

TCC Match Reports 2004

Sunday April 25th v. Hoylandswaine (away)

'I like pigs. Dogs look up to us. Cats look down on us. Pigs treat us as equals' (Winston Churchill)

Having finished alongside each other in mid table in 2003, it seemed likely that this opening fixture might give some guidance to the likely fortunes of the two teams as the new season began in pleasantly warm conditions. Over the last few seasons honours had been fairly evenly shared, including a tie game in a league fixture at Hoylandswaine and a remarkable semi-final win for Thurstonland when a classic example of defeat being snatched from the jaws of victory by Hoylandswaine unfolded before the eyes of an incredulous crowd.

Sixteen year old Sam Oldham opened with Mick Ingledow of rather more advanced years and, although 42 runs came from the first 9 overs, neither found survival easy. C. Beever, at only fifteen years of age, was particularly challenging whilst the equally brisk Ray Spencer, only a year or two older, bowled some good deliveries but was much more inconsistent. Indeed, his run from almost the edge of the boundary propelled him at such speed that it seemed that the drag hooks on an aircraft carrier might be useful in preventing him from finishing up on the bowling green on the opposite side of the ground.

The change bowling of J. Ibbotson and R. Brocklehurst lessened the run rate considerably and only ten more runs followed in the next fifteen overs. Mick Ingledow was bowled by Brocklehurst and new batsman John Eastwood took a while to get his timing in the face of the now accurate attack. Sam Oldham was also bowled for 20, one fewer than Mick Ingledow and 60 for 2 with the overs just over half gone had thoughts of the emptiness of Mother Hubbard's cupboard brought to mind rather than gluttonous visions of the Horn of Plenty which had seemed to fill the mind's eye a little while before.

The final total of 146 for 6 in the allotted 45 overs was largely due to John Eastwood. Early season rust was eventually dispatched as was the ball for four and six in the latter part of his well struck 69 not out. All other innings were fleeting cameos with an element of self sacrifice in evidence as attempts were made to boost the total as the overs ran out. Lee Booth managed to drag a ball back on to his middle stump from at least two feet outside leg stump. The feeling at tea was that we might be about 20 to 30 runs short of par on a typical early season wicket which played very fairly if a little slowly.

Dan Peace took the opening wicket of 2004 when opposing captain Richard Greenwood fell for just 5 to a smart slip catch by Lee Booth who also opened the bowling in his former medium pace style. Ryan Copley and the redoubtable Steve Hardwick began to build what looked like a decisive stand for the second wicket. The introduction of David Rishton's left arm spin saw Lee swap ends, replacing Dan Peace, and eventually the breakthrough came when Ryan Copley was bowled by Lee. The returning Adie Birkinshaw played patiently but Steve Hardwick's dismissal for 31 from a well held caught and bowled by Lee Booth signalled the beginnings of the Hoylandswaine resistance.

Adie Birkinshaw was out for 26 and, apart from brief resistance from R. Brocklehurst, the innings ended in the 40th over when last man Spencer hit a lusty shot to midwicket off his first ball. An excellent stop by Jordan Halliday propelled the ball towards John Eastwood at long on. The batsmen assumed wrongly that the ball had gone for four and the imminent midwicket pleasantries were rather abruptly cut short as the ball was returned to David Rishton whose simple task of removing the bails for the run out ended the game with Hoylandswaine on 119 all out.

Lee Booth returned career best figures of 6 for 44 whilst the second of David Rishton's two wickets in his 2 for 31 return was his 800th in first team league and cup cricket.

Thurstonland 146 for 6 (45 overs); Hoylandswaine 119 all out (40 overs)

Team: M. Ingledow; S. Oldham; J. Eastwood; D. Howarth; J. Halliday; L. Booth; N. Booth; K. Thackray; D. Peace; D. Rishton; A. Thackray (w/k).

**Saturday May 1st
v. Woodfield Park (home)**

'It all comes to the same thing at the end' (Robert Browning)

Once again the weather timed things to perfection with a day borrowed from mid-January on Thursday's practice night giving way by matchday to the best possible spring temperatures and clear light. Visitors Woodfield Park had won promotion the previous season and were making their first appearance in the Premier Section since relegation in 2000.

Captain Lee Booth was absent so John Eastwood took charge of proceedings and led out a side which had five players aged seventeen and under. The opening attack of Greg Holmes, on his first team debut, and Matthew Gummerson whose only other game in the first team had been the early rained off encounter against Old Almondburians almost exactly a year ago saw a combined age of just thirty-one. Three or four seasons ago, this seemed on its own to be the qualifying age for one of the youngest in the team. The gradual evolving of personnel is encouraging and gives optimism for the future.

The first over from each of them needed adjustments to the radar with a couple of wides each but after that the visiting batsmen were at a loss about how to cope with their accuracy and swing and it was a pity that the limitations on overs bowled in a spell meant that both had to be taken off when formidably into their stride. It is a long time since 19 for 6 was recorded on the scoreboard and this was after barely ten overs of play. Sixteen year old wicketkeeper Adam Thackray snapped up a catch behind the wicket off Matthew whilst comparative veteran older brother Kris at 17 held another off a mistimed pull at midwicket. Mick Ingledow had provided Greg with his first wicket in the senior side with a smart catch off a lofted drive and doubts were raised about tea preparations being finalised.

David Rishton's usual left arm wiles provided little relief as his eleven overs yielded eight maidens and figures of 1 for 4 whilst Kris Thackray took 1 for 25. It was a tribute to the resilience of the later visiting batsmen that they eventually reached a total of 79 all out in the 42nd over. Fourteen year old D. Moorhouse at no.11 was top scorer with 17 and support came from S.Hall (16), C.Tombleson (9) and J. Garrod (6 not out). Greg Holmes finished with 3 for 29 and Matthew Gummerson 3 for 21. A real collector's item, however, was the second career wicket in his 193rd appearance for John Eastwood when, having batted so well, D. Moorhouse pulled a rather short delivery straight to Sam Oldham at midwicket. A career bowling average of 59 was instantly halved.

The mellow late afternoon sunshine greeted Mick Ingledow and Sam Oldham as they set out to reach the relatively modest target. M. Gummersell and J.Garrod opened the Woodfield Park attack and the former soon had Sam caught behind although his remarks of ' Oh dear what a shame I have been given out. I consider that I did not touch the ball and the unfortunate umpire who is otherwise a splendid citizen may have been in error ' will have to stand in for the bleeps which would have accompanied a televised documentary about the misfortunes of village cricketers as they strive to reach the heights of Brian Lara's 400 not out.

In spite of the best efforts of the Woodfield Park bowlers, Mick Ingledow and John Eastwood had few alarms as they made their measured way to the required total for the second successive complete victory and an early place at the top of the fledgling league table. Mick's 39 not out left him just 36 runs short of 5000 in first team cricket. John's 34 not out alongside his unbeaten 69 at Hoylandswaine meant that he could jet off to Gran Canaria for two weeks knowing that whatever his next score his batting average as the 2004 season moves forward would be over 100.

Woodfield Park 79 all out (42.1 overs); Thurstonland 80 for 1 (21 overs).

Team: M.Ingledow; S.Oldham; J.Eastwood; D.Howarth; N.Booth; J.Halliday; K.Thackray; D.Rishton; G.Holmes; M.Gummerson; A.Thackray (w/k).

**Saturday May 8th
v. Cumberworth (away)**

'Life is not having been told that the man has just waxed the floor' Ogden Nash (American humorist)

A degree of suitably measured optimism was the requirement for the early season visit to last year's runaway champions Cumberworth. Although they had been defeated by Hoylandswaine, our opening day victims, victory in the Drakes League Sykes Cup over Golcar suggested that they would once again be one of the likely form teams of 2004. For three or four years this has not been the happiest of venues in terms of results and last year's embarrassment of 65 all out was still fresh in the memory with even that exceedingly modest score only being reached due to a last wicket stand of 29 between David Rishton and Damien Pawson.

The departure of Sam Oldham, bowled off his pads by Richard Greaves, to the fifth ball of the game reminded those assembled of the words of the linguistically jumbled Yogi Berra, former American baseball catcher with the New York Yankees, 'it's deja vu all over again'.

John Eastwood's absence on holiday gave the responsibility of batting at No. 3 to Kris Thackray and he and Mick Ingledow batted cautiously on a wicket of variable bounce and with an outfield which, apart from one or two areas, was fit for play after the heavy recent rains. It took seventeen overs before 20 runs were posted but the benefits of this dogged determination were to prove invaluable in the light of subsequent developments. Two excellent pulls for four by Kris were shots of class to release the shackles somewhat and he and Mick saw the total to 53 before, after a virtually chanceless knock, the former was bowled for a patient 22, an innings which should give confidence in the weeks ahead. Mick Ingledow eventually succumbed for 36 which neatly took his career runs total in the first team to exactly 5000 at an average of just over 31. Martin Oldham, making his seasonal debut, showed the benefit of his long experience in also scoring 22 whilst Lee Booth played a captain's innings with a good mixture of scampered singles and some more lusty blows to total 25. A late cameo knock from Matthew Gummerson, his first in the senior side, saw him score 8 not out from only six balls and the final tally of 130 for 8 was a respectable effort in the face of good bowling and the damp field. Spinner Ashley Littlewood did well for Cumberworth in the later stages of the innings.

Established young opposition opener Mathew Dolley had Australian teacher Cameron Cowen as his partner as Cumberworth began their reply. The latter, a left hander, drove powerfully and was particularly quick to punish anything short and we hoped that he was not Darren Lehmann in disguise. The firmer wickets of later in the season should give him chances to score heavily. Dan Peace removed both Matthew Dolley and Ashley Littlewood but Jason Senior, as ever, showed his adhesive qualities in partnership with Cowen.

Lee Booth now formed the attack with David Rishton after Dan Peace's 2 for 10 opening burst. It was a relief when the Aussie drove a little expansively at a Lee Booth delivery and was well caught at extra cover by brother Neil for 39. The remaining batsmen found the persistent accuracy of the two Thurstonland spinners restricting run scoring chances and wickets fell at regular intervals in an attempt to keep up with the scoring rate. Once Jason Senior departed, also for 39, the game was finely balanced and the last over saw 7 required with the last pair at the crease. Three scrambled leg byes were managed before Richard Greaves was bowled by David Rishton off the last ball to give Thurstonland victory by 4 runs. Sadly, it was all in vain as the game was the only one in the section to start and two have to finish for points to count.

Thurstonland 130 for 8 (45 overs), Cumberworth 126 all out (45 overs).

Team: Mick Ingledow; Sam Oldham; Kris Thackray; Martin Oldham; Jordan Halliday; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; Matthew Gummerson; Daniel Peace; David Rishton; Adam Thackray (w/k).

**Saturday May 15th
v. Woolley (home)**

In general, the English are not a particularly religious people and so they invented cricket to give them some idea of eternity. (George Bernard Shaw - Irish playwright)

The idealisation of village cricket has it that a group of local stalwarts gather together to do battle with like minded individuals from a neighbouring parish. The sun shines on a mellow English afternoon and shadows lengthen as evening arrives. The church presides over proceedings and, at one time, the vicar himself might have been playing in the match. His skills might have been modest but his presence had a moderating influence on the language used in the stern heat of battle.

One or two young men of the village would take their place alongside those of more mature years and all social classes would be represented with the squire playing apart along with local tradesmen amongst whom would usually be the blacksmith. His suitably muscular forearms, nurtured by many hours at the forge and shoeing the yeoman farmers's plough team, would busy themselves in sending the ball to all corners of the field with scant regard to the latest coaching manual.

About 120 all out in no more than 26 overs would be reckoned a fair return with the blacksmith contributing a lusty 49 in twenty balls, perishing to a catch in cow corner by a quaking visiting bank clerk who spent his days, in contrast to those of the said batsman, poring over ledgers and perched on a high stool whose design would have been familiar in Dickensian days. The visitors would score 49 for 9 before a gallant last wicket stand realised enough runs to see up the hundred and then time would be called with an honourable draw the result to be followed by foaming tankards of the landlord's best ale or even cider in the nearby hostelry.

At this point, I must beg forgiveness of those eager readers of these match reports for the self indulgent paragraphs above. The weather fitted the stereotype for the game against Woolley, there was a good mix of ages on both teams and, no doubt, without quite having the range of occupations represented in traditional village cricket accounts, a good range of jobs. Sadly, the blacksmith or, indeed, anyone remotely like him in his approach, was missing. A total of 224 runs between the two sides in just short of ninety overs would have been regarded as modest in a day's play in a modern test match.

Woolley used seven bowlers, most of whom bowled very accurately. The loose ball, when it came, was not quite timed or went straight to a fielder. Sam Oldham perished for 10 after an hour's toil with the score on 27. Mick Ingledow soldiered on and eventually got to 56 but he struggled for fluency and his usual acceleration in scoring rate never materialised. Kris Thackray made the most of his second opportunity batting at No.3 and made 32 with very few false shots and making some attractive drives before being run out in the 41st over trying to get things moving. A total of 101 for 2 on his departure became 123 for 7 at the close with batsmen scurrying to and from the crease like figures from an early twentieth century newsreel and the wistful reveries of the scorers were rudely shaken from contemplations of the meaning of life and the working out in their heads of Fermat's Last Theorem to the frantic scribbles of those forlornly collecting car numbers at rush hour on the M62.

Apart from Ian Norton, batting at No. 6 for Woolley, who scored a threatening 46 and briefly looked like winning the game for them, Dan Peace's initial burst of three wickets set the scene for three more from Lee Booth and four from David Rishton. The opposition batsmen were as becalmed as Thurstonland's in a game which will not rank as one of the all time greats.

Thurstonland 123 for 7 (45 overs); Woolley 101 all out (40.4 overs)

Team: Mick Ingledow; Sam Oldham; Kris Thackray; Martin Oldham; Jordan Halliday; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; Dan Peace; Matthew Gummerson; David Rishton; Adam Thackray (w/k).

**Saturday May 22nd
v.Green Moor (away)**

'How green was my valley' (Richard Llewellyn 1907 - 1983, Welsh novelist)

One of the longest trips of the season took the first team on its second visit to relative newcomers to the league, Green Moor. The centre of Sheffield is barely ten miles from the ground with Penistone quite nearby which enabled Mick Ingledow to engage in pleasantries about his hometown with local supporters in much the same way as tales of local legend must have been passed round the fireside in the days of our hunter gatherer forefathers.

The bright late spring sunshine had its charms lessened by a cool wind although the clear atmosphere enabled views of vast areas of West and South Yorkshire to be enjoyed from the field's elevated vantage point. Memories of last year's two sound thrashings by our hosts were in the mind as Mick Ingledow, prised away from genial gossip, and Martin Oldham opened the Thurstonland innings. Measured progress was initially the order of the day but gradually confidence increased as it was realised that the early collapse of our last visit had been avoided.

Martin was first to go for 12 and, after John Eastwood, tormentor in chief of bowlers throughout the weekend, had helped build on the good start he was followed by Mick for another patient knock of 24. Home captain Andrew Matthewman bowled a consistent line and few liberties could be taken with him and some keen fielding kept things in check until after the halfway point of the innings. His fifteen year old son accounted for an only slightly older Matthew Gummerson, promoted to No. 4 in the order, who was smartly stumped by Ian Mosley. So stunned was Matthew by the magnitude of this event that he remained fixed to the spot for a few seconds as if he had caught the eye of Medusa and been turned to stone. Off he had to trudge, however, followed soon after by in form Kris Thackray who played a cultured glance to leg for two to get off the mark. His next delivery was his last as he called for a single to a not all that deep mid on who returned the ball swiftly to the keeper to beat his despairing attempted return journey.

At 71 for 4 there was a chance that the careful opening might be going to waste but captain Lee Booth joined John Eastwood to transform the innings in the last fifteen overs. A calculated assault on the bowling by the latter saw a flurry of fours and sixes, one of which might have made it down the hill towards Wortley Forge but for the presence of a house and surrounding walls. Lee played a good supporting role like Sancho Panza to Don Quixote. After the addition of 110 runs Lee succumbed to the fourth ball of the last over for 28 which left Dan Peace time to propel the final ball of the innings to a tremendous height virtually straight above his head. A gallant Green Moor fielder who, had a copy been handy, might have had time to read a fair chunk of Don Quixote before the ball came back into view, was never favourite to catch the rapidly descending speck and two runs had been completed before the inevitable spillage occurred. John Eastwood was left undefeated on 94 with class shots played throughout his innings. Little did anyone guess that this was merely a taster for what was to follow in the Allsop Cup game the next day.

The early departure of the experienced John Hardy, caught off Dan Peace, was a welcome breakthrough but his opening partner J.Bates and D.Beachill kept the score moving. The former made a solid 39 and a quick 29 from Ian Simpson, who feels it a challenge to hit nearly every ball for six, kept matters in the balance. The steady persistence of David Rishton, in his 500th game, and Lee Booth kept the asking rate a little on the high side and wickets fell as well. A gallant late effort from Matthewman father and son left six needed to tie from the last ball but only a single was gained to end an enjoyable afternoon's cricket in marked contrast to the turgid affair of the previous week.

Thurstonland 183 for 5 (45 overs); Green Moor 178 for 8 (45 overs).

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Matthew Gummerson; Kris Thackray; Lee Booth; Dan Peace; Neil Booth; Sam Oldham; David Rishton; Adam Thackray (w/k).

**Sunday May 23rd
v.Heckmondwike (home) - Allsop Cup (Round 1)**

**'If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Then quit. No use being a damn fool about it.'
(W.C. Fields 1880 - 1946, American humorist)**

The Thurstonland ground looked its best as the weather once again was in top form for the visit of league newcomers Heckmondwike. They had been long standing members of the Central Yorkshire League until financial problems saw the club, with a long and proud history, on the verge of folding. The decision was made to join the Huddersfield Central League, with one side initially, to enable them to regroup and it was pleasant to be able to welcome them so early in their association in our competition. By coincidence they were due to play our second team in a league fixture in Section C at their ground on May 29th.

Mick Ingledow took a single off the second ball of the game so leaving Ian Short, playing his first game of the season in the senior side, to face David Bedford from the pavilion end. An elegant forward defence shot from the pages of the coaching manuals unfortunately failed to make contact with the ball which clipped the leg stump. An anguished announcement from ten yards away from the pavilion from Ian to the effect that it was the first time he had ever been bowled round his legs would, I am sure, have had the sympathy of Joseph as he voiced his frustration at his limited role in setting Mary along the road to the virgin birth.

Ian had an unexpected return to the middle an over or two later when Mick Ingledow injured a knee which necessitated a runner. His second and final departure from the batting side of the game came when Mick was bowled for 24 playing down the wrong line to a delivery from left armer Mick Fell.

The arrival of Lee Booth at No. 4 to join John Eastwood was a repeat of the previous day's partnership at Green Moor. In normal circumstances, Lee's purposeful 31 would have taken if not centre stage then at least more than a supporting role to an innings whose mixture of elegance and often sheer brutality has scarcely been seen. By its end, on an undefeated 147 which passed the previous first team highest individual score of 141 not out by David Howarth, those privileged to be there had seen fifteen fours and ten sixes. No chances were offered and the toiling visiting bowlers would hardly have been consoled in their vain efforts to dismiss him by the rare shots which were played and missed.

After Lee's dismissal, Dan Peace also helped to keep the score mounting past the 200 mark with some powerful shots until he was out on 48, yet again just missing out on what would have been his first fifty in the first team. John walked off to a deserved ovation from all present, including the wearied but unbowed opposition, with his total of runs for the season so far standing at 344 in four innings without being dismissed. His last knock in September 2003 had yielded 86 not out against Cawthorne so opposing bowlers have conceded 430 since his wicket was claimed. The game can be a real leveller but this rich run of form is to be enjoyed while it lasts, not least by John himself.

Two wickets for Matthew Gummerson and one for Dan Peace soon reduced the shell shocked visitors to 6 for 3 and the pages of the record books were again being stirred to look for the the highest winning margin. To the credit of Heckmondwike and to the pleasure of their sizeable following, G.Scott (40) and S. Haider (50) soon put a stop to that. It was a little disappointing that neither Ian Short nor Kris Thackray was able to bowl consistently when there was every opportunity, given the state of the game, to have an extended spell. They conceded 53 runs in 7 overs before the wiles of David Rishton (3 for 13) and Lee Booth (3 for 29) once again did the trick. A late order contribution of 18 from Mick Fell enabled the visitors to reach 134 all out. In spite of the one sided nature of the game it was played in

good spirit and we look forward to welcoming our visitors again for the league fixture with the second team later in the season.

Thurstonland 280 for 5 in 45 overs (a club record score); Heckmondwike 134 all out.

Team: Mick Ingledow; Ian Short; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; Jordan Halliday; Dan Peace; Neil Booth; Matthew Gummerson; Kris Thackray; David Rishton; Adam Thackray (w/k).

**Saturday May 29th
v. Cawthorne (home)**

Rowes Rule: the odds are five to six that the light at the end of the tunnel is the headlight of an oncoming train. (Paul Dickson 1939 -), American writer.

The clash of the titans, the big one, the irresistible force meets the immovable object.....tabloid headline writers would have had a whole range of banner headlines at their disposal for the fixture with Cawthorne which saw the visitors in first place and their hosts one point behind as the season began to take shape with June just around the corner.

Cawthorne batted first and the early removal of both Dale Skelly for a single, after 99 not out in his previous innings, as informed by his son who was their scorer and a mine of information suggesting a young Statto in the making, and Darren Lindley, returning after a spell in the Drakes League, made for a promising start. When D.Hawley also departed for 18 to reduce the visitors to 38 for 3, images of a rosy garden began to form. They did not last too long, however, as what proved to be a vital stand was soon under way between Darren Skelly and Ian Norton who was paying his second visit in a fortnight to Thurstonland having transferred from Woolley. On that occasion his 46 had nearly turned the game their way and Young Statto revealed that he had scored 51 not out against Cawthorne the previous week.

Matthew Gummerson left the attack after bowling seven overs for figures of 2 for 23 under age limitation guidelines but Dan Peace and Lee Booth had to use all their experience to contain both batsmen who adopted a very positive approach. There was also the rare sight of David Rishton conceding over five runs an over and figures of 1 for 38 from seven overs saw his bowling end for the afternoon at an unusually early stage. Darren Skelly was caught for 50 just a ball or two after reaching that landmark but Ian Norton pressed on towards what seemed like an inevitable century. He eventually was bowled attempting one ambitious shot too many for 96 shortly before the end of the 45 overs and Cawthorne closed their innings at 197 for 7.

A feature of the innings had been good running between the wickets with several examples of turning one into two. The Thurstonland fielding was adequate but seemed frustratingly unable to stop the extra runs being scored. Mick Ingledow and Martin Oldham gave the Thurstonland reply a solid start before the former played down the wrong line and was bowled for 16. After a slightly cautious start, John Eastwood got into his stride and thoughts began to turn to whether he would ever be dismissed. Spectators watched as eagerly as those about to witness the crossing of the sun by Venus as if determined not to miss such a rare event. With his score on 44, and 388 for the season, the moment came in a rather banal fashion as the umpire, who until that moment had turned down everything, shot his finger skywards in answer to an lbw appeal as if it had been jerked by an invisible puppeteer. So unused to being dismissed, John seemed to be calling for route directions to the pavilion before finding the true path to virtue and trudging off.

Martin Oldham scored 33 as the Thurstonland total mounted and Dan Peace was sent in to try to keep things moving. He managed to reach a belligerent 22 but overs began to run out and the Cawthorne fielders were keeping possible twos down to singles by their quick reactions and powerful, accurate

throws. Kris Thackray did his best but indecisive calling led to the running out of captain Lee Booth. This act ought to have cost him several pints in an effort to restore favours. Neil Booth reached a rapid 10 before even his efforts to gain an extra run ended in another run out in spite of a passable attempt at imitating the bomb in the swimming pool scene in the John Smiths TV advert in his efforts to reach the crease. Kris ended on 18 not out and Matthew Gummerson on 6 not out to see Thurstonland frustratingly close at 192 for 7 although the run rate in the latter stages always seemed likely to put the target just beyond reach.

Cawthorne 197 for 7 (45 overs); Thurstonland 192 for 7 (45 overs)

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; David Howarth; Dan Peace; Kris Thackray; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; Matthew Gummerson; David Rishton; Adam Thackray (w/k).

Saturday June 5th

v. Crossbank Methodists (away)

What makes men so tedious

Is the need to show off and compete

They'll bore you to death for hours and hours

Before they'll admit defeat.

(Wendy Cope 1945-), English poet.

Never let it be said that predictability is a feature of these match reports. Keen, regular readers are about to be set a little test of the sort that is probably a thankfully fading memory from schooldays.

Write fully and interminably on one of the following situations and in so doing assess its possible contribution to the sum of human happiness:

- counting the grains of sand on Blackpool beach
- getting toothpaste back into the tube
- measuring the entire length of the M1 with a 12" ruler
- serving soup from a tureen with a slotted spoon
- listening to an eternal loop tape of hits from tunes played while on hold when making a phone call
- cutting Thurstonland CC outfield with a pair of scissors
- counting the cars on the New Jersey Turnpike
- attempting the task of chewing and swallowing three cream crackers in one minute without a drink
- greasing all the rivets in the Eiffel Tower
- watching Crossbank Methodists bat for eternity and gallantly fail to score more than one an over

I must apologise for the last option as it is not entirely fair as the rush to 49 for 8 in 45 overs scored by our hosts represents a rate of 1.09 per over. The wonder was that hospitals in the Heavy Woollen area were not overwhelmed by those suffering potential coronaries at this giddy, indeed skittishly frivolous, run rate.

Had it not been for the pleasant good humour of the Crossbank scorer, who at eleven years of age announced his embarrassment at the afternoon's events as they unfolded, and his equally young assistant who put up the numbers on the board your correspondent might have been reduced to taking the role of one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, probably Pestilence, and visiting dire deeds

upon the hapless home batsmen. An amusing diversion was the taking of imaginary bets about whether the eventual total would reach 50.

Winning and losing are part of all sport and we sometimes pretend, at least at professional level, that it is more important in the scheme of things than it actually is. For goodness sake, win or lose, it is a game! At good village cricket level, which is where we ply our trade, it is a recreational relief from the routine of earning a living or being philosophical in interminable traffic jams. We all enjoy moments of triumph and gnash teeth when the opposition win but, in the course of a lifetime, what do these things matter?

Dogged determination not to be overwhelmed by supposedly better opponents is a quality to be admired but the level to which this is taken has to be questioned. Neil Booth enjoyed the chance to open and scored a good 27 not out with David Rishton, in at No.3 after the departure of Martin Oldham caught at the wicket for 4, getting 12 not out in his first innings of the season. Adam Thackray kept wicket well.

Crossbank Meths 49 for 8 (45 overs); Thurstonland 51 for 1 (16 overs).

Team: Neil Booth; Martin Oldham; David Rishton; Adam Thackray (w/k); Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; Kris Thackray; Dan Peace; Matthew Gummerson; Greg Holmes.

**Saturday June 13th
v. Edgerton (home)**

' You can only predict things after they have happened ' (Eugene Ionesco 1912-84, Romanian born French dramatist)

Mid-table visitors Edgerton promised to be more competitive opposition than Crossbank Methodists the previous week. Recollections of a Thurstonland double in 2003 were tempered by memories of a determined run chase by our visitors in the away fixture in 2002 when they had knocked off the required 195 for victory with eight balls to spare.

Opening bowlers F. Rehman, one of three brothers playing, and T.Aleem proved to be quite a lively proposition and the latter had Martin Oldham (5) caught behind down the leg side by wicket keeper Stuart Whitehead with the total on 14. First change bowler M.Ali, replacing Aleem, also bowled tidily and, unusually, it was Mick Ingledow who kept the scoreboard moving rather than John Eastwood as the batsmen had to pull out all the stops to keep things ticking over. Mick, making his 199th first team appearance, was eventually bowled for 36, virtually his first error, and at last John began to play more freely, giving hints of his prolific 2004 form. Kris Thackray, after a couple of good off drives which went straight to a fielder when a yard or two either side might have brought boundaries for both strokes, was comprehensively yorked by the persevering F.Rehman. Sadly, he failed to trouble the scorers as that curious phrase has it.

Lee Booth now joined John Eastwood and looked in touch from the first delivery. A compact defence gave little encouragement to the bowlers and he unleashed several sumptuous off drives which also seemed to get John Eastwood out of a slightly uncertain patch so it was a surprise when the latter was bowled for 35 so sending his average for 2004 plummeting to 211.5!

Neil Booth joined his brother and quickly showed that his opening role the previous week had paid off with fifteen overs still to go. Things are not always easy for a specialist batsman going in at No.6 or 7 when often little time is left. One cover drive to the bottom boundary was candidate for the shot of the season, even though mid June had not yet arrived, and suggestions were made that he had been

studying closely the latest coaching manual. The far from inadequate Edgerton attack must have despaired at seeing batting of this quality lower down the order. Lee eventually was bowled for 67 while Neil's cameo of 18 was another reminder that one of the charms of cricket is in the execution of the game's skills and not just in the result of the match. A trenchant 11 not out from Greg Holmes off only four deliveries in the last two overs left the total on 194 for 9 with a one ball appearance at the crease from young wicket keeper Adam Thackray. A sound defensive shot was executed in copybook style and he was congratulated on finding his way to the wicket after his services had not been required previously. F.Rehman ended with 5 for 63.

Dan Peace managed a gallant five overs in opening the attack ,although suffering badly from hay fever, and conceded 13 as the other two Rehman brothers got the Edgerton reply underway. Matthew Gummerson bowled three overs for nine runs before giving way to Greg Holmes who appeared to be struggling for rhythm and gave away 11 runs from 2 overs to the confident looking openers who posted 35 for 0 after eleven overs. Greg's thirteenth ball changed everything with the significance captured in this week's quotation. By his twenty-first delivery he had taken five wickets in nine balls to reduce the shell shocked visitors to 38 for 5. Remarkably, all five were clean bowled. He ended with figures of 6 for 21 and, apart from a belligerent 29 from V.Singh and a few lusty blows from D. Miller (11), it was largely a case of waiting for the inevitable although such a comprehensive win had not seemed likely until Greg's first strike with 45 minutes gone after tea.

Thurstonland 194 for 9 (45 overs); Edgerton 93 all out (27.5 overs)

Team: M.Ingledow; M.Oldham; J.Eastwood; K.Thackray; L.Booth; N.Booth; D.Peace; M.Gummerson; D.Rishton; G.Holmes; A.Thackray (w/k).

**Saturday June 19th
v. Old Almondburians (away)**

' If ever I'm feeling a bit uppity, whenever I get on my high horse, I go and take another look at my dear Mam's mangle that has pride of place in the dining room. ' (Brian Clough 1935 -), football player and manager.

Our promotion to the top section in 1983 was followed by that of Old Almondburians a year later which makes this the twenty-first successive season we have met in league action. Fortunes have ebbed and flowed with most contests being very competitive. A slow start to 2004 by our hosts had left them in an unaccustomedly low position in the table but a win the previous week at Crossbank Methodists had boosted their confidence.

The weather, after several weeks of sunshine on matchdays, was not as favourable for cricket although play was uninterrupted until after tea when two breaks totalling about twenty-five minutes in all represented the first period off the field in the current campaign. As seems inevitable, we had first innings on the Kaye lane pitch when batting never seems to be at its easiest.

Mick Ingledow and Martin Oldham began against familiar opponents in Ian Tunnacliffe and Steve Slack and the first four overs yielded just a single. This seemed to suggest that the pattern of many recent games at this venue was going to be repeated with runs having to be eked out like the last drops from a bottle of vintage wine. Gradually, however, the score began to mount on a pitch of variable bounce with most batsmen using their considerable experience to defend doggedly but ready to take full advantage of any looser bowling. Almost imperceptibly the total mounted until, just as the drinks tray was ready for its now ritual appearance, Martin was caught behind for 36 off virtually his first false shot. Quiet satisfaction was felt, however, at 68 for 1 from 24 overs.

The opposition had shown signs of frustration at the lack of a breakthrough but the sudden change in fortunes was entirely unexpected and the balance of the game shifted towards Old Almondburians. The second ball after the break saw Mick Ingldow adjudged lbw for a dogged 32 whilst Kris Thackray never looked at ease before mistiming a drive to be caught for a single leaving the score at 72 for 3. John Eastwood (25)and Lee Booth began to try to rebuild the innings with the former getting into his now familiar stride with five boundaries. So far, 2004 has seen runs flow from his bat like liquid from an alchemist's forge in the relentless search for gold.

Suddenly, like the fall of a Roman soldier on his own sword, the end came. His call for an unlikely single was answered by a direct hit on the bowler's wicket as he attempted to regain his ground, failing by a stride to reach his objective. Runs had again become hard to find with only Neil Booth really getting going before being caught for 20 from the first ball of the penultimate over, leaving Adam Thackray and David Rishton to defend doggedly to guarantee at least one point.

The early dismissal of Martin Tunnacliffe, caught at cover by Kris Thackray off the bowling of Matthew Gummerson, after the first short rain delay, gave cause for hope that all was not lost. Mick Hall played and missed at what seemed like every other ball before being snapped up at slip by Lee Booth off David Rishton after the ball had ricocheted from Adam Thackray's glove. This was as good as it got as Tim Taylor (77n.o.), already well into his stride, was joined by 16 year old Mark Henshaw (34) who, after a circumspect first few minutes, began to score fluently. Some well hit drives and pulls from both batsmen raised the score from 35 to 114 before a thin edge saw Adam Thackray's catch at the wicket off brother Kris's bowling dismiss the latter. The inevitable result soon followed .

Thurstonland 127 for 9 (45 overs); Old Almondburians 130 for 3 (38.5 overs).

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Kris Thackray; Lee Booth; Dan Peace; Neil Booth; Matthew Gummerson; Greg Holmes; David Rishton; Adam Thackray (w/k).

**Sunday June 27th
v. Azaad (home) Allsop Cup - Round 2**

**' Anthing you can do, I can do better,
I can do anything better than you. '**
(Irving Berlin 1888-1989, American songwriter)

The Allsop Cup fixture, postponed because of rain the previous Sunday, brought new opponents in Azaad from the Lupset area of Wakefield. Their only other visit to our ground had been to play our second team for a league fixture when they joined the Huddesfield Central League in 2001. They had a reputation for playing positive cricket and were currently leading Section B with an unbeaten record.

Tariq Mahmood and Kalim Aslam began with some accurate overs and neither Neil Booth nor Martin Oldham was able to take liberties. The score had reached 15 when Neil was out to a similar shot played 24 hours earlier against Denby Dale which resulted in him being caught in the gully for 4. John Eastwood joined martin and gradually runs began to come although no liberties could be taken and Tariq conceded only eight runs from as many overs before he took a breather A maximum of 12 overs by any one bowler is the new rule for cup matches this season.

Martin Oldham went for 22 and Lee Booth soon followed adjudged lbw when he seemed well down the track. A total of 68 for 3 kept the game in the balance but Kris Thackray's partnership with John Eastwood which began on Lee's dismissal was to prove the key factor in the game. Having hit one good boundary, Kris was a little fortunate to survive when he propelled a leading edge shot high towards midwicket. Initial over eagerness to take the catch saw the bowler and several fielders approach the

action area but, having arrived, everyone paused as if Medusa herself had turned them all to stone. The inevitable result was that the ball thudded to earth leaving Kris at the bowler's end a run to the good and, no doubt, absolutely certain that he would find the crock of gold at the end of the next rainbow to grace Thurstonland with its presence.

The onslaught now began even if that expression cannot do justice to yet another display of classy shots to all parts of the ground by John with Kris taking singles in a support role as well as hitting two excellent cover drives for four. The fielding became less tidy as good running put the opposition under pressure and they added 94 valuable runs before Kris was narrowly run out for 27 when going for a second run.

The few remaining overs saw John approach his century and David Rishton, who joined him for the last few balls, twice nudged a single to get him the strike but overs ran out leaving him on the agonising score of 99 not out. Some satisfaction was gained in that, when on 95, he passed the 5000 run mark in first team cricket in his 201st game.

In the absence of Adam Thackray and Matthew Gummerson on Joe Lumb representative duty for Huddersfield, another fifteen year old wicketkeeper, Tom Sykes, made his first team debut after some competent displays in the seconds whilst Damien Pawson made his seasonal debut after the end of his first year at university. Greg Holmes and Dan Peace opened the attack with Dan getting the first wicket. Damien's appearance at first change saw him settle into his rhythm quickly and he took two wickets. Any thoughts of a quick finish with Azaad on 52 for 4 were dispelled by a determined partnership which only ended when both batsmen were in the same crease and Tom Sykes rolled the ball the whole length of the pitch to run out Tariq. David Rishton and Lee Booth both proved a handful for the later batsmen with three wickets each and victory was achieved after a spirited effort from the visitors to see us into the quarter finals.

Thurstonland 187 for 6 (45 overs); Azaad 133 all out (39.2 overs).

Team: Neil Booth; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Lee Booth; Kris Thackray; Dan Peace; Jordan Halliday; David Rishton; Damien Pawson; Greg Holmes; Tom Sykes (w/k).

**Saturday June 26th
v. Denby Dale (home)**

**' Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure '
(TS Eliot 1888-1965 , Anglo-American poet, dramatist and critic)**

Loyal readers may be interested to learn that this fixture was viewed from a rather different perspective. Instead of the panoramic outlook on proceedings from the scoreboard, the game had a close encounter of the third kind experience for your correspondent as no official umpires turned up for the game. Along with retired league official, and now loyal supporter, Wilf Holland I had to don the white coat, or one as near white as the emergency situation allowed, and get the match underway. My years of officiating in Under 13 games was now going to be put to the test but both teams accepted the situation and the game was played in good spirit in spite of the suddenly autumnal weather which took us off the field after only five overs with Neil Booth, opening in the absence on holiday of Mick Ingledow, and Martin Oldham having got the score to 11.

During the break in play Steve Adler, club chairman and regular official, arrived from his abandoned game and he took over from Wilf after the resumption of play. Tom Goatley from ' my end ' worked up a lively pace and caused both Thurstonland openers to play and miss and to hurry shots but gradually the total mounted until, with confidence growing, Neil fell to a catch in the gully after a rather firm footed

attempt at a drive off Paul Wilkinson who had swapped ends. Next ball the gods seemed to consider nodding as John Eastwood, in prolific form, got a thickish inside edge on to his pads to his first delivery and the bowler, following through, just got his finger tips to the ball but was unable to hold on to the difficult return chance. John survived to make 44 before being bowled by Tom Goatley off a very good delivery whilst Martin contributed 32. Kris Thackray reached 10 with a sweetly struck 6 over mid wicket from veteran spinner Vic Reed but then was plumb lbw to the next ball, a decision made by the resident professional umpire and not by me. Indeed, only a few almost polite inquiries came in my direction although I was amazed that one delivery to Jordan Halliday did not even get a quizzically raised eyebrow by way of appeal for lbw when I would have welcomed a portable Hawkeye to assist in making what would have been a close decision. Dan Peace weighed in with a quickly struck 25 not out and Adam Thackray (6*) enjoyed the luxury of coming in with three overs to go at No.9 and found time to hook a lovely four from a short delivery from Wilkinson. The tea interval arrived at the late hour of 5.25 with the weather delays and rain began as we left the field with the score on 175 for 7.

Play resumed on time although a ten minute interruption followed in the fourth over but, almost miraculously, that was for the last time until the game ended shortly before 8.30. A bonus of being a participant was getting reacquainted with the 'banter' indulged in at all levels of sport and which, apparently, is what is missed on ending one's playing days. Both teams went through in house jokes, varying degrees of group and personal motivation, and used some words which, if not designed to frighten the horses, might have caused a modest blush to come to the cheeks of the traditional maiden aunt. An amazing range of nicknames also caused much quiet amusement. There was no sledging although the game was keenly contested and was an excellent example of good village cricket.

Richard Lammyman (46) and David Firth (35) made a determined start to the Denby Dale reply but David Rishton kept me and the batsmen on our toes and, in spite of being hit for three sixes, he bowled through for 2 for 79. Greg Holmes delivered five quite brisk overs in indifferent light without deserved reward after Dan Peace had bowled a steady opening spell to take 2 for 34, his perseverance ending the briefly threatening opening stand. Although pursuing their target virtually to the end in commendable style, the visitors ended 15 runs short.

Thurstonland 175 for 7 (45 overs); Denby Dale 160 for 7 (45 overs).

Team: Neil Booth; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Kris Thackray; Lee Booth; Jordan Halliday; Dan Peace; Matthew Gummerson; Adam Thackray (w/k); David Rishton; Greg Holmes.

**Saturday June 26th
v. Nuffield (away)**

**Saturday July 10th
v. Hoylandswaine (home)
' Let's get out of these wet clothes and into a dry Martini ' (adopted by Mae West in a 1937 film Every Day's A Holiday from a line coined by Robert Benchley's press agent).**

For the fourth successive Saturday, leaden skies with the promise of rain and a temperature giving a passable imitation of mid October greeted everyone for the first game of a weekend double header against Hoylandswaine. The postponed Allsop Cup quarter final was due to take place the following day at the reverse venue. In spite of the conditions, play began on time with the number of spectators swelled by a good number of former club players who were attending the five yearly official reunion.

The second ball of the match from Richard Brocklehurst was imperiously pulled for four by Mick Ingledow on his return from holiday but that was as good as it got for him as the next delivery saw him well caught low at slip by Adie Birkinshaw thus causing a rare early exit from the crease. In form John Eastwood replaced him and was soon into his stride as, along with Martin Oldham, he moved along the score quite briskly. Just before the second of the rain breaks, Martin was out for 24 leaving Kris Thackray just time to get off the mark before play was suspended yet again and at four o'clock an early tea was taken. After 24 overs the total was 74 for 2.

Play resumed just after half past four although players had to move on the damp field with the studied tread of wary sloths learning to line dance. A lovely four off his legs by Kris gave promise of greater things but this was unfulfilled as he was bowled soon after for 5. John Eastwood was now into his familiar 2004 style as the Hoylandswaine team coped with varying amounts of zeal with a wet ball and persistent drizzle and Lee Booth gave good support in a stand which was ultimately to be a key factor in the final result.

The latter unleashed some well timed drives before falling to a catch near the boundary for 21 when, as the ball left his bat, a six seemed a possibility. Dan Peace, in his role as pinch hitter, and Neil Booth both fell for 7 as runs came freely at the other end. Adam Thackray enjoyed the chance to bat at No. 8 and was John Eastwood's partner when he reached his second century of the season. His total could so easily have been four as a 99 not out and 94 not out have also been recorded. In attempting to keep the score moving, he was caught at square leg for 103. Adam was run out backing up from the bowler's end for 12 and the overs ran out with the total on 201 for 8.

An all spin attack of David Rishton and Lee Booth was faced by Hoylandswaine openers Mark Wadsworth and Adie Birkinshaw as they began the visitor's reply at 6.05. This certainly kept the over rate high, an important factor on a gloomy early evening. Both batsmen seized on anything wayward and a decent contest, in spite of conditions, began to develop. They were both dismissed quite close together for 19 and 16 respectively bringing together Ryan Copley and James Ibbotson.

A lengthy stand now developed with the former looking in good form and scoring freely all round the ground with his partner providing an important support role. The spinners gave way to Greg Holmes and eventually to regular opening bowler Dan Peace and Damien Pawson whose brisker pace caused problems. The quality of light was never good although the gloom of the start of the innings did lessen somewhat. After the departure of J.Ibbotson, Ryan Copley continued to press on and it was a relief and something of a surprise when a good deliver from the last ball of his first over saw Damien bowl him for a good 65. This was virtually his first significant error and his departure represented the turn of the tide in Thurstonland's favour. Damien ended with 3 for 21, Dan Peace 2 for 40, David Rishton 2 for 39 and Greg Holmes 1 for 15 but the visiting tail end held on for a point as the game finished at the late hour of 8.30.

Thurstonland 201 for 8 (45 overs); Hoylandswaine 176 for 9 (45 overs).

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Kris Thackray; Lee Booth; Dan Peace; Neil Booth; Adam Thackray (w/k); Greg Holmes; David Rishton; Damien Pawson.

**Sunday July 11th
v. Hoylandswaine (away) Allsop Cup Round 3**

'It doesn't matter if a cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice.' (Deng Xiaoping 1904 - 1997, Chinese Communist statesman and paramount leader from 1977).

Acquaintances were resumed and the contest rejoined just seventeen and a half hours after play had ended the evening before. This was the first meeting in the cup between the two sides since the dramatic 1999 semi-final when Hoylandswaine had rather improbably lost when needing very few runs with plenty of overs and wickets in hand. Once more Mick Ingledow and Martin Oldham got the game under way. Wayne Storey's partner was Ben Stocks. The enthusiastic young Hoylandswaine scorer informed me that he had not bowled for a while but this was not immediately suggested with a tidy couple of overs before Martin Oldham punished some looser deliveries which saw his removal from the attack after bowling a total of six.

Mick was soon making up for his swift dismissal on the previous day and both openers settled into a good stand with 50 runs soon being on the board. With youth increasingly, and gratifyingly, to the fore in both senior teams it was good to have a reminder of the skills and experience of two of the slightly less young players. The reference to 17th century French priest and statesman Cardinal Richlieu as the grey eminence might well have been applied to the two Thurstonland stalwarts who from time to time indulged in some unlikely quick singles to keep the score ticking along. Their occasional almost coltish zeal rolled back the years and the total had reached 91 before Mick was out for a well deserved 54. Martin continued until his dismissal for 61. His most significant personal statistic, however, was that his first scoring shot took him past the 11,000 run mark in the first team.

With their departure the innings lost a little momentum with the honourable exception of Dan Peace who came in at No. 5 and scored 36 with some good shots. Lee Booth was bowled second ball, John Eastwood got to 28 in an innings where he had to move along, for the most part, without boundaries but still raised his tally to 735 for the campaign although his average plunged once again to 122.50! A short arm jab from Greg Holmes late in the proceedings sent the ball high and wide over the clubhouse and matters closed with the total on 210 for 7. This was a satisfying score although, just like in the previous day's league game, there was the feeling that a few more runs had been possible. For Hoylandswaine, the persevering Richard Brocklehurst took 6 for 62, only failing to take every wicket that fell because of the last ball run out of Dan Peace.

Ryan Copley, the Hoylandswaine hero of the previous day, opened along with Mark Wadsworth. They were faced by Dan Peace and Lee Booth, back in his medium pace style after his spinning role in the league game. No obvious risks were taken by the home batsmen but it was obvious that they were up for the challenge. Opener Wadsworth, Chris Illingsworth and James Ibbotson all departed relatively cheaply but Ryan Copley looked in ominously good form once again. He gave a chance when in his thirties to deep mid on where the unfortunate Damien Pawson reacted a little late and the ball went under his hands and, to add the proverbial insult to injury, it then went four.

Steve Hardwick, often a thorn in our side, had joined Ryan Copley and moved the score along steadily if undramatically. Suddenly all changed and, unfortunately, Dan Peace was the sufferer. In an over of calculated brutality 28 runs were bludgeoned and the game was lost. Ryan Copley hit the winning runs soon after to end on 111 not out although he survived thanks to another spilled catch when on 91. Along with Steve Hardwick's 47, this had been the match winning performance and thoughts of a first appearance in the last four for five years had to be put on hold.

Thurstonland 210 for 7 (45 overs); Hoylandswaine 211 for 5 (44.1 overs).

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Kris Thackray; Dan Peace; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; Greg Holmes; David Rishton; Damien Pawson; Tom Sykes (w/k).

**Saturday July 17th
v. Woodfield Park (away) Rain Affected**

**Saturday July 24th
v. Cumberworth (home)**

' Any man who goes to a psychiatrist should have his head examined. ' Sam Goldwyn 1882 - 1974, American film producer.

Just in case any readers feel that, Rip van Winkle like, they have slept through another calendar revision and feel that a week of their life has been lost just as was asserted when there was the change from the Gregorian to the Julian calendar in 1752 let me assure them that the fixture at Woodfield Park on July 17th fell victim to the rain on yet another Saturday which had more in common with the chaste blasts of autumn than the anticipated delights of a day from high summer.

Resurgent defending champions Cumberworth were the visitors for the top of the table clash as the weather finally relented sufficiently to allow a full game to be played without interruption. After three overs from Lee Booth , opening the attack in place of holidaying Dan Peace, and Greg Holmes the visitor's total was one. Forty-two overs later it had risen to 269 and it was salutary to reflect that this was 220 more than Crossbank Methodists had managed seven weeks earlier. Such are the vagaries of sport and tea was consumed in quiet reverie and consideration was given to whether club finances would run to the purchase of Ordnance Survey maps covering routes to parts of neighbouring fields not visited for some considerable time. Stanley 's discovery of Livingstone in nineteenth century exploration of Africa was less of a wonder than the finding of cricket balls amid the burgeoning harvest of local farmers.

David Rishton 's holiday also caused him to be absent and his slow left arm wizardry meant that, hard though they toiled, the remaining bowlers were unable to stem the flow of runs. The Cumberworth total is the highest conceded by the first team since 1954 when reliable records begin. Ashley Littlewood scored 97, James Senior 34, Cameron Cowen 22 in very few deliveries....and so the events unfolded in stunned disbelief at the seeming inevitability of it all.

Lee Booth soldiered on throughout the entire innings to end with 5 for 112 from his 22 overs. Matthew Gummerson took the only other wicket to fall (1/43 from 6 overs) whilst Greg Holmes, conceding 46 runs, was the only bowler to concede fewer than five per over from his two five over spells. If a passing vicar had wanted inspiration for the following day's text then the lamentations of Jeremiah would have immediately sprung to mind.

As so often seems to happen at all levels of cricket, an innings featuring a glut of runs is followed by one of rather less lavish proportions. Today was not to be an exception. Mick Ingledow was bowled for a rare duck in the first over, Martin Oldham managed two, the 2004 run machine John Eastwood was caught behind off a faint edge for 11 and Neil Booth also failed to trouble the scorers. Twenty - two for four was not a promising situation and even Mr. Micawber in David Copperfield would have found it difficult to believe that anything to ease life's burdens was going to turn up.

Jordan Halliday had one glorious square cut for 4 before perishing on 9 but then resistance of a sort began. Lee Booth was still resting from his bowling labours and Kris Thackray (18) and Matthew Gummerson (12) used up a sizeable number of overs in an attempt to frustrate the opposition. Sadly they perished in quick succession along with Tom Sykes whose maiden first team innings was a golden duck. Lee Booth , eventually prised from his seat, and Greg Holmes then battled on for nearly fifteen overs raising the score from 64/8 to exactly 100 before Greg was lbw to the second ball of last over for 22, the top score, and Damien Pawson suffered the same fate to the penultimate delivery. Afterwards, in spite of a few noble late order batting efforts, everyone felt as if we had come third in a two horse race.

Cumberworth 269 for 6 (45 overs); Thurstonland 100 all out (44.5 overs).

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Kris Thackray; Neil Booth; Jordan Halliday; Matthew Gummerson; Tom Sykes (w/k); Lee Booth ; Greg Holmes; Damien Pawson.

**Saturday July 31st
v. Woolley (away)**

**' Children are dumb to say how hot the day is,
How hot the scent is of the summer rose. '
Robert Graves 1895 - 1985, English poet.**

Summer finally returned at Woolley with the game played under a clear blue sky and a scorching sun. The indulgences of two drinks breaks in each innings returned like a Proustian memory of times past and your correspondent was pleased to be able to record the score in the open air in front of the scoreboard under the shade of a parasol kindly provided by our hosts. Fending off a few persistent wasps attracted by the drinks of nearby spectators was a minor price to pay for enjoying the delights of weather not seen since mid June.

The pace of Tom Atkinson, probably the quickest bowler in the Premier Section, caused several deliveries to lift and both Mick Ingledow and Martin Oldham had the trade in value of their helmets reduced by having balls skim from them. The former could not get out of the way of one sharply rising ball and, having hit one authoritative boundary, was caught at the wicket for five. Not long afterwards the same scene was re-enacted when John Eastwood departed without adding to the 746 runs he has scored so far this season and so finally bringing his average below the hundred mark. I am sure, though, that 93.25 with August about to begin is a figure to be well pleased with.

Although staying lively for the first twenty overs or so the bounce from the wicket was a little variable. Kris Thackray was adjudged lbw for two and Martin Oldham, soon after hitting three successive fours, was also given out lbw to a ball that seemed destined to pass down the leg side. His 23 had given the promise of more to come. Neil Booth was smartly stumped by veteran Woolley keeper Ken Johnson and Dan Peace joined eighteen year old Ian Short, making only his second first team appearance of the season, with the total on 59 for 5. Only eighteen overs had been bowled so there was certainly no lack of action but another disappointing score seemed on the horizon.

The lower part of the order gradually hauled Thurstonland back into the game in a determined fashion which would have pleased captain Lee Booth , absent at a wedding. Dan Peace curbed his attacking instincts and, along with Ian Short who played some fine shots all round the wicket when given the chance, the score was raised to 104. Both then fell in successive overs to catches off virtually the first false shots they had played. Ian made a fine 32 and Dan a good 23 in support.

If Woolley thought the innings would fold quickly they were soon proved wrong as young wicket-keeper, Adam Thackray, and David Rishton , carefully at first but then with greater fluency, once again took the fight to the opposition. Good drives and pulls saw Adam score 23 before yet another lbw decision saw his departure. Greg Holmes had a couple of lusty blows for four before David was caught behind down the leg side for 15 in the last over but Damien Pawson saw out proceedings and picked up a couple of runs to leave the final score on 164/9, much better than had seemed likely ninety minutes or so earlier.

Greg Holmes and Dan Peace each picked up a quick wicket in the Woolley reply and when M. Nottingham was almost bowled when on 3, it seemed that our opponents were not going to cause too much trouble. The latter, however, made the most of his early fortune and played determined shots from then on. He was given good support by Ken Johnson (18) and when he was eventually bowled to make the score 124/4, he had made 86. David Rishton (3/44) and Damien Pawson (2/38) made the other Woolley batsmen fight for their runs and a good throw from Neil Booth secured a run out but Tom Atkinson and

Richard Baranowski, the last pair, saw the hosts home with five balls to spare to inflict a second successive league defeat.

Thurstonland 164/6 (45 overs); Woolley 166/9 (44.1 overs).

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Kris Thackray; Ian Short; Neil Booth; Dan Peace; Adam Thackray (w/k); David Rishton ; Greg Holmes; Damien Pawson.

**Saturday August 7th
v. Green Moor (home)**

' Be content to remember that those who can make omelettes properly can do nothing else.' (Hilaire Belloc 1870 - 1953, British essayist, poet and historian.)

This was the first of two games against teams also in the Premier Section's top four. Recent defeats against Cumberworth and, more surprisingly, against Woolley had seen the first team slip into third place after being leaders in mid July. Green Moor, just behind in fourth place, and next week's opposition, the newly resurgent Cawthorne, were to provide a test of the team's ability to sustain a challenge for one of the higher places in the final league table.

Stifled groans and ill disguised ironic comments greeted Lee Booth's return to the pavilion having lost the toss. Julian Bates, acting Green Moor captain in the absence of the holidaying Andrew Matthewman, had little hesitation in deciding to bat and he opened the innings accompanied by the experienced John Hardy.

If fortune is supposed to favour the brave then both Dan Peace and Greg Holmes must have won the all comers Cowardy Custard award judging by the lack of the aforementioned commodity in the game's opening overs. Dan induced a couple of Chinese cuts from Hardy as well as getting Bates to loft a ball which landed with unerring accuracy on a point just feet away from several converging fielders. Greg Holmes conceded only six runs from a miserly four overs before he was rested after his busy week's exertions representing Huddersfield in the Under 15s Lords Taverners competition.

Damien Pawson who relieved him also had no more good fortune but, almost inevitably, the batsmen broke free of their shackles and were one run short of a half century opening stand when David Rishton hurried a quicker ball through Bates's defence to bowl him for 33. Ian Mosley departed relatively quickly but Ian Simpson took full advantage of being dropped on one by Dan Peace and, in his usual inimitable style, struck the ball for regular boundaries before perishing for 36 just when it seemed he might already be putting the game beyond Thurstonland's reach. The patient Hardy also departed for 27 and with James Lear, a Thurstonland junior from the late 1980s, adopting a defensive role matters improved for the home team. Lee Booth captured a couple of wickets but a late onslaught from Nigel Dowkes saw him score a rapid 47 before he was caught on the boundary edge from the bowling of the recalled Greg Holmes off the last ball of the innings.

The glowing faces of the perspiring fielders as they trooped off for tea bore testimony to the heat which had returned for a second successive Saturday after the gloom of several weekends prior to that. The scorers, descending with relief from the sauna like scorebox, discussed tactics to repel persistent wasps which kept up WW2 Stuka like raids for much of the afternoon. The total of 182 for 5 posed a worthy challenge.

Mick Ingledow again departed quite early, caught behind for 5 and Martin Oldham scored a good 21 before getting out just as he was threatening to take control. Ian Short, promoted to No. 4 after his

efforts at Woolley last week, could not, unfortunately, repeat his performance and was lbw to his second delivery which left the innings in a slightly parlous state at 39 for 3. Reference was made in the game at Green Moor to Lee Booth being Sancho Panza to John Eastwood's Don Quixote and the two were together again with plenty to do. John reached 38 before getting under another attempted powerful legside blow and Steve Walsh took a good catch on the boundary. Lee unleashed some good drives to keep the score moving and brother Neil gave good support during the game's decisive stand before he was stumped for the second successive game on 24. Lee reached a deserved 50 and maintained the required six an over run rate before David Rishton with some good late blows saw Thurstonland home with eleven balls to spare with Lee on a career best of 70 not out, a virtually error free innings on a humid late afternoon and early evening.

Green Moor 182 for 5 (45 overs); Thurstonland 183 for 6 (43.1 overs).

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Ian Short; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; Dan Peace; David Rishton; Adam Thackray (w/k); Greg Holmes; Damien Pawson.

**Saturday August 14th
v. Cawthorne (away)**

' Cheer up! The worst is yet to come.' (P C Johnson 1866 - 1939, American journalist).

Record breaking downpours during the week leading into this game meant that ground preparations were at a premium and, although the day itself was once again sultry with fitful sunshine, conditions were only just fit for play. The Cawthorne wicket is traditionally on the slow side and both Mick Ingledow and Martin Oldham made watchful early progress. Gavin Hampshire, Cawthorne's Australian opening bowler, bowled six overs for only two runs and found himself a victim of the watchful eye of the umpire and there were several delays as his alleged running on the wicket caused gatherings of the wise and good to examine the problem. It was perhaps as well that he did not bowl again after this spell or else we might all still be enjoying the delights of one of the most picturesque grounds in the league.

After an authoritative pull for four, his only scoring shot after forty patient minutes, Martin was succeeded by John Eastwood who was caught for 2 from an odd bat-pad catch when wicketkeeper Dale Skelly ran several yards up the wicket to do the honours when the nearest outfielder was still some way in the distance. Ian Short batted patiently and showed textbook defence in the face of accurate bowling although each of his four singles were shots in the air as he tried to come to terms with the slow wicket. He then directed a cleanly hit shot straight to Ian Norton on the square leg boundary to give Jamie Holling the second of his seven victims.

In the meantime, Mick Ingledow was combining watchful defence with some well chosen attacking blows to get him back in the runs after three uncharacteristically less productive visits to the middle. Lee Booth also settled in well and together the score was raised to 78 before Lee was caught for a determined 16 just when the partnership was beginning to look as if it had the potential to be a decisive factor in the match. Sadly, there was little else of note to report, apart from Mick's eventual arrival at a well deserved fifty and his eventual total of 60 was well deserved. Apart from playing and missing a time or two, it was hard to recall any chance being given before he was out.

None of the later batsmen suggested they were going to linger for long and the last six wickets went down for just eleven runs, a disappointing return in the end although the going was never easy. A scampered single by David Rishton and Damien Pawson was just enough to see up the 100. This was only the second time this season that we had been bowled out and, curiously, the other occasion, against Cumberworth, also saw exactly the same total.

After rounding off a pleasant tea with a delicious homemade scone with jam and cream, the scorers had hardly got seated when the first ball of the reply from Dan Peace left Darren Skelly late and saw him snapped up by Adam Thackray to give him the first of his three catches and Dan the first of his three wickets. Gareth Kilburn (24) came in as a pinch hitter and the gamble paid off in the context of a low scoring game. He made a calculated assault on Lee Booth's bowling and, along with Darren Lindley, he rapidly saw the Cawthorne reply to 33 after only 4 overs. Both fell at that score, however, and Lee recovered from the opening onslaught and, having conceded 22 in his first two overs, only gave away 21 in his next twelve and ended with 4 for 43. Dan Peace (3 for 36) bowled one of his best spells of the campaign and with Cawthorne reduced to 52 for 5 victory looked a possibility. The persevering and patient Dale Skelly (24*), however, had other ideas and, with good support from Gavin Hampshire (11) and Mark Scanlon (13), he saw the home side to victory, although the winning hit for three from Mick Holling was a possible catch to Neil Booth. The result left Cawthorne looking like the only team likely to challenge Cumberworth for the title with just five games remaining.

Thurstonland 100 all out (43 overs); Cawthorne 101 for 8 (37.5 overs)

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Ian Short; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; Dan Peace; Adam Thackray (w/k); David Rishton; Greg Holmes; Damien Pawson.

**Saturday August 21st
v. Crossbank Methodists (home)**

' We had the experience but missed the meaning. ' (TS Eliot 1888 - 1965, Anglo-American poet, dramatist and critic).

The start of the return game with our visitors from Birstall might have had those with a dark sense of humour scurrying to the record books to see if the manufacturers of Prozac had sponsored the games between the clubs in the 2004 season. Medieval mystics in search of the contemplative life in a hermit's cell might also have considered the clubhouse sufficiently somnolent to set up home without any due concern about the likelihood of any sudden dramas on the field disturbing their devotions.

Only John Eastwood, opening in the absence on holiday of Martin Oldham, might take issue with that assertion. Having got off the mark with a sumptuous drive for four and then adding a single, he hit the ball past the bowler and called for a run. Unfortunately, Mick Ingledow was occupied in watching the efforts of both bowler and mid on to field the ball. This task was accomplished after brief juggling and the ball was duly dispatched to the wicketkeeper who was enabled to complete the run out. As the bails were removed he was already a few steps on his way back to the pavilion run out, as they say, by the proverbial pitch length. It was thought best to greet even the usually mild mannered John with a studied silence as he went into the pavilion just about holding things together. The possibility of ' Woe is me! ' as a suitable phrase to express his emotions was not the option taken.

It was now that Ian Short and Mick Ingledow appeared determined to wrest the Prozac Shield from our visitors who had won it so handsomely with 49 from 45 overs at their ground at the beginning of June. The opening attack was certainly accurate and the incessant rain of previous days meant that both wicket and outfield were slow. Ian had made just three when a cover drive was mistimed and he was caught. Only ten runs had come from nine overs. Gradually, however, the shackles were released and the run rate reached the giddy heights of two an over before Mick was lbw to one which kept low for a hard earned 24.

Kris Thackray, after two games in the second team, quickly got into his stride and, in the company of Lee Booth, played easily his most fluent innings in the first team. Two shots stood out, a back foot cover drive for four which even the wet outfield could not delay, and a powerful blow for six which went

between extra cover and long off. It was a pity that a sudden loss of patience proved fatal as a very good innings ended a little disappointingly on 33 when he lost his off stump attempting a rather wild heave. His efforts certainly galvanised the innings and with Lee continuing his good form with the bat in making 38, a respectable score was posted. Neil Booth (19*) and the lower order kept things moving although Adam Thackray, having scored a two and a single from the only balls he faced, found even his youthful legs could not manage an ambitiously attempted third run to become the second run out victim of the innings. The score of 151 for 8 was a reasonable return after the difficulties in the early part of the proceedings.

Quite quickly Crossbank found themselves at 13 for 4 with both Dan Peace (2 for 13) and Greg Holmes

(1 for 5 from five overs) making the breakthrough . Greg bowled particularly well and at times it is a little frustrating that he is restricted in the length of his spells because of his age. Trevor Heylings then settled in for the visitors and constantly patted back David Rishton's deliveries. At one point the score was 26 for 5 after 30 overs and the ever confident hens from the neighbouring farm were emboldened to extend their foraging further and further on to the outfield. A sudden flurry of two fours and two sixes from Wayne Lawford disturbed the soporific atmosphere. Ian Short and Kris Thackray bowled from the pavilion end in support of Lee Booth (5 for 30) and eventually Heylings was lbw for 22 scored from 98 deliveries. Just when it seemed that a point would go missing the last wicket fell in the 43rd over to end another war of attrition.

Thurstonland 151 for 8 (45 overs); Crossbank Methodists 76 all out (43.1 overs).

Team: Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; Ian Short; Lee Booth; Kris Thackray; Neil Booth; Jordan Halliday; Dan Peace; Adam Thackray (w/k); David Rishton; Greg Holmes.

**Saturday August 28th
v. Edgerton (away)**

' Everything is funny as long as it is happening to somebody else. ' (Will Rogers 1879 - 1935, American humorist)

Edgerton's latest ground at Dalton is within earshot of Huddersfield Town's ground on Leeds Road and the triumphant shout borne on the late summer breeze at about four o'clock was correctly interpreted as a goal for the home team in what was a 2-1 victory. Since the sad demise of one of Huddersfield's oldest clubs, the ground had been unused until taken over by our hosts. The wicket had obviously suffered from a period of neglect although it was at least some consolation to see cricket being played at such an historic venue.

The high vantage point in the scoreboard gave panoramic views towards the Pennines and it was possible to be an accurate weather forecaster as the clouds rolled in from the west with play taking place in alternating periods of bright sunshine and relative gloom but always with a bracing breeze with just the first hints of autumn in the air.

Eight Thurstonland batsmen failed to trouble the scorer if the not outs of David Rishton and captain Lee Booth, batting at No.11 to give an opportunity to others, are included. He had to negotiate just one ball at the end of the 45 overs. If readers who were not present at the game are now reaching for a large brandy to fortify themselves against an account of a desperate struggle towards a club record low score they can instead savour the mellow glow induced by a cup of Earl Grey as this is no tale of doom and gloom.

Whether it would have been if Roger Massiah, the long serving Edgerton player, had clung on to a sharp chance at slip offered by Mick Ingledow when he was on one is something we will never know but three batsmen plus extras saw Thurstonland to 194 for 9 in one of the oddest scorecards many of us have ever seen. It could almost have been an early attempt at musical notation. The main driving force, and sporting a rarely seen helmet, was John Eastwood who coped with the vagaries of the wicket with what seemed like relative ease as if he was batting on a hard June track the likes of which have not been seen in this summer of incessant rain.

Mick soldiered on to a hard earned 35 before mistiming a hook off a ball which lifted as did so many on the rather unpredictable track. The opening stand was worth 76, a remarkable effort given the circumstances. Ian Short then added 31 with John and faced some of the best bowling of the innings before being caught in the slips for the first of the ducks. He had battled for half an hour but was again frustrated by being unable to drive the ball with any confidence.

John gradually began to assume complete dominance and, after a brief leaner spell in the last month or so, he passed his fifty and then raced to his century with balls racing to the boundary across a surprisingly fast outfield and over it with several powerfully struck sixes. Neil Booth deserves a mention in despatches as his 11 was the third and last contribution from a batsman before he was stumped for the fifth time this season. John was caught just before the end for 111. This score took his tally for the campaign to 902, thus passing Glen Wood's first team record of 887 and left him a maximum of three innings to reach his thousand. Eight bowlers were tried by Edgerton with Javeed the most successful with a creditable 4 for 29 in three separate spells.

Once again, an early wicket each for Dan Peace and Greg Holmes put the opposition on the back foot. Naim Ansari (15) and Roger Massiah (21) struck a few defiant blows and got the score to 52 for 2 but Lee Booth (3 for 17) and David Rishton (4 for 11) soon altered matters and 77 all out from rather dispirited opponents was the outcome.

Thurstonland 194 for 9 (45 overs); Edgerton 77 all out (24.3 overs).

Team: Mick Ingledow; John Eastwood; Ian Short; Jordan Halliday; Kris Thackray; Neil Booth; Dan Peace; Adam Thackray (w/k); Greg Holmes; David Rishton; Lee Booth.

**Sunday September 5th
v. Old Almondburians (home)**

'Roll over Beethoven and tell Tchaikovsky the news.' (Chuck Berry, American rock and roll singer).

A cloudless sky and temperatures not experienced since the high days of early June seemed a cruel irony as the first of the late season 1.30 starts got proceedings under way. A large gathering of spectators was already present as the game began with high factor sun lotion being given what was surely one of its last outings of the year. Even the most pallid of legs were given a defiant airing in that most British of ways although no knotted handkerchiefs on heads were on view.

Our visitors' season had seen mixed fortunes since their rather unexpectedly easy victory over us at Almondbury at the end of June when the weather gave the first hints of the miserable summer to follow. A win the previous week had banished any last lingering relegation worries and an accurate opening spell from both Dan Peace and Greg Holmes saw a circumspect start by Tim Taylor, who had scored 77* in the first game, and my namesake Andrew Pearson. The latter fell for just two when Adam Thackray took a

catch from Dan's bowling at full stretch in front of first slip. It was only in the eleventh over that the runs overtook the number of overs.

Lee Booth took over from Greg after the latter had bowled his initial permitted five overs from which he conceded just three runs. After the departure of Tim Taylor for 12, Will Atkinson played some pleasing shots, particularly on the off side and David Rishton succeeded Dan Peace in the attack. After taking a couple of wickets with his medium pace, Lee reverted to spin and quiet periods of play were punctuated by a few aggressive shots which included a huge six by Atkinson. Wickets began to fall at regular intervals after the dismissal of Atkinson for a good 34. The third Aussie we have encountered this season, Matt Bedwell, had an uncomplicated style and struck a rapid 36 before being one of Adam Thackray's two stumpings. Along with three good catches, he had an excellent day in the field and brought his season's tally of victims so far to 20 (16 caught and 4 stumped).

Fourteen year old Alex Slack , at No. 9, batted with dad Steve at the end of the Almondburians innings and, after a nervous start, had time to play some confident shots to end with 14* and the break came with the total on 127 for 8.

Mick Ingledow and Martin Oldham looked in little trouble during a careful start to the Thurstonland reply until the former was given out caught behind for 12 with the score on 24. For a brief period the visiting attack kept scoring chances at a premium and even the prolific John Eastwood began rather cautiously and, indeed, played and missed once or twice. Matt Bedwell, having dismissed Mick Ingledow, was replaced by young Alex Slack and he looked a promising bowler although short deliveries were ruthlessly punished by John and almost without realising it, the score began to mount. The experienced Tim Taylor and Steve Slack also came in for punishment after initially being treated with respect.

John Eastwood reached yet another fifty and it looked as if he and Martin Oldham would see matters through to the end until, with the total on 119, the latter played a hugely expansive drive to a ball from Martin Tunnicliffe, introduced late into the attack, and missed to be bowled for 39. His effort had been a valuable foil to the increasingly fluent strokes of John. Kris Thackray had only two balls to negotiate before three fours in the next over ended matters. A score of 69* took John's tally for the season to 971 with the elusive thousand tantalisingly within reach with a maximum of two innings to go. Fourth position in the league was maintained, two points behind Green Moor but with Cumberworth and Cawthorne now out of sight.

Old Almondburians 127 for 8 (45 overs); Thurstonland 131 for 2 (27.5 overs).

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Kris Thackray; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; Dan Peace; Jordan Halliday; Adam Thackray (w/k); David Rishton; Greg Holmes.

**Sunday September 12th
v. Denby Dale (away)**

**' VLADIMIR : That passed the time.
ESTRAGON: It would have passed in any case.
VLADIMIR : Yes, but not so rapidly. '**
(from Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett 1906 - 89, Irish writer.)

Scudding clouds blown by a wind with the first autumnal chills in them and the threat of rain later gave proceedings at the start a rather routine feel with little sense of urgency. It was rather like expecting a cup of tea in the best china but finding that service came with a workaday beaker. A damp wicket, once again, did not help matters and both Mick Ingledow and Martin Oldham wore helmets although there was never any hint that their effectiveness was going to be called into question. Runs did come against the

opening attack of Paul Wilkinson and Andrew Hodgson who was to bowl unchanged and earn figures of 4 for 49 but progress by the batsmen was rather like that of a cat negotiating a snow covered street when the usual easy elegance has to be sacrificed in favour of a more pragmatic approach with each bit of progress being followed by a pause to check that the going was indeed within one's abilities.

Both Mick (19) and Martin (20) perished within a ball or two of each other which brought John Eastwood and Kris Thackray together. Three singles to the former got him quickly underway towards the 29 needed to complete 1000 for the season. Kris gave calm support and a couple of trademark fours from John saw him quite quickly to 17. Andrew Hodgson bowled a shorter ball outside the off stump which was cut firmly off the middle of the bat. Everyone expected another boundary but the script had been torn up! A fielder was seen in one of the oddest positions anyone can remember for a long time, a sort of fly gully or mediumish and rather wide third man. The well struck ball was obeying the laws of gravity but P. Jesney who was the said fielder dived forwards and, after a moment of disbelief from him and the whole of his colleagues, came up triumphantly to claim the catch.

A few weeks ago I suggested that Dan Peace had been reading the coaching manuals after two or three good innings with a range of elegant shots. Since then seven runs had come from four innings. Whether he too was in shock at John's dismissal or was waiting for volume two of How to Bat like a True Champion, his first ball proved enough to send him on his way again, bowled off stump. Lee Booth survived the hat-trick delivery but fell soon afterwards for six to the wiles of off spinner Vic Reed when he tried to cut a ball too far up and too close to him.

Neil Booth, Jordan Halliday and Greg Holmes all came and went fairly quickly and it was reassuring to see Kris Thackray still there rather like the sheriff in High Noon when the rest of town has departed leaving him to face the enemy alone. Watchful defence was mixed with one or two belligerent blows and a six, just a ball or two before he was stumped, landed well towards the middle of the adjacent bowling green. His 24 was hard earned and surely a big score cannot be too far away. A brief and entertaining knock by Adam Thackray (17*) in the company of David Rishton (1*) gave them the highest last wicket partnership of the season, an undefeated 15, but an interval score of 128 for 9 seemed rather like a neutered tomcat, neither one thing nor the other.

The increasingly persistent drizzle delayed the resumption and at 9 for 0 after five overs from Dan Peace and Greg Holmes play was interrupted again. After 30 minutes play resumed at 5.30 in poor light and the rain soon returned. Richard Lammymann and David Firth soldiered on with the former surviving a dropped catch when on 13. David Rishton found it hard to grip the increasingly wet ball and it fell to Kris Thackray

(2 for 21), bowling into the wind and rain, to bowl both D. Firth and young Ryan Geldart before the umpires called a halt for the final time at just past 7.05 with twelve overs still to bowl.

Thurstonland 128 for 9 (45 overs); Denby Dale 89 for 2 (33 overs).

Team: Mick Ingledow; Martin Oldham; John Eastwood; Kris Thackray; Dan Peace; Lee Booth; Neil Booth; Jordan Halliday; Greg Holmes; Adam Thackray (w/k); David Rishton.

**Sunday September 19th
v. Nuffield (home) – They never bothered to turn up.**

