

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

ACU WAS NOW “MARKING TIME ON THE SPOT”, BUT THROUGHOUT THE CRICKET WORLD ITSELF, SIGNIFICANT CHANGES WERE TAKING PLACE (IN THE EARLY 1960s)

In retrospect, these years were perhaps disappointing for the Association in comparison with those essential pioneering times which had gone before. Rather were they noticeable for a hiatus in assembled reports of ACU activity that broke new ground. There were, of course, the now customary announcements in “How’s That ?” of routine training classes arranged at the London headquarters premises at “The Three Nuns”, Aldgate on Friday evenings throughout the summer months of May and June and again, on a weekly basis, from 22 October, through to 3 December. Council meetings continued to be convened monthly throughout the whole year, but for the most part it would appear that the Association was now entering a period of relative calm of ‘marking time, on the spot’ rather than maintaining the almost frenetic pace of development characteristic of its formative years.

There were, of course, some newly affiliated bodies who were exceptions to this trend and the progress of Berkshire ACU was proudly reported in the Association Newsletter No 35. Not wishing to appear smug, the Berkshire chairman, John Howard, submitted his report on progress made by his association over a very short period in the hope that others may be encouraged to “set up in business on their own account.”

Founded as recently as in the winter of 1959/60, at a public meeting called by two men, it was now over 60 strong and growing steadily. It staged a general meeting every month of the year, with an average attendance of 20 irrespective of the weather being either fair or foul. A second monthly meeting was being planned at the alternate end of the County to cater for fringe members and any ‘refugees’ that care to cross the borders of adjacent Surrey, Middlesex or Bucks!

During its short life, it had had a course of lectures on the Laws, with lecturers from HQ, with attendances of students never less than 50; it had staged a Cricket Quiz, with Frank Lee, Freddie Brown and Ken Barrington on the panel; arrangements had been made for two written examinations for the first stage of Full Membership, to be followed very shortly by an Oral Examination – all in Reading - with the energetic help of HQ. Above all, in the opinion of the Chairman, the monthly meetings had provided an opportunity and incentive for training and revision by means of discussion, quiz and argument, the response to which had both surprised and heartened its committee.

The point of their experience was this: If it, Berkshire, could uncover such enthusiasm, with its essentially rural character and indifferent communications, what potential awaited discovery in some of the urban and metropolitan areas? However, at HQ, the now traditional programme of monthly ‘Open’ meetings continued to be arranged and were well supported throughout the year. The early ritual of these arrangements being made on Fridays had now been forsaken for other variable week-day evenings in the hope of giving members an improved opportunity of attending at least some of them and of giving greater flexibility in the arrangements made for the convenience of Speakers. Such personalities that were included in the current varied programme (1962) were Alex Bannister of “The Daily Mail”, A.C.L. Bennett of the BBC Cricket Club and Mr. N. Scott, the Wimbledon Tennis Umpire from the Lawn Tennis Association.

One of the best attended meetings was the “Club Captains and Players” evening, arranged, post season, for Tuesday, 25 September, at which those from Cricket Clubs were

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

invited to attend and air their problems, grievances and points arising from incidents on the field in the previous season.

The apparent diminishing number of reports of accumulated activity at this time perhaps reflected the sombre mood that seemed typical of Cricket in general throughout the United Kingdom at this particularly difficult period. Even the weather had seemed to conspire against a good start to the season, with unrelenting grey skies, bitter winds, arctic conditions and almost persistent rain prevailing during most months.

Certainly attendances at meetings arranged for the second half of the 'closed' season were seriously affected by appalling conditions, the like of which had not been seen since the notorious 'deep freeze' of 1947. Even London and the South-East, generally reckoned to escape most of the foul wintry weather, had experienced a blizzard on Boxing Day and snow remained ever present as hard-packed rutted ice on pavements and piled high alongside kerb boundaries until the onset of a general thaw, with more heavy rain on 5 March.

Inclement weather continued well into the first two months of the 1963 season and conditions such as these were not conducive for the high degree of concentration so necessary for competent umpiring. It was no help to concentration to become aware that incessant rain had repeatedly penetrated the official's white coat and frequently penetrated one's under-garments. Umpires, unlike players, could not immediately get into a change of dry clothing and, standing on wet turf and blowing on cold fingers, gave little joy when reflecting on the onset of next season's arthritis and lumbago. These conditions at least provided the General Secretary, Tom Smith, with the opportunity of reporting on matters outside of those provided in the Law Book. In "How's That ?", no. 36, he wrote:

"Our Association can (and, in fact, does) teach all the fundamentals of the technique of Umpiring. Concentration, however, is something we cannot teach. It is a peculiar quality that is a gift to the favoured, but one that most of us have to acquire. Each individual must train himself to a standard of concentration that will develop from experience. It is always when concentration lapses for a moment that something critical happens. When things are quiet at the end of the two extremes – a cold wintry day or long hours in the sunshine – this is the danger time. Thought and sighting wanders for a moment. A flash or action. An urgent appeal. An answer is required. It is such a situation that makes lack of concentration fatal, and it speaks volumes for most umpires that the predicament so seldom arises. A fitting thought for us all for the current season is to constantly remind ourselves that, as more responsibilities tend to come to umpires, so we must all the more practise concentration. Never, at any time should we be caught out by inattention".

Despite the dearth of reported news of new affiliations in this year, it was encouraging to learn that the East of Scotland Association had been able to give a helping hand to colleagues in the south of Scotland with a view to forming an association there on the right lines. A number of ESA members had been travelling down to the Borders once a month to give assistance for this purpose. It was further pleasing to report that Association Full Members were now being appointed to all senior matches arranged in Scotland and that two of these – C. Hirst and S.J. Walker – had been called to international duty in the recent Scotland v Australia fixture.

Similar news of distinction also came from overseas. Two of the five umpires who stood in the recent Ashes Series of Test Matches between the MCC Tourists and Australia were Bill Smythe of Victoria and Ted Wykes of New South Wales. Both were ACU Full Members and both had received excellent reports from MCC players and officials.

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

Contrary to the general trend, Northern Branch had continued to extend its range of training activity and had acted as agent for the Western Command of the Army at its School of Physical Training, Oswestry, Shropshire, under the tutelage of Major Ted Claridge and his team of approved instructors. This intensive course was assembled on the 30 April and dispersed on 3 May after a morning session of written examination, followed by an afternoon's exercise in practical umpiring. Autumn Evening Training Classes had also been arranged on Wednesday evenings from 26 September to 28 November inclusive, at the National and Bluecoat School, Hallgate, Wigan. In parallel, a second autumn course was arranged on successive Friday evenings at Broadheath, Altringham, Cheshire.

Despite a worrying period in December when Major Ted Claridge underwent two major operations in Bury Hospital, he was soon back in harness again in providing training on successive Wednesday evenings from 23 January to 3 April inclusive, this time with the school hall, Grimshaw Street, Preston, as venue. This completed a very full year's involvement by this evangelising enthusiast for the cause of ACU in its quest for the raising of umpiring standards.

Other progressive and rewarding news from Northern Branch was that it had been asked to nominate a supply of competent umpires for the Universities Athletic Association Championship Finals at the Firs, Fallowfield, Manchester. This was for the two-day game between Manchester and Southampton University; for the National Dock Labour Board Championship Final at the Manchester Ship Canal ground, Stretford and for the game between the Dockers of Goole (Yorkshire) and Liverpool.

Although the Northern Branch of the Association provided the first evidence of an organised devolution from ACU Headquarters in London, other groups of umpires belonging to local associations (some of which were to be affiliated to ACU; others perhaps still to learn yet of the existence of the Association), and residual enthusiastic but often geographically isolated individuals, were also doing their best to augment the basic aim of the Association itself – the improvement of umpiring standards nationally and world-wide.

One such individual was H.D. (Bill) Ainsworth who joined the fledgling organisation within its first weeks and was amongst the first to qualify as a Full Member. At this time he was in employment with the Air Ministry and was soon to be posted to Harrogate, Yorkshire. Offering his support in any capacity to Tom Smith, he was invited to convene a first meeting of Yorkshire Umpires to appraise them of the establishment and aims of this new Association and, perhaps, to encourage the formation of a locally affiliated organisation to the parent body.

The first seeds of his evangelising message appeared to fall on stony ground when a nucleus of Yorkshire reactionaries became suspicious, if not outright disdainful, of his Lancashire origin. However, a familiar face in the front row recognised Bill as his former platoon commander from his service days in Arras, in Northern France and this had an ameliorating effect. Further unexpected support from a locally respected gargantuan figure from Northallerton, Albert Gaskell, meant that his pioneering efforts were to carry the day.

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

In retrospect, it is salutary to mention that the origin of ACU's influence in the North-East, (in numerical terms, the largest Region of the Association in the 1990s), was directly related to Bill's initiative in convening that meeting in Harrogate.

From this time on, a close friendship was to develop between Bill Ainsworth and Albert Gaskell (1910-1972) who was one of very few umpires with no previous personal record of playing for a County to be appointed to stand as a member of the County First-Class Umpire's Panel. Born at Burslem, Stoke on Trent, Albert had always had a great enthusiasm for the game of Cricket. Having coached in its fundamentals at Newcastle (under Lyme) he went on to play for Trentham, in the North Staffordshire League, before moving to "The White House", 21, Broomfield Avenue, Romanby, Northallerton in 1933, playing in the North Yorkshire League.

Albert also played Rugby as well as Tennis (when neither clashed with Cricket) and Golf, but his love for Cricket always came top of his personal priorities. He took up umpiring after playing "serious Cricket" – it was never "anything but serious"! Considering his very generous proportions – in excess of eighteen stones! – it was remarkable that he remained sufficiently agile and mobile to remain a top level sportsman in such a variety of games. As one might suspect, anyone of his dimensions was a great trencherman and the stories of how he could dispose of three or more pints of bitter within minutes of the close of play are not apocryphal.

Brian Johnson, the 'wit of Cricket' frequently told this anecdotal after-dinner story of Albert: "His wife, Eileen, sometimes goes to watch a game when he is umpiring and tells him that she can easily recognise him because if 'it' moves, it's you. If it doesn't, it's the sight-screen!"

During the formative years of the Association, Albert was constantly active as an Instructor in the North-Eastern Counties. His classes took him all over the Yorkshire Ridings particularly and to Northumberland and other adjacent counties, often crossing to the "red-rose" side of the Pennines. In addition he also provided courses for the Army at Catterick and for the Navy at Portsmouth.

The following is an extract from the Northern Cricket Society Magazine made soon after his appointment to the First-Class Umpire's Panel:

"Personalities are few and far between in First-Class Cricket. Let it be said at once, then, that with the addition of Albert Gaskell, the Umpires' Panel has gained a rich and varied character as well as a performer of no mean competence. Albert has always been attracted to Cricket. He had an early misfortune in being born out of the County. He played for a short time in the North Staffordshire League before moving to Northallerton in the middle 30s where he played for many years with the local town club and North Riding Nalgo. His unorthodox batting, coupled with an unusual stance – he looked to be sitting on the edge of a low chair – was the subject of much comment by the onlookers but his runs were usually quickly got and there were times when he filled even the best of opposing bowlers with a sense of hopeless frustration.

As an umpire, his advance was rapid as he passed through the Yorkshire Council and Yorkshire League Section to the Minor Counties until, for the coming season, his name was added to the list of First - Class Umpires. This appointment, naturally, has given Albert much satisfaction, which is shared not only by his friends in the North Riding, but with all those he has met in his cricket travels and not least the members of our Society. He has been a member for several years and regularly stands in the Boxing Day matches.

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

If a decision of his might receive comment after the game, this is always met in a genial way and with a ready answer. One remembers a leg before wicket decision against our Yorkshire Skipper at Thorp Arch – leg plumb in front but stretched down the wicket! Albert got a bit of stick for that one but stood his ground well and had good support from Thorp Arch and Boston Spa! His good nature and readiness to help anyone will make him many more friends when he enters the larger sphere of First-Class County Cricket. We all wish him well for further success.”

March saw yet another Annual Dinner pursuing its usual happy and enjoyable course at the Connaught Rooms, London, with an attendance of 118 being the highest since the first such event had been held. This had been largely due to the attraction of its principal guests: Sir Learie Constantine, MBE, High Commissioner for Trinidad and Tobago and former cricketer supreme and Mr. Donald Carr, recently appointed Assistant Secretary of the MCC. Other guests included Major Sydney Woods, Secretary of the Club Cricket Conference; Mr. Langford of “The Cricketer”; Mr. Alex Bannister of “The Daily Mail”; Test Umpire, Charles Elliot; cricketers Arthur McIntyre, Harry Sharpe and Colin Page and Mr. Whitehead, the Middlesex Scorer. Members were delighted to have with them the Association President, Mr. G.O. Allen, CBE, for he had not expected to be present. He was in very good form in linking up the various toasts and introducing speakers.

Proposing the Toast of “The Guests”, Frank Warwick mentioned the famous game between the West Indies and Middlesex at Lords when Learie Constantine hit 86 of 107 in the first innings, 103 of 133 in an hour of the second, and took 7 for 57 in the Middlesex second innings, including a spell of 6 for 11 in 60 balls. The result had been an exciting win for the visitors by three wickets. Reminding his audience of the home side’s 352 for 6 wickets in its first innings, he said that out of this total the late Pat Hendron had scored 100 not out and regretted to add that our President had been run out for 4, whereupon the President interjected: “Yes, by Hendron!” which caused loud laughter.

Frank Warwick also pointed out other extraordinary performances by the chief guest during his playing career; two particularly unique ones being having a hymn played for him by the local band when it was known that he would be leaving Nelson CC – “Abide with me”, and having been given out LBW off his chest and neck, though each of these regrettable occurrences had taken place in Ireland!

However, it was not mere statistical performance that had made Sir Learie so welcome a guest, but rather his positive and dynamic approach to the game, which was so regrettably lacking nowadays in the higher reaches of Cricket. This had an obvious effect on succeeding West Indies Teams who were now second only to the Australians in being the highest profit earning tourists to the United Kingdom. Pleasure and admiration was also expressed of the chief guest’s reputations in spheres other than Cricket, including valuable services to the United Kingdom during the Second World War, for which he was awarded the MBE and Minister of Works and Transport in the West Indies.

Mr. Donald Carr proposed the Toast to the Association in an amusing speech, which while giving much pleasure was not of the kind readily committable to print! He was, however, clearly very pleased to be present and keenly enthusiastic about his new job. Mr. Pat O’Brien replied to this Toast and told of the agreeable news that Council member and Training Committee and Examination Board Chairman, A.E.D. (David) Smith, had again been appointed to the First-Class Umpires’ list.

And so to the always enjoyable post-prandial conviviality which annually concluded this major function in the Association’s Social Calendar.

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

In presenting his report at the Annual General Meeting on 23 March, the General Secretary, Tom Smith, said that there had been a drop in the rate of applications for membership received compared with the impressive record of previous years. This should not be seen as all that surprising after ten former years of consistency. Nevertheless, personal memberships had now grown to about 2,000, a figure doubled in estimate when consideration also included those officials who were members of the Association's affiliated bodies.

Pat O'Brien had again given a year of enthusiasm and efficiency in the running of the Association Training activities. Besides his secretarial involvement with day-to-day administration, he had always been personally active in providing a large share of the lecturing needed. In this regard, he had been admirably supported by stalwarts Fred Parker and David Smith who had always been willing to travel around the country to represent ACU.

Apart from the traditional course arranged at HQ, instruction had also been provided at Sittingbourne, Ashford, Catford, Ilford, Brighton, Romford, to the Royal Navy at Gosport and to the boys of Highgate School. These pupils had formed a Society of their own to discuss the meaning, interpretation and application of the Laws of Cricket. It was hoped that this enterprise might well be the fore-runner of other similar groups in the future as such would be an important stride forward towards improving the standard of umpiring in School Cricket.

Tom Smith was sorry to have to end his report on a sad note. Pat O'Brien had now arrived at the end of a long stint as Secretary to the Training Board and his private life had changed in such a way that he could no longer manage to be away from home so regularly and unselfishly as had been the case over recent years. As a result, he had been obliged to offer his resignation and it was with much regret that this had been accepted by Council.

The Association carefully continued to jealously guard the qualification of its Full Membership by keeping the standard required as high as it could after difficult written and oral examinations, followed by careful vetting of candidates' field work. An analysis of examination results over the period since the formation of the Association had revealed that a little over 50% of candidates had passed the written examinations and of these, approximately 70% had also successfully completed their Orals. The principal reasons for failures in both types of examinations had been due to insufficient preparation. Candidates had tended to concentrate their studies too much to a group of Laws rather than to a knowledge of their totality.

In summation of the examination activity of the past year, 294 sets of Written Papers had been issued which had resulted in 145 passes. 74 candidates had been successful in the Part 2, Oral examinations (from 94 attempts). The Passing Committee (consisting of T.E. Smith, A.E.D. Smith, F.W.Carr and H. O'Brien) had seen fit to elevate 66 Associates to Full Membership.

The administration of the Association's Examination Board and the conduct of its examinations had become the envy of many other bodies and was largely due to the undiminished enthusiasm shown by its Secretary, Frank Carr. By now, fully "retired" from paid employment, he had been working, voluntarily, many hours every day in the cause of ACU., not only in relation to his examination duties, but also on the workings of the new Association addressograph and despatch of literature - 10,191 items sent out over this

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

past year. The resultant combined stress had now taken its toll and, sadly, on medical advice, Frank Carr had reluctantly been obliged to give up his work as Examination Board Secretary.

A third sad resignation from office came when it became known that Jim Dear had also been compelled to give up his duties as Hon. Treasurer. Since moving to the south coast at Ferring on Sea, his business life and its associated worries had become such that he found it impossible to cope any longer with the arduous and ever-growing commitment involved in looking after the Association's Treasury. He had taken over as Hon. Treasurer at a terrible time, without warning, when Maurice Cruse, the first officer to hold this appointment, had died suddenly.

Death often does not give notice and, in this instance, Mr. Cruse had been stricken suddenly during the night. Matters had been left by Mr. Cruse in the midst of his personal attention and, when the General Secretary looked at the mass of residual material requiring attention, his heart had sunk. Jim Dear had volunteered to take over, cleared up outstanding matters with enthusiasm and had formulated a revised method of accounting. He could not be thanked enough for what he had achieved and it had been a great joy when Jim Dear agreed to be nominated for Hon. Life Membership - an honour reserved for those who have rendered special service to the Association. It was well deserved. He had done much for ACU for which the membership should always be grateful.

It had been distressing to Council and members that three of the most important posts had to change simultaneously in this one year, but the essential voluntary nature of Association officers meant that change was always going to be inevitable, sometimes, as now, at very short notice or with no advance warning as time marched on. The Association had to be grateful for the most excellent work that had been done by each of its retiring officials and all should strive to give their successors as much support and help as possible.

It had been pleasing to have continued to receive praise from people whose opinion had been valued. Association members themselves should be as confident as ever that the collective work being done was of the utmost importance to Cricket. It was by keeping to the highest possible standards of umpiring that the Association could continue to make its contribution to the future well-being of the game.

Apart from internal considerations of ACU, the year 1962 had seen a number of significant changes throughout the United Kingdom within the Cricket World itself. The first of these saw the last of one of the oldest (since 1806) annual encounters in the first-class calendar between matches played between "The Gentlemen" - unpaid amateurs - and "The Players" - paid professional cricketers. The respective captains of the teams for this final engagement were E.R. ("Ted") Dexter and F. S. ("Freddie") Trueman.

This change had come following the recommendations made to the MCC by its Cricketing Advisory Committee. This same committee had met in 1956 to consider an identical remit! It was hardly tenable (although traditionally characteristic of Lord's) that the committee's decision of four years previously was overturned. The earlier convention had concluded that "The distinctive status of the Amateur Cricketer is not obsolete, was of great value to the game and would be persevered", i.e. at that time the status quo - the annual "Gentlemen" v "Players" encounters would continue.

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

However, not all opinion of that era was totally convinced by the need for a change. Wisden Cricketers Almanack, for example, stated that "By doing away with the Amateur, Cricket was in danger of losing the Spirit of Freedom and gaiety which the best amateur players (thoughts of W.G. Grace, perhaps ?) had brought to the game". But even in the columns of this Almanack, a contrary view had been expressed by Alec Bedser some two years earlier when he wrote: "With advanced education and higher wages, there are safer and definitely more alternative prospects for the average youngster outside of the game".

The selection by the MCC of the eleven players to represent "The Gentlemen" had long been an anachronism, if not a titular affront to that greater majority seeking to earn their living by playing the game. A second traditional difference between the individual team members was that the amateurs - the 'Gentlemen' - were respectfully addressed as "Mr.", whereas the paid professionals - the 'Players' - were identified only by reference to individual surnames. This was essentially a feudal differentiation of 'amateurism' which, by convention believed that evolutionary accident occasioned by birth, blood and wealth bestowed narrow advantages that a wise Society should not challenge.

A certain amount of humbug went with it at times, latterly identified as 'shamamateurism' and 'Gents v Players', by definition, always embodied a number of caste marks that had become progressively unacceptable to the nation at large. These included such differences as the former would be expected to change in a 'dedicated' changing room and, as a final insult, each team would enter and leave the field of play by separate entrances.

Yet a number of matches between the two sides, post World War II, had been among the most vivid games of cricket played and they had added a great deal to the enjoyment of the English season. They had been worthy reminders of the period, which stretched for more than half a century before Test Matches occurred when the fixture enabled Englishmen (N.B. it was essentially an 'English' occasion) to see the best available cricketers pitting themselves against each other in one match.

It says much for the quality of Cricket seen in modern times between the 'Gentlemen' and the 'Players', as well as for the hold the fixture maintained on the public imagination, that great crowds rolled up to Lord's for the event several years after the Second World War - 28,000 for the 1948 contest! However, within a few years, the long agonising over amateur and professional status was eventually resolved by the Advisory County Cricket Committee on 26 November, 1962.

Sadly, the last encounter between the two teams had to be abandoned prematurely by a rain-swept draw. The last words on it are best described by the late H.S. Altham: "On the first day, Rev. D.S. Sheppard, returning to Cricket after a break of some years, played an innings of 112, sound and resolute enough to ensure his place for Australia. With E.R. Dexter and M.J.K. Smith helping him with partnerships of over 90 each, the Gentlemen's total was 323. Trevor Bailey made full use of a heavy atmosphere on the second day to take 6 for 58 and only some good hitting by F.S. Trueman and F. Titmus got the 'Players' out of serious trouble and within 63 of their enemy. The third morning was dominated by an impressive century by Prideaux, which enabled Dexter to declare, setting the Players 236 to get in 3 hours. Enterprising and attractive play by J.H. Edrich, Parfitt and Graveney carried them well ahead of the clock, but then the clouds opened, and Gentlemen and Players left the field for the last time".

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

Also at this time, a number of controversial “Special Regulations” - effectively only ‘experiments’ – were being tried out for a limited period in the game at County level. The two most recent of these included, in ‘experimental detail, umpires’ consideration of “front foot” placement in the bowler’s ‘delivery stride’ (in relation to amended markings of the creases) and, secondly, the possibility of ‘deliberate deflections” which would make leg-byes inadmissible.

It was unfortunate that such ‘experimental Special Regulations’ (which in the length of their experience, over more than one season, might have been further amended or even withdrawn in their entirety) were now being seen increasingly as the “norm” on televised cricket, thereby causing confusion to viewers, spectators, players and officials alike whose active participation was limited to the recreational game. As the representative of umpires at meetings of the National Cricket Association, Tom Smith voiced his concern at the unbalanced publicity given to their introduction to First-Class Cricket only and repeatedly campaigned for them to be made applicable to all grades of Cricket at one and the same time. It took more than one season for his voice to be effective and longer still for a permanent change to be made in official MCC Law as promulgated in the revised 1980 Code.

Thus, through the medium of the Newsletter, ‘How’s That ?’ (Issue no.40), - repeated as opportunity permitted at its Open Meetings – the Association was at pains to stress that, although of academic interest, such ‘Special Regulations’ should be disregarded by all those associated with fixtures outside of First Class Status. Until they might be officially introduced as being applicable to all grades of Cricket, the Association would neither teach their potential ramifications, nor expect answers to its examination questions to reflect such experimental detail.

However, the most fundamental transformation to the face of Cricket since the legalisation of ‘over-arm’ bowling one and a half centuries ago, came at the start of the 1962 season (but was only applicable at this time to the First-Class Game). This was the introduction of “limited overs” in regard to adjudication on the result of a match. Instead of two opposing teams striving to get all of their opponents wickets to fall with a lesser number of runs made by one of them (with the game fully ‘played out), the emphasis now would be on the total number of runs scored, irrespective of how many wickets had been taken i.e., a “draw” would no longer be possible and a win for one side would be inevitable. Thus, for example, after, say, ten overs, it could be seen as being more advantageous to have lost 3 wickets for 48 runs than to have lost no wickets for 20 runs. But, equally, the converse could be true if strikers 9,10 & 11 used the ‘long handle’ effectively. What now really mattered was the comparison between the respective total of runs scored by both sides at the end of the fixed number of overs bowled.

Its introduction had been the product of financial necessity to overcome the drastic decline in public interest in County Championship Cricket in the late ‘50s which had begun to threaten the well-being and even continued existence of the less supported Counties at the turnstiles. Championship gates had dropped from all but two million in 1950 to about a quarter of that figure in 1962, with only about a total of 100,000 members financially supporting 17 Counties. Additional sources of income were needed which were to arrive not only by the improved attendances of this ‘new’ audience but also in the form of corporate sponsorship.

This radical change had come from a recommendation made by H.S. Altham’s Advisory Committee set up by MCC to look into this problem, with the remit to make

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

recommendations to influence how future cricket might be played, financed and administered.

The continued haemorrhaging of spectators at the gates had to stop and, not surprisingly, the specialist Advisory Committee now concluded that a 'Knock-Out' competition, as a variation to the Championship League format, would hopefully provide the answer! The proposal took much digesting by Cricket 'purists' but with the financial position of most Clubs now desperate, it was clearly necessary to do something to attract 'new' money to the County game, bringing with it fresh ideas and incentives to both competing teams and individual players by the introduction of "Man of the Match" awards. So the experimental plunge was inevitably taken by the creation of "The Gillette Cup" in 1962.

The first "Gillette Cup" was launched at first as a 65-over competition because it was thought that, generally speaking, the greater number of overs the better i.e. the less artificial the game. However, because of the limited hours of daylight that came with the end of season approach – flood-lighting and 'night-cricket' would follow much later - the number of overs for all 'one-day' competitions has since been variously reduced to 60, 50, 40 and even 20/twenty overs with no apparent loss of interest by the paying public.

Initially, no bowler was permitted to bowl more than 15 overs and in later years this number was subsequently reduced to 13, 12 and 10. The pitch was to be covered throughout the match and this was not to be accorded First-Class status. The "Man of the Match" award was to be decided by appointed ex or current England Test Match players.

These innovative changes (in 1962) were meant to rekindle the public to the joy of Cricket and make it attractive to a new and probably younger audience with a positive result forthcoming for one side during one day's play. Hopefully, it was intended to become a real crowd puller similar, to attendances achieved in soccer for its F.A. Cup Competition and, my goodness, how well it succeeded from the start! The first final between Sussex and Worcestershire was an absolute sell-out with an admission charge of only 7s 6d. It was characterised by spectators wearing Rosettes, singing – "Good old Sussex by the Sea" -, jeering, counter jeering and sounds from a Worcester hunting horn! It certainly brought to Cricket's HQ a new dimension and a new type of spectator who was not necessarily an enthusiast for Cricket, but rather a partisan supporting his County in a Cup Final. Later the successful "Gillette" format (with minor variations) was to be followed by the introductions of its 'Texaco' rivals, the Sunday afternoon 'John Player' League and the 'Benson and Hedges' Trophies.

One major gain for Cricket at all levels resulting from the introduction of the 'limited overs' competitions has been the successive improvement in the quality of fielding and its placements. The pre-requisite of the saving of runs achieved by the opposition has caused a new degree of athleticism and throwing power of the players with the maintenance of physical fitness now high on the list of their priorities.

However, Alec Bedser frequently voiced his opinion that the arrival of limited overs had also introduced bad batting habits, but not all would agree with him. Others suggest that it has stimulated the range of possible stroke play i.e. such as the increasingly controversial "switch-hit" or quick single deflections and has tended to make batsmen more powerful and faster between wickets and has also taught them how to score quickly under pressure with a premium on all-round competence.

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

Soon, the financial incentive provided to the Counties by this new perversion of the game was further stimulated by the arrival of overseas 'Box-Office' celebrities such as Sir Garfield Sobers at Trent Bridge, Clive Lloyd at Old Trafford and Intikhab Alem at the Oval. The one-day, limited over, success in England was soon to be followed by similar competition at international level as witnessed by the generously sponsored "Prudential" and "World Cups", all now part of the regular encounters staged world-wide at pre-determined intervals.

Similarly, Clubs in the South changed course to adopt 'structured' competitive Cricket although this was not achieved without a stiff rearguard action from old stalwarts of the Club Cricket Conference, whose treasured object was the fostering of its cricket on essentially "friendly" or "social" encounters on non-competitive lines. However, Club Treasurers saw the financial advantages to be obtained from being members of leagues (such as those in the Surrey Championship) that could enjoy the benefits that would accrue from the provision of sponsored support.

In the ultimate, the Conference executive was obliged to cancel its opposition to the proposed change since the majority of the elite Clubs had threatened to resign its memberships if the CCC insisted on maintaining the status quo of retaining a non-competitive edge to its policy. It was just as well that this change was made at this time by the CCC since, within a few years, 2,000 Villages and 250 stronger Clubs in the area also wished to enter newly introduced national 'knock-out' competitions. Without this change of heart, this could have been the ominous death knell for the CCC.

Nevertheless, even today there are numerous Clubs, particularly of the 'Wandering' nature, who persevere and prefer to play 'proper' cricket in accord with official MCC Law. Predominantly, these fixtures take place on Sundays.

So the year had not only become notable for the loss of distinction between amateur and professional cricketers but Commercialisation of Cricket had also arrived. Almost a century after it was first suggested and rejected, a one-day (weather permitting), limited over, County 'Knock-Out Competition appeared in the national fixture lists, with its Final taking place at Lord's on the first Saturday in September. The Razor Company, Gillette, donated £6,500 in prize money, a trophy and "Man of the Match" award. The sponsor's slogan: "Good evenings begin with Gillette" now had a real ring of truth about it!

From now on, it would be augmented by full coverage on television and intense marketing was to fill the terraces again and put millions of pounds into the First-Class game. Its introduction had radically transformed the nature of Cricket's appeal to the public, so that it became a somewhat distant relation to the beautiful "meadow" game "that was played and watched for unsophisticated recreation" – (J.M. Kilburn in Barclays World of Cricket, Willow Books, 1986) From hereon, Cricket would not be the same, with the attraction of financial rewards assuming greater emphasis than mere pride in winning a sporting contest.

(Author's note: now for a change in emphasis for the reader of this narrative to consider, certainly, the most wistful event to occur in the World of English Cricket in 1962):

It came, not during the season itself, but in the last days of the calendar year when Sir John ("Jack") Hobbs died at his home in Hove, on 21 December, only after his 81st birthday anniversary.

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

He had been christened John Berry Hobbs because his father's name was John and his mother's maiden name was Berry. 'Jack', as he was better known, was the eldest of 12 siblings – six boys and six girls – a not uncommon feature of families in Britain in the late 19th. Century. He had been born within a stone's throw of Fenners, Cambridge, where his father had been on the staff as Head Groundsman and a professional umpire to Jesus College, so, from his earliest days he was brought up in a strong cricketing environment and delighted in watching university cricket there.

During his school holidays he would field in the nets, use a cricket stump as a bat on a gravel pitch. This primitive form of practise had the foundations of his skill. The narrow straight stump helped him to appreciate the importance of keeping a straight bat in later life. He was completely self-taught, and never coached but he never forgot all his life a piece of advice passed on to him by his umpire father. Facing spin bowling he was told to stand clear of the stumps: "Don't draw away. If you do so you cannot play with a straight bat and the movement may well cause you to be bowled off your pads."

His cricketing idol was Tom Haward so it was almost inevitable that the young Jack was hoping that he might become good enough to play for one of the leading Counties, preferably Surrey, where Tom was playing as a professional. As a boy and youth, he practised morning, noon and night. When he knew he would be busy during the day, he rose at six and practised before going to work.

In April, 1903, he went to Surrey CCC. to commence a long and illustrious career in First-Class cricket which was to make him known the world over and earn him a Knighthood from the Queen – the first professional cricketer to receive the honour.

Not many current members of ESCUA are old enough to have witnessed any part of this great player's cricketing career which spanned more than 30 years and brought him fame, second to none. His technique was matchless and at the height of his career, 'Punch' despaired: "Can nothing be done for J.B. Hobbs to make him sometimes get out for blobs?"

Obituary tributes by his contemporaries were made in glowing terms as follows:

Andrew Sandham: Jack was the finest batsman in my experience on all sorts of wickets, especially the bad ones, for in our day there were more bad wickets and more spin bowlers than there are today. He soon knocked the shine off the ball and he was so great that he really collared the bowling. He could knock up 50 in no time at all and the bowlers would often turn to me and say "Did you see that?" He was brilliant. Despite all the fuss and adulation made of him he was surprisingly modest, and had a great sense of humour.

Herbert Sutcliffe: I was his partner on many occasions on extremely bad wickets, and I can say this without any doubt whatsoever that he was the most brilliant exponent of all time and quite the best batsman of my generation on all types of wicket. On good wickets I do believe the pride of place should be given to Sir Don Bradman. I had a log and happy association with Sir Jack and can testify to his fine character. A strong church-goer, he seldom missed the opportunity to attend church service on Sunday mornings both in England and abroad. He was a man of highest integrity who believed in sportsmanship in the highest sense, teamwork, fair play and clean living. His life was full of everything noble and true.

Percy Fender: Jack was the greatest batsman the world has ever known, not merely his generation, but any generation and he was the most charming and modest man that anyone could meet. No one who saw him or met him will ever forget him and his legend will last as long as the game is played – perhaps longer.

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

George Duckworth: My first trip to Australia in 1928 was Jack's last and I remember with gratitude how he acted as a sort of father and mother to the young players like myself. Always a boyish chap at heart, he remained a great leg-puller. When 51, he promised to come and play in my benefit match in 1934 and despite bitterly cold weather he hit the last first-class century in his career. He told me he got it to keep warm!

Frank Woolley: Jack was one of the greatest sportsmen England ever had; a perfect gentleman and a good living fellow respected by everyone he met. I travelled abroad with him many times to Australia and South Africa and I always looked upon him as the finest right-hand batsman I saw in the 30 years I played with and against.

Today, as members of ESCUA, few of us might also appreciate that, indirectly, we also owe Jack Hobbs a great deal of gratitude for it was he, in his autobiography: "My life's story", had written in 1935:

"The value of good umpiring to a player cannot be overstated..... Bad umpires fray the temper of players..... Obviously it isn't "Cricket" for a player to take advantage of poor umpiring when it is clearly a case of "not out"..... I fear that Club Cricket particularly is often spoilt by the partiality of Umpires and the remedy would appear to lie in having a properly constituted Umpires' Association".

Our mentor, Tom Smith, who as a boy lived close to the Surrey Oval and became an avid disciple of "The Master" – an epithet and an eloquent appraisal of Hobbs place in Cricket's history – freely admitted that this comment from Hobbs was the seed sown in his mind for him to create in 1953, the very organisation – ACU & S – that he had identified as being necessary some eighteen years earlier for radical improvement in umpiring standards.

(Author's note: Now to return to more mundane matters in the residual months of 1962):

An earlier reference was made in this issue to the enforced resignation of Pat O'Brien as Secretary to the Training Committee. This had been because he had found the work of travel away from his home, lecturing on courses, to have been too demanding upon his available time to attend to his domestic commitments. However, always keen to make a valuable contribution, if possible, to ACU administration, he agreed to permit his name to go forward for appointment to the vacant position of Association Treasurer.

He was soon into his stride in his new role when he made the following appeal to the membership in the Newsletter columns:

"What I now have to say is of importance, not only to the well-being of this Association and its readers. Subscription by members is the life-blood of the Association and we, like all organisations, cannot carry out or function properly without money. Our rules provide that the subscription shall cover the calendar year and are due on the 1 April and be payable by the 1 May, annually. This essential rule is not being adhered to by a large number of our members and, as a result, a great deal of time and money has to be sent on sending reminders to such members.

On 1 May, 1963, I dispatched 290 statements of arrears to members who had not paid their subscriptions for 1961-62 and 1962-63 and, by the 6 June, I had received only 118 replies. This is rather disappointing as the sorting out of 'defaulting' members, preparation of the statements, addressing of envelopes etc., entailed some three to four days of my annual holiday, which you will appreciate, I could ill-afford to spare.

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

On checking further, members record cards on the 6 June, I found that apart from the 172 who had not replied, there were 213 Full Members, 317 Associate Members, 23 Private Members and 12 Affiliated Associations who had not paid their subscriptions for 1963. I do not wish to have to prepare statements for these 565 and I am therefore relying on the goodwill of these members, when they read this appeal to send me their subscriptions without further delay.

Payment can be made by Banker's Order – my Bank told me that its charges amount to 6 pence only. Such method of payment saves me an untold amount of work. Your Bank will provide you with a form on request. I close this appeal by thanking those members who have so far paid their subscriptions and I look forward to prompt response from the above-mentioned 172 and 565.

Yours sincerely, H.A. O'Brien

(N.B. Author's note: This heart-rending appeal from a purely voluntary officer has been quoted in full as it illustrates a factual historical record of only one of the Hon. Treasurer's problems. Although it did produce an encouraging response from 'defaulters' at that time, the need for similar exercises has been the very sad experience of all Association Treasurers to succeed Pat O'Brien over subsequent years.)

The Treasurer, Mr. O'Brien's appeal was further amplified by the General Secretary, Tom Smith, who again made his usual evangelising point about the need for added recruitment to the membership in the Newsletter columns:

"Membership of any organisation is its lifeblood and let there be no mistake about that. We must do everything we can to introduce new members to ACU. I know there is still a large potential "out there". Umpires are urgently required and currently we cannot meet the demands of Club Cricket. Every year there are hundreds of players giving up active cricket who have done some umpiring and, wherever possible, I hope all will encourage or induce them to take up officiating more regularly and to join our Association.

I am pleased to advise you of an important new advance. Every paid-up member of our Association is now fully insured against personal injury on the field and while travelling to matches (but excluding travel by motor-cycle). The benefits are generous and the cost to the member is nil. The annual subscription covers the premium. I am sure that all will agree that this is an excellent free service to members. It is also an added incentive for new members which I hope you will make use of as a selling point. Furthermore, it is an encouragement to members to pay their subscriptions promptly between 1 April and 1 May. Only fully paid-up members can qualify for benefit. This scheme replaces the old type of insurance cover for which members formerly paid their premiums separately over and above their annual subscription."

Another historical 'first' also appeared in Issue No. 40 of "How's That?" under the heading "Lady Umpire":

"Miss S. M. Swinburne of Winchmore Hill is our second lady Full member. Congratulations go to her, particularly, as we understand she is to officiate in at least one of the Tests for the Women's Cricket Association Tour during the forthcoming season."

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

Opening the 11th Annual General Meeting on Saturday 21 March 1964, Chairman, John Stewart, voiced special welcome to the President, Mr, G.O. Allen, in his first year as President of the MCC and to Mr. Frank Dolman, MBE, not only as a Full Member of ACU in own right, but also currently President of the Club Cricket Conference. In thanking all Association Officers on behalf of the membership for their inspiring work over the past year, in celebration of his Presidency of the MCC, Mr. Allen presented the Association with a block and ivory-headed gavel to facilitate the conduct of future Association meetings.

It was at this meeting that Mr. Eric Holmes of Chadderton, Oldham, was one of the four General Councillors to be elected to represent Fully Qualified Members. Apart from the personal element involved with any nomination, the election of industrious Eric, who as Secretary to the Northern Branch, had done much pioneering work for the Association based upon Manchester, did much to allay the developing but unfounded undercurrent from some provincial quarters that numbers of Association representatives with a southern bias were top heavy in its administration.

In presenting his annual review of the Association's fortunes, the General Secretary, Tom Smith, said he was again pleased to report the formation of new local organisations and that an additional number of these had applied for and, been welcomed as affiliations to the parent organisation. These had included:

- The Army ACU
- The Buckinghamshire ACU
- The Central Surrey Society of Umpires
- The Devonshire ACU
- The Hertfordshire CUA
- The Middlesex Grammar School Cricket Association
- The Sheffield and District ACU
- The South West Lancashire Umpires Association
- The Worthing & District Panel of Umpires.

From correspondence conducted with them in facilitating their formation, all appeared to have energetic and enthusiastic secretaries.

Referring to the past year's programme of "Open" Meetings arranged by Headquarters, the now traditional Club Representatives Meeting in September, was one that the General Secretary, personally, found particularly enjoyable. The evening included a resume of the past season's problems, worries and joys and there was always plenty of interesting discussion from which something could be learnt. He said:

"I believe implicitly that discussion of the problems and intricacies of Cricket Law and umpiring is of vital importance to all umpires. By storing up the kind of knowledge that can only come from the ebb and flow of discussion, the umpire can produce a decision required from an instant field incident. The incident may result from action that rarely happens. But rarely or not, there is no time to turn up the Law Books. All eyes are on the umpire. He must produce the answer. Here is the test, and only the umpire who has the knowledge and experience can avoid the terrible predicament of not knowing the answer. Hesitation and dither is a sure way of losing the confidence of players. As far as 1963 Club Cricket is concerned, members reported two most interesting points:

- Continued confusion amongst players with the experimental notes to the Laws being used in First-Class Cricket only.
- An increase in bowlers running on to the pitch and causing damage."

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

Tom Smith continued:

“A number of experiments are being conducted in First-Class Cricket and, as I have often said journalists and cricket commentators cause confusion by referring to these as “new Laws”. Either from ignorance or carelessness, comments are made in public which lead to considerable bewilderment amongst players spectators and officials alike.

I have taken this up with Brian Johnston and others who have promised to explain and clarify where possible. In the meantime, it is hoped that all umpires will familiarise themselves with the experiments and carry out the necessary publicity. We shall be dealing with this problem actively from time to time.

The second point of most concern this year – bowlers causing pitch damage – is not new. It is, however, unquestionably on the increase and must be stamped out. Law 46, Note 4 (v), clearly emphasises the duty of the umpire to intervene and prevent players from causing damage to the pitch – the plural meaning bowlers, batsmen and fielders. Batsmen and fielders can be spoken to in a quiet way and because they are usually unaware of their sins, there is little difficulty in this. With bowlers, the curved run-up, with two or three strides down the pitch before running off is becoming fashionable and must be stopped without delay. Damage to the pitch is unfair play. It also causes bad feeling with the opposition, besides being a serious inconvenience to the bowler’s own side. There are no thanks to a bowler who makes a patch for the bowlers of the other side to exploit.

Umpires should caution the bowlers, using a quiet firm manner, avoiding bad feeling; pointing out that it may be impossible to give affirmative LBW decisions if the bowler is impeding the umpire’s line of sight down the pitch, apart from the damage caused by being detrimental to both sides. If the bowler persists – cannot or will not – do anything about it, then the Captain must be requested to take action and this in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, will suffice. Further action under Law 46 will hardly ever be necessary.”

At this AGM, the newly elected Secretary of the Training Committee, Mr. F.(Fred) R. Parker gave his first report as follows:

“With training courses already in hand and others for which I am making confirmation of dates, the next winter programme will make constant calls on our lecturers and their journeys will be many and varied. This year, we have assisted the Buckinghamshire ACU by providing speakers at two of their monthly meetings and over the next four months will be giving further talks to that very enthusiastic body.

At the present time, a six week’s course is being given to the Surrey Women’s Cricket Association, at which 36 Ladies are attending – a number generally in excess of those who come to the “Three Nuns” for our own domestic training classes.

On 5 November, we commenced a series of six talks to the Maidstone Branch of the Association of Kent Cricket Clubs, thus continuing the service we have given to these very good friends over a period of several years. Currently, we are conducting our own training classes at “The Three Nuns”, Aldgate. The first started on November 6th at 7.30pm and will continue thereafter every Wednesday until 11 December. The attendance has been good but I welcome more applications from members and non-members, and, for that matter, their friends, even though they may have no immediate intention to take up umpiring. (A short review of the previous week’s talk will take place before each new

THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 8

lecture.) Full members should bear in mind that the course is not entirely for 'beginners' and they would be welcomed to attend for a "refresher".

During November and December, we shall be running a course for the benefit of the newly-formed Hertfordshire Society of Cricket Umpires. Negotiations are also currently in hand with the Sports Organiser for Swindon Education Committee for a training course in that area and also a condensed two-day course to Aldershot Services Cricket Umpires Association."

Not to be outdone by the encouraging reports of Association activity organised by Headquarters, Mr. Eric Holmes, advised that Northern Branch had also held a series of meetings at the Douglas Hotel, Manchester over successive months from September to April inclusive, which had included comprehensive understanding of the Laws.

The General Secretary advised that during the year the Association had maintained its close liaison and co-operation with all cricketing organisations. Mr. S.C. (Billy) Griffith, Secretary to the MCC and his Assistant, Mr. Donald Carr, had, as usual, given every possible help and encouragement to the work of the Association. Sincere thanks were due to Mr. Griffith particularly, who so kindly and generously made available to the Association the use of Lord's as venue for the recent potential Instructors course.

© Leslie Cheeseman