

THE SAGE – Summer & Winter 2011

2012 WINTER SAGE: PART 3 : ALL QUIET ON T'WESTERN FRONT

I've just emerged from hibernation and feel refreshed t'tackle t'never endin' pleasure o' abusin' t'lads at t'club. I thought I'd begin t'New Year with a rumble thro' t'winter period o'what's been goin' on. 'Twas watching t'first England v Pakistan ODI when t'lunch time feature appeared. Up popped t'ugly mug of Matty who 'ad been let out o'Radcliffe t'represent England Disabilities team. There's nothin' more orv puttin' whilst aving y'lunch than t'see his sickly smile. There was a couple o'waddles t'wicket with his left arm trundlers and then t'his batting. T'cameo o'two shots summed it up, a thrutch thro' mid wicket f'four and then a repeat shotLBW. It appears t'England coaches 'ave t'same problem with 'im as t'Millers. T'Secretary 'as acquired a hearin' aid which means that he and t'President 'ave been in constant contact at a sub sonic level. T'Chairman has been spending some cash with a new kitchen and abusin' Redders whom he claims puts more plaster on t'floor than on t'wall. T'Secretary arranged with Bostik that t'Millers have no fixtures on t'Saturday after t'wedding of TD and LJB as no one would b'in a fit state. Some o't'lads are netting privately but it'll make nor difference t'their usual abject performance. T'Treasurer 'as ensured t'winter bar 'as brought in t'cash t'pay t'solicitor. Roll on April as we need t'see if t'lovely Donna 'as wintered well.

c T'Sage 6/3/12

2011 WINTER SAGE: PART 2 : TD TO WED

T'club has announced that Lady Chatterley's Lover Syndrome has hit t'club. T'rough an'ready TD is t'marry that well known Radcliffian Property Tycoon Lady Jackson. She will forthwith be known as Lady Jackson-Birtwistle (LJB for future reference). One of me sources tried t'interview t'lass on one of her estates but was beaten back by smoke pouring from every orifice in t'house. A figure emerged statin' he couldn't stop as he was orf t'buy another 60 fags t'last t'day. TD intends t'use t' club roller t'drive t'bride t'ceremony on July 21st as 'twas t'oil and grease, as she inspected his container, that sparked t'relationship. Both parties have been summoned to t'club's disciplinary hearing as t'buggers are t'wed during t'cricket season. A jail sentence followed by a five year ban is not oout o'question for this heinous crime.

c T'Sage 9/12/11

2011 WINTER SAGE: PART 1 : I'M BACK

T'booggers keep complainin' that I'm not pontificating enough. I've deliberately rested me thoughts for two months so that t'vitriolic juices can flow when t'need arises. T'time 'as come.

So what's been 'appening' whilst I've been away. Well t'fiancee is now official. TD 'as succumbed t'her wily charms t'such an extent that he now 'as a permanent grin. T'Presentation Evening went well with more attendin' t'event which 'ad been brought forward. Now t'comment on t'runners and riders.

1st XI batting: Fatboyslim again, only 'cause t'booger kept gettin' red inkers.

1st XI bowling: T'Man from M&S - swings t'ball early doors,shite second spell,how he gets so many is one of life's mysteries.

1st XI Fielding: T'Forgotten Man- Danny W,rarely used booler and bat, suspect captain's sympathy vote 'ere or he slipped t'skipper a fag and a pint or two.

2nd XI Batting: Kevin D- only player to crawl over t'200 runs qualifying line.

2nd XI Bowling: Marcus - t'skipper didn't bool himself enough and badly missed t'Pink Blur but scraped home ahead o'AB

2nd XI Fielding: Brummy Boy- t'rose among t'horseshite

1st XI Captain's Trophy: Phil P - t'lad 'ad a good season behind t'stumps.

2nd XI Captain's Trophy: Brummy Boy - would've gotten more wickets if t'team could've coought a ball and batting improved as t'season progressed.

Secretary's Cup: Joe B for his 8-46 v Swinton Moorside just before he disappeared.

6 hit trophy: T'sloggers trophy was shared by Fatboyslim and t'England International

Highest Partnership: 115 Postie Fran and Fatboyslim. Good t'see t'Postie returned t'boswam o't'club.

Lurpak Trophy: 'tis for persistent shoddy fielding: T'were a number of candidates including t'Kiwi but it went t'Ashley B for a season o'pocket billards. It's what 'appens when you've gotta gal apparently.

Shoddy White Boot Trophy: 'tis for t'worst set of booling figures in a match. 'twas easily won by t'England International with 3-0-46-0, enough said.

Duck Trophy: Wadey, t'first team skipper obviously leads by example.

Roy Darcy Trophy: Club Person o't'year : T' official fiancee

T'Bonfire Nite Do attracted a record crowd and drank t'bar dry. Even Steptoe managed an appearance.

T'AGM went smoothly with t'usual reprobates being elected. Both skippers were re-elected.

All that's left to do is t'continual battle t'save t'club and a humbug Christmas t'y'all.

c T'Sage 27/11/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 22 : 2nds ABANDONED/ WADEY SNARED /ADVERSE POSSESSION

T'summer ended for t'seconds with another two points for an abandoned game, their fourth without a ball being booled. In fact, including matches forfeited, t'seconds 'ave only been on t'field o'play for 12 matches. Hopefully young Marcus will get t'averages in so we can all 'ave a laugh over t'winter.

Jenny's masterplan came t'fruitation on Saturday as Wadey was finally snared by t'marriage vows. I understand a number o'seats 'ad t'be kept free as he didn't know 'ow many of his offspring dotted around t'country were t'attend.

T'fight t'keep t'club ground began in earnest last Friday with t'Millers claim for adverse possession submitted. Hopefully t'Sage will be able t'give you regular updates interspersed among me various hoolidays. It's a 'ard life being retired.

c T'Sage 19/9/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 21 : FIRSTS OH SO CLOSE/DISMAL SECONDS

T'key match t'decide t'league went t'last ball o't'match with t'Lakesiders requiring 1 run off t'last ball with 1 wicket left...and got it. T'only controversy was that RCC had no scorer. T'Millers 'ad t'consolation o'winning t'last six competition snaffling 27 oout o'30 points...t'rain affected match v Lakesiders turned out t'be t'defining moment o't'season.

T'seconds 'ave avoided relegation but it's been a dismal season. O't'31 points gained only 13 have been actually won by t'Millers, t'remaining 18 have been forfeited and rained off matches. T'batting 'as been appalling with no player scoring 200 runs for t'season and t'booling has been erratic. On Sunday they were heavily beaten by Westhoughton by 8 wickets. T'Millers were dismissed for 103 with Gaz Young 25, Kevin 22 and t'much improved Louis Brum 20 not out. T'fielding once again failed t'support t'boolin' as Kevin dropped one and Redders ran away from one claiming t'imaginery sun got in t'eyes. Westhoughton knocked off t'score for t'loss of only two wickets. T'last match of the season is next Sunday against Thornham and hopefully most of the team will avoid t'hangover from Wadey's wedding next Saturday.

c T'Sage 12/9/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 20 : FIRSTS WIN TO ENSURE MINIMUM OF LEAGUE R-UP/ PINK BLUR MAKES BENJI LOOK A WORLD BEATER

T'firsts came up trumps again as they completed a rare win at t'home of t'Catholic Club. T'result gives them 12 five points wins which no one else can match. In t'process all clubs except for t'Lakesiders are out of t'running. T'season reaches its climax next week when RCC play Lakeside. 'Twas t'Man from M&S, who at one stage had 4-4, who carved his way thro' t'RCC batting line up as they collapsed to 25-7. A mini revival got 'em t' 44-8 but in came Tayab who yet gain proved t'be a thorn for t'Millers. T'skipper brought on his future father-in-law for one oover but promptly removed t'old man t'prevent 'im from suffering severe punishment as 13 was smacked off t'over. Me reports must 'ave finally got thro' t'skipper who eventually brought on t'grossly underated all rounder Danny W who promptly had Tayab caught by Matty for 38. RCC finally finished on 97 with t'Man from M&S taking 5-29 and Wadey 3-16. In reply Wadey failed t'trouble t'scorers but Poostie Fran (35) and Fatboyslim(23) took t'score to 47-1 before t'rain came. RCC used every trick in t'book t'prevent going back on but eventually t'rain stopped. T'score reached 84-3 when a clatter o'wickets saw t'Millers slump to 90-7 but Gaz Young and Phil saw t'team t'famous victory at 98-7.

T'seconds skipper had been taken by t'firsts and was badly missed. One of the weakest second teams t'take t'field was saved by the weather. Erratic bowling including 12 wides and 7 noo balls enabled Roe Green t' reach 134 on a wicket where 100 was a good score. Dwayne took two wickets but it was t'introduction o' young Benji that saw Roe Green being all out. T'Pink Blur had been wheeled out for a rare airing and snaffled four victims, two off young Birty, which saw him take 4-20. In reply, t'batting collapsed as expected but t'rain came and meant t'loss o' 10 overs. T'Millers managed t'hold out for t'remaining 14 overs thanks t'Louis Brum 21 and Dwayne 11 not out, to reach 50-6 off 35 overs.

T'Pink Blur informs me he slept till 12.30pm on Sunday and could hardly walk havin' squatted for 42 overs. Whilst havin' a lunchtime breakfast he was ordered by t'wife t'accompany her t'Dunelm ignoring his excuse that there was noo petrol in t'car. He then committed t'cardinal sin of ignoring t'wife as she surfed t'shop. This resulted in t'female 'incessant talking gene' kicking in.. For those young male readers, this gene enables t'female t'talk incessant drivvle for hours on end whilst barely takin' a breath. T'wife asked him t'choose between a cherry yohurt or insipid cream bedsheet. Now t'correct answer should've been 'I like both, you choose' but no, t'Blur made a choice only to suffer t'consequences in t'evening, as he was lambasted whilst bedmaking with t'wife, as she stated that t'sheet was t'wrong colour choice and 'we won't be using this again in this room'.

Wadey's stag nite on Friday has t'bizarre situation of t'father o't'bride organising it. T'bride's plea o' 'Don't leave him battered and bruised' was greeted with a Kiwi toothless grin. Steptoe continues t'collect medical problems as City collect players. This time he's got sciatica which only confirms t' fact he's a pain in th'arse.

c T'Sage 6/9/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 19:

MASTERCHEF & MAN FROM M&S KEEP TITLE DREAM ALIVE/GROSSLY UNDERATED ALL ROUNDER SECURES STANLEY NEWHOUSE TROPHY

T'firsts climbed back t'top o'table, on matches won, as three teams tied with 63 pooints. T'booy from t'Fothers were dismissed for 106, despite Franny's drooped doollies, as t'man from M&S scythed thro' t'top order with 5-33 and then t'veteran Kiwi mopped up t'tail with 3-14. Mayhem ensued as t'pressure told and t'Millers crumbled t' 62-8 with only t'Masterchef standing firm, a man amongst booy. T'Fireman (12) stayed with him until t'score was on 92 and it was left t'Man from M&S t'stay with t'Masterchef (37no) to help t'Millers crawl t'victory at 107-9.

On t'Sunday t'Stanley Newhouse Trophy was regained from t'Fothers who were booled out for 125. Five boolers picked up two wickets apiece. In reply, t'grossly underated allroounder Danny W was proomooted t'number three and showed 'is class with a quality 51no and then retired. This foollowed his spelled o'0-5 off four oovers. T'match was then secured with a rare appearance from TD who hit 21 not out and Wadey 14not out t'see t'team coast t'128-4.

T'Secretary appeared rather doon in t'dumps when I encountered 'im. During t'Saturday game he 'ad been informed he 'ad b'come a grandfather for t'first time. I toold 'im Jessica woould make a fine Millers' scorer and that he needn't feel old as he looked far younger than t'other grandfathers Steptoe an' Kiwi. I think t'real problem was his last statement 'T'shit o'a Treasurer 'as still not reimbursed me the 55p'.

c T'Sage 31/8/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE:PART 18: RAIN FOILS FIRSTS/SECONDS WIN FRIENDLY/FRANNY ZZZZ

T'climax t'season began with t'rain foilin' t'firsts in their bid for t'title. Unfortunately their rivals RCC and t'Fothers 'ad quick easy wins and 'ave a game in 'and. T'fitness o't'skipper needs investigatin' as he was run out whilst battin' with t'veteran o't'side Franny. This enabled Fatboyslim t'display 'is strokes as he hit an excellent 63 and along with Franny's 33 saw t'Millers t'146-1 and t'side looked set for a big score. 'Twas not t'be as a clatter o'wickets saw t'Millers dismissed in 42 overs for 207. Only Danny W, remember 'im, t'phantoom booler, well t'skipper doesn't, and when questioned merely stated 'We're winning'. Well t'boy appears t'be thrutching t'willow t'good effect and scored a much needed 18no. T'Millers were only able t'bool 33 overs with t'Lakesiders struggling on 132-7. T'Fireman took 3-60 aided by two wickets apiece from t'Man from M&S and young Matty.

T'seconds won their friendly against Milnrow who were dismissed for 82. Dangerous Dave took three wickets as did Martin Thommo and there was two for Dwayne. T'quality o't'opposiotion was seen when Zorro was dropped five times and finally 'retired embarrassed' for 31no as t'team cruised t'84-3.

There's severe concern o't'drinkin' legend that is Franny D. T'session began as usual with 'im quaffin' t'ale, with it barely touchin' t'sides, and his usual pontifications on anything cricket. He then fell asleep at t'bar. T'old boy's innings o'33 must 'ave exhausted him although those still present say he just gave up t'will t'live durin' t'Treasurer's thirty minutes monologue on all things electrical.

c T'Sage 23/8/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE:PART 17: 1sts TOP OF LEAGUE / 2nds CONTINUE DOWNWARD SLIDE

Well booger me, t'firsts won again and sit astride at t'top o't'league for first time since 2003. 'Tis tight with two points covering t'top four albeit t'Millers 'aving played a game more. However, t'title is theirs t'lose as their last remaining three games are against teams in 2-4th place. I thought I'd educate m'readers with t'word albeit as most of you will think I'm speaking bosch. Failsworth were dispatched for 85 after recovering from t'Fireman's early burst o'3-28, leavin' 'em 35-4, t'79-4 and then a combination o't'Master Chef (3-15) and Matty (3-11) skittled t'lower order. In reply, t'Millers collapsed t'15-3 before t'Master Chef (20) and Fatboyslim, returning from 'is 'oliday sojourn, put on 56 before t'Chef was stumped. T'Kiwi ensured no further wickets were lost as Fatboyslim ensured he 'ad a red inker.....again and finished 38no in a score o'87-4.

T'seconds slumped again as t'woeful battin' and dropped catches continued. Failsworth were reduced t'38-5 with AB takin' 4 wickets, but what appears t'be a tactical error in lettin' Redders 'ave t'ball resulted in a haemorrhagin' o' runs until t'skipper came on and took 3-2 in 13 balls t'see Failsworth 109. T'Colonel managed t'reach double figures for t'first time in many a year and even reached t'dizzy heights o'21 and with AB (23) put on 46 for t'first wicket. T'usual coollapse ensued as they crashed t'75-7 but t'Brummy boy (18) and Dwayne 12no managed a recovery which t'skipper continued. With t'team on 106-8, Mr Reeves (8-34) booled t'skipper for 6 and Ashley for a duck, t'leave t'Millers three runs short.

T'Division3 Cup Final was interesting. T'bottom team, 'aving been booled oout for 96 chasing 284 on t'Saturday, somehow managed t'thrash t'undefeated league leaders on t'Soonday.

Despite t'inclement weather, t'Fun Day went well last Soonday and a big thank you must go t'fiancee for masterminding t'event.

'The anal Treasurer's a shit' was t'information I received from t'Secretary. On further investigation it appears that t'Treasurer assured t'Secretary that t'£305.00 in small coinage he gave 'im t'bank 'ad been thoroughly checked. T'Secretary hauled t'shrapel t'bank only t'b'told three bags were short. Now thou knows t'Secretary is extremely reluctant t'spend his money and 'ad to shell out t'missing 55p. T'moral o't'story is t'Treasurer's a bullshitter, always has been, always will be.

c T'Sage 14/8/11 + 15/8/11 following message from t'Secretary.

2011 SUMMER SAGE:PART 16: MASTERCHEF COOKS TOTTY DUCK/ 2NDS FAIL MISERABLY

T'Secretary informs me t'ECB Anti-Corruption squad is on its way t'investigate t'unlikelyhood o't'firsts improbable run o'six matches undefeated. T'lads from Tots made steady progress t'70-3 before t'skipper, fresh from a week o'Carry on Campin' with t'Kiwi, made t'inspirational decision t'bool t'Masterchef. Now I make noo apology t'fact I regularly slag off t'boy for his shite performances, but you can't keep an oold dog doon. Boolin' his medium slow filth on doggy knees he scythed through t'batting oorder t' ave t'ridiculous figures o' 5-10 off six oovers. T'Kiwi ambled his way through seven t' take 2-25 as TSJ coollapsed to 95 all oout. Meehan began t'carnage with 'is unbroken spell o'seventeen overs as t'Millers capitulated t'29-5. Surveying t'mess in his new middle order position, t'Masterchef (23), with t'aid o'Phil Party (19) rebuilt t'innings and when t'partnership was broken t'Fireman took up t'cudgel with 19no and with Danny 'giveusabool' Willett 4no took t'team across t'line.

T'seconds returned after a lay off, but produced an inept performance being all oout for 91. Thornham 'ad noo problem knockin'em off for t'loss o'two wickets. T'only performance worthy o'note was from t'performance o' t'Bolton Backside, who 'as taken up keepin' as his pace booling neither 'as pace nor has he t'energy t'complete his run up due t'his mother's constant feeding 'im on a Tuesday nite diet o'bangers,mash,gravy,pies,puddings and chips. T'word is that t'performance could mean t'long search t'find someone t'reach t'high standards set by t'Pink Blur is over.

T'Secretary is off t'Taunton this week with t'Lanky U14 booy. Purely in his pastoral capacity, he invited t'Chairman's wife t'join 'im as she was on holiday and 'ad t'exciting prospect o' either delivering milk or labouring for Redders. She declined stating t'Chairman, despite being a physical wreck as he approached 50, still 'ad one part which functioned as normal. T'Fun Day will be reported on next week but it appears that t'organiser as already hijacked t'main prize...t'chance t'shower Ivor.

c T'Sage 7/8/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE:PART 15: FIRSTS REACH DIZZY HEIGHTS OF 3rd/TD IN DENIAL

T'firsts continue t'rubble up t'league table as they went five games undefeated and completed t'double over Elton Vale. There's no love lost 'tween these two teams and so it proved throughout t'proceedings. T'Millers hit their biggest total at Valers which is traditionally a pitch with loow bounce. Skipper Wadey hit 47 after losing Francis LBW for a duck. Matty contributed 23 and Phil 24 but it took a late order rally from Danny W 24 noot oout and t'Fireman 20 t'guide t'team t'178 off 45 overs. Wadey booled like a man possessed, well more possessed than normal, opening up with 3-13 off 7 as he made inroads int'top order. Elton started a recovery but t'introduction o't'Kiwi and Matty saw that this didn't progress too far with three wickets apiece. Danny W finished t'match with two catches off t'Kiwi as t'Valers were all oout for 126.

TD returned from his European sojourn but before t'Secretary 'ad chance t'talk t'im t'fiancee 'ad verbally accosted him regarding t'fact that t'Sage had besmeared her beloved and that TD 'ad left diesel in t'container. As usual t'Secretary skilfully defused t'situation by subtly asking her how far doon her tan went.

c T'Sage 1/8/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE:PART 14:1sts CONTINUE RUN/MASTERMIND DANNY/DIESEL GOES AWOL

T'firsts increased their undefeated run t'four with a winnng draw against Ashton. Batting first, a workmanlike performance saw t'team through t'183-9. T'Master Chef made a soolid 30 and Fatboyslim 29 but it was left to t'Kiwi 39noot oout and noomber 11 Marcus 11not oout t'put on a crucial last wicket partnership which eventually proved t'be a match decider. In reply, Fireman Steve led t'attack with 4-52 as t'others chipped in with a wicket a piece as t'Ladysmiths ended on 173-9. It has t'be reported that some o't' missed chances in t'field were dollies, especially Francis at slip and Marcus bemoaned t'absence of t'Pink Blur as Phil missed 3 stumpings off him.

T'rain curtailed t'20/20 with t'Totty booy's on 145. T'Millers start their batting this Friday.

T'preliminary round of t'Millers Mastermind competition, designed t'weed oout t'runts o't'litter, 'ad its first faller when Danny W thought t' Pied Piper of Hamlyn drowned t'rats in t'River Thames.

El Presidente was decidedly unimpressed with TD as not only 'ad he skivved orf t'sunnier climes, but 'ad left no diesel in t'mowers nor any in t'can. T'incident will be added t'long list of disciplinary matters, caused by t'influence o't'fiancee, which will b'discussed at t'next cooommmittee meeting.

Glassback Shaky was another decidedly unimpressed havin' spent t'today clearing t'weeds and such like from t'parkin' area. No one toold 'im t'bulldozer was due t'next day t'do t'job properly.

c T'Sage 24/7/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 13: 1STS GAIN THIRD SUCCESSIVE WIN

T'firsts entered uncharted waters as they won for t'third successive week. T'boys from Blackley batted first and t'Man from M&S snaffled two early wickets t'see 'em 26-2. T'introduction o'some class spin saw Marcus gain three wickets t'see t'opposition 99-5. T'opener Rutter held t'side together with 79 and eventually t'side succumbed t't'filth o'Fatboyslim 2-3 as they were 163 all out. Francis (42) and t'Master Chef (37) put on 87 for t'first wicket before Francis was booled. T'Chef was lbw again, with t'score on 102. It was left t'Fatboyslim t'guide t'team home with 29 noot oot after t'bruvver and Wadey 'ad gone for low scores. T'seconds' match on t'Sunday was washed oot which was a good job as 'alf were carryin' hangovers from t'evening b'fore and t'Colonel was a shade of green.

T'boys encamp at Totty's next Friday for a 20/20 game.

c T'Sage 17/7/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 12: 1STS CRUISE TO WIN AT METHS

T'Valers couldn't raise a team for t'20/20 so Donna's buns remained in t'freezer until August 5th. T'firsts cantered t'another easy win, this time boolin' t'Meths Men out for 85. T'man from M&S continued his wicket takin' with 3-22 t'make early inroads. T'skipper, havin' waddled in for six overs, then remembered young Danny W was a booler and chucked 'im t'cherry. T'lad goot rid o'his pent up frustration and 'ad an inspired spell of 5-23 off 8.5 oovers as t'Meths Men crumpled t'85. In reply, t'Millers lost early wickets as Francis D went for 5 Fatboyslim 13 and t'Master Chef 12. Fortunately t'Chef's mate is t'skipper so noo doubt he'll b'carried for t'rest o't'season. Matty decided attack was t'only way and smacked 35 t'take T'Millers virtually there until he was booled. T'Kiwi and Phil saw t'innings through t'end and another early finish and increase in bar profits.

Young Matty isn't available next week as he's orf t'play for England Physical Disabilities team and we wish him well. T'seconds friendly match against Bury was rained orf so t'Patio Panel lost t'chance t'abuse Ivor Bulge who was being roolled out t'umpire. Mrs TD 'as organised a meetin' on Tuesday at 8.30pm t'discuss t'Fun Day. T'woman is insatible, no wonder TD looks tired these days, and t'make matters worse, she's takin' t'groundsman orf on holiday during t'cricket season. T'is a disgrace and I've toold t'Secretary t'pair need t'be hauled before t'committee.

c T'Sage 10/7/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 11: SHAMBOLIC YOUTH HAVE NO IDEA OF STRATEGY

Apologies to my readers but needed a week off in Clackheaton to recharge batteries following depressing scenes at the Millers. I come back to find a brainbox of a first team skipper takes a team of nine bowlers to the bottom of league Robinsons and leaves the seconds with two bowlers to face league leaders Lakesiders. My mind boggles with the decisions of the youth of the day and just to prove me point, Robbos were shot out in 22.3 overs with Wade bowling ten (5-16) and the man from M&S nine (2-25). Such was the class of the opposition that Phil was getting stumpings off both opening bowlers and young Birty to snaffle four victims as they fell for 56. Twelve overs later the game was over. The Master Chef struggled again with a duck and G'Youngy scraped ten. Matty smacked 16 and Fatboyslim massaged his average with 18 no.

The lack of frontline bowlers had severe repercussions for the seconds. The previous week they tied a match which they should have won. Having reached dizzy heights by amassing 204-5 with Kev 89no, Zorro 31 and young Carl 36, the sun must have gone to the skipper's head. Westhoughton were 84-6 and then some bizarre choice of bowlers combined with some dreadful fielding which saw at least six chances missed, saw Westhoughton tie the game as Brummy boy got run out to prevent an embarrassing loss. The debacle saw the skipper retreat to the east coast for a rest and Redders had the job of tackling Lakesiders. He won the toss which saved a massacre in the field. The Millers batsmen got starts but didn't press on except for Dangerous Dave. Now those of us who know were severely shocked and suspected unnatural substances were involved as the man was crashing cover drives for fun in his highest senior knock of 29no. The only other performer was the Scott man, who crashed 23. He attended winter nets but had to leave early each week as his mum was always cooking him mash and bangers or steak and kidney pud. The Scott diet resulted in the boy changing his car to a model with a sturdier suspension. The skipper had a cameo 13 as the last pair put on 22 to get the score to 136 off 35 overs. In reply the Millers had a sniff with Lakesiders 28-2 but two dropped catches didn't help as the remaining runs were easily gained off 27 overs to reach 139-2.

Now my regular readers will be wondering what has happened to TD's fiancée, well I'll tell thee. TD's a changed man and the fiancée has realised that what she's missing all her life is 24/7 work at a cricket club. She's joined the committee, painted the club and spends hours on the internet trawling through pages of Bury Council documentation in the fight to save the club. The woman's possessed but that's what TD likes..... allegedly.

The 20/20 starts this Friday with the lovely Donna getting her buns out to join the bangers and burgers at the BBQ. The game starts at 6pm on this Friday.

c T'Sage 5/7/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 10: 1st TROUNCE LEADERS/ANOTHER 2NDS BAT COLLAPSE

'Twas a weekend not t'miss with t'firsts notchin' up a rare win at t'Fothers and t'Colonel and Redders both takin' surprise catches. Fireman Steve (13-7-26-3) and t'man from M&S (2-30) reduced t'Fothers t'84-6 despite Matty being flogged of 46 off 3 overs. A slight recovery to 106-6 was as far as they goot as t'Fireman 'ad a lbw and t'Kiwi took oonly five balls t'dismiss t'tail end with 3-0. Loud groans emanated from t'Patio Panel as t'information filtered thro' as those in t'know knew this meant earache for t'rest of t'evening as t'Kiwi regailed his efforts in minute detail. In reply, t''skipper and t'Master Chef dispelled all nerves as they put on 76 for t'first wicket before Master Chef was coought. Fatboyslim and Matty didn't last long but Wadey reached his fifty with a six before being lbw. Phil hit a four and t'Kiwi stroke a single to secure t'victory. A weakened Sunday team easily lost by 7 wickets t'Lakesiders. Wadey 27 and Phil 24 saw t'Millers t'68-2 before t'wheels fell off and they were all oout for 110. T'Lakesiders 'ad no trouble smackin' 114-3 off 18 overs t'secure victory.

T'seconds match began with a one minute silence for club life member Brian Greaves. Brian was one of two stalwarts who ran the successful junior section in the 70s/80s.

No umpire turned up but t'calvary arrived in t'guise of Ivor Bulge who offered his services. It 'as t'be said t'man 'ad an excellet match and 'as found his true vocation in life. 'twas a match t'Millers let slip after inserting t'boys from Swinton. Marcus took three wickets in a over t'ave 'em 46-6 including their skipper whom he dismissed using t'Salford Smack technique. This involves booling a full toss which hits t'knackers and whilst t'man struggles t'recover, bool him aroound his legs next ball. However, too much filth was thrown down including a crucial 13 wides and Swinton escaped. It took two excellent catches t'bring t'boys back int'game. T'Colonel coollapsed in a heap at wide mid-on as t' ball was drilled into his ribs and despite a heavy wheeze, he hung on. T'sight of t'red mark on his lily white chest was not a sight most of us should see. AB gained two further wickets for his 3-31. T'other catch extraordinaire was Redders' backward dive which enabled Marcus t'get what can only be described as a filthy five for. Steve D mopped up t'tail with 2-10. T'Millers got off t'a resonable start and t'Patio Panel rose as one with applause as t'Colonel stroked a drive to score his first run o't'season and thus avoid his fourth duck. He appeared t'be settled as he drove a six but was then booled next ball. Kev smacked 19 he then was coought and except for AB, poor shot selection saw t'team collapse t'79-9. Young Brummy supported AB and got t'score t'96 before one stuck in t'pitch and AB was coought for an excellent 37, but 13 short of being level.

c T'Sage 19/6/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 9: ANOTHER 1STS DEFEAT AS THEY'RE TAYABED

Another defeat sees t'Millers cascade down t'bottom third of t'league as t'lack of variation in t'attack saw RCC amass 251. T'boundaries were constantly pummeled and a dozen sixes smote. T'first four and six came off Wadey's over and he was soon out o't'firing line. Fatboyslim's filth was also dispatched and only t'boy from M&S had any early control. Danny W and Matty picked up three wickets apiece t'keep RCC t'190-8. However, t'depth of t'batting saw another 61 smacked until young Birty put an end t'mayhem with 3-45. In reply Franny (19) and Wadey (45) put on 74 for t'first wicket before Wadey fell victim t'first o'four lbws. Only Fatboyslim with 38 made any real contribution as Tayab ploughed through 21.1 overs takin' 6-66 and t'Millers capitulated from 146-5 to 176 all out. 'Tis an all tooo familiar regular event. T'make matters worse, Franny's knee ballooned as he was hit on t'knee by a ball. On t'good side, it boosted t'club coffers as he chose t'imbibe gallons o't'amber nectar t'ease t'pain.

T'seconds were washed out on t'Sunday and remain in second place in t'league.

c T'Sage 12/6/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 8: BOTH TEAMS WILT IN THE BLAZING SUN

T'first team score book was eventually found on t'morning o't'match festering in t'Colonel's kit bag. Both teams' batting barely survived thirty overs and two defeats were t'result. Nelly But brought his Totters' team down t' Croft Lane and they ensured they batted steadily for t'forty five overs and reached 161-9. It 'as t'be said that t'Millers 'elped them with a dolly dropped by Fatboyslim and t'Kiwi making noo attempt to go for a catch. Matty 'ad t'best figures o' 3-29 after Wadey 'ad grabbed two early wickets. T'batting reply was poor and t'team never recovered from 54-5. Only Wadey with 30 managed t'stay at t'wicket for any length of time.

T'seconds' battin' frailty was exposed again as they were whipped out for 126. Zorro managed t'get finally get 'is act together as he smote 53 and AB supported 'im with 27 but that was that. It took Mr.Malik only 27 overs t'power his way t'ton in a score of 130-3. Marcus taking 2-34.

c T'Sage 6/6/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 7: 1ST LOSE / 93-17 ...2NDS SCRAMBLE WIN

El Presidente and T'Sage, we constantly pull out our 'air as t'youngsters repeatedly fail to listen t'experienced advice we offer. I toold t'Wade that he needed t'learn from t'second match o't'season where he changed a winning team and lost. After last week's superb performance t'boy removed t'oldies and lost again, 'tis like pissin' in t'wind. Failsworth amassed 220-9 and t'Millers dribbled t'167. I would like t'give me thoughts on t'match but t'Colonel had t'scorebook and won't answer t'phone, probably still pissed up or in t'hospital.

On a spicy track o'variable bounce, Failsworth II got off to uneasy start and were 'elped by a Wayne dropped doolly. T'score reached 25-0 when t'wheels fell off. Brummy boy had booled 7 overs for 11 but 'twas AB booting to short legside boundary who excelled with spell o' 15-10-10-4. T'introduction o't'Willett Wobbler saw him rampage thro' t'line up with 6-22. Catches were taken by young Birty and two clos'uns by Zorro and Thommo. Even Wayne clung onto one and t'innings ended with t'Pink Blur snaffling a Willett wobbler t'be 45 all out.

Redders changed t'batting' order and Zorro started cartin' t'ball but still can't resist tryin' t'smack everything. 16-0 went t' 19-3 and 33-3 to 42-7. T'Willett boy has always claimed he's an all rounder, he faced two balls, drove them for a 2 and 4 , game over by 5.30pm.

T'trip t'bank holiday 40/40 at t'Fothers appeared t'be dull compared t'last year. No ramblin' speech by t'Chairman who managed t'leave t'Fothers uninjured. Report next week when me spies inform me o'proceedings and t'Colonel is tracked doon with t'scorebook.

c T'Sage 31/5/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 6: GOLDEN OLDIES INSPIRE 1st XI YOUTH/2nds SLUMP

Havin' battled t'wind t'get t'club t'see t'firsts I thought I was in some sorta time warp as t'firsts wheeled out t'golden oldies t'play t'Valers, including G.O. number 1 t'semi-retired Pink Blur on his first season's outing. G.O.number 2 Franny whacked a few in a quick fire 25, t'Master Chef was lbw and t'skipper needs t'get t'gym as t'boy creamed a drive which floated in t'wind and was snaffled by a Valer. At 63-3 t'wobbles 'twere setting in especially as Fatboyslim looked vulnerable but t'experience of G.O. number 3 t'Kiwi guided t'lad thro' difficult patch. T'boys put on a valuable 73 but young Gavin was cooght. T'Kiwi reached his fifty with a drive for four, failed t'acknowledge t'Patio Panel's applause and was cooght next ball, serves t'bugger right. Only t'Fireman shone in t'lower order with some glorious cover drives in his score of 23 no. It 'as t'be mentioned that t'Colonel appears t'be in fine form as usual, with his third consecutive duck.Me thinks t'boy is a pot hunter as t'duck trophy awaits him. In t'Valers' reply,t'Millers G.Os inspired t'Fireman and t'Man from M&S as they snaffled early chances. T'Pink Blur snaffled two, Franny took a full length diving slip catch and t'Kiwi cooght a ball he would normally 'ave watched floatin' o'his head. His version of t'event was he leapt in t'air, realised at t'last moment it was viciously swervin' and adjusted t'take it in one hand. T'official version differs somewhat differently.T'Valers were 17-5 but kept on a swingin' but t'Fireman 6-46 and t'Man from M&S 3-27 aided by one from t'Wade, who was knackered after four overs int'wind, ensure t'Valers were dismissed for 84 and an early finish and two jugs.

On t'Sunday Fatboyslim represented t'NMCL in t'fixture v Southport. John Barrow sent email t'Secretary on Sunday evening stating his selection had been vindicated after t'Secretary had questioned t'selection on grounds of insanity.T'only report we 'ave of t'match is Fatboyslim's. It reads:

'I was magnificent and anchored the innings for the top score of 34 in our 157. The NMCL captain, a very fine chap whom I rate very highly, entrusted me to bowl my eight overs which I did for 2-32. This was a key spell in the dismissal of Southport League for 118 and I made myself Man of the Match. Wadey doesn't appreciate my qualities and I think he's a shit captain.'

T'shock of being joint leaders was too much for t'seconds who struggled t'get eleven carcasses on t'field o'play. Swinton Moorside were dismissed for 144 with Joe B takin' an excellent 8-46 whilst Danny W nipped in with 2-43. T'fraility o't'battin' reared it's ugly head again. AB smacked 22 but 49-2 turned into 49-5 and 70-5 into 75-8. T'ability to defend and build an innings 'twis woeful at this level and only t'acting skipper Redders 16 not out, showed an application as t'ship sunk with all around him failing.

T'Sage 23/5/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 5 : WADEY PERFORMS DIY SURGERY/2NDS JT. LEADERS

T'2nd's zoomed t'top o'league without booting a ball as 7 points were amassed. T'Austerlands lads had t'forfeit owing t'combination o'stag do and t'trip t'final t'see t'Blues end their 35 years o'torment. Let's 'ope 'tis another 35 years before it 'appens again. Sunday's game 'twas washed out.

T'firsts lost oout t'weather. Ashton Ladyboys hit 213-8 but dropped catches, especially two dollies by Fireman Steve, let the score mount. Wadey at last realised he's a medium pacer and came on later to snaffled 5-29. T'Fireman got three but t'boy 'ad t'buy 'em goin' at five an over. Wadey's rugby experience came in handy as Dwayne dislocated a finger. With t'comforting words of 'Don't be a mardy arse' Wadey snapped them back in and then berated t'boy two balls later when he dropped a difficult full length diving catch. In reply, wickets fell in bunches and it didn't help with Wadey and Kiwi getting ducks and Joe B claiming he gotta snorter. Useful thirties from Matty, Franny, Paul and Phil enabled t'boys t'put themselves in a winning position. However, t'loss of six overs meant unnatural thrashing t'no avail and t'lads ended up 182-9 with Phil 32no and young Birty a gritty 0 not out.

Fatboyslim represents t'league team in their annual bash with t'Southport Districton Sunday. T'boy's in fine form 'aving scored 1 and 0 this season.

c T'Sage 17/5/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 4 : MARCUS GETS A MAIDEN, PRODIGAL SON RETURNS

T'firsts cantered t'easy win on t'Saturday as Matty mauled Blackley's boolers t'hit a jug evasion 91. T'boy seems t'be under t'impression he can swan off t'play for England at Hove, hit 51 not out, and then coome back t'proper cricket and smack a breezy 91 without any thought of his team mates' thirst. T'booy needs a good slappin'.

Joe B and t'Master Chef partnership didn't last long as t'Master Chef appears more adept at cookin' a duck than avoiding one. Joe B anchored t'reply with a gritty 18 not out off 27.4 overs. T'was good t'see someone battin' like Sir Geoffrey as it's a rarity in t'firsts. He and Matty put on 106 for second wicket befoe Matty was caught behind. Fatboyslim got a duck and t'Kiwi came in hit 20 not out to guide t'team to victory at 139-3. Earlier in t'match t'Blackley booy had coollapsed from 104-4 to 137 all out. T'Kiwi with 3-7 and offie Joe B 3-26 aided by two wickets from Master Chef accounted for their 136 dismissal.

On t'Sunday t'firsts entertained our Asian friends from T'Fothers in t'first round of t'cup. T'usual mayhem ensued as sixes reigned as t'Fothers recovered from 18-3 to 272 all out with 20 balls unused. Paul H and Wadey took three a piece and Joe B two. 'Twas good t'see t'return of Franny who appears t'ave spent t'last two seasons at t'Latvian circus improvin' his jugglin' act which was extremely impressive with three somehow caught. T'reply was steady with Joe B 27 and t'Master Chef 9 and Matty 4. Wadey upt'tempo with 37 but it was Franny with 76 not out who cemented t'middle order. Phil was run out for 24 and Paul smacked 17 but t'push came too late and t'team finished on 209-5.

T'seconds lost by 15 runs on a very spoorty track. T'match was reduced t'forty overs and AB booled throughout takin' 4-63 and t'skipper Marcus took three wickets as Farnworth SC reached 145-9. Some good fielding was highlighted by Louis Brum's diving catch which surprised him as much as it did his team mates. T'top order folded like t'perverbial pack o'cards and were 14-6. Such is t'annual pressure on t'second team skipper t'carry t'team that saw young Marcus launch int'a frenzied attacked. No one supported t'boy except for t'extras (31) and number 11 Redders whose dour defence amassed 10 not out, which enabled Marcus t'hit his first ever fifty. He was eventually booled for 60 with t'score on 130.

c T'Sage 8/5/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 3 : FIRST'S HAMMERED/ SHITEFEST AT AUSTERLANDS
.....2NDS SUFFER CUP HAMMERING

Noobody listens t'advice of us experienced cricketers. Doon't change a winning team I says last week but Wadey did and Fatboyslim contributed a magnificent one. T'fielding was atrocious with at least seven dropped catches and some woeful booting which lacked variation and coontrol. T'Meths hammered 241 with only Paul H cooming out with any credit (4-31). In reply, t'top four were in t'hutch for 28 and only t'veteran Kiwi with 42 cooming t'terms with t'booting. In fact t'top partnership came with t'tenth wicket with Danny W and Dwayne hitting 39 of which Danny scored 32.

I thoought t'days of Redders' slow medium paced filth was locked in t'club's archives, but no, new skipper Marcus opened t'booting with him. T'wind must've affected t'Austerlands boys as Redders snaffled two early wickets thus preventing t'skipper ordering him t'take t'sweater. Andy B booled well at t'other end with little luck other than t'two wickets. Austerlands 55-8 and Redders 5-47. T'game never ceases t'amaze me. T'skipper's leggers bamboozled Austerlands and they were all out 94. T'skipper's wife was frozen in t'scorebox and was less than pleased when t'umpires called for immediate turned around, so no cuppa t'warm t'frozen hands. T' Colonel with a duck and Zorro with 9 gave Austerlands early hope but Kevin D 29 and Andy B 38 scored t'bulk of the runs as t'Millers cruised t'an easy win.

Me words of wisdom at Croft Lane is like pissin' in t'wind. When any first teamer coomes into seconds he's shite and so it proved in t'cup on Sunday. Danny W contributed nothing with bat and ball and t'Kiwi a third ball duck but managed two wickets. Failsworth rattled up 216 with Gaz Young 4-48 and two wickets for t'skipper and Redders. Noobody supported Gaz who scored 49 and it was oonly a tenth wicket partnership of 49 with t'skipper that took t'score to 131.

c T'Sage 1/5/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 2 : Can't change a winning team eh Gav/Bostik baffled.

Thou knows that t'first match of t'season is noted for t'soound of leather on willow and t'smell of new mown grass. Not at t'Millers where t'smell of puke from Wadey (genuinely ill) and t'Kiwi (hangover) rented t'air. As usual, t'first team was weakened with four boys not available, and vice captain Fatboyslim would appear t'be spending next Saturday playing with his little Oscar as t'skipper tempted not t'change a winning team. T'poor boy is also starred, so caan't play for t'seconds. Not that t''Seconds would want him anyhow as past performances for t'team 'twere shite. Net sessions had goone well and an unheard of profit was made. T'new sightscreens where wheeled out, freshly painted by TD and t'fiancee. T'poor girl didn't realise that takin' on Tel meant she became assistant groundsman as well.

Robinsons woon t'toss and batted and eased t'102-1 before t'wheels fell off t'be 136 all out. Master Chef Joe S's medium paced filth (5-18) accounted for t'collapse and he was supported by Matty and Joe B with two wickets apiece. It wud 'ave been quicker had t'ill skipper not dropped a dolly and misfielded one for four. El Presidente gave a 'alf time Fergie talk about how t'bat sensibly. T'two Joes put on 61 for first wicket before t'Master Chef was out for 32 followed by Joe B 23. Debutant Kevin 'Soon of Dod', whose magnificent debut gave much encouragement t'rest of club's shite batsmen, ran himself oout for a duck and so at least goes t'top of t'duck table. 64-3 saw t'Kiwi join Matty and they put on a quick 41 before Matty was caught behind. Phil Party had a short stay for 6 but t'Kiwi 34no and t'skipper saw the score to 136-5. With one run to win Wady received a double nay treble boouncing ball. Unfortunatly, baffled Bostik Barrow appeared unaware of t'new ball rule but Wadey played a classic forward defence. Fair dooes t'Bostik as he appears t'ave read t'rule book over t'winter as he actually gave t'boys two lbws. T'first ball of next over t'Kiwi hit a six. 142-5 off 31.1 overs, job done, El Presidente happy for once.

c T'Sage 24/4/11

2011 SUMMER SAGE: PART 1 : Pre-season assessment

1st team : shite

2nd team: shite

Well that wasn't difficult was it. T'firsts will do t'usual thing and finish mid-table with 'em bottlin' out t'better teams. T'seconds will do well to stay in t'Division 3 'aving been relegated last year.

Well whood 'ave thoought it, back by demand, it's amazing 'ow t'boys enjoy being abused. So what's been 'appening at t'club? T'Chairman and t'Secretary 'ave been 'eavily involved in t'fight t'save t'club from t'Developers. El Tel 'as lost some of his David Dickinson tan but 'as managed t'keep hold of t'fiancee during t'winter season by ensuring his machinery is well oiled. T'Treasurer's been back t'electrical school and now 'as a piece o'paper saying he knows what he's doing. Oppy's volunteered to lend his various thermals t'any second teamer going t'Austerlands in April. Unfortunately t'offer 'ad t'be rejected as April t'early as t'thermals would still b'in quarantine. Dangerous is still with t'female pool maestro but it's seriously affected his ability t'perform with t'cue. Matty continues t'spend weekends at Loughboro' with t'England squad. It's been an education for t'lad as he didn't realise that there was life outside of Bury. Redders is attempting t'master t'square cut in order t'increase his run rate from one t'two runs per 'our. Dwayne's attempting t'create a cricket team of his own kids and t'Colonel continues t'talk bollocks. El Presidente continues t'lambast all those who 'aven't turned up t'working parties on Saturdays, Keith is still doing t'planting and t'pink blur 'as retired and will only play when short, which means every bloody week.. So basically, there's little change t'inmates at t'asylum.

c T'Sage 13/4/11