

FREE FORESTERS CRICKET CLUB



YEARBOOK 2025

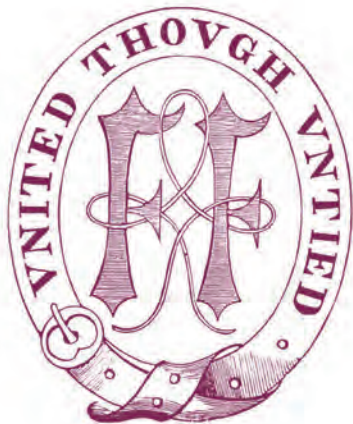
Graham's Signature Reserve Port



Pleased to support the Free Foresters Cricket Club

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EDITOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to the 2025 Free Foresters Handbook. As well as covering the 2024 season there is an account of the 2023 tour to Ireland which didn't make it into last year's handbook.

My thanks to all those who have contributed to this publication. My particular thanks to Paul Stubbs for his efficiency in collating the match and player statistics. You will notice a feature on our social media accounts which I hope will help FF to connect with each other and club affairs in general.

Joe Ireland, our resident book reviewer, contributes his usual wise survey of the best cricket reading of the past 12 months and, as we did last year, we continue to look at distinguished FFs of yesteryear. I hope The Quiz will provide some enjoyable teasers for your exasperation and delight. Meanwhile,

please do provide comments and suggestions for future editions and, if you wish to contribute an article on the FF or cricket in general, don't wait to be asked: write it and email it to me at secretary@freeforesters.com.

Enjoy a nostalgic read and best of luck for the new season!

JOHN HAMILTON

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.

MONDAY-TUESDAY 24-25 MARCH

Quadrangular Golf
at Royal Porthcawl GC

FF, MCC, XL Club, Grancogs
(Amalgamation of Grannies & Incogniti)

THURSDAY 10 APRIL, 18.00

AGM followed by drinks, East India
Club, 16, St James's Square, London
SW1 4LH

FRIDAY 13 JUNE, 13.00

Drinks gathering in the Coronation
Garden behind the Warner Stand at
Lord's on Day 3 of the World Test
Championship Final, Australia v South
Africa

FRIDAY 11 JULY, 13.00

Drinks gathering in the Coronation
Garden behind the Warner Stand at
Lord's on Day 2 of the England v India
Test Match

WEDNESDAY 16 JULY

BBQ at Seaton CC, Devon, after the
FF v MCC match

HOUSEKEEPING

We continue to adopt an "opt in" approach for receiving hard copies of the Yearbook and Fixtures Card, in part as a result of members' requests. Members who would like to be sent printed copies should contact our Membership Secretary, **Paul Stubbs**, on M:07734 415546 or **Email: ffcc.membership@gmail.com**, whilst those who have received copies by post, not having provided their email address for our database, but would prefer a digital copy in future, should also contact Paul to let him know that this is 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 will kindly ensure your order is fulfilled.

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

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

PG Wodehouse wrote of golf as “acting as corrective against sinful pride” and he attributed the “insane arrogance of the later Roman Emperors” to never having known the “chastening humility” of a “topped chip shot”. Sadly his love of golf does not seem to have much effect on President Trump. In these days of turmoil we all need something to distract us and remind us that there are still oases of calm and order left in the world. Cricket is one of them.

There is ample room in cricket for ‘sinful pride’ to be corrected: missed full tosses, dropped catches at Long On, best balls wafted effortlessly for six, but in spite of these past catastrophes, every season begins full of anticipation and hope.

Once again the club has a remarkable selection of fixtures for both men and women due to the hard work of the

Fixtures Secretary. Please apply for matches and don’t wait to be asked; it makes lives of match managers so much easier.

Please also remember to play in accordance with the spirit of cricket. I doubt if any of us can define it but we all know what it means. If the Free Foresters won’t, who will? Once again my thanks to all the officers of the club and others who make this all happen. Let’s hope the weather is benign, the wickets are flat, but not too flat and the catches stick: ours not theirs.

GENERAL SIR JACK DEVERELL



Sir Jack at Burton Court

FROM THE SECRETARY

I would like to start by thanking Paul Askew, my distinguished predecessor, for all his help in playing me into office. He has always been, and I'm sure will continue to be, readily on hand to offer wise counsel and reminders about what happens next.

The gratitude of the whole Club must be extended to Omkar Khot who has done such a wonderful job in revitalising our social media accounts. As someone to whom such media are on a different planet, even I have enjoyed the swiftness of the score updates, superb photographs from many of the beautiful grounds at which we play, and the general craic which these communications have provided. Thanks also go to Nick Turk and Tom McIlwaine for their efforts in organising fixtures and helping Match Managers to get their teams together. In the end, the duties have been split and,

going into 2025 and beyond, Nick will be Fixtures Secretary, organising the fixtures' dates, times and locations etc, whilst Tom will be Match Secretary, assisting the Match Managers, a noble band to whom we also owe a considerable debt of gratitude.

We continue our involvement in women's cricket through our FF Women's programme, where Paul Askew continues to work phenomenally hard, as he does in our partnership with ACE. Unfortunately, our principal sponsor, Close Brothers Asset Management, has withdrawn after being subsumed by an American company with no interest in cricket. We are very grateful to Graham's Port who continue to provide Player of the Match Awards in the form of a bottle of their excellent port to the lucky winner. Any FF with ideas about possible new sponsors should contact Rob Wood, our Sponsorship Secretary.

Finally, my best wishes to everyone for an enjoyable and successful season played in the traditional Free Forester style of playing hard to win whilst maintaining the highest standards of sportsmanship in the best spirit of cricket.

JOHN HAMILTON
Honorary Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to report on another successful year for the club from a financial point of view. As you will see from other parts of this handbook, we continue to maintain a growing fixture list including several prestigious matches at premier locations.

As I have mentioned previously, the increasing fixture list brings with it several associated costs, whether it be lunches and teas, accommodation, fees for officials or occasional ground hire, and these continue to rise year on year.

Thanks to a number of sponsors to enhance the usual receipts from match fees and subscriptions, we have been able to budget for Academy matches, Secretary games, and an increasing number of women's games as well as the regular fixtures against other wandering clubs, schools, and services teams.

I am particularly grateful to the match managers for their efficient handling of the funds on their respective match days.

As has been my practice over the last couple of years since taking over as Treasurer, I do not want this report to be filled with figures, but I am happy to provide members with a breakdown of the expenditure and how funds have been allocated. Once the accounts for the year ended 31 October 2024 have been approved at the AGM, I propose making the accounts available on our website.

In advance of this, I would point out that at the time of writing there is just over £33,000 in the club's bank accounts, which will be significantly enhanced by the receipt of members' subscriptions in April.

Finally, I hope we are an open thinking club, and I would be pleased to hear from members who have any thoughts regarding ways of enhancing our finances, including additions to our sponsors and donors or arranging mutually funded fixtures.

BERNARD CRITCHLEY

CANDIDATES OFFERED MEMBERSHIP FOR 2025

The following 19 candidates have been offered membership.

Will Barker

Alex Christie

Justin Clarke

Henry Dickinson

Tom Flavell

George Flowers

Sammy French

Chris Hofen

Oscar Jago-Lewis

Aadil Khan

Felix Kenney

Alexander Peggie

Matthew Plews

Nic Robinson

Brendan-James Smith

Jack Solomon

Thomas Stanley

Jacob Vanderburg

Harry Wood



A wonderful sub-plot in the OHJs v FF fixture saw Foresters candidate and OJ Felix Kenney join the Duck Club via an outstanding c&b from Will McKegney

FF TOUR TO IRELAND 2023

As the 2023 Summer drew towards its crescendo, the Free Foresters embarked on their inaugural visit to County Wicklow. The sense of Irish sporting anticipation was high, some say at levels unseen since Ken Doherty beat Stephen Hendry at The Crucible in 1997, and the Foresters were equally eager to get proceedings underway. An advance-party had already found their way across the sea a few days earlier, with Ali Carman, James Richardson and Dave Andrews embarking on a Golf & Guinness reconnaissance mission that proved highly beneficial.

The rest of the touring group had various paths ahead of them, with Akshay Sreenivasan opting for the Friday Birmingham to Dublin option that included a solo-night out to watch the All Blacks in a World Cup warm up, following some cricket scouting

at Trinity College Dublin. Christian Cabburn was on the red-eye from Nottingham and spent some brave and early hours in the airport arrivals bar as he waited to meet the Bristol three of Nick Turk, Stuart Walter and Omkar Khot on the Saturday morning, all narrowly making their flight following some reverse timekeeping from the Hon. Fixture Sec. Our local pro, Michael Glass, enjoyed a luxury coach trip from Belfast on match-day and following an excellent Irish breakfast in an American café, the last of the Foresters made the taxi ride to Oak Hill for our opening fixture.

And Oak Hill proved to be one of the major highlights of the tour. Built by Peter Savill on the estate that contains his racing stud, the ground is a replica of Ampleforth College, in this case with the stunning pavilion and bank towards the north west and miles of

spectacular Irish countryside and sea to the South East.

And it was the Old Amplefordians whom we faced on the field, themselves in mixed spirits following their iron intake the night before. Nick Turk called the Euro correctly and asked the hosts to bowl first, music to the ears of our opening duo of Carman and Richardson, both in a rich vein of form from Foresters fixtures in August. Following a couple of sumptuous heaves (slightly different to some of the heaves seen in Wicklow town on Friday evening) OA Harry Houston made some sharp inroads, dismissing both openers for 6 and 13 respectively. Cabburn's airport preparation looked to be paying dividends as he batted smartly en route to a marvellous 22, well supported by Glass in conditions that gave the bowlers plenty to work with.





The FF, in their special tour caps, contemplating tactics or perhaps longing for a Guinness?

Following Cabburn's wicket, Dave Andrews converted his flair around the greens to flair with bat-in-hand and he and Glass took command of the innings, a combination we'll hear more about later. With some glorious flicks off the pads and intelligent running between the wickets, the pair formed the platform for the subsequent Foresters to rather Free their approaches, with Khot & Walter joining Glass in succession after a fine 36 from "The Heat."

Khot & Walter, by this point beginning to sound like half-accountancy/ half-tobacco firm, took on the Ampleforth spinners, with the former utilising the cut to good effect and the latter his textbook down-the-ground sixes. They finished on 36 and 26, again Glass anchoring, adding to his total with some strong drives of his own. After a final hurrah from captain Turk

(dismissed by his opposite number for 12) and Sreenivasan (1 not out) the Foresters declared on 200/7 from approximately forty/ forty-five overs – Glass finishing on an unbeaten 37, perhaps 20 or 30 short of his "much preferred" average.

Following well-earned tea that included some biblical spells of rain, the FF bowling department (on this trip about as abundant as Southern rail trains that run on time) limbered in prep for some tough conditions to bowl in, given the greasy ball and now-sodden run-ups. Glass was given no respite and opened from the far end, his off-spin providing an early wicket, whilst Khot squelched in with medium pace from the other. Following a few overs of swing with little return in terms of wickets, it was clear that spin was the way to go and Sreenivasan was introduced.

Akshay, who combines his devious slow-left-arm with the hallucinatory "on-field encouragement" that Old Ben Gunn would've been proud of, bowled smartly and was easily the pick of the Foresters attack. He did very well to control the ball in the difficult conditions and snared some excellent wickets that pegged back the Amplefordians' middle order, with opener McLellan showing no signs of trouble as he approached 50. One of Akshay's wickets was OA's number 3, also dismissed like FF 3 Cabburn for 22, a super effort from the Kiwi.

After Glass came Walter (no hydro-puns intended) who swiftly removed the OA's number 4, and thus began an epic stint between the SLA and leg-spin contingent that not only made regular, aforementioned inroads, but also kept most of the scoring at bay with the exception of McLellan,

who continued on towards the 80s. Walter finished with 13 overs under his belt and Akshay taking 4 off his 16 overs.

With the scores neck and neck, both sides were in with a chance of winning and following a couple of short delays for rain, Glass was reintroduced, taking a vital wicket in the process. In what was becoming a real nail-biter, we came to the final over and then the final ball with OAs needing 1 to win and FF 1 wicket to tie.

So to an epic barbecue feast post-match from our host, Peter Savill, and having tucked into an array of sandwiches, chicken, burgers and sausages, both teams headed into the bright lights of Wicklow to first check-in to accommodation (a fairly rogue process after potting several blacks, something Ken Doherty

would presumably approve of) and then meet at The Bridge Tavern.

Some interesting and questionable drinking games were enjoyed by the OAFFs, Nick Turk in particular spending much of his evening chinned to the table and given the quantities of Guinness on show and down-gullet, several 147 breaks were certainly on. After a short stint in the live-music section of the Bridge, which mainly involved pestering the band to play Oasis, the FF moved on to Phil Healy's Bar & Grill. All that remains to be said is that despite the name, the Grill status of the venue after dusk was highly redundant and the baulk end came into play with several tequilas, rums and whiskies offering the Foresters 2-4 points each. Michael Glass again the pick of the Foresters as he used his cue to good effect.

The Bachelor Quarters (containing a now missing Glass, Cabburn, Sreenivasan and Khot) were in good spirits (quite literally) the next morning and hoovered the Full Irish breakfast on offer with some ease, much to the delight of the one other guest in the B&B who was visiting for a similar liquid snooker weekend of his own. The realisation of more cricket then dawned and following the appearance of Glass, they headed back to Oak Hill for a morale-boosting open-mic morning in the dressing room. As the other Foresters began to emerge, we were also lucky to recruit two new players in Sushant Gagen and Daniel Steele.

Gagen & Steele (an excellent name for a razor brand) were quickly into the action with the FF in the field against The Leprechauns. The seam department, that now included "Sushi"

and “Dan,” began with spells from Khot & Turk with varying levels of luck but it was Gagen that made the breakthrough with the score on 33 with the wicket of Topping, smartly caught at mid-wicket by Khot. Christian Cabburn came and went from the attack, the previous night’s activities putting a stop to his visit to the baize, but he bowled very well to no avail (4 overs, 1 maiden, 0-7)

Some strong Irish league cricketers in the Leprechauns’ middle order proved useful as they took the attack to FF spinners Akshay and Stu Walter, although the latter did pick up key wickets in a short burst, including the limpet-like Walshe for 27 off 92 balls. Sushi was bowling well and the pick of the FF in this innings wasn’t a bowler at all but his fellow guest Steele, who patrolled the mid-wicket region for the vast

majority of the innings, eventually taking a superb catch off Glass that showed aerobic and athletic ability. The Leprechauns closed on 182ao with 8 Foresters featuring in the attack (just the scouting mission 3 missing out on a bowl).

Following a reverse-tea, most of the FF were thankful that our stint in the field was over and it was a joy to watch one of the scouting 3, Ali Carman, do what he does best as he plundered 34 at well over a run a ball, having lost Richardson for 1 in the opening overs. Sushi was unlucky to chop on and Cabburn registered the only on-field FF duck with Dave Andrews playing patiently and stylishly as he became the new anchor. He was joined by Khot with the score on 45-4, plenty of work to be done to get the chase back on track.

The sun was beginning to shine in every sense, with Andrews firing his way through the gears, peppering some boundaries as Khot ticked over at the other end. The FF number six fell for 25 with the score at 90, thankful for adding 45 with Andrews but irritated to hit a half tracker straight to mid-wicket.

Michael Glass was continuing his fine run of form, pulling nicely and he followed up with drives and cuts to motor on in the engine room slot of number 7, the perfect partner to Andrews who was in complete control and as the warm Irish conditions helped with the various naps and recoveries happening on the pavilion benches, the pair saw the Foresters home for a 5 wicket win, their partnership 93 with Andrews on 50* and Glass 63* from 44. A fine end to the cricketing side of the visit and



*Michael Glass and Dave Andrews
walk off following their unbeaten
partnership of 93*

a slightly more subdued post-match drink with the opposition was enjoyed in the finest of weather.

Wicklow town. Many thanks to Nick Turk for his work in organising and we eagerly await 2024's edition!

OMKAR KHOT

Our final evening in Wicklow was a slightly different affair to the first, with the Foresters opting for a Chinese dinner, something that delighted Nick Turk, that involved plenty of trivia, duck, noodles and Guinness. Phil Healy was given the nod as the nightcap destination of choice, slightly less sweat, music and revellers than on the Saturday evening but after the final round of 7 points all turned in content to finish the tour on a winning note and a belly full of local cuisine.

A thoroughly special tour, playing at one of the finest cricket grounds in Europe as well as experiencing excellent hospitality throughout from our hosts, accommodation and

FIXTURE SECRETARY'S 2024 CRICKET REVIEW

2024 was another successful season for the Free Foresters. Availability was good, the fixture list remained strong and varied, with a good balance of high-profile games and friendly fixtures and the age profile of the playing membership continued to represent a source of strength for the future. Additionally working from home has massively increased availability, as FF members are able to play midweek cricket without taking holiday (subject to occasional off field moments to take Teams calls – generally with the video off).

There are obviously challenges. Availability in the early part of the season (which coincides with the university term) was weaker than we would have liked. Our geographic spread, although improving, remained stronger in the south than the Midlands and North – although it was particularly

pleasing to see the Gloucestershire contingent make the trek north for the mini-tour of Yorkshire. The FF seamer remains a rare and exotic bird, spoken of in hushed and awed tones by those lucky enough to have seen one. Members who have played with one are sought out eagerly by others, with the question of “What is it like to have a bowling attack not made up of five spinners, with an additional four spinners in reserve?” being one that is frequently asked. We were also without any matches overseas for the first time in some years, with our trip to Ireland very sadly having to be cancelled (due to bereavement). Plans are in place to address these concerns where we can – sadly the University sector remains stubbornly immune to FF influence and the shortage of coal mines is limiting our access to seamers (according to Omkar Khot).

In a slight break from tradition, we have broken the yearbook down thematically this year. We will cover the Schools, Secretary matches, the Western Series, Academy Games, and club games separately, with a short overview of each before the match reports. Feedback is welcome – if this is an unpopular innovation we will return to normality next year.

SCHOOLS FIXTURES

Matches against the schools are critical to the long-term future of the FF. Many of our members will first encounter the FF in these games and they offer a high standard of cricket early in the season for our more ambitious young members. But all is not well in this Garden of Eden.

First, the schools themselves are less open to FF fixtures than they were in

years past. There are many reasons for this. These range from the difficult (“Safeguarding”, a word which strikes dread into the heart of all who hear it), to the growing demands placed by A Levels on the time of senior pupils which limits their availability (and increases the popularity of 20/20 games – not always an attractive option for the FF, who may have to travel for several hours to play) via the lack of understanding on the part of some Directors of Cricket of the value of matches against the likes of the FF. Several schools which had long formed part of the FF fixture list dropped off this year. Work is ongoing to return these and it is looking good – in some cases. The reluctance of Directors of Cricket to understand the FF is proving a challenge, but we are confident of eventual success.

Second is the increased professionalism of some of the schools. Many

of them offer a significant number of Sports Scholarships, have world class coaching (literally in the case of at least one school which employs a former international coach), first class facilities (again literally in the case of one school, whose facilities are used by the local first-class county) and who provide and expect practice and coaching all year round. The effects of this are felt most strongly in the standard of fielding (the dreamy batsman whose fielding resembles Fotherington-Thomas is now an endangered species in school 1st XIs, as is the wild and woolly fast bowler, who now has a carefully grooved and repeatable action) and batting, where FF batters still tend to be working the cobwebs out of their systems.

This can cause some problems for the FF. As already noted, our youngest, keenest and most athletic members

(especially our seamers) tend to be at university during this period. Additionally, a lot of FF tend not to have access to world class winter training facilities, or parents who are willing to pay for overseas tours to ensure they hit the ground running. When you take these two factors and add to them the fact that the matches seem to be played almost entirely under grey skies and on green seamers, we generally find ourselves at something of a disadvantage.

The final concern (and it is the least of them) is that the traditional form of the game – a declaration match, where bowlers can learn to bowl proper spells, batters can build an innings, there are multiple breaks offering FF a generous lunch (three courses, possibly a beer) and an even more generous tea (cakes, sandwiches, sticky buns) – seem to be falling out of fashion. These matches

*The toss at Winchester College,
with FF skipper Will McKegney
and umpire Bernard Critchley*

tend to play to our strengths, not least because it doesn't matter if you only have three off spinners.

The match against Wellington was a case in point. Having stuffed the school out of sight in 2022 (when age, guile and experience triumphed over youth, athleticism and bad haircuts) the match in 2023 was cancelled due to torrential rain. Nevertheless, we arrived confident and with a strong side, including a genuine fast bowler. That he was an Australian added to our confidence. We bowled well, with Justin Clarke showing exactly the sort of form we were expecting and the Durham University side of the early 1990s rolling back the years. Sadly, our fielding was mixed – we dropped a couple of catches (schoolboys hit the ball absurdly hard these days, it was quite cold and Fotherington-Thomas is alive and well in the FF), which

was only partially offset by Justin Clarke's stunning boundary catch (taken directly in front of a suitably awed female admirer). This meant that we were chasing slightly more than we should have been (although it was still a relatively small total). We were confident as the chase began. This confidence grew as our opening batters demolished the Wellington openers, clearly channelling their inner Kris Sikkath (one for the older readers). Sadly, one too many risks was taken, and we lost a couple of wickets, but we were still ideally placed when the Wellington skipper, a left arm spinner came on.

We will draw a veil over what happened next. Some good balls, some enthusiastic LBW decisions and an enthusiastic but overambitious shot later we were all out. That this process took about 12 balls was a disappointment.



The beer after the game and the presentation of the Man of the Match port (to the winner's mother) were nice though.

After another wet start to the season, the Free Foresters were lucky to be welcomed back to Winchester College underneath blue skies and some nearly-warm April sunshine. The FF arrived with a strong side on paper, which batted deep, bowled a lot of spin, which on paper was expected to outmatch the opposition.

The schoolboys won the toss and chose to bat first on what is always a fair pitch: runs to be made once in, but always something in it for the bowlers. It was indeed the FF bowlers who drew first blood in the contest as the home side were reduced to 30-2 in the 12th and 38-3 in the 16th, McKegney dismissing both openers and Adam Forbes taking care of their number 3. Thereafter, the College dominated the hours either side of the lunch break as they moved the score beyond 180 before their skipper rather threw his wicket away with a careless shot on 81. Stu Walter followed this Ali Riyan wicket with one of his own and at 190-5 in the 45th the game was moving back towards parity. However, some lusty blows from the Winchester number 7 (37* off 21) and a patient 76* at the other end saw us eventually chasing 245 for victory after the declaration came some time after the half-way mark.

Upon reflection our chase never really got going as opening bowler Caird (who had earlier scored that vital 37*) accounted for 3 of our top 4, the last of which was an absolute beauty to dismiss Reid Mawdsley and leave the FF on 23-3. Adam Forbes and James Christian were able to build a promising partnership before the tea break but the number of overs we were left to bat with didn't look to be enough. 41-3 at tea then became 41-8 one over later as one of the more memorable overs had been bowled by a young left arm spinner. A mixture of shock and jubilation reverberated around Lords as the contest had well and truly been ended in just a few short moments. Forbes (41) and Omkar Khot (14*) added some respectability to our team's efforts as we headed towards 100, but in the end we would fall a long way short as one more wicket fell to left arm spin and we finished on 94.

Despite our sudden collapse this remains a highly valuable fixture for both parties; the College use it to rotate and trial various members of their wider 1st XI squad and the Foresters use it to question why they don't spend more of their own time working on their game over the winter months.

The game against Sherborne reversed the pattern of strong starts followed by a middle order collapse, with the FF choosing instead to showcase the "top order collapse followed by lower order recovery" approach (later to reach a state of Platonic perfection at Bradfield). An early collapse (none of the top five made it beyond 10) was repaired by two strong performances at eight and nine, with Craig Gourlay top scoring with an excellent 83. Our performance in the field was not quite enough to bring us victory, with the school passing our target with

seven wickets down. As always a very enjoyable fixture.

Our matches against the Eton-Harrow combination were reduced to a pair of T20s against Eton, after the Harrow match was cancelled due to rain. Against Eton we brought a strong young side, based around the FF Academy. Our fielding was impressive, helped by an excellent warm up run by Mark Rochester, our bowlers bowled excellent white ball spin and the captaincy wise (modesty forbids mentioning the identity of the non-batting, non-bowling skipper) and we kept Eton down to a small total. Pick of the bowlers goes to candidate Sikandar Rizwan with figures of 4/17. Some very modern batting got us off to a good start but the larger Eton ground (significantly larger than many club players are used to) led to several players being caught on the boundary and us falling short of the target.

Following a strong motivational team talk from Mark Rochester and a much-needed break to refresh and re-energise, the FF once again strolled to the pitch to bowl first in the 2nd T20. Another yo-yo innings saw the momentum shift both ways with Eton's Alex Duguid top scoring with 56 off 50 balls. Eventually, Eton finished their innings on 149/6, only 7 more runs than the 1st match! With a change in the batting lineup, we forged ahead with the chase. Candidate Oscar Jago-Lewis came alive and battered the Eton bowlers to all parts, he top scored with 62 off 39 balls which included 7 fours and 2 sixes. Sadly, there was not much else to celebrate as the wickets kept falling. With 6 ducks (of which 4 were golden), we were bowled out for 123, 7 runs less than the 1st match. The irony was not lost on the players as we clapped for Eton's performances, especially Aryaman Varma taking 5/13

(which included a hat-trick) and Jackson Andrae taking 4/13. With a lot of work to do, we eagerly await our next opportunity to beat Eton College.

The game against Shrewsbury was against a combined 1st-2nd XI, as the National T20 knockout the next day was the priority for the school. Having observed their players practising range hitting, James Richardson was heard to observe that things had changed since his day. In the match the FF batted smoothly, with Ali Carman "giving it some humpty" and despite a slight hiccup in the middle order we were able to set the school a challenging target. This proved too much for the school, and we romped to a large victory. After a discussion with the Master in Charge we will return to facing a full-strength side next year, so the Match Manager will concentrate on playing a team full of excellent boundary fielders.

*The FF team assembles at Repton,
with Headmaster Mark Semmence FF*

The Malvern game was delayed by rain, but with a lot of the team having travelled a long way their M/ic was keen to get a game – any sort of game – so we played a T20 as the early season gloom descended. A slow outfield, a green pitch, excellent bowling and great fielding restricted the school to a very early 1990s limited overs total. This looked even more inadequate as Robbie Hardwick set off like a train. The FF were in a position after five overs from which it seemed impossible to lose. Malvern though had a teenage spinner, fast emerging as FF kryptonite and we subsided to defeat.

Once again, the after-match beer was nice although the presentation of the Man of the Match award to a teenage spinner was starting to get old.

The trip north to Repton is fast becoming both very enjoyable and a



massive challenge. They are a very strong school, led by a dynamic and friendly Director of Cricket and “head mastered” by an FF (Mark Semmence). We arrived with a strong side (helped by the fact that several players agreed to play before fully realising where Repton was and how far a walk from the station it was). After last year, when we batted first and failed to set the school a significant target we chose

to bowl first this year. The school side – which felt like it consisted almost entirely of Derbyshire 2nd XI players, Derbyshire Academy players and ECB Premier League players – because it did, proved to be strong and thoroughly modern in their approach. They hit hard, often and with a clarity of concept that was deeply depressing for the FF skipper/encouraging for the future of English cricket.

Their bowling was equally strong, with their giant (and professional) opening bowler going at us aggressively and successfully and their left arm spinner George Pocklington taking a well deserved (and cheap) five wicket haul. Perhaps the only bright spot was the two oldest members of the side going full Sultan Zarawani and going out to bat in floppy hats. We subsided to defeat and for once the Man of the Match award didn't go to a spinner, instead going to the Repton batter who showed Gooch-like disgust at failing to turn his "daddy hundred" into a "daddy double hundred". We were glad he didn't.

The view from the pavilion alone is worth the admission at Clifton College and this season was no different. On arrival we were met with many familiar faces but more importantly many confusions on what format was to be played. Eventually, it was decided we

would play a timed match starting after 1pm with one interval. The FF were to bat with Vishal Mamgai and Alex Risk in first. These two openers have a great friendship which was on display with an opening partnership of 168, Mamgai unfortunately falling short of a magnificent century with 98 runs off 97 balls! Risk carried his bat with a score of 81 off 92 balls as match manager Alex Kula-Przezawski (KP) declared on 220/3. Opening the bowling for the FF were candidate Jacob Emler and Alex Peggie. The Clifton top order showed great determination against the opening bowlers, both moving the ball in the air and off the wicket with great skill. With a bit of grit, the batters eventually played more positive shots, keeping the FF on their toes. As wickets fell, their enthusiasm to win diminished and their sights were set on the anticipated draw. Elliot Watkins (an FF member) of Clifton College top scored with 57 off 77,

whilst the others had starts. Looking forward to next season's fixture, we hope to get a favourable result.

Bradfield was perhaps the lowest point of the FF season. In fact it may well have been the lowest point of any FF season (even worse than the game against Suffolk Gents in 2002 where a car containing five members – all batters – of the XI got lost en-route to the match and the Suffolk Gents chose to bowl first). The FF arrived with a strong batting side, including a candidate with a first class double hundred, bowled first and showed the wisdom of naging seam and canny spin. The pick of the bowlers was Akshay Sreenivasan with figures of 3/38. We bowled our overs fast (19 overs an hour) and Bradfield felt morally obliged to declare early (in time terms). Lunch had been excellent, and we were in good spirits as we began the chase.



Josh Fisher, centurion and man of the Match v Bradfield Waifs, receives his Graham's Port from Paul Stubbs

Fifteen minutes later we weren't. With a target in sight and the rain radar in mind, openers Jay Parmar and candidate Christopher Hofen made their way to the crease. The chase did not go well with a first ball wicket which started a collapse that saw our top 6 batters score 0,0,0,1,1,1 and we found ourselves 6-7. (Even writing the score makes me feel ill.). Clarke played with grit and together with Sreenivasan took the score from 19 to 62 when Clarke fell for a gritty 33. Three runs later it was all over. Credit is due to the fantastic bowling of Bradfield's Sam

Graham (figures of 4/4 from 9 overs) and Nick Murdoch (figures of 5/7 from 9 overs). Not a good day. A horrible day in fact. Even Bradfield's excellent hospitality failed to make up for our batting. One to improve on next year. To be fair it would be hard not to.

The game against KCS Wimbledon is a relatively new addition and we are still waiting for our first success in the fixture. As the FF rocked up to some glorious 28 degrees sun, having somehow avoided the quintessential Foresters last minute dropouts and arriving with a strong 13 man outfit, hope was in the air that after losing this fixture in both years since its creation the FF would finally taste victory. At first, the ball disintegrated faster than a Tory election campaign as the very strong King's openers convincingly slashed their way to 56-0 off 9 overs. When the ball flew past Bruno Bandeira at

1st slip heads began to drop, but too soon! Parv, after a tight spell into the wind snagged the first wicket to the now operational slip cordon and very quickly the wickets began to tumble, as the spin twins Akshay and Felix ripped through the King's middle order, leaving the schoolboys 116-7. At this point, skipper Rhys Jones thought some match management was called for, less the FF be given 65 overs to chase 130 on what had been a pretty flat deck, and put himself on for a few, which had the desired effect, with the score being 148-7 at lunch. Sadly, the FF proved unable to quickly dismiss a series of determined King's tailenders, with a mature 37 (84) from their skipper allowing the scoreboard to tick up to 215 by the time they could finally be routed after 55 overs. After a solid start with the bat, as Vijaan pushed on to 19 off 19, the FF struggled to put together partnerships. Tom McIlwaine

*The squad prepare for the sumptuous
black tie dinner after Day One*

(14 from 40) and Hugo Nicholls (8 from 23) both looked steady before getting a few good nuts. Jonno Arscot would look to take a Bazball approach, that made for some very smooth flashes and a lovely catch at long on while James Southorn made a very well earned 31 before falling to a caught and bowled as he tried to see how hard he could hit a ball at the 17 year old offie's midriff. In the end, the tail tried to hold on for an unlikely draw, with Cian Newland battling to a remarkable 23 after coming in at 9 before he and the skipper tried to block out for 14 overs. They made it through almost 11. However, just as a draw began to seem like a possibility Rhys seemed to assume the umpire's vision was as bad as his own, and left one on middle stump, making for a rather comical if disappointing end to the game. The FF have pledged to win next year, or may have to surrender their flag if we go 0-4!

After a revised date, Cheltenham College greeted us warmly as we took in the always amazing views of their first-class ground. As is tradition, we batted first in this timed fixture with guest James Salaman and Will Bovill taking the opportunity to face the college's opening bowlers. A bumpy start for the top 5 as wickets tumbled in frequent intervals. The college had their tails up but guest James Newman and guest Harry Dawson decided enough was enough and took it upon themselves to give college a run for their money. Newman went on to top score with a knock of 72 runs off 101 balls hitting 5 fours and 2 sixes, whilst Dawson took silver with his knock of 50 not out off 62 balls hitting 4 fours and a solitary six. With Dawson reaching his fifty, a declaration was made with the score at 201/7. In true FF fashion, the bowling lineup was made up of spinners! Akshay Sreenivasan and Ellis Sabbagh-Holt



opened the innings with some left-arm orthodox and right-arm off-spin. The college in response struggled with the lack of pace and wickets fell in intervals with the college's captain and opener watching his partners fall at the other end until he too fell with the top score of 48. With the final few overs left in the day, the batters showed great resilience in protecting their wicket. A sharp chance at silly point nearly taken by Rhys Lamplugh was the only blemish as the college secured the draw. Much fun was had by all and the young college players enjoyed the trials and tribulations associated with such a close draw. Pick of the bowlers for the FF was guest and old boy of the college Joe Coley with figures of 3/16. We look forward to another entertaining match in 2025.

FF SECRETARY'S FIXTURES 2024

A mixed season for our prestigious fixtures, winning two and losing two.

In June we played both University teams in 3-day games, losing to the Light Blues by 121 runs and winning against the Dark Blues by 10 wickets. On 20th June we were invited to play the Army at Sandhurst and lost by 55 runs. This match clashed with our fixture against Cambridge University and we are indebted to Tom McIlwaine for raising a team to play when the majority of our top players were at Fenner's. In July we beat Royal Air Force by 8 wickets.

Against Cambridge University, they won the toss and elected to bat. Wickets began to fall quickly in the first session and CUCC were soon 52-3 after 15.2 overs, but a fourth wicket stand between HK Kukreja and AR Amin settled CUCC to 112-3 at Lunch. At tea,

RESULTS

Free Foresters
161-10 & 226-10

Cambridge University
200-10 & 308-8 (dec)

Free Foresters
345-10 & 69-10

Oxford University
237-10 & 173-10

Free Foresters
175-9 (50)

Army
230-10 (46)

Free Foresters
110-2 (11.4)

Royal Air Force
106-10 (32)

FF had CUCC on 193-8. The last two wickets fell soon after tea. Day 1. FF finished the day on 91-4.

Day 2 started poorly and FF found themselves bowled out for 161 just after the drinks break. Wickets continued to fall and by lunch, CUCC were 14-2. After lunch, wickets became difficult to take and at tea CUCC were 138-5 and finished the day 247-7.

Day 3 and FF found wickets difficult to come by in the first session with Cambridge declaring on 308-8. At lunch, FF were 89-1 and with two sessions to bat out a draw looked likely. However, after lunch the tide turned and wickets started to fall as their spinners began to dominate. By drinks FF were 153-5. The final 5 wickets fell in 16.1 overs.

Thomas Drake-Brockman 65; Wajid Shah 39; Muaaz Ahmed 40; Ethan Berlusconi 67; Ollie Chaplin 5-109; Akshay Sreenivasan 5-102

We assembled in Oxford the following week and, again losing the toss, found ourselves in the field. Some early wickets and tight bowling saw OUCC 73-3 at lunch. OUCC reached tea on 185-5. The final 5 wickets were taken after tea and OUCC were dismissed for 237 with no time for FF to commence their innings.

Day 2 saw FF lose early wickets and lunch at 166-4. However, in the session after lunch, Wajid Shah and Sravan Konidena set about the OU bowlers and at tea had a lead of 51 runs being 288-7. FF extended the 1st innings lead to finish on 345. Two early wickets saw OUCC close Day 2 on 41-2.

Day 3 and FF had two wickets in the first over, from Henry Redmayne, without conceding a run and OUCC found themselves 41-4. OUCC rallied to 122-6 at lunch. FF bowled out

| Top 5 Batters | Runs | Games | Innings | Top score |
|-----------------------|------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Thomas Drake-Brockman | 140 | 2 | 3 | 65 |
| Wajid Shah | 128 | 2 | 3 | 89 |
| Tom Flavell | 123 | 3 | 4 | 83* |
| Ethan Berlusconi | 90 | 1 | 2 | 67 |
| Sravan Konidena | 77 | 1 | 1 | 77 |

| Top 5 Bowlers | O | M | R | W | Best |
|--------------------|------|----|-----|---|------|
| James Nelson | 27.2 | 10 | 45 | 8 | 4/19 |
| Will McKegney | 9 | 2 | 29 | 6 | 6/29 |
| Ollie Chaplin | 36.4 | 7 | 119 | 6 | 4/35 |
| Akshay Sreenivasan | 32.5 | 5 | 102 | 5 | 3/42 |
| Albert Burgess | 8 | 1 | 43 | 4 | 4/43 |

OUCC for 173, a lead of just 65 runs. Lucas Smith and Majeed Muhaymen set about chasing down the target inside 16 overs to win by 10 wickets.

Arjun Bhardwaj 40; Sravan Konidena 77;

Majid Shaha 89; Aizaz Ahmed 46; Majeed Muhaymen 45; James Nelson 8-45.

FF were invited to play the Army at RMA Sandhurst in a 50 over game.

With the majority of FF players at Cambridge University, Tom McIlwaine raised a team with some strong Academy players. The Army won the toss and elected to bat. FF bowled them out for 230 runs in 46 overs. Set a target at 4.62 runs per over, FF set about the task but early wickets found them 50-5 after 20 overs. Tom Flavell dug in and soon scored runs but began to run out of partners as others couldn't settle in and began to fall behind the required run rate. FF finished on 175-9 in their 50 overs, with Tom Flavell 83 not out. Albert Burgess 8-1-43-4.

The final game was against the Royal Air Force at Vine Lane. RAF won the toss and elected to bat. FF took early wickets and at the end of the 1st Power Play (10 overs) RAF were 37-2. FF soon turned to their spinners to set about the RAF. Will McKegney came

to the fore taking 6-29 to bowl out RAF for 106 in 32 overs.

Tom Flavell and Thomas Drake Brockman set about chasing down the runs and at end of the 1st Power Play had scored 98 for the loss of 2 wickets. The final runs were scored quickly to see FF win by 8 wickets in 11.4 overs.

Tom Flavell 37 not out; Thomas Drake-Brockman 57; Will McKegney 9-2-29-6.

PAUL STUBBS

THE WESTERN SERIES

The Western Series, run again by Nick Baldwin, is for many the highlight of the FF summer. A week of cricket, against lovely people, alongside lovely people, on great grounds is a perfect break from life. Nick has provided the following report...

After a day or two of coastal relaxation for those booked in for 7 days or longer, we made our way to Budleigh Salterton's wonderful new ground, this year with the magnificent two storey clubhouse finished and in full use through the day, with juniors and pub league matches taking place on their second square, as well as many enjoying Sunday lunch...

Sun 14 July @ Budleigh Salterton CC v BUDLEIGH SALTERTON

FF 224-4 dec (Robin Jones 81*,Neil Baker 76)
BS 225-9 (James Pyman 4-73)
BS won by 1 wicket

FF: Will McKegney (capt), Robin Jones, George Bretten, John Ratledge, Neil Baker (wk), Jamie Baldwin, James Pyman, Omkar Khot, Charles Stuckey, Rhys Jones, Oscar Ratledge.

A slightly delayed 12.30 start on a sunny and breezy day saw a Ratledge father-and-son opening partnership for the FF(see photo above), and a steady start.

44 was accumulated before Oscar was bowled, closely followed by old man John.

Robin Jones and Neil Baker then put together a splendid partnership of 127, Bakes providing perfect acceleration with 3 sixes in his 57 ball innings. George Bretten joined Robin, who now found the boundary regularly to notch up 11 fours in total, before skipper Will McKegney made a



sporting declaration after 41.2 overs to deny him any prospect of yet another century against this opposition!

After an early wicket for Charlie Stuckey, the Budleigh number 3 Mejzner in particular took a liking to the FF bowling, and the 100 was reached from only 15 overs. James Pyman (making his only appearance now that he has a proper job) was introduced and promptly ripped out Mejzner and the middle order, whilst the captain removed the other opener, and in the space of six overs Budleigh were reduced to 116-5. The home side battled on to 179-6, but a second wicket for Rhys Jones's new brand of 'seam', and another for Pyman, put the FF in the driving seat at 179-8.

Still Budleigh would not fold, and Oscar Ratledge and Jamie Baldwin were bravely introduced by the skipper.

Oscar and John Ratledge



The latter removed the number ten with the help of Neil Baker's fifth catch, and fifteen were still required for victory. Veteran home skipper and club Chairman Joel Murphy dug in determinedly whilst number nine Ryan Harris-Cotton boldly took on the returning Pyman, and a flurry of boundaries saw his side to a tense victory from 41.3 overs! A perfect start to the tour...and finished just in time for the large group of players and supporters to settle down to a delicious curry dinner whilst watching England v Spain in the Euros final. Outstanding hospitality from Budleigh, even if two wrong results on the day!

Mon 15 July @ Seaton CC v DEVON DUMPLINGS

No play possible due to rain

FF: James Fulton (capt), Neil Baker, John Ratledge, Charlie McKegney (wk), Alex Hume, Peter Deakin, Akshay Sreenivasan, Rory Fulton, Rhys Jones, Oscar Ratledge, Tom Ratledge.

Persistent rain, mostly heavy drizzle, prevented any play - with the decision made after enjoying a very social Chris Gamwell lunch!

Tue 16 July @ Seaton CC v SOMERSET STRAGGLERS

SS 227 all out (Will McKegney 5-62)
FF 229-5 (George Sandbach 94,
George Bretten 78) FF won by 5 wickets

FF: Chris Sandbach (capt), Robin Jones, Will McKegney, George Bretten, Will Sandbach, George Sandbach, Alex Hume, Nick Turk, Edward Fane-Trefusis, Akshay Sreenivasan, Rory Fulton (wk).

Opting to bowl first, the FF were unable to make any early inroads, and at



137-2 the Stragglers seemed set for a big total. The left-arm spin twins Will McKegney and, on his Western Series debut, Akshay Sreenivasan, were introduced, but initially were struck for six sixes between them! However, Akshay made a couple of breakthroughs, and then Will removed the big-hitting number 3, before working his way through the lower order to finish with a 'Michelle'.

In reply, the skipper got a 'jaffa' first up and was good enough to nick it, before his 'little' brother George Sandbach

joined forces with George Bretten for what proved to be the match-winning partnership. Both scoring at a typically fast rate, with plenty of boundaries, the left-hand/right-hand combination took the score to 171 before Sandbach got caught in two minds when one blow short of what would have been a well-deserved century and chipped a catch back to the bowler. Bretten also missed out on a potential ton, but the major work had been well done, and it was left to Alex Hume to steer the ship home - victory achieved in just 38 overs.

*A riot of crimson, white and green
after dinner at The Bistro*

A splendid evening dinner was once again enjoyed at The Bistro up on Beer Head, with all players and families gathered together, totalling over 50!

Wed 17 July @ Seaton CC
v MCC

MCC 217-9 dec (George Sandbach 3-33,
Akshay Sreenivasan 3-49)
FF 123 all out (George Sandbach 44)
MCC won by 94 runs

FF: John Ratledge (capt), Neil Baker, James Fulton,
Charlie McKegney (wk), Will McKegney,
Jamie Baldwin, Peter Deakin, George Sandbach,
Akshay Sreenivasan, Richard Stevens,
Oscar Ratledge.



*The two Georges, Sandbach
and Bretten, refuel after their
excellent partnership*



John Ratledge won the toss and after deliberation elected to bowl first. This soon looked like a very good decision, with debutant (and MCC candidate!) Richard Stevens and George Sandbach reducing MCC to 8-3. Stevens had little luck in his fine spell, but Sandbach took a third wicket with a sharp stumping by Charlie McKegney before the 50 was reached. The FF looked on top, but suffered a setback when the skipper lost a high ball in the sun and suffered a nasty eye injury. Peter Deakin took over the on-field captaincy, but the MCC middle order re-built against the left-arm spinners, aided by some unfortunate dropped catches.

However, at 175-7 the FF looked ahead, before number 5 Kantolinne, supported by the experienced Dominic Tuohey,

took the total past 200, before both were removed to bring about a fair declaration by Charlie Spink (in his last year as match manager).

Neil Baker and James Fulton made a steady start in the face of some accurate bowling, but before long the FF were reduced to 37-3. Only George Sandbach, in the groove from the previous day, looked like playing a match-winning innings, but when he was seventh man out with the score only 112, the game was up.

The evening continued at Seaton with both sides and many supporters enjoying the traditional barbeque masterminded by Charlie McKegney. Richard Stevens was 'rewarded' for choosing to play for the FF over MCC in this match by being presented with the yard of ale, which he promptly dispatched in true opening bowler fashion!

Thu 18 July @ Sidmouth CC v SIDMOUTH

FF 256 all out (Dave Maasdorp 61,
Rory Fulton 38, Jamie Baldwin 36)
Sid 137 all out (Charlie Stuckey 4-42,
Richard Stevens 3-5)
FF won by 119 runs

FF: Jamie Baldwin (capt), Chris Sandbach,
Neil Baker (wk), Dave Maasdorp, James Fulton,
Will Sandbach, Edward Fane-Trefusis, Charlie
Stuckey, Akshay Sreenivasan, Richard Stevens,
Rory Fulton.

With the ground looking as stunning as ever for the 12.30 start, Sidmouth decided to allow the FF first knock, and father and son James and Rory Fulton opened up impressively. Dad was the first to go with the score at 68, but Rory continued in confident fashion. His dismissal started a tumble of wickets to reduce the FF to 112-5. Enter Dr 'Daddy' Dave Maasdorp, up from Cornwall for his first appearance on this tour, and looking like a man in form! His partnership with

skipper Jamie Baldwin recovered the innings past 200, the Doctor producing a flurry of boundaries. Neil Baker, entering at number 8, ensured that the necessary 250 was reached.

Charlie Stuckey had risen from his sick bed and been told to play by his mother (!), and now took the new cherry from the croquet courts end. What followed was a masterclass in controlled medium-pace wobblers, as he reduced the home side to 54-4, including the key wicket of Luke Bess. Rich Stevens, held back by the skipper after his heavy workload on and off the field the previous day, now summoned up some pace down the hill, and ripped three out cheaply. There was no way back for Sidmouth, as Akshay removed their top scorer thanks to a fine boundary catch in front of the pavilion by Rory Fulton, and sealed the win with a stumping from Bakes.

So a fine victory to finish another wonderful week on the East Devon coast. I would like to thank all 26 players who featured during the week, not least the match captains Will McKegney, James Fulton, Chris Sandbach, John Ratledge and Jamie Baldwin. We are extremely grateful once again to Peter Langford and Bernard Critchley for their first-class officiating, with 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 Paul Askew, John and Maggie Hamilton, and Bill, Justine and Tilly Lawry; and Garri Jones and Arnie Clarke and family in non-playing roles.

A special mention also to Omkar Khot,

known these days as 'a reverse player' ...who chose to only play in one match, but provided tremendous support with his photographic record and social media reports, adding to 'all the fun of the tour'.

Although we sadly lost one day to the rain, we had mostly sunny weather for the other four matches; and with extremely high availability of players and a wonderful mix of off-field activities, the 2024 Western Series was another memorable FF experience.

FF ACADEMY 2024

2024 was a season of mixed results but I will remember it for its outstanding displays of growth, teamwork and determination. We always start the season with high expectations and we did show flashes of brilliance throughout the campaign.

We began with two T20s against an extremely strong Eton 1st XI. Both could have gone either way but we ended up losing both by a small margin. The Eton Director of Cricket was full of praise for the FF side, as well as pleased with us for sending a strong team which pushed the Etonians hard in every way. Our next outing was against an Army Development XI, the format again being two T20s. Putting out a team that was possibly even stronger than that against Eton, we won the first game comfortably by 61 runs. We were asked to change our batting order for the second match and obliged with the top 4 becoming the last 4; in the event none of them batted in the second game. This did make for a closer match which we lost narrowly by 10 runs. However, as the old saying goes, cricket was the winner, with everyone getting a bat and a bowl. Next season I believe we need

to play the Army's 1st XI as, in the past, we have always competed well against them. We were also far too strong for the RAF Development XI in our next fixture, winning by 4 wickets.

We then switched formats for our two 3-day fixtures against Cambridge and Oxford Universities. We didn't adapt well to the conditions at Cambridge and lost by 121 runs on a difficult pitch with a lot of turn and bounce, but we managed to reverse that in the Oxford game winning by 10 wickets. These results perhaps highlighted what a mixed season we were having as, even with a few players missing, Oxford were a better team than Cambridge, but we managed to beat them whilst losing to the Light Blues!

This trend of inconsistency continued in our 50 overs fixtures against the Forces, as we showed elements of

brilliance in beating the RAF by 8 wickets before subsiding to defeat against the Club Cricket Conference. It was a shame that our games with the Royal Navy were cancelled. We then played a very strong ACE Academy XI at the beautiful Arundel ground. This was a really close encounter with ACE prevailing on this occasion. Hopefully, this fixture will be the first of many against ACE.

Last, but not least, the U25 Beynon T20 Cup competition wherein we have been so successful over the last 4 years, finishing as winners 3 times and runners-up once, in a tournament which contains Minor Counties teams. This year, the Asian Cricket Council replaced Buckinghamshire, but Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire remained along with us. We were drawn against Hertfordshire in the first game, won the toss, elected to bat and ran up a

massive 217/6 in our 20 overs. This gave our bowlers confidence and we dismissed the opposition for 159. Thus we were into the final with a chance to defend our title. The Asian Cricket Council sent a very young, inexperienced team which was heavily defeated by Bedfordshire. At this point I would like to observe that this was probably the highest standard I've seen in my tenure so far. It is testament to the FF Academy's standard over the years that we have forced the counties to supplement their normal 2nd XI Development players with some first-teamers. Hertfordshire included 4 1st XI players and Bedfordshire 5. This didn't deter us but unfortunately three run outs during our innings cost us dearly and Bedfordshire eventually prevailed, to win their first title in many a year, a further tribute to the consistent excellence of the FF Academy's performances over the years.

This year we used 41 players of whom 21 were new recruits to the Academy. In batting, Ethan Berlusconi is to be applauded for his consistently high standard of batting, with 3 half-centuries in his 7 innings. Arjun Bhardwaj notched his maiden ton for the Academy this season, whilst Tom Flavell averaged 56.67, as well as snaring 8 wicketkeeping victims, ahead of Josh Sharratt with 6 and Oscar Jago-Lewis with 4. Of the bowlers, Yuvee Malhotra, Sikander Rizwan, Akshay Sreenivasan, Ravi Yarwood, Arjun Bhardwaj and James Nelson were the pick.

Lastly, my thanks to Paul Stubbs for his excellent scoring and organisation, and for standing in for me when I have the honour of playing for Middlesex CCC Over 50s on Wednesdays; to Keir Hopley for organising the umpires for our games, and to Tom McIlwaine and

Nick Turk for help with fixtures and players. As the old saying goes, “ It’s the work that you don’t see that’s the most important.” Let’s never forget that.

Bring on 2025!

MARK “ROCKY” ROCHESTER
Academy Director of Cricket

CLUB MATCHES

The club matches are loosely defined as those games that we play against Old Boys sides, other wandering clubs, and the university second teams. They are at the heart of FF cricket. It is noticeable though that while we remain strong a large number of these fixtures have dropped off over the years as wandering cricket becomes less fashionable, lives become busier and teams harder to raise. Some clubs which once played twenty matches a season now play five – some have

ceased to exist at all. We are going, over the next few years, to do our best to reverse this trend and are hoping to be able to return to the fixture list some long lost friends.

The club fixtures began against the Incogniti. A strange game on a bit of a “sticky dog”. Lots of rain the day before meant we were lucky to get the game on, but Datchet CC did a wonderful job of getting the strip in a good enough condition.

On winning the toss captain Mark Costin elected to have a bat, get a score and then let his spinners get through some overs. “The score” bit didn’t quite happen. A few lusty blows were landed by Costin, Venables and Clarke in particular, but no individual score of note left FF under par at 169.

In reply Clarke took two early

ones, and when joined by a third by Sreenivasan, Incogniti were 30/3. Game on. With Costin standing up to Clarke on the aforementioned “sticky dog” and producing considerable movement through the air it was tough to bat on. Clarke returned figures of 3/51 from 14 overs. The spin twins of McKegney and Sreenivasan were not to be outdone, returning 2/18 and 4/28 respectively. Overall it was a display of great control and skill from FF with the ball and in the field to see us to a 44 run victory.

A drive out to Torry Hill is certainly worth it for the wonderful hospitality provided by the Band of Brothers. Match Manager Patrick Phillips herded together a team full of candidates, guests and long-time members. With a plan in mind, we took strides towards the wicket with ball in hand. A perplexing batting innings filled with

much gusto and patience saw the Band of Brothers work their way through their innings. With lunch called, the players were marched through the farm and eventually found themselves enjoying an exceptional meal. After the lunch break, the Band of Brothers resumed their yo-yo innings which saw wickets fall but boundaries scored at alarming rates. Eventually, with one wicket to be taken, Phillips took it upon himself to hit the final nail in this innings. Band of Brothers were all out for 206 with Will Pollington their top scorer with 52 off 38 balls which included 8 fours and 2 sixes. The wickets were shared among the FF bowlers with candidate Kieran Hayne finishing with figures of 2/14. With only 206 runs to get, openers Ali Riyan and candidate Ben Goodrum took little time to get there with an opening partnership of 74/1. Runs were scored quickly as Goodrum continued to bat with candidate Aadil Khan. Goodrum

eventually fell scoring 59 off 54 balls hitting 12 fours and 1 six, whilst Khan was not out on 58 off 82 balls hitting 9 fours and 1 six. Only Tom Boucher looked to create some problems for our batters with figures of 4/50. Nevertheless, we won by 5 wickets. Many new relationships were forged between both teams and new rivalries to be tested in the rematch in 2025!

The Guards (after a slight confusion over the date – they had originally booked the day of the King's Birthday Parade) was a success, with the FF triumphing by seven wickets. Burton Court is a fantastic place to play cricket and the Guards remain charming hosts.

Radley Rangers were also seen off, albeit by the closer margin of three, with Babs Oduwole top scoring in a close game.

Next up were the Staffordshire Gents, whom we beat by seven wickets. The Staffs Gents won the toss and batted first on a sunny, warm late June day. Some excellent Foresters bowling by Brooks (2-17), Wookey, Sreenivasan, (3-10) and N Kaimal meant it was slow going for the Staffs Gents, who struggled to build partnerships and score at a fast pace. They declared on 149 for 9, having batted for 44 overs. The outfield got quicker as the day went on, which helped the Foresters. It was a comfortable chase in the end for the Foresters with candidate J Starkey making 67 not out and R Kaimal a tidy 38. The Foresters reached the Staffs Gents' total 3 wickets down, having only needed 30 overs. Although it was a comfortable win for the Foresters, the Staffs Gents were excellent hosts as always and, due to the excellent food (and beer and port!), it was a struggle to get players back on the field after

*It's not solely about cricket:
Pavlova of the Year!*

lunch and tea. However, the Foresters were (just) left with enough overs to chase down the total!

The Old Wykehamists had just too much for us this year. After successfully defending 85 in 2023 with just 10 players, the Foresters' spirits could not be dampened even by a couple of late dropouts. A negotiated toss meant that we would once again set a target and defend. And once again we set not very many. This time 132 with minor contributions abounding but Reid Mawdsley top scoring with 28. Highlights included Babs trying to get selected for England's Bazball side within the first over of the match (and perhaps a single shot?). Unsuccessfully. At 65-1, things were not looking promising and our main chance appeared to be delaying their football-interested middle order until the England football kick-off triggered some unwise aggres-

sion on Winchester's tricky hybrid pitch. But a couple of bowling changes brought on Arjun Bhardwaj and Ali Riyan who bowled 19 consecutive overs and ended up with 7-70 between them. At one point, the OWs needed 3 runs while the FFs needed 3 wickets. Up stepped Bhardwaj with two wickets in two balls (completing his 5 wicket haul for just 23 runs) and suddenly the FF looked favourites to be on the receiving end of another OW choke. But, a few edgy runs later, OWs held on to win another enthralling match by a single wicket.

Burghley Park is always an excellent day out. The flat wicket, short bound-



aries and lightning outfield can make it a long one though. After winning the toss the FF skipper reluctantly invited Burghley Park to bat on an absolute shirt front. The folly of this soon became apparent as the BPCC batters exploited the conditions to full effect, finally declaring on 348-7 off just 46.5 overs. The highlight was an excellent century from South African Keyan Gace.

FF's innings started in most unfortunate circumstances with Harry Wood playing an immaculate forward defensive only to see the ball spin backwards and clip the stumps. After a steady start Burghley generously changed the bowling to more friendly fare with James Richardson scoring a watchful 73.

With the required run rate increasing to nine an over Arjun Bhardwaj entered the fray and played a remarkable innings of clean hitting, making 118 off just 47 balls. Had the rain not brought proceedings to a premature end, what appeared to be an unlikely victory was a distinct possibility. The welcome and hospitality of Burghley Park was splendid as always.

For the game against the Gloucester Gypsies, Veteran Match Manager James Richardson was chuffed with

the team he had meticulously selected for this match against his own wandering side the Gloucestershire Gypsies. With the weather on board for the last day of July, Stowell Park was looking at its finest with a pitch worth its value in the finest of gems. The FF made sure to get underway with the bat with openers Harry Wood and Alastair Carman jogging to the crease. A slow start by the openers as the Gypsies bowling attack stuck to their plans. Richardson, cocksure of his batting lineup and busy with work meetings

and attending calls, was away from the action as things started to go awry. One after the other, batters went out to the crease and returned to the changing room to greet an anxious Richardson. Eventually, with the 8th wicket down, he went out to face the music but sadly returned similar to the other batters. Will McKegney was the standout batter showing the rest how to bat on a flat deck, scoring 41 runs! FF were all out for 113, with Richardson displaying a wry smile at his batting lineup. We returned to the pitch



with hopes to return the favour as we bowled to the Gipsies. The raw pace of left-arm seamer candidate Alex Christie and the batting star himself, McKegney, bowling left-arm orthodox. The Gipsies were greatly troubled by Christie's pace and accuracy. Some chances were split but the determination of both bowlers resulted in reward as Christie took 2 wickets and McKegney, the pick of the bowlers, 5/60. However, the heroic bowling display was not enough as the Gipsies reached the target resulting in the FF losing by 3 wickets. The rematch in 2025 will be a fixture not to miss!

The ever popular game against the HAC was a run soaked draw, with contributions all down the order. Mel Raganuth top scored with 55.

Hampshire Hogs is a fixture which has given much pleasure over the

years – they are always hospitable and welcoming. Whilst the weather did not quite play ball, being cloudy and with some rain but never enough to stop us playing, Hogs won the toss and batted. After a steady start, they lost two quick wickets to Alexander Peggie and exceptionally unlucky outswing bowling from Tom Clarke who seemed to make every batsman play and miss more than they hit it. The FF turned to spin with James Nelson taking out the obdurate opener and then Akshay Sreenivisan taking three quick wickets leaving the Hogs at 91-6. The opposition MM then came in and proceeded to show why he was both a good MM (let other people have a go before yourself) and a good player scoring at a strike rate of 130 and in company with the number 5 putting on 101 in 16 overs. Still at 199-9 with Akshay having taken another two wickets, we were happy with our performance but then the

Hogs MM proceeded to put on 38, with the number 11 only facing one ball and reaching his 100 before declaring.

The FF were somewhat deflated by this but knowing that we had a strong “engine room” of three Academy batters from 3-5 we ate our sandwiches and homemade fare comfortable with our position. Most seasoned FF watchers will know that it doesn't often quite work out as you planned with only Zain Ali with a cultured 38 looking Academy 'esque. The FF also found themselves at 91-6, and then 93-7 before Clarke and Alex Mistlin looked to be crafting a recovery with a stand of 50 before number 10 Will McKegney strode to the crease and calmly supported Tom Clarke to put on a further 65 unbeaten runs. And so it was an honourable draw with the FF ending on 208-8 and Clarke finishing on 81 not out. The opposition skipper

tried a multitude of bowlers to split up the ninth FF wicket but to no avail.

The OHJ cricket week is a highlight for many FF members as the festivities at the ground include camping, an activity that is greatly taken advantage of by all. The day begins with a few late arrivals getting to the ground to pitch up their tents and trot towards the pavilion for the toss. Match Manager and Old Boy of the College, Omkar Khot found himself leading the team onto the field to bowl first in this much anticipated match. Opening bowler candidate Jack Solomon made inroads taking both the openers' wickets. But this introduced the OHJ skipper Marcus Campopiano (current Italy cricketer) who took a liking to the change in bowling to spin. Will McKegney and Aky Sreenivasan toiled away on a batter's paradise as Campopiano blasted shots all round the park. Sreenivasan in particular

got hit out of the park but each time the ball was successfully found. Campopiano scored his century in quick time and eventually fell for a knock of 126! The innings also included OHJ's Felix Kenney (candidate of the FF) falling for a golden duck off the bowling of McKegney, which saw Kenney join the illustrious Duck Club. OHJs were all out for 253: the pick of the bowlers was Sreenivasan who also scored a century, with figures of 4/131. FF began their batting innings at a snail's pace with Hamish Smart and Barney French at the crease. Wickets fell with French steadying the ship each time until his time had come and he too fell with the top score of 33. Many starts but no conversions as the FF were bowled out for 188, losing by 65 runs. After shaking hands and freshening up, the players joined the OHJs at one of the local pubs for a few beverages, followed by a hot meal

back at the campsite. More drinks were consumed as the night went on. The next day's breakfast was a blessing for most players and the rematch in 2025 was in the minds of all as each began his journey home.

Returning to the Green Jackets ground (St Cross CC) to face the Rifles, the team was eager to get the ball rolling. Bowling first, the FF were fully stocked with two fast bowlers, a real rarity to have one but even rarer to have two! Parv Agarwal and candidate Alex Christie bowled with great pace and produced some movement off the pitch. The Rifles' openers in return fancied both bowlers and used the extra pace to score a bounty of boundaries. As the opening partnership crept to 100, spin was introduced with two left-arm orthodox bowlers operating at both ends. Akshay Sreenivasan took the first wicket to end the opening

stand with Shervin George scoring 76 off 68 balls striking 14 fours. Will McKegney soon after took two further wickets which included the other opener Warwick Foreman who scored 54 off 109 balls which included 6 fours and 1 six. Spin wreaked havoc as the Rifles kept losing wickets with little resistance. Jesse Reibeiro kept the Rifles in the game but was out on 30 after the injured Nibley Express Nick Turk took an outstanding one-handed catch on the boundary which has been immortalised thanks to a photographer capturing the legendary scene! Rifles were all out for 213, with Sreenivasan the pick of the bowlers with figures of 5/36. Similar to the Rifles, the FF openers scored quickly and blasted boundaries around the park. Arjun Bhardwaj scored 88 off 85 balls striking 17 fours, while Junaid Aziz retired not out with a hamstring injury scoring 65 off 78 balls striking

FF's Seasonal Bird, the North Nibley Express, soars and justifies his exemption from the Christmas Oven for at least one more year!

11 fours and a solo six. The rest of the batting lineup secured the victory as the FF won by 8 wickets. 2025 will see a major milestone take place between the FF and the Rifles, a date worth marking on the calendar!



Day 1 of the Yorkshire tour saw the FF venturing out to Hovingham Hall. Match Manager Joe Benson rallied together a strong side for the 1st fixture which included 3 Kiwis! Romany elected to bat first. The FF opening bowlers Paul Wookey and Nick Turk started strongly delivering a mixture of pace and guile, with bounce and swing! Romany kept their cool and saw off the openers which then saw the introduction of candidate Kiwi Nic Robinson who decided to use half his run up, but after a few runs were hit, he went back to his full run up, fired up to take the first wicket. Success came to Robinson as well as guest Rolo Storey bowling some cheeky tweakers took the next. Romany kept ticking away as Kiwi Akshay Sreenivasan began his bowling spell. Romany opener and skipper fell to Sreenivasan after scoring 49, which saw Van Der Merwe take up the responsibility to get Romany back on



Hovingham Hall

track. But he too fell to Sreenivasan's bowling after top scoring with 64 runs. With no further resistance, wickets fell like dominoes and the Romany were bowled out for 196, Sreenivasan the pick of the bowlers with 5/43 (his third consecutive 5 wicket bag in his last 3 FF appearances). The Bibury duo of Alastair Carman and James Richardson (aptly supported by Basil the dog from the boundary) opened the FF account with aggressive strokes scoring quickly and elegantly. Romany struck back with vengeance as the innings progressed, eventually bringing Kiwi James Nelson to the crease. The two sons, Nelson and Benson, guided the team to a sound victory, Nelson not out on 70 and Benson not out on 36, FF winning by 4 wickets. After the match both Romany and FF

members enjoyed a few beverages at the Worsley Arms which coincidentally was also the tour accommodation. A nice evening was had and another is in the books when we once more return to Hovingham Hall to face the Romany.

Day 2 of the Yorkshire tour saw the FF travelling to Escrick, where the Yorkshire Gents headquarters are located. Rain, rain, rain was all one could see as the Gents sent us in to bat... Bat in the rain that is. Play was to continue as a steady shower remained keeping the grass lush and the pitch a true menace for our batting line up. The Yorkshire Gents were in control throughout the innings as the FF batters were unable to adjust to the conditions. James Richardson on the other hand played one of the grittiest innings seen all season. Richardson kept his compo-

sure as wickets fell at the other end. He had a few short-lived partnerships but he kept going and went on to raise his bat to signal his 50+ score. After more rain fell, the last wicket was taken and it was the turn of the Gents to face our bowling attack on a wet Yorkshire special. Tea was declared after a few early wickets were taken. As the players tucked into the spread, the rain got heavier and heavier. A quick look at the wicket was enough for the umpires and captains to call it day, which resulted in a drawn match. The Gents are a fantastic club and the matches at Escrick have always been entertaining. We hope 2025 brings good weather for our next fixture!

In the lovely county of Cheshire, the FF return to Cholmondeley Castle, with new players to the ground trying their luck at saying it right! With a few late dropouts, the FF arrived at the ground

with only 9 players. But with some calls made guest Ian Souness, a New Zealander playing for Formby CC in the Premier division of the Liverpool and District Competition, made his way to ground through the various public transport options at play. Luckily for Souness, he had time to get to the ground as the FF were batting first. Batting first at this ground has always been a challenge, especially the first few overs. However, the top 3 kept their wits and, batting well, each scoring in the 30s. With lunch declared and a feast to be had, Souness made his appearance and got stuck in, with the FF numbers now up to 10. With no more reinforcements to arrive, the FF continued to bat post lunch with James Nelson top scoring with 49 runs to his name. The declaration soon came with pace bowler Stephen Brooks not out on 30, the innings total 212/6 after 40 overs. Brooks with his pace bowling

struck the first blow with the Gents yet to score a run! Trouble brewed further as spin took front stage with Nelson going on to take 4/37. However, it wasn't enough as the day ended with the Gents on 186/8, which resulted in a drawn match. Always a lovely day with the Cheshire Gents and their hospitality continues to be a great highlight, especially their selection of port!

SUMMARY

All in all this has been another fine year for the FF. The club has survived (just) the transition in Fixture Secretary,

appalling weather, teenage left arm spinners and inexplicable batting collapses. On a personal note I would like to thank my predecessor, Nick Turk, who provided the best handover I have ever received, a guiding hand, mentorship and friendship throughout the year. Every club needs a Turk – we are just lucky to have probably the most Turkish of all.

And Turkey - I'm very sorry I didn't listen and accidentally organised three fixtures on one day and two Academy games on another day!

| Team | Played | Won | Drawn | lost | Tied | No Result | Cancelled |
|-------------------|--------|-----|-------|------|------|-----------|-----------|
| Free Foresters | 39 | 14 | 10 | 14 | 0 | 1 | 13 |
| FF Academy XI | 11 | 3 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| FF Secretary's XI | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| FF Women's XI | 5 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

Statistics correct according to Play Cricket

FREE FORESTERS – RESULTS, 2024

| Date | Fixture | Result | FF Performances of note |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 14/04 | Marlborough College | Cancelled | |
| 15/04 | Harrow School | Cancelled | |
| 18/04 | Wellington College | Lost by 37 runs | |
| 21/04 | Sherborne School | Lost by 3 wickets | Gourlay 83 |
| 21/04 | Winchester College | Lost by 150 runs | Forbes 41 |
| 24/04 | Ampleforth College | Cancelled | |
| 01/05 | Shrewsbury School | Won by 121 runs | Carman 61 |
| 02/05 | Epson College (Women) | Cancelled | |
| 12/05 | OUCC Authentics | Lost by 2 wickets | Clarke 5-47 |
| 12/05 | Clifton College | Drawn | Mamgai 98, Risk 81 |
| 12/05 | RN | Cancelled | |
| 14/05 | Malvern College | Lost by 42 runs (T20) | L Sabbagh-Holt 2-9 |
| 14/05 | RAF | Cancelled | |
| 21/05 | Repton School | Lost by 144 runs | Colleymore 40 |
| 24/05 | Eton College | Lost by 12 runs (T20) | |

| Date | Fixture | Result | FF Performances of note |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 24/05 | Eton College | Lost by 26 runs (T20) | |
| 29/05 | Incogniti | Won by 44 runs | Sreenivasan 4-28 |
| 31/05 | Army Women | Won by 40 runs (T20) | Bowman 3-8 |
| 04/06 | RAF Development | Lost by 7 wickets (T20) | Parmar 41 |
| 04/06 | RAF Development | Won by 4 wickets (T20) | Sreenivasan 3-18 |
| 04/06 | Army Development | Won by 61 runs (T20) | Berlusconi 77, Ali Ahmed 50, French 51 |
| 04/06 | Army Development | Lost by 10 runs (T20) | Bovill 41, Kooner-Evans 3-21 |
| 09/06 | Guards CC | Won by 7 wickets | Costin 58 |
| 09/06 | Band of Brothers | Won by 5 wickets | Goodrum 59, Khan 58 |
| 13/06 | Bradfield College | Lost by 117 runs | Clarke 33, Sreenivasan 3-38 |
| 15/06 | OUCC Women | Lost by 8 wickets | |
| 16/06 | Cheltenham College | Drawn | Newman 72, Coley 3-16 |
| 16/06 | Radley Rangers | Won by 3 wickets | Crane 3-43 |
| 19/06 (3 days) | CUCC | Lost by 121 runs | Drake-Brockman 65, Chaplin 4-35, Berlusconi 67 |
| 19/06 | King's School Chester | Not recorded | |
| 20/06 | Army | Lost by 55 runs | Flavell 83, Burgess 4-43 |

| Date | Fixture | Result | FF Performances of note |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---|
| 23/06 | Helgioland Pilgrims | Not recorded | |
| 23/06 | Staffordshire Gents | Won by 7 wickets | Starkey 67, Sreenivasan 3-10 |
| 24/06 | King's College School | Lost by 74 runs | |
| 25/06 (3 days) | Oucc | Won by 10 wickets | Konidena 77, Shah 89, Nelson 4-26, 4-19 |
| 30/06 | Old Wykehamists | Lost by 1 wicket | Bhardwaj 5-23 |
| 01/07 | Burghley Park | Drawn | Bhardwaj 118, Richardson 73 |
| 04/07 (2 days) | Bradfield Waifs | Drawn | Nelson 56, Solomon 4-13 |
| 05/07 | Wiltshire Queries | Cancelled | |
| 07/07 | Gemini | Not recorded | |
| 14/07 | South Wales Hunt | Not recorded | |
| 15/07 | Budleigh Salterton | Lost by 1 wicket | R Jones 81, Baker 78 |
| 16/07 | Somerset Stragglers | Won by 5 wickets | G Sandbach 94, G Bretten 78, Mckegney 5-62 |
| 16/07 | Sussex Martlets | Drawn | |
| 17/07 | MCC | Lost by 94 runs | G Sandbach 3-33 |

| Date | Fixture | Result | FF Performances of note |
|-------|---------------------|-------------------|--|
| 18/07 | Sidmouth | Won by 119 runs | Maasdorp 61, Stuckey 4-42 |
| 21/07 | IZ | Not recorded | |
| 21/07 | Charterhouse Friars | Not recorded | |
| 23/07 | Oxford Downs | Not recorded | |
| 24/07 | RAF | Won by 8 wickets | |
| 24/07 | Worcester Gents | Not recorded | Drake-Brockman 57, McKegney 6-29 |
| 26/07 | Carlton CC Academy | Not recorded | |
| 27/07 | Ship Inn | Not recorded | |
| 31/07 | Gloucester Gypsies | Lost by 3 wickets | |
| 04/08 | HAC | Drawn | |
| 04/08 | Old Hurstjohnians | Lost by 65 runs | Ragnauth 55 McKegney 4-56, Sreenivasan 4-131 Clarke 81, Sreenivasan 5-41 |
| 07/08 | Hampshire Hogs | Drawn | |
| 11/08 | Rifles | Not recorded | |
| 14/08 | Romany | Won by 4 wickets | |
| 15/08 | Yorkshire Gents | Drawn | |
| 18/08 | Cryptics | Won by 3 wickets | E Sabbagh-Holt 4-30 |

| Date | Fixture | Result | FF Performances of note |
|-------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 20/08 | Club Cricket Conference U25 | | |
| 21/08 | Cheshire Gents | Drawn | |
| 25/08 | Rugby Meteors | Not recorded | |
| 28/08 | ACE Academy | Lost by 7 wickets | |
| 29/08 | Benyon Cup | | |
| 31/08 | Hurlingham | Lost by 164 runs | McKegney 3-50 |
| 08/09 | Adastrians | Cancelled | |

Note – further details on these results can be found on the Free Foresters Play Cricket site.

Match Managers are encouraged to ensure that all details are entered there as soon as possible after the match.

PLAYER STATISTICS FOR 2024

These figures only reflect those matches recorded in Play-Cricket. There are 6 matches for which, alas, we do not have full scorecard details recorded. Our recent policy is to have all our games recorded via Play-Cricket in part to allow complete statistical analysis.

| Top 5 Batters | Runs | Games | Innings | Top score | Average |
|------------------|------|-------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Arjun Bhardwaj | 446 | 12 | 11 | 118* | 55.75 |
| James Nelson | 282 | 11 | 10 | 70* | 35.25 |
| James Richardson | 198 | 13 | 11 | 73 | 18.00 |
| George Sandbach | 193 | 3 | 3 | 94 | 64.33 |
| Alastair Carman | 183 | 14 | 14 | 64 | 14.08 |

| Top 5 Bowlers | O | M | R | W | Best | Econ | Strk rt | Ave |
|--------------------|-------|----|-----|----|------|------|---------|-------|
| Akshay Sreenivasan | 212.2 | 32 | 946 | 49 | 5/41 | 4.46 | 26.00 | 19.31 |
| Will McKegney | 124.3 | 30 | 447 | 29 | 6/29 | 3.59 | 25.76 | 15.41 |
| James Nelson | 94.3 | 19 | 311 | 25 | 4/19 | 3.29 | 22.68 | 12.44 |
| Arjun Bhardwaj | 62.4 | 4 | 318 | 14 | 5/31 | 5.07 | 26.86 | 22.71 |
| Felix Kenney | 42 | 7 | 240 | 12 | 3/35 | 5.71 | 21.00 | 20.00 |

| Top Fielding records | Catches | Other | Total |
|----------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Akshay Sreenivasan | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| Nick Turk | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| Neil Baker | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| Alastair Carman | 5 | 1 | 6 |

Number of matches played (three or more matches)

22 Akshay Sreenivasan

14 Alastair Carman

13 James Richardson

12 Arjun Bhardwaj, Will McKegney

11 Parv Agarwal, James Nelson

10 Tom McIlwaine, Nick Turk

8 Elliott Watkins

7 Thomas Clarke, Omkar Khot,
Babs Oduwole, Ali Riyan

6 Felix Kenney,
Ellis Sabbagh-Holt

5 Luke Dawson, Reid Mawdsley,
Alex Mistlin, Louis Sabbagh-
Holt, Robert Wood

4 Joel Barber, Laurie Cadle,
Adeko Collymore, Mark Costin,
Robin Jones, Rhys Lamplugh,
Alex Thomas

3 Timothy Abrahams, Jasper Arnold,
Neil Baker, Jamie Baldwin,
Ollie Chaplin, Alex Christie,
Leigh Dickinson, Tom Flavell,
Adam Kula-Prezezowski,
Rhys Jones, Will Mason,
Richard Moffat, Benjamin Moulton,
Jay Parmar, Karan Parmar,
Alexander Peggie, Chris Sandbach,
George Sandbach, Hamish Smart,
Stuart Walter, Harry Wood

Akshay Sreenivasan
Most Matches for FF in 2024



FF WOMEN IN 2024

Manager **Paul Askew** writes:

The 2024 season, our sixth, got off to a winning start against Army Women. This followed two fixtures falling victim to the wet Spring. The Epsom College fixture on 2nd May was cancelled, frustratingly at the last minute, due to rain on the day and the much-anticipated season opener vs St Cross Symondians - the ECB women's league club T20 champions - failed to materialise due to pitch unavailability at a waterlogged St Cross in late April.

The Army game, on 31st May, was a T20 encounter. The fixture has been an ever-present since FF Women were established and the honours have oscillated. The Army are always strong, captained as usual by Connie Cant, and the match is inevitably hotly contested. This year, FF Women put out a decent side, mixed in

age, captained by the experienced Jenny Blofeld (Richmond and Middex). FF won the toss and batted first.

After a steady 31-run opening partnership in eight overs between Poppy Burnyeat and Jemima Bowman (at 4 an over), the innings dramatically accelerated from over No 9 with the arrival in quick succession of our keeper at No 3, Yasmin Daswani (Durham U, Spencer and Essex), and Robyn Bentley (Guildford and Surrey). Their partnership over the following seven overs saw FF put on a decisive



70 runs, Bentley being particularly destructive with 36 off 20 balls. The Army clawed back the run-rate following the dismissals of Daswani and Bentley with FF posting 128 for 4 at the close.

The Cant twins set the tone for the reply with a good partnership of 31 at 5.6 per over until the impressive Jemma Bowman claimed the vital first wicket, that of Army wicket-keeper, Georgina Cant, caught behind by Yasmin Daswani



FF Women at Aldershot
captained by Jenny Blofeld

*Leaving the field at Aldershot:
A good FFW win to savour*

on 19. Captain Connie fell at the beginning of the following over, bowled by the consistently accurate Isabel Churchman.

FF attempted (following coach Mawson's careful instructions) to keep the Army's dangerous No 3, Amanda Potgieter (the first player in the history of Army cricket to score 6,000 runs), off strike with reasonable success. When Potgieter fell on 25 off 35 balls in over 16 with the score on 82, FF scented victory. The remaining



overs yielded two more wickets for a mere four runs leaving FF comfortable winners by 40 runs.

The next game, on 15th June, was a 35 over game against Oxford University at the Parks - again an ever-present fixture on our list.

Some years the university teams are depleted through exams or unavailability

of various sorts. This time Oxford, captained by our friend and FF Hannah Davies, put out a strong OUCC eleven. FF, with a relatively young and inexperienced side, batting first, were unable to puncture the field against tight bowling, posting 125 all out, with Eleanor Varnier-Moore top scoring with 27. The university passed us with only two wickets down.

The following two fixtures were, alas, cancelled, both school games - Wellington College and Berkhamsted School. Our rain-interrupted season resumed at a very damp but hospitable Horsham CC on 16th July where an FF double-header had been arranged - the FF men and FF women both playing vs Sussex Martlets.



*Andy Mawson instructs
and encourages*



*FF Women at the Parks
captained by Samridh Agarwal*



*Partial sun at Horsham
as the game starts*



*Partial sun at Horsham
as the game starts*

*Saskia Cake flanked by Coach
Mawson and Russell Cake*



Our FF Women side was strong and youthful. We had a very enjoyable, tightly-fought game, dodging the showers - FF Women batting first and posting 133 for 5 in their 20 overs and coming out close winners (somewhat depending on the method of adjudging the result in this rain-affected match).

The FF men had the opportunity to appreciate the effort and skill as well as the friendships characterising their women counterparts as their game had, frustratingly, finished early due to the weather.

On to the final game of the season - a Friday evening T20 and BBQ at Spencer CC on 9th August against the home club, captained by FF Immy Brown. The game marked the debut of FF offspring, Saskia Cake.

In their typically hospitable manner,

Spencer offered us half-a-dozen players late on to supplement our side depleted a day or two earlier by fixture rearrangements elsewhere - notably at Richmond CC - taking out half our side. The end product, therefore, was more like an internal Spencer Women fixture - where, one might say, cricket was the winner!

The club's thanks are again due to our sponsors for their support. I would also like to thank players, our most hospitable opponents, parents, our coach, Andy Mawson, and my two main help-

Top centre, August crescent moon at Spencer: Curtain down on a season full of good cheer



mates in the organisation, Richie Stubbs and Kevin Emery. Looking ahead to the 2025 season, we continue the effort to transition from a start-up organised by the men to a women-run branch of the

club. The recent reorganisation of the women's game may offer FF some opportunities to attract strong players looking for good cricket who may have been somewhat 'orphaned' in the shake up.

All help in match and general management will be gratefully received. Inevitably, our transition will take time. We will expand our fixtures at the pace such a transition will allow.

DON'T GIVE HIM A DRINK! LET THE BASTARD DIE OF THIRST!

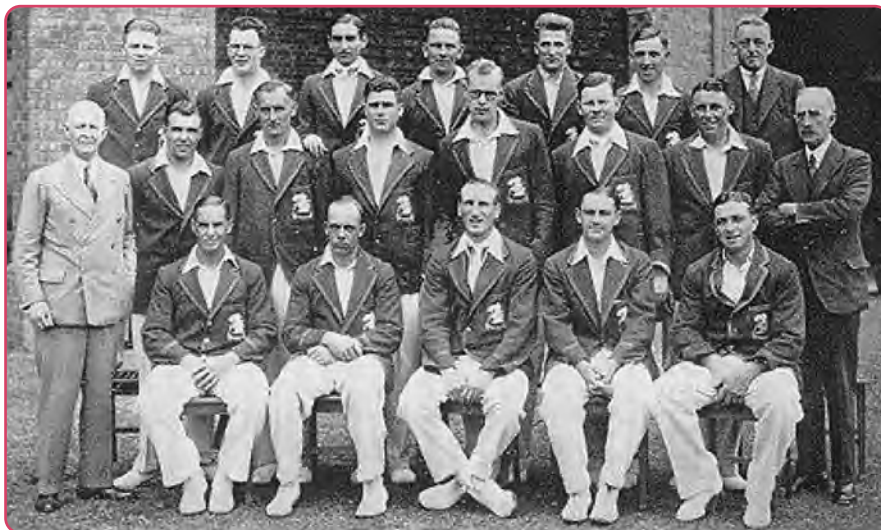
"Douglas Jardine is loathed...rightly... more than any German who fought in any war. Some days I feel I should like to kill him.....He seems too damn stupid." Hardly the sort of comment one expects to hear made by one FF (Gubby Allen) about another (Douglas Jardine), especially when Allen also reckoned that he was probably Jardine's "best friend" on the Bodyline tour of 1932-33. One shudders to think what Allen wrote about his enemies!

Jardine's popular reputation as a ruthless captain who used highly controversial tactics to reduce the effectiveness of Don Bradman, the most lethal run-scoring machine in the history of cricket, in order to secure victory and win the Ashes, might also make one wonder how he was regarded in FF and other club cricket, which he played throughout his life. However, whilst he

played his first-class cricket very hard, and seems to have found it difficult to relax in the company of professionals, rarely if ever sitting with them at meals on tour, he mixed in easily and affably with club cricketers, at Radlett CC and in several wandering clubs such as FF, Butterflies, Harlequins, IZ and the Incogniti with whom he toured the USA and Canada in 1920.

Unfortunately, records of Jardine playing for FF are limited. In 1928, he made 112 in his only innings against Oxford University in The Parks, repeating the feat two years later, making 112 and 50. In 1931 he made 87* against his old university and in 1937, at Fenners, he scored 50 and 47. He also played with some success against FF (United Though Untied!). At Winchester College, he made 77 against FF and later scored a chanceless 63 for Oxford

University in 1923. Clearly, the FF v Oxford game was a successful fixture for him no matter which team he was playing for. He must have made many more runs for FF but the scorebooks to prove it have disappeared. He was regarded as an exceptionally good defensive batsman but he could also hit the ball extremely hard, once driving the ball clean over the pavilion at Radlett. In his later years, a tropical disease which caused his hands to swell and made gripping the bat very painful, meant that he rarely batted for more than an hour or so. Perhaps the spirit in which he played club cricket is best summed up by his performance in 1938 for IZ v Lords and Commons for whom Lord Ebbisham, a great cricket enthusiast, was bowling at the age of 70. Jardine, remember, was not long out of first-class cricket and had a Test average of 48 and a first-class average



*Back row: Duckworth, Mitchell, Nawab of Pataudi, Leyland, Larwood, Paynter, W. Ferguson (scorer)
 Middle: Warner (Manager), Ames, Verity, Voce, Bowes, Brown, Tate, Palaret(Assistant Manager)
 Front: Sutcliffe, Wyatt, Jardine, Allen, Hammond*

of 46.83. Honour for both men was satisfied as Jardine contented himself by taking a single off each ball.

Wallace Reyburn called the 1967 All Blacks “The Unsmiling Giants” and the term might seem appropriate

for the classical image of Douglas Jardine: tall, haughty in appearance, ignoring spectators, except for the occasional disdainful spit on the outfield, and never showing pain or emotion on the field. He seems to have fallen out with Australian crowds

early in his first tour there in 1928-29. The situation in several matches required Jardine, the ultimate team man, to play a series of long defensive innings and the spectators jeered him for slow scoring rather than his Harlequin cap or appearance. The fact that he ignored them when in the field only aggravated matters. The famous playwright Ben Travers followed the tour and was in the MCC dressing-room when Jardine returned after being barracked during one innings. Patsy Hendren remarked, “They don’t seem to like you very much over here, Mr Jardine.” Jardine replied coldly, “It’s f***ing mutual.” Given this well-known antipathy, it’s perhaps surprising that DRJ was invited to captain the next tour Down Under, his appointment prompting the famous reaction from his old schoolmaster, Rockley Wilson: ‘Well, we shall win the Ashes, but we may very well lose a Dominion.’

It's easy to portray him as the cold-eyed killer who, according to some, instructed his team on the voyage to Australia that they were to "hate" the opposition and to refer to Bradman only by the term "the little bastard". It's easy only to recall the skipper who, when his opposing captain, Bill Woodfull, had been struck a fearsome blow over the heart by the final ball of a Larwood over, walked past the injured batsman shouting, "Well bowled, Harold!", before, at the start of Larwood's next over, stopping the bowler half-way through his run up, in order to switch the field over from the orthodox off-side setting to the full Bodyline leg-trap. When Larwood eventually bowled, it was another bouncer which knocked Woodfull's bat out of his hands. Later, in the same match, another Larwood bouncer was deflected by the Australian wicketkeeper, Bert

Oldfield, hitting him on the head and leaving him concussed. The crowd was incandescent with rage and the police, including some mounted police, were ready should a riot break out. It was during this passage of play that drinks were taken, inducing one spectator to shout, as Woodfull brought a drink to Jardine, "Don't give him a drink! Let the bastard die of thirst!" When England finally began their innings, with the crowd lusting for revenge, it is entirely typical of Jardine that he changed the batting order and moved himself up to open with Sutcliffe. He then batted the two hours through to stumps in his most obdurate style.

This is the Jardine whom some Australians loved to hate, the Jardine who advised his fellow Oxford blue, Colin Cowdrey, just before Cowdrey's maiden tour of Australia in 1954-55, '...when you reach Australia, just remember

one thing. Hate the bastards!' But there was an entirely different side to DRJ. After the Oldfield incident, he sent a telegram to Mrs Oldfield wishing Bert a speedy recovery and arranged for two Shirley Temple dolls to be sent to the Oldfields' two little daughters. When he married and had his own family of three girls and a boy, he was, especially for a man of his upbringing and time, an unusually devoted father. He played games with his children and read to them regularly, as well as teaching them fishing, shooting and cricket. He had a fine, dry sense of humour too, making him a very popular speaker on the club dinner circuit. Once, when he was vice-captain of Percy Fender's Surrey, the Surrey bowlers took a fearful hammering. On reaching the dressing-room at stumps, a weary Fender discovered to his exasperation that he was out of cigarettes and asked the dressing-room attendant to nip to a

nearby shop and “get me 20 Player’s”. Quick as a flash, Jardine added, “Make that 20 bowlers.” During his time playing for Radlett his captain invited him to come and try bowling some leg-spin. DRJ declined politely, explaining that his bowling was like German women, “rather loose and very expensive”!

Many Australian cricketers liked Douglas Jardine. On post-war tours, they met him at functions and warmed to his friendly humour. In 1948, Doug Ring and Bill Johnston sought skipper Don Bradman’s permission to accept Jardine’s invitation to dinner. Bradman refused to let them go and even declined to comment to the press when Jardine died in 1958 aged just 57. The scars of Bodyline were too deep. The distinguished Australian broadcaster Alan McGilvray, who was also a first-class cricketer for NSW, once asked Jardine if he had



Brisbane, February 1933, Woodfull ducks a Larwood bouncer as, from forward short leg to leg slip, Leyland, Allen, Jardine, Sutcliffe, Hammond & Verity are ready to pounce. Mitchell is at short cover.

any regrets about Bodyline. Jardine replied, “None. None whatever. I did what I had to do. I won the Ashes for my country and if I offended people that’s unfortunate. We had to prove we could defeat Bradman and we did.” However, it seems that Jardine did realise that Bodyline was not a tactic

which could become a permanent feature of cricket. He spent the rest day of the notorious Adelaide Test with friends. They agreed not to discuss cricket but, as they were turning in for the night, Jardine’s host, Ian McLachlan, said, “If this goes on it’s going to muck up cricket

because you're going to have cricketers playing in things like baseball masks." Jardine told him not to be silly and reassured him: "It'll be stopped. I've got an instrument in my hands whereby I can win a series against the little man(Bradman). It's good for England to win a series against the little man. But don't worry. It'll be stopped." Perhaps it was this foresight which prompted him to remark years later, when he went to Australia on business, that Australians no longer viewed him as a bogeyman, but more as "an old so-and-so who got away with it". Free Foresters simply regard him as one of the greatest to wear the crimson, white and green.

JOHN HAMILTON

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In Quest of the Ashes
Douglas Jardine

Bodyline Autopsy
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Never Surrender
Mark Peel

A Cuckoo in the Bodyline Nest
Gilbert Mant

SWINGING IN THE SIXTIES

Richie Benaud's Blue Suede Shoes: The story of an Ashes classic

by David Kynaston and Harry Ricketts (Bloomsbury 2024)

Worrell: The brief but brilliant lift of a Caribbean cricket pioneer

by Simon Lister (Simon & Schuster, 2024)

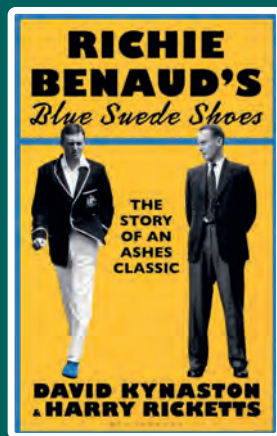
How can a blow by blow account of a day's play form itself into a book? Take a great moment in cricket's past, written as it happened but with digressions into social history and the players' own stories at every point, and our attention is captured. The final day of the Old Trafford Ashes Test in 1961 is the stage for Kynaston and Ricketts to tell their story. Losing three quick wickets in their second innings, Australia found themselves a mere 157 ahead, with no rain over the Pennines to be seen. The, presumably deliberate, omission of a scorecard encourages us to immerse ourselves in the narrative.

Enlarging the picture far beyond the middle, the authors draw the contrast

between the Australian captain, Richie Benaud, who the night before had strolled out insouciantly alone to inspect the wicket in the eponymous shoes and the haughty restraint of the home skipper Peter May. 'Both,

in their fashion, immaculately turned out,' but May is seen as hidebound by conservatism and personal reserve in his relationships, especially with the professionals in his team.

May scored a boy's own century on debut in 1951 when still an undergraduate but a decade later we read of an anxious thumb-nibbler, as wary of the press as of the players' bar. He had withdrawn from the First Test, yet to find form after a self-imposed sabbatical. Benaud, too, had concerns, for his shoulder prevented him from bowling in most of the county games and a googly was too painful to attempt. But with the cheers from the West Indies series, recently finished in Australia,

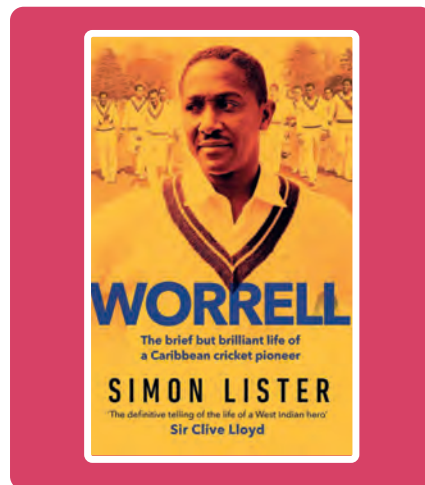


ringing in his ears, his team seemed to embody the 'brighter cricket' for which English cricket yearned.

England's middle order of Dexter, May, Close and Barrington (minus Cowdrey, unavailable due to a throat infection) balanced strokemakers and resilience alike. Close's impishly frenetic innings is dissected in full and revisited once more in the enjoyable appendix of 'Three Puzzles'. Trueman's footmarks are traced back there too along with whether Barrington was acting under orders when he opened his shoulders in the first innings. It will be a relief to some that Elvis Presley was not the King of the Australian dressing room after all and that Old Trafford had yet to proselytise itself by hosting pop concerts.

The after lives of each player are told sensitively, with all but Subba Row (who has himself now passed) deceased at

the time of publication*. As chairman of selectors, May, appointed from nowhere by a mysterious cabal, sacked captains or dropped players with clinical ruthlessness and Dexter, idealistic, controversial and prone to bizarre public announcements, both failed to revive past glories. However, it should be said that there was no disgrace in being beaten by the West Indian and Australian sides of the 80s and 90s.



Frank Worrell features in the book, for he covered the '61 Ashes as a journalist. 2024 marked the centenary of his birth and Lister's biography 'Worrell' rattles along in a rousing style with revelations, anecdotes, talent, friendship and music. Where 'Son of Grace,' Vaneisa Baksh's historical biography (Fairfield Books, also 2024), explores the Knight's influence well beyond cricket and details her - often fruitless - search for family members to answer her questions about his private life, Lister begins with the last session of the Brisbane Test in 1960.

** Quick quiz question: as of Jan 8th 2025, who is the oldest living male England cricketer?*

In the ABC radio box, when Solomon's direct hit ran Meckiff out off what proved to be the final ball of the match, there was widespread confusion as

to the result. The commentators who had fluffed their lines, roaring “It’s a draw!” were ordered back to the studio the following day to record a correct version for the archive. Worrell knew exactly what had happened. Of course he did, as did the 8 players in Lovitt’s famous photograph, with Kanhai ‘in the middle of the frame... leaping, pointing, jumping in the air, left knee hurdle-high with the now-ricocheted ball pinging away under his white boot’.

We read of the unofficial colour bar on the captaincy of West Indies and the reactionary and insular attitudes of colonial Barbados. Frustrated as he was, Worrell rose above them. His family had left for the USA but he stayed, before switching to Jamaica and, in the English season, playing as a professional in league cricket in Lancashire and Staffordshire, while studying for a degree at Manchester

University. We pursue his connections to Learie Constantine and CLR James, who leads an orchestrated campaign for Worrell’s candidacy as captain. After retiring, he returns to Jamaica as Warden of the University of the West Indies and is invited by the Indian government ‘to encourage closer links between India and Trinidad and Tobago... [and lecture] about the importance of young people from different racial backgrounds striving together for the same ideals’. Three months later, as Lister so movingly writes, his illness would deteriorate to a tragically young death from leukaemia aged 42.

In the epilogue ‘Everlasting Captain,’ a line from a calypso in his honour, we meet Ebony Rainford-Brent of Surrey, England and ACE, whose fixture with Free Foresters is now an annual highlight. Her rise through

cricket was supported and enabled through her friend Jenny Wostrack, the daughter of one of Sir Frank’s cousins. ‘ “She was everything,” says Ebony, determined to pass on the Worrell legacy as to how the game can change young people’s lives.

The style of the Sixties does not transfer easily to print. We need photographs to take us there and, perhaps inevitably, YouTube footage is welcome to do so. But when following this summer’s Indian series in the media, free yourself from the noise of the reaction to it, fabricated through stats, external comments, gambling commercials and gossip. They will all disappear if you pick up either of these books. ‘Marvelous,’ as Richie used to say.

** Quick quiz question: as of Jan 8th 2025, who is the oldest living male England cricketer?*

OBITUARY

SIMON EDWARD ANTHONY KIMMINS

26 May 1930 –

1 February 2025

Simon Kimmins was born in London in 1930 and attended Charterhouse where he played in the XI. He was the son of Anthony Kimmins, a playwright and film director. Simon Kimmins played for the Royal navy before making his first-class debut for Combined Services against Glamorgan in 1950. He made the first of his 12 appearances for Kent later that season. Later he played first-class matches for MCC and Free Foresters, as well as touring India and the Far East with EW Swanton's XI in 1964. His final first-class match was for MCC v Cambridge University in 1959. In all first-class cricket he aggregated 563 runs from 16 matches with a highest score of 81 and an average of 21.65. He also took 24 wickets at 41.50, with a best analysis of 5/42, and 13 catches.

MARY FITZGERALD

(wife of James FitzGerald)

24 January 1942 –

3 November 2024

James and Mary's daughter
Kate writes...

Mum was very much a cricket wife, accompanying dad to countless matches over the years in Devon, Dublin, Philadelphia and a vast array of other locations. It is difficult to believe that she would have put up with all the early morning car sickness from my sister, Zara and me, if she didn't enjoy the whole cricket experience. Certainly she loved the people and the social side of cricket rather more than watching it, even when dad was momentarily at the crease!

The Western Series was the highlight of the summer holidays for the whole

family when Zara and I were children – so many wonderful friendships made, so much swimming at Rousdon and too much clotted cream ice cream at The Ship Inn in Axmouth. Mum was a devoted member of the #rousdon-tealadies and a surprising proponent of precision sandwich-making, insisting that bread should be buttered right to the corners to avoid dry curl and that you could never put enough salad cream in an egg sandwich. She was a key protagonist in the ‘Unplugged Tea Urn Incident’ of 1986, where the Royal Wedding distracted business as usual tea-making and unfortunately the urn was not turned on. The resulting panic that ensued meant that tea was delayed by over an hour, players were left immensely disgruntled and somewhat rattled, and the phrase, “You had one job,” was first coined. Fortunately, everyone had moved on a few years later.

Anyone who knew mum and dad could see they had a very tight bond. They loved entertaining people and each other, they looked after one another as they navigated life’s glitches and successes together, and they were married for nearly 45 years. Dad lived and breathed ‘happy wife, happy cricket life’ – and they were very happy together.

Mum was never quite the same after we lost dad in April 2013. She continued teaching drama until 2018, retiring from a career that spanned over 40 years, and then she threw herself into supporting the community as a parish councillor and charity worker. Sadly her health deteriorated significantly last year having recently survived breast cancer and after several months in hospital she finally left us in November.

It is a real shame but neither Zara nor I managed to marry cricketers (and we don’t play it either) but we do watch it avidly and we have as much love for the Free Foresters as our parents once had.

We were very touched by the club’s presence at both dad’s and mum’s funerals – thank you from the bottom of our hearts x

FREE FORESTERS ANNUAL QUIZ 2025

Q1 Who was the first Test batsman to score his first 7 Test centuries against 7 different countries?

Q2 Kamindu Mendis of Sri Lanka recently reached 1000 Test runs in only his 13th innings, equalling the achievement of Don Bradman. However, the record for reaching 1000 Test runs is 12 innings, shared by a famous Englishman and a famous West Indian. Who?

Q3 Jack Hobbs and Herbert Sutcliffe formed the most successful opening partnership in Test history, in terms of average; their average stand was 87.81. Who is the only player to open in a Test Match for England with Jack Hobbs and Herbert Sutcliffe?

Q4 In 2024, who made 335* against Middlesex, thus breaking Graham Gooch's record of 333 for the highest first-class score at Lord's?

Q5 Which batsman hit which bowler for a record 43 off one over in the 2024 County Championship?

Q6 In the 2nd Test at Multan in October, Noman Ali and Sajid Khan took all 20 English wickets. Who were the last pair of spinners to take all 20 wickets in a Test, and when, and where?

Q7 Prabash Jayasuriya recently finished his 16th Test with a total of 97 wickets,

falling just short of equalling the record of reaching 100 wickets in 16 Tests, set by which England bowler?

Q8 Which two counties tied a match in the 2024 County Championship, with the 4th innings totalling 592, before the final wicket fell off the last possible ball?

Q9 In March 2024, Alex Carey of Australia scored 98* v New Zealand at Christchurch and took 10 catches in the match. He thus came within a whisker of joining an elite club of one. Only once in Test history, has a wicketkeeper made a century and claimed 10 victims with the gloves. Who scored 31 and 103*, as well as claiming 11 catches against Pakistan in 2012-13?

Q10 Harry Brook's 317 v Pakistan in Multan came off just 310 balls, making it the second fastest triple century in Test history. Who holds the record for the fastest?

Q11 Who, in 1997, with 138* and 103* against Pakistan, became the first and, so far, the only batsman to make two UNBEATEN centuries in the same Test?

Q12 In 4 County one-day finals at Lord's between 1979-1983 which bowler had aggregate figures of 38.4 overs, 11 maidens, 71 runs and 16 wickets? His team won all four matches and he was never chosen as man of the match despite figures of 6/29, 5/14, 3/13 and 2/15.

Q13 What is England's highest ever partnership in men's Tests and which two batsmen compiled it?

Q14 In 2024, which Lancashire League club became the first to field an all-women's team in the League's history? The team finished 7th out of 11.

Q15 Who captained England in the recent Women's T20 World Cup?

Q16 Which country lost 10 consecutive games immediately prior to the Women's T20 World Cup and then proceeded to win the competition?

Q17 Who was the first player (man or woman) to take 10 wickets and score a century in the same Test; she also took the first hat-trick in women's Tests in the same game!

Q18 Which Englishwoman holds the record for the most runs in Test history?

Q19 In September 2024, who became the youngest bowler to take 10 wickets (10/217) in a first-class match in England? Aged 16 years and 192 days, he beat the record of WG Grace which had stood for 159 years. Both took their record hauls at the Oval.

Q20 Who is the only bowler to have taken 5 wickets in an innings against all 18 first-class counties?

At Ollie Pope • A2 Herbert Sutcliffe and Everton Weekes • A3 Douglas Jardine • A4 Sam Northeast • A5 Louis Kimber off Ollie Robinson • A6 Jim Laker (19/90) and Tony Lock (11/106) v Australia at Manchester 1956 • A7 George Lohmann • A8 Glamorgan and Gloucestershire • A9 AB de Villiers • A10 Virender Sehwag • A11 Aravinda de Silva • A12 Joel Garner • A13 454 v Pakistan at Multan 2024 • Joe Root and Harry Brook • A14 Ramshot • A15 Heather Knight • A16 New Zealand (they beat South Africa in the final) • A17 Betty Wilson • A18 Jan Brattin • A19 Farhan Ahmed (brother of Rehan) for Notts v Surrey • A20 Phillip de Freitas



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