

As you all know, the car manufacturer VW should by now have offered us millions to sponsor the Virtual Wisdener (VW), but as no call has been received, no email has hit the in-box and to Libby's knowledge, no pigeon has landed on the roof with a pre-contract agreement strapped to its right leg...then my only option was on Abbey's suggestion approach Vintage Wine and offer sole sponsorship in exchange for a constant supply of *Whispering Angel*...isolation is biting and the Furmedge supply of aforementioned rose' is dwindling. Abbey is in denial and it is taking all Lorraine's parenting skills to prevent a major Furmedge crisis.

Well, today has reverted to a typical April day, some rain, a little chilly and (under normal circumstances) the start has been delayed, and there is little chance of play before lunch. So while you are waiting for the official announcement of what the umpires are up to, why not take a little look through the pages of this, the latest Virtual Wisdener.

The latest request for your 'World XI' from players you have actually watched live proved too easy...again the response has been exceptional. Some of you have a knack for this and some of you (Mr John Lear) managed to get two teams in the top 26. I know, 26 is an odd number to have, but I thought using the letters of the alphabet was an easy option.

The new poser is below.

I have (finally) I hear you gasp, put together the isolation Quiz 1 final table. It is on the last page and I am pleased to announce that Isolation Quiz 2 is on the way. **If you would like to enter please email me.**

Also on the following pages I have printed part 1 of 'The Survival of Wisden by Murray Hedgcock. I am planning to reproduce all of the article over the next three issues.

I am incredibly fortunate that I am not only busy with the VW and with trying (with Richard Lawrence's help) to put the 'Leaves From The Past' special edition together, but also the selling side is going strong.

On that note a massive apology to anyone who has not received their 2020 edition. Every single one that was ordered for by April 8th for UK delivery was posted for arrival on the 9th, but I really hope you appreciate that there are some areas of the Royal Mail system that are struggling. I assure you it is on the way/in the system. Overseas orders were all posted on the 8th, but I know that the current situation has had a big impact on deliveries, again I am so sorry.

Please keep safe and from us all, we hope you enjoy the following pages.

Bill, Lorraine (who has promised to make me my favourite meal in the world -steak pie and chips - for lunch tomorrow. I know, deep down I am an easily-pleased northern lad), Abbey (constantly counting the remaining bottles of *Whispering Angel* in case any new bottles have been born overnight) and Libby (binoculars in hand and flak jacket worn searching the skies for the VW pigeon).

PS: Please forgive any grammatical errors in the VW

In one of my introductions I gave a description of what my wife Lorraine thought about cricket. Apparently she is not alone. Here is one reply I received:

Dear Bill,

You have set a challenge of choosing the best eleven you have seen play. I am just about to accept this challenge, but sadly it involves a dangerous expedition to the nether regions of 'bedroom four'.

I have to climb over a collection of Christmas cards, wrapping paper and dozens of those nauseating wine bags(empty now of course) which a generation of well-meaning parents presented as seasonal gifts.

Behind them are some of the children's toys and best clothes which have still to be sorted and cleared.

There is then a small space which houses some mysterious equipment which Samuel sometimes uses to 'create' and play music on his computer. Once I have crawled beyond this there are a series of boxes, one of which (!) holds my collection of old cricket scorecards.

I will use these to make my decision.

To quote Captain Oates; 'I may be some time!'

Best wishes,

The Next Poser

Mark Bowden (see team H in the World XI section) has put the cat amongst the pigeons, or in the current climate, he has put the person who thinks 'they' know best as the host of an 'isolation party' for all his friends (yes it really happened)...

Back to Mark - Mark found it difficult to choose two players from a wonderful selection of all-rounders he had watched...so here is our next poser, inadvertently courtesy of Mark

Choose your World XI, from all-rounders who have played First-Class cricket from 1970 to the present day. Put them in the most 'plausible' batting order possible. A wicket-keeper must be included (but not to bowl).

It can be a World XI, County XI, Single nation XI...your choice entirely.

Back in 2013 the Wisdener reproduced, over four issues, an article written by Murray Hedgcock for Wisden Cricket Monthly in 1992. The article appeared in the December 1992, January, February and March 1993 issues of WCM. Murray - member of the WCC since, has given me permission to reprint it again. Since 2013 our membership has increased five-fold so hopefully older members wont mind seeing it again. The Survival of Wisden Part 1 (of 4) is below.

Fitzgerald Avenue is a quiet, curving street in the south-west London suburb of East Sheen, an area famous for nothing much: it is a place you drive through en route to other places, like Richmond Park, Twickenham, or the Surrey countryside. Sheen grew out of the village of Mortlake, known for Watney's Brewery - a landmark on the final stage of the Boat Race - and the ornate, desert-tent-like tomb of explorer Sir Richard Burton in the Catholic churchyard. Fitzgerald Avenue meanders just off Upper Richmond Road by Beverley Brook, consisting mostly of small terrace houses of the 1880s.

From 1925 until 1944, this little residential street concealed an unexciting group of buildings which owned the right to display the coat of arms of King George V, and were contributing substantially to the world of sport.

You can still turn up a pathway between houses No. 14 and No. 16 on the east side to reach the backyard of Brook Court, a block of council flats fronting on to Priest's Bridge. For those 19 years, this yard was the site of the Fitzgerald Works, the factory and head office of John Wisden and Co. Ltd. Today, when sports goods are largely imported from the Far East, most remaining British factories are in the provinces, but between the wars, London boasted works dotted through the capital. None was as significant - nor as forgotten today - as the Fitzgerald Works, proudly labelled: 'By Appointment - Athletic Outfitters to the King'. What precise use His dignified Majesty George V had for an athletic outfitter is unclear. His sporting interests were more those of an English country gentleman operating on the old principle: 'It's a lovely day. Let's go out and kill something.'

John Wisden made neither shotguns nor cartridges, and was not a supplier of angling equipment. But publicity material of the 1930s proudly labelled the company as manufacturer and exporter of all requisites for: 'Athletics, badminton, basketball, baseball, bandy-sticks, boxing, cricket, croquet, fives, football, golf, hockey, lawn tennis, lawn bowls, lacrosse, netball, polo, quoits, racquets, squash racquets, stoolball, table tennis, water polo.'

If the Monarch made little use of the products of Fitzgerald Works, his subjects worldwide, and sport enthusiasts outside the British Empire, maintained constant demand for the top-quality goods poured out by the factory and its skilled craftsmen.

John Wisden in 1931 issued the third edition (others appeared in 1917 and 1922) of a publicity brochure The Past and Present of Wisden's, with some interesting sporting notabilia 1850-1931. This includes a delightful article by an unnamed visitor to the works, telling us that 'Mail days at Mortlake are very exciting days indeed.' The packing department 'becomes filled with parcels, large and small, and

work is carried on at high pressure for, if one of those parcels should miss a mail, it generally means a delay of a week.'

The writer looks at consignments sent outside Europe, starting with tennis balls for Rabat - 'in this wild country of Morocco' - and for the Cape Verde Islands. Next was Ashanti: This parcel contained tennis racquets, strung with a patent tropical gut, and the only kind possible for use in such a humid part of the equator. They are carried by steamer from Takoradio, that fine new harbour from where they send our cocoa, after which these racquets, which first saw the light of a dreary English winter's day, progress by rail and car to Kumasi. It may be that some have a further journey to take into Tamale of the Northern Territories. No railways there, and in the rains, no roads either. Only the broad back of a native to carry our racquets. What a journey for this parcel lying here! And so on: cricket balls for Cape Town, bats for Kimberley, tennis balls for Bulawayo, a large quantity of tennis balls for Egypt, cricket and tennis equipment for Jerusalem, more for Aden, onwards to Persia with tennis balls and racquets, parcels for India ('too many to be noted'), squash balls for Afghanistan, and parcels for Mandalay, Penang, Malacca and Singapore. 'Sumatra, Java and New Guinea also had their parcels, but I was most interested to see one for the Cocos Isles, the most lonely place to which we send our goods, for only three relief boats visit it per year, and if we miss a mail it may be that these Englishmen, whose task is to protect our cable service, will be deprived of their tennis for many months.'

The imaginary journey goes on with supplies for Australia and New Zealand, China and Japan, Chile, Buenos Aires (squash equipment), West Indies, Mexico City ('implements for their own national game' - what could that be?), big supplies of badminton gear for Montreal, squash racquets for New York - and 'back again at Mortlake where the packages are being piled into a red Post Office van to leave us for ever'.

The brochure (at 96 pages practically a book) includes full-page advertisements detailing equipment produced at Fitzgerald Works, with tennis racquets including The Valkyrie Tropic, The New Wisden, The Tenax - Astus - Cosmos - Exceller - Blue Comet - Cranbourn - Impetus. The area link comes with a racquet named 'The Sheen' - do any still exist, tucked away in local lofts? (Sheen was the ancient name for Richmond).

Also based at the Fitzgerald Works was Denbys Hard Courts Ltd, a subsidiary making artificial-surface lawn-tennis courts. More detail comes in Wisden Cricketers' Almanack of the same year (1931), a full-page advertisement declaring simply that the company provides 'The best hard courts'.

The final message of the Wisden brochure declares firmly: 'We desire to inform our customers and friends that we do not pay commission or pecuniary consideration of any kind to

famous players whose names may appear in connection with a brand of article marketed by us. We feel this announcement to be necessary, as we find that a section of the public believe that where a famous name appears in connection with any article, commission or royalty is paid, and so cost of the particular article increased.'

If this were the continuing Wisden attitude, in an increasingly commercial age it is no wonder we rarely see the name in sports shops, alongside all the flashy branded gear recommended - at big fees - by the stars of sport today.

Wisden had no trouble getting the sports heroes of a less greedy age to recommend its equipment, notably in cricket, the sport in which the name has held its most special significance. Past and Present of John Wisden prints photographs of more than 100 bats displayed in its West End showroom museum at 15 Great Newport Street, alongside Leicester Square station. Four bats are signed by the turn-of-the-century Australian captain Joe Darling: two bear the inscription that each (unusually by today's concept of personal equipment) was 'shared by Trumper, Noble and Darling during the tour of the 1902 Australian XI and there was over 2000 runs made with it. Beautiful bat to drive with'. Another bat has, stuck down on the blade, headed notepaper of the Crystal Palace-based London County Cricket Club, dated Oct 27,1900, to say the writer had promised to score a century with it, and had made more than 1000 runs with it, so would like two more like it. The signature: W. G. Grace, the most towering figure in the history of the game, the man who lifted cricket from a rough and ready pastime into a national passion.

A list of 'Odds and Ends' records famed players doing great deeds with Wisden bats: Wisden hockey balls used in international matches, and the visiting Australian women's team using Wisden hockey sticks; a Wisden tennis racquet taken to the Gold Coast and 'flung into the corner of a grass hut, giving good service as a swotter' before being returned intact to the works; the Wisden Standard squash ball used regularly in the England Amateur Championship; Wisden boxing gloves used exclusively for Albert Hall contests; and so



on. But cricket was always the showcase of Wisden, primarily because the founder was one of the great cricket names of his day. John Wisden (Pictured, left) was born at Brighton on Sept 5, 1826, and played for Sussex from 1845 to 1863 as a bowler of three distinct styles. He began as a fast round-arm bowler, in the days before the arm was

allowed to be raised above the shoulder; after 1857 or thereabouts, he dropped his speed to bowl medium-pace - and also bowled slow underhand.

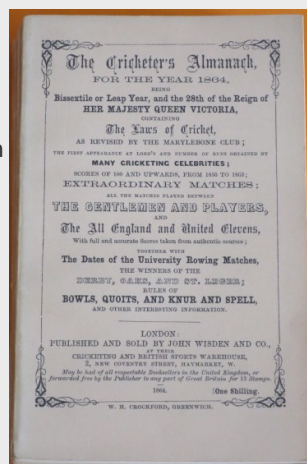
He shared cricket history by touring North America with George Parr's team of 1859- the first overseas trip by English cricketers. The visitors won their eight matches easily in Montreal, Hoboken, Philadelphia, Hamilton and Rochester, and the worst part of the tour was the return voyage when the Atlantic was at its roughest, one player declaring piteously he would 'never see land again'.

Wisden was one of the best bowlers of his time, right from his teenage entry into the game at an insignificant 5ft 4ins in height and 7 stone. He earned a nickname, 'The Little Wonder', and before his pace slowed, batsmen were said to fear his 'very fast and ripping deliveries'. But Wisden was no bullying fast bowler: he was known for unfailing good humour, a genial disposition, as well as great keenness and tremendous stamina. He was also a correct, patient batsman who was a regular member of the All-England XI, the professional team which toured England playing all sorts of opponents in the days before an organised County Championship, let alone international cricket.

A sprain received while playing racquets, which led to increasing trouble with rheumatism, took Wisden out of first-class cricket in 1863, and one year later he launched the most famous sporting annual in the world. This is Wisden Cricketers' Almanack, which in 1864 sold at one shilling for its 112 pages. Today that issue will cost you probably a couple of thousand pounds, if you can find it.

Wisden has come out every year since then, including two world wars. Its traditional daffodil-yellow dust jacket is a sign of spring and the new cricket season when it is launched in mid-April. It is the foundation of any cricket library, its 129 issues demanding 15ft of shelving, and worth perhaps £20,000 all told.

Wisden began selling cricket gear in 1850 at Leamington, and in 1855 opened a 'cricket and cigar shop' at No. 2 Coventry Street, off the Hay-market. In 1870 it became officially 'John Wisden & Co.', removing to 21 Cranbourn Street, Leicester Square, in 1872.



Once again, thank you to Murray Hedgcock and WCM Editor of the time, David Frith, for allowing us to reproduce 'The Survival of Wisden.'

Part two will be in the next Virtual Wisden.

The latest challenge was - Choose your World XI but it must be players that you have personally seen play (live, not on TV, radio etc) and it must be in batting order.

Mine was: Atherton, Gooch, Kohli, Smith (Steve), Lloyd (Clive), Botham, Stokes, Khan (Imran), Hegg (Warren), Holding, Warne. I Have chosen 26 from all the ones sent in....which of these is your favourite?

A: Keith Russell Boycott Lawry Richards Viv Javed Sobers Botham Knott Marshall Warne Underwood Ambrose	E: Frank Thompson Gooch Greenidge Richards (Sir Viv) Ramprakash Pieteron Botham Stokes Prior (WK) Warne McGrath Lillee	I: Peter Ackerman Richards (B) Greenidge Richards (Sir Viv) Tendulkar Smith Waugh (S) Gilchrist Warne Marshall Roberts Holding	M: Paul Hilton Cook Atherton Chanderpaul Smith (Steve) Kohli Stokes Flintoff Prior Warne McGrath Anderson
B: David Ackland Barry Richards Greenidge Marshall Sachin Tendulkar Clive Lloyd Ben Stokes Trevor Bailey Adam Gilchrist Malcolm Marshall Shane Warne Derek Shackleton	F: Paul Wetherall Cook Strauss Root Smith (Steve) Ponting Kohli Stokes Dhoni (wk) Warne Anderson Lyon	J: Graeme Foster Gooch Greenidge Ramprakash Hick Tendulkar Villas (D,wk) Botham Stokes Akram (W) Holding Warne	N: Giles Falconer Richards Gavaskar Dravid Lara Richards* Sobers Alan Knott+ Richard Hadlee Malcolm Marshall Shane Warne Derek Underwood
C: James Dewar Hutton Richards B Bradman (capt) Richards V Kohli Stokes Miller Botham Evans (closely followed by Sara Taylor!) wk Warne Muralitharan	G: Trevor Bedells Cook Greenidge Richards (Sir Viv) Kohli Lloyd (Clive) Smith (Steve) Botham Marshall Murray Warne Garner	K: Mark Tabot Milburn Worrell - Vice Captain May Neil Harvey Keith Miller Sobers Benaud - Captain Evans - Wkt K Lindwall Laker Tyson	P: Maggie Daniels (Lancs only) Atherton Lloyd (D) Law Hayes Lloyd (C) Flintoff Villas Watkinson Akram (W) Holding Muralitharan
D: Alan Newman Greenidge B.Richards Border C.Lloyd * V.Richards Stokes Knott + Holding Ambrose Warne Underwood	H: Mark Bowden Greenidge Gooch Richards (Sir Viv) Smith (Steve) Kohli Stokes Botham Healy Warne Marshall Holding	L: David Bown Boycott Marshall Sangakkara Compton Law Sobers Murray (J.T.) Trueman Van Der Bijl Bedi Muralitharan	Q: Chris Finch Trescothick Atherton Root Williamson Smith (S) Pieteron McCullum Butler Warne McGrath Anderson

R:**Jim Harding**

Boycott
Cook
Richards (sir V)
Tendulkar
Kohli
Smith (S)
Stokes
Knott
Warne
Holding
Marshall

S:**John Lear (1)**

Engineer
Greenidge
Harvey
Cowdrey
Pietersen
Sobers
Imran Khan
Warne
Hall
Lindwall
Muralitharan

T:**John Lear (2)**

Gavaskar
Turner
Worrell
Compton
Kallis
Botham
Gilchrist
Trueman
Lillee
Gibbs
Bedi

U:**U:****Neil Nelson**

Boycott
Gooch
Kallis
Tendulkar
Botham
Imran
Knott
Warne
Holding
Waqar Younis
McGrath

V:**Adrian Fowler**

Gavaskar
Greenidge
Richards (Sir V)
Tendulkar
Smith (S)
Waugh (S)
Stokes
Knott
Warne
Holding
Roberts

W:**Jeff Reid**

Boycott
Gavaskar
Richards (Sir V)
Abbas (Zaheer)
Pietersen
Botham
Dev (Kapil)
Taylor (R)
Akram (W)
Warne
Lillee

X:**Tom Hannaway**

Mohammed (S)
Turner (G)
Root
Smith (S)
Ponting
Waugh (S)
Khan (I)
Knott
Warne
Roberts
Holding

Y:

Elaine Munro
Cook
Atherton
Smith (S)
Kohli
Pietersen
Stokes
Dhoni
Warne
Broad
McGrath
Anderson

Z:**Len Roberts**

Boycott
Rogers
Trott
Tavare
Steele (D)
Willey (P)
Taylor (R)
Emburey
Old
Hendrick
McGrath

Comments on Team selection:

James Dewar (C) - 'I have used a bit of licence, as my father took me to Lord's when I was 2 years old, specifically so that I could say I had seen Bradman bat against the Gentlemen of England - he scored 150!'
David Ackland (B) - 'The inclusion of the No 11 and the Marshall twins may say something about my County allegiances.'

Trevor Bedells (G) - 'Here you go, a World XI I have seen play live since my first ever visit to a Test at Headingley 1968 when recipients of their first England caps were Messrs Prideaux & Fletcher'

Graeme Foster (J) - 'I decided to restrict my XI to matches I have seen in the championship and how the players performed in the games I watched.'

Mark Talbot (K) went for pre-1970's players only, all of whom he saw play live.

Paul Hilton (M) 'The hardest to pick were the openers. Over the past twenty years I have seen an abundance of quality batsmen from 3 to 7, but struggled with the openers.'

Len Roberts (Z) - 'I'm thinking 180-3 at the end of the first day, 350-6dec by tea on Day 2, then bowl the opposition out twice. I looked at this as the most combative, determined, reliable XI I could put together.'

Tom Hannaway (X) - 'This was really difficult and I wanted to put Viv Richards in but I never saw him live.'

Maggie Daniels (P) - 'I have watched Lancashire for nearly half a century and there is still a degree of sadness as to the brevity of Frank Hayes' career. He was an outstanding cricketer.'

Mark Bowden (H) - 'You don't make these things easy...I had Kapil Dev, Imran Khan, Ben Stokes, Ian Botham, Freddie Flintoff, Sir Richard Hadlee, and Jacques Kallis to fit into two places...I wish the question had been about choosing a team of complete all-rounders.'

...oh Mark, you should be careful what you wish for.

I have tried, for The Wisdener, to find quirky, odd stories that are a little different. I hope the ones below are of interest

Jonny Briggs

For the Third Test against Australia at Leeds in 1899 England selected Lancashire's Johnny Briggs. Briggs had last represented his country during the previous MCC tour to Australia in 1897-98 and his selection caused some surprise. In a distinguished career Briggs had achieved much. In 1885, he developed amazingly as a bowler: having scarcely bowled at all in previous seasons, he took 67 wickets for 13.74 each and in 1886, his bowling helped England achieve a 3-0 clean sweep of the series, their last whitewash victory in a series of three or more Tests in the Ashes until 1977. His batting did not suffer. Briggs hit a career-best 186 against Surrey at Liverpool – adding a then-record 173 for the tenth wicket with Dick Pilling.

In the exceptionally dry summer of 1887, Briggs took 100 wickets in a season for the first time, whilst in the appalling summer of 1888 he was consistently deadly on the treacherous pitches. His 160 wickets cost only 10.49 each and the following year he was one of Wisden's Six Great Bowlers of the Year. According to Wisden, following his exceptional performance in the England v Australia Lord's Test of 1886..."From that day down to the present he has been justly regarded as one of the most able and destructive bowlers in the country..."

Briggs was ruthless on the matting in South Africa's first two Test matches in 1888/9 taking 15 for 28 in the second Test, of which fourteen were clean bowled.

For Lancashire and England, Briggs shouldered an incredible burden. For Lancashire, as a professional or "player" in a team largely made up of "gentleman" amateurs he was expected to open the bowling and sometimes to bowl all day in tandem with the other professionals; Barlow, Crossland and Mold. He toured Australia five times and went to South Africa, experiencing very high temperatures. Professional cricketers were expected to play through injuries, if they didn't play, they would not be paid.

Briggs also bowled the third ever hat trick in Test Cricket. It happened at Sydney in 1892 when he finished off the Australian second innings. But prior to the Leeds Test match he had suffered a blow over the heart from Tom Hayward. Though this injury was not thought severe, Briggs collapsed during the match. Rather dramatically, the following appeared in Wisden, "The selection of Briggs had, as everyone knows, a disastrous result, the popular player being seized on the Thursday evening with illness of so serious a character as to prevent him playing any more during the season and rendering necessary his detention in the Cheadle Asylum. It was a sad end to a very brilliant career. On the form in which he had been bowling there was some reason for picking Briggs but the committee made a bad mistake in not retaining Rhodes?"

Such was the severity of his injury that he was one of the first patients to receive an X ray examination and it was found that a rib had damaged his heart; he did not play for the rest of the season.

In 1900, he made a remarkable comeback, taking all ten wickets for 55 against Worcestershire and scoring over 800 runs, but soon afterwards it became clear he was suffering severely from mental illness. Confined to an asylum, Briggs never recovered and died early in 1902 at the age of just 39 — a tragic loss to cricket

'New-Fangled Gadgets'

A letter published in The Wisdener, issue 13, Summer 2015.

Sir,

I was at Trent Bridge on both the Thursday and the Friday of the Aussie Test and I must admit that the number of people (around me) who spent the majority of their time on hand-held gadgets amazed me. I was chatting to the woman alongside and I asked her - politely - what she was doing on her mobile phone all the time. She said she was just keeping up with people on Facebook and following Twitter feeds about the Test.

Her explanation reminded me of a letter that appeared in a recent edition of The Oldie magazine. The writer was Peter White from Derbyshire:

"I haven't got a computer, but I was told about Facebook and Twitter and I am trying to make friends outside Facebook and Twitter while applying the same principles. Every day I walk down the street and tell passers-by what I have eaten, how I feel, what I have done the night before and what I will do for the rest of the day. I give them pictures of my wife, my daughter, my dog and me gardening and on holiday, spending time by the pool...And it works.

I already have four people following me; two police officers, a social worker and a psychiatrist."

My neighbour at the cricket missed at least half of the Australian wickets to fall...probably too busy finding out what Shane Warne was telling everyone on Facebook what he had eaten for breakfast.

Patrick Springer

(Non-Facebook or Twitter user)

A massive thank you to the 168 people who over the course of nearly three weeks put up with me telephoning them and being the Ken Bruce (or Magnus Magnusson - showing your age Bill, or Jeremy Paxman) of the WCC. Seriously, what a response and I have to admit that I fully enjoyed it. I decided to publish the Top 30 in the league table on the following page. The total mark available was 36, so a jolly well done to Fraser Simm for getting 35 points. If any one would like the questions from IQ 1 (for fun only) just ask.

There will be an IQ 2 - so please contact me to take part

Virtual Wisdener Isolation Quiz 1- Final Table

1st	Fraser Simm	35
2nd	Paul Munro	32
3rd	Ian Whitefield	28
	David Bown	28
4th	Chris Boothby	26
5th	Jay Evans	25
	Peter McDougal	25
	Helen Erskine	25
	Lindsay Foster	25
	Andy Forbes	25
11th	Christopher Rowsell	24
	Simon Hamilton	24
13th	Hilary Richardson	23
	Stephen Williams	23
	Dominic Warren	23
16th	David Holmes	22
	Michelle Gordon	22
	Alistair Henderson	22
	Howard Clayton	22
20th	Graeme Foster	21
21st	Kevin Drummond	20
22nd	David May	19
	Martin Pether	19
	David Hutchinson	19
	Will Davies	19
26th	Gerry Wilkinson	18
	Al Pycroft	18
28th	Peter Drake	17
29th	Christine Mulhearn	17
30th	George Shield	17