
THE GENT

No.173

October 2021

Mr Joshi scores 17 on debut – in civilian clothing



Dubey and Kumar step down
Season's review and averages
Northfields centenary

Match reports:

Bricklayer's Arms (abandoned)
Clapham In (lost by 5 wickets)
Bricklayer's Arms (abandoned)
Mpingwe (won by 3 wickets)
Squirrels (lost by 64 runs)

Oppo team of the year

Damon Wilson
Career Top 10s

Millfields (won by 6 wickets)
Holtwhites Trinibis (won by 90 runs)
Salix (abandoned)
Chiswick (won by 42 runs)
New Romney and Littlestone (won by 5 wickets)

Read about the Gents on www.gowlcc.org

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Captains leave the bridge

The duumvirate of Nilesh Dubey and Sumit Kumar will reign no more. If our next leaders display their levels of dignity, acumen and sportsmanship then the future is assured. They have safely navigated the storms of 2020 and 2021. Two memories will sustain us through many a cold winter. Away at Northfields in 2020 Gents defended 98 thanks to inspired leadership from Dubey supported by Kumar's unplayable bowling. Then a few months later Kumar led from the front in a tough game against Winchmore Hill Tigers, top-scoring in taking Gents from 101-7 to 187, and getting his tactics in the field spot on.

This season cricket has, when the rain allowed, been more regular. Neither was found wanting, both showing diplomatic skills that were not really needed in the placid 2020 season. All Gents players and fans hope that they will continue to play regularly in future years. Thank you, gentlemen.

The club is without doubt entering a new era and the new Committee will be ratified at the AGM, to take place on Saturday 30 October at Wycombe House CC (not the Bulstrode) at 7pm.

2021 results

2021 Played 22 Won 14 Abandoned 3 Lost 5 Cancelled 5			
10/4	Marble Hill Park	Gents 202-7 (R. Patel 75, Bocha 49, Chatharaju 35*) Crossbats 194-7 (S. Skinner 40, Winch 38, Carter 22)	Won 8 runs
25/4	Byfleet	Byfleet 184-6 (Clough 51, M. Hockin 50, S. Hockin 29) Gents 185-6 (Kota 55*, S. Patel 42*, Puli 34)	Won 4 wickets
2/5	F.W.E. Goates MG	Binfield 187-7 (Humphrey 52, Edgington 37*, Krishna 3-36) Gents 188-7 (Karnekanti 65, Bocha 42, Krishna 38, Docherty 3-37)	Won 3 wickets
30/5	Wycombe House	St Anne's Allstars 171 (Waddicor 36*, Bowman 31, Singh 30, Rizvi 24) Gents 172-6 (Kota 74, Z. Ahmed 22*, Sudireddy 20)	Won 4 wickets
6/6	Old Tenisonians	Plastics 179 (Anderson 71, Webster 48, Davies 22, Kumar 5-4) Gents 98 (Kota 30, Jamieson 5-18)	Lost 81 runs
13/6	Teddington Town	Gents 148 (Kumar 42, Karnekanti 36, Potdar 3-18) Teddington Town 151-6 (Singh 44, Potdar 26, Namilikonda 3-20)	Lost 4 wickets
20/6	Chiswick House	Gents 143-8 (Puli 34*, Kumar 32, Namilikonda 29, Sadhra 3-21) Salix 145-4 (Ilangakoon 60*, Kulasingam 27*, Henig 20, Sadhra 20)	Lost 6 wickets
27/6	Old Tenisonians	Ottershaw 76-4 (Singh 46, Charlton 25*)	Won 4 wickets
27/6	Old Tenisonians	Ottershaw 85-5 (Park 24, McMahon 22*, Krishna 4-14)	Won 8 wickets
4/7	King's House	Whalers 101 (Johnstone 28, Dubey 3-12)	Won 2 wickets
11/7	Cottenham Park	Gents 102-8 (Namilikonda 27, Bramley 4-18) Gents 151-9 (Dubey 40, Chatharaju 36, Puli 26, O. Watson 4-17) Wimbledon United 52 (Kumar 4-6)	Won 99 runs
18/7	Normandy	Gents 193-9 (S. Patel 31, Karnekanti 26, Dubey 25*, Chatharaju 23, Rees 3-40) Mpingwe 176-6 (Mitha 77*, Azhar 32*, Junaid 28)	Won 17 runs
25/7	Abbey RG	Bricklayer's Arms 8-0	Abandoned
15/8	Wycombe House	Gents 205-8 (Kulasingam 38, Ilangakoon 33, Chatharaju 28, S. Patel 26*, Kakan 3-28, Rumbold 3-49) Clapham In 206-5 (Ferreira 97, Williams 43, O'Connell 24)	Lost 5 wickets
22/8	Old Tenisonians	Bricklayer's Arms 131-8 (Foister 25)	Abandoned
29/8	Old Tenisonians	Gents 102-2 (Kota 31, Karnekanti 22, Puli 21*) Mpingwe 154-7 (Nayem 38, Ilyas 33)	Won 3 wickets
4/9	Long Ditton RG	Gents 155-7 (A. Ahmed 77*, S. Patel 29, Kota 20) Squirrels 191-9 (Glavina 36, Scott 28, Alexander 27, Hues 24, H. Patel 3-37) Gents 127 (Puli 27, Hues 5-15)	Lost 64 runs
5/9	Wycombe House	Millfields 201 (C. Cooper 74, Prowse 35, Collis 26, Krishna 4-32) Gents 204-4 (Kota 84*, Sudireddy 55*)	Won 6 wickets
12/9	Holtwhites Hill	Gents 275-8 (Kota 122*, Pingili 27, S. Patel 23, Jones 3-19, D. Wilkes-Green 3-40) Holtwhites Trinibis 185-7 (Smith 46*, Evans 32, J. Wilkes-Green 28, Ebbs 23)	Won 90 runs
19/9	Nursery Road RG	Gents 22-0	Abandoned
26/9	Lampton School	Salix did not bat Gents 183 (Pentakota 43, Puli 32, S. Patel 22) Chiswick 141 (Fry 62, Thakar 21, Raj Patel 4-28, Krishna 3-19)	Won 42 runs
3/10	New Romney	New Romney and Littlestone 203-10 (Payton 84, Harding 60, S. Lawrence 21, Raj Patel 3-31) Gents 206-5 (Kota 84*, Dubey 32, Gulati 21)	Won 5 wickets

Matches scheduled for 9/5, 16/5, 23/5, 1/8 and 8/8 were cancelled.

Averages

Forty played in 2021, 18 just once. This is typical of recent years, excluding the Covid-wracked 2020 campaign; 44 played in 2016, 45 in 2017, 43 in 2018 and 41 in 2019. Commendably, 13 played in at least half the 2021 games and full teams were fielded with the exception of New Romney. Fifteen debutants, of whom 12 played once, increased the club roster to 407. Or possibly 406. Is Ponnam who played in 2017 the same S. Ponnam who played in 2018? Basker might know, the Editor doesn't. Upon resolution of this conundrum, career averages and club records will be published.

Player (debut*)	M.	Inn.	NO	Runs	Avg.	Ct./St.	O	M	Runs	Wck.	Avg.
A. Ahmed	7	6	2	125	31.25	1	-	-	-	-	-
Bocha	3	2	-	91	45.50	1	-	-	-	-	-
Chatharaju	14	10	1	173	19.22	-	57	2	255	7	36.43
Dubey	13	9	3	168	28.00	3	48.3	7	150	9	16.67
R. Gilkes	2	2	-	0	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gulati	11	10	4	121	20.17	5	50	9	186	7	26.57
Karnekonti	19	15	4	257	23.36	3	37	2	171	4	42.75
Khan	6	2	-	33	16.50	2	8	-	43	1	43.00
Kota	19	16	4	581	48.42	10/1	50	2	288	7	41.14
Krishna	17	13	3	110	11.00	1	82.3	11	331	25	13.24
Kumar	11	9	1	109	13.63	2	37.2	7	143	14	10.21
Namilikonda	13	10	2	117	14.63	1	53.2	5	215	10	21.50
H. Patel	13	5	1	21	5.25	2	62.5	8	298	12	24.83
J. Patel*	4	3	-	15	5.00	1	-	-	-	-	--
Raj Patel*	11	8	-	48	6.00	1	40	3	191	9	21.22
S. Patel	20	13	2	197	17.91	3	38	1	184	7	26.29
Pentakota	2	2	-	55	27.50	-	7	0	48	2	24.00
Pingili	6	4	1	51	17.00	3	21	2	100	6	16.67
Puli	18	14	4	200	20.00	7	8	0	56	1	56.00
Shaikh	2	1	-	0	0.00	1	11	3	35	3	11.67
Soni*	2	1	1	0	-	-	2	0	18	0	-
Sudireddy	13	10	1	123	13.67	11/4	-	-	-	-	-

One game only: Z. Ahmed 1/1/1/22, 6-1-27-2, Amberkar* 1/1/-/0, Aslam* 1/1/1/19, 5-1-21-1, Babu* 1/1/-/2, M. Gilkes* 1/1/1/17, 4-1-19-1, Ilangakoon* 1/1/-/33, 3.5-0-17-0, Joshi* 1/1/0/17, Kantumuchhu* 1/-/-/-, Kulasingam* 1/1/-/38, 8-2-43-2, Malik* 1/1/1/11, 6-1-16-0, Mohan 1/1/-/1, D. Patel 1/1/-/6, 7-0-35-1, Rakesh Patel 1/1/-/75, 7-0-31-1 (2 ct.), Petluru* 1/1/-/0, 3-0-12-1, Ravula* 1/-/-/-, 7-2-29-0, Sadhra* 1/1/-/4, 4-0-26-0, Snelling 1/-/-/-, 5-0-26-1, T. Snelling 1/1/-/0, 5-1-23-1

50s/100s for (M = first 50 or 100)	50s/100s against
122* Kota <i>v.</i> Holtwhites Trinibis	97 Ferreira (Clapham In)
84* Kota <i>v.</i> Millfields	84 Payton (New Romney and Littlestone)
84* Kota <i>v.</i> New Romney and Littlestone	77* Kassam (Mpingwe)
77* A. Ahmed <i>v.</i> Mpingwe	71 Anderson (Plastics)
75 Rakesh Patel <i>v.</i> Crossbats	62 Fry (Chiswick)
74 Kota <i>v.</i> St Anne's Allstars	60 Ilangakoon (Salix)
65 Karnekanti <i>v.</i> Binfield M	60 Harding (New Romney and Littlestone)
55* Kota <i>v.</i> Byfleet	52 Humphrey (Binfield)
55* Sudireddy <i>v.</i> Millfields	51 Clough (Byfleet)
	50 M. Hockin (Byfleet)
4-wicket returns for (M = first 4 wickets return)	4-wicket returns against
5-4 Kumar <i>v.</i> Plastics	5-15 Hues (Squirrels)
4-6 Kumar <i>v.</i> Wimbledon United	5-18 Jamieson (Plastics)
4-14 Krishna <i>v.</i> Ottershaw M	4-17 O. Watson (Wimbledon United)
4-28 Raj Patel <i>v.</i> Chiswick M	4-18 Bramley (Whalers)
4-32 Krishna <i>v.</i> Millfields	
Sixes (27)	Run outs of opponents (9)
4 Chatharaju, Kota	3 Kota
3 Gulati, Namilikonda	2 Puli
2 A. Ahmed, Pentakota	1 A. Ahmed, Bocha, Karnekanti, Pingili
1 Z. Ahmed, Bocha, Dubey, Kulasingam, Rakesh Patel, S. Patel, Pingili, Puli, Sudireddy	

The qualifications for the statistics are five innings or 20 overs.

Top 5 batting averages	Top 5 bowling averages	Top 5 bowling economy rates
Kota 48.42	Kumar 10.21	Dubey 3.09
A. Ahmed 31.25	Krishna 13.24	Gulati 3.72
Dubey 28.00	Dubey 16.67	Kumar 3.83
Karnekonti 23.36	Pingili 16.67	Krishna 4.01
Gulati 20.17	Raj Patel 21.22	Namilikonda 4.03

Hundred partnerships (both opponents' were records for the wicket)

5	121	P. Kota (84*) and R. Sudireddy (55*) <i>v.</i> Millfields	Wycombe House	5.9.21
5	121	L. Payton (84) and T. Harding (60), New Romney and Littlestone	New Romney	3.10.21
7	102*	K. Mitha (77*) and Azhar (32*), Mpingwe	Normandy	18.7.21

2021 Played 22 Won 14 Abandoned 3 Lost 5

Debuts	Rajit Joshi, Jay Patel, Raj Patel
Runs	Kota 581, Karnekanti 257, Puli 200, S. Patel 197, Chatharaju 173, Dubey 168, A. Ahmed 125, Sudireddy 123, Gulati 121, Namilikonda 117, Krishna 110, Kumar 109
Wickets	Krishna 25, Kumar 14, H. Patel 12, Namilikonda 10
Ct/St.	Sudireddy 11/4, Kota 10/1, Puli 7, Gulati 5

Rain ruined eight matches in a bowler's summer played out on often damp pitches but the Gents ended strongly. Three wins in the cool spring weather at Crossbats (Rakesh Patel 75), Byfleet (Kota 55*, S. Patel 42* and 96 for the seventh wicket) and Binfield (Karnekanti 65, Krishna 38 and 97 for the first wicket) gave a false impression of what was to come as three successive matches were then cancelled. St Anne's Allstars were beaten before Plastics, Teddington Town (with two balls left) and the talented Salix beat the Gents. Late June and July saw the fortunes of the club restored as Whalers were beaten in a low-scoring thriller, Wimbledon United brushed aside and new opponents Mpingwe shaded on the hottest day of the season at Normandy, the unbroken seventh-wicket stand of 102 by Mitha and Azhar an all-opponents' record. Eleven weeks later, New Romney's Payton and Harding put up 121 for the fifth wicket, another record. The fusillade of sixes emanating from these batsmen will stay long in the memory.

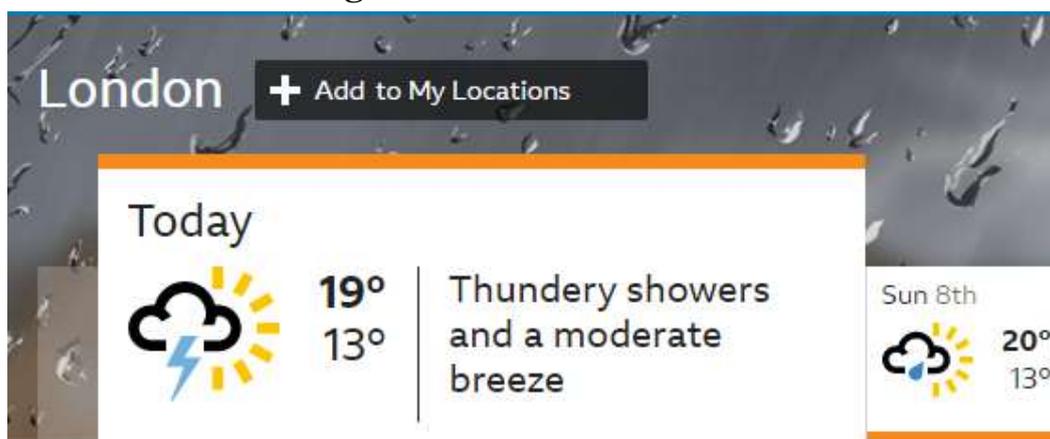
After two more cancellations the sun came out at Wycombe House for the visit of Clapham In, Ferreira's marathon 97 condemning Gents to their first loss there in one of the best games of the season. Salix kindly supplied four guests. Rain and handbags saw the Bricklayer's Arms return abandoned before Gents shaded the Mpingwe return inspired by Ahmed's vigilant 77*. Squirrels beat a veteran Gents XI in a jovial fixture. Kota with unbeaten scores of 84 and 122 led Gents to victory against Millfields (an unbroken stand of 121 with Sudireddy, 55*, for the fifth wicket) and Holtwhites Trinibis but the Salix return was flooded out. Chiswick were welcome visitors to the basic but serviceable Lampton School, the match well won. The Kota-inspired win at New Romney on tour (so defined because five stayed overnight) added the Kent marshlands to the club's outlier destinations of Gloucestershire, Hampshire, West Midlands, Malta and the Netherlands. Gents had recovered well, winning their final four completed games.

Francis (injured though he kindly turned up to support) and Newcombe (moved to Cheltenham) were sadly missed but Karnekanti and Puli blossomed. The experience Kota and Krishna gained in the MCCL with Wycombe House CC and Old Isleworthians CC shone in their performances with bat and ball. The outgoing captaincy duumvirate of Dubey and Krishna led with authority. S. Patel, Chatharaju and A. Ahmed (Saturday captain of Wycombe House 2s) were consistent, always playing according to the needs of the team. Gulati (first game 27 June), Chatharaju and Namilikonda (neither of whom played after August) had restricted but effective seasons. Khan played more matches than in any season since 2011 and taught the club how to take slip catches.

Kota conjured 581 runs at 48.42 with a century and four fifties, 308 coming in an autumn flurry of four innings for once out. Karnekanti and Puli made 200 with S. Patel and Chatharaju just shy. A. Ahmed, Karnekanti, Rakesh Patel and Sudireddy scored excellent fifties. There were thrilling batting recoveries against Crossbats, Mpingwe, Clapham In and Holtwhites Trinibis. Krishna, a model of consistency from May, took 25 wickets at 13.24, his best return, with Kumar (average 10.21), H. Patel and Namilikonda also in double figures and Dubey and Raj Patel one shy. Chatharaju, Gulati, Pingili and S. Patel often bowled well but the lush wickets were unhelpful for spinners H. Patel and Kota. Krishna and Kumar each notched two hauls of four or more wickets and Raj Patel, whose bowling improved after a long absence from the game, one. Sudireddy caught 11 and Kota ten but perhaps the best of all was Jay Patel's stupendous one-hander at slip against Chiswick. Adding back to Sudireddy's catches his four stumpings, one arrives at an impressive 15 fielding dismissals, more than a fifth of the total of 74.

Home pitches at Old Tenisonians and Wycombe House were improved. House hosted good nets and kindly rescheduled two cup games to accommodate the Gents. Superb new grounds at Binfield, Normandy and New Romney were visited while the artificial strip at a fourth, Lampton School, was adequate for an end of season fixture. Five friendly new opponents were played. The club's umpires attracted unfavourable comment in two fixtures to which one can only respond that they gave 20 batsmen out lbw whereas only 12 opponents suffered this fate, eerily identical to the truncated 2020 campaign. The club's charities benefited by £360 thanks to fines levied against Plastics.

One third of games cancelled due to climate crisis



In 2021 the weather deprived Gents of a third of the scheduled fixtures, the worst in its history. It was no better at Wycombe House, whose 2s had five league contests out of 18 rained off (three home, two away). Of the sixteen fixtures scheduled against Bricklayer's Arms, only ten have been completed. Monks recorded the dismal 2007 campaign (the previous worst) in illuminated manuscripts. They wrote of five cancellations and the abandonment of the second West XI match in which Hemin Patel took 3-17 to reduce West XI to 81-5.

Everyone was frustrated this year but everyone tried, and hats off to the likes of Krishna and Kota who often found alternative fixtures. We will applaud for ever the cheerful resourcefulness of Northfields on 23 May. Needing sawdust to dry the bowlers' run-ups, none was available, but a deputation returned from a local pet shop with bags of bedding wood intended for lining rabbit cages. They also put a great deal of effort in to swapping the venue to Durston House on 8 August after the usual Motspur Park biblicals.

Ground control

There has been much discussion, some of it informed, about home venues in 2022. This will be an important agenda item for the AGM. We must be mindful not only of the poor weather but also the good facilities we have enjoyed at Motspur Park and Osterley. We appreciate the improved Old Tenisonians ground, and the warm welcome we always get at Wycombe House, the free nets, and their flexibility in swapping the venues of two important cup matches that they were scheduled to host.

Bricklayer's Arms v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 25 July, Abbey RG. Bricklayer's Arms won toss. Rainy, 21C

Abandoned

Bricklayer's Arms		Gentlemen of West London	
*Foister	not out	0	Chatharaju, Karnekanti, Khan, Kota, Krishna, *Kumar, †Namilikonda,
Poulter	not out	5	H. Patel, Raj Patel, S. Patel and Pingili dnb
Gul, Lall, Mamoon, Gujjar, Sharma, Imran, Bloch, Evans, Ottley and †Locke dnb			
Extras	b1 w2	3	
Total	0 wickets	1.4 overs	8
Bowling: Pingili 1-0-2-0, Namilikonda 0.4-0-5-0			

Twenty-three players gathered more in hope than expectation at Abbey RG – we were going to rotate our 12 – but brief hopes of defying the forecast were soon drowned out, **writes Chris Locke**. We did at least get started after Simon Foister won the toss, but just after Tom Poulter had late-cut a four the heavens opened again and everyone ran for shelter. Twenty minutes later there were gulls paddling in the lake on the square and that was that. Thanks to all who nobly turned up, and let's hope for better weather on our rematch with the Gents in four weeks' time, and indeed for the rest of the season.

He's here all season



It was an agreeable surprise in July to bump into Australian Damon Wilson, ex-12 Angry Men, at Ealing CC, where is a Level 3 ECB coach. Before joining them, he became, according to his own website it has to be said, one of Barnes CC's "best-ever wicket-keeper batsmen"; a far cry from his Angry days when H.P. Denton wore the gauntlets ahead of him. He scored 100 against Gents in 2001 as part of their mammoth 284-3. He played once for us in 2003 and stropily wouldn't field where captain Buck told him to:

"Square leg please, Damon."

"Square leg? Naah, not for me mate."

These colours don't run

Suspicion torments my heart

Suspicion keeps us apart

Suspicion, why torture me?

So sang Elvis in 1962. And the Gents should have done in the Battle of Motspur Park on 22 August. Early in Brick's innings, a batsman drove towards the far boundary whence the ball was reeled in. They ran two. "That was a four," bellowed his colleague to the scorer from the sidelines a mere 60 yards away, "Scorer, that's four, why have you not written four?" "Because the fielder could see and you and I could not. Nor did the umpire signal it."

Something similar happened on the desolate wasteland that is Regent's Park Cricket Hub in July during the Tower Hamlets 2s v. Wycombe House 2s clash. A Hamlets batsman was crashing the ball into the deep field on the leg side. The square-leg umpire, also a Hamlets player as only one umpire was supplied, then proceeded to sprint alongside the outfielder in pursuit of the ball. "Why are you doing this?" he was asked. "To check you are not cheating on boundaries," came the reply.

The world has gone bonkers.

Oppo team of the year

Your favourite feature is back post-pandemic with the usual rules: one player per team and, as with *Wisden's* Five Cricketers of the Year, no repeat appearances, which rules out Yov Ilangakoon of Salix. This season was not one for startling individual performances but the XI below would be a match for anybody.

We open with two left-handers, a South African, and an Australian who took Salix for 152* and went aerial against the Gents on a filthy pitch. Going in late on 12 September after an injury Smith scored a good 46 and he was an inspiring captain in 2020. Another Aussie, Anderson, completes the top order. There will be plenty of runs there. Wicket-keeper was a hard decision to make. Fry holds off the challenge of Holtwhites' young Ben Evans, inadmissible in any event if we select Smith. Three all-rounders follow with Gaffar going in before CK and Cooper, who will take the new ball with the gifted if wayward Waddicor.

Kulasingam and Docherty will be first and second change with Surrey age group player Hilmy doing the leg-spin. The Commonwealth is well represented with representatives from Australia, South Africa, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Bowling all-rounder Watson will be twelfth man. No room for the New Romney giants? What do you think? We have taken a tough decision on the captaincy. Young Smith showed qualities of leadership and he will be 2-i-c to Gaffar whose subtle tactical awareness this season impressed. We go:

Riaan Ferreira (Clapham In)

Dean Johnstone (Whalers)

Ed Smith (Holtwhites Trinibis)

Joe Anderson (Plastics)

†Zak Fry (Chiswick)

*Aadil Gaffar (Mpingwe)

Christy Kulasingam (Salix)

Cian Cooper (Millfields)

Sam Waddicor (St Anne's Allstars)

Zoe Docherty (Binfield)

Nik Hilmy (Teddington Town)

12th man: Oliver Watson (Wimbledon United)

Gentlemen of West London v. Clapham In

Sunday 15 August, Wycombe House. Gents won toss. Sunny, 23C

Lost by 5 wickets

Gentlemen of West London			Clapham In				
Sadhra		b Royal	4	†Ferreira	c Khan	b Ilangakoon	97
†Sudireddy		b Rumbold	1	O'Connell		b Aslam	24
Ilangakoon	c Ferreira	b Kakan	33	Miller		b Kulasingam	0
Khan		b Kakan	17	Williams	st Sudireddy	b H. Patel	43
Namilikonda		b Kakan	5	Lynch		b Kulasingam	7
Raj Patel		b Frecknall	16	*Frecknall	not out		17
Kulasingam	c Cummins	b Rumbold	38	Royal	not out		2
Chatharaju		b Rumbold	28	Kakan, Rumbold, Cummins and Parmenter dnb			
Aslam	not out		19				
*S. Patel	not out		26				
H. Patel	dnb						
Extras	w8 nb6 b2 lb2		18	Extras	w4 nb1 b9 lb2		16
Total	8 wickets	40 overs	205	Total	5 wickets	38.5 overs	206
FoW: 6, 6, 58, 64, 69, 93, 151, 156				FoW: 63, 64, 131, 172, 204			
Bowling: Rumbold 8-1-49-3, Royal 8-0-33-1, Kakan 8-1-28-3, Parmenter 7-0-38-0, Frecknall 7-0-43-1, Williams 2-0-10-0				Bowling: Chatharaju 5-1-20-0, Raj Patel 6-2-11-0, Aslam 5-1-21-1, Kulasingam 8-2-43-2, Namilikonda 2-0-16-0, H. Patel 5-0-41-1, Sadhra 4-0-26-0, Ilangakoon 3.5-0-17-1			

Riaan Ferreira's composed 97 led Clapham In to victory in a good-spirited game. It was the visitors' second win in this rubber in the last three years and the Gents' first defeat on this ground in their sixth match. So much for statistics; of greater importance is that the club honoured the fixture, pulling in four Salix players to supplement the six members available, others playing in a T20 day in Watford.

Captain Patel was keen to involve the guests, three of whom he knew well, so his batting order came as no surprise: nor did the consistent quality of Clapham's attack who found good lines on a slow, true track. After the fall of two wickets in the second and third overs, Ilangakoon and Khan batted brightly. Indeed, the middle and lower order came up trumps again as a perilous 100-6 at 20-over drinks was uplifted to a competitive 205-8 after sterling work by batsmen 6-10. This has been a recurrent theme in 2021 and at the time of writing the average partnerships for the seventh and eighth wickets (30 and 21) are higher than any of the second to sixth. Kulasingam top-scored and hit the day's only six, adding 58 with the reliable, mature Chatharaju; Salix team-mate Ilangakoon was dropped on 4 and hit a lively 33; Raj Patel hit four good boundaries; and the duo of Aslam/S. Patel put up 49 in the final eight overs. A fair if not insuperable target of 205 was therefore set.

The reply was immaculate. Left-hander Ferreira's third 50 against the Gents was its anchor and he gave only one chance, when well set on 51. Fellow southpaw O'Connell provided solid support before falling an over before No.3 Miller. Kulasingam and Aslam then applied the brakes and it was 66-2 at drinks, 140 needed at exactly seven. Williams then set about Namilikonda and H. Patel with vigour, and betting exchanges had Clapham In as 52:48 favourites.

Ferreira, who hit 13 fours, was playing the bowling easily enough but he needed support after the fall of Williams. Lynch provided it briefly but his dismissal only let in captain Frecknall, who put bat to ball hard. Clapham In moved remorselessly towards their stiff target and Ferreira looked on for a century. The scorer thought he had it in the penultimate over, but no, it was four byes. He then fell caught at slip before Royal saw his side home. Raj Patel bowled immaculately.

We thank Wycombe House CC for honouring the Gents' booking when they had a postponed MDL quarter-final to host. They swapped to Barnes CC and won so all ended well. The facilities were spot on and Vasi Shaikh kindly returned to open the bar, so the Gents were able to toast their victors, who could lubricate their own fines session.

The Gents, with a talented side, did little wrong but were slightly outplayed by a strong, well-led but above all friendly opposition. Thanks to captain Dubey and Chandra Puli for support. A good day out.

Gentlemen of West London v. Bricklayer's Arms

Sunday 22 August, Old Tenisonians. Gents won toss. Cloudy then rainy, 21C

Abandoned

Bricklayer's Arms			Gentlemen of West London			
*Foister	c Karnekanti	b Kota	25	Kota	c and b Sharma	31
Poulter	lbw	b Krishna	11	Karnekanti	c Sharma	22
Held	not out		14	Krishna	not out	13
Lall	run out (Puli)		17	Puli	not out	21
Basnet	c and	b Gulati	10	†Sudireddy, Gulati, Chatharaju, Namilikonda, *Dubey, Khan		
Sharma		b Gulati	0	and S. Patel dnb		
Mamoon		b Khan	11			
Imran	c Namilikonda	b Krishna	18			
Bridgford	c Sudireddy	b Krishna	4			
Ottley	not out		3			
†Locke	dnb					
Extras	w9 nb5 b3 lb1		18	Extras	w9 b5 lb1	15
Total	8 wickets	35 overs	131	Total	2 wickets	28.4 overs
FoW:	17, 47, 67, 67, 89, 89, 116, 116			FoW:	52, 66	
Bowling:	Krishna 7-1-14-3, Chatharaju 5-0-12-0, Gulati 7-2-22-2, Karnekanti 2-0-14-0, Namilikonda 5-0-25-0, Kota 3-0-16-1, Khan 5-0-20-1, Dubey 1-0-4-0			Bowling:	Mamoon 6-1-22-0, Imran 6-1-12-0, Ottley 6-0-22-1, Sharma 7-0-23-1, Poulter 3.4-0-17-0	

A petulant game was abandoned with Gents needing 30 runs to win off 38 balls with eight wickets in hand. They were slight favourites (DLS had them seven runs ahead) but we'll never know. Trouble had been simmering all day and finally kicked off in Mamoon's sixth over when he exploded after being called wide and having an appeal for lbw rejected on height. For what it's worth, fielders square of the wicket thought the lbw call fair. Mamoon didn't and unleashed a volley of foul language at the umpire and batsman, followed by a melee, wise intervention by captain Dubey and a 20 minute delay. By then the rain that had threatened for the previous two hours was falling proper hard and after four balls of Poulter's fourth over the players left the field, never to return. Not a good day out for anybody.

The whiff of burning martyr is not pleasant and Gents were not without blame: umpires should neither bring their phones to the middle nor coach batsmen; and wides should never be queried. If in doubt, talk to the captain. These incidents gifted Brick's apologists an early own-goal. More important was the poor punctuality. The match started 29 minutes late at 1.29pm which was squarely the fault of the hosts. Had it begun on time, a positive result for good or ill would have been achieved.

What about the game itself? It was an even contest played on a slow, true wicket with a huge, lush outfield. Given this, Brick's 131-8, based around veteran captain Foister's 25 off 77 balls, was par. He was clearly run out but the umpire was unsighted. Gents seamers were on the money and Krishna and Gulati, serious bowlers in such conditions, were excellent. Seven batsmen made double figures but the fielding up well in the wind and poor light. Dangerman Lall was run out after being sent back by the captain, treating spectators to a vigorous, passionate debrief, by no means the last of the innings. Kota and Khan were among the wickets. Only eight fours were struck all innings: Gents would manage just half that as even lustily lofted drives stopped on landing.

The chase was executed sensibly. Dubey chose the club's most prolific two batsmen, Kota and Karnekanti, to open and they put up 52 in 16.4 overs. It was a welcome return to form for Kota after 33 in his previous five knocks, accompanied in several cases by bizarre ill-fortune. They both fell within three overs but Krishna and Puli simply carried on, and with more vibrant running the target hove into view before the dramas.

The two Brick games this season were only the 23rd and 24th abandoned in 622 matches over 34 seasons. The first game of 1.4 overs was the shortest abandoned game ever: the above at 63.4 overs the longest. Here we must wheel forward our favourite cliché: the games were fascinatingly poised. When the rains came in 1998, Gents were 16-1 off seven overs against Sunderland SC on 1 August and 22 days later 57-3 off eight against British Gas, these being the previous shortest.

The home page of our website (<https://bricklayersarms.play-cricket.com/home>, where you can find all our fixtures and match reports) proudly states: "Throughout our 30 seasons so far the spirit of cricket has been our focus." In this game we let that tradition down very badly, **writes Chris Locke**. An unseemly slanging match which led to our bowler swearing at their umpire marred what had been a tight contest between bat and ball. Such behaviour wouldn't be tolerated in a needle League contest, where it would be punished by penalty runs, fines on clubs and player bans, let alone a Sunday friendly. We've worked long and hard to establish the Brick as a sporting side people want to play on the social circuit. This sort of conduct risks losing fixtures, friends and our reputation. It isn't the first time excessive dissent has been shown this season. It has to be the last from now onwards.

As for the game itself, the Gents put us in on a grey day that always threatened the rain that eventually ended proceedings. Skipper Simon Foister and Tom Poulter negotiated eight overs of tight medium pace, though Simon was lucky that a fielder unsighted the umpire from giving what looked a clear run-out. Instead Tom was first to go, lbw for 11 to one that cut back in the next over. Sean Held had scored just two when his second single saw him aggravate the knee problem he'd had earlier this month. He retired hurt, but Sunny Lall took the score from 23 to 47 in the 16th over with some great hitting before being run out when Simon sent him back, the hamstring he pulled in failing to regain his ground adding to his volubly expressed dismay.

Anil Basnet, who needed to leave early for work but had stepped in as we were short, scampered a quick 10 before being caught by the bowler, and in the same 19th over Himanshu Sharma was yorked third ball as both wickets fell on 67. Hassan Mamoon helped the score to 89 in the 26th before being bowled for 11, and next over Simon's long vigil was ended for a 77-ball 25 as he hit to mid-on without the score progressing. But Sohaib Imran, who played himself in carefully before unleashing some cracking shots, and Ian Bridgford took us to 116 before for the third time we lost two wickets on the same score as Sohaib found deep mid-off for 18 and Ian skied to the keeper for a dogged 4. But Sean Held nobly volunteered to return with Hassan as his quicksilver runner, and alongside Mike Ottley 15 were added off the last 13 balls as Mike posted 3 and Sean 14 not out.

Given the murky conditions and the huge lush outfield 132 looked a par target even though, with Anil departed, we had just ten in the field, two of whom were injured. Hassan Mamoon and Sohaib Imran opened our attack, Hassan particularly unlucky as one opener snicked just past off stump but short of the 'keeper, who then couldn't hang on to a second edge with a one-handed dive to slip. Sohaib meanwhile gave away only 12 in his six pacy overs, but the opening stand was past fifty before a breakthrough came, Himanshu Sharma judging a skier nicely at mid-wicket off Mike Ottley to make the Gents 52-1 in the 17th over. Mike nearly had another as No.3 snicked his first ball onto Chris Locke's elbow. Three overs later Himanshu, who was generating some lovely swing, took a second catch off his own bowling to remove the other opener with the score on 66, and he almost pouched a third with a great effort low at midwicket off Ottley which stopped a full-blooded pull whistling to the boundary.

Gents had paced their chase shrewdly, though, and with wickets in hand started to accelerate. The effects of five games in eight days finally took their toll on Mike Ottley, who retired from the attack after bowling three successive wides. Tom Poulter took over spinning duties, while once Himanshu finished his fine spell Chris Locke advised Simon against bringing back Sohaib as the light was so dank.

By now a young umpire had arrived who had to be asked to put away his mobile phone and to stop chatting at square leg as the bowler was in his delivery stride. He then further irked the returning Hassan by giving the tightest of legside wides, but three balls later Hassan totally lost it when his lbw shout was (quite rightly in the opinion of fielders square on) turned down on height. The ugly row took a good quarter of an hour to be calmed, and the resumption lasted only four balls before drizzle turned to heavier rain and the skippers wisely agreed to call the game off. Harmony was restored in the pub afterwards, and while the Gents were favourites to win when the match was called off Himanshu did restore some of our tarnished honour by beating them at pool. But to them, and particularly to Gents organiser Andy Burman, whose hard work as stand-in groundsman was rewarded only by having his afternoon ruined by the unpleasantness, we must apologise and be sure we never behave like that again.

Gentlemen of West London v. Mpingwe

Sunday 29 August, Old Tenisonians. Mpingwe won toss. Cloudy, 18C

Won by 3 wickets

Mpingwe			Gentlemen of West London				
*Aadil Gaffar		b Pingili	11	Kota	c Savan	b Iftikar Batti	20
Maruf		b Pingili	17	Karnekonti	lbw	b Nasik Whahab	1
Nayeem	lbw	b H. Patel	38	*Kumar	c Ilyas	b Najeeb Khan	6
†Aftab	c Kota	b Kumar	19	†Puli	c Aftab	b Savan	0
Ilyas		b Krishna	33	A. Ahmed	not out		77
Mitha	c Karnekanti	b H. Patel	10	S. Patel	lbw	b Maruf	29
Azfar	lbw	b S. Patel	9	Pingili		b Nasik Whahab	11
Iftikar Batti	run out (A. Ahmed)		1	R. Patel	lbw	b Azhar	2
Najeeb Khan	not out		5	Krishna	not out		0
Nasik Whahab	not out		1	Khan and H. Patel	dnb		0
Savan	dnb						
Extras	w8 nb1 b1		10	Extras	w7 nb1 lb1		9
Total	8 wickets	40 overs	154	Total	7 wickets	37.1 overs	155
FoW:	30, 31, 83, 92, 120, 147, 147, 152			FoW:	3 10, 14, 37, 103, 148, 154		
Bowling:	R. Patel 4-0-17-0, Krishna 6-2-16-1, Pingili 5-1-13-2, Khan 3-0-23-0, Kumar 8-2-27-1, H. Patel 8-0-27-2, S. Patel 4-0-16-1, Kota 2-0-14-0			Bowling:	Nasik Whahab 8-4-12-2, Najeeb Khan 7-1-0-18-1, Savan 8-0-44-1, Iftikar Batti 6-0-38-1, Mitha 5-0-28-0, Maruf 2-0-12-1, Azhar 1-0-2-1		

The final Old Tenisonians game of 2021 was a cracker, with Aamir Ahmed's epic 77*, a club personal best with ten fours and a six, propelling Gents to a win by three wickets with 17 balls to spare. Fortunes oscillated all day. Mpingwe, deputising again for Battersea Eagles, put up a par score on a slow wicket after being reined back before the hosts recovered after early pace-inspired mayhem. Indeed, the visitors' first three bowlers were the fastest faced this season with the young left-armed Whahab proving a particular handful.

Despite the pace of Raj Patel and Krishna's usual clever variations the first 20 overs of the day were Mpingwe's, though Pingili struck twice in successive overs to remove the hard-hitting Afghani Maruf and his captain. Nayeem and Aftab were composed. At mid-innings drinks Mpingwe stood at 81-2 with hopes of 200 but were frustrated by the bowled-through pair Kumar and H. Patel who shared 3-54 in 16 overs. There were good catches from Kota running round from gully and Karnekanti applying cool judgement to a skyer at long-off. The team fielded tirelessly, Raj Patel putting in a tremendous shift in the deep and pitching his huge throws into Puli's gloves. Gents were tight on extras, in contrast to Mr Ahmed's Wycombe House 2s who conceded 39 the day before in Ealing Trailfinders 2s' winning 117-2.

Karnekonti, Puli and Kumar fell before eight overs were out and the hosts were in the mire. But while there is Kota (now with Krishna a proud member of Old Isleworthians and Heston CC) there is hope and he batted with exemplary technique for 17.3 overs. At his dismissal caught in the gully off spinner Batti's second ball Ahmed stood quietly at 9*, having been dropped on 6, and Gents were 37-4 needing 5.2 runs per over. Sanjay Patel entered the fray and the fortunes of the Gents were about to take a turn for the better.

Patel and Ahmed smashed 66 in just 68 balls. The stand was full of dashing strokeplay and top-notch running, and when Patel fell for 29 the run rate needed had plummeted to 3.5. Pingili batted calmly and 45 came for the sixth wicket in 37 balls as Ahmed accelerated, the day's only six clearing sight screen, trees and the groundsman's wall. It was the shot of the year (Dino Francis' destruction of the Paulin Ground sight screen took the accolade in 2020) and, for skill, guts and stamina, the innings the best of the year.

The job was nearly done by the time Pingili was out and though Mpingwe got Raj Patel with the scores level, it only remained for Ahmed to push the winning single at the refreshingly early hour of 6.35pm, which was testament to the slick over rates delivered by the bowlers, a credit to their skippers all of them. Late finishes are no fun on dark early-autumn evenings. It had been an even game of high quality and the 2022 clashes will be much looked forward to. Mpingwe are a fun, reliable and talented opposition and we thank Khalid Harris of Battersea Eagles who brokered the fixture as he deemed that his own Sunday 2s might be too weak to play the Gents. Harris is a saint.

Squirrels v. Gentlemen of West London

Saturday 4 September, Long Ditton RG. Gents won toss. Cloudy, 19C

Lost by 64 runs

Squirrels		Gentlemen of West London				
*Glavina	b H. Patel	36	Pentakota	b Chase	12	
Aldridge	b M. Gilkes	19	Karnekonti	c Scott	b Bateman	11
Ashcroft	c Sudireddy	11	Puli	b Hues	27	
†Scott	st Sudireddy	28	Raj Patel	c Shepherd	b Hues	11
Holmes	lbw	16	†Sudireddy	b Hues	2	
Shepherd	lbw	3	S. Patel	lbw	b Hues	2
Hues	b S. Patel	24	R. Gilkes	c Holmes	b Chapman	0
Alexander	c Sudireddy	27	Petluru	lbw	b Holmes	0
Chapman	not out	13	T. Snelling		b Hues	0
Chase	retired hurt	2	M. Gilkes	not out		17
Bateman	c Puli	3	D. Patel	c Ashcroft	b Chase	6
	b T. Snelling		H. Patel*	dnb		
Extras	w1 b6 lb2	9	Extras	w12 nb17 b7 lb3	39	
Total	9 wickets	35 overs	Total	All out	31.1 overs	127
FoW: 27, 56, 98, 98, 102, 121, 158, 176, 191			FoW: 21, 43, 76, 82, 85, 85, 86, 86, 96, 127			
Bowling: T. Snelling 5-1-23-1, M. Gilkes 4-1-19-1, Pentakota 3-0-26-1, Raj Patel 3-0-14-0, D. Patel 7-0-35-1, H. Patel 7-0-37-3, Petluru 3-0-12-1, S. Patel 3-0-17-1			Bowling: Shepherd 4-1-3-0, Bateman 5-1-17-1, Chase 4.1-1-7-2, Alexander 3-0-22-0, Chapman 4-1-14-1, Hues 5-0-15-5, Ashcroft 2-0-10-0, Holmes 2-0-2-1, Aldridge 1-0-16-0, Glavina 1-0-11-0			

Today was always going to be unusual, writes Naveed Khan. A Saturday game. A charity match with a trigger-happy Master of Fines. A guest scorer. A September fixture giving you a shorter day and leaving you even more at the mercy of the weather. So many new variables and so many opportunities for havoc. The start did not disappoint.

Hemin Patel vehemently instructed players from both teams to arrive early so that a 12am start could be strictly adhered to. This was the scene that greeted the first arrivals:



Not just one kids' football match being played on the cricket pitch, but two, one of which was a league match featuring two local teams. Along with all the parents and toddlers and their various paraphernalia, including deck chairs, camping chairs, tricycles with stabilisers and picnics. Some of whom actually camped on the wicket itself. Apparently the council had double booked us all. A conversation with the football coach ascertained they were scheduled to play until 12:30pm. He was very understanding of our

situation and agreed to rush through half-time and vacate the field of play as quickly as possible. True to his word, we were able to start our match at 12:40pm precisely.

Patel won the toss and elected to field. Theo Snelling started with an impeccable line and length resulting in a maiden. His new-ball partner, Maff Gilkes had a sharp catch put down by first slip on his second delivery. Squirrels' captain, Glavina, and his opening partner, Aldridge, then started to play their shots and their opening stand of 27 came in just 5.1 overs. Aldridge in particular was hitting the ball very cleanly and having dispatched Gilkes Jr. for a straight boundary had his middle stump completely uprooted the following over by a jaffa from the young pace bowler. Ashcroft arrived at the crease and added a further 29 with his skipper before being caught behind by the ever-reliable gloves of Sudireddy off Pentakota, who bowled two disciplined overs as first change before being put to the sword by No. 4 Scott, in his third over, four of his five boundaries coming in the unlucky 13th. Scott's positive approach seemed to encourage skipper Glavina who then started to open his shoulders more freely and at 81-2 after 14 overs, Hemin introduced the evergreen Dhruv Patel. The day's highest partnership (42) was broken when Dhruv had Scott smartly stumped by Sudireddy in his second over. Two balls later, Hemin bowled Glavina for 36, the day's highest score, and in his next over had Shepherd lbw. At drinks, Squirrels were 103-5 off 20 overs and the Gents team were feeling a little bit more energised by those three quick wickets.

Hemin and Dhruv continued to bowl with control and discipline, making Holmes and Hues work hard for every run. Hemin trapped Holmes lbw in his fifth over, bringing Alexander to the crease. This seemed to awaken something in Hues who started to find the boundary with more regularity. The scoring rate, healthy throughout the innings, then started to accelerate, 14 runs coming off Hemin's sixth over. Once both Dhruv and Hemin had completed their allotted seven overs, guest Petluru took the pace off the ball and the run rate. Sanjay Patel clean bowled Hues, for an excellent 24, with his very first delivery and Squirrels were 165-7 at the 30-over mark. Now the last few overs of an innings can be a little frantic as batsmen get more daring and unorthodox in an attempt to accumulate as many as possible. The last five overs here were definitely action-packed. Petluru had Alexander caught behind for a brisk 27. Chase managed to edge a Sanjay beamer onto his head and had to leave the field (reluctantly and still smiling it must be said) as the blood poured from his scalp. While this mayhem was going on, teenage Chapman pushed the ball into gaps, snuck byes and found the boundary to finish unbeaten. Theo returned to close the innings and had Bateman caught by Puli off the final ball to leave the Squirrels 191-9 off their 35.

Tea was taken quickly and within 20 minutes Pentakota and Karnekanti strode out to the middle with a required run rate of 5.49 for victory. Shepherd bowled with great skill, pace and control but no luck at all in his quest for wickets. His four overs yielded just three runs off the bat. He was wonderfully supported by Bateman who had Karnekanti caught behind for 11 by Scott in his third over. Both teams spookily losing their first wicket in the sixth over for an opening partnership in the twenties. A heavily-bandaged Chase started with a no-ball beamers but then bowled almost as miserly as the man he replaced. The runs started to dry up and the watchful Pentakota was cleaned bowled in Chase's third. Raj Patel joined Puli at the crease and attempted to inject some impetus with some sharp running between the wickets. The two Gents had to fight for every run and put on the joint-highest partnership of the innings with 33. However, the introduction of Hues in the 17th would have a catastrophic impact on the Gents' scorecard. He bowled Puli for 27 in his second over and then snaffled up both Raj and Sudireddy in his third. Richard Gilkes top-edged Chapman in the next before Hues struck another double whammy by removing Sanjay Patel and Theo Snelling in his fourth. From 76-2 the Gents had their entire middle order ripped out, sliding to 86-8 in the 23rd.

Enter Gilkes Jr. who decided he was going to fight fire with fire. From the first ball he showed clear intent and despite losing partner Petluru (lbw to Holmes) two overs later he continued to find the gaps, pushing a creaking (and at times complaining) Dhruv Patel to scamper through for ones and twos. At 94-9 and needing another 98 for an improbable (we don't use the word impossible) victory, the Squirrels skipper decided to literally give everyone a bowl, regardless of their ability. The number of wides and no balls increased dramatically and a now well-set Gilkes started to find the boundary. A thirsty Glavina then decided to bring back opening bowler Bateman along with the excellent Chase, who had Dhruv caught

off the first ball of his second spell to end an innings' joint-highest partnership of 33. Gilkes not out on 17. The Gents 127 all out in the 32nd over.

An action-packed game featuring some top-class batting, bowling and fielding, bloopers, bumpers, beamers, bashed heads, dropped catches and a boundary-saving slide by Aldridge that would not have been out of place in the Hundred.

The after party at the local pub lasted nearly as long as the match itself and featured Master of Fines, Hemin Patel, in a ruthless (charitable) mood. As per tradition, the Squirrels included us in their post-match ritual of awards and forfeits. Special mention to Ken Toft who came along to support the Gents both on the field and in the pub. Special mention to Sanjay Patel who kindly brought along and set up a table and chair for yours truly to score the match in comfort. Stuart Snelling was present throughout the proceedings, loudly cheering on the team. Katie and kids were also vocal supporters, especially during Gilkes Jr's innings and were generous donors to the charity collections in the pub afterwards.

Personally I thoroughly enjoyed being involved in a Gents fixture with Sanjay, Hemin, Richard, Dhruv, Stuart and Ken, all of whom warmly welcomed me to the club back in 2007. I think days like these are priceless opportunities for current Gents to see first-hand the guys that helped mould the club ethos and identity. I hope it inspires the current crop of talented cricketers and excellent human beings to be brave, be bold and create their own places in Gents' folklore. You are the future of the club, its destiny lies in your hands.

A wonderful day spent with wonderful people.

And now, Squirrels report. Chummy nicknames incoming:

The series is level at 2-2 with a comfortable win for an uncharacteristically strong Squirrels side.

The Squirrels were excited to be reunited at Surbiton for what is always a great fixture against the Gents, though it was a shame to see Wayne was again absent. Morale was bolstered however by the unprecedented and eyebrow-raising experience of looking at a teamsheet packed with actual quality. The pleasant news that our pitch wasn't ready for us yet further buoyed spirits allowing for a relaxed start to the game, catching up with dear friends, having some tiggies and admiring Pedalo's new calves. The skipper strode over to the middle to take the toss, whilst avoiding the 400 football-booted little leaguers tearing up the square, and made the first of a series of errors that on any other day would've seen him authoring the match report.

Having clearly stated that we wanted to chase Glove proceeded to lose the toss and bat. However, two brave volunteers answered the call and stepped in to open, on what was an extremely green and somewhat furrowed square. The bespectacled Aldridge (for it was me) strode out to the middle after his seventh pre-game wee, giving off an air of confidence and lemon juice. At length he was joined by Glavina who took an age to get ready, and face the first ball. In an uncharacteristically robust opening partnership Glavina rotated the strike nicely and Aldridge punched some authoritative boundaries down the ground. The vast outfield meant some strong running was needed from the FD ambassadors and the high performance coach, even though absent, must take some credit for the run rate.

Despite looking set Aldridge was bowled by one that nipped back, sending out the Wizard to the crease who breezily kept momentum going with some powerful hits to some radical areas. A flying visit from the Clive, who had left his house five hours earlier telling Chaz he was just popping out for some milk, was cut short as he realised that far from watching the usual SCC debacle he was watching something of a batting masterclass. Pashcroft eventually departed making way for Scotty, who dealt only in sumptuous boundaries all around the ground, while at the other end Glavina moved serenely into the thirties with some measured clips into midwicket. There was a very real and genuine danger of him looking like an actual cricketer. Needless to say there was still time for the attempted reverse sweeps (targeting the short boundary apparently).

Scotty eventually was stumped, punishing himself for missing the ball by not attempting to remake his ground even when he might have done; “It was a shit shot, I deserved to be out.” Glavina was eventually bowled bringing two new bats (Holmes and Shepherd) to the crease.

Shep unfurled one of the finest lunge forward defences since pre-Aldridge knee injury days, causing me to become misty-eyed with pride and nostalgia. This thankfully didn’t cause me to miss the controversy that followed shortly after. Given correctly lbw to the boisterous opposition skipper, from what I could see, Shep returned to his crease to give what I would describe as a historical re-enactment docu-series of how events unfolded before begrudgingly slinking off to the boundary, done for by the low bounce. After a cursory debrief with the team (“Should never have played back”) he selflessly went to his car by himself for the rest of the innings so he could keep us up to date with the Test score.

There was plenty of batting to come, with Holmes, Peds and Ted all accumulating well and running hard when the boundary proved to be too far to reach, keeping the pressure on the fielders all the time, causing misfields. This complimented a wonderfully characteristic innings from Ron who swiped a blistering 24 off 20. It was all extremely unusual to see batting performances all the way down the card. There was even time for some drama late on as Chasey hit a shoulder high beamer (inexplicably not called as a no ball by Glavina at square leg) into his receding hairline and had to be given medical assistance by the quite well-refreshed St John’s Ambulancemen aka Holmes and Ashcroft who looked like they’d been swigging the antiseptic: 191 looked to be a very good score.

The sight of the claret flowing freely and Chasey done up in a tourniquet like John Terry Butcher fired up the Squirrels bowling attack who took to the field, following a superb match tea, probably the greatest in SCC history, of triple cheeseburgers and nuggets. Poor on the sauces though and Scotty really should have been in the running for TFC for that, and I think he knew it, hence slinking off from the pub early. So off we went, and it was a good contest early on. Shep was aggressive from one end, JB getting some good movement from the other with pressure maintained in the field by some terrific keeping from Scotty. The unusual bounce caused him to wear more than one on the soft fleshy bit in his groin region (which extends down to just above the knee). On a slow low pitch though the batsmen hung in, managing to hit straight down the ground when the ball was overpitched, but eventually the breakthrough came as JB got some good carry through to the keeper. Even though a good partnership followed between Pentakota and Puli the rate was creeping up, and the score seemed to be getting away from the Gents as boundaries proved to be extremely hard to come by. First Chasey, then Peds and Ted came in with some fine bowling and figures to match but then that pressure was capitalised on by a breathless spell of bowling from the Wiltshire Windmill himself, harvesting the middle order with some relentless stump-to-stump bowling – the first SCC five-for in many a year.

By now thoughts turned to the pub, with the game secure but there was still time for some useful overs from the batters to have a bowl – Glavina, Holmes, Ashcroft trotted in with their varying unorthodox styles – and everyone was delighted to witness an actual mental breakdown that threatened the previously-thought-to-be-impregnable-most-balls-in-an-over-record held by expatriate Squirrel Hutchinson, R. Following that debacle I even managed to drop an absolute sitter, just to ensure voting later on was entirely uncontroversial. The pub ensued, a marvellous return to the Gribbling Fox, millions of beers, the opposition hilariously but apparently genuinely asking if we were a League cricket team*, one of the most exhilarating games of fives ever witnessed, the Wizard explaining to OHMSS Jonny Bateman that magic actually exists, anchovy and jalapeno pizzas and tremendous and existential hangovers the following day.

Champagne moment: The delivery that got me out, apparently...

Dick of the Day: Chasey smashing the ball into his own head.

MOM: Rob Hues, genuine all-rounder (and let’s not forget the astonishing catch in the warm up) (notable mention too for Peds)

TFC: Good evening

*and saying that our openers had the best technique of any batters they have faced.... How do you keep a straight face when someone is genuinely saying that to you? No professionals.

Gentlemen of West London v. Millfields

Sunday 5 September, Wycombe House. Millfields won toss. Sunny, 26C

Won by 6 wickets

Millfields		Gentlemen of West London				
E. Cooper	run out (Pingili)	9	*Kumar	c Prowse	b Jackson	4
Collis	c Sudireddy	26	Karnekonti	lbw	b Shaz	18
†Prowse	c Kota	35	Kota	not out		84
*Lachlan		1	Babu		b C. Cooper	2
C. Cooper	c Pingili	74	A. Ahmed		b Shaz	16
Roy	c Khan	5	†Sudireddy	not out		55
Hendry	c Pingili	11	Pingili, Khan, Raj Patel, Puli, Krishna and Ravula dnb			
Hughes		10				
Jackson		5				
M. Cooper	not out	1				
Shaz	st Sudireddy	0				
Extras	w16 b3 lb5	24	Extras	w14 nb1 b10		25
Total	All out	35 overs	Total	4 wickets	31.2 overs	204
FoW: 32, 52, 64, 101, 151, 174, 191, 200, 201, 201			FoW: 9, 52, 60, 83			
Bowling: Ravula 7-2-29-0, Krishna 7-0-32-4, Raj Patel 6-0-38-2, Puli 5-0-31-1, Kota 6-0-38-1, Kumar 4-0-25-1			Bowling: Jackson 5-0-36-1, Hughes 7-0-36-0, Shaz 7-0-35-2, C. Cooper 6-0-23-1, Hendry 3-0-25-0, M. Cooper 3.2-0-39-0			

When the Gents stood nervously at 83-4 off 17 overs, Millfields were favourites to avenge their heavy defeat one year before, but the first hundred partnership in 24 games, 121, led Gents to a memorable win. Kota (eight fours) and Sudireddy (six fours and a six) were imperious in their 86 balls together and the hosts had six wickets and 22 balls in hand when victory was gained at a quarter to seven. It was the club's third-highest winning total batting second (*since superseded at New Romney. Ed.*) and only the fourth of 200 or more. None saw fewer wickets lost. The game also saw the first wickets for Raj Patel and Puli. The result ties the rubber at 3-3.

The match was a triumph for the groundsman Mr Pope who provided a green-tinged but completely true wicket and a fast, shorn outfield. The adjacent strip had yielded 377 runs 24 hours before and not a single ball misbehaved. Millfields included their usual match-winners – Tom Collis (scores of 80, 150* and 66* at an average of 296, the only bowler to dismiss him being Jonny Small with a caught Bocha) and paceman Cian Cooper. Neither played in 2020 but returning was paceman Sam Lachlan who famously cartwheeled Ahmed's stumps, though the shoulder injury sustained in that game has prevented his bowling in 2021 as he awaits surgery.

On a hot, slightly misty day with no wind Millfields were delighted to bat first. Gents debuted Krishna's colleagues from the freshly-promoted Old Isleworthians and Heston 3s, Vijay Babu (565 runs this season) and Prithvi Ravula. David Roy from the same club was loaned to Millfields, who had suffered a Saturday withdrawal. Krishna it was of course who first brokered this fixture in 2016.

The lanky Ravula and Krishna (37 wickets in 2021 for OI and Gents going into this game) took the new ball and were steady against a sound opening pair. A run out broke the stand, both openers ending in mid-pitch before Pingili cleanly gathered the ball and threw in to the 'keeper who removed a bail. Unfit to bowl, his fielding was brilliant.

First change Raj Patel then struck twice with two big wickets, an outswinger finding the edge of Collis' bat and Lachlan playing on. At 17-over drinks, Millfields were 70-3. Prowse clipped Kumar's third ball to cover, 101-4 but by now the powerful Cooper was well set.

In just 17 overs at the crease his 74 (five fours and three sixes) threatened a huge total. But slowly, and benefiting from hard work and wise bowling changes, the Gents restored parity. Roy sliced to slip Khan and Hendry holed out to long on Pingili. Cooper himself fell to another superb Pingili catch in the deep off Krishna, whose second spell was inspired. He took three wickets in the final over off which just one run came and he ended with 4-32.

Ahmed reckoned 201 to be par. The captain put some finishers down the order and took first strike. A full-toss pulled for four and a drive to mid-off was good for the run rate if not the blood pressure of the supporters, and a spectacular and actually quite elegant bat hurl was the result. Kota was assured, clipping his ones and twos, and had good support from Karnekanti and Ahmed, though Babu fell early.

At 17 overs, Gents were 83-4, the spinner Shaz turning the ball and snaffling two, Kota 31*, exactly seven per over needed. Sudireddy is an intelligent, strong and fit cricketer with perfect eyesight. But it is not unfair to say that his shot selection at the start of the innings is apt to be potty. Sanjay Patel had addressed this matter the day before and it was a focused Sudireddy who went out. The pair played Cooper securely enough but his fiery spell perhaps deserved greater reward.

The fours began to flow, allied to superb running. Sudireddy drove three successive fours in Cooper Sr.'s first over, the 21st of the innings, 19 coming off it. The required run rate was down to a manageable 5.6 and there were powerful batsmen to come, but the pair were keen to see the job through. The runs flowed and Millfields were powerless to stop them but they fought the good fight till the end. A brisk appeal for lbw against Kota was declined and he gave a half-chance on 42 but otherwise the batsmen had it all their own way.

Aamir Ahmed put in much effort to arrange the facilities, including running the bar afterwards, in which he was introduced to such concepts as a half of bitter and a lager top. Support from House colleagues who had attended the MDL final at Richmond CC was also appreciated.

Career Top 10s

Greetings pop pickers, here are the charts. Right? Right! Not 'arf. S. Patel needs one game for his 400 appearances and D. Patel one for 200. H. Patel overtakes A. Buck in the runs with Kota also up one. Kumar crashes the list of wickets and Sudireddy, a new entry, skyrockets in the fielding dismissals, up ten places to fifth. On the strength of his brief but consistent season, A. Ahmed rises three places in the batting averages and hits the Top 10.

Appearances (✓= played in 2021)		Runs		Wickets	
S. Patel ✓	399	S. Patel ✓	6,803	S. Patel ✓	424
H. Patel ✓	260	M. Ashton	3,848	S. Snelling ✓	401
S. Snelling ✓	247	D. Patel ✓	3,225	H. Patel ✓	349
A. Buck	219	J. Wright	3,020	D. Patel ✓	235
A. Burman	211	P. Kota ✓	2,727	M. Ashton	222
D. Patel ✓	199	N. Husain	2,270	M. Sciberras	152
M. Sciberras	175	S. Kumar ✓	2,017	D. Todd	148
M. Ashton	153	R. Gilkes ✓	1,874	J. Wright	135
J. Wright	149	H. Patel ✓	1,829	S. Kumar ✓	118
D. Todd	147	A. Buck	1,815	A. Buck	115
Catches and Stumpings		Batting averages (min. 20 innings)		Bowling averages (min. 50 overs)	
S. Patel ✓	122/1	N. Husain	49.35	C. Wright	9.87
M. Ashton	59/3	G. Cloete	43.82	M. Ashton	11.23
M. Sciberras	60	P. Kota ✓	43.29	A. Iqbal	11.68
H. Patel ✓	59	R. Lall	36.96	R. Inkollu	11.81
R. Sudireddy ✓	38/10	V. Gulati ✓	34.91	S. Snelling ✓	11.91
S. Snelling ✓	48	J. Small	31.98	R. Lall	12.67
A. Buck	44	M. Ashton	30.54	A. Oruganti	12.76
D. Patel ✓	42	L. Wahed	28.20	W. Thompson	13.13
I. Maughan	40/2	A. Iqbal	27.83	N. Husain	13.41
H. Desai	33/8	A. Ahmed ✓	27.32	S. Rudru	13.69

Where the runs were scored

Wycombe House	383
Durston House	375
Paulin Ground	370
Chiswick House	367
Marble Hill Park	361

Wycombe House with an average 383 runs/game is the most prolific for batsmen (qualification five matches). Where Gents have played twenty or more games, Crown Taverners (25) heads the runs with 319, followed by Old Tenisonians (294 runs, 92 games), Victoria RG (261/133), Fairfield RG (250/30) and King's College (240/26). Toughest for batsmen was the now-defunct Town Park in Enfield which saw an average 230 runs in its ten games. New Romney was the hundredth ground to host us.

Holtwhites Trinibis v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 12 September, Holtwhites Hill. Holtwhites Trinibis won toss. Sunny, 21C

Won by 90 runs

Gentlemen of West London			Holtwhites Trinibis				
H. Patel		b Smith	8	Tew	c Pingili	b Gulati	8
*Kumar	c Tew	b Jones	10	Davis		b Kumar	10
Kota	not out		122	*J. Wilkes-Green		b Gulati	28
Gulati		b Jones	0	Ebbs	c and	b Shaikh	23
Shaikh	c Tew	b Jones	0	Dawe		b Karnekanti	9
S. Patel		b D. Wilkes-Green	23	†Evans		b S. Patel	32
A. Ahmed	hit wicket	b D. Wilkes-Green	16	Watterson	st Sudireddy	b H. Patel	12
†Sudireddy	c J. Wilkes Green	b D. Wilkes-Green	12	Smith	not out		46
Pingili		b Ebbs	27	D. Wilkes-Green	not out		3
Puli	not out		11	Jones and Kugarajan	dnb		
Karnekanti	dnb						
Extras	w27 nb12 b6 lb1		46	Extras	w7 nb1 b4 lb2		14
TotGulal	8 wickets	40 overs	275	Total	7 wickets	40.0 overs	185
FoW:	16, 37, 37, 94, 122, 161, 240			FoW:	8, 27, 73, 73, 109, 123, 147		
Bowling:	Smith 4-0-26-1, Jones 8-2-19-3, Watterson 8-1-60-0, D. Wilkes-Green 8-1-40-3, Kugarajan 4-0-54-0, Ebbs 7-0-61-1, Dawe 1-0-8-0			Bowling:	Gulati 8-1-42-2, Kumar 6-0-36-1, Shaikh 5-1-12-1, Karnekanti 6-2-21-1, H. Patel 8-2-17-1, S. Patel 3-0-13-1, Kota 3-0-21-0, Pingili 1-0-17-0		

Pavan Kota made his highest score of 122* (14 fours and two sixes) and with excellent support from the tail led Gents to a convincing victory amid a charged atmosphere. He batted all but 17 balls of the innings and hit 14 fours and two six in compiling the club's seventh highest score. Holtwhites' reply was at first frenetic but latterly very attractive and had Smith batted ten overs earlier it might have been very close.

Davis opened the bowling and conceded five no balls off the first delivery: extras would go on to be second top scorer. When he pitched them though he was dangerous and he castled H. Patel in the third over. Kumar and Kota then hurried things along, but three wickets – Kumar, Gulati and Shaikh – fell on 37 as Jones turned his off-spin, Tew obliging twice at first slip. Kota was then 8*. Stands of 57 with S. Patel, 28 (Ahmed), 39 (Sudireddy), 79 (Pingili, his 27 being a club personal best) and 35* (Puli) then put Gents into a strong position, though D. Wilkes-Green had deserved success with his left-arm slows. The batsmen were rampant, 177 coming in the second 20 overs. Kota as usual scored heavily with his cuts and glances but as he moved through the 60s and 70s he essayed some magnificent pulls and drives. He batted fluently, ran well and gave no chances.

Drama was condensed into the first over of the reply, bowled by Gulati. Tew hooked an opening aerial no ball for four, cover-drove the second for another and clipped the fourth to mid-wicket Pingili who took a neat low catch. We then had a dot, an enormous pull for six over square-leg and that, for a five ball over, was pretty good value for the spectators. Kumar bowled Davis before the captain and Ebbs added 46 in eight overs. Gulati, finding some extra pace, and Shaikh, with a juggling caught and bowled, saw them off.

At drinks Holtwhites were 99-4 (Gents had been 98-5 at the same point). Every batsman got in but the Gents bowled tightly, Shaikh, Karnekanti and H. Patel carding a combined 19-5-50-3. Patel went 17 balls without conceding a run. Young Evans played some good shots and the injured Smith found batting easy, taking Pingili for four successive fours in a powerful cameo, but the overs ran out. It had been a dignified reply by the hosts when they might have folded and the visitors never looked like dismissing them, such were the quality of the wicket and the resolve of the batsmen.

Controversy again stalked the land. Holtwhites were convinced they had Kota caught behind on 81 and lbw a few overs before. Umpire Ahmed is honest and experienced and declined both appeals, but relations between the teams became tense. "What goes around comes around," muttered an opponent to the Gents' scorer at the interval and certainly the umpiring in the second innings seemed partial though the Gents rose above it. It was a shame that the hosts refused to clap Kota's ton or shake hands after the match. There was no post-match socialising.

Unusual dismissals

When Aamir Ahmed executed a perfect late cut on to his stumps against Holtwhites he became only the second Gent to be dismissed under Law 35 (Hit Wicket). Young Philadelphian Zachary Bowden (below) was the first, against Alexandra Park in 2016 in his first-ever game of cricket.



Such dismissals are quite common in Tests with disintegrating bats, flying gloves and falling headgear gloriously represented. The great Inzamam-ul-Haq suffered this fate after falling on his stumps trying to sweep Monty Panesar in 2006.

Particularly hard done by was Alan Revill of Derbyshire who was hit by a lifter from Alec Bedser at the Oval in 1953. He shook his hand in pain and his glove flew off, hit the stumps, and dislodged a bail. The umpire thought that Revill was still “playing at the ball” and he was given out.

Law 37 (Obstructing The Field) saw the demise of Horace Hibbert against Swinging Googlies in 2016, the batsman intercepting a return throw with his bat in order to deny a run out. The only man given out under this Law in a Test was Len Hutton in 1951 against South Africa.

Gents games await a dismissal under Law 40 (Timed Out), though Dhruv Patel, with his lost equipment and urgent errands to be attended to at home must have tempted many an opponent to appeal for same.

Statistical note

Highest scores by Gents



Pavan Kota's 122* was his second club century (both are in the top 10) and his highest club score. Here are the Top 10 individual scores:

158*	S. Jones (left) <i>v.</i> West XI (Gunnensbury Park 21.7.02) including 12 fours and 10 sixes
143*	N. Husain <i>v.</i> New Barbarian Weasels (Fairfield RG 7.7.07)
137*	M. Ashton <i>v.</i> Enterprise (Victoria RG 10.5.92)
131*	J. Small <i>v.</i> St Anne's Allstars (Boston Manor PF 7.6.15)
128	R. Lall <i>v.</i> London Saints (Old Haberdashers CC 14.8.11)
126	G. Wright <i>v.</i> Clapham In (Crown Taveners CC 2.9.12)
122*	P. Kota <i>v.</i> Holtwhites Trinibis (Holtwhites Hill 12.9.21)
114*	S. Desai <i>v.</i> Close PF (Old Tenisonians CC 28.6.15)
111	G. Cloete <i>v.</i> London Saints (Old Tenisonians CC 18.5.14)
110	P. Kota <i>v.</i> Battersea Eagles (Old Tenisonians CC 22.7.18)

With successive scores of 84* and 122* Kota overhauled Nabeel Husain in the Most Fifties list. At first we thought that he had overtaken Ashton but he needs three more to equal him. It is of interest that Ashton didn't start his Gents career till he was 32 and scored six fifties after his fortieth birthday.

Northfields CC



Northfields CC celebrated its centenary with a mini-tournament at Durston House School. Over 40 current and former players attended and the stars of the day were former players Jess Murray and Jamie Shill as well as current players such as the evergreen Damian Egan and 13 year-old Zohib Kochi.

Several generations attended, from senior statesmen who started playing in the 1970s to younger members still at school who are just embarking on their careers.

Gentlemen of West London v. Salix

Sunday 19 September, Nursery Road RG. Gents won toss. Rainy, 21C

Abandoned

Gentlemen of West London		Salix
*Dubey	not out	12
Gilati	not out	9
Kota, Kantumuchhu, Puli, Bocha, A. Ahmed, Krishna, Karnekanti, †Sudireddy, S. Patel and H. Patel dnb		
Extras	nb1	1
Total	0 wickets	4.3 overs
		22
Bowling: Balasubramaniam 2.3-1-9-0, Unadkat 2-0-13-0		



What a disappointment as only 27 balls were possible at a sepulchral, saturated Nursery Road. Three overs were bowled before heavy rain forced the players from the field. After ten minutes they went out again but it was too dangerous to go on (Balasubramaniam had already taken a tumble). It would have been a good game. Salix were enjoying a winning season, most recently celebrating a spectacular victory against Jordans Taverners, Kulasingam a splendid 133.

Bricklayer's Arms, with whom Gents had a recent skirmish, were playing on the adjacent ground. Tension was in the air, the trigger fingers of the border guards were twitching and rockets were primed, but diplomacy intervened and it came to nothing.

The Gents had previous here. In 1996 an angry paceman was outraged by a rainy defeat to the Urban Associates, not least because captain Ashton, in an unusually credulous mood, had upon request by the oppo "gone easy" on the young No.11 Adams. We all know how that usually ends. Here is the report:

"(The Gents) batted steadily, greatly assisted by Burville's friend, the dapper J.J. Mitchell, and played well for nine-tenths of the game. However, in pitch black, Graham Young and his partner Adams were somehow allowed to add a then-record 41 for the tenth wicket to nick a win as the visitors' self-discipline fell apart amid some of the most bizarre incidents ever seen in a Gents game. As lightning crashed, 'keeper Burville and silly mid-on Ashton collided going for the winning catch, the oppo thinking it was deliberate, to give them a chance. Eleven men tried to captain at the same time, causing the legendary post-match bollocking administered by Mr Snelling."

At the crescendo of his rant, His Holiness liberated a changing room door from its hinges. Whether overpaid public sector carpenters have since fixed it cannot be answered as the pavilion, in a filthy state of dilapidation, was locked and bolted. In 1997 there was no vandalism but much recrimination as Gents lost to the same opponents in perfect conditions despite a brilliant performance by Dhruv Patel.

Many years on, the Gents play their cricket rather like the Urbans of that era; hard but sometimes within the Laws. Urbans were tough old buggers as Sanjay Patel would attest— in a West XI game against them and just a few balls in when nothing of import had happened, Kevin Allerton at gully sidled up to your correspondent (slip) and said "I'm not looking for trouble, but if it kicks off I'm not going to run."

Two games against Salix in 2022, and perhaps a T20 in August, will be much looked forward to. A draw then, but the gun batting on both sides might have produced a 450-run classic.

11/8/96	Gents 161 (J. Mitchell 37, M. Ashton 28, D. Patel 23, I. Johnson 3-23, Mantha 3-40, Bush 3-33) Urban Associates 164-9 (Young 48*, Glover 27, Bush 27, Mantha 22, Clift 21, Snelling 5-24)	Lost 1 wicket
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10/8/97	Urban Associates 135 (Kirk 57, Glover 20, D. Patel 5-21) Gents 120 (D. Patel 47*, Boddington 26, Glover 4-25, Kirk 3-21)	Lost 15 runs
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Gents (minus Puli) at Lampton School



Gentlemen of West London v. Chiswick

Sunday 26 September, Lampton School. Gents won toss. Sunny, 23C

Won by 42 runs

Gentlemen of West London			Chiswick			
*Dubey		b Mohammad	12	Sykes	b Krishna	0
Puli	c Sykes	b Malik	32	Redfern	b Krishna	1
Kota	c Clarke	b Malik	18	†Fry	c S. Patel	62
Pentakota	c Hurtig-Isaac	b Thakar	43	Penney		1
J. Patel	run out		10	Malik	c Sudireddy	10
†Sudireddy	c Zende	b Clarke	4	Thakar	run out (Kota)	21
A. Ahmed	lbw	b Clarke	5	Hurtig-Isaac	c S. Patel	4
S. Patel	run out		22	Clarke		1
Raj Patel	run out		7	Mohammad	c Kota	14
Gulati	st Fry	b Hurtig-Isaac	5	Harris	not out	2
Krishna	not out		0	Fernandes	c J. Patel	11
				*Zende	absent injured	
Extras	w13 nb3 b7 lb2		25	Extras	w10 nb1 b3	14
Total	All out	35 overs	183	Total	All out	32.3 overs
FoW:	14, 53, 96, 122, 127, 135, 154, 176, 183, 183			FoW:	0, 1, 4, 21, 100, 109, 112, 112, 129, 141	
Bowling:	Harris 6-0-34-0, Mohammad 5-0-18-1, Malik 5-1-17-2, Hurtig-Isaac 4-0-29-1, Clarke 5-0-28-2, Thakar 5-0-28-1, Sykes 4-0-16-0, Zende 1-0-4-0			Bowling:	Krishna 5.3-2-19-3, Gulati 5-2-6-1, Pentakota 4-0-22-1, Puli 2-0-17-0, Dubey 5-0-32-0, Raj Patel 7-1-28-4, Kota 4-0-14-0	

Gents and the prestigious Chiswick CC (founded 1853) rose above the somewhat basic facilities – look at the outfield in the picture – to produce a fine match in warm autumn sunshine. Pentakota and Puli glued the innings together and Krishna took three more wickets, but it was the Patels who grabbed the headlines: Raj took four wickets, Sanjay hit a blistering 22 and took two fine catches, and Jay made his first double-figure score and took the final catch. Each was run out. This was a new venue for the club, except that it wasn't. Though no official match had been played here, it transpired that the club's Hounslow-based Telugu contingent had been bunking in to play for free every weekday evening for months. A coterie of such renegades was indeed in attendance practising pre-match before being moved on by Yvonne, the facility's formidable supervisor.

Chiswick respected the fixture by fielding a strong, young team. Sykes, Fry, Chaplin, Zende and late-sub Fernandes play in the Saturday 2s and as Mr Ahmed would attest are no mean players. Dubey chose to bat. The first innings was steady though Kota gave three slip catching opportunities off Mohammad and Malik before one stuck. Dubey had previously played over the yorker. Puli and Pentakota both batted 18 overs to provide the foundation and the later batsmen went for their shots, S. Patel, as ever batting according to his team's needs, scorched 22 at a run a ball.

When Gents stood at 96-3 off 18 overs 200 had looked achievable, so Chiswick must be given credit for their second-half fightback. It was most unfortunate for them that their Saturday 2s captain Zende turned an ankle trying to take a catch and was forced to sit the rest of the game out. He is some player. Fourteen year-old Ben Hurtig-Isaac got turn and bounce off the true artificial wicket and he deserved his scalp. "He'll play for a county," predicted spectator H. Patel in a moment of wholesomeness. Their attitude was spot-on all day: they helped their hosts arrange boundary markers comprising T-shirts and kitbags. Krishna sourced purple tape to mark the batting crease. Ahmed supplied portable stumps.

It was a busy day for the scorer. There were few boundaries to record (only eleven fours to set alongside Pentakota's two hooked sixes in the first dig, eight fours and Fry's two sixes in the second) but all overs were bowled from the same end in order to ensure that the game finished by 5pm, which deadline was achieved with ten minutes to spare. Scurred singles and twos were the order of the day. Wonderful new-ball bowling by Krishna, Gulati and Pentakota wreaked havoc on Chiswick's top order before the brilliant Fry and Thakar turned the game round from 21-4 off 11.1 with a stand of high quality, 79 in 12 overs. Chiswick needed 84 in 13 overs when Fry clipped Raj Patel low to his reliable namesake at square-leg. It proved to be the turning point and Gents were home 10.3 overs later. Raj Patel was hostile and accurate and when brother Jay took a tough one-handed slip catch off the returning Krishna the game was won. An afternoon beset by logistical challenges had ended well.

New Romney and Littlestone v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 3 October New Romney. New Romney won toss. Sunny and showery, 14C

Won by 5 wickets

New Romney and Littlestone			Gentlemen of West London			
†S. Lawrence	c and	b Krishna	21	*†Dubey	b White	32
Kiruba		b R. Patel	7	Gulati	c Payton	21
Patel	c Gulati	b Dubey	10	Kota	not out	84
D. Lawrence	c A. Ahmed	b Dubey	0	J. Patel	c and	0
Payton	retired out		84	Krishna	b Goddard	15
Harding	retired out		60	Joshi	c Owen	17
McCurrach	lbw	b R. Patel	1	†A. Ahmed	not our	7
Goddard		b Kota	4	R. Patel, S. Patel and H. Patel	dnb	
White		b Kota	0			
Owen	c Kota	b R. Patel	0			
Harding II	not out		0			
Payton II	notout		6			
Extras	w5 nb2 b2 lb1		10	Extras	w18 nb5 b5 lb2	30
Total	10 wickets	35 overs	203	Total	5 wickets	32.3 overs
FoW: 13, 28, 28, 71, 192, 192, 196, 196, 197, 197				FoW: 56, 56, 61, 123, 184		
Bowling: Dubey 5-2-5-2, R. Patel 6-0-31-3, Gulati 4-0-26-0, Krishna 5-0-28-1, S. Patel 5-0-44-0, H. Patel 7-2-33-0, Kota 3-1-33-2				Bowling: White 7-0-33-2, Owen 5-0-30-1, Kiruba 5-0-36-0, Harding 3-0-20-0, Goddard 2-0-21-1, Payton 6-0-30-0, Patel 4.3-0-29-1		



A splendid match – by three days the latest in the calendar – ended with a win, but had the hard-hitting Payton and Harding not retired together with six overs of the innings remaining then the result might have been different. As it was the impregnable Kota (eight fours and two sixes in 24 overs at the crease) was able to take full advantage of a blistering opening stand by Dubey and Gulati. When Ahmed clubbed the day's eleventh six high over the long on boundary to seal the victory there were five wickets and 21 balls left (Gents had 10 men but the lowest scorer could bat twice, hence the margin of victory being five, not four, wickets). From the moment the Gents arrived in very good time they were made welcome by the Kentish Men, who are used to hosting touring clubs (Actonians came down on 11 September and in 2020). They do it well.

There was heavy rain on the Saturday but unlike Rotten Livers, who had refused to travel down a few weeks before, the Gents chose to believe their hosts who confirmed that the wicket would dry quickly and be playable. Eyebrows were raised at the small boundaries and the Technical Department perched on the neat electronic scoreboard (which tragically died due to a failed battery with five overs left) and two portable radio transmitters to assist communications between umpires and players and scorer.

Dubey and Raj Patel were soon into the groove and assisted by catches at mid-off and the 'keeper running forward to pouch a top edge, New Romney stuttered to 28-3. Captain Lawrence had sound technique and with Payton pushed the score up to 71 before Krishna caught a sharp one off his own bowling. With due respect to the top four, these overs were a mere prelude for what would follow, for in 80 balls, the Viking giant Luke Payton and 18 year-old Troy Harding added 121 and consigned to history the previous fifth-wicket record of 90 posted by Junani and Ahluwalia of Gubbays in 2007. But how did the stand evolve? They didn't have it all their own way: an early six apiece off S. Patel signalled their intentions but he and H. Patel suffered drops (both tough chances) and a few fielders suffered embarrassing falls caused by the always devastating combination of inadequate footwear and wet grass.

S. Patel got lift off the drying surface and H. Patel turned a few but the hosts progressed to 151-4 off 27. The spinner went for 12 in his sixth over but would close out with two maidens. Kota came on and 30 minutes later after a series of lost balls could cherish the most bizarre analysis in many a year. His first over went for 29 (6.6.6.1.6.4.) whereupon both batsmen retired out to let their mates have a bat; Goddard hit him for four and was bowled, 2-0-33-1; and in his third he bowled the veteran Everton White as part of a wicket maiden, 3-1-33-2. Eleven runs came from the final six overs as Kota took a good catch at mid-off off the returning Raj Patel, improving every game, who then pinned McCurrach. The masters of mayhem came back out, perhaps not strictly according to the letter of Law 25, to see up 203. Six wickets had fallen for 11 runs.

Captain Dubey put himself and Gulati up top and was rewarded with a vibrant stand of 56 in 51 balls before Dubey hit over a yorker. Gulati fell four balls later and J. Patel nine balls after that, 61-3 off 10.4, a sound enough start. A brief shower then drove the players off for ten minutes. The batsmen then batted with intelligence and resolve. Kota is famous for these qualities and in Krishna, the cheerful debutant Joshi (in civilian clothing) and Ahmed he found three perfect partners.

Kota and Krishna added 62 in 59 balls with exemplary running. Krishna's departure let in Joshi and a riotous stand ensued, full of japes. Joshi was slipping and sliding all over the place and at one stage stranded himself on the ground in the middle of the pitch, only to be reprieved by a wayward throw. But he merrily put bat to ball and slapped an impressive four over mid-on. Kota went up through the gears as 61 more came off 59, exactly the same duration as the previous stand. Joshi's quirky innings ended when he holed out on 184 but Ahmed was in no mood to hang about and he won the game with a towering six. Only twice before, in 2000 and 2018, had Gents scored more to win batting second. The Patels were not required to bat. Kota ended the season on 581 runs, the sixth highest in the club's 33 seasons:

756	J. Wright 2000
680	N. Husain 2007
674	P. Kota 2019
597	S. Namilikonda 2019
586	N. Husain 2005
581	P. Kota 2021

Spectators had feasted on 46 boundaries and it was two tired teams who celebrated after with the BBQ in full swing. Some Gents had booked B&Bs and the nightlife of New Romney was duly investigated and enjoyed. Rarely have the Gents met friendlier or more gracious opponents and negotiations have already begun for a weekend tour in 2022.

Payton and Harding after their epic stand

