

AGM MINUTES - 2010

The 37th AGM of the Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians was held in the Gateway Centre at Derbyshire CCC on Saturday 27 March 2010, starting at 11.15 am.

Present - David Baggett, Philip Bailey, Kit Bartlett, Robert Brooke, John Bryant, Mick Burton, Stan Dawson, Ric Finlay, Keith Gerrish, Jim Gibb, Roger Gibbons (Treasurer), Peter Gilbert, Peter Griffiths, Alan Grove, Michael Hawksworth, Brian Heald, Jenny Heald, Roger Heavens, Andrew Hignell (Secretary), Martin Howe, David Jeater, David Kendix (Chairman), Dennis Lambert, Brian Lawton, Tony Martin, Ian Maun, Harriet Monkhouse, Roy Morgan, Roger Moulton, Huw Nathan, Serena Nathan, Terry Needham, Chris O'Brien, Chris Overson, Tony Percival, Giles Phillips, Mick Pope, Alex Potts, David Pracy, David Roxburgh, Richard Slater, M.J.K.Smith (President), Paul Smith, Simon Sweetman, Cyril Waite, Keith Walmsley, Geoff Wilde, Martin Wilson, Robby Wilton and Peter Wynne-Thomas.

After a welcome from the President, the meeting began with a few moments' silence in memory of the following five members of the Association who had passed away during the course of the year - Mr D.L.Firmin, Mr J. Guest, Mr R.H.Holland, Mr E.H.Lawrence and Mr R.R.Phipps.

1. Apologies for absence

The Secretary reported apologies had been received from the following members - Don Ambrose, Ian Balfour, Derek Barnard, Paddy Briggs, Kevin Campbell-Woodward, P.T.Clare, Neal Davies, Paul Dyson, Colin Fricker, Michael Hill, Richard Isaacs, Julian Lawton Smith, Jim Ledbetter, Tim McCann, Douglas Miller, Bryn Nathan, Norman Rogers, Prof. Alan Stainer, Willie Sugg, J. Hugh Thomas, Tony Webb and David Whittingham.

2. Minutes of the 36th Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the AGM held at Cardiff on 28 March 2009 were unanimously approved (Proposed - Roger Heavens; Seconded - Dennis Lambert).

3. Election of Committee Members

The Secretary reported on the election for which 181 ballot papers had been received. No papers had been spoilt and the results, following scrutiny, were:

Harriet Monkhouse	139
David Jeater	124
Simon Sweetman	118
Robert Brooke	113

The Chairman stated that Secretary had acted as scrutineer and that the results had been ratified independently by himself and the Treasurer. He congratulated the first three on their re-election for further three-year terms, and he commiserated with Mr Brooke on his non-election.

4. Annual Report of the Committee for 2008/09

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, drew the meeting's attention to the Annual Report, as contained in the AGM booklet. Rather than repeating the content, he expanded on a few points and brought the meeting up to date with other developments. In particular, he referred to the recent review of the *Overseas First-Class Annual* in the March issue of *The Wisden Cricketer* in which the Association was described as cricket's 'think tank'. With this in mind, he congratulated John Bryant on his efforts in masterminding the compilation and production of this Annual.

The Chairman also commended David Jeater for his editorship of the Lives in Cricket series which had become a stunning example of prolonged high quality output. Reminders were also made about the one-off publications, such as *Cricket's Wartime Sanctuary*, that the Association was always pleased to consider, as well as the Research Grants, and the membership drive which had so far seen two-thirds of members recruited in 2009 deciding to renew for 2010.

An update was then given on the state of the new website, which would be shortly launched with additional functionality plus revised and updated content. The Chairman added however that he was unable to report on any progress with marketing, for which the Committee would be delighted to receive offers of assistance.

The Chairman reminded the meeting of the Committee's rationale behind the decision not to reprint and reissue all of the List A book – the free book for 2009 – which had unfortunately contained a large number of errors owing to a single programming error. Instead, a corrections supplement dealing with these entries had been made available on request. Only 5% of members had requested the supplement, thereby costing the Association only £100 rather than an estimated £4,000 for a full reprint. The Chairman added that a small number of other corrections or updates to biographies had been received and that these would be covered in the normal way via appropriate notices in *The Cricket Statistician*.

The Chairman announced that the free book for 2010 would be the biography of Jack Bond in the Lives in Cricket series, and that following the success of the London meeting in February 2010 another meeting was planned for November 2010 with, it was hoped, a very distinguished former Test cricketer as the guest speaker. Any ideas for other regional meetings, or gatherings to discuss more specialist topics, would also be gratefully received.

Finally, the Chairman thanked the many members who were the Association's unsung heroes, undertaking such tasks as proof-reading, checking facts and tracking down photographs. He concluded by commending the work of the Treasurer and Membership Secretary, both of whom had provided the Committee with timely, thorough and accurate information.

There were no questions raised and the report was unanimously adopted (Proposed – Jenny Heald; Seconded – Richard Slater).

5. Annual Accounts for 2008/09

The Treasurer began with two additional corrections to the Accounts for 2008/09, as published in the AGM booklet. Firstly, Item 8 on page 10 should have stated that the amount drawn down from the Minkley bequest in 2009 was £215 not £290. Secondly, there should have been a note providing additional information regarding the investments. He stated that money had been invested through Hargreaves Lansdown and deposited in two Legal & General Unit Trust Tracker Funds, originally split 40% Gilts, 60% Equities. He reminded the meeting that so far, no income had been taken with dividends automatically reinvested.

The Treasurer then commented on the small surplus for the year, the improved mechanism by which print runs were decided, and the availability of research grants as well as authors' royalties. In all, approximately £10,000 had been paid out without adversely affecting the Association's assets. He concluded by stating that the healthy and financially secure position of the Association allowed decisions to be taken on special one-off payments, such as the website design.

Dennis Lambert asked about the cost of the work on the website – the Chairman replied that around £300 had been spent on the new design, and that on-going maintenance costs, in the region of several hundreds – rather than thousands – of pounds were likely to be incurred in the future. He added that costs could be recouped through online sales to those who would not otherwise discover or buy our books.

Roger Heavens asked about the facility to pay online using a debit or credit card. The Chairman confirmed that this facility, at least in respect of debit cards and Paypal, would be desirable, as well as the ability to set up membership direct debits. Simon Sweetman commented on the advantages of using Paypal, although Peter Griffiths added that some countries were excluded from this method. Robert Brooke then implored the Committee still to allow payments by traditional methods. The Chairman provided that assurance.

In response to a question from David Jeater, the Treasurer reported that the value of the Hargreaves Lansdown investment stood, as of 25 March, at £135,689. Martin Wilson enquired if the Committee had any plans for this invested capital, to which the Chairman replied that the money would continue to be used for research grants, underwriting major publishing ventures which may involve financial risks, and maintaining subscription rates at a reasonable and constant level.

Finally Geoff Wilde asked if there was any mileage in having a separate investment account to cover payments such as grants and royalties, distinct from the day-to-day running of the Association. The Chairman responded that it remained more practical and cost-effective to make occasional, larger withdrawals from the investment account rather than regular and smaller ones. Nevertheless he accepted that future reports could make a more explicit distinction between these sources of expenditure.

The Accounts were then unanimously approved (Proposed – Dennis Lambert; Seconded – Brian Heald).

6. Appointment of an external accountant to prepare the Annual Accounts

The Treasurer proposed the re-appointment of Ian Barwick of Gerard and Co. in Stroud (Seconded – Richard Slater). This was agreed unanimously.

7. Rule Change

The Chairman reminded the meeting of the rationale behind the proposed change to the Association's rule 12.6 relating to the availability of Committee minutes to any member of the association on request to the Secretary. He pointed out that the current rule did not allow any exception to be made, even for a Committee minute that dealt with a highly confidential or sensitive issue. The Committee felt that the wording of the present rule could, in rare circumstances, force the disclosure of information that could involve the Association in serious difficulties or even litigation.

As a result, the Committee proposed a change which maintained the principle of the present rule whilst giving the Committee the authority to withhold any details where disclosure might breach confidentiality or otherwise compromise the interests of the Association as a whole.

Peter Griffiths enquired whether the proposed change would be applied on a case-by-case basis, or applied retrospectively, as well as enquiring for how long any such minutes would be closed. The Chairman reiterated that the intention was for sensitive matters to be identified at the time of their discussion and their closure noted accordingly by the Secretary. He added that the minutes so identified would remain closed until any such matters were no longer sensitive, with the Secretary recording their availability.

Following a question raised by Robert Brooke, the Chairman stressed that he hoped members of the Association would trust the ethical behaviour of the Committee, and accept that it would not abuse the proposed change in circumstances, for example, to spare their blushes in the event of an embarrassing blunder or internal disagreement.

Chris O'Brien asked whether the proposed change might lead to legal liability issues. The Chairman replied that because the Association was not an incorporated body, any such claims would have to be made against individual Officers or members of the Association rather than the Committee or the ACS itself. He added that the Committee was currently considering taking out insurance to cover any legal costs should such matters arise. An additional question was then raised about the Freedom of Information Act, which John Bryant confirmed did not apply to this matter.

The Committee's proposal was seconded by Richard Slater, and following a vote in which there was a single vote against, the following amendment was approved to Rule 12.6:

The Minutes should be open to the inspection of any member on application in writing to the Secretary, subject to the withholding of any minute if in the opinion of the committee, its disclosure would breach commercial or legal confidentiality or clearly be prejudicial to the broad interests of the Association.

8. Statistician of the Year Award

The Secretary announced that Ian Maun had been recognised as the Association's Statistician (and Historian) of the Year following the publication during 2009 of the first volume of his series on cricket in the 18th century. Ian's work *From Commons to Lord's* - published by fellow Association member Roger Heavens - had also been long-listed by The Cricket Society for its prestigious Book of the Year Award, with many regarding the book as one of the most important on cricket history in recent years.

The Secretary noted that Ian, who worked in the Education Department at Exeter University, had meticulously unearthed many new details about cricket in the 18th century, having consulted newspapers, journals, letters and other documents housed in national and provincial collections, as well as other resources not previously consulted by cricket historians, including dictionaries, novels, plays and poems.

The Secretary explained that Ian's research had started when he was trying to understand the relationship of the exploits of the Hambledon Club to the cricket which had preceded the days of that illustrious Club. What started out as a series of rough notes and jottings, disentangling what was fact and what was fiction, had subsequently metamorphosed into a major research project resulting in the publication of a reference book which provided a sharper and more complete picture of 18th-century cricket than previously achieved by many of the great scholars of cricket history. In particular, Ian had discovered several hitherto

unknown matches, as well as more than 200 references to cricket which, until now, had never been previously published.

Ian then received the Statistician of the Year Trophy from the President before thanking several members of the Association for their assistance with his research, especially Roger Heavens, Martin Wilson and Peter Wynne-Thomas.

9. Consultation on scorecard-based publications

John Bryant led a discussion about scorecard-based publications during which he reported on some of the feedback that had been received. He noted the many favourable comments, including those about covering matches that were not first-class, as well as continuing the publication of details of Minor County matches. He added that the Committee would subsequently review the feedback later in the year. Keith Walmsley then endorsed the value of paper-based publications, and suggested a volume covering South African scores from the 1970s and 1980s. Following a question from Cyril Waite, John Bryant stressed that the intention was to publish scorecards using the standard format, rather than producing books with heavily abbreviated scores.

10. Any other business

Brian Heald raised a question about the forthcoming match between the MCC and Durham in Abu Dhabi, and whether it would be considered as a tour match outside the UK or part of the English season. The Secretary then displayed details from the ECB website showing umpire appointments for 2010 and how the ECB (as well as the Press Association) were treating the match in Abu Dhabi as being the first game of the English first-class season.

Robert Brooke raised several points, including the need for tighter editing, perhaps via a sub-editor, of the Journal. He also expressed concerns over what he felt to be an unnecessary apology to Paddy Briggs, the author of the *Lives in Cricket* volume on John Shepherd, which had been included in *The Cricket Statistician* following the publication in a previous issue of an article by John Ward. The Chairman replied that John Ward's article was a very interesting and plausible alternative view of the circumstances surrounding a particular incident in John Shepherd's life. In particular, the author of the article was one of the leading authorities on Zimbabwean cricket and was bringing his first-hand recollections to bear.

The Chairman added that whilst the Committee saw no need to apologise for the article or to disown it, they were prepared, following a request from Paddy Briggs, to make it clear that the article did not mean to suggest that his own conclusions in the book on John Shepherd were other than carefully and properly reached, and to regret any inference to that effect. The Chairman concluded by reporting that both John Ward and Paddy Briggs, having seen the wording in the Journal, had agreed that the matter was closed.

Robert Brooke also raised a query about birthplace information and the use in Association publications of descriptions based on what he considered were out-of-date or incorrect geographical units. The Chairman stated that the Committee would review this issue and, where appropriate, agree an in-house policy for such terminology.

Following a question from Chris O'Brien, the Chairman confirmed that the Association were considering a new tie for members. However, a show of hands revealed that only a small number of members might be interested in making such a purchase. The Secretary then paid tribute to the work of Keith Gerrish in editing the *Second Eleven Annual*. Keith had tendered his retirement from this position and the Secretary thanked him, on behalf of the Committee, for maintaining the high standards of this publication.

Chris Overson raised the issue of failed e-mail messages and the receipt of spam and other unsolicited messages via the members e-mail forum. Peter Griffiths replied with some technical advice, in particular about anti-spam software.

11. End of meeting, and post-lunch discussions

The President made a few concluding remarks on the forthcoming season and the future activities of the Association, before the formal AGM closed at 12.45pm.

The Annual Lunch then took place between 1 pm and 2.30 pm, before John Bryant, Martin Wilson and others from the working party on 18th-century matches made a presentation on the preparation of a list of major matches from this period. These discussions ended at 3.30 pm and, after the serving of afternoon tea, the meeting closed at 4 pm.