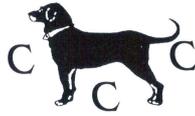


CHILMARK CRICKET CLUB
Affiliated to the Wiltshire Cricket Board



CCC v Douglas Jardine – Sunday 17th June, 2017

Note to archivists: when you write the history of Chilmark Cricket Club, please gloss over June 2017.

Sunshine, imported by Bev Small for the Church Fete, washed over Cleeves Farm on Saturday, making a postcard of the already picturesque village ground: upon it cricketers, beside it their families and beyond it, drifting in on the lightest of breezes, the fete and its raffle draw. The marrow of summer.

Douglas Jardine, a team run by Hugh Pym of the BBC, and populated by many of his offspring, arrived a little late, but soon had their openers at the crease and facing up to Max Allen from the Pettigrew end. The first ball was smashed to the cover boundary. Allen was unfazed though, conceding just one more run from the over and testing the batsmen with some good swinging deliveries.

From the non-Pettigrew end, and completing the youthful new ball partnership, Angus Steele charged in. After a few looseners he too found his way past the outside edge and it looked a matter of time before he would strike. However it was Allen who made the first inroads, getting one under the bat of the opener and removing his middle stump. After five overs the visitors were 25-1.

High temperatures combined with a sympathetic captain meant short spells for the bowlers. Consequently Jake Taylor was brought in to the attack early, and his first over was fairly tidy, with five runs coming from it. His second, however, went pear shaped. Four boundaries in the first five deliveries saw the number three bat race to 30 as he looked to take the game away from Chilmark early. Taylor, though, came back well, inducing a thick edge from the final delivery, which was well caught by Patrick Craig McFeely, running back from first slip.

At 68-2 after ten overs Douglas Jardine's run rate was concerning. To make matters worse for Chilmark, one of their strike bowlers - Angus Steele - was out of the attack with a back injury. The injury was a consequence of the teenage Steele growing at a rate not seen since Cornish lad Jack blew his mother's cow money on magic beans. If he keeps it up Steele will be able to adjust the Chilmark Church clock by hand when summer time ends in October.

Ben Eastmond was leading the season averages for Chilmark's bowlers coming in to this game, with just seven runs leaked per wicket. No more. His five wicketless overs went for 34 runs and though no-one said it, his recent hair cut is probably to blame.

At drinks Douglas Jardine were 111-2 and looking like setting a big total. A change of approach was needed and with this in mind Carl Jacobs warmed up his bowling arm while The Doc downed his orange squash and pondered his next tactical move. Jacobs's calisthenics were to no avail though, the skipper opting instead for Jack Stearman's left arm googly-whatsits. However his three overs went for 20 runs and brought no reward. Darren Lee (0-17) then tried his luck, as did Reg 'Golden Arm' Allen (0-25), but there was little joy for the bowling attack. Chilmark were running out of options.

The breakthrough finally came via Brand King, who struck in his third over with a ball that jagged into the batsman's pads and onto the stumps. By now Douglas Jardine were beyond 150 and the new batsman looked as competent as the one he'd replaced. Sixes soon followed. Then something magical happened. In the absence of Frog Lane's eighth best cricketer, Ben Fowles, Max Allen, also a resident of the legendary thoroughfare, took it upon himself to do what Frog Lane cricketers do best - avoid taking catches. Out on the deep mid-wicket boundary Max was talking to the sheep when a ball was lofted in his direction. The youngest of the Allens made an initial movement towards the ball, but then fully tuned into the Fowles' method. He backed away, waited for it to bounce and then, in the piece de resistance, watched it spin away from him and roll into the fence for four. Fowles would have been proud.

In the 27th over King struck again, repeating his into the stumps off the pads trick as the visitors stumbled to 178-4. Two overs later Max Allen gained some redemption for his fielding faux pas, generating a catch to mid-wicket, which was well taken by Carl Jacobs.

In the closing overs boundaries and the occasional six continued to flow, as Douglas Jardine raced towards a very healthy 230-6.

The tea break was a special treat - served by Blanche Stearman and Becky Lee in a dedicated marquee at the Church Fete, all of which was arranged by Bev Small, whose judicious organisational skills ensures 22 players, plus umpires and friends, are royally fed every game day at Cleeves Farm.

Despite 'Windmill' Will Thompson's urgings that some Chilmark players stay at the fete to have a go at Splat the Rat, the game had to go on. Upon return to the ground The Doc made a surprise adjustment to the batting line up and sent Carl Jacobs out to open alongside semi-regular opener Jack Stearman. There were 231 runs to get and the job required a wise head.

Stearman, of course, was that wise head, however Jacobs's enthusiasm for all things cricket meant there was a chance he may get the innings off to a flying start. The first over was a maiden. Soon after Jacobs started to find his feet though, hitting boundaries with his first three scoring shots. Stearman then got in on the act also, clearing the mid-wicket fence with a six that was destined for the changing room window, until Brand King leapt from his seat and took only his second catch of the season. Chilmark were cruising at 32-0 after seven overs.

A confident Jacobs is a dangerous beast, and this rarely spoken truism proved uncannily accurate when The Chair cracked a straight drive back at a bowler who was not expecting it. He barely had a chance to move his arms in a futile attempt to protect himself before the ball slammed into his neck. Down he went. It took a few minutes for the bowler to recover, and when he did he was left with a large bruise on his neck, which would take some explaining to his girlfriend upon his return home. Jacobs, meanwhile, quietly and off the record, complained that the bowler's neck had got in the way of a certain boundary. Shortly afterwards he tried to make amends, but the middle of his bat had gone into hiding again, and he was caught at mid-off for 14.

Darren Lee is a bit of a teacher's pet when The Doc is captaining, always managing to get himself promoted up the batting order. He came in at three and immediately sought to justify his position, cracking boundaries straight down the ground as if using a nine iron. Then he was bowled for 13.

Chilmark were making reasonable progress. At 69-2 after 11 overs the run rate was healthy and with Jack Stearman and Brand King at the crease, a hearty pursuit of the total was on the cards. But as is the way this season, things then began to fall apart. Firstly Stearman (25) got a worm burner of a delivery that crawled under his bat and nudged back his off stump. Jake Taylor replaced him and was looking good, until he spooned a catch back to the bowler with his score on two. Max Allen arrived and was playing all the right shots as he raced to eight with two boundaries, until he sliced a catch to point; then Ben Eastmond missed a straight one and was bowled for two.

Chilmark had lost four wickets for 27 runs in nine overs. With fifteen overs remaining and another 135 still required, King decided it was time to swing the bat. Over the next ten overs King helped put 80 runs into Chilmark's score, taking Douglas Jardine's bowlers for three sixes and six boundaries as he raced his own score past the half century mark. Along the way a disciplined Angus Steele turned the strike over, before being bowled for seven. But Jason Stearman then joined King in the middle and the pair began to make the improbable seem possible.

The fireworks ended when King came down the pitch one time too many, missed the ball and was bowled for 71. By then Chilmark's score was looking much more respectable than it had been at the drinks break, however they were still over 50 runs short of the target with just five overs remaining. When Reg Allen then kicked the ball on to his stumps and was out for a duck, the writing seemed to be back on the wall.

But if Douglas Jardine thought the game was won, they didn't account for their position being threatened by one of their own. Hugh Pym was given responsibility for bowling the third last over and it must rank as one of the most ordinary ever seen at Cleeves Farm (this is the place where Ben Fowles bowls regularly). In total 19 runs came from it, through a mixture of no balls that bounced to a roll, or sailed on the full over the batsman's head, wides that didn't even touch the pitch, as well as the occasional boundary hit by Jason Stearman and Patrick Craig McFeely when the ball was within range. So hideous was it that the scorers struggled to keep up - the scorebook next to Pym's name looks like the margin in a bored teenager's school book.

The consequence was that Chilmark suddenly had an outside chance of chasing down the visitor's total. This became slightly more possible when Stearman and The Doc took 13 runs from the penultimate over, meaning 21 were required for an unlikely victory in the last over.

It started well, with Stearman (18 not out) hitting two boundaries off the first three balls. Alas a single then meant The Doc was left with the somewhat challenging task of hitting two sixes from the remaining two deliveries. No fancy footwork would save the day though, as he was bowled for 13 and Chilmark fell short.

Douglas Jardine CC 230-5 (M Allen 2-35; B King 2-39) defeated Chilmark CC 219 (B King 71; Jack Stearman 25)