

The Carlton Lockdown Newsletter

Till the gates of Grange Loan are open again

5 October 2020 **ISSUE 27**

GIVING IT WHEELS



Evo and Craig visit Falkland CC on the first day of their tour.

Carlton skipper Ali Evans is giving it extra wheels as he and fellow Scotland cap Craig Wallace pedal 672 miles in support of Brain Tumour Research and in memory of Con de Lange. They are popping in at a range of cricket clubs on the way.

Ali remembers Con with great affection, 'A wonderful human being, kind and warm, who always put others first.'

Ali recalls bowling to Con at GL and going past him early on. Ali suggested that he was lucky to survive - after a quizzical stare back Ali says, 'Con simply went up the gears and ended with 89*. A true competitor.'

Nor was this de Lange's only success at Grange Loan. In 6 innings at the ground for Ferguslie and Clydesdale he averaged 61.40, with one century. Evidently a place he liked.

You can support Ali and Craig by making a donation to the vital research through this link:

https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/craig-wallace4

You can also keep up with Ali's progress through his Twitter account: @AliEvans647.

Newsletter News

The NL will now issue monthly. The next issue will be on Monday 9 November.

The Newsletter started in April; it was for a few weeks until the gates opened and the cricket season got under way.

Well, things changed - the season was delayed, delayed again and truncated. The Newsletter kept going.

This was only possible through the many Carlton members, old and new, who provided excellent material.
Many thanks to all of them.

Your chance to contribute

More exciting content is in hand.
But more is needed - so why don't you contribute? Everyone has a story to tell or a memory to share. Send a note to say hello from far away. Make a suggestion of something that would be of interest. Even get something off your chest. Everything is welcome.
Please get in touch at the email address below.

Newsletter@carltoncc.co.uk

HOW TO BE DOUGHTY

Cricketers may have been idle during the early part of lockdown, but the Grange Loan groundstaff were hard at work. Now the cricketers have left GL for the season, they are still working hard.

Alasdair McLeod, once characterised as Carlton's Doughty Groundsman, first became involved in groundwork 60 years or so ago; now working with Colin Smith, he has just finished his 39th season at Carlton. He has spent thousands of hours mowing and rolling.

The value of his work, and the quality of the pitches delivered, is recognised throughout the club and beyond. Alasdair answers some questions about the secrets of the trade.



What work did you and Colin do during the lockdown?

Basically, the same operations, other than preparation of match pitches, that would have been carried out normally. The usual pre-season rolling and scarification were carried out. Both the square and outfield were mown twice a week. Some watering was done during the dry spell. And Colin undertook a number of minor improvement works on parts of the outfield.

How much work goes into preparing a pitch?

Current practice is to prepare pitches that will last for a number of matches. Generally speaking, the First XI will get the first use of a new pitch; but that is not always the case. And it means that other teams get the benefit of pitches prepared to as high a standard as is possible in the circumstances.

When I was in charge, I reckoned that about ten hours work went into the immediate pre-match preparation of each pitch. But to that has to be added the regular operations that are carried out on the whole square: eg twice weekly mowing; fertilising several times a season; scarifying, spiking, overseeding and top dressing at the end of the season; and scarifying and rolling before the beginning of the season.

Have there been major changes in pitch maintenance/preparation philosophy in your time at GL?

When I became Ground Convenor in the late eighties or early nineties, I instituted two changes in practice: a programme of pre-season rolling; and the adoption of fixing pitches in the same positions year on year (now virtually universal practice but back then it was common, at least in club cricket, for pitches to be selected from match to match and thus usually overlapping with pitches that had been, or would be, used in the same season). Both of these developments were based on advice received by my previous club from Bernard Flack then Head Groundsman at Edgbaston). I also started to use the scarifier/verticutter more both at the beginning of the season and in pitch preparation and this developed further after we purchased the current machine. I should stress, however, that the club had carried out end of season treatment for many years and were ahead of the curve in that regard.

But the biggest change came with the acquisition of wheeled covers just over twenty years ago. Apart from the obvious benefit of being able to reduce substantially the incidence of rain affected pitches, and the effect of rain during matches, this allowed us to plan on using one pitch for a number of matches, improving the quality of pitches for everyone.

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What is the best thing that has been said about the pitches at GL?

The Scotland XI that played at the opening of the new pavilion was managed by Andy Moles who appeared at the wicket when we were working on the pitch between innings. During the conversation he said "You could play a test match on that wicket". Another Scotland Manager, Grant Bradburn turned up at the Grand Final against Clydesdale in 2016 amazed that pitches in Scotland could have as much bounce as that one.

But perhaps the best was last year at the cup semi final when one of Stoneywood's players chased me round the ground to say that he had to apologise for not making better use of the best batting deck he had seen since he left Australia!

What work is done in the close season?

As mentioned earlier, there is an extensive programme of renovation immediately after the end of the season. This comprises heavy scarification, spiking, overseeding, top dressing and fertilising. There is also a programme of pre-season rolling and scarification. In between both the square and the outfield are kept trimmed as necessary — and the cutting season is getting longer.



Colin Smith getting on with the post season tasks

At the same time there a number of routine maintenance tasks that have to be done, one of the most time consuming being clearing up fallen leaves. **Anyone who cares to turn up on a Sunday morning, especially between now and the turn of the year, can be found something to do!**

Any good anecdotes about the pros/OAs assisting you?

Perhaps we should draw a veil over the one who didn't come into work one morning because he was in jail!

But there was one guy who occasionally disappeared on a bender with a drinking mate. He insisted that we leave him a list of jobs he should have done and he would do them. To his credit, he was always as good as his word. He told us that on one occasion arriving at GL to complete his allotted tasks, he did so by climbing over the Lovers' Loan wall – and fell off! You will notice two crucial mistakes here. The first, obviously, was attempting to scale a wall in such a state; the second, and more crucial, was telling us about it! Russell Weir, who is a bit of a devil in inventing nicknames, promptly christened him Humpty Dumpty!

And of course, there was Mario...

The Bearded Wonder



Readers of a certain age will remember Bill Frindall, the scorer on BBC's Test Match Special, nicknamed the Bearded Wonder by Brian Johnson.

Meet Carlton's equivalent. Martin Firth - who scored every 4th XI match and several 5th XI matches and many intra-club games. In a 9 hour stint at the 6s tournament, it was reckoned he scored single-handedly 150 overs (plus the many tactical wides and no-balls signalled) and almost 700 runs.

Bearded Wonder indeed!

While we're on the subject of Groundsmen, the following verses were discovered a few years ago and attributed to Robert Burns. Scholars dismiss the suggestion that they are inspired by anyone associated with Carlton CC

Fair fa' your honest doughty face
Great chieftain o' the groundsman race
In the middle tak your place
Mow, roll, repair
Your cheery greeting rings through space
GET AFF THE SQUARE

To mak a wicket taks for ever
But who respects your great endeavour?
These players should be mair clever
You can despair
You tell them oft but they never
GET AFF THE SQUARE

Ye tend the strip, ye gie it bounce
The players dinna help an ounce
But aifter play they preen and flounce
Fegs! Everywhere
Till ye maun doughtily pronounce
GET AFF THE SQUARE

In winter whan the sna is flyin'
Players in their beds are lyin'
Sair wi' cauld the puir lambs cryin'
We can compare
Ye toil through winter scarifyin'
THATCH AFF THE SQUARE

Some folk may tak ye for a bore
When ye drone on aboot the mower
And moan the hunnels mak ye sore
Why should they care?
But muckle grass? Ye'll see them glower
GET AFF THE SQUARE

Ah! Doughty groundsmen are a special breed
An' ilka club must meet their need
For tractor oil, loam and seed
Sic modest fare
It's nae charity tae pay them heed
TO TEND THE SQUARE

Pitchero

Forget COVID, never mind the cricket, the Big Story of the summer was how Carlton switched from Teamer to Pitchero. The controversy continues. How on earth is it pronounced?

Grange Loan has rung with every permutation. Families have fallen out over the correct form.

Some favour 2 words - Pitch Hero; then there are those who accent the final syllable - pitche**roo** - making it sound like a business related to deliveroo. And others stress the middle syllable. Making it sound like a Spanish midfielder.

Then others give up altogether and just call it Teamer.

QUIZ NEWS

As the nights draw in and Lockdown continues, you've watched everything worth seeing on Netflix. What to do?

Back, by popular demand (sort of), comes

The World Famous Carlton Social Isolation Quiz

Friday 30 October

Friday 27 November

Full details will be available shortly through Whats App

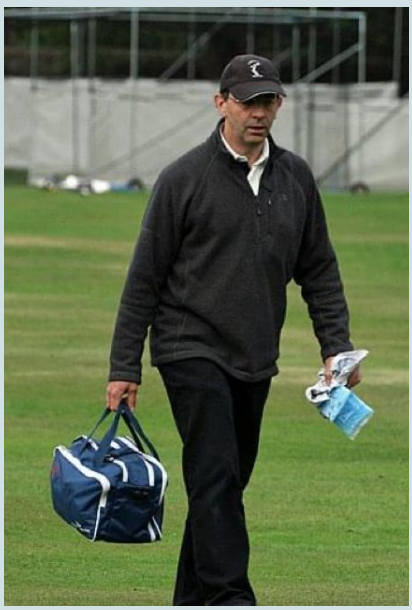
Don't miss the chance to knock reigning champ Brian Kaczynski off his throne.

Thanks Brian

There is one man to whom profuse thanks are due for his help in preparing the NewsLetter. Brian Forrester has been an untiring source of statistics and other invaluable information.

This is just another instance of how much Brian does to help Carlton. Brian was the second ever winner of the Jappy Trophy back in 1982 for 'general assistance' which shows how long he has been contributing. Over the years he has helped out in many ways - from junior winter coaching in the Peter Nettleton days, and now doing all types of repair jobs and enhancements to facilities in the Pavilion and around the ground. In in recent years has been the D/L expert on match days. He produces the club averages, hounding team skippers for the scoresheets with polite firmness.

Brian has also been a superb Membership Secretary since taking over from Nick Blundell in 1999. In this role he provides an important link to the non-playing and dog walking members of the club.



The photo shows Brian performing yet another vital unsung task - bringing the medical kit onto the field during a First XI match.

In his playing days, Brian was a stalwart and leading member of the 2nd XI, occasionally finding himself in the 1sts. The NL is advised that he was a stuffy top order batsman who could use the bottom hand to good effect when required. He also kept wicket from time to time - and recently announced that his records show that he is 12th in the all time list of Carlton stumpers with 60 dismissals!

Carlton is in Brian's blood - it is literally a family thing since he is son-in-law to the late Alun Davies legendary captain and past president.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Murray Whitaker

20 years old on 5 October.

Murray had a fine season and was the club's leading run scorer. Well done Muzz!

Murray's senior debut was unorthodox. On Sunday 3 June 2012, Carlton 4th XI were slated to play Tranent at GL. As the match report describes, there was some pre-match drama in the changing room ' *there was the last minute change and the need to replace ******** ****, who appeared at the ground with a 'Haribo hangover' from a sleepover the previous night, resulting in the ability to fall asleep at any given moment. Murray replaced ********, who retired green-faced to his bed.'*



Debuting Murray in conference with a slightly larger teammate

Murray next appeared for the 4s at Dalgety Bay on 28 July, when the rain which caused the match to be abandoned didn't stop him enjoying an ice cream.



**name withheld to spare Ruairidh's embarrassment.*