SOU'WESTERS' CRICKET CLUB

92nd YEAR

YEARBOOK 2022

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(revised up to January 2022)

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Nethercott O. ('18)

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As an elder Sou'Wester please accept some of my thoughts being a trifle nostalgic.

It was 1976. I was at the Rose and Crown in Trent, Buff Biggins hostelry, having supper at the bar with Tim Alexander and John Haynes, two Sou'Wester stalwarts. In the adjoining room the AGM was in progress. One of the items on the agenda was Election of New Members. I'm now in my forty fifth year as a Sou'Wester!

Earlier in 1973 I played against the Sou'Westers for Lisbon Sports Club at St Julyans picturesque ground in Carcavelos. This was Sou'Westers first Overseas Tour, hastily arranged by Richard Bromley who was a teacher at the school. Their party was ten in number consisting of seven players and three camp followers. Surprisingly a twelve aside match was arranged which ended in an honorable draw! Travel to Lisbon was by Laker Airways a forerunner of Easyjet and Ryanair. An extended lunch began by toasting both Salazar and the Queen in quick succession which coincided with the spirit in which the game was played. Hence the beginning of my association with the Sou'Westers.

Over the years there have been many changes. Fry-ups for breakfast have been replaced by more "healthy" food, helmets are now worn, fielding is more athletic, with no after the match gathering in the common room to enjoy a glass or two of Port. Cheap accommodation in schools, such as Bruton, Sherborne and Wellington, is now not possible due to the influx of foreign students. Gone are the days when you could freshen up before breakfast in the outside pool at Hazelgrove, my choice B and B. More importantly in my early touring days you were only guaranteed playing on your days of arrival and departure due to the surfeit of players.

My favourite grounds were North Perrot particularly Mrs Pinney's cheese lunches and Bridgetown for its location and sumptuous teas. My last game, like Granny's, was at Bridgetown, eleven years ago. In August I was able to revisit kindly being chauffeured by Jeremy. Sadly, the Badgers Holt was closed with no teas available due to Covid restrictions

Cancellation of the Overseas Tours to Argentina and Sri Lanka were my greatest disappointments. I can however confirm in my current dual role that the postponed tour to Portugal in 2021 will now be May 18, 2023 (Thursday) to May 22, 2023 (Monday) with games against the Coimbra Knights (Friday) and Oporto CC (Saturday /Sunday).

I would like to congratulate Charlie Peet and George Thomas being selected for the Under 19 Cricket World Cup 2022 in the West Indies. Charlie will Captain Scotland and George will be in the England Squad. The Sou Westers is in excellent hands with Jonny and Martin at the helm coupled with Andy doing a sterling job with the Western Tour Fixtures from afar. I feel privileged to have contributed and be a member of this unique touring cricket club.

CAPTAIN'S REPORT

The 2021 tour was never under the same Covid threat as 2020 and the only continuing restriction revolved around the catering arrangements, which our hosts managed most generously. We were again fortunate to have Loyton as our tour base for the first week, which included a pizza evening for all tourists, at which presentations were made of the Bruce Hart Trophy to Debs Kennedy for her wonderful on-going accommodation management, and of the Chris Carruthers Trophy to James Flatt as the young player of the 2020 tour. With regard to fixtures, it was largely more of the same, with the exception of a two day start at Morebath and new games at Chardstock and Westward Ho! Amazingly we were able to complete every match with very little weather interruption and finished the tour with the remarkable record of Played 12, Won 10, Drawn 2.

Peter George's comprehensive report covers all these in detail, but highlights include a hundred for James Flatt at Sidmouth, eleven other players topping 50, lots of wickets for Parker, Chairman Kennedy and Flatt and wickets for three next generation Sou'Westers, Max Clarke, Toby Silk and George Oliver. Talking of next generation Sou'Westers, congratulations are due to Paul Thomas's two youngest boys, George and Josh, who, having both been selected for Somerset CC's Academy, enjoyed not inconsiderable success at County and Country level.

Finally, special thanks are due not only to Peter for his wonderful report but to Christopher Dean and Mark Williams for their continuing support throughout the tour as umpires and to Marion and Vernon for their tireless efforts with the scorebook.

Looking forward to 2022, our AGM/Dinner has been arranged for Thursday 17th March at the Rugby Tavern in London and the tour commences at Morebath on Saturday 23rd July. Availabilities to me as soon as possible, please.

Martin Oliver

WESTERN TOUR 2021

The year between our last match at Kilve in August 2020 and the first of the 2021 tour at Morebath was dominated by the national struggle against COVID-19. Total victory had not been declared, but case numbers had been driven down, the restrictions applicable to cricket had been greatly relaxed, and thankfully the tour was able to proceed almost as normal, apart from the suspension of some of the traditional catering. Proper cricket lunches and teas may well be a permanent victim of the Great Virus.

However, as the tour progressed it seemed that another disruptive issue had arisen locally: an outbreak of innocent passers-by being struck by flying cricket balls. This can be the only explanation for the rash of gigantic safety nets encountered at, for example, Sampford Peverell, Sidmouth, Chardstock, Bridgetown and Westward Ho!, the supply of which must have been a nice little earner for somebody. At Sidmouth they went further: a newly adopted local rule meant that hitting the safety netting on the full resulted non is xir runs for the batsman but five for the fielding side; dismissal of the errant batsman would follow a second clearance of the netting following an official warning after the first. You will be pleased to hear that the Sou'westers so controlled their natural attacking instincts that it was not necessary to invoke this severe penalty for them!

The hottest weather of the summer had marked the days before the start of the tour but there was a dramatic change immediately beforehand and a delayed start to the first match was necessary. Thereafter, weather forecasts were consistently gloomy, but luck was with us, and every match was completed, several of them on the hybrid format of 80 overs split to a maximum of 42/38 and with the draw a possible result.

The 2021 Yearbook listed our first opponents as The Gentlemen of Morebath, stimulating rather unkind speculation about whether a full eleven could be found. The official scorebook, however, shows our opponents as the Loyton Oddballs so perhaps that speculation was justified! If you think the issue is important, Chairman Kennedy knows everyone and everything in Morebath. His party of family and friends were based there and again supplied that playing nucleus that is necessary for both social cohesion and success on the field in the following days.

Whoever our opponents were, our match against them suffered from a delayed start because of earlier heavy rain and then a gentle 30-over contest provided the ideal prelude for sterner tests to come. Nine bowlers turned their arms over as we dismissed the Oddball Gentlemen for 187 of which their ringer, Guy Bucknell, scored 68. The two non-bowlers were (wicketkeeper) Philip and George Oliver. George was playing his first full Sou'westers match at the age of eleven and his memorable bowling debut would have to wait until later in the tour. His batting debut was also postponed as we knocked them off for six, with Charlie Everett leading the way with the first fifty of the tour.

Guy Bucknell was back with us on the following day for an 80-over hybrid match against Morebath CC. He was one of the only four Sou'westers who got to the wicket in an impressive score of 274-2 after only 10 overs – a generous declaration, but Captain (I) Kennedy clearly knew his opponents well when he made it. The reply started positively, led by a W G Grace lookalike with the unusual cricketing name of Miguel who made the most of the short boundary on two sides; lost balls are a regular occurrence at Morebath including a record of 18 in one match, apparently! However, 101-1 at one point became 166-6 at another and stubborn resistance was required to draw the match at 203-9. We had four balls to remove number 11 but did not manage to do so.

Justin Williams was the Old Blundellians match manager the next day, as has become normal in recent years. However, he was not intending to play himself because of pressures at work brought on by the Virus and worked a twelve-hour night shift ending at 6am on the morning of the match. It was then that his wicketkeeper had to drop out and Justin stepped into his place very impressively with six Sou'wester victims (4 caught, 2 stumped) in our total of 203-9. The first of these was a delight: Justin had to move well forward to scoop up the ball just clear of the ground; as he did so he let out a delighted "yes!!!!!!!"; it was clear Rich Godfrey had nicked it and was already turning towards the exit, but Dean's Decisive Digit remained unmoved! After a discernible pause to think it through, Justin uttered the magic words "how's that" and the finger was raised.

203 was a decent score on a wicket slower and lower than we are accustomed to at Blundell's and it required proper batting to get us there especially when the ball was new. The middle order was able to build on the necessarily cautious start with James Flatt leading the way (69) and Will Oakes also in good shape until dismissed by a miracle catch from a Blundellian fielder. When it was their turn, the young Blundellians team did not show the same early patience and application and were dismissed for 103 with a top individual contribution of 18. Henry Parker took an impressive 5-26, the first five-wicket haul for a Sou'wester bowler since 2018, and Rich Godfrey 3-34, but this was one occasion on which, contrary to the usual adage, cautious batting in difficult conditions at the start rather than bowling ultimately won the day.

Much to the surprise of experienced spectators, Umpires Williams and Dean allowed play to start at Sampford Peverell in light drizzle. Some sunshine followed during which we reached 214-3 off 43.2 overs but then came more steady rain and a break in play, at the end of which a declaration was necessary in the interest of a balanced contest. Will Oakes (81) continued in the excellent style cut short on the previous day. After that, for a tour during which much of our cricket and especially our fielding was of a high standard, this was an off day. There were two smart catches but our bowling and some of our fielding were really not of the best. As a result, we failed to wrap up the win as early as we probably should have done, and the young SP cricketers batting at 8, 9 and 10 very nearly denied us completely. We eventually and not very gloriously managed to win in the end by 18 runs.

Happily, we were back to normal levels for a proper game of cricket at Sidmouth the next day. The batting was led by Rich Godfrey (56) and James Flatt, who scored his maiden Sou'wester century in our total of 292-5. There was a 20-minute rain interruption when Sidmouth replied and they may have concluded that their chance of victory went with it, but the idea of batting out for a draw once victory is unlikely seems to be foreign to this generation brought up almost wholly on limited overs cricket, and they subsided rather easily to 200 all out, with Chairman Kennedy doing most of the damage in a long spell (6-50 in 11.3 overs). In other circumstances, a deserved and comprehensive win against our respected and long-standing hosts at Sidmouth would be a highlight of the tour, but the manner of this one diminished that sense of satisfaction a little.

From Sidmouth, we moved on to another beautiful new ground at Chardstock. It is sited on the side of a hill, slopes down on two sides and comes with wonderful views across the neighbouring valley to the equivalent hills on the other side. The unique feature, however, is the bowling green constructed further up the hill in such a way that it is possible to stand in the spectator area at the bowls club and look down on the head of the square leg umpire on the cricket ground beneath. We are so fortunate to be able to play our kind of cricket in such lovely surroundings.

We won the hybrid match itself by 58 runs, a victory founded on a sound start from Charlie Everett (58) and Guy Bucknell (56), but, as so often with Sou wester cricket, the real interest was in the details, of which two stand out. First, in advance of the start there were a couple of misunderstandings about numbers, one result of which was that Sam Kennedy played for Chardstock. As a bowler, he dismissed Alec Sprague for a duck but as a batsman he recorded the golden variety himself as one of three in an over for Angus Spratling (4-12 overall). Secondly, the last man for Chardstock was of a similar vintage to George Oliver and the state of the match when he entered the fray was such that giving George his bowling debut was clearly the right thing to do. With his tenth ball in Sou'westers' cricket, George took his first wicket (caught Pring) and led the victorious team from the field with the most sublime smile on his face. This cricket is (sometimes) a wonderful game!

The Old Tauntonians were actually quite young when we encountered them on a morning which felt like a bad day in late Ocober, improving later to resemble a bad day in early October. We took 54 overs to accumulate 266-5 with Will Bucknell (68), Matt Sunter (83) and Guy Bucknell (63no) all making runs. OT's started reasonably well (63 for 1 at one point) but Henry Parker (4-23) and Charlie Everett (2-8) dealt quickly with the middle order and tail as they were all out for 130.

Because the match at Chulmleigh is played on a Saturday when some regulars are unavailable, it often sees the debut of a new generation of Sou'wester. This year marked the welcome arrival of a new Silk, Toby, younger son of Will, and the highlight of the contest was provided by Toby bowling in tandem with George Oliver, giving a combined age for the pair of 23. Each of them took a wicket too; the future is in good hands! In our winning total of 177-2, both Harry Kennedy and Angus Spratling made it to 50 before giving way for others.

The grim weather overnight led initially to the cancellation of the landmark fixture at Bridgetown but thankfully it was later reinstated on the artificial pitch and the weather began to improve a little too, just in time for the arrival of three very welcome additions to the supporting cast: Stewart and Jeremy Peet and Paul Thomas. It was also the first appearance this year for a medically discalceate Simon Hogg who racked up another Sou'wester first when he politely asked permission of Umpire Dean to bowl in bare feet and then proceeded to take 3 wickets in that state in the Bridgetown total of 157-8. Our reply was dominated by Charlie Everett (71no) and Justin Williams (59) but at the end Mark Meyer-Webb, making a welcome return after some years living in the United States, was at the wicket and ready for more!

When discussing the prospects at Instow before the start, the Tour Supremo, who was already salivating at the prospect of going unbeaten throughout, said he feared the worst today because "we haven' to at spearhead". Naturally, that slander was followed by swift inroads into the early North Devon batting which reduced them to 45-5 after 16 overs (Will Bucknell 3 and Freddie Bucknell and Rich Godfrey one each). Thereafter Number 8 led stronger resistance, got to 100 in the process and we faced a challenging final total of 238-9. Mark Meyer-Webb, batting at 3 on this occasion, held the innings together and was again not out at the end with 95 when we reached our target for seven.

The fact that we were still unbeaten with only two to play may have contributed to the Meaningful Contest which ensued at Kilve the next day. Our innings lasted 54 overs to total 254-7; in getting there it exhibited a shaky start (16-2), a middle order recovery (183-6) and a robust conclusion after Alec Sprague (41) joined James Flatt (79no). That late rally was crucial as Kilve lost wickets mainly to the same pair (Sprague 4-41, Flatt 3-47) and when Peter Stone entered the arena at number 11, 50 were required from 13 overs and the stage seemed set. There then ensued an entertaining and dramatic period of stalemate in which Peter made it clear Kilve would not pursue victory with the field set deep and Guy Bucknell was equally clear he was not going to be the man who threw away that unbeaten record by moving it closer. A few overs were played in a pleasingly tense atmosphere but in the end the ideal result was achieved for all parties – a draw with the battine side nine down at the end?

In 1964, Forest schoolboy Martin Oliver peered over the fence at Westward Ho! to watch the cricket and encountered Tim Alexander, his new master i/c of cricket, playing for the Sou'westers who were fielding one short. Martin was invited to fill the vacancy and the rest is history. Only a few years later, for reasons lost in the sands of time, the fixture disappeared from our list, and so it was good to be back there in 2021. It is another wonderful, memorable place to play cricket and with Hockings, the best ice cream in the world, readily available nearby as a bonus.

For the second day running, Alec Sprague led a late charge which ultimately won the 35-over match for us (66no batting at 8), building on the foundations laid by Jack Malden (58) and James Flatt (40no). Because of that late rally, the total of 224-6 was more demanding than had seemed likely earlier on and Bideford, Littleham and Westward Ho! (yes, all of them) ended on 195-6 in reply.

Our sort of cricket is undoubtedly in general decline and its future is very uncertain. The Hundred is only the latest television-inspired, money-centred alternative form which may well ultimately kill it outright. Nevertheless, within that broad picture, all sides, and especially wandering sides, ebb and flow in health and, in that context, there is no doubt that at present the Sou'westers are very much on an upturn. Many good players currently make themselves available for more than just the odd match and, as a result, there is a coherence about the side which has sometimes been missing in the past, with family connections across the generations still strong. The results show this but, vastly more importantly, so does the whole atmosphere surrounding the tour. Everyone seemed to enjoy 2021 greatly; let's hope they all return for more in 2022.

So, the tour record for 2021 reads P 12, W10, D2. Finishing the tour unbeaten is not actually as unusual as might be expected. However, this mainly seems to occur in years where bad weather brings about multiple cancellations or abandonments, for example in 2009 (W 3, D3, A/C 8), 2008 (W 3, D5, A/C6), and 2007 (W 8, D3, A/C4). The nearest real comparison (since 1971 at least) is 1998 (W 6, D6, A1) and even that does not really compare with 2021. So, the most successful Sou'westers' Western Tour on record? By the standard of results alone, yes; but that's not the whole story, of course. Although both sides must always strive to win otherwise there is little point to the exercise, other issues contribute as much or more to that feeling of success. Some of them, individually trivial but collectively vital, are recorded throughout this account and contributed just as much to our enjoyment of 12 happy, companiable days in the beautiful West of England, all made possible by the gracious hospitality of our excellent hosts. They shouldn't be too concerned, however; we will doubtless be back to our losing ways in 2022!

WESTERN TOUR 2021

PLAYED 12	WON 10	LOST 0	DRAWN 2
v Loyton Oddballs	Sat July 24	Won by 4 wickets	2-33, H.Kennedy 2-10
Loyton Oddballs	187 all out	H.Parker 2-20, J.Flatt 2	
Sou'Westers	191-6	C.Everett 53*	
v Morebath Sou'Westers Morebath	Sun July 25 274-2 dec 203-9	Match Drawn W.Bucknell 89, C.Eve K.Barnes 66, J.Kenned	rett 71*, G.Bucknell 64 dy 3-38, C.Everett 2-0
v O.Blundellians	Mon July 26	Won by 100 runs	frey 3-34
Sou'Westers	203-9 dec	J.Flatt 69*	
O.Blundellians	103 all out	H.Parker 5-26, R.Godf	
v Sampford Peverell	Tue July 27	Won by 18 runs	ell 48*
Sou'Westers	214-3 dec	W.Oakes 81, G.Buckn	
Sampford Peverell	196 all out	J.Flatt 4-53	
v Sidmouth	Wed July 28	Won by 92 runs	
Sou'Westers	292-5 dec	J.Flatt 132*, R.Godfre	
Sidmouth	200 all out	J.Kennedy 6-50, J.Mar	
v Chardstock	Thu July 29	Won by 58 runs	enell 56*
Sou'Westers	232-5 dec	C.Everett 58*, G.Buck	
Chardstock	174 all out	A.Spratling 4-18	
v O.Tauntonians Sou'Westers O. Tauntonians	Fri July 30 266-5 dec 130 all out		nell 68, G.Bucknell 63* ett 2-8, A.Spratling 2-44
v Chulmleigh(overs)	Sat July 31	Won by 48 runs	
Sou'Westers	177-2 dec	H.Kennedy 57*, A.Spr	
Chulmleigh	129-7	H.Parker 2-14,G.Olive	
v Bridgetown	Sun Aug 1	Won by 7 wickets	
Bridgetown	157-8	S.Hogg 3-38, J.Kenned	
Sou'Westers	158-3	C.Everett 71*, J.Willia	
v North Devon North Devon Sou'Westers	Mon Aug 2 238-8 dec 242-7	Won by 3 wickets J.Tyson 103*, W.Buck M.Meyer-Webb 95*, O	knell 3-50,F.Bucknell 2-21, G.Bucknell 39
v Kilve	Tue Aug 3	Match Drawn	
Sou'Westers	254-7 dec	J.Flatt 79*, A.Sprague	
Kilve	237-9	A.Sprague 4-41, J.Flat	
v Westward Ho!(over	rs)Wed Aug 4	Won by 29 runs	len 58, J.Flatt 40*
Sou'Westers	224-6 dec	A.Sprague 66*, J.Malo	
Westward Ho	195-6	M.Meyer-Webb 2-18	

AVERAGES 2021

BATTING (3 Inns)	Inns	N.O.	Runs	H.S.	Ave	Ct/St
C.Everett	8	6	293	71*	146.50	2
G.Bucknell	5	3	270	68	135.00	3
J.Flatt	7	4	386	132*	128.67	3
M.Meyer-Webb	3	2	124	95*	124.00	0
M.Sunter	6	3	207	83	69.00	6
W.Bucknell	5	1	170	89	42.50	3
A.Spratling	4	1	97	55*	32.33	7
H.Kennedy	5	1	128	57*	32.00	2
W.Oakes	4	0	128	81	32.00	1
R.Godfrey	5	0	144	56	28.80	3
A.Sprague	5	1	113	66*	28.25	5
J.Malden	5	1	110	58	27.50	2
H.Parker	3	1	29	19	14.50	1
P.Oliver	6	0	66	22	11.00	11/3

Also batted: F.Bucknell 10,0, H.Chatfield-Roberts 38*, M.Clarke 12, 4*, P.Clarke 1, 4*, H.Gillingwater 1 (1ct), J.Kennedy 14, 0, S.Kennedy 27, 16*, A.Newman 11, T.Silk 3* (1ct), W.Silk 3, 6, J.Williams 59 (1ct) A.Pring (2ct)

BOWLING (10 overs)	Overs	Maidens	Runs	Wkts	Ave
C.Everett	12.2	5	40	5	8.0
S.Hogg	10	0	36	3	12.0
H.Parker	45	5	194	16	12.1
A.Spratling	28	3	92	7	13.1
J.Kennedy	45.3	6	188	13	14.5
J.Flatt	47	2	243	14	17.4
R.Godfrey	29	6	119	6	19.8
F.Bucknell	24.1	5	91	4	22.8
A.Sprague	40	7	141	6	23.5
M.Meyer-Webb	14	4	51	2	25.5
W.Bucknell	21.5	2	132	5	26.4
A.Pring	38	7	121	4	30.3
S.Kennedy	26	4	120	3	40.0
J.Malden	15	0	124	3	41.3
G.Oliver	13	0	95	2	47.5
M.Clarke	22	1	113	2	56.5
H.Chatfield-Roberts	10	0	53	0	

Also bowled: H.Gillingwater 3-0-24-2, H.Kennedy 2-0-17-2, A.Newman 2-0-26-0, T.Silk 3-0-13-1, W.Silk 3-1-6-1, M.Sunter 4-0-16-0, J.Williams 3-0-15-1

FIXTURE LIST 2022

Date	Versus	Venue	Time
Saturday 23rd July	Loyton Oddballs	Morebath	2pm
Sunday 24th July	Morebath	Morebath	2pm
Monday 25th July	Old Blundellians	Tiverton	12pm
Tuesday 26th July	Kilve	Kilve	11.30am
Wednesday 27th July	Ottery Brewery XI	Sidmouth	11am
Thursday 28th July	Taunton Deane CC	Taunton Deane	1.30pm
Friday 29th July	Old Tauntonians	Taunton School	1.30pm
Saturday 30st July	Chulmleigh	Chulmleigh	1:30pm
Sunday 31st July	Bridgetown	Bridgetown	2.30pm
Monday 1st August	North Devon	Instow	2pm
Tuesday 2nd August	Bideford, Littleham &	Westward Ho!	1.30pm
	Westward Ho! CC		
Wednesday 3rd August	Sampford Peverell	Sampford Peverell	1:30pm
	& Tiverton		

PLEASE APPLY BY EMAIL TO MARTIN OLIVER FOR ALL GAMES (martin.oliver53@ntlworld.com) AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. WE WILL BE LOOKING TO FINALISE TEAMS WELL IN ADVANCE THIS YEAR AND WE DO NOT WANT YOU TO BE DISAPPOINTED.

AGM/Dinner will be on Thursday 17th March 2022 at 7pm. The Rugby Tavern, 19 Great James St, WC1N 3ES RSVP to Martin Oliver