

Last year, much to the consternation of my wife, I stuck my hand up at the AGM when no-one else did when we were looking for a second team captain. Not entirely sure that I knew what I was doing but feeling a warm sort of glow about the fact that I was doing the right thing.

Little did the club know that if you look back in 1987's Wisden you'll see my only previous captaincy record... Lord Wandsworth College 1st XI captained by Simon Blows. Record: Played 14 Drawn 1, Lost 13, Won 0. Perhaps I didn't have the right credentials for the job!

It's a measure of the club's strength in depth that the Waresley seconds are the highest positioned second team in Huntingdonshire with the exception of Godmanchester – a fact not lost on us when we played Eaton Socon later in the season but more of that later.

So, with my captaincy ineptitude safely hidden from the team we headed into the second team's first foray into Hunts Division 1.

I won't bore you all by giving the whole season's results but just recall a few highlights and a couple of low points.

Our first win of the season came in the third game and against the eventual champions, Newborough and it also brought one of the seasons best team performances. Chasing 183 for victory James Collings made a quality half century and then returning hero Steve Hooley battered an excellent 54 to win. But what was the abiding memory of that game was a fielding performance that was second to none. All catches held, diving stops and all eleven players supporting each other. It was a fine and much needed win, with the team made up of many young players.

In an otherwise unspectacular game at Huntingdon Chris Pierce performed his first piece of miracle fielding. Fielding at deep midwicket Coley bowled a half tracker that deserved what it got – a mighty whack for 6... or so we thought. A dreadfully out of position Chris Pierce back pedalled towards the boundary, and instead of turning to fetch the ball as we all thought he must surely do, he put up one hopeful hand and plucked the ball out of the air as simple as picking an apple. What was even more surreal was that the stunning piece of fielding was not greeted by cheers and shouts, but by total stunned silence from all 12 players on the field as they grappled in their minds with the concept of what had just happened. That the catch was stunning is not doubted, what was also quite amazing is that later in the season Chris performed a similar work of wizardry!

At Orton Park, and on a great batting pitch, we oh so nearly chased down 248. A very large total for a second team. Rooney hit a brilliant innings of brutal power which was comfortably his best knock of the season but frustratingly 7 short of a maiden Waresley century. Dip Patel looked class in his second game for the 2's with an inventive 50. However, Slipping from 230 for 5 to 245 all out and losing by 3 runs was personally my most disappointing defeat in a Waresley shirt.

A moment that highlighted how hard it is to captain in cricket, especially when your team is packed with previous captains and experienced cricketers was against Orton Park at home. Pat had bowled yet another excellent spell of 7 overs for 17 and we had a drinks break. Russell came up to me and said "what about putting Knibbo on, his swing might be just the thing to get a wicket", vice-captain said, "Pete Colebrook might be just the thing to get a wicket here", Kevin Cole said "maybe it's time to bring Steve Hooley back", Pat, not surprisingly, said "Don't take me off I'm bowling well". I made my decision and ... we lost the match!

Finally, in 9th, and relegation position, in the league we took on Eaton Socon at home. A good team batting performance topped off by a resurgent Vince Winn's 40 helped us to a useful 172 for 8. Tremendous bowling, with Steve Hooley yet again doing the uphill slog, and Pierce's aforementioned miracle, bowled Eaton Socon out for a mere 72. I think here it's worth considering what we did. This was Waresley 2nd team beating Eaton Socon's first team in a Hunts 1 league game. I think that's a measure of how far the club has come over the last few years and everyone throughout the club needs congratulating for that. It was a pivotal moment for the club.

Going into the last weekend of the season any of 6 clubs could get relegated, us included, however Dean scratched against us and a late win against Huntingdon left us in a brilliant fifth position. Personally I'm delighted by that and I think the rest of the team and club are too.

I have a couple of apologies for the season... I'd like to say sorry to Kevin for making him bowl with the short boundary behind him and then gloating just a bit too much when my half volleys were splendidly caught 2/3 of the way to the boundary and his sailed comfortably over the short boundaries for 6. Sorry too to Steve Hooley for treating him like a faithful cart horse and making him bowl up the hill all season whilst I trundled happily down hill!

Finally I'd like to thank a few people: all the players who contributed so much. John and Roger for creating the best club in the county. Trish for cleaning the clubhouse. Nick Greenfield for being an excellent vice-captain and tremendous help for the whole season. Jim Keys and Lyndon Price for supplying such excellent youngsters when I needed them and when they forced themselves into the team. I look forward to seeing more of them next year.

All our tea ladies who did a brilliant job as ever. Jim Crisp and Andy Donald for umpiring a couple of times for us. And most of all to a saviour to me for umpiring 80% of our games so well in his first season in a coat, Tim Colebrook. I'm incredibly grateful to you for all the effort you've put in, I thought you were consistently of a high standard, as did the other captains so well done and I hope you enjoyed yourself sufficiently to carry on next season. Would you please come up for a small token of our appreciation?