

# THE YORKSHIRE GENTLEMEN'S CRICKET CLUB

(Founded 1863)

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

19 March 2019

“Club cricket is an English institution and a national cause. In the celebrated refrain of his poem *Vitai Lampada*, Sir Henry Newbolt stressed that the values of the cricket field underpinned martial virtues and national honour: “Play up! Play up! And play the game!” Yet in the modern age, the institution of cricket at village (Club) level is in decline. Many traditional sides are struggling to survive, amid pressured lifestyles and the financial rewards of playing for bigger clubs. Dozens of smaller clubs face closure and the number of cricketers registered in England has fallen sharply – from 428,000 in 2008 to 278,000 in 2016.

For all the romantic imagery of white flannels on the village green, and cream teas in the pavilion, there is probably nothing that can be done to arrest this contraction. Cricket is a part of English social history, and times change.

Cricket has had a good innings. Its modern form and laws were essentially codified by the end of the Hanoverian era. New technologies in producing synthetic rubber revolutionised other ball games in the Victorian age, but cricket experienced only very minor changes in rules concerning dismissals and declarations. It was a game that suited the spirit of the age and the ethos of paternalism and public service.

Yet small clubs have long needed subsidy to survive. Cricket has changed markedly in recent years with Twenty20 contests, power-plays and edge-detection technology. The gentler pace of the village games may be waning, but cricket will survive.”

This article, taken from The Times only last month, presents a somewhat bleak picture, but it does set out quite accurately the context in which Club cricket, like ours, is trying to thrive. I remain optimistic for the YGs. We have a good playing membership; a lovely ground; and generous committed people making it all happen. But you only have to look a little closer to see an alternative picture – reducing fixture list, no Treasurer, no Fixture Secretary, increasing catering costs – and you can see that work needs to be done and volunteers need to be found to assure our status as the pre-eminent gentlemen's cricket club in the County.

**Treasurer.** Charles Glassey has been the Club's Fixture Secretary for 31 years. What an achievement in this day and age. He tried to stand down a few years ago but I wouldn't let him! So, I can't thank him enough for his contribution. He has done more than can be expected of a volunteer in the Club and I am delighted therefore to report that he has accepted the offer to become a Vice-President of the Club. But we desperately require someone to replace him. If you think you can spare some time to do it then please get in touch – you will NOT have to do 31 years. He leaves the Club in good financial health and we wish him well as he stands down.

**Fixtures.** Richard Umlers has served the Club for over 10 years as Fixture Sec. He too is now standing down and we all owe him a debt of gratitude. I do however repeat the above appeal for help. We have no cricket without a Fixture Sec, so if you think you can take this on, then please get in touch. Richard leaves us with another excellent season of cricket to look forward to; there

is a slightly reduced list reflecting a rationalisation of fixtures and thus a reduced burden on Match Managers. We wish him well as he goes to spend more time with his golf clubs!

**Match Managers.** Thank you to all our Match Managers who volunteer to run the matches on behalf of the Club. This is an important role and I encourage MMs not to take this role lightly. You are ambassadors for the Club, and in everything you do (the team you select, the way you play the game, the hospitality you show to the opposition) all reflects on YGCC. There is some helpful advice for MMs on the website which I urge all MMs to read, however many times you may have done the job before. It is a good reminder. I cannot capture all that is required of a MM in a pithy phrase but in essence, you need to select your team early; engage with the opposition MM and host them well on the day; play well, enjoy the game and win.

**Website.** Jeremy Philips has done a tremendous job on the website – [www.yorkshiregentlemenscricketclub.co.uk](http://www.yorkshiregentlemenscricketclub.co.uk). It is kept up-to-date with Club news and of course you can see all our fixtures and apply to play in matches from there. It does need all members, especially playing members, to register; if you have not done this yet, or if you need to update your details please can I urge you to do so before the season starts. Incidentally, you can follow the Club on Twitter as well @yorkshiregents where you will often to be able to follow a match in progress.

**Cricket.** Turning to on-field matters, the record for 2018, which was largely a gloriously hot summer for cricket, shows P31 W9 D7 L9 (6 cancelled or abandoned). It was what some commentators might call ‘a season of two halves’ as we managed not to lose at all in the first half but found it rather more difficult to win in the second! Although we should strive for no cancelled fixtures at all, this is not always in our own hands; I am however, pleased to report fewer games cancelled than last year. The notable performances can be seen below, but it is perhaps worthy of note, and quite surprising, that no YG scored a century – I cannot remember a season when this has happened before. The (slow) bowlers seemed to have a much more successful time of it! We kick-off again on Sunday 28th April vs Woodhouse Grange Academy.

**New Members.** I am delighted to welcome 3 new playing members into the Club. They are of course most welcome. We also have 3 further Candidates in the pipeline this year, so thank you to those who are helping to recruit.

**President’s Cup.** The winner of the 2018 President’s Cup is long-serving member, James Burdass. He was Match Manager of the St Peter’s fixture for 30 years before handing over to Charlie Elliot last season. To put that in context, James took over from Lt Col Dick O’Kelly in 1987! We look forward to seeing him playing again this year and perhaps bringing the next generation of Burdass along with him!

**Annual Dinner.** 125 guests attended the Annual Dinner at the Parsonage Hotel, Escrick in 2018 which allowed the President to record a profit of £1,083.11. Thank you again for organising this important event in our calendar. We were well entertained by former England & Middlesex player, Angus Fraser and I am sure Richard is once again planning to maintain his record for high quality speakers on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019 - the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the dinner in this format. Please make a note of the date and see if we can’t bring along a few more guests this year.

**‘100’ Club.** The ‘100’ Club brings in a more modest sum to the Club each year but it is nevertheless important. You can subscribe to this and support the Club for a mere £15. There

are 12 chances to win something - 11 monthly draws and a Jackpot Draw for £250. Thanks to Ali Rigby for organising this.

**Equipment.** Members are reminded of the generous support we receive from Hunts County Bats. They continue to offer members of the Club preferential rates for cricketing equipment – in the region of a 50% discount. Details can be found on their website at [www.huntscountybats.co.uk](http://www.huntscountybats.co.uk) or call them on 01480 451234. Please mention the Club when you place an order.

**Catering.** After many years of valuable support, Brenda has decided that she is no longer able to commit to helping us with the preparation of lunches and teas. I am grateful to her on behalf of the Club, for all the support she has given us over the years and wish her well for the future. The food will still be provided by Heather and we are confident of finding a replacement to help put it all on the table for us.

**Innings Closed.** I am saddened to report that HNL (Hugh) Blenkin died on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019. He played his YG cricket mainly in the '70s scoring 1856 runs in 72 matches. The story of how his wife, Marilla, ended the tradition of “no ladies or children in the pavilion before 6.30 p.m.” is covered in the Club History; suffice to say that in 1973 it was long overdue.

**Pre-Season.** The season gets underway officially at the AGM and pre-season dinner which this year takes place on **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April** at 7.30 p.m. by kind permission of Queen Margaret's School, Escrick. Please come along and catch up after the winter. It's a very good occasion to get the season underway.

**Last Over.** In response to the Times article quoted at the start, Michael Atherton wrote a lengthy article in which he says: “It seems unfashionable to say it, but some people actually like playing the game. No sport, perhaps, does existential angst as well as cricket and in the rush for new formats to attract a new audience, for Facebook likes, Twitter followers and bite-sized packages, there is a core constituency that enjoys the layered complexity of a longer, more satisfying game. There is a danger that they get taken for granted, or their wishes ignored.”

I take this opportunity, as I do every year, to thank all those who are engaged with the successful management of the Club – Committee Members, Match Managers, Bill & Mike the Umpires, Nigel as Groundsman, Catering Staff, and of course Paul White. I look forward to seeing you at Escrick, or at our away matches, during the 2019 season.

*DRE O'Kelly*

**Chairman**

## 2018 - Overall Results

Year	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Tied	Abandoned/Cancelled
2015	31	9	7	6	0	9
2016	33	10	2	12	0	9
2017	36	12	3	11	0	10 (7 by oppo)
2018	31	9	7	9	0	2/4 (2 by oppo)

**Hundreds:** Nil

**Highest Scores:**

Jason Dale 87 vs Langdale's Lovelies  
Geoff Barker 84\* vs Pocklington Pixies  
James van de Merwe 74 vs Pocklington School  
David O'Kelly 74 vs Harrow Wanderers  
Harry Adair 73 vs Romany

**Best Bowling:**

Bevan Fawcett 9-3-28-7 vs Radley Rangers  
Bevan Fawcett 10-1-35-7 vs St Peter's School  
Pankaj Saini 6.3-3-14-6 vs Borderers  
Pankaj Saini 9-2-15-5 vs Ampleforth College  
Bevan Fawcett 12-4-17-5 vs Woodhouse Grange Academy  
Jonny Anderson 12-4-26-5 vs Cryptics  
Angus Shaw 10.4-2-51-5 vs The Hawks  
Geoff Barker 18-3-61-5 vs Gentlemen of Leicestershire

As a reminder, please use the website to update your availability  
[www.yorkshiregentlemenscricketclub.co.uk](http://www.yorkshiregentlemenscricketclub.co.uk)

Have a fun and successful 2019.