

Inter Insular # 23 1974

The match was played at FB Fields, Jersey
on Saturday 10th August 1974
for the Players Gold Leaf Trophy

Umpires K G Clayton (Guernsey) and Dr R L Osment (Jersey)

Scorers J J Henry (Guernsey) and H W Hall (Jersey)

Toss won by Jersey who elected to bat

Guernsey won by 10 wickets

PREVIEW

'Mountford steps in'

John Mountford has been selected to take the place of Keith Howick in the Guernsey cricket side to meet Jersey next Sunday. The Rovers batsman has been unable to gain a place in his club's first team but has produced good form when playing in representative cricket. This will be his first cap.

The selectors, who met yesterday afternoon, decided not to name a 12th man.

'Inter-island cricket' by John Le Poidevin

A late hitch in arrangements for Sunday's inter-island cricket match in Jersey. The Jersey Cricket Association has had to change the venue from the Victoria College Field to the FB Fields. The reason? A 'misunderstanding' – one which has upset officials of the JCA. The FB Fields grass square has proved very adequate for past Jersey-Guernsey matches but a problem which arises at this venue is that play cannot start until midday on a Sunday. Play at Victoria College Field could have been the traditional 11.30am to 6.30pm hours which would fit in well with the Guernsey party's air travel arrangements. Jersey officials were busily engaged yesterday trying to make suitable arrangements. The people responsible for FB Fields are being asked if special consideration could be given this week-end because of the unfortunate circumstances.

The Guernsey players have to be at the Jersey airport just after 7pm for their return flight so it would not be easy to arrange six hours' play after midday.

The JCA has picked 12 players for Sunday's match and their final choice will depend on conditions on the day. Dave Billingham captains the side and the other players named are: Frank Fortey, Peter Osment, David Hunt, John Poynton, Merve Conway, Richard Hird, Chad Murrin, Mick Weedon, Martin Dodd, Mike Weaver, Harry Jones.

In an article on 10th August John Le Poidevin looked back over the history of the inter-insular:

'The day that Jersey forgot to pick team' by J Le Poidevin

The pendulum has swung each way over the years – and very firmly against the direction it pointed when a predecessor of mine wrote "... unfortunately from the local viewpoint, cricket is far more popular in Jersey than in this island. Over here baseball is the favourite summer game and quite candidly I think it will remain so for a long time to come ..."

That was in 1949 and he was right. Jersey played more cricket and were better at it. The series, as we know it, started in 1950 at the instigation of Jersey who substituted one of the two JICC-GICC matches with a Jersey-GICC encounter in 1949. Guernsey took the bait and a series of superb encounters has been the outcome. I've seen most of them and recalled a great number of thrilling cricketing moments in a few hours looking through match reports in the Evening Press files.

Jersey held sway in those early years of the competition and it was not until 1961 that Guernsey gained its first victory and on to record a hat-trick of successes. After that it was mostly drawn matches – odd exceptions being in 1969 and 1970 when Tony Howeson created havoc among our top batsmen. He took four for 18 in the first of these Jersey wins and six for 30 in the second. That 1970 match, played at FB Fields, was the last in the series to have been won.

I've been among those clamouring for limited overs play in the series and certainly one would like to see more decisive results. But during the course of my long excursion into the past I've come across many instances of splendid cricket matches which ended drawn. Matches like that in 1971 when Mick Wherry went out as number 11 batsman needing three runs off the last ball for victory.

If one counts victory by default on the two occasions since 1950 that Guernsey-Jersey cricket match has not been played then the record reads: Jersey seven wins, Guernsey five wins, and the remaining twelve matches drawn.

It was in 1952 that Jersey claimed they 'could not field a team'. Four years later the Guernsey team turned up for the match at the College Field but could find no-one to play against. Would you believe it? Jersey forgot to select a team! Guernsey cricket will not want to claim the Jerseyman's lapses as

victories I'm sure so our scorecard reads just three wins in 22 outings. Can we add to that in Jersey tomorrow? I'm fairly confident that we can – although not quite as confident as Guernsey skipper Ricky Mills who cannot see any way that we can lose.

And the 1959 match when Jersey needed just 8 runs to win with 4 minutes remaining. I clearly recall this match. Ian McCave set out to bowl the penultimate over, for the Guernsey side was having no truck with gamesmanship to stretch the one over through the four minutes.

Then he got a wicket and 'Chummy' Poree, batting number 8 for Jersey that year, raced to the wicket from the pavilion to save time. McCave struck again with another wicket. All hell broke loose in the Jersey camp – their number 9 batsman was completely unprepared. He was not padded up and by the time he had reached the crease it was too late to play another over.

There have been several occasions when victory looked possible for Guernsey only for Jersey to hold out against all odds for a draw.

In 1965 Guernsey raced to 251 for three declared (Alan Bisson 75, Pierre Le Cocq 85, Robin Roussel 51 not out) and were thwarted by an 86 not out from Brian Le Marquand and Jersey finished 231 for 6.

Two years later, again in Guernsey, Jersey were trailing badly at 134 for 8 at stumps in reply to Guernsey's 174.

Then in 1972, by which time Guernsey cricket was probably riding at a higher level than in Jersey, we scored 245 for six declared and Jersey were 213 for eight at the end.

And last year Guernsey scored 240 and Jersey hung on by the skin of their teeth. They were 145 for nine at the close – Phillip Le Cras having scored 69 of the Jersey runs.

There have been only two centuries scored in the series. That great veteran batsman R F B O'Callaghan scored 105 for Jersey in the 1959 drawn match and Stan Cleal 103 not out to play a big part in the Guernsey success in Jersey in 1962 – the last Jersey wicket incidentally falling in the last over of scheduled play.

The only sour moments I can recall – and here I'll admit my partisanship – came in 1969 and 1970. We lost both although this in itself was not the worst aspect from my point of view. In 1969 it seemed Guernsey would end a barren spell when they dismissed Jersey for only 148. But no – we managed only 47, the lowest score by far in the series. The next year in Jersey, Guernsey were

the victims of a couple of umpiring decisions which were acutely embarrassing to both camps.

How big a part they played in the ultimate collapse of our team for only 102 no-one will ever know. The wicket was good and it was only a question of time before Jersey won – but it took them 55 overs and most people at the FB Fields that day were bored to tears. I wrote then, “ ... it won't take many more yawns like this to end the series ...” I'm happy to record that there have been none, and the series is going very well – even though this year's could be the last 'traditional' game.

Most of the Guernsey team members have plenty of experience in the series – Warren Barrett and Pierre Le Cocq, for instance, played as long ago as 1961. The side is: Ricky Mills, Le Cocq, Barrett, Tony Taylor, Mick Fooks, Mike de Haaff, Bryan Preston, John Le Lievre, Mike Webber, Alan Lewis, John Mountford. De Haaff, Lewis and Mountford are new to the series.

MATCH

'The finest hour. Might of Jersey cricket humbled' by John Le Poidevin
Guernsey's finest cricket hour arrived yesterday when the might of Jersey cricket was humbled at the FB Fields. Shot out for a meagre 103 after their skipper Dave Billingham had won the toss and elected to bat, the final humiliation came when Tony Taylor and Alan Lewis knocked off the runs for the first wicket. It was the most comprehensive victory in the 24-year history of the series. It was only the fourth victory for Guernsey. The margin of victory was something out of the ordinary but the result was no shock.

Guernsey cricket has risen in stature in recent years and our players' confidence rides high. By comparison Jersey cricket is in the doldrums – and it showed yesterday. Ricky Mills, the Guernsey captain, said after the success that his team presents no problems to a captain. It is certainly a good all-round side but nothing should detract from the captain's own contribution. He has over the season brought out a fine team spirit from the squad which has played together a number of times for the GCA.

Heavy rain early on Saturday raised doubts about the wicket but subsequent sunshine and wind dried out the field. Mills was happy to lose the toss but he would probably have put Jersey in had he won it; not because of the wicket but because he felt the only way to beat Jersey was by allowing them to bat first. Guernsey last tasted victory in this series in 1963. It was almost worth a decade of waiting for yesterday's wonderful win.

The pitch offered little to pacemen Mike de Haaff and Pierre Le Cocq but they bowled splendidly and had both opening batsmen Frank Fortey and Peter Osment playing and missing many times. Eventually Fortey, only the second player to play for Guernsey and Jersey – Alan Conway was the other – got an edge to de Haaff's bowling but wicketkeeper Mick Fooks missed the chance. Fortey celebrated by hitting the next delivery deep to square leg for four. However, the miss was not expensive for Fooks took the catch Fortey offered off Le Cocq's bowling a couple of overs later. In between the two incidents Osment should have been run out at the non-strikers end but John Le Lievre's throw was wild.

After Fortey's wicket Jersey struggled even more acutely. Harry Jones edged a de Haaff delivery to Tony Taylor at second slip and when the fieldsman fumbled the ball an alive Le Cocq grasped it at third slip. Soon afterwards Osment also edged de Haaff and Le Cocq went forward to take the ball low. The umpire gave the batsman out but sportingly Le Cocq and Mills indicated that the catch had not been made.

At 21 for 4 Jersey were in real trouble. Billingham and David Hunt arrested the slide with sensible batting and their partnership of 45 ended only when John Mountford took a glorious low catch deep at mid wicket to dismiss Billingham. After this only teenager Chad Murrin batted with any authority and the much vaunted batting strength of Jersey was out for 103, Warren Barrett claiming five of their wickets.

Taylor and Lewis then showed how runs could be scored. A beautifully timed boundary backward of square leg by Taylor was followed by a superb shot through the covers by Lewis. It was great stuff for the Guernsey contingent and soon victory was virtually ensured. The main threat was the weather. Rain clouds loomed ominously but it was Guernsey's day all the way and the winning runs came just before the heavy rain started.

Post Bill Custard

Humiliated!

Island side lose by 10 wickets with an hour and a half to spare.

This was Guernsey's first triumph in the series, which commenced in 1950, for 10 years and their fourth in all. Guernsey were superior in all departments and were full value for their overwhelming triumph in a game played throughout in overcast and rather chilly weather. In fact rain threatened on occasions but

fortunately for Guernsey it held off until a matter of minutes after the winning hit had been made, and then it teemed down.

In comparison with Guernsey, Jersey's approach to the game was lacking in application. There was a far greater 'will to win' impression radiating from the Sarnians in all departments.

But this keenness to win was all within the framework of the Laws as instanced when Peter Osment was given out to a 'catch' in the slips. The ball however had dropped just short of the fielder who gathered it as he rolled over.

Immediately the Guernsey skipper Ricky Mills sportingly called Osment back.

REVIEW

'This victory was worth that 24 year wait' by John Le Poidevin

The action of Tony Taylor as he waved his bat high in the air in triumph when completing the winning run summed up the feelings of all the Guernsey team and their supporters at FB Fields last Sunday afternoon.

That 10-wicket victory over Jersey's top players was the ultimate in Guernsey cricket success. For had not Guernsey supporters been told only the previous evening by leading Jersey players that cricket in Jersey was (a) played at a higher level (b) better organised and (c) played more frequently than in Guernsey. If those claims are true – and I entirely refute each and every one – it certainly did not show last Sunday.

Guernsey's star cricketers outplayed their Jersey counterparts in every department. No-one could have foreseen such humiliation being inflicted.

Inter-island cricket rivalry is healthily keen and Jersey players and officials readily excused the Guernsey contingent for being so elated. "You've waited a long time for this" was a typical comment. We certainly had. Twenty four years to be precise ... ever since the series started.*

Surely a complete reappraisal of cricket in the sister island must follow. More than a little pessimism existed throughout the day and even before the start, one Jersey selector admitted that they could have fielded four similar sides; and each would be weak. Afterwards Dave Billingham, the Jersey captain, made a terse comment about his colleagues, 'It was gutless batting'.

But all was rosy in the Guernsey camp. Skipper Ricky Mills had said before the match that there was no way that Jersey could win the match – a theory he was prepared to back by putting Jersey in to bat if he had won the toss.

It was said that Jersey packed their team with batsmen in an effort to stave off defeat. Where those batsmen were I'll never know. Their opening batsmen

Peter Osment and Frank Fortey looked all at sea against the pace of Mike de Haaff and Pierre Le Cocq. Both our bowlers were in very good form but I don't think they would have passed the bats of Tony Taylor and Alan Lewis (our openers) in the same manner.

This was de Haaff's first island game and he is entitled to look back on it with pride. He has only come to the fore this summer. It was a surprise when Harry Jones came in at number three for Jersey and that Mike Weaver batted at number four. They are both free scoring batsmen and hardly best suited to a situation when the bowlers' tails are up. They didn't last long and when people like John Poynton came in at number nine – he normally opens – it was too late even to bat for a draw.

Taylor and Lewis went out to bat chasing only 103 but commendably they approached their task sensibly. Jersey had no score to bowl at and understandably their attack lacked fire. The Guernsey batsmen coolly picked up runs and were completely at ease. We all knew Taylor's class. We were all a little uncertain about Lewis. But not any more. He looked a damn good batsman in this match. An incident which pleased me immensely was when Peter Osment was given out caught in the slips. Both Pierre Le Cocq, the fieldsman who took the ball, and skipper Mills indicated to the Jersey umpire that the catch was not valid. There is room for sportsmanship even when rivalry is as keen as it was in this match.

* Not quite true as Guernsey won in 1961, 1962 and 1963 but obviously not by such a large margin.