History of Grittleton Cricket Club



Collated by Richard Saull in 2017/18 as part of the 150th celebrations of continuous cricket being played in the parish of Grittleton, Wiltshire.

Thanks to:

- Rob and Faith Ward, for doing much of the initial research
- Ian James and John Wilding for their memories
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- Joan Rummings for providing the 1950s team photos

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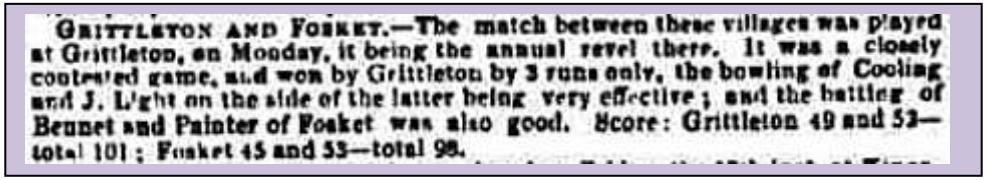
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1. First recorded cricket at Grittleton

The first recorded game at Grittleton we have found is in the Bells Life paper, published in London on 26th August 1849, some 168 years ago:



GRITTLETON AND FOSKET.—The match between these villages was played at Grittleton, on Monday, it being the annual revel there. It was a closely contested game, and won by Grittleton by 3 runs only, the bowling of Cooling and J. Light on the side of the latter being very effective; and the batting of Bennet and Painter of Fosket was also good. Score: Grittleton 49 and 53—total 101; Fosket 45 and 53—total 98.

Grittleton and Fosket. – The match between these two villages was played at Grittleton, on Monday, it being the annual revel there. It was a closely contested game, and won by Grittleton by 3 runs only, the bowling of Cooling and J. Light on the side of the latter being very effective; and the batting of Bennet and Painter of Fosket was also good. Score: Grittleton 49 and 53 – total 101; Fosket 45 and 53 – total 98.

This suggests that this was not the first time Cricket was played at Grittleton. It is conceivable that the Cricket was played in Grittleton 175 years ago, or even 200. Fosket refers to Foscote, a hamlet within the current parish.

What was cricket like in 1849? Bowling was underarm or roundarm, and there may have been two stumps. There were no boundaries. We can see that this was a low scoring game with two innings, so likely to be a lengthy affair.

There were no motorized grass mowers or rollers, so cricket pitches were unprepared in comparison to modern standards.

1849 in Context: War, Famine, Hats and Cricket.

1849: Victoria was Queen, the 15th Parliament was led by the liberal Lord John Russell.

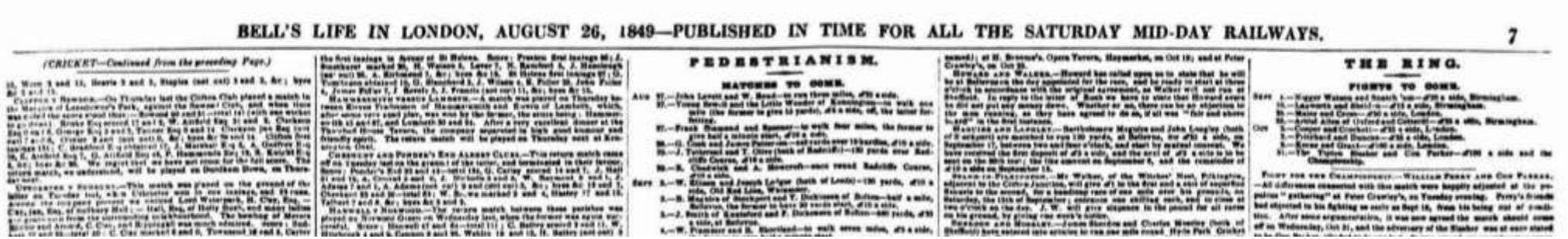
Colonialism was at its height, with the 2nd Anglo/Sikh war being fought by the British East India Company, with the annexation of Punjab in this year.

Cholera was rife, including in London (14,000 dead).

The first bowler hat (devised by London hat makers Thomas and William Bowler) was sold by hatters Lock & Co. of St James's.

The florin (two shilling) coin was introduced, partly to test the national appetite for decimalisation.

Cricket statistics were alive and well: William Ward died in 1849, he held the highest first-class batting score (278, MCC vs Norfolk, 1820), beaten by W.G. Grace's triple century in 1876.



BELL'S LIFE IN LONDON, AUGUST 26, 1849—PUBLISHED IN TIME FOR ALL THE SATURDAY MID-DAY RAILWAYS. 7

(CRICKET—Continued from the preceding Page.)

PEDESTRIANISM.

MATCHES TO COME.

THE RING.

FIGHTS TO COME.

2. 19TH CENTURY CRICKET

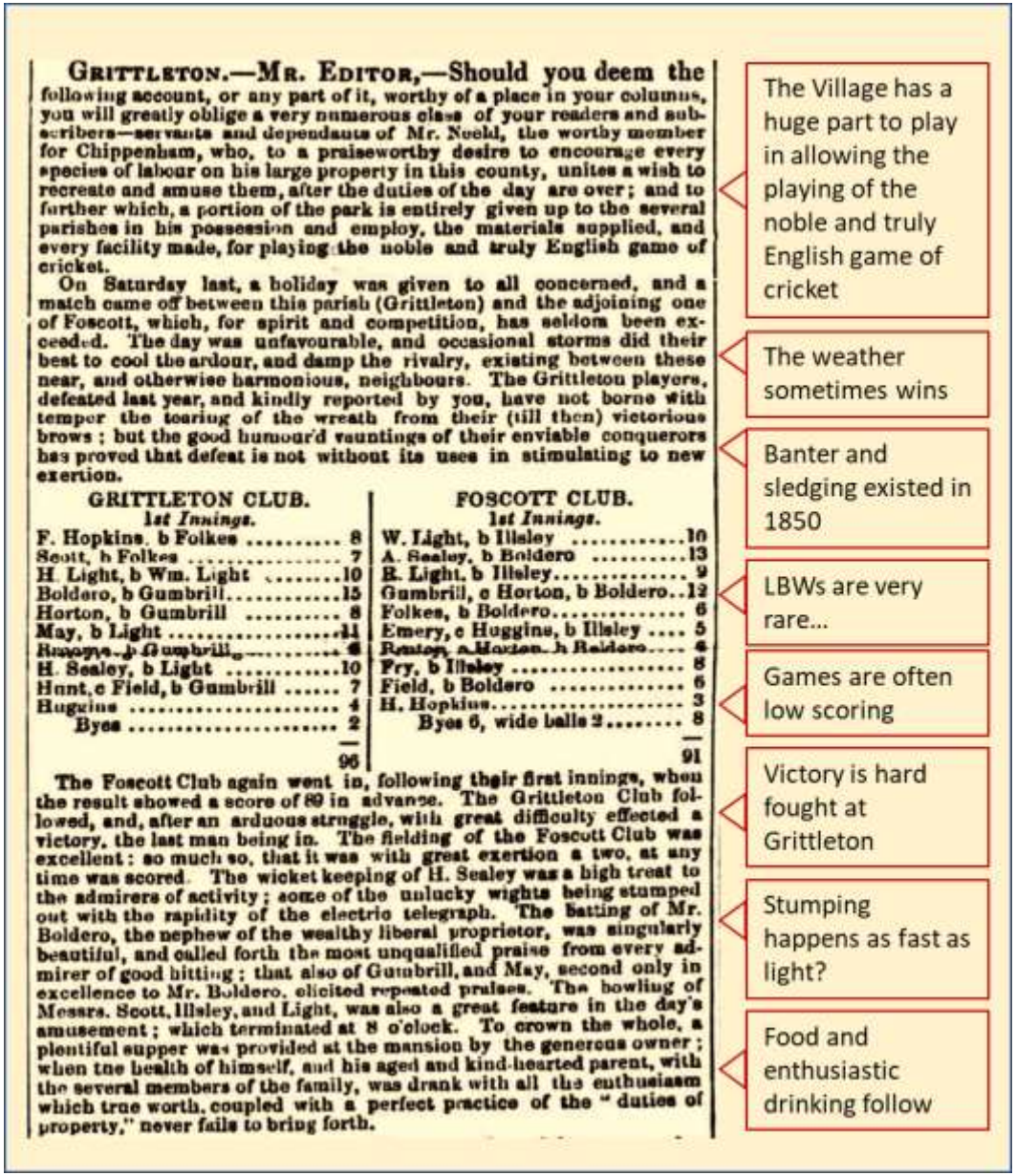
Was the early game recognisable as the same game that is played today at Grittleton?

The following year from the first recorded game at Grittleton, 1850, a charming piece in the 22nd August Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette gives much more detail about how cricket was organised and the influence of the Neeld family.

As shown to the right it establishes many principles of cricket that still exist at Grittleton today.

It is worth noting that the game of Cricket at Grittleton owes a huge amount to the generosity of the Neeld family, to their servants, to the parish and surrounding areas. The Neeld family describing Cricket as "the noble and truly English game of cricket"

There must have been multiple games where GCC played Foscott (Foscote) – the previous report showed a GCC win, where this one states that Foscott were the reigning champions.



GRITTLETON.—MR. EDITOR,—Should you deem the following account, or any part of it, worthy of a place in your columns, you will greatly oblige a very numerous class of your readers and subscribers—servants and dependants of Mr. Neeld, the worthy member for Chippenham, who, to a praiseworthy desire to encourage every species of labour on his large property in this county, unites a wish to recreate and amuse them, after the duties of the day are over; and to further which, a portion of the park is entirely given up to the several parishes in his possession and employ, the materials supplied, and every facility made, for playing the noble and truly English game of cricket.

On Saturday last, a holiday was given to all concerned, and a match came off between this parish (Grittleton) and the adjoining one of Foscott, which, for spirit and competition, has seldom been exceeded. The day was unfavourable, and occasional storms did their best to cool the ardour, and damp the rivalry, existing between these near, and otherwise harmonious, neighbours. The Grittleton players, defeated last year, and kindly reported by you, have not borne with temper the tearing of the wreath from their (till then) victorious brows; but the good humour'd vauntings of their enviable conquerors has proved that defeat is not without its uses in stimulating to new exertion.

GRITTLETON CLUB. 1st Innings.		FOSCOTT CLUB. 1st Innings.	
F. Hopkins, b Folkes	8	W. Light, b Illsley	10
Scott, b Folkes	7	A. Sealey, b Boldero	13
H. Light, b Wm. Light	10	R. Light, b Illsley	9
Boldero, b Gumbrill	15	Gumbrill, c Horton, b Boldero	12
Horton, b Gumbrill	8	Folkes, b Boldero	6
May, b Light	11	Emery, c Huggins, b Illsley	5
Huggins, b Gumbrill	6	Renton, c Horton, b Boldero	4
H. Sealey, b Light	10	Fry, b Illsley	8
Hunt, c Field, b Gumbrill	7	Field, b Boldero	6
Huggins	4	H. Hopkins	3
Byes	2	Byes 6, wide balls 2	8
	96		91

The Foscott Club again went in, following their first innings, when the result showed a score of 89 in advance. The Grittleton Club followed, and, after an arduous struggle, with great difficulty effected a victory, the last man being in. The fielding of the Foscott Club was excellent: so much so, that it was with great exertion a two, at any time was scored. The wicket keeping of H. Sealey was a high treat to the admirers of activity; some of the unlucky wights being stumped out with the rapidity of the electric telegraph. The batting of Mr. Boldero, the nephew of the wealthy liberal proprietor, was singularly beautiful, and called forth the most unqualified praise from every admirer of good hitting; that also of Gumbrill, and May, second only in excellence to Mr. Boldero, elicited repeated praises. The bowling of Messrs. Scott, Illsley, and Light, was also a great feature in the day's amusement; which terminated at 8 o'clock. To crown the whole, a plentiful supper was provided at the mansion by the generous owner; when the health of himself, and his aged and kind-hearted parent, with the several members of the family, was drank with all the enthusiasm which true worth, coupled with a perfect practice of the "duties of property," never fails to bring forth.

The Village has a huge part to play in allowing the playing of the noble and truly English game of cricket

The weather sometimes wins

Banter and sledging existed in 1850

LBWs are very rare...

Games are often low scoring

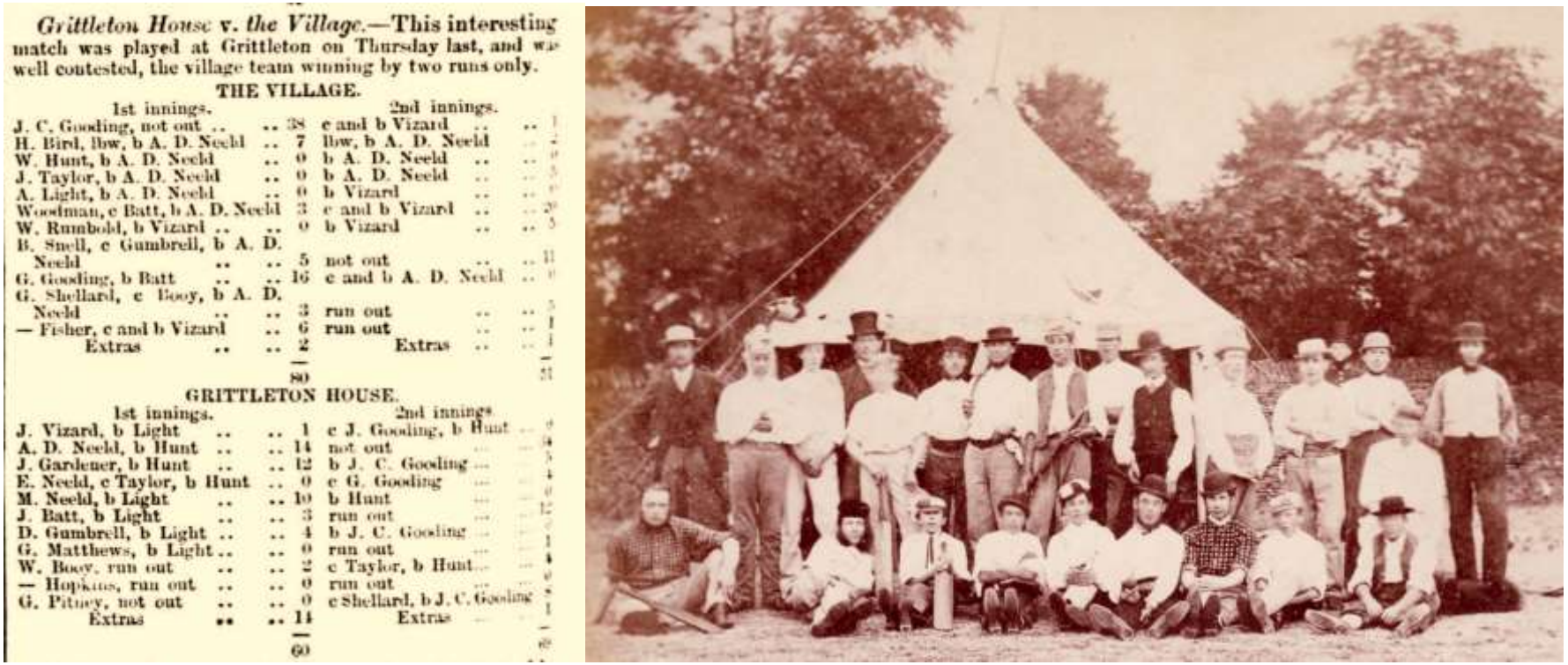
Victory is hard fought at Grittleton

Stumping happens as fast as light?

Food and enthusiastic drinking follow

3. GRITTLETON CRICKETERS RECORDED ON EARLY PHOTOGRAPH

A game between the "Village" and the "House" was played on Thursday 6th August 1868 and reported in the Devizes and Wilts Gazette. This is most likely the game when this iconic photograph was taken, only 30 years after photography was invented, and 4 years after Wisden was first published.



Grittleton House v. *the Village*.—This interesting match was played at Grittleton on Thursday last, and was well contested, the village team winning by two runs only.

THE VILLAGE.

1st innings.		2nd innings.	
J. C. Gooding, not out	38	c and b Vizard	1
H. Bird, Bw, b A. D. Neeld	7	Bw, b A. D. Neeld	2
W. Hunt, b A. D. Neeld	0	b A. D. Neeld	0
J. Taylor, b A. D. Neeld	0	b A. D. Neeld	3
A. Light, b A. D. Neeld	0	b Vizard	0
Woodman, c Batt, b A. D. Neeld	3	c and b Vizard	20
W. Rumbold, b Vizard	0	b Vizard	3
B. Snell, c Gumbrell, b A. D. Neeld	5	not out	11
G. Gooding, b Batt	16	c and b A. D. Neeld	0
G. Shellard, c Booy, b A. D. Neeld	3	run out	3
— Fisher, c and b Vizard	6	run out	1
Extras	2	Extras	1
	80		51

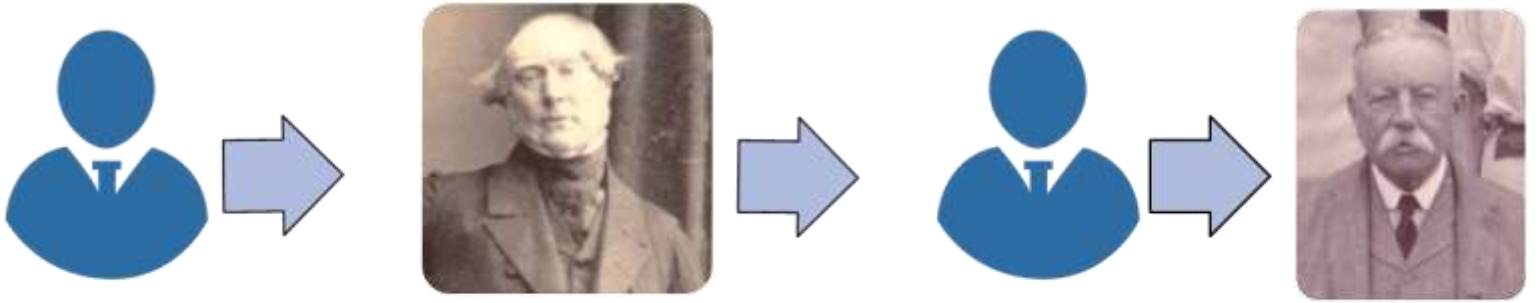
GRITTLETON HOUSE.

1st innings.		2nd innings.	
J. Vizard, b Light	1	c J. Gooding, b Hunt	0
A. D. Neeld, b Hunt	14	not out	5
J. Gardener, b Hunt	12	b J. C. Gooding	5
E. Neeld, c Taylor, b Hunt	0	c G. Gooding	4
M. Neeld, b Light	10	b Hunt	0
J. Batt, b Light	3	run out	12
D. Gumbrell, b Light	4	b J. C. Gooding	0
G. Matthews, b Light	0	run out	1
W. Booy, run out	2	c Taylor, b Hunt	4
— Hopkins, run out	0	run out	0
G. Pitney, not out	0	c Shellard, b J. C. Gooding	3
Extras	14	Extras	1
	60		35

The photograph was probably taken using a wet plate camera with an exposure of at least 2 seconds leading to some blurring. The back of the photograph is labelled "Grittleton Cricketers in 1868: Presented by Colonel Neeld in 1912", possibly when the pavilion was opened. It reveals a lot about the nature of cricket in 1868: Bats were similar in design to modern day, at least one of those in the picture has a splice. Handle springs were novel and made from whalebone. Pads are being worn by some of the seated players and hobnail boots are very much in evidence. Three players are wearing quartered caps, suggesting this was a team uniform. Much white is being worn but is not mandatory. The police are ready for any crowd trouble, as can be seen if you look on the back row, two from the right, where there is an early "photobomb" from the local constabulary. The game itself was hard fought, being won by the village by two runs. Unusually, there are three members of the Neeld family on the scorecard.

4. THE INFLUENCE OF THE NEELD FAMILY

The Neeld family were the originators and participants in one of the first Wiltshire cricket clubs – Grittleton CC:



Joseph Neeld 1789-1856

Joseph Inherited £800,000 from a silversmith great uncle and bought the Manor of Grittleton. From 1832 he began the restoration of Grittleton House. He was MP for Chippenham and made many donations to local causes. He filled the house with art and antiquities but died with no heir

John Neeld 1805–1891

The brother of Joseph, John inherited the estate in 1856. He was MP for Chippenham and also lived in London. As a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to Queen Victoria He was awarded the first Baronet of Grittleton.

He was the keen instigator and spectator of cricket at Grittleton:

A portion of the park is entirely given up to the several parishes in his possession and employ, the materials supplied and every facility made for playing the noble and truly English game of cricket – Devizes and Wilts Gazette, 22 Aug 1850

Sir Algernon William Neeld 1846–1900

One of John's seven children, A. W. Neeld played for the club, making runs and taking wickets and scoring runs in an internal "Married vs Batchelor" game in 1867. He was the club chairman in the same year.

Sir Audley Dallas Neeld 1849–1941

John's son and Algernon's brother. He played in the iconic cricketing photograph game at age 19. He took 11 wickets in the game.

Inheriting the estate on his brother's death, he died aged 92 without any heir and the estate was dispersed in 1967.

The final generation of Neelds was composed of six brothers, all of whom died without a male heir. Lionel Neeld, the younger brother of Audley died in 1952. The Estate passed to one of the brother's daughters, who married Mr Inigo-Jones who was the club president in 1974. He lived at Sevington House and frequently came to watch the game sitting on seats made from remnants of the elm tree that was within the boundary until the 1970s

He did not take up the estate, but passed it to his sone Ralph, who took the name Neeld to qualify.

5. THE ALL-ROUNDER REVEREND

Cricket is a game played by a team of characters, and Grittleton is no exception.

Henry Kearney Boldero was born on March 31st, 1831 in Weymouth, Dorset. His father, Henry George, was the conservative MP for Chippenham.

He was an accomplished cricketer with 13 first class games played for Cambridge and the MCC between 1851 and 1853, recording one score of 50. He played cricket at Grittleton before going to Cambridge, scoring runs and taking 5 wickets in a victory against Foscott in 1850:

"The batting of Mr Boldero, The nephew of the wealthy liberal proprietor, was singularly beautiful and called forth the most unqualified praise from every admirer of good hitting"

After university he was ordained, returned to the area and was the vicar at Yatton Keynell between 1856-1864.

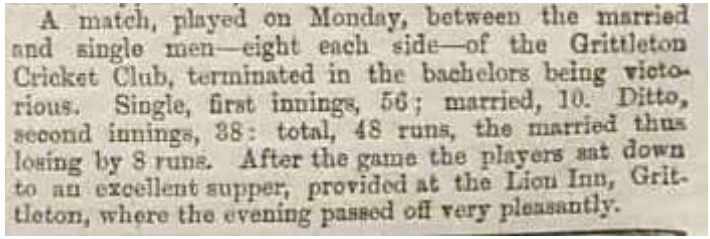
He continued to be involved in local cricket, assembling an invitational "Picked XI" that played Grittleton in 1860 and 1864, when his side won. He was closely involved with Grittleton, being the club president in 1865.

A W. Boldero, probably Henry's son, was noted as the "starter and handicapper" for the village sports event in 1894, so his family were still involved in the local sporting scene.

Henry died on February 18th, 1900, in Bath, Somerset, aged 68 years 324 days.

6. EARLY SOCIAL EVENTS & "WIND-UPS"

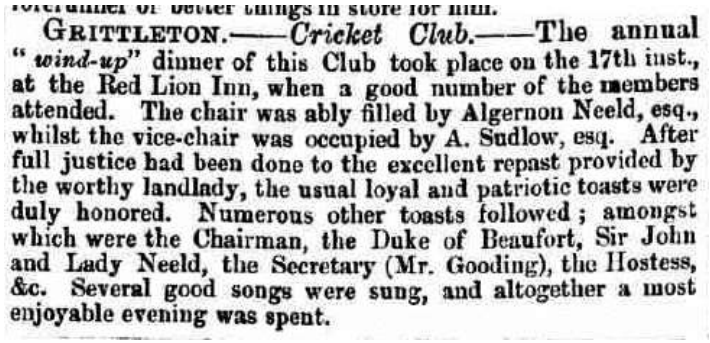
Not all the cricket at Grittleton is, or was, serious. Reports of social games include "Batchelors vs Married" club members in 1861:



A match, played on Monday, between the married and single men—eight each side—of the Grittleton Cricket Club, terminated in the bachelors being victorious. Single, first innings, 56; married, 10. Ditto, second innings, 38: total, 48 runs, the married thus losing by 8 runs. After the game the players sat down to an excellent supper, provided at the Lion Inn, Grittleton, where the evening passed off very pleasantly.

The result was not always the same:
1861: Batchelors won by 28 runs.
1866 (Single Innings) Married won by 79 runs.
1867: Bad light stopped play, a most exciting and equal game.

The end of season dinner, held in September was known as a "wind-up" dinner, for example in 1866, show the members camaraderie and respect for authority:



GRITTLETON.——*Cricket Club.*——The annual "*wind-up*" dinner of this Club took place on the 17th inst., at the Red Lion Inn, when a good number of the members attended. The chair was ably filled by Algernon Neeld, esq., whilst the vice-chair was occupied by A. Sudlow, esq. After full justice had been done to the excellent repast provided by the worthy landlady, the usual loyal and patriotic toasts were duly honored. Numerous other toasts followed; amongst which were the Chairman, the Duke of Beaufort, Sir John and Lady Neeld, the Secretary (Mr. Gooding), the Hostess, &c. Several good songs were sung, and altogether a most enjoyable evening was spent.

7. GAMES WON AND LOST, BUT MOSTLY WON.

Reports of fixtures and results between 1849 and 1955 that we have found are below. GCC were a force to be reckoned with, being a match for much larger town sides. The gap between 1868 and 1921 does not mean no cricket was played then – reports of sports days in 1890s and 1900s show cricket was alive and well during this period.

Year	Date	Opposition	Result / Notes
1849	August	Foscott	GCC won by 3 runs:
1850	August	Foscott	GCC won by 5 runs. H Boldero took 5 Wickets
1860	September	Picked 11	GCC won by 15 runs. H. Boldero top scores with 27
1864	Jun 30th	Rodbourn	Bad light stopped play: Winning draw for GCC
1864	Aug 20th	Corsham School	GCC won by 53 runs.
1864	Aug 25th	Tetbury	GCC won by 12 runs. Hunt and Swallow bowl out Tetbury in an hour for 36 runs
1865	10th August	Sir John Neeld XI	GCC lost by 57 runs. Perhaps not politic to beat the hand that feeds?
1867	27th August	Sir John Neeld XI	GCC lost by 13 runs.
1867	August	Kington Langley	GCC won by an innings
1868	August 1st	Draycott	GCC won by 120 runs. A. Light took 6 wickets
1868	August 17th	Chippenham	Abandoned due to rain, GCC having the upper hand.
1921	July 9th	Calne	GCC lost by 53 runs. Game played in mid-Wiltshire league, Calne league champions
1928	July 14th	Westinghouse and Saxby 2nds	GCC Won by 46 runs
1933	June	Sherston	GGG Won by 75 runs
1933	June	Castle Combe	GCC Lost by 7 runs - 30 runs played 23
1933	July	Lacock	GCC won by 58 runs
1933	August	Didmarton	GCC won by 16runs
1933	August	Lansdown II	No result recorded
1934	May	Langley Burrell	GCC won by 60 runs
1934	May	Sherston	GCC won by 82. Jim Hopkins scored 84, in 1933 he scored 110 in the same fixture
1934	Jun	Badminton	GCC won by 7 wickets, R. Bird mentioned in top county bowlers list for 5-38
1935	5th June	Box	GCC lost badly
1935	June	Sherston	GCC won by 1 wicket
1935	June	Langley Burrell	GCC Won by 6 wickets
1935	June	Trowbridge 2nds	No result recorded
1935	July	Chippenham 2nds	GCC Won by 71 runs
1937	September	Badminton	GCC Won by 102 runs (Badminton all out 20)
1938	July	Various	Westonbirt, Ashwick Hall, Devizes steamboats : Notice of fixtures, no results recorded
1949	July	Hullavington RAF	GCC won by 28 runs
1952	2nd August	Box	GCC won by 82 runs. A. Smith scored 114
1955	July	Westinghouse	GCC won by 42. The Hopkins family, including two county caps starred

8. INTER WAR CRICKET

The picture to the right, dated 1927, shows that cricket was very active in the inter war years. Pictured clearly in front of the familiar pavilion, The Neeld family take pride of place centre stage and are surrounded by 11 or 12 players, umpires and supporting people. The middle tier is sat on a low bench, possibly one of the ones that are still in use to this day. Helpfully, those pictured are named below the picture. Some of those pictured are mentioned in contemporary newspapers:

R.Bird was mentioned in the county honours weekly list in June 1934, Taking 5-38 vs Sherston.

Jasper Hopkins was also an all-rounder and wicket keeper, and was taken to hospital in 1932, having had the ball strike him on the back of the hand, an x-ray showing a splintered bone. He was the Sports Club Secretary. He was also a Wicket Keeper. His son, another J. Hopkins is at the back right.

Walter Woodman lived at Foxcote lodge, and had over 50 years' service on the estate, playing for the club with his brother for some 40 years, here he is taking on the role of umpire in later years.

Edward Pitney's obituary shows he was 68 at the time of this photo, was a native of Grittleton, educated at the bluecoat school and worked on the estate for 50 years. He was a keen player and became the club scorer. Captain Vivian and Jasper Hopkins attended his funeral at Grittleton.



H. CORFIELD, R. BIRD, J. HOPKINS, E. CORFIELD, W. GOUGH, A. BILLETT, J. HOPKINS,
W. WOODMAN, J DALGLEISH, ADMIRAL NEELD, LT.-COL. SIR A. D. NEELD, BT., COL. M. NEELD, C. DUNN, E. PITNEY,
R. HOPKINS, CAPT. VIVIAN, H. HULANCE, P. HULANCE.

9. MORE THAN A CRICKET FIELD

Made available for general use by the Neeld family, along with the "Red Lion" (now the Neeld Arms) the "Cricket Field" was a social centre for the village of Grittleton and the surrounding parishes. It has always been used for a variety of pursuits and activities, as well as less serious "social" games of cricket.

Bowls

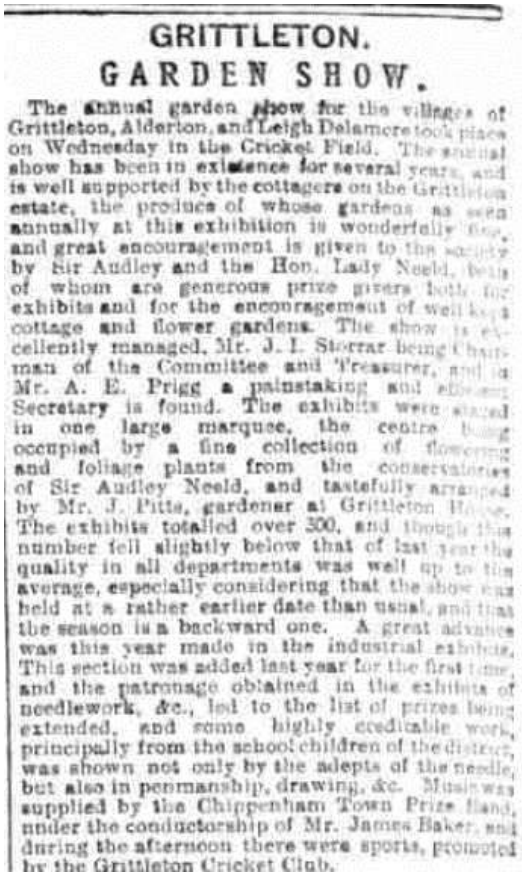
The first recorded picture of the Pavilion was on the opening of the bowling green at the top end of the green in 1914.



Another long exposure, note the blurry figures to the left, the ghostly figure at the right centre back of the group and the charming group of children to the right rear.

There is some moss on the pavilion roof, suggesting it has been there for a few years at least, so it is well over 100 years old. How many of these men did not return in 1918?

Garden Shows and Sports Exhibitions



GRITTLETON.

GARDEN SHOW.

The annual garden show for the villages of Grittleton, Alderton, and Leigh Delamere took place on Wednesday in the Cricket Field. The annual show has been in existence for several years, and is well supported by the cottagers on the Grittleton estate, the produce of whose gardens as seen annually at this exhibition is wonderfully fine, and great encouragement is given to the society by Sir Audley and the Hon. Lady Neeld, both of whom are generous prize givers both for exhibits and for the encouragement of well kept cottage and flower gardens. The show is excellently managed, Mr. J. I. Sterrar being Chairman of the Committee and Treasurer, and in Mr. A. E. Prigg a painstaking and efficient Secretary is found. The exhibits were staged in one large marquee, the centre being occupied by a fine collection of flowering and foliage plants from the conservatories of Sir Audley Neeld, and tastefully arranged by Mr. J. Pitts, gardener at Grittleton House. The exhibits totalled over 300, and though this number fell slightly below that of last year the quality in all departments was well up to the average, especially considering that the show was held at a rather earlier date than usual, and that the season is a backward one. A great advance was this year made in the industrial exhibits. This section was added last year for the first time, and the patronage obtained in the exhibits of needlework, &c., led to the list of prizes being extended, and some highly creditable work, principally from the school children of the district, was shown not only by the adepts of the needle, but also in penmanship, drawing, &c. Music was supplied by the Chippenham Town Prize Band, under the conductorship of Mr. James Baker, and during the afternoon there were sports, promoted by the Grittleton Cricket Club.

The cutting to the right from the 3rd August 1907 details the "garden show" that was a yearly event at the cricket field. Over 300 exhibits covering a wide range included vegetables, needlework, industry, school work. The clip goes on to include more detail on the prizes and sports on show: including a 2-mile races, tug of war, gymkhana, high jump, three legged, and more curious events such as "kicking the ball". As late as 1951 there were sports days and fetes held at the field, including a mixed ladies/gents "comedy" game of cricket, GCC Vs Bath Rugby, with GCC being the victors.

Hunting and Glazing

Hunting was a key part of village life, with large sections of the local papers describing the event. The groundsman in 1936 would have had more than a few hoof marks to deal with as a fox was cornered and "nailed" on the cricket field. In this period the Duke of Beaufort, the "Hunt Master", was dismissed first ball while playing for Badminton by Percy Hulance (see photo on previous page). The Duke was so enraged that he threw his bat through the glazed door of the pavilion and had to dispatch the estate glazier to make amends on the Monday.

10. CRIMINAL UMPIRING

Umpiring is an important part of the game of cricket – those who have played "village" embrace the amateur version of the art. Grittleton has produced a first class umpire – Mr. Fred Dunn, He was a county umpire in 1953/4, as reported in the clip to the right.

UMPIRED TEN MINOR COUNTIES GAMES

In his first season on the Minor Counties Cricket Championship umpires' list, Mr. Fred Dunn, of King Alfred Street, Chippenham, officiated at ten matches. Product of village cricket at Grittleton, Mr. Dunn described it as a very pleasant experience in the course of which he met a very nice lot of fellows.

His most exciting match was at the Oval between the Surrey and Lancashire second elevens, when Surrey, needing 199 runs, scored them in 100 minutes, to win by seven wickets. He found the greatest enthusiasm at Falmouth, for Cornwall's fixture with their Devon neighbours.

SOLDIER FOR TRIAL

On Theft Charge

Pte. Marvyn Welsford, 405 Coy., Royal Pioneer Corps, was on Thursday committed by Chippenham Magistrates for trial at Wiltshire Quarter Sessions at Devizes on January 5th, on charges of breaking and entering the pavilion of Grittleton Cricket Club and stealing an umpire's coat, and stealing a raincoat from a farm building. Supt. H. Edwards objected to bail, saying that accused was an absentee from his unit.

Supt. H. Edwards stated that Welsford made statements to P.C. Turner admitting breaking into the pavilion and taking an umpire's coat, in the pocket of which was a pack of playing cards. He also admitted taking the raincoat, the property of Mr. R. G. Hole, of Clapcote Farm, Grittleton, from a milking shed. Accused was arrested at St. George, Bristol.

Stanley Edwards, of Malmesbury, said he found an umpire's coat on a wall opposite his house. His bicycle was missing.

P.C. Turner said he arrested Welsford and another man in a field. He took them to a farmhouse to telephone, and while he was doing so Welsford ran away.

As reported on 25th Dec 1954 (left), the accoutrements of umpiring proved too much temptation for an absentee soldier. He had broken into the pavilion, possibly to find somewhere to get away from the weather, stealing an umpires coat and a pack of cards from the pocket. Perhaps he was looking for a disguise, but dressing as an umpire in December may not be the most effective camouflage.

Why an umpire needs a pack of cards is a mystery.

11. IN LIVING MEMORY

Ian James





Ian James first played for Grittleton in 1952 at the age of 16 (and a half), he remembers playing in the heatwave of 1976, when he was 40, and retired from the game shortly after. He was predominantly a bowler, always toiling up the hill at Grittleton, who could swing the ball both ways. His best figures were 8 wickets for 4 runs, and his highest score was 84 not out vs Nettleton.

A clipping from 1965, shown to the right, provides insight into the club characters. Grittleton easily subdued Westinghouse, with Ian taking 6-36 and Ivor Gough, who usually opened the bowling from the top end taking the other 4. The Grittleton Team sheet shows Ian being dismissed by J. Hopkins – Jim, who was pictured in the 1927 picture above, had switched to playing for Westinghouse. Reg Hopkins was "tip top" and the captain.

GRITTLETON v. WESTINGHOUSE

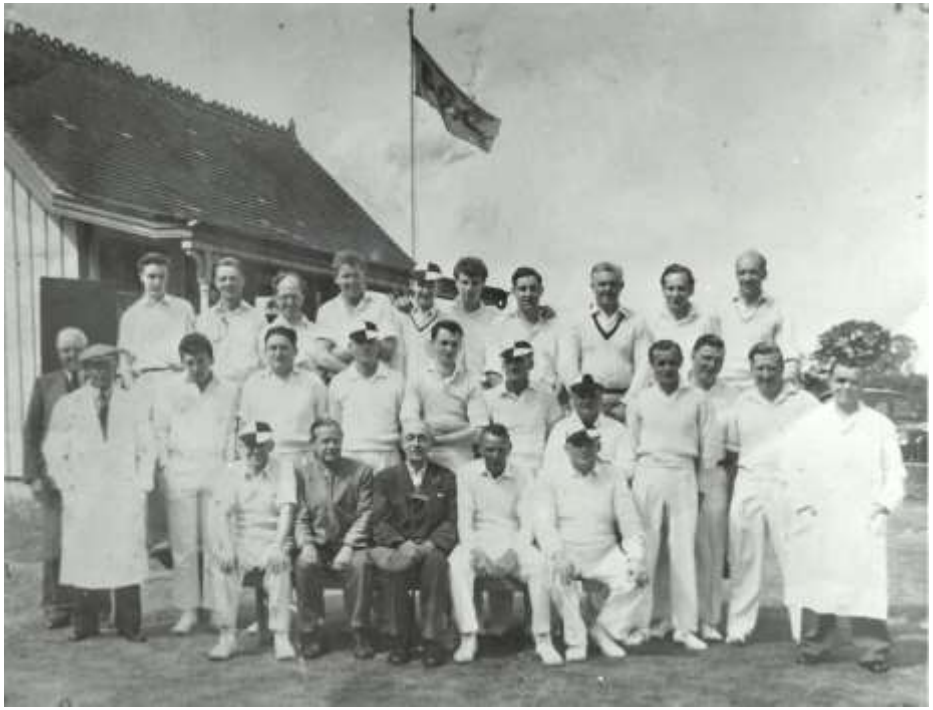
At home to Westinghouse on Sunday Grittleton won easily. Scores:

WESTINGHOUSE.—M. Pearce b Gough 14. E. Day c Talbot b Gough 16. J. Hopkins c Gough b James 5. P. King b James 4. J. Vizor c Haines b James 0. H. Clarke c Carter b Gough 11. R. Hopkins b James 4. C. Hopkins b James 0. B. Hopkins b Gough 7. R. F. Escott b James 7. R. Miles not out 0. Extras 6. Total 74. Bowling: I. James 6-36, I. Gough 4-32.

GRITTLETON.—I. Gough c Clarke b Miles 15. E. Talbot b Miles 7. E. Haines b Miles 0. I. James c J. Hopkins b R. Hopkins 12. R. Skidmore c J. Hopkins b Miles 4. L. G. Cole run out 29. L. V. Cole b R. Hopkins 10. Reg Hopkins c B. Hopkins b R. Hopkins 6. Reg Hulance not out 18. Ray Hulance c Day b Clarke 0. D. Carter c Miles b Clarke 0. Extras 14. Total 116. Bowling: R. Miles 4-23, R. Hopkins 2-5, H. Clarke 2-13.

Behind the stumps was Earnest "Bim" Talbot: a club stalwart and life member, remembered on a bench that is used at home games today. Wicket keeping duties then passed to John George from the School, and then to Adrian Shipp. Off the pitch Mr Cole was the Secretary and

Treasurer, with his two sons, Les and Lionel playing. Ian's three sons also played, Steve (who kept his bowling analysis in his head while playing) and Nick being GCC Stalwarts and Andrew playing for Chippenham. During his time Castle Combe CC closed through lack of players and merged with GCC, bringing with it the Swan family, Graham, Gordon and Geoff. Ron Skidmore, who is remembered by Richard Ellison, GCC's England player, was a good batsman. Peter Moore was a good batsman and captain. Ian captained for a short period.



GCC in the early 1950's. Back row: (left to right) No1: Vic Cole in the suit. No 3 Gordon Hulance. No 7 Colin Hopkins. No 8 Les Cole. No 9 Jeff Swan. No 10 Ivor Gough. Middle row: No 1Ted Hulance. No 9 Colin House.no10 Jeff Smith. No 11 Bernie House. Front row: No3 Jasper Hopkins No 4 Bim Talbot

Ian remembers the Grittleton pitch as being soft, with an elm tree that counted as two runs towards the bottom within the boundary – there is a hollow there to this day. Dutch elm disease did for the tree in 1978 and hitting the remaining stump then scored 4.

Boundaries were longer than today – he remembers Ivor Gough hitting the ball over the wall into the road, a huge hit. He can remember taking a great catch at fine leg and bowling as many as 16 overs in a game. The square was wider than today, with 12 pitches compared to the current 7 as Nettleton played there on Saturdays on the "Hullavington" side of the square. As today, teas were a highlight of the game - especially the currant buns - usually supplied by Mrs Cole and Mrs Hopkins. Mrs Cole was famous for not starting sandwich preparation before the first ball was bowled.



GCC in the late 1950's. Back row (left to right): Mr. Gough. Bob Hopkins. Lionel Cole. Jeff Smith. Stan Chivers. Bim Talbot. Ivor Gough. Dickie Cole. Ted Hulance. Front: Ian James. Ray Hulance. Reg Hulance. Les Cole. Percy Hulance.

Games were on Saturdays and Sundays, always friendly and timed: "You had to get them all out", "no sledging", LBWs had to be plum to be given. Flints coaches were used to transport the team to away games, such as at Brislington. He remembers playing at Seagry, RAF Hullavington, Corsham and Lacock, and especially Nettleton, which was the "needle match" made more interesting by the cow pats in the outfield and their trigger umpire. He does remember evening fixtures Vs Chippenham that were limited overs. Club dinners were held upstairs in the pub, but it was unusual to visit the Neeld Arms after a game. The club did not regularly tour.

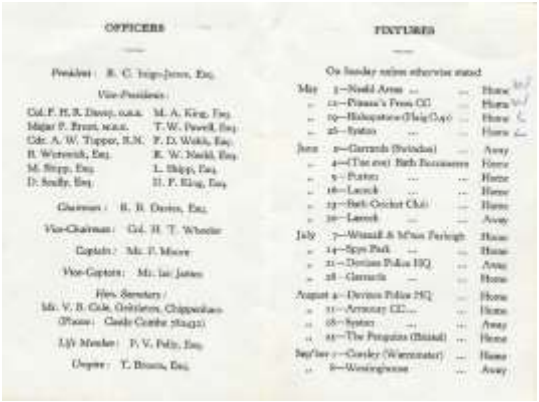
He remembers playing with Pete Hamilton, who still plays for the Neeld Arms side. Dave Madders hit sixes rather than defended and John Wilding "put the bat to ball and didn't hang about". All these gentlemen can be seen in the Neeld today.

John Wilding



John played from 1972, enjoying the friendly nature of the club and has never officially retired, still turning out for the Neeld arms as Umpire to this day. He has been Chairman and President and is a life member of the club. He found a 1974 fixture card:




OFFICERS

FIXTURES

It shows a set of friendly fixtures including Westinghouse seconds and Warwick Castle, a touring team from London. The Landlord of the Neeld Arms, David King, famous for playing a Hammond organ in the back bar to signal time, was keen on cricket and organised a yearly fixture. In this case a commemorative plate, still seen in the pavilion, was cast, with a fake GCC team, as the then secretary, Dicky Cole would not release the team list. Dicky was reputedly only the 3rd Secretary of the club, living in the reading room in Grittleton. He had clocked up 45 years and was also treasurer at the time of the club AGM in April 1979. The club decided to elect another treasurer and leave him to reach his half century as secretary. He was very upset and tragically died that very same night. He is buried in the Grittleton Churchyard. This event was a watershed for the club, upsetting many of the club and causing a dip in membership.

When Dicky's Widow moved out of the reading room in the early 1980s it was sold, and the proceeds invested. The resulting interest generated the income to purchase the Cricket Ground from the estate, securing it for the village. The capital was merged with the sale of the old village hall to build the existing village hall.

John's early captains in the seventies were Peter Moore who taught at Grittleton House and was a good left handed bat who preceded Ian James. Ian was followed by Chris Bird who lived in Stanton St. Qunitin and is now lives in Calne.

Inigo Jones, GCC President in 1974, was referred to as the "Old Squire" who refused the inheritance of the Neeld Estate in preference to his son Ralph Neeld – see the section on the Neelds.

A favourite fixture was Devizes Police away, where the hard wicket and subsidised bar resulted in a good team following. The club had some success in the Haig national village cup. Unbeknownst to the players, Haig donated a bottle of whiskey to the club, which Dicky Cole reserved for his own use.

The groundwork was overseen by Joe Broom, who also scored. Joe had a habit of supervising Pete Hamilton while he stood by having a smoke. Joe was well known for his affinity for drink, so the state of the pitch depended on how many he had had the previous night.
John remembers the club being an early member of the Malmesbury Village League (MVL) that they joined in the early 1980s. The original MVL was made up of 6 local village teams. Village cricket is often eventful – during one game against Charlton Geoff Start gave someone out and the player chased him with his bat around the boundary. Thankfully, Geoff was faster. During a game at Westonbirt, whose pitch was adjacent to the arboretum, Adrian Shipp was keeping and controversially accused by an elderly umpire of taking the ball in front of the stumps, a technical no ball.

GCC began to tour again in the 1980s. The picture below is from a tour to Dorset that John attended.



GCC on tour to Dorset, Wareham and Swanage in 1987 or 1988.
Back row (L-R)): *Roy Kilfoil, Julian Shipp, Edward Wilding, Nick James, Geoff Stuart, Steve Thompsett?. Front: Adrian Shipp, Andrew James, Phil Rawlings, Matt Newman, Alastair Kilfoil, John Wilding.*

On the way home from this tour, GCC played Blandford town. Blandford expected a team of yokels and did not account for tour ringers, Steve Thompsett and Andrew James whose bowling reduced them to 4 for 9. The bowling was relaxed, much to the annoyance of Andrew James, who returned a ball to Shippy that went for 6 overthrows. GCC played hard off the pitch, with the "wibbly wobbly" drinking game eventually resulting in Phil Rawlings (Captain) breaking his arm.
Dinners started again in the mid-80s when they were held in the Grey Lady, at Grittleton House. Ex-professional cricket speakers included Hugh Morris (Glamorgan and England), Nigel Briers (Leics), Richard Ellison (England and Grittleton), Bryan "Bomber" Wells (Gloucs).

Adrian Shipp became a key member of the club in the 80s, taking up cricket after a car accident stopped him playing hockey. His sons, teamed with Ian James's, the Wildings, The Kings, The Randolphs and The Runacres could form a very strong team, all from within the village.

The strength led Grittleton to join the Wiltshire leagues. GCC entered division 6 in 1987, topping the division in their first year. Brian Roberts topped the league batting with an average of 48.7, including 146 against Langley Burrell, one of the highest individual scores in the entire league. Al. Kilfoil was second in the league with an average of 38. Julian Shipp also got a mention for his 136* vs Buscott Park.

In the same year GCC also topped the bowling in division 6 with Steve James in 1st place (44wkts @7.27, best 6/16) and Al. Kilfoil in 5th place (24@9.58). GCC posted the highest score in the league that year - 352/5 vs Langley Burrell.

This dominance continued up through the leagues to league 2 in 1991. Individually Steve James came 2nd in the second division bowling averages in 1992 (44@9.5, best 8/66) and 1993 (39@10.7, best 6/24).

Julian Shipp topped the Division 3 batting averages in 1990 with an average of 53, he also achieved this in 1993 in Division 2, with an average of 42 and top score of 140 not out. Nick James, Geoff Start, Brian Roberts, Kevin Pearce and Alex Shipp frequently made it into the yearbook.

Year	Div	Result	Pld	Won	Tied	Captain
1987	6	1	15	13	0	Alex Shipp
1988	5	2	14	12	0	Alex Shipp
1989	4	2	16	12	0	Alex Shipp
1990	3	1	18	14	0	Alex Shipp
1991	2	4	17	11	0	Philip Rawlins
1992	2	3	14	12	0	Matt Newman
1993	2	3	17	10	1	Matt Newman
1994	2	8	15	5	1	Al Kilfoil
1995	2	9	16	4	0	Al Kilfoil
1996	4	7	18	7	0	Al Kilfoil
1997	4	7	13	4	0	Adrian Shipp

Grittleton CC First Team Wiltshire League Statistics

Behind the stumps Adrian Shipp topped the division 4 and 3 keeping stats in 1989 and 1990 with 21 and 17 dismissals, unusually stumping more than catching. Alex Shipp topped the catching averages in 1988 (14) and 1989 (9). Julian Shipp topped the league 2 catching averages in 1992(12).

GCC attracted players and was able to field a second team in the lower divisions between 1990-1995.

Year	Div	Result	Pld	Won	Captain
1990	7	4	14	8	Viv Beresford
1991	7	3	11	?	Peter Moore
1992	6	6	14	4	Peter Moore
1993	7	10	16	2	Kevin Pearce
1994	"B"	4	14	9	Kevin Pearce
1995	"B"	4	15	8	Kevin Pearce

Grittleton CC Second Team Wiltshire League Statistics

In 1995-6 the club lost players and fielded a single team and dropped two leagues, exiting the league in 1998 mid-season when it became impossible to raise a team on a Saturday.



GCC at home in the 1990s.
Back row (L-R): Al. Mclean, Al Shipp, Brian Bottomley, ?, Adrian Shipp, Tim Craddock. Front Row (L-R) Chris Russell, Mark Wheeler, Al. Kilfoil, Tony Wheeler, Pete Wheeler.

12. GCC's England player.

Every cricket club worth its salt has had an England Player in its ranks at some point, and GCC is no exception. Richard Ellison remembers playing at Grittleton in his teens during the early 1970s, and has kindly revealed to us some of his memories of playing at Grittleton:

I have 3 memories; the splinters you could pick up from the changing room floor, scoring a decidedly dodgy 13 in a ridiculous amount of time at a ground near Swindon and running out Ron Skidmore who was not best pleased with the calling from a snotty 13-year-old. Riding to home matches with my kit bag on my back also reminds me of my days at the club.

John Wilding remembers taking Richard to away matches, and how his bowling talent was evident in his early teens. He was also very difficult to get out as a batsman.

Cricinfo's description of Richard's first-class career:

A solidly built swing bowler who had been a fine schoolboy player, Richard Ellison made his Test debut (alongside Jonathan Agnew) in the 1984 Oval Test. He took five wickets but couldn't stop West Indies pulling off their historic 5-0 "blackwash". The following year Ellison was recalled for the fifth Ashes Test against Australia, at Edgbaston, and this time it was a different story: curly mop bobbing as he jinked in, he claimed ten wickets in the match, three of them on a delirious fourth evening as Australia crumbled to 37 for 5. The key wicket was Allan Border, who stretched forward but was befuddled by Ellison's late breakback. The ball just clipped the bails, and the danger man was gone. But Ellison lacked the pace to be as dangerous overseas, and also lacked the fitness to be as effective in England again. He missed the whole of the 1987 season with injury but bounced back with 71 county wickets for Kent in 1988. However, England never called again.



Richard Ellison is congratulated by his England team mates having just taken the wicket of Allan Border, the Australian captain, during the fifth Ashes test in 1985.

Richard Ellison – Statistics

Batting	Mat	Balls	Wkts	Best	BBM	Ave	Econ	5WI
Tests	11	2264	35	6/77	10/104	29.94	2.77	3
ODIs	14	696	12	3/42	3/42	42.50	4.39	0
First Class	207	30046	475	7/22		28.99	2.75	18

Bowling	Mat	Inns	Runs	HS	Av	SR
Tests	11	16	202	41	13.46	28.13
ODIs	14	12	86	24	10.75	78.18
First Class	207	284	5046	110	23.80	

13. 21ST CENTURY GCC

In 2000 GCC had reduced to a single Sunday team that played in the Malmesbury Village League – the MVL - and some 20:20 evening fixtures and friendly fixtures filled in a busy calendar. Like today (2018), Grittleton was made up of a core of strong players augmented with a large bank of occasional players.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s the ability of players to play on both Saturday and Sunday reduced, and very few new players emerged. Grittleton withdrew from the Wiltshire league and concentrated on Sundays in the MVL. Under the chairmanship of David Randolph, the transition from league to village friendlies was undertaken with care – the club remained solvent, was inclusive, and had enough critical mass to keep playing.

Key players in this time included the likes of Huw Williams, Richard Dunn, Alastair Kilfoil, Viv Beresford, Chris Russell, Kevin Pearce with Mark Webb as captain and keeper. Kevin and Chris did stints looking after the square. Adrian Shipp had the machinery and commitment to cut the outfield. The MVL suited the club and GCC usually challenged for the title. For example, in 2002 GCC Played 18, Won 13, Drew 1 and lost 4, with Richard Dunn winning the bowling prize and Al. Kilfoil the batting prize with an average of 38. The 2006 needle match was against Hawkesbury Upton: a very close final game of the season deciding the league winner. The game moved Nigel Payne to write the "Ballard of GCC" that is shown in the next section.

The tradition of the Cricket Club vs the Neeld House, this time the public house rather than the private estate, started again in 2005 as a Sunday game and became the President's game when Charlie West took on the post in 2006. This game became a hotly contested affair, with the Neeld/President's XI never beating the Club to this day. despite the publican's best efforts to enlist league and ex-county players, for example Chris Taylor (Gloucs).



GCC away at Swindon Civil Service, August 2003.Back (L-R), Huw Williams, Paul Runacres, Ed Blight, Q Grandison, Richard Saull, Mark Webb, Al. Kilfoil, Andrew Inchley. Front Row, Brian Bottomley, Viv. Beresford, Chris Russell.

In 2006, under the chairmanship of Edward King, the club undertook significant fundraising and built an extension to the rear of the pavilion to add spacious changing rooms and showers.

The period 2005-2010 saw more town sides joining the MVL and Grittleton found itself playing games on better pitches against a different sort of opposition in a competition that was organised into leagues. In 2010 Grittleton took the decision to leave the league and seek like-minded friendly opposition. 2011 saw the club go on tour, to Devon, for the first time for 10 years. The club has toured every year since.

Recent years has seen village cricket suffer a decline, with many local sides merging or folding due to lack of players or core membership. GCC teetered on the edge of joining this decline in 2013/14 but the club core members were determined not to allow the tradition of cricket at Grittleton to break. Mark Webb, Andrew Carrington, Anthony Josey and Richard Saull have been committee members for ten years and used connections and modern communications to maintain a large cadre of players. The club insists on being inclusive, without losing the will to win, and has attracted many local players who cannot commit to weekly league cricket. In this period the club took on the cutting of the outfield and worked with the village hall trustees to raise funds and maintain the pavilion, with a major renovation in 2016.



Since 2010, a second team has emerged in the village: a Neeld Arms XI. Using the cricket field as their home, they play mostly 20:20 evening games against local pub, young farmers and other social sides. The ground is also used by a range of other players and sides, with the net facilities available as a community resource.

Neeld Arms XI in 2016: Front, Pete Hamilton, Next row: Martin Kelly, James Gay, Neil Saint, Chris Taylor, Hugh Roche, back row: AA, Charlie West (With Cup), Matt Delargy. At Rear, Matt's Brother in law, Pete, Bruce Urquhart, Pete White.

On the field the club is always competitive, though more games have been lost than won since 2015. Games are played on Sundays and are usually 40 overs with a few evening 20 over games in mid-summer. Teas are provided by the players, with a coveted "best teas" award ensuring high quality.



Some of GCC in 2017: Left to Right: Richard Saull, Andrew Carrington, Edward Daly, Andrew Jones, Anthony Josey, Rob Ward (c), Julian Howgill, Graham Perkins, Mark Webb, Peter Cross.

GCC recognises those who have played an important role in developing and maintaining the club as life members. Current life members of the club are Adrian Shipp, Edward King, David Randolph, Vivian Beresford, Kevin Pearce, Richard Saull and John Wilding.

In 2016, Veronica Stokes, the granddaughter of former GCC secretary Richard (Dickie) Cole, donated a cup, last awarded in 1939 and kept by Dickie Cole for safekeeping during the war. It is the Vivian Cup – although its history is unclear, a Captain Vivian is pictured in the club photograph of 1927 (see page 8). The club now presents the Vivian cup to the "players player of the year", a fitting connection with the past of over 100 years.

14. THE BALLARD OF GRITTLETON CRICKET CLUB

Penned by Nigel Payne, this is a gripping account of the Malmesbury village league decider in 2006 vs Hawkesbury Upton, a game that all who played in will remember well.

In the annals of sport there is many a story,
Of deeds of defiance but defeat close to glory,
This was the prospect for Grittleton cricket,
As the toss against Hawkesbury took place at the wicket.

The first Captain Webb, and this is no flannel,
Was a Victorian chap, who first swam the Channel,
So we have a leader, who is famous of name,
Despite losing the toss, he thought we'd win the game.

Prospects were grim as we lost Chris, our star,
Bowled by a yorker as fast as Viv's car,
Steady progress was halted when Mark was out too,
But George B and Hughie both made quite a few.

An unfortunate run out as wickets kept falling,
It was nothing to do with Huw's lack of calling,
Wayne played some fine shots, including a six,
But then missed a slow one to stir up the mix.

Micky got a shooter; Nigel drove a straight six,
The Hawkesbury spinners tried all sorts of tricks,
Quick singles were scampered, the scoreboard ticked up,
But was it enough to win us the cup?

Al tickled, Lurch slogged as to a target we inch,
Not enough and Hawkesbury the title could pinch,
Despite Brian's best efforts our innings was done,
No quarter was given in this duel in the sun!

The tea was delicious but few could still eat,
The tough nuts of Hawkesbury still had to be beat,
Resuming the field, Captain Mark spoke out well,
When bowling or fielding give these fellows, hell!

Their openers were solid if lacking in flair,
So Chris pounded in and gave both a stare,
Time after time they failed to connect,
As Dunny bowled well, just as you'd expect.

George stormed in again and got the break through,
Chris caught a skier as Wayne made it two,
One batter kept scoring; we kept dropping his catches,
Five times we forgot that catches win matches.

Their score was increasing; the pressure was rising,
With the league up for grabs this was hardly surprising,
Occasional fours and occasional wickets,
The crowd got so large that we should have sold tickets!

Enter a hero as Huw started bowling,
Just like a magician as per J K Rowling,
Six wickets later their batting was shattered,
Just as their eardrums by Mickey were battered!
But the game was not over as one batsman stayed,
Could we still lose it now despite how well we'd played?
Seven runs to win and one wicket remaining,
Surely now was the payoff for all our hard training.

A loud snick to the keeper; Mark dives down to take,
But their "blind and deaf" umpires no signal would make!
The tension is now quite unbearably high,
Last over begins with a lucky leg bye.

With three needed to win, the ball is hit high,
Could be six or a four as it falls from the sky,
Eyes turn to see who is under the catch,
George pouches it calmly and we've won the match!

Cue Mickey to scream at the departing bat,
"Are you effing sure that you effing hit that?"
Next off to the Neeld to empty a barrel,
Toasting the health of a hedgehog named Darrel!

In the annals of sport there is many a story,
Of deeds of brave play and skill bringing glory,
All are untrue of the team aptly called Gritt,
But as we're the champions we don't give a ….
damn.

15. THE NEXT 150 YEARS OF CRICKET AT GRITTLETON?

The ambience of the Grittleton Cricket Field makes it a great place to play cricket: it is admired by all who play there, whether as a familiar home ground or visitor.

Cricket is a part of Grittleton and as well as enjoying the noble and truly English sport the current generation of players respect their duty to the considerable history and legacy of those who have played before.

The location suffers from not having the Estate resources that saw it maintained for the first 100 years, the iconic pavilion needs frequent attention to repair the wooden fabric, the northern stone wall is not complete and many of the mature trees are coming to the end of their life. However, the club and village work together to maintain the site so that it does justice to the history and is a fun place to play cricket and other sports.

We hope the sound of Cricket will be heard there for another 150 years, whether league, friendly or social.



Cricket at Grittleton painted by Milli Inchley, the wife of Andrew “Binary” Inchley, who played for GCC in 1990 and 2000’s