

THE GENT

October 2013

No. 141

Tales from the corridor of uncertainty

Bearded Wonders

Gents unbeaten in 2013¹

¹ apart from defeats



Season's summary

Newcombe steps down

Averages and Top 10s

Suncream and Baggy Greens by Tristan Haddow-Allen

Tigers join in muscular BBC abuse

The Sainsbury Wing

RIP Craig Maddock

Match reports:

Legends (won by 8 wickets)

Legends (won by 4 wickets)

Clapham In (won by 57 runs)

Salix (won by 158 runs)

Hale (won by 34 runs)

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Read about the Gents on www.gowlcc.org.uk

2013 Played 20 Won 16 Tied 1 Lost 3

Ins Basker, T Jones, Khalid, S Khan, Small
Outs de la Perrelle, Devunuri, H Desai, Inkollu, Khan, Mangineni, Ragothamreddy, G Wright

Runs Lall 486, Bocha 265, Small 264, S Patel 250, Cloete 187, S Desai 147, Basker 140, Khalid 117, M Jones 114, Hibbert 111

Wickets Lall 18, S Patel 16, H Patel 14, Hibbert 13, Bocha 11

Catches Bocha and Hibbert 5

A successful Jubilee season will be much cherished in future years, but it took some organizing. No fewer than 51 players donned the shirt, of whom 13 played only in the 25th anniversary games and seven only on tour. Injury ruled out de la Perrelle, Himanshu Desai and Khan for the whole season, Dubey and Sanjay Patel until June. George Wright went travelling and brother Laurie's blossoming musical career meant he was absent until August. Toft was rarely available apart from the Netherlands tour. It was therefore somewhat chaotic week to week and there was a danger that the tour would have to be cancelled before Judd Street Tigers mustered behind the flag. It was fitting that the best game of the season was between the fledging rivals.

When it became clear that such absences were threatening the ability to fulfil fixtures (one was indeed lost) the Committee reacted quickly. The tour was honoured thanks to Judd Street Tigers, who supplied five players. Fortunately, Caveney, Hibbert, Sciberras and especially Lall were of great assistance in arranging guests, several of whom were exceptional players. It was delightful to welcome three splendid new regulars, Tom Jones, introduced by Greg Newcombe, Jonny Small (Mark Jones) and latterly Vijay Basker (Praveen Bocha).

The total of games played looked nothing out of ordinary but was skewed by unplanned short second games against Ramgarhia, MSV Zeemacht and London Saints. Seven Sundays were missed before September, none due to the weather. Rams (and their tragic replacements BBC Mishits), Swinging Googlies and Crown Taverners bailed on the Gents, while the Gents bailed on Northfields. Other weekends were left fallow.

An early Twenty20 win over Cairns Fudge was notable for sprung stumps at the batsmen's end, a kitbag masquerading as the stumps at the bowlers' and Cloete (16 balls) leapfrogging Bocha (21 balls), who had just 20 minutes before set a record for the fastest Gents' fifty. Sixty-five more sixes (27 by the prolific Lall) would be struck in addition to Bocha's three and Cloete's eight that freezing April day. Pentakota, Lall, guest Raipuri and Bocha then bowled out Ramgarhia in 12 overs. A week off was followed by the tour, three defeats in low-scoring contests against MSV Zeemacht and CC Zwolle, a town home to club founder Mark Ashton in the 1980s, during which residency he thought that all public transport was free as he never saw a ticket inspector.

An unbeaten 57 by Small on debut saw a win against London Saints in a game that marked the return of Sanjay Patel. Bocha's 7-0-37-5 (his last four overs carding 4-0-7-4) and some smart field placement by Newcombe then set up the win against a strong Hale. The warm weather had finally arrived, but the Gents played only alternate Sundays from late May to late July. There was nevertheless some enjoyable cricket to be had, notably a Twenty20 day against Pak followed by an epic tie against Judd Street Tigers, Bocha and Lall scoring fifties.

A pattern was beginning to emerge. Playing on true pitches the Gents won five tosses, batted first and were inserted in two others. Runs flowed – 1,795 in seven games with Lall scoring 61, 67, 80 and 87. Small hit two more fifties in this Elizabethan period, Sanjay Patel, Sachin Desai, Dubey, Basker and Khalid one each. Judd Street Tigers, London Saints and Clapham Inn replied well but the unbeaten run was extended to 14 on a damp pitch at Hale. The Twenty20 Silver Jubilee, a gathering of the clans, was well organised and saw some good play, Caveney distinguishing himself with 50* in the second match, one of eight 15/20 over games out of 20. At season's end, the Gents had lost only three matches and were proudly unbeaten in England.

Lall (an impressive 486, the highest since Husain's 680 in 2007), Bocha, Small and Sanjay Patel dominated the batting with punitive hitting while six others made fifties, Dubey's against Clapham In being particularly stylish. Lall also headed the bowling (and appearances) with 18 wickets and Sanjay Patel took 16, paying only 12.6 runs per wicket and conceding only 4.1 runs per over. Bocha, Hibbert and the reinvigorated Hemin Patel also took more than 10 wickets. The fielding improved and 50 catches was eight more than in 2012.

As the season progressed Hemin Patel and Sachin Desai rediscovered their enthusiasm to great effect. This complemented the efforts of Newcombe and Hibbert at the helm. They led with dignity and acumen. Chairman Khan worked generously and tirelessly to market the club, setting up a new website and a Facebook page.

2013 results and fixtures

Date	Gents	Result	Judd Street Tigers	Result
Sun 21 April	-	-	Railway Taverners	Won by 6 wickets
Sun 28 April	Cairns Fudge	Won by 46 runs	Potter Street	Won by 54 runs
Sun 5 May	Ramgarhia	Won by 7 wickets	Dinder	Won by 120 runs
Sun 5 May	Ramgarhia	Won by 4 runs	-	-
Sun 12 May	-	-	-	-
Sat 18 May	MSV Zeemacht	Lost by 5 wickets	-	-
Sat 18 May	MSV Zeemacht	Lost by 63 runs	-	-
Sun 19 May	CC Zwolle	Lost by 32 runs	-	-
Sun 26 May	-	-	Graces	Won by 12 runs
Sun 2 June	London Saints	Won by 8 wickets	Eastons	Lost by 4 wickets
Sun 2 June	London Saints	Won by 43 runs	-	-
Sun 9 June	-	-	London Saints	Won by 8 wickets
Sun 9 June	-	-	Sunderland SC	Won by 76 runs
Sun 16 June	Hale	Won by 23 runs	Octopus	Won by 66 runs
Sun 23 June	-	-	Fives	Abandoned (rain)
Sat 29 June	-	-	Plums	Cancelled
Sun 30 June	Pak	Won by 3 wickets	Dinder	Cancelled
Sun 30 June	Pak	Won by 9 wickets	-	-
Sun 7 July	-	-	N2 Casuals	Won by 95 runs
Sun 14 July	Judd Street Tigers	Tied	Gents	Tied
Sun 21 July	-	-	CAMRA	Won by 5 wickets
Sun 28 July	Baker Street Irregulars	Won by 148 runs	Maggie and Stump	Won by 8 wickets
Sun 4 August	St. Anne's Allstars	Won by 219 runs	Old Grumblers	Won by 22 runs
Sun 11 August	London Saints	Won by 102 runs	Southgate Adelaide	Won by 48 runs
Sun 18 August	Legends	Won by 8 wickets	Cincinatti	Lost by 82 runs
Sun 18 August	Legends	Won by 4 wickets	-	-
Sun 25 Aug	-	-	-	-
Sun 1 Sept	Clapham In	Won by 57 runs	Acme	Won by 8 wickets
Sun 8 Sept	Salix	Won by 158 runs	Railway Taverners	Won by 9 wickets
Sun 15 Sept	-	-	Whalers	Won by 6 wickets
Sun 22 Sept	-	-	VCC	Won by 70 runs
Sun 29 Sept	Hale	Won by 34 runs	-	-
Record	Played 20 Won 16 Tied 1 Lost 3		Played 20 Won 16 Tied 1 Lost 2 Abandoned 1	
Runs	Lall 486 Bocha 265 Small 264 S Patel 250		Dane 491 Herlihy 458 Wright 452 Pinfield 420	
Wickets	Lall 18 S Patel 16 H Patel 14 Hibbert 13 Bocha 11		Dane 25 Webster 21 Warren 20 Scally 17	
Catches/Stumpings	Bocha/Hibbert 5 M Jones/Newcombe/S Patel 4		Wright 8 Porton 6/1 Pinfield/Dane 6 Wright 5	

2013 scorecards

28/4	Wandsworth Common	Gents 231-3 (Cloete 81, Bocha 54, Wahed 42) Cairns Fudge 185-6 (Lam 35*, Huxley 33, Howells 28, Griffiths 28, Hibbert 3-20)	Won by 46 runs
5/5	Old Tenisonians	Ramgarhia 63 (Raipuri 4-7, Pentakota 3-28) Gents 67-3 (Lall 43)	Won by 7 wickets
5/5	Old Tenisonians	Gents 97-7 (Raipuri 24, Lall 24) Ramgarhia 93-7 (Aman 27, Ali 26)	Won by 4 runs
18/5	Zeemacht	Gents 61 (M Jones 23, Kajan 3-5) MSV Zeemacht 62-5	Lost by 5 wickets
18/5	Zeemacht	MSV Zeemacht 122-8 (Rathu 52, M Jones 3-16) Gents 59	Lost by 63 runs
19/5	Zwolle	CC Zwolle 121 (Sylvan 28, C Wright 5-21) Gents 89-9 (Dishant 3-14)	Lost by 32 runs
2/6	Crown Taverners	London Saints 83 (Griffiths 45, Lall 4-25) Gents 86-2 (Small 57*)	Won by 8 wickets
2/6	Crown Taverners	Gents 151-4 (Bocha 44*, Lall 41) London Saints 108-6 (Chalmers 22*, T Jones 4-13)	Won by 43 runs
16/6	Crown Taverners	Gents 134 (Small 37, S Patel 25, Bocha 20, Davies 4-21) Hale 111 (Gurney 35, R Larby 29*, Bocha 5-37)	Won by 23 runs
30/6	Old Tenisonians	Pak 128-6 (D Khan 28, K Ahmed 25) Gents 131-7 (Small 28, Lall 22, Caveney 22*, D Khan 3-20)	Won by 3 wickets
30/6	Old Tenisonians	Pak 112 (H Khan 47) Gents 113-1 (Cloete 65*, Newcombe 21)	Won by 9 wickets
14/7	Old Tenisonians	Gents 231-9 (Lall 61, Bocha 56, Kumar 33, H Patel 23*, Porton 3-23) Judd Street Tigers 231-10 (Delanian 55, Herlihy 40*, Wright 32, Porton 20, Bocha 3-31)	Tied
28/7	Barn Elms	Gents 274 (Lall 67, Small 52, S Desai 36, Khalid 34, S Patel 29) Baker Street Irregulars 126 (Manistry 34, McWilliams 21, Khalid 3-16)	Won by 148 runs
4/8	Crown Taverners	Gents 325-9 (S Patel 76, S Desai 71, Bocha 62, Basker 29, M Jones 24) St. Anne's Allstars 106 (Chadwick 31)	Won by 219 runs
11/8	Old Haberdashers	Gents 271-6 (Small 85, Lall 80, S Patel 35*) London Saints 169 (L Patel 75, Griffiths 27, Hibbert 3-13, H Patel 3-22)	Won by 102 runs
18/8	Old Tenisonians	Legends 115-8 Gents 119-2 (L Wright 44*, Hibbert 32)	Won by 8 wickets
18/8	Old Tenisonians	Legends 104-9 (S Patel 42, Lall 3-24) Gents 107-6 (Caveney 50*, Snelling 3-24)	Won by 4 wickets
1/9	Chiswick House	Gents 279-7 (Lall 87, Dubey 70, Pentakota 21, Basker 20, Frecknall 3-39) Clapham In 222-3 (Curtis 57, Clack 52*, Carman 42, Hollands 31*)	Won by 57 runs
8/9	Imperial College	Gents 238-8 (Basker 79, Khalid 61, Pentakota 30, Thoms 30*, Tiffany 3-29) Salix 80 (S Patel 5-17, H Patel 3-6)	Won by 158 runs
29/9	Hale Common	Gents 177 (Pentakota 46, Lall 31, Hibbert 21, Singh 21, Larby 4-39) Hale 143-9 (Short 37, Giles 31, Rees 20, Sciberras 3-33)	Won by 34 runs

2013 averages

	M.	Inn.	NO	Runs	Avg.	Ct./St.	O	M	Runs	Wck.	Avg.
Basker	5	5	0	140	28.00	3	-	-	-	-	-
Bocha	11	8	1	265	37.86	5	32	0	183	11	16.64
Buck	2	2	2	16	N/A	1	2	0	14	1	14.00
Burgess	3	3	0	1	0.33	-	4	0	37	2	18.50
Caveney	10	6	2	91	22.75	1	4.5	0	40	0	N/A
Cloete	5	5	1	187	46.75	-/1	7	1	29	3	9.67
Denton	10	8	1	34	4.86	-	-	-	-	-	-
Desai S	9	6	1	147	29.40	2	21	1	86	7	12.29
Dimond	2	2	0	9	4.59	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dubey	7	5	1	87	21.75	-	24	1	150	4	37.50
Gilkes	2	2	0	1	0.50	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hibbert	14	11	0	111	10.09	5	35.4	4	182	13	14.00
M Jones	11	9	2	114	16.29	4	8	0	43	3	14.33
T Jones	13	8	2	36	6.00	1	6	0	41	5	8.20
Khalid	4	4	1	117	39.00	3	23.4	9	53	5	10.60
S Khan	3	3	0	11	3.67	1	14.3	1	70	2	35.00
Kumar	8	6	2	89	22.25	-	24	0	141	5	28.20
Lall	15	13	2	486	44.18	-	53	3	243	18	13.50
Mohan	2	2	1	19	19.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newcombe	12	7	0	67	9.57	4	15	0	114	4	28.50
Palmer	3	2	1	2	2.00	-	4	0	41	1	41.00
B Patel	2	1	0	4	4.00	-	4	0	29	2	14.50
D Patel	4	2	1	30	30.00	-	10	0	74	2	37.00
D Patel Jr.	2	1	0	6	6.00	-	5.3	0	44	2	22.00
H Patel	10	5	4	37	37.00	1	35.3	5	188	14	13.43
S Patel	11	9	1	250	31.25	4	49	4	202	16	12.63
Pentakota	5	4	0	97	24.25	2	22	2	102	6	17.00
Pinfield	3	3	0	12	4.00	2	3	0	28	2	14.00
Porton	3	3	0	15	5.00	-/1	3	0	15	0	N/A
Price	3	3	1	5	2.50	-	-	-	-	-	-
Qureshi	4	2	1	7	7.00	2	4	0	14	2	7.00
Raipuri	2	1	0	24	24.00	1	6	1	19	6	3.17
Sciberras	5	5	1	22	5.50	3	20.5	3	81	7	11.57
S Singh	2	2	1	21	21.00	-	8	1	34	0	N/A
Small	9	7	1	264	44.00	2/1	11.2	0	51	3	17.00
Snelling	3	3	1	27	13.50	-	14	0	69	5	13.80
Thoms	3	3	1	30	15.00	1	-	-	-	-	-
Toft	4	3	3	7	N/A	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wahed	4	2	1	55	55.00	1	-	-	-	-	-
C Wright	3	3	0	9	3.00	-	16	3	44	8	5.50
L Wright	3	2	2	55	N/A	-/1	1	0	4	0	N/A

Also played (one game only); Chez 1/1/1/5, Creed 1/1/0/2, 3-0-22-1, Iqbal 1/1/0/6, 4-0-23-0, H Khan 1/1/0/11 (1 ct.), Naish 1/1/1/1, 0.3-0-7-0, Rootham 1/-/-/-, B Singh 1/1/0/0, 3-0-11-1, Sprengers 1/1/0/0, 3-1-9-1, Webster 1/-/-/-, 7-1-21-1, Westwood 1/1/0/0

Highest score for: 325-9 v. St. Anne's Allstars (equal highest ever and record for 35 overs)

Highest score against: 231-10 Judd Street Tigers

Lowest score for: 59 v. MSV Zeemacht **Lowest score against: 63** Ramgarhia

Hundred partnerships for (3): 117 3rd. wicket Small/Lall v. London Saints, **105** 3rd. wicket Small/Lall v. Baker Street Irregulars, **102** Cloete/Wahed 3rd. wicket v. Cairns Fudge

Fifties for (18): 87 Lall v. Clapham In, **85** Small v. London Saints, **81** Cloete v. Cairns Fudge, **80** Lall v. London Saints, **79** Basker v. Salix,

76 S Patel v. St. Anne's Allstars, **71** S Desai v. St. Anne's Allstars, **70** Dubey v. Clapham In, **67** Lall v. Baker Street Irregulars,

65 Cloete v. Pak, **62** Bocha v. St. Anne's Allstars, **61** Lall v. Judd Street Tigers, **61** Khalid v. Salix, **57*** Small v. London Saints,

56 Bocha v. Judd Street Tigers, **54** Bocha v. Cairns Fudge, **52** Small v. Baker Street Irregulars, **50*** Caveney v. Legends

Fifties against (5): 75 L Patel, London Saints, **57** Curtis, Clapham In, **55** Delanian, Judd Street Tigers, **52** Rathu, MSV Zeemacht,

52* Clack, Clapham In

Four-wicket returns for (6) 5-17 S Patel v. Salix, **5-21** C Wright v. CC Zwolle, **5-37** Bocha v. Hale, **4-7** Raipuri v. Ramgarhia,

4-13 T Jones v. London Saints, **4-25** Lall v. London Saints

Four-wicket returns against (2): 4-21 Davies, Hale, **4-39** Larby, Hale

Sixes: (75) 27 Lall, **13** Cloete, **10** Bocha, **9** Khalid, **5** Hibbert, **4** S Patel, **2** Small, Thoms **1** S Desai, M Jones, Raipuri, Wahed

Duck trophy (26): 3 Denton, **2** Burgess, Caveney, Hibbert, Newcombe, Thoms, **1** S Desai, Dubey, M Jones, S Khan, Lall, Pentakota, Pinfield, Qureshi, B Singh, Small, Sprengers, Westwood, C Wright

Danegeld

Please take a moment to study the form of Judd Street Tigers. Four players (skipper Dane, cub reporter Herlihy, Wright and Pinfield) scored 400 runs while Dane, Webster and Warren took 20 wickets in their second season. Their season was remarkably similar to the Gents' but they used only 24 players. The Gents' averages were less spectacular but it was a praiseworthy feat by Rinku Lall to head runs, wickets and appearances.

Gentlemen of West London v. Legends

Sunday 18 August, Old Tenisonians. Legends won toss in both games. Sunny, 23C

Won by 8 wickets

Legends		Gentlemen of West London		
Denton	c T Jones	b S Patel	7 L Wright not out	44
Gilkes		b S Patel	0 Hibbert	b D Patel Jr. 32
Sciberras	c H Patel	b T Jones	0 †S Desai	c Sciberras b Buck 14
Iqbal	c M Jones	b Qureshi	6 Lall	not out 14
Mohan	c Qureshi	b H Patel	17 S Patel, M Jones, *Newcombe, T Jones, Qureshi, H Patel, B Patel, and Caveney did not bat	
Dimond	c Newcombe	b Qureshi	9	
D Patel	lbw	b Lall	11	
*Buck	not out		14	
Snelling		b H Patel	9	
†Price	not out		2	
D Patel Jr. and Rootham dnb				
Extras		w28 nb4 b7 lb1	40	Extras w12 nb1 b2 15
Total	20 overs	8 wickets	115	Total 15.3 overs 2 wickets 119
FoW: 7, 7, 14, 16, 30, 71, 74, 109				FoW: 59, 91
Bowler				Bowler
Hibbert	3-1-8-0			Iqbal 4-0-23-0
S Patel	3-0-16-2			Sciberras 2-0-21-0
T Jones	4-0-28-1			Snelling 4-0-23-0
Qureshi	4-0-14-2			D Patel 1-0-13-0
H Patel	4-0-25-2			D Patel Jr. 2.3-0-23-1
L Wright	1-0-4-0			Buck 2-0-14-1
Lall	1-0-12-1			

Won by 4 wickets

Legends		Gentlemen of West London			
Denton		b B Patel	11 M Jones	b Snelling	8
Gilkes	c Newcombe	b B Patel	1 Caveney	retired not out	50
†Price		b Dubey	2 Lall	b D Patel Jr.	1
D Patel Jr.	run out		6 T Jones	b Snelling	0
S Patel	st L Wright	b Kumar	42 Dubey	b Snelling	2
Dimond		b Lall	0 Kumar	c Buck	b D Patel 14
Snelling		b Lall	6 Qureshi	not out	7
Hibbert		b Lall	3 B Patel	b S Patel	4
Sciberras	lbw	b S Desai	8 Mohan	not out	2
*Buck	not out		2 S Desai, *Newcombe and †L Wright dnb		
Naish	not out		1		
D Patel	did not bat				
Extras		w10 nb8 b1 lb3	22	Extras w8 nb8 b3 19	
Total	20 overs	9 wickets	104	Total 15.3 overs 6 wickets 107	
FoW: 20, 26, 26, 44, 44, 69, 75, 97, 103				FoW: 23, 24, 27, 41, 93, 98	
Bowler				Bowler	
S Desai	4-0-18-1			D Patel 3-0-21-1	
Dubey	4-1-14-1			Snelling 4-0-24-3	
B Patel	4-0-27-2			D Patel Jr. 3-0-21-1	
Lall	4-0-23-3			Hibbert 2-0-21-0	
Kumar	4-0-18-1			S Patel 3-0-10-1	
				Naish 0.3-0-7-0	

The Gents beat the Legends twice in two low-scoring Silver Jubilee games to extend the unbeaten record to 11 matches. There was much commingling of the sides, with Horace Hibbert and Sanjay Patel moving to the Legends in the second match, but a festival atmosphere did nothing to reduce the competitiveness of the cricket. Indeed, the first innings of the second game saw some startlingly good cricket from both teams. There were 27 cricketers of whom many played in the tenth anniversary game in 1998 (see Note 1). A local Lebanese restaurant catered the game excellently and the number of cakes brought along set a club record.

Nabeel Husain sadly could not travel from Saudi Arabia after his father broke his leg, but Colin Naish made the no less hazardous journey from Gravesend to complete the Legends side. Dhilan and Bhaven, the sons of Dhruv and Ketan Patel, played and Keith Dimond brought Price, Mohan and Rootham from his workplace. The spirit of Enterprise CC lives. Buck captained the Legends with Hemin Patel and Newcombe captaining one match each for the Gents. Several players thought that that play would start at one o'clock which at least made the captains' selection process easier.



After the tenth anniversary game in 1998, a legal precedent was set that all runs, wickets and catches in such internal games should count towards the averages. This is known as the Murphy Amendment, after Bill Murphy who altruistically proposed it after a storming personal performance. With his catch, typically and nonchalantly taken at long-on, in the first game, Mark Sciberras went second in the career catching list with 60 behind Sanjay Patel (96), overtaking Mark Ashton (59). Although the games were lower scoring than many Twenty20s, the scorer had his work cut out and was assisted by the calm Naveed Khan with his iPad application, although the device, clearly overtired, hurled a purple wobbler late in the afternoon and broke down.

The teams appeared to be well-balanced but the Legends were undone in the first game by the slow wicket. Four of the first five batsmen fell to catches between point and cover from back-foot drives, Hemin Patel's to pouch Sciberras an outstanding reaction catch at silly mid-off. The rest of the batsmen buckled down and helped by some wayward bowling that saw Extras contribute an absurd two runs per over, Legends finished on 115-8.

Openers Laurie Wright and Hibbert played a skilful attack extremely well, 59 coming up in seven overs. Hibbert struck Sciberras for three successive fours but after Dhilan Patel bowled him with his first ball, Desai and Lall supported Wright (44*) as the Gents won by 8 wickets with 27 balls to spare. Tea was then taken, a tasty assortment of kebabs, wraps and salads, driven home, as it were, with cake and tea. The last time this restaurant catered a Gents match, a player's children scandalously jumped the queue and several players were deprived of sustenance. There was no such problem this time.

The second game saw some fine cricket. It was a Gents' attack perfectly balanced for the humid conditions with one paceman, three seamers and the off-spin of Bhaven Patel. No praise can be too high for Sanjay Patel's innings of 42, which included six of the eight fours struck in the innings. He was imperious and it took a fine bit of work by Laurie Wright standing up to get rid of him and give Kumar a deserved wicket. Lall was quick but took one wicket with a slow, looping leg-break that completely deceived Hibbert. Improved discipline by the bowlers kept the Extras in check and Legends closed on 104-9. Wright's standing up to everybody but Lall undoubtedly reduced the total as several batsmen were unwilling to get on the front foot.

There is something of a feast or famine aspect to Wayne Caveney's batting. In July 2010 he clubbed the then fastest Gents' fifty but he often wafts his wicket away, the forward-defensive not being part of his repertoire. What he has in his favour is a good eye, strength and fitness. He sprints his threes with ease and struck seven fours here. Pace and spin came alike to him. Mark Jones looked comfortable until playing down the wrong line to give Snelling his 389th. victim. Lall, Tom Jones and Dubey fell quickly before Kumar got his head down and took the Gents to the brink of victory. He fell to Buck in the slips but Qureshi and Mohan saw the side home, Caveney having retired according to the (somewhat malleable – see Note 2) rules of the day.

So it was 2-0 to the Gents, but the occasion was for once more important than the result. It was touching to the club's elders to see the day so well attended, 27 players being the largest number of Gents ever assembled in one place, even if some were unsure of the start time. The influx of players brought the total of 2013 to a whopping 50, although there have been unusual circumstances like the joint tour with Judd Street Tigers and this come all ye extravaganza. The day's captains bought in to the spirit of the day with a sacrificial lack of personal involvement, Newcombe neither batting nor bowling and Hemin Patel sitting out the second game to do the washing up.

Note 1 The tenth anniversary game took place on 6 September 1998 at the club's then home, Victoria RG in Surbiton. Fifties were a rarity then, only six being struck by the Gents all season. It should have been seven, but a Tony Buck beamer hit Dhruv Patel square on the nose and poleaxed the pint-sized twirler at 49*. In a less politically-correct era, the 1998 Legends were called somewhat pejoratively "Old Gents". They dealt with it.

Note 2 Retirement at 30 had been proposed but when Laurie Wright and Sanjay Patel sailed past this landmark their captains appeared to cock a deaf 'un.

Clapham In v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 1 September, Chiswick House. Gents won toss. Sunny, 22C

Won by 57 runs

Gentlemen of West London		Clapham In					
Small	c Clack	b Morgan	0	Oliver		b Lall	7
Dubey	c Clack	b Wildman	70	Carman		b Dubey	42
†Basker	c Clack	b Frecknall	20	†Curtis	c Basker	b Dubey	57
Denton	c and	b Frecknall	0	*Clack	not out		52
Lall	c Plaja	b Oliver	87	Hollands	not out		31
S Patel	c Wildman	b Oliver	15	Plaja, Frecknall, Wildman, Morgan and Van Sittert did not bat			
M Jones	not out		18				
Pentakota		b Frecknall	21				
†L Wright	not out		11				
*Newcombe and Manir dnb							
Extras		w17 nb11 b9	37	Extras		w13 nb8 b9 lb3	33
Total	35 overs	7 wickets	279	Total	35 overs	3 wickets	222
FoW: 0, 73, 83, 181, 209, 230, 260				FoW: 45, 86, 154			
Bowler				Bowler			
Morgan	7-1-52-1			Lall	7-0-32-1		
Van Sittert	4-0-45-0			Pentakota	5-1-29-0		
Carman	4-0-29-0			S Patel	7-0-47-0		
Frecknall	7-0-39-3			Dubey	7-0-38-2		
Wildman	4-0-28-1			Small	5-0-28-0		
Oliver	6-0-34-2			Newcombe	4-0-36-0		
Plaja	2-0-30-0						
Curtis	1-0-13-0						

A game of outstanding batsmanship played on a true batting pitch saw the Gents victorious by 57 runs. Winning a good toss on a warm day, captain Newcombe saw his men pile up their fifth-highest score ever, thanks largely to 87 from Lall (11 fours and two sixes) and 70, a personal best qualitatively and quantitatively, from Dubey (12 fours) plus some feisty batting from the middle and lower order. Clapham In can be proud of their response, for although they fell short they batted with courage and elan, Curtis (six fours and a six) and captain Clack (six fours) making fifties and Carman (six fours) falling just south of this milestone. Not since September 2000 (12 Angry Men 231-3, Gents 235-9) have the victors in a Gents game taken only three opponents' wickets.

So much for the statistics, which do not show what a good-spirited game this was. The sides are getting to know each other and the game is rapidly becoming one of the most eagerly anticipated in the calendar. The hosts put on a great show, booking a beautiful manor house venue and providing an excellent tea. Thanks go to them. They only had 10, a position to which Gents were reduced when Wright ricked his back, leading a Claphamist to suggest that had Wright been playing for his team, he would have been fined for "being the youngest player ever to have sustained an old man's injury". It was a day of medical misfortune, for the poor stalwart Kumar pulled out with a broken ankle on the morning of the match.

By 1.30pm only five Gents were present, the others being lost in the hinterland of Turnham Green. Newcombe was therefore relieved to win the toss and bat. He and Jones umpired while Small and Dubey opened, with Basker padded up three. Actually, he wasn't as only two pairs of Gents pads were on the ground at this point. It was to the general consternation of the visitors, therefore, when Small edged the third ball of the day to slip, the first of three victims there for Clack. Three in a game! Such adhesiveness is three years' worth for the Gents.

The bearded artist and oboe player then came into his own by tending the electronic scoreboard. It is not recommended for the scorer to attempt to tend a scoreboard as well as the book so his help was appreciated. Sadly, the device exploded and festooned the board with blanks and zeroes. The more technically-inclined Gents were soon poring over the 46-page instruction manual to bring it back to life, using such respected electronic engineering techniques as pulling the plug out of its socket and reinserting it, repeatedly flicking the on/off switch and random swearing. It was soon mended.

Dubey has had a frustrating year. Cursed, as many have been before him, by winning the Batsman of 2012 trophy, he had been ill with a kidney stone for much of the campaign. He required hospital treatment for dehydration after the Tigers match. The doctors zapped the stone and back came a very good player. He batted for 22 overs and played some superb straight drives. Basker supported him well, despite some comedy running, until he repeated Small's dismissal, the first of three for the dangerous Frecknall. At 73-2 after 11 overs the Gents had recovered well, although Denton soon drove back to the bowler.

Lall, with scores of 60, 67 and 81 in his last three 35/40 over games was dropped once off a tough skyer but was otherwise imperious, playing shots all around the ground. He and Dubey put on 98 in only 10 overs. They both fell to good catches but Patel, Jones, Pentakota and Wright added quick runs, the final total of 279-7 swelled by 37 extras (the Gents would leak 33). Thirty-three fours and four sixes were struck, along with six threes. This was a big ground with a pitch cut well to one side. The vast acres square of the wicket on the pavilion side saw all the threes and, in Clapham In's dig, an all-run four.

What a feast Clapham In put on at tea. A generous choice of sandwiches, cakes and fruit washed down with squash and gallons of tea left everyone satisfied. Cheese and pineapple on cocktail sticks might be sneered at as Abigail's Party food by the metropolitan elite, but my word they hit the spot and the Gents snaffled them in a trice. Cricket journalists present wisely thought that the game was open, although Clapham In would miss Ferreira, whose 134* saw them chase down the powerful Southwark and Lambeth Imperials' 242-5 in June for the loss of 7 wickets. Similarly, they had missed Boa in the first innings. The Kiwi's 5-4-1-1 in 2011 still scars the Gents.

Southpaw Oliver and Carman put on 45 before Lall knocked back Oliver's leg-stump with the first ball of the ninth over. Lall's figures in his bowled-through spell were impressive in the context of the game. No further wicket fell until the 17th. over, when Dubey's awayswinger got Carman for 42. He and Lall, having dominated with the bat, were in no mood to relinquish responsibility with the ball. Curtis and Clack batted well, adding 68 before Curtis feathered Dubey to Basker, taking over from Wright behind the stumps.

Clapham In scored a little more freely against Patel but the required run-rate was continually rising. A fine spell of leg-spin by Small sealed the game as the boundaries dried up, good thinking by Newcombe to take the pace of the ball against neat and correct batsmen. A task that always looked difficult became impossible after one ball of the 34th. over. Victory was the Gents' then but how well Clapham In had fought. To have lost scoring 222-3 was hard luck for them.

To return to the statistics, only twice before has the total of 501 runs here been exceeded, the lack of an eleventh player for all of the Gents' innings and, after Wright's back injury, 15 overs of Clapham In's undoubtedly contributing to this. Adding back bowling extras, 74.4 overs were bowled between 1.30pm (the start was half an hour late, squarely the Gents' fault) and 7pm. Tea took 30 minutes, so the over rate was 15 per hour. "Gates locked 8.10" read the stern notice on the entrance to the park. Had the planned 40-over format been played, the light might have become unplayable and it would certainly have been tight to clear the park by the time indicated. The prospect would have been of a scary incarceration.

More please

Following *The Gent's* muscular recent comments about the BBC Mishits, we are pleased to report that we are not alone. In his excellent report of Judd Street Tigers v. Railway Taverners, budding reporter Mike "The Truth" Herlihy, from whom we want to hear more, rants:

"Yours truly was allocated the task of reporter on the understanding laid down by the Club's hierarchy that I do not criticize any Club members; apparently JST have a fair sprinkling of sensitive players. You know the type, they swallow the BBC/Guardian propaganda around public sector expenditure/fracking and climate change but turn a blind eye to obscene payoffs at the BBC and the antics of their back in the day DJ's."

Get in. More research of the Mishits has revealed that they have a Latin motto *Semper Dignus In Adversis*. Presumably they mean 'Always dignity in adversity', in which case why not say so? *Dignus* translates as worthy or deserving, and "Always deserving in adversity" makes no sense. So, they are not only a disorganised, arrogant rabble but pretentious withal.

Gents' Facebook upgrade

1. [Vijay Basker Pala](#)

16 hours ago

[Made 79 runs in my last innings for WL County Cricket Club \(London\)](#)

We might have had a good season Vijay, but are not quite ready to join the County Championship.

Salix v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 8 September, Imperial College. Salix won toss. Showery, 17C

Won by 158 runs

Gentlemen of West London		Salix				
†Basker	c Padmore	b Tiffany	79	†B Shaw	b S Patel	4
†S Desai		b Heaton	0	Heaton	c Caveney	2
Pentakota	c Heaton	b Padmore	30	*Padmore	c S Desai	11
Lall		b Tiffany	0	Kulasingham	b S Patel	1
S Patel	st Shaw	b Dillan	1	Jolly	b S Patel	2
*Hibbert	lbw	b Kulasingham	4	Fletcher	c Hibbert	0
Caveney		b Padmore	13	Collins	b Pentakota	14
Khalid	c Padmore	b Heaton	61	O Shaw	lbw	8
Thoms	not out		30	Dillan	b H Patel	4
M Singh	not out		0	Tiffany	b H Patel	5
H Patel	did not bat			Willams	not out	4
Extras		w6 nb5 b5 lb5	20	Extras	w13 nb2 b7 lb3	25
Total	35 overs	8 wickets	238	Total	28.3 overs	All out
FoW: 1, 54, 75, 88, 94, 132, 147, 234				FoW: 17, 17, 21, 26, 26, 37, 60, 66, 67, 80		
Bowler				Bowler		
Heaton	7-0-37-2			M Singh	3-1-5-0	
Willams	7-0-28-0			Khalid	3-1-4-0	
Padmore	6-0-55-1			Lall	6-1-17-1	
Kulasingham	7-0-41-1			S Patel	5-0-17-5	
Tiffany	4-0-29-3			Pentakota	6-1-21-1	
Dillan	4-0-38-1			H Patel	5.3-3-6-3	

History repeated itself at cool, damp Harlington as the Gents recovered from a perilous position to post a winning total, a record seventh season's score of more than 200. In 2009, Salix had leapt from 102-7 to 224-8 with the Tasmanian Nick Goold's blast of 67. In 2012, a record tenth-wicket stand of 79 between Sanjay Patel and Pentakota (not then known as a batsman – he now opens both batting and bowling for his Shropshire league side Harpers) took the Gents to 252-9 after a slump to 95-6. Here, a mid-innings wobble saw them at 94-5 before a brilliant stand of 87 between Khalid and Thoms saw the total skyrocket to 238-8, quite a transformation. The pitch, friendly to bowlers all day, then turned into a spitting monster after a further shower was followed by a keen breeze allowing Sanjay Patel to card 5-17 as the ball flew off a length. This was the best return of 2013 but not, as he first thought, his best analysis. Great players are rarely statistical experts.

The start of the match was delayed by 30 minutes due to rain. Salix inserted the Gents (Hibbert would have batted) and there was drama off the fourth ball of the day when Sachin Desai played on to a lifter. Basker and Pentakota then batted very sensibly to add 54 in testing conditions. After the latter's dismissal, a potentially explosive middle order of Lall, S Patel and Hibbert scored five between them before Caveney got his head down to support Basker in a stand of 38. When Basker fell to a good catch in the deep for an excellent 79 (12 fours), having taken something of a shine to Kulasingham, the Gents were 147-7 after 28.1 overs. By now, Dane Thoms had joined Owais Khalid.

How well they batted, although Salix spurned the opportunity to dismiss Khalid on nought by dropping a routine catch. Rerieved, he soon went aerial, smiting three fours and seven sixes. Forty-two runs came off Padmore's last two overs and Khalid's fifty came off 21 balls, the Gents' equal second-fastest ever. Thoms was soon joining in the fun with uncle Horace's monstrous railway sleeper bat as 87 came off 40. Salix did not bowl badly but dropped a few chances after Khalid's early reprieve. Tiffany, the left-armer, was the pick of the bowlers.

The paranoiac pitch changed character after tea as a brisk northerly dried the ground. There had been some steep bounce in the Gents' knock and Singh, Khalid and Lall got the odd one to lift but it was the Patels who would do the damage. Sanjay from the motorway end was devastating, taking five wickets in his first three overs including a frightening throat-ball gloved high to slip Hibbert by Fletcher. Desai thought that he had taken a Hat-trick catch but the umpire was unmoved. Hemin Patel joined in the fun from the pavilion end and took three wickets and the Gents breezed to victory by 158 runs, a victory that had looked odds against at 94-5.

Salix still edge the contests over the years 6-4, with one match tied but the Gents have won the last three. The unbeaten run continues and now stands at 13 matches, or 16 according to those muddleheads who fail to acknowledge the thorough thrashings in Holland. Basker and Khalid became the ninth and tenth Gents to score a fifty this season.

Hale v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 29 September, Hale Common. Hale won toss. Sunny, 18C

Won by 34 runs

Gentlemen of West London		Hale					
†Cloete	c Vinay	b Larby	9	†Short	hit wicket	b S Patel	37
Bocha	c Short	b Larby	15	J Davies	c Basker	b Pentakota	4
Pentakota	c Short	b Singh	46	Larby	c Basker	b Khalid	1
Thoms		b Larby	0	†Giles	c Khalid	b Sciberras	31
Basker	c Giles	b Davies	4	Rees	c Khalid	b Hibbert	20
Lall	c Short	b Larby	31	*Weaver	c Pentakota	b Sciberras	9
Singh	lbw	b Vinay	21	Vinay		b Sciberras	0
S Patel	c Short	b Singh	2	Singh	c Khalid	b Hibbert	6
*Hibbert	c Giles	b Vinay	21	Punchard	not out		3
Khalid	c and	b Vinay	18	John Davies	run out		17
Sciberras	not out		1	Sanderson	did not bat		
Extras		w8 lb1	9	Extras		w6 nb2 b5 lb2	15
Total	32 overs	All out	177	Total	35 overs	9 wickets	143
FoW: 13, 33, 39, 57, 107, 129, 133, 142, 176, 177				FoW: 5, 10, 75, 93, 111, 112, 112, 123, 143			
Bowler				Bowler			
Giles	7-0-39-0			Pentakota	4-0-11-1		
Larby	7-1-39-4			Khalid	7-3-10-1		
J Davies	7-0-49-1			Singh	5-0-29-0		
Singh	7-2-33-2			S Patel	7-0-33-1		
Vinay	4-0-16-3			Sciberras	7-0-33-3		
				Hibbert	3-1-17-2		
				Lall	2-1-3-0		

In defeating their great old rivals Hale, the Gents won their eighth successive game and extended their unbeaten run to 14. In so doing, the club remained unbeaten in England in 2013 or, as one wit put it not inaccurately, “The Gents were unbeaten except when they lost.” The game, as many against Hale have been, was hard-fought but the Gents, significantly strengthened again by guest support, won the big points. Cricket matches rarely turn on a single incident but a case could be made that the brutal dismissal of Short to a Sanjay Patel bouncer was decisive here, for up to that point Hale were making a decent fist of chasing down a score of 177.

The ground had been soaked by overnight rain, a surprise to those who had travelled from London where no such weather had prevailed. A final mow and roll revealed a green pitch of patchy moistness that would surely be friendly to bowlers. Both captains would have fielded, but Weaver won the toss and inserted the Gents. In the third over, Cloete hit Davies into the trees for the Gents’ first of seven sixes. He soon top-edged a hook to mid-on, the first of Larby’s quartet. Bocha, who had hit the young quick for a straight six, soon feathered the awayswinger to Short, the first of four victims behind the timbers for him (Giles would later add a fifth ‘keeper’s catch). Thoms was blasted out for a duck. When Basker was brilliantly held by a diving Giles in the covers off Davies’s wily off-cutters, the Gents were in a spot of bother at 57-4.

Pentakota was perfect in the Jonathan Trott role, batting for 21 overs to top-score with a solid 46 (six fours), a knock forged in the Saturday Leagues. Lall cracked a brisk 31 before edging Larby behind but Singh took four fours off the remainder of the over to spoil the paceman’s figures. Late hitting by Hibbert and Khalid took the visitors up to 177, 20 or so above par according to locals, if not quite up to the explosions of recent weeks. A splendid tea hit the spot on a sunny, but cool and breezy day. Hale are fine hosts.

The Gents had two quick successes. Davies prodded to silly mid-on Basker (moved from second slip moments before) who in the next over dived forward from second slip to take Larby off a quick ball from Khalid that was parried by Cloete. Giles edged the next ball low to the captain at first slip but he could not hold on. Short and Giles then embarked on the best stand of the day, 65, with some resilient play, taking Hale to 75-2 off 21 overs.

Sanjay Patel, on an adrenalin rush after his terror spell against Salix, fetched a bouncer to Giles first ball, which was pulled for four. Undeterred, he dug one in at Short with an altogether different result. The ball, slightly fuller, reared at some pace and struck the batsman on the helmet. Short, clearly disorientated, spun around in his crease and trod on his stumps. Sciberras, bowling with all his guile, then got his first of three by inducing a chip to cover by Giles, the first of Khalid’s three there. There remained the formidable Rees who was untroubled until picking out Khalid off Hibbert’s first ball. Sciberras struck twice more in the evening gloom and Hibbert once more before a jolly partnership between John Davies and Punchard took Hale up to 143-9. Thus it was Gents 2-0 Hale over the season, but there remains little between the teams.

The Sainsbury Wing



We have dealt above with the headline numbers for the season but having allowed for a period of quiet reflection it seems fitting to make a few more observations. The club had a number of significant occasions in 2013. The tour almost didn't happen, but thanks to the tireless efforts of Naveed Khan and Greg Newcombe, plus the support of Judd Street Tigers it did. It is improbable that will be another foreign tour for a while but a weekend's cricket in the Cotswolds in August 2014 is being worked on, possibly with another game at the Victoria Ground. Watch this space. The Twenty20 days against Pak and the Legends were well organised and well attended. We can ask no more.

The side changed so much from week to week that it was hard to keep pace. All but one game was honoured though and my how the Gents were grateful for new blood. Rinku Lall was the go to man whenever the Gents were short and through the offices of Greg Newcombe and Mark Jones we welcomed Tom Jones and Jonny Small. There is another strand emerging and it is possible to trace this back to Ravi Inkollu and thence to that great clubman Peter Denton, who tapped him up while both worked at Sainsbury's. Denton also introduced Devunuri and Ragothamreddy, no mean players but not part of the Inkollu DNA strand.

Inkollu joined in 2008 and brought along his mate Murali Kalidindi later that season. In the final game, he brought along another pal, Suman Rudru, who was loaned out, in civilian clothing, to Hale for the last match, memorably clubbing Hemin Patel into the trees. In the spectacular 2009 season, the three, along with Patrudu Lalam, became regulars. Immigration Officers briefly deported the gainfully-employed, taxpaying Inkollu, but he snuck back for four games in 2012, possibly while his tormentors were off with stress leave or busy filing compensation claims for wasp stings.

The baton was passed to Ram Mangineni, who introduced Raj Pentakota and Praveen Bocha. The latest is Vijay Basker. By the end of the 2013 season, Ravi and his seven muckers had neatly made 130 appearances in 130 games. We salute them and hope they've enjoyed being part of it as much as we've enjoyed having them.

Top 10s

The publication of these in 2012 was mired in controversy surrounding the qualification for the career batting and bowling averages. We have therefore made qualification harder (20 innings, 100 overs). Hey presto born-again terror bowler Sanjay Patel now appears in both lists. As he should.

Appearances		Runs		Wickets	
S Patel	287	S Patel	5,444	S Snelling	391
S Snelling	238	M Ashton	3,848	S Patel	356
A Buck	218	D Patel	3,184	D Patel	231
A Burman	211	J Wright	3,020	M Ashton	222
D Patel	194	N Husain	2,270	H Patel	221
M Sciberras	170	R Gilkes	1,846	M Sciberras	150
H Patel	157	A Buck	1,808	D Todd	148
M Ashton	153	M Sciberras	1,444	J Wright	135
J Wright	149	N Boddington	1,416	A Buck	114
D Todd	147	S Snelling	1,327	N Boddington	98
Catches		Batting avg. (> 20 innings)		Bowling avg. (> 100 overs)	
S Patel	96	N Husain	49.3	M Ashton	11.2
M Sciberras	60	R Lall	37.8	A Iqbal	11.7
M Ashton	57	M Ashton	30.5	S Snelling	11.8
S Snelling	47	L Wahed	28.2	R Inkollu	11.8
A Buck	44	A Iqbal	27.8	R Lall	12.7
H Patel	44	S Rudru	27.2	N Husain	13.4
D Patel	41	R Inkollu	27.2	S Rudru	13.7
I Maughan	40	S Patel	25.9	S Bignell	15.1
J Wright	33	J Wright	24.0	S Patel	15.3
H Desai	33	N Dubey	23.5	H Patel	15.3

Suncream and Baggy Greens



*When **Tristan Haddow-Allen** reluctantly moved to Australia, he took the opportunity to live his childhood dream of playing Sydney club cricket. In the first of a new series, he discovers not everything was quite as he expected.*

“You must be the new bloke. We’ll call you Pom”.

November 2012

Such was my introduction to club cricket in Australia. The unpromising setting was the sunburnt upper-pitch of Morgan Power Reserve on the outskirts of Blacktown.

Blacktown is so called because “There were a lot of black fellas here – still are”. Blacktown is a lot further from Sydney Harbour in spirit than in the strict geographical sense. Western Sydney is the hinterland of Industrial Australia. Tough, working class, straight-talking, and mulleted.

My welcome came from my new team’s captain and, while everyone laughed, was meant exactly as it sounded – “I don’t know who you are or what you’ve done but you can go and get fucked. And as you’re English, get fucked again to be on the safe side”. He walked as if he was carrying a barrel under each arm and his face was like burnt rock. He never seemed more than an inch from a fight – as likely with his own team as the opposition – and aggression underscored everything he said and did.

It was 40C in the shade (or it would have been if the Morgan Power Reserve *had* any shade) and I was about to begin what was effectively a mid-season audition for a place in the team. And, as has always been made clear, no one in Australia plays cricket for fun – you play to win at all costs, or you don’t play at all.

This should have been daunting but I was thrilled. Like a punter who sits in the front row of a comedy show hoping to be abused by the comedians, this is what I’d come for. This was cricket in Australia as I’d always thought of it: the sunburnt country with its hard, unforgiving pitches and its harder and even less forgiving cricketers. This was the cauldron that produced Border and Waugh, Lillee and Thomson.

August 1983. Hanwell, West London

A balmy Sunday afternoon in the Bunny Park. The stumps are set up on the flattest bit of grass on the banks of the Brent. My father has bought my brother and me the Ian Botham-endorsed Duncan Fearnley Junior Cricket Set. It is the greatest present in the history of the world. My father is bowling, my older brother, Maxie, is the sole fielder at mid-wicket. I move to leg and hit the ball through cover. Little shit.

29 May 1989. Lord’s

Today is the third and final One Day International before the Ashes, in the good old days when the ODIs still served as an entrée to the main course, rather than the cheap and unwanted chocolate they give you as you’re walking out the door. England is 1-0 up, Gooch has just clubbed a century and Gower a silky 61. It’s a good time to be an eleven-year-old English boy. This is a golden age. England has won five of the previous six Ashes. What’s more, I play for Brentham CC U11s and we’ve been chosen to be amongst the first to play Kwik Cricket on the outfield during the lunch break. Cricket is the centre of my world, and I’m going to play on its holiest site – even if it’s with a blue plastic bat and an orange rubber ball. This is Lord’s. This is paradise.

Botham fielded in front of us and got heckled by the Australian crowd. A girl streaked. Alderman got Gooch on 136. I was on TV in the crowd. Ultimately England lost the game but won the series. More than 24 years later I still vividly remember what the boy next to me said: “Whoever wins the One Day series always loses the Tests”. Pah! What nonsense. What did he know? Even before I was old enough to really understand the game, I knew that it was our games against Australia that defined English cricket. Winning against Australia was everything, and we were going to win. Everyone said so. Border’s was the weakest Australian side ever to tour England. This was my first visit to Lord’s and the beginning of what I knew was going to be a brilliant summer. And then it began.

I had always watched cricket but the 1989 Ashes was the first where I sat down and watched virtually every ball (I’m surprised I didn’t end up in hospital, the number of illnesses I faked to avoid school) and probably the first

where I really understood the context of what was happening. And what was happening, of course, would shape the minds of every boy of my age.

Border, as he said later, was determined not to become the first Australian captain to lose three Ashes series, and so he brought over the first genuinely professional cricket team. Gower and Lamb and Botham were still rocking up to the game from the casino. Cricket was a bit of fun, the gentleman's game. A hobby they happened to get paid for. But the Australians meant business. They were hard-faced and determined and as one they told the English to get fucked. And just to be on the safe side, get fucked again.

England were ground into the dirt. We lost 4-0 and only rain really saved us in the other two. We used 29 players, nearly all of whom were crushed underfoot. Smith and Fraser had shown up their team-mates, but it wasn't enough. Not nearly enough. Australia had come, they had seen, they had conquered, and they were taking the spoils of war home with them. Australia was the power in the world. That was the natural order restored. Australia was the Roman Empire, and all roads led to the MCG.

And for sixteen years it continued, time after time, thumping after thumping. Such is the stain all Englishmen carry. The indelible mark, the feeling, deep down, that Australians are better than us. As a child, the image of Dennis Lillee – tall and muscular, tanned and mustachioed – typified the Australian male for me. He just looked tough. Chappell and Boon and Waugh and Hughes were just more of the same. If one man really cemented the mythology of Australian cricket in me, though, it wasn't any of them, or even a Test cricketer at all. It was Peter McConnell.

It's Christmas 1990 and Phil Tufnell is bowling at the MCG. He turns to the umpire and asks how many balls are left. "Count 'em yerself, yer Pommie bastard". Did you hear that? Did you hear that?!? In Australia even the umpire sledges you! A few balls later and Boon gets an edge to Jack Russell that would make Stuart Broad blush. 'Owzat?', asks Tuffers. A big grin comes over McConnell's face. "Not out". That was Australian cricket to my twelve-year-old self. They played it hard, and not always very fair. They had an inner steel we didn't possess, they would do whatever it took to win.

Australians were tough. They were special. It wasn't just Test cricket, though, or even Sheffield Shield, which we knew to be far superior to our wimpy County game. Australian club cricket was just different from ours. We had all heard the legend of the Grade competition, where youngsters played alongside Test veterans and stars were born. It was the Agoge which turned boys into Spartans.

I had heard so many stories it was almost a mythology. I wanted to see this magic place. I wanted to see Australian club cricket. I wanted to *play* Australian club cricket.

But I never did. Not then, at least. Not while I was any good. When I was in my late teens I played County League cricket – the rough equivalent of Grade – with and against the occasional First-class player, and was a fair player myself, although never likely to set the world on fire. I planned a trip to Australia to play when I was nineteen but, for one reason or another, I never went. I drifted away from the high end of competitive cricket after that – work and girls and booze becoming an increasing distraction (all right, just girls and booze) and played most of my cricket for the mighty St. Anne's Allstars, the touring side familiar to many.

Maximus: Rome is the light

Marcus Aurelius: Yet you have never been there. You have not seen what it has become

Morgan Power Reserve, November 2012

I wasn't the only thing that had changed. In the years that had passed England had regained the Ashes in what was arguably the greatest Test series in history, only for Australia's decline and fall to seem premature when they thrashed England in 2006/7. But then England won again, and again. For the first time since 1987, England had won the Ashes in Australia, and by an enormous margin. England had won three out of four, and looked ahead by a country mile.

We're barbecuing some sausages and drinking beers out of an eskie. It takes two days to play a game in Australia and we've spent most of them in the field. Jokes are made, the Ashes comes up in conversation. I get ready for the counter attack, ten against one, but there's something odd going on.

They're not attacking me, they're not taking the piss. They're talking about Anderson and Broad, KP and Tremlett. And Trott. Don't get them going on Trott. And then it dawns on me. They respect us. Fear us, even. It

doesn't seem right. I mock them, provoke them into having a go back, but they just take it. The fire's gone from them. Somewhere inside, they know we're better than them.

It was the same story on the pitch. The fight was missing. Soft dismissals, easy wickets. No one sledged me, no one bounced me, there was even a discussion about whether something was fair. Fair? What's happened to you people? The ball of aggression we called a captain stood out because he was an anachronism. Forty and from a different era. He could see the dying of the light.

September 2013

I've moved across town to the leafy old-money enclave in the north of Sydney and I'm looking for a new club closer to home. Darren Lehman's on TV, talking about the Ashes. Apparently if they'd scored a few more runs, been a bit luckier with injuries, umpiring decisions, DRS, maybe taken some more wickets, played a bit better in the important sessions, and if Stuart Broad had walked, they might have won a game. To hear a proud Australian grasping at straws, talking woulda coulda shoulda like that reminded me of the day I looked at my old dog and knew I had to get the vet to put the poor bugger out of his misery.

Next time: the new season dawns. Will Tristan make the grade?

Newcombe steps down



Just as this Edition was being put to bed, we heard that Greg Newcombe had resigned the captaincy. Since Sanjay Patel's reign from 2003 to 2009, the job has resembled the 1978 Papacy, when the Catholics went through Paul VI, John Paul I and John Paul II between August and October (prompting old school comedian Jasper Carrott to quip that his beloved Birmingham City failed to win a game during the reign of three Pontiffs). It was a good job that the AGM, originally scheduled for early October, was prorogued. It will give everyone a chance to mull things over. Newcombe will continue playing, which is good news.

In his brief tenure, Newcombe led the Gents with dignity and composure. He was beset with politics and handled those pressures well. He introduced Mark and Tom Jones and George and Laurie Wright, splendid fellows all. Perhaps the highpoint of his captaincy was the 2012 Cotswolds tour, during which Hemin Patel stood down as captain. Going into that weekend with three defeats in four games, Newcombe marshalled his troops to two memorable wins, thanks to the runs of Cloete, Khan and Butler, the bowling of Sachin Desai and Sciberras and his own leadership skills.

The matter of the succession need not detain us here. A leader will out and Newcombe will depart high office with the thanks of the club. Let us hope for a period of stability thereafter. Our Chairman is careful with his words but "mayhem", which he uses below, is bang on. Things can change rapidly but it is possible to be hopeful about the immediate playing future of the club. The biggest challenge will be to find suitable opposition. That does not mean hoofing anyone off the list, but there were too many blank weekends in 2013 and they need to be filled by strong opposition. To be unbeaten in a domestic season was an enjoyable experience but does not need to be repeated. Chairman Khan's official announcement follows:

It is with regret that I inform you Greg Newcombe will be stepping down as Club Captain with immediate effect. However, I am happy to report that he will continue to play for the Gents next season.

I would like to go on record thanking Greg for all his efforts, particularly in the last 18 months when he stepped up to the plate and shouldered a lot of responsibility. The last few years have been one of great change for the club and we are very much a team in transition in terms of playing and Committee personnel. Through all this change and on occasions, mayhem, Greg has led the team superbly and this season was a historic one as we finished 2013 unbeaten.

This means of course that we have at least one Committee position to fill and we encourage anyone who wishes to stand for the position of Club Captain to put their name forward by contacting Andy and myself. In the event of more than one nominee we will take a vote at this year's AGM, details of which are to be released shortly.

RIP Craig Maddock

We are sad to report that former London Owls' opener Craig Maddock has lost his battle with cancer, another good man taken before his time. The Gents first met him in September 1993 in a game whose changing fortunes, described below, illustrate that no opponents should ever be underestimated. The match followed an astonishing pattern. The result was not in the Gents' favour but everyone present agreed they had played in a true classic.



The 1993 season had been a successful one for the Gents, with a talented squad at Mark Ashton's disposal. Steve Bignell, a consistent force all season, was missing on 5 September but other marquee players were present and correct as London Owls, beaten convincingly in the first game, pitched up at sunny Surbiton. The day's events were recorded by Helen Carless in coloured pens. A certain amount of batting-order reversal went on but nobody complained about the 235-9 declared by the Gents. Tea was had and play resumed.



The Middlesbrough Cricket Club shirt Maddock proudly wore to the crease perhaps gave Ashton and his men a hint of what was going to happen. If that didn't, the three fours taken by the red-capped Richard Bulmer (left) off successive balls in Daniel Todd's first over did. The contemporary match report was full of praise for the batsmen, forgave the bowlers, but did not spare the fielders, apart from Burville and Richmond. Bulmer proudly went to his century and would add 40* more, Maddock, perhaps the more orthodox bat of the two, took out his bat for 87*. Ashton awarded Bulmer the match ball.

Maddock and Bulmer were reunited in 1994, smacking Ashton and Hill all over the place in an opening stand of 63. Thornicroft got Maddock for 46 (he and Todd would both take five-fors) as Owls slipped from 110-1 to 116 all out. The Gents and Bulmer came up against each other a few times after that, but Maddock never played in this series again. He left it with a batting average of 133. May he rest in peace.

Nostalgia Corner: 2000

“Sanjay Patel had disappeared during the meeting but was found asleep in the back seat of his car. On rejoining the meeting, he reprised his 1999 speech, saying that he loved the club dearly.” (AGM Minute)

“Did you ever see the like? Perhaps the most astonishing hour's cricket in Gents' history saw Horace Hibbert (81) and Mark Sciberras (22) blaze 108 runs off just 14 overs, smashing the record ninth-wicket stand in Gents' games. No witness will ever forget the destruction wrought by Hibbert. He faced only 50 balls and hit four sixes and ten fours in achieving his personal best score. Only Mark Ashton in his 137* at Surbiton in 1992 and his brother Bob* in his 54 at Twickenham in 1989 came close to this level of mayhem. Two of his three straight sixes were the biggest ever seen in a Gents' game. One went into the trees thirty feet above the sightscreen at the Town End, while the other cleared the trees at the Pavilion End and hit a block of flats three flights up on the full, at a guess a hit of 120 yards. Yet though it was his day, massive credit should also be given to Sciberras, who produced his best innings yet. When he took guard, the game was as good as over according to William Hill, who had The Gents at 50/1. Virgins were laughing, joking and larging it. When he fell with fourteen balls of the innings left, the tables had been turned. The bowling simply withered under the sustained assault. Fierce bowling and able fielding, including a season's best seven catches, then saw the Gents romp home at 6.30pm by 67 runs, only the Casuals' third defeat in twenty games in 2000.” (Match Report)