

New Patron of Malahide CC, Billy Goodwin

Conversation with Billy Goodwin (WG) on Saturday 23rd April 2022 in the Clubhouse, Malahide Cricket Club looking out onto the pitch where the firsts are playing their first competitive game of the new season against Phoenix CC. It is a busy afternoon in the Club as the fifths are up against Adamstown CC on the top pitch and there is the afters of a christening in the bar!

Billy was elected as the new Patron of the Club at the AGM succeeding his good friend Norman Adams who passed away during 2021. Previous Patrons were Joe McCleery, the Hon Rose Talbot, Lord (Milo) Talbot.

BG How do you see the role of Patron and what it means to you?

WG It is a great honour to be Patron of the Club. In terms of the role, it has changed over the years. The Talbots were the original Patrons. Then it became more ceremonial, meet and greet visiting teams and guests while the President was the equivalent of the present day Chair of the Club. Now the President is the meet and greet person and the Patron is somebody with a long association with the Club with the odd wise word here and there!

BG How long have you been involved with the Club?

WG I first played schoolboy cricket in Malahide when I was about 13 or 14 when our fixture list was limited to Clontarf and the long defunct Cremore in Glasnevin. So more than 70 years!

I first played cricket in school in The Kings Hospital School when it was located in Blackhall Place, Dublin 7 where the Incorporated Law Society is now. We played on the pitch behind the school. Younger brother Dougie also began his cricketing education in The King's Hos.

We grew up on St Margaret's Road, Malahide. There were few houses on the Road and we used to cut a cricket strip on the vacant space opposite us where we played.

BG When did you begin playing senior cricket?

WG The thirds were formed in 1954. Ivan Hughes was our first captain. And then Frank McSwiggan took over mid season. The McSwiggan homestead was across the road opposite the Club. Other players I played with in the early years were Conal Burgess, Jack Harrison, John Manning, Billy Behan, Bill Pryor, Major Vanderzee, Conor McMahon and Henry O'Shea. Vanderzee was an Englishman. Not very mobile on the pitch but a useful opening bat. He was in charge of the new Butlin's Holiday Camp in County Meath. Billy Behan's father was chief scout in Ireland for Manchester United.



BG You played 157 matches for the firsts from 1956 to 1972*

scoring a total of 609 runs and taking 44 catches as an outfielder. You have winner's medals in the 1959 Leinster Cup Final and the 1964 League title both of which were the first ever Senior One trophies for Malahide.

WG My main role on the firsts was as a fielder and latter order batsman. Usually I was at cover point and then sometimes close in, silly mid on or off. My instructions, often from AB Tony Robertson, was to play a defensive role as a batsman and make sure that we didn't lose the game. On the occasions when I was unable to comply with the instructions, AB was not overjoyed!

BG Statistics do not always tell the full story and I think your stats are a case in point. An outstanding fielder and a selfless lower order batsman is invaluable to any team. What are your memories of the 1959 Final?

WG We bowled Leinster CC out for 83. The Final was in Park Avenue, Railway Union's ground. Dougie took 5 wickets. It was his first big performance on the big stage. We won easily by 8 wickets. I remember travelling back from Sandymount on my Moto Guzzi (popular Italian motorbike). A group of us lit a bonfire outside the gates of the cricket club to welcome back the victorious team as we were being piped up the Dublin Road by the Malahide Pipe Band, past the Club, into the Village and down to Gibney's on New Street. Lewis Hughes stood on the bonnet of Tony Robertsons car outside Gibneys holding onto the aerial on the car, for balance, as he made speech after speech!

BG You captained the seconds in 1967 and 1968. Your vice captain was a fellow St Margaret's Road man, Ber Galligan. How did that go?

WG I don't think we won any trophies but we held our own. I bowled a lot more on the seconds. Mainly off cutters.

BG **"Malahide Scamper Home"** is a cricket headline from the Irish Times, 13/07/1970. It reads:

"Malahide required 2 runs for victory off the final ball of the match. Billy Goodwin snicked the ball from Alec O'Riordan through the slips and scampered through for a single with his partner Derek Connerton. The latter was safely home when wicketkeeper Fred Daly broke the wicket. Goodwin sizing up the situation better than anybody chased back for a second run. For some seconds both batsman were at the same end with the wickets down and then in a frantic scurry Connerton raced for the other end with the Belvederians vainly making a second attempt to run him out. After a quite drawn out discussion the umpires awarded the second run and Malahide secured the valuable points."

WG I remember it well. And in particular I remember Alec was not too happy, to say the least!

WG Later on I played many years for the Taverners and then around the year 2000 I captained the newly formed 6th XI for a few years to cater for the growing number of 16/17 year olds. Unfortunately, none continued to play. I was 69 when I played my last game. The game itself was memorable and a fitting end to a long career. There were 7 balls to go and 9 runs to win and deny us the League title. Fielding at long on and at full stretch I turned a 6 into a 4. Asked to bowl the last over, there were 4 singles off the first 4 balls and then I clean bowled the last 2 wickets to give us the win and the League!

BG You also played a lot of hockey.

WG Yes, I was a better hockey player than cricket. In the early days I played for Malahide Hockey Club. There were 2 hockey pitches in the old ground up to March 1953 - the mens pitch at right angles to the road at the Castle Drive end, the Ladies parallel to the road from the old Pavilion to the square which was railed off in winter. When the cricket club joined the Senior 1 ranks in 1953 a larger cricket square was needed. This had a knock on effect on the hockey. As the ladies were the senior tenants they were given the old mens pitch. Lord Talbot gave us permission to clear a space in the Lady Acre (at the back of the cricket ground near where the second pitch is today) for the mens hockey but there were major drainage issues so that never got going. The mens hockey folded but the womens team continued to play in the cricket club for many years. A number of us moved to Portrane Hockey Club where I played for the rest of my career. I played with John Neville and of course the great Paddy Neville who was a brilliant stick player. Paddy was the Irish hockey centre forward whenever his soccer duties with the Drumcondra club and the League of Ireland allowed. I came close to representative honours when I was selected for the annual fixture on St Stephen's Day when I was the only non capped player on the Leinster Select XI.

BG The second half of your story is your extraordinary years of commitment in the administrative affairs of the Club.

WG In 1963 I succeeded Conal Burgess as Honorary Treasurer and remained for the next 15 years until Kieran Leheny took over the reins in 1978.

BG What were the finances like when you were Treasurer?

WG Things were always tight. Like any Treasurer I had to keep a close eye on the cheque book. But it was smaller club back then and we kept the Club on an even keel.

BG Any tricky moments at the AGM's?

WG Not too many. In those days the AGM's were held in the old bar. About 20 or 25 members would sit around and we would go through the order of business. After we would have a bottle of beer, no draught back then. John Neville ran the bar which was weekend only. Friday nights, no women allowed! Saturday and Sundays the bar was open to all.

WG In 1965, we hosted our first senior cup final. In fact we were playing Old Belvedere. I remember overseeing a second bar where we placed a counter across the door to the kitchen in the old Pavilion. The funds generated from the Final were a welcome boost to the coffers.

The Annual Dinners were held in the old Malahide Golf Club opposite Malahide strand which was always a great night particularly the sing songs afterwards.

BG How long did you serve on the Committee?

WG I began a couple of years before I became Treasurer in 1963. I was President in 1983 and 1984 and continued for a period after. So maybe 25 years in total on the Committee.

BG The Committee oversaw a lot of changes to the Club during the

1970's and 80's.

WG Yes. In 1975 the old wooden pavilion was replaced by a new Clubhouse. Then in 1981 a new international standard square was laid by UK Pitch Consultant Peter Dury and his colleague Colin Dines and the ground was extended into the Lady Acre and surrounded by a new stone wall. And in 1983 the new bar, which is what you see today, was added.

BG And Trustee and other roles?

WG Yes, I have been a Trustee of the Club probably since the early 1970's and continue to be a director of the current Trustee company. So I suppose I have been a Trustee for approximately 50 years.

Also, I have been involved in the administration of the bar for many years, producing figures, stock taking etc.

BG You were Malahide's delegate on the Junior Branch Committee of the Leinster Cricket Union for a number of years.

WG Yes, I was on the Committee with Michael Sharp who was the Hon Secretary for many years and who sadly passed away quite recently.

BG Billy, looking back you have given extraordinary voluntary service both on and off the field to Malahide Cricket Club for over 70 years. Looking ahead for another 70 to 80 years say to the year 2100 how do you see the future for Malahide Cricket Club?

WG Well, as long as we are still playing cricket here and the Club continues to thrive. I think that would be good.

BG A final thought Billy.

WG A thank you to all of those with whom I had the pleasure of working with over all those years.

SENIOR 1 STATISTICS* compiled by Derek Scott

1954-1972 = 157 matches

Batting: 609 runs; HS 36

Bowling: 6/166

Fielding: 44 catches

Honours:

1959 - Senior Cup Win

1964 - Senior League Win (played 10 matches)

Brian Gilmore