

THE GENT

June 2008

No. 117

Tales from the corridor of uncertainty

Hat-trick for the chemical engineer



Saint Dallison is bowled by Ahsan Iqbal at Old Tenisonians*

* actually the second wicket of the three

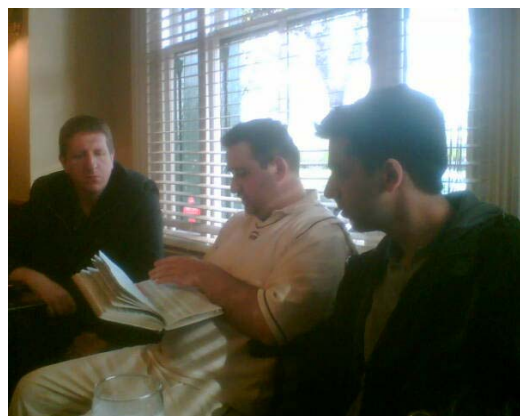
St. Anne's Allstars (won by 9 wickets)
Kingston Left Handers (drawn)
Sloane Club (won by 245 runs)
West XI (BAMC) (won by 83 runs)
London Saints (won by 7 wickets)
London Saints (Twenty20) (won by 3 runs)
New Barbarian Weasels (won by 145 runs)
Cairns Fudge (won by 2 wickets)
London Rams (won by 1 wicket)
London Rams (Pro15) (won by 39 runs)
Purley Arms (lost by 8 wickets)

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....and are then skittled for 62
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Read about The Gents on www.gowlcc.org.uk

Interim review



Listen, guys, it was completely chanceless...

The end of June is a good time to take stock of the first half of 2008. There have been some good results and powerful additions to the squad in Ravi Inkollu, Ahsan Iqbal and Horace Hibbert and a happy blend between players old, new and returning. Yet no side is insuperable, as the chirpy Purley Arms showed us (62 all out indeed, what a palaver). It has also been pleasing to see the improvement at Fairfield RG (the preferred home ground should no longer be an issue at the AGM) and the shared responsibility of obtaining the services of guest players. The desire for the second half of the season is to keep playing good, hard but sporting cricket, for the captain and vice captain to continue try to involve everybody and for nobody to have a major spanner out. There remains much tough work to be done from July and it will have to be done without Nabeel Husain, who is definitely off this time.

Two major milestones were passed against New Barbarian Weasels, Sanjay Patel playing his 200th. game and Jim Wright scoring his 3,000th. run at average of 24.1. Congratulations to both of these splendid fellows.

Wantaway ace Burmanov 'unsettled'

Foxtrotters' enigmatic quiz genius Dimitar Burmanov could be set for a sensational 25 million pounds (31.8 million Euro) transfer in the summer, according to reports. 'At 53, he is at an age where he want to win big things,' explained his agent David Benderov. 'So far he is only winning small prize and sees his future with different team in big four. He unsettled.' Despite having struck a rich vein of form in recent quizzes, the moody star has clearly been unhappy, refusing to acknowledge the congratulations of his team-mates after delivering some blistering answers, most spectacularly outing Birmingham, Londonderry, Cork, Edinburgh and Swansea as the second most populous cities in the constituent countries of the UK. The languid ace has been linked with Tristan Haddow-Allen's Bar Team, regular winners.

Primus inter pares

Whit weekend was notable for a most curious co-incidence, 41 all out being recorded by three of the teams batting first in our immediate circle. Crack leaguesters Old Tenisonians started things off by bowling out Worplesdon and Burpham for 41 in 29 overs on the Saturday, while on the Sunday London Saints, in 20.3 overs and Twelve Caesars, in 20.5 overs, were creepily dismissed **for the same score** by The Gents (also at Old Tenisonians) and St Anne's Allstars. Twelve Caesars were a team which could perhaps not unfairly be described as upper class loonies. Garreth Duncan wrote: 'Our first home game of the season brought a reunion with Adrian Marsden, our old friend from Oxford days, and his eccentrically dressed team, most of whom sported Roman emperors' names (from their regular dining club) and who took the field wearing, variously, a blazer and a pirate's bandana'. The scorecard reveals the presence in the order of inter alia Titus, Tiberius and Domitian.

Email from Daf Howells of Cairns Fudge

Thank you for having us on Sunday. It was a big day for us as it was the very first outing of our second team (so we only just beat their Seconds. Ed.) which we envisage being based in London mostly next season. As such we blooded a few debutants and thankfully everyone really enjoyed it. It was a very exciting game towards the end and I must say I have never seen a situation where the fielding team is crowded round the bat hoping for a wicket maiden to get a tie! It was competitive but played in the right spirit and I hope you will have us back next year. Thanks again. If you are struggling for opposition or players this season, please give me a shout as we are a keen bunch. I might be keen to become a Gentleman myself actually.

The 2008 season

Date	Gents	Venue	West XI	Venue							
Sun 19 Apr	-	-	Malta Cricket Association	Lost by 55 runs							
Sun 20 April	-	-	Malta Cricket Association	Won by 2 wickets							
Sun 27 April	St. Anne's Allstars	Won by 9 wickets	Sutton	Won by 4 wickets							
Sun 4 May	Kingston Left Handers	Drawn	Dinder and Croscombe	Cancelled (rain)							
Sun 11 May	Sloane Club	Won by 245 runs	Cincinnati	Lost by 19 runs							
Sun 18 May	West XI (BAMC)	Won by 83 runs	Gents (BAMC)	Lost by 83 runs							
Sun 25 May	Hale	Cancelled (rain)	Acme	Cancelled (rain)							
Sun 1 June	London Saints	Won by 7 wickets	Captain's Select	Won by 97 runs							
Sun 1 June	London Saints (Twenty20)	Won by 3 runs	-	-							
Sat 7 June	NB Weasels	Won by 154 runs	-	-							
Sun 8 June	-	-	Whalers	Lost by 78 runs							
Sat 14 June	-	-	Plums	Won by 94 runs							
Sun 15 June	Cairns Fudge	Won by 2 wickets	-	-							
Sat 21 June	-	-	-	-							
Sun 22 June	London Rams	Won by 1 wicket	London Saints (LNC)	Lost by 24 runs							
Sun 22 June	London Rams (Pro15)	Won by 39 runs	-	-							
Sun 29 June	Purley Arms	Lost by 8 wickets	London Rams	Won by 58 runs							
Sat 5 July	-	-	North Curry	Taunton							
Sun 6 July	OT Taverners	Old Tenisonians	Dinder and Croscombe	Away							
Sun 13 July	West XI (BAMC)	Old Tenisonians	Gents (BAMC)	Away							
Thurs 17 July	-	-	GSK (Twenty20)	Away							
Sun 20 July	Enterprise	Alexandra RG	Sunderland SC	Home							
Sun 27 July	NB Weasels	Fairfield RG	London Saints	Home							
Sat 2 Aug	-	-	-	-							
Sun 3 Aug	TBA	Fairfield RG	CAMRA	Away							
Sat 9 Aug	-	-	-	-							
Sun 10 Aug	-	-	Acme	Home							
Sun 17 Aug	London Saints	Old Haberdashers	Captain's Select	Away							
Sat 23 Aug	-	-	-	-							
Sun 24 Aug	Wombles/20 year game	Old Tenisonians	-	-							
Sun 31 Aug	TBA	Alexandra RG	All India	Home							
Sun 7 Sept	West XI (BAMC)	HSBC Beckenham	Gents (BAMC)	HSBC Beckenham							
Sat 13 Sept	-	-	West Farleigh	Away							
Sun 14 Sept	Salix	GSK Greenford	-	-							
Sun 28 Sept	Hale	Away	-	-							
Record	Played 11 Won 9 Drawn 1 Lost 1 Cancelled 1			Played 9 Won 5 Lost 5 Cancelled 1							
Runs	Inkollu 238, Husain 233, Khan 214, Denton 132			Dane 245, Wright 208, Babu 175, R Allerton 165							
Wickets	H Patel 17, Snelling 13, Iqbal/S Patel 9, Husain 7			R Allerton 13, Dane 10, Bhatt/Hill 9, Laing 8							
Catches	Denton 5, Khan/H Patel 3, Gilkes/Husain/Inkollu 2			Dane 6, R Allerton 5, /Bapu/Wright 4							
	M.	I.	NO.	R	Av.	Ct.	O	M	R	W	Avg.
Babar	2	2	2	50	N/A	-	2	0	2	1	2.00
Bryan	2	1	0	16	16.00	1	3	0	10	2	5.00
Buck	6	6	1	19	3.80	-	10	1	49	1	49.00
Burman	2	1	1	0	N/A	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Carroll	1	1	0	0	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Chayya	3	2	1	12	12.00	-	2	0	7	0	N/A
Denton	9	8	3	132	26.40	5	-	-	-	-	N/A
Desai	3	2	0	7	3.50	1	3	0	18	0	N/A
Fung	1	-	-	-	N/A	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Gilkes	9	7	1	93	15.50	2	3	1	19	2	9.50
Hibbert	2	2	1	11	11.00	1	8	3	21	6	3.50
Husain	6	5	1	233	58.25	2	24	5	84	7	12.00
Inkollu	10	8	1	238	34.00	2	30	7	79	7	11.29
Iqbal	4	3	1	22	11.00	-	17	5	43	9	4.78
Khan	7	6	1	214	42.80	3	2.4	0	7	2	3.50
Leader	1	1	0	0	0.00	-	6	0	18	1	18.00
Lee	1	1	1	1	N/A	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
H Patel	10	6	1	14	2.80	3	43.1	8	137	17	8.06
S Patel	11	8	1	110	15.71	1	36	11	93	9	10.33
Sciberras	4	3	1	43	21.50	1	16.4	2	70	6	11.67
Shanvare	3	2	0	0	0.00	-	6	2	26	3	8.67
Siddiq	1	1	0	6	6.00	1	-	-	-	-	N/A
Snelling	9	6	1	14	2.80	-	47	9	125	13	9.62
Toft	10	6	2	7	1.75	1	-	-	-	-	N/A
Turpin	2	-	-	-	N/A	1	-	-	-	-	N/A
Wright	2	2	-	53	26.50	-	8.3	0	41	2	20.50

Game 1: Fairfield RG, Sunday 27 April. St. Anne's Allstars won toss. Showery, 15C

St. Anne's in a spin before Khan fifty seals it

A vibrant, stylish 66 not out from Naveed Khan, his first fifty for the club, saw The Gents to a nine-wicket victory which kicked off their 20 years celebrations in style. He was well supported by HP Denton in an opening stand of 87, no mean feat on a damp, turning wicket on which the hosts' slow bowlers Hemin Patel and Mark Sciberras had taken seven wickets as St. Anne's collapsed after a promising start.

The Gents debuted all-rounder Ravi Inkollu, while Vivek Chayya played only his second game, having spent the years since being dragged along for a game by Dhruv Patel wisely, qualifying as a doctor. Ahsan Iqbal kindly turned up to support, but was loaned out, in civilian clothing, to St. Anne's, where he played with a sunny disposition and no little gusto. Maxie Haddow-Allen kindly ensured that he was fully involved.

Fairfield RG looked in good nick and though thunder, lightning and torrential rain skirted Kingston, the pitch was playable. The game was 30 minutes late in starting, partly due to the dismal weather and partly due to the reluctance of several St. Anne's players to leave the pub, perhaps fearing the worst. In fact, St. Anne's openers made an excellent start, helped by the concession of 5 wides off wayward deliveries from Snelling and Inkollu. Tristan Haddow-Allen was his usual assertive self and Crawford watchful and defiant until Snelling bowled him in the 7th. over. An assault of 6, 2 and 4 by Tristan rather spoilt the big man's figures and at 47/1 after only nine overs the visitors were in a sound position when the big wicket came, Tristan cutting a Sanjay Patel ball that held up low to Khan in the gully.

Thereafter only Scratch Begley provided much resistance as The Gents tightened their grip. Sciberras was tight, inducing a high, spectacular caught behind to dismiss Grant senior while Hemin got some turn from the Albion End, bowling Begley and Stephenson, having Nicol lbw and Iqbal neatly stumped. The Gents' catching was top-drawer, particularly for an opening game, Toft at backward point pouching Gould in Inkollu's improved second spell and Khan obliging Sciberras in the slips to dismiss Duncan. Allstars, batting twelve, just made the ton.

Teas were successfully outsourced to the Albion PH at a bargain 20 pounds, Inkollu eating six cakes. The players were grateful for shelter and the arrangement has much to commend it, though some fine-tuning is needed. The timing of 4pm seemed perfect for the weather was closing in and a long delay looked likely. But the sun soon broke through and conditions were pleasant by the end of the day.

The Gents' opening partnership was masterful, both batsmen playing themselves in against testing bowling from Chadwick and Haddow-Allen. The stand went along at four an over until Khan began to go for his shots, going on to smite 12 fours and a six. He was particularly harsh on the young colt Gus Grant, whose earlier dismissal for a duck had seen Ravi Inkollu charge down the pitch a-whooping to celebrate his maiden wicket. Gus could be heard piping up from the boundary about the shortcomings of The Gents, including a measured critique of a spinner who "has the most obvious faster ball ever" and "only spins it a bit." Great stuff. A ten-wicket victory, which students of *GWLCC/20* will know that The Gents have suffered but never inflicted, was hovering into view when Denton scooped Grant to leg slip 13 shy of the ton. There were no further alarms and victory was gained with over 15 overs to spare. At 5.30pm on a rapidly cooling evening there was disinclination to play a second game in order to involve the four Gents who neither batted nor bowled but their time will come.

St. Anne's Allstars; T Haddow-Allen 32, Crawford 4, AH Grant 1, Begley 21, Nicol 3, AM Grant 0, †Gould 4, Iqbal 5, Duncan 6, Stephenson 0, Chadwick 2 not out, *M Haddow-Allen 0, Extras 26, **103 all out (30.5 overs)**

FoW; 32, 52, 53, 58, 74, 86, 86, 99, 99, 103, 103

Bowling; Snelling 1-31, Inkollu 2-25, S Patel 1-11, Sciberras 3-18, H Patel 4-14

Catches; Khan 2, Denton 1, Toft 1

Stumping; Denton 1

Gents; Khan 66 not out, †Denton 24, Snelling 4 not out, Chayya, *S Patel, Gilkes, Turpin, Toft, Inkollu, Sciberras and H Patel did not bat, Extras 10, **104-1 (19.4 overs)**

FoW; 87

Bowling; Chadwick 0-19, T Haddow-Allen 0-14, Iqbal 0-15, Duncan 0-20, AM Grant 1-27, Nicol 0-6

Catches; Chadwick 1

Won by 9 wickets

Game 2: Victoria RG, Surbiton, Sunday 4 May. Gents won toss. Cloudy and humid, 22C

Kingston on the block

Plato defined time as the moving image of eternity but might have revised his observation had he seen Kingston's innings, a gritty, dull affair lightened later by some good whacks from Chesterman and Rajveer. Earlier, Gents had reached a patchy 123 against tight bowling and good fielding from this new opposition, with HP Denton retiring hurt after top scoring with 31.

It was good to be back at Victoria RG. The pitch was green and the outfield lush, no surprise after heavy midweek rain, which forced the Friday cancellation of the West XI game scheduled for Barn Elms, where Gents will visit in a fortnight. Batsmen came and went, Khan and Inkollu batting attractively, while Denton was resolute. The over rate was slow and as the game did not start until 2.19pm, a late finish was inevitable.

Kingston's innings started sensationally, deputy 'keeper Khan diving to his right to take a low one-handed catch off Snelling to dismiss Ingham. It would be the only catch of the innings, a decisive statistic. Wickets then fell at frequent intervals, Sanjay Patel's seamers earning him the astonishing analysis of 8-7-1-4. Though chances went down, Kingston only progressed to 28/6 off 16 when the last 20 overs were called. Full credit to the tail then for a resolute and not unattractive stand in which a few boundaries were scored. Sanjay got two in three balls, including loan player Daoud Shanvare, to make it interesting but Kingston's No.10 was a competent player and a draw it was, the first in a completed match for eight years.

Several Gents were clearly unhappy about the game, the case for the prosecution citing Kingston's questionable umpiring, slow over rate and unimaginative batting. Regarding the umpiring, teams have been disputing decisions from the men in white coats since cricket was first played and doubtless The Gents' umpires got a few things wrong here as well. To deal with the over rate, The Gents' innings was to comprise a maximum of two and a half hours' batting. It finished early but no more than 34 overs would have been bowled had it gone the distance, a truly dire rate, even allowing for the injury to HP and a short drinks break. The Gents bowled 36 overs in just over two hours and the previous week, in admittedly cooler weather, Kingston, in a match against Surbiton Imperials infamous for a Hat-trick of lbw's administered by umpire Yu Himm Fung, had managed 41 in two and a half hours. But it was difficult to score quickly with a slow wicket and outfield and even with a sprightlier over rate the final total would not have changed markedly. Regarding Kingston's batting, Chesterman and Rajveer should be applauded for saving the day. Their stand of 53 was the day's highest. Had they batted higher the contest would have been more entertaining, but it is not this match reporter's place to berate opponent's batting orders. Still, the tradition in such games is to go for the win and if you can't get it, go for the draw. Or to be more pragmatic, at least appear to go for the win before blocking.

The stark facts are, however, that The Gents by dropping too many catches did not do enough to win, and although Kingston had a defensive mindset, they kept to their game plan well, as indeed did The Gents in blocking out similar draws against 12 Angry Men in 1994 and Weasels in 1998 and 1999. Tony Buck reckoned his dour innings in the second of these (Weasels 227, Gents 67/8) to be where he truly learned to play cricket. To conclude, we move from Greek philosophy to English poetry. To see a World in a grain of sand, And Heaven in a wild flower, Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand And Eternity in an hour, wrote William Blake, though the MS refers to 'an hour and twenty overs'. He was no doubt watching a declaration game, whose death knell was tolled here.

Gents; †Khan 15, Denton 31 ret. hurt, Husain 9, Chayya 6, Inkollu 14, *S Patel 5, Gilkes 6, Buck 10, H Patel 2 not out, Toft 1, Snelling 1, Extras 23, **123 all out (29.2 overs)**

FoW; 19, 38, 50, 73, 91, 99, 107, 119, 123

Bowling; Martin 1-15, Connett 2-31, Rajveer 1-32, Alex 2-34, Shanvare 2-9

Catches; Ingham 2, Connett 1, MacLean 1

Kingston Left Handers; Crouch 4, †Ingham 0, Role 0, Fung 2, Connett 0, MacLean 1, Chesterman 10, Rajveer 39 not out, Shanvare 0, Mark 0 not out, Elliott did not bat, Extras 20, **77-8 (36 overs)**

FoW; 2, 4, 13, 15, 16, 21, 74, 74

Bowling; Snelling 2-15, Husain 0-17, S Patel 4-1, H Patel 1-15, Inkollu 0-5, Buck 0-7, Chayya 0-7

Catches; Khan 1

Drawn

Game 3: Burton's Court, London SW3. Sunday 11 May. Sloane Club won toss. Sunny, 25C

Amazing Grace

The Gents proceeded to an easy victory – the biggest by runs in their history – but of far more importance was the chance to play at a magnificent venue, steeped in history, against generous, friendly opponents after rain had caused the 2007 fixture to be cancelled. Sloane Club is a private members club whose facilities manager is Yoss Donovan, the FC Chad stalwart from the 1990's. He was able to negotiate the use of Burton's Court, the beautiful, historic ground of The Guards Cricket Club. The pavilion was festooned with paintings and photographs of The Guards' teams from the 1890's to the present day. Particularly poignant were the adjacent snaps from 1913 and 1919, with several of the surviving officers looking none too clever, but old Montagu the umpire still hale and hearty. By the 1930's, with political correctness gone mad, he had acquired his own initial, E. One of the surviving 1913 outfit was a Captain who had only been bumped up to Major by 1919. In a war which saw soldiers promoted General at 25 this was a truly staggering rate of career advancement.

With splendid views of Chelsea Hospital, idiosyncratic ground rules about how boundaries were counted, a remote controlled electronic scoreboard and, latterly, a UFO, this was a ground to cherish and to do anything to secure an invitation back. A pompous outbreak of bellowing by Mr Denton at the scorer (who had forgotten to clone himself and could not therefore simultaneously wield the scorer's pencil and work the complex scoreboard mechanism) and a brief mooning episode by Mr Gilkes aside, The Gents were as good as gold, and Yoss was keen to renew in 2009, perhaps a three-way competition. From a logistical viewpoint, Gents were in fine fettle, with fourteen current and two prospective players on the ground. Sloane Club were, however, denuded of major batsmen, though Yoss assured your match reporter that such talent does indeed exist, it just needs organising around the club's shift patterns.

The match itself was something of a Gents/FC Chad throwback and was played with the rugged friendliness of spirit for which those encounters were memorable. For example, Richard Gilkes was reprieved after being caught by slip Donovan, as umpire Snelling did not realise that the batsman was not ready. Such was the heat that players took drinks breaks every ten overs, but even so 85 were bowled in the day.

The wicket was fast, true and bouncy and captain Buck inserted The Gents. Sloane Club did not bowl badly and took two sharp catches, including one by guest Mark Sciberras, but were powerless to stop rampaging stands of 73, 86, 40 and 76, with fifties for Ravi Inkollu, his first for the club and Nabeel Husain, 69 not out in ten overs, his fifteenth, excluding his four hundreds. Naveed Khan, Richard Gilkes and Ahsan Iqbal provided fine support.

Sloane Club, who did not charge Gents a penny for all this, provided a fine tea, along with a lavish supply of liquid refreshment. They faced up to their task with initial circumspection but were undone first by pace, then spin, Hemin Patel taking 3-3-0-3 as the innings stalled from 30/5 to 30 all out. No matter, as the sides were then mixed up for a nine a side Pro18 game in which everyone got to bat or bowl. The game was deemed unofficial, so no scorecard is recorded here. The UFO was spotted by Naveed Khan, Ken Toft and Andrew Burman, who vowed to send a letter to the Government's Flying Saucer Committee for urgent action. In case you are wondering about the headline, a piper in the hospital piped that old plantation melody (originally called Loving Lambs) and young Grace Buck was told by her dad that it was especially for her. This was in spirit with the best day out for a long, long time.

Gents; Khan 24, Inkollu 80, Gilkes 45, Husain 69 not out, Iqbal 19 not out, †Turpin, Shanvare, Toft, Denton, *S Patel, Snelling and H Patel did not bat, Extras 32, **275-3 (35 overs)**

FoW; 73, 159, 199

Bowling; Donovan 1-47, Collings 0-16, Carew 1-39, Buck 0-60, Sciberras 0-41, Danny 0-29, Ricky 1-17, C Naish 1-23

Catches; Ricky 1, Sciberras 1

Sloane Club; Buck 1, Sciberras 2, Collings 13, Ricky 8, Carew 1, †C Naish 0, Danny 0, Donovan 0, J Naish 0, Donovan Jr. 0 not out, Extras 5, **30 all out (15 overs)**

FoW; 5, 19, 21, 21, 30, 30, 30, 30, 30

Bowling; Snelling 2-12, Iqbal 2-5, Shanvare 2-8, H Patel 3-0

Catches; Turpin 1

Won by 245 runs

Game 4: Barn Elms. Sunday 18 May. West XI won toss. Sunny and windy, 16C

Happy anniversary

The Gents took a 1-0 lead in the 2008 Bob Ashton Memorial Cup with a resounding victory, outbatting, outbowling and, crucially, outcatching their old rivals to post a convincing win. It was a day when almost everything captain Sanjay Patel tried came off, from his decision to put Ravi Inkollu (80 the week before opening the batting) at No.7 to stiffen the middle-order to calling back Nabeel Husain for a second spell to dislodge Chris Wright. Both sides scored 75 runs in their first 20 overs, but whereas The Gents scrapped their way to an above-par total of 162, West XI collapsed in a heap after their captain was out, only 4 further runs accruing. West XI had no complaints but will doubtless come back hard in the July return. This was an historic day, for on the equivalent Sunday 20 years before, The Gents had played their inaugural fixture, against the same opposition. Steve Bignell and Andrew Burman from that treasured day were in attendance here, the former kindly presenting the latter with a framed scorecard of that game.

After Sanjay Patel and Peter Denton had cut through the red tape to claim the right pitch, a few hundred yards from where the players had originally convened, Chris Wright won the toss and inserted The Gents, a decision vindicated early with three maidens first up and the wicket of Denton bowled Taylor in the fifth over. Khan and Husain then batted superbly to add 60 with entertaining calling but excellent running between the wickets, boundaries being at a premium with huge boundaries and long grass in the outfield. Indeed, though he struck five threes, Husain did not find the white lines once, asserting that he could not possibly have hit the ball any harder. Only four fours were scored all innings, compared to five, all by Wright, in the Beggars' knock. Khan was dropped four times but gritted it out for 25 overs, though he lost Siddiq caught behind and Iqbal, not the first nor, one suspects, the last Gent to have an attack of the red mist on facing Laing's teasing flight for the first time. The innings was stalling, but after Bhatt caught Khan off Rowan Allerton for a priceless 46, skipper Patel and the powerful Inkollu injected it with adrenalin before Bender took an excellent slip catch running back off Allerton to dismiss Sanjay Patel and Bhatt bowled Inkollu. It was now run for everything time, particularly when Husain returned as runner for the hobbling Chayya, who showed good attitude in his innings. Sciberras edged behind and Hemin Patel was run out as Husain tried to turn a two into a three. The innings closed on 162.

After a brief tea, battle resumed. An astonishing period of play followed, in which the Beggar top order was blown away. In the first over Prab Bapu top edged a pull to mid-wicket Sciberras. Denton then dropped Taylor down the leg side in the second, only for the left-hander to be out two balls later, gully Inkollu taking a miraculous one-handed catch as the ball looked to have passed him. Sanjay Patel soon bowled Bhatt and when in Husain's next over gully Hemin Patel flung himself to his right to pouch Chris Dane an inch above the ground, The Gents were in cricket heaven.

Credit, then, the defiance of Wright, who interestingly did not bowl himself in The Gents' innings and Cox, who added a composed 44, the second best stand of the day, against the pace of Iqbal, the guile of Sciberras and the slightly below par off-spin of Hemin Patel. The introduction of Inkollu's accurate, challenging pace and the reintroduction of Husain turned the match inexorably to The Gents. Inkollu bowled Cox and Rennie and Husain had Wright caught behind off a spiralling edge and outed Allerton with a simple caught and bowled next ball. McGirr parried a short one from Husain to Siddiq at silly mid-off – the Saudi's first five-for – and victory was completed when Khan bowled Bender with 9.4 overs left, just as the park keeper was beginning to lock up the ground. Had West XI's innings lasted only a few more overs, the game would have had to be abandoned.

Gents; †Denton 2, Khan 46, Husain 32, Siddiq 6, Iqbal 0, *S Patel 15, Inkollu 28, Chayya 6 not out, Sciberras 0, H Patel 1, Toft 0 not out, Extras 28, **162-9 (35 overs)**

FoW; 3, 63, 88, 89, 106, 125, 151, 156, 159

Bowling; Taylor 2-22, McGirr 0-28, Dane 2-26, Bhatt 1-22, Laing 1-36, Allerton 1-21

Catches; Bapu 2, Bender 1, Bhatt 1

West XI; †Bapu 0, Taylor 0, Dane 6, Bhatt 2, Cox 11, *Wright 44, Rennie 6, R Allerton 0, Bender 1, McGirr 1, Laing 0 not out, Extras 6, **79 all out (25.4 overs)**

FoW; 0, 0, 8, 8, 52, 75, 75, 75, 77, 79

Bowling; Husain 5-13, S Patel 2-3, Iqbal 0-14, H Patel 0-17, Inkollu 2-3, Sciberras 0-23, Khan 1-0

Catches; Denton 1, Husain 1, Inkollu 1, H Patel 1, Sciberras 1, Siddiq 1

Won by 83 runs

Games 5/6: Old Tenisonians' CC. Sunday 1 June. London Saints won toss. Cloudy, 18C

Diversity awareness

On the same wicket on which 24 hours before Old Tenisonians had skittled their Fuller's League Division 2 opponents for just 41 en route to an eight wicket win, Gents and London Saints repeated the plot almost to the run, the visitors defying the conditions to bat first on a damp but drying pitch on a cloudy, muggy day. The Gents won this low-scoring game after a superb spell of 5-2-7-5 from young Pakistani Ahsan Iqbal, including a Hat-trick, reduced the visitors' batting to rubble. The hosts found things little easier in the reply, losing three cheap wickets and surviving two dropped catches, before Gilkes and Denton steered them home.

"Whatever you do, do not bat first" advised Tenisonian Paul Kain but Dave Thomas had confidence in his batters, though the late arrival of Pete Berkeley probably did not help his cause. He arrived with his team 16-6 courtesy of Mr Iqbal (whose Hat-trick victims were Wathan caught Gilkes, Dallison and Chalmers bowled), Snelling and Husain having previously picked up an opener apiece. Cronin batted bravely but the damage was done even before a direct hit run out by Hemin Patel followed by two wickets for the spinner finished off the innings after 20.3 overs. Toft soon fell to a blistering one-handed catch by Nanton off Loomes who despite a stuttering run up is a very clever bowler. When Thomas bowled Khan and Loomes had Buck lbw The Gents were grateful that the target was not higher, though no further wickets fell.

London Saints; Griffiths 9, Grimes 1, Nanton 3, Cronin 12 not out, Wathan 0, Dallison 0, Chalmers 0, *Thomas 2, Loomes 1, †Jones 0, Berkeley 5, Extras 8, **41 all out (20.3 overs)**
FoW; 3, 13, 13, 13, 13, 13, 22, 31, 31, 41
Bowling; Snelling 1-10, Husain 1-10, Iqbal 5-7, Inkollu 0-8, H Patel 2-1
Catches; Gilkes 2, Denton 1

Gents; Khan 12, Toft 0, Buck 2, Gilkes 14 not out, †Denton 11 not out, H Patel, Husain, Iqbal, Inkollu, Snelling and *S Patel did not bat, Extras 3, **42-3 (10.2 overs)**
FoW; 6, 14, 15
Bowling; Berkeley 0-9, Loomes 2-9, Thomas 1-8, Grimes 0-11, Wathan 0-5
Catches; Nanton 1

Won by 7 wickets

The subsequent Twenty/20 was a thriller on an easing wicket which saw a spirited if ultimately unsuccessful response by Saints to a run a ball target. The Gents batted methodically, Denton anchoring the innings with steady contributions throughout the order. Saints used nine bowlers: The Gents, rather less democratically, would use only seven. Mr Berkeley took four wickets and would top score in the reply.

Berkeley and Thomas batted beautifully in the hunt for 121 runs. Their stand of 48 was the highest of the day and when, in Hemin Patel's first over (the innings' eighth), Thomas pulled the day's only six, Saints were slight favourites, though Hemin had the skipper lbw next ball. The off-spinner would take three more wickets, though runs were accruing at the required rate. The introduction of pace – including two regrettable Snelling beamers – finally pegged Saints back in the final two overs, only five runs coming of the nine required in the last. It had been an exciting, tight contest in which The Gents just won out, but it could have gone either way.

Gents; Denton 23, Gilkes 8, Husain 14, Inkollu 9, H Patel 5, Snelling 1, *S Patel 13, Iqbal 3, Buck 5 not out, Toft 3 not out, †Khan did not bat, Extras 20, **120-8 (20 overs)**
FoW; 31, 58, 72, 79, 90, 90, 101, 112
Bowling; Griffiths 0-20, Nanton 0-9, Wathan 0-5, Cronin 0-17, Grimes 1-6, Berkeley 4-13, Dallison 1-19, Loomes 2-14, Thomas 0-15
Catches; Chalmers 1, Cronin 1, Griffiths 1, Jones 1, Loomes 1, Nanton 1 **Stumpings;** Jones 1

London Saints; Berkeley 44 not out, *Thomas 31, Dallison 3, Chalmers 2, Wathan 5, Nanton 1, Cronin 6, Loomes 3, Griffiths 2, †Jones not out 2, Grimes did not bat, Extras 16, **117-8 (20 overs)**
FoW; 48, 61, 69, 84, 87, 96, 193, 114
Bowling; Buck 0-22, S Patel 0-20, H Patel 4-14, Gilkes 0-19, Iqbal 2-17, Husain 1-8, Snelling 1-11
Catches; Husain 1, H Patel 1

Won by 3 runs

Game 7: Civil Service Sports Grounds, Chiswick. Saturday 7 June. Gents won toss. Sunny, 22C

Gent batsmen frolic in the sun

Nabeel Husain's third century against the Weasels, his fifth in all, together with fine support from batsmen Naveed 'Nine Lives' Khan and the returning Jim Wright and bowler Mark Sciberras, were, for The Gents, the highlights of an enjoyable day's cricket. Weasels fielded gamely but were dogged by ill-luck, dropping Khan three times, failing to run out Husain early in his innings after a mix up and suffering the early departure retired hurt (due to an injured thumb sustained in a previous game) of key batsman John Bishop. Though The Gents defended their total easily enough, it would have been a lot closer had both their in-form batsmen departed early. Perhaps fortune favours the brave: or perhaps The Gents' luck will run out soon. Certainly Weasels missed Michaels here but played keenly throughout, with no trace of post-traumatic embitterment disorder.

Sanjay Patel assembled the team for a pre-match pep talk. 'Ah good, we are about to be told we've all done very well' smirked the team. It soon became obvious, however, that it was to be a wiggling and there was much shuffling of feet and nervous tittering as the team's batting and running between the wickets incurred the considerable wrath of the leader. We then got going and Khan survived the early dismissal of Denton bowled Dyer to club a bold if chancy 51 in 15 overs before cutting to point off Regnier-Wilson. Gilkes was soon deceived in the flight and stumped in what would be the first of a trio of victims for Weasels' new captain, the likeable West Ham fan Tom Pagan. Richard is now just 6 runs short of his 1,000.

The 105 run stand between Husain and Wright won The Gents the game. The latter batted as if he had never been away (though he had attended the Oval nets) and after moving discreetly into the 20's unleashed some powerful drives, running superbly with his younger partner, who hit ten fours and three sixes, including an outrageous reverse sweep. Pagan had them both but SP and Sciberras added a bright 22 in the breezy sunshine to conclude the innings. Weasels had kept at it well and smiled through their misfortune.

Husain's innings was the fourth highest in the club's history and once he had his eye in there was little the game Weasel bowlers could do to stop him. He is a phenomenon. The will he/won't he discussion about his departure bumbled on most of the day. "He's off on 1 August," pronounced Hemin confidently. "But he's just taken a three month auditing contract," countered Jim Wright. We'll know anon.

After a tasty tea taken al fresco, in which proper cheese sandwiches and chocolate rolls featured, Weasels quickly lost Bishop. Hayes and the impressive, top-scoring Jeavons batted well and there was resistance throughout the order but few boundaries, as The Gents hustled through 35 overs in two hours. When the ball was forced through the inner ring, Ken Toft and Yu Himm Fung swept to great effect. To quote Nine Lives: 'Every ball that came their way was attacked aggressively, cleanly taken and dispatched with gusto to the stumps. At our level, 100% accuracy is a rarity'. SP was able to use seven bowlers. Of these, Mark Sciberras was the pick, flighting the ball well, bowling a nagging length and deserving his three wickets. At the end, Mister Snelling tried a few bouncers at Dyer. The big man can still get it up.

This is a splendid ground with first-class batting wickets, if rather windswept and right on the Heathrow runway 27 flightpath, though no flying saucers were spotted. The clubhouse made an acceptable if slightly sterile venue for post-match socialising, during which pressure was put on the secretary to organise a few more Saturday games in 2009. Finally, big thanks go to last minute guest Yu Himm Fung, a man of eternally sunny disposition, though stressed by his forthcoming nuptials.

Gents; Khan 51, †Denton 2, Husain 109, Gilkes 6, Wright 47, *S Patel 11 not out, Sciberras 14 not out, H Patel, Snelling, Toft and Fung did not bat, Extras 13, **253-5 (35 overs)**

FoW; 5, 85, 123, 228, 231

Bowling; Dyer 1-28, Bishop 0-33, Hoskins 0-44, Regnier-Wilson 1-22, Patel 1-49, Duff 0-34, Hayes 2-39

Catches; Hayes 1 **Stumpings;** Pagan 3

New Barbarian Weasels; Bishop ret. hurt 2, Hayes 12, Regnier-Wilson 3, Jeavons 36, Mann 6, Hoskins 5, Duff 4, Sampson 2, Dyer 4 not out, Patel 8 not out, †*Pagan did not bat, Extras 14, **99-7 (35 overs)**

FoW; 20, 33, 42, 65, 79, 79, 89

Bowling; Snelling 1-12, Husain 0-15, Wright 1-20, H Patel 1-15, S Patel 0-5, Sciberras 3-16, Khan 1-7

Catches; Denton 1

Won by 154 runs

Game 8: Fairfield RG, Kingston. Sunday 15 June. Gents won toss. Sunny, 18C

Crisis, what crisis? Gents' tail holds its nerve

A classic, tense game against a fine new opposition was decided off the penultimate ball when, to Gent jubilation, debutant Gary Lee cover drove the winning single through a packed close field. Chasing 167, a total that would have been far higher but for seventh bowler Horace Hibbert's stunning 7-3-11-5, a century stand between Ravi Inkollu and Mark Sciberras seemed to have put The Gents in control, but seven wickets fell for 62 runs against some inspired bowling and fielding and it needed considerable resolve by the later batsmen to earn the win. Snarler Snelling described the game as 'one of the best ever.' It deserves its place in the pantheon.

Lacking batsmen Khan and Husain, Sanjay Patel opted to chase, the task being made unnecessarily onerous by the concession of 13 byes and 22 wides, none harshly adjudged. As the ball began to creep in the second innings, Cairns Fudge would go on to concede the same number of byes and only 9 fewer wides. Only the two half-centurions, therefore, outscored extras in their side's innings. After the early departure of Bodie bowled Snelling, Australian Steve Kent struck 53 before becoming Hibbert's first victim immediately after drinks. The Cairns Fudge middle order was solid but, despite the mounting extras and some dropped catches, wickets came at crucial times, Inkollu having Andy K well caught Denton diving down the leg-side and bowling Jonny, while Randle fell to a super Hibbert slip catch off Shanvare. Though the beefy southpaw Jimmy F clubbed 33, including 12 off Snelling's final over, the visitors were slowed down in the second half of the innings by Hibbert's bowling onslaught. At the 20-over point, The Gents were fearing 200 but seven overs of accurate fast-medium from the Jamaican, supported by improved fielding, brought the hosts back into the game.

Despite a wicket that was playing true, The Gents were by no means confident at half-time and were even less so when off the first ball of their innings Daoud Shanvare clipped a return catch to Dane. We were then treated to an epic stand of 104 in 19.4 overs between Mark Sciberras, one of whose best innings this was, and the pugnacious Ravi Inkollu, who struck a brilliant 63. A feature of the stand was watchful defence punctuated by periods of aggression, runs accruing consistently at five per over. One was of mindful of Geoffrey Boycott's aphorism – 'Always add two wickets to the score then see what it looks like' – when, in quick succession either side of 20-over drinks, Sciberras fell lbw (one of five such victims in the day) and Inkollu holed out to cover.

Things then began to heat up a treat as leg-spinner Steve Kent found his line from the Pavilion End, gaining two more lbw's at the expense of Hibbert and the aggressive Sanjay Patel, while Doyle had Jim Wright caught behind and induced a chip to a diving backward square-leg by Buck. Although the required run rate was creeping up, it was still under five, a legacy of the excellent second-wicket stand and Sanjay's brief onslaught.

There was much work to do when Snelling joined Peter Denton and my how they responded, running well in taking their ones and twos. The winning post, from being a tiny speck, slowly hove into clearer view before the burly paceman pulled a four and took a single to bring the scores level in the 34th. over. Dane bowled him off the first ball of the last, Cairns Fudge requiring a maiden to tie. Gary Lee then played three immaculate forward defensive shots before smiting the winning run.

This looks to be a fixture with a future as Cairns Fudge are an ambitious club running elevens in both Oxford and London. They were a tough bunch, but fair and sporting throughout and good company after the game, dispensing fines willy nilly, including one of a pound to Gary Lee for smiting the winning run. It had been an exhausting game, so fair play to the visitors for making the effort to join The Gents' evening celebrations.

Cairns Fudge; Bodie 1, Kent 53, Andy K 6, Jonny 0, Randle 23, Jimmy F 33, Clark 0, Howells 1, Matt C 0, Dane 10 not out, Jarred 2, Extras 36, **166 (34.3 overs)**

FoW; 10, 62, 67, 105, 119, 120, 131, 148, 157, 166

Bowling; Snelling 1-21, S Patel 0-29, Wright 1-21, Inkollu 2-27, Sciberras 0-13, Shanvare 1-18, Hibbert 5-11

Catches; Denton 1, Hibbert 1, Inkollu 1

Gents; Shanvare 0, Sciberras 29, Inkollu 63, Wright 6, Hibbert 2, *S Patel 16, Buck 0, †Denton 10 not out, Snelling 7, Lee 1 not out, Burman did not bat, Extras 30, **167-8 (34.5 overs)**

FoW; 0, 104, 112, 126, 135, 143, 152, 166

Bowling; Dane 2-21, Clark 0-33, Kent 0-18, Carroll 0-13, Jimmy F 1-25, S Kent 3-25, Doyle 2-16

Catches; Not recorded 3

Won by 2 wickets

Games 9/10: Fairfield RG, Kingston. Sunday 22 June. Gents won toss. Sunny, 19C

Wickets tumble as Gents set up club record

An enthralling game saw The Gents edge home amid extraordinary tension, Ravi Inkollu knocking off the winning runs while No.11 Rob Babar, soon to become an opener of some merit, blocked with steadfast courage. So, for the second successive game, The Gents survived a collapse to edge a tight contest but, though the bowling could not be faulted, they did not bat well here, losing six wickets for 18 runs. London Rams can be proud of the redemptive efforts of their bowlers, an 'astonishing effort' to quote Sanjay Patel.

The first innings advantage was The Gents' as pace, seam and spin did their ruthless job, Snelling being particularly impressive and Sanjay Patel taking a marvellous catch in the deep to out the loaned Horace Hibbert, who had launched Hemin Patel for two fours and a pulled six in the same over. The pitch was lively but there seemed no way back for Rams as Richard Gilkes and Craig Bryan added 28 for the fourth wicket after early setbacks. Chasing teams approaching the win with tea looming should play sensibly and keep their wickets intact. It's the law. At 4 o'clock, with Gents at 47/3 needing 25 to win with 7 wickets and 21 overs in hand, both teams seen keen to bring matters to a conclusion as swiftly as possible. Then the fun started as the accurate and hostile Neil Patel found his line after nine runs had come from his first over. He took five wickets, including Buck and the Patels in one over, but Inkollu and Babar knew enough to edge The Gents home. Twenty-two players took tea in a trance, unable to believe what they had witnessed.

London Rams; Fisher 0, Nikesh Patel 2, Benshye-Brown 3, †Rothwell 0, Vale 15, Neil Patel 9, Lee 0, Barnes 11 not out, Hibbert 15, Hunt 0, *Rowe 0, Extras 16, **71 all out (22.5 overs)**
FoW; 2, 4, 5, 14, 36, 37, 41, 56, 56, 71
Bowling; S Patel 2-9, Snelling 3-11, Inkollu 1-11, H Patel 2-27, Babar 1-2
Catches; Desai 1, S Patel 1

Gents; Toft 2, †Carroll 0, Desai 7, Gilkes 14, Bryan 16, Buck 2, Inkollu 15 not out, *S Patel 0, H Patel 0, Snelling 0, Babar 0 not out, Extras 16, **72-9 (20.2 overs)**
FoW; 2, 9, 19, 47, 57, 61, 61, 61, 65
Bowling; Benshye-Brown 2-18, Hibbert 1-3, Vale 0-13, Neil Patel 5-11, Hunt 1-12
Catches; Rothwell 1, Vale 1

Won by 1 wicket

After tea, there was a Pro15. The Gents' innings was based around a superb maiden fifty from Rob Babar, whose batting was a revelation. Having performed defensively in the first game, here he unleashed some beautiful shots, elegantly pulling and driving seven fours. His last seven innings (0, 0*, 0*, 0, 0, 3, 1, 18 and 50*) are an object lesson in perseverance and, here, opportunity. With Sanjay Patel clubbing a brisk 34, The Gents posted 122 and steady bowling and keen outcricet (exemplified by a sliding stop on the boundary by Mr. Gilkes, whose bowling return is not mistyped) forced victory. Gary Lee held one end up for Rams but they fell 39 runs short on a sunny but cool and windy evening. This was the tenth successive unbeaten game, beating the previous record of nine set between 18 June and 13 August 2000. The record number of consecutive wins, previously six (set three times), was eclipsed in the first of this afternoon's games. It was indeed a day of milestones, Steve Bignell scoring his 5,000th. run for West XI and Richard Gilkes his 1,000th. for The Gents.

Gents; Snelling 1, Babar 50 not out, H Patel 4, *†S Patel 34, Inkollu 15, Buck 0, Hibbert 9 not out, Bryan, Gilkes, Desai and Toft did not bat, Extras 9, **122-5 (15 overs)**
FoW; 4, 9, 70, 98, 106
Bowling; Fisher 1-8, Rowe 1-13, Barnes 0-31, Lee 0-12, Benshye-Brown 1-20, Vale 2-11, Neil Patel 0-14, Rowe 0-9
Catches; Hunt 1, Rothwell 1

London Rams; Lee 25, Neil Patel 2, Nikesh Patel 9, Vale 2, Benshye-Brown 16, †Rothwell 21, Barnes 1 not out, *Rowe 0, Fisher 0, Hunt 0 not out, Extras 36, **83-8 (15 overs)**
FoW; 11, 20, 24, 51, 69, 81, 83, 83
Bowling; Bryan 2-10, Buck 1-20, Desai 0-18, H Patel 0-20, Hibbert 1-10, Snelling 1-2, Gilkes 2-0
Catches; Bryan 1, H Patel 1

Won by 39 runs

Game 11: Fairfield RG, Kingston. Sunday 29 June. Gents won toss. Sunny, 21C

Crawling from the Rekhidge

The Gents' proud unbeaten run was effectively ended after ten overs when Tejbal Rekhi took a simple caught and bowled off Daoud Shanvare (the gentle Afghani's second such dismissal in a fortnight). It was his fifth wicket, left Gents at 20-5 and although Denton and Sanjay Patel resisted for a while the innings closed at a paltry 62, the second lowest Gent score batting first of all time and the lowest batting first or second since 60 all out against West XI in 2005. Purley Arms easily chased this down, in a mere 12.4 overs. This defeat has been coming for a while and its manner was no surprise after recent batting collapses against Cairns Fudge and London Rams.

This was a fixture sourced from the internet against a Surrey pub team who play regular cricket. Indeed, among their 2008 victims are Urban Associates, whom they beat in a close, low-scoring game in May. They arrived on time but it was with consternation that the hosts noticed the absence of a groundsman, who had the game down for the Saturday. Encouraged by Albion landlord Pat ('Physical work? There's eleven of yer. Bleedin' sort it') and led by the superstrong Ravi Inkollu, The Gents ripped up the posts and we had a game, the groundsman arriving an hour later.

Perhaps this administrative problem and the resultant hanging about caused a lack of concentration in one or two players' minds, perhaps the pitch was a tad two-paced, perhaps Rekhi was a demon bowler but whatever the reason the outcome was the stumps of Desai, Inkollu and Gilkes knocked back, Toft's bails dislodged with an unlucky, soft played on and Shanvare caught and bowled. Denton was again batting well, thriving amid the fielders' loud encouragements and in the skipper he found a partner not only willing but able to resist. Purley's support bowlers were less hostile and the pair played some pleasing shots before the former fell lbw. Hemin Patel resisted for a well before edging to the 'keeper diving forward. Kiwi debutant Mark Leader played on, ditto the skipper with Burman still to face a ball in 2008. Only London Owls, in 1991, had bowled out The Gents for a lower total batting first, in pouring rain at Gunnersbury Park.

The Gents had little luck in Purley's innings but the fact that they required only 12.4 overs to win is eloquent testimony to the one-sidedness of this match. Leader bowled well and deserved his wicket, while Inkollu ran out Shergold going for a second that was never on. But Gardner and young Rahul Chardrhy savaged the Patels whose combined 16 balls went for 29 runs. It is fascinating how in all sports teams on the way to defeat rarely enjoy any luck. Inkollu and Leader kept beating the bat but the edges would not come and Sanjay shelled a tough chance in the fifth over.

"Well done, we hadn't lost before today," proffered one Gent. "Can we have your oppo's phone numbers?" countered the Purley Arms skipper with a merest whiff of triumphalism. There was little mixing after the game. Both sides had tea then the oppo rushed back home to watch Spain, a team revered by journalists despite being, let it not be forgotten, neutral in Euro 39, win the football. The Gents would have perhaps liked a Pro15 to restore some pride but the absence of any opposition denied them even that.

Had this game occurred a season before then it would have been a worthy contender for the Games of Shame in *GWLCC/20*, coming as it did after a series of competent and in one or two cases inspired 2008 performances. 'Ah, but we only had ten and some top players were absent' came one sublime piece of Gents rationalisation. True enough, but as the chairman pointed out, it was disappointing that only eight members (two far from fit) made themselves available for this game. Thanks to Himanshu Desai and Mark Leader for guest support.

Gents; †Denton 29, Desai 0, Inkollu 4, Gilkes 0, Toft 1, *S Patel 16, Shanvare 0, H Patel 2, Leader 0, Burman 0 not out, Extras 10, **62 all out (22.1 overs)**

FoW; 7, 13, 16, 20, 20, 40, 59, 62

Bowling; M Snadden 0-18, T Rekhi 5-6, D Neal 1-21, S Snadden 2-13, R Rekhi 1-3

Catches; R Rekhi, 1, Not recorded 1

Purley Arms; Shergold 20, R Rekhi 14, Gardner 8 not out, Chardrhy 12 not out, Extras 9, **63-2 (12.4 overs)**

FoW; 30, 32

Bowling; Inkollu 0-24, Leader 1-18, H Patel 0-14, S Patel 0-15

Catches; None

Lost by 8 wickets

Space monsters buzz SW3



June/July 1947 – Flight Major Hughie Green of the RAF is making a ‘long and boring trip’ alone, by car, from Hollywood to Philadelphia, where he has a business appointment. His car radio is on. Flying Saucer Review Vol.1, No.1: ‘About 250 miles out of Philadelphia, a commentator interrupted the programme to announce that a flying saucer had crashed in New Mexico, and that the Army were moving in to investigate. Later the programme was interrupted again, and quite a few details were given. Several newsflashes about the incident, from various radio stations, followed. The last I heard was just before reaching Philadelphia. The announcer promised further bulletins. None followed. When I got to Philadelphia I bought all the newspapers I could lay my hands on. But not one carried the story. And questions at the radio stations just drew a blank. It’s mystified me ever since.’

Summer 1949 – In the woods of Westminister, Massachusetts, Betty Aho (later Andreasson and then Luca), aged twelve, sees a strange-looking little person emerge from a hole. She will recall under hypnosis: ‘He has a funny colour, and has big eyes and a funny suit on. He’s pressing a button and it’s shooting out something, like a tiny ball of light and it’s coming toward me and hitting me in the head again, like before.’ The alien tells Betty that they’re preparing things for her to see ‘that it may help people in the future.’

May 2008 – Three cricketers, Andrew Burman, Naveed Khan and Ken Toft observe first two **then four** white lights hovering several thousand feet up in a cloudless sky above the Burton’s Court cricket ground in London. They remain stationary for several minutes then move off in a westerly direction, the four lights maintaining a rectangular shape. The three observers are graduates in chemistry, economics and geography and are respected as rational men, not prone to flights of fancy. While balloons or lasers were a possibility, the nearby presence of army barracks lead the interested observer to the conclusion that the lights belonged to hostile alien craft, possibly from Mars. The plot of movie blockbuster ‘Independence Day’ was thus visited on social cricket.

The Flying Saucer Working Party was set up in October 1950, but operated under such secrecy that its existence was known to very few. Nevertheless, there were two clues that such a study had been carried out. The first was in the Secretary of State for Air’s response to Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s famous 28 July 1952 memo in which he enquired ‘What does all this stuff about flying saucers amount to? What can it mean? What is the truth? Let me have a report at your convenience’. The response, dated 9 August 1952, began ‘The various reports about unidentified flying objects, described by the Press as “flying saucers”, were the subject of a full Intelligence study in 1951’.

The second clue was in a minute dated 29 May 1959, written by an official in S6 (a now defunct MOD division whose responsibilities for researching and investigating UFOs were latterly taken on by DS8, Sec(AS) and now DAS). This minute contained a sentence which read: ‘The subject was reviewed by the J.I.C. some years ago and their views agree with a more extensive review carried out by the Americans’. This minute can be found at the National Archives in file DEFE 31/118.

The working party’s conclusions were set out in a document dated June 1951 and bearing the designation DSI/JTIC Report No. 7. It was entitled ‘Unidentified Flying Objects’ and classified ‘Secret Discreet’. The report was made available at the National Archives on 1 January 2002 under reference DEFE 44/119. Some of the key National Archives file references containing the Report and related DSI/JTIC discussions are DEFE 10/496, DEFE 41/74 and DEFE 41/75.

The report concludes that all UFO sightings could be explained as misidentifications of ordinary objects or phenomena, optical illusions, psychological delusions or hoaxes. The main body of the report ends with the following statement: ‘We accordingly recommend very strongly that no further investigation of reported mysterious aerial phenomena be undertaken, unless and until some material evidence becomes available’.

The report was duly considered by the DSI/JTIC and it was recommended that in view of its sceptical conclusions, it should be regarded as a final report. It was further suggested that the working party be dissolved with immediate effect. This was agreed, thus bringing to an end the MOD’s first UFO research project. It would be another 45 years before a follow-up study was undertaken, codenamed Project Condign.

Ten more years, Sanjay, ten more years...

Thrilling news is abroad that a new underground line for West London is being proposed which would run from Surbiton to Brent Cross through Ealing and Brentford. The proposal is a result of a feasibility study done by Capita Symonds for the West London Chamber of Commerce. The West London Orbital would connect the many radial railway lines in West London, creating a comprehensive rail network, rather than providing for journeys mainly into and out of central London. The line would be complementary to Crossrail and would serve as a feeder to it.

A number of routes have been examined for the new metro and the most promising one would run between Brent Cross and Surbiton via Wembley, Ealing Broadway and Richmond. The aim would be to reinvigorate the local economy and stop the increasing trend of West London towns becoming dormitory areas for Central London. The proposed line would operate using short driverless trains, similar to the Docklands Light Railway and updated to the most modern standards broadly similar to the recently opened Copenhagen metro in Denmark. The transit time from Brent Cross to Surbiton would be 28 minutes, with a maximum train speed of 80 km/h. No station on the route would be more than 15 minutes from the interchange with Crossrail at Ealing Broadway. The 25km line would link together 20 different radial rail or tube lines.

The implications for The Gents are enormous. Sanjay can leave his car at home, HP's, Burman's, Turpin's and Ravi's commute to games will be halved and we might even see that rare phenomenon, a migration north of the river by the club's South West London contingent to play London Saints.

Proposed Line



Inflation stalks Beggar bowling returns

An interesting incident occurred in the West XI/London Saints Lord Nelson Cup game on 22 June when Phil Hill 'bowled' Jon Loomes on the windy marshland of Barn Elms. Here is Mr Bignell's take on events: 'Having taken professional advice, it would appear that Mr Hill's dismissal of London Saints' Loomes in their second innings last Sunday was illegal, since the bails blew off the wicket whilst the ball was in the air and were not on the stumps when it hit the wicket'.

Law 23 Section 3B states 'Either umpire shall call and signal dead ball' if (4) 'one or both bails fall from the striker's wicket before he (the batsman) has had the opportunity of playing the ball.' Conversely, if the non-striker's wicket is broken at the point of delivery by the bowler or some act of nature, this does not affect the legality of the delivery which should not be called Dead Ball – ref. West XI v Acme 13 August 2006, when a bowler knocked over the stumps in his follow through, bowled Chris Dane and was wrongly No balled.

Law 28 (the wicket is down) 4. Dispensing with bails states:

If the umpires have agreed to dispense with bails, in accordance with Law 8.5 (Dispensing with bails) the decision as to whether the wicket has been put down is one for the umpire concerned to decide.

It was with knowledge of Law 28 that the umpires dispensed with bails on 1 June 1997, GWLCC v. Wandham in Surbiton, a game described in *Decade* as 'an ill-tempered fixture.' It was blowing a gale, as video footage taken by Gavin Fryer-Kelsey of that game testifies. Dust was billowing across the pitch and a group of schoolgirls had difficulty keeping their clothing intact, or perhaps that was unrelated video footage on the same tape. The Gents were in a spot of bother chasing 95 to win.

Sanjay Patel was facing and the ball appeared to clip the stumps but in a flurry of bat, pad and dust neither umpire could be sure and the decision was not out. Cue much surrounding of the umpire at the bowler's end, jabbing of fingers, etc. The Gents ground out a victory by 4 wickets but these unseemly events spoiled the game.