Panther News
Stratford-upon-Avon Cricket Club
incorporating Stratford Bards Cricket Club
Spring 2018

Picking up the Pieces
This time last year we were getting used to the idea of past Chairman, Steve Cootes, not being around. His shoes were always going to be hard to fill and this has proved the case. The retirement of Colin Davis as Director of Junior Cricket, saw the very able Matt Dutton taking over and George Fisher agreeing to stand in as temporary Chairman meant there was at least some continuity in these positions. John Shurie picked up a number of outstanding projects on which Steve had been working and with the additional help of members such as Club Captain, Mike Brown and the experience of Hon Secretary, Iain Lythall, the Club continued to function. With the balance sheet in good shape and our main sponsor REPL supporting us, things were moving forward. On the playing side, while the 1st XI eventually managed to survive in Division 3, the 2nd XI went agonisingly close to promotion, missing out by one point and the Bards XI finished a respectable 4th after a dodgy start. There was never a dull moment.

What Happened Next?
Alas, if things don’t stay the same, they change, and the first four months of 2018 has again seen major changes to the personnel running the Cricket Club. However, probably the most significant set-back was the announcement that our main sponsor, REPL, was not renewing its role as main Cricket Club sponsor. They have supported the Club magnificently for 3 years and their support will be greatly missed. At the December 2017 AGM, it was announced that 1st XI Captain, Mike Brown, was leaving the Club – a great loss on many fronts. Sam Bishop was standing down as captain of the Bards XI. Our SNL groundsman and 1st XI wicket keeper, Chris Calcott, had also decided to move to pastures new. Iain Lythall, after years of service, decided to stand down as Hon Secretary and John Shurie announced that due to other commitments, he no longer had the time to spend on many of the projects that required a considerable amount of weekly time, though he would see through most of the projects in which he was currently involved. George Fisher was keen to emphasise that his position as stand-in Chairman was temporary and a full time Chairman needed to be found as soon as possible.

So, suddenly there were a lot of holes to fill. However, the most positive news was that Chris Whelan had agreed to become 1st XI Captain, and with Josh Hickman continuing to skipper the 2nd XI and Matt Dutton agreeing to replace Sam Bishop as the Bards XI Captain, these guys, with the help of hardworking Social Sec., James Urquhart, have taken charge of the playing side which will hopefully see the standard of our cricket rise to greater heights. Tony Marney agreed to move into the Hon. Secretary spot, Rick Smart remains as Hon. Treasurer and James Harcourt became the Club’s Birmingham League representative. So, not all doom and gloom. However, that still leaves the roles of Chairman and Commercial Director to fill and the need to find people to take over some of the many projects that require time and effort spending on them. Where are they? Are you out there?

Panthers Capture Tasmanian Devil
The Club have captured the services of 18 years old Tasmanian, Declan Waddington, as its overseas player for 2018. The promising wicketkeeper-batsman joins us from Tasmania Premier League club Lindisfarne. “I think we’ve been quite smart with our recruitment,” said new Panther’s skipper, Chris Whelan. “Declan has been playing Premier League cricket in Tasmania and we’ve no doubt recruited a very talented young cricketer, who is a replacement for Chris Calcott and will bring much more to the table in terms of run scoring for us which is something we’ve not had in previous seasons. Great credit must go to Matt Dutton who has done a huge amount of work in finding us a high quality young overseas player.”

President’s Message
Here’s to a Summer of Enjoyment both On and Off the Field!
The ‘Beast from the East’ has finally left our shores and spring has sprung at last and the promise of a cricketing summer is within our grasp. May I begin, on behalf of the Club, by thanking John Shurie for all his hard work and optimism while keeping the show on the road in the absence of an elected Chairman. It really is very much appreciated by everyone. Secondly, I should like to extend a warm welcome to our new overseas player, Tasmanian, Declan Waddington and hope he has a happy and fruitful time with the Panthers.

Thirdly, may I welcome John Bishop back into the fold who is once more taking on the onerous task of looking after both the Swans Nest Lane and Atescot Park grounds. If he is half as successful as last time he was in charge, the club will surely go from strength to strength.

To our captains, Chris Whelan (1st XI), Josh Hickman (2nd XI) and to the Stratford-upon-Avon Cricket Club players, both youth and senior, to the coaches, and to all the members and spectators, I wish a summer of enjoyment and success, both on and off the field.

And finally, may I ask you all to help the club in any way you can by supporting the various fund-raising events during the season, hopefully culminating in another, ‘Holly and the Ivy’ in the Swan Theatre at Christmas.

Hugs and kisses,
All Troughton, President

......STOP PRESS......
Just as we are about to go to press, it has been announced that Matt Dutton and his family are moving to Australia. We wish them well in their new adventure. The Club will miss his tremendous contribution, particularly in relation to Junior Cricket. Bon Voyage!
Back to the Future......

Apart from the elite Birmingham & District Cricket League, league cricket as we know it, started in the early 1970s, when what was considered to be the top 12 cricket clubs in the Midlands area (Coventry & North Warwick, Evesham, Harborne, Kings Heath, Knowle & Dorridge, Leamington, Moseley, in the West Midlands, and Stratford-upon-Avon, Sutton Coldfield and Wolverhampton), who played each other on a “friendly” basis twice a year, decided to form themselves into a league which was called the Midland Club Cricket Championship. It was very successful with Stratford becoming League Champions in 1888. It continued through the existing structure! As a club, we at Stratford are already in contact with the various stakeholders including the Warwickshire County League and will work with them to keep everyone up to date on developments.

The Management Board of BDPCL will be comprised of two divisions (Premier One and Premier Two) with 12 clubs in each division. There will be promotion and relegation between Division One and the respective County League. In future, our on-field performance may well see us back in the Birmingham League. Wherever we play cricket this summer and next – we look forward to seeing you enjoying your cricket at Swans Nest Lane and Alscot Park. If you have any questions, please contact our Birmingham League Representative, Jim Harcourt, jim.harcourt@hotmail.com.

On the 1st XI prospects for 2018, new Captain, Chris Whelan commented, “The new league structure for 2019 means that whatever we do this coming season, in 2018 we shall be playing in the Warwickshire League. However, there comes the challenge. Winning the Warwickshire League in 2019 and then the following promotion, is a tall order but we are confident to the Birmingham & District Premier Cricket League, now reduced to Premier One and Premier Two. So, we need to improve the standard of our cricket even more to give ourselves the opportunities of competing for this prize.” Looking forward to the coming season and our gear and facilities, Chris said, “There is a feeling of excitement within the Club with a shake-up both on and off the field. It certainly feels that we now have the right individuals in place to help drive the Club forward.”

As a subject of new players, Chris highlighted the effort put in, “We have been busy on the recruitment front securing a number of players who will be determined by a play-off system to be played at the end of the 2018 season. The two BDPCL teams will play in the new Warwickshire League back in the 1990s, we have enjoyed competition far and wide across 5 counties with many long lasting fixtures such as this one. In this special season, we were proudly crowned Premier League Champions back in 2001 and although many of the 48 clubs wanted to retain the current structure, many felt that change was necessary to ensure a sustainable future. Modern sport and lifestyles are changing rapidly, and the new structure will allow the dual aims of providing local community/local county club cricket (with local Derbies!) for the many whilst those clubs playing at an elite level have a merit-based league (with promotion/relegation to county leagues) that allows those with the talent and the budgets to compete sustainably.

A common view held amongst many clubs was that too many clubs were continually ‘chasing the dream’ of playing in higher divisions by spending money on players whilst neglecting their facilities and community roots. We at Stratford, have found out the hard way in recent years by attracting value for money overseas players whilst investing in our facilities and grounds equipment. Whilst our immediate future may lie in the Warwickshire County League, we should note that should we win the county league and be successful in the play-offs in 2019, that we will be back in the Birmingham League Premier Two Division for 2020. This provides a great incentive and emulates the back-to-back promotions that would be required to rise to the equivalent Division 1 status.

2nd XI Still Have the Talent

In his 2017 review, 2nd XI Captain Josh Hickman, said “2017 was in fact the most successful season for a Stratford 2nd XI in the “play cricket” era (post 2003) with fifteen wins being recorded, although it was frustrating to miss out on promotion once again. This success was even more impressive considering the availability problems faced by the club and it is a testament to the players that turned out, even when the side was short. As a team we felt that we deserved to be promoted, and to miss out in the end by a single point was heart-breaking. What made it even more disappointing was the fact that we had beaten the side above us twice convincingly and lost fewer games throughout the course of the season, but that is league cricket for you.” He emphasised that there were plenty of positives to take forward into 2018.

Significant work has been done behind the scenes and if the numbers at winter nets and the buzz around the club at the moment is anything to go by, then all of the hard work is paying-off. The active culture that has been built in the 2nd XI over the last couple of years has contributed to on field success and it’s important that this be maintained. The 2nd XI also plays a crucial developmental role within the club and it is essential that we create an environment that welcomes and encourages the progression of all players. If we can create an atmosphere that encourages participation and enjoyment, then success will undoubtedly follow.
**New Law Amendments within the Recreational Game**

It’s important that all players and umpires, regardless of standing, are aware of the following law changes to be implemented by the ECB across all recreational cricket.

**Introduction**
Following the release of the new Laws in 2017 by MCC, the ECB has considered and issued a notification of new laws which will be applied across the Recreational Game.

All amendments have been considered by the Recreational Assembly (RA) in their function as the voice of recreational cricket from the 39 County Cricket Boards.

**Bat Sizes – Law 5.7**
There has been concern about the management of this new law. This concern has been voiced by players, parents and from the companies that provide equipment.

The RA voted unanimously for a phased approach outlined below:

- **2018** A moratorium of this Law across all recreational cricket.
- **2019** New Law to apply across the Minor Counties Cricket Competitions (MCCA) and the top two divisions (where there are two or more) of ECB Premier Leagues. A moratorium to apply across all other levels of recreational cricket.
- **2020** All Recreational Cricket to adhere to the new Law.

**Bowling of Dangerous and unfair non-pitching deliveries – Law 4.17**

The ‘High Full Toss’
Law 41.7.2 has provided discussions at a local level, in particular, the effect it may have on developing cricketers and game management. The RA believes that additional guidance should be provided as the principles behind the law have potential unintended consequences for young players.

In discussions with MCC it is clear the question of dangerous/uncontrolled deliveries and the likelihood of injury is foremost in their thinking.

ECB maintains that Law 41.7.4 provides for the majority of these instances and that the removal of a young bowler falling foul of Law 41.7.2 through inexperience or early development but providing no danger to the striker is potentially damaging to the development of a young bowler and is likely to cause management issues between parents, coaches and players.

The RA approved the following guidance that provides a pragmatic approach to those charged with the management of player development and the Law when managing matches involving players below the age of 16.

- **Open Age and Youth League Cricket (16+)** will be implemented in full across all hardball cricket.
- **A bowler (Under 16 and below)** will be no-balled for every ‘high full toss’. The player will not receive a warning or be removed from the attack by the umpire unless deemed to be in breach of Law 41.7.4 where any delivery deemed as dangerous or non-pitching delivery in the bowler being withdrawn immediately by the umpire for the remainder of the match.

**Players’ Conduct – Law 42**

-On-field sanctions for ‘Open Age and Youth Cricket (16+)’

In applying on-field sanctions there is a requirement for umpires to have a level of training and support for the management of this process. Law 2.3 requires umpires to meet with the captains and Law 2.3.1.6 covers any special conditions of play. There is a feeling that at the meeting between umpires and captains the opportunity to be explicit about behavioural expectations should be taken. Also, in the case of Junior and Schools cricket the opportunity to bring in the Master in Charge, coach and/or Team manager, both points should be addressed at a future date.

ECB has created an extensive training programme designed specifically to bring their members up to speed and ECB would expect that any ACO member standing in the 2018 season would be able to apply the law. This would account for approximately 8500 members or 25% of games played.

Leagues are encouraged to ensure that Club Umpires, qualified or unqualified, use the ECB and ECB ACO resources that will be made widely available before the start of the season.

In matches where players are acting as umpires throughout the duration of the game, the RA proposes that the Organising Body maintains its Competition Code of Conduct protocols but that on-field sanctions are not applied.

-On-field sanctions for Junior & Schools Cricket.

In the event of an action or incident worthy of sanction under Law 42, the ECB recommend that the following applies:

- **Law 42.2 – 42.7** in addition to the warnings provided to the captain, the umpires must advise the Master in Charge or Team Coach/Manager and request that the behaviour improves.

In the event of any breach that results in a sanction at Level 3 or Level 4, a report to the organising body must be provided within 48hrs.

These Law amendments are strongly recommended to be used across all recreational cricket.

ECB is the responsibility of the competition organiser to provide final sign off and adopt these amendments ahead of the 2018 season.

**New PLAYERS**
A warm welcome to our new player additions. I am sure they will add much to what is already a talented bunch of players.

Lee’s Dream Shattered!
Lee Clarke’s dream of retaining his place in the England Physical Disability T20 squad has been shattered, with the news that he has been selected. Lee has been working incredibly hard over the last three years and it is unfortunate that he has not been selected.

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John Bishop, who last season was responsible for Alscot Park, has agreed to become Head Groundsman once again, with the remit to oversee both SNL and Alscot Park. He will again have the help and experience of Brian Webb who will be responsible for keeping all the machinery in good working order for both grounds. Our new Australian overseas player, Declan Waddington, under the guidance of John will assist with the work on both grounds particularly the mowing of the outfields and the areas beyond.

**Alscot Park Review**

John Bishop in his Alscot Park review for 2017, said “On the whole the square played very well, and providing a separate length wicket for each of the three Junior teams using the ground did make it easier to preserve the rest of the square for adult cricket.”

A pre-season refub of the pavilion by the Alscot Park Estate, gave it a new look and feel. At the end of the season Phil Day Sports provided the necessary Winter dressing and everything looks set fair for the new season. John commented, “The old roller has had its pre-season service, though keeping it going may be a challenge and help will be needed to look after the areas beyond the boundary to make sure they don’t become overgrown and risk damage to cars being parked.”

**SNL Review**

In his report on SNL, John stated, “The post 2017 season treatment done by Phil Day Sports, has not proved to be 100% successful, as the square has not wintered well due to the weather. It became too wet to spike and aerate in the right time. Spring fertilizer and turf hardener was applied, but the severe weather at the end of February and early March delayed progress, particularly early rolling of the square. Given better conditions we should see the ground back to its former glory.”

Not Exactly the Wind in the Willows!

Following an inspection of the willow trees at SNL by the Council, seven trees have needed to be felled as they were in a dangerous state. The big tree next to the set fair for the new season. John Winter dressing and everything looks like and feel. At the end of the season the Alscot Park Estate, gave it a new post 2017 season treatment done by 100% successful, as the square has not become overgrown and risk damage to cars being parked.”

**Club Wins BDPCL “Fair Play Trophy” for Fourth Time**

Although the Club failed to win a team trophy in 2017, the 1st XI was awarded the prestigious BDPCL “Fair Play Trophy”, a much coveted, as it is awarded by the Umpires officiating at matches on the basis of Respect for the Opposition, Respect for Umpires, Respect to the Game and Captain’s Performance in Team cricket. This is the fourth time the Club has won this trophy and says much for the way the Club plays its cricket and the attitude of the players. Well done! Four of our “very own” took huge strides towards a potential career option outside of cricket. Participation in a charity fashion show event held at The Bell, Aldermington, in which the Stratford Bards were co-beneficiaries alongside The Shakespeare Hospice. Dexter Purser, Mike Brown, Archie Walker and yours truly, all suited and booted (see photo), were supposedly accoutrements to the female models in Gemini clothing, although I suspect we were more in the spotlight with a mainly all-female audience!

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**Groundsman’s Cuttings**

They both agreed that one of the challenges to overcome, is how to keep the area between the boundary rope and the perimeter tidy. In the past this has been done on an ad hoc basis or had rather let down the overall look of the ground. Under John’s supervision and with the help provided by Declan, hopefully, this will be rectified.

**Webbie’s Achievements Acknowledged by MCCC**

At the recent Midlands Cricket Club Conference Dinner, Brian Webb was presented with the prestigious Halesowen Trophy for services to Youth Cricket, both at Stratford CC and County level.

Brian Webb added, “The power roller has been serviced and the wicket mower repaired, though this probably need replacing at some point. So, equipmentwise we will be in reasonable shape for the start of the season. The storage container is having power roller mower repaired, though this will make it easier to prevent it becoming just a dumping ground for everything.”

Brian became involved with youth cricket at Stratford CC in 1981, assisting Colin Davis, before qualifying as NCA coach and then advancing to Senior Level. He “Says” he is still coach and Youth Cricket Manager at the Club, a post he held for 13 years. His administration skills were then recognised by the MCCC as he took over the MCCC South Warwickshire U16 League before joining the MCCC Committee. But, it was with The Warwickshire Cricket Association that Brian feels he made most impact. When appointed U15 County Organiser, he campaigned for the top teams to play each other more often and against more elite cricket. So, the U15 Premier League was created with promotion and relegation. Despite the formation of the ECB County Boards past season, the system has cascaded down to other Warwickshire age groups.

Brian’s volunteer achievements were also recognised in 2007 when he was awarded an ECB OSCA (Outstanding Services to Cricket). Not just a pretty face, Webbie!

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Another busy social year passes and what an interesting year it has been. In summary, we held our 2016 annual dinner in April prior to the start of the 2017 season. It proved to be a very successful event with awards being handed out to Ivo Kegworth (Clubman of the Year), Archie Walker (Youth Cricketer of the Year), Mike Brown (1st XI Player of the Year), Sam Bishop (Bards Player of the Year) and Declan Waddington (REPL Player of the Year) – many thanks to all who attended.

The President’s VIP Day, held in June, was again a huge success and attracted past players from considerable distances. This years’ event will take place on Sunday, 2nd September. Our Golf Day returned to Stratford Oaks. We were blessed with great weather and a course in superb condition, despite persistent rain during the build-up. The winners, with a Texas scramble score of 9 under par and retaining champions were Gareth Langman, Alex Marney, Jack Gossell and myself. Many thanks to everyone who attended, especially Sally Holdsworth, Charlotte Atkinson, Sim Abell, Nicola Harvey and Laura Urquhart waving the flag for our female golfers. This year’s event will take place on Saturday 22nd September at Stratford Oaks Golf Club.

We decided to change the timing of our Annual Dinner for 2017 to take place more appropriate time – September. Therefore, we had two dinners in 2017. In future, our Dinner will take place at the end of each season, whilst it’s still fresh in everyone’s memory! The “Clubman of the Year” trophy was awarded to Colin Davis for his many years of service to the Club, particularly the development of the Junior Cricket section. David Bailey was 1st XI Player of the Season, Dexter Purser was deservedly the 2nd XI “Player of the Year” and Sam Bishop’s outstanding performances won him the “Bards Player of the Year” award. Matt Hallett was presented with the REPL Player of the Year trophy. A special award was presented to Rob Watts for his dedicated services as 1st XI scorer.

In another fund-raising event, Sam Douthwaite and I took part in a Firewalk at The Bell during a night of fireworks and live music. We managed to raise a fantastic £750 towards The Shakespeare Hospice. I don’t think if we’ve seen Sam so nibble on his feet on the cricket field!

Our relationship with The Bell, Aldermington didn’t stop there, as “Bards of old” gathered for a Christmas Dinner. The food was excellent quality matched by great company and plenty of Bards stories!

We kick started 2018 with our annual quiz. Two times, previous winners, “Sam Douthwaite’s Big Party”, were unable to retain their title, in fact they came last. The winners by a narrow one point margin were “University Challenge” led by team captain, Martin Malone.

With a lot of changes happening around the Club, please keep an eye out for new events as well as the Annual events. Details are always released on our Website, Facebook, Twitter and our email contacts.

James Urquhart, Social Secretary

The President’s VIP Day will take place on Sunday, 2nd September. It is hoped to emulate last year’s very successful event, where our VP’s and past players and members joined up in great numbers. There will be a buffet lunch followed by an entertaining cricket match between current and past players still playing. A successful raffle is very much part of our fund raising on the day, so we will be grateful for the donation of as many prizes as possible. Please contact Colin Davis1944@gmail.com if you can help.

**Presidents Day**

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Sponsorship News 2018

Sadly, we say goodbye to REPL, who have been our main sponsor for the last three years. We would like to express our gratitude to Mike Callender and his colleagues for their considerable contribution.

We are delighted that Langmans Dental Health Centres have joined as a shirt sponsor for 2018. We welcome your support! Marston’s Beer Company continue into their 3rd year as sponsor in 2018. Marston’s are the preferred beer supplier to the Club. Continuing their multi-year support of the Club many thanks go to Holdsworth Windows for their generosity once again and to Smart Accountants for their provision of professional services. Considerable thanks to Alscot Park for their tremendous fundraising events on behalf of the Club and The Shakespeare Hospice last year. The Charity Fashion Show and the Firework & Fireworks events were hosted at The Bell, Alderminster and raised thousands of pounds for both causes. For 2018, the Estate will continue to develop the facilities at Alscot Park to provide a wonderful place to play cricket and to socialise. This will include fundraising events to provide for a cricket net in 2019, so please support forthcoming events.

We thank Emma Holman-West, Alscot Estate CEO, and her team for their support of community cricket. Look out for more developments during the summer.

For more information on sponsorship opportunities, please contact Jon Gill on 07710 667291.

We hope you have enjoyed our latest Newsletter.

Feel free to contact us with any comments – colin.davis1944@gmail.com or 07828 485177.

Follow us on our website stratfordcricketclub.com and on social media.

Langmans Dental Health Centres

We have a programme of continual modernisation and heavily invest in the latest technology and training so we can offer you the most up to date dentistry.

We will help you look after you and your family’s teeth for a lifetime.

We encourage preventative techniques, helping you to understand how to maintain the health of your mouth and keep it free of tooth decay and gum disease.

We offer a full range of preventative and cosmetic treatments.

Stratford-upon-Avon Surgery
Ely Place, 28 Ely Street
Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 6LW
Tel: 01789 292460

Wellesbourne Surgery
2 Willow Drive, Wellesbourne
Warwickshire CV35 9SB
Tel: 01789 840786

Email: enquiries@langmansdental.co.uk