

MEMOIRS OF AN "OLD BOY"

I had been exploring the Chilterns for some time with old boys from school, friends from the seas and deserts and an occasional stranger when in the mid summer of 1928 we left Paddington for Bledlow, changing at Princes Risborough and taking the Oxford Line for Bledlow Station.

Outside the Station was the Seven Stars and after a jar or two we walked towards the hills. At the Corner House pub we stopped to enquire about the cricket we had seen on our way and were invited to join Bledlow Village Cricket Club at a subscription of £2.00 per annum. We were staying at The Lions in Bledlow so we saw much of the local game and were much impressed by the enjoyment all seemed to take in playing together with the laughter abounding. That was just over sixty years ago and I remain a devoted member.

I described the Club many moons ago to John Arlott at The Old Bat & Ball, Hambledon, and in the course of time I became Club Secretary and a life member. Nowhere have I enjoyed the game more and of course many stories could be told, but the following are worthy of note.

On one occasion, the opposition umpire refused a stoppage of play while heavy rain fell. "You'll get just as wet in the cowshed as on the field", he concisely explained as in those days we had no pavilion and a large cowshed was used opposite where the present one stands.

On another occasion, we were playing against Chalfont St. Giles and I was fielding close to the bat. I distinctly heard a snick and the catch was taken by our wicket keeper. The Chalfont player was given out by our umpire, Len Kingham, much to his surprise. As he walked from the wicket he said to Len, "What was I out for umpire?" to which Len replied, "Rest of the afternoon chap, and you look in the Bucks Free Press on Tuesday."

When I was Secretary to the Club, I sent notice of the AGM to the members almost entirely by personal delivery. One year, I delivered Lord Carrington's at the Manor House as usual. Our meetings then were held at The Lions and members began arriving a good hour earlier - nothing has changed! We had just started when I felt a nudge in the back and it was his Lordship himself just arrived back from Australia where he was Governor General. He asked if the Agenda could be altered and I said that I should normally need ten days' notice but he could address the meeting under Any Other Business. It was then that he gave us our field.

Frank Angel is 85 years old and the oldest member of Bledlow Village Cricket Club.