

# CRICKET CAFÉ

The Newsletter of the Cricket Societies' Association

[cricketsocietiesassociation.com](http://cricketsocietiesassociation.com)

ISSUE 2 – March 2019



## The Cricket Societies Association....

is a consortium of over 30 cricket societies mainly in the U.K. and exists to further the interests of cricket enthusiasts and societies during the winter. It provides a forum for the exchange of ideas to help its member societies develop and can also assist in the formation of new societies.

Welcome to the second edition of Cricket Café. This issue has more content related to the business of the Cricket Societies Association. For example, the reports from the November 2018 Leicester meeting provide plenty of food for thought. Thank you to David Dickinson of Nottingham Cricket Lovers' Society for his detailed notes from that event.

The account of last December's CSA/ECB liaison meeting continues the theme of looking at core issues which impact on the CSA and by implication the cricket spectator. The forthcoming changes to county cricket in 2019 and 2020 will affect us all and were discussed in depth at that meeting.

The flourishing Worcestershire Cricket society produces an excellent newsletter. I am grateful for Stuart Bryan's account of David Houghton's recent talk to that society.

Many of us remember the successful Colin Milburn play, 'When the Eye has Gone'. Dougie Blaxland, the *nom de plume* of the former Kent and Derbyshire player James Graham-Brown, has produced another cricket play. This play on the experiences of Chris Lewis, *The Long Walk Back*, is also worthy of our support. Full details about the project and performances are listed.

Slow over rates is an issue which has exercised many commentators in recent years. Chris O'Brien gives a personal view on the subject and puts forward some innovative solutions.

Mark Rowe writes about other cricket societies which may be of interest to this readership. This is a timely article since the Cricket Memorabilia Society (CMS) has recently affiliated to the Cricket Societies' Association. A warm welcome to all members of the CMS. Keith Walmsley from the Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians writes in more detail about one of the societies that Mark recommends.

## Editorial

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Chris said that he had been able to see many counties in 2018 and to meet up with friends from other societies, meeting people from Hereford, Sussex, High Peak, Chesterfield, Worcester, Stourbridge, Lancashire and Cheshire and East Riding as well as his home society in Cheltenham. He encouraged everyone to make contact with local societies when visiting somewhere with a society.

The 2019 fixtures would be published the week after the meeting, and the Committee would hold its annual meeting with Alan Fordham of the ECB shortly afterwards. He asked anyone who would to raise any particular points with him, to let him know. The pattern of next season will be different thanks to the Cricket World Cup - so the 50 overs competition in 2019 is expected to be completed before the CWC, and the domestic T20 to follow that event, along with the small matter of the Ashes. A by-product of CWC will be that, because of the need for the ICC to have "clean" grounds staging matches, both before and during the competition, counties will play more matches on out-grounds.

2020 will again be different thanks to The Hundred with the domestic T20 played before that competition and the 50 overs competition, only played by English-qualified players not involved in The Hundred parallel to that tournament.

The Chairman thanked Dave Taylor and Ken Burney for organising the event today in Leicester, together with the home Society for making us welcome. Phil Veasey was standing aside as Minutes Secretary, and the Chairman thanked Phil for his enthusiasm and help in this role.

Stephen Retout, from Derbyshire, has stepped in to the role of Publicity Officer taking over from Anthony Collis, and his first efforts as the magazine "Cricket Café" had already been circulated.

## Leicester 2018 Meeting (1):

### Chairman's Report

Our Secretary (Dave Taylor) has indicated that he will stand down from his post at the AGM in 2020. The Chairman thanked Dave for his invaluable support and hard work. Chris asked that anyone who would like to be considered for this role could talk to the committee.

Finally, with the centenary of the ending of World War 1 occurring the day after the meeting, Chris mentioned *Cricket Remembers*, published this week on the ECB website. This features an article by David Frith mentioning WG Grace, AEJ Collins, and Percy Jeeves to name but three, and commended it to delegates.

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It is with a heavy heart that I have to announce that I will not be seeking re-election at the AGM in March next year. My domestic circumstances will not allow me to carry on, but I would like to thank you all for your support over the years. My predecessor, Bob Wood was an extremely hard act to follow and I am not sure I have done him a great deal of justice as he was both Secretary and Treasurer of the Society, as it was then. I have really enjoyed the helm and along with Chris, our Chairman, and Ken, our Treasurer, I think we can point to a number of initiatives that attempted to drag the Association kicking and screaming into the 21st Century.

We all took office at approximately the same time, which I think was advantageous towards reform. I have made a lot of friends and will never forget my Lancashire & Cheshire Chairman, the late Ken Thomas, congratulating me on my appointment whilst we were driving home in the car with Barry Rickson, erstwhile of this parish, and he said "They picked the right man." I was at that time Secretary of the Lancs & Cheshire Society under his Chairmanship of 49 years – I wasn't there for 49 years, he was – and I could have wished for no finer recommendation from no finer a gentleman than Ken Thomas.

Leicester 2018  
Meeting (2):

Secretary's Report

But as a classics scholar I soon found out that the cry of “The King is dead, Long live the King” meant that the dynasty goes on despite losses of individuals. Whoever succeeds me will have the pleasure of working with a fine Chairman and Treasurer, as well as our minute taker, David Dickinson and our new Public Relations Officer Stephen Retout. I trust your support for them all will be as great as the support you have shown me. I won't be disappearing altogether.

There is little to report since March, yet a lot has happened. The pro-forma worked well at Edgbaston, I hope that you will all keep supplying him with anecdotes and information from your Societies because this is what I like, and I'm sure you do too. David Dickinson has also expressed a willingness to lend a helping hand with administrative duties; an erudite mind is always welcome.

I remember commentators not so long ago remarking on the first £100 test ticket at Lords. It has now reached the provinces, and whilst the revenue is good for the test grounds, it is a poor return for the punter at more than £1 an over, nearly 17 pence per ball. What format the new 100 ball event will take nobody knows, not even the tournament organisers, and where this new audience will come from, I have no clue; well that's not true – we have been told that they are targeting Mums as they have the purse strings. These administrators have obviously never ventured North. I always think that if the administrators poured as much money and marketing time into the County Championship as they do into T20, then we would have a larger target audience.

Dave reminded delegates that this year marked the centenary of the end of the first World War and the meeting held a minute's silence to commemorate this.

## Secretary's Report (continued)...

The Treasurer, Ken Burney, reminded delegates that the AGM would be held at Edgbaston on March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019 and that subscriptions of £20 per society are due on 1<sup>st</sup> January.

A report on the Association's financial position would be presented to the AGM. The Association currently had approximately £6,100 in a reserve account. There would be a listing in next year's Wisden at a cost of £90. The Association will be 50 years old in 2019.

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David Houghton recalled how when he initially joined Worcestershire he flew to England as second team captain and coach, but during his journey the first team coach Kevin Lyons left, so on his first day in his new job he was promoted to replace Lyons! For the rest of the season, David also looked after the second team and played Birmingham League cricket for West Bromwich Dartmouth and such dedication and passion for the game shone throughout the evening.

David started playing in his home country Rhodesia and played hockey to national standard as a youngster but chose to specialise in cricket. He played for Rhodesia in the South African provincial Currie Cup tournament and when the country became Zimbabwe, David was part of a golden era as they dominated international cricket between associate member nations. Sadly, Zimbabwe were not granted test status in the 1980s when, alongside David, they had players of the calibre of Graeme Hick, Kevin Curran and Trevor Penney and could have flourished on the world stage.

## Leicester 2018 Meeting (3):

## Treasurer's Interim Report

## David Houghton at Worcestershire Cricket Society

Stuart Bryan

Hick, Curran and Penney sought professional careers in the U.K and the domestic structure went downhill. Despite Zimbabwe clearly not having the players and professional system in place to become a test nation, David spoke of his bewilderment that they were given test status in 1991.

David shared that he and the other players wanted to rebuild Zimbabwean cricket by re-joining the South African system again, rather than being the whipping boys of international cricket. David did lead out Zimbabwe in their first Test match against India and he scored 121, making him one of only three players to score a Test century in their first game as captain.

During his international career, David identified Viv Richards and Martin Crowe as the best batsmen he ever played against, Malcolm Marshall and Wasim Akram the best bowlers and Ray Jennings the best keeper.

After starting his coaching career at New Road, David went onto coach his homeland, which included the famous drawn test match against England, who according to England coach David Lloyd had 'flipping murdered 'em!'

David returned to the county game and coached Somerset and Derbyshire and recently ended a spell as Middlesex batting coach to return to Derbyshire as first team coach, where he stated his intention to play the youngsters from a squad of 17 players.

Like many previous speakers, David spoke of his preference for red ball cricket and reflected that the modern-day batsman's approach of 'attack as the best form of defence' has reduced the art of constructing long innings.

Despite scoring a duck on his first innings at New Road, it was clear that David had warm memories of his time at Worcestershire.

He spoke of his close friendship with Damian D'Oliveira and was still in touch with other former players and staff.

David Houghton at  
Worcestershire  
Cricket Society  
(continued)...

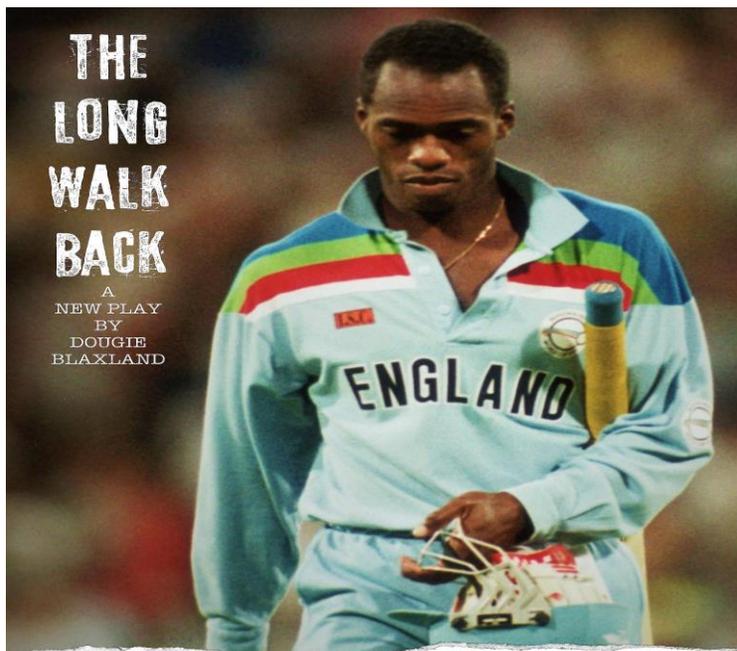
## **THE LONG WALK BACK**

**Produced by RoughHouse Theatre and Live Wire Theatre**

Based on real live events, *The Long Walk Back* tells the epic story of an international sporting star's catastrophic fall from grace. England cricketer Chris Lewis enjoyed a meteoric rise to fame and fortune in the 1990s. Playing 85 Tests and One Day Internationals for England he seemed on the verge of greatness when he was named England's International Cricketer of The Year in 1994. Within months of his cricketing career ending, however, his life lay in ruins when he was sentenced to 13 years in prison for smuggling cocaine into the UK.

Beginning with his arrest at Gatwick Airport in 2008 and an attempted suicide on his first night in custody, *The Long Walk Back* charts the extraordinary journey that took Lewis from the brink of despair to a profound moral awakening.

**Stay in your seats for a post-show Q&A session with Chris Lewis and RoughHouse Theatre Director Shane Morgan.**



Produced by RoughHouse Theatre and Live Wire Theatre

## The Long Walk Back

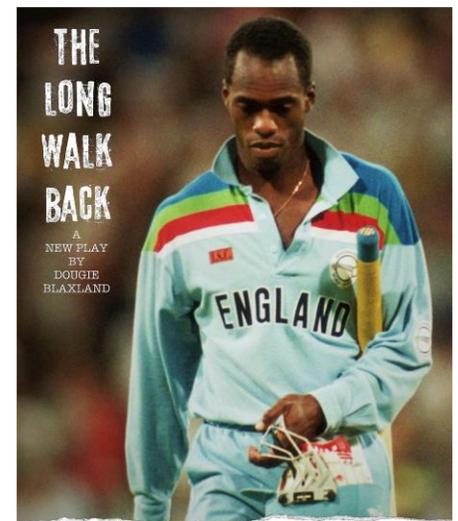
Dougie Blaxland

**TOUR DATES & VENUES**

- Mon 1st April** Portland Young Offenders 2.30
- Tues 2nd April** Chipping Norton Theatre 7.45 - 01608 642350 [www.chippingnortontheatre.com](http://www.chippingnortontheatre.com)
- Wed 3rd April** Phoenix Theatre Bordon Hants 7.30 - 01420 472 664 [www.phoenixarts.co.uk](http://www.phoenixarts.co.uk)
- Thurs 4th April** The Everyman Cheltenham 7.30 - 01242 572573 [www.everymantheatre.org.uk](http://www.everymantheatre.org.uk)
- Fri 5th April** The Everyman Cheltenham 7.30 - 01242 572573 [www.everymantheatre.org.uk](http://www.everymantheatre.org.uk)
- Sat 6th April** The Everyman Cheltenham 7.30 - 01242 572573 [www.everymantheatre.org.uk](http://www.everymantheatre.org.uk)
- Wed 10th April** The Haymarket Basingstoke 7.30 - 01256 844244 [www.anvilarts.org.uk](http://www.anvilarts.org.uk)
- Thurs 11th April** Reading Cricket Club 7.00 - [www.readingcricketclub.com](http://www.readingcricketclub.com)
- Fri 12th April** Bronzefield Young Offenders Institution
- Sat 13th April** Royal & Derngate Northampton 7.30 - 01604 624811 [www.royalandderngate.co.uk](http://www.royalandderngate.co.uk)
- Sun 14th April** Dorchester Arts 7.00 - 01305 266926 [www.dorchesterarts.org.uk](http://www.dorchesterarts.org.uk)
- Tues 16th April** The Wardrobe Bristol 7.30 - 0117 902 0344 [www.thewardrobetheatre.com/tickets/](http://www.thewardrobetheatre.com/tickets/)
- Wed 17th April** The Wardrobe Bristol 7.30 - 0117 902 0344 [www.thewardrobetheatre.com/tickets/](http://www.thewardrobetheatre.com/tickets/)
- Thurs 18th April** The Blue Orange Birmingham 7.45 - 0121 212 2643 [www.blueorangetheatre.co.uk](http://www.blueorangetheatre.co.uk)
- Fri 19th April** The Rondo Bath 8.00 - 0333 666 3366 [www.rondotheatre.co.uk](http://www.rondotheatre.co.uk)
- Sat 20th April** Leicestershire County Cricket Club Grace Road Leicester 7.30 - 0116 283 2128 [www.leicestershireccc.co.uk](http://www.leicestershireccc.co.uk)
- Tues 23rd April** Nottingham Playhouse 7.30 - 0115 941 9419 [www.nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk](http://www.nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk)
- Wed 24th April** Greenwich Theatre London 7.30 - 020 8858 7755 [www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk](http://www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk)
- Thurs 25th April** Greenwich Theatre London 7.30 - 020 8858 7755 [www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk](http://www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk)
- Fri 26th April** Greenwich Theatre London 7.30 - 020 8858 7755 [www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk](http://www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk)
- Sat 27th April** Greenwich Theatre London 7.30 - 020 8858 7755 [www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk](http://www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk)

Further details: [www.roughhousetheatre.com](http://www.roughhousetheatre.com)

## The Long Walk Back (continued)....



Produced by RoughHouse Theatre and Live Wire Theatre

I am currently the chairman of the Association of Cricket Statisticians & Historians (ACS). You may have had the dubious pleasure of hearing me talk to the meeting of the CSA at Leicester last November, when I tried to explain some of the background to the ACS, and how our interests may overlap with those of some, at least, of your society's members.

I am writing now to follow up that talk, by confirming something that I mentioned during it. If your society would like one of our representatives to come to talk about the ACS for perhaps 15-20 minutes to one of your future meetings, we would in principle (and if practicable) be very willing to do so.

I confess that our aim in making this offer is not entirely altruistic! The ACS is currently looking to broaden its membership, and we feel sure that there is potential to do this from among the membership of the cricket societies. So, if you would like to take up our offer, I would hope that you would be willing for us to bring along a batch of our membership leaflets to distribute to those present, and perhaps also to bring some of our recent publications for sale.

If you are interested in following this up at any time, please contact me via this email address [k.walmsley135@btinternet.com](mailto:k.walmsley135@btinternet.com) and I will be happy to discuss this further with you.

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Tony Palladino, the veteran Derbyshire and former Essex pace bowler has asked me to let readers know that he is available for speaking engagements. Tony spoke at the Derbyshire Cricket Society Christmas meal and was extremely well received. I can supply his e-mail address or he can be contacted through Derbyshire CCC.

## Association of Cricket Statisticians & Historians

Keith Walmsley



The Association of Cricket  
Statisticians and Historians

The meeting was an informal one, giving Alan Fordham the chance to explain the rationale behind the current and future fixture plans, and to discuss matters arising. Alan tabled his spreadsheet - this year with 10 colours, showing the blocks allocated to the highest level of mens and womens cricket , including tests and ODIs, and particularly this year, the Cricket World Cup (CWC) starting on May 30 with the Final on Sunday July 14th) covering all of the days between April and September.

The pattern of fixtures is similar to 2018, but CWC has many impacts - the need to start and finish the 50 overs competition before CWC starts, then no domestic white ball cricket whilst CWC is on (meaning that period will contain County Championship fixtures only, and that some 11 counties who's grounds are staging CWC will either play more cricket at outgrounds (for example – Newport and Swansea in Wales and Isle of Wight and York CC) or have a slightly lop-sided fixture list involving successive away matches. The Ashes will be played post CWC in August and September.

Alan addressed the perceived shortage of weekend cricket by stating that many fixture timings were driven by Finals days being Saturdays, the need for end of group and knockout rounds to be televised as well as the need to maximise time between fixtures, but recognised that there some slots (notably June) where 4 day cricket might start on Sunday and not Monday and counties have been given that option, assuming agreement between both teams.

In 2020 - the introduction of *The Hundred* would mean changes to the schedule (a) domestic T20 played from end-May, with a blend of 4 day matches in that period (b) *The Hundred* will be played in July and August (c) counties will play their 50 overs competition parallel to *The Hundred* , with no overseas players allowed (d) *Hundred* host counties will again play more 50-over matches at out grounds.

Alan also spoke about the 10/8 divisional split replacing the 8/10 current split in 2020. This should mean that (a) more teams are playing better quality cricket in Division 1 (b) there's less fear of relegation from Division 1, as proportionally fewer teams will be relegated and (c) there's an improved chance of promotion from Division 2, with 2 fewer teams in that division.

A 2019 meeting was pencilled in for 12 December.

## CSA/ECB Liaison Meeting

Chris Coleman

This annual liaison meeting between the CSA (Chris Coleman and Ken Burney) and the ECB (Alan Fordham) took place on 13 December 2018.

In the autumn of 1986, a few weeks before I saw Enoch Powell howled off the stage by anarchists, in the same room at the University of Bristol students' union I was not the first nor the last student to walk around stalls for various student societies. I joined the German and history societies, besides the cricket club. I never had anything more to do with them. As wastes of money go it could have been worse. Being a member of your local cricket society strikes me as excellent value for money; a warm room, or at least warmer than outside; good conversation, and a drink if you want. It doesn't have to stop there. For £21 you can join The Cricket Society. They run meetings in Bath, Birmingham, Chester-le-Street and London. Judging by their Twitter account, and their printed journal, they just like cricket, and following it. Having had a cricket book published in 2010, when I heard about the Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians, I felt it was something I had to join, as I was now one. And I had an O level in statistics. Members of the ACS, so I found out, don't necessarily have to be a published author. You just have to have an interest in cricket's past and stats, and pay the £29 a year membership. For your money you get a journal four times a year in the post, and can attend the annual AGM at Derby.

If you're more of a collector, try the Cricket Memorabilia Society. It too has a magazine, and runs two auctions a year, spring and autumn. They're not the only cricket let alone sports auctions around, but as the CMS says, commission rate is relatively low. You can also go to the weekend commercial auctions by Knights in Leicester three times a year. That can take you into several other worlds, of collecting – match programmes, postcards, ceramics, autographs – with their own sales, societies and magazines.

What they have in common with actual cricket clubs and indeed other sports clubs and any number of groups, is that surprisingly, or worryingly, few people keep them going. It doesn't take much – someone falling ill or moving out of the district – for a once thriving group to shrivel or close altogether. I became a committee member and editor for the ACS, although I didn't know anyone beforehand, because it felt the right thing to do. Could I do more, and could you? For sure. If you don't feel like lending a hand or joining any of these groups, it's a free country. Except don't grumble if – like my local Needwood Cricket Societv in Staffordshire in 2018 – it folds

## Other Clubs and Societies

Mark Rowe offers some extra possibilities of clubs and societies you can join.

Mark is the author of four cricket books, *The Victory Tests* (2010), *The Summer Field*, a history of English cricket (2016), *Yorkshire Tyrant*, a biography of Brian Sellers (2017) and *Young Bradman* (2018).



Over rates in cricket have declined spectacularly. Slow play can be an affront to paying spectators; fining and suspending captains hasn't done enough.

We need to do more. Here is what I suggest:

(1) Insist that umpires apply law 41.10.1, which requires, in normal circumstances, batsmen to be ready to take strike when the bowler is ready to start his/her run-up. So, umpires must stop a batsman

discussing tactics with the non-striker;

congratulating his/her colleague for a minor achievement; or

'gardening' the pitch (unless damaged since the previous over or other interval)

in a way that delays play.

(2) Batsmen must not change their equipment, unless damaged, if that delays play.

(3) A fielder needing equipment (e.g. helmet, shin pads) which is not on the field of play, must wait until the end of the over, or an interval in play if earlier, before going to get it.

(4) Play shall not be held up to await a substitute fielder coming onto the field.

(5) Bad light shall not lead to a suspension of play if the batsmen wish to continue, subject to compliance with health and safety laws.

(6) Three white lines should be drawn on the pitch, parallel to the return crease, and in line with the wickets, to enable the batsman to see where to take guard, without needing the umpire (initially to apply experimentally in t20 matches where it is not long before lines are re-drawn between innings).

(7) Vitality Blast t20 regulations requires a batsman to be ready to take guard 1 minute after the fall of a wicket; consistent with (6) should now say be ready to bat; and the bowler should start to bowl as soon as the batsman is ready (regulations for other forms of cricket to be reviewed in due course).

## Slow Over Rates – Potential Solutions

Christopher O'Brien



The author of *Cardus Uncovered – Neville Cardus: The Truth, the Untruth and the Higher Truth*, reviewed in Cricket Café Issue 1: P13, puts forward some interesting ideas to address this increasing problem.

The book, £10 plus postage, is available online (google Cardus Uncovered Lancashire) or you can buy it at Old Trafford, Lord's and Trent Bridge. Or email Chris: [whitethorn.range@gmail.com](mailto:whitethorn.range@gmail.com) and pay by bank transfer or cheque (phone no. 0115 922 1481).

(8) Implement the suggestion of the MCC World Cricket Committee that, in Tests, a 'stop clock' limits the time from the end of one over to the start of the next to 45 seconds; monitor how it works and research the time between overs in other forms of cricket with a view to extending a 'stop clock' beyond Tests.

(9) In t20 cricket, if the above changes have not achieved the desired result, have 10 overs bowled from one end, then 10 at the other end, but batsmen do change ends between overs.

(10) Law 41, which states that players shall not waste time, should be re-worded (what is waste? A bowler rearranging the field for 2 minutes may think this is a valuable use of time, not a waste). The real objective is that players progress the match as quickly as practicable, taking into account the interests of all those present (which will include spectators): we need some wording (perhaps a definition of time-wasting) which achieves this.



## Slow Over Rates – Potential Solutions Continued ...