

Bledlow Ridge 1s v Eynsham 1s

Home: Saturday 4th August 2018

The Ridge Scrape Home on Wicket of Uneven Bounce

Ben Keeping Finds ‘Miles Driven’ Easier than ‘Runs Scored’

The Beatles’ Music is Slammed by the Next Generation of Ridge Cricketers

Eynsham: 95 all out (28.1 overs)

BRCC: 96-6 (22.1 overs)

Result: Won by 4 wickets

If it had been a golf match Ben Keeping would have won the prize for the longest drive. As it was, his four-hour trip back from holiday in Cornwall yielded two runs (which reduced his batting average from just over 9,000 to about 85), no wickets, no catches and later in the day, several pints of beer as he considered the possibility of driving all the way back, for so long that five hours and several pints later, it made no sense to do so.

Eynsham had arrived *en masse* well before 11.30 for a 12.30 start but without wicketkeeper Jacque Cousteau who has apparently sunk without trace following the match report for the game played on 2nd June. His replacement did not wear a diving suit, helmet, goggles or breathing apparatus although his flippers did look a size too large.

It was a good thing they arrived early as they were able to cut, roll and mark the strip and put out the 30 yard discs, although marks were deducted for not putting the sightscreens in place before the game commenced. Had it not been for drink-driving laws they would probably also have stayed longer than the home team after the game was over, as this proved to be the perfect cricket match: it lasted 50 overs, ended mid-afternoon in bright sunshine with a fully stocked bar and platefuls of leftovers from another of Roz’ specials.

Eynsham won the toss and chose to bat not realising they had just rolled a number of IEDs into the wicket. What they got was fizzing, spitting and shooting... before we told Brooksie that that was not appropriate behaviour from a fielder.

Sam Hollingshead was caught by Hamsah in the unlikely position of Gully off Captain Birdseye before skipper Sam Jones – who had made 29 of the first 35 runs, edged one to Sam Rolfe off the bowling of someone not called Sam, unless Hamsah has been pretending all along.

There then followed an example of the first Repeating Phenomenon which has occurred several times this season (see earlier reports) where the batsman pleads that he hit the ball down on to the ground instead of upwards to the keeper.

“What the Sam Jones is going on?” said wicketkeeper Sam and received a clip around his ears from his dad for bad manners.

Fortunately for The Ridge the umpire adjudged him out which means that Joss Goff’s shot (Twyford) two weeks earlier which ended in the hands of first slip might just have been out too... but I’m not bitter. At least Sam Jones agreed he had hit his.

That was a good wicket to get, not least because we now had two batsmen not called Sam at the crease so it was less confusing. It was also much more classy to have someone called Roland batting, yes Roland batting, not Roland Batting, and his surname Margerison is even more classy - the best we can do in our side being James Goodband and Matt Brightwell, whoever he is.

Anyway, enough of this rubbish. Hamsah and Dakes began to chip away. SamDog stood up to the stumps for one ball, nearly had his nose rearranged from a lifter and retreated again. The score went from 35-1 to 46-5 in a short time despite each batsman taking the precaution of wearing bomb disposal suits and riot protection headgear. What they weren’t prepared for was the odd scud missile which added to the variety of dismissals of which four were bowled or played-on and six were caught (five behind the wicket)

Hamsah bowled Dan Clarke with his best ball of the season, an inswinging yorker but he had overstepped the mark, something we normally associate with Steve Bird and rude stories. This batsman stayed around to cause a bit of trouble until he was eventually caught by SamDog off Hamsah which is about as unlucky as you can get.

All this while, BenDog was quite chatty at slip - having made such a long journey - a position in which he had been retained from the previous week in spite of, or perhaps because of, his 50% catching record. We learnt among other things how attractive he had been to the opposite of the species when in his late 20s he had loadsamoney and an Aston Martin (not to mention extraordinary good looks as we reminded him). Moving onto the current era, he described his occasional frustration with England’s cricket - even though they were in the process of winning a wonderful test match against India - with a sentence that started “I told Hermione she had to make the children lunch before finishing the gardening, and then when I sat down to watch the cricket I couldn’t believe...”. It makes you wonder what all those nannies, not to mention several butlers, are doing most of the time.

Anyway, more than enough of this rubbish. We had six wickets by the time Tom Gerken came to the wicket. He took a temporary liking to Ben Hillarious, before realizing what the RidgeBears have learned the hard way, that ‘temporary’ is the best option, as Hillarious is

best in short doses. He (Tom Gerken) hit one huge six which is the only known instance of a pie being hit out of the ground by a gherkin. It was lucky that Dakes didn't swallow them both. Tom G then let Hillarious bowl him with a trench-cutter.

Hillarious (2-29 off 6) also got Tom Smith which seems to me to be a perfectly normal name, like Sam Jones for example and one can only assume Bill Brown was unavailable and was what had let Roland Margerison, or perhaps Ben Smitten, into the side in the first place. Ben Smitten incidentally was bowled by Hamsah who ended with 3-24 off 7.

Junaid had taken over at the top end from Dakes (3-24 off 12) having already stunned us with a piece of fielding excellence when he rapidly got into a position to back up a loose throw-in and save some overthrows, something rarely seen in our team (backing up that is, not overthrows). He stood out for this alone although he was difficult to miss in smart white trousers and contrasting shoes. He has not however, yet learnt to stop the ball with his feet (Shaun) or to perform a forward roll while letting the ball through his legs (HairBear).

Having watched ShaunDog bowl one over, Junaid (2-6 off 4, best strike rate of all of 12, best average of 3 and economy rate of 1.5, just saying) finished with the wicket of Nigel Walker caught behind off SamDog and with that surname you can't really hang around in the hope of being given not out.

SamDog ended with five catches, putting him ahead of Hollywood who is not a wicketkeeper and which only goes to show how much we missed Mike "Chairboy" Gilet who wasn't there to tell us when this last happened. Luckily Gilet was not missed at all as I can give you the answer: it has never happened before.

Gilet was missing under the pretence of supporting his football team: "Why would Gilet miss playing cricket to watch Wycombe Wanderers?" enquired Mrs Hollywood sagely after the game. In truth he needed a week off from being victimised in match reports so he won't get mentioned here save for two things: firstly Sam Jones said after the game that he had been nice to his bowling in the first match but he would have smashed it all over the place this time, and secondly with The Chairboy away, both our teams won their matches before 5pm. Just saying.

Eynsham had set us 96 to win. Roz was informed that we would not be taking tea yet and it is just possible she cursed RolfeDog who a half hour earlier had told her during a drinks break, that she need to get a move on as Eynsham were already six wickets down and we'd probably take tea early.

Not even the British can have tea at 2.20pm so RolfeDog and Hamsah went out to bat in a new passive-aggressive partnership and I will leave the reader to guess which was which or who was who. Or whom.

There was a small clue in the field Sam Jones set to the second over. Having remembered Hamsah's pyrotechnics in the first match, he placed various fielders on the boundary only to see Hamsah's first ball fly over slips for four as he attempted to knock the Golden Ball off West Wycombe church.

Alas there was to be no Golden Ball's day for Hamsah whose second shot exoceted straight into the hands of the player he had yorked first ball with a no ball, Dan Clarke. The fielder failed to return the compliment and caught it on the deep Extra Cover boundary, before in a fit of guilt, wheeling away over the boundary rope in order to evoke some controversy.

Unfortunately there was no one in at Lords to take the call for clarification of the law and so Hamsah was adjudged out. It is possible that from now on we may see top level cricketers catching the ball on the boundary before tearing towards the crowd in celebration (Roy Essandoh, Wycombe Wanderers FC 2 v Leicester City 1, FA Cup Qtr Final 2001) and taking off their shirts only to receive a yellow card (Steve Brown in the same match).

BenDog went next, plumb LBW to Nigel Walker, the umpire failing to realise how far he (BenDog that is) had travelled for this innings and that he is a very important investment banker. Gilet texted to say that every four hours in the car had been worth one run.

RolfeDog followed after two boundaries, deciding to tuck his bat inside his right pad to a ball from Sam Hollingshead (unnecessarily long name) and thereby appear to be leaving a ball on middle-and-leg.

We were in a bit of trouble at not-many-for-three (bad work with the scorebook someone), but Dakes and Hollywood started a revival until Hollywood was LBW to a scudder for 16 at which point SamDog stuck around for a while with Dakes, without actually scoring a run.

He was able to direct ball-hunting fielders to a lost ball from a six by Dakes which had landed a good thirty yards into the flourishing Wildlife Garden next door. With this we were treated to the second Repeating Phenomenon of the year, already described at least three times in earlier match reports. The ball was found, somewhat miraculously in the long grass, sorry wildflowers, in exactly the position pinpointed by SamDog who had watched it go in, only for the finder to question whether it was the right ball. Suspicion seems to remain that a UFO is dropping slightly used Cherwell League match balls into all the fields and hedges surrounding all the grounds so that no one can be sure that the ball they have found in the right place is the one that was lost.

Anyway, SamDog forgot to bat properly and was caught. This meant that RolfeDog (8) had outscored SamDog (0) and Hudson (2nd X1: did not bat) but that the latter two did at least manage to match RolfeDog's runs on the day, with eight catches, Hudson having got three, something BenDog can only dream about .

Captain (Corporal?) Jones rotated his bowlers from the bottom end, leaving Sam Unnecessarilylongname 4-29 off 11, unchanged at the top.

Try as he might, Captain Jones could not get Captain Birdseye out although Brooksie, who came in in his rightful position of No 7 to win the match, did his best first ball, calling for a quite reasonable single, but forgetting that Dakes does most things, including batting and bowling, in a stupor from which he can only be awoken with a loud call of "YES".

Dakes survived and after a cameo 10 runs, Brooksie made us all chuckle (RIP Barry Chuckle, Chuckle brother, comedian and Malcolm Ashby lookalike, who passed today, 5th August, aged 73) by hitting the winning boundary straight into the safe hand of Nigel Walker, who might also once have been a very good wing three quarter for Wales.

And so with four wanted, it was left to Junaid to finish the job. "What's Junaid's batting like?" enquired BenDog of RolfeDog. "Like his brother Hamsah's..." RolfeDog replied "...except with defensive shots." "Thank God for that" said BenDog with some relief.

Thus it was, that Junaid carefully took guard and blasted his first ball through midwicket for four and made me look a complete arse.

A win by 4 wickets. Challow got 20 points from a draw with Horley (well played Horley) while Twyford beat Oxford 3s narrowly, so we stay 2nd but with Twyford well in contention.

It was about 5pm when the day really started. Eynsham stayed for plenty of refreshment in the old time-honoured fashion and discussed how we could fit more people called Sam into the game next time. BenDog dithered over whether to travel back, Hollywood was joined by his wife who Taggart, on return with the victorious 2nd X1, called Mrs Hollywood all evening as he could not remember her name (it's 'Felicity', Tags, or 'Fliss' if you can't manage four syllables after a pint) and Captain Birdseye' was joined by his mum and dad who are trying to work out where Dakes has got all his energy from this year - we think it's the beard.

Everyone reflected on the moment in the game when Dakes fielding in the covers, called to Brooksie who was fielding at Long Leg. As if that was not ironic enough, he asked Brooksie to move 10 yards to his left. I'm not saying Brooksie missed the opportunity of a lifetime but if it had been me I'd have put my hands on my hips, stamped the ground and said: "I have been fielding in this position to our bowling for fifteen years and know exactly where to stand, thank you very much".

Eventually after putting much of the world and cricket to rights we said goodbye to the last of the Eynsham players but not to Ben Smitten's cap which I recovered and am currently keeping as hostage for some purpose or another. We know he is intelligent as he is smart enough to have put his name in his cap (unless his mum did it for him) so perhaps he deserves it back.

The rest of our 2nd X1 were back by now and the quality of the conversation gradually went downhill though they were only partly to blame. Dales, yes Dales (who got five wickets for the 2s and should not be confused with Dakes who only got three wickets for the 1s) eventually went home but left his wallet behind. As the bar regrettably does not yet have contactless payment we called him back. Instead of collecting his wallet and hurrying off home, he decided that as he had come back he might as well have enough drink and continue the slightly morbid game of "Dead Or Alive?". This involves naming a player from our vintage or earlier, at High Wycombe Rugby Club and declaring or guessing whether their blood is still warm.

Taggart and BenDog got into a very pretentious game of "Name Your Favourite Book and your Favourite Song" where each tried to name an author or musician the other hadn't heard of. Where was David Oxford English Graduate the one time you needed him? He once left a textbook behind at Teddington that was so heavy I had to get someone to put it into the car.

BenDog came out with the classic "I'll tell you someone who writes a good book" as though authors set up an industrial production line. It turned out to be Charles Dickens which was rather better than Taggart's Enid Blyton, although Taggart tried to rectify the situation by bandying about the name of Robert Louis Stevenson which as everyone knows is the name of the man who invented the steam engine. The best Hollywood could come up with was one entitled 'Best SAS Manoeuvres 2005' so we moved on to music.

Hudson said he had listened to some of his parents' Beatles records once and declared they weren't up to much. At the time I took this to mean The Beatles but on reflection he has complained about bad parenting from time-to-time. When RolfeDog mentioned Sgt Pepper as a classic album, HairBear, who kept mentioning the names of bands that I cannot believe

exist, said "Nah, it's all too samey". Thus one of the most ground-breaking albums of all time, with songs as diverse as She's Leaving Home, Lovely Rita Meter Maid, For The Benefit of Mr Kite and When I'm Sixty Four (next year actually) was written off in a single casual statement by a Bledow Ridge lower middle order batsman.

HairBear went from reasonably sober to reasonably pissed in the sixty seconds it took him to take a comfort break during which Mr or Mrs Hollywood must have laced his drink. On return and as he had not batted, he whined on about wanting a bowl, so much that RolfeDog went and got him one from the kitchen to quieten him down.

We finally packed up and left. We reflected on Hamsah's news that he had passed his driving test and that in contrast Shaun, despite starting driving into walls three years ago at aged 16, has still not driven beyond the gatepost of No 6 RIdgeside. Stuart Murdoch for his part, began to go white on realising what he had done in passing his test this week. There he was, waiting, tee-total for his dad to be ready so that he could drive him home; he was then off to collect his sister from somewhere. And so the rest of Stuart's life will pan out as a taxi driver for his dad (to whom he owes 3,791 trips) and for his sis (quantity unknown), on perpetual standby.

Best to have failed that test Stuart, or to have somewhere in Cornwall to escape to. The four-hour trip would be worth it. Ask Keeps.

Greg Inge, Seb Gibson and Mark Weller of Eynsham were not insulted in this match report and got off lightly for reasons unknown.