

Bledlow Ridge 1s v Thame 2s – Sat 11th July 2015 (Away)

Arnie is hailed as Ridgebears Tame Thame

Lloydy takes a catch - You heard it first here.

Thame 2s 235-7 (53 overs)
BRCC 1s 236-6 (46.3 overs)

Won by 4 wickets

This was Arnie Schwarzenegger's first appearance of the season for the Ridge, well for two years in fact. Yes, looking slightly like Henry Hale, formerly of this parish, but somewhat larger, he arrived, had a short net and pronounced himself fit to play, and fit to wrestle five lions while pumping 200lbs.

We lost the toss just proving that Taggart is a useless Tossler and fielded on a dry fast outfield. MSD opened up against a friend of his and bowled him fifth ball – call yourself a mate?

Then Thame's Paddy Harris who couldn't bat, but who (later) had a lot to say in the field, got 26 or 27 as people who can't bat so often do; we have four or five like that. There had been much discussion about who bowled from which end and after no early success Tags decided he was on at the wrong end. This meant he had made two mistakes before the match had even started.

The outfield was nearly as fast as Henry, who had replaced Arnie Schwarzenegger after half an hour. The first potential controversy came when someone said Henry was the fastest runner in our side and Rory and Jonah bristled. When someone said that Diesel might be the *slowest* runner in the side, *Lloydy* bristled.

Writing this a week later, the game is a bit of a blur but Thame's innings was notable mostly for *Lloydy's* diving right- (in his case wrong-) handed catch, an event as likely as a solution to the Greek economic crisis. On the subject of fielding, after Henry's first throw from about 70 yards landed perfectly at the top of the stumps, he threw with the philosophy that the nearer you are to the wicketkeeper the harder you should fling it.

Taggart rotated his bowlers well although bowler rotation always seems to involve him bowling all the time at one end or another, while Geoff is only allowed short spells – well what else do you expect? – on the basis that he might get a wicket before the batsman realizes he is completely useless and is whipped off. Hmm, I could have chosen a better turn of phrase.

Not satisfied with Lloyd trying to solve the Eurozone crisis, Brooksie took a stumping off the bowling of – wait for it – Taggart, just as Lord Lucan rode by on Shergar. If you have not heard of Lord Lucan or Shergar, one of them was a member of the aristocracy who murdered his nanny (although I always thought the newspapers got it wrong and that he murdered his *children's* nanny) and fled the country, while the other was a prize racehorse who also disappeared without trace but might possibly have appeared in some tinned meat sold by a major supermarket a few decades later. 'Lord Lucan' always seemed to me to be a strange name for a racehorse.

I digress, but who wants to read about cricket?

If you must: we did quite well to restrict them to 235-7 but it was still a large total to chase and the prospect of batting was made worse during the team by the sight of Henry's pecs as he ate tea, shirtless.

RolfeDog and Diesel got things underway with a partnership of 50, interrupted frequently by the musings of Mr Harris including a comment about the batting of Laurel and Hardy. It was not clear which he thought resembled which?

Diesel was adjudged LBW despite a woody sound, RolfeDog missed a full toss and was bowled off his foot, so with Laurel and Hardy gone, Simon "Harry Secombe" Lloyd was joined by Rory but not for long and his dismissal soon after not only suggested a Grexit, but also seemed to put us out of the chase at 65-3.

But fast rivers run deep as they say, a little deeper than the waterless shower I took after my innings, and so does the Ridge batting (I do apologise for drifting into poetry for a moment), so supported by Steve BirdDog, Rory had other ideas. He made 75 with two big sixes and claimed he hardly middled one shot.

Rory's departure at 157-4 seemed to put an end to things but after a quick burst from Brooksie Geoff went out to join his old buddy, mucker, mate and chum, BirdDog.

Wielding his bat like an axe, Axeman Tombs smashed and carved us towards the total. Working the ball around and through midwicket BirdDog played the rapier to TombsDog's axeman. My apologies for another outbreak of poetry.

It began to look as if we had a chance and a crowd slowly gathered. They were nearly all members of the Brooks family but then, as someone remarked, nearly everyone in Bucks, is.

From a required rate of seven an over we got to 11 wanted off 2 overs and then the Axeman hit the first ball for four. With 7 wanted from 11 balls what would any normal human being do? Probably make sure he hit the next ball and kept the total moving. Not the Axeman who tried to scythe the next three deliveries out of the ground and failed to make contact with any of them. 7 off 8 became 5 off the last over.

Birdy hit a three, the field came in and Geoff then managed to hit one... straight in the air to a fielder. With 2 wanted off 4 balls in came Arnie who had replaced Henry. He scrambled a single then accepted the generous offer of an overthrow and we suddenly realized we had finally won our second match. We all thought that Rory and Geoff had done it and nobody really noticed BirdDog's 53 not out. Well why would you?

Better news was to follow in the week when the four points that had been deducted on a whim at Abingdon, were reinstated and we moved up to sixth place in the league.

Twenty nine points in one week was an achievement even greater than the size of Henry's pecs.

Ben Keeping is away and on holiday in Peckham