



The Soapbox

Another season is over and although it took until the last three games of the season, it was another year in which silverware was secured.

Performances in the Essex League were fairly indifferent. The high points were runners-up spots in the Dukes T20 competition and for the 5th XI in 4th XI Division 1. It was mid-table for the rest of the teams which seems disappointing given the last few years but is something that a lot of clubs would be happy to achieve. Not that I think we should be satisfied, the ability that we have in the club demands better.

The Sunday 1st team won the Essex Sunday League for the fifth time but the first time since 2006. All nine games were well contested and captain Rob Hayto must be congratulated for his work in getting sides out in the face of considerable indifference.

The last two games of the season saw Chelmsford retain the Warsop T20 crown.

In the colts sector there were very few games played at under-13 and under-15 level and the under-16s played some amazing cricket but unfortunately only in the opening round of the competition.

The good news came from the under-11s. Thanks largely to the efforts of Bernice Clark, this age group got through 22 games and achieved some success by reaching the District Final and winning their league. There is considerable promise in this group and the younger section on Friday nights.

Away from the pitch, the Committee continued to work hard and keep things running. The hero of the season was David Goddard for his

strenuous efforts in ensuring that we got sides out; it was a big year for unavailability.

At higher levels, Jack Sterland forced his way into the Loughborough UCCE team and made his debut at first-class level as well as doing well for the MCCU XI in the County second XI competition. Aaron Beard and James Clifford are part of the Essex Academy set-up with Aaron now in the ECB Development Programme. Both lads took to the field and gained some publicity when Essex played England. Shona Keane was also recognised as one of the leading U15s in the country.

You may notice that austerity has hit the Toss. I can't be bothered with the clip art, picking out weak metaphors that even I don't understand on later reflection. Actually I no longer have access to publisher and can't be bothered downloading templates. If there is someone who does want to take the Editor's Chair, please volunteer.

Inside the issue are the team reports that I've received or made up, a bar report, some statistics, an article from Keith about how to produce your best. I probably should have read that before or during the season.

Thanks to Brian (Poole) for submitting his report first and to Darren (Thompson) for actually responding to the deadline I set.

Come to the Club Dinner

Friday November 8

The Bar

We managed the bar for 23 weekends.

Cricket was played on 19 Saturdays, 9 Sundays and 14 Fridays.

The Fridays included Colt's practice evenings and three T20 matches. There were also two Wednesday T20 matches.

The bar was open on every one of these occasions.

We are fortunate that so many people are willing to help out with the day to day running of the operation.

My thanks go to every one of them, particularly Max Gibson who is there every week to share the barman role. The others include Berna, Keith and Lee (Cranmer), Julie and Martin (Witham), Hannah (Devenish), Sue (Hollingsworth), Gill (Hickman) and Peter (Anstee), with apologies to anyone I've missed out.

The good weather has meant that takings have been so much better than 2012 where approximately £3,500 gross was lost.

I hope that the ale has been good, the service of a good standard and the hours acceptable.

As the years catch up with me, I would ask that members, ex-players and partners give thought to offering some time to ease the burden of every matchday opening.

Roll on 2014 and even bigger takings.

Brian Poole

The Numbers

Highest Total:

For: **393-6** Under 16s v Bentley

Against: **288-4** Chingford v 1sts

Lowest Total:

Against: **40** Fives & Heronians v 5ths

For: **81** 5ths v Wanstead & Snaresbrook

Highest Score: 208 James Clifford

U16s v Wickford

Centuries: 14

2 – James Clifford

1 – Jack Sterland, Dan Hagen, Adil Dewan, Gary Chidley, Nick Bailey, Jack Moss, Tom Iliffe, David Goddard, Barry Clayden, Vit Sapaetharan, Bradley Green, Liam Keaney

Best Bowling: 7-13 Ben Clifford

2nds v Hadleigh & Thundersley

Five-Wicket Hauls: 26

5 – Keith Goodman

3 – Ben Clifford

2 – Stuart Everard, Phil Arnold, Neal Abhyankar, Harry Arnold

1 – James Clifford, Ollie Devenish, Nisarg Patel, Tom Halsey, Fahren Mahmood, Neil Raisborough, Ken Jones, Tom Arnold, Alistair Fergus, Alex Bailey

Hat-Tricks

Ben Clifford

Saturday 2nd XI

Coming into 2013 season as reigning Champions with a very strong squad on paper, the expectation was that we would be at or near the top of the table.

A slow start was turned around after the third game. A brilliant bowling performance from 15 year old Ben Clifford (5-3) against Colchester brought us our first win of the season. We were undefeated until our 11th game of the season away at Wanstead, where we produced a very poor batting performance. That was our first league defeat since home to South Woodford on 2nd June 2012.

From that defeat we were always under pressure to fight for top spot with the in-form Ilford and Shenfield also in contention for top of the table. We then played Shenfield, a must win! And we did. An excellent batting performance from opener Nick Bailey (87), Gary Chidley (53) and Lee Cranmer (42* off just 28 balls) chasing 236 got us the all-important 20 points.

With 4 games to go, we were 2nd, 8 points behind the leaders Ilford. We lost our way though and 3 of the last 4 games with the win against 8 man Hornchurch! We ended the season a very disappointing 4th. Played 18, Won 7, Drawn 4, Lost 4 & 3 Abandoned.

Gary Chidley was the most consistent batsman with an average of 40.25 (326 runs), Nick Bailey didn't have the best of starts to the season, a century in the third team brought him straight back up and he scored 2 half centuries, both match winning performances! I bet Rob Hayto wishes he had more games in 2nds contributing very well with the bat scoring 3 half centuries in 5 innings.

50s: Gary Chidley (3), Rob Hayto (3), Nick Bailey (2), James Redman (1), Dave Thrift (1), Stuart Everard (1) & Miles Clark (1).

The bowling was the strong department. Ben Clifford came up to the 2nds this season and made it look very easy, 21 wickets (including 2 five-wicket hauls) at an average of just 12.29. Reliable Stuart Everard consistently bowling long spells had a fine season with 34 wickets (including 2 five-wicket hauls) at an average of 16.76. Craig Thompson also contributed well with 20 wickets (average of 21.7). The dominance of Everard left little opportunity for the other leg-spinner Tom Halsey to join in the attack, Halsey did contribute with 14 wickets with an average of 25.93. Other bowlers who performed well were Rob Hayto, Paul Jones - who is mainly known for his batting rather than his bowling - and Matt Poole who I thank for relieving father duties to get the ball back in his hand to help out the team at short notice when selection is a struggle, all took 9 wickets respectively.

5 wicket hauls: Stuart Everard (2) & Ben Clifford (2).

Bradley Green and surprisingly Darren Thompson were joint top catchers with 10. Special mention must go to 16 year old Bradley who had his first full season in the 2nds and consistently performed very well behind the stumps (10 ct, 4 st).

I would like to thank John Everard for all the hard work scoring which I really appreciate and also to Maureen Green & Bernice Clark for filling in when John was scoring for the 1st team. I would also like to thank Colin Miller & Nigel Bond for helping out with umpiring.

Darren Thompson

Saturday 5th XI

Expectations were relatively low for the 5th XI this season, although final positions of 3rd in both of our last two seasons in this division perhaps should have been a clue that the team was not lacking in quality. Promotion as runners-up was secured in the penultimate week, and is a fine achievement in difficult circumstances. It is certainly true that whilst the miraculous work of David Goddard meant that sides with the ability to be competitive were consistently fielded, the use of 42 players through the season is indicative of the lack of a 'core' for the side. Inconsistency of availability through the club is felt more strongly at this level than above, and it also makes it harder for (often young) players to develop their skills when they are being asked to play different roles week by week. I have particular sympathy in this regard for James Burns who having worked on his bowling through the winter then spent most of the summer keeping wicket, and doing an admirable job of it.

The basis for Chelmsford's success this season was games being won through individual performances. Only seven fifties and two centuries were struck in total through the season, but with the exceptions of Rupert Redman's 68* in a winning draw at Horndon, and Barry Clayden's 53 in vain against runaway champions Buckhurst Hill, the other seven innings of note made major contributions to victory. These included DG's century against Epping, maiden league half-centuries for Matt Davis (80 at Wickford) and Rory Skepelhorn (58 at Epping). Connor Cheverall also made an impressive 62 at Fives in what proved to be his last outing in the 5th team for the season, and has gone on to excel at a higher level. A success story of the season was Jordan Campion, who regularly showed good temperament and struck the ball cleanly, and with further experience and practice should be able to convert this into heavy run-scoring. Finally, it would be remiss of me not to mention Barry Clayden's 77* against Shenfield and masterful 105* against Wickford, which underpinned crucial victories late in the season.

The bowling was also heavily reliant upon individual performances in 2013. 17 players took a wicket in the season but only five of those had an aggregate of more than 5 wickets. The regular star of the show was Adam Chantry, the only player to appear in every fixture and taking 30 wickets at a fine average of 13.13. Evidence of Adam's consistency is that he didn't achieve a single 5-wicket haul, albeit taking 4 on five separate occasions. Adam's enthusiasm, his improved fielding, and on one occasion even his batting combined to a very impressive year returning from a major injury. Another notable impact was made by young Harry Arnold, who returned 13 wickets at 14.77. This included a remarkable spell in the first league game of 6-24 against our dear friends at Shenfield. I for one certainly enjoyed informing their adult players from slip that they were about to get out to a bowler who was shortly to celebrate his twelfth birthday. I had a pretty strong year, returning 19 wickets at 10.74 although with less consistency than my younger counterparts, 17 of those wickets coming in four fixtures, including 5-20 in the return fixture against Shenfield. Harry Green picked up 6 wickets in two spells before being elevated to the 4th XI, and Eddie Lawrence showed he had lost none of his nous in two appearances.

As well as more consistent availability the team would benefit next year from a regular captain. Four different stand-ins were used this year, ranging from the unwilling (myself), those who found form and returned to the 4ths (DG and Rupert), to Barry. Competing in the 4ths Premier Division next year, our 5ths will be facing the 3rd XIs of four clubs and the 4th XIs of another four clubs. As we continue to work towards playing at a higher standard and narrowing the gap to our 3rd and 4th XIs, making it easier for young players to progress upwards through the club, stability would be a big help. If you want to throw your hat into the ring, speak to the usual suspects.

Alex Bailey

The Long Road (and Report) – The Under-11s

The Colt's section has been a problem area for a couple of years. The main difficulty has been finding someone to run sides, so it was fantastic news when Bernice Clark said that she would run the under-11s if someone was prepared to help out with coaching.

Given the lack of experience, we pulled out of Division 1 and put a side into each Division 2. Both of these divisions had 11 teams and I confidently told Bernice half the sides would pull out, so there wouldn't be that many fixtures. I rather reckoned without Bernice's tenacity as she organised games with every single side and only late pull-outs by the opposition sides meant that we had two fixtures unfulfilled.

I also predicted that we'd get knocked out of the Cup early so there'd only be one game to worry about there. Fine performances against Brentwood, Bentley and Springfield made that another duff prediction as the team made it to the CEDCB final.

The ethos was very much about learning through experience. Virtually everyone had a go at being captain and most found that they had far more ideas and confidence when someone else was captain. Also, everyone bowled 2 overs, generally leaving two bowlers per game who would bowl 3.

Terriers is a 20 over game with teams of 10 a side that bat in pairs for 4 overs each. I should say approximately 10 a side. The one drawback of Bernice being organised enough to pick teams early was that people would forget. There were also people who heard about the game and assumed they were playing and turned up. This meant arranging either some players to bat for 3 overs or 6 overs depending on how many we had or people to be rested in the field. The one thing learned from this exercise is that you should not challenge Felix May to a game of rock-paper-scissors.

My main role was trying to explain the game; as Ryan Cheverall dubbed it the voice of doom. Other than that it was umpiring for most of the innings, I say most because I usually had to be replaced for a few overs as I needed the toilet, particularly in the early months when it was freezing cold. Even my rising fury at another straightforward single being spurned was insufficient to stay warm.

The team in the East Division was designated as the A team and was picked on ability. This team proved to be very strong with 9 wins and 1 defeat and aside from the defeat did not have too many close contests. These results were good enough to secure the League title.

At full strength this was an extremely competent side with lots of talent at a wide variety of points along their personal learning curves. The bowling was pretty much always good with the 10-year olds Sam Tremelling and Dan Cornell particularly impressive. The batting was rather more erratic, with the two Matts - Cole and Cook – clearly the outstanding performers. These two were reliable with the ball and under catches as well.

Lots of other players made a big impact in some of the games. Felix May, Fabian Bright, James Boyden and Ryan Cheverall all showed themselves to be useful in each discipline. Jack Karmy played well with the bat on occasion and caught well and Henry Pearce generally bowled well and can bat.

Particular praise has to go to Oliver Colgrove who picked up the essentials of batting in terriers cricket. Oliver played a large number of the games and was only out once and that was in a match that the B side was thrashed by a good Brentwood team. His confidence gradually grew during the season and I am sure he will build on his solid technique.

Oliver and Matt Cook always seemed to be in the nets with their dads when I turned up and when I left, showing real commitment to improving.

In the latter part of the season Harry Shelsher played very well and the very impressive Luke Smith joined the set-up.

The team in the West Division was designated as the B side. Generally half the team would be picked from A team regulars and the rest were younger and novice players; some of whom of course also made appearances in the A side.

Results were rather mixed with 3 wins, 1 tie and 4 defeats plus one walkover win and one draw as we (by which I mean Bentley) could not arrange a fixture. The defeats were mainly because the side was overmatched by either ability or ruthlessness – we've got a couple who can't bowl so these two giant lads are going to bowl 4 overs each, is that okay?

In general the A team names mentioned above played the starring roles but a lot of players made their bows and contributed well. Among those were Rafferty Bright, Will Boyden, Mollie Tuff, Jayden Prabhakar, Nabeel, Tanay and Tanuj Mukherjee and Tom Hutchinson.

The Cup run was a real surprise to me and the first three matches followed a similar pattern. The opponents were restricted to scores of around 70 and the targets were chased down for the loss of 2 wickets. The bowling was excellent in these games. The batting was largely done by Matt Cole who played very well, finishing about 40 not out each time with Matt Cook supporting very well in the game against Springfield.

Beating Bentley was very satisfying if long drawn out. They put the start back by an hour so that they could have more practice and then at the break we waited for 15 minutes whilst their manager lectured his team.

In the final, Hutton proved a bit too good, one of their players batted brilliantly to score 90, an imposing score in itself.

As well as the games mentioned, Bernice organised a Dads and Lads game which was very enjoyable. There were certainly a few competitive Dads on show and Felix May picked up a hat-trick all caught by Matt Cook.

There was also a practice match arranged when one side dropped out on the Friday. To give an idea of Bernice's commitment she tried to arrange a game with another of the sides left to play and when they said they'd had to call off as well, tried to arrange a game with the team they had called off on.

She may not thank me for saying it but the Club, the parents and the players were very lucky to have Bernice as the manager. I know how stressful being a Colt's manager can be as you wonder what the weather will do, whether everyone will turn up and whether the opposition will arrive.

Without that stress, I found the season to be very enjoyable and hope that the kids and their parents did too. It certainly seemed that everyone enjoyed it and the parents were a good bunch, making Brian happy on Friday nights.

The individual highlights were hat-tricks from James Boyden (at Tillingham) and Oliver Colgrove (at Maldon).

If I had to pick out one moment from the season it would be Matt Cook inside edging a ball that had bounced twice - off the pitch - onto his stumps. This was an amazing achievement, especially given that the ball had virtually stopped and hilarious but the best thing is that Matt actually learned from this and was very careful about getting his head into the right place when playing off the front foot for the rest of the season.

Alistair Fergus

Do you remember the first time?

Victory at South Woodford in the last game of the season secured the Essex Sunday League title. This is a competition that has been in existence since 1997 and that we have won 5 times; more than any other club.

That gave me the rather shocking thought that I am probably the most successful player in the history of the League having been a regular player in all of these sides. That is not to say I've been much use, generally I have been a passenger in the sides although never so often as this year. It was a massive relief to me when a wicket at South Woodford reduced my bowling average to double figures.

It was interesting to reflect on the side that won the League for the first time in 1998, also achieved by beating South Woodford. Three of that side are still regulars (me, Paul Jones, Stuart Everard). Three more featured in a few games to help out when we were struggling for numbers (Matt Poole, Eddie Lawrence, Neil Fergus). The other five (Tim Jones, Chris Cakebread, Ian Brailey, Nigel Bond and Rob Semple) have moved away or given up. It is positive that 7 of the 8 who still live in the area are still connected to the Club.

The rather more sobering reflection was looking at my team-mates and realising that Ben Clifford was only about six months old when that game was played.

As I was the oldest in the side by some distance, I hope that one or more of the current team will prove to be more successful than me.

Congratulations to Rob Hayto for the achievement of winning the league. Rob was also the joint leading wicket-taker in the Competition.

Alistair Fergus

The Results

Saturday 1sts

P 18 W 8 D 5 T 1 L 3 A 1 Pts 243 (5th)

Saturday 2nds

P 18 W 7 D 4 L 4 A 3 Pts 217 (4th)

Saturday 3rds

P 18 W 7 D 2 L 7 A 2 Pts 215 (6th)

Saturday 4ths

P 18 W 8 D 2 L 5 A 3 Pts 227 (4th)

Saturday 5ths

P 16 W 9 D 1 L 2 A 2 Pts 241 (2nd)

Sunday 1sts

P 9 W 7 L 2 Pts 138 (1st)

1sts

League Cup

P 3 W 2 L 1 Semi-Final

League T20 Cup

P 8 W 6 A 1 L 1 Runners-up

Midweek

Warsop T20

P 6 W 6 Champions

Under 16s Matchplay

P 7 W 5 L 2 2nd Group

What are you thinking?

A Bowler's Checklist

- Am I completely ready to bowl?
- Do I 'switch on' before my run up?
- Do I see the shot I want the batsman to play?
- Am I in control of where the batsman can hit me?
- Am I bowling one side of the wicket?
- Do I 'really' know my field placements in all circumstances?
- Have I a 'go to' person on/off the field?
- Can I vary my length at will – particularly short of normal or full?
- Am I passive or pro-active?
- How often am I negative?
- Can I run up and let it go when under pressure?
- Don't 'I wish I had done' – if you think it, do it – talk to someone
- How many strings to my bow?
- Sometimes the batsman has his day

A Batsman's Checklist

- Do I switch on as the bowler begins his run?
- Are my knees bent with my weight on the balls of my feet (not heels)?
- Am I focussing on the hand before the ball is bowled?
- Do I replicate my trigger movement?

- Am I meeting the ball – not the ball meeting me?
- Has my game plan switched due to differing standards of pitches?
- Am I target-setting throughout my innings?
- Which bowler should I target?
- Am I really aggressive in my backing-up and running?
- Am I watching my partner to see if he is in trouble and if I can help?
- Am I confident of scoring runs, or just hoping to survive?
- Is my confidence translating to my partner?
- Am I losing my shape when attacking?
- Am I balanced after my shot?
- Am I in a strong position?
- Is my weight moving into the shot and not away?
- Do I squeeze the handle when hitting?
- Am I watching the ball on and off the bat?

WELL – ARE YOU?

Keith Goodman

There is a lot to think about in cricket but these are questions that you should challenge yourself about. Hopefully no other bowlers answered no x 8, passive, all the time even when I'm asleep, run up and let it go is what I always do, does screaming count?, what bow? And I know.

For the record Keith took more than 50 league wickets in 2013.

Saturday 1st XI

I remember sitting here last year writing the end of season report, in the same chair on a rainy Sunday afternoon in West London, and thinking we came close this year but next year if we make a few improvements we will win the league. A year on and I'm scrolling down the league table to see a mid-table finish in a season where we did make some improvements but also made some other mistakes. So in order to fill the pages of The Toss on a season with the usual highs and lows I ask myself one question, what was different about this year?

For a start the table tells a different story this year. This year most teams beat each other and there were just 37 points separating the top 6 sides, a change from the years when Wanstead, Brentwood and Chelmsford would run away at the top of the table. We managed to lose fewer games but struggled to go on the mid-season run, and pick up the 25 point wins in the timed games, leaving us with too many draws to compete at the top of the table.

I have never hated cricket more than April, May and June. The first half spent walking around the boundary as Director of Cricket while I recovered from my knee operation was very frustrating. I love watching cricket normally but watching a team you usually play for week in week out is unbearable, and it definitely does always seem easier from the side-line. I'd like to thank Nick for stepping in to captain the side when I couldn't; he wasn't necessarily a willing volunteer but I could tell he secretly loved it...

On the batting front not much had changed. The top 5 of Adil (Dewan), Dan (Hagen), Jack (Sterland), Nick (Prowting) and Matt (Thurston) scored the bulk of the runs, but for me it was particularly pleasing to see Matt bat with the flair and fluency that I used to enjoy so much from the non-striker's end

in colt's cricket.

We are still a very good bowling side. Nisarg (Patel) had another strong year and with the support of James (Clifford) the pair proved for another year that the difference between a 1st XI batter and a good 1st XI batter is their ability to play quality spin well. There are not many who are able to say they got the better of these two, not much different there.

What was different this year on the bowling front was that I was able to captain a bowler that most would call the captain's dream - a bowler to come up with a game plan, set a field to it and bowl to it. Ollie's return of 21 league wickets at 16 was a fantastic example of learning your own game and executing it (I hope my brother's not reading this). If The Toss was to accept readers' letters I'm sure this comment would solicit a letter from Sterls saying that Ollie (Devenish) can only take wickets on green seamers; although he does better on these wickets it isn't true. I'd be more worried if I could only bat on flat ones when I play every other game at Chelmer (this is a joke Sterls).

Faces are changing but the roles in the side don't. I believe the 1st XI is made up of three types of players - the older experienced players, the guys who are not so young anymore and should be in the peak of their club career, and the youngsters who have come through the ranks and are breaking into the team. This year we saw another turn in the cycle with Neil (Fergus) and Paul (Jones) moving on and Ben (Clifford) and Aaron (Beard) breaking into the side. This means one thing for the rest of us who probably fall into one or a blend of the two older categories, we need to play like we are in the peak of our career and use our experience to win the league in the next couple of years. We will never have a better chance than this.

We can beat Brentwood in the league. This was the highlight of the year for me as after being outplayed in the T20 final we were due our moment and my goodness it was worth the wait. Having set a below par score of 212 I set us the challenge of saving the 30 runs we had failed to get when batting with either a fielding or bowling display that would win us the game. Ben Clifford delivered this with one of the best bowling spells you will see in club cricket, leaving Brentwood stunned by his accuracy and late movement (and not to mention the “accidental” bouncers – he’s too honest) as he collected three big wickets in a heart racing half hour.

I would like to thank Tony (Edney) for his support through the season as usual, I think we’ve nearly mastered the Duckworth Lewis now, and to the ladies for their lunches. They are still indisputably the best lunches in the league.

On a final note, one thing I would like to be different is the attitude and commitment to training both in the summer and winter. While there are barriers to some of us making training sessions, I would encourage us all to make more of an effort to attend training as better attendance can only make the sessions themselves and our performances on a Saturday better.

Chris Prowting

Chelmsford Cricket Club AGM

Tuesday 26 November

All members are welcome to attend. Have your say on the Club.

Red KPIs

Didn't we have a lovely time...

when we went to Wanstead & Snaresbrook

1st XI: Lost by 6 wickets

2nd XI: Lost by 5 wickets

3rd XI: Lost by 52 runs

4th XI: Lost by 32 runs

5th XI: Lost by 10 wickets

Highest Total: 149

50s: 1 (Tom Iliffe)

Must do better

Results v Champions

1st XI: Away L Home D

2nd XI: Home D Away L

3rd XI: Home L Away L

4th XI: Away L Home D

5th XI: Away L Home L

The Big Match

Essex League Semi-Final Totals

2013: 99 v Chingford

2011: 79 v Shenfield

2007: 94 v Chingford

2002: 90 v Saffron Walden

Champions – Sunday 1st XI

I say at the start of each year that we are more than capable of winning the Sunday league and it is very satisfying to be able to write my end of season report with that goal achieved. During the season, 35 different players were used in just 9 league games, quite an incredible number.

Our season started off with a rare home game vs. Roding Valley, a side we hadn't had much success against in recent years. We posted a respectable 208 with Liam Keaney (47) and Dan Hagen (59) anchoring the innings before a useful late flurry from Brad Green. Although we had posted a good score we still needed to bowl well, Andy Thurston and Craig Thompson took 3 wickets each and some good fielding ensured Roding Valley were always just behind the rate.

The first of many away trips was to Southend on Sea, after winning the toss again we posted a reasonable 231. Some sensible running and big hitting from Nick Bailey and Darren Thompson ensured that our innings didn't falter too much after some poor middle overs. After a shaky start, Southend's lower order picked up momentum and looked to give themselves a chance before a couple of quick wickets ensured that the target was out of reach. I picked up two wickets as did Tom Halsey and Craig.

Our next away trip to Bardoli proved to be one of the toughest games I have captained. Availability was at an all-time low and no matter how much I begged, people were just not available. Thanks to Dave Goddard's efforts we managed to get a side together and participated what was a very exciting game of cricket. Batting first we posted a below par 159 on a good track. After Nick and I posted half centuries, the innings collapsed quicker than a pack of dominoes. Bardoli got off to a good start but regular wickets kept us in the game. As the game came to its close Andy Thurston produced a brilliant spell of bowling taking three for 8 from 3 overs to swing momentum in our favour. Bardoli crept over the line in a

game which was unfortunately marred by controversy when the umpires ruled out a perfectly good catch that would have put us in a strong position.

Hadleigh & Thundersley was the next awayday. In another good game, Hadleigh posted a par score of 251 with Liam, Tom and I amongst the wickets. We got off to a good start with Gary Chidley and Dan setting the platform. At one stage it looked as though they would see us all the way before Dan fell for 89. Ollie Devenish joined Gary who continued his impressive record at Hadleigh finishing 116*. Ollie hit the winning runs in the final over completing a 9 wicket win.

Ollie and Neal Abhyankar were the star performers against Orsett in another close game. With traffic causing some of the Chelmsford players to be late, the Orsett captain kindly gave us the toss allowing us to bat first. Ollie played superbly for his 74 and looked set to complete a well-deserved 100 before naively holing out. Useful runs from Liam and Craig boosted the score to 220, although 250 looked on the cards earlier. After a poor start Chelmsford pulled things back superbly through the spinners, Neal bowled with great control and caused Orsett all sorts of problems as he returned the quite incredible figures of one for 8 from his 8 overs. Tom was the chief destroyer picking up four wickets, although some would argue that this was flattering given his performance. After bowling my quota of overs, I took the gloves to allow Matt Thurston to bowl his off cutters, this proved a good plan as Matt got the breakthrough, dismissing Lockyer who had chanced his arm on his way to a destructive 95. A flurry of wickets saw Chelmsford win by 13 runs, a good result against last year's Champions.

Our second defeat came against Harold Wood. Harold Wood chose to bat first on a good pitch and posted a below par 196. Aaron Beard bowled with good pace and caused the Harold Wood batters plenty of problems as he dismissed the dangerous Sher through a sharp

catch in the gully from Gary. Sampson provided some good hitting on his way to a half century to give Harold Wood some momentum at the break. After a poor start, Gary and I staged a recovery but the middle order foundered. This was almost rescued by Aaron, who continued his fine game hitting an unbeaten 54 and so nearly took us over the line. Rain intervened and we were 6 runs behind the rate to suffer defeat.

Our second and final home game of the season saw us host Aztecs, a side yet to record a victory in the season. Nick Bailey took charge in my absence (at the T20 Finals Day) and ensured that the title charge was still on through another narrow victory. Aztecs posted a respectable 176 on a difficult pitch with Tom picking up five wickets and Craig three, both well supported by the other bowlers. Lee Cranmer and Angus Turner saw us off to a good start but neither were able to go on to post a big score as it was left to Liam who played sensibly for an unbeaten 40 and Craig (33) after a rare failure from Nick left his side struggling. Neal (15*) played destructively and the winning runs came with 5 balls to spare.

Arguably the strongest Sunday side of the year travelled to Waltham in the penultimate league game. Winning the toss and batting first, Chelmsford amassed 270. Chris Prowting (83) anchored the innings, allowing Vit Sapaetharan (40) and Nisarg Patel (71) to play some big shots. Nisarg was particularly destructive; his 71 came from just 52 balls and included 5 maximums. Mind you, Ben Clifford scored 12 not out from 2 balls.

Waltham started well in reply but as the pressure told, wickets started to fall, Nisarg with a key run out swung the momentum in our favour. Waltham were behind the rate when skipper Ali came to the crease and soon changed that, he left nothing behind as he took the attack to the Chelmsford bowlers before falling to Vit for 85 off just 43 balls. This all but ended Waltham's chances and Nisarg took the final wicket as we won by 34 runs with over 4 overs remaining.

Going into the final game against top of the table South Woodford, we needed to win and ensure that South Woodford scored no more than 5 bonus points. On a cold, wet and windy

day I won the toss and decided to bowl. South Woodford never scored fluently thanks to some tight bowling from Ben and James Clifford and Nisarg. Neicho (33) and Qureshi (34) both played well but neither could go on. Having only scored 2 bonus points thus far, Chelmsford could afford to chase the total 8 down. As long as Al Fergus didn't bat, we would win the league. Jack Sterland got Chelmsford off to a flying start before rain changed the target to 156 in 38 overs. Once Jack fell to Iqbal, Nick and Nisarg steadied the ship. They saw Chelmsford home, Nick finishing 46* and Nisarg 48*.

We were officially Champions.

I would like to thank everyone who has played this year and made themselves available and for the efforts they have put in, also to Maureen Green and Bernice Clark who on many occasions scored for me. Huge thanks must go to Dave Goddard who has once again helped me to raise sides throughout the year.

The fact that we only had 1 batsman in the top 25 of the Premier League shows how everyone has contributed at one stage or another and how well the bowlers have bowled. Although I could pick many players out for their contribution, I felt that Liam Keaney and Andy Thurston were two of our consistent players/performers throughout the season and congratulate them on their efforts.

Many people believe that Sunday cricket is rubbish and it is unfortunately starting to die away, but if you look through the scorecards, some of the best games were played in the Sunday league and many went down to the wire.

If you want to know more about Sunday cricket and how good or bad it is, just speak to Andy Thurston who at one stage only wanted to play Sunday cricket due to how close the games were.

Here's to next year.

Rob Hayto

Saturday 6th XI

When in November, at last season's AGM, I felt that my position as Club Captain and 6th team captain had reached a point where a change of personnel would refresh these important roles, I was delighted that Colin Miller, at such short notice, accepted my proposal, for he knew the task well, having been the Extra 3rd XI captain in the past.

Through the fine efforts of Tony Edney in getting a balanced set of fixtures from his database of clubs with development sides looking for friendly matches, the 2013 season was set with a full fixture list with the exception of a blank on the good old 'V' weekend.

Selection on Monday evenings at the start of the season is the time when the 6th team captain finds out whether he will have to select from 5 or 15 players or a combination thereof! The 2013 season proved to be a particularly difficult one to predict the availability of players!

Dave Goddard, in his dual role as Team secretary and Club Captain, worked wonders in conjunction with Colin and the two of them together produced a new generation of young cricketers from the colts section to play regularly for the 6th XI and for the 5th XI when promoted.

At the season's conclusion it transpired that we had completed 10 matches, of which 6 were won, with a thrilling tied result against Westcliff 4's, only 2 losses and a single drawn match with North Weald which belied the 'bore draw' rumour when North Weald were 5 runs short with 1 wicket remaining.

Despite all the efforts of Colin and David we were forced to cancel the 6's on three occasions through lack of player availability, which included letting down our friends from the Rayleigh Club, twice, and of course a further 3 matches were rained off!

There was a stable number of regular 6th team players available for selection which, from early season recruitment, included the likes of Ben Turner, Rory Skepelhorn, Callum Rudd, Jamie Matthews, Jon Tween and Matthew Cole all playing regularly. New blood was needed for the 6's as some of last season's regulars including James Burns, Jordan Champion, Adam Chantry, Harry Arnold and Sean Sullivan had been pinched for selection to the 5's this season.

It was apparent from the teams 'body language' that all the 6's matches were being thoroughly enjoyed and this can be credited to Colin and his enthusiasm and the enjoyment he gets from playing the game to win, but in a manner according to the 'spirit of the game'.

Thank you Colin for accepting the captaincy of the 6thXI this season; I hope you will accept the 2014 nomination? Hopefully this will give you a bit more time to consider from now until the AGM in November!

BOB SHORTMAN

Highest Score: Ben Turner 96*

Best Bowling: Harry Arnold 5-41

Colts Cricket Round-Up

The Colts Season for the under 13s and under 15s was restricted to 3 and 4 games respectively.

For the under-15s, three of those games were won but a highly controversial defeat at Shenfield in the second round of the Cup seemed to take away any appetite for matches until a couple of games were played at the tail-end of the season.

The under-13s lost all three games heavily. They gained a certain amount of notoriety by being bowled out for 8, including eight extras at Great Baddow. As Essex were shot out for 20 at a similar point in the season, this brought TV cameras to Chelmer Park and I thought our ability to comment on failure made us look a more professional outfit than the omerta from the ECG. I also thought our spokesman sounded like a spiv.

An incredibly talented under-16 side swept aside its first 5 opponents with some spectacular cricket. Four times they batted first and each time posted in excess of 300. James Clifford hit two centuries including a double and a half-century, Vit Sapaetharan a century and a half-century, Brad Green two half-centuries and 49*, Ben Clifford and Aaron Beard also hit half centuries. The other game saw Horndon shot out for a low score but grabbing five Chelmsford wickets.

The first four wins gave progress through to a second group stage and another three matches. Having beaten Hadleigh, the next opponents were Uppingham and Saffron Walden.

In the last two games, availability problems hit hard. A certain lack of depth was exposed, making it all the more annoying that there were so few attendees at (Monday night) training, a malaise that afflicts both the adult and junior sides of the Club.

The fielding was one of the key differences, too many missed chances, too many twos allowed or boundaries that should have been cut off. The Uppingham game probably should have been won but although Brad batted superbly, they came up just short in the chase. That left a big win needed in the Saffron Walden game; the target of 219 needed to be achieved in 28 overs in order to qualify. Despite Brad, Vit and Tom Arnold playing well that proved way too much.

Mention must go to Tom and to Harry Green who were among the leading wicket-takers in the Competition.

Award Winners

Colt of the Year: **Bradley Green**

Stan Doe Trophy: **James Clifford**

Most Improved Player: **Jamie Matthews**

Clubman: **Tom Blaker**

Under 11s

All-Rounder: **Matt Cole**

Batsman: **Matt Cook**

Bowler: **Sam Tremelling**

Fielder: **Felix May**

Under 13s

Player of the year: **Harry Arnold**

Under 15/16s

All-Rounder: **Ben Clifford**

Batsman: **Vit Sapaetharan**

Bowler: **Tom Arnold**

Fielder: **Harry Green**

Helpful Colts

Tom Hutchinson

Jonathan Tween

T20 sides

2013 saw our most successful T20 campaign to date, we managed to win the Warsop T20 for the third year in a row and made history by reaching the final of the Essex League Dukes T20 competition where we lost to a very well drilled Brentwood side.

The Warsop T20 Finals Day was hosted by Hatfield Peverel and this year it proved a nightmare to arrange a date that all four teams could participate in. It was eventually played on 22 September and as you would have expected at 9.30am, it was cold, wet and not very pleasant to be playing cricket.

Drawn against the hosts in the semi-final, Chelmsford progressed into the final without any hassle as Peverel only just managed to post 115 thanks to some tight spin bowling and some intelligent bowling from Steve Drain. Adil Dewan made sure the result was never in doubt as he took the attack to the seamers in his destructive innings of 50*. Well supported by Aaron Beard Chelmsford had once again made it to the afternoon. Rayleigh beat Old Chelmsfordians to set up the final.

Winning the toss Chelmsford batted first posting 160. After losing Dewan and Beard early on Gary Chidley and Lee Cranmer rebuilt the innings superbly. The innings then faltered before a few lusty blows in the last over. Rayleigh got off to a decent start but after their big hitting opener holed out to Tom Halsey in the deep (despite shouting "he won't catch it") the innings started to slow down. Mostly thanks to some more intelligent bowling from Steve Drain who quite rightly took the player of the day award.

The day finished on a sour note as only half the Rayleigh team emerged from the changing rooms to shake hands. Despite giving out plenty of stick whilst we were batting they appeared to have taken offence that the opposition might respond with a few words of their own.

The group stage had been negotiated fairly easily. Clinical victories were recorded over Old Chelmsfordians (8 wickets), Willow Herbs (68 runs) and Mountnessing (8 wickets) and Bentley conceded. The main features were a couple of half centuries from Lee Cranmer, one from Gary Chidley and a fine spell of bowling from Chris Drain.

The main amusement came from Mountnessing's captain Alex Pearce, trapped lbw for a low score by Ben Clifford for the second time in his career. Just as happened the first time, he appeared on play-cricket as did not bat.

Losing in the final of the Essex League Dukes T20 to Brentwood was very disappointing. Although on reflection, it was a great achievement to get there. Our mid-week availability for the group games is often scarce but we were fortunate to always raise strong sides.

The group stage was negotiated without much difficulty, Matt Thurston fell just short of a century against Wickford and Billericay were beaten comfortably with a rain-off at Basildon. Top spot was secured when Fahran Mahmood hit a 6 off the penultimate ball to win us the game at Colchester. This followed after James Clifford and I had bowled fine spells to restrict Colchester to 110.

Having never won a knockout game since the competition started, it was nice to beat

Old Southendians to remove this demon. We then beat South Woodford in a closely fought quarter-final on the Friday night to progress to Finals Day on the Sunday at Billericay.

Drawn against Upminster in the semi-final, we posted 170 thanks to some high quality batting from Matt Thurston and Nick Prowting and boosted by my destructive hitting in the final overs. We felt that we were well on top at the halfway stage and Upminster were never allowed to get away from us thanks to some excellent bowling all round, Neil 'Big Matches Only' Fergus in particular was impressive on his return to the game.

Upminster ultimately fell well short of their target, bowled out for 107. With Brentwood beating Ardleigh Green in the other semi-final it set up what was to be a great final with Brentwood's 1st team entourage in full voice.

Brentwood won the toss and batted, posting a testing but gettable score of 174. Our innings suffered an early setback as Nick Prowting pulled up injured. Jack Sterland played positively but after his dismissal, the innings struggled to get going due to some very tight bowling and fielding from Brentwood.

Despite some big hitting from Patel at the end, we fell 32 runs short of their score.

A successful campaign nonetheless.

Many thanks to everyone who played umpired and scored in our T20 games this year. It was a pleasure to Captain both sides and as I stand down from leading both sides next year I wish my successors the very best of luck for next season.

Rob Hayto

Sunday Friendly XI

When we were able to raise a side and this frankly was not very often, we were pretty successful in Sunday friendlies.

There were nine friendlies played with seven won and two lost. The individual highlights of the victories were centuries from Bradley Green at Fives & Heronians and Liam Keaney against Forest Gate. Brad's innings was particularly impressive as Fives had a number of their 1st XI attack and it was his first century in adult cricket.

Fairly comfortable wins were recorded over Robinson Lakeside, Forest Gate, Writtle, Broxbourne, Sheering and Fives.

The one close win was the much anticipated match against Cosmopolitan. As usual they were welcome guests and it was a very tight finish. A stupendous diving boundary catch by Lee Cranmer in the last over enabled us to prevail by 6 runs.

The defeats coincided with actually having two sides playing on a Sunday although one was the MCC match on President's Day so it was the first team who lost. The other was an actual Sunday 2nd team, who lost out to Havering-atte-Bower.

Along with practice, Sunday cricket is a good way to improve your game and retain or gain form. At the moment there seems to be no real appetite for either and the league showings perhaps reflect that.

Saturday 3rd XI and 4th XI

Three games into the season and three easy wins, it looked like a seventh successive 3rd XI title was on the cards. Perhaps a bit of complacency set in but certainly there were a couple of new decent sides in the league this year and ultimately the 3rd XI did not even compete for 1st place.

The main problem was the batting, which despite a surfeit of talent delivered very little. There were several weeks when the line-up would not have looked out of place had it been the top order in the 2nds but aside from Tom Iliffe and Jack Moss, no one really delivered. Of the young players, Angus Turner and Vit Sapaetharan were the most successful without managing major scores. Chris Drain made a great start to the season but was afflicted like the rest by the close.

Jack had a fairly decent season most notably in innings against Ilford and Fives & Heronians, a match in which he finally achieved a well-deserved century.

Tom's season was spectacular; he batted like Superman but seemed to be kryptonite to everyone else. There were several innings in which he was left unbeaten as things fell around him. He averaged nearly 125 and managed a century in a brilliant match-winning partnership with Jack against Ilford.

Nick Bailey also made a century in his only appearance, providing the right sort of response to being left out of the 2nd team.

As the batting struggled, longer orders were picked but that caused some thin bowling options. Phil Arnold bowled pretty well through the season and in the games he played Fahan Mahmood had a significant impact. The spinners, Tom Arnold and Keith Goodman had fantastic seasons. Tom in his first season at this level took 35 wickets at 14.

Keith outstripped that with 38 wickets at 12.68.

Without having the title to play for and having suffered so many collapses, the spirit in the team was rather listless at the close of the season. There is loads of talent though and perhaps the other teams were looking out for Chelmsford this year.

The fourth team did pretty well under Steve Pleasant. There was no doubt about the strong suit of this team as evidenced by the fact that the number of half centuries and five-wicket hauls were exactly the same (8). The victories all came against teams that finished below them, often in hard-fought chases of middling scores. There were four defeats and two draws against the top three, so fourth place was definitely fair.

David Goddard made a great return to form in the second half of the season, scoring three of the fifties including the highest score of the season (78). Steve himself had a solid season.

An experienced bowling attack with the likes of Keith Goodman, Neil Raisborough, Ken Jones, Alistair Fergus and Neal Abhyankar generally made the going difficult for opposition sides. Neal was leading wicket-taker with 25.

Alongside the old heads, three talented youngsters made a good impact on the team. Alex Critchell produced incredible numbers and with his terrific action, there is a lot of promise but he did have a golden arm this year. Harry Green and Connor Cheverall showed great composure, attitude and quality and will doubtless perform very well in 2014 if they do not move up.

TheToss

If you have any articles or stories to share about Chelmsford Cricket Club, be they last year or even more historical (or hysterical) please send them to alistair.fergus@btinternet.com

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