



THE SUSSEX MARTLETS

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A Safe Pair of Hands...

A WICKETKEEPING LEGEND

Wicketkeepers of old were reputed to have gnarled hands, possibly enhanced by the odd broken or misshaped finger or two. In the late 19th/early 20th century, South African 'keeper Barberton Halliwell put raw steak in his gloves to soften the blows his hands took keeping to fast bowlers. (He liked to stand up to the fast bowlers on the matting wickets being used then.) Rod Marsh experimented with this too, in an effort to protect his battered and bruised hands whilst keeping to Lillee & Thomson in the 1970s.

The only extra protection the hands featured above had, however, was a second pair of inners inside his gauntlets.

In a first-class career spanning 20 years from 1960-1980, 740 snicks found their way into these hands, 181 of which were Test match scalps.

As with Rod Marsh, these hands had to contend with the quickest bowlers of the era: Wes Hall, Charlie

Griffith, Wayne Daniel, Vanburn Holder, Andy Roberts, Colin Croft, Joel Garner and Malcolm Marshall.

The last time he had been at the ground was playing for the West Indies against the Duke of Norfolk's XI in 1963, a month shy of his twentieth birthday. He was at the crease with his captain, Frank Worrell, when the game was won (by 3 wickets). That summer in the Test series he went on to claim a then record 24 dismissals behind the stumps.

Today the owner of these hands is still going strong, at the age of 82, and we were thrilled to have him with us for our Club Day at Arundel Castle. At the end of the day, he presented the Wills Trophy to the Junior Martlets captain – although surely would have preferred it if it had been the captain of the senior side he was handing the trophy to.

His greatest achievement in Martlet eyes, however, has to be the fathering of a current Martlet stalwart...

DERYCK MURRAY



Deryck, Maureen & Michael Murray

Yes, Michael's Dad – and Mum – were our guests of honour at our Club Day at Arundel this year. And what great company they were. This article is based on conversations with him on the day, together with a recorded interview Michael did with his father (in which Michael sounded more and more West Indian the longer it went on!)

It turns out that Deryck has a number of Sussex connections. As a young cricketer with the West Indies' Under 16s and 19s, Deryck was coached by Sussex's Ian Thomson and then, for a short time, Jim Parks – as Deryck explained:

“While he was coaching us, there were some injuries in the England touring party and he had to go and fill in and play for England... he made a 100 in his debut Test match in Trinidad...” Years later, on the England tour of 1963, Deryck and Jim became opponents, “Coach on one side and his protégé on the other,” Deryck quipped.

Deryck had travelled as the reserve 'keeper, but just before the first Test match David Allen went down with measles and Deryck was selected. Watchers of the recent Ashes series will not be surprised to hear that the West Indies were rather better prepared for the 1963 series, playing ten first-class games before the first Test match. The highlight of the summer was the Lord's Test, famous for Dexter's cavalier 70 against Hall and Griffith. It was said that a Dexter drive through the covers off Hall was so fierce that it hit the boundary before Hall completed his follow-through. Deryck's view was that “though it may have been a little more aggressive than his normal batting... his normal batting was to pick the balls to hit.”

There were murmurings about Charlie Griffith's action (I remember Richard Langridge telling me once that his bouncer was particularly difficult, as it seemed to come

from behind Charlie's head. What was Deryck's view from behind the stumps?

“Griffith had a very open-chested approach to the wicket... and was almost leaning back when he delivered and very often he would pass the outside edge of the bat... but me keeping wicket, by the time the ball had got to me it was in line with leg stump, if not outside.” Deryck was clear that Griffith, who was within the 15 degrees tolerance allowed today anyway, didn't throw. Unlike Bumrah, who has a late release, Griffith had an early one.

Talk then returned to Sussex. As was customary in those days, the tour featured a match against the Duke of Norfolk's XI at Arundel. It was very well attended, as the still-surviving Pathe newsreel shows (see <https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/105642/>). Deryck recalled they were faced by “the semblance of an England team...” Indeed, it was star-studded: captained by Alec Bedser, it included Barrington, Dexter, Cowdrey and Graveney. The West Indies did not field their best team, omitting both Hall and Griffith, but it was strong enough to win by 3 wks. Although Deryck stumped top-scorer Barry Knight off Sobers and caught Alan Smith off Joey Solomon (who claimed 8 wks), he remembers the occasion more as an introduction “to the whole atmosphere of English cricket, not just English county cricket.” The flags, the tents and a full house at Arundel, to say nothing of the lunch and tea made a particular impression on the youngster.

(<https://www.espnricinfo.com/series/west-indies-tour-of-england-1963-61874/duke-of-norfolk-s-xi-vs-west-indians-tour-match-466243/full-scorecard>)

And finally to the present. What did he make of his return to the ground some 62 years later?

“It was nice to be on the bank and look around and see the social side of the game was still alive and well. I was also able to recognise the enthusiasm for the game among the players... different ages... some 16 and 17 year-olds pitting their enthusiasm and their athleticism against the older statesmen, who would have the guile and the knowledge, and to see how the two meshed.”

Deryck contrasted this with some of the international cricket he has seen where “a lot of overly serious people play and I can't understand how people fortunate enough to have to play cricket for a living and not enjoy it and not be happy that they are out in the field...”

Of the Club Day contest he noted “There was a lot of enjoyment and whilst there is obviously going to be banter on the field it was nothing contentious or confrontational. As long as the game is preserved and continues, we need to keep working on the youngsters and ensure the environment we are developing is one of enjoyment.”

Desmond Devitt

THE CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW



At last year's dinner, Paul Walker generously presented me with a copy of Mike Brearley's renowned book, *The Art of Captaincy*. Brearley, drawing on his considerable experience, reflects on the nature of leadership and remarks that "each appointment is to some extent a guess, every step in life has an element of uncertainty." His words serve as a valuable reminder that, regardless of how much we plan and prepare, unpredictability remains an inherent part of any role or decision we undertake.

While members may still be pondering whether their decision to support my nomination was the correct one, I can say with certainty that I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year as Chairman. I am deeply grateful for the kind words and steadfast support members have offered throughout the year.

As someone who continues to work, I may have stretched the definition of 'remote working' this summer. Arundel, Hurstpierpoint College, Marden, Worth, Horsham, Lancing and Fletching all served as makeshift offices, allowing me to embrace glorious surroundings, spend time with wonderful people and watch some truly fabulous cricket. It was well worth it.

The highlight of the season was undoubtedly the Club Day. Unlike the previous year, the weather was favourable, and we were delighted to welcome our Patron, Johnny Barclay, members of the 1965 Jubilee side, and, of course, Deryck Murray. As expected, Deryck was erudite, highly entertaining, and utterly charming. The cricket itself was a spectacle, with skippers Michael Murray and Oscar Harman orchestrating an impressively tight finish. The eleven Juniors who took part showcased their skills admirably and were a credit to Adam Lloyd, the dynamic head of our junior section.

Off the pitch, even though I inherited a club in excellent health, there are always opportunities to enhance and develop further. Pauline R. Kezer, the respected U.S. politician, once said, "Continuity gives us roots; change gives us branches, letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights." Striking the right balance between continuity and change is a central aim for me this year.

One key aspect of continuity is ensuring our tenure at Arundel remains secure. This work is ongoing, but thanks to our excellent relationship with Alistair Subbarow, James Rufey and the Arundel team, who understand the essence of the Sussex Martlets, I am confident that we will reach a mutually agreeable arrangement to secure our roots at the Castle.

Nonetheless, we must acknowledge the new commercial reality facing us, more of which later.

The second pillar of continuity is the remarkable group of people who form the golden thread binding the Club together. Our President, Nigel Russell, has been a constant source of support – often with a pint of Mr Harvey's finest in hand – and I am sincerely grateful for his gentle wisdom. Without the guidance of Mike Charman and Alan Newman, I would scarcely know what was happening. Their commitment to the Martlets is truly astonishing, as is the dedication of all our Committee members, to whom I extend my heartfelt thanks.

This year, I wish to pay special tribute to our very own 'Mr Cricket', Darryl Rebbetts. Having chaired the Cricket Subcommittee and managed our match managers with great effectiveness, Darryl will be taking a well-earned rest from his role – though not, I hasten to add, from playing. He has carried out his responsibilities with the same care and attention to detail as he brings to his cricket, always supportive and exemplary. He somehow managed to make it all seem effortless. I am pleased that George Read has agreed to take on this mantle, and I am confident members will give him their full support.

In George, alongside Dom Heater, we are fortunate to have a new generation of club administrators passionately committed to the Martlets and our values. Many clubs struggle to find younger volunteers, so I am especially grateful to them – and to any other younger members keen to get involved in club administration – for stepping forward. Their impact is already visible in a streamlined, social-media-driven approach to match selection, information, reports, and club promotion. This change is intended to help us "stretch and grow", attracting new players and retaining existing ones. For those of us who are more seasoned, rest assured – match reports will still be available via the club website.

Two other areas of "change" centre on our approach to women's cricket and cricket in state schools. In truth, this is more about evolution than revolution. Kirah has done an outstanding job this year, often against significant odds and we wish her well with her new venture, coaching in Hong Kong. While women and girls' cricket is expanding rapidly, the pool of high-quality players just below county standard, whom we aim to nurture, remains quite small. Kirah worked with a very young side, and we now look to bring in some more experienced players to provide additional ballast. This is a challenging task, but we are determined to succeed, ensuring that women and girls are an integral part of the Martlets family.

Your President and I share an ambition to tap into the often-overlooked talent of state school cricketers. Adam

Lloyd's Juniors have set – and met – a target of 50% of the squad having a state school background, aided by the success of the B.A.C.A. project. It was thrilling to see several young state school players involved in the adult side, who clearly understood what it means to be a Martlet, enjoyed playing for the Club, and recognised that our matches are more than just another game.

At the other end of the playing-age spectrum, Derek Horsham led the Over 40s with his customary flair, infectious enthusiasm and sparkle. Thank you, Degsy.

As mentioned earlier, a new commercial reality is emerging. The cost of playing at Arundel is set to rise, alongside increased expenses for other grounds, catering, and the valued men and women who umpire and score. We need to ensure that playing for the Sussex Martlets remains affordable, as there are already enough barriers to participating in cricket. To address these challenges, we will refine our approach, including seeking additional commercial and personal sponsorship, encouraging legacy donations, focusing on converting players into members, and exploring other means of generating income.

On that note, our sincere thanks go to our main sponsors, Hub Telecoms (through John Goodacre), to our club sponsors, Ritchie Phillips (through Stuart Ritchie), and, of course, to our ever-generous Vice-Presidents.

Change and growth will be part of 2026, but it is equally important to nurture our roots, which are evident in our club culture. How we play the game, our conduct on and off the pitch, the stories we share, our remembrance of legends past and present, and the rituals and ceremonies we uphold all contribute to what it means to be a Sussex Martlet. It is a very special club.

David Whelpton

THE PRESIDENT'S PIECE



As I write this piece, England have just been beaten at Sydney, ending a dismal tour that fell way short of expectations on so many levels, but more of the Ashes later. We have seen yet another gourmet year of cricket with a magnificent drawn 5-Test series against India, a win against Zimbabwe and now the Ashes. England were scheduled to play 70 days of all-formats international cricket in 2025, the equivalent of a day's play in every five throughout the whole year. The arguments about whether there is too much international cricket being organised by those seeking to fill the coffers, over keeping interest and competition vibrant and fresh will last long beyond bar closing time. As a comparison (of

sorts), England's footballers played 10 international matches in 2025 and the Rugby Union team played 12. Answers on a postcard, please!

Sussex consolidated their position in Div. 1 after a worrying mid-season wobble and, with the addition of Jack Leaning from Kent, Tom Price and Dom Goodman from Gloucestershire plus the return of Danny Briggs for this coming season, they will look for greater consistency and a chance to have a tilt at the title.

Closer to home, having brought such a sense of fun and enjoyment to all that he did both on and off the pitch, we bade a fond farewell to Paul Walker as a highly successful Chair of our Committee earlier in the year. Despite a move back to his roots in Yorkshire, he remains a committed Martlet and it was a great pleasure to meet up with him in Perth, resplendent in his Martlets' blazer. In his place as Chair, we welcomed David Whelpton who has brought a different dimension to the Club's leadership at a time when we must, necessarily, focus more on income generation to sustain our future and develop our external relationships. I'm sure David won't mind my saying that he's settled in remarkably quickly and is gripping his agenda with enthusiasm!

I have been reflecting more on a question David raised early in his tenure about what it means to be a Martlet and how therefore do we best capitalise on our strengths. Each of us will have our views on what makes the Club so special. I would guess that the first and obvious thought is that as a wandering club we offer a less demanding schedule for the individual, when set against the rigours of league cricket. The ability to pick one's own matches allows a greater freedom to enjoy good quality cricket in chosen company. This comes with a very occasional challenge of raising sides, but a system of effective match management is also a huge strength. It broadens the "ownership" of the Club and creates a pool of potential future Club officers. Our rich history and strong connection, particularly in the past, with the County Club are a testament to a strong sense of tradition on the recreational stage, properly tempered with an ethos to suit current social expectations.

We also have the privilege of a wonderful connection with Arundel and also of playing at some of the most picturesque grounds in the county. But for me, perhaps the Club's greatest strength is, through its ethos, the ability to create enduring friendships, and in my case for over 50 years. One only has to see the chatter on the WhatsApp groups to get a feel for that strong sense of camaraderie, badinage (and trivia!). David's challenge to us all in this respect is the right one to pose – how best do we use these enviable strengths to benefit recruiting and our lasting place in the recreational game. As members we all need to take

responsibility to help shape the Club's future and I know David would welcome thoughts and ideas.

The theme of enduring friendships was exemplified just before Christmas when your Editor and I set off 'Down Under', not only to watch the Perth Test but, amongst other things, to catch up with Martlet legend, Adrian Ford in Tasmania. The Perth Test is now history of course – the most expensive two days of cricket for so many travelling fans, but sadly the lessons of that debacle in terms of maturity and respect for the format appear not to have been consistently learned during the series by a frustratingly talented but ultimately brainless England side. Most would now agree that the so-called "bazball" culture is in need of a significant overhaul. But on a much happier note, Desmond and I can report that Adrian and Liz Ford were in strikingly good form in their new Hobart home and they would love to see any Martlets making the trip.

The Club Day at Arundel held last August is reported elsewhere but what a pleasure it was for us to welcome the renowned Deryck Murray and his delightful wife Maureen, Mike's Mum and Dad of course! It was a revelation talking to him about the extraordinary list of famous West Indian quicks he kept to and yet his hands still look in reasonable shape! We shared experiences of working in the U.N. in New York, often fraught with diplomatic risk but not as serious perhaps, he recalled, as being flown to a charity match in Lancashire by Ted Dexter with Graeme Pollock also on board, when the plane suffered engine failure and had to make a forced landing in a kale field, thankfully without injury except apparently to Lord Ted's pride!

As ever, I hope to see many of you round the boundary in 2026; once again our exceptional fixtures secretary has concocted a wonderful menu for our delight. Talking of the engine room, there are an additional two individuals that need mention. Robert Forster, who hands over the reins of the Golfing Society in March to Greg West, has been a tower of strength in that role and has painstakingly taken on the task of updating the Society's history – it's a very informative and interesting read that can be found on the website. We thank Robert for his successful time with the Society and wish him well in the future as we also wish the very best of luck to Greg in this important post.

Once again, we owe a huge debt of thanks to Mike Charman who does so much more for the Club than simply his "moneybags" role and who, together with Alan Newman, form the lynchpin of efficiency and stability behind the scenes. Every year I say how fortunate we are to have such resolute individuals looking after our collective backs and I am happy to repeat it without apology!

Nigel Russell

THE TREASURER: WHEN WILL IT END?



Yes, it is still me filling the role of Treasurer as, for a number of reasons, my search for a successor has been on hold for this last year. As I inferred last time, it would not be in the Club's interests for more than one officer to retire at the same time and to my knowledge my fellow directors will see out the current term at least. However, I shall shortly be communicating with all members more details of what the role entails as the first part of finding a replacement hopefully to understudy me for the current year.

I normally wait to write this missive until I have submitted the draft year-end accounts to our auditors and this year is no different for the 2025 accounts. Provided no major changes are suggested, the accounts will again show a deficit on the general fund as in 2024, reflecting the ever-increasing cost of staging cricket. Long-term, this is not sustainable and as it is unrealistic to raise the costs to cricket members to cover all the amounts required, more effort is being put into raising funds from other sources, including more corporate sponsorship. However, the general fund reserves are at £16k, which is well in excess of the suggested £10k minimum figure agreed a few years ago. The Harrison/VP Fund is standing at a very healthy £14.8k, up from £6.3k, following the receipt upfront of the 3-year sponsorship (at £3k p.a.) of £9k from the sponsor of the women's section. The £1000 due to be paid to be a patron of the Sussex Cricket Foundation for 2025 was looking doubtful with last year's accounts results, but a very generous and anonymous supporter stepped in to enable the continuation of this worthwhile support of recreational cricket in Sussex and has very kindly agreed to do so for two further years.

I would again ask all Members to notify me on treasurer@sussexmartlets.co.uk of any changes in your contact details, including both email and postal addresses, so we can continue to inform you of Martlets matters. Most of our paying members now do so by direct debit, which is easier to administer than standing orders or cash, and if you are not yet using this method please consider doing so. You are covered by the DD guarantee for any incorrect request for payment and will receive a discount on your subscription compared to other methods of payment.

In conclusion, I hope these are my penultimate musings as Treasurer, but I would implore you, if you can, to make my leaving the role even better by donating to the Club's finances. 2026 is the last year of having to account for accumulated funds from the discontinued life members' payments – if you took advantage of this scheme many years ago, or if you are an Honorary Member, you may wish to join our other generous donors.

Mike Charman

REVIEW OF THE SEASON

MARTLET MEN'S XI



Into the face of the young captain who sat on the steps of the pavilion at Sheffield Park there had crept a look of furtive shame; the shifty, hangdog look which announces that George Read has won the toss and made a dreadful decision. If you're wondering why I'm starting with the season's closing match in September, and indeed why I am choosing to point my ire at George Read (splendid cricketer now stepping up manfully on the Cricket Committee to succeed the Stakhanovite Darryl Rebbetts), then all will soon be revealed.

If ever a season deserved the label 'mixed blessings', 2025 was it. We played 29 fixtures, winning 11, losing 13, and drawing 5 – a record that sounds middling until you remember how many of those days contained either (a) something daft, (b) something brilliant, or (c) both, often in the same over.

April: curtain-raiser at Arundel and an early lesson in humility. We began where one ought to begin: at Arundel Castle, in a fixture against Ardingly College that was competitive, good-spirited and tense enough to feel like real cricket rather than seasonal aerobics.

I managed just about to stifle my appalled shock that Jordan Rollings was putting the Ardingly squad through their paces on the immaculate Arundel turf to the accompaniment of a boom box playing some ghastly Ibiza thumping. If you really insist on warming up at Arundel (a touch *infra dig* in itself), surely it would be better done to the sound of the song thrush in the chestnut tree, or, if you must, then I think some early-



Rob Burgh, Hector Loughton, Jordon Shaw, Nick Peters, Tayyab Mahmood, Sam Carter – George Read, Ben Whelpton, Darryl Rebbetts, Will Burch

period Bach the right complement (Sir András Schiff at the piano; other interpreters are available).

Stuart Ritchie captained, his son captained the opposition and the season's second ball did what second balls sometimes do – kissed the top of off and reminded everyone that winter nets are not, in fact, cricket. Jens Richardson was not to be distracted by the musical terrorism, the master batsman purring to 111. A declaration at 199 for 5 set up a chase which, after some disciplined bowling (Heater (D), Hunter, Trotter and Waylett) and sharp catching (am I allowed to mention three grabs in the cordon from yours truly?), ended with Ardingly nine down and their last pair clinging on. A draw, and a proper one to boot.

Early May: Worth, wind and lots of runs. The season's first emphatic result arrived at Worth School, in weather that made 'smart shorts' feel like a minor act of self-harm. George Read (match managing with the zeal of the returning exile) assembled an XI and later proceeded to write the sort of match report that should probably come with page numbers. The important bit: we made 250-5 declared, with Hugo Gillespie reaching 103*, and the hosts were dismissed for 135, giving us a win by 115 runs. This was also, for the record, the match in which I took the catch of my life. But George Read, in that same match report and actually the beneficiary bowler, wrote a line that may well stand as the biggest injustice since the imprisonment of Alfred Dreyfus. He penned a phrase that questioned whether the ball had in fact carried. Not only poorly expressed, ungrateful and mean-spirited, but also words that create epistemological problems of such magnitude as to lay upon the logical and semantic resources of the English language a greater burden than they can reasonably be expected to bear (copyright Sir Humphrey Appleby).

George, my libel writ is winging its way to you and I have Paul Walker on retainer (very reasonable rates providing that you sign a covenant to let him bowl 'one more over' even after he's been lumped for 16...).

Mid-May: narrow losses, decent cricket and the 'banter-bus' era. If Worth was a romp, the next stretch was a reminder that the Martlets are perfectly capable of playing well and losing anyway. We went down to Jordy's charges at Aldridge Cricket Academy by one wicket in a game where 247 (the ever-excellent Tom Naish one blow away from the ton) still wasn't quite enough.

Then came Eton College and the Ramblers, where a message about a 'banter-bus' briefly made everyone worry that the club WhatsApp had been hacked. We made 207 all out (bravo Lamb and Shaw), bowled well enough to give ourselves hope (Michael Murray

taking 4-31) and still lost by three wickets to an unbeaten hundred that was, not at all grudgingly, a very fine knock. There was exemplary puppet-mastering from the 'off-games' Ashers (new hip), terrific hospitality, an excellent post-match session in the concrete pub 'garden' in Datchet and the sobering realisation that even on a good day we remain only one Rhys-Williams knock away from defeat.

May's recovery: Seaford and a proper escape. If you want a single match that captures Martlets cricket – the wobble, the recovery, the late partnership, the general air of 'this should not be so close' – it's the win at Seaford College. We were set 207 and, then engineered a chase that was comfortable until it turned ridiculous. At 162-8, needing 45 with two wickets left, the odds were on the school. Dominic Heater and Harry Wingfield-Digby (those wickets at Lord's have steeled his nerves) had other ideas, taking us home with overs to spare and saving not just the points but a good deal of face. The prospect of another generation of Wingfield-Digbys (what's the collective noun, I wonder?) in Martlets colours will bring joy to all hearts.

June: a wobble, then a thriller on the 'Sunshine Coast'. June contained both a strong win at Eastbourne C.C. and a run of defeats (Goodwood, I Zingari, Brighton College) that felt harsher than the cricket deserved.

As ever a delight to be at Goodwood. This time played as an overs game, and we timed our arrival well, as the park sat unsullied by all the infrastructure that comes with the Festival of Speed (mustn't sound too disapproving – I know well that Stuart Ritchie is grateful for a local race circuit to give his stable of Aston Martins a proper gallop every so often).

Peter Lamb, always in the runs at Goodwood, rifled some characteristic straight drives, and looked set fair for something special. His father arrived brandishing the long lens, relishing the prospect of adding some money shots to the Lamb family album. However, distracted by some umpiring issues, Lamb perished, returned to the pavilion and proceeded to chunter about how 'uncalled wides' had ruined his focus. We all left him to it after about five minutes, but it made not a whit of difference

as on and on Lamb complained to a now-empty dressing room, eventually eliding into some sort of background white-noise that rumbled unabated till tea.

We set a competitive 177-9, and in the field it was touch and go until the end. Murray bowled at the key man... up went the ball to cow corner. It was one of those horrible, swirling and – everyone knew – crucial catches (think the Richie Benaud line when Mike Whitney dropped Botham in 1981 – 'what a steeper...what a terrible moment...'). Sorry Archie Durrant...

I've written in the past about how Michael Murray, when something goes amiss, like a rejected lbw shout, reacts only with a twitch of the eyebrow (the left eyebrow of course, so that the umpire does not see). On this occasion, however, he let out a howl of rage, like a mastodon calling to his mate across the primeval swamp (thank you P.G. Wodehouse for my second stolen line of the day).

The month was rescued, spectacularly, at Eastbourne College. The Australians at the top put on 96, we then collapsed from 96 without loss to 128 for 6 in what can only be described as a pre-lunch hallucination; then Jared Humphreys and Jack Trubshaw stitched together a partnership that dragged us to 238 for 9 declared. Eastbourne replied briskly, reached 153 for 1 and looked comfortable. Then the game did what cricket does when it's trying to impress someone: it turned square, wickets fell in clumps and the hosts ended up all out for 234. A win by four runs, chapeau to Heater (D) and Whelpton, and a match that proved, once again, that you're allowed to be dead and buried provided you have a couple of spinners and a quantum of stubbornness.

July: high scores, hard lessons and one match for the scrapbook. We followed with two notable wins: a big-scoring day against the Hampshire Hogs and a tight one against the Crawley Cricket Hub, the latter won by seven runs in 30-over match.

Then came one of the matches of the summer. West Chiltington away. After early losses, Freddie Ferro and



Goodwood – glorious as ever...

Ed Middleton produced a partnership of real quality, rebuilding and then accelerating to give us a competitive 258. In reply, the hosts threatened to take it away – and then Hamish Kidd produced the spell of the season: 7-54, including a decisive late burst that turned a looming defeat into a win by 17 runs. Strong recommend: Willy Boulter's match report on the website – including a rare verbing of the word 'victuals' (Om/Ashers, is that allowed?). If you like that, you'll love his splendid book on the Stragglers of Asia (although weirdly the book contains no description of my ton against them for the Martlets back in the day – most neutral critics would deem that worthy of a short chapter at the very least).

The rest of July, and on to Lancing College. Absent Jens Richardson (for once taking a year off, so no banked century this year) we suffered a top-order implosion against the Rovers, leaving us 5 down well before lunch and Ben Whelpton and the skipper trying to patch up a sinking vessel. Whelpton played a self-denying hand until the moment when, having hauled ourselves to respectability, I gave him the nod to unleash hell. Six fours off the next over followed, each struck harder than the previous. In the field Whelpton combined well with spin buddies Joe Waylett and Tom Whyte (with Phil Savage sprite-like behind the stumps) to keep the Rover wickets tumbling.

The Chairman, Whelpton Snr, was bullied into his whites and ensured we were fully staffed in the field. Whyte interspersed his barbed left-armers with waspish commentary on geopolitics, reprehensible batting techniques, modern literature and the correct quantity of golden syrup in a teatime flapjack. Tom Whyte as a regular this season is akin to having a smart-talking Radio 4 panel show in the corner of every changing room.

The Rovers hung on for a draw nine down. Whyte continued to transmit on the balcony as the sun dipped behind the chapel, the shadows lengthened and the Rovers kindly kept us topped up with alcopops (they are a young crew these days) and cider.

We concluded July with a narrowish loss to the Yellowhammers at Tonbridge School and a comfortable win over Frogs at Hurst (well batted Ritchie Jnr).

August: feast, famine and a game that refused to finish. August began with a bruising at the 'Cradle of Cricket' against the Broadhalfpenny Brigands – the sort of day where the opposition summoned the shades of Lumpy Stevens and Silver Billy from their golden past, and you suddenly find yourself hoping for a dignified draw while your scorer's paper dissolves in drizzle.

To Worth Abbey against the charming Emeriti. Opinions differed as to whether the pitch that day resembled more a late-period Jackson Pollock or a wedding cake

abandoned in the rain. The toss proved crucial, and though the ever-excellent Ferro and Tayyab Mahmood (a fantastic addition to the playing ranks) made the best of it, and skipper Darryl ran through all his resources in the field, but we couldn't avoid a four-wicket loss.

And then one of the season's best games: Old Hurstjohnians at Hurst. We declared at 298-8, with Read's 90, Darryl Rebbetts's 102*, and Jordan Shaw's glittering 50 giving us a total that should have been enough. The hosts were then 133 for 8 (Whelpton causing his usual havoc, including dismissing M. Semmence for a vanishingly rare low score at this ground), at which point the game was essentially won.

I'm sorry George Read... but I must... Except it wasn't won, because OHJ number ten (Batchelor) produced a counter-attacking century for the ages and our own George Read switched into what might charitably be described as a post-modern fielding performance, shelling catch after catch after catch. Might the cricketing gods have been doling out retribution after the questioning of someone else's catch of the season?

The late-summer run-in did at least include some proper wins: a big one over Ditchling, a chase at Horsham and then one of the season's happiest days at Buxted Park, masterminded by Nick Beechey – sunshine, excellent beer, paella, churros and nearly 550 runs in the day. Buxted declared on 268 for 7 and we chased it down at 269 for 5, with an innings from Tom van der Jeugd that was basically a hitting clinic.

Ben Davies simply refused to let the weather defeat the cricket, and marshalled super-soppers and wind machines to rescue a new fixture at his club Horley – a splendid day with the hosts deserved victors. Let's go back there in 2026, please.

September: the traditional hungover finale. We ended, as tradition dictates, at Sheffield Park against the Armadillos. The weather was lovely; the Martlets' condition was not. We were bundled out for 89 and the chase completed in a bare 13 overs. There are defeats that sting; this one mostly made people laugh in a slightly haunted fashion. The important thing is that it's now on the calendar as something to avenge. Normally George Read – the soi-disant 'Tolstoy of match reports' – treats us to a proper novella; this time brevity was the soul of wit.

Andy Zaltzman has been known to remark that statistics are like a ventriloquist's dummy: stick your hand far enough inside them and they can be made to say anything. However, in terms of all-round performance the tale of the tape in 2025 leaves little room for doubt: take a bow Master Whelpton.

Sam Carter

BATTING AVERAGES

(Qualification: 4 innings)

	Innings.	N.Os.	H.S.	Runs	Average
D. Rebbetts	5	3	102*	225	112.5
F. Ferro	9	3	63	367	61.17
B. Whelpton	13	1	96	569	47.42
J. Shaw	7	0	80	287	41.0
S. Carter	14	0	72	237	16.93
T. Mahmood	16	1	64	232	15.47

Best performances: Sam Geyer (155), Sam Geyer (119), Jens Richardson (111), Hugo Gillespie (103*), Darryl Rebbetts (102*)

BOWLING AVERAGES

(Qualification: 4 matches)

	Overs	Maidens	Runs	Wkts	Average
B. Whelpton	114.3	19	436	30	14.53
M. Murray	58.2	8	226	14	16.14
T. Whyte	51	3	193	11	17.55
R. Burgh	47.4	3	244	10	24.4

Best performances: Hamish Kidd (7-54), Jordan Shaw (5-44), Tom Whyte (5-72), Ben Whelpton (4-12), Ryan Trotter (4-28).

OVER-40s CRICKET

Played 9, Won 4, Lost 4, Drawn 1.



With yet another joyous and fun-fuelled season behind us, our review focuses on Willy Boulter's tour report and Steve Lovell's outstanding match report of the Seniors debut fixture at Arundel against the touring Singapore C.C.

Eight further completed fixtures garnered wins against Worcester Nomads, Harry Baldwin Occasionals and Streat & Westmeston. We were runners-up to Old Malvernians, Lucky Stars Australian Transplant XI, The Forty Club, and Fletching C.C. during their fabulous cricket week! Honours were shared at Petworth C.C.



Paul Walker, Willy Boulter, Phil Savage, Derek Horsham & Nick Stevenson (umpire) prostrate themselves at the feet of the victorious Sussex Sharks

As ever, match reports and stats can be viewed through the Sussex Martlets website and Play-Cricket.

I can never be more grateful of the support offered by all the players, officials, and supporters who go towards making the Sussex Martlets Over 40s a joy to be a part of.

Derek Horsham

MARTLET VETS TO WORCESTER



For the fourth year in succession, the brains trust of the Martlets Over-40s section had achieved a pre-season, bank holiday tour itinerary, starting with watching the Sussex Women at New Road, Worcester on the Saturday. Alan Newman had done his usual great job with the fixtures, and a small hard core assembled on

the first day to watch Sussex overcome the Worcester ladies, largely thanks to a brilliant century by Mollie Adams. Pictures were taken with the victorious team, once the Martlets had been admonished for stepping on the hallowed turf which, even after the game, seemed as protected as a minefield.

A long session in the garden of a hotel just along the opposite bank of the River Severn ensued, a jug or two of Pimm's de rigueur, before the team repaired to a mix of accommodation. The AirBnB was very central and comfortable (thank you Degsy), the only issue being it "slept 8" on only 4 beds! One of our original number decamped on that basis... Meanwhile Degsy manfully slept on the floor!

We headed out to Malvern College Sunday morning and met up with the Old Malvernians' social team, tentatively called the Griffins, a rather younger profile, but then we enjoy a challenge. "The Senior" is a beautiful ground, although narrow boundaries mean

that 6s are counted as 4s; this did not constrain their openers much, both scoring 50s and retiring. Phil Savage was the star with a stumping and a catch, keeping to a "mixed" bowling display. Johnny Wills, all the way from Jersey, was one of the better bowlers, whilst Paul Lack was, as ever, unlucky; Jeremy McGahan was the most economical, except for Degsy, who bowled 7 overs for 26 (7 wides!), as the Malvernians got to 205-6 off their 34.4 overs. The highlight was a hat trick by our very talented ringer, Ian Jones, right at the end of the innings!

Batting, Jones, opening, was expected to contribute much but hit his second ball straight to fine leg. Other early season shots followed, and the Martlets never quite looked the part, except when Arran Aris was in the middle. With 44 off 23 balls, including 7 fours and a six, it seemed as if he might take the game away, but when he was out at 106-4 our relatively thin batting line-up was under immediate pressure. Dan Jackson had scored a solid 33, David Mann a sprightly 19, and Phil Savage hit 20 quickly, but we were always losing wickets and the Malvernians emerged deserved winners by 19 runs, as Martlets closed at 186. Tom Whyte ended on 15* after three lusty boundaries, returning some of the treatment his bowling had been given!

A happy time followed in the very convivial Morgan pub, which made one member particularly pleased, and the team relaxed over an Italian meal back in Worcester, followed by various hostelries, which did not quite hit the heights of Bristol last year!

For the third day of our preseason tour, the Over 40s (notionally, most are the wrong side of 50 or even 60!) travelled out from the city to the beautiful Worcester Nomads Cricket Club, a strong member of the local league scene. Here we had a fulsome welcome from the opposition for the day, the Gentlemen of Worcestershire, a 35-over game in prospect in order to accommodate an earlyish start for those motoring back to Sussex later.

Losing the toss, the team took the field, bolstered by some additional members, young Oscar Mann, Luke Jerram and Malcolm Burt, who were all to play key roles in a five-wicket victory – which deserves advertising early in this piece! As our leader Degsy has often said, the Over 40s do not always enjoy an easy ride, results-wise!

Degsy himself opened the bowling feeling rather stiff and not 100% fit, it has to be said, but he had good support from Tom Whyte at the other end – Tom was the most successful of the Martlet bowlers with only 23 runs conceded off his 7 overs and two wickets taken. Our man from Jersey, Johnny Wills, also bowled economically at just 5 an over without luck – the others we should perhaps skate over, maybe just mentioning Walks who bought his wicket at 10 an over! For the

opposition, Joshua Hawes made 51 and sportingly retired, while Chris Ellison marshalled the later innings with 43* : Phil Savage found a devastating throw to run a batter out, whilst David Mann stumped and caught one to be level with Phil's keeping the day before.

The Gents accumulated efficiently at 6+ runs an over and the total of 224-6 looked challenging as Arran Aris and Malcolm Burt went out to bat. An opening partnership of 68 got us off to a good start, if a little slowly at 4 an over, but then Arran, joined by Jerram, went into overdrive, scoring at nearly 10 an over for the next ten overs: Jerram was out for 32 off 22 balls and Oscar Mann came in to contribute 33 runs off 27. Arran was third out for a devastating 89 from 88 balls, with 11 fours and four sixes, an excellent innings which left Martlets 65 to make off 10 overs – not quite straightforward, but most of the way there!

Fortunately, the Mann father and son combination was very much on song and added 39 at a run a ball, before Savage (briefly) and Johnny Wills helped Mann Senior see us home, with a very measured innings of 25* off 21 balls. Experience counts. It was a thoroughly satisfactory end to the tour and a deserved reward for Arran's explosive batting in the first two thirds of the innings!

Thanks as ever to Alan Newman, Degsy, Paul Walker and others who contributed to the planning of the trip – special mention for our new tourist and umpire from Richmond, Nick Stevenson, who added a lot of erudition, umpiring nous and colour to the tour; and also Nigel Beesley, who scored both games immaculately as ever – and also bought a copy of my book (shameless plug – "One Arm Bowls A Little" – the history of the Stragglers of Asia!). Everyone had a super time as usual and, for those who have not been on this early-season adventure before, I thoroughly recommend it next year, destination as yet unknown!

Willy Boulter

OVER 40s AT ARUNDEL CASTLE

Surely there can be no lovelier cricket ground in this green and pleasant land than that of Arundel Castle; the 3½ acre amphitheatre built in 1895 by the 15th Duke of Norfolk. Of course, the Sussex Martlets have the honour of regarding Arundel Castle as their spiritual home; but never before had the Martlets Over 40s hosted a match there. Until, that is, one gloriously sunny July day in 2025.

The Martlets' openers Jules Hunt and James Dahl wasted no time in getting the scoreboard ticking over, the latter hoping to take inspiration from his last innings at the ground when he'd scored a century. Clearly feeling comfortable, boundaries flowed freely for Dahl.

He'd hit 11 fours before his was the first wicket to fall, leg-before to Kalpathy for 56. Buoyed by the breakthrough, Kalpathy claimed his brace of openers' wickets later that same over, courtesy of a fabulous catch in the deep by Shah. With Hunt departing for a well-crafted 35, the Martlets were 100-2 as St. Nicholas' church bell also struck two in the distance.

With on-field temperatures now akin to the Padang, Singapore continued resolutely, setting boundary-riding fields with little success, although Kakulapati did trap Willy Boulter with the first ball of his spell. Thereafter he was put to the sword by Mike Nolan and Will Howard.

Nolan had progressed to the semi-finals of the Wife-Carrying World Championships in Finland the previous weekend. *[What? This deserves an article of its own. See below. Ed.]* Yet he showed no signs of tiredness as he bludgeoned the Singapore attack to all parts, hitting three sixes before retiring on 50* from just 37 balls. Howard also retired in the same over with an unbeaten half-century, having hit four fours and two sixes. For the final twenty minutes, Steve Lovell and Johnny Wills scampered doggedly in the heat, drawing the Martlets innings to a close on a sporting declaration of 249-5.

Dan James, the youngest Martlet at a spritely 42 years, opened the bowling attack from the Castle End. His hostile pace generated bounce from a hitherto flat track and stifled the S.C.C. openers' scoring opportunities. But it was Will Wingfield-Digby who made the first breakthrough, bowling Wright early on.

Singapore's number three, Maheshwari, then settled in, conserving his energy in the sapping heat, effectively dispatching any loose deliveries from Chakravarty through the lightning quick outfield. Skipper Walker had slipped off the field for an executive power nap, but returned, refreshed, to bring himself into the attack with immediate success. It was he who bowled Maheshwari for 43 to end the latter's hour-long resistance.

Meanwhile at the other end, Tom Whyte's variation in flight and pace was ripping through the tourists' middle order, claiming three wickets in as many overs. By drinks, the home side had reduced Singapore to 75 for 6, and appeared in complete control...

And so to the final over of the match. Jules Hunt was handed the ball to eke out the last wicket. As he circled in from the Castle End the pavilion clock clicked past 6.28pm and all eyes focussed on tail-ender Lenard to bat out for the draw. 1st ball – defended. 2nd ball – just wide outside the off stump. Hunt recalibrated. The 3rd delivery was pitch perfect; Lenard played fractionally down the wrong line and was bowled. Before the bails hit the turf the Martlets were celebrating jubilantly; victory by 131 runs, with three balls to spare.

Steve Lovell

MARTLETS WOMEN'S XI



The Sussex Martlets Women enjoyed a season filled with four competitive cricket games, emerging talent, and some memorable performances. Although results were mixed, the campaign showcased both resilience and progress within a developing squad.

A Strong Start – Victory at Hurstpierpoint (16 June)

The Martlets opened their season in excellent fashion with a 51-run win against Hurstpierpoint College. A disciplined team performance set the tone early, with solid batting foundations and tight bowling ensuring a confident first victory. The fixture highlighted the group's potential when executing both skills cohesively. Alice Noakes played a standout innings, scoring 51 off 38 balls and taking 2-8 off two.

A Tough Contest Against M.C.C. (2 July)

Momentum proved difficult to maintain against a seasoned M.C.C. side back at Hurstpierpoint College. Despite periods of promise, the Martlets fell 39 runs short, unable to chase down a well-constructed M.C.C. total. The match provided valuable learning opportunities, particularly around building partnerships and closing out run chases. Always a good game, the Martlets put up a good fight with every player chipping in with the bat and ball.

International Challenge at Petworth Park (16 July)

One of the standout fixtures of the summer came against Hong Kong C.C. at the picturesque Petworth Park. In a tight and exciting contest, the Martlets were beaten by 5 wickets, though not without notable individual contributions. The visitors chased down our 155 target on the last ball of the game, making it a thrilling watch for everyone! A big thank you to Petworth for hosting and providing the women's tea of the season, with a fantastic display of food!

Season Finale at Horsham (19 August)

The campaign concluded against the Free Foresters at Horsham C.C., where the Martlets suffered an 8-wicket defeat. Despite a challenging end, there were positive signs in the team's approach and periods of disciplined play. With a very young team, the Martlets demonstrated brilliant resilience, determination and competitiveness.

While the team may not have been as successful as they would like, there were many excellent performances. All games were played in the Martlet way, with all players demonstrating a great spirit for the game. The women's section certainly has a bright future.

Kirah Ambroziak

MARTLETS DOWN UNDER

The Sussex Martlets really did England proud over the winter – a pity it was not reciprocated!

First on the scene in mid-October was **Neil Billing**, intent on seeing something of England's build-up to the Ashes. Unfortunately, the T20 v. the Kiwis in Christchurch ended up being abandoned (a result England would have happily settled for in some of the matches that followed).



"At least there was other entertainment, as this bunch of Kiwi fans amused the crowd dressed as frogs, and they leap-frogged over each other, particularly at the fall of an England wicket! Amazing to watch an international where the majority of fans just sit on the grass!"

By early December the Barmies et al were assembling for the main act, with Martlets' President, **Nigel Russell** to the fore, pen at the ready:

1ST TEST: PERTH



"Even if you were a Martian on the flight down to Perth from Singapore, you could not have avoided the deep sense that a major sporting series was about to start. Passengers resplendent in their England hats and shirts supplying constant chatter about cricket and how this time round we had a real chance on knocking over an ageing and weakened Aussie side. On the plane the buzz of excitement and anticipation was palpable..."

Your President (having been suitably enthroned) and Editor found themselves being ambushed on arrival by various Sussex "ne'er-do-wells" promising an antidote to jet-lag, which turned out to be four hours in an Irish pub. It has to be said that England's preparation was no better. Unlike the Indians the previous summer, who spent 8 days in preparation at the 'WACA', England had taken two days to prepare, on a feather bed at Lilac Hill against their own 2nd XI.

"We reached the relatively new amphitheatre, capable of seating 60,000 and took up our seats right behind the bowler's arm. Time to fasten seat belts... Crawley nicks off in the first over for 0, no surprise there, Root does the same, but in the 8th, Pope makes a nervy 46, Brook (who is keen to audition for "Strictly") it appears by his constant dancing down the wicket) makes a valuable 52 nevertheless. England all out 172. Well, as the adage goes, it takes two innings to judge a strip. England similarly bowl pretty full and get due reward. Carey top scores with 26, Stokes gets a 5-for and the Aussies are 123-9 at the end of Day 1..."

Enough painful memories – cut to the presidential summary! "A fellow spectator aptly commented that he had just witnessed two T20 games. Where was the discipline and respect for the format? If this was to be the mindset for the rest of the series, what chance of winning the Ashes? As we wandered round the city in the next couple of days, it was littered with shell-shocked and disconsolate English fans looking for entertainment. Desmond and I took off to Fremantle where we visited the original convict prison..." where we enquired whether there was any room for 11 more offenders from England, with their equally culpable warder.

Paul Walker picked up an interesting Aussie observation: "On the way out of the ground at the conclusion of Day 2 I overheard a couple of Aussies. One said to his mate 'I knew the Poms were gonna give up... but I thought it would be after Adelaide rather than on Day 2 of the 1st Test!'"

2ND TEST: BRISBANE

"It turns out that Brisbane is quite a long way to go for one game of cricket," wrote **Phil Savage**. "The jet lag left me as I boarded my flight home and then came back for another week when I touched down.

Mr Walker joined me a matter of minutes after I got to Brizzie and we were lucky enough to have a couple of days exploring before the game. A day on the river and a day on the beach later we were baking in our blazers at the top of the Gabba.



Paul Walker & Phil Savage

Easy to forget in the doom of it all, but that was a rare good day with Joe Root's ton and then Sussex all-rounder Jofra smashing it to all parts. It was also a privilege to watch Alex Carey standing up to Nesar and Boland and his catch of a ball that entered sub orbit running back over his shoulder, with Labuschagne seemingly climbing on him for the entire journey for no discernible reason."

Another defeat, but **Andrew Hartridge** was consoled, "reminiscing of captaining a Martlet team including Jofra to an infamous loss against Ardingly College many moons ago! The obligatory post-match trip to Noosa was indulged in – luckily the *Daily Mail* snappers weren't interested in my antics!"

3RD TEST: ADELAIDE

Over to **Paul Walker**:

"Harry had kindly picked me up at the airport and it was great to see him. He even invited me out for drinks on night 2! We were lucky enough to bump into both Matt Ritchie and Mike Atherton.



Mike Atherton, Harry Walker, Matt Ritchie & Paul Walker

[Adelaide is] a beautiful city and the loveliest of Test cricket grounds (a brief, but warm walk from my digs). A lovely local solicitor, her sport-obsessed husband and an adorable black labrador called Robson were my generous hosts here. A visit to the scoreboard, with my landlady Sarah, the day before the Test, was made all the more memorable by a brief encounter with Pat



Pat Cummins with Paul Walker

Cummins. His wife hails from Harrogate – of all places (my new home). Sadly for England, he was steely eyed, incredibly fit and on a mission to make it 3-0. Guess what? That's exactly what happened.

Despite the defeat, it was wonderful to spend time with fellow Martlets – the irrepressible Steve "the Human Ashes" Lovell, Neil Billing, Laurie Cadle, Stuart Ritchie, Rob Burgh..."



'Little Urn' Lovell

Steve Lovell certainly did his Barmy bit to amuse/wind up the host nation with his outfit: *Sorry Aussies – the REAL urn must FOREVER stay at Lord's (You've got Previous).*

4TH TEST: MELBOURNE

The arrival of **Charlie Hartridge** saw a change in English fortunes (albeit temporary).

"The M.C.G. is a magnificent place to watch cricket; ease of access is a good start. Approaching the stadium the stands look big enough from the outside, but only from inside is the true scale of the arena revealed, as the playing area is sunk to accommodate the lower seating level. Our seats at mid off/long leg are towards the top of the first level, very similar to the lower Warner Stand at Lord's, an excellent view.

The Aussie openers start positively with few alarms until the 7th over when the carnage begins, possibly when the lacquer has come off the ball and it started to grip in the over-grassed surface. Four down at lunch was a decent first session for England, but there were murmurs from the pundits that it should have been even better. No worries, we happily settled for 152 all out.

Mitchell Starc bowls the first over from the Members End with 94,000 in the house. What an atmosphere, how intimidating it must be to walk out to bat! Inside five overs England's innings is in tatters. Brook plays the only way he knows, which was probably the right way in the conditions, to top score and a few lusty blows from Atkinson took England to 110 all out.



*A brace of Hartridge
(Andrew & Charlie)*

Day two is brighter and a little warmer and our seats today are high up but again at mid off/long leg. The pitch continued to play tricks and was difficult to bat on, as Carse, Tongue and Stokes kept going with great heart in the absence of the injured Atkinson. Helped by several rather casual strokes, Australia were rushed out cheaply again leaving England 175 to win, which would be the highest score of the match.

We had it as a 50:50 match but thankfully Crawley and Duckett started positively putting on 51 and we were on our way to a famous victory inside two days."

5TH TEST: SYDNEY

The final Test is covered by the Martlets' very own E.W. Swanton, **Stuart Ritchie**:

"In a deft touch following the conclusion of the fifth Ashes Test, Cricket Australia invited spectators onto the playing surface to join the teams for the awards ceremony at the Sydney Cricket Ground. In unique scenes, and very respectfully, spectators flooded onto the outfield surrounding the square and in front of the Men's and Ladies' Pavilions. Spectators and players

mingled together. The awards were presented. The Ashes, in that moment, belonged to everyone.



Matt and Stuart Ritchie

That said, the disappointment of this edition of the Ashes was manifest – joining the tour at Adelaide and five days later, the game was up. Many will have put their life savings into touring with England with scant return. Winning a Test down under at the M.C.G. was welcome relief, even if in two days. The rest should go down as one of the biggest regrets in cricket history, and certainly the England players deserve to

be haunted by their collective failure, with Bethell and Tongue the only ones deserving of credit for emerging as Test cricketers.

In other thoughts, there was no sense that Brook contributed to the leadership of this squad, further evidenced by his hushed-up disciplinary from the preceding O.D.I. series in New Zealand. Rather, it seemed all was left to talisman Stokes, certainly on the field. In contrast, the strength of the relationship between Stokes and Root at the conclusion of the Boxing Day Test was a joy to see, with their delight at winning an Ashes Test in Australia. And for Root to score two centuries on Australian soil was affirmation, if it was ever needed, that he stands tall with the greatest cricketers ever."

Unfortunately, the reports from our correspondents were so extensive it was impossible to include them all here, but full versions can be found on the Sussex Martlets website.



JUNIOR MARTLETS XI



A frustrating 2025 season for the Junior Martlets. With seven fixtures scheduled through July and August, unfortunately only three were to go ahead. Cancellations from the Hogs, West Chilts, Crawley hub and ACE were disappointing.

The season opener was a trip to the idyllic Stonewall Park to face the "old favourite" Band of Brothers. The Brothers were the only defeat last season and the Juniors wanted revenge. The Martlets won the toss and elected to bat, with a short leg side boundary and rock hard road of a pitch. Jimmy Lloyd opened with Matt Ritchie, the duo putting on a quick 80 before Matt was clean bowled for 52. Jimmy went on to 81 before getting caught at cow off a bouncer. Oli Wicks' intro was fast and furious and an unbeaten 105 put the Martlets in a great position. The Brothers turned to spin and took the next 5 wickets for only 10 runs! The Martlets finished on a respectable 288 all out. Martlets bowling turned out to be strong, utilising seven bowlers on a hot day. The wickets were shared and we managed to bowl them all out for 208 for an 80-run victory.

The next day a trip to the historic Harrow School for a fixture v Lord's Youth. Martlets were put into bat and Theo Tippler opened up with a steady 46 to get the innings going. The wickets fell quickly and the Juniors were under the cosh from some impressive seamers. Jimmy Lloyd came in at 7 with them struggling at 124-6. A patient 79 off 81 balls meant we batted out our 50 overs ending on 241-9.

A quick turn around with dark clouds appearing and before you know it Lord's Youth are struggling on 47-6. Excellent bowling from Oli Wicks, Hamish Kidd and Freddie Ives with two wickets each. Lord's Youth batted sensibly until the inevitable rain came, finishing on 148-7 from 33 overs. The Juniors won by 43 runs (D/L).

The season finale v the Senior Martlets at the beautiful Arundel Castle proved to be a cracker. The Seniors batted first, getting 270-4 from 43 overs before declaring. Spinner Tom Bailey impressed with figures of 3-55 from 11 overs. Tom Bailey and Matt Ritchie opened the batting and put on 43 before Tom was dismissed, Matt going on to get a steady 45. Kai Taylor and Oscar Harman batted next putting on 86 with Kai ending up getting caught on the boundary for an impressive 98. With 3 balls to be bowled in the match, the Juniors were at 242-9 needing to survive the last three balls to retain the cup. Hamish Kidd blocked out for a draw and a well-earned retained trophy for the Juniors.

Many thanks again to all the parents for their support, umpires and scorers and of course Alan Newman for



Deryck presents the Wills Trophy to Oscar Harman

his organising. I look forward to getting back to seven fixtures next year with hopefully fixtures against a touring Indian team, Lord's Youth and Sussex C.C.C. alongside the usual favourites.

Adam Lloyd

THE GOLF SOCIETY 2025



This is my last report as Hon. Sec. of the Martlets Golf Society. Yes, I will be standing down after my two terms of three years in post. This report is written with a much lighter tone than my first in 2020 when we were in Covid lockdown and we were only able to complete

three fixtures. Therefore, six years on, I look back with considerable joy at the golf played and new friends and acquaintances made on the links of our host clubs. During this time, we lost Littlestone G.C. as a fixture but gained the Hampshire Hogs, who host us at Hayling Golf Club, the Band of Brothers, who host us at Royal St George's G.C. and East Brighton G.C.

The membership too has changed in this period, with a few sadly leaving us, as they now play their golf on the links in the sky. Pausing on this thought for a moment, I personally have very warm memories of Ham Whitty, a past Hon. Sec. of the Golfing Society, who updated the history of the Society in 2005; more on this later. In terms of recruitment, which has been a focus of the last six years, we are going from strength to strength as we have welcomed just under 30 new members, many of whom have single figure handicaps. We hope this new

cohort will ensure the Society continues to play high-quality golf into the future.

Unfortunately, 2025 saw the Martlets win just three matches: against the Band of Brothers at Royal St. George's in May, the Purchasers in June and against East Brighton G.C. in August, the last being the first win in four outings for the Martlets, against what is always strong opposition.

In June the Martlets supported the Willie Bicket memorial golf day at the Army Golf Club in Aldershot. The format was 18 holes of foursomes, in the true Martlet tradition, followed by a delightful curry lunch and tributes to Willie. The day was won by Stuart Ritchie partnering yours truly, winning by one point with 38 points, 25 of which were secured on the front 9 nine after which we wobbled, dropping points on some tricky back 9 holes.

Looking ahead to the 2026 season, we have a few changes to our match managers. William Forster will take over from Mark Bowden to manage the West Sussex fixture and Dan Jackson joins the match managers' group to manage the Hogs match, which is vacated by William.

We hope we will see an improvement in the win ratio for the Society. One can't help but think that home course knowledge is a great advantage for our hosts, whose handicaps somehow seem to be very competitive!!!

Some of you will know that in the early term of my tenure I was asked to update the history of the Sussex Martlets Golfing Society. Armed with the Society's historical records and document archive, I set to work with the most valuable assistance of Peter Hartland, our Club Historian. Peter has been an invaluable contributor to updating our history through his encyclopaedic knowledge of the wider Martlets club and his access to the British newspaper archive.

Our research has taken us to many places not previously visited by our previous Hon. Secs. Dan Mathews and Ham Whitty. (Dan wrote the original history in 1965 which Ham updated in 2005.)

The result our endeavours is that we have discovered a treasure trove of new information, linking its very early members to the birth of county golf in Sussex in the early 1900s. The updated version of the history of our wonderful golfing society is now a living document and is available to read on the Martlets website (<https://www.sussexmartlets.co.uk/the-club/martlets-golf-history-nov-2025/>).

I am delighted to announce that my successor will be Greg West, who will take over in the spring. Greg has been a Martlet for forty years, having been advised of

his election on his twenty-second birthday in 1985. As a candidate from Midhurst Cricket Club, he had fallen tantalisingly short of a debut hundred on the Martlet tour to Cambridge University earlier that year.

For a brief period in the late eighties and early nineties he played Southern League cricket, where he converted to a wicketkeeper/batsman, a position he adopted while he continued to play for the Martlets until his cricketing career ended nearing his fiftieth birthday. He scored five centuries for the Martlets and was leading run scorer in 1989.

Greg played many golf matches for the Sussex Martlets Golf Society in the eighties before a long hiatus that ended a couple of years ago with his return to the fold. Greg is a member of Goodwood G.C., where he plays off a useful 21.6 handicap.

He is also the publisher of two science fiction novels and is working on the completion of the trilogy. Greg still lives in Midhurst with his wife Janet and has two adult daughters, Francesca and Jasmine.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on the Committee, our match managers for their support during my tenure, along with all the Martlets who have supported our matches this last six years. It has been a most enjoyable privilege to hold the office of Honorary Secretary, considering the contributions to the Society of those who have gone before me.

Robert Forster



Robert Forster has proved a wonderful Honorary Secretary of the Sussex Martlets Golf Society. He has been a fine custodian of our rich set of fixtures whilst cementing the wonderful West Sussex club at Pulborough as our golfing home.

He has continued with recruitment keeping the central tenet of the Society intact, namely that it is the golf society of a cricket club and as such leaves the Society in an enviable position. Thank you, Robert!

It's an honour to be taking over from Robert and the previous holders of the office. I can only hope to continue to keep things ticking over whilst supporting the match managers and remaining open to suggestions, all in a largely unnoticed way whenever possible.

Greg West

SUSSEX MARTLETS ANNUAL AWARDS

These annual awards were made at this year's dinner, held in the pavilion at the County Ground, Hove on March 6th 2026. The citations were provided by Darryl Rebbetts, Derek Horsham, Robert Forster and David Whelpton.

Men's Batting & Bowling Awards – Ben Whelpton



Ben enjoyed an outstanding all-round season, deservedly claiming both Batter and Bowler of the Year. With the bat, he scored 569 runs at an average of 47.42, including a highest score of 96 and five 50+ scores. With the ball, Ben delivered 114 overs to take 30 wickets at an impressive average of 14.53, an

economy of 3.81, and best figures of 4-12 vs Horley. Ben epitomises consistency and shows no signs of letting either trophy go next season. A truly impressive campaign.

Over-40s Award – Tom Whyte



Our Over 40s Player of the Season is a powerhouse of all-rounder, man and individual, who was not only outstanding for us, but was always available for the regular Martlets also. Useful late-order runs, catches, flurries of wickets, laced with on/off field commentary, have ensured Tom Whyte will go down in Martlets folklore!

Martlets Women's Award – Alice Noakes



Alice was a standout performer with both bat and ball. Her all-round commitment on and off the field was outstanding and she was happy to step up to the captaincy whenever we needed her.

Golfing Award – Stuart Avern



Stuart supported a number of matches across the length and breadth of the county, winning with multiple partners and in doing so compiled an unmatched winning record. As such, he is therefore a truly worthy winner of this year's award.

Martlet of the Year – Brian O'Gorman



An outstanding member of the Club for three-quarters of a century. An embodiment of all that is precious about the Sussex Martlets, having a deep love and knowledge of the game, whilst being hugely supportive of all our young players. And he is great company!



With the start of the 2026 cricket season just a month away, I have been reflecting on the last twelve months at Arundel Castle Cricket Club.

Our year started with the demolition of the outdated old office adjacent to the pavilion and construction began for a new replica building enabling the Castle Cricket Club and Foundation to work together under one roof for the first time. The treasured historic view from the square to the pavilion was preserved and construction completed just before the beginning of the 2025 cricket season. The new office was officially opened by Henry, Earl of Arundel and Mark Nicholas, Chairman of the M.C.C., before the annual Duke of Norfolk's XI versus M.C.C. match. We remain hugely grateful His Grace, The Duke of Norfolk and the Castle Trustees for their support in making this all possible.

Additional investment into the ground has included a new second (digital) scoreboard, the purchase of an outfield blotter, to which the Sussex Martlets kindly contributed, and upgraded Wi-Fi for spectators. Equally important was the laying of two new high-quality wickets on the square during the autumn. These will take a couple of years to bed in, but they will enable us to stage more first-class professional cricket in the future.

During the season we hosted a variety of cricket matches from international to school levels. Alongside the Sussex Martlets, we saw cricket teams from Hong Kong C.C. and Singapore C.C. In June we welcomed the international squads from South Africa and Zimbabwe, when members were allowed inside the ground for the first time to watch South Africa prepare for their World Test Championship match against

Australia at Lord's. Having very much enjoyed their time at Arundel, the South Africans went on to win a keenly contested Test match very much against the odds.

In July we saw the return of first-class county cricket during a week-long festival where men's, women's and disability teams from Sussex C.C.C. played in front of thousands of spectators from across the country. With the same luck enjoyed by the South Africans, Sussex went on to win every game, with high praise for the quality of the wickets, the ground and hospitality.

Our 2026 fixture list is shaping up nicely. Our relationship with both the England and Wales Cricket Board and Sussex County Cricket Club remains strong. Between them they will provide over twelve days of first-class cricket at the ground during the 2026 season. This will include a four-day match featuring Freddie Flintoff's England Lions versus South Africa 'A's at the end of May. The Sussex C.C.C festival week will return at the end of June, featuring men's and women's Metro Cup 50-over matches, a County disability triangular Hundred tournament and a Sussex C.C.C. legends' match.

Our goal is to ensure that everyone who visits Arundel Castle Cricket Club has a magical experience and 2025 certainly delivered on that promise. Our ground staff, caterers, caretakers and administrators work hard to make it a very special place to play or watch cricket. The historic and special relationship with the Sussex Martlets remains strong and we look forward to welcoming you all back to the ground for what I hope will be an enjoyable and successful 2026 season.

Alistair Subba Row

Principal Fixtures at Arundel Castle, 2026	
<i>MAY</i>	
10th	Sussex Martlets v MCC
22–25th	England Lions v South Africa A (four-day match)
31st	Australia Women v South Africa Women T20 (2pm)
<i>JUNE</i>	
10th	Duke of Norfolk's XI v UKAFCA (Combined Services)
11th	Women's Inter-Services T20 Finals Day (10.30am)
Oxford University v Cambridge University Cricket Festival	
20th	Women's 50-Over Match
21st	Men's 50-Over Match
<i>JULY</i>	
9th	Duke of Norfolk's XI v MCC
21st	Actors v Authors
Sussex Cricket Festival	
29th	Metro Bank One Day Cup: Sussex v Essex
31st	Sussex v Hampshire "Legends" (2pm)
<i>AUGUST</i>	
2nd	Metro Bank One Day Cup: Sussex Women v Middlesex Women
7th	Duke of Norfolk's XI v Lord's Taverners
9th	Cricketer Cup Final
15-16th	Disability T20 Internationals: England v South Africa

BILLY GRIFFITH C.B.E., D.F.C., T.D.

Sussex Martlet President (1964-1970 and 1973-1976)



As a Club, we were fortunate, I feel, to have had Billy Griffith, such a distinguished cricketer, as our President; in two spells, the first from 1964 to 1970 and the second from 1973 to 1976, the fourth longest serving President of the Club since its formation in 1905. He was a remarkable man.

Stewart Cathie Griffith (always known as Billy – cricketers seem never too subtle at coming up with appropriate nicknames) was an outstanding schoolboy cricketer at Dulwich College, where he became a close friend of Hugh Bartlett, a prolific batsman, and they both played for Cambridge (1934-1936). Billy won his blue in 1935 and Wisden commented, "It is a long time since Cambridge had a better wicketkeeper."

His family had close connections with Middleton, which became a very strong side after World War II. Billy was always very generous with his help and encouragement of young players at the club.

Billy played one game for Surrey in 1934 and like Hugh Bartlett he joined Sussex in 1937. Billy's career might have taken a different course had he remained with Surrey.

He performed distinguished war service in Normandy in World War II and at Arnhem, along with Hugh Bartlett. He was part of the Glider Pilot Regiment. At Arnhem he sheltered from enemy fire in slit trenches for a long time with Hugh Bartlett and they spoke of matches they had played in "but only those we did well in". He subsequently made his escape and returned to Allied lines by swimming across the Rhine. He was awarded the D.F.C.

He captained Sussex in 1946 and was Secretary 1946-50. He played in only three Tests, including one in the West Indies in 1947/48 in which he scored his maiden first-class century. He went as vice-captain with Frank Mann's M.C.C. touring side to South Africa (1948/49) and his name was mooted as a possible

England captain, but this was complicated by the fact that he had such an outstanding contemporary in Godfrey Evans, who held the position of England wicketkeeper almost uninterrupted between 1946 and 1959. However, it was on merit that he was preferred to Evans in two of the Tests on that tour.

He became Assistant Secretary of M.C.C. in 1952 and then Secretary from 1962 to 1974, a position, it is acknowledged, he held with great dignity, tact and restraint during a time of great change in the cricket world, including not a little unrest. He later became President of M.C.C. He also found time to play golf and was a member of the Sussex Martlets Golfing Society, very often teaming up with Arthur Gilligan in foursomes.

I first saw Billy at the County Ground Hove in 1952 when he was keeping wicket for Sussex against the Indians, a match which Sussex won. However, it was marred by an injury to Billy, when he was hit by the bat of Manjrekar. Billy was standing up to the wicket and Manjrekar flailed his bat and struck Billy just above his left eye. All Manjrekar would say was "you are my third victim". Billy actually sustained a serious eye injury and was taken to Brighton General Hospital and by an immense stroke of luck was seen by a German eye surgeon, who happened to be on a teaching visit to Brighton and was able to save the eye. Jim Parks substituted for Billy behind the stumps – a sign of things to come.

The next time I recall seeing Billy was in 1980 at a match between Sussex Martlets and the Duchess of Norfolk's XI. The film actor, Oliver Reed is said to have spiked his team mates' drinks and the lunch melon course with vodka. The players and spectators were appalled and embarrassed by his behaviour, which became more raucous and objectionable as the match progressed – so much so that Billy retired to the quiet of his car.

On another occasion, I did ask Billy how it was that he was chosen to open the England batting in his first Test match (in the West Indies), because word had it that the skipper (Gubby Allen) was sitting in the changing room and declared to another player that the next person to walk through the door would open the batting. That, Billy said, was not correct; he and Jim Laker both had an intensive net and Billy was chosen.

Despite increasing cricket administration pressures at Lord's, Billy devoted much time to Arundel and was instrumental in making possible the continuation of cricket there following Duke Bernard's death. He had assistance from Colin Cowdrey and Ronnie Aird – the three of them Lavinia (Bernard's widow) described as her three musketeers. They formed the Friends of Arundel Castle Cricket Club and as Martlets we can be grateful to Billy for his part in building up the close

relationship between Arundel and the Sussex Martlets to the extent that over the years the Sussex Martlets have been able to regard Arundel as their spiritual home.

I acknowledge with thanks the help of Mike Griffith (Billy's son and himself a Sussex county cricketer), Peter Hartland, Brian O'Gorman and Gregory West in enabling me to put this article together.

Robin Carr



As S.C.C.C. captain, Mike Griffith was instrumental in the selection of two Sussex Martlets, Tony Lush and Tony Beedles, for Sunday John Player League matches in 1969.

Tony Lush was an excellent hard-hitting batsman club cricketer for Middleton. I was also a member of Middleton, which attracted cricketers, especially during August, when they had a match almost every day. Indeed, Mike Brearley's family holidayed there and he played regularly for Middleton before he joined Middlesex.

I persuaded the Sussex selectors to put Tony Lush into one match of the 40-over John Player Sunday League competition, to give the middle order a boost. The other club player was Chris Bidwell, who played in a different match.

Sussex batted first in the match against Middlesex in 1969 and Tony played really well in a partnership with Tony Greig and Sussex amassed a large total for 40 overs, especially in those days, of 288. He played with great abandon scoring 22 very quickly in the late overs.

Sussex won the match bowling out Middlesex for 271 and to that date it was the highest combined total score in the competition.

My decision to play two club players did not go down that well with the contracted players, but I always subscribed, and still do, to the view that there are always a handful of club players who would do well in county cricket if they had chosen that route. I believe Tony Lush and Chris Bidwell were two such players.

Mike Griffith

In a telephone conversation a few months before his death, Tony Lush recalled this occasion with considerable pleasure. He was grateful to Mike, not only for selecting him, but for demoting himself to allow Tony an innings. The result was a partnership with Tony Greig which put on 54 in 4½ overs.

M.A. Buss c Brearley b Titmus	80
K.G. Suttle b Connelly	8
G.C. Cooper c Bearley b Herman	69
J.M. Parks run out	18
A.W. Greig not out	60
J.A. Lush c Parfitt b Herman	22
M.G. Griffith not out	0
Extras	9
TOTAL	288

DNB: A. Buss, D.L. Bates, J.A. Snow

In reply, Middlesex were all out for 231 (J.M. Brearley 74, M.J. Smith 51).

And now from the sublime to the ridiculous! Ed.

THE WIFE-CARRYING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sussex Martlets get up to all manner of things off the field, but none quite as extraordinary as Mike Nolan. His wife Jo helped me piece this story together.

Apparently, this contest has been held annually since 1992 in Sonkajärvi, “a tiny town in central Finland, known only for the Wife-carrying Championships, which allegedly evolved thanks to a local legendary 19th century brigand, Rosvo-Ronkainen, who would only employ the strongest men at a time when wife-stealing from the nearby village and carrying them off through the forest was all the rage.”

What induced Mike (aged 55) and Jo (aged 52) to take part is not entirely clear. And then, as complete beginners, some training was in order, surely? No, despite very variable levels of confidence: “I have almost none. He has a surfeit,” said Jo. “Hence Mike’s belief that we didn’t need much training. Plus, to quote him, ‘I’m the one doing the heavy lifting’. Ha!”

Maybe so, but as Jo puts it, he wasn’t being suspended upside down for several minutes, one’s upper body chunking against their partner in the Estonian lift they had settled on. For those not conversant with that position, Jo explained, “It involved me being suspended down his back, my legs crossed at the knee ‘loosely’ around his neck, my arms gripping his waist, my head at his bum level. There wasn’t a lot of dignity.” Agreed.

Reminiscent of that TV classic of yesteryear, *It’s A Knockout*, the course consisted of just over 250m of running track, with a formidable water obstacle: “a 5m round pool with sloping sides about a metre deep in the middle – and two waist-high thick-log hurdles along the back straight.” Jo explained.



Mike & Jo at the water obstacle

The day before the real race they entered a sprint event (very much on the same lines). Gluttons for punishment – did Jo enjoy the ride? Silly question, really.

“If I’m honest, it was quite the most extreme 42 seconds of my life (and I’ve bungeed and given birth to three children). The plunge into the water was like being bogwashed. I was almost sure I’d drown. As we emerged, I couldn’t tell where we or any of our fellow racers were.”

Surely time to pack up and head for home/therapy/the divorce courts. No, the next day they returned for the real thing – and it seems they did really rather well.

“Blood pounded in my ears, as I held as strong and still as I could,” Jo recalled “while Mike really did do all the heavy lifting.” The result? They completed the course in 01:30.86, just 14 seconds or so behind the winners, who were aged 42 and 37 respectively, with Jo noting “just as it doesn’t have to be your actual wife you carry, she also doesn’t have to be over 40. Sour grapes? Perhaps. In compensation, it turns out we were the oldest competitors, which makes our 6th place (in the world, lest anyone forget) that much more of an achievement. Plus, we were only a second and a half off medals.”

In conclusion,

1. Please note that they were not wearing Martlets colours
2. It is not recommended that you attempt the Estonian hold at home
3. Rumour has it that Derek Horsham is thinking of expanding next year’s Over-40s tour to include wives, and is exploring links with Finnish cricket clubs...

Desmond Devitt

OBITUARIES

PETER DUNN (1951-2025)



Peter lived for his cricket. From his earliest days at St. Andrew's prep school in Eastbourne he would be the first out of the classroom at break to rush outside and 'bag' the best of the asphalt wickets, having first retrieved the stump-sized piece of wood that served as a cricket bat from its hiding place. The use of a stick rather than a cricket bat was mandated by the master in charge of cricket, one J.L. (Jack) Bryan (Kent and England), who insisted it was the only way to ensure proper contact when using the real thing! During the summer holidays, Peter played for the Southdown Rams, a club for boys from the various prep schools in the area and which served as a feeder to the Junior Martlets.

After St. Andrew's Peter went on to Sedbergh, where he was in the cricket XI for three years and captain in 1970. Whilst there he was also able to indulge in his other sporting loves of rugby and fives. During this time Peter played numerous games for the Junior Martlets.

On leaving Sedbergh, he moved to London and joined Thomas Cook in Harrods. This gave him the opportunity to travel widely, but exotic tropical islands were not for him. Instead, he hitchhiked across Yugoslavia and, on another occasion, he climbed up to Everest base camp. He also spent a considerable amount of time meeting his many relatives in Australia, courtesy of his Australian mother. But it was after all of this that his travels took a different turn. He joined BMW motorbikes, a job he loved and for whom he worked for 25 years, travelling all over the U.K. visiting the dealerships and occasionally organising European trips for dealers to try out the latest bikes!

Peter continued to play cricket at this time, mostly for the Martlets. One highlight for him was being part of the Martlets six-a-side team that won the Horsham Jubilee tournament in 1977.

In 1978 the family moved to Gundleton near Alresford in Hampshire. Here his DIY talents came to the fore and over a number of years he transformed it from a house into a home. He also took with him the cricket net which every spring was ceremoniously unravelled and put up in the garden. Anyone then visiting the house was expected to bowl at least one over, usually to the sound of a running commentary!

The move to Hampshire logistically made playing cricket in Sussex difficult. So began Peter's long association with the Hampshire Hogs. But his playing career was sadly shortened following a motorbike

injury, which required an operation to fuse some vertebrae and meant he was no longer able to bowl his off breaks. Instead, he threw his energies into a more administrative role, becoming Fixtures Secretary, Secretary and finally President.

Peter's funeral was a remarkably fitting send off. The dress code was blazers and club ties, his coffin was draped in a huge Hogs flag, and the service ended to the sound of the *Test Match Special* theme tune.

He leaves behind his wife Ginny of 48 years and sons Richard and Mark, who clearly share his love of the Noble Game.

Peter Hall

TONY LUSH (1937-2025)



Tony Lush was at school at Brighton College, where he was an outstanding schoolboy cricketer. *The Brightonian* (1954/55) records that "he was the mainstay of the batting; for the first half of the term he seemed, except for a century against K.C.S. Wimbledon, to be what he was last year – a batsman with a fine eye, extraordinarily strong wrists and a range of strokes which enabled him to score so fast that he became over-confident and threw his wicket away."

Aged 17 (in 1954), Tony scored 85 for the Martlets v Old Hurst Johnians, which was more than twice the score of anyone else on either side, effectively winning a low-scoring match for the Martlets. (He was later to score a century for the Club, in 1967.)

In his final year at Brighton, he was deemed a good captain "whose fielding was an inspiration and whose batting justified his selection for the Southern Schools against The Rest at Lord's. His supreme confidence, powerful wrists and fine eye make him a devastating batsman when on top of the bowling."

After leaving school, he served his National Service of two years in the Royal Artillery as a 2nd Lieutenant, and for whom he played cricket, after which his working life was in retail.

He captained Middleton Cricket Club in the early 60s before moving North and sides used to bat on for another 30 to 40 runs if he was playing, as he could destroy an attack.

In his later life he played cricket in the Bradford League, with quite a bit of success, for a team called Farsley, whom he captained in 1980, and later with Bingley. He was known as the six-hitting king of the Bradford League, once hitting 16 sixes over a 4-game period. He

played alongside Ray Illingworth, Kevin Sharp, Tim Boon, Neil Mallender and Steven Rhodes for Farsley.



Tony led the Cricketer Cup team at Brighton College to victory in 1969, and is on the all-time College cricket team at #5. The same year he played his one and only game for Sussex, in the John Player League (see p. 19-20).

He was the Sussex junior squash champion following his time in the school squash side. In his later life he took up golf and crown bowls.

Robin Lush

We were associated from earliest years at Middleton in under-12 matches, later of course for the Club and also for Sussex Young Amateurs and Junior Martlets, for whom he made a 100 vs Seniors at Hove in 1953. (I have a press cutting and Y.A. photo) – a remarkable innings, which these days would have seen him taken at once by Sussex. Conventions were different then, but he would have been in the very top class of the game.

What a glorious batsman! Such power and precision – very difficult to bowl to and he was one of those who made sure that Middleton always succeeded in the usual run chase. He could hit a good length ball to any quarter of the ground at will.

Brian O’Gorman

PAT MATHEWS (1926-2024)



Pat Matthews was a very prominent sportsman in the post-war years and a charming, self-effacing playing companion.

Educated at Felsted, he proceeded to Clare College, Cambridge where, taking advantage of the unrivalled facilities and opportunities, he won blues for cricket, golf and hockey. University cricket was very strong then with Test players such as David Sheppard, Peter May, John Dewes and “Gerry” Alexander (West Indies).

He played in 21 first-class matches, for Cambridge and Sussex, often opening with David Sheppard for the latter, but continuing studies at Yale in U.S.A. prevented more.

Playing for Sussex Martlets he added strength and presence to the team, though appearances were spasmodic. He was often included against the schools, where his skill and encouragement of the boys were notable, particularly vs St. George’s Weybridge, adding much to the day.

He also kept his golf going and won the ‘Fathers and Sons’ in partnership with his father, the redoubtable J.K. Asked about this he replied, “Dad never gave me a bad lie.”

Brian O’Gorman

David Gibbs in ‘Summers by the Sea’ commented that “the Mathews family has been involved without interruption in Martlet cricket and golf throughout the whole 100-year history of the Club.” Pat’s father, ‘J.K.’ was in fact, a founding member.

Pat was captain of the County Cricketers’ Golfing Society (1971) and Secretary of the Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club (1984-92). For the Sussex Martlets, he scored two centuries (in 1950 and 1954) and was for many years a vice-president of the Club.

TONY PIGOTT (1958-2025)

Tony Pigott’s death occurred too close to the date of publication for a full obituary piece to be included in this edition. However, there is an excellent piece on him on the S.C.C.C. website: <https://sussexcricket.co.uk/news/remembering-tony-pigott-1958-2026>

The Martlets were represented at his funeral by Nigel Russell & Mike Charman.

MEET THE COMMITTEE

It is the turn of our new Chairman of the Cricket Subcommittee to introduce himself:



NAME:
George Read

EDUCATION:
Lewes Old Grammar School,
University of Southampton.

CAREER:
4 years as a market risk analyst in the energy and commodities industry. Returned from Australia in March 2025 after an 18-month career break playing cricket and travelling.

SUSSEX CONNECTIONS:

Born in Haywards Heath, lived in Sussex and in London ever since.

CLUBS:

Buxted Park, Sussex Martlets, Free Foresters.

BEST MARTLETS MOMENT:

My one and only Martlets hundred at The Hurlingham Club in the Covid year of 2020! I'm long overdue to add to this tally, after falling in the 'nervous nineties' a few times since...

BEST MARTLET TEAM PERFORMANCE:

'The Miracle at Medinah' (West Chilts) in 2019! Chasing 301 for victory on the flattest deck Sussex had ever seen, West Chilts were 224-3, with ample overs left in the game. Skipper Hector Laughton took the ball, to everyone's dismay, only to go and take a '6-fa' and bowl the Martlets to a 2-run victory!

FOOTBALL OR RUGBY?

I am definitely a football fan over rugby, and, to a lot of people's disgust, I am a passionate Chelsea fan! I very much enjoy watching rugby, but my following doesn't stretch much further than the Six Nations.

OTHER SPORTS:

I am a huge lover of golf and find it criminal how little I manage to play. I am also a big walker and runner and am currently training for a half-marathon!

OTHER INTERESTS:

I am an avid fantasy football player. A stat that I am very proud of is that I finished 5,303 in the world last season, out of over 13 million players, putting me in the top 0.04% of players!

FAVOURITE BANDS:

'Bring Me the Horizon', 'Linking Park' and 'Sleep Token'. I'm a bit of a rocker/metal head, which always seems to surprise people when I say that.

FAVOURITE FILMS:

Christopher Nolan's *Dark Knight* trilogy I think will always be my favourite series of films. Outside of that, *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Casino Royale* and *Oppenheimer* are certainly up there.

BEER OR WINE?

Always a beer over wine for me, in particular a lovely, hoppy IPA, if I had to choose. I am very partial to a gin and tonic, too.

A FEW WORDS FROM ME:

I am truly honoured and privileged to have been asked to take over the role as Cricket Subcommittee chairman, following Darryl stepping down at the end of the 2025 season. I don't think we will ever be able to thank Darryl enough for the work he has done on and off the field for the Martlets over the last few years and he has certainly left big shoes to fill! A true Martlet who I will undoubtedly look to at times over the coming season.

This coming season, the Cricket Subcommittee really wants to focus on getting some new, passionate, younger faces into the Club, to complement the crop of Junior Martlets that we have coming through. We also really want to bring the Club more into the 21st century. The newly formed WhatsApp community, which Dom Heater did some fantastic initial work on, is the start of this. Similarly, the Club's upcoming Instagram account will really help with this recruitment drive and spreading awareness across the county about who the Sussex Martlets are and what we represent.

NEW MEMBERS 2025/26

The Club welcomes into membership:

Cricket: Tom Hay (Cuckfield C.C.), Edward Hooper (Fletching C.C.), Will Howard (Horsham C.C.), Paul Hutchinson (Royal Household C.C.), Tony Jeswani (Worthing C.C.), Alan Nichols (Bromley C.C.), Mike Nolan (Ditchling C.C.), Will Nolan (Tonbridge School 1st XI), Sam Theodoridi (Chippingdale C.C.), Harry Wingfield-Digby (Eton Ramblers C.C.), Jonny Young (Ansty C.C.).

Eve Atkins (Petworth Park C.C.), Alice Noakes (Horsham C.C.), Violet Clements (Sussex Pathway), Emily Groves (Ansty C.C.), Isabel Jennings (Fernhurst C.C.), Tia Joseph (Brighton & Hove C.C.), Shobhavi Waduge (Worthing C.C.)

Golf: Ellis Batchelor (The Dyke G.C), Neil Lancaster (East Brighton G.C.), Mick Richards (Mid Sussex G.C.), Stewart Tippler (East Sussex National G.C.).

Non-Playing: David Heine, Julian Plumley (re-joining).

If you know of anyone who wishes to play cricket or golf for the Sussex Martlets this summer, do please get in touch with me and remember the application form is available from the website of the Club.

David Whelpton

DEREK SEMMENCE

Mark Semmence's tribute to his father is now published by the Sussex Cricket Museum, with an epilogue specially written for it by Martin Speight. It will be available via the S.C.C.C. website at a price of £12 a copy. This has been made possible by the generous sponsorship of Stuart Ritchie, and Mark has asked that the proceeds from the sale of the book are shared between the Sussex Museum Trust and the Arundel Castle Cricket Foundation.

Beyond Boundaries Derek Semmence: A Life in Cricket



From Mark's warm and loving introduction all the way through to Martin Speight's generous and moving epilogue, this is an enchanting story about talent and understated achievement which will be savoured by cricket lovers and friends from all over the world and many more besides.

This tribute is not just about a life well lived, but it also outlines a short history of the society and era in which

Derek lived and thrived and to which he gave so much energy as the spirit of the age unfolded. And it is this spirit that emerges so powerfully both on and off the field and amidst family and friends. Derek was always a giver, never a taker.

This is a theme which runs through to the end of the story, when Martin Speight concludes his epilogue with a richly pertinent quotation from Robert Louis Stevenson.

It seems that Derek, from an early age, showed precocious talent as a cricketer and all-round sportsman. His batting was crafted with elegance and finesse, perhaps rather more Mozartian than Wagnerian in style. In this way he played at just about every level from first class to club and league cricket, as well as for his beloved Sussex Martlets, and a great deal more I'm sure.

Although Derek was undoubtedly 'A great man of Sussex', as Mark Allbrook asserts, you will notice that his influence and example spread both in this country and overseas, most especially in India. Here, as you will discover, he was very much loved and his wife, Christine, too. He had the chance to show off his coaching and mentoring skills whilst at the same time immersing himself in a culture far removed from home in Sussex. Indeed, India became almost a second home.

What shines through from this lovely tribute is how much Derek loved the game and those who played it. That he was very good at it helped. He never lost his zest and enthusiasm; humility and integrity always present. And all this achieved without loss of temper or even raising his voice (though his loud and infectious laughter has been noted!). His coaching style was always serene, calm and well considered and, as such, has had such an impact upon so many people over the years and no more so than at Hurstpierpoint College.

So thank you, Derek, and thank you to all those who have produced this wonderful memoir, which exudes love and generosity at the turn of every page.

John Barclay

Photo credits: Neil Billing, Robert Forster, Malcolm Griffin, Charlie Hartridge, Nigel Russell, S.C.C.C., Paul Walker.

**A full colour version of this magazine can be found on sussexmartlets.co.uk
Ideas and articles for future editions of *The Martlet* are gratefully received.
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