

Shipton Cricket Club is privileged to play at one of the most idyllic grounds in the county. We enjoy a facility of such quality that this year we have been selected to host the full county side, a level of cricket of a considerably higher standard than that normally found on the village green.

Nobody can forget the glorious summer of '97 when our efforts saw our pilgrimage end at the Mecca of cricket, Lords. We will always treasure the tremendous support received. But this type of success is fleeting, and for most of the season players and officers work to improve the level of league and friendly cricket. In 1998 the first team topped the table after a wonderful start. What made this all the more laudable was that it was against teams often having a professional from the cream of six counties.

Being the only village in the top flight meant that we were unable to match the resources of sides like Leighton Buzzard, Banbury or Bicester and North Oxford, yet we managed to finish a creditable fifth and easily retain our division one status. The euphoria of the previous season was tempered by a disappointing exit in the regional final of the National Village Knockout, but the almost Herculean efforts of one man, who smashed an incredible 19 off the final over to dash our hopes, proved the deciding factor.

In the 2nd XI, emphasising youth gave league experience to a crop of highly promising young players. Had we had greater luck with the toss and the weather, promotion from the league might have been achieved (we eagerly await the coming season). Although competitive cricket forms a good percentage of the club agenda, our standards could not be maintained without our Sunday fixtures and our youth cricket policy. These provide opportunity for existing and prospective players to enjoy and develop their game, rather than their "sledging" techniques. We run two senior teams on Sundays alongside boys' and youth cricket, from ages 8 to 15; players of all ages and abilities are always welcome and we offer midweek coaching throughout the season.

The running of the club is a costly business, and without the fund raising efforts of our members and the invaluable donations received annually from our vice-presidents, we would struggle to maintain our facilities and to nurture the young talent which represents our future. We work on an almost break even basis, leaving little capital spare for projects such as improvement of practice facilities, which are of great importance to our future. To this end, for a minimum of £30 p.a., we invite anyone to join our list of vice-presidents. We notify you of all activities and fixtures, welcome you to our subsidised bar and invite you to our annual Presidents' Day for wine and food.

You don't *have* to make a financial contribution to support your local team, spectators are always welcome and appreciated. So whether you are a prospective player or just someone who wants to enjoy a family picnic in unique surroundings, come along and share in village life.

Here are the names and numbers of people with further information:
Vice-President donations: Geoff Miles, 830905. New members: Mark Meredith, 01608 644092. Junior cricket: Jerry Senior, 830416.

Senior club night 6.00pm every Tuesday, from 13th April.
Junior club night 6.00pm every Wednesday, from 21st April.