

Bowdon Vale Cricket Club Match Reports - 2018

Saturday 15th September:

1XI: versus Wistaston Village away. WVCC 136-10. BVCC 68-10.

No report but on behalf of Iain Johnson, thanks to all who played this year and especially to all who supported us through thin and thin. Thanks to everyone who chipped in (sorry!) to make our teas the very best in the league and thanks to Harry Wood and helpers who did such a great job on the ground.

2XI: versus Warrington 3 at home. BVCC 97-10. WCC 101-0.

So the 2nd team's season ended as it began. Batted first, didn't get enough runs and the opposition who are top of the league knocked them off for none. On paper our top 6 was the best we put out all season. Grass though was a different story and only Ben Langley batting through the 36 overs was worthy of note. I bowled the future today and both Max Lloyd and Tom Greening from the Under 13s completed their spells with aplomb but no luck. Both bowling dangerous deliveries without finding a wicket. Marcus Dean opened the bowling and bowled well but our 96 runs was not good enough to induce the pressure to play shots and the batsmen saw him off after 6 overs. Gareth Roberts bowled his usual variations of long hops and full tosses interspersed with unplayable leggies and came closest to taking a wicket but just didn't manage it. At least this time all of Warrington 3rds players managed to finish the game with none of them going off in a huff. So that's it, no more league cricket and another year in the sun over. I hope all the players enjoyed at least some of it and please look to recruit over the winter. We need some first team quality players of course but cricket is a game to be enjoyed by all kinds of player. Bring them all. Have a great winter, see you at nets next year.

Saturday 8th September:

1XI: No game due to weather

2XI: versus Winnington Park away. WP 149-6. BVCC 78-2. Match abandoned due to weather.

After 3 weeks of being unable to field a side the Vale Twos travelled to Winnington Park for a dead rubber. They can't go up and we can't go further down. After three weeks of no play nothing short of snow drifts was going to stop us playing so we started on time in a break in the rain. Fortunately Winnington Park has excellent drainage and the Groundsman had gone home. Missing the sage advice of the regular vice-captain, Ben Langley stepped ably into the breach and upon winning the toss we had no hesitation in asking Winnington to bat. Park made a shaky start with Neil Quinn taking full advantage of the conditions bowling full and straight. He picked up 3 for 40 all bowled from his 11. Damian Paul at the other end picked up 2 for 41 off 10 including an excellent safe catch by John Greening at mid-on. Then the rain came and we took an excellent tea provided by the WP skipper's daughter. One to rival even the teas at the Vale. We lost 8 overs to rain and the change bowlers bowled with little luck at the number 5 Barney and number 7 Giles. The 28 runs off 6 overs fail to tell the tale of Tom Ollier's excellent spell at these 2 batsmen in difficult conditions with a wet ball. In his final over he was rewarded with the wicket of Giles caught in the covers by John Greening for 25. Winnington Park then decided to bat their full allocation of 45 overs restricting vale to 37 to reply. The last 15 overs going for just 30 runs as Stacey and Langley bowled dot after dot with clever changes of pace to restrict WP to 149. In reply Vale set off like a train with 14 off the first two overs. Unfortunately Nicholas fell to the best catch their mid-on will ever take for 12 with the score on just 15. Ben Langley and Mike Drape batted watchfully for 12 and 36 respectively before Ben was trapped in front LBW. Steve Whipday came to the crease for his first bat in 8 years but could only add 1 before rain and poor light stopped play with the vale 80 for 2. Thanks very much to everyone who turned out. Last

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game next Saturday against Warrington 3rds at Bowdon Vale. We have a chance to affect who goes up champions in this game so let's put a good show on for the last game. Mark

Saturday 1st September:

1XI: versus Knutsford away. KCC 254-6. BVCC 81-10.

No report.

2XI: Match conceded

Saturday 25th August:

1XI: versus Tranmere Victoria at home. TV 194-10. BVCC 167-10.

Tranmere were the visitors on an overcast day. Captain Johnson lost the toss and was asked to field. Jack Halsall and Damo Paul opened the bowling for Vale. There was an early wicket as Jack had O'Brien caught by Dom Turner for 2. He went on to bowl Robinson for 10, the dangerous D Singh for 47 and had King well caught at slip by Little Harry Mills. Wild Bill Crowson bowled well and deservedly had McGowan caught behind by the skipper for 1. Walker 33 attacked from ball one before Nummy hit his stumps. Little H in his last game as a boy caught and bowled Prasad for 4. At 135-7 Vale had done well but Athunda hit out for a superb 50 before Harry caught him off Nomaan. Brown was caught by Papa Drape and captain Singh was bowled, both by Harry ending the innings 11 overs early at 194. Jack 4-46 Harry 3-39.

Halsall and John Ollier had to survive 10 overs before tea and did so with ease pushing the score past 50. After tea Jack was the first to fall, bowled by Athunda for 43 at 60. John Boy started to find his timing until he was bowled by D Singh for 39. At 90-2 things looked promising but soon Vale were in trouble. Papa 3 was caught off D Singh then Steve Bottomley was adjudged LBW for 1. Ben Langley was unluckily given caught behind for 2, Dom was LBW for 4 and Harry was bowled for 2 by Robinson. Nomaan battled away but at 139 he hit Singh to point for 29. Eight runs later Diddy Damo was caught off Robinson for 0. The injured captain 12 and wild Bill 11 not out battled for eight overs with Bill hitting a wonderful cut for 4 before Johnson was bowled at 167 and Vale fell short by 27 runs. 13 points.

2XI: versus Rostherne away. BVCC conceded.

Saturday 18th August:

1st XI: versus Trafford MV away. TMV 223-5. BVCC 154-7.

Having lost 5 on the trot Vale arrived at Trafford Metrovicks looking for a change of fortune and some fighting spirit. Captain Johnson lost the toss and was asked to field. Jack and Nigel Halsall opened the bowling with Jack the first to strike getting Donovan to hit to Nomaan Hasan for 17. Asghar and Auty pushed the score to 100 before Little Harry Mills had the latter caught at slip by John Ryan for 19. Vale were unable to get any more wickets until the score reached 200 when Harrison edged Jack to stand in keeper Dr Dwai for 39. Asghar was eventually bowled by Nummy for a brilliant 129 and Adnan top edged the same bowler to Nigel for 2. Saqib 18 and Gururaj 1 saw TM to 233-5 before declaring after 43 overs.

Young Ryan and Ginge Power opened for Vale but soon Alex hit Saqib to Gururaj for 2. Nummy hit a couple of boundaries before running himself out for 9 with the score on 25. Jack and John played nicely before at 64 the opener cut Strangward to Saqib for 22. At 90 Jack 44 succumbed hitting Yasim to Saqib in and Ben Langley followed next over caught by Auty off Strangward without scoring. Dr Dwai and Steve Bottomley batted for 14 overs adding 46 before Dwai was caught by Gururaj off Saqib for 21. At 140 Steve was brilliantly caught by Donovan off Sharma

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for 31 but Nigel 7 and Dom Turner 3 held out for the last 5 overs with few problems to see Vale draw and gain 11 points. A much improved fighting display.

2XI : versus Europa Exiles at home. BVCC conceded.

Saturday 11th August:

1st XI : versus Over Peover at home. OP 257-6. BVCC 140-10.

Vale welcomed Over Peover on another sunny day. Nigel Halsall won the toss and put Peover in. With two players still at work Noddy Saleem and Alex Power opened the bowling . It was Lord Noddington who made the breakthrough having Owen caught by Hopton for 4.

Mann and Suryayanshi pushed the score past 50 before Nigel trapped the former for 19. Price and Sury put on another fifty before Nummy had Price lbw 22. There was no let up for the Vale bowlers as Lancaster his 7 fours and two sixes before Abz had his caught by Hopton for 53 at 201. John Ollier took a smart slip catch off Nummy to remove Madnani for 1 then Nightingale hit Ginge to Mum's for 7. Ruddock 20 helped Sury 112 to get the score to 257-6 before declaring after 43 overs. For the second week in a row Alex was out first ball and at 21 Johnson was bowled by Jones. John Boy continued his golden summer hitting the bowling to all parts. Dr Dwai Sen 17 stuck around before being stumped at 109. Thereafter we saw a monumental Vale collapse with Steve Bottomley bowled for 0 by nightingale, then Nummy was bowled for 4 by Sury and then the bug wicket of John Boy was bowled by the same bowler for a superb 92 leaving Vale 129-6. It was soon for 8 as Abz and Noddy fell in consecutive balls .Louis Power and Nigel had 18 overs to survive but it was too much as Halsall fell to Sury for 6 and Simon went first ball leaving Vale 140 all out. Sury added to his hundred with 5-24 while nightingale 3-27. Another poor display. Fighters required!

2nd XI : verses Warrington 4 away. WCC 43-10. BVCC 44-5.

A good performance from the twos resulting in 20 points and 5th in the league. I didn't particularly like the look of the track so on winning the toss put Warrington in on it. The Vale opening bowlers made good use of the new ball with Damian Paul getting one to leap off a good length to get the dangerous Lee caught drape at gully. At the other end the mighty Quinn bowling cutters on a sticky 2 paced surface proved too much for another 4 of the top 6. Quinn bowled 7 overs and took 4 for 7. With the top on the track going it's time for some spin and whilst Roberts got no luck at one end, at the other Mills picked up 5 for 9 with Drape picking up 2 more catches at gully to wrap up the Warrington innings for 43. Quick turn round and the Langley-Nicholas combination continued at the top of the order after it's week off. Langley left one he should have played, possibly his mind was still in Lanzarote and this brought a procession of Vale batsmen to the crease who lasted just long enough for the scorer to write their name down. In the end we got to 44 with 5 wickets down. Nicholas 20 top scoring and Mills 10 not out with the ever reliable Ryan 6 not out seeing us over the line. Next Week sees the visit of Europa Exiles to fortress Vale .

Saturday 4th August:

1st XI : versus Frodsham away. BVCC 114-10. FCC 118-6. Lost by 4 wickets.

No report.

2nd XI : versus Frodsham at home. BVCC 233-3. FCC 139-9. Match drawn.

The Vale were at home to Frodsham and stand-in skipper Roberts won the toss and elected to bat (they beat us comfortably at their place so payback was the order of the day). The "stalwarts" - in the shape of Williamson and Ryan - opened the batting, crashing fours to all

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parts of the ground against sharp (but a little wayward at times) bowling. Williamson eventually fell on 14 shortly followed by Ryan on 28. In next were Drape and Power and an impressive 22 by Power followed (mainly dealing in fours). Power was eventually bowled by London. This left Drape at the crease to be accompanied by the next batsmen - Halsall. An impressive 74 not out followed from Halsall, including nine fours and four sixes crushing the ball to all parts of the Vales boundary (including the Bowling Green on many occasions). Equally as impressive was Drape who ended up on 64 not out - which included 13 fours. Roberts called an end to the brutal batting, as we didn't have enough tin hats to go round, and declared (after a short discussion with his council - Lord Stacey) with three overs to go on a huge score of 233 -3. Job well done!!

After the usual top of the pops teas, which is the norm at the Vale (thanks to Val and John Ollier this week), it was our turn to have a go with the ball (after over-indulging in Val's home-made sausage rolls and lemon cake). The first scalp fell to the mighty Thomas Ollier who got Corless for 4 via a sharp catch in the covers by Roberts (luckily it was straight at him as he doesn't move much these days!) Quinn quickly took Burgess for 14 - ending up with a fantastic show of 10-5-19-1. Young Ollier took the second wicket of Madilan - eventually finishing on very impressive figures of 9-0-43-3. The skipper threw the ball to Damian 'Ted' Paul then Lord Stacey - but both had no luck as the opposition started to dig in realising that the game was getting away from them. Blocking was then the order of the day. Halsall and Roberts bowled tightly slowly picking up wickets. Halsall was unlucky not to get more as over 5 plumb LBWs were turned down (I think 2 went under) ending up on figures of 13-6-27-2. Roberts also toiled away trying all sorts, ripping one back from the next square, to clean bowl Carham who stood there in amazement chunnering to himself all the way back to the shed. Roberts ended up on 12-5-19-3. The Vale needed one wicket to win but Horyn hung around for a great defensive knock of 41 not out bringing them home 94 short of the total for a draw. In short a great, pleasant, game played in good spirit in great surroundings with the odd umpiring niggles but we mostly kept our calm - mostly!!!! Thanks to Harry for preparing the wicket for us. Next week Warrington 4s away

Wednesday 1st August:

Vikings versus Cheadle Hulme away. CHCC 157-2. BVCC 132-8. Lost by 25 runs.

The final league game of the season saw the Vikings make the journey to top of the table side Cheadle Hulme who had only lost one match all season & that to the Vale. Winning the toss, the home side elected to bat & openers Oldfield & Dearden set about the Vale attack retiring on 30 & 31 respectively. That brought in Battye & Stringer who took over where their colleagues left off until Nigel Halsall bowled Battye for 19. There was still no respite as Stringer finished unbeaten on 28, Potts was caught by Gary Webb off Ian Jordan for 29 & Unsworth unbeaten on 10 to post a score of 157. In truth it could have been worse with Cheadle Hulme rattling along at 10 an over but it could also have been better with several catches dropped. Facing a tough score to chase, openers John Ollier & Pete Williamson were contained by a tight attack, running singles but not hitting fours. Williamson departed for 14, & John Ollier started to reach the boundary to complete an unbeaten 34. Steve Bottomley hit some lusty blows in his 27 & Pete Thorpe compiled a steady 27 but the challenge was beyond them as they lost quick wickets chasing runs. Finishing 25 runs short was a valiant attempt, ultimately losing to the league winners.

Look out for some live action photos of the Vale batsmen snapped by our own wildlife paparazzo Marcus Dean.

Saturday 28th July:

1st XI: versus Styal at home. BVCC 84-10. SCC 85-8. Lost by 2 wickets.

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Under overcast skies vale welcomed third placed Styal desperate for points. With captain Johnson missing Nigel Halsall won the toss and chose to bat. Alex Power and Dwai Sen opened but soon Rusty was out caught in the gully off Amir for 4. The doc followed the same way off Hatton without scoring. Athletes Papa Drape and Simon the egg Hopton scampered their way to 27 before Papa was caught off Hatton for 4. At 45 Simon was run out in a mix up with Nomaan and Jack Halsall was ducked by Hatton lbw. Fifteen runs later Abz Afzal 13 was caught behind and Noddy Saleem fell first ball both to Hatton. Nummy was caught on the boundary (I don't believe it) for 25 and Louis Power became Tattons seventh when he nicked behind. Little Harry Mills 8 and Big Nigel Halsall 1 no scraped the score to an underwhelming 84 before the former was bowled by Afzal leaving the bowlers a mountain to climb.

Units Noddy and Nigel opened the bowling at it soon became clear that it wasn't going to be straight forward as first Nigel bowled captain Morton for 4 and , after putting Harrison in hospital Nods bowled Afzal for 1 leaving Styal 19-2 effectively 3 .Yousef and Shawcross steadied the ship and saw the score past fifty before an amazing over brought vale back into things. First Lord Noddington bowled Shawcross for 10, then next ball Gallagher nicked to Simon. Having missed the hat trick Bailey pulled the next ball to Nigel leaving Styal 52-5. Pickles helped Yousef move the score to 67 before ginger power, whose hair was causing much confusion in the Styal ranks , found Pickles leading edge and Jack did the rest. Four runs later and little Halsall got the prize wicket of Yousef trapped lbw for 38. Ahmed and Hatton stood firm and when the former cut Jack past the citizen with three runs required it looked over. However a brilliant chase by the H Bomb kept them to 2. That allow ginge to bowl Hatton and bring in last man Afzal. First ball he swung and missed then second ball he hit high in the air. The nod manage to chase back but couldn't hold on . A great shame after an inspired performance in the field. Nods 4-27 Rusty 2-11. 4 points

2nd XI XI : versus Appleton 4 away. Match abandoned.

Turned up at Appleton 4ths to play at the school pitch next door against their 4th team. Half the team was redirected to a club down the road by their first team who couldn't find their way with both hands and an atlas. Found the ground . Got on it. Won the toss took the cows off it and put them in.... 4 out of every 6 balls spitting off a length. Holes in the outfield. Match abandoned ground and pitch unfit and dangerous . Hopefully be rearranged for 1st Sunday in September at another ground.

Wednesday 25th July:

Vikings versus Brooklands at home. BCC 131-5. BVCC 104-8. Lost by 27 runs.

On another glorious sunny evening, the Vikings were looking to bounce back from the disappointment of the previous weeks' performance. After losing the toss and being asked to bowl first, an early wicket from Bob H via a nonchalant one-handed catch by Simon H, was the prelude to a spate of full tosses and half trackers that got the Brooklands innings off to a flyer, with both Law and White hitting rapid 30's. The introduction of Damian P reduced the run rate slightly, however it was the evergreen Will C who finally brought the game back to evens. An outstanding spell of accurate swing bowling, produced the fine figures of 4-1-12-2 (not helped by a misfield for 4) that gave the Vikings a target to aim for. The BVCC innings got off to a steady start, but wickets at regular intervals against some tight bowling, soon saw the innings behind the required run rate. A brief flurry from Rick G and Mark N gave the Vikings some hope, but once they'd both departed, the total quickly became out of reach. It was just left to Andy H and Damian P to provide a late master class in running between the wickets (which was always going to end in tears) to get the total past the 100 mark. Figures: W Crowson 2-12; R Gandy 23; I Jordan

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2-12; M Nicholas 15; B Hutton 1-19; J Ollier 14; Next Week: last game of the season v Cheadle Hulme away.

Saturday 21st July:

1st XI: versus Westminster Park away. BVCC 175-8 WMP 176-6. Lost by 4 wickets.

Vale travelled to Westminster park in need of a win. Capt Johnson lost the toss and was asked to bat on a dampish wicket. Rusty Power and the skipper opened on a lively wicket and soon Johnson nicked Vanteddu behind for 5. John Boy Ollier hit a couple of nice boundaries before he was bowled by captain Vyshak for 11. Dr Dwai Sen joined Alex who at 46 was caught at gully for 24. Ben Langley was bowled by Sayed for 0 at 64 before Simon Hopton and Dwai batted well pushing the score past 100 before Simon was bowled by Babar for 23. Abz Afzal and the Doc put on 41 before The Citizen was caught off Vyshak for 20. Dwai completed an excellent 50 before falling to Vanteddu. Papa Drape made a pleasant 15 but Vale fell just short of maximum batting points on 175-8. Boy Willson and Diddy Damo Paul opened the bowling and there was an early success as Gundappu was trapped LBW by the Boy for 4. Captain Vyshak and Praveen then batted well seeing off the new ball well. Vale continued the generosity they have shown over the last few weeks as both batters were given lives. Ben was unlucky not to pick up a wicket in his 5 excellent overs. Westminster Park was cantering to victory as Vyshak brought up his fifty. Simon stumped him soon after off Little Harry Mills leaving the score 145-2. Citizen Abz bowled Bonda for 4 then Little H had Rana well caught by Abz for 6. Abz then bowled Sayed with a well pitched googly and had Ishaq caught by the H Bomb. Sabhash was then dropped in the deep off Abz and next ball smashed a boundary to end the match. Praveen ended 92 no. Citizen 3-19 Harry 2-34. Vale 11 points.

2nd XI: versus Ashley at home. Ashley conceded.

With the game against Ashley's Cheshire Academy off because the academy couldn't get a side out, the Bowdon Vale Worldwide University of Cricketing Excellence put on a pairs competition. Many thanks to everyone that played and the winners were Pat Burke and Louis Power with a very creditable 70 runs off 6 overs. Next Week the Bowdon Vale worldwide University of Cricketing Excellence are away at Appleton.

Wednesday 18th July

Vikings versus Sale away. SCC 103-8. BVCC 86-9. Lost by 17 runs.

Chasing a modest total of 103 at Sale, Vikings were literally bowled out for 86, with 7 of the 9 dismissals re-arranging the stumps. The home side did well to reach a hundred after being reduced to 34-6, chiefly by the bamboozling spin of Mark Nicholas who returned the miserly figures of 3-12 off his 4 overs, taking two in two balls, the first a juggled catch by keeper Neil Hitchen to dismiss the dangerous Almond for 15; and the second a wrong-un that pitched in Ashton-on-Mersey & hit the stumps in Sale. Rick Gandy (1-20) clean bowled opener Wellings & Andy Higson (1-2) had Hanrahan well caught by Ian Jordan for 6. On came Bill Crowson (2-16) getting King caught in the deep by John Ollier for 1 & Brooks splendidly caught one-handed over his left shoulder by Mark Nicholas for 13. Bob Hutton (1-23) chipped in with a wicket to leave Sale at 67-8 but Moore (26*) & Brittan (13*) cleverly farmed the bowling to reach a total that was probably 20 more than they should have got. Openers John Ollier & Pete Williamson (19) set off at 8 an over, with Ollier particularly brutal on the bowling hitting 6 fours in his unbeaten 31. With the demise of Williamson at 66-2 off 12 overs, Vale needed a very do-able 38 off 8 overs. Skipper Gary Webb ran himself out for zero & Pete Thorpe departed for 12, sparking a collapse to 78-6. Rick Gandy (8) & Andy Higson (6) both threatened to win the game but the Sale bowlers

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kept hitting the stumps, Moore taking 4-20 off 2.2 overs having conceded 16 in his first over, leaving Vikings short by 17 runs.

Saturday 14th July

1st XI: versus Audlem at home. BVCC 177-10. ACC 178-9. Lost by 1 wicket.

With the heatwave showing no signs of abating, Vale hosted top of the table Audlem. Nigel Halsall won the toss and chose to bat first. Simon Hopton and Mike Drape opened the batting but with four on the board the former was removed by McIlveen for a duck. John Boy Ollier joined Papa D and the two pushed the score to 40 before Papa was bowled for 12 by Swift. Nummy then hit a quick 24 before holing out on the boundary off Humphreys and Citizen Abz (15) did the same. John Boy soon brought up his fifty and at 149-4 Vale looked well set before Noddy (17) joined the caught on the boundary club. Dominic Turner was LBW first ball and John Boy's innings came to an end at 77 again LBW. Little Harry Mills hit Humphreys (6-65) to mid-on and captain Johnson nicked Farrell behind for 1 leaving vale 156-9. Diddy Damo Paul (5) and Nigel (15 not out) battled away, the former hitting a glorious four the latter hitting three boundaries despite being hit on the head before Damo nicked behind at 177. Noddy and the Diddyman opened the bowling and Damo bowled Banfield with his first ball. Shenton and Hine put on 48 before Halsall bowled Shenton for 32. The Vale bowlers created chances but couldn't take them until Rothwell (16) chipped a catch to Little H. Nummy soon bowled Hasibe for 2 leaving Audlem 90-4. R Farnell joined Hine who was extremely lucky to survive a caught behind off Nomaan. The two put on 37 before Farnell crashed Little Harry to what seemed to be another boundary before the H-Bomb intercepted taking another special catch. Four runs later Nummy bowled Hine to the great delight of his teammates. Hasse and Swift played sensibly and took the score to within 14 of victory when Noddy crashed through Swifts defenses. Farrell was brilliantly caught first ball by Papa D and when Hasse was bowled by Nods, 9 runs were required. Despite the great effort, Humphreys and McIlveen saw Audlem home leaving Vale feeling robbed. Noddy 3-36, Diddy 1-20, Nummy 2-47, Nigel 2-37, Little H 1-20. A great effort but sometimes the better team doesn't get what it deserves. 13 points.

2nd XI: versus Kingsley away. KCC 285-4. BVCC 98-10. Lost by 187 runs.

The second team took 5 under 16s, 2 over 40s and 4 over 50s to promotion hunting Kingsley. Kingsley won the toss and elected to bat on a road with a short boundary at the pavilion end. Three Kingsley batsmen got 50s and Ben Ainsworth got his maiden 100. Him getting his ton was the cue for Kingsley to declare on 285 after 38 overs. We used all our available bowlers and the best figures were 2 wickets for Roberts. Everyone tried hard but to no avail as our teamsheet started to look like an episode of Holby City. Broken toes, hip problems and finally to top it off the keeper tore his calf. Next week we will bring St John's instead of a scorer. Our turn to bat and it started ok with the openers cruising to 25 before the left arm of Kitchen produced an inswinger that went through the gate of Nicholas. Langley and Williamson battled to 13 and 29 respectively, both caught playing aggressive shots. Apart then from a cameo 17 from Roberts, everyone else was in single figures. Everyone hung around but couldn't push the score forward and we finished on 98 all out. Champagne moment was Max Lloyd aged 13 telling 40 something John Greening to calm down as John played at the ball and missed. Next Week Ashley at home

Thursday 12th July

Vikings versus Cheadle at home. CCC 139-4. BVCC 142-2. Won by 8 wickets.

A fine all-round team effort saw Vikings win with an over to spare in a high-scoring match at Priors Street, thereby avenging the defeat of a similar close encounter earlier in the season. After Cheadle's ten-man team was made up to the full compliment by the addition of Vale's own

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Mark Nicholas, their openers Kapoor (15) & Dooler (30*) set about the Vale opening attack putting on 50 for the first wicket. Kapoor was run out taking a quick single to Pete Thorpe, who, surprised at the impertinence of taking a single to him, swooped on the ball & sent an exocet return over the stumps to Simon Hopton who neatly removed the bails. Dooler & Dadabhoy (31*) continued to build a formidable score, both retiring at their maximum. Vale bowlers sensed the chance to recover & Andy Higson (1-14) deservedly (he told the batsman that too) struck to remove Ahmed through a sensational catch by Damo Paul at deep square leg, plucking the ball out of the air when it was almost behind him. Damo (1-25) then bowled the dangerous Roberts for 29 with the score on 114. In came agent Nicholas & who did his duty & spooned a catch only for Gary Webb to decline the offer. Ian Jordan (1-22) returned to the attack & bagged the wicket of Burgess via a catch by Higson & it was left to Nicholas (7*) & Oakes (10*) to complete the innings posting 139. Chasing seven-an-over, openers Simon Hopton & Neil Hitchen made a steady start, blunting the dangerous attack of Goodier (1-17) & Shah until Hitchen was out for 9. Pete Thorpe set about the Cheadle attack with some brutal hitting, especially off Nutall. Agent Nicholas (1-29) persuaded Simon Hopton to run past the ball to be stumped for 18, bringing in Gary Webb to farm the bowling with Thorpe who retired on 31, replaced by Pete Williamson. Both Webb & Williamson chipped away at the bowling & then Webb upped the pace of the game, driving hard & turning ones into twos in a series of lung-bursting 22 yard sprints taking the Vale to require 24 of 24 balls. Looking for respite from the sprinting, Williamson hit a straight six onto the roof of the house at the top of the ground, gaining enough time to recover by the time the ball was eventually found. Webb retired on 32 & Williamson on 30, leaving Mike Drape (3*) & Rick Gandy (4*) to finish the job. Come back agent Nicholas, mission accomplished!

Saturday 7th July

1st XI: versus Glazebury away (moved to home). BVCC 293-4. GCC 90-ao. Won by 203 runs.

With England due to play Sweden at 3pm Vale started their away match at 12pm at the Vale in blistering heat. Captain Iain Johnson won the toss and chose to bat. Gingerman Alex Power opened with the captain and the two had a few scares while seeing off the new ball. Alex soon got into his stride and quickly he brought up his fifty. Glazebury started to struggle as Vale passed a hundred and with yet another boundary the Ninja brought up his second century of the season. At 149 he hit a full toss off Pedigrin to J. Brunt for 101. Nomaan came in and immediately crashed the ball to all parts. Both Johnson and Nummy brought up their fifties before the latter was caught on the boundary by Green off J. Brunt for 61. Mark Nicholas was run out first ball but young Ben Langley continued the onslaught. The captain was charitable when he ran down the wicket and lost the boundary he hit and was penalised 5 runs and two balls later played on to Hargreaves for 86. Steve Bottomley (7 not out) hit a monster 6 and with Ben (27 not out) pushed the score to 293-4 off 38 overs before the declaration. Ian Willson and Nigel Halsall had 6 overs before the footy started and had time to remove Hargreaves LBW to Halsall for 4. Having celebrated England's win Vale got back to business. At 52 Carroll 34 edged The Boy to Hopton who took a smart catch. J. Brunt then was caught off the thigh of Simon off Nigel. Green was clean bowled by Willson for 0 and Meulmann was caught by Nicholas off a top edge off Halsall. It became 63-6 when McArthur swung and missed at Nigel. M. Brunt did the same at 72. Hepworth was caught neatly by Williamson off Nummy for 15 and Nigel wrapped up the win when he trapped S. Brunt LBW. Halsall 6-39 Willson 2-30 Nummy 1-4. 25 points and a good day all round

2nd XI: versus Glazebury at home. Glazebury conceded.

Wednesday 4th July

Vikings versus Whalley Range away. WRCC 128-5. BVCC 129-1. Won by 9 wickets.

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On another very hot evening the Vikings put in a good all round performance to beat the Rangers by 9 wickets. It wasn't quite as easy as the result might suggest. After a ponderous start to their innings from Saeed (25) the Rangers came to life in the later stages with Davies (30*) and Glass (32*) on the counter attack. (Bowling figures not currently available). With a fast outfield the target of 128 was probably a little below par but the wicket was offering some encouragement to the bowlers. Ollier (30*) and Dean (30*) batted superbly to give BV a great foundation and Bottomley (29*) and Webb (17*) guided them home with an over to spare. Next week: v Cheadle (H) day depends on whether England beat Sweden on Saturday or not ☺

Saturday 30th June

1st XI: versus Wistaston at home. BVCC 177-10. WCC 181-7. Lost by 3 wickets.

With temperatures hitting 30 degrees centigrade Vale captain Iain Johnson won the toss and decided to bat. Things started well as the skipper & young Ginge Alex Power hit the ball nicely putting on a swift fifty partnership before Alex 30 hit a full toss from leg-spinner Woolley to Bourne. With the score at 77-1 in the twentieth over things took a turn for the worse when Johnson 30 was bowled by Thornhill. Williamson was caught behind off Woolley for 9 in the next over and Steve Bottomley was trapped by Thornhill for 1 leaving Vale 83-4. Abz and Nomaan steadied the ship putting on 41 before The Citizen hit Hogben to Borio for 19. James Bottomley followed next over bowled by Borio first ball. At 138 Simon Hopton was run out for 6 and soon after Louis Power was caught off Borio for the same score. Nummy was caught by Bourne off Hogben for a watchful 26 at 161 and after some lusty blows Noddy was run out trying to get on strike for 28 leaving Vale 177 all out in the forty fifth over. Noddy and J-Bo opened the bowling and young Bottomley struck an early blow as Nummy took a superb one handed catch to remove Briddon. The same pairing struck again as Botham 9 skied an attempted drive leaving Wistaston 31-2. Clarke and Barnes then batted well taking the score passed a hundred before an outstanding one handed running catch by Little Harry Mills off Alex got rid of the latter for 65. The Ninja soon had Clarke (50) caught smartly again one handed by Hopton with 35 still required. Ginge then had Hiles caught one-handed by juggler Williamson at slip for 0 and J-Bo bowled Allwood (16) and Borio (1) with 16 still needed. However captain Hogben ruined the party by smashing the remaining runs. James Bottomley 4-35, Alex Ginge Power 3-27. A much improved performance especially in the field. 12 points.

2nd XI: versus Warrington 3 away. WCC 252-4. BVCC 143-7 Match drawn.

Match day at Warrington Sports Club to take on Warrington 3rds who are top of the league with 10 wins out of ten, mostly chasing. I looked at our team with its plethora of bowling options but few recognized top order batsmen. I looked at a track like polished concrete and an outfield of white dry grass that would not have looked out of place in the West Indies. I looked at our relative positions in the league and I thought we need to field first here. What I didn't look at was the forecast. It was about 35 degrees in the shade. Not a popular decision. So on winning the toss I put Warrington in to bat. The experienced opening bowlers of Neil Quinn and Damian Paul started well but anything off line got put away by openers Saghat and Lee. The outfield was lightning-fast and had a peculiarly lumpy quality making the ball jump around which was fun. Things started to go wrong when the captain put Lee down on a toughish one-handed attempt at first slip off the bowling of Paul. Damo did get some reward a couple of overs later getting Saghat caught gully by Roberts. Out to bat came the diminutive Mathas. Bandanna on his head and goatee beard. I did wonder what Tillekeratne Dilshan was doing with his Saturdays. I had changed the bowling at both ends bringing the pace off with Graeme Stacey and Gareth Roberts. Dilshan, sorry Mathas, was on one and Roberts bowled a juicy knee high leg stump full toss. Dilshan top-edged it and out it sailed to deep square leg. Circling under it was Ben Langley. We

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waited for the catch, he waited for the catch, he dropped it. Oh dear. The other opener Lee by this time was on 37 decided to retire too hot to bring in Abdul. Carnage was on the cards. I used 8 bowlers. Mathas didn't give another chance and went on to get 107 not out. Abdul hit 60 in quick time eventually falling to me at long off. No one bowled badly but the track was one to make you retire. In the end Ben Langley picked up two with his special new delivery. I can't tell you what it is if you haven't signed the official secrets act. Warrington declared on 252 for 4 after 41 overs. Giving us 49 to chase them. Our turn to bat so Ben Langley and I face up to the usual medium pace this level offers. Wacas is right arm medium thinks he's quick. After I put him over second slip twice his gears started slipping. After finding the edge twice he decides the way to go is to bowl short at me and treat me to the full eyeball to eyeball follow through including kicking dust at me. This would have been more impressive had the short balls not disappeared through point and mid wicket respectively. The captain took him off after his 6 overs went for 24 and he walked off the pitch in disgust at being taken off. It's nice to see a happy ship at the league leaders. You have to feel for the captain who seems a really nice guy. Cricket then did its usual twist as I fell for 27 stumped overbalancing to the leg spin of the recovered Lee with the score on 52. Colin Smith joined Ben and the pair took the score to 94 before Smith fell bowled for 16. Tom Ollier came in 4 but didn't trouble scorers as Ben went past only his 2nd senior fifty. Time to Roll the dice. Roberts came in the dice came up snake eyes and he went for 4. John Greening joined Ben and got 11 in a decent partnership taking us to 128 but 252 was never on when the big hitters were out so Ben Langley dug in taking his vigil into the 41st over when he eventually was bowled for 61. That's how you make up for dropping the guy who gets 100 and Damian Paul, Dominic Turner and Graeme Stacey batted out the rest of the overs with the Vale's score 143 a battling result well done.

Wednesday 27th June

Vikings versus Bowdon away. BVCC 122-6. BCC 112-8. Won by 10 runs.

On a perfect mid-summertime evening in Bowdon, the Vikings won this important local derby despite their batting, bowling & fielding. After losing openers Simon Hopton & Pete Williamson with only 20 on the board, Gary Webb (24) & Steve Bottomley (32*) set about rescuing the innings & trebled the score until Gary was out to a steepling catch that most of us had money on the fielder spilling. Ian Jordan & Mike Drape came & went & Gareth Roberts clubbed 3 boundaries in his 15, leaving Damian Paul (15*) & Andy Higson (9*) to close the innings. Constantly out of breath either due to altitude sickness from batting so high up in the order or lack of fitness (you decide), both ran ones, twos & threes like Olympic sprinters & gave Vale a sporting chance with a final score of 122 that had looked unlikely at the halfway stage. In reply, Bowdon took advantage of the short boundary until Bob Hutton (1-9) trapped the dangerous Simpson LBW. In came Nabihl who punished the Vikings clubbing 4 boundaries in his unbeaten 30 but needed to add an abacus to his kit to keep tally of his score to avoid asking the scorer every few deliveries. Simon Hopton displayed all the delicacy of a wrecking ball in his stumping of O'Brien off Roberts (1-12) & then repeated the performance off Andy Higson (1-26) to put Lamb to the slaughter. At 97-3, Bowdon were in with a shout but didn't reckon with the arm of Damian Paul who ran out Grosfils for 2 & Steve Bottomley who found his new sport for when he retires, crown green bowling, rolling the ball along the ground from deep cover to run out Jois. The entry of Bill Crowson to the attack was ultimately the deciding factor, seemingly able to bowl the ball on the command of Gareth moving from "down leg Bill" to "middle stump Bill, clean bowling Pickup for 14, to "middle & leg Bill", castling Lines for zero. Simon claimed a stumping off Bill who finished with 3-20 in a match-winning performance.

Saturday 24th June

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1st XI : versus Winsford away. BVCC 66-10. WCC 67-2. Lost by 8 wickets.

Won the toss. Batted. Alex Power mankaded. Vale skittled for 66. They knocked them off for 2. Enough said. Move on!

2nd XI : versus Winnington Park at home. WPCC 196-9. BVCC 172-9. Match drawn.

The Vales 2's were at home to Winnington Park on a fantastic track lovingly prepared by Cheshire's number one groundsman. The Vale's captain, Gareth Roberts, won the toss and opted to field as the opposition's track record suggested they were a good chasing team. The opening bowlers toiled away, with not much success, until Thomas Ollier finally made a breakthrough getting Kadsu out for 18. The next wicket to fall was off the bowling of Quinn (1-70) who was unlucky to only to take the one wicket - Barnes on 29 - LBW. At this point Winnington's scoring rate looked like they were set for a 250 run haul. Thomas bowled his maximum of 6 overs (up the hill - 6-1), so Gareth brought on 'Down Leg Bill (Crowson). Bill started reigning in their run rate and after a couple of fantastic fielding moments from Ben 10 - giving us two run outs - helped stem the flow. Quinnie, from the house end, had used up his allotted 14 overs which brought on the 'Spin King' Roberts. He paired up with Down Leg Bill (1-14) and after two relatively easy drops off Roberts' bowling he ended up on 4-36 taking a wicket with the last ball of the innings - stumped behind by Smith who had, yet again, a fantastic day with the gloves (not bad for a pensioner!) The opposition ended up on 196 for 9 with top scorers Ali - 67, Barnes - 29 and Panmar - 22. After the usual 'top of the pops' tea it was time for the Vale to try and hit leather. Openers Jonboy and Ben 10 (family partnership) batted against quick bowling from both ends - sadly Jonboy fell cheaply for 3 (surprising after his recent great form). Smith (16), Dean (26) and Langley (15) made good starts but never kicked on. Louis Power and Mike Drape's middle order partnership steadied the ship - with 36 and 29 respectively - letting us get one foot in the door for a win. Roberts edged one behind (again) on 15 and the game looked like it was slipping away. Bill Crowson fell on 4 - but what a 4 it was. It then fell to young Thomas Ollier and Dom Turner to face out the last 3 overs for a draw. The packed crowd watched nervously as Tom and Dom bravely steered the ship home for a losing draw on 172 - 25 short. A fantastic days cricket played against great opponents sportingly giving us fielders to cover late arrivals and pain breaks. Without sounding too cheesy 'cricket was the all round winner'. Looking forward to next Saturday away at Warrington. Cheers. Gareth.

Wednesday 20th June

Vikings versus Urmston at home.UCC 137-6. BVCC 130-4. Lost by 7 runs.

The Vale played their nemesis Urmston on a dry, cool evening & came up 8 runs short of a win in a game they could have & should have won. Losing the toss & asked to field first, the Vale made a lethargic start in the field until Bob Hutton made the vital break though with a stunning yorker, hitting the base of the stumps to bowl Riddler for 27. Watson pushed the score along retiring not out for 33. At this point, we were looking at chasing a score of over 160 until Rick Gandy was introduced to the attack to bowl with pace & claim 2 the wickets of Turner for 10 & Allcroft for none, both bowled. Bill Crowson's wily left-arm over seamers accounted for Shetty for 16 & Edgington for 1 to pin the visitors back to a decent score. In what felt like a slow-motion replay, Nigel Halsall had to decide which end to throw the ball to with both batsmen stranded mid-wicket & opted to send the dangerous Tootell back to the shed. 137 was the final score & our bowling figures: Halsall 0-26, Thorpe 0-15, Gandy 2-11, Hutton 1-25, Higson 0-19, Nicholas 0-13 & Crowson 2-13. Skipper Gary Webb's instructions to openers John Ollier & Pete Williamson to see off the opening attack didn't have the desired effect as Williamson was bowled third ball by Tootell. However, Pete Thorpe & John Ollier did execute the instructions, the latter retiring for an unbeaten 34 with a massive six off Tootell & Pete falling to an unbelievable catch at the

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wicket by the keeper standing up to pouch a top edge off a bouncer. Steve Bottomley held the innings together with an unbeaten 31, inching the Vale closer to their target with Gary Webb in support. In search of quick runs, Nigel Halsall & Rick Gandy came & went leaving Gary (19*) & Mark Nicholas (11*) to push for the line. 5 wides helped the cause with 30 needed off the last 3 overs but Urmston's death-bowling & boundary protection was too good for the Vale & we missed out on victory by 8 runs. Urmston bowling: Tootell 1-20, Howells 0-24, Shetty 0-23, Bowers 0-13, Edgington 2-12, Turner 1-19. Next week: Bowdon away

Saturday 16th June

1st XI: versus Knutsford at home.KCC 215-8. BVCC 218-3. Won by 7 wickets.

After last week's exciting win, Vale hosted high-flying Knutsford. With captain Johnson running late, Nigel Halsall tossed and lost and was asked to field first. The Halsalls opened and soon the elder one had both openers back, first trapping Zulfiqur LBW for 0 then having Arslan well caught by Louis Power for 5. Muhsin Ali and Ali Asaad set about rebuilding the innings and with Vale fielders in generous mood, especially off Jack's bowling, they built a 130 run partnership before Little Harry Mills showed everyone how to catch removing Asaad for 85 off Nomaan. Nigel did the same taking a towering catch off Little H to remove the dangerous Ghazanfar for 1. Muhsin's innings finally ended at 73 when Nummy crashed through his defenses, then Harry had Butterworth stumped by captain Johnson for 5 and bowled Shah for 1 leaving Knutsford 184-7. The Bhatti boys Adeel 17 and Nabil 8* pushed the score past 200 before Jack got a deserved wicket with the help of a stunning catch by Nummy (honestly, I saw it). Saleem helped the score to 215-8 before the rains came. Knutsford decided to declare as tea was taken and by the time the ground was clear Vale had 44 overs to score 216. This seemed a mountain as Jack was out in the first over for 0. Dr Dwai joined Alex Power and as he did last week stabilised the innings. After 9 overs Vale were 29-1 when The Ginger Ninja and The Doc put their feet down. With both batting with ease it, was a surprise when at 83 Dwai aimed a hoik at Asaad and was bowled for 36. Nomaan joined Ginge and saw Alex bring up the first fifty for Vale this season. Thereafter the crowd witnessed one of the great innings played at the Vale as the left hander crashed the ball to all parts. When he reached 97 he hit the ball towards the boundary. Although the fielder stopped it the umpire signalled a 4 and everyone celebrated. However the decision was changed any Alex remained on 98. Three overs went by before aptly he crashed the ball through the field and got a massive hug from Nummy. The partnership raced to 105 before Nomaan was caught off Saleem for 20 leaving 28 needed off 7 overs. Steve Bottomley (12*) helped Alex (130*) to get them in four overs and bring home 25 points. A magnificent performance! Go Superginge!

2nd XI: versus Knutsford away.KCC 198-5. BVCC 81-10. Lost by 117 runs.

The Vale second eleven (actually, it was a second ten) came off second best against a strong Knutsford side on an overcast day. Captain Roberts asked the home side to bat first & the seam attack of Rick Gandy & Pat Fox (1-63) both bowled well without much luck in an opening spell of 16 overs, both bowlers picking up a wicket each to leave Knutsford on 47-2. Spin twins Graeme Stacey (0-37) & Gareth Roberts (1-18) then took over the attack & immediately Roberts had opener Butler stumped by Colin Smith for 29. Both wheeled away but with no results & were replaced by Bill Crowson & young Max Lloyd who was making his debut. Bill finished with 0-31 off 8 overs & Max a very promising 0-17 off 4 bowling up the hill & against the wind. Downey (64) & Simon's (49) partnership of 104 was the defining part of the match & set a target that was ultimately well out of Vale's reach. Rick Gandy returned to bag a brace of wickets in the first over of his second spell giving him figures of 3-8 but the flurry of end of innings hitting left him with a creditable 3-18. A torrential downpour in the tea interval had more of an impact on the outfield than the wicket making it difficult to hit boundaries on a very big ground. Only Ben

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Langley & Bloodaxe Roberts (14) managed to cross the line in the Vale innings, Roberts clubbing 3 in consecutive balls. Openers Ben Langley (9) & Pete Williamson (23) took the score to 19 before wickets started to tumble against a tight attack of Ahmed (4-37) & Downey (2-26). Tom Greening was unfortunate to be run out having batted well for 8 & the final pair of Graeme Stacey (4) & Bill Crowson (7*) dug in for 4 overs before the final wicket fell leaving Vale 81 all out. In truth, we didn't get much luck, we fielded well, bowled as best we could, ate a good tea & gave good match experience to juniors Tom & Max. In my book, that's worth more than the 3 points we took back to Priory Street.

Wednesday 13th June

Vikings versus Cheadle Hulme at home. CHCC 116-5. BVCC 117-4. Won by 6 wickets.

Tonight our Over 40s played Cheadle Hulme on a dry evening in a full 20 overs game. Winning the toss and electing to field first, Vale started well. Cheadle Hulme batted steadily until Bob Hutton bowled a cracker of a ball to get Andy Oldfield out for 1 to make the score at that point 6-1. After that wicket Cheadle started moving up the gears until Mark Nicholas took a superb catch off Nigel Halsall to get Martin Unsworth out for 15 making the score 31-2. The visitors pushed the score along through Mrinal Dasgupta and Damian Stringer, both retiring not out for over 30 and then Rick Gandy bowled Jaime Maltman a cracker to clean bowl him for 4 leaving them at 90-3. Gareth Roberts bowled to Paul Hutchinson who played and missed allowing Simon Hopton to take the ball and easily stump him for 12 to make them 112-4. Finally Rick Gandy took a wicket in the last over to bowl Steve Mobley for 10 which made their total 116-5. Our bowling figures were: Bob Hutton 1-23, Ian Jordan 0-14, Nigel Halsall 1-15, Mark Nicholas 0-24, Rick Gandy 2-16, Bill Crowson 0-13 and Gareth Roberts 1-8. In reply, Simon Hopton knocked the ball nicely around the field partnered by Marcus Dean until Marcus was surprisingly bowled for 0 to leave the Vale 32-1. Pete Williamson joined Simon at the crease and pushed the score along until Simon had to retire not out on 30. Steve Bottomley then joined Pete out in the middle and took the score to 73 until Steve was bowled by Mrinal Dasgupta for 22. Gareth Roberts was bowled first ball by Damian Stringer for 0. Pete Williamson was clean bowled by Jamie Maltman for 21 to leave the Vale on 98-4. It was left to Rick Gandy and Mark Nicholas to bring the team home for a well-deserved win, Rick finishing on 16 not out and Mark on 11 not out. Cheadle Hulme bowling figures were: Andy Oldfield 0-29, E Lindsey 1-11, Mrinal Dasgupta 1-26, Damian Stringer 1-21 and Jamie Maltman 1-17. Next week: Urmston at home. Thanks to Harry Mills for the match report.

Saturday 9th June

1st XI: versus Tranmere Victoria away. TVCC 202-9. BVCC 203-9. Won by 1 wicket.

After last week's debacle Vale arrived at a sunny Tranmere with a point to prove. Captain Johnson lost the toss as usual and was asked to field first. Noddy Saleem and Ginger Power opened the bowling and soon found lots of life in the wicket. Noddy was first to strike as O'Brian edged to Papa Drape at slip for 8. Harinder Singh and England pushed the score to 35 before Karthick struck with his first ball getting Harinder to edge behind. Three balls later Dhanwant was bowled for 0. Chatterton came in swinging from ball one but soon Dr K had him top-edging to Simon Ducky Hopton. Noddy trapped England LBW for 18 before Citizen Abz removed Brown (9) and King (0) both caught and bowled off superb half trackers. When he removed the stubborn Tuohey for 22, Tranmere stood at 102-8. Then came a great fight back by Tejpal Singh who smashed the ball around the park, ably supported by Wood. Finally Tejpal was stumped for 60 off Karthick and Tranmere declared after 42 overs on 202-9. Dr K 4-40, Citizen Abz 3-32, Noddy 2-52. The sight of openers Hopton and Nicholas will have struck fear onto the opponents and they put on 34 before Nicco nicked off to Tuohey off Tejpal for 3. Simon soon followed as he

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advanced down the wicket and was bowled for 27 by Harinder. Rusty Power called Dr K for a second run that saw the latter run out by 23 yards approx and Steve Bottomley was adjudged LBW next ball to Tejpal. Harinder then got Alex to play on and Papa D was scuttled first ball leaving vale 70-6. In stepped Abz and with Dwai started the counterattack first getting themselves in, then playing some wonderful shots. Dr Dwai started driving the bowling up the wall with some lovely late cuts while Abz muscled the ball around. At 144 Dwai aimed a big shot to get to his fifty but was well caught by Chatterton off Wood for 48. Abz fell straight after again caught by Chatterton this time off Tejpal for 35. With still 55 needed Noddy hit some welcome boundaries before with 20 runs still needed he was strangled down the legside off Wood for 18. Little Harry Mills joined his captain with three and a half overs remaining. There were still 17 runs required with two overs to go when Johnson steered a full toss through slips for 4. Then they were gifted 5 wides and it was game on as 3 was required from the last over. The captain pushed a single off the first ball and Little H saw out the next two. Off the fourth ball the H-Bomb pushed through the covers and scampered two and Vale had won. A real roller-coaster ride. Finally Vale found the fight they've been lacking and a fine 25 points.

2nd XI: versus Rostherne at home. BVCC 238-9. RCC 162 ao. Won by 76 runs.

What a day 9th June was at the Vale. A day of greats! The 2nd team was at home playing Rostherne, who sadly eventually turned up with 7 men. Stand-in skipper Gareth won the toss and decided to bat and sportingly gave the weaker opposition 3 fielders to make a day of it and to help what he thought was the weaker side. Gareth reversed the batting order so Earl Gray and Thomas Ollier opened. Earl Gray fell on 3, young Tom Ollier sadly for 0. Louis Power went two balls later also for 0. Willow and Damo, aka TED, were new batsmen at the crease; Willow the old statesman tried to steady the ship after his 94 the previous week but fell for 2; squeaky bum time for the skipper as it was beginning to look like his idea of flipping the order might fail and he would end up with egg on his face. However at this point he didn't know he was going to witness one of the most unlikely partnerships he has ever had the pleasure to watch by Ben (10) Langley and Damo (TED) Paul. Damo started slowly spending time at the crease skilfully building his innings, patiently waiting for the 4 ball and blocking the straight one. A collection of punches and pulls got Damo to no less than 61, being run out by one of our on loan players (sorry matey), beating his highest score of 22 by a long way. This was Damo's first 50 for the Vale and on home soil too; a fantastic and well-deserved effort which was 9 years in the making. Whilst all that was going on the mighty Ben 10 was playing with amazing patience, knocking quick ones and twos. The opening bowler started to bowl down leg trying to slow the scoring rate but that was not a problem for Ben who kept flicking him off his pads for four after four culminating in another tremendous score and a fantastic first 50 in senior cricket by the youngster. He scored 58 and in the end was bowled by Etherington in front of a joyous crowd who clapped him all the way back to the pavilion. With only 15 or so overs left, skipper Gareth put himself in with Colin Smith who went first ball (the first ball he has faced in 5 years). Dom Turner held one end for 10 while Gareth (Blood Axe) Roberts went to town as he does, more slogs than front foot drives as usual. He eventually fell for 66, caught behind (again). John Greening and Neil Quinn put on 8 in the last few balls. The Vale ended up on 236. What a come-back, and a sigh of relief from the skipper. After tea the skipper gave a few, dare I say it, none-bowlers a go at the Rostherne openers as they only had 7 men. Once again the opposition put up a sterling resistance and yes, once again, Gareth thought he had cocked up, nevertheless knowing that he had decent enough bowlers in the wings to come in if things got out of hand. The opposition chipped away at the Vale score but with only 7 batsmen in their armoury it was a steep hill to climb. They eventually fell short of the target with a highly respectable score of 162 all out. All the Vale mainstream bowlers chipped in with the odd wicket, Gareth taking the last one stumped by Colin. The highlight of the Vale's fielding was off the bowling of the ever-reliable Neil Quinn. The batsman

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edged one to our keeper Smith, who deflected it to Greening at first slip, who then palmed it to second slip Damo who said "cheers" and pouched it.

A brief note about the day: a tremendous all-round game of cricket with some personal firsts in fantastic surroundings. The teas made by our catering staff are second to none at the Vale, with homemade lemon cakes and many other mouth-watering goodies. A big thank you should go to the ground staff for their hard work behind the scenes, and a big thank you to Olliers John Junior and John Senior in helping me by umpiring all day in blazing sunshine. A great weight off my mind. Cheers, Gareth (stand in skipper).

Wednesday 6th June:

Vikings versus Brooklands away. BCC 163-2. BVCC 138-10. Lost by 25 runs.

Some good batting from the Brooklands top four batsmen (3 retired and 1 out for 27) took advantage of a Vikings off day in the field. Mark Nicholas bowled well for 4-0-23-1 and Gareth Roberts captured the only other wicket to fall. No maidens and just two wickets for the Vale unfortunately. In the interval, the Vikings batsmen optimistically reminded themselves that we'd got a similar score only a couple of years previous. After the first over, one maiden and two wickets to Brooklands. Bowdon Vale were 0 for 2 needing 164 off the remaining 19 overs. The Vikings then scored 111 in the next 10 overs hitting 4 sixes and 11 fours in the process. John Ollier, buoyed by his quick-fire 30 retired the previous week, was rampant hitting 34 retired with one of his sixes suggesting that the Brooklands health and safety committee should invest in larger nets to protect their tennis and hockey colleagues (any Brooklands readers take note). Steve Bottomley (34 retired) and Ian Jordan (33 not out) followed suit with some good hitting and running. 54 more runs were required off 9 overs at less than a run a ball, Brooklands were worried, the Vikings were hoping. Sadly, it wasn't to be - Gareth Roberts hit 18 and, before the conclusion, evergreen all-rounder Bob Hutton collected another single, his second in two weeks, before he was stumped with the Vale falling 25 runs short.

Saturday 2nd June:

1st XI: versus Trafford MV at home. BVCC 117-10. TMCC 120-0. Lost by 10 wickets.

2nd XI: versus Europa Exiles away. BVCC 217-10. EECC 106-9. Match drawn.

The Vale's second-team trundled off down the old Chester Rd to Mere for a clash against Europa Exiles. Our illustrious leader sadly wasn't present (sat in Leeds in the rain) so the capable number 2 took the helm. Gareth lost the toss on a dry covered pitch with drizzle in the air and we were put into bat. Sadly Marcus gloved a wide down leg that the debutant keeper snaffled. Gareth (umpiring) signalled wide and confusingly Marcus sportingly as ever walked (no one else heard the edge) for only 2!! The mighty Ben (10) Langley, steady as ever, fell to a catch at square leg on 22. Wooden Leg Willow steadied the ship with an amazing knock of cuts, pulls and drives eventually falling to a catch by the keeper (again) on 94!! Drape, Greening & Turner (edged to keeper) sadly all went cheaply. Gareth (blood axe) Roberts did what he does best 8x4s and 1x6 for his 49 and yes - you guessed it - edging one to the keeper! Damo put up some good resistance playing some brutal shots for 15 and yes - you guessed it - edging one to the keeper! Graham Stacey added rear end value with an unbeaten 12, the Vale finished on a very impressive 217 all out - a fantastic display. After tea Exiles started off steadily, and cautiously, realising that 217 is an unrealistic score to beat and that the Vale had to bowl them out. Dig in they did - frustratingly 5 dropped catches made the already tough going tougher. The Vale's stand in skipper rotated the bowling well trying to not let the batters settle. A great effort in the field chasing down balls and encouraging other players when things didn't quite go to plan was the order of the day. Gareth's

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champagne moment was when his plan eventually came good with a heavily weighted leg side field intentionally bowling wide down the leg side got one to rip and bowl Paul (pit bull) Heads round his legs, as he stood there bemused to what just happened !! Damo ended on figures of 12-4-14-3 superb effort, Marcus Dean 10-1-37-2 but was unlucky at times, Earl Gray 6-0-11-2, Gareth 8-2-16-2. The opener Tom Ollier bowled brilliantly but was really unlucky not to snare a wicket but the best figures of the day go to the mighty Tom Greening for figures of 3-1-2-0. Champagne moment was Wooden Leg Willow snaffling a sharp left handed catch at first slip to round off his already superb day !!! Not for want of trying the Vale stuck at it coming literally a whisker away in the final over to bowl them all out !! But it wasn't to be, their skipper Barry held his nerve to see the Exiles home for a draw 106-9 to finish off a great spirited game played in competitive fun !!

Wednesday 29th May:

Vikings versus Sale at home. SCC 129-5. BVCC 102-7. Lost by 27 runs.

The over 40s played Sale on a miserable and dull evening. The toss was won by ourselves and we elected to field first. Sale's opening batsman began steadily until 18 when Ian Holland was bowled out by Andy Higson for 6. They then moved up to 56/2 when Mark Almond was run out by Ian Jordan for an entertaining 27. They then moved up to 57/3 when Chris Smith was bowled out by Damian Paul for 18. They then moved up to 89/4 when J Finlay was bowled out by Peter Thorpe for 11. They then moved up to 120/5 when Paul Hanrahan was stumped by Gareth Roberts off the bowling of Bob Hutton. Our bowling figures where Ian Jordan 0-15, Bob Hutton 1-24, Andy Higson 1-33, Damian Paul 1-30 and Peter Thorpe 1-17. The first five balls (44W44) of the Vale innings were eventful: 4 (Marcus Dean), 4 (byes), wicket (Marcus Dean), 4 (byes), 4 (Peter Thorpe). John Ollier (30 retired) and Peter Thorpe (30 retired) both batted really well to get the Vale to 35 off 3 overs, 51 off 5 overs and then 63 off 8 overs. Unfortunately, no other batsman was able to maintain this winning momentum and Bowdon Vale ultimately finished disappointingly well beaten on 102-7. Sale's bowling figures where Ian Holland 2-30, Rob Moore 0-14, Mark Almond 1-22, Paul Hanrahan 3-11 and Hemant Sakpal 1-11. The biggest cheer of the day came when the evergreen Bob Hutton in a rare fully padded appearance nonchalantly nudged a single for his seventh Bowdon Vale run in his eighth season at the Vale. Bob finished 1 not out and increased his Vale career batting average. Next week: Brooklands away.

Saturday 26th May:

1st XI: versus Over Peover away. BVCC 119-10. OPCC 121-8. Lost by 2 wickets.

2nd XI: versus Warrington 4 at home. WCC 129-10. BVCC 132-4. Won by 6 wickets.

Toms and Johns today in the Vale's second team clash with Warrington. John And Tom Greening joining John and Tom Ollier in the side to face Warrington at the Vale. Once again the ground staff produced a shirt front but the Vale had a proper batting line up out and on winning the toss I elected to field. This looked to be a great decision when the Warrington openers got to 50 without loss in just 14 overs with the Vale dropping 3 catches. Change of bowling brought a change of luck as injured G. Roberts bowled his 14 overs taking 4 for 17 and Damian Paul clearing up the dangerous opener caught behind and hit wicket same ball finishing with 1 for 23 off 11. Tom Ollier came back for a second spell and finished with an excellent 2 for 42 off 11 with all the runs in his first spell. Dilemma now, who to bowl at the end? So I brought on young Tom Greening who was never going to let us down and he took 2 for 6 off 3 to close the innings with the score on 129 off 45 overs. Tea then occurred and what a tea. Potato wedges 3 different types of cake. Pizza, sandwiches, pate and crusty bread. Also some salad but we won't go into that. I can't speak for all the league but the best in our division undoubtedly. Bowdon Vale's top

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order included over 40s stalwart Marcus Dean substituting for Ben Langley who wanted to watch Real Madrid. He and I put a few on 14 and 23 respectively but the big show John Ollier batting at 3 with a heavy hitting 49 runs and Gareth Roberts, did I say he's injured, with 31 not out mainly on the leg side saw the Vale home with 20 overs to spare. 20 points and our first full win of the season. Well done lads. Mark Nicholas.

Thursday 24th May:

1st XI : versus Knutsford at home. BVCC 98-8. KCC 101-7. Lost by 3 wickets.

Wednesday 23rd May:

Vikings versus Cheadle away. BVCC 123-7. CCC 124-2. Lost by 8 wickets.

Vikings were on the wrong end of a last ball thriller at Cheadle when Roberts (not our one, the other one), needing 4 to win with one ball remaining, smashed the ball to cow-corner to win the match. Ten runs had been needed off the last over & a Vale were favorites but Roberts & JC (not that one, the other one), steered the home side to victory. Vale bowled & fielded well in the low, late evening sun, having little luck as the ball looped up on several occasions only to drop short of the fielder. Ian Jordan (1-15) had removed the dangerous Blood LBW for a duck off the 4th ball of the innings but Cotterall (32*) & Bardsley (32*) kept the score ticking along. Marcus Dean (1-17) picked up the only other wicket courtesy of a well-held catch from Steve Bottomley. Bob Hutton (0-26), Damian Paul (0-20), Mark Nicholas (0-24) & Bill Crowson (0-18) all bowled well without luck. Vale started their innings scoring at 5 an over. Rick Gandy was out early for 6 & Marcus Dean (17) & John Ollier (11) pushed the score along to 41 off 8 overs. The middle order of Steve Bottomley (13), Ian Jordan (16), Pete Williamson (22) & Gareth Roberts (17) all chipped in with quickly run singles & crashed fours but by far the biggest crash of the evening was when the irresistible force of Damian Paul met the immovable object of Mark Nicholas (or was it the other way round?) in the middle of the wicket to create particle acceleration that the Hadron Collider scientists at CERN can only dream about. Still, 123-7 looked a competitive score but it wasn't to be.

Saturday 19th May:

1st XI : versus Frodsham at home. BVCC 109-9. FCC 111-3. Lost by 7 wickets

2nd XI : versus Frodsham away. FCC 147-8. BVCC 123-9. Lost by 24 runs.

So the twos turned up at Frodsham with a relatively long tail and only 10 men but it's still better than shopping . What I found was a track that looked a little two paced . Actually it wasn't two paced it was a BMW deck . It had 6 forward gears and turned without warning. So on winning the toss I put Frodsham in to bat. Quinn and Paul bowled tight line with little luck till the Frodsham skipper launched Quinn into the stratosphere. Underneath it was Pete Williamson who after a 20 minute wait for it to come down, nonchalantly pouched the catch. The bookies lost a fortune betting on the ball. 21 for 1 . Game on. Quinn picked up another 2 wickets finishing on 38 for 3 from 14 and Roberts with a mixture of full tosses hit down deep square legs throat and unplayable leggies picked up 3 more for 22 off 7. The rest of the story was unfortunately spilled catches and stumping the umpire didn't agree with and 2 run outs meant Frodsham finished on 147 for 7 after 45. After Tea (the pies are amazing) Ben Langley and I opened the batting. Once again we put 42 on without getting the 50 partnership; Langley falling for a patient 12 in the 15th over. He will be a very decent bat that lad. I soon followed bowled for 21 and Pete Williamson and Dom Turner had to rebuild. Dom however fell for just 3 and when Roberts played on for 16 and

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Greening followed with the same fate for nought Frodsham sniffed a chance of a win. This brought 13 year old debutant Tom Greening to the wicket. He strove manfully to keep out the Frodsham bowlers but when Williamson fell for 30 with the score on 96 it was a big ask of Tom to shepherd the tail end to 147 and the Vale were all out for 123. I am going to pinch a literary concept from the great sports writer of Barnton's Sunday team Peter Clarke. Champagne moment: Tom Greening smashing the Frodsham leggie back over his head when he brought all the fielders in round the bat to him. Brown ale moment: Turning up with 10. Next Week the Twos are playing Warrington at home. Get your names in the book please. Mark Nicholas.

Wednesday 16th May:

Vikings versus Whalley Range at home. WRCC 130-3. BVCC 134-6. Won by 4 wickets.

On Wednesday, our over 40s played Whalley Range. It was a bright sunny evening and we played the full game which is a 20 over game. The captains tossed up and Whalley Range won the toss and elected to bat. Whalley Range batted steadily to get all the runs they could get in the first six overs when the first wicket happened when they were 30/1. From there, they moved up to 51/2 and then they progressed to 118/3 and they finished on 130-3. Our bowling figures were Nigel Halsall 0-27, Bob Hutton 0-16, Andy Higson 2-27, Bill Crowson 0-13, Damian Paul 0-30 and Gareth Roberts 1-17. With so many potential bowlers in the side (nine!), Marcus Dean's hat-trick ball after the previous week's 2 in 2 was put on hold until next week. Whalley Range's batting figures were Akhtar Vohra 11, Mark Glass 28, Paul Griffiths 30, Paul Davies 30, I Moat 10, Jahangir Abbas 16 not out and Andy Jarvis 1 not out. New opening batsman Rick Gandy and regular Marcus Dean got the innings off to a blistering start. Rick's dismissal brought Peter Thorpe to the crease for his first appearance of the season fresh with kit just rescued from the back of his loft. Marcus and Peter batted beautifully taking the Vikings to 80 when Marcus retired with the Vikings ahead of the required run rate. After Peter's dismissal for 29, a few mighty blows from Nigel Halsall took the Vikings to 106 with 25 still needed. In a nervy last few overs, the combination of Steve Bottomley, debutant Neil Hitchen, Andy Higson and Damien Paul with some good hitting and running between the wickets saw the Vikings home for a second consecutive victory. Our batting figures were Marcus Dean 30 retired not out, Rick Gandy 10, Peter Thorpe 29, Steve Bottomley 19 not out, Nigel Halsall 18, Gareth Roberts 5, Neil Hitchen 5, Andy Higson 1 and Damian Paul 0 not out. Whalley Range's bowling figures were Mudassar Iqbal 1-25, Mani Kadirvel 0-18, Andy Jarvis 0-33, Paul Davies 1-11, Paul Griffiths 1-26, Akhtar Vohra 1-8 and Jahangir Abbas 0-5.

Saturday 12th May:

1st XI: versus Styal away. SCC 147-10. BVCC 61-10. Lost by 86 runs.

Vale arrived at Styal confident after last week's win. They were greeted with an ugly looking wicket. Captain Johnson lost the toss as usual and was asked to field first. Jack Halsall and Homunculus Damo Paul opened the bowling. However, unlike last week there were no early breakthroughs as Johnson and Harrison batted nicely putting any bad balls away. They put on 70 for the first wicket before Nomaan Hasan bowled Harrison for 37. He then started to terrorise the batters and soon bowled Pickles for 6, trapped Yousef for 0 and bowled Morton for 2. Steal continued to tick the score along going past 100 before Nummy picked up his fifth wicket when he hit the stumps of the dangerous Baig for 21. Red haired Alex Power was introduced and in his first over had Saxon bowled with a long hop that nearly bounced twice. At 130 opener Johnson was finally caught by John Ollier off Alex for 49. He then had Soni caught by Little Harry Mills for 0 before captain Johnson stumped Hatton off deadly Damo for 1. Shawcross was bowled for 14 leaving Alex the amazing figures of 4-6. Nummy finishing with 5-30 and Diddy D 1-17. Chasing 148 to win Vale soon slumped to 2-2 as Simon Hopton and Jack Halsall both picked up ducks.

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Nummy hit a couple of decent shots but was soon bowled for 11 by Coventry. After his bowling heroics, Alex battled doggedly and with John Ollier started to put a partnership together before the latter lost concentration and was bowled by Yousef for 13. This started a major collapse as Vale slumped from 40-3 to 55-8 as Steve Bottomley and Joel Wesley were bowled off successive balls from Yousef. Captain Johnson survived the hat trick ball from the next over but off the last ball pulled a side muscle (the dangers of being too muscley). He had to retire after the next over and soon after Alex top edged Hatton to Shawcross for 23. Damo became the fifth nought of the innings when he was caught by Yousef off Tatton. Little Harry hit a couple of nice shots to push the score to 61 before Dom Turner was caught off Yousef for 1. As the captain couldn't bat Vale were beaten by 86 runs. An embarrassing batting performance for the second week out of three. 5 points

2nd XI: versus Appleton 4 at home. BVCC 177-9. ACC 80-9. Draw.

Today's second team game resulted in a winning draw for the Vale. The captain lost the toss so Appleton put us in on a belter thanks to the new covers. Openers Nicholas and Langley got to 48 before Nicholas feathered a cut on 31. Langley and Williamson continued the good work taking the score to 65 before Langley was bowled for a patient 17. Then came the traditional collapse with Paul and Roberts bagging a fine pair of fat quackers and the panic was palpable in the air. No panic from Ryan 3, Williamson top score 38, and Hitchen 10 who weathered the storm and set up the carnage to follow. Quinn's debut 14 in quick time was nearly none when he spooned a dolly to gully who refused the catch. 3 Appleton fielders then attempted the run out whilst Quinn who had attempted a run and slipped when sent back proceeded to roll back into the crease. Appleton soon regretted that. Quinn powered 3 pulled 4s whilst Greening smashed 35 with 2 sixes and 3 fours. Vale's 177 for 9 always looked too many. It became a mountain when Ollier bowled 8 tight overs for 19, Stacey picked up 4 for 30 and Appleton strove to close the shutters. Roberts turned it square for 7 overs for 2 runs and the mighty Quinn bowled 12 overs taking 2 for 9. There was some excitement with 3 wickets late on and Nicholas ringing the changes with outlandish fields trying to provoke a shot but the Appleton late order prevailed 9 down for just 80. A great performance from a determined Vale who it was a pleasure to captain (Mark Nicholas).

Wednesday 9th May:

Vikings versus Bowdon at home. BVCC 133-2. BCC 53-8. Won by 80 runs.

Remarkably the rain cleared to allow an 18 over match between Bowdon Vale Over 40s and Bowdon. The Vikings started steadily with Hopton getting an excellent quick 30* off 21 balls. The rest of the batsmen struggled to time the ball but Dean 21, Webb 25*, Bottomley 17 and Roberts 17* kept the scoreboard moving to finish on 133 for 2 (18.0). Bowdon struggled from the start with Jordan (1-5) taking a wicket off the first ball of their innings. This gave an opportunity to some of the less regular bowlers, Jessop (1-4), Ollier (0-7) and most remarkably Dean (2-3) taking wickets in the last two balls of the innings leaving him on a hat-trick for the next match. Possibly a record winning margin?

A big thank you to Harry Mills junior for all his help last night including preparing the ground, scoring and writing this match report.

Saturday 5th May:

1st XI: versus Westminster Park at home. WPCC 73-10. BVCC 75-4. Won by 6 wickets.

After last week's wash out the sun was back to greet Westminster Park to the Vale. Once again skipper Johnson lost the toss and was asked to field on a dampish wicket. The Uncle and Nephew combination of Nigel and Jack Halsall opened the bowling against an aggressive batting line up. After a few lusty hits it was the Nephew that struck first as he struck Gandhi's off stump. The score

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progressed to 35 before he removed Sayed with the help of a good catch from Abs Afzal. Babar tried to pull young Halsall once too often but ended up top edging a steeper to Steve Bottomley who managed to catch it one handed. As Uncle Nigel kept it tight and beat the bat regularly Jack kept picking up wickets. Next was Rana who was bowled for 2. Little Harry Mills then took two nice catches to dismiss Varun and Sahara before a clever bit of thinking saw captain Vyshak yorked for 33 giving Jack seven. Nigel finally chipped in with two in two balls, first having Wadhura well caught at slip by Mark Nicholas, then bowling Vanteddu. After the drinks break Jack picked up his eighth by bowling Gunderapu and finished the innings at 73. Jack 8-45 Nigel 2-28. This appears to be the first time that Nomaan has not been required to bowl when playing. Simon Hopton and Mark Nicholas opened and the former was soon in his stride hitting three boundaries. When he reached 17, he went down the wicket to spinner Varun and was stumped. Mark and Citizen were also soon out both hitting to cover leaving Vale with a few nerves. Nomaan in his usual manner started carving the ball to all parts but Jack was soon bowled for 5 with the score at 50. Nummy 33 not out rode his luck but with Steve Bottomley, 7 not out, saw Vale to an excellent 6 wicket win. A great performance with some hard yards in the field by John Ollier and Louis Power also played. 25 points.

2nd XI : versus Ashley Academy away. Match conceded by BVCC

Wednesday 2nd May:

Vikings versus Urmston away. UCC 140-6. BVCC 113-7. Lost by 27 runs.

On a surprisingly pleasant evening, given conditions earlier in the day, the Vikings wheeled themselves out for another season of sporting endeavor. Having never won this fixture at Urmston the Vale were hoping to catch Urmston cold. (Urmston's had lost their first game of the season last year). But the Urmston top six batted steadily and with Gandy restricted to one over through injury Urmston reached 140-6 with Watson 29, Higginbotham 30* and Turner 30*. Debutant Damien Paul had a good first game with 1-22 (3.0) and Roberts 2-27 (4.0) bowled through the pain taking two wickets. There were also some good catches from Crowson, Gandy and Ollier and some surprisingly good fielding. The target of 140 on a good but slow wicket was achievable if the Vale top six could perform as well as the Urmston top six but this was not to be. Urmston's slightly weakened attack was still difficult to score off quickly. Wilson 1-12 (4.0) and Shetty 1-19 (4.0) being the pick. Dean was unluckily run out (18) and only Roberts (35*), with a welcome return to over 40's form, made any real impression.

Saturday 28th April

1st XI : versus Audlem away. Match called off due to waterlogged pitch

The 1st XI match was called off on Friday due to excessive rain & waterlogged pitch.

2nd XI : versus Kingsley at home. BVCC 73-10. KCC 74-1. Lost by 9 wickets

A good day today in so far as the twos got a full side out and after 3 hours of hard work by players and ground staff to sort out the soggy outfield the game commenced on time. With a dry deck the captain elected to bat. Unfortunately the batsmen did not elect to bat. So 73 all out was the result. Damian Paul took a wicket with the first ball of the Kingsley innings and hopes ran high. Unfortunately despite good bowling from G. Stacey, T.Ollier, G Roberts and the aforementioned Damian Paul backed up by good fielding 73 was not enough to defend and Kingsley got them.

Saturday 21st April

1st XI : versus Glazebury at home. GCC 121-10. BVCC 86-10. Lost by 35 runs

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The new season started in beautiful sunshine as captain Iain Johnson lost the toss and Glazebury chose to bat first on a damp wicket. Alex 'Ginger' Power and dangerous Damo Paul opened the bowling but had little success early on. Diddy Damo became the first person to fall foul of the new beamer law and was removed from the bowling. Little Harry Mills and Nomaan Hasan took over the reins at first with little luck. Warhurst and Hargreaves took the score to 82 before the latter was bowled for 26 by Nummy who quickly added a second with the help of a sharp catch by the returning Dr Dwai. This helped Little H who then found his line and soon removed Meulman with another good catch this time from Louis Power. Bathurst was effectively out twice as he hit his wicket just before the ball did. Nummy bowled Warhurst (34) with a quicker ball and Harry added two more wickets bowling both Green and Morris before Nomaan did the same to Stainer. Action man Gareth Roberts teased the tail bringing him two brilliantly stumped wickets and finishing the innings at 121. Nomaan 4-11 Harry 4-45 Gareth 2-9. Simon Hopton and Alex opened but the sharp pace of Stanier soon saw Ginge edge behind for 1. At 29 Dr Dwai was bowled by a thunderbolt before Nummy and Simon counter-attacked. There was a six each and good stroke play to take the score to 55 before Nomaan aimed one too many big shots and was bowled for 17. Power junior lasted one ball before Steve Bottomley helped Simon steady the ship. When Hoppy was out caught and bowled to Warhurst for 37 hopes were still there but soon Steve was LBW for 7 giving Stainer 5 wickets. Newcomer Ben Langley, after excelling in the field, was given LBW and Little H and Damo both bagged ducks as Vale subsided to 86 all out and a 35 run defeat. A lot of practice required.

2nd XI: versus Glazebury away. Match conceded by BVCC.

With 17 players unavailable the 2nd XI had no option but to concede.