

MATCH REPORT

V&A v. The Thebertons

Sat. July 7, 2007

THE SUN CAME OUT. A minor miracle, considering the hail of last week. Nothing about this almost biblical weather surprises. Perhaps a plague of locusts next, followed by boils...

Dennis was skip and agreed a 35 over game – quite enough time in the field for some of us. We lost the toss and were sent in – it was a good toss to win as batting became progressively easier.

We started badly with James Nixey bowled first ball, and Peter Heathcote run out by Olly Betts who called a quick single to a bloke who does not do ‘quick’. But Tom Bird and Olly had a nice partnership of 30 or so before opening bowler William Bevan, he of the aggressive speed and manner, bowled Tom as he had James. Enter Dennis, who smacked a marvellous 25 to all corners, including a majestic 6. There was an amusing incident when Dennis cut William Bevan to the boundary, prompting young William to call him, loudly, a ‘flashing bastard’ which we deduced implied that the shot had been flukey (which it had not). Dennis answered by walloping a 4 off the next ball, a beautifully timed sweep. Bevan Jr. was not pleased.

Dennis was supported by the steady Olly Betts (eventually bowled for a useful 20) and then by Olly Bamber, now happily returned to Stonor after marriage. Bamber was – annoyingly – bowled by the ebullient (‘Chucker’) Gerry Bevan (father of William) for 23, but it was a nice innings after a long lay-off. Robert Taylor’s first ball was a long hop which he smacked as firmly to mid-wicket as a ball can be hit. Unfortunately the only fielder on the leg side got in the way and caught it. Bummer. But Chris Moore came in, and belying his lowly position in the batting order, whacked the ball to all boundaries, including a straight 6. When he was out (for 30) Adam Jacot strolled in. He was visibly out of sorts and struggled to 3 before being caught behind by snicking a tempting slow ball. Thing had gone badly wrong – we were a meagre 135 for 9 with last pair Bird N. and Peter Linthwaite determined to score at least another 30 off the remaining 5 overs. But, although Bird scored a quick 10*, Linthwaite could not find his touch of yesteryear and had 9 consecutive dot balls. What happened next is a matter of conjecture. In Pete’s version – ‘Forcing the pace Linthwaite hit a hard shot towards mid-off and called for a quick run, belying his 60 years by charging down the pitch, but was sent back by a leaden-footed, dozy Bird...and slipping on the wet pitch (a few drop of rain had fallen) was unable to get back in time and was run out.’ According to Bird – ‘Linthwaite hit a ball straight to silly-mid-off, set off like a crazed lemming, was correctly sent back, but betraying his 60 years was unable to turn round, fell over, lay on the floor and was run out.’

We were all out for 150 and it was not enough and we knew it.

Dennis (2 wickets) and Adam (1) opened the bowling, Adam bowling his 7 overs straight through. He was variable in length and direction but dismissed their best batsman with an LBW (possibly a bit high). He had problems with his run-up. He was perhaps stepping over the line. Young William Bevan, up at the pavilion, urged

their umpire to no-ball Jacot by shouting ‘No ball!’ very loudly and often while the ball was in flight. As this non-plussed the batsman Umpire Tim Young, their very agreeable organiser, suggested that William shut the fuck up, which he did.

But The Thebertons crept inexorably towards the modest total. Tom Bird came on in a desperate throw of the dice. His 6 balls – he had but one over – went like this...dud ball, single, long hop, long hop, sneak, atrocious long hop that crept under the bat and hit the wicket, long hop...he was then quite rightly taken off, albeit with figures of 1 for 1.

One notable event of our fielding was the most brilliant run out by Robert seen on this ground or any other. A ball was hit firmly wide of Robert fielding at deepish point. Paddy, their captain, called for a very reasonable run. An easy single if anyone else was fielding there, and a comfortable two if Andy, Adam or myself was in the vicinity. But Robert stooped, turned and threw in one movement. He had one stump to aim at from 35 yards - and hit it.

The other moment of joy was Dennis bowling Bevan Jr. with a beauty, just after Bevan was probably stumped off Linthwaite’s bowling (but William’s umpire father understandably declined to add to his parental load by raising the finger). Pete, Robert and James all bowled quite tidily (well, James bowled tidyishly), with Robert bowling a useful maiden. Unfortunately, just after Dennis had given a rousing speech about how we were going to win, Chris Moore went for 16 in an over and that was rather that.

Tim Young appropriately got the winning runs. The Thebertons are perfect opposition, and could not be more helpful, skipper Paddy even cleaning his dressing room, rinsing out the dustbin, clearing away the ghastly mess left by Henley 3rd XI and, for all I know, cleaning the toilets. Their team includes some socially smart cricketers, but their status can be lost on us common lot, as per this exchange between their very nice Mr. Verity (who retired unwell), batting at no. 3, and the V&A’s Peter Heathcote. It went like this –

P.H. ‘What’s that club sweater you’re wearing?’

Mr. V. ‘It’s a Romany Club sweater.’ [A prestigious, famous club]

P.H. [Unimpressed because he hadn’t heard of it] ‘What’s the cap?’

Mr. V. [Surprised perhaps by the lack of reaction] ‘An Old Wykhamist cricket cap!’

P.H. ‘What’s that?’

Mr. V. ‘It means I played cricket for Winchester College.’

P.H. ‘What’s that?’

Nicky Bird