

Secretary's report 2018

Mr President, members,

After the successes of 2016 last season was always going to be a challenging one and so it proved to be.

Battling the drop throughout the campaign, the 1st XI's fate was decided off the field at an end of season league meeting. A decision by champions Ketton to join the Leicestershire pyramid meant we remained in Cambs League Division 1, though it looks like being an even tougher task in 2018 with three sides due to face relegation.

In summary, all four Saturday sides maintained their status quo though struggled in varying degrees. The Sunday experience was much brighter. The 1st XI narrowly missed out on promotion to Rutland League Division 1 while the 2nd XI shared the Fenland Trophy and reached the Ernie Wool Cup final.

The other 2017 highlights featured the ECB's exciting new junior cricket adventure 'All Stars Cricket', the 3-Day Sports Festival and the fireworks display, when over 1,500 people joined the sparkling event at The Avenue.

The 1st XI won only four of their 22 League matches and finished 11th of the 12 teams in Cambs League Division 1. Their Player of the Year (Ian Bradshaw Shield) for the second year running was skipper Tyler Phillips, who scored 404 runs and took 12 wickets.

Leading run-scorer on a Saturday was Tyler's younger brother Brandon with a tally of 612 runs at an average of 32. His figures included a century in the early season friendly against Downham Town. The other leading run-getters were Australian Clinton Bricker, swashbuckling opener James Hilliard and young all-rounder Spencer Saberton with 303, 242 and 225 runs respectively. Clinton scored the highest individual 1st XI score of 92 not out in the 7-run mid-May victory against Waresley

Vice-captain Andrew Wright grabbed most wickets with 28, followed by the fit again former skipper Chris Ringham with 20 while Spencer Saberton and Sam Clarke both took 19. Saberton, who only joined the Club at the beginning of the season from Witcham, won The Young Player of The Year award. (The Chris Littler Shield).

In the Rutland League, the 1st XI, led by the enthusiastic Andrew Wright, looked like Division 2 league winners for most of the season until they slipped to third place at the close - a mere one point behind second placed Kings Keys and seven points behind champions Weldon. In total they won 12 and lost 6 matches.

Top of their run scoring charts was the impressive Brandon Phillips, the vice-captain who scored 584 runs at an average of 45, a tally that included six half centuries. Combined with his runs for the 1st^t XI on a Saturday Brandon became the first non overseas player to score 1,000 runs since Andrew Mills in 2008 and 2009. His final total was 1,205 across all formats.

Other notable batting aggregates for the 1st XI on a Sunday came from Ben Chapman with 377, Andrew Wright with 237 and Curtis Oldroyd with 214 runs. The 18-year-old former Chatteris Town player Ben Chapman scored his maiden century for the club against Burghley Park.

Slow bowler Steve Coe was the leading wicket taker with an excellent 39 wickets at only 13 apiece. Steve, a hard working cricketer, is always one of the first to net practice and his all-round performances (he also scored 173 runs) meant he deservedly won the Sunday 1st XI Player of the Year award (The Michael Wallis Trophy). Steve was one of only three bowlers to take 50 weekend wickets along with Andrew Wright and Sunday 2nd XI skipper Sam Mason.

Skipper Andrew Wright weighed in with 25 Rutland League wickets at an impressive average of only 10. His figures included a hat-trick against Weldon and led him to be the Rutland League Division 2 Bowler of the Year. County under 15s leg-spinner Geoff Kirby made some important contributions taking nine wickets for the Sunday outfit.

The 2nd XI, in the post John Wallis era, won 5 and lost 11 of their league matches to finish 8th in CCA Senior League Division 2. Led by new skipper Matthew Vail (the Young Akram, to those of a certain age), the side achieved its main objective to stay in the division with a couple of matches remaining.

After the 'Dad's Army' tag of a few years ago it was good to see some young players make the jump from the 3rd XI to the Saturday 2nd XI. Adam Conyard 240 runs and Curtis Oldroyd 155 runs both impressed and struck half centuries during the campaign. Their Player of the Year (The Pat Ringham Trophy) went to all-rounder James Harradine, who scored 267, their second highest run scorer and took 18 wickets. Top run scorer was the dependable opening batsman Steve Hinson with 395 runs. Steve scored the side's only century, 101 in a thrilling win against Godolphin when the 2nd XI chased down 250. Experienced wicket keeper John Gilson topped the average with 181 runs at 30.

On the bowling front the ever reliable Richard Green headed the charts with 21 victims closely followed by the 'Old Akram', Vail with 20.

Stepping up from vice-captain Sam Mason led the Sunday 2nd XI to a share of the Fenland Trophy title with Khalsa CC. Both sides had identical records with 7 wins and 2 defeats and an average of 33.44. Khalsa later defeated the 2nd XI by 5 wickets in the Ernie Wool Cup Final. Leading a young side, Sam flourished at the helm, topping the bowling figures with 30 wickets in addition to a handy 144 lower order runs. Young paceman Charlie Revell was his main accomplice with the ball taking 20 wickets.

Hard hitting left hander Curtis Oldroyd struck the most runs, 249 followed by Jacob Gray with 215. Jacob was awarded their Player of the Year award (The Les Mills Trophy). Curtis scored their only three figure total, 101 runs versus Wimblington. Curtis's consistent performances for both Sunday sides and the Saturday 2nd XI resulted in him being named the Most Improved Player of the Year. (The Nick Lowe Trophy).

At the recent Fenland Trophy Annual General Meeting skipper Sam picked up the competition's bowling award for the second year running and the fourth time in the last six years! Sam's bowling on a Saturday for the 3rd XI, where he bagged another 20 wickets, helped them finish fourth in CCA Junior League Division 3. The team won 6 and lost 7 of their league matches.

The 3rd XI batting was particularly disappointing as only three players scored an aggregate of over 100 runs. Sam's total of 117 at an average of 23, the highest aggregate, helped ensure he became the 3rd XI Player of the Year award (The Mel Pooley Shield).

The 4th XI's major achievement was to regularly field teams and we are grateful for the players enthusiasm towards the end of the campaign helping us fulfil our fixtures. They eventually finished 9th of 13 in CCA Junior League Division 5 North. James Mortlock deservedly won their Player of the Year award striking 245 runs at a stellar average of 81. His figures included an unbeaten century (102) against Cambourne 3rd XI.

It is vital that we look to field four Saturday sides as it gives valuable opportunities to young players taking their first steps into adult cricket. One shining example of this in 2017 came via 13-year-old Kian Pooley who bagged a five wicket haul for the 4th XI against Cam Kerala in July. Kian also played some weekend cricket for the Sunday 2nd XI, where he featured alongside our evergreen President and County Over 60s batsman Pat Ringham.

The midweek T20 season was disappointing as both the Crows and Young Crows failed to progress from the first stage of their respective competitions, the Jaidka Cup and the ECB'S National Under 19 event.

At junior level the Club fielded sides at under 11, 13 and 15 for boys. Their respective players of the year were as follows:

Boys

Under 11

Batsman – Toby Conyard

Bowler – Charlie Bradshaw

Manager's award – Samuel Gowler

Under 13

Batsman – Daniel Bradshaw

Bowler – Phoenix Nightingale

Manager's award – Kian Pooley

Under 15

Batsman – Kylan Nightingale

Bowler – Geoff Kirby

Manager's award – Bradley Harper

Team finished joint 2nd in the table

One feature of last summer was the staging of three county 14s boys matches on a Sunday, one of which was abandoned, which possibly featured some cricketing stars of the future. The County under 17s were on show in a two-day match against Hertfordshire in early August.

In addition the club hosted two Kwik cricket festivals in May and June respectively.

On the coaching front we would like to thank Bill Adamson, Pat Ringham, Harry Vaheesan, Rob Tombs (All Stars Cricket) Emma Alterton (U11 Manager), Tara Nulty (U13 Manager) Linda and Hadleigh Kirby (U15 Managers) and the assistant coaches who all helped the Club with winter and summer nets.

On a more sombre note Jim Day and Mike English, both club vice presidents passed away during the year. Individually they were big supporters of the club and will be missed at The Avenue.

The 13th 3-Day Sports Festival provided great entertainment for 80 boys and girls during late July. Chairman Les Mills headed up a busy team and despite some rain interruptions; the event was another highlight of the junior programme.

We are very grateful to the coaching team of Bill Adamson and Stuart Mills plus all the assistant coaches and helpers plus Helen Foad for catering. The three days were also supported by March Boxing Club, March Athletic Club, March Soccer School, Peterborough Hockey Club, Kirby Castles, FDC Tennis Coach and the local Police.

We should not forget the vital contribution from the Festival sponsors Fenland District Council, Fenland Youth District Council, Fenmarc (Alex Thorne) and Active Fenland District Co-ordinator Lauren Bremner.

Festival Awards 2017 – Presented by Les Mills and the Mayor Kim French at the close of the event were awarded to;

Bob Terry Trophy - Madisyn Shepherd
Greg Ward Trophy - Charlotte Harradine
Cliff Pearce Trophy - Jacob Philpott
HMP Whitemoor Trophy - Dexter Harvey

However, probably the most exciting new junior development of last year came via the ECB's new nationwide cricket initiative All Stars Cricket for 5 to 8 year olds. With Rob Tombs as our Activator, there was a vibrant feel at The Avenue for eight Sunday mornings in the summer. With parents coming along to support their children the idea proved a hit for everyone who attended the sessions at March and Doddington. The club have already registered for this season's programme where we hope to see more boys, girls and parents getting involved. Plus our Activator is even keener get started again!

A crucial part of any local cricket club is sponsorship and over the past decade we have been extremely grateful for the support of our main sponsor Maxey Grounds & Co. However, they have decided not to continue future sponsorship. We have more

news on 2018 to report this evening but in the meantime we as members should acknowledge the support given by Maxey Grounds & Co. On behalf of the club I would also like to thank match day sponsors, advertising board sponsors and match ball donors.

The club remained a part of the ECB initiative for schools 'Chance to Shine' where Matt Morley from Horseheath undertook the required hours at local schools on the Club's behalf. Anthony Palmer also provided valuable hours of coaching for the local group, FACET. March Town Cricket Club remains in the Chance to Shine scheme in 2018.

A series of ladies fitness sessions and some cricket coaching were held in the summer and it would be great if in the near future a ladies team could be reformed, especially following England's World Cup win in 2017.

We are appreciative of our 1st XI scorer Norman Topliss whose meticulous work, in this internet age was transferred directly to our Twitter page. Terry Hunt took on a new role as scorer for the majority of Saturday 2nd XI home games. Furthermore, our in-house press man president Pat Ringham kept all the members up to date on all the cricketing news at The Avenue via Twitter, www.marchtowncricket.com and via his excellent photography. Meanwhile, Facebook kept followers informed of the varied events both on and off the field at MTCC.

Two ex players who made progress as umpires last season were John Wallis and Gary Nicholls. John, in his first season umpired some Cambs League Division 1 fixtures whilst Gary, who has been umpiring for nine years has been promoted to the East Anglian Premier League panel for 2018.

ECB County pitch advisor Mel Pooley headed up a supportive ground team of Bill Crumly, Dave Wright, John West, Pat Ringham, Steve Coe, Clinton Bricker, Barry Short, Bill Ransom and Martyn Wilkinson. Clinton Bricker deserves special praise for his work preparing wickets at The Avenue in Mel's absence. The dedication and expertise of this team resulted in the club being awarded the Rutland League Division 2 Ground of the Year for 2017. Further recognition came from the umpires at the three day Unicorns match against Northumberland who described the wicket as superb. The drawn match produced over 1,200 runs.

We have a busy programme of county cricket across all Cambridgeshire age groups scheduled this summer ranging from Under 15s to Over 60s. In what promises to be an exciting afternoon on Sunday 17 June The Avenue will play host to two T20 matches featuring the full Cambridgeshire side against Bedfordshire. We look forward to a large crowd watching the county double header

Six players from the club represented Cambridgeshire at senior level with Richard Green's 4-25 a personal best for Cambs Over 50s v Huntingdonshire. Steve Hinson scored an unbeaten 48 in the same match - Adrian Bussey making his debut during the season against Suffolk. Pat Ringham was presented with a commemorative cap for making 115 appearances for the county seniors and lined-up with six England capped players in an East Anglian XI v the Australian Over 60s Touring side. Stuart

Arnold played in every national league match for Cambs/Hunts Over 60s and Dennis Furnell made nine appearances for their 2nd XI.

Away from the cricket the most crucial area of the club is the bar. It can easily be argued that the bar is more important as without the bar revenue generated the club as we know it could not run as effectively. We are therefore indebted to the bar chairman Nick Lowe and his team of Graham Smart, Michael Wallis, Francis Gaimster, Les Mills, Gary Nicholls, and Matthew Vail.

Fresh from his month long Aussie jaunt, it is important to record that our chairman Les Mills obtained the club's ECB Club Mark re-accreditation. This behind the scenes, unnoticed work by Les, involves a large volume of paperwork but enables the club to apply for many grants and benefits which would not otherwise be possible. Thank you Les.

Social events in 2017 included an early season Race night, Halloween evening, Aussie night, Twenty/20 match and barbecue

David 'Jordan' Kenning won the 2017 MTCC Open Golf championship and formed part of the winning team with Robert Sears and Tim Cliss. Promoter Terry Hunt back to full strength organised a successful 10 Week draw during the season as well as helping our treasurer Alan Day with the weekly bar check. Sunday lunches in the winter months have been well attended and the pool, domino and darts teams continue to play regular league matches at the club. Another new venture hosted at The Avenue was Walking Cricket which in conjunction with Fenland District Council proved a popular weekly gathering for former players. The sessions will return this summer.

The club continues to play an important community role hosting the Age Concern group every Tuesday, while March Town Athletic Football Club Boys and Girls football teams play at the ground when the cricket season finishes. In addition the club regularly hosts quizzes for St Wendreda's Church.

As in 2016 the largest crowd on the ground came at the end of October when the 1st March Scouts staged a spectacular fireworks display, supported by a live band. The event has very quickly established itself as a major date on the club calendar. We look forward to the show in October 2018.

Ex-England bowler and current test selector Angus Fraser was the guest speaker at the annual dinner a couple of weeks ago.

Finally, and I have intimated this in previous annual reports, the club and its members need to start a process of involving a younger generation in the running of the cricket club. We are indebted to a band of helpers, many of whom have been loyal in their commitment for a considerable time.

We at least need to begin a process of shadowing current major officials. If we fail to do this the club's future could be seriously affected. We must as a membership take action now and embrace all the benefits both on and off the field that All Stars Cricket has to offer.