

# FREE FORESTERS CRICKET CLUB



At Winchester College in late April, full of anticipation for the season ahead

## YEARBOOK 2024

# *Graham's Signature Reserve Port*



**Pleased to support the Free Foresters Cricket Club**

## CONTENTS

Editor's welcome . . . . .	2
Dates for your diary and housekeeping . . . . .	4
A note from the President . . . . .	5
From The Secretary . . . . .	6
Candidates offered membership for 2023. . . . .	8
Fixture Secretary's 2023 cricket review . . . . .	9
Match results summary . . . . .	45
Player statistics for 2023 . . . . .	51
FF's 2022 tour to the Netherlands . . . . .	53
FF Women in 2023 by Paul Askew . . . . .	55
Free Foresters in 1873 by Michael Parsons . . . . .	60
Famous Free Foresters: Sir Pelham Warner by Simon Hughes . . . . .	68
Joe Ireland's cricket book reviews . . . . .	74
Deaths of members and tributes . . . . .	76
The FF Annual Quiz . . . . .	80





## EDITOR'S WELCOME

I hope you enjoy the range of content in this Yearbook. As usual, at its heart is coverage of the season just gone for our men and women – plus this time a report on the 2022 men's visit to the Netherlands which missed the previous Yearbook. Match and player stats are back I'm pleased to say, thanks to the efficiency of our Membership Secretary, Paul Stubbs. We also, as usual, provide the names of the Candidates to whom we have offered membership, report on the sad deaths of members notified to the club, provide a review of our finances, some social dates for the diary and general notices for members.

As part of FF becoming a more open and accessible club, we have widened the scope of articles in the Yearbook – exploring more of our own history so as to allow members and a wider cricket-interested audience to know

about our rich and interesting past as well as our involvement in a continually changing cricket scene.

In this vein, may I draw your attention to two fascinating pieces. The first is by former Match Secretary, Michael Parsons, on FF in 1873 as we made the transition from our Founder, the Rev'd William Riland Bedford's administration to the next generation under the great Teddy Rutter. The second is a piece about Sir Pelham Warner by Simon Hughes (father of FF) in a new feature-section called Famous Free Foresters. Joe Ireland has, once again, provided crisp reviews of (two) interesting new cricket books, and the Great Quiz, inaugurated some years ago by our Treasurer, Bernard Critchley, has been understudied this year by my successor as Secretary and Editor of the Yearbook – John Hamilton – demonstrating in doing so a sound

grasp of cricketing facts, factoids and trivia and their importance when proponents of the game club together. As ever, we welcome comment and suggestions for future editions.

*PAUL ASKEW*



*Your editor enjoying the traditional gathering behind the Warner Stand at the Ireland Test last summer*

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY AND HOUSEKEEPING

*Members and their friends are warmly encouraged to meet over a drink or BBQ at the following FF matches as well as attend the AGM and other social events during the season. Any additions to this list of dates will be posted on the website.*

### THURSDAY 11TH APRIL, 18.30

AGM followed by drinks, Colliers International, 95 Wigmore Street, London W1U 1FF

### TUESDAY 18TH JUNE, 13.00

*Pimms in the Parks* drinks party on Day 1 of FF vs OUCC

### TUESDAY 25TH JUNE, 13.00

*Fizz at Fenner's* drinks party on Day 1 of FF vs CUCC

### FRIDAY 12TH JULY, 13.00

Drinks gathering at the Coronation Garden behind the Warner Stand at Lord's on Day 3 of the West Indies Test Match

### WEDNESDAY 17TH JULY, 18.00

BBQ at Seaton CC at the FF vs MCC match

### WEDNESDAY 28TH AUGUST, 13.00

Drinks at FF vs ACE Academy at Arundel Castle

### FRIDAY 30TH AUGUST, 13.00

Drinks gathering behind the Warner Stand at Lord's on Day 2 of the Sri Lanka Test Match

## HOUSEKEEPING

We have moved to an 'opt-in' approach for receiving hard copies of the Yearbook and Fixture Card, in part as a result of requests from members. This

cuts our carbon footprint and saves on printing and postage. However, members who would like to be sent printed copies should contact our Membership Secretary, Paul Stubbs

E: [ffcc.membership@gmail.com](mailto:ffcc.membership@gmail.com)  
M: 07734 415546.

Equally, those members who have received their copies by post (not having provided their email address for our database) and wanting a digital copy in future should also be in touch with Paul to let him know this as their preference.

The website is the place to go for kit and Accessories is our online shop. Please place your orders and make your payments there. Nick Turk has kindly stepped in as Quartermaster. He will ensure your order is fulfilled.

Notices will go out by email and the website about new social or cricketing dates for your diary as well as any significant items of news as and when these occur or are arranged.

## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Last year I mused whether 'Bazball' would survive the stern test of an Ashes series. Secretly, I felt it wouldn't and after the first two tests I feared the worst, but had Mancunian rain not rescued the Aussies we would have seen one of the great Ashes 'fightbacks'. There are still questions about its possible longevity. Is it a style that will change the way Test cricket is played for the foreseeable future, or simply the result of the way a group of players and a coach wish to play the game which will wither away as they leave the game? Who knows, but it was marvellous if nerve-racking to watch and has revitalised the 5-day game which has to be to the good.

These, however, seem to be troubling days for sport. There are fewer people playing recreational level sport, serious questions posed in some sports about safety and the resultant impact on long

term health, increasing harassment of officials on the field and, more troubling, off the field in the form of abuse on social media. There is little the Free Foresters can do except demonstrate to those against whom we play that the game can be properly competitive and yet played in a proper and friendly manner. This is particularly so when we play against schools. If we don't set the standard, who will?

Once again, I encourage playing members to apply for as many games as they are able. It makes the lives of match managers so much easier as they are able to 'select' sides rather than spend valuable time on the telephone and social media trying to 'raise' them.

Lastly, I must, as always, thank all those who manage matches, act as Regional Representatives, serve on the committee and in particular fill 'officer' posts.

Sir Jack at Burton Court



In particular, I must thank Paul Askew who stands down as a long serving Secretary. The Secretary sits at the centre of the web, coordinating the work of all the other organisational elements; he is also the public face of the club. Aside from his role as Secretary, he has been one of the driving forces behind the development of women's cricket in the club. He has done a remarkable job and we owe him a very substantial debt of gratitude. We welcome John Hamilton as his replacement. Enjoy the 2024 season, not long to go now.

*GENERAL SIR JACK DEVERELL*

## FROM THE SECRETARY

May I first pay tribute to the outgoing Fixture Secretary, Nick Turk. His devotion to the club, popularity with FF cadres as a team player combined with his superb administrative skills have helped produce a period of steady sailing. His successor, Tom MacIlwaine, whom we welcome, inherits a well-populated match and regional management structure and excellent relations with all our opponents.

In section 7, Nick reports (with others) on the season just gone. 2023 was a season with the typical mix of great highs and not-so-highs - including the unseasonably wet weather at the start of the season. Nick rightly emphasises the importance we attach to playing attacking cricket in the right spirit and not being afraid of risking defeat in pursuit of victory.

It's worth reporting that your Committee continually looks to streamline the path for Candidates in signing up and to promote the wider benefits of membership. This is in an effort to push back against a trend shared by other sports clubs towards what might be shorthand as a casualisation of membership. Candidates will still need to have been proposed for membership and will need to prove themselves over two games. But in 2024 we will be trialling a monthly Committee election panel, so that as soon as Candidates have played twice and performed, they may come forward for immediate election - thereby avoiding the typical three or four month delay post the end of the season in receiving an invitation from the President to join.

In handing on the Secretaryship after nine years at the start of this season to John Hamilton as a historian and

history teacher by profession and avowed cricket nut, I am delighted that the traditions, high achievements and founding aspirations of our great and progressive club will be kept to the fore.

As part of our progression, we have been gradually increasing our partnerships within the game, both in our men's and our women's sections. We are very pleased, for example, to be supporting the ACE Programme in helping fund some of their coach training in gaining relevant ECB qualifications, in linking with the ECB in the women's game in inaugurating an annual T20 fixture against the previous year's national league T20 winner, and with Lloyds of London's Inigo Insurance in encouraging women working in the City to play the game.

You will also be aware of further commercial partners from this year, notably

Close Brothers Asset Management - who very much support the ACE coach initiative - and Graham's Port, our port house of choice, who are providing Player of the Match Awards (for all but our school games of course) in the form of bottles of their delicious Graham's Six Grapes Port. Such commercial partnerships allow us to expand our modernising and outward-facing initiatives as with Guy Beresford's Independent Search Partners who, six years ago, came in at the outset of FF Women and continue to support us today. We are delighted with all of this support as much as that from our members who are generous when the time comes around for special appeals as with the Philip Whitcombe Memorial fund 16 years ago to help found our men's Academy.

Good luck and good cricket to all in 2024.

**PAUL ASKEW**



*The Hon Sec with Chevy Green, CEO of ACE together with FF and England U19 Women, Davina Perrin, and her father, David, at a Wisden Cricket Monthly bat-testing at the Oval in February.*



CANDIDATES OFFERED MEMBERSHIP FOR 2023

The following 58 candidates have been offered membership as from 2024

Mike Abington	Thomas Douglas	Duncan MacKay	Ellis Sabbagh-Holt
Aizaz Ahmed	Josh Fisher	Yuvee Malhotra	Gareth Schreuder
Will Barker	George Flowers	Vishal Mamgai	James Shaw
Sanjoy Bassi	Adam Forbes	Owen Marshall	Dan Stanley
Ethan Berlusconi	Barney French	Will Millard	Will Steel
Arjun Bhardwaj	Luke Frey	Jonny Murray	Ollie Steele
Bill Breen	Michael Glass	James Nelson	Andrew Stephens
Laurie Cadle	Christopher Hofen	Hugo Nicholls	Raman Suri
James Cake	Billy Hughes	Riley O'Donnell	Uday Totuka
Charlie Carroll	Elliott Hyman	Rishabh Parekh	Elliott Watkins
Seb Carty	Joseph Kelly	Simon Perry	Ed Williams
Tom Clarke	Rhys Lamplugh	Nathan Piddock	Richard Wills
JJT Coyne	Joel Leacock	Matthew Plews	Harry Wood
Ollie Dabinett-Jays	Freddy Loveland	Henry Redmayne	
Luke Dawson	James MacGregor	George Reed	

FIXTURE SECRETARY'S 2023 CRICKET REVIEW

Any cricket season which follows the long, hot summer of 2022 when only three FF games were called off by rain, is always going to feel second best. However, to have the first six games rained off looked as if Tendulkar, Gower, Bradman, or whichever cricketing god you believe in, was having a laugh at our expense. Even then we had to wait for the Academy match against the Royal Navy in May to record our first win of the season. Thereafter, we won more than we lost and only drew six matches. It made me think that the FF have in fact been playing Bazball well before the term was coined by the media. It is certainly something that is encouraged by the last three Fixture Secs – a glorious loss in wandering cricket is better than a boring draw!

There are exceptions to this and one of them is when we are playing the

schools – a draw is not a concept they are used to when playing an unlimited diet of overs cricket. It is why we try to play declaration cricket against the schools as it is a new format for many and makes the school teams think. It gives lower-order batsmen a chance to save a game rather than having no choice but to throw the bat and it encourages bowlers to tempt batters out rather than relying on them to swing and hope. It was therefore good to see King's School Chester (thanks to Joe Benson for getting that game going) battling out for a draw on a hot day in May as well as Cheltenham College doing the same against James Croft's band of Old Cheltonian FFs.

Two treasured and venerable wandering sides were also involved in exciting draws; in both cases the last wicket pair held out – and it was very appropriate that Arthur Leigh-

Pemberton saw out most of the final over for the Band of Brothers at his family's gorgeous ground at Torry Hill. A quick mention here for a virgin match manager, Paddy Phillips who got a great group of FF and candidates together; who says 13 is too many on a hot day? This did allow us to have rolling subs – especially handy when girlfriends and wives come to watch, allowing a meander round the ground while fielding with good batsmen and three seamers!

At Queen's College, Oxford, our top order failed against the South Wales Hunts and it soon became obvious that the FF could not win and therefore, after the SWH fast bowlers had had a go with some success, the slowest of slow bowlers was brought on to tempt the lower order. The FF number nine was old enough to know

better but still had a wild swing and so it was left to the oldest and youngest member of the FF to see out the last two overs. Honours were just about even at the end and although the Hunt team were the better on the day, they were not quite good enough!

We also had some hugely exciting wins and losses beating the Crusaders by one run at Fitzwilliam College, losing by one wicket at Sherborne and 10 runs at Harrow, defending 89 at Winchester College's Lords ground against the Old Wykehamists (special thanks to Babs for rushing down from London to find he was last man in and then not facing a ball before the other batter was out), and a last wicket partnership for the FF at Hovingham Hall v Romany that eked out 13 runs - funnily enough, the same pair of surnames who denied the SWH two months earlier in June. Another very appropriate family-related last

wicket partnership saw Tom Savill (OAs) score the winning runs on his father's beautiful private ground at Oakhill near Wicklow in Ireland – it was followed by a quite legendary night in the pubs and clubs of Wicklow.

But they were all over-shadowed in terms of tension by the one run win over the Rifles five August days later in Winchester. Stuart Walter - another first-time match manager – led his team from the rear – batting at number 11 and only coming on to bowl as third change. Some may find that unfulfilling, but I feel it gives a match manager a chance to concentrate on captaining - and putting everyone in the team before themselves and then hoping that the team he has put together can conjure up an enjoyable and competitive game. Therefore, it must have been initially worrying at 204-7 chasing 211, and then hugely

satisfying, to have two run-outs and a stumping which saw the Rifles subside to 210 all out with the last batsman run out by Karan Parmar going for the run that would have seen the scores level.

Later on, in the longer report, you will read about the Academy and Secretary matches, but I make no apologies for this somewhat wistful look back on the 2023 season. That is because I wanted to concentrate on the FF matches which many of the readership will either recognise or have played in. Indeed, I think it is what makes FF cricket so special and keeps us coming back for more year after year! There were some unsung heroes I would want to remember as well – people who helped MMs out at the last minute or quite simply were always around to play. Akshay Sreenivasan chalked up his 50th FF game this year which given that he has only been playing for four

seasons, is pretty impressive. After much lobbying from me (sorry, Rocky), he finally got a game for the Academy in our season finale at Arundel and proceeded to take the first four Combined University wickets.

Tom McIlwaine has played all over the country despite having to rely on public transport to get to every match – which from the wilds of Lincolnshire is no mean feat! He will be an excellent Fixtures Secretary by dint of the fact that he plays a lot of cricket and has also been taught well by the Army how to do an excellent “Staff” job. I don't know how many FF games James Richardson has played over the last three years, but again he seems to pop up all over the country playing for the FF despite suffering certain car related issues. However, a very understanding girlfriend and an even more faithful friend in Ali Carman saw him play 15

matches in 2023. For the long drive up to Yorkshire for the Romany and Yorkshire Gents games, he had kindly offered me a lift and when getting into his car for the first time since last season, I enquired gently when he had received the welcome communication from the DVLA. He delightedly said he had regained his driving ability at one minute past midnight that morning - six hours before we met up - typical JR!

Next year, Tom McIlwaine, in taking over the Fixtures Secretary role, will continue to improve and refine the organisation of the match managers and regional reps. His no-nonsense style and organisational ability will, I hope, spread the load of the fixtures secretary further than I managed. Games in places such as Torry Hill, Cheltenham College, Oakhill CC and Ascott House are hard to beat, but I also hope that the spirit and essence

of FF cricket will continue to flourish under his leadership – we are very lucky playing the type of cricket that we do in the places we play. It is so good that the England Test team have copied our “no boring draws” mantra and long may it continue.

## FF IN THE WEST COUNTRY

The first three matches in the Western region were cancelled without a ball being bowled and hence Tom Atkins, one of our longest standing match managers, ran the first game of the season at Sherborne. The school raves about him and the 1st XI love playing this game as Tom runs it so well – we lost gloriously by one wicket having scored 193-5 with Will Caldwell 55 and guest Joel Leacock 54 top scoring for the FF. Four wickets for Craig Gourlay in 16 overs was not quite enough to stop the school winning, but hopefully a few of them will also think FF cricket

is fun and competitive and want to play for us in the future.

A very welcome return to the Close at Clifton in 2021 was repeated in 2023 but unfortunately with the same result! The FF won the toss and chose to have a bowl in the hope of restricting Clifton's youngsters to a low score in their 40 overs. Tidy bowling, particularly from Old Cliftonian Rupert Swetman, and from Omkar Khot restricted Clifton to 218-5. Swetman was the pick of the bowlers taking 3-25.

The FF innings started with some flair, with Babs playing a glorious looking hook shot which unfortunately went straight into deep backward square leg's hands. The innings was somewhat steadied by Vishal Mamgai (50) and Brad Parry (41). It was a day for the statisticians with the FF's first

eight wickets all being out caught. Unfortunately, the lack of a big score from anyone meant we finished 40 runs short with one wicket in hand before we ran out of overs. Whilst the result didn't go our way it was a great day out with compliments from Clifton's cricket staff who are keen to ensure it remains an annual fixture.

Another staple of the FF in the west is the game against Cheltenham run by Old Cheltonian James Croft – he of Gucci loafers and Jos Buttler stash. As ever, a strong side of either Cheltonians or those who slipped through the net and went to Shrewsbury, turned out and tried to reverse the drubbing we got in 2022. Will Mason for once did not flatter with reverse sweeps and scoops and scored an impressive 50 well supported by fellow Cirencester club member Billy Breen and James Croft hiding down the order. Last year 220 odd was nowhere

near enough, but this year the Sabbagh-Holt brothers (also of Cirencester CC) plus Sachin Bandra took a few wickets and restricted the College to 151-7 – an honourable draw.

Another team who have caused us recent pain in terms of their cricket prowess are the Wiltshire Queries who this time won the toss and elected to bat. After a fast start, the Queries were 51-1 from 10 overs. Adam Forbes bowled a brilliantly tight 15 overs on the bounce, which included five maidens and built significant pressure. A wicket on the stroke of lunch saw the Queries head into the pavilion at 159-2. Then it all changed!! After loading up on some of Wiltshire's finest ham, coronation chicken and pasta salads, our bowlers took the remaining wickets for just 60 runs. There was some brilliant bowling all round, but particularly good spells from Seb Woodford and Cameron Silva.

The FF innings got off to a turbulent start with a wicket falling in the first over and at one stage we were 23-3 after seven overs. Some sensible batting soon created a sense of calm and saw just one more wicket fall in the rest of the FF innings. The young duo of Pratyush Ramesh and Joseph Kelly starred with the bat, sharing an unbeaten partnership of 164, to guide us to a handsome six wicket victory at the beginning of the final hour's play.

The Worcester Gents game was threatened by the weather with both captains keen to make a game despite the gathering clouds. Akshay Sreenivasan took his new MM duties very seriously, getting a crack team together, but they were not quite ready for the onslaught from the WGs – perhaps sore after two heavy defeats in previous years. Their

opener scored 102 from 67 balls with good support from the rest of the top five. The Gents declared on 239-4 leaving the FF with about 25 or 26 overs to score at over 9/over to win. Tom McIlwaine had brought his pro from Lincolnshire to help out and Dan Stanley proceeded to hit 101 from 47 balls, but despite James Richardson scoring 49 from 33 balls we finished 15 runs short with eight wickets in hand – a very honourable draw.

Unfortunately, the game against the Gloucester Gypsies which was going to happen at Cheltenham College during the festival, was cancelled by the GCCC and next year we will return to Stowell Park for our more traditional declaration fixture in 2024. Having said that, the triangular Hundred competition we had in 2022 was a fantastic event and we hope we can do it again one year.

## THE WESTERN SERIES

A necessary change of schedule meant starting our five days in early July on the East Devon coast on a Sunday rather than Monday, and not at Seaton but at Budleigh Salterton's very impressive new ground...

### Sunday 9 July vs Budleigh Salterton CC @ Budleigh Salterton

FF 203-7 dec (Peter Deakin 55, Jono Arscott 50, George Bretten 43)  
BS 204-7 (Alex Hume 3-41)  
BS won by 3 wickets  
FF: Alex Hume (capt), Robin Jones, Ed Pyman, George Bretten, Jono Arscott, Peter Deakin, Will Sandbach, Nick Turk, Rory Fulton (wk), James Deakin, Rhys Jones.

Skipper Alex Hume won the toss on a sunny afternoon, and decided on first use of the slightly damp surface. By the fifth over the FF were two down for 18, but George Bretten and Jono Arscott then came together to take the score



past 100 - Arscott especially fluent in his run-a-ball half century, before the canny Joel Murphy removed both. Peter Deakin then compiled a gritty half century of his own, and the unwell Will Sandbach added a cameo, before the declaration after 47 overs. A wicket apiece for Will Sandbach and Alex Hume reduced the home side to 11-2, but thereafter consistent partnerships frustrated the FF. James Deakin produced a collector's item of a wicket, caught by Dad Peter, who took two other smart catches. Rhys Jones also surprised everyone including himself by catching two and executing a run out, and the game remained in the balance at 139-5 and 168-6. However, the FF lacked sufficient penetration, and Budleigh batted sensibly to record a deserved victory in the 41st over. Nick Baldwin presented Chairman Joel Murphy with a FF tie and the History of the FF for their magnificent new

clubhouse, to mark our first fixture at The Holt. Temporary facilities were in place this year, but we look forward greatly to the 'full experience' in 2024.

#### **Monday 10 July vs Devon Dumplings @ Seaton**

DD 120 all out (Richard Pyman 4-25, Will McKegney 3-18) FF 121-2 (Neil Baker 63, James Fulton 40\*)  
FF won by 8 wickets  
FF: Will McKegney (capt), Neil Baker (wk), Barney French, James Fulton, Jamie Baldwin, Richard Pyman, Chris Sandbach, Omkar Khot, George Bretten, James Pyman, Oscar Ratledge.

Another winning toss by the FF, and Will McKegney inserted the Dumplings. The openers accumulated 35 before the skipper decided to introduce his left-

arm spin, with devastating impact, to reduce the Dumplings to 43-3. Chris Sandbach then removed the opener Cockram for 51 from 88, before Richard Pyman polished off the innings with some excellent seam bowling, assisted by a sharp stumping from Bakes, and a run-out by Barney French...the last wicket caught Son bowled Dad! The Dumplings were well below par - with their four overseas players all, incredibly, dismissed for ducks!



*An intergenerational FF side with a typical mix of old salts and fine youngsters to face the Dumplings*

In reply, Neil Baker struck the ball in typically positive fashion for a fine run-a-ball half century, and was joined by James Fulton, who saw the FF home with little trouble from just 26 overs.

#### **Tuesday 11 July vs Somerset Stragglers @ Seaton**

SS 192 all out (Will McKegney 6-51)  
FF 196-1 (Robin Jones 98, John Ratledge 90\*)  
FF won by 9 wickets  
FF: James Fulton (capt), John Ratledge, Robin Jones, Jamie Baldwin, Jono Arscott, Barney French, Charlie McKegney (wk), Will McKegney, Rhys Jones, Oscar Ratledge, Rory Fulton.

Stragglers' skipper Luke Williams elected to bat first, and 60 was added at a run-a-ball, before Oscar Ratledge removed their dominant opener. Will McKegney settled into a long, controlled spell from the Colyton end, steadily working through the order, supported by Jamie Baldwin's military medium that

fooled skipper Williams. McKegney removed five of the top seven, including Peter 'United Though Untied' Deakin, caught behind by brother Charlie. His 21 overs unchanged featured 100 dot balls, and remarkably the top scorer in the Stragglers' innings was extras with 46!

The greying Light Blues John Ratledge and Robin Jones opened up for the FF, and had to be watchful against some decent bowling. Having seen off the new ball, they both accelerated to well-earned half centuries. It then became apparent that with only 193 needed for victory, the race was on to



*Jonno Arscott (side view) checking with the youngsters about the post-match plans on the Devon Riviera*

see if either could reach a hundred! The contest was close, but it appeared that with a flurry of boundaries and the strike at the right time, Jones was going to take the individual prize. However, attempting to hit the two required, he was bowled by a good full-length delivery by Luke Williams! Ratledge was left ten short, but with the satisfaction of a red-inker!

A splendid evening dinner was once again enjoyed at The Bistro up on Beer Head, with all players and families gathered together, this time inside in one big room.

**Wednesday 12 July  
vs MCC  
@ Seaton**

FF 138 all out (Charlie McKegney 41\*, Barney French 36)  
MCC 141-5 (Will McKegney 4-61)  
MCC won by 5 wickets  
FF: Chris Sandbach (capt), James Fulton,

John Ratledge, Neil Baker, Barney French, Charlie McKegney (wk), Will McKegney, James Pyman, Owen Marshall, David Maasdorp, Nathan Piddock.

Chris Sandbach won the toss and elected to bat, opening up together with James Fulton. However, the MCC opening bowlers made the very most of the wicket, regularly beating the bat. Having survived for nearly 12 overs, both openers were dismissed in quick succession. Batting looked ever harder, as the middle order was removed without the scoreboard advancing noticeably - and the sixth wicket fell in the 34th over with the score just 52. Barney French dug in, and found a more free-scoring partner in Charlie McKegney, perhaps batting a few places too low at nine. They added 52 for the eighth wicket, before the fall of French precipitated a swift end to the FF innings after nearly 63 overs, with McKegney left high and dry.

The total seemed a good 50 below par, but Will McKegney took the new ball from his favoured end, and kept the FF in the contest. He took the first four wickets to fall, with two fine catches by Dave Maasdorp, and at 81-4 an unlikely victory was still possible. However, without wickets from the other end, his efforts proved in vain, as the MCC batted sensibly with time on their side, and opener Kantolinne saw his side home with a fine 65 from 112 balls.

The evening continued at Seaton with both sides and many supporters enjoying the traditional barbeque masterminded by Charlie McKegney. Nick Baldwin presented the retiring groundsman Derek House with an FF tie...and then Peter Thwaites demonstrated his legendary yard of ale technique, before Doctor Dave Maasdorp stepped up to prove his misspent youth!

*Before battle at the wonderful Sidmouth CC  
to finish the Western Series*

**Thursday 13 July  
vs Sidmouth CC  
@ Sidmouth**

FF 247-3 dec (Chris Sandbach 134, Neil Baker 37, Jamie Baldwin 35, Omkar Khot 32\*) Sid 168-7  
(Will McKegney 3-39)  
Match drawn

FF: Jamie Baldwin (capt), Chris Sandbach, Neil Baker (wk), Omkar Khot, Alex Hume, James Pyman, Will Barker, Will McKegney, Owen Marshall, Dave Maasdorp, Nathan Piddock.

With the ground looking resplendent as ever for the scheduled 11.00 start, and skipper Jamie Baldwin winning the toss, we were frustrated by persistent rain showers. When the skies finally cleared, it was obvious that this was now going to be more like a 40 over match.

Chris Sandbach went in first with the captain, a pairing with 'previous' at this venue - and 77 was a more bijou partnership this time. Neil Baker added



further acceleration, before Omkar Khot joined Sandbach to demonstrate why he had brought his bat on tour! His elegant run-a-ball knock was the perfect accompaniment, as Sandbach reached a fine century and motored on towards the declaration in just the 38th over.

The Sidmouth reply was totally dominated by Devon's Luke Bess. But some good catching and wickets for Will McKegney

and 'Magic Arm' Maasdorp, assisted by a lightning stumping by Bakes, reduced the home side to 108-5. At this stage, Bess went for broke, dealing mainly in boundaries, and reached his hundred. Just when it looked like he might take his team close, he holed out off McKegney, with the score at 163. Thereafter, the block was on, and the final overs saw fielders all around the bat, but just one more wicket for McKegney.

So, a drawn match to finish another wonderful five days on the East Devon coast. As part of Sidmouth's bicentenary cricket week, Chris Sandbach and Luke Bess were the easy man-of-the-match selections of the captains, and Jamie Baldwin received a bicentenary cap from home skipper Charlie Miles. Nick Baldwin spoke of the valued long association with Sidmouth, and congratulated this great club on achieving 200 years - 33 years older than the FF - marking the occasion with the presentation of an FF tie for display in their historic thatched pavilion.

I would like to thank all 27 players who featured during the week, not least the match captains Alex Hume, Will McKegney, James Fulton, Chris Sandbach and Jamie Baldwin. We are extremely grateful once again to Peter Langford and Bernard Critchley for

their first-class officiating; Bernard also handling the tour finances. It was lovely to see so many former players and supporters, especially the ever-growing young families. It was especially nice to have Cherry Bretten and daughter Charlotte and her children on holiday for the week, as well as visits from John and Maggie Hamilton, and Bill Lawry; and Garri Jones and Arnie Clarke in non-playing roles. Although the weather was not the best, we managed to complete all five matches; and with extremely high availability of players and a wonderful mix of off-field activities, the 2023 Western Series was another memorable FF experience.

**NICK BALDWIN**

## OXFORDSHIRE AND HAMPSHIRE

Charlie McKegney looks after this region with some of the most beautiful school grounds and, with easy access from London, it is an attractive option for many in the Forester heartland. As a result, player recruitment is not difficult. It was the weather, though, which attracted many to play at Winchester College on the first dry day of the FF season. I am convinced that some of those who opt to play at Winchester are lured in by the thought of playing at the College who call their ground Lords. Each season I get a hopeful/naïve question along the lines of "are we really playing at Lords?" before the games at Winchester College! Will McKegney was the match manager for this game and noted "that the ground staff team worked tirelessly to produce a lovely (hybrid) pitch for us to play on - and the outfield was surprisingly dry

given how wet the month of April had been up until that point".

Some weary faces in the away team's dressing room suggested that there was an element of surprise at the game going ahead on a fairly murky Sunday morning. A few Saturday evening choices may have been different had we had a dry week of weather leading up to the game, but then again maybe not - it is often in adverse circumstances that players find themselves performing at their optimum level, or so people like to try to convince themselves!

And so when the home side won the toss and asked their visitors to field it was with great optimism that we took to the field, watched on by our self-selected 12th man, Omkar Khot, and our ever reliable scoring and umpiring

duo of Paul Stubbs and Bernard Critchley. My first thanks go to that trio for all they contributed on and off the field throughout the day.

At 89-1 from 20 we were staring down the barrel of a high run chase. However, Adam Forbes, who had just demanded an 11th straight over with the new ball, had other ideas. His short and wide delivery outside the off stump of the Winchester Captain (who scored a century against the FF last year and had also done so the day before at Bradfield) was cut to club debutant Riashabh Parekh at backward point. Huge celebrations, filled with irony and relief, would follow as we knew this was our chance to wrestle back some momentum. Forbes was then replaced with Joe Ireland, who so kindly provided a lunchtime and after match tippie, and he got to work straight

away. Fresh off a successful spell the day before, the big left-armer went on to claim figures of 5-27 from his 12 overs. Stuart Walter (2-51) and Ali Riyan (1-26) picked up our wickets from the other end and, overall, the team did very well to restrict their schoolboy counterparts to exactly 200.

Ali Carman was so determined to justify his trip out of London that he creamed the first ball he faced straight down the ground. A lovely sound off the bat followed shortly after.... as did the catch from the Winchester mid-off fielder! In truth, the Foresters never really got going. At tea we were treated to some words of wisdom from our batting coach, Ali Riyan, but ended up falling 62 runs short. Top contributors were the aforementioned candidate Parekh (33), bowling sensation Adam Forbes (26) and the ever-entertaining Brad Parry (20).



Looking at the scorecard you would be forgiven for thinking that the main talking point of this innings was the 23 over spell of the Winchester opening bowler. His 7-50 was full of control and hopefully we will see him in FF colours in years to come. However, it was his dismissal of fellow spinners union member Ireland that sparked an opinion not heard before in any cricketing circles the watching members had heard before. The next time you see Joe, do ask him about his batting pads and their validity in his kit bag. Despite the defeat, this was another great day for the FF. The 2023 season was up and running and all was put right in the Queen Inn shortly after stumps.

A grey and sticky Sunday morning greeted both sides at the serene Queen's College Ground in south Oxford for the third instalment of the latest series of matches between two of the most venerable wandering

sides - the South Wales Hunts and Free Foresters. Some injury-based changes to the XI resulted in Ellis Sabbagh-Holt and Rich Wills being drafted in, more on them later, and there was much excitement about the prospect of a Queen's College lunch and tea once again.

Foresters on-field captain, Nick Turk, won the toss and asked the Hunts to have a bat. Nathan Piddock and Turk were given a fairly sudden wake-up call, with Arnold (one of the Welsh side's two Ugandan internationals) punishing the opening spells as he raced to 50 just after the drinks break. Akshay Sreenivasan and Arjun Bhardwaj were brought quickly into the attack to stem the damage but Arnold and his partner Prothero were tucking in before lunch, the latter reaching his 50 before being dismissed by the FF's Gentleman Farmer, Wills.

Prior to this wicket, Arnold was undone by a gem from Sabbagh-Holt, whose opening 3 overs returned 2 wickets for only 6 runs. In partnership with the aforementioned Wills, whose off-spin teased from a great height, ESH pulled control back in favour of the FF, changing his pace, turn and flight with good effect. Akankwasa was the second of the Ugandan professionals and motored to a fifty before being castled by the fifth spinner, leggie Elliot Watkins before the interval. A customary Queen's College feast was laid on once more, with full hot and cold options, a huge range of salads and sides, tea/ coffee and around 3 or 4 options for dessert, including a first-class Eton Mess (the pick of the puddings for many Foresters and Hunts on the day).

Back to the cricket and whilst Rich Wills was closing his account with two

of the four Jones family members playing for the Hunts (finishing with 3-24 off 8 overs, including 2 wicket maidens), Watkins was finding his groove with the wicket of another Jones and Khan. He was controlling his pace and flight excellently and his 3 wickets were well-deserved. Special mention to his dad for his impeccable attire in the FF supporters' area.

By this point, Hunts captain Matt Jones (also a Forester) felt that his side had enough and called in his side to prepare to defend 244. A tepid start followed with James Richardson out for 0 in the third over, leaving Rishabh Parekh and Bhardwaj to rebuild. The young pair took the score to 41-1 with some excellent strokes before Khan snuck one through Bhardwaj's defences, triggering a collapse with Parekh and Ali Carman both being bowled with the score on 45, the FF 4 down.

Rhys Jones had previously entered at 45-3 and began to dig in, showing good patience alongside Watkins at 6. A partnership of 23 had built before Watkins was undone by Akankwasa, allowing Piddock to enter the fold and try to up the run rate at 68-5. The Penarth player played some elegant shots en route to a fast 10 but a ct. Jones b. Jones combo got the better of him, Rhys Jones still holding up his end. With the score on 80, Rhys's innings finally came to an end with the youngster scoring a gutsy 7 from 48 balls, batting well with Turk, who was refusing to budge himself. Sreenivasan and Wills were back in the pavilion following their own gutsy stints, facing 46 balls between them and accompanying captain Turk in the hopes of saving the game with the score past 100 at this stage. After the 9th wicket fell, it was down to ESH and Turk to form

some a West Country rear guard and solid defences from both ensured the FF came away with a draw.

Another game in Oxford in June saw the FF return to see old friends at Teddies. Old boy Ruairi Willis got together a strong side, batted first and posted an imposing 297-6 with guest Hofen scoring 85 before MM Willis came in to score a rapid 51 at the end. Then the spinning Sabbagh-Holt siblings from Cirencester – Louis (3-45) and Ellis (2-16) – broke the back of the school's batting and we ended up winning by 106 runs.

Another visit to Lords to play the Old Wykehamists in early July gave Tom Pugh a chance to delve deeply into his Filofax to get a side together – for some reason this game proved very hard to recruit for but those who played (apart from Babs...) all enjoyed what

was a very exciting game. A team of 9 had been assembled and eventually on the morning Babs was convinced to make the journey from North London by train and a current Wykhamist made up our 11. Babs had only been able to leave at about 10.30 from child care duties and arrived after a rapid walk from the station to see that he was next -and last man in with the FF 89-9. He quickly got changed and was quite relieved to see that he was not facing but that soon changed as number 10 was bowled and he tucked his unused bat under his arm and walked back to the pavilion. Things would have been a lot worse without a 50 partnership between Watkins (30) and Arnold (21) but still 89 was not much of a total. On a pitch taking spin, Pugh opened with his only seamer of any pace (T Pugh) and Ellis Sabbagh-Holt on at the College end. An early wicket for ESH then allowed a clearly worked up MM

to take the next three wickets and the game was on! ESH then took another couple before Elliot Watkins took 1 wicket as did the Fixtures Secretary in his only over before Pugh (3-20) was convinced to bring back ESH (4-46) to apply the coup de grace and a 9-run victory! Meanwhile Babs checked the return train times...

The Radley Rangers game on Bigside at Radley saw the old boys winning the toss and batting. Their innings got off to a poor start and at 19-3 things did not look good, but at 84-3 matters looked more positive. Then the spin trio of Sreenivasan, Walter and McKegney (W) changed things and the RR found themselves 86-7. A minor recovery and the RR stuttered to 128 all out. The FF reply was anchored by the Bibury CC duo of Carmen and Richardson who nearly took the score past 50 and whilst no batsman scored more than

30, the FF won by 4 wickets with Henry Redmayne seeing the game through.

Two miserable days took care of proposed games against Oxford Downs CC and Hampshire Hogs. Of all the close games in 2023 the most nerve racking in terms of tension was the win over the Rifles at St Cross in Winchester. Stuart Walter - a first time match manager - led his team from the rear - batting at number 11 and only coming on to bowl as third change. Some may find that unfulfilling but I feel it gives a match manager a chance to concentrate on captaining - and putting everyone in the team before themselves and then hoping that the team he has put together can conjure up an enjoyable and competitive game. Therefore, it must have been worrying to see the Rifles apparently cruising to victory at 204-7 with two well set batsmen chasing the FF's 211 all out.

Then Ollie Dean (son of James) was run out by Jay Parmar, three more runs were eked out (210-8) before a stumping and the last batsman being run out by Karan Parmar going for the run that would have seen the scores level. Quite a finish and an unexpected one-run win for the FF!

A new one-off fixture this year was Ellingham CC in south Hampshire, played to celebrate their centenary as part of a cricket week. Their ground is perched on a hill overlooking the New Forest just east of Ringwood with beautiful views to the north and the A31 and a McDonalds just to the north which was useful for the early arrivals looking for some sustenance! We won the toss and James Christian had no doubt about batting first on a hot day and a small outfield. No one failed batting wise with James Richardson top scoring with 76 with Jo Kelly and James

Caldwell scoring 50s. A declaration at 283 -3 from 50 overs seemed fair but with no seam bowlers to speak of, JC released his full array of spinners including all three members of the headband squadron (see last year's yearbook) and gradually the FF worked their way through the Ellingham batting order and we ran out victors by 96 runs with Akshay Sreenivasan taking three wickets to wrap up the game.

## FF IN THE HOME COUNTIES

Wet weather meant that no FF games were played in this part of the country until the end of May when Mark Costin's team travelled to Hertfordshire for our match with Incogniti CC. At the superb Tring Park CC where we were superbly hosted, FF lost the toss and were asked to field. On an overcast day it looked a good one for the seamers. Sadly, we only had one such in the XI. Owen Venables bowled

14 overs with control and skill to return figures of 2/47. He was supported by a barrage of spin which, on a wicket used 10 days prior for the NCCA T20 Finals Day, was taking turn. The pick of the bowlers was Arjun Bhardwaj with figures of 3/39 with his off spin. The Incogs were reduced to 70/6 at one point before their 7 and 8 batted superbly to get them up to 269 all out. A score we backed ourselves to chase.

It was not to be as most batters made starts but got in and out. 30 off 23 from Karan Parmar and 40 off 33 by Luke Dawson the picks. Eventually having to go at 7 an over for long periods of time on a spinning wicket, and our steadfast lack of interest in a draw, proved our downfall. Lots of pleasant cameos, but no-one went on as we were bowled out for 169 to lose by 100 runs. The 17 overs to go illustrated that we were on track, but for the wickets lost - no blockfest from the FF!

For your scribe, the day of the Band of Brothers game started with picking up Robbie Hardwick at a small station in what seemed like the middle of nowhere in Kent - but there was no mistaking Robbie standing outside the station in FF blazer and cap in 24C heat! Torry Hill is in the middle of the Garden of England and is one of those private grounds that reeks of history and tradition. The pavilion is not grand but the pitch is well looked after and the setting tranquil, with a five-minute walk to the old stables on the edge of the Leigh-Pemberton estate for lunch and tea. A glorious day helped and with a few girlfriends being persuaded to come and watch, the scene was set for the FF to win the toss, go big and then see if we could bowl out the Band of Brothers. New match manager Paddy Phillips had managed to arrive with 13 players but duly won the toss, Hardwick recognised a flat deck and

proceeded to tuck in with towering straight sixes his trademark. Four short of a century he was caught at long on but that only allowed Reid Mawdsley to show off to his girlfriend with an array of powerful shots. He didn't miss out on a century and thereafter claimed he was trying to get out but 146 from 92 balls seems to tell us that he didn't try too hard!

George Bretten scored a rather sedate 50 allowing the FF to declare at 362-4 after only 41 overs. On a small ground with a very fast outfield, we thought we had allowed the BoB enough time to get the runs but we had reckoned without a long tea and many ball hunts in the long grass surrounding the pitch. In the end it was fitting that Arthur Leigh-Pemberton (the heir to the estate) survived 13 balls for to ensure a draw in the last over with 9 wickets down.

Nearer London, Sevenoaks School is more suburban than the Garden of England but is still very much in Kent and has a beautiful ground away from the town centre. The FF batted first with a good sprinkling of Sevenoaks related players as well as those ever-present FF in 2023 – McIlwaine and Sreenivasan. Sevenoaks won the toss and were instructed by their MiC (David Smith – FF) to insert the FF - much to the chagrin of the rest of his players on a hot, windless day!

Aaron Bankay and old boy Alfie Marr-Johnson put on 72 in 10 overs after which Bankay (151) really dominated the rest of the innings with only Jay Parmar with 36 making a significant score. 273-7 seemed fair but it turned out our spinners held the key.

In reply Sevenoaks went off at a similar rate scoring 50 from 8 overs

with captain on the day and Old Sennockian Turk trying to relive memories of bowling down-hill at Solefields 40 years ago - but with little success... Ben Dawkins was the school's star bat scoring 26 from 24 deliveries and looking very accomplished before Akshay snared him. Thereafter Akshay (4-39), Ash Arora (3-30) and Rhys Jones (3-13) mopped up the rest of the school's batting. Ash's left arm wrist spin achieved prodigious turn to the extent that some batsmen seemed happy to leave balls pitching 30 cms outside off only to see them hit middle!! A comfortable win in the end thanks to Bankay's batting and the spinners being too much for a young team.

Bradfield College is the alma mater of Harry Came, the most recent FF player to play County cricket – now regularly opening the batting for Derbyshire. The

current crop of 1st XI players at Bradfield will no doubt want to emulate him.

Before the start of the game, the last two players to arrive at the ground were Rhys Jones and perpetual journeyman Akshay Sreenivasan. On entry to the changing room the other players were elated at the arrival of the keeper; in fact, even Rhys and Akshay were too, until it dawned on them. Without much further debate, Akshay took his box and assumed the role of the keeper and not twirling away with his left arm spin. Special mention to Bradfield College recent alumnus Matthew Bond on his Free Foresters debut as a guest. He was a late addition to the team and being in home conditions used the new ball well by hitting the deck hard and gaining some movement. Unfortunately, he got too much movement on one particular ball which exposed the inside edge of the opening batter, only for it to

'fly past the very much flightless Kiwi. Bradfield two top batsmen scored 50s as the school batted first and posted 250 -7 before declaring. For the FF, Parmar (J) and Totuka bowled tidily but without luck and it was left to the Sabbagh-Holt brothers and Wajid Shah to take the wickets though at some cost in runs conceded.

In reply with 7 of the top 8 having either played representative or FF Academy cricket, we looked to have a strong batting line up and we needed two or three to contribute. Parmar (K) scored a good 66 from 75 balls. When he was out at 141 and then another wicket fell at 160-8, it seemed the FF were doomed. However, Totuka was just getting into his stride and was joined by the younger Sabbagh Holt (2 from 17 balls) who proceeded to play a Jack Leach like innings while Totuka dominated a ninth wicket stand



of 70 with a fluent 79 from 57 balls including 11 fours and 3 sixes. It was sadly not our version of Headingley 2019 as Totuka fell and the last wicket could not quite score the 21 needed, falling 18 short. Quite a game and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The Bradfield Waifs game is the highlight of the season for many – a two-day game with a night of revelry in between and played on one of the better school grounds – The Pit at Bradfield College. Akshay Raja enthusiastically offered to run this game early in the year and then found out that his business commitments – running wine bars and opening one near the date of this game – would preclude him actually playing. He got a half decent side together with Academy stardust sprinkled amongst the lesser mortals. The FF won the toss and batted first with good contributions from Luke Maslan

(44), Freddie Smith (50) and Fergal Walter (56) declaring at 242-7. Maslin (3-16) and Ali Riyan (3-12) then helped bowl out the Waifs for 133 and a handy first innings lead.

Nothing scandalous has reached my ears about the night in between but something profound must have happened as we soon found ourselves at 73-8 and wishing that the first innings lead was higher. However, Maslan had been hidden down the order and batting at 10 hit 66\* from 50 balls including three sixes allowing Mark Goodeve-Docker to declare at 170-9! A poor start in pursuit of over 270 saw the Waifs struggling at 35-4 but one batsman scored a 100; however, when he was out at 169, the rest folded and we ran out winners by 71 runs with Karan Parmar taking 3-37, Ali Riyan 2-5 (from 7 overs) and James Boyle 2-34. Sign up early for this game next year!!

The game against the Gemini at the Sunningdale School is the domain of Rich Moffat and, as Fixtures Secretary, I delight in knowing that he will raise a side and organise the day superbly. This year he won easily chasing down the opposition's 176 all out for the loss of only 3 wickets. As for who starred in the Gemini innings and who scored our runs, I am none the wiser apart from knowing that Moff himself scored 68\*. Hopefully more information will be forthcoming next year!

Charterhouse Friars is also run expertly by Moff - this game is played for the Ed How Trophy in memory of a great left arm swing bowler and a not-so-great batsman who played for both the Friars and the FF. When at Cambridge playing the counties during the warm-up to the first-class season, Ed once scored 7\* for the Light Blues and declared it one of his



*Enjoying a pre match sherry*

finest cricketing achievements! Back to the game and at 82-2 the Friars had got off to a solid start and then Will McKegney (4-7) and Tom Clarke (3-12) reduced them to 136 all out. Things were not looking good when Parv Agarwal (9\*) joined Adam Forbes (55\*) with the score at just over 100 and 7 wickets down but Forbes finished matters with a flourish with a huge 6 and we re-claimed the Ed How Trophy.

Omkar Khot runs the Old Hurst Johnnians game with much style and panache from the campsite etiquette to celebrations when an OHJ becomes a new member of the duck club – this game is an institution and well worth travelling to Sussex to play in. There is a very full description of the weekend and the game on the website and so I will focus here on the part of that report that (loosely) concentrated on the game!

Having been wet, matchday arrived and, thankfully, the weather was excellent. The high levels of wind and sunshine had resulted in the pitch being playable and following the splendid Hurstpierpoint College breakfast, where we were also joined by George Read (candidate) we headed over to the Pavilion for an occasion rarely seen on the Sunday. As is customary at OHJ Cricket Week, the opening day (typically the Saturday v. Eton Ramblers) sees the home side's flag raised by Mr. T Moulton OJ (The Manager) with R.W. Smart OJ playing a piece on the trumpet, signifying proceedings are underway. This year, given the washout the previous day, it was Free Foresters and the rest of the playing XI arrived in good time to witness this.

And so to the toss, with the OJs winning (2021 FF guest James Brehaut their captain) and electing to bowl – a



*Keeping warm, if a bit blurry,  
in style at the campsite*

decision naturally welcomed by the FF Management team of Turk and Khot. One of last year's batting heroes, Barney French, opened with the aforementioned Read and both began in positive fashion to frustrate the bowlers, particularly those that came up the hill. French, sometimes known as Mustard, ticked the scoreboard over nicely and Read, whose full-English breakfast had clearly worked, began to pummel the OJs to all parts of the ground, racing to 50 within the first hour of the match.

That first hour was significant for the match, with the FF amassing 108-0

off 18 overs, allowing the remaining 8 players and Management to enjoy the full delights of the Sherry School. Shortly into the sweets, mediums and dries we lost our first wicket, the dangerous Read falling to leg-spin for a classy 89 and unlucky to not reach three figures. This brought in Ollie Dabinett-Jays, also a candidate who has been playing many of the FF Academy fixtures in 2023, and, after a steady partnership with French, he was unlucky to fall for 14. OJs enjoyed their best spell of the first innings, with some accurate spin-bowling clamping down on the Foresters in the middle to end overs that preceded a fantastic Sunday Roast in the College. Ollie was introduced to the Foresters by Tom Drake-Brockman, who dominated this fixture last year – both playing at Chichester Priory Park. George Bretten was famously in the unused engine room of that match (he also hid away from Sherry School) and he played

some fine shots before being caught by a screamer (the catch – not the fielder Ed) at long-on, the fielder misjudging the chance and recovering a la Ben Stokes in 2019 v. South Africa.

Thankfully, this allowed the other half of that unused engine room, Richard Moffatt, to come to the crease and enjoy a bat at Hurst after some Harvey's Bristol Cream but this clearly showed when he was undone for 3, the Foresters 224/5, needing a little push to secure a competitive target. However, it was the shrewd captaincy of McKegney that proved invaluable here, calling the players in on 241-6 off 55 overs. The carrot well and truly dangled.

On to the second innings and it was the perfect start for FF, Nathan Piddock (candidate) removing Chris Viggor for 0 and thus bringing about the first new member of the OJ Duck Club of the

week. Nathan, who took 4-29 for FF as a guest in 2022 was also responsible for new Duck Club members in last year's fixtures (having also played for South Wales Hunts the day after).

Akshay Sreenivasan was tidy up the hill, controlling the new-ball well with his standard licence agreement and he was rewarded with the big wicket of Semmence (FF) for 8 following another Piddock in-ducker that got the better of Longley for 15. The OJs 25/3 at this stage. The tea break provided some welcome solace for the hosts, as well as a strong range of sandwiches, cakes, scones and biscuits but it was all Foresters when both sides returned for the final session.

More Piddock and Sreenivasan magic undid for the entire OJs' top seven – the score 73 when Drew joined his captain Brehaut in the middle and allowed a

glimmer of hope. The pair put on 44 (in other words, 40/45) for the eighth wicket but Stuart Walter, who had earlier arrived in an excellent camper van, produced the key wicket of Brehaut for 37, smartly stumped by Cadle.

Dabinett-Jays was unlucky to not to pick up a wicket but it was McKegney who opened the operating theatre (Ed-is this a well known cricketing analogy?) and finished off the innings with 2-3 in 8 balls, the final wicket an excellent slip catch from Moffatt. Another shrewd individual, Brian Clough, would've described that team and captain's performance as professional and it was an outstanding return for Nathan Piddock, who took 5-42.

Overall. an excellent day and after both sides enjoyed the post-match debrief, this time in the White Horse, the remaining Foresters headed back

to camp for a BBQ finish. Ben Moulton cooking in full FF tie and jacket, quite right. We look forward to 2024's edition already!

Not far away in Worth, a very different outcome as for the first time in many years the Old Amplefordians took revenge on Babs and his FF team. We were bowled out for 85 and they scraped home by 4 wickets – it was a closer game in Ireland 3 weeks later.

## FF IN THE MIDLANDS

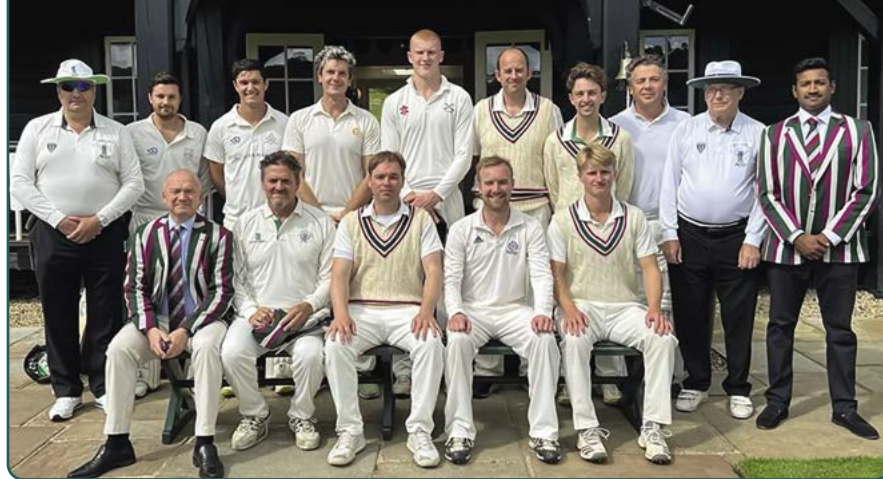
This collection of games covers a large swathe of the country and the Fixtures Secretary is relatively loose with his description of the Midlands to make sure that each regional rep has roughly the same number of games!

First up was the Cambridge Crusaders run by ex-Light Blue, Mel Ragnauth. He was able to collect a good band of

*The team to face  
Sir JP Getty's XI at Wormsley*

cricketers. The records of the game are somewhat contradictory as PlayCricket suggests we won by “0 wickets” whereas Mel’s result sheet claims a one-run victory. I will go with the latter – and assuming it was an overs game, we batted first with McIlwaine and Bhardwaj giving us a solid start before Parekh provided some late impetus with 72 and we finished on 229 all out. When the FF bowled, Phillips provided the seam option and thereafter it was spin only with Bassi (3-56) the pick of the tweakers. A hugely satisfying win for Mel in his first appointment as an MM.

The Staffordshire Gents game is a quintessential Forester game, expertly run for some time by Hugo Hadcock. His match report was short but with all the facts required: Good bowling performance from the FF - L Cosford (2-26), S Brook (2-28), M Henderson (1-35), N Kaimal (2-32), and R Wood (2-31) all



bowled well and we restricted the Staffs Gents to 165 all out. The FF chase was steady, with the standout batsmen being L Hadcock (66 not out) and L Cosford (33). As ever, a great lunch was provided by the Staffs Gents on what is always a fun day out for the FF.

Another cracking day out is the match v Burghley Park where we always bat first, have a sumptuous lunch, score well and then watch the home side chase our total down with ease. Manager Rob Wood promised a different result with quality bowlers and a higher declaration

and reported as follows: After winning the toss and batting FF started their innings with a stutter as BPCC’s new signing charged down the hill and dismissed the upper order.

After bowling changes were made the engine room of Omkar Khot and Tom McIlwaine compiled 110 for the fifth wicket. Both batted nicely, with Om’s wristy elegance particularly pleasing on the eye for 81. Some lusty blows by Billy Breen down the order set the total at 256, which was expected to be competitive.

Despite good spells by the FF opening attack of Freddie Loveland and Billy Breen, containment proved difficult. Without regular back up bowling BPCC scored the runs at a canter for the loss of only three wickets – plus ça change, Rob!

Babs Oduwale managed the FF team back to The Close at Rugby to play the Rugby Meteors thanks to FF Charlie Wedgwood after too long a break. Unfortunately, we did not return with a win as we collapsed to 126-9 and then saw the opposition score the runs easily for the loss of only 4 wickets. Oduwale was hampered somewhat with two other FF games happening on the same day due to a combination of circumstances forcing the Fixtures Secretary’s hand - suffice to say it will not happen again.

Through Garri Jones’ good offices, we were delighted to be invited to play

*Old Marlburian, Kent CCC  
and FF double-centurian , Billy Mead*

once again at Wormsley against Sir Paul Getty’s XI. Garri got together a strong team which was a mixture of selection and those who APPLIED for the game – I know in this easy-come-easy-go world, doing something radical like applying for games seems rather old school, but two or three people did apply and were rewarded with being involved in one of the best games the FF play. Garri was non-playing MM and, having lost the toss, we were asked to bat. A strong looking batting line up initially flattered to deceive and at 124-4 were looking below par. Luckily, Billy Mead was still batting and on 80 not out. With some help from Marshall (39), Meads scored 121 runs of the next 180 runs the FF compiled and we declared after 49 overs at 306-7 with Mead having just reached his 200\*.

It had been a hot day and so, facing a daunting total, we hoped the home side





would be somewhat deflated. However, there were some familiar faces in the invitational Getty XI's top 4 (Bovill x 2 plus Berlusconi). The home side proceeded to reach 150 for the loss of only 2 wickets. This was before FF's Frankie Brown got into the action, taking 5-47 allowing FF to end up impressive winners by 91 runs.

### FF IN THE NORTH

We don't play many games in the North early in the season, but Tom McIlwaine has a decent number of players to help and support our teams in some of the most beautiful but less well-known grounds in that part of the country. Certainly, we are lucky to play at Repton in late May, for example, where Mark Semmence welcomes us to one of the more stunning school grounds with the school chapel and the thatched pavilion as a back-drop. Tom had assembled a crack side with four current or former members of

the Academy plus a former pupil who made runs for fun as a school boy here. Our strength was in our batting but – a bit like England in the recent World Cup - only one batsman fired at all with Ed Hyde's 50\* allowing us to get to 133. That was never going to be enough, and we lost by 6 wickets with only Sreenivasan claiming any control with figures of 10-3-32-2.

Shortly afterwards but still just in May, we played King's School Chester for the first time in some years with Joe Benson having made the introduction with his old teacher and then offering to manage the game. Other local cricketers such as Mark Fearnell, Rohit Kaimal, Stephen Brooks and Freddie Cheshire complimented a mixture of four Indian tourists supporting Joe plus the Sabbagh-Holts and the ever-present Sreenivasan. Kamal and Cheshire got us off to a good start and with Fearnall

and Benson scoring 40s, we were able to declare at 237-9. The school never really got going and were happy to settle for a draw despite a hostile opening spell from Brooks, something a little less hostile from Abraham and then 24 overs of spin from Sabbagh-Holt x 2 plus Sreenivasan.

Staying in Cheshire, we are always glad to make the trip to Cholmondeley Castle to play the Cheshire Gents. We are looked after very well by Wayne Goldstein providing a sumptuous lunch with wine. If this largesse is meant to lull us into a post-match stupor, it has not worked for the last two years but this time, the Gents batted first and their 149 on a tricky wicket proved too good for us.

There was quite a break for the Northern FF chapter until the next game on a mini-Yorkshire tour in mid-August to play at Hovingham Hall –

a typically beautiful country house ground with the pitch immediately in front of the “big house” in the village of Hovingham. It is on the edge of the Howardian Hills just north of York. It has a very good bakery near the pond in the middle of the village which is well worth a visit if you have driven four hours to get to the ground and hence need some sustenance!

To the game itself – we lost the toss and hence were sent into the field. A very miserly opening few overs from Paul Wookey and Parv Agarwal meant that Romany were 27-3 from 10 overs. That soon became 45-5 after the introduction of some spin from the Sabbagh-Holt brothers before a 105-run partnership between 6&7 redressed the balance – it became fairly brutal towards the end! However, as soon as the hitting ended, 149-5 became 163-9 and a declaration

at about half time. A very steady opening partnership between Wood and Richardson settled the nerves and with Oxford Blue, Hardwick, coming in at three, the rest of the team discussed the night spots of York and/or the beer at the local pub which was only about 300 metres from the ground.

Needless to say, 83-1 soon became 92-4, and then 109-6. Captain Benson played beautifully for 34 before being run out by Sabbagh-Holt (L) and we were 135-8, Wookey came in and swung hard but not for long and so 13 were required for the last wicket. Louis S-H tried to turn hero with number 11 Turk running hard and despite a near fatal run out, a mis-field turned one into two and we won in the penultimate over. All the players retired to the Wolsey Arms for a few pints of beer and for some, their bed for the night. Wandering cricket in a nutshell!

The next day we were bound for Escrick Park and a date with our old foes – the Yorkshire Gents. We batted first and didn't really get going despite promising starts from Agarwal, Stanley and Hardwick and we finished 149 all out. At one point we did have James Richardson (YG) bowling to James Richardson FF which is one for the stat books out there! An excellent lunchtime curry seemed to fortify the team and the YGs stuttered along with all the FF bowlers either taking wickets or not giving away runs. Sabbagh-Holt (E) (not L who had been incapacitated by 4 pints of IPA the night before), Turk and Stanley all had identical figures of 2-13 but Agarwal was the pick of the bowlers with 3-19 and the FF ran out easy winners by 50 runs. After a few years running this game, Paul Wookey is going to Australia to play cricket and so Joe Benson will run the tour with help from the Gloucestershire chapter of the FF who will make the long but rewarding journey to Yorkshire again.

## FF IN LONDON

This area is looked after by a few long-standing and reliable FF members – Omkar Khot, Will Sandbach and Jake Kings albeit most of the match managers know the potential players reasonably well and indeed have no problems recruiting players apart from the curse of the MM – the last-minute drop out!

With a few games falling foul of the weather, Charterhouse was the first game of the season and played unusually on a Saturday. It was run by Ben Ryder-Smith with much help from Chris Sandbach and Babs Oduwale who have a network of players who are not tied to league cricket. Chris is the new master-in-charge of sport at Charterhouse and we look forward to playing the school on a regular basis. A pretty strong team on paper with the three Sandbach brothers and

various other quality players did not really function as a batting line-up with all of the top 8 bar one getting into double figures but with a top score of just 28. 150 did not look enough and the school chased it down with ease for the loss of only three wickets – two of them to Will Sandbach.

Eton has always been a strong opponent, and to keep things current, we played 2 x 100 games this year. Jake Kings reported as follows - Free Foresters gathered at Upper Club to take on Eton College in the first of two 100 (16.4 overs) matches.

Free Foresters were asked to bat in the first game and set a score of 165. Zac Jones contributed 106 runs off 61 balls, which included four 6s and 14 4s. Some wayward bowling from Eton also contributed 23 in

extras. Set 166 to win, Eton set about the target from the first ball. Merlin Stamper was runout on 72 from 42 balls and Aryaman Varma reached his 50 in 29 balls to help see Eton home with 2 balls to spare to win by 7 wickets.

After a fine lunch both teams took to the field for the second game. This time Eton opened the batting and reached 140 - 8. Amogh Karpe scored 52 off 42 balls. Chasing down this score without the assistance of Zac Jones, who had to go back to work, FF got off to a bad start losing a wicket in the second set (over). But Jack Attenborough set about the target and scored 65 off 41 balls, including nine 4s, before being caught at cover. Still needing 26 off 11 balls, FF fell short by 13 runs. An enjoyable day's cricket, with Eton players setting off for their half term break in good cheer.

Burton Court must be one of the most historic grounds that we play at and on a glorious early Sunday in June, Will Sandbach gathered a convivial team together and, at 36-5, the Guards seemed to be extending their hospitality beyond the pavilion. However, a 101-run partnership and a decent wag of the tail meant that the FF had to chase 210. Patrick Philips was the stand-out bowler with 4-31 from his 8 allotted overs. Scoring at just over 5 an over should not have been a problem on a lightning outfield. However, we managed to need 13 from the last two overs with two wickets in hand and then 9 from the last over with only one wicket in hand. Some frantic running left 4 needed from two balls, but with the last man facing, and Turk holed out to cover. A disappointing end to the day but it is hard to play cricket on this ground and not leave with a smile on your face!

Four days later we were at Harrow – another school's cricket super-power with Mark Ramprakash as the cricket pro producing a steady stream of quality cricketers. Harrow won the toss and batted first and at 166-1 in this 45 overs match looked well placed but at 220-6, MM Simon Roundell and his seventh bowler – Harry Baker (5-40) had pegged the school back with a late rally taking them to 286 all out off the last ball.

The FF had an explosive start from Josh Fisher scoring 35 from 22 balls with Arslan Khan (46), George Reed (47), Tom McIlwaine (38) and Redding Barnes (53) all contributing and keeping the FF in the hunt but we didn't have a batter being the glue for the chase and we fell an agonising 10 runs short! A great game enjoyed by all and many thanks to Simon Roundell for getting such a good side together.

The new fixture in 2022 at KCS Wimbledon saw Rhys Jones managing the side again and whilst currently in Canada, he posted the MM report from across the Atlantic: The FF rocked up in Wimbledon to blue skies and a track that, after being reseeded over the winter, promised to be less tricky than the pitch we played on last year. After winning the toss, the FF bowled. With the game following a similar course to last year, the opening bowlers had little to show for their mostly tidy spells against good top order batters – a 148 run opening stand. Thereafter, the spinners began to work their way through the order, with a 20 over spell from Mulhotra (5-68) giving new definition to “holding up an end”. At the finish, the part time off spin of candidate Nicholls would finish the KCS innings, with 2 wickets from 2 overs to give the FF a very reasonable 210 to chase from 50.1 overs. Unfortunately, none of the FF was able

to stick around, bar very handy knocks from Nicholls (40) and 36\* from Khot, and the FF ended up needing 24 off the last over with 8 down. Mulhotra decided he was J. Buttler-come-again and went for it, only to get caught at mid-off. The skipper came to the crease with 4 balls to survive to draw the game, but was trapped LBW on the last ball of the day! We go again in 2024!

Our friends from Mumbai CC came over again in 2023 and Ted Peggie, who had toured to India in 2022, took over running the game. He found a great pitch to play on at Reigate Priory CC but we didn't quite perform and our form from the Indian tour followed us back to the UK. Only Sanjoy Bassi with 36 seemed to cope with the MCC attack and we were all out for 136. At 68-3 in reply, we sniffed a chance after two wickets for Ali Riyan but only one more wicket fell and we lost in only 27

overs so avenging their defeat from the year before.

We had two Aussie touring sides over to coincide with the Ashes and although the Crusaders game was rained off, we played IZ Australia at Royal Ascot CC which Garri Jones managed. FF were inserted by the Australia IZ on a warm day. James Nelson anchored the innings with 82 and was the last man out in the 52nd over. No one else really troubled the scorers except John Carroll caressing an elegant 25 and Parv Aghawal with a powerful 40 towards the end.

199 all out felt 25-50 runs short and so it transpired. Despite good swing bowling from Will Steel, aggressive Chinamen from Charlie Carroll and 3 catches from Jono Arscott, the Aussie IZ cantered home with 15 overs to spare. Of note, the Aussie

IZ were captained by Geoff Lovell who in 1992 was the first Bradman Scholar sent to Oxford University from Sydney University. Geoff captained the Oxford XI that lost at Lord's to a team containing 3 of the FF team, Carroll, Arscott and match manager, Jones.

After a hiatus of a year, Nomads suggested playing the game against them at Ascott Park as opposed to Blackheath. Ascott House and Gardens is the historic rural retreat of the de Rothschild family which was gifted to the National Trust. The cricket ground is part of the 30 acres in the estate. It was a popular choice and although the wicket offered quite a lot of help to the bowlers, the setting made up for it. The Nomads won the toss and batted but candidate Andrew Stephens soon got into the swing of things reducing the opposition to 52-6 before the lower order helped their number 4 more than

double their score and reach 135 all out with Stephens taking 7-27 in just over 6 overs!

The FF knew it was not going to be easy and were soon in trouble at 12-3 and 50-5 with father and son Wood – Rob and Harry (c) – part of the damage. Then Candidate Elliot Watkins joined Karan Parmar and serenity ruled with a steady 88 run partnership from 140 balls bringing victory by 5 wickets. Parmar was the key with 70\* but he could not have done it without a steadfast Watkins scoring 27\* from 70 balls – ironically hitting the only 6 of the innings.

Traditionally the Adastrians is the last game of the season but that does not stop James Cunningham recruiting his team for this match in early April and getting concerned when his team sheet is not nailed on by the beginning

of May. I wish all MMs had this attitude! His match report was not of the “short and pithy” variety either:

After months of miserable weather and just as the cricket season wraps up for most, the FF were treated to some glorious sunshine at Vine Lane for our fixture against the Adastrians. We had a strong XI despite some last-minute scrambling for players after late dropouts. A notable drop out was the lesser-seen Christian Cabburn, who is yet to repay match manager James Cunningham for kicking him out of his room in India so he could entertain his Tinder match – next year, Cabbers...

Captain Nick Turk covering for the injured match manager lost the toss but much to the delight of the FF, we were put into bat. Ali Ryan and George Carpmael opened up against some tidy bowling. Ali, hungry for

some runs to end his season, gave us a masterclass in ball counting and farming the strike. His attitude prevailed as he scored a classy 55. George and Billy Hughes unfortunately failed to trouble the scorer, Paul Stubbs, who was taking a break for the day from his new appointment as an international scorer. Finding ourselves at 56-3, Arjun Bhardwaj walked to the crease in full Essex CCC whites, and fortunately for us he showed the FF just why he possesses those whites, scoring a delightful 110\*. Despite the incredibly deep FF batting line-up, Turk found himself batting at 6; one imagines this to be the highest he has ever batted (Ed – wrong JC, 2). Unfortunately, he failed to repay the MMs trust by not capitalising on the promotion and at 146-6 off only 24 overs which had taken 3 hours, we needed to kick on so that we could make the declaration. Thankfully, James Christian walked to



the crease with Arjun looking settled. JC found himself trapped LBW on the first ball; however, it was clear the umpire had had a shocker so after a few laughs and some good sportsmanship from the opposition, JC was given a reprieve. The Adastrians would come to regret calling JC back as he went on to blast 50\* off 39, in a 115-run partnership with Arjun off 72 balls. Arjun, showing little mercy, dispatching the 13-year-old bowler out of the ground a number of times. Thanks to this late onslaught, Turk was able to make the declaration with the FF making 261-6 off 43 overs.

Lunch was taken between innings at 15:00, a decent spread was laid on, topped off by some magnificent cakes. Sadly, for the FF, the MM decided not to grace us with his presence at lunch, instead went home and was not to be seen for the rest of the day.

The FF took to the field, looking to get through their overs slightly quicker than the opposition. Tim Peters, England over 60s player, took the new ball in his shiny new spikes and bowled a very tidy opening spell alongside Billy Hughes who claimed two wickets in his first over to leave the Adastrians at 0-2. The Adastrians made a good recovery largely thanks to some dire FF fielding. Thankfully, Tim managed to break this partnership taking the key wicket of the Adastrians solid looking opener. Tom Clarke bowled tidily, supporting Hamish Smart at the other end, who having taken wickets in India was given the chance to show his remarkable array of full tosses and rank long hops but much to everyone's surprise, failed to pick up a wicket. The FF, keen to get as many overs in as possible before 17:00, pushed on in the searing heat, Captain Turk refusing to stop for drinks much to his troops' disgruntlement (a key reason

you don't make an ex-Gurkha officer, captain). James Christian helped the FF charge by bowling a very tidy and rapid (over rate, not pace!) spell before the last hour began.

The game was finely poised with the Adastrians at 141-4, needing another 120 off 20 overs, with their number four nicely settled. The FF opted for a couple of bowling changes, bringing on Ali and Arjun. Ali with his first ball was able to make the crucial breakthrough thanks to a brilliant catch from Ted Peggie, who had already been showing his class behind the stumps. Ali then managed to make it 2 in 2 but wasn't able to take the hat-trick. He did, however, pick up one more in his first over and quickly decided he would not bowl again leaving him with figures of 1-1-0-3. Arjun continued his fine day out by picking up two wickets, finishing with figures of 3-2-1-2. The

FF looked destined to win now with one wicket needed from 9 overs. Tim thought he had the final wicket, but Umpire Anton deemed it a no ball after a shadow moved on the wicket during the delivery. Thankfully though, it wasn't long until victory was finally sealed, and it was sealed in the most spectacular fashion when the 'seasonal bird' (as John Hamilton FF calls Nick Turk) quite literally taking flight and taking a one-handed blinder at mid-off to make up for his poorer efforts earlier in the innings, followed by huge elation from his fellow team mates – a very satisfactory win! Thanks as ever to Stan Boardman for his hosting and general generosity as ever – indeed after a few years of a “dry” Vine Lane, it was great to have a few beers after the game in the late September sun.

With a few connections with the HAC, we managed to re-arrange a game against

them in mid-September having originally been due to play in the middle of the season. Babs selected (this being one of the over-subscribed games we play!) a decent side but that didn't stop the HAC reaching 175-1 before Matthew Jones took four wickets and they declared at 245-6. A solid 56 run opening stand between Carty (52) and Clarke (30) soon became 65-3 and then 108-5 before Oscar Watson (62) set up the run chase, but at 181 Watson was out and despite rapid 20s from Elias and Kula-Preswanski we fell 31 runs short.

The final game of the season was against Porto CC (old friends from Portugal and of course home of our sponsors, Graham's Port) and was again held at Royal Ascot CC thanks to Rich Moffatt's links there. Adam Johnson won the toss and batted with Moffatt (65) using his local knowledge to top score with most others

contributing but 206 was probably less than we should have got. However, at 67-4 and 114-6 with their top scorer just out, Porto CC were looking on somewhat shaky ground but two rapid innings at well over a run a ball in an eighth wicket stand meant they were able to cruise home in 31 overs with only two wickets in hand. Thoughts turned to a return fixture in Porto asap! And so ended the FF 2023 season – one notable for close finishes with 13 matches being lost or won by fewer than 20 runs or two wickets and to me that is the epitome of good wandering cricket. I would like to think that the FF ethos of not wanting to play overs cricket is part of these statistics. We do not want boring draws and, especially with schools, we hope our opposition appreciates that playing us will be both competitive and enjoyable.

*NICK TURK*

A confab following the fall of a wicket



## FF ACADEMY

Mark Rochester, Director of the FF Academy U/25s, writes:

Overall, this was a mixed season for the Academy. Multiple young players were blooded, especially towards the end of the season and significant contributions came from a wide variety of players which can only be good for our club. With a bit more luck with injuries and availability of senior academy players, we could well have won the majority of our fixtures.



The Beynon Cup trophy-winning Academy team

We won well against Royal Navy 1st XI, but were disappointed to lose this year in good battles against strong Army and Royal Air Force XIs. We won our two games in the T20 Beynon Cup Quadrangular tournament played between Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and FF. Once again, the day was hosted most hospitably by Bishop Stortford CC and expertly and efficiently organised by Ian Potton of Herts. It was a notable achievement to win the trophy for the third season in a row.

For me, this was another great season, and, yet again, a privilege to be part of seeing these talented young players come together from various parts of the country, play as a team and also take on board information from me

as coach about how we ought to go about the various batting and bowling challenges. Personally, and on behalf of the club, a big 'thank you' is owed to Paul Stubbs for scoring in these top games at the same time as keeping me informed about run rates and various opposition stats.

My highlight of the season was winning the Beynon Cup for a third season against Minor Counties Development XIs. The game against Bucks was particularly good. Seeing Gareth Schreuder and Billy Mead put on a partnership of 178 in 95 balls, dispatching the bowling to various parts of Bishop Stortford CC ground was just a joy and goes down as great memory.

Finally, may I wish the best of luck to all those who play in the Academy in 2024 as there is no ceiling to our Academy players potential.



Mid-game tactical discussion

## PLAYER STATISTICS

(These figures only reflect those matches recorded in Play-Cricket)

A total of 46 Players used in Academy games, with the following playing in 3 or more matches.

- 5 Aizaz Ahmed  
Jay Palmer  
Ollie Dabinett-Jays  
Wajid Shah  
Yuvee Malhotra
- 4 Billy Mead  
Joe Kooner-Evans
- 3 Adam Forbes  
Harsh Parmar  
Karan Parmar  
Lucas Smith  
Sikander Rizwan

## FF SECRETARY FIXTURES 2023

This was a mixed season for the four prestigious Secretary fixtures, winning two and losing two.

In June we played both Cambridge and Oxford University teams in the traditional two innings format over 3-days, beating the Light Blues by 152 runs and losing to the Dark Blues by 9 wickets.

In August, we were entertained by Sir Paul Getty at Wormsley to play his XI and won by 91 runs in a thrilling declaration game.

The final Secretary game was a new fixture against a Combined Universities XI played at the beginning of September at Arundel Castle This was a closely fought 50-over game which we lost by 2 wickets.

## RESULTS

**Free Foresters**  
309/9 (dec) & 156-7 (dec)  
**Cambridge University**  
134-10 & 176-10

**Free Foresters**  
141-10 & 211-10  
**Oxford University**  
327-10 & 27-1

**Free Foresters**  
306-7 (dec)  
**Sir Paul Getty XI**  
215-10

**Free Foresters**  
260-10 (39.4)  
**Combined Universities**  
264-8 (46.1)

## CUCC

Against Cambridge University, we won the toss and elected to bat. The openers put on 112, reaching 152 for fall of the 3rd. A 4th wicket 50 run partnership saw FF at 224 runs. Having passed 300 runs, captain Adam Forbes declared with an hour of play remaining on Day 1. Cambridge finished the day on 30-4.

Day 2 started well for FF and by lunch, Cambridge were 109-7. After lunch, FF quickly set about the tail. With a lead of 172, Adam Forbes decided not to enforce the follow-on, FF planning on quickly extending the lead. However, we got off to a bad start losing one of our openers to first ball of the second innings. At tea, FF had reached 68-2. We then declared with an hour's play left to go at the Cambridge top order. This time Cambridge hung on and finished the day 30-0, 298 runs behind.



Day 3 and FF found wickets difficult to come by in the first session with Cambridge 133-3. However, after lunch the tide turned and wickets began to fall as our spinners began to dominate. Cambridge could only manage to put on another 43 runs.

For FF, Aaron Bankay 77; Ethan Berlusconi 109; Joe Kooner-Evans 5-47 & Wajid Shah 6-46

## Oucc

Buoyed by our victory over Cambridge, we assembled at the Parks in Oxford the following week. Winning the toss we elected to bat. We seemed to have

left our batting at Fenner's as FF found themselves 121-8 at Lunch. Oxford, on resumption of play, finished us off quickly, leaving one-and-a-half sessions left in the day. After a couple of early wickets, Oxford reached 104-2 at tea, and closing the day on 207-8.

Day 2 saw Oxford extend their lead with Saqlain Choudhry scoring an excellent 111 runs, before finally being dismissed with 20 minutes of play before lunch. FF survived this period to be 11-0. After lunch, two wickets fell in quick succession before a 4th wicket 109 run partnership saw FF at a respectable 141-3. At tea on Day 2, FF

FF v Combined Universities:  
the two sides at Arundel

reached 177-7, with Billy Mead on 105. FF passed 200 runs shortly after tea with all-rounder Saqlain Choudhry getting his 5th wicket to go with his earlier first innings century. With less than an hour's play left, Oxford set about chasing down the 25 runs required.

A wicket in the second over brought some relief to FF; however, the inevitable happened and Oxford recorded a resounding victory inside two days. Our thanks to James Pyman and the rest of the Oxford team for entertaining the FF team at Vincents.

For FF, Max Chu 77; Billy Mead 115; James Nelson 4-100

## SIR PAUL GETTY XI

As noted earlier in the season report, a bright sunny day in late August, FF gathered at the beautiful ground of Wormsley in the Chiltern Hills. Sir Paul



Getty XI won the toss and put FF into bat. FF got off to a strong start reaching 138-4 at lunch with opener Billy Mead on 88. A 5th wicket 100 run and 6th wicket 50 run partnership saw FF pass 300 runs, with skipper Liam Casey finally declaring on 306-7 after 49.1 overs once Billy Mead had made his double century, finishing on 201\* off 122 balls in 197 minutes with 26 4s and 5 6s.

Sir Paul Getty XI set about the run chase in true bazball fashion reaching 50 inside 7 overs and at tea were 93-2 (13 overs). "Could they chase down?" was the talk at tea amongst the officials. At drinks and

before start of last hour, Sir Paul Getty XI had reached 153-4. Twenty overs to score another 153 runs with 6 wickets in hand, a task that they set about. But soon wickets fell and Sir Paul Getty XI were bowled out for 215 with Frankie Brown finishing on figures of 11.5 – 1 – 47 – 5.

## COMBINED UNIVERSITIES

In early September, FF once again gathered at the picturesque ground at Arundel Castle to play a Combined Universities side. Adam Forbes winning the toss elected to bat. At the end of the first Power Play (10 overs) FF had reached 77-2. With 3rd and 5th wicket 50 run partnerships and

Billy Mead in dominate form alongside Adam Forbes and Aaron Bankay, FF were looking at a 300 plus total. However, Billy Mead was caught at Backward Square Leg on 99 and FF were 191-5. FF could only manage another 59 runs to be bowled out for 260 in 39.4 overs.

Combined Universities set about this target needing to score at 5.2 per over. At the end of 1st Power Play they were 64-0, well ahead of run rate. During the middle Power Play, wickets began to fall to the spinning duo of Raja Akshay and Ollie Chaplin and after 40 overs had Combined Universities at 216-7. Saqlain Choudhray dug in scoring 86 before being caught by Wajid Shah, but the damage had been done and at 260-8 Combined Universities need one score to win which came the very next ball as a boundary saw them pass the target.

Billy Mead 99; Aaron Bankay 47; Raja Akshay 10-2-34-4; Ollie Chaplin 10-3-29-2.

Top 5 Batters	Runs	Games	Innings	Top score
Billy Mead	415	3	4	201*
Ethan Berlusconi	145	2	3	69
Aaron Bankay	124	2	3	62
Max Chu	77	1	2	76
Karan Palmer	62	2	4	34

Top 5 Bowlers	O	M	R	W	Best
Wajid Shah	33.6	2	121	8	4/24
Ollie Chaplin	31	8	81	6	2/15
Joe Kooner-Evans	27.5	7	83	5	4/31
Frankie Brown	11.5	1	47	5	5/47
Raja Akshay	10	2	34	4	4/34

MATCH RESULTS SUMMARY

Opponents	Match Manager	FF score	Oppo Score	Result	Margin	Key performances
Oxfordshire	Babs Oduwole	Abandoned				
RAF	Mark Rochester	Abandoned				
Marlborough College	Nick Turk	Abandoned				
Malvern College	Richard Howitt	Abandoned				
Wellington College	Robin Jones	Abandoned				
Shrewsbury School	Will Mason	Abandoned				
Winchester College	Will McKegney	138 ao	200 ao	Lost	62 runs	Joe Ireland - 5-27
Sherborne School	Tom Atkins	193 - 5	194-9	Lost	1 wkt	
Charterhouse	Ben Ryder-Smith	150 ao	154-3	Lost	7 wks	
Royal Navy	Mark Rochester	123-2	121-6	Won	8 wks	Adam Forbes 63 Sanjoy Bassi 3-11
Royal Navy	Mark Rochester	176-9	173-5	Won	3 runs	Ollie Dabinett-Jays 63
The Authentics	Mike Hargrove	Abandoned				
Clifton College	Adam K-P	178-9	218-5	Lost	40 runs	Vishal Mumgai 50 Rupert Swetman 3-25
Crusaders	Mel Raganuth	229-9	228-9	Won	1 run	Rishabh Parekh 72 Sanjoy Bassi 3-56
Repton School	Tom McIlwaine	133 ao	134-4	Lost	6 wks	Ed Hyde 50
Eton College	Jake Kings	165-6	166-3	Lost	7 wks	Zac Jones 100
Eton College	Jake Kings	127-8	140-8	Lost	13 runs	Jack Attenborough (G) 65
Kings School Chester	Joe Benson	237-9	129-8	Draw		
Incogniti	Mark Costin	169 ao	269 ao	Lost	100 runs	Arjun Bhardwaj 3-39
OUCC Women	Paul Askew	181-6	66-7	Won	115 runs	Isla McCulloch 50



Opponents	Match Manager	FF score	Oppo Score	Result	Margin	Key performances
OUCC Women	Paul Askew	118-8	63-7	Won	55 runs	Charlotte Stubbs 4-9
Guards	Will Sandbach	Lost	5 runs			
Harrow School	Simon Roundell	276-8	286 ao	Lost	10 runs	Redding Barnes (G) 53 Harry Baker (G) 5-40
Band of Brothers	Patrick Phillips	362-4	222-9	Draw		Reid Mawdsley 146 Robbie Hardwick 96 George Bretten 51
Sevenoaks School	Nick Turk	273-7	123 ao	Won	150 runs	Aaron Bankay 151 Akshay Raja 4-39 Rhys Jones 3-13 Ashwani Arora 3-30
OUCC	Mark Rochester	189-9	192-2	Lost	8 wks	
CUCC Women	Paul Askew	253-2	28 for 8	Won	225 runs	Jess Oloenshaw 62 and 3-6 Emily Barrett 57 Laxmi Johal 52 Sairose Del Tufo 3-3
Bradfield College	Wajid Shah	232 ao	250-7	Lost	18 runs	Uday Totuka 79 Karan Parmar 66
South Wales Hunt	Omkar Khot	136-9	243-8	Draw		Richard Wills 3-24 Elliott Watkins 3-46
Tonbridge	Joe Shamash	Cancelled	Cancelled - FF			
CUCC	Mark Rochester	306 -9 & 156-7	134 ao and 176 ao	Won	152 runs	Ethan Berusconi 69 Aaron Bankay 62 Joe Kooner-Evans 4-31 Waj Shah 4-24 Aizaz Ahmed 3-20
Staffordshire Gents	Hugo Hadcock	166-5	165-9	Won	5 wks	Leo Hadcock 65*

Opponents	Match Manager	FF score	Oppo Score	Result	Margin	Key performances
Cheltenham College	James Croft	224-9	151-7	Draw		Will Mason 56
KCS Wimbledon	ROJ Jones	196 ao	220ao	Lost	24 runs	Yuvee Molholtra 5-68
St Edwards Oxford	Ruari Willis	297-6	191 ao	Won	106 runs	C Hofen (G) 85 Louis Sabbagh-Holt 3-45
OUCC	Mark R	141 ao and 211 ao	327 ao and 27-1	Lost	9 wks	Max Chu 74 James Nelson 4-100 Billy Mead 109
Mumbai CC	Ted Peggie	139 ao	142-4	Lost	6 wks	
Old Wykehamists	Tom Pugh	89 ao	80ao	Won	9 runs	Ellis Sabbagh-Holt 4-46 Tom Pugh 3-20
Burghley Park	Rob Wood	256ao	257-3	Lost	7 wks	Omkar Khot 81 Tom McIlwaine 68
Crusaders Australia	Tim Abraham	Abandoned				
Bradfield Waifs	George Sandbach??	242-7 and 170-9	133 ao and 208 ao	Won	71 runs	Fergal Walter 56 Freddie Smith 50 Luke Maslin 3-16 Ali Riyan 3-12 Luke Maslin 66 Karan Parmar 3-37
Wiltshire Queries	Adam Kula	222-4	219 ao	Won	6 wks	Praytush Ramesh 104 Josh Kelly 73 Cameron Silva (G) 4-33 Seb Woodford 3-52
Army Women	Paul Askew	128-8	130-6	Lost	4 wks	
IZ Australia	Garri Jones	199 ao	200-5	Lost	5 wks	James Nelson 82
Gemini	Richard Moffat	176-3	175ao	won	7 wks	Richard Moffat 68*

Opponents	Match Manager	FF score	Oppo Score	Result	Margin	Key performances
Rugby Meteors	Babs	126-9	127-4	Lost	6 wks	Pete Deakin 55 Jono Arnscot 50 Alex Hume 3-41
Budleigh Salterton	Nick Baldwin	203-7	204-7	Lost	3 wks	
Devon Dumplings	Nick Baldwin	121-2	120ao	Won	8 wks	
Somerset Stragglers	Nick Baldwin	196-1	192ao	Won	9 wks	Robin Jones 98 John Ratledge 90* Will McKegney 6-51
Army	Mark Rochester	150ao	152-4	Lost	6 wks	Will McKegney 4-61
MCC	Nick Baldwin	138 ao	141-5	Lost	5 wks	
Sidmouth	Nick Baldwin	247-3	168-7	Draw		
Nomads CC	James Barker	138-5	135 ao	Won	5 wks	Karan Parmar 70 Andrew Stephens 7-27
Radley Rangers Stuart Walter 3-24	Charlie Mckegney	129-6	128 ao	Won	4 wks	Henry Redmayne 3-13,
RAF	Mark Rochester	247-8	250-1	Lost	9 wks	Aizaz Ahmed 52
Charterhouse Friars	Richard Moffat	137-6	136 ao	Won	4 wks	Will McKegney 4-7 Tom Clarke 3-12 Adam Forbes 55*
Oxford Downs CC	Chris Sandbach	Cancelled				Gareth Schreuder 70 Wajid Shad 64 Ollie Dabinett-Jays 3-18 Joe Kooner-Evans 3-22
Royal Navy	Mark Rochester	191-8	185 ao	Won	2 wks	

Opponents	Match Manager	FF score	Oppo Score	Result	Margin	Key performances
MCC Women	Paul Askew	72-6	265-5	Lost (DLS)	109 Runs	Dan Stanley 101 retd
Worcester Gents	Akshay Raja	225-2	239-4	Draw		
UK Armed Forces Women	Paul Askew	Abandoned				
Sussex Martlets Women	Paul Askew	166-7	168-1	Lost	9 wks	George Read 89 Barney French 62 Nathan Piddock 5-42
Hampshire Hogs	Waj Shah	Abandoned				
Cheshire Gents	Leigh Dickinson	106ao	149-8	Lost	43 runs	
Old Amplefordians	Babs Oduwole	85 ao	89-6	Lost	4 wks	
Old Hurstjohnnians	Omkar Khot	241-6	124 ao	Won	117 runs	
Romany	Joe Benson	165-9	164-9	Won	1 wkt	Parv Agarwal 3-19 Nick Turk 2-13 Ellis Sabbagh Holt 2-13 Dan Stanley 2-13
Yorkshire Gents	Paul Wookey	149ao	99 ao	Won	50 runs	
Philanderers	John Ratledge	308-8	309-6	Lost	4 wks	
Rifles	Stuart Walter	211 ao	210 ao	Won	1 run	Joe Kelly 56 Karan Parmar 3-51
The Infantry	James Pyman	Abandoned				Billy Mead 201* Frank Brown 5-47
Sir Paul Getty XI	Garri Jones	306-7	215 ao	Won	91 runs	
Ellingham CC	James Christian	283-3	187 ao	Won	96 runs	

Opponents	Match Manager	FF score	Oppo Score	Result	Margin	Key performances
Beynon Cup Bucks	Mark Rochester	210-3	110 ao	Won	100 runs	Gareth Screuder 118 Billy Mead 53*
Old Amplefordians	Nick T	200 ao	201-9	Lost	1 wkt	Akshay Raja - 4-76
Leprechauns	Nick T	183-5	182 ao	Won	5 wks	Michael Glass 63* Dave Andrews 50*
Cryptics	James Richardson	Cancelled				
CCC	Mark Rochester	207 ao	202-3	Lost	2 runs DLS	Hugh Teesdale 3-46
Adastrians	James Cunningham	261-6	184 ao	Won	77 runs	Arjun Bhardwal 110* Ali Riyan 57 and 3-0 James Christian 50*
Combined Universties	Mark Rochester	260 ao	264-8	Lost	2 wks	Billy Mead 99 Akshay Raja 4-35
HAC	Babs	214 ao	245-6	Lost	31 runs	Oscar Watson 62 Seb Carty 52 Matthew Jones 4-38
Porto CC	Adam Johnson	206 ao	210-8	Lost	2 wks	Richard Moffat 65 Akshay Raja 3-40

Won29

Lost33

Drew6

Abandoned11

Cancelled3

TBC1 - Philanderers

Total82

PLAYER STATISTICS FOR 2023

These figures only reflect those matches recorded in Play-Cricket. There are 14 matches for which, alas, we do not have **full** scorecard details recorded. Our recent policy is to have all our games recorded via PlayCricket, in part to allow complete statistical analysis. We hope to reach 100% PlayCricket coverage in 2024.

Top 5 Batters	Runs	Games	Innings	Top score	Average
Billy Mead	514	7	7	201*	102.8
Aaron Bankay	452	5	6	151	90.4
Omkar Khot	227	9	7	81	45.4
Karan Parmar	517	17	19	70*	39.44
James Richardson	224	11	11	76	22.4

Top 5 Bowlers	O	M	R	W	Best	Econ	Strk rt	Ave
Raja Akshay	132	28	483	29	4/34	3.66	27.31	16.66
Will McKegney	74	15	251	18	6/51	3.39	24.67	13.94
Ellis Sabbagh-Holt	79.5	7	356	16	4/46	4.46	29.94	22.25
Andrew Stephens	12.4	2	54	14	7/27	4.26	5.43	3.86
Karan Parmar	53.2	6	276	13	3/37	5.18	24.62	21.33

Top 5 Fielding records	Catches	Other	Total
Raja Akshay	9	1	10
Charlie McKegney	7	2	9
Nick Turk	6	2	8
Karan Parmar	5	2	7
Ollie Dabinett-Jays	7		7

Number of matches played (three or more matches)		
<b>22</b> Rajagopalan Akshay Sreenivasan, Karan Parmar	<b>8</b> Robert Wood, Will McKegney, Louis Sabbagh-Holt	Bradley Parry, George Sandbach, Joel Leacock
<b>20</b> Jay Parmar	<b>7</b> Parv Agarwal, Babs Oduwale, Stuart Walter, George Bretten, Aaron Bankay	<b>3</b> Jamie Baldwin, Chris Sandbach, James Fulton, Josh Fisher, Nick Chaplin, Mark Costin, James Christian, Adam Kula-Przez wanski, Robbie Hardwick, Timothy Abraham, Ethan Berlusconi, Jemma Dreyer, James Caldwell, Liam Casey, Ted Peggie, Joe Benson, Mark Rochester, Nathan Piddock, Sikander Rizwan, Luke Dawson, Poppy Burnyeat, Alex Thomas, Harsh Parmar, Dan Stanley, Duncan MacKay, Joseph Kelly, Lucas Smith, Barney French, Neil Baker.
<b>16</b> Wajid Shah	<b>6</b> Freddy Loveland, Rhys Jones, Paul Wookey, Rishabh Parekh, Mo Rizvi, Zac Jones,	
<b>13</b> Nick Turk, Ali Riyan, James Richardson, Yuvee Malhotra	<b>5</b> Maya Barnwell, Isla McCulloch, Jasper Arnold, James Nelson, Elliott Watkins, Charlie McKegney, James Pyman, Laxmi Johal, Muaaz Ali Ahmed, Ollie Chaplin	
<b>11</b> Alastair Carman, Tom McIlwaine	<b>4</b> Owen Marshall, Will Mason, Dubs Wood, Fergal Walter,	
<b>10</b> Aizaz Ahmed, Omkar Khot, Ellis Sabbagh-Holt, Sanjoy Bassi		
<b>9</b> Billy Mead, Adam Forbes, Joe Kooner-Evans, Ollie Dabinett-Jays, Arjun Bhardwaj		

## FF'S 2022 TOUR TO THE NETHERLANDS

*Thanks again go to Nick Turk for organising and managing the Dutch tour in 2022 to play in the quadrangular tournament hosted by De Flamingos as of recent years. Nick's efforts, together with the captain, Andrew McCulla, and the squad mean that our long-standing and treasured relations with the Dutch as well as the Leprechauns and MCC remain strong. His report, below, missed the previous Yearbook.*

Nick Turk writes:  
Looking back at previous Dutch tour reports, there is a clear pattern to tours to the Netherlands – whether it be getting there, the cricket or the nights in between. This tour did not change that pattern nor disappoint. We had a very competent team, which was the result of Andrew McCulla and the Tour Manager/Fixture Sec having several coffee-fuelled meetings discussing the balance of the team. But this didn't

stop a drop out – for compassionate reasons and thus acceptable. So, the FF super-sub, Jason Soames, was bugled and he answered the call, travelling to Amsterdam on the same day – a super effort!

The first night was slightly chaotic with traffic jams, covid restrictions and delays meaning the squad arrived in dribs and drabs at the hotel in Amstelveen before going off to see what Amsterdam city-centre had to offer... typical FF tour-match preparation!

The first game was against the MCC at the beautiful VRG ground where England recently played the Netherlands in an ODI. It was amazing to see the length of the sixes that Jos Buttler hit as we were playing on virtually the same pitch – we never got anywhere near that power! We batted

first and in the 50 overs reached 257-9 and then proceeded to bowl out the MCC for 93 - a very satisfying win by 164 runs.

We were very well looked after that evening, being taken on a tour of 'Amsterdam on water' followed by a few beverages. It was noticeable that none of our cricket playing hosts joined us on these trips, claiming (guess what? Ed) other engagements!

Slightly jaded, therefore, but playing the Leprechauns who were also suitably hampered, the next day's game was reduced to 35-overs a-side and was played on the artificial pitch - surrounded by dykes and thick woodland. It was a high-scoring affair with the Irish batting first and scoring 271 at 7.75 per over. Our response was equally explosive. We won with 5 overs to spare having scored at 9 runs per over.





The team in NL

So, another final-match decider versus the other unbeaten side – our non-drinking hosts – De Flamingos. After a third night of revelry with a celebratory meal in the pavilion followed by another trip to central Amsterdam, ‘slightly jaded’ didn’t really do justice to the state of the team who arrived at the VRG complex for the rain-shortened, 20-over match against the Dutch. This was also played on the artificial pitch

and runs flowed from the unjaded orange bats. Unfortunately, their score of 179 was 50 runs too many as the strain of sport and socialising on a 24/7 basis finally caught up with the squad!

Nevertheless, the quality of the cricket and the facilities at VRG Amsterdam were first class and the hospitality we received was amazing. The squad

are to be congratulated on their performances on the field – I just wish they had not been quite so exuberant away from the cricket pitch... at least not 50 runs worth!

Squad – A McCulla (capt and wk), B Breen, JC Cunningham, J Fisher, R Hardwick, D Holland, W Mason, D O’Sullivan, P Philips, A Raja, G Sandbach, J Soames

## FF WOMEN IN 2023

Manager **Paul Askew** writes:

Now in our fifth year, FF Women had another interesting and enjoyable season. We played nine games with a further two on the fixture-list cancelled. As a relatively recent start-up and with the Free Foresters as a club unknown to women cricketers unlike, say, the MCC, the aim for FF Women has been to establish a clear and distinctive position and, in so doing, to raise the level awareness of Free Foresters among women cricketers and in the women’s game more generally. A further challenge as a nomadic side, has been the need to broach the idea of a ‘wandering’ cricket club – broadly a novelty for women cricketers.

We have opted to pitch FF Women - much like that of our men’s FF Academy – as a club for good standard young cricketers on their

*FF umpire, Lizzie Conder, discussing policy on leg-side wides for our 2 x T20 day at The Parks with FF’s Yasmin Daswani, and Victoria Bagge of OUCC on Saturday 3rd June. Yas top scored in Game 1 with 42\* in a 55 run win, FF having posted 118 for 8. Isla McCulloch top scored with 50\* rtd in a 115-run win in Game 2, FF having posted 181 for 6.*



way up or to those already playing at a reasonable level. True to FF, we aim to take on strong opposition and play in the right competitive spirit. This means that our players (and those we hope to recruit) tend to have lots of competing calls on their availability. Most also play at the representative level for a county or a regional franchise as well as for a league club, school or university. Unsurprisingly, these better players have lots of choice. The knock-on effect on the

pattern of our results was, perhaps to state the obvious, that when we were able to field a full-strength FFW side we tended to win - and the reverse if not! But it is important to say, as in previous seasons, that, even when results went against us, we played lots of good cricket, and had lots of exciting and enjoyable encounters in very welcoming circumstances, promoting the good name of the Free Foresters and adding a series of excellent players to our ranks.



*The side vs OUCC for our two x T20 day on Saturday 3rd June 2023.*

*L to R standing: Laxmi Johal, Amy Wheeler, Jenny Blofeld, Yasmin Daswani (capt), Jemma Dreyer, Poppy Burnyeat, Charlotte Stubbs\*, L to R kneeling Isla McCulloch, Maya Barnwell, Amy Hearn, Annie O’Gorman*

*(\*note that Charlotte Stubbs, in her fourth year for FF and in Year 12 at Latymer Upper School, was made Surrey CCC's Women Young Player of the Year for 2023 and is in the England U19 training squad)*

The high point of the 2023 campaign, as in recent seasons, was the two days of the 50-over Mabway Cup - a triangular competition vs the MCC and the UK Armed

Forces - this year returning to Larkhill camp in Wiltshire. Our young and talented team – boosted by excellent recruits from Wilshire and Gloucestershire thanks to Barry Aitken of the Wilts's and FF's ex Hants seamer, Kevin Emery - was overpowered by stronger and more seasoned opposition in both matches. It remains a fervent objective of FF Women to win the Mabway!

As to results, the season started and ended with wins with losses in-between. So, in our early fixtures, which took place in the first half of June, three good wins were recorded versus the universities of Oxford (x two) and Cambridge (x one).

We lost a close 40-over game versus the Army at the beginning of July and also fell later in the month to ACE Women in the highly enjoyable gala T20 Caribbean evening at Spencer CC where the sides had been evened up just before the start as the FF Women's side present had been deemed a bit strong for ACE!

The next fixture was a new one versus Sussex Martlets Women - themselves in their first year of existence. An excellent 35-over game was fought out at East Grinstead CC who kindly hosted the match. FF batted well, posting a decent score of 166 for 7 in their 35 overs via a steady 84-run opening



*Scoring at ten an over, FF post a big score in their 25 over game vs CUCC on Wednesday 14th June for the loss of only two wickets.  
L to R Jess Ololrenshaw (62\*rtd), Emily Barratt (57\*rtd), Laxmi Johal (52\*rtd)*

partnership between Isla McCulloch (41) and Georgia Irving (40) and a late flurry of runs from skipper, Laura Bailey (37\*). But, despite an excellent opening spell from the silkily accurate left-arm seam of Zoe Spenceley, and the right arm pace of Maya Barnwell plus good efforts by the rest of the bowlers, we were unable to dislodge the experienced No 1 and No 3 Martlet batters, Phoebe Wilkinson (83\*) and captain Lucy Western (58\*),



*Helicopter-stopped-play at Larkhill – a knock-on from the war in Ukraine*

*Captain of FF, Maya Barnwell, proudly wearing the EW Swanton blazer, preparing for the toss with UK Armed Forces' (and Army) captain and our good friend, Lt Connie Cant*

who compiled. a huge and match-winning 140-run partnership in 29.5 overs, bringing the game home for our delighted hosts.

The season finale was a great treat in that we were invited to play in the inaugural Inigo Women's Cricket Festival at Burton Court in Chelsea. Inigo Insurance, an innovative and relatively new underwriter at Lloyd's, wished to encourage female

colleagues at Lloyd's to play cricket, aligning as a business in the commercial world with the game's values of camaraderie, friendship. and respect. Initiating a triangular, eight-a-side competition between Inigo, JP Morgan and FF was the result. It was a pleasure to meet directors



of Inigo, several Chelsea Pensioners, painter Jocelyn Goldsworthy and the guest speaker, Isabelle Duncan.

FF ran out winners, ably captained by Immy Brown. The President enjoyed meeting old acquaintance, Jocelyn Galsworthy - there to record the scene in oils - and Hugh 'Flea' Wilson, his sparring partner from the 1980s Army vs Surrey IIs halcyon days at the Oval. Flea, a director at Lloyd's, had been the brilliant fulcrum in getting the Burton Court event off the ground.

As for this coming season, two new high-end fixtures are in development to further the objectives of awareness-raising for





Friend's reunited: Jocelyn Galsworthy, the Pres and Flea Wilson.

FFs Charlotte Stubbs and Davina Perrin in training with England U19 at Loughborough and hoping for selection for the tour to Sri Lanka at Easter

- a representative, three-match tour to Ireland towards the end of the season being organised together with Cricket Ireland to play two days vs Ireland Development (or Ireland Under 19's), and one day versus Leinster.

My thanks are due to all the players, parents, sponsors and supporters who were involved this season. This includes, in particular, Guy Beresford of our lead sponsors, Independent

FF Women at the more senior end of the game and attracting strong young talent to our ranks. These two fixtures are:

- an annual early-season match against the previous season's winner of the ECB's national clubs T20 competition (the winner in 2023 being St Cross Symondians CC, Winchester to be played in April/ May 2024 at St Cross), and...



Search Partners, Andy Mawson our coach, parents Richie Stubbs and Clare McCulloch, Sue Laister from ECB, Buddy Mason of London Schools, and FF's own Dave Smith of Kent CCC's Women's Pathway, Kevin Emery our new Western regional rep, and FF Membership Secretary and scorer, Paul Stubbs.



Pres Jack Deverell - in his element - offering winning tactical advice to our young stars



FF Captain Immy Brown raising the Inigo Trophy: team L to R Paloma Wright, Raameen Affan, Tessa Bruyns, Jo Foster, Immy Brown, Jenny Blofeld, Emily Barratt, Zuniara Ahmad

## FREE FORESTERS IN 1873

**Michael Parsons**, our former Match Secretary, prompted by a friend's discovery in a local bookshop of an FF Fixture Card from 1873, was moved to research and write up the season and how FF was organised 17 years after foundation. See Appendix for table listing the fixtures over this period including tours to Scotland which began in 1864. Ireland tours began 30 years later in 1894 and in the Netherlands from 1921 following the foundation of de Flamingos.

### THE SEASON

The year was one of the wettest summers recorded, but that did not stop 'operations in the tented field' commencing at Oxford. In spite of the weather 23 games were played and the bare facts were Won 8 Lost 7 Drawn 8. Beyond such dull detail the card does invite a closer look at wandering cricket 150 years ago.

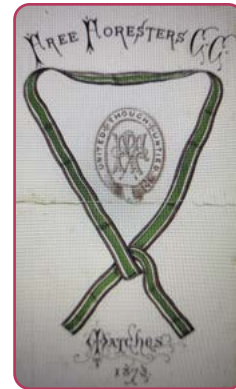
Our Founder, the Revd W.K.R. Bedford, is still a match manager, but not active, and notably E.C. Rutter is now Secretary. In 1870 it was realised that the cricket management was getting a

bit slack and there was real danger of the club breaking up, Teddy Rutter was pressed to take a post that he would hold for 40 years. 'He was for very many years a most prominent member of the Free Foresters and for that Club did many noteworthy things.'

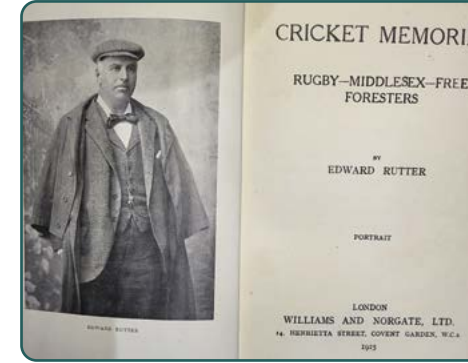
The match managers have club or City addresses in London with the exception of a Rugby schoolmaster. In our first 17 years we wandered far from the Sutton Rectory Ground,

### THE 1873 CARD

This is the period of country-house cricket, two-day fixtures are the norm and often part of a County Week; travel was a major consideration - where you played you stayed. Traditionally the season started in Oxford, against Christ Church where William Bedford had qualified head of the list for a studentship. Due to an attack of scarlet fever, he was unable to take up the place; instead he went to BNC - another long-standing fixture, but this year we only play Bullingdon.



The front cover of the 1873 Fixture Card



Teddy Rutter, FF Secretary for 40 years

While the cricket was always serious, so was the social scene. At Rockingham Castle, the game provided the backdrop to a garden party. After dinner, there was dancing and perhaps a performance by the Free Forester Quartet. The Liverpool banquet included a magnum of champagne set out between each couple of guests, and there were riotous evenings in the Royal Artillery mess at Shoeburyness.

The Civil Service game in Battersea Park had its problems: being a public place, some members of the community resented this intrusion and simply got in the way. We even

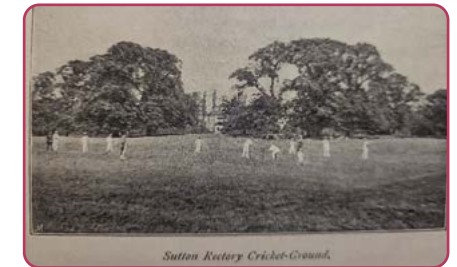
managed two fixtures on the same day, at Chichester and the Western Club, Manchester, where there was a magnificent pavilion, but if we had to make do with a tent then it was usually in the grounds of the big house.

Some of the best amateur cricket in England was played at Southgate, founded in 1855 by the Walker family who spared no expense in supporting the game on a ground close to their house, Arnos Grove. No fewer than seven Walker brothers played first class cricket; they might take some comfort that the eponymous Piccadilly line station on their land would later be praised for its elegant simplicity and harmonious fusion of form and function.

The Rugby game was especially popular and has been a constant since 1858; in part this was due to the excellent train service from the metropolis. As an Old

Rugbeian, the Secretary would look after that fixture and Hillingdon which was his home club.

In his fascinating *Cricket Memories*, Teddy Rutter comments on Pype Hayes where we play W.W. Bagot's team. After spending his early days in the streets of Birmingham, Mr Bagot found himself the owner of much land and plenty of cash to go with it, and new to the role of a gentleman of great estate. Leaving his mother to look after the business end, he devoted himself to cricket with the encouragement of



The Rectory Field at Sutton Coldfield where FF was founded



his best friend and principal bowler, Rylott, a well-known pro at Lord's; his side was largely composed of his old Birmingham friends who were only too happy to enjoy all the good things on offer at Pye Hayes. Tempted to indulge in a bit of social engineering, William Bedford felt he might help Mr Bagot by introducing a better class of cricketer; his hope was that a team of Free Foresters would have the desired effect.

The Wisden Cricketers Almanack for 1874 lists the I Zingari fixtures but not ours. However, we do get a mention in 'the individual innings of three figures' section, so Lieut. H.W.Renny-Tailyour 140 n.o. for RE v. FF, and E.F.S.Tylecote 104 FF v. Western Club, who also kept wicket for The Gentlemen v The Players of England at The Oval, a game in which W.G. Grace made 159 and took 7 for 63.

There is a note that Mr W.G. Grace, then aged 25, will lead an English Twelve to Australia comprising 5 Gentlemen and 7 Players, leaving Southampton on the *Mirzahpore* next October. We may be sure that on tour they did not all stay in the same hotel, a precedent that would not change until P.F. Warner's 1903/04 tour when it was considered a tremendous success.

WG negotiated a fee of £1,500 while the Players got along with £170. In Teddy Rutter's opinion, WG was neither an amateur or a pro; he was independent of both. Who else could have so revolutionised the game that his presence alone could draw a huge crowd?

### GETTING THERE

By 1870 the main centres were well connected by the railway and the web of local lines was growing.

Getting to the game involved much consideration of Bradshaw's Railway Companion, though the density of information and small text made the timetables far from easy to use. Having resolved that problem, you only had to get to the station and now the groom tells you that Lucy Glitters has gone lame.

There is no Scottish Tour this year: we have already visited the 'Land of Cakes' six times for a fortnight of cricket, the prospect of a salmon and the pleasures of the Forth and Clyde Junction Railway. There is travel mentioned in the Annals: On Monday 6th August, by an early train from Stirling, with *Jupiter Pluvius* in the ascendant, Foresters made their way to Glasgow, and on to Drumpellier, where they were heartily welcomed by Colonel and Mrs Buchanan of "that ilk".

William Bedford did not enjoy the convenience of a station at Sutton Coldfield until 1878. As by far the biggest land-owner in Sutton, in 1857 he was on the provisional board of a company to raise capital to build a line. It came to nothing: the proposed route totally divided opinion, while others thought the whole project a monstrous invasion.

After this set-back William no longer took a leading role in local politics. He was often ill and took rest cures on the Continent. Instead, he devoted his time to his other interests, especially cricket. The Sutton Coldfield club was founded on the Rectory field in 1847, an event we celebrated 150 years later.

### THE GROUNDS

"Without labour on a ground there is no cricket" – *Bell's Life in London*, which means much pulling and pushing. The

top grounds are now well maintained. It is 40 years since Edwin Budding took out a patent for a rotary blade machine – a pony with leather boots pulls a Ransomes of Ipswich mower round the Rectory field.

### Box, Bat, Pads . . .

John Wisden's Cricketers Almanack for 1874 advertises all the essentials available at the Cranbourn Street shop. There is a wide choice of Improved Leg-Guards, FF members would prefer those made with chamois leather and given the unpredictable pitches opt for some 'Private Pads'.

The best bats now have a sprung handle. Naturally, makers gravitated to St John's Wood where Benjamin Warsop and Frank Dark & Sons have workshops, while down the City Road, Clapshaw & Sons can supply their

lovely Aquila Clapshaw. Elsewhere, Percy Stuart Surridge is repairing old bats, while in Robertsbridge, the village carpenter, L.J. Nicolls, has decided that bats are the coming thing. It is possible that Teddy Rutter topped the 1873 Middlesex averages with balls made by the Duke family. Wisden describes him as 'a free right-handed batsman, he will be better remembered as a slow round-armed bowler with much break'. He played first class cricket for MCC and Middlesex, and was on the Committee of both Clubs. Playing for the Veterans against MCC in one of the Centenary games at Lord's in 1887, he clean-bowled WG for 24 with his first ball, and that was not the first time he was one of his victims.

### ATTIRE

The informality of earlier years is now a thing of the past, white flannel trousers

and shirts being preferred. Red-mayne & Co, New Bond Street, will supply the FF hat ribbon which is also appropriated by the ladies. Blazers and caps are in the ascendant, but the first view of an FF sweater is not until 1885, worn by Mr W. Bovill at Ludlow.

THE ANNALS

*The Annals of the Free Foresters 1856 -1894* by our Founder, W.E.W. Collins and Other Contributors describes the early years of this great Club; in particular, Chapter XVIII deals with the 1873 season. The book is dedicated: *To The Viceroy of India / The Most Distinguished Member of the Club / His Brother Foresters / Wish Health and Wealth.* The Viceroy was Lord Dufferin,



The Rev W.R.R. Bedford

President of the Oxford Union Society in 1847 when William Bedford was the Secretary, but sadly there is no record that he was active. The living of Sutton Coldfield was of such wealth and status that would have impressed the Archdeacon of Barchester. The Revd William Kirkpatrick Riland Bedford was Rector for 42 years. His eldest son was last in the line before the living reverted to the Diocese; his *Three Hundred Years of a Family Living: Being a History of the Rilands of Sutton Coldfield* tells the tale.

To William, the Oxford Movement must have been a total anathema. His ideal was an orthodox, efficient cleric and thorough sportsman. He was all of that and so much

more - antiquarian, genealogist, author, expert archer and philanthropist. When there were calls for the establishment of a new parish church in neighbouring Boldmere, he was the driving force behind the project and contributed a third of the cost.

With such a high profile, it was inevitable that William had his critics. Sarah Holbeche, who kept a diary of life in Sutton Coldfield, observed that the Rector is not so well thought of. In 1864 'the Rector left for two years, going to Edinburgh for health and rest he said'

DATE	MANAGER	MANAGER
May 10	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 11	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 12	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 13	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 14	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 15	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 16	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 17	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 18	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 19	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 20	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 21	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 22	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 23	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 24	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 25	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 26	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 27	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 28	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 29	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 30	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD
May 31	W. R. R. BEDFORD	W. R. R. BEDFORD

The 1873 Fixture Card

and the following year 'Whit Monday, The Rector declined to entertain the children as usual, so the curate Mr. Meredith had them at The Rookery.'

Sarah's diary does confirm that he was not in good health, probably a contributory factor to his retirement as FF's first Secretary in 1862, and now able to devote more time to his other interests culminating in the major *History of Sutton Coldfield*.

1874

Thus ends the 1873 season; let us hope for better weather next year. If you wish to play at Hillingdon on June 8th, you are requested to write to M.T. Martin at 86, Piccadilly W.

With grateful thanks to Alan Rees, MCC Archive and Library Manager.



The eperne presented in March 1863 to the Rev W.R.R. Bedford on retirement as Secretary (loaned to the MCC Museum by the Bedford family) 'In grateful memory of long service... and as a token of esteem... by his most attached friends and affectionate brethren of the club.'



## FAMOUS FREE FORESTERS

### **Sir Pelham Warner** MBE (1873 –1963)

**Test cricketer and cricket administrator. Elected to FF in 1894.**

*In the edition of the Yearbook, we begin our series on famous Free Foresters with a piece that **Simon Hughes** wrote on the occasion of The Cricketer magazine's 100th anniversary in 2021. With so much one might say about his life, not least his role in the Bodyline Series which is touched on here, Hughes' focus, as past Editor of The Cricketer, is more on Warner's writing, noting his role in 1921 as founder of the magazine.*

Sir Pelham Warner, the founder of this magazine, was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad in 1873. He was the youngest of 21 children born to his father Charles Warner, Trinidad's Attorney General, and his two wives: the first one died and then Charles married Rosa Cadiz who was Pelham's mother. He learnt to play cricket at the family's beautiful (and presumably large) house in Trinidad, fed balls by a black boy called Kilobry.

He was sent to Rugby School aged 13 where he inherited the nickname Plum, and he soon attended his first match at Lord's. It was the summer of 1887. "I had as a boy devoured the pages of *The Field*, which in those days gave a great deal of space to cricket, *Wisden* and *The Times*," he wrote in his book *Lord's*, published in 1946. "I used to dream of cricket! It was therefore with a thrill of anticipation and delight that I passed through the turnstile at the main gate and watched the play from

a seat in front of the ivy-covered tennis court where the Mound stand now sits." The match was MCC versus England during the MCC's Centenary week. "WG Grace was in the MCC side and during the luncheon interval he passed by and I gazed with undisguised admiration, not to say awe, on the greatest personality the game has ever known. With his black beard and giant

*Portrait of a 72-year-old Sir Pelham Warner in 1945 in his FF tie by Alfred Reginald Thompson 1894 – 1979*



figure, with an MCC cap crowning his massive head, he bestrode the cricket world like some Colossus, and little did I dream then that one day I should play with and against him."

Little did Plum dream that he would play for and captain England, or that one of his brothers, Aucher, would captain the West Indies (surely the only instance of two men from the same family captaining opposing international teams), that a stand would one day be named after him at Lord's or that he would launch a weekly cricket magazine that would still be thriving one hundred years later.

**James Dean, one of the FF archives team, writes:** An interesting picture, though some fairly inelegant headgear. Warner's bucket hat looks similar to the sort of thing my daughter takes to Glastonbury.



*Warner (seated centre) in 1897 touring America.*

*The team picture comprises back row, from left: John Tonge, Francis Stocks, Richard Bennett, John Head. Middle row, from left: H. D. G. Leveson Gower, Arthur Whatman, Plum Warner, Gilbert Jessop, Frederick Bull. Front row, from left: Harold Marriott, Harry Chinnery.*

The party was PF Warner's XI to North America from 13 Sept 4 October 1897. They played 6 matches. 2 in New York on Staten Island, one in Baltimore and 3 (including 2 first class matches) in Philadelphia. The party actually

numbered 12, with the 11 in the picture joined by WM Hemingway a Cambridge Blue who played for Gloucs and was (for a time at least) a prep school master at Elstree School. He was not, and did not become, a Forester.

Of those in the picture, four were Foresters (year of election in brackets); Tonge (1893), Head (1891), Leveson Gower (1894) and Warner (1894). A further three became Foresters later; Bennett (1903), Marriot (1900) and Chinnery (1899). Chinnery is on the Roll of Honour at Lord's; he had been commissioned into the KRRC (which is now son Ollie's regiment, also FF!) and as a 40-year-old subaltern, he was killed on the Western Front in May 1916.

I think one can be fairly confident that Tonge and Head are wearing FF blazers, and Head a FF cap.





Warner, in 1903, having debuted for England in 1899.

Cricket Across the Seas and How We Recovered the Ashes (in 1903) – a book that revived the concept of the Ashes which had been largely forgotten after the famous mock obituary in the *Sporting Times* in 1882. He was a passionate advocate of West Indies cricket, but he abhorred some islands' whites-only selection policies, declaring that any West Indies side visiting England would need at least four or five black players to challenge the county teams, and campaigned for, and achieved, proper integration.

#### Simon Hughes continues....

Perhaps it was not so surprising that Warner founded a cricket magazine. He was a cricketing evangelist and cricket correspondent of the *Morning Post* and he had already written half a dozen books by his mid-forties including *Cricket in Many Climes*,

There had been a regular cricket publication that preceded *The Cricketer*. This was *Cricket* – a Weekly Record of the Game – and it was created and edited by the Surrey chairman and secretary of the Football Association, Charles Alcock, who also founded Test matches and

the FA Cup, and lasted 25 years until his death in 1907. This left a vacuum in specialist cricket coverage which Warner and his friend Geoffrey Foster, the Worcestershire and Kent batsman, decided should be filled as they sat in front of the Lord's pavilion when cricket had resumed after the First World War.

So, in April 1921, the season after Warner had retired from playing for Middlesex, the first issue hit the newsstands, opening with his immortal words, "The popularity of, and interest in, cricket not only here but in every part of the world where Englishmen are gathered together, was never greater than at the present time." Opposite his first editorial was a caricature of a lion and a kangaroo, both in pads, reading the magazine, in reference to the Ashes series that summer (which England lost

3-0.) Undeterred, Warner called *The Cricketer* "a bible to be collected in instalments" and the magazine (more of a paper then) featured numerous reports from different levels of the game - schools, club, services, county and international, and an eclectic mix of columns about coaching, cricket history and other issues called, among others, *Vin Ordinaire* and *Country Vicar*. There was an occasional gardening section too.

His journalistic commitments were compromised by his direct involvement in the *Bodyline* series of 1932-3, as team manager of the England tourists being responsible for recruiting Douglas Jardine as captain and therefore complicit in the 'leg theory' tactics. As a result, he was generally detached from the public outcry (mainly in Australia) that the series initiated, and deferred opinionated

comment to the 'Second Slip' column written by the former Yorkshire and England player Frank Mitchell. In the 1933 Spring Annual under the heading *Australian Difficulties*, *The Cricketer* defended England's tactics but also suggested that the counties should not indulge them. "Should leg theory be adopted by all the first-class counties, cricket would be reduced to a farce," it declared.

Warner alternated his writing and editorial duties with a semi-permanent role as chairman of selectors – a combination that would now be untenable – and, having married Agnes Blyth, fathered three children – Esmond, John and Elizabeth. Esmond's daughter, Marina, inherited her grandfather's writing gene and became a prolific author. Her novel *The Lost Father* was shortlisted for the Booker prize in 1988. She has vivid

recollections of her grandfather even though she was only six when they first met.

"He was famous for his very amiable, gentle manners. He was extraordinarily unlike athletes today, and even as a child I was kind of surprised at how slight he was. He'd had TB, I think, as a child, and he was actually ill for one of the Ashes tours. He wasn't exactly frail because he was very erect, and mobile. One of the stories we liked very much was for him to recite the names of his brothers and sisters in the right order, because he had 20. He never ate anything, he was extremely thin, and so our favourite story was that he, when asked if he'd like a second helping, said, 'one pea please.'"

Marina's father Esmond (Plum's son) married an Italian, Emilia Terzulli,

whom he met during World War 2. She had a typically cricket-themed welcome from Plum when she arrived in England. “After the war my mother arrived from Southern Italy on one of the first passenger planes to come into Heathrow, and she came alone because my father was still in Sri Lanka, fighting there. She made her way alone to her new in-laws’ flat, and met Plum and Agnes. They sat down and had tea and Plum showed her a cricket bat. He said ‘My dear, there is just one thing you need to know, if you’re going to live in England.’ And he squared up on the carpet, and said, “You need a straight bat, and your eye on the ball, like this. Then you will do fine here in England.’ Everything in the flat, which was in South Kensington, was in the shape of something crickety. I still have the clothes branch which is in the shape of a bat, there was a clock in the

shape of a wicket, and the clock face was the ball.”

“He was always very loyal to his Trinidadian roots, and saw himself as a West Indian. When I was visiting Barbados a few years ago, I met Sir Hilary Beckles, the great historian of West Indian cricket. I was very apprehensive because he was a powerful critic of colonial history and the white West Indians’ behaviour. But he came up to me very warmly, shook my hand and said, ‘your grandfather, marvellous man, he integrated the team.’”

“I must have got my writing tick from Plum because he never stopped writing books. There were over 20 titles in all. They happen to be all about cricket whereas mine are all about fairy tales. It had been a plantation family but it became a scribal family. There are Warners all over the Caribbean, not

just in Trinidad. In fact, one of the other branches of the family started some of the newspapers in the Caribbean.”

Plum remained editor of *The Cricketer* almost until he died in 1962, by which time the Warner Stand had been erected at Lord’s. The original press box was located in it. The stand has recently been redeveloped with a restaurant on the top floor called Pelham’s which has a panoramic view of the game. It is a fitting legacy to a man who gave his life to it and provided so many of us with the opportunity to read and write about it.

*SIMON HUGHES*

Sir Pelham Warner picture credit MCC, With grateful thanks to Alan Rees, MCC Archive and Library Manager.

Noting Plum Warner’s Trinidadian provenance, the fact that, aged ten he was sent to Harrison College in Barbados where, according to the CLR James Cricket Research Centre, ‘the foundation at any skill acquired in cricket was built’, and his admiration for West Indian cricket and cricketers, the FF archives team (Michael Parsons, Jonathan Pearce, James Dean, John Hamilton and me) hope in time for the next edition of the Yearbook, to have completed our research in the FF and broader cricket archive for the story of another cricketing knight who played at least once for Free Foresters - Sir Frank Worrell.

As a club, we are very conscious of the significance of, and robust debate about, the recent ICEC report as well as more broadly the concern in the UK over how to treat historical wrongs today. As reported recently in the Daily



*Sir Frank Worrell in FF blazer  
At the Parks in 1964*

Nevis over slavery links would only be considered ‘if somebody came forward with a reasonable argument... (given that) ... we can’t cancel the past’. That would seem to be a very sensible position.

Sir Frank Worrell, who became the first black cricketer to captain the West Indies cricket team for an entire series in 1960, was knighted for services to cricket in 1964. He played in our game against OUCC in the Parks in the same year. He died dreadfully young at 42 of cancer three years later. There is so much to admire in the life and character of this member of the legendary ‘Three Ws’ that I personally hope, even if he did not become a Forester in the 1960s but played simply as a guest, that we might posthumously elect him as an Honorary Associate.

*PBA*

## JOE IRELAND'S CRICKET BOOK REVIEWS

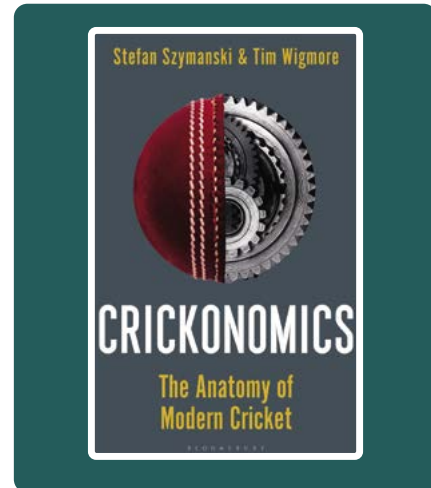
***Crickonomics: The Anatomy of Modern Cricket***  
by Szymanski & Wigmore (Bloomsbury)

***Bazball: The Inside Story of a Test Cricket Revolution***  
by Booth and Houlton (Bloomsbury)

Cricket lovers traditionally may read about the game over the winter and play it in the summer. Now, with endless franchise tournaments filling any space, we can be more distracted than ever. 'Crickonomics' begins to explain this.

Building on Tim Wigmore's 'Cricket 2.0,' which I'd recommend first, 'Crickonomics' is an entertainingly eccentric read, fuelling debates to keep you in the pavilion when you really ought to have gone home. What is more valuable: batting or bowling? What should be done about the rain? Why are New Zealand consistently competitive? Where will cricket be in five or ten years' time? Compare the direction

of women's cricket, where innovation is more flexible than the entrenched interests in the men's game can allow. The IPL is too strong, but it isn't going away. Comparisons with baseball grate and before I complain that the book is



data-led, there are moments of inspiration. 'Inshallah,' they report, as one Afghani brother (representing Germany) hopes to face another, in his own nation's colours, in international cricket.

This book is anything but stuffy and elitist. They give cricket administrators a kicking for institutionally being so. Basketball (apparently the second biggest sport worldwide after football) shows that Olympic inclusion is the way to take the sport forward. Or do we prefer to turn up in FF blazers and spend our time in country houses and the pavilions of Oxford?

Alternatively, you could watch England play Test cricket under Ben Stokes and Brendon McCullum. Bazball was one of the Oxford English Dictionary's words of 2023, but what does it mean? For the wide-eyed believers, it's the most thrilling Test cricket they've seen.

The curmudgeons grumble of an indulgent fad of batsmen throwing their wickets away, hazardous declarations and an echo-chamber of empty warm words. For its opponents, 'It won't work against us.' Until it does.

Stokes's captaincy record stood at W13, L5, D1 before the India tour of 2024. But the success of this 'revolution' is not to be measured by statistics. 'It is heart, soul and commitment,' says McCullum. In his interview to become England coach, he insisted players must 'chase every ball hard to the boundary'. So far so ordinary, but the book has a wry take on Jack Leach's concussion when he slid head-first into the boundary in his bid to follow instructions.

With the bat, a pattern was set by a series of thrilling run-chases. Zak Crawley, after a bewilderingly long stay in the 'Last Chance Saloon', eventually delighted

the management team as he creamed the new ball everywhere. But those who associate Bazball just with big hitting might ask themselves how consistently this team takes 20 wickets each match. A collective strike rate of 53.52 balls per wicket places Stokes ahead of all other England captains in this regard.

Booth and Houlton have enjoyed access to virtually all the current players and their



words ring true. They give a clear picture of the duo's motivational skill, although there is little original comment from the men themselves. A chapter on McCullum's upbringing in South Dunedin gives us his hinterland, where no-one has a bad word to say about him. And Mike Brearley pops up with a psychologist's insight as to why Stokes may be best placed to empathise with his players.

The authors fulfil their promise of full coverage of the 2023 Ashes series. They had to do so, since Gideon Haigh's 'Ashes 2023, a Cricket Classic' was sitting so alluringly alongside it in the bookshop. The more literary may prefer that, especially when they read Jonny Bairstow's extraordinary mash-up of five mixed metaphors in six sentences. While Booth and Houlton raise a laugh at that, the love from the dressing room which empowers 'Jonathan Marc Bairstow' is another of Bazball's gifts.

## DEATHS OF MEMBERS AND TRIBUTES

We remember the following three Members whose deaths were notified to the club in 2023/4. Their years of birth and of election (in brackets) are shown.

- ‘Nat’ Fiennes, Lord Seye and Sele b. 1920 (1947)
- Charles Robins b. 1935 (1959)
- Robin Brodhurst b. 1952 (1975)

We appreciate being sent notices, obituaries and tributes about members.

### CHARLES ROBINS

*This tribute to Charles Robins is drawn, with help from FFs Will Robins, his son, and Peter Came, his nephew, from his fine obituary in the Times, the tribute by Middlesex CCC and a brief recollection of playing together by Brian O’Gorman.*

Born in Burnham in Buckinghamshire on 13 March 1935, Charles was the eldest son of former Middlesex and England cricketer Walter Robins and followed in his father’s footsteps by representing Middlesex (as an amateur) both as a

player (also bowling leg-spin) and as an administrator. Charles was educated at Eton College, where he excelled in cricket, playing for the College for several years, taking eight for 29 in 1951 and as Captain in the 1953 season when he scored a century.

He joined Middlesex as a young man and made his professional debut for the Club aged just eighteen against Gloucestershire at Lord’s, alongside the likes of Jack Robertson, Don Bennett, Fred Titmus and Alan Moss. This was the first of 44 first-class appearances

he made for Middlesex, playing as a right-handed, leg-spinning all-rounder. He hit 712 first-class runs for the Club, including a highest score of 49, and picked up 73 first-class wickets at an average of 33.34, including best bowling figures in an innings of 7 for 78, taken against Cambridge University at Fenner’s in 1954. He was made captain in 1958.

He was persuaded by his father Walter, an apparently ‘bombastic Test selector’ not to put his name forward for selection. ‘You are not good enough’, said the father. ‘It will upset your



Father and son

mother.’ ‘He was non-confrontational, tolerant, listened to people and always looked for solutions. He was a cricketing diplomat,’ said son Will.

His commitment to Middlesex Cricket far from ended when his playing career finished, however, as having served for numerous years on the Club’s General Committee and in the role of Chair of the Cricket Committee throughout the hugely successful Brearley and Gatting eras, he became the Club’s Chair in 1994 and served a three-year term before later becoming the Club’s President between the years 2005 and 2007. When Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie (a team-mate at Eton), as MCC President, initiated the admission of women into the MCC, Charles Robins chaired the

sub-committee that recommended the motion’s implementation in 1998. In this vein, he was pleased to hear about FF’s move to establish FF Women. He was not pleased, however, at the proposal in 2022 to drop the Eton vs Harrow and Varsity fixture at Lord’s. His son, Will, notes ‘My father was a traditionalist and a scholar of cricketing history. He felt replacing historic matches and flooding Lord’s with non-elite fixtures was not right.’

Brian O’Gorman notes when asked whether he played with Robins; I did indeed play with Charles Robins. Firstly, for FF v Leamington where his advance-and-retire batting style was observed and, secondly, at Middleton is Sussex for a team ‘The Two Blues’, mostly Old Etonians. Charles bowled leg breaks and googlies with confidence and effrontery, high flight and plenty of spin. There were

scoring opportunities specially for a left hander but one always felt the lethal ball would come. So it proved - O’Gorman - bowled Robins 40! Charles was captain of Middx II at this time.

Also recalled is a trip to the Argentine to celebrate the North vs South match - most enjoyable. Charles had represented The Argentine on ICC for some years and was happily remembered. Cricket was very important to Charles and one always knew he was on the field. He made an important contribution to it.



Playing for Middlesex, seated far right



## ROBIN BRODHURST

*This tribute is taken from that paid by the school, Pangbourne College, at which Robin taught from 1990 to 2012.*

Robin was born in Winchester, the son of a well-known Winchester College schoolmaster Arthur ('Podge') Brodhurst who also played first-class cricket as an amateur for Gloucestershire. 'Podge', in turn, was the son-in-law of H. S. Altham, another first-class cricketer and also a leading figure for decades in the MCC and the administration of cricket. Robin played cricket throughout his life, albeit with less success than his father or grandfather, but with just as much enjoyment. Educated at Marlborough College from 1965-70, he went to RMA Sandhurst from Marlborough in 1971 and was commissioned into the Royal Green Jackets in 1973.

After serving six years in the Army, Robin decided, like his father, to become a schoolmaster. He read History at Goldsmith's College, London University and completed a post-graduate certificate of education (PGCE) at Selwyn College, Cambridge. Beginning a 30-year career teaching history in 1981, his first job was at Berkhamstead School before moving to Ampleforth College in 1985.

In 1990, with ten years' teaching experience under his belt, Robin responded to an eye-catching advertisement in the educational press for "old-fashioned schoolmasters with young legs" placed by the College headmaster, Anthony Hudson, who was seeking more diverse men and women with wide contacts to rejuvenate the staff. Within a couple of years, he was promoted to Head of History, a role he held for the next twenty years.

In parallel, he began writing books beginning, in 2000, with publication of Churchill's Anchor, his well-received biography of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound. Numerous other publications and a couple of books followed, including most recently one in 2020 titled The Altham-Bradman Letters. An inveterate joiner of clubs, associations and societies, Robin was also Hon. Secretary of the Navy Records Society, a Council member and Chairman of the Publications Committee of the Society for Nautical Research, a founder member of the Army Records Society, a former committee member of the International Churchill Society and a member of the British Commission for Military History.

He will be much missed.

His brother Foresters very much share that sentiment, and his friend,



Nigel Goodeve-Docker, adds the following:

Robin always played in the FF v Leicester Gents fixture, but one year chose to stay with his Godfather rather

than with everyone else. It took him far longer to reach the ground than he thought it would and he arrived an hour after the start of play to find that FF were fielding. For his sins, he was positioned at long leg at both ends

for the remaining 40 minutes until lunch. Highly unamused, he remained monosyllabic throughout the day and when the Leicester Gents declared, Robin was instructed to open the batting against a useful Gents attack which made him even more irritated. It was only when he became aware of the loud applause did he realise that he had reached a very good fifty and, although 20 runs or so later he was bowled, Robin was smiling again and the foundations for an FF victory had been laid.

FREE FORESTERS ANNUAL QUIZ 2024

This year, Bernard's Great Quiz is set by John Hamilton - Secretary-elect. The maximum score is 60 points. Those scoring 50 or more may join Bernard at the Crooked Swan at Crewkerne or the Bowler's Bar at Lord's for a beer on the Hon Treasurer.

**Q1** Australia won the 2023 Cricket World Cup despite losing two matches in the group stage. Hosts India beat them, but who else did? (2 points)

**Q2** Name the two men who have captained in TWO World Cup final triumphs. (4)

**Q3** Name the FOUR men who have captained England in a World Cup Final. (8)

**Q4** There have been 12 Women's Cricket World Cups since the first in 1973. How many times has England won the trophy? (2)

**Q5** Only three countries have won the Women's Cricket World Cup. Australia and England are two; which team became the only other winner in 2000, beating Australia by 4 runs? (2)

**Q6** The Player of the Tournament in the 2022 Women's World Cup has a famous cricketing uncle and husband. Name all three. (6)

**Q7** On 12 March, 2006, Mick Lewis (Australia)recorded the worst figures in an ODI conceding 113 runs off 10 overs v South Africa. However, in the recent CWC, his record was equalled by one of his compatriots, also v South Africa, and later broken by a Dutchman who took 2/115 against Australia. Can you name them? (4)

**Q8** Two Englishmen share the unwanted record for most expensive ODI analysis for England. One took 0/97 off 10 overs v Sri Lanka in 2006 (Leeds). The other conceded 97 off just 9 overs v New Zealand at The Oval in 2015, but he did take a wicket. Name them. (4)

**Q9** 15 of the 18 counties in the County Championship have won the title at least once. Which 3 counties have never won the title? (6)

**Q10** Only one player in the famous Bodyline series of 1932-33 had a son who went on to be a Test cricketer (& captain). Name the father and son. (4)

**Q11** With apologies for the blasphemy, who said this to whom and where in August 1968: "Well done. Christ, you've put the cat among the pigeons now." (6)

**Q12** And as a sequel to Q.11, which Australian spinner said, "Well done, X. It'll be interesting to see what happens." (2)

**Q13** When India beat England in England for the first time in 1971 an Indian supporter called Bella caused something of a stir when she joined other Indian fans on the outfield in front of the pavilion. Why? (2)

**Q14** Who is the only winner of an Academy Award for Best Director to have played at Lord's? (2)

**Q15** Who became the first cricketer to be timed out in the recent World Cup? (2)

**Q16** Four Australian left-handers have scored a Test triple century. Who? (4)

The best team on the pitch

We are proud to partner with the Free Foresters Cricket Club and support the next generation of aspiring cricketers.

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ANSWERS: A1 South Africa | A2 Clive Lloyd and Ricky Ponting | A3 Mike Brearley, Mike Gatting, Graham Gooch, Eoin Morgan | A4 4: 1973, 1993, 2009, 2017 | A5 New Zealand A6 Alyssa Healy, Ian Healy (uncle), Mitchell Starc (husband) | A7 Adam Zampa, Bas de Leede | A8 Steve Harmison (0/97), Chris Jordan (1/97) | A9 Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire, Somerset | A10 The Nawab of Patuati Senior (England) and Junior (India) | A11 Umpire Charlie Elliott to Basil D'Oliveira at The Oval, 5th Ashes test, when D'Oliveira reached his century, with the England team to tour apartheid South Africa that winter due to be chosen after the test. | A12 John Gleeson, off whose bowling D'Oliveira had just brought up his century. A13 Bella was an elephant! | A14 Sam Mendes for Ship-ton-der Wychwood in the 1997 Village Final | A15 Angelo Mathews | A16 Bob Cowper, Mark Taylor, David Warner, Matt Hayden.



# FREE FORESTERS CRICKET CLUB



FF wanderers leaving lovely Oakhill in late season, the ground in Co Wicklow made by FF Hon Associate and generous host, Peter Savill

UNITED THOUGH UNITED

## YEARBOOK 2024