A SLAP IN THE CAMEL

SCHOOLBOY STORIES

MORE EXCITING TALES FROM THE WORLD'S FINEST CRICKET TEAM

-THE FINGER-
H. D. G. LEVESON-GOWER'S PUSH-STROKE IN THE SLIPS.

From photo by E. Watkiss & Co., Brighton.
HAZY RECOLLECTIONS OF 2003

The Summer of 2003 was the hottest and driest since Bodleian cricket records began. We finally seemed to be having a real summer when there were no questions about games going ahead and you didn’t have to ponder over jumpers and footwear. The summer seems longer and drier the deeper we head into the winds and darkness of autumn/winter and the sliding pratfalls in the drizzle against Pharmacology, leaden skies at Cuddesdon and virtual nightfall at the Warneford are forgotten. We even contrived to miss the hottest day of the year for as Gravesend fried and Oxford dreamily perspired the Bodley XI shivered to victory in light rain at Wadebridge. Mostly heat and sun with the discovery, thanks to John Sharp, of the Jesus College ground with the views across East Oxford to Boars Hill. With St Bartholomew’s Chapel in the foreground a fielder could imagine the countryside lying between the city and the village of Cowley.

From Bodley’s ‘hardened regulars’, we saw our first 100th appearance this year as Steve Arnold reached the mill… er… milestone in September. This was remarkable as he had virtually retired from the game at the beginning of the season. New faces included slow bowling loving Jon Gordon, fluent strokemaker James Hodgkin, and sky blue Andy Hudson.

It was a season in which we won more games than we lost. This comparative success was reflected in our Jack Cox cup run. After a weather-influenced defeat to Pharmacology, we had received a pummelling in the field against Physiology. At the innings break there was an outbreak of positivity and the nearest we’ve had to a team huddle. Sure enough Ditta, Steve Waterman and Garry batted us to a win. A last over win against Plants followed, in which the sight of Martin and John Wilby running us to victory provoked off field jubilation bordering on a one day pitch invasion of old. If the quarter final against Medicine was a painful experience (especially for Nigel) at least we were not all out (thanks Nigel).

The summer started with a heavy defeat against Far From the Madding Crowd. This would be avenged on a sleepy Sunday in July as Nick pushed us to a win, as weekend traffic on the A34 droned on in the background. The Ripon College game was notable for a good win and our introduction over a pint in The Bat and Ball to a dalmatian called Bertie. A keen cricket fan, Bertie was our noisiest supporter as we sweated against the University Offices in blazing June. Sounds from the Cowley Road carnival only inspired a Calypso Collapso on our part. Offices were beaten later in the year with a team of stalwarts and friends? /complete strangers? (the scorebook is a bit vague on this one).

Other recollections include a Ditta hat trick against Blackwell’s. At Stratfield Brake a Bodley side assembling as play progressed, faced an Elsevier side fielding one S. Morrissey. It was panic on the streets of Kidlington alright as we were 49 all out. Andrew Milner captained us aggressively to our best performance as yet against OUP at Jordan Hill (the best ground this year for swallow aerobatics). Readers or ex-readers cropped up regularly. Against Jesus College we were able to give Isabel
Achterberg a cricketing farewell to Oxford, while an historian who batted some scientists to a win against us in the Cox (???) has expressed an interest in playing for us next season.

Our second West Country Tour was a success thanks to the hospitality of Mike Hine’s family in Trevone, Cornwall and the friendliness of Stu’s hometown club in Wellington, Somerset. I don’t know if anyone found any cider in Wellington as I only remember struggling with the treacle like Indian lager. So no Addlestones which had been touted all summer by Murray Priest for its hallucinogenic properties. Not that it was needed in Trevone with much of the game played in a thickening heat haze in which third man, long leg etc., almost disappeared while watched by the potential Hawkwind audience in the campsite behind them. The Wadebridge ground on Sunday was perfect for a restorative raised walk by the River Camel, from which Ditta and John Tuck could be watched performing with the bat versus St Issey. Success in the field included a Tour trademark, magic circle dismissal by Al Fisher. Fish and chips and Doom Bar in a pub on Padstow harbour was a fine ending to our trip.

Competitively a fine win against Military Survey completed our year at a new ground for us. Andrew Milner and Ditta scored 50s in a close game at Stanton St John (hope to see that ground next year). All that remained was the relaxation? of the Bodley/Bodley game and sincerest thanks to Dave Price for taking the winning wicket that saved me the trauma of bowling the last over with sweaty palms.

So on to our tenth season. Did Nick and Stu know what they had started back in ’94? What chance an anniversary game against the old adversary, Cambridge? (Where is Jonathan Ringer)? Failing that, maybe a Cambridge 94 XI versus the rest on Friday 13th August?!

Roll on April.

_Buzzer_
MEET THE PLAYERS

Stuart Ackland
Wasn’t going to play much this season. Did though. Delivered in style on the Tour with a real “roots” experience at Wellington where the emotional intensity of the occasion clearly kicked in when Stuart generously invited one of their batsmen to return to the crease when he comically ran himself out. Fortunately his team mates quickly shouted him down on that one. His heroic “our only option is for me to open the batting” line as he captained on the day was positively Henry the Fifth-esque. Reckons a new conservatory might put paid to his touring activities in 2004 – we’ll see about that!

Stephen Arnold
In recognition of his 100th appearance for the team, Harvey Keitel was cast to play our centurion in Taking Sides. Tough and hard-nosed, Major Steve Arnold, a gruff and rude American sent to Berlin just after World War II, sets out to investigate a world of which he knows nothing. [How very appropriate, some might say (but not The Finger)]. To the Germans, deeply respectful of their musical heritage, Furtwangler is a demigod; however, to Arnold, he is just a lying, weak-willed Nazi. Steve plays Beethoven on high volume on the office record player, usually to fuel his anger and charge up his finger-pointing lbw-awarding tactics. Taking Sides depicts the jarring debate between Arnold and Furtwangler as they discuss art, politics and proletarian culture, the confusion of war, and how it is never possible to give John Tuck “not out”.

Dave Busby
One moment summarises the glory that was 2003 for Mr Busby. One delivery left of our innings at Ripon College, and Dave arrives for his first action of the year. The bowler in question has already taken five wickets. What does Dave do? Fulfils his life-long cricketing ambition by smashing the ball over the tree and into the field next to the ground for a steepling six. Inevitably, his season was all downhill after that.

Andrew Colquhoun
Andrew helped us out on a number of occasions this year, even making the effort to get from his job in London to mid-week matches when we were short. Which is more than can be said for some of his team mates. Who could forget him appearing on the horizon against Elsevier to make up the numbers as our last wicket fell? Then persuading Stephen after the pair of them had defiantly kept the bowlers at bay for five overs to swap bats as the most senior batsman should have the better bat, whereupon both were out in the next two balls! Sensational quintessential Bodley cricket – don’t we just love it!

Garry Cooper
Punctuality has never been this team’s strongest suit, but Garry made a spectacular attempt to make sure he couldn’t be accused of letting his mates down by not showing up on time when he arrived at Pembroke College’s ground seven days before the rest of the players. The Finger was seriously impressed by this devotion to duty, Shame it didn’t last though. After many years of trying to nail Garry to do a match report, he finally agreed to put pen to paper and describe the same match – at least that way his embarrassing timetabling oversight would remain unrecorded; however, he pulled a muscle whilst batting and disappeared after tea, (not unlike Arsenal’s 2003 Championship challenge), thus unable to describe our epic bowling comeback.

Andrew Fairweather-Tall
A good season at the crease for Andrew, a highlight being a knock of 30 against the Offices which nearly had him carry his bat. Was often amongst the wickets as well. Yet 2003 will be the season for which Andrew is remembered for much, much more. Nothing to do with his cricket, but more to do with his amazing mental powers. This will be the season when Andrew took on the role of Ditta’s nemesis – wherever Andrew showed up, Ditta’s batting didn’t. Good job he didn’t come on Tour then, otherwise we’d have been well and truly shafted.
Alan Fisher
Alan’s new, “less-flighted” delivery (could have fooled us) conned many a batsman in 2003. He had a wonderful Tour this year, getting amongst the wickets with a slow delivery that deceived both batsmen and fellow team mates (in the sense of ‘Christ he’s bowled another one, we’re gonna get tonked here…bloody hell, he’s bowled him!’) How he got out against Trevone will forever remain a mystery though. The abiding non-Tour memory has to be when Alan spent an age tying up his dog during one game against The Offices while frantic team mates were urging him to come and get padded up.

Jon Gordon
Jon’s debut was a baptism of fire (heavy drizzle really) in the slippery Jack Cox defeat to Pharmacology but he willingly came back for more. After early struggles with footwear Jon bought a new pair of boots and committed himself to the Bodley cause. He did his fair share of batting, bowling and umpiring while perhaps not facing as much of the slow bowling that he fancied taking on. In the Elsevier game he had scorers, umpires and the barman in the Kidlington clubhouse reaching for the rule book as the difference between a stumpimg or a run out off a no ball almost gave him an extended life at the crease.

Mike Hine
Delivered big time with the Tour, laying on the accommodation, food, and the odd beer, to prove an invaluable member of the squad. Mike’s season, however, started slowly with a spectacular injury in the second over of the Physiology match which left him on the sidelines for much of the year. Still, it gave him plenty of opportunity to get first hand knowledge of our Cornish opponents on various scouting missions to the West Country.

James Hodgkin
Destroyed The Offices at Queen’s with a blistering opening spell, then stuck around to bat us to victory. James made his debut on that ill-fated evening at Kidlington, but impressed us by turning up with a proper cricket bag and all his own gear. He’s certainly endeared himself to his team mates by announcing that playing for Bodley was far superior to playing for Bicester and North Oxon. One to watch out for next season.

Andrew Honey
Spent most of the season sunning himself in the Sinai Desert, allegedly working, so his appearances were strictly on the limited side. This lad seems to The Finger to be a natural tourist, so will he break his duck in 2004? Talking of which, Andrew’s only trip to the crease failed to trouble the scorers, but taking a trip to Egypt to avoid batting tips from Staggers and Benny Richaud really does seem a little excessive.

Andy Hudson
Stepped in at the last minute to post a classic match report on the second Far From The Madding Crowd fixture – just one thing missing though ….. any reference to Garry’s premature arrival (or even departure) from the game. Otherwise Andy just got better and better, and looks to have all the necessary attributes required for the annual Tour. His batting clinched the game against Military Survey when all around appeared to lose their cool in classic Bodley style – give him time and he’ll learn the art of turning certain victory into lamentable defeat. Most importantly though, he’s a natural in the pub after the game.

Martin Kauffmann
Martin started the season in fine form, getting two catches against The Offices and then top scoring with 35 in the last Jack Cox. His form behind the stumps was top-notch as well, despite the bruises such a rôle brings. It is hard then to pinpoint where it all went wrong. Perhaps the thought of missing another Tour, another weekend of beer and curry (with the matches getting in the way though), the mental torture of denying yourself something you know you will enjoy, proved too much. Whatever it was by the end of the season Martin had to have his wife by his side and, would you believe it, she’s a better player than he is!

Andy Knight
We only had the pleasure of Andy’s company once this season, before he set off for the Mediterranean in a clapped-out old van never to be seen again. When he did play though, he marked the occasion with a spectacular duck, but bowled superbly to take one for one off three overs.
Andy MacKinnon
Bowling us to victory against The Crowd at Pembroke will be an abiding memory, evolving from a nervous start to "no way are you going to take me off", as a procession of batsmen succumbed to his cunningly flighted deliveries dropping from the heavens – a perfect foil to Ditta roaring in from the opposite end. But, as with every season it seems, Andy's top achievement was getting the best bed on Tour, despite sharing the room with three others, and despite being the last one to enter the room.

Nick Millea
Nick played his usual part in Bodley's season, captaining and batting well (including that splendid innings at Wellington on Tour). Unfortunately such heroes didn't extend to swimming in the sea at Trevone. As braver souls ventured forth Nick dipped a toe in and decided it wasn't for him, which all goes to show that when it comes to a bit of water it seems it isn't quite so tough Up North - he complained after that the cold water had made his foot swell to twice its normal size, which is funny as the water had the opposite effect on certain parts of the anatomy of those who actually swam in the water. Won the bloody golf on Tour again as well. Holding his own (nearly) when asked to make a speech in reply at St Issey was also a highlight.

Andrew Milner
Knows rather too much about why this edition of The Finger took so long to arrive on the shelves. Besides this, Andrew was very quiet on the webcam front this time round, but after a slow start with the bat, found his trademark explosive form as the season drew to a close. Some wonderful innings on Tour and against the military mapmakers, where none of the bowlers managed to trouble him .... unlike Dave Price in the Whippersnappers match.

Ian Peedle
Technically a "ringer", yet Ian made three appearances for us, and turned out in the annual Bodley v Bodley match for good measure. Ian is well-known in Bodley sporting circles as a footballing regular. Indeed he is our only player with first division experience ....... albeit in Belize. Thrived in the relaxed atmosphere of our dressing room (compared to the frenzied intensity of The Offices' set-up), Ian batted, bowled and fielded with distinction. A welcome addition to the squad.

Dave Price
What looked like being a quiet season suddenly exploded into life as Dave single-handedly delivered victory to The Latecomers in the end of season Bodley v Bodley encounter. Bamboozled Andrew with his "wrong 'un", just as victory seemed certain for The Early Birds. When he's not cricketing, keep your heads down because The Birdman of Bodley can be seen flapping around with a lawnmower on his back high above Cumnor Hill. Just don't ask, right!

Dan Rogers
Starred against Blackwell's and in the second Crowd game, finishing the season with a most impressive batting average of 30. Also shared in the season's best 7th wicket stand with Nick against The Crowd, and chipped in with his usual catch and wicket without which the season would not be complete. Impressed everyone at the Pembroke College ground by supplying most of the spectators too.

John Sharp
John impressed all those on the boundary at the Whippersnappers match by explaining how easy it was to bat against Nigel Walker. He was less impressive on the match reporting front, when promising to deliver his thoughts on the Blackwell's defeat within a week .... We're still waiting for it John, and that was from last May! Only two appearances over the season, but that did include opening the bowling at Horspath Road.

John Tuck
Endured a traumatic Tour back in the Bodley fold. Dodgy brakes were the least of John's problems as he found himself sharing a room at Trevone with early risers Ackland, MacKinnon, and all talk but no swimming Millea. Still John was able to take it out on the St Issey bowlers, and particularly enjoyed the fact that he was twice-dropped by a Southampton-supporting fielder.
Nigel Walker
Still smarting from the revelation that his home town, Mirfield, came in at No.28, three places ahead of Oxford, in the recent survey of the “50 most crap places to live in the UK”. Let’s face it, armed with an insult like that, any batsmen hailing from locations below 28 can look forward to a torrid time at the crease next season because Nigel has every right to be seriously angry. Otherwise he topped the bowling averages, (yet again), and will perhaps be best remembered in 2003 for his flying header which ended the game against the Medics.

Steve Waterman
Restricted to just three Jack Cox appearances which included top scoring against Pharmacology and leading the victory charge from the front against Physiology. His transfer to Mansfield College shouldn’t affect his availability for us; however, Mansfield must be only college without a cricket pitch of its own that we could use – surely he should have moved somewhere more useful? Can he be tempted to Tour again? The “Reverse Dorset” seems an awfully long time ago now.

Mike Webb
A welcome return to form with the bat for Mike this year. His explosive driving also came to the attention of Ronald Milne in the Sainsbury’s car park as Mr Webb launched his old banger into the Deputy Director’s brand new car with spectacular results. On the pitch his batting ranged from those usual free-scoring fireworks to his partnership of 43 with Ditta at Trevone, in which Mike scored all but 43 of the runs. Also bagged two catches against OUP, but found his bowling potency has been somewhat reduced with the recent outlawing of the “Gromit”.

Richard Webber
Made the journey to Kidlington for his sole appearance of the season against Elsevier. Richard billed this as his final match for Bodley, and as a special treat he was invited to open the batting. Given that we only had three players at the ground at the appointed start time, maybe it wasn’t quite the “honour” it seemed to be. He demonstrated the wisdom of this promotion by almost running his captain out on the first ball, then capped that by almost immediately running himself out instead.

John Wilby
Whatever happened to the team’s bumper crowds on sunny evenings at Mansfield Road? For some reason John seemed to pull in plenty of spectators over the past few years, but our building site of a ground proved unpopular with his fans in 2003 – it wasn’t that the weather was poor – maybe it was just the cricket? John bowled tidily as usual, saving his best performance for Holy Trinity; as ever was responsible for a catch on the boundary v. Physiology; and stayed true to form with the bat, peaking for the season with 8, again against Physiology.

Ditta Yousa
One sublime moment summed up Ditta’s season. At Wellington he chose to set the most bizarre-looking field of the season. Everyone was posted on the off-side except for John Tuck, who was left all alone in splendid isolation. Was it something he’d said? The batsmen had been hammering us all over Somerset, so we needed something special. Something special is precisely what we got. Ditta raced in, fired down a ball just to the off of middle, and the batsman swung mightily to the leg side. John stood motionless as the ball looped gently in to his hands for one of the easiest catches of the season. Now that’s what The Finger calls class. The Tour saw him score over a 100 runs and rightly be awarded man of the match by the St Issey captain.
The Early-Birds v The Latecomers
5th September 2003

Andy Mackinnon, Ditta Yousaf, Mike Hine, Ian Peedle, Andy Hudson, 100 Cap Hero
Dave Busby, Andrew Fairweather-Tall, Andrew Milner, Jon Gordon, James Hodgkin, Stuart Ackland
Nigel Walker, Dave Price, John Wilby, Robin Akers, Mike Webb, John Sharp

The Latecomers won by 4 runs
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<tr>
<td>Ditta Yousaf</td>
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MATCH RECORDS AND REPORTS

11 May 2003
Bodleian Library v Far From the Madding Crowd
At Jesus College, Oxford
Friendly: 40-over game

Far From the Madding Crowd 176-9
   (Yousaf 3-28, Milner 3-38)
Bodleian Library 55 all out
   (Webb 15*, Yousaf 9)

Far From the Madding Crowd won by 121 runs

From the press box - report by Stuart Ackland

DOG DAY AFTERNOON

Confusion caused by having a team partly made up of four Andrews, two Stephens and two Ians resulted in Bodley crashing to one of its heaviest defeats in the opening game of this year’s cricket season, against pub side Far From the Madding Crowd. Bodley lost the toss and were made to field first, in reasonable weather, cloudy but warmish. Tight bowling from Ditta Yousaf, Andrews Milner and Fairweather-Tall and your reporter wasn’t enough to stop the impressive opening partnership race away and it was with much relief that Ditta got the vital breakthrough with his first of his three wickets with the score on 62. The Crowd though managed to keep up a steady pace and Bodley fielders were kept busy throughout their innings, chasing balls to the boundary and trying to keep the singles down to a minimum.

Far From... finished their innings with 177, a big total but certainly not out of our reach on a good day. Unfortunately, this wasn’t a good day. A heavy downpour at the end of the second over makes for a flat wicket when play resumes and a number of our batsmen are deceived by balls not behaving as they should (that’s my excuse anyway) but, overall, Bodley performed poorly with the bat. With the exception of Mike Webb none of our team made it to double figures. As was often the case last season the team had to rely too much on the recognised batsmen and, if they are out cheaply (as in this case) there is no real strength in depth. As is the case with the national team our tail doesn’t often wag, in fact you could go as far as to say it has been docked when a puppy. Bodley are all out for 55, just avoiding our lowest ever total, after just 25 overs.

21 May 2003

*Ripon College v Bodleian Library*

At Ripon College, Cuddesdon

Friendly: 30-over game

**Bodleian Library** 178-7
(Yousaf 83, Millea 62)

**Ripon College** 62-8
(Ackland 2-5, Walker 2-7)

*Bodleian Library won by 116 runs*

*From the press box - report by Andy MacKinnon*

**BUSBY’S SIX AND OUT LEAVES VICARS AT SIXES AND SEvens**

Under threatening skies and on the greenest of green pitches a slightly under-strength Bodley team took on the trainee clerics of Ripon College at Cuddesdon. Bodley batted first and after some initial trouble coming to terms with the vagaries of the pitch, Nick Millea and Ditta Yousaf proceeded to compile a commanding first wicket stand against occasionally challenging bowling. As their team mates twiddled their thumbs on the boundary Nick and Ditta took the partnership comfortably past 100, with Nick finally the first to perish for an excellent 62, with the score at 122. Ditta took this as his signal to up his run-rate whilst normal Bodley service was resumed at the other end as wickets now began to fall swiftly. With a century looking a distinct possibility Ditta was unlucky to be dismissed for 83 in the penultimate over, but the excitement continued to the end of the innings. Dave Busby found himself simultaneously facing the last ball of the team’s thirty-over allocation and the first of his own innings, and stunned everyone, himself included, by swivelling round and pulling the ball over the square leg boundary for an imperious six - a champagne moment without a doubt, and Dave found himself in the enviable position of having fulfilled his season’s ambition with his first shot, giving the Bodleian team a final total of 178 for 7.

When the team took to the field it soon became clear that Ripon were going to find the pitch much more of a challenge than Ditta and Nick had - a series of useful-looking batsmen fell to a mix of injudicious shots and intelligent bowling from Nigel Walker, Stuart Ackland and Andy Knight, all of whom took good advantage of the helpful conditions to leave Ripon struggling at 12 for 4. Charitable captaincy from Nick saw Bodleian’s occasional bowlers brought on to make more of a game of it but wickets continued to fall until an excellent final wicket stand from Ripon saw their total nudging towards respectability. A final over run out broke the partnership to bring the innings to a close at 63 all out to seal a thumping 115 run win for the Library.

Bodley X: Yousaf, Millea, Cooper, Kauffmann, Walker, MacKinnon, Knight, Ackland, Busby, Fisher.
At 22 May 2003

Bodleian Library v Pharmacology
At Mansfield Road, Oxford
Jack Cox Trophy: 20-over game

Bodleian Library 58-9
(Waterman 32, Walker 4)
Pharmacology 59-4
(Cooper 1-2, Milner 1-4, Walker 1-6, Fairweather-Tall 1-10)

Pharmacology won by 6 wickets

From the press box - report by Andrew Milner

HERE WE GO AGAIN?

First Jack Cox game of the season and the sense of déjà vu is palpable. There’s a nip in the air, the threat of rain hangs heavy and there’s the gnawing feeling that once again we are more than a little under-prepared in the batting, bowling and fielding departments.

We arrive at Mansfield Road at the appointed hour, but what’s this, no pavilion? Turned to dust by the demolition men, a building site now occupies its place. Our portakabin awaits in the corner of the ground. Unfortunately we don’t have the key and must wait for the Pharmacologists to make the arduous 15-metre journey from the Pharmacology building to open up. That’s another thing that’s coming back to me about JC games – the opposition are always, without fail, late. Once unlocked the interior is revealed as a muddled jumble of discarded football gear with a backnote of liniment. The joys of early season Manny Road!

An inspection of the wicket and another change from last year: a narrow strip of astroturf. At least this means the game can go ahead despite the decidedly soggy outfield. But will the narrowness of the target area be a problem for our unpractised bowlers, more used to employing the full width, and more, of a traditional grass wicket?

Bodley bat first, a chance to rack up the runs before light and drizzle makes batting hazardous. Sound reasoning perhaps but only if we get off to a good start. So often if we lose a wicket early on two or three quickly follow and it’s more about survival than making quick runs. Aggressive scoring combined with not losing wickets is what is required here. Ditta and Steve Waterman start with good intent and look to score from the off but the bowling is accurate and the new surface takes some getting used to. Ditta, while forcing the pace, is caught in the second over. This is a setback. And it’s made worse when missrs Fairweather-Tall, Milner and Kauffmann are all out for one run apiece after failing to adjust to the unfamiliar pitch. Steve holds up the other end, playing an innings of great good sense, looking to biff any bad balls to the boundary - it’s just that nobody seems to want to hang around long enough to keep him company. At the close of the innings (and we did manage to bat out the 20 overs) we make 58 for 9. The lopsided nature of our batting performance is starkly revealed in the statistics: Steve top scores with 32, Nigel is next with 4, everyone else gets either 1 or 0. Thank heaven, as always, for trusty Extras who puts on a much-needed 17.

It’s not really a defensible total and the onset of steady drizzle doesn’t exactly help. Bowling is potentially hazardous with a run up that moves from wet grass onto slippery astroturf. And it’s hard to get a grip on the increasingly soap-like ball. The potential for injury is clear but we play on. In the circumstances we bowl and field well enough but Pharmacology have plenty of time to get the runs and, not needing to take risks, by the 16th over they reach the target for the loss of 4 wickets.

A disappointing start to the JC campaign certainly, but everyone should be commended just for turning out in such trying conditions. Cricket’s a game for clear skies and warm weather - roll on summer.

Jack Flavell writes ......

GRACE IN OXFORD

W.G. Grace, “The Great Cricketer” as the inscription on the Grace Gates at Lord’s succinctly
describes him, was born into a cricketing family at Downend near Bristol on 18 July 1848. 
There have been many great cricketers since, but Grace was the first great cricketer, a man
who stood out above his contemporaries, not just in terms of his physical presence but in
terms of his extraordinary achievements over a long period of time. Grace played against
Oxford University on a number of occasions, mainly for the MCC, and in 28 innings he
scored 1,169 runs against them at an average of 43.29.1 Did this cricketer colossus ever
perform in Oxford? The answer is that he did, at various stages of his long career. Grace
played in 870 First-Class matches, of which eight took place in Oxford.2

In his teens Grace played for the Lansdown Cricket Club in Bath, a famous club which had
fixtures against a number of top sides including Oxford University. There is, however, no
evidence to suggest that Grace played for Lansdown in Oxford or even played for them
against the University. Grace’s first match in Oxford took place on 21 and 22 May, 1866,
when at the age of 17 he represented the Gentlemen of England against the University, along
with his elder brother George Frederick (Fred) Grace. This match took place at what was
known as the Magdalen Ground, at Cowley Marsh.3 The match itself was fairly unremarkable
and the University won by ten wickets. Grace scored 2 and 0 and took no wickets for 69.
Three years later in May 1869, Grace was back, this time representing the Marylebone
Cricet Club against the University, having at the age of 20 been elected a member of that
club at the beginning of the season. Grace comments: “This was my first appearance as
a member of the MCC, and also my first appearance at Oxford.”4 Grace’s memory was
sometimes selective, and he was perhaps anxious not to recall his earlier visit. He continues:
“There was nothing remarkably interesting about the match, for the score was very low, and
the weather very cold and unpleasant; wickets good.” And here there is just a touch of false
modesty, since Grace scored 117 in a match that the MCC won by an innings and 30 runs. He
also took 5 for 49 and 2 for 61. Perhaps there was little to remark on since this was his sixth
First-Class hundred and such all-round performances were already becoming commonplace.

Our abiding picture of “W.G.” is of a tall, portly man with huge beard and a small cap, but at
this stage of his life Grace was a very different figure. C.E. Green describes him in 1868 as
“comparatively slight but very tall”.5 He was also a considerable athlete and at a sports
meeting in the previous year he had won the 100 yards, the quarter mile and the hurdles.
According to Green: “He had rather a lolling style with a tremendous stride, and I always
remember that on that occasion he wore salmon coloured running drawers.” Grace was
always something of an exhibitionist. In his late teens, Grace had decided to qualify as a
doctor and there was some speculation that he might choose Oxford for his studies, or go to
Caius College, Cambridge, which had a strong medical tradition. In the event, he enrolled in

1 Lord Hawke et al., The Memorial Biography of Dr. W.G. Grace (Lond., 1919), p. 360.
2 The Cricket Archive website at http://www.cricketarchive.co.uk is the source of much of the
information in this article. I have also drawn on Simon Rae’s W.G. Grace, a Life (Lond.,
1998).
3 This ground was the venue of 70 First-Class matches between 1929 and 1912. Grace played
here four times and four times in The Parks.
5 Memorial Biography, p. 68.
1868 at Bristol Medical School, where he remained as a “General Perpetual Student” until he finally qualified 11 years later.\(^6\)

Grace was back in Oxford with the MCC in May 1870 for a three-day match against the University, which the MCC won by six wickets. Grace scored 54 and 73 not out, but only took one wicket. In May 1874, he took part in the same fixture and again the MCC won, this time by 40 runs. Grace scored 5 and 21 and again took one wicket. There was then a gap of 12 years until 1886, when the University’s two-day match against the MCC was for the first time staged in the University Parks.\(^7\) Grace was by now aged 37 and very much in his prime, having already scored 76 centuries in his career. He had toured Australia several times and taken part in the first Test Match against that country. As it happened, the Australians were touring England that summer, and Grace scored 170 against them at the Oval Test in August. Not surprisingly, the students, who fielded a weakened side as a result of examinations, felt somewhat overawed and intimidated. The students scored 142 in their first innings, and the MCC replied strongly with Grace, opening the batting, 50 not out at the end of the day. It appears the students surmised that Grace might just be vulnerable if he could be given a hangover, and at a dinner that evening he was encouraged to drink to excess. The plan seemed to be working when Grace was bowled during net practice the following morning, but when the match resumed he proceeded serenely to his hundred, finally being out for 104 (one six and fifteen fours). Just to make his point, Grace then took all ten University wickets for 49 runs with his deceptively innocuous slow-to-medium-paced deliveries. Grace was not a modest man and his recollection of this match illustrates his approach: “I scored 104 for the MCC, and took the whole ten Oxford wickets. These being the only items of interest in connection with this match.”\(^8\)

In June 1888, Grace, now nearly 40, returned with the MCC to play against the University. This time he made a modest contribution by his standards, scoring 95 and 29, and taking one wicket in each innings. Twelve years later, in 1900, Grace was back again in Oxford, this time as captain of the London County team, which he had founded two years earlier. At 52, he was now the “Old Man”, having scored 120 First-Class centuries, and having played in his last Test Match the previous year against the Australians at Trent Bridge. On this occasion, the University had its revenge for the indignities suffered on previous visits. Grace injured his hand and could not bat. He did manage to bowl, but R.E. Foster, who scored 169 in Oxford’s massive first innings total of 539, hit him for four consecutive sixes. The University won by an innings and 330 runs. Five years later, in May 1905, Grace took his final bow in Oxford in the University Parks. Appropriately, he represented the Gentlemen of England, as he had done 39 years earlier on his first visit. The University won by 50 runs, but Grace, opening the innings, scored 12 and 71 and took four wickets in the University’s first innings. Grace continued to play cricket for some years and took part in his last First-Class match in April 1908, at the age of 59. What an inspiration he is to those of us now in our fifties.

\(^{6}\) Rae, W.G. Grace, a Life, p. 78.

\(^{7}\) The University Parks first staged a First-Class match in 1881. First-Class matches were also played on the Christ Church ground from 1878 and this ground rather than The Parks was the venue of matches between the University and major international touring teams between 1882 and 1961. Australia always played at Christ Church; South Africa, the West Indies, and New Zealand tended to play at The Parks.

\(^{8}\) Grace, History of a Hundred Centuries, p. 103.
28 May 2003
Blackwell’s v Bodleian Library
At Horspath Road, Oxford
Friendly: 20-over game

Bodleian Library 86-3
(Yousaf 24, Webb 19*, Millea 19)
Blackwell’s 87-7
(Yousaf 3-16, Fisher 2-15)

Blackwell’s won by 3 wickets

From the press box - report by Nick Millea

HAT TRICK HEROICS NOT ENOUGH

At the scheduled 6pm start there were six Bodleyites loitering around, and millions of Blackwell’s players fully kitted out and indulging in serious fielding practice. We quickly negotiated the loan of three of their surplus squad members and elected to bat, as other Bodley players emerged in the distance. Ditta and Nick fresh from their 122 opening stand against the Vicars moved desperately slowly against some tight bowling and lively fielding. After around fourteen or so overs Ditta was heard to say “we can bat right through here”. Before they knew it, both were back in the pavilion having posed a stand of 49. Mike Webb was joined by the hapless ringer Martin Cusworth, who reckoned he could bat. It quickly became apparent that the longer he remained in, the less likely it was that we’d score any runs. Mike sussed this out and did the humane thing in calling him for a quick single. The fielders took the bait, and Martin was run out. This left Mike and Dan Rogers to put together a quickfire unbroken stand of 29, to see us to a total of 86 for 3 off twenty overs.

As model planes continued to dive bomb the ground, we suddenly realised we weren’t exactly well equipped with bowlers. Stephen Arnold had shown up very late on and done an umpiring stint, but that would have taken us up to thirteen players, so he pedalled off home. The Blackwell’s Three didn’t bowl, so Johns Wilby and Sharp were given the new ball. Mr Wilby bowled one of their openers, but Blackwell’s made steady progress to 34 when Ditta had their No.3 caught behind. Next ball, and the new batsman was clean bowled. For the hat trick ball, we brought in the fielders, but Ditta didn’t need them. The batsman gamely stood right in front of his stumps, and Ditta fired the ball into his pads – a stonewall lbw, and a stunning hat trick to boot. Alan took two quick wickets and suddenly Blackwell’s were 58 for 6. Sadly our fringe bowlers couldn’t tighten the tourniquet, despite some excellent fielding from Dave Busby and Jon Gordon. A late caught and bowled from Dan raised hopes, but our opponents made it home with just five balls to spare. A valiant effort from Bodley, and a most enjoyable evening against most convivial opposition.

Where's Tarrant-Tino when you need him?

Last Wednesday saw an incident-packed encounter in the Jack Cox Trophy at Mansfield Road. Unusually Bodley took on and beat an "ology", but not without the occasional controversial interruption on the way.

We reckoned we ought to field and get amongst their batsmen. We won the toss. We fielded. Their batsmen got amongst us. In the first over Nick spilled a catch, but we didn't want to get him out, we wanted him to stay out there longer. Next over, same batsman, and a soon to be departed Bodleyite let one slip through his not so fast fingers - but we didn't want to get him out, we wanted him to stay out there longer. Mike Hine then chose to pull a hamstring - the irony of it all, as this was the first time all season we've managed to field a full eleven, and ten balls into the game, Mike struggles off and we're down to ten players. No phone a friend option here, we can't replace our hobbling hero. Later in the innings in successive balls, the same nameless culprit, risking the pricey consequences, chose not once, but twice that he didn't want to get the batsman out - you've already got 25, but we don't want you to be out for that, will you try to double your advantage? He did, and so did his mate, both using the last of the twenty overs to go fifty-fifty, retiring with half centuries apiece, leaving us staring at a daunting 157 for one - John Wilby had taken a wonderful juggling catch off Andrew Milner's bowling. The team's frustration at our ineptitude was epitomised by Dave Busby's violent right-footed assault on a spectating rucksack.

We decided we might as well go for broke. Ditta (45) and Steve (37) accepted the challenge and put together a stonking opening partnership of 82 off nine overs, before both fell in the space of three deliveries. Those on the boundary had started to sniff a surprise. It looked like the Physiology lads and lass might not be too strong in the bowling department. Mike Webb and Nick chivvied things along but succumbed in the run chase, then controversy really kicked in. A new bowler threw his first ball, and was "no-balled" for his misdemeanours. His second was another illegal "chuck", which Andrew thumped high towards the boundary only to be caught; "no ball" was belatedly called, but the 'ologists said it was too late. Now we were 110 for five, still up with the run rate, and about to encounter some 'interesting' bowling. Garry and Nigel were up to the challenge, as were the bowlers, who thoughtfully sent down an appetising assortment of wides. Everything else was smashed to the boundary. Their last decent bowler launched a bouncer at Garry, which he fended off with aplomb (or was it a shoulder)? Next ball was called "wide" by an extremely youful umpire, to which the bowler unwisely objected. In true 'Millionaire' style, those on the boundary heard some non-cricketing language akin to "fur" followed by a cough. Arms were raised and handbags drawn, then ice hockey-style, everyone piled into the middle to separate the umpire and the four-times dropped quick bowler. Our umpire retired to the boundary, and all of a sudden Bodley found themselves needing four to win off eighteen balls.

So who would bowl the next over? Their pugilistic skipper asked the Physiology audience for an answer, and a French lad who'd never played cricket before took the ball. Two singles, a no-ball, and a wide saw us through to an epic jackpot Jack Cox win, Garry contributing a devastating unbeaten 34.

Who knows, but with Plant Sciences the opponents in our final group match, a place in the knock-out phase beckons. Why not come along to Mansfield Road for more fireworks on Thursday 19 June?

Bodleian Library 107 all out
(Fairweather-Tall 30, MacKinnon 16, Ackland 16)
University Offices 108-5
(Yousaf 2-29, Wilby 1-11)

University Offices won by 5 wickets

From the press box - report by Stuart Ackland

CALYPSO TIME IN COWLEY

A perfect day. A sky as blue as a sailor’s trousers, a hot sun and a breeze welcome enough to make you forget reddening ears and neck ‘till later. And more for once - playing on a pitch just off the Cowley Road we had the musical accompaniment of this year’s carnival. As the music alternated between the East and West Indies you could have closed your eyes and dreamed you were in Delhi or Lahore, Trinidad or Antigua, with the breeze coming off a warm Caribbean or Indian sea.

Enough of this, Bodley were playing The Offices, the people who pay our wages (though, honestly, this had no effect on the result). Bodley have been playing The Offices for a while now and a few of the games have been less than friendly in the past so this one has been looked forward to with some interest.

Bodley for once win the toss. The captain, on account of the hot sun, forgoes usual tactical practice (i.e. always bat second, that way you can have more cake at tea. It should be mentioned here that the captain bats fairly low down the order). Ditta Yousaf and Andrew Fairweather-Tall open the Bodley account, Ditta soon rejoins the crowd at the pavilion but Andrew almost carries his bat through the innings, before being out on 30, Bodley’s top score of the day. More importantly Andrew plays his part in a few crucial partnerships which manage to push Bodley’s total to 107 before the last wicket falls after 22 overs. A small amount, but in the circumstances not one to be ashamed of. Then tea. What a thing of beauty a cricket tea is, sandwiches of every filling, pies and sausage rolls and then cake; chocolate cake, flapjacks, Bakewell tarts...I could go on. Now you can see the wisdom behind batting second. Bodley go out to field, realising that to get something out of the game they will have to field and bowl better than usual. And, from the start, we do. Andrew continues his fine performance with the bat by bowling tight overs giving little away. Behind the stumps Martin Kauffmann - despite questions being raised about the worth of Medieval specialists - lets nothing pass him and even holds on to two difficult catches. Ditta, your humble and red scribe, Alan Fisher and John Wilby also get valuable wickets while in the field Dave Busby, John Sharp, Andy MacKinnon and new players Andy Hudson and Jon Gordon snaffle up every ball that comes their way.

But, alas, alack and any other word starting ala... Bodley’s figure is soon overtaken. Handshakes all round, washing up and subs collected. Still the music from the carnival can be heard as Bodley players make their way home. More games to come, all leading up to this year’s Tour to Cornwall (surf and turf anyone?) New players are always welcome, ability to laugh at poor cricket and a love of beer more important than skill, fitness etc., etc.

**FILM 2003**  
*(Based on a review featured in Outline 148 of 30 October 2003)*

In response to the request for further reviews of *To Kill a King*, here is one, though I must have seen a different film with the same title and actors.

The film I saw was mostly awful as an attempt to tell the story or assess the motives of the main players in the events depicted. Tim Roth was ludicrously miscast as Cromwell, and did not seem to know whether to play him as an out-an-out psychopath or a tetchy teenage rebel. Neither really suits a man who was 46 when the story began, and rose to power through his ability, energy and single-minded conviction. Roth’s sudden adoption of a cockney accent as the film progressed, was, I fear, deliberate, and together with the shorn locks, was meant to indicate that Cromwell was now identifying himself with the ordinary folk and the ‘revolution’. Strange for a Huntingdonshire gentleman, who is never depicted in paintings and prints with anything other than the same long hair as a Fairfax, or the gentry on either side of the divide. I hope the John Wayne style walk he used in one scene was Roth’s joke at the film-makers’ expense.

There were so many ridiculous episodes and missed opportunities that I can hardly begin to list them here. That Fairfax should think about assassinating Cromwell was silly enough, but the half drawing of a pistol and the sudden loss of nerve while standing next to Cromwell during his inauguration as Lord Protector just completely beggared belief. Especially as by this time, the disillusioned Fairfax had long since retired to his Yorkshire estate. But then chronology, together with truth and credibility, were never allowed to get in the way of the story the film-makers wanted to tell. At some point I think they realised that they were in deep water: the film began with a date so that you would know where in all these events you were. There were no more, which saved any embarrassing juxtaposition of pretended fact with known events. You might even have been forgiven for thinking that Cromwell had not aged a bit when he leapt youthfully off his deathbed (he was now aged 58 by the way) to harangue Fairfax about what might have been if only he had been true to the revolution. There is a dramatic scene during the King’s trial where Lady Anne Fairfax, when asked where Lord Fairfax is, cries out from the gallery “he has more wit than to be here”. You missed it? That is because it was not there, being replaced by an awkward and limp scene where Lady Fairfax simply gets up, curtsies to the King, and walks out. I will not dwell on Cromwell’s fictitious appearance and daft speech on the scaffold after the King’s execution (to proclaim the freedom of the people in the ‘noo republic’) or his penchant for murdering passers-by who annoy him; the scene where he jumped up and down on his Protectoral robes was at least funny. The Second Civil War of 1648 was just simply missed out, probably because Fairfax’s famous atrocity (the execution of two royalist officers at the siege of Colchester) would not have fitted neatly into this version of the story.

Rupert Everett was good value as Charles I, and the Bodleian played its part. The film looked pretty good (if you like that sort of thing). I think I noticed one or two extras (was that Mr Fairweather-Tall signing the death warrant?), but Alan Fisher and his dodgy false moustache were not given the prominence they deserved, nor were Dave Busby, Chris Hunwick and Nigel Walker, who had spent a whole week of filming completely out of character in the guise of Puritans. Clearly not method actors, any of them.

Have I been harsh? I must apologise to all those who share a table with me in the canteen and have heard all this and worse. Just don’t mention *Braveheart*...

*Mike Webb*
18 June 2003
Holy Trinity v Bodleian Library
At Warneford Hospital, Oxford
Friendly: 20-over game

Holy Trinity 56 all out
(Yousaf 2-1, Price 1-0, Walker 1-0)
Bodleian Library 102-3
(Yousaf 52*, MacKinnon 25*)

Bodleian Library won by 8 wickets

From the press box - report by Sheila Allcock

MAC THE MASTER

When your correspondent arrived she was told by Holy Trinity’s captain, Mike Hill, that it wouldn’t be worth opening her chair as the match would shortly be over, their score being at that point being 1 for 2 (English usage, i.e. one run for two wickets, not Australian usage, one wicket for two runs, which would have been marginally better). However she had more faith in the batting abilities of the team than their captain, and this faith was rewarded by the longest partnership of the innings, between Tom Honey, who played some good strokes for his 39, and Steve Weitzel. The latter would have won plaudits from Geoffrey Boycott as he batted for forty minutes for a grand total of nought. However, this provided stability which was badly needed, and allowed for run making at the other end. Luck was on his side when one ball hit his stumps but the bails stayed on. The rapport between the batsmen could have been better as on more than one occasion there was a danger of a run out, in one case the batsmen had crossed and then returned to their original ends. Holy Trinity’s final total was 66 for 6 off twenty overs.

They had an early success when Dave Busby was bowled by Chris McLeod for a duck, but Ditta Yousaf’s masterful 50 saw Bodley home, with the captain Andy MacKinnon scoring the winning run. The spectators as well as having to peer through the gloaming, were also rather chilled by this time, and although they were officially Holy Trinity supporters they applauded every four scored by Bodley as bringing the end of the game sooner and giving them the chance to go home and have some hot soup. However, it wasn’t to be as for some devious cricketing reason Bodley continued to bat for the full twenty overs and ended with 102, enabling Andy MacKinnon to finish on 25 not out and the enviable captaincy record of 100% wins, i.e. two games, two wins.

19 June 2003
Bodleian Library v Plant Sciences
At Mansfield Road, Oxford
Jack Cox Trophy: 20-over game

Plant Sciences 118-7
(Milner 2-9, Yousaf 2-9)
Bodleian Library 119-6
(Kaufmann 35*, Webb 33)

Bodleian Library won by 4 wickets

From the press box - report by Stuart Ackland

PLANTS UPROOTED

Cricket, especially Bodley cricket, is a game often resolved two ways. Either one team is dominant, scoring freely and getting wickets (Bodley are often on the receiving end of this, occasionally they have dominated), or the fortunes of both teams ebb and flow, at one moment one team is in a strong position and then, after a few quick wickets or a bad over, things change. This second type of game is the best for the observer but does little for the nerves of those involved.

Last Thursday’s game, the final one of Bodley’s first round matches in the Jack Cox competition proved to be the latter and it went down to the very last over before Martin Kaufmann, Bodley’s top scorer with 35, got the winning runs. Bodley, for the first time in over six years are through to the next round of the Jack Cox. Maybe that explains why at the end, soon to be ex-Secretary to the Library, the Head of SERS and lesser lights of Bodley C.C. were bouncing up and down in delight.

Bodley performed well with the ball, claiming regular wickets from the bowling of Ditta Yousaf, Andrews Milner and Fairweather-Tall, your reporter and Dave Price, which kept the Plants worried. Dave claimed the wicket of their most dangerous batsman by tempting him into hitting the ball in the general direction of Nigel Walker, who took the catch marvellously well on the boundary. Temporary blips in an otherwise good fielding display (how that ball went through my legs for four I shall never know) managed to push the opposition score up to 118, reachable certainly, but one we have often fallen well short of before.

Bodley’s batting starts badly and they have soon lost their first three wickets for few runs. The ball is firmly in the Sciences’ court until a combination of a very poor over (which due to the number of wides takes 13 balls to complete at the expense of 20 runs) and some firm hitting from Andrew Milner and Mike Webb put the game back within reach. Andrew, after a powerful display of batting, including six fours, is soon out but the combination of Mike and Martin, and then Martin and John Wilby after Mike is out, see us home. Mike hits the shot of the day, an effortless six over the long boundary. Any suggestion that it was wind assisted would be cruel, so I won’t make it here. But, crikey, it was windy.

An excellent achievement for a team whose average age is often that much older than the young teams we play against in the Jack Cox year after year. All credit to the team and to the captaincy of Andrew Milner.

7 July 2003
Far From the Madding Crowd v Bodleian Library
At Pembroke College, Oxford
Friendly: 35-over game

**Bodleian Library** 165 all out
   (Millea 78, Cooper 20)
**Far From the Madding Crowd** 113 all out
   (MacKinnon 3-11, Yousaf 3-18)

*Bodleian Library* won by 52 runs

*From the press box - report by Andy Hudson*

**COOPER REFUSES TO WRITE MATCH REPORT SENSATION!**

In Ingmar Bergman’s masterpiece *The Seventh Seal* a knight returning from the crusades attempts to forestall the Grim Reaper by taking him on at chess. If he’d thought it through properly he might have decided that cricket was a better bet, but then he’d have needed to rustle up a playing field and stumps and stuff, not to mention a bunch of other players, and you know how these Equity types are.

No such problems with facilities or prima donnas for Bodley on Sunday at Pembroke College, so cricket it was, against the beer-users of Far From the Madding Crowd. Captain Nick Millea propitiously won the toss and elected to bat, and although progress was never smooth against some accurate bowling on a wicket displaying variable bounce, Bodley eventually posted the competitive total of 165. It would have been more but for the slow outfield which caused even a mightily struck ball to squirm across the boundary like an apologetic serf. The skipper came within an over or so of carrying his bat, wielding his blade like a whip, only wider and made of wood, in making 47.27% of the total, and there were valuable contributions from Cooper (20) and Rogers (19).

Tea followed: nothing fancy, just sandwiches and cakes. Ask any cricketer and he’ll tell you that haute cuisine is not what’s wanted. Despite a rapid opening spell from Ditta Yousaf – thank goodness, actually, that the batsmen were wearing pads on their legs – F.F.T.M.C. then put themselves into a winning position, cruising to 100-2 with the help of some catches that didn’t quite go to hand. MacKinnon changed all that, lobbing hand grenades from the south end which exploded in the batsmen’s faces, and finished with 3-11. We scented blood, their last man fell over like a prawn, Ackland’s throw from mid-on shattered the stumps like a smart bomb, and the good guys won by forty odd runs.

“Ah! stirring times we live in – stirring times,” wrote Hardy. He knew what he was talking about.

*Bodley XI*: Millea, Tuck, Fairweather-Tall, Yousaf, Cooper, MacKinnon, Hudson, Rogers, Ackland, Busby, Arnold.
9 July 2003

Elsevier v Bodleian Library
At Stratfield Brake, Kidlington
Friendly: 20-over game

**Bodleian Library** 49 all out
(Yousaf 18, Hodgkin 8)

**Elsevier** 50-4
(Yousaf 2-5, Hodgkin 1-13)

Elsevier won by 6 wickets

*From the press box - report by David Busby*

**EVEN THE CAVALRY COULDN'T FIX THIS SHAMBLES**

The Mark Twain saying that golf is a fine walk spoiled will be heard a lot again this week. On this occasion the same could be said of cricket and a fine bike ride along the Oxford Canal in late afternoon sun. Cheery boatpeople, swooping swallows and wallowing cattle was exchanged for a tough if not uneventful game against Elsevier at Kidlington C.C's Stratfield Brake ground.

Bodley batted first through lack of numbers. Tension on the boundary was divided between events on the pitch and an ever changing batting line-up as players arrived traumatised by the trials of the Ring Road at rush hour. Next year I think we should hire a narrow boat.

Our innings didn’t really get going apart from a fine 18 from Ditta, a lovely lofted four from debutant James Hodgkin and a four from Jon Gordon. The cavalry from the Imperial War Museum turned up in the form of Andy Colquhoun to hold an end up into the 17th over before our dreadful demise for 48 (our second lowest score ever). The general confusion was summed up by Jon Gordon’s dismissal, caught by the wicket-keeper off a no ball only to be run out by said keeper. Elsevier’s scorer called for his reinstatement as you can’t be stumped off a no ball, but the consensus was that having run the length of the pitch it constituted a run out not a stumping. Discuss. We did and it all made perfect sense when explained by the Kidlington Over 40s keeper in the bar afterwards. We also had possibly our first hit wicket dismissal.

After an innings of variously dodgy landmarks Bodley worked hard to make life difficult for Elsevier. Perceptive field placing from Al Fisher claimed an early wicket. Accurate bowling from Ditta led to two wickets in consecutive balls and when James Hodgkin struck we felt we may still have a chance. But too many fours slid by on the fast dry outfield and Elsevier won comfortably with ten overs to spare. Oh dear.

Onto the bike and back along a dark canal dodging shadowy figures on the towpath none of whom appeared to be disillusioned Bodley batsmen.

15 July 2003

Bodleian Library v Medicine
At Mansfield Road, Oxford
Jack Cox Trophy quarter-final: 20-over game

Medicine 235-2  
(Walker 1-21, Yousaf 1-23)
Bodleian Library 96-9  
(Cooper 21, Walker 19*)

Medicine won by 139 runs

From the press box - report by Stuart Ackland

DEFEAT IS SUCH A BITTER PILL

The feeling of satisfaction at making it through to the quarter-finals of this year’s Jack Cox competition, the first time in Bodley’s cricketing career, lasted all of eleven balls. That was how long it took for our opposition’s opening batsman to find his range and hit the first effortless six of their innings. A further six were to follow, along with twenty-eight fours. Bodley’s hopes of an even contest started to disappear rapidly after that and they then spent most of the time making forlorn efforts to stop boundaries shoot past them or looking in the bushes surrounding the pitch for lost balls. Requests that the opposition stop hitting the ball so hard weren’t treated with the seriousness intended.

Medicine, our opponents tonight, make the huge total of 235 off 20 overs, an impossible task for Bodley to match, let alone overtake. Ditta Yousaf and Andrew Fairweather-Tall open the batting for Bodley but are unable to make runs off accurate bowling, and Bodley start to collapse. Garry Cooper and Nigel Walker restore some credibility for the team by getting some valuable runs but the end soon approaches. Nigel, with the last batsman in at the other end, is struck in the face by a rising ball and retires hurt and bloody, Bodley finish on 96.

The step up required to compete at this level proved too much, the opposition outplayed your team in every way, effortlessly picking up runs off even our best and fastest bowling and then forcing us into giving up our wickets cheaply. To be on the receiving end of such a thrashing was a particularly frustrating experience and the situation wasn’t helped by my young son, yet to grasp the finer points of the game, shouting out “good shot Dad” as another boundary was hit off my bowling by the opposition. Thanks son.

19 July 2003
Oxford University Press v Bodleian Library
At Jordan Hill, Oxford
Friendly: 40-over game

Bodleian Library 119 all out
(Cooper 25, Webb 21*)
Oxford University Press 120-8
(Fairweather-Tall 3-14, Cooper 2-23)

Oxford University Press won by 2 wickets

From the press box - report by Andrew Milner

SO CLOSE TO VICTORY – BUT PRESSGANGED AS USUAL!

Games at Jordan Hill tend to follow a pattern. It’s always baking hot, the pitch is a belter, OUP get a shed load of runs and we don’t. Well, as per, it’s a scorcher alright, the pitch is, reassuringly, straw hued but as to the uncompetitive nature of the fixture? This year things are not quite so clear cut.

We bat first. A good idea since we don’t want to be running around in the heat of the afternoon. It’s a 40 over game so let’s make them do some work out in the field first and then see if they are a somewhat jaded when they come out to bat. Worth a try surely? James Hodgkin and Martin Kauffmann are our openers and do a good job against some accurate and lively Press bowling. Realising 40 overs is a long haul (for a Bodley side at least) they eschew the overly flashy shot and steadily accrue runs while the OUP attack is beginning to be blunted. Martin is bowled first after 30 minutes but Andrew Fairweather-Tall joins James and the ship is steadied. Then James is adjudged out to a contentious lbw but now Garry and AF-T continue the good work. Andrew is bowled on 17 and is replaced by Milner who doesn’t, as is his wont in this fixture, tarry long at the crease. Mike Webb is in better form and a useful middle order partnership is formed. When Garry is caught, playing uppishly, on 25, Bodley stand at 85 for 5. Reasonable, but a little so far so unspectacular. Regrettably OUP don’t seem to have any really poor bowlers, no one who we can tonk 10 or 15 runs off in a wayward over. That means no respite for the second half of the batting order and no one can stick around with Mike to put together a meaningful partnership. We are all out for 119 off 37 overs with Mike undefeated on 21. Not a great total but at least OUP hadn’t ripped through us.

Only one way to win this game: bowl the Press men out, there’s no chance they won’t get the runs off 40 overs. A great start when their opener is caught on 3 (b. Milner, ct. AF-T) and things get better when the other is caught for 11 (b. AF-T, ct. Webb). Unhappily the next pairing put up stiffer resistance and 40-odd runs. At last their no.3 is bowled for 30 and we’re back in it. His partner goes for 19 (b. Cooper, ct. Webb) and then two quick wickets, both bowled by Andrew Fairweather-Tall, who is in superb form with the ball. Things are now looking distinctly interesting – OUP are 6 wickets down for around 75 runs. If we can knock back a wicket or two quickly we could have a famous victory. Alas, and annoyingly, we can’t quite get the breakthrough. Two further wickets fall but only after a spirited stand by the batsmen and with the Press now just some 12 runs short of our total.

So OUP manage to prevail by two wickets, but we ran them close and I’m convinced we could have won it if one or two of our batsmen had just been able to get around the 50 mark. But a good team performance with everyone fielding particularly well. A shame the jinx of Jordan Hill has not been thwarted this time – but perhaps next year?

27 July 2003

*Jesus College GCR v Bodleian Library*
At Jesus College, Oxford
Friendly: 30-over game

**Bodleian Library** 131 all out
  (Yousaf 29, Fairweather-Tall 21)

**Jesus College GCR** 112 all out
  (Yousaf 4-20, Milner 2-31)

*Bodleian Library won by 19 runs*

*From the press box - report by Martin Kauffmann*

**MR AND MRS – A BODLEY FIRST**

The Bodleian’s latest fixture was notable in several ways: new opposition, in the form of Jesus College MCR; the first ever appearance of a female player in the Bodleian team; and a victory. The coincidence of the two latter features will surely not be lost on the team’s management; maybe it’s one for Duncan Fletcher to ponder too.

The Bodleian, captained by Andrew Milner, elected to bat first. James Hodgkin and Ditta Yousaf were immediately faced by a fast bowler who seemed unable or unwilling to direct his deliveries at the stumps rather than at the batsmen’s heads. Umpire Stephen Arnold was finally forced to intervene and issue a warning: who said umpiring would be no fun for Stephen once John Tuck had gone? The bowler at the other end achieved better results with less pace but better line and length: the fact that he is a regular reader in the Upper Reading Room may have disconcerted some of the batsmen. A patient innings from Ditta saw him reach 29, including four fours. Andrew Fairweather-Tall, Jon Gordon, and Andrew Hudson also hit out well, though none could keep pace with a player called Extras, who contributed no fewer than 43 runs to the eventual total of 131 all out. Lesley Smith, the above-mentioned female debutante, played a vital anchor role in the latter part of the innings, batting for half an hour and thus allowing Extras to continue adding to his score.

The Jesus openers were capable and cautious in the face of tight bowling from James Hodgkin and Andrew Fairweather-Tall. Things seemed to get more threatening after the fall of the first wicket, with the arrival of the talented left-handed no.3; but Ditta found extra bounce to have him caught off the glove at slip, and much to his credit the batsman walked without waiting for the umpire’s finger. Enter at no.4 the wild opening bowler, who turned out to be much more controlled as a batsman. During his innings of 26, which included some beautifully timed boundaries, the Bodleian total seemed vulnerable; but the moment when he was bowled by Ditta proved to be the turning-point of the innings. Thereafter wickets fell steadily; and Extras, perhaps exhausted by his efforts during the Bodleian innings, played now in a much more subdued fashion. Ditta was eventually rewarded with four wickets, Andrew Milner with two, and Jon Gordon with his first ever for the Bodleian: Jesus finished on 112 for 9, giving victory to the Bodleian by 19 runs. No beer or curry afterwards: the players are saving their energies for the Tour...

*Bodley XI*:
Yousaf, Hodgkin, Milner, Hudson, Fairweather-Tall, Gordon, Kauffmann, Smith, Busby, Arnold, Wright.
ANDY MAC'S TOUR DIARY
(with a little help from Stuart Ackland and Mike Webb)

One of the many perks, no, sorry, let's start again...the only perk in helping to run that glorious institution that is the all-conquering Bodleian cricket team is that you can choose where the team goes on Tour. Hence the sudden appearance of trips to the West Country in the last couple of years. After last years ok (but only ok) return trip to Derby another trip to the West was organised and arrangements made with relatives of Mike Hine, who conveniently own a hotel in a pretty Cornish village, a waxed board away from good surfing beaches. Games quickly fell into place, people signed up and eager anticipation grew. Pluses were plenty: pasties, beaches, good beer and (supposedly) warm weather. Negatives were single but sad, a lack of curry past the Somerset border.

The traditional tourists were lacking some familiar faces this year, as both Stephen and John Sharp were not amongst the group. This had a number of drawbacks: who was going to organise the beer kitty? where were the stimulating conversational pieces going to come from? not to mention the opposition’s runs off dodgy fielding? Anyway, new boy Mike Hine more than made up for any deficit in the team.

To break the journey up the team had a game in Somerset on the Friday night. Conveniently placed halfway between Oxford and Padstow, Wellington seemed the logical choice, that it was the home town of this year’s Tour organiser is neither here nor there. Still, it did enable Stuart to point out to his fellow travellers the newsagents he was caught shoplifting in when very young (he should stress, in case his mum reads this, how young and foolish he was) and the local school, from which he learnt how to play the noble game in the first place.

The team set off in various cars from the Bodleian roadway at 1pm on Friday. Food, routes and scenic stops were left to individual tastes, the only common aim being to reach Somerset in time for the first game of the Tour, against Wellington C.C. The Mike Webb car included expertise on maps (Nick), a film star from To Kill A King (Alan) and an “expert” on the English Civil War who also had a deep knowledge of the western routes out of Bath, so inevitably the route cut off the Bristol corner and headed instead to the site of the battle of Lansdown where there is a monument to the victorious Royalist commander, Sir Bevil Grenville. It seemed appropriate to pay homage to the leader of the Cornish Royalists, in the hope that we might receive inspiration from his successes for the great task ahead of us. It was only when we read the inscription that we realised that although he had won the day, he had also been killed, a fate which so far we have avoided, although Stephen Arnold has come close on several occasions. The power of Sir Bevil works in mysterious ways, however, for after this visit Nick suddenly tore up all his plans to spend his honeymoon in an exotic sun-kissed location, and opted instead to book a small rock in the middle of the Bristol Channel. It later transpired that this “island” had been owned by Sir Bevil Grenville.

Somehow, the team managed to gather in Wellington in time for the big match. It now became apparent that we had a fifth columnist in our midst, because Stuart Ackland was seen chatting to various locals around the ground. He later claimed that he had been brought up in the town and had been to school there. This might explain his attempt to scupper Bodley’s efforts at a critical point in the game, though most Wellingtonites we talked to later strenuously denied that they knew him or that he had anything to do with the town.

The game itself was memorable for the most spectacular run out in the annals of cricket, engineered by some fine acting by our resident thespian (Alan Fisher). The batsman struck the ball over the bowler’s head and stood to admire his shot as it raced to the boundary. The non-striking batsman, not so sure about the boundary, set off at a gallop, and ran two while Alan shuffled after the ball. To all us fielders, it looked as though Alan too had given up the chase. He nonchalantly picked up the ball as though it had already crossed the boundary, and lobbed it back to Ditta. The non-striker was turning for a third run, but it had only just dawned on the batsman that if he wanted any runs at all he had better set off. Now Ditta had the ball and threw it at the stumps. It missed, but went the length of the wicket and hit the other set of stumps, running the batsman out while an exhausted non-striker looked on in despair, having run three lengths of the wicket for absolutely nothing. But now Stuart showed his true allegiance, and called the batsman back. Hoots of derision etc., and Stuart was overruled. We lost the game by the way.
Wellington have good league sides so a loss to start the Tour was always on the cards, and this proved to be the case, despite a good performance. The lack of pre-match beer due to poor linking up seems firmly to blame.

8 August 2003
*Wellington v Bodleian Library*
At Wellington
Tour match: 20-over game

**Wellington** 157-7  
(Ackland 2-32, Yousaf 1-18)  
**Bodleian Library** 95-4  
(Millea 50*, Tuck 19)

*Wellington won by 62 runs*


The game ends with a win for the home team. I find out that the person who scored used to go to school with my mum and then shake hands with Wellington’s president, father of best friends at school. A small world...if you go to the right place. Beers with the opposition to follow, then more beers and the traditional curry. Conversation flowed, as did the Cobra from waiters’ trays and a great start to the Tour was duly declared.

The next morning, bleary eyed and full of breakfast, and onto Cornwall, via Taunton to pick up Andy MacKinnon and for Ditta to get his bat sorted at the County Ground.

An appalling piece of scheduling meant I missed the first day of the Tour as Friday 8th was my son’s 4th birthday. After a day spent nursing bitterly celebrating in style, I found myself at Oxford station the following morning at an entirely unsocial hour waiting for a train to Taunton to enable me to meet up with my fellow tourists, who had soldiered manfully on in my absence. After an uncharacteristically relaxing and timely journey I was met at the station and the Tour was on. Hazy tales of curries and a painful cricketing defeat the day before brought me up to speed on progress so far as we set out for Cornwall, and more specifically the village of Trevone, which was to be our base for the next couple of days.

Traffic jams took us off the beaten track and on a high-speed high-anxiety trip through the country lanes to Trevone, a small village a couple of miles or so from Padstow. We were staying at a hotel owned by relatives of Mike Hine, porter and recent very welcome addition to the team. The facilities and location were great, with sea views from many of the rooms and a sweeping vista across the bay, including a disconcertingly large hole in the middle of the right-hand headland. One brief refreshment stop later, with the team as fully assembled as it was going to get and we were off to the second game of the Tour against a local Trevone side. The pitch was situated to one side of a large field, the other side of which was a campsite. Unfortunately the one entrance to the site was on the wrong side of the campsite, with the comic side-effect that throughout the game anyone fielding at long on or long off was constantly threatened with being run over. This certainly resulted in an unprecedented level of alertness in the field with Trevone quickly reduced to 10 for 2 thanks to an excellent opening spell from Stuart Ackland. Natural balance soon reasserted itself however, with the home team going on to rack up a challenging 170 for 7 from their 35 overs. Many of these runs came towards the end of the innings as a mysterious inland mist which was to bless/bedevil the whole trip began to drift across the ground, eventually becoming so thick as to make it impossible to see the opposite end of the ground when fielding in the roadkill positions at the bottom of the considerable slope. My personal situation was even worse than this after I’d foolishly come along wearing only my prescription sunglasses, inadvertently adopting a very rock and roll attitude to the challenges of the mist. The mist, once arrived, stayed with us all weekend, so while the rest of the country was sweltering in 100 degree heat we pottered round Cornwall in a drab but nevertheless very pleasant 20 degree greyness. A quick tea later and the Bodley reply began well with Tuck, Yousaf, Milner and Webb all scoring well as Bodley cruised to a measured and comfortable 159 for 3 in the 26th over, with the Trevone target well within
Mr. White, Mr. Dark Blue, Mr. Grey, Mr. Dark Blue, Mr. Black

Healthy breakfasting on tour
reach. Regular followers of the team’s (mis)fortunes will already have anticipated the collapse which was to follow, as three wickets fell with the score on 161. I was one of the three, though can remember absolutely nothing about the dismissal - my memory appears to have a helpful filter which remembers only scoring shots, catches and wickets whilst dispensing with the tiresome parade of failures, hurrah! The low quality of my efforts in this case however meant I got to go back in at number 11 to make up the numbers in our depleted team, though the fact that I was also still padded-up may have had some small bearing on the decision. A dramatic combination of a lack of precision with the scorebook allied with some desperate and valiant running left Stuart Ackland facing the final ball with two runs required for victory, one for a tie. With a fine view from halfway down the pitch as the ball was bowled I saw Stuart swipe, edge the ball and direct it just beyond the despairing fingertips of the Trevone keeper as the tie was secured - honours even!

9 August 2003
Trevone v Bodleian Library
At Trevone
Tour match: 35-over game

Trevone 170-7
(Ackland 3-19, Fisher 2-34)
Bodleian Library 170-9
(Yousaf 51, Milner 40)

Match Tied


Back to the hotel for the evening and in lieu of the more traditional curried fare the hotel laid on a barbecue on the substantial back lawn. Alcoholic fogging in addition to the meteorological equivalent prevents any detailed report of proceedings, though images of Dave Busby inadvertently (benefit of the doubt here) dropping coleslaw and other barbecue food items onto the resident labrador’s head and neck loom large through the fog of memory. Several of the team, myself included, suddenly found ourselves still out on the lawn in utter darkness towards the end of the night, with brave souls volunteering to make the increasingly hazardous journey to the bar and back across the dewy lawn and dark uneven stone steps. Add to this the usual bout of late night channel-hopping in search of boxing/log fire action/risqué European ice cream ads, then later to pool games of very uneven quality in the bar and Stuart’s attempts to prod the party along with doom-laden CDs of questionable wailing and you have a fairly archetypal Tour night’s entertainment.

Less archetypal and even more ill-advised was my decision to join Stuart in an early morning swim only a matter of hours after crawling to bed. (I would describe the terrifying cacophony of snores coming from the room I was sharing with Stuart, Nick and John Tuck but I slept through and was allegedly responsible for most of it). To be fair the swim was remarkably invigorating, so much so that we were moved to commemorate it by transplanting a considerable quantity of sand back to the communal bath in tribute. A hearty breakfast ensued, followed by a trip to investigate the blowhole on the headland. This turned out to be impressively steep-sided and vertigo-inducing with no-one in the initial visiting party wanting to get too close to the edge. Andrew Milner and Dave however went on to make a mockery of our caution as they scrambled down to the bottom of the hole on a later trip.

After the usual faffing and fiddling about the touring party reassembled to head off for the time-honoured Tour tradition of a round of pitch and putt. This year’s venue was a valleyside course in Mawgan Porth which tested our frankly restricted skills to the limit. The occasional impressive/fluky shot was seen but much of the round was spent hacking, slashing and peering into the long grass. Drama at the last hole saw a play-off between Nick and I on the adjacent comedy putting course. Inspired by the setting my shot inadvertently cannoned into Nick’s ball and knocked it to within an inch of the hole, thereby ensuring his continued reign as Bodley Golf Touring Champion. Buggler.

After a tedious hour or so inspecting roadside hedges at very close range and being all-too-forcefully made aware of the stupidity of people driving enormous mobile homes down narrow country lanes, we
arrived in Wadebridge for the final game of the tour against a side from St Issey. The ground and pavilion was very well kept, bordering the River Camel. Bodley batted first and an excellent partnership between John Tuck and Ditta (49 and 48 not out respectively) allied with a biffing cameo of 26 not out from Andrew Milner took us to a very respectable total of 166 for 4 from our 30 overs. Sledging was a constant in the field, though it was all inwardly-directed, particularly at the St Issey captain, who as a local councillor had apparently just colluded in awarding himself a hefty pay rise - the native Cornish wit on display made umpiring a pleasure! An excellent all-round bowling and fielding performance from Bodley made St Issey work hard for their runs - Stuart, Mike Webb, Alan Fisher, Dave and John Tuck all chipped in with wickets, Nick took a couple of catches behind the stumps and wickets fell regularly. Nevertheless, things were starting to look a little dicey as St Issey crept close to our total with a fine knock of 37 from a Mr Fuller holding their innings together. The ball was flying to all parts of the ground, causing Dave to worry his bowling would be met with "a slap in the Camel". The Camel remained unslapped however as the balance was decisively swung as Nick moved me from the usual gully position to a catching position at silly mid on (no, really, I just checked) and the danger man smacked the ball straight into my hands from Stuart’s next ball. St Issey subsided then to 150 all out, to leave Bodley the winners by 16 runs.

10 August 2003
St Issey v Bodleian Library
At Wadebridge
Tour match: 35-over game

Bodleian Library 166-4
(Tuck 49, Yousaf 48*)
St Issey 150 all out
(Ackland 2-17, Fisher 2-19)

Bodleian Library won by 16 runs


The post-match ceremony turned out to be a surprise highlight of the day as the St Issey captain held court, giving a comic rundown of the game’s high- and lowlights, clearly inspired by the spirit of local comedy god Jethro. Ditta was named man of the match for his excellent contribution with both bat and ball, a very popular and well-deserved choice (please come on the next Tour Ditta, ppleaseeeeeease).

On a high after the success of the game we headed en masse into Padstow for the evening, meeting there with Hannah Chandler who after electing to go to Padstow for a fortnight to escape the shadow of the Library was visibly overjoyed to find ten of her colleagues had pursued her there. An inexcusable shortage of curry meant fish and chips all round for tea, beer, beer and more beer, and repeat to fade.

A frightening inability to learn my lesson meant I went for another early morning dip the following day prior to a valedictory final breakfast and the looooonng drive home - another fine Tour fully enjoyed by a motley crew of nearly-broken men. Many, many thanks to Mike Hine for suggesting the venue and sorting out the accommodation, where we were made very welcome, thanks to Stuart for sorting out the opposition and thanks again to Nick for his calm leadership of what is not so much of a team as a rabble. Cheers!
13 August 2003

University Offices v Bodleian Library
At The Queen’s College, Oxford
Friendly: 20-over game

University Offices 123-8
(Hodgkin 4-16, Peedle 2-13)

Bodleian Library 124-2
(Hodgkin 39*, C. Williams 39)

Bodleian Library won by 8 wickets

From the press box - report by Stephen Arnold

BENNY RICHAUD REPORTS

The latest encounter in the ongoing cosmic struggle between the forces of Light and the forces of Darkness (represented respectively by the Bodleian Library’s cricket team and that of the University Offices) was very nearly a disaster for the Bodleian. So many of the team’s regulars were floored by Post Tour Stress Disorder after struggling back the previous weekend from the fleshpots of Cornwall that we barely managed to find a side. We wouldn’t have, in fact, had not the oppo (who were oversubscribed on this occasion) donated three players - a white-haired old gentleman, an amiable youth, and Ian Peedle, well known to followers of Bodleian football (if there be any such).

Things looked grim for the Bod and your correspondent felt obliged to do his best to instill an appropriate sense of despondency and gloom. Not at all a question of negative attitude, of course, merely a realistic appraisal of the situation and a desire not to have ill-founded optimism cruelly crushed. As it turned out, such misgivings were completely misplaced, as the Offices, having won the toss and chosen to bat, were reduced after the opening bowlers’ eight overs to 25 for 5. This was mainly due to a really excellent spell by James Hodgkin, who exploited with naggingly accurate medium pace a pitch of variable bounce to take 4 for 16. Thereafter, despite economical pace bowling from Yousaf and two wickets in as many overs for Ian Peedle’s ultra-slow leg spinners, the Offices’ score mounted, largely due to the long-handle treatment of the white-haired old gentleman’s lobs by a 6ft 6in Pakistani named Latif, who eventually top-scored with 48. After their allotted twenty overs the Offices had amassed 123 for the loss of eight wickets.

So depleted was the Bodleian side that in order to reach this quite modest total our openers would have to excel themselves. Disaster strikes with only three runs on the board when Ditta is caught out. Enter the white-haired old gentleman. As the tall Pakistani fast bowler runs in to deliver his thunderbolts, one’s heart quails for the frail dotard on the receiving end of such awesome fury. The white-haired old gentleman proceeds to smash his first ball over mid-off for four. Game on.

With James building an innings with impeccably orthodox strokeplay and the WHOG belabouring every ball as if with a club the score starts to climb. The WHOG is finally lbw for 39 and the amiable youth joins James. These two, ably assisted by Extras, see the Bod home with eight balls to spare. James is equal top-scorer with 39 not out: one of the great all-round Bodleian performances.

Hardly a triumph for the forces of Light, however - of the 124 runs we needed, no fewer than 83 were contributed in one form or another by Offices players.

17 August 2003

* Bodleian Library v MRLG (Military Survey)*

At Stanton St John

Friendly: 30-over game

**MRLG** 183-3
(MacKinnon 2-28, Hudson 1-32)

**Bodleian Library** 184-6
(Yousaf 50*, Milner 50*)

*Bodleian Library won by 4 wickets*

*From the press box - report by Andrew Colquhoun*

**CAPTAIN'S NIGHTMARE**

Spare a thought for Captain Millea. Here was Nick hoping to entertain the team from the Military Survey at Bodley's adopted home ground at Jesus College, for the first time. Our opponents had come all the way up from London, Nick himself had just sprinted in from Witney, the weather was beautiful, all had arrived for a prompt start, just one problem: there was already a match in progress at the ground. Somehow, the college had double booked and the groundsman seemed conveniently AWOL.

The Military Survey went into an 'O' group, plotted the co-ordinates and phoned them in to call in an air strike. Meanwhile, in a brilliantly conceived pincer movement, two armoured convoys were on their way! Carnage and mayhem were averted at the last moment, when it was pointed out that it might take too long to fill in the craters to get the game on that afternoon. Into the eye of the storm, entered the calmest man on the planet, Ditta, suggesting that he might be able to get his club to host the match for us. Stan, one man chairman, umpire, groundsman and mein host, duly agreed to help us out. At this point, it was just as well we were playing the army's cartographers, as the ground at Stanton St John has been camouflaged with all the cunning of Jasper Maskelyne. Our potential embarrassment saved, we took the field for a thirty over game, hoping that Messrs Duckworth and Lewis could have the day off.

Opening the bowling, Ditta showed plenty of fire, whilst Andrew Milner bowled tightly. Nevertheless, the mappers took control, putting on 91 for the first wicket. The breakthrough came as a result of your correspondent managing to shift his bulk enough to take a well-judged catch off Andrew MacKinnon's enterprising bowling. Big Mac doubled his tally next over, the skipper snaffled a catch at the wicket. Andy Hudson was the only other wicket taker, thanks to a catch from our ringer from Jesus. The Survey made a creditable 183 for 3, Bodley would have to bat well.

After a hearty tea, openers Colquhoun and Peedle strode out to bat. Bodley's top order remembering how nice the tea was, contrived to get out quickly to get back into the pavilion for seconds. Yousaf and Milner then steadied the innings, both men got to 50 and then had to retire. Nick produced a fine captain's innings to take us just short of victory. Bodley then suffered another of their now famous batting collapses, with MacKinnon and Kauffmann succumbing to the intense pressure. With vultures circling overhead, and pessimists at the boundary recounting tales of spectacular Bodley defeats, Andrew Hudson rose to the challenge to see us home with four balls to spare. It was nice to win, in the end though, it was just important for us to be able to put the game on. Thanks must go to Stan, Ditta and Stanton St John Willows for helping us out of a potentially embarrassing situation.

MATCH OF THE SEASON

5 September 2003
*The Early Birds v The Latecomers*
At Jesus College, Oxford
18-over game

**The Early Birds** – Nick Millea, Stuart Ackland, Ian Peedle, John Wilby, Andrew Fairweather-Tall, John Sharp, Andy MacKinnon, Mike Hine and Andrew Milner.


Jon Gordon umpired the game.

*The Latecomers won by 4 runs*

*From the press box - reports by Nick Millea and Sheila Alcock*

The fourth annual Bodley v. Bodley cricket match took place last Friday evening at the Jesus College ground. As befits this fixture, the teams were selected on the most cunning of criteria – the first nine players to arrive were to be “The Early Birds”, and the final nine would be “The Latecomers”, and given the threat of an early dusk, The Latecomers would bat first.

Andrew Milner led his team into the field whilst Ditta Yousaf juggled an ever growing band of players into a batting order, sending out the season’s two big discoveries, James Hodgkin (English Faculty Library) and Andy Hudson (RSL) to open the batting. With batsmen required to retire on scoring twenty, James made steady progress, unlike Nigel Walker, a man in a hurry who smashed his way to twenty in no time. The latest Latecomer, Mike Webb was heard in the distance yelling “How do I get in?” and later seen scaling a fence in a race to don his pads for a bat. Despite this distraction, Ditta also reached the retirement mark, and the Latecomers’ innings ended on 112 for 7, with James and Nigel back at the crease. The pick of the bowlers was Andy MacKinnon with two for nine, other wickets falling to Mike Hine, Stuart Ackland, Andrews Milner and Fairweather-Tall, plus regular Bodley guest Ian Peedle. John Sharp’s athletic fielding also caught the eye.

So, 113 to win, and Stephen Arnold and Bodley friend Robin Akers to open the bowling. Only Nick Millea passed the retirement mark as wickets tumbled regularly for the Early Birds, including what looked like a highly controversial running out of John Wilby. A confident Andy Mac was quickly brought to earth when his son said “Daddy, I thought it was only cricketers who wear pads”. Still, Andy made double figures, as did Ian and the two Andrews. The penultimate wicket fell with the score on about 90, leaving Nick and Andrew Milner as the last batsmen. They quickly neared the target when Dave Price was brought on to bowl. Two overs to go, five runs needed. Andrew blocked the first two balls, then Dave managed to get one to turn, and the sound of clattering timbers resonated round the ground. The Latecomers had won by four runs. Apart from Dave, James had chipped in with two wickets, Stephen, Andy Hudson and Ditta bagging the others.

Leaving the pitch, Andrew happened to mention that he’d never been on the winning side in one of these games. Dave Busby later revealed he’d been especially anxious as his 100% winning run was under threat and he was due to bowl the last over. Moral of the story, make sure you’re on Dave Busby’s team next year, and not Andrew Milner’s!

Thanks to Jon Gordon (Politics) for kindly umpiring the game throughout, and a special mention to Stephen Arnold, who after the game was presented with a bottle of bubbly and a book describing his Bodley cricket career, having become the first player to tot up 100 appearances for the team.
LATECOMERS

Hodgkin not out 32
Hudson st Millea b Hine 7
Walker not out 27
Price b MacKinnon 5
Akers c Milner b Ackland 1
Webb c Millea b Peedle 4
Busby b Milner 3
Arnold b MacKinnon 0
Yousaf lbw b Fairweather-Tall 24
Extras 9
TOTAL (for 7 wickets) 112

Fall of wickets: 1-8 2-54 3-58 4-68 5-70 6-89 7-106

EARLY BIRDS

Millea not out 29
Ackland b Arnold 2
Peedle c Walker b Hodgkin 12
Wilby run out 6
Fairweather-Tall b Yousaf 14
Sharp b Hodgkin 1
MacKinnon c Hodgkin b Hudson 11
Hine lbw b Webb 6
Milner b Price 16
Extras 12
TOTAL (all out) 109

Fall of wickets: 1-21 2-41 3-45 4-48 then the scoring gets dodgy!

Arnold 2-0-12-1 Hudson 2-0-8-1
Akers 2-0-15-0 Yousaf 2-0-6-1
Walker 2-0-5-0 Price 1.3-0-10-1
Hodgkin 2-0-14-2 Webb 2-0-13-0
Busby 1-0-6-0

By tradition the final match of the series pitches members of the cricket team against each other. The way the teams are divided has been the result of much ingenuity such as by people’s name, age or by place of birth, but none so pragmatic as on Friday 5th September when there were eighteen players in all. The first people to arrive and therefore able to put a side in the field acted as the fielding side with no nonsense about the toss and the captain’s decision.

Your correspondent arrived after these preliminaries had taken place and watched with some bemusement as some other rules had also been changed - any batsman who scored 20 had to retire and all members of the team had to bowl (including the wicket keeper). There was considerable debate among the latecomers waiting to go into bat as to how many overs each side would have and it only became clear that it was 18 overs per side, i.e. two overs each from nine players quite late in the day.

I arrived home in time to watch the highlights of the Test Match and started to ponder the differences between the Bodley team and the England team. The first contrast which struck me was the speed of fielding, which is certainly at a gentler pace than that of the England players. The second was the propensity to go off for bad light - I doubt if England would have got started on an overcast day such as it was last Friday. In the Bodley match the bowlers bowled straight as was evidenced by the number of times the stump went flying. There were no commentators present to get a wicket by praising a batsman to the skies only to have him out next ball. The crowd was knowledgeable and well-behaved, no fancy dress or Mexican waves, or even beer, much to the chagrin of one of the spectators. All-in-all I think the Bodley players come out well from this comparison.

At the end of the match there was a ceremony in which Nick Millea made a presentation to Steve Arnold for playing in his 100th match. How many England players can say the same?

This report is even shorter on facts than usual, as I was asked to write a report too late to make notes, but I can reveal that Bodley won!
RINGING THE CHANGES

2003 was a difficult season for the Bodley team – trying to raise a team was usually a problem, and in our 18 fixtures we only managed to field a team of eleven genuine Bodleyites in just three games. Borrowed players or teams of nine or ten players were a feature of all our other matches. But why should this be? Only three new faces joined the diminishing band of regulars this season: Jon Gordon from Politics, James Hodgkin from the English Faculty Library, and the RSL’s Andy Hudson. Whether by accident or by design, we’ve lost ten stalwarts over the past year: Pete Allmond has succumbed to bowls; a number of players moved on to pastures new – Chris Hunwick to Liverpool and Richard Lindo to Worcester weren’t seen this season; Andrew Colquhoun and John Tuck changed to jobs moving to London prior to the season, but came back to make occasional appearances; Andy Knight and Richard Webber left Oxford after a single appearance apiece this year; Steve Waterman switched jobs in Oxford and became increasingly difficult to locate; Sadiq Abbasi’s studies kept him out of action (though he’s very keen for 2004); and Murray Priest simply chose not to make himself available for any beer or cricket – we’re not sure how long his abstinence will last.

So, who are these ringers we had to employ? For our first game against Far From the Madding Crowd we welcomed Ian Peedle, Steve Rance and Ian Rose. Mr Rose has regularly been drafted in for cameo appearances over the years, but Steve had been desperate for a call-up for some time. A drinking mate of Ian Rose, plus the uncle of Reader Services’ Julie Ball, Steve made certain of his selection by enrolling on the same German course as the skipper’s other half. How could we turn him down after that? He also proceeded to post our highest 9th wicket stand of the season alongside Mike Webb. Ian Peedle went on to play enough games for us during the course of the year so that he now qualifies as a regular.

The Blackwell’s fixture at Horspath Road proved to be a major embarrassment as we really struggled to put out a team. We needed to use three of our opponents to make up the numbers. Allen Stevens fielded in the slips, Chris Robertson ran around a lot near the boundary and had a phenomenal left-arm throw, whilst the unfortunate Martin Cusworth batted at four for us, and it quickly became apparent that the longer he stayed in, the fewer runs we’d score. Mike Webb did the decent thing and staged a wonderfully choreographed tactical run out.

We were short again to meet the challenge of Jesus College GCR, and the scorebook shows a mystery Mr Wright turned out for us. Anyone remember him? He scored four not out, bowled four overs, and was rumoured to be a Physicist mate of one of the Jesus team. We do remember Lesley Smith though – Mrs Martin Kauffmann looked very good indeed in the nets, and scored a solid two, remaining at the crease for a good half hour.

In the final Tour game, Nick’s mate Robin Akers just happened to be on holiday in the vicinity, and took the field as our 11th man. He spent ages padded up ready to bat, but St Issey couldn’t get Ditta or Andrew Milner out, so Robin took his chance with the ball, bagging a wicket with his first ever delivery, then taking an athletic catch in the field. He enjoyed himself so much he even returned for the Whippersnappers match.

The second Offices match saw the Bodley XI heavily indebted to our opponents who supplied three of our team. Ian Peedle was back, whilst “white-haired old gentleman” Chris Williams and “amiable youth” Trevor Williams both made winning contributions with the bat. Would our own players have been good enough to score the necessary runs? Lesley was back for this game too, and maintained her 100% winning record for the team.

In the final game against the military mapmakers we were able to rope in the loud and lively Lancashire fan, Jeremy Taylor from Jesus GCR. We liked him. He batted and bowled a bit, and when it came to fielding, he said “I’m not very mobile at the moment so field me close in” – he spent most of the day harrying back and forward to the boundary and took a blinding catch. We’d like to see him again when he’s fit. Ian Peedle was back once more, opening the batting and bowling well.

So it’s thanks to all those who rang for us this year. As Buzzer notes in his introduction, we won more than we lost in 2003 (never been done before). Perhaps ringers are the answer?
STATISTICS

Batting

Highest score

83  Ditta Yousaf v Ripon College
78  Nick Millea v Far From the Madding Crowd (A)
62  Nick Millea v Ripon College
52* Ditta Yousaf v Holy Trinity
51  Ditta Yousaf v Trevone
50* Nick Millea v Wellington
50* Andrew Milner v Military Survey
50* Ditta Yousaf v Military Survey
49  John Tuck v St Issey
48* Ditta Yousaf v St Issey

Individual runs total

Ditta Yousaf 444
Nick Millea 292
Andrew Milner 158
Mike Webb 129
Garry Cooper 101
John Tuck 90
Andrew Fairweather-Tall 82
Steve Waterman 71
James Hodgkin 64
Andy MacKinnon 59
Martin Kauffmann 50
Chris Williams 39
Stuart Ackland 31
Dan Rogers 30
Nigel Walker 30
Jon Gordon 29
Andy Hudson 27
Alan Fisher 21
Trevor Williams 19
Dave Busby 15
John Wilby 13
Ian Peedle 11
Andrew Colquhoun 10
Stephen Arnold 9
Jeremy Taylor 5
Steve Rance 4
Mr Wright 4
Dave Price 3
Martin Cusworth 2
Ian Rose 2
Lesley Smith 2
Mike Hine 1
Richard Webber 1
Andrew Honey 0
Andy Knight 0
John Sharp 0
Batting averages
(Qualification: 3 innings)

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Also batted

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<td>39</td>
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<td>Trevor Williams</td>
<td>19*</td>
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Sixes hit

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<td>Mike Webb</td>
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Highest partnerships

[A number of partnerships may well have been missed, as the scorebook has incomplete records for our games against the Offices (Jesus), Holy Trinity, Far From the Madding Crowd (A), Wellington, and the Offices (Queen’s)]

Ditta Yousaf / Andy MacKinnon & Andrew Milner / Nick Millea (4th) v Military Survey 145
Ditta Yousaf & Nick Millea (1st) v Ripon College 122
Ditta Yousaf & Steve Waterman (1st) v Physiology 87
Ditta Yousaf & John Tuck (4th) v St Issey 79
Mike Webb & Andrew Milner (4th) v Trevone 71
Garry Cooper & Nigel Walker (6th) v Physiology 49*
Ditta Yousaf & Nick Millea (1st) v Blackwell’s 49
Ditta Yousaf & Andrew Milner (5th) v St Issey 48*
Nick Millea & Garry Cooper (5th) v Medicine 44
Mike Webb & Andrew Milner (5th) v Plant Sciences 43
Ditta Yousaf & Andy Hudson (3rd) v Jesus GCR 43
Ditta Yousaf & Mike Webb (2nd) v Trevone 43

Highest partnership by wicket

[A number of partnerships may well have been missed, as the scorebook has incomplete records for our games against the Offices (Jesus), Holy Trinity, Far From the Madding Crowd (A), Wellington, and the Offices (Queen’s)]

1st 122 Ditta Yousaf & Nick Millea v Ripon College
2nd 43 Ditta Yousaf & Mike Webb v Trevone
3rd 43 Ditta Yousaf & Andy Hudson v Jesus GCR
4th 145 Ditta Yousaf / Andy MacKinnon & Andrew Milner / Nick Millea v Military Survey
5th 48* Ditta Yousaf & Andrew Milner v St Issey
6th 49* Garry Cooper & Nigel Walker v Physiology
7th 36 Nick Millea & Dan Rogers v Far From the Madding Crowd (A)
8th 21 Nigel Walker & Andy Hudson v Medicine
9th 20 Mike Webb & Steve Rance v Far From the Madding Crowd (H)
10th 11 Mike Webb & Dave Busby v OUP
**DITTA'S DILEMMA**

On a sunny afternoon at Pembroke College, the lads on the boundary were watching Dan Rogers and Dave Busby bring a healthy innings to a close. Tea was looming. Ditta had been dismissed fairly cheaply that afternoon, and was mulling over the wild inconsistencies in his form throughout the season. Given this extra thinking time, he'd realised that his erratic batting displays must have been a result of something not altogether obvious. Was it the weather? The opposition bowlers? The Reader ball? All of a sudden, he pronounced to his team mates, “It’s him”, pointing an accusing figure at Andrew Fairweather-Tall. “Whenever Andrew plays, I’m crap”. Surely not?

The Finger decided to analyse Ditta’s batting with this information in mind, and here are the results of our investigations for the 2003 season:

**Ditta’s batting when Andrew plays**

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<td>University Offices</td>
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**Ditta’s batting when Andrew doesn’t play**

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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trevone</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military Survey</td>
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In terms of batting averages, When Andrew’s around Ditta registers a positively MacKinnon-esque 9.57, but take AFT out of the mix, and Ditta’s average soars to a figure unimaginable for any of his colleagues, an ethereal 53.86. So Ditta’s hunch looks to be correct.

Anyone out there doubting the AFT hex theory need only look at the scorecard for the Whippersnappers match on 5 September.
Bowling

Best bowling

4 for 16  James Hodgkin v Offices (Queen’s)
4 for 20  Ditta Yousaf v Jesus GCR
3 for 11  Andy MacKinnon v Far From the Madding Crowd (A)
3 for 14  Andrew Fairweather-Tall v OUP
3 for 16  Ditta Yousaf v Blackwell’s
3 for 18  Ditta Yousaf v Far From the Madding Crowd (A)
3 for 19  Stuart Ackland v Trevone
3 for 28  Ditta Yousaf v Ripon College
3 for 38  Andrew Milner v Far From the Madding Crowd (H)
2 for 1   Ditta Yousaf v Holy Trinity

Wickets total

Ditta Yousaf 23
Stuart Ackland 14
Andrew Milner 13
Alan Fisher 10
Andrew Fairweather-Tall 9
James Hodgkin 6
Andy MacKinnon 5
Nigel Walker 5
John Tuck 4
Garry Cooper 3
Andy Hudson 3
Ian Peedle 3
John Wilby 3
Dave Busby 2
Dave Price 2
Robin Akers 1
Stephen Arnold 1
Jon Gordon 1
Mike Hine 1
Andy Knight 1
Dan Rogers 1
Mike Webb 1
Bowling averages
(Qualification: 10 overs)

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Also bowled
- Robin Akers 3-0-15-1
- Stephen Arnold 6-2-26-1
- Dave Busby 9-0-28-2
- Jon Gordon 2-0-12-1
- Mike Hine 2-0-27-1
- Martin Kauffmann 7-0-47-0
- Andy Knight 3-2-1-1
- Ian Peedle 9-1-64-3
- Dave Price 4-1-26-2
- Dan Rogers 3.1-0-24-1
- John Sharp 1-0-9-0
- Jeremy Taylor 2-0-14-0
- Chris Williams 2-0-31-0

Fielding

Catches

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Nick Millea</td>
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<td>Andrew Milner</td>
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<td>Andy MacKinnon</td>
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<td>Stuart Ackland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Colquhoun</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Fairweather-Tall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin Kauffmann</td>
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<td>John Tuck</td>
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<td>Nigel Walker</td>
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<td>Mike Webb</td>
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<td>Robin Akers</td>
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<td>Dave Busby</td>
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<td>Garry Cooper</td>
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<td>James Hodgkin</td>
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<td>Dave Price</td>
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<td>Dan Rogers</td>
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<td>Jeremy Taylor</td>
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<td>John Wilby</td>
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<td>Chris Williams</td>
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<td>Ditta Yousaf</td>
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Stumpings

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<td>Nick Millea</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Finger wishes to place on record its thanks to the following:

- To our opponents for daring to take us on (in many cases for the umpteenth time), and proving to be such accommodating hosts;
- To Mike Hine for setting up such a memorable Tour;
- To Stuart Ackland, Mike Hine and Nick Millea for supplying the photographs;
- To Jack Flavell for his supply of cricket balls;
- To our season's scorers for being so delightfully approximate in their endeavours;
- To Sheila Alcock, our number one fan, and those long-suffering supporters, hugely welcome at every game;
- To John Sharp for setting up the Jesus College ground link;
- To Stan Rhymes, the groundsman at Stanton St John for saving the day against Military Survey;
- And finally to Stuart Ackland, David Busby, Rosemary McCarthy and Nick Millea, without whom The Finger would not have been possible.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Match</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 9 May</td>
<td>v Far From the Madding Crowd</td>
<td>at &quot;home&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 12 May</td>
<td>v Ripon College</td>
<td>at Ripon College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday 23 May</td>
<td>v British Library</td>
<td>at Civil Service Sports Ground, Chiswick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 10 June</td>
<td>v Blackwell's</td>
<td>at Horspath Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday 13 June</td>
<td>v University Offices</td>
<td>venue to be arranged</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday 27 June</td>
<td>v Far From the Madding Crowd</td>
<td>at Pembroke College</td>
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<td>Wednesday 7 July</td>
<td>v Elsevier</td>
<td>at Stratfield Brake</td>
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<td>Sunday 18 July</td>
<td>v Digitext</td>
<td>at The Queen's College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 23 to Sunday 25 July</td>
<td>THE TOUR</td>
<td>Sheffield and Northumberland</td>
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Alan ‘The Cat’ Fisher ready for anything that comes his way