

# Bowdon Vale Cricket Club Match Reports - 2009

## Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September:

1st XI : versus Lymm OP at home. BVCC 76 all out. Lymm OP 78-4. Lost by 6 wickets. Vale confirmed their relegation status at Priory Street with a typical low score of 76 all out. Only skipper Nicholas (21) and young Will Hartley (10) on debut provided any resistance as Scholes (3-36) put them under pressure. Vale were all out in 39 overs. Lymm opener Wright (21\*) was the foundation of the visitors reply as man-of-the match Scholes (30) hit them to victory. Jack Halsall returned creditable figures of 3-9.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Pott Shrigley away. BVCC 126 all out. PSCC 94 all out. Won by 32 runs. The visitors were put into bat on a drying wicket on a cloudless afternoon at picturesque Pott Shrigley. After the loss of an early wicket, Callwood made a steady 29 & was later joined by Hopton who made an aggressive 37. The Vale batsmen succumbed to the long hops & full tosses of Farrer who took 5-27 off 7 overs to bowl the Vale out in the 33<sup>rd</sup> over. A early run out by Hopton with a direct hit from a bye put the home side in trouble as Hussein (3-25) ripped out the middle order. Solanki (3-28) and Crowson (3-13) proceeded to make light work of the Pott Shrigley lower order to finish the match in the 37<sup>th</sup> over, the Vale winning a comfortable margin.

## Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September:

1st XI : versus Stockport away. BVCC 148-6. SCC 149-4. Lost by 6 wickets. Already champions Stockport won the toss and asked the Vale to bat on a damp, slow track. After the early loss of a wicket, skipper Nicholas (60) & Froggatt (31) dropped anchor for a stand of 96 in 28 overs. Spin rather than pace was the order of the day as the Vale struggled to 148 for the loss of 6 wickets, only Jack Halsall (22\*) providing any real impetus. Opener R.Barber (68) wasted no time in punishing the visitors' bowling attack with Hope (33) providing able support. The arrival of Froggatt (2-15) into the bowling attack caused the departure of both openers and so it was left to D.Barber to crash a quick 27\* to finish the game in the 30<sup>th</sup> over. With nearest rivals Over Peover picking up 11 points from their draw at Prestbury, the 8 points that the Vale gained from this match were not enough to save them from relegation. We now look forward to cricket in Division 3 next season.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Wilmslow at home. No play due to rain affected pitch.

## Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> August:

1st XI : versus Alderley Park at home. APCC 145-6. BVCC 147-5. Won by 5 wickets. A bottom of the table clash saw Vale record their first victory since 23<sup>rd</sup> May. Opening bowler Hasan claimed an early wicket but Prime (51) and Dales (27) consolidated with a stand of 84. At 92-2 off 30 overs the visitors were set well for a good score but Hasan, bowling unchanged for the whole innings, took 4 more wickets to restrict them to 145. Hasan's bowling figures 23-5-65-5. In reply, man-of-the match Hasan struck 44 and was well supported by Bottomley (38) and Ollier (31\*) as Vale secured their victory in the 41<sup>st</sup> over. Butterworth (3-43) was the pick of the visitors bowling. This win gives Vale a glimmer of hope of survival - 51 points behind Over Peover and a maximum of 75 points at stake.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Alderley Park away. BVCC 123-7. APCC 110-9. Match drawn. Despite late cry-offs, transport problems and injuries, the Vale took a moral victory from the match against Alderley Park. Vale were invited to bat first on a green, seaming track & struggled against the swing & seam of skipper Lewis (4-44), being 61-3 off 30 overs. However, Stevenson (33) held the innings together & Johnson (36) plundered the bowling for Vale to finish with a respectable 123-7. Having scored a gritty 5, youngster Conroy on debut took a difficult catch at

square leg to dismiss opener Chaudray as the Vale attack made inroads into the home side. The seam & swing of Hussein (4-43) and the flighted filth of Whipday (4-29) causing the most damage. Only Woolacott (61) provided real resistance, batting sensibly & taking Park within sight of victory in the fading light. Hopton put the Vale back in the driving seat with a magnificent high, one-handed catch at short point but the visitors couldn't take the last wicket in the final 2 overs of a close match.

### Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August:

1st XI : versus Over Peover away. BVCC 155-7. OPCC 158-7. Lost by 3 wickets.

The Vale came out second best again in a tight encounter at Over Poever. Batting first, the visitors were reduced to 41-5 after 18 overs, With 7 wickets down at the 30 over mark & only 75 on the board, Vale looked like posting a low score. Bottomley & skipper Halsall thought differently with an 8<sup>th</sup> wicket stand of 80. With 15 singles in his 33 not out, Halsall gave the much of the strike to Bottomley who crashed 4 sixes & 5 fours in his unbeaten 65. Mills was the most consistent bowler with 4-56 off 19 overs. In reply Over Peover got off to a slow start with only 31 runs off the first 15 overs. However, Ashton & Ingarjiola with 37 apiece produced the key partnership to push the home side within sight of victory which was achieved in 43<sup>rd</sup> over.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Sandbach at home. BVCC 204-7. SCC 147-7. Match drawn.

Both Vale & Sandbach teams observed a minute's silence in memory of young Rob Anderson who sadly died early in the week. After skipper Evans had won the toss, Vale batsmen took advantage of a good batting track with a rapid start hitting 119-5 off 30 overs. Williamson (28) and Whipday (38) inflicted the damage but at 129-7 it looked like the Vale had squandered the good start. Reynolds & Saleem came together & gradually used up the overs, sensibly accumulating runs. With 2 overs to go & the score on 165-7, Saleem opened up crashing 24 off the 44<sup>th</sup> over. With 15 coming off the last over, Saleem reached 53 not out, Reynolds supporting well with an unbeaten 27. Coppenhall was the pick of the Sandbach bowlers with excellent figures of 15-5-27-5. In reply, Sandbach made a steady start & kicked on after the loss of the first wicket with the score on 38. At 105-3 off 30 overs it was game-on. However, Hussein took 2 vital wickets, Wattney (42) and Kendrick (34) stifling the Sandbach reply & their innings petered out 57 runs short of the Vale total. Man of the match Saleem took 2-38, Hussein 3-40 and Afzal 2-27.

### Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August:

1st XI : versus Barnton at home. BCC 188-6. BVCC 185 all out. Lost by 3 runs.

With rain in the air, skipper Nigel Halsall won the toss & let the opposition bat first. Opener Cross scored a patient 40 in over 2 hours which lay the foundation to Barnton's innings. At 109-3 off 30 overs, the visitors kicked on to finish on 188 with 6 wickets down, R.Whitehouse finishing 36\* and Nigel Halsall being pick of the Vale attack with 4-51. I. Willson was unlucky to return only 1-17 off his 7 overs. Barton received a bonus of 5 runs penalty as the ball hit a helmet in the field. Having made his debut as wicket-keeper, M. Nicholas continued his stay at the wicket with a brisk 37 as the first 2 wickets fell cheaply. Jack Halsall steadied the innings & proceeded to rip the Barton bowling apart, scoring a magnificent 97. At the 30 over mark, Vale were 132-5 with victory in sight but a late rally of well-held catches by Barton scuppered Vale's hopes the home side were left 4 runs short of victory in the final over.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Trafford MV away. TMV 156 all out. BVCC 113 all out. Lost by 43 runs.

At 90-8, the Vale attack thought they had done their job but Trafford Metrovick rallied to 156 all out, 30 runs being added for the 10<sup>th</sup> wicket. S.Lee was top scorer with 53. S.Whipday (6-40) and N.Saleem (3-41) were the pick of the Vale bowlers. Vale's reply never really got off the ground as batsmen got in & they got out (Whipday 17, Evans 13). After 16 overs Vale were 37-5 & in trouble. Despite S.Hopton's 29, Vale finished 43 runs short of their target, Houghton (3-34) being the pick of the home side attack.

### Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> August:

1<sup>st</sup> XI : versus Prestbury away. PCC 205-6. BVCC 145 all out. Lost by 60 runs.

There was no change to the dismal sequence of results for Vale at Prestbury. Batting first, the home side raced to 133-4 off 30 overs with Battersby (49) & Urendran (72) doing the damage. A further 72 runs came off the last 15 overs. The most successful bowler for Vale was Allen with 3-15. In reply the Vale started well with Ryan (23) & Nicholas (67). However, a hat-trick from opening bowler Gray blasted a hole in the Vale innings & only Lancaster (35) managed to take the attack to Prestbury. Vale were all out 60 runs short of target in the 38<sup>th</sup> over with Prestbury strike bowler Gray returning 7-38.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Aston at home. BVCC 166 all out. ACC 167-3. Lost by 7 wickets.

The only thing Vale won all day was the toss at Priory Street against Aston. Batting first, Vale raced to 123 off only 30 overs, the problem being that they lost 9 wickets in doing so. Williamson (49) & Roberts (37) were the main contributors but the highlight of the innings was a last wicket stand of 49 between Turner (28\*) and young Jack Ryan (20). Both batted sensibly for 15 overs to finish with a score which was never in sight at the 20-over mark, albeit probably 40 runs short of par. In reply, Vale's weakened attack could not get the upper hand with only Rutter bowling economically. Youngsters Draper (76\*) & Bishop (43) gave no chances & batted confidently to close in on the Vale total, Aston ultimately achieving their objective with 11 overs to spare.

### Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> August:

Vale Vikings XI : versus Timperley at home. BVCC 119-3. TCC 123-9. Lost.

Vikings were back in action after missing 2 weeks due to rain & almost pulled off an unlikely victory at Priory Street against Timperley to bring the Over 40's season to a close. Batting first, Vikings made a steady start with 3 of the top 4 batsmen all retiring at 30 (G.Roberts 32, P.Williamson 32, I.Froggatt 30) but were unable to accelerate and settled for a score that was par for the course. In reply, Timperley's Ward led the attack retiring at 32 and the remaining batsmen continued at +6 an over. With 2 runs required to win, 4 overs left & 4 wickets remaining, Vikings hit back through Crowson & skipper Froggatt such that the visitors still required 2 off the last over with 1 wicket remaining. A four off the second ball of the over saw Timperley home with 4 balls to spare. The season closed with excellent fare of sausage & mash & thanks to the Vikings catering team for all their hard work.

### Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> August:

1<sup>st</sup> XI : versus Runcorn away. BVCC 139-9. RCC 140-6. Lost by 6 wickets.

Young Sam Moncur was the star of the Vale batting display scoring a steady 36 in 80 minutes, his first 3 scoring shots being boundaries. Support came from John Ollier (31) and Noman Hasan (26) as the visitors posted a reasonable score at Runcorn. However, the Vale bowling attack could not find form as M.Kayhill (43) dominated the innings for the home side who won with 9 overs to spare.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Wistaston at home. No play - rain.

### Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July:

1<sup>st</sup> XI : versus Weaverham at home. BVCC 92 all out. CC 93-3. Lost by 7 wickets.

Vale struggled against high-flying Weaverham at Priory Street, slumping to 17-3 after 10 overs. A brief recovery by Jack Halsall (21\*) and John Ollier (24) saw the home side reach 73-6 off 32 overs but Vale could only add another 19 runs before their innings was complete. R.McMillon was the pick of the opposition bowlers returning 4-45. Weaverham's "star" D.Ashley crashed a quick 65 & the game was over in 18 overs with opener S.Robinson bizarrely 9 not out at the end.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Bunbury away. BCC 84 all out. BVCC 88-4. Won by 6 wickets.

Vale bounced back after the disappointment of last week to record a resounding victory at Bunbury with Steve Whipday featuring with both bat & ball. Skipper Paul Allen (3-20) and occasional bowler Whipday (4-16) skittled the home side for a low score and then Whipday (26) and youngster Zac Stevenson (23) drove the Vale to a win with 25 overs to spare.

### Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July:

1st XI : versus Winsford away. WCC 146 all out. BVCC 97-7. Match drawn.

A slow game at Winsford saw the home side get to 60-4 after 21 overs with M.Clarke playing a steady innings. Support came from Webb (21) & Dean (21) to take Winsford to 146, with skipper Nigel Halsall pick of the Vale bowlers taking 4-21. The Vale struggled in reply, reaching 67-4 off 30 overs with only Jack Halsall (27) looking convincing. Ultimately, Vale could not find the partnerships to push on & ended 7 down still needing 50 runs.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Malpas at home. MCC 127 all out. BVCC 43 all out. Lost by 84 runs.

A young Vale 2<sup>nd</sup> XI containing 5 U15's couldn't match the firepower of the Malpas bowling attack as they recorded 5 ducks in their score of 43, with Faupel (14) top scorer. Peak (5-26) & Punnett (5-13) did the damage for the home team. Earlier Ben Hampson (3-17) was pick of the Vale attack as they restricted Malpas to 71-5 after 30 overs & an under-par final score of 127.

### Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July:

Vale Vikings XI : versus Sale at home. SCC 75 all out. BVCC 76-2. Won.

Debutant skipper Ian Froggatt led his team to a resounding victory over Sale at Priory Steet. Early pressure from the wily spin of Pete Shakespeare (2-5) and Bob Hutton (2-8) restricted Sale to a slow start. However, none of the Sale batsmen could deal with Bill Crowson's bowling as he returned match-winning figures of 4-7 in a total of 75. Only I.Harrop and extras with 17 apiece made an impact on the scoreboard. In reply, Pete Thorpe (29\*) played his usual solid role guiding Vale to victory with 7 overs to spare, the highlight of his innings being a towering straight six. Gary Webb (20) & Pete Williamson (19\*) were the other contributors as Vikings made early inroads into the lamb casserole and apple pie.

### Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July:

1st XI : versus Kingsley at home. BVCC 137-8. KCC 140-8. Lost by 2 wickets.

The Vale came out second best in a game they could have easily won at Priory Steet against fellow strugglers Kingsley. Vale openers Ryan (17) and Nicholas (27) gave Vale a steady start making 41 off 17 overs before losing 2 quick wickets. Paul Hunter steadied the ship with a patient 26 in 75 minutes before the tail wagged with Roberts (23\*) and Bottomley 23 taking Vale to 137. The pick of the Kingsley bowlers was A.Burden (4-35). Kingsley opener E.Leneghan took advantage of an early dropped catch to post 47 which was the cornerstone of their innings. Hendry (24\*) & Martin (27) led the victory as the visitors scored 30 in the last 3 overs, winning with 1 ball to spare. Skipper Nigel Halsall was pick of the Vale bowlers returning 4-61.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Kingsley away. KCC 174-8. BVCC 133 all out. Lost by 41 runs.

A youthful 2<sup>nd</sup> XI took the field against Kingsley who posted a good score of 174, P.Solanki claiming 4 wickets. Skipper Paul Allen led the batting reply with 46 and was well supported by youngsters James Callwood (19), Zac Stevenson (32) and Ben Hunter (9) but fell short of the required total. Nevertheless, this was good experience for a young side.

### Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July:

1st XI : versus Cholmondeley at home. CCC 235-7. BVCC 150-9. match drawn.

Cholmondeley's Ford was the man of the match as he rattled up 97 with the bat allowing the visitors to post 235 & declare after 40 overs. Hasan was the pick of the Vale bowlers with 4-90.

In reply, Ryan started well but Vale were never really up with the run rate as they hung on for a draw at the end of 50 overs, with G.Ford returning 4-33.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Chester CO away. CCO: 160-8. BVCC 74 all out. Lost by 86 runs.  
Very little went right for the Vale after winning the toss on a flat, hard track at Chester. Opener Roberts took the sting out of the Vale attack with a patient 54 & Chester were in control after 30 overs with 90 on the board, ending up with 160, probably 20 too many. In reply, there was no answer to the pace & bounce of Price who carved through the Vale top order, with the Vale ending up second best.

### Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July:

Vale Vikings XI : versus Sale away. SCC 78 all out. BVCC 80-3. Won by 7 wickets  
Winning the toss, skipper John Ryan chose to bowl first with a theoretically weakened bowling attack. However Sale found conditions difficult and struggled to 47 after 10 overs and ultimately 78 all out, all the bowlers taking wickets (Howell 2-24, Shakespeare 1-17, Knowles 2-13, Williamson 2-16, Ryan 1-2 and Roberts 2-5). In reply, Pete Thorpe playing his usual anchor role (30 retired) and Gary Webb (25) gave Vikings the perfect start against an experienced Sale attack of Harrop & Briggs. Bottomley & Roberts saw Vikings home with 6 overs to spare.

### Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June:

1st XI : versus Lymm OP away. BVCC 51 all out. LOPCC 54-1. Lost by 9 wickets  
Nuff said!

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Pott Shrigley at home. PSCC 71 all out. BVCC 76-3. Won by 7 wickets  
The Vale coasted to a home victory as they entertained Pott Shrigley at Priory Street. Star turns for the Vale with the ball were S.Hussain 5-15 and N.Saleem 3-13 as they sent the visitors packing for 71. In reply the Vale had little difficulty reaching their victory target for the loss of 3 wickets, Abdul Afzal contributing an unbeaten 35.

### Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June:

1st XI : versus Stockport at home. SCC 203-3. BVCC 29 all out. Lost by 174 runs.  
Nuff said!

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Wilmslow away. BVCC 148 all out. WCC 101-7. Match drawn.  
A struggling Vale 2XI travelled the short distance to Wilmslow for a bottom of the league clash. The rain meant it was a reduced over's game (34 a side). Paul Allen won the toss and had no doubt in batting first. His decision was fruitful with some lack lustre bowling and scores from Afzal 27 and Johnson 38 helped the Vale to 148. With all 3 results possible Paul and his side could have asked for a better start with the Wilmslow top 5 being skittled for 2 runs. Allen was on course for his maiden Hatrick only to be denied by the variable bounce. But then Wilmslow found the spark they needed to dig out a draw from a position that only really should have produced 25 points to the Vale, Allen finished with 5-38 as he and his merry men trough everything into it Wilmslow finally batted out the draw 101 for 7 giving vale 12 valuable points. This hopefully will give the vale the confidence they need as the next couple of fixtures will yield some valuable points.

### Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June:

1st XI : versus Alderley Park away. APCC 147-6. BVCC 114 al out. Lost by 33 runs  
The Vale made the trip up the A34 to the new ground of Alderley Park on Saturday. The home side were still seeking their first victory of the season, whilst the Vale were looking to move into mid

table safety. Skipper Halsall upon winning the toss had no hesitation in asking the home side to take first knock. After opener Farmer fell for 45 the Vale bowling soon made inroads into the Alderley Park middle order as wickets fell at regular intervals. A solid 6th wicket partnership of 47 between Dewson and Parry rescued the Alderley Park innings enabling them to post a competitive 147. Nigel Halsall with 4-42 was the pick of the Vale bowling. Nicholas (32) and Ryan gave the Vale a sound platform for the run chase with an opening partnership of 47. The introduction of Shah and Braithwaite into the attack signalled a middle order collapse as 5 wickets fell for 8 runs, as the vale slumped to 55-5. Jack and Nigel Halsall set about repairing the damage until Jack fell for a fine 32. Nigel was left marooned not out on 11. Alderley Park were handed their first victory of the season, as the Vale finished on a disappointing 114 all out. Once again the Vale failed to bat their allotted 45 overs, slumping to a 33 run defeat.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Alderley Park at home. APCC 168-8. BVCC 159 all out. Lost by 9 runs. Alderley Park completed a double over the Vale with a slender 10 run victory at Priory Street. Batting first the visitors posted 169 for the loss of 8 wickets. The wickets being shared amongst Allen and two a piece for Hussain, Bloors and Solanki. In reply the Vale had good contributions from Donalds 15, Evans 22, Bloors 23 and a sparkling 52 from Gareth Roberts. With the Vale last pair at the wicket with 10 runs required and 3 overs remaining, victory was in sight for the Vale. However a juggling caught and bowled by Walker accounted for Donald and the chance of victory was gone.

### Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June:

Vale Vikings XI : friendly versus Brooklands away. BVCC 152-1. BCC 139 all out. Won by 13 runs.

### Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June:

1st XI : versus Over Peover at home. Match abandoned - rain.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Sandbach away. BVCC 123-9. SCC 130-2. Lost by 8 wickets.

### Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June:

Vale Vikings XI : versus Brooklands at home. BCC 100-9. BVCC 101-3. Won. Good tight bowling once again by Bowdon Vale Vikings restricted the visiting Brooklands to 100 for 9 off their allotted 20 overs. Pete Shakespeare was once again the cheapest of the bowlers with figures of 4-0-7-1 with both Neil Edwards (4-0-2-42) and John Ryan (3-0-16-2) being the main wicket takers. In reply, Bowdon Vale were soon in trouble at 31 for 3 and with the luckless Keith Fenton having ruptured his achilles at the crease, occupation of the crease for the remaining overs was critical. Fortunately, Ian Froggatt (34 retired), Steve Bottomley (23 not out) and John Ryan (19 not out) were able to steer the Vale home without further loss with a couple of overs remaining. Two wins on the bounce for the Vikings!

### Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May:

1st XI : versus Barnton away. BVCC 122 all out. BCC 123-6. Lost by 4 wickets. As the summer finally seemed to have arrived it was a pity that the Vale batting did not match the glorious weather. Once again the Vale took first knock, contributions from Nicholas 16, Hasan 42 Whipday 17 and Bottomley 13 saw the Vale close on a disappointing 122 all out in 45 overs. On a firm track and fast outfield a score of around 170 should have been within reach of the Vale. Once again Noman Hasan got the Vale off to a flying start, taking a wicket with the first ball of the Barnton innings, caught behind by Ascot. As the Barnton top order approached their run chase in cavalier fashion, chances were always on offer. The Vale were to rue the chances given to both Wingfield and Sambell, as the former went on to complete a match winning knock of 50 not out to see Barnton to victory by 4 wickets. The Vale were left to ponder what might have been an

improbable victory if they had taken their chances, as little Barnton batting remained in the shed. Once again Hasan finished with excellent figures of 5-63.

2nd XI : versus Trafford MV at home. BVCC 99 all out. TMVCC 102-9. Lost by 1 wicket. There was another thriller at Priory Street, as the 2nd XI went agonisely close to snatching victory as they entertained neighbours Trafford MV. Batting first the Vale could only muster 99 all out in the face of some steady bowling from Haughton and Walsh. Chris Evans was the Vale top scorer with 14. In reply an inspired piece of swing bowling from Syed Hussain, who finished with excellent figures of 7-27 had the visitors in disarray. Despite every effort from skipper Paul Allen and his boys a 9th wicket stand of 10 runs by the Trafford MV last pair saw the visitors to victory by the slender margin of 1 wicket.

### Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> May:

Vale Vikings XI : versus Cheadle at home. CCC 70 all out. BVCC 71-1. Won by 9 wickets. Vikings turned in a team performance to gain a resounding victory at Priory Street. Batting first, Cheadle were put under immediate pressure by the subtle spin of Pete Shakespeare (3-9) and the pace of Neil Halsall (1-3). All bowlers chipped in to reduce Cheadle to 70 all out, with John Ryan (1-15), Bill Crowson (1-16), Rod Howell (1-16) and Pete Thorpe (2-6) all contributing, the only resistance coming from Lund (21). In reply, Keith Fenton (27\*) and Gary Webb (30\* retired) led the Vikings attack to overtake the total with overs to spare.

### Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May:

1st XI : versus Prestbury at home. BVCC 131 all out. PCC 125 all out. Won by 6 runs. It was a nail biting affair at Priory Street, as the 1st XI edged to victory against fellow strugglers Prestbury. The Vale was asked to take first knock on a damp wicket following the week's downpours. Once again the Vale batting flattered to deceive as they finished a disappointing 131 all out in 44 overs. Nicholas 17, Williamson 27 and Hasan 19 all made excellent starts without going on to make larger contributions. It was left to skipper Nigel Halsall 19 not out to attempt to bat out the remaining over's with Ascott. In reply the Vale bowling welcomed back Noman Hasan and what a difference he made. Halsall's Jack and Nigel both revelled in the additional bowling support, as the strong Prestbury top order was put to the test. Opener Montgomery with 30 and the dangerous Cheetham were dismissed as the Vale fielders backed up their bowlers by taking the catches on offer and with some keen fielding. A steady fall of wickets kept the Vale in the game. Fifteen runs were still required with the last Prestbury pair at the wicket. As the tension mounted it was a tumbling catch from Steve Bottomley at long on off the bowling of Jack Halsall that saw the Vale to victory by the slender margin of 6 runs and pocket 25 precious points. Nigel Halsall 4-37, Jack Halsall 3-30 and Hasan 3-45 all returning excellent figures on the day.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Aston away. ACC 87 all out. BVCC 88-6. Won by 4 wickets.

A stronger looking 2nd XI made the long trip to newcomers Aston and returned victorious. Aston had no answer to the bowling of Allen 4-23, Hussain 2-15, Roberts 2-27 and Solanki 1-17 as the home side were dismissed for 87. Keith Fenton 25 and an unbeaten 31 from Alex Faupel saw the Vale to victory despite a mid-innings slump, in the face of some spirited bowling from Hardman 5-36.

### Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May:

Vale Vikings XI : versus Sale at home. BVCC 116-7. SCC 23-3. Match abandoned - rain. Vikings' chances of victory were scuppered by rain with Sale struggling on 23-3, thanks to 3 wickets from Pete Shakespeare. Earlier, Pete Thorpe had given Vikings a solid start with 30\*. John Ryan (27) & Neil Halsall (20) continued the attack to post a competitive total.

### Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May:

1st XI : versus Runcorn at home. BVCC 139-9. RCC 140-3. Lost by 7 wickets.

On a blustery afternoon, the Vale entertained Runcorn at Priory Street, looking for their first win of the season. For the first time this season skipper Halsall lost the toss and the Vale were asked to take first knock. Contributions from Nicholas 27, Jack Halsall 21, Webb 28 and Bottomley 27 saw the Vale close on 139-9. In response the Vale were seeking an early breakthrough, but opener Kayhill, having been thrown a lifeline, when a stumping appeal was turned down, blasted his way to a match winning 80. Hussain with 2-35 was the only Vale bowler to make an impression as the visitors strolled to a 7 wicket victory.

2nd XI : versus Wistaston away. BVCC 102 all out. WCC 103-6. Lost by 4 wickets.

The Vale 2nd XI made the trip to Crewe to take on Wistaston. Batting first the Vale posted a disappointing 102, newcomers John Greaves 25, Jim Bloors 26 and 15 year old Tom Moncur 20 not out. There was 5 wickets a piece for Townsend and Barlow. The Vale made life difficult for the home side, as skipper Paul Allen led from the front with 3 wickets with assistance from Bloors 2-30. Barnes with 34 eventually steered the home side to their victory target with 4 wickets in hand.

### Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May:

Vale Vikings XI : versus Timperley away. TCC 133-4. BVCC 127-6. Lost.

Vikings made a valiant attempt to overhaul an impressive total of 133-4 from Timperley but missed out by just 6 runs in semi-darkness. The Timperley top order sprinted to a score of 70 after 10 overs (Heathcote 31\*, Fisher 30\* and Nicholson 32\*) but the Vikings attack managed to peg them back with tight spells from Shakespeare and Froggatt. Thorpe led the reply with a solid 34\* and Froggatt added 25 before fading light and accurate bowling left Vikings with too much to do in the last over.

### Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May:

1st XI : versus Weaverham away. BVCC 97 all out. WCC 98-2. Lost by 9 wickets.

Nuff said!

2nd XI : versus Bunbury at home. BVCC 158-9. BCC 132-9. Match Drawn.

The Vale 2nd XI were denied their first victory of the season by a stubborn last wicket stand as they entertained Bunbury at Priory Street. The visitor's last wicket pair survived the last 10 over's despite every effort from Paul Allen and his boys. The Vale took first knock, James Callwood 17 impressed early on before a mid innings collapse saw the Vale tumble to 36-5. Iain Johnson and John Greaves with 46 and 32 respectively came to the rescue with a partnership of 62. A late flurry from Paul Allen 18 and Jack Ryan 15 saw the Vale close at 156-9.

In reply Bunbury had no answer to the Vale attack as Allen and Hussain with 3 wickets a piece ripped out the top order, assisted by two excellent run outs from 15 year old Jack Ryan. Despite every effort the Vale were denied the victory points by the resolute Bunbury last pair.

### Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May:

Vale Vikings XI : versus Urmston at home - BVCC 78-7. UCC 81-1. Lost by 9 wickets.

### Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May:

1st XI : versus Winsford at home. BVCC 79 all out. WCC 81-9-2. Lost by 1 wicket.

The thrilling finish that lay in store was difficult to visualise at mid afternoon, as the Vale were staring a comprehensive defeat in the face at 45-8, indeed the game looked a better bet to finish before the afternoons football matches. Once again skipper Nigel Halsall won the toss and elected to bat first on a track affected by the previous day's rain. Beswick 4-17 made the most of the helpful conditions as the Vale slumped to 45-8. An 8th wicket partnership between Whipday



and Ascott held up the Winsford attack, Whipday contributing an excellent 31 not out. The Vale closed on a disappointing 79 all out. Drama then unfolded after tea as Winsford were reduced to 18-4 with skipper Halsall leading from the front with an excellent display of 'line and length' bowling and a small element of sideways movement. Wickets were falling at regular intervals as panic set into the Winsford ranks and once Barrett fell for 34 the Vale sensed a real chance of forcing victory. The Winsford last pair was at the wicket with 6 runs still needed for victory. A stubborn 11 not out from Smith saw Winsford over the finishing line with just one wicket to spare. Nigel Halsall finishing with excellent figures of 6-23.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Maplas away. MCC 288-4. BVCC 99 all out. Lost by 189 runs.  
Nuff said!

### Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April:

Vale Vikings XI : versus Grappenhall away - friendly. GCC 82-5. BVCC 85-5. Won.  
Vikings met a Grappenhall side containing 4 ex-Vale players in a warm-up game for the Over 40's league in a match restricted to 18 overs per side. Grappenhall made a steady 82 for the loss of 5 wickets with Pete Shakespeare being the pick of the bowlers returning 2-11 off his 3 overs and John Ryan supporting with a mean 1-6 off 2 overs. In reply, Vale made a slow start but Steve Bottomley 32\* and Gareth Roberts 21 saw Vikings home with overs to spare. Nick Talbot was the pick of the Grappenhall bowlers with 3-16.

### Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April:

1st XI : versus Kingsley away. BVCC 150-7. KCC 151-2. Lost by 8 wickets.

The Vale opened their Meller Braggins Cheshire Cricket League season with a visit to the newly promoted and the picturesque ground of Kingsley. Skipper Nigel Halsall maintained his impressive record of losing the toss and was invited to bat first. On a firm track, offering variable bounce, Mark Nicholas held the top order together with a knock of 29, before the Steve's Bottomley and Whipday with 43 not out and 33 respectively, took the Vale to a respectable 150 after 45 overs. Burden returning an impressive 5-37 for the home side. At the turnaround the Vale hopes were high and a tight spell of bowling from skipper Halsall and Awais Athar gave the Vale hope as they strived for an early breakthrough. However, a calamitous performance in the field saw the Vale spill 6 catches as Butcher 52 not out and Dolan 39 not out made the most of their lifelines to see the home side to victory with 8 wickets to spare. Nigel Halsall with 2-35 being the pick of the Vale bowlers.

2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Kingsley at home. BVCC 64 all out. KCC 65-2. Lost by 8 wickets.

At Priory Street, a depleted 2nd XI was no match for Kingsley. Turner with 14 and Jack Ryan 11 reached double figures against an experienced Kingsley attack. In ideal batting conditions the visitors reached their victory target with 2 wickets down.