

The Maynard family have produced two of the finest batsmen ever to turn out for the club - in Matthew and his son Tom. Charlie has also played. **TOM MAYNARD** looks back at his own time at Crofft-y-Gennau Road – and hints at a return.



I think Dad first took me down to St Fagans when I was about 5 or 6, and it didn't seem too long before I was in the Under-9s, with Phil Makinson guiding all the youngsters into the game. We had a good side going up through the Under-10s, 12s and 13s – boys like Mike O'Shea, Chris Thorne and Dan Davies were a bit older than me, and we were pretty hard to beat. We had some smashing games against Cardiff on the Diamond Ground, and on that little, middle pitch at St Fagans. I always like that one! At that level, you had to retire once you got to 25, and I always tried to get there as quickly as possible, even though it meant the end of your innings... I loved bowling, too, in those days – still do, when they let me!

I wasn't all that old when I played my first senior game. It was for the Fourth's, somewhere in the wilds of the South Wales valleys. Uncle Charlie was captain, and the other one who made a big impression on me was Wacko. I found out later that he does have a real name, but I never heard anyone call him Ian Courtney.

Anyway, Uncle Charlie took a very relaxed approach in the field, strolling around in his muddy trousers, basically letting it all go by. He was great to play with though, always encouraging me along, and I didn't do too badly, making twenty-odd, so I was happy enough.

A couple of weeks later, I got to bat with him, and I have to say there were far more shots being played at the other end than at mine. He was a lot more attacking than me! I soon realised why he went for boundaries, though, since even in those days he was pretty dodgy between the wickets.

Still, he didn't actually run me out, which Dad did to me, playing for St Fagans in a 6-a-side at Pentyrch. To be fair, he did apologise later...

I didn't spend too long with Charlie and Wacko in the Fourth's – I was keen to move up through the sides, and luckily I did. I was 13 when I played my first game for the First's – at Sudbrook. Actually, the atmosphere was pretty hostile when I went in to bat. It was a real test, playing against grown men, and it did my cricket a lot of good.

It helped that we had such a smashing bunch of boys in the team – Nick Swetman, Tom Merilaht, Owain Hopkins, they were all great to play with, always trying to help me along, always wanting me to do well. James Samworth was my first captain, and after that Alun Evans took over, leading us to a couple of league titles. Great days.

Once I'd moved on to Glamorgan, it was really good to come back for the odd game with the boys again, whenever I could try to help out. It was just as if I'd never been away – they let me straight back in, sharing in the stories and the banter, a great club and a great atmosphere. I did sometimes feel a weird pressure to perform, as a county player, but not too much. We had so many good players in the team – Alun, Richard Kaufman and the rest – that you felt that if you didn't get the runs, someone else would.

A few times I played for St Fagans along with Dad, although whenever I batted with him, he always scored more runs than me! People often ask how much he talked to me in the middle, but he's never been one to give me too much advice. Sometimes, we would chat when we were trying to chase down a target. He'd say let's just knock it around for a while, not take too many risks, and then see where we stand when we get down to the last few overs. Otherwise, he tends to keep it all pretty simple. Try and see the ball, and when you see it, hit it hard, which is basically what I've done in my career. If it needs to be hit, hit it!

I was sorry to leave Glamorgan, but everybody knows the story there. It was tough, but now there's a new chapter, and it couldn't have started any better. Moving to Surrey, and then winning both promotion in the County Championship and a one-day trophy in my first season – well, that was amazing.

It would be great to see St Fagans do something similar, get promotion to the top league - this summer especially. It's such a great club, with a wonderful youth set-up providing so much young talent coming through, that hopefully can help us to do just that.

And yes, I would love to play for the club again – not just when I'm old and creaky, either! If ever there's a spell when I haven't got a match with Surrey, when I've got some time off, I'd love to come down and have a game.....Just don't tell Uncle Charlie!