

BATS, PADS & GLADIATORS

A MISCELLANY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE CRICKET

Charles Wood

Cricketing author and commentator Charles Wood turns his attention to the Glories of Gloucestershire. But although he touches on the prime Gloucestershire years of the 'artful old toad' W.G., Wally Hammond, and R.C. 'Jack' Russell MBE, while skipping over a fair share of tears and doldrums – be warned this book is not a club history.

Drawn from interviews and conversations with a wide range of former players both professional and amateur; club officials, broadcast commentators, die-hard spectators and competitive tea ladies, the content herein shouldn't be taken too seriously because, simply, it is often completely hilarious.

The tales are legion. Take as examples the cricketing 'spirit' upon Sheepscombe's Laurie Lee Field, or those Pratt Cup cricketers changing into whites in the billiard room of a North Nibley mansion overshadowed by Breakheart Hill. Neither should one overlook the parrot that squawked 'GLAWSTER!' nor the bizarre connections to be found as far afield as the islands of Nevis and Corfu.

And now, resplendent in blue pyjamas, the County's cricket pros led by Captain 'Giddo' Gidman call themselves 'Gladiators', and hope springs eternal.

Taken as a whole, the author has unearthed a worldwide passion for Gloucestershire cricket that's alive and well, and full to the brim with eccentricity and odd statistics.

A tome to be enjoyed by every lover of the 'summer game'.

THE AUTHOR

Charles Wood gave up the legal profession, and the stress of work in Libya and Hong Kong, yearning for the artistic life. For the past twenty years he has just about managed to avoid wearing a tie to work or getting grubby.

Before turning to writing he was a self-taught documentary filmmaker, and also worked as a cameraman for BBC and ITV news. In 1997 he made *Grace and Favour*, Gloucestershire County Cricket Club's first official club video. His film *Dragons – The Story of a Country Parson* was broadcast on HTV in 1999. And in 2005 he was the first Englishman to win a documentary film award in the Republic of Moldova.

Charles has also found time to be full-time dad of four; an illustrator; a part-time college lecturer; a part-time school teacher; and an occasional BBC radio broadcaster.

He now admits to his enjoyment of cricket and poddling through the lighter side of life's rich tapestry, relieved that he has never been bankrupt.

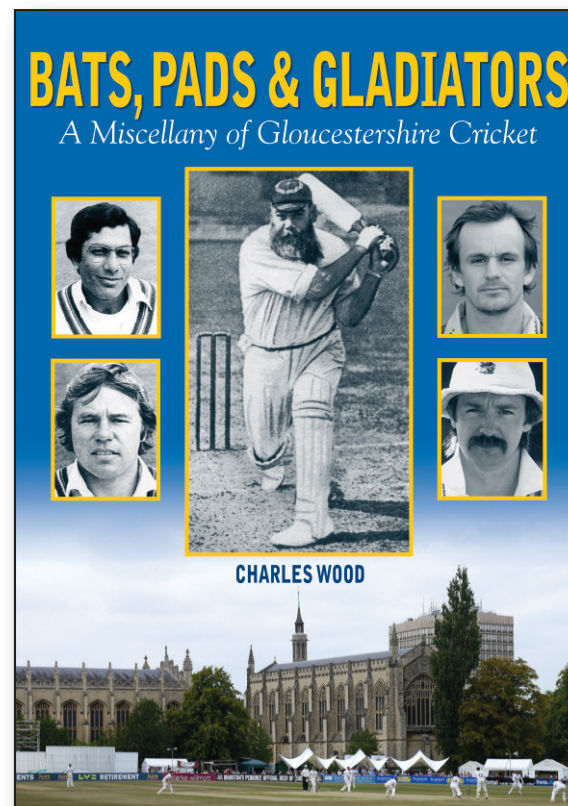
He lives with his family in the West Country.

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