



The Third Decade

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Gentlemen of West London CC 2008-2017



Introduction



The decade began with Hemin Patel and Mark Sciberras skittling St. Anne's Allstars on a filthy Fairfield RG strip and ended in the Hale twilight with Gourav launching Sanjay Patel for two sixes and a four. Fortune was not in his favour that day, though his team won, but it was fitting that Sanjay was involved at the death. He was captain in 2008 and will resume this responsibility in 2018. He was the Gents' most consistent batsman over the decade, scoring 2,621 runs at 26.47, improving an already healthy career batting average from 25.08 to 25.65.

A period that saw rapid change is celebrated below in a series of vignettes, some of them based on fact. *Decade3 by season* is a parallel publication and contains what you would infer from the title.

Earlier years are covered in the *Decade* and *Decade2* publications available online. The temptation to amend these earlier publications through the distorting lens of hindsight was strong but has been resisted as they were a valid record of opinions at the time, wrong-headed and unfair in certain respects though they sometimes were. Errors in scorecards that have come to light have, however, been amended in *Decade3 by season*.

The final Hale game of 2017 was No.553. The first took place on Sunday 22 May 1988, when the Gents were invited by West XI to a sunny Boston Manor Park in Brentford. West XI won by 35 runs. The match was brokered by West XI's chairman Steve Haywood, a member of both clubs, so we have much to thank him for. The author saw his four overs go for 28, was scandalously fingered lbw, but took a diving catch at silly mid-off. Counselling helped him to recover from that experience by the middle of 1993 and he missed few matches over the 30 seasons. He remains fourth in the all-time appearances list behind Sanjay Patel, Stuart Snelling and Tony Buck but will drop to fifth by the end of 2018 when Hemin Patel, vice-captain in 2018, overtakes him.

Trends emerged over the decade. There were more players, more opponents and better pitches which resulted in more runs, scores increasing in each decade. Squabbling remained buoyant but players generally pulled together for the greater good. There were also more captains, some elected. Six were voted in from 2008 after only three in the 20 years prior.

Who was in the side that started the decade against St. Anne's Allstars? The batting order was Khan, Denton, Snelling, Chayya, Sanjay Patel, Gilkes, Turpin, Toft, Inkollu, Sciberras and Hemin Patel. Only the top three batted and only the Patels played in the decade's final game, although Gilkes and Snelling kindly came along to support. It was neat that Hemin Patel morphed from No.11 batsman in 2008 (very much on merit) to opener in 2017. With Ravi Inkollu's debut we can see the beginning of a bloodline of Telugu Gents without whom the club would have struggled and probably not survived. Peter Denton introduced Inkollu and has his own tribute. With Sanjay Patel regaining the captain's asterisk in the 2018 scorecards, we eagerly await the next ten years.

Aliens



May 2008 – Three cricketers, Andrew Burman, Naveed Khan and Ken Toft saw 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 remained stationary for several minutes then moved 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 configuration of the lights seemed wrong, and the nearby presence of army barracks led the interested observer to the conclusion that the lights belonged to hostile alien craft, possibly from Mars.

All-rounders



We concentrate in this publication on 2008-2017, the modern era of Gents cricket, but here we go back to 1988 to have some fun with all-rounder stats.

The pre-eminent all-rounder was founder Mark Harvey Wynford Ashton, whose stats in the early years beggar belief. He has been praised often enough in magazines and yearbooks and deserves every accolade. In 153 games he scored 3,848 runs, including 23 fifties and two centuries, at an average of 30.54, took 222 wickets, including 18 hauls of four or more, at an average of 11.23 and an economy rate of 3.01 and held 59 catches. Think about that for a moment.

This is where we will no doubt offend some people, so here is the caveat. Such statistics as follow take no account of quality of opposition, but we offer them anyway. Two qualification criteria need to be fulfilled to participate in the list below: 20 wickets and an average for batting higher than for bowling. Sorting them in order of batting average divided by bowling average gives an insight, if not definitive, into ability if not longevity.

Had the qualification been relaxed to 10 wickets then Upender Sanga would be top by a mile with batting and bowling averages of 112.00 and 3.9, and an all-rounder's ratio of 28.72. Veterans would then complain that he only played twice and point out that two of his wickets were spectators keen for a bat, who attended the crease in civilian clothing.

	Matches	Runs	Bat Av. (A)	Wickets	Bowl Av. (B)	Econ.	A/B
Husain	61	2,270	49.35	76	13.41	4.18	3.68
Kota	24	585	39.00	38	13.03	4.45	2.99
Lall	28	887	36.96	43	12.67	4.50	2.99
Ashton	153	3,848	30.54	222	11.23	3.01	2.72
Iqbal	25	501	27.83	41	11.68	3.35	2.38
C Wright	13	235	23.50	23	9.87	3.66	2.38
Inkollu	43	816	27.20	54	11.81	3.20	2.30
Rudru	21	517	27.21	32	13.69	3.54	1.99
Small	52	1,337	31.09	40	17.63	5.85	1.76
S Patel	334	6,258	25.65	406	15.56	3.76	1.65
Bocha	60	1,366	26.27	57	16.75	4.91	1.57
J Wright	149	3,020	23.97	135	16.01	3.67	1.50
Pentakota	31	515	23.41	39	16.10	4.10	1.45
Bignell	76	1,025	18.64	51	15.10	4.08	1.23
D Patel	198	3,219	19.87	234	16.43	4.17	1.21
Jampala	34	401	17.43	31	15.52	4.15	1.12
Thornicroft	29	389	17.68	33	15.94	4.05	1.11
Boddington	82	1,416	18.39	98	17.05	3.83	1.08
Kumar	92	1,411	20.75	72	20.24	4.07	1.03
S Desai	89	1,237	16.28	46	15.80	4.56	1.03

Awards

Sanjay Patel's skill and consistency won him eight playing awards in the ten years. With his 11 before 2008 he stands on 19, ahead of Mark Ashton on 12 and Nabil Husain seven. This was fair reward for perhaps the Gents' three best players. The true test of a consistent player is to retain an award. Sanjay Patel retained All-rounder in 2010, 2011 and 2012 and Batsman in 2010 and 2011. Hemin Patel retained Bowler in 2011 while Newcombe and Jampala retained Fielder in 2013 and 2016 respectively.

	All-rounder	Batsman	Bowler	Fielder
2008	Inkollu 450 runs/19 wickets	Inkollu 459 runs	Snelling 29 wickets	Gilkes 4 ct./0 st.
2009	S Patel 432/27	S Patel 432	Inkollu 31	H Desai 13/2
2010	S Patel 326/21	S Patel 326	H Patel 41	S Desai 13/4
2011	S Patel 356/16	S Patel 356	H Patel 32	H Desai 9/4
2012	S Patel 274/15	Dubey 269	S Desai 21	Newcombe 6
2013	Lall 486/18	Lall 486	Lall 18	Newcombe 4
2014	Small 289/18	Basker 302	Katragadda 13	Bocha 6
2015	Jampala 204/10	Small 478	S Patel 14	Jampala 5
2016	Kota 480/30	Kota 480	Kota 30	Jampala 6
2017	Bocha 349/13	Basker 300	H Patel 20	Bocha 9

Basker



Vijay Basker is a force of nature. Here are the reasons we love him:

He is a true, generous and loyal friend.

No photo opportunity is spurned. At a tense point in Gents v. Pak (look at the nervousness shown by cover-point), he has found time to glance towards the square-leg boundary. He will be on the back pages again. Yes!

His Mary Poppins bag of cricketers. Mark Jones coined this superb phrase. Whenever the Gents are short, and sometimes not, he pulls in players. For good or ill, he is a one-man selection committee.

His idiosyncratic attitude to teas. At Northfields in 2014 he disappeared for 30 minutes and came back laden with about twenty chicken and chips buckets and enough Diet Coke to float a tanker. Northfields do a good tea and his breakout catering was timed just before it was served.

The game is the thing. He played for Tigers and scored an excellent fifty. Ditto an innings-turner for Pak. It helped the day along.

Belter

Runs flowed in the games below. The Northfields, Crown Taverners and West XI games were played on small grounds, two at Crown Taverners (West XI on an artificial pitch) and one on the Durston House school ground. Chiswick House and the Paulin Ground hosted the Clapham In and Tigers runfests.

The most runs at Old Tenisonians over the period was the 231-apiece epic with Judd Street Tigers in 2013, a contender for the match of the decade.

521 runs Gents 260-7, Northfields 261-3 in 2015

501 runs Gents 279-7, Clapham In 222-3 in 2013

481 runs Crown Taverners 258-5, Gents 223-8 in 2017

480 runs Gents 250-5, Judd Street Tigers 230-8 in 2014

478 runs Gents 279-3, West XI 199-7 in 2011

Captaincy

Once a settled living, there have been eight official captains and fifteen have captained at least one game in the past ten years. Mark Ashton, the first, held the job for 12 years and left on his own terms; the fifth, Hemin Patel, held the reins for just three games before imploding, although he notched up an impressive 31 further captaincy appearances, 24 while vice-captain (2009-2011). Ashton was not elected to the role, but simply assumed it. There is much to be said for such dictatorial behaviour. His monarchy saw barely a murmur of dissent after the public execution of a few troublemakers who had heinously disrupted an AGM. There was stability too when Richard Gilkes led, the torture chamber at his house being in full vigour.

From 2012 the life expectancy of the captain, the most senior position in the club, plummeted. Social media were often awash in this period with rumours of imminent sackings, resignations and partings by mutual consent. These rumours sometimes began before the first ball of the season had been bowled. It was a turbulent period for the club, strangely independent of performances on the pitch, which remained steady. After Hemin Patel's blink and you miss it tenure, Greg Newcombe, Horace Hibbert and Sumit Kumar led for two years each.

Captain	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
S Patel	18	15			1				1		35
H Patel		8	5	12	3	1	1	2		2	34
Kumar							2	5	16	8	31
Gilkes	1		19	10							30
Hibbert						7	10	10			27
Newcombe					9	12					21
Bocha									2	7	9
Small							2	4	2		8
Denton	3										3
S Desai					2						2
Sciberras					2						2
Toft			1		1						2
Basker										1	1
Dubey							1				1
Krishna										1	1
Total	22	23	25	22	18	20	16	21	21	19	207

Captains 1988-2002

Mark Ashton (RHB, EW, RMF). Captain 1988-1999



Debut 1988
 Matches 153 Runs 3,848 Wickets 222 Catches 59
 50s 23
 100s 2
 HS 137* (Enterprise 1992)
 4-w 18
 BB 7-44 (Enterprise 1996)

Founder of the club who managed relatively scarce resources well in the early days and bequeathed a united squad. A charge of mistrust of spinners was dismissed through lack of evidence. Eight century stands, including a record 152 for the fifth wicket with Mike Hughes *v.* London Saints in 1993. Took a hat-trick off the first three balls of the innings *v.* Enterprise in 1991.

Stuart Snelling (RHB, RF). Captain 2000-2002



Debut 1995
 Matches 243 Runs 1,353 Wickets 397 Catches 47
 50s -
 100s -
 HS 46* (London Saints 2009)
 4-w 27
 BB 8-33 (12 Angry Men 1999), the club's best figures

Led from the front by personal example. Devastating new ball bowler and on his day no mean batsman. His 8 for 33 are the club's best figures. Took three hat-tricks, including five wickets in five balls *v.* London Canaries in 2001, which is arguably a triple hat-trick. This feat was equalled by Gooden of Yallourn North in Victoria, NSW in 2017. Gooden, a self-confessed medium-paced trundler, wanted things over quickly "so his team could get on the frothies". Two century stands.

Captains 2003-2013

Over seven years Sanjay Patel rose manfully to the challenges identified by Australian great Steve Waugh: “The captain has to pull together ten different individuals with contrasting personalities and personality traits and get them all going in the same direction by treating them equally but differently.”

Sanjay Patel (RHB, RM occasional OB). Captain 2003-2009



Debut 1995
 Matches 334 Runs 6,258 Wickets 406 Catches 106
 50s 28
 100s 1
 HS 100* (London Rams 2005)
 4-w 18
 BB 5-13 (London Saints 2001)

Most club appearances, most runs, most wickets and most catches. In seven seasons he oversaw the transition to a new side but was always deferential to experience and chose his friends wisely. Nine century stands. Record 79* partnership for the tenth wicket with Raja Pentakota *v.* Salix in 2012.

Richard Gilkes (RHB, OB). Captain 2010-2011



Debut 2002
 Matches 136 Runs 1,856 Wickets 15 Catches 32
 50s 7
 100s -
 HS 93 (Salix 2012)
 4-w -
 BB 2-24 (London Rams 2008)

Captains of this era had to pass a filthy sense of humour test. It was also desirable that they had tactical insight. Gilkes scored straight tens in both categories. His judgement against West XI in the low-scoring classic of 2010 set a standard seldom surpassed. No less impressive was a letter of congratulation to Village after a display that needed bagging and lobbing in the bin. Four century stands including the famous 113 with Naveed Khan against West XI in 2009 for the first wicket. With Sanjay Patel the only Gent to figure in two century stands in the same game. Patel performed this feat with Nabil Husain and Neebam Bhatt *v.* London Rams in 2005 (fifth and sixth wickets) and Gilkes with Sachin Desai and Nilesh Dubey *v.* Salix in 2012 (second and third wickets). On six other occasions Gents and opponents each posted a century stand in the same game.

Hemin Patel (RHB, OB). Captain 2012



Debut 1998
 Matches 206 Runs 1,397 Wickets 283 Catches 53
 50s 1
 100s -
 HS 50 (Clapham In 2016)
 4-w 13
 BB 5-17 (West XI 2010)

A subtle tactician who took off-colour humour to new heights (or depths). Captained more games as deputy than when he held the position officially. As a consequence of being primarily a bowler (although Ravi Inkollu rated him one of the most correct batsmen in the club) he set excellent fields. Took most wickets over the decade despite scaling back his appearances 2012-2015. Headed wickets totals 2006-2011 and 2017.

Greg Newcombe (RHB, RM). Captain 2012-2013



Debut 2009
 Matches 70 Runs 658 Wickets 31 Catches 27
 50s 2
 100s -
 HS 54 (Judd Street Tigers 2016)
 4-w 1
 BB 4-24 (London Saints 2011)

Youngest captain at 23, the same age at which Alexander the Great conquered Persia. Alexander ultimately suffered from the propensity of the Macedonian aristocracy to assassination. Brilliantly delivered an unbeaten domestic season in 2013 and introduced greats in Jones and Small. Two century stands.

Captains 2014-2017

Horace Hibbert (RHB, RM). Captain 2014-2015



Debut 2000
 Matches 77 Runs 795 Wickets 62 Catches 22
 50s 2
 100s -
 HS 81 (12 Angry Men 2000)
 4-w 2
 BB 5-11 (Cairns Fudge 2008)

A deep knowledge of tactics served him well. A great delegator. Scored 81 on debut in a record 108 stand with Mark Sciberras (ninth wicket *v.* Brondesbury Casuals). Two century stands.

Sumit Kumar (RHB, RM). Captain 2016-2017



Debut 2009
 Matches 92 Runs 1,411 Wickets 72 Catches 10
 50s 8
 100s -
 HS 79* (Northfields 2015)
 4-w -
 BB 3-11 (Bricklayer's Arms 2016)

While captain of Close PF in 2010 dismissed a player from the pitch. ICC took seven years to catch up. The culprit was angry at the lack of a third-man and had made an unwise speech. Often batted low to give chances elsewhere. Scored 51 on debut. Cleared King Charles Road by Alexandra RG in Surbiton with a straight six in this innings, leading to speculation that it was the biggest hit seen in a Gents game. Two century stands, including an all-wicket record 212* with Jonny Small (sixth wicket *v.* St. Anne's Allstars).

Centurions 2008-2017 († two hundreds in one game)

Three left-handers head the list. MacDonald, Small and Poulter austerely completed tons without hitting a six.

165*	Elmes (Northfields) (Durston House, 24 May 2015), 19 4s, 3 6s
164* †	Ahmed (Close PF) (Old Tenisonians, 28 June 2015), 32 4s, 4 6s
146	Shanin Khan (Bengal Troopers) (LMPF Greenford, 1 May 2016), 9 4s, 10 6s
144	Sayf-Ali Khan (Stanmore Warriors) (Shenley CS, 3 September 2017), 18 4s, 4 6s
131*	Small <i>v.</i> St. Anne's Allstars (Boston Manor PF, 7 June 2015), 19 4s, 3 6s
128	Lall <i>v.</i> London Saints (Old Haberdashers, 14 August 2011), 9 4s, 11 6s
126	G Wright <i>v.</i> Clapham In (Crown Taverners, 2 September 2012), 21 4s, 3 6s
114* †	S Desai <i>v.</i> Close PF (Old Tenisonians, 28 June 2015), 12 4s, 2 6s
113	Griffiths (Hale) (Hale Common, 27 September 2009), 17 4s, 3 6s
112*	D Redhead (Northfields) (Durston House, 22 May 2016), 12 4s, 3 6s
111	Cloete <i>v.</i> London Saints (Old Tenisonians, 18 May 2014), 15 4s, 4 6s
109	Husain <i>v.</i> New Barbarian Weasels (CSSC Chiswick, 7 June 2008), 10 4s, 3 6s
106	Small <i>v.</i> Judd Street Tigers (Paulin Ground, 27 July 2014), 16 4s
105	MacDonald (St. Anne's Allstars) (Barnes Common, 2 August 2014) 14 4s
102	Lall <i>v.</i> West XI (Crown Taverners, 4 September 2011), 16 4s, 2 6s
100*	Butler <i>v.</i> Cheltenham Allsorts (Victoria Ground, 10 June 2012), 11 4s, 7 6s
100 †	Cloete <i>v.</i> St. Anne's Allstars (Barnes Common, 2 August 2014) 18 4s, 2 6s
100* †	Sanga <i>v.</i> Bricklayer's Arms (Raynes Park SG, 27 August 2017) 13 4s, 2 6s <small>Retired not out</small>
100*	Poulter (Bricklayer's Arms) (Raynes Park SG, 27 August 2017) 13 4s <small>Retired not out</small>

Chasing

The internet of things tells us that Occultists, who govern from the shadows controlling the world with their paid off puppets, worship numbers. So do we. The number 150 possesses mystical qualities. The Gents have won 85% of their games with such a score batting first, the oppo 75%. Batting collapses often end abruptly. They are less painful for the vanquished than seeing your bowlers flayed to all parts on a hot late afternoon, accompanied inevitably by dropped catches and sometimes a bowler pulling up crook as the wheels come off. Only 18 times has the side chasing scored 200 runs in a Gents game and only six of those chases were successful, four coming in the last decade:

Gents 260-7, **Northfields 261-3** in 2015
 Gents 235-9 dec., **London Owls 239-0** in 1993
 Gents 237-9, **Northfields 238-3** in 2016
 12 Angry Men 231-3, **Gents 235-9** in 2000
 Gents 203-2, **Close PF 206-4** in 2015
 Close PF 196-5, **Gents 200-6** in 2010

Denton, HP (Hamstring Peter)



The progenitor of the Telugu Gents in the current squad is Peter Denton, shown left after he had been overbearing and sarcastic to a fast bowler, or had maybe spilt his Ribena.

In 2008, he introduced a Sainsbury's colleague, Ravi Inkollu, a happy and influential moment. Inkollu brought in Murali Kalidindi, Suman Rudru and, in 2009, Patrudu Lalam. Ram Mangineni played in 2012 and soon recommended his cousin Raja Pentakota and friend Praveen Bocha, described as a "good fielder". Vijay Basker was brought in by Pentakota in 2013. Energetic recruitment continued in 2014 (Karthik Jampala, Aravind Katragadda, Vamsee Krishna and Anil Oruganti), 2015 (Pavan Kota and Ratnakar Sudireddy), 2016 (Ranjith Charharaju) and 2017 (Chandhu Bandla, Srinivas Namilikonda and Kushal Sampath). These Southern Indian Gents, mainly IT workers (Jampala is a pharmacist), have complemented the old guard. Old and new need each other. Thank you, Peter.

Etiquette

Googling "cricket etiquette" returns 562,000 results, all of which we have read. Most confirm it is good practice to clap a new batsman in. The Gents have done this since Charles Arthur and Steve Bignell strode to the crease in May 1988. There was therefore consternation at Brentham in 2010 when the truculent professional umpire told the Gents off for doing this, claiming that it was patronising and disrespectful. The etiquette guide of Australian club Endagine Dragons says "Yelling from the sidelines is not tolerated". This lesson has never been learned and the noise from the boundary when Gents batsmen are getting bogged down would not have been out of place in a Victorian asylum. Etiquette is also not dicking about on your mobile phone while umpiring, as correctly pointed out by Bricklayer's Arms in 2017.

Film



Before the September 2008 Salix game at Glaxo SK a crew filmed the teams. Let Salix take up the story:

"We then took a half hour out to accommodate the BBC who had come along to film us as a backdrop for the new Dave Gorman show *Genius*. All was going swimmingly until we set up a field so they could film close ups of a few players whacking the ball. We were one player short so I had pressganged my neighbour into coming. He was keen but hadn't played for a good few years. Anyhow, the inevitable happened and whilst he was crouching at silly mid-on a super whack hit the end of his index finger and broke it in about nine places, so it was off to A&E and no game for him as he became the third Salix player to be injured before a game started."

We note that Salix have an impressive section on their website devoted to Injuries. It has pictures.

Finance

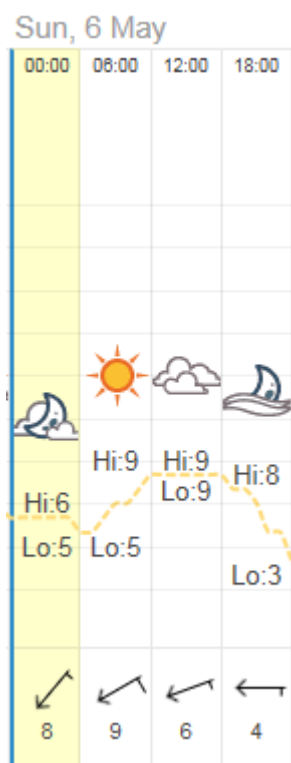
Solicitors Chivers Easton Brown sponsored the Gents in 2000 and 2001 but before and since it has preferred not to rely on a benefactor model, aiming to self-fund through subscriptions, match fees and donations. Managing relations with a sponsor is not easy because you have to adhere to a service level agreement which can prove onerous. CEB never did deliver their flag which the Gents were supposed to fly on match days.

In order to cover increased costs the match fee was increased from £5 to £10 over the period and the annual subscription from £40 to £70. Bill Flack donated his cricket library to the Club in 2010, sales of which generated £136. Jim Wright most generously paid two years' subscriptions and others made one-off donations.

A problem of renting expensive private grounds is that the norm is to pay tea money and bring a ball, not share the costs of the day. That is fine if home and away fixtures are arranged, but in a one-off the hosts are out of pocket. This was forcefully brought home in 2009 when British Library, who inhabit the fantasy world of taxpayer subsidised cricket, were asked to go Dutch and pay £60. They were reluctant to do so but after brutal negotiations handed over £40. This experience traumatised treasurer Ken Toft.

The unglamorous position of treasurer requires stability but in recent years has been a hot potato. Hemin Patel was sacked from it by mutual consent in 2015 after only a few months.

Freezing



The Gent has always recorded a summary of the weather in its match reports. On 6 May 2012 Hemin Patel's men went to the neat Ashford CC ground to play Ramgarhia in the first match of the season. A game scheduled for 40 overs a side last barely half that, the hosts winning by 5 wickets (Gents 76, Ramgarhia 78 for 5). *Gent 136* recorded:

"The venue was impressive if a little desolate on the coldest day on which the Gents have ever played. The friendly groundsman confirmed that the game would go ahead and as the punctual Gents were getting changed, a local planespotter and cricket enthusiast announced that his VHF radio had confirmed the temperature at Heathrow to be 8C. Christmases on Pluto have been warmer."

The previous coldest match was against West XI on 19 May 1996. The London-weather.eu website confirms that maxima were below 10C 16-18 May 1996, with a high of only 8.4C on 18 May. By 19 May it had warmed a degree or two but there was still sleet with a piercing easterly wind during the match. Dhruv Patel's wife Reika came along to support and used Andrew Burman as a windbreak.

In May 2007 English seamers Harmison, Plunkett and Sidebottom brushed aside a weak West Indies batting side at Headingley. The lowest temperature at an English international game, 7.4C, was recorded. Bill Frindall, the late BBC statistician, confirmed that the previous lowest temperature for a Test match in England was at Edgbaston in 1965 against New Zealand, when the mercury rose to just 8C.



Situated at the foot of the Himalayas the HPCA(left) is certainly one for a thick jumper. Situated in the city of Dharamsala it is amazingly at an altitude of 1,547 metres above sea level. England had the cold comfort of playing the first international match at the HPCA and some pre-match forecasts predicted snow.

In January 2013 the Resident Cricket Club in New Delhi cancelled all fixtures for the month stating on their website "it's just too cold for cricket!". Famously, it snowed at Buxton in June 1975 during Derbyshire v. Lancashire. The hosts were skittled on the bumpy, drying pitch for 42 (Mick Glen absent ill) and 87. Perhaps the Gents have got off lightly.

Home

Memory recalls that the home grounds comprised in neat serial succession Gunnersbury Park, Victoria RG, Fairfield RG, Crown Taverners and Old Tenisonians. In fact, it was not that simple and there were parallel hostings. Old Tenisonians first hosted the Gents in 2005 when Victoria RG was still used. Here are the home venues from 2008:

Ground	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total	RPG
Old Tenisonians	4	3	4	4	1	4	7	7	7	7	48	288
Crown Taverners		1	4	5	5	3		1		1	20	319
Fairfield RG	5	7	4				1	1			18	250
LMPF Greenford			2	2	3					2	9	282
Boston Manor PF			1	3				3			7	295
Victoria RG	1	2									3	261
Alexandra RG	1	1									2	237
King Edward RG				1							1	353

Undoubtedly a large part of the Gents' success in 2009 and 2010 can be ascribed to the variable wickets in Kingston. The batsmen would grind out solid totals knowing that the Patels, Inkollu, Iqbal and Rudru would be unplayable as the pitches deteriorated, or do the damage before tea and chase down a small total. It is fascinating to compare runs per game on the regular home pitches (RPG above in all games, not just 2008-2017). The Lilliputian Crown Taverners yields 319 (we have always maintained that one day a side will score 400 in 40 overs there), Old Tenisonians 288, Victoria RG of fond memory 261 and Fairfield RG 250.

Good days, but it would have been interesting to see the win/loss record had better pitches been supplied. The club complained to the contractor Quadron in 2009 about the poor Fairfield wickets. A farcical public sector cover up then ensued with the secretary being allowed ten minutes to read their report, which is ridiculously now regarded as authoritative by Surrey CCC and quoted in their boring pre-season round robin emails.

The Gents returned to Fairfield RG for one-off games in 2014 and 2015. The facility had had something of a makeover with new dressing rooms. Moreover, there was a more pleasant atmosphere in the park than five years before, possibly because many of the local heroin addicts had 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. On balance the club has favourable memories of the Fairfield but it is no longer suitable for hosting the desired standard of cricket.

Dhruv Patel, living a beefy drive away from Old Tenisonians, brokered a deal there which permitted rental of more pitches after 2014. It is now the regular home venue. Crown Taverners hosted the club in a T20 in 2009 and explained that they were looking to increase lettings on Sundays. This was the beginning of a happy if short-term relationship that prospered until 2013. The Gents still visit once a season. Old Tenisonians has its critics but it is a steady if not especially attractive venue, offering good facilities, seam movement and a little turn for the bowlers and steady bounce for the batsmen.

Invention

Inspired by the 2009 MPs' expenses scandal, Village CC brilliantly invented the result of their match against Buckhurst Hill CC in 2014 claiming on their website to have beaten them by one run. According to Buckhurst Hill's scorecard, the match was drawn with scores level after they scored 179 for 9 chasing Village's 179 all out. As this was a match limited by overs not time, the game should have been called a tie but the point is that according to Buckhurst Hill neither side won. They recorded their No.11, Pramod, as being 1 not out at stumps, a matter of moment. Village's sour match report had Pramod run out going for his single and claimed the win. Earlier in the game, Village's Harty, angered upon being called wide, demanded that the umpire be replaced and his decision overturned.

Now here's a brilliant example from football. Bradford Park Avenue FC was accused of leading its supporters up the garden path with misleading reports of a pre-season tour to Spain. Bradford PA's official website claimed its new striker Rory Patterson had scored a hat-trick in one match, and that the tour had been played out against "tough opposition". It then emerged that Patterson did not tour and that tour fixtures were arranged against sides of a Sunday morning standard. Some aspects of the tour report "were not 100% true", admitted the club.

Law 36

This is a subject that causes wide rifts within and without the Gents. Two players come to mind who have left clubs after controversial lbw decisions while an oppo captain similarly dismissed down the M3 in 2017 had a meltdown. Peter Denton, always a sound umpire, is eager to improve and will be taking an umpiring course in 2018. The Gents' relationship with Law 36 did not start well. In August 1988 Steve Haywood tried to murder the befuddled and bewildered Des Dolan for giving him out lbw because "the ball hit the pad and they appealed." An unprecedented seven lbw appeals, mostly ridiculous, were upheld in the match against Raynes Park Former Pupils in 2011, four by Gents' umpires.

In *The Guardian* in 2014 Nick Miller proposed that the Law be amended to allow dismissals to a ball pitching outside leg stump that would have gone on to hit the wicket. His lucid argument is that "It seems incongruous that a leg-spinner can bowl a ripping turner that completely outfoxes their opponent, or a left-arm seamer beats a right-handed bat with a late swinger that is prevented from crashing into the wickets only by the batsman's pads, to be denied because the ball had landed an inch or so outside the line of leg stump".

Moaners

The first obnoxious oppo was Pacific back in 1991, a faraway time when former Russian republics were falling over themselves to declare independence and Manchester City were yo-yoing between Divisions 1 and 2 cheered on by fans waving comedy inflatables. A fixture was arranged but was rained off. The Gents were then dumped over the winter for not being good enough.

The internet is a risky source. All clubs describe themselves as "friendly and weak/medium" but you need to have second sight to understand what they are really about. This can be solved, but it needs funding. We must stop the wastage of public money on such overspend as motivational magicians (Cotswold Council, £19k) and a clothing allowance for "Geordie Armani" (Durham Council, £12k). More lucratively, pensions for public sector workers who were idle and incompetent during their careers should be cancelled immediately and the miscreants made to forage in camps. Savings made here would fund a Directorship of Recreational Cricket, with a brief to ensure that all cricket matches arranged at short notice are fun and well balanced with harsh penalties for sides who misrepresent themselves. This works both ways. London Saints and New Barbarian Weasels dumped the Gents because the games had become too one-sided.

The Gents know how unpleasant such blind dates such as Purley Arms and the horrific Blue Marlins can be. But at least these outfits turned up, unlike a shudder of tumbling clowns called BBC Misfits, whose stupid secretary later denied all knowledge of the fixture. In mitigation, he may have been distracted by an urgent instruction by the Corporation to help fabricate evidence against Tony Blackburn or some other innocent media personality.

When young one was taught to say thank you after being invited to a party. We therefore denounce the denigration of hospitality. A former West XI player, never known to prepare a tea himself, did this frequently in the 1990s. It formed the basis of a Music Hall turn which he is probably still touring. He even made the lower reaches of the Top 40 with his novelty single "Mustard Sandwiches and No Drinks" (Deram 346). The sniffy Magdalen and Village, neither of whom have hosted the Gents, also complained about the teas. Magdalen had the audacity to mark it, and gave it 6/10. For whining entitlement though, Old Grumblers take some beating with their denunciation of Fairfield RG:

"Fielding on a threadbare outfield of shredded Coke cans as hard as asphalt to the knee and elbow isn't the essence of the OG wandering ethic. I am particularly keen to get back on the village green, the dignity of homemade chutneys and forthright exchanges with bumpkins."

We offer a respectful word of advice. Get your own ground, find out how much work is involved in hosting a match, then get back to us.

But what of our own misfits? Elvis Presley was always good on moral guidance and he advised in 1969 to "Clean up Your Own Backyard" (RCA 1869. It got to No.21) and yes the Gents have had a few difficult personalities. Here is another quote from Gideon Haigh about his Yarras mates that will do for us:

"There were a couple of dickheads in there too. No club is without them, I dare say. But the proportion I've encountered at the Yarras has been vanishingly small. And we also know, that a club dickhead might be a dickhead, but he's your dickhead."

Nationality



This was a productive afternoon's poring about on Facebook and going through old match reports. As far as can be ascertained without studying criminal records and passports, the Gents have fielded players qualified for the nationalities below. Naveed Khan and Tomal Aguirre (left with Katragadda) very usefully ticked off two nations, being qualified respectively for Pakistan/Ireland and Bangladesh/Chile through parentage. All ICC Full Members are represented except, strangely, Zimbabwe.

Gents qualified for ICC Full Members		Gents qualified for ICC Associate Members	
Afghanistan	New Zealand	Chile	Malta
Australia	Pakistan	China	Netherlands
Bangladesh	South Africa	France	Saudi Arabia
England	Sri Lanka	Hong Kong	Scotland
India	West Indies	Germany	USA
Ireland		Japan	

New oppo



We have played 47 new teams since 2008. It is easier to establish fixtures now but perhaps something has been lost from the days when word of mouth recommendations were the norm. We have unearthed some diamonds in the past ten years. Bricklayer's Arms, Clapham In, Judd Street Tigers, Northfields and Wimbledon United should be on the card for years to come. Hale and Salix were first met in 2006 and 2004. It is always an enjoyable day out with these guys, win or lose. Ashford hosted well and 14-y-o Waqar Rao (left) was some bowler.



Willison models Clapham In's Duck Suit at London Fashion Week



"Give me three pieces of evidence that God exists"
Jack Davies of Hale needs answers, now

The most frequent opponents 2008-2017 were Hale (19 games), London Saints (15), Salix and St. Anne's Allstars (11), and Pak and West XI (10). Northfields, with five wins in eight matches, were the most successful. Twenty-two opponents were played only once so there was a lot of attrition from the card. Despite the decline of cricket outside the independent school sector and the keen as mustard Asian community, fixtures remain easy to get.

Nobility

Music buffs love one-hit wonders and cricket statisticians adore one-cap wonders. There are 128 Gents who have played once and 58 appeared since 2008. Some were more than gainfully employed and got good value for their match fee. Vasi Shaikh bowled a mammoth 13 overs, the longest spell since 1999, Chris Boden, Rakesh Patel and Matt Tewhatu hit fifties and Alex Butler smashed 100 not out. But we celebrate here the following noble six: Chaudry, Hashmi, Herbert, Methra (identified in the match report as an HR colleague of Sachin Desai and Hemin Patel), Nilesh Patel and Rootham. Each gave up his Sunday but in a series of inclusive captaincy incidents none batted, none bowled and none took a catch. Possibly none touched the ball but this is unrecorded. We trust that if they remember us at all, they will be favourably disposed to us.

Not his day

INNINGS OF AXIOM PATRIKHTAS			
BATSMEN	HOW OUT	BOWLER	RUNS
1. Mostafa Islam	Not out		19
2. Saad Hossain	Not out		0
3. Mostafa Islam	OUT		
4. Saad Hossain	OUT		
5. Saad Hossain	OUT		
6. Saad Hossain	OUT		
7. Mostafa Islam	OUT		
8. Saad Hossain	OUT		
9. Saad Hossain	OUT		
10. Saad Hossain	OUT		
11. Saad Hossain	OUT		
Byes	X		
L. Byes	X		
N. Bs.	15		
Wides	65		
Extras	80		
Fall of Wickets:			Total 92
1/ X	2/ X	3/ X	4/ X
6/ X	7/ X	8/ X	9/ X
BOWLING ANALYSIS			
Sujon Mahmud 0-4-0-92-0			W- 0/0/2
			NB- 3/17/4

In April 2017 in Bangladesh 65 wides and 15 no-balls saw a side claim a win in just four legal deliveries. The Dhaka Second Division Cricket League match between Axiom and Lalmatia quickly descended into farce in the second innings as a protest against umpiring decisions unfolded.

Opening bowler Sujon Mahmud delivered an incredible 15 no-balls and 13 wides, each of which went to the boundary to concede 65 runs. His four legal deliveries went for 12 runs. His 32-ball over saw Axiom complete a 10-wicket win in just 0.4 overs, having racked up 92.

So be careful before chortling at the bowling spells below. First, nobody threw a game, second they had the guts to bowl when the batsmen were on top and third some of the spells were very long indeed. For example, Paul Pigott bowled 15 overs and Stuart Snelling (who took eight wickets) 11.4 in the era of declaration matches. Hats off then to Fawkes of Northfields who returned 8-0-79-4 but saw his side win by 7 wickets, the only bowler in the list to celebrate a victory.

1-92	Baister of London Rotherham (4 Sept 1994)	0-63	Todd v. London Owls (5 September 1993)
4-80	Pigott of London Owls (31 July 1994)	3-63	Staple of Crown Taverners (25 July 2010)
4-79	Fawkes of Northfields (24 May 2015)	3-63	Neighbour of Baker Street Irregulars (12 July 2015)
8-77	Snelling v. East Harrow Cheetahs (4 Aug 1996)	0-62	Black v. West XI (24 May 1992)
0-76	Foster of Salix (19 August 2012)	3-61	Tupling of Wandham (% June 1994)
3-75	Quinn of London Owls (9 July 1995)	1-61	Grant of St. Anne's Allstars (4 August 2013)
0-68	Edge of Enterprise (10 May 1992)	2-61	Wright of Judd Street Tigers (27 July 2014)
0-67	Dane of West XI (4 September 2011)	0-60	Buck of Sloane Club (11 May 2008)
1-64	Arjun of Northfields (28 May 2017)	2-60	Dane of Judd Street Tigers (14 July 2013)
1-64	Rinku of Monty RH (24 July 2016)		

Patronymic

In 2015 the most common surnames in the UK were: Smith, Jones, Williams, Taylor, Davies, Brown, Wilson, Evans, Thomas and Johnson. The Gents have since 2008 ticked off Horace Hibbert's pal Tony Thomas in 2010 and Hale's John Davies who guested in 2012. Smith, Williams, Taylor and Brown remain to be enrolled.

The name Patel derives from Patlikh, the record keeper named by princely rulers in Gujarat to keep track of the crops, pat being a parcel of land. In *Decade2* we mistakenly wrote that there had been 14 Patels, ranging in size from the giant Yogeswaran to the youthful pintpot Dhruv junior. There hadn't, for further research revealed that one, Pritesh, was in fact a Naik. Not to be downhearted, four new Patels have mustered under the colours since 2008: Bhaven (Ketan's son), Jignesh (Sanjay's mate, the nippy ex-Middlesex 1st. XI bowler), Rakesh (United Titans) and Vischal. Dhruv Patel junior was identified as Dhilon. That is 17, with 798 appearances, 331 since 2008. This is three-quarters of all the Patels in the world.

Second to the Patels are the Wrights with Jim, Chris, George and Laurie earning 180 caps, 156 before 2008. Khans have also been quietly clambering up the appearances ladder. Since 2008 Ahmed, Hamid, Shezhad (Naveed's brother) and Waleed have increased the complement to seven, with 88 caps.

Patel	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Hemin	21	23	25	21	5	10	5	10	17	17	154
Sanjay	18	15	20	17	13	11	10	14	12	11	141
Dhruv	1		6	6	1	4		3		1	22
Bhaven				1		2					3
Dhilon	1					2				1	3
Ketan				1			1		1		3
Nilesh				1							2
Jignesh				1							1
Rakesh								1			1
Vischal				1							1
Total	41	38	51	49	19	29	16	28	30	30	331

Rain



Wayne Caveney is always happy at his cricket. Here he is sweeping the residue of a shower off the artificial wicket at Crown Taverners in the 2011 Ham and Petersham game. Thanks to a quick-drying ground the match was completed. Right is Old Tenisonians – three days after this photo was taken a game actually went ahead but the Gents have been rained off there on eight other occasions because of the odd microclimate.

Here is Hemin Patel's from 2011 after nobody helped him clean up after a soggy T20 day. His words should be compulsory reading.

“What an annoying day. There would have been some good games today. Apart from the weather the other annoying thing for me was some bad manners and reluctance to help organise the day. Now onto my rant.

When we are the home team there are certain responsibilities that we need to carry out, like making sure the oppo feel welcome and helping out throughout the day.



Rants

What upset me the most was people's total reluctance to do the job I asked them to. I understand people give up their Sundays and want to have fun but so do I. I don't want to scrub the BBQ grill, arrange drinks and clean up but this is what I had to do while others carried on drinking, eating and playing football.

Most of our kit was thrown on top of the bag, left outside or thrown halfway across the pavilion. This kit costs us a lot of money and we need to look after it. It takes two minutes to put away the kit you have used but I think people just think it's not mine so I don't care. We are all adults, have some respect for the team. I was going to name and shame but you probably know who you are and if you don't you will next week. We are a team and should act like one. Rant over.”

Here's Jack Davies on the Crown and Cushion's landlady:

“Your reporter got it right re the pig-ignorant landlady who is a right bitch from the wrong end of Manchester. I told her she's not fit to be a landlady.”

Here's Village's Hindle on the national situation in 2011:

“There is a great deal wrong with our country 1. Too many people not prepared to work. 2. Education far too left-wing and can no longer be described as education. 3. Bilderbergers controlling the world government. 4. Police forces out of control and responsible, complicit with many in the judiciary and the so-called Ombudsmen, of allowing appalling crimes against families to continue with children and houses stolen from individuals wrongly. 5. Most seriously, a TREASON against our Bill of Rights and Magna Carta that has left us with no Monarch since 1972, and which the police forces up and down the country refuse to deal with thereby committing MISPRISION of TREASON themselves.”

Records

As pitches improved, the decade saw eight record wicket stands, five by the Gents and three by opponents. Himanshu Desai featured in three of them, two with Ramanjit Lall and one with Praveen Bocha. Northfields (238 for 3 and 261 for 3) posted the best and third-best chasing scores, 261 for 3 and 238 for 3. Six of the twelve 150 partnerships were posted in the period, including the Gents' highest, the unbeaten 212 between Jonny Small and Sumit Kumar against St. Anne's Allstars in 2015.

John Elmes of Northfields (165 not out) and Fawad Ahmed of Close PF (164 not out) recorded the record individual scores in Gents games. Gents batsmen struck 11 of their 23 centuries, opponents eight out of 20. Sachin Desai with 8-0-31-7 against Cheltenham Allsorts carded the best limited-overs return in a Gents game while Wimbledon United's Andrew Cripps's 5-4-1-6 was the best return by an opponent.

Individual record-holders are pictured below, with a random Gent mysteriously airbrushed in the picture of Elmes. For all-time records, see *GWLCC_Records 2017*.

THE GENT

Winter 2017 No. 69
Tales from the corridor of uncertainty

Now top this



INSIDE...

- Markets tumble on election turmoil as market record confirms Jimmy de Brito as Man of Year for 2016
- Wright and night - the open their trophies
- The joy cups Bowler, Steve Farley
- League cricket - it's dead in the water
- Skonk film tribute
- Letters and e-mails by the truckload

PLUS...

- Master's schedule - Windsor Grammar School events published
- Coleridge's ACME absence - all Sharn get her billion and again!
- Buggers carry on regardless, revised fixtures, etc.
- Getting out wash? Boreas/Tric reveal winter project

Highest partnerships 2008-2017

6	212*	Small (131*) and Kumar (74*) <i>v.</i> St. Anne's Allstars	Record wicket stand for	Boston Manor PF	7 June 2015
2	186	Elmes (165*) and Murray (56) (Northfields)	Record wicket stand against	Durston House	24 May 2015
3	169	Giles (34) and Griffiths (113) (Hale)		Hale Common	27 September 2009
3	163	Sanga (100*, Ahmed 50* and Chalamalasetti 26*) <i>v.</i> Bricklayers' Arms		Raynes Park SG	27 August 2017
4	162	H Desai (46) and Lall (128) <i>v.</i> London Saints	Record wicket stand for	Old Haberdashers	14 August 2011
3	161	Lall (102) and Cloete (97*) <i>v.</i> West XI		Crown Taverners	4 September 2011
1	149	S-A Khan (144) and S Borkhatria (61) (Stanmore Warriors)		Shenley SC	3 September 2017
3	138	Khan (75) and Small (88) <i>v.</i> Bricklayer's Arms		Raynes Park SG	21 August 2016
3	133	Flauker (73) and Taylor-Maughan (62) (Cairns Fudge)		Old Tenisonians	29 June 2014
3	132	Oruganti (70) and Jampala (49) <i>v.</i> Bricklayer's Arms		Old Tenisonians	19 July 2015



Jonny Small 131 not out *v.* St. Anne's Allstars 2015



John Elmes 165 not out for Northfields 2015



Sachin Desai 7 for 31 *v.* Cheltenham Allsorts 2011



Andrew Cripps 6 for 1 for Wimbledon United 2017

Records 2008-2017

Highest totals for (2008-2017)

325-9	St. Anne's Allstars (Crown Taverners, 4 August 2013) ³⁵ Batting first
301-9	London Saints (Old Tenisonians, 18 May 2014) ³⁵ Batting first
279-3	West XI (Crown Taverners, 4 September, 2011) ³⁰ Batting first
279-7	Clapham In (Chiswick House, 1 September, 2013) ³⁵ Batting first
275-3	Sloane Club (Burton's Court, 11 May 2008) ³⁵ Batting first

Highest totals against

281-7	Stanmore Warriors (Shenley CS, 3 September 2017) ⁴⁰ Batting first
261-3	Northfields (Durstons House, 24 May 2015) ⁴⁰ Batting second
258-5	Crown Taverners (Crown Taverners, 9 July 2017) ⁴⁰ Batting second
252-5	Village (Fairfield RG, 5 September 2010) ⁴⁰ Batting first
251-7	Old Tenisonians Taverners (Old Tenisonians, 4 July 2010) ⁴⁰ Batting first

Lowest totals for

53	Wimbledon United (Cottenham Park, 14 May 2017) ^{Batting second}
54	Magdalen (Old Tenisonians, 1 July 2012) ^{Batting second}
57	West XI (HSBC, 7 September 2008) ^{Batting second}
59	Wombles (Victoria RG, 30 August 2009) ^{Batting first}
59	MSV Zeemacht (Zeemacht, 18 May 2013) ^{Batting second}

Lowest totals against

30	Sloane Club (Burton's Court, 11 May 2008) ^{Batting second}
35	London Saints (Fairfield RG, 17 May 2009) ^{Batting second}
41	London Saints (Old Tenisonians, 1 June 2008) ^{Batting first}
42	Wombles (Victoria RG, 30 August 2009) ^{Batting second}
44	Baker Street Irregulars (KGF Richmond, 27 April 2014) ^{Batting second}

Best bowling for

7-31	S Desai <i>v.</i> Cheltenham Allsorts (Victoria Ground, 10 June 2012)
6-11	Sanga <i>v.</i> Pak (LMPF Greenford, 7 August 2016) ^{T20}
5-7	Iqbal <i>v.</i> London Saints (Old Tenisonians, 1 June 2008)
5-7	Snelling <i>v.</i> Salix (GSK Greenford, 14 September 2008)
5-11	Hibbert <i>v.</i> Cairns Fudge (Fairfields RG, 15 June 2008)

Best bowling against

6-1	Cripps (Wimbledon United) (Cottenham Park, 14 May 2017)
6-25	Boa (Village) (Fairfield RG, 5 September 2010)
5-5	Xavier (Magdalen) (Old Tenisonians, 1 July 2012))
5-6	Rekhi (Purley Arms) (Fairfield RG, 29 June 2008)
5-11	Patel (London Rams) (Fairfield RG, 22 June 2008)

Expensive bowling

4-79	Fawkes (Northfields) (Durstons House, 24 May 2015)
0-76	Foster (Salix) (LMPF Greenford, 19 August 2012)
0-67	Dane (West XI) (Crown Taverners, 4 September 2011)
1-64	Arjun (Northfields) (Durstons House, 28 May 2017)
1-64	Rinku (Monty RH) (Old Tenisonians, 24 July 2016)

Runs in a season

486	Lall 2013
480	Kota 2016
478	Small 2015
459	Inkollu 2008
432	S Patel 2009

Wickets in a season

41	H Patel 2010
39	H Patel 2009
33	H Patel 2008
32	H Patel 2011
31	Inkollu 2009

Catches/stumpings in a season

13/4	S Desai 2010
13/1	H Desai 2009
11/2	Small 2016
9/4	H Desai 2011
9	Bocha 2017, Kota 2016

Swimming pools



The Australians may have grabbed the headlines over the winter with the Pool Deck at Brisbane but GWLCC were the pioneers of such leisure installations back in July 2015, to the obvious delight of Jessie, the much-loved companion of the captain of Bricklayer's Arms Mr Watson. The consultant architect was groundsman John Crawford. Karthik Jampala kept the water flowing.

Synopsis

In 2017 Gents and opponents averaged over 150 runs per innings for the first time. Opponents' average score of 157 for 8 was the highest recorded. Shoot outs on dodgy council pitches, an important factor in the successful 2009 campaign, seem a distant memory. We have also split the data into three decades and have spared you a dodgy graph. An interesting trend emerged, the Gents improving their average score from 129 (1988-1997), to 139 (1998-2007) and then to 158 (2008-2017). Opponents leapt from 117 to 139 before a small regression to 134. This meant that 46 runs were added per game. No Gent scored 500 runs in a season from 2008 to 2017, something achieved five times before 2008, but there is copious evidence of improved batting down the order. Eleven of the Gents' 23 centuries, and eight of the opponents' 20 were scored over the period. The Gents scored 59 of their 93 scores of 200 in the last decade, oppo 21 of their 43.

Perhaps the bowling got worse over the period, perhaps pitches and opposition improved, an opinion held by the eminent social cricket commentator and President of Judd Street Tigers Steve Bignell. He maintains that the quality of Sunday cricket is higher than ever, although the number of purely social teams is in decline. It is hard to ascertain the true position with the number of teams waxing and waning, as it always has.

The Gents should score their 100,000th. run in about eight years, by which time we'll all be flying to the matches in solar-powered drones.

	Gents batting				Opponents batting			
	Runs	Wickets	Avg. R.	Avg. W.	Runs	Wickets	Avg. R.	Avg. W.
2008	2,868	169	130	8	2,269	187	103	9
2009	3,813	164	166	7	3,043	218	132	9
2010	3,552	195	142	8	3,558	186	142	7
2011	3,419	166	155	8	3,248	170	148	8
2012	2,875	134	160	7	2,307	154	128	9
2013	3,240	131	162	7	2,484	168	124	8
2014	3,032	126	190	8	2,042	138	128	9
2015	3,462	155	165	7	2,758	142	131	7
2016	3,398	166	162	8	3,128	176	149	8
2017	3,105	154	163	8	2,979	143	157	8
1988-1997	18,735	1,113	129	8	17,033	1,144	117	8
1998-2007	28,035	1,541	139	8	25,771	1,535	139	8
2008-2017	32,764	1,560	158	8	27,816	1,682	134	8
	79,534	4,250	144	8	70,620	4,393	128	8

Top 10s



Talent counts, but not as much as opportunity. If you played, you contributed.

Runs	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
S Patel	169	432	326	356	274	250	187	207	185	235	2,621
Kumar		51	234	160	53	89	114	251	334	125	1,411
Bocha					208	265	141	103	300	349	1,366
Small						264	289	478	252	54	1,337
Dubey		12	224	184	269	87	124	126	149	112	1,287
S Desai		255	210	128	169	147		202	56	69	1,236
Basker						140	302	265	115	300	1,122
N Khan	281	332	119	95	74			26	106	33	1,066
H Patel	65	101	168	166	23	37	15	86	159	219	1,039
Cloete				221	172	187	327	57			964
Wickets	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
H Patel	33	39	41	32	7	14	8	9	25	20	228
S Patel	19	27	21	16	15	16	16	14	10	10	164
Sciberras	18	11	10	22	8	7			2		78
Kumar		1	13	7	11	5	8	5	14	8	72
Snelling	29	16	9	3	4	5			4	2	72
Hibbert	6	6	10	3	6	13	9	4	2	1	60
Bocha					6	11	11		15	13	56
Inkollu	19	31			4						54
Dubey			9	2	8	4	6	7	1	9	46
S Desai		1	1		21	7		9	4	2	45
Catches	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
S Patel	4	5	7	3	6	4	1	4	4	1	39
H Patel	6	8	6	5	1	1	1	3	2	3	36
S Desai		4	13	3	4	2		2	4	3	35
H Desai	4	13	4	9	3						33
Newcombe		6	5	2	6	4			4		27
Bocha					2	5	6		4	9	26
Small						2	2	6	11	3	24
Hibbert	1	2	4	2	2	5	1	4		1	22
N Khan	6	4	2	4	1				5		22
Sciberras	6	4	2	4	3	3					22

Tours



Malta 2011 – hospitality from Gordon Hewitt to Mark Sciberras

Winchester in 2009, Malta in 2011 and Cheltenham in 2012 were hugely enjoyable and in May 2013 the Netherlands played host. In Cheltenham a local simpleton who had taken cider asked what planned terror outrage the Gents were investigating. He had misread the GWLCC printed on the tees as GCHQ.



Vintage camerawork from an early smartphone (Winchester 2009)

Touring brings out hitherto unseen qualities in a man. A spectacular tourist was Sachin Desai, whose epic tour of Malta comprised nine balls, caught first ball in the first innings and retired with a broken finger keeping to Iqbal eighth ball of the second. A keen evangelist, he then disappeared to practise his good works in the lower quarters of the docks and was not seen again. “Go straight for souls, and go for the worst” wrote Salvation Army founder William Booth.

Troubled



The Hale village idiot screaming at the traffic outside the Ball and Wicket in 2008 set the bar high. Having welcomed Gents supporter Dave Bender and his three Gent pals with a friendly “My dog could kill you four cunts” he went outside to throw items at passing cars, including his own shoes, before being taken in hand by half of Hampshire Constabulary’s finest, to whom he was known.

This put down an important marker in the years to come, with dogs a recurrent theme. The evangelist loon who encouraged his mutt to eat the al fresco tea at Ealing Central Sports in 2016. Worse, the whining, entitled bitch whose yappers attacked a Gent at Chiswick House in 2014. Did you not understand the sign “Cricket is played here. No dogs”? Why did you say “If you weren’t so aggressive I’d call them off”? That could have been a small child.

We also denounce itinerant child racists (Wandsworth Park), drivers who wind their windows down and utter jocular appeals, mooncalves who ask the scorer who’s winning, joggers on the pitch (the Chinawoman at Chiswick House), and pub landlady cat retrievers passing friendly comment (Crown Taverners). All have interrupted the match. We want a peaceful place to play our games. We pay for the privilege, you do not. You have been warned. Next time you will be hunted down and killed.

They offend at their peril. We reported in 2009:

“Another minor cricketing record may have been set during the Old Grumblers game, the spectator told to fuck off by most players during a single game. Your man, who had issues, started on several Gents players during his perambulation around the boundary, including Ken Toft, who had just shelled a catch. A beefy Saxon retort was delivered by Sir Kenneth and his loyal retinue. Chummy then toddled over to where scorer Burman and the Old Grumblers were encamped. After a menacing staring session he started again, giving everyone the benefit of his views on the legality of the bowling action of Mark Sciberras and the general standard of the match. He had, he informed the gathering, studied cricket and knew a lot about it. His speech was not a good idea and he exited with his vocabulary enhanced, or possibly not.”