

THE GENT

March 2015

No. 145

Tales from the corridor of uncertainty

Up the ladder to the roof

Vijay wins Batsman, Most Improved and Bob Ashton Trophies



AGM review

Conduct bond put in place

Remaining nets and fixtures

Cricket pricing

Crown Taverners seek Saturday support

Ever Decreasing Circles

Career statistics

Contact this magazine via email andrewburman_840@hotmail.com

Read about the Gents on www.gowlcc.org or Twitter @gowlcc

AGM review



A horrid word became known to the Editor during his spectacularly unsuccessful recent staff appraisals. “Avoid recency bias,” said HR, by which they meant do not base an evaluation on the most recent project. Back in the real world of cricket AGMs, the members had to assess candidates for the prize giving according to sustained performance over the whole season.

Vijay Basker’s tireless organising deservedly won him the Bob Ashton Trophy. His runs and catches won him Batsman and Most Improved and yes, there was a hint of recency as the pitches improved, 36 runs in his first six innings being followed by 266 in his last five, during which he also found time to score 84 in two digs against the Gents. Other contenders for Batsman were Gregg Cloete, who top scored with 327 in only four innings, Jonny Small (289 in 11) and Raj Pentakota (276 in 11).

Small’s 289 runs, 18 wickets and tireless fielding rightly won him All Rounder, although he had fierce competition from Pentakota (contrasting innings of 72 and 63 in his last two knocks) and the perennial Sanjay Patel. Aravind Katragadda (above) won Bowler, his action described by the night’s excellent MC Peter Denton as “one of the most beautiful I have ever seen.” Certainly effective, it delivered the figures of 63.4-13-164-13, his economy rate of 2.58 unparalleled by a front line bowler in recent years. The Gents had an improved year in the field and the sharpest of a sharp bunch Praveen Bocha won Fielder. The shields therefore have four new names and congratulation are due to them.

Horace Hibbert continues as Captain. Sumit Kumar was elected his 2-i-c after a vote, the incumbent, although unfortunately absent in 2014, Sachin Desai being the other candidate. Rarely can there have been two such strong candidates. Charges increased, as they had to, and new Treasurer Hemin Patel will implement them well. A Vote of Thanks was passed to outgoing Treasurer Ken Toft who did the job for many years with judgement, wisdom and accuracy. Many appreciated his efforts.

Law 17

We have renewed at Old Tenisonians CC but they have asked us to sign a conduct bond stopping practice on the square. Before anybody gets out of their tree this is only implementing Law 17. In summary, the ground is the groundsman’s and there shall be no practice on the square.

Law 17 – Practice on the Field

1. Practice on the pitch or the rest of the square

(a) There shall be no practice of any kind, at any time on any day of the match, on the pitch or on either of the two strips parallel and immediately adjacent to the pitch, one on either side of it, each of the same dimensions as the pitch.

(b) There shall be no practice of any kind on any other part of the square at any time on any day of the match, except before the start of play on that day or after the close of play on that day. Practice before the start of play

(i) must not continue later than 30 minutes before the scheduled time or any rescheduled time for play to start on that day.

(ii) shall not be allowed if the umpires consider that it will significantly impair the surface of the square.

2. Practice on the outfield

All forms of practice are permitted on the outfield before the start of the day’s play on any day or after the close of play on any day
or during the lunch and tea intervals
or between innings,

providing the umpires are satisfied that such practice will not cause significant deterioration in the condition of the outfield.

Such practice must not continue later than 5 minutes before the scheduled or any rescheduled time for play to commence or to resume.

GWLCC 2015 remaining nets

Saturday 28 March, Kia Oval, 10-11am, 2 lanes

Sunday 12 April, Teddington Sports Centre, 11am-1pm, 2 lanes

GWLCC 2015 fixtures

Date	Oppo	Venue
Sun 3 May	United Titans	To be arranged
Sun 10 May	Wimbledon United	Old Tenisons
Sun 17 May	Gubbays	Old Tenisons
Sun 24 May	Northfields	Durston House, Ealing
Sun 31 May	Judd Street Tigers	Old Tenisons
Sun 7 June	St. Anne's Allstars	To be arranged
Sun 14 June	Hale	Crown Taverners
Sat 20 June	London Rams	Fairfield RG
Sun 28 June	Close PF	Old Tenisons
Sun 5 July	To be arranged	-
Sun 12 July	Baker Street Irregulars	To be arranged
Sun 19 July	Bricklayer's Arms	Old Tenisons
Sun 26 July	Pak	Old Tenisons
Sun 2 August	Blue Marlins	To be arranged
Sun 9 August	London Saints	Old Tenisons
Sun 16 August	Clapham In	Old Tenisons
Sun 23 August	Bricklayer's Arms	Raynes Park
Sun 30 August	-	-
Sun 6 Sept	Salix	Imperial College, Harlington
Sun 13 Sept	Gubbays	Cavendish RG, Eastcote
Sun 20 Sept	Blue Marlins	To be arranged
Sun 27 Sept	Hale	Hale Common

The Committee was aware that the 2014 fixture card lacked quantity if not quality, so we have arranged more games in 2015. The season is topped and tailed by a reprise of last season's exciting clash with Vijay Basker's United Titans and the traditional convoy sojourn to Hale. We are delighted to welcome back Pak and Close PF. Pak, captained by Khurshid Ahmed, have been popular, well-balanced opponents over the years, and stand 4-4 in the series. Expect a variety of young Khans, including we hope Waleed and Hamid, to play. Close PF are the works team of Sumit Kumar and Nilesh Dubey. We last met them in 2010 in a double Twenty20 ending 1-1. That day will forever be remembered for the dismissal by Captain Kumar in the game's first over of a fielder who refused to go where he was told (a promising demonstration of the smack of firm leadership he will need should Master Hibbert be absent) and the Gents chasing down 196 amid a feast of competitive umpiring.

Wimbledon United, founded in 1920, will be the first of eight visitors to Old Tenisonians. Let's hope for better weather than in 2014. We will play four teams twice: Bricklayer's Arms, Gubbays, Hale and new bugs Blue Marlins, introduced by Kumar. The Tigers game will be in May not July. One predicts a rather lower-scoring game than in 2013 and 2014. There will be one Saturday game, in Kingston against London Rams and if there are no cancellations in the prior weeks it will be the club's 500th. (and Mr Burman's birthday so you must play).

London Saints have been reduced to one game at their request while Cairns Fudge appear to have quietly dumped us. Good Spymaster Lord Toft, we need to know more so get among them with your beard and Wolf Hall cloaks, do some serious interrogation and report back. They originally said Saturdays only but then out of the blue they made an offer of a Sunday game, which they promptly rescinded after a Committee veto. We need to know what Tiger Mr Herlihy would call THE TRUTH. Now, their email in which Fudge confirmed that they no longer play Sunday games and wished us luck for 2015 is capable of literal interpretation, but experience tells us otherwise. Their captain looked slightly dismayed at a fantastically off-colour quip by Hemin Patel after the 2014 game but that is insufficient grounds to be dumped. More when Lord Toft reports back. A Bill of Attainder looms followed by a spot of fun on Tower Hill.

There was more drama with the publication of Judd Street Tigers' yearbook. The club only started playing in 2012 and have only played the Gents twice but already their honours board is festooned with deeds against our club. Three of their record stands were posted in these games and all involved Jim Herlihy. We conclude with an apology to Jonny Small, whose 106 against Tigers in 2014 was scandalously omitted from the Club Records publication issued over the winter. It has now been corrected.

Wimbledon United



This interesting piece of social and cricket history is taken from their web-site <http://www.wucc.org.uk>. This is a prestigious club and we will be proud to host them in May after the disappointment of last year's cancellation.

The Club was founded in 1920 by a group of cricket enthusiasts, among them railwaymen, shopkeepers and postal workers, some of whom are pictured above. The main driving force of the Club was Sid Blundy, pictured second from right. He was ably assisted by Bill Price, Ernie Cane, Frank Farley and Charlie Bowen, seen above from left to right. Their families still retain connections with the Club.

When the Club was formed no sport was allowed at Cottenham Park on the Sabbath. All the men worked on Saturdays in those days, so games took place on Wednesday afternoons. This was convenient for the railwaymen and postal workers on shift work and of course shops closed early on Wednesday afternoons. Hence the Club's original name was Wimbledon Wednesday.

When cricket was permitted on Sundays in the late 50s/early 60s, games also took place on this day. Because there were Sunday and Wednesday teams the Club was renamed Wimbledon United. Later on in the sixties Wednesday games were dropped.

It has been the policy of the Club not to play League cricket. That is not to say however that we don't try and win our games and compete hard. However over the years the Club has benefited from this policy, being able to play games against clubs knowing that they will be played in a friendly and sporting spirit, which has enabled long established bonds to be maintained.

The price of love

There was much discussion about charges at the AGM and now that the dust has settled it is a good time to reflect and compare with other grounds. In 2015, the Gents will pay £125 per pitch at Old Tenisonians, which means that with tea and a match ball we can put on a game for £185. Given that the standard charge for this ground is £143, we enjoy something of a bargain with our discount, although we have to prepay the pitches. For comparable facilities at LMPF Greenford, you would pay £168 (bottom pitch), £198 (middle pitch) or £204 (top pitch). You are also encouraged, if not forced, to take their (not bad) teas which were £85 at 2012 prices, the last time we had them, and would be around the ton now.

If you won the Lottery, you might forgo the helicopter and hire Chiswick Park for £223.20, with a non-compulsory inhouse tea going for £11 per head which includes a bumper one and a half rounds of sandwiches each. Add in match ball and scorers' teas and the day will cost an eye-watering £487.20, or £22 per head. Get a £22.80 County match ball rather than a £10 League one and the day will cost £500, known by currency traders as a Sachin, defined as the cost for an evening in a Maltese nightclub including all you can drink and the dispensation of personal favours, including attempts on the person, by Romanian hostesses. Downscale, the going rate for a council pitch in Ealing, Hounslow, Brent or Kingston currently varies between £88 and £91. You can therefore put on a game for £150 but you may not have anywhere to shower.

The Committee is asking you to stump up an increased annual membership fee of £60 and an increased match fee of £7. Extensive Google research has found clubs with cheaper annual membership, but always balanced by a match fee of £10-£12. The £60/£10 combo is quite common. You are getting your cricket at a fair price.

Crown Taverners – Hampshire League help needed

If you have anyone who fancies moonlighting/practising by turning out for the Taverners on a Saturday however occasionally, do please send them my details. I'm hoping to put together a large squad of part and full time league players this season to prevent a repeat of last season's match forfeits. nickoverend666@gmail.com

Ever Decreasing Circles remembered

Jon Hotten is struck by an old English sitcom's "quiet, unacknowledged and deep-running despair", which features, naturally enough, a game of cricket...

You might remember *Ever Decreasing Circles*, a British – make that English, because it could only be English – sitcom of the early 1980s, the fading final years of a genre that quite often looked at notions of class and aspiration and then gently took the piss out of them.

Ever Decreasing Circles, like *Terry and June*, *The Good Life*, *Brush Strokes*, *Keeping Up Appearances* and several others, featured the nascent middle classes, dwellers in the cul-de-sacs of the 70s boom-burbs; commuters, middle managers, golf club members, with their dreams of conservatories and soufflés and the company dinner-dance. These pretensions were easily speared, but not often as darkly as they were in *Ever Decreasing Circles*.

It's contextual, of course: the show is a thing of its time, written by John Esmonde not Chris Morris, but there's a quiet, unacknowledged and deep-running despair to it that in retrospect seems quite daring. Richard Briers plays Martin, a pedantic, obsessive-compulsive valve salesman with a photocopier in his garage and moral code as inflexible as a Periodic Table. In 2012, he would reside somewhere on the autism spectrum; back then he was just funny, and not unrepresentative. Most people knew someone like him.

His neighbours were Howard and Hilda, a couple that seem weirder now than they ever did then, a middle-aged, guileless pair who wore matching jumpers and thought the same thoughts at the same time. In 2012 they would have been hounded to death by Jeremy Kyle kids or under the care of social services. The jeopardy came from Paul, a new arrival in the close who was handsome, urbane, funny, good at everything, and – most shockingly of all – the owner of a successful hair salon. Martin loathed Paul of course, not just for who he was, but for what he represented. There was a darker subtext, too. Martin's wife obviously fancied Paul, to which Martin was oblivious (thus making any hint of betrayal all the more devastating).

Ennui, boredom, acceptance, resentment, disillusionment, loyalty – it was all there, just alluded to rather than highlighted. The other day I stumbled on an episode, in three parts, on Youtube. It's about a cricket match. The set-up is classic; like all sitcoms, it telegraphs its ending while allowing it to be savoured. Martin is the team's skipper. He has run the side for 14 years, dreaming of promotion to a division where they could play a club that has 'underfloor heating in the dressing rooms' (another impossibly glamorous idyll of the 1970s). He is also the fixtures secretary and the man responsible for looking after the kit, which he has just whitened and varnished.

He's desperate to stop Paul playing, of course, because he knows he'll be better than everyone else. The rest of the team all want him in, even if it means they can't play themselves. There is a tremendous little scene around this in Martin's garage, where Paul arrives to confirm his availability (he's told he'll still have to fill in and return the postcard that Martin will send to him); Here Martin recalls Denis Compton ('I always get emotional when I think of him') and Compton's captain at Middlesex, FG Mann, 'Not so great a player by many a long chalk,' Martin says, 'but nevertheless his captain. 'Never ever did you see Denis question FG, slight FG or demean FG.' 'What are you trying to say?' Paul asks, disingenuously. 'I'm not trying to say anything,' says Martin. 'I am saying it'.

It's kind of funny, but kind of awkward too. It has heart, and it has another twist for the '80s cricket fan in that the actor playing Paul is a dead ringer for Phil Edmonds, that most haughty of Middlesex players.

The story runs its inevitable course: Paul isn't playing until a bloke called Curly (he's bald of course, as all people in sitcoms called Curly are) is injured in the warm-up. The opposition bat first and rack up 200, partly because Martin won't bowl Paul. In reply, they're 46-7 when Martin is out in ridiculous circumstances, leaving Paul to bat with Howard, a man who, it's revealed, proposed to his wife while stoned on endorphins after making his highest ever score of 11. Paul gets the runs.

There's a sting, though, in the last scene. Martin is in the dressing room with his wife, avoiding the jollity of the bar, where Paul is holding court. The opposition skipper comes in and announces he won't be accepting Martin's offer of a jug for his lads. 'That bloke who got the runs played for Cambridge University. If you want to win that much, we won't be drinking with you'.

It could have ended there, with Martin proved right. Instead, his wife suggests they go into the bar, where Martin always plays the piano and everyone has a sing-song. Just as they go to open the door, the piano starts up. Martin's wife looks through. 'Yes,' she says, 'it is him...'

It's equivocal and bittersweet, and for the time, brilliantly done. The cricket match is equally well observed: it rings with scenes and characters familiar to any club player – bored wives on the boundary, no spikes in the pavilion, the crooked, unchallengable away umpire; even those distant and long-gone tropes the home-knitted jumper and the club kitbag. I'd say John Esmonde was a fan: alongside the Compton/Mann scene, Paul walks into bat with a Jumbo, which in the early 80s was the bat du jour. Martin makes do with a Fearnley.

The 'action' is badly filmed, another faded tradition. Cricket would appear quite often in shows like this, because it represented something, and how the characters reacted to it said something about them. No-one's used the game in this way for a long time, and it would take a good writer to make it work in these more atomised days. Writers now might be more savage, funnier, but they don't often have such lightness of touch.

(Ah! Memories of Terry Medford scoring 19 off one ball to lead Sir Denis's team to victory. June! Ed.)

The 2015 squad – career averages

	M.	Inn.	NO	Runs	Avg.	Ct.	O	M	Runs	Wck.	Avg.
Basker	17	16	1	442	29.47	9	-	-	-	-	-
Bocha	27	24	1	614	26.70	13	83	7	351	28	12.54
Buck	216	192	19	1,808	10.45	44	409.1	15	2,057	114	18.04
Caveney	54	42	11	443	14.29	6	6.3	0	60	0	-
Clark	4	4	0	141	35.25	2	23	3	101	4	25.25
Cloete	22	21	2	907	47.74	6	53.5	5	225	10	22.50
Denton	113	100	15	1,051	12.36	21	5	1	26	2	13.00
Desai	71	65	3	910	14.68	26	80.5	2	354	30	11.80
Dubey	49	46	6	900	22.50	6	191	24	782	29	26.97
Gilkes	134	123	7	1,846	15.91	32	41	5	230	15	15.33
Hibbert	57	49	6	687	15.98	17	183.5	27	849	55	15.44
Jampala	7	5	0	81	16.20	1	16.2	1	72	8	9.00
Jones	33	22	5	228	13.41	6	36	2	200	12	16.67
Katragadda	11	9	3	86	14.33	7	63.4	13	164	13	12.62
Khan	53	49	5	958	21.77	17	111	10	464	17	27.29
Kumar	56	47	6	701	17.10	4	213.4	22	856	45	19.02
Lall	28	26	2	887	36.96	10	121	10	545	43	12.67
Newcombe	54	43	9	461	13.56	23	87.5	5	547	28	19.54
Orugant	4	2	0	27	13.50	1	2	1	1	2	0.50
Patel D	194	180	19	3,184	19.78	41	911.5	69	3,779	231	16.36
Patel H	162	121	21	933	9.33	45	732.4	69	3,520	229	15.37
Patel K	32	21	3	25	1.39	5	88.3	3	435	23	18.91
Patel S	297	268	50	5,631	25.83	97	1,549.2	217	5,656	372	15.20
Pentakota	24	20	4	446	27.88	7	113	14	476	28	17.00
Qureshi	7	3	2	32	32.00	3	6	0	30	4	7.50
Sciberras	170	144	15	1,444	11.19	60	599.4	45	2,742	150	18.28
Small	21	18	3	553	36.87	4	63.3	5	320	21	15.24
Thoms	8	8	2	90	15.00	3	2	0	12	0	-
Toft	137	99	41	550	9.48	25	-	-	-	-	-
Wright	12	8	5	89	29.67	2	3	0	21	3	7.00

We give you the career averages of those who played four or more times in 2014 plus possible returners from previous seasons. The season is rich in promise for the statistician. Sanjay Patel could rewrite several records. One day this season he will play his 300th. game. He is 19 wickets shy of Stuart Snelling's 391 (realistically more than one season's work) and just four shifts off his 1,572 overs bowled. A hundred catches also looms (three are needed), although he only took one in 2014, the captains preferring to utilise his skills in the deep.

We perforce deal here with hard statistical evidence but a speculative monograph could be written on how many wickets the big fellow Mr Snelling would have taken had he had the current crop of wicket-keepers and close catchers at his disposal – perhaps 450 with Thoms/Turpin doing the gloves and Hibbert and Basker in the slips.

Hemin Patel stands just two wickets behind Dhruv's 231, although he will have to bowl 117 successive maidens to shave his economy rate to that of the pint-size twirler. Three wickets will put him third in the career aggregate list. Just 67 runs and he will join the Elite Club of Gents with 1,000 runs and 100 wickets, the eight current members being Ashton, Buck, Dhruv Patel, Sanjay Patel, Sciberras, Snelling, Todd and Wright, Gods in the eyes of this writer all of them.