

Isis Cricket Club

Chair's Report - 2023 Season

Isis AGM, November 7th, 2023

Twelve months ago we had a rather fractious meeting. Hopefully, it will be much calmer this year.

The first committee meeting debated the state of the club. There were too many oldies and a desperate need for youth. As a club we are always looking to grow and develop but the big question was how? There were many good ideas - developing the website, advertising, a greater media presence. In the end we just reverted to the easy option... just get Alex to bring along his mates. As usual we had a mix of personal contacts and complete strangers turning up. So a very warm welcome to: Vish, Abi, Harsh, James, Yash, Ed, Joe and the returning Kieron.

This has been a very different year. For a start there were lots of people at nets. A load of bowlers showing they could bat before being discarded once the season began. A load of batters showing they couldn't bowl before being correctly ignored once the season began.

But I must give some thanks to those who have made the club the success it is:

A new captain (Joe Walter) retaining the ancient Isis tradition of losing more games than are won. Although this year's captain reincarnation was more Sylvester McCoy rather than Tom Baker and took losing to an extreme not seen before. Luckily our wonderful fixtures secretary didn't arrange matches against the Daleks or the Cybermen as we may well have witnessed the end of time. But what a season. We hear a lot in sport about bouncing back from defeat. There are reams of articles and books devoted to overcoming adversity, how (in modern parlance) to 'process' failure, how to learn the right lessons, how to come back stronger. But, Joe, you didn't need those because you never came back. There is an art to losing and you, like Jos Butler, have perfected it.

But you do lose well. Not in that faux Victorian, stiff upper lip, take it like a man, courteous handshake way. No, you lose properly. Like Andy Murray. All half-hidden rage. I have loved your refusal to put a sugary gloss on the pain of defeat, your refusal to indulge in artifice, your refusal to take the positives. Congratulations. Gracious when winning and glorious in defeat. And great credit must also go to Joe for his efforts to ensure that everyone was treated fairly in terms of selection, despite the travails of coping with bad weather and a membership that was both large and eager to play. You managed to keep everyone equally unhappy at not playing. You shared the disappointment evenly. And finally, we mustn't forget your contribution to the charity fund by not only collecting the 'drops' fines but also by paying so much towards it. Your appreciation for the captain, please.

Keith Whiter, the Treasurer, web site manager, cricketing correspondent and general get things done bloke. Thanks for keeping tabs on the monies, collecting and checking it all, paying everyone. For keeping us in good financial health whilst costs are escalating, bills are turning red and the supermarkets are putting security tags on bread. Thanks for a website that is the envy of many and a constant source of statistics that enable everyone to write their own history, and for those match reports. There is nothing better than having played a part in a thrilling victory than to turn to the website to read of the great feats that unfurled. And to read 'A great Isis victory. Ponsford bowled a very, tight economical opening spell taking a couple of early wickets before Whiter and Wyatt dismissed the dangerous top order batters with some excellent bowling. Easty and Joe Walter came

on as change bowlers before Whiter finished off the tail.' And thanks for all your work organising the charity walk.

Nick Wyatt, the Fixtures Secretary. Thanks for putting together such a good set of fixtures, for continually weeding out the unreliable and the 'far too good for us' teams. And locating other teams that play in a similar friendly manner to us and remain about our level. It is no easy job. Also, for sorting out the grounds. We are so lucky to have Queens as our home ground and although we are now having to play more at Brasenose this can hardly be described as one of the world's worst lifestyle choices. Unlike choosing to live in a country with a Home Secretary who... But most of all thanks for being part of a cricketing dad-son combo. What a proud day that was when Nick and William took to the field together. Think Frank and Frank Jr Lampard, Mickey and Alex Steward, Floyd Mayweather Sr and Jr, David and Johnny Bairstow, Cesare and Paulo Maldini. What do they all have in common? Fathers and sons successful in the same sport. And the son was always better than the father. Thanks, Nick.

Alex Beavan, the Secretary, without whom everything would get done before the last minute. Alex is a star of the club, organizing events in surprising venues, ensuring the decisions we make are eventually followed up, remembering vital things at the last moment. He is the Isis version of Jimmy Glass, Agueroooo, Geoff Hurst or perhaps, more pertinently, Jean Van der Velde coming down the 18th fairway. Thanks for all your hard work, Al.

Thanks to Keith Ponsford, the President and Safeguarding Officer for keeping us all safe again, all year. For the golf, for constantly helping and supporting in the background and for proving beyond doubt that children always end up better at sport than their parents. Cheers Keith

Finally to all the committee members who have supported and helped this year – the vice captains (Olly, Rich, Harry) who nearly all had a better win ratio than the captain but stayed mostly quiet about it, for organizing venues (Jon), devising and running the incomprehensible Fantasy League (Ravi), and most of all, for keeping me sane on the journey to Compton Dando (Jakey). All your help, support and ideas make a difference – in a good way. And of course to all of the members of the club who, through your kindness and generosity of spirit, make the club what it is today – a team that has won one game since the end of June.

But let's not let facts get in the way of a good story. Next season is what counts. The theatre of yesterday is history. Think of the potential in our side, a bowling attack that can dominate games, batters who can fulfill their dreams and inspire a new era of success. For this team is steeped in the values of brotherhood, sacrifice and charitable works with a sense of its own destiny, a sacred mission in which we, who inhabit its spirit, play for something much larger than ourselves. Unless we don't get picked in which case the club can go to hell in a handcart.

Allan East