



Decade 2

Andrew Burman

Gentlemen of West London CC 1998-2007

1998 Played 18 Won 7 Drawn 1 Abandoned 3 Lost 7

Debuts Beaumont, L. Flack, Heap, H. Patel, Naik, Rix
Runs S. Patel 397, D. Patel 239, Murphy 202, Buck 138
Wickets D. Patel 23, S. Patel 18, Snelling 16, Todd 11
Ct./St. S. Patel 5

10/5	Victoria RG	Urban Associates 206-6 (Mantha 90, Glover 29, Maxwell 26, C. Mitchell 3-27) Gents 90 (M. Ashton 35, Gathercole 3-14)	Lost 116 runs
17/5	Victoria RG	Gents 142 (M. Ashton 52, Bignell 4-22) West XI 146-7 (Mattimoe 56, Hassan 20*, Todd 3-30) BA	Lost 4 wickets
24/5	British Gas	12 Angry Men 140-9 (Sawyer 59, Todd 3-13, S. Patel 3-33) Gents 101 (S. Patel 43, Brand 3-9, Bullock 3-13)	Lost 39 runs
31/5	Victoria RG	Gents 107 (D. Patel 37, C. Mitchell 27, Tupling 3-24) Wandham 108-3 (Carbro 56*)	Lost 7 wickets
7/6	KGF Tolworth	Gents 175-9 (S. Patel 67, Rix 21) FC Chad 79 (Collings 20)	Won 96 runs
20/6	Town Park	Gents 198-7 dec. (Bignell 56, C. Mitchell 35, Harper-Dallas 31, S. Patel 31, Cronin 3-3) London Saints 101 (T. Mayhew 29, S. Patel 4-17, Snelling 4-22)	Won 97 runs
5/7	Victoria RG	Gents 106 (Coad 4-23, Trow 3-15) Sunderland SC 81 (S. Patel 3-17, Snelling 3-22, D. Patel 3-24)	Won 25 runs
11/7	Long Ditton RG	Gents 150-5 (D. Patel 50, Murphy 41, Buck 30*, Sunil 3-28) Enterprise 29-2	Abandoned
19/7	Boston Manor Park	Gents 123 (Boddington 32, Hughes 27, Vine 5-16) West XI 125-4 (Vine 84*) BA	Lost 6 wickets
26/7	Victoria RG	NB Weasels 227 (Groves-Loader 111, Seddon 26, Snelling 5-38) Gents 67-8 (Owen 3-7, Kirkwood 3-14)	Drawn
1/8	Town Park	Gents 16-1, Sunderland SC did not bat	Abandoned
2/8	KGF Tolworth	Gents 173-6 (S. Patel 59, Murphy 31) Enterprise 87 (Beaumont 27, K. Dimond 20, D. Patel 5-12, Snelling 3-15)	Won 86 runs
9/8	Victoria RG	Gents 159-9 (Murphy 43, K. Dimond 25, S. Patel 23, Buck 20) Virgin Casuals 160-1 (Allack 64*, Spratt 51)	Lost 9 wickets
16/8	Victoria RG	Gents 166-7 (S. Patel 54, D. Patel 22, Murphy 21) FC Chad 149 (K. Dimond 61, Heap 28)	Won 17 runs
23/8	Victoria RG	Gents 57-3, British Gas did not bat	Abandoned
30/8	King's College	Gents 146-7 (S. Patel 46, Naik 20, Collings 3-20) FC Chad 120-5 (Collings 36*, C. Russell 22) PC	Won 26 runs
30/8	King's College	Gents 76 (Laiq 20, Snelling 20, Owen 3-13) NB Weasels 79-2 (Tattersdill 20*) PC	Lost 8 wickets
6/9	Victoria RG	Old Gents 135 (D. Patel 49 ret. hurt, Murphy 34) Gents 141-5 (S. Patel 31*, Snelling 24*, Naish 24)	Won 3 wickets

Decade was written in the afterglow of five years' unbroken success, which boasted 64 wins in 97 games, with the Bob Ashton Memorial Cup won every year. This was bound to incur a reaction; the Gents had become the team to beat. In the damp summer of 1998 opponents improved, the Gents suffered with injuries and some players moved away or lost interest. From a strategic point of view the club also made mistakes. The base of opponents remained too small, little effort was made to find an improved home ground and succession planning was non-existent. For years, the charismatic Ashton had led the club but well though Dhruv Patel did in his prolonged absence from May there was little attempt to groom a long-term successor. This was the year Sanjay Patel came of age. He had a superb season but in a watershed year results saw a profound downturn in a rainy summer in which only 15 games were completed. The main absences were Wright (travelling in New Zealand), Ashton (injured in the first West XI game), while the gentle Lancastrian Maughan opted for the golf course, having played only one game in 1997.

Five of the seven wins came against irregular opposition but the campaign was not wholly unenjoyable, firstly because expectations were not too high and secondly because of the cheerful leadership of D. Patel, who after Ashton's injury kept the ship afloat. It was the year when everybody got a go and, unlike the Ashton era, nobody got glared at or muttered at. If it worked, fine, if not, there was always next week. "You had better bat first," he said to 12 Angry Men, "otherwise it will be all over by three-thirty." Sad but true.

The statistics of the season were neither compelling nor misleading: Snelling's took 24 fewer wickets and D. Patel's 11; the average score was the lowest since 1992; and the number of wins, down from 12 in 1997 to seven, was the lowest since 1991. S. Patel, however, scored 397 runs, up from 250. It was clear that he was a gifted all-rounder but was perhaps not at this point seen as a potential captain.

West XI deservedly regained the Bob Ashton Memorial Cup with after a fine display by new signing, the confident Australian Cameron Vine, who ripped through the late order and then hit a pulsating 84*. Thereafter the season meandered on in a pleasant enough way, with predictable results, though the Gents blocked a tense draw against, for whom Ian Groves-Loader had scored a fluent hundred before holing out to that splendid fielder Mark Burville. A young student made his debut against FC Chad on 16 August. His name? Hemin Patel.

An enjoyable President's Cup, in this era a well planned and executed competition, was won by Weasels after Dhruv Patel horrifically ran himself out first ball in the final. The season ended with past players taking on the new wave in a 30-over tenth anniversary fixture. The day was marred by a facial injury to Dhruv, knocked on the conk by a Dolan beamer when on 49 and carted off to Kingston hospital. He deserved better than that after keeping things going so well all year. This game saw the farewells of stalwarts Simon Alderman, Des Dolan and Richard Sambrook Smith, while John Townley would play only once more.

1999 Played 22 Won 9 Drawn 1 Abandoned 2 Lost 10

Debuts	A. Culasy, Toft
Runs	M. Ashton 316, D. Patel 290, S. Patel 281, J. Wright 204, Snelling 162, Boddington 157, Hughes 119, Buck 109, Todd 108
Wickets	Snelling 43, S. Patel 16, D. Patel 15, Todd 13, J. Wright 12
Ct./St.	M. Ashton 12/2, Richmond 8, A. Culasy 5/1
Notes	Most overs and most wickets in a season: Snelling season's analysis was 149.5-25-417-43 BB by a Gent: 8-33 Snelling v. 12 Angry Men.

25/4	Honor Oak	Gents 100 (Ansari 3-6) Exiles 104-4 (Ansari 67*)	Lost 6 wickets
2/5	Victoria RG	Urban Associates 186-7 (Kirk 69, Clift 39*, Matthews 33) Gents 112 (D. Patel 26, Snelling 24)	Lost 74 runs
9/5	Fire Brigade	Gents 152 (S. Patel 66, M. Ashton 34, Wardle 4-36, Carbro 3-44) Wandham 153-5 (N. Wilson 81)	Lost 5 wickets
16/5	Albert Road RG	12 Angry Men 108 (Cossart 32, Snelling 8-33) Gents 112-4 (D. Patel 24, S. Patel 23, J. Wright 22, Hughes 21)	Won 6 wickets
23/5	Victoria RG	Gents 211 (Heap 40, Fryer-Kelsey 37, J. Wright 22, Jones 3-44) FC Chad 145 (K. Naish 53, Rix 3-37)	Won 66 runs
30/5	Victoria RG	Gents 173-7 (Hughes 84, J. Wright 31, K. Patel 4-37, Carbro 3-34) Wandham 96 (Wardle 29, Heald 20)	Won 77 runs
6/6	Victoria RG	West XI 101-7 (Bignell 30, Taylor 20, Snelling 3-7) Gents 103-6 (M. Ashton 29, Mattimoe 3-28) BA	Won 4 wickets
12/6	CSSC Eltham	Gents 151 (Harper-Dallas 64*, S. Patel 25) NB Weasels 37-1	Abandoned
19/6	Town Park	London Saints 154-8 dec. (Swidierski 39, Cotton 25*, O'Donoghue 20, D. Patel 3-40, S. Patel 3-40) Gents 91 (D. Patel 31, Cronin 3-13, Swidierski 3-30)	Lost 63 runs
20/6	KGF Tolworth	Gents 147-9 (D. Patel 60, K. Dimond 3-30) Enterprise 89 (Murphy 3-13)	Won 58 runs
27/6	Sutton Common RG	Robin Hood 174-3 (Rafiq 59*, Douglas 43, Towe 29*) Gents 109-10 (S. Patel 26, D. Patel 20, Rafiq 6-16)	Lost 65 runs
4/7	Victoria RG	Gents 125 (D. Patel 35, Richmond 24*, Naish 22, Spedding 4-15) Sunderland SC 129-7 (Hardy 58, D. Patel 3-32)	Lost 3 wickets
11/7	Victoria RG	Gents 124 (K. Dimond 20, Shannon 4-34, Hibbert 3-42) 12 Angry Men 83 (Snelling 6-24)	Won 41 runs
18/7	Gunnersbury Park	Gents 166 (M. Ashton 54, Boddington 35, S. Patel 22, Reeves 3-30) West XI 150-7 (Seale 44*, Mattimoe 42, Snelling 4-16) BA	Won 16 runs
25/7	KGF Tolworth	NB Weasels 174-3 dec. (Tattersdill 48, W. Flack 46, Newlands 29*) Gents 81-9 (H. Patel 24, Owen 4-5)	Drawn
31/7	Town Park	Gents 188-9 (M. Ashton 46, S. Patel 41, Thornicroft 27, Coad 3-43) Sunderland SC 184-9 (Curry 61, Rough 37, Snelling 3-35)	Won 4 runs
1/8	Victoria RG	Enterprise 135 (Parker 38, Harper 25, K. Dimond 24, Chawle 4-15, Snelling 3-1) Gents 132-7 (J. Wright 29, Snelling 28)	Lost 3 runs
15/8	Victoria RG	London Saints 209-4 dec. (T. Mayhew 70, Swidierski 56*, J. Ramdial 30, Cotton 21*) Gents 174 (D. Patel 50, J. Wright 24, Buck 23, H. Patel 21, Swidierski 3-59)	Lost 35 runs
29/8	King's College	FC Chad 127-5 (Cooper 52*, L. Flack 27) Gents 122-9 (Boddington 44, M. Ashton 26, B. Russell 3-19) PC	Lost 5 runs
29/8	King's College	Gents 87 (Burville 27, W. Flack 3-6, Owen 3-13) NB Weasels 89-2 (W. Flack 53*) PC	Lost 8 wickets
5/9	Victoria RG	Church Street Nomads 169-4 dec. (Siddiqui 50*, Brett 47, Armes 46) Gents did not bat	Abandoned
12/9	Raynes Park SG	West XI 133 (Hill 30, Harper-Dallas 23, Snelling 4-15, Boddington 4-35) Gents 134-5 (Boddington 45, M. Ashton 40*) BA	Won 5 wickets

Ashton's last full season was the first losing one since 1990, but an improvement on the damp, frustrating 1998 campaign, though the 13 Gent run out victims may have disagreed. It was a curious season, at times, as in the President's Cup, undisciplined and fractious, at others, e.g. against West XI, highly competent. Nor did the weather follow a consistent pattern. The sun shone much of the time but there were spectacular floods at Eltham and Surbiton. FC Chad gained their only win against the Gents, but the Bob Ashton Memorial Cup was regained 3-0. Stuart Snelling took 21-3-38-11 in the rubber and on 16 May returned 17-6-33-8 against 12 Angry Men on his way to a season's aggregate of 149.5-25-417-43, records for both number of overs and wickets.

It was the year the tail wagged, innings recovering from 88-4 to 211 (FC Chad), 63-7 to 124 (12 Angry Men), 84-5 to 166 (West XI) and 90-5 to 188-9 (Sunderland SC). Full sides were fielded in all but three games and in two of those a Gent was loaned to the opposition to even up the numbers. There were plenty of comedy moments, with Mr Ashton usually to the fore. Pre-match briefings on his journeys to the games from Hitchin, in which everyone and everything was blamed except his poor sense of direction, became much looked forward to. His wicket-keeping, especially those leg-side takes with a combination of pad, glove and arm, had several players in stitches. Yet as he rightly countered, he was the first catcher into double figures in five years. Snelling turned up for a game in tight Lycra cycling shorts and Fryer-Kelsey dyed his hair blond. It was that sort of summer.

The campaign comprised a healthy middle period of just three defeats in 13 games, but with only one win out of nine either side of it. It was generally a bowler's season while the catching statistics recorded not only Ashton's impressive tally behind the timbers but a splendid eight for Fielder of the Year Richmond. His apart, only 20 other outfield catches were taken, a poor show. The President's Cup was a gruesome day for the club, but a notable one for FC Chad and the ultimate winners, New Barbarian Weasels. The season ended with an abandonment against Church Street Nomads due to a thunderstorm before the third win against West XI, who suffered in 1999 from both the absence of their 1998 hero Vine and limp leadership. This season was the end of an era. Ken Toft played the first of his 137 games in the July classic at Town Park against Sunderland SC.

2000 Played 21 Won 15 Drawn 1 Abandoned 2 Lost 3

Debuts	Beepath, Evans, Fitch, Irvin, Minhas, Sciberras
Runs	J. Wright 756, S. Patel 300, D. Patel 256, Harper-Dallas 135, Snelling 135, Buck 125, Evans 115, Boddington 109, Sciberras 108
Wickets	S. Patel 30, Snelling 24, J. Wright 21, Todd 20, D. Patel 16, Fitch 13
Ct/St.	S. Patel 8, Sciberras 8, J. Wright 7, Snelling 6
Notes	Record successful chasing score by Gents: 235-9 <i>v.</i> 12 Angry Men Record ninth-wicket stand by Gents: 108 Hibbert (81) and Sciberras (22) <i>v.</i> Virgin Casuals Record sixth-wicket stand by opponents: 100 Dane (73) and Walton (53) (West XI)

7/5	Paulin Ground	12 Angry Men 121 (Harper 41, Hadfield 32, Bullock 21, J. Wright 3-37, D. Patel 3-41) Gents 122-8 (Snelling 26*, D. Patel 20, Evans 20)	Won 2 wickets
14/5	Fire Brigade	Gents 185-9 dec. (J. Wright 102, Evans 23, Wardle 5-53) Wandham 80-7 (Carbro 27*, Snelling 4-19, S. Patel 3-11)	Drawn
21/5	Victoria RG	London Owls 98 (Fitch 36, Barton 34, Boddington 4-0) Gents 101-3 (J. Wright 46*, Boddington 24*)	Won 7 wickets
4/6	Victoria RG	Gents 139 (J. Wright 61, C. Wright 4-23) West XI 109 (Charlton 26, D. Patel 4-22, J. Wright 3-20) BA	Won 30 runs
10/6	Town Park	Gents 184-4 dec. (Harper-Dallas 76*, Bignell 43, Fitch 35) London Saints 113 (Cotton 40, Todd 3-17)	Won 71 runs
11/6	Victoria RG	Enterprise 160 (W. Dimond 35, K. Dimond 32, Withers 30*, Fitzgerald 27, Sciberras 3-36) Gents 141 (J. Wright 41, Snelling 27, W. Dimond 4-13, McEvoy 3-29)	Lost 19 runs
18/6	King's College	Gents 192-7 dec. (J. Wright 80*, Buck 37, S. Patel 34, Owen 3-32, Raderecht 3-54) NB Weasels 72 (Pinnock 30, Sier 20, Snelling 4-22, S. Patel 3-12)	Won 120 runs
25/6	Victoria RG	Gents 174-3 (J. Wright 100*, Evans 25) London Canaries 109 (Hussain 36, Evans 3-21)	Won 65 runs
1/7	Beverley Park	Gents 181-7 (S. Patel 69, Harper-Dallas 59, K. Dimond 4-31) Enterprise 105 (S. Patel 3-10)	Won 76 runs
9/7	Victoria RG	Plums 96-6 (Snyman 30*, Todd 3-12) Gents did not bat	Abandoned
16/7	Victoria RG	Gents 208 (D. Patel 62, J. Wright 30, Comber 3-6) NB Weasels 101 (Newlands 28, Snelling 3-8)	Won 107 runs
23/7	Gunnery Park	West XI 96 (Harper-Dallas 38*) Gents 97-5 (D. Patel 25, S. Patel 22*, Taylor 3-20) BA	Won 5 wickets
6/8	Beverley Park	Sunderland SC 94 (Hardy 36, Todd 5-14) Gents 95-3 (J. Wright 56*)	Won 7 wickets
12/8	Kinver	Gents 190 (D. Patel 60*, Pearce 4-54) Enville 151 (Branch 73, Fitch 5-25, D. Patel 4-25)	Won 39 runs
13/8	Enville	Bedouins 145-1 (Moxon 51*, Thomas 51*) Gents did not bat	Abandoned
20/8	Victoria RG	Gents 142 (S. Patel 65*, Pearce 3-37) London Saints 145-8 (Berkeley 29, Griffiths 28, Sciberras 3-22, J. Wright 3-29)	Lost 2 wickets
27/8	King's College	Gents 174-6 (J. Wright 50*, D. Patel 24, S. Patel 22) NB Weasels 107-4 (Woodhead 52*, Tattersdill 35) PC	Won 67 runs
27/8	King's College	NB Weasels 67-7 (Tattersdill 46*, J. Wright 3-13) Gents 68-4 (J. Wright 22) PC	Won 6 wickets
3/9	Victoria RG	12 Angry Men 231-3 (Denton 57, Bullock 35, D. Wilson 31 ret. hurt, Brand 23, Anderson 23*) Gents 235-9 (J. Wright 103, Snelling 42, Harper 3-36)	Won 1 wicket
10/9	KGF Morden	West XI 178-7 (Dane 73, Walton 53, S. Patel 4-21) Gents 162-8 (Minhas 62*, Buck 27, Sciberras 26, Sangaralingam 3-23) BA	Lost 16 runs
17/9	Shepherd's Bush	Gents 213 (Hibbert 81, Hadfield 31, Sciberras 22, Levesley 3-33, Rolfe 3-36) Brondesbury (formerly Virgin) Casuals 146 (Millar 32, Hilton 22, Fitch 3-24, D. Patel 3-28)	Won 67 runs

After dismal early season weather caused two cancellations, the Gents enjoyed an unbeaten May to christen their most successful season to date, the first under the captaincy of Snelling, who had taken over from Ashton in the winter. Wright dominated the batting with a record 756 runs including three centuries and four fifties. Mark Sciberras, who would play 175 times, Damian Evans and Eddie Fitch joined which gave the Gents a more youthful look. Ashton missed the season and would only play a handful more games. Only Enterprise, London Saints and, in a dead rubber, West XI got the better of an improved, more balanced team. The season's first defeat came in an excellent game against Enterprise, sexagenarian Bill Dimond and son Keith producing sterling performances, who were one of only six sides to bowl the Gents out.

The Enterprise return was S. Patel's captaincy debut. He put on 137 with Harper-Dallas in a game in which five penalty runs were conceded when the ball hit a McDonald's bag containing the tea of one Nicholas Boddington, which the bespectacled southpaw had carried to his fielding position. "Ever the innovators and groundbreakers, the Gentlemen of West London CC raised the virtuosity of cricket teas to a new level," observed Bignell.

Ian Richmond organised the first tour, to the West Midlands. A run-filled Saturday game on an artificial school wicket included a Fitch five-for and a D. Patel hat-trick, which guest Andy Robinson harshly debriefed as "a dodgy stumping decision, a poor boy so frightened he trod on his stumps and the easiest catch I've ever seen." At Enville CC a day later, the ex-Birmingham League openers retired according to the rules of the game. Rain ended proceedings early to the relief of the tourists, who then tucked into a generous tea. "A reality check," observed Sciberras. It was despite the rain the best of the club's tours to this beautiful part of England, not least because of the efforts of Buck, who, lacking only mauve jacket and polyester tie, ferried everyone about in a minibus as though a coach driver born and bred.

With the Bob Ashton Cup retained 2-1, and victory in the President's Cup, it was a remarkably good season. Wright scored his third century in the club's record chase, against 12 Angry Men for whom Denton scored 57. Only Husain (680 in 2007) and Kota (674 in 2019) have since come near this total.

2001 Played 21 Won 12 Abandoned 1 Lost 8

Debuts	Denton, Knock
Runs	S. Patel 430, J. Wright 346, Buck 343, Minhas 319, Irvin 264, D. Patel 174, Sciberras 135, M. Ashton 119
Wickets	Snelling 39, S. Patel 26, D. Patel 19, J. Wright 13, Buck 12, Fitch 12, Todd 11
Ct/St.	Irvin 6/3, Snelling 8, S. Patel 7, Sciberras 6
Notes	HS by opponents: 284-3 (12 Angry Men) Record ninth-wicket stand by opponents: 68 Heafield (40) and Wall (19) (London Rams) Five wickets in five balls: Snelling 6-6 <i>v.</i> London Canaries

6/5	Victoria RG	Gents 168-9 (J. Wright 73, Rowe 4-43) London Rams 117 (Severn 46, Boddington 3-11, Knock 3-33)	Won 51 runs
20/5	Victoria RG	Urban Associates 123 (Joseph 36, Mantha 33, Zachariah 20, D. Patel 6-16) Gents 127-5 (S. Patel 39*, Minhas 28, J. Wright 21)	Won 5 wickets
26/5	Victoria RG	Gents 81 (Trow 3-2, Coad 3-19) Sunderland SC 82-8 (Coad 27, McGirr 23, Snelling 4-10)	Lost 1 wicket
3/6	Fairfield RG	West XI 152 (C. Wright 45, Walton 29, Taylor 26, Snelling 4-12) Gents 142 (D. Patel 49, Minhas 30, Dane 3-24, Folley 3-35) BA	Lost 10 runs
9/6	Church Street RG	London Saints 164-6 dec. (A. Mayhew 39*, Nanton 37, Cotton 26) Gents 62 (Thomas 5-15)	Lost 102 runs
10/6	Victoria RG	Gents 172 (Buck 46, J. Wright 46, W. Dimond 4-37, K. Dimond 3-33) Enterprise 47 (Fitch 4-18)	Won 125 runs
23/6	Victoria RG	Gents 174-8 (Minhas 50, Boddington 25, Knock 25, Irvin 24, McGirr 4-30) Sunderland SC 178-6 (Stewart 58, McGirr 34, Coad 26)	Lost 4 wickets
24/6	Victoria RG	London Owls 156 (Bulmer 74, Barton 31, Buck 3-35) Gents 157-6 (S. Patel 58*, Irvin 31, Fitch 3-29)	Won 4 wickets
1/7	Victoria RG	Gents 225-5 (Minhas 78, M. Ashton 61, D. Patel 20) London Canaries 17 (Snelling 6-6)	Won 208 runs
8/7	Victoria RG	Gents 181-5 (Minhas 41, S. Patel 35, Sciberras 30*, D. Patel 24) Enterprise 107 (W. Dimond 32*, McEvoy 27, Snelling 4-10, Buck 3-20)	Won 74 runs
15/7	Victoria RG	Gents 261-4 dec. (Buck 102 ret. hurt, Irvin 41, S. Patel 27*, J. Wright 27, Minhas 25) NB Weasels 77 (Lynch 28, Snelling 5-3, Todd 3-44)	Won 184 runs
22/7	Gunnorsbury Park	West XI 125-8 (C. Wright 27, S. Patel 4-7) Gents 126-6 (Irvin 41, Buck 24, S. Patel 22*) BA	Won 4 wickets
28/7	Belairst Park	London Rams 117 (Heafield 40, Severn 26, Sciberras 4-30, S. Patel 3-9) Gents 119-7 (S. Patel 21, Sciberras 21, Thompson 3-19)	Won 3 wickets
29/7	Victoria RG	12 Angry Men 284-3 (D. Wilson 100, Bullock 65, Anderson 53*, Denton 27) Gents 164 (Buck 28, Minhas 27, Shannon 3-26, Conroy 3-35)	Lost 120 runs
5/8	Victoria RG	Exiles 221-6 (Atkins 101*, Hobley 61) Gents 62 (Anderson 5-12, Weir 3-25)	Lost 159 runs
11/8	Kinver	Gents 200 (S. Patel 88, D. Patel 26) Enville 140 (Goring 47, Willis 21, Sciberras 4-25)	Won 60 runs
19/8	Victoria RG	London Saints 86 (Thomas 23*, S. Patel 5-13) Gents 6-2	Abandoned
26/8	LSE	NB Weasels 130 (Perry 76, Buck 4-26) Gents 131-2 (Irvin 41*, J. Wright 28) PC	Won 8 wickets
2/9	Victoria RG	Gents 177 (S. Patel 56, Evans 25, Wadeson 3-33) Plums 151-9 (Attenborough 55, Folley 22*, Shea 20, Snelling 3-22)	Won 26 runs
9/9	Brondesbury	Brondesbury Casuals 207-7 (Spratt 56, Arnold 39*, Mugeridge 34, Bailey 22, Todd 3-29) Gents 108 (J. Wright 22, Johnson 4-14, Bailey 3-23)	Lost 99 runs
16/9	Berkhamsted	Gents 194-8 (J. Wright 47, M. Ashton 38*, Buck 27) West XI 196-5 (Dane 51, Taylor 39, Walton 32*, Rawlings 24) BA	Lost 5 wickets

Despite a healthy number of wins, the fleeting return of Ashton and some solid individual performances, including four batsmen with 300 or more runs, this was a difficult season. Captain Snelling was not given the unconditional support that should have been his as of right, there was friction within the club and three of the defeats were by embarrassing margins. The friendliness of the Gents, something the eloquent and perceptive Sciberras felt was “instinctive and imperative” to preserve, was gradually being eroded. Towards the end of the season there was a regression to the bickering of 1999 with graceless behaviour both in victory and defeat.

Furthermore, though there was mid-season talk of a merger between the Gents and West XI and a brief sarcasm amnesty, relations between the clubs fell to a new low. Snelling was outmanoeuvred tactically by Wright in the Bob Ashton Memorial Cup but received little support from some of his senior players in the two defeats, though the President’s Cup was solidly retained. New Barbarian Weasels were having problems in 2001 and the captain was glad to write them a letter of encouragement before an EGM at which their very future was discussed. The circuit was pleased that they continued and they still play.

Damon Wilson was the only man to hit a century against both West XI (in 2002) and the Gents. Having suffered some agonising defeats to their old rivals since 1999, Wilson, supported by fifties from Bullock and Anderson, helped 12 Angry Men to post the highest score by opponents, 284-3. A reply of 164 had a certain dignity which the 62 all out (minus Snelling) against Exiles a week later (a ton here for Atkins) certainly did not.

Buck scored his only century against the Weasels, though soon after reaching this milestone he walked into a high full-pitch and ended his day in Kingston hospital. Remarkably, he has no other fifties to his name. Snelling took five wickets in five balls against London Canaries and the Gents said goodbye to Daniel Todd who took 148 wickets in his 147 games and remains seventh in the all-time list. Peter Denton, whose demeanour and sportsmanship were in diametrical opposition to some of the chancers infesting the club in this era, made the first of his 129 appearances.

2002 Played 20 Won 11 Tied 1 Abandoned 2 Lost 6

Debuts Gilkes, Hancock, S. Jones, J. Lewis
Runs J. Wright 373, D. Patel 303, S. Jones 287, S. Patel 279, Fitch 153, Buck 144, Sciberras 128
Wickets S. Patel 29, Snelling 25, J. Wright 12, S. Jones 10, D. Patel 10
Ct/St. Fitch 6, Sciberras 6
Notes HS by a Gent: 158* Jones *v.* West XI

28/4	Victoria RG	Gents 137-3 (D. Patel 53*) St Anne's Allstars 7-1	Abandoned
5/5	Victoria RG	Gents 160-7 (S. Patel 55, Fitch 23*) London Rams 160-8 (Derriman 66, Severn 27, Boddington 3-21)	Tied
12/5	Hampstead Heath	Gents 91-10 (D. Patel 36, Bullock 4-11) 12 Angry Men 78 (S. Patel 3-14, J. Wright 3-15)	Won 13 runs
19/5	Victoria RG	Urban Associates 193-4 (Joseph 98, Wahi 32) Gents 96 (P. Johnson 3-11, I. Johnson 3-19) PL	Lost 97 runs
25/5	Victoria RG	Gents 189-9 (D. Patel 85, Fitch 37, Trow 4-37) Sunderland SC 77 (Curry 24, Stewart 22, Snelling 4-10)	Won 112 runs
2/6	Victoria RG	West XI 227-6 (C. Wright 43, Dane 42, Taylor 33, Bignell 31) Gents 145 (D. Patel 44, M. Ashton 27, S. Patel 23, Laing 5-6) BA PL	Lost 82 runs
8/6	Town Park	London Saints 90 (Jones 29, Knock 3-22) Gents 94-2 (Murphy 37*, Evans 34*)	Won 8 wickets
15/6	CSSC Chiswick	New Barbarian Weasels 167-9 (Perry 39, Michaels 24, Bishop 22, Mortimer 22) Gents 90 (Snelling 26, Michaels 4-13, Owen 4-23) PL	Lost 77 runs
29/6	Victoria RG	Gents 193-6 (J. Wright 87*, Snelling 35*, Buck 25, D. Lemmon 5-33) London Canaries 59 (Harty 27, S. Patel 4-8)	Won 134 runs
7/7	Cottenham Park	Urban Associates 174-5 (Gathercole 57, I. Howard 28, Kirk 23) Gents 97 (Buck 43) PL	Lost 77 runs
13/7	Victoria RG	Gents 208 (J. Wright 55, S. Jones 28, Irvin 26, Pagan 3-19) NB Weasels 180-4 (Bishop 85*, Michaels 36) PL	Won 28 runs
21/7	Gunnersbury Park	Gents 249-6 (S. Jones 158*, D. Patel 20) West XI 150-6 (Taylor 56, Walton 28) BA PL	Won 99 runs
27/7	Muswell Hill RG	London Rams 85 (Sydenham 25*, S. Patel 4-17, C. Wright 3-23) Gents 89-4 (C. Wright 27*, Dane 25)	Won 6 wickets
28/7	Victoria RG	12 Angry Men 160-6 (Conroy 42, Hibbert 30, Hill 3-18) Gents 164-9 (S. Jones 48, S. Patel 38*, Hibbert 3-16, Conroy 3-27)	Won 1 wicket
4/8	Victoria RG	Sunderland SC 121-3 (Stewart 50*, Hardy 37) Gents did not bat	Abandoned
11/8	Enville	Bedouins 122 (Thomas 60, D. Patel 3-33) Gents 117-9 (S. Patel 24, Fitch 23)	Lost 5 runs
18/8	Victoria RG	Gents 191 (J. Wright 79, S. Patel 34, S. Jones 33, Griffiths 6-31) London Saints 103 (Swidierski 37, S. Patel 4-8, Sciberras 3-1)	Won 88 runs
24/8	Victoria RG	Strongroom 134 (John 33, Bully 33, Ray 23, Snelling 3-20) Gents 139-6 (C. Wright 51*, J. Wright 33, Orme 4-19)	Won 4 wickets
8/9	Brondesbury	Gents 107 (Hill 24, Johnson 4-23) Brondesbury Casuals 108-0 (Holt 47*, Bennetts 39*)	Lost 10 wickets
15/9	Berkhamsted	Gents 155-6 (J. Wright 33, S. Patel 32, Fitch 31, D. Patel 23) West XI 154-8 (Rennie 27, Sangaralingam 24*, J. Wright 3-28) BA	Won 1 run

Had West XI been beaten the previous September, then 2001 might have been regarded as a successful year. The natural West London order was, however, restored in 2002 in a splendid game – Ashton's last – at Berkhamsted and the Gents would feel better about themselves. The pendulum would swing to West XI in 2003 with the signing of Vyas and Bhatt. Though Mark Hancock would disappear over the winter, three very important signings were made. Stuart Snelling brought along Richard Gilkes, Jason Irvin brought along James Lewis and Colin Naish referred an Australian colleague, Steve Jones, who had become disillusioned with league cricket but fancied a few games for a friendly team. Each in his own way would contribute well. The last was seen of Nick Boddington after 82 games in which he scored 1,416 runs and took 98 wickets with his slow left-arm spin.

The club generally behaved better in 2002, though Irvin and Thompson came close to fists in the tense tie against London Rams, Irvin storming off the pitch. The cricket was patchy until mid-July as the Gents suffered four defeats in the inaugural PALs League, won by Urban Associates. To ensure umpiring consistency, all balls down the leg side in the PALs League were, for this season only, to be called wide. This gave rise to some large extras totals, e.g. in the first West XI match Gents conceded 44 (the day's top score), including 26 wides. It is interesting to record how enthusiastically West XI took on their league commitments, judging it on their website to be a "great success" but then after a pause for reflection resigned from it after their AGM.

Jones made a quiet debut in June against Weasels, but after the second defeat to Urbans (Buck 43) matters began to improve, culminating in an extraordinary inning at Gunnersbury Park, the club's highest. The great West XI rivals rubbed along better in 2002, so much so that the amalgam 27 July game against London Rams is regarded in both clubs' annals as a win. West XI support was also needed against 12 Angry Men, Hill taking 3-18 and scoring 15* in support of S. Patel's ice-cool 38* in a then-record tenth-wicket stand of 51 as Gents won by one wicket. This game will forever be remembered for its sensational catching, Jones pouching the dangerous Conroy one-handed high above his head on the Balaclava Road boundary as the ball looked certain to be a six, then falling himself to a wonderful slip catch by Hibbert.

It had been a solid rather than spectacular year in terms of individual performances (the Jonestown Massacre at Gunnersbury Park aside) but a definite improvement on 2001. Matters were, however, about to take a turn for the worse.

2003 Played 19 Won 6 Tied 1 Lost 12

Debuts Bender, Bhatt, Derriman, Husain, C. Lewis, Norcott, Sherwani, B. Vyas, Thompson, Yates
Runs S. Patel 385, D. Patel 202, Vyas 200, Buck 162
Wickets S. Patel 28, Snelling 17, Buck 16, D. Patel 14
Ct/St. Irvin 8/1, Buck 8, S. Patel 7, Sciberras 6, Vyas 5

27/4	Victoria RG	Gents 118 (S. Patel 32, Haddow-Allen 4-19) St Anne's Allstars 98 (Jones 34*, Sciberras 5-14)	Won 20 runs
4/5	Victoria RG	London Rams 165 (Lea 46, E. Thompson 43, Buck 3-31) Gents 104 (Snelling 21, Derriman 3-20)	Lost 61 runs
11/5	Hampstead Heath	12 Angry Men 103 (Emerson 37*, D. Wilson 24, Conroy 21) Gents 85 (S. Patel 50, Conroy 3-6, Shannon 3-8) PL	Lost 18 runs
24/5	Victoria RG	Gents 131 (S. Patel 42, Sciberras 25, McGirr 5-33) Sunderland SC 89 (Hardy 33, S. Patel 3-9)	Won 42 runs
1/6	Victoria RG	West XI 188-9 (Dane 79, C. Wright 21, S. Patel 3-39) Gents 145 (Snelling 33, Sciberras 21, Husain 20, Vyas 4-20, C. Wright 3-21) BA	Lost 43 runs
7/6	Church Street RG	Gents 114 (Gilkes 41) London Saints 117-5 (Mauger 32, Nanton 26, T. Mayhew 21)	Lost 5 wickets
14/6	King's College	Gents 182-9 (Bignell 44, S. Patel 41*, D. Patel 22, Regnier-Wilson 3-37) NB Weasels 183-7 (Michaels 61, Woodhead 34, Bishop 23*, C. Wright 4-34) PL	Lost 3 wickets
21/6	Victoria RG	Gents 83 (Buck 22, Harty 4-13, Holton 3-3) Feathers 84-4 (Symons 30, D Lemmon 23, S. Patel 3-9)	Lost 6 wickets
29/6	Victoria RG	Gents 248-8 (Vyas 66, S. Patel 51, Buck 35, W. Dimond 3-42) Enterprise 163-9 (K. Dimond 63, Price 22, W. Dimond 21, Heap 20, Bhatt 3-16)	Won 85 runs
6/7	Dundonald RG	Urban Associates 170-9 (Gupta 33, Bush 24, I. Howard 22, Johnston 22) Gents 157 (S. Patel 40*, D. Patel 38, Irvin 24, Sciberras 23, Glover 3-12) PL	Lost 13 runs
12/7	Victoria RG	Gents 167-5 (Vyas 56, Snelling 37*) New Barbarian Weasels 167-8 (Bishop 40, Perry 35, Jones 29, Mortimer 26, Buck 3-33) PL	Tied
20/7	Gunnersbury Park	West XI 171-6 (C. Wright 64, Vyas 42, Bignell 38) Gents 131 (S. Patel 45*, Bhatt 3-16) BA	Lost 40 runs
27/7	Victoria RG	Gents 119 (Buck 31, Bryan 3-22) 12 Angry Men 121-3 (D. Wilson 48*, Anderson 41*) PL	Lost 7 wickets
3/8	Victoria RG	Gents 167-9 (Vyas 63, Sciberras 27, Buck 26*, Gilkes 21) Sunderland SC 124-8 (Campbell 63, S. Patel 4-8)	Won 43 runs
10/8	Victoria RG	Jay Bharat 167 (Jigar 31, Rohan 26, Ketan 21, Nilesh 20, Dharshit 20, S. Patel 5-33) Gents 112 (Dharshit 4-28, Rohan 3-17)	Lost 55 runs
17/8	Victoria RG	Gents 184-9 (Derriman 80, Thompson 28, Toft 27, Keenan 3-52) London Saints 121 (Cotton 44, Swiderski 25, Buck 3-13)	Won 63 runs
31/8	Victoria RG	St Anne's Allstars 114 (Hipwell 37, Begley 33, Haddow-Allen 20, Buck 3-20, Husain 3-24) Gents 119-4 (Husain 52*, D. Patel 30, S. Patel 22*)	Won 6 wickets
7/9	Brondesbury	Gents 55 (Gurney 4-17, Johnson 3-7, Levesley 3-17) Brondesbury Casuals 59-7 (Dane 4-7)	Lost 3 wickets
14/9	Berkhamsted	West XI 178-9 (Carter 56, C. Wright 29, Bignell 24, Snelling 3-25) Gents 167 (D. Patel 32, Snelling 32, Vyas 3-18) BA	Lost 11 runs

The Berkhamsted defeat in the 0-3 concession of the Bob Ashton Memorial Cup was the twelfth of the season, a tally only equalled in 2005, while six wins was the fewest since 1990 when only nine games were played. A strong case could therefore be made for 2003 being the worst Gents' season. It was a torrid baptism on and off the field for new captain S. Patel, elected in controversial circumstances at the AGM when a cabal led by Buck, D. Patel, Hill and Wright ousted the successful Snelling. Fitch, a skilful player who never quite fulfilled his potential with GWLCC, refused to play under Patel and soon left while Ashton had retired. But Patel impressed by sorting out the disciplinary problems in the club as well as keeping his own game at a high pitch. Nobody could say he shirked tough decisions. It was a difficult season for all, but especially the new players in that it would have been preferable to have introduced them gradually into a winning team. Instead, they were thrown into the deep end. Perhaps it was to be the making of Nabeel Husain.

One cannot, however, be too critical of a side who had to make do without Ashton, Boddington, Jones, Minhas, Murphy and Wright from previous seasons. Young sides are by their nature inconsistent. Helped by some big wins batting first and three fifties from West XI guest Vyas, the 2003 Gents outscored their opponents (2,588 runs to 2,582) and scored more fifties (seven to six) but only five times did they bat the full 35 overs, winning three of those games, tying one and losing one narrowly to a powerful Weasels. The batting was therefore clearly a problem for most of the season. The nadir was the collapse to an admittedly strong Feathers attack, Hill penning an acidulous match report. Patel struggled to improve things with the resources he had, though to his great credit he never bemoaned this fact and was apt to be sharp when reminded how strong the batting had often been in recent seasons. There was more to praise in the bowling. For the first time since 1997, no opposition reached 200, though cynics argued that they didn't have to when Gents batted first. S. Patel took most wickets.

The biggest problems were the lack of continuity and the absence of Wright, who had moved to New Zealand in what would transpire to be one of Empire's shorter emigrations. The Gents fielded 48 players in 2003, which spoke eloquently of the contacts the club had, but during the unparalleled run of success between 1993 and 1997 the maximum used was 33 and the minimum (in 1997) just 26, which did not seem to be a non-causal relationship. A vibrant, talented 12 Angry Men won the second PALs League, but Urbans, the 2002 winners, would not contest the trophy again. West XI had withdrawn after only one year.

2004 Played 21 Won 15 Abandoned 2 Lost 4

Debuts	Turpin
Runs	Thompson 307, S. Patel 306, Gilkes 237, Norcott 231, J. Wright 183, Husain 170, D. Patel 152, Derriman 146, Sciberras 132, Toft 122, Buck 118, Vyas 113
Wickets	Buck 21, S. Patel 21, Snelling 17, Thompson 15, D. Patel 14, Sciberras 14, Derriman 11
Ct/St.	S. Patel 10, Sciberras 8, Derriman 7, Norcott 7, Snelling 6, Toft 5

25/4	Victoria RG	St Anne's Allstars 42 (Haddow-Allen 20, Thompson 3-2, Snelling 3-3) Gents 43-6	Won 6 wickets
9/5	CSSC Chiswick	12 Angry Men 136 (Mitchell 46, McMillan 28, Thompson 3-10) Gents 139-4 (Thompson 53, Husain 29, S. Patel 25*) PL	Won 6 wickets
23/5	Lytelton PF	Stumps 55 (Derriman 4-19) Gents 56-3 (Thompson 22*, Sciberras 20*)	Won 7 wickets
30/5	Victoria RG	Gents 151-8 (Thompson 38, J. Wright 32, Buck 25*) West XI 155-4 (Bhatt 82*, Vyas 34) BA	Lost 6 wickets
5/6	Church Street RG	Gents 190 (S. Patel 47, Vyas 45) London Saints 147 (Jones 36, de Ruyter 36, A. Mayhew 29, Nanton 25, S. Patel 4-28)	Won 43 runs
12/6	King's College	NB Weasels 136 (Bishop 35, Alexander 31, Regnier-Wilson 26, Perry 20, S. Patel 3-20, Derriman 3-33) Gents 137-8 (S. Patel 59, J. Wright 23, Wheldon 3-10, Owen 3-22) PL	Won 2 wickets
13/6	Old Rutlishians	Old Rutlishians 215-3 (Dolben 57, Ardley 44, Dodds 34, Lindo 26*) Gents 178-9 (Gilkes 51, D. Patel 21, Buck 20*, Hughes 3-31)	Lost 37 runs
20/6	Victoria RG	Gents 220-6 (Derriman 51, Norcott 51, Gilkes 43, Vyas 28*) Enterprise 82 (K. Dimond 26, Plimmer 23, Sciberras 4-20, Thompson 3-12)	Won 138 runs
27/6	Brondesbury	Brondesbury Casuals 172-8 (Donaldson 57, Arnold 40, Buck 3-24) Gents 42-6 (Sands 3-11)	Abandoned
3/7	Belair Park	Gents 231-6 (Thompson 66*, S. Patel 59, Derriman 47*, Denton 23, Gilkes 20, Sack 3-24) London Rams 141 (Severn 33, Rowe 21, Thompson 3-10)	Won 90 runs
10/7	Victoria RG	NB Weasels 104 (Buck 4-9) Gents 108-7 (S. Patel 21, Michaels 3-21) PL	Won 3 wickets
18/7	Gunnery Park	West XI 163-5 (Dane 37, Taylor 35, Vyas 23, C. Wright 22*) Gents 150-8 (Husain 42, Norcott 24) BA	Lost 13 runs
25/7	Victoria RG	12 Angry Men 98 (Sherwani 28, Buck 3-7) Gents 99-3 (Vyas 40) PL	Won 7 wickets
1/8	Victoria RG	Sunderland SC 125 (Guthrie 30, P. Patel 4-28) Gents 129-4 (D. Patel 41*, Buck 36)	Won 6 wickets
8/8	Victoria RG	Gents 133-6 (Thompson 42*, S. Patel 26, Levene 3-34) London Owls did not bat	Abandoned
14/8	Kinver	Gents 163 (J. Wright 50, Norcott 35, Grainger 3-31) Enville 40 (D. Patel 5-11)	Won 123 runs
15/8	Enville	Gents 163 (Thompson 37, S. Patel 30*, D. Patel 27) Bedouins 131 (Thomas 31, Nock 29, D. Patel 3-19)	Won 32 runs
22/8	Victoria RG	London Saints 125-7 (Berkeley 25, Jones 24, Yogeswaran 24, Sciberras 3-16) Gents 129-7 (Husain 71, Norcott 24*)	Won 3 wickets
29/8	Victoria RG	Gents 84 (S. Patel 22, Crawford 6-24) St Anne's Allstars 73 (Haddow-Allen 32, W. Flack 4-25)	Won 11 runs
12/9	Berkhamsted	Gents 157 (Gilkes 48, Sciberras 27, Snelling 20, Bhatt 3-24) West XI 161-6 (C. Wright 57, Bhatt 32, Bignell 20) BA	Lost 3 wickets
19/9	GSK Greenford	Salix 110 (Shaw 28, W. Flack 4-30) Gents 111-5 (Gilkes 28, Toft 22, Kulasingam 3-25)	Won 5 wickets

In 2003 *The Gent* had noted that if the club wanted to field members-only line-ups then the membership was too small to sustain the current level of fixtures. An influx of new players meant that it was easier to raise teams and full sides were fielded each game. It was gratifying that in the June Weasels/Old Rutlishians double-header weekend, nine players played both matches. Along with the tour, the highlight of the season was winning the PALs League with four victories batting second, though in both return legs the opposition were below strength, The Gents lending Weasels and 12 Angry Men players to make up the numbers. Successes were shared about (12 players made 100 runs) but Batsman and All-rounder of the Year Wayne Thompson had a fine season. The totals of players used, 32, was down exactly a third on 2003. This gave the captain greater continuity, which undoubtedly helped results, though the batting order was seldom settled, due to a combination of form, tactics and happenstance. Bill Flack's eight wickets in his first two games and all-round presence gave the club great hope for the future on and off the pitch but sadly he would retire through ill-health the following season.

The Gents completed two games on tour for the only time and won them both with identical scores of 163. The maiden victory over Bedouins was the best performance of the summer. Many of the games were low-scoring, but there were runfests against London Rams and Enterprise. Three remarkably similar Gents' scores of 151-8, 150-8 and 151-7 were not enough in the Bob Ashton Cup and West XI, who won 17 and lost only 6 games this season, triumphed 3-0.

This was the year the Gents fell out of love with Victoria RG, Surbiton. The wickets had become variable and sometimes dangerous. Embarrassingly, no pitch was prepared for the game with Urbans. The captain described the wickets at the AGM as "diabolical". New vice-captain Sciberras agreed with him and recommended playing three games away from VRG to test the water, with a full review to be held in a year's time.

The Gents had led in the matter of sponsorship from 2001 when a £500 per annum deal was brokered by Max Minhas with Chivers Easton Brown, a firm of Surrey solicitors. At a time when relations between the clubs were poor, West XI reacted with sarcastic disdain to this initiative, but in hindsight the sponsorship, as predicted by Buck, proved more trouble than it was worth. CEB did not renew in 2004, Minhas left, no new sponsor could be found and the Gents were left with a pile of out-of-date sponsored shirts. This was a somewhat casual approach to branding.

2005 Played 19 Won 7 Lost 12

Debuts Butt

Runs Husain 586, S. Patel 303, Denton 207, Sciberras 164, J. Wright 152, Buck 150, D. Patel 136, Gilkes 126

Wickets Sciberras 18, Husain 15, S. Patel 15, Buck 10, Butt 9

Ct/St. Denton 5/3, Buck 7, H. Patel 7, Turpin 5

24/4	Victoria RG	St Anne's Allstars 153-8 (Begley 89*, Buck 3-41)	Lost 39 runs
8/5	Battersea Park	Gents 114 (Sciberras 42, Thompson 25, Devlin 4-13, Chadwick 3-7) 12 Angry Men 196-5 (Anderson 53*, Wilson 48, Bullock 35, Sciberras 3-26) Gents 143 (Husain 54, D. Patel 20)	Lost 53 runs
15/5	Victoria RG	Gents 147 (Husain 47, J. Wright 35, Buck 29, Ahmed 3-11, Nasir 3-17) Pak 146 (S. Khan 30, Azeem 25, Ghaffar 24) PL	Won 1 run
22/5	Victoria RG	Urban Associates 175-8 (Kirk 79*, Bush 33) Gents 143 (D. Patel 30, Norcott 25)	Lost 32 runs
29/5	Victoria RG	West XI 165-9 (Vyas 38, Clarke 30) Gents 60 (Husain 20, Vine 3-8) BA	Lost 105 runs
5/6	Old Haberdashers	Gents 116 (Bhatt 26, Vyas 22) London Saints 117-7 (Berkeley 21*)	Lost 3 wickets
11/6	King's College	NB Weasels 174-7 (Perry 58, Hayes 42*, Woodhead 24) Gents 175-3 (Husain 104*, S. Patel 33*) PL	Won 7 wickets
19/6	King Edward RG	Gents 187-7 (Husain 61, D. Patel 48, Sciberras 37) Pak 191-4 (Mahmood 81*, Ansar 36, Arshad 30) PL	Lost 6 wickets
26/6	Brondesbury	Gents 184 (S. Patel 46, Denton 37, C. Wright 25, Vyas 23) Brondesbury Casuals 186-7 (Saïid 70, Cresswell 66)	Lost 3 wickets
3/7	Belair Park	Gents 264-6 (S. Patel 100*, Husain 53, Bhatt 51, Davies 3-22) London Rams 203 (Davies 57*, Severn 53, Murtland 29, Husain 3-2)	Won 61 runs
9/7	Victoria RG	Gents 112 (Husain 26, Perry 3-16, Hayes 3-29) NB Weasels 116-3 (Perry 87*) PL	Lost 7 wickets
17/7	Gunnersbury Park	Gents 125-10 (Husain 51, C. Wright 4-17) West XI 114 (Taylor 38, Barling 20, Snelling 4-24) BA	Won 11 runs
30/7	Victoria RG	Gents 183 (Husain 79, S. Patel 30, Norcott 23, Denton 20) Sunderland SC 92 (Buck 28*)	Won 91 runs
7/8	Victoria RG	Gents 168 (Husain 30, J. Wright 29, Bailey 26, Parker 4-10) Enterprise 126 (Plimmer 47, Fitzgerald 22, K. Patel 3-13)	Won 42 runs
14/8	Victoria RG	London Saints 133 (T. Mayhew 51, Berkeley 26, Husain 3-16) Gents 92 (Husain 22, Buck 21, Berkeley 3-30)	Lost 41 runs
21/8	Old Tenisonians	Gents 104 (J. Wright 33, Husain 21, Ronesh 4-12) Jay Bharat 108-4 (Naik 56, Ketan 21)	Lost 6 wickets
4/9	Victoria RG	Gents 155-6 (Denton 50, Sciberras 43, Gilkes 27*) London Owls 98 (Satchell 57, Hill 3-19)	Won 57 runs
11/9	Berkhamsted	Gents 116 (J. Wright 34, Dane 4-25, C. Wright 3-19) West XI 117-2 (Taylor 41*, C. Wright 37, Vyas 20) BA	Lost 8 wickets
18/9	GSK Greenford	Gents 93 (S. Patel 32, Lumsden 4-12) Salix 94-7 (Rayner 33*)	Lost 3 wickets

Not even the most ardent Gent fan could call 2005 a campaign of unremitting glory, but it did have its successes. The PALs League was retained on a shared basis after two compelling early performances and West XI were taken to a decider in the Bob Ashton Memorial Cup for the first time since 2002. S. Patel's scored his only hundred, which came just 22 days after Husain's, one of an unprecedented six scores of fifty or more in just 13 games for the young Saudi, who dominated the scoring with 586 runs. Otherwise, the batting was patchy, with only Patel (303) and Denton (207) over 200, though the latter (who along with Turpin kept wicket manfully and skilfully) and guest Bhatt recorded their maiden fifties, the former after a recount due to botched scoring (Husain's hundred was similarly upgraded after proper audit). A notable career milestone was S. Patel's achievement of 3,000 runs and 200 wickets, his 200th. wicket being Enterprise's redoubtable Keith Dimond.

The absence of a strike bowler for all but two games was felt, though Husain, S. Patel, Sciberras (top of the wickets list with 18) and Wright were economical and sometimes penetrative. Snelling took the Gents' only four-wicket haul (D. Patel's eccentric 4-57 came when on loan to Sunderland SC). Buck, Butt, D. Patel, H. Patel and K. Patel were less consistent, going for five or more per over, though each had at least one excellent spell. Buck and H. Patel (seven each) took most catches in a year of outcricket that was patchy but, as at Gunnersbury Park, occasionally inspired.

In the high summer, the Gents were pretty good, but the only early season success came in the 1-run nail-biter against a superb new opposition in Pak, impressively achieved without the captain or Snelling. An unbeaten club record Husain/S. Patel fourth-wicket stand of 127 against Weasels at King's College kick-started an impressive run of scores, the only blips being the Weasels return and West XI away, the latter game actually won, by tight bowling (led by Snelling on a brief return from Brazil) and fielding. However, Gents were unable to defend 187 in the second Pak game and 184 at Brondesbury against excellent batting sides. Several players thought the latter clash (agonisingly lost off the fifth ball of the last over) the best of the year. Those there will long remember Casuals' captain Bernie Spratt summoning his players back from the showers as the Gents fought back to take a clutch of late wickets.

But to offset these spectaculars, there were dismal collapses against the ever-sociable London Saints (twice), Jay Bharat, Weasels, Salix and statistically at least, the worst of the lot, 60 all out at home to West XI, the club's lowest in this series. It was common in the post-mortems to plead for more settled batting orders, but that was easier said than done when several top batters were only able to play half the games. Wayne Thompson, who left after the first game, was missed. Later, he appeared for London Rams and belted 146 against West XI.

2006 Played 22 Won 13 Abandoned 1 Lost 8

Debuts	Babar, Carroll, S. Desai, Wahed, Young
Runs	Husain 461, S. Patel 364, Gilkes 270, J. Wright 268, D. Patel 176, Wahed 159, H. Patel 149, Sciberras 124, Denton 114, Bhatt 105
Wickets	Husain 20, H. Patel 20, S. Patel 19, Buck 18, Snelling 15, D. Patel 12, Wahed 11, Babar 10
Ct/St.	S. Patel 10/1, Turpin 9/1, Gilkes 8, H. Patel 7, D. Patel 5, Husain 5
Notes	Record third-wicket stand by opponents: 215 Heyman (132) and Jones (89) (Village XI)

29/4	Barnes Common	St Anne's Allstars 131 (Evans 56, Nicol 31, Husain 3-11) Gents 133-3 (D. Patel 44, Sciberras 44, Husain 22*)	Won 7 wickets
7/5	Hale Common	Hale 76 (Calvert 31, Watmore 21, S. Patel 3-4) Gents 81-6 (Wahed 23)	Won 4 wickets
14/5	Old Tenisonians	Gents 251-5 (J. Wright 67, Sciberras 59, Husain 36, Wahed 26*, H. Patel 20*, Kieran 3-56) 12 Angry Men 97 (Gary 24*)	Won 154 runs
21/5	Victoria RG	Gents 99 (N. Khan 3-20) Pak 26-3 PL	Abandoned
4/6	Old Haberdashers	Gents 243-8 (Husain 103, Gilkes 41, Wahed 25, H. Patel 20) London Saints 133 (Berkeley 47, Griffiths 28, S. Patel 3-8)	Won 110 runs
11/6	South Park	Gents 154 (J. Wright 42, Gilkes 27, Joshi 3-28, Hughes 3-29) NB Weasels 94 (Wheldon 39) PL	Won 60 runs
17/6	Victoria RG	Gents 141 (S. Patel 45*, Bhatt 33, Baker 6-38) Sunderland SC 142-6 (Stewart 32, Howey 30, Hardy 27*)	Lost 4 wickets
18/6	Fairfield RG	Pak 152 (Ghaffar 72, Haddow-Allen 3-10, Sciberras 3-32) Gents 79 (Young 25, Ghaffar 3-12, Nasir 3-19) PL	Lost 73 runs
25/6	Old Tenisonians	Gents 290-3 (J. Wright 95*, Husain 76, Bhatt 48) London Rams 218 (Severn 63, K. Patel 3-29)	Won 72 runs
2/7	Brondesbury	Brondesbury Casuals 186 (Rogers 50, Rizvan 27, Cresswell 25, Ali 23, Buck 3-21) Gents 124 (D. Patel 27, Dev 26, Bhatt 23, Johnson 4-28, Cresswell 3-23)	Lost 62 runs
8/7	Victoria RG	Wantage 115 (Wallbridge 36, Newton 29) Gents 116-3 (J. Wright 36, Young 27, Wahed 22*)	Won 7 wickets
16/7	Old Tenisonians	Gents 142 (Gilkes 33, S. Patel 30) West XI 147-4 (Vine 47, Bhatt 44, Barling 28) BA	Lost 6 wickets
23/7	Victoria RG	Gents 137-8 (H. Patel 31, Harris 21) Jay Bharat 139-5 (Nathwani 52, Rahil 27, Sanjay 20*)	Lost 5 wickets
30/7	Old Hamptonians	Village XI 256-5 (Heyman 132, Jones 89*) Gents 113 (Miller 28, Lloyd 3-33)	Lost 143 runs
6/8	Enville	Bedouins 199-8 (Branch 50*, Susman 50*, Stanier 37, Snelling 3-24) Gents 119 (D. Patel 32, S. Patel 27, Gilkes 22*, H. Patel 21)	Lost 80 runs
13/8	KGF Tolworth	Gents 201-6 (Husain 36, Wahed 34*, D. Patel 32, S. Patel 29*) London Saints 128-9	Won 73 runs
20/8	Fairfield RG	Gents 172 (S. Patel 78, Ramaiah 39, Wasse 5-21) London Owls 74 (Bignell 32, H. Patel 4-8, Husain 3-6)	Won 98 runs
27/8	Old Tenisonians	Wombles 83 (Carroll 23) Gents 84-2 (Ramaiah 45*)	Won 8 wickets
27/8	Old Tenisonians	Gents 207-3 (Husain 54*, C. Wright 48, Snelling 31*, Denton 30*) Enterprise 118-8 (Beaumont 50*, Starkey 24, Buck 3-2)	Won 89 runs
3/9	Fairfield RG	Gents 218-5 (Husain 57, S. Patel 36*, Darpan Patel 31, Bell 3-36) Urban Associates 134-9 (Howard 34, Bush 33, Husain 4-5)	Won 84 runs
10/9	Berkhamsted	West XI 146 (C. Wright 54, Husain 4-25) Gents 147-3 (Husain 59, Gilkes 53, C. Wright 3-40) BA	Won 7 wickets
17/9	GSK Greenford	Salix 150-8 (Shaw 52*, Padmore 31, Spillane 20, Wahed 4-33) Gents 138 (Gilkes 23, Fletcher 3-29)	Lost 12 runs

The year began awfully with the death at 49 of Ian 'Marty' Renvoize, a keen player and loyal friend from the formative years of the club. Five founder players attended his January funeral in Bury St. Edmunds. The winter nets were enlivened by the presence of some new players heralding what the club hoped would be a new era. In the event, the playing season was in danger of fizzling out in August, but ended as it began with a starburst of wins and was therefore judged ultimately successful, with 13 games won and only eight lost, of which seven came in nine outings mid-season. Nabeel Husain and Village XI's Roland Heyman scored hundreds. Though it had its frustrations, 2006 was a pleasant season of promising new players, high scores and silverware, though the Gents had to make do with a 1-1 in the Bob Ashton Memorial Cup, each side gaining a convincing away win after the first game had been cancelled due to rain.

Disappointing aspects were the resignation of Justin Norcott, poor timekeeping at the more northerly games and the lack of support for the prestigious Bedouins match, played on one of the most beautiful and historic grounds in England, which ended a period in which mass absences drove the club's organisers frantic. This nine-game slump from 17 June to 6 August saw hot weather, resignations, illness, holidays and strong opposition conjoin to deadly effect. Since Black Sunday in May 1992, Gents' fans had clung to the hammering inflicted that day by West XI as consolation that things could be worse, but those who made the journey to Hampton to watch or play in the Village XI game now had a new badge of honour.

The rota was 47. There were six guests against Jay Bharat and three, none of whom stand-in captain Gilkes had met before, against Brondesbury Casuals. Husain significantly missed all seven defeats in the dog days, while Wright, Snelling and D. Patel made only nine combined appearances in that period. Husain dominated the batting with four fifties on top of his hundred. Wright (twice), Sciberras, S. Patel and Gilkes scored the other Gent fifties. Husain also jointly headed the bowling on 20 wickets with H. Patel, though more parsimoniously, typical of what was more of a seamer's year. His low economy rate (3.4), so vital in limited over games was only bettered by Snelling (whose bag of wickets did not reflect his excellent, sometimes fearsome spells) and nearly matched by Babar, S. Patel and Wright. The slow men, Buck (18 wickets), H. Patel (20), D. Patel (12) and K. Patel (7) had some good spells but still averaged four or five per over, copping flak against the likes of Village XI and Brondesbury when the strike bowlers were absent.

2007 Played 18 Won 11 Abandoned 1 Lost 6

Debuts	N. Khan, Shanvare
Runs	Husain 680, S. Patel 256, Denton 217, D. Patel 189, Gilkes 179, Wahed 155
Wickets	H. Patel 24, Husain 17, S. Patel 17, Snelling 15, Buck 14, D. Patel 10
Ct/St.	Husain 12, Snelling 7, Gilkes 5, S. Patel 5
Notes	HS by Gents: 325-5 <i>v.</i> London Saints (see also 2013) Record third-wicket stand by Gents: 166 Husain (100*) and Kain (87) <i>v.</i> London Saints

6/5	Fairfield RG	Gents 139 (Husain 39, H. Patel 27) Pak 85 (N. Khan 36*, Husain 3-10, E. Babar 3-10) PL	Won 54 runs
20/5	Gunnersbury Park	Gents 194-7 (Husain 76, D. Patel 39, Wahed 27, Bignell 3-47) West XI 79 (Bhatt 26, S. Patel 3-0) BA	Won 115 runs
3/6	Old Tenisonians	Gents 325-5 (Husain 100*, Kain 87, Denton 45, D. Patel 45, Wahed 21*) London Saints 184-9 (Yogeswaran 42, Griffiths 31, Dewhurst 26, Thomas 24, Van Marle 15*, S. Patel 5-30)	Won 141 runs
9/6	Dundonald RG	Gents 177 (Husain 69, Buck 29, Hoskins 3-16) NB Weasels 117-9 (Hoskins 34*, Woodhead 20, H. Patel 3-21) PC	Won 60 runs
17/6	Fairfield RG	Pak 172 (Ghaffar 45, Maani 31, George 22) Gents 128 (S. Patel 48, Umar 5-30) PC	Lost 44 runs
7/7	Fairfield RG	Gents 281-7 (Husain 143*, C. Wright 54, S. Patel 29, Young 29, Dyer 3-42) NB Weasels 45 (Buck 5-23, Snelling 3-14) PC	Won 236 runs
8/7	Old Tenisonians	Gents 72 (D. Patel 36, Varney 5-24, Borgust 3-34) OT Taverners 73-2 (Perkins Jr. 29)	Lost 8 wickets
8/7	Old Tenisonians	OT Taverners 109-6 (Varney 37) Gents 111-2 (Wahed 39*, Husain 32*)	Won 8 wickets
15/7	Old Tenisonians	West XI 81-5 (Dane 37*, H. Patel 3-17) Gents did not bat BA	Abandoned
29/7	Fairfield RG	Gents 188-10 (N. Khan 47, Gilkes 32, Husain 31, Hibbert 3-36, Middleton 3-47) 12 Angry Men 132 (Lawrence 35, Wilson 21)	Won 56 runs
4/8	Fairfield RG	Gents 176-8 (Gilkes 62, Carroll 28, Toft 20*) Enterprise 85 (Fitzgerald 33)	Won 91 runs
5/8	Fairfield RG	London Owls 61 (Barber 21, H. Patel 21) Gents 62-1 (Husain 49*)	Won 9 wickets
5/8	Fairfield RG	Gents 109-2 (Denton 48, Emson 26, Shanvare 23*) London Owls 87-3 (H. Patel 36*, Barber 21)	Won 22 runs
12/8	Old Haberdashers	London Saints 199-5 (Thomas 47*, Yogeswaran 41, Berkeley 32*) Gents 184 (S. Patel 71, Gilkes 30, Shanvare 24, Snelling 22)	Lost 15 runs
26/8	Old Tenisonians	Gents 141-7 (D. Patel 29, Husain 28) and 99 (J. Wright 21, Keith 3-21, Babar 3-25) Wombles 113-9 (Barrett 57*, H. Patel 3-16) and 100 (Keith 35, Wahed 21, J. Wright 3-11)	Won 27 runs
2/9	Cavendish RG	Gubbays 215 (Janani 74, Aryuat 49, Deepak 30, Snelling 4-27) Gents 129 (S. Patel 36, Denton 35, Ravi 3-20)	Lost 86 runs
9/9	Berkhamsted	Gents 147 (Husain 66, Taylor 3-19, R. Allerton 3-26) West XI 149-5 (Dane 38, Norcott 32) BA	Lost 5 wickets
16/9	GSK Greenford	Salix 193-8 (Padmore 37*, Rickman 32, Kulasingam 32, Shaw 28) Gents 164-9 (Wahed 47, S. Patel 24)	Lost 29 runs

A season of promising early cricket ended the first 20 years glumly with four losses in the final five games. It was a similar season to 2006, but one left that left many questions unanswered. A more accurate perspective might have been possible had six of the first 14 games not been ruined by rain. Five matches were cancelled (though Old Tenisonians, itself a last minute fixture after Brondesbury Casuals pulled out because of other commitments, was rearranged) and the pivotal West XI home leg abandoned after a freak storm.

Husain, eloquently described by Snelling at a lively AGM as the most talented player in the club's history, scored 680 runs, including two hundreds, three fifties and a 49*, took 17 wickets and held 12 catches. The charge that the Gents were too reliant on him had some substance (indeed S. Patel reckoned 2007 to have been the worst batting season for some years, with Husain merely papering over the cracks), but what a performance his was, and in his final full season too.

S. Patel and Denton were consistent, but nobody else made 200 runs, though D. Patel batted fluently against West XI at Gunnersbury Park and Old Tenisonians. Gilkes's fifty was a match-winner against a game Enterprise. Lloyd Wahed provided fireworks at Gunnersbury, along with three super catches, and so deserved a fifty against Salix. Rob Babar, who kindly introduced his brother Ed, and Carroll found their batting form against Salix and also bowled some tight spells. Alex Young showed promise. Poor Toft suffered again from injury and had a muted season, but kindly always gave his full support. Khan batted fluently against 12 Angry Men.

S. Patel and Buck took five-wicket hauls against London Saints and Weasels, but it was the subtle spin of H. Patel who, with beautiful flight, topped the bowling with 24 wickets, he and Husain restricting the batsmen to under 3.5 runs per over. Snelling was not helped by the damp, slow wickets but lost none of his guile after 1,373 overs for the club, remaining a top-class bowler. S. Patel, having said pre-season that he would not bowl much, often opened the bowling and was cunning and effective. Other bowling lacked penetration, while D. Patel was underused and after Berkhamsted sent a communication on the matter of an incendiary nature.

The PALs League was tied with Pak, as was the Bob Ashton Memorial Cup with a West XI side who improved throughout the season. The best performances were against West XI at Gunnersbury Park and London Saints at Old Tenisonians. Both Pak matches, Old Tenisonians, London Saints away and the combative Wombles were also highly enjoyable. The disappointment of the summer was the double-booking by Jay Bharat of their home game. After they walked away from the problem, Gubbays kindly stood in.