



### BARBADOS OVER 50s INTERNATIONAL SENIORS FESTIVAL - 2003

Devon were represented by six players in the festival which commenced on Monday 10 th November 2003. Chris Theedom (Manager), Tom Stanton (Captain), Brent Howard, Richard Coe, Richard Cavendish and Phil Matten made up the nucleus of a team from the West of England. They were joined by a number of players from Hereford, Shropshire and Cumbria. The team were known as England West. Other teams from England taking part were Suffolk, Bedfordshire and Berkshire and the international teams were Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Ontario and British Colombia.

Accompanied by Stan Newell the scorer the players and wives were entertained on the Sunday to a spectacular opening event in Bridgetown. Unfortunately the much heralded sunshine of Barbados was in short supply on Saturday, Sunday and Monday and torrential tropical rain on the Sunday produce incredible flooding. Could this really be Barbados!!

Fortunately the hotel, beach and facilities were outstanding and the unusually bad weather was soon forgotten when the sun came out and we played our first game against British Colombia.

To the Devon players this was a real eye opener in that the square consisted simply of two wickets and the wicket that we were playing on was simply baked mud and the outfield had certainly not seen a roller for a number of years. However, we were to find out that this was the norm in Barbados and throughout the West Indies.

Having won the toss British Colombia were invited to bat on a slightly damp wicket but with the temperature in the nineties and incredible humidity the wicket soon baked.

Playing in a team that came from different parts of the country was not easy but British Colombia were eventually restricted to 125 for 9 wickets with Phil Matten taking the important wicket of the ex Barbadian, Colin Deare. Fielding in these conditions were incredibly difficult and drink breaks were taken every ten overs.

As far as batting was concerned Richard Cavendish showed his metal by hitting quick boundaries and made 16 off four scoring shots before he was brilliantly caught in the gully. Theedom had his first bat of the tour and soon realised that playing the English way on Barbados wickets simply doesn't work.

The wickets were hard and low and we soon found out that to be a successful batsman you had to hit the ball hard and through the line. Devon overtook the British Colombia total with overs to spare losing 5 wickets in the process.

The next game was against the tournament favourites Barbados who were made up of a full contingent of ex-first class cricketers and two test cricketers. In their previous game Barbados had scored just under 300 in 35 overs and England West were expecting the worst. However, the England West bowlers including Matten and Howard soon put the brakes on the star studded Barbados side and after ten overs they only had 25 runs on the board and 72 runs after 20 overs. However, Lawrence Mapp and Brian Clark decided that the best way to score runs on a very slow outfield was to hit the ball out of the ground and this they did on a regular basis. Mapp was eventually out for 78 having hit numerous sixes and fours to all parts of the ground. All his sixes were hit twenty to thirty yards past the boundary and Barbados eventually financed on 181 for 5 which was an outstanding achievement considering the conditions. Phil Matten was the pick of the bowling with 7 overs, 2 wickets, 25 runs, with Brent Howard bowling 7 overs, 0 wickets, 23 runs. In reply Theedom opened the batting and scored a fine 22 with Richard Coe joining him who eventually scored 27. After ten overs of batting Theedom was clearly knackered and he simply could not lift his bat and was castled by a straight one from Lewis. Nothing further was heard from Theedom for at least half an hour while he disappeared under a cold shower. After being 51 for 1 off 15 overs unfortunately the England West batsmen simply couldn't cope with the heat and humidity and eventually collapsed to 103 all out but Barbados had been given an early fright.

After the game the usual awards and exchanges of memorabilia were carried out and many friends made in the clubhouses. Not only that but Banks bitter was drunk in abundance. It was pleasing to see Sir Everton Weeks appearing at all our games to watch lengthy parts of cricket and the whole tournament was very well supported by the Barbados Cricket Association.

The third game played was during the second week when Trinidad and Tobago were our opponents. They too had got a full island representative team and had not lost in the tournament so far. Having now become somewhat acclimatised the England West side fancied their chances of an upset. However, England West once again lost the toss and had to field in extreme conditions and after 10 overs Trinidad & Tobago were 63 for 0 wicket. However, with the introduction of Stanton into the attack wickets then regularly fell and Trinidad & Tobago finished on 162 for 8 with Stanton 7 overs, 3 wickets, 24 runs.