

THE MERTON WAY



-season-
2017-2018





ABOUT US

We are an amateur sports team that currently has 7 adult football teams and 6 youth teams. Founded in 1910, we have affiliations with the Southern Amateur League and the Amateur Football Association.

As a budding young football club we welcome any new players at all levels to join our club.

We Invite you to come down to our training sessions.

ADULTS TRAINING:

LOCATION: St Mark's Academy School, Acacia Road, Mitcham CR4 1SF

TIME: 8pm-9.30pm on Wednesday evenings (please arrive by 7.45pm to stretch and warm up)

SURFACE: Astro-turf - please wear appropriate footwear

Each player is responsible for their own physical fitness. Attendance at training is encouraged and preferable but not yet compulsory. However training is likely to affect team selection and there may be occasions when attendance is required.

HOW TO GET THERE:

TRAIN: Mitcham Eastfields train station is a five minute walk from the pitches with trains from Victoria, Clapham Junction and Balham.

Exit the station, walk up Grove Road with the school on your right. Just after the new building, there is a path on your right signposted '*Entrance to Adventure Playground*' which brings you to the pitches.

CAR: Acacia Road is off Tamworth Lane. Drive all the way to the end of Acacia Road, with the school on your left, follow the road around to the left and you reach the entrance to the pitches.

Our home ground is:
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground, Martin Way, Merton, SW20 9BU

Alternatively
Check out our website at:

<http://www.mertonfc.co.uk/>

Feel free to send enquiries and find more information about our club.



2017-2018 Chairman's Overview

Here we are at the start of a new season. Welcome to all our new members and welcome back to all those faithful members.

This is the first edition of the Merton Way this season and thanks to Sam our editor for volunteering again. We all enjoy reading this weekly magazine but we need to receive articles. When the season gets under way we need match reports. This season there will be an end of season award for the best contribution.

New Committee/New Challenges

Each season brings with it new challenges and this season is no exception and in many ways it has a lot of new challenges to be overcome by pretty much a new team. Ed Plaistow is our new Fixtures Secretary and Darren Fitzgerald is taking over as Disciplinary Officer. With changes to the SAL rules, sin bins and our booking system (See later) these guys will have some new problems to resolve. But they have enough footy experience to do just that.

One of our first challenges is to recruit our members and collect membership fees. Training has been well attended but it now comes to the crunch where players need to pay up and register as they must be registered in order to play when the season starts on September 9th. We have put the membership fee up to £80. This is a very small increase. The cost of pitches will go up as will our expenditure on the bar amongst other things. The youth membership has gone up from £180 to £220 as we operated that section last season at an overall loss.

So guys join up and pay up. Finances will be a challenge this year and bar profits will be a crucial ingredient so we will be organising some good bar events!

Changes from last season that affect us all.

So let us deal with the changes that we are facing. The Council has contracted out the maintenance and booking of its sports facilities to IdVerde who we now have to deal with. This has started very well and we have had good discussions with them about maintenance of the pitches, remedial work and preferential booking and we are hoping to reach an agreement for the benefit of all before the season starts in earnest.

At their AGM and Fixtures meeting the SAL unveiled their new constitution with which we are broadly happy. It has introduced a greater degree of regionalisation with only first and seconds being all London divisions. Our threes are in Junior South division 1 which is better for them as last season it was very much a north dominated division. The 6s have been promoted and find themselves in the same division as the 5s.

The biggest changes are that the SAL has been chosen by the F.A. as one of the Leagues to trial 'Sin Bins' So this season dissent will be punished with a ten minute sin binning for the mouthy player. All of us are going to have to be very careful to avoid this and letting the team and club down. It is worth reminding ourselves of what Doug Insole had to say. He was an England cricketer and test selector and was also a good amateur footballer and captained Corinthian Casuals. He admonished one of his players for disputing the award of a penalty saying 'There are five good reasons why that was a penalty. Number one the referee has given it and the other four don't matter'

There are quite complicated rules for multiple offences and an explanatory leaflet will be circulated. Another change relates to the postponement of games. Where in exceptional circumstances it is possible to postpone a match at relatively short notice without having to call off lower team matches and move players up to fulfil the fixture.

A major challenge for our club are the arrangements for Bar Management and Catering, With Peter Kemp's retirement we are putting in place new arrangements for its management and manning the bar. In addition, Jasper is also leaving and we are recruiting a new chef.



Improvements at the club.

A very important challenge will be to deliver a number of improvements to the club and remain within our financial constraints. We are keen to improve the entrance area to our bar and also obtain some on site storage by purchasing a container. Additionally, we are in negotiations with IdVerde to secure a measure of exclusivity on the pitches at the Hood. This will all cost money but we have built up some reserves and we intend to invest some of that to secure the long term benefits.

You will all recall the sad and untimely death of Nick Papanastasiou last autumn. The collection at his funeral was made in our aid and we are using that money to improve the outside entrance to our bar with some landscaping and planting as a permanent memorial to him. We will be buying the materials but we will be organising the labour from within the club with working parties on a couple of Sundays soon. We are also in the process of siting and purchasing a container on site for vital storage of equipment. We are still working to launch a scheme to improve the pitches at the Hood with new drainage.

Sin bins for dissent

With the SAL trialling 10 minute Sin Bins for dissent all our players are going to have to be very careful to avoid this and letting the team and club down. Doug Insole, an England cricketer and test selector was also a good amateur footballer and captained Corinthian Casuals. He admonished one of his players for disputing the award of a penalty saying 'There are five good reasons why that was a penalty. Number one the referee has given it and the other four don't matter'.

The season ahead.

It is all very exciting as we look forward to the new season and all its possibilities. The most important thing that I would urge all players is to help their captain/manager. Reply to their requests for availability as soon as you possibly can. Help them on match days with collection of money/writing reports/looking after kit /water bottles/first aid. Then come to the bar and have a drink with your team but don't forget the ref and the opposition. And Good luck!

- Max Herbert



MERTON FC 2017 EVENTS AUG – DEC



SATURDAY 26TH AUGUST – MEMBERSHIP DAY

- JOSEPH HOOD
- FROM MIDDAY
- ENJOY FRIENDLY MATCHES, BAR OPEN & BBQ FROM 3PM
- MAN U VS. LEICESTER @ 5.30PM



MERTON QUIZ - SATURDAY 7th OCTOBER

- 7pm START prompt – 10pm FINISH
- Classic Quiz with all the proper rounds!
- Teams of 6, £10 per person – including fish & chips.
- ALL teams to put forward a team for entry.
- BOOK YOUR TEAM NOW** – Alex.herbert@velocity-ww.com



SATURDAY 2nd DECEMBER – THE MERTON CHRISTMAS JUMP OFF

- 7pm – Midnight
- Kick-off silly season with your 1st Christmas party at the Hood!
- Drinks, food & Carol singing a plenty – with the now annual competition for the best Christmas Jumper on the night!

JOIN OUR FANTASY FOOTBALL LEAGUE
WITH THE CODE:
677482-169904



FANTASY PREMIER LEAGUE

IN ASSOCIATION WITH





2017-2018 TIME TO PAY MEMBERSHIP FEES

It's that time of the year lads,

Where you need to secure your place within the Merton FC dream for 2017/18 by paying your subscription fees. We strongly encourage you to pay this by bank transfer. Please contact Toddy if you need the club's bank details (although these have already been sent to you).

However, if you are unable, or unwilling, to do BACS, we will take cash. The deadline for payments is **THURSDAY 31 AUGUST!!!** If you do not pay by then, you will not start the first game of the season, so please do make yours and our lives easier by paying on time.

A reminder that fees for the season are as follows:

Standard membership - £80

Refer a Friend - £50 (£50 each for you and the referred friend)

21s and under - £30

Social - £20

Merton FC

Animals need

YOU



NAME: Simon Clapperton
 AGE: 43 (I know, how is still that good at his age)
 POSITION: Centre half
 BIRTH PLACE: CHELMSFORD
 NICKNAME: CLAPPERS

1S MANAGER

SIMON CLAPPERTON



1) Tell us who you are outside of the club. What do you do, how would you describe yourself?

I thought it would be easier to ask others their thoughts. "Inspirational leader, my hero" - James Tilley, "Like a fun, cool older brother" - Tom Rowe, "If I'm half the man he is, when I'm his age, I'll be so proud" - Ivan Gladkow, "Useless, old, fat ****" - Siri Durrani.

2) How did you end up at Merton FC, and what is your favourite thing about the club?

Googled local clubs and found an old mate played here. Seeing so many people enjoying their football and the friendships they make along the way.

3) Please tell us your personal career highlight with Merton FC?

Guiding the 1st team to promotion into SAL Division 1. First time in 60 years!

4) What was your funniest moment at Merton FC (on the pitch or off it)?

Both on tour. Off it was Max's face when Tilley told him he'd forgotten his boots as we arrived at the pitch. The pitch was a good 15 minute drive from the hotel and we were already late. On it was Tilley's performance once he donned his, now collected, boots. Three attempts at a skill which all ended with him on his backside. In his defence he was still pissed from the night/morning before.

5) What are your goals and expectations for your team this season? Aim is to push for promotion and integrate more new, younger, players

RAPID FIRE

Player to look out for in your side this season? Hopefully one of the new guys making a name for themselves.

Predicted top scorer? Charlie Hockless

Person with worst chat/banter? Chaz or Siri

Who is most likely to get injured? Ivan Gladkow

Worst fashion sense? Browner or Ivan. Browner doesn't try or care. Ivan on the other hand.....

2017-2018 1st team league division

Senior Division 2	2016-17 position
Actonians Association	3rd in Senior Division 2
Alexandra Park	8th in Senior Division 2
Civil Service	5th in Senior Division 2
Crouch End Vampires	[R] 10th in Senior Division 1
HSBC	9th in Senior Division 2
Ibis Eagles	7th in Senior Division 2
Merton	6th in Senior Division 2
Norsemen	[P] 1st in Senior Division 3
NUFC Oilers	[R] 11th in Senior Division 1
Old Fincheians	4th in Senior Division 2
Old Lyonians	[P] 2nd in Senior Division 3



2S MANAGER

GRAHAM WILGOSS



1) Tell us who you are outside of the club. What do you do, how would you describe yourself?

Sports journalist turned corporate sell-out. Running? Yes please; preferably somewhere a bit different. Cycling? Well, we all have our problems.

2) How did you end up at Merton FC, and what is your favourite thing about the club?

During our (largely idle) Championship Manager-heavy university summer of 2002, Alex Herbert asked me to join his local team for the Hassocks 6-a-side tournament. Proud to say this club means as much to me now as it always has to him. Nowadays (if your cringe pipes can take it), playing any match with Sherbs in yellow is special.

3) Please tell us your personal career highlight with Merton FC?

Being promoted with the 1s at Bank of England courtesy of a 1-0 win on the final day stands out. As does last season's Indian summer.

4) What was your funniest moment at Merton FC (on the pitch or off it)?

Absolutely any time I've ever golf-balled Ivan Gladkow. Actually, on that note, Van chewing through that pint of Caffrey's on tour in Albufeira is up there. Partly because it has now (reluctantly) become his thing at a Merton wedding breakfast. What a continuous source of delight for us all. Thanks, Vanya.

5) What are your goals and expectations for your team this season?

A glorious cup run? Tick. Chris Rayner tying defenders in knots? Tick. Tom Benham setting a new world record time for the 100m? Tick. Paul Pearce topping the interceptions made chart? Tick. Ben Cook to go looking for a dust-up? Boom.

RAPID FIRE

2017-2018 2nd team league division

Intermediate Division 3	2016-17 position
Cambridge Heath Res	New club
Carshalton Res	[R] Withdrew from Intermediate Division 2
Hampstead Heathens	New club
Merton Res	6th in Intermediate Division 3
Norsemen Res	9th in Intermediate Division 2
Old Blues Res	8th in Intermediate Division 3
Old Owens Res	[R2] Withdrew from Intermediate Division 1
St. James' Old Boys	4th in Intermediate Division 3
The Warren Res	[A] 7th in Intermediate Division 3
Weirside Rangers Res	5th in Intermediate Division 3

Player to look out for in your side this season? Joe Grew.

Will dominate relentlessly.

Predicted top scorer? David Quinton. All from less than six yards. That said, Rayner is a two-in-one kind of guy.

Person with worst chat/banter? I always look forward to Conor Murphy's on-pitch comms. Because I still (for now) have the privilege of splitting my game time between the 1s and 2s, can I also say Chaz? Chaz.

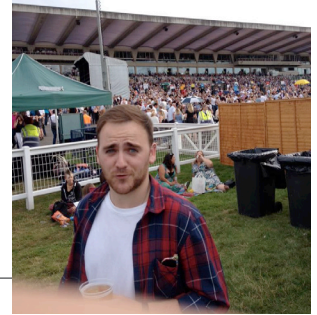
Who is most likely to get injured? Anyone tackled by Mustard in training. We walk in the garden of his turbulence.

Worst fashion sense? Darcy tends to rock up to games dressed as though he has just returned from a rave in an abandoned car park. Honourable mentions for Clappers' jeans and Van's brown jumper. dressed as though he has just returned from a rave in an abandoned car park.



3S MANAGER

DARREN FITZGERALD



1) Tell us who you are outside of the club. What do you do, how would you describe yourself?

I'm a Deputy Site Manager at St Marks Academy...Most would describe me as a miserable old bastard. When really I'm just reserved with a few one liners.

2) How did you end up at Merton FC, and what is your favourite thing about the club?

I got a call from Daniel Woollard asking if I would be interested in helping run the U15's side at Merton. Having previously worked together at our old club and the Midweek U18's at AFC Croydon Athletic for the later stages of the season. We came down a few times, met and spoke to Steve and Max... the rest is history. My favourite thing about Merton has to be the great vibe and feel of the place; it's not just a club. It's a boars club.

3) Please tell us your personal career highlight with Merton FC?

This has to be being a part of the coaching set up that has turned around the fortunes of the U15's (Then U14's)(Now U16's) Taking over a squad that would just fulfil a fixture, taking only 3 points from 1 win out of 18 games. Conceding 112 goals with a goal difference of -87. Transforming into an 18 Man squad for the start of last season. Finishing 4 places higher with 7x the amount of points; considerably cutting down the goal difference to -13 in what proved to be both a competitive yet frustrating league, however still a very successful season all round.

4) What was your funniest moment at Merton FC (on the pitch or off it)?

Apart from being mistaken for Mustard at the preseason club day by Vanny. It has to be the Away game to Old Parkonians for two reasons, both coming on the touchline...

The first being my return of the long trench coat, infamous flat cap and not forgetting the notepad. Underneath this array of stylish clothing was my kit just in case we needed a number on the pitch as I had sustained an injury a couple of games previous after losing a somewhat competitive tussle with a bush.

The second being one of the Parkonian players (who wore Number 14) He had been giving it out all through the 1st half to the point he even decided to take on the woodwork, and clearly one was not up to the challenge, and from the corner ended up in a heap on the floor. Rings of he's broken his arm cry around the pitch. Half time. As 14 is now being led to the carpark. Team talk commences with the comment "Number 14 has been by far their best player" Cue the brilliance that is Mustards quick sarcasm.... "Well I doubt he will be this Half"

5) What are your goals and expectations for your team this season?

Obviously we would all like to win the league and get to a cup final etc.. being realistic, I think we are good enough to compete and would like to see us push for promotion. One step at a time though, and for now if we can turn the 1 goal defeats into wins and close out a game from winning positions I'll be happy. As for the U16's it has to be going for the league.

2017-2018 3rd team league division

Junior Division 1 South	2016-17 position
Actonians Association 4th	9th in Junior Division 3
Alley Old Boys 4th	[P] 1st in Junior Division 4
Carshalton 3rd	3rd in Junior Division 2
City of London	New club
HSBC 3rd	3rd in Junior Division 3
Kew Association Res	[R2] 9th in Intermediate Division 3
Merton 3rd	9th in Junior Division 2
Naffsborough 4th	4th in Junior Division 2
Polytechnic 4th	[P] 3rd in Junior Division 4
South Bank Cuaco 3rd	2nd in Junior Division 3
Old Willsonians 3rd	8th in Junior Division 2

RAPID FIRE

Player to look out for in your side this season? John Cox
A.k.a Jordan Lad'

Predicted top scorer? Dom Plumridge (Sorry Ed)

Person with worst chat/banter? Darcy (#AwfulBantz)

Who is most likely to get injured? Vin (Most Likely to fake it)

Worst fashion sense? Mustard (Double Denim!?)



NAME: EDWARD PLAISTOW
 AGE: 31
 POSITION: LEFT BACK
 BIRTH PLACE: CARSHALTON
 NICKNAME: SCHOLESY

4S MANAGER ED PLAISTOW



1) Tell us who you are outside of the club. What do you do, how would you describe yourself?

I'm a Quantity Surveyor who works for a leading UK and International Construction Services Consultancy. I class myself as a hard worker who is willing to put the time and effort into all that I do in order to succeed. That includes Merton!

2) How did you end up at Merton FC, and what is your favourite thing about the club?

I used to play in the Price Georges Youth Football League in Morden for a team called Tooting Eagles (managed by Clive Roberts who some might know from his time at Merton). After competing at U16 level it was time to move on with a number of us, including my brother Dan Plaistow, selected to represent the league against Merton. I'm not sure if it was the 1st XI we were competing against however we did manage the win! I liked what I saw and the camaraderie of the players and I haven't looked back since.

3) Please tell us your personal career highlight with Merton FC?

I would have to say leading 5th XI out in a SAL Cup final. Unfortunately we lost in extra time albeit against a strong Polytechnic side a number of leagues above us!

4) What was your funniest moment at Merton FC (on the pitch or off it)?

I would have to say that the funniest moment for me would be picking up a caution when I 'apparently' caught the opposing player with my studs during an arial challenge. Play resumed but the players acting skills resulted in the ref to stopping the game to go and have a word. A minute later he walks over to me and shows me the yellow card. I asked what it was for and was shocked when his response was "He said you studded him". A second yellow card followed soon after as I stood in front of the ball to stop a quick free-kick.

5) What are your goals and expectations for your team this season?

Following back-to-back relegation's, just staying up would be an achievement. I feel that with the quality of players available, this season should be the one where we push for the title.

RAPID FIRE

2017-2018 4th team league division

Junior Division 4 South	2016-17 position
Actonians Association 7th	4th in Minor Division 3 South
Civil Service 6th	8th in Minor Division 2 South
Ibis Eagles 6th	[P] 3rd in Minor Division 4 South
Kew Association 3rd	[P] 2nd in Minor Division 4 South
Merton 4th	9th in Minor Division 2 South
Old Salesians Res	3rd in Minor Division 3 South
Polytechnic 7th	5th in Minor Division 3 South
Polytechnic 8th	[P] 9th in Minor Division 4 South
South Bank Cuaco 4th	7th in Minor Division 3 South
West Wickham 6th	6th in Minor Division 3 South

Player to look out for in your side this season? Aaron Loftus

Predicted top scorer? Dom Plumridge

Person with worst chat/banter? John Gridley (But only when he talks about Chelsea!)

Who is most likely to get injured? Dan Gridley

Worst fashion sense? Undecided.....cop out I know but its a hard question to answer.



5S MANAGER

CLIVE CORRIGAN



1) Tell us who you are outside of the club. What do you do, how would you describe yourself?

I work in security (CCTV) so get out and about. Generally I'm pretty laid back but outspoken about what I think.

2) How did you end up at Merton FC, and what is your favourite thing about the club?

I worked with Chris Outred for about 4 years before he could muster the courage to say hello before introducing the club to me. I like how committed many of the members are, coming to training rain or shine and are willing to support our bar before, during (sometimes) and after the season.

3) Please tell us your personal career highlight with Merton FC?

A largely improved season for the 5th team I've been leading and seeing so many people attend extra training to try and push for promotion. (Also still my half-way line goal which Malcolm kandula can take credit for assist from KO for)

4) What was your funniest moment at Merton FC (on the pitch or off it)?

Hard to narrow it down to one with the 5s. If I could screenshot some of the stuff that's on there you'd need an entire newsletter!

5) What are your goals and expectations for your team this season?

I want to get 5 goals and actually get promotion.

RAPID FIRE

Player to look out for in your side this season? Dwayne

Predicted top scorer? Andy Bitmead (Bitsy)

Person with worst chat/banter? Sam- constantly tells us his love life

Who is most likely to get injured? Tiago. Cramp seems to strike and induce him into labour!

Worst fashion sense? Dwaynes trainers can be pretty garish....

2017-2018 5th team league division

Junior Division 5 South		2016-17 position
	Actonians Association 8th	4th in Minor Division 4 South
	Carshalton 6th	[P] 1st in Minor Division 5 South
	Civil Service 7th	6th in Minor Division 4 South
	City of London 3rd	New club
	HSBC 5th	[R2] 9th in Minor Division 1 South
	Merton 5th	5th in Minor Division 4 South
	Merton 6th	[P] 3rd in Minor Division 5 South
	Old Wilsonians 6th	8th in Minor Division 3 South
	Old Wilsonians 7th	8th in Minor Division 4 South
	South Bank Cuaco 5th	7th in Minor Division 4 South



NAME: KEVIN LOCKE
 AGE: 34
 POSITION: L/B AND C/B
 BIRTH PLACE: CROYDON TOWN
 NICKNAME: SMITHY OR THE BEAR



6S MANAGER

KEVIN LOCKE

- 1) Tell us who you are outside of the club. What do you do, how would you describe yourself?
 I am a larger than life character and work for the home office (just a desk job!). I enjoy playing golf and fishing!
- 2) How did you end up at Merton FC, and what is your favourite thing about the club?
 I ended up at Merton due to knowing a few of the first teamers at the time. I was asked to come along and naturally fitted into the sixth team! My favourite thing about the club is that everyone is really welcoming and the bants is unbelievable!
- 3) Please tell us your personal career highlight with Merton FC?
 Scoring 5 goals last season from left back. That's premier league standard! And also winning the MFC golf day!
- 4) What was your funniest moment at Merton FC (on the pitch or off it)?
 Getting golf balled whilst pouring out a jug. Downing 3 pints in one wasn't the best idea!
- 5) What are your goals and expectations for your team this season?
 Now the sixes have been promoted (not sure how!), I want us to be competitive but not to take away the fun side of playing football. Hopefully a mid table finish will be a good start at this new level for us.

RAPID FIRE

Player to look out for in your side this season? Trey
 Predicted top scorer? George B
 Person with worst chat/banter? Ram
 Who is most likely to get injured? Matt H
 Worst fashion sense? Beans - he loves a flowery blouse

2017-2018 6th team league division

Junior Division 5 South		2016-17 position	
	Actonians Association 8th		4th in Minor Division 4 South
	Carshalton 6th	[P]	1st in Minor Division 5 South
	Civil Service 7th		6th in Minor Division 4 South
	City of London 3rd		New club
	HSBC 5th	[R2]	9th in Minor Division 1 South
	Merton 5th		5th in Minor Division 4 South
	Merton 6th	[P]	3rd in Minor Division 5 South
	Old Wilsonians 6th		8th in Minor Division 3 South
	Old Wilsonians 7th		8th in Minor Division 4 South
	South Bank Cuaco 5th		7th in Minor Division 4 South



NAME: DAN ALLY
 AGE: 23
 POSITION: DEFENDER
 BIRTH PLACE: KINGSTON
 NICKNAME: DANNY



7S MANAGER

DAN ALLY

1) Tell us who you are outside of the club. What do you do, how would you describe yourself?

I am a self employed builder who specialises in bricklaying, patios, fencing and driveways. I am a fun guy who doesn't take life too seriously (but i only do when it comes to football)

2) How did you end up at Merton FC, and what is your favourite thing about the club?

I was searching on the Internet for local football teams and Merton Football club caught my intention. My favourite thing about the club is that it's very well run and communication is fantastic, fun and happy atmosphere and all members present and past are always welcoming.

3) Please tell us your personal career highlight with Merton FC?

Playing south bank in a league game we was 4-0 down in the first half and came back 4-4.

4) What was your funniest moment at Merton FC (on the pitch or off it)?

Breaking my nose when I was playing bank of england in a double header. But I was still happy because we won both of them games.

5) What are your goals and expectations for your team this season?

The team is aiming for promotion this season and build a strong side.

RAPID FIRE

Player to look out for in your side this season? Billy G

Predicted top scorer? Billy G

Person with worst chat/banter? Probably me.

Who is most likely to get injured? Hopefully no one.

Worst fashion sense? Keiran with his skinny jeans and shoes

2017-2018 7th team league division

Junior Division 6 South		2016-17 position
	Alley Old Boys 7th	4th in Minor Division 5 South
	Bank of England 5th	7th in Minor Division 5 South
	Civil Service 8th	2nd in Minor Division 5 South
	HSBC 6th	[R2] 9th in Minor Division 3 South
	Merton 7th	6th in Minor Division 5 South
	Old Blues 3rd	[R6] 10th in Junior Division 3
	Old Salesians 3rd	9th in Minor Division 5 South
	Old Wilsonians 8th	8th in Minor Division 5 South
	Old Wilsonians 9th	11th in Minor Division 5 South
	South Bank Cuaco 6th	10th in Minor Division 5 South



YOUTH TEAMS

Under the guidance of Steve, the youth sides of Merton fc have grown from strength to strength. Backed by a group of willing hardworking managers and coaches the teams developed into strong sides last season. Season upon season the club is growing in stature throughout the youth teams on a Sunday morning. This season is no different, despite losing one team from last year, the club has increased by one more youth team this year.

Last season was a success both on and off the field, with teams competing at the top end of the leagues, some consolidating in the division after a tough first season and others having a strong initial season to build upon. Off the field the enjoyment and club ethos was clear to see throughout with the youth players taking part in the club events throughout the year.

This season has seen a few tweaks to the set up, with Daniel Woollard and David Laughton support Daniel has taken over the role of Child Welfare Officer and David as Youth Treasurer. Alongside last season's manager's Gary, David, Steven, Steve, Dan and Darren the club are pleased to welcome Neal & Roy (U9s), Justin (U10s), Tony & Charlie (U13s), and Eleanor (U14s) to the ever growing youth set up. Teams are looking to improve from the season before, whilst developing the experience for the players off the field.

Meet the team:

Steve Dewsbury - Head of Youth Section & U14s manager.

Daniel Woollard - Child Welfare Officer & U16s manager.

David Laughton - Youth Section Treasurer & U12s manager.

Meet the youth managers!

U9s - Roy Crabb and Neal Davison.

U10 – Gary Thompson and Justin Shanley.

U12s - David Laughton and Stephen Davis.

U13s – Tony Finnan and Charlie Haryott.

U14s - Steve Dewsbury and Eleanor Moran.

U16s - Daniel Woollard and Darren Fitzgerald.

There are two players that need a special mention, they are the *Mckenzie Dewsbury & Joe Adams*. They've played for Merton FC for five seasons now and have racked up 175 matches between them, Mckenzie 94 matches and Joe 81 matches. Well done boys!! Watch out Martin Quinlan they're catching you up.



OVER THE SUMMER

Merton FC Golf Day – 28 July

During the long months of summer, 28 of the Merton faithful gathered in late July. However, this wasn't to play football. Instead, they tried their hand at a different sport: the gentleman's game of golf. The venue was the Oaks at Carshalton, the competition a complex combination of individual and betterball stableford, and the weather was, at best, overcast.

Yet the lads excitedly set about whacking the little white ball around this relatively user-friendly course. Rat had forewarned us all that it was, in effect, Kevin Locke's home track. But in the absence of a halfway house, many assumed that the tank would be running on empty, and that other players posed more of a threat. So they all plugged away, with game performances from the likes of Tome Rowe, Ryan Gresty, Clappers and local lad Aaron Ackerman. But as the weather closed in, it was the fourball of Kev, Mark Chappell, Chris Savory and Andrew Dobson who emerged with far and away the best scores.

Amid vicious accusations of banditry, their points were tallied up. In the betterball stakes, it was a dead heat on 45 points between the pairings of Messrs Locke & Chappell, and Savory & Dobson respectively. How to break the tie? A putt-off, of course. In a long, snaking playoff, Savory produced a blinder, and he and Dobson celebrated a famous victory.

A bitter blow for Kev, although he ran away with the individual prize on an impressive 40 points. He had the honour of being presented with the trophy by our effervescent Club President Dodge (pictured), while Ryan Gresty scooped the individual prize money by default, courtesy of a convoluted one-man, one-prize system. Aaron won longest drive, while Dobson clinched nearest the pin at the 15th. Both he and Savory (pictured) should enjoy their triumph as much as they can this time around – their handicaps will be reviewed next year!

A big thanks to all involved, and we look forward to this becoming an enduring Merton FC tradition.





MFCCC Season Review

The summer of 2017 saw a rabble of Merton men and assorted ringers don the whites four times, coming up one game short again in their bid for a perfect season. Here's what occurred:

Merton FC CC (124 for 9) beat Thales (111 for 7) by 13 runs

Things started with an enthusiasm-tester north of the river on the Parliament Hill cabbage patch. This elicited the usual availability problems and matched the record low of 4 actual Merton men in metaphorical yellow caps to face Thales. BIG MIKE can always be relied on to a) turn up; and b) be a candidate for a run out, and with the shadow of his compatriots' catastrophuck in the Champions Trophy just days before, his sense of patriotism overpowered him. With the ball sent way down leg and bouncing off the keeper's pad, non-striker Mike wondered silently down the pitch to run an additional single without bothering to inform his partner. The keeper had erstwhile gathered, inexplicably thrown it to the striker's end (where two batsmen were inside the crease), and missed. Both batsmen then set off in unison to the other end and by the time a fumbling fielding side had eventually dislodged the stumps at the bowler's end, both batters were short by a good 11 yards. Ryan followed suit a few overs later after a dodgy call for a quick single, and was not shy about expressing his disappointment at batting partner, umpire and even his protective equipment. Classy. But Gubby helped steer the ship to a respectable 124 that was going to be tough to chase on this "pitch".

An early wicket brought in Thales' number-three who, to phrase it in the most generous of terms, was clearly not a cricketer. After struggling to take guard, he swung and missed numerous times, before taking a blow to the mid-section. But like Mike Tyson, he didn't flinch, and, even more in keeping with the famed boxer, he then punched ringer Dave for four a few balls later. Punched, not in the typical textbook, cricketing sense of the word, but with a clenched fist that had come loose from the bat handle, struck the ball through mid-wicket, which top spun its way to the boundary. A couple of 25*s saw Thales threaten the Merton score, but then a stumping and a run out put paid to their chances. In keeping with the events of the day, the run out was delectably farcical. Gubby initially did well to stop a straight drive off his own bowling. With the striking batsman out of his ground, he sensed opportunity, but his throw to the keeper was a dreadful one. A series of ricochets and fumbles saw the ball end up with Rob at square leg, and in the intervening seconds, the two batsmen had run back, forth, and then back again. The sorry episode was, in fairness, concluded clinically though, as Gubby's collected Rob's thrown and dislodged of the bails with the batsman just short of his ground, and Merton saw out a 13-run victory.

Merton FC CC (106 for 6) beat TOTIE (105 for 7) by 4 wickets

Next up were TOTIE, who Merton thrashed at Parliament Hill last season in the first outing of the reborn cricketing outfit. This time, the venue was Wandsworth Common and Merton men were out in force given the locality of the fixture. Sadly, none of them brought their catching hands. Early on, Rat pouched a dolly at mid-on and then a sharp caught & bowled to show us how it's done, but thereafter Merton displayed a startling lack of competence in the field. An edge from the opener inexplicably bounced in and out of Ryan's gloves after minimal deviation (I blame Mike for excitedly shouting "CATCH!" from 2 yards away). Clappers took a wicket with his unique brand of super slow bowling and should have had a run-out too, when he stopped a low drive with the batsmen attempting a suicidal single. But he stood, inexplicably, statuesque, holding the 'ready-to-throw' pose for a good few seconds before gesturing for Rat to move out of the way. His eventual release of the ball came with both men well home, and the subsequent inquest could not establish what the hell he was doing. More chances went begging as Kev dived under one at point, Dan Bridgeman fumbled a skier and ringers Ben and Dave not wanting to feel left out grassed theirs too. Fortunately, some effective bowling from Rat, Gubby and a returning Dan Bridgeman pegged the lower-order back, with strikes at regular intervals leaving Merton 107 to win on a tricky deck. The reply got off to a shaky start, as Kev lobbed one to cover. Yet, in keeping with the theme of the day, said sitter was duly shelled, and it proved a costly miss. Kev made a mockery of what was actually a difficult pitch, carving some mediocre bowling to all parts as he and Siri laid a solid platform. The latter, whose knock consisted of three boundaries and an abundance of dot balls, was eventually pouched at square leg. Mike came and went which paved the way for Welch to get the crowd off their seats with an uncompromising hoicke through mid-on for four. At the other end, and against the backdrop of an unrelenting, piercing fire alarm Kev continued on his merry way, bringing up his retired score of 30* with a massive six over long on, and leaving his team within sight of victory. A tumble followed. Welch, who'd played quite well for his career-best score of 8, inflicted an unnecessary act of self harm by charging down the wicket for the most non-single there's ever been. Perhaps the big man was in a rush to get to other footballing engagements. Ryan fell foul to a grubber ball and Gubby, in typical fashion, wasn't keen to hang around, and lofted one high into the grasp of a retreating mid-off. But Clappers, Ben, and a continual stream of extras allayed any fears of Merton snatching defeat from the jaws of victory, and two majestic boundaries from the aforementioned duo were enough to see the lads home with three overs and four wickets to spare.



Wimbledon United (216 for 9) beat Merton FC CC (196 for 9) by 20 runs

Next up, Merton FC CC descended upon Cottenham Park on a glorious, albeit extremely humid, day for their first 'proper' game of cricket to date - a 35-over affair against the esteemed Wimbledon United. Just three ringers required for this one as word about the quality of teas had spread through the camp and everyone fancied a bite of the cherry strawberry scone. Browner was fearsome with the new ball for Merton, tearing in down the hill and extracting pace, bounce and two genuine edges that were snaffled behind by Ryan. Authentic wickets which would have been pleasing for traditionalists the world over. At the other end, Rat had gamely kept things tight, despite having to summit 'Mount Everest' at the bowling crease. Wimbledon fought back with a fine 76-partnership that Rat eventually broke, and Ty added another scalp shortly after. With another partnership developing, Kev was brought into the attack to 'buy' a wicket, and he did precisely that. He conceded about 20 from his over, before 'inducing' a run out, which was more a reflection good fielding than it was menacing bowling. But then it got untidy. Having already dropped a few earlier in the innings as a team, Kev and Ben were unable to hang onto some catches immediately thereafter, while Rat shelled one towards the end. It felt costly at the time, and so it proved, as Wimbledon ended up posting an imposing 216 for 9 in their allotted overs.

Suitably fattened up, it was the turn of Merton to wield the willow. Wimbledon's new addition Samir took the new ball, and was clearly different class. He struck second ball, with Kev unable to do much about a fast, inswinging yorker. Ringer Toby and Mike then steadied things, just about seeing Samir off. Eventually, Mike, after surviving a loud caught-behind appeal and a close lbw shout, skied one to point. A bit of a procession followed but the exceptional sportsman that is Rat strode out to the crease, and rather changed the complexion of the game. So too did Toby, who by now was seeing the ball very well, and growing in confidence with a series of glorious, high-quality cricket shots that found the fence. His fifty came up briskly, and, in tandem with Rat, they continued to put the bad balls away and transfer pressure onto an increasingly-flustered opposition. Toby eventually fell for a majestic 79. Ben and Rat continued the good work with a few big shots - suddenly it was 40 required with four overs left, and Merton dared to dream. Unfortunately, Wimbledon had kept Samir in reserve and his tight death bowling meant Merton ended up 20 runs short.

Merton FC CC (118 for 7) beat Prince Consort XI (91 all out) by 27 runs

And so to the final game, against the team who had deprived us of the perfect season in the same fixture last year. This time Ryan won the toss, chose to bat in what were already gloomy conditions and Merton really never looked back. Ringer Faisal, sourced by Sam Harvey on the day of the game got things moving with a quickfire 25* at the top of the order, running poor Kev ragged with his quick twos that will surely pay dividends at training next week. Mike followed suit with a composed knock which included an absurd beamer upper cutted to point for a one-bounce four. Welch cracked a straight drive back past the bowler and then one miles up in the air which miraculously fell between 4 fielders on his way to a career-best 8. Sam finally arrived 45 minutes late to up the ante with some top drawer shots, which at least appeared top drawer judging from the technique he showed, and the directions the fielders were chasing after the ball. As darkness fell the Merton innings finished which a frantically run three and 118 on the board from 18 overs.

You wouldn't want to face the opening bowling trio (yes, trio. Deal with it) of Browner, Rat and Sam on the brightest of days so pity the Prince Consort openers tasked with picking up the ball in this light. Kev compared the vast outfield to the MCG, at least in size. In terms grass length it was closer to a woodland meadow and as for the pitch, well that offered plenty in the way of shin-smashing low bounce for the pacemen. Browner bowled peach after peach that nobody could manage to nick. Rat bowled hooping swing which cleaned up the opener and Sam bowled express pace that built the pressure until a comical runout ensued which knocked the stuffing out of PCXI's reply. With the oppo miles behind the run rate part timers Kev and Welch stepped forward to throw down some dibly doblers, and what a moment ensued. With three slips in the cordon to Welch clocking 30 mph, the trap was set. An edge was induced and Sam flung himself high and to his right, one-handed to take a catch evoking memories of Stokes at Trent Bridge and Strauss in 2005. Merton celebrated like they'd won the world cup, with an 11-man huddle bouncing up and down on the square in delirium. Great for Sam to make up for his two "dropped" catches earlier in the innings. To complete the comedy bowling, Ryan whipped off the pads and gave himself an over, stealing a wicket with his second ball having set the batsman up with a 3-bounce wide before it. So Merton finished the season on a high with a 27-run win and 3 wins for 4 games. Will they be able to build on this next year? A previously fed-up skipper had suggested he wouldn't be bothering with trying to corral this unresponsive, non-committal bunch of cattle in 2018. But perhaps after a performance like this, and with the moments of unbridled joy which ensued, he could be persuaded. We'll find out in just under 12 months.



PRE-SEASON

Match reports 1s and 2s Polytechnic – 12th August

Another tough fixture for the 1s and 2s as we went to Chiswick to play Polytechnic at Civil Service 4G. Poly won the first division AFA and SAL senior cups for a unique treble. We played two one hour games with a mixture of 1s and 2s for both teams. We lost the first 5-2. We played pretty well until half time with the score 2-2. DQ continued his good pre season with both our goals, We took the lead when he latched on to a high cross and headed over their keeper. He reacted well again to score our equaliser just poking the ball in ahead of their keeper. In between Poly scored two very good goals. An unstoppable shot to finish off a good move and something of a solo effort. WE could not get the ball of their playmaker and could not get close enough to foul him – we tried. In the second half Poly dominated with some really good passing football and some good strikes. Given time they finished well from the edge of the box.

We lost the second game 3-1 DQ scoring again. This was a closer contest. But again they were the better side. All round it was a good morning with some positives. Thanks to Sam for stepping into an organisational role in Clappers absence and for Gubby for keeping in both games. The pre season continues with another toughy as we go Old Wilsonians - Another good club and another serious test.





Saturday 12 August 5s Match Report

The season is coming. No, not winter like that popular boobies and dragon show keeps banging on about – the football season. And it looks like it could be the season to be jolly. [Two winter references in a summer match report – this is going to be off the chain]. We did start off as if we had had an over-indulgent summer – a bit slow with the opposition taking the game to us. We still limited them largely to shots outside the box, and the better ones were superbly stopped by Sam or on one occasion, our crossbar. Throughout we were trying to play out the back, and after the initial shaky period this started working to our benefit. Some good football at the back beat their press and we managed to hit Gibbo early. Our Welsh powerhouse of a striker superbly held off their centre back [much like we have to do to him if he sees Shaun the sheep – one for Baby Burch's era] until the opportune moment and played Bitmead through 1 on 1 with the keeper. There was only ever going to be one outcome – Bitmead's controlled drive slotted past the keeper and made it 1-0. We were on top at this stage, playing it around with real confidence and purpose from front to back. We spurned a few chances; however it was not surprising when we went 2-0 up. Our little roadrunner on the right [Delman] sprinted on the overlap and was played through. His cross caught their defender out, and despite an anguished stretch he could not take it away from Dulanjie. From only a few yards, D calmly slotted it past the keeper to give us some breathing space going into the break. We started the second half well, retaining the ball and keeping our shape whilst fashioning a chance or two in the opening stages. The turning point however came around 10-15 minutes after the restart, as a cross from the right caught Sam out in goal and rocketed into the back of the net. It was very fortunate as he certainly did not mean it, and it dipped as such that Sam did not have a chance. 2-1.

At 2-1, we were strong and resolute defensively. They started to get on top as they needed another goal to give themselves enough time to win the game, however this meant that they left gaps at the back. Apart from our opposition hitting the bar, we had some of the best chances until the late stages where they started really breaking from midfield in a gung-ho attempt to get an equaliser. This eventually paid off as a late run – one that appeared to stray offside before the ball was played – got their attacking midfielder through on goal, who chipped in to make it 2-2.

Towards the end of the game, we fashioned by far the most clear cut chance of it. Some good interplay down our left flank saw the ball drop back to Chris, who spotted Dulanjie in the box. His ball in was inch perfect, beating the man in the middle to play D in with the keeper. He swung some part of his appendage at the ball, some say it was his leg but it looked much longer than that whatever it was, at the ball. He had rather slapped at it as the ball went agonisingly wide, the defender in front just about having done enough to distract D from making a clean contact. And that was it – the final whistle went and the score ended 2-2.

Considering this team was well-drilled, 2 divisions above us and didn't let up at all proves just how well we did for our first game back from our long summer break. Kudos to Dingo Tigs for avoiding an Aussie cramp, which is evidently much more intense than the cramp the rest of us get. It beat us all on the sweepstake; however I did have a pound on him almost killing someone with a dangerous tackle and he didn't disappoint on that one. Our backline was traditionally solid with papa Burchall marshalling the defence, Delman contributing going forward as well as dealing with a tricky little player and Outred solid in defence and deserving an assist. Clive put in a dogged display despite pulled out some intense and slightly random Cruyff turns which left us all panicking at times. Ryan and Dwayne worked hard going forward and defensively, with Ryan finding him in an unusual position – on the pitch for the start of the game, however on the left just so he could look longingly at the bench to his side. Dulanjie and Andy both scored good team goals with calm, composed finishes, and our battering ram of a forward Gibbo scared the living daylights out of their defenders like a bull at a matador.

There was no formal vote on man of the match, and it is one of those games where it would have been really difficult to choose. Sam's string of excellent saves that preserved our lead for so long is certainly worth a shout, however there were so many good performances that everyone gets man of the match. We won't have any teams in our league [ringers aside] that are as good as this outfit though, and we matched them in all parts of the pitch, therefore everyone gets man of the match. Lame?

- lukey Newman




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