

MATCH REPORT
V&A v. JACOBITE CHANCERS
SATURDAY SEPT. 8, 2007, STONOR

THE DAY WAS RATHER COLD BUT THE CRICKET WAS ALWAYS ENTERTAINING. As we were only 8 when play started (11.50 a.m., not bad) we contrived to bat first in a 35 over game. Rico opened (with a runner) with the ever willing James Nixey. James had just stroked a beautiful ball towards the pavilion when he received a nasty bouncer which he fended off with his forearm, very painfully. Unfortunately it tickled the bail off. Martin Bowden, who was umpiring, did not feel the ball was high enough to no ball, but in truth if James hadn't used his arm his head would now be in Pishill. Dennis came in and flashed at a couple but we're used to that and he usually settles down to murder the bowling. But he got a tempting full toss to leg and top edged it to shortish long leg. Enter Bowden who got exactly the same ball and did exactly the same thing. When Rico was out (his hamstring prevented him from going forward properly) we were 30 for 4 with Jake and Chris Moore in. Not looking good. But Ed Black, the Chancers' captain, plays the game in a Corinthian spirit, as you'd expect from an Eton Rambler, and put on a change bowler to lessen the grip. Nevertheless it needed all Jake's prowess and Chris's fluent back-foot play to steady the innings...and ultimately manage a century partnership against good bowling. Jake tried hard, perhaps too hard, to up the tempo at one point, and Chris got stuck against one bowler which slowed the rate, but we were indebted to these two for making a very good game of it. Chris was out shuffling forward for an excellent 50 and Jake was not out 65 or so (I have lost the scorebook, but think I'm right). We've always known Chris is a better batsman than his lowly batting position suggests. That he bats at 9 is due to his self-effacing modesty and uncomplaining ways. Worse batsmen would whinge at such an insult. Simon Foster was bowled going neither forward nor back, and Peter Linthwaite might have got a run or two but I don't think so. We ended with 188, which was a hell of a good score considering Dennis and Martin's early demise. But we missed perhaps Dennis's flamboyance which might have increased our total to over 200.

Lunch was the usual fare (tea rather better, with fancy cakes), provided by myself in Sarah's absence (again). She returns next week but it might be too late to cement her status as Chief Tea Lady. There are candidates waiting – Lucinda Reeve, who is ever helpful, and Georgie Foster, who, while never challenging seriously for any Domestic Goddess contest, nevertheless can turn on a dishwasher with aplomb if shown what the thing looks like. She made the tea in Lucinda's absence fielding (who did a very good job of it, and looked rather fetching in her whites) and with her daughters served it daintily.

We gambled somewhat at the start of the Chancers' innings by holding back our main bowlers and opening with 4 overs each from Simon and James. It paid off in that they went for less than 5 an over and James got Ed Black caught behind (after two atrocious full tosses that must have unnerved the batsman). Rico was bugged and couldn't bowl which was a pity as his medium stuff is very accurate. But we had Jake, Martin and Dennis and all bowled well, particularly Jake who was unfortunate not to get more than a solitary wicket due to missed catches and balls flying between fielders. Martin's inswingers were perhaps too penetrative. They beat the bat on several occasions but swung so much they missed leg stump. Dennis picked up a

wicket, and picked up Lucinda too, who rushed over in breathless excitement. There was rather a lot of canoodling between Martin and Lucinda on the field, and pinching of bottoms, which Wisden may not record.

Although we defended well in the field, a combination of a missed catch or two, and stolid batting by their 3 and 4, saw them close on the target inexorably. The pitch was not taking spin so Moore and Linthwaite were out of luck. With 2 overs to go they reached the target. Game lost but we had made a good day of it, thanks to Jake and Chris. This is always an agreeable fixture because their captain makes it so. We particularly appreciate the help they offer moving tables and chairs etc. Some teams merely watch as we old people heave and puff. They provided us with a substitute fielder which is always a bummer from the sub's point of view, you're either moaned at for being a wally by the fielding side or ostracised for catching one of your mates.

Next Sunday is Rob Noble's Catchiteers. Roger Smith returns after marrying an Aussie and becoming the father of a baby who is eligible to play for England or Australia. I understand that Smith Jnr. is sometimes irascible and likes a drink so very much a chip off the old block.

Re: the CASE OF THE MISSING MOWER...as mentioned last week Stonor C.C. took delivery of a sit-on mower worth £7000 on Monday. By Tuesday morning it had gone, nicked from the container behind the pavilion. Obviously an inside job, whatever Old Bill says (they claim it was passing, opportunistic thieves, which is absurd). They do not appear to be investigating with tremendous diligence. However, Stonor's Chairman, Peter Collings, told me that the invoice contains a clause that 'title to the property does not revert to the buyer until final payment has been made', which it has not (£4000 is payable in January). So my contention is that the dealer's insurance may cover. Watch this space. In the meantime if someone down the pub tries to flog you a brand new sit-on mower for a grand or less, buy it, it's worth seven.

NICKY BIRD

an old which .

and what