
THE GENT

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Russian cyberattack causes cricket chaos



Hayes shenanigans

Greg Newcombe the go-to man

Stephen Bignell's The Last Ball of Summer

Early averages

Match reports:

Crossbats (lost by 72 runs)

Hook and Southborough (won by 90 runs)

Hayes (lost by 41 runs)

Binfield (won by 81 runs)

Wimbledon United (won by 127 runs)

Read about the Gents on www.gowlcc.org

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Shenanigans at Hayes

Shenanigans

[ʃɪˈnænɪŋ(ə)nz]

NOUN

informal

1. secret or dishonest activity or manoeuvring.
'the chairman was accused of financial shenanigans'

It was with sadness that we received an email from Byfleet on 21 April stating that they could not raise a team. Sadness because it is a beautiful ground and their friendly side hosted so well in 2019 and 2021. Their Saturday XI had already played (and tied with) Wycombe House 2s in 2022 and their blazers spoke about a strong squad, so the cancellation was a surprise. Hayes stepped in that evening.

There was intrigue when during the Gents' innings a new bowler Harpreet Sangha was announced to the scorer. Now Sangha had not batted in their all out innings. Captain Gursh Chalal confirmed at drinks that he was a substitute for a player who had to leave early. Now the play 12 bat 11 format is not uncommon on the Sunday circuit (see Tigers and Gents 2020), but the captains must agree it beforehand. It transpired that our Harpreet was no mean player, being a 1s regular in the Home Counties League.

The scorer called the peelers and gave a statement. But the courts are all WFH so not much will happen till 2025.

A new look

Bricklayer's Arms and Holtwhites Trinibis are off the list and Hale have folded after suffering problems with insurance for their pretty ground on the Common. There were some good games there over the years as autumn closed in. It always seemed warm at midday before the mercury dropped like a stone by dusk. For the 35th season a refresh was therefore needed, and Hook and Southborough, Redbourn (Herts), Prince's Head (Richmond) and Lydd (Kent) have been added. Hayes was an unplanned addition after Byfleet cancelled. Only four teams remain from 2012. The historical disposition of our opponents is:

2002	St Anne's Allstars
2004	Salix
2009	Northfields
2011	Clapham In
2015	Wimbledon United
2016	Millfields
2018	Crossbats, Squirrels
2019	Kempton, Plastics, Teddington Town, Whalers
2021	Mpingwe, New Romney and Littlestone, Ottershaw
2022	Hayes, Hook and Southborough, Lydd, Prince's Head, Redbourn

Gents are missing a few players from recent seasons. Praneeth Karnekanti has moved to Manchester for work. Domestic commitments, injury and illness will prevent Dino Francis, Rajeth Joshi and Naveed Khan from playing, though they have promised to support and we hope to see Jay and Dino before too long. We wish Naveed, a superb club man, all strength as he regains his health.

Go-to man Greg

Anybody who thinks the job of match secretary is simple should try it for a season, or ask Nilesch Dubey and Hemin Patel. The bane of his life is late withdrawals – things generally look good on a Monday morning. The go-to men in recent years have been Vijay Basker, with his Mary Poppins bag of brilliant cricketers (a Mark Jones phrase), and Vamsee Krishna, but in the period before them nobody held a candle to Greg Newcombe, now resident in Cheltenham with his young family, who regularly supplied guests and in three cases members of high quality. The stats are impressive but of greater importance is that these chaps were there, Greg got them there, and the Gents would have struggled without them.

He was captain from June 2012 to September 2013, leading Gents to an unbeaten domestic season. He was a man for the big occasion, the tougher the game the better, and it is no coincidence that his highest score of 54 came up against a good Judd Street Tigers' attack and his best bowling, 4-24, against a rampant London Saints whom he played pretty much on his own. His diving catch against West XI in 2010 turned the game. He still has the match ball. Now on to his mates.



Mark Jones was an enigma. On his day a fine quick bowler, he developed the yips but was good company and contributed much to the gaiety of matches. Upon his departure he amusingly wrote: 'I don't think there's another team in England that would let someone that is in the team for their bowling continue to play for three seasons without being able to bowl a single ball.' **Jonny Small** was a joint enterprise between Greg and Mark. On his day a one-man highlights reel, he scored 131* against St Anne's Allstars, 106 against Judd Street Tigers and won many a game. He also ran out Dino Francis in the first over *v.* Squirrels.

Laurie Wright (far left above) was in the eyes of no less a judge than Sanjay Patel the best wicket-keeper in the club's history, though Sudireddy is running him close. Eight stumpings in 13 games was remarkable. BBC journalist **George Wright**, Laurie's older brother (centre above), scored a brutal 126 against Clapham In at Crown Taverners. As a teenager he was a County-standard leg-spinner but gave up the art. **Tom Jones** played most of the 2013 season and took 4-13 against London Saints.

Tomal Syed-Aguirre's debut on 7 June 2015 against St Anne's Allstars was full of incident and is justly celebrated. Batting eight, he was padded up for 25 overs while Small and Kumar added an unbeaten 212. He had Bowman caught with his first ball and later took a sharp catch in the covers to see off Murray, one of Sanjay Patel's three. A fifty against Baker Street irregulars followed in his second game. He enabled Gent ethnologists to tick off Bangladesh and Chile in the countries to have represented the club.

We now move on to the singletons and what stellar contributions they made. **Seb Gibson** bowled steadily against Birdlip and Brimscombe on the 2013 Cheltenham tour and **Alex Butler's** 100 against Allsorts was a match-winner (Sachin Desai with his 7-31 might disagree). We wrote of burly Kiwi **Matt Tewhatu**: 'He scored 50 on debut to help chase down Gubbays' 135 all out. Not content with that, he then took 7-1-23-1 in a spell of compelling swing bowling, delivered refreshingly off a four-pace run. Doubtless inspired by his knock, he proceeded to score 198 for Balham the following Saturday.'

Career summary – Greg and his mates

Player (debut)	M.	Runs	Avg.	50s/100s	HS	O	Wckts.	Avg.	4w	BB	Ct.	St.
G. Newcombe (09)	79	816	15.69	2/-	54	122	37	18.92	1	4-24	29	-
J. Small (13)	54	1,439	31.98	8/2	131*	123.3	40	18.00	3	4-5	29	3
M. Jones (10)	38	266	12.67	-	36	37	13	15.77	-	3-16	6	-
T. Jones (13)	13	36	6.00	-	11*	6	5	8.20	1	4-13	1	-
L. Wright (12)	13	96	24.00	-	44*	3	3	21.00	-	3-17	3	8
S. Syed-Aguirre (15)	6	75	37.50	1/-	56*	10	3	24.00	-	1-11	1	-
G. Wright (10)	5	196	39.20	1/1	126	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
A. Butler (12)	1	100	N/A	-/1	100*	8	-	N/A	-	0-37	1	-
S. Gibson (12)	1	-	-	-	-	8	1	24.00	-	1-24	-	-
M. Tewhatu (16)	1	50	50.00	1/-	50	7	1	23.00	1	1-23	-	-

Crossbats v. Gentlemen of West London

Saturday 9 April, Marble Hill Park. Crossbats won toss. Sunny, 11C

Lost by 72 runs

Crossbats		Gentlemen of West London	
Dubey	c Pingili	b Parvathaneni	1
Winch	c Chatharaju	b S. Patel	24
S. Skinner		b Parvathaneni	56
Shirley	c Kota	b Krishna	38
Mancini	lbw	b Puli	7
Carter	run out (Kota)		9
A. Skinner	not out		12
Nicolas		b Chatharaju	14
Aman	not out		3
Khan and Gumbley	dnb		
Extras	w15 b1 lb1		17
Total	7 wickets	35 overs	181
FoW: 4, 60, 115, 130, 149, 149, 176			
Bowling: Chatharaju 6-1-24-1, Parvathaneni 6-0-26-2, Kumar 4-1-16-0, R. Patel 4-0-19-0, S. Patel 4-0-26-1, Krishna 7-0-36-1, Kamat 1-0-12-0, Puli 3-0-20-1			
Kota	c Aman	b A. Skinner	3
Krishna	lbw	b Shirley	15
Puli		b A. Skinner	2
Pingili		b Shirley	16
*†Sudireddy	c Carter	b Dubey	11
S. Patel		b Gumbley	29
Parvathaneni	c Gumbley	b Shirley	1
Kumar	c Gumbley	b Shirley	3
Chatharaju	c Shirley	b S. Skinner	2
Kamat		b S. Skinner	15
R. Patel	not out		1
Extras	w8 lb3		11
Total	All out	31.2 overs	109
FoW: 6, 13, 38, 53, 53, 54, 65, 69, 105, 109			
Bowling: A. Skinner 5-3-3-2, Khan 4-1-9-0, Dubey 7-1-23-1, Shirley 7-1-30-4, S. Skinner 4-2-1-18-2, Gumbley 4-1-23-1			

Finally, the start of the season had arrived, and the Gents were fully prepared for their first game of the season against our good friends Crossbats, **writes Hemin Patel**. The Gents fielded well but it was a less than average batting performance and high quality bowling from the oppo that saw the Gents fall to a 72-run defeat.

With our usual scorer unavailable, Nilesh kindly agreed to come and score using his fancy new app, which took him a bit of time to get used to but he soon found his groove. With the official captain of the Gents not playing as it was too cold, Ratti won the toss and elected to field first. I asked him why he did this and he said the artificial pitch looked like a good track to bowl on first and that the ball would come onto the bat a lot easier in the second half of the game when the dew came down. The Gents took to the field two men short for the first over. Sanjay, who was playing his 400th game for the club was on the boundary sorting out his long johns and new boy Abhinav had not realised that he had to pay for parking in the car park. Nilesh, a true team player, took to the field.

The Gents started strongly with both Ranjith and Abhinav bowling good lines and in just his second over Abhinav took the first wicket, firmly proving that his 1.2m rupee transfer fee was worth every penny. That brought the elegant left-handed Skinner to the crease who anchored the rest of the innings. Sumit and Raj then bowled well but batsmen started adapting to the pitch and were hitting the gaps nicely. Sanjay came on and took a key wicket, brilliantly caught in the covers by Ranjith but then the runs started to come at a canter. A mixture of sweetly-timed shots, slogs and hoiks along with some questionable fielding saw Crossbats reach 181-7 at the end of their 35 overs.

After a quick turnaround the Gents began their innings. Vamsee and Pavan took to the crease against some high quality bowling. A. Skinner and the left-hander S. Khan bowled beautifully giving nothing away and it was Skinner who took the key wicket of Pavan. Vamsee continued to play patiently and after a huge appeal for caught behind not given by the umpire he started to knuckle down and take some singles. Chandra looked uncomfortable and at one point decided it was better to use his thigh to hit the ball instead of using his bat. He was finally cleaned up by Skinner. The Gents never really got going and wickets fell at regular intervals along with a few spectacular catches. Sanjay and Prathamesh gave the Gents some brief hope but after Sanjay had run out of breath and was bowled by Gumbley the last wicket of Prathamesh finally fell, 109 all out.

Overall it was a good game of cricket and Crossbats certainly deserved the victory. We will need to learn quickly from this and get back to our winning ways. A big thank you to Nilesh who was not due to be at the match but ended up picking up kit, our cheerleader Rajit, scoring and fielding for an over.

Hook and Southborough v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 17 April, Hollyfield School. Hook and Southborough won toss. Sunny, 20C

Won by 90 runs

Gentlemen of West London			Hook and Southborough				
Krishna	c Sadiq	b Solomon	9	Worley	c Gulati	b R. Patel	0
Pentakota		b Moseley	2	Oliver	lbw	b Kalisetty	12
†Kota	c Bhalla	b McInnes	53	Ilyas	c H. Patel	b Kalisetty	7
†Gulati	c Bhalla	b Horley	2	Hardy		b Kulasingam	3
Chatharaju	c and	b Evans	50	†Bhalla		b Gulati	0
Kulasingam		b Horley	22	Evans		b Parvathaneni	0
Parvathaneni	c Moseley	b McInnes	1	McInnes		b Parvathaneni	0
S. Patel	not out		23	*Collen	c Gulati	b Krishna	13
R. Patel		b Moseley	0	Sadiq	c Parvathaneni	b Kota	22
Kalisetty	c McInnes	b Moseley	0	Moseley	c Pentakota	b Krishna	2
*H. Patel	c Collen	b Sadiq	1	Solomon	not out		13
Extras	w4 nb2 b1		7	Extras	nb2 b4 lb2		8
Total	All out	37.5 overs	170	Total	All out	29.4 overs	80
FoW: 5, 39, 44, 104, 126, 137, 160, 161, 161, 170				FoW: 0, 10, 21, 21, 22, 22, 30, 59, 59, 80			
Bowling: Moseley 7-0-26-3, Sadiq 6.5-0-20-1, Solomon 8-0-46-1, Horley 7-0-34-2, McInnes 4-0-25-2, Evans 5-0-18-1				Bowling: R. Patel 5-0-11-1, Kalisetty 5-1-8-2, Parvathaneni 3-1-4-2, Gulati 3-2-2-1, H. Patel 5-0-18-0, Kulasingam 4-0-11-1, Krishna 1-0-2-2, Chatharaju 1-0-3-0, S. Patel 1-0-7-0, Pentakota 1-0-6-0, Kota 0.4-0-2-1			

With a near perfect display of bowling and fielding, the Gents recorded their first win of the season beating new opponents Hook and Southborough CC by 90 runs, **writes Hemin Patel**. Before going into any detail, we would like to thank our oppo for a brilliant day out of hard and fair cricket in a perfect location. We hope that we can continue this fixture for many years to come. The Gents welcomed guest Suresh Kalisetty and the legendary Christy Kulasingam on loan from Salix (contract negotiations with his agent are ongoing but the Gents are refusing to agree to his request of two biryanis a game), as some players had to appease their wives so that they could play cricket for the rest of the season. Andrew Burman was serving the last of a two-match suspension, after picking up a red card last season and we can't wait to have him back next week.

After losing the toss the Gents had been put into bat in what looked like a tricky wicket with a lush outfield. We knew boundaries were going to be hard to score and we had to take every opportunity to take singles. Bearing that in mind the skipper asked Vamsee and Raja, our very own Test Match Specials, to pad up (it would have been different but we had to deal with a few stragglers and Raj left his whites at home). Raja was bowled early on for 2, after some tight bowling, which bought Pavan to the crease. Pavan began to hit the gaps and both batsmen ran well to keep the score ticking along. Vamsee then started to pick up the pace of his own innings to one run an over and was finally dismissed for 9. Bobby then fell soon after, top-edging a ball which bought the hungry Ranjith to the crease: a key partnership for the Gents as both batsmen began to play their shots finding the boundaries and run quickly between the wickets. Pavan was finally dismissed after making 52 (four fours) and Ranjith (seven fours and a six) fell for 50. Some great fielding and catching from the oppo and some good lower order hitting from pensioners Sanjay and CK finally saw the Gents dismissed for 170.

At half time the Gents dug into the brilliant tea provided by the oppo, something we have not done for over two years, and with our bellies full took to the field. Raj and Suresh opened the bowling and Raj took a wicket in the first over with a dirty full toss that was easily caught by Bobby at mid-on. Suresh bowled well pulling out his inswingers and outswingers and completely baffling the batsmen.

Now one thing to mention, in an article in *Cricket Monthly*; 'The art of catching the cricket ball after it has taken the outside edge is a special gift. Some do it well, some less so, and then there are the gifted few who do it with what appears to be nonchalant ease.' Enter the skipper Hemin Patel who took what some would say was an absolute worldie off Suresh dismissing the dangerous ex-County player Ilyas. I can't stress enough how good this catch was and how important it was to get Ilyas out as he would have definitely scored a ton and won the game for Hook. It was this catch that won the game. Suresh then swiftly took his second wicket, dismissing Oliver lbw after no shot was offered.

Bobby and Abhi then continued the good work bowling brilliantly and after taking the skipper's advice Bobby bowled the perfect yorker to take his first wicket. Abhi was outstanding and unplayable and took two in two with his pacy inswingers. With the oppo six down on came the skipper and CK. CK then took a wicket with a daisy-cutter while the skipper was unlucky not take a wicket after the fielder refused to try and catch the ball.

Vamsee came onto bowl, and with his worst bowling display took two wickets with Bobby taking an outstanding catch. The skipper then decided to let everyone who hadn't bowled have an over and Pavan took the final wicket of the game to secure the win. From the skipper's point of view the bowling and fielding were outstanding, only one dropped catch which was slightly difficult. Our batting still requires improvement but that will come, we just need to keep it simple and stick to what we are good at.

2022 Played 4 Won 3 Lost 2

9/4	Marble Hill Park	Crossbats 181-7 (S. Skinner 56, Shirley 38, Winch 24)	Gents 109 (S. Patel 29, Shirley 4-30)	Lost 72 runs
17/4	Hollyfield School	Gents 170 (Kota 53, Chatharaju 50, S. Patel 23*, Kulasingam 22, Moseley 3-26)		Won 90 runs
		Hook and Southborough 80 (Sadiq 22)		
24/4	Hayes	Hayes 221 (Sam 46, Jyoti 30, G. Singh 30, Bittu 25, B. Singh 25, Varasala 4-40)		Lost 41 runs
		Gents 180 (Kota 49, Kumar 29, Chalal 5-40)		
1/5	F.W.E. Goates MG	Gents 215-4 (Kota 107*, Gulati 52)		Won 81 runs
		Binfield 134-9 (Sugumar 24, Hesketh 23, Chatharaju 3-26)		
8/5	Old Tenisonians	Gents 217-8 (Kota 76, Parvathaneni 63, Prytherch 3-51)	Wimbledon United 90 (Khan 39)	Won 127 runs

100 partnerships for	100 partnerships against
135 Kota/Gulati <i>v.</i> Binfield (4th. wicket)	-
114 Kota/Parvathaneni <i>v.</i> Wimbledon United (6th. wicket)	
50s/100s for (M = first 50 or 100)	50s/100s against
107* Kota <i>v.</i> Binfield	56 S. Skinner (Crossbats)
76 Kota <i>v.</i> Wimbledon United	
63 Parvathaneni <i>v.</i> Wimbledon United	
53 Kota <i>v.</i> Hook and Southborough	
52 Gulati <i>v.</i> Binfield	
50 Chatharaju <i>v.</i> Hook and Southborough	
4-wicket returns for (M = first 4 wickets return)	4-wicket returns against
Varasala 4-40 <i>v.</i> Hayes	5-40 Chalal (Hayes)
	4-30 Shirley (Crossbats)
Sixes (6)	Run outs of opponents (3)
3 Kota	2 Kota
2 Parvathaneni	1 Kumar
1 Chatharaju	

Remaining fixtures

Sun 15.5	Kempton	Away	Kempton
Sun 22.5	Northfields	Away	Durston House
Sun 29.5	St Anne's Allstars	Home	Wycombe House
Sun 5.6	Mpingwe	Home	Raynes Park SG
Sun 12.6	Teddington Town	Away	Teddington Town
Sun 19.6	Salix	Away	Chiswick House
Sun 26.6	Ottershaw	Home	Old Tenisonians
Sun 3.7	Whalers	Away	King's House SG Chiswick
Sun 10.7	Wimbledon United	Away	Cottenham Park
Sun 17.7	Squirrels	Home	Old Tenisonians
Sun 24.7	Redbourn	Away	Redbourn (Hertfordshire)
Sun 31.7	TBA	Home	Wycombe House
Sun 7.8	Northfields	Home	Old Tenisonians
Sun 14.8	Clapham In	Home	Old Tenisonians
Sat 20.8	Prince's Head	Away	Richmond Green
Sun 21.8	Plastics	Home	Old Tenisonians
Sun 28.8	TBA	Home	Wycombe House
Sun 4.9	Millfields	Home	Wycombe House
Sat 10.9	Lydd	Away	Banks SSC (Kent)
Sun 11.9	New Romney and Littlestone	Away	New Romney (Kent)
Sun 18.9	Salix	Home	Nursery Road PF
Sun 25.9	Ottershaw	Away	Ottershaw
Sun 2.10	TBA	Away	TBA

Hayes v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 24 April, Hayes. Hayes won toss. Sunny, 17C

Lost by 41 runs

Hayes			Gentlemen of West London			
Jyoti	c Puli	b Varasala	30	Gulati	b G. Singh	0
Nagra		b Chatharaju	4	Kumar	b Sangha	29
B. Singh	c Puli	b Parvathaneni	25	Kota	st Nasiri	49
Kalia	c Sudireddy	b Varasala	1	Puli	lbw	17
Vipen	c Dubey	b Varasala	12	†Sudireddy	b Anmoldeep	2
Bittu	c Sudireddy	b H. Patel	25	Chatharaju	b Chalal	2
Anmoldeep		b Varasala	5	Parvathaneni	c Nagra	4
†Nasiri	lbw	b Dubey	7	S. Patel	b Chalal	11
Sam	c Sudireddy	b Gulati	46	Varasala	run out	9
G. Singh		b Parvathaneni	30	Dubey	not out	11
*Chalal	not out		5	*H. Patel	b Anmoldeep	5
Sangha	dnb					
Extras	w14 nb12 b5		31	Extras	w20 nb13 b3 lb5	41
Total	All out	32.5 overs	221	Total	All out	35.1 overs
FoW:	21, 71, 71, 81, 92, 103, 127, 164, 215, 221			FoW:	0, 81, 109, 123, 133, 140, 141, 158, 166, 180	
Bowling:	Gulati 6.5-1-38-1, Chatharaju 4-0-32-1, Parvathaneni 6-0-53-2, Varasala 7-0-40-4, Dubey 6-1-36-1, H. Patel 3-0-17-1			Bowling:	G. Singh 5-0-25-1, Sam 5-0-28-1, Sangha 5-0-18-1, Bittu 6-0-25-0, Chalal 8-0-40-5, Anmoldeep 6.1-0-36-2	

Gents lost against a strong team but kept their dignity on a demanding afternoon. Hayes were a late replacement for the gentler Byfleet who had scratched through lack of players on the Thursday. Arrangements for the game were crisply made after an ad was placed on thefixturelist.org and on a cool afternoon Hayes won the toss and batted on a dry, true wicket. The innings may be divided into three sections; the hosts raced to 71-1 within ten overs, Gents pegged them back with excellent bowling and catching before the tail then wagged. The visitors were well in contention at 109-2 in the 23rd over but were shot down by Chalal's off-spin and Anmoldeep's raw pace. Hayes were worthy winners.

The extras count on a cool day was 72 and in truth both sets of bowlers lacked consistent control. The normally frugal Gulati opened with three wides before Chatharaju castled Nagra. Brief carnage then ensued as the ball flew to and over the boundary but the introduction of Parvathaneni and Varasala on debut, well supported by Dubey, changed the game as six wickets fell for 56. Puli took two fine catches at gully, Sudireddy was his usual competent self, three for him, and Dubey took a sharp one at square leg, injuring his hand in doing so.

From 127-7 in the 20th over Hayes responded well. The veteran Bittu held the fort for 15 overs then top-edged a sweep to give the captain his 350th wicket. But Sam and G. Singh smote lustily as the last three wickets doubled the score. The bowling figures were at first sight unflattering but these were powerful batsmen and the Gents were pleased to conclude the knock with 43 balls to spare, albeit for a large total (the highest conceded since Wimbledon United's 222 in 2018). Only once had they successfully chased a higher score than this.

What Gents perhaps did not need was a golden duck for poor Gulati, who misjudged a yorker. But Kumar and Kota put up an excellent 81 in 17.4 overs, the day's highest stand. Kumar's cover drives were a thing of beauty and Kota looked impregnable. By now Harpreet, an unapproved substitute who had not batted, was bowling a frugal spell and he castled Kumar. Puli and Kota took it to 97-2 at 20-over drinks.

The black-trousered Chalal was now bowling off-breaks with flight and turn and he proved a game-changer. He bamboozled Kota for his third 49 since 2020 and methodically worked his way through the middle order. His partner was the quick Anmoldeep who began his spell with two five-wides but thereafter was hostile and menacing. He was bowling at 75mph and was not shy of the short stuff, striking Dubey a fearful blow on the elbow, to whoops of encouragement from the fielding ring and chippy demands that the batsman should retire hurt. Every batsman got a start and the game only slipped away in the last few overs. Gents had put up a stout display in difficult circumstances. There was no socialising with the hosts after but the match had fulfilled its purpose as a hard challenge.

Binfield v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 1 May, F.W.E. Goates Memorial Ground. Binfield won toss. Cloudy, 14C

Won by 81 runs

Gentlemen of West London			Binfield			
†Sudireddy	c Suresh	b Watts	9	*Jones	b Chatharaju	6
Kumar	c Jones	b Watts	6	Henly	c Dubey	8
Kota	not out		107	Gupta	c Sudireddy	16
Dubey		b van der Walt	18	†Suresh		1
Gulati		b Henly	52	Wade	c and	4
R. Patel	not out		9	Sugumar	c Kota	24
Chatharaju, S. Patel, Krishna, Snelling and *H. Patel dnb				Hesketh	st Sudireddy	23
				Watts	not out	17
				Thomas	b Kumar	1
				Rakesh	run out (Kota)	2
				van der Walt	not out	20
Extras	w8 nb2 b2 lb2		14	Extras	w5 nb1 b5 lb1	12
Total	4 wickets	35 overs	215	Total	9 wickets	35 overs
FoW: 12, 19, 49, 184				FoW: 8, 21, 22, 27, 43, 92, 93, 102, 106		
Bowling: Watts 5-0-31-2, Sugumar 4-1-8-0, van der Walt 7-0-48-1, Rakesh 6-0-42-0, Thomas 4-0-30-0, Hesketh 4-0-23-0, Henly 5-0-29-1				Bowling: Snelling 3-1-3-0, Chatharaju 5-0-26-3, S. Patel 4-1-14-1, Krishna 6-0-32-1, H. Patel 6-0-23-2, Kumar 3-2-4-1, Dubey 4-2-2-0, Kota 3-0-21-0, Gulati 1-0-3-0		

To Gents the win: to Binfield's veterans and colts applause that should ring throughout the Thames Valley for their warm welcome and gutsy cricket. At 43-5 they were up against it but their lower order showed determination to bat the 35, even if they fell short. Kota (12 fours and a six) scored his fourth century and Gulati (six fours) his fourth 50 and his first since 2019. Chatharaju was the pick of the bowlers while the returning Stuart Snelling bowled with vigour until an injured calf ended his spell.

After a rain delay of 40 minutes, the covers came off and Binfield inserted Gents on what looked a green but flat pitch. Kumar, perhaps wrongly shod, took a tumble in the second over but was dusted down by the close fielders and resumed. Sudireddy had pulled a four in the first over but edged Watts behind, and soon Jones had his second when Kumar drove to mid-off. Dubey batted like a prince until wafting over a straight one from the talented 15-year-old van der Walt, whose second spell was the fastest of the day. That made it 49-3 after 11.

Kota and Gulati were together for 20.4 overs, sprinting their singles and twos, and driving and pulling voraciously. Binfield's bowling and fielding held up well under the onslaught and there was scarcely a fielding error which bespoke great credit to the groundsman and the coaches. Gulati was bowled by the wily spinner Hesketh with 20 balls of the innings left. The stand of 135 was the highest since 2020, but not a record for the wicket (H. Desai and Lall hold that – 163 v. London Saints in 2011). Kota was batting phenomenally well and stood on 89. Raj Patel took guard and batted with composure, spurning no scoring opportunity but cleverly ceding the strike. A Kota pull for six took him to 95, three singles and a lofted off-driven four and he was there, an achievement worthy of great praise.

It was a big challenge for Binfield and Snelling and Chatharaju had their tails up. Henly pulled Chatharaju for two fours in the second over but going for a third was caught at square leg. Two overs later the captain was bowled. Snelling pulled up injured after carding 3-1-3-0 but his replacement S. Patel bowled Suresh with his second ball. When Chatharaju took a neat caught and bowled for his third, and Krishna induced an edge behind to see off the talented Gupta, it was 43-5 and Binfield were in serious trouble.

Sugumar and Hesketh then posted 49 in 52 balls against an array of bowlers. H. Patel had them both, Hesketh stumped after giving him the charge and Sugumar skying to cover Kota running in. Kumar bowled Thomas and Rakesh was run out by a direct hit by cover, Kota in the action again. As he was in the game's death throes when teenagers Thomas and van der Walt batted in the final seven overs under darkling skies, the South African taking Kota for four successive fours. Binfield had fought the good fight and though they finished short did well to see out the overs. From top to bottom, they impressed and after only two visits here this has become a fixture to savour.

Gentlemen of West London v. Wimbledon United

Sunday 8 May, Old Tenisonians. Wimbledon United won toss. Sunny, 20C

Won by 127 runs

Gentlemen of West London			Wimbledon United			
Krishna		b Khan	2	Nayak	b Dubey	13
Kumar	run out (Khan)		17	Hasan	c Kulasingam	14
Kota	lbw	b Prytherch	76	Ahmed	lbw	0
Dubey	c J. Hitchman	b Anand	17	Williams		0
†Sudireddy	c Khan	b Prytherch	0	Khan	run out (Kumar)	39
Chatharaju	lbw	b Saxby	4	Lamb		8
Parvathaneni	c Lamb	b Prytherch	63	Nawab	b Sirikonda	0
S. Patel		b Saxby	5	*Saxby	b S. Patel	4
Kulasingam	not out		18	Brown	c and	7
Sirikonda	not out		2	†J. Hitchman		0
*H. Patel dnb				Prytherch	not out	0
Extras	w5 b5 lb3		13	Extras	nb3 b1 lb1	5
Total	8 wickets	35 overs	217	Total	All out	21.1 overs
FoW: 11, 22, 50, 58, 75, 189, 190, 199			FoW: 23, 27, 27, 30, 56, 56, 66, 89, 89, 90			
Bowling: Brown 7-2-12-0, Khan 7-1-52-1, Anand 4-0-19-1, Prytherch 7-0-41-3, Saxby 5-0-37-2, Nawab 3-0-23-0, Hasan 1-0-18-0			Bowling: Chatharaju 5-1-16-2, Dubey 6-0-21-2, Sirikonda 4-0-15-2, S. Patel 3-0-25-1, H. Patel 2-1-2-2, Krishna 1.1-0-9-0			
Lamb 1-0-7-0						



Abhinav Parvathaneni's maiden Gents 50 (63) and Pavan Kota's 76 put the match beyond the plucky Maroons, the pair adding 114 in just 79 balls. The Gents now lead this series 5-3 having won the last three by expanding margins of 70, 99 and now 127 runs. Absent from the visitors' ranks were Cripps, Herbert and Hitchman Jr., who have always troubled the Gents, and by their own admission their side was not strong in batting.

But the game was not all one way, for Maroons had chosen to bowl on a breezy afternoon and thought their decision vindicated when the hosts subsided to 78-5 after 17.1 overs. Krishna, Sudireddy and Chatharaju fell for low scores while Kumar and Dubey, having both struck four fours (Dubey off Prytherch's first four balls) were smartly run out and caught behind off a feathered edge. Kumar's dismissal was unusual and well executed. Kota drove back to the bowler who spun and threw down the stumps with the batsman stranded out of his crease. The matter was debated entertainingly during the evening with unrepentant umpire S. Patel.

When the fifth wicket fell Kota had moved on to 32, having survived two drops. He and Parvathaneni, brushing off an unfortunate trouser malfunction, would exact a heavy price in the following hour.

The groundsmen had prepared a flat wicket with good carry, and an outfield with a No.1 trim. Boundaries flowed, both men crashing 11 fours and two sixes. Parvathaneni outscored his partner 63 to 44 in their time together. His square-cut, a notoriously hard shot to execute well, was a revelation and his booming drives down the ground unstoppable. Kota, locking away his early uncertainties, just powered on and on and at 185-5 off 30 a score near 240 seemed feasible.

Great credit must therefore attach to the Maroons, whose fielding had never wilted and who now got late reward. Kota was first to go, leg before after 30.2 overs and after a single by S. Patel Parvathaneni fell on 30.4, picking out cover point. Kulasingam, a wise cricketer, put bat to ball heartily and Gents closed on 217, more than expected after their shaky start.

Teas have returned on some grounds but not here and the break was set at 20 minutes. By now the great Horace Cleve Hibbert had pitched up, looking well and dispensing his usual wise insights on matters cricketing and spiritual. Raj and the injured Jay Patel would turn up an hour later, making for a jolly atmosphere.

The breeze got up again, the ball began to swing and conditions for seamers were perfect. United's innings never got going after a solid opening stand of 23 in 37 balls as Chatharaju and Dubey reduced them to 30-4 in the tenth over, two bowled, one lbw and one caught at long leg. Sirikonda, with his model action, and S. Patel then took over with the required run rate 7.5. The left-handed Khan was a talented batsman and smote Sirikonda for a huge six off a no-balled full toss but the student, in only his second appearance, took two in three balls. S. Patel got a deserved victim, 56-7. H. Patel also took two in three with a neat c&b and the bowling of the veteran Hitchman, who had given him the charge but missed. Khan had moved resolutely to 39 but was superbly run out by cover Kumar, who threw down the stumps at the bowler's end after confusion over a quick single.

After a tidal wave of such positivity let us end on with two moans, both easily fixable. First, timekeeping was sloppy with only four men present at the appointed time and plenty of work needing to be done moving out the boundaries and stumping up. These tasks fell on the captain and his three punctual acolytes and should have been shared around. The match therefore started ten minutes late, squarely the fault of the Gents. Such delays are discourteous to the oppo and can even influence the result, e.g. against Bricklayer's Arms in August 2021 when the Gents were half an hour late for a match that was abandoned with 38 balls left.

Secondly, why was it not 40 overs? It was a sunny day and the ground was perfect. Pitches have shot up in price, we need the game time, and the club's preferred format, as expressed frequently at AGMs, is 40 not 35. Should the visiting captain gripe about this then we can insist on it as our hosts often do. There is a place for being an accommodating host, and full marks to the skipper for his desire to extend a warm welcome, but such deviations from club policy need to be ruthlessly eradicated.

Remorseless Pavan has Jim Wright in his sights

'Making predictions,' the Danish politician Karl Steincke once remarked, 'is difficult, but even more so when they are about the future.' So let us therefore restrict ourselves to hard facts. With his third score of 50 or more in 2022, and his 26th in all, Pavan Kota overtook Mark Ashton (25) and moved within five of Sanjay Patel (31).

He is five runs shy of Jim Wright's career aggregate of 3,020 runs. Dhruv Patel (3,225), Mark Ashton (3,848) and Sanjay Patel (6,871) remain ahead of him.

It's never too early for the averages

Player (debut*)	M.	Inn.	NO	Runs	Avg.	Ct./St.	O	M	Runs	Wck.	Avg.
Chatharaju	5	4	-	58	14.50	2	21	2	101	7	14.43
Dubey	3	3	1	46	23.00	2	16	3	59	3	19.67
Gulati	3	3	-	54	18.00	2	10.5	3	43	2	21.50
*Kalisetty	1	1	-	0	0.00	-	5	1	8	2	4.00
*Kamat	1	1	-	15	15.00	-	1	0	12	0	-
Kota	5	5	1	288	72.00	2	3.4	0	23	1	23.00
Krishna	4	3	-	26	8.67	-	15.2	0	79	4	19.75
Kulasingam	2	2	1	40	40.00	1	4	0	11	1	11.00
Kumar	4	4	-	58	14.50	-	7	3	20	1	20.00
*Parvathaneni	4	4	-	69	17.25	1	15	1	83	6	13.83
H. Patel	4	2	-	6	3.00	2	16	1	60	5	12.00
R. Patel	3	3	1	10	5.00	-	9	0	30	1	30.00
S. Patel	5	4	1	68	22.67	-	12	1	72	3	24.00
Pentakota	1	1	-	2	2.00	1	1	0	6	0	-
Pingili	1	1	-	16	16.00	1	-	-	-	-	-
Puli	2	2	-	19	9.50	2	3	0	20	1	20.00
Sirikonda	1	1	1	2	-	-	4	0	15	2	3.75
Snelling	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	3	0	-
Sudireddy	3	3	-	19	6.33	4/1	-	-	-	-	-
*Varasala	1	1	-	9	9.00	-	7	0	40	4	10.00

The Last Ball of Summer by Stephen Bignell ****1/2



Our friend Mr. Bignell, whose CV boasts 76 appearances for the Gents and a large multiple of that for West XI and the Tigers, has maintained a lifelong interest in cricket and the Great War. A wry and accurate observer of cricket and cricketers, his debut novel cleverly fuzes these two themes. The context needs stating. The Great War 1914-1918 (or 1919 – the year is disputed) between the Allied Powers and the Central Powers saw nine million killed in combat, five million civilian deaths from military occupation, bombardment, hunger, and disease, and millions more dead from genocides and the 1918 influenza pandemic.



Colin Blythe, Kent and England 1879-1917

The dead included 275 first-class cricketers of whom twelve were Test players (seven South Africans, four Englishmen including Colin Blythe, and one Australian). West Indies would not play its first Test till 1928, New Zealand 1930, India 1932 and Pakistan 1952. British headmasters of the day would assemble their pupils to tell them tearfully of the deaths of old boys and sometimes masters. The 1939 film *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, based on James Hilton's 1934 novella, features just such a scene. Mothers and sweethearts would dread the arrival of the Post Office messenger boy carrying a telegram that would begin 'Deeply regret to inform you...'

Boys leaving school to fight for King and Country are the subject of this book. The characters, or should one say their foibles, are inspired by participants in Gents v. West XI games of a few years ago. Anybody who played in them will instantly recognise Professor Brooman, Bigglesworth, Billy Hill, Tommy Banter, Professor Purviss, Sebastian Renshaw, Pongo Smelling, Freddie Wright-Herbert and the Mosleys. We follow them from school to the Western Front where we know it will not be broad sunlit uplands.

The characters are finely drawn. Why then have no actions for libel been gazetted? Quantifiable loss would be hard to prove and among Sunday cricketers at least self-deprecation still exists. One boy may be said to be Bignell's prototype, Arthur Collins who in 1899 aged 13 scored 628 not out ('plus or minus twenty shall we say' according to scorer Peglar) in a junior school match at Clifton College. Poor Cyril Lindrea finished with 50-5-218-0 and within a year would die while still a schoolboy. What of young Collins? He survived school but never played first-class cricket and was killed in action on 11 November 1914 at the First Battle of Ypres while serving as a captain in the Royal Engineers. He was 29.

Half a star has been debited because the school scenes do not always fit together. The author went to a grammar and might have been better to set them in such an environment, or to have consulted for details his old West XI team mates, most of whom were public schoolboys. But this is a minor quibble. Taken all in, it is a first-rate read for summer and comes thoroughly recommended by *The Gent*.