

MATCH REPORT

Sunday July 12, 2009 at Stonor

V&A v. Old Talbotians

THERE WAS AN IRONY in the Talbotians fielding eleven good men, while we only managed 9 somewhat iffy men, three being pretty crooked [Dennis, Jake and Jack] and some being a bit passed it by the look of their fielding, not mentioning any names like Rob. A couple of weeks ago their skipper, our friend Sunil, told us that they were struggling and that we should look for alternative opposition. But they persevered and found 11. On the day we had two drop out, one through a suspected dose of alcohol poisoning, which I can sympathise with, horrid business, hits you unexpectedly.

The Old Talbotians, incidently, were founded by journalists on *Now!* magazine, an ill-fated venture by the late Sir James Goldsmith. *Private Eye* referred to the mag as *Talbot!* for some obscure reason.

We started at 1.45 or so without lunch because it rained overnight and, briefly, in the morning as forecast. This meant no lunch preparation for me [Sarah away *again*], but making sandwiches for an elaborate tea is a surprisingly boring chore.

We put ourselves in because we were too few to field [Jake and Jack a bit late], in a 30 overs game. Rob and Chris Moore opened and scored 60 or so, a bit slowly at first, before Rob was stumped trying nobly to up the run rate. Dennis came in and immediately set about the bowling, until we were very soon, with Chris's able support, up to 8 an over. Chris reached a deserved 50 with some powerful lofted drives and pulls. When he departed there was no let up, Peter Holmes scoring briskly, Jake hitting one majestic 4 before having a rush of blood and being stumped, and then Jack Cooke-Hurle whacking an incredible 40 in 5 overs. Meanwhile Dennis passed 50 with a 6, eventually making 76* or so [I haven't got the scorebook]. James went in at the death and joined the run fest. We made a sound total of 237 and felt pretty confident.

After tea we opened with Nixey and Peter. Two overs from James were deemed enough but Peter bowled out his 6 to good effect, getting a caught behind and maybe another wicket [can't recall]. Jake Warman bowled two beautiful off brakes to bowl two good batsmen and Dennis and Jack also bowled slow stuff effectively, taking a wicket apiece [I think]. Then my day ended as I got a hard top edge in the mouth which split the lip. My public say I look hideous, more than usual, a bit like Leslie Ash or Joan Rivers after surgery. Dennis took over the captaincy but there was not much he could do to stop their star batsman smacking sixes all over the ground. Peter Linthwaite suggested that James Nixey should come back, his slightly short length might offer catching chances. Perhaps. And then again perhaps not. This was not one of Peter's more inspired suggestions. Poor Nixey succumbed to the yips and a sneak told me that one over went like this - wide, wide, wide, wide, wide, wide, 1, 6, 6, 2, 6, 1. Total 28. Ooops. Sorry to bring this unfortunate stat up. It is to Nixey's

everlasting credit that he did not shy away from the proffered ball, he did not refuse his captain's request to bowl.

Their top class batsman eventually made 136 and won the match. Congratulations to him and his team for contributing to a very enjoyable and exciting day, although one I might wish to forget. I am reduced to sipping whisky through a straw.

Next Saturday is the Pretenders game. Please let us know if you can play. It is the Lord's Test so we may struggle. Let us look for inspiration to our lads' heroic last wicket defence in Cardiff, and not to KP's brainless batting or – particularly – his reverse sweep [Dennis de Caires to note].

Nicky Bird