THE PRIMARY CLUB
The cricketers' charity for the blind and partially sighted

Members' newsletter

April 1997

DEREK UNDERWOOD TO BE FIRST CLUB PATRON

Derek Underwood MBE

One of England's finest cricketers, Derek Underwood MBE, has agreed to become the first patron of The Primary Club.

Derek, who has been a member for many years, qualified in spectacular style in 1965. Batting for Kent in the first innings against South Africa at Canterbury, he was bowled first ball by Peter Pollock. To make absolutely certain of his Primary Club qualification, in the second innings he was caught by Van der Merwe off Macauley on the third ball of a hat trick. It was the last ball of the match and Kent had lost by an innings and 147 runs in two days!

Nervous

When Derek arrived at Beckenham Cricket Club as a nervous 15 year old, his first captain was a certain E.C M. Thomas, the retiring Honourary Secretary of The Primary Club.

"The Primary Club was founded at Beckenham Cricket Club where I "served my apprenticeship" prior to joining Kent in 1963. It is, therefore, an honour for me to become the patron of this great Club and follow in the footsteps of Brian Johnston who was, for many years, the Club's unofficial patron. He did so much for the Club with his frequent messages "over the air" on Test Match Special.

The work of the Club is so important because sport and exercise have a vital role to play in the life of someone who has little or no sight. Please continue your support for The Primary Club and help us go from strength to strength."

Best wishes

Derek Underwood

DEREK UNDERWOOD

THE CLUB'S LARGEST PROJECT COMPLETE

The Primary Club's largest ever project, the nursery swimming pool at Dorton House, was opened by Derek Underwood on 29 June 1996. The cost of the pool was £162,000 paid for by The Primary Club over the previous three years.

Dorton House is a school for blind and partially sighted children near Sevenoaks, run by the Royal London Society for the Blind. All children at Dorton are taught to swim. It is an ideal way for them to gain confidence and a sense of achievement in complete safety.

Exercise

Physiotherapists also use the pool with children who have additional disabilities. Hydrotherapy enables them to exercise joints that could not otherwise be used, as water supports the child's body weight. The pool, which has a special wheel-chair access, is specially heated for young children, who lose body heat faster than adults.

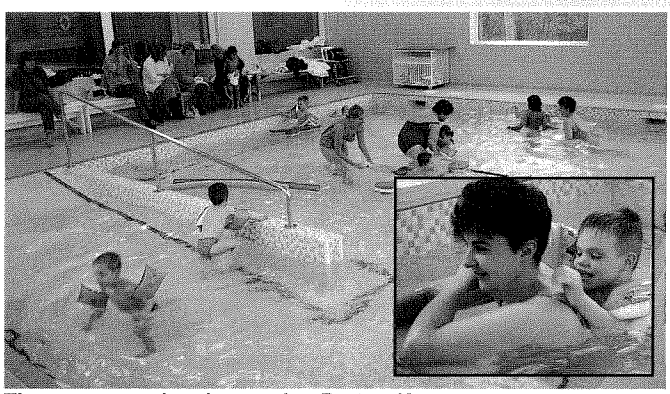
Good turnout

There was a good turnout of Primary Club members. After opening the swimming pool, Derek Underwood joined in a game of cricket played by two visually impaired teams. He was very impressed by the extraordinary control the bowlers achieved with the soccer-sized ball. "I could not hold the ball in the palm of my hand," said the man who took seven Australian wickets for 50 at The Oval in 1968. "I was far happier bowling to Lawry and Redpath."

The unkindest cut of all was a comment he overheard whilst waiting at the end of his run up to begin an over.

"It's all right, he can't bowl." The batsman was totally blind.

"It really was," says Derek, "an experience with a difference."



The nursery swimming pool at Dorton House

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MIKE THOMAS RETIRES

As with Hobbs and Sutcliffe, Hutton and Washbrook, the time comes for all great cricketing partnerships to unbuckle their pads, retire to the pavilion and drink the odd gin.

Sadly, Mike and Tonie Thomas, after 11 years running The Primary Club, have decided that, with Mike's health not 100 per cent, they will play a less active part, remaining as trustees. Although their achievements have been extraordinary – annual donations have increased dramatically since they took over – it is the very personal way they have developed the Club that has given it a style that is unique. Many members have written to say how much they will miss those little notes from the Hon Sec and meeting Mike and Tonie at sporting events for the blind all over the country. They have asked me to say thank you, on their behalf, to all those who have written.

Mike and Tonie Thomas

Mike and Tonie have become real friends to so many members and The Primary Club owes them an enormous debt.

CHANGING TIMES

"The lamentable change is from the best;
The worst returns to laughter"

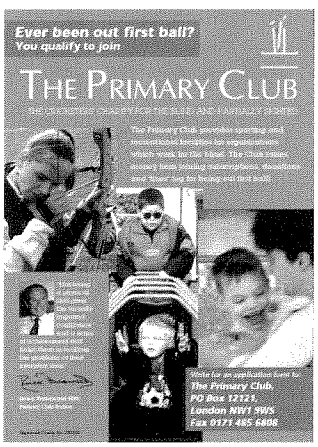
King Lear

Although we have no intention of making any fundamental changes to a very successful and happy club, we are going to try a few innovations and anxiously await your reaction.

Firstly, I hope you approve the new-style newsletter. At the very least it provides an opportunity to include photographs, so that you can, at last, see what Mike and Tonie Thomas look like!

As usual with this newsletter, two application forms and an addressed envelope are enclosed. One form is for your donation, the second for the introduction of a new member. Although we number many distinguished test and county players amongst our members, if your grandmother was out first ball playing on the beach at Skegness in 1927 – she qualifies!

The final enclosure is a rather colourful page, exhibiting a selection of high quality, extraordinarily tasteful clothing and other items, at bargain prices, for Primary Club members who wish to be at the cutting edge of fashion.



As part of the PC's recruiting drive for new members we have produced an A4 size poster in colour. If any of you know of any club or organisation that will take one, please let me know and I will send you as many as you can distribute. For more information on the Club's recruiting drive, see back page.

Clothing and other items for members

We are introducing a range of clothing and other items available to members. An order form is on the back of the page of illustrations. It is, of course, a flagrant attempt to raise money for our objectives, but so far we are resisting the temptation to follow the lead of the MCC in offering members Club underpants.

Generous

Our supplier's advice is to order sizes on the generous side. They suggest that you order one size larger than you think you need, particularly with the pure wool V-neck sweater.

Due to the incompetence of the proof reader (the Hon Sec) there is an omission on the leaflet. The V-neck sweaters come in 44" as well as the other sizes mentioned.

The photo of the umbrella has not come out well. "The Primary Club" appears on the yellow panels below the logo. It all looks a bit washed out in the photograph; in fact the panels are dark blue and gold.

THE NEW TEAM

If Mike and Tonie are Hobbs and Sutcliffe, my wife, Marion, and I are two very nervous under-16 Colts, playing in our first adult match and still uncertain which pad goes on which leg. Fortunately, the trustees are unchanged and the indefatigable Tony Bentall is still there as Honourary Treasurer, but the Thomas's are a very hard act to follow.

Although my name is Robert Fleming I am, sadly, unconnected to the merchant bank. If I were, I could dole out lavish donations and we could all go home. Our contact address and numbers are:-

PO Box 12121
London NW1 9WS
Tel: 0171 267 3316
Fax: 0171 485 6808

I was particularly sorry that we had to lose the old PO Box 111 at Chislehurst, but the NW1 postal district is into five figure numbers. As it was, Marion had to revive seduction techniques long since forgotten to persuade the Post Office to give us a fairly memorable number.

BULLETIN

FANTASY LEAGUES

Beckenham Cricket Club have been running some very lucrative Fantasy Cricket Leagues and donating the profits to The Primary Club. This year the hockey section raised £300 and the cricket section £200. If you know of a club that could run a Fantasy League (and send the profits to The Primary Club of course!) and if you would like details of how to run such a league, please let me know.

THE THREE YEAR RULE

A reminder that, if we do not hear from you for three years, we will have to drop you from the mailing list. With over 9000 members we have to watch stationery and postal charges.

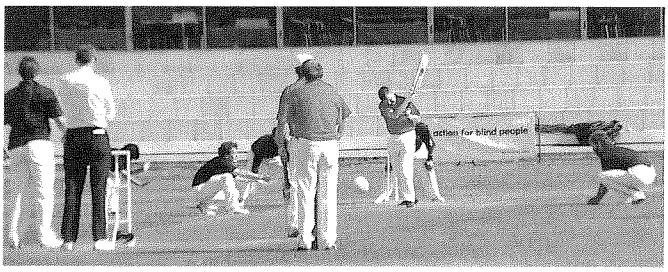
Primary Club sponsor Lord's final

The Primary Club is to become the sole sponsor of the final of the British Blind Sport Cricket Knockout Final at Lord's on 2 August 1997.

In the past we have been co-sponsors. The tournament is the premier competition for blind and partially sighted cricketers in the UK. Teams from all around the country compete for The Primary Club Trophy.

Primary Club members will be very welcome at Lord's to watch what should be a great afternoon's cricket. Cricket played by the blind and partially sighted is an exciting and sometimes dangerous game. The laws of cricket have been adapted for blind players (see green panel).

Do come to Lords on 2 August. Play starts on the Nursery Ground at 1.30pm and will last for about four hours. Access is via the North Gate on the corner of Wellington Road and Wellington Place, NW8. Admission is free and there will be refreshments available all afternoon. **Please wear a Club tie or brooch so that we can make contact.**



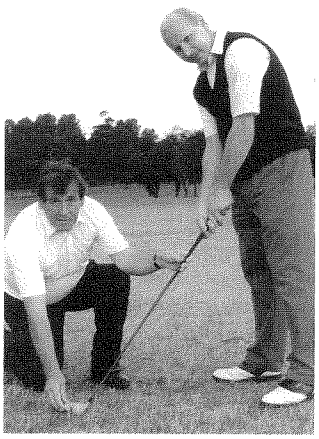
The 1996 Lord's final

- ***Each team bats once; an innings can last for a maximum of 25, eight ball overs.***
- ***There is a maximum of seven 'partials' (partially sighted players) in each team. Other players must be 'totals' (totally blind)***
- ***The ball is a soccer ball containing ball bearings.***
- ***'Totals' are allowed to be LBW or hit wicket twice before being given out.***
- ***A 'total' bats with a runner.***
- ***A full toss to any batsman will be called no ball. A ball bowled to a 'total' must bounce twice.***
- ***A 'total' may catch the ball on the bounce.***

Golf switch

1997 will be the fourth year that The Primary Club and Royal Blackheath, England's oldest golf club, have sponsored the British Blind Masters Tournament. Next year we will be sponsoring the English Matchplay Championship.

Primary Club members will be welcome at the 1997 British Blind Masters on 14-17 July at Hawkstone Park, Shropshire.



Barry Ritchie, a former professional footballer for Coventry City who played cricket for Warwickshire Colts, lost his sight in 1979. In 1992 he was runner up in the Matchplay Final and now has a handicap of 23.

RULE CHANGES

The trustees have agreed two rule changes that you should know about.

1. Rule 6 – fines have been increased to £2 (A fine can, of course, always be higher!)
2. Rule 6 (ii) – Primary Club ties or broaches should be worn on the Saturday of "any Test Match played in England."

THE WORST CRICKET TEAM?

One of the most enjoyable aspects of becoming the Hon Sec of The Primary Club is to see the extraordinary way members find to raise money for the Club.

The Meat Raffle

Kevin Lee of Burnham-on-Sea sent a cheque for £1,000 on behalf of the Rosewood Ramblers pub cricket team. "Probably the worst team that has ever disgraced a cricket pitch. Our only win in three years was a walkover, when the carefully chosen opposition got held up in a Bank Holiday traffic jam on the M5....The bulk of the money was raised by my wife Jan's unstinting efforts in running a meat raffle each Friday in the the local boozer." Sadly the pub was sold and the raffle had to end.

The Pro, The Owl and The Org

Cricket Lovers At Warwickshire (C.L.A.W.) is the collective name for three members who regularly send a generous cheque, this year for £400. The thinking behind their pseudonyms is unfathomable to an outsider, but Rick Coleman (The Pro), Brian Hodder (The Owl) and John Shaw (The Org) fine each other 'and other unsuspecting individuals, sums ranging from £1 to £5 for various misdemeanours whilst watching cricket at Edgbaston. Wrongdoings range from missing a wicket by being at the bar or the loo, to failing to wear The Primary Club tie on the proper occasions. There is a lot of coercion, blackmail and fun involved.'

Fred Hubbard's Birthday Party

Mr Hubbard of Bristol, reached a chanceless 70 not out last November and celebrated with a party. Instead of bringing presents, he asked his guests to write a cheque to The Primary Club, which resulted in a splendid donation of £210.

Jim Parks' Old England XI

For several years National Westminster Bank have sponsored Jim Parks' Old England XI for £1 a run, the proceeds going to The Primary Club.

The distinguished, if by now perhaps slightly aching, limbs of the great Sussex, Somerset and England all rounder and his team have been working on the Club's behalf again and we have received a marvellous donation of £1,400 from Nat West and their co-sponsor, Sphere Drake. This season Nat West are handing over their co-sponsorship to American Express. Welcome Amex and thank you very much Nat West, Sphere Drake and, of course, Jim Parks and his team.

I hope you will forgive me for singling out a few of the more eye catching fund-raising efforts. I am sorry that there is not space to mention more. As the new boy I have been enormously impressed by the generosity of so many members. Thank you.

Recruiting new members

As Mike Thomas indicated in his last newsletter, this is not an easy time for The Primary Club.

We are receiving many urgent requests for assistance from organisations which work with the blind, but there are a lot of calls on our members' money.

One application is from The Royal School for the Blind. They are building a centre for young people with Juvenile Batten's disease, a cruel genetic disease resulting in blindness, loss of physical ability and life expectancy rarely beyond the mid 20s. They have asked for our help in funding a sensory garden and nature trail.

In an attempt to recruit new members, we have produced a recruiting pamphlet which five first class counties – Essex, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey and Sussex – have very kindly agreed to include free of charge in their pre-season mailshots. The recruiting drive will continue throughout the rest of the country over the next few years.

If you know of any potential new members, please give them one of the enclosed application forms – or tell us!

THE PRIMARY CLUB
SUMMARY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
Year ended 31 March

	1997 (estimated)	1996 (actual)
Joining subscriptions, donations and profit on sale of ties	66,000	58,900
Tax recoverable on covenants	3,500	3,600
Legacy fund installment	3,000	3,400
Interest receivable	2,200	2,700
	74,700	68,600
Administrative costs	(5,500)	(3,200)
Surplus for the year	69,200	65,400
Undistributed surplus of earlier years	1,200	1,700
Donations made in the year	(68,500)	(65,900)
Undistributed surplus carried forward	1,900	1,200

Notes: Administrative costs are inevitably higher with the changeover of Honourary Secretary. The Royal London Society for the Blind meets the cost of printing and posting this newsletter.Copies of the Club's full accounts can be obtained from the Honourary Treasurer.

DONATIONS TO SCHOOLS AND CLUBS FOR THE BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED

Dorton House School, Sevenoaks	Fitness centre. New equipment and modernising old gymnasium. Golf driving range and other sports equipment	48,000	46,000
Metropolitan Sports & Social Club	Sponsorship of player on cricket tour of South Africa	900	750
British Blind Sport	Club Fours Bowls Tournament, Cardiff	1,000	400
	Sponsorship of National Cricket Final, Lords	3,650	500
Birmingham Sports & Social Club	Midlands Cricket Tournament	750	750
White Rose CC, Leeds	Northern Cricket Tournament	500	350
	Cricket pavilion	-	3,000
Leeds Sports & Social Club	Goalball and cricket equipment	1,000	700
	Cricket festival and National Goalball Competition	500	-
English Blind Golf	Co-sponsorship of British Blind Masters Tournament	2,500	2,500
Royal National College, Hereford	Aerobic trainer	3,000	-
Joseph Clarke School, E. London	Stage 2 of Climbing Frame Play Unit	3,200	-
Henshaw's College, Harrogate	Exercise equipment	3,500	3,750
St Vincents School, Liverpool		-	3,000
Pennine Bowling Club		-	1,500
Andlaw House, Exeter		-	2,000
Linden Lodge School, Wimbledon		-	700
		68,500	65,900

YOUR DONATIONS

"When I was one and twenty I heard a wise man say, 'Give crowns and pounds and guineas but not your heart

The banks will not accept crowns and guineas and even the legendary generosity of Primary Club members may not extend to donating their hearts. Pounds, however, are legal, at least until 1999, and because The Primary Club does not ask for a subscription, we are totally dependant on your donations.

Donations in any form are, of course, very welcome. I would like to remind members of five methods of payment in particular.

DEED OF COVENANT – for a minimum of four years. The benefit to the Club is that we can reclaim basic rate tax, which means that each donation is worth an extra 30 per cent. If you are a higher rate tax payer, you can reclaim the difference between the basic and higher rates of tax. If you would like details of the Deed of Covenant scheme, please tick the box on the Application Form.

GIVE AS YOU EARN – if the company for which you work is registered with the Inland Revenue for this scheme, your donations can be deducted from your salary ***before tax.***

GIFT AID – a donation of £250 or more qualifies under the Gift Aid scheme which entitles the Club to reclaim tax at the basic rate. On receipt of your cheque, we will send you the appropriate form for completion.

LEGACIES – without doubt the most painless way of giving and one of the most important sources of income for many charities. Please remember The Primary Club in your will. If you do, please tell us so that you are kept on the mailing list, even if you send no other donations.

CHARITABLE TRUSTS AND FUNDS – we receive several donations from charitable trusts and companies' charitable funds. If you know of an appropriate trust or a company which makes charitable donations, please bring The Primary Club to their attention.

Famous Primaries

DAVID "IRONGLOVES" BOOTHROYD.
Bowled Harlow 0
Batting for the Jolly Rogers CC v Brightling Park
Brightling 14 September 1996.

Although well up the order at No 9 (No 10 being aged 10 and No 11 absent) he did not repay his captain's confidence, being bowled through one of several gates. "Not," he said, "one of my better primaries."

If you have had a primary of note, please tell the Hon Sec. Fame beckons!

The Club has recently acquired a new computer. We are required, under the Data Protection Act, to advise you that your names and addresses are stored on the computer. We will never, of course, release details to anyone.

Because of the work of Mike and Tonie Thomas and their predecessors, especially Leslie and Joan Harris, The Primary Club has come a long way since its origins, when £46 was raised in the first nine years. At a difficult time for charities, the Club's income last year rose by nearly 10 per cent. I am sure this is, at least in part, a response from members which recognised Mike and Tonie's 11 years of devoted service to the Club.

My wife Marion and I are very conscious that we are taking over a curiously English, very special club. With a lot of guidance from the splendid Hon Treasurer, Tony Bentall, the trustees and, I hope, the members, we will do our best.

When the time comes to write my second newsletter, I trust we will be celebrating an Ashes victory. Have a splendid season.

Yours sincerely

ROBERT FLEMING
Honourary Secretary