



EMERY Philip Allen (1964- At Shore 1973-1982 (Register No. 11737)

1st XI 1979-1982 (captain 1981-82), GPS 1st XI 1980-82 (captain 1982), NSW Schoolboys 1st XI 1981

NSW 1988-1999, Australia 1994.

Wicket-keeper, middle-order batsman.

First-class career. 121 matches: 3292 runs (26.12), 1 century; 337 catches, 47 stumpings. 74 one-day matches: 84 catches, 17 stumpings.

Test career. 1 match: 8 runs (retired hurt); 5 catches, 1 stumping. He also played one ODI (3 catches).

Phil Emery became Shore's 1st XI wicket-keeper at the age of 14. Even at that tender age (he was known as "Bubba"), he looked destined for a first-class career. He captained the XI to a joint premiership in 1981. In his second year as captain, Shore lost just one match all season, against the eventual premiers, Sydney High School: Shore were runners-up. He played First Grade for Gordon soon after leaving school, and took over from Greg Dyer as New South Wales wicket-keeper late in the 1988-89 season (he also made 83 in the second innings of his first match, having been sent in as night-watchman). He was soon recognised as one of the most reliable keepers in Australia, and as a more than useful batsman down the order. New though he was to the first-class game, he might well have been in contention for the Test position taken, and occupied with great distinction, by Ian Healy in 1989. But Phil continued to serve New South Wales magnificently, keeping with great success to spinners in the responsive SCG wicket, as well as standing back to the likes of Lawson, Whitney and Holdsworth. As a batsman, he made 17 first-class fifties and one century, and opponents were always glad to see the back of him.

In 1992-93 and 1993-94 Phil was given the job of captaining New South Wales, an onerous task for a wicket-keeper at the best of times. That Phil not only did the job well, but in fact led NSW to its 41st and 42nd Sheffield Shield title, speaks highly for his tactical nous and his leadership qualities. Also in these two seasons he skippered the team to victory in the Mercantile Mutual One Day Finals - a unique and first time event in NSW cricket history. Altogether he played in five State finals, of which three were won by NSW.

In October 1994, Ian Healy, on tour with the Australians in Pakistan, was injured. There was no other keeper on tour, and the question was, who of the other keepers in Australia could be relied on to take Shane Warne? There was only one answer: Philip Emery. So he flew to Lahore to keep for his country: first in the final of the Wills Triangular Series, in which he took 3 catches and allowed no byes; and then in the third Test in which, despite a badly bruised thumb sustained while batting, he took four catches, and a stumping off Warne, in the second innings of a drawn match. Incidentally, he retired hurt with his bruised thumb with 2 runs to his name, but returned later in the innings to amass 6 more.

On March 13th 1997, against Tasmania in his 100th match for New South Wales, Phil scored his only first-class 100. He completed his century with a very sharp single, and only just made his ground amid loud appeals from the Tasmanians. The square-leg umpire, also a Shore Old Boy, when asked about his very tight decision, gave a memorable answer: "I wasn't even looking." Quite right too.

Many good judges thought that Phil was the best wicket-keeper in Australia, even though Ian Healy filled the Test position magnificently. But life is full of "might-have-beens", and he, and indeed all of us at Shore, can take pride in his achievements for New South Wales. And the esteem in which he was held by his fellow-players is clearly illustrated by the fact that when Healy's injury occurred and Australia called, Phil was the one they sent for.