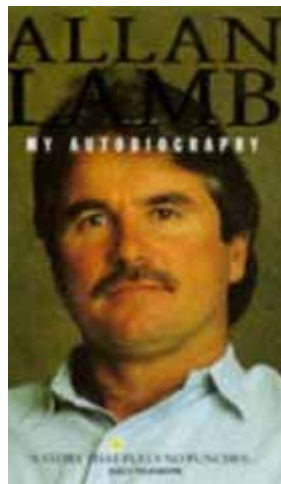


# FROM CAPE TOWN TO THE HOLME VALLEY

## Profile of Allan Lamb by David Brenchley

Seemingly plucked from obscurity by Northamptonshire in 1978 – he was playing for Western Province in his native South Africa - Allan Lamb had a great cricketing education in England. He went on to captain England thrice (albeit losing every game) and is one of just 12 England players to have won over 100 ODI caps.



Brought over from Cape Town by Derbyshire captain Eddie Barlow, Lamb landed at the doorstep of Huddersfield League side Holmfirth. Although he “needed time to adapt to the pitches in England”, he still hit 149 not out in one famous innings. In fact, he was so good he caused the village all sorts of problems, as he explains in his autobiography: “After I’d dumped a few balls [in the river]...they placed a guy at that end, armed with a long pole with a fishing net on the end.”

During the year he had at Holmfirth, Lamb turned out for both Derbyshire and Northamptonshire 2<sup>nd</sup> XI before signing full time for the latter at the age of 24. In 1981, he went on to become one of *Wisden's* five Cricketers of the Year. With his home country banned from Test cricket, Ken Turner (then secretary of Northants) persuaded Lamb to take advantage of his English-born parents. He took this advice and the rest, as they say, is history.

Lamb made his international debuts in 1982, the first being a One Day International against India at Leeds where he made 35 not out in an impressive 9-wicket victory for the hosts. His Test debut followed eight days

later against the same opposition at Lord's. This time he made just nine, but then 37 not out second time round as his adopted country won again.

He played in three World Cups, including the final of the 1987/88 tournament when he destroyed Courtney Walsh's bowling to score 67 from 68 balls as England beat the great West Indies.

His most famous Test series for England also came against the West Indies in 1989/90. He made 132 and 119 in separate matches as England lost the series 2-1. His first ton came in the 1<sup>st</sup> Test as England tied up a shock nine-wicket win against some of the greatest cricketers ever.

Despite his second century of the series, the West Indies easily wrapped up the final two matches by 164 runs and an innings and 32 runs respectively.

His international career lasted just two more years as he bowed out with a Test average of 36.09 and One Day average of 39.31. And, although not a bowler, he even picked up a single Test wicket.

He carried on playing first-class cricket for Northamptonshire until 1995 and nearly captained his team to their first County Championship during his last season.