

Bledlow Ridge 1s v Shipton-under-Wychwood 2s

Saturday 31st August 2019 – Home

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Shipton given Bloody Nose by RidgeBears and Wellsy Given Bloody Nose by Shipton

Multiple Groundsmen Turn Meadow Styles into Gardens of Bablyon

A Goofy Yorkerman is Born

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BRCC – 276-9 (50 overs)
Shipton - 92ao (22.3 overs)

Result: Won by 184 runs

“What a Quintessentially beautiful English morning” mused RolfeDog as he drove up to The Ridge. In the words of Ray Davies and The Kinks it was going to be a “Sunny Afternoon” (1966). He reflected that it had been much the same nine weeks earlier at the away fixture on that warm day in June, when he had never felt better: refreshed and in form. The only downer had been our failure to take the last Shipton wicket and – oh yes – his duck at the very start of the day. At least it had taken 14 balls to get nought.

Meadow Styles looked like a groundman’s convention. There was BirdDog on the roller, Jimmy Lovebite (Curator) on the outfield mower, Charlie Farley hand-mowing the square in perfect stripes, Robbie Carter happily (shock-horror!) ironing out The Kinks in the wicket and Ginger Tom was around somewhere tending to a blade of grass that had wandered out of position. There was little for RolfeDog to do except warm up with some exercises, jog around the field and do some mental preparation for the big innings ahead.

Naturally Cooperman was the other Ridgebear early at the ground, loosening up in the nets. Shipton’s Elliot Bryant - a Dedicated Follower of Fashion (1966) if ever I saw one - arrived by 10.35 saying he was always late, realised he was contradicting himself and recalibrated. His teammates soon arrived at Meadow Styles aka The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, to see Charlie Farley putting the finishing touches to the square with a hairbrush and comb. Sid would have said “I am in paradise” (from Waterloo Sunset, 1967) and would have added “magnificent”.

The rest of the RidgeBears themselves did not arrive until the Groundsman, Junior Groundsman, Junior Groundsman’s Father, Ground Curator and Ground Curator’s Little Twerp had finished their work and left.

Cooperman had by now delivered about 15 overs on his own in the nets. RolfeDog padded up and showed him a thing or two. RolfeDog couldn't wait for Dakes (Useless Tosser – see last week's report) to win the toss and decide to bat.

Which he did. And decided he would open with RolfeDog and learn a thing or two.

RolfeDog took guard, looked up to see young tearaway Greg Woods at the end of his run-up, and decided he'd teach him a thing or two ... and those veterans in the slips for that matter.

The first ball, when it arrived, started on a middle-and-leg line; by the time it pitched it was around middle; it cut away further still and lifted sharply pinching RolfeDog's right thumb firmly against the bat handle. "You Really Got Me" (1964) thought RolfeDog as he saw the ball travel in a gentle parabola into the hands of second slip and turned to walk off.

"RolfeDog, c Veteran, b Young-Tearaway – 0". Balls faced: 1

"Well at least you had a 100% strike rate" said Gilet to great amusement (mostly his own) on his return to the pavilion.

As if to prove this was no fluke, Wellsy nicked off to Young-Tearaway shortly after, then Dakes hit a long hop to Ben Norgrove at deep cover who swallowed the catch in the way Dakes swallows cake. 28-3.

The Real Captain (Perry) and Hollywood did a rebuild, with Hollywood in combative mood again until, encouraged by the first ball from Steve Bates which he lodged high in a tree, he steered a low full toss into the hands of Norgrove on the boundary. "Your strike rate was 116.67" announced Gilet on Hollywood's return to the pavilion and we all gave thanks.

Hugo joined The Real Captain (TRC) and reined in his natural attacking tendencies (geddit?) on the basis that with the score at 85-4 it would be unwise to gallop before he could trot. TRC seems to like Shipton and when he was eventually next out for 52 with the score on 144, Gilet kindly brought it to our attention that TRC has averaged 166 against Shipton for the season against RolfeDog's big fat 0. "Mind you..." said RolfeDog, "...he's taken a while doing it".

Hugo was caught behind soon after, for a painstaking 17 but reflected that – after Junaid's brief visit to the wicket – for once his innings had enabled others to make hay later; Gilet observed that Hugo had batted for as many minutes as Alex had made runs (52), with just the 17 to show for it. All this was too much for the arithmetical part of Gilet's brain which shut down temporarily while he recalibrated, and this saved him a horse-whipping from Hugo.

By now – as if you hadn't guessed it – two Ridge veterans were at the wicket. Yes, veteran of the Aston Rowant match report, Max Wall was batting with co-veteran Groucho-chasing-a-waitress-Marx and they were doing it in black-and-white.

84 they put on, without a memorable shot between them, well except for Brooksie's extra cover drive, which startled the waitress. At the other end Birdgy groaned "La la la la, oh my poor rheumatic back" (from Autumn Almanac 1967).

"Your partnership of 84 was only one run less than the first four wickets put on altogether" Gilet told BirdDog on his return to the pavilion, before going for a lie down. Birdy made 39 in 38 balls (SR 102.63 if anyone cares) before Brooksie, who had forgotten his wallet, became the ninth RldgeBear of nine, to be out caught, for a beer-jug-defying 47.

It remained for Cooperman and Gilet (who was no longer boring the charming lady scorer from Shipton, that job having passed to Hollywood) to defy gravity by putting on 16 unbeaten runs. Gilet had the distinction of hitting the ball hard past the well-apportioned Elliot Bryant only for Mr Bryant to chase the ball down over the fast outfield, before it reached the boundary. "What are the chances of that?" thought Gilet and did some statistical analysis before concluding that, like the pending No Deal Brexit, it must be around Six Million to One. We all gave thanks to Boris Johnson for putting this event into context.

Teatime, and it poured with rain. With a masterful grip of mathematics and of the league rules, Gilet announced that if we restarted in half an hour, no time would be lost and his teammates started to yawn.

Under the Bosman ruling, Roz was soon to be out of contract and so went to enormous lengths to have her tea-making agreement renewed for next season. The Committee is now likely to consider the renewal sympathetically after a Shipton player said this was the best tea he had seen all season and tried to lure her away with the promise of a brand new microwave and a Morphy Richards kettle. She may prefer use of a Kenwood Mixer, which is on offer from the BRCC Committee together with a new set of jay-cloths.

In the dressing room, as we prepared to go out again, Wellsy and Captain Perry debated the tactics employed by Admiral Nelson in the Battle of Trafalgar where, instead of lining his fleet in parallel to the enemy ships in the traditional manner he split his fleet and sent two columns right into the middle of the enemy enabling his better trained crews and larger guns to annihilate the French and the Spanish in the melee.

At the same time and in another corner of the dressing room, Brooksie, another tactical genius, was describing how he had once bashed an already mortally injured badger on the head, to put it out of its misery just as a couple of ladies on horseback came into view (neither of whom was Hugo in disguise).

RolfeDog was struck by the intellectual gravity of at least one of these two stories and how Admiral Nelson might have been able to use Brooksie's weaponry to good effect at Trafalgar had they not lived 214 years apart and had the Spanish ships been manned by injured badgers.

The Shipton innings became the Cooperman-and-Junaid-Show as Admirable DakesEye employed his big guns up front. In the same week that Morf morphed into Morph (see

WhatsApp post by Hollywood), Cooperman morphed into Yorkerman. Once BirdDog had given up a hard chance at slip it became obvious that no one was going to be caught behind the wicket, so The Unreal Captain (DakesEye) decided to pack the area. This was the ultimate humiliation for Hollywood: a once-great Mid Off, moved to the obscurity of third slip via a short sojourn at midwicket last week, even when the new Greatest Mid-Off in the World (Yorkerman) was bowling,

Yorkerman bowled Ben Norgrove which served him right for fielding so well, then bowled Steve Bates first ball and accounted for Luke Champion, all bowled. This brought in Tim Senior. His father, (presumably) Jerry Senior had captained last week so who is the more senior? And when they bat together who is the senior partner? And where is William Senior (Aston Rowant) in all this?

Senior Junior hit three boundaries before Yorkerman decided enough was enough and yorked him.

By now all players under 55 were in the slip cordon except Hugo who – with great irony – DakesEye had placed at “short” third man. This meant that Wellsy, a “Well Respected Man” (1965), with all his original limbs and RolfeDog, mostly a “Plastic Man” (1969) were patrolling the covers. Wellsy went full length (‘call that full length’? thought Hugo) to save a boundary and got up with various facial grazes including a bloody nose.

After Junaid won an LBW decision he persuaded Ian Lewis to give a catch to Wellsy, before Yorkerman achieved his first ever five-for for the Ridge with another bowled: 10-3-36-5.

It has to be reported that one of his victims returned to the pavilion in a state of frustration and described Yorkerman as “Goofy”. Goofy?? How could he insult this “Dedicated Follower of Fashion” (1966). There’s no doubt Yorkerman was Happy, happier than the Grumpy batsman he celebrated in a slightly Bashful way. Like Pluto he was on a different planet.

Enter Callum Dingle who had had a bit to say a few times earlier while collecting the ball from the boundary. After a SIX over cover, a FOUR behind point he shouldered arms stylishly and was bowled by Junaid. “Should have left that one alone” said someone. There was one more wicket for Junaid taking him to four - 10-2-43-4 - and then *it* happened.

The opening bowlers completed their ten overs each and Gilet came on. Showing scant sensitivity Dakes had held him back until nine wickets were down. Had this been the plan? I’m “Tired of Waiting for You” (1965) said Gilet to Dakes and milked it by not taking a wicket in his first over enabling Dakes to try a few deliveries at the other end without his signature ‘hop’ which can make him look like an “Apeman” (1970). The last wicket was then caught by Wellsy off Gilet who calculated the effect that his 1.3 overs 1 wicket for 4 runs would have on his season’s statistics, this being his last game of the season.

We had won by 184 runs, a little while before a beautiful “Waterloo Sunset” (1967) descended over the ground. Some of us decided to celebrate by going for a curry in Risborough. The Real Saint, freshly returned from the 2s narrow defeat in the foreign country of Cropedy, declined on the basis it was after his bedtime as he felt like he had been

away for All Day and All of the Night (1965), while Gilet shocked everyone by just declining. Yes, Gilet declined a curry. This time it was the rest of us "Tired of Waiting for You" (1965) and we reported this event to the league. Miraculously he persuaded Nathalie that as he was going to miss next week's final match, a good meal was the least he deserved. The CCL statistics committee was by now in chaos but who cared?

RolfeDog and Cooperman parked in "Dead End Street" (1968) Once the waiter at Birdy's favourite haunt had told Birdy what he would be ordering, we spent the evening enlightening The Real Captain as to the particular and peculiar characteristics of one Mr Geoff Tombs (a "20th Century Man", 1971), thereby fulfilling our obligation to the world to ensure that someone somewhere is talking about Tombsy at any one time. Birdy's strike rate was 150.27 words to the minute: Gilet made a note of this, advised the CCL and put it in his "Autumn Almanac" (1976)

Gilet was definitely not available next week, Hugo needed geeing-up (geddit?) in order to be available and would the newly-named but unavailable Yorkerman be persuaded to play after all? See next week's episode.

The day ended as it started, with RolfeDog and Yorkerman returning to the club (to collect Yorkerman's car) some time before 11pm, where they had a short net in the dark and RolfeDog thrashed Yorkerman's bowling all over the place. "It's a mixed up, muddled up, shook up world" as Ray Davies once said. (from "Lola" 1967).

Dominic Cummings is unavailable for comment

Alan Partridge has made a formal complaint to the CCL over unauthorised use of the term "North Norfolk Digital" in last week's match report