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End of season meeting  
Camden Head

8pm, 18 October 2007

1. VCC 2007: what was good?
2. VCC 2007: what wasn't as good?
3. VCC: the future
  - a. Winter nets
  - b. Winter socials
  - b. London fixtures 2008
  - c. Participation in the NELCL
  - d. Tours 2008
  - e. Recruitment?
4. Monies and kit
5. Cash for honours
6. Beer spilling incident

**Present:** Potty, MMJ, Prep, the inimitable Martin Koder, Deano, Hom, Redders, McClarence, Navjot and a vague odour of sick.

**Apologies:** TJR, Woodlouse, Bomb, Sibbo, Mav and the usual joke.

### 1. VCC 2007: what was good?

This year probably marked the Village's first year as a going concern rather than a 'loss leader' with a committed core of players old and new, increased financial stability and victories coming with an unprecedented regularity. New innovations such as Lord's nets, Know your Village, Twenty20s, the Special Bus and branded underwear all proved successful. The Village started the season well, with Bomb in excellent form<sup>1</sup> and Ed Thomas played an off drive.

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<sup>1</sup> Canard in *Life of Bomb* noted that this pre-Bell period marked the zenith of the Bomb's first flowering. However, in *Bomb exposed* Puncher & Wattman suggested pre-match nooky may have affected in concentration in the second half of the season.

## 2. VCC 2007: what wasn't as good?

The rain-affected summer had knock on effects, disrupting summer nets and robbing the club of momentum at a point when winning had somehow become a habit. Prep commented that our fielding was pretty sloppy – he is probably not the first to observe this – and proposed that we undertake a series of turd polishing<sup>2</sup> sessions with the hope of improving our fielding. Likewise, our punctuality and warm-up routine (e.g. the McClarence™ three fags and can of ASBO juice) may not be the most professional. Neither of the games versus London Fields and the Shakespeare proved particularly enjoyable, and neither the Village's nor the Bomb's late season form<sup>3</sup> quite lived up to early season expectations. The poor late season run for the Village itself might have reflected problems in which lack of player availability at times impeded putting out full strength XIs, as well as rain disruption depriving players of form and match practice.

## 3. VCC: the future

**Winter nets:** Prep to book a weekly session of either one lane for two hours or two lanes for one hour at Bethnal Green Technical College from Jan-April. Navjot to book six coached nets sessions at Lord's in March and April. These will be augmented by Sunday morning sessions in Vicky Park once the weather allows.

**Winter socials:** aim for monthly(ish) winter socials, with xmas drinks on Sat 16 December (rather than a dinner – Nav to rearrange), Burns Night in January and ten-pin bowling in February. A fundraising 5-a-side football tournament was also suggested.

**London fixtures 2008:** aim is for roughly five weekend games per six weeks, plus a few mid-season Twenty20s, with the desire to play more Saturday games than Sunday games for obvious social reasons.

Though there was a general consensus that it playing games on good pitches with decent facilities in places which are easily accessible for the whole club demographic, it seemed uncertain how to achieve this. A few more out of London games in places that were easily accessible by public transport (Oxford, Cambridge or other home counties venues) might help, and whilst subletting club pitches is a possibility, these are more often available on Sundays than Saturdays.

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<sup>2</sup> Not Linnie Evans

<sup>3</sup> In *Bomb: a life less ordinary*, Hatchjaw remarked that “[Bomb’s] peers viewed the concealing-that-he-batted-for-another-side incident as ‘poor form’ in their online discussion.” Whilst Morgans, in his seminal *Confessions of a deviant*, commented that “much of this may have come from Bomb posting “[pseudonymous] messages on the guestbook seeming to be critical of himself on the principal [*sic.*] that good publicity is all publicity and in doing so boosting his cachay [*sic.*]” (p. 96) though this work was largely silent on the subject of concealing that one bats for another side. The lightweight *Watch out there’s A-Bomb about!* by Sergio deflected attention from this incident by focussing on the nascent romance between Lord and Lady Bomb of Bellend with an entire chapter devoted to silky scarves. However, the psychoanalytical school of Flintstone and Rubble relate the semiotics of Bomb’s ‘shit ruined’ maxim and his sexual reawakening at the hands of Ms Bell to an unspecified incident in the changing rooms at Portsmouth Grammar School, which emerges as constant theme in their revisionist classic *Tumescence and the backfoot stroke: decontextualising the member’s end.*

Using school or university grounds may provide a solution, as might friendlies against clubs with access to pitches.

Unsurprisingly, people stated a desire to play in close-fought matches and matches that the Village stood a chance of winning, but there was also little agreement on how to achieve this. But overall, people seemed to enjoy playing teams who'd we could share a drink with after the game.

Bomb sent a lengthy missive to the meeting concerning his views on what types of fixture the club should seek to play next season, and this was read out and discussed. As several others had suggested above, it seems that the NELCL is not necessarily perfect for all of the Village's needs, but there was no consensus as to whether any other option would be better, with some viewing the NELCL as largely adequate and other advocating the Village became a wandering club that only played friendlies.

**Participation in the NELCL:** Having discussed the various merits and demerits of the NELCL, we decided to hold a ballot at the AGM as to whether the Village re-enters. This will consist of a brief written statement to be composed by the committee summarising the choice and an anonymous vote. Proxy voting will be available.

There seemed to be a general agreement that the NELCL would be better if it had more teams in and that each team played each other less often, and the NELCL seems to be trying to recruit more teams. It is also thinking about changing the format to so that only six bowlers are required. There was some suggestion that the league might not represent the most Corinthian form of the game, particularly with regard to umpiring decisions, and people generally felt that such gamesmanship is not particularly enjoyable, and ought to be addressed if we re-enter.

On a logistical note, the NELCL publishing its fixture card in early spring makes it difficult to secure friendlies and particularly venues for staging them.

**Tours 2008:** as well as running tours to Oxford, Cambridge and Wiltshire (though not perhaps on bank holiday weekends or in the middle of August). Though a trip to Oporto was mooted, it seems that a foreign tour would be a trip too far.

**Recruitment?** Though the Village's batting line up may not be the strongest, and Andy, Dean and Morgans will be unavailable for all or some of next season, it was felt that there was no need for active recruitment other than to suggest that players continued to invite friends to join and to continue to welcome newcomers from the web and at nets.

In the previous season's EGM it was suggested that the following may aid the recruitment and retention of new players: "games in more places than just Hackney, games for all levels of ability, teas at matches, and post-match socials for every game." And likewise this year, people agreed that if the Village provided an attractive cricketing and social package, then our expansion might continue.

#### **4. Monies and kit**

The village currently has a healthy bank balance though still has several outgoings for pitches and the like to cover. Dean is due to send out a reminder to collect outstanding fees. The general view seemed that the current system of payment is working adequately and that there is no need to bring in an on-the-day collection system. However, it was suggested that charging a one-off sub of £10 a player may help to cover the cost of new kit, a motion that will be put to the AGM.

The club is in need of a new bat and a new helmet, as at present we rely on borrowing helmets from either Potty, McClarence and Bomb<sup>4</sup>. In addition, Navjot is to enquire about keeping the club bag in the Pembury.

#### **5. Cash for honours**

The Pembury Tavern has offered us a 1.9 x 1.1 m space for an honours board. There was unanimous support for us to pursue this, funding it with a whip 'round. Navjot to get quotes.

#### **6. Beer spilling incident**

Realising that MMJ had missed last orders, McClarence decided to very kindly pour half of his last pint into MMJ's empty pint glass. On seeing McClarence raise his glass Luca raised his saying 'cheers' clinking it towards Richardson's tilted pint glass. Martin Koder's pinstripes got very wet and beery.

### **ACTIONS**

Book nets – Prep/Navjot

Rearrange xmas social – Nav

Prepare form for NELCL vote – Nav/Committee

Votes on NELCL & subs - AGM

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<sup>4</sup> It was the lengthy section discussing Bomb's purple helmet in Morgans' *Confessions of a deviant* that led the critic Fotheringay to note that "his stream of consciousness ramble makes *The Naked Civil Servant* seem as innocent as Enid Blyton" (LRB).