

Secretary's report 2012

Mr President, members

To summarise the year in a paragraph, 2011 will be remembered for achievement on the field, though ultimate disappointment for the 1st XI; an unbelievable season for our overseas star Matt 'Bomber' Wilcox; the opening of our refurbished lounge; a world record by a 13-year-old Josh Fox in a junior game and a visit from the England chairman of selectors, Geoff Miller.

Whilst all the teams had reason to be pleased with their results at the conclusion of the 2011 season the most significant change to the club came in early December with the official opening of the newly refurbished lounge area by past president and club stalwart Norman Alton. This major refresh to the lounge area was long overdue and I am sure you will now agree, the club has once again shown the foresight to invest in its future. The hard working sub committee can be proud of their work and we must recognise the support of WREN (Waste Recycling Group) for their financial support towards the project.

As our retiring president, Mel Pooley mentioned last year we must never forget the group of unpaid workers in all the club's senior posts, (more details later), as without them the club would not be the thriving community cricket organisation it is today.

Back to the action at The Avenue, the 1st XI started with a flourish in the Cambs League and headed the table at the end of July. However a challenging fixture list, some unavailabilities in August and an injury to our overseas star Matt Wilcox stretched the side, although they eventually finished a very creditable third.

We must once again thank the duo of skipper Chris Ringham, leading the side for the sixth year in succession, and Matt whose joint performances played a major part in the teams' final position. Chris bagged 50 Saturday wickets for the first time - a total which included three six wicket hauls, while also handling the demands of captaincy. Matt was an all round revelation scoring 1,569 total league runs – 892 on a Saturday, along with 68 total wickets, 48 on a Saturday. His run tally included three centuries, with his highest score an unbeaten 136 against Nassington. As Chris told me recently Matt's character was shown in the away game at Granta, where after taking six wickets on a road at Clare College, he was asked if he wanted to put his feet up, but he replied 'no way' and proceeded to score a match winning unbeaten century.

As a result Matt became only the second overseas player to win the George Granger tankard for the Saturday 1st XI player of the Year.

Other batsmen to make an impression on Saturday's were Carl Chapman, who returned to the club and struck 408 runs and Shardul Brahmabhatt with 353 runs, while first team opener Tommy Howgego picked up a hat-trick in the early season friendly against Downham to add to his 229 runs in the Cambs league and 262 runs in the Rutland League.

The Sunday 1st XI achieved an impressive fourth place in Rutland League Division 1 under the leadership of Rob Tombs and then Stuart Mills after Rob became a father in mid-season. Stuart took the Sunday 1st XI award, the Michael Wallis Trophy, after taking 18 wickets and scoring 247 runs.

They both captained a young Sunday side which has, over recent years, provided a platform to the club's youngsters to perform at a higher level and this was shown in displays by David Hodson, Josh Jackman, Tyler Phillips and Callum Young.

As a result, David, who scored a maiden undefeated century against Medbourne was presented the Most Improved Player of the Year donated by Nick Lowe. Tyler, who in all matches scored 228 runs and bagged 28 wickets, including five wickets against eventual champions Ramsey, won the Chris Littler Shield for the Young Player of the Year award.

The Saturday 2nd XI will have a very different look this year as John Wallis has relinquished the post, which he first undertook in 1988 for two years, when under a first team exile at the time. Furthermore, since 1997 he has been Saturday captain for 12 of the past 15 years. Although my brother, I hope the members recognise the devotion John has given to the club over this sustained period, one which has seen great success for the second team.

Indeed, he made sure the team finished on a massive high coming second in CCA Senior League Division 1, behind the international stars of Hardwick & Caldercote and losing only three games. It was mixture of youth and experience along with John's management of the team that saw the side almost join the ranks of the Cambs League, a major recognition for a club 2nd XI.

The star batsmen were Robert Moden (366) and James Harradine (302), who both scored over 300 league runs, while the skipper and Ben Pyle scored over 250 league runs. Robert struck a match winning 129 not out against Great Shelford, while James had the misfortune to score 99 against Sawston to narrowly miss scoring his first century for the club. Let's hope as captain he achieves that goal this summer.

Back in the 2nd XI ranks wily slow bowler Richard Green, and young Callum Young headed the bowling ranks taking 31 and 30 wickets respectively. The latter helped Callum win the Pat Ringham Trophy for the 2nd XI Player of the Year. County over 50 player Stuart Arnold also maintained his miserly accuracy with the ball taking 16 vital league wickets, which included two five wicket hauls.

The 3rd XI had a disappointing season considering the players who were available, although the recent news that the team have avoided relegation will have cheered up captain Matt Hubbard.

Their Player of the Year award, for the Mel Pooley Shield went to Jamie Stimpson, who scored 51 not out and 82 in their last two games and an aggregate of 268 runs to help them win three of their last four games and subsequently secure survival. The only other player to reach over 200 runs was experienced opener and County Over 50s batsman, Pat Ringham, who scored 255 runs. The other batting highlight was when James Hilliard scored a century when leading the side against Pymoor

The bowling honours were shared between the young and the old with Stuart Fox and Matt Hubbard both with 21 wickets and the 15-year-old Toby Nulty with 19. Toby's figures included a hat-trick.

After last season's relegation the 4th XI bounced back by winning CCA Junior League Division 5A under their new captain Bill Hilliard. It's never an easy task being the last team at selection, but Bill's general enthusiasm and his regular weekly discussions with the third team skipper kept him, the team and other officials on Monday's interested both on and off the field of play.

Centuries were scored by Manuj Patel and Lewis Hilliard, who added 212 for the first wicket against Histon, while experienced Dennis Furnell again gave steady support. However for his performances opening the bowling their Player of the Year award went to young Sam Mason.

It was déjà vu for the Sunday 2nd XI who defeated Wisbech 3rd XI again in the Ernie Wool Trophy Final, where skipper Stephen Wallis led from the front scoring a match winning half century. They also finished runners up in the Fenland Trophy.

Their leading run getter was David Haslegrave with 324 runs while Stephen 283 and fellow opener Jake Beart scored 269 runs. For Jake's consistency, teamwork and for playing every Sunday game for the past two seasons he was awarded the Les Mills Shield for the Sunday 2nd XI Player of the Year.

Matt Hubbard took most wickets with 14, followed by youngsters Toby Nulty and Jacob Gray with 11 apiece. They were backed up by the enthusiasm of wicket keeper Gary Nicholls and a match-winning hat-trick by Callum Young, against local rivals Chatteris.

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 - Rob Conyard. Bowler – Ollie Mann

Coaches's award – Isaac Ahmed

Finished third out of 11.

Under 13: Batsman – Josh Fox. Bowler – Keaton Smith

Coache's award – Harry Woollen

Finished fourth out of 11.

Under 15: Batsman – Toby Nulty. Bowler – Harry Wenn

Coaches's award – Ashley Payne

Finished fourth out of 8.

Girls

Player of the Year – Emma Alterton

Player's Player of the Year – Katie Linard

Most Improved Player of the Year – Danielle Green
Finished third

3 Day Festival Awards

Greg Ward Trophy for Best Coach – Matt Wilcox
Bob Terry Achievers Award – Christopher Howsam
Whitemoor Award – Jacob Halls
Cliff Pearce Award for Effort – Luke Thorne

The most significant displays by the juniors came from Josh Fox, who made national headlines in taking two hat-tricks in one innings, the first person to do so for over 100 years and Toby Nulty who scored three hundreds for the under 15s in 20 over cricket and had his name included in 'The Cricketer Magazine' for his exploits.

The development of the junior players is a result of the dedication of all the coaches, who helped with winter and summer nets. The winter nets proving a major success and we are indebted to Mandy Haslegrave for organising the project. The full list of coaches being; Stuart Mills, Matt Willcox, Pat Ringham, Chris Ringham, Rob Tombs, David Haslegrave, David Hodson, Callum Young, James Beresford, Rishi Brahmhatt, Jenny Lambert, Tara Nulty, Bill Adamson, Josh Jackman, Brett Tinnion, Jake Beart and Andrew Wright. A special mention to Stuart Mills for managing the club's Academy.

Furthermore, we have recently heard the great news that we have been awarded approximately 80 '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.

Of course the place to be for all the cricket news and activities is www.marchtowncricket.com where Fixture Secretary Pat Ringham spends many hours keeping us all up to date.

The club was presented with the Rutland League Division 1 Ground of the Year award which confirmed the excellent pitches prepared by the hard working ground committee chaired by John West. John leads a team of Mel Pooley, Gary Nicholls, Barry Short, Matthew Vail and Brian Wright who work tirelessly during the season. They really showed their abilities and devotion when the club were honoured to stage the four-day Minor Counties Final in September between Cambs and Devon, which was severely affected by some very inclement weather. Although the host county lost the match, the ground staff were winners on all four days for the wicket they prepared.

The club once again had the honour of staging two three county matches and a one day game for Cambridgeshire in addition to the final and in 2012 are pleased to be staging two three-day Minor Counties fixtures against Buckinghamshire and Cumberland respectively.

Scoring duties were shared principally by Greg Short for the Saturday 1st XI and Norman Topliss, who was a regular on Saturdays for the 2nd XI as well as helping out

both 1st and 2nd XI's on a Sunday. Norman has been a welcome addition to the club and we hope he continues to enjoy his scoring role.

A highly successful three-day cricket festival was organised by a busy sub committee plus a number of other coaches/assistants, where approximately 85 children attended each day.

The Social Committee staged successful racenights, a 200 club draw, Barbecue, Aussie night, 20/20 match against some former players, entertainment evening and Vice President's evening. Sunday lunches have now become a regular feature in the winter months and we now have pool, darts and domino teams playing regular league matches.

The club continues to support the community by playing host to the local Age Concern group every Tuesday. Furthermore, we hosted a well attended New Year's Eve function organised by Helen Foad, which supported the Macmillan Cancer Oncology Unit at St Barts, London charity raising £275, while Helen also staged a successful quiz in April in aid of FACET.

Whilst on the subject of financial matters, our long standing treasurer Alan Day continues to undertake his role with great diligence and we know we are in safe hands with him.

The Committee are very grateful to all the club's sponsors, Maxey Grounds and Co, the main sponsor, those businesses that have sponsored 1st XI Cambs League matches, advertising boards and match balls. The chairman deserves recognition for all his efforts to secure those match ball donations. All of this support is so important against the current economic background and it helps maintain and promote the cricket facilities we provide to all players and is very much appreciated by the Committee.

Chairman Les keeps us all on our toes, but joking aside, he has a great passion to promote the club with the three-day festival and on the social side to name only a couple and puts in many hours as an active head of the Team. As secretary of the Cambs Cricket Board he has been invaluable in securing more 'Chance to Shine' hours for the local schools, which will benefit the club and is very aware of any local and national funding available, which was highlighted this year with the funding from WREN. Les deservedly won the Club Person of the Year award.

On a sad note former Club chairman, bar chairman, committee member and umpire Denis Vail died suddenly in November. Dennis was club chairman in 1997 and 1998; an active committee man throughout the 90s and will be missed on a Saturday afternoon watching the teams at The Avenue.

Former member Colin Warner, a regular supporter of the teams and vice president, Fred Yeadon also sadly passed away toward the end of the year.

Back to those unseen workers who do so much, bar chairman Nick Lowe is at the club almost daily as part of his role and gets great support from Graham Smart and the club president, Michael Wallis, as part of the bar committee. Not many clubs have a president and a chairman who both do weekly shifts of bar duties. In addition Nigel Read has been an active bar committee member since 2004 putting in many voluntary hours for the club, but sadly he has now moved back to London. Nigel will be a hard act to replace and we should be very grateful for the time he has given the club, Of course Cambridgeshire will miss him for his work off the field and on, as he famously fielded as substitute for them against Buckinghamshire in 2008!

It is this spirit which binds the club and it is no better illustrated than by Norman Alerton, who continues to visit the cash and carry each week, where I understand he is very adept at identifying a bargain and in his role as the unofficial Deputy Treasurer. We should all embrace the above endeavours and if possible, give some time of our own to move this club forward both on and off the field.