



P2: Swan on song – a nifty fifty and a five-fer to die for **P5:** Fashion special – nights in Taylor-made linen **P56:** Marriage lines – the ballet belle and the Old Bailey



Foot up: JT recuperates in Geneva

JT shows he's still the bee's knees

By **MIKE MORGAN**
Personal Fitness Correspondent

LOOKING at James Timperley with a crocked knee at CERN in July 2011, it was difficult to be optimistic.

It wasn't just that he couldn't walk or even bear any weight on it, he was reading a women's magazine – and seemed to be enjoying it. Would the record-breaking Stroller ever return to the dominant force of yore, you might well have asked.

Fast-forward 21 months to the Strollers' first game of 2013 and you'd have your answer. One ACL reconstruction and one missed season later and Timperley strode to the crease against Great Missenden in customary fashion.

His innings began carefully, a few

BATSMAN/STROLLER OF THE YEAR

pushes off the legs and down the ground. Some hurried singles to get off strike.

The batting looked OK, the running less so. The first few strides could have been Eoin Morgan off for a quick single, the last few more Jesse Ryder at the end of a long night.

With running between the wickets a challenge, there'd have to be more shots. A lot more shots. The push down the ground was soon followed by a clip over midwicket for four, and then a trademark hockey slap through cover. One six was later described as "muscled down the ground".

Timpers was back; as determined and

focused as before, but with a more powerful and defined game plan.

That first innings back became an unbeaten 103, including three sixes and seven fours. And so began an individual season to transcend all others for the Strollers: 18 innings, 1,009 runs, two centuries and nine fifties, all at the astonishing unprecedented average of 100.9. The team was to win 12 of the 18 games. James was to win the 2013 Batsman of the Year and Chairman's Awards.

The stats suggest a glut, a glorious run of form defying explanation, but according to Timperley, it was anything but. "Sheer bloody mindedness" was the motivation revealed JT later – and: "No innings was a thing of beauty."

To the Strollers it was a welcome return to the family and back from the dark side.

He swoops to conquer

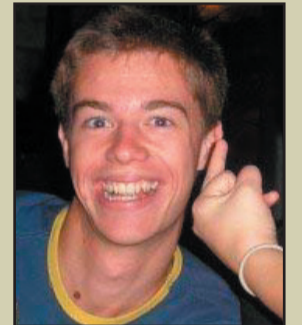


FIELDER OF THE YEAR

For all his bucket-like hands and telescopic arms, it was his anticipation, timing and grace that set Eric Swale apart in the field. Some will remember Odney for the ground he covered in the deep, followed by the dive and the snatch, to dismiss the hosts' danger man and trigger a collapse that brought the Strollers to the brink of victory. Another measure of Eric's authority in the field was that he beat Jono Addis – who allied his usual reliability with a screamer at West Chiltoning – into second place for this award.

Piers Ovenden

Hitting the right notes



TOURIST OF THE YEAR

Laurie Allsopp takes the most exotic gong a Stroller can win, fighting off Paul Dorrans, who missed his flight to Nice for the second consecutive year. It was Laurie's knowledge of French bars (the musical kind) that swayed the judges. He took his place at the Relais Imperial grand piano on the last night of the Riviera tour, placed his smartphone on the piano top and demanded his audience name their tune. With his chord crib displayed on a tiny screen and to the calls of "Swipel!" when he had to change page, he led his Strolling choir in an unforgettable cacophony of all-time greats.

Maggie Patston

Wycombe Wanderer



BOWLER OF THE YEAR

"I'm not surprised, he's a different player since he moved up the M40," said Mike Morgan of Jim Hodgson's award. "Back in South London the endless trips to fried chicken shops took their toll. Jelly Jim' I used to call him." Since moving, Hodgson's career has been revived. His match-winning 6-28 at Kempsford was almost certainly down to intense pre-match training with Fin, a key member of his new-found Wycombe entourage. Jim's 2013 haul pushed him past Stan Slaughter to fourth in the Strollers' all-time wicket-takers' list. In Australia, Darryl John is said to be considering a comeback to keep his third place intact.

Sam Brodbeck

Evergreen Brodbeck rolls away the years to lead...

THE ORANGE REVOLUTION

By **HAMISH McDOUGALL**
Historic Events Reporter

THE WATERING holes of Fleet Street were awash with orange squash tonight as evergreen Stroller Simon Brodbeck was named Player of the Year for 2013.

He won the club's oldest award for his brilliant bowling performances in a season when he captured 62 wickets at a miserly 15 runs apiece.

It is the third time Simon has won the Max Brodbeck Trophy – named in honour of his father, the Strollers' first President – adding to back-to-back wins he gained in the long-lost summers of 1986 and 1987.

Only James Timperley, Player of the Year in 2007, 2008, and 2009, has a similar record, but Simon's feat is unequalled in spanning different eras in Strollers history.

Even as the Brodbeck annus mirabilis was unfolding, the stats gurus were scouring the record books. A hint of what was in store came at Maidenhead & Bray in May when Simon claimed a hat trick, his second for the club.

Then at Englefield in August came the phenomenal milestone of surpassing 1,000 wickets. Surely the club all-time high of 68 wickets in a season, set by Peter Patston in 1988, would follow?

As the season drew to a close, successive captains came under pressure to give Brodbeck optimum time at the bowling crease. Consideration was even given to parachuting him into the Riviera tour, although rumours that a few extra

PLAYER OF THE YEAR

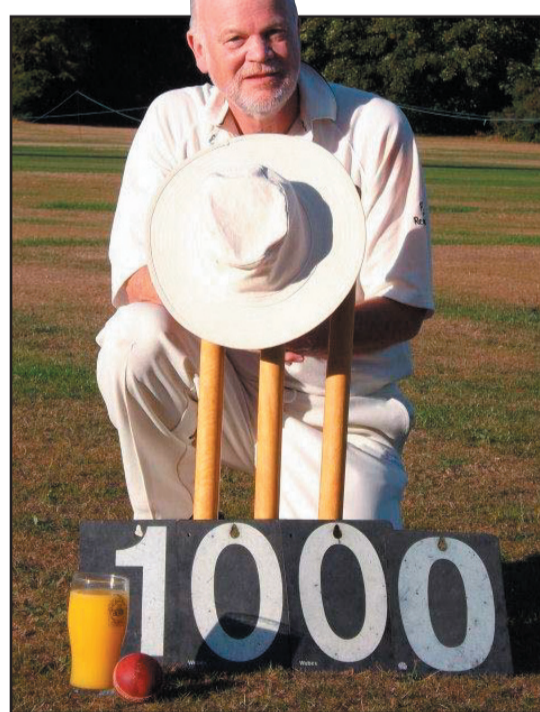
late fixtures could have been set up to help the cause were denied by the club hierarchy.

As it was, Peter's record remains to be shot down another year and Simon was left to ruminate on what might have been. But he can draw comfort aplenty from the many other club records he does hold: most games, most runs, most wickets, most five-fers, strongest orange squash drunk, best Elvis Presley impersonation – and earliest call for availability for the Three Counties Tour, at two years and 83 days ahead of the start date.

A long-term acquaintance from Beeston said: "Simon is the finest player produced by Nottinghamshire since Sir Richard Hadlee. They share a meticulous approach to goal setting and professionalism. I am putting a motion to the Notts CCC committee that a Taylor/Brodbeck gate be erected at Trent Bridge. It's the least he deserves."

Experts say Brodbeck's bowling success lies in the secrecy of his deliveries. "Batsmen can't tell if it is spin or seam, swing or cut. Like Shane Warne in his pomp, he is always crafting new deliveries to bamboozle the opposition," said one. "He plays his cards, including the goals he sets himself, close to his chest," said another.

This cloud of mystery, along with the colour of his distinguished beard, lends a respectful aura to the venerable founder of our club. Yet if his past is receding – like his hair – in shades of grey, his future, as this year's award shows, is decidedly bright – and incontrovertibly orange.



Get the pitcher: Simon celebrates his 1,000th wicket



Who put the Pies into Pilates?

Piers receives the blessing of his peers

By **JEFF BALL**
Statistical Analyst

OUR deep-thinking Kiwi capped a fine season by being handed the coveted Reg Cooper Award as Players' Player.

When not hounding City bankers, Piers Ovenden was to be found on cricket pitches in the M4/M40 corridor, regulating the opposition. Things got off to a flier with three half centuries in his first four innings. He later weighed in with two more fifties and – saving the best

PLAYERS' PLAYER

till the bank holiday – an undefeated 111 at Stanton-by-Dale.

He also had a passable record with ball in hand (and he's quicker than Eddie Hemmings). Primarily used as a strike bowler in short sharp bursts, he had a haul of 21 wickets at a decent average of 25.

With a natural action that generates lateral movement, he had an uncanny knack of breaking key partnerships and picking up prize wickets. However, his own worst

critic, he was forever complaining that his bowling was never quite on the money. One can only wonder what devastation he might do when "it's all working OK".

And that's not all. Piers proved an adept wicketkeeper and fielder (nine catches and one stumping) and a quietly authoritative captain, with an inclusive style that ensured that those at the "commitment end of the scale" got a game. He went so far as to lead pre-match Pilates with a series of mind (and body!) bending exercises. There were even one or two converts.

The only blot on this copybook was a short dip in form when the management decided he would benefit by going out on loan to the Demijohns. Unfortunately, there was no clause to prevent him from playing against the Strollers. He duly struck an attractive 40 and offered almost single-handed resistance to the Fleet Street juggernaut.

Now he is soon to become a father for the first time, we wish him and Hanna all the best. Let's just hope we see as much of the Pie-man in 2014 as we did last year.