

CHILMARK CRICKET CLUB
Affiliated to the Wiltshire Cricket Board



CCC v The Wiltshire Queries – Sunday 11th June, 2017

It's not who wins or loses that matters, it's whether or not Julia Sheppard brings her flapjacks to the tea. By this measure, Sunday's affair at Cleeves Farm was a raging success.

On the cricket field... it was another story.

The Wiltshire Queries batted first, which means they probably won the toss, which is to be expected nowadays. Eleven Chilmark players then took to the field and served the first half of their afternoon's long sentence. It was sunny, but windy, because life can't just be nice, can it? No. It has to give with one hand and take with the other. Why bother.

Anyway, Pete Corbin got things under way, steaming in from the Pettigrew end and threatening to throttle any batsman that dared swing the bat at his leather projectiles. One of them did and got a boundary. It wouldn't be his last. Corbin glared. At the other end Ollie Clayton was given up-the-hill bowling duty. This was made extra difficult because Clayton basically hasn't bowled since about this time last year. Consequently he was wayward and the Queries were off to a flying start.

In the third over a rare shaft of light shone upon a dark and bitter cricketing existence, when Corbin snuck a wonderfully executed in swinger through the batsman's defence. Seeing the ball heading towards the stumps, miss the bat, but then get deflected away, Corbin pirouetted and appealed to umpire Carl Jacobs for justice in the form of an upheld LBW appeal. Jacobs, however, was having none of it. Corbin was aghast. Also oblivious, as everyone else on the field, including the batsman and umpire, had seen that the ball had in fact hit the off stump. Corbin then tried to appear as though he knew that all along, but he wasn't fooling anyone.

Clayton continued and began to find his line and length. Then he trapped the Queries' number three bat in front and the visitors were 39-2 in the fifth over. It was a fair old run rate, but wickets were falling. Cricket was happening.

A few boundaries later and the Queries had moved swiftly along to 47, only for Corbin to strike again, this time knocking the leg stump from the ground and not troubling Umpire Jacobs with a request for further adjudication.

Things were looking up. They then looked upper, as Max Allen, replacing Corbin from the Pettigrew end, got the stump trifecta when he removed the middle one with his fourth delivery. The Queries were 54-4 in the ninth over and Chilmark had a deluded sense of belief.

For the next 15 overs that delusion was like a splinter under a fingernail, as the surviving opener and a rather senior left-handed bat plundered runs to all parts. There are few highlights to share during this period, though Ned Pattenden's return to the bowling crease for two overs of mystery are worth a mention. However far more notable was an incident that occurred in the 21st over - allow me to paint the scene for you...

The wind sock is reaching for Dinton, whipped by an incessant breeze from the west - a harbinger of doom. Sheep graze nervously in the north-east paddock, while the horses, shadowed from happenings by their fly masks, huddle either side of a fence in the eastern paddock, licking one another's hides for comfort. Brand King, trying to put off-field woes out of his head, has the ball in hand, standing at his mark a few paces from the bowling crease at the Pettigrew end. A rather senior left-handed batsman taps the pristine pitch by his foot, ready to play his part. Around the field ten Chilmark players await anxiously to see if they will be called upon. But the wind blows for just one of them - the one they call (for the time being) Frog Lane's sixth best cricketer.

King approaches the crease, flings his leading arm skyward then brings over his right. The ball emerges from his hand, its trajectory shorter than intended. It pitches on leg stump, bounces to waist height and is whipped away to its date with destiny.

Out at deep square leg Ben J Fowles is considering the impending tea. Julia Sheppard has brought her flapjacks along again and a rumour has reached Fowles that Jo Ulliyot has turned up with a surprise cake of some sort. Ben likes surprises. He rubs his tummy with giddy anticipation. So much to look forward to. Suddenly, though, he is shaken from his daydreaming as a cracking sound, perhaps a gunshot, rings out. He looks up and realises his teammates are all following something in the air between him and the pitch, which reminds him that cricket is happening and he is playing it. He tries to follow their eyes and locate what it is that has caught their interest. Perhaps it's a pheasant and The Doc is trying to intimidate the opposition by shooting it. But it soon becomes apparent that, far more ominously, the cricket ball is heading his way. If only he had seen it earlier, he thinks, he would have had time to get out of the way, maybe take a few steps back, let it bounce and then 'save the boundary'. But it is too late for that now - the ball is heading straight at him and he is going to have to make a genuine attempt at catching it.

Frog Lane's seventh best cricketer cups his hands, anticipates the place in the universe ('Oh why do we travel through the unending vacuum of space at such speed?') that its path might intercept his, closes his eyes and prays that Jo Ulliyot's surprise cake isn't carrot, because carrots shouldn't be in cakes, it's just not right. Then he remembers he is meant to be praying that he would catch the ball instead, so he quickly amends his scripture, but by then the ball has bounced off his arm and rolled to a standstill on the grass by his right boot.

The wind sock falls limp, the horses part company and break into idle trots, while the sheep, recently shorn of their winter coats, chew their cuds with banal indifference. Ben Fowles, in a dark hole, and slips to eighth in the Frog Lane cricket rankings.

King would get his man a couple of overs later, trapping the left hander in front for 44. The partnership, by then, was worth 80 and the Queries were very much on top. The new man in kept an end safe as the opener spread his wings and it wasn't until the 33rd over that Chilmark struck again, Max Allen triumphing twice in three balls, the first bowled, the second well caught behind the wicket by 'keeper Clayton.

When all was said and done the Wiltshire Queries had notched a very competitive 216-7, with their opener remaining unbeaten on 112.

It was a decent total and with Chilmark's batting ranks looking a little thin, there wasn't a great deal of expectation amongst the home team that they'd reel it in. Still, a decent tea could fix all that and a decent tea was delivered. Julia Sheppard prepared a starter to go with her flapjacks, in the form of tuna mayo and sausage sandwiches. Bev Small's ham salad and Melissa Corbin's egg mayo sandwiches also satisfied the savoury cravings of those assembled, while Carl Jacobs's cheese and pickle were provided for those who are in to that kind of thing.

Sarah Miller's carrot cake gave Ben Fowles pause for concern, however there were ample options to satisfy all leanings, with Emma Taylor providing chocolate, Bryan Cross fruit and Bev a Victoria sponge, along with a tasty selection of scones. Jo Ulllyot's surprise cake was chocolate olive oil and it was amongst the first demolished.

During the innings break some of the regular Queries were heard to say that the main reason they keep coming back to play at Chilmark is because of the tea. Quite the compliment. For the tea team. Not the cricketers.

And on that note, Chilmark's innings commenced.

Brand King took strike for the first ball, a lone, dark cloud of despair hanging over the melancholy opener's head. He survived the first few balls, then edged through the slips to get off the mark. His partner, the rarely-out-of-the-news Ben Fowles, was in a better headspace, but also struggled to find the middle of the bat early on. After three overs Chilmark were 4-0.

In the fourth over King was put out of his misery (on the field at least) when he tried to attack but succeeded only in spooning an easy catch back to the bowler. The Australian took his cloud to the changing room and banged his head against the wall so to feel a different kind of pain.

Ollie Clayton arrived as the first drop batsman and immediately started clipping singles around the wicket. Fowles, momentarily, was inspired, driving to the cover boundary and taking his score beyond ten. Then he edged to first slip and Chilmark were 14-2 in the sixth over.

Max Allen will register some big scores for Chilmark one day, maybe even later this season. On Sunday he was out, caught and bowled, for a duck. When Ned Pattenden lofted a drive over a

somewhat elderly fielder's head in the covers, it looked very much like he would get at least a couple of runs for his efforts. However this, like so many others in season 2017, was not Chilmark's day. The fielder tracked backwards, threw his hands at the ball and somehow caught it. Pattenden was gone for one and Chilmark were in dire straits at 28-4.

Dave Ulliyot's wife bought a chocolate olive oil cake to the game, Dave himself bought a calf muscle on the brink. After cracking 15 runs in quick time and, along with Clayton, bringing some respectability back into Chilmark's score, Ulliyot set off for a run from the non-strikers end after Clayton had cracked a shot behind point. As everyone else watched the ball glide across the grass and into the fence, Ulliyot lay on his back in the middle of the pitch. For a moment no-one could understand why he was there. There really seemed no need. But then concern grew and The Doc was beckoned from the pavilion. A quick diagnosis had it that he had pulled a calf muscle and thus his day was done, broken, but not beaten.

"Windmill" Will Thompson joined the fray and immediately sought to replicate his much publicised boundary from a few weeks ago. Every ball he faced, regardless of where it pitched, drew the same shot from young Thompson - down on one knee with the bat arcing through a few moments after the ball has passed by. It looked good from the pavilion, but was relatively ineffective on the pitch. Still, he managed to get some value for it, racking up seven runs before the method cost him his stumps.

Clayton, meanwhile, had been looking imperious, showing he was a class above his struggling teammates. But then on 44 a ball kept low and his innings, along with any far-fetched hopes for Chilmark, came to an end.

Darren Lee bowled a tidy, if uneventful, spell earlier in the day; but he saved his fireworks for his time in the middle with the bat. In a little more than three overs he cracked five boundaries, all straight down the ground, and looked as though he could do it all day. Then he edged to slip and was gone for 25.

Patrick Craig-McFeely came in at ten and nurdled a single before being bowled, making way for Pete Corbin, who felt his batting was under appreciated by being put in at number 11. He was bowled first ball. To make things worse the Queries then asked him to stay out there so they could bowl at Jason Stearman for the remaining three overs of the game. It was a cruel form of punishment, only terminated by Stearman's dismissal for 11 in the second last over.

So another heavy defeat for Chilmark. In the sporting parlance of the day, there are some positives to take from it, though in Chilmark's case those all relate to the tea.

Wiltshire Queries CC 216-7 (M Allen 3-46; P Corbin 2-48) defeated Chilmark CC 158-9 (O Clayton 44; D Lee 25)