

# Hemel Hempstead Town Cricket Club

## April Newsletter

Hello again! We should be saying welcome back but we find ourselves in unprecedented times, uncertain when or if cricket will return to Heath Park.

Last week, glorious sunshine beamed down, unheard of in what would have been the pre-season openers home and away against Reed.

To bring you some news, some things have drastically changed and others have not. As usual, our juniors were wintering well and there are some bright talents amongst the ranks that are sure to bolster the sides in the years to come.

For those of you that don't know, soft furnishings were successfully installed to the bar area in the pavilion to make the club feel more homely. Gone also are those horrible grey chairs which have now been replaced by much better quality seats, which are in the club's colours. Visually, the club really is looking in good shape for the future.

Whilst the future of socialising at the club in the future looks secure, we must address the very real prospect of a significant delay to the season. But, having said that, it is important we stay positive even when things can sometimes look bleak.

If we all do our bit, stay home, and suffer now, there's no doubt that we'll all be back together on that pitch (or in the bar) sooner rather than later.

For now, take care and stay safe. See you all soon.

### *View from the Chair – Professor Richard Grayson*

I'm writing to update you on how the club is faring in these unusual times.

We don't know yet if we might have some kind of cricket season, but the England and Wales Cricket Board is looking at getting things going again at senior levels in early July if at all possible, and is at least planning for that if public health advice allows. Within Herts Junior Leagues, we are working to the same timescale. If we are able to, we will look to move as many May/June fixtures into July/August, though probably as friendlies rather than as formally competitive groups.

A number of projects at HHTCC are on hold. We were due to have new nursery ground nets built over the course of a week at some point when the weather allowed in late March or April. Depending on when normality resumes it is possible that this work will be done in late June, but otherwise it is likely to be done after any season we might have has ended. Repairs to the pavilion balcony are due to be carried out in advance of the season as soon as we know when that might start. Our bar refurbishment, largely funded by our bar suppliers, Dayla, is also on hold.

We were left with a large amount of bar stock which would have gone off during the lockdown. However, we were pleased to be able to donate nearly £1,200 of that to the Queensway House care home in Highfield where it was gratefully received.

Massive thanks are due to our shirt sponsors [Vertex](#) and [Carrob](#) who have continued to support the club just as if cricket was being played. None of our other sponsors have sought any kind of refund and I would urge you all to take a look at their details [here](#). Please think about whether you can support their business now or when normality resumes in just the way that they are supporting us.

As you will have read, many cricket and other sports clubs are facing severe financial challenges, with virtually no income and bills still to be paid. Whilst we are in a relatively positive position currently, we are not immune from the risk of financial problems if this situation is prolonged. We have reduced our costs to the very minimum but things like ground maintenance, insurance and standing charges for utilities are unavoidable. We have reviewed our financial position under a range of outcomes from cricket resuming in July to no cricket or events in 2020. (Continued on Page 2)



(Continued from Page 1) We believe that we can survive but without ongoing government support, if our reserves are severely depleted then our nets and balcony projects could be in jeopardy. Certainly, under all circumstances, we will need everyone to support the club as much as possible once we reopen.

I emailed a few weeks ago about possible subscription refunds. Many replies came back saying that any refund would be refused, and nobody said they would like one, but this is still something we will look at in due course. For now, despite government funding, we still have costs in excess of £25,000 to carry for the rest of this year, and clearly we will not know what the position is as regards playing cricket for some time. We'll make a decision on this as soon as we can.

I want to thank a number of people who are working hard at the club. Trevor Radcliffe, Andy Turbutt and Will Langley have been doing much financial planning in order to work out what needs to be done immediately and longer-term to take advantage of local and national government funding which has been made available, not least to support staff. They have put in many hours on this work. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude for what they have done and are continuing to do. Paul Thompson is continuing to volunteer to cut the grass and is able to do that while observing suitable distancing rules sitting on the grass cutter. Emma Benson has continued to assist with various matters around the club. Thank you all.

As we look forward to how things might be in the next weeks and months it is tempting to reflect on big issues and what's important in life. A number of comparisons have been bandied around in the media with the 'Blitz Spirit'. As a 20<sup>th</sup> century historian I find some comparisons with the Second World War problematic. Of course, some people are now having a terrible time, but as a country we do not face the existential threat which that generation's life and liberties faced and there is no question of sinking, in Churchill's words "into the abyss of a new Dark Age". Indeed, though we need to reflect on the considerable dangers faced daily by heroic key workers, and the ill health and bereavements which are being suffered, most people are not being asked to do any more than stay at home.

However, two aspects of the war generation's approach spring to mind as relevant for today. First, their phrase "Mustn't grumble" says a lot. We have much to be thankful for even now. Second, that generation, even in the darkest days, continued to plan for the future and how they could make a difference in their local communities and wider society. From that planning came the NHS on which we all rely now. I know many of you are already doing such work. But my request to all would be, while you have perhaps more time to think than usual, what one extra thing might you do when we resume that you do not normally do, and could that be to help the community resource that is our cricket club? Could you come to a work party at the club? Could you run a social event? Could you help manage or coach a junior team? Please do let me know if you can think of anything you might be able to help with.

In the meantime, I wish all of you good health, and look forward to seeing you, hopefully, at some point in the summer.

### 100 Club

It's time to announce the winners for the October, November and the jackpot December draws of the 100 Club! Due to current circumstances draws for 2020 are delayed, but we will announce these in due course when it appropriate to do so.

Each number you buy has a 35% chance of winning across the year so you could be in with a real chance of claiming a cash prize! There's also a bumper Christmas draw with a £100 jackpot!

It's not too late to enter, and costing just £1 a month it's a real bargain! All the details for joining and the draws can be found here: <https://www.hhtcc.co.uk/membership#100Club>

£20		£10		£5	
October 2019	Lesley Cheesewright		Jim Birnie		Teresa Canning
November 2019	Aaron Wilson		Harry Howard		Rose Fowler
£100		£75		£50	
£25		£15			
December 2019	John Birnie	Brett Penny	Caren Doodson	Mel Hones	Chris West

## **Cricketing Memories**

With no cricket matches to bring you news on, this month we decided to let you become the reporters! We've been busy collating some of the favourite cricketing memories from the membership to share whilst we eagerly await the return to the cricket pitch.

If you'd like to get involved and share your favourite stories to be included in the next newsletter please feel free to get in touch! You can find contact details on [Page 7](#).

### **Andy Turbutt – 4<sup>th</sup> XI Vice Captain**

*"In 2008, I was Manager of the U15 Junior team that won both the Herts County Cup and the Peter Wright Memorial Trophy. We also won the Indoor League but I won't dwell on that!*

*We won the Peter Wright Memorial Trophy by beating Potton End in the final, bowling them out for 24 and knocking the runs off in two overs for a 10 wicket win.*

*To win the County Cup, after winning our regional league (unbeaten and never winning by less than 80 runs or 8 wickets), we beat Letchworth by 101 runs in the Quarter Final, Old Albanians by 18 runs in the Semi Final and Hertford by 19 runs in the final.*

*Shortly after the final, I was looking at the U15 County Cup Winners shield. It had 30 crests inscribed with past winners and our 2008 U15 win filled the very last crest.*

*I tracked back through the other 29 crests and found that HHTCC had won the very first County Cup Final recorded on the shield in 1979...and I was playing in that game! We beat Hitchin by three wickets at St Albans CC and I was at the wicket with my fellow 14 year old, Phil Lewis when we hit the winning runs!"*



### **Ryan Wilson – 2<sup>nd</sup> XI Wicketkeeper**

*"My favourite cricketing memory is from a few years back in a cup game against St Albans West Indian. That season they'd smashed us twice in the league and rather annoyingly revelled in it for far too long.*

*We went over to their place, on a Sunday afternoon, to play on the infamous wicket which was a death trap. They won the toss and stuck us in and we were soon skittled out for just 97. I batted 36 minutes for 9 runs, but the backbone of the innings was from Dave Jenkins – who scored a battling 16 not out from 71 balls in 87 minutes 'Here we go again' I thought.*

*By some miracle the tables were turned and we began to chip away at their batsmen. I think Nick and Lewis Hodgins took 5 wickets between them. One of the West Indies' batsmen (who scored a hundred against us on Saturday) was challenged by Nick Hodgins from first slip to clear Tom Waterton at cow corner. He managed to resist the challenge for just two balls before hitting one straight to him!*

*In the end we bowled them out for 88 to give us the win by 9 runs! It was one of the loudest EM chants I've heard in the changing room afterwards!"*

### Steve May – Sunday Cricket Legend

*"The 2019 cricket season was probably as exciting as it gets - England winning the World Cup, Ben Stokes securing a drawn Ashes series, but for those of us at Heath Park on Sunday June 30th nothing beat the adrenalin rush and the reaching for the Valium tablets as Hemel clinching a last ball last wicket win over Hertford in a game that swung like Tarzan.*

*Hertford including 6 first teamers posted 224. Hemel slumped to 84 for 5. "We've lost this one!"*

*Skipper Lew Hodgins and Billy May put on 112 with 10 overs still to go. "We've won this one!"*

*Skipper Lew Hodgins and Billy May are out in successive balls..."We've lost this one!"*

*Last man Lockey (Adam Locke) strolls out at 207 for 9. Still 16 needed - "Can he stay with (Charlie) Hoskins?"*

*The overs and runs crawl by until going into the last over just 2 are needed..."We can win, lose or tie this one!"*

*Lockey scrambles a single. The scores are tied. Hoskins eeks out the tension by blocking the next 3 balls.*

*Two balls left and Hoskins drives to mid on. The Hertford fielder claims a catch. Hoskins disagrees so too do the umpires. More of the crowd faint. One ball to go.*

*"Lockey, get your head down and just run off this last ball". No need ! Hoskins hits a 4 and: "We've won this one!"*

*A significant win indeed against a Hertford side who in their last game post 320 against Watford which guaranteed Hemel their only promotion of the season.*

*Who knows right now what will happen in 2020? Will there even be a Chess Valley League?*

*No, cricket doesn't get more exciting than at Heath Park on Sunday June 30th 2019."*



### Sam Wheeler – 3<sup>rd</sup> XI All Rounder (and big dog owner)

*"I only joined Hemel last year and I already have so many memories that I could have sent in. I enjoyed a lot of last season playing in the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI and I was pleased to become a regular fixture in the side.*

*However, one moment stands out for me as a personal landmark, which was my club debut for the 4<sup>th</sup> XI. I took a five wicket haul against Old Minchendenians (despite coming on as the third change – thanks Mike!)*

*To make things even sweeter we also won the incredibly close game by just 13 runs. We posted 211-9 and bowled them out for 198, a perfect way to start the season!*

*I debated for a long time which memory to submit for the newsletter but I won't mention my Sunday debut where I was out first ball – a perfect start to my Hemel career...*

*I also have fond memories of channelling my inner Bradley Cooper at the club Karaoke night, belting my heart out to 'Shallow'. Some have said that I have a voice of an angel and that I definitely wasn't upstaged by my girlfriend Charlotte!*

*In short, I really miss cricket and I can't wait to be back playing (and singing) really soon!"*



### Professor Richard Grayson – HHTCC Chairman

*"I'd like to be able to say that my best cricket memory is watching Northants beat Warwickshire at Lord's in the 1995 NatWest Final. The Northants team was a contender for everything that year and a few either side of it, but were regularly pipped, often it seemed by the hard-partying Warwickshire side. It was not to be in the NatWest Final, all down, in my mind, to an LBW decision not given by Dickie Bird. Consequently, the occasion I most fondly remember was the 2017 World Cup Final in which the England women's team defeated India at Lord's. Seeing a team you support winning a World Cup is pretty special and since I follow Northern Ireland at football, England cricket teams are where such success is most likely to come from.*

*I had bought tickets for the final months before the tournament began, hoping that England might make it. I didn't go to any other games but watched all the England matches on TV. There was something about the team in 2017 which, just as for the men in 2019, suggested that they were destined to lift the trophy at home – even with hiccups on the way. The day itself was a great occasion, with Lord's packed and the crowd in fine voice. It all came down to the last hour of play and it looked like India would easily get the score before Anya Shrubsole started to tear through the batting order. There was a moment of despair as Katherine Brunt dropped a catch which she would have taken on any other day, a catch which would have won the World Cup. Minutes later, England were winners. My view was side on, from the Grand Stand, and I filmed the final ball, capturing the bails flying into the air and lighting up red as the crowd erupted. To cap it all, as the team paraded around the pitch with the trophy, I managed to get my wicket-keeping gloves signed by Sarah Taylor – in her prime, arguably the best keeper in the world across both the men's and women's games."*



### Joni McNicholas – HHTCC Bar Manager

*"I haven't been able to actually do a season yet, which I'm gutted about, but thought I'd get involved anyway! I can't wait to get back to normal and for the club to be running smoothly – it's going to be a lot of fun!*

*The club has looked great over the winter, particularly at Christmas, and I'm sure it will as well when we finally get to host all the great events that we've got planned for members this year.*

*See you all soon!"*



### Nicko wins award

Our dear friend and long-time 2<sup>nd</sup> XI scorer Graham Nixon was presented with a special award for his dedication at the Herts Service to Sports Awards over the winter. Congratulations Graham!



### Stay in the loop with the latest...

To stay up-to-date with the latest club news and events, join our Facebook group via:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/hhtcc/>

### Whilst you're here...

The club would like to thank all of our sponsors for their continued support for the coming season. Why not check out their websites below?

Please support them where you can!



### 'A Memoir to Scott Mason'

The Club has received 'A Memoir to Scott Mason' kindly sent to us from Ludlow Cricket Club (where Scott also played) at the request of his family in Australia.

Scott, who played for Tasmania before his tragic early death in 2005, helped our Club win the Hertfordshire Premier League title in 1999 with his personal performances and the positive influence he had on the team's overall approach as well. He is generally regarded as the best overseas batsman to play for the Club.

The booklet includes several references to Hemel Hempstead Town CC and a message from our then captain Giles Berry. It will be placed permanently in the Members Bar upstairs for all to see.



### *Useful Contacts*

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Chairman: Professor Richard Grayson – [hhtcc.chair@gmail.com](mailto:hhtcc.chair@gmail.com)

Membership Secretary: Mike Samuels – [hhtcc.membership@gmail.com](mailto:hhtcc.membership@gmail.com)

Bar and Functions Manager: Emma Benson – [hhtcc.events@gmail.com](mailto:hhtcc.events@gmail.com)

### *Got a story?*

If you have any news or photos you'd like to share in the next newsletter or have any feedback then please email: [hhtcc.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:hhtcc.newsletter@gmail.com). We'd love to hear from you!

~ Aaron ~

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