

The 2008 Northern Cricket Society booklet includes a special feature on the 4th Pennine Cricket History Conference, staged in March 2008 at the University of Huddersfield

THE
NORTHERN
CRICKET SOCIETY
— *Established 1948* —



The Len Hutton Portrait

BOOKLET 2008

THE FOURTH PENNINE CRICKET CONFERENCE

Brian Senior

So it came round again, the fourth annual meeting of cricket aficionados at Huddersfield University, the home of the Cricket Heritage project. This year we had a new venue on the campus, the spacious Castle Hill Suite.

Once again the gathering clashed with Yorkshire's AGM, but that rubber stamping of the new season was no contest when it came to the attraction of the Huddersfield event where old and new friends from all over the country gathered together for the series of talks and presentations. There were also displays of club and county memorabilia and an array of publications under the Heritage banner. Settling down to the opening address by Dr Peter Davies, the event organiser, was like settling down with a ripple of expectation of the kind one associates with the opening over of a game.

First on was the well-known and respected Malcolm Heywood, godfather of Todmorden and author, with his wife and son, of the marvellously evocative, 'Cloth Caps and Cricket Crazy'. His subject was Todmorden's 20th century professionals, but with so many having played for the club over the years, he chose to concentrate on just a few in certain periods. Among those of note were Fred Root (1933-37), George Macauley (1938 - 39) and M.S. Nichols (1946), the fastest bowler Malcolm had ever seen, even faster, at times, than Frank Tyson who played there later. In the 1970s Des Barrick and Peter Mamer were two of Todmorden's professionals.

Next was Dr Andrew Hignell, first-team scorer for Glamorgan and club archivist. He gave us an update on the controversial topic of Cardiff's progress to becoming a Test venue, but his main presentation was 'Rain Stopped Play', a treatise, with graphic charts, about how the weather affected cricket. Traditional beliefs that Yorkshire and Lancashire were at a disadvantage weatherwise were disproved by statistics. For example, in the 2007 season, Yorkshire were only sixth in order of hours lost; obviously Worcester with the floods fared worst of all. But, interestingly and surprisingly, over the last ten years the Oval and Lord's were grounds that had also lost many days' play.

The pre-lunch session was in the form of an interview, with Peter Davies putting questions to Farid Karolia co-founder of Mount CC based in Batley. Mount now play in the Dales Council Cricket League, but when the club was founded 34 years ago it had had a difficult start. With wages in the factories being quite low, players had to go knocking on doors of friends and relatives 'with a begging bowl', said Farid, to raise money to buy kit. Although in their first season they played fourteen friendly games, 12 of the games were against the same side! That's what you call a real local Derby. The club now has several teams, a thriving junior section and its own ground in Hyrstand Park.

In the afternoon, after a pleasant pub lunch, we returned with no chance of nodding off, certainly not with raconteur Allan Stuttard, the Walsden stalwart, former player, club chairman and historian. He told the story of "Have Ball, Will Travel", the tale of Sam Moss, a journeyman cricketer in the region before and after WW1. Not only was a Sam a big hitter, he was also a fearsome fast bowler. In one game for Padiham, he took all ten wickets, each one clean bowled. As evidence of Sam's power as a bowler, Allan had brought along a large framed exhibit of a stump broken in two and the ball with which Sam had shattered it. Amazingly, Allan had discovered this exhibit in somebody's attic. Sam Moss had also been awarded a gold watch for one of his remarkable feats, but Allan lamented that he was unable to come across that as well.

And finally, what could be better to finish with than Tony Hutton's slide show, with expert comments, - 'Cricket Grounds, 2007'? Each year, Tony, with his patient wife, Diana, make excursions around the country to savour new grounds. On one occasion he visited, in just one day, 20 grounds in the Oxford area. His 2007 collection included grounds in Durham, Worcestershire, Northumberland, Derbyshire and Staffordshire, together with photos of games at Whitgift, Sedburgh and other public schools and a few universities. Of the remainder, there are too many to list; but the range covers not only the picturesque village pitches and pavilions but also the mundane city grounds. He now has well over 30 volumes of photographs. This was the third occasion that Tony has made such a presentation and it looks as though Peter will give him a regular spot in the future.



Browsers at the Conference bookstall