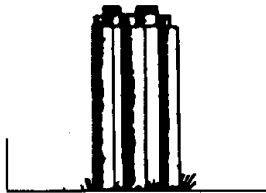


BADGERS CRICKET CLUB



www.badgerscc.org.uk



These Fifty Years

A retrospective of the life of a
friendly cricket club



A typical English summer scene – 40th President's game



Back in 1979 Dave Tickner refused to print a picture of a naked Badger on page three of the booklet commemorating twenty-one years of the Badgers. This being the 21st Century we no longer have such inhibitions so that particular taboo can be broken, hopefully without shocking anyone too badly.

Of course in these times of Political Correctness we do need to tip our hat to modern mores, so here's one for the ladies:



And no, I can't tell them apart either – I've never been any good at sexing badgers, naked or otherwise!?

Welcome from the Chairman

Simon Fox welcomes you to our fiftieth season celebrations

As I write this I can think of only one thing "Please God, bring me sunshine". But by the time you read these words we will already be in the hands of the gods.

I'd like to extend to you all the warmest of welcomes to Badgers CC's 50th Season Celebration, an event which is its own testimony to the qualities that make Badgers so special. When you stop and think that at any one time we are able to count on only around 20 active members, it is close to a miracle that we are still alive and thriving. But thriving we are, as I am sure the activities and events of the afternoon will demonstrate and with the 'class of 2008' sporting one original player from our inaugural season, a third generation Badger playing as a regular member, and our very own blend of 'experience' and youth across the membership.

We have a very full afternoon planned for you all, whether it be on the field, around the picnic table or in the bar. But the real and most important purpose of the day is to get together and spend time with old friends, re-live past times and savour once again the bonds that have brought us and held us together for our half-century. Today, more than ever for Badgers, it's not the winning that matters! Enjoy!

I have a few thank-yous to make:

First, to Hall & Woodhouse, brewers of our namesake Badger bitter, for their contribution towards our bacchanalian delectation this afternoon and to Richard Kemp for his endeavours in soliciting this donation.

Second, to Tadworth Cricket Club for allowing us the use of their excellent facilities, and for their assistance and support in many other ways. I know you'll agree that this is a wonderful, traditional English cricketing setting with great facilities for a family event such as this. And how especially appropriate that it is just a couple of miles from where the Badgers story all began, close by in Belmont, back in 1959.

Third, to those other members who have helped in the many tasks required for the organisation and arrangements for today. The list is long, so thanks to you all, you know who you are! But one particular thank-you goes to Michael Willmott for coming up with the master-plan for the day, making the arrangements with Tadworth CC, sourcing the Fish & Chips, and (fingers crossed) even arranging for a visit by a local ice-cream van.

And last to you, for coming and for making our day.

Formation and Foundation

Two competing Methodist churches and Willows begat Badgers

It is difficult at this remove to be entirely certain of the gory details of the formation of the club (how I would love to be able to quiz my old man about it for this piece) and my own knowledge of the genesis derives mostly from Dave Tickner's item on the history of the club in the booklet he produced for the club's twenty-first season celebrations:

"In the summer of 1958 members of Lind Road Methodist Church Youth Club and Belmont Methodist Church Club (sic) were challenged to a cricket match by members of Banstead Methodist Church. The match was at Epsom and although the result is lost in the passage of time it is remembered for Mike Law umpiring with a leg in plaster whilst recovering from an accident. The following winter the same combination played football at Banstead. Bryan Hodges captained the side and Alan Preston played on the wing!

In March 1959 a meeting was called at Belmont Methodist Church Hall under the chairmanship of Derek Beadle at which the members of Belmont and Lind Road agreed to form a cricket club. The club was to be named 'Willows', the club colours to be black and white, Captain Mike Law, Vice Captain Alan Preston,

Chairman Derek Beadle and Secretary Laurence Pitts.

At the club's first committee meeting it was reported that a Willows C.C. was already in existence in Wallington and were also members of the C.C.C. As the club colours were black and white it was decided to call the club 'The Badgers'."

Simon Fox's wide ranging communications with various one-time Badgers have thrown some interesting additional light on the story and Derek Beadle himself embellishes the details of that initial challenge match a little:

"Some may argue that the real catalyst was a man who had no connection with the club and no hand in its formation. Nigel Thomas, who later became a full-time youth worker within Methodism, was at the time secretary of Banstead Methodist Sports Club.

Always keen to advance the prowess of his club he challenged me to produce an eleven to play Banstead's cricket team.

A scratch eleven was recruited from Belmont and Lind Road churches augmented with a couple of my city colleagues.

Following the match the desire to play regular cricket grew stronger and an inaugural meeting was held to form a proper club and a committee of seven elected to carry the matter to fruition."

I have known for some time that Dennis Adams lays claim to having coined the Badgers name, and indeed a statement to that effect can be found on the web site. Interestingly there is some minor disagreement over that point, with Bryan Hodges making the following points regarding the club's formation:

"None of us ever thought in 1959 that the Badgers would last five years let alone fifty and it does seem like yesterday that a few of us, I think it was over a bridge game held at my parents' house in Avenue Road, Belmont – one of many that usually included Laurie and Brian Pitts, with whom I grew up in my early years in Kings Road, Belmont through the war years before they were both boarded at Reedham School near Purley after their father drowned when a troop ship was sunk. An ironic tragedy

considering Brian died on the Norfolk Broads in similar fashion to his dad.

Others included in our late night game, supported by plates of tomato sandwiches, were Dave Winters, who always underbided, and Alan Preston, who liked to pass, whilst Laurie and Brian were always overbidders but were interesting to watch.

I mention all this because the idea of playing cricket for fun came up on one of these occasions and sort of grew from there to include people like Mike Law, Dennis Adams, who now lives in Somerset, Derek Beadle as non-playing President, who now lives at Umberleigh in Devon, Allan Butt and later included Peter Legge and Brian Moore and I think early on Roy Gordon as scorer. Not sure about the Club name, I think it just evolved because of the colours. Sorry Dennis."

However, Derek Beadle is happy to cede the honours to Dennis, saying "The choice of name took some time with research producing many clubs with 'Willows' in their title. Surrey

Brock's Trivia Corner

Badgers played their first game as a fully-formed club at the Morden Sports Ground against Riverside (Battersea) on 18th May 1959. That first eleven consisted of Dennis Adams, C. Buckingham, Roy Gordon, Bryan Hodges, Mike Law, Brian Pitts, Laurence Pitts, Alan Preston, E. Webster, R. Wheeler and David Winter. They share the distinction of all having their stumps disturbed during that first innings of 67, a feat that I simply don't have the time to confirm the rarity of, with David Winters and Bryan Hodges top-scoring on 15, extras close behind on 14 and nobody else in double figures.

Brock's Trivia Corner

The first major feat for the club was Brian Moore's eight for fourteen in the third game of the first season, against Banstead Methodists at Rosehill on 30th May. Brian also recorded the club's first fifty – 58 not out against Century Insurance on 27th June 1959, the sixth game of that first season, again at Rosehill – but it was Mike Law who made the first ever century, racking up 130 (of 186 for 3) against St. Johns on 13th May 1961, the first game of that season and once again played at Rosehill.

Oaks was at one point mooted and eventually Dennis Adams suggested Badgers; acceptable to the committee the name was adopted and Badgers started to look for fixtures.

Early stalwarts included that superb strategist, my very good and much missed friend, Laurence Pitts, his brother Brian, Alan Preston, David Winter, Peter Legge, Bryan Hodges, Dennis Adams (who recruited Brian Moore), Mike Law, Peter Ward, John Moffatt, John Bailey, Albert Briscoe and Roy Gordon"

It is also interesting to note that the club obviously struggled with team selection in the early days, just as it does now, with Bryan observing "There probably were others as the search for regular players each week grew desperate for availability reasons.

We were all proud of Surrey's six consecutive County Championships – we even went each week to evening nets at what was then Allders Cricket School in Croydon, such was our enthusiasm, where on one occasion our coach was Ken Barrington. Phenomenal!"

One common thread can be found throughout the various reminiscences, both on the early days and more recently, which is at the heart of the Badgers' appeal — friendship.

Derek closes his comments with "Many afternoons of enjoyment have come and gone but the friendships made have endured" whilst Bryan says that "I am proud to think that our original idea to 'play for fun' seems to have continued and with some of the original lags around."

I will leave the final word to Dave, mainly because I couldn't have put it better myself:

"I feel the real strength and enjoyment of playing for the club lies in the perfect balance struck between trying to win and having an enjoyable afternoon amongst friends"

Amen to that, and long may that spirit continue.

[This article was written by Steve Pitts with significant contributions from Dave Tickner, Derek Beadle and Bryan Hodges, to whom my thanks for allowing me to share their words]

The First Decade

Roy Gordon remembers the early days of the Swinging Sixties

18th May 1959 — The Day the Badgers were born.

I was just 15 and very excited as I had always loved cricket and now I was being asked to play.

It was an all day game and I remember it well. The home side, Riverside, batted first and I spent most of their innings chasing round the boundary.

They scored a massive 247 for 8 dec.

Then came our turn to bat and – oh dear – we were all out for 67. What the statistics do not show is that, as it was an all day game, they suggested we batted again, after all it was our first ever match. Did we do better second time around. I am afraid not and we were all out for 63. Everyone said we would never last – how wrong they have been.

How many of you remember 'beer matches'?

In the early days matches were often over before tea. Badgers were pleased

to reach three figures when batting as scores below 100 were frequent. So we then had a ten over a side match with everyone having to bowl an over. I suppose this was the start of limited overs cricket!!

We were all very keen in the early days and had outdoor nets at Rosehill every Wednesday evening. Not only did we practice batting and bowling but also we had great competition on the catching cradle. Where did that cradle go?

In one of our early matches at Rosehill we actually played in the snow. I was batting to save the game whilst the rest of the team were in their cars keeping warm. We did draw the match with one of my hour long innings of forward defensive strokes and no runs!!

We also had one of the fastest bowlers for our standard of cricket and we will always remember Brian Moore's 10 wickets for 2 runs. That will never be repeated.

Steve's Statistical Sett

It almost certainly isn't going to surprise anyone to learn that Brian Moore dominates the numbers in the first decade scoring 2084 runs at an average of 29.8 and taking 266 wickets at an average of 7.2 whilst bowling 915.3 overs – over 30% of which were maidens. Both Brent Noble and Mike Law broke the thousand run barrier (although Mike required 105 innings) and Allan Butt, Pete Legge and David Winter all bagged more than 100 wickets.

The Second Decade

Alan Tickner looks back on the Seventies

1969 was the year I met Brent Noble. Who would have thought that an unsolicited approach by a stranger in an estate agent in Cambridge would have a greater influence on my life than Neil Armstrong stepping out of the lunar lander and onto the moon? Summer weekends would never be the same. Rushed lunches, late arrivals at dinner parties and the endless search for excuses as to why we had been able to carry on playing well after dark!

It was with some trepidation that I ventured to my first net. The Badgers seemed a great bunch of guys. There were some who were very tall, some very short and some, wearing wicket keeping gloves, who were very noisy. There were dentists, stockbrokers, students, Irish, English and

Australian. In 1970 I mentioned I had a brother who was a former school's opening fast bowler who batted at number 11. His performances at nets rather disproved this profile and over the coming years his batting rather overtook his bowling achievements until in 1993 the minutes of the AGM recorded that Dave had indeed bowled his last wide!

New players joining the Club in the seventies were told to forget all their previous coaching and to quickly learn new skills —how to turn two into a single when batting with Brent; how to contribute fully to the legendary Badgers collapse; how to respond to a call of ... Yes... No... Wait... Oh OK then!; how to ingratiate yourself to the senior players by doing all their fielding for them.

Steve's Statistical Set

Whilst the second decade saw Brian Moore continue to dominate the bowling statistics – sending down 1715.2 overs, with over a third of those being maidens, taking 515 wickets at an average of 6.2, conceding less than two runs an over and taking a wicket every twenty balls – his contribution with the bat was overshadowed by Brent Noble who scored 2413 runs in 94 innings at an average of 33.5, nearly ten runs better than the 23.7 that Brian's 2531 runs from 129 innings represented. Alan Tickner broke the 2000 run barrier as well – scoring 2236 runs from a team-leading 136 knocks – whilst also taking 266 wickets in 1120.4 overs, in which categories he was second to Brian and well ahead of the field. Dave Tickner and Albert Briscoe both took more than 100 wickets and scored more than 1500 runs.

Brock's Trivia Corner

The most common forename amongst regular Badgers down the years has been David/Dave, of whom there have been seven, with Steve/Stephen next most popular with five. At one point during Dave Tickner's captaincy it was not unusual for the club to field four of each in the same game, and DT took great delight in placing all four Daves on one side of the wicket and all four Steves on the other, which made calling for catches an adventure!!

At the start of the 70s the team was led by Albert Briscoe and Keith Partlett a fearsome Irish, Aussie combination who were not very keen on losing! Mike Law and Roy Gordon shared the glove work and Brian Moore and Brent Noble were the mainstays of the batting and bowling. Albert's post match team talks in the Angel did much to affect the long term drinking habits of the youth of the team in the shape of Chris Preston, Steve Goldman and Phil Walters.

During the 70s the Club managed to field a team for at least six midweek games as well as every weekend. Nets were held every week during the whole season. You would have thought with that amount of practice we would have been world-class! However our opponents on a weekend never really posed the same challenges we diligently practised at nets. A Kempy top spinner pitching over the roof of the net and onto the railway line, followed by a 100 mph ripper from Walters which didn't pitch at all kept all the batsmen on their toes. Fielding practice was generally conducted in the dark with

the entire Pitts family trying to see just how fast they could throw the ball at you when you couldn't even see them! Roy was the king of the catching cradle being the only one who could consistently hit it. Catching a ball on a clear summer's day was somewhat trickier and the job at weekends was left to a very select few, much as today.

Having served my apprenticeship as Baggage Master, Press Secretary and Vice Captain, I took over as Captain in 1975. Albert had left me a finely honed squad anxious for more success. By now we had enlisted a few more proper batsmen and bowlers with Chris Morgan and Steve Card notable amongst them. Dave continued to practice the art of fast leg breaks and in one notable season he and Brian took 100 wickets between them, the 98 for Brian still being a Club record!!

During my time as Captain two matches stick in my mind. Dormansland were a very good side and we struggled for years to beat them. On this particular day we made a good score batting first with a fine

half century from Brent. Chasing 160 Dormansland were 16 for 0 after two overs and the signs did not look good. They were then all out for 21!! I have never seen such quick accurate bowling from the Badgers or the quality of catches taken that day.

The other memorable match was not quite the same. Old Walcountians, another strong side, were skittled out by Moore and Co for a paltry 37 runs on a very quick wicket. As Brent went in to open our innings he said "Do you want me to knock the runs off quickly or play my normal innings?" Needless to say he was out for a duck and the team all out for 35!

Some things never change. Every AGM in the 70s reported the same –

poor attendance at nets, poor fielding and who has got the premium bonds?

As the 70s drew to a close, I handed the reins to Dave safe in the knowledge that his tactical awareness and leadership skills would take the Club to even greater heights!?

During the 70s many new members joined the Club and helped maintain the friendship and camaraderie that has always been the most important feature of playing for the Badgers. Lots of friendships were made which continue today and we all owe a deep debt of gratitude to everybody who made the Badgers what it was and what it remains.



1962: 18th August at Rosehill vs. Montrose

Back row (L to R): A.Briscoe, J.Moffatt, J.Bailey, B.Passmore, L.Pitts, P.Ward, R.Gordon, P.Legge, J.Kempsell
Front row (L to R): A.Butt, D.Beadle (Chairman), F.Butt (President), M.Law

The Third Decade

Dave Tickner recalls that the Eighties wasn't just Thatcher's Britain

The 80s were spent under the captaincies of Alan & David Tickner and Simon Fox and marked the start and evolution of the fixtures against Badgers Brewery, plus the midsummer annual weekend pilgrimage to the Cotswolds where many enjoyable tours were held.

We were very fortunate during this time in having a top class groundsman, John Jinkins, to prepare our wickets at Rosehill and invariably got the better square when two games were being played. The catering there, however, was sometimes non-existent, so we took turns in providing sandwiches and who will ever forget that baking hot day when Dave Bowerman produced from his sweaty bag that welded mass of

cheese and butter soaked white bread!

The Badgers arrived on the international scene when Adrian Cowell was chosen to play for (wait for it ..) Japan against Vanatu in a World Cup pre-qualifier and on opening the batting received two consecutive beamers from their opening bowler who just happened to also be their Olympic javelin thrower. Luckily Adrian was prepared as Phil Walters had tried to dismember him with similar deliveries several times earlier in the season at nets!

A special thanks to Alan Tickner for the many times he roped in someone from work when we were short, many of whom subsequently joined the club.

Steve's Statistical Sett

Whilst the old king still reigned supreme on the bowling front in the club's third decade – Brian Moore's average of 8.1 was over four runs better than anyone else – the batting was dominated by new boy Chris Morgan, who had made his debut as the decade began and played his last innings as it ended, with 2924 runs at an average of just over 40. Dave Tickner made 3427 runs from a team leading 156 innings, whilst brother Alan played slightly fewer innings, 148, whilst amassing his tally of 2639. Simon Fox, Brian Moore, Steve Pitts and Adrian Cowell all broke the thousand run barrier, whilst Dave Clark, Dave Bowerman, Dave Tickner, Steve Card and Alan Tickner all took more than 100 wickets. Alan was the workhorse, sending down 1374.1 overs, and was unsurprisingly the leading wicket taker with 303, although Steve Card also managed an impressive 200.

The Fourth Decade

Steve Pitts reminisces on the not-so Naughty Nineties

In this strange chronology the Nineties actually started quite serenely in 1989, with the club continuing much as it had done in the rest of the late Eighties. Simon Fox and Adrian Cowell were in their third year as captain and vice-captain respectively, those two plus the Tickner brothers, Andy Parker and myself all played regularly and made some runs, whilst Steve Ducker, Andy and the Tickners provided the bulk of the bowling resources.

Then came the bombshell. Before the penultimate game of the season, a one-off contest against Netherne Hospital, Simon took me to one side and explained that both he and Adrian had accepted jobs that meant

they would be unable to play for the Badgers in 1990 – Adrian would be in Japan and Simon in Thailand – and that ‘the powers that be’ had decided that I was the obvious (read: Hobson’s) choice to take on the captaincy.

With hindsight the timing was a little hard on my wife Janet, but she was very supportive even though by the time my term finished eleven years later we were transporting three children under the age of eleven to each game. I owe her a big vote of thanks for her selflessness.

Over the course of the Nineties the team would change significantly from that of 1988. The Tickner brothers and myself being probably the only major

Steve's Statistical Sett

With the disappearance of Chris Morgan and Brian Moore’s knee problems the fourth decade saw a changing of the guard across the board. Darren Hanley topped both the run list and the averages, scoring 2447 at 46.2 but was closely followed in terms of average by David Aldwinckle whose 42.7 would have been good enough for top placing in the three preceding decades. Mark Gordon, Steve Pitts and extras all broke the 2000 run barrier, whilst Alan Wilkes, Andy Parker, Dave Tickner, David Aldwinckle and Alan Tickner all passed 1000. AT and Steve lead the appearances with 143 with Mark close behind on 130, during which he snared 115 catches. Alan Tickner again bowled the most overs, 1217.4, but his 246 wickets at 13.7 weren’t good enough to head the list, an honour that fell to David Aldwinckle whose 73 wickets cost exactly 11 runs apiece. Mick Willmott wasn’t far behind Alan with 235 wickets and Alan Wilkes snared another 149 victims.

on-field contributors at the beginning of the decade that were still contributing at the end of it. In came a new cast of characters, most of them fairly colourful in their own ways.

There were David Aldwinckle and Darren Hanley, two of the best batsmen that the club has seen, with very different styles. Darren was always correct, pretty much always hit the ball on the floor, and also fielded as well as anyone whose initials aren't MG. David could be both watchful and pugnacious as a batsman, and was also a useful swing bowler who specialised in knocking over the tail, especially if they were juniors (sorry Dave, but some tales just get taller with the telling).

Andy Parker was a useful all rounder who never managed to bring his on-field attitude into line with the Badgers ethos, and with whom I had a number of run-ins. I will say no more on that front. Another that I didn't always see eye-to-eye with was Alan Wilkes but those disagreements were always more amiable and Alan's miserly bowling provided a degree of control that was welcome to me as captain and his fielding has passed into Badgers' legend!

Just to illustrate what a diverse bunch the Badgers can be, we counted amongst our regular number the club's very own gravedigger in John Rourke. He was a useful medium-quick bowler, who always performed best after a couple of cans of White Label on the way to the game, and

would willingly toil away for ten overs or more against the opposition's best batsmen, often for very little reward, and then stand shaking his head on the boundary when Mick Willmott or Alan Wilkes bagged a handful of wickets as the batsmen got themselves out trying to fill their boots. John had been introduced to the club by Barry Forrester, a dapper young man who was turning into a useful cricketer when we lost him to the retail trade.

I had hoped to regale you with stories from individual games, but despite spending an evening poring over the old scorebooks most of my memorable moments turned out to be either earlier or later than my assigned time period – Jeremy carrying his bat at Newchapel, for 42 out of a total of 170; the squeaky close winning finish against the Foreign & Commonwealth Office; an end of season contest with Newchapel that was so much fun that both sides agreed to come back again the following week; a low scoring battle with South Beckenham in a ploughed field in Croydon somewhere; Chris Morgan and my brother putting on a partnership of 110 to which Dave contributed 25.

Two particular games in the correct era do stand out for rather different reasons. Firstly, the Badgers perennial problem with getting eleven players out each week was never better illustrated than by a 1990 contest against G.A.M., played in less than salubrious surroundings somewhere

Brock's Trivia Corner

At the fortieth anniversary dinner I posed the question 'How many Badgers does it take to change a light bulb' and received two entertaining answers: "All of them – one to change the bulb, and the rest to blame Steve because the old one blew in the first place" and "In a team of eleven there is no Badger available to change a light bulb because two are batting, two are umpiring, two are padding up, Richard [Kemp] is checking out the beer, Brent hasn't arrived yet, someone is scoring, Steve is still finishing his tea, and of course, as Mark will tell you, a team of eleven Badgers means only ten unless it is a Monday night when it is at least sixteen"

in the heart of Surrey Docks, where we managed to scrape together just six players, although the opposition only managed to field seven themselves, and a short-handed Badgers won the game by successfully chasing 104. If I remember it was a baking hot day – whilst I watched some of the game I was working that day and unable to participate – and everyone finished up thoroughly drained.

Secondly, there was the 1998 game against Blindley Heath where we found ourselves chasing 198 to win and had slumped to 89 for 9 but with number seven Alan Tickner playing quite beautifully whilst wickets tumbled around him. Yours truly joined him at the wicket, suffering from a bad back, and we had carved out a potentially match saving partnership of 49 runs spread over twelve overs before I contrived to nick the very last ball of the innings and lose the game instead.

The Nineties also saw the welcome return of Allan Butt to the Badgers fold – his patented post-delivery stare

at the batsman still intact, if a little less fierce than of old – and the blossoming of Mick Willmott from a middle aged 'warm body' that hadn't played cricket since school to a middle aged leg spinner who could turn games on their head, one way or the other, and whose practical jokes in the changing rooms and at the tea table kept us all on our guard.

Brian Moore had pretty much finished playing for the Badgers by the time I took over as skipper, so I rarely had the pleasure of throwing him the ball and asking him to exercise some control for me, however I still have the most vivid memory of the last time that Brian played for the club, back in August 1992. We were playing Richard Kemp's local side Loose, at Maidstone Grammar School on a damp day and on an artificial wicket.

Brian's knees were pretty much shot, and indeed he had to do the 'pop the joint back in' trick on several occasions (a sight not for the squeamish), so he was reluctant to bowl in the conditions. However, he

hadn't batted so Darren persuaded him to give it a go just to get in the game. Despite the fact that he hadn't played in over a year, and had only turned out occasionally over the previous three or four years, the first ball was right on the spot and he ended up bowling six overs and taking one for fifteen. A truly remarkable fellow.

Finally, one of my biggest pleasures over this period, and in the years since, has been watching Mark

Gordon develop from Roy's boy into arguably the best all-around cricketer that has ever played for the club, and certainly the best fielder, not just for us but for anyone in our standard of cricket. I have many fond memories of his fielding running out batsmen who otherwise seemed set to make big scores and some of the catches that he has taken – especially in his 'specialist' position of short cover – have amazed and delighted his teammates whilst leaving opposition batsmen literally open-mouthed.

View From The Boundary

A few rather maudlin notes from editor Steve Pitts

It has been both a great pleasure and a great burden putting together this publication. Reliving the memories has been the greatest positive element, along with the constant reminders of how much fun spending all of my life around Badgers' cricket has been.

The joy has been tempered by the fact that my father, who was such a fundamental element of the club for much of its existence, isn't here to share in those celebrations. Of course, there are other Badgers who did not live long enough to see this milestone, and whilst I am reluctant to list them all, for fear of missing someone and causing offence, I feel that it is important to tip my hat to Pete Legge, Barry Passmore, Mike Law, Frank Butt and Alan Wilkes, all of whom

would no doubt have been proud and pleased as punch at our achievement.

I don't lay claim to Dave Tickner's comedy touch, and so was always going to struggle somewhat in comparison with his 21st anniversary equivalent, but I hope the tales herein offer a worthy tribute to fifty years of Badgers cricket.

Oh, and without being a killjoy, I should point out that both Dave and Alan have been a little 'economical with the actuality' in their pieces. For the record, Adrian Cowell would never have faced Phil Walters in the nets, and Brian's best haul was 72 wickets in one season. Both gags were too good to pull altogether but I feel a disclaimer is necessary in the interests of future historians (or those with no web access).

The Fifth Decade

Mark Gordon digs over the still warm ashes of a new Millennium

As present skipper of the Badgers and having held onto the role for the last eight years it is down to me to review the current state of the team.

But before I do this I have many more memories of Badgers cricket than that of the last eight years. I have been brought up with Badgers and remember spending every weekend watching dad, retrieving the ball when the players were warming up with so called catching practice. On a personal note like any player I can remember my first 50, 100 and five-

fer; my first tour; my first umpiring decision; and memories of most grounds on which I have played. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone with whom I have played, to me they are all family and I have been brought up with the Badgers spirit. I would also like to thank my wife Dawn who married into the Badgers life.

The last eight years have seen the coming and going of many players, just as in other years. There do seem to be more departures than arrivals

Steve's Statistical Sett

Obviously the fifth decade is not quite complete, so these numbers are up to and including the Ockham game on 13th July, but it is fairly obvious who dominates the batting. Patrick Redding is in his sixth season for the club but has already scored 3117 runs, just 90 shy of Mark Gordon's impressive ten season tally, and his average (74.2) is by far and away the best we've ever seen. Alan Tickner and extras are both well over 2500 runs, Steve Pitts reached 2000 during the Ockham match and Dave Tickner, Barry Davenport, David Aldwinckle, Simon Fox and Richard Ward have all passed 1000, with Graham Ward and Graham Davenport poised to join them before the season is out. David Aldwinckle deserves special mention for his batting average of 49.1 which would be the best in any other decade but pales behind Pat. Mark leads the 'iron man' category, having played in 166 matches out of a possible 179, and grabbed an astonishing 147 catches over that span, in which category Graham Ward has pouched 50. The bowling numbers are not so distinctive with Alan Tickner topping the averages with 128 wickets at exactly 15 whilst Graham Davenport, Mick Willmott, Ian Gregg and Mark Gordon have taken more than 100 wickets, with Mark having every chance at 200. Greggy has bowled the most overs, 1146.3, with Mark the only other bowler with more than 1000 overs.

but lately we are managing to put out an increasingly younger side. This does not always prove to be successful as some of our younger players are somewhat the worse for wear on match days but at least it's a positive step forward. It's good to see the progress of Darrell Pitts – as other players have watched me grow with the club I am now seeing the same with Darrell. The introduction of Patrick Redding five seasons ago was a great example of a league cricketer who wanted to play the sport on a friendlier basis. Pat is a great talent, probably the best batsman the club has seen (at least in my time) and has fitted into club activities and banter. Sadly it seems we are slowly bringing him down to our standards!!

The arrival of the Ward brothers has also brought a good depth and entertainment value to the side, and it's players like these who will carry the club forward.

These new players and a few old faces all featured in what was my best game as skipper and one of the best games I have played in, at Stoke D'Abernon in 2005. We had to bat first and had a second rate performance with only Paul Little and Richard Ward giving us something to bowl at. Bowling before tea was a rare novelty and I have never seen such a strong fielding performance – every catch stuck and every bowler bowled out of their skin – we turned them over for just 81 and won by 40 runs. This game was in the middle of a nine game winning streak and a season which

saw us win 14 games and in my 20 years at the club I can't remember such success and the enjoyment it brought to all, and this achievement was not just the work of two or three players but the whole squad with everyone having a fair go.

I have also had the pleasure in seeing Alan Tickner and Patrick Redding share in two 200 first wicket partnerships.

Some of the players who have hung up their jockstraps over the last few years will be missed both on and off the field. Mick Willmott was always great entertainment and with his crop of hair spent many hours in the shower trying to rinse out the soap that the pranksters had poured in. Mick would get his own back at tea with the "does this jam tart smell alright" and someone would end up wearing the tart on his nose. I was also at the ground when Mick bamboozled a young Hook Norton side with his flighted leg spinners and took nine wickets. It seems that Dave Tickner has also taken a back seat, his contribution to the club has been huge. I never really played when Dave was a bowler but I have seen many good innings from Dave and he is definitely the club speaker. It also seems that Alan Tickner will only play in a few games a year. Alan has been consistent with both bat and ball for years and he can't be blamed for wanting to rest the body after the amount of overs he's bowled. It was only a few years ago he bowled all afternoon from one end. Alan notched

up his first 100 after his fiftieth birthday, which shows there's still hope for the rest of us.

Unfortunately David Aldwinckle has also ended his cricketing career early with "dodgy" eyes – though he can still umpire, which is a worry! David was a great batter and bowler and it was a shame we couldn't get him to play more often. He also managed to get us some very good fixtures in his role as fixture secretary.

One player that has also left the club became the first Badger to be banned. Andy Parker is a name which most players have heard of and sadly for the wrong reasons. Andy was a good cricketer and a nice fellow, but once he was on the pitch he became a handle (another word for handle, comes after door).

Sadly Alan Wilkes passed away last year and although he had not played for a few years he will always be remembered. Alan was a league cricketer who was very wise with the ball and I never really saw him at his best with the bat. He will be

remembered for his arm in the air at gully signalling for someone else to chase the ball and for falling asleep in the pub on tour and snoring.

Every era has probably had its extraordinary characters in the team and we have at least two at present. One being Rako a legend for fireworks, wheat crunchies and avoiding catching the ball. The other so called legend in the team is Paul "the shammy" Wilson. To me as captain he is very frustrating, as he is a wanderer in the field and tries to stop the ball with his knees. Paul's batting preparation could produce a whole book, but in brief we've seen him take half an hour to get padded up in an hour net session. He's put his helmet on before anything else and we've seen him do the pad straps up first and then feed his legs through.

All in all playing and socializing with the Badgers over the years has been great fun and entertaining with some great cricket thrown in and I hope we can keep it going for another 50 years.

Brock's Trivia Corner

In 2003 the club achieved the impressive feat of scoring over 400 runs without losing a wicket. Things got started with a 51 run match-winning fifth wicket partnership between Alan Tickner and David Jones against Epsom Methodists, continued through a record-breaking 200 run opening stand between Alan and Patrick Redding the following week at Stoke D'Abernon and reached 396 when Simon Fox and Steve Pitts posted another 145 run unbroken opening partnership against NPL Lensbury. The streak came to an end at 410 against Croygas, but you have to feel sorry for Graham Ward who was padded up for the whole of the Stoke and NPL games and then recorded a duck when he finally did get a bat at Croygas!!

Two Decades Of Touring

Richard Kemp recollects more than twenty years of Tours

It would be impossible to describe fully the enormous pleasure experienced by so many Badgers' players, families and friends whilst on tour. Of course, every aspiring cricket club should have a tour but where, when, how long, etc challenge the mind.

The following represents the most difficult writing task of my life – to coordinate faded memories and archives retrieved over 25 years.

Teams played

- Badgers Brewery
- Spetisbury
- Bryanstone
- Hook Norton
- Ebrington
- Oxenford
- Churchill
- Heythrop Park

- Windrush Valley
- Milton
- Martinstown

Results

Played 46; Won 28; Lost 8; Drawn 9
(plus 1 Abandoned)

1980 to 82

2 x 1 day trips to Blandford Forum for Badgers Brewery game.

1. Coach trip in rain – plied with beer, team paralytic in brewery bar – still won.

2. Coach that wasn't (Dave Bowerman's 'error') – took cars – very tired on return.

Longer trip to Blandford area – played Spetisbury and Bryanstone. Dave Pitts christened 'Slime' after hurdling into stagnant water jump.

Steve's Statistical Set

On the field performances on tour have tended to be tempered by the late nights and a certain amount of alcohol consumption, but two stand out from the pack, both in 1992. Andy Parker made 102 against Heythrop (although he was only persuaded to retire by assurances that it would count as a not out for the averages) and Mick Willmott took a memorable 9 for 41 against Hook Norton, for whom the red mist was strong that day. Highest partnership was 130 between David Aldwinckle and Mark Gordon for the second wicket against Hook Norton in 1999, but the most memorable was probably the eighth wicket 67 against Milton in 2004 with which Simon Fox and Allan Butt broke a record that had stood for 45 years.

1984 and onwards

First trip to the Cotswolds – one match only against Hook Norton. We realised we had found an idyllic location and developed close ties with Chipping Campden, Ebrington (evening games), Hook Norton and Natwest Bank (Heythrop Park) over twenty years.

After several years it became traditional for us to miss out on one game due to the weather or a scheduling cock up.

In 2003 Hook Norton Under 15s (?) made 263-5 – biggest total conceded. Badgers made 247 all out.

Accommodation

In Chipping Campden included the Lygon Arms, The Potteries, Seymour Hotel, Volunteer Arms (usually arranged by Alan & Helen Wilkes). Later stayed at Deddington Arms and Crown & Cushion (Chipping Norton) as a supporter.

Brewery trips

Badgers Brewery – 1 (+ 3 games).

Hook Norton – 2 (+ one-eyed barman).

Before/after game entertainment

Golf – Heythrop Park's own 9-hole course + several others.

Skittles – darts – rounders + the odd card school and cribbage.

Sunday morning walk essential (girls chased by cows) plus mid morning coffee in hotel near marketplace.

Garden trips for ladies (remember Ernest Wilson Memorial Garden in Chipping Campden and Davidia (handkerchief) tree, Hidcote and the walled garden at Heythrop Park).

Memorable acquaintances

Ivor (Lygon Arms).

Duncan + Ken Smith (Hook Norton) + 16 year old who made 160 for them.

Jeremy (fireman) and Bruce (Aussie) at Ebrington.

Other events

1987 was the year we went to watch Glos v Worcs at Gloucester because Ebrington was rained off. Went to see Botham bat but were five minutes late and he was out first ball, so plan was scuppered, but we did get to see Hick

Brock's Trivia Corner

The batting order is a fluid beast for the Badgers at the best of times, but some may wonder at the 109 run opening partnership against Milton on the 2005 tour, coming as it did between Mark Gordon (who hates opening the batting and has not done so voluntarily since becoming captain) and Ian Gregg (who is never given the chance). The explanation is simple enough, in that the order was pulled out of a hat during the drunken revelries the night before the game.

make 138 by about 3 pm against Walsh and Lawrence and a few overs of Dilley and Botham with the ball.

Lots of escapades in Chipping Campden but difficult to place them in chronological order. I remember first meeting Jan Pitts at The Badger Bistro near the Lygon and a plateful of sausages (Mr P says this is on-limit); Margaret winning the 9-pin bowling; Bowerman and D Pitts attempting to drink the Volunteer dry; Dave T and Ivor plotting all sorts of equine excursions; platefuls of fried breakfasts to soak up buckets full of ale; peaceful B&B haven in the pottery across the road; dour Yorkshire supporters in Lygon following Yorks v Somerset; compulsory village stroll + all the lovely gardens; golf at Broadway on Friday afternoon. There were more after Simon went in search of Wang Fu.

Significant Injuries

Andy Parker at Ebrington – twisted ankle. Jeremy took him to hospital but upon late return found he was locked out of the Seymour Hotel (had changed from an inexpensive B&B run by a couple of ‘older’ ladies to a very expensive up-market hotel) and had to sleep in his car.

Dave Tickner pulled both hamstrings at Hook Norton and had to be carried off the field, and to the bar.

Steve Pitts was hit in the face by ball at Windrush Valley CC match in 2001 and broke cheek bone.

Tour Trophies

Wang-Fu provided by Simon Fox from Thailand (won by numerous people including Richard, Ann and Suzanne Kemp, Alan Tickner and Brent Noble) and then silver cactus from Mexico also donated by SF.

Questions

What was the name of Dave Tickner’s dog which won the Greyhound Derby in June 1992?

Who swam in his underpants at Heythrop Park, and then spent ages trying to dry them using the warm air hand dryer?

What colour was Jeremy’s favourite cap?

Who paid Churchill’s tea money?

Who got into the apple pie bed in Ebrington?

What was the Andy Parker (and Fern?) bath incident about?

Who shared a bed with Steve Pitts?

Where was the wicket cut out in a meadow and the pitch marked with gloss paint?

Who danced on the table after his favourite Campari tippie?

Where did the girls encounter brown bears, lions, giraffes and camels?

[Answers available from either the author (Richard Kemp) or the editor (Steve Pitts) since there turned out to be no space to include them anywhere]



Acknowledgements and Thank You

I would like to thank Simon Fox for driving this whole idea to fruition, Roy and Mark Gordon, Dave and Alan Tickner and Richard Kemp for their contributions of articles, Darrell and Jacqueline for comments on content and proof-reading and Janet for all that plus her forbearance over the past few weeks, whilst I've been like a bear with a sore head as I struggled to put this together, and for arranging the printing.



1976: 3rd July at Beddington Park vs. Cheam Parish
Back row (L to R): D.Bowerman, R.Gordon, B.Noble, L.Pitts, B.Moore, R.Kemp
Front row (L to R): A.Tickner, R.Phipps, D.Tickner, P.Walters, J.Chignell



2006 tour: 15th July at Ibberton
Back row (L to R): A.Butt, M.Gordon, P.Redding, R.Dawar, M.Mann, G.Ward
Front row (L to R): S.Fox, S.Pitts, M.Willmott (reclining), S.Dawar, I.Gregg