

PHOENIX POST

Great Melton Cricket Club

**Sponsored by Yellow Brick Morgages,
Alan Boswell Group and Nimbus Bookkeeping**

Pre-Season Newsletter

March 2024

GET READY TO CELEBRATE OUR 50th ANNIVERSARY

This summer the club celebrates its 50th Anniversary so put the weekend of Friday 28th to Sunday 30th June in the diary and get yourselves down to Melton Park to join the fun.

The idea of forming a cricket club emerged from a conversation between 2 Norwich City College students, Steve Phoenix and Chris Lacey back in 1970 but it didn't bear fruit until Steve returned from teacher training and took up a position at Dereham Boys Secondary School in 1973. A few other keen cricketing friends were recruited and, on 13th June 1974 a match was arranged at Reepham. Four of the team, Steve, Mike Phoenix, Trevor Parfitt & Ray Chamberlin lived in Great Melton, a village with no existing cricket team, so Great Melton Cricket Club was born.

That first season the team played 5 away T20 matches, with kit borrowed from Dereham School P.E. Department, losing them all. As well as the 5 founder members already mentioned, Chris Betts, Steve Carr, John Griffin, Steve Fincham, Mick White, Alan Marham (diseased), Geoff Batley, Ian Cartwright, Richard Green, Mark English, M. Robinson, J. Scott and P. Dye all played in that first season. In those early days there was a strong Saxlingham/Norwich Union contingent. Geoff Batley and Mark English went on to

spend many years at Old Buckenham C.C. but the Phoenix brothers, Chris Betts, Steve Carr and Chris Lacey became Melton 'legends'. The following season the fixture list increased to 14 and the team, strengthened by Rob Webb, Keith Hall & Frank Smith won 10 and lost 4.

It is hoped that as many of those early players as possible, plus any other past Meltonites, might return to Melton Park to celebrate the Golden Anniversary.

The Friday and Saturday (28th & 29th June) will see the normal junior coaching night and barbecue followed by league fixtures against Diss at home (1st Team), Cromer A away (A Team), Bungay A away (B Team) and Hingham A at home (C Team) with players returning to the club for a social evening following those games.

The **BIG 50th ANNIVERSARY DAY** is **Sunday 30th June** and will be a family fun-day with past Melton legends invited back for a reunion, a 4-team 'President's Day' cricket tournament, plus music, games, activities, a bouncy castle, food vans etc.

Get Set Day



SATURDAY 23rd MARCH

We need your help to get things ready for the new season. There are plenty of jobs to do on the ground and in the pavilion so please spare us an hour or two from 9.00 a.m. onwards. Tea, coffee and biscuits provided.

powered by 

GET SET WEEKEND



**Help Make Cricket Happen.
Come along to the
Get Set Weekend**

Date and time	Saturday 23rd March (9.00 a.m. - 2.00 p.m.)
Location	Great Melton C.C. Hall Road. NR9 3JB
Contact	



Success for
indoor teams

WINTER SUCCESS - ONE TROPHY ALREADY!

After last summer's unprecedented trophy haul, it looks like we might need to order a bigger cabinet as the under 12s have already won their indoor competition while the men's indoor team have topped one of the South Norfolk groups and play in the South Norfolk Final on Sunday 10th March. The NCB Finals Day is on Sunday 17th March at Wymondham Leisure Centre. Led by Martyn Cook our youthful team have shown no desire to relinquish their hold on the trophy they won last year and have swept all before them with some outstanding individual performances. James Alcock, Sam Davey, Corey Rushton, Martyn Cook, Steve Cadge and George Ryan are pictured here but George Bunn, Ryan Hayward, George Woodcock & Harrison Cunningham have also contributed in what has been a real team effort.



Following their 2023 success the team travelled to Uppingham School in Rutland to take part in the regional finals. A different format, rules and ball from that played in the Norfolk competition meant we were not as prepared as we would have liked and forced to learn quickly. In the semi-final we were matched with Blunham Cricket Club from Bedfordshire who won the toss and asked us to bat. Having scored a respectable 94 from our 12 overs we felt that this was perhaps around 20 runs light and this proved to be the case. Despite getting off to a good start by dismissing both openers for 7 and 9, we couldn't break through after that and lost by 4 wickets.

Great Melton Under 12s also won their NCB indoor league after a fantastic performance to beat Norwich in their final match. Norwich had been top of the table and unbeaten but Melton produced a dominant performance which resulted in a huge win by 100 runs, with 11 wickets taken in the 12 over match. It gave them enough bonus points for them to pip Norwich for the title.



The U16s finished 4th in their group of 6, beating Norwich, Sprowston and Great Ellingham but losing to Swardeston and, eventual competition winners, Hethersett & Tas Valley. The U14s were not quite so successful, losing all 4 of their matches.



Our young Women's team came close to another trophy. They won 4 of their 5 games in the NCB Women's Indoor League defeating Tas, Topcroft and Beccles before finishing with a nailbiting 3-run win over Swardeston in their final match. It wasn't enough, though, as a narrow defeat against Old Buckenham in their opening match meant the ladies had to be satisfied with the runner-up spot. Nevertheless a great effort girls!

Membership and Spond

Membership fees remain unchanged from the 2023 season and are as follows:

- Senior players (Year 11 and above): £30 membership fee; £7 match fee; £3 50 midweek match fee
- Students and unemployed: £15 membership fee; £3.50 match fee/midweek match fee
- Junior players (Years 3-10): £50 membership and coaching fee; £3.50 match fee (all matches)

2024 registration and membership fees will be requested by Spond towards the end of March

Great Melton has some of the cheapest fees in the county so please make sure you pay them. There are still debts remaining from 2023. **All players are asked to check their Spond accounts and clear debts before the start of 2024.** Match fees and availability will continue to be collected by Spond in the 2024 season.

SENIORS UP FOR THE CHALLENGE



Chris Optimistic

Six trophies won and runners-up in three competitions. Phew! 2023 was quite a year. How do we follow that?

For the seniors 2024 presents a real challenge with all 4 teams competing in different divisions. For the 1st, A and C Teams the challenge is adapting to a higher grade of cricket following promotion while the Bs will undoubtedly be looking to consolidate having slipped down to NCL Division 2E and with the core of last season's team having moved to pastures new.

Club Captain, Chris Greenslade, is certainly confident that the Club will rise to the challenge and that optimism is based on the continued strength of the junior section, a good close season with regard to recruitment and the success of the winter nets at Taverham Hall.



Chris says, "We are excited at the promise of some of the juniors coming through. Ultimately it is going to mean lots of competition for places which is of paramount importance if we are going to succeed this year. Nets have been going very well thus far. Generally quite well attended and the standard has been very high. We have had a number of new faces attend which is positive with a good number of them signing on the dotted line."

Among the "new faces" are four lads from the U.E.A. all of whom are of 1st/2nd team standard. Greg Rostron has returned from Topcroft, while Matty Robinson has moved into the area. Darshan Rai has also netted and we're hoping we will once again see his fast bowling talents at Melton this summer. An ex-Northants Premier League player joining us from the start of the season is also an intriguing possibility.

Chris adds, "Aspirations for the season are not set yet as we haven't had the captains meeting however ultimately the focus will be on trying to keep the 1sts, 2nds and 4ths in the leagues following promotion and be really competitive. I've been speaking to a few people from other clubs who think our 1st team will be challenging for promotion this season too so that is really positive in terms of an outside opinion."

The B Team's new skipper, Woody Loines, (pictured here with President, Steve Phoenix) is a long-time sponsor of the club through his 2 businesses, Anglia Pallets and Nimbus Bookkeeping. He will certainly be looking to have a positive impact and hopefully lead the B's back to Division 1.



The 1st Team also have a new captain. Dom Evans (pictured below) has taken over from his good friend Joey Greenslade and should hit the ground running having spent his second winter playing cricket in New Zealand. The very best of luck to Dom, Nick Aston, Woody, Duncan Greenslade and their teams. Never an easy job cricket captaincy! The action starts on Saturday May 4th with matches against Sheringham (h), Hockwold (a), Sprowston B (a) and Aldborough (h).



OVER 40s

The over 40s are steering well clear of nets or any other pre-season training in the hope of being in tip-top condition to face Rocklands in their first match on Wednesday May 8th. It's hoped that by nurturing those ageing bodies the new 10-match season can be safely negotiated. The League has been expanded to include Brooke which means we play Rocklands, Topcroft and Tivetshall twice and everyone else once. The team was on a winning streak at the end of last season. Let's hope it can continue.

GIRL POWER!

Women & Girls' Cricket at Great Melton



A Bit of History

It's hard to believe that it was over a quarter of a century ago that 'The Spice Girls' were singing about "Girl Power" and the first Great Melton female players were grabbing attention with their exploits on the cricket field. It was back in 1999 that Lucy Phoenix and Kara Shingleton (left) were taking wickets and scoring runs for Great Melton's U15 team and becoming the first players from the club to represent Norfolk.



In the next few years a small number of girls joined the boys for coaching but it wasn't until 2008 that Louise Cadge began coaching a separate girls' group and a further 4 years until Chris Brook (then the Norfolk Girls' Manager) joined

Melton as a Coach, bringing some of his County squad members with him. An U13 Girls' Team was entered into the Lady Taverners softball competition - and won it - and a very young Great Melton Ladies Team competed in the NCB Women's League (Pictured above)

So, the progress has been slow and steady to a position today where Great Melton, provide more opportunities to women and girls than any other club in the County. And now we have the facilities to match: separate changing rooms, showers and toilets and a far more welcoming environment for our female members.



Last season we had 90 female members who played a vital role in all our teams from our U9 team all the way through to our Saturday A team. They won gold medals alongside the boys in the U13 T20 club competition and the Andy Seeley U15 Norfolk Cricket Alliance trophy and silver medals in the U15 T20 club

competition and U19 T20 blast final. Several of our girls were also part of our promotion winning senior A and C teams with Niamh Rushton becoming the 2nd female player to appear in the 2nd Team, following in the footsteps of Caitlin Ellis. It surely can't be long before one of our girls makes it to the first team. "Go Girls!"

Woman & Girls Cricket in 2024

In 2024 we will continue to offer plenty of opportunities for girls to play alongside the boys and we have also entered several female only teams. Our ladies' team (open to girls in Years 8 and above) has entered the Norfolk Women's Shell League and will play teams from Swardeston, Brooke, Topcroft, Beccles and Hethersett & Tas Valley while our U15 Girls team has been entered into the Norfolk U15 Girls 'Hundred' Competition and will play teams from Brooke and Norwich. We have also entered a second team into Tier 2 of the Norfolk Cricket Alliance competition. This team (U11 Blaze) is intended to be primarily a girls' team and girls from Years 5 to 8 are eligible. They will be playing primarily against boys/mixed teams from other clubs throughout the season but we hope to organise some friendly matches against girls' teams from other clubs too.

Come on, Mum, give cricket a try!

Softball cricket is a great way to get into playing the game for women and girls of all ages and on **Thursday 16th May** we are planning our first junior mum's (other relations welcome) softball festival. We challenge each of our junior teams (U9/U11/ U11 Girls/U13/U15/U15 Girls) to raise a team of 6 mums/aunties/sisters/grandmas to take part in this fun-filled evening with perhaps some Prosecco involved too.



You don't need to have any experience in playing cricket as your junior coaches will help you through the evening.

For our younger girls there is also the U11 girls softball competition. This takes place in the form of 3 or 4 Sunday festivals throughout the season where the girls get to play in matches against other clubs. It is always a great atmosphere with lots of cricket to be played and fun to be had. So if you are in Years 6 or below there will be plenty of opportunity for you to represent the club in some matches.



The pictures show Women & Girls' Player of the Year, Rebecca Davey and the Club's 'Most Improved Player' Niamh Rushton receiving their 2023 trophies from Chairman Simon Woods.

PAVILION UPDATE

Looking Good!

By the start of the season (hopefully) all finishing touches will have been completed on the pavilion. It's been quite a project but, with Maxine Rushton leading the way through 2023, and lots of others pitching in, we've finally got a building to be proud of. It's been hard work and quite stressful at times but the project has delivered improved changing facilities including a female changing room with shower, extra ladies' toilets, a new umpire's room, a new lobby, a refurbished clubroom and an extended patio area. The clubroom is enhanced by permanent heaters, new curtains and new furniture. Plans are afoot to improve the bar and the store room when finances allow but, with pictures on the wall, we're just about ready to go. It is hoped the improvements will result in the facilities being used a bit more outside the cricket and bowls' season.



COUNTY PLAYERS



Congratulations to our 16 youngsters who have been selected for this year's County age-group squads and particularly to Sammy Belderson (pictured), Rebecca Davey, George Fawkes and Niamh Rushton who have also been selected for the NCB Centre of Excellence Programme.

- The full list is:
- Ellis Pailles (U11 Boys)
 - Isiah Zeb (U11 Boys)
 - Georgina Duncan (U11 Girls)
 - Matilda Chapallaz (U11 Girls)
 - George Fawkes (U13 Boys)
 - Lucus Berney (U13 Boys)
 - J.C. (U13 Boys)
 - Emma Larenson (U15 Girls)
 - Hope Buxton (U15 Girls)
 - Imogen Cook (U15 Girls)
 - Samia Mohammed (U15 Girls)
 - James Alcock (U16 Boys)
 - Sammy Belderson (U16 Boys)
 - Corey Rushton (U18 Boys)
 - Niamh Rushton (U18 Girls)
 - Rebecca Davey (U18 Girls)

DIARY DATES

Junior Coaching Starts
Friday 26th April

Saturday Socials
27th April, 25th May,
27th July

Junior Mum's Softball
Thursday 16th May

50th Anniversary Weekend
28th-30th June

Senior Presentation Evening
Saturday 31st August

Junior Festival
Saturday 7th September

GREAT MELTON CC PRESENTS

3RD ANNUAL GOLF Championship

11TH APRIL 2024

BARNHAM BROOM GC (HILL)

- Team entry £260
- Hole sponsor £100

EVENT

4-person scramble
Nearest the pin
Longest drive
Raffle/auction
2-course dinner

AGENDA

09.00-09.45 Registration, tea/coffee & bacon rolls
10.00 Shotgun/two-tee start for teams
14.30-15.30 Return to Barford suite for 2-course lunch
15.30-17.00 Presentation, raffle/auction & socials

Register Now
Contact Chris Greenslade 07715603917 chrisgreenslade@yahoo.com

GOLF DAY Thurs 11th April

Please do your best to support our **GOLF DAY** at **Barnham Broom Golf Club**. The goal this year is to raise **£2500**. It is **£260** for a team of 4 (which includes a round of golf and two-course lunch) and it's **£100** to sponsor a hole. We need teams, prizes and especially **hole sponsors**. **Contact Chris Greenslade or another club member for details.**

MEET THE CHAIRMAN



Simon Woods, known affectionately as "Shafty," has been with the club since 1992 and is now 6th in the all-time appearance list having played exactly 600 games. A wicketkeeper with 593 'victims', a former 1st & A Team captain and a member of the coaching team, Simon officially took over as Chairman at the 2023 A.G.M.

ALL THE JUNIOR NEWS

WINTER NETS

The juniors are preparing for the new season with 8 weeks of winter net sessions (4 per team) on Monday evenings at Hethersett Academy. These have been well attended with around 12-16 children per session, enabling players to practise new skills, for some working with new coaches, and within new age groups.



TEAMS, COACHES & MANAGERS 2024

Having enjoyed a bonanza junior season in 2023 winning 4 County Cup competitions and reaching the final of 2 others, Summer 2024 will see us striving to emulate some of that success but also to provide as much cricket as we can for as many as we can. Amazingly the club plans to field 13 hardball teams and 2 softball teams across 6 age groups from U9s to U19s.

U9s: 1 hardball team & 1 softball team, coached by Iain Nichols and Nick Aston & managed by Bronwyn Nichols.

U11s: 3 hardball teams & 1 girls softball team coached by Joel Pailles, Frankie La Grange and Gary Coleman, a level 3 coach who we welcome back to the coaching team having coached at Melton several seasons ago.

U11 girls: Coached by Matt Rushton and managed by Helen Swannie and Laura Cook who we also welcome to the team.

U13s: 3 teams, Tier 1 coached/managed by Carl Fawkes and Oli Berney and Tier 2 coached/managed by Jason Whiddett and Adam Thompson.

U15s: 2 teams plus a girls hardball team, Tier 1 Coached by Martin Alcock & managed by Jack Dainty; Tier 2 coached & managed by Chris McKay and Simon Woods & the Girls coached by Matt Rushton & Aslam Mohammed.

U17s: 1 team coached & managed by Martin Alcock

U19s: 1 team captained by Corey Rushton & coached & managed by Matt & Maxine Rushton.

Good luck to Joel Pailles, Iain Nichols and Nick Aston who are taking their ECB Core Coaching Award and, as well as those already mentioned, a warm welcome is extended to Steve Cadge and Mark Newbold, both 1st/A Team members, who will be assisting with Monday night coaching.

SUMMER TRAINING

Friday night training starts on **Friday 26th April (6.30-8.00 p.m.)** for **U9s and U11s** and there are currently spaces available in both age groups for new members.

Monday night training for **U13s & U15s starts on Monday 29th April (6.30-8.00 p.m.)** and there is limited availability in these age groups.

Girls in school years 8 & above are also invited to attend the **Ladies'** sessions on Thursdays (in addition to their normal Monday sessions). These will start on **Thursday 25th April (6.30-8.00 p.m.)**

New members wishing to join our thriving junior section or requiring further information, should contact our Junior Secretary, Maxine Rushton: Mattnmax@btinternet.com



All Stars & Dynamos courses are aimed at children who are brand new to cricket or too young to join our hardball sessions. Sign up does not start until **3rd April** & is managed by the ECB and not by the club. The sessions start on **Friday 10 May** and run for 8 weeks (please note changes in time from previous years)

All Stars is for youngsters from Reception to Year 2 and will run from 6.00-6.45. Information can be accessed at: <https://ecb.clubspark.uk/AllStars/Course/39b71bf5-29d7-4198-bf00-3a628814c454>

Dynamos is aimed at youngsters in Years 3-6 and will be from 7.00-8.00 p.m.

<https://ecb.clubspark.uk/Dynamos/Course/115304b6-aef3-498c-9f4a-763622c02379>

Volunteers Needed

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers and the coaching team is in need of help from parents or senior cricketers to assist with All Stars & Dynamos. You don't need to be a qualified coach, just a keen and enthusiastic individual. Training takes place in April - a single evening course and then you're ready to go. You need to be 18 years or over to do the course.

However, if you're under 18 and want to help out, there are plenty of opportunities on Friday nights. It can count towards your DofE Award. Please contact Head of Junior Coaching, Matt, who will discuss options with you: Matt_rushton@icloud.com

If running around, organising youngsters is not your thing, though, there are plenty of other activities around the club

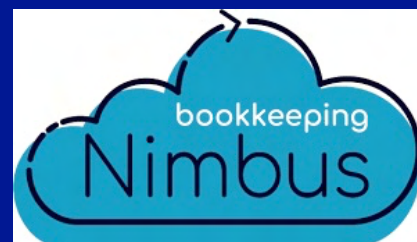
that you might like to get involved with. We're run completely by volunteers so, if it's work on the ground; help behind the bar, on the barbecue or in the kitchen; clerical assistance; help with fundraising or any other skills you might have that we might need, please let us know. We will be delighted to warmly welcome you to the team.



The picture above shows some of our many coaching volunteers at last season's Junior Festival.

New Look for Presentation Evening

There's an earlier date and a new look to our annual Presentation Evening this year. For many years we've celebrated our season and handed out our awards in October, recently at Glen Lodge or Roundwood, but this year we've gone for something different - a much earlier date, **Saturday 31st August** and a familiar venue, **Melton Park**. The cost will be £20 a head and that will include a hog roast with salads or a vegetarian/vegan option. It is hoped that the final matches of the season may be able to start a little earlier so players, partners and other guests can make it to Melton in good time and round off the season and celebrate our award winners while events are still fresh in the mind and before the university terms start.



A big thankyou to our main shirt sponsors, **Yellow Brick Mortgages**, **Alan Boswell Group** and **Nimbus Bookkeeping** for their continuing and much-valued support.

Thanks also to our 2023 ground sponsors The Goat Shed, Russen Hill Estate Agents, Anglia Pallets, Noobru, CiM Signs & Graphics, Computer Service Centre and T.H.Groundcare. We hope to continue seeing their signs around the ground in 2024.

Please do your best to support the above companies if you ever need their services.

Remember we're always on the lookout for new sponsors. If you would like to support us please get in touch. Maybe you would like to sponsor one of the holes for our Golf Day.

A final thank-you to our Vice-Presidents for your support over the years in cash or kind.

A BIT OF SAD NEWS

The Club was saddened by the news of the death of one of its Vice-Presidents, Ruth Phoenix, on 14th February, aged 94. Ruth and Robert Phoenix, the parents of President, Steve and Groundsman, Mike, lived at College Farm and supported the club from its humble beginnings. It was an agreement between Robert and landowner Edward Evans Lombe in 1988 that secured Melton Park as our home in Great Melton which was officially opened in 1993. Robert, who received the Aldous Shield as 'Volunteer of the Year' in both 1999 and 2000, died in 2006 but Ruth continued to support us with donations and raffle prizes and was often at Melton Park or Town Close watching her sons, grandson Olly or great-grandsons, Sam and Ben Johnson. Ruth and Robert were also members of the Bowls Club. Ruth's passing marks the end of an era really as Sir Edward, Robert, Alan and Kate Barnard, Audrey Holland, Phylis Curson and Geoff Dunn, all great supporters of the club, have sadly passed away in recent years. Ruth's funeral is at Great Melton Church on Monday March 11th and, fittingly, the wake will be held in our refurbished clubroom. The club sends its condolences to Steve, Mike and their families. The pictures, below show Ruth and Robert painting the sightscreens, which he made, in 1997: Ruth and Robert with Kate Barnard at our Six-a-Side and Fete in 2005 and Ruth watching cricket in 2013.



And finally... a picture from the archives. 44 years ago, on 25th May 1980, we embarked on our second tour to Nottingham and here we are lining up against Epperstone. We lost! *Our touring squad were: (back) Andy Haylett (hidden), David Carr, Stuart Halliwell, Vernon George, John Brooks, Mike Phoenix, Fred Green, Stuart Clancy, Dave Stinton, Adrian Fisher (front) Chris Betts, Steve Carr & Steve Phoenix. Sadly, Fred and Stuart H are no longer with us. The first tour, also to Nottingham, was in July 1979 but there have been many since then to Oxfordshire, Yorkshire, Kent, Hertfordshire and Hampshire. Mike Phoenix is the only person to have been on all of them!*



That's it folks!
Hope you've enjoyed it

