

## Ian Collins (1965 - 2021)

One or two of you may have heard some of us "oldies" using the expression "True Crosser" .... one who enjoys life to the full, with an apparently carefree approach to the game, but generally abiding by the club's motto "Keep Smiling".

In my opinion there are few better examples of a "True Crosser" than Ian Collins , who sadly passed away on Wednesday 21st July.

Ian joined GXCC as a colt in the 1970's and was good enough to play adult cricket at the young age of about 13. Ian was a very gifted sportsman and cricketer, playing for most of the GX teams and becoming a valued member of the Saturday 1st X1.

As a batsman, Ian was elegant and could play all the shots with delightful ease. At the crease he had a charmingly or disconcertingly laid back demeanour (depending upon which side you were on), but this disguised a fierce determination and will to win. I have fond and vivid memories of various superb match winning innings that Ian notched for the Saturday 2's, that I was privileged to captain in the 1980's. In one match against Tring Park we were chasing 200 (a big score in those days) and opener Ian was becalmed on about 15 after 20 overs. I put my pads on ready to assume my occasional role as sacrificial slogger. Ian must have seen this folly, for 10 overs later he was 130 not out and the match was won!

As a bowler, Ian was capable of bowling very fast. On his day he could also bowl very straight. My favourite recollection was when we were playing Basingstoke, whose opening batsman had long been the league's heaviest scorer. I gave Ian the new ball and told him to give it all he's got. The first two balls were fast wides, almost breaking the hands of 2nd slip. However, the third delivery sent the middle stump cartwheeling out of the ground, to howls of laughter from the Crossers that day. The batsman couldn't quite believe what had happened, but then neither could we!

By the late 1980's Ian's younger brother Murray was also playing and when paired together, they were certainly the most aerobic in an otherwise somewhat creaking XI.

Ian could sometimes be highly self-critical if he felt he was performing below par. In one hilarious episode, Ian top edged a simple catch to mid-on and he decided to walk back to the pavilion past the bowler's end, as he felt there was no chance it could be dropped. Looking down, shaking his head and talking to himself in self-chastisement, Ian plodded on. Meanwhile mid-on dropped the catch and fell over backwards, eventually retrieving the ball and throwing it to the bowler who also dropped it. By the time the bails were off for what should have been a simple run-out, Ian had plodded past the popping crease, wholly unaware that his luck was in. We had to shout out "You're still in

Ian, you're still in ". Somewhat bemused and embarrassed, Ian returned to the crease, then hitting a fluent 50.

Ian went on the GX tour to South Africa and also on our annual west country tour to North Devon. One of the great sights was seeing Ian hit multiple sixes onto the beach at Westward Ho! Ian's pace also unsettled a good number of North Devon batsmen as he was one of very few who could get some life out of those low and slow wickets.

In the early 1990's I had the pleasure of working with Ian, as he joined the same company, when he was training to be a Chartered Surveyor. Ian was an extremely popular member of staff, not only due to his commitment, but also due to his brilliantly infectious and original sense of humour that had an uplifting effect upon all that he met.

Ian could invariably see the funny side of most things and I'm pretty certain that if he knew that I was writing this tribute for him, he would be roaring with laughter!

Ian was a "True Crosser" in every sense and he will be greatly missed. I know that Ian had often worked abroad in recent years and I hadn't seen him for quite some time, but his memory will certainly stay with me forever. My thoughts and prayers are with all of Ian's family for their sad loss.