

Player Profile – Paul Newton

By James Norbury

Cricket has been in Paul Newton's blood for as long as he can remember. Incredibly, his first taste of competitive cricket came when he was just eight years old during an under-16s league game. Since then Paul has gone on to play for a number of different clubs both in his homeland of Australia and here in England.



One of the proudest moments during his time in the game so far came quite unexpectedly. While looking at the Victorian Premier Cricket website he discovered that he had been nominated for 'best innings seen' by Ringwood CC's secretary Paul Jones. The innings in question came while playing for Ringwood during the 1982-3 season. Paul scored 106 not out against local side Footscray, prompting the local paper to lead with the story: 'Superb batting by Newton – Ringwood Cricket Club's past players were treated to a superb batting display as Paul Newton hammered a magnificent century at the weekend.' The achievement was even more memorable for Paul as the Footscray side that he played against contained a number of extremely talented players including Merv Hughes, as well as a young Tony Dodemaide who went on to enjoy success with both Australia and Sussex.

Paul has had a number of other personal achievements during his cricketing career. On 17 April 1998 he received the 1997 Mirfield Sports Council Sporting Achievement Award. That season had seen him score 1,234 runs at an incredible average of 137.11, and this total figure included five centuries.

In the 1980-1 season he formed a successful batting partnership with Daryl Stranger that saw them notch up 176 runs between them against St. Kilda CC. That stand remains the highest seventh-wicket partnership in the history of Ringwood CC. This is a record that Paul is immensely proud of, and he admits to "checking back every now and again to make sure it's still there".

Paul's first role in cricket came when he was eight years old - as scorer for the Bedford Under-16s, a team one of his older brothers played for. His first competitive game came when he was asked to join the team when they were a man short. Looking back to his debut, Paul remembers with amusement that he was so nervous that when he came in to bat he took guard the opposite way round! He carried on making appearances for the side whenever

necessary, and in his last game before the junior section folded he made it into the local newspaper. He shared a partnership of 50 runs with his older brother Peter, scoring 6 himself.

Following the collapse of the junior section, Paul joined up with the Ringwood CC youth team in 1969 and he would go on to tour New Zealand after being selected to play for the Victorian Schoolboys side. During his younger days he admits to being inspired by his idols Dennis Lillee and Ian Chappell, and often went to see them play at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. At Ringwood Paul slowly began to work his way up the youth ranks until he eventually became a regular in the senior first eleven. During his time at Ringwood – up till when he left in 1985 - Paul played 65 matches for the first team, scoring 2,000 runs and averaging 32 runs per game. He also notched up two centuries for the club.



Prior to joining Ringwood, Paul had his first taste of success in cricket playing for Eastwood Primary School. The team was coached by Paul's sports teacher Mr Foulkes, who was determined to lead a side to the Melbourne Metropolitan School Championship. The competition was entered by a few hundred teams from the region, but in the season of 1972 it was an Eastwood side containing Paul that captured the trophy.

The biggest influences on his career, especially during his earlier years, were his father Ken and his three older brothers: Ken, Robert and Peter. Paul got much of his love and enthusiasm for cricket from them, and he remembers how his father drove him and his three brothers to all their cricket matches.

After six straight seasons spent in the Ringwood first eleven, Paul began to turn out more regularly for the seconds. He spent one season playing for the Ringwood second team before making the decision to find another club where he would have more first-team opportunities. He played one season for Croydon in the Sub-District Cricket League. The following season he decided to play at a higher level again, moving to Fitzroy-Doncaster of the Victorian Premier League. Following the end of the cricket season in Australia, Paul came over to England in 1988 with his friend Geoff Hughes to play on a winter tour. The tour proved to be extremely significant in Paul's life as it was during this trip that he met his future wife Jan. Had it not been for this trip, Paul would never have gone on to play for Harry Lime or Mirfield.

In 1988 Paul joined up with Leeds League outfit Nostell. During his time at Nostell he played alongside fellow Aussie Dean Jones, who had recently played in the Australian side that won the 1987 World Cup. In Paul's season at the club Nostell lifted the league title. For Paul it was an honour to play alongside someone who had that amount of skill, and he believes that Jones is the best player he has played with or against during his entire career.

On finishing the season with Nostell, Paul decided to take a sabbatical away from his beloved sport to focus on his work and home life. He returned to cricket in time for the 1994 season. His wife worked at Mirfield Free Grammar School alongside 'Harry Limer' Charlie Woodcock...and Woodcock suggested that Paul play for Harry Lime. The rest is history.



The first thing that struck Paul about Harry Lime was their attitude. "Harry Lime were a social team...It wasn't just about the cricket." Paul went on to become a prominent member of the Harry Lime first eleven, and played for eight years before their merger with Mirfield, in the process scoring 4,500 runs at an average of 52. While playing for the 'Limers', Paul made the highest score of his career: 176 not out. His former teammate Martin Hatfield said of Paul: "I remember that when he first started playing for us a couple of teams complained because they thought we were paying him to play for us!"

The man from Victoria took another cricketing sabbatical between 2002 and 2004, so as to spend more time with his two daughters, Sophie and Sarah, who are now 12 and 7 respectively. During this break, Paul played friendly cricket occasionally in Lancashire for Rossendale CC. On his return, Paul joined the rest of his Harry Lime teammates at Mirfield CC. In his first season back he helped the side to promotion and the league title.

Paul was born in 1960 in a town called Moe, roughly 100 miles from Melbourne. His father later moved job and the children were brought up in the Melbourne suburb of East Ringwood. Before moving to England, Paul worked for the Department of Social Security in Australia as a hardware controller. In England he worked for Kirklees Council before switching to his current job in Human Resources at the University of Huddersfield. Paul is currently an active member of Mirfield Harry Lime CC and hopes to help the side in its bid for future success.