



ACS MEMBERSHIP BULLETIN

No. 45 – May 2023

The ACS reaches its half-century!

3 March 2023 marked the ACS's fiftieth anniversary. On that date in 1973, 30 cricket-lovers gathered at the Edgbaston ground in Birmingham and voted – by a majority of one! – to form a new 'Association of Cricket Statisticians' ('Historians' was added to the name 20 years later). Co-founders Robert Brooke and Dennis Lambert were elected our first Chairman and Secretary, respectively. Of the original 30 founder members, seven – Philip Banham, Robert Brooke, David Gallagher, Peter Handford, Godfrey Prior, Norman Rogers and Martyn Taylor – are still members of the ACS today, and we thank and congratulate them on their loyalty and longevity.

Later in the year we are planning to meet in person for the first time since the pandemic hit the UK, with a 50th anniversary lunch at Grace Road, Leicester on Saturday 14 October. Further details were disclosed at the recent virtual meeting – see the item starting at **02:45** in our YouTube recording. More information about this event will be announced nearer the time.

You can read more about the formation and earlier years of the ACS, here
https://archive.acscricket.com/books/twenty_one_years_of_the_ACS/index.html

Prompt Despatch of Orders for ACS Publications

Members have rightly expressed their frustration at the delays between placing orders for ACS publications and receiving the ordered books. In some cases, payments have been made two or more months before the books become available. Whilst some of the delays in getting books to members are attributable to shortcomings in the various postal systems involved, a significant part of the responsibility rests with the ACS and its internal processes, and we apologise to our members for this.

To address these concerns the committee has decided to include on the quarterly sales flyer order form only books that are guaranteed to be available at the start of the corresponding sales quarter (1 Feb; 1 May; 1 Aug; 1 Nov). Other books may be mentioned as "coming shortly ...," but they will not be open to order until available. From now on, publications will be uploaded to the ACS Online Shop only when they are physically in stock.

These process changes will eliminate unreasonable prepayments for books not yet available and will enable ACS Sales to deliver complete orders immediately upon receipt. The improved process will nevertheless remain subject to postal delays that are beyond the control of the ACS.

Payment of ACS Membership Subscriptions

The majority of ACS members support the committee by paying their annual subscriptions on or before the due date of 1 December each year. Subscribing by direct debit is the lowest cost and administratively easiest method of payment for both the ACS and its members. Over 500 members representing over 60% of the total membership subscribe in this way. The ACS incurs no bank charges and members benefit from a £2 discount on their subscriptions.

A further 10% of members typically pay by other means prior to 1 December. This is excellent from an ACS cash flow perspective but has other drawbacks such as the administrative inconvenience of handling cheques or the charge of 4-5% levied on the ACS for payments via PayPal, although it is acknowledged that overseas members may not be able to use the UK direct debit scheme to pay their subscriptions.

The ACS currently operates a grace period of two months, ending on 31 January, for members to complete their subscriptions. Payments made close to the end of that period unfortunately cause both additional administrative effort and incremental costs, as instructions for the Spring mailing need to be given by mid-January. All paid up members at that cut-off date are handled via the bulk mailing arrangements that we have with our mailing service provider who manages the mailing process at a very competitive cost. But mailing of Journals to members who miss this cut-off date has to be handled by means of individual mailing transactions which incur a very significant on-cost compared to the bulk mailing process.

To save on these costs, the committee has agreed to reduce the grace period from two months to seven weeks. The deadline for payment of subscriptions will in future years be advanced to 18 January or the nearest preceding working day.

In order to avoid the ACS spending time and cost in handling the effects of late subscriptions, members who have not yet done so are urged where possible to enrol in the direct debit scheme. Details are available from the Membership Secretary at membership@acscricket.com. Regardless of the method of payment, we would urge all members to pay their subscriptions before 18 January to ensure continuity of membership and prompt receipt of the Spring mailing.

Impact of Inflation on ACS costs

As members will be well aware, inflation is impacting severely on businesses and households across the world. The ACS is not immune from this global phenomenon. Over the past few years, we have experienced modest increases in both the cost of publications and administrative expenses but this trend is now accelerating dramatically, especially in the area of postage costs which form a significant element of the ACS cost structure. The ACS has achieved considerable success in containing cost increases by improving internal business processes (e.g. eliminating meeting costs), challenging our suppliers and in some cases changing supply sources (e.g. for the quarterly mailings) to take advantage of better commercial terms and conditions. The effect of these measures has been to more or less stabilise the price of publications for around the last four years and to maintain membership subscriptions unchanged for the past five years. The latter will extend to six years after the recent AGM decision to maintain subscriptions unchanged for a further 12 months ending in November 2024.

Members will understand that it will be impossible for the ACS to maintain this position beyond the short term, but we will endeavour to keep any increases to a minimum. The first evidence of this movement will be an increase in the cover price of the ACS Journal which will increase to £5 starting with the Summer 2023 edition. Members receive one copy of the Journal as part of their membership subscriptions so will be shielded from this increase until November 2024. Non-members, and members wishing to buy additional copies, will pay the increase immediately. It is evident that membership subscriptions will eventually need to increase as well and as things stand the committee expects to have to table a proposal to this effect at the 2024 AGM.

Improving the Record

The ACS has recently relaunched its 'newinfo' website, following a lengthy period when it was largely out of use. It has also been renamed, and is now called 'Improving the Record'. We would encourage any member who discovers new biographical information about a cricketer to send this by email to newinfo@acscricket.com, along with details of its source. By 'new biographical information' we

mean information which differs from that currently shown in Cricket Archive (CA) regarding things like players' names, or their places or dates of birth or death, or their family relationships to other cricketers, or their batting or bowling styles, or their involvement in sports other than cricket, or key events from their lives outside cricket – so long as this new information is verified from a credible source.

If the new information is agreed to be credible and reliably-sourced, the necessary changes to the CA database will be made without delay – usually within two or three days of receipt.

The **newinfo@acscricket.com** address can also be used to alert us to instances where it is discovered that the CA database has two or more separate entries for the same cricketer. If the evidence provided is persuasive (and we stress again that there needs to be some definite evidence on this, and not just an assumption that two players with the same name and initials are one and the same person), these entries can be merged so that the CA database records the player only once.

We would remind members that suggestions for improving scorecards that are already in the CA database, for example by the incorporation of additional or corrected details, should be sent direct to **scores@cricketarchive.com**. Again, evidence supporting the suggested changes should be provided.

Volunteers for proofreading ACS publications

Proofreading and checking ACS books before publication is an important role, helping to ensure accuracy and consistency. We currently have a much-valued pool of proof readers but are always looking for a few new volunteers so that we can share the workload. The ACS has developed a Style Guide, which is used by proof-readers, and other advice is available as and when needed. If you are willing to be added to the pool of proof readers, please send an email to Jeremy Lonsdale at **livesincricket@acscricket.com**

Committee meeting reports

The ninth General Committee meeting of 2022/23 took place on a virtual basis on Saturday 24 September 2022. It discussed arrangements for the 2023 AGM, as well as the proposal for a separate 50th anniversary event during 2023, possibly a lunch at a convenient location with one or more speakers after the end of the cricket season. Members will be asked for their views shortly. The committee further discussed the appointment of a new editor for the ACS Journal, and also heard that the number of members had returned to the December 2021 level. The majority of the meeting was taken up with the regular committee strategy discussion which considered how the Association could develop its appeal and attract more members.

The tenth General Committee meeting of 2022/23 took place on a virtual basis on Saturday 22 October. The Committee noted with sadness the death of Travis Basevi at the age of 47. A number of members paid tribute to the many ways in which his work had benefitted the cricket community, in particular his creation of StatsGuru, CricInfo's revolutionary searchable cricket statistics database. Andrew Samson was welcomed on his co-option to the Committee. Plans for the members meeting (to be held by Zoom on 26 November) were finalised. It was agreed that a special luncheon will be held at Grace Road, Leicester on 14 October 2023 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Association. The Chair of the Publications Sub-group reported that all four publications planned for November were well in hand, although for a number of reasons, including possible postal strikes, there might be some delay in their delivery. Rodney Ulyate noted that the Association's first venture into making use of YouTube, an interview with Keith Walmsley, the author of *The ABC Tour*, had been very successful. The Committee would consider how to make further use of this facility. The Treasurer reported that the association's final position remained stable, although not surprisingly the value of its market investments had fallen. Sales of publications continue to be disappointing, but it was hoped that the four November publications would help improve the position.

The eleventh General Committee meeting of 2022/23 took place on a virtual basis on Saturday 19 November. The Committee confirmed plans for the members' meeting (to be held by Zoom on 26 November) and further discussed arrangements for the Anniversary event on 14 October 2023 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Association. There was a general discussion about arrangements for the Annual General Meeting to be held in March 2023. The Secretary also reported on nominations for election to the Committee. The Committee also received an update on various publications issues, including progress with several forthcoming books. In view of the current uncertainty around Twitter, the Committee approved setting up an ACS account on the Mastodon site. The go-ahead was also given to setting up an ACS YouTube channel.

The twelfth General Committee meeting of 2022/23 took place on a virtual basis on Saturday 17 December 2022. The Committee was pleased to note that feedback from the members' meeting held in November had been very positive. The talks by authors about their books were well received. The Association's social media presence continues to develop with the successful launch of its YouTube channel. Unfortunately, for reasons largely outside ACS control, the publication of some books due to be issued at the beginning of November had been delayed. Purchasers had been informed about this and the Committee discussed how delays could be prevented in future. The Committee approved the updating of a number of procedural documents necessary for the efficient operation of the association, and further discussed arrangements for the AGM in March and the Golden Jubilee lunch in October.

The thirteenth General Committee meeting of 2022/23 took place on a virtual basis on Saturday 14 January 2023. The Committee received a presentation from Jonathan Northall, the newly appointed editor of the ACS Journal. He set out his early thoughts about the future development of the Journal. These included expanding the range of topics and introducing some new features including interviews with significant cricket historians and statisticians. The Treasurer provided positive news on the ACS's financial position, and it was agreed to look afresh at arrangements for overseeing ACS investments. Final details of the plans for the AGM in March were discussed. The Committee considered the possible impact of the recent Royal Mail cyber-attack on the ability of ACS to send out mail to overseas members.

The fourteenth General Committee meeting of 2022/23 took place on a virtual basis on Saturday 18 February 2023. The Committee heard reports on discussion with Nottinghamshire CCC about the possibility of the Peter Wynne-Thomas Library at Trent Bridge housing an ACS Archive. A paper was presented proposing clarifications about the definition of a batting partnership. A number of changes to administrative procedures were approved which should have the effect of reducing delays in the delivery of ACS publications, improving the efficiency of the annual membership renewal process and improving the process by which authorised members can amend/update the Cricket Archive database.

Membership Update

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members: John Bennett, David Collins, Colin Cuthbertson, Christopher Field, Shaun Fisher, Peter Jordan, James King, Joel Mundy, Dhurai Navaneetham, John Newton, John Reddish, Chris Rew, Chris Skyring, Brett Smith, John Todd and Peter Watson.

We require a new postal address from the member Alan Moore.

The Association extends its deepest sympathy to the bereaved families of the recently deceased members: Robin Brodhurst, Lionel Cooke, James Coombs, Graeme Crosby, Brian Evans, David Fryer, Clifford German, Bill Hopkins, Tony Hutton, Graham Kent and Tony Webb.