

## ISLIP CRICKET CLUB



Away from the hurly burly of weekly Sunday cricket, the long winter evenings leave plenty of time for contemplation. And what better to contemplate in those gloomy hours than Wisden's "“What are the butchers for?” and other splendid cricket quotations?”. Harold Pinter put cricket in context when he said “I tend to believe that cricket is the greatest thing that God ever created on earth ... certainly greater than sex, although sex isn’t too bad either”. We are yet to canvas the views of Islip squad members on this particular bon mot, but we hope they will remember that “Cricketers are brave men and, at the same time, so casual, so apparently unexcited..... they restore one’s faith in human dignity” (*Journalist Colin MacInnes, New Society, 1963*).

Putting all that aside, it is when the end of season averages are published that human dignity falls away and mathematician GH Hardy’s quote ”Cricket is the only game where you are playing against 11 of the other side and 10 of your own” takes centre stage. This year, after our best winning season in living memory, the statistics highlight some fine performances. In 21 matches, 9 runs short of 3,000 were scored by Islip batsmen, with 5 batsmen contributing more than 200 runs apiece, led by Mike Henderson with 578 in 10 innings (11 appearances) and Ollie Black with 453 in 17.

Name	App	Runs	Avg	100+	50+	Best	NO	Innings
M Henderson	11	578	72.3	2	3	161	2	10
O Black	17	453	32.4	1	3	113	3	17
B Crawford	19	328	21.9	0	1	68	2	17
H Brock	16	227	20.6	0	0	39	4	15
J Launchbury	15	211	17.6	0	1	72	1	13
R Hambridge	20	198	14.1	0	1	56	1	15
L Price	11	185	20.6	0	1	84	2	11
J Stothard	4	157	52.3	1	0	100	1	4

The bowling figures were not too shabby either. Ben Crawford took the most wickets (29 – compare that with Neil Brock’s Player of the Year 26 wickets two years ago) but the best bowling average was, in a remarkable performance, that of none other than Mike Henderson:

Name	App	Avg	SR	Econ	5W	O	Runs	Wkts	Best
B Crawford	19	16.2	24	4.1	1	116	471	29	5/14
R Hambridge	20	15.2	19	4.8	1	72.5	350	23	7/9
M Henderson	11	12.1	15.3	4.8	1	56	267	22	5/37
L Price	11	18.8	26.6	4.2	0	75.3	319	17	4/42
W Goodfellow	13	12.3	10	7.4	0	15	111	9	4/49
G Roper	8	20.3	22.6	5.4	0	30.1	162	8	2/5
J Launchbury	15	48.1	51.6	5.6	0	68.5	385	8	2/18
J Adams	6	15.6	26.6	3.5	0	31	109	7	3/18
K Crawford	11	32.8	53	3.7	0	53	197	6	3/18
H Brock	16	55.2	48	6.9	0	40	276	5	2/48

In 11 appearances, Mike took 22 wickets, taking a wicket every 2.5 overs for 12.1 runs per wicket. Supporting him alongside Ben, Lee Price and Ryan Hambridge took 40 wickets between them and William Goodfellow, who also eclipsed father David in the batting figures, deserves a special mention for 9 wickets in 15 overs at an average of 12.3, taking a wicket every 10 balls, as does his friend George Roper with 8 wickets in just over 30 overs. Kevin Crawford, metronomic in 2021, still managed 50 overs despite a season blighted by a shoulder injury. With the 2022 attack bolstered by a fully fit Kevin, prospects for 2023 are rosy.

For those who wonder where Wisden found the title for its lexicon of cricket commentaries, the quotation in the title (“What are the butchers for?”) is attributed to the US actress Pauline Chase who, catching sight of the umpires at her first cricket match, was baffled. Alongside the bafflement and the eulogies, cricket has received other less favourable comparisons. Football fans may remember the 2007 FA Cup final between Manchester United and Chelsea. At half time commentator Mark Lawrenson, less than enthralled by what he had seen, was moved to say “A great advert for cricket”. But we should remember that “If Stalin had learned to play cricket, the world might now be a better place” (*Richard Downey, Archbishop of Liverpool*).

Debate about cricket, its role and significance will continue but meanwhile we look forward to Islip’s 2023 season. If the weather and the rabbits are kind, our square will be ready for our first game of 2023, at home on April 16<sup>th</sup> when Kempsford will be the first visitors of the season. Do consider coming to join us, even if only for the occasional game or for the annual club dinner on Friday March 31<sup>st</sup> – venue to be announced shortly.

For more information go to the website (<https://www.pitchero.com/clubs/islipcricketclub> ) which will be updated with the full ’23 fixtures as soon as they are finalised, or email [islipcricketclub@gmail.com](mailto:islipcricketclub@gmail.com).

*\*With thanks to Marc Howe for the loan of his copy of “What are the butchers for?” and other splendid cricket quotations? ”*