



THE ARROW

The Newsletter of Carlton Cricket Club

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Issue 51

A FLYING VISIT **Robin Singh**

For many older Carlton members, the best player ever to don Carlton colours is Robin Singh, who played as professional at Grange Loan in 1995 and 1996. In 44 First Team matches, he scored 1445 runs at an average of 48.17, including 2 centuries and a top score of 114. He also took 90 wkts, at 18.36, with a best return of 6-43.

Robin paid a short visit to Grange Loan this summer - see more inside.



Some Memories of Robin Singh at Carlton



[Robin Singh in last 7 overs mode for India \(see text over\) - see him in this clip despatch Shane Warne during the 1999 World Cup](#)

Although born in Trinidad, Robin was of Indian extraction and played 1 Test and 139 ODIs for India, scoring 2336 runs and taking 60 wickets. He was a superb fielder. Following his playing career, he has coached at many levels: he was India's fielding coach between 2007-9; as coach to the Mumbai Indians, he helped them win the IPL in 2013.

In 2020 Robin took up the role of Head Coach to UAE. It was in that capacity that he returned to Scotland this summer to oversee UAE's fixtures with Scotland, during which he managed to pay a brief visit to Grange Loan and a chat with Andy Macpherson.

Robin told Andy,

'My memories of playing for Carlton are very special, visiting the club again brought the 90's back to me. I loved the competition, it was very competitive. It helped me develop and improved my game.'

'At times the conditions became very challenging because of the cold weather but the team were fantastically supportive, as were the club members and officials. I felt very much at home and loved the experience. Most importantly I made some lifelong friends.'

'I would say Edinburgh is one of my favourite cities in the world. My wife and I loved just sitting around in the city and enjoying the festival and exploring the picturesque countryside. And we'll never forget the warmth of the Scottish people we experienced.'

'I see a lot of change in Scottish cricket, they look a good team now and are much more professional. It seems like they have a good vision going forward.'

'I am not too sure about league cricket in Scotland now but the standard of cricket was very competitive when I played. Professionals were good and the local players very competitive. I am sure there are more avenues opportunities and pathways for players, coaches and umpires improve.'

'My coaching tip for Carlton's youngsters? 'If you want to play the sport and enjoy the sport, commit to making sacrifices - you need to have passion for the sport and learn from the challenges. This will help in all walks of life. But if you aspire to the next level, then there is no shortcut. Commit to making sacrifices, sustained effort, training without compromising goals, focus on consistency. The sport, and family, comes first.'

Another former team mate who enjoyed catching up with Robin this summer was David McLean who was part of the umpiring team during the Scotland-UAE fixtures.

'What I remember about Robin is a really, really tough competitor but at the same time always polite and never looking for excuses - always looking to see where he went wrong or what he could do better.'

/more over

More Memories of Robin Singh

Those who played alongside Robin Singh remember him as an explosive batsman and dangerous bowler. He is also remembered as a highly exacting coach.

In the words of Bryn Lockie, 'Robin Singh was one of the most talented professionals I have played with or against in Scotland. A fantastic medium fast outswing bowler and an explosive batsman. Obviously a super one-day cricketer with over a hundred Caps for India in that format. If his time had overlapped modern T20 cricket, I am sure he would have been exceptional. A tough task master at training but he always expected high standards of himself and those around him.'

Hugh Parker recalls that he made an approach to Robin after he played in a benefit match at GL during the 1994 season. 'He kept hitting the ball over the nets at the bottom of the ground! He played for St Modans at the time and when I approached him after the game, he accepted almost immediately!' Hugh recalls Robin's batting mantra, 'He always said to bat calmly until seven overs to go when you went daft – I don't know why it was seven overs – but it seemed to work for him.'

As an example of that philosophy, Andy Macpherson remembers how Robin scored a century in his first league match for Carlton to win against Grange. A good start!

Carlton CC 1st XI 1995

Masterton Trophy Winners



D Barker (scorer), R R Singh (Prof), D H MacLean, R I M Bannerman, S W Baker, J A M Kerr, B G Lockie
G J Langley, A Davies (Hon Pres), J H R Parker (Pres), A D Macpherson (Capt), A D E MacLeod, J W Govan

/cont'd

'He built his innings carefully with the required rate increasing, but let loose with about 7 overs to go win the game and pass the 100.' The scorebook (see below) confirms this - 50 in 105 balls, 100 in 130. He was out for 114, dismissed by Pete Steindl off the second last ball of the game with one run required to win. Sixteen years old Fraser Watts came in at 10, but was not required to face as the batters had crossed. Alan McLeod duly got the required single. Job done.

R SINGH	230	105	130	MCGURK STEINDL	114
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Hugh Parker remembers a similar innings in a Scottish Cup match against Aberdeenshire at GL. 'It was late in my playing time so I came in lower down.... there was a bowling change with about seven overs to go - I took 2, 2, then a single to give Robin the strike - the next three balls ended up in the gardens.'

Alan McLeod also has a vivid memory of that game, 'We lost quite a few early wickets but Robin was still at the crease. I remember that he was purely focused on time at the crease and instructed any new batsman not to worry about the run rate. The required rate continued to creep upwards and everyone on the side-lines began to moan about the lack of scoring. Robin just kept telling the non-striker that he would wait for last seven overs.

'That's exactly what happened, Robin waited and with the required run rate up at a massive level he unleashed an array of aggressive shots. The score was chased down in the last over....panic over!'

David McLean recalled Robin's last seven overs philosophy but also, 'One thing that stood out was the way it would look as though he was just going to block a ball and then all of a sudden, with the flick of a wrist, he would send the ball flying over the wall at the far end.'

Robin is also remembered as an exceptional fielder, he once took five catches in a match against Freuchie. As Andy says, 'It was no surprise when he was appointed India fielding coach after his playing days were over.'

Alan McLeod also recalls him as a bowler, 'Robin's time at Carlton was before reverse-swing was as common a phenomenon as it is these days, but Robin was ahead of the game and understood how to do this. It was quite funny when he was bowling as he would not allow anyone else in the team to touch the ball.

'The wicket-keeper had to just throw the ball straight back to him to avoid any idiot in the team getting moisture on the wrong side of the ball!'

David McLean kept to Robin and also remembers his early mastery of reverse swing, 'We would quite often go out to the middle and he would bowl while I kept. It was very interesting speaking to him to learn where he was looking to bowl particular deliveries and to see the control he had of the ball.'

David also remembers during practice once being with him at the top of his run-up and demonstrating his change in grip - whereas his previous inswinger had crashed into the batter's pads, his next ball was a huge outswinger which the batter 'missed by 4 feet!'

But, Alan recalls, Robin's competitiveness could also get the better of him. 'Ian Beven was professional at West of Scotland (and subsequently Grange) in those days, a highly competitive Aussie and fine cricketer. I remember that he managed to wind-up Robin during a match against West of Scotland at Grange Loan. Bev just kept talking to Robin, tempting him to hit it out of the ground. In the end Robin fell for it and was caught out at cow corner to the delight of Bev!

'Happy Days!'

Omar Ahmad

188 wickets including seven 5 wkt hauls in 155 First Team matches. His best return was 7-20 against Forfarshire in 2014 at GL.

The Carlton green-top legend talks about his career at Carlton and his new role as Head of Carlton's Diversity Committee.



5-23 at Myreside, May 2021

I joined Carlton from Edinburgh CC half way through season 2006. My main reason for moving was that the level of cricket played in Edinburgh wasn't high enough for what I wanted going forward playing for East of Scotland and Scotland respectively.

The main reason for picking Carlton was that I knew some players already (Charles Legget, Ali Evans, Steven Elder Craig Marshall) who I had played with in representative games.

Just about my first game for the 1s was against Grange away - when I got my first wicket against them (Jonny 'biscuits' Gray - stumped by Jamie Kerr) in a brilliant win for us!

I've had many great games for Carlton, but I think my best games were home games against Heriots and Dunfermline getting 13 wickets in total (6 against Heriots and 7 for against Dunfermline). Another to note was against Ayr in a Scottish Cup match in 2011. They had New Zealand test cap Michael Papps who got a ton. I bowled 10 overs for a measly 11 runs and took 1 wicket - not bad - but sadly it was in a losing cause.

Cedric English was probably the best coach I played under. He corrected my bowling action and introduced me to bowling my 'famous' stock ball outswinger.

Who have been the most difficult opponents? As I have played for over 13 years there have been a lot of tough opponents, Grange in their prime were a good side and Heriot's now are probably the best team I've seen.



On the way to 7-20 in 2014

Omar on the Diversity Committee

'Carlton Cricket Club believes that all people, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, language, race, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual orientation have the right to participate in cricket and to receive protection from abuse.'

Carlton CC Equality Statement

The Club's [Culture Statement](#) sets out the importance which Carlton places on inclusivity – Carlton is a Club for everyone. We not only respect differences, but view diversity as a key element for our long-term success.

I am therefore very pleased to head Carlton's new Diversity Committee - which we have started for everyone - from different social and economical backgrounds, different ethnicities, women, LGBT community. All are part of, and welcome at, Carlton. We must continue to ensure that is the case.

Many can feel as if they have no voice. No one to approach. No one in the management committee to hear their issues.

We want to make sure that Carlton is a fair and fun place to play and be a part of, which is why we created the diversity committee. We saw all the bad news from Yorkshire and Cricket Scotland last year and are determined to make sure this wasn't happening or won't happen in the future at Carlton.

The main issue we face after speaking with many different players within Carlton is the treatment they feel they get. Unfortunately some players feel as if they get overlooked; picked on; forgotten about. And not coached enough due to being in one of the categories above. We will ensure that all these issues are addressed.

We want to ensure that women to feel more involved within the club. People from different backgrounds to feel like they are no different from anyone else. And most importantly have a place where people can come to for advice or to have their voices heard.

So far Umair, Kerry, Fraggie, Anish and Siobhan have joined the discussion - but we would be pleased to hear from anyone else who wishes to play a part.

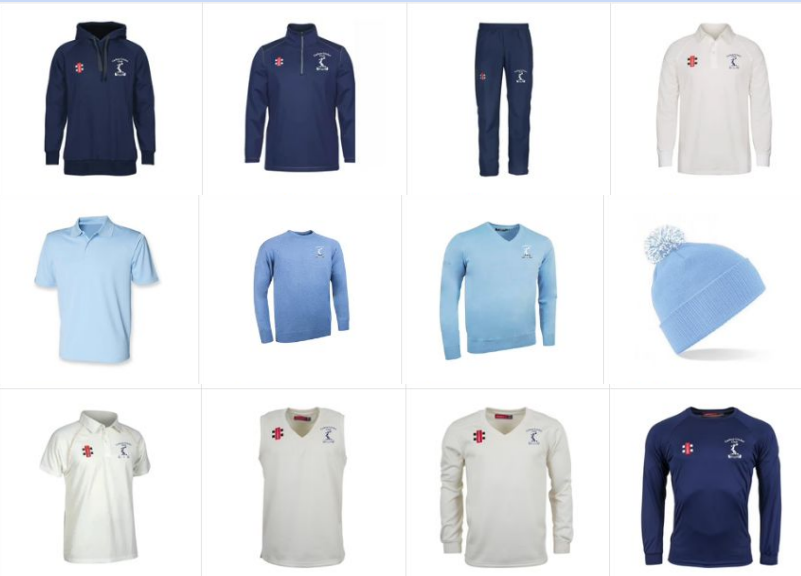
Watch out also for news of a special email address through which anyone with any concerns can raise issues in confidence.

Carlton welcomes the recent appointment of Anjan Luthra as Chair of Cricket Scotland and looks forward to working with him to ensure that cricket is a fully inclusive activity.

CHRISTMAS RAPIDLY APPROACHES

A PRESENT OF CARLTON KIT OR LEISURE WEAR IS ALWAYS WELCOME

THE FULL RANGE IS AVAILABLE THROUGH BRUNTSFIELD SPORTS.



bruntsfield
sports
online

SWEATER NEWS

Martin Robertson says he has one Carlton Heritage Sweater available - Sleeveless - size XL - £65.

Martin is also happy to put together another order with the manufacturers if there is wider interest. An order early in the next couple of months should ensure that the sweaters are available by the start of next season.

Interested?

Get in touch with [Martin](#) direct.



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.org.uk
feel good shopping

Raise funds for Carlton Cricket Club whenever you shop online

All you have to do is click on this link and that will take you to Carlton's Easy Fundraising page to register. Then either use the website or mobile app every time you shop. It's that easy.

Carlton Season 2022 Players' Survey

John Beattie reviews the main points to emerge from the end of season players' survey

Organising a Club the size of Carlton is a never-ending task, and the Management and Cricket Committees are already laying down plans for 2023.

Many thanks to everyone who filled in the Players' Survey – it's provided us with some helpful thoughts on what we need to put in place for next year. This is what we've learned:

Training

Generally, people were happy with pre-season nets and in-season training. We are fortunate to have access to excellent coaches, and sessions were well organised. Concerns were expressed about attendance at senior training, particularly 1/2s and older juniors. There was also a request for greater focus on work on technique and specific skills (e.g. death bowling, range hitting), and greater link between training and matches.

Matches

Again, most were happy with the matches we played: well organised, selection generally well handled and thanks must go to all team captains for all their work getting 11 onto the pitch each week.

There was a general theme of reduced availability of players, particularly in the high performance teams where consistency might be more expected.

There has been much discussion about whether this was a post-Covid effect, with

people wanting to prioritise non-cricket activities that they had missed out on, or a more permanent change in the nature of amateur sport. Regardless, this change of availability from week to week caused significant work, not least for team captains who were continually moving players up and down as availability changed. This is an area we will be looking at for 2023.

The role of juniors in 3/4/5s cricket continues to be praised and is one of the defining characteristics of our club, and the new Women's 2nd XI was a welcome addition. In the Mixed Development games there were some problems with opposition having a different idea of what a development game should feel like – we have raised this with ESCA who have responded positively, and we aim to have much better opposition matching next season.

Communication

The use of Pitchero and Whatsapp were widely supported, although a few questioned the consistency of use of different comms channels. Some missed the regular match updates on Twitter which have fallen away following the addition of live scoring, and this will be looked at.

Social

There was praise for the events put on by the Club, with Pizza Geeks especially well liked. We would welcome ideas on how to improve mixing between the different sections of the Club, and introducing a greater variety of special events.

The Club is looking to re-launch the Social Committee after a hiatus during Covid, so if you would be keen to help please get in touch with [Kerry](#).

The Wrong Kind of Cracks?

Shortly before he hung up his mowing kit, Colin Smith shared some expert knowledge on a subject close to batters' hearts.



Clay has four features that interest us:

- Each clay particle is small $<0.002\text{mm}$
- It is flat - plate like
- Each particle carries a small covalent electric charge
- Clay shrinks when it dries.

When compressed, the electrical charges attract covalently and although each charge is small, the millions of particles bond to form a solid and hard area.

Uncompressed, the soil will break up when it dries due to shrinking. However, compressed the soil will stick together much better, but two competing forces are at work: shrinking and the covalent bonding. As the clay shrinks, the distance between particles increase and the bonds weaken. What holds it together is the root system, but it has to break somewhere and that is when cracks develop. There will be a weak point in the soil or root system somewhere and the cracks will develop from that point.

The root system will determine the type of cracks. A poor root system will result in a rectangularish network of cracks, often only 2-3 inches across with weak edges. These will further crumble when the ball lands causing inconsistent bounce. On the other hand, a good root system will promote long, snaking cracks with firm edges. These are nothing to be scared of.



Not Grange Loan - cracks were emerging at GL this summer but were irrigated out

So if you look at a pitch and see cracks and are wondering how it will play, look at the nature of them. If there are lots small cracks forming a lattice type network, it won't play well. However, if they are few but long, don't be alarmed. Bat first if you can because the pitch will dust up, but don't be overly concerned if you have to bat second.

We are all familiar with the wrong kind of things. The wrong kind of leaves or snow frequently disrupt our transport system. In sport generally and cricket in particular, we often hear about the wrong kind of bounce, the wrong colour of pitch and commentators who are paid to know about these things talk about cracks. But is it justified?

Either side of the millennium, the ECB commissioned a study into First Class pitches. It took into account not only Captains' and Umpires' pitch reports, but weather data and soil samples from the pitches. It presented a picture of runs per wicket (rpw) for each feature. Some results tended to confirm existing opinions/prejudices. For example, cloudy days and green pitches tended to result in a lower rpw - a loose correlation.

However, when it came to cracks, there was no correlation. Extreme examples had a match with a rpw figure of less than 10 (fancy a bowl anyone), whilst another produced a figure of over 150 (fancy a bat anyone). Both pitches had cracks, so what was going on?

If you ask cricketers what produces a good cricket pitch, many will say rolling, some will say watering, and others mowing. Very few will say soil type or grass root system.

The soil type we use is loam and the constituent that we are interested in is clay. Loam used for cricket in the UK has a clay content of 24 - 40%. Carlton has $>30\%$ clay. The Oval tops the UK with 40% and the WACA in Perth tops the world with 70%.

**Janie Hemsley,
seen here receiving the
Women's Fielder of the
Year from her skipper, has
been a valuable addition to
Carlton Women in 2022.**

But she doesn't like cricket.

She loves it!!!

Hi everyone! I was asked to write a wee article after the conclusion of my first Women's Premier season with Carlton. It was a summer of mostly highs, a few lows and a lot cricket played; my first ever 50 is a standout high (in a preseason friendly) along with a high score of 33* in the league, taking a couple of wickets and bowling many, many wides!

My love of cricket started much like my love of most sports; my older brother started playing and I was determined to be better than him! Luckily Sam wanted to be a bowler which meant I got hours of batting practice, which I loved, and we avoided the two footed challenges of our football tussles! With cricket my goal was always to hit him as far over the fence as possible. Sometimes it worked out, often my bails went flying and more than a couple of times it resulted in the breaking of windows. A love of batting was born and my want to swing hard (often against my better judgement) has never left, the only difference now is the result of often getting out LBW, (as my wife has kindly reminded my whilst writing this article).

People are regularly surprised to hear that this was my first full season playing club cricket, despite playing for most of my childhood. Unfortunately, due to a lack of a girls' team at our local club and a busy sporting schedule of tennis, football and athletics it never quite worked out for me to join a club. Most of my school friends played though, so I spent much of my summer holidays in the nets at the boy's school.



With one of Kent's CC grounds in our town we often went down to T20 games and even managed the odd test match at the Oval or Lords. We also played a lot (and I mean a lot) of Brian Lara International Cricket on PS2!

In my later teens, I played more and more football and tennis and ultimately I turned this into a career, moving out to New Zealand to work as a full-time tennis coach. My coaching career was short lived though due to sustaining a series of stress fractures in my back, which resulted in me not being able to play any sports for a couple of years, until last summer when I was able to have a small procedure which resulted in being relatively pain free for the first time in years.

It was post lockdown(s) and being new to Edinburgh, I decided the time was right to start playing cricket again, even with a rather stiff spine. The fast (ish) bowling of my youth is no more, I have to be cautious of not getting carried away with the bat and my fielding is... how to say this... not very graceful! But I am absolutely loving playing again!

It's fair to say; I don't like cricket, I love it!

Why cricket? Why Carlton?

*Ben Thurman
faces up to
life's big
questions.*



For some reason photos of Ben are hard to come by - was this a good knock or not?

But it's still hard to sum up what I've got from the club over the years, and why I keep coming back each season; and so I found myself thinking about the game I played this year before an enforced mid-season break.

It was at Barnton, and I'd spent the last 15 overs at point watching a pair of "Carlton juniors" absolutely tear through the opposition top order, reducing them to 40 for 6. Earlier in the day, a few of the "Carlton seniors" had batted us to a decent total of 200 or so. And now we were stood around in the evening sunshine: a team spanning a range of ages that – notwithstanding the select few excitedly shouting "cricket!" at seemingly random intervals – genuinely enjoy each other's company and success (so much so that I even got to come onto bowl at the number 11 at the end of the innings).

That moment seemed to encapsulate what it is that I love about playing at the club, and in my experience it's a dynamic that's quite unique. So, for now, the answer to "why cricket?" is probably, "Carlton". And as long as there are still juniors shouting, "you're still in your prime", as I pick myself up from diving to stop a ball, I reckon I'll be back next season too.

Ben was awarded the 3rd XI Batting Award this season.

Most years I find myself wondering at some point or other, usually after a low score, whether I really want to spend my weekends during the best part of the year at Peffermill, when I might otherwise be in a tent in the mountains (see photo below) or spending long days on the bike. So I'll leave the "why cricket" part for now, and focus on Carlton.

I arrived at Grange Loan in 2014 and was welcomed into a 2nd XI side that escaped relegation by the barest of margins (ask Brad about that one - or see [Newsletter 19](#)). A glance at Brian's stats page tells me that I played 54 games for the 2nd team; and then, since 2018, when I was overtaken by a whole load of younger, more talented players coming up through the club, another 30-odd for the 3's.

While lots of things have changed in that time, playing cricket at Carlton has been a constant part of my life since I moved back to Edinburgh.





All at Carlton were deeply saddened to learn of the recent passing of **Alastair Keatinge** - a great friend and supporter of the club.

A regular attender at Grange Loan as he followed the fortunes of Cameron and Euan as they progressed through the junior and senior teams. He will be greatly missed by all.

The condolences of everyone at Carlton go to Susie, Cameron and Euan.

A recent arrival at Grange Loan is a handsome new bench in memory of Jean Calder, long time Carlton member who died earlier this year. As noted in [Newsletter 44](#) Jean's first familiarity with Grange Loan was as a schoolgirl hockey player.

The bench also remembers Jean's elder sister Anne, who also regularly escorted Jean's dogs round the ground when her sister couldn't.



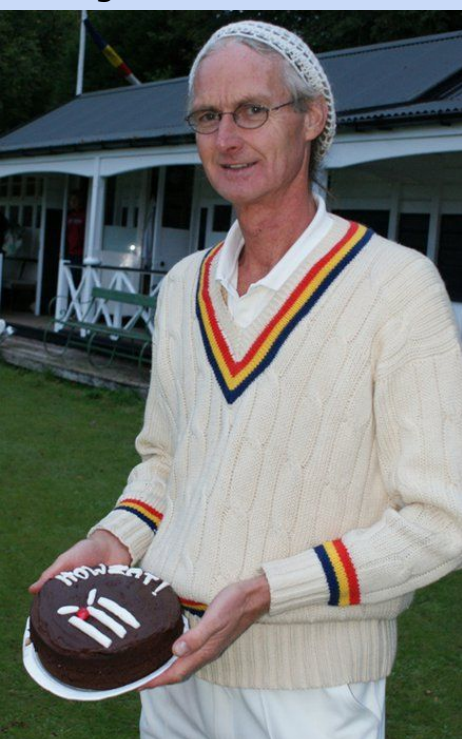


Manderston

A Carlton end-of-season tradition that seems to have gone by the way is the match against Manderston CC. For many years the legendary quality of the tea on offer at the Borders club was a huge incentive to gain selection.

Manderston play on a delightful ground close by [Manderston House](#) near Duns. While the House dates back to the 18th Century, it was significantly remodelled in the late 19th Century and early 20th Century by Sir James Miller, a soldier and successful racehorse owner (he had two Derby winners to his name), whose family fortune was made through trading across the Baltic. He died young with no children and the estate eventually came into the ownership of the Palmer family, of Huntley and Palmer fame. Accordingly the House contains the world's largest collection of Huntley & Palmers biscuit tins.

Sir James was a keen cricket lover and an important addition to his project was the cricket ground. The original pavilion was refurbished in 1999 and still has period charm. At one time many of the large houses in the borders would have had similar, if not so perfect, facilities and healthy competition would have taken place between teams of staff and guests.



Carlton's connection with the Club derived from the Swan family who farmed close by and 5 of whose family members played for Carlton, Richard captaining the club and Scotland. Their father, Willie Swan, had been Chair of the Scottish Cricket Union in the 1970s.

Memories of playing at Manderston have faded but an abiding memory of many who enjoyed the tea was of a bowler who played in an unorthodox headgear. There is a mystery as to why he eschewed a cap or sun hat in favour of what looked to all like a hair-net - perhaps it was a pre-cursor of the hair band more recently adopted by pace bowlers the world over including Stuart Broad and Calum Sibley. But getting out to this bowler would invite ridicule from team mates. There was a lot of that - for he was a demon bowler.

The House was the location for the Channel 4 Series [The Edwardian Country House](#) and during filming Carlton's efforts on the field were watched by the cast fully decked out in period costume.