

# Bowdon Vale Cricket Club Match Reports - 2017

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

**2nd XI: versus Glazebury away. GCC 151-10. BVCC 155-5. Won by 5 wickets.**

Vale 2nd XI completed their season with an excellent win at Glazebury, avenging the result from earlier in the season. Skipper Louis Power made the critical decision to field after winning the toss, hoping to catch the home side on a drying wicket. Jake Drape (1-19) made the early breakthrough bowling Carroll & Ian Willson (1-20) followed up having Bansel caught by Mark Nicholas at gully. Glazebury dug in through skipper Hargreaves (35) & McCue (53), both punishing any short bowling. Harry Mills (1-48) bowled Dahou but it was Gareth Roberts who took the vital wicket of Hargreaves holing out to Louis Power who took a steeping catch at deep mid-on. Graeme Stacey pinned the dangerous Ekka LBW & carved through the tail taking 3-21 off 4 overs. But it was Gareth Roberts who produced 2 remarkable balls pitching outside leg & bowling both Chesworth & Caine behind their legs to finish with 4-40. Glazebury finished on 151 off 36.1 overs ceding 8 overs to the Vale. In reply Vale lost Mark Nicholas & Jake Drape to the dangerous Dahou (3-15), but Pete Williamson & Louis Power put on a partnership of 62 to take the sting out of the attack by waiting for the bad ball & making use of the short boundary. Louis fell for 15, bringing John Ryan to the crease. Williamson was out for 64 with the score on 95, with 57 still needed. Gareth Roberts' cameo of 18 took the Vale to 119. In came John Greening to celebrate his wedding anniversary by smashing 24 as he & the unbeaten Ryan (15) saw the Vale to victory & 20 points in the 45<sup>th</sup> over. And so the season ended, finishing a mid-table 7<sup>th</sup> having won 8, lost 10 & drawn 1. Thanks to all 30 players who turned out this year, to all the supporters, to Harry & Thursday night helpers for the excellent playing facilities & to Rachel & helpers for the best teas in the league. Only 7 months to go until the next match.

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

**1st XI: versus Styal at home. No play due to rain.**

What a shame that Vale should gain promotion with a wash out. However, what a fantastic season with so many great performances throughout. Thank you to all the players who have battled away to make this happen. Once again Harry has provided the best wickets to play on and the girls have provided the best teas. Having missed out today we would like to celebrate next week at the Club. Hope to see you all there and look forward to a new challenge next year.

With the cancellation of the match against Styal, the Vale concluded fixtures for the season and assured promotion earning 7 points to end on 368 points, 36 ahead of nearest rivals Styal who have 1 game to play. Nine wins, four losses, three draws and 2 cancellations was the final return for the season. Congratulation to skipper Iain Johnson and all the players who participated. Also, huge thanks go to everyone who assisted the team behind the scenes delivering fantastic teas, excellent playing facilities and tremendous support.

**2nd XI: versus Styal away. No play due to rain.**

Disappointingly but as expected, the match was called off due to wet conditions. With one game left at Glazebury next week, the Vale lies in 7<sup>th</sup> position in the table (which is based on average points per match).

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

**1st XI: versus Frodsham away. FCC 97 all out. BVCC 98-2. Won by 8 wickets.**

After last week's results Vale's promotion push was very much back on as they arrived at top of the table Frodsham who were on an 11-match winning streak. With the sun beating down captain

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Iain Johnson lost the toss and was asked to field. Ian Willson uncharacteristically started the match with a wide full toss that was smashed to the boundary. That turned out to be the last bad ball from The Boy as we went back to beating the bat. Aiden Bottomley took the first wicket with score on 5 when he took a low caught and bowled off Williamson. Johnston and Brimble then battled away against tight bowling as both Steve Barrett and James Bottomley kept the pressure on. Having switched ends after 1 over Nomaan, having apparently gone lame, then pushed a ball through Johnston's defences and bowled him for 29. Wilkinson and Brimble took the score to 74 before the latter's vigil was ended at 22 when he top-edged The Num to John Ollier. At 81 A-Bot took a smart catch to remove Wilkinson (17) and then did it again to give Little Harry Mills his first wicket. Captain Warburton, often the scourge of the Vale, edged Nomaan to John-Boy who took a sharp catch and Frodsham were 81-6. Wright, whose big hitting helped win the reverse match earlier in the season managed to cart Little H over the ropes but was soon stumped by the agile keeper for 10 at 97. Frodsham were to score no more runs as the H-Bomb bowled Deal and Pidgeon in successive deliveries then Nummy picked up his fifth, trapping Chriscoli in front. Nomey 5-9, Little H 4-25, A-Bot 1-10. Simon Hopton and Jack Halsall opened and got off to a good start putting on 43 before Warburton bowled Jack for 28. John-Boy was bowled by Wright for 5 at 50 before the limping Num (18 not out) joined The Egg (46 not out) to see Vale home by 8 wickets. A great team performance picking up 25 points. A win next week against Styal will see Vale's first promotion since John Ryan was a young man. C'MON THE VALE!

**2nd XI: versus Trafford MV at home. TMVCC 236-10. BVCC 133-10. Lost by 103 runs** 'Roberts 7 wicket haul & hatrick can't prevent Vale loss'. On a bright and sunny September afternoon at Priory Street, the Vale suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of promotion chasing hopefuls Trafford MV. The visitors won the toss and elected to bat first. The Vale opening attack of Javed and Paul initially kept Trafford MV openers in check. After 15 overs Trafford began to take the game away from the Vale as Wilson 62, Donovan 59 and Auty 75 made the most of the conditions. Interestingly none of the other Trafford MV order made it to double figures. However, the Vale stuck to their task and Gareth Roberts returned career best figures of 7-53 including a hatrick to stem the Trafford onslaught. Crowson 1-38 and Javed 1-53 and a run out the other wicket takers. In reply, there were no demons in either the wicket or the Trafford MV attack as the Vale slid to 133 all out in the 30th over. Main contributions came from Nicholas 25, Fenton 16, Roberts 20 and Javed 20, and left the Vale feeling that they had not done themselves justice in the run chase.

### Saturday 26th August:

**1st XI: versus Hartford at home. BVCC 114 all out. Hartford 95 all out. Won by 19 runs.** Hartford won the toss & fielded first. Vale scored 114 in 31 overs with Jack Halsall top scoring with 44 & Nomaan Hasan supporting with 31. Whittle 3-30 and Pattisapu 3-45 were the pick of the bowlers. After early wickets from Aiden Bottomley (2-21), Vale spin-twins Nomaan Hasan (4-18) and Harry Mills (2-19) destroyed the middle & lower order to bowl Hartford out for 95 in the 37<sup>th</sup> over, thereby racking up 25 points for the Vale.

**2nd XI: versus Appleton 4th XI away. BVCC 87 all out. Appleton 152-8. Lost by 65 runs.** 'Paul & Crowson heroics just fail to rescue a draw for the Vale'. The scoreline doesn't do justice to the efforts and great team morale shown by the '8 man' Vale 2nd XI at Appleton. Despite the sterling efforts of several members to field a full team the Vale were 3 men short for this fixture and were grateful to 14-year-old Steve Keegan for standing in at short notice. Steve then performed admirably in the field and scored a run on debut. Appleton won the toss and took first use of another 'Appleton green top'. Despite the large amount of

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available spaces the Vale attack performed brilliantly to limit the home side to 152. Paul 3-20, Roberts 3-30, young Ben Langley 1-23 and Ryan 1-56. All the bowlers kept a tight line with minimum loose deliveries, backed up by some excellent ground fielding and catching. In response, the Vale top order encountered an opening attack which belied their lowly position in the table, with both movement and uneven bounce proving a challenge. Ryan 16 and Turner 17 batted doggedly to counter this threat, however both fell with 19 overs remaining. Up stepped Damo Paul and Bill Crowson, into a situation they had both faced previously. Resisting all that Appleton could throw at them, the pair resisted until the 40th over when Damo was undone by the returning opening bowler with a fast 'yorker'. A brilliant team effort by the '8 man' team, with bags of encouragement, backing each other up and showing loads of team spirit throughout the 45 overs in the field. Well done fellas.

### Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August:

**Vikings versus Bollington away. BCC 121-6. BVCC 68-10. Lost by 53 runs.**

The Vikings' season came to an end with defeat in the quarter final play-off match against Cheshire O40s South-East champions Bollington. The Vikings did well to restrict Bollington to 121 the highlight being a spectacular one-handed catch in the outfield by Steve Bottomley. In reply Vale never really looked like reaching the target after making a terrible start, being 14-3 off 6. Only Thorpe 31\* reached double figures. Bollington's bowlers made great use of the conditions, Palazzo 2-19, Johnson 2-4 off 4 and Aldridge 3-9 made light work of the Vikings fabled batting line-up. Bollington were deserved winners and in retrospect it was no disgrace to lose to a side that have won all their matches this year and have now been in the finals 5 years out of the last 6. We wish them luck in winning a semi-final for the first time this year. A season to be proud of for the Vikings who can still consider that they have over achieved this year. Averages and player of the year to be given out after the friendly match between The Vikings and the rest of the Bowdon Vale club on September 10th at the Vale. A special thanks to Harry (old and young☺) for their work on the ground this year and to Rosie for the delicious teas. Finally, none of this would have been possible without the organisational skills of Steve Bottomley, his twelfth consecutive year as team organiser, and the support this year of vice-captain Jon Jessop. See you at the Vale on September 10th.

### Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> August:

**1<sup>st</sup> XI: versus Mellor away. No play due to rain.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> XI: no fixture.**

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

**1<sup>st</sup> XI: versus Kerridge at home. BVCC 218-9 dec. KCC 93-7. Won by 125 runs.**

On a sunny day at the Vale captain Iain Johnson won the toss and chose to bat against an 8 man Kerridge side. Simon Hopton (34) and Jack Halsall (39) opened and made batting look easy, putting on 76 before both fell within a run of each other. Saqib and Nomaan pushed the score past 100 with Nummy hitting a six and two fours before he went for a wander and was controversially given run out for 21 sparking a heated debate between the batter, the fielders and groundsman Harry Wood. When Saqib was caught for 14 Vale stood at 117-4 and in need of a partnership. Up stepped club ginger Alex Power and Citizen Abs who batted nicely until at 186 Abs was well caught for 33. As Vale pushed for quick runs so as to declare Stokesy was bowled for 42. Captain Duck Johnson got a second baller, Asim was stumped for 7 and Little Harry Mills was caught on the boundary for a golden. Joel Wesly and Arsalan Javed helped the score to 218-

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9 in 40 overs when the innings was closed. Asim and Arsalan opened and bowled well but Harbige and Regan were resolute in defence. After 22 overs the score stood at 58-0. This moved on to 66 before Little Harry, after struggling with the footmarks, went round the wicket and bowled Harbige for 12. Grayston stuck around with Regan until at 84 he chipped Nummy to Jack. Nomaan then bowled McKeith for 5 before Little Harry took the prize wicket of the irritating Regan trapped LBW for a well-made 58. Joel cleverly wound Nummy up by dropping a dolly and the next three balls were all straight claiming Januszowski and captain Banks LBW and last man Ravenscroft bowled to complete his second hat-trick of the year and a 125 run victory. Nomaan 5-34, Little Harry 2-27. Fair play to Kerridge for making a game of it but a vital 25 points bagged.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Ashley Academy away. BVCC 146-10. ACC 149-2. Lost by 8 wickets.**

Having travelled to the away match against Ashley via grounds at Rostherne & Ashley, Vale finally ended up at the right location, Mere. This was a sign of things to come as the day just didn't go the Vale way. Batting first, openers Mark Nicholas & Ben Langley both fell cheaply, Mike Drape followed for 18; then a promising stand of 55 between Keith Fenton (18) & Gareth Roberts (45) brought Vale back into the game. Drinks brought wickets as 106-5 became 116-8 & then 122-9. Stalwarts John Ryan & Graeme Stacey (1) dropped anchor, batting out overs 32 to 44 in a stand of 24, Ryan finishing unbeaten on 26. Veteran Brian Birtles was the pick of the Ashley bowlers bagging 6-50 off his 14 overs. Despite good opening spells from Damo Paul & Jake Drape, Ashley made a solid start at 3 an over reaching 45-0 off the first 15. The spin trio of Graeme Stacey, Mark Nicholas (1-21) & Gareth Roberts (1-19) gave it their best shot, Nicholas bowling Broaders for 32 & Roberts bowling Johnston for 19. Despite the attempts of John Greening, Ben Langley & John Ryan (eight bowlers in all), the Vale had no answer to opener Griffiths who finished unbeaten on 80 off 42 overs, leading them to victory & leaving the Vale to find their way home via Macclesfield.

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

#### **1<sup>st</sup> XI : versus Heaton Mersey Village away. BVCC 135-10. HMVCC 136-9. Lost by 1 wicket.**

Having lost narrowly earlier in the season Vale arrived at a sunny Heaton Mersey looking for revenge. Captain Iain Johnson lost the toss and as in the first game was asked to bat. Simon Hopton and Mike Drape opened the batting on a difficult wicket and it wasn't long before Papa was caught behind for 4 off Malik. The same bowler had Simon caught and Vale were 14-2. Saqib (15) and Nomaan (14) battled hard for every run before George got Nummy to push to cover. Ex-captain Steve Barrett pushed his first ball back to Malik and Saqib was caught in the deep. Asim (8) survived 26 balls before becoming Malik's fifth wicket and Vale were 58-6. Captain Johnson was bowled by George at 74 before Joel Wesly helped Citizen Abs push the score past 100. When Joel fell Ian Willson came in and took the attack to the hosts hitting an amazing six into the field closely followed by his bat. Abs' brave knock came to an end when he was caught for 31 at 114 but little Harry Mills looked more assured than anyone as he helped The Boy put on 21 for the last wicket. There was a bit of luck as the ball hit Ian's stumps and flew to the boundary without dislodging a bail. Malik finished with 5-22 as Vale set about defending 135. Ian and Asim opened the bowling and as in the first game the openers came out swinging. There was a very close shout for LBW first ball and HMW managed to get to 19 before The Boy bowled Wellington. He soon won an LBW against captain Jowery for 10 and at 24-2 things looked promising. However, Chapman was becoming a pain hitting well to leg while Parchment stuck around. After surviving 27 balls for his 4 Ian hit his Parchment's stumps. Honeyghan was run out by Asim for 0 but put on 23 runs and HMV were 76-4. At 88 Steve Barrett got Malik to edge behind and Vale were back in it. There was then a 29-run partnership before Hobson top-edged

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Nummy to Saqib. With 10 runs required Nummy bowled Samuels for 0. The Boy, now bowling round the wicket, trapped Newell for a 21 ball duck and bowled Deans with three still needed. Chapman managed to edge Nummy through a vacant third slip and brought the scores level. Some comical running nearly brought about a run out but Vale failed to take their chances as the heroic Chapman hit to leg the winning runs finishing on 84 not out. Ian 5-45, Nummy 2-25, Steve Barrett 1-23. Deja vu all over again. 9 points

**2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Appleton 3 at home. BVCC 161-10. ACC 155-10. Won by 6 runs. Vale edge nail-biter as Javed bags another '5-fer'.**

On a bright sunny afternoon at Priory Street, Appleton won the toss and invited the Vale to take first use of a green looking track after a wet week. The Vale top order responded with contributions from Mark Nicholas (22), John Ryan (21) and the returning Freddie Fenton (24). This laid the foundation for a hard-hitting knock of 46 from John Ollier. A mini collapse then followed which allowed Arsalan Javed (18) and Jake Drape (4 not out) to bat intelligently to try and see out the 45 overs. Javed unfortunately pulled a long hop down square leg's throat to see the Vale innings close in the 42<sup>nd</sup> over. Once again it was youngster Javed who was the leading light as the Vale set about the Appleton response. In tandem with Pat Fox they kept the Appleton response in check, with Javed picking up three wickets in his first 7 over spell, Fox bowling without any luck. Mark Nicholas wheeled away at the bottom end in a marathon 13 over spell to return 4-45, aided by a fine running catch by Freddie Fenton behind the stumps. Javed returned for his second spell to bag another two wickets, and his second 5 wicket haul in consecutive weeks, as Appleton edged towards their target. The last pair had taken them to within 7 runs of a winning total as the tension built. It was Jake Drape returning for his second spell who uprooted the dangerous Warham's off stump, that saw the Vale over the line in a tense finish. 25 points to the Vale in an excellent game of cricket played in the right spirit.

### Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August:

**Vikings versus Brooklands away. BVCC 98-9. BCC 101-4. Lost by 6 wickets.**

With second place already assured Vale Vikings ended the league season with another loss. Despite Hopton's 26 and Dean (19) making a good start the Vale middle order failed to capitalise and finished on 98-9. Law 4-17 the best of the Brooklands bowlers. White (30\*) and Jones (21) ensured that Brooklands reached the target with ease. Nicholas 2-21 and Jordan 2-12 kept up their challenge for leading wicket taker. The Vikings will now face Bollington in a regional quarter final play off at Bollington with the likely date of Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August. Should they win that game they will take part in a finals day at Chester Broughton Hall on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

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

**1<sup>st</sup> XI : versus Saughall at home. SCC 112-10. BVCC 113-4.**

After Friday's heavy rain it came as a pleasant surprise that the Vale pitch was dry enough to play. Captain Iain Johnson won the toss and put Saughall in to bat. Ian Willson and Aiden Bottomley opened against the Huxley twins. It was clear that batting would be tough and soon The Boy trapped one of the twins LBW for 1. A-Bot got Ballard to nick to Little Harry Mills who took a sharp diving catch at slip. Captain Roberts hit Citizen Abs to James Bottomley then trapped the other twin James Huxley (25) LBW. Keeper McCartney (16) twice hit Nomaan over his head for six but Nummy had his revenge when another hack ended up on his stumps. Moore tried to come down the wicket to the Numster and was brilliantly stumped by the captain who then caught Alen Roberts off Little H for 6. Watts (30) batted well and tried to get Saughall to a decent score but was caught brilliantly by number 1 son off Asim. Little H then knocked

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Barrow's off stump out the ground and the innings ended at 112 when James took his third catch to dismiss Healing off Asim. Boy 1-9, A-Bot 1-12, Nums 2-32, C Abs 2-19, Little H 2-12, Asim 2-9. Simon Hopton and Mike Drape set off in reply with The Egg cracking a couple of early boundaries. However, Papa (4) was unlucky to see a defensive shot trickle back onto his stumps. James (2) got a brute of a ball from Tony Roberts that Watts brilliantly caught and Nummy (7), after nearly being caught the ball before gave further catching practice to James Huxley leaving Vale 33-3. Simon and Daddy Bottomley playing nicely despite the conditions and at drinks the score was 75-3. However, Simon fell in the next over for 40 leaving Asim (11 not out) to join Steve (36 not out) to finish the job with no further alarms. A good all round performance 20 points.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Warrington 4 away. BVCC 159-8. WCC 60-9. Won by 9 runs.**

'Javed bags another '5-fer': The Vale stormed to a convincing 99 run victory led by another devastating opening spell by Arsalan Javed who bagged his second 5 wicket haul of the season. The Vale were asked to bat first and skipper Power orders to bat 'the 45' were executed to perfection by Turner (30) and Barrett (50) in the top order. A slight wobble in the middle order brought some intelligent late order batting from Greening, Fox and Javed to post a competitive total, with the Vale being all out in the 44th over. (nearly job done skipper!). In response Warrington had no answer to Javed and his opening partner Barrett and were soon reduced to 12 for 5. Inevitably the rear-guard action ensued, with Agar (19 not out) providing stubborn resistance. Skipper Power rang the bowling changes which saw Fox pick up a couple of wickets, before Javed returned to clean up the number 11 with the first ball of his second spell. Another excellent team performance.

### Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> July:

**Vikings versus Cheadle Hulme at home: CHCC 130-10. BVCC 109-2. Lost by 21 runs.** The Vikings suffered their first defeat since losing to Urmston on 10th May. Although a disappointing defeat it puts the team's achievements this season into perspective. Losing against last year's winners is no disgrace but it was a match that really should have been won. With Cheadle Hulme's openers going cheaply it looked like they would be contained to around 100 but Battye 30\* and Stringer 32\* batted well punishing some unusually loose deliveries from the Vale bowlers. The highlight of their innings was another (his third!) over 40's hat-trick from the in-form Nicholas (3-17). Beckley (25) scored some late runs taking the ten-man team's total to a par 130. Vale started briskly with Dean (30\*) timing the ball as well as he has all season and were 61-0 off 10, but Jessop (28) and Webb (25) couldn't score quickly enough against some accurate bowling from Dearden (0-15) and Beckley (0-15) to set up the usual Vale Grandstand finish. For a change Vale failed to make use of their strong batting line up and finished 21 runs short of the target. The Vikings are now guaranteed second position and can't catch Urmston in first place. A quarter final tie will be arranged away against Bollington from the South-East group.

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

#### **1<sup>st</sup> XI : versus Mossley away. BVCC 187-7. MCC 103-9. Match drawn.**

Overnight rain meant a lively wicket at Mossley. Captain Iain Johnson lost the toss and Vale were batting. Simon Hopton and Mike Drape opened and had to survive some difficult times as Papa was peppered by Turner and was hit a couple of dangerous blows before calling for a helmet. However, after two warnings in his four overs Turner was taken out of the attack. The opening partnership was broken at 42 by Brown who bowled Mike for 19. Chances went down before Simon too fell to Brown for a well-made 42. Nomaan (9) was caught and bowled by the same bowler and returning number one son James Bottomley (2) was Brown's fourth wicket leaving Vale 108-4. The slide continued as Saqib fell to Simms for 30 and Citizen Abs to captain Cresswell for

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2. At 116-6 things were looking dodgy but captain Johnson (20\*) helped Daddy Bottomley put on 52 before the latter was run out for 44. Number two son Aiden Bottomley (9\*) struck a well-timed boundary off Lawton and Vale finished on 187-7. Brown 4-31. Ian Willson and Aiden opened the bowling and both bowled quickly causing problems for the batters. The Boy made the breakthrough when he bowled Turner for 14 then got the big wicket of Cresswell leg before for 11 leaving Mossley 34-2. As with last week there was no attempt to win by the hosts and Vale were having to work hard. James Bottomley hit Wright's stumps at 57 then French joined Carney and blocked over after over. Nummy, Citizen and Little Harry Mills were all tried but no wickets were forthcoming. With seven overs left The Boy and Aiden came back and Ian immediately had opener Carney LBW for 22 off a zillion balls. In his next over he bowled French and suddenly Vale had a sniff. Aiden then got Rigby chipping to Little H then bowled Daniel Lawton leaving three overs to get three wickets. James Lawton and Brown saw out two and a half of them until with three balls left Brown scooped a catch to Steve. Next ball Ian hit the stumps of Oakes leaving him on a hat-trick with one ball to go and one wicket left. It wasn't to be though as Simms managed to keep it out and Vale were thwarted yet again. The Boy finished with 6-17, Aiden with 2-22 and James 1-28. So close! 17 points

### **2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Timperley at home. TCC 176-8. BVCC 178-7. Won by 3 wickets.**

This was a good toss for the Vale to win & they took advantage of a drying wicket to put pressure on the visitors who has thrashed them earlier in the season. Arslan Javed (3-17) bowled well to peg Timperley to 34-3 off the first 13 overs. Joel Wesley bowled an excellent spell & was unlucky only to return 1-22 in his 9 overs. Shukla held the innings together with an excellent 82 & was last out bowled by Steve Barrett (1-12). He was supported well by Cross (21) until John Greening took an excellent catch at deep square leg off Greame Stacey (2-53). Gareth Roberts exchanged keeper's pads with John Ryan to pick up 1-30 off 9 overs. In truth, the Vale had done well to restrict Timperley to 176 given 5 dropped catches. We even dropped a sausage at tea time but were saved by the 2-minute rule. Fuelled by an excellent tea, Vale made an uncertain start losing Ben Langley with only 8 on the board bringing Steve Barrett to the wicket to join Pete Williamson. They put on 96 for the second wicket with Williamson (41) crashing a rank long hop to extra cover & Barrett (56) losing his wicket to Neem who picked up 4-33. The Vale middle order stuttered until John Ryan (18) & Joel Wesley (26) formed a winning partnership to get us close to the line, allowing "the Finisher" John Greening to smash the winning boundary in his unbeaten 10. All told, an excellent victory, a big team effort & 20 points to boot.

### Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July:

#### **Vikings versus Sale away: SCC 116-8. BVCC 117-5. Won by 5 wickets.**

This evening saw a well fought match between Sale CC and The Vikings at Sale CC. Sale CC batted first and went off like a rocket with M Almond (30\*), I Harrop (21), N Davenport (13) and M Rowley (20) being the main contributors. At one stage they were 84 off just 9 overs. Captain Webb's decision to take the pace off the ball worked wonders with Gareth Roberts (4-0-13-5) and Mark Nicholas (4-0-13-2) bowling like Emburey and Edmonds all those years ago. It was a brilliant spell of spin bowling that was backed by our very own Bob Taylor behind the stumps, Simon Hopton taking 3 stumpings. From such a dominant position, Sale CC were restricted to 116-8 off 20 overs. What a second half bowling performance from The Vikings! Unfortunately the start to our innings was not great but also disheartening. Marcus Dean having seen off the first over saw Simon Hopton out for a first baller but then Nigel Halsall was badly hurt taking a single and an ambulance was called once we managed to carry Nigel off the pitch. It appears to be his hip and once the paramedics arrived (at the end of our innings) gas and air was given before taking Nigel off to hospital. Nigel - hope you are recovering well and on behalf of The Vikings we

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wish you a speedy recovery. All the very best mate, see you soon!!! You will be big miss for the next few games but take care and recover well. So with the score at 5-1 (albeit it 5-2) in the second over, Jon Jessop joined Marcus in the middle after a delay to allow Nigel to be carried off. Marcus Dean (19) and Jon Jessop (26) saw off Sale's opening bowlers and steadied the ship and then the big hitters came into play with Ian Jordan's fine run of form continuing with an unbeaten 31 and Peter Thorpe (24\*) seeing us home but not without a scare! Both Gary Webb and Rick Gandy fell first ball bringing the number of golden ducks in the innings to 3 - how many teams have ever won a match when three of their batsmen have got first ballers? Answers on a postcard please (are there postcards anymore?) To put Peter Thorpe's innings into context once the mighty Jordy had retired, we needed: 42 off 5 overs; 28 off 4 overs; 18 off 3 overs; 14 off 2 overs; 10 off 1 over. At this stage it was getting very dark and also raining heavily so Thorpey batted like his namesake Graham all those years ago in the dark of Pakistan to take us to victory! It was good to see John Ollier, Peter Shakespeare and Paul Hunter at the match and now roll on next week... Up The Vikings!!!!

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

**1<sup>st</sup> XI : versus Malpas at home. BVCC 200-4 dec. MCC 168-3. Match drawn.**

With captain Iain Johnson locked away in the bank till 2pm it was Steve Bottomley who won the toss and Vale were batting in the sunshine. Simon Hopton and Mike Drape opened and pushed the score along nicely. Simon survived a scare as he was caught off a full toss that was adjudged a no ball and Papa Drake was given in off a stumping attempt which surprised everyone. However, with the score on 81 Simon was less fortunate when given run out for 49. Saqib Shafiq hit a six and then was caught next ball for 7. Nomaan joined Papa and shocked onlookers with a couple of forward defensives before the real Nummy arrived and crashed the bowling around. At 149 Mike was caught behind for 41 and after hitting his fourth six to bring up his 50 Nummy was caught on the boundary (honestly!) leaving Vale 166-4. With a declaration imminent Kartic (21) and Steve (17) not out pushed the score past 200 before the former was run out and Vale declared at 201-5 after 42 overs. Jake Drape and Ewok Damo Paul opened the bowling and bowled tidily but without success as it became apparent that Malpas weren't going for the runs. Kartic and Nomaan also bowled nicely and eventually Nomaan made the breakthrough at 91 when skipper Rickett top-edged a sweep and Diddy Damo took a smart catch. Lyes came in and batted 26 balls for his single until Papa Drape came into the attack and forced him into a shot which brought a one-handed catch from Little Harry Mills. Harry then had Charlton caught by Steve with the score at 128 but there were no more wickets as Parry 74 and Roberts 19 saw Malpas to 168-3 off 48 overs. A strange game leaving Vale with 14 points and still two points clear at the top.

**2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Appleton 4 away. BVCC 114-10. ACC 117-7. Lost by 3 wickets.**

Disappointingly, Vale under-performed in a match that should have been closer than it actually was. Both captains would have fielded if they had won the toss so it was Vale openers Mark Nicholas (18) and Ben Langley (7) that struggled on a pitch & with atmospheric conditions that helped the bowlers - in other words the ball swung in the air & moved off the pitch. Most of the Vale batsmen gave their wickets away, except for Gareth Roberts who gave the score an air of respectability crashing 42 when all seemed lost. Cumberland did the damage with 6-38 & the Vale were skittled for 114 in only 27 overs. At 18-3 we thought we had Appleton on the ropes as Pat Fox (2-19) and Arslan Javed (2-15) used the conditions well. Parker held their innings together with a steadfast 36, well supported by Sander (24), putting on 65 for the fourth wicket. Nicholas joined the attack spinning his way to 2-19 & Roberts swapped the keeping gloves with Fox to bag 1-12. With little luck in the field and despite the return of the excellent Arslan Javed, the Vale were unable to stop the flow of runs & lost in the 37<sup>th</sup> over.

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## Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July:

**Vikings versus Bowdon at home: BCC 103-7. BVCC 105-3. Won by 7 wickets.**

In most seasons this would be viewed as the most important fixture but with the Vikings sitting in second place and Bowdon adrift at the bottom it was a case of banana skin avoided. Simpson (34\*) always saves his best performances for the Vale and gave Bowdon a good start but a succession of excellent run outs kept the score in check. Gandy (2-10) took the valuable wicket of ex-Lancs Wood with one of the balls of the season, clean bowling him in a wicket maiden. Halsall was also on fire and finished his spell with a wicket maiden followed by a double wicket maiden. The Bowdon innings stalled through excellent bowling and fielding and they finished on a below par 103-7. For most of the season the opening pair of Dean and Hopton have been the utmost in reliability but both fell cheaply on this occasion causing a few flutters. Nicholas (12) and Jessop (32\*) steadied the longship but Halsall (33\*) took the weaker Bowdon attack apart launching three sixes out of the ground. In the end a comfortable victory by seven wickets. Next week: Sale (A)

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

**1<sup>st</sup> XI: versus Rostherne away. Match conceded by Rostherne.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> XI: versus Europa Exiles at home. BVCC 219-5. EECC 110-10. Won by 109 runs.**

With the sun beating down young John Ryan won the toss and had no hesitation in batting. Mark Nicholas and Ben Langley opened and batted beautifully pushing the score past 50 without any alarms. JR commented that it reminded him of when he was a lad watching W.C. Grace and C.B. Fry batting. Mark passed his own fifty in some style and Ben joined in with some glorious drives before being bowled by Miller for 24 having put on 95. That brought in clone Papa Drape. The two scampered their way to 124 before Mark missed one off Drummond and was bowled for a fine 85. Frazer "the seeker" Meadowcroft (5) went back to a straight one at 132 before Gareth "have a look" Roberts smashed his first ball for four, and with Papa put the Exiles to the sword. As the ball was flying in and out of the fields around things got confusing for some as Vale appeared to have lost Frazer. Then Harry pointed out that he was in the opposite field looking for a ball found 20 mins earlier! Despite the frantic calls from the players and Mark telling him to move to his left he carried on until captain Ryan walked round to tell him. Gareth was eventually caught for a 16 ball 36 with Vale 194-4. John Greening (4) helped Paps push the score to 215 before being bowled off the penultimate ball of the innings. That left Pat "fiery" Fox to hit the last ball for 4 finishing the innings on 219-5 with Mike Drape 45 not out. Arslan Javed and club mascot Damo Paul opened the bowling. It took two balls before Arslan hit Bruce's stumps. In his next over he did the same to Clinton and then he had Miller caught by Roberts and bowled Clarke, and Diddy Damo bowled Bradbury, Exiles were 22-5. From then on it was a waiting game as Daniels and Hodgson set about saving the match. Eventually, with the score at 62 Lord Stacey bowled the former for 31 and repeated the dose on Drummond for 8. Heaps was helped to the crease by Gareth and Damo (he was still quicker than half of Vale's team). With overs ticking away the pressure started to build. Captain Ryan, off his long run up, managed to find the edge of Heaps bat and was well caught by Foxy with 12 overs to go bringing captain Harwood in to join Hodgson. Vale threw everything at them with Arslan back and Lord Stacey switching ends. With two overs remaining Arslan found the edge and Fiery did the rest sending the capacity crowd wild. Arslan finished with 5-18, Diddy 1-22, Lord Stacey 2-33, captain Ryan 1-8. A valuable 25 points. Anyone seen Frazer?

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

**Vikings versus Cheadle away: CCC 140-6. BVCC 140-7. Match tied.**

Unbelievably the Vikings tied for the second time in two matches after having only two previous ties in over 11 years. This was again 3 points gained rather than 1 point lost. Loose bowling, some sloppy fielding and a bit of bad luck gave Cheadle 25 more runs than they should have achieved. They also made the classic mistake of "this bloke's got no kit, wearing trainers - keep him in" next over goes for 20 runs. The ball continually fell between fielders to everyone's frustration but credit to Cheadle they went for their shots and mostly came off. Blood reached his 30\* quickly, Bardsley more slowly but Shazad slashed hard for a rapid 31\*. Gandy 1-16 and Jordan 2-29 were the pick of the bowlers and there was more to come from both of them. The reliable Hopton (30\*) provided stability at the top of the order with some of the other front line batsmen struggling to score quickly enough. At 59-4 off 11 the target seemed beyond reach but as has been the case all season when some batsmen don't come off others step up to the plate. Firstly, Dean 19 and Thorpe 27 brought Vale back into with 10 runs off overs 15 and 16 but both went in consecutive balls. With 3 overs to go Gandy and Jordan came to the crease needing 35 to win. 9 came off over 18 then Gandy was dropped first ball of the next over bringing Jordan on strike. The next 3 balls went 4,4, and then 6. 9 required off the last and in an identical situation to the one against Whalley Range two weeks earlier 1 was needed of the last ball but Gandy was stumped leaving the scores level.

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

**1<sup>st</sup> XI: no fixture**

**2<sup>nd</sup> XI: versus Glazebury at home: BVCC 62-10. GCC 63-8. Lost by 2 wickets.**

Vale came second in a low scoring game that they could have won, only for a little more luck. Batting first on a green-top, the Vale opening partnership of John Ryan & Mark Nicholas didn't last long with Mark spooning a caught-and-bowled catch for the first of Carroll's 4 wickets. Copy-paste that shot for several others as Vale batsmen came and went in similar fashion off both Carroll (4-29) and Caine (4-19). Mike Drape managed 17 runs of resistance and Ben Langley played a solid innings to see the Vale all out for 62 in 34 overs. We thought that this would not be an easy wicket to bat on & we were proved right as Harry Mills reduced the opposition to 9-3 off the first 5 overs. Jake Drape bowled a tight opening spell of 6-3-8-0 and Arslan Javed replaced him to bowl just as tight taking 1-8 in his first six overs. His seventh over was the most memorable as he took 3 wickets, including a smart catch by Ben Langley to dismiss dangerman Hargreaves for 22. Damo Paul bowled a tight spell, Jake Drape returned to pick up a wicket (1-14) & Mark Nicholas turned his arm, showing his Haka skills in 2 very close but unsuccessful LBW appeals. Until number 10 batsman Carroll arrived, Glazebury had registered 6 ducks, beautifully drawn in the scorebook by artist Iain Johnson, guesting as celebrity scorer for the day. However, Carroll's number in the scorebook belied his batting skills as he saw them to victory scoring an unbeaten 15. Vale had pushed the game into the 38<sup>th</sup> over & had come very close - but no cigar - and only 4 points to show from the day. We deserved better.

## Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June:

**Vikings versus Urmston at home: No play due to rain**

## Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June:

**1<sup>st</sup> XI: versus Styal away. SCC 147-10. BVCC 140-10. Lost by 7 runs.**

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Vale welcomed back Dr. Karthic as they arrived at Styal under overcast skies. Captain Johnson lost the toss and Styal chose to bat. Ian Willson, playing his first game of the season, and Jake Drape opened the bowling on what looked a decent wicket. The new ball was lost in the sixth over which seemed a blessing as Baby Drape immediately had Yousaf skying a pull that was well caught by Little Harry Mills. At 57 Asim knocked Johnson's off stump out the ground and three runs later Harrison hit Little Harry to Karthic at point. Captain Morton helped Pickles push the score to 79 before the impressive Asim had him caught by Boy Willson, then Harry tossed up a perfect off spinner and bowled Shawcross. Saxon and Morton got Styal past the 100 mark before Karthic bowled Pickles for 28 and Saxon for 13. Tatton hit some lofty blows before a smart stumping by Simon Hopton gave Karthic his third. Soon he had another as Saqib took a wonderful catch running over his shoulder and Abs Afzal removed last man Amir with another lightening stumping from The Egg, finishing the innings on 147. Karthic 4-15, Asim 2-16, Little Harry 2-27, Baby Drape 1-22, Abs 1-33. Simon and Karthic opened but found runs hard to come by. Hopton was first out bowled by Soni for 7 then Karthic was caught behind for 8 leaving Vale 16-2. Abs and Saqib batted well before the latter was run out from a direct hit for 10. Abs was caught at slip for 20 and with Vale's run rate becoming static Asim was trapped by a shooter and Ginger Alex Power played on, both off Tatton. With the score 59-6 captain Duck Johnson joined Steve Bottomley. With some beautiful late cuts through first and second slips he moved the score passed 100 before his luck ran out and was well caught at point off Shawcross for 20. Soon after, Steve was also well taken, this time by keeper Pickles off Yousaf for a battling 28 and with 40 still required it looked all over. However, Baby Drape and The Boy counter-attacked with Ian hitting his first ball for four then followed it with a mighty six. Jake joined in with a couple of quality fours and some good running leaving Vale requiring 8 to win before Coventry bowled Willson for 21. Jake (14) then tried to smash Shawcross out of Styal but missed and a great match finished in disappointment. However, 11 points were acquired and Vale are still standing top going into their free week.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> XI: versus Styal at home. SCC 150-10. BVCC 154-7. Won by 3 wickets.**

This was the Stacey Roberts show; and I don't mean the mobile Beauty Therapist from west Wales (yes, she does exist, Google it if you don't believe me); Graeme Stacey for taking a career best 7-30 off 13.4 overs and Gareth Roberts for his brutal 54 that contained 5 sixes & 4 fours. Losing the toss meant that visitors Styal elected to bat & lost opener Fernando early to a jaffa from Arslan Javed (1-25). Skipper Middleton (38) & Jackson (26) steadied the ship before Damian Paul struck in his spell of 1-12 removing Jackson in the 20<sup>th</sup> over with the score on 68. Arslan Javed ran out dangerman Wood for 31 with the score on 140. Stacey took wickets at regular intervals, was on a hat trick at one point & cleaned up the tail in the 43<sup>rd</sup> over. In reply openers Pete Williamson (24) & Mike Drape (22) put on 51 for the first wicket in 8 overs. Enter Gareth Roberts in the 14<sup>th</sup> over and it immediately started to rain; sixes & fours pouring down for 10 overs. John Greening shouldered arms to a straight one & was clean bowled for 2, leaving the cool heads of Ben Langley (7\*) and Damien Paul (8\*) to see the Vale to victory in the 26<sup>th</sup> over and 25 points in the bag to boot.

### Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June:

#### **Vikings versus Whalley Range away. WRCC 152-3. BVCC 152-6. Match tied.**

It was a thrilling encounter at Whalley Range (which was a first for most of the Vale team). The Rangers batted first on a good wicket and with humid conditions. Akhtar 31\* and Des 28 provided early stubborn resistance and kept a good scoring rate reaching 63 off the first 10. The Vikings failed to contain Whalley's middle order going for 89 off the last 10 overs. The big hitter Mansha 15\* and Moat 29\* taking 44 off the last four overs in a sudden downpour. With a target

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of 7.5 per over and the outfield slowing up it was always going to be a difficult task but Dean 29 and Hopton 31\* provided a foundation for Webb 22, Thorpe 19 and the inform Bottomley 27\* to attack in the last 10. In a frantic last few overs wickets were sacrificed to scramble as many runs as possible, with a ball to go the scores were level and debutant Pete Clements was left with the unenviable task of facing his first ball for a few years needing 1 to win, Kahn fired in a perfect yorker and bowled him. 3 points gained rather than a point lost. A big game next week as BV find themselves 1 point behind opponents Urmston who now top the table on their own. Is it too early to say title decider? 8 pointer?

### Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June:

**1<sup>st</sup> XI: versus Frodsham at home. BVCC 152-10. FCC 154-6. Lost by 4 wickets.**

A scorching day saw captain Iain Johnson win the toss and Vale were batting. Things however started badly as Simon Hopton (1) was caught at slip. Asim Rafiq and Mike Drape both bagged ducks as Vale struggled. Saqib Shafiq (42) did his best to imitate the missing Nummy by hitting some glorious shots before being caught on the boundary. Steve Bottomley battled for his 18 before captain Warburton trapped him in front. Abs Afzal joined Alex Power for a cack-handed partnership and played nicely, bringing Vale past 100 before the Citizen hit what looked like a straight six. However, the ball plugged and Warburton lobbed the ball in and ran Abs out. That seemed to rattle Vale as Nigel Halsall, after being dropped first ball, was caught behind third ball; captain Johnson was trapped in front for a golden and Jake Drape became the fifth quack of the innings. Alex, however, was still fighting hard against both the bowling and bursting into flames. He hit his eighth boundary to bring up a superb fifty and then sent Warburton into the trees with a monster six. Little Harry Mills (4) helped the score to 152 before being bowled in the last over. Baby Drake and Asim opened the bowling. Asim soon made the breakthrough removing Grumble for 4. At 37 he then hit the stumps of both Chriscoli and Houghton and when the Unit had the dangerous Wilkinson LBW with his first ball and bowled Pidgeon for 1 Frodsham were 48-5. Halliwell and Warburton took the score to 70 before in his first over Abs trapped the former for 12. The next ball Wright whacked Abs into the bowling green and started a slog-fest which Vale were powerless to stop. Both batters hit 45 not out with 11 fours and 6 sixes between them finishing the game with a six. A disappointing end to a good game that swung both ways. Asim 3-34, Nigel 2-23, Abs 1-33. 9 points taken.

**2<sup>nd</sup> XI: versus Trafford MV away. TMVCC 181-10. BVCC 138-9. Lost by 43 runs.**

The 10 man Vale 2<sup>nd</sup> XI made hard work of their trip down the A56 to Trafford Metrovick on a gloriously sunny day. Losing the toss Vale made an excellent start in the field as Pat Fox (2-39) and Arsalan Javed (2-27) scythed through the top 4 batsmen to leave the home side 28-4 after 8 overs. Maybe the thought of sipping an ice-cold lager in the summer sun distracted the Vale as they proceeded to drop 7 catches, letting off kiwi top scorer Jack Auty (73) 5 times and his main support Rothwell (57) once as they hauled TMV out of a desperate situation. At one stage the Vale could have been chasing 240 plus but Greame Stacey (2-32) and Dave Gould (1-34) put TMV in check & Gareth Roberts swapped keepers pads for the ball to wrap up the innings taking 3-4 off 3.3 overs, leaving TMV all out for 181 in the 41<sup>st</sup> over. With 49 overs to overhaul the opposition score, veteran openers John Ryan & Pete Williamson took the score to 44 when Ryan (15) was caught at the wicket off one of Patel's bouncers in his 9-ball over. Gareth Roberts smashed his first 2 balls for four in a 22 run blitz and Williamson held out until the 28<sup>th</sup> over when he was caught at the wicket for 49. Louis Gould made a personal best of 10 and Vale's resistance collapsed as they were all out for 138 in the 31<sup>st</sup> over, with man-of-the-match Auty taking 4-11 off 5 overs. In hindsight, it was a great effort in the heat with 10 men and a side short on experienced batsmen, although the saying 'catches win matches' has never been so true.

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John Ryan safely deposited the 9 points in his bag & set off back down the A56 to bring them home to the Vale.

### Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June:

#### **Vikings versus Brooklands at home: BVCC 104-5. BCC 100-4. Won by 4 runs**

Vale Vikings ended the first half of the season on top of the table with another hard earned victory making it 5 wins out of seven. On another difficult wicket for batting Dean (24) and Hopton (33\*) made slow early progress. Brooklands "youthful" bowling side kept the scoring down until a late flurry from Halsall (22\*) and Jordan (8) took Vale past the seemingly unlikely 100 mark to 104-5. Winning breeds confidence and belief so they say but few would have believed that Vale would have much of a chance when Brooklands reached 55-0 after 11 overs. However unlike the Vale, Brooklands did not have the strength in depth to overcome some brilliant bowling from Halsall (0-13) and Hutton (1-13) both of whom were hit for a six making their figures more remarkable. Vale dropped 3 catches, all difficult, but came back strongly in the field with a great run out (Jordan) and then took two vital catches. Brooklands needed 9 to win off the last over, but Roberts (0-30) who had taken some early heavy hitting crucially bowled a perfectly controlled over restricting them to just 4. Brooklands were left scratching heads as to how they had lost but The Vikings march on. Next week: Whalley Rangers (A). Heads up: Joint leaders Urmston at home on 28th June.

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

#### **1<sup>st</sup> XI: versus Hartford away. BVCC 93-10. HCC 75-10. Won by 18 runs**

With rain falling all night and an uncovered wicket, Vale were pleasantly surprised that the Hartford ground was fit to play on time. Captain Johnson lost the toss and was put in to bat. Hopton and Rafiq opened and it soon became clear that it was going to be a tough afternoon. Simon edged Gopal behind for 0, then Asim was adjudged lbw for 1. Nomaan Hasan arrived in the 4th over with the score 2-2. Surprisingly he decided to go on the attack and hit spinner Whittle for 3 sixes. However, Safiq (0) hit to cover and then Nummy was caught on the boundary (who'd have thought) for 24. Ollier, Bottomley and Johnson all fell cheaply leaving Vale 33-7 in the 17th over. Abs Afzal and Joel Wesly chipped away until at 50 Citizen Abs was bowled by the impressive Gopal (4-9 off 14 overs). New boy Dom Turner in his own style helped see off the opening bowlers and then hit some nice shots in his 13 pushing the score to 82 and Little Harry Mills (7) struck a lovely boundary before being caught leaving Vale 93 all out. Joel for the second year running top scored with a fine 25 not out. Tea was taken in which time the rains came and for long periods it looked like that was that. However, with half an hour to go they relented and Hartford were left with 33 overs to chase the runs. Nummy and Little Harry opened on a now soggy wicket. With the ball difficult to grip the Vale bowlers did a fine job keeping the pressure on. Nummy won an LBW decision to remove Ranganthan and then another to claim Pickup before bowling Khan for 6. Whittle went on the attack and Hartford went past 50. Nummy removed the leg stump of Satish to keep Vale's hopes up and then the Citizen bowled an unplayable googly than bowled Whittle for 20. Still requiring 4 wickets and only 6 overs remaining everything was in the balance. However, Abs soon removed Gidfal and Brahana. Captain Buckley took his team to within 18 of victory before Asim hit his stumps and then very next ball Turner, who was suffering from gout, was hit on the foot right in front and Vale had pulled off an improbable win. Nummy 4-20, Abs 3-5, Asim 2-25. 25 more points. Phew!

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> XI: versus Wilmslow at home. WCC 162-10. BVCC 165-4. Won by 6 wickets.**

The Vale were at home against second in the league Wilmslow with both keeping one eye on the weather after a late start due to a wet pitch after a rainy morning. Huge thanks to Mike and

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Jake Drape and of course Harry for the hours of hard work that morning to get the pitch up to playing conditions and I use the words lightly as it was still wet in places. Wilmslow opened the batting on a sticky wicket and opening bowlers Jake Drape and Alex Power bowled quickly and tightly restricting their openers to 2 runs an over after ten overs. Power got the first scalp clean bowling Davidson for 16. A change of bowling and drinks brought on Nicholas and Stacey who were quickly rewarded, Nicholas got the opener Oakley for 33 and Stacey got the danger man Ashad for 46. Nicholas then got a few quick wickets helped by wooden-legged keeper Roberts who took two sharp stumpings and caught the captain where only Roberts heard the edge and the captain honourably walked. Nicholas ended on his best figures in 30 years of cricket 11-2-55-6. A great effort. Stacey also did well and finished on 11-1-41-3. Wilmslow ended up all out on 162. Nicholas and the returning John Ryan opened the batting for the Vale making slow progress in the tricky conditions against good bowling. Ryan uncharacteristically went early for 5 followed quickly by Alex Power for 1 (Alex said it was a good 1). Mike Drape steadied the ship with 27. Nicholas took one through the gap in his grill and came off for some ice and a breather and skipper Louis Power came to the crease and made a good captain's knock taking on Wilmslow strong bowling attack with apparent ease. After Mike was out, Roberts went in early because we were well behind the run rate making a quick 18 off two overs and then was bowled. Nicholas (39\*) returned to the middle after his blood injury and he and Louis Power (61\*) steadily walked us over the line with one over to spare. In short a great all-round performance once again in the field and with the bat and also bowling out a stronger opposition. Well done to all those concerned. The seconds are away next week.

### Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June:

**Vikings versus Cheadle Hulme away: BVCC 113-8. CHCC 102-7. Won by 11 runs.**

Vale proved that cricket is a game for the many not for the few with a fantastic team performance. When the home captain takes five minutes to decide what to do after winning the toss you might think that it would be a tricky wicket and it proved to be the case. Timing the ball was difficult all evening but with the Vikings strong batting line up and 6 and of the top seven reaching double figures meant a respectable target was set. Boundaries were especially difficult to come by, Vale managing just six with only Ollier (16) clearing the ropes. Bottomley (24) and Jessop (14) contributed some middle order runs quickly to reach 113-8. Cheadle Hulme also started slowly with opener Dare (20) finding it difficult against the accurate bowling of Jordan (1-12) and Thorpe (1-18). Some great catches, fielding and wicket keeping kept the pressure on but Stringer (31\*) and Potts (26) were proving difficult to shift and looked like bringing Cheadle back into the game. The return of Gandy (2-16) meant they stayed behind the run rate. The tension built and at one point Hopton showing his usual sense of fairness even requested that the umpire give a wide as it was just as wide as the ball before, the umpire duly obliged. Then Potts hit a six and a four off the first two balls of the 18th over to make it really interesting but Roberts got his man next ball caught Gandy. Higson (2-21) and Roberts (1-24) bowling at the death in the rain ensured the victory was achieved. A great team effort with all eleven players contributing keeping Bowdon Vale in top spot jointly with Urmston. Next week Brooklands (H)

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

**1<sup>st</sup> XI: versus Mellor at home: BVCC 240-7. MCC 152-10. Won by 88 runs.**

With the sun beating down at the Vale captain Johnson won the toss and chose to bat. With Karthic sunning himself in India, Simon Hopton opened with Asim Rafiq and started by hitting the first ball for four. The two put on 42 in 10 overs before Asim flicked a legside ball from Vallori and was caught for 15. Last week's 2nd team centurion Sadiq Shafiq nicked behind for 7 and Nomaan "caught on the boundary" Hasan was caught on the boundary for 8. Jack Halsall cut to

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gully for a duck and Simon, after batting wonderfully, tried an ugly slog off the similarly shaped Smith and was bowled for 44 leaving Vale in a precarious position on 78-5. Steve Bottomley joined John Ollier and the set about repairing the damage. Johnboy, having survived a caught behind appeal, was adjudged LBW for 24 to Robbie Tadman on 123. Citizen Abs Afzal joined Steve and with the bowling a little easier Vale took advantage. With good running (we saw successive threes hit) and clean hitting the two put on 104 before, with a declaration looming, Abs was bowled by Orr for 47. The innings was closed after 43 overs at 240-7 with Stevie B 71 not out. Vallori was the pick of the bowlers with 4-63. Jake Drape and Asim opened the bowling and soon found plenty of bounce in the wicket. With the pressure of excellent lines Satish Kumar cut hard at a ball from Baby D and was well caught inches off the ground by the citizen. Asim had Robbie Tadman pushing the ball to short cover where Jack took his usual great catch. Jake bowled Bailey with a beauty and then Asim had Senthikumar (32) well caught by Little Harry Mills and cleaned up keeper Last for 10 leaving Mellor 68-5. Captain Marsland and the big hitting Smith tried to counterattack but Nummy soon had the captain LBW for 11. Orr was well stumped by the heroic captain off Nums for 2 before Abs took over. He had Will Tadman caught behind for 1 then the big wicket of Smith for 44 nicely pouched by Steve in the deep. Karthic 8 (I thought he was in India?) and Vallori 21 not out entertained for a while before the former was stumped and the innings closed at 152. Asim 3-34, Abs 3-21, Baby D 2-17, Nums 2-46 Another really good bowling and fielding display. 25 points. Get in!

**2<sup>nd</sup> XI : no match**

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June:

**1<sup>st</sup> XI : versus Ashton on Mersey at home in T20: AOMCC 200-6. BVCC 141-10. Lost by 59 runs.**

Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> May:

**Vikings versus Sale at home: SCC 96-7. BVCC 99-1. Won by 9 wickets.**

We are joint 1st. What a team performance last night. Firstly, I (Andy Higson) am not technically gifted enough to produce the report as an attachment as Gary aka captain AWOL does so here it is. Not content with being the star fielder and batsman last week Steve Bottomley decided that he needed a little more pressure on him as team organiser, captain and wicketkeeper as well. First job the toss; such is Steve's skill as a negotiator Sale agreed to bat without the need for the toss. Sale were missing a few regulars as were the Vikings with Jonny "pick your fixtures" Jessop and irresponsible skipper Webb absent. Gareth Roberts and Nigel Halsall took the new ball and apart from one mighty blow for 6 kept it tight with Halsall taking the early scalp of Mark Almond; apparently Nigel never liked Soft Cell. The pressure continued with Hutton the perennial performer and the world's highest ranked all-rounder Ian Jordan keeping things tight before Jordan and Bottomley combined for a run out and Halsall and Bottomley for a second. Higson and Nicholas came on to finish things off with figures of 2 for 15 and 1 for 11. Halsall completed his 4 overs with figures of 1 for 9. It was a wonderful bowling and fielding performance with no mistakes and Sale were contained to 96 for 7 off 20 overs. With no Sale players retiring and all struggling to time it and Sale having a strong attack we feared a tricky run chase. Jordan continued his meteoric rise up the batting order and opened. Such was his confidence that he opened with WG Grace's original cricket bat and immediately found the middle of the edges for a flying start. Accompanied by the right handed Gower, Marcus Dean (30\*) we raced to 18 off 3 overs before Jordan was dismissed. This brought the mighty Ollier to the crease and his relief to not see me umpiring with my trigger finger saw him quickly in to his stride. Ollier (30\*) retired with a mighty 6 and Marcus followed him soon after leaving the club pro Steve Bottomley and

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Halsall to calmly guide us over the line with more than 4 overs to spare. A great performance from all on a lovely sunny night. Well done all.

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

**1<sup>st</sup> XI: versus Kerridge away: KCC 104-10. BVCC 107-3. Won by 7 wickets.**

Vale arrived at Kerridge with the temperature at 25°C. Captain Johnson lost the toss and Vale were fielding. However, before they got on the field the thunderstorms arrived causing the game to be delayed by an hour. When the covers came off the game had been reduced to a 43 over match. Jake Drape and Karthic Rajaram opened the bowling but initially found the conditions tough. However, Baby Drape produced a great delivery to clean bowl Regan for 9. He then went on to bowl captain Banks and Capper with full tosses. Dr Karthic took a fine caught and bowled to get rid of Davies and when Baby D persuaded wild to play on the score stood at 39-5. Grayston and Grimes counter-attacked as Nomaan was strangely off colour. However Little Harry Mills broke the partnership at 67 removing Grimes with the help of a running catch from the captain at slip. He then bowled Renshaw with a ripper before Nummy finally got a wicket when Grayston hit him to Citizen Abs Afzal who took a good catch. Little H removed Ravenscroft and when Abs got Ryder to edge to Jack Halsall the innings ended at 104. Baby Drape 4-19, Little Harry 3-23, Karthic 1-28, Nummy 1-25, Citizen Abs 1-5. That left Vale 59 overs to get the runs but persistent rain removed 12 of them. Eventually Simon "the egg" Hopton and Dr Karthic set about the job with Simon especially aggressive. We were treated to them running a three in a partnership of 31 in 5.1 overs until Simon was well caught at slip for 22. Jack pushed the ball around before captain Banks had him caught behind for 10. Nummy (8) hit his first ball for 4 but as usual was caught on the boundary leaving Vale still 40 short. However, there was no need to panic as new boy Asim Rafiq (10\*) joined Karthic (56\*) and with some wonderful shots saw the team through to a seven wicket win and 25 more points.

PS Joel played as well!

**2<sup>nd</sup> XI: versus Ashley at home: BVCC 233-5. ACC 117-7. Match drawn.**

Vale came out top in a drawn match against neighbours Ashley at Priory Street. With a thunderstorm approaching, skipper Pete Williamson won the toss & elected to bat but not for long as the downpour hit the Vale after only one over. John Ollier was unlucky to lose his off stump to the only ball that Ryan pitched on the stumps in the 3<sup>rd</sup> over & Mike Drape followed 12 overs later for 10. That brought Saq Shafiq to the wicket to build a 91 run partnership with Williamson (56) that ended in fluke fashion in the 34<sup>th</sup> over with 136 runs on the board when bowler Sharif deflected a straight drive onto the stumps with Williamson just out of his ground. Faz Shakeel (23) came to the wicket to put on 74 in only 8 overs, Saq completing an excellent century of 17 fours & 2 sixes. Gareth Roberts came and went, leaving Alex Power (7\*) to complete the carnage with Saq who finished unbeaten on 114. The visitors were making a steady reply until Shafiq & Roberts combined forces to execute an excellent run out. Graeme Stacey bowled unchanged to return 2-24 and Ben Langley showed his growing maturity to return 1-2 in his 5 overs. Tom Ollier got in on the act with 2 wickets in his 4 overs. However, the Vale couldn't make the vital breakthrough & Wadid saved the day for Ashley with an unbeaten 61. Nevertheless, 16 points, a draw and a creditable all round team performance.

## Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May:

**Vikings versus Bowdon away: BCC 105-6. BVCC 106-4. Won by 6 wickets**

Before the match the players observed a minute's silence in respect of the victims of the Manchester Arena bomb attack. Chris Kupursuaravic the Bowdon captain spoke briefly to describe everyone's horror and express their sympathy. The players also wore black armbands.

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Bowdon made the better start with the Vale making some uncharacteristic fielding mistakes in the opening overs. Bowdon debutant Goldstein impressed with 30\*. As soon as the ball was changed to a pink one BV regained their focus. Excellent bowling from Halsall (2-9) taking the important wicket of Thompson and Hutton (3-12) reduced the scoring rate. A truly spectacular catch from Bottomley, running round the deep, was the highlight of the innings and sadly missed by most of those watching the football in the pavilion. A late flurry of runs from Marshall (20\*) and Kushwara (25\*) took the Bowdon score past the 100 mark. The slow low wicket and some accurate bowling from Goldstein (1-8) made early scoring difficult but with the Vale strong batting line up the result was rarely in doubt. Hopton (20), Bottomley (30\*), Halsall (15) and Jordan (15\*) made sure of a comfortable victory with nearly 3 overs to spare.

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

**1<sup>st</sup> XI: versus HM Village at home: BVCC 101-10. HMVCC 105-8. Lost by 2 wickets.**

With the rain reducing the game to a 37 over match captain Iain Johnson lost the toss and Vale were put in to bat. Returning Simon Hopton and Kartick Rajaram opened the batting and made things look easy until Kartick chipped Malik to George. At 62 an optimistic call of 3 led to the running out of Simon for 34 which led to an old fashioned Vale collapse. Jon Jessop aimed a heave at Malik and was bowled. Then Nummy did the same to George with the same result. With the score at 71-4 at drinks Vale seemed in a decent position until Steve Bottomley was bowled for 1 straight after. At 80 Captain Johnson was bowled by an unplayable (for him) delivery and Nigel Halsall was adjudged LBW next ball. Alex "Stokesy" Power hit a wonderfully timed six off Malik and batted well until top-edging Wellington for 23. Harry Mills came and went before Jake Drape and Damo McCarthy pushed the score past 100, the latter being stumped to finish the Vale innings at 101. Nummy and Nigel opened the bowling and the Village soon showed their intentions by hitting a six and a couple of fours in the first two overs. Nigel then broke through at 19 getting Honeyghan LBW. Wellington was soon bowled by Nummy and at 35 who then got an LBW decision to remove Jowery leaving the score at 38-5. Newel and Malik batted well before Kartick had Newell caught by Nigel at slip for 10. Jake Drape had Samuel caught by Steve Bottomley with 31 needed before two big chances went down off Jake's bowling. Nigel had George LBW for 14 with 4 needed but Malik remained calm and saw the Village home by 2 wickets. Bowling returns were Nummy (3-39), Nigel (3-30), Kartick (1-7) & Jake (1-6). A good effort but disappointing result. 8 points.

**2<sup>nd</sup> XI: versus CH Ladybridge away: BVCC 126-9. CHLCC 130-3. Lost by 7 wickets.**

On a day when we didn't expect to plan much cricket due the rain, 10-man Vale at least got a game in & managed one more point than for an abandoned game. Winning the toss, Vale took first use of the facilities with newcomer opener Asim Rafiq displaying classy shots in his 24. Abs Afzal held the innings together with an unbeaten 53 containing 5 fours & 2 sixes, taking advantage of the opposition players who appeared star-stuck in his presence. Abs was supported well by Fraser Meadowcroft (7). Vale collapsed twice, offering 2 hat-trick opportunities & were all out in the 32<sup>nd</sup> of their allotted 38 overs, Arsalan taking 4-35 & Aslam 4-23. The Vale opening attack of Pat Fox (1-13) & Graeme Stacey (1-21) bowled well but were unable to dislodge Moore (31) until Ben Langley bagged him in his spell of 1-27. Despite the efforts of the Vale bowlers, no more wickets were taken after 77-3 in the 20<sup>th</sup> over & the opposition passed the Vale total 12 overs later to claim maximum points, Aslam ending on 50 not out & Warke on 28.

### Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May:

**Vikings versus Cheadle away: No play -rain.**

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

**1<sup>st</sup> XI: versus Saughall away: BVCC 163-8. SCC 47-10. Won by 116 runs.**

Second placed Vale travelled to top of the table Saughall looking to make up for their failure to beat Mossley. Captain Iain Johnson finally won a toss and chose to bat on what looked a good batting wicket. However, it didn't play that way as Jack Halsall received a ball from spinner Chris Andrews which spat off the wicket catching the edge and flying to slip. Papa Drape joined last week's hero Karthik and battled hard hitting some nice boundaries before being bowled for 22. Nomaan (18) crashed a big six before holing out and Steve Bottomley fell LBW. When finally Karthick was out for 40 & Vale were 95-5. After scoring his first run of the season the skipper and Citizen Abs steadied the ship. Abs fell to a good catch behind for 10 before Joel Wesley (17) and Johnson (23) pushed the score past 150. Big Damo McCarthy and little Harry Mills made sure Vale had 8 batting points as they finished on 163-8. Nomaan and Jack opened the bowling and Nummy was soon into his stride getting Salisbury to pop a catch to Joel. The bowling remained tight and Nomaan soon removed Chris Andrews LBW and Griffiths with a ball that trickled onto the stumps. Despite Nummy playing dodge-ball in the outfield, Saughall were unable to up the run rate. Karthick in his first over bowled a filthy full toss and Roberts smashed what should have been a boundary but Jack jumped and palmed it up over his head ran back and dived full length to complete a stunning catch. Karthick then got Michael Andrews to snick behind despite neither the Keeper nor the Umpire noticing. However, the batsman sportingly walked off leaving the home side 23-5. Little Harry then bowled another magical full toss which Jack again dived to catch to get rid of opener Huxley for 14. Citizen Abs had Pierce edging to Papa Drake at slip and then little Harry mopped up with some wonderful bowling finishing the innings at 47. Little Harry 4-9, Nummy 3-5, Karthick 2-6, Citizen Abs 1-4. A superb bowling display and 25 more points. Vale at the top!

**2<sup>nd</sup> XI: versus Appleton at home: BVCC 175-10. ACC 163-10. Won by 12 runs.**

Having won the toss & deciding to take advantage of a drying wicket, Vale openers Mark Nicholas (21) & John Ollier (20) got off to a fast start racing to 39 off 4 overs until both fell in short time. John Greening & Dave Gould went cheaply & then Gareth Roberts set about the attack smashing 5 sixes & 5 fours in his 56, supported well by Ben Langley (10). At 128-6 after 22 overs, Vale were in control but then lost 2 quick wickets which meant that 131-8 didn't look so good. Pete Williamson (19) and Pat Fox (30) took the score to 174 & the Vale ended up with a competitive 175, conceding 9 overs to the opposition. Pat Fox continued his excellent match by bowling unchanged for 14 overs returning 1-30 with 6 maidens & taking an excellent catch off Dave Gould who bagged 5 wickets for 39 in his 12 overs. Wharton (30) & Porter (33) thwarted the Vale attack but it was number 9 batsman Ormson who came to their rescue to club an aggressive 48. Ben Langley returned 2-15 of his 5 overs & having runs out of options & the opposition needing 12 to win off 6 overs, skipper Williamson threw the dice for the last time & turned to John Ollier who duly obliged & clean-bowled the dangerous Ormson. Dave Gould cleaned up the final batsman for his five-for to lead the Vale to victory by 12 runs.

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

**Vikings versus Urmston away: BVCC 102-6. UCC 103-2. Lost by 8 wickets.**

Vale went into this match with a strong 11 and having won the toss were optimistic that they could finally beat their bogey team. Sadly, it was not to be with Tootell (1-11) once again causing the BV openers problems and leaving them on 17-2 off the first 6 overs. Webb (31\*) and Thorpe (22\*) provided some middle order stability. Jordan's quick-fire 26 pushed the score along but the Urmston bowling remained consistent throughout, with Edgington (2-18) coming back on to

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prevent any late onslaught. Nigel Halsall making his O40's debut suffered a first ball run out, then when opening the bowling saw his first three deliveries go for 4,4, and then 6, Shetty (31\*) removing almost instantly any hope of restricting the Urmston batting. In 3 overs Urmston were on 35, it had taken Vale 8 overs to reach that score. Things improved for the Chairman finishing with a maiden and taking a superb catch. Jordan (2-18) took two wickets in 3 balls but Newton (32\*) and Myers (10\*) ensured a comfortable victory for Urmston. Next week: Cheadle (H)

### Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May

**1<sup>st</sup> XI : versus Mossley at home: BVCC 226-7. MCC 128-8. Match drawn.**

With captain Iain Johnson banking it was John-boy Ollier's turn to lose the toss and Vale were put in to bat. It was "the return of the Jack" as young Halsall began his comeback alongside Kartic Rajaram. They were into their stride early with Kartic off the mark with a six. Jack batted nicely before receiving a good ball from Brown that castled him for 20. John-boy kept the momentum going before Brown got him the same way. New boy Saqib looked good muscling a couple of sixes in his 25 before Citizen Abs Afzal got stuck in knocking the ball around nicely. When he was eventually caught near the boundary for 46 Vale stood at 187-4. Papa Drape went going for quick runs and the captain claimed his second run out for 0 on the trot. With one over to go Kartic had moved to 88. Little Harry Mills cleverly pushed a single of the first ball leaving 5 balls to get the hundred. The first was on driven for four before a dot ball followed. Then a huge six moved him within 2 before a wide confused the issue. Kartic took a single off what he thought was the last ball leaving himself stranded on 99. Little Harry ran himself out off the last and Vale finished 226-7. After batting 45 overs Kartic was asked to open the bowling with Baby Drape. Both bowled really well with no luck as they beat the bat over and over again. It was the introduction of spin that got the breakthrough as Citizen Abs trapped Moss LBW for 18 in his first over. He then got Frost caught behind for 0 before little Harry picked up the prize wicket of Cresswell for 4 caught by Papa Drape off the glove of captain Johnson. A good partnership by opener Rigby and Wright frustrated Vale as the bowling was rotated. Eventually it was Jack bowling with great pace that got the edge of Rigby's bat and Papa did the rest. With overs running out Abs trapped Wright LBW for 40, then Jack removed Brown and Tideswell with successive balls edging to John-boy and Abs. 2 wickets were needed in the last over bowled by Citizen Abs. When the third ball bowled Butler with a perfect leg break hopes remained. However Lawton saw them off and Mossley finished 128-8. Abs finished with 4-33 and Jack 3-7. A great effort without the two bowling heroes of last week. 16 points gained

**2<sup>nd</sup> XI : versus Timperley 4 away: BVCC 141-9. TCC 146-1. Lost by 9 wickets.**

The Vale's second team trundled off to the deepest & coldest part of Cheshire (namely Kerridge) to play Timperley (whose own ground had drainage issues). Our stand-in captain, Nigel Halsall, won the toss and elected to bat (a wise move) as we had heard on the grapevine that Timperley had scored 350 & declared the previous week. Opener Mark Nicholas sadly went early for 1 and Dave Gould was joined at the crease by his old indoor cricket partner, and bottom order slogger, Gareth Roberts who quickly went to town on the opening bowling attack. Dave 'Gouldy' Gould held one end up, chipping away like he does best, while blood axe (as Nigel calls him) Roberts made a brisk 70 until clean bowled with an excellent slow ball by the youngster Sathi. A great partnership of 93 by Gould & Roberts was what was needed, setting a good platform for the incoming batsman. Sadly, the baton wasn't really carried as only Dominic Turner managed to reach double figures (24) with a great knock against a really good bowling attack. A promising start for an up & coming star for the Vale as young Ben Langlely scored an impressive 7 runs leaving us all out for 141. The Vale opened the bowling with Nigel Halsall and Damian Paul proving to be a great partnership with tight, accurate, bowling at both ends with pace and swing being our opening gambit. Sadly, to no avail as the openers for Timperley, Saini (69) and Fisher (53\*),

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made light work of things and moved their total on with apparent ease. Once captain Nigel realised the game was lost he rightly decided to throw the ball around and give a few people a chance to bowl. Up next was debutante Thomas Ollier who, in his first over, cleaned bowled Saini - a great moment for the youngster. Natarajan 14\* made light work of the Vales total. A big well done to our new younger players - Ben Langley and Thomas Ollier - a great performance by those two in the senior cricket arena. The Vale were 141 all out Timperley 142-1.

### Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May

**Vikings versus Whalley Range at home: BVCC 134-4. WRCC 128-5. Won by 6 runs.**

This evening we played our first league game of the season against Whalley Range CC at home. Their captain won the toss on the second time of asking as he did not call the first time - his excuse was that he is their Juniors Coach so usually lets the kids call (?). Anyway he reminded me that our juniors stuffed them last season and were "the best BVCC junior team we have ever played against". As Mike and I coach that team that's great but to the match.....BVCC 134-4. Marcus Dean 31\*, Jon Jessop 31\*, Steve Bottomley 30\*, Gareth Roberts 24\*. So like the friendly last week, Marcus started like a train leaving me his opening partner to push the singles and give him the strike. Once Marcus retired, John Ollier came in but was given out LBW bringing Steve in who played beautifully - again leaving me to push the singles! However, I just (only just) retired before Steve and then Gareth decided to smash the ball like a missile to round our innings off. 134-4 and Ben needs a new bat! So go our bowling..... WRCC 128-5: Collins 31\*, Khan 31\*, Callaghan 24; Hutton 1-14, Nicholas 1-14, Jordan 1-23, Roberts 1-25. The decision was made to open with Ian Jordan and Bob Hutton who took 1-23 and 1-14 off their 4 overs and then on came Andy Higson (0-16) and Mark Nicholas (1-14). Mark Nicholas took the catch off Ian Jordan's bowling and the guy behind the stumps took the stumping off Bob. After his 3 overs Mark was replaced Will Crowson and Mark admitted he was so relieved having seen the "size of the batsman's shoulders" that he praised the captain's decision! Anyway Bill went for 2 massive and I mean massive, 6s in his first 2 balls but the recovered to just go for 1 run for the remaining 4 balls. Another stumping off Gareth and a run out by that bloke behind the stumps kept us in it. So we reached the last over with 21 to win but hey we won by 6 runs so up BVCC!! Urmston CC next week and a great start to the season!

### Saturday 29th April

**1<sup>st</sup> XI: versus Malpas away: MCC 143-10. BVCC 145-5. Won by 5 wickets.**

After the aborted start to the season last week Vale found themselves with a 1,000 mile trip to sunny Malpas. Captain Johnson had lost none of his tossing skill and lost it meaning Vale fielded first. Jake Drape opened the bowling for the first time along with Damo Paul. It was Jake who took the first wicket of the season getting Parry to edge to Simon Hopton for 9. Then young Drape took a good catch off a superb head-high full toss by Damo to remove Lyes for 8. Captain Rickety was bowled by Nomaan for 8 before a decent partnership between Tinsley and Hunt took the score to 100-3 at drinks. However, Nummy and the reinvigorated unit of Nigel Halsall soon had things under control. Nummy had Tinsley caught by debutant Karthik Rajaram for 57. He then removed Earl and then Hunt for 36 with the help of a steeping catch from Steve Bottomley. Nigel then got in on the act and mopped up the last four wickets finishing with 4-29; Nummy 4-43. Vale were left with the task of chasing 144 to win. Hopton and Karthik opened and looked comfortable until the former hit a full toss to Tinsley when on 39. On 16 Karthik found the boundary fielder and John Ollier was put out of his misery when adjudged LBW to Roberts for 6. Nummy batted with his usual aggression hitting 6s and turning down easy second runs. Bottomley helped the scored to within 4 of victory before spooning a catch. Captain Johnson saw out the last ball of the over so Nummy could finish the job but the plum decided to give a caught and bowled chance to the bowler. However, Southall clearly realised the more

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dangerous batsman was at the other end and touched the ball onto the stumps running the captain out for 0. Nummy 49 not out promptly did what he should have done the ball before and hit the winning runs to cap a great all round performance and give Vale a winning start to the season. Vale top of the league. What the hell!

**2<sup>nd</sup> XI: versus Pott Shrigley at home: BVCC 165-5, PSCC 166-5. Lost by 5 wickets.**

Having set a competitive total to chase, the Vale came up against a strong batting line up which ultimately cruised to victory with 10 overs to spare. A bowling attack of 4 seamers & 3 spinners found it difficult to tame the main opposition batsmen Wilkie (61) & Rawsthorne (49); spin finding most success through Graeme Stacey 2-28, Gareth Roberts 2-20 & Mark Nicholas 1-21. With hindsight, the Vale total was at least 45 runs short. Stand-in skipper Pete Williamson (46) & Mark Nicholas (12) put on 55 for the first wicket to provide a solid base. Gareth Roberts crashed 27 in short time & Mike Drape remained unbeaten on 29. At least we salvaged 11 points out of the game.

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April:

**BVCC U13s v Ashley CC U13s ay home: ACC 112-5. BVCC 113-6. Won by 4 wickets.**

Well what a start to the league campaign! This was a complete team performance with everyone playing their part in a thrilling win against Ashley CC. Winning the toss, we invited our opponents to bat first with Louis Hart and Jamie Barlow opening the bowling and both were unlucky not to take at least a wicket each. Their opening batsmen played very well and it was Dan Barlow who stopped their free flowing scoring with a great 2 over spell conceding just 8 runs. This pressure allowed Patrick Burke and Tom Jessop to come on and both take 2-12. This was complimented by excellent controlled spells by Joe Woolf (0-15), Sam Belfield (0-5) and Max Lloyd making his BVCC league debut (1-17). Our opening batsmen Tom Ollier and Jamie Barlow started very brightly and looked in complete control playing some fine shots and taking some quick singles until Jamie was bowled. Tom (13) was then partnered by Patrick Burke but 2 quick wickets had us wobbling at 25-3. Another wicket now would have put us in trouble but an excellent 52 run partnership between Tom Greening (21) and Tom Jessop (31\*) put us back in control. Tom Child then played some majestic late cuts until he was well caught. Louis Hart was really unlucky to get stumped leaving us 101-6 with 4 overs left to score 12 runs! But never fear as Dan Barlow and Max Lloyd saw us home with 1.3 overs left in the dark! The winning run was greeted with cheers from all of the BVCC parents. Thank you for your support and it was great to see Solomon down also supporting the team! It really was an excellent team performance with absolutely every member of the team playing well for each other. Mike and I cannot ask for anything more from the lads. Man of the match this time goes to Tom Jessop for his 2 wickets and retiring on 31 but special mentions do go to all the players this week as it really was a great team performance.

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April

**Vikings versus Outcasts at home: BVCC 157-5. OCC 82-4. Won by 75 runs.**

With temperatures in single figures this was certainly no "warm-up" match but the weather did not prevent a convincing victory for the Vikings in this 12 a side match. With most extremities turning blue the match was played with pink balls for the first time. Vale batted first with openers Jessop (19) and Dean (28\*) making a steady start. Hopton (30\*) and Jordan (29\*) kept the run rate going to take Vale to a total of 157-5 off 20 overs. Outcasts never really got going with only Cross (25\*) and Vale Outcast Hunting (29\*) making any real impression. Hutton (2-22) and some excellent seam bowling from Jordan (2-8) kept them in check and restricted the score to 82-4. Sterner tests to come.

Next week: Whalley Rangers (H)

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## Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April

**1<sup>st</sup> XI: versus Rostherne at home: match conceded by Rostherne.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> XI: versus Europa Exiles away: BVCC 79-10. EECC 81-5. Lost by 5 wickets.**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> XI made a losing start to the 2017 season against Europa Exiles played at Mere Cricket Club. Winning the toss, debutant skipper Louis Power chose to bat in near-perfect cricket playing conditions but the openers found it difficult to score against the nagging accuracy of P. Heaps. Drinks were taken in the 21<sup>st</sup> over after which Pete Williamson was caught for 36 to make the score 51-2. There then followed a traditional display of Collapso-cricket as the Vale lost the last 8 wickets for 28 runs in the space of 10 overs. Chief destroyer for Exiles was P.Heaps returning 5-24. In reply the Vale took regular wickets with Damo Paul bagging 3-29 and Harry Mills & Gareth Roberts taking one a piece but with only 79 runs on the board, Exiles finished the job in the 20<sup>th</sup> over for the loss of 5 wickets.