

Bledlow Ridge II 104
Brackley 108-3

This was the day when Taggart lost his temper, Henry lost his nicknames and Ady lost his memory and/or grip on reality.

The Ridge also lost, collectively, at cricket.

First thing we lost, however, was John Rolfe. Apparently he hasn't missed a Saturday in 20 years or something but presumably Mrs Rolfedog has twigged that he's been wasting his afternoons at the club and his evenings hunched over a keyboard writing these reports.

Captain Taggart then made the game's greatest tactical blunder by losing the toss (useless [noun. one who tosses] that he is etc.). A green, sloping, uneven pitch with a thick outfield had our esteemed umpire The Chair sagely predicting 100 would be a good score, and in appreciation of his wisdom we proceeded to score almost exactly that.

Rob was run out. It is hard to say which travelled more slowly, Rob as he sauntered what he must have presumed was an easy two or the ball as it pulled up suddenly in long grass. He must have lost his sense of time and space. One popped up to account for young 'Nasser' Nate and Ady propped forward and was quickly adjudged LBW.

This left Dave Maunder and Dan Strange to try to repair the damage. Stranger hit some fine shots down the ground, even a boundary or two, but then he lost his off peg.

There was a controversial incident involving DOEG and the opposition's delightful captain-wicketkeeper, remarkable because Dave's winning personality rarely incites any animosity. Captain Charming pouched the ball, about a minute later DOEG went for some gardening and he whipped off the bails with a long appeal. The umpires were unimpressed, especially The Chair who was forced to rise from slumber to consult with his colleague. A friendly debate ensued, much enjoyed by all.

As the innings progressed at a soporific pace, a much more energetic debate began surrounding the appropriate moniker for the latest Ridge superstar, Mr. Henry Donnelly. Everyone has nicknames at the Ridge. His brother, Matt Donnelly, is Mahendra Singh Dhonelly, aka MS. What now? Suggestions abounded.

Initially (pun for Rolfedog there) they were nautical: HMS Donnelly? Then they were regal: HM Donnelly? Shaky had just settled on Her Maj – or just Maj - when his dad threw a spanner in the works by informing us his full set was HW. Shaky was at his wits end. High Wycombe? Halloween? The Hartford Whalers?

Sadly HectoWatt was soon batting with his brother, armed with a hopeless jumble of names. However, for each name that fell by the wayside he picked up a run and so topped the scoring charts. Thanks largely to the Donnelly family we reached a (predictable) 104.

Tea taken, we determined to put the squeeze on Brackley with tight fielding. Which of our five wicketkeepers should set the standard? As Shaky pulled on the gloves Ady lost his powers of recollection. They do say 'judge not lest ye be judged', and it's safe to say Ady's keeping has already been judged. Nothing wrong with a few digs at Shaky's technique though (which was actually quite effective.)

Serenaded by the Brackley Town F.C. PA system, which it's fair to say was pretty one-track, we proceeded to bowl too many half-trackers ourselves (2nd pun?) and Brackley started well. Homework did get one to loop gently to Schniff who, despite his fashionably retro cricket whites, rather lost his cool, crying 'OH S**T' before taking an easy catch.

Not however the easiest of the day. Taggart didn't seem bothered by spilling a very slow 'viciously spinning' return catch, claiming it was a bump ball, to the confusion of many. Those confused included the batsman who apparently would have walked. Promptly dispatched by same batsman, Taggart very definitely and very audibly lost his temper.

Jam-Jar bowled a fine spell and eventually castled their opener – who with 70 doubled the next best score of the day – and Nasser Nate stole one with the scores level to buy us an extra point, but it was too late. We had lost. Congratulations to George H.W. Bush, who was man-of-the-match.

The final drama: on the way home we heard the news. The first team had not lost. They had won. Then, like Ady, we were all in dreamland.