

Minutes of the 49th AGM of the Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians held virtually via ZOOM on Saturday 19 March 2022

Members present (44): Ian Baker, Philip Banham, Pelham Barton, Dale Brown, John Bryant (Chair), Chris Burgess, Philip Defriez, Paul Dyson, Jonathan Farmer, Ric Finlay, Roger Gibbons, Peter Gilbert, Mike Goulder, David Griffin, Pete Griffiths, Peter Hart, Jenny Heald, Andrew Hignell (Secretary), David Jeater, David Kendix, Julian Lawton Smith, Neil Leitch, Jeremy Lonsdale, Harriet Monkhouse, Denis Moore, Bryn Nathan, Huw Nathan, Serena Nathan, Chris O'Brien, Brian O'Sullivan, Chris Overson, Jo Rice, Ian Russell, Graham Searle, Vijitha Senaratne, Brent Simmonds, Paul G Smith, Simon Sweetman, Peter Tatton, Garry Wallace (Treasurer), Keith Walmsley, Harry Watton, Robby Wilton, John Winniffrith.

1. PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

The meeting began at 10.03am with the President welcoming everyone joining from the UK and the rest of the world to the 49th AGM. It was the third consecutive AGM that had to be held virtually, although he appreciated that it did allow some members to attend who would not have done so otherwise. He reminded members that he had twice been wrong in anticipating that the next AGM could be held in person. He hoped that members would be able to get together in person next year for the 50th AGM.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Secretary read out apologies from the following people: Robert Brooke, Mark Chaloner, Jenny Griffiths, Adam McKie, Douglas Miller, Roger Moulton, Mick Pope, Norman Rogers, Don Starr and John Ward.

3. REMEMBERING OUR DECEASED MEMBERS

The Secretary reminded members that in July 2021 Peter Wynne-Thomas had passed away. He had made a massive contribution to the Association and his legacy would be mentioned again later.

During the year, the following members had also died: David Andrews, Johnny Bruce, James Cook, Colin Crane, Ian Croxall, David Edney, Murray Hedgcock, Peter Jackson, John Lee, Richard Lloyd, David Missen, Michael R Pearce, Don Rogers, Bill Rowland, Bill Rutter, Rev. Andrew M Taylor, and Gordon Wishart. The meeting observed a period of silence in memory of deceased ACS members.

4. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE 2021 AGM

The Secretary asked the meeting to use the poll function on Zoom to approve the minutes of the 2021 AGM and the subsequent EGM, held via Zoom on 25 September 2021. The Secretary announced that the motion for the approval of both the 2021 AGM minutes and the subsequent EGM minutes (proposed by Julian Lawton Smith and seconded by David Jeater) had been passed unanimously, with 38 people voting in favour, none against and there were two abstentions. Chris O'Brien acted as teller for this and other votes.

5. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30/11/2021

The Chair said it had been a challenging year because of the effects of Covid-19. The committee had held meetings remotely which, although challenging, had provided opportunities to involve some for whom in-person meetings would not have been possible. During the year under review, the committee had been joined by Pete Griffiths and Peter Hardy, and Adam McKie had stood down. In addition, outside the year, Simon Sweetman, our Journal editor, did not seek re-election to the committee, and the Chair took the opportunity to mark Simon's huge contribution over the years. He will carry on as editor for the time being. The Chair said there were still two vacancies on the committee and encouraged members to put themselves forward or suggest someone who might be suitable. He also noted that Keith Walmsley had stood down after three distinguished years as Chair but remained on the committee. The committee had comprehensively reviewed its rules and the new ones were passed at the EGM in September 2021. The Association had produced 10 books in the year but was still looking to get right the balance between traditional paper and electronic publications. The report was proposed by the committee and seconded by Adam McKie, and unanimously approved, with 38 votes in favour, none against and three abstentions.

6. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30/11/2021

The Treasurer summarised the highlights of the year. The Association made a net profit of in excess of £8,000 for the second year in a row and generated a positive cash flow of over £9,000 for the second successive year. The liquidity and cash reserves were very satisfactory and everything seemed to be in good shape. He drew members' attention to the fact that the profitability of publications had dropped by about £3,000, but this did not affect the bottom-line result as the Association had had the benefit of a very valuable bequest from the estate of Peter Wilkinson, the proceeds of which was around £3,500. However, the Treasurer emphasised that this was a one-off windfall, which would not be repeated every year, and members needed to be aware that profitability would drop unless we acted on certain elements of our publications. He said that some of the statistical publications are particularly vulnerable to declining demand, and as a committee and as an Association there was a need to consider their future. He encouraged members to buy the *OFCA 2021* and the *Second Eleven Annual 2022*, as well as the *2022 Year Book* when it came out. Otherwise, the position was stable.

Peter Hart asked why books were not selling and losing money. The Treasurer said that the statistical books in particular were suffering because much of the information could be gleaned from other electronic sources. In addition, *OFCA* was very expensive at £65-70 and the *Year Book* in the £30s, and a number of those members who had died recently had been purchasers of these publications. New members were often digital members who went for digital-type material. Biographical and historical publications were holding up rather better and the material was not as readily available through other sources. In addition, only about 25-30% of ACS members buy hard-copy publications and, although the Association is promoting books to non-members, they tended not to sell many copies this way as many who are interested are already members of the ACS. The Association tended not to sell more than around 200 copies of books unless the author strongly promoted the product, in which case we sold between 250-300 copies.

The Chair supported the Treasurer's analysis but said that, while the availability of statistics online was cutting into demand for ACS publications, the issue with producing in electronic form only was that there are costs associated with getting it into a fit state regardless of whether in paper or electronic format. Whereas authors can do some of the typesetting for themselves for narrative publications, typesetting of scorecards for statistical publications was a professional activity for which payment was made. If books were produced in hardcopy, the Association at least had a chance of recouping some of the costs of production. The Association has not yet found a way of charging for electronic publications but still had to pay the set-up costs. Getting this balance right was one of the biggest challenges facing the Association.

The Treasurer recommended the accounts for 2021, which was seconded by David Jeater. The accounts were unanimously approved, with 39 voting in favour, none against and there were two abstentions.

7. APPOINT AND AGREE RUMUNERATION OF THE INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTANT

The Treasurer explained that Judy Lang, the accountant, was very professional and prompt and accurate in producing the accounts and other returns. Her fee was increased last year, and it was proposed to maintain it at the same level of £2,975. The Treasurer proposed the motion, which was seconded by Pelham Barton. The motion was unanimously approved with 39 members voting in favour and none against.

8. COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

The Secretary said that three nominations were received for four places on the Association committee and so there was no requirement for an election. The following will continue to serve on the committee – John Bryant (proposed by Phillip Bailey, seconded by Adam McKie), Jeremy Lonsdale (proposed by Mick Pope, seconded by John Broom) and Garry Wallace (proposed by Chris O'Brien, seconded by Jenny Heald). Garry Wallace will continue as Treasurer.

The Secretary said he was also delighted to be able to say that David Kendix had agreed to continue to act as President. Mr Kendix asked that members have the opportunity to vote for the recommendation that he be approved as President. This was unanimously accepted, with 40 members voting in favour and none against.

9. RULE CHANGE

Mr Walmsley explained that the Association agreed a series of new rules in autumn 2021. In preparing papers for this meeting, the committee felt a few small changes to the wording about circulating papers for the AGM were needed, in particular, to allow documents to be sent out separately as ready but still within the 21-day limit (Rule 16.3), and documents relating to the accounts to be submitted to the AGM (Rule 16.2). The Chair proposed the rule change and Ian Baker seconded it. The motion was passed unanimously, with 39 members voting in favour and none against.

10. PRESENTATION OF THE STATISTICIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD (BROOKE-LAMBERT TROPHY)

The Secretary announced that Julian Lawton Smith was the ACS Statistician of the Year and winner of the Brooke-Lambert Trophy. He thanked Stephen Musk for the citation which was:

I am sure everyone present this morning will be aware of the ACS Minor Counties project. The end product of this project has been the publication of an annual covering each of the twenty seasons from the inauguration of the Minor Counties championship to the start of the Great War, plus a summary volume covering the whole period. This project was the brain-child of Tony Webb and is one of the largest funded by the Association. Tony's herculean efforts were rightly acknowledged when he himself was awarded the title of Statistician of the Year in 2005. It is therefore very fitting that Julian should be the recipient of this award this year. Sadly, ill-health forced Tony to stand down as Project Leader after the production of the 1906 annual. And Julian, in his typically magnanimous way, volunteered to take over to ensure the project ran its course. I can pay no bigger compliment to Julian than to say that the standard of his annuals has been as every bit as high as those edited by Tony. Julian has proved to be a highly effective boss, not just in terms of man-management but also in his willingness to do the necessary donkey-work when volunteers have been thin on the ground. For instance, if I needed reports from the sporting press of the time, Julian would happily make the trip to the British Newspaper Library and obtain photocopies of the relevant articles. It was only when working closely with Julian that I came to appreciate exactly how time-consuming and painstaking leadership of the project actually was. I turn now to the summary volume, or the 'doorstopper', as many people refer to it. In the absence of any other enthusiasts, I volunteered to generate much of the content but I made it very clear that I am simply not management material. And so, Julian once more stepped up to the plate to oversee the production of the summary volume. He did an excellent job in marshalling his team of statisticians for one last push in order to generate what we like to think is a coherent

and valuable volume. He was a pleasure to work with, always ready to give knowledgeable advice but also open to suggestions from myself and all the other contributors. Julian was generous with praise when he liked my product, but when he wasn't quite so keen on what I had written, his constructive criticism was expressed in such a tactful way that it did not rouse my notorious artistic temperament. Julian has now retired with honour, intending to pass on with his long-delayed history of Oxfordshire County Cricket Club. He thoroughly deserves to be awarded the Statistician of the Year for keeping the Minor Counties Championship front and central in the work of the Association.

Julian thanked Stephen for his kind comments and said he felt honoured to receive the award. He said Tony Webb had been a major influence on his life in the last 23 years. When he took over leadership of the project from Tony he was still working full time and so needed some help. Fortunately, Stephen Musk, Colin Munford and Pete Griffiths all volunteered to take on increased roles and he said he could not praise their contribution too highly. He highlighted that it had involved 75 people and published 21 books, and he thanked everyone who had contributed as well as the ACS committee, which had provided support throughout the project. The project had also generated match scorecards and career records, as well as biographies of the players of the time. It had also filled gaps in the Cricket Archive database. Julian also thanked his wife, who had put up with his cricket research over many years.

11. PETER WYNNE-THOMAS AWARDS

The President reminded members that Peter Wynne-Thomas was the finest cricket statistician and historian of recent times, a founder member of the ACS in 1973, Secretary from 1974 to 2006, twice ACS Statistician of the Year, and a former Nottinghamshire CCC president. He was awarded the British Empire Medal in 2019 for services to cricket and to the community in Nottinghamshire. The President said he was therefore delighted that the committee had decided to commemorate the life and work of Peter.

Mr Walmsley reminded members of Peter's willingness to help people with research and to learn about cricket. The committee had therefore decided to acknowledge this by recognising members of the Association who through their voluntary efforts had provided help or other benefits to individual members or the Association as a whole over a lengthy period. Mr Walmsley said it would not be an annual award but would be made on an occasional basis to worthy recipients. There will be no specific trophy but rather there will be a modest entitlement to complimentary ACS books as a tangible reflection of our appreciation for their efforts.

Two awards were made this year. Mr Bryant announced that the first recipient was John Ward. He had been an ACS member since 1974, had produced book reviews for the Journal, supplied additions and amendments to match scores on Cricket Archive, provided invaluable support for the preparation of *OFCA* and acted as a proof-reader. John had also initiated the very popular '100 Years Ago' feature on the ACS online forum. John's enthusiasm for cricket

had been kindled on a family holiday to England in 1966, and he had played club cricket from 1971 to 2007, only stopping when the competition switched to the T20 format. He has also coached and umpired in primary school cricket. John's cricket reporting career started in 1977 with the ACS's *Cricket News*, and since then he had contributed to *The Cricketer*, Cricinfo, Cricket Archive and *Wisden*, and still did reports for Zimbabwe Cricket. It is a very proud resume and Mr Bryant commended John as one of inaugural winners of the award. In a reply which was read out for him, John Ward expressed his thanks to Robert Brooke for his encouragement, and also Pete Griffiths, Douglas Miller and Harriet Monkhouse for their support in 2007 to enable him to work in England during a period of financial crisis in Zimbabwe.

Mr Walmsley introduced the second recipient, Harry Watton, who had contributed countless amounts of assistance to ACS members over many years. He said that no-one was more deserving of the award. Harry had provided a wide range of assistance over the last five years and more on a wide range of topics to a wide range of people. His work on the 'Major Feats in Minor Cricket' project has been stupendous in, both identifying new feats and uncovering extra information on nearly 200 matches in which such feats occurred. He had researched countless individual queries on the ACS online forum and had helped many members on numerous occasions. Harry had been a member since 1974 but it was only recently that he had been able to engage with the Association so prolifically. He is a Warwickshire supporter of long standing and was a local cricketer, as well as an enthusiastic pianist. For all his assistance to members, Mr Walmsley said Harry was a deserving joint inaugural winner of the Peter Wynne-Thomas award. Harry Watton expressed his thanks for the award.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Secretary reported that there had been no items of Any Other Business submitted by the due date.

The President closed the meeting at 11.09am.