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| 8-May-22 | Sheepscombe | BPCC vs Sheepscombe – 8th May 2022  “Is this an LBW game?”  The first game of the season always contains its own magic. After a potential away game was scuppered by our own ‘skipper’ last Sunday, the season started in its rightful place; at home among the ducks, the pheasants, the sheep and their droppings.  All the preparations had been meticulously planned and carried out. The pavilion had been repainted by a diligent work party[[1]](http://www.blenheimparkcc.co.uk/bpcc-vs-sheepscombe-cc-8th-may-2022/#_ftn1), the restored sightscreens gleamed in the soft spring sunlight[[2]](http://www.blenheimparkcc.co.uk/bpcc-vs-sheepscombe-cc-8th-may-2022/#_ftn2), and a crack tea team had been assembled[[3]](http://www.blenheimparkcc.co.uk/bpcc-vs-sheepscombe-cc-8th-may-2022/#_ftn3). Shame no-one had bothered to test the lawnmower[[4]](http://www.blenheimparkcc.co.uk/bpcc-vs-sheepscombe-cc-8th-may-2022/#_ftn4).  Hours of effort by the chairman wielding the recalcitrant, unresponsive mower resulted in an outstanding wicket that produced five hundred runs in seventy overs. He also spent many further hours fruitlessly attempting to explain to me the internal (non-)workings of said piece of machinery.  Sheepscombe won the toss and opted to bat against the evergreen Walker and Angol. After 11 overs the visitors had only 34 on the board, providing hopes of a manageable chase that, regrettably, disappeared faster than the scones at teatime. George got the mustard-helmeted Davenport to drag on, then pinned Williams in front and barely appealed, such was its obvious plumbocity. But the umpire, amusingly dressed as a Victorian-era music hall performer, remained unmoved. George’s voice went up a few octaves as he politely queried the non-decision, forcing the umpire to ask his colleague at square-leg whether “this is an LBW game”. Another query, another octave from the bowler. After receiving assurances from his fellow that the Laws of Cricket were actually in effect, the finger was raised.  As it turned out, this was a fatal error.  Charlie Isaac came in at number five, and soon spotted the potential of the change bowling and the short boundaries. Four followed six followed four with monotonous regularity, and he was looking set fair for a big score when he chipped one back to Rhino who dived (fell) full length (not very far) and spilled the return catch, the only type of catch at which he usually excels. A costly one, as Sheepscombe droppings go. By the time he decided he’d had enough, he’d plundered 153\*, with twelve sixes and eighteen fours, and the total had risen to an alarming 261 off 35 overs. Three wickets for George, two for Gareth and one each for Stan, Rhino and Will. The best of the bowlers went wicketless.  Boardman(42) and Cox (sr) (31) (there’s a special offer on brackets) anchored the response, and after a while noted that the boundaries were just as short in our innings. But the required rate was always going to be, in the inelegant phrasing of our Antipodean cousins, ‘a big ask’. Kerr the Younger, after a strangely muted innings, missed a straight one, and, this being an LBW game, had to go. But Harvey and Dean Yates gave the final total an air of respectability with an undefeated partnership of 101, 45\* for dad and 55\* for lad, and a final total of 229-5.  Sheepscombe 261-8 (C. Isaac 153, S. Davenport 31, G. Kerr 3-43)  BPCC 229-5 (H Yates 55\*, D Yates 45\*, P Boardman 32, M Cox 31)  Sheepscombe won by 32 runs  [[1]](http://www.blenheimparkcc.co.uk/bpcc-vs-sheepscombe-cc-8th-may-2022/#_ftnref1) Thank you, Andrew, Phil S, Stan, Nigel, Phil B.  [[2]](http://www.blenheimparkcc.co.uk/bpcc-vs-sheepscombe-cc-8th-may-2022/#_ftnref2) Thank you, Stan.  [[3]](http://www.blenheimparkcc.co.uk/bpcc-vs-sheepscombe-cc-8th-may-2022/#_ftnref3) Thank you, Jeanette, Andrew and Gill.  [[4]](http://www.blenheimparkcc.co.uk/bpcc-vs-sheepscombe-cc-8th-may-2022/#_ftnref4) Thank you to everyone who didn’t bother to test the mower. |
| 15-May-22 | Steeple Aston | I usually try and include a little local colour about our opponents and their history in these match reports, but not even Google could come up with anything remotely interesting about Steeple Aston. A request to their players returned similarly unpromising results, until, in passing, it was mentioned that neighbouring North Aston was the site of England’s “first recorded poltergeist”.  A poltergeist, as I’m sure you all know, is a type of ghost or spirit that is responsible for physical disturbances, such as loud noises and objects being moved or destroyed. That definition came from Wikipedia, which means that it is proven scientific fact.  Old Polty got to work early for this game, mischievously disabling the exact same mower part that had been “repaired” two days earlier, sending fictitious weather reports to player’s phones, and disrupting the Palace’s parking instructions. Once everyone had arrived, and had reluctantly agreed to do what they’d come for, the covers were moved by altogether more substantial entities, and a twenty-five over per side format agreed. The visitors opted to bat and started slowly, and it wasn’t until Willo (the wisp?) came in at 5 that the scoring rate began to impishly accelerate. His 48 carried his team to a respectable 124-7 at the break. Spearman bagged his usual cheap tail-end wickets (batsmen numbers 1, 3 &4), there were two for Weedon, and one each for Angol and Sulley.  Only a supernatural phenomenon could account for our overseas star Sandy bagging a first-baller, the ball striking bat, pad, thigh-pad and, presumably, poltergeist before dislodging the bails, bringing the skipper to the crease. Once again, no plausible scientific explanation exists for him attempting a wild mow at his first delivery, sending it gently toward mid-off, nor indeed for the fielder fumbling the dolly. Phil Boardman had a life of his own, albeit a much more excusable one, when Hatz dived full-length at point to clutch a sharply-struck cut, only to see the ball spill as his elbow hit the turf. They had put on 40 in 11 overs when Phil was run out for 14 going for a sharp second, following which wickets tumbled regularly. Malcolm top-scored with 33 as BPCC were bowled out for 88 in the final over. But considering the weather, the parking issues, and the extensive paranormal activity, cricket was the winner. And also Steeple Aston.  ADE |
| 22-May-22 | Checkendon |  |
| 29-May-22 | Stoneleigh |  |
| 12-Jun-22 | Sheff University Staff |  |
| 19-Jun-22 | Eynsham |  |
| 22-Jun-22 | Middleton Stoney |  |
| 26-Jun-22 | Juveniles | So we clutched a draw from the jaws of defeat against the Juveniles Sunday. Highlights included a 50 for Phil B, a run out involving Coxy, extended bowling spells from the 4 fit bowlers available and 8 wickets shared between Weedon, Spearman J and Kidd (including 2 in 2 to finish the innings).  Chasing 169, we were about 40 short when Weedon dispatched the final ball of the game for 6 with still 2 wickets in hand in this timed game.  Rhino |
| 3-Jul-22 | Minster Lovell | So for the second week running we clutched a draw from the jaws of defeat against Minister Lovell on Sunday.  Highlights included Stan bowling unchanged for the whole of the Minister Lovell innings ably supported by Coxy, Simon Parker and Finn and in particular our latest debutant, Dave Zollo. A number of good catches were also noted as were two stumpings.  Chasing 180 odd, we started well including a half century for Coxy and 30 odd for Simon upon his return from foreign adventures only for the middle order to collapse in spectacular fashion whilst attempting to chase down the runs.  The Spearmen (Phil and Finn) were however able to hold out for a draw.  Phil B |
| 10-Jul-22 | Stoneleigh |  |
| 17-Jul-22 | Islip |  |
| 24-Jul-22 | Medmenham | Despite losing the toss, everything initially went our way in the field. First ball of the innings Keyes dived full length at slip on a dodgy elbow from which he not only remained unharmed but more importantly for most of us, saved what would have been a likely boundary.  Walker and ‘The Wheels’ Weedon (on the back of 6-28 the previous day\*) opened both the bowling and the wickets account.  The highlight of the innings was surely Stan’s precision bowling. With flight and guile a Stan delivery had just enough on it to a. reach the batsman (for he was indeed male) b. deceive him and c. clip the off bail sufficiently to dislodge it. He could never have done that again if he’d tried. But this is Stan Angol OCD, and he did! Very next ball. Much to everyone’s astonishment and the batsman’s bemusement, a slow motion replay of the initial slow motion was indeed re-enacted. So, what does one do when Stan Angol is on a hat-trick? Crowd the bat or deploy all fielders to boundary? Eoin Morgan never had these conundrums. Suffice to say the hat-trick was narrowly avoided.  Spearman Snr, the new skipper failed to lead by example as at least 2 (two) drives inexplicably and uncharacteristically eased beneath him without interception or impediment of any kind. It may have been the strange brand of parched grass in the outfield or he may have simply caught the often cited Blenheim Captain Fielding syndrome. We shall never know (but other excuses are available on request).  Skiers *were* snared by Jake & Dean (not to be confused with that surfing duo from the 60s, or the cinematic combo). Both impressively calling for the ball with their feet a shoulders width apart to create a firm base and good balance, head still, hands in front of eyes as they each watched the ball nestle nicely in their outstretched palms. True text book stuff. Crocodile fingers were nowhere to be seen.  At 62-7 off 22 the game was there for us to lose but of course we have all been here before. Frustration ensued with the fluent left hander and not so fluent or orthodox right hander testing our patience in the field and evidently those spectating. However, our cool was kept and crucially boundaries were kept to a minimum.  So 123-8 off 35 meant marginally over 3 ½ an over was required, but with us lighter on batting than we would like, the game was far from a forgone conclusion, but was however, still just about in our favour.  The pick of the bowlers were Weedon (2-7) and R. Kidd (2-12) whilst Angol (2-27), Walker (1-27) and J. Spearman (1-15) all chipped in.  Yates the Younger and Spearman the Superior opened the batting. With a decade of nurturing and careful coaching together at a local club, these two knew how to set about the task. Both ‘went massive’ with perfectly creamed 6’s through mid wicket whilst also nicely timing other boundaries and being sensible enough to keep the odd yorker and straight one out, and also rotating the strike (they must have some good coaches out their way). Having taken the score to 80-0 in 14, both perished in quick succession, Jake having scored his maiden Blenheim 50 (that wasn’t then converted into a ton) and Harvey falling for an equally stylish 21.  Yates the Elder and Keyes quickly saw us home to complete our first win of the season against a team not called Stoneleigh.  We then enjoyed Medmenham’s hospitality which extended to an endless supply of ice creams, crisps, chocolate rolls and larger – a cracking way to end the day and almost the perfect diet for the elite sportsmen we aspire to be.  Rhino  \* As always the devil is in the detail with tales (from a reliable source) of OAPS, girls and 13 year olds again having been bullied out by Big Boy Weedon but wickets is wickets as the man himself would no doubt suggest. |
| 27-Jul-22 | Barbarians |  |
| 31-Jul-22 | Cricketers Club | (With apologies for any offence caused by the following self indulgence …)  Some games of cricket are instantly forgettable. Grey weather, ok oppo who set a middling total to chase that is either got or not. Bring your own bland tea, retire to the pub and on to the next game. Sometimes the cricketing conveyor belt can resemble a middle of the road pop act on a tour of nondescript market towns.  Yesterday’s encounter with the Cricketers Club Of London was not one of those matches.  With a toss being a good one to lose after the early morning showers and a new pitch prep regime in place, Blenheim managed to win it for the first time this season courtesy of novice captain Spearman (Snr). He’d had little time to mould his team with only two players surviving from the victorious mid-week fixture and just three from the previous weekend’s success. Seeking advice from his senior top order players, he chose to bat.  He was soon to rue that decision. The fiery and accurate opening bowlers extracted life, bounce, pace, turn, bounce, drift and bounce again out of the wicket which had been given a make-over with several trims with the new mower and carefully hand rolled only minutes before by opener Phil Boardman.  Experienced Blenheim campaigner Palmer (now in his 3rd game for the club) joined Boardman at the top of the order and made a gritty and defiant 20 despite the ball spitting off a length more often than not.  At the other end the Boardman’s will no doubt have (and have had) better days but they both fell cheaply in the early innings carnage, undone by the unpredictability of the new ball pairing/damp /hand rolled/ over trimmed, unplayable wicket (pick your own ready made excuse).  Keyes, not normally racked by self-doubt when batting, didn’t know whether to defend or attack and, opting for the latter for the first time in several attempts, perfectly picked out mid-off as if conducting a fielding drill. Enter debutant Smith who showed promise of innings to come perhaps, but he too soon succumbed for 8.  Into this hostile environment strode the youngest member of the team in 15 year old Finn Spearman soon after which we reached our nadir at 47-6. Engel being the latest victim of the unplayable armageddon having put into action his fool proof plan – step back and pull to leg (to be fair this is Allan’s only solution to every batting malaise on any wicket). Problem was he was thrown a full pitched straight one, which re-arranged his woodwork. We were staring down the barrel of one of the gaskets being fired in the nearby re-enactment and there was seemingly no light at the other end of it. But Finn calmly saw off the remainder of the openers overs and was joined by the reassuring influence of his older brother. At this stage there was a feeling that with the pitch so unplayable a score of 120 off 40 might well be competitive but that was currently as far away as most of our ‘regular’ players during the height of the cricket season.  In a reversal of their personalities, Finn generally played the patient game guiding the ball with soft hands whilst Jake played the more belligerent knock biffing anything there to be biffed including a swivel pull for 4 and two maximums. The brothers gradually took the score away from the ‘humiliation’ zone up into just plain ‘embarrassing’, before passing through ‘rubbish’, ‘below par’ and onto ‘OK’. But they didn’t stop there. The 50 partnership came and went with running between the wickets rarely seen before in Blenheim colours. At Finns demise on 29 they had added 93 for the 7th wicket (surely a Blenheim record) with Jake securing his second 50 in as many innings.  With just 5 overs to go, Cameron Ayris, having scored his own half century against us not a month before in Minster Lovell colours, strode to the crease and bludgeoned the ailing oppo bowlers for a further 31\* in double quick time with three 4s and a 6 of his own.  194-8 then had seen the quickest ‘U’ turn since, well since the last one from the Conservatives.  Opening the bowling from the Walker End was Ollie Reeve – a more than adequate replacement for ‘The Wheels’ Weedon – being not only a left arm seamer but also a middle order hitter in the David Willey mould.  The pitch, although still a tad spicy was more jalfrezi than vindaloo by this stage with any early moisture having evaporated in the afternoons sun. Reeve was taking no prisoners however and in his first over dismantled the openers stumps with the batsman lying prostrate in the crease having seemingly taken tips from Allen Engel on how to cope in these conditions.  Not to be out done, and not content with a mere 69 runs, Jake opened from the pavilion end and immediately uprooted the off stump. In shades of our own innings, 5-2 off 3 quickly became 20-6 off 9 with Reeve snaring another courtesy of his mate Ayris behind the stumps and Jake tucking in thanks to catches from various family members. It was shortly after this point that skipper Spearman played his trump card and contributed to the days play for the first time (other than events of 18 and 15 years ago obviously). Jake bowled an expensive 7th over and in doing so missed the opportunity to take a hat-trick, and therefore had to settle for figures of 6-9. The skipper sensing the CCoL lower order could take the game away from us in the way that we had them, brought himself on to stem the flow of runs. Shortly after it was all over, scuttled for 34. One of the biggest turn arounds in Blenheim’s cricketing history had been completed emphatically and a victory the original Duke himself would have been proud of (although to be fair he probably wouldn’t have found himself in the position we did in the first place.)  Over at Back Lane there was debate as to who was mostly responsible for the turn around. Was it Finn or Jake, or maybe Cameron? The consensus (based purely on weight of numbers rather than any rational argument) was that it was the top 6 who had selflessly sacrificed their wickets and who had done the grunt work in taking the shine off the new ball whilst between them *almost* seeing off the openers, for the lower middle order to make hay.  So, to Palmer, Keyes, Boardman’s young and old, Smith and Engel, Cheers! A job well done.  And we all drank to that.  A game that will live long in the memory. At least in the Spearman household if not so much in London perhaps.  **BPCC 194-8        J Spearman 69, C Ayris 31\*, F Spearman 29, S Palmer 20**  **CCoL  34 ao        J Spearman 6-9, P Spearman 2-0, O Reeve 2-20**   |  | | --- | |  | | **Minster Lovell U10s circa 2013** |   The MLCC U10s 2013 squad were collectively responsible for 129 runs, 8 wickets and 4 catches in Blenheim’s recent game with the Cricketers Club. Also featured is Harvey Yates who successfully opened the batting and kept wicket for us at Medmenham the previous week.  Rhino |
| 7-Aug-22 | South Wales Hunts |  |
| 14-Aug-22 | Philosophers’ |  |
| 20-Aug-22 | Chatsworth |  |
| 28-Aug-22 | Checkendon | Yesterday saw a game that had almost everything:  470 runs and 12 wickets  13 year old umpires (what could possibly go wrong?)  Free hits (who knew?)  Another Jake/Finn 100 partnership  A last ball finish - with 11 required off the last over, it went like this: 6 2 R . W 4  **BPCC     234-5    (35 overs)           J Spearman 88\*, Aadeesh 34, F Spearman 31\*, H Yates 29, D Yates 20, M West 19**  **CCC       236-7    (35 overs)           J Spearman 4-38, D Yates 1-32, H Yates 1-42** |
| 4-Sep-22 | Sheepscombe | In a game that was paradoxically both predictable but also one sided in our favour today at Sheepscombe we saw;   * Big runs up front from Boardman Snr, and Yates Jnr (66 and 44 respectively) but not Keyes * The usual Blenheim collapse 133 -2 became 179 ao * An attempted - but failed - quick 3rd run from Boardman Snr so that badly judged that it saw the demise of our quickest runner between the wickets (it wasn’t Boardman Snr). * An away team tea! Splendid indeed. * Weedon and Walker busting their guts first up with limited reward or assistance. * The usual mid game Spearman combo coming to the rescue when not much else was happening (5 wickets for the two family members who bothered to turn up today) * The long awaited for lap of honour after a dismissal from our former keeper Kerr * And another one! * Some calamitous fielding on the boundary including kicking an almost stationary ball *up hill* over the rope! * 9 bowlers used * Dropped catches * Decent catches * And catch of the season taken by Harvey Yates at deep backward square leg diving full length just inside the line. The team were elated – not because it was a stunning catch so much as it denied us having to endure 5 more balls of utter filth from captain West who nevertheless will tell anyone who will listen that he is now on a hat-trick.   **BPCC   179 ao (31.5 overs)    P. Boardman 66, H. Yates 44, West 14**  **SCC 89 ao (27.1 overs) F.Spearman 3-22, P.Spearman 2-7, 1 each for Msrs Weedon, Walker, Leyes, O.Boardman, West**  Rhino |
| 11-Sep-22 | Stonor | Blenheim recorded an emphatic win yesterday in the last game on the South Lawn for 2022.  Chasing 176 to win Keysey led the way with 53 ably supported by Andrew Woodcock (48\*) and newcomer Awais (40). |
| 18-Sep-22 | Steeple Aston |  |