

**Minutes of the 45th AGM of the Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians held in
The 3aaa Pavilion at Derbyshire CCC on Saturday 17 March 2018, starting at 11 am.**

Present (38) – Philip Bailey, Philip Banham, Pelham Barton, Nigel Bratton, John Brown, John Bryant (Chairman), Mark Bryant, Charles Davis, Philip Defriez, Alec Dytham, Jonathan Farmer, Jim Gibb, Jenny Heald, Andrew Hignell (Secretary), Stephen Hill, David Kendix (President), Julian Lawton Smith, Malcolm Lorimer, Adam McKie, Gerry Martin, Tony Martin, Harriet Monkhouse, Nicholas Morrison, Roger Moulton, Bryn Nathan, Huw Nathan, Chris O'Brien, Tony Percival, Mick Pope, Mark Rowe, Douglas Roxburgh, Peter Tatton, Barry Valentine, Cyril Waite, Garry Wallace (Treasurer), Keith Walmsley, Geoff Wilde and Peter Wynne-Thomas.

1. PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

The meeting began at 11.05 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 also drew everyone's attention to the fact that many of the challenges faced by the Association mirror those facing the county game.

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 34 members: David Allison, Stephen Baldwin, Martin Bevan, Robert Brooke, Chris Burgess, Ric Finlay, Keith Gerrish, Roger Gibbons, Peter Gilbert, Peter Griffiths, Alan Grove, Aidan Haile, Roger Heavens, Michael Hill, Martin Howe, Ilyas Hussain, David Jeater, Martin Jones, Douglas Miller, Serena Nathan, Chris Overson, David Pracy, Angus Rodger, Ian Russell, Christopher Saunders, Alan Simons, Richard Slater, Alan Stainer, David Studham (Melbourne CC Library), Willie Sugg, Simon Sweetman, Mike Thompson, Tony Webb and Robby Wilton.

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: David Baggett, Idris Barrett, Peter Bebbington, Richard Cousins, Richard Dean, Robert Elliott, Edmund Goodwin, David Harvey, Nick Haycox, Brian Heald, Richard Merricks, Nick Perry, John Riddy, Michael Sheridan, Maurice Sills, Geoffrey Smith, Craig Stevens, Clifford Taylor, Ken Thomas and John Waddington.

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

The minutes of the 44th AGM of the Association, held at Derbyshire CCC on Saturday 18 March 2017, were unanimously approved, as proposed by the Committee (Seconder – Jenny Heald).

4. COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

The Secretary reported that, in the absence of any other candidates for the four vacant places on the Committee, the following three had been re-elected to the Committee:

- Andrew Hignell
(Proposer – John Brown; Secunder – Roger Moulton)
- Mark Rowe
(Proposer – Douglas Miller; Secunder – Stephen Musk)
- Huw Nathan
(Proposer – David Jeater; Secunder – Martin Jones)

Given the vacancy which was therefore arising, the President stressed that anyone wishing to stand for the Committee in the future or put themselves forward to be co-opted should contact the Secretary.

5. THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30/11/2017

Prior to delivering the report, the Chairman said that he would be standing down after three years at the helm. He then drew the attention of those present to some serious financial matters, chiefly related to the Association's current business model for publications. He added that the Association was something of a niche publisher, but even so, sales to members were generating a loss.

The Chairman stressed that there was time to address the problems, and added that the Committee had reviewed each of our current publication series as well as looking at the viability of certain marginal titles. He added that further information would be shared with members during the afternoon session, but he pointed out that the likelihood would be more online publications, as with records and statistics, whilst the Committee was also proposing a significant increase in subscriptions.

Members then raised a number of points – Malcolm Lorimer reminded everyone of the words of former President Richard Streeton relating to personal contacts and promoting material in county shops, museums and other heritage centres at county grounds. He also commented on the scale of Committee expenses, besides enquiring about the resurrection of a sale or return policy, before adding that he, Christopher Saunders and Stephen Chalke were prepared to assist the Committee in drawing up a marketing strategy.

Peter Wynne-Thomas asked about whether contact had been made with cheaper printers – possibly overseas – whilst Nigel Bratton asked whether any thoughts had been given to merging with the Cricket Society. Mick Pope suggested introducing ebooks, whilst Mark Rowe suggested using social media for publicity.

The Chairman then responded to these points by reminding the meeting that nobody currently on the Committee had any marketing expertise. However, Douglas Miller had also offered advice, and he looked forward to dialogue with him plus Messrs Lorimer, Chalke and Saunders. He added that the Committee would investigate using lower-cost (including overseas) printers/typesetters, as well as re-visiting the potential of sale or return.

The President then spoke about Committee expenses, and the fact that the Committee met five times a year at what he believed to be a value-for-money location in Central London. He added that if new Committee members were to be recruited it was important to cover the expense of meeting up to five times a year. The Committee report, as proposed by the Chairman, was then unanimously approved (Seconder – Nicholas Morrison).

6. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30/11/2017

The Treasurer briefly went through the Accounts, and began by drawing attention to a printing error as identified by Geoff Wilde in the AGM booklet. He then re-iterated many of the comments made by the Chairman, especially relating to the losses incurred by various publications. He added that the Committee had now introduced a 'Go/No-Go' policy to evaluate the viability of future publications before any costs were committed, in addition to the streamlining of administrative arrangements with ACS Sales to improve customer service.

The Treasurer commented positively on the successful efforts to reduce stocks of publications, plus the greater use of electronic processes. He thanked members for embracing these measures, especially adopting direct debits for membership subscriptions, and using the online shop for book purchases. Nigel Bratton requested a note on the computation of Corporation Tax in the financial reports in the future, whilst Geoff Wilde asked about the financial implications of the research initiative with Royal Holloway (University of London). The Secretary and Chairman responded about the 'value-added' which the project provided, as well as promoting the core purposes and aims of the Association.

After thanking the Treasurer for his earnest endeavours, Nigel Bratton then proposed the adoption of the Annual Accounts (Seconder – Geoff Wilde). This was unanimously agreed.

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

The Treasurer proposed the re-appointment of Judy Leng to act once again in this capacity. An increase of 10% in fees, which had not changed for the last two years, was also proposed. These proposals were unanimously agreed (Seconder – Philip Banham).

8. CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Treasurer then outlined the rationale behind the proposed increase in subscriptions. Whilst Pelham Barton commented positively about the value for money compared with the costs of watching county cricket, Malcolm Lorimer asked about the scale of the proposed increase and suggested an incremental rise over a number of years. Barry Valentine also enquired about discounts on direct debits whilst Stephen Hill suggested reduced rates for those in difficult circumstances. However, Peter Wynne-Thomas shared his disagreement with the increase, and suggested that a better solution to generate additional funding would be improved marketing.

The Treasurer responded by indicating that the Committee had discussed various options for raising subscriptions and ultimately decided to address the issue in one step rather than annually returning to the AGM with proposals for further incremental rises. It was hoped to maintain the new subscription rate for an extended period subject to ACS business conditions. The Treasurer also confirmed that a direct debit incentive scheme was already in operation which saved members £2 and had been successful in significantly raising the number of members subscribing in this manner. The idea of offering reduced rates for those in difficult circumstances was considered to be almost impossible to administer equitably but the possibility of individuals approaching the Committee in extreme cases was not ruled out.

After extensive discussion, the motion to increase subscriptions was then proposed by Nigel Bratton (Seconder – Philip Banham) and agreed with one vote against.

9. RULE CHANGES

The Treasurer then summarised the rationale for the suggested change to Rule 16 Finance, aimed in particular at highlighting the Committee responsibilities for good corporate governance and the adoption of sound accounting policies. The changes were proposed by Chris O'Brien (Seconder – Mick Pope) and unanimously agreed upon.

10. STATISTICIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Chairman announced that the Association's Statistician of the Year was Charles Davis of Melbourne, Australia. Keith Walmsley then gave the following citation before the Brooke-Lambert Trophy was presented by the President.

It is with great pleasure that I can announce the winner of the Brooke-Lambert Trophy is Charles Davis, a resident of Melbourne and one of the unsung heroes in the world of cricket statistics. To those who know of his work, Charles is probably best known for his diligent tracking down, over many years, of original scorebooks or scoresheets of every Test match ever played (or as many of these as have survived), and then using these to re-score each match to produce detailed ball-by-ball scoresheets of every game. To date he has posted newly-detailed scores of every Test match from 1877 up to the early 1960s, including his detailed ball-by-ball re-scoring of over 330 of them. Not content with just re-scoring the games, Charles also makes the results freely available on his website, and uses them to derive a host of new details and records for our delight.

In addition, Charles has pioneered the opportunities created by new sources of online information – such as online ball-by-ball Test match commentaries – to create statistics on previously unexplored areas. By painstakingly combing through these sources he has produced completely new statistics and analysis on subjects like missed catches and stumpings (by country, by fielding position, and by named wicketkeeper), and on the success rates of appeals (by country, by bowling style, by named bowler and by named umpire).

These are just some examples of Charles's varied and original approach to the derivation and interpretation of cricket statistics. There's a whole lot more on his website, and in articles that he produces for publications such as the online Cricket Monthly.

But Charles is not just a delver into the scores and records of Test matches. In earlier days he was a bio-hydrometallurgist with the Rio Tinto mining company, and he also plays a mean piano. In addition, the blurb of one of his print publications tells us that he is 'quite possibly the only cricket statistician to have his work quoted in both the New York Times and the Australian Federal Parliament'. One of his books, called The Best of the Best, contains what is referred to as a statistically rigorous rating system for cricketers of all types and across all eras, and he has also extended this analysis to other sports in order to produce an answer to the question 'Who is the greatest sportsman of all time?' It will come as little surprise to today's audience to learn that by this process Don Bradman emerges as the greatest-ever cricketer; it will probably be not much more surprising that the Don also emerges as the greatest in all sports, well ahead of the likes of Pele, Jack Nicklaus and Michael Jordan. And quite right too!

It is for his wide range of original and fascinating work in the field of cricket statistics and research that we are very pleased to make this award to Charles today. He is only the second Australian to receive the award over its 32 years, following in the footsteps of Ray Webster 20 years ago, and we are delighted that he has been able to travel here from his home in Melbourne to receive the award in person. He has told me that he has to date visited over 80 countries and has travelled to the top of Mt Kilimanjaro and the base camp of K2; but before today he has never been to Derby!

Charles – our sincere thanks for all that you have done and continue to do in our field of interest, and many congratulations on this well-deserved award.

After receiving the Award from the President, Charles Davis thanked the Officers and Committee, before adding how delighted he was to attend and receive the award in person. As a scientist who revels in the study of statistics, he added that he was delighted to have collected and analysed over 1,000 Test match scorecards, and he thanked those who preserve scorebooks and other archive material.

11. PRESENTATION

Another presentation followed to Roger Moulton, who was retiring from the Committee. The Chairman paid a short tribute to Roger, whose spell on the Committee also saw him serve as an efficient and erudite Chairman. Roger responded by thanking his colleagues on the Committee and fellow officers. He felt that it was the finest committee on which he had served, especially as it contained people who were prepared to give their time, show willingness and enthusiasm, and get things done. The President then added his thanks both to Roger and to the current Chairman for his efforts.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) Jim Hindson of Cricket Archive/The Cricketer then joined the meeting and outlined the relationship between these organisations and the Association. He highlighted the continuation of reduced subscriptions to the Cricket Archive website as well as a marketing agreement with *The Cricketer* magazine (which has a readership of around 25,000), which will see articles on the Association, book reviews and adverts.

- (b) Barry Valentine spoke about his plans to create a ball-by-ball record of every Ashes Test since 1921. It was suggested that Barry should get together with Charles Davis to talk further over this subject.
- (c) Chris O'Brien suggested having specific information on the number of new members in the Committee's Annual report, or elsewhere in the AGM booklet.
- (d) Adam McKie gave a brief update on his research work at Royal Holloway (University of London) and how members of the Association may benefit from a proposed exhibition being planned by the MCC on women's cricket, as well as a dinner and other projects relating to oral history.
- (e) Malcolm Lorimer spoke about the research work being undertaken by Aidan Haile on pre-1700 references to cricket.
- (f) Keith Walmsley noted that this had been the first-ever AGM at which founder member Robert Brooke had not been present, and he suggested that the Secretary should contact him on behalf of the Association, to express our regret over his absence and to wish him well.

After the President had closed the formal business of the AGM at 1.03 pm, members enjoyed the Annual Lunch at which the Secretary thanked the catering staff of Derbyshire CCC for their splendid meal and service.

Afternoon Session

The afternoon session then began at 2.45 pm with the Chairman leading discussions on a number of topics, including the digitisation of paper-based resources. He noted how many members had accumulated paper-based records and how they should themselves arrange for electronic copies to be made, rather than asking the Association to fund their digitisation. This approach found support from those present. The Chairman invited support from anyone who wished to assist with digitising Tony Webb's archive of Minor Counties material, and offered to undertake the scanning of one year's worth of this material himself. In response to a question from Stephen Hill, the Secretary outlined the grants available from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Archives, based at Kew.

Keith Walmsley then gave a short presentation about the future of publications. He began by reminding everyone that one of the objects of the Association was 'to promote and encourage research into the statistical and historical aspects of cricket throughout the world and to publish the findings.'

He then added that the Committee had discussed a number of potential cost-saving measures, including shorter and more realistic print-runs; subscription-only for some publications (advance payment to help set print-run); reducing typesetting costs; reducing printing costs; abolishing authors' royalties; reducing free books to Committee members and eliminating inappropriate trade discounts.

Mr Walmsley then made a series of summative comments on the current series:

- (a) Greens: Unless considerable cost savings achievable, discontinue immediately;
- (b) OFCA: Continue for the time being, though OFCA is unlikely ever to cover its costs;
- (c) Hard to Gets: A finite series – continue to its natural conclusion (in 2023 or 2024);
- (d) Year Book: Continue; possible digital-only publication in future years;
- (e) Second XI Annual: A best-seller! Continue as at present;
- (f) Minor Counties year-by-year: Continue to 1914 edition (due in 2019). Series then comes to a natural end;

- (g) Minor Counties player booklets: Low-cost; continue as at present;
- (h) County Grounds: Continue, to complete the full set of 18 counties (last two currently in preparation). Maybe further volumes e.g. Ireland; first-class grounds in non-FC counties if willing authors come forward;
- (i) Lives in Cricket: Continue, but with tighter limits on the subjects covered;
- (j) Cricket Witness: Continue, but with tight controls on the subjects covered. Desirable to secure wider publicity for Cricket Witness volumes, including in non-cricket-specialist areas.

He then concluded with a reminder of a series of general topics raised during the day on this subject, including living beyond our means; are we producing too many publications, and/or are cover prices too high; methods of saving costs, and of enlarging our market; the ongoing debate of print v digital publications; the annual free book for members; and having to fund from reserves the publication of some core statistical publications.

Those present appeared broadly supportive of the approaches taken by the Committee. In particular, the likely discontinuance of the 'Greens' series did not prompt any strong objection. Members made several very helpful additional suggestions including the use of Google Books, with selected extracts; having an annual voucher rather than a free book, with members using the voucher to obtain a discount on a book of their choice; and the need for authors to publicise their work and to submit a marketing plan.

Julian Lawton Smith spoke briefly about Tony Webb's archival material from the Minor Counties Project and how he planned to make a short presentation about the material at the 2019 AGM. The Secretary then talked about the use of such archival material, including scorecards and newspaper reports, in the work of reminiscence groups and other projects linked to mental health, loneliness and isolation. He recommended members looking at similar work undertaken with footballing records by Tony Jameson-Allen of the Sporting Memories Network.

The President duly closed the meeting at 3.35 pm, at which point afternoon tea and coffee were served.