

CRICKETING NEWS

Number 1

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The Friends of Grace Road

During the Spring of 1970, a few enthusiasts approached Mr Turner, our Secretary/Manager and suggested that there must be members who would be able and willing to undertake voluntary work on the ground. Within a few weeks they received "instructions" to report to the ground, on a Saturday morning and found that white paint and brushes had been provided and about 20 odd bods set about painting the picket fence and other parts of the ground.

As a result of this tentative beginning the idea of forming a group who could take part in fund raising activities and provide some social events during the long winters was born.

In October, 1970, Mr Turner, and Mr L Humphries, Chairman of the Welfare Committee met the friends in the Club room of the Old Cricket Ground Hotel and our terms of reference were discussed and agreed upon.

We decided that our fund raising activities should not clash with those so capably undertaken by the Clubs' own Promotion staff. In turn the Club agreed that any money raised and contributed would go towards improving the amenities on the ground - The Friends of Grace Road were launched.

Within a few weeks a rummage sale had been organised and £60 was raised.

During the summer of 1971 a winter programme of events were arranged and from a Christmas Fair, film shows, etc., we were able to present to the Club £400 which purchased about 10 teak seats for the members' enclosure.

In 1972 we undertook the running of bus trips to away matches and in July of that year

helped to transport over 500 supporters to see our team become the first winners of the Benson and Hedges Cup. Our travelling supporters have seen some remarkable wins to mention Taunton, Canterbury, Headingley only whets the appetite for more.

In the ensuing years we have presented the Club with over £3000, this has gone to paying for the improved Public Address System, more seats in the enclosure, and the covering for the seats on the Milligan Road site (alas to disappear into Milligan Road itself in last winter's gale).

This last summer we established the basis for a sales organisation. We have been offered a room in the bottom of the 'Meet' which will in future become "The Shop", and we hope to offer a wide range of magazines, books, souvenirs, and cricketama. This is in addition to our office near the main score board at which coach bookings will be taken.

Our winter programme of coffee mornings, film shows, dances, fashion shows, and rummage sales, etc., have enabled our members and friends to meet socially, and we are open to new ideas, so that our activities can be widened.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Turner and the Committee of the County Club for the help and encouragement during the past years. In addition to thank our many "friends", both members and non members for their support, and to appeal to anyone who is interested in the welfare of the Club and our efforts to assist them, to contact us - "The Friends of Grace Road".

L WALLACE - CHAIRMAN

The Championship Summer

by Martin Johnson

THE CRICKET CORRESPONDENT OF THE LEICESTER MERCURY

It was perhaps fitting that Leicestershire had to wait until the last match of the season at Chesterfield to clinch the county championship for the first time in their 96 year old history.

Not only did it preserve their reputation for being a team constantly involved in the kind of finishes that torment even their more nerveless supporters, but also it was a kind of poetic justice for the way they'd earlier been robbed

of 10 points by Derbyshire at Grace Road. Lost points that at one awful stage looked as though they might have cost them the title.

As it turned out they could have picked up a points haul of exactly nil in the final match, like true champions, they went out with another triumphant victory - their 12th all told nearly all of which seem to have been completed in gathering gloom and with one eye on the clock.

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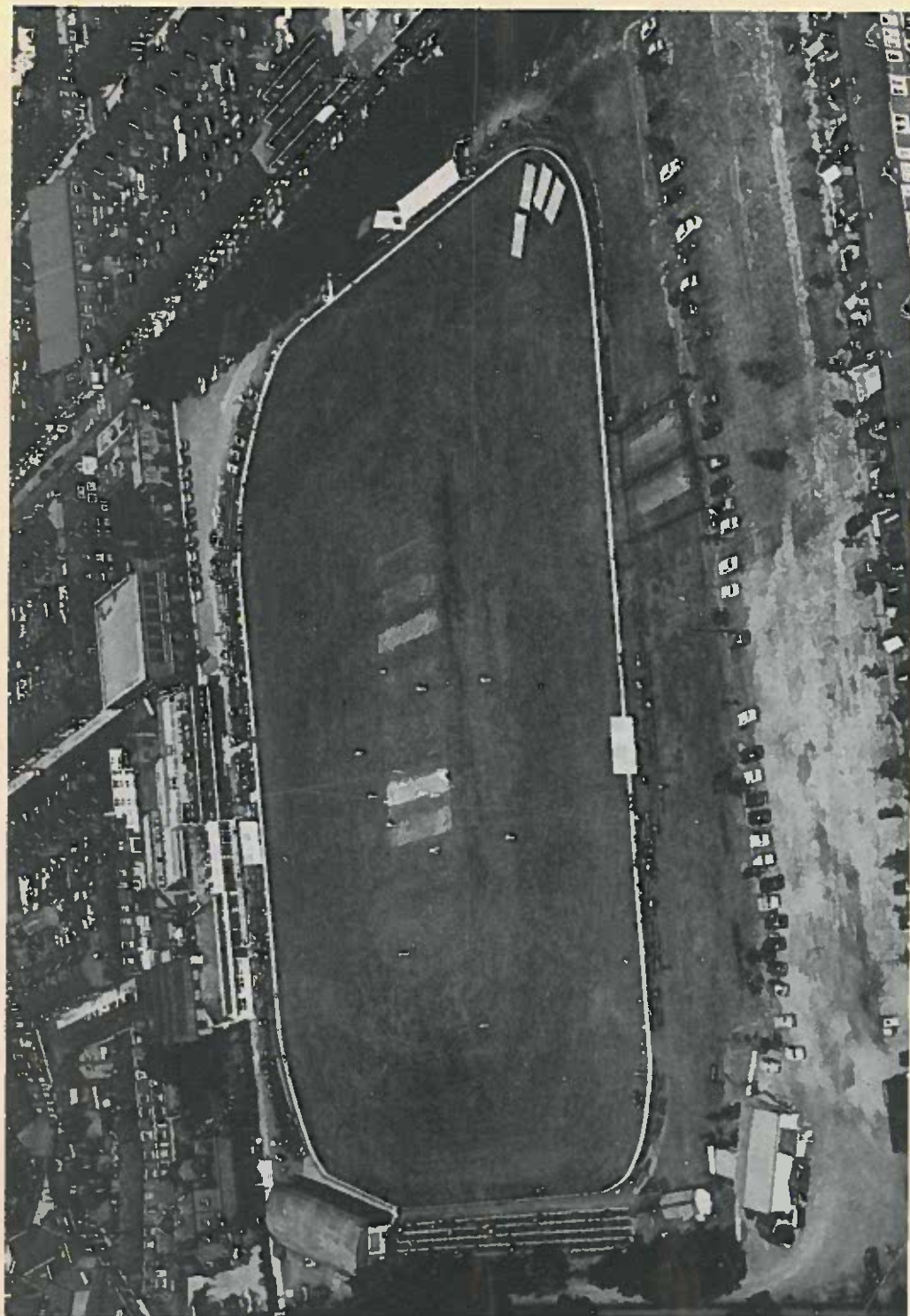
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Any one who still doubts the entertainment value of championship cricket, and heaven pray we don't get four-day games next year, should have followed Leicestershire this year. For sheer value for money it's been like picking up a Rembrandt for a couple of bob.

Individual performances naturally stand out in the memory - not only from Leicestershire players - and if I was hard pressed to name the best, it would have to be a tie between Tolchard's epic hundred at Coventry and that magnificent match winning stand between McVicker and McKenzie at Tunbridge Wells.

In many ways, McVicker has been the man of the season. His bowling has been an absolute revelation (I think he ought to get the new ball next year) and he must be the best number nine batsman in the Country.

Illingworth's leadership has, of course, been an inspiration but if one examined the record

book closely it becomes clear that the basis for success has been tremendous all-round team work. The captain himself has always stressed that point.

Leicestershire had already proved themselves one of the country's top one-day sides before the season started, and underlined the point with victory in the Benson and Hedges Final.

But the championship, as is the First Division in soccer, is the ultimate test of a team's all round ability - and Leicestershire, in the end proved themselves the best.

I think, too, that 1975 buried the myth of Grace Road "dust track" wickets. Most took spin on the last day, as one would hope and expect, but their batting quality was best proved by the fact that Leicestershire took less bowling points than any other side in the country.

The Champions with the "League of Counties" Look

By John Woodcock

CRICKET CORRESPONDENT OF THE TIMES

Chesterfield, Monday, September 16th 1975

Leicestershire are County Champions for the first time since they joined the happy throng in 1895. The four bonus bowling points which they took off Derbyshire yesterday, added to Lancashire's failure to take more than two off Sussex, are sufficient to give Leicestershire the title.

They deserve their success. In a match played to the death on a good, fast pitch, I am not sure that I would back them to beat Lancashire and Hampshire, or Kent for that matter. But they have taken their chances in the past few weeks, unlike Hampshire, and they have a good balance. Best of all, they encourage spin, yesterday, for example, Illingworth had used four slow bowlers by lunchtime.

With four wickets apiece, Illingworth and McVicker saw to it that Leicestershire were not left short of points. There had been no weekend rain in Chesterfield, or none to speak of. The pitch, though, being of uneven bounce, gave the bowlers an advantage. Those who did most to hold Leicestershire up were Bolus, Sharpe, Hill and John Ward. The first two had added 70 for the first wicket, when Sharpe was well caught at second slip, the last two 51 for the fourth, when Illingworth bowled Ward,

Hill and Ward thwarted Hampshire last Friday and they played well again now.

Leicestershire had collected their first bonus point when Harvey-Walker was caught off Illingworth on the midwicket boundary, which he had just previously cleared. They got their second when Illingworth had Swarbrook leg-before, the third when Miller hooked McKenzie to Balderstone standing by the square leg umpire, and the fourth when Alan Ward was leg-before to McVicker. It hardly mattered after that that Taylor and Hendrick added 30 for Derbyshire's last wicket, or that Leicestershire, when they went in again, lost early wickets.

Soon after tea, with the news that Lancashire had had a bad afternoon, Leicestershire knew they were champions. It was fitting that Illingworth should have had so much to do with Leicestershire being richer by £3,000 at the end of the day than when it began. He had worked hard in his time at improving the County Cricketer's lot.

It was right that McKenzie, in his last first-class match, should take a wicket, and convenient for Balderstone, or at any rate for Doncaster Rovers, that because Leicestershire were home and dry he was allowed to chase up the motorway to Doncaster to play in a fourth

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division match with an evening kick-off. Many good games players have divided their time between football and cricket, whether one has played in the county championship and the Football League on the same day before I rather doubt, certainly not when he has been on the cricket field for all but eight playing minutes of a six-hour day.

There will be some red faces in Yorkshire this morning when they read of Leicestershire's triumph. Since they let Illingworth go he has won many honours as a captain, having led England to victory in Australia and Leicestershire to the John Player League, the Benson & Hedges (twice) and now the Championship. As an all-round cricketer, Illingworth has retained his form wonderfully well; as a tactician, he is undeniably astute. He has kept himself fit, too, for a man of 43; as fit, anyway, as a troublesome back will allow.

The Leicestershire side at Chesterfield, which they would probably consider to be their best for three-day matches, consists of three Yorkshiremen (Birkenshaw and Balderstone are the other two) two Lancastrians, two Devonians, an Australian, a Rhodesian and two from the minor counties, Steele from Staffordshire and Dudleston from Cheshire. I doubt whether the championship has been won before by a county without a native to their name, though in recent years it has been common enough to have only two or three. It is no coincidence, either that it has been won for the third year in succession by a

side untroubled by Test calls, Hampshire and Worcestershire having this same advantage as Leicestershire.

Leicestershire's best placings until this year have been equal second in 1967, when Tony Lock was their captain, and third in 1953 under C H Palmer. In 1967 of their regular side Hallam and Spencer were born in the county. Birkenshaw, Roger Tolchard and Dudleston survive from then. Going back to 1953, five who played more often than not were Leicestershire born Tomkin, Gerry Lester, Munden, Spencer and Hallam.

Three cricketers, while playing for Leicestershire, have been chosen by Wisden as one of the five cricketers of the year - A E Knight (1904) George Geary (1927) and Ewart Astill (1933) E W Dawson had Leicestershire and England after his name; so more recently, have Illingworth, Birkenshaw and Lock.

My own early memories of Leicestershire are of L G Berry getting any number of runs for them, rather in the same way as John Langridge did for Sussex, and later of Jack Walsh, from Sydney, bamboozling all but the best "readers" of the googly and chinaman with his prodigious left-arm spin. Now, under Raymond Illingworth, and with a driving force as secretary in Michael Turner, they have come to the top, leaving only Essex, Northamptonshire, Somerset and Sussex still with the championship to win.

When Action Speaks Louder Than Words

By Mike Stevenson

CRICKET CORRESPONDENT OF THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

Even though at 34 limbs may not be as supple nor enthusiasms as fierce, Graham McKenzie, one of the half dozen most distinguished post-war fast bowlers, is still an inspiration to the connoisseur.

The announcement of his retirement, along with that of Mick Norman (in his prime one of the finest cover points in the country and an excellent batsman) will recall the long years of dedicated service that these two have given as well as the impressive resurgence of Leicestershire cricket.

Any student of the game (apart from Graham's 246 Test victims for Australia) will

confirm that he was, and is, the possessor of one of the most perfect actions that sheer athleticism and superb physique can combine to produce.

Left shoulder points marginally right of the batsman prior to delivery after the menacing acceleration of the loping, lubricated run-up. The shoulder action, at delivery, is such that the left foot is also pointing almost to fine leg yet the breakaway after the ball has gone is sufficiently sharp to carry him in the direction of cover point.

Talking to him now, one gets the firm impression of a gentle Australian in whom there

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is no guile, despite his obvious qualities as a competitor. Though loyal to his compatriots it is clear that he is not happy about the intensification of verbal and psychological gamesmanship and invective that seems to be part of Test Cricket today.

Discipline and manners seem to be dirty words in some quarters these days, but McKenzie always played as if he possessed and respected both.

The fact that Mick Norman's service to his second county, Leicestershire, has been, since 1969, in the one-day game should not obscure the sterling qualities of a career that began in 1952 when he made his debut, for Northants against the Indians, earning a regular place around the close of the 'fifties and thereafter scoring over 1,800 runs in successive seasons between 1960 and 1964.

It was in the early Sixties that Jack Fingleton not only described him as the best cover point that he had seen in England, but also tipped him for selection for the impending Australian tour, but top honours and the glory that goes with them were not for Norman.

By 1965, released by Northants, he had joined his present county where he is widely

regarded as one of the best pacers of an innings, as a popular and unselfish team man and consequently a considerable contributor to the happy dressing room atmosphere that prevails under Ray Illingworth.

An example of the way Norman operates was the record third wicket Benson & Hedges stand of 227 against Warwickshire in 1972, when Brian Davidson's explosive 158 in 106 minutes was largely possible through the ability of Norman to provide him with the lion's share of the bowling by superb unselfish running between wickets.

Certainly, he did as much as any to help Leicester to their victory in the John Player League last year.

This has been Norman's benefit year, but those who might suspect that he is quitting rather than retiring at the intelligent time with the requirements of his own county and career as a school master in mind simply do not know the man.

Both he and Graham McKenzie have been a credit to the game to which they have given so many years fine service. They will be greatly missed.

QUIZ -

- 1 A new Umpire. Could be a character out of Shakespeare
- 2 Who topped the Pakistan batting average in the English tour 1974
- 3 What 2 players are current New Zealand test players and play for Worcester
- 4 2 Australian test players have played in recent years for Somerset
- 5 Who was bottom of the John Player League in 1974
- 6 Who took 4 wickets in 4 balls in a John Player League Match
- 7 Which Leicestershire Player has done the hat-trick in a John Player Match
- 8 Who holds the 7th wicket partnership record in a John Player League Match
- 9 Which County won the 2nd XI championship in 1974
- 10 Which Counties had the lowest number of wins in 1974 championship
- 11 2 test players have joined Derbyshire this season
- 12 How many test players are on the staff of Warwickshire
- 13 What is the highest innings total in first-class cricket
- 14 Prior to 1975, what was Chris Balderstone's batting average
- 15 What is the name of Glamorgans new fast bowler
- 16 1937 was a record year for a Leicestershire batsman
- 17 M Hallam and T Spencer hold what record wicket stand
- 18 Born in Lancashire, played for Lincolnshire now Leicestershire
- 19 Has played for Torquay Utd and Exeter City
- 20 Who succeeded Les Ames as Kent's Secretary

The answers to the above can be found in the 1975 edition of the Playfair Cricket Annual

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A Tale of Two Captains

by M E J C Norman

When I was invited to leave Northants in 1965 and to join Leicester the following season it would be no exaggeration to say that I was piqued and yet apprehensive at the same time. The pique I might say came about through the timing of my demise at Northampton. The team was on the way up. I imagined a benefit was in the offering and any future career I might have, seemed tied up in Northampton. The fear was due to the fact that Leicester had been for many seasons (at least in the eyes of opponents) a team which others enjoyed playing against - four of my own centuries were made against Leicester.

The one difference it seemed was that one Graham Anthony Richard Lock had taken on the job of injecting life, into the weary fox.

It was clear after early season training that 1966 was bound to be different. The team was pushed through the most rigorous training stint ever experienced. The emphasis was on fielding and by the end of 3 weeks Lockie had succeeded in injecting pride into this aspect of our performance. Teams fielded may be better than the Leicester of 1966 but none with more enthusiasm.

In 1966 Leicester was bumped up the table six places under Lockie's inspired leadership - no bowler ever looked as hostile as he, no batsman felt safe with that menacing figure lurking in the leg trap. Difficult catches were made to look easy - and easy catches made to look difficult, but his adage was 'every bloody catch as to be copped'. My own personal memory in this regard was during a match we played against Derbyshire. A catch went up and was promptly dropped by me, Lockie came over put his arm round my shoulder and walked all the way back with me to my position, at the end of the over, I met someone later who said 'what a great gesture that was by Lockie, consoling you the way he did'. What do you mean consoling me? I asked, he blinded the way no one has ever blinded at me before. I was upset at the time but as you came to know the man you realised that it was merely part of an extremely effervescent character.

In 1967 Leicester rose to joint second in the table and was robbed of the championship by a wash out at Hastings on the final day. It would have been a fitting end to a great career in English cricket could Lockie have pulled it off. For twenty years he had been the games greatest showman, he encouraged and

galvanised his colleagues, he overpowered his opponents with a mixture of skill and colourful language, when he left the arena I felt that Leicestershire's chance of the championship had vanished for good and there were those around that harboured like thoughts, I'm sure.

Arrival of Illingworth

Leicestershire's demise of 1968 was only partially interrupted by the arrival of Ray Illingworth in 1969. In that season the side floundered - the last six but although Illy was off playing in the tests against West Indies there were signs that revival was again on the way. A sense of purpose had returned to the dressingroom and if the atmosphere was not as heady as under Tony Lock this was perhaps due to the differences in temperament of the two players. Whereas Lockie was volatile and sometimes moody, Illy retained a dignified calm seemingly in the face of any crisis. His phlegmatic exterior belied hidden fires. When moved to sharp comment owing to a lapse in the side his tongue could be as sharp as any. I well remember dropping an important catch against Somerset one day at Grace Road and his judgement was swift and straight to the point 'get your bloody hair cut' I would have taken it as a compliment from some captains - but one thing Ray never did joke about and that was his cricket.

As a character he was complimentary to Lockie, whereas Lockie would engage in kissing tactics as an expression of appreciation. Ray rarely offered more than a solitary nod of the head. Not unnaturally he studied his own performance as artificially as did those around him, his abiding principle (and this he shared with Lockie and I suspect all great captains) was 'when you think you've given 100% look again you'll find another 5% stowed somewhere. He gave no quarter and expected none. To bat against him was an experience I often wished I'd missed. The tempting delivery was not an offer, the cheap run searched for in vain, in short his philosophy was never to give a thing.

Both Lockie and he played very shrewdly, they weighed the odds before committing themselves, and you could be sure that their chance of success was very high if they did choose to gamble.

I often think as captains and as men they shared one massive virtue - they were the

continued at bottom of next page

A Summer with the Likely Lads

By S Chamberlain

My official scoring duties commenced at Lutterworth at the beginning of June. When I sat in the scorer's box, wearing scarf, overcoat and gloves watching it snow and my final chore was at Edgbaston at the end of August, in a temperature of over 80.

First of all, I must say what a fine bunch of lads, these young cricketers are, both on and off the field. And should give the club fine service in the years to come and how well they have been skipped by that great young veteran, Terry Spencer.

For any readers who have not kept up with results during the season, here are the details: 2nd XI CHAMPIONSHIP

P14 W6 D8 L0 162 pts 11.57 av.
UNDER 25 COMP. P8 W7 L1

It is difficult to pick out the highlights of the season, but first of all I must mention two drawn games - saved by rearguard actions.

v MIDDLESEX AT LUTTERWORTH

W Daniel, the very fast West Indian bowler playing for Middlesex had taken 8 for 48 in the first innings and 4 in the second and the 8th wicket fell in the 12th over of the final 20. N Cook and T Stretton (21 no) batted out time.

v LANCASHIRE AT BLACKBURN

This time the 8th wicket fell in the 7th over of the last 20 and again Terry Stretton (26 no) and Mick Norman (53 no) saved the day.

Now the two most exciting wins

v WORCESTER AT COLWALL

This match was played in the most delightful surroundings, right at the top of the Malvern Hills, with the constant threat of

thunderstorms which could have ended the match any time during the second day.

Worcester declared at tea time on the second day setting Leicestershire to get 206 to win in 80 minutes plus the 20 overs. When the latter was started, the score was 62-1 with J Tolchard and David Humphries at the wicket. Then the onslaught started and the second wicket fell in the 13th over, Humphries was bowled for a magnificent 116 and the total 185. Two further wickets were lost in the same over. Then the rain commenced heavily, however, as the players reached the pavilion, it fortunately stopped and the runs were finally knocked off in the 17th over with J Tolchard 77 not out.

v NORTHAMPTON AT NORTHAMPTON

Northants scored 173 and Leicester were 112-8 in the first innings then M Schepens (50 no) and P Booth (44 no) took the score to 202 for 8, gaining 4 extra bonus points. Leicester were set to score 216 to win in 85 minutes and 20 overs. This time a magnificent opening partnership between Nigel Briers (33) and Dave Gower (88) put on 121 in 70 minutes and the match was won off the first ball of the last over.

And now the piece de resistance of the whole season.

UNDER 25 FINAL v MIDDLESEX AT EDGBASTON

Middlesex had won the title in the 3 previous seasons that the competition had been organised.

Good bowling and keen fielding kept the Middlesex score to 168. T Spencer 4-32.

In the Leicestershire innings, constant batting from D Gower (34) M Schepens (22) D Humphries (42) and Paddy Clift (50) made it look all too easy. However, Patel caused a little flutter by taking 3 wickets for 2 runs in 2 overs. But Leicestershire were finally home and dry by four wickets.

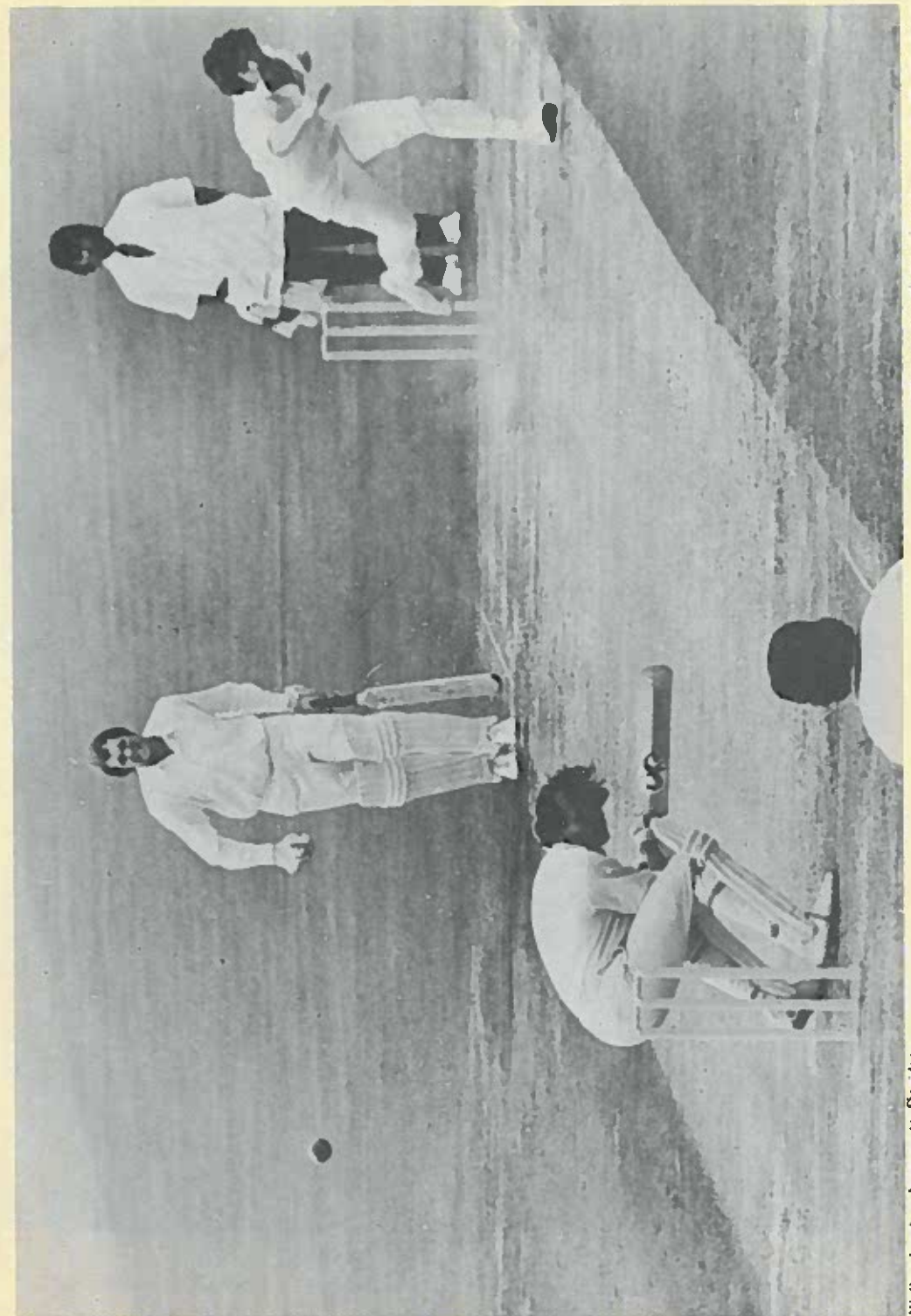
Champagne in the dressing room with a highly delighted Mike Turner - who also conveyed the news of Leicestershire's great victory at Trent Bridge.

Finally, I must mention the party at the end of the season at "The Cricketers" so kindly given by Norman and Hazel. The end to a wonderful season many happy memories and the making of lots of new friends.

TALE OF TWO CAPTAINS - continued

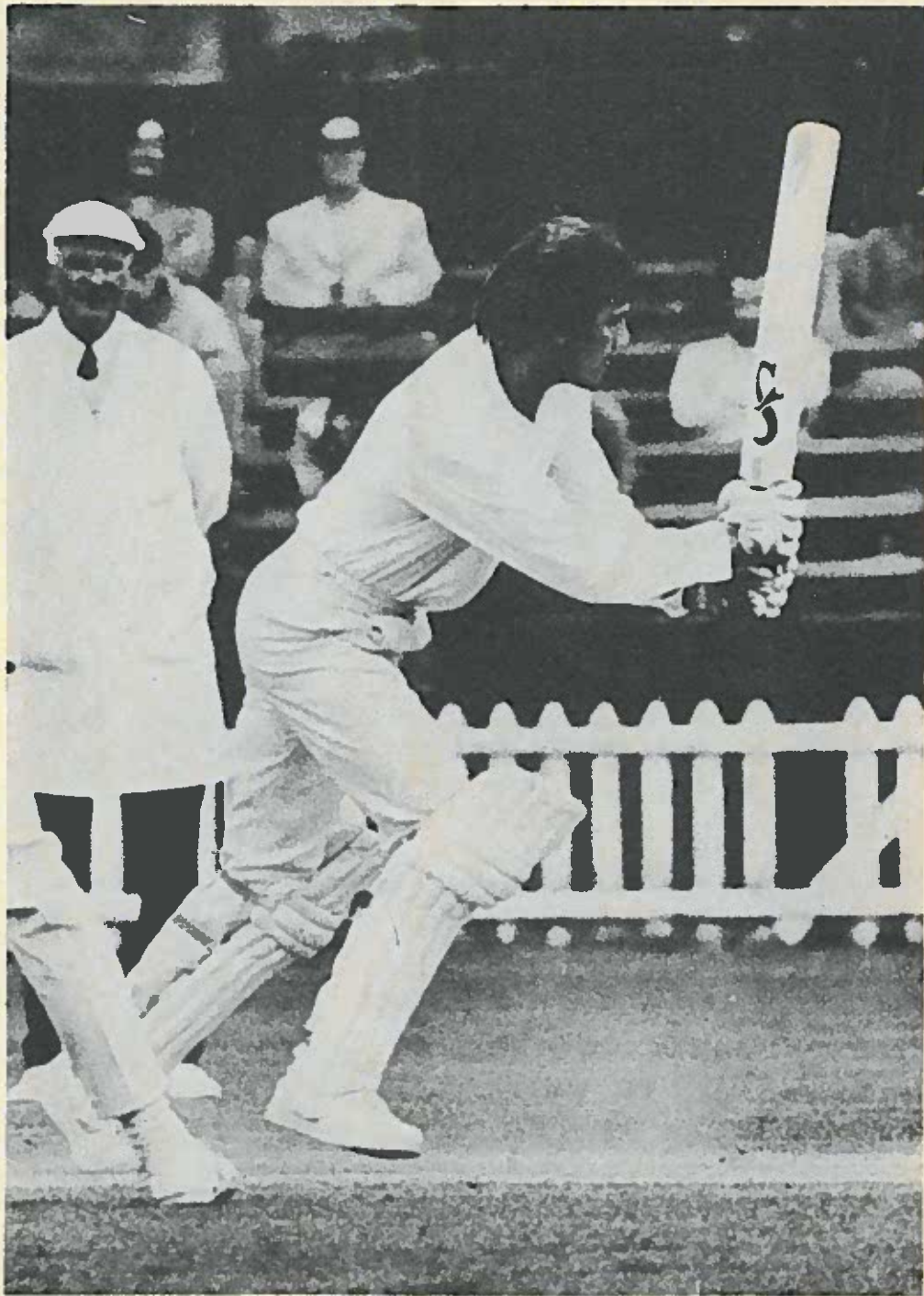
possessors of a whole lot of common sense. As Lily has so often remarked 'you don't need a university degree to get on in life just a lot of common sense.' It is this virtue above all else I feel sure that has enabled him to achieve so much for Leicestershire and England when most people had written him off as just another Yorkshire exile.

For my own part I must say that it has been a great privilege to have played under them both, my outlook and knowledge of the game has broadened as a result, but more important the experience has enhanced my enjoyment and to them both I am sincerely grateful.



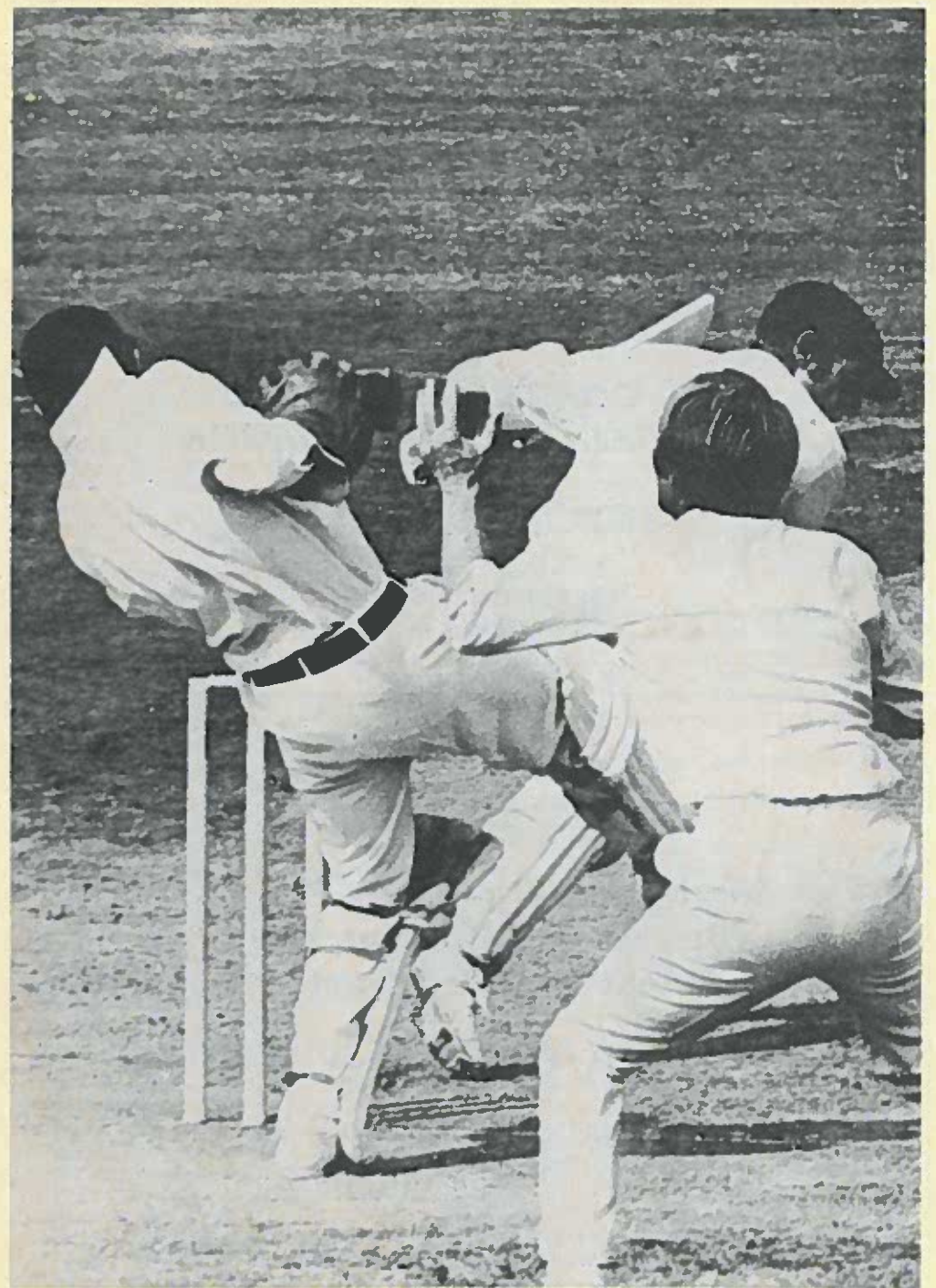
Walker bowls a bumper to Davidson

Photographs: By kind permission of Neville Chadwick



Roger Tolchard - the batsman

Photographs: By kind permission of Neville Chadwick



Roger Tolchard - the wicketkeeper

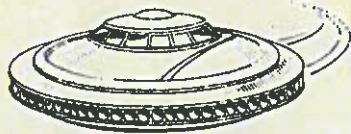
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WHAT A GAY DAY!

By Chris Balderstone

LEICESTER v DERBYSHIRE at Chesterfield 11.30 am - 6.30 pm

DONCASTER ROVERS v BRENTFORD at Doncaster 7.30 pm - 9.10 pm
SEPTEMBER 15th 1975

Having just joined the Rover's and with the new season already under way, I wanted to "get into" football as soon as possible. (I'd already played two games in the blank cricket week before).

But obviously I wanted cricket to take priority, because winning the County Championship depended on this final game of the season.

Ray Illingworth had been good enough to say if we clinched the title as expected, on this the second of the three day game, I could play soccer at night. (possibility of injury would'nt be as important for the last day).

The mad idea formed in my mind, that it might just be possible to play in both games, because of the million to one chance geographically, of the two fixtures, being only twenty odd miles apart. (a fast car, two quick changes inside an hour, should be no problem? one has also to be a supreme optimist) plus the fact Leicester were odds on favourites to win the title easily.

The big day arrived and I assessed it to myself thus, we'll be in the field until approx. mid-afternoon, (take it as steady as possible). We'll have gained maximum bowling points? We'll hear on the radio the other teams involved in vital games are not doing well? We'll know then we've won the Championship? Then in our second innings, I can ask to drop down the batting order and rest for soccer tonight?

In practice things never work out as easily as that. During the morning session we didn't get the wickets we were hoping for, I had to bowl nine overs, and we heard the three other teams were getting their expected points. At lunch I rang Rovers manager Stan Anderson, saying I didn't think it looked on, he said, he'd still come, ready to drive me if the situation changed favourably.

Things went better after lunch, we bowled Derby out, getting as many points as we possibly could, but one of the other teams were

still doing well enough, to make our match depend on our winning the game on the third day, snookering my soccer.

So I had to bat in my usual No 3 position and I was walking to the wicket with Stan Anderson looking on, in the second over.

Many complicated thoughts passed through my mind during the next half-hour.

1 These bowlers Ward and Hendrick are bowling bloody quick on a lively pitch.

2 Hope I don't get hit anywhere, especially on my thighs, or I won't be able to play football, Anyway?

3 Wickets are falling at the other end.

4 Wish they would signal situation of the other games, in our favour, then it wouldn't matter if I get out, as seems likely at the moment, and I could get my feet up.

5 We're in no position yet, to even win the game tomorrow.

6 Get you're head down son, and fight em off.

7 Don't think about about bloody soccer now.

After what seemed like ages - a big cheer went up from our dressing room, I knew the Championship was ours. (Lancashire had failed to get their maximum bonus points).

8 Great, What a relief.

9 Tremendous achievement for us (same as winning First Division).

10 I can play at Doncaster tonight now.

11 You're still batting son, and starting to enjoy it now.

12 Two hours to go yet to 6.30 finish.

13 Stan's wanting you to get out.

I managed to stay batting till end of play, dashed to the waiting car, changed en-route, reaching Doncaster twenty minutes before kick-off, having attuned my mind, and looking forward to playing football.

To cut a long story short, we drew an enjoyable match 1-1 didn't sleep much that night reliving all the days events in my mind, and anticipating tomorrows.



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Famous Leicestershire Cricketers

No 1 - W E Astill by E E Snow

HONORARY CURATOR TO THE LEICESTERSHIRE CCC

William Ewart (named after Gladstone) Astill was, without doubt, the best Leicestershire born all rounder who has played for the County and probably the best English all rounder who never played against Australia, although he played against South Africa and West Indies as well as touring with MCC in India, Sir Julien Cahn's XI in Jamaica, and Lord Tennyson's team in West Indies.

He was the eldest of twelve children of Ezre Astill - himself a good club player who captained the Temperance Club, and young Ewart joined this club at an early age. Born at Ratby on March 18th, 1888 - for some unknown reason his age was always stated wrongly in Wisden and other reference books (but has since been corrected). A nephew of that fine fast bowler, Tom Jayes, Astill made his debut for Leicestershire in 1906 at the age of 18 and soon made a reputation as a bowler. Eventually his batting developed and he performed the double nine times, a feat only exceeded by Rhodes, Hirst and Jupp. His totals in first-class cricket were 22,726 runs average 22.54 with 15 centuries and 2,431 wickets average 23.76.

Appointed captain of Leicestershire in 1935 - the first professional leader of the County - this position held no terrors for such a polished and capable man and the side won eleven games finishing sixth in the Table. He played regularly until 1937 but only made a few appearances in 1938 and 1939 when he coach-

ed the young players. Astill had a beautiful high action and he could bowl his off-spinners on any kind of pitch; if necessary the occasional "donkey drop" was produced to dislodge a stubborn batsman.

In the 1914-1918 War he gained a commission in the Machine Gun Corps; in the Second World War he was again awarded a commission. After demobilisation he became coach at Tonbridge School where he was largely responsible for the development of Colin Cowdrey and he almost succeeded in persuading Cowdrey to qualify for Leicestershire.

Apart from being an outstanding cricketer, Ewart Astill was accomplished in many directions. He was a director of the sports firm of James McRobie, and also of the family furnishing business. A bachelor - he had a fine tenor voice and was an excellent pianist (his favourite song was "I'm tickled to death I'm single). With his handsome, sunburnt face he was always in much demand and the centre of attraction in any company. But whatever he tried he excelled in; Amateur Billiard Champion of Leicestershire he was one of the best "tricksters" on the billiard table in the Midlands.

He had fought for years against asthma and this eventually forced him to give up his coaching at Tonbridge in 1946, but he died from cancer on February 10th, 1948. Thus ended the life of the elder of the most famous Leicestershire born partnership of all time - Ewart Astill and George Geary.

The Classics and Cricket

by Peter Rochford

Formerly of Gloucestershire — now First-Class Umpire

Cricket writers often turn to the classical quotation to analogise, and they could do worse than that! Truly some of the poetic masters' quotations might imply a cricketing background — especially with the help of paraphrasing.

Take Wordsworth who said, "Milton thou should'st be living (playing) at this hour". Few in Gloucestershire would disagree there.

Shelley wrote of the Skylark "what thou art

we know not". Jeff Thompson and Lilee raised similar sentiments in two Test series.

Younger players might look to David Steel and heed the words of Byron who, in an ode to Napoleon, said "Thanks for that lesson it will teach."

Virgil too may have the answer to Australian abilities. It was he who said "They can because they believe they can".

Kipling on the other hand had England in

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mind in writing "We have forty million reasons for failure but not a single excuse". He wrote also of "Little tin Gods", but at least the summer game can never be so accused.

Oscar Wilde, perhaps observing some in-cautions running between the wickets, commented "To lose one parent (partner) may be regarded as a misfortune. To lose both looks like carelessness".

Wilde might also have been an observer at the closing stages of a John Player match when he said "A voice behind me whispered low 'that fellows got to swing.'" I doubt, however, the comment would be 'whispered' at Grace Road!

We have seen changes in England's teams and captains: and who would argue with Cicero who said "The causes of events are

ever more interesting than the events themselves".

Milton — the poet not the cricketer — wrote of "Chaos umpire sits, and by decision more embroils the fray". Well, many players will subscribe to that view!

Even 'Bill of Stratford' had two characters, Osric and Laertes cast as batsman and umpire. "A hit, a very palpable hit" said Osric. "A touch, a touch, I do confess" spake the other.

And in this year of Ilingworth and Leicestershire let us close with Bryon and Tennyson.

Byron's words "There was a day — there was an hour" is sufficient in itself, and Tennyson's "For men may come and men may go but I go on forever", a captain's coat of arms.

Broadcasting from Grace Road

By Terry Harris

Two days before I made my Home Service debut as a cricket commentator, from the BBC studio in Welford Road, I received a lengthy memorandum from the Corporation which ended with the words "you'll find the key under the dustbin."

Most cricket enthusiasts are convinced that any fool can be a cricket commentator — and they are right. Any fool could be a cricket commentator which is why the BBC invented the post of cricket producer. The producer's job is to make things so difficult for the commentator as to ensure that a little bit of intelligence is required after all.

On local radio we are lucky. We don't have a producer very often — or a scorer or even a seat on the great occasions when the Corporation sends from London approximately one technician for every spectator and one commentator for every player.

However, I have commentated from Lords when my producer — for reasons best known to himself — chose to spend the afternoon in Leeds whispering down the line into my headphones at regular intervals such information as "Radio Humberside have joined." I was about to whisper into microphone — "Hello Radio Humberside" — when I realised just in time

what I was about to do.

However, the man who is paid to describe cricket is fortunate indeed, particularly when he is describing Leicestershire cricket to a Leicestershire audience in the summer of 1975.

I am often asked how I recognise all the players. The answer is, of course, that I don't but obviously I know most of them and ask the visiting scorer to identify the ones I haven't seen before. And even then, it is quite possible to make mistakes when half of them are wearing sun hats.

Another piece of advice — the commentator should never try to be too technical. When you hear the players talking among themselves you realise that cricket is still basically a very simple game. Tony Lewis once told me that he could not read a bowler's hand and if a player like Brian Davidson can't spot Intikab's googly from 22 yards with a sight screen behind him I hope you'll forgive me for not reading it from the top of the pavilion seeing "as through a glass darkly" — (the windows haven't been cleaned since the box was built).

Which brings me to my final observation — it's amazing how quickly the light improves when the commentator takes his sunglasses off.

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