

## An Innings of Evenley by Graham Wiblin

In Evenley on summer days  
Upon the Village Green  
A motley crew in shades of white  
Will hopefully be seen

My story will now unfold  
Recalls a certain game  
One Saturday in August  
Against Long Crendon near Thame

The public bar had closed at four  
The wives had cleared the tea  
And Evenley were chasing  
A score of one two three

Picture then this lovely day  
Hot sun and bright blue sky  
The fielding team look young and fit  
But the tank tracks hard and true

Dave rice is captain for the day  
He's deep in thought unspoken  
Will Slinger  
Make a useful score  
Will Julian's eyes be open

With a stick to match his new white  
coat  
The umpire calls for play  
Middle and leg the chosen guard  
The first ball on it's way

Now Julian was very proud  
He'd never had a duck  
But his Charlie Nicholas batting stance  
Would fail to bring him luck

The click was heard, the fingers up  
The fielders go mad  
Julian is adamant  
"It was definitely my pad"

Nought for one a dreadful start  
But one that's not to rare  
Dee Day's in at number three  
To do a quick repair

Now Dave was very short of work  
And the influence on his game  
Was to make his top priority  
A broken window pane

Prod and poke is not his style  
Well usually not so  
But David patiently waited  
For the short one that would go

At last it came, a perfect ball  
Dave heaved a mighty stroke  
It's hit the road, it's bounced, a crash  
"Thank god" he said "It's Broke"

His mission done Dave wanted out  
All had gone to plan  
Suicide run, throw in, Howzat!  
He headed towards his van

Number four appeared in view  
Decked out in light blue hat  
Accompanied by his portly spread  
It was Tykey-Jones the bat

Would the Welshman call the tune  
Against the quick attack  
Downhill from the Church Lane end  
A bouncer, ouch a crack

He grimaces swears and shakes his  
arm  
But wait a knowing grin  
It's his painting hand that's hit  
No work next week for him

He's coming of retired hurt  
Things are not going well  
Peter Franklin's next man in  
He's sure to give 'em hell

Franko was Manns Best form  
From beer the night before  
A six, two fours, a six again  
He accelerates the score

Then Peter spied at deep fine leg  
A bird he fancied pulling  
He whispered to himself  
"She needs a dam good bulling"

She strayed behind the bowlers arm  
But Franko didn't worry  
Desperate for a closer look  
A leg bye they did scurry

She settled in a tempting pose  
And up went Peter's hackle's  
He never saw the quicker ball  
That downed his cricket tackle

Meanwhile at the other end  
Stood Slinger mean and tall  
The only problem for Evenley  
Was that he'd only faced one ball

Now worrying about his averages  
As Slinger always does  
He considered all the options  
Yes, nought out's enough

To make sure that he stayed on top  
Would mean a crafty plan  
So thinking quickly, just for once  
He dropped his bat and ran  
Hurling straight into the gents  
He looked in dreadful pain  
"My stomach", he said "I've got to  
go"  
"It's the old mans milk again"

Thirty three for three the score  
Another two retired  
Mike Bosher had an awesome task  
To get the innings fired

He started scoring one's and two's  
Has he ever scored a four?  
And despite continual barracking  
He pushed along the score – slowly

In with him was Harman G  
The Middleton elite  
Fresh from taking three from ten  
He entrenched his static feet

He waved the bat at several balls  
Never daring to step out  
But eventually got a straight one  
Which he gave a hefty clout

It rolled on gently to the pub  
And Graham's running five  
But Bosh has only managed two  
These round tabler's always slow

Thirty eight the stand was worth  
When Mike played a forward stroke  
The bat itself was so surprised  
It jarred his hand and broke

The ball was skied to second slip  
And he made no mistake  
Over fifty still required  
Please rain for Evenley's sake

A captains innings was needed now  
To halt the teams collapse  
But someone's changed Dave's  
glasses  
For his reading one's alas

He swings outside the off stump  
As the ball goes down the leg  
Unfortunately the next ones straight  
And takes the middle peg

He groans, collapses to the turf  
And clutches the injured part  
He should have worn a bigger box  
To protect his throbbing heart

In falling he had left his crease  
The wicket keeper couldn't fail  
So as well as his parts so closely  
named  
He also lost his bails  
The tails looking very weak  
Unlikely then to wag  
Ned Kelly is our last real hope  
But he's having a crafty fag

"Come on Tat pads on quick"  
The captain loudly shouts  
And so ten minutes later  
Speed Greatbatch shuffles out

There's only one thing on the mind  
Of this lean and mean machine  
To ensure he wins the ducks award  
For which he's very keen

So very carefully for him  
He lofts a simple catch  
To the man at deep mid – wicket  
And it goes straight down the hatch

"Calm down lads", the captain says  
"It's strategy we need"  
Dave Greenaways a clever chap  
Buckingham University indeed

Davis does a useful job  
Whippet Harman's batting great  
They move the score to ninety six  
But they're desperate for a break

The sun beats down, Ah at last  
The drinks are on their way  
Dave Greenaway just stands his  
ground  
He thought he'd have to pay

The orange squash was laced with gin  
To spur the lad's along  
But Grahams seeing double  
And his middle stump is gone

Fingers is in, but the finger is up  
He only lasts one ball  
And Chico quickly follows  
On the trudge back to the hall

Six runs were then needed  
To spoil Long Crendon's plans  
But Evenley required  
A volunteer eleventh man

Steve Copping had gone back to camp  
The Hunt's were at a wedding  
Chubby was in Leckhempstead  
And Wiggle in Reading

Long Crendon then looked home and dry  
Their champagne corks were popping  
Who's you ask, was the last man in  
It was good old Snaky Copping

Tatty shirt and bright red socks  
A trusty can of bitter  
If only Snake could see the ball  
He'd be a damn good hitter

He ambles slowly to the crease  
Hands adjusting box  
Assisted by loud advice  
From Andy Jell and Nigel Fox

Just as Snake prepared to face  
He heard a sound he knew  
And an Escort with a flashing lamp  
Came roaring into view

The bowler is on his way  
And Snake'y is taking aim  
One bounce, he swings, connects full  
face  
It soars towards school lane

The fielders stand with baited breath  
Snakey whoops "Get on it"  
And then it landed with a thud  
On P.C. Wards white bonnet

The umpires hands are raised aloft  
It is the winning six  
Roger Charleson hurries out  
To quickly take some pics

The crowd erupted with delight  
Five of them and one and all  
There was Richard, Rockey, Reg and Len  
And the benchman Jeffrey ball

Snakey was mobbed by all the team  
The uninjured ones that is  
He even offered to buy a round  
Of various assorted fizz

So in years to come you'll tell your  
friends  
And together propose toasts  
When you find old Banbury Guardians  
Or Brackley and Towcester Posts

And the legend now is written here  
For all of you to see  
Of that glorious day in August  
Of the innings of Evenley