

WACO Appointments Officer's AGM Report 2016

Apologies for not being here in person for you all to throw custard pies at, I am enjoying a well-earned holiday in Skiathos after a hard summer shepherding you lot around!!

As you are all aware, it has been a frustrating time this season due to the weather affecting many fixtures. Surprisingly, the Malvern Cricket Festival performed mostly in the sun!! My thanks to you all for assisting in the Festival umpiring duties. There were 450 appointments in just 6 weeks which accounts now for a third of our season.

There has been a valuable increase in 2-day matches and even a 3-day for the first time and many of our umpires who qualify have been used, some for the first time.

The Canterbury Cup was much reduced this year and I had considerable trouble appointing to some matches, mainly due to distances involved and the fact that they commenced at 3pm on a Sunday, a time when most of you are wedged into comfy chairs. My thanks to those who answered the call for these appointments and my disappointment to those who never appear on a Sunday – fortunately, very few.

Another season of 1200+ appointments even without District matches which is a move to be deplored by WCB (maybe nationally ??) as it will appear to exclude even more younger players away from cricket, at a time when interest in the summer game is declining with clubs closing and schools not playing. County Cricket Boards should be actively supporting not reducing youth cricket. Perhaps this is the reason that Malvern Cricket Festival is burgeoning in its popularity?

Pete Clement departed our County during late August, a very pleasant family man and a good umpire. More to the point he was the Festival appointments officer, our loss is Sussex's gain. Beware, I am now looking for his replacement!! It could be you.

One final plea, when you get around to placing your availability on Who's the Umpire during 2017, please ensure you keep it up to date!! I waste an awful amount of time and effort chasing around after umpires who suddenly discover that they are on holiday when I want them. Remember, the ECB yardstick is: "Appointment offered for 3 days only – then removed if not accepted/declined and re-offered elsewhere. 3 declinations – no more appointments in the current year."

Winter well.

Chris Bryant