



Chairman's report on 2010  
Presented at AGM on 21st March 2011

## Introduction

The Club maintained its progress last year, both on and off the field with some notable highlights, including runner up as the Herts League Club of the year, three junior County Cups, the promotion of our Third XI for the third season running and the promotion of our Fourth XI as Champions of Division 13. Our First XI continued to perform well in Division 1, finishing mid table and showing some character to put together some good performances in the second half of the season. Sunday cricket moved forward with the foundation of a home-based fixture card against sides that mirror our approach to the game.

We gained some important recognition for our coaches and administrators, without whom the Club would simply not develop. Mark Lewarne, our Junior Section Manager, deservedly won an ECB OSCA and your Chairman was recognised at the Dacorum Excellence Awards as a Community Sporting Hero. We also said farewell to Mark Herring, who has been head coach over the last five years and around whom we have built an impressive team. We now have 7 Level 2s, 16 Level 1s and 15 Young Leaders.

In the Junior Section, we provided cricket facilities to over 250 boys and girls, ran 5 cricket weeks in Easter, May Half Term and Summer holidays and fielded 14 junior teams – 3 of which went onto win the County Finals in July. Our Girls squad continued to develop with a number being selected for Area and Libby Marsden representing the County. Anna Nicholls won a coaches prize for best overall player in the Bucks County U13 Girls Squad. Overall, twenty-five of our boys and girls are representing Hertfordshire at Area or full County Level.

Among the high days of the summer, we had 4 visits from international cricketers - Saqlain Mushtaq attended the Bowlathon, Niall O'Brien held a wicket keeping masterclass, Anya Shrubsole coached our girls and Iain O'Brien handed out the colts awards. We hosted the U14 County Final and several inter-county junior matches. Under Tim Buckley's leadership, we held a very well-attended end of season dinner that raised substantial funds and was an excellent social function.

At the end of the season, we made the commitment to field a fifth XI in the Herts League in 2011 to provide the opportunity for more cricket for the older colts. The use of Cow Roast as our third ground has not been successful, so we have now reached agreement with the School to use their fields at Haslams and Kitcheners instead. In return we make our new nets facility available to them during the day.

We expanded our community role, providing coaching to four of the local primary schools and added Ashlyns, the secondary school to our program. Under Benny Mitchell, we increased membership of the 50Club, which raises the funds to cover the cost of the coaching – which is provided by the Club at no cost to the schools involved.

The on-field activities are covered by the Club Captain's report, so I shall focus on the off-field and development aspects of our past year.

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## Achievements against priorities for 2009

1. *Membership fund raising* – As highlighted in last year's Treasurer's report, funds raised were less than £2 per member (senior and junior) in 2009. And most of the funds raised had come from the usual very small number of members who attended most functions and were most generous with their cash. This situation was simply not acceptable for a Club with over 300 subscribing members (and a further 200 plus family members). Under Tim Buckley's leadership we put together a fund-raising team who developed a plan, set some targets and set things going. They initiated scratch cards, upped our game at all social events, organised a Bowlathon and brought back the end of season dinner which was a big success. **As a result, the funds raised per member were over £10 in 2010, a five-fold increase.** In addition, Fine and Country were brought back on line as a sponsor and a new deal has been negotiated for 2011 onwards. The team is now focusing on using our membership to reach out into employers, families and extended networks to bring in funds. Plans are in place to mount a music event in 2011.
2. *Strengthen our coaching team* – With colts' numbers continuing to rise, we needed to make sure we had the depth of coaching resources to match. We were given a significant boost in achieving this aim, by the wonderful generosity of the Paul Beard Memorial Fund, who contributed £6,000 towards the cost of coaching courses. As a result we were able to put thirteen juniors through their Young Leader course, six people through Level 1 (five of whom are U17) and two through Level 2. Although we will inevitably suffer some turnover amongst our coaching team, we now have strength and depth in our coaching resources to cover the increased numbers joining the Club.
3. *Make fuller use of Cow Roast facilities* – The objective in taking on Cow Roast when it became available two years ago was to ensure we could support the continued expansion of the Colts and enter a 5<sup>th</sup> XI into the League, playing home and away from a secure base. For various reasons, Cow Roast proved to be an unpopular venue, with only around half a dozen matches taking place there all season, down on the previous year. Rather than renew the lease, we looked again at the facilities available at the School, especially now that they have established a second field at Haslam's Field allowing us to play there during term time and then migrate down to Kitchener's Field next door to us once term ends. This will be much more attractive to our Fifth XI as they debut in the League.
4. *Strengthen our Sunday cricket program* – Sunday cricket had long been a poor cousin to Saturday cricket with only a handful of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> XI players willing to play both days. We had decided to continue with League cricket for the Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> XI and to build a fixture card of friendly games for the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI played predominantly at home or within a very short travelling distance. However, after a patchy start in the League, we bit the bullet and withdrew part-way through the summer to focus entirely on social cricket. Ian Putman and Peter Dudley worked together to ensure we entertained a fixture for most remaining Sundays in 2010. Peter, as Sunday Fixture Sec has now built a full program for 2011.
5. *Increase our schools outreach program* – Benny Mitchell, instigated the 50 Club in 2009, which brought in £1,000 towards the cost of our schools outreach program. Its aim in 2010 was to fulfil its name, fifty people contributing £50 each per year, to enable the Club to take coaches into every school in Berkhamsted, at no cost to the school. Although there was a slight increase in 2010, the 50 Club was still less than halfway to achieving

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its aim. In terms of coaching delivery, we reached into the secondary school, Ashlyns, for the first time and delivered two sessions a week there throughout the summer term, although these were often poorly attended. There is more work to be done in 2011.

6. *Continue to build senior membership* – For a Club of our size and position in the town, senior membership could and should be higher than it is. We still suffer from gaps in our membership as an unfortunate legacy of our period of decline until six years ago. This remained an un-met ambition in 2010, with only a handful of new members joining which just about matched the numbers leaving (mainly for Canada!). This remains an objective for 2011.

### **Priorities for 2011**

1. *Continue success on the field* – Whilst we have moved nearer to our aim to have the Saturday sides spread out over the League divisions in order to enable players to move between teams without encountering a massive difference in standards, we still have some way to go, so further promotions remain an important objective. On the junior front, our all-conquering U16s of 2010 have now graduated into adult cricket, so we are looking to the upcoming age groups to push for junior titles, including the girls who get to play in Leagues for the first time in 2011. We will, however, remain an inclusive club, providing cricket for all, so will balance this aim with the provision of a fifth XI for adults and B squads for the junior section.
2. *Improve the quality of our coaching, especially for elite players* – As highlighted above, we have now built a strong cadre of coaches and can focus on improving the quality of our coaching delivery. This will involve better allocation of coaching resources to specific groups, especially elite players, more effective session planning and generally more management of the whole coaching program.
3. *Establish process for transitioning colts to adult cricket* – We have been waiting for the colts section to reach the point where it starts to deliver cricketers into the adult teams ever since we restarted Colts in 2007. Now that it is starting to do so, we need to have clear plans for bring the U16s and U17s into the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> XIs so that it is a success for both the player and the side. Unless we do this, we run the risk of players being accelerated too fast with too little regard for their development and enjoyment of the game.
4. *Increase our schools outreach program* – We face the dual challenge of both increasing the fund-raising of the 50Club and broadening our reach in terms of the coaching provided to local schools. With the departure of our full-time coach, Mark Herring, we need to find a new model, based on our overseas player.
5. *Establish Volunteering structure* – The objective here is to leverage the various schemes available to make volunteering more valued and recognised. Although primarily focused on youngsters, it applies across the board, and will help us shift the burden of running the club from a few to many. We now have Elaine Fong and Sarah Marsden installed as Volunteer co-ordinators and they will start to assess our priorities and recruit and manage volunteers for a wide array of roles and tasks, including:
  - a. Grant applications
  - b. Press, PR, Website, Social media

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- c. Fund raising activities
  - d. Administrative tasks.
6. *Continue to build senior membership* – As highlighted above, senior membership could and should be higher than it is. We need to raise our profile amongst the target age groups and make sure that Berkhamsted is known as the club to join throughout our local area.

### **Conclusion**

The Club had an excellent 2010. In many ways its recent success has created the challenges for future years in terms of sustaining the structures and activities that underpin its success, as reflected in our objectives for 2011.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have fulfilled roles on the Management, Cricket and General Purposes Committees in 2010 and to the skippers and leaders of our Junior Section, Mark Lewarne and Simon Roberts (who is also our CWO) – your contribution is highly valued and appreciated by the whole Club.

Julian Dent  
18 March 2011

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