

MATCH REPORT

V&A v. ROYAL ASCOT 2nd XI

At Royal Ascot Race Ground, Sunday Sept. 17, 2006

ANOTHER FINE DAY, although some people arrived rather less than grunted owing to duff directions. Sorry. Nevertheless, on the plus side was a good view of the new grandstand (not perhaps an architectural masterpiece), a nice secluded ground (though the pitch itself was erratic) and a very decent tea to look forward to.

The opposition and their hirsute skipper Nick were very hospitable, and next season we hope to entertain them at Stonor. Ascot preferred a timed game - 20 overs from 5.00 p.m., but in the event they went in first and batted longer than expected so generously extended the time to 20 overs from 5.30, which meant the light was fading fast at the end.

We started rather badly, or – to put it another way – very badly. Dennis' bowling was tight and fast and he only went for 14 in 8 overs. But Adam, unfortunately, was not so tight. Martin said that he had tried to get Adam's karma right in the car, by not exciting him or talking dirty. But he must have said something wrong because in Adam's 3 overs, before he was mercifully allowed to recover in the deep, he went for 42 runs, one over costing a whopping 26. No balls and wides did not help. But thankfully some accurate spin from Richard Cowley's Aussie friend Anthony (with a nonchalant one-handed caught and bowled), and Martin's penetrating inswingers, put a brake on the scoring. Both bowlers went for less than 2 an over.

Their best batsman had retired hurt after a nasty lifter from Dennis, and a succession of batsmen came and went without dominating, although their skipper anchored one end. There was some excellent bowling from Linthwaite (2 wickets, one good stumping by Cowley), and some ok stuff from Nixey and Bett (1 wicket each, Bett bowling their best batsman when he returned from injury). Good catches from Martin (caught and bowled), Olly and Tom, who also had a devastating run-out aiming at a stump from 20 yards, and a caught behind by N. Bird put further pressure on Ascot, who eventually declared at 148 for 9.

Noble and Cowley opened. The first over was one of dross, but Noble resisted the urge to score. Thereafter he upped his personal run rate to one an over, but Cowley was quicker off the mark and we were tugging along nicely when Cowley was out for a speedy 25 or so. Enter Fraser. He faced some very solid bowling, a quick spinner, and ultimately a very good quick bowler indeed who had been kept in reserve (perhaps too late). Noble can smack them – he hit a huge skier over mid-off – but his natural game is to see off the main armoury. He was out, having done his job (and generously sacrificing his wicket), for 37. Andy went on to make 53, with a plethora of trademark cuts and pulls and sweeps, and one classic drive for 4 through cover point. Olly Bett (0) came and went, Nixey (10*) struck a superlative cover drive to the boundary, but in the end any nerves among spectators as wickets fell and the run

rate stuttered were calmed by Dennis (35*) who struck 4 majestic boundaries in an over to win the game.

So, our last game of the 2006 season and a very agreeable afternoon. Fraser and Dennis tied for the Man of the Match Award which N. Bird drunk by mistake the night before.

Note for your diary: Saturday December 2, 2006...the V&A AGM and Dinner Dance at the COACH & HORSES, Kew Green, Richmond, Surrey. £20. Usual stuff, hot buffet, tacky awards. Drinks from 7.00 p.m. in the Rotarian Lounge. We have as yet failed to get a guest speaker, but if you know of someone appropriate and amusing – Inziman, Tuffers, Pope Benedict – let us know. Fred Truman, I'm told, is funnier now than he's ever been.