Cup.

The introduction of the ICC's World Cup Qualifying Series (WCQS) structure has opened up the opportunity for smaller teams to stake their claim and realise the dream of competing for one-day international cricket's biggest prize.

The 12-team ICC Trophy represents the final qualifying hurdle, with the qualifiers from this competition set to travel to the Caribbean to play against the ICC's ten full



**DOUGIE BROWN** Years of experience on the circuit with County Champions Warwickshire will be invaluable to Scotland.

member countries and Kenya. The WCQS comprises three qualifying tournaments in Europe, two in Africa and the Americas, and one qualifying event each in Asia and East Asia-Pacific.

Those countries that just missed out on regional qualification contested the WCQS

Division Two event in Malaysia from which the top team, Papua New Guinea, gained the final qualifying spot for the ICC Trophy.

On the 29th of April 2004 at Stormont, ICC President Ehsan Mani and ICC Chief Executive Malcolm Speed signed the historic host agreement. Mr Mani said that he



**JOHN DAVIDSON** Canada's star performer took the 2003 World Cup in South Africa by storm.



**SCOTLAND** ICC Inter-Continental Cup winners 2004.



**ANDREW WHITE** Irish Cricketer of the Year 2004 and a key player in Ireland's qualification chances.

was very pleased that the Irish Cricket Union was planning to host matches in both Belfast and Dublin.

"Throughout its history, the ICU has operated as a unified body and I am delighted that matches will be staged in both the north and south of the island.

This tournament will leave a positive legacy for cricket in Ireland as it will raise the profile of the game and assist in the development of better facilities for practicing, playing and watching the sport.

The ICC is delighted that the games will be played at such a variety of venues as it means that no ground will be played on too frequently and that will augur well for the state of the pitches."

ICU secretary John Wright, who is also the tournament director, said:

"We are very grateful for the enthusiastic manner in which clubs throughout the country responded to the invitation to host games.

In fact we received more acceptances than were required so, inevitably, some clubs will be disappointed. However, such is the enthusiasm for the tournament that some of these clubs have offered their facilities for 'warm-up' games."

ICC Chief Executive Malcolm Speed then officially launched the tournament in March at a reception for civic, media and host club representatives.

"It is 25 years since Sri Lanka beat Canada in the final of the first ICC Trophy in England and on the occasion of this event's Silver Jubilee there is more at stake for the twelve participating teams than ever.

There are five previous winners of the ICC Trophy. Three have gone on to claim Test match status while the other two, the holders Holland and United Arab Emirates, will be amongst the contenders in Ireland.

This event provides a unique insight into the relative merits of the top teams outside the established Test-playing nations."

Stan Mitchell, President of the Irish Cricket Union in this busy year said the ICC Trophy would be "a huge shot in the arm for cricket throughout Ireland".

Former international batsman Stan continued: "The tournament will simply be the biggest event in the long history of the Irish Cricket Union and with five places at stake for the next ICC Cricket World Cup, it will build up terrific support. I have no doubt it will give a new lease of life to the sport throughout the island, not only at the high-

est level but also at that vitally important grass-roots, development level.

Cricket knows no boundaries in Ireland and we are particularly grateful to the ICC for breaking with the tradition of one centre to allow the tournament to be played north and south of the border. I am very much aware that the tournament represents a huge challenge of organisation but I have no doubt that host clubs up and down the country will be more than equal to the task."

Just how much of a legacy the tournament will leave is still a matter open to debate. While the southern government has



**ED JOYCE** The Middlesex player's availability will be key to Ireland's chances.

greatly assisted the host clubs in Dublin, the northern authorities have been less forthcoming and at the time of writing, clubs were still unsure as to the potential finance available. For each club there is certainly a huge outlay in terms of time and manpower, never mind the finance.

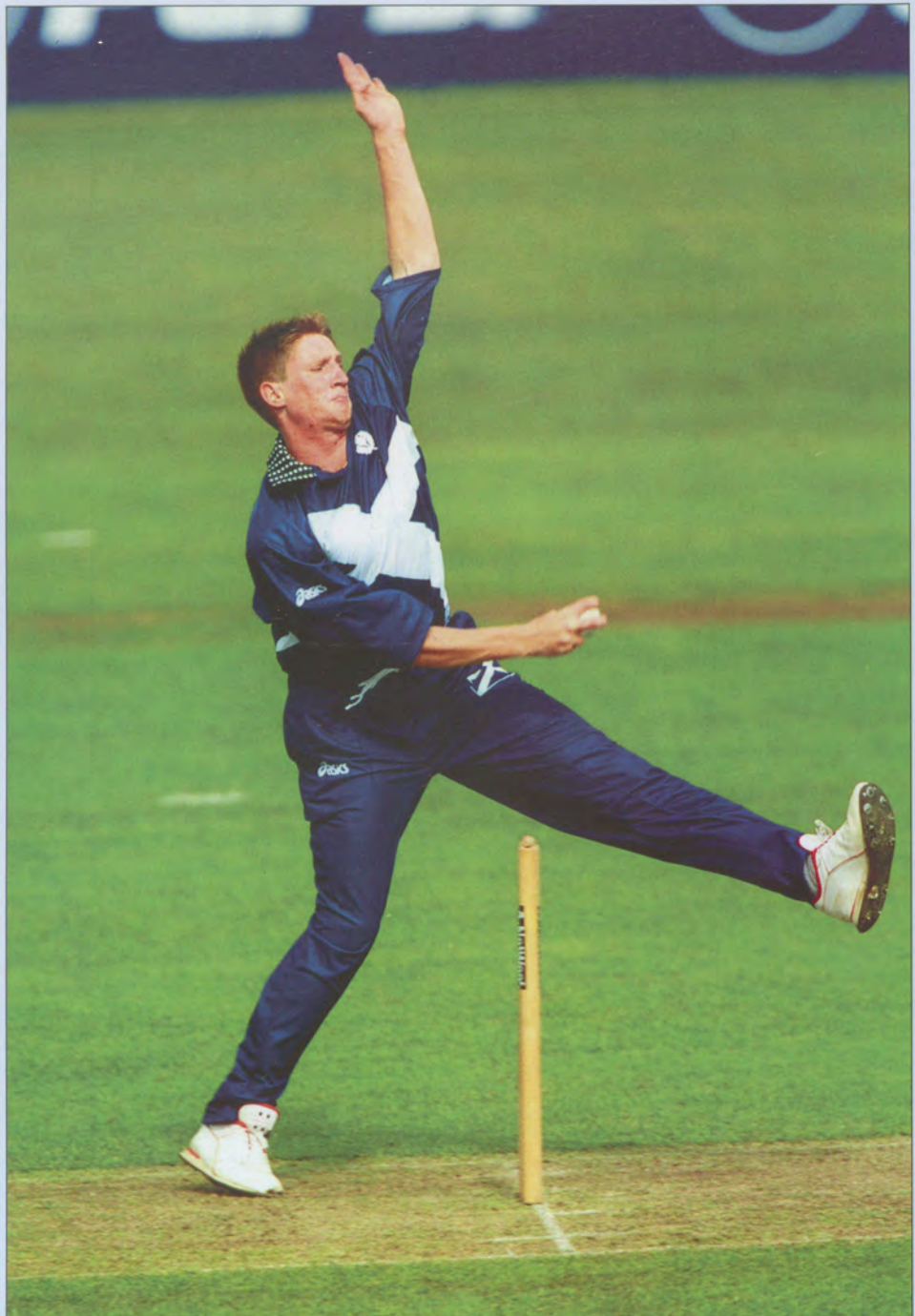
Holland, Canada, Namibia, Scotland and the UAE have all, at various times, participated in the World Cup as a result of the ICC Trophy. Therefore it is fair to say that the task for the hosts is far from simple, albeit they find themselves in the easier of the two first phase groups and it is this stage that will offer the chance of a straightforward qualification. A top two finish in their group means an automatic passport to the finals while a third or fourth place finish will lead them to a play-off shootout in Dublin, in phase two.

Anything else doesn't bear thinking about!

Ireland's main opposition may come from the USA who recently competed in the ICC Champions Trophy, although their aging squad may be competing at one tournament too many. The other group looks more competitive, and only two from Holland, Scotland, Canada and Namibia will qualify by the end of the first phase.

For minnows Oman and Papua New Guinea it might just be all about the experience, but expect the remaining nations, Bermuda, Uganda, UAE and Denmark to slog it out in Group A.

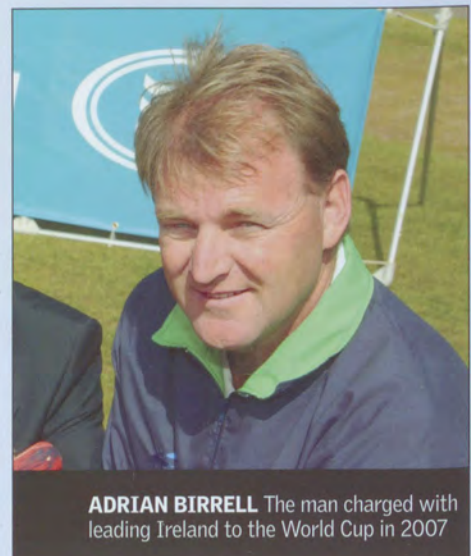
The time for talking is about to stop and while Ireland might feel the brunt of a lot of home pressure, all the twelve teams will be battling to create their own piece of history, and further glory down the line in the Caribbean. But while most of the spotlight will focus on cricket, everyone associated with sport in Ireland will want our visitors to enjoy our island, our people and our culture, and hopefully leave with happy memories of a great summer in the emerald isle.



**JOHN BLAIN** Scotland will be hoping the Yorkshire bowler gets released for the tournament.



**JOE DOHERTY AND MALCOLM SPEED** Officially launched the ICC Trophy in March.



**ADRIAN BIRRELL** The man charged with leading Ireland to the World Cup in 2007



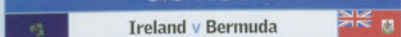
# ICC TROPHY IRELAND 2005

ICC TROPHY - PREVIOUS WINNERS  
 1979 (England): Sri Lanka  
 1982 (England): Zimbabwe  
 1986 (England): Zimbabwe  
 1990 (Netherlands): Zimbabwe  
 1994 (Kenya): United Arab Emirates  
 1997 (Malaysia): Bangladesh  
 2001 (Canada): Netherlands

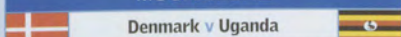
# fixture list

## FRIDAY 1 JULY

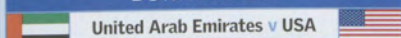
### STORMONT



### MUCKAMORE

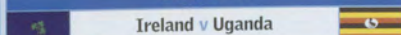


### DOWNPATRICK

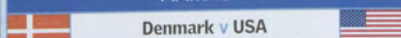


## SATURDAY 2 JULY

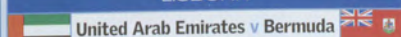
### COMBER



### ARMAGH



### LISBURN

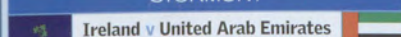


## SUNDAY 3 JULY

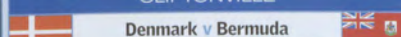
### RESERVE DAY

## MONDAY 4 JULY

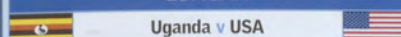
### STORMONT



### CLIFTONVILLE

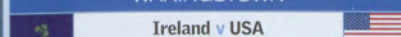


### LURGAN

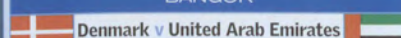


## TUESDAY 5 JULY

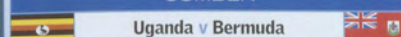
### WARINGSTOWN



### BANGOR



### COMBER

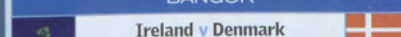


## WEDNESDAY 6 JULY

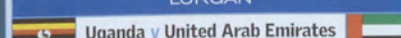
### RESERVE DAY

## THURSDAY 7 JULY

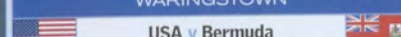
### BANGOR



### LURGAN

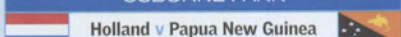


### WARINGSTOWN

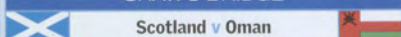


## FRIDAY 1 JULY

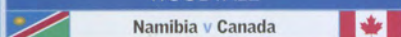
### OSBORNE PARK



### SHAW'S BRIDGE

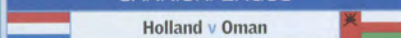


### WOODVALE

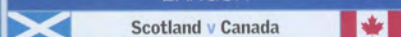


## SATURDAY 2 JULY

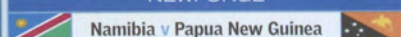
### CARRICKFERGUS



### BANGOR



### NEWFORGE

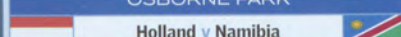


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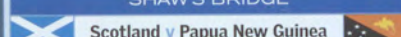
### RESERVE DAY

## MONDAY 4 JULY

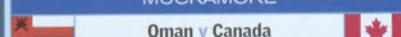
### OSBORNE PARK



### SHAW'S BRIDGE

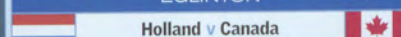


### MUCKAMORE

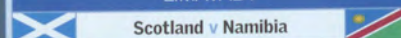


## TUESDAY 5 JULY

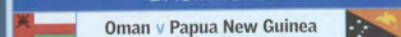
### EGLINTON



### LIMAVADY



### DRUMMOND

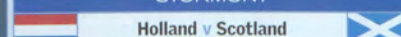


## WEDNESDAY 6 JULY

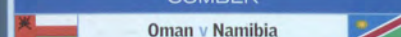
### RESERVE DAY

## THURSDAY 7 JULY

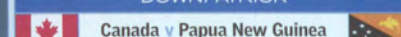
### STORMONT



### COMBER



### DOWNPATRICK



## SATURDAY 9 JULY

### CLONTARF

SEMI-FINAL 1: 1st A v 2nd B

### THE HILLS

SEMI-FINAL 2: 2nd A v 1st B

### MALAHIDE

SEMI-FINAL 3: 3rd A v 4th B

### NORTH COUNTY

SEMI-FINAL 4: 4th A v 3rd B

### LEINSTER

SEMI-FINAL 5: 5th A v 6th B

### MERRION

SEMI-FINAL 6: 6th A v 5th B

## SUNDAY 10 JULY

### RESERVE DAY

## MONDAY 11 JULY

### MALAHIDE

3RD & 4TH PLACE: Loser SF1 v Loser SF2

### CLONTARF

5TH & 6TH PLACE: Winner SF3 v Winner SF4

### THE HILLS

7TH & 8TH PLACE: Loser SF3 v Loser SF4

### NORTH COUNTY

9TH & 10TH PLACE: Winner SF 5 v Winner SF6

### RATHMINES

11TH & 12TH PLACE: Loser SF5 v Loser SF6

## TUESDAY 12 JULY

### RESERVE DAY

## WEDNESDAY 13 JULY

### CLONTARF

Winner SF1 v Winner SF2

## THURSDAY 15 JULY

### RESERVE DAY

Group A

Group B

Semi-finals

Play-offs

FINAL

# exciting

The North West season kicks off in earnest on April 23rd and, with another busy winter of activity in the transfer market, 2005 promises to be as fiercely competitive as ever with the 'big three' of Brigade, Limavady and Donemana sure to be to the fore once again. **PETER SHIELDS** reports.



## Northern Bank Senior Cup

### Preliminary Round: 7 May

St Johnston v The Nedd  
Fox Lodge v Killyclooney  
Burndennett v Coleraine  
N Fermanagh v Bonds Glen  
Killymallaght v Sion Mills

### 1st Round: 21-22 May

Fox Lodge or Killyclooney v Eglinton  
Ardmore v Donemana  
Burndennett or Coleraine v Killymallaght or Sion Mills  
Strabane v Bready  
N Fermanagh or Bonds Glen v Brigade  
Drummond v Limavady  
Glendermott v Creevedonnell  
St Johnston or The Nedd v Ballyspallen

### 2nd Round: 11-12 June

### Semi-Finals: 18-19 June

### Final: 29-30 July at Eglinton

**PETER GILLESPIE** Will be hoping for a successful season for both club and country.

# times

The ICC road show arrives briefly in July for what many North-West observers see as a paltry allocation of three games to the area, but with Strabane's Peter Gillespie and Brigade's Gordon Cooke likely to be the only players involved, it will certainly provide less of a distraction to domestic competition than in both the NCU and Leinster. So from that point of view every cloud has a silver lining but surely the most passionate supporters in the country could have added another dimension to the tournament and been another positive factor in Ireland's attempt at World Cup qualification?

In Senior 2, Sion Mills, relegated from the top flight last year, face an uphill struggle, having lost a host of their main players, and will surely be happy just to get out the other end in one piece.

Burndennet, only just edged out of the title last year, will fancy their chances of going one better now. With the nucleus of last years' squad intact, and the addition of former Sion Mills and Ardmore professional Sanjeev Sharma, there's plenty of reason for Aidan Boyle's side to look forward to the new campaign. One thing they can expect though, is to have their credentials severely tested by the likes of Fox Lodge, maybe Creevedonnell and Killymallaght.

Fox Lodge, relegated in 2003, have been boosted by the return of young batsman Brian Allen, after his Division 1 winning year with Brigade. The Foxes also have the services of Professional Daniel Manohar, one of the region's most consistent overseas player for the past three seasons, and will probably start slight favourites for the league.

Killymallaght have surprised many cricket followers here by announcing that they are set to bring a professional for the first time. West Indian Denzil Hyatt is the man in question, and if he hits it off with the young talent already there, it could be a big season for them. They are also delighted that they have retained the services of last year's top player in the Division, Gareth McKeegan, despite interest from several top-flight clubs. They've got definite top three possibilities.

It's probably fair to expect Creevedonnell and Bonds Glen to be best of the rest, but little doubt that there's a fascinating season ahead.

In Senior 1, newly promoted Ballyspallen have signalled their intention to stay in the top flight with the signing of no less than five new players. Former Irish international Richard McDaid is the pick of the bunch and there is no doubt he has the ability with bat and ball to be a star performer on any side. But one man doesn't make a team and that is why the other signings, Gregory



**GARY NEELY** Will spearhead Glendermott's bowling attack in the push for honours.



**'JUNIOR' McBRINE** One of the best cricketers the North-West has ever produced.

McDaid and Simon Dunn from Drummond, and under-age internationals Stephen Dunn and Andrew McGinnis from Donemana, are seen by many as astute captures. The latter are just another two talented players coming off the Donemana conveyor belt and with first team places at The Holm as hard to secure as ever and an U19 World Cup qualification tournament coming up this summer, who can blame them for wanting to play senior cricket?



**STEPHEN SMYTH AND DECKER CURRY** Two of the most destructive batsmen in Irish Cricket.

At the other end of the scale Drummond appear, on paper, to have had a bad winter on the transfer merry-go-round. The player losses to Ballyspallen were compounded when star performer Chris Moore confirmed he would be joining Limavady and veteran bowler Brian Coyle moved to NCU Section 3 club Academy. Wasim Haider will not be returning so Drummond will have to prove that matches aren't won on paper, and hope that new pro Naved Latif, lives up to his billing as a seriously talented player.

Ardmore will be fully aware that they face another season of struggle and will rely heavily on Iftikhar Hussain to

produce the goods if they are to avoid the trap door. The return of Ciaran Curley from Brigade is a bonus and he, along with Karl O'Doherty and the Brolly brothers Paul and Ger, will be the other key performers in a season in which they will be looking to blood the youngsters. A finish above 10th may suffice for the Bleachgreen men!

Eglinton is another club that will be looking for a couple of early season victories to calm the nerves. They have a new pro in the shape of West Indian 'A' team player Keith Hibbert but apart from that, with Andrew Riddles still on board, its "as you were".

Bready have ambitious plans for the future, and that will now include Sunday cricket, but for this season, the continued progress of their talented young squad is probably the best they can hope for. They have opted for the same skipper/pro combination with Trevor Hamilton and South African Arno Jacobs filling the respective roles, holding on to spinner Trevor Britton is also a big plus. Runs from Mark Olphert and wickets from the skipper will be important but perhaps playing for 4th in the league and a decent cup run will be as good as it gets in 2005.

In their last season playing at the Park, Strabane have retained the status quo from last year. Terence Patton Jnr's only real loss, but not an insignificant one, is that of his father who has finally hung up his boots after an illustrious career. After a season that promised so much, 2004 will be remembered as the one that saw them lose three cup finals and a lot will depend on the availability of Peter Gillespie and how the aging legs of Bobby Rao have endured the winter, as to whether they can repeat the cup

runs of last year.

At the Rectory, Glendermott will be without the services of the prolific Hasan Raza who has been selected and contracted for the Pakistan 'A' team, leaving him with a very good chance of progressing back into the full Pakistan Team that tours the West Indies in the middle of May. His replacement is 28 year old Indian Pravanjan Mullick but few would relish the opportunity of following in Raza's footsteps after he took local cricket by storm last term. The return of Gregory McElhatton from city rivals Brigade, and the signing of Englishman Paul Hampshire from the old Belfast Harlequins club will bolster a squad already containing Gary Neely and Johnny Thompson, and backed by a vociferous and fiercely partisan support. Watch them, because they could pull off a few shocks.

So that leaves the big guns, Brigade who won the Senior League last year to make it three in four years, 2004 Senior Cup winners Donemana, and Limavady, All-Ireland Cup winners a record-equalling three times. It's hard to look past them again for where the major trophies will be heading come the end of September, and as in the past, the matches between them could ultimately prove to be the difference. The last few years have been characterised by ties, tense one wicket wins and a host of 'nail biters' that have thrilled the crowds in the North-West. I don't expect much to change in 2005.

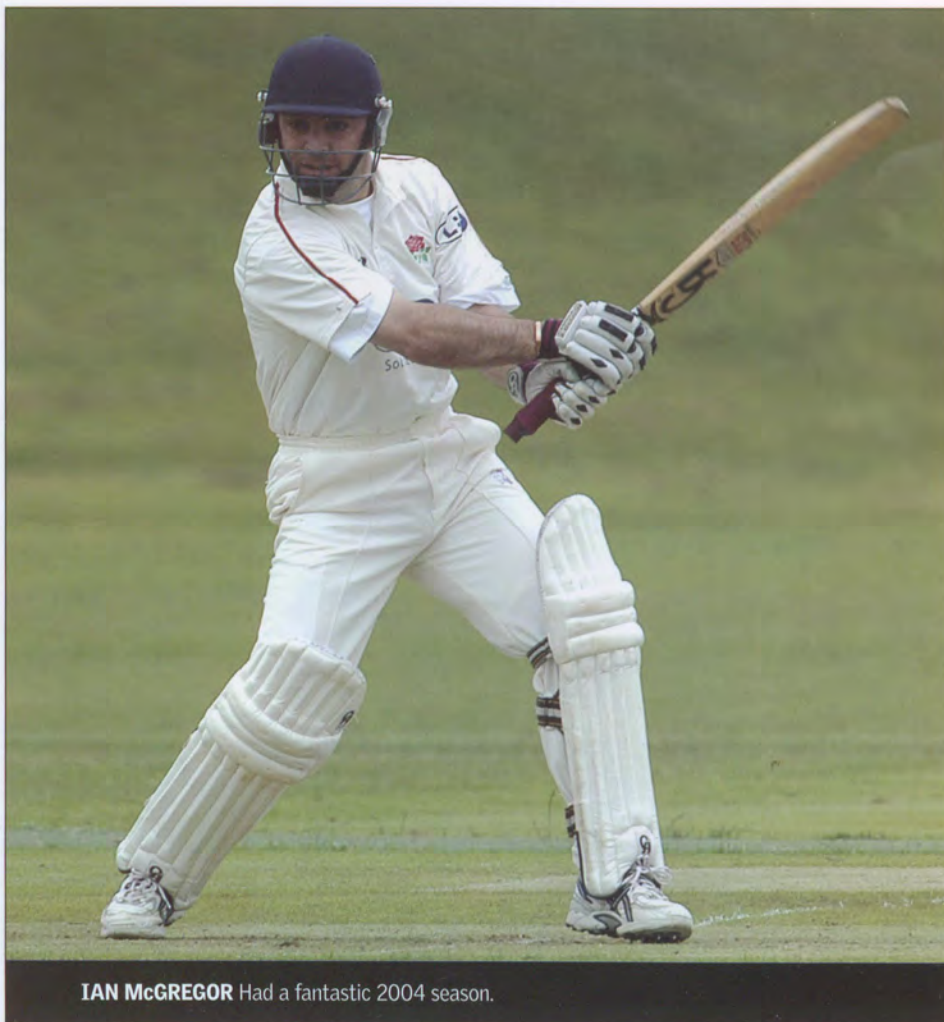
Donemana have lost two talented young players but there is still plenty of strength and depth to their squad. Of course, they will always be able to depend on significant contributions with bat and ball from the McBrine twins James and Junior, but other players have started to come into their own. Richard Kee and Dwayne McGerrigle can be destructive batsmen on their day, while skipper Jordan McGonigle is a proven performer at this level. Add in the all-round talent of Pakistani professional Azhar Shafiq and there is quality throughout the team. They are of course the holders of the Ulster Cup and although they have a tricky first round tie away to Waringstown in the Irish Senior Cup, with a good blend of youth and experience, an intimate knowledge of their home ground and a large support, expect them to be there or thereabouts.

Brigade have been the most consistent league side for the last few years but will be desperate to lift their first cup since the Irish Senior Cup in 1999. David Cooke and Wasti will be expected to once again make the bulk of the runs and the re-emergence of Gregory Wilson from early retirement is a big bonus. Mark Simpson and Graham Moore, along with skipper Gordon Cooke form a

formidable pace attack. They have lost Ciaran Curley, Gregory McElhatton and Brian Allen from last year, but with John Browne returning from Sion Mills, they have a number of useful cricketers in the squad, and they will be right in the mix come the business end of the season.

And so to Limavady, Irish Senior Cup winners last season albeit largely on the back of a frustratingly inconsistent campaign. There is no doubt the loss of Kamral Akmal to international duty was a big blow and more will be expected from Zeeshan Malik this year after a season adjusting to both batting and keeping in Irish conditions. Decker Curry once again has the reigns, and if he and Stephen Smyth are firing on all cylinders, backed up by Ian McGregor after his fantastic 2004 season, then runs should not be a problem. Add in new signing Chris Moore and established performers like Mark McDaid and Andy Christie and you have a powerful top order. The bowling department is probably the weaker suit, but Victor McDaid has 'been there, worn the t-shirt' and his all-round experience will stand the Roesiders in good stead.

It's a toss up within the 'big three' for the league and the cup, but you can be sure, weather-permitting, cricket lovers in the North-West are in for another intriguing season.



**IAN MCGREGOR** Had a fantastic 2004 season.

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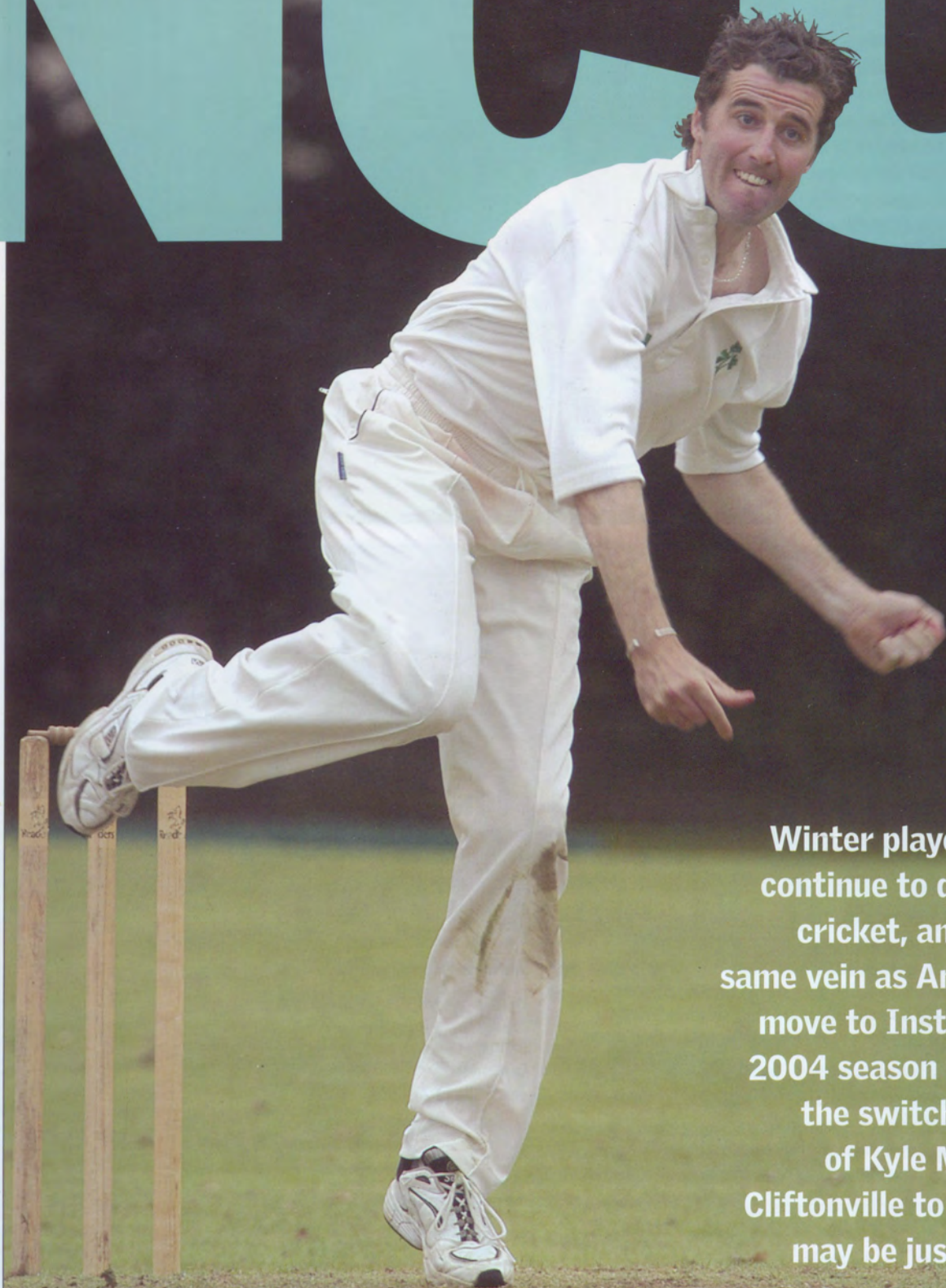
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# NCU



Winter player movements continue to dominate local cricket, and in much the same vein as Andrew White's move to Instonians for the 2004 season was big news, the switch of allegiance of Kyle McCallan from Cliftonville to Waringstown may be just as dramatic.

**KYLE McCALLAN** Has made the switch to 'The Lawn'.

# SEASON 2005

**Editor Clarence Hiles previews the new season and throws the gauntlet down to local players to lift their game and end the dominance of the overseas professionals.**

In a season that will be totally overshadowed by the ICC Trophy, there is every reason to see the local competitions as small beer set alongside the biggest competition that Irish cricket has organised and played in. Not only will the top players limit their club appearances in pursuit of greater goals, but local groundsmen will jealously protect their best wickets for the bigger matches.

The NCU will play a major part in staging the ICC Trophy and both the clubs and the administrators deserve the highest praise for having the vision and the commitment to take up the challenge. But the NCU season doesn't start and finish with a couple of week's cricket in July, and the reality is that some of the best club games during the coming season will produce just as high a standard as some of the international games, given the obvious status of some of the minnows in this qualifying tournament.

When the cobwebs of a long dreary winter are cast aside, NCU domestic cricket can look forward to an interesting season, with the new 20/20 competition a breath of fresh air for the 'stop, wallop and run' brigade that seem hell-bent on providing exciting cricket for the supposed fans who aren't there. Instant cricket is now the bread and butter of world cricket, a further dilution to 20 overs may throw a lifeline to sagging crowds at county cricket, but it won't do much to bring the fans rolling back to NCU cricket. Quite frankly, it's already been there with midweek competitions, and while these games are a good thrash, they are really novelty cricket in its basic form. That said, good luck to the participating teams, and especially the players who have finally got the

## Newry and Down Democrat Challenge Cup

**1st Round: 30 April**  
 Hollywood v Cooke Collegians  
 Civil Service North v Donaclooney  
 Dunmurry v Armagh  
 Woodvale v Ballymena  
 Muckamore v Laurelvale  
 Larne v CIYMS

**2nd Round: 21 May**  
 Derriaghy v Woodvale/Ballymena  
 Muckamore/Laurelvale v Hollywood/Cooke Collegians  
 North Down v Instonians  
 Waringstown v Dunmurry/Armagh  
 Carrickfergus v Lurgan  
 Bangor v Lisburn  
 Cliftonville v Larne/CIYMS  
 Downpatrick v Civil Service North/Donaclooney

The 3rd Round and Semi-Finals of the competition will be drawn after the preceding rounds.

**3rd Round: 11 June**  
**Semi-Finals: 16 July**  
**Final: 4/5 August at Downpatrick.**

chance to dress up in their pyjamas and bring a bit of colour to the local game. After all didn't those names and numbers really give the local game a great lift over the past two years?

Winter player movements continue to dominate local cricket, and in much the same vein as Andrew White's move to Instonians for the 2004 season was big news, the switch of allegiance of Kyle McCallen from Cliftonville to Waringstown may be just as dramatic. Kyle is a very talented cricketer, but when the statistics are totted up at the end of the season it may be the arrival of Pakistani professional Ijaz Ahmed that proves to be the most significant.

Overseas professionals once again dominated local cricket last season and the telling



**GARETH MORRISON** MOM in the 2002 Senior Cup Final and the top scorer in last year's competition with 145 v Instonians.

statistic that should alarm players, administrators and indeed cricket fans, was that AB De Villiers scored 894 runs in only nine innings at a staggering average of 127.71 per game. Had he not been recalled to South Africa for representative honours, heaven knows what he would have scored in the latter part of the season. De Villiers has gone on to establish himself in test cricket, but his legacy to Ulster cricket must go a lot farther than the back-slapping of adoring Carrickfergus club members. Entertaining as he may have been to the Carrickfergus faithful, De Villiers exposed the huge gap between local cricketers and overseas professionals, and again opened up a contentious debate that has been going strong for 25 years. Love them or hate them, and there are

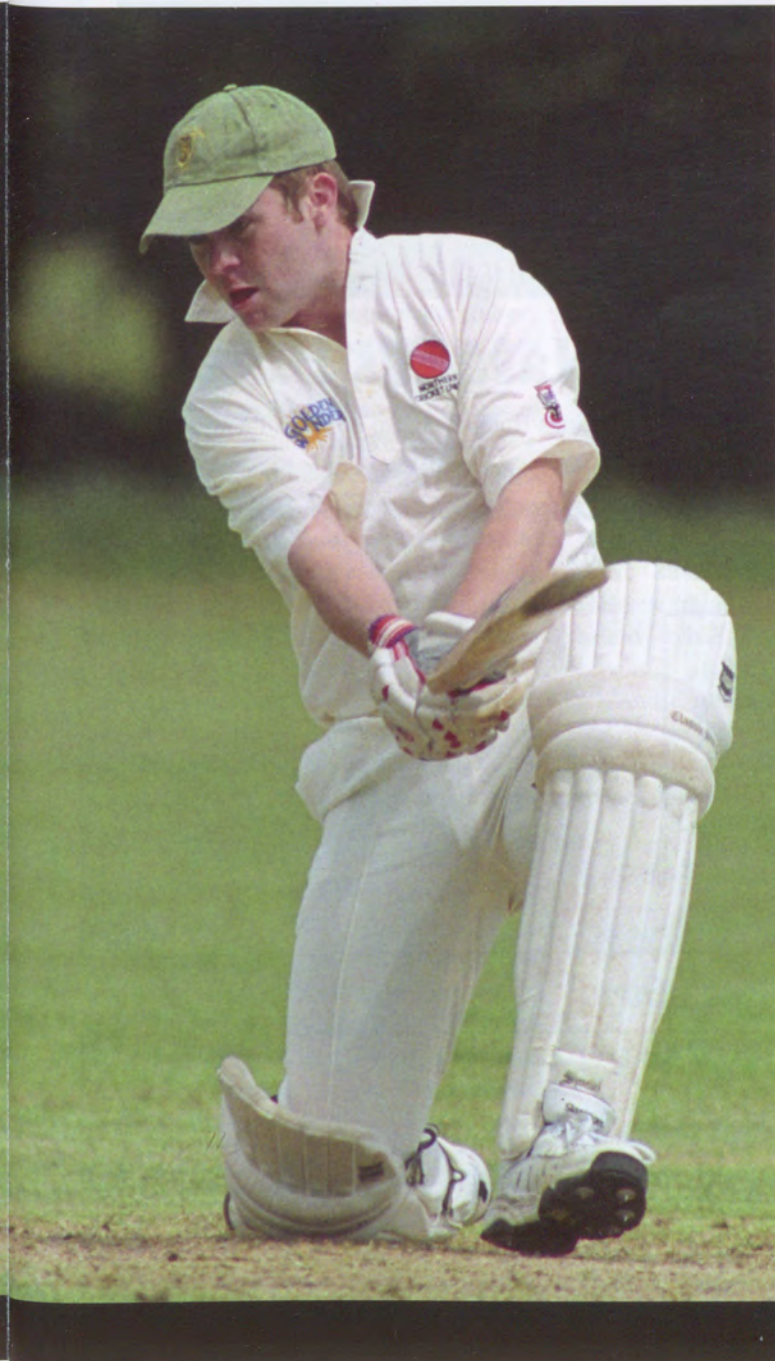


**GREG THOMPSON** The Lisburn teenager will spend the majority of the summer with Lancashire.



**PAUL TATE** Has returned 'home' after a season as player/coach at CIYMS.

plenty of people in both camps, the overseas professionals totally dominate local cricket, and if the best local players are going to change that trend in 2005, then they have got to lift their game to another level. The presence of five overseas professionals at the top of the 2004 NCU battings averages may not be new to local cricket, but it is getting all too predictable, and surely if the local game has been improved so much by their presence, should we not expect a higher return from our better players when it comes to reviewing the season's performances. Yes, the overseas professionals are good, but they aren't all world-beaters, and surely our better players and some more tactical strategies, could limit their dominance. Limited overs cricket should not be dominated by prolific big hitting batsmen, but it is a reflection of the declining standard in local cricket in recent years, that the batsmen have developed much better to the changing nature of the game than the bowlers, and that not enough thought is being put into the tactics and strategies that are so vital throughout the limited overs game. Other vital areas such as fitness and practice are elementary, and only the players themselves can determine whether they give both the focus and the commitment to the job, as gone are the days when you could mix the social scene



with senior cricket and still perform at a high standard. These days a totally dedicated fulltime professional awaits the errant bowler, and he hasn't much sympathy for the less dedicated!

In some ways the dynamic in local cricket has moved the proverbial mile, but in other ways not much has changed. Each season starts with great optimism at every ground, but although all teams are equal before the first ball is bowled, some teams are 'more equal than others!'

Waringstown and North Down have been the pre-season favourites for the last five years, and have justified their status with more consistency than their rivals. The Comber team may have picked up the lion's share of trophies, but Waringstown has rarely been too far off the pace, and this season they have every reason to feel that their young team is up for the challenge. It would be a brave punter to think otherwise, given the recruitment of McCallen and Ahmed, but statistics don't lie, and significantly Waringstown had only one player in last year's top twenty batting averages. At a club weaned on batting supremacy in their halcyon years, this is a telling statistic, and the main area where they will have to significantly improve to justify their pre-season favourites status. McCallen and



**JOHN STEVENSON** A consistent performer for inconsistent Instonians.

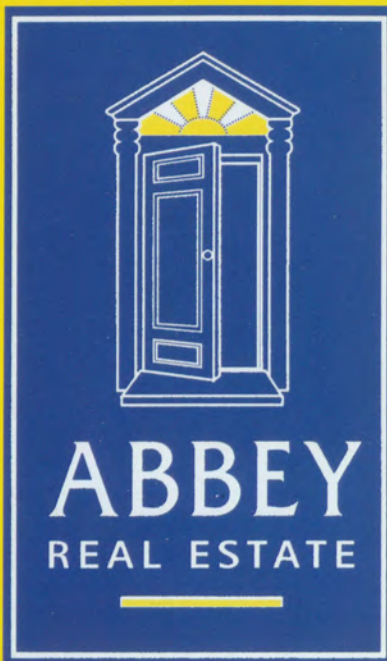
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Ahmed are positive factors, plus the availability of talented skipper Jonathan Bushe who opted out of Ireland's demanding 2005 schedule, but the limited availability of McCallen and the potential rather than the performance of the next generation are negatives that have to be overcome on the tough road to glory.

The 2005 winners may be a forgone conclusion to some people, but even at the Lawn, they won't be as complacent as to count their chickens before they are hatched! On paper North Down has the best all round team in the league, but trophies aren't won on paper, and who could eliminate Bangor after such a tremendous 2004 season? The fact that only the two County Down neighbours stand out as likely contenders is indicative of the mixed fortunes of the other contenders in recent years. Instonians may be the best placed of the bunch to challenge, with John Stevenson's batting a vital cog in their wheel, but without Andrew White they are decidedly short of batting support. Even with the addition of Neil Gill from Muckamore, their bowling won't frighten too many opposing batsmen and it remains to be seen if they can fill the vacuum left by Northants-bound White.

North Down lost two early league games last season without their influential professional Taimur Khan, and it was catch-up time as they spent the rest of the season chasing a rampant Bangor. Everyone expected the Seasideers to fumble, and they did, but only two matches from the end of their historic season and the week after they had clinched their first ever senior trophy! It was a fairytale season for Bangor and especially their popular captain Chris Yeates, but the awesome task of defending their title won't be easy given that North Down has won the league title four times in the previous five years, with Waringstown the other winner. But unlike many of their rivals, Bangor has a well-balanced team, full of talent and a brilliant professional in Regan West, the best all round performer in NCU cricket last season. Yeates will have to do without outstanding all rounder Johnny Hewitt, who has switched to section three CIYMS, but he can still call on Mark Hutchinson plus McCord, Stewart, and ever-green wicket-keeper Brian Millar, so he's not short of talent within his ranks. However, the one uncertainty with Bangor remains, can they keep the ball rolling and build on their unforgettable 2004 season and go on to greater things?

Ralph Coetzee's switch from Belfast Harlequins to North Down will strengthen both their batting and bowling, but with Andrew Haire moving in the opposite

direction, at what cost to the long term future of the club? Andrew may not have set the world on fire to date, but he is a true born and bred North Down cricketer, and at barely twenty has more cup and league winner's medals than most cricketers will win in their careers. He finished above Coetzee, McCallen, Eagleson, and Ahmed in last year's bowling averages, without fully establishing himself in the team, and many people feel the best is yet to come from this enthusiastic and talented young cricketer. His switch to Stormont won't help his career long term, but it will throw additional pressure on Coetzee to perform. Overall North Down has the most complete side in local club cricket, their batting line-up of Khan, Russell, Kennedy, Ryan and Robin Haire is impressive, in addition to the all round skills of Coetzee, plus a formidable bowling attack of Adams, McKenna, Cleland, Dalzell and Moreland. Add skipper Shields as a wicket-keeper batsman who could still do a useful job for Ireland, and the team is solid in every department. Even Billy

even with De Villiers's runs, and not surprisingly they have replaced the newest edition to South African test cricket with another prolific South African batsman in Davy Jacobs. He's on a hiding-to-nothing to emulate the performances of De Villiers, but with Eagleson, Cooper and Davy Menaul in support, Carrickfergus should win enough matches to survive and take their chances in a cup run. This would be just reward for a club that has a thriving social centre and has made huge strides to improve their facilities and to develop the game in the area. Last year both the thirds and fourths won their respective leagues, so Carrickfergus Cricket Club is a lot more than the first eleven.

That leaves newcomers Derriaghy, and virtually everyone's likely choice to finish bottom and return to section two cricket. That would be a huge disappointment given the effort and hard work on and off the pitch to win promotion last year. It is Derriaghy's first time in the top section, but there's little room for sentiment in competitive sport, and it will be a case of 'sink or swim' from the out-

**Love them or hate them, and there are plenty of people in both camps, the overseas professionals totally dominate local cricket, and if the best local players are going to change that trend in 2005, then they have got to lift their game to another level.**

Adams' ageing legs are up for another season, ably supported by the exciting prospect of young left-arm seamer Gavin McKenna and the very underrated Ian Cleland.

If the form-book is correct then the other six teams will be fighting to avoid relegation from the first match, and it is difficult to think otherwise given past performance and the current strengths of the various squads. Lisburn are a poor shadow of former teams, even with the talented Simpson and Thompson in their ranks, Lurgan will need more than inspirational leadership from feisty new skipper Paul Stafford to survive, Downpatrick should have beaten North Down in last year's cup semi-final but failed to deliver any consistency in the league, and not much is expected to change this season, while Cliftonville have a lot to prove at the start of the 'life after Kyle McCallen' era. To their credit, the Greenisland club will be up for the challenge, and have plenty of talent within their ranks in Terret, McKee, Stirling and Anderson.

Carrickfergus barely survived last year,

set for the newcomers. Derriaghy will have two major assets during the 2005 season, namely the all round skills of the explosive 'Freddie' Van De Burgh, plus local knowledge of a postage stamp ground, akin to Donemana in some ways for its character, shape and size. In much the same way that visitors are taken aback when they first visit the Holm, it will be just as much a culture shock when section one teams visit Derriaghy for the first time!

Waringstown for the league, North Down for the cup, and Derriaghy for the drop, with none of the NCU teams likely to make any impact on the Irish Senior Cup, might be a reasonable preview of the season in store, but Bangor will lead the teams most likely to upset that seemingly safe prediction.

Only time will tell, but hopefully the new 20/20 competition will generate more interest than just a thrash for the players, and come September, some of our best local players will end the dominance of overseas professionals in our batting and bowling averages.

# THE FAST AND

**ALAN JEFFREY** won 11 caps for Ireland and had spells with Eglinton, Brigade and Bready. He is also a part time cricket journalist, covering the North West scene for several newspapers.



"Come on big man, give me another", that was the battle cry to give Big Roy Torrens six more spurts of energy and dismiss the lactic acid for another

few minutes. The pain tension and body wrenching motion of a fast bowler is akin to a fine tuned racecar, everybody knows it's going to break down but nobody knows when. Fast bowling can be put into several categories, but you certainly need plenty of guts and plenty of guile to out-think the stroke-maker who is just 22 yards away.

I was privileged to play in the same team as Roy Torrens and the great wicket keeper Ossie Colhoun. I recall on one occasion at Beechgrove playing neighbours Glendermott in a Faughan Valley Cup match mid week, Brigade were on top and going through the top order quickly when a cocky batsman was crazy enough to jibe at big Roy, "is that all you have in the way of pace?!"

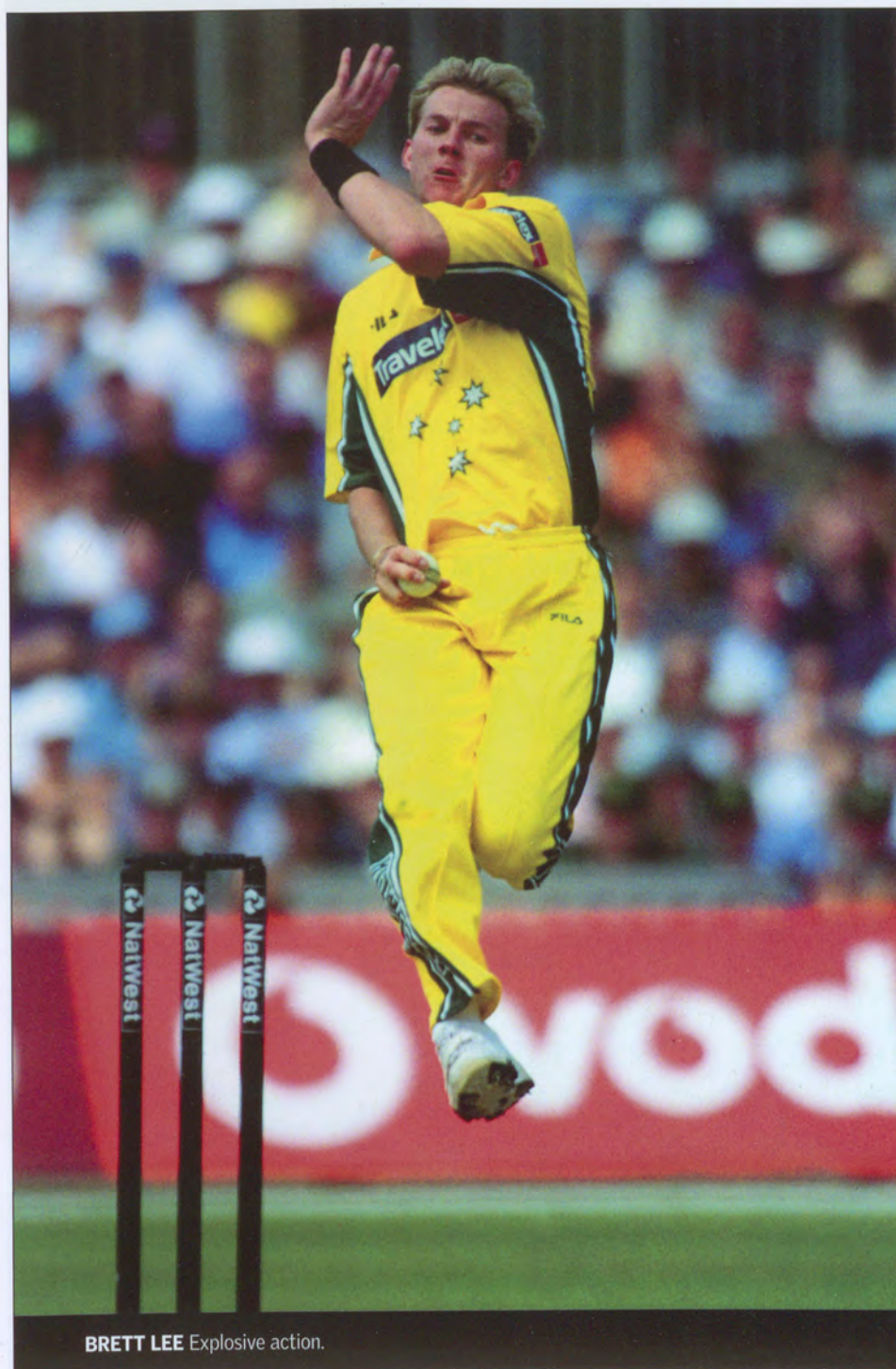
Hendy Wallace was the best all round pace bowler but even he took a few seasons to acclimatize to the North West wickets. In his first season at Eglinton, Brigade faced the Villagers in the Irish Cup. The Brigade opening pair were up against a formidable opening attack from Eglinton and one particular ex-Villager who was opening for Brigade that day didn't catch a wink of sleep the night before. Colin Jeffrey at the other end clipped Wallace to fine leg and the other opener was well run out taking a suicidal second run to stay away from strike and laughed all the way to the pavilion, which was probably relief!

In that same match I watched Big Roy plaster the ribs of Billy Henderson and not once did the gritty batsman rub his wounds, however, on his return to the pavilion a few



**SHOAIB AKHTAR** Possibly the quickest bowler the North-West has ever seen.

# THE FURIOUS



BRETT LEE Explosive action.

**Pace bowling can be likened to the art of war, knowing your enemy and finding his weakness, that is one tip any quickie must exploit to gain the upper hand.**

overs later he was noticed attending to the injury.

In 1998 Strabane signed Shoaib Akhtar, although by this time the 23 year old had already made his Pakistan Test debut against the West Indies at his home ground of Rawalpindi. He was the quickest bowler the North West had ever seen, coming in off a short run, but he was once again raw to the Irish conditions and batsmen. It would be fair to say that the Tyrone club has yielded some fine pace men. Alan Moorehead should have reached the international stage like Peter Gillespie but the biggest talking point was Tony Johnston who had great pace, and ability with the bat, but was sadly let down by his temper which needed to be harnessed.

Strabane travelled to Eglinton for a league fixture with a fired-up Tony Johnston bowling very fast on a superb wicket. Left-hander Mark Burley drove a sweet half volley off his bowling and the next ball tried to emulate the previous shot, but was just getting the bat up when his stumps went flying past 'keeper Paul McNamee's ear, and all Tony Johnston said as he passed, "if you want to drive, buy a car", a great retort for a bowler!

David Scanlon of Bready has the explosive action and strength that compensates for his height while big Boyd Rankin, all 6 foot 6 inches of him, has the height advantage,



**SIMON CORLETT** Classic action.

so that the ball is released about 7 feet from the ground, which can make it more difficult for the batsman to pick up the length of the delivery. This can catch the batsman going forward to drive only to see the ball rise off a length.

Going back to the 1990's, The Nedd, boasting star players David and "Coke" McMichael, were going well in the Senior Cup and had defeated local rivals Limavady in the quarter-final, when they faced Eglinton in the Semi Final at Lougheramore Road. The ground, which is now a housing development, was never up to international standard and it was never going to suit Hendy Wallace and Paul Killen who were the cream of the Eglinton attack. The weather was mild at the start of July and everyone knew that the pitch was going to be the key factor in the match. On arriving at the ground, the Eglinton side were astonished to see the covers on the pitch and the ground nearly waterlogged, it even took an umpires' inspection to see if it was playable. I am not accusing anyone of tampering with the wicket but there must have been a very high water leak in the vicinity, as the ground lies on very sandy soil! Big Hendy didn't use his pace that day but the visitors still narrowly defeated the home side to reach the final.

In the North West a good friend of mine commented on some of the 'mean' bowlers.

Geoff McConnell gave 110% while Paul 'Grunty' Wallace would happily bowl 25 overs for St. Johnston when you were allowed to, Terence "Pewee" Patton really hated being scored off and then there's Lee McGonigle, a happy bowler of maidens.

I would rate Roger Kerr as one of the best 'quick' bowlers in the North West. He has the ability to get the ball to move in the air and off the pitch and can go through a team like a knife through butter. Richard McDaid has matured well and has raised his game to reach the International stage as well as putting together some fine performances for his club. Gordon Cooke of Brigade

has the qualities to bowl fast and this has brought him 65 international wickets in 65 matches with an impressive 4 for 60 against South Africa in 1998.

My memories of Irish pace men reflect back to Simon Corlett, Roy Torrens, Peter O'Reilly and the late Hugh Milling, who gave me encouragement whether playing with or competing against him.

So looking at the fast men the wicket plays a major part in whether or not a fast bowler is to 'put his back into it' and extract anything from the wicket. I believe that Ireland has the ability to produce quickies up to Under 19 International level but the



**BOYD RANKIN** His height will give him extra bounce.

County circuit has to come into play if the next step on the ladder is to be achieved. This has shown in every tournament that Ireland has competed in.

I always admired Dennis Lillee and Geoff Thompson, destroying England many years ago and I watched closely the silky smooth run up of all the fast bowlers on the international scene, especially Sir Richard Hadlee.

I would advise any bowler to concentrate on the run up. On a damp day, you should also see the angle of attack to the stumps, perfect these and you will have the building blocks in the right place.

I am a big fan of Brett Lee and admire how he came back through a serious back injury to bowl even quicker. If any young pace bowler can get a look at his action they will see that it is honed to explosive perfection. Pace ace Alan Donald would be my pick from South Africa while I have had the honour to be at the non strikers end for Ireland against Derbyshire when the great Michael Holding was bowling to fellow North West and Ireland all rounder Nigel Thompson. I faced Devon Malcolm when he was at the height of his career with England back in 1989 and this experience could only be described as going onto a motorway for the

**I would rate Roger Kerr as one of the best 'quick' bowlers in the North West. He has the ability to get the ball to move in the air and off the pitch and can go through a team like a knife through butter.**

first time after passing your driving test, and being used to driving at 45mph, you suddenly have projectiles pass either side of you at speeds of up to 90 mph. Once you stay there for a while it becomes a lot easier and you get very used to this speed but the trick is staying there!

The most deceptive 'quick' I ever saw was probably Malcolm Marshall. I remember watching England v West Indies at the Oval, sitting sideways on to the wicket. I had arrived just before the start of play after lunch and 'Whispering Death', as Michael Holding was affectionately known, opened the bowling. Geoffrey Dujon, the West Indies 'keeper, was standing about 20 paces back and after three deliveries when the eyes became adjusted to the pace, it was just about possible to follow the path of the ball. Chris Tavare was doing his usual impression of a stonewall so the skipper decided on a change after three or four overs. Enter Malcolm Marshall. His run up was slightly more than half that of the elegant Holding who gathered pace rhythmically in the approach, a thing of beauty to behold without doubt. Marshall sprinted from his first stride and when he released the ball I saw NOTHING, just the dull thud of the ball into Dujon's gloves who had by this stage moved back at least four paces from his previous position. Throughout that over from Marshall I was unable to pick up the ball, and only after four overs [when I'm sure he tired slightly], was I able to detect the faintest blur of red leather skidding through at very high speed. Rather Chris Tavare than me!!

Pace bowling can be likened to the art of war, knowing your enemy and finding his weakness, that is one tip any quickie must exploit to gain the upper hand.

I would like to finish by making the point that pace bowling has a short life span in the career of a cricketer but there is no greater pleasure than beating your opponent just 22 yards away & removing him from the crease.



**GORDON COOKE** Some impressive spells for Ireland.



Andrew White receives his 2004 'Irish Cricketer of the Year' award from John Taylor. Looking on are Sunday Independent editor Angus Fanning (left) and Sam Synnott, Managing Director, Hyundai Ireland.

## 2004 IRISH CRICKETER OF THE YEAR

Andrew White was the recipient of the 2004 accolade in a season of many personal and team achievements. He played a significant role in two great Irish victories, firstly against Surrey in the Cheltenham & Gloucester Trophy and then against the West Indies in a match which saw Ireland chase 292. In his First

Class debut for Ireland he scored a magnificent 152\* against Holland and later in the season he was signed by Northamptonshire. In his 53 matches to date for Ireland he has scored just under 1,250 runs at an average of just over 30 and taken 50 wickets at an average of 27.5.

# AFRICAN SAFARI

Namibia will host the semi-finals and final of the ICC Intercontinental Cup in 2005.

The semi-finals will take place from 23-25 October with the final taking place from 27-30 October. All matches will be staged in the capital Windhoek with the final scheduled to take place at the Wanderers Club.

Namibia Cricket Board President, Laurie Pieters, said that the preparations for the finals were already underway.

"The awarding of the finals of this prestigious ICC event to our country is

a major boost for cricket and those that love the sport in Namibia," said Mr Pieters.

"We already have the grounds and facilities required and preparations have now begun to ensure that we are ready to welcome the regional winners."

Hong Kong is the only new side in the 12-team ICC tournament which last season brought competitive multi-day cricket to the second tier of cricket nations for the first time. It replaces Malaysia in the Asia regional qualifiers and will begin its campaign in Nepal

on 24 April.

The Americas region looks set to produce an intense festival of cricket with the three qualifying matches scheduled for Toronto in Canada from 23 August to 2 September.

The ICC Intercontinental Cup format remains unchanged in its second season. The top team from each of the four regions will progress to the semi-finals and final in Namibia.

There have been minor changes to the points structure with more rewards available for first innings runs.

## WEBSITE REPRIEVE

Only an eleventh-hour reprieve from local businessman and cricket aficionado Ivan McCombe saved the CricketIreland website from going out of business. This would have been a tragedy for local cricket given that the forum is an independent voice within Irish cricket and gives a platform for a rich variety of contributors to voice their opinions on many of the issues involved in the local game. It has also proved a fountain of knowledge, and a much more effective communication tool than many of the official mediums traditionally used.

In the past the website attracted some criticism for posting anonymous and at times mischievous emails, but under the excellent editorship of Barry Chambers, it has removed most of the distasteful postings and gone from strength to strength with audio recordings and ever-increasing valuable archives. The website has also given a platform to a plethora of willing correspondents, never found wanting when it comes to solving the delicate and contentious issues that seem to plague Irish cricket every year.

## NORTHERN IRELAND CRICKET ASSOCIATION

The future of the NICA has been confirmed and it will come under the control of the Irish Cricket Union with three representatives from each of the two northern unions making up the committee. The NICA is a useful medium to obtain grant-aid from the Sports Council for Northern Ireland, for cricket and sporting initiatives that come solely under the jurisdiction of the British government. Since cricket in Ireland is now administered on an all Ireland basis, the NICA can still serve a useful purpose and play a significant part in the development of cricket in the province.

## WOMEN FIND THE GOING TOUGH

Ireland finished last out of eight at the Women's World Cup in South Africa in March and April. A Full report on the tournament will be featured in the Summer 2005 issue of The Ulster Cricketer.



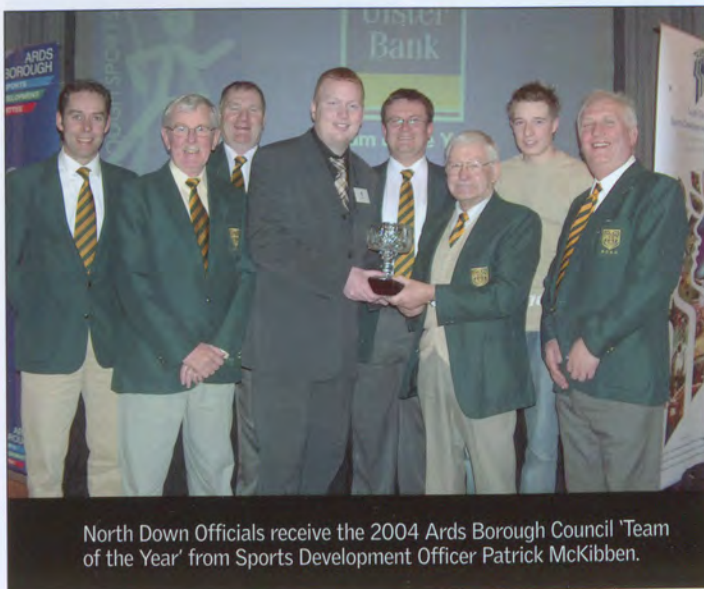
# ICC INTER-CONTINENTAL CUP 2005



Bob Kerr (left) with Caroline Montgomery and Alan Montgomery.

## NEW SPONSOR

The Campsie Paper Company will sponsor the North West Cricket League in 2005. North West Chairman Bob Kerr said, "I am delighted that Campsie Paper Company is going to be the new sponsor of the North West league. They are obviously closely connected with Alan Montgomery, and that's a happy coincidence, as he is of course the North West President". Caroline Montgomery, of Campsie Paper Company, said of the sponsorship, "It's great to be able to help North West cricket, with whom my family has been so closely involved over many years. I hope it proves to be a mutually beneficial involvement for both the company and the North West Cricket Union."



North Down Officials receive the 2004 Ards Borough Council 'Team of the Year' from Sports Development Officer Patrick McKibben.

## NORTH DOWN CAPTURE AWARDS

North Down 1st XI were named Ards Borough Council 'Team of the Year' 2004 following their fourth Senior Cup win in five years. The club as a whole was also awarded a 'Service to the Community' award by the local Rotary Club at a presentation dinner in January.

## OUT OF SORTS

Cricketers all over the Province are praying for popular Lurgan stalwart Dickie Maxwell who suffered a major stroke during the winter. It has been a trying time for Dickie and his family, but he has shown all the old fighting spirit that made him such a cocky and endearing personality over the years. Although still considerably restricted in movement, he is slowly improving, and everyone in cricket wishes him a full recovery.

Another former cricketer in the 'wars' was former Ireland captain Dermott Monteith who also suffered a stroke pre-Christmas and was hospitalised for some weeks. Happily Dermott is now on the mend although he has been asked to slow down by his medical advisers. Not surprisingly one of his old mates at Lisburn quipped, "He's been slowing down for thirty years

## FRIENDLY VENUES

Ireland's last two warm-up games before the ICC Trophy will be played at Downpatrick and Lurgan. The hosts will face 2003 World Cup finalists Namibia at Strangford Road on Tuesday June 28 while the following day Scotland will provide the opposition in their final practice game before the tournament begins on July 1.

### Practice matches:

**Tuesday June 28** – Denmark v Oman (Woodvale), Ireland v Namibia (Downpatrick), UAE v Papua New Guinea (Saintfield), Uganda v Canada (Osborne Park).

**Wednesday June 29** – Bermuda v Oman (Saintfield), Denmark v Canada (Newforge), Ireland v Scotland (Lurgan), UAE v Holland (Cliftonville), Uganda v PNG (Carrickfergus), USA v Namibia (Lisburn).

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## 2005 NCU PRESIDENT



Robin Walsh

Flamboyant Public Relations guru Robin Walsh is the President of the Northern Cricket Union in 2005, while the vice-president is North Down stalwart Ian Shields.

As well as his presidential duties, Robin will continue his PR work for the Ulster Bank Awards and Lion Sports Awards, his journalistic exploits with the Sunday Life and just for good measure, he is the Public Relations Officer for the northern command of the ICC Trophy.

A busy summer indeed!

## EAST BELFAST C.C.

East Belfast Cricket Club, made up predominantly of members of the former Shorts club, will play its first competitive match on May 7th at home to Indian Gymkhana.

## CRINDLE RETURN

One piece of very good news to emerge from the North-West during the winter was the return of Crindle Cricket Club to competitive action. They will contest their first season back, in North-West Intermediate League 3.



South African born all-rounder Ralph Coetzee has moved to 'The Green'.



New ICU President Stan Mitchell (centre) with past president Bob Kerr (right) and Roy Harrison.

## NEW ICU PRESIDENT

Former Phoenix and Ireland batsman Stan Mitchell was elected as Irish Cricket Union president in February with Waringstown stalwart Roy Harrison named as his successor in 2006. Mitchell's appointment has a North-West connection, as the now-domiciled Dubliner was a member of Donemana's famous 1969 team.



Kyle McCallan is presented his Waringstown shirt from club captain Johnny Bushe.

## INTERNATIONAL MOVES

Some familiar names will be playing their cricket at new clubs this season. In the NCU, Kyle McCallan has made the switch from Cliftonville to Waringstown while Ralph Coetzee, after spells with Woodvale and North/Belfast Harlequins, has joined North Down.

In Leinster, Irish captain Jason Molins has indicated he will be playing his club cricket in England and his former Phoenix opening partner Jeremy Bray has moved to Clontarf.



Basil McNamee, Chairman of the NCU Schools' Committee makes the draw with David Fairley, Manager, Ulster Bank Crumlin Road.

# SCHOOLS' COMPETITIONS

Holders Regent House have been handed a home draw in the first round of their defence of the Ulster Bank School's Cup, they will entertain the second string from Campbell College at 'The Green' in early May. Last year's beaten finalists Strabane Grammar are at home to Belfast High School.

## Ulster Bank Schools' Under 15 Cup

### 1st Round by 3 May

- (1) Campbell College v Ballymena Academy
- (2) Limavady HS v Craigavon SHS
- (3) Regent House v Friends' School
- (4) Bangor GS v BRA
- (5) Belfast HS v Saintfield HS
- (6) RBAI v Lurgan College
- (7) Limavady GS v Grosvenor GS
- (8) Down HS v Foyle & Londonderry
- (9) RS Armagh v RS Dungannon
- (10) Dalriada v Larne GS
- (11) Lisneal College v Strabane HS
- (12) Portora RS v Strabane GS
- (13) Parkhall College v Ballyclare HS

### 2nd Round by May 10

- (14) (1) v MCB
- (15) (2) v (3)
- (16) (4) v (5)
- (17) (6) v (7)
- (18) (8) v Banbridge Academy
- (19) (9) v (10)
- (20) (11) v Wallace HS
- (21) (12) v (13)

## Ulster Bank Schools' Cup

### 1st Round By May 4

- (1) MCB v Limavady GS II
- (2) Regent House v Campbell College II
- (3) Strabane GS v Belfast HS
- (4) Wallace HS II v Royal School Armagh
- (5) Sullivan Upper v Bangor GS II
- (6) Dalriada v BRA II
- (7) BRA v Coleraine AI
- (8) Ballymena Academy v Sullivan Upper II
- (9) Ballyclare HS v Bangor GS
- (10) Royal School Dungannon v Larne GS
- (11) Campbell College v Down HS
- (12) RBAI v Limavady GS
- (13) Wallace HS v Foyle & Londonderry College II
- (14) Lurgan College v Friends' School
- (15) RBAI II v Banbridge Academy

### 2nd Round by May 11

- (16) Foyle and Londonderry College v (1)
- (17) (2) v (3)
- (18) (4) v (5)
- (19) (6) v (7)
- (20) (8) v (9)
- (21) (10) v (11)
- (22) (12) v (13)
- (23) (14) v (15)

3rd Round and Semi Finals to be drawn after the preceding rounds.

## CRICKETIRELAND RANKINGS

Ireland, somewhat surprisingly, sit in second place in the CricketIreland rankings for all those nations taking part in the ICC Trophy. The rankings have been produced using a modified form of the ICC's one day international ranking system. They are based on all matches between the teams in the last four years, with more recent meetings having a higher weighting.

### RANKING POINTS:

<b>Holland 136</b>	<b>Canada 99</b>
<b>Ireland 132</b>	<b>Uganda 95</b>
<b>Namibia 122</b>	<b>Papua New Guinea 89</b>
<b>UAE 117</b>	<b>Oman 87</b>
<b>Scotland 116</b>	<b>Bermuda 84</b>
<b>USA 101</b>	<b>Denmark 80</b>

## CANADA ASSISTANT

Instonian Colin Siller, a familiar face to NCU cricket followers, has been appointed assistant coach to the Canadian team playing in the ICC Trophy here in July.

## PAKISTANI RANKINGS

The Official rankings released by the Pakistan Cricket Board in March contain some familiar names to followers of Ulster Cricket. Although there are no bowlers there are a number of batsmen in the list. Brigade's Wajahatullah Wasti tops the list, closely followed by Shoab Khan of Cliftonville in second and former Glendermott star Hasan Raza in fourth place. There is no sign of seasoned campaigners like Taimur Khan of North Down or Azhar Shafiq of Donemana but Waringstown's new signing Ijaz Ahmed sneaks in at twenty-fifth.

# Civil Service North is Born



**ANDREW HAIRE** Has a point to prove.

With the benefit of hindsight, the move with the rugby code proved disastrous, and long before the cricketers took charge of their own destiny again, it was painfully obvious that they had no future in a multi-sports club dominated by overpaid and narrow-minded rugby players. In the selfish world of Irish club rugby, amateurs are expected to raise the money to fund the prima donnas on their 1st XV and for minority sports within a multi-sports set-up, that means virtually all the resources are channelled into the rugby section.

The perception at North of Ireland Cricket Club in 1999 was that the move had so much potential, but the reality has proved otherwise. Belfast Harlequins is essentially a rugby club, and the cricketers were soon marginalized, off the field problems compounded by inconsistent results on the field.

It's been a topsy-turvy few years for North of Ireland Cricket Club, with the traumatic departure from Ormeau almost as big a tragedy as the complete loss of identity within the Belfast Harlequins set-up at Deramore.

Relegation at the end of the 2004 season was a bitter pill to swallow, a season when the 1st XI came so close to winning the senior cup. But the best news to come from the demise of North of Ireland Cricket Club/Belfast Harlequins Cricket Club was the surprise merger with Civil Service Cricket Club at the end of last season, and the switch to Stormont under the new name of Civil Service North Cricket Club.

All this adds up to an exciting year for section two cricket followers, because the talented Civil Service North team will be the hot favourites to win promotion and take their place in the premier section, a place where many cricket lovers feel they rightfully belong. Belfast Harlequins wasn't the worst team in section one last season, yet they were relegated, but the subsequent loss of Ralph Coetzee to North Down was the only significant departure despite several of their best players being 'tapped' by rival clubs. Top of the 'hit list' were captain Wayne Horwood and talented wicket-keeper-batsman Gary Wilson, but both stayed firm, and will spearhead the club's return to past glories in their historic 2005 season.

Horwood's aggressive cricket will be a major attraction in section two this season, but overall opposing bowlers will have a torrid time if the Civil Service North batsmen regularly show their true form. Stephen Dyer in particular is a class performer, and young Andrew Haire will be keen to show his former North Down club members what they let go.

Relegated teams normally bounce back after a season in section two to recharge their batteries, and it will take a major effort from the other clubs to thwart the Stormont team. The main challenge should come from Muckamore, Ballymena and Woodvale, but don't rule out Larne! The boys from the busiest seaport in the province may not have

the most fashionable pedigree, but they are quickly establishing themselves as a cricket centre of some standing and vision. Last year they were just off the pace, but the experience gained will stand them in good stead, and if the hard-working Derriaghly can make it to the premier section, then why not ambitious Larne?

Last year section two produced a tremendous finale to the season with plenty of action at the top and the bottom of the league table in the last few weeks. Unfortunately most of the action in the relegation zone was off the field, and although Armagh, Hollywood and CIYMS all finished with four wins and the same number of points, there were no play-offs because Woodvale and Hollywood could not complete their final league game because of inclement weather. The frustrations of trying to accommodate the re-arrangements and the inevitable play-offs, boiled over with some unnecessary caustic mud-slinging from camp to camp, a situation exacerbated by the NCU trying to stage-manage the outcome and set in place play-off arrangements prior to the Woodvale versus Hollywood game being played. Of course they were trying to play the honest broker with some foresight, but when their backs are against the wall, clubs don't always welcome the intrusion from officialdom, and more often than not prefer to hide behind the rulebook. That meant that when the Woodvale and Hollywood match could not be played, there were no play-offs, and poor old CIYMS got relegated on the basis of their inferior league status of the previous season.

Quite apart from the rights and wrongs of this scenario, all the clubs knew what was in the rulebook prior to the start of the season, and therefore everybody played under the same rules. To try and change the status quo was inviting antagonism, and it



**GARY WILSON** A key player in CSNI's push for promotion.

certainly did that!

However, what was disappointing was the fact that none of the clubs involved bothered to table a motion to the NCU annual general meeting to change this archaic and ambiguous rule, so that interpretation, manipulation and confusion don't enter the debate when the situation re-occurs, as it will inevitably do. NCU cricket certainly didn't invent the wheel as far as ties at the top and the bottom of leagues have been around since the start of competitive cricket. But what we haven't done either is to move our rulebook with the times, and put in place a pragmatic mathematical tiebreaker, or alternatively just revert back to the previous season's status and forget about relegation play-offs.

The irony of the relegation scenario was that at the other end of the league table, the tie between Muckamore and Derriaghy was settled on the field in the true spirit that the legislators had intended when the rules were drafted. Maybe it was a case of more to gain in promotion, and more to lose in relegation, but either way it was a cricket solution that brought dignity and fair play to the fore, in stark contrast to the relegation debacle.

Derriaghy won the play-off and created history in reaching the top section of NCU cricket for the first time. It was a magnificent achievement, but Muckamore contributed more to their demise than anyone by self-destructing in the final games by losing three of them, when promotion was there for the taking. There's no doubt there is plenty of talent at Moylena but it begs the question on their ability to handle the pressure of the big matches, and with Neil Gill going off to Instonians, they will have a tough task bouncing back from such a traumatic collapse.

Ballymena didn't add section two silverware to their sesquicentenary celebrations in 2004, but they had a very satisfactory year, and that's really where Ballymena cricket appears to be placed at present. The club enjoyed some great years in the eighties, peaked in the late nineties with that memorable senior league triumph in 1998, plus an Irish Senior Cup final appearance, but in the past few years the team has been just off the promotion pace. On their day the Ballymena team is good enough to beat any of their rivals, including some of the top teams in section one, but without an overseas professional and restricted within a rugby

club, their efforts will be thwarted by more ambitious rivals.

Woodvale is the great enigma of section two cricket. For a club with such a rich and colourful heritage, languishing in the middle of section two cricket is a far cry from their halcyon years when they produced so many fine Irish internationals, packed their Ballygomartin Road ground every week, and won senior trophies time and time again. Maybe it was the burden of expectation that crippled the modern generation, but Ulster cricket needs a strong Woodvale club, and Belfast cricket will only successfully develop if clubs like them take the game into the communities and produce homegrown talent. The current Woodvale club has come through some challenging times in North Belfast, and should be all the stronger for it. Fifty years ago Woodvale won the senior league title and repeated that success twice in the following decade. But it is now almost forty years since their team won the senior league, and for a club with such a magnificent senior cup record, their 1998 victory is their only success in the last fifty years. Paul Robinson has the daunting task of bringing back the glory to Ballygomartin Road, and



**STEPHEN DYER** Has stayed loyal to the cause.

hopefully it will happen, but perhaps not as early as 2005.

Some of the top NCU administrators in recent years have been Cooke Collegians men, a tribute to an efficient and hard-working administration team that has raised their profile to a high level, and almost buried the legacy of the old Cooke and Collegians clubs from whence they came. A transition period was inevitable, but the Shaw's Bridge set-up is now an impressive sports complex, and although some skeptics feel an amalgamation with joint incumbents Instonians Cricket Club is almost inevitable, both clubs are doing quite nicely on their own at present. Last year Cooke Collegians finished in a creditable mid table position, and with the experienced Craig Irwin at the helm in 2005, they will hope to put some serious pressure on the favourites. However, they don't appear to have the strength in depth to win the title, and may be satisfied with a year of consolidation and a cup run.

This leaves Holywood, Armagh and newly promoted Laurelvale as the three teams that might be most people's favourites to contest the relegation dogfight. Unfortunately there is nothing in the formbook to think otherwise, and while the McCrum brothers will give Laurelvale a lot of mettle, they must have solid support from

their teammates to win more matches than their rivals. Armagh and Holywood benefited from avoiding relegation play-offs last season, so it remains to be seen whether this was a lifeline, or a one-year delay of the inevitable. The County Down club has been on a steady decline for some time despite the Herculean work of stalwarts like Billy McCormick and Michael Shannon, but the time has surely come for their younger members to grab the mantle and lift Holywood from its lethargy.

Armagh's beautiful ground at the Mall is arguably the most idyllic setting in Irish cricket, and most of their rivals would not want to miss out on playing at such a majestic setting, but their sentiment is unlikely to stretch onto the pitch. It will be a tough year for Armagh, and their season might hinge on their key matches with neighbours Laurelvale and Holywood.

It all adds to a season of great promise in section two with some key matches amongst the principal teams in the early weeks of the season. Civil Service North will be the team to beat, and at the other end of the table, clubs should target a minimum of five wins to avoid the 'threat' of a relegation play-off, or a straightforward drop, as CIYMS will be bursting to get back into this section and settle a few old scores.

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# Expert Opinion

Belfast Telegraph cricket correspondent and gambling supremo **ROBERT FENTON** gives his thoughts on the odds for the ICC Trophy...



**T**he ICC Trophy and qualification for the 2007 World Cup holds centre stage on the Irish cricketing front for two reasons.

Firstly, it is being played here in July for the first time with the first phase of matches being played throughout Northern Ireland before the semi-finals, play-offs and final move to Dublin.

Secondly, Ireland under Adrian Birrell, have a magnificent chance of going to the West Indies in two years time and it will be a very dull summer if they do not make it.

Such will be the interest, local bookmaker's McGranaghan Racing, have wasted no time in dipping their toe into this market. They are of course, no strangers to laying odds on Country Cricket and the Ashes this summer, will create an expected increase in turnover.

But Joe Thomas has to be congratulated for leading the way in the ICC Trophy betting and he has got it right by naming Ireland at 2-1 favourites to lift the trophy on July 13.

They are 8-11 to win Group A and that has to be a banker bet. Consider that Bermuda, Denmark USA or Uganda should present little in the way of a serious threat, that only leaves UAE who won the trophy, somewhat surprisingly in 1994 when beating Kenya in the final in Nairobi.

But again, the conditions and home advantage will favour the Irish and while that price is short, it looks a winner and can provide the basis of saving the stake on a big punt to win outright.

Group B is much more competitive but while Namibia might do something, the top spot should rest between Scotland and Holland.

I would expect the Scots to be strong, especially if they have their County players on board and at 11-8 to head, the section, are well worth a good bet.

The Dutch are very solid winning the trophy in 2001 and twice being runners-up. Their reputation goes before them but the Thistle can put a thorn in their side and set up a potential Ireland-Scotland final. Bet both to win outright – the Scots are 3-1 – and that will hopefully bring a return of 50 per cent on investment, as it will be equivalent to backing a 1-2 or even money winner.



2/1	Ireland	10/1	Uganda
3/1	Scotland	16/1	U.S.A
4/1	Holland	20/1	Papua New Guinea
8/1	Namibia	28/1	Bermuda
8/1	U.A.E.	33/1	Oman
10/1	Canada	50/1	Denmark

Each-way – Odds Place 1.2.

## I.C.C. TROPHY CRICKET JULY 1ST – JULY 13TH 2005

### GROUP BETTING

GROUP A		GROUP B	
8/11	Ireland	11/8	Scotland
7/2	U.A.E	9/4	Holland
5/1	Uganda	9/2	Namibia
7/1	U.S.A.	5/1	Canada
16/1	Bermuda	12/1	Papua New Guinea
33/1	Denmark	16/1	Oman

Win Only

# Irish cricket: on the brink

**CLARENCE HILES** looks back over 25 years and compares the state of the game after the 1980 season to where we are now.

**H**ow do you compare growth and progress in any sport? Is it in the number of people playing or watching the game, the bank balances, the number of clubs in existence, the performances of the players, or the strength of the national team?

Maybe it is a combination of all these factors, and maybe it is time to try and evaluate if our game has indeed progressed or indeed if it matters! There is certainly a much higher profile of Irish cricket across the globe, and this hasn't been achieved just because of our ICC Trophy participation, it has been on the back of some fine performances at every level of youth cricket, some stirring performances by the senior team, some high profile visits by megastars Steve Waugh, Hansie Cronie and Ali Bacher, the increasing number of overseas professionals in the local game, our umpires raising their international profile, and the emergence of several Irish players on the county circuit. With Ireland about to stage the ICC Trophy competition in 2005, there is every reason to feel the game is on the crest of a wave, and the disappointment of Toronto in 2001 can finally be put to bed with qualification for the 2007 World Cup in the Caribbean.

In addition, the Ireland set-up appears much better organized with a fulltime national coach and a fulltime chief executive, plus a plethora of committees, administrators and several development officers.

It all seems a far cry from the 1980 season, barely 25 years ago, but seemingly a lifetime in the evolution of Irish cricket.

The dapper Stuart Pollock was ICU president in 1980, Derek Scott was secretary, Cyril Irwin counted the pennies, the mercurial Dermott Monteith was Ireland captain, and also distinguished himself on an MCC tour to Bangladesh. From a financial viewpoint the 1980 season was one of the most profitable in the union's history, a trading surplus of almost £16,000 boosting the reserves to almost £30,000. It cost £47,000 pounds to run the union's affairs on and off the pitch, and it was recorded that without the generous support from sponsors the



**MIKE HENDRICK** Introduced Team Ireland culture in the nineties.

game could not flourish. The Guinness Cup interprovincial competition was in its prime, and won in 1980 by a strong Ulster Town team, with all three northern teams finishing above their southern opponents. The two NCU teams also dominated the Esso Cup youth competition. Times were good in 1980!

Ireland played six matches in 1980, three traditional games against MCC, Scotland and Wales, plus the two showpiece games against the mighty West Indies in Dublin, and the only true competitive game against Middlesex in the Gillette Cup. Unfortunately rain played havoc with most of the games, although the victory over the MCC at Ormeau was the first on home soil for 20 years. The Middlesex match was a milestone for the Ireland team as they performed brilliantly, albeit going down to the eventual winners by five wickets.

Fifteen players made up the Irish squad, and although the ICU had mixed feelings about the increasing numbers of overseas professionals entering the game at club level, they still arranged a match against the professionals in Belfast as a warm-up for the Middlesex match.

At club level, in the NCU Lisburn won the league, North of Ireland the cup, while in the North-West Donemana added another league

title, and Limavady won the North-West Senior Cup in bizarre circumstances with Indian test star Kapil Dev in their team. In Leinster Malahide and Clontarf took the honours and in Munster, once again Wanderers proved invincible in both the league and cup competitions.

But overall the face of cricket at club level was changing, especially in the north, where overseas professionals dominated the season, and North Down's recruitment of Waringstown's Michael Reith sent shock waves through the arteries of the traditionalists, who predicted chequebook recruitment and player poaching was about to destroy the very fabric of the sport.

On reflection the cricket landscape some 25 years later has certainly changed, especially at national level, but it is difficult to gauge whether performances at club level have improved or declined, given that the game has changed dramatically in that time. The purists may lament the preponderance of bitsy players in the modern game, but instant cricket is the future of the game, and with 20/20 cricket about to unfold, it seems likely to continue in that vein.

As Ireland prepares for the 2005 season it is remarkable to also reflect on the complete change in the face of the game at this level. Of the 24 ICU officials involved in 1980, only Murray Power remains within the ICU committee set-up. Perhaps less surprisingly none of the players remain, although somewhat alarmingly only former 1980 player Ian Johnston is still involved with the game at national level. The old Guinness Cup and Esso Cups have since gone, while the traditional six selectors have been reduced to three plus the national coach. Perhaps that should read one, since the national coach now effectively picks the team. The real growth in Irish cricket has been in the organization of the game on and off the pitch, with numerous committees and sub committees, and a host of youth competitions. Irish cricket has also embraced semi-professionalism and removed many of the old barriers that prevented qualified players from playing because the hierarchy wanted the national team to be

# of greatness or at the crossroads?



**LISBURN 1<sup>ST</sup> XI** NCU Senior League winners 1980. Back row, left to right: N Cruickshanks, G Corkin, H McAuley, GEG Lyness, H Cook, JD McDowell  
Front row, left to right: JW Solanky, JE Lockhart, WR Monteith, J Kirkwood, JD Monteith

## The real growth in Irish cricket has been in the organization of the game on and off the pitch.

completely Irish. And despite what some people might think, Jack Charlton did not generate this development, it came from Mike Hendrick and his Team Ireland culture in the mid nineties. Mike was good for Irish cricket, but too far in front of his time for some amateur administrators and selectors. His departure left a short-term vacuum in visionary thinking but the subsequent appointment of a fulltime chief executive a few years later had more vision and brought the development of the game back on stream.

Things have since moved at a rapid pace in Irish cricket, and with a national squad of 25 players, and a 2005 fixture list of possibly 12 games, the pressure on the field will be mirrored off it as ICU officials grapple to control an ever-increasing expense budget. It will cost £100,000 to run Irish cricket in

2005, and although much has changed in 25 years, those prophetic words of ICU treasurer Cyril Irwin in 1980 are just as poignant in 2005... "without the generous support of our sponsors the game could not flourish."

Has cricket improved in those 25 years? Who knows, but it has certainly changed,

and whether that is for the better or not, only the reader can decide!

That said, we are going to enjoy some meaningful competitive cricket in July with a lofty prize at stake, and this is a lot more attractive than all those meaningless games played in 1980.



**MICHAEL REITH** Captain of 1980 winners Ulster Town, receiving the Guinness Cup from Howard Dunne.

# summer fixtures calendar 2005

## MAY

1 Sun	2 Mon	3 Tue	4 Wed	5 Thu	6 Fri	7 Sat	8 Sun	9 Mon	10 Tue	11 Wed	12 Thu	13 Fri	14 Sat	15 Sun
	Downpatrick v Bangor Instonians v Derrigally Lisburn v Cliftonville Lurgan v Carrickfergus N Down v Warrington		Ireland v Yorkshire (C&G Trophy) at Stormont			Bready v Eglinton Ballygalabin v Ardara Downsides v Brigade Strabane v Limavady Blackburn v Downside St Johnston v The Field Fox Lodge v Killybeggs Burdennett v Coleraine N Fermanagh v Bards Glen Killybeggs v Don Mill Bangor v Lisburn Carrickfergus v Inst. Cliftonville v Lurgan Derrigally v North Down Warrington v D'Patrick	Limavady v Cliftonville Instonians v Eglinton Bready v Carrickfergus Strabane v Limavady Ardara v Lisburn D'Patrick v Glendennet Strabane v North Down Bangor v Downside Fox Lodge v Woodvale Bonds Glen v Holywood Killybeggs v Don Mill Bangor v Lisburn Carrickfergus v Inst. Burdennett v Larne M'ners v Crookedson Armagh v Six Mills C S North v Coleraine Cooke Colleg v St Johnston		CSNI v Woodvale Warriors Cooke Collegians v North Down Dunmurry Dynamos v Braidside Blacks The Villagers v Cliftonville Cobras	The Seahorses v Mackmore Marauders Downpatrick v Holywood Clerics Larne Pirates Lisburn Lions Lurgan Spades v Armagh			Inst v YMCA or Leinster Pembroke v Cork County Cliftonville v N County Limavady v Bangor Rush v Derrigally Glendennet v The Hills Railway Union v Lurgan CYM v Lisburn Warrington v Downside Mahide v Bready Dunmurry v D'Patrick North Down v Brigade Ballygalabin v Carrick Strabane v Phoenix Armagh v Morris or St Johnston Eglinton v Clontarf	

## JUNE

1 Wed	2 Thu	3 Fri	4 Sat	5 Sun	6 Mon	7 Tue	8 Wed	9 Thu	10 Fri	11 Sat	12 Sun	13 Mon	14 Tue	15 Wed
The Seahorses v Bangor Gryhans Holywood Clerics v North Down Lisburn Lions v Braidside Blacks Cliftonville Cobras v Armagh			Cliftonville v North Down Derrigally v Warrington D'Patrick v Carrickfergus Caburn v Instonians Lurgan v Bangor Irish Senior Cup 2nd Round	ClubTurf Ulster Cup 2nd Round White Horse Hotel Ulster Shield 2nd Round		CYMS v Cooke Collegians North Down v Downpatrick Carrick Eagles v Dunmurry Dynamos Larne Panthers v Lurgan Spades	Bangor Gryhans v CSNI The Seahorses v Woodvale Warriors Larne Pirates v Braidside Blacks Armagh v The Villagers			Northern Bank Senior Cup 2nd Round Derrigally v Bangor Downpatrick v Cliftonville Instonians v Lurgan Lisburn v North Down Warrington v Carrick Newry and Down Democrat Challenge Cup 3rd Round				

## JULY

1 Fri	2 Sat	3 Sun	4 Mon	5 Tue	6 Wed	7 Thu	8 Fri	9 Sat	10 Sun	11 Mon	12 Tue	13 Wed	14 Thu	15 Fri
Ireland v Bermuda at Stormont Denmark v Uganda at Mackmore United Arab Emirates v USA at Downpatrick Holland v Papua New Guinea at Osborne Park Scotland v Oman at Shaw's Bridge Namibia v Canada at Woodvale ICC New Zealand Women's T20I at Clontarf	Rigaku v Eglinton Downside v Downside Ardara v Limavady Bready v Ballygalabin Downside v Strabane Denmark v USA at Armagh United Arab Emirates v Bermuda at Lisburn Holland v Oman at Carrickfergus Scotland v Canada at Bangor Namibia v Papua New Guinea at Newforge		Ireland v United Arab Emirates at Stormont Denmark v Bermuda at Cliftonville Uganda v USA at Lurgan Holland v Namibia at Osborne Park Scotland v Papua New Guinea at Shaw's Bridge Oman v Canada at Mackmore	Ireland v USA at Warrington Denmark v United Arab Emirates at Bangor Uganda v Bermuda at Clontarf Holland v Canada at Eglinton Scotland v Namibia at Limavady Oman v Papua New Guinea at Downside		Ireland v Denmark at Bangor Uganda v United Arab Emirates at Lurgan USA v Bermuda at Warrington Holland v Scotland at Stormont Oman v Namibia at Clontarf Canada v Papua New Guinea at Downpatrick			Eglinton v Downside Downside v D'Patrick Strabane v Ballygalabin Limavady v Bready Ardara v Brigade Bangor v North Down Carrick v Cliftonville Derrigally v Lisburn Instonians v Downpatrick Warrington v Lurgan Semi-Final 1: 1st & 2nd B at Clontarf Semi-Final 2: 2nd A & 1st B at The Hills Semi-Final 3: 3rd A & 4th B at Mahide Semi-Final 4: 4th A & 3rd B at N County Semi-Final 5: 5th A & 6th B at Leinster Semi-Final 6: 6th A & 5th B at Munster	3rd-4th Place: Larne SF1 v Larne SF2 at Mahide 5th-8th Place: Winner SF3 v Winner SF4 at Clontarf 7th-8th Place: Larne SF3 v Larne SF4 at The Hills 9th-10th Place: Winner SF5 v Winner SF6 at North County 11th-12th Place: Larne SF3 v Larne SF6 at Rathfriland Irish Schools' v NSW Comb. High Schools' at Bangor	Ulster Schools' v NSW Comb. High Schools' (ICU) ICC Final: Winner SF1 v Winner SF2 at Clontarf	ICC Final: Winner SF1 v Winner SF2 at Clontarf	Ireland U19 v NSW Combined High Schools'	

## AUGUST

1 Mon	2 Tue	3 Wed	4 Thu	5 Fri	6 Sat	7 Sun	8 Mon	9 Tue	10 Wed	11 Thu	12 Fri	13 Sat	14 Sun	15 Mon
			Newry and Down Democrat Challenge Cup Final at Downpatrick		Eglinton v Bready Ardara v Ballygalabin Brigade v Downside Limavady v Strabane Downside v Blackburn Carrick v North Down Cliftonville v Instonians Derrigally v Downpatrick Lisburn v Lurgan Warrington v Bangor Web Senior Cup Semi-Final	Limavady v Eglinton D'Patrick v Ballygalabin			European Under 23 Championships in The Netherlands			Downside v Eglinton Bready v Ardara Strabane v Brigade Ballygalabin v Downside Bangor v Lurgan Carrick v Downpatrick Instonians v Lisburn North Down v Cliftonville Warrington v Derrigally Scotland v Ireland (ICC Inter Continental Cup) at Aberdeen	White Horse Hotel Ulster Shield Final	European Women's Championship

## SEPT.

1 Thu	2 Fri	3 Sat	4 Sun	5 Mon	6 Tue	7 Wed	8 Thu	9 Fri	10 Sat
	Irish Senior Cup Final	Eglinton v Brigade Downside v Downside Limavady v Ardara Ballygalabin v Bready Strabane v Glendennet Cliftonville v Carrick Downpatrick v Instonians Lisburn v Derrigally Lurgan v Warrington North Down v Bangor							Downside v Eglinton D'Patrick v Downside Ballygalabin v Strabane Bready v Limavady Brigade v Ardara



# THE ULSTER CRICKETER

## APRIL

<b>23 Sat</b> Strabane v Down Brackley v Bregally Downpatrick v Eglinton Ballinacorney v Lisburn Downpatrick v Downpatrick Loughborough University v Ireland at Loughborough	<b>24 Sun</b> Warwickshire v Ireland at Edgbaston	<b>25 Mon</b>	<b>26 Tue</b>	<b>27 Wed</b>	<b>28 Thu</b>	<b>29 Fri</b>	<b>30 Sat</b> Downpatrick v Strabane Brackley v Downpatrick Eglinton v Ballinacorney Arboyna v Downpatrick Loughborough v Downpatrick Bangor v Cliftonville Carrickfergus v Lisburn Derraghly v Lurgan D'Patrick v North Down Warrington v Instonians H'wood v Cooke Colleg. C.S North v Donaghney Dunmurry v Armagh Woodvale v Ballymena Muckamore v Laurelvale Larne v CUYMS
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<b>16 Mon</b>	<b>17 Tue</b> Muckamore Marauders v CSNI North Down v CUYMS Carrick Eagles v Braidside Blacks Cliftonville Cobras v Lurgan Spades	<b>18 Wed</b> Bangor Gryphons v Woodvale Warriors Holywood Clerics v Cooke Collegians Lisburn Lions v Dunmurry Dynamos Armagh v Laurelvale Panthers	<b>19 Thu</b>	<b>20 Fri</b>	<b>21 Sat</b> Zoo Lodge at Killybeggs v Eglinton Arboyna v Downpatrick Downpatrick v Coleraine v Killybeggs at Glen Mills Strabane v Bregally N Foranagh at Braid Side v Bregally Downpatrick v Loughborough Downpatrick v Coleraine St. Johnston at The Rock v Ballinacorney Derraghly v Woodvale/Ballymena Muckamore/Laurelvale v Holywood/Cooke Collegians North Down v Instonians Warrington v Downpatrick/Armagh Carrickfergus v Lurgan Bangor v Lisburn Cliftonville v Larne/CITAD Downpatrick v Dal Service North/Donaghney	<b>22 Sun</b>	<b>23 Mon</b>	<b>24 Tue</b> CUYMS v Holywood Clerics Cooke Collegians v Downpatrick Carrick Eagles Lisburn Lions Laurelvale Panthers v Cliftonville Cobras	<b>25 Wed</b> Bangor Gryphons v Muckamore Marauders CSNI v The Seahorses Dunmurry Dynamos v Larne Pirates Lurgan Spades v The Villagers	<b>26 Thu</b>	<b>27 Fri</b>	<b>28 Sat</b> Eglinton v Downpatrick Arboyna v Bregally Brackley v Strabane Bangor v Warrington Downpatrick v Derraghly Instonians v Cliftonville Lurgan v Lisburn N Down v Carrickfergus	<b>29 Sun</b> Loughborough v Bregally Arboyna v Downpatrick Downpatrick v Bregally	<b>30 Mon</b> Strabane v Downpatrick	<b>31 Tue</b> Downpatrick v CUYMS Muckamore Marauders v Woodvale Warriors Larne Pirates v Carrick Eagles The Villagers v Laurelvale Panthers
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<b>16 Thu</b>	<b>17 Fri</b> Twenty20 Cup Final's Day at Shaw's Bridge Ireland U19 v MCC at Stormont	<b>18 Sat</b> Brackley v Cliftonville Arboyna v Downpatrick Northern Bank Senior Cup Semi-Finals Bangor v Instonians Carrickfergus v Derraghly Cliftonville v Warrington Lisburn v Downpatrick Lurgan v North Down	<b>19 Sun</b>	<b>20 Mon</b> Ireland v MCC at Bangor	<b>21 Tue</b> Ireland v MCC at Warrington	<b>22 Wed</b> Ulster Bank Schools' Cup Final at Muckamore	<b>23 Thu</b>	<b>24 Fri</b> Graham Cup Final at Carrickfergus	<b>25 Sat</b> Strabane v Eglinton Loughborough v Downpatrick Ballinacorney v Brackley Downpatrick v Bregally Downpatrick v Strabane Carrickfergus v Bangor Derraghly v Cliftonville Downpatrick v Lurgan North Down v Instonians Warrington v Lisburn Irish Squad v Pros South 19C	<b>26 Sun</b> Irish Squad v Pros North at North Down	<b>27 Mon</b>	<b>28 Tue</b>	<b>29 Wed</b> U15 Inter-Provincial Championship (NWCU) U13 Inter-Provincial Championship (LCU) Southern Schools v Ulster Schools (LCU)	<b>30 Thu</b>
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<b>16 Sat</b> Downpatrick v Strabane Brackley v Bregally Eglinton v Downpatrick Downpatrick v Ballinacorney Downpatrick v Lisburn Cliftonville v Bangor Instonians v Warrington Lisburn v Carrickfergus Lurgan v Derraghly N Down v Downpatrick Newry and Down Democrat Challenge Cup Semi-Finals Irish Senior Cup 3rd Round	<b>17 Sun</b>	<b>18 Mon</b> European Under 17 Championships in Denmark European Under 13 Championships in Dublin	<b>19 Tue</b>	<b>20 Wed</b>	<b>21 Thu</b>	<b>22 Fri</b>	<b>23 Sat</b> Brackley v Downpatrick Downpatrick v Strabane Ballinacorney v Eglinton Strabane v Arboyna Downpatrick v Loughborough Bangor v Downpatrick Carrickfergus v Lurgan Cliftonville v Lisburn Derraghly v Instonians Warrington v N Down	<b>24 Sun</b> Strabane v Bregally Arboyna v Eglinton Downpatrick v Bregally ClubTurf Ulster Cup Semi-Finals White Horse Hotel Ulster Shield Semi-Finals	<b>25 Mon</b> Downpatrick v Ballinacorney	<b>26 Tue</b>	<b>27 Wed</b> European Under 15 Championships in The Netherlands	<b>28 Thu</b>	<b>29 Fri</b> Northern Bank Senior Cup Final at Eglinton D'Patrick v Warrington Instonians v Carrick Lisburn v Bangor Lurgan v Cliftonville North Down v Derraghly	<b>30 Sat</b>	<b>31 Sun</b>
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<b>16 Tue</b>	<b>17 Wed</b>	<b>18 Thu</b>	<b>19 Fri</b>	<b>20 Sat</b> Brackley v Downpatrick Downpatrick v Arboyna Downpatrick v Strabane Downpatrick v Downpatrick Bangor v Derraghly Carrick v Warrington Cliftonville v Downpatrick Lurgan v Instonians North Down v Lisburn	<b>21 Sun</b> Downpatrick v Lisburn Eglinton v Strabane ClubTurf Ulster Cup Final	<b>22 Mon</b> NCU Colts Cup Final at Cliftonville	<b>23 Tue</b> Ireland v Holland (ICC Inter Continental Cup) at Stormont	<b>24 Wed</b>	<b>25 Thu</b>	<b>26 Fri</b>	<b>27 Sat</b> Downpatrick v Loughborough Brackley v Ballinacorney Brackley v Downpatrick Downpatrick v Downpatrick Derraghly v Carrickfergus Downpatrick v Lisburn Instonians v Bangor North Down v Lurgan Warrington v C'ville	<b>28 Sun</b> Cliftonville v Derraghly	<b>29 Mon</b> Bangor v Carrickfergus Instonians v North Down Lisburn v Warrington Lurgan v Downpatrick	<b>30 Tue</b>	<b>31 Wed</b>
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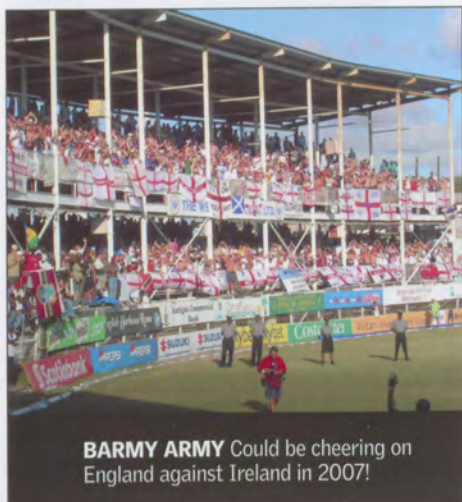
Championships in Wales

### KEY

	ICC TROPHY		NORTH-WEST SENIOR 1		CLUBTURF ULSTER CUP
	IRELAND		NORTHERN BANK SENIOR CUP		WHITE HORSE HOTEL ULSTER SHIELD
	UNDER-AGE INTERNATIONALS		NCU DIVISION 1 SECTION 1		YOUTH & SCHOOLS
	IRISH SENIOR CUP		NEWRY & DOWN DEMOCRAT CHALLENGE CUP		
	IRELAND LADIES		TWENTY20 CUP		

# There'll be a welcome on the Caribbean hillside...

**CLARENCE HILES** gives an Irish perspective to World Cup 2007 and what lies in store for Ireland and its supporters when they qualify for the competition.



**BARMY ARMY** Could be cheering on England against Ireland in 2007!

The burden of expectation is huge when you are a sporting favourite, but the Ireland players will have to handle that responsibility this summer. Whether they like it or not, the home team starts odds-on favourites to win the biggest competition in their history, with the safety cushion that even if they 'fail,' they can still qualify for the biggest event in Irish cricket history by finishing in the top five positions in a twelve-team tournament full of cricket minnows. It may seem harsh to say it, but anything less than qualification would send Irish cricket back to the drawing-board and medium-term obscurity.

Ireland are up for the challenge, and while there are no certainties in sport, this talented squad will give their all in pursuit of World Cup glory and accept that destiny has given them a wonderful opportunity to put Irish cricket on the world map. Of course we all remember our great days of glory when we beat the mighty West Indies in 1969 and 2004, those great wins over Zimbabwe, Middlesex and Surrey, and our European success under Mike Hendrick. But in the bigger picture of world cricket,

these monumental milestones in Irish cricket caused little more than a passing flutter, so the current Ireland squad has a golden opportunity to carve its own place in history over the next few years.

In such circumstances it may tempt providence to put the cart before the horse and look at what sort of welcome lies on the Caribbean hillside for the Ireland contingent, but who can avoid such speculation given the circumstances?

There is one certainty that can be taken with some confidence; Ireland will have plenty of support in the Caribbean. Not only is there a strong spattering of Irishness around the region, but also the Ireland squad will travel with plenty of support from well-wishers, fans and Irish cricket lovers. The Caribbean region has been a regular haunt for many Irish cricket supporters over the years, with teams going on tour, private visits and regular jaunts to the test matches by Irish cricket enthusiasts. The Irish connection has also been strengthened through visits to the Emerald Isle by cricketing mega stars Sir Garfield Sobers and Sir Everton Weekes, while a number of West Indian



**IRELAND** Hoping to celebrate World Cup qualification. Left to right, Gary Wilson, Ryan Eagleson, Niall O'Brien, Kyle McCallen, Andrew White, Eoin Morgan, Adrian McCoubrey, Adrian Birrell, Jason Molins, John Mooney, Peter Gillespie, Trent Johnston, Jeremy Bray, Andre Botha, Lesley Delaney (Bank of Ireland), Gordon Cooke.

overseas professionals have successfully plied their trade in Irish club cricket. Add the recent sponsorship of West Indies Cricket by Irish communications giants Digicel, and we are almost kissing cousins!

World Cup 2007 fever hasn't yet gripped the Caribbean with the tenacity that it might engender in other parts of the world, simply because of the laidback and easy-going culture of its people with its relaxed lifestyle of procrastination. After all, why rush at 100 miles an hour when you can get to your destination without any stress or anxiety at half that speed?

Quite simply, the only things that move fast in the Caribbean are the fast bowlers, and the beer.

The latter gets hot if it sits too long!

That said, it will all come good on the day, at least that's what everyone in the Caribbean believes, and who could fault these friendly people who have got it right when it comes to enjoying life and putting it into perspective. Cricket is still a sport in the Caribbean, and while it embraces every facet of Caribbean life with a passion, it remains a sport, and after the game is over, the party begins. Caribbean people may not be rich in monetary terms, but they are warm, friendly, and endearing hosts who will talk long, loud and late on their national sport, without acrimony or bitterness. They just love their cricket.

The build-up to World Cup 2007 in the Caribbean has been overshadowed to some extent by events off the cricket field, and in particular the row over sponsorship involving communication giants Digicel and Cable and Wireless, player's contracts, and some

inept performances by a team once revered all over the world for its cavalier and exciting cricket. The capacity to self-destruct has never been too far from West Indies cricket, and the selfish interests of individual players, countries, politicians and cricket boards, have done nothing to create cohesion and take the region forward with a common purpose, either economically, politically, or in sport. It may seem strange to outsiders, but this is a region of small islands and small economies, most with their own governments, currencies, historical allegiances, and cultures. Only in cricket does the West Indies come together as a single entity, and

## Quite simply, the only things that move fast in the Caribbean are the fast bowlers, and the beer. The latter gets hot if it sits too long!

although there has been a lot of shuffling in economic and legal circles to bring the region together, it will take a long time to produce a single market economy and political identity. Little wonder cricket struggles to have a cohesive identity, and little wonder prime ministers are in the middle of the fray when it comes to disputes and team selection!

Can you imagine Irish Cricket Union president Stan Mitchell or president-elect Roy Harrison getting a rap from the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern or Prime Minister Tony Blair for the exclusion of a particular player, or playing any role in the negotiation of the contracts offered to the players?

The internal politics of West Indies cricket will be set aside in due course, and

eventually the World Cup promotional extravaganza will embrace the region. The administration has already been established, and tight timescales set in place in the provision of quality grounds and facilities. The final will be staged at the Kensington Oval in Barbados, and while nothing has started in respect of the physical changes planned to make it one of the best cricketing stadiums in the world, the slow and sensitive background work on acquisition of adjoining properties and land, is well advanced. Other islands like St. Lucia have already their new ground at Beausejour in place, and all across the region plans are being implemented

with the help of local governments, overseas governments, and the ICC.

The biggest challenge to World Cup 2007 will not come in cricket facilities or administration, it will come from the logistics of trying to accommodate thousands of cricket fans, and moving them quickly and effectively throughout the region. This is a huge challenge, given the small airports around the islands, and the limited hotel rooms in even the most popular tourist locations.

Ireland's base for World Cup 2007 will be determined by their finishing position in the ICC Trophy, and the other teams in the group will be determined from their world rankings as at April 2005. The ICC has already designated the base for four teams to help with the organisation, these being Australia (St. Kitts and Nevis), West Indies (Jamaica), India (Trinidad and Tobago) and England (St. Lucia). The England contingent will be the biggest challenge, and although based in St. Lucia, many England supporters will stay in Barbados and commute on match days, a short flight of 45 minutes in the air, but who knows how long at the airports either side!

If Ireland wins the ICC trophy or finishes fifth, they will be based with Australia in beautiful St. Kitts and Nevis, two islands within a stone's throw of each other, and



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Sri Lanka	£1050	12
India (Golden Triangle)	£1300	14



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Can you imagine Irish Cricket Union president Stan Mitchell or president-elect Roy Harrison getting a rap from the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern or Prime Minister Tony Blair for the exclusion of a particular player, or playing any role in the negotiation of the contracts offered to the players?

with a population of 45,000 and 8,000 respectively. The arrival of 10,000 supporters for a cricket match in St. Kitts will present a major challenge, 20,000 visitors will be chaos! St. Kitts will have a new ground by then, courtesy of the Chinese government, but its cricket status is small and the island's biggest sporting achiever remains top sprinter Kim Collins, the 100 metres world sprint champion in 2003.

Nevis with its idyllic 'cotton-wool' mountaintop has a few small club grounds, but hardly anything currently capable of hosting a World Cup game.

If Ireland finish second in the ICC Trophy they will join the host country in Jamaica, and they could be in for a torrid time in blistering heat, and against some of the most partisan supporters they could imagine in the Caribbean. Most of these games will be centred on Jamaica's famous test ground at Sabina Park in Kingston, but the country's capital has a dreadful international image for crime, and while this is a beautiful island and relatively trouble-free outside certain areas of Kingstown, many visitors will rightly give it a miss.

Finishing third, Ireland could join England and the Barmy Army in beautiful St. Lucia. This would be ideal in terms of location and playing conditions, given the island's close proximity to Barbados, the simple logistics of coming and going there, its beautiful new ground at Beausejour, and the friendly welcome that St. Lucians and their cricket-loving prime minister Keith Mitchell will provide. St. Lucia is a growing tourist destination with great natural beauty and a lively social scene around the Rodney Bay area in the north of the island, close to the cricket ground, and the main golf course at Cap Estate.

If Ireland finishes fourth they will join India in Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad is the home of the great Brian Lara and the Queen's Park Oval, where most of the games will be played, and has a rich cricketing history dating back to 1930 when England beat the hosts in the first test match that was played there. Half the Trinidad population is of Indian origin, so Ireland can expect few favours off the field, and perhaps even less if Bangladesh is one of the other teams in the group. This may be the weakest group, but with Uganda, USA, United Arab Emirates, Denmark, and Bermuda to negotiate first, we really are getting the cart before the horse to start talking about beating established test countries!

There's a lot of cricket to be played before World Cup 2007, but Ireland and their supporters have a lot to look forward to when they secure their place this summer.

Maybe then we can look at the grounds in the second phase?



**ROY HARRISON** Chief Negotiator in contract disputes?!

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# Healthy Competition

Competition featuring teams in both the Northern Cricket Union and the North-West will be expanded in 2005 with the addition of The Ulster Shield. Sponsored by the White Horse Hotel, the new competition will feature teams from section two of each union, and will be run under similar rules to the ClubTurf Ulster Cup competition.

### ClubTurf Ulster Cup 2005

**1st Round:** Sunday 8th May 2005

Limavady v Cliftonville  
Instonians v Eglinton  
Bready v Carrickfergus  
Derrriaghy v Brigade  
Ardmore v Lisburn  
Downpatrick v Glendermott  
Strabane v North Down  
Bangor v Donemana

**2nd Round:** Sunday 5th June 2005

**Semi-Finals:** Sunday 24th July 2005

**Final:** Sunday 21st August 2005

### White Horse Hotel Ulster Shield

**1st Round:** Sunday 8th May 2005

Fox Lodge v Woodvale  
Bonds Glen v Hollywood  
Killymallaght v Dunmurry  
Burndennett v Larne  
Muckamore v Creevedonnell  
Armagh v Sion Mills  
Civil Service North v Coleraine  
Cooke Collegians v St Johnston

**2nd Round:** Sunday 5th June 2005

**Semi-Finals:** Sunday 24th July 2005

**Final:** Sunday 14th August 2005



**BRIAN MILFORD (LEFT) AND BOB KERR (RIGHT)**  
help Keith McGuinness from ClubTurf make the draw.



**ESHAM HORSHI (LEFT)** from the White Horse Hotel presents the Ulster Shield to Bob Kerr (Centre) and Brian Milford.



**JOHNNY BUSHE** Currently the best wicketkeeper in Ireland.

In former days, the first two names on the selected side were the captain and the wicket-keeper, such was the importance and the permanency of the core elements of a cricket team. Traditionally wicket-keeping was an art on its own, few aspiring cricketers having either the skill or the aptitude to don the gloves, and even fewer the talent to improve and go on to attain higher representative honours. Having a good 'keeper' on the team had many advantages, not least for the bowlers, fast and slow, who enjoyed the benefits of efficient catching and smart stumpings. Bonds developed between the two, and some of the best partnerships in club cricket were not between the two top batsmen, but between a good bowler and in many instances, an even better wicket-keeper. A really brilliant 'stumper' could not make a bad bowler look good, but most of the time he lifted an average bowler to another level. Teamed with a really good bowler, they were a class act.

Wicket-keepers have always been a breed apart in the cricket team; they had their own gloves, their own routine, and their own objectives, not always behind those of the team!

A faultless performance with no byes conceded was a good day's work, irrespective of the result, and if that was combined with several catches, a few runs, and 'not out' in the scorebook, then for many of the old club wicket-keepers, it didn't get much better.

Or did it? Have you ever watched the absolute delight on a wicket-keeper's face when he takes a stumping, the ecstasy and pleasure at perfecting one of the trade's most accomplished skills, almost independent of the bowler's contribution? These guys were artistes in their own right, and if any aspiring young wicket-keeper wanted a place in the senior team, he had to be exceptional to replace the incumbent, or he had to look around for a club that needed a new face behind the stumps. After all, the poor old wicket-keeper was chasing only one position on the team!

## Wicket-keepers have always been a breed apart in the cricket team; they had their own gloves, their own routine, and their own objectives, not always behind those of the team!

Of course not all wicket-keepers are specialists with limited batting expertise, and history shows that there were some outstanding batsman-cum-wicket-keepers down the years. However, they were and are in the minority, but right up to the introduction of instant cricket in the mid sixties, specialist wicket-keepers were still automatic selections in most teams. But as the game changed from time to limited overs, that tradition became a controversial element in team selection, and it remains one of the liveliest debates amongst the great strategists and theorists of the modern game, mostly emanating from the comfort of armchairs and TV remote controls. None of us has the knowledge, the expertise, or the experience to evaluate the best wicket-keepers against each other, but it doesn't stop us having opinions, and judging from the contributions sent to the Reader's Forum on the Cricket Ireland website during the winter, there are plenty of correspondents willing to oblige.

The topic became a major talking-point when Waringstown's fine young wicket-keeper Jonathan Bushe announced that he was withdrawing from the national squad due to business and family commitments. It

was a brave decision in the face of Ireland's exciting 2005 season, but for the recently married club captain a pragmatic choice, given the almost impossible task of trying to balance a career and family life, with the demands of amateur sport played under professional conditions. Ireland's squad members have been asked to make huge personal sacrifices over the past few years, and while that may fit comfortably into the work ethic and availability of the professionals in the squad, it has created major problems with the family lives of those who have a life outside the sport, or who have different priorities. The national squad reflects total commitment, a culture that was first introduced by former national coach Mike Hendrick in the nineties, and which brought the premature retirement of some established former players, and shortened the careers of some excellent players that were unable to give cricket a huge chunk of their time. As a result the Ireland squad may not have all the best players in the country, but it does have those who are 100% committed. Jonathan's decision was therefore not unexpected, but the reaction that followed bordered on nonsense, and ranged from asking the national coach to coax him back into the fold, to a plethora of suggested replacements embracing has-beens, never-was, and never-will-be alternatives.

In their midst were some good suggestions, but the website selection process highlights the value and importance of keeping selection committees to as few people as possible!

Behind the emotional turmoil within the Bushe household, there lies the reality that brilliant stumper that he is, Jonathan is not a match-winner in his own right, and with all the players available, he would not even have made the team. Ireland's first choice wicket-keeper is quite rightly Niall O'Brien, a full time professional county player and a useful batsman who has already an international century to his credit. And therein lies the heart of this intriguing debate, because

# Dinosaur or match-winner?

## The specialist wicket-keeper in the modern game.

**CLARENCE HILES** looks at the evolution of the specialist wicket-keeper in the modern game, and evaluates the contribution at representative level.

gone are the days when the best specialist wicket-keeper was an automatic choice. Cricket has moved on so much that the specialist wicket-keeper has almost become a dinosaur in the modern game. To his credit Bushe is no slouch with the bat, but I'm sure his dad has often reminded him that in his 7 games for Ireland, he finished with a higher batting average and a higher top score! However the point is academic outside the

Bushe household, and given that Eddie probably only hit two fours in an innings once in his distinguished career, and that was against this writer, it brings some perspective to the ridiculous claim that wicket-keepers can win matches. And outside their batting, the number of genuine wicket-keeping victims has considerably diminished in the modern game. If we look through the career statistics of all the top Ireland wicket-keepers past and present, you will find that they barely average more than one victim per match.

As for match winners, highly unlikely!



**OSSIE COLHOUN**  
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**NIALL O'BRIEN** Keeping an eye on Brian Lara at Stormont last year.

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**PAUL JACKSON** Career was interrupted by injury.

There will be a certain irony within the Bushe family on this issue, given that Eddie played for many years in the shadow of the great 'Ossie' Colhoun, and was certainly much better than the paltry seven caps he received. But after Ossie's retirement in 1979, the Irish selectors became totally embroiled in the specialist versus batsman-cum-wicket-keeper debate, and brought Phoenix's Gerry Murphy into the fray as a better option than Eddie, supposedly because he could bat. Gerry didn't set the world on fire at the crease, and little wonder given that he faced professionals in all three games, but five runs from three innings quickly killed that strategy. Eddie returned to the fold, but the damage was done, and Ireland's best wicket-keeper of the day prematurely retired a short time later.

Enter Paul Jackson, a brilliant stumper, and unorthodox, but useful batsman, but injury-prone. 'Jacko' quickly established himself in the team, but his occasional absence meant the specialist debate never left Irish cricket in the eighties, and was reflected in some interesting selectorial foibles. Sean Bradley's selection for Ireland against MCC at Eglinton in 1982 was viewed as reward for long service as a loyal deputy. Despite his excellent wicket-keeping pedigree, Chris Harte's selection over North Down's Dennis Artt in 1982 was more to do with his past batting performances than his wicket-keeping prowess at the time, and Jimmy Kirkwood's three appearances in 1983 all too fleeting.

In hindsight this was the start of the end for the specialist wicket-keeper at the highest level of Irish cricket, a debate that was mirrored at test level with both Alan Knott and Alex Stewart limiting the appearances of the outstanding Jack Russell, albeit a fine batsman at county level. The ascendancy in this arena has long been settled with Adam Gilchrist, Mark Boucher, Ridley Jacobs, and more recently Geraint Jones, all established test batsmen in their own right, as well as fine wicket-keepers.

Irish cricket has taken its time on deciding the issue, Keith Bailey and Brian Miller two specialists who also won recognition, while fine players like Bruce Topping, Carson Rose and Artt, were amongst those who



**ALAN RUTHERFORD** Good 'hands' and useful with the bat.

didn't, but whom many people felt were good enough in their era. Of course the brilliance of Jackson from 1981 to 1994 limited the opportunities for aspirants at this level, but when Irish cricket finally embraced the one-day game in the nineties, it was to prove the death-knell for the specialist wicket-keeper.

The astute Hendrick knew this long before the Irish selectors got the message, but once he established Andrew Patterson and Alan Rutherford in his team, the mould was cast for the future. Andrew won 60 caps, hit four half centuries and had a highest score

of 73 against MCC in 1996. Some critics might feel his average of just under 18 was modest for a batsman, but therein lies another enigma in this intriguing debate. Averages mean little or nothing in the modern game. Quite often close matches are won by a cameo innings, not always by a batsman. For example, who would have bet on West Indians Courtney Browne and Ian Bradshaw winning the ICC Champions Trophy against all odds last year? Once again a wicket-keeper-cum-batsman and a bowler who could bat, turned a losing cause into an historic victory.

It remains to be seen who takes up the gloves for Ireland in the future, but whoever stands will be expected to add more than a couple of catches and a few good stops to the cause.

One thing is certain, they are unlikely to match the wicket-keeping brilliance of Bushe, Colhoun, Jackson, Bradley or Bailey.

**It remains to be seen who takes up the gloves for Ireland in the future, but whoever stands will be expected to add more than a couple of catches and a few good stops to the cause.**

# TWENTY



**DAVID SIMPSON** Capable of bowling 'yorkers'.

Although many people will say we have been playing it for years under a different name, the adoption of coloured kits and the entry of all the major teams with no restriction on player eligibility, will mean this competition is no hanky-panky midweek league. Logistics dictate that rain interrupted games will not have a Duckworth/Lewis outcome, nor will they be played under floodlights. However, with a little bit of luck from the weather and an enthusiastic commitment from all the clubs and players, the format has a real chance to 'take off'.

Other initiatives that have been introduced are centred around the commercial aspect of the rules. Teams will not only be able to incorporate large sponsors' logos on their new kit, but also brand a particular company to their team. Eat your heart out traditionalists as the days of 'Fast Fry Chicken North Down' may be just around the corner!

Quite appropriately there will be twenty teams, split in four groups of five, guaranteeing each club four games with at least two at home. What a great opportunity for clubs with some initiative to introduce a new sponsor and what an opportunity for a corporate to market its product or service in a whole new arena. The use of an orange ball eliminates the need for black sightscreens, although those grounds hosting games in the ICC Trophy have to meet this requirement anyway.

Shaw's Bridge may not be everybody's choice for a cup final venue, but the fact that the organisers wanted the two semi-finals and final on the one day created a challenge. If the finals day were on a Sunday then Lurgan, Waringstown and/or Ballymena would miss out so instead, a compromised late start on a Friday afternoon necessitated a venue with two grounds. Whether this will prove popular with the players and supporters remains to be seen.

Maybe mid-week semis and a Friday evening final would have been better, but this is circus and while some of the top grounds may miss out this time, there will be plenty of time to review and revisit in the future.

'The Villagers', 'The Braidside Blacks' and the 'Bangor Gryphons' are just three of

# 20

After a winter of speculation, the NCU finally announced the details of the Lion Sports Twenty20 Cup in February, with the first matches slated to start in May. **PETER SHIELDS** reports.



**RAZZMATAZZ** Will the clubs fully embrace the concept of Twenty20?

**The bowlers will be lambs to the slaughter – after all who will remember a good analysis in a 20 overs game, and what might be considered a good bowling analysis?**

the new names in use for the inaugural competition, but it remains to be seen if this leads to any serious 'pinch-hitting', 'death bowling' or Jonty Rhodes-like fielding. These questions will only be answered when the competition gets underway, but the one thing that will generate plenty of enthusiasm is the alternative it offers to normal mundane midweek practice. The purists might not like it, but that's the way the game is going.

So will the new format produce shock results and ultimately a shock winner?

Highly unlikely, but some teams will no doubt be better suited to the shorter duration,

indeed some might say it favours the weaker teams, but don't bet on it. A shorter innings is unlikely to alter the approach of batsmen like Ryan Haire, Johnny Terrett, Wayne Horwood or Johnny Hewitt, so it is really their teammates who will have to adjust. The bowlers will be lambs to the slaughter, after all who will remember a good analysis in a 20 overs game, and what might be considered a good bowling analysis?

Without listing them, it is obvious that all the 'pros' will be important cogs in the wheels of most teams, but some attacking local players are well equipped to match them pound for pound in this type of game. Prodigious

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**RYAN HAIRE** Shorter format won't affect his approach.

hitters like Gavin Ringland, Neil Russell and Gareth Morrison come immediately to mind, while on the bowling stakes, full and straight will probably be the order of the day, so step forward David Simpson, Dale Mullan and Derek Heasley. Of course, you may assume that a decent spinner will get a 'bagful' of wickets, whereas those having a bad day might question the club's decision to order only six orange balls for the season!

Woodvale, specialists of the '10 over bash' while in Senior One, might fancy their chance of a couple of big scalps and what of Dunmurry, the current holders and consistent force in the union's previous twenty overs competition?

The 2004 Senior League Champions Bangor are in a tricky group with Instonians

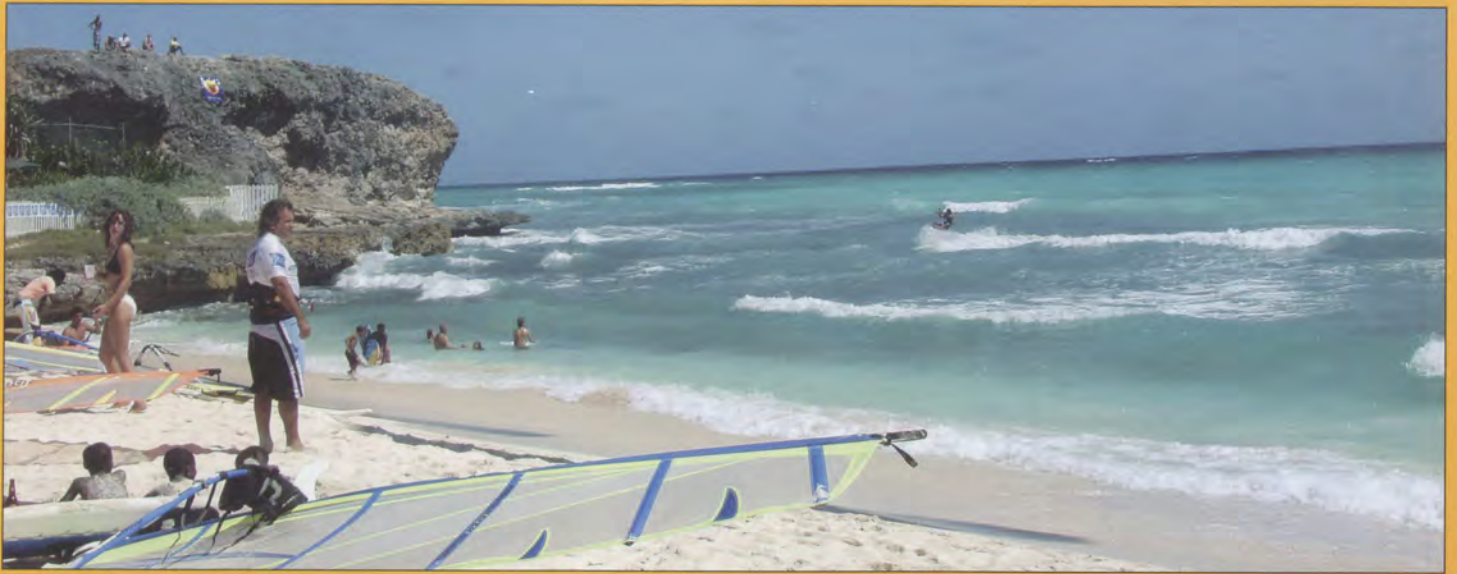
**Of course, you may assume that a decent spinner will get a 'bagful' of wickets, whereas those having a bad day might question the club's decision to order only six orange balls for the season!**

and section two favourites Civil Service North, while the Mid-Ulster group, containing Cliftonville, will be keenly contested.

Cup specialists North Down and the unpredictable Downpatrick appear set for a heads-on battle in their group, while Lisburn appear to have the easiest route to the semi-finals from the final group. But will they make it?

Nothing is set in stone and while there may be the odd mismatch, hopefully it won't be too embarrassing in such a condensed game.

Finally congratulations to the often-be-leagued NCU for giving the players the competition they wanted. Now it's up to the players, supporters and the sponsors to step up to the table and perform!



# Domiciled in Barbados

Domiciled in Barbados, **CLARENCE HILES** is well placed to highlight the investment potential of the island and sees a unique opportunity for irish cricket lovers to own a piece of the rock...

It is often said that the world is a small place and with good reason. Cheap flights and more money in your pocket make travel to anywhere in the world within the reach of most people, while the Internet and mobile phones have taken communication to an unbelievable level.

To put it in Irish cricket terms, North-West teams are now frequent visitors to Dublin, the NCU teams have found out where the M2 leads to, and Leinster clubs have found out there's a couple of unions up in the north!

Who knows maybe we'll eventually get to Munster again?

But the real visionaries are the cricket travelers who blaze new horizons every season and travel far and wide in search of new cricket shores. Many of these visitors have ventured to the Caribbean, either on cricket tours or with their families, and most have become repeat visitors. Whatever the appeal of the tropics, it never ceases to bring people back, and if cricket is your first love, then where else in the world can you see it so passionately enjoyed than in the islands?

The Grasshoppers have set the pace in 2005 with their tour to Barbados and St. Lucia in April, but perhaps less known have been the visits of such well-known personalities as Ireland team manager Roy Torrens, doyen cricket correspondent Ian Callender, former Instonians opening bowler Tom McCormack, former Instonians opening batsman Colin Barkley, and happy cruisers Reggie Thompson and Tom Irwin from

Laurelvale. All this before the test series, and the almost annual pilgrimage during the autumn of a motley selection of North-West personalities.

It all adds up to happy times, and many old cricket stories garnished by too much rum and Banks beer!

But the major talking point amongst many Caribbean visitors in recent times has been the World Cup in 2007.

Will the region be able to cope? Will the grounds be ready? Where will the visitors stay and how will they move from one destination to another?

These are interesting questions and challenging times for small island economies, but rest assured that World Cup 2007 in the Caribbean is well under control, and don't be fooled by the traditional laidback approach from the locals. It will all come good on the day, but mainly because behind the scenes there are many talented people and government agencies feverishly working to make it the huge success it promises to be.

The marketing of World Cup 2007 as a business opportunity within the region has sparked off many enterprises, and some could produce unexpected windfalls for Irish visitors and visionary investors. Ireland will surely qualify for the competition, and once their base is determined it will spark a series of holiday plans and tour organization as many followers will want to be part of the greatest adventure in the history of Irish cricket. But not all potential supporters will follow the path of the home team, and may

look at World Cup 2007 in a broader sense, and plan their trip around the bigger matches in the latter stages of the competition. And that may ultimately involve the final in Barbados or a semi-final in that lovely sister island of St. Lucia.

With that exciting prospect down the road, little wonder both islands are awash with construction projects, all aimed at providing either second homes for those wanting to invest in the Caribbean, or rental homes for those who plan to visit in 2007 and beyond.

But the opportunity for investors should be plain to see from outside the region, since both islands are linked to the ailing US dollar and that means for Irish and European visitors or investors, they get a lot more for their pound and their euro!

With such an attractive exchange rate the Caribbean is almost cheap for European visitors these days, but the real gains are to be made in property investment, and many Irish investors have already cashed in on the opportunity. For those who don't know the procedure or the market place, Barbados is very British and has a strong British tourism culture that ensures the rental market is buoyant. There are no restrictions on overseas property ownership, and mortgages are available up to 70% for overseas buyers. Of course the island has a glitzy image as the playground of the rich and famous, but in much the same way as people buy property in Ireland, you cut your suit according to your cloth in Barbados real estate. Yes, there are



plenty of multi-million dollar West Coast properties, but there are also good value quality second home properties in the middle price range.

And one unique feature of property ownership is that you can purchase jointly with

family or friends using a property-holding company for the purpose, a tax efficient and flexible way to buy.

Barbados has a number of developments coming on stream but one of the most exciting just released is Silver Point, a quality

upgraded former South Coast hotel complex on one of the most beautiful beaches in the Caribbean. The 88 units are being offered at prices starting around US\$130,000 with the best units facing the magnificent Caribbean Sea on offer at under US\$400,000.

Beachfront property in Barbados at around 200,000 pounds is certainly attractive given that beachfront continues to be the jewel in the real estate crown!

The Silver Point complex is being marketed as an investment opportunity with a huge emphasis placed on its unique location and the investment potential for owners that go into the rental pool as the complex will be managed and run as a quality apartment hotel by the developers.

What this means for regular cricket visitors and those planning to come for the World Cup, is that you have a second home to utilize in 2007, and for many years to follow as a strong rental income is almost guaranteed at one of the world's leading holiday destinations.

And for those who are looking for a golf location then El Sol Sureno is an exciting new development at Barbados Golf Club with prices starting at US\$420,000.

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# Back to basics



North West cricket stalwart **BILLY HENDERSON** believes there may be light at the end of the tunnel for Sion Mills.

**G**enuine cricket followers throughout the North West will be delighted with the news that Raymond Moan and his two sons Giles and Darren are returning to their home village Sion Mills to play their cricket in the 2005 season. Their return is after a thirteen-year absence during which time they played their cricket with North Fermanagh C.C. Kesh.

At the start of the cricket season in the highly competitive environment of North West cricket, most of the talk around the clubhouses centres on which players are on the move to what clubs. This is something of a modern phenomenon that has been

**This movement of players sometimes causes a degree of animosity between clubs and has demolished the concept of loyalty that previously pervaded the small villages and hamlets where cricket flourished in the North West of Ireland.**

developed over the last couple of years, as the clubs who are seemingly becoming richer are willing to plough their resources back into the game by signing players from other clubs to strengthen their squads.

This movement of players sometimes causes a degree of animosity between clubs and has demolished the concept of loyalty that previously pervaded the small villages and hamlets where cricket flourished in the



**RAYMOND MOAN** with sons Giles and Darren.



**SION MILLS** The scene of many famous matches including Ireland's victory over the West Indies in 1969.

North West of Ireland.

However, this will not be the case at Sion Mills, as without the introduction of a real cricketing family such as Moans, it was a certainty that Sion Mills would not have fielded a team for the 2005 season.

This fact emerged when only a handful of people turned up for the club's Annual Meeting at the end of last year and no one at the meeting was prepared to take on the captaincy or organise the team.

After hearing of this situation, Raymond, who lives close by and visits the village every day, had something of a dilemma. Should he stay at Kesh where he had good friends and enjoyed a more laid back environment than was ever the case at the more combative and competitive Sion Mills, or should he persuade Giles and Darren to come with him to try to re-establish a team in the village which held so many great memories for him?

He has taken the second option and with great encouragement from his long time friend Joe Loughery, the Chairman of the Sion Mills Recreational Club, has worked out a plan to relaunch cricket in the village.

This plan essentially gives Raymond full control of the cricketing side of the club while the Recreational Club, thanks to their long term benefactors the Herdman family, owners of the Mill, will channel the funds required for the upkeep of the ground.

Although he is now in his fifties and in the twilight of his playing career, Raymond firmly believes he still has a lot to offer in the Captaincy role. He is confident that he can build a young team around the likes of club stalwarts Lee McGonigle and Ian Scott. He is also determined to create a new attitude around the club, with no paying of players and the drive to develop a pride in representing Sion that once existed, when most of the cricketers worked in Herdman's Mill.

Raymond is one of a number of Sion Mills players to represent their country,

## Not only is Sion Mills cricket famous for its illustrious playing talent but the picturesque ground itself once witnessed the humiliation of the great West Indies Touring team, when they were bowled out for a paltry 25 runs by the Ireland in 1969.

others being Andy McFarlane, John Flood, Ossie Colhoun, Aubrey Finlay, Brendan Donaghy and Tommy Harpur. He also captained the North West inter provincial side on a number of occasions during his eighty-eight appearances.

Not only is Sion Mills cricket famous for its illustrious playing talent but the picturesque ground itself once witnessed the humiliation of the great West Indies Touring team, when they were bowled out for a paltry 25 runs by the Ireland in 1969. This was a full-blown international match and the West Indian team had travelled to Ireland

after playing a series of Test matches with England.

Like virtually everyone else from the village and its surrounds Raymond worked in Herdman's Mill until 1995. At this point he realised that the textile industry in Northern Ireland was going into decline and with his future employment not guaranteed, he



**AUBREY FINLAY**



**JOHN FLOOD**

investigated the possibility of starting up his own business bottling spring water which was in abundance on his farm about a mile from Sion Mills Village.

His decision to quit working in the mill has sadly, in retrospect, been shown to be a sensible one, with the announcement last year of the closure of the textile section, throwing the village into something of a depression. Perhaps this closure contributed to the negative vibes surrounding the cricket which has been part and parcel of the Herdman's site for generations.

Raymond's business has been going the other way with the demand for his Sperrin Springs water booming and he is now competing well in the north-west area with the more established brands. His company now provides employment for four others including sons Giles and Darren.

Raymond has already set about building his team with the help of opening bowler Lee McGonigle and they have been using the indoor practice facility in the Strabane Sports Complex since mid February. When asked if any new players would be joining the club he replied, "no comment at this stage", I suppose this is fair enough considering the task he has taken on.

Lets hope for cricket's sake that Raymond and his sons' return to Sion Mills will mark



**HERDMAN'S MILL** A focal point in Sion Mills for generations but now in decline.

the beginning of a new era for this famous club known throughout Ireland and they can survive this season in Division two of the league and go from strength to strength in the coming years.

I personally wish him well in his venture and hope that the good management he has shown in getting his business off the ground will carry him through this challenge, a challenge incidentally, which defeated a previous incumbent Mr Bobby Rao who worked tirelessly to improve the club. Bobby eventually

succumbed to the parochial pressure and left to go back to Strabane C.C. after making great improvements to the recreation club. Unfortunately binding together a team of players from the village was beyond him and he left a little disillusioned.

When Raymond was asked how he expected to succeed where the former Indian Test Cricketer failed, his answer was simple, "Bobby was not born within the boundaries of Sion Mills". A prerequisite I would think without a doubt.

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Bob Kerr receives his Past Presidents tie from ICU Honorary Secretary, John Wright.

## OBITUARIES

### Ian Lewis

In a long cricket career Ian Lewis excelled both as a player and as an administrator. Father of Alan, he was a distinguished Irish international batsman in his own right, and a prolific batsman in Cork and Dublin club cricket. His graduation into cricket administration was natural, given that he was a straight-talking no-nonsense thinker, and his elevation to the presidency of the Irish Cricket Union in 1989 was a fitting accolade for his service and commitment to the sport. He loved cricket, and was omnipresent at most Dublin YMCA games where the Lewis family gave great encouragement. In tandem with his supportive wife Imelda, he travelled north on many occasions, and much farther afield to watch both Ireland and England in test matches.

His funeral was huge, a fitting tribute to a man who served cricket at every level with dignity and distinction. **JCH**

### Karl Mullan

Although he had a much stronger rugby background, Karl covered a lot of Leinster and Ireland cricket over the past 25 years. Many former international players will recall his regular presence at the big games and his fair and unbiased reporting. He had a great passion for sport and was an interesting and endearing conversationalist. Karl passed away at the end of last year.

### Hamilton 'Hammie' Ewart

'Hammie' Ewart was one of Armagh Cricket Club's greatest stalwarts and characters. He had a deep passion for the game, and was an authoritative and highly respected cricket historian. He loved delving into the archives, and was a willing and enthusiastic researcher when information was required on Armagh cricket. But above all, he was a warm and friendly follower of cricket, who served the game with distinction on and off the field, and although he had been in ill health for some time, he retained a close interest in the local game and all that was happening around it.

Unfortunately 'Hammie' lost his long fight with illness in March this year, a great loss to his beloved Armagh Cricket Club and Ulster cricket in general. **JCH**

## NICA ACADEMY TOUR

Fourteen players, four coaches and a number of enthusiastic parents completed a highly successful seven-match tour of South Africa in April.

For the young players involved, and their not so young coaches, it proved to be a tremendous experience and one that will stand them in good stead not only for the season ahead but for their future cricketing careers.

### Results summary

#### At Bellville 20 March

Northern Suburbs 133/10 (L Nelson 3-22, J Milligan 2-15, J Hall 2-17) lost to NICA 203/10 (J Milligan 29, L Nelson 28, P Stirling 26) by 70 runs

#### At UCT 22 March

Southern Suburbs 161/7 (J Magowan 2-26, G McKenna 2-37) beat NICA 155/9 (G Thompson 33, J Shannon 26) by 3 wkts

#### At Fish Hoek 23 March

Under 15 Club XI 100/10 (G McKenna 2-8, M Heaney 2-15, J Magowan 2-22) lost to NICA 103/2 (J Hall 65\*, J Shannon 20) by 8 wkts

#### At Durbanville 24 March

Western Province Invitation XI 150/9 (M Heaney 2-9, P Stirling 2-12) lost to NICA 151/9 (J Hall 26, C Dougherty 25, G McKenna 20) by 1 wicket

#### At Langa 26 March

Western Cape U18 176/5 (S Moore 2-21, P Stirling 2-23) beat NICA 66/6 (J Hall 20) by 110 runs

#### At Bellville 28 March

Western Province U15B 160/10 (J Milligan 3-38, P Stirling 2-22, G Thompson 2-34) beat NICA 147/10 (J Magowan 26) by 13 runs

#### At Newlands

Western Province U15A 271/6 (M Vallie 109, M Heaney 3-56) beat NICA 207/10 (C Dougherty 71, G Thompson 56, P Stirling 29) by 64 runs

## THE YEAR OF THE UNDERDOG?

A number of the country's top sides were drawn against each other in the first round of the 2005 Irish Senior Cup. In the NCU, Waringstown are at home to North-West Cup Holders Donemana and cup specialists North Down entertain Brigade. Dublin kingpins North County travel to Cliftonville while the holders, Limavady, host NCU league champions Bangor. Last year's beaten finalists Strabane welcome Phoenix to The Park, in what is a repeat of the 2004 quarter-final. Could this be the year of the underdog in our premier knock-out competition?

### Preliminary Round

YMCA v Leinster  
Merrion v Old Belvedere

### 1st Round (14 May)

Instonians v YMCA or Leinster	Pembroke v Cork County
Cliftonville v North County	Limavady v Bangor
Rush v Derriagh	Glendermott v The Hills
Railway Union v Lurgan	CYM v Lisburn
Waringstown v Donemana	Malahide v Bready
Drummond v Downpatrick	North Down v Brigade
Ballyspallen v Carrickfergus	Strabane v Phoenix
Ardmore v Merrion or Old Belvedere	Eglinton v Clontarf

# Life on the bottom rung

BBC correspondent Michael McNamee from Dungannon Cricket Club laments the declining standard of cricket in Section 4.



I can't actually remember an article in the Ulster Cricketer about the dubious joys of playing in Section Four so I regard it as an honour to be asked. I'm not sure how much you know about the lowest rung of local cricket - very little I would guess if you were showing off your wares at 'The Green' or the 'The Lawn' week in week out.

Dungannon CC has been ever-present in Four for all of my twenty playing years bar one. 1999 was our one golden year when a Kiwi-inspired promotion campaign ended with us winning the League. It all seems like a dream. A trophy. A presentation. Shaking hands with David Gower.

Suffice to say, the Kiwi fled the nest and in 2000 we returned to our natural home. And to be honest, over those 20 years it's been great. Most of the current Section Three teams have popped into Four at some stage so we've played at picturesque spots like Dundrum and the wind-tunnel that is Mallusk (three jumpers a necessity in May). Rows? There've been a few. ...but then again ...life would be dull without such characters as Reggie McNally at Victoria. Reggie loves his cricket and loves to win so that's at least two things we have in common. He can occasionally let the excitement of the game get to him, so make that three things in common! I can recall many great battles

at the Gordon Playing fields and Lurgan Park through the years and perhaps my favourite memory was the day Dungannon dismissed Victoria for 26 on a bizarre day when we caught EVERYTHING more than an inch above the grass. I still have the red marks on my palms from the exocet I got in the way of at short square leg ....That was the day when Dungannon took to the pitch with four McNamees on board - and there wasn't an angry word spoken. ...Strange indeed... All these happy memories make Victoria's recent decline and the overall decline in Four all the more worrying.

Let's start with the basics - Section Four is shrinking and the standards of play are dropping.

The 2005 season will start with the section down to eight teams - the lowest I can remember. This is a great relief for humble fixture secretaries

trying to fit in rearranged matches, friendlies or even, Lord forbid, a weekend off.

However if that number of teams were to drop even further you would have problems. The teams currently at the bottom are weak. On a bad weekend very weak. Any attempt to suck them into an enlarged Section Three would lead to an even greater number of mismatches. You only have to surf the NCU archive of scores for 2004 to find some ridiculous results in Four. What is achieved when



**DUNGANNON 1<sup>ST</sup> XI 2004** Back row, left to right: Neeraj Mehta, Andrew Brown, Simon McAleece, Neal Kerr, Gareth Lucas, Chris Adrain. Front row, left to right: Ben Sheriff, David Suitor, Jeff Meeke, Michael McNamee, Roger Robinson

you beat an obviously below-par team by 380 or 263 runs?

So it's in everyone's interests to ensure that no more clubs go to the wall but this might be struggling against the trends of recent history. I can recall playing at YMCA and Ballynahinch in the 1980's. They are no longer with us and once a club has disappeared it's highly unlikely to return. In recent years, Shorts and Portadown have danced with oblivion ....Portadown have re-emerged with some very useful younger players but the historic Shorts name has gone and it wouldn't take too much to even push clubs like my own into difficulties. A large number of the current Dungannon 1st XI live outside

#### ULSTER BANK LEAGUE DIV. 1 SECT. 4 2004

	P	W	T	NR	L	Pts
Drumaness	16	13	0	0	3	52
Ards	16	12	0	0	4	48
Civil Service	16	12	0	0	4	48
Indian Gymkhana	16	11	0	0	5	44
Dungannon	16	10	0	0	6	40
Portadown	16	6	0	0	10	24
Victoria	16	5	0	0	11	20
Newry & Mourne	16	2	0	0	14	8
Shorts	16	1	0	0	15	4

the town, many in Belfast so the days of gathering at Dungannon Rugby Club for away trips are long gone. These days a home game is an away trip for most of us.

Last season, the NCU - to its credit - gathered together the Section Four clubs for a crisis meeting and a general theme emerged regarding the difficulty of attracting younger players. Obviously this is not a problem unique to Four but one that can only be addressed by positive action. You have to go out and tout for business, entice and coach young players in the hope that a certain percentage will stick with you. Look at how Templepatrick and Larne escaped Section Four through positive action. Sadly not every club has the manpower or resources to put in place recruitment drives or regular coaching. For many, the struggle to field two teams every weekend, pay the bills and prepare the wickets takes precedent. It's been excellent to welcome new clubs like Indian Gymkhana and Newry & Mourne to the party in the last decade but it's fair to say that both struggled in their earliest days when they were putting down roots in previously barren soil.

Hand in hand with that decline in the numbers of teams goes the drop in playing standards in Section Four. This is not rose-tinted nostalgia speaking (I'm only 35!) but cold realism. Visiting umpires have said the same. Fewer teams, fewer players, fewer good players - it's a logical progression. Personally, I believe the switch to limiting



**DUNGANNON PARK** An idyllic setting.



**Yes, yes, yes to the pyramid structure of Irish cricket but let's be brutally honest, how many Section Four players are going to be brought into the national squad for the next World Cup campaign? Why not try something new?**

each bowler to ten overs hasn't helped. In any Section Four game, there's a fair chance of a middle order batsman facing ten or twenty overs of dross. That's assuming the batting side reaches the thirty over mark. I know it should lead to bowlers improving and it should involve more players in the game but for me, there's no great joy in pasting part-time doblers to the boundary. Put the limit back to 15 overs a bowler and make more batsmen graft for their runs. Better still, cut the matches to 40 overs a side or get rid of limited overs cricket altogether. When touring in England, Dungannon used to play "declaration matches" and in the main these were much more enjoyable.

In limited overs, what is the point of the second batting side holding out for 98 for 9 in fifty overs when chasing 200 to win? We've all been there and let's be honest, it's utter tedium all round. Especially now that bonus points have gone. Whereas in a declaration game, bowling at a team holding out for a

draw can become a nerve-jangling tactical battle. Tail-enders can save the game and part-time bowlers can be called up to try and buy that vital wicket. Yes, yes, yes to the pyramid structure of Irish cricket but let's be brutally honest, how many Section Four players are going to be brought into the national squad for the next World Cup campaign? Why not try something new?

So with the new season looming, spare a thought for the ignored and unloved cricketers of Section Four ...we sense the NCU is run by and for the big boys and we know no one will really mourn if another couple of backwater clubs slowly sink into the mire over the next decade. I can understand that attitude - no club has a divine right to survive if there's no longer a demand for cricket in its area. However as the clubs at the base of the pyramid continue to struggle with playing numbers and playing standards, it would be great to feel part of the NCU family rather than its poor relations.

# Great elevens of ulster



LIMAVADY IN 1888

## Limavady Cricket Club

The hard-hitting Sergeant George McCarthy of the Royal Irish Constabulary was one of the key batsmen in the late 1880s when Limavady created history by winning the first cup competition, ironically defeating Donemana in the inaugural final of the County Derry Cricket Union Cup in 1888. George captained the team to that epic victory and the following year scored 78 against Sion Mills in the semi-final, a huge score at the time.

Jack Semple was an automatic choice for me as he was such a lovely man and totally devoted to the Limavady club. Tales of his prodigious hits are legendary, but for me it was his warm friendly personality that was his hallmark, and little wonder he was held in such high esteem in North-West sport.

The much-travelled Victor Craig was also a key member of the 1961 team that won the league championship, and he must have been a brilliant wicket-keeper to win Irish selection in an era when only a few North-West players were even considered. Another of my selections Billy Millar won international recognition in the late sixties, and it would be tempting to look at a few other players from that era, but with only eleven selections there's no room for indulgence.

Limavady suffered some lean years after the sixties but they created some controversy in 1980 when they won the cup final against Sion Mills in bizarre circumstances, after the County Tyrone team failed to appear



**LIMAVADY, IRISH CUP WINNERS 2004** Left to right: Andy Christie, Keith Burns, Johnny Thompson, Richard McDaid, Roger Kerr, Victor McDaid, Decker Curry, Mark Mc Daid, Simon Mc Michael, Stephen Smyth, Simon Kilburn, Ian McGregor, Craig Hartin, Mary McElwee (scorer).

# cricket

In the second of his series on the Great Elevens of Ulster club cricket, editor **CLARENCE HILES** features his Great Elevens at Limavady and Bangor Cricket Clubs. These are not necessarily the best eleven players, but in his opinion the top eleven members who put the club on the Ulster cricket map...

**Kapil only played once for Limavady but with over 300 test wickets he was a bit special. He also scored an exciting 85 runs in that final, so overall it could be argued he left an indelible mark in the history of the club!**

at the proper time when the match moved into a third day. Perhaps it was the inclusion of my fifth pick, the great Kapil Dev that was the problem, so he is a definite starter in this fantasy team.

Kapil only played once for Limavady but with over 300 test wickets he was a bit special. He also scored an exciting 85 runs in that final, so overall it could be argued he left an indelible mark in the history of the club!

My next choice is Ivan Lapsley, a brilliant all rounder on the field and an outstanding administrator off it. Ivan's contribution to the club in the modern era has been phenomenal and much of the success on the field has been on the back of his well-orchestrated efforts off it. As a cricketer his great years may have been in St Johnston's colours, but since 1988 he has been a giant to the Limavady cause.

Ivan's great coup was bringing the great Decker Curry to Limavady, and what an asset that has proved. Decker has re-written the record books and established himself as the most prolific batsman in the history of North-West club cricket. Another key member of the modern era has been Ian McGregor, sometimes over-shadowed by his high-scoring teammate, but a terrific batsman in his own right. Both are included.

There has to be a McDaid in the team,

given the huge contribution of the McDaid dynasty to the club, and I've opted for Ireland international Richard McDaid, although the long-serving Victor was a close second.

I have also included the affable Ivan McMichael, as much for the sporting manner in which he played the game, as for his brilliant batting. On his day there were few better batsmen in North-West cricket, and with such an outstanding pedigree through youth and schools cricket, it remains a mystery why Ivan didn't go the whole way into the senior international team.

Finally my last choice in the Great Eleven of Limavady Cricket Club is the legendary John Hunter, a colossus to the cause and a man who served the game with great distinction on and off the field. John would captain the team as he was a leader amongst men, skipper of the great Sixties team, visionary chairman who brought such cricket legends as Sir Garfield Sobers and Rohan Kanhai to the Roe Valley, club administrator who did so much to improve the facilities, supreme North-West administrator, benevolent patron, and Irish Cricket Union President in 1974.

Every great team has a Twelfth Man, and the loyal hard-working Andrew Christie wins the honour in my fantasy Limavady team.

**John Hunter (captain)**  
**Sergeant George McCarthy**  
**Jack Semple**  
**Victor Craig**  
**Billy Millar**  
**Kapil Dev**  
**Ivan Lapsley**  
**Decker Curry**  
**Ian McGregor**  
**Richard McDaid**  
**Ivan McMichael**  
**12th. Man: Andrew Christie**

## Bangor Cricket Club

Ever since they won the NCU senior league championship for the first time last year, I've reflected on the men who put

Bangor on the Ulster cricket map over the years, and who would have been delighted that the 2004 team finally brought some glory to the club after so many fruitless years. It seems incredible that this was the first major success for the County Down club, given the huge contribution its members gave to Ulster and Irish cricket for so many years.

There is some uncertainty about the origins of cricket in the Bangor area, as local papers record games with neighbours Ards in the 1890s and a Bangor Cricket Club affiliated to the Northern Cricket Union in 1906. The club disbanded during the Great War but reformed in 1919 before going out of existence some time later. A new club was later formed in 1933, but with most of the original records missing, Bangor's cricket historians obviously took this as a starting point in their history as they celebrated their jubilee in 1983. For the purpose of this appreciation of the Bangor membership we have taken 1906 as the starting point because it allows us to include GS Goodall,



JOHN HUNTER



**BANGOR, SECTION 1 WINNERS 2004** Back row, left to right – J Hewitt, P McMillan, R Bell, P McCormick, J Stewart, R West, J Hewitt, B McMillan. Front row, left to right – M Williamson, B Millar, C Yeates, M Hutchinson, M McCord, A Williamson.

their club captain in the early twenties, and a Junior Ulster interprovincial batsman of some repute. Goodall was a native of Nottinghamshire and had an interesting background that included service in the Boer War before he arrived at the seaside town. Bangor played at Ballyholme in this era and struggled to produce a good wicket because they had to share their ground with the rugby players.

The newly formed club in the thirties played at Ward Park but it was a batsman's worst nightmare from all accounts, and therefore a little ironic that one of the finest cricketers in the province should be playing on it. Wallace Sproule was a native of Killyleagh and had distinguished himself during the war years on active service in Europe, but was better known in cricket circles for his prolific batting and bowling feats for Downpatrick and Ulster. He was capped three times for the Gentlemen of Ireland in 1923/4 so it was quite a coup for the Seaside when he joined them in the mid thirties and actually captained the club in 1939. Sproule was the first Ireland international to play for Bangor, albeit some years later, and is my second name on the team.

The Bangor club had many fine stalwarts at the time, but the emergence of Michael

**Conn was a legend in Bangor sport, and a tireless workhorse for both club and union. He was chairman of the Northern Cricket Union in their centenary year in 1986, and Irish Cricket Union President in 1992. His sudden death two years ago stunned the local cricket community and left a huge vacuum in its wake.**

Rea (senior) in the post-war era was to prove one of the major influences in the development of the club, as Michael became one of its finest players and administrators, and in later years was honoured with the presi-

dency of both the Northern Cricket Union and the Irish Cricket Union. Overall the Rea family made a huge contribution to Bangor Cricket Club, with Michael's brother Herbie a tower of strength. And in the modern era his son Michael emerged as one of the club's truly class batsmen. Michael Rea (junior) is an automatic choice in my Great Eleven, as he became a prolific opening batsman for Ireland with 52 international caps from 1985-96, and would have won many more had he not relocated to England to develop his business career.

For many years big Harry Eadie was the face of Bangor cricket teams, and while his big soft lobbs looked so inviting to even the most moderate batsmen, most succumbed and were easily snapped up by a canny bowler who played such a prominent part in the historic 1947 cup final

In the last 35 years three distinguished Bangor players certainly put the club on the map with a string of outstanding achievements on the field, and perhaps just as many off it.

The late Conn McCall joined the club from Holywood and became one of the most prolific batsmen in local cricket making 15 successive Ireland appearances from 1964-66, and creating a little bit of history with a



JOHN ELDER

century in each innings of an interprovincial match against Munster. Conn was a legend in Bangor sport, and a tireless workhorse for both club and union. He was chairman of the Northern Cricket Union in their centenary year in 1986, and Irish Cricket Union President in 1992. His sudden death two years ago stunned the local cricket community and left a huge vacuum in its wake.

John Elder was one of the best fast bowlers to play for Ireland, and represented his country 37 times from 1974-87. In addition to creating havoc amongst local batsmen for over 25 years, John has been a visionary thinker and a prominent administrator in the development of the game at every level.

In more recent times his website company has added another dimension to communication within Irish cricket, and he remains one of the key people in taking Irish cricket forward in the next decade.

Bangor cricket owes much to the local grammar school and over the years many masters have not only produced excellent young players, but also joined the club and made significant contributions to its welfare. Chris Harte followed a long line of devoted cricket schoolmasters and was without doubt the most talented and the most committed. He was a fine batsman at every level of cricket he played, and an efficient wicket-keeper with bags on enthusiasm and focus, a role model to any aspiring young student.

Another Bangor wicket-keeper was the dapper Maurice Moore, not such a tidy stumper from all accounts, but a doyen umpire who brought great credit to the club in the eighties after he made his international debut in 1982. Maurice retired much too early from umpiring as he was without doubt the best of his era.

Yet another wicket-keeper wins a place in my special Bangor Eleven, but in the case of Brian Millar, he would certainly take the gloves. Brian's senior cricket career began in the eighties and how fitting that he should still be there in that historic 2004 season

after achieving every personal honour possible in a distinguished cricket career that included 20 Ireland appearances in the early nineties.

My final choice has to be the current skipper Chris Yeates, not only for leading his team in its greatest year, but for the captain's role he played in that historic victory, a popular sportsman in every sense.

Finally, Ian Houston is my 12th man and I would dearly have loved to include him on this fantasy team as there are few more loyal and devoted cricketers in the country, and 'Houstie' does it all so quietly and modestly in the background.

What a formidable team and apologies to lots of others I've had to leave out. I can't believe I've no place for Tim English! And the captain? It could only be Mickey Rea!

**Michael Rea (senior) captain**

**GS Goodall**

**WS Sproule**

**Michael Rea (junior)**

**Harry Eadie**

**Conn McCall**

**John Elder**

**Chris Harte**

**Maurice Moore**

**Brian Millar**

**Chris Yeates**

**12th Man: Ian Houston**



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# Grounds for debate?

Rather than dwell too much on the size of Irish cricket grounds, genuine lovers of the game should pay tribute to the beauty of the best grounds irrespective of size and location. **CLARENCE HILES** gives a personal perspective...

**B**ig hitters are part and parcel of cricket folklore and even if the stories have been garnished by the passage of time, everyone loves to hear of prodigious batting feats. A six hit invariably brings the biggest cheer during a game, the ultimate reward for cavalier batting and adventure.

Unfortunately few big hitters can do it consistently, and most stories in club cricket highlight batsmen who had a day out rather than the characteristics of a proven run getter with an aggressive batting pedigree. The reason is simple, bowlers have brains, and they set the trap to catch the big hitter, and surprise, surprise, he invariably takes the bait.

Unfortunately the debate about big hitting in Irish club cricket eventually comes down to the size of the ground, as those who brag seldom see the other point of view, and in many cases they live in their own parochial paradigm. But what a travesty to proven big hitters like Decker Curry, Alfie Linehan and Michael Blair. Sure they could hit sixes in small grounds, but they could also hit them

on big grounds, and they did it with great consistency.

The size of the ground always comes back to haunt the North-West, and their NCU and Leinster contemporaries are often quick to point out that North-West grounds are smaller, therefore it is much easier to hit sixes. But is this really true? A survey of the

top section in the three main cricket unions should confirm the following small grounds (below):

The 50/50 rating is where the ground is not particularly small but has a short boundary in at least one area.

What this means in cricket terms is absolutely nothing! The size of the ground is

LEINSTER		NCU		NORTH-WEST	
DUBLIN YMCA	No	NORTH DOWN	No	BRIGADE	50/50
PHOENIX	50/50	LISBURN	50/50	DONEMANA	Yes
LEINSTER	No	LURGAN	No	LIMAVADY	No
CYM	No	DOWNPATRICK	No	STRABANE	Yes
THE HILLS	50/50	BANGOR	No	BREADY	Yes
NORTH COUNTY	50/50	DERRIAGHY	Yes	EGLINTON	No
PEMBROKE	No	WARINGSTOWN	No	ARDMORE	No
MALAHIDE	No	CLIFTONVILLE	No	GLENDERMOTT	Yes
RAILWAY UNION	No	INSTONIANS	No	DRUMMOND	No
CLONTARF	No	CARRICK	50/50	BALLYSPALLEN	Yes
OLD BELVEDERE	No				
RUSH	No				
MERRION	No				
DUBLIN UNIV.	No				



**ALFIE LINEHAN** A genuine 'big hitter'.



**DERMOTT MONTEITH**  
Never struggled at Wallace Park!

the same for both teams and what may be termed as an advantage for the big hitters, might be seen as a disadvantage for the bowlers, especially the slow variety. That said, isn't it amazing that slow bowling icons Dermott Monteith (Lisburn), Junior McBrine (Donemana) and Matt Dwyer (The Hills) have all plied their trade on small grounds with such excellence?

The size of grounds is not really that important in club cricket, as big hitters are a

breed apart and will be big hitters anywhere if that is their culture. Of more importance perhaps is the natural beauty of a cricket ground, and while big hits are fairly forgettable in the passage of time, the enjoyment and experience of playing at some grounds will leave an indelible impression on many cricketers.

We all have our favourites and I offer my top ten in appreciation of some wonderful days spent at cricket:



**THE LAWN** Home of Waringstown C.C. and a beautiful setting for a cricket ground.

- 1 Beautiful Moylena by the Six Mile Water – home of Muckamore Cricket Club
- 2 Mount Juliet – an unforgettable experience
- 3 The Holm at Donemana – unique, fiercely partisan, noisy, but fair.
- 4 The Lawn at Waringstown – simply the idyllic home of village cricket in Ulster
- 5 Downpatrick – especially on the 12th of July with bands marching along both sides of the Strangford Road
- 6 Wallace Park Lisburn – great cricket, great teas, great friends and too many late nights!
- 7 Rathmines in Dublin – a city cricket ground steeped in history and tradition
- 8 Majestic Phoenix Park in the heart of the country in the middle of bustling Dublin
- 9 Trinity College Dublin – what a setting!
- 10 Sion Mills – a privilege just to walk on the same turf as so many great players of yesteryear.

Wonderful memories of days spent at cricket, amidst plenty of forgettable wickets and runs over the years.

And the worst ten? Maybe that's best left for the bar!

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# CRICKETER UMPIRES' CORNER

## NORTH WEST UMPIRES ASSOCIATION



**Lawrence Moore reports...**

With the new season almost upon us, the North West Umpires Association are looking forward to the 2005 campaign, and the chance to renew many friendships and acquaintances.

Although the challenge game against our colleagues from the NCU has bitten the dust, members will still have the opportunity to meet and host officials from the other unions during this season's exchange visit programme.

Certainly the North West lads like to sample the hospitality available throughout Ireland, and for the likes of Connie McAllister, these are occasions not to be missed.

Anyone who knows Connie will know that he is the epitome of good company for an evening, and his stories are legendary.

He's a show on his own at times, but when joined by the likes of umpiring colleagues George Brolly, Maurice Simpson, or Eric Cooke after a game, you can be sure of a long night.

Eric claims he just stays to keep Connie company, and Maurice reckons he's easily led, but the next time they have to abandon a car at McCourt's bar won't be the first.

Maurice's good lady Maude has an agreement with Fixture Secretary Robin Glenn that he only gets one game each season with Mr. McAllister!

Mind you, the North West has always had it's characters in the umpiring ranks; David Caldwell recalls another Ardmore Umpire George McGowan, one day giving guard to opening batsman Cyril Ward. Cyril deliberately set his bat two feet outside off stump and shouted "what's that George?" "That's nothing Cyril" replied George.

The opener then took proper guard smiling smugly at the official, and was promptly bowled first ball. As he walked past the umpire at the bowler's end, George was heard to chuckle, "That's twice you got nothing today Cyril".

We've also been fortunate enough to be able to count legends like Willie John (Glaxo) McGonagle and the late John Flood among our number, and as well as being top class players, both men went on to become highly

respected officials.

We were just discussing those old characters at our training session this week, and Robin Glenn recounted an incident during the 1982 season, when he was (as he is now) umpire's appointments secretary.

He was umpiring a game at Beechgrove on quarter-finals day in the Senior Cup, when he was summoned to take a phone call just before play was due to get underway. The call was from Bertie Brolly, who was at Eglinton, officiating at one of the other ties with Ernie "Red Doc" Doherty.

"We've got a big problem here Robin" said Bertie... "Ernie has landed here full drunk, and the two sides are refusing to play"

Just at that, Ernie grabbed the phone off Bertie and adds... "Hi Robin, these boys think I'm full, but the truth is I was at the dentist this morning, and got new teeth in, so I can't talk properly..." Just at that, Bertie took the phone back and added, "aye and he must have got new shoes as well then Robin, for he can't stand either!"

Apparently the game went ahead, with Bertie doing both ends, and a stand in at square leg!

Whilst there may not be many more like that these days, you can be sure the men in white still like their wee chuckle, and the final word on the

subject is left to current North West man John Gamble. After a huge lbw appeal was turned down, and the usual hands on hips ensued, the bowler came over to John and asked, "how could you not give that out?"

John gave him a wee wink and said..." you can't give a man out when he's going so well..."



**UMPIRES ENJOYING THEMSELVES AT THE NORTH-WEST DINNER** Eric Cooke, Robert Kelly, Robin Glenn and Maurice Simpson.



**PETER WHITE**

### IN THE FRAME

At least one Ulster umpire has sampled the test cricket atmosphere this season and has plenty of 'warm' memories to reflect on! Big Peter White was a popular tourist with the Grasshoppers on their Caribbean tour in April and not only did he stand at Beausejour, the test ground in St. Lucia, he also officiated when Fidel Edwards played against the tourists in Barbados.

Peter was an excellent tourist, resplendent in his official umpire's regalia despite the scorching heat. A quick thinker, he realised early in the tour that liquid supplements were essential in the tropical climate and once he had fine-tuned his personal palate to Cockspur rum and ice, his fitness and concentration moved to another level!

As a touring umpire Peter was a credit to the Irish umpiring fraternity, and the efficient and professional way he carried out his duties was highly praised by all the Caribbean cricketers he met. Local cricketers can expect a finely-tuned athlete standing this season with some new expressions like 'that's out man' and 'shoot the liquor guys' (bring out the drinks trolley!!)

### SOME USEFUL DATA

Did you know that last year the NIUAS provided officials at a staggering 550 matches? This is a tremendous achievement and it can only get bigger with the new Twenty/20 competition this season.

Remember this means a heavy workload for some of the 'old stagers' so for all you retirees what about extending your cricket career with a stint in the middle?

# UMPIRES' QUIZ

Let's test all you umpiring experts with a pure umpires quiz.

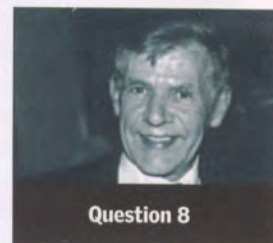
First prize will be copy of "A History of Senior Cricket in Ulster" and in the case of a tiebreaker the first correct set of answers received will be the winner. All entries to be sent to Peter Shields at ipshields@hotmail.com

## WHO ARE THEY?

- 1 North Down's famous international umpiring double act for many years in the thirties?
- 2 Sion Mills's 'Jack-of-all-trades' and one of the North-West's legendary umpires?
- 3 Former Bangor wicket-keeper who made his international umpiring debut in 1982?
- 4 He called himself the "Red Doc from the Rock", lived in the Faughan Valley, and was a colourful North-West character during the seventies and eighties?
- 5 Father was international umpire, son was international opening batsman?
- 6 He called North Down's Ian Carsar for 'chucking' in an Irish Senior Cup game?
- 7 Awarded the BEM in the eighties, tipped for a knighthood in his dreams?
- 8 Which club is long-serving North-West umpire Harry Henderson from?
- 9 Doyen of Ulster umpires and a proud life member of Kent County CC?
- 10 Sam McConnell and John Doherty umpired the 1986 North-West cup final. What was their connection?
- 11 Who was the long-serving umpires president who died last year?
- 12 Where did the umpires have their monthly meetings before moving to Shaw's Bridge?
- 13 Umpires stalwart who was elected NCU president in 1991?
- 14 Bready's two international umpires in the eighties?
- 15 Featured on the front page of the Autumn 1988 edition of the Ulster Cricketer?
- 16 Played in the most senior cup finals in Ulster cricket and umpired two North-West finals?
- 17 Former international umpire who once owned a horse called Wicket-Keeper?
- 18 Umpiring brothers of the eighties from CIYMS CC?



Question 5



Question 8



Question 15



Question 19

- 19 That wonderful little Welshman Dai Jones was a legend in Ulster umpiring but what was his day job?
- 20 Who is Barry Chambers's umpiring uncle?



## FINGERS IN THE RIGHT PIE?

Great news for local umpire Trevor 'Fingers' Henry who was selected to travel to Malaysia for some high-level grilling in preparation for greater

things at a higher level, starting with the ICC Trophy later this summer. Trevor took it all in his stride, probably because most of the Malaysians thought it was Ian Callender on holiday. However, Ian was in Barbados at the same time where he goes regularly, he was barely recognised as most people think it's Trevor Henry!

Eric Cooke was due to travel as well but unfortunately had to pull out and there was no available 'look-alike' although several North-West umpires claimed they could put on a good face if needed.

### Members of the inaugural ICC Associate and Affiliate Umpires Panel:

Trevor Henry - Ireland	Roger Dill - Bermuda
Subash Modi - Kenya	Sarika Siva Prasad - Singapore
Buddi Bahadur Pradhan - Nepal	Hameed Shahul - Indonesia
Paul Baldwin - Germany	Tony Cooper - Fiji
Niels Bagh - Denmark	John Thallon - Scotland

## UMPIRING ETIQUETTE 2005

For those who don't know who's who in the umpiring hierarchy, the top brass in 2005 are as follows:

### Northern Cricket Union

President	Peter Lunney
Chairman	Alan Waugh
Vice-chairperson	Joy Muir
Appointments Secretary	Ian Houston

### NW Cricket Union

President	Harry Henderson
Chairman	Eric Cooke
Vice-chairperson	Colin McClelland
Appointments Secretary	Robin Glenn

Last November I organised a two day 'Cricket IT' seminar in Antwerp, which was presented and attended by internet and statistics enthusiasts from various European countries. Some amazing internet-related hardware and software technologies were demonstrated – live video and audio streaming from your own £300 camcorder, a hand-held computer with scoring software that could beam the current scorecard from the boundary of a ground to the internet, cricket statistical software that produces just about any information imaginable at the click of a button, online software that can manage tournaments and generate the complete web site for the tournament automatically ... and lots more. All wonderfully intriguing stuff and who knows what we will be looking at by the time of the next such seminar?

Of course, this 'whizz-bang' software and hardware is most impressive and provides lots of possibilities and worthwhile challenges. However, even the most basic properties of the world wide web – interactivity, hyperlinking, ease and speed of publication – open up all sorts of opportunities for cricketing organisations. Vast reductions in running costs, generation of revenue from new and previously unreachable sources, marketing and public relations, development of a vibrant cricketing community, promotion of the game among young people, impressing potential sponsors – these can all be achieved through low-cost web operations.

Here in Ireland we have, as in other countries, been quick to embrace the Internet but rather slow to embrace many of the opportunities that it provides. Given that cricket struggles for exposure in this country, that television coverage is quite simply abysmal, and that the finances of the game are not healthy, this is unfortunate. Let me give just a few examples of what is possible, starting with some from across the water in Scotland.

Many organisations spend unjustifiably high amounts on printed publications of all sorts—many of them could instead be published electronically and distributed over the Internet. Until this year, Cricket Scotland published a quarterly, 36-page, tabloid newspaper which they distributed free and posted to subscribers. I am told that the costs of this were in the order of £4,000 per issue for printing and postage. Now they produce it electronically and email it to subscribers who can print it off, in glorious full colour, from their own computers. Savings of around £16,000 per annum – and they now publish it monthly! If you want your own copy, go to [www.cricketscotland.com](http://www.cricketscotland.com) and become a subscriber.

In 2004 Cricket Scotland launched their online shop selling their wide range of Saltires-branded merchandise, as well as match tickets, annual memberships, and Saltires National League membership packages. Tens of thousands of pounds of revenue have been generated through this shop and new overseas markets have been opened up for their attractive clothing.



the last word  
**JOHN ELDER**

## Time to take greater advantage of the Internet

**"The most basic properties of the world wide web – interactivity, hyperlinking, ease and speed of publication – open up all sorts of opportunities for cricketing organisations."**

Many of Cricket Scotland's staff, coaches and team managers have been trained to use UlsterWeb's online software that enables them to publish articles, match reports and other information directly on to their web site. The communication flow among the governing body, clubs, players and general cricketing public has increased greatly. The dynamic content of the site and the large increase in site traffic didn't escape the attention of would-be sponsors – as well as their large Lloyds TSB Scotland sponsorship, Cricket Scotland have recently obtained a ground name sponsor for a five-figure sum!

But a lot more than this is possible without enormous effort and expense. Already on the CricketIreland site we publish pre-recorded audio and video clips – live audio and video broadcasting are more expensive to deliver but we may well make a start during this season. And, if the Irish television and radio companies won't cover cricket, why don't we introduce our own internet-based broadcasting channel? You can expect to hear a weekly, thirty-minute, audio program soon on CricketIreland.

There are many excellent web sites that provide lively and interesting promotional and coaching material aimed at young cricketers, which is one area that we, sadly, have neglected to date on CricketIreland. A lot of this material is available at low cost and can easily be re-authored and customised for the Irish youth audience.

Although the ICU are currently developing their next five year Strategic Plan, I'm not aware that the use of the Internet features strongly in the strategies they are developing for their areas of activity. However, now that we have, at long last, a unified web site structure for Irish cricket and CricketIreland has direct access to ICU resources and personnel, we can hope to achieve a lot more than we have done so far.

If Ireland qualifies for the 2007 Cricket World Cup, as ought to happen, then there will be many new opportunities that can be developed through a flourishing web-based operation. It's probably fair to say that, internet-wise, we have not realised the full potential that the forthcoming ICC Trophy presents for marketing and promotion of the game in Ireland, so let's make sure we make the most of the even bigger event in 2007. We look forward to bringing it all to you on CricketIreland!

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