



THE ARROW

The Newsletter of Carlton Cricket Club

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Issue 53

COMING HOME



Carlton looks forward to welcoming Finlay Thornton back to Grange Loan this season. Finlay is seen here striking out for Manly Warringah, proudly wearing his Carlton helmet. More about Finlay inside.



FINLAY THORNTON

After leaving Scotland for down under at the end of 2016, the Thorntons settled in Newcastle, 2 hours north of Sydney, and Finlay joined Toronto Workers (Cricket Southern Lakes) District Cricket Club where he was mentored by the great spinner Robert "Dutchy" Holland who a few of the older generation will recall from his days playing in Scotland. Toronto is also the junior club of Paul "Blocker" Wilson, a test opening bowler better known to Scots as the umpire who gave Richie Berrington out v the West Indies. Other previous players include Bruce Patterson, Mark Nicholas and more recently Jake Ball (England), Tom Kohler Cadmore (Yorkshire) and Michael Pepper (Essex).

Finlay has played junior representative cricket for Newcastle and Country NSW and also progressed up the senior ranks at Toronto. He has been playing first grade since he was 15. He also had two years playing for Manly Warringah in the Green Shield where he played with current Sydney Thunder player and Aus u19s captain Joel Davies.

Aussie cricket also teaches you be to resilient, along with his share of ducks and dropped catches off his bowling, Finlay has also had to miss a lot of cricket, including the cancellation of the state u16 "Bradman Cup" due to bushfires, state schoolboys tournaments and many other games to COVID and unseasonably wet Australian summers (La Niña) and various injuries.



Finlay receives the 2016 u13 batting award from Mario Olivier

Finlay has also been doing a lot of coaching (including his job as a multi sports coach) and this season was assistant coach to dad, Rob, of the Newcastle Junior Representative Academy (u12s-15s).

Finlay is very excited to be returning to Carlton and hopes to emulate Hamish Gardiner - another former junior who returned from Australia and who made a great impression on him as a young lad.

CARLTON LOTTERY - RECENT WINNERS

Kevin Whitaker (Oct)
Ian Thompson (Nov)
Fraser Watts (Dec)
Mike Kennedy (Jan)
Jo Beech-Brandt (Jan)

Join Up Now

Full Details at

<https://carltoncc.co.uk/club/lottery/>

AMIT BIJ

29 Nov1981 - 1 Jan 2023

All at Carlton were shocked and saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Amit Bij. Amit made an impression on everyone at Grange Loan both as a cricketer and a man. We will all miss him and send our thoughts to his family.

Amit was a close friend of Shuaib Farooq - they joined Carlton at the same time. Shuaib remembers what his friend meant to him.



I've known Amit for about 13 years. I got to know him as his in-laws had a corner shop opposite to where I lived. Amit was a great Husband, father, and Son: he was honourable, he was kind, he was charismatic and most of all he was a great friend who was there for me whenever I needed him. Whatever he put his mind to, he cared with a passion, whether it be his work, his family or social life.

He worked hard at whatever he put his mind to and just left an impression on many. I remember the times we worked on some DIY projects at his home; he walked behind me with a brush and shovel to minimise any mess caused. We joked around about how he was clean freak.

I miss him greatly; he was my best friend! I will remember him for all the times we spent together whether it be whilst training at cricket, times spent out together and even whilst we were both at work - the calls/constant texts/ random Gifs and songs we liked. And the weekly meals we went out for, we spoke of all sorts - the room was never quiet, full of laughter and relaxed ambience

Amit's Daughter Ria and my two children attend the same primary school, and the kids see each other daily at drop-offs and sometimes in the playground. My kids looked forward to seeing Amit and Ria in the morning for a quick muck about. Even the kids are missing Amit, he know how to always able to put a smile on anyone's face.

I know that we have already heard this many times before and we don't realise it until a loved one passes - life is a lot shorter than any of us realise and you just don't know what you have until it's gone.

I just wish I could just speak to him one last time and tell him he's been a fantastic friend and how proud I am that he was a part of my life.

Who was to know he would be gone far too soon leaving behind a loving wife and two gorgeous daughters?

Amit Bij will truly be missed for who he really was.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Don't let others do all the work.

Carlton's success depends on the voluntary efforts of its members.

Everyone can make a difference.

Do you have skills or experience which the club could draw on from time to time?

We would welcome additional advice and help in the following areas particularly.

PR/Communications

IT

HR

Fund Raising

Facilities Management

DIY

Catering

Photography

Let us know at [**Carlton**](#)

BREAKING NEWS

- **Dewald Nel - Carlton welcomes Dewald as Head Coach for 2023 - more about Dewald in the next issue of the Arrow.**



- **Subscriptions** are now due and are being collected through Pitchero. Prompt payment appreciated.
- **Pre-Season Quiz Night** - coming soon - details will follow through social media channels.
- **AGM** - a report of the AGM can be found on the [Club Website](#).
- Congratulations to **Omar Ahmed**, Head of Diversity, who becomes Vice President and Director of Carlton



INDOOR PRACTICE?



A full programme of indoor practice sessions may have got underway. But, 'It's for softies,' according to the hardy stalwarts of Carlton's women's section who continue to use Grange Loan to hone their skills for the new season no matter the weather.



NET GAINS

Work has just underway to refurbish and improve the nets at Grange Loan. Improved surfaces and extended run ups will ensure that the facilities remain of the highest standard. The project is planned to be complete by the time that outdoor practice commences in April. Also in hand are plans to refurbish the artificial strip, which in addition to being available for matches should also increase the range of practice facilities at Grange Loan.

Commenting on the projects, Director of Cricket Stevie Gilmour said,

'This is great news for all Carlton's members. The present nets were installed in 2011 and have been a great asset to the club. They have been very well used but began to show signs of wear and tear in the last couple of years. We are determined to ensure that Carlton continues to have the highest standard of practice facilities. This refurbishment is an essential part of achieving this goal and all players can look forward to using them this season.'



Installation of the nets in 2011.



GROUNDKEEPING AT GRANGE LOAN



Following the retirement of Colin Smith at the end of last season, Carlton has recently advertised [the post of Head Groundsperson](#). Prior to Colin's appointment the role was filled for many years on a voluntary basis by the legendary Alasdair McLeod, assisted by the equally legendary Russell Weir. Some junior members may have believed that Alasdair's tenure began with the club's foundation, but he doesn't go quite that far back. His work on the ground started almost as soon as he walked through the gates on joining the club as a player in 1982. Turning up for his first practice session, he soon found himself driving the roller. He then had a spell as Ground Convenor before assuming the role of de facto Head Groundsman in the early 2000s.

The importance of this role to the club's success may still not be fully appreciated. It is almost wholly overlooked in the accounts of Carlton's development, even though from early in its life Carlton has been responsible have its own ground.

An incident recounted by NL Stevenson in Play, his history of the club, suggests that in its early years the club's groundskeeping efforts may have been less than fully professional. He writes of preparation for what was planned to be a money spinning fixture with the touring Clown Cricketers (a team of touring English professionals),

'To prepare a really good wicket at Old Grange Loan, Stratton a road contractor in Upper Grey Street, put on his heaviest road roller. Everything was set for the big game and the club was looking forward to making another handsome profit for its enterprise when it was discovered that the heavy roller had cracked several of the drains under the square and the repair of these drain-pipes and the loss of the match wiped out Carlton's credit balance and kept the Club in debt for many years to come.'

Despite this warning, Stevenson's history contains only fleeting references to how the ground was managed and maintained, although it is clear that there was a paid groundsman for much of the period. But they are shadowy presences - exceptionally the First XI photograph of 1911 (below) identifies Scott (Groundsman) in the centre of the back row. In the manner of the time (and for many years after) being paid for his services meant Scott was identified by surname only.



But there is no mention of Scott as a professional player although the roles were traditionally combined.

The club had first engaged a Groundsman/Professional in 1880 when 'Joshua Wadsworth of Yorkshire' was engaged at £2 per week (about £200 in today's terms). However there is no reference to performances in the field by him.

The following year Colquhoun was engaged for the role at 10/- per week: he was also given *'charge of the beer and the profits arising from the sale of it.'* There was discussion as to whether he should be allowed also to play and it was agreed that if he were selected he would be paid 5/- (25p) per match. Sadly Colquhoun proved *'negligent in his duties and frequently not down to put out the net and look after the ground'* and was threatened with dismissal. This did the trick - he ended the season the club's best bowler.



'Parkes from Nottingham' (above) served as professional for a number of seasons from 1898 seen above in that season's photograph; he took 59 wickets that season and was also second in batting averages. He was similarly successful in the following years and was the club's best bowler in 1899.

Parkes was succeeded by James, who was paid £1/10- per fortnight through the 1902 season - about £135 in today's money. James gets no mention as a player in Stevenson's text but other sources suggest he may not have been a success: in 10 innings he amassed only 43 runs and does not feature in that year's bowling averages.

It is likely that Parkes and James undertook some ground work. The club did without a professional player in subsequent years - what assistance it had for the ground in the Edwardian years is not known.

There was no cricket during the years of World War 1 and Grange Loan *'was now an impenetrable jungle without a track to break the tangled undergrowth.'* A challenge for any groundsman, but Stevenson reports that *'Wragg, a Nottingham man, was engaged as groundsman and his work on Grange Loan brought it back to its excellent pre-war condition.'* However there is no mention of Wragg as a player.

Subsequently there was a succession of hired hands, in 1928 the going rate had increased to £5 per week. The club did not engage a professional player - during the 1920s the playing resource was exceptionally strong.

Tom Crosskey [see the Arrow 44](#) was engaged as Professional and Groundsman in 1930. This proved a long standing engagement, and he was supported by the efforts of members and various casual appointments during the season. In 1947 his wage was £7pw (£350 today). After Crosskey reverted to amateur status as a player, groundsman appointments were made regularly - in 1951 Mr R A Liddell of Durham was paid £6/6/- per week. Initials could now be awarded.

In the mid 1950s there was a change of policy - the majority of the ground work would be done by members with some part-time assistance for the preparation of wickets. A Mr Lauder, who had previously been groundsman at Grange CC, was engaged for a number of years at the princely remuneration of £10 for the season.

These arrangements continued until in 1964, following the dismissal of an un-named part-time groundsman, members also took over wicket preparation.



Jimmy Jappy (above rt) added this role to the many other contributions he made to the club's running.

Jimmy worked for a confectionery firm nearby and would spend his lunchtimes and after hours working at Grange Loan. He was known to bribe the juniors to help out with sweeties from the factory. But he had an unfortunate habit of destruction-testing equipment and was certainly not a person to leave unattended with a pile of leaves and a can of petrol! Jimmy would also lament about the number of matches played on the square - who knows what he would make of the current demands made on it!

While there were regular pleas for wider assistance, and despite the expectation that all players should do some work on the ground at training nights, it fell to a small group to make the necessary inputs. Long serving skipper Alun Davies took on the principal role in the mid 1970s closely assisted by George Innes and Richard Swan and in due course, Hugh Parker and Alasdair McLeod. Alasdair McLeod's commitment became central following his professional retirement in 2001 and Russell Weir's previously voluntary contribution was formalised from 2006. Hugh Parker continued as long serving Grounds convenor.

During the 1960s the outfield was cut by the Council (£2 per cut) until, with the acquisition of a tractor and cutters, club members were able to do that as well - George Reid, Chris Paul Russell Weir and Brian Forrester significant among them.

Many hands have assisted keeping the surrounds of the ground neat and tidy - including Sandy Crerar Ron Salomon and Tony Batten. Brian Forrester continues to do this important work to this day.

Since the 1970s there has been continuing investment in better equipment to ensure that the standard of wickets and surrounds at Grange Loan can be maintained at the highest standards.

As this account shows, the club has been fortunate that so many have contributed to make Grange Loan the place it is. It is a tale of self-help and commitment combined with appropriate professional expertise which continues to this day.

Further offers of help in this vital work are always welcome.



A CHALLENGE TO ANY GROUNDSKEEPER

Carlton CC 1st XI 1898



MacNaughton (League Umpire), J F Briggs, W Chill, D Currie, R T Morrison, MacKenzie (League Umpire)
P Robathan, N L Stevenson, R Maxwell (Capt), R Blackadder, G W Jupp, Parkes (Prof)
E F Cox, W A Banks (Treasurer)

In 1898 Carlton's home ground was not on its present site, but nearby to the south west on what is now the corner of Blackford Loan and Relugas Road. Carlton had played there since 1869 and the ground was known as Little Transylvania because of its wooded surrounds - some of these trees can be seen in the background to the above photo. Also to be seen is a flock of sheep. Accounts for the period show that the club received income in excess of £20 for grazing, more or less matching the rent Carlton themselves paid for the field. This was therefore a significant contribution to the club's finances, although relations with the grazing tenants were sometimes difficult. The sheep may have done sterling work on the outfield, although where they were herded when the players moved into the field of play is not clear. Carlton moved from Little Transylvania to the Grange Loan ground in 1905. Sheep do not feature in any subsequent photographs. However livestock were not wholly out of the picture. For many years the outfield was tended by horse drawn equipment. The horse was stabled at the ground in a small housing behind the pavilion. Sadly there is no photographic record of any Carlton horse going about its work and the term workhorse now applies to fast bowlers toiling up the hill against the wind.

[A fuller account of Carlton's early grounds can be found on the club website.](#)

Robert Burns' Paen to Groundskeepers



For a number of years Fantasy Bob attempted to amuse his handful of readers with claims he had re-discovered a hidden trove of cricket poems written by none other than Scotland's national Bard Robert Burns. In honour of the recent celebration of the Bard's birthday, The Arrow reproduces one of these efforts below. There is no evidence that the Bard had any particular groundsman in mind at the time of writing. Some previous readers have however remarked that it bears some tribute to a well known figure at Grange Loan, to whom it can stand as a tribute.

*Fair fa' your honest doughty face
Great chieftain o' the groundsman race
In the middle tak your place
Mow, roll, repair
Your cheery greeting rings through
space
GET AFF THE SQUARE*

*To mak a wicket taks for ever
But who respects your great
endeavour?
These players should be mair clever
You can despair
You tell them oft but they never
GET AFF THE SQUARE*

*Ye tend the strip, ye gie it bounce
The players dinna help an ounce
But aifter play they preen and flounce
Fegs! Everywhere
Till ye maun doughtily pronounce
GET AFF THE SQUARE*

*In winter whan the sna is flyin'
Players in their beds are lyin'
Sair wi' cauld the puir lambs cryin'
We mun compare
Ye toil through winter scarifyin'
THATCH AFF THE SQUARE*

*Some folk may tak ye for a bore
When ye drone on aboot the mower
And moan the hunnels mak ye sore
Why should they care?
But muckle grass? Ye'll see them glower
GET AFF THE SQUARE*

*Ah! Doughty groundsmen are a special
breed
An' ilka club must meet their need
For tractor oil, loam and seed
Sic modest fare
It's nae charity tae pay them heed
GET AFF THE SQUARE*



[Anyone unwise enough to wish to enjoy more of the Bard's rediscovered cricket poems can find them on this link.](#)

HAYDEN LAING

He may sound as South African as boerewors, but as he tells here, Hayden has an illustrious Scottish cricketing lineage.

I started playing cricket at the Jeppe Quondam Cricket Club in Johannesburg when I was 4 and then played cricket at school from 6. It is an old boys club for Jeppe High School for boys, the oldest boys school in Jo'burg, which I attended from Grade 8 to 12.

Quondam is historically the most successful club in Gauteng (formerly Transvaal), but fifteen years ago the club nearly folded because it allowed the first team to take priority over the junior section which was all but destroyed. But when my Dad took over as President there was a real drive to get the junior section strong again and the fruits of that are being shown now. I was part of the team that won the T20 cup in 2014 and 2015. The club won the Prem B title 2015, Presidents 2014 and Su2 2013, and have won both the Prem A and Prem B competitions 3 out of the last 4 years. Not bad. Well done Dad.



A string of First Class and International Players have played for Quondam including Neil McKenzie (below rt) ([renowned as the most superstitious cricketer ever](#)), Alviro Petersen (below left), Alan Kourie, Hugh Tayfield , Ian Fullerton, Sylvester Clarke, Rod Estwick (West Indies Bowling coach), and Clive Rice.

My Dad, Dean Laing, the current Club President played First Class Cricket for Gauteng , Notts and South Africa.



The Quondam ground (above) is a very special place for me - when my Mom left hospital with me as a new-born she went there, not straight home as you might expect. So cricket really is in my blood



And here is my Scottish heritage. My Grandad played football for Rangers and Preston North End and then signed a contract for Liverpool before moving to Zimbabwe and then onto South Africa to play for Pietermaritzburg United. He was from Meigle and is twin brother of the famous Scottish cricketer Ralph Laing. Gordon Laing, also a Scottish international cricketer, is their elder brother.

I came to Arbroath in 2016 as an overseas amateur, fully intent on going back after a year but I met Shannon-Anne and decided to stay. We married at the end of 2021.

I played 3 seasons at Arbroath before moving to Edinburgh. I chose Carlton after a chat with Fraser Burnett, who I played with at Arbroath. He convinced me that Carlton was the place for me. Top advice, Fraz! I joined in 2020 and the best moments so far have been watching us win the Masterton and then the National T20 in 2021.

I am looking forward to helping the work on the ground at GL this season. I have been doing ground work since I was 13. Quondam doesn't employ a full time head groundsman, but rather the first team captain heads a team of juniors and young players. When you make your debut in the first team you're required to finish that season on the grounds team so it's club run. It also allows the newer players to keep in touch with the roots of the club.



I have always had a fascination with the science of pitches and so I always signed up for the grounds team. I also did a stint at Carnoustie Golf Links when I was at Arbroath.

Comparing Scottish and South African club cricket brings a number of points to mind. Scottish and South African clubs tend to be close the clubs internally, all clubs feel like a family. But it's much more cutthroat in South Africa, there is intense rivalry, players from different clubs really don't like each other and games are always on a knife's edge. In Scotland it's much more gentlemanly, clubs don't hate each other and players have friends in other sides.

THE LAING HERITAGE



Hayden's great uncle Ralph Laing (photo left), a left hand top order bat, won 25 Scottish caps between 1969 and 1979. His best performance was against Ireland in August 1976 at Hamilton Crescent when he scored 127*. He went on to be President of the Scottish Cricket Union in 1992. Elder brother Gordon (photo right), also a top order bat but right handed, won 28 Scottish caps between 1964 and 1974.



In June 1970 he scored 93 against Ireland at Perth.

Both played for Perthshire, when it was perhaps the strongest club in Scotland. Perthshire had regular friendly and occasional cup matches with Carlton. Ralph's best against Carlton was 77*, in 1976, at GL; Gordon's best against Carlton was 39* in 1972 also at GL.

CAN YOU HELP CARLTON CONTINUE TO IMPROVE?

Know a potential sponsor?

Got an idea for a fund raiser?

Got an idea for a social event?

Got a suggestion for how the club can improve?

Want to do a little to help now and then?

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