

Outside-edge

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Graeme van Buuren joins a long line of illustrious GCCC first-class captains

The Magazine of the Gloucestershire Exiles
News and views on and about Gloucestershire County Cricket Club

Editorial

It did seem that we were approaching the end of the Covid crisis until the invasion of the Ukraine created another terrible situation. It may seem crass to divert our attentions to cricket but sport does have a way of enriching our lives and making the world seem a better place. The cricket season is rapidly approaching and we are full of optimism that this one will be more special than the last. It does seem an age since we were celebrating the County's return to Division 1 and finally the time is nigh. After the confusions of the last two seasons, we can hope for some much-needed normality to return or as 'normal' as can be expected.

To add to the expectations, we have new men at the top with the Head Coach Dale Benkenstein and Performance Director Steve Snell alongside the new red ball and 50-over captain Graeme van Buuren. Incoming from abroad are Marcus Harris, Naseem Shah and Paul van Meekeren while we are delighted that Zafar Gohar should return for a second season. Later in this issue, Mark Kidger provides an excellent preview of the season with more detailed analysis of the squad. Our hope is, of course, that we can make a realistic challenge for that elusive Championship title.

The Exiles' committee has also been busy planning the campaign with the AGM having started the season and the Cheltenham Day set for 26th July. We have also been exploring the possibilities for other events although planning for these has been tricky in uncertain times.

As ever my thanks are due to our wonderful contributors for this issue. They are, in random order, Sarah Blowen, Mark Brunt, Mark Kidger, Matt Davies, Simon Ireland, Robert Moreland, Grenville Simons, Keith Gerrish, Howard Allen, Ian Herdman, Douglas Miller, Neville Denson, Nigel Dean and Ruth Sharville plus a host of members who have provided their memories of the Cheltenham Festival. Thanks also to Tony Hickey for his constant supply of wonderful photos.



Simon Ireland has written a wonderful article on the ever-popular David 'Syd' Lawrence

On a personal note, I'd like to add my condolences to the friends and family of Chris Bell who has recently passed away. Chris has been a regular contributor to Outside-edge and I had the great pleasure to meet him shortly after taking over as Editor. Chris was a lovely chap, very warm and friendly, who was delightful company.



Save the date:

The Exiles' Cheltenham Day will take place at the Festival on
Tuesday 26th July, the second day of the Championship game v Northants.
Further details to be announced soon.

Chair's Message

A fresh mind, a fresh set of eyes. In a recent article for The Bristol Magazine, new Gloucestershire Head Coach Dale Benkenstein set out his ambition for the club and how he sees his role as the 2022 season begins – to bring a fresh perspective to what he sees as an already ambitious squad, full of aspiration. Even with the shrewd overseas signings made over the winter at his disposal, Benkenstein recognises that there is something already there at the heart of Gloucestershire cricket on which to build: team spirit. This is something that those of us who have been watching for the last few seasons know already – the necessity of a smaller squad to play for each other and, to the best of their ability, stick with it to the bitter end. Despite our moans, we know that there is much to build upon and I'm sure we all have a sense of - dare I say it? – quiet optimism for the season ahead.

Dale Benkenstein comes with impeccable credentials - not least his close links to fellow compatriots and Gloucestershire favourites Jonty Rhodes and, of course, Mike Procter. These names link us to summers gone by and most of us will have a few specific mental snapshots at the mention of them – the outstretched hand taking the impossible catch; the ball heading off over the sightscreen as if shot from a cannon. It's likely that some of these performances took place at the Cheltenham Festival, which celebrates its 150th anniversary this year. The Gloucestershire anniversaries keep coming but this is a special one – the oldest cricket Festival in the world. There are many factors which call us back every year: I challenge you to put your finger on what it is exactly that makes it so special. There will be several sesquicentennial (I had to look that up) events at Cheltenham this year, including our own special day on July 26th – we hope to see many of you there.

We love looking back – that is what sports fans do. But we also look forward and, in that context, I'm so delighted by the response to our 50th Anniversary Fund. Thank you for all your donations, which will go to the newly re-purposed Gloucestershire Cricket Trust to be used to encourage community participation on the sport throughout the county in many innovative and diverse ways.

So, as you dust off your cricket bag, shake out the crumbs of last year's sandwiches and finally wash out that sunhat that's been looking a bit worse for wear since 1992, here's to a season full of enjoyment for those of us watching and a successful summer on the pitch for our squad.



Welcome

Alongside the continued development of the County's homegrown talent the close season saw the squad strengthened considerably with five new signings announced. One was not exactly "new" but was greeted with delight by County supporters everywhere.

Having joined Gloucestershire late in the 2021 season Zafar Gohar will be returning to Bristol for the 2022 season, initially on a pay-per-play basis until late July but then full-time from August onwards. This brings to an end a long-time search for a high-class, attacking spin option. His impact last season was instant and dramatic, taking 20 wickets at 14.35 in the final four Championship matches of the season including 11-101 in the final match, against Durham. Less than 18% of the first-class wickets taken by the County last year fell to spin and more than half of those were the work of Gohar with his slow left-arm bowling. Lahore-born, Gohar first came to prominence as part of the Pakistan Under 19 side which won two World Cups from 2012. He made his One-Day debut against England in 2015 and in January 2021 he made his Test debut for Pakistan against New Zealand at Christchurch. "I can't wait to get back and hopefully pick up from where I left off," he said when his signing was announced. Nor can we.

Perhaps more with the white-ball game in mind, although available for all formats, the 29-year-old Dutch international Paul van Meekeren has joined Gloucestershire on a two-year deal. He will be well known to Steve Snell having spent three years at Somerset from 2016. He joined Durham in July 2021 for the final matches of their Vitality Blast campaign and played in their Royal London Cup team where he took 14 wickets in seven matches with his right-arm fast-medium bowling. He will be the first Dutch national to play for the County and in 2021 was the first Dutch player to figure in the Caribbean Premier League, taking eight wickets in eight matches for St Kitts and Nevis Patriots in their title-winning campaign. He has 48 international wickets to his name in 46 matches for the Netherlands and took part in last year's T20 World Cup finals. So far in his career he has 65 wickets in 72 T20 matches and 63 in 56 List A matches.

Another right-arm seamer joining the squad is Ajeet Singh-Dale, who has also agreed a two-year deal. A product of the Hampshire Academy, the 21-year-old from Berkshire impressed Gloucestershire's coaches when he took 5/30 against the County when playing for Hampshire in the Second Eleven competition in 2021. He later featured on-loan for Gloucestershire in the final four Second Eleven Championship matches of the season picking up eight wickets to add to the thirteen taken earlier in the season for Hampshire. On announcing the signing the Second XI and Batting Coach Owen Dawkins said, "Ajeet displayed different skills to what our other young seamers offer."

Something different is certainly what Gohar's fellow Pakistani Naseem Shah will be bringing to Gloucestershire. Described by The Cricketer as "one of the brightest sparks in the global game," the arrival of the 19-year-old speedster will be a prospect that opposing batsmen will not be relishing but one that County supporters will. After bursting onto the Test scene as a 16-year-old against Australia at the Gabba when he took the wicket of David Warner, Naseem followed this up a month later when he became the second-youngest player in history to take a "fifer" in a single innings with 5/30 against Sri Lanka. In 2020 he was part of the Pakistani team to tour England and twice dismissed Joe Root in the Test series. He will be the quickest bowler to represent Gloucestershire for quite some time, adding more variety to the attack. He was named in the Pakistan squad for the Test series against Australia in March, perhaps giving him the chance to compare notes with his new Gloucestershire team-mate, Marcus Harris. Quite how much of Naseem there is to see this season will depend on the international calendar. He is due to be available for the first half of the County Championship and the T20 Blast group phase, before returning home in early July. There will be much to enjoy before he leaves.

Signing Marcus Harris, another one to agree a two-year deal, was a major coup for the County when you look both at his proven run-scoring and at Gloucestershire's struggles for big runs, especially in the first innings of matches, over the last two years. He first played English domestic cricket last year, at Leicestershire, where in just eight matches he scored 655 runs at 54.58, scoring centuries in three successive matches. He led Leicestershire to victory over Gloucestershire in the Championship match in June with an excellent 148 off 236 balls. A left-hander (the County now has quite a few!), he made his debut for Western Australia in 2011 since when he has scored 7,567 runs for Victoria, his home state, and Leicestershire at an average of 39.82 with 18 centuries. He has so far played 14 times for Australia including four matches in last winter's Ashes series where he averaged 29. Although he has opened the batting for Australia he batted at three in the County Championship, which will give flexibility at the top of the order. But it is not only his batting that will be important. He was described by fellow-Australian Ian Harvey, the Club's Assistant Coach, as, "a leader and a consummate professional" and apparently received a "glowing endorsement" from Club legend and former skipper Michael Klinger. He is clearly a top-class player in the red-ball format but he is also keen to experience the Vitality Blast and although he has played no T20 cricket for over 18 months he was the top scorer for the Melbourne Renegades in 2017/18 in the Big Bash League with 324 runs at 29.45. All Exiles are delighted to see Gloucestershire back in Division One of the County Championship and will be keen to see further progress in the white-ball formats. These signings, in their different ways, strengthen the existing squad greatly. We welcome them all.

Gloucestershire Season Preview 2022

Mark Kidger gives his thoughts and hopes for the new season.

So, finally the moment that we have been waiting for since relegation in 2005 and feared might not happen, is upon us: a season in Division 1. That rain-sodden draw with Northamptonshire, on September 26th, 2019, which guaranteed promotion for both teams, now seems so long ago. So much has changed. So much has happened since. And, with hybrid formats in the last two seasons and uncertainty in what form the Championship would return, there was a real fear that the divisions might be re-drawn rather than respecting promotion and relegation from the 2019 season. Instead, by one of those mischievous quirks of the fixture computer, the Shire started their campaign on April 7th with a repeat of that fixture, this time with Northants the hosts.

Cautious optimism seems to be the watchword for supporters. Last season saw both elation and disappointment, but a realistic assessment would be that the side over-achieved for much of the season until sides worked out how to neutralise the Gloucestershire attack. However, the arrival of Zafar Gohar at the end of the season provided a new dimension to the bowling and gives a confidence that any side preparing a turning track for a visit from the Shire this season will see the tactic rebound on them. Watching Zafar and Graeme van Buuren brush away Durham with high quality spin in the final match of the season was a pleasure that we have not had for years (how Sir Robert would have enjoyed commentating on that one). It was a joy to see how, between them, they took 16 wickets against Durham after eight in the previous game, against Glamorgan, with Zafar a big factor as Gloucestershire won three of their last four matches, ending the season on a high. The six games to be played in July and September should see Zafar and GvB enjoy more success together.

One of the great pleasures of 2021 was to see a raft of young players coming through. The Price brothers and Dom Goodman were not familiar names to most but came in and made an immediate impact. Tom Price, in particular, was an outstanding success with wickets at modest cost and valuable runs at No. 8: can he repeat this success over a full season and turn into a genuine bowling all-rounder? Dom Goodman will hope to have more chances in 2022: his economy rate was the best of the entire attack in 2021. Ollie Price is yet to take a first-class wicket but bowled with calm maturity when given a chance.



Ollie Price not to be confused with..... Tom Price

The impression is that Gloucestershire have real strength in depth in the bowling department, with a nice mix of pace and styles: it is a better-balanced attack overall than at any time in recent memory. Opinions of who would form the best attack if everyone is available and showing decent form vary widely, which is always a good sign. One feels that they will compete on just about any pitch. Fans are looking forward to seeing Naseem Shah's pace make things happen on dead pitches but one suspects that not too many sides will enjoy facing Shah, Payne and Higgins on early-season pitches.

There is less confidence about the batting. The last two seasons have featured some alarming collapses and that may be the greatest impediment to success unless fixed in 2022. The fact that just four out of thirty 50s last season were converted into centuries is a worry.

Tom Lace – still only 23 – produced some fine innings but needs to score runs more consistently in 2022. James Bracey – 24 – is turning into a high-class top-order batsman. For me, though, Miles Hammond was the revelation. With a career average under 25, he must have known that 2021 could be his last chance saloon and he responded with some fine innings, often scored in a crisis, as well as 11 catches close to the wicket and some useful bowling spells as an emergency spinner. His biggest frustration must have been not to have converted any of his four fifties into a century. If he can add to his two first-class centuries in 2022 and start making big scores, it will help Gloucestershire to build the first innings totals that set up victories.

The biggest issue in 2021 was probably the lack of solid opening partnerships, leaving the middle order time and again exposed early to the new ball. Signing Marcus Harris from Leicestershire should provide solidity at the top (his last five matches in all formats over the winter have produced a century and three fifties, so he will come into the new season in form and with confidence after an excellent 2021 for Leicestershire). If Gloucestershire are to do well, much will depend on his ability to combine with Chris Dent and give the side solid starts that can be converted into big totals. Hopefully, now relieved of the captaincy, Chris Dent will feel more relaxed and confident and will be back to his mean, run machine best. With Graeme van Buuren and James Bracey available full time, the top order has a much more solid look this season. If Miles Hammond can continue to score good runs, Ben Charlesworth or Tom Lace can make good their immense promise and Ryan Higgins is not too over-bowled to be able to provide a sting in the lower middle order, the side could yet start to post the 400+ first innings totals that have been missing in the last two years. Having Ryan Higgins and Tom Price coming in, rested and with 300 already on the board instead of in a crisis, will offer them more liberty to express themselves with the bat.

Although most fans would go no further than saying that a successful season would be ensuring Division 1 cricket at Bristol again in 2023, there is a sense that the club has made some good signings and has added plenty of strength in depth. If the planets align correctly and the side gets some early season momentum, it could do better than just survive this season. #GoGlos!



Chris Dent will hope to build on his 9711 first class runs

Memories of the Cheltenham Festival: Exiles look back

When I put out the call for articles about the Gloucestershire Exiles for our 50th anniversary last year, writes Sarah Blowen, many members focussed on the Cheltenham Festival and the lasting encounters and friendships - even marriages! - made there. The paragraphs below will resonate with many of you and bring to life some of our favourite players and fellow Exiles who were such a part of this annual 'family gathering'.

Nick Bryan first encountered Gloucestershire cricket in the 1970s and like many of us the stars of that era had him transfixed:

"The game that got me into cricket didn't last very long, barely 20 overs. There wasn't even a result. I was seven. I was told that we supported Gloucestershire because we had moved fairly recently to Cheltenham from East Anglia. My family and I were on holiday in Scotland and watched, on a black and white TV, what was probably the first BBC broadcast of a JPL match from the Cheltenham festival. Gloucestershire had two men from Pakistan playing for them called Sadiq and Zaheer. They came and went very quickly because a rather scary looking bowler, very tall with long hair called Willis, got them out. Gloucestershire were 0 for 2 which wasn't good. Then a man called Procter came in and the art of batting suddenly looked a whole lot easier. He knocked the ball over the marquees effortlessly on numerous occasions. Then it started pouring with rain and that was the end. My life was never the same again after that. Years later I was lucky enough to ask Mike Procter for his recollections of scoring 109 out of Gloucestershire's total of 135 for 4 in 1972. He couldn't remember it at all. True greatness!"

It is not just what happens on the pitch that makes the Cheltenham Festival. Cally Barlow remembers one of the Gloucestershire Greats, who was a dear friend to the Exiles:

"I like to walk wickets. Sometimes I am successful, sometimes not, but the person I liked to walk with was Bryan "Bomber" Wells. We'd probably meet up on his perambulations round the ground and then complete our circuit together. Well, I say together but always in the company of other fans who gathered round Bomber to hear his wonderful anecdotes and memories. We never reached our destination in under 30 minutes and often much longer. It was always a delight, and did we walk those wickets? I can't remember now as my whole attention was on Bomber and his stories."

Whilst sitting on the Cheltenham boundary, Cally also made an impression on another Gloucestershire cricket figure, in more ways than one:

"When watching cricket, I used to attend matches on my own. I liked to find a good spot to watch the action, take out my little scoring book and enjoy the game. As a member of the then Gloucester Regional Committee, I had got to know quite a few people and they would often have a few words in passing. I met the delightful Ron Lev, a great supporter of the Exiles in this way as he stopped to have a chat. How I miss him.

One day I was sitting in my usual spot on the low wall by the ice cream van when a shadow appeared in front of me. I looked up and there was Eddie Barlow, then the Gloucestershire coach. "What's the score?" he said having noticed my book. I thought to myself "You're the coach you should know what the score is". However, I told him and we chatted for a few minutes and then off he strolled. The next day I was late arriving at the ground and dashing through the Members gate, I saw Eddie lounging on the side of the Pavilion wall. He saw me, looked at his watch and said "What's this? The scorer arriving late?" We both laughed and he asked if I would like a coffee.

In South Africa about 5 years later we were at a party, and someone asked Eddie, "Hey Bunter, how did you and Cally meet?" With that lovely twinkle in his eye and his cheeky grin he said, "While I was taking a stroll round the ground at the Cheltenham Festival I spotted a lady sitting on a low wall and thought I would go over and see if I could see down the front of her dress"."

One of the characters of the Cheltenham Festival often in evidence was Nico Craven MBE. “My name’s Nico – it rhymes with psycho” is how he used to introduce himself. Howard Allen remembers his friend:

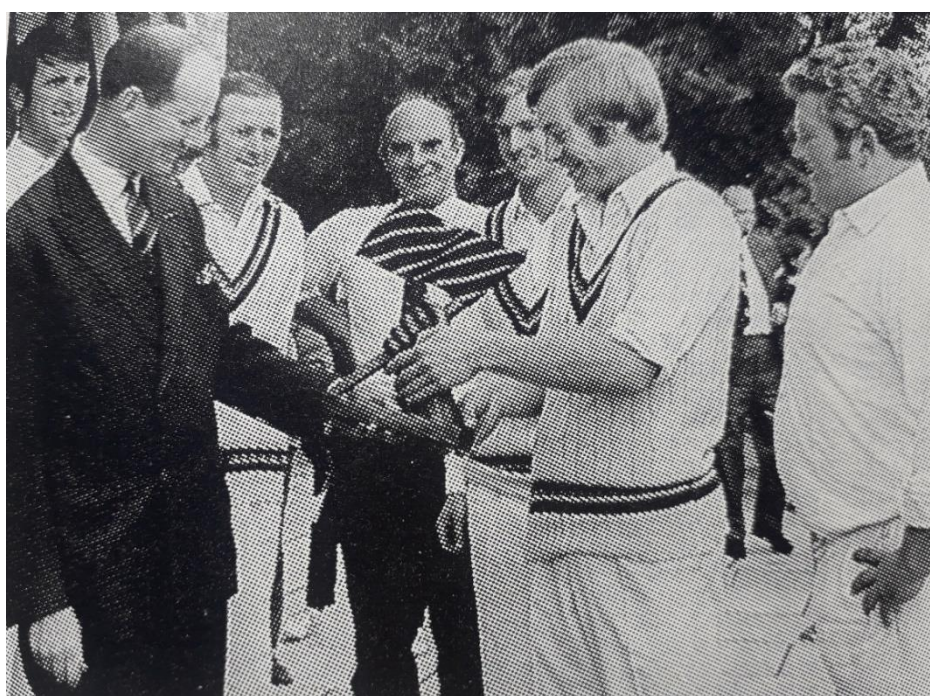
“Nico was a familiar and much loved presence at the Cheltenham Festival for well over 70 years. He made his first appearance there in 1935 and continued to attend until his death in 2010, even when having to fit in daily rounds of dialysis at a local hospital, which he did with his characteristic courage, patience and without complaint.

Nico lived as a Gloucestrian Exile in Cumbria for many years but would always make the pilgrimage back home for the Cheltenham Festival. As Grenville Simons of Wisteria Books wrote in his foreword to Nico’s “That Darn’d Elusive Championship” [2003]:

What a sight! It is 10.15 a.m. on what promises to be a sweltering hot July day at the Cheltenham Cricket Festival. Mowers are gliding gracefully over the outfield, players are warming up and the crowd is growing. ‘Here comes trouble,’ says Barnaby. Into view strolls the familiar figure of Nico in his light, linen jacket. Beneath it he is wearing an interesting coloured tie. We enquire about its origin, pull his leg and over a cup the banter begins...

Nico, as per norm, would have completed a circuit of the boundary prior to meeting up with his fellow Exiles - greeting and talking with old friends and folk that perhaps he had never met previously. His engaging smile and warmth of personality were ever to the fore. He possessed an expertise in the arts of praising, joking and gently advising. I treasure my years of friendship with Nico – ever grateful that he enrolled me into the great family of the Exiles. I highly valued his advice and support during my early years as editor of *Outside-edge*.”

Nico wrote each year a book on his associations with cricket – past and present, and every year he would donate a collection of them for the Exiles’ Cheltenham Day raffle. He also introduced the idea of awarding ‘The Gloucesters’ adds Sarah – a bronze trophy he had made by a Cumbrian sculptor and awarded to a player for the outstanding contribution during the festival, after he felt that Mike Bissex’s outstanding contribution to the 1970 Festival had passed unrewarded. In 1971, Alan Gibson wrote in *The Times* “It is, to be sure, a rather alarming trophy, a replica of a large fist, just the thing to coax a baby to sleep. Henry Blofeld, the adjudicator, wisely awarded the honour to [David] Allen”. This was the forerunner to the Exiles’ Player of the Year Award – now presented in the form of a less-alarming, engraved tankard.



Nico Craven presenting his trophy to Mike Bissex

James Lillywhite and his lasting impression

By Grenville Simons author of "Lillywhite's Legacy. A History of the Cheltenham Cricket Festival"

Several years ago, my wife and I went to the Wesley Barrell shop located at 3, Queen's Circus, Cheltenham, as they were having a furniture sale. Although we didn't buy anything we had a fascinating conversation with one of the shop assistants.

We were told that each day before closing time the staff went round all the chairs and sofas plumping up the cushions so they looked fresh and inviting for the next day. However, when they came in the following morning the cushions on a sofa by a window on the top floor were invariably dented once again looking as if they had been sat on overnight. This got me thinking. Was it the ghost of James Lillywhite that would recline on the sofa when everyone had gone home and all was quiet in the room? For it was here that Lillywhite lived, ran his 'emporium' selling sports goods, and died aged fifty-seven in November 1882.

In 1856, James Lillywhite, known as 'Jem', began working at Cheltenham College. He was appointed cricket coach and manager of the Playground (now the site of the cricket festival) the central meeting point for the pupils' recreation and amusement. He was a 'natural' when working with the boys, patient and fun, quick to settle disputes and an inspiring coach. Quite quickly the standard of cricket at the school improved.

In 1861, he arranged for the United All-England XI to play Twenty-two Past and Present Cheltonians. He had great difficulty persuading the board to allow this game to go ahead, as they were 'dreadfully afraid of admitting all sorts of riff-raff into the College grounds'. The prestigious visiting team consisted of some of the leading cricketers of the day, including John Wisden, the 'Little Wonder', who three years later would bring out the first issue of his Cricketer's Almanack. They had just returned from the first ever overseas cricket tour, the historic trip to Canada and the United States. As a business venture Jem's event was a failure, but his mind was set and he started making exciting plans for the future.

When county cricket first came to the College ground in July 1872, Gloucestershire easily defeated Surrey by an innings and thirty-seven runs. Each of the following years tents were erected, bands played, and fashionably dressed ladies watched from the grandstand. In 1876, with Yorkshire as the visitors a large crowd was treated to an unforgettable batting display from W.G. Grace who was enjoying an *annus mirabilis*. For eight hours he plundered the north-country bowlers, making 318* in the Gloucestershire total of 528. Rain meant the match ended as a draw, but Jem's venture gained good publicity and he proposed replacing one game with a week of cricket. Talks between the College Council and Gloucestershire County Cricket Club took place, agreement reached, and Lillywhite was to be paid £120 to run two games in 1878.

So, the 'Cricket Week' arrived and the entrepreneur worked hard to organise a variety of social events throughout the week. He arranged musical concerts, theatrical performances and a grand celebratory banquet to be held at the Plough Hotel hosted by Baron de Ferrières, the popular mayor of Cheltenham. Despite some disappointing results and unsettled weather, 'The Week' grew in prominence. Attendances increased, national publicity was favourable and a good profit margin began to appear. Jem's hard work was recognized and toasted, but sadly it all began to take a toll on his health. Gradually the responsibilities were passed on to Jem's son-in-law Edwin Lawrence, and he was granted management of the event for 1883.

James Lillywhite died on 24th November 1882. There were many warm tributes. Shops in the town closed for his funeral at the town cemetery overlooked by Cleeve Hill. It was attended by family, fellow cricketers, business associates and many friends. As a mark of respect for their mentor over fifty senior College boys walked bareheaded in front of the hearse forming a guard of honour at the entrance to the chapel. In 1906, the Cheltenham Cricket Festival commenced. Through his entrepreneurial skills James Lillywhite had sown the seeds for what is now the longest running festival of its kind in the world. Lillywhite's legacy not only includes dented cushions in Queen's Circus but the unique, historic cricket festival that takes place every year on the Playground.



CRICKET AND MUSIC - PERFECTLY IN TUNE

Simon Ireland draws a parallel between different harmonies.

'If music be the food of love, play on.' Orsino's words at the start of Twelfth Night show that while Shakespeare may have favoured the leg side (!), there can be no such thing as too much of matters musical or, indeed, of our national game. And whether you identify with Charlie Parker the great Gloucs. spinner or Charlie Parker the bebop pioneer, both were wonderful creative artists and it is no coincidence that critic Neville Cardus covered both Cricket and Music during a long and illustrious career in journalism.

There are many parallels between the two and it was a book review in a recent edition of The Cricketer magazine that prompted me to delve more deeply into music's cricketing connections. 'Jazz and Cricket' by Matthew Wright contains a telling quote from Richard Williams who was also both a music critic and a sports feature writer for The Guardian and still contributes occasionally today (quiz buffs will also know him as the original host of The Old Grey Whistle Test).

'I like it when nobody, neither the participants nor the audience, knows what's going to happen or how things will turn out, which is the link between Cricket and Jazz.'

The ebb and flow of the first-class game with its lulls and crescendi does seem almost musical, of course. Specialists in each facet of the game are rather like virtuoso instrumentalists who then come together as a team to entertain and tantalise us and while we know where a pop song or a symphony is heading, perhaps Jazz with its inherent unpredictability does offer the closest comparison. (I must admit a personal stake in this line of argument at this point as my son is a professional bass player who has performed at the Cheltenham Festival several times with Kansas Smitty's as well as doing regular gigs at Ronnie Scott's).

Watching the Gloucestershire team warm up before play commences, I will have the same nervous excitement as before a gig and perhaps this is why famous musicians down the years have developed a love of the game as they recognise the similar demands placed on technique, the chance to show skills practised over thousands of hours and, above all, the opportunity to entertain, even to thrill, an audience. Mick Jagger, Eric Clapton and Elton John are all well-known aficionados and a number of players' autobiographies detail the high jinks (something of an understatement) that took place in the latter's Melbourne hotel suite during the Ashes series of 86/87.

Neville Cardus would probably not have been inspired to put pen to paper to capture a worse for wear Phil Tufnell but as Duncan Hamilton reminds us in his award winning The Great Romantic, 'As Cardus saw it, there was no difference between filing one thousand words on a Halle concert and another thousand on an Ashes Test.' He was equally at home in both environments and his style reflected a love of both. A favourite player in his early journalistic days was Lancashire's Cecil Parkin, 'the first jazz cricketer, a card and an artful dodger' who often sang as he returned to his bowling mark and asked umpires for requests as he knew the lyrics of the day's most popular numbers!

Gloucestershire's supreme batsman, Wally Hammond, inspired Cardus during the 1938 Ashes and his 240 at Lord's was deemed to be 'the greatest innings I ever saw. The one innings I'd most like to see again.' But it was not, in fact, to music that he turned for inspiration but sculpture as he wrote 'for sheer classical elegance it compared to the Elgin Marbles'. And another Gloucestershire great, Tom Graveney, inspired a young Michael Parkinson to compare his range and graceful virtuosity to the playing of Jazz clarinettist Johnny Dodds. 'I thought they were the two great stylists of all time!' gushed the passionate fan of both disciplines.

Collaborations are essential in both worlds whether they are between songwriter and lyricist (and there are few greater Cricket fans than Tim Rice), soloing instrumentalists playing off each other or batting and bowling

partnerships. Frank Tyson made a telling musical analogy when summing up his peerless pairing with Brian Statham: 'My success was often down to Brian's relentless pursuit that injected desperation into batsmen. It felt like having Menuhin playing second fiddle to my lead.' More recently, Richie Richardson and Curtley Ambrose have swapped bat and ball for rhythm and bass guitars as they turn out for the intriguingly titled 'The Big Bad Dread and The Bald Head'.

Time for a final few cricketing chords and a possible XI of performers with feet in both camps. One might open with singer songwriter Mark Butcher and vocalist Sir Alastair Cook (born in Gloucester); a more than useful pianist called Bradman could come in at three followed by Keane's lead singer Tom Chaplin who hits the ball nearly as far as he does off the tee; the Lancashire wicket keeper Frank Parr would entertain on the trombone which he played professionally and multi-instrumentalist Jeremy Coney could flesh out the middle order with New York based bass player Orlando Fleming who played for Devon in the Nat West Trophy in the mid-1990s, dismissing both Paul Grayson and Richard Blakey, and winning the Minor Counties Trophy at Lord's. Johnny Borrell from Razorlight would be a lively fielder with a 'golden touch' while Brett Lee and Henry Olonga could share the new ball.

Roy Harper would be a sentimental choice at number 11 just so that when finally dismissed we could play his classic song 'When an old cricketer leaves the crease'. A cricketing calypso would make an ideal soundtrack to post match drinks and any match would, of course, take place at Cheltenham. The legendary pianist George Shearing relocated from New York to Stow-on-the-Wold each summer and although blind he loved to attend Gloucestershire matches with a friend who would act as commentator. 'How I love cricket and how I desperately wish I could see the play,' he told the late David Foot during a chance encounter. Like all Exiles - and many music fans - he would echo a well-known lyric: 'I don't like Cricket, I love it'!

Support the Mike Procter Foundation this May!



Many of you will know that our Gloucestershire legend, **Mike Procter**, is recovering from recent heart surgery in South Africa. Mike is doing well and has been delighted to receive so many messages of support from his fans.

Our friends at the Mike Procter Foundation are holding a very special fundraising event at Old Trafford on May 7th: a celebration of the 50th anniversary of 'that' Gillette Cup semi-final between Lancashire and Gloucestershire...if you don't know what I'm talking about, check out the articles about this match which has entered cricket folklore in a recent edition of Outside-edge...

Mike Procter, David Hughes and others who played in the game will be there. Ticketing details are attached – it would be great to have a Gloucestershire Exiles presence at the event. Mike's Foundation does amazing work within disadvantaged township communities in South Africa and they would love as many Exiles as possible to sign up to receive their occasional email newsletters. You can do so at www.mikeprocterfoundationuk.org

Following the Shire from Spain



Mark Kidger writes of a lifetime's passion for the County

I was always keen on cricket, although inhibited by a severe lack of talent. This meant that, from a young age, a lot of the time I did the scoring. As my junior school (Hambrook County Primary) had a keen sports teacher who arranged fixtures with many local prep schools, this meant a lot of travelling with the team at weekends to all parts of the county, which was a lot of fun. I did play for Hambrook CP and played for the Bristol Grammar School 3rd XI (a team reserved for those with enthusiasm, but no ability). Having been at the County Ground after school in 1977, when Gloucestershire went so close to winning the Championship (what a speech by Mike Procter from the balcony afterwards), I became a junior member and attended almost every home Sunday League game, even though it meant walking home to Winterbourne Down afterwards as this was quicker than waiting for a bus. At university, I tried my hand at indoor cricket (great fun but makes The Hundred look as hidebound as Test cricket). After leaving university, I got a job teaching mathematics in Kent and played for the school staff team in mid-week and Addington 2nds at the weekend, turning into a useful seamer who could either bowl what, at our level, was quick, or swing the ball and took plenty of wickets. Three years of playing cricket sometimes three times a week and attending county games ended abruptly when I had the chance to go to Tenerife to do a PhD, working in the observatories there and on La Palma.

Tenerife, with its large Indian community, does have cricket, played on a flat area of waste ground near the port, where a large group gathers at weekends to play. Getting news of Gloucestershire, though, was tricky. It was internetless times and my main source of news was the BBC World Service's 5-minute sports bulletins which gave County scores and a couple of 15-minute sessions of TMS during Tests. This left me only vaguely aware of the travails of the side in the late '80s and early '90s.

As the Internet started to develop, it got easier to follow games. Internet versions of newspapers (then free) offered scorecards and reports. Then CricInfo appeared and allowed me to follow games live, even if Championship coverage was limited – still better than nothing! The greatest revolution though was the pioneering work of Mark Church (Churchie) at The Oval to start live ball-by-ball commentary on radio and internet: the first time that Championship cricket had been broadcast ball-by-ball for decades. Churchie did a wonderful job and encouraged wide audience participation. This was followed by Middlesex commentary, too. Unlike Mark Church, the Middlesex commentator worked alone and relied even more on e-mails and audience participation to fill in. After Ned Hall, Kevin Hand took over Middlesex commentary and rapidly became a legend with a big international following. This coincided with me moving to the European Space Agency in Madrid to work on the Herschel mission. Broadcasting alone from the TMS box Kevin Hand used to grab any guest that he could find to help fill in when play was slow including, on one memorable occasion, Thierry, the Lord's pastry chef: this is widely regarded as the best session of play that Kevin ever broadcast as the interview was fabulous. Doing a job that could be tedious at times, but often very exacting, with cricket on in the background to allow some moments of rest was great for mental health when work was stressful, switching attention briefly to the cricket when something of note happened.

For fans like me, it was a great moment when, finally, the BBC started broadcasting ball-by-ball on all-county games, later backed-up by text commentary. Finally, I got to hear Bob Hunt (Sir Robert, please!) regularly and found that he was as much of a living legend as Kevin Hand – the two of them broadcasting together on a Gloucestershire v. Middlesex game was always a delight.

An Appreciation of David 'Syd' Lawrence

'Syd' Lawrence was always a great crowd favourite as a whole-hearted player with genuine pace and a local lad. A friend of mine claimed to have 'discovered' him as his raw teenage pace proved unplayable to the point of dangerous for school matches! Simon Ireland gives his appreciation:

Appropriately enough, David 'Syd' Lawrence has always loomed large in my pantheon of Gloucestershire greats but it took his moving interview in Mark Butcher's 'You guys are history' Sky documentary to underline that he has a strength of character to match his physical might.

When the Azeem Rafiq affair brought Yorkshire's handling of Asian cricketers under the spotlight, there were doubtless several counties in the 'there but for the grace of God go we' camp as what dubiously passed for banter decades ago is now rightly seen very differently. And while Gloucestershire has always been justifiably proud of producing England's first UK born black Test cricketer, Syd's treatment in his early days represents a blot on the county's copybook, not least as it was a fellow team member who perpetrated his initial abuse on an away trip. Syd spoke about this in stark terms and to give the county its due, an immediate and unreserved apology was to follow. We also know from the testimony of other black players on the circuit at that time that ignorance led to a catalogue of mistreatment and Courtney Walsh, Syd's fast bowling partner for a decade, relates in his autobiography that Syd and John Shepherd received volleys of abuse in a game at Scarborough for which David Bairstow was forced to apologise profusely.

What Syd experienced in his early days made him even more determined to succeed at the highest level and it was humbling to see him reduced to tears in Butcher's programme as he remembered how proud his parents were that their son would be representing England. By this stage, the gangling fifteen-year-old I first encountered in a Sunday newspaper feature on the future of English Cricket had become the muscular, buccaneering presence capable of sending frissons of excitement through any crowd. He added the raw pace to Gloucestershire's attack that had been missing since Mike Procter's day and, of course, complemented Courtney Walsh to excellent effect for over a decade. When I was lucky enough to be introduced to Graham Gooch at a charity event in the Long Room at Lord's a couple of years ago, I asked him about the challenges posed by the Shire's opening attack and he suggested that scoring was certainly easier against Syd but as a partnership they were one of the best around at that time.

David Green wrote of the near miss 1985 Championship season, 'Lawrence's direct and ferocious assault was a perfect foil for the more languid looking Walsh.' Syd took 85 first class wickets in that season and there were 'lightning spells' at Hove and Gloucester, in particular. He was voted Young Player of the Year by the Cricket Writers Club but had to wait till 1988 to win a place in the Test team against Sri Lanka at Lord's alongside Jack Russell. Further caps followed in 1991 against the West Indies before the fateful tour to New Zealand that brought horrendous injury a week after his 28th birthday.

The shattering of his left patella during his delivery was apparently 'like a pistol shot' and proved deeply upsetting to everyone present, not least Jack behind the stumps. Eleven years after his teenage debut for the Shire, the career of this giant of a man had been brought to a shuddering halt and despite months of brave rehab and two valiant comeback attempts, Gloucestershire would never see Syd in meaningful action again after 1993. And impressive though his county statistics may seem as he managed 477 first-class wickets and 147 in one day games, mere numbers will never hint at the excitement he generated, the unstinting effort he gave and the affection he inspired among diehard supporters.

Syd will always be a hero in my eyes, both for his wholehearted and thrilling exploits on the pitch and also for his strength of character in coping with adversity in many forms. He remains, indeed, a mighty inspiration.





Top row (L-R) Jared Warner, Luke Charlesworth, George Scott
Middle row (L-R) Tom Lace, Ben Wells, Chris Dent, Josh Shaw
Bottom row (L-R) Miles Hammond, James Bracey, Ian Cockbain, Tom Smith



t, Paul van Meekeren, Dominic Goodman, Ben Charlesworth.
, Will Naish, Ajeet Singh Dale.
ain, Jack Taylor, Graeme van Buuren, Ryan Hig-gins, Matt Taylor,

Gloucestershire Exiles' Hall of Fame

In every Spring issue of Outside-edge, we pay tribute to a Gloucestershire Great and induct them into our virtual Hall of Fame with appreciations from members and fans. In 2021 we added the great West Indian bowler, Courtney Walsh.

Spring 2013	Mike Procter	Spring 2018	Zaheer Abbas
Spring 2014	Walter Hammond	Spring 2019	'Jack' Russell
Spring 2015	W.G. Grace	Spring 2020	Michael Klinger
Spring 2016	Mark Alleyne and Tom Graveney	Spring 2021	Courtney Walsh
Spring 2017	Arthur Milton	Spring 2022	'Charlie' Parker

C.W.L. 'Charlie' Parker



Keith Gerrish proposes Charlie Parker as our latest Hall of Fame entry. Keith writes:

I have been reading the latest Outside-edge and looking at the Hall of Fame players. It strikes me that there is only one player who only bowled – I appreciate that Mike Procter and W.G. took many wickets, and that Hammond took his share. So, I would like to nominate Charlie Parker, who in a 33-year career (1903-1935) took 3170 wickets for Gloucestershire (average 19.43) and 3278 first-class wickets (average 19.46). The latter makes him the third highest wicket-taker ever, behind only Wilfred Rhodes (4187 wickets) and Tich Freeman (3776 wickets). His best figures for Gloucestershire were 10 for 79 v Somerset at Bristol in 1921 and 17 for 56 v Essex at Tuffley in 1925. Six times he managed a hat-trick (Doug Wright had 7 and Tom Goddard also 6) including two in the same game against Middlesex at Greenbank in 1924.

Sadly, perhaps because of his character, he was capped only once (in 1921). He was a “Wisden Cricketer of the Year” in 1923.

Always a great source of historical facts and statistics, Howard Allen supports Keith’s nomination:

‘Charlie’ Parker was one of the greatest left-arm spin bowlers in the history of the ‘noble game’. His record makes astonishing reading. He switched to bowling left-arm spin after the First World War. His illustrious career record is remarkable.

Balls	Mdns	Runs	Wkts	BB	Ave	5wl	10wM
157328	7719	63819	3278	10-79	19.46	277	91

With his uncanny control of spin, flight, pace and length, Charlie on a difficult wicket could be unplayable and on a good one he would still bowl out the best batsmen. In the years 1920-1935 he took over 100 wickets in each season and in this triumphant period he also claimed over 200 wickets on five occasions.

In his sole Test in 1921 at Old Trafford against the powerful Australian side, he took 2 for 32 from 28 overs, when the Australians were bowled out for 175. In this series on two other occasions he was summoned to the ground and even though the wickets were described as ‘Parker friendly’, Charlie did not play. Perhaps the Parker ‘free spirit’ and his reputation for not mincing his words were held against him by the chairman of selectors, the imperious, Sir Pelham Warner.

In 1930 in the famous tied game against Australia at Bristol he took 7 for 54 in their second innings of 117. He bowled Bradman for 14 and then dismissed him for 42 in the second innings. Charlie bowled Bradman for 96 when playing for H.D.G. Levenson’s XI at Scarborough. Charlie had taken Bradman’s wicket on the three occasions when he had the opportunity to bowl to him. No other bowler ever surpassed Charlie’s success rate when bowling to Bradman.

Several of Charlie’s bowling feats are legendary. In 1922 in his Benefit game against Yorkshire at Bristol, he hit the stumps with five successive deliveries but one was a no-ball. In 1925 against Essex at Gloucester he took 17 for 56 in the match. His record of 26 wickets in three successive innings still stands. He also performed the hat-trick on no less than six occasions and he took 9 wickets in an innings nine times.

Charlie is above all the one bowler I would have loved to see bowling his brisk left-arm spinners on a responsive pitch. Then at stumps over a pint to listen to him dilate on the craft of spin bowling and to share in some discussion with him on the issues of class, social justice and inequality. These were matters of great concern to the former pupil of Cheltenham Grammar School. Charlie was not a conventional personality. My father saw him play in his heyday and whetted my appetite for the wonders of cricket and he recalled Charlie heading for the beer tent during the lunch break.

I place Charlie Parker as the second name after Wally Hammond on my selection list of my best Gloucestershire XI since 1900.

No one deserves a place more in our Hall of Fame than Charles Parker and I commend him without reservation for admittance in 2022.

Ian Herdman adds his support:

May I support Keith Gerrish's nomination of Charlie Parker for 2022 inclusion in the Hall of Fame. Charlie's longevity in the first-class game for Gloucestershire and awesome career bowling figures speak for themselves. He amassed an amazing total of 3,170 wickets at 19.43, a feat that will surely never be broken and stands third in the all-time list of wicket takers worldwide. He sometimes started a match bowling seamers (having started his career exclusively in that mode) before switching to his better known orthodox

slow left-arm spin. His best analysis was all 10 for 79 against Somerset at Bristol in 1921. In all, he took 10 wickets in a match 91 times and 5 wickets in an innings 273 times - wow!

Nigel Dean adds further weight to Keith's nomination:

If given the chance to watch a Gloucestershire great of yore, who would you choose? You can't get a player more famous than W.G. Grace. Maybe it would be Gilbert Jessop, the Croucher, or Wally Hammond. Dear Tom Goddard springs to mind. I would have loved to see any of those in action. Certainly Charlie Parker, the latest entrant to our Exiles Hall of Fame. What a player. What a character.

Charlie the player racked up the most wickets and appearances in the county's history. Recommended by W.G. in 1903, his career spanned from then until he retired at the age of 52 in the Thirties. But he was most effective, converting from pace bowler to slow left arm, when cricket resumed following the First World War. Charlie even managed a world record in 1924, the first player to take 3 hat-tricks in a single first-class season. In over 30 years with the County he took well over 3,000 wickets.

Some thought Charlie the finest left arm spinner of the lot. The late author and journalist David Foot described Charlie in a profile as 'a beautiful bowler who intelligently schemed his successes with the ready co-operation of Hammond at slip. Theirs was a teasing, ensnaring double act, infuriating to the victim. He would bowl with flawless skill on all types of wickets, flighting and spinning his way through the sturdiest of defences.'

Charlie was also known for speaking his mind. Cruelly and staggeringly he was only picked once by England. Clearly his face did not fit. As Foot wrote: 'Perhaps those who chose our national team judged Parker by his biting tongue rather than his supple fingers.' On one occasion, Charlie made his feelings crystal clear to Pelham Warner in an infamous incident in a hotel lift. It most certainly ended any lingering chance of Parker getting another England invitation.

This largely self-educated man from Prestbury talked with as much passion about political radicalism and music as cricket. As a radio broadcaster, I would have loved an interview with him.

I must admit that I knew little of Charlie Parker until Keith made his nomination. His playing record is remarkable and he seems a fascinating character. For a summary of his career, members would do well to read this article in the GCCC website <https://www.gloscricket.co.uk/news/charlie-parker/>

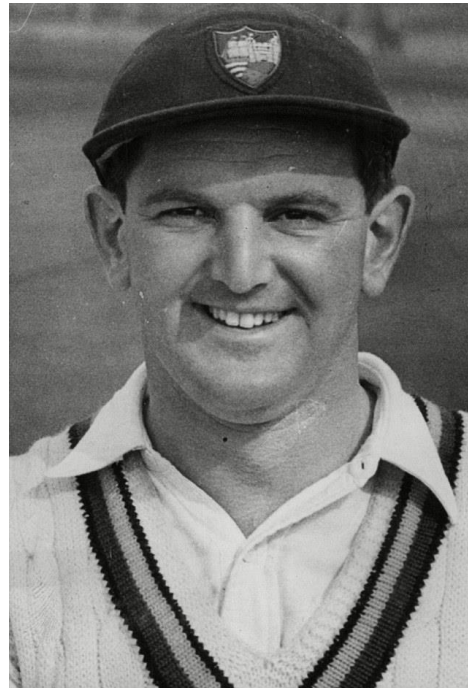
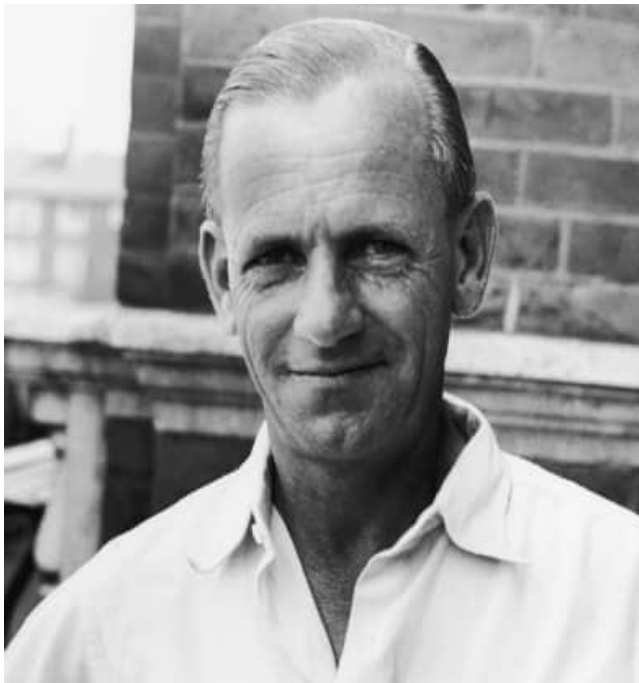


Lancastrian Exiles

Some of our members are Exiles as of birthright. Some were born in exile and yearn for the Promised Land of their forebears. Yet others have had to work hard to cross the north-south divide! Two Lancastrians, Douglas Miller and Neville Denson, reflect on their road to Gloucestershire... Little did they know it when they submitted their articles separately, but both had their introduction to Gloucestershire cricket at the same Old Trafford match in 1947!

Douglas Miller:

When Outside Edge arrives and, perhaps more pertinently, when I congregate with other Exiles, I have to confess to a dominant emotion of jealousy. I know I am about to be overwhelmed by those happily reminiscing about a childhood spent watching George Emmett, Tom Graveney and others in their prime. The Exiles, you see, is intended for just such people, those long-term supporters of the county no longer living within a bus ride of the county ground. I am quite different. I was probably sixty years old when I first set foot on any of Gloucestershire's home grounds.



Two great Gloucestershire stylists, George Emmett and Tom Graveney

I harbour just one childhood memory of seeing a Gloucestershire team take the field - and when I did so I was far from wishing them well. I go back to early August 1947, my second first-class match. I was sitting at what has now become the Statham End at Old Trafford, at midwicket in those days. I was, or would shortly become, a junior member of Lancashire. My heroes were not Charlie Barnett or Sam Cook but Cyril Washbrook, Winston Place and Jack Ikin.

The pattern of the fixture list in those early post-war summers meant that it would be fifty years before I would next see Gloucestershire take the field in a first-class game. As a member of MCC I was in the pavilion for the glorious victory of 1973, though it was still a matter of indifference who won that Gillette Cup final. I seem to remember some sixes from Tony Brown, but my day is most sharply recalled for overhearing Jim Foat's remark on returning to the dressing room - 'How did Villa get on?' Oh dear, how far removed I still was from the Exiles.

It all changed in the late 1990s. Somehow, I had been persuaded to join the ACS (Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians). Rather curiously I travelled to Headingley for the AGM and learnt that a series of books on county grounds was in progress but needed someone to take on Sussex, Somerset and

Gloucestershire. I put my hand up for Gloucestershire – it wasn't far from my Buckinghamshire home, and I reckoned it might be an interesting way of occupying my winter.

I soon came to recognize what a friendly club I had volunteered to write about and I spent many happy hours in the company of Bert Avery, the retired first team scorer. I think he enjoyed the challenge of finding snippets from the archives – little else occupied his time beyond digging out details for those who swore, rightly or wrongly, that an ancestor had played for the county. Thanks to Bert I enjoyed free access to past yearbooks and old minute books, once being allowed (against the rules) to take some away for evening reading in my hotel bedroom. I felt a bit of a scrounger, so I thought the decent thing might be to join the county club. An added attraction was the rich vein of sustained good form the club was enjoying at a time when Mark Alleyne was about to assume the captaincy. Taking out life membership meant I would never need to review my allegiance – and an attractive deal was on offer.

Around this time, I heard of the Exiles. With all the travelling and overnight stays my labour of love was becoming a bit of a drain on resources. Not another expense, I said, parrying the initial pleas to join.

My resistance didn't last for long. At first, I felt an outsider again, but not for long! I seem to remember Mike Pimbury being one of the lynchpins at the time, and Mark Brunt has always been in evidence. Was he not editor of *Outside-edge*? John Light was certainly a dominant presence, giving us the benefit of his knowledge as a Lord's tour guide at one of my early meetings. In July 2000 I was able to bring my *Cricket Grounds of Gloucestershire* to market at Cheltenham. It was very much a poor man's offering as Stephen Chalke raced around laden with boxes to meet demand for his new book with Bomber Wells. But mine was to become a steady seller through the county shop.

Though I am proud to wear the tie and relish the chance to get to Cheltenham, I still perhaps lack the pedigree of a true Exile. However, in one respect I can throw down a challenge. Who else among the Exiles has visited the site of every one of the eighteen grounds on which Gloucestershire have played either a championship or List A match? Come to that can you even name them all? Perhaps that question should be part of the entrance exam should we ever wish to make membership of the Exiles a bit more elitist!

Neville Denson:

I was surprised, puzzled and honoured when I received the invitation to become an Exile. I searched my mind for how I, a dyed-in-the-wool Lancastrian and member of Lancashire CCC, could possibly qualify. The cynic in me wondered if it was a plot to gain 'intelligence' about a rival: the nicer side of me was highly flattered, I thought it a lovely gesture, and won.

My introduction to cricket couldn't have been further removed from the greenery of Gloucestershire. I lived in what was the most densely populated region of Europe and could cycle well over 10 miles from my home before I saw a green field. Perhaps that is why the green of the Central Lancashire League cricket attracted me so magnetically.

So, what can I plead in defence of being a Gloucestershire Exile? Here's the best list I can come up with: the first County Championship game I ever attended involved Gloucestershire. That was at Old Trafford back in 1947, when I saw Jack Crapp get 131 – or rather saw him add 5 to his overnight score of 126, before Dick Pollard sent one of his stumps cartwheeling. It stopped abruptly and just in time. Another cartwheel and it would have impaled the wicketkeeper...

I played football with Geoff Pullar in a tough and tumble amateur league and I even bowled at him one evening on a school's concrete wicket. I think they are still looking for the ball.

As a young boy, I knew a man who played cricket for the local factory team who I now know was from Gloucester. For a long time, I thought he was from where he said he was: 'Glorster'. He claimed to have been

on the ground staff at Gloucestershire and was keen to bowl the 'wrong 'un' which, on occasion, he did to devastating effect. I never saw him take a wicket with it – to be fair, I never saw anyone score off these balls either – but such was his zeal that when the wrong 'un went wrong, the ball would climb rapidly to reach the top of the 150-foot industrial chimney. Batsmen, fielders, wicket-keeper and umpires alike were mystified and bemused. Then, those realising that the ball was no-where to be seen and that what went up must eventually come down, were more concerned with their safety than the game and sought to protect themselves from the ball as it re-entered the earth's atmosphere.

I have a grand-daughter who rejoices in the name of Martha Grace – which you will all know was the name of W G's mother. Even though he was not a Lancastrian, I am prepared to acknowledge that W.G. Grace was a rather good cricketer. I have to confess, alas, that my grand-daughter's surname of Buenrostro is not one to be commonly found in Gloucestershire.

My friend Nico Craven was Gloucestershire enough for both of us. I have paid a couple of extremely happy, enjoyable visits to the Cheltenham Festival in his company and after my first visit was even moved to write some verse about it.

It was from Gloucestershire that I was released after serving a two-year sentence in the RAF. The place was PDC Innsworth. PDC stands for 'Personnel Despatch Centre' and – despite the fact that these words typify the de-humanising that the armed forces were pretty good at – I was delighted to be 'despatched', rather like a parcel, back into the real world and for this, the county has a special place in my heart.

There I rest my case. I feel as if I've examined my conscience and been through the confessional and am greatly relieved as a result.

Yet I still ask myself how can a Lancastrian CCC member be a Gloucestershire Exile? Though in many ways I can't be, I *am*, and pleased and proud to be.



Tom Lace will be hoping for a fruitful 2022

Gloucestershire Exiles' Player of the Year 2021

Not only do Gloucestershire Exiles nominate past greats as candidates for the Hall of Fame: members also vote for their Player of the Year who has impressed them in the previous season and award them the Ron Lev Memorial Trophy.

Our 2021, Exiles' Player of the Season is **Graeme van Buuren** who enjoyed his most successful season in GCCC colours.



Ruth Sharville (a new Exiles' member) gives her view of why GvB fully deserves this recognition:

I can think of no worthier winner of our Player of the Year award than Graeme van Buuren. He played a crucial part in the successful season Gloucestershire enjoyed last year, scoring runs, taking wickets and fielding well in all games he was able to be involved in, as demonstrated by his position in the season averages. But all this he did with the burden on his shoulder of protracted Home Office activity (or lack of it) to confirm his UK residency, a process which should have been simple but dragged on all season. He bore this with such fortitude and good humour which cannot have been easy. And despite everything that may have been on his mind, that famous smile was never far away. GvB is a player who clearly loves what he does, and loves performing well for his team. We love it too, and I'm sure I'm speaking for us all in wishing him all the very best as he takes on the captaincy in the red ball and one-day games. Keep smiling, Graeme, and keep us smiling too!

Gloucestershire Exiles' Players of the Year 1991-2020

1991	Tony Wright	2001	Jeremy Snape	2011	Will Gidman
1992	Courtney Walsh	2002	Craig Spearman	2012	Ian Cockbain
1993	Jack Russell	2003	Jonty Rhodes	2013	Michael Klinger
1994	Courtney Walsh	2004	Jon Lewis	2014	Will Tavaré
1995	Jack Russell	2005	Alex Gidman	2015	Michael Klinger
1996	Mark Alleyne	2006	Hamish Marshall	2016	Hamish Marshall
1997	Mike Smith	2007	Steve Kirby	2017	Liam Norwell
1998	Mark Alleyne	2008	Steve Snell	2018	Ryan Higgins
1999	Mark Alleyne	2009	Steve Kirby	2019	Ryan Higgins
2000	Jon Lewis	2010	James Franklin	2020	Ian Cockbain
		2021	Graeme van Buuren		

Obituaries

Since *Outside-edge* last went to press, we have lost several Exiles known to many of our members. Sarah Blown pays tribute.

Christopher Bell, who died in November aged 90, was a Cheltenham devotee. Part of the Gloucestershire generation who, as cricket-mad youngsters, were desperate for cricket to restart after the Second World War, he waited impatiently outside the gates of the College grounds to see Gloucestershire play India in 1945. But the wait continued: it rained all day and the gates stayed firmly shut. Chris remained by those gates, taking in the atmosphere, and returned for most of the summers in the next 70-plus years too. Chris wrote many articles for *Outside-edge* over the years, usually about the Cheltenham Festival, with a combination of gentle wit and nostalgia, laced with wisdom and foresight. We were intrigued to learn, in one article, of the time he brought - the now - Dame Maggie Smith to the Festival, when on tour with the Oxford Theatre Group which he founded in the 1950s.

Chris worked for the BBC and was a highly influential senior executive at the World Service, a job that took him all over the globe when he was not to be found sitting behind the bowler's arm at the College Lawn End. He was a man of many interests, which he shared in his generous, quiet way. After sitting with him round the boundary each summer, various books from his library - history, politics, cricket; novels by Gloucestershire writers - would arrive by post, with thoughtful notes as to why I might appreciate them. From his Chorleywood home, Chris continued to make trips by train to London for cricket at Lord's or excursions to the theatre until infirmity took over. But his bright mind and love of Gloucestershire cricket was still much in evidence and remembered fondly at a meeting to celebrate his life at the historic Jordans Quaker Meeting House in Buckinghamshire on a beautiful day in early January this year.



Chris Bell (second left) and Val Whitfeld (centre) at the Cheltenham Exiles' Day with Sir Robert Morland, Pat Rose and Keith Lye.

Valerie Whitfeld, who died in November aged 88, will be remembered by many as a vibrant, devoted cricket fan who was an immediately recognisable presence wherever she was watching Gloucestershire. Val's ebullient support was based on a detailed understanding of the game and a desire to see the team do well. She loved chatting with the players and had a natural curiosity for others which meant that anyone sharing a bench with her outside the Bristol pavilion had told her their life story and learnt much of hers before close of play. Val was a member of the Bristol regional committee for many years and, together with Jill Jenkins, was a formidable fundraiser for the County, putting on many big events such as Christmas Dinners at Berkeley Castle.

Val was herself an able sportswoman, playing tennis from her early days as a girl in Clifton well into older age. She loved travelling to watch sport and enjoyed the Cheltenham atmosphere, driving up from her Bristol home with husband David for many years and in later life staying with local Exile members Pat and Aidan Rose. Val loved the Exiles' Day at Cheltenham and always insisted on putting her bank-telling skills to good use by counting up our raffle monies at the end of the day.

Despite declining health in her final years, Val's cricketing memory remained sharp. When hand-delivering her copy of Outside-edge to her Stoke Lane home in Westbury-on-Trym, I was always invited in for a chat about the season ahead or games we had seen. Even when Covid made it impossible to visit her in St Monica's Home, she spoke of hoping to 'get to the cricket', but sadly this was not to be.

Val's funeral at Canford crematorium was a joyful affair. It included a 'moment of reflection for Val's love of cricket' – to Hearts & Wickets 1986 Soul Limbo, the suitably upbeat theme to Test Match Special. Other familiar faces who will be missing from Cheltenham this year are Barry Bettany and June Cox. Life and retirement brought both Barry and June to live near the College Ground and to preferred spots on the pavilion stand, just a few rows from each other.

Barry Bettany was introduced to the Gloucestershire Exiles by our former chair – and GCCC Chairman – Roger Cooke. Like so many of Roger's friends who have been invited to support the Exiles' and the Club's fundraising efforts by attending an event, Barry so enjoyed the atmosphere that he came back year after year, bringing a table of his friends and neighbours with him. Maybe we can take some credit for his move to Century Court, just over the Bath Road behind the College chapel? Barry was a genial and generous supporter of the Exiles both at home and at away events, too.

June Cox and her husband Geoffrey first watched Gloucestershire play in the 1940s and had been long-term Exiles just over the border in Worcestershire when they moved to Cheltenham. June was a quiet, charming presence on the Pavilion stand who enjoyed the company of her Cheltonian friends and supported both the Cheltenham region and Exiles' events at the festival. Like many other Exiles, June was a woman of many parts and it was always a pleasure to hear her talk with knowledge and insight not just about cricket but music and literature too.

We also remember the passing of Exile and former Gloucestershire cricket player **Geoff Mains MBE**. Fast-bowler Geoff was the Club's longest surviving and second oldest former player, having made his debut in 1951 against the touring South Africans. He went on to play for the Club until 1954. After moving to Reading, Geoff became involved with Berkshire Cricket Club, the most consistent of National County sides in recent history. He was a tremendous supporter of Berkshire, following the 1st XI home and away for many years and was one of the best-known faces on the 'minor' counties circuit. The players loved his naïve wit and enthusiasm and found it hard to believe that fast bowler Geoff, who always wore a respectable suit and tie to watch them play, was once sent home from Bristol County Ground by the County Secretary Colonel Henson, who took exception to his powder-blue Teddy Boy ensemble. Geoff loved meeting other Gloucestershire players at the former players' days and was delighted when, in recent years, he discovered the existence of the Exiles and was able to meet up with like-minded supporters of his beloved 'Glorse'.

Book Reviews

Robert Moreland reviews a fascinating story.

Kiss Myself Goodbye- the Many Lives of Aunt Munca By Ferdinand Mount



Ferdinand Mount was the respected head of Mrs. Thatcher's 10 Downing Street Policy Unit. In his acclaimed book he examines the extraordinary Aunty Betty - "Munca" - married to his paternal Uncle Geoff. Why should a review of this book appear in a cricket publication? The answer is that Munca had been previously married to the captain of Gloucestershire County Cricket team. On 20th January 1933 Patricia Elizabeth Baring (ie Munca) married Dallas Alexander Chancellor Page. Tragically on 1st September 1936 returning from defeating Nottinghamshire at the Wagon Works in Gloucester, where he took the match winning catch, Page's car collided with a motor-cycle on the (then) Gloucester- Cirencester road near Duntisbourne Rous. He died the next day in Cirencester hospital. At their wedding, Page gave his age as 21. Munca gave her age as 30. In fact, she was 39. This gives an indication of what the book is about. Munca is rarely what she says she is. Originally from Sheffield, her life story is riddled with affairs, divorces, illegitimacy, bigamy, deceit, and false names. She was immensely cruel to her adopted daughter and effectively blocked her engagement to David Dimbleby

Ferdinand Mount has done a brilliant job of discovering and putting together much of the facts about Munca's life. She had a son, Buster, from an affair in her teenage years (Mount believes the father - a very wealthy man - later married Munca's mother). She pretended he was her brother. He went to Cheltenham College and there became a friend of Dallas Page. At first Mount thought that Munca met Page having first had a relationship with his predecessor as Captain of Gloucestershire, Bev Lyon. However, when the paperback came out, he revealed he realised that she met Page through Buster. At the time of Page's death, she was in France. It appears she was with her next husband - Ferdinand Mount's uncle, the wealthy Greig Mount, whom she married shortly after Page's death. Mount wonders if Munca had much interest in cricket. However, Roger Gibbons, who Mount describes as "the presiding genius of the Gloucestershire County Club

Heritage Trust”, sent him a photo showing Munca enjoying herself at the dinner to celebrate Tom Goddard’s benefit year.

Dallas Page was the son of Herbert Page who played for Gloucestershire and Oxford University. Page succeeded Bev Lyons as captain. Would Dallas -the son of an Oxford and Gloucestershire cricketer- have gone much further in cricket? He would have needed to improve his batting. He became captain because he was the only amateur available. Nevertheless, he did manage to get Gloucestershire to fourth position in the championship in 1936. Page is buried in the church at Selsey famous for its pre-Raphaelite stained glass.

Roger Gibbons (past President of Gloucestershire County Cricket Club) and I attended a meeting of the Cheltenham Literature Festival Book Club. All present much enjoyed the book describing it as a page-turner.



The view from the Exiles’ tent 2022

Calling prospective Gloucestershire Exiles’ Committee Members!

- Do you love Gloucestershire cricket?
- Fancy getting a bit more involved in the Exiles?
- Can you find your way to a pub in Ealing about three times a year?

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Your Exiles’ Committee is on the lookout for new members. We have enjoyable meetings where we plan our events, publications and discuss news from the club: as the *de facto* representatives of all GCCC members outside the county boundaries, Bristol looks to us to inform policy as well as raise vital funds for the Academy and Emerging Players programme. Why not come along to one of our meetings and join us for the evening to see if this is for you?

For further details on membership, please contact Matt Davies on 07970 730267 or matt.davies@bbc.co.uk

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After a successful season, Jack Taylor leads the T20 team for 2022 again.