

RAY DALY INTERVIEW 2020

Interview with the captain of Malahide CC's double winning team of 1971, Ray Daly.

On Monday 25th May 2020 on the patio outside the back entrance of the Clubhouse in Malahide Cricket Club on a beautiful sunny morning. We sat at opposite ends of the table in compliance with the Covid 19 pandemic restrictions. The ground, where no play was possible due to the virus, was in pristine condition although a little parched.

In 1971 Malahide CC, captained by Ray Daly, won the Leinster Senior League and Cup double for the first and only time in its history. Also, they were the first team since Merrion CC in 1940 to remain unbeaten for the entire season.

BG: Sean Pender, Irish Times Cricket Correspondent wrote at the time "Under the stern and inspiring captaincy of Ray Daly, Malahide adopted a bright and attacking strategy if there ever was even a forlorn chance of victory and deserve to be ranked among the best Irish club sides of recent times." Ger Siggins writing in 100 Not Out, The History of Cricket in Leinster "Malahide completed the double in 1971 with skipper Ray Daly leading from the front with 487 runs." Winning the double in 1971, undefeated, was a fantastic achievement. What are your memories?

RD: Yes, it was a fabulous year. We had a very good team, well balanced. In fact the joke was as told by our wicketkeeper Geoff Ireland that the team was so well balanced that we had five Catholics, five Protestants and an atheist Englishman called Ireland! Our bowling attack was very strong led by Dougie Goodwin and supported by fellow seamers Bobby Shaw, Gerry Ward and Ray Kelly. Future international bowler Alan Hughes was waiting in the wings to make his breakthrough. Our batting was not quite as strong with Gerry and Sean O'Brien, Derek Connerton, Joe Caprani and myself being the main run getters. Joe was near the end of his career (age 51) but he continued to have great enthusiasm which was infectious.

BG: Was Geoff Ireland the missing piece of the jigsaw – what was his story?

RD: Geoff was one of those guys who turned up at practice night one evening out of the blue, played for a season and a half and then disappeared. He was an excellent keeper with good hands. He stood up to Dougie on occasion which created more pressure on the batsmen. Also, it released Sean "Jacko" O'Brien from behind the stumps. Jacko who was a League of Ireland goalkeeper was very agile and fielded mostly at short leg where he took 20 catches which broke the Leinster record since the League began in 1919! So yes Geoff Ireland did play a very important role in 1971.

1971 Senior 1 League and Cup Winners – Total Matches Played = 19

	Runs	Wickets
R Daly	487	15
J Caprani	299	
D Connerton	284	
G OBrien	252	
S OBrien	247	
D Goodwin		55
R Shaw		38
R Kelly		31
G Ward		30

BG: It's clear from Press cuttings and other sources including Ivan Hughes History of Malahide CC (1981) that you as captain were the architect of the double. What was your approach to captaincy?

RD: Well first of all having somebody like Dougie in the side made my job a lot easier. He was unique. He bowled from one end virtually from April to September. In fact 1971 was his best ever year from an average point of view. He took 55 wickets at an incredibly low average of 6.94 and won the O'Grady Cup (Best Bowler in Leinster). Then at the other end we had Shaw, Ward and young Kelly, all very good bowlers. I think as captain I may have taken the pressure off Dougie who had been captain for the two previous seasons which allowed him to bowl with more freedom.

BG: Pender refers to you as an attacking captain with attacking field placings and always looking to win.

RD: In many ways I had no option but to attack. To win we had to bowl the opposition out. Back then there was draw cricket. The pitches were uncovered and there was quite a bit of negative play. 120, 130 was a decent total. Our bowling was strong so attacking fields made sense.

BG: There were lot of strong characters on the 1971 team including the three O'Brien brothers. Were they a difficult group to captain?

RD: No, not at all. Of course winning helps but the atmosphere was good throughout. At the end of every practice session, for about half an hour, the team and whoever else was around used to drag the heavy roller out to the square and roll the wicket. It was good for team spirit. In fact, the roller is still in the Club behind the trees adjacent to the road! Also I think my experience previously captaining Old Belvedere which included strong personalities like Alec O'Riordan helped me.



BG: Malahide 3rd XI under Dougie Keegan also won the Intermediate League and Cup double in 1971. So all round a fantastic year for Malahide.

RD: Yes and it cost me a couple of bottles of brandy! To incentivise, I offered a bottle of brandy for every 50 scored. In those days there not too many 50's let alone 100's. Anyway, Pat Young scored a hundred and Barry Gilmore scored a fifty in the Intermediate Final and they took me for three bottles!

BG: 1971 was also the year you were capped for Ireland. You must have been very happy.

1 Irish Cap v Denmark, 1971 @ Allborg, Denmark

RD: Yes, it was a great moment. In fact, I didn't get the actual cap until the following season when Irish Selector (and Hon Secretary) Jimmy Boucher presented it to me in the Malahide car park when we played Phoenix. And of course back then you had to buy your own jersey! In terms of the match it was the last game of the year for Ireland, at the end of August against Denmark. We were bowled out for 66 in the first innings in difficult conditions. I batted number 5 and scored 4. Unfortunately, I didn't get to bat in the second innings.

BG: Edward Liddle, the Irish Cricket historian wrote in your Biography note that "Ray was unlucky that his sole cap came at the end of a season 1971 in unfamiliar surroundings – Denmark – and in appalling weather, which prevented him batting twice. Perhaps, Daly would have had another chance for Ireland had his debut match not come at the season's end. As it was he returned to Leinster cricket with Malahide, continuing to score runs with freedom and consistency." Were you unlucky?

RD: I was picked in the preliminary squad for the tour of North America the following year but there were changes made and I was omitted from the final travelling group. So yes I would have loved to have played more times for Ireland but it wasn't to be.

BG: 1971 was an eventful year. In mid-season versus Merrion in Anglesea Road you bowled an over of underarm deliveries in protest against a delayed declaration. There was a headline in The Irish Times the following day which reported "Under alms at Anglesea Road"! I think the copy editor may have had hearing issues! What was the story there?

RD: I put Merrion in to bat. We had a weakened team that day, Dougie may have been on international duty and there were others missing. The Merrion captain Alex Burns took the view that as they were inserted it was up to us to bowl them out. Which to a degree was fair enough but it got to a ridiculous stage where I was lobbing up donkey drops and their batsmen were just patting the ball back making no effort to score. So I said to the umpire Tim Protheroe-Benyon what can I do here. So he said you can bowl underarm if you like. So I bowled an over of underarm deliveries. Merrion eventually declared at 7.25 in the evening. We batted for a few overs and then the game was over. A draw!

BG: Was there bad feeling after the game?

RD: Not really. I recall the team going for a drink, as normal, after the game with Merrion.

BG: A feature of your Senior Cricketing career was that you moved back and forth between Old Belvedere and Malahide. Why was this?

SENIOR LEAGUE AND CUP APPEARANCES – TOTAL 323

1958-1968	Old Belvedere	155
1969-1975	Malahide	111
1977-1979	Old Belvedere	38
1983-1987	Malahide	19

RD: It was just the way things worked out. I was in school in Belvedere College and they asked me to play for them. Also, my older brother Ken was already playing senior cricket for Old Belvedere so the connection was there. I played my first senior game for OB in 1958 while still at school. At the time, Old Belvedere was a relatively new club. They were formed in 1950 and granted Senior 1 status in 1957. In the early days I was picked as a seam bowler who batted. One early memory from that time is playing at Rathmines and dismissing Joe Caprani who was then playing for Leinster. After the game, I approached Capper for his autograph, as I was a serious autograph hunter, then aged about 15 or 16. He thought I was taking the proverbial and told me where to get off. After a while sense prevailed and all was well!

Then in 1969 I joined Malahide. Actually Bobby Shaw who came from Civil Service and myself joined Malahide on the same early season practice night. We had moved to Malahide in the early 1950's and I had played schoolboy cricket for Malahide during the

summers. My father also played and had been Secretary for Malahide so it was kind of a natural process to join Malahide. Later on around 1975 I had stopped playing for a season or so. At the time I was coaching in Belvedere College with Robin Waters. Old Belvedere asked me was I interested in turning out so in 1977 I re-joined them for a few seasons and then returned to Malahide in 1983 to finish out my senior career.

Senior League and Cup Stats 1958-1987

Matches	Runs	Average
323	6442	23.17

Wickets	Average	Catches
148	20.08	121

BG: You played in six Senior Cup Finals, four for Old Belvedere and two for Malahide. You have four winners medals. It is not a record but it is not far off it. Also, you had the unique distinction of captaining two different teams to victory. Belvo in 1966 and Malahide in 1971. What are your memories?

RD: Yes, in 1964, 65 and 66 we won all three cup finals against Malahide. Old Belvedere at the time was a young club and for the most part a young team. 1964 (Cabra) and 1965 (Malahide) were close games whereas in 1966 when I was captain we won by a big margin. In the first of the three Finals Les Lloyd and Charlie Kelly put on 55 for the last wicket which in many ways won the game for us. In the first of the three Finals in 1964, Malahide who won the League in that year, were favourites with a very strong team which included five internationals Joe Caprani, Paddy Neville, Doug Goodwin, Podge Hughes and Gerry O'Brien. In 1965 and 1966, Alec O'Riordan was in devastating form and took seven wickets in each game. One memory from the 65 Final which was played in Malahide – the game started on the Saturday and carried over onto the Sunday. After mass on Sunday morning I was in Maurice Mahon's Newsagent shop on the Diamond in Malahide when a local woman came up to me and wished me bad luck for the day, referring to the continuing final. Maurice, behind the counter, was clearly amused but diplomatically said nothing!

In 1971, I again captained, this time for Malahide, when we beat Clontarf in a low scoring game. Although the winning margin was only 29 runs, in the end the victory was comfortable. Doug took 4 wickets and young Ray Kelly won the Man of the Match with a fine performance taking 5 for 16. John Player No 6 Cigarette Brand was the sponsor. As winners, we all received an engraved Ronson Cigarette Lighter. No medals!

1972 was another low scoring encounter in Sydney Parade. The wicket was not easy. We were bowled out for 79 but then we had Pembroke on the rack at 27 for 7. However, they managed to scrape through and win by one wicket. My last final was in 1977 when I was playing for Old Belvedere v Phoenix in Malahide when we were well beaten.

6 Senior Cup Finals

1964	Old Bel 158 v Malahide 123 @ Cabra (win)
1965	Old Bel 174 v Malahide 108 @ Malahide (win)

1966 **Old Bel 210 v Malahide 65 @ Phoenix – Capt OB (win)**
1971 **Malahide 102 v Clontarf 73 @ Castle Avenue – Capt MCC (win)**
1972 **Malahide 79 v Pembroke 80/9 @ Sydney Parade – Capt MCC (lose)**
1977 **Old Bel 132 v Phoenix 135/4 @ Malahide (lose)**

BG: Six Finals and four victories. A fantastic achievement by any standards. Most cricketers rarely play in a final. Can I return to the 1972 Final between Malahide and Pembroke. It was a low scoring epic. Sean Pender reporting in the Irish Times states that there were two key moments in the game. The first was when Ray Kelly was batting – “Kelly mistakenly believing that he had been bowled by Gordon Mellon after the ball had come back off Harry Hill’s pads which dislodged the bails, started to walk and was stumped by Hill who had to uproot a stump to perform the feat.” What was your memory?

RD: Yes, we were annoyed. It was not in the spirit of the game. It definitely motivated us when we took the field.

BG: The other moment which Pender refers to was when Dougie was taken off with one over left in his spell. He had already bowled 11 overs.

RD: Yes I recall the senior players came together and we decided to hold Dougie back for one over. They were about 29 for 7. At that stage they still had another 50 to win. In the end Pembroke scraped home by one wicket.

BG: Was everything ok after the game, I mean after the Ray Kelly stumping?

RD: Oh yes, we joined Pembroke in the bar afterwards for the celebrations. In fact, I think we were the first to fill the Cup!

BG: You were an opening bat – how would you describe your technique?

RD: Very orthodox. Although in the early days I was more fluent. I was a bowler who batted. A vacancy arose at the top of the order in Old Belvedere and I became an opening bat. Our batting wasn’t strong so as opener I curbed my natural instincts. In the old fashioned style I tucked my elbows in which restricted my play. It was only later on when I completed coaching courses that I freed up my arms and began to drive. Generally, I was more of a back foot player probably influenced by the slow Cabra wickets. Scoring shots were mostly the cut and pull. My defence was solid which I would have picked up from Frank Worrell.

BG: Frank Worrell? Do you mean the great West Indian legend? One of the 3 W’s of Weekes, Walcott and Worrell fame?

RD: Yes. He coached us at Belvedere school for a fortnight at a time for two years in 1957 and 1958.

BG: Wow! How did that come about?

RD: The school brought coaches over from the UK most years. Actually, during a reunion RTE Broadcaster John Bowman was able to establish from records that it cost six guineas per week and his accommodation to bring Frank over.

BG: That was very enlightened of Belvedere. What was he like? What type of a coach was he?

RD: Very unassuming, soft spoken, very laid back. And a great coach. In fact it was my job after school to go across the road to the Belvedere Hotel where he was staying and bring him down to Jones Road near Croke Park where he coached us. He had a great affection for the game. I learnt a huge amount from him. Particularly tactical awareness.

BG: Was he still playing?

RD: Yes, very much so. He was touring the UK in 1957 with the West Indies. He hit a big hundred in one of the Tests. In those days, the tour lasted for maybe six months and he would come over to us during a gap in the schedule. We had a series of coaches including Charlie Hallows, former English test player and Vic Cannings from Hampshire.

**Frank Worrell, 1st black captain of West Indies, died 1967
4th July 1957 - 191* v England @ Trent Bridge**

Charlie Hallows, English Test Player, Worcester, Lancashire coach

Vic Cannings, Warwickshire, Hampshire, 1947-1959

BG: Did you keep in contact with Worrell?

RD: Yes, for some years afterwards. In fact, when the West Indies played Ireland in College Park in Trinity in 1957 Frank brought me into the dressing room so that I could get autographs which included a young Gary Sobers, Wes Hall, Collie Smith and Rohan Kanhai. Later on we exchanged letters. Tragically Frank died of leukaemia when he was only 42. Frank recommended me for trials with Gloucestershire, Somerset and Hampshire. I didn't go. The life of a professional cricketer in those days was very uncertain. And my father advised me to continue with my studies.

In 1959, I went to Lord's for a week's coaching. Six of us were sent over by the Irish Cricket Union and five went on to play for Ireland, Podge Hughes, Ivan Anderson, Dermot Monteith, Brendan Donaghy and myself.

BG: In an era where wickets were uncovered and scores were generally low you scored two centuries.

RD: In fact, in all the games I played I only recall two centuries scored against me. I hit a hundred in a Cup Match in Cabra and also a hundred for North Leinster. David Pigot also scored a century in that match. David and myself put on 200 for the first wicket.

116 – Old Belvedere v Leinster in 1966 @ Cabra (Cup)

100* - North Leinster v Ulster Town in 1967 @ Castle Ave (opening stand of 214 with DR Pigot 107)

BG: Cricket Historian Edward Liddle records that you were an ever present on the North Leinster side for the first nine years of the Guinness Cup Interpro competition from the start in 1966.

North Leinster Interprovincial XI - 1966-1975

Matches	Runs	Ave
30	498	18.44

BG: Who was your favourite opening partner?

RD: Probably David Pigot. He was a good player. He was 10 years older than me but we batted well together.

BG: Your Best Batting performance?

RD: Scored ninety odd against YMCA in a cup match before lunch here in Malahide. Just one of those days where everything felt right. And bizarrely, I was bowled leg stump having shouldered arms!

1970	17 catches - Leading catcher in Leinster
1975	5 catches in Field v Carlisle at Kimmage

BG: Best Batter you played against?

RD: There were a lot of good batsmen around. But if I am being honest I think Alec O'Riordan was the best. His batting was underestimated because he bowled so much.

BG: Best Bowler?

RD: Alec and Dougie. Alec was lethal against the lower order. He would just blow them away. Whereas Dougie's nagging accuracy would pressurise the top batsmen into making a mistake but would not knock over the tail in the same way as Alec. Podge Hughes was quick. But probably the quickest was Rodney Bernstein who played for Carlisle.

President Malahide CC – 1988-1990 - 3 Years

BG: You played a lot of social cricket with the Leprechauns and Meath County.

RD: Yes, Meath County, mostly on Sundays, in a beautiful ground in front of Headfort School, County Meath. In those days league cricket was confined to Saturdays. The Earl of Headfort who was an interesting character often attended. And the Leprechauns who of course are still going strong today. In 1971 I toured with the Leps to the UK where we played Essex in the County Ground in Chelmsford.

BG: Hold on, the Leprechauns played the English county team Essex, how did that come about?

RD: Tony Leon from Carlisle CC set it up. As is normal with the Leprechauns we were a varied group in terms of standard. When we arrived at the Chelmsford ground we were quizzed by the West Indian quickie Keith Boyce who was playing for Essex:

“How many fellas from the side that bowled out us in Sion Mills are playing?” Boyce asked. “None” was the reply
“So you dropped the whole team?” a puzzled Boyce.

The Essex team included many of their Test stars such as Keith Fletcher, John Lever, South African Lee Irvine and Boyce himself. Apparently, there was a misunderstanding in that Essex thought they were playing the Ireland team rather than a team from Ireland! Naturally Essex batted first and scored nearly 200 before lunch. “Heads up boys” the Leps Secretary Michael Brennan sought to reassure us at lunchtime, “only last week, they (Essex) scored 170 before lunch against Lancashire”. The only difference was that we did not have the same batting line up as Lancashire – in fact far from it! In the second innings Clayton Jones (Leinster CC) and myself opened the batting on a quick Chelmsford wicket. I took Boyce’s first over. He was off the long run. He was known to bowl over 90mph. I had never seen anyone run in so quickly to the wicket. I remember seeing the sole of his big foot landing in the popping crease and thinking to myself that if I was looking at the sole of his boot then I wasn’t watching the ball. It is the only time in my career that I lost it.

BG: Lost it? Do you mean you couldn’t see the ball?

RD: No. I mean I was angry with myself that Boyce had unnerved me so much that I wasn’t even looking at the ball. In those days we had no helmet or even a thigh pad! Anyway I survived the first over. And then left arm John Lever bowled a maiden over to Jones. Next over, I managed to top edge one from Boyce which flew down to third man. There was an easy two. I ran up to the non-strikers end to complete the first run. Jones hadn’t moved. He was standing still in his crease. I said what are you doing? He said “No way, I’m not facing Boyce, I’m not going down there!” I had to run back to the strikers end with no run scored. I can still hear the guffaws from the cordon of slips led by the “Gnome” Fletcher!

**Keith Boyce, West Indies, 21 Tests: Debut 1971
Essex County CC 1965-1977**

BG: Finally Ray after you stopped playing you did a huge amount of coaching. You must have enjoyed it.

RD: Yes, I love coaching. And I particularly like being involved with the better players. At the higher level a player will be found out if his technique is not up to scratch so I enjoy working with players from that point of view.

BG: You have coached many sides.

RD: Yes, Belvedere College for 10 or 12 years when Robin Waters became sick. Robin would sit at the side of the nets and I would do the technical stuff with the youngsters. I enjoyed giving back to my old alma mater.

I coached the Leinster brigade of the Irish Senior team in 1997 when the Irish team were preparing for the World Cup in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Irish coach Mike Hendrick was based in Belfast so I looked after the Dublin group based at the Indoor School at Wesley College.

For many years I was coach with the Leinster and Irish Schools XI. And the Irish under 17 and 19 teams including at the International Youth Tournament in Bermuda in 1997 when we came very close to winning the competition.

I coached a number of club sides including The Hills, Malahide, Balbriggan, Leinster and Railway Union.

BG: You've been involved in cricket since the early 1950's.

RD: In fact I can go back as far as the late 1940's just after the war. We were members of Merrion Cricket Club. At the time we lived in Mount Merrion. My father played for the seconds and thirds and was Team Secretary for yonks. And I used to follow my big brother on the underage team. I was seven or eight and sometimes filled in when they were short fielding at fine leg both ends! Going back even further I remember trying to bowl fast in the back garden. The odd window was broken and there would be war "That cost seven and six!" So yes playing, coaching, watching for over 70 years. In truth it's been a fabulous lifetime in cricket.

Brian Gilmore