

DIARY OF THE SEASON - 2011

Sunday, April 24th

The warmest April in years saw Cimla's season off to a prompt start with a friendly fixture at Briton Ferry Town - and this traditional pipe-opener has rarely seen such hot conditions. Town took first knock and got 164 for 8 (Graeme Hughes 2/43, Liam Woolfe 2/26 and late reinforcement Jack Lever 2/7). Hughes (43) was the mainstay of Cimla's reply which fell short at 142 (Keith Davies 18, Chris Stephens 15, Peter Curtis 15 also getting useful practice).

Saturday, April 30th

The 1st XI made a disappointing start, going down to a 4-wicket defeat at Baglan. Cimla were all out for a respectable enough 177 (Wayne Thomas 35, Craig Kelly 29, skipper Martin Rees 27) but Baglan, steered by Lee Williams' 95, eased home, Wayne Thomas (3/46) and Anthony Davies (2/22) leading the Cimla bowling.

The 2nd XI made amends with a 99-run home win over Baglan. Batting first, Cimla openers Nigel Gunter (61) and Scott Lewis (60) provided a solid start as Cimla ended on 176 for 8 in the reduced 40-over format. Baglan were shot out for 77 by the spin of Jon Pryce (6/24) and Mike Price (3/26).

The 3rds lost by 3 wickets to Sketty Church. Rashid Mushtaq on debut rescued Cimla with a blazing century, his 106 including 14 sixes and 4 fours as they totalled 183 with James Hornby next best on 27 and Imran Pervez 20. Sketty Church struggled early on against Asim (3/47) and Imran Pervez (2/35) but prospered lower down to take the honours.

Thursday, May 5th

Welsh Assembly elections on, Alternative Vote referendum on but the visit of Skewen in the Guardian League was rained off !

Saturday, May 7th

An exciting finish saw Hills Plymouth edge home by 3 wickets against Cimla at Cefn Saeson. Batting first, Cimla knocked up a useful 208 for 9 (Keith Davies 49, Craig Kelly 40, Neil Baggridge 28, Chris Stephens 21) but Steve Manning (98 not out) led the Merthyr side to 209 for 7 in the 49th over, Steve W. Jones (3/40) and Anthony Davies (3/53) leading the bowling.

It was reach for the valium time too for the 2nds who gained a second successive win at Hills Plymouth by 2 wickets. Hills found the variety of Ian Thomas (4/23) too much as Mark Evans (3/18) and Nathan Howard (2/20) got to work. Scott Lewis (22) held the Cimla batting together with a flurry from captain Mike Price (20) before Evans and Patrick O'Brien scrambled Cimla home.

Cimla 3rds won by 4 wickets at super league Port Talbot 3rds who, as catches were spilled, totalled an imposing-looking 197 for 6, Jag Nagaraj (2/38) leading the bowling. With Imran Pervez (48) and Ian Hornby (40) in form, Cimla passed that total at 200 for 6 for their first win of the season.

Thursday, May 12th

The Midweek XI got the 2011 Guardian League campaign off to a winning start by beating Dyffryn whose 135 for 6 (Chris Jenkins' swingers bringing him 2/22) looked formidable. Sound batting throughout the Cimla order, led by Imran Pervez (50 not out), Gavin Pugh (31), Jim the Trim Williams (21) and Scott Lewis (15) saw Cimla home 4 wickets down.

Saturday, May 14th

The best day yet for the Club as all 3 Saturday XI's completed handsome victories in some style.

The 1st XI set a new record by smashing a massive 328 for 4 against Pwll at Cefn Saeson. Gavin Pugh, in his first game of the season, led the way with a magnificent 137 and received excellent support from captain Martin Rees (68), Chris Stephens (51), Craig Kelly (38) and Keith Davies (23 not out). After the dismissal of star Marcus Leaf for 44, Pwll were blown away by Wayne Thomas whose 6 for 49 included a first-ever hat-trick. Pwll subsided for 138 all out, leaving Cimla winners by a monster 190 runs.

The 2nd XI won their third game in three, bowling out Pwll 2nds for just 74 (Morgan Dixon 4/30, Nathan Howard 2/5 and Mark Evans 2/24 with Owen Hosgood taking 1/13 and two well-judged catches.). Nigel Gunter (46 not out) and Scott Lewis (23 not out) saw Cimla home without loss and a convincing 10-wicket win.

The 3rd XI toppled another super-club Pontarddulais 3rds in another record win - by a huge 223 runs ! Rashid Mushtaq hit his second century of the season, his 104 not out including 11 sixes and 6 fours. Imran Pervez (37) and Neil Hornby (25) helped Cimla to 257 for 9 then Jag Nagaraj (7 for 14) ripped through the Bont batting as the visitors were all out for just 34.

Thursday, May 18th

The Midweek XI gained a second successive victory, beating Baglan by at Cefn Saeson. Captain Keith Davies' policy of ensuring that everyone gets involved worked again as Baglan struggled to 84 for 5 against 6 different bowlers who shared the wickets. In reply, a fine knock of 31 by Gavin Pugh was the main contribution to Cimla's 85 for 7 with Martin Rees unbeaten on 19.

Saturday, May 20th

Rain washed out Cimla's visit to Dyffryn after Anthony Davies (2 for 18) and Wayne Thomas (1 for 14) with the assistance of two catches by Chris Stephens had reduced the home side to 35 for 3.

Cimla 2nds were luckier in that they were able to complete their game at Cefn Saeson. After being put in on a damp track, Cimla lost wickets regularly and were all out for 135, captain Mike Price leading the way with 48 not out. Next best was the resurrected Gary Bray (19) who was a proud father to play alongside his son Adam who scored and promised more than his neat 8. With the wet ball difficult to grip, Dyffryn coasted him thanks to a superb 100 not out by Jon Day.

Pontardawe 3rds scratched their visit to Cimla 3rds who, as a consequence, were awarded maximum points and now lie second in the table to Mumbles 3rds.

Thursday, May 25th

Rain again caused the cancellation of the Midweek XI visit to Briton ferry Steel.

Saturday, May 27th

Heavy overnight and morning rain meant that all fixtures were washed out by midday - unfortunately, the weather relented later allowing most others to play. Did we miscalculate ??

Thursday, June 2nd

The Midweek XI made it 3 wins out of 3 with a 47-run win over Landore at Cefn Saeson. Batting first, Cimla raised an impressive 163 for 5 (Craig Kelly 51 not out, Gavin Pugh 45, Ian Hornby 29 not out and Chris Jenkins 25). Landore replied with 110 for 8 (all-rounders Ian Hornby 3/24 and Chris Jenkins 2/23, James Williams 2/26). Much harder tasks ahead though - still, the Midweek XI have already bettered last year's 2 wins !

Saturday, June 4th

A dismal day as the 1st XI slumped to a 193-run defeat at Bronwydd who piled up 275 for 9 (Steve W. Jones 5/68, Chris Jenkins 2/46, Wayne Thomas (2/51). Only Craig Kelly (30) showed any resistance as Cimla crumbled for 82 all out. The 2nds fared little better as their 108 all out (Nigel Gunter 62, Robert Thomas 16) was easily overtaken by Bronwydd for no loss.

The 3rds provided a measure of comfort with a 5-wicket Cup success at Pontarddulais who made 105 all out, Dr. Jag Nagaraj celebrating the arrival of his twins with 3/14 and Asim Saleem taking 4/43. Imran Pervez (46 not out) and Rashid Mushtaq (35) saw Cimla home with comfort.

Thursday, June 9th

The Midweek XI suffered their first NGCL defeat, narrowly losing to Port Talbot at Cefn Saeson. Batting first, Cimla reached 108 for 7 (Martin Rees 43, Anwar Mohammed 26, Chris Davies 14 not out) but Port Talbot got home at 109 for 5 with Imran Ashraf taking 2/27.

Saturday, June 11th

Cimla suffered a 6-wicket defeat at Landore. Batting at 20:20 pace, Cimla were all out for 165b in just 29.2 overs with Liam Woolfe (57), Chris Jenkins (30), Wayne Thomas (28) and Imran Ashraf (20) the main contributors. Landore easily passed their target for the loss of 4 wickets, Gavin Pugh (2/14) leading the bowling.

A splendid 14th century of his career by Nigel Gunter (106 not out) was the highlight as Cimla 2nds got back to winning ways at Cefn Saeson. Landore racked up a tidy enough 177 for 5 (Mark Evans 2/39). At 24 for 1 off 12 overs, a Cimla win looked unlikely but the Old Master (1 six and 16 fours) aided and abetted by Keith Perkins (32 not out) and Robert Thomas (19) saw Cimla home at 178 for 2.

Cimla 3rds strengthened their hold on second place with a 172-run win at Morryston 3rds.

Thursday, June 16th

The Midweek XI had an excellent 6-wicket win at Ynystawe who knocked up 136 for 4 in their 20 overs before Cimla, led by the unbeaten Chris Jenkins (52) and Gavin Pugh (51), overtook them with time to spare.

Saturday, June 18th

Cimla just fell short in pursuit of Divisional leaders Llandysul at Cefn Saeson after the morning's mopping up operation yielded a 40-over contest later reduced to 39. Llandysul got away a bit in the closing overs to raise 165 for 5 with Wayne Thomas (3/25) the pick of the Cimla bowlers. Sound batting by Gavin Pugh (37) and Chris Jenkins (20) kept Cimla in the hunt and a late charge by captain Martin Rees (31 not out) and Wayne Thomas (24) was not quite enough as Cimla made 154 for 7, losing late wickets in the charge.

Both the 2nd and 3rd XI games fell foul of the weather.

Thursday, June 23rd

The Midweek XI's home game with Briton Ferry Town was cancelled due to overnight rain - again !

Saturday, June 25th

With the 2nds and 3rds cancelled at Cefn Saeson due to incessant rain, attention was firmly focussed on the 1sts at Porthcawl. After a long delay, Cimla's batsmen seemed in an unholy hurry and were all out for a poor 89 (Liam Woolfe 24, Keith Davies 20) before Porthcawl rushed to beat the rain at 90 for 1 in 16 overs..... a performance to match the dreadful weather !

Thursday, June 30th

Despite the all round efforts of Imran Pervez (2 for 10 and 27) and skipper Keith Davies (18), the Midweek XI lost at BS Port Talbot, being all out for 104 in unlikely pursuit of the home team's 145 for 4.

Saturday, July 2nd

Turnaround Saturday brought about a turnaround in Cimla's fortunes as the sun shone and the Club recorded its first "full house" of the season.

Leading the way was the 1st XI who accounted for Baglan by 9 wickets at Cefn Saeson to move out of the bottom two. Wayne Thomas (4/36) and Anthony Davies (5/24) were among the wickets and there was a promising 1/24 from Andrew Collins on debut as the visitors were all out for a poor 97. Despite the loss of Graeme Hughes 19, skipper Martin Rees (21 not out) and an unbeaten 42 by Chris Jenkins, probably the team's most improved player, saw Cimla home.

The 2nds had a comfortable double at Baglan 2nds who were bowled out for 116 by captain Mike Price (3/5), Mark Evans (3/29) and Patrick O'Brien (2/31). Nigel Gunter (40), Scott Lewis (17) and Owen Hosgood (13 not out) led Cimla home at 117 for 5.

The 3rds had an incredible win over Gowerton 3rds who amassed 302 for 6 (Ragu Gunde 2/45) at Cefn Saeson. Too daunting a target ? Not for Beefy's Army who surged home at 305 for 5 in what was an all-time record chase. Consistent batting throughout the order brought useful contributions from Waleed Malik (55), Mouzam Butt (49), Neil Hornby (40) and James Hornby (36) before a match-winning stand between Mohammed Hassan (39 not out) and Ragu Gunde (17 not out) squeezed Cimla, cheered home by 1sts and 2nds, to a remarkable victory at 309 for 6.

Thursday, July 7th

Cimla lost to NGCL leaders Clydach at Cefn Saeson by runs. The visitors knocked up a useful 145 for 6 (Chris Jenkins 2/15, James Williams 2/25, Imran Pervez 2/34) and Cimla replied with 115 for 6 (Imran Pervez 39 not out, captain Keith Davies 20).

Saturday, July 9th

Like the little girl in the rhyme, Cimla are either very, very good or horrid these days and this week it was much the latter who fell apart at Hills Plymouth who worked hard to reach 145 for 9 against Anthony Davies 5/28 and Wayne Thomas 2/53. Cimla's response was a miserable 106 all out, only captain Martin Rees with a dogged 41 showing the necessary determination and Baglan have now leap-frogged Cimla again following their draw against Briton Ferry Town.

A severely under-strength 2nd XI lost by 4 wickets to Hills Plymouth at Cefn Saeson. Inserted on a damp track, Cimla battled their way to a useful 147 for 6 - captain Mike Price taking command with 43 not out,

James Williams getting a season's best 24 and Scott Lewis a hard-grafted 23. In reply, Hills Plymouth shot away to a quick start but were held in check by Jim Williams who snipped away for 2/36 and Mike Price (4/13) but Cimla's much-changed combination lacked the resources to push home for victory.

Cimla 3rds continued their fine form with a massive 213-run win at Cowbridge 3rds. Batting first, Cimla racked up 317 for 7 as both Neil Hornby and Walid Malik got 90 each. Mouzam Butt 42 also threatened before Cowbridge were dismissed for 104 (Ragu Gunde 5/38). Cimla 3rds remain third although the sorry demise of Gowerton 4ths has enhanced their standing.

Thursday, July 14th

Cimla rounded off the 2011 NGCL League programme is at The Gnoll with a handsome 22-run success against Neath. Batting first, Cimla totalled 119 for 5, captain Keith Davies (27), Martin Rees (24) but the innings of the night was played by Chris Jenkins who smashed an unbeaten 50 that included 6 sixes. Neath were never in the hunt against sound bowling all round and they responded with 97 for 7.

Saturday, July 16th

On May 14th at Cefn Saeson, Cimla racked up 328 for 4 against Pwll; this time it was the turn of the Llanelli side's batsmen to dominate as their star Marcus Leaf crafted a brilliant 186 not out as Pwll reached 286 for 1. Although Chris Stephens got 35, wickets fell too often and that total was always out of Cimla's range and it took a determined stand between captain Martin Rees (31 not out) and consistent Keith Davies (31) to steer Cimla to a draw at 187 for 8.

Unfortunately, the 2nd XI game fell foul of the weather while the 3rds were without a game owing to Hendy's pre-season withdrawal from the WWCA.

Thursday, July 21st

The NGCL Editor's Cup campaign began at home to Skewen who earned an emphatic win. Batting first, Cimla made 102 for 9 (Scott Lewis 24, Anwar Mohammed 21, Chris Jenkins 20) but Skewen rattled home without loss.

Saturday, July 23rd

Cimla climbed out of the automatic relegation places courtesy of a 71-run victory over bottom club Dyffryn who look doomed. Inserted on a damp track, skipper Martin Rees (42), Liam Woolfe (27) and Chris Stephens (21) were the mainstays of Cimla's 146 all out, two ex-Cimla men Adrian Thornhill (2/24) and Paul Amphlett (2/34) bowling tidily. Splendid bowling by Wayne Thomas (5/35) and Anthony Davies (3 for 15) had Dyffryn on the back foot and the visitors were all out for 77 of which another former Cimla man Dickie Davies got 22.

Dyffryn 2nds inserted Cimla who batted solidly around Nigel Gunter's 90 not out to reach 172 for 4, Robert Thomas (22), Keith Perkins (trimmed for 15) and Chandra Sekeran (15). Dyffryn got off to a good start and, to their credit, kept chasing but were all out for 133 (Robert Thomas 2/20, Mike Price 2/22, Owen Hosgood 2/24 and Mark Evans 2/31), mention must be made of two wonderful Perkins catches and two run outs by Hosgood and Tom Davies.

Cimla 3rds had a disastrous day as their under-strength side was shot out for 36 by Carmarthen Wanderers who got home at 38 for 3 with Mouzam Butt (2/13) causing minor concern.

Thursday, July 28th

The Midweek XI suffered a last over loss at Ynystawe after the home side scored 149 for 4. Gavin Pugh (41), Anwar Mohammed (21), Chris Jenkins (20) and Moazum Butt (a valedictory unbeaten 20) led the Cimla charge and it took two fine boundary catches in the last over to deny Cimla at 139 for 6.

Saturday, July 30th

Cimla edged an exciting win at Briton Ferry Town by 1 wicket in the 52nd over of the second innings. Town rallied from 90 for 5 to reach 226 all out (Steve W. Jones 4/38, Wayne Thomas 2/35, Ian Hornby 2/57) and the two extra overs were to prove crucial. Virtually everyone contributed to Cimla's reply - Craig Kelly top-scored with 38, Graeme Hughes (31), Liam Woolfe (25), Wayne Thomas (25), Chris Jenkins (24) and Keith Davies (22) - before last pair S.W. Jones and Ian Hornby scrambled the winning run with 4 balls to spare. Baglan's defeat against Porthcawl leaves the Evans Bevan boys 36 points behind Cimla but a third consecutive victory and revenge over Bronwydd next Saturday would greatly assist Cimla's cause.

There were just 4 balls remaining too when Cimla 2nds tied up a 66-run win over Briton Ferry Town 2nds at Cefn Saeson. A spate of late cry-offs and unavailabilities hit the side hard again but Cimla recovered from a perilous 13 for 4 to reach a creditable 156 for 9 in 40 overs. Captain Mike Price (82) held things together with Mark Evans (27) providing best help. Town's openers provided a steady, if slow, response and on their dismissal, Cimla steadily worked their way through the remaining batting with some vintage bowling from Mike Price (4/12), Stuart Jones (2/4) and Jim Harper (2/23) doing the damage.

Cimla 3rds, similarly affected by the cry-offs, said ta-ta to any lingering title pretensions when they went down at Tata to B.S. Port Talbot. Waleed Malik (44) was the mainstay in Cimla's 85 all out but the Steelmen got home at 86 for 3.

Thursday, August 4th

Cimla's home Cup game against B.S. Port Talbot was abandoned with the visitors having made a commanding start against Chris Jenkins and Anwar Mohammed.

Saturday, August 6th

After two good wins, Cimla slumped to a heavy defeat against Bronwydd who, with no League officials present, racked up 250 for 5 declared, Chris Jenkins (2/21). In reply, Cimla managed only 153 all out (Chris Stephens 43, James Hornby 21) although the visiting umpire inflicted 3 LBW's on Cimla, and, with Baglan winning at Hills Plymouth, the heat is on again.

Cimla 2nds travelled to Bronwydd where torrential showers saw the game reduced to the bare 30 overs. Poor Bronwydd totalled 138 for 9 (Ian Thomas 6/35, Mike Price 3/36) and Cimla were 3 for 0 off 3 balls when a further heavy downpour brought the game to an abrupt conclusion.

Cimla 3rds returned to form with a 9-run thrashing of Ammanford 3rds to claim another Premier scalp. Batting first, Cimla set a formidable 259 with Waleed Malik scoring 113 - his first century for the Club. He received excellent support from Jahanzeb Khan (31) and 30 each from Ragu Gunde and Rashid Mushtaq who then tore into the young Ammanford batting with 5/72) and the visitors were all out for 168.

Thursday, August 11th

The Midweek game at Briton Ferry Town was another victim of the weather.

Saturday, August 13th

Thanks to the hard work of all the volunteers led by chairman Finn and Chris Jenkins who pitched in to make the Cefn Saeson ground playable, the 1st XI match against Landore proceeded when others in the SWCA did not.

Landore, inserted in a match reduced first to 45 overs then to 38, set a formidable 192 for 4 with Jay Copp, dropped twice, advancing to a well-struck century (Wayne Thomas 2/45, Jim Williams 2/52). Cimla made a good start through Graeme Hughes (41), Craig Kelly (18) and Keith Davies (20) but, as the rate required mounted, wickets fell. Liam Woolfe (21) threatened briefly but Cimla ended on 159 for 9 to extend their lead over Baglan to 20 points but Newport beat Cardiff in the Premier League to raise the spectre of 3 teams down this year although 6 clubs are neck and neck and anything could happen in the "League That Doesn't Play".

The 2nd and 3rd XI games at Landore and Ynysygerwn were both cancelled.

Thursday, August 18th

Cimla won the final Midweek XI game of the season at Briton Ferry Steel by 7 wickets with time to spare. Steel were restricted to 114 for 7 by Imran Pervez (2/10) and James Williams (2/). With Gavin Pugh (50 not out), Neil Hornby (25) and Chris Jenkins (23 not out), Cimla wasted little time in reaching their target for the loss of 3 wickets in the 14th over.

Saturday, August 20th

A Cimla side showing six changes from the previous week (a record even in this season of mass-unavailability) were no match for champions Llandysul where they went down by 5 wickets. Acting captain Graeme Hughes won the toss and elected to bat in a game reduced to 44 overs and Cimla were all out for 133 (Gavin Pugh 50, Neil Hornby 23). Llandysul got home for the loss of 5 wickets, Chris Jenkins taking 2/10.

The games involving the 2nds (home to Llandysul) and the (away to Ynystawe) were victims of the rains.

Saturday, August 27th

The 1st XI did everything possible to defeat Porthcawl by 68 runs at Cefn Saeson. Batting first on a wet wicket, Cimla had proceeded rapidly to 142 for 4 (Chris Stephens 61) when rain intervened, reducing the match to a 34 over affair. Sustained hitting by Chris Jenkins (47) and Keith Davies (31 not out) steered Cimla to an imposing 201 for 5. Porthcawl also got off to a quick start but their batting faded against the excellent bowling of Wayne Thomas (6 for 51) who carried his season's tally to a personal best of 39.

Cimla finished with 5 wins (all against different teams), 3 draws, 8 defeats and 2 cancellations. This equates with 8th spot and probable relegation although the situation may yet be rectified if Usk win the East Wales title and don't take up a Premier League place - and their season doesn't finish until 17th September. If indeed, 2012 means Division 4, opponents will include the relegated duo of Baglan and Dyffryn plus Felinfoel, Llandeilo, Ystradgynlais, Llandarcy and Kidwelly. Swansea 3rds have already applied to rejoin the WWCA and it seems that Neath might join them.

The 2nds were caught on a sticky wicket at Porthcawl and were all out for a seasonal low of 67 of which Wahji Khan contributed 34 in his final game before leaving for Derby. Cimla's bowlers made Porthcawl fight hard for their victory before the home side reached 68 for 6 after 38 overs (Pat O'Brien 3/8 and Imran Pervez 2/10). The 2nds finished 5th with 7 wins, 4 defeats and no fewer than 7 cancellations !

The 3rds' final game at home to Skewen fell foul of Friday's flash-floods. "Beefy's Army" thus finished 4th (behind Mumbles, Sketty Church 1sts and Port Talbot) with 7 wins, 3 defeats and 5 cancellations.

Thursday, September 1st

As the season drew to a close, the intrepid Cimla tourists met with a not unexpected defeat at Great Eccleston. Batting first, the home side racked up 183 for 8 against the experienced (that's the most polite description) and varied Cimla attack, Mark Evans (2 for 33) being the most successful. In reply, Cimla got a solid enough 141 for 6 (Nigel Gunter slapped 39 not out, Chris Jenkins 19 and father and son Keith and Tom Davies 19 apiece). Mention must be made of the "northern connection" Hugh Williams who travelled across from Manchester to swell Cimla's ranks and showed that he has lost none of his all-round skills with a

wicket, a jaunty 9 runs despite descending trousers and (Martyn Jenkins will never believe it) a catch which for its sheer uniqueness rivalled the excellence of those taken by Messrs. Jenkins C. and Davies T.