

## CRICKET

Just a few years since moving to the UK, **Gordon Shorrocks** has gone from humble Australian cricket player to captain of Grace's, the only gay cricket club in the world. Here he tells us why he loves the sport and how he got involved with the team.

I've been playing cricket from the age of ten. I wasn't very good as a child, but like a good bottle of red, I got better with age.

There's no greater feeling than hitting a glorious four to the boundary and I like making new friends and having camaraderie and competition. Cricket ticks all those boxes and is a lot of fun.

My partner and I moved to the UK three years ago this June and this is my third season with Grace's. A season starts at the end of April and continues until the end of September, and our season is generally comprised of half competition matches and half friendly matches.

I've always played cricket and back home I was, as far as I know, the only gay guy in a straight team. But I never came out when I was playing for my straight team. When I came to the UK I saw Grace's advertised in the LGBT pamphlet that circulates Soho, so I went to try out – we did some training at Lord's, which we do during the pre-season, and it's gone really well. This is now my first season as captain too, so it's going fantastically. I'm loving it – they're such a lovely bunch of guys.

The team is a very diverse group and I'd say most of the guys that play for us are older guys – some of them are in the closet and some are not. I'd say the youngest guy is about 23 or 24-years-old and it ranges up to guys in their 50s, so we've really got a great mix of ages.

Grace's has been around since 1996. It started primarily as just a group of gay guys who got together to play cricket. Then, after a few years, they eventually joined the league and now we're doing very well.

At the end of last season I was nominated to see if I was interested in becoming captain, and I won the votes, partly because I'd captained back in Australia a few years ago. It's a great honour being captain of Grace's – looking after a good bunch of guys and chilling together afterwards is a lot of fun.

My role as captain, along with the president of the club, Dominic, involves choosing the team each week, making sure we have enough players and getting details correct so everyone can get to the games, which are at various grounds all around London.

We're in the Middlesex League and this is our third year competing there. We haven't had any competitions yet this year, but they start in a couple of weeks.

We're always looking for more people who'd like to play cricket with us. It doesn't matter whether you've never played the game or you're an expert – we're always very accommodating. My other half, Mark, had never played cricket in his life, but he started playing this year and he's improving every week. And Christian, an American guy, didn't know one end of the cricket bat from the other and he's getting better every week too. So it really doesn't matter how good, or not so good, you are.

• [www.gaycricket.org.uk](http://www.gaycricket.org.uk)



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# BOYZ

18 Brewer Street, London, W1F 0SH  
Tel: 020-7025 6100 • Fax: 020-7025 6109

**Editorial**

020-7025 6110

**Scene**

020-7025 6120

**Advertising**

020-7025 6100

**Stuart Brumfitt** • Editor • [stuart@boyz.co.uk](mailto:stuart@boyz.co.uk)  
**Luke Till** • Scene Editor • [luke@boyz.co.uk](mailto:luke@boyz.co.uk)  
**Joseph Cattell** • Editorial Assistant • [joseph@boyz.co.uk](mailto:joseph@boyz.co.uk)  
**Steve Gregory** • Senior Sales Executive • [steve@boyz.co.uk](mailto:steve@boyz.co.uk)  
**Rob Dean** • Business Development Executive • [rob@boyz.co.uk](mailto:rob@boyz.co.uk)  
**Flint Smith** • Sales Executive • [clinton@boyz.co.uk](mailto:clinton@boyz.co.uk)

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**Paul Bowen** • Art Director • [paulb@boyz.co.uk](mailto:paulb@boyz.co.uk)  
**Erik Dohse** • Internet Co-ordinator • [erik@boyz.co.uk](mailto:erik@boyz.co.uk)  
**Francisco Serrano** • Accounts • [francisco@boyz.co.uk](mailto:francisco@boyz.co.uk)  
**David Bridle** • Managing Director • [davidb@boyz.co.uk](mailto:davidb@boyz.co.uk)  
Contributing Designers: **Flint Smith**  
Contributing Photographers: **Rolf Gillespie, Dos Fotos** and **LondonClubPics.com**

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