



## **COLOURED TROUSERS No 7**

### **BUCKS COUNTY CRICKET CLUB NEWSLETTER**

**Editor Bill Scholes**

And a warm welcome to another edition of Coloured Trousers - this will be No 7, my how time flies. We hope you have enjoyed reading the past editions, and will continue to do so. If you have any particular items or topics you would like to see, please let us know, and/or if you would like to contribute an article, as a number of you have already, I would be more than delighted. Contact details on last page.

Well, That Was The Season That Was..... with a slight doff of the cap to That Was The Week That Was (TW3) – a popular satirical TV programme of the early 60's which some of our older readers may well remember.

If four words could sum up our season, they may well be "nearly but not quite"

#### **NCCA One Day Trophy**

At the start of the season, the T20 competition was cancelled due largely to the Covid restrictions that were still in place at that time, thus depriving us of 8 matches. We did manage to play a few 50 over friendlies during this time, including re-claiming the Nurton -York Cup from Oxfordshire. We were then straight into the One Day 50 over competition, initially played in 4 groups of 5 teams. Unfortunately we only managed one win from our 4 matches, thereby failing to qualify for the knock out stages. However, despite being second best to Wales for most of our opening game, our bowlers fought back strongly and came within a couple of overs of pulling off an unlikely victory. If we had pulled it off, it may well have changed the dynamics of the group – we could have gained momentum whilst Wales may have lost theirs!

### **NCCA County Championship**

On to the newly vamped County Championship, sadly reduced to just 4 matches rather than the 6 we had been used to for many years. Many reasons have been put forward for this change, some even vaguely logical, but one cannot help but draw comparisons to what is happening in the First Class game, where the County Championship is being slowly side lined in favour of the white ball/ pink ball /disco fever / pyjama clad razzmatazz. Even the 50 over game, where England are of course World Champions, has been pushed aside and downgraded in importance in order to make room for the latest and greatest innovation since sliced bread , or so the ECB tell us . The 50 over game would now appear to be suffering from being around 30 overs too long !

As I write this, the question of what the First Class County championship will look like next season is currently under debate, and so it should be. Its tight at the top of Division One, but there is absolutely nothing to play for for the 12 clubs in Divisions Two and Three, apart from pride and a bit of prize money. Although the National Counties have long desired promotion and relegation, surely matters of this import should be decided on more than just 4 matches. In fact it was only three matches this season, as promotion from both Division Two West and Division East were decided even before the final round of matches – and that was without any real bad weather! We can only hope that the powers that be in the NCCA will follow the example of the First Class Counties and revisit the requirements for promotion. Two up and two down would keep the Divisions fresh, rather than more of the same old, same old.

Anyway, back to Bucks cricket and we opened our campaign away against **Bedfordshire** at Bedford School. We batted first and posted 264, which included a debut County century from AJ Woodland, and a championship debut half century from Alexei Kervezee. In reply Bedfordshire could only manage 162, Cam Parsons and skipper Tom taking 4 each with Jack Rodnight bagging the other two. Leading by 102, we pushed ahead in our second innings – excellent contributions with the bat from Ross Richardson , Stephen Croft, and Cam Parsons. We declared on 242-7 , leaving Bedfordshire with 344 in 114 overs to win. With the score on 239-8, and 20 overs still remaining, we scented victory, but were unable to secure the last two wickets as Beds held on for what turned out to be a vital draw. Nearly but not quite. Up next were **Hertfordshire** at Tring Park and a remarkable victory by 10 wickets inside two days put us right back in contention. A rain interrupted first day saw Herts all out for 184, with excellent bowling from the all Bucks seamers, particularly skipper Tom with 5 wickets. Another half century from AK seemed to put us in charge , but then wickets fell fast and only dogged resistance from Ross Richardson and Tom ensured a valuable 23 run lead. A dramatic last session saw Herts skittled for just 73 in 33 overs, leaving just 53 for victory. Total secured in 6.3 overs, with Eliot Callis leading the way. Buoyed by this victory, Bucks then travelled up to **Cumbria** to face a side who had lost their opening two games, but promotion hopes were dashed after suffering a crushing 158 run defeat. With Cumbria struggling on 114-5 , it was looking good but the hosts rallied to 297 all out. Bucks lost both openers – one of which was a night watchman- very cheaply in the short time left of the day, but despite a battling 57 for a second nightwatchman Stephen Croft, ended their innings on 145. Declining to enforce the follow on, Cumbria built on their lead before declaring on 196-6 on the final morning. We were then faced with a huge task of scoring 345 for victory, or batting out the rest of the day for a draw, but

secured neither as we were bowled out for 186. A sad day was made worse when it was confirmed that Bedfordshire had claimed the sole promotion spot by defeating Northumberland. Despite being out of the running for the sole promotion spot in Division Two, we finished the short Championship season on a high note, defeating **Northumberland** by ten wickets at Chesham. Heavy torrential rain on the Saturday night, penetrated the covers, delaying the start until 3.15pm. Bucks won the all important toss, and inserted the visitors. Another excellent opening spell by Cam Parsons, taking 3 quick wickets, saw Northumberland reduced 60-8 before their No 9 Matt Oswell (57) lifted them to 139, Cam finishing with 4-43. The Bucks first innings started in more favourable conditions on Monday. All batsman apart from one reached double figures, the top scorer being Stephen Croft (32) for the second successive match. The last wicket fell at 235, a lead of 96.

In the 30 overs remaining on the second day, another outstanding spell by Parsons, the comical run out of captain Richardson, who ended up at the same end as his partner and a clutch of late wickets by spinners Conner Haddow and Croft, left Northumberland apparently teetering on the brink of defeat at 95-7 - still one run behind. However, once again finishing off the tail proved a difficult task and a career-best 91 not out from Dale Shaw, making his first Championship appearance in five years, helped the visitors to reach 175. Cam Parsons finished with match figures of 8-88. Bucks had no problem in reaching the 85 runs required with Buckingham Town opener Michael Wells making a maiden half century in an unbroken opening stand of 85 with AJ Woodland.

The other match in the Division between **Hertfordshire** and **Cumbria** at Hertford was abandoned under the competition's COVID-19 protocols following a positive test in Cumbria's squad who had all travelled down together by coach.

	FINAL DIVISION TWO EAST TOTAL							
	M	W	L	D	A	Bat Pts	Bowl Pts	TOTAL
Bedfordshire	4	2	0	2		9	16	65
<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>57</b>
Hertfordshire	4	1	1	1	1	7	8	43
Cumbria	4	1	2	0	1	3	12	39
Northumberland	4	1	3	0		2	16	34

## FINAL DIVISIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND UP OF THE SEASON

**Suffolk and Oxfordshire will meet in the final of the National Counties Championship at Tring Park on September 5-8 following a dramatic end to the last day of the regular season.**

**Div ONE EAST:** Suffolk snatched the Eastern Division One title from the grasp of neighbours **Norfolk** after a record-breaking last wicket partnership between Adam Mansfield and Ben Claydon clinched an improbable one wicket win over **Staffordshire** at Copdock. When the pair came together, Suffolk were still 89 short of their target of 370 in 90 overs and, by that time, they knew that only a win would be enough to take above Norfolk who had beaten **Cambridgeshire** earlier in the day. But Claydon, who was unable to bat in the first innings due to injury, made a maiden Championship half century,

Mansfield finished on 47 not out and Suffolk got home with seven balls to spare to reach the final for the first time since 2005. Suffolk finished two points ahead of Norfolk with Staffordshire 25 points further back in third.

Norfolk must have thought they had reached the final for the first time since 2002 after they overcame stubborn Cambridgeshire resistance to win by four wickets at Wisbech. Cambridgeshire scrapped hard throughout the last day but defeat confirmed their relegation, with Lincolnshire staying up.

**DIV ONE WEST** **Oxfordshire** topped Western Division One after they beat **Dorset** by seven wickets at Wimborne to end Berkshire's hopes of winning the Championship for a record fifth successive season. Oxfordshire overcame stubborn second innings resistance from Dorset's Alex Eckland to take the Western Division One title. Eckland batted four hours for his 87 and was joined by Simon Woodruff in a seventh wicket stand of 65 which frustrated Oxfordshire. Off-spinner Max Mannering broke the resistance when he snared Eckland and Woodruff in successive overs on the way to his first five wicket haul in the Championship.

**Berkshire** briefly went top after they had beaten **Cheshire** by 158 runs at Falkland but by that stage Oxfordshire were already well on course for victory. Having declared at their overnight score, Berkshire challenged Cheshire to make 351 to win on a pitch taking spin. Slow left-armers Chris Peploe and Luke Beaven took four wickets each with off-spinner Euan Woods claiming the other two as Cheshire were dismissed for 192. Oxfordshire were left with plenty of time to chase 114 and, after they had stuttered to 55 for three, Freddie Smith (23 not out) and George Tait (44 not out) saw them home in an unbroken fourth wicket partnership of 62.

**Shropshire's** tail guided them to a three wickets win at Sidmouth over **Devon** who finished their Western Division Two campaign winless. Devon began the final day marginal favourites as they needed four wickets with their bowling attack refreshed and Shropshire still needed 58 for victory with all their frontline batsmen back in the pavilion. But Sam Ellis (21 not out), Ben Lees (25) and Worcestershire Academy seamer Mitchell Stanley (20 not out) shepherded Shropshire to their second successive win, leaving Devon to contemplate life in Div Two next season.

**DIV TWO WEST: Herefordshire** had already clinched the Divisional title before this round of matches but had to settle for a draw against **Cornwall** at St Austell where a second innings half century from Scott Harvey denied them a fourth straight win. Harvey and James Turpin (41 not out) added 81 in an unbroken fifth wicket partnership as Cornwall closed on 191 for four having been set 307.

### FINAL COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP BATTING AVERAGES

Name	Mch	Inn	N O	Runs	HS	100s	50s	Av
AJ Woodland	4	8	2	268	109	1		44.67
RAJ Richardson	4	6	2	158	77*		1	39.50
MR Wells	2	4	2	76	55*		1	38.00
AN Kervezee	4	6	0	210	70		2	35.00
SR Croft	4	6	1	151	57		1	30.20
CDR Parsons	4	6	1	128	43*			25.60
E Callis	2	4	1	60	39*			20.00
MJ Payne	3	4	0	63	30			15.75
AE King	4	6	0	92	29			15.33
TRG Hampton	4	5	2	45	20			15.00
JAG Rodnight	3	4	0	54	20			13.50
M Khan	1	2	0	20	11			10.00
CPW Haddow	4	5	0	34	21			6.80
DJ Ogden	1	2	0	3	3			1.50

### FINAL COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP BOWLING AVERAGES

Name	Mch	Ov	Mdn	Wkts	Runs	Best	5-Wkt	Econ	Av
CDR Parsons	4	126	43	25	288	4--38		2.29	11.52
JAG Rodnight	3	47	18	6	101	2--13		2.15	16.83
SR Croft	4	55.1	10	9	164	2--7		2.97	18.22
AN Kervezee	4	21	6	2	42	1--10		2.00	21.00
AJ Woodland	4	84	18	10	236	3--28		2.81	23.60
TRG Hampton	4	100.4	14	13	351	5--55	1	3.49	27.00
MJ Payne	3	49	5	5	137	2--34		2.80	27.40
CPW Haddow	4	57	18	3	112	2--34		1.97	37.33

### SOME CRICKETING TRIVIA

#### The Slowest Duck in cricket History

On March 1999, during the 1<sup>st</sup> Test between New Zealand and South Africa at Eden Park, Auckland, Geoff Allott recorded the longest innings without scoring in Test history. The NZ batsman spent 101 minutes at the crease and faced 77 deliveries before being dismissed without opening his account.

#### Cricket on High

At 7035 feet (2,144 m ) above sea level, the cricket pitch at Chail, Northern India, is the highest in the world. It was constructed in 1893 by the Maharaja of Patiala, who ordered that a hilltop be levelled in order to provide the

## BUCKS ACADEMY REPORT

By BCB Head Coach Jason Rance

Despite the uncertainty at the beginning of the year we managed to get an extensive fixture list completed involving a variety of formats including the new 100 ball, T20, 50/50 & a 3 day game. The most pleasing factor for me this year was the amount of pathway players (U18s) who were involved in the game & also players who based on Academy performances were given the opportunity to play for the Minor County 1<sup>st</sup> team which is exactly the purpose of the Academy side. Throughout the season, 12 U18 players were given the opportunity to play & there were crucial contributions made by every player.

The highlight's of the year came in the T20 Benyon Cup @ Bishop Stortford where we managed to chase down 203 in 18.2 overs (Jake Tarling 69 off 41 balls & Marcus Critchley 84 off 39 balls). In the game before Vs Free Forresters we were so close to chasing another massive total finishing on 188 chasing 200. In both matches it was great to see the freedom in which the batters played and especially the positivity in which we played the spinners.

**Batting:** 2 out of the top 3 run scorers were U16 which is a great reflection on the season. Marcus Critchley was top scorer with 380 runs @ 29, Aatish Anthathi (U16) 220 runs @ 22 & Jake Tarling (U16) 215 runs @ 72.

**Bowling:** Teddy Fleming (U16) was the standout with the ball taking 15 wickets @ 14. Stephen Croft (14 wickets) & Conner Haddow (10 wickets) also bowled well and were an integral part of the team bringing their experience of 1<sup>st</sup> team cricket and the standards set there into the Academy side. This was so important for the younger players to see 1<sup>st</sup> hand what is expected at the next level and for them to aspire to be in their shoes in the years to come.

**Fielding:** Fielding is such an important part of the game and I know the emphasis the 1<sup>st</sup> team put on this so I was really happy to see the improvement made throughout the season. At 1<sup>st</sup> the younger players in particular were off the pace but as the season went on the more experienced players set the required standard which was replicated by the younger players making us a much better fielding unit by the end of the season.

Congratulations to Academy players Jack Rodnight, Ross Richardson, Adam King & Michael Wells who all progressed into the 1<sup>st</sup> team and all made match winning contributions.

In regards to the younger players, congratulations to George Weldon, Raphy Weatherall who have been offered a Northants Academy place this year with Aatish Anthathi & Aadi Sharma being offered a place on the basis they reach fitness & fielding requirements.

**Thanks very much Jason, great to get a report on the progress of the Academy lads as they obviously have a vitally important part to play going forward in the ongoing development of the 1<sup>st</sup> X1.**

## NCCA 50 Over Trophy Cup Final

**Berkshire** won the National Counties Trophy for the sixth time since 2004 by cruising to a 151-run victory over **Cumbria** at Wormsley, where they have never lost a one-day final. In front of a good-sized crowd, they posted an impressive 260-8 in their 50 overs on the back of an excellent knock of 84 off 126 balls from opener Savin Perera and 76 (88) from Toby Albert, the pair sharing a second-wicket stand of 132.

In contrast, Cumbria lost both openers for just two runs and their sixth wicket went down at 31 before they finished up with just 109. Andy Rishton took 4-16 from 10 overs to earn the man-of-the-match award, while Luke Beaven claimed 3-20, Tom Nugent 2-27 and Chris Peploe 1-23. Six wickets fell to lbw decisions. The margin of victory was the biggest in the history of the competition which began in 1983, bettering the 128 runs by which Berkshire defeated Shropshire in the 2013 final also at Wormsley. To their credit, Cumbria certainly had the noisiest fans at Wormsley, making their voices heard even if their team never looked like winning the game.

## NCCA Championship Final

**Oxfordshire** won the National Counties Championship for the first time in 32 years with a 178 runs victory over **Suffolk** in the final at Tring Park.

Five wickets from slow left-armers Olly Clarke ended Suffolk's resistance and meant that the title remained in the Western Division for a fifth consecutive season following four straight wins by Berkshire. Having beaten Berkshire in their penultimate divisional match, Oxfordshire went into the final as slight favourites but they had to win the hard way having been put in on a pitch that offered the bowlers early encouragement. The match produced only two half centuries – by Oxfordshire captain Jonny Cater (56) on the opening day and by Suffolk's Jacob Marston (61) on the last. There were 12 other scores of 30 or more with the depth of Oxfordshire's batting in the second innings ultimately proving decisive.

Oxfordshire also had to be patient on the final day with Marston and Kyran Young extending their fourth wicket partnership to 51 before Young was bowled by Clarke for 26. Clarke struck again just before lunch when Joe Gattling was stumped and off-spinners George Tait and Max Mannering followed up with the wickets of Ben Shepperson and Josh Cantrell. Marston and Tom Rash held Oxfordshire up for 13 overs before Marston was bowled playing back to Clarke to end an innings of almost four hours. Adam Mansfield edged Clarke to Gareth Andrew at second slip and the came 15 balls later when Rash was bowled by Clarke. It was Oxfordshire's fifth Championship title following previous successes in 1929, 1974, 1982 and 1989.

## ***WHY NATIONAL COUNTIES CRICKET CAN BENEFIT FROM THE HUNDRED***

**By Bucks member and long time supporter Andy Worboys**

As the inaugural Hundred competition nears its end, one of the most expensive investments the ECB has ever embarked on has had a huge effect on the rest of cricket. In an attempt to "appeal to a new audience" it can be argued that cricket has followed much of the rest of society by "dumbing down" the product it is offering.

The core competition of English professional cricket, the 4-day County Championship, has been relegated to late Spring and early Autumn in an attempt to cash in on the perceived endless hunger for one-day cricket. Even the Royal London Cup, the 50-over knock-out competition has had to field part-time and short-term contract players as it has clashed with the Hundred. With England's Test batting (Joe Root excepted) crumbling against New Zealand then India, the state of the domestic game isn't good.

However, the media are reluctant to criticise this situation too much as they have a vested interest in the Hundred. Both the BBC and Sky endlessly plug the "excitement" of the Hundred as you can now watch cricket with fireworks and live music. Even horse racing has attempted to find a "new audience" with live music after race meetings. This has often backfired as the "new audience" over indulges then starts drunken brawls to the horror of genuine racegoers. On the plus side, the Hundred has created some new interest in cricket but mainly because it is being shown live on terrestrial television. That DOES reach a new audience.

The nett effect of this is that county members, unless they are fans of the Royal London Cup and T20 competition are getting a raw deal. At the height of summer there is virtually no 4-day cricket to watch. Most of the lovely festivals have been dropped as they used to be laid on for the summer holiday crowds. Therefore there is a large pool of traditional cricket fans who have little to watch in the height of the season. We have started to detect this at Bucks matches with members of professional counties coming along to watch a match over three days with two innings per side. With mostly free admission and some lovely grounds to visit, who could argue against whiling away the summer in this way? The National Counties have a great opportunity to cash in on these disaffected cricket fans with what they have to offer. It's a huge pity the season has been truncated to leave only two home games and a maximum of six days cricket at home. The last Bucks v Northumberland match at Chesham attracted fans from as far away as Southampton and the Isle of Sheppey in Kent as it's easy to access via the underground.

It is vital that the host club also recognises this and ensures that adequate facilities such as food, drink and toilets are made available to more than just the players and officials. An operating public address system to inform spectators in also a pre-requisite, as it a daily scorecard/programme (which is already in



operation). By advertising these matches widely on social media and cricket forums the potential for significantly greater support at matches is sitting there, waiting to be invited. It needs to be marketed as the traditional game but open to everyone. No fireworks, no dancers, no music, no hype. More spectators also means the matches are more attractive to potential sponsors.

The current mentality at the ECB merely reflects the way society has been going. Loyalty used to be rewarded, now it is just the new customer who is being chased (think of banks, insurance companies, energy companies etc where you keep having to change every year to get the best deal). Sports fans are seldom like that. Whether it's football, rugby or cricket, allegiances are embedded. The one-day obsession to chase the "quick buck" cuts right into those allegiances. The disaffected professional county cricket fans could well find a new home in club and National County cricket. It is up to the latter to identify, invite and make these supporters feel welcome at the 3-day game. The potential is great.

### **Andy Worboys**

(These views are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of Bucks County Cricket Club).



**From Ian Hodgson and Su Klyne**

With many apologies, we are afraid that we are going to have to cancel this year's golf day and dinner. There are a number of reasons - our main speaker Simon Hughes is now required for the rearranged completion of the IPL in Dubai (which is exactly over that period) and we are struggling for numbers due to many taking the chance of holidaying at the beginning of October and others still very wary of dining indoors in any large gathering.

Hopefully we will be fully back to normal next year so can plan properly for the event.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH BUCKS SKIPPER TOM HAMPTON



The Buckinghamshire skipper Tom Hampton has reflected on the 2021 NCCA season as Sports Shots spoke to Hampton as his young side improved and learned from their campaign.

How was your preparation for 2021 compared to previous years? How did you adapt?

***At one stage it was looking like we were going to have to have really shortened preparations for this year with all the lockdowns. However when we found out that the 2020 competition was being cancelled for the year as frustrating as that was, it did allow for us to have a more extensive pre season of one day cricket playing 4 one day games before our first competitive game. So it was different to most years but by no means did we miss out in our preparations.***

How did the Trophy campaign go? Tough group/Individual games etc?

***The Trophy campaign was very frustrating, we just couldn't quite get ourselves firing. Against Wales we probably got done by the wicket a little and showed great fight to stay in the game and we were outplayed by Bedfordshire in all areas. Oxfordshire showed signs of what we could do as a side and then a rain effected final game against Berkshire. So all in all we had a bit of everything in our group, but ultimately we weren't the best side this year in what was a very strong group. On the plus points we had some good performances and I think Jas (Jason Harrison), Stan (Simon Stanway) and I have learnt quite lot about our 1 day cricket this summer.***

How did the Championship campaign go?

***I can not help but feel that we missed an opportunity of promotion this summer which is a little disappointing. We played some really good red ball cricket over the competition especially in the games against Beds, Herts and Northumberland. Cam (Parsons) was simply outstanding throughout and had a remarkable season, I think it was as good a year as a bowling unit as we have had for a while. The batting showed glimpses and what was pleasing was that all the guys put in a knock at some stage during the competition, but we probably didn't bat well enough as a team for all 4 games. It was a younger side than we have put out for a while as well so it was really pleasing to see some of the youth coming through. One poor game up in Barrow and we missed our opportunity at promotion but I am convinced that the Championship side will be back in Division One very soon.***

Positives to take from the season in white and red ball cricket?

***There were definitely positives to take from both forms of the game this summer, for me the biggest of those is that we were able to bring some fresh faces into the sides and play some competitive cricket and learn a lot about the depth in the squad.***

Lessons learnt from the season?

***Yes definitely a few lessons learnt and Jas (Jason Harrison), Stan (Simon Stanway) and myself will look at catching up in the near future to put some plans in place to improve on those and be in a better place to start next summer.***

Winter plans?

***As with most winters we will leave the guys to do what they want to pre-Christmas where hopefully they will start getting some of the physical work done. Then once we get into the new year we will start getting together as a side to start our cricket prep. We are looking into something a little new to finish the winter prep this season and just need to firm up a few things but that could be very exciting.***

Any other points?

***A big thanks from all the guys to all the people who help make our season possible, plus to the people who come and support the side. The continued support means a lot to all the guys.***

A big thankyou to Andy Bone of Shorts Shots for conducting the above interview on behalf of Coloured Trousers.

## **SENIORS REPORTS - kindly supplied by Ron Hedley**

### **Buckinghamshire Over 60s and Over 70s**

**The Over 60s 1<sup>st</sup> XI** finished a disappointing season with defeat by Norfolk in the National Bowl Preliminary round at Amersham CC. Norfolk batted first and were soon 9 for 3 due to three wickets for Denzil Owen. A dropped catch changed the match as two Norfolk batsmen scored centuries which took them to 225 for 4 off 45 overs. Denzil Owen finished with 3-20 off 9 overs. The Bucks reply never took off and they fell short on 204 for 9 off 45. Nigel Field 31, Jim Spooner 22 no.

**The Over 60s 2<sup>nd</sup> XI** qualified for the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI Bowl competition due to finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> in Division 2 East. They were drawn at home to Middlesex 2nds in the Quarter Final at Amersham CC. Bucks batted first and reached 183 for 8 off 45 overs. Jon Dobbs top scored on 41. Middlesex reached the target with two overs to spare ending on 185 for 7 off 43 overs. Andrew Connolly 3-51 off 9 overs.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> XIs** compete at a level where there is only one division of 3<sup>rd</sup> XIs and one division of 4<sup>th</sup> XIs, which means they get to rearrange all rained off matches. Fortunate this season with so many rained off.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> XI** set Suffolk 3<sup>rd</sup> XI 220 to win in the last of the regular season fixtures at Winchmore Hill (Penn) CC. Bucks 219 for 3 off 45 overs. Nick Zala 94 no Kevin Woodhouse 46 no. Suffolk were never close to reaching the target and finished on 168 for 9 off 45 overs. Latif Khan 2-32, Kevin Woodhouse 2-22 and Francis Braganza 2-49. After being easily beaten by Surrey 3<sup>rd</sup>s earlier in the season Bucks gained revenge at The Lee CC in a rained off rearranged fixture. Surrey reached 208 for 7 off 45 overs. Bucks finished on 212 for 8 off 44.5 overs with Kevin Woodhouse scoring 79. The 3<sup>rd</sup> XI completed the season at Chenies and Latimer CC with a fixture v Sussex 3<sup>rd</sup> XI. The match was rain affected and Sussex won by the DLS method. Bucks totalled 138 for 7 off 38 overs and Sussex had to score 128 off 34 overs to win. They reached 128 for 6 off 32.2 overs.

**The 4<sup>th</sup> XI**, which is a joint team with Middlesex, had three rained off fixtures to complete commencing away to Hertfordshire 4<sup>th</sup> XI at the excellent Potters Bar CC ground. Hertfordshire 4<sup>th</sup>s had an outside chance of winning the division. Bucks totalled 200 for 4 off 45 overs. Walker 61, Taylor 51 and Coppock 27 no. Herts set off at a blistering pace and looked certain winners until Mahmood Akhtar came on to bowl. He took 6-22 off 8 overs which included a stunning caught and bowled. The joint team batsmen went even better against Sussex 4<sup>th</sup> XI a week later at Princes Risborough CC. A season highest total of 285 for 4 was achieved with Taylor 50 Gurdial 53 Ged Holmes 78 and Mahmood Akhtar 39 no. Sussex 4<sup>th</sup>s started really well but then faltered on the loss of a couple of quick wickets to end on 208 for 6 off 45 overs. The season ended in defeat against a strong Essex 4<sup>th</sup> XI who had to win to win the division in their first season in the competition. Essex won the toss and elected to bat. They batted steadily to reach 184 for 4 off 40 overs. Tight bowling kept Bucks/Middlesex under control and we never looked like upsetting Essex by winning, finishing on 127 for 8 off 40 overs, Taylor 58.

The Joint **Berkshire/ Buckinghamshire Over 70s** team had a disappointing end to their season with defeat against Essex Over 70s in the National Over 70s play offs. The match was twice abandoned with Berks/ Bucks arguably in the better position when both matches were called off. The third attempt took place at Hurst CC in Berkshire on a Sunday as the next round was due to be played two days later. Batting first Berks/ Bucks totalled 200 for 8 off 45 overs. John Potheary came into form with 73. Due to bowling injuries during the match Berks/Bucks had to find 6 overs from a non bowler, using three players to bowl 2 overs each. In a very tight finish Essex crept to victory ending on 202 for 8 off 44.5 overs. I am sure the regular bowling attack would have seen off Essex

comfortably. No disrespect to those who stood up to bowl the extra overs required. The Over 70s 2nd XI completed the Bucks Over 60s and Over 70s season with victory over Middlesex Over 70s at Southgate CC on Tuesday. (sorry to mention it again Keith) David Brooker top scoring with 50 retired not out. ( I am not sure if that is David's first game for a County Over 70s team or not but if it was he also scored 50 on his Over 60s debut, quite some feat, for a man who is a bowler)

**We are indebted to all Clubs who allow us to use their ground and facilities. We also thank all groundsman, umpires and scorers.**

## **The Decline of the County Championship**

**By Jonathan Lilley – a Life member of both Middlesex and Buckinghamshire County cricket clubs**

As a Middlesex member I will be pleased to see the end of the 2021 season, probably the worst I can ever remember for the county. Their performances in all competitions were pitiful to say the least. This set me thinking that through the club's long history it is in essence a championship winning county with modest success in one day competitions. This to some extent may explain the decline in the county's fortune in recent years.

The ECB is legally the sport's ruling body in England and Wales and is supposed to promote and support cricket at all levels. In my opinion it has become a follower rather than a leader. They having introduced T20 in 2003 then failed to capitalise on it as other countries such as Australia, India and the West Indies introduced franchise teams becoming commercially successful. In 2021 The Hundred was established and I leave the reader to draw their own conclusions on it. In essence the ECB is being run by marketing and finance men with little or no appreciation of cricket. This is further amplified by the decline of the England test team with just a handful of world class players. In other words, the ECB has placed its emphasis on white ball cricket to the detriment of the red ball domestic game. Even within one day cricket the fifty over competition appears to be under threat as T20 and The Hundred are here to stay. I suspect that in the future even these versions will be shortened.

The above point is demonstrated by county championship games being played in the cold and wind of April and early May and concluded in the shorter days of autumn in September and now October. This pattern then leaves high summer for one day cricket and the very occasional championship games. In my view the county championship should be played over the entire summer (I make no comment as to the format). The recent general decline in England performances has to be due to players not playing red ball cricket. In the recent test series against India Jonny Bairstow's first red ball cricket was in August. This is beyond words. While one must acknowledge that one day cricket earns the money for cricket, the

county cricket is where players learn their trade. Without the county championship cricketers will not have a basis in which to learn and develop their skills. Clearly the ECB is doing its best to marginalise the county championship if not destroy it completely. All people who care about the history, traditions and unique qualities of the noble art should do everything in their powers to ensure that the championship continues and is put back at the centre of the domestic season.

While I feel the first-class championship is in danger, I did think the championship in the national counties was safe. With each club playing eight games it seemed a reasonable number to make a decent and sensible competition. Now the NCCA has too gone down the white ball route at the expense of the three-day championship. The revised format sees each county playing only four championship games {two home and two away, divided into various groups}. Once again white ball cricket seems to be the *raison detra* of national counties cricket. For the traditional supporter the future of the noble art must seem dubious to say the least.

The history of cricket suggest that it has been very good at reinventing itself and responding to changes in society and I suspect that cricket will continue to do so if only on the village green. I do however fear in the middle term for the futures of the counties and test cricket played by England.

*The views expressed are those of Jonathan Lilley who is a life member of Middlesex and Bucks County cricket clubs. August 2021*



You may well remember that I informed you of the above European cricket tournament back in Coloured Trousers No 4. Well, it's now happening over in sunny Malaga, Spain and the Trophy they are playing for is shown above. It is a T10 competition with 15 national teams taking part, split into 3 groups. England are in Group C along with Italy, Germany, Finland and the Czech Republic. The best of our NCCA players have been chosen to represent England ( their words, not mine !)

Our squad is made up of players from 8 counties - Berkshire, Wales, Dorset, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire and Hertfordshire – 6 from



the West and 2 from the East. Group C starts on Monday 27 September and all matches in all the groups are being shown on BT Sports. It works out at about 3 matches per day.

**KEEP UP TO DATE WITH BUCKS C.C.C. ON SOCIAL MEDIA**  
**Although the season has ended, you can keep up to date with our presence on social media throughout the winter months**

Website: [bucksccc.org.uk](http://bucksccc.org.uk)

Twitter @ Bucks CCC

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/Bucks County Cricket Club](http://www.facebook.com/BucksCountyCricketClub)

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

Well, that's about all for now, you have probably got enough to read. A few articles have been carried over to the next Edition, including a review of the Bucks Women's season.

Once again, many thanks to all those who have helped and contributed to this edition, especially Su Klyne, John Phillips, Ron Hedley, Jason Rance, Andy Warboys, Jonathan Lilley, and Andy Bone of Sports Shots. All, or any, contributions gratefully (very) received, as of course are comments – good or bad.

**I would also like to thank all of our sponsors , shirt, match and players, who have so generously supported us this season.**

**Stay safe as always.**

**Bill Scholes** [billscholes@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:billscholes@hotmail.co.uk) **01420 560290**

And finally a message from Ron Hedley. Ron is supporting Jeff Stelling's **MARCH THE MONTH** campaign raising money to support the Prostate Cancer charity and has organised a series of 3 mile walks from all home grounds he has played on this season. Please support him if you can – all are welcome.

***The Prostate Cancer Walks are now very close with 4 of them next week. There is a poster attached below with the details of the first 5 walks and we will add at least two later in October and keep you informed.***

*I am still hoping that every one who played at least one match for the Over 60s or Over 70s will join us for at least one walk if they are fit and able and not working or on holiday. We have added a Saturday walk at Bledlow Ridge CC for those who cannot make a walk during the week. They will be leisurely walks of around 3 miles and take in lunch, generally at the end of the walk. The Princes Risborough walk will be the shortest walk with lunch at The Lions, Bledlow and then a walk back to Princes Risborough CC.*

***The first walk is at Wembley CC on Tuesday*** and so far we have a good number from Middlesex Over 60s / Over 70s joining the walk but only two from Buckinghamshire, so if you played 4th XI or Over 70s 2nds come and see some team mates from this season.

***Prostate Cancer UK and Jeff Stelling ask that all walkers contribute £25 to join a walk and that done at our Just Giving page and then get as many family and friends to make a donation too.***

Buckinghamshire CCC Over 60s and Over 70s Cricket

## ***Prostate Cancer Walks 2021***

***Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021***

***Wembley Cricket Club, Sudbury Avenue, Wembley HA0 3HG***

***Meet at 11.30 for a Wembley walk with our friends from Middlesex CCC Over 60s followed by lunch (lunch venue to be confirmed)***

***Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021***

***Princes Risborough Cricket Club, Horsenden Lane HP27 9NE***

***Meet at 11.45 for a noon walk via Bledlow Village CC to The Lions of Bledlow for lunch & then a walk back to Princes Risborough CC***

***Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021***

***Littleworth Common Walk***

***Meet at the Jolly Woodman PH, Littleworth Road, Littleworth Common SL1 8PF at 11.00am for a walk with Berkshire Over 70s followed by lunch at the pub.***

***Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021***

***Chearsley CC, Winchenden Road HP18 0DP***

***Meet at for a walk at 11.30 am followed by lunch at The Bell PH, just a short walk from The Cricket Club***

***Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October***

***Bledlow Ridge CC, Chinnor Road HP14 4AA***

***Meet at 11.00 am for a walk followed by lunch at the Café in the Cricket Club Pavilion***

***We hope to provide a cuppa and biscuits before the walks from all of the Cricket Club***

***Just Giving Page. Ronald Hedley Buckinghamshire CCC over 60s over 70s walks***



