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**FEBRUARY, 2017 NEWSLETTER**

# Clubs summoned to three Behaviour Forums

CONCERNED about the deteriorating behaviour of players at all levels in recent seasons, the League have summoned all 40 member clubs to attend three regional Behaviour Forums during March in an attempt to ease the pressure on umpires.

In a statement issued to all club chairmen and 1st XI captains, League secretary Geoff Wellsteed writes:

“The League does not construe it has a major problem with player discipline, but there is a widely-held feeling that on-field behaviour has deteriorated.

We need to be aware that the Umpires Association is struggling to recruit and retain panel members. Again, player discipline is cited as a contributory factor.

”These two issues have led the Cricket Committee to commission a Behaviour Forum where all aspects of the subject can be debated. The plan is to invite all club chairmen and 1st XI captains, together with a representative group of umpires. The discussion will be led jointly by former Bramhall chairman Ian Milligan and Duncan Anderson, the current Didsbury chairman. They have produced a Powerpoint Presentation to stimulate a lively dialogue.

The meeting is a Behaviour Forum not a Blame Forum and healthy discussion will seek to pinpoint the magnitude of the perceived problem and identify some practical outcomes.

### **Feed back**

“By targeting chairman and captains we hope to give the initiative a high profile and be confident we can expect necessary messages to be fed back to club members” concludes the League secretary.

To minimise travel three regional **mandatory** meetings have been arranged (all 8 p.m.):

**EAST CHESHIRE** at Bramhall on Wednesday, March 8 for 15 clubs - Alderley Edge, Hyde, Cheadle, Bramhall, Macclesfield, Didsbury, Bollington, Msrple, Cheadle Hulme, Stockport Lindow, Bredbury,. Romiley. Heaton Mersey, Congleton.

**WEST CHESHIRE** at Chester on Monday, March 20 for 10 clubs – Chester Boughton Hall, Neston, Oxtun, Widnes, Upton, Barrow, Alvanley, Tattenhall, Christleton, Weaverham.

**CENTRAL CHESHIRE** at Toft on Monday, March 27 for 15 clubs – Toft, Timperley, Nantwich, Urmston, Grappenhall, Oulton Park, Sale, Warrington, Bowdon, Mobberley, Northwich, Brooklands, Davenham, Ashton on Mersey, Middlewich.

## **OVERSEAS UPDATE**

LEAGUE secretary Wellsted has also laid out latest developments regarding the registration of Overseas players in 2017. He reports:

“To update the tricky subject of overseas players, you will know that the Home Office are committed to reducing these numbers. Some clubs been in touch with me and with Registration secretary Tony Morris. I fear we have probably not have been very helpful, but I must re-stress the messages delivered at the AGM which were:

O The League are unable to comment on the UK Visa requirements as we are not licensed by the Home Office to do so.

O All applications to the League to register an overseas player MUST be accompanied by the latest version of the ECB Overseas Player registration form signed by the club chairman and secretary. This form must not be amended in any way.

O Only when the visa requirements have been satisfied should you subject your paperwork to Tony Morris. He will then adjudicate according to League rules, as usual.

O We have seen a number of cases being pursued by clubs which look ‘dodgy’. So please ensure the validity of your recruit before parting with any money.

O The League will be attending a meeting of the League Conference on Saturday, March 11 when this subject is on the agenda and will be discussed, although somewhat later than desirable. One point which has become clear through the Conference is that the Home Office will classify a player as a professional even if he has played in only one or two representative matches for an Under 19 regional state team. That rule still applies even if those matches were some years ago as the term ‘professional’ is applied indefinitely. Clearly with such a classification, a YMS Visa is a complete non starter.

### **... and lastly**

ANOTHER pre-season reminder to clubs:

They need to get their captains / helpers etc. - especially Child Welfare Officers in contact with young players - properly registered with the Cheshire Cricket Board before the season opens.

### ***Bowdon's Chris Ashling in line for Conference Player of Year award***

TO recognise the outstanding work achieved by their late secretary Neil Edwards over a 25-year period, the League Cricket Conference are launching an annual award for the Outstanding Player of the Year.

All affiliated leagues have nominated a player for the inaugural award and the Cheshire County League have put forward Bowdon paceman Chris Ashling.

Chris, 28, who had a spell as professional with Glamorgan in the early 2000s, took 62 ECB Premier League wickets at 12.03 last season when he helped Bowdon finish runners-up. He was named Players' Player of the Year, receiving the Mark Alcroft Trophy at the Presentation Dinner in October.

County contracted players Rob Jones (Toft) and Danny Lamb (Bramhall) who both had outstanding returns were not eligible, neither were any Overseas players.

Chris Ashling has made into a short list of five for final selection, along with David Ball (Dorrige), Gareth Dawson (High Wycombe), Lee Hodgson (Marske) and Matt McKernan (Leigh)

The nominees are expected to be present when the winner is named at the Conference's annual meeting at Nantwich on Saturday, March 11.

The Bowdon player, however, will be absent as he is to be married that very day!

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### **Only 46 clubs in Cheshire Cup & Shield**

INTEREST in the Cheshire Cup and Shield continues to shrink and only 46 clubs – 28 and 18 respectively – will be lining up when the two competitions begin on Sunday, May 21.

The **Cheshire Cup** will comprise 28 clubs (32 in 2016) including 21 from the Cheshire County League.

The stand out tie looks to be the clash between holders Hyde and Nantwich at Werneth Low, while New Brighton v Premiership champions Alderley Edge and Wallasey v Chester Boughton Hall also take the eye. Newcomers are Broadbottom, Caldý and Weston.

Organiser Peter Hayes says: “The introduction of a £50 deposit has clearly deterred some clubs, but it is better for them not to enter than concede after the competitions have started”

● Sunday, May 21 is the date of Cheshire’s Unicorns 50 overs clash with Staffordshire at Knypersley which means several of the games below will have to be postponed.

#### **Round 1 draw:**

Didsbury v Caldý;

Warrington bye

Wallasey v Chester Boughton Hall

Grappenhall v Oulton Park

Widnes v Toft

Elworth bye

Upton v Port Sunlight

New Brighton v Alderley Edge

Broadbottom v Bramhall

Macclesfield v Bollington

Timperley bye

Cheadle v Bowdon

Weston v Urmston

Neston bye

Hyde v Nantwich

Oxton v Davenham

Round 2 is on Sunday, June 25; quarter-finals on Sunday, July 23; semi-finals on Sunday, August 20; the final on Sunday, September 4..

### **SHIELD FINALISTS MAY MEET**

HOLDERS of the **Cheshire Shield**, Northwich will host Stockport Trinity in the preliminary round on Sunday, May 21. Should they win, they could then be hosting Hawk Green, whom they beat in the 2016 final.

#### **The draw**

##### **Preliminary round (Sunday, May 21):**

Northwich v Stockport Trinity

Hale Barns v Hawk Green

##### **Round 1 (Sunday, June 4)**

Northwich or Stockport Trinity v Hale Barns or Hawk Green

Winsford v Bunbury

Prestbury v Ashton on Mersey

Parkfield Liscard v Alvanley

Cheadle Hulme v Lindow

Ashley v Romiley

Brooklands v Barrow

Westminster Park v Maritime.

Round 2 is on Sunday, June 28; quarter-finals on Sunday, July 23; semi-finals on Sunday, July 23; the final on Sunday, August 13.

## **JOSEPH HOLT T20 TROPHY GROUP FIXTURES & DRAWS**

THE 1st XI Joseph Holt T20 competition has undergone a revamp for 2017.

All 36 clubs have been included and are divided into 10 unseeded geographical groups to provide as many local derbies as possible, playing either two or three games each, on Thursdays, or other days of the week by mutual agreement.

Pink balls must be used in all games.

For the 2017 season, clubs are to be given 24 free balls (12 red and 12 pink) at a total cost of more than £300 per club. This offer is only available to clubs who have paid all their fines and debts and operate within the 1st XI Vivio-sponsored divisions.

### ***Group fixtures***

#### **GROUP 1: (3 clubs: Neston, Oxton, Upton: playing 2 games each):**

Thursday, May 11: Oxton v Neston;

Thursday, May 25: Upton v Oxton;

Thursday, June 8: Neston v Upton.

#### **GROUP 2: (3 clubs: Grappenhall, Warrington, Widnes: 2 games each):**

Thursday, May 11: Widnes v Warrington;

Thursday, May 25: Warrington v Grappenhall;

Thursday, June 8: Grappenhall v Widnes.

#### **GROUP 3 (4 clubs: Alvanley, Barrow, Chester Boughton Hall, Christleton, 3 games each):**

Thursday, May 18: Christleton v Alvanley; Barrow v Chester

Thursday, June 1: Alvanley v Barrow; Chester v Christleton;

Thursday, June 15: Alvanley v Chester; Barrow v Christleton

#### **GROUP 4 (4 clubs, Bowdon, Lindow, Mobberley, Timperley: 3 games each):**

Thursday, May 18: Mobberley v Bowdon; Lindow v Timperley.

Thursday, June 1: Bowdon v Lindow; Timperley v Mobberley.

Thursday, June 15: Timperley v Bowdon; Lindow v Mobberley.

#### **GROUP 5 (3 clubs: Davenham, Northwich, Weaverham; 2 games each):**

Thursday, May 11: Northwich v Weaverham;

Thursday, May 25: Davenham v Northwich.

Thursday, June 8: Weaverham v Davenham.

#### **GROUP 6 : (3 clubs: Nantwich, Oulton Park, Tattenhall , 2 games each):**

Thursday, May 11: Nantwich v Oulton Park.

Thursday, May 25: Oulton Park v Tattenhall

Thursday, June 8: Tattenhall v Nantwich.

#### **GROUP 7: (4 clubs: Bramhall, Cheadle, Cheadle Hulme, Stockport, 3 games each):**

Thursday, May 18: Cheadle Hulme v Bramhall; Stockport v Cheadle.

Thursday, June 1: Cheadle v Cheadle Hulme; Bramhall v Stockport

Thursday, June 15: Cheadle v Bramhall; Cheadle Hulme v Stockport.

#### **GROUP 8: (4 clubs Brooklands, Didsbury, Sale, Urmston, 3 games each):**

Thursday, May 11: Urmston v Sale; Brooklands v Didsbury.

Thursday, May 25: Brooklands v Urmston; Sale v Didsbury.

Thursday, June 8: Urmston v Didsbury; Sale v Brooklands.

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### ***T20 draw contd ...***

#### **GROUP 9: (4 clubs, Alderley Edge, Bollington, Macclesfield, Toft, 3 games each.**

Thursday, May 28: Bollington v Macclesfield; Alderley Edge v Toft

Thursday, June 1: Toft v Bollington (date subject to change); Macclesfield v Alderley Edge.

Thursday, June 15: Macclesfield v Toft; Bollington v Alderley Edge

#### **GROUP 10: (4 clubs: Bredbury St. Mark's, Hyde, Marple, Romiley; 3 games each);**

Thursday, May 18: Romiley v Bredbury; Marple v Hyde;

Thursday June 1: Hyde v Bredbury; Romiley v Marple

Thursday, June 15: Bredbury v Marple; Hyde v Romiley.

### ***Group play-offs***

Games to be played on dates to be mutually agreed by Thursday June 22: clubs to toss for right to stage games:

**MATCH A:** Winners of Group 1 v winners of Group 2;

**MATCH B:** Winners of Group 5 v winners of Group 6

### ***Quarter-final play-offs***

Games to be played on dates to be mutually agreed or by Thursday, June 25; clubs to toss coin for right to stage games:

**Winners of PLAY-OFF MATCH A v winners of GROUP 3**

**Winners of PLAY-OFF MATCH B v winners of GROUP 4**

**Winners of GROUP 7 v winners of GROUP 8**

**Winners of GROUP 9 v winners of GROUP 10**

### ***Finals Day ...***

A toss of the coin will decide which of the four quarter-final winners stages **FINALS DAY** on Sunday, July 9 (reserve day Sunday, July 23). A further toss will resolve the semi-finals draw.

The Finals Day champion will go on to qualify to represent the League at home in the **ECB NATIONAL T20 AREA FINALS** on Sunday, July 30, when they will host Greater Manchester League, North Staffs. & South-Cheshire League and North Wales Premier League.

A full set of Group fixtures is available on the league website.

## ***Lancashire 2nd to play four games in Cheshire***

LANCASHIRE Second XI are to play four games in Cheshire during the 2017 season.

They start off with a 50 overs challenge match against Cheshire 2nd on Tuesday, May 2 (11 a.m.).

Next up is a 2nd XI Trophy game against Durham at Bowdon on Tuesday, May 16 (11 a.m.).

Lancashire then take on Worcestershire at Neston in a 2nd XI Trophy game on Monday, May 22 (11 a.m.).

Lastly, the Red Rosemen will play MCC at Urmston from Tuesday – Thursday, July 18 – 20 in a 2nd XI championship fixture (11 a.m. daily).

Other outgrounds on which Lancs will be appearing include Hem Heath (Staffs), Northop Hall, Northern, Liverpool and Blackpool.

🕒 Lancashire Academy trio Henry Dobson (Tattenhall), Ed Fluck and Sam Perry (both Alderley Edge) have been in Mumbai for the past month playing in 50 overs and T20 cricket tournaments organised by the Indian Cricket Board.

## **LATEST 2017 CLUB NEWS**

### **Bowdon to celebrate Lord's appearance**

BOWDON secretary when the League was founded in 1975, the First Division title a year later and when they reached the final of the John Haig National Club ko at Lord's a further 12 months on, David Young plans a get-together of survivors this summer.

It will take the shape of a buffet meal at the club on Saturday, June 10 starting at 6 p.m. on the day of the Premiership game against Chester Boughton Hall

David told *Newsletter*: "We played at Lord's in 1977 when the final against Southgate was rained –off. The match was replayed at Edgbaston a few days later, when we lost. I have been trying to contact all members of that team to stage a reunion. Unhappily, not all are still with us and a couple of others are ill".

David's contact e-mail address for anyone who would like to attend is d.young48@btinternet.com

### **BRAMHALL BUSINESS DIRECTORY**

FORMER **BRAMHALL** player Paul Bellis plans to publish a Business Directory covering the district at Easter which will include a major feature about the cricket club. A player there from 1986-2006 and now a life vice president, Paul served as a Bramhall councillor from 2000-2015. He is currently a Director at SK Graphics, publishers of the Bramhall Business Directory which appears twice annually.

Bramhall have elected Peter Lawson as a Life Member in appreciation of his long service. Not in the best of health and standing down as a League officer, Peter hopes to watch more cricket at Church Lane next summer.

### **Chester to have TWO captains**

CHESTER BOUGHTON Hall's have devised up the novel idea of separate captains for ECB Premier League and Cup matches in 2017.

Lee Dixon steps down as overall 1st XI skipper to concentrate on his duties leading Cheshire, making way for his younger brother, Ross who will skipper in League games. Ross was recently married to an Australian girl Down Under.

Experienced former Glamorgan all-rounder Will Owen will lead Chester in all cup games.

Chris Fleet captains the Academy side and continues as Club Captain while Jim Gillson remains chairman. Brian Gresty begins a three-year term as President in succession to John Legry. The 3rd and 4th XIs will become known as 3A and 3B.

### **Davenham stage county U16s**

DAVENHAM have accepted an invitation to stage an Under 16 county match between Cheshire and Lancashire at Butcher's Stile on Wednesday and Thursday, July 19 and 20. This will mean reversing their Over 40s games against Mobberley on July 19 and on May 31.

A sponsorship deal with builders Stewart Milne Homes has made funds available to help the club's growing junior section. A bowling machine, new kit and extra professional coaching has been made available, says junior co ordinator Karen Gallagher.

Over 40s captain Martin Bentley is succeeded by wicket-keeper Simon Freedman,

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**Club news contd ...**

### ***DIDSBURY HAPPY***

PROMOTED to the ECB Premier League as champions of Division One, **DIDSBURY** have expressed satisfaction with their officers by re-electing, as follows:

Chairman and treasurer Duncan Anderson; secretary Tim Hughes; 1<sup>st</sup> XI captain Nick Anderson; 2nd XI captain Shahaz Qasim; 3<sup>rd</sup> XI Sunday captain Mark Dowse; 4<sup>th</sup> XI Sunday captain Tony De Weever.

### ***Macclesfield Players of Year***

AT the **MACCLESFIELD** Player of the Year awards evening, popular Aussie Nick Bertus won three 1st XI prizes, while the 2nd, 3rd and 4<sup>th</sup> XI awards went to Fin McCance, Dave Cowen and James Coombes respectively. Clubmen of the Year were Graham Mason and Steve Littler

Among changes. Ben Welsh becomes secretary and Dave Frame stands down as 40s captain. Principal sponsors Chrome Motors have stepped down.

Club Newsletter Editor Simon Griffiths has been named Cheshire East Council Volunteer of the Year. The award recognises outstanding unpaid work in the community and Simon's achievements heading up new ventures on the ground have been justly recognised.

Evan Gulbis, Macc's former Aussie all-rounder, played in the final of the Big Bash for Melbourne Stars when they lost to Perth Scorchers, scoring nine and taking 1-9. He played alongside Kevin Pietersen

### **Graham Gooch @ Marple**

FORMER Essex and England captain Graham Gooch was guest speaker at MARPLE'S Sportsman's Dinner in mid-November.

The club's PR man Mark Brook reports: "Goochie was excellent and I can highly recommend him. His knowledge of the game and good humour thrilled us all".

Marple plan a 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of their sole First Division title success, in 2017.

### ***Camden back at Neston***

ALL-ROUNDER Luke Camden has rejoined **NESTON** after a spell with neighbours Birkenhead Park, recently relegated from the Liverpool Competition's premier division.

Luke keeps fit during the off-season playing for Cammell Laird in North-West Counties League.

Neston are lining up a quality overseas player, reports re-appointed skipper Simon Stokes.

David Hurst will be playing a full season at Parkgate.

Zimbabwe-born all-rounder Simon Mugava who scored 326 runs and took 36 wickets for Neston last season, has moved to live in Stoke and expects to play in the North Staffs League for Alsager.

### ***Oulton Park bi-centenary***

**OULTON PARK** are well ahead with plans for their bicentenary celebrations to take place in season 2020.

With five large new homes shortly to be built at the public house end of the ground necessitating the construction of a safety wall, Oulton have major plans to extend their ground and possibly re-site the square further away from the pavilion. The pavilion itself is also to be upgraded.

Full proposals will be published when Cheshire West & Chester Council planning permission has been received, hopefully by the spring.

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*Club news contd ..*

### ***Lancashire sign Sale's Brooke Guest***

OUTSTANDING SALE wicket-keeper/batsman Brooke Guest has signed a professional contract with Lancashire for 2017, but expects to be regularly available for the Dane Road club's County League matches.

A former Australia Under 19s player, Guest scored 1,097 runs in all cricket for Sale last season and also appeared regularly for Lancashire 2nd, figuring in their team which beat Somerset in the 2nd XI knock out final at Old Trafford.

### **Timperley strengthen**

TIMPERLEY have signed all-rounder Tyrone Lawrence and wicket-keeper Chris Canning, both from Sale, also former Natal and Gloucestershire batsman Grant Hodnett, who played in the Moorside League last season.

Kiwi all-rounder Dan Cooper who played for Timpers in 2015 and 2016 has settled in the UK and will become an ordinarily resident player next season.

Paceman Jack White, who took 36 Premier League wickets in his debut season is staying at Stockport Road

### ***First-class debut for ex-Toft Aussie***

TOFT's outstanding Aussie Jake Hancock (2011 – 2015) made his first-class debut in January when he played for Tasmania against Queensland at the Gabba scoring 0 and 12. He has also played against Victoria at the MCG.

### **HAPPY DAYS FOR URMIES' CHAIRMAN**

URMSTON chairman Rob Arnold has been clocking up the miles following his beloved Imps – Lincoln City FC – in the FA Cup

He has seen every match so far and plans to be at the Emirates for the forthcoming quarter-final against Arsenal, which he does not believe will end the club's fabulous Wembley run.

Meanwhile, Urmies have lost the talented Parkinson brothers: Callum has signed a contract with Leicestershire and is to play in the Leicestershire County League, while Matthew, recently in Dubai with England Lions, will be with Egerton in the Greater Manchester League.

Bradley Yates and Sam Oldham have both left.

Lancashire 2nd opener Calum Turner becomes the club's youngest 1st XI captain. He is currently playing Grade cricket in Australia following his recovery from a ruptured spleen.

Returning to the club are Lewis Jackson from Leigh and Samit Panda, who has been playing for Edgworth.

Urmston have withdrawn from the Sunday Third XI's First Division.

### **Neil Cross for Upton**

UPTON have made quality addition to their playing strength for next season's First Division programme in Neil Cross, the former Wallasey, New Brighton, Oxton, Bowdon and Cheshire all-rounder.

Former 1st XI captain Andy Roberts becomes Cricket chairman at Old Greasby Road, while 4<sup>th</sup> XI captain for the past 20 plus years, Ian Bruce, has been made an Honorary Life Member.

Chairman Jez Lamb reports that Upton have confirmed their partnership with North-West based charity Vital Signs Foundation (VSF) and they have appointed one of his predecessors Steve McCormick as charity co ordinator.

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## ***Cheshire Umpires' AGM at Winnington Park***

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SECRETARY Tony Morris has despatched agendas for the Cheshire County Umpires & Scorers Association AGM.

It is to be held at Winnington Park Cricket Club on Thursday, March 9 (8 p.m.)

### ***League Umpires' 2017 meeting dates***

DATES of League Umpires & Scorers Association meetings in 2017 (all 8 p.m.) are:

Pre-season, Wednesday, April 19 at Timperley;

Mid-season: Wednesday, July 5 at Toft;

End of season: Wednesday, September 20 at Alvanley (to be confirmed);

AGM: Wednesday, November 8 at Toft.

### ***Duckworth – Lewis – Stern course***

MEMBERS of the ECB ACO who would like to learn more about the details of the highly-complicated Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method of scoring should attend a course at Toft on Saturday, April 8.

Cheshire Scorers Officer James Emmerson has devised a flyer which contains full information about the course which can be obtained by contacting him on [semajemm@gmail.com](mailto:semajemm@gmail.com)

The course entails alternative sessions from 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. or 1.15 p.m. to 3.45 p.m. on April 8 and costs £20 per head

### ***Umpires' Winter Newsletter***

CHESHIRE Umpires's highly readable Winter Newsletter has been circulated by Editor Alastair Davies.

Interesting items include a Message from chairman Ian Gtreensmith, an Umpires' profile (Alistair himself), Geoff Young's Training update, Geoff Wellsted's Bits and Pieces and a few words from County Performance Officer John Lofthouse. John has spent the last two months watching football in the sunny Algarve. A story in itself perhaps for the Spring Issue?

*Alistair can be contacted for contributions on [alistair61@gmail.com](mailto:alistair61@gmail.com)*

### ***Third XI fixture changes***

REQUESTS for 2017 season Third XI fixture changes should be directed to new Competition secretary Roger Ollier. He can be contacted by telephone on 01928 787 192 (home); 07710 730 038 (mobile) or [rgollier@aol.com](mailto:rgollier@aol.com) (e-mail).

### ***Notts tourists seek fixtures***

SEEKING mid-week friendly fixtures during a tour of Cheshire and neighbouring counties in the first week of July are Nottingham League Division A club Collingham and District.

Vice chairman and tour organiser Davis Pipes says his players will be of mixed strength, but no mugs and good mixers.

Any club who would like to offer to host Collingham from Monday, July 31 to Friday, August 4 inclusive should contact David by telephone on 07900 886732 or by e-mail on [david.pipes11@gmail.com](mailto:david.pipes11@gmail.com)

## **CHESHIRE FORM OVER 70s TEAM**

AT the recent **Cheshire Over 60s** AGM it was agreed to form an Over 70s section for the first time to play in competitive games in 2017, availability permitting.

The skipper will be Ken Crofton of Birkenhead Park.

Leader of the Over 60s first team will be Grappenhall's Nick Sharp with Bob Ashley remaining at the helm of the successful 2nd XI which last season reached the National final.

### ***Weaverham lead way in Vale Royal Indoor League***

REDUCED to six clubs this winter, the **Vale Royal Indoor League** passed its halfway mark with Weaverham leading Kingsley by three points.

Weaverham beat Kingsley by 107 runs to 83 in a top of the table clash on January 30 to go clear of their closest rivals, with Nantwich also in the running.

Games are played weekly at St. Nicholas High School, Northwich, from mid-October to mid-April. 13.

The competition is run jointly by Andy Bennion and Peter Robinson

#### **TABLE TO FEBRUARY 21**

	<b>P</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Pts. deducted</b>	<b>Total</b>
Weaverham	8	7	1	-	21
Kingsley	8	6	2	-	18
Nantwich	7	5	2	-	15
Oulton Park	5	1	4	-	3
Oakmere	7	1	6	3	0
Davenham	5	0	5	6	-6

## **AGM OF COMBINED UK FAST LEAGUE**

THE first annual meeting of the merged **UK Fast Cheshire League** took place at Holmes Chapel on Thursday, February 23. This followed the merger of the UKFast League and Cheshire Alliance.

The combined league will operate with 60 x 1st XIs and 78 x 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th XIs.

The First Division will comprise: Middlewich, Congleton (relegated), Ashton on Mersey, Barnton, Disley, Hale Barns, Stockport Georgians, Lymm, Runcorn, Irby, Port Sunlight and Haslington (promoted). The two leagues' Umpires' associations have also agreed to merge.

The new combined league's pre-season meeting is at Holmes Chapel on Thursday, April 13 at 8 p.m.

## **It's 2002 - 03 and our final trip to Oz**

THE trouble with writing up long past cricket tour experiences by those of us of a certain age is that we tend to get dates mixed up.

Thus the New Zealand trip described in *Newsletter's* January issue was attributed to March 2003, whereas it was actually 12 months earlier. This has been pointed out by several good folk we actually met on that Kiwi tour.

The tour Wyn and I actually experienced in 2002-03 was our third - and intended to be the last - to Australia, starting shortly before Christmas for the Melbourne and Sydney Tests and finishing in mid- January after an epic 2,000 miles rail journey.

We asked Gulliver's Travels to plan something different to our two previous tours to Oz in 1994-5 and 1998-9 and they compiled a wonderful itinerary with some novel experiences which live with us to this day.

Unfortunately, the cricket outcome was the same: the Test series ended in a 4-1 hammering, something we anticipated when arriving shortly before the Boxing Day game at the MCG, already 3-0 down.

Nasser Hussain's team had lost at Brisbane by 384 runs (Hayden 197 and 103, Michael Vaughan 177), at Adelaide by an innings and 51 runs (Vaughan 177) and at Perth by an innings and 487 runs.

So hopes weren't high when we took our seats for the Boxing Day Test after enjoying a floodlit Christmas dinner in a lovely city park seated next to another fresh UK arrival, David Moss of MGS.

England actually put up a decent show, losing by 'only' five wickets with scores of 551-6 dec. (Justin Langer 250) and 107-5 to England's 270 and 387 (Vaughan 145)

### **Preferential treatment**

I tried to get into the elite MCG Members pavilion, decently dressed although shod in trainers on Boxing Day (attendance 80,000). I was turned away by a flunkie who had just admitted a man wearing a dreadful coloured T-shirt open at the chest. When I complained, he replied: "Sorry, sir, that gentleman happens to be the Attorney General".

Next day a plane whisked us 600 miles to Sydney in time for the fabulous New Year's Eve fireworks display which we watched from a yacht in the harbour. There were 1M people watching from the shores - and only 20 reported arrests for misbehaviour

England won Test Match 5 at the SCG, at last playing like a team. The scores were England 362 (Mark Butcher 124) and 481-9 dec. (Vaughan 185), Oz 363 and 226 (Andy Caddick 7-94 on a dust bowl). The 5-day attendance for a dead rubber was 190,000 incidentally.

The batting of Michael Vaughan - three tons and 633 runs at 70 plus - on this tour was wonderful and his innings at the SCG was the best I have ever seen by an Englishman abroad.

On Day 3 Wyn had good cause to thank England's Alex Stewart when he scored 16 runs off the last over of the day, earning her 100 dollars in a Gulliver's Sweep.

Next match up was at Bowral, when an England XI took on Don Bradman's XI in the Don's delightful home town deep in the NSW countryside. Apart from centuries by Owais Shah and Mark Waugh, we shall always remember this game because it began in 80 degrees tropical heat and finished after being clasped by a unique cold snap which sent many ill-clad species in the capacity crowd home early.

Wyn and I sat with former Bowdon cricketer Simon Milner, with whom we had kept in touch for the past 10 years since his emigration with father Len.

After the game we drove 300 miles to the Milners' lovely home in Canberra for an overnight stay. Chief reporter in the Senate's equivalent of Hansard, Simon gave us a tour of the Parliament building, meeting several grandees, then around the small city which is totally devoted to politicians' requirements and is actually quite dull.

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### ***Aussie tour contd ...***

We've continued to keep in touch with Simon and were upset to learn recently that after his retirement, he is fighting cancer. If anyone would like his e-mail address I will oblige

Next day we took the train back from Canberra back to Sydney, 400 miles in six hours, and saw kangaroos in the wild for the first time.

I umpired a match between a Gulliver's XI skippered by our tour leader Mike Gatting and a NSW Country XI at Parramatta. The Aussies were led by Trevor Chappell, he of underarm bowling infamy (B& H final Oz v New Zealand at MCG, 1981). He still looked a very handy batsman, scoring a rapid 100, an innings ended by light rain before a message from the dressing-room asked me to inform Mr. Gatting that lunch was ready early. True to form, Gatt could not get off the field quickly enough and we never resumed. Trevor Chappell told us over sandwiches he still dined out on that infamous underarm incident. "No regrets, mate: I was under orders". (From his brother Greg).

We stayed on to watch the triangular ODI series between Oz, England and Sri Lanka which enabled us to spend a week in Tasmania's capital, Hobart. England lost to Australia at the splendid Bellerive Oval on the banks of the Derwent River when former Tasmania Sheffield Shield favourites David Boon and Jack Simmons wallowed in an open top car trip round the ground.

Tassy is a fascinating island, now a State in its own right, very different to the mainland. We drove up the 5,000 foot volcanic Mount Wellington, when we spotted Snow at the peak in mid-summer for the first time. This was in the shape of former England bowler John, not the variety we know so well at home!

We also went on a trip to see an original British penal colony at Port Arthur, faithfully maintained in its mid-19<sup>th</sup> century condition.

### **Cruisers' musical send-off**

Back in town we interrupted a late-night dinner at the harbour to watch a massive cruise ship setting off for Southampton via Cape Town when hundreds of waving voyagers were given a tear-jerking brass band send off.

Flying back to the mainland, we watched two ODIs on our all-time favourite ground at the Adelaide Oval. (Not any more, I'm afraid, after the garish new stands built to accommodate Aussie Rules football). England beat Sri Lanka, before losing to Australia, the scores totally escaping me.

On our last day in the city, we took a bus 50 miles to the town of Murray Bridge, through which flows the awe-inspiring Murray River. A day on a boat enjoying the wildlife, crocks and all, was fascinating.

Next morning we set off on the adventure we had keenly anticipated, the 2,000 miles two-night three-day railway journey on the Indian-Pacific Express from Adelaide to Perth. This took us via the Nullaboor Plain - 900 miles without a tree or a bend in the track - with only one stop. That was at Cook, population 2 (the souvenir shop proprietor and wife). Much later we paused at Kalgoorlie to take in water and despite it being almost midnight we were whisked round the famous gold mining town with little life at that time of night apart from some brightly-lit brothels.

After a 56 hours trek with superb sleeping conditions and food, we arrived at Perth. The trip cost about £450 per person with a twin cabin and all restaurant meals, plus taxis to and from the train, which I reckon was pretty good value. The fare is doubled today.

We spent our final day down the Swan River at the port of Fremantle, where thousands of British exiles, including many young people apparently destined to be mistreated, had ended their £10 Passages in the 1950s. We also saw a huge ship loaded with 40,000 sheep headed for the Phillipines and were told only about 70 per cent would survive.

Flying back to the UK from the City of Light lopped a couple of hours off the journey home and after a leg-stretcher at Dubai, it was back to Sandiway to prepare for what 2003 had in store for us.

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## **League's pre-season meeting: Wednesday, April 12**

THE League's pre-season Management committee meeting at which cricket balls, handbooks, results sheets, match cards etc. will be available for collection is at **Warrington Sports Club on Wednesday, April 12, 7.30 p.m. for 8 p.m.**

All full and associate member clubs should attend, the latter if only to collect their kit.

## **WEBSITES INFO**

The League's Pitchero website administered by Richard Fennah contains recent pictures and documents, including all 2016 & 2017 issues of *Newsletter*. It can be located on:

**[www.cheshirecountycl.org.uk](http://www.cheshirecountycl.org.uk)**

For other League news including all 2017 season fixtures, tap into Darren Sutcliffe's website ...

**[www.cheshirecountycl.play-cricket.com](http://www.cheshirecountycl.play-cricket.com)**

For those who have difficulty in locating fixtures, process the following:  
From the list of options on the index bar at top of the Home Page, select Matches, then Fixtures, then 2017 Fixtures which are set out in superb technicolour.

**NEXT ISSUE OF THE *NEWSLETTER*  
WILL BE IN EARLY APRIL .....**

Meanwhile, please direct latest club news, comments, letters, corrections, complaints, obituaries etc. to the undersigned ....

**[Mike.t-b@talktalk.net](mailto:Mike.t-b@talktalk.net) .....**  
**Monday, February 27, 2017**