

AGM MINUTES - 2007

The 34th AGM of the Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians was held at Derbyshire CCC on Saturday 31 March 2007, starting at 11.15 am.

Present - W.D.Ambrose, D.J.Baggett (President), P.J.Bailey, R.S.Baldwin, C.J.Bartlett, D.F.Baskerville, D.Biswas, A.V.Bradbury, R.W.Brooke, J.C.Bryant, G.M.du Sautoy, C.F.Fricker, H.D.Garrod, K.T.Gerrish, R.A.Gibbons, J.A.Goulder, M.A.Goulder, P.D.Griffiths, B.Heald, J.A.Heald, R.Heavens, A.K.Hignell (Secretary), M.F.Hill, R.V.Isaacs, V.H.Isaacs, N.C.James, D.A.Jeater, D.Kendix, D.A.Lambert, B.M.Lawton, J.N.Lawton Smith, A.J.Ledbetter, J.E.Liddle, J.C.Lodge (Treasurer), D.H.Miller (Chairman), H.I.D.Nathan, J.T.Needham, C.D.O'Brien, C.R.J.Overson, A.B.Percival, G.A.Phillips, M.Pope, G.A.Potts, D.J.Pracy, A.Revill, N.W.Rogers, M.P.Ronayne, D.S.Roxburgh, R.W.Slater, M.J.K.Smith, P.G.Smith, S.Smith, K.W.Sugg, S.J.Sweetman, M.J.Thompson, C.R.Waite, L.P.Walker, K.S.Walmsley, A.J.Webb, G.S.Wilde, R.C.Wilton and P.Wynne-Thomas.

1a. Apologies for absence

After the President had welcomed the members, including the President-Elect, M.J.K.Smith, to the Derbyshire headquarters, the Secretary reported that apologies had been received from the following members – Ian Balfour, Paul Bolton, Guy Curry, Stephen Draper, Ric Finlay, Martin Howe, Neil Jenkinson, Ian Maun, Eric Midwinter, Harriet Monkhouse, Roger Moulton, Bryn Nathan, Kevin Preston, Rex Roberts, Angus Rodger, Andrew Samson, G.P.Schlittner, Steven Sheen, Colin Tong, David Whittingham, Roger Wright.

1b. Obituaries

The Secretary also reported that during the past year Richard Streeton, the Association's former President, Nauman Bader, John Kitchen and Philip Thorn, as well as several other members, had passed away. The members present then stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect in memory of these gentlemen.

2. Minutes of the 33rd Annual General Meeting

The Minutes of the 33rd Annual General Meeting were received and approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting held at Trent Bridge on 25 March 2006 (Proposed - Richard Slater; Seconded - Michael Hill).

3. Election of Committee Members and Officers

The President reported on the results of the election for the three vacant places on the committee. Harriet Monkhouse and Peter Griffiths had each been re-elected, whilst David Jeater had been elected.

No election had been required for the post of Treasurer, and in the absence of another candidate Roger Gibbons would take up the office from the end of the meeting.

4. Annual Report of the Committee for 2005/06

After the President had drawn the meeting's attention to the report in the agenda booklet, the Chairman commented how membership numbers were still on the increase as a result of a number of recent initiatives. He added his concern about the general antipathy towards the sale of books at county grounds, including Lord's. He was pleased to report that, following a recent meeting with the Deputy Chief Executive of MCC, he had been asked to provide advice about which books should be stocked in the MCC Shop – he hoped that this would result in an increased number of titles being stocked at Lord's that would be of interest to the more serious and scholarly follower of the game, including some of those published by the ACS.

The President then thanked the committee for their efforts in the course of the past year, particularly noting the work of Philip Bailey and David Kendix in forging a close and positive working relationship with the ICC. He also noted the efforts made by others, including Jenny Griffiths with ACS Sales, Simon Sweetman as Editor of the Journal, Tracy Pope for her work with the Journal and other publications, and David Jeater as the Editor of the Lives in Cricket series. With the latter in mind, he reminded members that the publications were the lifeblood of the Association, notwithstanding the electronic means that now enabled information to be disseminated by both the ACS and counties.

He concluded by saying that other changes were imminent, with committee meetings scheduled to be held in London and elsewhere, whilst the AGM continued to be a moveable feast.

In response to a question from Brian Heald, Peter Griffiths reported that a decision had been taken not to continue with publication of the Statistical Surveys in view of their sales levels, especially when much of this information was so freely available elsewhere on the Internet.

The Chairman briefly mentioned the substantial funds that the Association now held, and asked members to contact the committee if they had any ideas for specific projects or other ways in which they would like the ACS to apply this capital.

Richard Slater commented favourably on the two meetings held at Lord's, which had involved a tour of the ground and an illustrated talk on the Ashes by Glenys Williams. He thanked the Chairman for his efforts in organising these meetings and hoped that similar events could be held in the future. The Chairman added that a highly successful event had also been held at Trinity College, Cambridge, and thanked Roger Heavens and Paul Smith for organising an enjoyable day, full of scholarly input.

The report of the Committee was duly adopted (Proposed - Dennis Lambert; Seconded - Terry Needham).

5. Income and Expenditure Account for the Financial Year ending 30 November 2006

The President began by reporting that, after the publication of the Accounts, the Committee had discovered several problems, especially relating to the Valuation of Stock. The Treasurer also mentioned other erroneous figures, but stressed that the problems lay with the presentation of the Accounts, rather than the overall financial position.

In response to questions from Dennis Lambert and Tony Percival, the Treasurer explained how the figures for the cost of publications were drawn up. Peter Griffiths added that there was an important distinction between the cost of production and the value of the books, whilst the Chairman commented that, unless most copies of a book were sold soon after it first became available, it was unlikely that the remainder would be disposed of at full price. There had, for instance, been a successful response to the Christmas sale that had helped to dispose of old and surplus stock, but these sales were achieved at much reduced prices.

In response to questions about the ACS investments, the Treasurer and David Kendix explained that a subcommittee had been formed which – after taking free advice from an ACS member who was an independent financial advisor – had ratified funds being placed for investment through Hargreaves Lansdown. David Kendix explained how a passive management strategy had been chosen with 60% in the more volatile UK Equity market and 40% in the very predictable UK gilts. In response to a question from Dennis Lambert, David Kendix stated that he felt the Association had taken a sensible middle-ground course with this investment policy.

Dennis Lambert pointed out that, whilst thinking about the future financial safety of the Association, the Committee should not become deflected from the original purpose of the ACS, namely to promote and publish the research of its members. At a time when the bottom had fallen out of the book market, he believed that it was imperative that funds should still be earmarked for non-profit-making publications. The President confirmed that the Committee would discuss this, and clarify the position, at their next meeting.

After Mike Thompson had raised a question about the accessibility of the investments, David Kendix explained that there were no problems with long-term notice periods and that the Association could, with the necessary signatures, gain access to their funds within the space of a few weeks. In response to a question from Peter Griffiths, David Kendix informed the meeting that income from the fund was to be re-invested rather than distributed, there being no immediate requirement for it.

The President concluded that he was glad that the problems over the Accounts, as presented to the meeting, had been identified and addressed. The President and Treasurer then explained that, as a result, the following would take place:

an amended set of Accounts would be presented to the Committee for their next meeting on 14 April;

if deemed correct, these revised Accounts would be sent out to Members, when the Summer Journal was distributed, together with a notice that an EGM would take place – at a time and at a venue to be decided by the Committee at their meeting on 14 April – at which these revised Accounts would be received and, if approved, adopted for the Financial Year ending 30 November 2006.

David Kendix asked whether a show of hands should be taken to gauge interest in attending an EGM, but, without knowing a precise date and time, or a specific venue, it was felt that this would be a futile exercise.

Geoff Wilde then asked about the certification process and the timings of when these discrepancies had come to light. The Treasurer replied that the problems had only been identified after the Journal had been sent out to members. He said that a new certification process would now commence.

In response to another point raised by Dennis Lambert and a question from John Bryant, Roger Gibbons and Simon Sweetman each explained the various procedures by which accounts could be prepared, and a certificate produced. In light of these points, the Chairman added that on 14 April the Committee would also discuss whether any Rule Changes were needed concerning the preparation of the Accounts, which, if deemed appropriate, could be endorsed at an EGM.

6. Appointment of an auditor for 2006/07

In light of the points above and the lengthy discussion, it was unanimously agreed to defer a decision on the appointment of an Auditor until the EGM (Proposed - David Kendix; Seconded - Brian Heald).

7. Statistician of the Year Award

The President reported that Krish Reddy – the distinguished South African statistician – had won the Award. Peter Griffiths, in accepting the award on his behalf, drew the meeting's attention to the work undertaken by Krish – often in very difficult circumstances – in obtaining details about the 223 matches staged during the Apartheid era.

Peter then read out a letter from Krish in which he conveyed his 'sincere appreciation to the committee for choosing him for the Award. I am delighted in being the recipient of such a prestigious accolade, and am particularly pleased for all those cricketers, almost all of whom I saw play and several of whom I knew personally, whose efforts on the field I have had the pleasure of researching and recording.

'It does my heart glad to know that at long last their performances have been recognised by the rest of the cricketing world, and for this I am indebted to the Association, and more particularly, to two members, namely Andrew Samson and Robin Isherwood. These two gentlemen have been kind enough to scrutinise my work with meticulous precision. Their professional approach has enabled the work of an amateur enthusiast to be presented in an acceptable form for publication in the *M and F South African Cricket Annual*.

'In closing, I would like to commend the Association and its members for the excellent work they are doing in providing an invaluable service to cricket in respect of both statistics and the game's history.'

8. Presentations to Retiring Officers and Committee Members

Presentations of tankards were then made to three members retiring from the committee.

The President began by highlighting the outstanding work over the past decade of Mick Pope (and his wife) with the Journal and other publications. He thanked Mick for his wholehearted efforts as Marketing Manager.

The President then thanked Jerry Lodge for all of his work on the Association's behalf during his seven years of service as Treasurer.

The Chairman paid tribute to the retiring President for the guidance he had given to the Association at a time of much change in the Association's affairs. He added that the President had been much more than a mere figurehead, and had always been available with unfailingly wise counsel in addressing the many challenging issues they had faced together.

9. Any other business

Stephen Baldwin spoke briefly about his work with Local History Societies, especially with members of the Radcliffe-on-Trent Society who had undertaken some excellent cricket-related research. He also commented on the poor state of Richard Daft's grave, and outlined the plans for its renovation, before concluding by asking for the support of members of the Association in raising funds for this scheme.

The Chairman wondered whether members might feel that a donation from the Association was a suitable use of its funds. Both Mike Thompson and Vic Isaacs added that many other graves of leading figures in cricket history were in a poor state, and it was agreed that a policy should be drawn up which supported their renovation, as well as that of Richard Daft.

Robert Brooke then raised several concerns, including those relating to a recent Journal article which, in his opinion, had ridiculed the efforts of certain cricket historians. In response to an additional point, Peter Griffiths reiterated that the committee have set up a procedure for the peer review of all major articles, and Simon Sweetman asked for volunteers to assist him with this process. Dennis Lambert added that those involved should remember that there was an important distinction to be borne in mind between differences of opinion and factual mistakes.

In response to another point raised by Robert Brooke, the President confirmed that the Committee, in conjunction with the Editor, would address the issue of Obituary notices in the Journal. After Robert Brooke had asked about the choice of a wicket-keeper in the Famous Cricketers series, the President and Peter Griffiths reiterated that the decision had been made by the Committee and the Series Editor. After Robert Brooke had raised a final point about the proposed Beldam book, Peter Griffiths pointed out that a list of important matches was still being drawn up.

The President closed the AGM at 1 pm.

10. Lunch

Lunch was then taken, and over coffee M.J.K.Smith made a short and very interesting address to members, in which he spoke about his own playing career for Leicestershire, Warwickshire and England.

11. Research Workshop

Between 2.30 pm and 3.45 pm, a research workshop took place in which several presentations were made.

The Secretary began by outlining the work of Dr Peter Davies and his small team at the University of Huddersfield, relating to the Cricket Heritage Project in Calderdale and Kirklees, which had been funded from 2004 by the Heritage Lottery Fund. He also showed how several of these ideas, especially those relating to education and community outreach, were now being followed up by Glamorgan Cricket as part of the ground development scheme at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff, and the proposed Museum of Welsh Cricket.

Roger Heavens then spoke about the research undertaken by Ian Maun of Exeter University on 18th-century cricket, and his proposed publication of *A Chronology of Cricket 1700-1799*. A number of new sources and hitherto unknown matches were outlined, together with the proposed publication schedule for the Chronology.

The Secretary and Peter Griffiths then showed members various websites which would assist with genealogical and statistical research. In response to questions raised by members, it was agreed that links to these websites would be publicised on the ACS website, and the Secretary urged members to submit details of websites which they had found useful in their own research.

After a closing question from Richard Isaacs, the meeting agreed that it would be extremely useful for the ACS to follow up several of the research points, raised by all of the workshops, especially linking up with the historical work undertaken by local cricket clubs, and exploring ways of collating this archive information in an electronic format.

The workshop ended at 3.45 pm, after which tea was served, with members departing from 4 pm.