



A BARONET'S DIARY

SIR RICHARD FITZHERBERT

Life gives few opportunities for the true use of that phrase, but I was there on the day England won the Cricket World Cup on Sunday 14th July 2019. As regular readers will know I love my cricket and each January plan my diary around the fixtures list, especially at Lord's, and apply for various tickets to take family and friends to international matches and others in London NW8.

The Cricket World Cup (CWC) takes place every four years and the last time it was held in England was in 1999. As a member of the MCC (Marylebone Cricket Club) for the games at Lord's I had to enter a ballot for tickets. For the round robin England/Australia match I was only given one (so I sent it back to the ticket office) but I was also allocated three tickets for the final. Remember this was in January – seven months before the actual day.

With the final being held on a Sunday I travelled to London the night before. I could have picked any train but chose the 1700 from Derby and at the coffee bar espied two fellow Derbyshire MCC stalwarts. After re-arranging our seating, the banter flowed from Leicester to St Pancras, including the fact that both Messrs Stephenson and Copestake had been there in 1979 when England played West Indies in the final, losing to an inspired display by Viv Richards.

An early night followed and then a bus trip from Battersea to St Johns Wood. The change from the 137 to the 13 proved eventful as I bumped into another member who had flown down from



'I was there'

Newcastle that morning, having got up at 3am. Such was the draw of the final that, of course, featured England v New Zealand.

The official 10.30am start was put back 15 minutes due to light rainfall but my friend Paul and I were there in our seats for the toss and the news that New Zealand had chosen to bat first. My son Freddie, meanwhile, had arrived at the ground without his ticket but Eric the Uber driver drove him to Putney and back so he only missed ten overs or so. A schoolboy error.

For what has now been christened 'the game of the century' the first two innings ambled along relatively mundanely until the denouement of the final two overs in the England run chase. The Stokes 'catch' on the boundary by Boulton – adjacent to us and clearly not out – the six overthrows after the ball inadvertently rebounded off Stokes' bat and the scrambled run-outs at the end made for nerve-tangling tension... and then the Super Over situation...

We had never seen anything like it. Lords had never seen anything like it. The world had

never seen anything like it. So with a Super Over for each team, England batted first and set a target of 16. Neesham then hit Archer for a six and England's hopes looked blown apart but with New Zealand needing two off the final ball a good throw from the deep by Roy to Buttler ended with the run out of Guptill and the victory was England's.

The ground exploded with fireworks and, apart from the New Zealand supporting Essex-man in front of us, the Warner Stand stood to applaud this truly historic moment.

With the presentations over and the World Cup secured, we repaired to a hostelry in nearby Maida Vale, only to bump into a trio of Staffordshire Fitzherberts (the Catholic side of our family) to continue the revelry!

It had been quite an occasion. It had been quite a day. Freddie, Paul and I will never see another day like it.

PS My return journey to Derbyshire on the Monday was a joyous but subdued affair. We had won the World Cup! ♦

ABOVE:
Celebrating the win with Freddie

BELOW:
Lord's on the day

Contact: tisshall@dircon.co.uk