

The occasional Newsletter of the **Council of Cricket Societies**

First Over

In the last edition, I wrote 'In view of Australia's bowling attack . . . it will be interesting to see whether England's lead [in terms of home wins] can be maintained, let alone increased'. I don't think anyone foresaw just how inept the Australians' batting (Lord's and Oval excepted) in English conditions would prove to be. None but the most fervent of England supporters expected Alastair Cook's team to regain the Ashes in such dramatic fashion.

CCS Website

Phil Veasey is preparing to launch the re-designed website. The site provides the opportunity for the inclusion of brief details of each society's programme of speakers for 2015/16. Each meeting can be included on the calendar. Individual societies are asked to email philrveasey333@sky.com with details of speakers without delay.

Society Profiles

Individual societies are invited to submit a feature about their achievements and activities for inclusion in this newsletter. It is hoped that such accounts will be of interest to others to read about your society's past and present plus amusing episodes. Rather than listing individual speakers, it may be preferable to include one or two favourite raconteurs. Besides referring to basic information (year formed, venue, fixed days of meetings, membership etc) societies are encouraged to make reference to specific projects, such as awards, sponsorship, or youth schemes that individual societies may organise or support. It is planned to feature one society in each edition of this newsletter, but it cannot be done without your help. There is no deadline for submissions.

Send your feature to either contact address:

Email: adcollis@blueyonder.co.uk

Post: Anthony Collis, 34a Chawn Hill, Stourbridge DY9 7JB

Ashes Overdose

And so a topsy-turvy Ashes "limped to a close", said Jonathan Liew in the Daily Telegraph. England lost the final Test to Australia by an innings and 46 runs – but it hardly mattered, as they had already won the series. And if, by the end, it was clear that this was not a "vintage" Ashes, that's because "a certain fatigue" has set in. Encounters between England and Australia once seemed special: they had a sense of novelty, of "new enmities being forged". But this was the third Ashes series in two years.

Less than three years into his Test career, Joe Root has already played Australia a staggering 14 times.

No wonder players and supporters alike are fed up.
It's time for a break!

Fatigue Factor

Domestic cricketers want to reduce the amount of cricket they play in order to improve the standard, according to a study released by the players' union. In the survey of 240 Professional Cricketers' Association members, a representative said the "schedule is ridiculous" while another claimed it was "actually unsafe". Another member said some "felt like zombies" at times, "either waking up to play or waking up and being in the car travelling". The England and Wales Cricket Board are currently reviewing the domestic game. Currently, each of the 18 counties is scheduled to play 16 four-day games, eight 50-over matches and 14 Twenty20 games – not taking into account later rounds of knockout competitions. That amounts to almost 90 days of cricket between April and September (163 days).

The key findings from the study are:

- 98.3% of players believe Test cricket remains the pinnacle of the sport
- The County Championship should remain the premier domestic competition, and the format should only be changed to incorporate a " significantly better overall schedule "
- The Twenty20 competition should revert to being played in a block
- The 50-over competition is seen as less important and of lower quality [BBC and PCA websites]

CCS members are invited to express their views on the survey's findings.

Pakistan Twenty 20 or 'Money, Money, Money'

An inaugural Twenty20 Pakistan Super League will be held in Qatar next year. The Pakistan Cricket Board says forty foreign players from all test-playing countries, except India, have expressed an interest. The tournament will take place from 4-24 February 2016 in Doha and will feature five teams playing for a prize of \$1-million. It will take place in Qatar because of a lack of venues in Doha, the home of Pakistan cricket since 2009. [BBC]

Another Quiet Man

I was saddened to learn recently of the death of a cricketer who many people probably would not readily describe as 'a quiet man'. During my tenure as founder and chairman of the sadly now defunct Cricket Society of South Africa, I was privileged to meet a number of top cricketers, all of whom were only too willing to talk cricket to the fledgling Society. One such person was Clive Rice. He was a quiet

man, who was as hard as nails on the field and a fine leader of men. He had to be. The Transvaal side of the early-mid 1980s almost burst at the seams with stars such as Jimmy Cook, Alvin Kallicharran, Graeme Pollock, Kevin McKenzie, Neal Radford, Vince van der Bijl and later on Sylvester Clarke – not forgetting the skipper himself. His Transvaal colleague, Neal Radford has kindly provided the following tribute to his former captain: Ricey, as he was nicknamed, was the ultimate professional in his time. Tenacious, gutsy, tough, uncompromising, competitive and driven, he gave no quarter and asked for none when he crossed the ropes. Winning was the only goal, and finishing second meant you were last in his book. He was certainly the best player never to play Test cricket, with a career comprising 26,000 runs at an average of 40, and 930 wickets at 22. He was the best captain I have played under and I am sure the rest of the ‘Mean Machine’ squad are devastated by his death. The Transvaal team formed a real brotherhood and through excellence, dominated the domestic scene for a decade under Ricey’s captaincy – the finest side I had the privilege of playing for! No player let the others down – if Ricey said 5pm at the Wanderers’ nets, no one arrived later than 4:30pm, such was the respect the guys had not just the captain, but for each other. Ricey – R.I.P.

AROUND THE SOCIETIES

Essex C.S. – Their summer newsletter contained a warm tribute to Alan Saywood, who died, aged 83, in April 2015. Alan joined the committee in 1999 and took over as Secretary and Vice-Chairman two years later. Alan contracted polio shortly after he was born, which left him wearing callipers on his weakened legs, but he never let his disability impair him. He had a long career with Fords as a design engineer and developed a passion for fast cars, winning many rallying events in his younger days. On one of his journeys to CCS meetings at Edgbaston, he found himself on the M6 toll road [easily done – Ed.] and managed to sweet-talk his way out of paying the toll at the first exit. Alan was an artist of repute. He produced an excellent painting of the County’s first-class cricket pavilions to commemorate Essex C. S’s 25th anniversary in 1999 and the limited edition prints raised a considerable sum for the Society’s funds.

Ian’s failing health caused him to resign from the committee in December 2014.

This abridged report first appeared in ‘Willow Talk’ – the newsletter of Essex Cricket Society.

Cotswold Cricket Museum

Andy Collier, curator of the Museum, has had to declare innings closed (temporarily it is hoped) on his labour of love. The first-floor attraction relied on the revenues of the ground-floor teashop. A visitor information centre was introduced to encourage footfall, but failed to attract enough additional visitors – and thereby generate vital extra revenue – for the museum’s sustainability.

QUESTIONNAIRE

To date Phil Veasey reports that twelve survey replies have been returned, for which many thanks. The brief survey form was sent out with the last newsletter.

The prime purpose of the questionnaire is to ensure the CCS has up-to-date information in order that the Council's redesigned website is as accurate and informative as possible. The other reason for the survey is to obtain information that may be shared and, if considered appropriate, introduced by individual societies.

Despite the small sample processed so far, a number of interesting points have arisen. These include:

- 2 Societies meet in the daytime with one holding meetings on Saturday afternoons
- 3 Societies are active on social media (Facebook, Twitter etc)
- 3 Societies present annual awards to local clubs / cricketers
- 7 Societies arrange regular dinners
- 8 Societies are featured on their local County Club websites with two Counties providing valuable support by including Society leaflets with their mailshots

If you have not returned your Society's details, it will be much appreciated if you can do so as soon as possible.

NEWSLETTER

As editor, I shall strive to ensure that the contents of the newsletters fulfil most if not all of the following criteria. Each edition needs to be interesting, lively and relevant to the readership.

It must be accepted however that due to long periods between issues the contents do not always chime with topicality.

Contributions from individual societies, snippets of interesting local news that may have eluded the national press plus ideas as to how the appeal of cricket societies may be broadened to attract new members are always welcome.

Final Over

CCS's half-yearly meeting will be held on Saturday 7 November 2015 at the County Ground, Derby. The guest speaker will be Mike Newell, Director of Cricket – Nottinghamshire CCC.

An official notice together with lunch arrangements will be circulated separately.

As the 2015/16 winter season is about to commence, it is appropriate to salute the superb efforts of various unsung people who identify, contact, arrange, negotiate, hire, meet, welcome, entertain and introduce the guest speakers. Occasionally, they also have to find replacements at very short notice. Thank you! Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

In view of recent results, moves are afoot to reduce the number of playing days from five to three for each Test match played in England against Australia. Reliable sources say that the trophy to be contested, under the new playing arrangement, will be known as The Cinders

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Council of Cricket Societies

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