

THE GENT

January 2016

No. 150

Dhanawade scores 1009 not out **...thanks neighbour Vijay for lending his pads** **...survives intimidation from third-man** **...and gets a bollocking from Sumit**



AGM debrief – awards for Jonny, Karthik, Sanjay and Sumit
Sumit Kumar is new Captain, Jonny Vice-Captain
2016 fixtures, nets and payments
Slow scoring tribute – Barrington, Bolus and Nadkarni

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Winter inspiration for the bowlers

This edition of *The Gent* is dedicated not to our own club, nor to Ben Stokes, nor indeed to cover boy Pranav Dhanawade of KC Gandhi School with his 1009 not out and family home three streets away from Vijay Basker's. Instead, it goes out to 10-year-old Tijas Misar of Arya Gurukul School, the poor lad who carded 6-0-142-0 in the infamous HT Bhandari School tournament match that saw Master Dhanawade's gluttony.

Gents' captain Sumit Kumar wrote incisively: *The opposition team of Arya Gurukul declined to play one day before the match because of their school exams. As a result, Arya Gurukul fielded a team of U.12 players with two 10-year-old bowlers. It was like a 16-year-old playing with toddlers. On top of this, the boundaries on the off- and leg-side were no more than 30 yards. Above all, he survived nine close calls – seven catches and two stumpings. For me, it is not a staggering but a shameless achievement where the senior guys bullied 10-year-old kids into bowling at them for ten hours. I daresay this can only happen in India where such a feat is hyped rather than criticised. KC Gandhi's coach should be immediately sacked for not declaring when he knew that he was playing against a team with bowlers who are not supposed to bowl this much.*

There are several questions to be answered and *The Gent* has of course written to the Indian Parliament seeking clarification. First, did KC Gandhi not have exams? If not, why not? If so, why was cricket scheduled in the middle of them? More pertinently, why were exams scheduled during a cricket tournament? It is possible that Arya Gurukul's seniors had resits but we need confirmation. Second, did the U.12s not have exams?

In the Editor's day at Windsor Grammar School, summer exams were in June. House school track and field events were scheduled for May and cricket for July. Cricket was not compulsory. If you didn't fancy it, there was always Mr. Winthorpe-Yewtree's modern ballet classes.

Proper cricket Part I

Much has been written about modern Test cricket strike rates and 350 runs in a day seems to happen a lot these days. How refreshing, therefore, was the Delhi Test in December 2015 between India and visitors South Africa, whose second innings 143 all out occupied 143.1 overs. The bowling figures made fascinating reading, Ravindra Jadeja carding 46-33-26-2 and Umesh Yadav 21-16-9-3. Proper cricket.

Raghunath Nadkarni's astonishing bowling for India against MCC at Madras in the 1963-64 series remains the meanest spell in Tests. His figures at the end of the third day, having bowled mostly against Brian Bolus and Ken Barrington, read 29-26-3-0. He finished with figures of 32-27-5-0 as Bolus and Barrington clubbed him to all parts and bowled a record 21 consecutive maiden overs (131 dot balls in a row) in a 114-minute bowling spell. In the final Test of that series, Nadkarni hit 52* and 122*. It remained his only hundred in Test cricket. Our hope for 2016 is that Gents bowlers take heed, particularly when Northfields and Close PF rock up.

The English batsmen mentioned above were famed for their slow scoring. In his later after dinner speech career, Bolus opened with the line, "For those of you who saw me bat... let me apologise." He is one of the small band of captains to send off one of his own players, dismissing the Derbyshire and England paceman, Alan Ward, from the ground after Ward had declined to bowl. Sumit Kumar has famously followed in his footsteps, dismissing a recalcitrant Close PF fielder in the first over after chummy refused third-man duties.

The Gents net at the Ken Barrington Centre at the Oval. Although he died young at 50 he had a long career and like Bolus a higher Test than First Class average. On tour in Pakistan, he and five other MCC players kidnapped Idris Begh, the Karachi jeweller and umpire whose decisions they thought biased. They poured a bucket of water over him in their apartments and scoffed at him. Unsurprisingly, riots ensued. MCC President Lord Alexander offered to recall the tour and the press called for the culprits to be barred from international cricket, but team manager Howard managed to smooth things over. In a public relations exercise MCC jovially played football against the Pakistani Air Force with Barrington in goal. Just like they would today.

Just how gifted a player Ken Barrington was can be gauged from the fact that to reclaim, then permanently keep, his Test place after being dropped, he abandoned his natural attacking style to become one of cricket's most notorious stonewallers. The revised method cost him his place once, by way of punishment for taking 435 minutes to score 137 against a humdrum New Zealand attack at Edgbaston in 1965, but overall it served him brilliantly. England too - before a heart attack forced premature retirement at 37, Barrington amassed 6,806 Test runs at an average (58.67) surpassed for England only by Herbert Sutcliffe.

AGM slightly less riotous than usual

The days before the November AGM were nothing if not dramatic. First, Hemin Patel was sacked as treasurer by mutual consent, although he would attend as a vociferous backbencher, cricket's Edward Heath, without the dark rumours. Sumit Kumar and Jonny Small then threw their hats into the ring for captain and vice-captain and would contest the positions with incumbent captain Horace Hibbert and Vijay Basker. We then received from Mark Jones quite the best Apology for Absence ever filed:



Unfortunately I won't be able to make the AGM as I'll be back in Cheltenham. This date was locked in for a visit a long time ago and I have tickets for the Cheltenham races with the family so can't duck out of it either. In slightly bigger news I will not be playing for the Gents next season. I'm heading off travelling at the start of May and (visa depending) ending in Canada to work from November 2016. I might be able to fit a game in very early season if we have an early fixture but just want to let you know my plans.

I should also take this opportunity to thank you for letting me play and become one of the Gents. It's been some of the most enjoyable cricket I've played and I've met some great people along the way. I don't think there's another team in England that would let someone who is in the team for their bowling continue to play for three seasons without being able to bowl a single ball, so I thank you for that as well.

This is by no means goodbye and I hope to be playing again in a season or two's time. I really hope you will still be carrying out the same role Andy as your services to the club are what keeps the Gents team going year on year. That and maybe Vijay's Mary Poppins bag of brilliant cricketers.

The Administration Department of the Gents is always busy on the afternoon of an AGM. There are telephone calls to be fielded. No, there has been no last-minute venue change. Preston Road is still on the Metropolitan line. Voting slips have to be folded and a ruler procured to cut them, the bringing of scissors to a Gents AGM having been considered inadvisable for some years. David Bender had been appointing Returning Officer and would count the slips, ignoring these Health and Safety precautions by finding his own pair of scissors in the gutter on the way to the meeting via a spot of preloading with the Secretary. His eyes lit up. It might not have ended well but fortunately for them nobody who had ever wronged him was in attendance.

All told it was a peaceful evening. The boys of 1999 still have the record for mayhem, the Hertfordshire pub brawl against local chavs being the tenth victory of that season. The full report of those events, unpublished to this day, is subject to the Thirty-year Rule.

A new Committee

There were some very strong candidates, although the Committee would have to do without Naveed Khan after his resignation as chairman following an excellent tenure. Congratulations go to new captain Sumit Kumar and new vice-captain Jonny Small, who will lead well. Outgoing captain Horace Hibbert brought stability and dignity to the position after several years of mayhem and was rightly praised by his replacement, promoted from the vice-captaincy. The Committee will be completed by new chairman Peter Denton, secretary Andrew Burman (both unopposed) and new treasurer Praveen Bocha, elected against Vamsee Krishna, who had also valiantly volunteered for this suicide mission.

The question of how the day's captain should be appointed in the absence of both Captain and Vice-Captain inspired considerable discussion, Sanjay Patel eliciting from Andrew Burman with ruthless cross-examination an admission that the previous method (whimsical appointments by Burman) was not consistent with the aims of the club. Therefore, in such circumstances in 2016 the captain and vice-captain will decide.

Horace Hibbert was a strong captain with a sound tactical grasp. His work and charity commitments meant that he could not make all the games but he was a forceful presence when he did. Like other recent captains Richard Gilkes and Greg Newcombe, he was sometimes undermined and indeed forcefully alluded to this in his AGM address, calling his chief tormentor "a complete wanker" and other epithets that caused the interpreters consternation. Mr. Hibbert did not always use his own cricket talents as much as he might have, preferring to give others a go ahead of him. Freed from affairs of state, expect his star to rise again.

Karthik nabs All-rounder and Fielder while Sanjay rolls back the years



David Bender earned his stipend as Returning Officer. Things were simpler in the past when Gents were identifiable by a maximum of two names, surname or nickname. Since the advent of Johnny Titan, we have in some cases three but DB coped very well.

Jonny Small scored most runs and Sanjay Patel took most wickets, so their rewards as Batsman and Bowler of 2015 were within the boundaries of logic, but logic is not something that has always informed cricket teams armed with a secret ballot.

Jonny's century against St. Anne's and 88* against Clapham In made him a worthy winner. Club shields are liberally engraved with Sanjay's name, but this was his first Bowling award since 2002. It was a remarkable performance for a 42-year-old, albeit a very fit one, and his 18th. award. Sumit Kumar won Most Improved with a club personal best of 251 runs in only 11 innings including five not outs. A few players came up a notch but Sumit's achievement was a sea change.

The arguments for All-Rounder and Fielder were more nuanced and the members chose Karthik Jampala for both, although there were several other credible candidates. Karthik played only one game before 12 July but impressed thereafter with consistent batting, economical bowling and impervious, sometimes spectacular fielding, including five catches and two run outs. His successes came against strong opponents, a fact statistics do not readily convey. Still, to win All-Rounder without a 50 is unusual, only Rich Wilman and Stuart Snelling having done this before.

Winners' 2016 averages

	M.	Inn.	NO	Runs	Avg.	Ct./St.	O	M	Runs	Wck.	Avg.
Jampala	12	10	1	204	22.67	5	30.5	3	138	10	13.80
S Kumar	11	11	5	251	41.83	1	39.0	2	205	5	41.00
S Patel	14	12	2	207	20.70	4	54	2	268	14	19.14
Small	15	14	2	478	39.83	6	29	2	201	13	15.46

The 40 over conundrum

Anil Oruganti proposed the 40 overs format at the AGM and there has been much discussion since. As was pointed out then, the format can be accommodated but it needs punctuality and a prompt and perhaps earlier than 1pm start.

It was noted with a wry smile by the club's sceptics that the passionate advocates of the longer game were the chaps who rocked up an hour late due to "transport problems", i.e. getting on the tube late. In passing, this was a pity as they were just too late to hear the secretary's tribute to their logistical skills.

Forty overs can increase involvement, although it makes for a long day if the bowling is wayward and a side has to bowl 42 or 43. Things of course do not always proceed as planned. The Battersea Imperials game was planned to be 40 overs, reduced to 38 after a 15 minute delay and lasted a whopping 45 overs in total. You couldn't make it up.

It is the decision of the captains but *The Gent* believes it is a goer. The format worked well in the 2014 Tigers game and as Vamsee Krishna has said, we are here to enjoy as much cricket as we can.

Honours Board

	All-Rounder	Batsman	Bowler	Fielder	Most Improved
1990	Mark Ashton	Ian Maughan	Simon Alderman	Des Dolan	Ian Maughan
1991	Nick Boddington	Mark Ashton	Mark Ashton	Richard Sambrook Smith	Nick Boddington
1992	Rich Wilman	Mark Ashton	Daniel Todd	Richard Sambrook Smith	Daniel Todd
1993	Mark Ashton/Steve Bignell	Mike Hughes	Mark Ashton	Rich Wilman	Ian Renvoize
1994	Mark Ashton	Nick Hubbuck	Mark Ashton	Ian Maughan	Ian Richmond
1995	Jim Wright	Mark Ashton	Stuart Snelling	Mark Burville	Jim Wright
1996	Dhruv Patel	Mark Ashton	Stuart Snelling	Bill Murphy	Bill Murphy
1997	Dhruv Patel	Mark Ashton	Stuart Snelling	Mark Burville	Chris Mitchell
1998	Sanjay Patel	Sanjay Patel	Sanjay Patel	Sanjay Patel	Tony Buck
1999	Stuart Snelling	Mark Ashton	Stuart Snelling	Ian Richmond	Stuart Snelling
2000	Jim Wright	Jim Wright	Sanjay Patel	Mark Sciberras	Jim Wright
2001	Sanjay Patel	Sanjay Patel	Stuart Snelling	Mark Sciberras	Tony Buck
2002	Sanjay Patel	Jim Wright	Sanjay Patel	Mark Sciberras	Eddie Fitch/Phil Hill
2003	Sanjay Patel	Sanjay Patel	Stuart Snelling	Mark Sciberras	Richard Gilkes
2004	Wayne Thompson	Wayne Thompson	Stuart Snelling	Justin Norcott	Justin Norcott
2005	Nabil Husain	Nabil Husain	Mark Sciberras	Ken Toft	Nabil Husain
2006	Nabil Husain	Nabil Husain	Hemin Patel	Paul Turpin	Hemin Patel
2007	Nabil Husain	Nabil Husain	Hemin Patel	Richard Gilkes	Lloyd Wahed
2008	Ravi Inkollu	Ravi Inkollu	Stuart Snelling	Richard Gilkes	Mark Sciberras
2009	Sanjay Patel	Sanjay Patel	Ravi Inkollu	Himanshu Desai	Himanshu Desai
2010	Sanjay Patel	Sanjay Patel	Hemin Patel	Sachin Desai	Wayne Caveney
2011	Sanjay Patel	Sanjay Patel	Hemin Patel	Himanshu Desai	Himanshu Desai
2012	Sanjay Patel	Nilesh Dubey	Sachin Desai	Greg Newcombe	Sachin Desai
2013	Ramanjit Lall	Ramanjit Lall	Ramanjit Lall	Greg Newcombe	Mark Jones
2014	Jonny Small	Vijay Basker	Aravind Katragadda	Praveen Bocha	Vijay Basker
2015	Karthik Jampala	Jonny Small	Sanjay Patel	Karthik Jampala	Sumit Kumar

Bignell spot on

In reply to your question in the latest *Gent* Geoffrey Charles Hurst (later Knight of the Realm) played his only First Class match for Essex against Lancashire at Liverpool on 30 May 1962. He batted No.10 in the first innings (just above JC Laker) scoring 0 not out. In the second innings he was bowled for a duck batting No.8. He took one catch (off Laker) in Lancs' second innings.

Essex 296 (Bailey 97) & 153-7dec.
Lancs 149 & 272

Essex won by 28 runs.

Hurst played 23 games for Essex Seconds 1962-4 mostly as wicket-keeper. Interesting to see that the Gunnersbury Park pavilion is no more. Last year the cricket field was invaded by 'travellers' (see *Daily Mail* report April 2014). Such is the fate of all Council grounds and pitches. The future is with established cricket clubs. We have a meeting later this month regarding affiliation to Winchmore Hill CC and will keep you updated.

London Saints bid Gents adieu

It's with great regret that I have to say that we are going to have to end (hopefully suspend?) our playing relationship with Gents for the time being, **writes Dave Thomas**.

My various injuries have forced me into being a bystander (can bat but not bowl which is what I really enjoy) so I have been trying to farm out the organisation to others without success. Also our dwindling age and numbers (with people leaving London) mean that it's not sustainable to have a full fixture list so we have decided to cut down drastically and just play once a month – five or six in total.

As we are playing so few it's been decided to play against teams roughly our standard and I'm afraid (as we haven't been able to keep in touch with the advance of the Gents) that we feel that Gents are too strong for us and so shouldn't be one of the teams we play.

I for one am sorry as we've had such a long association and hopefully we'll get a new influx of players and be able to play again soon. All the best for the season.

Fixtures, finances and nets

Nineteen matches have so far been arranged in a similar card to 2015's, including on 29 May a strong new oppo White Swans (Southall) who play at the luxurious LPOSSA ground in Sudbury Hill. The Judd Street Tigers match has been brought forward from July, let's hope for better weather after the 2012 and 2015 rain cancellations. The Sea Wolves game, when the Day Units are emptied for a day, will be on Saturday 18 June.

Date	Home	Away	Comments
Sun 1 May	United Titans	-	Confirmed
Sun 8 May	Wimbledon United	-	Confirmed
Sun 15 May	Gubbays	-	Confirmed
Sun 22 May	-	Northfields	Confirmed
Sun 29 May	-	White Swans (Southall)	Confirmed
Sun 5 June	-	Judd Street Tigers	Confirmed
Sun 12 June	Hale	-	Confirmed
Sat 18 June	London Rams	-	Confirmed
Sun 26 June	Close PF	-	To be confirmed
Sun 3 July	-	St. Anne's Allstars	Confirmed
Sun 10 July	-	-	To be arranged
Sun 17 July	Bricklayer's Arms	-	Confirmed
Sun 24 July	Baker Street Irregulars	-	Confirmed
Sun 31 July	-	-	To be arranged
Sun 7 August	Pak	-	Confirmed
Sun 14 August	Clapham In	-	Confirmed
Sun 21 August	-	Bricklayer's Arms	Confirmed
Sun 28 August	Battersea Imperials	-	Confirmed
Sun 4 Sept	-	Gubbays	Confirmed
Sun 11 Sept	-	Salix	Confirmed
Sun 18 Sept	-	Hale	Confirmed

You will have seen Treasurer Praveen Bocha's call for payment but it won't hurt to repeat it. Please pay your subscription of £60 as soon as you can. The Club had just had to pay £340 for nets and £210 for insurance and since we are unlikely to be funded in the near future by a plain-speaking retail entrepreneur or ruthless hedge fund manager, and Camelot bounced our speculative claim for a £33m Lottery prize, we need your dosh.

On-line:	Cheque payable to Gentlemen of West London :
Account Name: Gentlemen of West London	Praveen Bocha
Account No: 59634839	Flat 5 Featherstone Court
Sort Code: 60-14-41	Chadwell Heath
Bank: Natwest	RM6 6DJ

Nets

Sunday 3 April at Teddington School Sports Centre **11am-1pm**

Saturday 9 April at the Oval **10am-12am**

Sunday 17 April at Teddington School Sports Centre **11am-1pm**

Prices have risen significantly so we need a good turnout. Please do your best to attend.

Proper cricket Part II

I think T20 has accelerated our appetite for high-risk cricket in longer forms of the game, **writes Sam MacDonald** in his Full Toss blog. Is Test cricket better for it? I suppose that's down to personal taste. Maybe there have been good consequences and bad. But watching supposedly high-quality batsmen slog hopelessly at good length balls while trying to save a Test match makes me wince. This certainly isn't the beautiful game I've grown up with. Maybe I'm just getting old.

Consequently it's time for a call to arms. Perhaps us traditionalists should remove our monocles, put down our Victoria sponges, and start a new and exciting (though ultimately lethargic and ineffective) movement to save traditional Test cricket. We could follow the example set by the trailblazing slow food movement, which reverts traditional methods of cooking. Maybe Boycott and Tavaré could be persuaded to front the campaign, with stylish photography capturing the pure ecstasy of a perfectly perpendicular forward defensive stroke?