



The Cricket Society

NEWS BULLETIN

CORRESPONDENCE: David Wood, Hon Secretary, PO Box 6024, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 2ZS
or by email to davidwood@cricketsociety.com

LIBRARIAN: Howard Milton, 46 Elmfield Close, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 0LP
WEB SITE: www.cricketsociety.com

President: John Barclay

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

NOTHING IN HIS CAREER BECAME HIM LIKE THE LEAVING OF IT (With apologies to The Bard of Avon)

Although the Editor could never be described as a pillar of the cricketing establishment (although one missive from Australia seemed to think I was the power behind MCC!?), some of the modern 'improvements' to batting styles tend to meet with my disapproval. Reverse sweeps make me shudder; KP's attacks (when batting, that is) made me bewail the lack of a basic straight-bat technique and David Warner just makes me think – slogger! And so on.

However, Brendon McCullum is another matter entirely. Watching New Zealand lose early wickets in their second Test against Australia and seeing the talented Kane Williamson inching to just three runs in over sixty deliveries was a painful experience until the world turned upside down. Having been beaten comprehensively by his first ball, Brendon McCullum sliced the next ball over the slips for four and then began to construct something of true wonder. With most bowlers going for barely one an over, Mitchell Marsh entered the attack and jaw-droppingly, saw his first over go for twenty one runs. And that was just for starters. McCullum reached his half-century in thirty four balls and then decided to accelerate. Twenty balls later, he reached the fastest century in Test history and then decided that he could then relax and 'have a dip.' A baffled Steve Smith seemed to have taken a leaf out of the Kim 'what-in-the-world-can-I-do' Hughes book on captaincy and then, in desperation, set a field with most people in no-known positions, including two fly-slips. The latter was so fine that Steve Smith became the first captain in heaven knows how long to effectively employ a long-stop. It was fabulous fun.

But there is something more than just a hitter having his finest hour. McCullum has announced that he will be retiring from International Cricket and this was his last Test match. It is given to very few players to be able to say that they leave cricket in a better place than when they joined the fray but McCullum is one such man. It is not just his positive attitude to batting that has made spectators sit up but it is the manner in which he has taken a New Zealand side, not just to an improved position in world cricket but to that of leaders in sportsmanship who have caused other Test teams to follow their admirable example. The New Zealand team do not sledge; they do not whinge about umpiring decisions and they are the first to congratulate an opposing player when he produces a match-winning bowling performance or a great batting one. It's sometimes amusing to see other sides having to bite back a nasty comment when a batsman plays and misses or have to remain silent when the stump-microphone is alert for any attempt to intimidate a new batsman, suddenly realising that the old ways have become a no-go area.

I shall miss just about everything about Brendon McCullum and yet (and there always seems to be an 'and yet') he will be around for some time to come as he plies his trade in the seemingly never-ending round of T20 competitions that litter the globe. A possible portent of the future when talented players give up the kudos of the longer game for the readily-available awards of what used to be called 'hit and giggle' by county pros? I don't know but I hope not.

I don't begrudge Brendon, however, a penny of his future earnings as it is will be a small payback for the improvement that he personally has brought about in world cricket and for the way in which one determined sportsman can change prevailing attitudes. It would be nice if he reconsidered his decision to quit the International scene but I doubt it. He is a man who makes up his mind and sticks to it.

All I can do from a non-partisan source is to offer him my heartfelt thanks for what he has achieved and to hope that his spirit will live on in cricket.

In the words of the very old song – So long, it's been good to know you or perhaps, more aptly – Thanks for the memory.

John Symons

(Please note: the views expressed in the Cricket Society News Bulletin Editorials and Notes are those of the author and not of the Cricket Society as a whole.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

How strongly I agree with Ron Price's letter in the Feb / March Bulletin where he expresses his lack of understanding as to why a bowler in a limited-overs game is restricted to a pre-ordained number of overs whereas a batsman can bat for as long as he is able. Good for the batsman, but where's the justice in that, or the logic?

The answer presumably is in the belief in some quarters that the best entertainment is provided by batsman filling their boots, and games using as many of the allotted overs as possible. We don't want any bowler having a good day, settling into a long spell, challenging the batsmen over a lengthy phase of the innings and compelling them to be watchful and, heaven forbid, even taking a hatful of wickets.

In other words, is cricket about getting the other team out? Is it about an even contest between bat and ball? Is it about only runs scored, and negative bowling and defensive field placings, or is it also about taking wickets?

Richard Hanks

(Ed. Certainly, in the early days of 'knock-out' cricket, there was a fear that the likes of Derek Shackleton, Les Jackson and Tom Cartwright, to name but a few, would simply bowl for an entire innings at one end and thus, put a brake on the 'brighter cricket' that was meant to come from limited-overs play. It took a few years to realise that astute captains, Ted Dexter, for example, could also put fielders on the boundary and stop fours being scored. These days, such tactics, if allowed, would probably mean that super-fit batsmen would score at 12 an over, with six twos being run. One might also remember the limit on bowlers' run-ups on Sundays which saw Wayne Daniel, for one, begin by running on the spot for a while to simulate his full normal run-up! I guess what it all means is that limited-overs cricket is an evolving (and to a degree, an artificial one) and so rules are meant to be tinkered with. It's a fair point to say that times have changed and that captains could be given the option of allowing a successful bowler to carry on past their allotted share.)

Dear Editor

John Bailey has advised that the 1922 Wisden confirms that the 1921 Trent Bridge Test was the 100th between England and Australia. I misread the *Times* report. It leaves unanswered when it was determined that the first should be 1876/77. Personally I do not think private tours should be regarded as Test Matches. Without delving too deep; the first attempt to define the nation state in sport was for the 1908 Olympics. It was ameliorated by the individual organisations responsible for each sport. For example Great Britain and Ireland had four hockey teams each representing a home nation.

My error identified when Australia fielded a representative team for the first time. 1892/93 also marked the inaugural Sheffield Shield and Currie Cup competitions. Whether an 'organised' domestic first class competition should be a prerequisite of a Test team is retrospective; but it is likely so was the numbering from 1876/77.

On other recent subjects:

The final of the Midlands Knock-out competition (4 counties - 65 overs per side) in 1962 did not limit the number of overs a bowler could deliver. The first round was played with a limit of 15 overs each. The off side fielders were limited to six. The second Gillette Cup competition introduced the 13 overs limit.

One further "Nought All Out" 28 May 1892 St Paul's Church (Pudsey) to Stanningley Baptist who replied with 43.
Date calculated from report in the Yorkshire Evening Post of 31/5

Best wishes

Ron Price

Dear Editor

I have just returned from a thoroughly enjoyable visit to Cape Town, where I had the great pleasure of witnessing the second Test against South Africa at Newlands. Day two was the most exciting cricket that I have ever watched from the stands and the whole match was enthralling

My only criticism of the England performance concerns James Anderson's lethargic attitude. He showed little verve and his body-language gave the impression of a man who would rather not be playing. As a senior member of the team, this set a bad example and is unfair to all other bowling members of the squad, who would doubtless give all in their powers to fill Anderson's place in the team.

Now back in England, I saw much of today's first day at The Wanderers and little seems to have changed, in spite of a more bowler-friendly pitch. He certainly didn't look like the leader of the England attack and again ended the day wicketless. Is it time to hang up his test-match bowling boots and make way for a younger, more energetic, enthusiastic and ambitious bowler?

Terry Cartwright

(Ed. It could possibly be that Jimmy Anderson was taking longer than expected to get over his injury from the summer, He didn't seem to have that 'nip' that he normally had. A green English wicket early on in 2016 should give us the answer as to whether his malaise was temporary or permanent.)

Dear Editor,

When is a "run" a run?

Is it just me or does anyone else feel that the fuss made about bowlers running batsmen out whilst they are backing up is misplaced nowadays in the context of televised international matches? We have the situation where televised replays are responsible for batsmen having to depart just millimetres short of safety, whether by stumping or run-out,

and batsmen being reprieved by no-ball calls when bowlers overstep by millimetres. Against this background, why should a fielding side let the batsman at the bowler's end "pinch" a couple of inches by backing up? One batsman can stay in his crease when the bowler releases the ball and be run out by one inch whilst another batsman, in otherwise similar circumstances, who "pinches" a couple of inches, makes his ground by an inch.

The Laws of cricket are supposed to guard against this by allowing the bowler to run the batsman at the bowler's end out if he leaves his crease early. Why do people object to this? The batsmen all know the rules. Are "warnings" given about any other forms of dismissal? Would the wicket-keeper "warn" the batsman if he was in danger of being stumped? Against a background over the years of allegations of interfering with the condition of the ball (bottle-tops, etc.), an illegal means of trying to gain an advantage, why be so reticent about dismissing a batsman by legal means?

Whilst on the subject of "runs", I believe reference was made recently to weird rules relating to "short" runs. A batsman runs up and down the wicket for a "two" and the umpire signals "one short". The batsman is awarded one "run". Why? Neither excursion up and down the pitch was a full "run", so why award any runs at all? Imagine the climax of a match with a well-set batsman having to make five runs off the last two balls with a very weak number eleven at the other end. The batsman doesn't do too well with the first of the last two balls but the ball ends up running down towards the fine leg boundary. The batsman figures he needs to be on strike for the last ball and deliberately runs "one short" well short of the crease and hopes the number eleven can scamper back to the bowler's end. The well-set batsman is awarded one "run" and has a chance to hit a four off the last ball as he has retained the strike. If he was not awarded any runs for his "token" excursion up and down the wicket, he would have to hit a six off the last ball!!!

John Carman

(Ed. A thorny couple of topics. Re the 'short run' - Law 18 covers this and gives the umpire the power to disallow runs. Don Oslar did just that in 1975 at Tunbridge Wells in the game between Kent and Leicestershire. Re 'mankading' I'll just pop out and get my old hobby-horse to give it an outing. The old sane Law stated that (I paraphrase here) the bowler could only run out a non-striker at the non-striker's end before beginning his bowling action. That meant that for the batsman to have left his crease before the bowler began his action, he could genuinely be described as 'Unfairly Stealing a Run.' Now a bowler can reach the point of delivery or, as in the West Indies Under-19 case, reach the delivery crease without ever attempting to begin his action. The batsman, as I was coached, should watch the bowler and indeed, walk in with him until he begins his bowling action and then transfer his gaze to the other end. The principle was to leave the crease at the non-striker's end at the same time as the ball was delivered. The two actions would be simultaneous. Now the batsman can leave his crease, assuming the bowler will deliver the ball, only to find that the bails have been removed and he is out on appeal. This simply does not constitute Unfairly Stealing a Run as was the intention of the original Law. One could also say that a fielder in motion as the bowler runs up is also an unfair tactic and he or she should remain static until the delivery is made which would be potty. Bring back the old Law is my cry.)

Dear Editor

Have just received Newsletter No 570 and am very grateful to you for your very kind comments about the talk I gave last December. I was actually rather nervous about it all and had a couple of sleepless nights, as I knew that I would be talking to real cricket lovers. However the warmth of the reception soon calmed down my worries and I thoroughly enjoyed the occasion. I am very pleased that all there seemed to enjoy it all and I certainly also enjoyed hearing Andrew's interesting talk about Barry Richards. What a player he was.

In my nervousness, I quite forgot to say some of the things I had planned to say. One, which I thought would have been enjoyed, was that I had no coaching at school whatsoever. I went to Christian Brothers College run by Jesuit brothers from Ireland. They knew nothing about cricket and because during WW2 they could not get any brothers out from Ireland, they managed to get on loan, Brother Nelson from Geelong, Australia. The trouble was though that he too knew nothing much about cricket! He used to run the nets but the only thing he ever said which could remotely be related to cricket coaching, was when he saw a boy backing away from a quick bowler. Then Bro. Nelson would shout out, "Boy don't run away. Remember you are British!!"

I really learnt about the game by watching first league games in Cape Town on Saturday afternoons after the war ended. Our games were always on Saturday mornings. Also my father could chat a bit about the game too.

Anyway thanks very much for your kind comments and I was privileged to be invited to do the talk and enjoyed being with you all very much.

Hooray for the England side doing so well in South Africa, apart from that fourth Test.

Robin Thorne

(Ed. It was a delight to hear Robin talk about a time that is rarely discussed nowadays. I like the coda about the coaching Australian monk. Shades of the apocryphal (I hope) story of a schoolboy batsman having his left foot nailed down to stop him backing away!)

Dear Editor

Watney's as a brewing concern was not to everyone's taste, as the Editor made clear in his February/March Bulletin review of the book, *Frank and George Mann – Brewing, Batting and Captaincy*. He suggests the company to have been "a fairly typical rapacious brewer...Very few, if any, tears were shed when Watney Mann was gobbled up, and there has never been any cry to bring back their products".

As a non-drinker I am in no position to evaluate those products, but what should be stressed is that Watney's had an excellent reputation as an employer, taking a paternal interest in the welfare of its workers, white or blue-collar - or no collar. At its peak, Mortlake Brewery employed around 1,600 men and women, and so was hugely influential in the life and times of its village.

Watney's was a strong supporter of sport and especially cricket at its Mortlake sportsground. (The Brewery closed in December, leaving a 21-acre site to be redeveloped – what an opportunity for international money!).

In November 1919, Watney Combe Reid and Co. Ltd. published the first issue of a house journal, *Hand in Hand*, including an announcement that a sports club would be established on Cromwell Meadows, “*a pleasantly situated strength of land within five minutes walk from Mortlake Station*”.

First and second cricket elevens were soon in action, playing outside teams, and a departmental competition was organised. The first match between a Brewery X1 and a Tenants' team was held in 1920, the Tenants captained by Tom Potter, licensee of the Derby Arms at East Sheen, and former head professional at Repton.

The October 1921 issue of *Hand in Hand* reported a Ladies-Gentleman match, men to bat, bowl and field left-handed. They were of course “ladies and gentlemen of the staff” – white-collar employees only. “*Miss Hornsby created much amusement by her activity behind the stumps*”. May Hornsby was Mortlake's star sportswoman, representing Britain as a sprinter in the “Olympic Games” at Monte Carlo from April 15-22, 1922.

The journal later published a picture of a Brewery team of 1898-99, but there was no indication where they played. Another report said Mortlake Brewery cricket began in 1880 when the team was challenged by Staines Brewery – and won “after a fortnight's practice”.

Charity matches were organised from the mid-Twenties, a game on September 20, 1925, bringing a team including Andrew Sandham, Frank Lee, Patsy Hendren, Jack O'Connor and Bill Hitch. They played an eleven raised by brewery director R.L.Gordon, also including several county players.

One year later, fifteen first-class players turned out including Hendren and Sandham, in one of several games played in aid of the Royal Hospital at Richmond. In 1937 Surrey Club and Ground played the Brewery, the future England keeper Arthur McIntyre behind the stumps. A 1937 game saw Bill Edrich in action, alongside Hendren, who was a regular organiser of these special fixtures.

The secretary of the sports club at this time was the old Surrey player Bob Gregory; a benefit match was organised for him in 1939, the Watney side reinforced by several Surrey players, including Sandham and McIntyre. The visitors included Laurie Fishlock, also of Surrey, who toured Australia in 1936-37 and again in 1946-47.

The sports ground grew vegetables during World War Two, and did not reopen until 1947, when Watney's director John Haslewood – the only non-regular soldier to command a Guards regiment in action, and a prominent member of MCC - led a strong team. The batting began with Gubby Allen, who six months later was to lead England in the West Indies. His opening partner was the broadcaster and writer Jim Swanton – and at No.3 was Denis Compton.

This was the year when Compton was to hit 18 first-class centuries and 3,816 runs – a figure not challenged before or since. But on a rain-soaked Mortlake pitch, he was dismissed for just 14. The team also included the England allrounder George Geary and the brilliant leg-spinner Ian Peebles, so that it was hardly a surprise that the visitors defeated the home team.

Jim Swanton told me years afterwards that he could not recall this game. “*But I do recollect another early post-war match on the same ground when I got a side together at the invitation of the war ace 'Laddie' Lucas, in aid of an RAF charity. Why it comes particularly to mind is that between our going out to field and the tea interval, someone kindly went through our pockets, and almost cleaned us out. Gubby Allen was the only man who escaped, brandishing a gold cigarette case which the thief had missed. George Mann played and lost an MCC memento which had belonged to his famous father, the Middlesex and England captain F.T.*” (Oddly, no record has been found of this match. Was it played somewhere else?).

When a new pavilion was built for the social club in 1960, membership still cost just threepence a week. There were 2,300 members at its peak – many from the Stag Brewery, Pimlico. There were six fulltime groundsmen, the club also boasting a fulltime secretary and an assistant, and a fulltime steward and stewardess.

In the second half of the 20th Century, interest in company sports clubs began to die, and the Mortlake club was wound up in 2000. The occasional cricket match is still played on the sportsground – which under planning law is protected - and Richmond Cricket Club has indicated an interest in leasing it as an out-ground especially for its thriving junior membership.

Murray Hedgcock

(Ed. Good to hear that Watney's were 'good for you' (to pinch a rivals advertising slogan) if you were one of their workers. A recent book on Lost Cricket Grounds made me realise that so many grounds, club and county, were provided by enlightened employers and the sadness that when multi-nationals came a-calling, they were unable to recognise the value of keeping such amenities. My own life changed when I 'worked the tins' for a local club in my home village, whose beautiful sports facilities (cricket, football, hockey, tennis, yea and even croquet) were provided by an employer whose business was implements of destruction (torpedoes, actually) but gave me an early love of cricket.)

Dear Editor

Many thanks to the Bulletin for noticing Brian Rendell's book on Frank and George Mann in the ACS 'Lives in Cricket' series.

I was editor of that book: like your reviewer I was an early member - shareholder even - in CAMRA. So I am well aware of Watney Mann's notoriety among some beer drinkers.

I was, though, a little surprised to see that about two thirds of the review was about fizzy beers and the like, without saying whether the book's subjects were involved in the company's alleged poor brewing and sales practices. Frank, for example, died aged 76, in 1964 and was never a director of Watney Mann: George was largely responsible for personnel matters in the company.

Brian and I were rather more surprised to read that the book praised the company: quite frankly it doesn't. It simply relates the company's history without offering an opinion on it, deliberately. We are agreed that the book should have referred to fizzy beer in a footnote: we are both astonished that two thirds of the review should relate to the absence of that footnote.

David Jeater

PS: We leave it readers to decide whether Frank's 10,600 runs for Middlesex at 25, including eight centuries, figures given in the book, show that he was "not worth" a place in the side.

(Ed. Sorry about my 'rant' about Watney-Mann which probably unbalanced the review somewhat but I'm not sure you can separate men who were part of the family that ran the business, one of whom sat on the Board, from the commercial decisions that the family firm took. Still not convinced about Frank Mann, personally though.)

Dear Editor

May I refer to your reviewer's piece on Martin Howe's book: Norman Yardley – Yorkshire's Gentleman Cricketer? I will admit that I share – and this goes back to 1946 – Mr Howe's hero-worship of Norman Yardley and do not care for the reviewer's tone in attempting to summarise Yardley's achievement. "Almost worth a place in the Yorkshire XI, at least after the war" smacks to me of patronage. Then, 'his captaincy of Yorkshire wasn't a success.' Unfair, it was only not a success when you compare him with Brian Sellers, who did not have to face the Surrey XI of W S Surridge and later P B H May, which has been held to be comparable with Sellers' Yorkshire team of the 1930s. Everything is relative and under Yardley's captaincy (1948-55), Yorkshire were usually assured of the runner-up spot, no disgrace and once (1949) were joint champions; in that period the runners-up position was often when Surrey were champions. As a batsman, Yardley frequently contributed notably. I usually saw Yorkshire at Sheffield and NWDY seemed to save his best batting for Bramall Lane. I remember two centuries against Surrey, captain's innings indeed, in 1948 and 1950, though the best in my experience was a superb 134 not out against the New Zealand tourists in 1949.

Many of the same conditions apply to Yardley's England career. Apart from easily winning, as captain, a series against South Africa in 1947, after saving the first Test with him contributing 99 on his own account, he was unlucky enough to captain against Bradman's immortals in 1948 and Goddard's Caribbean heroes of 1950, having played a whole series in Australia in 1946/7, where his performances outshone an off-colour Hammond and was certainly worth his place in the touring side at No 6 or 7, not to mention topping the bowling averages, taking worthwhile wickets all the time (not that Australia had many rabbits then), something he repeated in 1948. Critics of Yardley often ignore this.

So, Yardley was a fine-all-rounder, an elegant batsman with superb legside strokes, one of Wisden's Five (1948), a sound captain and a cricketer to look up to. I must buy Mr Howe's book and see if we sing from the same hymn-sheet!

Philip L Scowcroft

(Ed. Oh dear, I thought I might get letters from the Broad Acres about this. Firstly, I said that Yardley was "almost certainly worth a place "not that he was "almost worth a place". The distinction is that it was no mean feat for an amateur to get a place among the cream of Yorkshire's professional batting after the war and Yardley is to be commended for that. The comments on his captaincy stemmed from many of the Yorkshire players of the time who were critical of Yardley's captaincy, although to be fair, many were wholly supportive and both sides are quoted extensively in Martin's book. Eventually, captaincy will be gauged by success and Yardley only had one share of a championship during his reign. Surrey did not begin their successful run until 1952 and Yorkshire dipped as low as twelfth in 1953, although usually finishing between second and fourth through the years of Yardley's captaincy. England is another matter and I think the giveaway is that after Australia in 1946/7, the only times that Yardley played for England were as captain. When he was available as a player but not captain, he was not selected. The same could be said for his contemporary F G Mann. The really good news is that Martin Howe's excellent book looks to have gained another purchaser and that makes the exercise worthwhile).

Dear Editor

I was very disappointed to read the inaccurate statement that Tom Harrison President of the Irish Cricket Union was awarded the MBE.

Roy Harrison who was the deserved recipient of the award is a stalwart of the Waringstown club and a former Irish international, and is a Past President of both the Irish Cricket Union (now Cricket Ireland) in 2006, and the Northern Cricket Union in 2000/01.

I trust the other information I read in your magazine is more accurate and better researched.

Roger Bell

(Ed. I think I obliquely expressed my views on the Honours System in general but I'm genuinely sorry to have got Roy Harrison's forename incorrect in my Miscellany note. As to the other information in the 'magazine', we are fortunate to have an informed and well-read membership who can point out the sins of omission and commission to the Editor.)

Dear Editor

Perhaps I can add a tale under the heading of 'nearly upsets'.

Oxford, 23rd May, 1963.

The University was entertaining the West Indies in the Parks. On the previous day, the University, batting first, had struggled to a total of 119, Hall and Gibbs sharing seven wickets. Eager for relief from approaching Finals, I strolled towards the ground in the morning in anticipation of seeing some spectacular batting from Conrad Hunte and co. As I neared the pitch, I encountered a rotund and perspiring clergyman, presumably hastening to discharge clerical duties. "They are sixty-six for six", he cried. The University then proceeded to dismiss the West Indies for 107, no mean

achievement against what was then one of the strongest international sides. One PNG Mountford had the impressive figures of 7-47. The University managed 219 in the second innings. I arrived in time on the next and final day to see the West Indies knock off the runs for the loss of four wickets, Seymour Nurse unbeaten on 116. As the batsmen were being vocally encouraged by two men of clearly West Indian heritage and identified by their uniforms as 'bus conductors, an elderly retainer emerged from the pavilion and approached the two, calling out 'Would you two gentlemen kindly refrain from making so much noise'.

Peter Slimm

(Ed. A lovely story and we would be delighted to hear of any more occurrences witnessed by members.)

Dear Editor

I was most interested to read John Brown's letter in the last Newsletter. I did not see Brian Lara's innings at Edgbaston but I was at The Oval for the match against Worcestershire.

I do not keep the score as Mr Brown does but I particularly remember Stuart Surridge being booed for declaring at 92/3 with Peter May batting beautifully.

I particularly recall this moment as I had never previously heard this reaction to cricket at The Oval. I had first visited The Oval in 1948 and had gone regularly in School Holidays since 1950.

I shall be particularly interested to read John Brown's further memories when the article appears.

Tony Dey

(Ed. We have received John's article but a higher authority (that's the Chairman) will be deciding which future Journal it will appear in. Peter May was the top scorer in the entire match with 31 not out and Hugo Yarnold was the only Worcester player to get to double figures – 14 not out – in either innings! Somewhat unbelievably, no Worcester batsman got a pair in the match in their completed innings of 25 and 40 – only 9 wickets fell in the second innings as Louis Devereux retired hurt. The entire match consisted of only 88.1 overs.)

Dear Editor

I know it's not a book but to me one of the finest pieces of cricket writing is John Warr's biography piece in Barclay's World of Cricket on Denis Compton. It is wickedly accurate and humorous.

I was lucky enough to see Denis play many times and played for my club in a benefit match for Leslie Compton. Arranging publicity for the game we of course asked Les if Denis would be playing. He said he'd invited him but it was likely he'd accepted half a dozen invitations for the same day and probably wouldn't remember to turn up for any of them.

I also played in a game when John Warr kept wicket.

Keep up the good work!

Ken Hughes

P.S. Denis didn't play in his brother's benefit match.

(Ed. Probably just as well, seeing that in brother Leslie's Middlesex Benefit match in 1955, Denis managed to run him out without facing a ball! As to John Warr, he has long been justly regarded as one of cricket's greatest wits. John Warr said, of Denis Compton "He was the only person who would call you for a run and wish you luck at the same time." and when asked at one of Bill Edrich's later weddings whether he (John) was to be seated in the church as for the bride or groom, he simply replied "Season." Any other examples of John's wit would be very much welcomed and I'll be happy to, print a selection.)

If you have any views on cricket and associated topics that you'd like to express, please write to the Editor, John Symons at symonsjc@hotmail.com or 110 Whyke Lane, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 8AS. The next deadline for receipt of letters is **April 8th 2016**.

☆☆☆

THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Sitting in the attractive and spacious pavilion of Bath Cricket Club last month and listening to Somerset's Peter Robinson being interviewed by Stephen Chalke, two thoughts jostled for attention. First I could see reflected behind me, from the glass covering cricket pictures on the wall behind the speakers, youngsters playing cricket on the outfield: in February, what a welcome and refreshing sight! The large 'coffins' full of cricket gear they had dragged there – contrasting sharply with something Peter was saying about the paucity of cricket kit during his early years in the game – said something else, about sport and society and twenty-first century life. Secondly, that to be a Cricket Society member near to one of our Branch venues can be a double delight. There are a few dozen cricket societies in the UK but only if people are members of The Cricket Society can they enjoy a full range of publications and other products **and** attend meetings

with speakers in London, at Edgbaston, The Riverside, Richmondshire, and now Bath and perhaps other Western locations. All at a knock-down cost.

The Bath CC meeting was one of two there – the other on Tuesday 15 March, with cricketer-umpire Jeremy Lloyds – designed to re-establish our West of England Branch. The attendance was good, the cricket talk stimulating, the company and setting excellent. Several members volunteered to help Stephen Chalke steer an ambitious programme of meetings for the autumn 2016 to Spring 2017 season. Please consider attending these meetings if you live or are passing through the area. I see a need for the centre and the branches to work more closely together, not least in respect of securing the funds and sponsorship that will help us to peg our already low subscription rates. Meanwhile, and in any event, please encourage your friends who like cricket to join The Society and buy raffle tickets at all our

meetings you attend – the proceeds help hugely in defraying the rising costs of meetings and keeping The Society on a sound financial footing.

The Association of Cricket Officials

I must confess that until Douglas Miller, *eminence grise* of both The Cricket Society and the ACO, drew the latter to my attention, I was not aware of its existence. Boasting 8,500 members drawn largely from the ranks of recreational umpires and scorers, the ACO provides tutoring courses, shares relevant news and good practice, holds meetings and conferences, and not least advises on cricket's laws. Phil Reeves, Derek Barnard and I met recently with the ACO's Ben Francis to discuss the scope for cooperation between our organisations. To start the ball spinning, I have contributed an article about The Society and the benefits of joining us to the next issue of the ACO's magazine. Ben will be writing for us about the ACO. I hope that cricket laws guru Mark Williams will be able to address a London meeting during the 2016-17 programme.

A related plea. The ACO, average age 60, has the email addresses of over 80 per cent of its members. We, with a similar average age, have no more than a third. If we don't know your email address, or if your preferred email has changed, please tell us – to davidwood@cricketsociety.com

The Cricket Society and MCC Book of the Year Award 2016

We announced on 1 March the short list for the forty-sixth year of our Book of the Year Award. Seventeen books – nominated by either Cricket Society or MCC members (not publishers) – were accepted for the long list and whittled down to six by a panel of judges independently chaired by writer and broadcaster and former England and Somerset cricketer Vic Marks. The other judges are David Kynaston and Stephen Fay (nominated by the MCC) and John Symons and Chris Lowe (nominated by The Cricket Society). I'm the competition's administrator. Six books are in the frame for the £3,000 prize (which the MCC contribute along with the venue – we run the competition itself), which will be presented to the winner on Monday 11th April in the Long Room at Lord's. A sell-out audience of 200 people will comprise Members of the Cricket Society and MCC, most of the shortlisted authors, publishers, and some of today's finest cricket writers and journalists. Writer Pat Collins will give the keynote address. The last *Bulletin* included a booking form and details are also available on our (soon to be revolutionized!) website.

The six-strong list includes two books about W.G Grace: Richard Tomlinson's fresh look at the man and his times and Charlie Connelly's imaginative recreation of W.G.'s latter years. Former winners Stephen Chalke and Scyld Berry compete again with wide-ranging books about, respectively, the County Championship and '*The Game of Life*'. Books about cricket in the West Indies and a forensic examination of the life and death of Peter Roebuck complete the list. As Chair of judges Vic Marks said: "2015 was an extraordinary year for books about cricket. Two volumes initially strongly favoured by my judges haven't even made the short list. One judge [not unknown to the readers of these pages] has referred to the possibility of fisticuffs! Our final meeting is likely to be long but I am sure we can resolve differences amicably and come up with a worthy winner."

The competition, run by the Cricket Society since 1970

and in partnership with MCC since 2009, is for books nominated by MCC and Cricket Society Members, and is highly regarded by writers and publishers. Last year's winner was Dan Waddell's *Field of Shadows: The English Cricket Tour of Nazi Germany 1937*. James Astill won in 2014 with *The Great Tamasha: Cricket, Corruption and the Turbulent Rise of Modern India*. This year's short list comprises, alphabetically by author:

- Scyld Berry's *Cricket The Game of Life: Every Reason to Celebrate* (Hodder & Stoughton)
- Stephen Chalke's *Summer's Crown: The Story of Cricket's County Championship* (Fairfield Books)
- Charlie Connelly's *About Gilbert: The Last Years of WG Grace* (Bloomsbury)
- Tim Lane and Elliott Cartledge's *Chasing Shadows, The life and death of Peter Roebuck* (Hardie Grant)
- Simon Lister's *Fire in Babylon, How the West Indies cricket team brought a people to its feet* (Yellow Jersey Press)
- Richard Tomlinson's *Amazing Grace: The Man who was W.G* (Little, Brown)

The Cricket Society's 'Day at the cricket' 2016

This is now confirmed for Monday 11 July, at Taunton, for the second day of Somerset's Championship match against Middlesex. Vic Marks will be with us and address us collectively at some point in the day. There are initially 35 places available, at £55 each. The package includes: entry to the ground (with 12 car parking spaces); accommodation with individual private suites and balcony; coffee and Danish pastry on arrival; the Somerset Chef's two course grazing table; afternoon Cream Tea; and full private bar facilities. Entry and other details - including of the Sunday evening 'Taunton Tour' Phil Reeves will be leading - will be circulated to those attending.

Some places have already been snapped-up by members who attended last year's comparable event at Grace Road, Leicester. We may be able to secure some extra accommodation. To secure your places please send cheques, made payable to The Cricket Society, to me at 74 Probyn House, Page Street, London SW1P 4BQ, together with confirmation of your preferred email address.

The ground is not far from the railway station for those coming by train. If you plan to come by car please let me know the registration number and, perhaps Solomon-like, I will decide who gets the 12 at-the-ground parking spaces to be allocated. There are alternative parking options which Somerset CCC will outline later; their website has some accommodation links. Our Treasurer and social organiser, Phil, writes:

"As last year we shall be running a short pub crawl on the Sunday evening for people staying over in Taunton – during which our Chairman tells me that Christmas Card starlet Bracken is expected to make a special guest appearance - finishing with a curry at a city centre restaurant. Accommodation is currently plentiful in Taunton on the Sunday night. For those frugal members the cheapest reasonably central option is the Travelodge at £41 a night but this is perhaps a half hour walk from the centre. The Taunton Central Premier Inn is available at £49 and is considerably closer. For those of more significant means the Holiday Inn is offering rooms at around £90 right in the centre of town and there are other options available at a similar level. All prices current at time of going to press."

Nigel Hancock

MISCELLANY

Some stirrings in International cricket with the news that the ICC may be looking again shortly at the 'carve-up' of cricket (mainly revenues) by India, Australia and England. Could be interesting.

A tip of the hat to a man who departed this world as the only man to average over 100 in Tests. Andy Ganteaume, making his debut in Test matches at Port-of-Spain against England in 1948 was delighted to score 112. He had been less delighted, when approaching his century, to receive a message from his skipper, Gerry Gomez, telling him to 'get on with it.' In the second innings, with West Indies unsuccessfully chasing 141 to win, Ganteaume did not bat and was never selected again. He did tour England in 1957 but did not play in any of the Tests, despite West Indies being comprehensively outplayed. Oddly, although a wicket-keeper batsman, he did not keep wicket in his only Test, Clive Walcott holding the gloves.

Disappointing to see 'mankading' not only at Under-19 level as noted in our letters section but now in associate cricket with Oman's Aamir Kaleem doing the same to a Hong Kong batsman in the ninth over of an Asia Cup match. Time for this to be sorted out before it gets out of hand please.

Meanwhile, it seems alarming that despite all the increased coaching that goes on in every country, the number of bowlers suspended for suspicions about the legality of their actions is on the rise.



FUTURE ACTIVITIES

THE CRICKET SOCIETY TRUST

Eversheds LLP are hosting a drinks reception on **13 May 2016** at One Wood Street, London EC2V 7WS to raise funds for The Cricket Society Trust's existing programmes and at least one new programme.

David Gower, former England captain and Sky Sports commentator will answer questions from Isabelle Duncan, BBC radio commentator, author of *Skirting the Boundary: A History of Women's Cricket and President of The Cricket Society Trust*. *If you would like to put a question to David Gower at the reception, please write your question below. We hope that you will make a voluntary donation.*

The event will take place on the top floor of Eversheds' modern offices which afford a panoramic view of the City of London and in particular, possibly the finest view available of St Pauls Cathedral.

Admission is by ticket only (priced at £37, payable by cheque to The Cricket Society Trust.

An application form is enclosed with this Bulletin giving full details of the event and how to apply for tickets. It is expected that the demand for tickets for this prestigious event will be high, so we would advise members to apply as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

CRICKET SOCIETY SPRING DINNER - REMINDER

The Spring Dinner takes place on Friday 22 April 2016 at 6.45pm for 7.15pm at the Royal Over-Seas League.

As usual, we will also be presenting the Wetherell Awards, the Don Rowan Memorial Trophy, and the Perry-Lewis/Kershaw Memorial Trophy. A leading cricket figure will make the 'Toast to Cricket' and we hope as many members as possible can join us for the evening.

The Booking form was enclosed with the previous Bulletin but can also be downloaded from the "Dinners" section on the Society's website.

Please send all remittances to **Andrew Cashmore-Till** 21 Belvedere Road, Upper Norwood, London SE19 2HJ 07860 512461

Andrew is also contactable for enquiries by Email at andrewcashmoretill@cricketsociety.com

RECENT ACTIVITIES

BRANCH MEETINGS NEWS

LONDON

MARK PENNELL and MARK BALDWIN

– *Phil Reeves* reports:

70 hardy society members braved storms to pack out the Civil Service Club to hear Mark Baldwin (MB) and Mark Pennell's (MP) stories on the life of a cricket journalist.

MB started his career in 1980 and reminded us that in those days there were no computers or mobile phones and typewriters (with plentiful carbon paper) were still very much in use. His first writing job was on a student paper and he then graduated to the Kent and Sussex Courier moving onto the Sevenoaks Courier and the Kent Messenger which remarkably in those days also

produced an evening edition. After a spell covering rugby as well as cricket on the Western Daily Press he moved up to Fleet Street writing for The Times on cricket and rugby. In recent years he had been a correspondent for the Press Association covering county cricket.

MP had a somewhat less conventional start as a private investigator. He was also a very good cricketer in his own right but not perhaps quite good enough to earn a living as a professional in those days. He had to sit his journalism examinations, learn shorthand and serve his apprenticeship on the Bromsgrove Messenger. The memory of his shorthand exam where he had to take down 100 words a minute for 4 minutes and only make four mistakes still makes him break into a cold sweat.

Both recalled that there was great camaraderie in the press boxes in those days even if some correspondents were a little stern. MP told the story of the local

reporter on the Yorkshire Post who when asked a question on the morning of a match gave the answer and then muttered “that’s your one for the day lad”.

The position today has changed completely in there are hardly any correspondents in the press boxes for county games. Regional papers used to cover all matches home and away but the Yorkshire Post is now the only paper which does this. It is very difficult to get into the profession unless you are willing to serve an unpaid apprenticeship and only the wealthy youngsters are able to do this. Websites do pay for writers but only at very low rates which makes it difficult to make a living.

In 2014 the Press Association, due to financial pressures and with little notice, decided to make redundant their ten or so county cricket correspondents. The Cricket Writers Club and MB in particular took this matter to the ECB and explained that it would be the death of county cricket reporting. The ECB realised this and now funds the writers to produce copy from at least some county matches. It is likely to be the case that many sports may in the future have to rely on the governing bodies to fund reporting of their events. MB commented that this relationship with governing bodies is not ideal as it could in some circumstances cause a conflict of interest if the writer wished to criticise that body. However the arrangement with the ECB is currently working well and there have been no such conflicts to date.

At the interval members slaked their thirst at the bar and reconvened for questions. On being asked what advice he would give to a budding journalist MP suggested he should think of another career. Both agreed it was now so difficult to get into the profession and apart from star writers almost impossible to make a decent living. He said that although journalism courses are still very popular one lecturer told him recently that only two or three of his students out of perhaps 30 a year had gone on to find jobs on national newspapers. Many hopeful writers on overseas tours essentially pay for their own tickets and hope to find a story to sell when they are there – “backpack journalism” it is called.

Inevitably questions were asked about the current county structure. MB felt that the ECB really wanted to create a T20 Premier League of some description as they felt they had missed out unlike the IPL and Big Bash. This could feature just 9 county teams with mergers of two or three counties necessary. It would be played in a short summer window allowing England and overseas players to participate. Teams would probably be “owned” by the ECB and it was thought that television money from India would be substantial. MP felt that unlike India and Australia who had their own franchise system it was more difficult in England as there was much more loyalty to county teams.

For the county championship it was thought that the ECB would prefer an 8 team first division and a 10 team second division with just 14 games played in each division. This would mean just one team would be promoted and relegated each year. MB said he had a suspicion that in reality what was wanted was just 14 counties and it was a pity that the ECB could not be honest with this desire as it would make moving towards it much easier.

MB then set out briefly an idea for a reorganised county season that he had sent to the ECB – (see full version on Page 16 of this Bulletin). This he admitted

was complex but would allow any team to win the county championship and not just those in the top division.

When asked about terrestrial TV coverage both Marks felt that the ECB had done very well financially out of the current SKY deal and had money in the bank. This might mean they would look more favourably on some sort of terrestrial live coverage but it was not clear whether the BBC, C4 or Channel 5 would really be interested.

Finally Nigel Hancock asked each speaker for his favourite memory of the cricket they covered. MP said it was without doubt T20 finals day when Kent won the title on his birthday. In the dressing room afterwards Darren Stevens took off his shirt and presented it to Mark as a birthday gift. MB said he had so many happy memories but would never forget the magnificent sight of Sir Vivian Richards striding out to bat.

Howard Milton proposed the vote of thanks after which the satisfied members went off to fight the storms on their way home.

(Ed. My thanks to Phil Reeves for nobly stepping into the breach to provide notes of the Meeting as Southern Railway had what the Victorians called ‘a fit of the vapours’ when faced with the drama of storm Imogen – which turned out to be a stiffish breeze on the South Coast. Trains were too frightened to go out alone so had to sit in sidings near Chichester as the storm raged – or rather didn’t. I shall add incompetent, privatised train companies to my ‘rant list’ along with purveyors of fizzy beer and Jeremy Hunt.)

DURHAM AND THE NORTH-EAST

JOHN BARCLAY – Stephen Ransome reports

A sunny afternoon at Arundel (see Bob Crosby’s report on Stephen Chalke’s visit to Durham Feb/March newsletter) produced another gem for the most northerly English outpost. A good turnout to hear our President, John Barclay speak was richly rewarded with a series of well-crafted anecdotes, reminiscences and humorous insights laced with serious messages and illuminating and thought-provoking comments on areas of controversy. In his introduction, our Chairman, Ian Howie, pointed out how privileged we were to have John talk to us tonight. Ian spoke of their meeting at Arundel, where Durham were playing Sussex on a fine sunny day (some wine was mentioned too), and inviting him to the chilly climes of the North East. When asked what topic he might speak about John suggested a few ramblings. He was true to his word touching variously on pairs, avoiding ‘king’ pairs, distinguished dismissals, ‘mankading’, ‘walking’ and Arundel.

At this point John took over, using the Arundel match as a cue, to talk warmly and almost nostalgically about watching the leg spin of Scott Borthwick first break an awkward partnership, then mop up the Sussex second innings, to complete a win for Durham .

Using the theme of one of his favourite players from the North East, John mentioned Geoff Cook, but quickly diverged into reasons why first class cricket was so long in arriving in the North East. The reason, provided by Stephen Chalke, was that it was felt to be too far away to play cricket, despite, John added, the mass of enthusiasm and culture for the game in the area, which was unlike that found in the south.

Interaction with the audience, naming North East born cricketers, prompted John to mention Norman Graham

(Big Norm) and his first encounter with him. In great detail, John described the match (Sussex v Kent, Hastings May, 1973) in detail, with Kent batting first. John bowled his off-breaks dismissing Graham Johnson before lunch. After lunch one M.C. Cowdrey faced John, who produced a leg stump half volley which was clipped straight to Tony Greig at short leg. An illustrious scalp and John admitted to feeling very good. Kent declared leaving Sussex to bat the next day. An overnight thunderstorm soaked the uncovered pitch and with the tide in, the dressing room was happy that there would be no play that day. However, the sun came out and the pitch was declared fit for play after tea. Big Norm and Derek 'Deadly' Underwood, shared the spoils, operated in tandem reducing Sussex to 55-5. Having assiduously practised his forward defensive stroke, in the dressing room, John felt prepared to face the conditions. His first ball, delivered by Underwood, matched the bowler's nickname. A quicker ball was met by the text-book forward defence only for it to 'fizz' and kick striking John on the thumb and loop gently to M.C. Cowdrey in the slips. John considered this to be a distinguished dismissal.

The follow-on was even more disastrous, following yet another overnight thunder storm. The Sussex players were convinced that no more play would be possible, despite the re-appearance of the sun. They did not reckon with, as John distastefully described, the Sussex secretary's decision to call in the local fire brigade to pump the excess water from the ground and the Kent players assisting in the mopping up (shades of the Oval Test 5 years previously).

Play recommenced late in the day. With Sussex 22-5, John returned to the crease to face Underwood. John's team mate and friend, John Spencer, predicted that he would bag a pair, if not a king pair. His forward defence had improved, aided by throw downs from Spencer in the dressing room. A firmly struck shot was smartly fielded by Brian Luckhurst. The next ball, vividly described with actions, pitched, fizzed and kicked striking John's thumb and looping to Cowdrey again. Caught Cowdrey bowled Underwood twice were very distinguished dismissals but the morale-sapping, king pair had been avoided.

On his return to the dressing room Spencer, wreathed in smiles, pronounced that never again in his whole career would John be subjected to such nastiness. He was right. John also quipped that with 47 noughts in his career, he never took a bribe.

Returning circuitously, to Geoff Cook, John said that if one wanted to meet anyone from the North East one went to Northamptonshire. Wondering why, the audience responded that it was Doug Ferguson, from the North East, acting as scout for the county.

John described Geoff's qualities as calm, thoughtful and generous – these were the ingredients of his success – illustrating this with an experience in a match at Northampton, in the Sussex, near-miss, Championship season in 1981. Northamptonshire had declared, leaving an awkward 20 minutes to survive. Kapil Dev, playing in his debut game for Northants, wearing 3 sweaters to ward off the cold, opened the bowling to John. The first ball, a gentle away swinger, firmly played by John straight into the hands of Geoff, at short leg. There was silence, no appeal and Geoff threw the ball to mid-on. John felt relieved and deservedly so, as he

went to make a century the next day. In the second innings, chasing a total, John was out LBW first ball for what should have been a 'king' pair. Summing up that episode, he said that Geoff had such charm and understanding and knows how to encourage woebegone cricketers who are struggling.

A lively discussion, prompted by John, on 'Mankading' referring, in particular, to the recent incident in the West Indies v Zimbabwe U19 world cup match, as to its rights and wrongs led John into another of his well-crafted but meaningful tales. The scene, a Benson and Hedges Quarter final. Sussex posted a below par score and the opposition were making steady, if slow, progress in their reply. During John's spell he noted that the non-striker, a player he was not particularly keen on, was regularly stealing ground. This got up John's nose. Ian Greig also mentioned this to John so, rather than interrupt in the more traditional manner, John, loudly, for the benefit of the slightly nervous umpire, warned the player that he would run him out if he transgressed again. John finished his over and was grateful the player was dismissed in the next over.

One final story, of John behaving badly (his description), or a case of saved by the bell, occurred in a match against Hampshire at Eastbourne (he lamented the omission of out grounds as venues, in recent times). He was facing a rampant Malcolm Marshall and Sussex were 45-3. John was surprised. It was rare for him not to be one of those three. With Imran Khan as partner, Sussex were beginning to recover when Marshall whistled one down which brushed John's glove and was caught by the keeper. The speed and direction of the ball had unbalanced John. He, wistfully, maintained that he was not in a position to instinctively walk and combined with the loud striking of the clock adjacent to the ground, the umpire, David Shepherd (Shep), failed to hear the sound and gave not out. This was met by a discomfiting frostiness from those on the pitch. At the between-over conference John asked Imran if he would endeavour to face Marshall's next over. During the next Marshall over John was caught backing up too early and Marshall, still very cross, removed the bails. John turned to Shep and insisted he gave him out, saying that he was happy to go! As he was walking off, Nick Pocock, the Hampshire captain, withdrew the appeal pointedly insisting that they did not play cricket in that manner! John returned to mount a stand with Imran.

Continuing with the subject of walking, John turned to the Test in 1998, at Trent Bridge with England chasing 247. Atherton was in determined mood. Allan Donald produced a ferocious spell and snared Atherton into gloving one to the keeper. He did not walk and the umpire gave it not out. Sometime later, John asked Atherton about the incident and not walking. Atherton's reply was that Boycott had once told him the answer to the issue was in the bible. Psalm no1 the first 8 words "Blessed is the man who does not walk".

John answered questions on the work of the Arundel Castle Cricket Foundation to help and encourage young people for whom life is a struggle. It runs alongside the cricket club all year round and the feedback is very positive. Arundel would not be there if it were not for the charity.

In response to a question on Kevin Pietersen's recent comments on the division of funding of the

international boards, John tended to agree that the views were sensible and there should be consideration of how best to spread the game and its spirit. He added that he did not agree with Atherton about abandoning the 'Spirit' as it had contributed a lot to the game since its introduction.

A question about Boycott's absence from the game coinciding with the Thomson /Lillee era brought about a final story involving Dermot Reeve, who was disliked by Boycott. Reeve got him out twice LBW and, on the second occasion, struck Boycott on the thigh. After the game, Boycott approached John to solicit his support in reporting the umpire, Billy Ibadulla, to Lord's. John politely declined.

After 90 minutes of thoroughly entertaining ramblings, the evening was concluded with John expressing his pleasure at being able to come that evening because he had been enlisted to speak at the Annual Dinner, which was not now going to take place!

WEST OF ENGLAND

PETER ROBINSON in Conversation with STEPHEN CHALKE – *Richard Hanks reports*

The glory days are back. The West of England branch is able to field a team again. On a day so wonderfully clear at the Bath Cricket Club that it might have been possible to pick a Roly Jenkins googly, and when it was a joy to see some twenty-five young children, including girls of course, having coaching on the outfield, an audience of some fifty welcomed Peter Robinson.

Stephen Chalke – to whom we are indebted locally for initiating the revival of the branch – introduced Peter as the greatest living supporter and friend of Somerset County Cricket Club. Something of a local legend, Peter was already known, certainly by name, to many of the audience. What some of us did not know was that his uncle was Roly Jenkins, Worcester leg-spinner and Test player of the forties and fifties. Born in Worcester, it was natural, then, that Peter joined Worcester, although he gave up the certainty of a mundane job on leaving school to do so.

At Worcester, though, he found himself one of five spinners on the staff, including another left-arter, Norman Gifford. So, in 1965, he joined Somerset, where he enjoyed a successful playing career as spinner and batsman through into the seventies. Thereafter, he became Coach in the great years that followed, and only retired from having any post at all within the club a few years ago, having at one stage reached the giddy heights of Health and Safety Officer. On first joining, he had been put up, at the club's expense, at a well-known and very comfortable local hostelry – for two nights, when he was told that the club could not afford it. Several years later, when Brian Close became a Somerset player, he was housed at the same hostelry for seven years.

When Close joined, they soon saw at first-hand what a very good batsman he was. They also realised how, apparently, he never played a bad shot and always got out to the best ball of the innings. As a captain, he would certainly give you a good telling-off, but his great strength was that he never carried this over to the next day. When Close came, Peter was pleased because it meant he no longer had to field at short leg. There, Close's legendary bravery was indeed proved, and his legs sounded better than many bats. Peter also reminded us of how good an all-round sportsman Close

was; an excellent golfer, and he had been on Arsenal's books with Gloucester's Arthur Milton.

That could never happen now, and Peter regrets that many youngsters may be encouraged to concentrate on only one sport from, perhaps, the age of twelve. His philosophy would be to play as much as you can while you can. That said, he does believe that, within reason, it pays dividends to get talented youngsters playing in men's cricket. Good work though the academies and some schools may do, you learn more from playing with mature players than always just with your peers. After the day's play, in the clubhouse you could learn such a lot from the senior players for the price of a brown ale. Some modern players could do with learning the difference between being positive and playing recklessly, and how to think for themselves.

Another brave cricketer and character that Peter played with was the Australian import who then adopted Somerset, Bill Alley; a bowler with remarkable control and a batsman who never even wore a thigh pad, something he was always keen to let Fred Trueman know when he came on to bowl.

Peter was, of course, asked about Marcus Trescothick. He had always looked good from a young age, and he loved the game, and he especially loved batting. But, then, Peter had bowled him thousands of balls on winter evenings in the adjacent, chilly Peter Wight indoor school. Talking of Somerset openers, Peter mentioned Mark Lathwell, who did so all too briefly in the early nineties. People would come just to see him bat, and it was such a shame that he was lost to the game all too soon. He could have become a wonderful player.

Asked who he would love to see bat again in their prime, Peter could not decide between the two Richards, Viv and Barry. But he could delineate them; one the butcher, the other the surgeon. What perception.

Games he especially remembered certainly included the 1967 Gillette Cup Final at Lords. He was not really picked as part of the bowling line up (all seam) but as an opening bat. So, he did not get a bowl, but he did catch Colin Cowdrey, and said that there was nothing like playing at a packed and partisan Lords. Another somewhat different game he remembered was at Yeovil in the John Player League, when Brian Langford bowled his allotted eight overs for no runs. At the other end, Peter was positively profligate, bowling his eight for some twenty-odd.

Yeovil was one of several Somerset out grounds, and Peter has fond memories of these. He had to refer to the Bath wicket, but contrasted the atmosphere of the out-grounds with playing a county match at, say, Edgbaston, with hardly anyone there. Wickets are too "samey" nowadays and lack character, and he cited drop-in wickets in particular. It's actually good to get around the county, but it's all too centralised, and that is true of much of today's cricket.

Not surprisingly, the question of local boy Jos Buttler's wicket keeping came up, and Peter had to say that he did not think he had the natural soft hands and the movements of a keeper. This illustrated another change in the game; what was expected of a keeper. He considered that the best keeper he ever saw was Alan Knott, especially on uncovered wickets. The best thing he thought for Butler's cricket would be for him to play six or seven county matches, especially against the moving ball, instead of going off to the IPL

It's all a far cry from when money seemed to matter rather less, and when the mayor of Worcester organised a collection for Roly Jenkins to help support him when he was selected for an MCC tour of South Africa. When Peter came to Somerset he was paid £525 a year. In the winter at Worcester he helped the ground staff put the ground to bed, and when that was done he moved onto the hop houses. At Somerset, he worked in a goods yard, unloading wagons, where he found the 5.30am start less than congenial.

Given his specialism, it was not surprising that Peter was asked about the dearth of left arm spinners. He illustrated his answer by concentrating on Jack Leach of Somerset. He never bowls badly, but he needs talking to (coaching?) about different ways to get batsmen out. But with the selection policy, and the bringing in of overseas players, will he get what every young bowler needs, which is the chance to bowl every day?

With regard to the seemingly parochial matter of the Somerset captaincy (Chris Rogers of Middlesex and Australia has joined the staff, Trescothick has stood down from the captaincy, and Rogers is taking over), and with every respect to Rogers, Peter felt it was disappointing that an overseas player had been brought in. Did James Hildreth not want the job? Or what about taking a punt on Peter Trego? On a broader front, Peter said that overseas players used to be much more long-term and become part of the "family".

Yellow cards, red cards – Peter is against them all. He is certainly all for discipline. Umpires should report breaches and players should be hit where it hurts, which is in the pocket.

Peter had reminisced about the past, and commented on the modern game. Of course, not everything had been all sweetness and light in his day, and he had been obviously reluctant to talk about the Roebuck, Botham, Richards, Garner hiatus, beyond saying it was his saddest time. He felt that so much had changed, but he would not swap it for what he had had. One sensed regrets in Peter about the way things have developed, but this is an amiable gentleman, whose proudest moment remains receiving his county cap in 1966, and no trace of bitterness ever crept through, and he gave us a most convivial afternoon.

We were also honoured to have several national officers of the society supporting the meeting, and Nigel Hancock spoke briefly, saying that, like cricket, running a branch is a team game, and asking all who could possibly do so to make themselves available for selection. Of particular interest at a West of England meeting was the further news, and an illustration of what branches can do, of an away-day being organised by the London branch to the Middlesex match at Taunton on 11 July.

So concluded the first innings of the new branch – one that can definitely be Chalked up as a success.



STATISTICAL NOTES - by Keith Walmsley

New Zealand's statisticians came up with a good one during the recent NZ v Australia Test at Wellington, when they told us that Henry Nicholls' second innings score of 59 was the highest score ever made on debut for NZ by a player batting at number 4. The previous NZ record for this position had been a mere 45.

So it was off to the books and the computer for yours truly, to see how other countries' records stand. And there are several surprises:

- No player making his debut for England and batting at number 1 in the order has ever made a century in his first Test. The best score by an England no. 1 on debut was Colin Milburn's belligerent 94 against the West Indies at Old Trafford in 1966.
- Only four of the ten Test countries - England, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh - have had a debut century recorded by a player batting at no. 4. Two England no. 4s have achieved the feat (Frank Hayes and the senior Nawab of Pataudi), and just one has done so for each of the other three countries.
- South Africa and Zimbabwe still have top-order positions in which, like New Zealand before the recent Test at Wellington, no debutant has made even a 50. The best score by a South African debutant at no. 5 is 48 by OC Dawson at Trent Bridge in 1947, and the best for Zimbabwe at the same position is 41* by David Houghton in his country's inaugural Test at Harare against India in October 1992. This was Houghton's second innings of the match; in the first he had batted at no. 6 and scored 121, which is still the Zimbabwe record debut score at that position. So Houghton uniquely holds his country's records for two different batting positions.
- No player for any country has yet made a score higher than 71 when making his debut and batting at no. 9 - yet there have been two debut centuries at no. 10, and a score of 98 at no. 11.
- No Bangladeshi has yet made double-figures for his country when batting at no. 11 on his debut. Their best debut score at this position is a humble 9* by Robiul Islam at Lord's in 2010.

The records by batting position for England, and for all countries, are as follows:

England: 1 - C Milburn 94, 2 - WG Grace 152, 3 - Ranji 154*, 4 - FC Hayes 106*, 5 - RE Foster 287, 6 - BH Valentine 136, 7 - MJ Prior 126*, 8 - DL Bairstow 59, 9 - D Gough 65, 10 - PJW Allott 52*, 11 - NG Cowans 36.

All countries: 1 - Khalid Ibadulla (P) 166, 2 - Brendon Kuruppu (SL) 201*, 3 - JA Rudolph (SA) 222*, 4 - Aminul Islam (BD) 145, 5 - Foster 287, 6 - RG Sharma (I) 177, 7 - Prior 126*, 8 - JDS Neesham (NZ) 137*, 9 - BS Sandhu (I) 71, 10 - Abul Hasan (BD) 113, 11 - AC Agar (Aus) 98.

There isn't room here to include the equivalent details for each of the ten Test-playing countries, but if any member would like them, please contact me at the usual address.

Even, though not very deep (or crisp)

In their first innings in the recent Johannesburg Test, South Africa scored 313, in which the highest individual score

was only 46 (Elgar), and the lowest was 12 (Morkel).

This was the 13th Test innings in which all 11 batsmen made *at least* double figures, though only the fifth in which all 11 made *precisely* double-figures (in the other eight cases, at least one batsman made a century). Here are the details of those five instances:

359	India v NZ (Dunedin) 1967/68	HS - 80	LS - 12	Extras - 16
524-9d	India v NZ (Kanpur) 1976/77	HS - 70	LS - 10*	Extras - 26
471	Australia v SL (Colombo) 1992	HS - 68	LS - 10*	Extras - 58
470	England v WI (Oval) 2004	HS - 72	LS - 10	Extras - 48
313	South Africa v Eng (Jo'burg) 2015/16	HS - 46	LS - 12	Extras - 21

South Africa's total of 313 is the lowest of the 13 Test innings in which all 11 batsmen made at least ten runs; the previous lowest was 358 by South Africa v Australia at Melbourne in 1931/32 (in which KG Viljoen made 111).

The range of scores by the individual batsmen at Johannesburg was only 34, which again is a record for any of the 13 innings. This range of 34 corresponds to 10.86% of the innings total of 313, which is not only the record low figure for the Test innings in which all batsmen made double-figures, but also set a new record for all the first-class innings in which this feat had been achieved: the previous record was 11.22%, recorded when Kent were dismissed for 303 by Somerset at Gravesend in 1950 (HS 44, LS 10).

Kent's 303 is not the record-low score in which all 11 batsmen reached double-figures. Worldwide, out of the 130 first-class innings in which the lowest score by any batsman was at least 10, there have been seven innings of under 300; the four under 290 are as follows:

248	MCC v Cambridge U (Cambridge) 1908	HS - 49	LS - 10	Extras - 7
267	Somerset v Cambridge U (Bath) 1949	HS - 41	LS - 10	Extras - 23
270	Lancs v Sussex (Manchester) 1957	HS - 42	LS - 11*	Extras - 19
278	SL Air Force v Panadura (Panadura) 2011/12	HS - 61	LS - 13	Extras - 8

South Africa's total of 313 stands in joint-14th place in this list. In the MCC innings at the head of the list, the individual scores (in numerical rather than batting order) were 10, 11, 14, 18, 19, 20*, 22, 22, 26, 30 and 49; a shame that W.G.Druce had to make as many as 49, as otherwise the range of individual scores might have been far lower than the lowest actual range in all first-class matches, which is the figure of 31 as recorded by Somerset and by Lancashire in the matches listed above. South Africa's range of 34 comes joint-third on the overall first-class list.

(With thanks to David Seymour for suggesting this as a topic for these Notes.)

Half a name onward

Among those playing first-class cricket in the 2015/16 season are two players sharing half their surnames with rather more established cricketers: Michael Guptill-Bunce, a right-handed opening batsman for Auckland, and Gudakesh Moti-Kanhai, a slow left-arm bowler from Guyana. In these days of increasing numbers of 'conjoined surnames', how long might it be before we can make up a full XI of players sharing part of their multi-part surnames with Test cricketers?

The answer is that we don't have to wait at all, for we can make up the XI with nine players from the ranks of past Test cricketers: HDG Leveson *Gower*, NS *Mitchell-Innes* and GHT *Simpson-Hayward* (England), Chuck Fleetwood-*Smith* (Australia), Tuppy Owen-*Smith*, Albert *Rose-Innes* and Percy *Twentyman-Jones* (SA), and Glen Bruk-*Jackson* (Zimbabwe).

Fancy that

How's this for a match? Playing for Eastern Province v Boland at Paarl in South Africa's second-tier first-class competition in mid-February, middle-order batsman and medium-pace bowler Kelly Smuts took 7-36 in Boland's first innings, including three wickets in one over; then scored 108 in EP's reply; and rounded things off with 6-35 in Boland's second innings, with four of his wickets coming off four consecutive deliveries. Moreover, his 13 wickets in the match included the dismissals of all 11 of his opponents at least once - not at all a common feat. I trust he bought a round (or two) for his team-mates after the game.

☆☆☆

TIMES PAST - CRICKET WRITERS AND BOOKS

Lack of space has beaten us again but I'm hoping to return to a comic, or at least, a comedic offering, next time.

☆☆☆

BOOK REVIEWS

Here the Editor hangs his head in shame at the error perpetrated in our last Bulletin. Somehow (and I'm still trying to work out how) I managed to get one book's author completely wrong so, by way of apology, here is the correct appellation and the least that I can do is to reprint the review with the correct details.

FIRST XI: Eleven Stories of the World of Cricket – Bob Cattell - Charlcombe Books £7.99

Fiction is still fairly rare in cricket books so it was with some interest that I picked up this book from an author, with whom I wasn't familiar. This is probably because

Bob Cattell has been a successful writer of children's (or young adult's) fiction but now he is making his first foray into the adult readership world and using the genre of his favourite sport.

The short stories are more fragments and range across the globe from Aboriginal Australia to Lord's and from Afghanistan through Pakistan to the West Indies. A surprising number of topics come under scrutiny from the problems of sexuality in women's cricket; match-fixing (or to more accurate, spot-fixing) on the sub-continent; 'streaking' at major sporting occasions and the story of a man who scores his first ever century with a disturbing twist at the end.

Some stories work and some don't but there is enough talent on display to suggest that there might well be another book to come on cricket - perhaps a full-length one with a plot centred on club or village cricket, which seems to be the area that the author knows best. One comment though. In the case of the 'streaker' (and I won't give away the sex) The Guardian doesn't pay for stories of that kind, which is a minor point but needs saying.

Interesting debut and worth looking out for future offerings.

(Ed. As I said, the least that I could do is to reprint the review with the correct details. It's a very good debut in a field, that of cricket fiction, which is notoriously difficult to 'get right' and Bob's work shows that he both understands the genre and the wider world of cricket. It could also be a very good book for a younger member of the family to get them introduced to the world of cricket literature.)

☆☆☆

THE SOCIETY LIBRARY

Howard Milton writes:-

The Cricket Society Library in the Royal Over-Seas League is open to members for between 75 to 90 minutes before any Society meeting at the League. It is also open by appointment for the borrowing and returning of books and such researching as time allows by contacting Jo Miller at anglojem@yahoo.com. There are now no Royal Over-Seas League London meetings before the summer break. As last year I intend to open the Library for business sometime during the summer. Please lookout for the date.

Also, for any member with a reasonable research enquiry which may be solved from the Library's extensive resources, please contact either Jo on the e-mail address above or me at the address at the head of this Bulletin or by e-mail library@cricketsociety.com. Please enclose a s.a.e. in any postal correspondence.

WEBSITE

Members will have noted (and indeed, have commented on) the fact that our website seems to have ground to a halt, as it were. The Executive has decided to undertake a thorough revamp of the site and to that end, we are currently seeking and assessing some bids to bring the website into line with current standards. We will keep members apprised of our progress but just to whet the appetite, we are also seeking competitive bids to digitise the Society's Journals from the beginning. Members will, of course, be able to access the archive as one of the benefits of Society membership but we will be looking to make a charge for non-members who wish to access the archive for research purposes. Hopefully, we will have some progress to report in the very near future and our website will prove to be of considerable benefit and usefulness to our membership.

New Members

Mr I K Blacklidge of High Wycombe
Mr A J Comette of Crediton
Mr W J Edmunds of Basingstoke
Mr J Garnsworthy of Wallington
Mr A Gibson of Langport
Mr J Hennessey of London EC2
Mr S G Kirk of Croydon
Mr B C Laverton of London SE6
Mr D Lobb of Burton on Trent

Mr P J Moore of Newport Pagnell

Mr A H Rawlinson of Dorking

The Cricket Society would like to extend a warm welcome to our many new members. Every new member who joins our many established, current members gives us renewed belief that The Society will be able to continue to support the game and promote its principles. New members still come from all over the country which is very much what your Executive wants to see. One of our senior members, Bob Laverton has enticed the 'next generation' to come aboard and although lob-bowling may have fallen out of fashion, Mr Lobb of Burton on Trent has joined us to redress the balance. We hope that all new members will find that your membership brings you enjoyment and your sojourn with us be a long and happy one. If there is any topic that is close to your heart and would like to see featured or whether you would just like to express your views on cricketing matters past and present (or future) – please write in and we will be happy to include them in our ever-expanding correspondence section.

Deaths

Mr R J Harragan of Llanelli

Sad to see that Bon Harragan, one of our most regular correspondents has passed away. Bob was a great encourager of youth cricket in Wales and one of the last letters that I received from him was in Issue 568 when he recalled 'talent-spotting' the young Geraint Jones. Our thoughts are with Bob's family and friends.

☆☆☆

In Our Next Bulletin:

Well, members responded nobly to my hope expressed in the last Bulletin that I would get lots of letters and so I hope that correspondence will have been stimulated by the content of this issue. There will be more musings by our Beloved Chairman (even though he has yet to write his Little Red Book); a look at a comedic book on cricket; a chance to include Book reviews that do not get into the upcoming Journal; reports of Branch Meetings and all the fun of the fair. Perhaps even some cricket news, although don't hold me to that. In short, very much the mix as before and one hopes, none the worse for that.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Currently, line advertisements cost £2.00 per 20 words plus 20p per additional word but this will be subject to review later in the year. Advertisers should include their address or telephone number in the advertisement, which should be sent to the Editor, John Symons, at 110 Whyke Lane, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 8AS or preferably by email to symonsjc@hotmail.com Cheques should be made payable to **The Cricket Society**. The closing date for the next issue is **April 8th 2016**.

CRICKET SOCIETY MERCHANDISE

The following items with the Father Time logo are available to members: .

Ball point pens.....	£1.50
Car stickers.....	£1.50
Key rings.....	£1.50
Note pads	£4.00
Lapel Badges	£1.50
Traditional ties (maroon with white stripe and Father Time).....	£8.00
City Tie (Diamond design blue)	£10
70th Anniversary Tie (1945-2015) Blue/Maroon Stripes	£10

SPECIAL OFFER: City Tie and 70th

Anniversary Tie	£15
Member pack (Traditional tie; notepad; pen; key ring; car sticker, lapel badge).....	£17

(See Merchandise Section on website for pictures of items:

<http://www.cricketociety.com/merchandise.html>)

All prices above include post and packing (surface mail overseas). Overseas members please remit in sterling.

Please send cheques (made payable to "The Cricket Society") to

Brian Harrild, 1 Keens Lane Cottages, Reydon, Southwold, Suffolk. IP18 6NT.

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Contact **Bill Burke 0771 3252637** or wbt103@hotmail.com

FOR SALE

A letter from J R Mason to Jim Coldham discussing the aftermath of World War II And the upcoming Australian Tour with mentions of Compton, Edrich, Hardstaff and Hutton.

Phone **Ian Gilbert** – 01582 508655

Email - ian.david61@yahoo.co.uk

WISDEN CRICKETERS ALMANACKS REQUIRED

I am always looking for Wisdens to purchase and as a collector myself, I completely appreciate that most collections come onto the market out of necessity or bereavement. These collections deserve to be treated with the respect and honesty that the collector would want. For this reason I tend to offer more for Wisdens than others, especially pre 1976 editions.

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FUTURE SOCIETY EVENTS

LONDON Meeting dates:

(At the Royal Over-Seas League, Park Place, London SW1 at 7.00 p.m. except where noted.)

2015/16 Winter Season for your diaries:

2016

Tuesday 8th March 7.00 pm - Simon Inglis at the Civil Service Club (13/15 Great Scotland Yard, SW1A 2HJ)

Simon is a much-respected writer on sport with an emphasis on where the game was and is played. His current book **PLAYED IN LONDON – Charting the Heritage of a City at Play** has received many admiring reviews, with its detailed look at venues covering all sports but he will concentrate on London cricket grounds and their heritage when he is with us. (NOTE: the Meeting is on Tuesday not a Monday as stated in the last Bulletin. Also the address is Great Scotland Yard not New Scotland Yard, which is where the Editor is likely to find himself if he makes any more errors!)

Wednesday April 13th March 7.00 pm– Richard Tomlinson, at the Civil Service Club (13/15 Great Scotland Yard, SW1A 2HJ)

Richard has an excellent biography of WG Grace out at the moment, which has been nominated for BOTY.

Monday 11th April 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm -Book of the Year Award Evening in The Long Room at Lord's (Booking Form accompanies this Bulletin)

Friday 22nd April 7.00 pm - Spring Dinner (Booking Form accompanies this Bulletin)

MIDLANDS BRANCH MEETINGS

All meetings will take place at **Edgbaston** on Tuesdays, except where stated, starting at **8pm**.

2016

March 16th * Steve Elworthy - Former South African Test Cricketer and now Director of Events at the ECB (* Note THIS IS A WEDNESDAY.)

2016

DURHAM AND NORTH-EAST BRANCH MEETINGS

Monthly meetings henceforth will be on a back-to-back basis. Speakers will come to **Riverside** for the first Thursday in the month at **7.30 pm**, (note change to earlier time). They will also now attend and speak at Richmondshire Cricket Club, Hurgill Road, RICHMOND, North Yorkshire. DL10 4AR on either the Wednesday prior to or on the Friday following this date.

2016

Thursday, March 3rd and Richmond, Friday March 4th - Dean Allen - 'Empire, War & Cricket in South Africa'

SOUTH-WESTERN BRANCH (WEST OF ENGLAND)

(All Meetings, unless otherwise noted, will be at Bath Cricket Club 2.00 pm)

Tuesday March 15th - Jeremy Lloyds, the former Somerset and Gloucestershire cricketer and current first-class (and former international) umpire.

As mentioned earlier in The Bulletin, we thought that members would be interested in the full, detailed version of a proposed reorganised county season that Mark sent to the ECB and we are happy to include it here. We would also welcome members' views on this proposal.



COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON – THE ALTERNATIVE by Mark Baldwin

*ALL dates based on 2015 calendar

LVCC

3 conferences (A, B and C) of six teams play 10 four-day matches (five home, five away) in April-July

Top two in each conference qualify for Div 1, middle two for Div 2, bottom two for Div 3

3 divisions (1, 2 and 3) of six teams play 5 four-day matches (with reserve day) in August-September

15 four-day matches played per county

Champions are Div 1 winners; prize-money all way down (1-18); prize money in Div 1 (i.e. teams finishing 1-6) is better than Div 2, and Div 2 better than Div 3; modest silverware for Div 2 and Div 3 winners in addition to Championship trophy for Div 1 winners

Where you finish (i.e. places 1-18) determines where you start next year's Conferences (i.e. teams 1 and 6 go into Conference A, teams 2 and 5 go in Conference B, teams 3 and 4 go in Conference C, and so on)

Conference season:

11 slots provided*: April 12-15, 19-22, 26-29, May 3-6, 10-13, 19-22, 26-29, June 2-5, 9-12, June 30-July 3, July 19-22 (+23 reserve day for final slot, in which all play all)

*Extra slot provided to allow for tourist matches to be played against a county in certain of these slots

Divisional season:

6 slots provided*: August 5-8 (+9 reserve day), 15/16-20/21 (+21/22 reserve day), 23/24-26/27 (+27/28 reserve day), September 1-4 (+5 reserve day), 8-11 (+12 reserve day), 15-18 (+19 reserve day, in which all play all)

*Extra slot provided to allow for tourist matches to be played against a county in certain of these slots

** Tourist match slots could be found elsewhere (i.e. during one-day knockout slots) if ECB want to create room for counties to go to Champions League and finish domestic season in September 8-12 slot.

Our next issue will feature Mark's alternative plan for limited-overs fixtures.