



# SEAXE NEWS

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**Summer 2020**

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## SEAXE AND WHAT IT MEANS

**Mike O'Farrell**

It has been an illuminating and humbling experience to be a part of this “club within a club” as chairman and really appreciate the passion and interest aroused by this game we all love. However what is different about Seaxe members is their knowledge of the game, its history and its players and perhaps most significantly the development of young players through funding of Colts cricket ,support for initiatives like AllStars cricket and the bursary programme.

There have been many interesting moments during my tenure ,the occasional exchange with members about the performance of the side or individuals, the over rate, the price of beer in the bars and other similar issues ! But ...there also has been the Christmas events, the 50 year celebrations,

the awards evenings where future stars were seen for the first time in a formal setting and where the entire 1<sup>st</sup> squad would come to support the Seaxe efforts and share in the excitement

Being part of Seaxe also means working with a committed and enthusiastic group of volunteers at committee level and in the box to ensure that as much as possible can be done for Seaxe members and to help those young people who have sporting potential but no resource to find a way forward.

As I write this, the ECB have advised us that there will be Test matches and that domestic professional cricket will start in some format in August, but we have had several false starts, so I am waiting to see a fully -formed schedule before getting too excited. This period has been very demanding with numerous video-



*Mike O'Farrell*

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conferencing sessions ( it would be wonderful to sit at a table for an informal conversation, picking up the body language and asides from those present !) and I am very grateful for the commitment of all our players and the staff at Middlesex Cricket during this testing time.

Finally thank you all for your tolerance and patience and your willingness to offer your views about the game which WILL continue, and let's share a glass or cup of coffee, depending on your preference, as we have in the past when we go through the Grace Gates for that first home game.

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### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

#### Glen Birkwood

First of all, may I take this opportunity on behalf of the membership, to thank Mike O'Farrell for all his hard work as our Chairman, and I hope we will have the chance in the not too distant future, to thank him in the time honoured way. I am very pleased to say that Mike has agreed to stay on the Seaxe committee thereby maintaining a strong connection with the Middlesex Board.

I deem it to be a great honour to have been designated as the new Chairman of the Seaxe Club, I will do my very upmost to uphold the high standards set before me, and I hope this meets with your approval?



*Glen Birkwood*

What a way to start my Chairmanship - no cricket - no AGM - no box reception - no Committee meetings - no Awards Evening - no Middlesex Office!! Nevertheless we cannot sit still, and so we are now looking to have a presence on social media to create an awareness of our aims, ambitions and hopefully increase our membership; Keith Macrae has been tasked with this development which should result in a Seaxe Club Facebook Group.

You will see in this edition an update from Sharon Evers on the All Stars Cricket programme and the new addition, Dynamo Cricket. I am hoping, with approval from the committee, that because of the lack of bursary opportunities this year, to use the monies allocated for such and increase our financial support for these worthwhile and important endeavours.

My thanks go to Russell Grant for his contribution, a more passionate Middlesex man you would be hard pushed to find.

It is my fondest wish that we can still hold our Awards evening at some stage this year, but that of course is all dependent upon social distancing restrictions.

Our award winners have all received their vouchers and have had their names engraved upon the relevant trophies; but they have yet to experience the pleasure of receiving their awards from their peers and our own cricketing legends. What will happen about this year's nominees/winners all depends on how much cricket is played!

Some people curse "modern technology" but never has it been more important than now in enabling us to communicate with each other. That is why it is vital we have your email address and that we are kept informed of any changes.

I hope you enjoy reading this albeit brief, edition of the Seaxe News that I've managed to cobble together.

Stay safe, stay sane and let's look forward hopefully, to some cricket and each others' company ere long!.

***Glen Birkwood***  
***Chairman Seaxe Club***

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### **A BRIEF INTRODUCTION FOR THE SEAXE CLUB**

#### **Maria Holloway**

Having left her native Brazil to move to England in 1989, Maria has wholeheartedly embraced her new home's sporting traditions, She became an enthusiastic cricket spectator, after being introduced to the sport in 2002.

Maria joined Middlesex Club as well as the MCC as an Associate Member in 2008. Living in London has given her the opportunity to enjoy both the county and international cricket played at Lord's. Maria is an avid spectator of Middlesex games at Lord's, whenever her work and her travel for work allows for it. Maria joined the Seaxe Club in 2011.



*Maria Holloway*

Maria has worked in the International Development Sector most of her adult life, travelling extensively across Africa. She trained as social worker, and has also taught Portuguese as a language teacher. In her current role, Maria works with an international development research and training thinktank, as a researcher.

In her spare time, Maria helps walk dogs for the blind and is a member of Merton community panel.

We are pleased to say that Maria has agreed to be co-opted onto the Seaxe committee where we believe she will be a great asset.

***Glen Birkwood***

## **SEAXE NEWS**

### **THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX**

In 1987 the receipt of a letter from 10 Downing Street confirming that the axing of Middlesex County Council (created 1889), did NOT affect in any way the existence of our County of Middlesex (first documented AD704) and began a drive and impetus in promoting the truth about Middlesex.

The County's name had suffered, some unhelpful local authorities (that replaced the County Council), did their best to airbrush out their Middlesex roots. The uninformed media brainwashed those not in the know with what we would now call "fake news" that Middlesex did not exist in ANY form.

The following year 1988, we needed a date for Middlesex Day, and following a poll of members of the predecessor to Middlesex Heritage (Friends of the County of Middlesex), it was decided to connect to the date of the Middlesex Regiment and their heroic stand at the Battle of Albuhera on the 16th May 1811. This date has continued to be a double celebration of the County and its Regiment.

Thank you for your support in helping to gain renewed official recognition for a county that is an integral part, and indeed older than, the Kingdom of England and Great Britain too. Keep blasting the myth that the abolition of the 76 year old Middlesex County Council was the abolition of the County of Middlesex which is over 13 centuries old, when it was NOT.

Encourage people to put Middlesex in their address. Spelthorne borough might be in Surrey County Council but it is NOT in the County of Surrey, Potters Bar and South Mimms may be under Herts County Council but are NOT in the County of Herts. County Councils and Counties are two very different things and one should not be confused with the other.

***Russell Grant***

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### **A SENIOR UPDATE**

**Alan Coleman**

When we left Oman on the evening of Sunday 15th March little did we know it would be months before seeing each other in the flesh again, let alone be playing any cricket.

The world of video calls has become the new normal, and our Science and Medical team have done a fantastic job in providing an array of optional training activities for the players to take part in.

It's been a challenge from a planning perspective, especially with no fixed target date for when we might get back as a group. Several plans have been

created, adapted, ripped up and then rewritten, but whenever we are given the green light to return to training I'm certain we'll be prepared. This is especially important for the fast bowling group, whose programmes are carefully planned with gradual increments of their bowling overs in the lead up to competitive games.

I count myself very lucky that I have been "unfurloughed" to work with Tom Helm, while as it stands the rest of the professional cricket staff remain on the scheme, and are awaiting a date to return to work.



*Alan Coleman*

Tom, who is part of the England training group, and I, currently commute to The Oval 3 times a week to complete his training programme. Surrey have done a fantastic job in setting up The Oval as an environment where cricket activity can safely take place, and I know that Angus, Lorraine Poole and the medical team are currently working extremely hard to enable Radlett CC to open up soon as our training base.

To their credit, Surrey have laid on some great facilities that we have been able to benefit from, and we are hugely grateful to Alec Stewart and his team for this opportunity (I bet it's not often those words have been written in the Seaxe News!).

Tom has returned to training in great shape, and really has hit the ground running. He has worked incredibly hard over the last winter after some shoulder issues last season, and has managed to maintain the progress he made in Oman despite not being able to formally train for the last few months.

Hopefully the other members of the squad will be back to join us soon, and we will have some cricket to look forward to. In the meantime, I wish all Seaxe Club members well and I'm sure I speak for everyone when I say that we hope to see you at a game soon.

***Alan Coleman***

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### WHAT HAVE THE ACADEMY BOYS BEEN UP TO IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS

It is very difficult to comprehend that here we are in June and we still haven't seen a ball bowled or a boundary struck. It has been a very challenging few months for the whole country, and one that has required us to adapt to the new norm of online activity. Whilst these few months have been challenging and frustrating for the players, due to them not being able to get outside and practice/play, it has however allowed us to spend more time focusing on other areas. The academy boys have been able to access around four sessions a week, with a mixture of physical and cricket online sessions. The online physical sessions (home gym, yoga, core, mobility sessions) as well as some outdoor independent running sessions where the players see how they fair against each other in a leaderboard challenge. The cricket sessions have covered a wide range of topics with the areas covered being mainly tactical with some examples being different phases of games, field settings, psychological and nutrition. We have also been able to do a number of Q&A with current professional staff players who have kindly volunteered their time to answer the academy players questions. All things considered and within the restrictions of what we have been able to do, it has been an enjoyable challenge and one that the players have still developed even though they couldn't hit or bowl any balls.



*Rory Coutts coaching.*

### IS THERE ANY UPDATE ON RETURN TO PLAY FOR ACADEMY AND YOUTH CRICKET

At this stage there is no date for any youth return to playing, the boys are able to train recreationally at their clubs, but all Academy and County Youth Cricket remains on hold. With things changing by the week and the country adapting to the changes, we are all hopeful that we will see an update which gives us more clarity on a return date. We as a club want to play and to maximise any available time we can once we have been given the green light to do so in line with the Government and ECB regulations.

## **WHAT WILL THE SELECTIONS FOR THE ACADEMY AND YOUTH CRICKETERS LOOK LIKE IF VERY LITTLE/NO CRICKET IS PLAYED?**

At this point it is difficult to think too far ahead, like I mentioned earlier, the situation is changing weekly and our intention is to maximise whatever time we get. It is only June now, so it is important not to write off the summer just yet, but be ready to take advantage of whatever time we get in order to continue the development of all our young players.

**Rory Coutts**  
**Head of Youth Cricket**

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### **ALL STARS CRICKET & DYNAMOS**

**Sharon Evers**

Let us have a quick reminder about last year, 2019 was a great year with 3,124 children taking part in All Stars Cricket across Middlesex with 858 of them receiving a free place due to the generosity of Seaxe Club supporters. We managed to raise £30,030 with £5,000 being donated by you, so again thank you for your kind support and making a difference for this young people.

The 2020 season would have seen us move in to our fourth year of All Stars Cricket and the launch of the new programme Dynamos Cricket which is aimed for 9 - 11 year olds and very much focussed around match-play. This was to be the perfect next stage of delivery for all those All Stars Cricket children and also a great introduction to cricket to any new young people who may not have taken part in All Stars Cricket or club cricket before. Targets for 2020 to tie in with ECB's Inspiring Generations strategy was to have 87 All Stars Cricket Centres reaching a target of 3,700 young people with the aim of providing a minimum of 1,200 free places for disadvantaged children. For Dynamos, the target was to introduce 30 new centres reaching a target of 600 young people. This gave us a fund-raising target of £42,000.00. We were pleased to see that by the beginning of March, we had 89 centres signed up for All Stars Cricket and 51 centres for Dynamos, meaning first targets were reached, then tragically the Country went into lockdown and the next stage of fundraising and recruitment came to an abrupt end.

We already know that there are many children living in Middlesex below the poverty line, and now the Children's Commissioner has stated it will be years before we fully understand the human, social and economic consequences of the current Coronavirus crisis, with new and distressing stories of hardship. State and the Charitable sector are stretched in their support to meet basic needs. Campaigners are warning that this pandemic will lead to a rise of those in need.

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When cricket can return safely, we want to be ready to welcome these families and for cricket to play its part in supporting children to become or remain active. Securing funding will be even tougher than before, but we are exploring multiple avenues to ensure that barriers are removed from children and that cricket remains a sport of all young people.

*Sharon Eyers.*



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## BEHIND THE SCENES

### Katie Berry

I first started working for Middlesex Cricket in 2001 via a joint project with Capital Kids Cricket (CKC), a cricket charity that provided opportunities for inner city children. My role as a Community Coach was to; increase the number of state schools playing cricket in the Middlesex boroughs of East London, to form new community cricket clubs in those boroughs and to support talented young people to access the Middlesex pathway. I left this role a couple of years later to take up a full time Coordinator role with CKC to lead the charity through a difficult transition period.

Feeling the pull of the Club, I returned to Middlesex to take up a Cricket Development Manager role with the then Middlesex Cricket Board (MCB). In 2012, I was promoted to Director of Development for the MCB and in 2016 transitioned to my current role as Director of Participation & Safeguarding with the Club.



Now that participation and recreational cricket responsibilities are part of an integrated Middlesex Cricket strategy, my role is to work across the club to ensure cricket reaches out and supports as many people as possible in the county of Middlesex, be that as a participant, volunteer or fan. I am fortunate to lead nineteen talented members of the Participation Team who deliver over forty participation programmes that focus on youth development, inclusion & diversity and wellbeing programmes across the 17 London Boroughs of Middlesex, as well as supporting our network of clubs and our invaluable volunteers that make the game safe and vibrant for all.



*Katie Berry*

I truly believe sport can unlock potential and change peoples lives for the better, this is what drives me to break down participation barriers for people to get involved with cricket. Being able to take part in sport should not be a postcode lottery and thanks to the support of the Seaxe members, we have provided opportunities for girls to play localised structured cricket for the past seven years that has now formed into a county wide league, fully incorporated into the Middlesex Junior Cricket League (previously MCA) alongside the boys leagues, but proudly retaining the Seaxe name. You have also recently supported hundreds of disadvantage children to access the national cricket programme All Stars Cricket and help spark a lifelong connection to the game. Working with delivery partners, funders, and supporters to raise awareness of these barriers and delivery solutions is a crucial part of my role.

My biggest challenge remains dispelling the perception that cricket is only for the few, cricket can be a sport for many, even if you don't like playing or watching the game, I have seen first hand how the spirit of the game can be a vehicle for meaningful social change. As we emerge together out of this pandemic, I believe the Middlesex family will reach out to more people across London and the surrounding areas, to help people reconnect with others, achieve their potential and enjoy what our game can offer.

As we look with hope to the day county cricket can return, please do come and say hello to me and the wider Participation Team, particularly our Apprentices – talking to you will help them on their learning journeys, by helping them understand what the club and the game means to you. You will find them around the grounds in their Middlesex kit, delivering activation programmes at home matches via Pinky's Pavilion.

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### OUR YOUNG PLAYERS DURING LOCKDOWN

#### LUKE HOLLMAN - as of the 3rd June 2020

The County has been excellent and have set up daily morning sessions where we are able via Zoom, to do structured gym work, Pilates or yoga; all voluntary due to furlough.

To supplement this I am also running and cycling as well, and this is keeping me busy throughout the weeks. It's nice to have a bit of a routine again. I had never really cycled that much, but I've borrowed my dad's bike and slowly increasing the distances each ride. Living close to central London I've really enjoyed getting safely around the virtually deserted streets, and could get up to respectable speeds on some straight and flat roads. I've also been going around some grounds such as Lord's and The Oval; but where it really hurts is seeing the club grounds like North Middlesex on gloriously sunny idyllic days and the groundsman working on an otherwise pristine ground. To see the ground empty on a match day has been a massive wrench.

Since lockdown relaxation, there has been an increase in activity, and I have got out and about playing some golf as well, which has been nice and a good time killer. I do really fear that having lost our prime early season that so many youngsters at the amateur level may drift away from the game. However, it could also massively rejuvenate and make them realise how much they love and miss the game.

It's been good to read that our own England players are now able to train, and so hopefully we won't be too far away either from some individual or small group training. The last time I bowled and batted was on our Oman trip, so net practice will be vital to find my rhythm again. It's been a frustrating time, but I'm hopeful



it won't be too much longer before we are able to get out there and play the game we all enjoy so much!

*Luke Hollman in action*

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE DIGITAL AGE

Recently, the Committee has considered how to increase awareness of Seaxe's assistance to youth cricket and broaden engagement with the club's activities. Experience with other organisations, of a similar size, indicates that Social Media may have a role to play. After all, with 80% of the UK shopping online and 2.5 billion smartphones globally, 'digital' communication cannot be ignored.

To try and quantify those we could potentially connect with, a review was initiated. Indications are that there are (unsurprisingly) a large number and this may not be the best place to start. For example, The Cricket Society one encounters online may not be the same as the UK one with which most are familiar, but an identically named Asian organisation - the overseas dialling code was a 'giveaway'!

During this exercise, it was discovered that the ECB were organising a series of webinars on the use of 'digital media', so unperturbed I signed up. Although not all topics covered were relevant (whether Seaxe require a Digital Strategy remains to be seen), there was a lot of interesting material, giving considerable food for thought. Who would've thought that Dumfries CC, in south west Scotland, are a leader in the field.

Considering Social Media, as everyone knows there is a plethora of platforms – Snapchat, WhatsApp, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram: what to choose? Despite some managerial shortcomings, Facebook is a constant, remains popular and is widely used – particularly by those born before 1990! It also gives an opportunity for publicity and sharing news updates, whilst allowing feedback or communication between participants.

To this end, Seaxe is establishing a Facebook Group. In the current cricket-free times, it is hoped that members will engage, share thoughts and communicate with each other. When set-up and operational, details will be confirmed by e-mail (if we have your address), with a further update in the Newsletter.

Time will tell if any external interest can be converted into membership.

***Keith Macrae***

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### LOTTERY DRAW

Earlier in the lockdown we held a lottery draw under strictly controlled conditions. As I said before we cannot stand still. Our thanks go to Peter Jackson for overseeing the draw, and our congratulations to the winners:

1st	£125	Barry White
2nd	£75	Ian Murray
3rd	£50	Hilary Spencer
4th	£25	Geoff Dawson

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### OPINIONS / IDEAS ALWAYS WELCOME

As previously stated, I would be delighted to receive your comments (good or bad), any articles etc., for inclusion in the Seaxe News and possibly for placing on the Seaxe / MCCC websites.

All correspondence by email: [glen.birkwood@hotmail.com](mailto:glen.birkwood@hotmail.com) - or by post to:  
86 Edgell Road Staines upon Thames Middx TW18 2EL  
Thank you.

If you have yet to do so, could you please forward your email address to Les Rowland - see below. This makes communication so much easier and efficient.

Enquiries about membership should be addressed to Barbara Buxton, 1 Croft Court, Chelmsford, CM1 6UQ - email: [buxtonb@hotmail.com](mailto:buxtonb@hotmail.com)

If you prefer to receive Seaxe News by email, please send your email address to our joint membership secretary Les Rowland - [leslie.rowland@ntlworld.com](mailto:leslie.rowland@ntlworld.com)

Finally don't forget to keep an eye on our website for general information:  
[www.seaxeclub.co.uk](http://www.seaxeclub.co.uk)

Let's hope we get some purposeful cricket soon!

***Glen Birkwood Editor***