

Secretary's Report 2013

Mr President, members

The sporting highlights of 2012 were the Olympians, Paralympians, Bradley Wiggins, a horse called Frankel and the hosepipe ban. From the moment I received a letter from Anglian Water in late March and shortly afterwards obtained their permission to water the square out of hours it didn't stop raining! It became officially the wettest summer since 1912! To put the weather effect into perspective only two players, Ryan Meyer and David Hodson scored over 500 runs and two bowlers Ryan and Callum Young reached 50 wickets in total during the season.

When the teams finally got onto the field (which for the club skipper Chris Ringham wasn't for long) it proved a very respectable season. The first team, despite the prolonged loss of their regular spearhead came fourth in the Cambs league and fifth in the Rutland League, the 2nd XI third in CCA Senior 1, the 3rd XI improved on last year's position coming fourth, the 4th XI finished third in their section, while the Sunday 2nd XI triumphed in the Fenland Trophy.

Indeed, after two fantastic Matt Wilcox inspired seasons, 2012 was always going to be tough for the 1st team in the Cambs League and this wasn't helped by the indifferent weather which caused the abandonment of several games at the start of the season against the so-called weaker teams. However, the performances of two Aussies - our resident overseas player from Brisbane, Ryan Meyer, and the Olympic holiday maker/Victorian all rounder Steve Seymour – together with promising youngster, Tyler Phillips saw the team finish so high in the table.

With one of our opening bowlers missing from mid June when Chris Ringham suffered a broken finger, veteran wicket keeper John Gilson led the side with the enthusiasm of a much younger man and as a club we should acknowledge the excellent job he performed alongside his busy role behind the timbers.

So to the Aussies. Well, Ryan scored a combined total of 957 1st XI runs, 419 on a Saturday, and took 67 wickets with his left arm wrist spin, despite the regular wet tracks, at a tidy average of 12.72, while in a brief visit Steve performed miracles. In four matches all won by the 1st XI he took 12 wickets, which featured two hat-tricks in successive weeks against St Ives and Camden and struck 189 runs including a century against Saffron Walden 2nd XI. In fact back in February Steve had taken five wickets for Victoria 2nd XI against the touring Sri Lankan side and included Kumar Sangakkara as one of his victims.

Their player of the Year (The George Granger tankard) was young all rounder Tyler Phillips who had taken on additional responsibility in the absence of the skipper to take 31 wickets in the Cambs League and also score 142 runs. The County under 17 vice-captain doubled up on the awards receiving the Young player of the year trophy (The Chris Littler Shield) and much is expected from Tyler again in 2013, hopefully with Chris Ringham back at the other end.

A late blooming 'youngster', who would have made his dad proud was experienced middle order batsman, Matthew Vail, who scored 312 runs, many of which were made in pressure situations

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Stuart Mills excelled in his role as the Sunday firsts captain in spite of the constant difficulty in selecting a competitive eleven and has clearly inherited the organisation skills of his father. As a result the team achieved a second year of survival in Rutland League Division 1 finishing fifth.

They continued to show off the talents of the club's younger players to help them towards playing Cambs League cricket on a Saturday. This was highlighted by the Player of the Year (The Michael Wallis Trophy) Callum Young who took 30 wickets in 11 games and led the attack superbly. Callum finished two wickets short of Cambridgeshire bowler Jamie Smith in taking the most wickets in the league. Considering Callum missed seven games through attending University, it was a more than credible effort. Callum had also shown his ability with the bat when he hit a half century for the Saturday 2nd XI. He was supported on Sunday's by Australian spinner Ryan Meyer, who took 27 wickets and captain Stuart Mills taking 17 wickets.

The batting was led by Australian Ryan Meyer, who just missed out on scoring the most runs in the league scoring 538 runs which included four half centuries and one century versus Market Overton. Ryan was supported ably by hard-hitting opening partner David Hodson who scored 257 runs and Ben Pyle with 167 runs, who scored his maiden Sunday first team half century over the season. Along with Ben's 164 runs for the Cambs League side this enabled him to become the Most Improved Player of the Year trophy donated by Nick Lowe. A guest appearance from Carl Chapman saw him score the sides other century of the season, 115 against Market Overton.

The Saturday 2nd XI had a disrupted season with effectively two captains as vice-captain Rob Moden took the role in the early part, while James Harradine was selected on merit for the first team until he returned later in the season to take up the reins. Considering the above, the team did very well to finish third in Senior League Division 1.

Top of their run scoring charts was Rob Moden with 254 runs and I hope that Rob continues to play his cricket at The Avenue as he has a lot to offer with his powerful batting and his enthusiastic approach, which I know from first hand works especially well with the club's younger players. He received support by former captain and stalwart John Wallis with 194 runs and James Hilliard with 145 runs.

Bowling wise it was down to the young 16-year-old medium pacer Toby Nulty with 18 wickets at a very competitive average of 16.11 and County Over 50s slow bowler Richard Green, who took 26 wickets. Toby was awarded the 2nd XI Player of the Year award (The Pat Ringham Trophy) and we all hope his performances will progress again next season so he establishes himself as the premier 2nd XI bowler with an eye on promotion eventually to the first team. It will also be good to see him be more consistent with the bat, where he has undoubted talent.

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Matt Hubbard led the 3rd XI to a fourth place finish in Junior Division 2A, which was an improvement on last season's near relegation. Their leading batsman was soldier Scott Welcher with 146 runs from only three knocks. Scott also scored 103 runs for the Sunday 1st XI and along with his wicket keeping has developed into a very adaptable and reliable player. The only other batsman to reach a total of 100 runs was Anthony Henson.

Generally runs were hard to come by this season and it was the two experienced bowlers Stuart Fox and skipper Matt Hubbard with 18 and 12 wickets respectively who kept the side in a respectable final league position. Off spinner Stuart's nagging off-spin bowling earning him the 3rd XI Player of the Year award (The Mel Pooley Shield)

2013 will see home league games being played at Doddington Cricket Club and we hope the excellent grass pitches at that venue will help the club's crop of promising young players prosper, see more runs scored by the batsman and the side challenge for promotion.

The 4th XI suffered from lack of games owing to the weather and a late club withdrawal from within their league, but they narrowly missed out on promotion finishing third in Junior 4A

On the field their Player of the Year was veteran Glenn Hulley, who snaffled 15 wickets. He was supported by Manuj Patel with 12 wickets. On the batting front their leading run scorer was Daniel Woods, who returned to regular action after missing most of the past two seasons with 151 runs including two half centuries from only four innings. Young Josh Watson also struck a powerful unbeaten 97 against Bluntisham 2nd XI and along with Dennis Furnell were the only other players to score more than 100 runs for the 4th XI during the season.

Off the field their skipper Bill Hilliard achieved his weekly challenge to get 11 players, while introducing some new young players alongside the old hands of himself and Dennis Furnell.

Dennis also made one appearance in the newly formed Cambs/Hunts Over 60s side alongside joint player/manager Pat Ringham, who put his club form behind him to finish one of the top run scorers in a highly successful team that reached a national cup semi-final.

All-rounder Richard Green made his eagerly-awaited debut for Cambs Over 50s away to Leicestershire and was joined by Stuart Arnold in what was Pat Ringham's final game as skipper after a decade of appearances. Richard went on to play in all five games in the Over 50s and in those produced three innings of 30-plus.

The Sunday 2nd XI won the Fenland Trophy for the first time since 2007 and had a chance to complete their double and win the Ernie Wool Trophy but lost in the final to a Matt Bamford inspired Doddington.

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Top of their running scoring charts was young Daniel Woods with 298 runs at an impressive average of 59. He received excellent support from skipper Stephen Wallis, who despite all his hamstring pulls scored 230 runs, which included a six out of the ground against Wisbech...a surprise to all, including Stephen! Jake Beart struck his maiden century, an undefeated 113 against Wimblington in July, while Rob Moden repeated the feat against the local side in September with 100 not out. Promising signs were also shown by Nathan Oliver, who scored his maiden half century for the club and more is expected from him in 2013

However, their most significant player was opening bowler Sam Mason who became the Sunday 2nd XI Player of the Year (The Les Mills Shield) taking 21 wickets. Sam was later presented with the Fenland Trophy bowling award at their recent AGM. The other leading wickets takers were Jacob Gray, who took a hat trick against Spalding with 14 wickets and experienced Matt Hubbard 10 with wickets.

The club again fielded sides at Under 11, 13 and 15 for boys and the girls competed in the Cambs and Hunts women's league.

Their respective players of the year were as follows;

Boys

Under 11: Batsman - Doug Furlong, Bowler – Sam Green

Coaches's award – Patrick Allington

Finished third

Under 13: Batsman – Robert Conyard, Bowler – Dan Waltham

Coach's award – Luke Green

Finished fourth

Under 15: Batsman – Adam Conyard, Bowler – Rob Munden

Coaches's award – Lewis Welcher

Finished third

Girls

Player of the Year – Fran Plitsch

Player's Player of the Year – Emily King

Most Improved Player of the Year – Emily Hill

Along with Tyler Phillips the following young players received county recognition during the summer: Robert Conyard Under 12, Adam Conyard Under 14, Josh Fox Under 14 and Toby Nulty Under 16. The latter three all showed some promising performances at the weekend for the senior sides.

The Development of the junior players is a result of the dedication of all the coaches, who helped with winter and summer nets. The full list of coaches being: Stuart Mills, Ryan Meyer, Pat Ringham, Chris Ringham, Rob Tombs, David Haslegrave, David Hodson, Callum Young, Jenny Lambert, Emma Alerton, Toby Nulty, Tara Nulty, John Wallis, Bill Crumly, Bill Adamson, Josh Jackman, Jake Beart and Andrew Wright. A special mention to Stuart Mills for managing the club's Academy.

Another recent addition was the installation of a new artificial wicket at the pavilion end net, which we hope will help with coaching in the future.

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Stuart Mills or should we call him Sebastian Coe began work on the mini Olympic festival back in the depths of January. His endeavours alongside a busy sub committee on the three days in late July produced a wonderful event for over 100 local youngsters. Stuart received support from Bill Adamson, Simon Birch, Ryan Meyer, Helen Foad, Lesley Knaves and Sam Hare

On Presentation evening Ian Groome attended with his 'Olympic Torch', which thrilled the local youngsters. We must also recognise the sponsorship received from Cambs County Council and the Fenland District Youth Council plus FDC Staff Verity Allen and Sam Darlow.

The event has now become established on the local calendar and we can be proud of how the event has developed over the years.

Furthermore, we have recently heard the great news that we have been awarded approximately 100 'Chance to Shine' hours for next summer. This is a boost to the local youth community and to the club coaching young cricketers of the future.

All the club news both on and off the field remained in the capable hands of Fixture Secretary Pat Ringham, who kept us all informed. www.marchtowncricket.com is an excellent website and is now established as a source of information for players in the 21st century.

The ground committee faced an extremely challenging year although the team led by John West were still awarded the Rutland League Division 1 Ground of the Year for the second consecutive year. John heads a team of Mel Pooley, Gary Nicholls, Barry Short, and Brian Wright who work tirelessly during the season. Richard Green was responsible for the scoreboard and kept this in good working order. We are also indebted to Gary's father Bob who gave many voluntary hours rough cutting the ground, helping with the fencing and at the county matches, but who tragically died whilst on holiday in the summer.

The club once again had the honour of staging two three county matches, both severely affected by the weather and a one day game for Cambridgeshire and in 2013 are pleased to be hosting a variety of county matches.

Scoring duties were shared principally by Norman Topliss and the returning Steve Gaskin who both did their mix of 1st and 2nd XI matches. Steve in fact went even further playing a match winning batting role for the Saturday 2nd XI in a one wicket win against Longstanton, where he defied their attack with 0 not out!

A busy Social Committee staged successful racenights, a 200 club draw, Aussie night, entertainment evening, new members evening and Vice President's evening. The Barbecue became a victim off the early July monsoon weather. Peter Bowler was the guest speaker at the annual club dinner in January.

Sunday lunches remain a regular feature in the winter months as do the pool, darts and domino teams who all play regular league matches.

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The club continues to support the community by playing host to the local Age Concern group every Tuesday. Helen Foad organised a well attended New Year's Eve event raising £700 for the Help the Heroes charity. Helen also staged a quiz which raised £170 for the friends of Burrowmoor school charity. And we mustn't forget our own Nancy Sinatra's - Chairman Les Mills and Fixture Secretary Pat Ringham, who both pulled on their walking boots with Ian 'Beefy' Botham to raise £1,700 for Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research, a charity very close to the Chairman's heart.

As a sports club we value the support we receive from our many sponsors, club sponsors, Maxey Grounds and Co, those businesses that have sponsored 1st XI Cambs league matches, advertising boards and match balls. It isn't easy in these tough economic times but this income is vital to help us maintain the excellent facilities we offer to all members and the Committee is very grateful to all our backers.

On a sad note former opening bowler, Committee member, and Ground Chairman Terry Softley died suddenly in early November. Terry was a former Clubman of the year in 1991 and an active Committee member for nearly 10 years and he will be remembered fondly for the work he did at the club and will be sorely missed.

The club continues to be indebted to the old guard of Bar Chairman Nick Lowe, who maintains an almost daily presence as part of his role, President Mike Wallis with his regular bar shifts and Norman Alerton, who never stops working for the club. Indeed since Alan Day our Treasurer has been seriously ill; Norman has taken on more responsibility with the club's financial affairs and deservedly was awarded the Club Person of the Year award (The Chris Littler Shield).

Alongside Team Smart, Vice Chairman/Pavilion Manager Graham and wife Linda, who both regularly work behind the bar and handle memberships in addition to Chairman Les Mills, who continues to promote the club in so many ways, he also gets the odd picture in the local press, these members are dedicated to the club and as members we should not forget the hard graft they all put in throughout the year.

Let us hope 2013 brings sunshine, an injury free season for our club captain Chris Ringham, further progress for all our promising young players and all our teams.

This club is held in high esteem in the county, though to maintain and prosper all members need to support and help the old guard and for younger members to capture the enthusiasm and hard work of young Stuart Mills. Let's hope this moment can be seized and the club can continue to flourish in all areas.