

# COLOURED TROUSERS No 42



## BUCKS COUNTY CRICKET CLUB NEWSLETTER

**Editor: Bill Scholes**

### NCCA CLUBERLY COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION

**Buckinghamshire and Devon met in the final of the NCCA Cluberly Championship for the second year running, and for third time in four seasons, but unfortunately this time it was Devon who emerged the winners.**

**Bucks men's hopes of claiming a third National Counties Cluberly Championship in four years were dashed when they lost by 122 runs to Devon in the final at West Bromwich Dartmouth on Wednesday. It was sweet revenge for Devon, who had lost to Bucks by varying margins in the 2023 and 2025 finals.**

Bucks skipper Conner Haddow gave his side a chance of victory by taking 11 wickets for 199 runs in the match. But set 256 for victory, the Bucks batting, which has looked fragile for much of the campaign, succumbed to 133 all out on the fourth and final morning. No Bucks batter reached fifty in the match.

On the first day, Devon who chose to bat on winning the toss, scored 280 from 80.1 overs on a flat pitch. Their star was opener Sam Elstone who scored a determined 104 from 158 balls. Haddow, who took a record 16 wickets in last year's final, returned 5-103 in 34.4 overs.

In reply, Bucks were lacking a big innings. Rhys Nicolas and Matt Pardoe both scored 48 while former England Under 19 player Aaryan Sawant scored a stylish 42. In the end Bucks were grateful to some good innings by George Harvey and Ed Bragg for reaching 279 in 89.2 overs, a first-innings deficit of 11 runs.

Devon looked like running away with the game when openers Elliott Hamilton (70) and Elstone (55) put on 127 at the start of their second innings.

But Bucks, thanks to a marathon 44.1 over spell by Haddow, stayed in the game and Devon were restricted to 244 in 100.1 overs.

The Bucks skipper finished with figures for 6-99 to take his tally in four matches on this ground for Bucks to an amazing 44 wickets, including six five-wicket hauls.

Bucks had four sessions to get their target of 256 and by the close of the third day had reached 56-3, including losing Sawant to an unfortunate run out.

Next morning the innings fell away badly, apart from a brief flourish from Josh Lincoln and they succumbed to 133 all out.

Devon, the better all-round side, thoroughly deserved their success while Bucks will need to find more support for the Haddow, who has shone for Worcestershire 2nd this season, if they are continue their recent run of success.

All at Bucks would like to congratulate Devon on their well deserved victory, not only for their actual performance in the Final, but also with their form showed in their championship campaign, topping Division One West with 3 wins and a draw. Having a settled side was an doubted bonus, with just 13 players used throughout the 5 matches.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that Bucks reached the Final for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in 4 years, certainly no mean feat, and one we should be immensely proud of. I believe it is fairly clear from the performances over the last few years that both Bucks and Devon have proven to be very much up there as two of the top National Counties under the NCCA banner.

To the Victors the spoils, they say ..... and therefore I make no apologies for reproducing below a report taken from Devon CCC website on the Final. Having sat through 3 and a half days of ( fairly jumping!) live streaming. I believe it is a fair and unbiased report.

**DEVON won their first NCCA Cluberly Championship title since 2011 by beating defending champions Buckinghamshire by 122 runs on the fourth morning of the final at West Bromwich Dartmouth.** After three days of tight, competitive cricket the end came quickly as Buckinghamshire, who began the day needing 200 more for victory with seven wickets intact, were bowled out for 133 in under two hours.

The win gave Devon their eighth outright Championship title with one shared with Bedfordshire in 2004. It also avenged a 19-run defeat by Buckinghamshire in last season's final, which was one of their major motivations coming into this match. Buckinghamshire's hopes of retaining their title rested on someone from their remaining top order batters playing an anchor role as Devon opener Sam Elstone had done in each innings.

But they lost three wickets in the first 30 minutes with Rhys Nicholas falling to a sharp catch at second slip by Matt Whalley off Sam Read who then struck the decisive blow when Matt Pardoe, the former Worcestershire left-hander, was lbw for seven pulling a full-toss. Devon captain James Horler then withdrew Read from the attack and brought on seamer George Daldorph at the Golf Course End, a move that paid instant dividends when Daksh Sabherwal was caught behind by Matt Thompson, the sole survivor from the side which beat Cambridgeshire in the 2011 final.

That left Buckinghamshire deep in trouble at 76 for six, but their victory hopes were kept flickering by Josh Lincoln and George Harvey who decided that attack was the best form of defence in a seventh wicket partnership of 48. Lincoln rattled to 33 – which included a six over long-on off Whalley – then miscued slow left-armer Callum Harvey to Horler at long-off and the last three wickets went down for two runs in

successive overs. Ed Bragg went lbw to slow left-armer Whalley, Harvey was bowled by a beauty from his namesake for 24 and Elstone, who took the player-of-the-match award, pouched the catch at second slip to account for Buckinghamshire captain Conner Haddow which started the victory celebrations.

No Devon bowler was able to match Haddow's 11 wickets in the match with Harvey's six wickets – three in each innings – being their best match return. But their victory was very much a collective effort with Elstone's runs – 104 in the first innings and 55 in the second – and his opening partnership of 127 with Elliot Hamilton on the second evening proving significant. Buckinghamshire were left to rue dropped catches and the failure of their batters to convert promising starts into potential match-shaping innings. There were ten individual scored of 20 or more but no half-centuries.

"It was a really good final. We knew the quality of the Bucks team and congratulations to them on winning the Eastern Division and pushing us so hard here. "I think it shows how good the standard of National Counties cricket is and how important it is in the pathway for these youngsters. Some of them still aspire to play first-class cricket: for others it will be the highest standard they play in. So, to play in a high-profile final involving two really good teams is great for them.

"From an onlooker's point of view, it was a match that ebbed and flowed and it's really nice to be on the winning side."

*For Buckinghamshire captain Conner Haddow there was disappointment after he had done more than anyone to keep his side in the hunt for a third Championship title in four seasons by taking 11 wickets in the match and his aggregate to 44 wickets in four Championship matches at West Bromwich Dartmouth.*

*"It doesn't mean anything if you don't win the game," Haddow said. "It was nice to bowl well but I'll be thinking about what else what we could we have done."*

*Haddow's focus is likely to be on dropped catches and a lack of runs from Buckinghamshire's top order while Devon opener Sam Elstone made 104 in the first innings and 55 in the second in a match turning opening stand of 127 with Elliot Hamilton (70).*

*"The key moments were we lost a flurry of wickets at the start of each innings and again this morning," Haddow said. "We never really had those periods when we went bang, bang, bang with the ball but they did. We dropped a few chances as well. If you take off the runs scored after those chances the scores were pretty much even. "Devon are a very good side. It was very close last year in a game which could have gone either way so fair play to them.*

*"At the start of their second innings both openers played very well. The pitch spun but if you stuck in you could score. In our second innings only Billy Dodds batted for more 60 balls. When you don't have that you are never going to score quickly on a pitch like that. You have to be more attritional and they did it better than we did."*

Right, lets cheer ourselves up by looking at the positives and the good result achieved from our last Eastern Divisional match against Cambridgeshire which resulted in our 3<sup>rd</sup> appearance in the Championship Final over the past 4 years. That in itself is a major achievement and should be recognised as such. A total of 21 players enjoyed the thrill of playing in a National Counties championship Final. Four of these (Conner Haddow, Tom Weymes, Ed Bragg and George Harvey) played in all 3 Finals, whilst another four (Alexei Kervezee, Ewan Cox, Archie and Billy Dodds) played in two of the Finals. It should also be remembered that we had 3 different captains over the last three years - Tom Hampton, Alexei Kervezee and Conner Haddow.

## **EASTERN DIVISIONS CHAMPIONS - AGAIN**

2022 Eastern Division Two Champions

2023 Eastern Division One Champions      Final Winners

2025 Eastern Division One Champions      Final Winners

2026 Eastern Division One Champions      Final Runners Up

### **NCCA CLUBBERLY COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP –Cambridgeshire v Bucks At Peterborough Town 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> August**

Buckinghamshire retained their Eastern Division One title on a tense final day of the regular season and will now make the familiar trip to West Bromwich Dartmouth, venue for the four-day final which starts on September 6. Buckinghamshire needed just 15 balls of the final day to score the 17 runs they needed to complete the formalities of their victory over Cambridgeshire at Peterborough.



Photo @Andy Bone Sports Shots

We lost Billy Dodds, bowled by Aum Patel for 13, but an unbeaten 36 from debutant Jack Bates saw them home by eight wickets which then meant they had to monitor from afar events at Stafford where Suffolk had the chance to overtake them by beating Staffordshire.

Bucks, who chose field first, were held up on the first day by excellent half-centuries from Cambridgeshire's Tom Cullen (86) and Will Routledge (76). They helped the hosts to reach 291 before being bowled out in the 90th over. Skipper Conner Haddow returned 4-90 in a marathon

33-over spell, while High Wycombe seamer Liam Bulteel, one of three Championship debutants in the Bucks team, was rewarded for an accurate spell with the final wicket.

The Bucks innings followed a similar pattern. Matt Pardoe (72) and Archie Dodds (55) established a strong platform before Chesham teenager Daksh Sabherwal made a most promising debut with 62 off 133 balls to help Bucks reach 308 all out - a slender first-innings lead of 17 runs.

The game swung dramatically Bucks's way in the final session of the second day, when Cambridgeshire sensationally collapsed from 50-3 to 66 all out, losing their last seven wickets for 16 runs in 12.3 overs to the left-arm spin of Pardoe and Haddow. Pardoe achieved the amazing figures of 5-7 off eight overs with four maidens, for once outshining Haddow who took 3-15 off 13 overs. This left Bucks only 50 for victory. They could not quite complete a two-day victory, but needed only 15 balls on the final day to ease home by eight wickets thanks to an assured unbeaten 35 from their third debutant Jack Bates 19, recruited from Northants 2nd XI.

Bucks achieved this success without all-rounder Ed Bragg while Bertie Foreman is back playing with Kent.

Bucks players and supporters spent the rest of Tuesday keeping an eye on the Staffordshire v Suffolk game, hoping that the latter county did not win. In the end Staffs, chasing 371 for victory, comfortably held out for a draw at 285-7.

#### **NATIONAL COUNTIES CLUBBERLY CHAMPIONSHIP EASTERN DIVISION 1 FINAL TABLE**

|                | P        | W        | D        | L        | Bonus Pts | Pts       |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>BUCKS</b>   | <b>4</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>23</b> | <b>71</b> |
| Northumberland | 4        | 2        | 1        | 1        | 26        | 62        |
| Suffolk        | 4        | 1        | 2        | 1        | 25        | 49        |
| Staffordshire  | 4        | 1        | 2        | 1        | 25        | 49        |
| Cambridgeshire | 4        | 0        | 1        | 3        | 22        | 26        |

## **BUCKS WOMEN – 2026 REPORTS**

### **METRO BANK ONE DAY CUP - LEAGUE 3**

**Bucks Women rounded off their season on a high with a thumping win over Cambridgeshire in the One Day Cup. Coupled with their performance in being the only Tier 3 side to reach the dizzy heights of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Round of their Vitality T20 Cup, not to mention some excellent individual performances, it has been a great season which head coach Ben Ungaretti will reflect on in the next edition of the Newsletter.**

# Cambridgeshire Women v Bucks Women

At Fenners on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September



Image \_Sports Shots

## **Bucks Women finished their season with an enormous 230-run win over Cambridgeshire on Sunday in the Metro Bank One Day Cup.**

After losing the toss and being asked to bat first, Molly Carter cashed in on the opportunity, racking up an impressive 76 alongside Afra Rose Mohamed and Cara Duggan.

The in-form Tegan Stockdale unfortunately fell early in the innings for just 12. However, this opened up the opportunity for Mohamed and Duggan to follow Carter in the run-scoring department.

Afra batted brilliantly before falling four runs short of her half-century, with Charlotte Aylmore claiming her first wicket.

Captain Duggan then took apart the Cambridgeshire bowling attack, finding the ropes 12 times on her way to a sublime maiden century.

Tilly Fellows continued the onslaught of boundaries alongside Duggan, smashing five fours and one maximum before her quickfire half-century was halted after just 31 balls.

Duggan was excellent, and alongside Megs Woodward, Bucks racked up a huge total of 347/4 from their 50 overs.

The home side did not get off to a desirable start, losing two wickets inside the opening 10 overs, with Nina Jerman and Jessica Mccrum dismissed.

Afra and Kertha Kethes were the pick of the Bucks bowlers, taking seven wickets between them for very few runs.

Despite spirited knocks from Kelly Haynes (33) and Millie Rawlins (22) in the middle order, Bucks kept things incredibly tight, conceding just four extras, and made quick work of the lower order.

Kertha and Carys Gerber took the remaining wickets, bowling Cambridgeshire Women out for 117 and sealing a big 230-run victory, while finishing their Metro Bank One Day Cup campaign in third place

## Berkshire Women v Bucks Women

At Finchampstead CC on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August



Image \_ Luke Stafford Sports Shots

In their penultimate game of the Metro Bank One Day Cup season, Bucks travelled to Finchampstead to face near neighbours Berkshire, who sat 2<sup>nd</sup> in the table. A tough match in prospect. Opting to bat first, Bucks made a strong start with openers Molly Carter 21 and Annie Townsend 25 both contributing to the opening partnership of 42 and they were followed by Afra Rose Mohammed 35 and skipper Cara Duggan 20. Tegan Stockdale 31 and Carys Gerber 20 continued to press ahead and helped Bucks towards their final total of 209-9. Mary Briscoe with 3-29 was the pick of the Berkshire bowlers.

Berkshire got off to the worst possible start, both openers being removed without troubling the scorer. Carys caught Atorer off the bowling of Charlie Miley whilst Patil was lbw to Layla Judge, Ashneet Chahal with 41 and Finty Trussle 24 restored some order but once they had departed only Mary Briscoe, who top scored with 45 provided any real resistance as Berkshire subsided to 163 all out, leaving Bucks the winners by 46 runs. Star of the Bucks bowling attack was spinner Zaynah Wani who took 4 wickets for 25 runs of 8 overs.

### ONE DAY CUP – LEAGUE 3      FINAL TABLE    2026

|                | P.       | W        | L        | A        | T        | N RR        | PTS       |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| Devon          | 7        | 6        | 1        |          |          | 2.31        | 29        |
| Berkshire      | 7        | 5        | 2        |          |          | 0.72        | 25        |
| <b>BUCKS</b>   | <b>7</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>0.72</b> | <b>22</b> |
| Staffordshire  | 7        | 4        | 2        | 1        |          | 0.53        | 21        |
| Cheshire       | 7        | 2        | 3        |          | 1        | -0.39       | 14        |
| Shropshire     | 7        | 2        | 4        |          |          | -0.39       | 11        |
| Wiltshire      | 7        | 1        | 6        |          |          | -0.07       | 4         |
| Cambridgeshire | 7        | 1        | 6        |          |          | -2.29       | 4         |

**MCC WOMEN v BUCKS WOMEN @ Wormsley**

**Friendly on 29<sup>th</sup> August**

**MCC welcomed Buckinghamshire Women to Wormsley for an entertaining 50-over fixture, with the visitors securing a seven-wicket victory after successfully chasing 150.**

**Batting first, MCC's innings was anchored by an excellent 56 from Finty Trussler, who occupied the crease for more than two hours and provided much-needed stability after early wickets had reduced the hosts to 58 for 4. Useful contributions from Crofts (17\*) and Smith (11) helped MCC to a total of 149 as they were bowled out inside 40 overs. Buckinghamshire's bowling attack shared the wickets impressively. Evie Dixon was the standout performer, returning figures of 4-22 from her eight overs, while Sky Springett claimed 3-22 and Tilly Fellows finished with 2-26.**

**In reply, Buckinghamshire built their chase around a composed innings from Molly Carter, who carried her bat for 65\* from 108 balls. After Afra Rose Mohamed contributed 12 and Jesal Kulhar added 18, Carter found support from Tilly Fellows, whose unbeaten 27 helped guide the visitors to their target with more than 13 overs to spare.**

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CRICKET BOARD v BUCKS WOMEN @ County Ground, Northampton**

**Friendly on August**

**Away again, this time to the County Ground at Northampton for a 20 over friendly against the Northants Cricket Board. The home side, having won the toss, elected to bat first and solid performances from their top 6 six batters saw them reach a total of 182, for the loss of just 4 wickets.**

**Evie Dixon was the pick of the Bucks bowlers with 2-31. Faced with a large total, Bucks lost wickets consistently with only Carys Gerber with 41 posting any real resistance, before the innings closed on 127-8., leaving the home side victors by 55 runs.**

**BUCKS MEN and WOMEN 100 Ball FRIENDLIES at MILTON KEYNES**

**Bucks Men 2ndXI beat Milton Keynes XI by 3 runs ( I think)**

**Top scorers for Bucks were Daksh Sabherwal 33 and Shane Wijeyasinghe 16**

**Top scorers for MK XI were Danny Chapman24 and Eashaan Nune 20**

**Bucks Women beat National Asian Cricket Council by 78 runs**

**Top scorers for Bucks were both the openers Tegan Stockdale 53 and Tilly Fellows 37**

**Top bowler for Bucks was Kertha Kethes with 5 wickets for 15 runs**

## **BUCKS BOYS AND GIRLS UNDER 18's**

**Huge congratulations and well done to both our Boys and Girls U18's as they have both qualified for their National Semi-Finals . After their dramatic one wicket win over Warwickshire , our Girls will take on Yorkshire Girls U 18's in the County Cup whilst the Boys will take on Staffordshire in the National Counties T20 competitionT20**



## **RICHARD HAYWARD R.I.P.**

"It is with great sadness that I relay the news that Richard Hayward passed away on 28 August 2026 at the age of 72. Richard represented Bucks CCC from 1978 to 1989 when he emigrated to Nelson in New Zealand with his wife Sue. He played in 51 championship matches scoring 3380 runs at an average of 45.67 (the fourth highest average of those who scored 1500 runs or more). He would have played more often for Bucks CCC but he was on the staff at Hampshire in 1981 and 1982 and Somerset in 1985 (shortly after he had been appointed as captain of Bucks CCC). He also represented Central Districts in New Zealand from 1982 to 1987. He continued to be heavily involved in cricket in New Zealand including subsequently becoming an Official Match Referee for New Zealand Cricket.

Richard grew up playing cricket for Ickenham in the Thames Valley League where I first got to know him and played for Middlesex Seconds at that time. He was a stylish left-handed batsman and occasional left-arm medium pace bowler. Most importantly he was a true gentleman on and off the field and it was a pleasure to have been in the same team as him."

With best wishes.

Ian Hodgson

The following post, by Bucks member Andy Warboys, appeared last week on the County Cricket Matters Facebook page.

### BUCKS CCC CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH PROGRAMMES FREE OF CHARGE

We have a small quantity of Bucks County Cricket Club match programmes + scoresheets available for the Bucks v Staffordshire & Bucks v Suffolk 3-day matches played at Chesham Cricket Club in July & August. These are free of charge on a first come first served basis.

Please DM me if you'd like either match (or both) with your name & address & we'll post them off to you completely free within the week.



**Philip Barker** commented on **Andy Worboys's** post: "these were superb, a really good initiative and the cricket was good to watch too."

Well done Andy, it's all excellent publicity for both Buckinghamshire CCC and National Counties cricket.

# Bucks County Cricket Club



## Annual Golf Day and Dinner

We are delighted to invite you to the **Bucks CCC Annual Golf Day and Dinner**, taking place on **Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2026**, at **Moor Park Golf Club** (WD3 1QL).

### The Programme of the day is as follows:

12:00 pm – Meet at the Club in the Carris Bar

1:00 pm – First match tees off

7:00 pm – Two-course dinner, followed by the prize-giving

There will be the usual individual prize plus a team prize. This will be played in 4's with the best two Stableford scores to count. You may apply individually or make up a team. You are welcome to bring guests to this event.

Ticket price Golf and Dinner **£110pp**.

Please contact John Phillips for further details

- [john.phillips@bucksccc.org.uk](mailto:john.phillips@bucksccc.org.uk)

If you wish to attend the dinner only please contact John, the cost of the meal is **£40p**

## FROM THE WORCESTERSHIRE C.C. WEBSITE

**Worcestershire trialist, Conner Haddow, dominated proceedings at Newport Cricket Club, claiming impeccable figures of 5-51 and 7-38 in respective innings, as his side came out on top over three days in a return to friendly action away to Glamorgan.** A Haddow fifer helped to restrict the home side to just 254, as George Ealham starred with the bat for the Pears, notching a scintillating 160 runs helping the visitors built a first innings lead of 94, having replied with a resounding 348, despite a Joe Davies hat-trick for the Welsh outfit. It was then Worcestershire's left-arm spinner who played protagonist once more, as Haddow staggeringly improved on his first innings haul, accounting for seven of Glamorgan's second-innings scalps, as his side needed just 85 runs on day three to seal victory. Despite somewhat of a second-innings top-order collapse from Alexei Kervezee's side, contributions from Fin Jones, Seb Linnit and Alfie Higgins proved enough to see the Pears over the line, emerging victorious by three wickets on Monday.

Conner Haddow took 5 for 32 to help dismiss Essex for 159 to give Worcestershire a convincing 318 run victory at Billericay CC. Ayaan Malik top scored with 48 for the home side.

## BUCKS CRICKET HEADLINE SPONSOR 2026

**A big thank you to Bloom Health Hospitals for becoming Bucks Cricket new Headline Sponsor for the current 2026 season,**



## SPONSOR A BUCKS PLAYER

A great big thank you to all those members/ supporters or companies who have sponsored a Bucks player over the past 8/9 seasons. Going forward, the administration of this initiative will in future be administered by Bucks Cricket.

## SUPPORT BUCKS CRICKET



The County Club and Bucks Cricket are working actively to promote and develop cricket at all levels and ages throughout the county . You can support these efforts by either by joining Bucks County Cricket Club or becoming a Patron of Bucks. Becoming a Patron automatically qualifies you to become a member of Bucks CCC. Essentially we are encouraging people to become patrons going forward and provide gift aid through that means as a benefit to both the CIO and the patron. Clearly for all existing members nothing changes.

Players are treated slightly differently currently as they have to be members for the benefit of the insurance cover so we are leaving them at the £25 per annum level.

As a Bucks member, you will be entitled to :-

Free access to a new enlarged on line copy of the Bucks Cricket Handbook encompassing all aspects of the organization

A Hard copy of a reduced content Bucks CCC Handbook on application to the Membership Secretary

Free entry to all Bucks home matches including the Showcase game

A regular bi monthly on line newsletter with up to date results/fixtures/ news and information

The Annual Subscription is : -

£25 for individuals

£35 for partners living at the same address

£10 for juniors (aged under 18)

£15 for students in full time education ( (aged under 24 )

Life membership is also available

Membership forms are available from Rachel Hudson Email: ([admin@bucksccricket.co.uk](mailto:admin@bucksccricket.co.uk))

Another excelleny blog from Yahoo Over Cow Corner

## Another Ode to Multi Day/Red ball cricket



There is an adage that cricket supporters watch the sport during the summer and read about it during the winter. A modern development on such a theme would be to watch the sport during the summer and stream cricket during the winter courtesy of platforms such as *You Tube* and the litany of channels that have included highlights of matches from decades past. *Cricket Australia* created a channel during the early weeks of 2026 that showed matches from the *Wide World of Sports* coverage of the sport beginning in the early 1980's. Regularly featured were test match highlights, particularly from the late 1980's and early 1990's.

What struck home was how red ball cricket remains largely similar to that played nearly forty years ago. Names and players change, kit has become more commercialised, grounds have become more grand or morphed into stadia but the tactics employed broadly replicate those from times of yore. The genesis of an innings ordinarily features three slips and a gully, very few fielders in front of the bat and an expectation that the ball will move through the air. Batters will look to survive the early movement of the ball; as Brian Lara once opined: he always gave the first hour to the bowler. Blunting the influence of the new ball is almost as important as early runs. Part of this process are the little, early acts of defiance from the batters: leave, leave, leave, forward defensive with the rifle crack of ball against bat that echoes and reverberates around the ground. Leave some more. Runs have to be gleaned despite the vast acreage of unprotected outfield as the ball and pitch are at their most potent.

Such a tenet was put under the microscope by England's test team during the tenure of Brendon McCullum as the notion of pressurising the bowling team via rapid scoring was a more worthwhile tactic. England's comprehensive defeat during last winter's Ashes and Bangladesh's recent defeat of Australia on Australian soil by utilising the traditional tactics that 'put miles in the bowlers' legs' under the auspices of capitalising on tired limbs demonstrated that little has changed on such matters.

In contrast to the patient beginnings to an innings, the glory and majesty of a crisp, elegant cover drive that pierces the field and scuttles to the boundary akin to the proverbial scolded cat; a shot that never fails to bring great joy and hearty, zealous applause. Indeed, Jon Hotten expanded on the subject in his superlative tome *Vinciness*, also released in 2026.

It is such little vignettes that further add to the sense of timelessness: the uncertainty of how a pitch will play and acceptance, by supporters, that a low scoring match is just fine. The realisation that a team can enjoy a dominant session but such an advantage doesn't render the result a foregone conclusion. The enjoyment of quality slip catching that is now almost unique to red ball cricket but how, somewhat conversely, standards seem to have dropped a little due to the increase in white ball cricket. The absolute nature of the lunch interval regardless of overs bowled in the morning session (weather interventions notwithstanding) and the *passeggiata* of those in attendance. Some forward thinking counties even allow spectators during said *passeggiata* to take place on the outfield.

One of the more intriguing aspects are the games within a game. During a match earlier in the season between Hampshire and Somerset the one of red ball cricket's unique scenarios unfolded as Hampshire's Jake Lehmann was required to bat alongside the last two batters in the hosts line-up. Under such circumstances, the tactic of farming the strike comes to the fore and the bizarre scenario of the fielding captain placing all of his / her players on the boundary to present the set batter with the easiest of singles. At almost every other juncture of the match the batter would gratefully accept such largesse but on this occasion the opportunity for a comfortable single is eschewed for precisely two thirds of each over under the auspices of farming the strike and keeping the last two batters away from the bowling for as long as one dares. Indeed, during a test match on England's last tour of New Zealand there was the bizarre, but amusing, sight of Mitch Santner, whilst batting with number 11 Will O'Rourke, visibly showing disappointment after striking a four when attempting to nudge a single; retaining the strike viewed as more important than three extra runs at that juncture of the match. Players, faces and grounds may change but such an art remains a constant of red ball cricket and is unchanging throughout the years. Such similarity provides a sort of lineage to past generations; a sort of red ball DNA.

Or the subtle, yet discernible, bi-play and tactics of delaying or speeding up of proceedings during the last over before the lunch or tea interval in order to squeeze in one additional over or make sure that no further overs are bowled, depending on one's viewpoint. One more, or less over, shouldn't make a difference to the overall match but one more over for the batters to negotiate could yield another wicket at such a crucial juncture; similar to a goal just before half-time in Football. The psychology of the moment still holds great import.

Arguably the most fascinating aspect is the unique nail-biting drama of one side attempting to cling on for a draw, eight or nine wickets down where barely a run is scored for the final hour of play. One of the two most fundamental aspects of the game, scoring runs, has been eschewed in favour of survival but the theatre, angst and caprice of the situation holds sway over anything else. And the always incredible sight of ten fielders surrounding the bat hoping for an edge, any edge. Four or five days of a narrative being developed narrowed down to such an acute scenario / passage of play. Critics will sneer at the idea of a draw after four or five days of play but for the supporters of either team involved the emotions of a drawn contest will prove emotive, raw and all-consuming for a considerable time after the match has concluded. Cricket may be a sport dominated by numbers but it doesn't have to always be so binary.

These moments, these passages of play, these nuances morph together to render red ball cricket a marvellous timeless puzzle that still entralls and intrigues many. To paraphrase and contextualise an anonymous poem originally published in *Punch* magazine:

*Red ball cricket is slow*

*Let's hold this picture*

*The sunlit field, the shadows on the grass*

*And keep it slow*

*The whole tranquil pageant in the sun*

## **RON HEDLEY'S SPONSORED CHARITY WALKS**

### **Ron's March with England Cricket Seniors Walks 2026**

**On the March and on the TV. On Friday 7th August we took part in another first walk, this time with Leicestershire CCC Seniors. The Essex walk was broadcast on Songs of Praise on Sunday 9th August and is available on the BBC i player. A very moving programme.**

Our other walks to County Grounds are to a County Championships first day of four. The Leicestershire walk is for their One Day match against Warwickshire CCC. We will forward details as soon as possible.

Kind Regards      Ron 07710 987 950

### **CAN'T GET TO A GAME**

#### **KEEP UP TO DATE WITH BUCKS C.C.C. ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Do not despair, help is at hand. Don't miss a moment**

Website: [bucksccricket.co.uk](http://bucksccricket.co.uk)

Twitter : @BucksCricket

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BucksCricket>

Instagram: [bucksccricket.official](https://www.instagram.com/bucksccricket)

**All of Bucks 1st XI games will be streamed live on our YouTube channel, and from this season all clubs will be required to have a camera at both ends of the ground, so that the view will always be from behind the bowlers arm.**

Once again, I would like to thank all those who have helped and contributed to Coloured Trousers with interviews, articles and photos over the past year, particularly Andy Bone and Sports Shots, Jason Harrison, Mike Knox, Ron Hedley, Jonathan Lilley, Annie Chave, County Cricket Matters, Yahoo Over Cow Corner, Steve Peart, Paul Dean, Anna Harris, Simon Parbery Rich Hudson, Rachel Hudson, George Halfhide., , Conner Haddow, Carla Duggan, Andy Warboys and Ben Ungaretti. We are of course obviously very grateful to all our sponsors and especially to Andy Bone and Luke Stafford of Sports Shots for their excellent media coverage. All contributions are gratefully received of course –why not join our happy band of literary contributors.

*Billscholes*

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**The views expressed in this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of Bucks C.C.C**

