



## 19 Philip Albert Myburgh (Pam) Hands

**P**hilip Albert Myburgh (Pam) Hands was the middle brother of the set of three Hands brothers who represented South Africa in cricket. Of the three brothers, Pam had the most successful cricketing career. The eldest Hands brother's very promising cricket career was cut short by his premature death in World War I (see Reg Hands above – details about Pam Hands' ancestors can also be found in the piece on Reg).

Pam Hands was born on August 13, 1890 in Claremont, Cape Town. Pam, like his two brothers, Reg and Kenneth Charles Myburgh (Ken), was educated at the Diocesan College, where they all represented the First XI as well as the First XV. In addition, all three brothers became Rhodes Scholars and all three of them won their rugby Blues while studying at Oxford. Reg and Pam gained further rugby honours when they played for the South African Army XV versus the New Zealand XV during World War I. Finally, all three brothers served with distinction in World War I. Pam Hands rose to the rank of major, and served with the Royal Heavy Artillery in France and was awarded the DSO (Distinguished Service Order) and the MC (Military Cross).



Pam Hands attended Bishops from 1901 till 1908, when he passed the matriculation exam (first class) and was awarded the Rhodes Scholarship. He began his studies at University College, Oxford, in 1908. There he represented the College in rugby and cricket, and also got his Oxford University Authentics cap for cricket. He won his Blue for ice-hockey in 1909, and his Blue for rugby in 1910. He studied law and obtained an Honours degree in Jurisprudence (third class) in 1911. Of all the cricketing lawyers who appear in this book, only Pam Hands' qualification on the basis of a legal career could possibly be questioned. Although he studied law at Oxford, I could not find any positive trace of a legal career in either England or South Africa. Although one source states that he was a chartered accountant from 1911 (ie, the year when he returned from Oxford to South Africa) to 1940, at least two other sources confirm that he was only admitted as an accountant after 1913. In a letter his elder brother Reg wrote to the Warden of Rhodes House in September 1913, he states that "Pam is gradually qualifying as an accountant and hopes to take his final [examination] in December [1913]". Nevertheless, on his return to South Africa he may have practised law for a short period

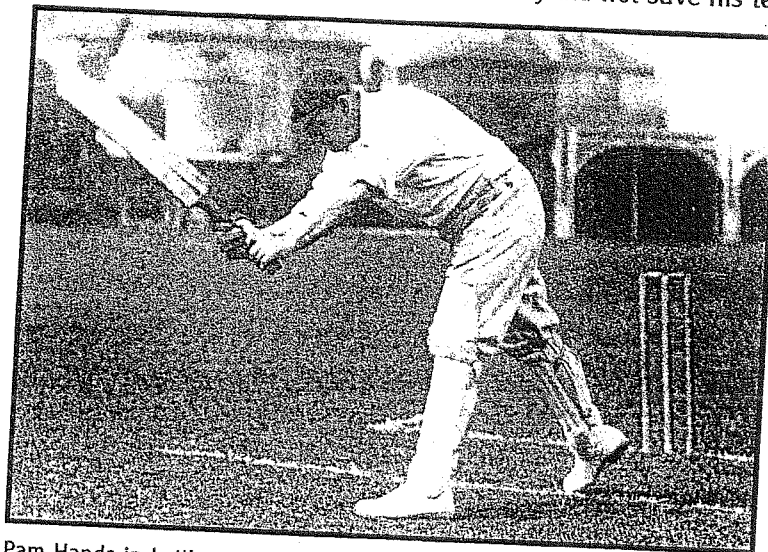
A debonaire Pam Hands, fresh from Oxford with an Honours degree in Jurisprudence, circa 1912, aged 22



of time during 1911 and even during early 1912. What type of legal work he did, if any, is highly speculative. However, what we can be sure of is that after his return to South Africa he decided to change careers and qualified as an accountant. A newspaper report dating from 1914 describes his profession as "accountant in Cape Town". In 1919 he was admitted as a partner to his father's accounting and auditing firm, Hands and Shore. But it cannot be ruled out that he might also have acted as legal advisor to his father's firm of accountants while working there as an accountant. After all, he did hold an honours degree in Jurisprudence from Oxford. He was also an incorporated accountant in England and retired from his profession in 1940.

Pam Hands married Sybil Joyce Marais in 1920 but the marriage was later dissolved, and he never remarried. One son - Philip Reginald (Reg) (who was given his second name in honour of his predeceased Uncle Reg) - was born from this marriage. Pam and his wife spent some time in England and Europe during the English summer of 1931. During this period he applied and was recommended for a post as tutor at Oxford. We cannot be sure whether he took up the post, or in which discipline he taught. Perhaps he even taught law at Oxford, who knows?

Of the three Hands brothers, Pam was by far the most successful cricketer. He represented the Western Province cricket team from 1906 till 1927 and played for them in 13 Currie Cup games and 11 other first-class games. He is described in contemporary reports as a "fine upstanding and powerful player, who has much improved his defence ... [h]e bats right-handed, and is a good field, but not much of a bowler". Except for a tendency to hit big sixes, his batting was a model for young cricketers -- correct and quick-footed (despite his bulk) and breathing aggression. He played many a fine innings for Province. Arguably the best of all was his 119 out of a total of 192 against Transvaal at the Wanderers, Johannesburg, on a matting wicket, in December 1923. The second highest score was 21. Although his magnificent and brave century did not save his team from suffering a huge



Pam Hands in batting pose, turns one away to the leg side

defeat at the hands of the home team, it won him a place in the 1924 South African side that toured England. He played EP (Buster) Nupen (a world class bowler on matting wickets) magnificently. (See Nupen below.) He apparently came off the field "perspiring but triumphant, with his great thigh and buttocks all colours of the rainbow from Nupen's sizzling, unidentifiable off-break".



But Nupen had the last laugh – he had Hands caught by Louis Duffus off his bowling and he took six wickets in Province's second innings.

Pam Hands played in seven official and two unofficial tests. He began his test career in 1913/14 against JWHT Douglas's English team. He played in all five tests and finished third on the list of batting averages for South Africa. In the first test in Durban he scored three and 14 (incidentally, in the same test PT Lewis made his only appearance for South Africa – see Lewis, above); in the second test in Johannesburg he scored nil and 40; in the third test in Johannesburg he scored 26 and seven; in the fourth test in Durban he scored 51 and eight; and in the final test in Port Elizabeth he scored 83 and 49. He also bowled eight overs for 27 runs in the second test. His 281 runs in the series were scored at an average of 28.10. He took one catch in the fourth test.

The second series in which he played was in 1919/20 against HL (Herby) Collins's Australian Imperial Forces team. He played in both the unofficial tests in that series and scored ten and 21 in his two innings in the first test. In the second test he scored nine in the first innings and did not bat in the second innings due to illness. Both tests were played in Johannesburg.

His sixth test was played against WW (Warwick) Armstrong's Australian team in 1921/22. He only played in the third and final test at Newlands, Cape Town, and scored nil and 19. After South Africa's second innings the two sides' scores were level and Australia needed just one run in their second innings to win the test and the series 1-0. Pam Hands bowled the first and only ball in the Australian second innings from which the winning run was scored.

On the 1924 tour in England he was not a first choice for the tests, largely because he could no longer throw effectively. His seventh and final test was played against England during the South African tour of 1924. However, this test, the fourth of the series, was ruined by rain and Hands did not face a ball in the entire game. During his test career Hands had 12 innings, scored 300 runs which included two fifties, and had a highest score of 83. His test average was 25. He took three catches in tests.

Pam Hands suffered from chronic bronchitis as a result of mustard gas poisoning in World War I and died suddenly in Parys in the Free State on April 27, 1951. He was apparently only visiting there, because he lived in Hermanus, where he was instrumental in starting cricket at the boys' school – he even helped to lay out the pitch.

(See Anon "Major P Hands dead" *Cape Argus* Monday 30 April 1951 1; Anon "Death of Pam Hands" *Cape Times* Wednesday 1 May 1951 7; Anon "SA Rhodes Scholars" *Sunday Times* Sunday 26 April 1914 17; Colin Bryden (ed) *South African Cricket Annual 1999* Vol 46 (1999) 156; Geoffrey A Chettle *South African Cricket Annual 1955* Vol 4 (1955) 182; ID Difford (ed) *The MCC Team in South Africa (1913-14)* (1913) 104-106; Diocesan College "OD Cards – PAM Hands" and OD Magazine; Paul Dobson *Bishops Rugby: A History* (1990) 136, 210, 239; Robin Isherwood and Philip Bailey *Western Province Cricketers: 1889/90 – 1995/96* (1996) 9 and 28; MW Luckin *South African Cricket 1919-1927* (c1927) 305; AC Parker *WP Cricket - 100-not out* (1990) 39 and 197; *Rhodes House File* sv "PAM Hands"; *Rhodes Scholar Register* sv "Hands, Philip Albert Myburgh"; and *Sports and Sportsman* compiled and edited by the *Cape Times* (c1924) 314-315.)