

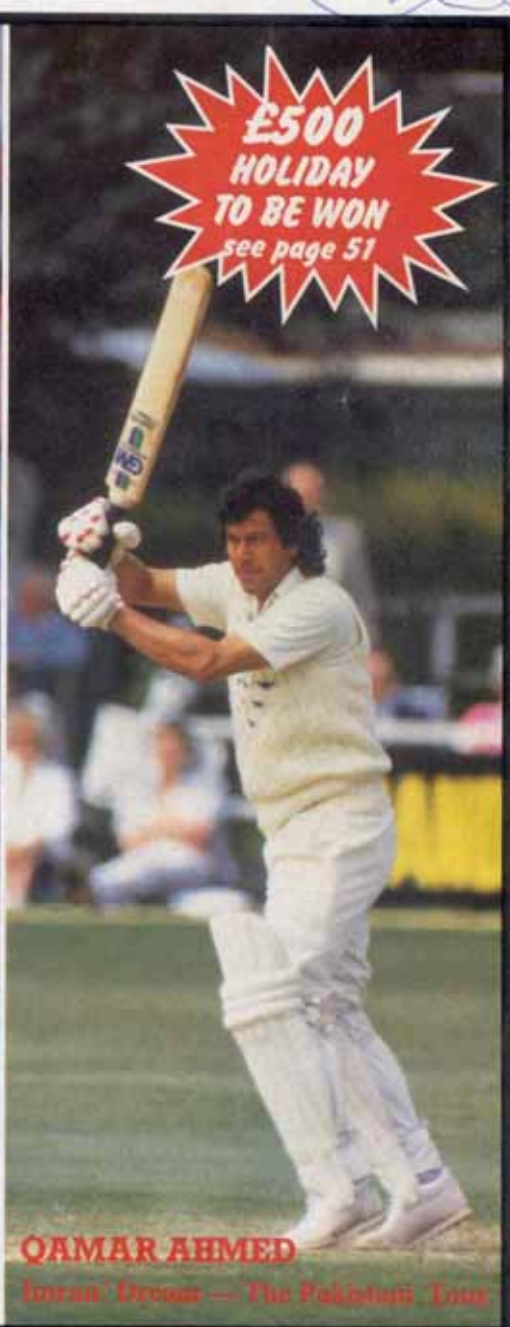
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CLUB TOURS — LEAGUE PROSPECTS — PLAYER PROFILES

By Peter Pickup

No. 13 HARTSHEAD MOOR CC

Since their first Bradford League season in 1963 Hartshead Moor have rarely entered a match without having someone a bit special in their team.

In recent seasons the likes of Shahid Mahboob, Shisir Hattangadi and Raj Venkatraman, have all played with distinction for the club. Should you be none too familiar with any of these three perhaps a few brief details will serve well.

Mahboob joined Hartshead Moor for the 1982 season, his 89 League wickets at 12.85 was only bettered by 1 player in each division, and when he met Idle for the 2nd time that season, he took all ten wickets for 39, this was against the League leaders in a vital late season promotion clash. Mahboob was a bowler of the highest class, yet one year later he helped create a record for the 6th wicket partnership in One Day Internationals when at Headingley he assisted Imran Kahn to put on 144 and his help was certainly active to the tune of 77 runs himself.

Raj Venkatraman joined midway through the 1981 season to play in the last 13 fixtures. This he did with 4 half centuries, at least double figures in every innings and an average of 45. He was a player from Bengal who was clearly destined to move to greater things. Mastering the English Bradford League wickets he returned home to India a better batsman, and in their 82-3 Ranji Trophy scored 44 out of 231 to lead his team to the Quarter Final. In that QF he made 73, and was selected for East Zone, when he found such as Kapil Dev, Madan Lal, and Yashpal Sharma in opposition. He was not overawed and averaged 44.75.

Hattangadi first played for the club in 1983, a great, in fact sensational signing for in 1982 he opened in the Ranji Trophy with Sunil Gavaskar against Maharashtra, was run out for 50 but it was 12 more than the little master made. In the following match he again opened with Sunil, and once more made more runs, 56 against 10. He made 1412 in the 1982-3 Ranji QF and then scored 92 against Delhi in the semi final.

This then was the kind of player you saw when watching Hartshead Moor. Hattangadi a real gem of a player, a man with sparkle, maybe he should be called Hattan Garden. On his debut for the club he made 53 against Cleckheaton, and before the season was out hit 4 centuries, 6 half centuries and 4 scores between 25 and 50, out of a total of 19 innings. This means only 5 times did he fail to reach 25, and such consistency was typical, of some strong Hartshead batting performances.

In the beginning, which for the club in the Bradford League was as mentioned above 1963, things were not always so.

The opening fixture, to their position

among the countries elite, was a home game with Lidget Green. By some strange magic from the weathermen no game in the division started, apart from that played at Hartshead. As the league rule states that unless at least 2 games in a division commence, all matches will count draws, it was obviously going to be 1pt each from the start. However play did commence giving them a first taste of league life as opponents Lidget made 150-4 in their allotted overs.

UNBEATEN SIDE

It was not known then of course, that Lidget were going to be a formidable side that season and were to go through the season unbeaten. The rain did eventually catch up with this part of the county when a reply of 50-3 wickets had been made. In their first away game only 140 was totalled batting first at Baildon. However it was enough to produce a first win, as Baildon were dismissed for only 92. Back at home in game 3 another victory came for the weather but away at Laisterdyke one week later, Ray Hirst scored 128 for the clubs first Bradford League century, and again a win was forthcoming this time by 86 runs.

When defeat did arrive it was against Locals rivals Brighouse for whom a certain Frank Lowson made 96. At the seasons end half their matches had been drawn, and with just 5 wins and 6 defeats, a position half way in the table was gained. Both Brian Collier and Donald Hirst topped 500 league runs, and Collier made 119*, but perhaps Raymond Hirsts first century was the main highlight. His namesake Donald, is best remembered for calling a batsman back to the wicket, an action which cost his side the match, yet something one can only applaud, and he made runs quickly & with style.

BLOW, SOFTENED

In 1966 after making only 2 scores under 20 in his 14 innings, Donald Hirst dealt a blow to the club by leaving after 16 yrs as skipper. He handed over to Terry Evans, and his replacement in the team John Eyre softened the blow a little by starting with scores of 28, 67, 72, 38 & 23 in his first 5 innings. Yet at the season end, 49 points from 22 games was only enough to gain 5th place, sixteen points behind a promotion spot.

Evans along with Len Squire took the batting honours, and both were to be long servants who enjoyed many happy moments, and still do, with the club.

Leading the attack 20 yrs ago was Brian Redfearn the former Bradford Park Avenue, Bradford City and Barrow foot-

baller. In 1966 he took 52 league wickets at 11.84. Redfearn was an all action cricketer reminding me of that other Brian, the man with no pain, Close. Brian Close recently told me that Bradford League cricket suffers from lack of enterprising captains, but this is something which cannot be levelled at Hartshead Moor.

PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

When promotion did arrive it was in 1972, Martin Kent took 47 wickets at 11.00 and Pat McKelvey who has seen County selection with Surrey had 39 at just 9.89 each. Alan Greaves had 534 runs in that season and as no other batsman from that club reached the league averages, it was testimony to the team effort which had occurred. Going up as Champions was a great honour and two years later in 1974 they went up again as Champions. I am sure they would rather have stayed up, but only 3 league wins brought them to earth and relegation in 1973. When they again took the Championship in 1974 it was hoped they had a stronger team. New wicketkeeper Mosedale scored 518 league runs and had 32 victims (only 2 behind the Leagues top keeper). Bill Brown topped the League bowling averages with his 46 league wickets costing 8.93, yet once again the club returned first time to Div 2.

'A LITTLE BIT SPECIAL'

Not many times since have they threatened to return, yet never a season passes without something a little bit special happening. In 1968 against Farsley in the Priestley Cup Hartshead dismissed them for 19. David Lee took 5-5, the only time he had 5 wickets in an innings that year.

Six years later and Hartshead dismissed Salts for even fewer, just 15. Lennie Hanson a more than useful all rounder was star this time, taking 5 wickets for just 4 runs.

The only player to score one thousand runs in a season for the club was Venkatraman, and this he did in 1985. The second XI made a few headlines when in 1976 they made 330 for 5, which was a new record for 2nd team cricket since the league went to 50 overs.

EVANS & SQUIRE

Then there has always been those long serving players Evans and Squire to pull games round and give stability when needed. I first saw Len Squire in 1965 and he scored 56. I next saw him twice the following summer and he made 73* and 623. Maybe I should have been his mascot. His