

MATCH REPORT

V&A v. THEBETONS

Sat. July 8, 2006

A 35-over game was played, which has the virtues of guaranteeing a result, allowing those with smart dinner-dates to arrive before their wives combust, and those of us with a drink problem to get to the pub before the shakes.

We won the toss, batted and started indifferently, Rob Noble being bowled for 1. But the two Ollies, Holroyd-Pearce and Bett, put on a quick 80 odd before Bett was out for 18, after two delightful boundaries. H-P went on to make a stylish 91. All would have been very different if Thebetons had caught 6 chances before lunch, some that Noddy or Fotherington-Thomas would have snapped up. After lunch – during which the Red Kites performed an entertaining air show – they suddenly started to hold catches and our total, which seemed to be heading for 200 plus, receded alarmingly, eventually stuttering to 187. De Caires, Nixey, Bloxham, Morris and N. Bird all whacked fours before succumbing through a mixture of misjudgement, bad luck and incompetence.

Their innings began brightly for us when Dennis bowled Rico with an unplayable delivery. But then things went awry – a 50 partnership should have been snuffed out at the outset but a catch was dropped...then another, then another. It seemed that nothing would stick until Matt Bloxham at point, diving athletically to his right, showed how to do it. Magnificent, and the man hasn't played for a decade, lives in Greece where he sits in the sun drinking Ouzo. Chris Moore then had a brilliant caught and bowled and a smidgeon of hope appeared – to be crushed immediately by another crucial dropped catch, the man dropped going on to score 50. It would be invidious to name the guilty party so I will not mention Rupert.

But bowlers toiled manfully (or in Linthwaite's case toiled). Somebody suggested that we were a bit effete in the field, lacked another big butch Dennis-type bowler, a real man like Amelie Mauresmo. Whatever...there were fine balls from James Nixey (1 wicket – bowled), H-P (the catch by Matt) and Mooro had a further wicket, trapping their best batsman LBW.

But frigging about with bowling changes and setting defensive fields did nothing, lofted shots continued to drop between fielders and more catches went down (some difficult). So they reached the target with an over or two to spare. Catches may win matches but we were missing Roger, Martin and Adam and 7 overs from any of them would have turned the game.

But a nice day, courtesy of weather, Kites, gracious opposition and Olly Holroyd-Pearce's innings that made a game of it. Chris Moore, incidently, dobbed Rob Noble in the merde, revealing to the lovely Donna that Rob had been playing cricket the week before and not 'working in the office' as Rob had maintained. Her displeasure was apparent, violence was swift but discreet.

Thebetons had Jerry 'Chucker' Bevan playing for them (normally a Hermit). His dodgy bowling action explains his nickname. Purely out of malice, I once called him for successive no-balls, much to his visible annoyance, but our batsman muttered 'Don't no-ball him, or they might take him off.'

Next week we welcome the Jesmond Joggers (Sat. July 15). Please let us know if you can make it. As an example of commitment may I commend Dennis's brave stand – he has a wedding to go to, but is thinking of crying off to play, risking weeks of marital disharmony, celibacy and the spare room. Years ago a chap called Greg arrived late despite rushing from his father's funeral. Dave Wright was captain, he told Greg not to let it happen again, which we thought a bit rich, Greg was hardly likely to have another father croak on him, but Dave was not a sensitive man.