

ISIS CRICKET CLUB

20TH ANNIVERSARY CHAIRMAN'S XI

A sun-drenched day in early August, a bit of Isis nostalgia and as close a finish in a friendly cricket match as you could hope for. What a fantastic day!

Back in April one of our Queens Saturdays was noted as fixture-free, and Chairman Keith Ponsford was therefore invited to select opposition to befit the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of Isis Cricket Club. In the months afterwards, Ponsford set about his task with aplomb and contacted past players and friends from regular opponents in the Isis list. There was a little last-minute adjustment, but come the day of 4th August a formidable Chairman's XI was ready to face the might of Isis Cricket Club 2007. In actual fact, had they been playing regularly as individuals the Chairman's XI batting line-up was arguably stronger on paper than the regular club side, who had one or two ever-presents missing on the day. So there was an air of confidence among the opposition as they mustered on a fantastic summer's afternoon at Queens. The day started in appropriate style with everybody, including guests, enjoying a glass of Pimms together as



Keith Ponsford entertained those all around with a fine speech to introduce one by one his team of the day (see profiles below). After a toast to The Club, the players then scurried away to the dressing rooms and prepared for battle, where by mutual agreement the Isis present were sent out into the hot sun, and the Chariman's XI came out to bat.

Keith Whiter and Jim Clemson opened the Isis attack against Clive Whitby and Dave Penhallurick, who had travelled over from Ireland especially for the occasion. With tight bowling from both ends the batsman took their time to settle, though class shone through whenever any bad or wayward ball was sent down and was despatched for runs. Penhallurick was trapped plum LBW in the sixth over, given with no hesitation by the highly respected straight down the middle umpire,



Jonathan Watts (Bowler's Union). Dave Lawrence came in to support Whitby and after the bowling changes these two together started to build a score. Dale Jacobs, secret weapon of Isis, found the early going hard as his line and length failed him, while Roy Blatchford bowled reliably at the other end. Nick Wyatt replaced Jacobs and got early success, trapping Lawrence LBW for 18 trying to sweep off one knee, and

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Blatchford then bowled Rob Randall in the next over for 2. Julian Francis came in and showed his class before an excellent Blatchford delivery turned and removed his off-stump for 8. While all this was going on Whitby continued to mount a score, and when Alan East came out and started to support well things looked ominous for Isis. After Whitby had raised his bat in salute of a half-century (well done Clive, still got it!) Whiter was brought back to the attack and gained immediate success when Whitby drove to mid-on and Nick Wyatt took a well-judged catch. Trevor Williams joined East in the middle and together these two put on a very good stand, running cheeky singles with gay abandon. East eventually perished for a very good 39 to the returning Jacobs, and Williams and Jon Watts carried their bats for 28 and 10 respectively. A score of 175 was always going to be a stern challenge for the Isis side, and so it proved to be.

A fine Martin Cross tea was consumed in the break before the Chairman's XI took the field to defend their first innings total. The opening attack took an over or two to settle, though Richard Howard soon started to bowl dependably. Once Powis had remembered when to let the ball go, he also fared better and had Richard Stoneman caught by East for 11. Neil Johnson joined Olly Walter in the middle and together they started to build a typically measured response. Walter was eventually out for 38 after trying to work a Keith Ponsford delivery away to third-man and a little later Julian Francis took the first of three wickets dismissing Johnson for 23 to a Jonathan Watts catch. After Ramcreepaul was run out for nought, Paul Jacobs had started to settle the innings but then



fell to an excellent diving catch at short mid-wicket from Penhallurick from the bowling of Francis. Was the Isis middle-order rot going to set in? When John Cripps and Keith Whiter both fell cheaply, the latter to an excellent stumping from Williams and with the reply still in double figures, that's certainly how it seemed. However, after some more bowling changes, and through typical determination and great running, Blatchford and Wyatt mounted an excellent recovery which, as time went on and the Isis score rose, started to catch the crowd's attention.

Ponsford, ever the sportsman, continued to share the bowling around and poor old Rob Randall suffered the anguish of a spate of wides and no-balls. As the batsmen worked the ball around for singles, twos and threes. Ponsford was forced to ring the changes when the Isis target fell below 30 and an unlikely Isis victory started to look possible. The possibility became a reality as the target fell below 10, though the drama did not end there as East jubilantly raised his arms after having Blatchford trapped LBW in the final over of the game, with Isis 3 runs short of the target.

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With two wickets remaining, Dale Jacobs strode into the fray, and how fitting that in this anniversary match, Isis's youngest regular should firstly defend a couple of East deliveries before driving the ball over the fielders heads, the batsmen running four and pinching a win at the death. Without a doubt, the Blatchford-Wyatt stand of 79 was the talking point, a club record for the eighth wicket.

And so a tremendous day drew to a close as Isismen young and old, and friends, joined together for a closing beer before saying fond farewells. The die-hards finally gave the Cross's some peace and retired to Aziz for a very pleasant after-match curry, reflecting on a perfect day and looking forward to a repeat performance in 20 years time.

Charimans XI Profiles

Name

Details

Clive Whitby

Perhaps the most stylish batsman in Isis history, in his day Clive played his Saturday cricket at Tiddington and his social cricket at Isis. His batting average of 42 from 47 innings speaks for itself, but his most memorable feat must be an unbeaten 100 on the Warneford Hospital ground against Clinical Pharmacology in 1995.

Dave Penhallurick

The Isis leading run scorer over all time, Mr. P still turns out to bolster the Isis batting line-up on his frequent visits from Ireland. Dave scored 1,092 runs in the 2002 season, and in that same year scored the club record of 151 not out in the opening game of the season against West Hanney, which amazingly Isis went on to lose.

Dave Lawrence

The Victor Meldew of Isis Cricket Club, Dave Lawrence immortalised the phrase "Play Fucking Cricket!" when he hurled this invective on a young and impressionable Neil Johnson in a friendly game against Jordans in 1996. While he rates himself as a bit of a batsman (don't we all), Dave's bowling record shows his true bent, where to the end of 2006 he had taken 348 wickets in his Isis playing career. I bet we all wish we are as fit as Dave when we reach his years (he's still a silly old sod!)

Rob Randall

Dr. Rob Randall, chemist, poll-tax collector, legend! Rob holds the club record for the most successive ducks (7) which happened during his only year of captaincy. While he never really shone with either bat or ball and no longer turns out for us on a weekend, Rob is still a dedicated and seasoned tourist who excels at the art of sleep, whether in the car or (more usually) in the bar. The only Isisman in living history to balance a pint of Guinness on his head for 5 minutes while asleep. Another nice bloke despite being a Brummy!



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- Julian Francis Julian is a dear friend and ever-present opponent from United Oxford Hospitals (Clinical Pharmacology as they were). A left-arm bowler and right-hand batsman Julian is very adept at both and is a true competitor. Despite all the years we have known him, Julian has only played competitively for Isis once when he travelled to Torquay, Devon in 2004 to join a depleted Isis tour party in a famous game against Barton C.C. when the entire team were lost and arrived 90 minutes late for the game despite the club being ten minutes away from the tour hotel.
- Alan East Alan East is one of those of the teaching fraternity, who came to Isis in the year 2000, pays his annual subscription without fail, and hardly ever makes himself available to play. Despite being a dower Brummy, he is a genuinely nice guy who can bat, bowl and field when he wants to. He gives great banter on the field, shines the ball with style and wears a silly floppy sun hat.
- Trevor Williams Trevor Williams is Mr Wayfarers cricket club. Many a young player have come of age in the Wayfarers side under Trevor's expert tutelage, not least his son Chris who in the same year as Trevor started playing for Isis scored his maiden century in the year 2000 against the College Servants. Trevor is another who defies his age and while he now chooses to keep his playing days to the Wayfarers calendar, his wicket-keeping is as sharp as ever as his umpiring, where his judgement is spot-on.
- Jonathan Watts As Trevor is to Wayfarers, Jonathan is to Enstone, where his bowling always proves to be a formidable match for any batsman. Jonathan and the chairman go way back to the days when Keith was an Enstone lad himself, so when Isis started their regular fixtures with Enstone in 2002 it gave both (and a few besides) a chance to catch up. Isis and Enstone matches are always keenly contested, though back five years ago Jonathan orchestrated some pretty heavy defeats of Isis. While in recent years the pendulum has swung in favour of Isis, there is always an edge when the two teams meet.
- Richard Howard Richard is another old colleague and acquaintance of the Chairman, and was long-term fixture secretary of Charlton-on-Otmoor before handing that job over a couple of seasons ago. Richard is a canny and respected player who can both bat and bowl in the top order. Charlton v Isis is another of those fixtures that always has an edge and where honours are pretty even over time,. That is except for six-a-side cricket where too often the Charlton boys turn up to nick the silverware from our annual event.

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Alan Powis While never really one for wielding the willow, Alan Powis was a fine opening bowler in his day. What Alan lacked in pace, he more than matched with wile and guile and 6th spot in the all-time Isis career records for wickets taken is testimony to his success for the club. His bowling action was never exactly text book— he ran in, gave a skip and with a whirl of the arm (as the other stayed still) sent a swinging ball down a good line and length that would nip back and have the batsman beaten all ends up. A bit of a faddy eater was Alan (had his own personal pot of jam at Queens as I remember) but a good drinker none the less. A real character, and a delight to have playing down at Queens again.

Keith Ponsford Last but not least, the chairman himself. It would seem that there are not many people in and around the Oxford area that Keith hasn't played football, rugby, badminton or cricket with or indeed educated in his time at Bayswater, Marston or Cutteslowe schools. An Isis original, Keith is a real figurehead for the club and extends a social and welcoming hand to all and sundry. That is, unless they are facing him down the track where his competitiveness prevails and his so-called knuckle ball is legendary. Keith is the only man to take a hat-trick in an Isis six-a-side competition. He may be an educator, but woe betide any under-16 batsman that faces him; he shows no mercy and has snaffled up the wicket and destroyed the confidence of many a young cricketer. A legend of Isis, there are not many people who'll be left standing after a drinking session with Mr. Ponsford, where strong real ales disappear with gay abandon into his seemingly hollow legs. Plagued by injury a couple of seasons ago it is a real delight that the big man is back on the field, and enjoying his cricket as much as ever. Mr Ponsford, sir, we salute you.