

SECRETARY'S
REPORT
2020

As we turned the corner and entered 2020 thoughts were focussed on the year of celebration that lay ahead to celebrate 175 years of cricket at Tofts Rd.

President Tony Moss had already invested many hours of his own time and expense organising the Church service, corporate golf day, Proms in the Park and with Mike Stein had published a masterpiece in the 175 brochure. Along with these events Tony surprised everybody by announcing he was launching a fashion item, the 175 blazer was born, our President Emeritus, Keith Moss, once again offered his generosity and sponsored the cloth.

The club was in a good financial position in January, mainly due to the many private bookings that we were holding, many being "word of mouth" recommendations, Richard and his team, Sam, Naomi, Shannon, Sue and Zara were joined by new staff Morgan and Kristen, all have done an excellent job.

Had you mentioned the word "Corona" to anyone pre 2020 it would have meant a bottle of beer with a piece of lime lodged v in the neck. Corona was to take on a whole new evil meaning, and one which would change the way the world functioned. As the virus spread across the world at an alarming rate we began to realise that we would not be exempt from it, hand sanitisers appeared on the bar, handshakes were replaced by elbow contacts and a new phrase was introduced..."Social distancing".

Boris confirmed all our fears on March 23rd when he locked down the whole country, the club was in turmoil with so much to do, the management and staff worked tirelessly to conform to government guidelines, negotiated with suppliers, utilities, insurance companies and the coffee machine!, along with this all the stock had to be removed and the clubhouse was mothballed, furlough for the staff had to be arranged and business grants applied for, it was not an easy task.

With Jaynes` assistance we were able to forecast how long we could survive for with no income, Danny negotiated with sponsors where he could, both of these were invaluable for the future of the club. The club is also indebted to all those members who paid their subs knowing that there was no certainty of any cricket, Thank-you.

Thankfully we did not lose any members to Covid-19 although one member, Stuart Tiffany had a particularly rough ride with it and is thankfully on the road to recovery. One area that benefitted from the lockdown was the ground, every year it looks pristine for the start of the season, this year the bar was raised even higher, the "Wednesday crew" and the "Green Arrows", alias, Jeff and Hedley worked when they could whilst following strict guidelines, Debbie White ensured the floral displays were as good as ever, other members added to the cause as and when. It was pleasing to see the club helping the local community by leaving the ground open, we have received many kind words from local residents who used the ground for their hour of daily exercise. A mention must go our long term groundsman, Eddie Thurwell, who, despite his wife being terminally ill continued to prepare the wickets for matches, sadly, Christine passed away in July.

Despite the lockdown and no sign of the club operating in the near future the management continued to work behind the scenes via Zoom meetings, one of the areas that needed addressing was one that we had told you, the members, we would deliver, a members area to alleviate the problem of overcrowding when private functions are in progress, plans were drawn up, it was then suggested that this new area had the potential to be used as a coffee shop during the day.

The plans were submitted and despite some local concerns re traffic they were accepted, it must be stressed that the new area is not designed to bring a lot more traffic into the clubhouse but to make it more comfortable for those who are in it, Chairman, Chris Gott has been the driving force behind the project, Andrew Doidge offered his services to help deliver the major refurbishment 7 years ago, he has once again come to offer his knowledge and expertise. We are also very much aware that there is considerable work to be carried out on the outfield and scoreboard, plans are in the pipeline for this work to go ahead before the next campaign.

Returning to some sort of normality enabled the players to commence one on one training, it was not an easy task with so many strict guidelines to adhere to, there were so many setbacks to overcome.

A mention must go to the League who had a monumental task of organising a programme of cricket for the season, the goalposts were constantly moving in a very uncertain world.

Eventually in July we saw the return of both junior and senior cricket, the juniors had some excellent games, in previous seasons many matches were cancelled due to clubs not having enough players to field a team, one advantage of this year was that clubs who committed themselves to playing did so knowing that they had players to fulfil fixtures.

We returned to opening the clubhouse once more albeit in difficult surroundings, it was difficult for all concerned who helped get the clubhouse adapted to a whole new way of operating, one way systems, signage on the floors, card payment only and table service were a few to mention.

It was becoming more apparent that there would be no celebrations for the 175th anniversary, along with Lozfest and bonfire night we would be having no major fund raising events either.

The finances of the club were obviously greatly helped by the government grants along with the furlough scheme that we received, these were essential to our survival, added to this was the measures put in place by the management team to ensure we remained in a financially stable position.

In normal circumstances copies of the audited accounts would be available to view in the clubhouse leading up to the A.G.M which is normally held on the second Friday in January, this has now been postponed until further notice. I don't feel it is correct to put the accounts on a social media platform and therefore a full copy can be requested via email to rcwbrown@gmail.com. All I will say regarding the finances is that considering the hardships we have faced over the past nine months this club is in good health. Paul Calvert our auditor very kindly stated, "You have steadied your ship in a very rough sea".

Cricket

As usual Phil Raistrick has compiled a dossier of the season.

This season was unique and unprecedented in the entire history of the club and the Bradford League. The global pandemic of Coronavirus imposed a serious lockdown of all social activity in the UK, including the banning of all sports, starting in March. It looked virtually certain that there would be no cricket played anywhere in the country, and possibly the world, in the whole of 2020.

But then, there were some signs of the rate of infection slowing, and the Government, anxious to kick start the economy, relaxed some of the draconian measures which had brought the country to a halt. The ECB spotted a possible window of opportunity, and successfully arranged for cricket to be possible – but with considerable restraints. The Bradford Premier League responded with an inspired format to enable competitive cricket to take place between late July and mid-September.

This format consisted of each of the four divisions being split into two, based on geography, and within the 2 groups thus formed in each division, each club would play 8 fixtures with 40 overs per side, and the normal points system applied to arrive at a winner of each group. The two table-toppers from each division would then play each other in a "final" to establish the "winner" and receive a trophy.

The Premier Division had 5 teams in each group, and to ensure a fixture every week, it was necessary for each team to play one game against a team in the other Premier group. Because of this, PSL were drawn to play Townville, away, and this encounter led to the only defeat of the truncated season. The home side were put in to bat, and were quickly reduced to 37 for 6, but then some audacious big hitting from their tail achieved a total of 188 which proved to be too many – by a margin of 57 runs.

All the other games were won in reasonable comfort, with major contributions being made by the team's "backbone" of the last 15 years or so: Mark Robertshaw (352 runs @ 58.67), James Smith (118 runs @ 39.33), and Chris Marsden (185 runs @ 37.00 and 11 wkts @ 17.36). Every opportunity was offered to the younger members of the team, and it was Archie Scott who took the greatest advantage with 114 runs @ 22.8 and 18 wkts @ 12.5.

Other notable cameo contributions came from Barrie Frankland (2Xscores over 40) and Josh Priestley (a 5for v Brad & Bing)

All 14 men who appeared for the 1st XI played their full part in good, consistent team performances, and as always, the standard of fielding was amongst the best in the league.

So we finished top of our group in the Premier Division, but unfortunately, the play-off final against Townville (again!) had to be cancelled because of Coronavirus precautions. But the title of "Joint Winners" of the Bradford Premier League Covid Cup will be added to our honours board!

So – in summary – it has been a strange summer. At least we had some cricket, and our players were able to demonstrate their quality. In every match we fielded 6 players who have come up through our great, and much envied junior set-up. 2 of the others also have strong family links with the club.

Whatever 2021 brings, probably still with an eye to Coronavirus considerations, we can look forward with confidence, because we have both established and upcoming quality in abundance – principally based on this club's solid belief in family values and growing from within. I must add to Phil's report the appreciated commitment shown to the club by the players who waived all their match fees for the season, thank-you.

The second team started the season in July with a home defeat to rivals New Farnley by 6 wickets, Gomersal proved too strong the following weekend and we were defeated once again by 6 wickets despite loan signing Aaron Days' 44 on his debut. As the season progressed the confidence grew within the team and wins against Batley and an excellent win away to New Farnley proceeded the earlier defeats. A couple of abandoned games made the season even shorter and before we knew it the season was over. As mentioned earlier by Phil it was a strange summer but we were fortunate to witness cricket, the two loan signings from Yeadon who played for us, Aaron Day and Sam Johnson performed well and have since signed for us permanently after witnessing the team spirit and what this club offers, welcome to the family!.

The Thirds had a season that they will want to forget, having been promoted the previous year this year proved difficult despite stalwart Keith Marsden finishing top of the league bowling averages with 18 wickets, included in that figure were two 5fers, you can't keep an old dog down, well done Keith. There are, despite the poor season, some excellent junior prospects coming through the team.

All in all it has been a very difficult year, not just for us as a club but for our members, our local community and our fellow teams within the league. As in the recent previous years this club has had to deal with testing off field issues and 2020 proved to be no different, a few of our members have suffered serious health or accident life changing problems, our thoughts and prayers go out to their families at these difficult times. Every club within sport has its members who give a lot of their life to the club, Roland Parker was one of those figures, Roland was loved by everyone at PSLCC, in October we received the sad news that he had passed away aged 95. Keith Moss added the following kind words for his long term friend on the club website following his death.

"Roland was totally devoted to Pudsey St Lawrence and despite his failing health in recent years he still liked to come to matches assisted by his daughters. It says so much of his loyalty to the club that he attended to church service to celebrate the club's 175th anniversary in March, it was great that he could be there as he has played such a huge part in shaping the direction of Pudsey St Lawrence. Roland was the very essence of a Bradford League cricketer and Pudsey St Lawrence has lost a man who thoroughly deserves to be described as a club legend."

Finally, to all our members, sponsors and friends I wish you a happy, prosperous and safe 2021 and look forward to seeing you all when PSLCC can provide you with a safe environment for all to enjoy.

Richard Brown,

Hon.Sec PSLCC

