

COLOURED TROUSERS No 30

2025

BUCKS COUNTY CRICKET CLUB NEWSLETTER

Editor: Bill Scholes

“ The Times they Are A Changing”

so sang Bob Dylan back in the day, and no truer word was spoken, or sung, about than the world of County Cricket which I'm sure is very close to all of your hearts.

Where does the time go -, it only seemed like yesterday that that we were celebrating the start of the new century , and here we are a quarter of the way through already. In those 25 years cricket, and in particular cricket watching, has changed dramatically, with now 4 major competitions - County Championship, T20, 50 over One Day Cup and The Hundred all competing for your hard earned money, but just as importantly, for your time if you are that way inclined.

When I started to put this edition together at the beginning of February, it was the time of the year when the forthcoming fixtures, both National County and First Class, were being perused to see where the summers journeys might take you. The eagerly anticipated arrivals both Wisden and Playfair Annuals was of course a great boon, along with a trusty dogeared Ordnance Survey map to plot potential journeys. Obviously Bucks fixtures were the first to be plotted, and these days that is not as far as one would have liked. In days gone by, the next step was to hopefully see where and when your favourite County outgrounds still featured ie, the likes of Arundel, Horsham, Eastbourne, Bath, Chesterfield, Cheltenham College, Guildford, Scarborough.

Coming back up to date, we now find that.....

“Money, Money, Money In a Rich Mans World”

sung of course by ABBA is more pertinent. The last couple of weeks or so have seen the ECB sell off of The Hundred competition to the highest bidders and there were a few of those. There are 8 Hundred franchises with the entire value of these eight franchises coming to around £967m.

Figures to blow your mind, considering some of the dire predictions for the future of the county game over the last few years, but what that will mean to the likes of Bucks CCC and the other National Counties we will have to wait and see. At the moment I believe we are considered part of the recreational or grass roots sector where best estimates seem to be that around £50m is set to be distributed. National Counties cricket is becoming more important in the overall hierarchy and deserves proper funding if it is to continue to promote the progress of young aspiring cricketers into the First Class game. (See article further on in the Newsletter)

Anyway, enough of money talk, on with the cricket

BUCKS FIXTURES 2025

For those who may not be aware, Bucks play in three competitions organised by the National Counties Cricket Association. There are two white-ball competitions – the NCCA T20 competition, which features a series of double-header fixtures, and the NCCA Trophy, which is a 50 over-a-side competition. Both of these are played on a group basis, with the T20 Group winners qualifying for Finals Day and the Trophy winners and runners-up qualifying for the quarter-finals, with the semi-finals and final to follow. There is also a red-ball competition, the NCCA Championship, which is a three-day competition. This is split into Eastern and Western Divisions, with a Division One and Division Two in each section.

Pre Season Warm ups /Friendlies- all 50 overs

Sunday 6 April	Intra Squad match	High Wycombe
Sunday 13th April,	Middlesex 2nds	Merchant Taylors' School
Monday 21st April,	Hertfordshire	West Herts

NCCA 50 OVERS KNOCKOUT

Date	Opposition	Venue
April 27	Devon	Instow
May 4	CORNWALL	TRING PARK
May 11	Berkshire	Falkland
May 18	OXFORDSHIRE	TRING PARK
Quarter Finals	1st June	
Semi Finals	22nd June	
Final	13th July	

Oxfordshire have agreed that our home Trophy fixture against them would also be played for the Nurton/ York Cup.

NCCA T20 COMPETITION (2 matches per day)

The T20 reverts back to four groups of five, Bucks are again matched with Berkshire, with Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire, and Wales NC completing the group. The 'Super 12s' will follow - the top 12 clubs playing in four round robins around the country to determine the four finalists.

Date	Opposition	Venue
June 8	BEDFORDSHIRE	CHESHAM
June 15th	Oxfordshire	Didcot
June 29	BERKSHIRE	CHESHAM
July 6	Wales NC	Ebbw Vale
Super 12's	3 August	
Finals Day	24 August	

NCCA COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

Date	Opposition	Venue
July 20-22	Suffolk	Bury St Edmunds
Aug 10-12	CAMBRIDGESHIRE	CHESHAM
Aug 17-19	Staffordshire	Stafford
Aug 31- 2 Sep	LINCOLNSHIRE	HIGH WYCOMBE

SHOWCASE MATCH		
Sunday 21st July -	Northamptonshire	The County Ground, Northants

BUCKS 2nd XI FIXTURES

Date	Opposition	Venue
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May 27		Suffolk	Sudbury CC
May 30	2 xT20	BERKSHIRE	MARLOW
June 18	2xT20	Berkshire	TBA
July 8	2 xT20	Northants Academy	Peterborough Town CC
Aug 21	2 xT20	OXFORDSHIRE	HIGH WYCOMBE
Aug 26	50 over	LONDON SCHOOLS C A	CHESHAM

Now this is something to warm your heart in the cold weather - something to look forward to - a trip to North Devon CC at Instow at the end of April. I can see the sea from here!



WOMEN'S CRICKET and BUCKS WOMEN

It has been over 5 years since county cricket has been at the top level of women's domestic cricket, but all is about to change as 2025 will see the return of County cricket to the top of the tree. The 8 team regional structure, which included the likes of Southern Vipers, has clearly not lived up to expectations, and so there will be a return to the old structure but with some important differences that will affect Bucks as well as the other National counties. One important difference will be the introduction of an early season FA Cup style 50 over knock out competition – the County Cup – which will involve all levels of women's county cricket. It may not come immediately but it does offer up the opportunity of a club such as our own performing a giant killing act beloved of the media. Recent international performances by the England team have shown there is a need for stronger domestic cricket, challenging players both physically and mentally.

After a year of discussions., 2025 will see the unveiling of the new Women's Domestic Structure bringing change but also exciting new challenges. The previous 8 regional teams have made way for a 3-tiered county-based system.

Tier 1 will be comprised of 8 fully professional teams from the Men's First Class structure,

Tier 2 will be made up of the remaining 10 First Class Counties . with

Tier 3 being made up of National Counties.

However, Tier 3 still presents a much improved and better funded programme than the previous County Competitions, with the Tier 3 counties splitting into a Division 1 & Division 2 in order to create a competitive, and meaningful matchplay programme. **Buckinghamshire** will be a

Division 1 side for 2025 for both the 50 over and T20 formats. There will also be promotion and relegation between Div One and Div Two creating the competitive landscape that our players will want at this level of Cricket

Tier 3 Division 1:

Berkshire, **Buckinghamshire**, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Devon, Hertfordshire Staffordshire, Wiltshire

Buckinghamshire Women will compete in all 3 of the new competitions in 2025:

BUCKS WOMEN - FIXTURES FOR 2025

METRO BANK ONE DAY CUP - LEAGUE 3 DIVISION ONE- 50 OVERS

Date	Opposition	Venue
April 21	CAMBRIDGESHIRE	WORMSLEY
April 27	Devon	Budleigh Salterton
June 1	Hertfordshire	CAMPBELL PARK
Aug 10	Wiltshire	Swindon
Aug 24	Cheshire	Warrington
Sept 7	STAFFORDSHIRE	STONY STRATFORD
Sept 14	Berkshire	Slough

VITALITY BLAST – LEAGUE 3 NORTH T20 COMPETITION (2 per day)

Date	Opposition	Venue
June 15	CHESHIRE	Bledlow Village
June 29	CAMBRIDGESHIRE	HOLMER GREEN
July 13	Staffordshire	Milford Hall CC
July 27	Final : Winner of North Division v Winner of South Division	

VITALITY T20 WOMENS COUNTY CUP

Date	Opposition	Venue
Mon May 5th	Sussex	Hove

The winners of the above tie will be away to either Glamorgan or Gloucestershire on **Saturday 10th May**. The semi-finals and final will be played on Finals Day on Monday May 26 at the t County Ground, Taunton, with the two semi-finals preceding the final.

Sadly, but possibly not totally unexpected, it is now clear that when one views the upcoming fixtures in their respective competitions, that there is no competitive red ball cricket. It would appear that the ECB’s predilection for the short format game is being repeated in the women’s game. Obviously cost is a factor, but the possible financial windfall(mentioned elsewhere) may perhaps change a few views.

RECENT MOVEMENTS IN AND AROUND THE NCCA AND THE HOME COUNTIES PREMIER LEAGUE



Bucks Wicketkeeper-Batter George Harvey Joins Gerrards Cross

31st January 2025 by [Andy Bone](#)

The Highly-Rated Bucks Wicketkeeper-Batter George Harvey Has Joined Home Counties Division Two Outfit Gerrards Cross. George made his championship debut for Bucks in 2023 against Suffolk in their championship winning season, top scoring in both innings. The Dukes Lane-based club announced their new signing across their social media platforms recently. The statement said: *We are delighted to announce the signing of 19 year old Wicketkeeper-Batsman George Harvey ahead of 2025 season! George joins us from Eastcote CC whilst having also played for Bucks Men's 1st XI, having played for them since u15. George has also played within Middlesex set up until u18s. He is also currently over in Australia playing over the winter in Tasmania.* Harvey was a member of the Bucks Men's 1st XI that defeated Leicestershire in the NCCA Showcase game on 22nd July 2024 at the Uptonsteel County Ground.

Sports Shots, in partnership with ETDC Digital Media.



Another young Bucks on the move as Mohit Babu joins Harefield.

17th February 2025 by [Andy Bone](#)

Mohit Babu Is the latest signing to join Harefield as they continued to bolster their squad ahead of their return to The Home Counties Premier League Division One. Babu, is an extremely talented young cricketer. A fast bowler with lots of raw pace and skill, Babu joins from Amersham. As well as representing Bucks Cricket through the age groups, he has also played for the county's Second XI.

Berkshire skipper Dan Lincoln has finally made the move to High Wycombe CC

17th February 2025 by [Andy Bone](#)

For Dan Lincoln, joining High Wycombe Cricket Club feels like a natural progression in a career that has already spanned county and national honours. As the captain of Berkshire CCC, The Challengers, and the England XI, Lincoln's move to Wycombe has been years in the making—and now, the timing feels p Club Captain, Harry Lane described his joy with the signing of Dan Lincoln, particularly “Dan’s winning mentality, professionalism and knowledge are invaluable for our players to have access to across the club in the years to come, as we look to develop our next crop of talented players throughout the club. “ “With Lincs joining the club alongside Aadi Sharma, the future is very bright with our already very strong first team squad” With Dan Lincoln on board, High Wycombe CC is gaining a player of immense talent and an experienced player who can help shape the club’s future.

Read Dan Lincoln’s full interview with Teddie Casterton of ETDC Digital Media on Sports Shots website www.sportshots.org.uk

BERKSHIRE HEAD COACH REJOINS BOYHOOD CLUB DATCHET

It is the end of an era for Berkshire Cricket as Head Coach Tom Lambert leaves to return to his boyhood club Datchet to take up the role of director of cricket, leading them into a hopeful new era. Lambert, who first joined the club in 1988 as a young colt, left in 2000 and had a successful career at clubs like Slough and Henley. After retiring as a club player in 2021, he served as head coach at Berkshire Cricket, overseeing a highly successful period. Berkshire Cricket Head of Performance, Neal Robinson: “Tom’s contribution to Berkshire Cricket over the last 14 years is quite simply immeasurable. He built the foundations to the Performance side of Berkshire Cricket, and a lot of the programmes we still run were Tom’s ideas. I don’t believe that anyone will ever have a bigger coaching impact on NCCA cricket. All our team wish Tom the best in his exciting project at Datchet CC and will be watching on as he continues to work with some of our players in the Challengers this summer.”

BJORN MORDT APPOINTED BEKSHIRE 1stX1 MENS HEAD COACH FOR 2025

We are delighted to announce that Bjorn Mordt has been appointed as the new Men’s 1st XI Head Coach for the 2025 season. Bjorn has a long association with Berkshire having been the county captain from 2007 to 2012. Bjorn shared his enthusiasm about taking on the role, stating: “I am very excited to start working with the Berkshire 1st XI squad. It is undoubtedly, in my opinion, one of the most talented groups of cricketers Berkshire have ever had. Testament to all the hard work over the last 13 years by Tom Lambert. I have massive shoes to fill and will be doing my best to continue what he has built. I am looking forward to working with Dan Lincoln and the rest of the boys and hope to keep the Stags going from strength to strength.”

OXFORDSHIRE APPOINT NICK PINHOL AS NEW MANAGING DIRECTOR

Oxfordshire Cricket is delighted to announce the appointment of Nick Pinhol as its new Managing Director, effective 1st March 2025.

Having been involved with Oxfordshire Cricket since the age of 15 – first as a player and later in a variety of coaching, marketing and leadership roles – Nick has played a pivotal role in the development of cricket across the county. Over the years, he has served as a Pathway Coach, Marketing & Communications Officer, Marketing & Commercial Manager, Secretary to the Board, Participation Manager, and most recently, Operations Director. His experience across these areas has equipped him with the expertise required to lead Oxfordshire Cricket into its next chapter.

The Changing role of Wicket Keepers

Another interesting article from the pen of Jonathan Lilley, a long time supporter and life member of Bucks and Middlesex.

It is important to note that cricket has always had the ability to change and reinvent itself over the many decades. In 1963 when the Gillette Cup was introduced in England and Wales as the first one day cricket event in the world who would have thought it would come as far as it has so far.

For many years teams would select their best wicket keeper regardless of their batting ability. This began to change with the emergence of Adam Gilchrist. This Australian may not have been the best wicket keeper in Australia but he certainly contributed to how the one day game was changing as well as almost reinventing scoring rates in test cricket. In fifty over cricket he would open an innings being capable of taking any first class attack apart. In test matches he batted at No 7, this would allow him to score heavily against tired bowlers. Although much of his wicket keeping was not always of the highest standard he was in fact a very good stopper. In recent years England has chosen Ollie Pope, Jos Butler and Jonny Bairstow as wicket keepers who in my view were not of the highest class, but played for their batting rather than their wicket abilities.

In previous times teams would always select their wicket keeper regardless of their batting skills. Northamptonshire played a keeper named Keith Andrew. He was an excellent stumper having been picked for England tours. For his county he often batted at No 11. This would not happen today. Bob Taylor {Derbyshire and England} a world class wicket keeper also probably struggle to be selected on a regular basis.

In my view one day cricket has caused the turning top class wicket keepers into mere stoppers. In the next few years one day cricket will only continue to expand probably the art of wicket keeping continuing to fall away. It may be in time some teams may even do away with the glove men. This would be tragic situation and a loss to our game.

Jonathan Lilley January 2025

OH NO....THE END OF AN ERA

Norfolk CCC will no longer play at Horsford

Following cordial negotiations with the Trustees of Horsford CC over recent weeks it is with very heavy hearts that the Norfolk CCC executive committee made the difficult decision to leave Manor Park which has been the counties base for the last 24 years.

The two clubs had been unable to find a mutually agreeable financial package that suits the needs of both parties. Norfolk CCC had made a very generous offer to Horsford CC that was not accepted and therefore had no alternative but to look for a new home. After Norfolk CCC advised Horsford CC they were leaving and had reached an agreement to play at another host club, Horsford came back to say Norfolk CCC could have free cricket in 2025. This offer was too late as Norfolk CCC had already agreed a package with their new host club Sprowston CCC

The executive committee of Norfolk CCC has extended their sincere thanks to everyone at Horsford CC for their help and support over the 24 years and have wished Horsford CC “all the best” for the future.

Norfolk CCC have entered into a long-term arrangement with Sprowston CC where they will play their two home NCCA championship matches and stage the showcase games. There are also three white-ball fixtures scheduled for Sprowston CCC in 2025.

The Norfolk Cricket Festival which has been a focal part of Norfolk CCC’s heritage since the 1890’s will continue in the same format with the members tents and marquee hospitality in place as normal. This year the Norfolk Cricket Festival will also include the showcase game against Kent CCC on Monday 4th August.

All Home Championship games are now played at Sprowston CC, Barkers Lane, Sprowston, Norfolk NR7 8QZ. The white-ball matches will be played at Sprowston CC and Great Witchingham CC, Fakenham Road, Great Witchingham NR9 5QR

Norfolk have been at Horsford’s beautiful Manor Park ground since 2001 before this move to Sprowston, Prior to Horsford, Norfolk’s home for 125 years was Colman’s Lakenham ground.

I have actually played at 2 of these 3 grounds – Lakenham and Sprowston, back in the days when I was a medium quick !

Bucks County Cricket Club



The 127th Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday 26th March 2025 @7.45pm is. Venue is the Wendover Cricket Club Pavilion, the Witchell, London Road, Wendover

An Ode to National Counties Cricket

Over the last few months a number of similar articles have been appearing in the main stream cricketing press over the few months extolling the virtues of experiencing, watching, attending and just being part of National Counties cricket. This is particularly true in the months of July and August (they used to be known as the summer holidays !) and from which county championship matches and 2nd X1 matches are noticeable by their absence.

After several years of failed ECB ideas for recreational cricket - Premier League cricket, no one over 23 eligible for Minor Counties, etc, it is now generally accepted that National Counties is the pinnacle of cricket outside the First Class game and can provide an important pathway for talented young cricketers. It clearly is of a high standard, recent results in the various Showcase games have showed that, and generally is far superior to county 2nd X1 cricket, where teams are rarely made up of full time professionals as counties can't afford to employ 22+ professionals. Were you aware that in 2023 a total of 750 players were recorded as playing in 2nd X1 cricket- that is an average of around 42 per county ! This generally includes those not involved with the first team, those returning from injury, players on trial, from clubs around the county and academy prospects. The 2nd X1 four-day competition has been restructured for 2025 and it will see three groups of six counties play each other once -so just 5 competitive matches - in what has been named 'The Championship Challenge'. The 2nd XI 50 over competition no longer takes place , partly due to The Hundred and the One Day Cup running concurrently.

Annie Chave is, as she herself states below, a fierce and long term supporter of county championship cricket, particularly her beloved Somerset, as well as editing County Cricket Matters website. If you haven't found it yet, and you are a County cricket devotee, I can strongly recommend it – www.countycricketmatters. To me, and I know to a lot of other people, Annie's article epitomises all that is right and good about County cricket and is a beacon of light amongst the ECB's constant tinkering. Annie wrote the article for the 2025 Devon Brochure, and I thank both Devon CC and Annie for their permission to use it.

Annie Chave - Editor at County Cricket Matters

I'm a fierce supporter of the county championship. The cricket I love isn't fast paced. I don't feel the need for loud music with pulsating crowds, bright colours, and sky-high sixes. True, this might appeal to some, and it offers up a different option for a more diverse crowd.

Indeed, what constitutes entertaining cricket? It feels that the definition is becoming more elastic, more disparate. For me, cricket is a gentler, more cerebral game. It is strategic. That strategy comes

with time at the crease, with batters seeing off bowlers, with the serenity of the batter's dogged defence and the metronomic rhythm of the bowler's line and length. My cricket, then, is a battle between bat and ball, stretched ideally, over a number of days with changing weather and pitch-conditions. To this fan, the entertainment is in the captain's tactics in the endeavour to win within the time allotted. Sadly, the scheduling of championship cricket sees it increasingly marginalised and timetabled in the weak Spring sunshine or the increasingly stormy autumnal weather in September. There are fewer long summer days of short sleeves and sun tans, where you can be sure of the intriguing narrative of long-format cricket.

In response to the lack of summer championship cricket, I am turning more and more to the National Counties Championship. These three-day red-ball games set a limit of 90 overs per team in the first innings, and they occupy what is still the all-too-brief summer cricket slot. It was mid-August 2024 when I spent two delightful days with friends at



Sidmouth August 2024 by Annie Chave

Sidmouth's ground (site of the foundation of Somerset CCC), watching Devon and Cheshire locked in a relegation battle. With the opening of The Hundred emblazoned across screen and media, it seemed almost incongruous to find a game so quietly getting on with simply playing cricket. True, the glorious sunshine and the idyllic seaside backdrop can colour your judgement, but to a lover of long-format cricket, these games are like a breath of fresh air. And I was not alone.

These events are free to the public, and you can come and go at your leisure. There are deckchairs placed around the ground, and refreshments for sale. There was a festival feel among the extremely knowledgeable and friendly crowd, and we were treated to three days of tense high-quality cricket in a beautiful setting and a relaxed atmosphere.

As I walked around the edge of the boundary rope, so close to the action, I met and talked with fans from Lancashire, Gloucestershire, Somerset and even a Zimbabwean, united in their love of the game. I was fed with statistics and stories about the players from parents, coaches and followers of the game.

These inter-county games are vital to the lifeblood of cricket, and not just because they offer players a stepping stone to a higher level, but because they illuminate a golden game, one that is good for the soul and fabulous to watch. Long may they continue.

Annie Chave - Editor at County Cricket Matters

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Over the past few years, numerous talking heads have been giving their views on on the best ways to reorganize county cricket , with particular emphasis on the county championship – reducing the number of matches played, changing the make of the balls, and at what times of the year etc. Interestingly, National Counties clubs have received a few mentions, but these are almost as a bye the bye, and rather as a means of making up the numbers.

This I found to be rather disappointing, as I believe National Counties clubs are a strength in their own right, particularly with the ongoing demise of 2nd XI cricket that has been happening over the last few years. There does appear to be a lack of awareness and understanding of how good National Counties cricket is, although there are some green shoots appearing with articles in the cricketing press extolling the virtues of our game – a secret hiding in plain sight. The game that we love really does need promoting – “if you build it, they will come,” the famous quote from the movie Field of Dreams springs to mind. This could just as well read “ if you promote and advertise it, they will come”

Back to the possible re-organization of county cricket.

Why don't ECB take a leaf out of their new format for womens' game and reorganise the men's game in a similar manner, and include all 38 First Class and National Counties in the mix ?

Option One

Tier One (Premier Division) 8-10 clubs First Class counties - probably those with test match grounds

Tier Two (Division One) Remaining 8 or 10 First Class counties

Tier Three (Division Two) 20 National Counties , split into 2 divisions of 10 (either regionally or based on last seasons finishing places)

Option Two an alternative from slightly left field

Basically same as above, but to now include County 2ndX1's

Tiers One and Two would be set out as above , but given the numbers (possibly 40) **Tier Three** could be split into 4 regional Divisions, mixing up County 2nd's and National Counties.. Most of the county 2X1's play their home matches on very attractive outgrounds anyway (often same as National county sides) so not a huge comedown. In order to make it competitive, this could be arranged as one Premier Division, with 3 regionals feeding in. There should of course be promotion and relegation – perhaps two up and two down.

All or any views on the above would be appreciated. Perhaps its time for someone to start a National County Cricket Matters website/ Facebook group ?

SPONSOR A BUCKS SQUAD PLAYER - for just £50

Firstly a great big thank you to all those members/ supporters or companies who sponsored a player over the past seasonand or previous seasons. We are planning to continue with the sponsorship initiative for this coming season... If you wish to continue last season's sponsorship or sponsor one of the new additions to the Squad, or for more information

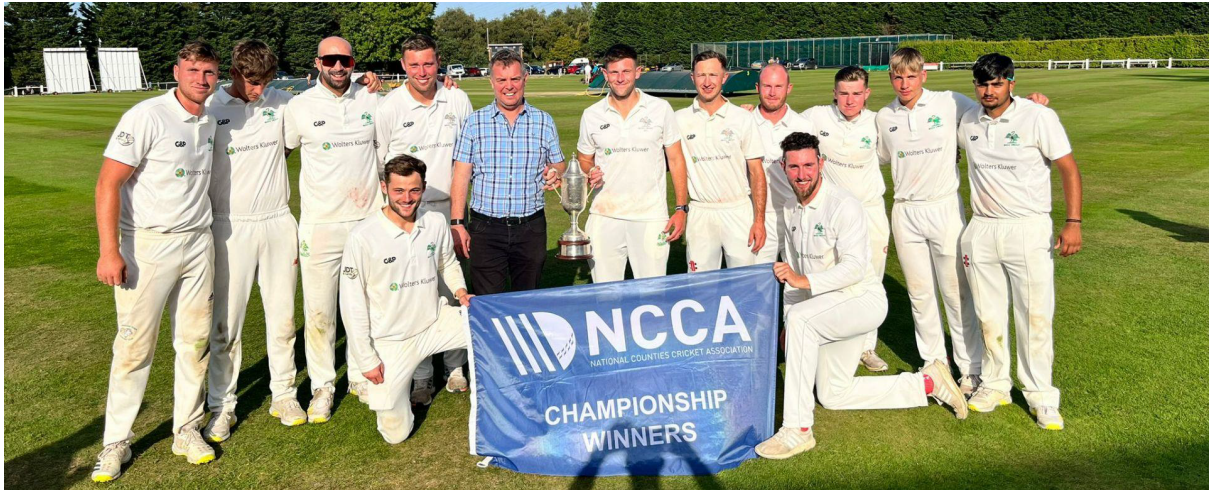
Please contact Bill Scholes Tel: 01420 560290 or billscholes@hotmail.co.uk

BUCKS C.C. C. PLAYER SPONSORSHIP 2025

PLAYER	SPONSOR (S)
Alexei Kervezee	Jonathan Lilley
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SUPPORT BUCKS CRICKET



By joining Bucks County Cricket Club

The County Club and Bucks Cricket are working actively to promote and develop cricket at all levels and ages throughout the county at a home match. You can support these efforts by joining the Bucks County Cricket Club.

As a Bucks member, you will receive:

- 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/information re our representative cricket.
- Entry into Free draw for Hospitality for 2 at a Home Bucks match

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 John Phillips .

Email: johnphillips@bucksccc.org.uk Tel: 01494 721244

HYBRID CRICKET PITCHES

I came across this article on the Devon Cricket website and wondered whether it would be of interest to some of our clubs, particularly those with a growing number of teams. This potential over use of wickets due to ever increasing demand could well be one of the reasons why some clubs do not put themselves forward to be considered for hosting a County game. Perhaps this is where some of the money from the Sale of the Century(sorry Hundred) mentioned above could be utilised.

Exmouth CC became the second Devon club to install hybrid cricket pitches recently when they installed three hybrid strips on the square at The Maer.

Speaking on the benefits of installing the hybrid pitches at the club, Chair Jeremy Tozer said:

"This was an unmissable and privileged chance for us to make some overdue improvements to our square and was helped massively by a generous grant from the ECB & Sport England 2024 Grass Pitch Improvement Fund without which is highly unlikely to have happened.

"The hybrids will undoubtedly enhance our opportunity to continue to host high-profile matches at Exmouth by having the quality of wicket more akin to the level that County teams play on week in week out.

"The introduction of the new hybrid pitches will enable us to continue to grow as a club and hand-in-hand enhance the status of Devon cricket."

The Grass Pitch Improvement Fund (GPIF) aims to tackle inequalities by providing improved access to good quality, safe playing facilities for targeted groups. For 2025, priority is given to applications which support cricket in diverse communities and for disability and low socio-economic groups. Clubs with thriving women and girls' sections may also consider applying, but for this year priority will be given to the other eligibility criteria. Investment is targeted into three main areas:

1. Improving the quality of squares and outfielders
2. Creating sustainable management of sites
3. Installing hybrid pitches to increase playing capacity.

"It's rewarding to see clubs improve their facilities for the overall good of the game, which is very much the case for this project," says Devon Cricket Foundation's Funding & Facilities Manager, Nick Goodliffe. "It will be very interesting over the coming years to monitor the increased usage and consistent performance that they will bring to the equation."

The installation of the hybrid pitches is set to provide numerous benefits to the club. Most noticeable will be the improvement to the quality of the wickets and the reduced wear and tear on the remainder of the square as the hybrids take on a higher share of the cricket played at The Maer. *This provides us an opportunity over the next few seasons to make much-needed improvements to other wickets across the square,"* says Jeremy. *"This is essential for us with the sheer volume of cricket we now offer at Exmouth every season."*

The club are also hopeful of enhancing their opportunities to host high-profile matches. The club already plays host to numerous Performance Pathway events and Devon CCC matches, putting *"Exmouth in the spotlight and showcasing Devon cricket to a wider audience."*

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

Please note the new social media addresses below as the old ones have been disabled and merged with these.

Website: bucksccricket.co.uk

Twitter : @BucksCricket

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

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

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.

RON HEDLEY'S SPONSORED CHARITY WALKS

Ron Hedley has said that the funds raised for Prostate Cancer UK from the walks and associated activities had now exceeded £50,000, the point at which he had intended to regard the project as complete. However, there had been so much enthusiasm to continue, both within the county and around the country, that a further series of walks are being planned for 2025, several of which would be from grounds where a First Class County match was in progress. There would also be a walk during the Over 60s tournament in Malta in March and a short tour to Rome was planned for the autumn, which would include a match against the Vatican XI.

R.I.P Trevor Taylor and Fred Noyes

It is with great sadness that we have to report the recent deaths of Bucks members Trevor Taylor (aged 90) and Fred Noyes (aged 93), both of whom had been regular attenders at home matches in recent years. Up until a couple of months ago, Trevor had been a regular reporter on the local cricket scene for both Amersham and Chesham Today.

Once again, many thanks for all your support and to all those who have helped and contributed to Coloured Trousers over the past year, particularly Andy Bone and Sports Shots, Mike Knox, Kevin Beaumont, Ron Hedley, Jonathan Lilley, Annie Chave, County Cricket Matters, Yahoo Over Cow Corner, Steve Peart, Paul Dean, Rich Hudson, Rachel Hudson, Trevor Taylor, Tom Hampton and Alexei Kervezee. We are of course obviously very grateful to all our sponsors and especially to Sports Shots for their excellent media coverage as well as to Charlie Carter for all his excellent photographs. All contributions have been gratefully received of course – why not pass the time until cricket starts by writing an article or two and join our happy band of literary contributors.

Bill Scholes

billscholes@hotmail.co.uk

Tel: 01420 560290

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