THE GENT

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| **June 2014** | **No. 142** |

Tales from the corridor of uncertainty

**Tragedy on Saints’ tour**



**RIP Peter Clerk**

**Nearly Men**

**Averages**

**RIP Alex Young and Peter Clerk**

**Match reports:**

**Baker Street Irregulars (won by 6 wickets)**

**Baker Street Irregulars (won by 70 runs)**

**London Saints (won by 214 runs)**

**Northfields (won by 186 runs)**

**London Rams (won by 13 runs)**

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In Memoriam

It is not possible to escape the shadow of tragedy in this edition. Alex Young died by his own hand in April while in May during London Saints’ tour of Trinidad and Tobago an opponent, Peter Clerk, collapsed at the Queen’s Park Oval crease and later died of a heart attack. Later we publish John Quinn’s thoughtful eulogy.

Alex was not the first Gent to die young. Bob Ashton, Stefan Meininger, Graham Thelmer and Ian Renvoize were all taken before their time. Hundreds were crammed into the Sacred Heart Church in Wimbledon for Alex’s Memorial Service, in which Sean Carroll carried the bread and wine to the altar as part of the Offertory Rite in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. One day, we will reconvene the Gents and Wombles fixture to celebrate his memory. We will certainly invite his parents. Mr Young pointed out that Alex could put bat to ball but never could bowl. In mourning Alex, we have chosen to quote Mr Chris McGrath, Headmaster of Donhead School, the Jesuit Preparatory School which Alex attended (the School Song was sung at the Service). It strikes a note of hope and we hope that when you read these words, you will recall with affection the sight of Alex playing cricket to no mean standard, always with a smile. Mr McGrath wrote:

I am sure that different people will have different views as to what, for them, constitutes the start of summer. Maybe the early morning light or the change in the garden. For myself, it must be the sight of the mower on the squares, the boundary rope emerging and the sightscreens being rolled into place. The horrors of the last winter are over (and I don’t mean the weather) and the promise of the new season begins.

Whatever people might say about the appeal of the game for young people, I believe it is a game that has a huge amount to offer them, on and off the field of play and, once the playing days are over, the memories will remain. For myself, the greatest memory was being in the crowd (as a young boy!) during the Massie Test at Lord’s in 1972, when Bob Massie returned figures of 16-137 on his debut and destroyed England in the process.

Cricket is about character, sportsmanship and legends. That leads me nicely to my favourite piece of commentary from John Arlott, the greatest cricket commentator of all time, about Don Bradman, the greatest cricketer of all time, when Bradman was dismissed for a duck in his final test in England in 1948:

‘*Hollies pitches the ball up slowly and ... he's bowled... Bradman bowled Hollies, nought ... bowled Hollies nought ... and what do you say under these circumstances? I wonder if you see the ball very clearly in your last Test in England, on a ground where you've played some of the biggest cricket in your life and where the opposing side has just stood round you and given you three cheers, and the crowd has clapped you all the way to the wicket. I wonder if you see the ball at all."*

I wish the boys at Donhead every success in the cricket season ahead. May the runs flow for them; may the wickets fall for them; may they hold their catches and may they catch the cricket ‘bug’. May they also learn by far the most important lesson in cricket: move your feet!

Nearly Men

Congratulations to Gregg Cloete for his well-deserved 111 against London Saints. But what about those who almost got there? We doff our caps to the Nearly Men below:

**98** Joseph of Urban Associates (2002)

**98** Cloete *v.* Birdlip and Brimpsfield (2012)

**97\*** Cloete *v.* West XI (2012)

**96** Hubbocks *v.* Wandham (1994)

**96** Thornicroft *v.* Rotherham SC (1994)

**95\*** J Wright *v.* London Rams (2006)

**93\*** Ashton *v.* New Barbarian Weasels (1993)

**93** Gilkes *v.* Salix (2012)

**93\*** Small *v.* Northfields (2014)

**92** Seale of West XI (1992)

**91\*** C Arthur of West XI (1992)

**91** Bowman of St. Anne’s Allstars (2011)

**90** Waddell of West XI (1990)

**90** Maxwell of Urban Associates (1998)

**90** S Packer of Southwark and Lambeth Imperials (2011)

Queen’s Park *v.* London Saints. Queen’s Park Oval, Port of Spain, Trinidad

The game was abandoned after 5.3 overs when QPCC opening batsman Peter Clerk collapsed and later died in hospital. He was 49 and we had never met him until he walked out to bat at 11.30am today. Two hours later, he was dead from a heart attack. But not before he had hit his first ever six at the Queen’s Park Oval, the club’s Test ground home in Trinidad.

His team mates told us that statistic later this afternoon, as they looked for positives in a dreadful day. Rum bottles were being passed around, as a death is traditionally marked in Trinidad. And we were happy to provide a slender silver lining – many cricketers have passed personal milestones against London Saints CC. We learned a great deal about Peter this afternoon. He left a wife and three teenage children. He had a history of heart trouble. He was not due to open the batting today. And he had never hit a six at his home pitch.

The game today was to have been the highlight of a tour that has taken 14 months to plan. That’s gone. But most of us will now be going out on a boat with his team mates tomorrow to, well, get drunk, make each other laugh, talk about fragile life and cricket and learn more about Peter. And we shall talk about plans born today, fuelled by rum, on how to commemorate today. Possibly a return to play another day. We may or may not. But we won’t forget today for a very long time – and it will be marked.

John Quinn was one of our two opening bowlers today. He has written a personal eulogy:

I’m typing this more slowly than usual, with a digit less, having two strapped together, after breaking one trying to catch the opening bat off my own bowling. Please don’t feel sympathy for me. For in the next over, as I was getting treatment, an opposition player suffered a heart attack and subsequently died.

Our day could not have started better: a big and healthy breakfast followed by a short cab ride to the Queen’s Park Oval, a ground that is to feature yet another Test Match in its glittering history, in a couple of weeks.
A day of so much promise, of so much expectation. A lovely, loving tour of the building and its museum by its curator increased our sense of its history and made the team suitably intimidated by the occasion. Dave Thomas, as usual, prior to the game, found the appropriate words when he thanked the curator and the MD of the ground, stating simply, eloquently and with great exactitude: ‘Playing here is the highlight of all our careers.’ Everyone nodded.

The opening overs featured the normal mix of London Saints’ wayward and testing deliveries, wides, boundaries and dropped catches. As Pete Berkeley ran in to bowl the opposition’s batsman, Peter Clerk, fell to the ground, suffering, what we were later to discover, was a heart attack. Despite the immediate intervention of Sheila and her nephew, a final year medical student in Trinidad, and, within minutes, the full attentions and efforts of the doctors and staff of the St Clair Medical Centre, he could not be saved.

I was waiting in the same hospital for attention to my broken finger. I’ve never felt more of a fraud as the family and loved ones of Peter arrived at the hospital. The crying and outpouring of emotion was difficult to deal with.
But much worse was the silence. The biting of lips and evasion of eye contact. For it spoke more than a neon sign, more than tomorrow’s headline that our opponent had played his last game. I’m treated, X-rayed, strapped and sent on my way. Normally I would have the right to feel cheated: missing the final game on tour in two days; and tomorrow’s golf. Instead I’m elated and distraught; who said life was black and white, certainly not Mr Lennon. Sheena and I walk the 200M back to the ground, mumbling vague platitudes to the cricketing colleagues of the deceased, and, unusually, lost for words to say to his family. The national flag and the LSSC’s banner, so recently fluttering proudly on the ground’s elegant flagpoles, are sadly limp at half-mast.

Back at the bar there is a lively hubbub of noise. It is not from the LSSC contingent. Apparently it is a tradition to buy a bottle of rum and drink it on such an occasion. From what I’ve witnessed during the last two weeks it is a tradition that applies to too many occasions in the Caribbean! But today it helps. We talk in cliches and gallows humour. But the truth is that a 49-year-old – younger than most of our team – a fellow cricket lover, has died, doing what he enjoyed. We are saddened and his family and team mates are shocked. Not because we have been reminded of our own mortality. Because? Because, just because…

But I can’t leave it here, so I go online to find the quote I think I know. Instead I find:

*“Death never comes at the right time, despite what mortals believe. Death always comes like a thief.”*

Christopher Pike, The Last Vampire

A great man retires

Stuart Alexander Snelling, “Snarler” has retired. He didn’t want a big fuss made but modest though he is he could not have believed that *The Gent* would not mark the occasion. His contribution was immense. Statistics rarely tell the full story but in his case are instructive. To highlight two, his total of wickets is unlikely to be overhauled and his Economy Rate is, of all who have bowled more than 100 overs, the best in the club’s history with only Mark Ashton (3.0) and Ravi Inkollu (3.2) knocking on the door.

His larger wicket hauls were taken in declaration, or timed games, with no over limit. He took eight wickets in an innings twice, six three times, five eight times and four 14 times. He took five wickets in successive balls against London Canaries in 2001 and in 1999 produced perhaps his finest bowling against West XI.

He was a solid fielder and although he never quite hit the 50 his clumping drives deserved he was often a resolute batsman, a reverse-sweep against London Saints a regrettable lapse. To paraphrase Captain RF Scott, the scorebooks and the vandalised door at Nursery Road Playing Fields must tell the tale.

SA Snelling’s 4, 5, 6 and 8-wicket returns

**1995** 4-15 *v.* London Saints (**Won** by 87 runs)

 4-13 *v.* London Owls (**Won** by 75 runs)

 6-35 v. Urban Associates (**Lost** by 52 runs)

**238 Matches**

**174 Innings**

**46 Not Out**

**1,327 Runs**

**10.37 Batting Average**

**HS 46\* v. London Saints**

**47 Catches**

**1,572 Overs**

**290 Maidens**

**4,604 Runs**

**391 Wickets**

**11.77 Bowling Average**

**2.93 Bowling Economy Rate**

**24.12 Strike Rate**

**BB 8-33 v. 12 Angry Men**

**1 yellow hair dye experiment**

**1 unhinged changing room door**

**1996** 5-13 *v.* 12 Angry Men (**Lost** by 15 runs)

 8-77 *v.* East Harrow Cheetahs (**Lost** 61 runs)

 5-24 *v.* Urban Associates (**Lost** by 1 wicket)

**1997** 5-28 *v*. Urban Associates (**Lost** by 3 wickets)

 5-14 *v.* London Saints (**Won** by 4 wickets)

**1998** 4-22 *v.* London Saints (**Won** by 97 runs)

 5-38 *v.* New Barbarian Weasels (**Drawn**)

**1999** 8-33 *v.* 12 Angry Men (**Won** by 6 wickets)

 6-24 *v.* 12 Angry Men (**Won** by 41 runs)

 4-16 *v.* West XI (**Won** by 16 runs)

 4-15 *v.* West XI (**Won** by 5 wickets)

**2000** 4-19 *v.* Wandham (**Drawn**)

 4-22 *v.* New Barbarian Weasels (**Won** by 120 runs)

**2001** 4-10 *v.* Sunderland SC (**Lost** 1 wicket)

 4-12 *v.* West XI (**Lost** by 10 runs)

 6-6 *v.* London Canaries (**Won** by 208 runs)

 4-10 *v.* Enterprise (**Won** by 74 runs)

 5-3 *v.* New Barbarian Weasels (**Won** by 184 runs)

**2002** 4-10 *v.* Sunderland SC (**Won** by 112 runs)

**2005** 4-24 *v.* West XI (**Won** by 11 runs)

**2007** 4-27 *v.* Gubbays (**Lost** by 86 runs)

**2008** 4-39 *v*. West One (**Lost** by 3 wickets)

 5-7 *v*. Salix (**Tied**)

**2009** 5-25 *v.* Kingston (**Won** by 7 wickets)

**Baker Street Irregulars *v.* Gentlemen of West London**

**Sunday 27 April, King George’s Field, Richmond. Gents won toss (toss in second game was agreed). Cloudy, 16C**

**Won by 6 wickets**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Baker Street Irregulars** | **Gentlemen of West London** |
| Mead |  | b Katragadda | **2** | Bocha | lbw | b Neighbour | **3** |
| Nickless | c Basker | b Dubey | **0** | Denton | c Nair | b Neighbour | **2** |
| Nair | c Bocha | b Small | **8** | †Basker | c Adams | b Prewett | **8** |
| Adams | c Sub. | b Cloete | **1** | Small |  | b Neighbour | **5** |
| McWilliams | c and | b Kumar | **0** | Jones | not out |  | **8** |
| T Phillips |  | b Kumar | **7** | Pentakota | not out |  | **17** |
| S Phillips |  | b Pentakota | **5** | Kumar, \*Hibbert, Cloete, Dubey and Katragadda did not bat |
| Prewett | c Hibbert | b Small | **2** |  |  |  |  |
| Burke |  | b Hibbert | **8** |  |  |  |  |
| Findlay | lbw | b Hibbert | **2** |  |  |  |  |
| Neighbour | not out |  | **0** |  |  |  |  |
| **Extras** |  | w1 b6 lb2 | **9** | **Extras** |  | w4 | **4** |
| **Total** | **22.1 overs** | **All out** | **44** | **Total** | **12.3 overs** | **4 wickets** | **47** |
| **FoW:** 8, 8, 11, 13, 24, 27, 30, 34, 38, 44 | **FoW:** 5, 5, 14, 19 |
| **Bowler** |  |  |  | **Bowler** |  |  |  |
| Dubey | 3-2-2-1 |  |  | Neighbour | 3-0-6-3 |  |  |
| Katragadda | 4-3-1-1 |  |  | Findlay | 2-0-8-0 |  |  |
| Cloete | 4-1-11-1 |  |  | Nair | 3-2-6-0 |  |  |
| Kumar | 2-0-6-2 |  |  | Prewett | 3-0-13-1 |  |  |
| Small | 5-1-13-2 |  |  | McWilliams | 1-0-10-0 |  |  |
| Pentakota | 3-2-1-1 |  |  | T Phillips | 0.3-0-4-0 |  |  |
| Hibbert | 1.1-0-2-2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Won by 70 runs**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Gentlemen of West London** | **Baker Street Irregulars** |
| Cloete | c Nair | b Findlay | **73** | Mead | c and | b Katragadda | **14** |
| \*Hibbert |  | b Nickless | **0** | Burke | run out |  | **13** |
| Dubey | ret. not out |  | **50** | McWilliams | c Cloete | b Hibbert | **0** |
| Kumar | c and | b Nair | **9** | Nair | c Bocha | b Pentakota | **12** |
| Katragadda | not out |  | **9** | Findlay | st Basker | b Small | **3** |
| Bocha | c S Phillips | b Nair | **0** | Neighbour | c Cloete | b Bocha | **29** |
| Jones | not out |  | **0** | S Phillips |  | b Bocha | **0** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| †Basker, Denton, Pentakota and Small did not bat | Adams | run out |  | **1** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  | Prewett | c Cloete | b Bocha | **0** |
|  |  |  |  | Nickless | c Pentakota | b Bocha | **0** |
|  |  |  |  | T Phillips | did not bat |  |  |
| **Extras** |  | w3 nb1 lb1 | **5** | **Extras** |  | w4 | **4** |
| **Total** | **15 overs** | **4 wickets** | **146** | **Total** | **15 overs** | **9 wickets** | **76** |
| **FoW:** 36, 110, 146, 146 | **FoW:** 15, 16, 29, 45, 45, 52, 53, 76, 76 |
| **Bowler** |  |  |  | **Bowler** |  |  |  |
| S Phillips | 1-0-15-0 |  |  | Hibbert | 3-0-15-1 |  |  |
| Burke | 2-0-27-0 |  |  | Katragadda | 3-1-8-1 |  |  |
| Nickless | 2-0-16-1 |  |  | Pentakota | 3-0-21-1 |  |  |
| Adams | 1-0-17-0 |  |  | Small | 3-1-8-1 |  |  |
| Neighbour | 2-0-19-0 |  |  | Bocha | 2-0-11-4 |  |  |
| Findlay | 2-0-15-1 |  |  | Kumar | 1-0-9-0 |  |  |
| Nair | 3-0-18-2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Prewett | 2-0-18-0 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

“Persistent rain” chanced the BBC Weather website. Those who think an inaccurate weather forecast a small matter, a victimless crime perhaps, should think again. The livelihoods of mariners and farmers are at stake, not to mention the mental well-being of cricketers, many of whom are members of hard-working families. The first and only precipitation arrived, not heavily at 11am as forecast, not even at 12 or 1, but at 6.30pm after Pentakota had taken the 11th. Gents’ catch of the day to give Bocha his fourth wicket in the second game played. That is 7.5 hours wrong at one day’s notice. The Gents won both games, putting up a fine bowling and fielding display in the first while dominating with the bat in the second, Cloete (five sixes and seven fours) and Dubey (three sixes and three fours) doing most of the damage. Up at Winchmore Hill, visitors Potter Street had limped to 37-7 off 21 overs to Judd Street Tigers’ bowlers before recovering to 162 all out. Here, Baker Street Irregulars collapsed to 31-7 off 17 but were unable to effect a similar bounceback.

It was good to return to this ground after a gap of 22 years. The facilities are Spartan but the location, by the Thames opposite Ham House, compensates. New skipper Hibbert inserted BSI on a brown, patchy wicket that offered seam movement and turn. Dubey and debutant quick Aravindhu Katragadda were lively and accurate, seeing off openers Mead and Nickless with an edge behind and a full-toss that clipped the top of off-stump. Cloete, Kumar, Pentakota bowled sensibly, using the conditions well, while Small’s leg-spin got turn and bounce, the captain weighing in with his rarely-seen off-breaks. Nair, the Phillips brothers (one of whom took a memorable diving catch to dismiss Adams while deputising for a delayed visitor) and Burke fought a good fight but the innings limped to 44 all out in 22.1 overs. No sooner had the players left the field than BSI’s captain began negotiations about a second game. Some thought this defeatist, but there was a counterargument. The match was clearly not going to last very long, whoever won. The Gents promptly subsided to 19-4 as the excellent Neighbour took 3-6, Adams’ catch running around at deep mid-wicket to see off Basker an outstanding effort. Pentakota’s Shropshire league experience and Jones’s burgeoning batting talent then saw the Gents home with no further loss.

The Gents then batted by agreement in a 15-overs game. Hibbert put his big hitters up the order and this, coupled with an easing pitch and Findlay’s decision to bowl his support bowlers first, led to a torrent of runs. Cloete pulled the first ball for six over mid-wicket and added four more maxima in his 73. He was dropped five times, none easy, the ball descending at great velocity through slate-grey skies from about a thousand feet. Dubey looked on fine form in his retired 50 as the Gents put up 146-4, exactly half coming off the first 6 overs of support bowling. BSI then passed their previous total for the loss of only three wickets but the catches stuck and they finished on 76-9. The Gents therefore won their tenth successive game and extended their unbeaten run to 16, a club record.

2014 results

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| **Date** | **Gents** | **Result** | **Judd Street Tigers** | **Result** |
| Sun 27 April | **Baker Street Irregulars** | **Won** by 6 wickets | **Potter Street** | **Won** by 5 wickets |
| Sun 27 April | **Baker Street Irregulars** | **Won** by 70 runs |  |  |
| Sun 4 May | **-** | **-** | **CAMRA** | **Lost** by 6 wickets |
| Sun 11 May | **Wimbledon United** | **Cancelled (rain)** | **Old Grumblers** | **Cancelled (rain)** |
| Sat 17 May | **-** | - | **Oporto** | **Won** by 88 runs |
| Sun 18 May | **London Saints** | **Won** by 214 runs | **Oporto** | **Won** by 4 wickets |
| Sun 25 May | **Northfields** | **Won** by 186 runs | **Graces** | **Won** by 7 wickets |
| Sun 1 June | **London Rams** | **Won** by 13 runs | **Eastons** | **Won** by 2 wickets |
| **Record** | Played **5** Won **5** | Played **6** Won **5** Lost **1** |
| **Runs** | Cloete 184 Small 107 Pentakota 85 Dubey 66 | - |
| **Wickets** | Bocha 8 Small 7, Hibbert/Katragadda 6  | - |
| **Catches/Stumpings** | Bocha 4 Cloete 3/2  | - |

2014 averages

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **M.** | **Inn.** | **NO** | **Runs** | **Avg.** | **Ct./St.** | **O** | **M** | **Runs** | **Wck.** | **Avg.** |
| Bagchi | 1 | 1 | - | 7 | 7.00 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Basker | 5 | 4 | - | 30 | 7.50 | 2/1 | - | - | - | - | -- |
| Bocha | 4 | 4 | - | 19 | 4.75 | 4 | 13.1 | 1 | 35 | 8 | 4.38 |
| Caveney | 1 | 1 | - | 24 | 24.00 | - | - | - | - | - | -- |
| Cloete | 3 | 2 | - | 184 | 92.00 | 3/2 | 4 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 11.00 |
| Denton | 2 | 1 | - | 2 | 2.00 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Dubey | 4 | 3 | 1 | 66 | 33.00 | 2 | 14 | 4 | 27 | 3 | 9.00 |
| Hibbert | 5 | 4 | - | 36 | 9.00 | 1 | 20.4 | 6 | 54 | 6 | 9.00 |
| Jones | 4 | 4 | 2 | 17 | 8.50 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Karthik | 1 | 1 | - | 4 | 4.00 | - | - | - | - |  | - |
| Katragadda | 4 | 3 | 2 | 27 | 27.00 | 2 | 18 | 7 | 31 | 6 | 5.17 |
| Kumar D | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Kumar S | 3 | 2 | - | 37 | 18.50 | 1 | 8 |  | 32 | 3 | 10.67 |
| Newcombe | 1 | 1 | - | 40 | 40.00 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Patel H | 1 | 1 | - | 14 | 14.00 | - | 6 | 1 | 16 | 1 | 16.00 |
| Patel S | 1 | 1 | - | 10 | 10.00 | - | 4 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2.00 |
| Pentakota | 5 | 4 | 2 | 85 | 42.50 | 1 | 24 | 7 | 83 | 4 | 20.75 |
| Sharma | 1 | 1 | - | 0 | 0.00 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Small | 4 | 3 | 1 | 107 | 53.50 | - | 14 | 3 | 39 | 7 | 5.57 |
| Sub. Fielder | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Thoms | 3 | 3 | - | 53 | 17.67 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 12 | 0 | N/A |
| Toft | 1 | 1 | - | 0 | 0.00 | - | - | - | - | - | - |

**Gentlemen of West London *v.* London Saints**

**Sunday 18 May, Old Tenisons. Gents won toss. Sunny, 26C**

**Won by 214 runs**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Gentlemen of West London** | **London Saints** |
| †Cloete | c Griffiths | b Nanton | **111** | Griffiths |  | b Hibbert | **17** |
| H Patel | lbw | b Grimes | **14** | Grimes |  | b Dubey | **8** |
| Dubey |  | b Grimes | **10** | Grant |  | b Hibbert | **0** |
| \*Hibbert |  | b Nanton | **23** | A Mayhew | st Cloete | b H Patel | **12** |
| S Patel | c Barber | b Pearce | **10** | Wathan |  | b S Patel | **0** |
| Thoms |  | b Nanton | **24** | Barber | run out |  | **7** |
| Bagchi |  | b Berkeley | **7** | Ciccone |  | b S Patel | **0** |
| Bocha | lbw | b Berkeley | **0** | Berkeley | not out |  | **22** |
| †Basker | c Grimes | b Pearce | **14** | Nanton | not out |  | **6** |
| Pentakota | not out |  | **49** | Burrell and \*Thomas did not bat |
| Katragadda | not out |  | **13** |  |  |  |  |
| **Extras** |  | w8 nb12 b6 | **26** | **Extras** |  | w7 nb4 b4 | **15** |
| **Total** | **35 overs** | **9 wickets** | **301** | **Total** | **35 overs** | **7 wickets** | **87** |
| **FoW:** 61, 77, 162, 162, 205, 212, 213, 224, 255 | **FoW:** 27, 27, 38, 38, 50, 50, 66 |
| **Bowler** |  |  |  | **Bowler** |  |  |  |
| Burrell | 6-0-54-0 |  |  | Katragadda | 5-2-9-0 |  |  |
| Thomas | 5-0-41-0 |  |  | Pentakota | 5-1-15-0 |  |  |
| Grimes | 4-0-39-2 |  |  | Hibbert | 4-3-2-2 |  |  |
| Berkeley | 5-0-37-2 |  |  | Dubey | 4-2-3-1 |  |  |
| Barber | 3-0-32-0 |  |  | S Patel | 4-1-4-2 |  |  |
| Nanton | 6-0-37-3 |  |  | H Patel | 6-1-17-1 |  |  |
| Griffiths | 2-0-27-0 |  |  | Bocha | 5-0-14-0 |  |  |
| Pearce | 4-0-28-2 |  |  | Thoms | 2-0-12-0 |  |  |

Gregg Cloete became the Gents’ tenth centurion at a sunny Old Tenisons, bludgeoning the hosts to their third score of more than 300. He scored a mighty 111, smiting 15 fours and four sixes. In reply, London Saints battled doggedly but although they never threatened the total, at one point adding just 8 runs in 6 overs, the defensive resilience of their batsmen was beyond fault. This was an unusual game in that visiting captain Dave Thomas chose to select from only those players who were going to tour Trinidad and Tobago. This was a selection policy of great integrity, perhaps modelled on the Gents’ picking all Dutch tourists for the Judd Street Tigers 2013 clash. This deprived them of the service of several star players. Saints fought hard – the Gents never looked like bowling them out – but did not help their cause by dropping Cloete when he had scored only 11. Nevertheless, the powerful South African deserved his good fortune, having previously scored a 98 and a 97\*.

The ritual of the toss was observed although the captains had agreed that the Gents would bat first. Four Gents were stuck on a train so Hemin Patel was happily promoted to open with Cloete, falling lbw to Grimes’s off-spin in the eight over, his first such dismissal and one which conferred considerable conversational opportunities throughout the day. His 14 was neat and well-composed but, along with several other meritorious innings, passed unheralded as Cloete ruled the roost for 17 overs before Griffiths took an excellent catch at deep mid-wicket. He struck the second and third balls of the day for four and six past and over long on but one run later spiralled a top-edge to square-leg who, dazzled by the sun, could not hold on. From that point on Saints were struggling. Bright batting all the way down and particularly from Hibbert, Thoms and the late rampaging Pentakota, put up a score exceeded only twice before by the hosts. Nanton, as nippy as anyone on the day with his three-pace run up, Grimes and Berkeley were the pick of the bowlers and the fielding was steady under fire.

A varied tea hit the spot and Saints batted. New bug Katragadda and Pentakota, with a Saturday Twenty20 under their belt, bowled nothing loose and by the time Hibbert rested them after 10 overs the required run rate had climbed from 8.6 to 11.1, gettable over a few overs but next to impossible over 25. Hibbert struck with his first and third balls, whereupon the innings went into a trance. Griffiths started well and Berkeley’s clean hitting injected some levity into proceedings but by then it was too little, too late for Saints. The captain, Dubey and Sanjay Patel had a combined analysis of 12-6-9-5.The game was won by this point but the Gents, although keen to bowl Saints out, could not do so. After the glut against Baker Street Irregulars, no catches were taken, but there was one drop, two refusals and a spectacular direct-hit run out by Bocha. In the end, one man had made the difference.

Hemin Patel drew level with Mark Ashton on 222 wickets when he had Andy Mayhew stumped, a notable achievement. Ashton paid only 3.01 runs each for his wickets, Patel 4.8, but the off-spinner has the better strike rate, taking a wicket every 19 balls compared to the club founder’s 22.

**Northfields *v.* Gentlemen of West London**

**Sunday 25 May, Durston House. Gents won toss. Sunny, 17C**

**Won by 186 runs**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Gentlemen of West London** | **Northfields** |
| †Basker |  | b Egan | **7** | Elmes |  | b Katragadda | **0** |
| Pentakota |  | b Elmes | **0** | Shill |  | b Katragadda | **6** |
| Newcombe | c Taylor | b Westwood | **40** | Arshad |  | b Pentakota | **2** |
| Small | not out |  | **93** | Durrance |  | b Katragadda | **2** |
| Bocha | st Brown | b Shill | **16** | Brown | c and | b Katragadda | **5** |
| Thoms | lbw | b Westwood | **1** | Cave | run out |  | **21** |
| Katragadda |  | b Westwood | **5** | Jones | c Basker | b Bocha | **6** |
| \*Hibbert | lbw | b Donk’broek | **8** | Taylor | c and | b Bocha | **0** |
| Jones | c Durrance | b Taylor | **8** | Egan | c and | b Bocha | **3** |
| Caveney |  | b Elmes | **24** | Westwood | c Thoms | b Bocha | **2** |
| Karthik | run out |  | **4** | Donkerbroek | not out |  | **0** |
| **Extras** |  | w34 nb7 b8 lb1 | **50** | **Extras** |  | w14 nb3 b5 lb1 | **23** |
| **Total** | **39.3 overs** | **All out** | **256** | **Total** | **24.1 overs** | **All out** | **70** |
| **FoW:** 3, 20, 86, 124, 126, 151, 173, 196, 247, 256 | **FoW:** 9, 14, 14, 23, 24, 44, 45, 54, 70, 70 |
| **Bowler** |  |  |  | **Bowler** |  |  |  |
| Egan | 8-1-15-1 |  |  | Katragadda | 6-1-13-4 |  |  |
| Elmes | 8-1-35-2 |  |  | Pentakota | 6-1-26-1 |  |  |
| Arshad | 3-0-32-0 |  |  | Bocha | 6.1-1-10-4 |  |  |
| Westwood | 7-2-32-3 |  |  | Hibbert | 6-2-15-0 |  |  |
| Shill | 5-0-50-1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Taylor | 4-0-29-1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Donkerbroek | 3-0-39-1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Brown | 1.3-0-15-0 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

A monumental, unbeaten 93 by Jonny Small, in which he hit 13 fours and two sixes in a stay of 29.1 overs, set up a Gents’ total more than double their previous effort here two years before. Newcombe, who batted for 19 overs, played a perfect No.3 knock while the tail provided the fireworks to complement the orthodoxy of Small. Katragadda, bowling very fast, and Bocha then skittled Northfields for 70 with four wickets apiece from the Brentford end, utilising the prominent ridge to great effect. Not since Hale away in September 2012 have the Gents lost in England, an unbeaten domestic run of 21 games. This victory was the twelfth in succession and the 18th. without defeat.

The early overs belonged to Northfields as the wily, accurate Egan and the quick left-arm over Elmes restricted the visitors to 25-2 off 13 overs, picking up an opener each in a rare 40 over contest. The bowling was supported by wise field placement and vibrant outcricket, drive after drive finding the fielder as the pressure mounted. Momentum shifted to the Gents in the third over from the spinner Arshad. The yips struck as the poor chap bowled five No-balled beamers, 20 coming off the over including two Newcombe sixes over mid-wicket. He departed on 86 but Small then played the bowling at will in his best innings for the club. He was especially powerful square of the wicket and gave great aesthetic pleasure.

Bocha was stumped after a promising start and Hibbert and Caveney batted with freedom, striking three sixes including a straight monster apiece into a Swyncombe Avenue back garden, to the expressed chagrin of the lady householder. Fortunately, Northfields are masters of the diplomatic arts and litigation seems unlikely. One recalled the Scotch nutter at Town Park, Enfield in the 1990s who threatened to sue London Saints once for endangering children’s lives, when a four had dribbled to rest by a playground fence. The response by Gary Jones, one of clarity and vigour, impressed itself forcefully on this witness. A marathon three hours’ dig ended at 4.30pm, the Gents having equalled Sri Lanka’s ODI score in Mark Ashton territory at Chester-le-Street. The bowling was a little ragged with 50 extras conceded, the Gents facing no fewer than 45 overs in total. That is a long time to field on a sunny, windy day, even for a fit young side.

The ridge here is well known and my how Katragadda and Bocha exploited it. Having no tumulus to aim at, Pentakota and Hibbert simply concentrated on line and length and bowled well, Pentakota yorking Arshad. Katragadda struck in each of his second, third, fourth and fifth overs, his final dismissal a low caught and bowled. Bocha was his equal, demolishing the middle-order. Jones was caught off one that spat and caught his thumb, while two further caught and bowleds and a top-edge to second slip left Northfields nine down. The veteran Cave had batted serenely amid the carnage before he was run out. It had been a compelling bowling display. This result ties the series 2-2 and during a convivial evening with the hosts both sides were minded to expand it to a home and away rubber in 2015.

**London Rams *v.* Gentlemen of West London**

**Sunday 1 June, Fairfield RG, Kingston. Gents won toss. Sunny, 21C**

**Won by 13 runs**

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| --- | --- |
| **Gentlemen of West London** | **London Rams** |
| †Basker | c Sub.(Sharma) | b Fisher | **1** | Murtland | c and  | b Dubey | **30** |
| Small |  | b Fisher | **9** | \*Severn | c Dubey | b Pentakota | **6** |
| Jones | c Severn | b Brain | **0** | Stevens |  | b Kumar | **11** |
| Pentakota | c Sub.(Small) | b Brain | **19** | Rothwell | c Thoms | b Small | **10** |
| Dubey | c Sub.(Basker) | b Fisher | **6** | Fisher |  | b Small | **9** |
| Sharma | c Stevens | b Brain | **0** | †Hallam (1) |  | b Small | **0** |
| S Kumar |  | b Khan | **28** | Khan | not out |  | **21** |
| †Thoms | lbw | b Khan | **28** | Brain |  | b Small | **0** |
| \*Hibbert | lbw | b Stevens | **5** | †Hallam (1) |  | b Hibbert | **2** |
| D Kumar | not out |  | **2** |  |  |  |  |
| Toft |  | b Khan | **0** |  |  |  |  |
| **Extras** |  | w9 nb3 b2 | **14** | **Extras** |  | w7 nb1 b2 | **10** |
| **Total** | **23.3 overs** | **All out** | **112** | **Total** | **31.3 overs** | **All out** | **99** |
| **FoW:** 10, 13, 14, 25, 31, 47, 85, 91, 112, 112 | **FoW:** 14, 43, 64, 66, 66, 88, 94, 99 |
| **Bowler** |  |  |  | **Bowler** |  |  |  |
| Brain | 7-0-35-3 |  |  | Pentakota | 7-3-20-1 |  |  |
| Fisher | 5-0-28-3 |  |  | Hibbert | 6.3-1-20-1 |  |  |
| Khan | 6.3-1-22-3 |  |  | Dubey | 7-0-22-1 |  |  |
| Stevens | 5-0-25-1 |  |  | Kumar | 5-0-17-1 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Small | 6-1-18-4 |  |  |

The Gents won their thirteenth successive game and extended their unbeaten run to 19 but were perhaps fortunate to do so. Had Rams had a full team they might well have won and indeed they dominated much of the game before Jonny Small’s leg-breaks struck the knockout blow. Earlier, contrasting innings from Raj Pentakota, Sumit Kumar and Dane Thoms had enabled the Gents to scrape 112 on a Fairfield RG pitch providing its traditional help for bowlers.

Some disorganisation was afoot. The Gents had seven on the Monday but a welcome inundation of Yesses took the squad up to twelve, one of whom withdrew. Rahul Sharma, a friend of Sumit Kumar, and Deepat Kumar, co-opted by his pal Nilesh Dubey at 1.30pm, debuted while Rams had only eight men, the Gents lending two fielders throughout to some effect. CAMRA stalwart Brain opened the bowling with his medium-pace and with Fisher’s slow left-arm posed immediate challenges. The Gents plummeted to 31-5, three batsmen holing out to loaned team-mates and a fourth finding captain Severn at mid-off. Pentakota had played attractively amid the carnage. Kumar looked good from the word go, striking the shot of the day, a glorious cover-drive to the longest boundary off the pacy Shabhaz Khan. Thoms batted with determination, with Pentakota and Kumar the only ones to make it into double figures. Khan and Stevens finished the innings off at ten to four. It was a job well done by a varied attack. The Gents were annoyed at the unused overs but 112 was a fair recovery.

Rams’ dig contained much tense cricket. The dismissal of Severn, a fine batsman with centuries on his CV, provided the first of three controversial moments, the second being when a Ram claimed heinously within earshot of the Gents’ scorer that Subbuteo never manufactured a cricket game. His cover drive off Pentakota was cleanly caught by Dubey close in, but was it a bump ball? The umpire did not appear to give the batsman out, but Severn walked anyway. Murtland batted doggedly and was well supported by Stevens until Kumar got one through to bowl the latter. The big wicket of the opener came with a sharp Dubey caught and bowled and with Small hitting the spot immediately and getting slow turn, the Gents had their tails up and runs became scarce. The leg-spinner had Rothwell (who had been recalled by Hibbert after being given out lbw) caught behind and bowled Fisher, Hallam and Brain. He flighted the ball superbly and became the first Gent leg-spinner since Priyesh Patel in 2004 to take four wickets. Khan struck hard for his 21 to set up a fine climax but was left beached with 13 needed from 21 balls when the returning Hallam was bowled by the Hibbert off-break, two Gents tweakers bowling in tandem for the first time in many years. The eight Rams had worked their socks off and so nearly did it.

The facility has had something of a makeover with new dressing rooms. Moreover, there was a more pleasant atmosphere in the park than five years ago, possibly because many of the local heroin addicts have taken the High Road home to vote in the Scotch referendum. A teenage show-off (not precisely what the players called him) rode his bike across the outfield but other passers-by who engaged the players and scorer in conversation showed a good knowledge of cricket.