

## Delhi World Book Fair 2006 Very Important News Item

*"O what a jovial and motley crew thou art, ye makers and sellers of books!"*

*Some reflections (with a short match report) on the occasion of the...*

*Delhi Book Fair*  
***First International Publishers' Friendly Cricket Match***  
*Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2006*  
*on the playing fields of the Islamic University, Delhi*

That an expatriate Scot who has been working for a German publisher for several decades should be allowed to report on this historic event may seem a great anomaly to many in this global world. Scotland has never been counted among the greater cricket-playing nations of this world, and I myself have never trodden the holy surface of a cricket pitch anywhere on this Earth. The nearest I ever got to batting or bowling was playing the street game we called "rounders" in Glasgow where I grew up – by the way, American baseball is an unashamed corruption of this game! And I was not allowed on the pitch this time, either – maybe at the next Fair?

*However*, I did grow up with the fascinating BBC television commentaries of test matches. In England, most of the five days of a cricket test match was spent *not* playing because of rain, so the commentators had to be extremely inventive – one of the ways they passed the time was to explain the rules of this mystic game to the uninitiated, and thus I learned the basics. I must admit that to this day I still do not understand the rules of LBW (leg before wicket), and I believe it is a mere ploy by the umpires (cricket referees) for periodically shaking up a game to stop it grinding to a numbing stalemate halt.

Anyway, Mr. Vij of Jaypee Brothers, one of the distinguished publishers, importers and distributors of India took it into his head to inaugurate a cricket match between the international publishing community and the "national" publishing and bookselling sector,

many of whose representatives were assembled in Delhi for the bi-annual international book fair. The match was most generously sponsored by Gopson's Printers, Delhi.

And, ladies and gentlemen, this event is here to stay! It will definitely be a **regular feature** of the Delhi Book Fairs, *and it was indeed very friendly!*

Not only was the weather ideal on that Sunday – warm, sunny, with a slight breeze – and the players in good spirits, but the quality of play would have been a surprise for anyone who had watched the whole match, as I did. The “internationals” were on average about 10 years older than the young'uns from the local side, but their experience, skill and determination almost helped them to success.

I was overruled in my attempts to have a handicap of 30 runs awarded to the internationals – unheard of in this man's world! I was also called to order by the Internationals' captain, Mr. Philip Walters, for advising their batsmen to “just whack it for fours” – he pointed out politely but pointedly that an exile Scot should hold his peace if he cannot differentiate between “whacking” and elegant leg-side driving (whatever that is!). We needed runs. In the end the Internationals came close to catching the locals, only falling short by 24 runs (184 to 160).

## *The Game Itself!*

### First International Publishers' Friendly Cricket Match, 29th January

International Publishers		National Publishers	
1	Mr Philip Walters, Arnold (Captain)	1	Mr JP Vij, Jaypee (Captain)
2	Mr Andrew White, Anshan	2	Mr Rehman Khan, McGraw Hill
3	Mr Alberto, Blackwell	3	Mr Sanjiv Goswami, Springer
4	Mr Kolado, Nigeria	4	Mr Venkat, Springer
5	Mr Oliver Gadsby, T&F	5	Mr Sunny Malik, EWP
6	Mr Richard Fidczuk, Sage	6	Mr Satish Jain, CBS
7	Mr Stephen Troth, Elsevier	7	Mr Gopi (T&F)
8	Mr Manzar Khan, OUP	8	Mr Santosh Verma, Thieme
9	Mr. Charles Jenkins, MacMillan	9	Mr Tarun Duneja, Jaypee
10	Mr Salluddin, Paramount	10	Mr Sanjay Banerjea, Elsevier
11	Mr Saket Budhiraja, Elsevier	11	Mr Sunil Saxena, Ane Books
12	Mr Venkat, Blackwell	12	Mr Mohit Batra, Rajat Books
23	Mr. Alastair Paul, Thieme Publishers, unused substitute	23	Mr. Alastair Paul, Thieme Publishers, unused substitute

#### **Venue :**

Sports Complex  
Maulana Mohammed Ali Johar Marg  
Jamia Milia Islamia  
Near Holi Family Hospital  
New Delhi  
Ph: 9810846202

25-overs match

Dress code: White shirt, white trousers and sport shoes (some of the gentlemen opted for somewhat off-white dress versions)

The Indian team was captained by Mr Vij, President of Jaypee Bros, and the International team by Philip Walters, MD of Hodder Arnold.



The International team

It soon became clear that the struggle was somewhat uneven. The Indian team, made up of publishers and distributors based in the country, was well favored with energetic and experienced players. In the International team, Oliver Gadsby was not entirely untypical, not having picked up a cricket bat since his schooldays 30 years previously. Other team members came from Elsevier, Blackwell, OUP and Sage. The team's savior was Charles Kingsley of Macmillan, who had played for both his college at Cambridge and the MCC, and who scored 80 runs to become man of the match. The final score saw the Indian team with 184 runs, and the visitors with 160.



The victorious Mr Vij – holding aloft his *own* donated trophy!!!!



Man of the match, Charles Jenkins of Macmillan, sought out just in time from the depths of one of the halls of the Delhi Convention Center (and he *did* whack them for fours *and* sixes!)

What I loved about this day at the Delhi playing fields was the spirit of mutual respect and acceptance shown by all participants towards all of those present. I myself, as a representative of a relative "latecomer" to the scene, was accepted with a warmth and hospitality that took my breath away. Here I come, a Scot in exile working for a European publisher, telling these experienced and passionate cricketers how to change their tactics to win the game, and they adopt me as their good luck mascot and let me have a medal!

Passion is indeed the word I have to use for the Indian attitude, not only to cricket but also to publishing and bookselling. They are passionate producers of the written word. At the source of this is their central belief in the creation and dissemination of knowledge – for the purpose improving and enriching all human life. In this they are very close to all attitudes of genuine enlightenment in this world.

Yes, I got a medal for doing nothing and enjoying myself – this confirmed to me that India is high on the list of candidates for the location of the original Paradise described in many mythologies – and I will certainly be returning to Delhi in 2 years to attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Publishers Cricket Match.

P.S. I still do not understand LBW, but maybe the umpires in heaven just want something to discuss and ruminate on for all eternity. On the other hand, we don't have to understand everything in this world, maybe just enjoy it and earn nice medals!