

## The Briar's 1993 U.K. Cricket Tour

On the 13th June 1993 a squad of 17 cricket players departed for a 9-game tour of England. With games organised for London, Edinburgh and small counties throughout the U.K. Though departure was delayed for more than 9 hours there was an aura of anticipation as the squad members started to gather at the International Airport. All spruced to the hilt in the required Briars attire, including the short, back and sides, was certainly a sight. After the luggage was checked-in, like horses to water the squad began to gather at the nearest watering hole. Was this just to settle nerves or a sign of things to come (based on certain squad members enthusiasm for Briar's Cub activities) only time would tell. At 10.30 pm the formal good byes were made and finally the 13-hour journey to Los Angeles began. A trip that some members would prefer to forget, P.P. would consider it his most memorable. Los Angeles and Disneyland were the place to go, with over an hour waiting period for some rides. Space Mountain and Briar's Patch gave an opportunity for some of us to experience our youth again.

The time difference between Los Angeles and London gave Desi Morrison an excuse not to celebrate the passing of the aging process. Anthony Clarke's seat allocation was certainly a mis-fortune, seated between two absolute goddesses, (if only they weren't over 70). While Wally was certainly in a class above the rest. But it was on with business, the business of playing cricket. First port of call was London, it was typical of English weather, wet and miserable, but it definitely didn't dampen spirits. With the feeling of jet-lag and not being able to access rooms until that afternoon, a tour of London was suggested. Later that day it was a struggle to motivate oneself for the night activities. "Two Scooner Wonder" John Price was certainly an inspiration for us all. The First Test at Lords was overcast and cold. With the Merv Hugh's Mo's and co-ordinated coloured shirts, you couldn't miss us in a crowd, even if you wanted too. The London Telegraph had us pose for a couple of photographs. The highlight was having our photos taken with members of the Australian side. Oh! and the cricket itself was great too, with Michael Slater scoring his maiden test hundred (152) and Mark Taylor also scoring 111 with an opening stand of 260 (A record at Lord's).

### **Game 1- B.W.I.A.**

The first game was against BWIA, who were a West Indian team, with 4 first class players, including Roger Harpers older brother. (One hoped that they didn't get any lessons from the Master Blaster himself. They were certainly very competitive and colourful. Briars 136 - BWIA 137 for a loss of 4 wickets.

G. Abood claiming the first Briars duck of the tour.

### **Game 2 - Old Merchant Taylors c.c.**

With the win of the toss and Gerard Price scoring the first half century of the tour and the good support by Jason Smith and Gerard Abood (both scoring 39), put Briars at a good stand for a big score. But it was not meant to be, Old Merchant Taylors won with one over to spare. The grounds and facilities, such as an electronic score board, was probably the best on the tour and the most picturesque. Peter (Wally) Wallace and Craig Hickey deserved outstanding Achievement Awards (However did they achieve deserved standing during the game)?

### **Game 3 - Ramsey c.c.**

We travelled by bus to Ely for our third game. Ramsey c.c. went into bat, they belted 223 runs off 43 overs. But with Phil Tregedale top scoring with 63 not out. Supported by Brett Howle, John Price and David Abood gave us a good reason to celebrate. It was Briar's first WIN of the tour – and celebrated we did, with the opposition providing the entertainment. The party carried on throughout the evening with Briar's testing their vocal chords in between gulps of the fine British Ale.

Maybe Desi Morrison could comment on which drunken chief (out of 20) was given the most constructive advice, while pushing the bus, which broke down up the road at 12.00 at night. We spent most of the next day travelling through the English Countryside, which included a glimpse of 'Sherwood Forest' on our way to Edinburgh - Scotland. What was going to be a short trip, ended up 8 hours

on the road - thanks to the great navigation skills of John Price. At least we had a break at a little pub along the way called 'The Dog', with fine food and dining one didn't mind spending money at the old traditional English Oak Pub. Edinburgh Castle was unbelievable as it seem to have been carved out of

a mountain of rock. One could only imagine the strength of the men taken to complete such a structure. We finally arrived at the Royal British Hotel for some long-awaited R & R.

### **Game 4 - St Boswells c.c.**

The wicket was quite wet when St Boswell went into bat, making a score of only 112.

Contributed to the fine bowling of Jason Hughes. But alas, in reply Briar's could only score 100 runs. Not only was the weather dismal but also, the performance of the team.

### **Game 5 - Penicuik c.c.**

Early on the morning of the 25th June some members of the team decided to head out to the famous St. Andrews Golf course for a round or two. That afternoon we travelled to Penicuik just outside Edinburgh. With Briar's first up to bat and scoring 230. David Abood top score of 60 with good support from the skipper Brett Howle (53). But unfortunately, just when Desi Morrison was on a roll with 2 wickets for 17, rain washed out play.

Once returning to the Royal British Hotel it was off to the local pub for dinner. The next morning a few of us looked a little worse for wear, with Desi looking like he didn't get a wink of sleep all night.

Around 2 pm we departed for York via Newcastle. After checking into the Novotel Hotel, we went searching for a night activity. Unfortunately, it was pretty slack, so it was an early night for all. Well rested it was off to explore the sights of the City of York. We took a tour on an open-top-bus, at this stage of the trip, it was looking pretty much the same. Desi was so impressed with the sights he decided to take the bus tour again. All standing on the side walk we waved Desi off on his way. We didn't see sleeping beauty again that day. (How many times did he go around – who knows!!).

### **Game 6 - Bedale c.c.**

Our next match was a 90 min drive from York. This game was to become our second win on the tour and what a convincing one at that. With an opening stand of 109. David Abood scoring his second 50 and Paul Price

were the backbone to the batting line-up, well supported by John Price (30) and Phil Treggle (38 not out) Briars 222 runs for 4 wickets.

In the field it was the bowling of Peter Wallace, Des Morrison, Paul Price and John Price all contributed to containing Bedale to only 176 off 45 overs. A very solid performance done by all. Certainly, a good reason to celebrate. The next day we were off to Derwent water. It was decided that a more scenic route be taken, so we drove through the Yorkshire Dales made famous by the TV serial 'All Creatures Great and Small'. We were staying at the Derwent water Hotel located near a large lake about 1 mile outside the small town of Cheswick. Once again, we went off into the township to sample some of the local cuisine and the beer (nearly every township and/or shire had their own local brew and this fact did not escape the boys). It was getting on and the first group decided to go back to the hotel. The stragglers decided to walk and take a short cut through a cow paddock. Clarke's great idea to find a sleeping cow to push over, but unfortunately there was not a sleeping cow to be found. (Lucky for the ow)

### **Game 7 - Cockermonth C.C**

Our next game, according to the local press was to be a big event. On arrival at the ground, the opposition were so fired up, they were falling over their own feet. The toss was won and Briar's went into bat. Paul Price and David Abood got the side off to a good start. Paul Price played very well with a good score of 70. The total score being 196 after 45 overs. Briar's bowling attack started very well, containing Cockermonth 61 runs after 20 overs. We were able to keep the opposition below 196, which made the tour record 3 Wins - 3 defeats.

The after-match function was one to remember with a game called stumps. With Gerard Price leading the way by firstly crashing into the table of drinks which he was supposed to skull then making his way down to the stumps, circling 10 times with his forehead placed on the stump, then staggering back for the next member to have a go. With team members such as Brett Howle, Paul and John Price, Peter Wallace, David Wright and Gerard Abood, (on reputation alone) there was no way that Cockermonth were going to win.

### **Game 8 - Neston CC**

The next day we had to travel to Chester to play our next game. Which was to be played against Neston in the small town of Warall. Winning the toss again and batting, the openers got off to a good start. Having 20 on the board in 3 overs. But it was Phil Treggle (85) and Gerard Abood (56) the main stayers in the innings. Des Morrison was the pick of the bowlers. The Neston side were never in the hunt. The after match function was not up there with the best. On the 3rd July we travelled to Stratford on Avon, arriving around 12.00pm. The place was really alive with people everywhere. Once we checked into the Stratford Moat House, the rest of the day was at our leisure. As the evening wore on, the game room was the most popular, with pinball, pool tables and everyone's favourite, the Air Hockey. The next morning off on the mandatory open-top bus trip to see the sights of places such as William Shakespeares birth place and the river Avon. There was also a slight hint of spring in the air. Or at least, according to the behaviour of 2 young team members Gove was in the air).

### **Game 9 - Kenilworth Wardens - Final Game**

The next day was our final game of the tour. By this stage nearly all players were feeling very weary and a good percentage of the boys were carrying some sort of injury. But like the true Briar's the players finished the tour with a win. Made possible by an all-round performance with both bat and ball. Brett Howle (61), Gerard Price (47) and mister average Phil Treggle were the bats to perform. Des Monison 3 wickets, David Wright and John Price being the pick of the bowlers. Briar's 210 - Kenilworth 179. Saving the best for last, the performance of Anthony Clarke (Mr Duck Man) with 2 ducks in his last 2 bats. The function after the game was great. With plenty of song and drink (Brett Howle winning the skulling competition). By midnight the boys had enough and were looking forward to a good rest back at the hotel. Plenty of best wishes, hand shaking, and goodbyes were said. The Tour Police throughout the tour were very tough, placing fines on individual for things such as mis-conduct, wearing the wrong attire, bad navigation etc. John Price was the leader of the gang with the longest record of criminal activities.

Thanks to Sanford and Gullivers travel for their co-ordination, but credit must be given to Brett Howle and John Price for organising the tour and to club members and players for their participation in fund raising activities.

As for me, it has always been a dream of mine to play in England, but to do it with a great bunch of guys, was definitely a dream come true.

Also watching the different personalities and behaviour of my team mates was a learning experience. To be accepted and made to feel part of the team, made it a lot easier to overcome my feelings of uncertainties on leaving the shores of Australia - MY NATIVE LAND.

*Jason (Brother) Smith*



### **U.K. Cricket Tour**

**Back Row (left to right):** Peter Wallace, Des Mornson, Phil Treggle, Paul Price, Anthony Clarke, Jason Hughes.

**Middle Row (left to right):** Marc Burns, Frank Caristo, Gerard Abood, Jason Smith, David Wright, Paul James.

**Seated (left to right):** Craig Hickey, John Price, Gerard Price, Brett Howle, David Abood.