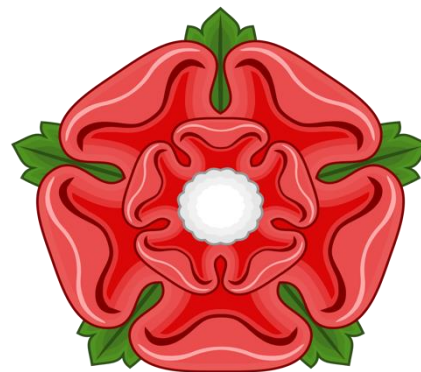


Lancashire Association of Cricket Officials



Newsletter
August 2020

Welcome to our first Newsletter since cricket resumed, I hope you find something of interest to read. As we return to a 'new normal' (not sure you can return to something 'new' but I'm sure you get my meaning!) we have also decided to return to the bi-monthly issue of our Newsletter. I do hope you have enjoyed these monthly versions during lockdown. I must thank all our Contributors and particularly our Editor, Tim Mansfield the LACO Communications Officer for all his hard work in collating, editing and formatting the content as well as the excellent series of interviews. Although this will be our final monthly Newsletter please be assured that should anything urgent need to be communicated we will issue a one of single topic versions to keep you updated.

On this edition we have another article on Disability Cricket. We have now heard from an Umpire, a Scorer and now a player involved in this form of the game. If you haven't experienced it do try and catch a game, the level of skill enthusiasm and indeed bravery involved is really something to behold and we make no apology for featuring this aspect of our sport in recent Newsletters. The participants deserve all the publicity they can get.

As previewed in our July edition we are now delighted to launch our new LACO website:

LancashireACO.wordpress.com

In this month's Newsletter:

New Website

**Rob Hales on his experience of
Stage 4 cricket**

**Tim Mansfield interviews
Lancashire's most successful
captain**

**Jeremy Alderson reviews Ian
Gould's book**

**Peter Robinson reflects on his
career as an Umpire's tutor**

**Paddy Brown suggests a radical
change to umpire appointments**

**Remember that we are happy
to take contributions on any
cricket related topic, not just
Officiating – deadline for the
October edition is September
22nd**

Please take time to read the article below which contains details of the content and visit it soon. The CPD material in particular is excellent and we are proud to promote this to the wider cricket community both within and outside our County.

We also have our first book review. If anyone wants to submit similar book reviews please feel free to do so and we will include them in future editions.

Finally, I must refer to the thought provoking article on Umpire Appointments by Paddy Brown in which he advocates the idea of a Countywide Appointments process. I would add that this is not current LACO policy but we would love to hear peoples' views either by email on Twitter @Lancashire ACO or on our Facebook page Lancashire Scorers & Umpires (LACO)

I do hope you enjoy reading all the articles and find them informative. Enjoy the rest of this truncated season and we will be back in October with a post season version of our Newsletter.

Return to a 'new form' of cricket

So after 44 Saturdays without any cricket and with my three previous attempts (2 friendlies and 1 league game) falling foul of the atrocious weather, I finally returned to the middle on Saturday for a local derby between Chorley and Leyland. Having been heavily involved in the efforts to both get cricket back on in the County and in designing the new rules and regulations that apply, I thought I would record my thoughts on how the 'new normal' worked having finally had chance to see at first hand.

I know that a few of our colleagues had stated that it wouldn't be 'proper cricket' but I have to say that is not how I found it. While the game was a bit one sided it was certainly competitive. Before going into detail I want to make it clear, I am not a scientist and I am not qualified to say whether the regulations that were put in place as a condition of allowing cricket to be the first team sport to resume are logical or necessary. As an umpire my role is to ensure that the players keep to these new COVID regulations to the best of my ability while using my common sense. This is a duty that we as officials owe to cricket, sport in general and the communities in which we live. As I stated in my letter to the Lancashire MPs when lobbying for their support to 'get the game on':

"In relation to risk, cricket requires a high level of discipline under normal circumstances due to the inherent dangers already associated with playing the game. Discipline is enforced on the field of play by 2 umpires, backed up by experienced administrators in the event of any breaches. I can think of no other sport better equipped to ensure any necessary additional guidelines are strictly adhered to, umpires are well trained, organised and administered by the Association of Cricket Officials to ensure the highest possible standards at all levels of recreational cricket."

Turning now to the specific measures and how they worked in practice I will take each in turn. I will not deal with the 'off field' measures as I see these as being more the responsibility of the clubs to manage and enforce.

⇒ On Field Social Distancing

On the whole I felt this was OK, certainly players didn't celebrate in a huddle at the fall of the wicket although both sides did probably get within the 2m recommended distance of their colleagues at times but certainly no more that they would in everyday life. I felt safe in my interactions with bowlers, fielders and batsmen. One point I would make is that we, as umpires, should set a good example and make sure we are seen to maintain good, even exaggerated social distancing between ourselves however unnatural that may feel. I know for some this won't be a problem!

⇒ *Ball returned direct to the Bowler*

This worked well after a reminder to one of the sides (one side had played fewer games to date than the other). It is important that the bowler is aware that the ball is going to be passed directly back to him, if he turns his back and walks away things are more difficult! One benefit of this is I felt it improved the over rate.

⇒ *Ball returned to base of the stumps at fall of wicket*

This quickly became the norm and caused no problems.

⇒ *Umpires replacing bails*

I am pretty sure this will be hated by some officials but in Saturday's game we had no problems. Both wicket keepers were very good and weren't forever removing the bails and my colleague and I are both, if I say so myself, fairly active on the field so this really wasn't an issue for us on the day.

⇒ *Batsmen Running Lines*

The side who had played more games managed this really well, the other team needed some reminding but generally, after a reminder, all the batsmen adopted well to this condition. One plea on behalf of groundsmen everywhere, wherever the running line is marked please make sure that the batsmen run down the edge of a wicket and not down the middle so as to preserve future wickets. Of course for judging run outs we need to move a good distance from the wickets but this is probably a good habit to get into (see our CPD video on 'Positioning' on our new website!).

⇒ *No sweat or saliva on the ball*

I thought players would forget but I didn't see one instance of a player applying sweat or saliva. One did wipe the ball down the back of his shirt but a quiet word soon put a stop to this. As umpires this should again make us adopt good practice and watch the ball carefully when not in play.

⇒ *Equipment not being used*

Although not an issue from an umpires perspective, nobody even offered me their equipment to hold, I must admit players did tend to pass caps and sweaters to each other rather than take them off the field as required. Some more education is needed here I feel.

⇒ *Hygiene Breaks*

As long as the team is well organised, as both were on Saturday, these didn't slow the game down and were handled well. I must admit 6 overs seemed to come round rather quickly and personally I wish it was, say every 10 overs instead. But 6 overs it is and ALL must players treat this as important and make sure that they do sanitise at every break.

One small anecdote, one of the Captains on Saturday forgot his cricket whites and had to borrow a pair which unfortunately had very shallow pockets resulting a frequent trail of sanitiser, ball sanitiser wipes and various other items being dropped around the field at various times. Note to Captains, make sure you have deep pockets!

All in all I felt that the on field measures worked well and they are a small price to pay to allow us to get the game on. We need to make sure that we continue to maintain standards, I am sure that teams will get used to these changes and if the pandemic continues and they become the 'new normal' then so be it. They certainly won't put me off from occupying the 'best seat in the house.'

New Website

As an organisation, LACO has been aware for a while that we needed a Website. We had been working with LCF for some time to improve our presence on the Lancashire Cricket website but various limitations on the content that website could host meant that if we were to continue to serve our members to the standards we wanted in this digital age having our own site was an imperative.

Following a request in an earlier Newsletter, one of our members Beverley Wilson kindly volunteered to help us establish a site. Without her contribution we wouldn't have been able to make the progress we have and I want record my thanks to her for all her hard work.

We are now able to launch our website:

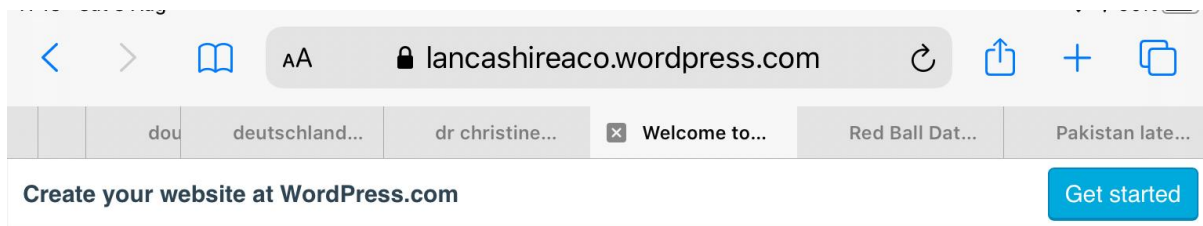
LancashireACO.wordpress.com

We hope that you 'bookmark' the site and visit it regularly. We are very keen to increase the content and would welcome suggestions for items that you would like to see included.

At present we have the following information contained on the website:

- News items including links to copies of our recent Newsletters.
- Links to the MCC Laws as well as to the Regulations for the Lancashire Knock Out and all the leagues in Lancashire who publish their match regulations on line.
- Details of how to become an umpire or scorer
- A Training page which explains all the courses that we offer and the dates and venue where they will run. This also contains links to the booking site.
- A Continuing Professional Development (CPD) page where you will currently find 8 modules covering various aspects of umpiring, these can be provided to tutors for face to face Powerpoint presentations or are available to watch online with full commentary. We hope to add to these and would welcome your suggestions for future topics to be covered.

We hope you enjoy using the website, together with our Twitter and Facebook accounts, as well as these regular Newsletters, we hope to keep you informed and updated.



Lancashire
Association of Cricket Officials

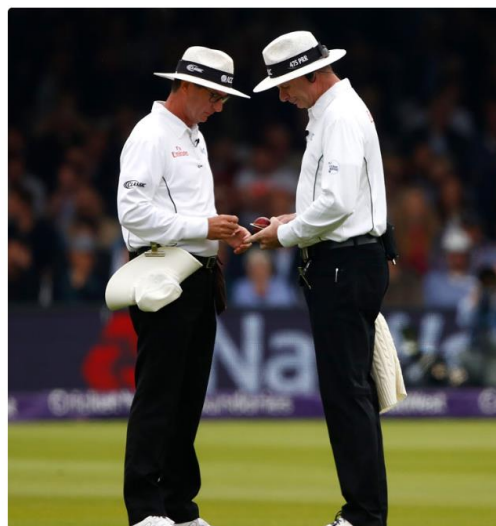
Welcome to Lancashire ACO

News and Information about LACO

[Home](#) [About](#) [Training](#) [Contact](#) [Laws and Regulations](#) [News](#)

Home

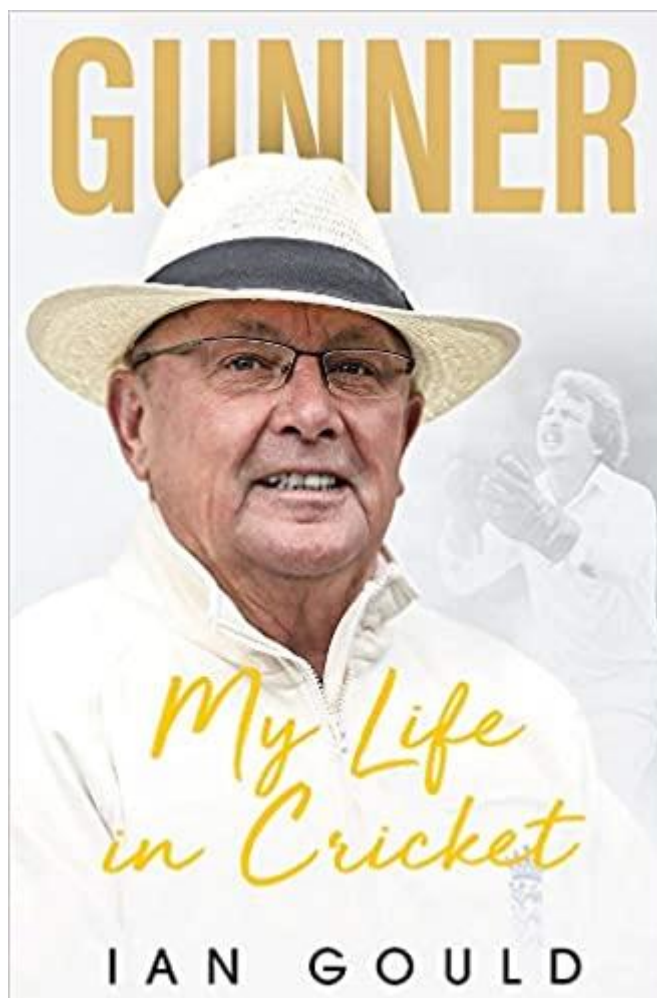
Welcome to the website of the Lancashire Association of Cricket Officials (L.A.C.O)



[How to become a cricket official](#)

Book Review

"Gunner: My Life in Cricket" is the fascinating and revealing story of the career of Ian Gould, the former wicketkeeper who played and coached at County and International level for Sussex, Middlesex and England and also umpired at the highest level. He became one of the greatest and



most respected umpires in the game.

As a member of the elite umpires panel for thirteen years, it is fair to say that he has many tales to tell, including his centre stage involvement in some of the game's biggest controversies. His part in the infamous "Sandpaper" Test in 2018 is a real eye-opener.

One of his greatest skills is man-management and his understanding of the current-day pressures of the International game. Balancing the needs of the game and the art of forming a rapport with the players is something that he has achieved to perfection.

He talks candidly about his battle with depression (which caused him to take a break from the game) and the people who helped him overcome one of the worst periods of his life. He also has very strong opinions on DRS and the role of the third umpire in the game.

There are also details of how he very nearly became a professional footballer for Arsenal at the very start of his sporting career, when he was a particularly good goalkeeper. This earned him the nickname of "Gunner". His thoughts on his future in the game and the future of cricket in general make this an excellent account of the life of one of the true characters of the game.

Reviewed by Jeremy Alderson

Marking Umpires and Lord Beefy

Since our last newsletter it has been announced that Ian Botham will become Lord Botham. You may recall that Lord Beefy was not pleased when John Holder and colleague, Ken Palmer, made Somerset play on a drying, turning pitch against Middlesex. After Somerset enjoyed an amazing win, Botham “You two have gone from poor to satisfactory in my book”.

Continuing with our series about those involved in Visually Impaired Cricket, I interviewed Lancashire captain, Sheraz Chohan.

Sheraz Chohan is 43 and was born in Oldham. Sheraz was born with visual impairment and although he played open cricket as a boy at both school and Werneth Cricket Club, he found that he couldn't continue to play as his sight deteriorated. Cricket however remained a passion, but VI cricket was underdeveloped in Lancashire and when after a gap of some years, Sheraz wanted to start playing again he created his own pathway in the county for VI cricket after initially playing again thanks to Galloways. He was pivotal to the establishment of Lancashire Lions in 2011 and has been the Club Secretary since then.



Sheraz is an inspiration to all who come into contact with him. His qualifications include Level 3 Youth Worker, Level 2 Fitness Instructor and Level 2 Cricket Coach.

In 2012 the team entered the BCEW Development League under Sheraz's captaincy and they went on to win the league with a 100% record. They were then promoted to the BCEW National League the following year, finishing fourth when they also won the Brian Johnston Memorial Trust competing against three other teams from the north and four teams from the south. This tournament took place over a weekend in Leicester which again they won with a 100% record 7 out of 7 matches.

"In my role as captain we also won the international series against Bulgaria in 2014 and hosted Bulgaria for the first of its kind 'United European Vision' project. As a result of the win the team received the honour of being presented with medals from the Lord Mayor of Manchester."

Sheraz told me: "It's quite a tactical game. The B1s are as important if not more so than the partially sighted. We play all around the country. Last year we met Kent, Surrey, London Metros, Somerset, Yorkshire, Sussex and Surrey, but sadly VI cricket where social distancing is impossible hasn't been able to resume." He says that field placing safe really important in VI cricket and that the game is very strategic in terms of batting orders and the use of runners. He says it is a game in which umpires need to concentrate closely at all times and he is really grateful for the support of LCC Disabilities Development Officer, Rob Tipping. Sheraz says that as VI cricket has developed in the county "all the umpires have been brilliant, but Hughie Evans stands out."

My 25 years in umpire education by Peter Robinson. I started training umpires about 25 years ago, when the ACU&S was the organising body. In those days, we just went through the laws one by one out using Tom Smith, with little or no guidance on field craft and best practice.



Peter stepping in when the Westmorland League was short of an umpire this season

I attended a couple of tutor training courses run by ACU&S that were of limited value.

Fred Elmore was the Education Officer for Lancashire back then and he attended some of the courses I ran at Warton CC near Carnforth. Fred was very supportive and was always available on the phone if I needed advice.

Computers were just starting to become a household item back then, but they were a mystery to me and I never thought they would catch on.

After about five years of running these courses, the ACU&S suddenly produced a DVD with a course based around a powerpoint presentation. I have to say that, at the time, I didn't own a laptop and hadn't a clue what a DVD was. Anyway, I attended a training course and quickly realized the benefits of powerpoint graphics for training umpires, so I persevered and learned the basics of computers so that I could use the new technology.

The Westmorland Cricket League purchased a laptop for me to use and I borrowed a projector. It was a relief when, after switching everything on for the first of these courses, the images appeared on the screen. The feedback from course participants was overwhelmingly positive and this gave me the drive to develop my delivery techniques to better suit the new style of the courses.

After several years of delivering these powerpoint courses, the first grainy low quality videos started to appear. I found out how to link these into powerpoint and, despite the poor quality, they further enhanced the benefits and professionalism of the presentations.

With the benefits of video in the training of umpires clear, I became frustrated by the poor quality of the clips that were available at the time and I was convinced that there must be a way to improve on the quality. I spent a year trying to find a method without success, until I was in Currys buying a new TV. I mentioned to the sales rep what I was trying to achieve. He said they had a piece of equipment in the back store that he thought might work, there was no demand for this item and they had removed it from display. He spoke to the manager and we agreed that I could purchase it with the understanding that my money would be retuned if it didn't work.

I nervously connected the equipment to our TV and my laptop and set it to record a short cricket clip. I couldn't believe that, after all this searching I had chanced upon the answer, the equipment worked perfectly and the recorded clip could be saved onto my desktop as a video file in the same quality as it was shown on the TV.

I put the video through my editing software and this resulted in a good quality video clip that could be incorporated as a useful training aid for the courses.

Over the next few months, I built up a library of clips and decided I should share them with other tutors.

The ECB ACO had just taken over from the ACU&S and Nick Cousins had become head of ACO. I contacted Nick and told him of what I had produced. He and Glyn Pearson, who was now the ACO National Education Officer, arranged to come up and view the videos. It emerged that they were also trying to find a way to record videos but as yet had failed to find a way.

Following this meeting, I was asked to incorporate the videos into the new suite of courses that the ACO were producing. By now, my powerpoint skills had improved dramatically and as I added the videos to the presentations, it became apparent to me how amateurish the slides were. I mentioned this to Nick and Glyn and they agreed and asked me to do whatever I felt necessary to improve them.

I had now become part of the production team for umpire education material with regular meetings with Nick and Glyn, many of these were at Lord's which initially I found quite daunting. Chris Kelly also sometimes attended these meetings. Initially I found Chris quite difficult to work with, but we found a way and, over the years, I have found him to be most helpful with his knowledge and experience. He remains my go to person if I need advice on umpire education matters.

By now High Definition TV had arrived. The picture quality was a different level altogether and made my standard definition video clips look dated, so I had to find a way to record in HD. This took 18 months of searching the internet and pestering people, until I believed I had found the method. I discussed this with Nick Cousins and he agreed that ECB ACO would finance the purchase of the hardware I thought would work, they also bought me a new laptop.

Well, the system worked perfectly and I have been producing video clips in full HD for about 5 years now. During this time HD projectors have become available so the standard reproduced on screen for course participants has improved beyond recognition.

I have enjoyed this journey immensely, I never had myself down as a creative person. I am no longer part of the education team and I can't deny that I find this a little frustrating as I believe I am producing the best material of my life. Nevertheless, I will continue to produce material for the benefit of members and non-members of Lancashire ACO

Should Match Appointments Be Made And Coordinated at a Lancashire level?

I think so. For many of us in Lancashire, we umpire in one league – when we have several leagues available to stand in. For colleagues across the country they may not have this luxury, for they can only stand in one league; a league which encompasses the whole county as a pyramid.

In Lancashire we have many cricket leagues spread across the county, often overlapping the same geographical area. Most play on Saturdays and others play most of their league programme on a Sunday.

Given this situation, why do most umpires only stand in one league? What stops an umpire based in one location, where two cricket leagues surround them, from standing in different leagues?

Umpiring the same people, weekend in, weekend out, will, after some time, bring complacency – ending up with little to test a competent official after the five-or-so years that it takes to establish themselves. After which you have 'set your stall out' and players know you.

If umpires were to be appointed centrally by the Local Governing Body (LGB), using WTU, it would hopefully make for a more streamlined approach to collating data on performance and appointments. It would also offer several people a break from performing a role which in some cases should be worthy of a good rate of pay. Cricket is often over reliant on the volunteers who work so hard.

Through an LGB-based appointing system, umpires would be able to set limits on how far they could travel; if an umpire wanted to travel 60 miles each way – they could do, just as an umpire could stand at any club within a 10 miles radius of their home address.

If this happened, perhaps most importantly for the benefit of the players; the right umpire would be appointed to the right game. **Paddy Brown**

What do you think? Let us know @LancashireACO or on the Facebook group