

# QUALITY CRICKETER WHO TOURED AUSTRALIA

## Profile of John Beaumont by Paul Rai

John Beaumont was a man with more first-class cricket to his name than England's two current strike bowlers, James Anderson and Stuart Broad. To be exact, Beaumont played 112 first-class matches - ten matches more than Broad and Anderson put together, as of February 2008.



"He was very accurate as a bowler; he was able to make the ball get up to a nasty height. His action was curious, but possibly reminiscent to many of the great George Freeman; he walked up to the crease and could still work up good pace for a long time with his high, easy action." This is a quote from Arthur A. Lilley describing Beaumont. Lilley also included Beaumont in his list of top-flight bowlers from the period 1880 to 1890.

Known affectionately as 'Jack' to those close to him, he was born and bred in Armitage Bridge. Beaumont began his cricketing education in the 1870s when ABCC were known as 'The Armitage Bridge House Park Club', before progressing onwards and upwards to the Yorkshire Colts side for whom he played in 1877.

Despite playing for Yorkshire on only four occasions, he was lucky enough to play in his home town, Huddersfield, at Fartown. Beaumont also made his debut for Yorkshire at the home of cricket, Lord's. Beaumont batted at number eight in the first innings, making an unbeaten 12 after his captain won the toss and elected to bat first against Middlesex. After impressing with the bat in the first innings he was asked to open in the 2<sup>nd</sup> innings and added 24 runs to a second-innings total of 230 before being clean bowled.

Although achieving moderate success with the bat in his first competitive three-day game, he became renowned for his fast bowling.

After qualifying by residence, Beaumont joined Surrey in 1885, making his debut at the Oval in late May against Middlesex. Beaumont took the new ball, bowled 16 overs unchanged, 12 of which were maidens and finished with first innings figures of 6 wickets for a mere 11 runs. Middlesex made an embarrassing 25 and were asked to follow on. Beaumont took 6 more wickets in the 2<sup>nd</sup> innings and he finished with match figures of 12 wickets for just 48 runs conceded, leading to a comprehensive victory for his new county.

Beaumont continued to take wickets relentlessly with 8-47 in the return fixture against Middlesex, 6-15 against Hampshire and match figures of 9 for 101 against his native county, Yorkshire. Beaumont finished the season ninth in the national bowling averages with 129 wickets at 16.74 apiece.

Some of the finest cricketing encounters in which John Beaumont participated were duels with his ex-colleagues in the Yorkshire side. Battles with former Bridge team-mate Robert Moorhouse often brought out the best in both players. In 1888 Beaumont took 8 wickets for 40 runs – and Moorhouse was his fifth scalp.

At the Oval in the subsequent season, against Yorkshire, Beaumont was among the wickets once again, with first innings figures of 6-46. Robert Moorhouse arrived at the wicket with the score 71-7 and went on to amass an impressive 47 not out, helping his side to a respectable total in the process. Moorhouse felt it was the best innings he had ever played for his county. He had the added delight of seeing his fellow Bridge player off! Beaumont, however, had the last laugh as Surrey won by two wickets and he took his 450<sup>th</sup> first-class wicket in the match.

Beaumont may never have played for England but he did play against the Australian tourists in 1886 and then toured the Antipodes with Mr G.F. Vernon's team in 1887/88. During the tour Beaumont played on some of the most beautiful and historic grounds in the world, including the Adelaide Oval, the MCG and even the Association Ground in Sydney, now known as the SCG.

Former Bridge man Beaumont also went on to make several appearances for the South of England in the old North v South matches. Not only did he play alongside the maverick legend W.G. Grace, he also achieved a hat-trick in one of the battles.

Finishing his career with 467 wickets at an average of 16.71, Beaumont has a record any modern day bowler would be delighted to have. Armitage Bridge can be proud of playing a crucial part in the development of such a quality cricketer.