

Durham 2000 Millennium International Cricket Festival July 29 to August 5, 2000

"I got off at Durham... and fell in love with it instantly in a serious way. Why, it's wonderful - a perfect little city.... If you have never been to Durham, go there at once. Take my car. It's wonderful."

Bill Bryson, Notes from a Small Island, 1995

Staten Island CC had a wonderful tour to Durham, England to participate in the Millennium World Cricket Festival. Durham is just 264 miles from London (less than three hours by train), 125 miles from Edinburgh (less than 2 hours by train) and 187 miles from Birmingham (just 3½ hours by train). It is on the main North-South rail network, two miles from the A1 (M) and 30 minutes drive from Newcastle International Airport.

Twelve clubs participated in the festival.

Alperhorns	Switzerland	Cosmos	USA
Mayor's XI	England	New Farnley	England
Optimists	Luxembourg	Piton Dover	Barbados
Royal Air Force C.A.	United Kingdom	Sinsen	Norway
Sporting Alfas	Spain	St. David's	Bermuda
Staten Island	USA	Svanholm	Denmark

Before I write more about the trip, I would like to include an excerpt from the column written by the Festival organizer Michael Potts in the program. " In spite of provisos I have always at heart an ethos which I heartily spread during Festivals (a secret which I kept from the council). This ethos is simple- so simple when it is presented in black and white- that it appears prosaic in extreme. It is that we; all of us, every man, woman, and child regardless, of culture, sex, political affiliation, religion, ontology, or experience are equal. Not the same, thanks god, but equal.

The obvious belief is accepted by most of us at an abstract intellectual level. To bring this belief home at a real experimental level I have brought people together. People with radically different perspective, people with nothing in common. Nothing saves a passion, a stupid passion: Cricket. The sport is played in most countries and is probably the most unlikely of global phenomena. It is a passion, which drives its victims to move around the globe in vast, uneconomic herds searching to get their "fix." It is through the sharing of an obsession that has brought us together at one place at one time. Such contact has the natural consequence of making us aware of our commonality. Contact results in friendship between people. Friendship removes misunderstanding and stereotypes. We know we are equal with the people we know.

One would believe that only the English could be so stupid as to play a game which is such an esoteric nature that those who play it have no idea of the full rules of the game.

Rules, which regulate everything from legitimate use of violence in the game to what happens if person is caught after the ball, hit a cow. This belief is a mistaken one. Cricket is one of the fastest growing sports in the world. By nature, it is one of the friendly games where over the long-playing day the teams mix. The mixing is the key to Durham Festival." Staten Island CC's trip to Durham was very much in keeping with these sentiments.

The tour started with the opening ceremonies on Saturday the 29th of July. Some of us attended the wedding of young Luke Knowles and thus could not make the opening reception. The first game was to create two divisions so that the winners and losers from each group could form a separate division to play each other. Staten Island was pitted against the Mayor's XI assuming that we will the game and play in the winner's division. To the surprise of our hosts (no surprise to SICCC) we lost to the Mayor's XI by 3 wickets. I must say the tour was so much fun because in the loser's division the clubs were very evenly matched and we have to play three more wonderful games. Two of the five scheduled games were rained out.

The highlights of the tour are many. We get to play six (seven if one is in the finals) 40 over games in one week. All eleven clubs stayed at the University dormitory. It was in itself a wonderful experience. The facilities were clean and comfortable. Full breakfast and lunch were provided at the hostel. I don not think that we have ever had a better value. The host clubs provided the usual outstanding tea. All of the cricketing facilities were good to excellent. Particular mention must be made of Sarciston SC where we played two games. The grounds and facilities were immaculate. This

very nice club hosted us with lots of warmth. Perhaps, we must try to play Sarciston on our next trip to Durham. The sightseeing opportunities were galore. The Durham Cathedral and Castle were incredible. The city and the University offered loads of fun.

As for our cricket, we played a total of four 40 over games, all of which were closely contested played in a competitive but friendly atmosphere. Charu, Wahid, and Lomesh were our aces. Rest of us did our usual chores. The scores are on our web site (statenilandcc.org). Staten Island represented itself very well on and off the field and along with Cosmos were excellent ambassadors for USA cricket. The RAF C.A. won the cup and the shield (loser's division) was won by Sporting Alfas. Once again Kudos to Clarence for arranging a very nice tour.

The next Festival is from July 27 to August 3, 2002. We have been invited to participate. We must try to do it again.

Touring Party: Clarence Modeste,
Charu Chudhary,
Anne and Ray King,
William Dinning,
Wahid Mohammed,
Carton Saney,
Michael Emmamdie,
Lomesh Persaud,
Amir Ali,
Raj Ramlal,
Kumar Balakrishnan,
Rajadurai Bavanandan

By Kumar Balakrishnan