

Minutes of the 44th AGM of the Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians held in The 3aaa Pavilion at Derbyshire CCC on Saturday 18 March 2017, starting at 11 am.

Present (50) – Philip Bailey, Philip Banham, Pelham Barton, Robert Brooke, John Brown, John Bryant (Chairman), Howard Clayton, Jennifer Ellison, Jim Gibb, Roger Gibbons, Peter Gilbert, Alan Grove, Brian Heald, Jenny Heald, Andrew Hignell (Secretary), Stephen Hill, Martin Howe, Tony Hutton, David Jeater, David Kendix, Julian Lawton Smith, Malcolm Lorimer, Tony Martin, Douglas Miller, Harriet Monkhouse, Nicholas Morrison, Roger Moulton, Bryn Nathan, Huw Nathan, Serena Nathan, Jeff Nicholls, Chris O'Brien, Chris Overson, Tony Percival, Richard Phillips, David Pracy, Mark Rowe, Douglas Roxburgh, Ian J.Smith, M.J.K.Smith (President), Paul G.Smith, Simon Sweetman, Geoff Thomas, Cyril Waite, Garry Wallace (Treasurer), Keith Walmsley, Geoff Wilde, Robby Wilton, Peter Wynne-Thomas and David Young.

1. PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

The meeting began at 11 am with the President welcoming everyone, and thanking the Officers and Committee for their work on behalf of the Association during the past year. He added that he had been honoured to be the Association's President over the past ten years, and could hardly have thought of holding such an exalted position 65 years earlier when his maiden first-class innings had ended being 'caught Fiddling bowled Nutter' for nought. Indeed, he felt it very appropriate that his active involvement in cricket should end in association with the Association.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND REMEMBERING DECEASED MEMBERS

After everyone present had introduced themselves (and their county affiliations), the Secretary reported that apologies had been received from the following members: David Allison, David Baggett, Jeremy Barlow, Martin Bevan, Paul Bolton, Nigel Bratton, Ric Finlay, David Frith, Keith Gerrish, Roger Heavens, Iliyas Hussain, Richard Isaacs, David Jeater, Martin Jones, Adam McKie, David Parry, Giles Phillips, Mick Pope, Angus Rodger, Norman Rogers, Ian Russell, Richard Slater, Sir John Sparrow, Willie Sugg, John Ward and Tony Webb.

Those present then stood briefly in silence in memory of the following members of the Association who had died during the course of the last 12 months: Brian Box, Bob Combes, E.D.Craddock, Barry Gill, Dennis Lambert, Norman Lenton, Robert Little, Jack Meadows, Alan G.Moore, David Otway, Michael Ronayne, Dave Steedman, Brian Tester, Alex Twells, Christopher R.Walker, Patrick Warwick, Gary Wayte, Don Wigan and Roy Wilkinson.

3. A TRIBUTE TO DENNIS LAMBERT

Robert Brooke then gave a tribute to fellow Founder Member Dennis Lambert who, after a short illness, had died during the Autumn of 2016. Robert had first met Dennis in 1964 after the pair had answered an advert in a Midlands newspaper for help with post-war Leicestershire statistics. After a brief encounter on Coventry railway station and the sharing of a few beers, they had exchanged notes.

Their next meeting came at Hampton-in-Arden during 1971 after Robert had published a small booklet on Warwickshire-Worcestershire Championship matches. The pair agreed that an Association should be formed of like-minded individuals, and after Robert devised an advert, he and Dennis made contact with Peter Wynne-Thomas, Philip Bailey, Brian Heald, Philip Thorn, Tony Woodhouse, Philip Banham and Roy Wilkinson.

An inaugural meeting was convened during March 1973 at Edgbaston. Despite objections by Irving Rosenwater about taking statistical matters away from The Cricket Society, the Association was duly formed with Dennis acting as its inaugural Secretary. He had remained an active member ever

since, regularly attending AGMs and serving on the research grants subcommittee. Robert finished by saying that the last time he had seen Dennis was at the 2016 AGM and that, apart from not wearing a trilby hat, he had looked very much like he had back in 1964 at Coventry. Members then joined with Robert in a round of applause in honour of Dennis' contribution to cricket statistics.

4. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM

The minutes of the 43rd AGM of the Association, held at Derbyshire CCC on Saturday 19 March 2016, were unanimously approved, as proposed by the Committee. (Seconder – Brian Heald).

5. COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

The Secretary reported that, in the absence of any other candidates, the following had been elected to the Committee:

- Keith Walmsley (Proposer – David Jeater; Seconder – Martin Chandler)
- Chris Overson (Proposer – Robby Wilton; Seconder – Peter Gilbert)
- Ric Finlay (Proposer – Don Starr; Seconder – Richard Smith)
- Philip Bailey (Proposer – Peter Griffiths; Seconder – Brian Cowley)

The Secretary also announced that David Kendix was the Committee's nomination to succeed M.J.K. Smith as President. This was unanimously approved by the meeting (Seconder – Philip Banham)

6. THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30/11/2016

In introducing the Annual Report, the Chairman drew the attention of the meeting to the fact that the bulk of the work undertaken by the Committee in the past 12 months had been associated with addressing technological issues relating to the dissemination of information and data via electronic means and the Internet.

Chris O'Brien asked about issues relating to the decline in membership, as well as a decline in the number of articles with a statistical focus in the Journal, plus the associated shift towards those with a historical slant. The Chairman stressed that the Committee were eager to see a balance, but together with editor Simon Sweetman, he added that the Association could only publish what had been submitted for publication to the Journal.

Malcolm Lorimer enquired about attracting new and younger members through publications with a slant towards Twenty20 cricket. The Treasurer questioned whether a viable market existed for a Twenty20 Annual given that the audience for these matches appeared to relish the event and the experience, rather than other facets of the game. He added that attempts to produce a Women's Annual had failed because of concerns over achieving a viable number of sales.

The Chairman duly proposed that the Report be adopted (Seconder – Jenny Heald) and, after a show of hands, it was unanimously approved.

7. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30/11/2016

The Treasurer briefly went through the Accounts, as shown in the AGM booklet, highlighting the fact that the Association had generated a loss for the fifth successive year, and drew the meeting's attention to the line on page 8 which stated 'it has been emphasised by ACS Treasurers at several prior AGMs that it is the objective of the Committee that all membership and administrative

expenses should be covered by membership subscriptions and that the ACS should not use its reserves to subsidise membership subscriptions.'

With this in mind, he recommended that annual subscriptions – having remained constant for the past four years – should be raised by £2 for UK members to £22, and by £3 for overseas members to £29, effective for the financial year commencing 1 December 2017. He also noted the need for business efficiency and for electronic payments to be encouraged, especially as, during the course of the past 12 months, the Association had not issued any cheques to suppliers. He noted though that many of the membership renewals still took place by post and cheques. With just 35% taking place via direct debits, he proposed incentivising electronic payments by offering a £2 discount to those members using direct debits.

Douglas Miller then asked about the lack of a marketing expert on the Committee, and suggested that £5,000 of Association funds should be allocated towards boosting membership via advertisements in cricket newspapers and magazines, besides creating flyers for county teams to circulate to their members. Malcolm Lorimer also suggested linking with the Cricket Heritage Forum, involving the archivists in each of the first-class counties.

The Treasurer then proposed that the Accounts be adopted (Seconder – Pelham Barton). This was agreed unanimously after a show of hands, before the Secretary added that thanks should go to Mick Pope for stepping in to co-ordinate ACS Sales when Neil Beck was unable to continue, owing to illness, with Mick helping the Treasurer to rationalise the processes for the sale of publications.

8. APPOINTMENT OF AN EXTERNAL ACCOUNTANT TO PREPARE THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Treasurer proposed the re-appointment of CJCA Ltd to act once again in this capacity. This was unanimously agreed (Seconder – Douglas Roxburgh).

9. CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

With the Treasurer having outlined the rationale for an increase in subscriptions, the proposals put forward by the Committee were, with one abstention, unanimously approved (Seconder – Douglas Miller).

10. STATISTICIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Chairman announced that the Association's Statistician of the Year was a joint award to Stephen Hill and Barry Phillips in recognition of their outstanding research on the biographical details of former players of Somerset, as evidenced by their recent encyclopaedic book *Somerset Cricketers 1882-1914*. Roger Moulton gave the following citation:

Over the years, a number of writers and researchers have produced some outstanding books on the players of a particular county – we think perhaps of Peter Thomas' book on pre-war Yorkshire cricketers, and our own Peter Wynne-Thomas' series of books on Nottinghamshire Cricketers.

To their ranks we must now add a new title, following the publication in 2016 of the first volume of a series on Somerset Cricketers, which provides thorough, but lightly-written and entertaining, biographies of all the 227 cricketers who played in a first-class match for that county before the First World War, complete with a photograph or an autograph – and usually both – of every one of them.

You can perhaps imagine the effort involved in tracking down photos and autographs of so many players from the pre-First World War era; and a comparable effort has gone into the biographical research too. The book is anything but a rehash of the information already in circulation about each cricketer. Instead, the project has started with a completely clean sheet for each player, and the extensive new research that has gone into the book's

preparation has revealed the need for numerous changes – the number runs into the hundreds – to the established records of individual players, ranging from relatively minor (though still important) details of their exact dates and places of birth and death, through the correction of errors in players' names, right up to the identification of a number of completely new cricketers who played for the county, who have not previously been identified as first-class cricketers at all. And as the book's flyleaf correctly states, beyond these basic biographical details, throughout the book 'myths are exploded and countless new facts are unearthed.'

The credited author of the outstanding Somerset Cricketers 1882-1914 is Stephen Hill, already a published author in the world of fiction but for whom this is a first venture into writing about cricket. He it is who must take the credit for the book as a whole, but he has at all times stressed his debt to his fellow-lifelong-Somerset-supporter Barry Phillips, who has shared with Stephen the detailed research for the book. Stephen is on record as saying that he could not have completed the project without Barry's research and unflagging support.

In celebrating the book, the Committee have been struck both by the writing and by the original research that it contains. It has therefore decided – for only the second time in its history – to make a joint award to mark this year's Statistician of the Year. So we are delighted this year to present the newly-named Brooke-Lambert Trophy to Stephen Hill and Barry Phillips. And we look forward keenly to their second volume, already at an advanced state of preparation, which will bring the story of Somerset Cricketers up to the Second World War – with a further volume to follow. Bring it on!

After receiving the Brooke-Lambert Trophy from Robert Brooke, Stephen Hill said how pleased he was to win something on behalf of Somerset and, following the Championship run-in of 2016, not to have someone from Middlesex pip them to the post! He also paid tribute to members of the Association for their help with research, before Barry Phillips briefly spoke about how their research partnership had begun in 2014 and now stood at over 10,000 shared emails.

11. AWARD OF HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

The Chairman announced that the Committee had great pleasure in awarding Honorary Life Membership to Brian Heald, in recognition of his many and varied services to the ACS. Keith Walmsley read the following citation:

The award of Honorary Life Membership celebrates those who have been of stalwart service to the ACS as such: a sincere expression of appreciation for services rendered to the Association.

Today we honour two members with this award. The second award, of which we'll hear more later on, is to our retiring President, whose 'services rendered' need little or no explanation.

But in our first award, we are very pleased to mark the contribution to the Association over many years of a Yorkshireman (by birth and by inclination) and Essex Man (by adoption): Brian Heald.

Brian was one of the 30 founder members present when the ACS was set up 44 years ago. Since then his many activities for the Association have included his involvement in the preparation of some of our key statistical publications, as well as in his role as a long-serving committee member.

Among the publications, I should mention a couple in particular. In the 1980s Brian was a member of a small subcommittee responsible for putting together the most challenging of our series of guides to first-class matches – the Guide to First-Class Matches in India. He later had a similar role with the Sri Lanka guide. Then in the 1990s and 2000s he was the general editor of the series of Statistical Surveys covering the years from 1868 to 1881, and he was also the joint compiler of the volume for 1863.

Brian served on the ACS Committee from 1988 until 2005, making him – by some distance – the longest-serving former committee member not (to date) to have received Honorary Life Membership. For much of that time, as well as carrying out his work on particular publications and his role in the general running of the Association, he also played a much-appreciated role as organiser of our annual London meetings.

Outside his work for the ACS, Brian has in his time provided key statistical inputs to the Playfair Cricket Annual, to The Cricketer Quarterly, and to the Benson and Hedges Cricket Year; all the while acting as Essex CCC's statistician, a role from which he stepped down only last summer.

There's much more I could say about Brian – not least his loyal support for Hull Kingston Rovers, his eclectic tastes in music; and we mustn't fail to pay tribute to his wife Jenny, who as well as contributing significantly in her own right to the work both of the ACS and of Essex, has been at Brian's side for so much of his time with the Association.

But it is Brian's wide-ranging contributions to the ACS over many years that we mark with this award today, and for those, he is deservedly welcomed to the select band of our Honorary Life Members.

The retiring President then made the award before Brian responded by saying that, having retired from the Committee 11 years before, he was pleased that his research work had not been forgotten. He also thanked Peter Griffiths and the late Dennis Lambert for their support.

A further presentation was then made by Peter Wynne-Thomas to M.J.K.Smith, who also received Honorary Life Membership of the Association to mark his retirement as President of the Association and his support over the last ten years.

12. RETIRING PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

After the Chairman had paid tribute to M.J.K.'s service to cricket in general, the retiring President reminisced about his time in county cricket, remembering Les Berry, Brian Close, Norman Yardley, Maurice Leyland, Tom Cartwright, Jack Bannister, Tom Dollery and Peter Richardson.

M.J.K. also answered several questions from members, including Robert Brooke, Jim Gibb, Martin Howe and Chris Overson on a number of cricketing topics. He finished by commenting on how the skills of batting had changed following the advent of Twenty20 cricket, besides wishing Joe Root well in his new role as England captain in Test cricket.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) In the absence of Adam McKie owing to a prior commitment, the Secretary gave an update on his progress in the research project, sponsored by the Association, at Royal Holloway, University of London. He noted that Adam, having successfully completed his MA, was now embarking on a Ph.D on women's sport during the inter-war period. Adam was also converting his MA thesis into a publication to be issued by the ACS. Scheduled for Spring 2018, it was likely to run to around 50,000 words and would include an introduction focusing on women's cricket played during the First World War.

The working title was *Cricketers and Citizens: A History of Women's Cricket, 1916-1939*, and it would argue that cricket was a reflection of – and cause of – women's changing role in society during these years. The Secretary added that Prof. Sarah Ansari, the University's Head of History, was delighted by Adam having progressed on to a Ph.D, besides saying that a conference (hosted by RHUL) on women's cricket was being considered in the near future.

- (b) Robert Brooke proposed that the Association should consider publishing a book on cricketers who had celebrated their 100th birthdays. He also suggested that the Association should assist with the re-dedication of a gravestone in memory of A.E.Stoddart. Howard Clayton added though that a similar project with Bobby Peel had been expensive.
- (c) Malcolm Lorimer drew the attention of the meeting to the excellent facilities at the Gladstone Library in Hawarden [Flintshire], as well as the forthcoming Cardus Lunch.
- (d) CricketArchive – the Chairman outlined the recent changes to CricketArchive with the complete database being moved behind a paywall. With Jim Hindson, the Managing Director of CricketArchive, attending the afternoon session, the Chairman outlined the current position, as well as the response of the Committee, and the offer from CricketArchive of a discounted subscription for ACS members for at least the first year via a special code that would be shortly available in the Members' Area of the Association's website.

Several operational questions were asked, with Ian Smith, an employee of CricketArchive, confirming that a subscription would also provide access to the online archive of *The Cricketer* magazine.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 1.02 pm for the Annual Lunch. Members then reconvened at 2.35 pm and, after the Chairman had thanked the catering staff of Derbyshire CCC for their splendid meal and service, David Kendix spoke about his various roles in cricket, having progressed from the scorer for the BT Cricketcall commentators in the later 1980s to – amongst others – being the official scorer at international matches at Lord's, a role with the ECB in drafting playing regulations in county cricket, a place on the ICC Cricket Committee and currently serving as Treasurer of Middlesex CCC. David also briefly spoke about his work in drafting Test rankings as well as the proposed Test Championship involving the top nine nations, besides commenting on the skill-sets which county scorers now possess.

At 3.15 pm Jim Hindson joined the meeting and outlined how it cost a six-figure sum for The Cricketer Ltd. to run the CricketArchive website, and how revenue had been sought to recover these costs. Having abandoned advertising, CricketArchive had introduced a paywall and were recognising the support of the Association by offering members a discount of 33%. He added that a members' forum was being introduced to help gauge interest and answer queries.

Jim also said that minor cricket scores, below elite club level, were unlikely to be uploaded, before answering questions from those present on topics including the ability to download information into spreadsheets, the provision of live scores (via Opta), and the question of charging counties for access to biographical information previously provided in good faith by ACS members. The Chairman also raised several questions from members who were unable to be present, including one about free access to ACS members and the absence of adverts in the future. Jim re-iterated that adverts had been discontinued, besides confirming that CricketArchive were not prepared to offer free access, but he hoped that the 33% discount would be continued for future years.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 4 pm, at which point afternoon tea and coffee were served.