

## Gentlemen of Bedales C.C. Vs Hammer Bottom Butsers C.C. - 26<sup>th</sup> June 2011

Flaming June had finally arrived at the memorial field and the sun shone gloriously as the visitors erected their flagpole and surprisingly announced they now play only "proper cricket".

With the GoBs aghast at such an unexpected statement, a ten minute discussion between the two team's committees ensued, when it was agreed that the format of the match would be 30 overs each, no retirement at 25 and definitely no "free hit - not out first ball".

Proper cricket indeed!

Skip Hillisy won the toss and realising that his cup floweth over with cricketing talent, decided the GoBs should bat first.

The experienced and reliable opening pair of Mike S and Wethers got off to a patient start but were soon in their magnificent stride, falling just one short of a 50 partnership as Wethers was stumped for 20.

Al Mc came to the crease in his now accustomed No 3 slot but soon lost his partner as Mike was caught behind by visiting skip and wicket keeper David G for another fine score of 34.

Al was joined by Charlie C., Dunhurst's young, fit, Antipodean gap year student who enjoys bashing Pom bowling. The 19 he took off Julian Wilkinson's over has condemned that poor man to long odds on favouritism for the prize for 'Most Expensive Over' in the Bottom's post season 2011 Roll of Honour.

Charlie then proceeded to smash a ball back at the bowler, almost decapitating the umpire as it sped past for yet another four.

Al decided he could spend his time nurdling but after just a few nurdles decided that he would get in on the act and joined in, dispatching the bowlers to all sides of the ground.

As an aside to all this, as the Bottoms were a man short, various Gentlemen took turns in fielding for a few overs. This occurred both smoothly and inconspicuously until Sledger Petrie took his turn and, I can only assume forgetting himself, started sledging his own batsmen.

Charlie's penchant for whacking the ball back hard at the bowler was finally his undoing when one amazingly stuck and he was caught and bowled for 38.

George P, our other young buck, joined Al who went on to complete his 50 on his way to a superb 61 when he was eventually bowled.

Guy B and George started well until the inevitable happened and the athletic, speedy one was run out by five yards going for a quick second run.

George was just about to turn for a third at the other end. He was out a few balls later to another fine catch.

A few more runs were added by Tom B and Jay G (with a handle like that, surely he should have been rapping on the John Peel stage at Glastonbury) as the innings closed at 178 for 6.

Dave's tea was its usual mix of thick cut cheese and pickle; superbly seasoned egg: and ham with just a touch of mustard sandwiches, the obligatory sausage rolls and for a change donuts and a large bowl of strawberries. Unfortunately, for some inexplicable reason there were no tea bags, no sugar and no milk. Fortunately, Wethers to the rescue as he raced off to the local Co Op and returned, proudly announcing that he had bought fair trade tea. It was commented that one could actually taste the lack of exploitation. We all slurped and nodded in agreement.

The openers for the Bottoms were met with a GoB's pace attack of Mike S and Jay G, despite the latter admitting that three (or was it four?) donuts were laying somewhat heavy. It made no difference as Jay took two quick wickets. The first a caught and bowled when the batsman skied one and Jay bellowed, Brian Blessed like, "MINE!!!" before everyone stopped dead in their tracks and he comfortably took the catch. The second was from a fine delivery that seemed late and bowled the batsman all ends up.

Mike took a wicket with his last ball, a fine slip catch by Wethers that surprised himself even more than his astounded team mates.

George came on for a spell of 4-1-9-1 and Guy B teased and confused the batsmen with a mixture of flight and variation. This climaxed with an event seldom recorded in a cricket scorebook:

**Batsman out - Stumped Chancellor, Bowled Britton!**

With the Gentlemen very much on top, Tom B came on to bowl his looping, extra slow balls at one end with Sledger at the other. With the ball hardly reaching the bat let alone coming on to it, the batsmen found it very difficult to get the ball away and when they did, it was invariably collected and thrown in hard to the keeper, over the stumps by George and Charlie in the deep.

On the other side of the pitch, a calm had settled until the sky suddenly went dark. An unannounced solar eclipse or Big Gordy popping along to see how things were going? I hear you ask. Neither, but a swarm of wild (when I say wild, they looked furious!) bees at a height of no more than eight feet above the ground passed over Hillsy who hit the deck and watched for thirty seconds as the vicious little beggars flew overhead towards Al, who was 50 yards away. Al looked up, shimmied, sold them a dummy, Phil Bennett like, and watched them fly off into the far distance.

Sledger, unmoved by all this commotion, carried on pinning the batsmen down until the unexpected happened. He bowled first one, then a second and with the home skip catching the visiting skip in the deep, finished with excellent figures of 7-0-23-3.

Wethers took the last official Bottom's wicket (a bit of a gimme stumping for The Chancellor) before we welcomed Sledger's charming daughter, Joss to the crease at number 11 for the visitors.

Miss P was bowled but given not out, scored a couple of runs and saw out the remaining few balls with the match finishing in a victory for the GoBs by margin of 55 runs.

Now that's what I call "Proper Cricket".