

# THE Farley Getting ready to hibernate FOX



**6** Sleepless in Somerset  
The tour reviewed



**9** Gwyn'll Fix it!  
Cricketing problems solved



**11** Megabits of RAM  
Statistical highlights



## IT'S ALL OVER

Remember the cricket season? You know, that wet period between April and early September?

Ok, so it's a few months back now, but this ever so slightly delayed Fox can reawaken the memories of vintage strokeplay, devastating bowling and athletic fielding. As well as our own performances.

Looking back on 2009, obvious highlights include the Under 11s cup run, the success of the midweek side, the August form of the 1sts and of course the tour (carefully edited report inside). The season saw some fantastic individual performances, such as the 90s from Dan Gibson and Doc Warley and Ed Foster's four in four as well as some astonishing consistency from the likes of Thompson and Covill with the bat and Swain, Ramsey and Webster with the ball.

We enjoyed run-ins and run-outs, spills and thrills, Woody's

tales from the edge and Butch's tales from just about anywhere. And behind the scenes, the likes of the ground staff, the bar staff and the coaching staff helped keep everything ticking over – a massive thank you to them.

But now it's almost time to look forward to next season. The league structure is out, and indicates some long away trips for the firsts, while the club AGM is only a week or so away, on Monday 7th December. It's when all the club officials for 2010 will get elected and Andy C proves he can count. If there's a job you want or something you think the club should be doing differently, get in touch with George before the meeting.

See you there!



*It's over – Woody sends the 2009 season on its way*

### Things we've learned since the season ended

1. As soon as the season ends, Mike becomes incredibly busy at work – clearly doing all the things he completely ignored during the summer months...
2. Geoff likes to prepare for Christmas very early – as evidenced by his festive wishes sent out in early October
3. Oxo and Juddy make a lovely couple – can't quite remember which of them claimed to be the wife at the club dinner
4. For optimum bowling performance, ensure Woody is sleep deprived – see the tour review for details
5. Watching Saj Mahmood's return to England colours, there's hope for all of us yet!

# THE FINAL MONTH

## **Firsts find form**

Having finished July on a high after beating the top of the table team, the firsts were disappointed to miss out on a chance to shoot down more high-flyers when the weather claimed the Old Alresford game.

But with confidence flowing through the team, the trip to Hurstbourne Priors saw a comfortable win – despite an astonishing middle order collapse detailed elsewhere in these pages. Lord Oxley pinged some fine boundaries in his 42, but when the innings was derailed by ducks, it was left to Simon Wakeford and Rory ‘Cameo’ to bring things back on track. Wakeford’s 48 was the highlight of the 177 total.

Dan Jackson then proceeded to bowl his best spell of the season, picking up two quick wickets while Geoff got in on the act at the other end – as well as sending in a swift return for a run out. From 29-4, Priors were never in the hunt, and Dan cleaned up the tail to finish with 4-25.

## **Miserly against Midhurst**

Next up came Midhurst, who were dispatched back to Sussex by six wickets. The seeds were sown with some outstanding new ball bowling from Theo Bossom and Geoff, conceding just 14 off the first ten overs. The spinners were then able to capitalise, working their way through the middle order who were unable to accelerate, ending on 177-8.

After the Farley innings got off to a similarly slow start,

it was Marty Spayes who got the game back under control with his aggressive running. Andy Coveney then found his form, timing the ball exquisitely and when Marty fell, in came Mike to cruise to victory.

## **Borne of Frustration**

Understandably, spirits were high on the trip to Tichborne Park – and not just because of the beer festival in the local pub that night. But it was to end in disappointment, with an agonising three run defeat.

Dave Probert had been the pick of the attack, keeping Tichborne down to 215-4 – a total boosted by a couple of missed chances. Yet after collapsing to 35-3, we looked out of it. It was then that Tom Palmer, making a welcome return to Farley colours, began to unleash his shots and with Mike at the other end, the runs began to flow.

Both fell in the same over, but Geoff took up the charge, smacking his first ball for six. Rory looked in fine touch at the other end and helped take the score on to 180 before falling. The game kept ebbing and flowing and it came down to the last over with four needed and two wickets left. It was not to be: Dave Probert holed out on the boundary from the first, then Paul Roberts promptly played all round a straight one. The beer in the Tichborne Arms did its best to soothe the wounded souls.

## **Flight of Hand**

It made for a determined side that faced up to Over Wallop in

the final game of the season, and the new-ball pair of Bossom and Ramsey again gave the visitors plenty to think about. But with wickets proving elusive for the seamers, it was left to the twins of twirl to get amongst it. Paul grabbed a couple, but it was Jake that did the real damage, bewildering a succession of batsmen with his flight to finish with 4-36. Theo finished off the tail and we were left with a target of 182.

His Lordship once again set the tone with a fine 52, before Andy and Mike came together to see us to the brink of victory. Mike fell in the 40s for the third time this season leaving Dan Jackson to justify his promotion to the all-rounder’s slot with some fine shots to seal the win.

It meant a total of seven wins and seven defeats – arguably a poor reflection of the talent in the side. We were left to rue some fairly abject early season form, but as the second half of the season underlined, we are comfortably a match for anyone in the league. We’ll just have to prove it next year!

## **See-saw Seconds**

Once again, the Seconds had a mixed month, winning two and losing two – a decent return given the fact that we had to play the top two sides in the league.

The first match at home to Ampfield saw Pete Thompson in the runs again, anchoring the innings with a fine 40 after Andy Redding had got things off to a solid start. A quickfire 35 from Sam Ramsey helped us

## *The final month cont...*

to a total of 193-7 and Ampfield were never really in the hunt. Butch bowled a miserly spell of 10 overs for just 24 runs, and the senior pros kept the squeeze on to leave the visitors 40 runs adrift.

### **Double Gibson**

The following week saw arguably the performance of the season, bringing down high-flying Longparish in convincing fashion. It began with a wicket for Dave Probert in the second ball of the innings, while at the other end Andy Gibson revelled in the new ball to grab 3-24 in nine parsimonious overs. With Thommo snaffling 3-28, Longparish were all out for 199 in a fine fielding display.

It was soon to get even better – despite losing three early wickets. At this point Andy Gibson joined son Dan at the crease for a season's best partnership of 163, described by all present as a joy to watch. Gibson Sr and Jr both unveiled strokes all round the wicket, with Dan racing to 92 before falling with victory in sight. Andy hit 56 and Sam – captain for the day – enjoyed hitting the winning runs.

### **Falling over Andover**

Sadly, the magic couldn't continue the following week, narrowly failing to overhaul Andover V at home. In a bizarre coincidence, the Seconds lost by just three runs – the same margin as the Firsts.

Dave Glanvill and Peter Wing both bowled excellent spells

in keeping Andover down to 175, but neither had the luck they deserved. Andy Redding's 42 gave us a solid platform and Thommo notched up another 50. But after both fell, the innings subsided in disappointing fashion.

It was a similar story the following week, with the trip to champions-elect Littleton. With the run machine on her majesty's secret service somewhere, the home side dispatched us for 120 and romped home by 7 wickets.

The final tally of seven wins and eight defeats may leave some sense of disappointment, but there were very few occasions where the team were outplayed – despite frequently having to make last minute adjustments just to get eleven men (or boys!) on the field. Stalwart performers were backed up by some emerging stars and there is lots to build on.

### **Not quite a month of Sundays**

The three Sunday games in August were a mixed bag. Oxo made hay against his former club, St Mary Bourne, in the first game but the others failed to follow his lead. Despite a fabulous spell from Jake, the 'Bourne gained a crushing victory.

It was back to Tidworth for the third in this summer's Newton Tony series and this time it was Dan Gibson who stole the plaudits with his 91. Gwyn made a welcome return to action, grabbing two catches, and Woody found the track to his liking to pick up some wickets in a tightly fought victory.

The trip to IBM Hursley was a difficult one. With a man short, the inexperienced team battled well but were outclassed on the day. Simon Wakeford shone with bat and ball, but it was mostly a day to forget.

### **Hurstbourne Priors versus Farley**

On a day when members of the RSPB were spotted in this lovely Test Valley village, Saturday August 8th proved a day they will never forget!

They had amassed in numbers to get a sighting of the extremely rare Ring Fenced Tit but instead they were left utterly astonished to see not one... but a trio of Golden Ducks!

The Chairman of the local RSPB Branch, Mister Firstball, was so excited that he had to be catheterised on the spot by Doc Warley to avoid the ground being waterlogged.

Spayes, Covill and Ramsey however were less pleased with the experience and trudged back to the shed for an early tea of egg and orange sauce sandwiches.

Truly something for the ann'als!!

*Gwyn Blenkinsop*

# CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

This year's club dinner was a small but dignified gathering at the Red Lion Hotel. Following his successful organisational duties, George then took the floor.

I'd sum up the season as a relatively successful one for the club.

Both Saturday league teams finished mid table, but both also managed to beat sides leading the league – an indication of our potential. The 1st XI played 14, won 7 & lost 7. The 2nd XI played 15, won 7 & lost 8.

The Wednesday T20 team went through the league season unbeaten and were semi-finalists in the KO Cup – a great return to the format and great fun to play.

Both our colts teams did very well, most notably the U11s, who were finalists in the New Forest Cup versus Bashley. There is no shame in losing to Bashley who are a much bigger club.

Alongside this, we have returned to a more complete Sunday fixture list over the last couple of years. This offers us a good opportunity to introduce the younger players to senior cricket without the pressure of the league on their shoulders.

We had a good Club Day in July – T20 style. We fielded six 6-a-side teams with lots of music clips and of course commentary provided by Pete Thompson. A memorable day all round.

The end of season tour was a great success with the Club winning both games (editor's note: the Chairman had to check this 'minor' detail during his speech – the only reports he'd received prior to that seem to have involved hazy smiles, glazed eyes and a confirmation that the tour was great...)

The success of the Fantasy League last year was carried on this year with Webbo's XI managed by Paul Webster winning this year's £30.

This year we launched the Farley Fox, an 'off the wall' newsletter reporting on the games and behind the scenes at the Club. All this was compiled and produced by Paul Roberts. All contributions are very welcome for future editions.

It was decided at a management committee meeting in the close season that to offset some of the cost of match balls, we should adopt a Matchball Sponsorship scheme for all home league fixtures. The sponsor of the game which the committee deemed the best would then be invited to the dinner. So this year's winners are Ian and Jane Wallace, who sponsored the deeply satisfying victory over Hampton Park (see previous editions of the Fox for more details.)

On the downside, we had some unexpected visitors into our tractor shed who stole some parts from the tractor. But thanks to David Parsons, who offered replacement parts from an old tractor he had in the (very) back of one of his barns, the wheels were back in motion within a week.

I'd also like to thank a number of people who make a significant contribution to the club throughout the season:

- Kevin for scoring
- Brian & Cyril for their overall work in and around the pavilion and bar
- Roger for keeping the outfield trimmed
- Geoff for making sure we all had a wicket to play on every week
- The Hook & Glove for making the teas, and
- the President and Vice-Presidents for their support in whichever form.

## Awards

*1<sup>st</sup> team batsman:* Mike Covill

*1<sup>st</sup> team bowler:* Jake Hand

*1<sup>st</sup> team player of the year:* Simon Wakeford

*2<sup>nd</sup> team batsman:* Pete Thompson

*2<sup>nd</sup> team bowler:* Ian Swain

*2<sup>nd</sup> team player:* Paul Webster

*Sunday player of the year:* Matthew Wood

*Most improved player:* Dan Gibson

*Clubman of the year:* Kevin McLoughlin

### Kevin's response

*I would like to offer my sincere thanks to those responsible for awarding me the Clubman of the Year Trophy. I sometimes get the impression, from comments made during the season, that I am doing the teams a great favour in scoring for them. This may be so but I get as much pleasure out of scoring as the players get from playing. It is therefore a true 'labour' of love.*

*In addition, I value the friendship created and developed during the years in which I have been involved with the club. Despite long periods of absence, those friendships have endured, in some cases for over 45 years – 46+ if I'm lucky!*

*It was ironic that the award came at the end of a season in which I have been absent more often than usual, due to the Australian connection. I've been assured, however, that the award covers a more lengthy period and I appreciate the recognition it symbolises for services rendered.*

*Although the memory won't improve I hope to continue for as long as I am physically able.*

### Ball of the month

Shane Ramsey!\* Sam takes advantage of a turning track at Timberscombe to rip a huge googly up the hill. The batsman thinks it's a leggie and leaves it alone, to find himself trapped on the crease as it darts into his pad. Umpire Geoff can barely contain himself...

*\*Not the mullet-haired diving champ from Neighbours of yesteryear*

### Partnership of the month:

Only one candidate here – the Gibson family show at Longparish. Here's to plenty more such opportunities next season: pick any 2 from the 3 of them.

### The Jayasuriya Award for playing yourself in

Coming to the crease in the middle of a tense run chase at Tichborne, Geoff picks his first ball up and over deep square leg for a huge six.

### Tantrum of the month

Despite various high-profile contenders, the funniest strop came at Hurstbourne Priors when Andy Coveney stomped off and threw his kit to the floor, announcing simply "I'm fed up with mud."

### Quote of the month

"It's weird playing in the Seconds. They talk about bums the whole time." *Woody objects to the "keeping it tight in the ring" jokes.*

### Question of the month

"So what's *your* idea of fun?"- aggrieved visitor to Minehead, unable to comprehend AC's stern refusal to join the conga.

### August's special award: Best impression of a sightscreen

Sensing the Wallop batsman's strong tendency to on-drive, Geoff positioned himself at a very straight long-off – almost directly behind Jake's arm. Camouflaged in white, he remained there for a couple of overs before being challenged... at which point he bluntly refused to move before Gwyn sent him on his way.

# SLEEPLESS IN SOMERSET

*Farley's first tour in years turns out to be everything the tourists expected and hoped for. Roving reporter Dan Gibson remembers what he can...*

As fourteen Foxes descended on Minehead and the York Hotel, the town braced itself for the arrival as every licensed vendor of alcoholic beverages doubled stocks and prepared for an onslaught. The men (and boy) of Farley, keen not to disappoint embarked on their mission and, beginning immediately, settled down to watch the cricket with a pint – a great start.

After the local football captain/ karaoke guru had spotted obvious talent in our midst, snapping up the youth for a Sunday cup fixture we headed for a curry at the local hot spot. It certainly was.

As the night progressed, Jake 'The Voice' Hand, was presented with a chance to shine on his true stage... the karaoke stage. His angelic voice bought the tour to life with his chart-topping standard rendition of Elvis' Teddy Bear which, with the resultant standing ovation, rocked The York to its foundations. Despite the hotel bouncer nearly ejecting our opening bowler for nothing more than over enthusiasm, the party had now really started and the tone of the tour was set – beer, late nights and questionable breakfasts.

The following morning was suitably quiet, mixing recovering and relaxing in the build up to our opening tour match. The selection issue was



*Yeah, great idea – take the official group photo at 1am on the last night*

somewhat solved by certain 'volunteers' deciding that an afternoon of cricket wasn't really on their agenda. Despite this, a comfortable victory was wrapped up and the tour party headed back to the hotel for the evening.

On a personal note, the Saturday evening was not as eventful as one would imagine. After watching the football highlights, I settled down for a nap that extended itself into the following morning. However, I from what I have heard the expected happened as copious amounts of alcohol were consumed and with Crazy arriving back post 3am, it is presumed that the night was made the most of.

The highlight of Sunday morning was a trip to the arcade, pretentiously masquerading under the title of a 'casino'. Amongst the penny slots and ball toss games Woody found his calling. Whether his result was reassuring or

alarming, he proceeded to register the highest ever-recorded total on a sniper game, moving targets and all.

Another satisfying victory followed in the afternoon, prompting a celebratory beer, and another, and another...

These celebrations were headed by Crazy Dave who finally had the weight of carrying the duck hat relinquished from him, with the hat fittingly returning to its designer and owner, Marty.

In the evening we decided to really take advantage of being away from Salisbury by sampling some of the local cuisine, choosing to dine at a Wetherspoons before retiring to the hotel for a few cheeky beverages. Naturally this led to many cheeky beverages and many of us finished the tour at 5.30am on the Sunday morning before departing at 11. A successful and enjoyable tour all round I think.

*Sleepless in Somerset cont...*

## We played some cricket too!

*Official tour cricket correspondent Sam Ramsey provides the details*

### **Game 1 – Timberscombe**

With everyone match-fit, Farley were raring to go under skipper Gwyn Blenkinsop's control. Okay not quite... Paul Roberts enjoyed watching from the boundary as his considerably 'less hung-over' team mates went out to field first, all bearing the burden of the night before.

Strike bowlers Dan Jackson and Dave Glanvill were handed the ball to start with. However, both struggled: could it have been the night before? Or perhaps the giant mud-stain on DJ's trousers was off-putting? Or maybe even the thought of wearing the duck cap at the end of his expensive over was too daunting for Dave? Dan ended with figures of 6 overs, 0 for 19 and Crazy bowled just 4 overs taking no wickets for the same amount of runs.

The Butch and Woody show then proved to be effective as wickets started to fall. Simon took the crucial first wicket with a caught-and-bowled dismissal, paving the way for Woody to take 3-38, his last wicket being a quick reaction catch off his own bowling, saving umpire Geoff Ramsey from sudden death.

'Bagel' Butcher was bawdy in the field, notably off Woody's bowling, muttering something about fishing. When the batsman then hit the ball straight back to Woody who

dropped it, Simon-quick-as-a-flash-Butcher promptly bellowed "Woody... the one that got away!"

Jake Hand then took the important wicket of J.Shooter who was firing his way to a century before he was caught by DJ. Yours truly dismissed K. Godfrey, who (despite drinking early doors with us the previous day) was well on his way to 50, with 'The Wonderball'. Pitching well outside off stump the batsman left it, not expecting the googly which veered in to take him plumb LBW. There was some confusion when umpire Geoff Ramsey appealed for the LBW decision himself before realising he had to give it out. Thanks Dad! After a spell of 4.4 overs I ended with figures of 3 for 17 with Dave Glanvill taking the last wicket with an athletic dive at slip to catch a deflection off Mike's gloves.

With Farley needing 152 runs to win, captain Gwyn decided to open the innings with his old running mate Marty Spayes. The pair rolled back the years with on an opening partnership of 74 runs to put us well on the way to victory. Both fell in their 30s, leaving Dan Gibson to attack the Timberscombe bowling before swinging too hard and missing a straight one. Covill finished the game with a big six to end on 20 not out with Jackson unbeaten at the other end.



*Our two tour skippers*



*The winning team at Timberscombe*

### **Game 2 – Roadwater**

With Paul Roberts recovered from Friday night's antics and Saturday's hangover he was ready to help Farley win the second of their tour games. Tour baby and Sunday captain Dan Jackson lost the toss and Roadwater decided to bat first.

Geoff Ramsey opened the bowling and took a wicket in his second over, continuing his virtually unplayable spell he ended with figures of 6 overs, 2 maidens, 1 for 8 runs. At the other end 'Bagel' started promisingly with a maiden over. However, as we found out, good things don't always last. Butch's last 3 overs went for 41 before skipper Dan Jackson asked him to 'take a blow'.

Jackson bowled viciously without reward before he changed to bowl spin as 13-year-old N.Wilson came out to bat.

## *Sleepless in Somerset cont...*

Dan found out that spin wasn't as easy as it looked and finished on figures of 5 overs for 21 runs.

Paul Roberts on the other hand bowled with a clear head, taking a wicket in his second over and only conceding 12 runs from his 6 over spell. He was however let down in the field when Woody dropped a catch off his bowling making his bet with fellow spinner Jake Hand seem rather expensive.

Some of the fielding was rather more impressive. After Andy C misfielded a ball at square leg, he decided to wing it in backwards without looking. Mike Covill then flicked the ball onto the stumps – dismissing the less-than-amused batsman after a bit of controversy. Covill continued with his ruthless performance to dismiss the 13-year-old Wilson in a less than sporting effort!

Paul Trenell bowled well yet he couldn't force a wicket from his 4 overs for 8 runs so Jackson brought on his double sided spin attack of Woody and Jake to end Roadwater's innings. Woody bowled 4 maidens in his 7 overs taking 4 wickets for

12 runs which made him the leading wicket taker on tour. Jake bowled 5.1 overs as he took the last wicket ending with figures of 16-2.

Roadwater's total of 122 runs didn't seem daunting as opening pair of Dan Gibson and Dave 'Crazy' Glanvill went out to bat. Both got off to a rather shaky start which had either something to do with the 'skiddy' track or the amount of alcohol consumed the night before. Crazy hit a solid 4 over the bowler's head before being stumped for 6 runs.

Andy Coveney then joined Dan at the crease to put on an 84 run partnership. Dan made a good 54 runs before being caught out ending his un-Gibbo-like innings where he just couldn't find the middle of his bat.

Creator of the 'Duck Cap' Marty Spayes then went out to bat, returning all too quickly to the dressing room after edging one straight back to the bowler for 0 runs. Crazy's celebration from the boundary proved hilarious as he jumped up and down with relief as he didn't have to wear the 'Duck Cap' anymore.

I then went in to bat with a duck looming in my mind. As AC piled on the pressure, I managed to scramble a single to get me 'off the mark' and went on to score 7 runs not out. After telling Andy C that I felt like hitting a 6 into the (nearby) river he got worried that I'd deprive him of his 50. After a few 'sighters' he then boomed a 6 over the fence and yes, you're right... into the river to bring up his 51 runs not out to win the game. With Farley having won in a convincing style and being unbeaten on their tour, we made our way to the pub to enjoy our final night in Minehead.

### **One big thank you...**

... goes to our tour organiser, Mr Geoff Ramsey. Not only did he mastermind the entire effort – from matches to accommodation to transport – but he also provided the rest of us with suitable protection from the zealous landlady. It's not often that the Farley Silverback is seen to cower, but those domineering Irish tones certainly sent him running for cover...

Cheers Geoff – here's to the next one!



*Gwyn tries to defy gravity*



*The essence of touring*

# 2009 – The Groundsman’s Perspective

A damp, but not wet, early / mid April made for perfect rolling conditions and quite a few monotonous hours were put in. The square was marked out in the middle of the month and wicket preparation begun in earnest in order to accommodate the first of our touring visitors on 19<sup>th</sup> April.

Looking at the fixture card, 54 wickets were going to have to be prepared in the season.

The outfield was growing vigorously and initially two cuts a week were required. Once the playing length of grass was established then the cutting was performed according to need. Never less than once a week though!

Any opportunity in May when the conditions were right was seized upon to do more rolling. By the end of the month the whole square was in reasonable shape and more time was spent on individual wickets. Two “weed and feed” programmes had been carried out by early June and the grass was growing freely because we had been having the odd torrential downpour. No watering required at this stage amazingly. Then came that hot spell! (Yes we did have one – don’t you remember it?) The wickets got hard and needed watering. More hours of monotony!!

The grass in the outfield started to go brown. Mowing got tricky because it was difficult to see where you’d been. To try to get round this, one week the field was mown “up and down” the next “across”. Nothing worse in the

conscientious mower’s mind than to see that you had missed a bit somewhere. Definitely only a once a week cut now and that was really only for tidying up purposes.

By early July the “BBQ Summer” appeared to have arrived. Watering on the square had continued through June and into July. The outfield had “browned up” and the ball was racing to the boundary!!

I went off on holiday leaving the reins in the capable hands of Keith Redding. When we landed the pilot smugly told us that it was 1 degree cooler in Barbados than it was in London. Had we made a mistake? History tells us the answer was a resounding “No”!

Having left the outfield a light shade of brown I returned to find it a verdant green in three short weeks! Having scanned the “interweb” whilst away I had noticed a few games had been rain affected and here was the proof! No need for watering now! All the seed that had been put in the repaired foot holes had germinated and was well away. Both teams with good wins in the last week and so into August.....

Would it ever stop raining? Would I ever get on the square again? Not a ball bowled in the first week and floods leading into the second. Hopes of outdoor nets washed away!

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August *Times* newspaper “*Hot, dry spell heralds a bumper fruit season.*” Are they in the same country I ask myself? I’ve

seen the best part of an inch of rain fall today! We’ll see.

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> August *Times* newspaper: “*Wettest place in UK on 8<sup>th</sup> Boscombe, Wiltshire.*” Thought it was wet! However, sun shining brightly today... weather perks up and watering the square again needed!

With the last games complete, my thoughts are now turned to the Autumn square renovation. In the last couple of years I had some help on the Friday scarifying and aerating before the designated weekend loam spreading. This was an enormous help because it means we can get the main work done on the Saturday. Despite horrible conditions, the Friday team did their bit and a good few people turned up on a bright Saturday morning to spread the loam. We were done by lunchtime, so thanks to everyone who was there.

My thanks also to Roger Sharpe for mowing the outfield throughout the year. Without him that would be another 2 hours a week for someone to put in. Thanks also to Keith Redding for looking after the square whilst I was away.

*Geoff Ramsey*

# GWYN'LL FIX IT

Who needs an aging Yorkshire wrestler in dodgy tracksuits when Mr Blenkinsop can solve your cricketing problems?

Now then, now then! I'm very happy to be here on this wonderful armchair and delving into my sack, I have found a letter here from a very earnest young man. He writes:

*Dear Gwyn*

*Though a relatively recent convert to the game of cricket, I've become I'm a bit of an addict. Not only am I an enthusiastic, energetic left arm seamer and fast improving batsman, but I've also developed an uncanny ability to spot the flaws in my team-mates' games. However, when I try and point out the problems, they just ignore me.*

*Please, please, please can you fix it for me to be taken seriously? Just once would be enough.*

*Yours Bagel*

Well, Mr Bagel. It isn't as easy as all that to be taken seriously, let me tell you! You need to develop an aura. One of gravitas – and being known as Bagel, or sporting t-shirts that tell everyone you're barmy won't help. Nor will shouting "Um Bongo" at umpires, my lad.

So. My solution is simple. Get yourself a coaching badge this winter and spend next summer working with the under 11s. They're too young to question whether or not you should be taken seriously, so I reckon you've got a good few weeks before they even doubt your cricketing knowledge. Sorted! Right. Here's an unusual letter

in that it's from a chinaman, no less. Well, I've had it translated and it reads:

*Dear Gwyn*

*I'm in torment. Despite playing cricket for many years, and gravitating to a position on the club committee, I've yet to master one of the fundamentals of the game: a defensive shot. No matter how important the situation – for instance, needing four to win off the last over when I'm the last man in – I just can't muster a basic block. Please can you fix it for me to stop getting out in such fashion?*

*Yours A Chinaman*

Oh dear Mr Chinaman! It seems you are in a pickle. Can't go forward, can't go back. Quite good at going across the line though, I hear – with booze as well as bat.

Now then: there are limits to even my powers, and I can't stop you getting out in tragic ways, what with you waving your bat around like a kid with his first pair of chopsticks. But what I can do is offer you a marvellous once in a lifetime opportunity to visit the Simon Butcher coaching clinic. Now there's a lad who knows how to defend! And while you're going there, take that Trenell chap with you – his hands are far too low on that bat. I know 'cos Mr Butcher told me...

Finally, here's a letter sealed in wax with a big O on the outside.

It reads:

*Dear Gwyn*

*I'm writing to you on behalf of his Lordship. He has requested your services in helping him keep his hands together – not in prayer, but instead to ensure the safe landing of a cricket ball. He has become frustrated by the number of occasions on which his soft palms have failed to cushion such an item over the summer and he requires a solution before next season. Please could you fix it for him to take a catch? It doesn't have to be a skier.*

*Yours Jeeves*

Well Jeeves, you can tell his Lordship from me that the problem may well lie in the softness of his hands. Having manservants rub them with butter every night to protect their youthfulness might be invaluable for glad-handing the grateful tenants on the estate, but it does no good on the cricket pitch – no good at all!

Might I suggest then that the night before a game, he uses an alternative substance, such as Pritt Stick or Velcro? Even some of that wax sealant you use on your stationery might do the job – as long as it doesn't detract from his ability to spank ridiculous sixes over extra cover and ping the ball past backward point repeatedly.

Right. That's my sack empty for this season so I'm off to polish the jewellery. I shall look forward to fixing more of your cricketing problems next year.

# MEGABITS OF RAM

All summer long, Geoff has been busily compiling wave after wave of stats for us to pore over during the long winter months. Here are some of the highlights... and lowlights.

## First team – most runs scored

1. Mike C 355 @ 39.44
2. Wakeo 264 @ 29.38
3. Andy C 258 @ 25.80
4. Oxo 232 @ 19.33 (plus an 89 that didn't count up at Chawton!)
5. Doc 156 @ 15.60

## Second team – most runs scored

1. Thommo 438 @ 54.75
2. Prof 257 @ 21.42
3. Keith 235 @ 23.50
4. Dan G 168 @ 42.00
5. Andy R 151 @ 13.73

## First team – most wickets

1. Jake 17 @ 23.94
2. Paul R 13 @ 25.31
3. Geoff 12 @ 26.08
4. Mellers 10 @ 19.20
4. Dan J 10 @ 32.60

## Second team – most wickets

1. Prof 20 @ 14.35
2. Paul Webster 17 @ 22.76
3. Thommo 16 @ 18.13
4. Dave Probert 9 @ 9.33
5. Butch 8 @ 40.00

## Big hitters – the most sixes

1. Andy C – 7
2. Dan G – 5
2. Mike C – 5
4. Geoff – 4
4. Wakeo – 4

## Red-inkers – most not outs

1. Paul Webster – 7  
(from 8 innings!)
2. Thommo – 4
3. Mike C – 4
4. Crazy – 4

## Meanest misers – the lowest economy rates (Qualification: 20 overs)

1. Andy Gibson – 3.05 from 20 overs
2. Geoff – 3.08 from 101 overs
3. Wakeo – 3.12 from 40 overs
4. Thommo – 3.49 from 83 overs
5. Dave Probert – 3.66 from 38 overs

## Wide boys – the most extras

1. Crazy – 60 (having scored 51 runs with the bat, he is officially minus 9 for the season...)
2. Jacko – 44 (plus 20 no balls)
3. Geoff – 26
4. Paul Webster – 19
5. John Amos – 19

## Safe hands – most catches

1. Jake – 7
2. Paul R – 6
3. Juddy – 5 (plus 2 more keeping)
4. Butch – 4 (and no drops... are these the safest hands in the club?!)
5. Geoff – 4

## Oops I did it again – most spills

1. Oxo – 4
2. Paul R – 3
3. Wakeo – 3
4. Keith – 3 (though he did take 10)

## Fantasy League MVP (based on average points per match)

1. Dave Probert – 85.6
2. Thommo – 80
3. Andy Gibson – 66
4. Geoff – 65.25
5. Prof – 56.93

Wondering what to do with your winter?

Don't want to spend those long cold nights on your own?

Then enrol in **Doc Warley's School of Charm** – the simple way to find yourself in fine company.

Lessons include:

- How to ascertain marital status in an instant
- How to get free drinks from a lovable landlady
- How to bring her sister/daughter into the equation – discreetly!

Optional extras include bus-driving tuition and basic anatomy. Potential charmees always welcome.

*If you haven't seen the full details, have a look on the club website.*

## View from the Tractor

How long does it take to mow the outfield? It all depends, is the answer. It is certainly much easier to get going now that we have a specially built tractor shed...

Once out and I'm in 4th gear I have a choice. Straight up and down or across? Perhaps anti-clockwise is easier. Is the grass a bit too long? If too short, can I see where I have been? Yes! By the wheel marks. Should I then be slightly inside the wheel marks or outside?

Anyway, off we go and by looking at the church clock I can see the time. Once I had the bright idea of going diagonally across the field: surely that would save time, I thought. When I had finished I looked at it. It was a nightmare. The bowlers would have really gone off the pitch and the batsmen googly-eyed! I had to do it all again.

Then, just when all is going to plan, that bit in the middle called "The Square" is not actually in the middle! The distance at the church side is less than the farm side... However, when all is finally conquered, I then move the screen and gently mow round it before moving it back. Just before I drive in to the shed, I clean up the rollers, adjust the cutters and give it a grease, ready for the "off" next time.

And how long does it take? To tell you the honest truth, I haven't a clue – except that if I start at 4 o'clock I'm home between 5.30 and 6. Of course, if that bit in the middle wasn't there, I reckon I would save 10 minutes or so. These things are sent to try us!

*Roger Sharpe*

## FROM THE LABS

### The appliance of science for a happier club

It's long been established that statistics don't always tell the whole story. This summer's Ashes proved the point, with the Aussies outscoring us on almost every stat – but still losing.

From a scientific perspective, therefore, it seems only reasonable to conclude that traditional stats – such as averages – are failing us. We need an alternative, more subtle, more intelligent way to measure our performance.

That's why as soon as the season ended, the Prof and his team focused on the numbers. Using 2009 as a benchmark, they've developed a new system that will transform statistical analysis for future generations of Farley cricketers.

"It was quite simple really," explains the Prof, at great length. "We decided that raw data is just too raw. For example, the number runs scored doesn't fully reflect the prime

factors of an innings, the vectors of the shots played, the average velocity of the bowling or the precise area of the playing surface."

"So instead, we gathered some additional information: an opponent index, that reflects how good the oppo actually were, a pitch probe, the arithmetic mean of the quality of strokeplay (known as the Mark Waugh factor) and the lowest common denominator of aggro at the crease (the Steve Waugh factor)."

"We then multiplied the sum of those by Pi, the number of degrees and other qualifications a batsman possesses and the average number of players they'd coached that morning."

"Having completed the calculation, it became clear that I was in fact the leading batsman in the club last season!"

#### CONTRIBUTORS

WORDS: Roger Sharpe, Dan Gibson, Geoff Ramsey, Sam Ramsey, George Manston, Gwyn Blenkinsop, Paul Roberts

PICTURES: Sam Ramsey and the barman in the York

DESIGN: Duncan Moss

*Thanks to our sponsors*

