Vets 17, Gravesend Moles 31. 20/1/18.

Only place to start this week was the sheer amount of contenders putting their hand up for TotM. Did they know that their 'punishment' would be knocking back a pint of Timmy Taylor's Landlord? FFS if I'd have known that then I might have aimed the attempted conversions at the corner flag instead of the posts. Just briefly on that subject, the conspiracy to encourage scoring tries only in the corners continued (though at least the 100% record for this calendar year has gone).

Anyway back to the TotM contenders: Martin Maytum for his yellow card for hugging one of the opposing forwards? Bob Purfitt for his line out throw that travelled, by a generous estimate, one foot? Ben Tugwell for having a kick charged down near our try line that resulted in a try? There may indeed have been others but this week's prestigious award goes to winger, and joint Youth Chair, Phil White for his screamer of a shot that would have hit the top corner of the net had we a football goal instead of rugby posts. Phil's fly hack from our 22 resulted in a scrum for the Moles from which they scored. You have to feel a little sympathy for him however as it transpired that Captain Karim Neseyif communicated that he was close by in support. Did Phil not hear or did he decide that if this was the only help around than maybe the best decision was to leather the ball halfway to Square Hill?

As to their post match 'punishment' there was ever only gonna be one winner once El Capitan 'in absentia' Neil Cole remembered to include Mayhem for his yellow card. The drink off, that included MotM No 8 Ben Court for, well, being Ben Court, Anthony Round standing in for Bob Purfitt, Water Boy David Tugwell for standing in for son Ben and centre Richard Cutbill standing in for Phil, ended in a humiliating defeat for the backs with Mayhem coasting to victory.

Back to matters outside, the first task of the afternoon there was to clear the pitch of, would you believe in light of who we were playing, mole traps! Thereafter, for a change, we were pretty sharp in 'getting off the bus' and found ourselves two tries to the good after the first quarter, helped not least by an imperious display of line-out jumping by Paul Massey. The tries being scored by No 8 Ben Court, powering his way to the line from outside the 22 and hooker Anthony Round finishing off a 'flowing' move with a shimmy to collapse over the line. Then the Moles' well and truly untrapped themselves [geddit??] with three tries of their own, of which two should have been avoided [see para 2]. However just before half time we re-asserted some authority when skipper Karim was on hand to finish a long period of possession (which heavily featured fly-half Gary Whitehead) by touching down. Or should I say flopping down. Without any attempt to get near the posts whatsoever (not that he was the only one).

For long periods in the second half we could barely get out of our own half. And when we did we invariably knocked on (although given the mud, cold and rain this probably wasn't too surprising, especially with the forwards hogging the ball for long periods). Eventually the pressure told and the Moles scored twice in the dying minutes of the game, leaving them to celebrate with an impromptu photoshoot on the mudbath of a pitch and a bottle of port and jug of ale inside.

MotM: Ben Court (commendations for Adrian Clark and Paul Massey).
TotM: Phil White

Try-scorers: Ben Court, Anthony Round, Karim Neseyif.
Con: ME.