



Welcome to the winter edition of the regular community newsletter produced by Marylebone Cricket Club - the owner of Lord's. It is the tenth edition we have published; I hope that each one has helped to keep you in touch with developments at 'the home of cricket'.

The next three pages contain articles about improvements at Lord's, local MCC initiatives such as a fund-raising evening for St John's Hospice, and our efforts to identify and foster young talent - both on and off the pitch. We are also delighted to bring you news about some special offers for local residents (including a discount at the Lord's Tavern Bar & Brasserie) plus days when there will be free admission to Lord's - both for adults and, in particular, for children - next season.

Free admission to matches at Lord's

Indeed, MCC will be offering free admission to children for an unprecedented range of matches in 2006. This policy will apply, for the first time, to every level of cricket played at Lord's - from village to Varsity matches, Club

to county fixtures, and a men's Test match to a women's one-day international. For example, school parties will be entitled to free admission - by prior arrangement with MCC's Ticket Office - to the first two days of the England v Sri Lanka npower Test match, beginning on Thursday 11th May. Children will also be admitted, free of charge, when England's women play India in a NatWest Series fixture on Monday 14th August.

Children and adults alike will be given free entry for several other games - including the men's and women's Varsity matches on Saturday 1st July and the npower-sponsored National Village Final on Sunday 3rd September.

Further information about these free entry days will be published, nearer to the time of each fixture, on MCC's website (www.lords.org).

Lord's Tavern Bar & Brasserie: special offer

MCC is delighted that the Lord's Tavern Bar & Brasserie, off St John's Wood Road, is proving increasingly popular among local residents - particularly at lunchtimes. The introduction of a 'no smoking' policy has been widely welcomed, while another recent innovation - jazz sessions on Sundays - has added to its daytime appeal, too.

We have also increased the Tavern's attractiveness as a dinner venue by introducing a very tempting new menu. To encourage local residents to try it, MCC will reduce your total bill by 15 per cent if you have an evening meal there before the end of January. Just show this newsletter to our staff before placing your order. (Please note that this offer may not be used in conjunction with any other Tavern promotion.)

Personal fitness at Lord's

Finally, if you feel the need to work off any festive over-indulgence, at the Tavern or elsewhere, please note that local residents are very welcome to use the gymnasium in MCC's Indoor Cricket School. In fact, readers of this newsletter are entitled to a 15 per cent discount on 'club' memberships; for further information, please contact Personal Fitness at Lord's, which is operated by John Neal Training, on 020 7616 8615.

Roger Knight
Secretary & Chief Executive, MCC

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KEEPING LORD'S WORLD-CLASS

MCC raises the roof on founder's birthday

The Mound Stand's 'tented' roof - one of the iconic images of Lord's - was removed (see below) towards the end of November as MCC reached a key stage in its latest ground improvement project.

The work - which was undertaken on the 250th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Lord, the ground's founder - was necessary as the roof, built in 1987, had exceeded its scheduled lifespan.

The new covering, currently being installed, will maintain the stand's award-winning appearance.

MCC's Roger Knight, said: "Our ground improvement programme really began, in earnest, when the current Mound Stand was constructed. Now, after almost twenty years, and over £50 million of investment, we are going back to the place where we started. After renewing its roof this winter, we will refurbish the rest of the Mound Stand next year. It is all part of MCC's policy of continuous investment, to ensure that Lord's remains not only world-famous but world-class."

The work on the Mound Stand's roof is being undertaken by Base Structures; its project manager is Chris Ives (0791 7138660).



Indoor School re-opens after refurbishment

Another ground improvement project was completed in October when MCC's Indoor Cricket School re-opened after a £175,000 refurbishment; the changes included the installation of new nets, improved lighting and a high-tech 'Supergrasse' playing surface.

MCC's Head of Cricket, John Stephenson, said: "The National Academy at Loughborough raised the bar for indoor cricket in this country; we wanted to put our School back in that top bracket. Now we're planning to develop a video analysis suite to improve its facilities even further."

The building is used, throughout the year, by an enormously wide range of players - from elite international cricketers to complete beginners. It is also a key facility for the London Schools Cricket Association and many individual local schools (see page 4).

MCC unveils Rolls of Honour at Lord's

MCC has installed Rolls of Honour in its Pavilion, in memory of the 612 members of the Club who died, serving their countries, in the two World Wars.

The dedication and unveiling ceremony was held in early August, when an MCC side played the Combined Services at Lord's.



The Roll of Honour for the First World War lists 330 MCC members - including the Test cricketers Kenneth Hutchings (England) and Reginald Schwarz (South Africa). This board had previously been displayed in the Pavilion but was removed last year, when the building was closed for an £8 million refurbishment programme. MCC took the opportunity to have the board repaired and corrected - as a research project revealed that several names had, wrongly, been omitted from it.

The Roll of Honour for the Second World War is completely new and contains 282 names - including those of the England cricketers Ken Farnes and Maurice Turnbull.

Between them, the Rolls of Honour list four MCC members who were awarded the Victoria Cross; in addition, they feature many brothers (including twins) and several fathers and sons.

Lord's groundstaff win acclaim at annual awards

The Head Groundsman at Lord's, Mick Hunt, and his team have been praised for the quality of the pitches they produced for both first-class and one-day matches during the 2005 season.

In the 'Groundsman of the Year' awards, organised by the England & Wales Cricket Board, Lord's was commended for its pitches in both forms of the game.

John Stephenson said: "I'm delighted that our groundstaff have been praised for the consistently high standard of the pitches they produced last season. It takes a huge amount of work, and all the groundstaff's expertise, to keep the quality of our pitches so high."

In addition, the practice facilities at Lord's, including its Nursery Ground (behind the NatWest Media Centre), were voted the best in the country.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Long Room carols raise funds for hospice

An evening of carols at Lord's, organised by MCC, raised over £1,500 for St John's Hospice, in Grove End Road, on 14th December.

This annual concert has quickly become one of the most popular pre-Christmas events in St John's Wood, with an ever-increasing number of local residents and MCC members applying for tickets. Unfortunately, some applications were unsuccessful this year, even though the event was being held in a larger venue - the recently refurbished Long Room - than in 2004.

A capacity crowd enjoyed an excellent performance by the choir (The London Chorus), its conductor (Ronald Corp) and the organist (Christopher Whitton).

Romaine Darey, from the Hospice, said: "We're very grateful to local residents and MCC members for being so generous with their donations, which will be put to the best possible use. We're also indebted to everyone at Lord's for staging, yet again, such a fantastic festive event, in a truly stunning setting."



Local property prices boosted by Lord's

According to a new report, the prices of local properties are boosted by their proximity to Lord's.

Based on a survey of leading estate agents, the report found that flats and houses near leading tennis and cricket venues tend to attract premium prices.

In the case of Lord's, it concluded that the benefit amounts, on average, to around £14,500 per property. However, football grounds have the opposite effect, and tend to reduce local prices by about 1.8 per cent.

Further information about the survey, which was published in October, is available from Propertyfinder.com.

Blue plaques for MCC's second home

MCC is hoping to install two blue plaques to mark the site of its second, long-forgotten home.

Between leaving its original ground (in Dorset Square) in 1810 and moving to its current site, in 1814, MCC played on a field located just south of Lodge Road.

MCC had to leave it, after just three seasons, when land at the southern end of the ground was required for canal construction work.

It is hoped that one of the new plaques will be installed at street level, so that it can be seen by pedestrians, and another by the side of the canal, or on a bridge over it, for the benefit of boat-users.

The project was suggested by a cricket-loving local councillor, Murad Qureshi, who has since been researching the history, and exact location, of the second ground in association with MCC's David Rayvern Allen - an eminent cricket historian.

Each of the three grounds was known as "Lord's" after being found and prepared, for MCC, by Thomas Lord.

Local forum held in Long Room at Lord's

The latest meeting of the St John's Wood Area Forum was held at Lord's, in the historic Long Room (see below), towards the end of November.

The venue helped to attract an unusually large number of attendees who considered a wide range of community issues - including activities for the elderly, parking rule changes and local pharmacy services.

Presentations were made by bodies including Age Concern and Neighbourcare, while Westminster City Council's "One City" initiative - the successor to its "Civic Renewal" programme - was outlined by Cllr Brian Connell.

As usual, the main Forum meeting was preceded by a surgery session in which Council officers were available to answer local residents' queries on subjects such as housing issues and council tax benefits.

MCC was delighted to host the meeting, free of charge, as part of its community relations programme.



PROMOTING YOUNG TALENT

MCC supports children's 'Chance to Shine'

MCC has boosted the 'Chance to Shine' initiative - aimed at reviving cricket in schools - by inviting its members to contribute to the campaign's fund-raising appeal.

'Chance to Shine' - organised by the Cricket Foundation - was promoted in a leaflet sent by MCC, earlier this month, to all its 18,000 full and 4,000 associate members. It included a Gift Aid form to help maximise the overall value of their donations.

Roger Knight said: "MCC wants to play its full part in ensuring that this exciting new project is a resounding success. I know that many of our members will be very keen to contribute to the appeal. In addition, we look forward to working closely with the Cricket Foundation to ensure that the various 'Chance to Shine' and MCC schools initiatives complement each other and achieve their common goals."

The President of 'Chance to Shine', Mervyn King (the Governor of the Bank of England), said: "I am delighted that 'Chance to Shine' is receiving support from MCC. I am sure its backing will prove enormously important in helping us achieve our ambitious objectives."



Local school's hat-trick at Lord's

A local school has recorded an impressive hat-trick at Lord's by winning an important cricket tournament for the third year in succession.

In November, the team from St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School was triumphant, once again, in the Middlesex Indoor Kwik Cricket Championship.

Mike Walsh, the School's deputy headteacher, said: "This is a real achievement for a school with no cricket facilities on site. But our location means we have great access to the Indoor Cricket School at Lord's."

The pupils had made the short-trip to 'the home of cricket' every Friday for training.

In recognition of its achievements, the School was presented with a cricket bat signed by the England team and a 2005 Ashes Series DVD by MCC's Secretary & Chief Executive, Roger Knight (see above).

MCC Young Cricket Photographer 2006

An MCC Young Cricket Photographer is to be appointed for the fourth successive year.

The successful candidate will benefit from a unique combination of financial support (worth up to £7,500), professional exposure (including, potentially, an end-of-season exhibition at Lord's) and access to matches both at Lord's and abroad (through covering one of MCC's overseas tours). Above all, MCC's appointee will be mentored by Graham Morris - one of the world's top cricket photographers.

Last season's scholar, Adam Venn, said: "As MCC's Young Cricket Photographer, you get a brilliant combination of access, advice and investment. It's an invaluable scheme and a really enjoyable role."

MCC envisages that its Young Cricket Photographer 2006 will be aged between 18 and 25. He or she should have a demonstrable interest in cricket, a talent for both action and atmospheric photography and a genuine interest in becoming a professional sports photographer.

By Monday 6th February, applicants should submit examples of their work, together with a covering letter and completed application form (available via www.lords.org), to: MCC Communications Department, Lord's Cricket Ground, St John's Wood, London NW8 8QN.



MCC Young Cricketer selected by England

An MCC Young Cricketer, Caroline Atkins, has just returned from a tour of Sri Lanka and India as member of England's women's squad.

She had been selected after a good domestic season, in which her batting continued to improve and her fielding skills impressed everyone who saw them. As the England women's Chairman of Selectors, Mike Griggs, said: "Caroline's selection reflected the hard work she had put into her game in 2005, and the expert coaching she received from Clive Radley and his MCC colleagues."

The Young Cricketers are based at Lord's throughout the season, and boast previous 'graduates' such as Ian Botham (England), Mark Waugh (Australia) and Hamish Marshall (New Zealand).