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Daniel Day: old-time stalwart of Hampshire cricket.

In loving memory of
DANIEL DAY
One of the
All-England Cricketers
Who died at Southampton
Nov 22 1887
Aged 81
His end was Peace

This inscription on his gravestone in the Old Cemetery (G 109 243) recalls the player who gave strength and continuity to the Hampshire side in the early Victorian years preceding the formation of the Hampshire County Cricket Club in 1863.

The beginnings of Hampshire cricket at Hambledon a century earlier are rightly celebrated but this original impetus had petered out by 1800.

The next important phase came in the 1840s, which saw the transition from ancient to modern in cricketing history, characterised by the development of round-arm bowling, legalised in 1834, leading to the adoption of true overarm style in the 1860s.

The outstanding professional bowler of this period for Hampshire was Daniel Day - now little remembered but well worth recalling for his distinctive contributions, on and off the field.



Daniel Day was born at Streatham, on 14 June 1807, the seventh son of a builder who died when he was a baby. He learnt his cricket on the local common and at a school where his fellows included Alfred Mynn, the future "Lion of Kent".

In his teens he was engaged by the Lord's groundsman Cobbett as a practice bowler and went on to play for several leading Surrey clubs, notably the Camberwell Clarence side, through which he became friendly with the celebrated Nicholas Felix - a cricketing schoolmaster of many talents, whose innovations included a "catapulta" bowling machine and items of protective gear.

Probably with his help, Day patented about 1827 his "tubular guard gloves", manufactured for him at Wilson's india-

Figure 1. Daniel Day's Grave

rubber factory, Streatham. Initially water-filled, later air-inflated, neither form provided sufficient protection for batsmen's hands and they were superseded by the solid rubber strip type of glove associated with Felix.

Encouraged by his mentor, Day moved to Southampton in 1842, to take the tenancy - from the brewer Edward Cooper at £100 a year - of the Antelope Inn in St Mary's Road

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(then still called Love Lane) and the cricket ground beside it, opened three years before, south of what became the Royal South Hants Hospital.

Day became the leading professional bowler for the South Hants Club, then the mainstay of Hampshire cricket, its members including Thomas Chamberlayne of Cranbury Park, Sir John Barker Mill of Mottisfont and Sir Frederick Harvey Bathurst, whose estate was near Salisbury.

Wykehamist Sir Frederick was the outstanding Hampshire amateur of this period, a strong hitter and fast round-arm bowler, with whom Day operated for a decade in effective partnership, often bowling unchanged - likewise on other occasions with Richard Bodle, the other long-serving pro with the South Hants Club.

In 1842 Day was 35, standing 5 feet 9½ inches, weighing 14½ stone, at the height of his cricketing powers. Twenty years later a contemporary expert assessed his career in these terms: "As a batsman Day was never considered much but he made some good scores (especially for the South Hants Club), playing steadily and well in a good forward style. As a bowler, he was first rate, with a high delivery, his balls getting up quick from the ground. He fielded generally at short slip, where he was very good."

Round-arm bowling had been officially permitted since 1834; Day contributed to the transition to the overarm style, legalised by the MCC in 1864.

He made a memorable first appearance at Lord's on 30 June -1 July 1842 for Hampshire against MCC. In their second innings of 283 Day and Bodle each scored 70, while Day also took 10 wickets, skittling MCC to a 235-run defeat. In subsequent encounters, although Hampshire lost or drew, Day again distinguished himself as the key wicket-taker, in tandem with Bathurst.

Best remembered of Day's contemporaries is today N Felix, the elegant left-hander who played all over England between 1828 and 1854. He adopted this pseudonym partly due to the awkwardness of his surname, Wanostrocht (of Flemish origin) and partly because serious cricket was not then considered wholly respectable for a schoolmaster. Author of the classic *Felix on the Bat*, he was an accomplished artist, who depicted Day in a painting which he presented to him.

The original 16" x 12" painting (later reproduced as a limited edition lithograph) remained in Day's family until 1915, when a descendant sold it into the Lord's collection - for £5, which was little enough but all the MCC would then offer on a £15 asking price!

When Day was moving to Southampton, Felix wrote him a letter (which the recipient treasured until the end of his days) giving good advice - "act under the kind guidance of Mr Chamberlayne ... keep well in with the magistrates in complying with what they appoint about late drinking hours ... avoid having gambling parties ... never let a sharper take you in or come into your house."

In 1844 Felix enabled Day to stage "a most interesting and entirely novel match" at the Antelope Ground, involving his bowling machine, a development of the ancient Roman siege engine. This "great curiosity" was set up on 30 September, when "11 players of the county of Hampshire" met 13 gentlemen of the South Hants Club, with the Catapulta."

The gentlemen had only to bat and field, for all the bowling against the professionals was done by the machine - whose "straight and powerful fire" they found it hard to play. Day was caught out for 2. Top scorer, "b. Catapulta 13", was his colleague Bodle. Shorter and slighter than Day, Bodle (1816-69) was a man of seemingly constant "mournful countenance" who rarely smiled during his twenty successful seasons from 1839 with the South Hants Club, as a steady, slow-medium round-arm bowler and a careful batsman. He was still described as "cricketer" in Southampton directories of the 1860s but by then leg injuries had obliged him to retire from the field, which he then took as umpire. He

also earned his living as baker and draper and wrote cricket reports for the *Hampshire Independent*.



N Felix Esq (from the original in the MCC collections at Lord's)

The Catapulta match had to be left as a nicely poised draw when evening fell on the Antelope Ground.

Day doubtless found that occasion profitable. His venture at the Antelope Ground was based on the South Hants Club renting it at £5 a year, while he took all the gate money.

In 1844, soon after he married the widow Mrs White, he was obliged to give it up because the Earl of Guilford, the pluralist Rector of St Mary's, whose glebe land it was, proposed to offer it for building. In the event, this did not occur until the end of the century, after four decades as the centre of Hampshire cricket - transferred to new headquarters at Northlands Road in 1885.

Day then took from John Bell's brewery the lease of the Woolston Hotel and the field beside it, where "he made a capital wicket" for the 1845 season. The South Hants Club played there, Day staged single wicket matches and games with teams from Winchester College (where he coached) as well as major attractions like "14 of Hampshire v the All England XI".

Figure 2. Daniel Day - "drawn and presented by

On their first visit in September 1848, William Clarke's men were shot out in their second innings for 22 by Day and Bathurst; the match was drawn, with the home side needing 19 from its last pair at the wicket. The next year, Day and Bathurst again bowled unchanged through both innings - but could not prevent the tourists winning by two wickets.

In 1850 Day was selected for the Players against the Gentlemen at Lord's. From 1846, when its county club was reformed, he also played for Surrey - more often than for Hampshire, which had a lesser county programme of matches - and for Dorset, as well as for South Hants and other local clubs requesting his services from time to time.

County cricket qualifications were then conveniently vague. The great Fuller Pilch played for Hampshire in the 1840s, likewise Surrey and Sussex, as well as for Kent, while Alfred Mynn also appeared for Hampshire in 1844, probably through Day's connection with him.

"Expending in cricket in the county from £1,000 to £1,200", Day remained at Woolston until 1851, when he found support insufficient to merit renewing his lease. Big matches produced gates worth over £100 (4,000 at sixpence) but receipts "suffered

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considerably when inclement weather prevailed, owing to the distance from town" - people were reluctant to travel to Woolston unless the sun was shining!

Day then took the East Hants ground at Southsea for two years. A highlight of the 1852 season there came in August, when the United All England XI (formed by John Wisden, of *Almanack* fame, seceding from William Clarke's somewhat autocratic and parsimonious management) played their first match - against "Twenty Gentlemen of Hampshire, with Day". Wisden took 20 for 42 to give his side victory. His XI won again in 1853, despite being dismissed for 70 and 42, mainly due to Day claiming 12 wickets: the Gentlemen fell 16 short, their modest totals including no less than 22 ducks!

In 1855 Day brought a dramatic conclusion to Surrey's match with Kent at Kennington Oval. In a three-day game, Kent needed one to win, with three wickets in hand; Day bowled them all for nought, to make it a tie.

Day spent two seasons at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where he managed a hotel and coached and played for the Northumberland club.

His absence from the Southampton scene seriously weakened Hampshire cricket, which languished through the 1850s without representative county matches, until there was a revival, leading to the formation of Hampshire Cricket Club at a meeting held at the Antelope Inn on 11 September 1863.

Cricket continued to be played on the Antelope Ground after Day left. His successor as landlord was Francis Brooks, who died about 1853; management was taken over for the next ten years by his widow, Mrs Ann Brooks, aided by her eldest daughter Charlotte - who attended to the horse that drew the pitch roller as well as binding up players' injuries and protecting her younger sister from flirtatious approaches.

In the 1860s Day was again involved with arrangements at the Antelope Ground, where the newly formed Hampshire CCC played until 1884 and matches were staged between 22 of the Southampton Union Club or Gentlemen of Hampshire and the visiting All England elevens - several of them won (with, rather than against, the odds) by the local sides. Day and Bodle often provided expert umpiring on these occasions.

Although his cricket took Day away from Southampton in the 1850s, he kept up his interests in the town. From 1853 he was listed as an inn-keeper in Terminus Terrace, where he took a site from Queen's College, Oxford, and built Day's Hotel at a cost of some £1,500 - investing his savings and the £360 proceeds of the North v South match played for his benefit in 1852. He was obliged to sell out at a loss after a few years but continued as landlord of local inns - the Cobourg and the Ship at Northam jointly in 1859, then the Britannia Hotel, Chapel and briefly, around 1863, the Red Lion at Bitterne.

"Day's Hotel" kept his name until taken over by R J Parker about 1880 and Day resumed his connection with it from 1865 until about 1878. He is also said to have kept a shop selling tobacco and cricket gear.

In the 1870s he lived at Millbrook in a house called Gothic Lodge or Cottage, then spent his last years at 9 Derby Road, the home of George Doswell - who played the role of grandson, although actually the son of the George Doswell who married Daniel Day's sister Mary Ann in 1855.

At 80, he caught a chill watching cricket at the old Antelope Ground with which he was so closely associated. A few weeks before his death on 22 November 1887 he gave a bedside interview to a representative of the *Hampshire Independent*, which later published his wide-ranging reminiscences of a long cricketing life, primarily devoted to Hampshire.

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Daniel Day was buried in the Old Cemetery, near the boundary with the Common, still the scene of informal cricket. Interred with him, at his special request, were his walking stick, batting gloves and favourite old bat, worm-eaten with age.

Postscript

The headstone on the grave of Daniel Day also records the burial there of "Charlotte Doswell who died Oct 19, 1932 aged 70, also of her beloved husband George Daniel Doswell, reunited April 19, 1947, aged 87."

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Footnote

Previous articles in *Hampshire* magazine (April 1974 and September 1980 respectively) told the full stories of the 1844 "Catapulta" game and the All-England v Southampton matches.