The Stro



'These mountains weren't here last year!' Alastair Macaulay reviews Peter's driving on the Continent p.99

STROLLON, PETER

The life and heart of the Fleet Street Strollers for 43 years

WAY back when, the *Evening News* played the *Evening Standard* – and Simon Brodbeck lined up against Peter Patston. Since then there have been 43 summers of Strolling.

Peter has been the life, the spark and the heart of it all since the first recorded Strollers team took the field against West India and Millwall Docks at Sidcup on 25 April, 1976. In those far-off days of hot metal and long Cheshire Cheese lunches Peter played the leading role and went on to be an ever-present - along with Maggie - on every roistering Strollers tour.

But it is not just a story of 641 games, 751 wickets and 3,901 runs. The figures and the stats (lovingly created by Maggie) are not half of the story, for it was Peter's Patstonness that made him the heartbeat of the club – a sharp wit to keep the changing room on its toes and a ringmaster of the après-match proceedings. He would laconically chair the inquest into yet another defeat and be first to the bar to lead the evening's entertainment with a bottle of Merlot, a song and an incisive comment.

Relentless enthusiasm, a kindly heart, good humour and a love for cricket have always been more important than winning for the Strollers and Peter embodied those principles we founded the club on all those years ago. After a lifetime's spell from the top end, take a rest Peter – and thanks for the company, the laughter and the friendship.
Simon Brodbeck

Maggie's corner

644 Matches 1976-2018

f 455 Innings

3.901 Runs **10.19** Batting

average

7 Half-centuries

84* Highest score, vs Blackfordby on 2 June 1990 **3,383.5** Overs

751 Wickets

19.73 Bowling average

20 Five-fors

7-18 Best figures, vs Fullerian All Stars on

22 August 1987 166 Catches



A 'particularly generous bowler' writes: Peter Patston in his own words

I AM a particularly generous bowler and over the years have given opposition batsmen nigh on 14,000 runs. Maggie has uncomplainingly recorded practically every

It's a comforting thought that as I approach the twilight of my cricket career I still play in the team we set up nearly 40 years ago alongside the bright younger things that will keep it strolling on.

As they used to say in the team song (to the tune of *The Laughing Policeman*): "He really only keeps his place, 'cos his missus keeps the book!"

From Gentlemen, Gypsies and Jesters: The Wonderful World of Wandering Cricket

Mr Tambourine Man

And take me disappearing through the smoke rings of my mind Down the foggy ruins of

Far past the frozen leaves The haunted frightened Out to the windy beach

Far from the twisted reach of crazy sorrow Yes, to dance beneath the diamond sky; With one hand waving free Silhouetted by the sea Circled by the circus sands With all memory and fate Driven deep beneath the waves Let me forget about today

until tomorrow. **Hey! Mr Tambourine** man, play a song for me I'm not sleepy and there is no place I'm going to **Hev! Mr Tambourine** man, play a song for me In the jingle jangle morning I'll come

From Stanton-by-Dale to Saumur, the bard of Bath led us on a merry dance

Permed prince



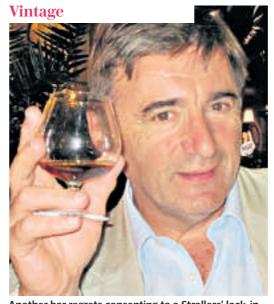
Peter celebrates winning the 'most like a Bee Gee' award for 1978

Too late? There's no such

thing when on tour

Peter, and the Patstons (large and small), have been part of my life - not just my cricket life since 1990. He and Maggie were always part of what made the Strollers warm and welcoming and fun... and, let's be honest, occasionally dangerous. The thought of Running Bear is generally

enough to have me start awake out of a sound sleep. The nightmare will be linked to drinking by the Loire in Saumur, when there was no such thing as "too late" or "we have to play tomorrow". The 60th birthday celebrations in Bath were also a highlight. You will be missed. my friend. Evan Samuel



Another bar regrets consenting to a Strollers' lock-in

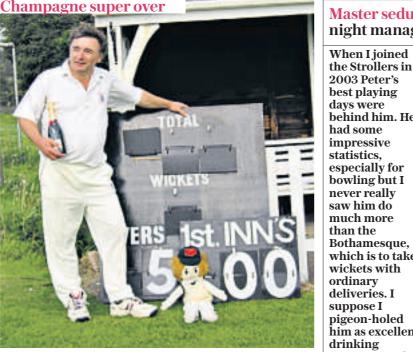


Peter is shocked to see Maggie without her legendary coloured pencils

40 years on Wine, food, laughter - and family

Think of Peter and words spring to mind immediately: wine, food, laughter, family hospitality, theatre, Dylan, friendship. None of the above was known when first meeting Peter on the cricket field, 40 or more vears ago. Then, Peter, sporting a bouffant perm, bowled strict medium pace and caught with big hands

at first slip. Over the years the perm went, and off-breaks replaced the medium pace. Meanwhile the friendship with Peter and Maggie grew stronger: weekend breaks, Bath rugby, holidays and, of course, Strollers' tours. Tricia and I were privileged to have had Peter in our We will miss him greatly. Brian Taylor



Peter and Sir Ivor celebrate yet another landmark

Master seducer Booze, little sleep and tour flu: Charles the night manager of Ashby-de-la-Zouch never stood a chance

by that I mean

the Strollers in exceptional, in 2003 Peter's spades, with the kind of anarchic best playing days were singlebehind him. He mindedness that had some would keep impressive Charles the statistics, night manager at especially for The Royal in bowling but I Ashby pouring never really drinks until gone 5 for two nights saw him do much more in a row. Year on than the year. And as for Bothamesque, Saumur, Grasse, which is to take Cern? **Guaranteed late** wickets with ordinary booze, little sleep and tour deliveries. I flu. Breakfast? suppose I pigeon-holed Never. What did him as excellent we talk about? Everything and company, and nothing. Bob

And then I head, remember maddeningly, for bowling the first the vacant third over at Windsor slip area. But **Great Park in** what's this? First and only slip 2011(?), I took the throwing outside himself headlong makes edge and a magnificent one-handed grab. Take a bow Peter Patston. Cricketer. I will miss you. Tom

Dylan definitely.

watched the ball

Private Eyes Storyteller who had us in tears The ludicrous

One evening in Bath there was a crowd around the dining table listening to Peter reading a short Private Eve article about an asparamancer from Evesham.

subject tickled Peter as he kept dissolving into laughter. This was infectious and soon the whole table was in tears and the short article ended up taking

complete. This was just one example of the fun, warm hospitality I have been lucky enough to share with Peter and Maggie. Jim Hodgson

half an hour to

We band of brothers French campaign

French tours magnificent, with Peter at the centre of festivities. Singing Running Bear on the banks of the Loire was a highlight, as was

the St Crispin's Day speech on a table in St Vallier-de-Thiey. The only response to the latter was Ka Mate, the Ngati-Toa Rangatira haka. The best

him performing | hangover cure? Travelling to the ground in the Previa with Bob Dylan: "one more cup of coffee before I go... to the valley belowwww...' Hamish Macdougall