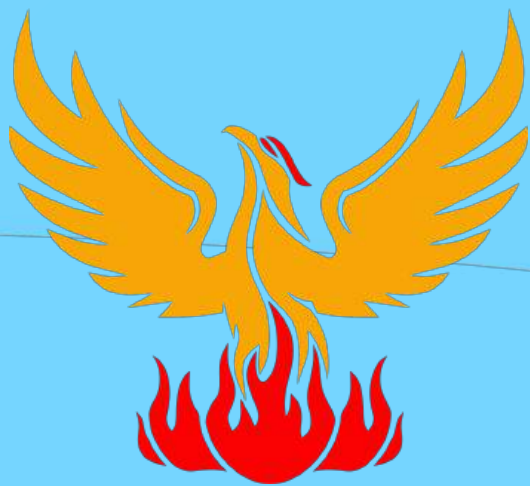




PHOENIX POST

Great Melton Cricket Club

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

Pre-Season Newsletter

March 2025

Get Set Day



SATURDAY 12th APRIL

Although the ECB's 'Get Set Day' is officially 5th April, ours is a week later on Saturday 12th. Please join us at Melton Park from 9.30 a.m. onwards to help us get everything ready for the new season. There are plenty of jobs to do - painting, weeding, tidying, cleaning - on the ground and in the pavilion so please spare us an hour or two. Best to wear some old clothes and tea, coffee, bacon rolls and biscuits will be provided.

RICHARD & GEORGE STEP UP

After a winter of upheaval following the loss of several first team players, 2 club stalwarts have stepped into the breach.



As we prepare for the 2025 cricket season, the Club would like to extend sincere thanks to Richard Waddell and George Bunn for stepping up to lead during a time of significant change. Richard has been elected Club Captain, overseeing all senior playing matters while George has stepped in as 1st Team Captain to take on the challenge of trying to keep us in Alliance Division 1.



Richard joined Great Melton in 2011 when he moved down from his native Newcastle and has 5 years' experience as 1st Team Captain, including leading the team to promotion in 2013 and again in 2019. Richard has played 182 times for the club, taking 226 wickets and scoring 2239 runs.

Following two remarkable seasons of unprecedented success, we now find ourselves entering a new chapter. While we had anticipated the potential departure of one or two players aiming to test themselves at a higher level, we weren't expecting quite the scale of change — with six players moving on.

That said, we see this not as a setback but as a fresh opportunity. Competing in Alliance Division 1 without last season's top four batsmen will present a challenge, and there will naturally be a ripple effect across all four of our Saturday teams. But as we've learned from over 50 years of proud Club history, every sporting journey includes its highs and lows — and it's during these transitional moments that character and community shine brightest.

We're excited about the energy and enthusiasm Richard, George, and our other captains — Nick Aston (A Team), Woody Loines (B Team), and Duncan Greenslade (C Team) — are bringing to their roles. Winter nets at Hethersett High School have been running since early February with strong attendance and a real buzz of positivity. It's been especially

encouraging to see so many of our talented young players stepping up, showing they're ready to make their mark at senior level.

So yes, 2025 may bring its challenges, but we're approaching the season with confidence, unity, and determination. The Phoenix spirit is alive and well — and we're ready for whatever comes next!



Best wishes Richard, George, Nick, Woody and Duncan.

In normal circumstances running 4 teams on a Saturday is always a tough challenge and we are one of a small number of Norfolk clubs that do it. Despite the loss of a few senior players we do believe that we can still field 4 teams and fully intend to do so. However, a few new faces - or even returning old ones - would help a lot! If you know anybody looking for a club, or simply wanting to get back into cricket after time spent out of the game, please tell them to get in touch. The fact that we play in Divisions 1 and 3 of the Norfolk Alliance and Tier 1 and 3 of the Norfolk League means there's a standard that suits just about everybody. We are a friendly, sociable lot so new players are made very welcome.

NETS AND SENIOR PRACTICE

The last of 6 indoor net session took place on Sunday 23rd March (7.30-9.30) at Hethersett Academy so, weather and ground conditions permitting, senior training will begin outside at **Melton Park** on **Tuesday evenings** from **6.00-8.00 p.m.** Notification as to when this starts will be via Spond.

...AND THEN THERE'S THE OVER 40s!

New Over 40s skipper Olly Harris (pictured long before he reached 40!) has already been busy checking on the fitness regimes of his squad members and, by all accounts, they're "going well" which probably means most have been taking it very gently so there won't be too many sprains and strains by the time the first match comes along versus Drayton at Melton Park on Wednesday 7th May. This season Melton are in the North & East Division of the Norfolk Over 40s Social League so will be up against a new set of teams: Norwich, Horsford, Sprowston, Acle, Bradfield, Reepham & Salle and, of course, Drayton. Some teams we play once and some twice. All the dates and fixtures are on Play-Cricket. There's a few new rules and Aslam's already moaning about the fact he's restricted to an 8-



Winter Success

There has been plenty of winter cricket action and no shortage of success with winners or runners-up medals for 4 of our 5 indoor teams. The unbeaten **U14s** won the NCB South Norfolk League and, not to be outdone, the **U12s** followed it up by also winning the NCB Norwich League without losing a match.





Our very young **U14 GIRLS SOFTBALL TEAM** (left) finished 4th in their league but coach Matt Rushton was delighted with their progress in achieving victories over Hethersett & Tas Valley and Bradenham.

THE WOMEN'S TEAM (below left) again competed in the NCB Shell Women's Indoor League and won 5 and lost 2 of their 7 matches to finish runners-up behind an experienced Old Buckenham. Availability was a challenge but, helped out by girls from Swardeston and a few other clubs and well-captained by Samia Mohammed, Melton played some excellent cricket.

NORFOLK CHAMPIONS

THE MEN'S TEAM capped a fine indoor season for the club by being crowned Norfolk champions. A youthful team, including a trio of McKays, ensured a top-place finish in our South Norfolk group with a final-game win against Dereham before further victories over Drayton and Hethersett & Tas Valley on S.N. Finals' Day secured the winners medals and a place in the County final on Sunday 23rd March. A composed batting performance and victory over Mundford in the semi-final was followed by a very close final against North Norfolk winners, Bradfield. Having won the toss skipper Martyn Cook elected to



field first but Melton found wickets hard to come by and Bradfield posted a very respectable 269. However, another good batting display from all 3 pairs saw Melton crowned Norfolk champions for the 2nd time, having initially won the trophy in 2023.

IMPORTANT

PLEASE REGISTER YOUR OWN **PLAY-CRICKET** ACCOUNT

We've all become used to the 'Play-Cricket' website and, with the advent of live-scoring, the Great Melton one is our first point of call when we're trying to follow the progress of our teams, find our results or see who the star players were in any given week. It is also used by the leagues for registrations and transfers. All our players, senior and junior, have to be registered on Play-Cricket and it's important that personal details, like names and dates of birth are correct, or problems can arise. In the past club administrators have been able to set up/amend accounts for players but now, club members have to do this for themselves. It is important, therefore, that you check your own and your children's Play-Cricket accounts and edit them as appropriate. If you don't have one, please create one. Go to <https://greatmelton.play-cricket.com/home>. If you already have an account, log-in & go to Account/Edit Account. To register for the first time select 'Sign-Up' at the top of any Play-Cricket site and follow the instructions.

ALL THE JUNIOR NEWS

WINTER NETS



The juniors have been preparing for the new season with winter net sessions at Hethersett Academy.

TEAMS & COACHES 2025

Having won 4 County Cup competitions and reached the final of 2 others in 2023 it would have been extremely difficult to emulate those achievements in 2024 but our youngsters were still pretty impressive. The U15 Phoenix team won the Andy Seeley Cup, the U13 Phoenix won the ECB Cup (Norfolk) & were runners-up in the Regional Final while all the other age group teams reached the semi-finals of their county competitions. We also succeeded in our aim to provide competitive cricket for as many youngsters as possible by fielding several Blaze and Fire teams in the 2nd tier of the Alliance competitions. The U11 Fire team actually did brilliantly to win their league.

In **2025** the club will field 11 hardball teams across 6 age groups from U9s to U19s.

U9s: 1 hardball team & 1 softball team (tbc). Lead Coach: Iain Nichols.

U11s: 3 hardball teams (Phoenix, Blaze & Fire). Lead Coach: Joel Pailes

U13s: 3 hardball teams (Phoenix, Blaze & Fire). 1 Blaze/Fire Team will be an **U13 Girls' Team**. Lead Coach: Gary Coleman

U15s: 2 teams (Phoenix & Blaze). Lead Coaches: Chris McKay & Oli Berney

U17s: 1 hardball team. Lead Coach: Martin Alcock

U19s: 1 hardball team (Melton Phoenix). Lead Coach:

In addition, softball tournaments will be entered as and when appropriate.

SUMMER TRAINING/COACHING

Friday night training starts on **Friday 25th April (6.30-8.00 p.m.)** for **U9s and U11s**.

Monday night training for **U13s & U15s** starts on **Monday 28th April (6.30-8.00 p.m.)**.

Girls in school years 8 & above (plus any County Year 7s) are also invited to attend the **Ladies'** sessions (in addition to their normal Monday sessions). These are likely to start on **Thursday 1st May (6.30-8.00 p.m.)** tbc.

All Stars & Dynamos courses are aimed at children who are brand new to cricket or too young to join our hardball sessions. Registration is open now & is managed by the ECB and not by the club. The sessions start on **Friday 16 May** and run for 8 weeks until 4th July.

All Stars is for youngsters from Reception to Year 2 and will run from 5.45-6.30. The coaches will be Helen Aston, Rob Pugh, Matt Gilbert & Steve Cadge.

Dynamos is aimed at youngsters in Years 3-6 and will be from 6.45-7.45 p.m. The coaches are Bron Nicholls and Rob Pugh.



JOIN OUR TEAM

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers to join our coaching team (pictured below) and particularly need the help of 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, Nick Aston, who will discuss options with you:



WOMEN & GIRLS CRICKET 2025

Melton & Swardeston Join Forces



Great Melton & Swardeston Cricket Clubs are excited to announce the merging of their ladies' teams to compete in the newly formed Icen Women's League Division 1 and the existing Women's Shell and Softball Leagues for the 2025 season onwards. Both clubs see the merger as a fantastic opportunity that will give players the ability to play at the most appropriate level and help to develop their cricket by having a clear pathway. It should also ensure a wider pool of talent to enable competitive teams to be fielded in each level of competition.

With twice the number of coaches, opportunities to train on alternative Monday and Thursday evenings and both Melton Park and Saxlingham available for matches and training, this is a big step forward for ladies' cricket at both clubs.

The merger, however, only impacts the Women's teams (involving women & girls from Year 8 upwards plus Year 7 County squad girls) and will not affect other junior or senior cricket that will continue to be managed and organised separately.

Work is underway regarding playing kit, shirt sponsorship and membership details but here's a sneak-peak at a possible new logo (still to be ratified)



OUR YOUNGER GIRLS



Our 'ladies' team (pictured left V Swardeston at Saxlingham last season) is quite a young one and many of our female players compete on an equal footing with the boys, representing our Phoenix, Blaze or Fire teams. An U13 girls' Blaze/Fire team will compete against 'mixed-sex' teams in tier 2 of the NCA competition in 2025. In addition there are opportunities to enter various women & girls softball tournaments during the season so there will be plenty of cricket for girls of all ages and abilities. Some of our older girls like Alice Brand, Rebecca Davey & Niamh Rushton have been playing senior league cricket for several years. Last year Niamh was selected for our A Team in Division 3 of the NCA.

Membership and Match Fees

2025 registration and membership subscriptions will be requested in the next few weeks via Spond. Registrations need to be completed and subscriptions paid before the 1st May. The fees have increased a bit this year but are still very good value compared to most clubs. They are:

- Senior players (Year 11 and above): £40 membership fee; £7 match fee; £3.50 midweek match fee
- Students and unemployed: £20 membership fee; £3.50 match fee/midweek match fee
- Junior players (Years 3-10): £60 membership, training/coaching fee; £3.50 match fee (all matches)
- Social/Non-Playing Membership: £10

Spond will continue to be used for the collection of match fees. It costs a lot to run a club the size of Great Melton so **all senior players & parents of juniors are asked to pay promptly when requested on the Spond app**. It saves us having to 'chase up' lots of debtors at the end of the season. If there are any problems or any specific hardship, please speak to the team captain, manager or lead coach. The Club will consider any requests sensitively and sympathetically.

PAVILION PLANS



With the finishing touches applied to the pavilion and having had a bit of a rest from 'projects' we're now looking at what further improvements could be made. The curtains have certainly made the clubroom less noisy but a rug and some new sofas will, hopefully, make it even better. Some 'landscaping' is needed around the entrance and the original plans also had a 'phase 2' which included possible solar panels and an updated hot water system. During the winter the present tank in the roof leaked and caused a bit of damage to the ceiling but thanks to our plumber Matt Clarke's swift action it was quickly repaired and the staining on the ceiling will be rectified on 'Get Set Day'.

Any further work will be dependent on grants and Joel Pailes has kindly offered to apply on our behalf to the Hornsea 3 Community Fund.

There are already plans to install wifi and Steve Clarke has offered to take over the management of the bar stock. We're hoping for a few more volunteers who might be prepared to 'do a stint' behind the bar on a Friday evening (and at other times) so the onus doesn't always fall on the same people like Matt or Duncan (pictured below). If you would like to help, please speak to Steve or one of the present bar staff. Having wifi should make things much easier.



The clubroom is available for hire, particularly outside the cricket & Bowls season, and has been used for meetings, parties & funeral wakes during 2024. If you are interested in hiring it, please contact Steve Phoenix on 07759693916.

COUNTY PLAYERS



Congratulations to our 22 youngsters who have been selected for this year's County age-group squads, particularly to George Fawkes, Lucas Berney, Emma Lawrenson & Samia Mohammed (Pictured receiving the Rachel Heyhoe-Flint Award from Mark Nicholas at Lords in 2024) who have also been selected for the NCB Centre of Excellence Programme. The full list is:

Ellis Pailes (U12 Boys)
Isiah Zeb (U12 Boys)
Sienna Avenal (U13 Girls)
Matilda Chapallaz (U13 Girls)
Ellie Cook (U13 Girls)
Georgina Duncan (U13 Girls)
Ella O'Sullivan (U13 Girls)
Alexandra Patel (U13 Girls)
Lucas Berney (U14 Boys)
J.C. (U14 Boys)
Max Cubitt (U14 Boys)
George Fawkes (U14 Boys)
Emma Lawrenson (U15 Girls)
Maya Lowen (U15 Girls)
Samia Mohammed (U15 Girls)
Sammy Belderson (U16 Boys)
Laurie Poulson (U16 Boys)
Alice Brand (U18 Girls & Women)
Rebecca Burrows (U18 Girls)
Imogen Cook (U18 Girls)
Rebecca Davey (U18 Girls & Women)
Niamh Rushton (U18 Girls & Women)

DIARY DATES

Junior Coaching Starts

Friday 25th April (U11, U9)
Monday 28th April (U13, U15)

Friday 16th May
(All Stars & Dynamos)

Saturday Socials

29th March (Pool Night/
Mulligans), 14th June,
26th July

President's Match

Family Fun Day

Sunday 6th July

Presentation Evening

Saturday 30th August

Junior Festival

Saturday 6th September
tbc

GREAT MELTON FAMILY FUN DAY &

PRESIDENT'S MATCH

Sunday 6th July

This summer the club is combining with the village of Great Melton to stage a summer event for everybody - a family fun day. A T20 Presidents' game in the morning, from 10am to 1pm will be followed by a traditional village fete involving BBQ, bouncy castle, raffle, tombola, stalls and games, afternoon teas, live music, a bar and more! And entry is free!



Hosted jointly by GMCC and Great Melton Church, all monies raised will go to the club and the churchyard appeal.

"For many years my mum & dad organised the village fete and the cricket club has always meant so much to Mike and me so it's great to see the two come together. Cricket, family fun & games, music, food and drink. What's not to like? I hope as many of you as possible will support it"

End-of-Season Celebration

At Melton Park

Last year we experimented by holding our end-of-season celebration evening at **Melton Park** after the final league games and, generally, the new-look event received a big thumbs-up. So, having done it once, we're aiming to do it again - even better - in 2025. The big date for your diaries is **Saturday 30th August**. The evening will bring the season to a close with a hog roast, live music, a raffle and, of course, the presentation of awards. Here are 3 pics from last year's event (1) The B Team (Div 2 Champions); Sammy Belderson (Most Improved Player); Duncan Greenslade (Volunteer of the Year)



GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Sadly the club lost another of its Vice-Presidents in 2024. Sid Clarke, dad of Steve and grandfather of Matt and Neal, was a Vice-President of GMCC for more than a decade. Always interested in the club and supportive of it, even when he lived in Spain, Sid died on 3rd October, at the age of 94.



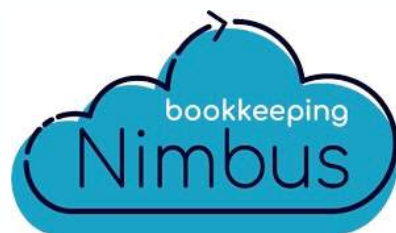
A BIG GREAT MELTON THANK-YOU

...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 2024 ground sponsors **The Goat Shed**, **Russen Hill Estate Agents**, **Anglia Pallets**, **Noobru & CiM Signs & Graphics**. We hope to continue seeing their signs around the ground in 2025. This year we also have a new ground sponsor **Cecil Amey (Opticians)**.

Please do your best to support the above companies if you ever need their services. We're always on the lookout for new sponsors. If you would like to support us please get in touch.



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

Club Kit



Club clothing and other kit can be ordered from our new supplier **4Sports Group**. Click on the 'Club Shop' link on the website or paste the following link into your browser: <https://www.4sportsgroup.com/Great-Melton-CC> and you will head straight to the Great Melton Club Shop to view the full range of items. They will all bear the Great Melton logo.



We are advised that turnaround is about 3-4 weeks but increases as the season approaches so order now if you want your kit for the start of the season. 4Sports is based at 4 Charleswood Road, Dereham, NR19 1SX so you could pop in or contact them on 01362 854413 or sales@4sportsgroup.com. Some kit samples will be available at the first junior training session on 28th April.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED TREASURER

We are looking for a volunteer treasurer to aid the club in matters of expenditure and finance. This is a crucial role as the club can not function without one!

If you can help, or would like to discuss the role, please contact:

Simon Woods - Club Chair
simonwoods71@gmail.com



We Need You

Unfortunately Carl Fawkes' increased work commitments mean he cannot devote as much time to the Club as he has in the past so we need a new Treasurer a.s.a.p. This is a vital post - the club cannot function without someone to look after the money - but we've been trying since before the AGM to find a volunteer willing to take on the role. If you can help or you would like further information please contact Chairman Simon Woods.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the club and in the recent survey several club members indicated a willingness to help in one way or another. Whether it's assisting with finances, helping with coaching, umpiring or scoring, helping on the ground, serving behind the bar, cooking burgers or assisting with general maintenance, there's always something to suit

your skills or interests. Lots of people doing lots of things is always better than a small group doing everything. The survey, of course, was anonymous so, if you did indicate an interest in volunteering, please make that known to us. Results of the survey are still being assessed by our Executive Committee but will be shared in due course.



A shout-out to the groundsmen

The magnificent Melton Park (pictured last season on our 50th Anniversary Celebration) ranks among the best cricket grounds in Norfolk. We are very lucky to be able to play our cricket there. It takes a huge amount of work to maintain it, especially considering the amount of use it now has. The final word in this newsletter, therefore, is a big thank you to our groundstaff, Mike, Grenville (who 'retired' last year after 30 years helping on the ground... but is still helping!) and Martin.



THANKS GUYS!