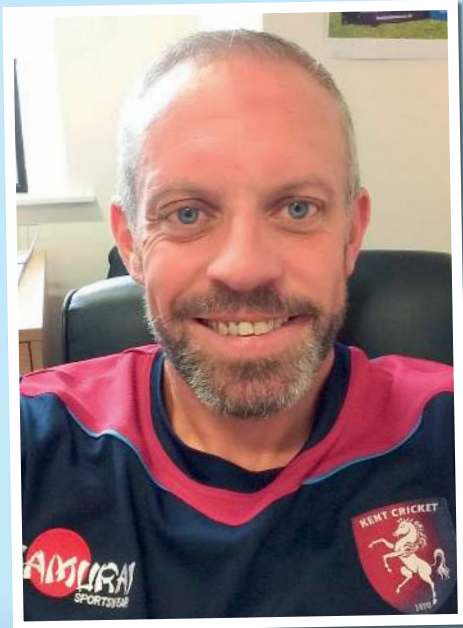


# SHARING A PASSION FOR THE GAME



› Andy Griffiths

**Raising the profile of cricket in the community is a role Andy Griffiths clearly relishes.**

He exudes energy, as he strides into the office, dressed in dark blue shorts and polo shirt emblazoned with the Kent County Cricket Club logo. Here's a man who loves his job and has the determination to see through his ideas.

So what does a director of community cricket do? Andy is only too happy to explain: "My team is the link between the club and anyone out there who is playing cricket, interested in playing – even those who don't know they are interested in playing. We visit schools and village teams to support them in the game, as well as turning up on housing estates to encourage young people hanging around on skate parks, or open spaces to have a go at street cricket."

These visits, arranged with the help of housing associations under the "Street Cricket" programme, have proved a great success, with nine schemes now operating across the county. A deprived area is selected and Andy and his team go out to find a

group of young people – most frequently lads – who appear not to have anything to do. Offering them a bat and ball, they encourage them to have a go at a simple game of cricket, while trying gently to instil a sense of purpose, sporting discipline and playing by the rules.

And it works! Andy says partner organisations, like the Chance to Shine charity and Safer Kent group supported by county police, have been impressed at the decrease in incidents of knife crime, race hatred and vandalism once the street game has been established in an area.

Other projects in the community include encouraging women to get active, via a version of cricket using a soft ball. Four 20-week schemes have been set up across Kent, some in women's refuges, some among ethnic groups where women are not normally allowed to take part in sport.

Andy and his team also go into schools to deliver curriculum-based subjects, several in association with organisations such as Southern Water and



Photo: Oyster Bay Photography

Countrystyle Recycling. He explained: “We do workshops relating to safe water use, or recycling, while also sharing the message about the importance of keeping active through sport. The kids love it and teachers say the retention of information is noticeable.”

Andy is helped by a team of 12, including five community coaches. Together they visit 450 primary and 200 secondary schools across Kent, including specialist centres where they deliver cricket for children with disabilities. Cricket for visually impaired youngsters is amazing, says Andy. The players use a large ball with ball-bearings in it, to allow them to hear when it is coming their way.

The community team also delivers coaching courses for village and other cricket teams, including those for umpires, scorers and ground staff. First-aid courses are also popular.

A Young Leaders’ programme has proved successful, offering selected 14 to 16-year-olds the chance to gain knowledge which will help them move into senior cricket. For those who want to pursue a sporting career, BTEC qualification courses in level three sport and level two cricket are being launched at The County Ground, Beckenham next September.

The community team also offers practical help for clubs across the county, making grants – thanks to sponsorship by The England and Wales Cricket Trust, Waitrose and Jewson – towards the cost of “sprucing up” clubrooms and grounds.

All in all, it sounds a pretty hectic life for Andy, who came to Kent in 2007 after a career in sales for a paper company which involved “too much travel and too many trips around the M25”. He’s obviously passionate about the game and choc full of ideas how to share the joy with the maximum number of people.



## RETAILING THE KIT

**A shrewd deal with West Ham Football Club has ensured Kent County Cricket Club’s official shop will be given a smart new look ahead of the 2017 season.**

Manager Barrie Dyer proudly reveals the revamp will feature fixtures in the club colours of maroon and blue.

“West Ham are moving to the Olympic stadium and were getting rid of all their fittings, he says. “We got a really amazing deal on the price.”

Barrie is passionate about the shop, which he has managed for 12 years. He’s always been involved in the sports wear business, working in the Eddie Crush shop in Dover alongside his mum as a schoolboy and later spending a year with Hubble and Freeman.

He now spends five-and-a-half days a week, including Saturday mornings, behind the counter of the club shop at The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence, advising customers on the correct gear to buy, whether a first bat or a T-shirt in the team colours.

The shop also supplies schools with hockey gear and does a roaring trade in sports-related gifts at Christmas. It is the only cricket specialist supplier in the area and Barrie prides himself on his customer service. He also lends his hand to bat repairs and shows me a much-loved example which he is working on.

“With bats ranging from £100 to £700, it’s no wonder players like to keep them in good condition,” he says.





# MAINTAINING A FAMILY TRADITION

**Cricket is in Emma Santer's family. She was taken to matches at her village club as a young girl, helped with scoring from an early age – and now she works at The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence in Canterbury.**

The connection with the game doesn't end there. Emma's family still owns the village pitch at Gills Green, near Hawkhurst, which was set up by her great-grandfather almost 100 years ago.

Emma, the commercial director for Kent County Cricket Club, explained: "A group of players got together to form the club in 1919, after men from the village began to return from war. It's still in the family and very much an active concern."

Emma joined Kent Cricket at Canterbury in November 2015. Before that she worked at Folkestone Racecourse for nearly 10 years. That was also an ideal job – she's a keen horserider and her grandfather Jesse Santer was an amateur jockey. In fact it was while exercising a horse in preparation to race in

his colours 14 years ago that she fell and broke two vertebrae in her back, forcing her to take four months off work as an advertising sales manager. Fortunately, she made a complete recovery and took the job at the racecourse.

When the cricket job came her way she was delighted to once again combine a love of sport with a professional role she so enjoys.

Like the other directors at the club, Emma's is a complex job, attracting sponsors for games and players' kit and advertising various corporate Team Kent Business Club membership packages which start at £3,250 a year. "We are the only top-level sports venue in Kent now," she points out, "so we attract quite a bit of corporate interest."

Team Kent Business Club members can enjoy "breakfast with the boys" at the start of the new cricket season – a chance to meet the players and network with other sponsors and partners. There are also tours of the Shepherd Neame brewery, a major

› Emma Santer



sponsor of the club through its Spitfire brand.

Sponsors, partners and Team Kent Business Club members also get priority booking on games, the most popular being the floodlit T20 matches. They have voting rights with the club and get 10% off at the club shop. Sponsors get a mention in all match programmes and the annual publication, plus good coverage on posters.

Emma is also responsible for her team, which includes communication, marketing, ticketing and events and retail. It's enough to keep her very busy throughout the year, still pinching herself that she's got a job that is "a natural mix of business and pleasure in a relaxed, business environment."



Photo: Oyster Bay Photography