

## Secretary's report 2011

Mr President, members

While at the moment it is topical to say that an Australian with a 100 next to his name is a bowler, it was different at The Avenue last summer as our young Aussie Matt 'Bomber' Wilcox struck six centuries with the bat. Matt's exploits helped the 1<sup>st</sup> XI finish fourth in the Cambs League - two higher than 2009 - and eventually earn promotion in the Rutland league. There were mixed fortunes for the other three Saturday sides with the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI going up, the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI staying where they were and the 4<sup>th</sup> XI going down. At the end of the season the Sunday second team won the Ernie Wool Trophy.

Chris Ringham in his fifth year at the helm for the 1<sup>st</sup> XI once again led by example, taking 44 Tucker League wickets, though without the reliable run-maker Andrew Mills, promising youngster Kurt Cunningham, and with only fleeting appearances from Shardul Brahmhatt, fourth place on Saturday and third place on Sunday were excellent efforts. Clearly, what surprised everyone were the exploits of Matt Wilcox, who had arrived as a bowler who could bat, but returned to Melbourne with 1,746 runs and 44 wickets. Statistically, few previous overseas players have made such a difference to the team. Only an injury stopped him making an even bigger impact with the ball.

On the batting front we were fortunate to have Cambridge University student and Lancashire 2<sup>nd</sup> XI all-rounder Rob Woolley available early season, where he scored 359 runs in seven Cambs League innings, including successive hundreds. He also helped the 1<sup>st</sup> XI win their game against Ramsey taking 5-34, despite previously not being allowed to bowl. It is hoped that he will be returning again this year and will be able to display his talents with both bat and ball.

The skipper captured a total of 50 wickets and was awarded the Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> XI Player of the Year award, while Richard Green became the inaugural winner of the Michael Wallis Trophy, Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> XI player of the Year. The evergreen off-spinner returned to first team action to take a total of 56 wickets, 39 of them in the Rutland League. Returning from university, Stuart Mills made an impression, taking 31 wickets in total for the senior side.

The other 1<sup>st</sup> XI century makers were the Sunday vice-captain Rob Tombs, who hit an undefeated 116 versus Isham and scored a total of 892 runs and in one of his brief appearances, Shardul Brahmhatt scored 114 against Abington.

Rob is taking over the reins as captain of the Sunday side in the top division of the Rutland League and I am sure we all wish him luck with his new venture. The Rutland League has proved an excellent test for our developing young players and the delayed promotion to the top division, due to one team's withdrawal will prove a stern test.

Saturday vice-captain John Gilson continued to vociferously support the bowlers and defy his years behind the stumps and along with Stuart Arnold, Stuart Fox and Pat Ringham played for the county over 50s team.

It all came right at last for John Wallis, leading the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI to promotion to CCA senior League Division 1 on the last day of the league season after two previous third place finishes. John has seen a complete transformation in the team over the past decade from the ageing warriors of the past to the young bloods of today, while still maintaining his own enthusiasm and levels of performance. He led the way with the bat scoring 426 runs, 309 on Saturdays. However, opener John Kaberry scored most Saturday runs with 338 and won their Player of the Year award.

The chief wicket takers were Andrew Wright and Stuart Arnold who took 25 and 24 wickets respectively. Andrew won the Young Player of the year trophy as in all teams he took 51 wickets and scored over 300 runs. Not to miss out, when he was not in the 1<sup>st</sup> XI, Richard Green added another 16 wickets in the CCA campaign.

The new young looking side relied on the likes of David Haslegrave, Andrew Wright, Josh Jackman and John Kaberry to help make them a formidable outfit in the field. David Haslegrave moved up the ranks from the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI, to the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI and made appearances in the Cambs League side to score over 500 runs in total and took the Most Improved Player of the Year award.

Returning to the ranks after a season as captain inspired Pat Ringham as he stroked his way to 348 runs at an average of 31 to help the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI earn a mid-table position in CCA Junior League Division 2A. Jamie Stimpson gave him most support with 205 runs. The only century of the season came from Rob Moden, who scored 130 against Wilburton.

However, their Player of the Year award went to new skipper Matt Hubbard, who took 23 wickets, while the wily old campaigner Stuart Fox led the wicket taking haul with 25 wickets.

Unfortunately for the second successive season the fourth team were relegated, despite the valiant efforts of vice-captain Bill Hilliard, who shouldered the role after skipper Glen Hulley was unable to give the job his full attention due to work commitments. Bill's work should not be forgotten as at the bottom of the chain at selection it was a constant challenge for him to field a side each week, integrating young players, some playing their first games of senior cricket.

Dennis Furnell led their batting with 296 runs, which included a 93 against Wisbech, while he received good support from James Shepherd with 253 runs. James also took 20 wickets to become their Player of the Year. Young Sam Mason showed promise taking 11 wickets, although making a guest appearance against Fordham his dad Ken took 7-37, the club's best figures for the season in all teams.

The Sunday second team's highlight was their exciting last ball victory in the Ernie Wool trophy final against Wisbech 3<sup>rd</sup> XI. With one ball remaining 14-year-old Toby Nulty struck the match-winning runs to the delight of the many youngsters in the team and of course their skipper, Stephen Wallis during his fourth year in the role.

The biggest setback to the Sunday side came in early November, when their scorer Greg Ward died suddenly. Greg had been with the side for the past four years and had given fantastic support to Stephen off the field, driving to most of the away games and always encouraging the many young players. He will be sorely missed.

With all-rounder Richard Green playing for the 1<sup>st</sup> XI on Sundays the bowling attack relied on the new young regulars, Toby Nulty and leg-spinner Nathan Oliver, who took 16 and 18 wickets respectively. Matt Hubbard filled in the experienced shoes of Richard and took 13 wickets as they finished fourth in the Fenland Trophy. Toby making significant improvement during the season as he also took 11 wickets for the 4<sup>th</sup> XI.

The runs were shared between, Josh Jackman 377; skipper Stephen Wallis 340, Rob Cumming 234 and Jake Beart 231. Without doubt the Sunday star was Josh Jackman who averaged 94.25. Josh's stylish batting saw him accumulate over 500 runs during the summer, including a maiden half-century in the 1<sup>st</sup> XI, not forgetting the 26 wickets. Josh deservedly won the new Les Mills Trophy as the Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> XI player of the Year award.

Young batsman Nathan Foad scored his maiden senior cricket century with 105 not out against Whittlesey.

The club again fielded sides at Under 11, 13 and 15 for boys and the girls competed in the Four Counties Women and Girls' League. The girls highlight was winning the under 13 Lady Taverners County competition and Emily King, Fran Plitsch and Emily Hill all played for the county side.

Their respective players of the year were as follows;

#### Boys

Under 11: Batsman - Samuel Clarke, Bowler - Oliver Mann

Manager's award: Geoffrey Kirby

Under 13: Batsman - Lewis Welcher, Bowler - Robert Munden

Manager's award: Ashley Payne.

Under 15: Batsman - Brett Tinnion, Bowler - Sam Mason

Manager's award: Thomas Dunn

#### Girls

Player of the Year: Emily King

Player's Player of the Year: Hana Howsam

Most Improved Player of the Year: Chanel Ogden

The Development of the junior players is a result of the dedication of all the coaches, who helped with winter and summer nets. The winter nets proving a major success and we are indebted to Mandy Haslegrave for organising the project. The full list of coaches being; Stuart Mills, Matt Willcox, Pat Ringham, Chris Ringham, Rob Tombs, David Haslegrave, David Hodson, Callum Young, James Beresford, Alan Beresford, Rishi Brahmhatt, Jenny Lowe, Ollie Burton, Bill Adamson, Ollie Burton, Josh Jackman and Andrew Wright.

Whilst we are in a celebratory mood, two of our cricketing members received OSCA's from the Cambridgeshire Cricket Board with Norman Alerton winning the Lifetime Achievement Award and Stuart Mills the Young Volunteer Award. Norman and Stuart also went along to the national awards at Lord's, where they were caught on camera for the club website with former England captain Michael Vaughan.

The club was presented with the Ground of the Year award by the Cambs Cricket Board grounds association. This confirmed the excellent pitches prepared by the hard working ground committee chaired by John West. Mel Pooley, Gary Nicholls, Barry Short, and Matthew Vail being the other members of the Ground Committee. We are also thankful to Brian Wright for the many paid hours he puts in during the summer.

Along with Greg, who undertook the scoring role each week for the Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> XI and the Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> XI, Norman Topliss was the regular scorer for the Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> XI.

Graham Smart was awarded the Club Person of the Year award for his dedicated work as subscriptions secretary, barman, member of both the bar and social committees, while in his spare time he played for the dart and pool teams. The Club is very lucky to have a member like Graham.

A highly successful 3-day cricket festival was organised by a busy sub committee plus a number of other coaches/assistants, where nearly 100 children attended each day.

On the social side the social committee staged successful racenights, a 200 club draw, barbecue, Aussie night, 20/20 match against some former players and a Vice President's evening. Sunday lunches have now become a regular feature for the members and the club held several entertainment evenings. In the winter months we now have pool, darts and domino teams playing regular league matches.

The club continues to support the community by playing host to the local Age Concern group every Tuesday and a local disabilities group use the club for their monthly disco's. Furthermore, we hosted a well attended New Year's Eve function organised by Helen Foad, which supported the 'Help for Heroes' charity raise over £500, while Helen also staged a successful quiz in aid of breast cancer.

Amidst the current economic climate it is imperative we recognise and thank all the club's sponsors, Grounds and Co, the main sponsor, those businesses that have sponsored 1<sup>st</sup> XI Cambs league matches, advertising boards and match balls. Their support does so much to maintain the cricket facilities we provide for all the players and it is appreciated by the Committee.

On a sad note former player and Vice President, Bob King, sponsor and regular supporters of the club, Cliff Pearce and Kate Hunt and former umpire Len Crouch passed away.

Of course the current status of the club overall is dependent on the band of unpaid workers in all the senior positions and no more so than the bar which remains in the very capable hands of Bar Chairman, Nick Lowe, Nigel Read, Graham Smart and a

group of volunteers, where Norman Alterton continues to make the weekly trip to the cash and carry.

A special mention this year to our long standing Treasurer Alan Day, who is recovering from a recent operation. On behalf of the club I am sure you would all like to join me in wishing him a continued steady recovery.

As I remarked last year the current economic climate will continue to affect the club both on and off the field so again it is important that we all pull together to create the right atmosphere to promote good cricket and to provide better facilities for all our members. Our work with the in house coaching, involvement with the ECB's 'Chance to Shine' and re-accreditation of Clubmark, help with the former while it is anticipated that work to improve the lounge area will be undertaken this year, to assist with the latter. Personally, I think we have the people to achieve those goals.

On the subject of Clubmark I know our Chairman, Les Mills undertook a large amount of unseen work to maintain this important status, which is recognised by the ECB.

Finally, may I on behalf of everyone thank current President Mel Pooley for his hard work over his period of office as the 'old student' has continued to provide his expertise to assist the ground committee.

Also it is a great pleasure for me to wish the new President, my father, the very best as it must seem a long time ago when he played his first game for the club back in 1949. I am sure he will relish the role.