

THE GENT

September 2008

No. 118

Tales from the corridor of uncertainty

Autumn Watch – Stag rituals at Motspur Park



‘The young stags seem to want to lock horns with the oldest, but are in fact indulging in a gesture of respect. It is getting dark, and all will be off soon to pleasure their hinds...’

Match reports:

Old Tenisonians (lost by 32 runs)
West XI (BAMC) (lost by 2 runs)
Enterprise (won by 104 runs)
Battersea Ironsides (lost by 1 wicket)
West One (lost by 3 wickets)
London Saints (won by 34 runs)
Close PF (won by 16 runs)
West London Invitation XI (tied)

Averages and statistics

Player profile (from Waterloo Sunset) –
Peter Berkeley (London Saints)



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Read about The Gents on www.gowlcc.org.uk

Porcelain inlaid with gold



On the square – a freemasonry of cricketers

The Gents' porcelain anniversary Twenty20 festival was described by Hemin Patel as "probably the best Bank Holiday fixture we have ever had." It was made so by Chris Wright and Dhruv Patel, who at short notice got teams together, and the flexibility of the players, some of whom (e.g. Ken Toft, Daoud Shanvare and the Patel brothers) played for two different sides during the day. Richard Gilkes fielded for no fewer than 66 overs! Though there were fewer runs than the 2006 festival, when 765 were struck including 19 sixes and 59 fours, this was a more even competition: on another day, Dhruv's talented young batsmen might have won out.

The Gents' opponents have been recorded for posterity as Close PF and West London Invitation XI, who became after Kingston Left Handers, Sloane Club, Cairns Fudge, Purley Arms, Battersea Ironsides and West One, the seventh and eighth new oppo of 2008. Kingston would have been the ninth. Only one of that lot was unpopular: Purley Arms, oddly the very outfit who have been stalking the secretary for two 2009 games. The others will remain on the card. This rate of change tracks West XI's, whose progressive ethos has seen them play five new sides, with two more to come.

The Gents' celebrations, hats tossed in the air and detention amnesty and half-day holidays all round, were perfectly justifiable. This writer cannot remember a run chase like it, only West XI in 1993 coming close, when The Gents chased down 134 in 35 overs having stumbled to 66-4 off 26. This time, 91 runs were needed off the last ten overs with five wickets down. Only three runs came off the 11th. over. The final nine then went for 13, 6, 6, 10, 7, 13, 7, 14 and 11 to ensure a tie, only the fourth in the club's history after West XI (1992), London Rams (2002) and former favourites New Barbarian Weasels (2003).

The day Enterprise stifled The Gents

To strike a solemn note of caution, however, for those looking for portents for Beckenham, this was far from a full West XI team: only six weeks before, The Gents had failed to score six runs in the last two overs against just such a configuration. West XI have decided not to assign to their games official status, which is, cynics should note, nothing to do with the muted performance of their statistician but quite a lot to do with the absence of most of their first XI. Talking of frustrated run chases, memories go back to the Enterprise classic of 1 August 1999. We share after the card an excerpt from the match report with apologies for the sub-Cardus opening sentence, the chippy use of Christian names, forenames and nicknames and implied criticism of the umpire re leg-side wides not being given by the blind old fool.

Victoria RG	Enterprise 135 (Parker 38, Harper 25, K Dimond 24, Chawle 4-15, Snelling 3-1)	Gents 132-7 (Wright 29, Snelling 28)	Lost by 3 runs
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'How curious this wonderful game can be. The Gents needed 41 off ten with six wickets in hand and were frustrated by Mahesh. Snarler and Jimmy moved the board on to 126-4 off 32 overs. Just ten were needed off three. Snarler blocked one, drove to long-on for two and was then castled. Manoj glanced his first ball for a single and Jim blocked the last two. Big Keith bravely opted to bowl the penultimate over, stunningly a wicket maiden. Poor Manoj was transfixed by three deliveries and bowled by the fourth. Andy failed to put bat to ball to the last two balls, both outside leg stump. Six runs were thus needed from the last possible over. This would have given Gents victory, as they would have lost fewer wickets. Uma's first three balls were searing and straight, and Jim could not force them away. The fourth was glanced down to short fine-leg. Jim called for two but a good pick up and throw saw Price have the bails off with Jim a yard short of the second. Enterprise were afire. A bye came off the fifth ball, leaving Burman with the task of scoring four for victory. He drove, missed and the batsmen could only take the one bye to the 'keeper.'

I'm not saying my mother-in-law's ugly...

All Gents, and in particular Richard Gilkes, Tony Buck and Hemin Patel, are reminded when bantering in a humorous fashion that the BBC's 1948 Green Book, which defined what comedy material was appropriate for broadcast, has never been repealed.

There is therefore an absolute ban upon the following: Jokes about Lavatories, Effeminacy in men and Immorality of any kind. Suggestive references to Honeymoon couples, Chambermaids, Fig leaves, Prostitution, Ladies' underwear, e.g. winter draws on, Animal habits, e.g. rabbits, Lodgers and Commercial travellers.

Furthermore, impressions of the following celebrities are discouraged: Gracie Fields, Ethel Revnell (with or without Gracie West), Renee Houston, Nat Mills and Bobbie, Vera Lynn, Jeanne de Casalis (Mrs. Feather) and Harry Hemsley.

London Saints player profiles

Peter Berkeley

Nickname : Hilda and a few others that cannot be repeated on a family website

Date of Birth : 14 June 1961 (old but young in London Saints terms)

Place of Birth : Dibden Purlieu (Wath knows where it is)

Squad Number: 16

LSSC Debut : 25/07/82 v The White Swan, Avery Hill

Best Batting : 60 v West XI, 30/07/06, Berkhamstead CC

Best Bowling 6-9 v Coolhurst, 09/08/03, Church St., Enfield

Football Team(s) Supported: Oh behave

Cricket Team(s) Supported: Hants and England

Who is your favourite cricketer / sports star: Roger Mason/Mike Channon

Favourite Food: Ham, egg and chips after golf

Favourite Drink: Milk

Favourite Band / Singer: This year's Muswell Hill festival will feature Squeeze, Springsteen, Elvis Costello and The Beatles with Ian Dury and The Blockheads as headline act

Best Country Visited: West Coast of US of A

Best Sporting Moment: 1/5/76 (too much too young)

Best Individual LSSC Sporting Moment: Surely London Saints sport is about taking part – perhaps the footy team winning APSCIL 2nd. Div. in '92 – finally getting a 50 (against West XI) after several scores in the 40's

Your most embarrassing moment - cricket and non cricket: Cricket - As I write it's the run-out at Coldharbour but there are many others. Non cricket – An incident in Atlanta, Georgia involving the gay community cruelly set-up by Lugs Bergman – never trust a Geordie

Worst Sporting Moment: Saints 1974 relegation (it's harder to take at 13)

Worst LSSC Sporting Moment: Oh so many – footy team relegation perhaps

Best Champagne Moment Witnessed: Oh so many – Andy Jones in last year's mudbath at Witham having avoided any fielding with whites pristine fell at the last

Best Cricket Tea Eaten: Same game - Witham Friary church hall 2007

Worst ever London Saints 4 x 400M Relay Squad: Can't we have 10 x 10,000M squad? Reggy, Roger Mason (complete with soiled whites), Neil Hotston (to quote Andy Jones: If Christopher Reeve had ever got the use of his legs back, he would have run like Neil') and The Wath!

Reserves: Pearce, Griffiths, Speedtwin

Had to completely rethink this as I saw Keenan skipping across the outfield at Norton

Who, in our opponents, is your nemesis: Pah!

Most Memorable Cricket Ball witnessed: Saw a lovely Reader in Lilywhites the other day – it was shiny and red with gold stitching

(Apart from Family) - Person you would most like to be marooned on an island with: A basketball (it worked for Tom Hanks)

Person you would least like to be marooned on an island with: Ken Bates

If you were an animal what would be: A dog with wheels for back legs – they look fun!

If you weren't a famous LSSC Cricketer what would you be: I'd be getting less grief from the good lady about Sundays being a family day!

Who would play you as lead role in the story of your life: Sid James

What keeps you relaxed: Bashing one out!

A little known fact about yourself: That I never disclose little known facts about myself

The 2008 season

Date	Gents	Venue	West XI	Venue							
Sun 19 Apr	-	-	Malta Cricket Association	Lost by 55 runs							
Sun 20 April	-	-	Malta Cricket Association	Won by 2 wickets							
Sun 27 April	St. Anne's Allstars	Won by 9 wickets	Sutton	Won by 4 wickets							
Sun 4 May	Kingston Left Handers	Drawn	Dinder and Croscombe	Cancelled (rain)							
Sun 11 May	Sloane Club	Won by 245 runs	Cincinnati	Lost by 19 runs							
Sun 18 May	West XI (BAMC)	Won by 83 runs	Gents (BAMC)	Lost by 83 runs							
Sun 25 May	Hale	Cancelled (rain)	Acme	Cancelled (rain)							
Sun 1 June	London Saints	Won by 7 wickets	Captain's Select	Won by 97 runs							
Sun 1 June	London Saints (Twenty20)	Won by 3 runs	-	-							
Sat 7 June	NB Weasels	Won by 154 runs	-	-							
Sun 8 June	-	-	Whalers	Lost by 78 runs							
Sat 14 June	-	-	Plums	Won by 94 runs							
Sun 15 June	Cairns Fudge	Won by 2 wickets	-	-							
Sun 22 June	London Rams	Won by 1 wicket	London Saints (LNC)	Lost by 24 runs							
Sun 22 June	London Rams (Pro15)	Won by 39 runs	-	-							
Sun 29 June	Purley Arms	Lost by 8 wickets	London Rams	Won by 58 runs							
Sat 5 July	-	-	North Curry	Abandoned							
Sun 6 July	Old Tenisonians	Lost by 32 runs	Dinder and Croscombe	Abandoned							
Sun 13 July	West XI (BAMC)	Lost by 2 runs	Gents (BAMC)	Won by 2 runs							
Thurs 17 July	-	-	GSK (Twenty20)	Lost by 23 runs							
Sun 20 July	Enterprise	Won by 104 runs	Sunderland SC	Won by 25 runs							
Sun 27 July	Battersea Ironsides	Lost by 1 wicket	London Saints	Won by 77 runs							
Sat 2 Aug	-	-	-	-							
Sun 3 Aug	West One	Lost by 3 wickets	CAMRA	Lost by 8 wickets							
Sun 10 Aug	-	-	Acme	Won by 84 runs							
Sun 17 Aug	London Saints	Won by 34 runs	Captain's Select	Lost by 5 wickets							
Sun 24 Aug	Close PF (Twenty20)	Won by 16 runs	-	-							
Sun 24 Aug	West London Invitation XI (Twenty20)	Tied	-	-							
Sun 31 Aug	Kingston	Cancelled (rain)	Cuddington Casuals	Won by 6 runs							
Sun 7 Sept	West XI (BAMC)	HSBC Beckenham	Gents (BAMC)	HSBC Beckenham							
Sat 13 Sept	-	-	West Farleigh	Away							
Sun 14 Sept	Salix	GSK Greenford	-	-							
Sun 21 Sept	-	-	Bures and District	Away							
Sun 28 Sept	Hale	Away	-	-							
Record Runs	Played 19 Won 12 Tied 1 Drawn 1 Lost 5 Cancelled 1 Inkollu 390, Husain 256, Khan 253, Denton 225			Played 20 Won 10 Lost 8 Abandoned 2 Cancelled 1 Dane 483, Wright 391, Bapu 386, R Allerton 268							
Wickets	H Patel 30, Snelling 21, Inkollu/S Patel 16, Sciberras 15			Dane 18, Laing/Wright 17, R Allerton/Hill 16							
Catches	Sciberras 6, Denton 5, Gilkes/Ink'u/Khan/H Patel/Toft 4			R Allerton 10, Bignell/Dane 9, Bender/Bhatt/Wright 6							
	M.	L.	NO.	R	Av.	Ct.	O	M	R	W	Avg.
Babar	4	4	2	64	32.00	-	6	0	29	1	29.00
Bryan	2	1	0	16	16.00	1	3	0	10	2	5.00
Buck	13	13	2	79	7.18	1	16.3	1	85	2	42.50
Burman	2	1	1	0	N/A	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Chayya	3	2	1	12	12.00	-	2	-	7	-	N/A
Denton	16	15	4	225	20.45	5	-	-	-	-	N/A
Desai	8	7	0	59	8.43	3	3	0	18	-	N/A
Gilkes	16	14	1	174	13.38	4	4	1	24	2	12.00
Hibbert	2	2	1	11	11.00	1	8	3	21	6	3.50
Husain	7	6	1	256	51.20	2	27	5	91	8	11.38
Inkollu	18	16	2	390	27.86	4	80	12	218	16	13.63
Iqbal	6	5	2	87	29.00	-	27	7	87	11	7.91
Kalidinda	2	2	0	15	7.50	-	12	2	33	4	8.25
Khan	10	9	1	253	31.63	4	7.4	1	31	3	10.33
Leader	3	3	2	13	13.00	-	16	3	64	6	10.67
H Patel	18	13	3	58	5.80	4	78.1	14	278	30	9.27
S Patel	15	12	1	158	14.36	2	51	11	162	16	10.13
Sciberras	11	10	1	125	13.89	6	44.1	3	225	15	15.00
Shanvare	6	4	0	14	3.50	2	19.5	5	66	5	13.20
Snelling	16	12	3	39	4.33	-	82	18	252	21	12.00
Toft	18	12	4	43	5.38	4	-	-	-	-	N/A
Turpin	3	1	0	1	1.00	1	-	-	-	-	N/A
Wahed	2	2	0	28	14.00	1	-	-	-	-	N/A
Wright	2	2	0	53	26.50	-	8.3	0	41	2	20.50

Also played (one game only); Carroll 1/1/0/0/, Fung 1/-/-/, Lee 1/1/1/1, Dhilon Patel 1/1/0/1, D Patel 1/1/0/29, Rudd 1/1/0/0, 8-0-12-2, Siddiq 1/1/0/6 (1 ct.)

Game 12: Old Tenisonians' CC, Sunday 6 July. Old Tenisonians won toss. Sunshine and showers, 18C

Consistency not enough as Gents fall at the final hurdle

The Gents, disappointingly handicapped by fielding only ten, (including Dhruv Patel's twelve-year old son Dhilon) lost to a talented Old Tenisonians outfit, themselves two short, in a 40 over game that just dodged the heavy rain. At least a game was completed, poor West XI suffering the abandonment of both their Somerset tour games, the second with Chris Dane stranded just three runs south of a maiden century. The withdrawal from the planned XI, for very good reasons, of Husain and Snelling thus proved significant, though it did enable the secretary to reopen negotiations with Dhruv Patel, absent so far in 2008, whose eldest was kindly loaned for the afternoon. The tea-interval precipitation proved significant as the pitch and outfield then slowed perceptibly, making boundaries more difficult. Nevertheless, The Gents had no complaints about the result and can be proud of a stirring fightback in the second half of the first innings led by debutant Murali Kalidinda and Daoud Shanvare, followed by several resolute knocks.

Skipper Denton declined the opposition's initial offer of a 35 over game and their counteroffer of the declaration format. It was therefore a long afternoon, compounded by the extended tea interval, Dhilon being bowled on the dot of 8pm. The Gents made two early breakthroughs, Inkollu bowling Whitehead with a pearler of a late inswinger and Khan having Perkins Senior well held by point Buck. The estimable Kain and Perkins Junior then provided the best batting of the day, the former driving with impunity and the latter sweeping with great élan off Sciberras and Hemin Patel, who were struggling with their line in the strong winds blowing across the ground.

These two took 19 off Hemin's final over to take the hosts to 98-2 off just 18, a 200-plus total then looking possible. Cue the introduction of Daoud Shanvare (8-3-15-0) and Murali Kalidinda (8-1-19-4). Daoud bowled a little quicker than normal while Murali, bowling right-arm round, was a real handful. He pinned the left-hander Perkins, somewhat controversially lbw, and also numbered Kain, caught Shanvare in a repeat of the Perkins Senior dismissal, among his victims. The groundfielding improved from tolerable to good and the catches stuck as the innings petered out to 140 all out in the 37th. over. The clouds, which had been banking ominously for an hour, then burst.

It looked touch and go but the rain ceased and play resumed at 5.30pm, with the outfield wet and the pitch sticky. A steady opening stand was ended with the run out of Khan by a direct hit and when Inkollu soon spooned up a full-toss to silly mid-off, The Gents were struggling. What ensued was a succession of competent innings without anybody being able to dominate an accurate, experienced Surrey League seam attack. Sciberras, Buck and Denton batted solidly but nobody could go on to the fifty the match position demanded. The theory – take ones and twos into the large gaps – proved difficult to put into practice and Old Tenisonians bowled to their fields perfectly. One Gent remarked that although he could only count nine opponents, there seemed to be eleven of them when he was batting. Even when the ball was belted it held up in the outfield, five or six potential fours earning no more than twos.

The required run rate rose, as run rates do in such circumstances, but The Gents did not give up and had the aggressive Hemin stayed in longer might have come very close. However, he edged behind, the ball after a similar appeal was declined and that was pretty much that. Well played Old Tenisonians, who were keen to renew in 2009, when more Gent members must make themselves available. Denton provided excellent leadership all day, keeping soundly, top scoring, giving everyone a go and briskly chivvying people along.

Old Tenisonians; *Kain 49, Whitehouse 2, Perkins Senior 11, Perkins Junior 34, Halsey 5, Varney 10, †Webster 6, McNestrie 2, Emanaus 0 not out, Extras 21, **141 all out (36.3 overs)**

FoW; 7, 20, 102, 108, 119, 129, 134, 141

Bowling; Inkollu 2-14, Khan 1-24, Sciberras 0-28, H Patel 0-32, Shanvare 0-15, Kalidinda 4-19

Catches; Shanvare 2, Buck 1, Inkollu 1, Sciberras 1

Gents; Khan 6, Sciberras 14, Inkollu 1, Buck 15, *†Denton 21, Shanvare 13, Toft 8 not out, H Patel 9, Kalidinda 6, Dhilon Patel 1 not out, Extras 13, **109 all out (37 overs)**

FoW; 20, 23, 35, 43, 76, 79, 100, 106, 109

Bowling; Varney 1-17, Emanaus 0-13, McNestrie 2-21, Perkins Senior 1-26, Whitehead 1-10, Kain 0-15, Perkins Junior 3-6

Catches; Webster 3, Emanaus 1, Perkins Junior 1, Perkins Senior 1

Lost by 32 runs

Game 13: Old Tenisonians' CC, Sunday 13 July. Gents won toss. Sunny, 21C

Heartbreak for Gents as Beggars keep their nerve

Needing six runs off the final two overs with three wickets left, The Gents had one hand on the Bob Ashton Memorial Trophy, but were unable to retain their grasp, leaving the visitors victorious by two runs. West XI's loud celebrations testified to their relief, The Gents' stunned silence to their disappointment, for, led by Ahsan Iqbal's brilliant knock, they had fought back hard only to be denied at the last. A Beckenham decider it is then.

West XI lacked only Chris Dane from their strongest eleven but still fielded a powerful batting order, whereas The Gents lacked several major batsmen, including Khan and Wright, a late withdrawal due to illness. They were in any case without Sanjay Patel, holidaying with his family rather than, as Chris Wright rather cheaply put it, 'running scared' but it was a source of disappointment to the organiser how quickly a squad of 15 haemorrhaged to 11. At least it spared any tough selection decisions. Denton inserted West XI, whose openers took 33 from the first six overs with boundaries and extras galore. Inkollu had Bapu given harshly lbw and Chris Wright was bowled heaving at Husain in the Saudi's final appearance. Taylor's attritional 20 in 23 overs was of signal importance but The Gents' seamers kept him and Vine in check before the Australian, nursing a pulled muscle, holed out off the returning Snelling to Sciberras, who ran twenty yards before clinging on just in front of the long-off boundary. This proved the turning point of the innings as Hemin Patel (4-2-12-4) and Daoud Shanvare (4.2-0-16-1) cleaned up, The Gents satisfied with 127 all out with 2.4 overs unbowed. Extras at 27 was the top score.

It was a similar comeback to the previous Sunday but, as on that occasion, it proved to be too high a total for a thin batting line-up to chase. Inkollu cracked the first ball of the reply for four but fell bowled Wright in the second over, though the watchful Sciberras and Husain added 49 in 15 overs before a collapse. Sciberras fell lbw to Allerton, Gilkes swished over a Taylor full-toss, Husain was bowled Hill, Hemin Patel chipped Hill to a hobbling Bapu at slip and Denton was bowled Hill, all horrible shots, and in eight overs Gents had slumped from 55-1 off 15 overs to 65-6 off 23.

The Iqbal/Buck stand so nearly won the game, the Pakistani surviving an early drop to card his highest score for the club as 45 came in 9.1 overs, the previously chirpy Beggars becoming rather quiet. If Mr. Vine is not trying to get under the batsman's skin, then West XI as a rule are struggling. The Golden Boy of Bermondsey Cricket, now resident in the bloody streets of Peckham, was bowled by the returning Bhatt in the 32nd. over but 11 runs came off the 33rd., bowled by Hill, including drives for four and the day's only six by Iqbal. Alas, Shanvare only scored one off the 34th. over, holing out to Wright off Bhatt, 122-8, five to tie, six to win.

Hill bowled a challenging last over, the product of his many years' experience, Snelling being run out as Iqbal pushed for a second run off the first ball. Toft then scampered a single and Iqbal declined to run on a hit to the boundary fielder. There was pandemonium as three were needed to win from the last ball, but Toft was run out. There was some muttering about whether the final ball should have been called wide, but non-striker Toft thought Sciberras's decision fair. If one has to ascribe West XI's remarkable win to one moment, let Steve Rennie's sliding boundary stop, turning a four into a two, be that moment. The Gents could perhaps take encouragement from West XI's extremely loud (but, it should be said, harmless) cavortings, for they all but did it. In the opinion of this writer, the better, or at least the more consistent, side won here. Nothing West XI did touched the heights of the innings of Iqbal or the bowling of Hemin Patel, nor did they plumb the depths of The Gents' middle order batting, none of their players registering ducks.

West XI; Bapu 19, Taylor 20, *Wright 2, Vine 25, †Rawlings 10, Allerton 9, Bhatt 1, Rennie 3, Norcott 3, Bignell 4 not out, Hill 5, Extras 27, **127 all out (32.2 overs)**

FoW; 33, 42, 91, 94, 105, 111, 114, 117, 122, 127

Bowling; Snelling 1-22, Husain 1-28, Inkollu 1-14, Iqbal 1-18, Shanvare 1-16, H Patel 4-12

Catches; Sciberras 1, Toft 1

Gents; Inkollu 9, Sciberras 18, Husain 23, Gilkes 0, *†Denton 1, H Patel 0, Buck 6, Iqbal 43 not out, Shanvare 1, Snelling 0, Toft 1, Extras 23, **125 all out (35 overs)**

FoW; 9, 58, 61, 64, 64, 65, 110, 122, 123, 125

Bowling; Bhatt 2-21, Wright 1-14, Allerton 1-24, Taylor 1-22, Hill 3-22, Vine 0-11

Catches; Bapu 1, Wright 1

Lost by 2 runs

Game 14: Alexandra RG, Surbiton, Sunday 20 July. Gents won toss. Cloudy, 18C

Experience shows in breezy Surbiton

An enjoyable if blustery day's cricket saw The Gents' first win in four games as Enterprise, chasing a formidable 182 to win, collapsed to 77 all out in 16.3 overs. Positives from The Gents' point of view were consistency in both batting (something sorely lacking in recent weeks) and bowling while Enterprise bowled and fielded well but, the magnificent Cloete apart, did not do themselves justice with the bat.

The opening salvos were interesting as Parker and Lazel made good use of the new ball, swinging and seaming it and frequently beating the bat. But Khan and Toft produced a model opening stand for captain Gilkes, arguably the bravest of the season against very testing bowling. Though only 17 runs came from the first ten overs, they toughed it out before Khan, after a brief onslaught, edged behind in the 12th. Inkollu then went ballistic, striking five fours and a huge six in just four overs at the crease before being bowled by the Kitchener leg-break. Toft fell lbw after a manful knock but Desai, Dhruv Patel and Gilkes carried on the good work in plummeting temperatures, playing some pleasing shots and running hard. Inkollu apart, though, the batsmen never quite broke free – a hostile spell from the young South African Cloete saw to that – but the skipper was happy with 181 in the 35 overs, the highest score since 7 June.

The DIY tea worked very well, the highlight being bowls of hot vegetable curry and pitta cooked by Reika Patel and brought along by pint-sized twirler Dhruv. Nobody went hungry. It was good to catch up with Dhruv, who was in a particularly sunny mood and lo and behold there was Sanjay Patel, skiving off from a family wedding in Wandsworth to run the rule over the team's tactics and performance. After enjoying half hour or so's cricket he was caught bang to rights by an urgent call from the missus who summoned him back for the photographs, a golden Terry and June moment. Cue the theme music, that instrumental classic penned by John Shakespeare, formerly of 1960's pop group The Ivy League.

The Gents' bowling was terrific. Snelling opened with a maiden, the hostile Leader then bowled batsmen two and three with his first two balls, a double wicket maiden ensuing. Snelling then castled Heap in his second maiden, the score after three overs being 1-3 (the one being a bye). By now the muscular Cloete was at the crease. Keen to have a dart, he bludgeoned Leader for four, six and four as 16 came from the over. Clearly attritional being the sort of cricket up with which he would not put, he went on to strike seven more fours in a remarkable display of clean hitting. Lazel stayed with him as 32 were posted for the fourth wicket, a nudge to Khan off Leader ending the stand. Inkollu's fiery three overs accounted for skipper Dimond, well held by cover Desai off a top edge. Hemin Patel and Shanvare then cleaned up, Cloete's super innings ('Different level, different class' according to the wise Naveed Khan) ending worthily, caught long-on Gilkes off Shanvare. Had he received more support (six of his side were out for a duck), this could have been a very close game.

With this, his fourth four-wicket return of 2008, young master Hemin 'Future Gents Captain' Patel now has 25 wickets and has Snarler Snelling's monstrous hauls of 39 (in 2001), 40 (1997) and 43 (1999) within range. While clubs such as West XI rely on a stereotypical army of medium-pace trundlers to do their dirty work, Gents attacks remain an aesthetically glorious cynosure, though soon a spoilsport umpire will draw attention to the variety of colourful headgear in which Mr. Shanvare likes to bowl. Not since August 1997 had the club played here and not much has changed since then, the wickets still offering pace and movement for the bowlers, coupled with irregular bounce, the park still infested by pitch-encroaching chavs. Yet despite all that the day went well and this popular fixture will be much looked forward to in 2009.

Gents; †Khan 25, Toft 10, Inkollu 33, Desai 19, D Patel 29, *Gilkes 24, Buck 6, Leader 5 not out, H Patel 1 not out, Snelling and Shanvare did not bat, Extras 29, **181-7 (35 overs)**

FoW; 35, 75, 92, 105, 143, 163 180

Bowling; Parker 0-19, Lazel 1-23, Dimond 2-49, Kitchener 1-27, Cloete 2-27, Hickman 0-16, Heap Jr. 1-12

Catches; Cloete 1, Fitzgerald 1

Enterprise; Heap 0, Kitchener 0, Parker 0, Lazel 3, †Cloete 57, *Dimond 1, Hickman 1, †Fitzgerald 0, Price 0, Sellers 0, Heap Jr. 0 not out, Extras 16, **77 all out (16.3 overs)**

FoW; 0, 0, 0, 32, 43, 44, 44, 67, 77, 77

Bowling; Snelling 1-3, Leader 3-31, Inkollu 1-12, H Patel 4-7, Shanvare 1-9

Catches; Desai 1, Gilkes 1, Khan 1, H Patel 1

Won by 104 runs

Game 15: Battersea Ironsides SC, London SW17, Sunday 27 July. Gents won toss. Sunny, 28C

Bowlers show the way but it's another defeat

In yet another close game, The Gents' bowlers nearly redeemed a dismal batting display from which only Denton, Sciberras and Snelling emerged with much credit. Nearly but not quite. From 32-0 The Gents had collapsed to 91 all out in perfect batting conditions with 13 of the 40 overs left unbowled, but took wickets regularly in the second dig before Ironsides sneaked home with their final pair, two left-handers, at the crease. The match-winning innings was played by Bajan Dave Greenidge, who batted over 30 overs. Though there were several likely shouts for lbw and a Hit Wicket which the unsighted umpire could not give, his was a top class innings. The fact remains The Gents batted poorly.

It had started so well, with a composed opening stand of 32 before slow left-artermer Rapusingha, having bowled Sciberras off his pads, ripped through the middle order, having Desai caught at point by Greenidge, Turpin in his first game since May caught behind and Gilkes bowled. Inkollu was bowled by young Raj Augustine, Buck holed out to point and when the manful Denton fell – one of three victims for 'keeper Crooks – The Gents had plummeted to 60-7. Chris Rudd fell for a duck on debut, but some useful runs were eked out towards the end, Hemin Patel even smiting a huge six over mid-wicket, but it looked too little too late for the visitors. Ironsides' bowling and fielding was top drawer, a classic mixture of youth and experience, and they gave little away.

Mr Snelling uttered some strong words at half-time. Quite rightly so, for much of the recent batting has been limp, with undignified collapses in four of the last six innings. Denton led by example here but too often batsmen are getting out to poor shots. He pointed out that The Gents 'field with concentration and thought but do not bat like that'. Greenidge's innings should have been videoed and compulsorily studied by every Gent. Clearly a player of some ability, as demonstrated by his five fours, he was not above the forward-defensive or leave alone. His concentration was exemplary.

The Gents bowled with gusto and it was clear that runs would have to be ground out. Only 17 runs came in the first ten overs and 25 in the ten after that as the pace of Snelling and Inkollu, the seam of Rudd and the spin of Hemin Patel tied the batsmen down. Skipper Kennedy was given lbw off Inkollu. There would be no further such decisions answered in favour of the bowler despite much keening and pleading nor, oddly, any catches. There ought to have been one, a skier off the leading edge of Umar's bat to second slip Sciberras, but this best of outfielders dropped it. No matter, as next ball Chris Rudd had his first Gents wicket, clean bowled.

Sciberras ran out Reddy, booting the ball into the stumps, after one too many risky singles but the rest of the middle order were able to stay with Greenidge as the total slowly mounted. Hemin Patel bowled Malone with the final ball of his spell and The Gents were fighting hard. Greenidge and Alford, however, proved particularly adhesive before a clatter of wickets gave The Gents real hope. In a hostile second spell Inkollu bowled Greenidge, Arud Augustine (smashing a stump in the process, absolutely marvellous) and Ahmed while Sciberras cleaned up Alford before No.9 and No.11 steered the ship home, to great whoops. Your match reporter spent most of the second innings deadbating criticisms of The Gents' playing ability from a grumpy Ironside Scottish supporter, who had taken strong drink. PG Wodehouse's observation that 'It is never difficult to distinguish between a Scotsman with a grievance and a ray of sunshine' was never better illustrated as he denounced even the most blameless Gent before falling asleep. Shades of the Town Park nutter from many years ago! Otherwise the hosts were as good as gold. This is a definite fixture for 2009. As a short-notice replacement for New Barbarian Weasels, who cancelled three days before the game and are skating on very thin ice, the day, despite the loss, went smoothly and Ironsides were welcoming hosts.

Gents; *†Denton 24, Sciberras 8, Desai 4, Inkollu 4, Turpin 1, Gilkes 6, Buck 2, Toft 7, H Patel 11, Snelling 9 not out, Rudd 0, Extras 15, **91 all out (27 overs)**

FoW; 32, 40, 49, 50, 56, 59, 60, 74, 90, 91

Bowling; Ahmed 1-10, A Augustine 0-13, R Augustine 2-16, Rapusingha 4-15, Alford 3-15, Malone 0-8

Catches; Crook 3, R Augustine 1, Greenidge 1, Rapusingha 1

Battersea Ironsides; *Kennedy 1, Greenidge 38, Umar 4, Reddy 0, †Crook 5, Malone 7, Alford 8, R Augustine 0, Rapusingha 0 not out, Ahmed 4, A Augustine 5 not out, Extras 20, **92-9 (35.3 overs)**

FoW; 7, 17, 23, 35, 58, 73, 79, 83

Bowling; Snelling 0-22, Inkollu 4-22, Rudd 2-12, H Patel 1-22, Sciberras 1-12

Lost by 1 wicket

Game 16: Fairfield RG, Kingston, Sunday 3 August. Gents won toss. Showery, 20C

Wily Colonials survive Gents' fightback

Fixtures sourced from the internet have an element of risk: they may turn out to be dire mismatches (Village XI) or be spoiled by diametrically opposed attitudes (Purley Arms) but this one was a resounding success. Though unable to defend 133, itself a score that, thanks to Ravi Inkollu and good tail-end support, had represented riches after a collapse to 48-5, The Gents scrapped hard and ran a talented side, with four extrovert Aussies, close.

The day started with the terrible news from the groundsman that Gary Privett, who as pitch bookings officer at RB Kingston had provided sound administrative support to GWLCC for many years, had died of a heart attack in his forties. May he rest in peace. As the news sunk in and Michael Vaughan resigned the England captaincy, there was eventual movement towards the cricket field. With rain still about the captains agreed a 30 over game, which did not start until 2 o'clock. This proved a wise decision, as the heavens opened soon after the last ball was bowled. The intervening four and a half hours produced some fascinating cricket, though West One had their noses in front most of the time. The aggressive Khan and composed Sciberras, who was dropped early at the wicket, posted 23 off the pacy Australian openers before the Pakistani tried to pull a short ball off the front foot and looped a catch behind off Williamson. Denton smashed two fours before being bowled by a shooter (the wicket was otherwise true) before the ubiquitous Australian Williamson ran out Sciberras with a superb throw. Things got worse for The Gents as Gilkes pulled a full-toss off part-time spinner Frank, also to Williamson and the skipper swept to the 'keeper.

Inkollu was largely untroubled among this mayhem and in Murali Kalidinda found some keen, youthful support before Zonneveld had him lbw, 70-6. Though Hemin Patel edged behind for a duck off the son of darts commentator Sid Waddell, Snelling, Toft and, especially Leader (a stand of 27 off the last 18 balls) supported Inkollu to the hilt as the young warehouseman struck 9 fours on his way to a sterling 61 not out. The total of 133 was not bad and The Gents had momentum going into the second innings.

Alas, this momentum was dissipated as opener Greig took four fours off Snarler Snelling's first two overs, the great man suffering from a bad cold, though revenge would be his later. It was the tall, elegant Kiwi Mark Leader and Kalidinda who gave Sanjay Patel control, conceding only 29 from their 10 overs, Leader weighing in with two lbw's to see off the openers. Alas, Waddell took three successive boundaries off Inkollu's only completed over and with the immaculate Williamson playing shots all round the ground the match seemed to be slipping away. The score rose to 82-2 in only the 16th. over, at which point the game of French cricket being played by three of West One's children was providing the more competitive spectacle.

The persevering Sciberras then had Waddell smartly stumped but Zonneveld, after cautiously playing himself in, took a heavy toll of the Patels. At 108-3 West One were nearly home and hosed but strange things have happened in Gents games in 2008 and this clash was no exception. Swapping ends and coming in off a shortened run was one Stuart Alexander Snelling, who bowled Williamson with his second ball, Pulford with his third and Byrnes with his sixth, improving his figures from 2-0-19-0 to 3-1-19-3 in the process. However, Pate was yet another useful batsman and although Snelling got a fourth victim when Zonneveld was well held by fly slip Toft, that was as good as it got for The Gents, who suffered their fifth defeat in six games. In itself an alarming statistic, it should not be forgotten that in the record ten-match unbeaten that ended on 29 June, there were wins by 3 runs, 2 wickets and 1 wicket. Since then, games have been lost by 2 runs, 1 wicket and 3 wickets. Some close games then and with a little bit of blooming luck the wins will start again soon.

Gents; Khan 8, Sciberras 7, †Denton 11, Inkollu 61 not out, *S Patel 1, Gilkes 1, Kalidinda 9, Snelling 3, Toft 4, H Patel 0, Leader 8 not out, Extras 20, **133-9 (30 overs)**

FoW; 23, 43, 43, 48, 48, 70, 95, 106, 106

Bowling; Williamson 2-24, Pulford 0-15, Zonneveld 1-26, Frank 2-12, Byrnes 1-36, Waddell 2-15

Catches; Fahey 3, Williamson 1

West One; Butcher 5, Greig 28, Waddell 22, *Williamson 33, Zonneveld 20, Pulford 0, Byrnes 0, Pate 17 not out, Deniston 0 not out, Frank and †Fahey did not bat, Extras 8, **134-7 (26.3 overs)**

FoW; 28, 41, 82, 108, 108, 108, 131

Bowling; Snelling 4-39, Leader 2-15, Kakidinda 0-14, Inkollu 0-16, Sciberras 1-23, H Patel 0-15, S Patel 0-14

Catches; Toft 1 **Stumpings;** Denton 1

Lost by 3 wickets

Game 17: Old Haberdashers' CC, Elstree, Sunday 17 August. Gents won toss. Sunny, 19C

Scibo leads Gents home

Tight bowling pegged back the powerful Saints' middle order at just the right time to achieve a hard-earned victory in an entertaining match. Mark Sciberras was The Gents' hero, top-scoring with 37, taking three crucial wickets and two catches while his team-mates dropped five as the pressure mounted. There was much to praise in the visitors' batting, including an excellent Denton/Sciberras opening stand, but the outcricket in the hosts' reply in worsening light was patchy and sometimes comedic. Nevertheless, this was a welcome win.

Old Haberdashers' CC is a ground with bags of character and London Saints are always friendly and welcoming, so it was pleasing to be able to field a full side without guest support. After some negotiation about which wicket to use, the one prepared being very close to the boundary, the captains opted for the more central Saturday pitch. Credit to the groundsman, therefore, for it behaved perfectly after 100 overs on it the day before. Stalwarts Denton and Sciberras opened and posted a composed, attractive 76 in only 15 overs, respectively striking four and five fours, the younger man being quite ruthless with the full-toss and long-hop. Both fell in quick succession, Denton run out and Sciberras lbw to Loomes. Gilkes got his head down after recent trauma before falling to a sharp Grimes c&b, while Inkollu, Sanjay Patel and Iqbal batted fluently without ever exerting complete control. The dismissal of Iqbal was spectacular: caught by slip Pearce off the returning Nanton, the ball travelling like a shell. Nanton was the pick of the bowlers, though Saints were disappointed by their 21 wides. It was a fair score but this Southampton side, even without Berkeley, batted deep.

As a previously sunny, warm day became dull and chilly, one saw both the strengths and frailties of the 2008 model Gents. The early bowling from Snelling and the skipper was tight and accurate. Cotton, in his last game before emigrating to Australia, drove Sanjay to Toft in the covers, 7/1. Good luck to this skilful, popular opponent. Saints were only scoring at two runs per over when Iqbal was brought into the attack, and he struck in his first over, the veteran Grimes driving to Sciberras at short mid-on.

It is difficult to pinpoint where it began to go wrong for The Gents. The darkening skies may have contributed, assertive batting from Yogeswaran, Lui Patel (making his debut in this series) and Velvet Underground fan Wathan certainly did, but for a ten-over period The Gents fell apart. Though Yogeswaran fell caught Inkollu on the mid-wicket boundary off Hemin Patel, Patel and Wathan hauled their side right back into contention. There were five drops. They came twice at slip (one involving a collision), long-on, long-off and silly mid-off, none difficult (we are excluding here the two that flew past Buck). Heartwarming comedy moments became contagious as fielders dived over the ball. Four Inkollu overthrows upgraded a Wathan two to a six. All it needed was Eric Sykes and Tommy Cooper to appear on the ground carrying a plank.

Gradually, the skipper sorted out his fields, drawing praise from his opposite number Dave Thomas, a man wise in the art of field placement. Sciberras's 7-0-33-3 then won the match, though the contributions of others should not be ignored. He bowled Patel and Wathan, had Nanton lbw and took a second catch off the skipper to dismiss Chalmers, thus having a part in the dismissals of each of Saints' main dangermen. His was a towering performance, greatly admired by all participants here (including the groundsman's friendly white cat) and it is marvellous to have him back as a regular. The required run rate rapidly rose and Sanjay Patel's and Snelling's frugal second spells ensured that there would be no repeat of the events here on 12 August 2007, where Thomas and Berkeley thrashed The Gents for 67 in the final five overs as part of their immortal 93-run stand. Saints were 34 runs adrift at the end, but there was little between the sides and the final margin was deceptive.

Gents; †Denton 30, Sciberras 37, Inkollu 24, Gilkes 8, *S Patel 28, Iqbal 22, Desai 7, Toft 6 not out, Snelling 0, Buck 2 not out, H Patel did not bat, Extras 25, **189-8 (35 overs)**

FoW; 76, 77, 108, 137, 159, 163, 173, 173

Bowling; Nanton 3-18, Keenan 0-39, Thomas 0-20, Loomes 2-30, Grimes 1-45, Pearce 0-35

Catches; Cotton 1, Grimes 1, Patel 1, Pearce 1, Thomas 1

London Saints; Yogeswaran 18, Cotton 1, Grimes 7, Patel 46, Wathan 25, †Chalmers 16, Nanton 16, *Thomas 2, Pearce 3 not out, Loomes 0, Keenan 2 not out, Extras 19, **155-9 (35 overs)**

FoW; 7, 24, 40, 107, 112, 144, 146, 146, 150

Bowling; Snelling 1-11, S Patel 3-19, Iqbal 1-26, H Patel 1-13, Sciberras 3-33, Buck 0-36, Gilkes 0-5

Catches; Sciberras 2, Inkollu 1, Toft 1

Won by 34 runs

Games 18/19: Old Tenisonians' CC, Sunday 24 August. Sunny, 21C

Fit to be tied

With the scores level at 140, Neepam Bhatt bowled Richard Gilkes with the last ball of the final game, the trophy being shared between The Gents and the West London Invitation XI, writes **Steve Bignell**.

With no official fixture this weekend five West XI players (Wright, Bignell, Bhatt, Bender and Laing) were joined by guests and surplus Gents for the three-cornered contest that also included Dhruv Patel's talented young Close PF XI. Dhruv's team were beaten by the other two sides (Bhatt scoring 41 of the first 43 runs, before retiring at 50) as the Beggars comfortably chased down 92 to set up the final with The Gents.

Bhatt (44) and Wright (36) were the main contributors to an impressive total of 140-8, which appeared well out the reach of The Gents as they slumped to 50-5 at the halfway point, David Bender taking an incredible one-handed catch, and still needed 33 from the last three overs with only 3 wickets left, but some clean hitting from Hemin Patel and Richard Gilkes set up a winning position until Bhatt's excellent final delivery. It was a highly enjoyable day's cricket and special thanks to Andrew Burman for arranging everything in his usual efficient manner.

Can I just go on record as saying a massive thanks and well done to all who took part on Sunday, writes **Richard Gilkes**. We may have been missing some founder members of the club but everyone involved had a good day. One exception may be the young lad who misjudged the catch in the deep and took one on the nose. I hope he recovers quickly from that. Big thanks to all who brought or prepared food and cakes.

Firstly, thanks to Andrew and Hemin for their work and effort behind the scenes to make the day such a success, writes **Mark Sciberras**. Then Dhruv, Chris Wright and the Westies for making sure there were three competitive and sporting teams on the day. The cricket played was some of the best many of us will ever see. Neep's batting was awesome, Rich's and Hemin's batting to help tie the last game was incredible, whilst Dave Bender's catch was one of the best I have ever seen. A day to remember and a privilege to have been a part of.

Gents; H Patel 7, Sciberras 8, Wahed 22, Gilkes 5, Inkollu 12, †Denton 6, *S Patel 7, Buck 17, Desai 11, Snelling 3 not out, Babar 1, Toft did not bat, Extras 24, **124-10 (20 overs)**
FoW; 25, 29, 43, 57, 75, 81, 95, 117, 119, 124
Bowling; Nimit 3-28, Tohin 0-33, Sumit 1-12, Dulaph 3-13, D Patel 1-13, Narasimha 1-13
Catches; Not recorded 5, Narasimha 1, Nimit 1

Close PF; Donald 32, Vigu 0, Nilesh 28, Shanvare 9, Sumit 20, Amit 0, *D Patel 0, Nimit 6, Narasimha 0, Tohin 0, Extras 16, **108-9 (20 overs)**
FoW; 1, 44, 70, 81, 82, 82, 104, 105, 105
Bowling; S Patel 2-25, Inkollu 0-16, Snelling 1-22, H Patel 2-15, Sciberras 2-25
Catches; S Patel 1, Sciberras 1, Wahed 1

Won by 16 runs

Close PF 92-3 (15 overs) (Nimit 43 not out, Sumit 26) **lost to West London Invitation XI 93-2 (9 overs)** (Bhatt 50 ret. not out, Toft 13 not out, Dev 11 not out) **by 8 wickets**

West London Invitation XI; Bhatt 44, Dev 17, Boden 10, Shanvare 1, *Wright 36, †Bignell 3, Naish 0, D Patel 13 not out, K Patel 0, Laing absent injured, Extras 19, **140-8 (20 overs)**
FoW; 48, 69, 81, 85, 103, 107, 139, 140
Bowling; Snelling 0-14, Babar 0-27, Sciberras 2-34, H Patel 1-25, Inkollu 1-21, S Patel 2-11
Catches; Desai 1, Gilkes 1

Gents; Sciberras 0, Wahed 6, Snelling 10, Inkollu 8, Buck 12, *S Patel 12, Desai 11, Babar 13, Gilkes 37, H Patel 16, †Denton 0 not out, Toft did not bat, Extras 13, **140 all out (20 overs)**
FoW; 0, 8, 22, 26, 50, 52, 78, 80, 138, 140
Bowling; Bhatt 2-18, Dev 2-14, Bender 1-21, Wright 1-21, Boden 1-19, Shanvare 1-25, K Patel 0-12
Catches; Bender 1, Bignell 1, Boden 1, D Patel 1, Wright 1

Tied