

# TOUR REPORT — 2007 SEASON

25th – 28<sup>th</sup>/29th May 2004



There was much excitement on May 25th as 12 Isismen good and true dashed from the trials and tribulations of the work-place and gathered at Queens college for mandatory pre-tour drinks at the start of the first ever Isis international cricket tour. Wiblin put himself in line for the 2007 duck award by a) forgetting to bring the eagerly awaited club shirts and b) coming dressed as Captain Nemo in a very smart naval jacket. Thoughts of the gruelling journey ahead were forgotten as mine hosts the Cross's served us with beer and raped us of our tour pocket money in a game of poker. And when the clock eventually struck 8<sup>1/2</sup> bells it was time for the off as the men of Isis boarded the Stoneman- and Whiter-mobiles and started the journey to North Wales.

## Who went on Tour?

- Simon Godby
- Jack Hart
- Brendan Lewis
- David Penhallurick
- Keith Ponsford
- Rob Randall
- Matt Randall
- Harry Stoneman
- Stumpy Stoneman
- Olly Walter
- Lester Whitby
- Keith Whiter
- Pete Wiblin
- Nick Wyatt

Stoneman immediately fell behind the pace and was left sauntering up the A34 as Whiter's crew joined the M40 and headed for Birmingham and the M6 toll road. When Godby's bladder could last no longer, a piss-stop was called for and following much needed relief the boys took on solids. The Stoneman-party entered the service station as the lead vehicle set off again, but Ponsford's navigation went awry and around the Stoke-on-Trent area Whiter left the M6 on a short-cut that took him on a fifty-minute detour back towards Stafford. Less haste, more speed M Whiter!! By the time the right roads were found and the party progressed into North Wales, the on-board beer had run out and time ticked on. By 12:30 both cars made it to Holyhead and we joined the queue for the ferry. Brendan Lewis, tour bitch, nearly had an accident and with no loo in sight proceeded to run madly up and down the line of cars. He still hadn't relieved himself before the line proceeded to board the boat and some ten

minutes later he was seen dashing up the stairs looking very worried. The rest of the party set up camp on the passenger deck and the drinking began again. While some made makeshift beds on the stage, Nick Wyatt started a poker-winning streak that lasted just about the whole weekend. Gradually the youngsters cried off and found whatever space they could for some beauty sleep, while Ponsford, Whiter, Whitby, Lewis and Godby saw the night through and watched the sun rise on a blustery aft deck. Soon the passengers stirred as the ferry entered the Liffy and the ship arrived in Dublin.

Bleary eyed and white faced we returned to the cars, and as we left the dock area and entered the city, all but two of the party were snoring soundly as we started a 3<sup>1/2</sup>-hour journey across Ireland. Once we had found



## TOUR REPORT — 2007 SEASON

the M4, and then the N4, the journey was fairly uneventful, though two hours later the drivers were glad to take a break at a Longford garage for bacon butties, coffee and a glance at Wiblin's porno mag. After rest, the boys hit the N5 for the journey towards Castlebar. By this time Whiter for one was starting to get very droopy eyed, so a blast of the Saw Doctors and a seated rendition of the Tommy K dance was employed to re-energize the batteries. In time we passed through Castlebar and when the mighty Croagh Patrick loomed into sight there was much relief as 30 minutes later we descended into the beautiful town of Westport. While Stoneman winged (fineable offence) about not being able to check into the hotel until the afternoon, the rest of the boys enjoyed a hearty SuperValue full-Irish breakfast across the square. We then headed along Clew Bay to Old Head beach for some much-needed sea-breezes, and while Stoneman caught some Z's a game of Frisbee and a walk along the sands ensued. Sunshine through the morning was interspersed with light rain, but there was never any threat to the afternoon's cricket. "Is this rain because of the mountain and the bay", asked Brendan. "No, its because it's Ireland", replied Mr Whiter. In time we headed up to Moneen to pick up the natives (Mr. and Mrs. Penhallurick) together with jet-setting brother Matt Randall, fresh in from Washington, and we all then headed on to Castlebar for the first game of tour.



When we eventually arrived at The Mall the Mayo team were gathered in readiness and preparing a wicket that looked softer and more fertile than a bag of compost! I am not sure what the device being used to level the wicket is called, but it certainly wasn't a roller— it was a kind of heavy metal plate on a pole, which was pounded into the soft ground. While this was originally landowner Lord Lucan's cricket green, compared to the majesty of Queen's it was different class. We men of Isis truly do not realise how lucky we are sometimes! No offence to the locals though, you have to admire their dedication and pluck. Anyway, the players headed into Daly's Hotel to get changed, and then twelve-

men of Isis spread themselves out around the field as the home team came into bat, watched by a bemused assortment of locals wondering what the hell was going on in the middle of their town. One chap on the pathway (the boundary) behind the bowler's arm, clearly amused at the spectacle of a game of cricket (whatever that is), was seen to suddenly gather up three small children and herd them to cover after Ponsford bowled a couple of balls that were smacked back for six over his head, a fine Irish welcome indeed. Once the useful early order Sri Lankan contingent were dismissed though, wickets started to fall and the home side were dismissed for a lowly 114 after only 29 overs—an easy target surely. Back into Daly's then for sandwiches and tea (the umpire declined tea and took on more of the black stuff) while Isis plotted how they would go out to bat and knock off the runs. Umm—that was the idea anyway. It could have been local



## TOUR REPORT — 2007 SEASON

knowledge of course, but when the innings started the ball seemed not to bounce so much as it had earlier, and top-order batsmen (and others besides) were felled to shooter after shooter. Somehow, Walter contrived to make a lofty 15 runs, but with nobody else making it over 5, and extras top-scoring with 32, Isis were dismissed for 69 and Mayo claimed their victory. One side bemused, one side amused, the teams changed into civvies and met in the bar and after a few pints had been sunk a fines meeting was convened, presided over by Chairman Keith Ponsford. Everybody paid in some way, but our one chance to turn the tables on the treasurer was too good a chance to miss and Wiblin was fined unmercifully for all manner of offences. In time we thanked Daly's for their hospitality, thanked Mayo cricket club for their camaraderie and headed back to The Wyatt hotel to check-in and get ready for a night of revelry.



Tour traditions held up as we firstly met in the hotel bar for a couple of crafty pints before heading up the hill for the tour curry. But what a mistake that was! One waiter, one chef and a restaurant full of diners who were looking forward to satiating their hunger before getting on it in the local bars. The food was fair enough, once it came, but it took some two hours for some of the party to be served, so that by the time we hit the bars they were already starting to close.

Thankfully, The Wyatt was accommodating though, and while the exertions of 36+ hours with little or no sleep forced some to bed, others finished the night with a few more beers. Nick Wyatt (no relation) won yet another game of poker to finish off the day, and by 4 a.m. all were soundly asleep tucked up in bed.

Six hours later and everybody was up and availing themselves of full Irish breakfasts in the hotel restaurant, before meeting up for a morning excursion. Whiter led the party out of Louisburgh and onto the famine walk memorial at Doo Lough, where the breath-taking view of the lake and surrounding Sheffrey Hills truly captured the party's imagination. After many photos were taken the party drove down through Delphi, alongside Killary Harbour (Ireland's only natural



## TOUR REPORT — 2007 SEASON

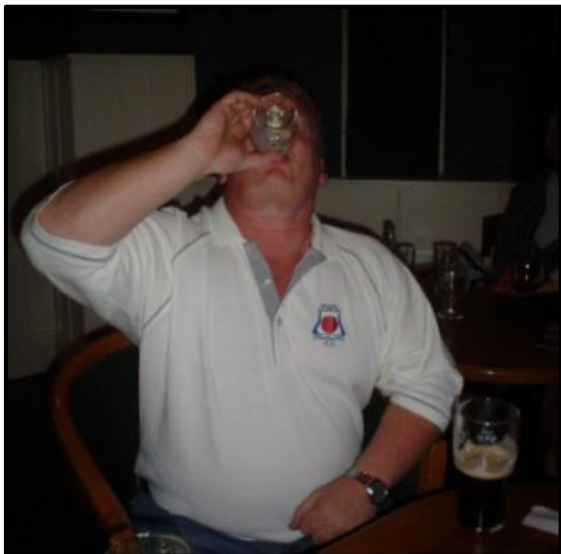


fjord) before stopping again at the magnificent Aisleigh Falls for more photos and a chance for the Isis youth to play on the rocks under the bridge. The old codgers chose to stay in Stoneman's car and muttered about wanting coffee. As time dragged on it became evident that we were some distance from Castlebar, so that a mad dash was on if we were to make it for the afternoon kick-off. Some 45 mins later than planned the cars arrived at The Mall and Isis hastily adorned their whites for another foray onto the Mayo wicket.

A 30-over, 13-a-side match ensued in which Isis restricted the opposition to 96 and actually managed to make the target, with Whitby and Penhallurick starring by being the only batsmen to make double-figures. And so, honours were even for the tour, and after group photos were taken we once again met in Daly's for after-match drinks and more fines. Forgoing a stop at The Wyatt on the way back a decision was taken to eat at The Tavern (the so-called "Pink Pub") at Murrisk where a quite awesome meal was had by all (the Atlantic seafood chowder was to die for!). While some dashed off to Bertra Strand to watch the sun set over Clew Bay, the rest finished their meals at a leisurely pace and in time we headed back to Westport ready to hit the town. A quick shower and change, another cheeky pint in the

Wyatt and the party crammed into Matt Malloy's, where the Guinness flowed, local musicians entertained in the back room and a bloody good time was had by all. Harry Stoneman performed well in the game of heads and tails, and was convinced he was being victimised. Around the one o'clock watershed an advance party set up camp in the hotel bar and once everybody who was up for the craic was in place, the drinking games started. Whiter was hoisted by his own petard when he lost the spoof and was obliged to neck an elephant snot (a sherry and Bailey's mix). A double round of Guinness was ordered and a games of 21's ensued, at which Jack Hart was particularly pathetic and was forced to speed drink at just about every other call. Rob Randall was in fine form, refusing to go to bed and sleeping at the table, even failing to be roused by an assortment of objects being balanced on his head,

## TOUR REPORT — 2007 SEASON



including at one time a half-full pint of Guinness. Slowly but surely the party started to break up though and a game of poker was announced in the Wyatt/Walter room. As a precursor, and at just about the same time as Jack Hart was in his room throwing up into the wastepaper basket, the poker boys made a dash for the local greasy spoon, where rank and tasteless burgers were available until 3 in the morning. There we were entertained by the local 18-to-20-somethings, who'd all been on it and were getting leery. Funniest was some guy getting bitch-slapped by a truly horrendous creature who calmly stopped her tirade to collect her burger before wailing into the hapless lad she was with once again. Nice. So, back to the poker where it was all the boys could do to stay awake and Harry Stoneman proved to be rock-and-roll as he calmly finished up any and all of the remaining Guinness, winning the poker to boot! Gratefully the tourists welcomed sleep and taking advantage of the late breakfast service enjoyed an extra hour in bed too.

After another hearty breakfast the Isis boys packed their bags and Whiter paid the hotel bill. Coming in under budget for the weekend,

a decision was taken to spend the surplus on tickets to a first-class 20/20 game, as an excuse to reconvene the party later in the season. And so we happily headed off, firstly to Murrisk Abbey and the famine memorial, and then on to Carrowmore Strand, where the magnificent beach and fantastic views of Clare Island were scorned as most of the party lined up to throw stones at a rock (feckin' ejits!). And so, on to Mr P's for games of darts, pool, table-tennis, poker and to watch England destroy the West Indies in the test match. A fabulous Penhallurick lunch and a few cold ones in glorious sunshine were the dog's bollocks, but as the afternoon wore on there was no choice but to start the long journey back across Ireland to Dublin and the ferry home. The journey was fairly uneventful until we got near the M4. After stopping for more photos along Clew Bay, and taking a couple of unplanned detours along the way, Whiter eventually



## TOUR REPORT — 2007 SEASON



caught up with Stoneman just before the N4 became the M4, and taking advantage of the duel carriageway pinned back his ears and sped off towards Dublin. Once the Whiter-team had gotten to Dublin they drove up O'Connell Street hunting for a pub and a meeting point. Thirty minutes later, with parking at a premium and no suitable meeting points found, it was decided that we should just meet at the ferry and drink the fines on board. No problem said the other car, who were just on the road to the port. There was no further incident until Whiter's party were on board and had secured pole position in the lounge. As the first drinks were being taken, a phone call from Olly Walter announced that the other car was lost in Dublin. Who knows what six able-bodied men were thinking, and if they'd have been awake when they left the port two days earlier perhaps things would have been different, but it turned out that they had of course headed off to Dun Laoghaire. By the time they had got back into Dublin, found the Liffy and followed it to the sea, the rest of the party were highly amused and watched as the Stoneman-mobile nearly took off at the speed hump and screeched up to a locked gate as the final trucks were loaded. In slow motion it seemed, the ship slowly drew out of the harbour, and while the laggards headed back into Dublin to find somewhere to spend the night (Jury's Inn, pizza, poker, early night), the rest were on board and drinking the fines. Ponsford proved a dab hand at Pontoon and the journey back to Wales passed quickly. An interminable drive back down the M6 saw five anxious passengers trying to keep driver Whiter awake, but after a few coffee stops they made it back to Oxford in one piece, and slowly but surely the party were dropped at home and the tour was over. What happened with the others, nobody knows, but by all accounts they drew into Wales shortly after lunch that same day and made it home before dark. All in all, a bloody good weekend, and even though the 20/20 tickets fell by the wayside, given that the six feckin' ejits squandered any remaining money on ferry excesses and an extra night in Dublin, it all went more or less to budget.

This account cannot go without mention of one man, Michael Rabbet, stalwart of Mayo cricket. When we eventually arrived in Mayo for the tour, he welcomed us with open

## TOUR REPORT — 2007 SEASON

arms. He was there for the first game, he was there for the curry and for the beer afterwards. He was there for the second game, he was there for the Pink Pub afterwards, and he was even there for the lunch at Mr. P's on the Monday too. If it was not for his wife and work he'd have probably joined us on the boat home as well. A genuinely nice bloke who helped make the weekend a success! But my, could that guy talk. While he bonded with any and all of us, it soon became a bit of a tour laugh to see who was being "Miked" at any particular time. Whiter won on the Saturday curry night, Ponsford won in Daly's, Whitby won at the Pink Pub (as his dinner got colder and colder) and Wyatt won in the hotel bar on the Sunday evening. Just about everybody was Miked at some time over the weekend. No sweat though, harmless fun, and without him Mayo cricket might not even exist. If you read this Mike, fair play to you sir—you are a gentleman and a scholar and we are very grateful for your hospitality over what was a memorable Isis tour. *Go raibh maith agat.*

TOUR FINES	
Offence	Fine (euro)*
Forgetting to bring euros	5
Wrong-handed drinking (fines chairman to declare appropriate sessions)	0.50
Lateness (for anything!)	1
Non-attendance at breakfast	2
Most unusually or most fineable dress-sense for the evening (party vote)	5
Fraternising with the opposite sex while out with the lads	5
Telling Irish jokes in any bar	5
Trying to pull a 50-year+ femail and failing	20
Retiring to bed before 1:30 am on any day of tour	5
Rising from bed after 9 am on any day of tour	10
Drinking lager on tour	2 (per pint)
Drinking ladies drinks or alcopops on tour	1 (per drink)
Any form of whinging to the tour organiser, captain or fines chairman (don't whinge – pay your fine and take it like a man!)	2 (per whinge)
Inappropriate behaviour of any form (decided by the fines chairman)	at discretion
Forgetting or losing passport	20
Refusing sex with a fellow tourist (exclusive fine for Brendan Lewis )	5
Failing to buy a jug after 50 runs, 5 wickets or 3 catches	2 jugs
Out for a duck	2
Out for a golden duck	4
Out for more than 0 but less than 10 runs	1
Bowlers 0 for plenty fine	4
Any wide or no-ball	1 (per extra)
Missed run-out (wicket-keeper's fine)	2
Running out of a team-mate on tour	3
Use of the "Isis five-toed foot-fielding on or near the boundary" technique while on tour	2
Other mis-fields (except dropped catches)	1
Dropped-catches	2
Refusing to umpire	5
Refusing to score	5
Forgetting any item of kit (non-playing tourists excluded)	3 (per item)