

BRIAN BOLUS - MY DAD'S GREAT CRICKET FRIEND.

Brian Bolus was born JOHN BRIAN BOLLUS on 31 - 01 - 1934 and nicknamed "Bolley" throughout his long and distinguished career. He represented three Counties as an opening right handed batsman - his native YCCC, Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire and he played Test Cricket for England in 7 Tests between 1963 to 1964. In Brian's 20 seasons of first class cricket , he scored over 25,000 runs and he achieved over 1000 runs in a season on 14 occasions (YCCC 2 ; NCCC 10; DCCC 2)

As a renowned After Dinner speaker in his retirement from First Class , he would often start by saying " For those of you who saw me bat ... let me apologise ! " and he would be a man of dry and self deprecating humour. But his speeches would be as expansive and entertaining as his batting frequently wasn't - Brian was engaging company, a man of contrasts, a gritty northern batsman and a lovely bloke on and off the field.

Brian died on May 7 th 2020 at the age of 86 and he is mourned by cricket supporters of a certain age in the three Counties he played for - they witnessed a man who always gave 100% and his 25,000 accumulated runs meant he could really play the game.

YORKSHIRE 1956 - 1962

Brian Bolus was born in Whitkirk near Leeds and played in the local leagues until joining YCCC and making his debut in 1956 against the MCC at Lord's .Brian played as a member of three County Championship winning Yorkshire teams during his career at Headingley. He played for the "White Rose" County for 7 years and 107 matches, scoring 4,712 first class runs with a top score of 146 not out v Hampshire at Portsmouth in 1960 and 7 Centuries in total. He led the YCC batting averages in 1961 with over 1,900 runs and was capped by the County but moved onto NCCC after Yorkshire had opted for the younger and relatively unknown Geoff Boycott.

NOTTS 1963 - to 1972

Brian's most successful years of his first class career were at Trent Bridge - Notts obtained the services of a very experienced cricketer who made an immediate impact in his first season. With a "I'll show 'em" attitude, he hit 100 not out against YCCC in his first meeting against his former County and won the "Man of the Match" award. Brian then scored 77 v YCCC at TB, with his first 53 out of 59 coming in 57 mins. He followed that up with 114 at Bradford v YCCC and received a standing ovation! His remarkable first season was the result of oft forgotten, highly enterprising batting.

Brian scored 2,190 runs in all matches in 1963 and no batsman scored more that his 5 Centuries. He hit a career best of 202 not out v Glamorgan at Trent Bridge out of 303 and was subsequently selected for England v WI at Leeds on 25th July 1963. He hit his first ball in Test cricket for 4 off the legendary Wes Hall back over his head, taking 10 off the over. His stalwart performances earned him a place on the Winter tour of India where he played in all 5 Test matches, averaging over 48.

Brian played 269 matches for NCCC scoring over 15,000 first class runs with 28 centuries at an average of 34.69. In 1970 he scored over 2,000 runs and was appointed Captain in 1972, after having previously stood in for Garry Sobers as Skipper. Brian was very consistent, achieving over 1,000 runs in every season of the 10 he played at Trent Bridge, an amazing batting achievement.

Brian's outstanding career for Nottinghamshire has been recognised with his inclusion in the 2003 publication "100 Greats of Nottinghamshire CCC ", a worthy tribute to his skill & application.

DERBYSHIRE CCC 1973 to 1976

Brian was released by Notts at the end of 1972 and was immediately appointed Captain of Derbyshire - he scored over 1,000 runs in two of his seasons with DCCC, with 100 against YCCC in 1973 - the Counties only Century that season.

In total, he played 64 First Class matches for DCCC with a H.S. of 151 v Oxford University in 1975.

In his Derbyshire career, Brian scored 3,279 first class runs with 4 centuries and was Captain of the side on 87 occasions in all cricket for the County.

COUNTY RECORD

Brian Bolus became the first player to Captain two different Counties in successive seasons (NCC & DCCC) and he retired from First Class in 1975 with 25,598 First Class runs to his name at an average of 34.03 with 39 centuries.

In his mid - late career, Brian had developed a much more cautious batting technique with an often grafting style and an increasing use of the front pad. At the age of 39 as the senior player at Derbyshire - one of the weakest and most fragile of County Team batting line ups - he had few resources at his disposal. Frequently in this period Brian just had to try and avoid defeat and was unwilling to take as many risks which often made viewing suitable only for the most diehard DCCC supporter.

This probably accounted for his future trade mark "after dinner speech" apology!

FACT ; Brian is frequently remembered for famously sending off Alan Ward of DCCC & England in a County match at Queen's Park , Chesterfield after Alan had declined to resume bowling against Yorkshire CCC in 1973.

ENGLISH RECORDS

In his 7 Test career , Brian Bolus scored 496 runs at 41.33 , with a HS of 88 against India in Chennai and four other Test fifties - he still holds two unusual records at this level , namely ,

- 1) Most Tests in a complete career without recording a single figure score (7) AND
- 2) Most Test Match innings in a completed career without ever scoring a single figure score (12)

Brian' lowest Test score was 14 and apart from his first Test innings, he was never dismissed in under 52 minutes .

His final 5 innings in Tests were 57, 39, 35, 58 and 67 - He should be considered unfortunate not to be selected again for England after his return from India 1963/64 with Boycott & Edrich taking over the opening positions.

IN RETIREMENT from FIRST CLASS

When he retired from the First Class arena, Brian Bolus had played 469 First Class matches, 142 "A" List games and 7 Tests for his Country. Brian's cricket career continued up to approx 1983 with him playing as a pro in the Bradford League for Cleckheaton, Brighouse and then Farsley with whom he led to their "Priestley Cup" triumph in 1983.

From 1976, he was appointed as the "Leisure Services Director" of Gedling Borough Council in Nottingham and when I met him professionally in 1982, he negotiated a very significant Vending Services contract for all the Councils leisure sites and pools with myself for the Company I was then working for with as a young salesman, - he was a pleasure to meet and know and my own friendship with Brian developed from there.

He later served under Ray Illingworth as an England Selector in the 1990's and Brian also became the respected Chairman of the England Management Advisory Committee.

He was given the honour of being appointed as "President" of Nottinghamshire CCC for two years in 2004 and 2005.

Brian Bolus was a solid, determined & consistent player and a friend of my family, - Captain of Two Counties and Capped by all three, I remember him as a lovely man that few, if any, ever had a bad word for - a fitting epitaph of a great student and lover of the game.

My late father Michael Hall, a former NCCC player in the 1950's, was a personal friend of Brian over many years of cricket at Trent Bridge and they enjoyed each other's company enormously at Player Reunions, Dinners and matches - the picture is from the Redford CC's Annual Dinner of 1983, when through this great friendship, my dad got Brian to speak as a guest along with Geoff Boycott and Retford's own Derek Randall, who had been coached and mentored by Michael from a nine year old, up to his appearance as a Test match player in his own right.

It was, as I remember, quite a night and Brian was brilliant & entertaining as only he could be!

BRIAN BOLUS - RIP (31. 1. 1934 - 07. 05. 2020)

Chris Hall

9th May 2020

