

Jesus College cricket in the early 1970s

I played cricket for Jesus College from 1972 to 1975, though chiefly in the first two years before exam pressures intruded! However when I was captain of the side in 1973, we bought a new scorebook for the new season and I find myself in possession of the previous one to this day – so I have records of the 1970 and 1971 seasons also.

Those two seasons were dominated by two batsmen who matriculated in 1969 – Bob Upton from Cardiff, who had played for the Welsh Secondary Schools – and Ed (now Baron) Faulks, previously of Wellington College. Between them they scored 11 fifties over those two seasons – Upton reaching 98 not out against Albion CC in 1970 - and Faulks showed his all-round ability with 5-46 against Trinity School Croydon in 1971.

But despite efforts and the support of other capable players, the College was not successful in Cuppers. In 1970 Balliol were beaten by 6 wickets but St Catherine's won the second round match by 4 wickets.

Jesus 71 (Faulks 37; Millener 5-11) St Catherine's 72-6 (Bodycombe 3-15)

The bowler destroying the Jesus batting on that occasion was New Zealander and Oxford Blue John Millener, who later became a Junior Research Fellow at Jesus. He played no more than once or twice for the College, but with his pace it was the only time I can recall praying that the batsman wouldn't send a catch in my direction at first slip! After Jesus, John continued his physics research career in the USA, but didn't stop playing cricket. He took 4-13 for the American All Stars as they defeated Tony Greig's World XI (including Gary Sobers, Greg Chappell and Sunil Gavaskar) at Shea Stadium in New York in 1978 and represented the USA in the 1982 ICC Trophy.

1971 saw a first round defeat for Jesus in Cuppers against Worcester College:

Jesus 105 (Ross 28) Worcester 106-1

The 1972 College side was captained by Andy "Tufty" Leech, but in practice he played very little at Bartlemas Close, as he was called up for duty in the Parks, gaining 12 first-class wickets, including future England opener Dennis Amiss twice in one match. However he missed out on selection for a Blue. College cricket was organised by Hon Secretary Mike Pedley, a dependable but dour opening bat from Stoke, and the side was generally captained by Bob Upton, who wore lightly his studies for his Maths finals and was far and away the best batsman in the side. With many of the previous year's team having graduated or spending their time in preparation for finals, we first year students formed the core of the side, featuring all-rounder Bryan Lewis, wicket-keeper John Wyn Griffith and the Yorkshire triumvirate of off-spinner Robert "Chubbs" Hall, medium-pacer Dave Link and yours truly.

Again in terms of results we were not terribly successful! One interesting fixture was against Northamptonshire Amateurs, a midweek collection of keen recreational cricketers augmented by a first-class player or two. In 1972 they featured John Pember, ex-Leicestershire pace bowler, who reduced us to 4 runs for 6 wickets at one point – numbers 2 to 7 scored 1 run between us.

In Cuppers we came up against Queen's College and lost a close game by only 5 runs.

Queen's 112-9 (Faulks 5-23) Jesus 107 (Morgan 25)

Leading the bowling attack for Queen's was Tim Lamb, whose subsequent career included over 500 wickets for Middlesex and Northamptonshire and eight years as CEO of the Test and County Cricket Board.

But while we took the game seriously and appreciated the best pitches I have ever played on, courtesy of groundsman Alf Toombs, we also found the cricket enjoyable as a social occasion. Woe betide the captain who didn't declare if still batting at 5pm - Mrs Alf's famed teas could not be delayed! Two or three times a year we would have lunch also as part of an all-day game – typically against Trinity School Croydon and the touring Cheshire Wanderers. I think Bryan Lewis and I must have been not out at lunch for the 1972 team photo below.



Jesus College CC 1972

Other opponents that stick in the memory from 1972 include a North Oxford side featuring Oxford United Manager Gerry Summers and his assistant Mick Brown (later of Manchester United), and a team called the Erratics, who lived up to their name by having an ageing and less than agile wicketkeeper concede 51 extras in our total of 137 – next highest score Morgan with just 18!

From my captaincy year of 1973 I have only the photo, the summary averages and my memory to rely on. Robert Hall was Hon Secretary, capably organizing the cricket season in parallel with leading the College Ball Committee (with Steeleye Span headlining) and perhaps presaging his current role as CEO of Ole Smoky Distillery in Gatlinburg, Tennessee! Postgraduate Bob Upton led the batting with 207 runs at an average of 29, followed up by Hugh Parry (134 at 19) and yours truly (128 at 14). Leading wicket-takers were Freshman fast bowler Mark Wakelam with 25 and Robert Hall with 22. Andy Leech captained the Authentics (University second team) that year, which helped give opportunities for several of us to play at that level – he only bowled 40 overs for the College in 1973, but took 11 wickets at less than 9 apiece. His involvement wasn't enough to give us Cuppers success though – I think it was St Catherine's who beat us that year!

However we did manage to beat Trinity School Croydon in a very tight match, and even gave Northamptonshire Amateurs a close game. I remember feeling very proud of myself for "seeing off" (ie actually surviving) the dangerous Pember, but then in my relief promptly hitting a slow half-volley from the new bowler straight into the hands of mid-off!

As a captain I was concerned about injuries to my pace bowlers. Mark Wakelam was a music student whose piano teacher objected to him playing cricket because of the risk to his fingers – Mark and I reached a compromise that I would declare before he came in, unless it was absolutely crucial for him to bat to save the game: in fact like many fast bowlers he was very proud of his batting and amassed 20 runs at an average of 3 over the season (still ahead of Dave Link though, who failed to trouble the scorers in any of his four trips to the crease that year!). We had failed to protect Bryan Lewis the previous season - as well as being an excellent cricketer Bryan was a top-ranked fencer, who gained international honours as well as multiple Blues with Epee and Sabre. Bryan avoided close fielding positions to protect his rapier-wielding hands, but while running full speed round the outfield in the attempt to prevent a boundary, he fell off the end of the Jesus cricket ground and down the six-foot drop which separated us from Lincoln. The consequent injury to his knee did not rule him out of the British Fencing Team at the Munich Olympics, but reduced mobility certainly didn't help his performance.



<u>T.V.</u> <u>O'LEARY</u>	<u>M.</u> <u>WYATT</u>	<u>A.</u> <u>SOKILL</u>	<u>M.</u> <u>WAKELAM</u>	<u>D.</u> <u>FULTON</u>	<u>M.</u> <u>CORDNER</u>	<u>F. H.</u> <u>CHOUDBURY</u>
<u>M. D.</u> <u>PEDLEY</u>	<u>B. J.</u> <u>LEWIS</u>	<u>J. R.</u> <u>HALL</u>	<u>D. D. V.</u> <u>MORGAN</u> <u>(CAPTAIN)</u>	<u>J. P.</u> <u>WYN GRIFFITH</u>	<u>D. H.</u> <u>PARRY</u>	<u>R. G.</u> <u>UPTON</u>

Jesus College CC 1973

1974 was my Finals year and I played less than in the previous seasons. Although we had lost the batting of Bob Upton, captain John Wyn Griffith had a powerful seam bowling attack at his disposal, seen dominating the back row of this picture with Andy Leech (available for college cricket in his final year) and Mark Wakelam, plus Freshmen Andy Meehan and Rob Gwyn. We also gained the batting capability of Kevin Bogue, who on one occasion nudged his way gently to 15 in a century opening stand, while Leech inaugurated Bazball forty years ahead of its time at the other end.



Jesus College CC 1974

I stayed on at Jesus for a postgraduate year, but played little cricket in 1975. However as President of the All Stars that year I was able to bring together a very good team to give the College a challenging game. I don't personally recall the result, but Andy Leech tells me that he was very pleased to score 50 off an attack led by Andy Meehan!



All Star XI 1975

Back row: Dave Link, Bryan Lewis, Andy Leech, Mike Pedley, Dick Ley, Pete Burley, Bob Upton
Front: Robert Hall, David Morgan, John Pyle, John Wyn Griffith.

David Morgan - Mathematics 1971;
President Jesus College All Stars 1974-75