

THE SAGE – Summer & Winter 2010

WINTER SAGE: PART 6 : THERMALS REQUIRED/OLD SKILLS GETTING LOST

Thought I'd pen a quick passage on t'situation so far, post Oz trip. With t'wily old skip Nigel relinquishing t'2nd team captaincy I'd serious concerns over young Marcus' ability t'cope with t'intricacies of t'art. T'boy 'as fallen at t'first hurdle with t'first task of attending fixtures night. T'Austerlands game away had been nicely embedded in mid July. For those of us in t'know a good decision by Bostik but t'fallow youth 'twas unaware Austerlands is t'highest ground in t'country. He succumbed t'Austerlands approach and agreed t'move it t'April 30. This 'ull coome back t'haunt 'im as he loses a spinning finger t'hyperthermia. I think it would be wise for me t'do a pre-season article on t'benefits of wearing thermal underwear as t'youngsters ain't got a clue. Ivor Bulge 'as already offered his various pairs for hire but no amount of t'biological detergent 'as removed t'heavily ingrained streaks. Those of you in t'know also recognise t'dark arts of keeping t'various items of pre-historic equipment running at t'club. No one 'as t'ability of t'brown envelope warrior t'tickle t'mowers t'spark 'em into life following hours of abuse and branch thrashing from TD. Unfortunately these arts will be lost if not written down for posterity as t'BEW is now suffering from bouts of amnesia. A classic example occurred on Tuesday night as TD and young Mark battled away trying t'remove t'empty gas cylinder from t'heater. T'BEW stated it was easy t'last time he did it but couldn't remember how he did it. Fortunately TD eventually whipped it off somehow. For those of you interested in t'gossip, TD and t'fiancee still going strong. There's no connection 'tween t'last two statements.

It's that time of t'year t'start getting your backside down t'club on a Saturday afternoon t'do t'necessary pre-season work. I shall name and shame t' boogers who don't attend at least once.

c Sage 9/2/11

SAGE SHANE : PART 3 - DEEP DEPRESSION MATE /GREAVO GAINS AN OSCAR

G'day yeh pommey baastards and gud riddence. Severely thraashed in the Aashes and now you'veve nicked the first 20/20. Gee the country is in mouuurning and even Rolf H's didgeridoo can't briing a smmile. I believe your boys maanaged to get back to Oz deespote causing chaaos at Adelaide airport. Somehow they mannaged to avoid the check-in desk and got straaight to haand luggage section whereupon they were told their cases were too heavy, and told to faack off and do it properly. T'Sage informs me Steptoe speent most of the flight asleep but true to form TD took advantage of the free nectar and downed 40+ tinnies. At arrivals TD received a rapturous reception from t'fiancee, Pam told Steptoe to get in the car. TD was baack at the club the next Tuesday night but Steptoe hasn't been seen since, siting long term jet lag as an excuse. I'm also informed that Sarah sprogged and Fatboyslim, not used to winning things, called it Oscar, sounds like an o.g. to me.

c Sage Shane 14/1/11

SAGE SHANE : PART 2 - HOW D'YOU CONTROL TD ON A 36 HOURS CELEBRATORY BINGE?

G'day yeh pommey baastards. Ned Kelly, Dame Edna, Skippy, Rolf Harris, Shane Warne, you took a hell of a beating. Geez, you murdered us for five days and not even rain could help us. It took until day 4 of the Test for the flag to be seen despite the Secretary repeatedly texting Steptoe that it wasn't visible. The rumour was that your boys were actually holed up in some Raadcliffe pub and hadn't made the trip. The meeting with Ozzie Wayne has failed to materialise as he's not answering his phone. It hasn't helped that Steptoe has left a repeated rant/text of how shit the Aussies are. Three hours after Swann had bowled Siddler, the rain and thunder/lightning came. To rub salt into the wound the dynamic duo joined 500 other Barmy Army supporters in blocking roads in pouring rain doing a poor imitation of Gene Kelly's 'Singing in the Rain', you beauty. The Oz police were not amused. Steptoe's seriously concerned about the next 36 hours, before they fly home Thursday evening, about how he's going to supervise TD. At least he's got a choice of 749 churches to seek divine guidance. Whether the true story of what the two did when not at the cricket will ever emerge is still to be seen. They arrive back Saturday where not doubt the Treasurer will begin a detailed debrief whilst trying to avoid questions on whether the milk round is still in one piece.

c Sage Shane 7/12/10

SAGE SHANE : PART 1 - WHERE'S THE FLAG?

G'day yeh pommey baastards from maarvellus Brisbaane, the land of the banana benders. Gez, how did you lot maanage to score 517-1 when you normaally collaapse like a paack of caards. I've been giving the boys some culturaal aadvice, maainly how to combine drinking the amber nectar, smoking the duffies, whilst simultaaneously striking up conversation with the sheeilas and fighting off the mozzies. Wee've approached the situaation which you poms might understand if I saay 'Where's Waally?' Despite texting the boys about where to position the flaag, I didn't see it. The question I ask is whether the boys were actually there? They maintaain the Baarmy Arrmy transport them to and from the gaame so they caan't ave got lost. So we're off to Adelaide where no doubt the boys will visit some of the 749 churches in the city.

c Sage Shane 30/11/10

WINTER SAGE: PART 5: T'BOYS' TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS IN GETTING TO OZ

Steptoe's body managed t'hold itself together so t'intrepid twosome made their way t'airport at tea time on Saturday. There was much wailing and tears as TD and t'fiancee said goodbye and tears of joy from Pam, secure in t'knowledge that she would 'ave three weeks of peace and quiet t'look forward to without t'invalided hypochondriac around. T'Secretary 'as wasted no time and is currently pastoralling both ladies.

Steptoe had made t'interesting decision t'travel in his Man City outfit seemingly unaware that t'security checks on football fans were intense. Luck was not on Steptoe's side as his chosen x-ray machine bleeped 'im and he encountered a 'red' customs official. T'decision t'berate t'man about t'filthy red scum, and that t'bleep was a 'set-up' didn't go down too well. ' as t'official ordered a strip search. Steptoe squealed that it would take an hour t'take off his shirt and it didn't help matters that TD, in hysterics, reminded t'man not t'forget t'check Steptoe's orifices.

T'boys took t'brave decision t'do t'journey without nicotine patches. T'first stage, Manchester t'Dubai was about six hours. Five hours in t'flight Steptoe ordered a drink only t'be told they were free on t'flight because of t'problems they'd with Qantas. Five hours of drinking time lost but t'boys made up for it on t'thirteen and a half hours flight from Dubai to Brisbane as they drank t'plane dry of caans. T'only problem they'd was in Dubai where they found a smoking lounge but it required them t'spend a certain sum. T'four pints they'd cost 'em £40.

T'boys arrived in Brisbane in t'rain. Steptoe and TD were pleased with themselves and Steptoe told TD that perhaps they could give up t'fags....TD's reply is unprintable. They made their way t'Barmy Army hostel only t'find they were t'first ones there as t'backbackers were packing up t'go. Steptoe then encountered what was going t'be a daily problem, extricating TD from a bar. Eventually t'task was achieved so that they could wander around and get their bearings. Believe it or not, they came across a drinking hole called 'Sage'.

This is me last article as I'm passing over t'rest of t'tour encounters t'me distant cousin in Oz, Shane.

c T'Sage 22/11/10

WINTER SAGE: PART 4 : HONEYMOON IN A&E/ T'CHAIRMAN'S LONG LOST LOVE CHILD FOUND

T'article this week will leave more questions than answers for you t'mull over thro' t'winter. Zorro finally wed t'missus who ended up in t'A&E on t'honeymoon. T'mind boggles as t'what our superhero was up t' , but both are keeping quiet.

There'a serious concern regarding t'Chairman who, in his unshaven state, has taken on t'appearance of Albert Steptoe. T'final indignation came last Friday when t'Treasurer was 'elping him collect t'milk money. An old dear kindly asked young Mark whether t'Chairman, hunched up in t'van, was his father. T'Treasurer, for once, was lost for words but had t'apologise t'old dear for t'wet patch he'd just left on t'floor.

And so t'TD. For our younger readers, this next bit will be a template t'check how much influence t'female sex has 'ad upon you. For t'purposes of t'article, t'lady in question will be referred to as t'fiancee. TD has obviously gained much confidence as t'fiancee has been displayed at t'last two social events. T'first question is why would such an attractive lady be interested in TD? Is it his gift of t'gab, his rugged looks or t'magnetic personality? Nah, me thinks he invited her down t'his groundsman's container t'look at his selection of machinery and attachments. Apparently t'smell of diesel oil does something t'a female. There's been a noticeable improvement in TD's attire (influence 1). He's had an extra short haircut (influence 2). Unfortunately it's left a bar code across t'back of t'next where t'sun didn't reach. He's dusted down his passport as he'd thought it was needed t'leave t'Radcliffe boundary to go shopping in Bury with t'fiancee (influence 3). Ivor Bulge had a shock when he was interrupted by a knock on t'door as he was about t'peruse his daily slot on Sky Channel 955. T'fiancee wanted entry t'TD's flat to clean and sanitise it (influence 4). TD's happier at work (influence 5) and influence 6.....t'milkman informs me t'regular daily order has been punctuated with 'milk not required today' notes.

Next week: T'boys leave for Oz ...full story as t'tour diary begins.

c T'Sage 15/11/10

WINTER SAGE : PART 3 : DYSLEXIC COLONEL AND T'CHAIRMAN BECOMES A MEDICAL CELEBRITY

Refreshed after me charabanc tour of t'northern slag heaps I returned t'find t'Colonel employed in t'art of sewing t'flag for TD. Unfortunately this painstaking job, made more difficult by t'thin cheap material flag TD had bought, had to be redone. T'Colonel, still suffering deep depression from another crap season with t'bat and in t'field, was under t'impression he played for ELMP CC. T'resewn flag was on display in t'club house on bonfire night and reads...T'PATIO PANEL ELPM CC ON TOUR..... As me articles are copywrited I expect a hefty payment from t'club t'arrive soon.

T'Chairman rolled up t'his latest medical appointment only to be surrounded by enthusiastic medical students. Apparently some had been waiting hours to see our Chairman's X-ray as t'size of t'gap 'tween bones in his break was unheard of. One young filly enquired of our illustrious Chairman "Mr. Kilcoyne, for my notes, would you please tell me how you sustained your injury?" T'Chairman responded eloquently 'I was pissed'.

A large crowd attended t'successful bonfire night. A guy had been made up of all t'old cricketing gear left around, including a wig, and had been taped t'chair. Once placed on t'fire t'guy suddenly fell head first ont' ground with some wag asking whether it was related t'Chairman.

Next week: TD sniffs out an early Sheila.

c T'Sage 7/11/10

WINTER SAGE : PART 2 : MEDICAL UPDATE AND TOUR AGENDAS

Before t'discussion on t'tour agenda I need t'update me readers on t'medical situation of some of t'committee. T'President has had his cataracts done and is now able t'see properly and had a shock when he first saw t'wife again. T'old boy's in a buoyant mood stating no Division 3 booler will be able t'contain him and he'll show t'shit second teamers how t'bat. Next appointment he 'as is with t'psychiatrist as he apparently suffers from delusions of grandeur. T'Chairman is continuing t'recover slowly, t'barometer of improvement is shown by t'increasing about of abuse young Mark is getting doing his good samaritan work. T'Treasurer has had t'medical contraption removed but t'angle is still not within t'ICC's 15 degrees.His one man show on t'whole injury, from start to finish, starts this Tuesday at 8pm and part 2 concludes on Saturday, expect a late night.

And so back t'tour. T'agenda is still rather vague and is subject t'continual change depending upon t'fitness of our dynamic duo. There appears t'be a big difference in t'way t'boys will spend t'time away from t'cricket. Killer has gone for t'cultural option, which before t'injury included sea fishing, exploring t'Barrier Reef and exploring t'area. TD has gone for redneck option.....bars and sheilas. Whilst Killer is laid up, TD is practising hard for his option as he attempts to beat David Boon's tinnies record on a one way flight.

c T'Sage 4/10/10

There will be no report next week as the Sage is off recharging the acidity in his batteries.

WINTER SAGE : PART 1 : PREPARATION FOR OZ

T'dynamic duo, once deciding it was a now or never situation to go t'Oz targetted t'first two tests in Brisbane and Adelaide.

T'success of a good trip is meticulous planning and so t'discussions took place. . A mole has secreted t'following planning schedule t'me which t'boys wrote on t'back of a fag packet. It 'as been translated int'English and set out in a proper manner by myself t'reflect t'long hours of discussion between t'two pioneers.

Jobs Killer	Jobs TD
1 Arrange flights to and from Oz	1 Purchase large England flag
2 Arrange internal OZ flights	2 Embroider flag with appropriate wording
3 Arrange accommodation through Barmy Army	
4 Arrange for periodic payments for accommodation	
5 Arrange payment for flights	
6 Arrange travel insurance	
7 Check passports	
8 Enquire about visas and obtain	
9 Collect monies off TD	
10 Arrange transport to airport	
11 Check luggage allowance required	
12 Ensure travel tickets printed off	
13 Check flight times	
14 Set up the wife's pastoral visits from the Secretary	

As of Sept 27 Killer has completed jobs 1-14.....As of
Sept 27 TD has completed job 1

c T'Sage 27/9/10

ARTICLE 29: SNIPERS STAND DOWN /FINAL GRIM ASSESSMENT

Apologies t'me regular readers for t'lateness of t'article but 'ad t'get latest update on t'Chairman. Following Monday's visit t'docs t'snipers have been stood down as t'break appears t'b'mending itself. 'twill save t'NHS budget as t'only dart they found t'penetrate t'scrawny arse was t'expensive ones used for t'rhinos. Despite ordering t'wife not t'attend t'consultation with t'doc Pam completely ignored him as she thought t'pertinent question would not be asked...and how right she was. Given t'opportunity by t'doc t'raise any points t'Chairman declined as he was intending going t'Oz whatever t'situation. However, t'wife intervened and t'doc took a deep intake of breath when t'question was asked. It would appear that he's made it with two weeks t'spare. T'Chairman managed an appearance at t'club on Tuesday evening. T'committee meeting was half way through t'agenda when t'group thought some disorientated tramp had wandered int' place but it turned out t'Chairman hadn't shaved for some weeks. T'Colonel spent t'rest of t'evening being t'Chairman's bitch as he was repeated requested t'get t'Chairman more caans . It would appear cider, curry and cocodamol now form a major part of t'Chairman's diet. For some reason young Mark doesn't appear too keen t'go on t'dogs trip. T'Chairman says he's recently been getting plenty of practice sprinting from t'alsations and such is his level of fitness, he's considering entering him in t'7.30 at Belle Vue.

When I looked at t'initial draft of me assessment of t'season it was just one vitriolic outburst of abuse towards each player so I decided t'look at t'team in general. T'firsts finished joint 6th and were knocked out in first round of cup. T'team lacked consistency, both in availability for selection and performance. T'team tended t'perform well against similar and lower opposition, but they put up little resistance against t'top four. Very few batsmen were prepared t'graft and so there was no base t'build from. T'booling was too similar and lacked a quality strike booler and spinner. T'wicket keeping was badly hit by availability and split between four players, whilst t'fielding also displayed a serious lack of consistency. In me opinion, based on a wealth of experience, for t'2011 season, t'team needs t'draft in at least three batsmen, two quality boolers and a wicket keeper.

T'seconds were relegated, winning only two matches, and were knocked out in cup first round in a bool off. T'team suffered for a number of reasons. Each week there were usually two first teamers not available and this made t'batting woefully weak. Only one player passed 200 runs and there was only one fifty scored. Most of t'rest struggled t' stay at t'crease for any length of time t'build an innings. Most of t'clubs pace boolers were in t'firsts so t'attack was powerpoof and realied very heavily on t'legger's 55 wickets and t'pink blur's 31 victims. T'fielding was generally abysmal and t'real worry was t'performance of t'young'uns who don't appear t'be making any progress in batting, booling or

fielding. Hopefully relegation will be a blessing and an influx of new first teamers into the team will release some of the first team who are past their sell by date.

It's not all doom and gloom as the off-field activities have resulted in an excellent season and the club is in a healthy financial situation.

Next week we start part one of a fifteen weekly travelogue which follows the exploits of the dynamic duo as they invade Oz and attempt to drink Queensland and Victoria dry.

T'Sage 22/9/10

ARTICLE 28: 1st TEAM CRUISE T'WIN AS WILLETT TAKES 5 / CHAIRMAN 'OFFICALLY BLIND'/WINTER SAGE

T'skipper Wady won t'toss and inserted t'Meths men on a green TD track. T'warm up was impressive as Danny W dropped a skyer in front of t'face which left a rosy mark. WLM were soon in trouble as they took on Carl's arm and lost. Wady got some away movement and was rewarded with a wicket. Danny W struggled t'control t'off cutter as WLM reached 25-1 but managed t'get one t'lift which had Taylor caught behind and then proceeded to reek carnage as WLM crumbled t'25-6. Mr.Patel then pasted Willy all around t'ground as he booled two overs of dross. Danny W took care of him with a fortunate lbw to 'ave figures of 5-25, a shock t'everyone who witnessed t'event. T'remaining batters appeared intent on hitting t'cow corner, something which young Nigel spotted early on and Wady placed himself there t' take t'two catches off Joe S, t'first with a magnificent catch falling backwards. Gavin picked up a wicket as Willy snaffled a dolly off him at mid wicket. 93 all out.

Willy and Gavin opened in order t'get their 500 for t'season. Willy needed 27 and smacked 26 in boundaries for a score of 30 and Gavin took some time t'reach t'seven he needed. Willy was booled for 30 out of 39-1 and this would normally be t'start of a collapse. Not this time as Wady had picked t'second team skipper who was solid as a rock. He and Gavin took t'score t'85 before Swanton's short and wide booting saw Gavin caught at mid on for 35 and Nigel at deep point for 18 with t'score on 91. Shaky came in and was dropped at slip first ball and somehow managed t'see t'over out. 'Twas left to Phil to guide to ball through slip to secure t'winning runs.

With t'game finishing at 5pm much discussion and drinking took place. T'only sensible decision made was to organise a club outing t'Belle Vue to t'dogs for Saturday October 2nd. Contact Wady if interested in going.

T'20/20 final went as predicted with Elton Vale cruising to 39 runs victory. EV amassed 190-6 with t'Kiwi taking 3-27. ELPM collapsed to 52-6 but some respectability was given t'occasion as t'skipper Wady smacked a 50 and t'Kiwi 28 not out as t'Millers finished on 151-7.

T'Duckless Wall: The following magnificent three failed to score a duck: Mike H, Young Nigel, TD

Chairman Watch: Rumour has it that two one armed bandits were seen in Primark purchasing a pair of pasley pyjamas. Could t'knife and t'Chairman's

body be meeting at last. Snipers are on 24 hours alert and 'ave been practising trying t'hit a small scrawny arse on t'move. T'Chairman found out this week that t'Authority's data bank 'as him listed as a blind milkman. This would explain a lot.

Next week . T'Sage will give his end of season thoughts and advice t'players.

EXCLUSIVE.....EXCLUSIVE.....EXCLUSIVE

Keep in contact with t'ELPM website through out t'winter.....T'Sage has been exploring his ancestry and discovered a cousin five times removed in Oz who's agreed to monitor Killer and TD on tour. There will be weekly reports as our intreped twosome hit Oz. T'build up will start on Monday Sept 27.

T'Sage 13/9/10

ARTICLE 27: BOTH TEAMS THRASHED/ T'PATIO PANEL WELCOME BACK BOSTIK (Sept 4)

After t'excitement of last Sunday's revelry at t'Fothers this week was somewhat of a let down as both teams suffered very heavy defeats. 'Twas the first time this season that t' seconds were still batting when t'first team arrived back. T'shambolic day began with Shaky turning up, having not been selected, saying he'd forgotten t'scrub his name off t'unavailability sheet and he'd told Wadey he was available. Wadey hadn't a clue . T'Colonel was dispatched t'seconds which now had 12 players. T'firsts hadn't a scorer either as t' Treasurer sulked at home and ignored Wadey's texts because he wanted t'score for t'seconds at home and not travel t'Fothers. Lee W was dishing out his usual stream of abuse as Wady grabbed him and let him know he was t'token scorer. T'"poor boy hadn't a clue how t'do t'job let alone spell scorer. As usual t'mess was left t'young Nigel to sort out. Fortuned Zorro dropped out to let t'Colonel play whose magnificent contribution was another duck. T'firsts were dismissed for 76 with five ducks. Only two scores of 20 plus-Joe S 26 and extras 23. In reply, t'Fothers needed only 29 balls to smack 78 - seven sixes and six fours. Paul H grabbed two wickets (2-0-37-2) and it was left t'Shaky t'end proceedings with his looping leggers, t'first turned but three of t'next four were dispatched for six.

T'seconds bowled badly, fielded atrociously and dropped six catches in t'process then batted disgracefully as they ended their season relegated. Fothergills amassed 300-6 with Marcus 4-113 and Ashley B 2-49. Marcus had a total of 56 wickets for t'season and was t'only player t'pass 20. Only t'retiring skipper put up an form of resistance and his 31 out of 78 meant he was t'only player t'score 200+ runs for t'season,and these facts sum up t'problem t'team had. T'Patio Panel, swelled by t'firsts, ensured that Bostik was made t'feel welcome as they continued t'advise him about t'wide ball rule and how t'signal it.

Such is t'concern in t'club for t'welfare of its members that it was not surprising that as t'Chairman couldn't attend, TD and young Mark took it upon themselves to call on him at home to offer their sympathy and t'wish him a speedy recovery. For some unknown reason t'Chairman didn't appear very pleased t'see them.

It 'as t'be reported that some damage was done t'club very late last August Sunday. T'pizza man arrived with two young ladies who were desperate for t'loo. T'"Kiwi volunteered to show them t'way only t'trip over t'heater cable and rip t'plug socket off t'wall. Sometimes it doesn't pay t'be a gentleman.

T'Duckless wall - of t'main players Mike H, Terry B and young Nigel still duckless as t'season's count is now at any all time high of 76

T'Sage 6/9/10

ARTICLE 26: CRICKET TAKES BACK SEAT AS CHAIRMAN ENDS UP IN A&E . (Aug 30)

T'weather took charge on Saturday with t'seconds' game abandoned without a ball being booled. T'firsts found t'opposition seemingly only interested in improving their personal stats as t'ball spent more time out of t'ground (20 sixes) than in. Elton Vale smacked 295-4 in 34 overs which included eight appalling dropped catches, three by young Carl, before declaring. T'fragile Millers batting stumbled as Joe S pouched a duck, Joe B 5 Gavin 8 but Shaky still there at end on 15no as rain came with score on 33-3.

Ivor's suspect captaincy and organisation was there for all t'see as t'day began with him only finding ten players to go t'Fothergills. T'top order produced t'goods with t'Kiwi 40, Lowey 24 and a return from injury by t'Colonel who scored 38. T'wheels fell off when young Mark H gave Wadey out LBW for 0 and 118-2 resulted in 124 all out in 20 overs and Ivor batted himself too low as he was on t'pop. T'Fothers took their time including an indecent respect for Ivor's booting, I mean 5-1-10-0 'tis ridiculous but they eventually cruised t'six wickets win with t'Kiwi taking 2-21. It's also worth noting that t'skipper Ivor Bulge managed t'collapse at slip and hang on to one of two catches offered to him. It was just a case of gambling on which of t'two balls he saw was t'real one.

Now I know thou'st only interested in t'circumstances of t'Chairman's demise but I feel a full report is necessary. For those of you who 'ave difficulty in reading and understanding anything other than t'tabloids, t'basics were, in chronological order:

1. Chairman paralytic
2. fell outside Fothers' club and hit head on concrete
3. unconscious
4. photos taken for website
5. very basic medical assistance given
6. carried to coach
7. taken to hospital in morning by Pam
8. left arm broken in two places
9. hospital check next Monday and possible operation

Now thou has t'curtail t'laughter 'as this is a serious situation. T'Secretary is worried as accidents occur in threes and t'Chairman and t'Treasurer both 'ave serious left arm injuries. It has t'be said that t'Chairman was only doing his duty in fraternizing with t'opposition in a situation of 'entente cordiale'. T'Chairman was blissfully unaware for half t'evening that his ELPM cap had been replaced with a Thomas t'Tank Engine one. T'Secretary, in 'is pastoral role, contacted Pam t'enquire about t'situation. She declined t'give a quote for t'Sage on t'grounds t'wording would be too crude for public consumption. T'Chairman was under t'influence of serious painkilling drugs but declined to make any comment for t'Sage. Please note that pictures will be available in t'club on Tuesday evening.

However, we're still left with t'following intriguing questions:

1. Will t'vet with a tranquillising gun be needed if t'arm needs an op as we all know t'Chairman's aversion t'hospitals?
2. How will t'injury affect t'trip t'Oz.
3. Will Ernie be able t'deliver t'milk?
4. When will we see t'Chairman at t'club again?
5. Will t'Secretary need to pastoralise Pam?

T'Sage 22.8.10

ARTICLE 25: Wherethefookarewe tribe discovered in TD's outfield / Double loss (Aug 22)

T'rumour is that t'outfield only gets cut when TD's 'ad a haircut, in me opinion both need a damn good shearing.

T'seconds lost again despite 'aving two ex-first team batters. Saddleworth t'were inserted and found life difficult as Marcus and Stevie D kept control with t'first 20 overs leaking only 23 runs. T'pink blur missed two early chances when t'ball popped but recovered with three stumpings. Stevie 2-25 off 14 overs sealed one end up but when he got knackered t'Kiwi was unable to maintain t'pressure. Marcus wheeled away with 22 overs 6-74 and Joe B's filth snared t'unlucky Ward especially as t'rank long hop was caught by TD. T'youngsters 'ad no answer to Marcus and at 94-7 t'Millers were in t'hunt, but t'experienced later order guided t' team t'148. In reply, t'Millers reached t'lofty heights of 70-3 but then decided t'emulate England and lost next 7 wickets for 28. T'was t'Kiwi's fault, stumped off t'pie thrower when going nicely on 29 and he received well deserved abuse from t'Patio Panel. His last words t'skipper were 'Sorry but t'booling was too easy'. TD's answer t'long outfield was t'hit bool aerial for his brisk 16 but no one else could stay with t'skipper and following a classic cover drive Lee W was booled with team all out for 98.

T'firsts didn't cause Littleboro' Lakeside too much trouble as they demonstrated their inconsistency with t'bat and capitulated t'85 all out. Joe S 34 anchored t'innings but only Willy S 27 could support him.. T'skipper contributed another fine duck. At least t'booling made t'Lakesiders reply a little uncomfortable. Danny W 2-8 and a wicket for t'skipper had 'em 43-3 but that was t'last sniff and two late wickets, a rare Irongloves stumping off Ashley B and a runout from Benji B were not enough as t'Lakesiders got home with five wickets in t'hutch.

Next Sunday sees t'emergence of Ivor Bulge, providing he can find a clean pair of undies, who is attempting t'captain an eleven at t'Fothergills for t'Arthur Doc Trophy. Time has not been a good friend t'Ivor who claims his best performances occur when he's 'ad a few pints before t'match. As a esteemed member of T'Patio Panel Ivor will no doubt suffer as much abuse this Sunday as he's been dishing out this year. T'bar is situated at deep mid wicket which is where t'pundits expect Ivor t'be fielding, except for t'occasional waddle t'middle t'turn t'arm over. He claims t'be batting at 4 but will probably need a runner as there's no oxygen tent on site.

Medical report: T'Steward is progressing nicely and young Mark's arm contraption indicates a higher degree of movement but t'ICC are concerned t'kink is more than t'allotted 15 degrees and t'boy will 'ave t'attend t'Murali Test

Centre if he's t'bool again. T'boy is thinking about a future in umpiring and those in t'know will watch his performance with interest next Sunday at t'Fothergills especially as most umpires don't umpire with two caanns in t'pocket.

I've been asked by t'Secretary t'bring up 3 points:

1] T' remind all players that t'league matches for t'rest of t'season start at 1.30pm.

2] There's a Race Night next Saturday

3] If Whispering Bob mentions once again 'Where's me tracky top?' t'Secretary will lamp him one.

Duck count.....up 5 this weekend t'grand total of 67

T'Duckless Wall of Honour. Mike H, Terry B, Simmo and young Nigel still going strong

T'Sage 22.8.10

ARTICLE 24: Willy hits a big'un as Paul's inspired/ Roytonians relish Redders' relapses
(Aug 18)

Apologies t'all of me regular readers for t'lateness of t'article but t'shock of a first team win and t'depression of another heavy second team defeat sent me and t'wife t'Lakes for a bit of r and r . Tried really 'ard t'keep t'wallet tight but t'old gal booled me a google and used t'flexible friend t'purchase a spotted teapot.

T'firsts got off to a ragged start with three early losses but t'inconsistent Willy S just 'ad one of those days and smoted a ton, t'majority of which came in boundaries I presume, as t'scorebook was in as much mess as t'opposition's fielding. Nobody else really helped other than Gavin with a 19 and t'Kiwi with 16, though we were extremely lucky t'witness a rare cameo from Danny W, t'boy's had major fixation with ducks, which saw him 14 not out in a score of 198-9. In reply Blackley were reduced t'81-7 but a late order revival was extinguished by Paul H whose mammoth spell (for him) of 17.2-3-53-7, supported by Willy's 2-18 and Phil P's 3 catches, sorted Blackley out as they finished on 149.

T'seconds wandered off t'play Roytonians 1st team who were second in t'league. Fearing for t'punishment of his fragile team on a warm summer Sunday, t'skipper won toss and batted.....game over by 6pm. Only Mike H 34 and Andy Greenwood 23 not out reached double figures and Danny W contributed a magnificent 0 in a score of 88 which contained t'usual five ducks. Early tea, but no actual tea, was taken. T'pink blur was too fast for Roytonians square leg who gave t'stranded opener not out. Lowey took an excellent slip catch but then Marcus weaved his magic and Danny W embarked on a magnificent spell of off and leg cutters. Both batters struggled against both boolers but Redders came t'their aid and helped them through a torrid time with two dropped catches, t'second a dolly at mid on as they reached 92-1.

T'Wall of Honour. As 30 players have accumulated 62 ducks this season 'tis easier for me t'list t'four who are currently duckless.....Mike H, Terry B, Simmo and young Nigel.

T'battle of t'bruvvers has died out as Gavin 'as seen off Carl as has Ian with Gary. Both Birty boys can't score a run between themselves which leaves Steve and Danny D, both of whom have had shit seasons with t'bat so we'll call it a day. Less work for me.

T'Sage 18.8.10

ARTICLE 23: SOS FOR BATSMEN (Aug 8)

T'club is sending out a SOS call for batsmen. if you want a change of club there's a place at T'Millers

.Another dismal batting display by both teams again, with t'usual five ducks in t'seconds. Skipper Wadey brought Terry D into t'team to strengthen t'fielding.....t'boy dropped two catches which at least maintained his form from t'previous week in t'seconds. Springhead reached 98-2 but none of t'boolers booled with any control. Willy got t'break through and on 148-6 t'skipper resorted t'mad chef Joe S who snaffled 3-6 which saw Springhead 155. In reply, Shaky was still thinking about t'money that 'ad escaped from his wallet on his cruise and was caught for 3. Willy followed for anoother duck and Carl didn't last much longer 9-3. T'Skipper hit a breezy 31 but no one could stay with Joe S who scored 57. Danny W continued his surged t'duck trophy with yet another as t'Millers were all out for 141. Mark H's scoring wasn't up t'his usual OCD level with figures but I've marked him a strong 7 oot o'ten as his first words in t'club were 'Where's t'tippex'.

T'seconds 'ad Littleborough 66-7 but t'slogger hit 43 not out, all on t'leg, and they reached 128. Marcus Y notched up anoother five for with 6-67 with t'aid of t'pink blur and t'batsmen being booled around their legs. Steve D suffered at t'hands of t'slogger with 3-41 and Redders picked anoother jammy wicket up. T'catching was good including Lee W who caught a good'un. T'batting was dismal again but Danny S 23 hit his season best and Danny D 17 at least blocked a few.

Young Nigel is orf t'Taunton so t'usual information which follows my article won't appear this week. He tells me in t'future it'll be quicker t'list those without a duck this season (including himself) than those with and rechisten it T'Wall of Success. Danny W has 6 ducks but Willy S appears determined t'catch him with 4.

ARTICLE 22: THREE HEAVY DEFEATS IN A FORGETTABLE WEEKEND (Aug 1)

'twas a shocking weekend with both teams having heavy defeats inflicted upon 'em. T'only thing that changed was t'number of ducks which must be getting towards some sort of record. T'firsts went t'Totts and inserted 'em and held them at t'three quarters stage t'reasonable total with Paul H 4-62 and Wadey 3-35 booting t'brunt of t'overs and Phil P taking four catches. Aaron W dropped his usual catch but unfortunately one of Danny W's overs went for thirty which changed t'complexion of t'game towards t'end and Totts were finally booled out for 190. Cue t'usual batting display as t'Millers were rolled over for 98 with only Wadey 24 and Carl 23 getting established.

T'seconds crumbled t'54 all out against Rochdale 3rds whose two opening booters would've easily been good enough to open for our firsts. One good catch by Andy G but Terry Dickinson dropped a dolly which he tried t'cover up by diving. So impressive was t'dive that TD's been put on t'short list for GB 2012. On t' Sunday two early dropped slip catches followed by a further two, meant t'Millers were struggling. Littleboro' put on 122 for t'first wicket when Mike H's pies confused Mr Pye and Marcus took a good catch. Kiwi was magnificent on a slow wicket and his rehabilitation under t'guidance of t'skipper was there for all t'see. Kiwi claimed he was flogged senseless but t'skipper took a note of how Killer used t'treat 'im and booled him straight through as he returned figures of 22- 4-60-2, including a leg side stumping by t'pink blur. Marcus returned t'mop up t'later order with t'aid of t'pink blur and Danny S snaffling two close catches as he took 5-89. A score of 198-8 proved too much. T'skipper instructed t'Colonel about how t'be a proper opener and t'use t'opportunity to get some form, and even lent him his bat..How did T'Colonel repay these wise words.....by leaving his one brain cell back in t'pavilion. Having attempted one slog and then been dropped in t'first over, he slogged again in t'second and was caught at mid off. T'skipper came in at 36-3 and held one end and was finally out at 122-7. At t'other end Mike H 24 and Kiwi 19 attacked and then Marcus hit a glorious 27 not out but Danny D couldn't support him and was ironically booled trying t'defend.

T'Wall of Shame.....all re-offenders - Willy S, Lee W, Aaron W, Dwayne P, Danny S, Craig H

T'Sage 2/8/10

	inns	runs	av		inns	runs	av
Wade Gary	10	118	11.8	Greaves Carl	11	285	28.5
Wade Ian	14	352	25.1	Greaves Gavin	14	455	35.0

	inns	runs	av		inns	runs	av
Dwyer Steve	8	84	12.00	Birtwistle Ashley	4	25	8.3
Dwyer Danny	13	112	8.6	Birtwistle Ben	7	9	4.5
Dwyer Amy	1	7	7.0				

ARTICLE 21: 1st CRUMBLE T'CATHOLIC CLUB/ 2nd SKIPPER ADMITTED T' CLINIC (July 26)

A weakened Millers team were crushed by t'Catholics whose lower order decimated t'booling. Paul H 4-70 made inroads in t'top order and had restricted RCC to 100-5 but then t'wheels fell off and with t'aid of some questionable field placings, RCC amassed 258-7. T'usual problem then occurred as t'mentally fragile batting failed once against t'top teams, with only Fatboyslim and Joe B showing any desire t'battle it out. Dwayne smashed 16 not out, including his first six, but t'final score of 97, with five ducks, speaks for itself.

'twas a big weekend for t'seconds as they played t'team above and t'team below them in t'battle at t'bottom of t'league. I tried t'contact t'skipper last night but his wife told me that t'stress of skippering t'bunch of wazzocks has resulted in him being forceably admitted t'clinic for battle scarred skippers, where he met Wadey on t'way out. T'wardens, I'm led t'believe, are on 48 hours round t'clock suicide watch. His wife was extremely pissed off as t'police had initially accused her of GBH as t'old man's body was badly bruised from taken t'ball on t'flesh as it ripped through t'surface and spat. It reminded me of t'Brian Close v Michael Holding encounter in t'halicon days of t'seventies. So what caused all this???

T'repeated disgraceful batting performance of some of t'team in both matches (scores 0-5, but mainly 0), that's what. T'would be callous of me t'name and shame so I would ask you t'consult t'second team scorecards t'identify t'culprits. It started so well on t'Saturday as Greenmount were dismissed for 87 off 34 overs. Steve D 3-23 and t'Kiwi stifled t'top order and then Andy B 4-15 and Marcus 2-20 stepped in t'polish them off. T'highlight of t'fielding was t'eighth wonder of t'world as Danny S dived horizontal, I know, it's hard t'believe and I was there, and snaffled t'catch one handed inches from t'ground at point.

T'openers failed yet again, and Andy B, following a series of low scores, has taken t'batting like our friends from t'sub-continent. He crashed 27 and t'Millers were 40-2 off 4 overs, but it didn't last as 45-1 became 54-5. T'skipper came in on t'hatrick and dealt with t'young whippersnapper with some distain. T'Kiwi decided to follow t'AB school of batting and crashed a quick 25 in a partnership of 33 but was out with t'scores level. T'winning leg bye in t'same over saw a rare Millers win in only t'12th over.

On t'Sunday t'skipper won t'toss and inserted Farnworth SC on what turned out t'be a slow track. Marcus took two quick wickets and then another with t'score on 44-3. T'Kiwi used all his experience but never got a ball t'move. Both Leach (84) and Murphy (47) batted well and put on 97 before t'wily skipper introduced Redders. A bootiful away swanger saw t'pink blur whip off t'bails for one of four

stumpings. Marcus was reintroduced, Leach dispatch a ball of flighted filth into Danny D's hands and 164-4 resulted in 186 all out with Marcus 7-87 and Redders 2-29. T'fielding was good except for Carl G who couldn't cope with t'high standards required in t'second team. AB rounded off a rough weekend of dropped catches by running out Andy L after a 33 opening partnership. Carl was dropped early, hit a quick 24, and was caught. AB(25) hit a six and then out. T'skipper came in and from 85-3 off 16 overs, put on 68 with t'Kiwi and were coasting at 153-3. T'Kiwi ignored t'skipper's instruction to play safely and was booled trying t'cut a booler booting off cutters for 44. T'skipper then proceeded t'watch t'rats desert t'ship as 153-3 went to 156-8. Marcus hit a quick fire 10 but was out on 174. T'skipper's 28 overs vigil for 32 not out guided t'score t'186 with Redders facing t'last three balls. T'first was blocked but instead of tip and run he thought he was a batsman and went for a gap in t'gully area and was caught.

T'Wall of Shame: there's plenty to add this week with 1st team's 5 and 2nd team 6. Danny W leads with four but closing up fast is Danny D 3 T'Colonel 3, AB and Wadey 3.

Carl struggling to live with Gavin and Danny's moving ever closer to Amy.

c T'Sage 26/7/10

ARTICLE 20: NUMBER 11 SAVES T'DAY AGAIN/ CARL'S TON/ WIGS GALORE WHERE'S BOSTIK? (July 19)

T'Millers are pushing their luck as they 'ad t'rely on their number 11 t'see them home again. Last week it was Dwyne crashing a four for victory, this week Irongloves hadn't t'skill t'play t'bouncing ball and young Lee was left t'deal with securing t'two points, which he did with a magnificent glide to third man through t'ring o'slips.

Ashton blasted t'Millers t'tune of 253-7 dec off 41 overs and young Carl G responded t'bruvver's maiden ton by hitting one himself-10 fours and 8 sixes. Unfortunately, cricket 'tis cruel, one week you score a big ton, t'next you get a duck. Just when Carl needed help from t'skipper Wadey, he didn't get it and neither were t'Krum and t'Kiwi much use. T'boys shut up shop with Irongloves and Danny W looking as though they would see it through, but you just can't trust t'Millers batting. Too many players lack t'consistency which was t'hallmark of my playing days, mind you, t'brown envelopes helped.

T'Patio Panel made a brief appearance between t'rain but t'sparkle appears t've left them and t'booggers are in need of some catalyst t'inspire them. Which reminds me, Bostik Barrow should be making an appearance sometime soon having returned from one of his many holiday jaunts.

T'evening event was run by Gavin with his Eighties night, which allowed for all t'nancy boys we 'ave in t'club t'dress up and strut their stuff. T'range of wigs on show was more flamboyant than t'club is used t'seeing on a Saturday night but t'event went well. T'steward, despite his predicament, entered t'proceeding dressed as some hippy porn star accompanied by t'lovely Donna who was impressive.....ly dressed as well.

T'Wall of Shame: Ian W notches up another.

Carl creeps ever closer

c T'Sage 19/7/10

ARTICLE 19: GAV & WADEY RECORD PARTNERSHIP/AB'S DASTARDLY DEED/WHISPERING BOB MET HIS MATCH (July 12)

T'Sage is so disgusted with AB's unsporting behaviour that t'report will 'ave t'wait 'til t'nite t'allow him t'calm down.

T'stats were designed t'encourage increased performances not t'encourage t'skulduggery that AB displayed. For those of you not in t'know t'second team batting performances this year have been appalling. T'old skipper, batting on one leg for most of t'season, along with AB were only two in t'treble figures. At 77-9 with 25 overs left t'skipper joins AB (29). AB had just avoided his third successive duck and this innings made him leading run maker. T'boy (average 16.5) then procedes t'yahoo t'first ball, is booled, thus preventing t'skipper (average 19.7) scoring any runs, in fact, not even receiving a ball. Those in t'know await t'see with interest whether AB is selected for next match and if so, where he'll bat. Clifton amassed 191-7 with only Marcus 4-73 and t'Kiwi 3-41 coming out with any credit.

T'first team received some harsh words from t'new skipper Wadey following an abject performance against Robinsons. T'two Joes had reduced Robinsons from 79-2 to 124 all out. Joe S 4-4 and Joe B 3-13. They then put on 48 for t'first wicket but shocking batting caused t'team t'crumble t'107-9. Paul H 10no and Dwyne 8no eventually saw t'boys home.

On t'Sunday Joe B went awol again and young Lee W substituted. Andy McCheyne had a tremendous game, a seven ball duck and a dropped dolly but t'boy looked t'part in his floppy hat. Half of t'Failsworth team were on a trip t'Whitby and at 22-2 it looked as though they weren't missed but Fatboyslim and Wadey literally played tip and run augmented by boundaries they developed t'score. 'Twas a pleasure to see Fatboyslim's fitness levels at such a high peak and despite t'loss of weight in t'arse area he's managed t'counterbalance when pulling t'leg. A club record partnership ensued of 339 as Fatboyslim 20/12 out muscled Wadey 21/9 in t'boundary count. Me thinks t'Wadey needs t'go t'gym as some of his sixes weren't clearing t'houses. T'partnership ended with Wadey booled for 163 with t'score on 361 and then Fatboyslim was caught for 170, his maiden century with t'score on 384. Then 'twas true farce as Krum and golden duck Craig left t'Kiwi entering t'field o'play with no pads on and facing hatrick ball, which he duly dealt with. Wadey had had enough and declared t'innings 384-6 with five overs unused.

Irongloves and Shaky dropped early chances but t'fielding of t'current Lurpak award winner was outstanding. T'colonel scored a direct hit and then nonchalantly took a screamer. T'Kiwi 4-46 and Joe S 3-26 dismissed Failsworth

for 148. T'boys would like t' congratulate Irongloves on taking two catches which severely shocked some of those present.

T'wonderful world of modern technology saw young Mark in an unusual contraption following his operation and t'surgeon says he might never play t'violin again. With t'steward on t'other side of t'bar TD had taken over. Whispering Bob's mammoth six hour attempt to affect Terry had no impact and he left a dejected man as TD was still only warming up for t'heavy evening session ahead.

T'Wall of Shame welcomes Albert McCheyne, Fatboyslim, Carl Eden and Redders. T'Colonel picked up his second with t'prospect of many more t'come.

c T'Sage 13/7/10

ARTICLE 18 : T'CLUB GETS ONE ARMED BANDIT / T'KIWI RESIGNS AS WLM WIN FIRST MATCH (July 3)

It arrived at 6.33pm in a sling, much t'boys disappointment as they thought they were in for a few hours of gambling. Holty's arm refused t'go t'grave with any reverence. Whilst recuperating, he was thinking about t'distinct lack of sympathy cards he hadn't received when t'dog caused young Mark t'reach out and grab it. T'force ripped t'tendons and Mark had lumps where he shouldn't have but, t'boy's credit, despite searing pain, he still kept on talking until t'casualty stuffed him full of morphine. Even then, it needed a second dose t'throttle t'tongue . T'doctor was ecstatic as he hadn't seen one as bad as this for years and gleefully pencilled in an op for this Monday. Please note t'Chairman will not be accompanying young Mark as t'thought of t'knife 'tis too much for t'delicate boy. T'Secretary, in his pastoral role, has kindly offered to look after Donna.

T'Kiwi resigned as first team skipper following t'debacle at Westleigh, who gained their first victory of t'season. With t'two Joes out, t'rest struggled t'cope with an awkward track and were dismissed for 132. Only Fatboyslim (42) showed t'true art of batsmanship and Zorro thrashed a 20 at t'end. Willy Street took two wickets but Fatboyslim was brought on too late and showed his class with 2-11. Westleigh knocked t'score off in 24.2 overs.

T'second team encountered t'same familiar annual problem of first teamers regularly dropping out and stripping t'team of batters. Fortunately t'skipper saved his team from severe punishment by winning t'toss. AB, who has recently expounded t'theory he was an opener, got his chance. Bowled, third ball for a duck.....t'third of t'season. T'skipper smiled wistfully as another plan succeeded. Redders and Ryan dug in, literally, and for 32 minutes no run came off t'bat, 4-1 off 10 overs, t'four being extras. Redders clipped a four, t'shock was too much and he was out next ball. At 79 -7 t'skipper (21 no), manfully playing with serious injury, proceeded with young Andy G (37 no), to show those present how to play. Form is temporary, class 'tis permanent (is leading run scorer). They put on undefeated partnership of 57 to see t'Millers t' 136-7. In reply, some imaginative field placing by t'wily old skipper failed to bear fruit as t'fielders dropped catches - Steve D, Andy B, Dwayne P. T'three wickets achieved were t'usual dismissal by t'pink blur, an excellent Dwayne P held skyer and a spectacular full length dive off his own bowling by t'young pigeon catcher Ben.

T'Wall of Shame: AB and Danny W lead with 3 ducks, followed by Wady and Kiwi.

Fatboyslim overtakes bruvver at last .

c T'Sage 5/7/10

ARTICLE 17: HOLTY'S BOOLING ARM.....R. I.P (June 30)

'Tis with much sadness and hilarity that t'club announce t'death of t'Steward's booling arm. It died painfully at 7.13pm GMT Tuesday June 29th and has yet to be put t'rest. T' Steward was enticed out of his lair and booled two balls at t'fence panel. T'lumps in t'ground caused t'ball t'turn but t'steward didn't realise this as he thought it was natural ability. Brimming with t'confidence he proceeded t'nets t'show t'players that t'club 'twas missing out on a quality left arm spinner. Having marked out his run up, he ambled in and at t'moment of release, t'muscle in t'left arm pinged. Flowers, with roots, are to be sent t'Keith t'be placed in a memorial garden, which is where young Nigel's missing ferns must be.

'Twas with much amusement that I received a text from Fatboyslim informing me that I hadn't included his bruvver's Saturday duck in t'averages and he kindly informed me Carl's average was now 27.25. Such is t'pressure t'boy's under he's bought a calculator and invested in lessons on how t'use it.

T'bladder problems caused me t'miss t'kiwi's deliberate failure to attempt to field a screamer last Saturday. A full analysis will appear in next week's article.

T'Sage 30/6/10

ARTICLE 16: DOUBLE LOSS BUT WHAT'S T'GROUNDSMAN DOING? (June 29)

T'weather 'twas gorgeous again but t'sights I saw at t'Fothergill's nearly took me t'early grave. I can understand Terry looking more and more like David Dickenson and young Nigel t'tanned Adonis but some of t'exposed pearly white legs t'were x rated. AB, Dangerous and Marcus's pins must have last seen t'light of day way back in t'nineties, and as for Redders, one bruise on t'sparrow legs looks as though t'cat has given him t'hickey. Talking about t'groundsman Terry (now referred to TD in future) what's he been doing all week with t'hose pipe 'cause it certainly wasn't being put used on t'ground? Me thinks he's been secretly practising for t'wet T shirt competitions in Oz. T' sorched outfield reminds me back in t'early eighties when we had to embark on t'mass urination programme in order t'keep t'turf alive.

T'firsts were spectacularly put t'sword by t'non-English willow as t'Fothergills took t'booling apart. T'Millers hit a 233-7 with t'two Joes opening up with 76 before Joe S was booled for 47. Relatively slow progress was made by Joe B (46) and Shaky (30) but Fatboyslim, inspired by t'abuse he's receiving from his bruvver, hit an excellent 43 not out, notice t'red inker, and Ian W finally managed to score a run with t'quick fire 21. T'Colonel, severely pissed off on being dragged out of t'seconds, hit two fours at t'end. Then T'Millers got Sabired t'tune o' 142 and t'Fothers coasted to 238-5 with 7 overs remaining

T'seconds encountered a park's type pitch and were dismissed for 78. Fothergill's had little problem in knocking them off but t'were some astonishing sights t'behold. AB's attempt for move five yards ended with him having to make a spectacular 'City dive' in order to make t'catch and Zorro churned t'turf up as he turbo charged for ten yards to make t'catch off t'dad. Although t'pink blur's catch was superb as t'was his scintillating cover drive which T'Fothers responded by putting cover on t'boundary, little comment needs t'be made as class is permanent. T'vice captain had a 'moody', unhappy his 5-71 last week was not recorded in t'archives for posterity, and t'fact he gave Danny S run out, he proceeded to bool some shite. Danny S didn't help matters by dropping a dolly off him.

T'quiz night was well attended with t'usual skullduggery as t'Colonel was allegedly caught not only using a mobile but the offered some feeble excuse as well. T'Chairman and t'Treasurer plus t'lovely Donna would like t'point out that once again they retained their title despite being faced by t'conglomerate team of Greaves, Greaves, Dangerous and Mrs, Colonel, Dibble and Grub.

T'Wall of Shame: we welcome this week Carl G, Andy G, Dangerous as well as 2nd offenders AB and Danny S

Little movement except Ian, Gavin and Danny are creeping closer to their counterparts.

T'Sage 29/6/10

ARTICLE 15: SHAMBOLIC 1ST XI / 2ND FALL 1 RUN SHORT / YOUNG BIRTY ON NATIONAL X-BOX BAN (June 19)

T'was another shambolic display by t'first team and I don't know why I boother to waste valuable space in describing their performance, so I won't. As soon as they come up against decent boolers they can't take t'pressure. Only Joe B batted properly with a stalwart 31 but 'ad little support other from Krum with 21 to fall all out for 87. T'Valemen knocked them off in 18 overs for t'loss of one wicket, enough said.

T'second team were involved in a match of t'twists and t'turns. T'Valemen couldn't cope with young Marcus and with t'aid of t'pink blur and two excellent catches from T'Colonel Lurpak and Ben B, they found themselves 26-6. Then t'wheels fell off as half chances were missed and Colonel Lurpak dropped a dolly. A fightback saw t'Millers have 'em 136-9 but an extraordinary feat of Zorro hitting by number 11 Majid with 52 off 16 balls took them to 188 all out. T'Miller's Zorro hit 22 but t'team slipped to 88-5. T'skipper hit 21 and then there followed by some magnificent batting, completely out of character, by Andy G (39) aided by T'Colonel with a swashbuckling 30, guided t'team to within victory. T'Patio Panel, swelled by t'disgraced first teamers, did all they could t'encourage t'umpire t'award wides and no balls, but t'no avail. Fourteen were required off t'last over and with Andy's 4 and 6 two were required off t'last ball. Andy went for t'victory and was caught. T'story of t'second team's season, so near and yet so far.

Off t'field of play, El Presidente was whipped off t'ground by t'Mrs as soon as t'match was finished in order t'ave an early night following his escapade t'previous week. T'steward resisted t'temptations of Statler and Waldorf t'remain reasonably sober, but nothing's ever quiet at Croft Lane. T'notice board, despite a number of promises from t'Steward, still hasn't been put up so t'Secretary will confirm his resignation in writing. Young Ben B took t'spotlight this week with t'asbo from t'x-box people. T'boy 'ad t'serve a 24 hours national ban for 'matters unbecoming by a user'.

Good t'hear this column is being read in Oz, unfortunately our Aussie friend Wayne doesn't understand much English and is struggling t'understand t't in t'sentences. T'Chairman has been gathering ELPM kit for Wayne for when they meet up in Oz, but we understand he's eaten half a ranch since being with us and we don't know if t'kit will be big enough for t'fat b*****d.

T'Wall of Shame welcomes Joe S. Ian W and Willy S both had another duck and so t'top of t'duck table is filled by 1st teamers. On 2 ducks are t'Kiwi, Danny W, Ian W and Willy S

T'battle of t'bruvvers and Dwyer Family is as follows. Two big changes.....Krum goes ahead of Ian W and Danny manages to go ahead of Amy.

ARTICLE 14: T'BATTING BATTLE O' T'BRUVVERS AND T'DWYER FAMILY(June 15)

T'add some spice and club talk I thought I would light t'touch paper and stand back and watch t'arguments rage over t'batting performances of t'four sets of bruvvers in t'club. Their stats will be displayed each week at t'end of t'article.

ARTICLE 13: SHAKY ON T'SLIDE AS CARL SEARCHES FOR A PARTY (June 12/13)

T'true art of sliding down t'batting order was dramatically displayed on Saturday. Shaky was padded up for 15 overs when t'skipper imparted t'immortal words t'Shaky 'We've 'ad a good start and don't need your sort of batting now' . T'was a cruel blow for poor Albert as not only did he slump from number 3 straight t'number 11 but failed t'get his £6 worth other than a good tea.

Joe B (76) anchored t'innings and put on 87 for firts wicket with Joe S (31) and a further 51 with young Willy who continued his good form with 47. Gav failed to take t'shine off t'ball for his brother which he claims he 'as to do. Young Carl just smacked 22 off one over in his 27 not out at t'end of t'innings and told all who would listen he should be higher up t'order. I understand from those in t'know that young Carl was desperately enquiring on facebook if anyone knew of a party he could go to. Did t'boy succeed?

A score of 228-7 was good but proved not good enough. Controversy surrounded t'second innings and with only one umpire two run out non-decisions effectively changed t'game. T'Patio Panel were incensed but were impotent in more ways than one. They did grudgingly congratulated t'skipper on his fielding. T'skipper said he was diving around, T'Panel claim he just fell over.

Ian W, recent scores of 1,1,0 ploughed away for ten overs, yes in two spells as t'boy's not fit enough t'bool ten on t'trot, 4-73. T'skipper tried all boolers but t'no effect as t'Lakesiders cruised home with a eighth wicket partnership of 50 and 27 balls t'spare.

On t'Sunday t'second team's opening bowlers were severely punished for bad bowling against Clifton. Nine boundaries in 44-0 off 8.1 overs before t'rain came t'their aid. Danny W booled too short (0-18) and Steve D too wide (0-22).

Statler and Waldorf were at it again and t'steward was bladdered by 11pm, as was t'groundsman, t'chairman t'wadey t'Carl and Mrs El Presidente told me she wasn't impressed with t'state of t'President when he arrived home either. T'Secretary showed a 'fit of pique' and resigned. T'discarding of his two donated large ferns by Keith was one thing but t'straw that broke t'camel's back was t'removal of his main notice board for t'telly.

Induction in t'Wall of Shame: Ian W

c T'Sage 14/6/10

ARTICLE 12: ANDREA FAILS TO CHECK T'KIWI'S STUDS & YOUNG BENJY CATCHES PIGEONS (June 5/6)

Thou knows that Andrea does everything for t'Kiwi including wiping his backside, but t'old girl slipped up when failing t'check t'skipper's studs whilst packing his bag. T'Patio Panel are getting on in years and extreme hysterics need t'be avoided in case of t'heart attack. T'Kiwi attempted t'bool his notorious '24 yarder', slipped and fell on t'backside. T'Panel wet themselves and t'Kiwi checked t'studs t'see very few there. I understand some chastisement occurred late on Saturday evening.

Big Willy was at it again hitting a cultured 84 with t'aid of Joe S, demoted to number 7, who slogged his way to 42 and Carl who did likewise to 31. Now this last score upset young fatboyslim who appeared unable t'convince t'brother that his early doors chiselled 35 laid t'foundation t'innings when t'booling was at its best.

Springhead charged after t'Millers 254 and young Danny W and Ian W took some serious stick. T'skipper calmed things down and with t'aid of fatboyslim, Willy and Krum, dismissed Springhead for 183. Five points and up to third in t'table. However, t'catching deteriorated again and t'highlight was Danny W attempt to catch a skier. Now t'manual says t'boy should take some time t'assess t'situation, get into position and steady thee self and do t'business; not run in straight away, stand still and then let t'ball go over t'head for four.

T'20/20 drew a good crowd and some excellent entertainment was 'ad. T'Kiwi, rosey cheeked from t'camping in t'lakes, did t'bbq; and those in t'know think he should resign as skipper and do this job permanently. Totts scored 133 off their 20 overs and t'Millers were 81-1 off 8 as Big Willy got going but collapsed t'83-6 and then 100-7. Mike H and Danny W did t'business and Danny slapped two fours t'see t'Millers home with 2 wickets and 14 balls to spare and storm t'top o't'triangular table .

T'second team friendly was decided by Irlam's first teamer who took 3-7 and smacked 33 not out. ELPM collapsed from 41-1 to 79-9 before acting skipper Marcus strode in at number 11 and hit a swashbuckling 31 with young Ashley B (12 not out) in a partnership of 59 for 10th wicket. Redderseque luck from shite booling saw Dangerous take 2-21 as young Ben Birty swooped for his first of three catches. He then took 3-12 as Irlam reached 105-6 only for t'game t'be taken away from t'Millers by some violent batting from t'ringer.

T'weather has drawn in t'crowds in and everyone except t'President was glad to see old Franny. El Presidente had come t'aid of t'steward and gone off t'replenish supplies which had run out. On his return he asked young Mark for a pint of his much beloved bitter. only t'be told that Francis had been up t'his old tricks again and supped t'barrel dry.

T'was discussing t'events of t'day in t'bar but was forced t'leave when t'conversation 'tween t'two red headed Marks on t'problems being ginger in t'sun reached an all time low. T'treasurer graphically explained how, in using t'sun lamp t'tone his lilywhite skin, he burnt his arse.

T'Wall of Shame: t'runners and riders so far for t'duck trophy are:

Joint 1st: Keyworth (2) Willett (2) ...don't need to mention any one else as these two are t'favourites

c T'Sage 7/6/10

ARTICLE 11 : STATLER AND WALDORF'S BAD INFLUENCE ON T'STEWARD (May 29/30)

Saturday's games t'were washed out but that had no effect upon t'bar takings. Those of you who are old enough t'remember T'Old Grey Whistle Test will remember Bob Harris. We've our own whispering Bob Statler who has encamped upon t'bar stool in t'corner drinking t'scrumpy cider along with his side kick Keith 'put a double in t'pint lad' Waldrof. 'Tis all well an' good for t'club funds but their influence upon young Mark has had an catastrophic effect - t'steward is regularly pissed by 6pm.

T'old hands watched in amusement at t'birthday bash as young Carl targetted 11/13 unattached females. Poor boy 'as lost his touch as he appears unable t'pull t'skin o'a rice pudding; but t'lad's a trier even taking 3 home in t'taxi, but I'm afraid as they say in t'Eurovision, t'lad scored nil points.

T'sun shone for Sunday's Stanley Newhouse Trophy, but it didn't shine out o't'backside of t'skipper for t'day you Fatboyslim who had to resort to a drinks break speech 'Do as I say not as I do' as he dropped 5 catches t'lead t'troops into t'pit of disarray. Not only was his catching a disgrace, even off his own bowling, but he turned up t'match with no balls. Willy Street had some control on t'game with 3-33 but carnage ensued. Young Ashley managed t'pitch t'ball up and was rewarded with 3-46 as t'Harvey reach 256. In reply t'skipper led from t'front andretired on 50. Young Willy gracefully got to 52 before being caught and Carl hit a lustly 54 not out. Zorro was run out going for t'quick single.

T'Patio Panel were in their element as first Danny W completely ignored their technical advice of how t'avoid a third duck o't'season and he achieved t'milestone with some ease..caught 0. T'Panel bayed for t'tail end to tread on their wicket so t'retired men could return but t'Fothergill's saw through it and deliberately missed chances to keep t'weaker men in....just not cricket as t'Millers finished on 234. T'Panel firmly believed that t'match would 'ave been a Millers' victory had Plastic Pete (a disciple of Bostik) t'Harvey's umpire, ignored numerous F&H wides as t'hands appeared t'be melted in t'coat pocket.

A good day was had by all and one o't'highlights was t'sartorial dressed umpire Ivor Bulge, resplendent in his panama hat. T'game was stopped as he had t'waddle at pace after his hat, which blew off and t'bets were on as t'whether t'hat would reach t'boundary before Ivor collapsed. Ivor won but 'ad t'call for a pint t'recover.

c T'Sage 31/5/10

ARTICLE 10 : 1sts FIND BALLS/AMY OUTSHINES HUBBY/T'PATIO PANEL T'SPONSOR YOUNG BIRTY? (May 22/23)

T'skipper embarked on an unusual pre-match team talk with a Churchillian type speech quoting t'Sage's comments last week, t'summary of which was 'you were shite'. It worked. He won t'toss and batted this time in t'searing heat. Willy Street (60) laid t'foundation but t'usual collapse 98-2 to 120-6 failed to signal t'pack o'cards' syndrome as Gary 'Krum' W (42) galvanised t'lower order, excluding t'skipper who achieved his second successive duck, with Danny W (17) and Carl G (23) helping t'score to an impressive 191.

A very strong Totts batting line up was dismembered by quality catching, not a single drop, it brought t'tears t'me eyes as I recalled past glories in my day when this was t'norm. Joe S held a screamer a 2nd slip off t'third ball of t'innings to t'shock of everyone, and then held another. T'flying horizontal Krum, measured 3.2 on t'Richter scale, got rid of t'dangerous Ashley P and young Ben B caught Meehan's skyer. Gavin caught Marsh and Ian W caught t'flying Iqbal off young Ben t'end to game 131 with Willy S 4-28 and Ian W 3-39. (TSJ 174-0 on t'Sunday to win cup 2nd round v Blakley).

T'Patio Panel, with nothing to criticise, slept in a comatosed state for most of t'second innings but awoke with glee as Bostik made an unscheduled appearance.

T'second team got a good thrashing in their friendly against Manchester University's 5th (out of 7) team. T'Uni won t'toss and batted beautifully. On behalf of t'club I tried t'broker a deal t'sign t'seven who would walk into our firsts, but it was scuppered when t'President denied all knowledge of t'concept of t'brown envelope. They cruised to 280-8 off 35 overs and then declared. Danny D 3-23 and Joe B 2-56 were t'major wicket taker and t'pink blur had t'three usual victims. Willy's mate Lee needs a mention. Talked up as a good fielder by Willy, Lee proceeded to drop two catches and was clean bowled first ball for a duck. T'Millers encouraged t'Uni lads t'ave a big tea and t'ruse worked as t'score reached 93-1. Willy S hit a powerful 51 and Ryan M an encouraging 26 but then it all went down hill rapidly. T'two Birty boys batted together until young Ben hit a full toss down square leg's throat three quarters in from t'boundary. It was at this point T'Patio Panel question Ben's slight build and decided t'boy needed t'imput of two steak puddings a week.

Amy D, impressive when fielding, was cheered for every run she scored and had t'pleasure of batting with t'hubby who did did usual six and out . Amy tickled a four to reach 7 before being bowled. T'Secretary signed her on and told Danny

he could look after t'child in t'future on match days. T'remaining batting didn't make much impression as t'innings ended on 180.

T'following were inducted in T'Wall of Shame: D.Dwyer and T'Kiwi for t'second time

c T'Sage 24/5/10

ARTICLE 9 : CRAP WEEKEND (May 15/16)

T'think I missed me omnibus edition of Corry to watch t'same familiar pattern. Bring on a good team and t'boogers collapse like a pack o'cards. Top of t'league one week and down t'sixth t'next for t'first team.

T'skipper inserted t'Catholic Club with Joe B gone AWOL and after quick wicket Joe S drops a dolly early on and t'man goes on t'make fifty. It didn't get much better as t'opposition notched up 194. At least ironing Mike snaffled three behind t'stumps. Looking down t'team list, who was going t'anchor t'innings when under fire from t'pace attack? No one again, god help us if there was a war, no backbone these boys. Only ironing gloves with a sparkling 34 not out offered any resistance as t'team collapsed to 97 all out.

T'second team blew it again against t'Rochdale Sunday team. T'skipper opened and defied their attack in an innings containing mostly drives, a rarity in itself. T'skipper was knackered after a scintillating cover drive which failed to reach t'boundary 150 yards away and an all run three. His 24 was only beaten by 25 extras as t'team struggled to 107 all out. Rochdale collapsed to 16-4 as Marcus Y and Paul H took two wickets apiece, but t'youngsters dropped two catches and that was that, 111-4 with 20 overs left.

Induction in 'T'wall of Shame' - Paul H, T'Kiwi and Danny W, with two golden ducks, becomes t'leader in t'race for the t'duck trophy.

c T'Sage 17/5/10

ARTICLE 8: T'PATIO PANEL'S VERDICT.....'BOSTIK BARROW BURSTS BUBBLE' (May 8/9)

There will be a slight delay in t'report whilst t'club's legal eagles check t'head line.

No it's fine on t'two points of cricketing law relevant to t'situation:

1. T'Patio Panel were under t'influence and not qualified to give lbws from 50 yards away adjacent t'wicket.

2. BB did stick three fingers up for Gavin.

'Tis marvellous this game of cricket, one day you're on top of t'world and t'next you're down t'earth. 1st team strode t'top o't'league with a seven wickets win at Ashton. A whirlwind start by Mr.Khoker (71) had t'Millers in a spin but t'skipper took charge and bowled himself 10-5-23-4 to bring some reality back t'situation. As I've been telling thee before, there's no substitute for experience. However, I must at this point express me embarrassment with t'dress of t'skipper. A club cap yes but when he shuffles ont'field of play, dressed in Compo's hat, I despair. Had Nora come on and smacked him one I would've applauded t'old girl. Some late wickets by young Gav and Joe B dismissed t'Ladies for 165. It would have been a smaller total if Craig H hadn't dropped his weekly dolly (gets t'harder ones though) and young Ian spent t'evening whingeing that his hand was sore trying t'disguise two dropped chances. In reply, t'two Joes put on 88 before Joe B was out for 39. Shaky was lbw again, a sign t'eyes and other functions seem to be going. Willy hit a four and six before being run out and young Gav kept company with Joe S to see t'Millers home. Joe 90. as I recall, was a fantasy programme in t'80s and that was probably t'last time Joe S batted as well. His 87 not out contained 16 fours and a six.....a fantasy story if I ever 'eard one; and he's already half way t'last season's total.

T'batting t'next day was shocking. Joe B had pulled out with t'sickness bug but t'rest succumbed meekly to 127 on a track with a bit of bounce. No application t'stick it out, as in my day. and t'be bowled out in t'cup with 12 overs not used is a criminal offence. T'booling wasn't much better as t'Valemen cracked 98 in boundaries. 'Twas t'skipper's fourth change bowler Gavin who caused a stir with 5-23 but too little too late as t'Vale won by 2 wickets.

T'second team paid t'price of poor fielding as they let slip a golden opportunity t'pick up five shiners. T'skipper won t'toss and batted. He and Gareth Y(38) put on 63 for t'second wicket and then t'wheels somewhat came off 81-1 to 96-5. A

late order revival, somewhat of a shock for this team, saw Aaron W (26) hit four fours and a six . Good to see Carl G back after three years. Young Carl G, well should be young at 24, but t'boy has realised that trying t'gallivant at t'Bury night club on t'Friday night is not as easy as it used t'be, hit a good 28 to see t'team to 171. T'skipper pulled a surprise as t'Millers opened with two spinners and Prestwich were reduced to 14-3 but it also included a dropped catch which cost the game. Young Mr. Cheshire survived drops on 0 and 38 to go on to make a match winning score of 78. Marcus Y and AB three wickets a piece and young Ben B with two, aided by t'skippers four dismissals, and a marvellous run out by Carl saw Prestwich 148-9. T'skipper swore he had a stumping but not given as number 11 straight drove three sixes and a four t'short boundary to win t'game. One good point, Dangerous survived t'match without being injured again; no doubting t'influence of a good woman.

In t'bar, Mrs. El Presidente, having told young Nigel she wasn't happy with his field placings, then handed over to Mr. El Presidente, who then proceded,with t'aid of beer mats, to show young Nigel how to set a defensive field t'Marcus. To cut a long story short it basically involved everyone on t'boundary, though he ran out of t'mats, and Marcus covering singles on both sides of t'wicket.

T'Wall of Shame: following Sunday's performance, two more recipients will be inducted..... Danny W and Paul H....what I hear you cry, didn't Dangerous get a duck on Saturday? T'skipper scrutnized t'book and found batting total 156 only actually added up to 154. T' two singles were on Aaron's score which had also been added up incorrectly. One of t'singles should have been on DD's.

T'Sage 10/5/10 ...please note all T'Sage's work is now copywrite as he doesn't want any thieving bastards nicking his opinions.

ARTICLE 7: BLOOD BATH AT THE OK CORRAL (May 1/2)

Will t'owner of the Dangerous Dave pontoon ticket with 'two complete games before injury' please collect their winnings from t'committee.

There was much celebration at t'club, especially from t'Chairman (but more about this later) with the 1st team winning again and t'2nd 's superb win at Greenmount.

1st team, with the return of t'three amigos, were inserted. T'skipper, with an inspirational move, opened with thrasher Ian who duly hit five sixes and nine fours in his excellent innings of 78. Unfortunately t'rest of t'top order tried to emulate him and failed miserably but t'skipper Kiwi came in at six and showed how things should be done. Me thinks t'ageing milkman's eyes are going as he top edged t'ball and split his right eyebrow. Blood spilt on t'sacred turf didn't affect him as it would t'young nancy boys and he continued before being bowled for 28. Danny W (15) and Mike H (22) hit breezy knocks to be all out 217. Now this looks an impressive score but not t'us in t'know. T'boys failed t'bat t'45 overs and t'gungho approach to batting depresses me with only 30 singles in 217... 'tis shocking, not like in my day.

However, all this pales into insignificance with t'behaviour of young Gav, and if I was on t'committee I would 'ave him banned for life but I'd settle for a damn good thrashing with t'birch. T'Failsworth fielder goes t'hospital with a broken finger, so, and per t'etiquette, t'Millers provide a sub fielder. Young Dwyne fields well but when Gav comes on he lets t'ball pathetically through his legs for four. Last year his big arse would 'ave stopped it. T'was embarrassing and T'Patio Panel quite rightly let rip with howls of vitriolic abuse. T'bowling was shambolic. Ian S was knackered after six overs 2-20 and some of t'support bowling I could've scored off with a stick of rhubarb. Cricket 'tis a cruel game, one week Willy Street's a star t'next he's down t'earth with his picture on 't'wall of shame' and 0-28 off three overs. Danny W is another who I'd 'ave before t'committee for jug evasion. He smugly sat in t'bar with 4-20 but 'twas a disgraceful attempt at a caught and bowled as t'ball looped in t'air, he went for it, stopped, went for it again with a pathetic dive and missed t'cherry. T'big Failsworth partnership, filled me 'eart with joy as t'ball was played along t'ground and t'strike rotated, proper cricket t'was. T'was broken by Ian W(3-44) who had both of them and somehow t'Millers managed a 28 runs win. Two wins out of two and in top three of t'table, t'bubble is bound t'burst soon.

Now I've been mildly offended by some of t'comments from t'ignorant of t'club for not criticizing t'2nd team skipper. 'Tis difficult to lambast t'experienced man when he's doing a fine job. 'Tis time for me to educate t'fine points of cricket

which pass t'nancy boys and others by at Croft Lane. Firstly he won t'toss, t'man being a true professional, had been religiously practising all week since his three losses last week, and fielded. Two reasons for this, t'sick and unfit crew he had needed t'best of t'weather to get through 45 overs and secondly, t'boys liked agood tea. El Zorro pulled out with sickness but turned up and at tea time, announced he was 12th man and dragnetted t'tea table. T'skipper had a torrid time behind t'stumps missing six leg side stumpings but getting t'other three plus only two byes in 40 overs of standing up.'Criticize' I hear you say but time to educate again. T'harest part of keeping is not only standing up but standing up to inswing bowlers like Paul H and Steve D, on early season wickets with variable bounce. Why stand up? This not only increases t'chance of a stumping but alsokeeps t'batter in t'crease thus increasing chance of lbw. T'catching early on was dreadful and Mr. T. and Mr J. Ahmed lustily hit t'heart's content until Marcus bowled Mr T who was on his fifth innings for 47 and Dave H caught Mr.J with a remarkably casual catch on t'boundary for 31. This proved to be a fluke as t'next chance went straight through t'hands for six. Skilful field placing, t'right men in t'prominent catching positions , saw Paul H bag three and AB one. Steve D 4-36 was well supported by Marcus 3-43 and young Ben B with 3-26 who bowled unfazed with t'opposition boys on t'slog and finished them off for 194. I must applaud t'skipper for bollocking young Ben earlier on for straying from his fielding position on t'boundary. T'boy had taken it upon himself to move 20 yards further in and in doing so held a magnificent diving catch.

A 35 opening partnership was highlighted by Redders 10 overs 0 and t'balcony rose as one as Nev signalled his one and only scoring shot, but t'boy 'ad seen t'shine off t'ball. Craig H opened up but lost concentration and 'oled out. Cometh t'our cometh t'man. AB produces one match innings a year and this was it so he's dropped for rest of t'season. He hit a magnificent 75 not out. Fortunately his nemisis Redders was at square leg and kept chirpping at him to keep concentration when t'fatigue set in, as it did ten minutes into his innings. At 55-3 t'skipper put on 62 with him but played a shit shot trying t'drive. Dangerous Dave was marooned and fortunately Lady Luck intervened and a bouncer split his chin. T'claret ran riot and Steve was particularly peed off as he had lent Dave his sweater,which will now be framed and displayed. Paul H gave t'innings t'impetus it needed and took t'pressure off AB. He clubbed six fours and a six in 35 not out in an defeated partnership of 70 with three overs to spare. It would be unkind of me t'mention Paul's bowling (0-51).

And now T'Chairman. He 'ad been celebrating t'City win and joined t'1st team in further celebration. At 10 o'clock he committed the heinous crime of knocking over t'Treasurer's pint but soon escalated into a criminal offence as t'pint washed over t'precious cash t'Treasurer was counting at t'time. I left as t'volanic eruption in Iceland had nothing on t'possibilities here. Fortunately,I'm told, t'Chairman's wife arrived , who is accustomed in t'art of dealing with naughty boys, and escorted him t'car; but like a real trooper, t'Chairman was back Sunday evening filling t'coffers of his beloved club.

ARTICLE 6: EL PRESIDENTE'S RETIREMENT

It's with a 'eavy 'eart that I 'ave to announce t'retirement of El Presidente from t'field of battle. It comes to us all but t'old boy 'as 'ad a good innings. As we were reminising only last week, times 'ave changed and not for t'best we think. T'President and me come from a different era, no nancy helmets nor thigh pads, just cotton gloves with rubber spikes, a pair of canvas pads, a proper bat made from English willow, and t'ball was hand made in this fair isle. It was an era of two practice sessions a week and woe betide any one who missed a match as they never got back into t'team. An era when fast bowlers were prominent who whistled t'ball through one's own hair and brown envelopes were common.

There 'ave been many a time when we've batted together but t'highlight last season was his innings with t'skipper against Roytonians. Having fielded for 45 overs and bowled eight overs T'President was entitled t'think about putting his feet up to watch a decent batting display. But no, a dismal performance by t'youngsters, who couldn't even play a decent forward defence, saw ELPM 2nds 46-9. T'President strode in and with t'old hand Nigel, put on 56 with no trouble at all, and it was only sheer exhaustion which saw T'President succumb. Fortunately for t'club t'whisky sales will continue to increase and no doubt he'll continue to occasionally join T'Patio Panel and issue his constant theme 'your field is too attacking, protect t'boundaries'.

T'Sage 28/4/10

ARTICLE 5: WEEKEND OF APRIL 24/25

Thou knows you just can't trust Jonny Foreigner. All we asked was for t'volcanic ash to stay a little longer to stop t'three amigos flying off on t'stag weekend, I wouldn't mind but how wilt Times cope in Barcelona when t'boy can hardly speak English? T'mobile companies did a roaring trade as t'lines between skippers were red hot as they tried to get 22 carcasses on t'field of play, even t'barman 'I 'ave a dream' Mark was press ganged into donning t'whites.

Credit, where credit due, t'first team did t'job in beating Robinsons who looked in similar position to us. Three quick wickets by Danny W and t'Kiwi had Robinsons reeling. T'crowd were stunned into silence as Craig H, t'2009 Lurpak Fielding award winner, fell t'ground as though being shot in t'buttocks and somehow pulled off a stunning catch. Normal service resumed later as t'poor boy couldn't decide whether to cup his hands or use t' Aussie style of palms up as a skyer went straight through onto his forehead. This however paled into insignificance when compared t'dolly t'Kiwi dropped off his own bowling. and in my day, any bowler worth his salt would retire from t'game in disgrace. Terry B had manfully donned t'wicket keeping gloves and held two gud'uns but paid t'price as on t'Sunday morning he found muscles he never knew he had which caused him to waddle in t'John Wayne style. Gavin G and Willy Street went on a marathon bowling stint which kept t'score under control as Robinsons reached 158-6 off their 45 overs. Gavin's 17 overs on t'trot was virgin territory for him and with his batting stint t'poor boy collapsed into bed, so stiff he couldn't get out of t'bed in t'morning. In my day, we regularly played twice a weekend, bowled for hours on end, batted like a dream and were up at 5am in t'morning off t'mill. Me thinks too many of t'youth of t'day are nancy office boys. Debutant Joe B immediately joined t'wall of shame with a duck and Craig H was bowled for 11 which did include two boundaries. Shaky restored some calm with 29 but it was Gavin (35) and Will Street 60 not out who hit ten boundaries in t'key partnership which ended with Gavin being caught behind. T'skipper Kiwi 9 not out ensured there was no panic as Willy ended t'match by hitting t'young spinner fortwo consecutive sixes.

T'2nd team skipper, for all his qualities, is a lousy tosser and it was t' first of three he lost over t'weekend. T'boys were massacred by Saddleworth who plundered 256-4 in t'gruelling sun but until t'dropped catches, t'Millers were still in t'game. One positive note was that t'old men put their backside and bellies on t'line to save runs right t'end, well to 44.5 overs when Mark H let a four trickle over off Ivor Bulge's bowling. He was not amused. Steve D 2-32 and young Young 2-73 bowled well until t'onslaught came. In reply, well let's say t'team did well to reach treble figures. Steve D, another with pulled bullock muscle, clubbed 38 and along with Dangerous Dave were the only ones to reach double figures. as if by some miracle, one of t'few players to crawl off t'field without injury was Dangerous, ironic eh? Hopes were pinned on 'I had a dream' boy but he was

stumped second ball but he did lean impressively on his bat at t'none striker's end.

T' first round of t'cup against Greenmount lasted 10 balls before t'lord took pity and sent torrential rain. Ten balls was enough to see Zorro back in t'hutch having slapped a long hop straight cover. Two hours later t'umpires tried again but t'wicket had changed as t'ball spat off a length. T'boys couldn't cope and at 13-3 signs were bad, but experienced batsmen Shaky and t'skipper showed how to play in these conditions. Reminds me of t'old sticky dog wickets we played on in t'past where you needed skill and technique, a rare commodity in this team. T'bowl off....what can thou'st say when t'main pace bowlers can't hit t'three stumps. Marcus and young Ben struck and the score was 3-2 to Greenmount with just one bowler to go. T'skipper, in true class, took off his w/k gloves and duly did t'business. Unfortunately, Mr.Ahmed did t'same for Greenmount and that was that.

It'll be interesting to see how many make t'nets on Tuesday, as I've never seen so many casualties after t'first weekend, bunch of Jessies.

T'following join T'Wall of Shame : Joe B, Andy B, Mark 'I 'ad a dream' H

T'Sage 26/4/10

ARTICLE 4: 2ND TEAM FRIENDLY

'Twas good to hear t'leather on t'willow as t'ground looked a picture, freshly painted, newly mown and an impressive new score board with its flashing red light and expertly hand painted by our unemployed graphics designer.

T'2nd team was boosted by t'Kiwi and Fatboyslim and most of t'lads turned up on time except two. T' skipper was extremely concerned that Danny S's driver's side car suspension had broken as it lurched towards him at a 45 degree angle. Turned out that Danny had been grazing a lot during t'winter. T'Kiwi rolled up, as usual, ten minutes before t'start of play. It was good to see me old mate Mr.Openshaw, t'man could bowl. As most of you know, Oppy started smoking in t'womb and decided t'stop t'save money. Unfortunately t'enterprise backfired as hisconstant masticating has resulted in him having to buy a new 'wardrobe' as he now 'as t'same problem as t'Hulk.

Irlam won t'toss and batted. Joe B dropped a dolly off Redders and Irlam made hay until t'skipper stepped in. Now normally I would lambast a wicket keeper for posing in a pair of pink gloves, but all I saw was a flash of pink as t'opener danced down t'track to a Redders rare drifter and t'bails were off in a flash. There's no substitute for skill, pink gloves or not. Redders owed his second wicket to a brilliant diving left handed slip catch by AB. Now this was class but not in the category of T'President's slip catch I saw some years ago when he was 69, t'number rings a bell but I can't remember why. Fortunately Redders' 4.4-0-42-2 was humanely killed off as he pulled a fetlock and left the field. Danny W bowled a good line at pace and was rewarded with two wickets, one by a magnificent dive by Fatboyslim to get rid of their County U16 bat. T'Kiwi was expensive but had too much experience for t'Irlam youth as he cut one sharply back to bowl 'im. His other wicket saw Joe B atone for his earlier blemish as he held a one handed stretcher. Irlam recovered from 77-5 but once t'sixth wicket partnership was broken, quickly followed by a run out, Irlam subsided as Joe B 2-9 and Ben B finished off t'tail to 160.

Headingley has the Western Terrace, England the Barmy Army, but neither of them compare t'brutal caustic comments from ELPM's 'T'Patio Panel', comprising of those of a 'certain age', who deem themselves experts after six cans. T'Kiwi was the target of their baying. T' Patio Panel maintain they would have reached t'skyer but gave him a mark 2.3 for effort and 8.5 for his approach style and 9.4 for overall entertainment value.

I was just finishing off an excellent Donna tea when me last bit of t'swiss roll was rudely spluttered out as Zorro pinched a quick single to start t'proceedings. It didn't last long. Having survived two dropped catches Joe B did the decent

thing and ran him out. Joe B anchored t'innings with 41 but wasn't supported by t'middle order, three of whom had their picture taken by T'Patio Panel, sitting underneath t'duck. Now these boys think they've got away with being named and t'shamed but all will be revealed at t'end of this article. T'skipper's a wily old fox, a trait only us old'uns recognise. T' experience in the batting line up lay in t'lower and 55-5 was no problem as Flatboyslim hit 23, Danny W 32 not out and t'Kiwi 16. He should have seen t'team home but got excited and was bowled with t'score 145-8. Normally with ELPM teams I would be extremely worried at this stage, but not this time as t'skipper had held himself back for this very moment. An impressive classic leg glance for 1 not out was all he needed to do as he watched Danny W smack the boundaries. New bowler on so t'skipper imparts his wise words to Danny, 'Have a look first and wait for t'bad'un' First ball six over cover, game over 165. I despair, when will t''young'uns learn to play this game properly?

It's at this point that 'T Wall of Shame' duck list will be posted every week. No such need for this sort of thing in m'day as us quality players knew how t'nurdle t'single.

T'Wall of Shame is : Ashley B (1) Danny S (1) and a golden from Aaron W (1)

T'Sage 19/4/10

ARTICLE 3: FITNESS UPDATE

It's true, really true, t'hibernation of t'kiwi is over but it's taken its toll. He says t'pressure of running t'first team means he's too busy to do a stint behind t'bar.

T'boys had a number of swellings and stiffness after t'first net session and not in places where swellings and stiffness should be. AB has decided that he's retired again from bowling following a s and s reaction. It was an education for some of t'lads as many had not seen the Grand Canyon before, but Danny Zorro soon put an end to that. Paul's struggling with t'injury but t'boy managed a full stint at second net. Redders bowled straight from t'beginning of second net (second miracle of t'evening) and young Marcus spun his magic. The lads thought a new chunky player had turned up but on closer inspection it turned out to be Joe. Bryan finally decided he was a left hand bat and had expert tuition from t'secretary. Hard luck Messrs Bailey and Greenwood....serves you right for missing nets expecting a historic occasion at Spotland.

Me contacts assure me Ashley's 18th went very well except for t'behaviour of one lady. Now in my day ladies had their sherry or babycham and discreetly held their liquor but times have obviously changed. If anyone sees Michelle B please would you kindly fill her in with what 'appened after 10pm last Saturday.

T'Sage 14/4/10

ARTICLE 2: NET SESSION 1

I was sitting in me parlour drinking me 'orlicks whilst perusing t'teletext on first day of county season, when 2nd team skipper rings. 'Sage he says, your readers want an article on the first net session'. I explained to young Nigel that as I hadn't been t'nets he would have to tell wot 'appened and I would give me opinion.

An impressive 18 turned out at Parrenthorn in a dim litted 'all, dim litted my arse, in my day we played by the light of one street lamp and I 'ad no problem dispatching t'ball. This was quite an expedition as many of the boys rarely know how to venture out of Radcliffe. 'I know the way' said Times' passenger.....and finished up at Cheetham Hill. Ma Birty arrived 30 minutes late and greeted t'secretary by blaming young Ashley for showering too late and then laid into t'secretary stating the state of the club was a disgrace and she'd spent 2 days cleaning for young Ashley's 18th party...jelly and ice cream and a stripper me thinks.

T'secretary got his usual abuse from 1st team as soon as he wanted money off them. Secretary has framed t'coins he received from Willy Street.

In my day nets were treated with reverence, quality forward defence with the occasional attacking shot once warmed up. Not for this bunch of cowboys as t'forward defence seemed a foreign shot for these lads. Good to see two quality new players arriving Joe Bailey and Andy Greenwood. Joe certainly knows how to use the forward defence and only he and t'skipper batted as batters should. Andy's left arm pace will add variety. AB's bad knees suddenly improved as he peppered young Ashley and declared he was miraculously available to bowl this year. Redders took one and a half hours to bowl straight and Wadey spent most of t'evening posing in his enhanced light sunglasses. T'fags were out after but half an hour and loud wheezing was 'eard from t'side door. T'only remaining interest was whether Danny Zorro and Dangerous Dave would get through t'evening without injury. No bloooooody chance. Zorro's knee collapsed after a long bowling spell and Dangerous was pinged by Dwayne 'Sorry mate it just slipped out'

Finally, still no sign of 1st team skipper.....there's a pint for the t'first to see the lesser spotted kiwi. All bets off if he's first seen ten minutes before first match.

T'Sage...I'm off to bed now. 8/4/10

ARTICLE 1: PRE-SEASON REVIEW

About bloody time too. The amount of time I've spent giving advice to young'uns (anyone under 55) and they ignore it. Nuffing like 'aving it down in writing so the little boogers can read it for themselves. I wuz talkin' to me mate Vic Tripe over t'winter and were saying that things are getting too cozy for us both, as England kept winning and we had little to grumble about. I told Vic that young Alistair had a lot to learn even tho' we beat the Banglas and that a spell watching the ELP MCC 2nd team skipper wud greatly improve his lack of captaincy flair. We both agreed that life wud soon get back to normal once ELP MCC got into action.

So, a pre-season review. A bunch of lazy boogers I say. Only 6 regular bodies down repairing and renovating the club. They'll expect everything to be ready as they stroll down for the first game. Surely a Saturday afternoon at t'club is better than one with t'wife? Talking of t'wife, I sense a fund raising photo opportunity for t'club now the score box has a large window and red light above it, and along with t'stencilled duck, two of t'club's innovations this year.

1st XI- well in name only. I saw some rubbish collapses last year and they play t' game as though it's a new fangled 20/20 match. I see skipper Steve has been preparing well for the season, no scorer and still to emerge from hibernation. Wady, a graduate from the Salford Schools Cricket Academy, will 'ave to carry the batting again, providing he can stay in long enough and use his brain.....ah well one can only dream. I've a concern about young Gav whose big backside will no longer be able to counterbalance his slog following an impressive loss of weight. Opener Joe, I worry about t'boy, when Paul scores more runs than you in a season it's time to change the bat for a machete. Young William Street should bolster the middle order but big Willy tends to bat like Wady. Willy has been toning up for the season by using a Stihl saw on the club's protective concrete wall flood barrier. Craig, an artist with the paint brush but me thinks it's now time for him to bat with one. Will fatherhood change Paul who's seriously emerging as the club's all rounder who bats at 11. I nearly had a 'eart attack when I heard we had new 1st XI players. We've raided the SSCA academy again to bring young Coco Walsh. Hopefully this boy will show t'others how to bat and tweak those offies. There's an interesting mix of characters at t'club and Wadey'sbruvver Gary should add another layer, he's also from the SSCA academy. Irongloves, another SSCA graduate whose only claim to fame is that he still holds the SSCA Under 11 10th wicket partnership record. Showed some promise batting at 6 but has yet to pull out a big'un. Albert McC struggled last year and really needs to spend time with 2nd team where he can demonstrate his masterful square cut. Jenks, one wonders how one who is so horizontal survives t'winter, 'as anyone seen him?

During the winter Terry has been undergoing umpire anger management therapy. Has it worked.....we'll see on t'first wet day.

2nd XI - must admit the old man did an wonderful job in avoiding the drop. It warms the cockles of me heart to see this old boy out score all others. There's no substitute for class and a stout forward defense, which is something Danny Zorro needs to acquire this year as he's a disciple of the Wady School of Thrashthebat. Is it me or me glasses that deceive me that whenever Redders goes out to bat his tight little arse is getting smaller by the year. It's not normal that a player should be wearing the same size troosers that he wore at school. Andy B thinks he's an opening bat now he's retired from bowling, I think the boy's been sniffing too much paint fumes. I'm seriously worried that married life has affected Marcus' his bowling arm. His batting again progressed and much is expected of the new vice captain this year. Stevie D.....who's bothered about Rooney's ankle. it's Stevie's we need to worry about.....a quality bowler who had t'bowl off three paces last year which will be reduced to 2 paces this year, one next year and rolling it underarm t'next. I'm afraid the poor soul will be reduced to begging for the raised digit. Dangerous Dave, an example to us all of how to raise funds for t'club. The DD pontoon will involve the dicey art of predicting how many games he will play this year. Young Aarontime to produce the goods. Showed what can be achieved against Rochdale. Young Birties.....if they take me advice they should continue to improve, Ben with t'ball and Ashley with t'bat. Young Ryan...just started to show form before he got injured playing that nancy game. Dwayne...reminds me of a lithe Sir Learnie Constantine with his fielding, a joy to watch which is not t'case with his batting.

Crock watch - the much vaunted Holty big toe has taken its time to heal. To be honest, I 'ave little sympathy for someone who goes out t'bat with a big 'ole in the toe of his boot. But credit, where credit is due, he's acquired a new pair and has informed skipper he's ready for action as an attacking number 9 and not a defensive no 11. His reasoning for this change in attitude appears to have come from a dream he had where he hit a six. If thou'st 'ave a lot of time to spare ask him to tell you the tale. Danny S, still under heavy sedation as a result of Bolton's dismal season, has been hallucinating, claims he's a wicket keeper now.

In conclusion, unless some new talent emerges I'm confident this lot will give me loads of material with which to work with. I look forward to me talks with El Presidente, now he and me were quality players...none of this being coached malarky; and an opportunity to impart my words of wisdom throughout the season, which of course will be a wet one so two more points in t'bag.

For those of you who do not frequent t'Staff, I should inform you that half the club has been banned following various escapades from our members this

winter. Those in t'know inform me no one gets barred from t'Cross so that's the new meeting place for away matches.

The Sage