

Great Match: Shelf v Sandy Lane, 1989

By Dave Febrero

The legendary Mark Taylor made his Test debut for Australia while Allan Border took seven wickets for just 46 runs against the West Indies. However, for players and fans in the small village of Shelf there were more memorable cricket matches in 1989.

In that year Shelf recorded their first Waddilove Cup victory for 13 years (and their last to date) at Bradford Park Avenue against Sandy Lane - despite nearly losing the match with the last ball of the match. "It was a fantastic day to be part of Shelf CC," current club chairman Andy Dimbleby remembers. "To win in those circumstances was unbelievable."

Opener Billy Sugden hit an incredible 76 in the final and remembers the game to this day. "I'd played in two cup finals before and I wasn't overly nervous going into the game," he said. "I ended up playing my best cricket of the tournament...Rhys Burston opened with me and he made 50-odd as well." Andy adds: "I can remember Rhys missing more balls than he hit but still managing to get his half-century." Despite having John Ramsden injured while chasing a quick single, Shelf batted their way to 206-6 in 45 overs with Ian Hawksworth adding a powerful 30. "I recall missing my place in the batting order while carrying John off injured," says first-team veteran Mick Priestley.



SHELF, who won a thrilling Waddilove Trophy final by just four runs against Sandy Lane at Park Avenue. Back, from left: Andy Dimbleby, Harold Burston, Mick Priestley, John Ramsden, Andy Furness, Philip [unclear], Don [unclear]. Front: Billy Sugden, Satnam Thiara, Rhys Burston, Ian Hawksworth, Colin Boardman.

The winning Shelf side

Having started off like a runaway train, Shelf ran out of steam, with the middle-order failing to add to the fantastic opening partnership of Sugden and Burston. However, the team remained confident. "Sandy Lane were not a good team," Andy remembers. "Their bowling attack was strong but batting-wise, and as a whole, their team was average. But finals are anyone's, and the fact that this final was being played at Bradford Park Avenue made it a bit more special for both teams".

However, no-one could have predicted how close, or special, the eventual outcome was going to be. Over 400 spectators spaced out around this ex-county ground witnessed one of the most heart-stopping moments in Waddilove Cup history. "Sandy Lane had batted really well and required 12 runs off the final two balls to win it," Mick Priestley recalls. "The first ball flew miles over the boundary edge for a six. Our bowler, Satnam Thiara, like the rest of us, was really worried."

The next ball the batsman went for the exact same shot. "Everyone thought it was a six," says Andy Dimbleby. "But somehow it seemed to fade right at the last minute and drop into the outstretched hands of Rhys Burston who was fielding on the boundary edge. If he had dropped it I think it would have been a six and we would have lost the cup".

Shelf, with the aid of their captain's fingertips, won the cup by just five runs, having used just three bowlers in the final. After the game the real celebrations began! "Billy and Rhys had collected over £100 in their collection so we got absolutely hammered on that," Andy remembers. "We went round each pub in Shelf and each landlord filled up the cup with bitter – and it was quite a large cup! In fact the only landlord who didn't fill up the cup was the landlord of the Shoulder of Mutton pub – where the club is actually based!"