

## MATCH REPORT

SUNDAY SEPT. 4, 2005

V&A v. HERMITS

THIS IS OUR OLDEST FIXTURE. We have seen the Hermits grow old and fat, drink having taken its toll. But they are still keen and competitive, none more so than the combustible Jerry Bevan who can be relied upon to explode in the field. He did not disappoint on Sunday. What was a little disappointing was variable umpiring which saw Rob and Will dismissed for leg before which even our dopiest umpire would have considered too far forward to assess with any accuracy. Two rather better shouts from Olly Betts when we were bowling were rejected. Nevertheless the absence of Martin and Roger was the crucial difference between the two sides; we didn't have enough bowling. This was compounded by our dropping 5 catches and the ball invariably falling between fielders. Nevertheless I would like my penn'orth. I happen to know that Tim, my brother-in-law and the offending umpire, does not read this site. So, without fear of litigation, I can confirm that he is a myopic, befuddled buffoon.

Adam captained in a 40 over game. It was very hot and we were pleased to bat first in the heat. We started briskly and Rob and Patrick put on 60 odd before Rob was out, to a poor decision the second time in a row. He behaved with exemplary grace. Patrick went on to make nearly 50 chanceless runs. Adam scored a mighty 47, others chipped in, notably Freddy who is a wonderful player of good bowling, less assured with crap.

But there was never a run fest because they had 4 sound bowlers, particularly the two Bevan boys. William is a very good bowler (and batsman) indeed. Ed Churchwood smacked a few, so too did James at the end. Ryan looked good. Bruno was as elegant as ever, but not for long. We reached 209. Goodish, but with a weakened bowling attack and flat pitch it did not look enough.

Lunch was provided by Sarah but she did not feel able to come herself. Mrs. Jacot oversaw the catering and provided a marvellous tea.

Their innings, like ours, started well. Terry and Tony reached around 50 with some big hits and – from Terry – some cover drives out of the MCC manual. Perhaps they were fortunate with some decisions but we dropped Terry and we can hardly complain about a stumping decision that went against us which was certainly too close to call. Actually Terry was eventually out LBW when he probably snicked it. Adam tried everything to dislodge batsmen well dug in but bowling was a bit erratic, although Ryan got some swing, Freddy bowled some excellent inswingers (and got a wicket), James bowled better than the week before, Patrick turned a few, Olly bowled some good straight stuff, ditto Will...and Bruno bowled. It is there in the scorebook. One was reminded of Johnson's likening a woman preaching to a dog walking on its hind legs. It is not done well but you are surprised it is done at all. Medium/fast bowling when the body has seen better days is ambitious. For those who witnessed only his last two overs on Sunday let me emphasise that for 25 years he was the V&A's major bowler, swinging it both ways, with some venom. Such was his

dedication that in recent years he had to lie down in a darkened room after bowling 8 overs, to recuperate. He has earned his ripple of applause, and pocket watch.

Our fielding suffered rather as they neared the target and there were perhaps too many captains on the pitch for Adam's liking. They scored the winning runs with some overs to spare.

But it was a lovely day and the Hermits thoroughly deserved to win (at last). Adam managed the tricky business of ensuring that all 12 of us either batted or bowled with tact. The Hermits are all very agreeable, even Jerry when he's in the pub, which soothes the pain of defeat.

This Saturday it is our last game – against the virile, socially-elite young men of the Jacobite Chancers. Please let me know if you can play. They are not an 'inclusive' team like us, they have no-one above the age of 28, no gays, no disabled. They thus do not qualify for lottery money like we do, but they tend to stuff the opposition. If you know of some butch Aussie who hates posh young Poms bring him along.