

ISLIP CRICKET CLUB



It is now nearly four weeks since newspapers ranging from the Hindustan Times to the Alloa and Hindfoot Advertiser carried headlines along the lines of “Cricket ball is a natural vector of disease: British PM Johnson”. In these days of fake news, it therefore comes as no surprise that recreational cricket returned to England and Wales on July 12th. The ECB’s strong response to BoJo’s throwaway line has made all the difference and we are now on the fourth of our five steps to heaven, Adapted Gameplay, which involves buying copious quantities of sanitiser and wipes, turning up at games in whites and a ban on giving caps to the umpire.

After a frantic week of preparing player track and trace forms and GDPR disclaimers, Islip returned to action at Blenheim Palace on July 19th in a match hastily brought forward to 12.30 to avoid clashing with a drive-in cinema. The early start scuppered Kevin Crawford’s attempt to follow Government guidelines on supporting the economy by booking a lunchtime table for the team at the Royal Sun. With nine more games to come this year, we are confident that the club will make a contribution in the weeks ahead.

After half an inch of overnight rain, the outfield was not fast and it turned out to be a low-scoring match. Blenheim batted first in what was initially a 30 over game, extended to 35 once the niceties of ball sanitisation had been mastered. At the first hygiene break, a dispenser appeared on the field and unexpectedly provided the fielders with a dose of liquid soap; the regulations called for hand sanitiser. Was this an innocent mistake or a clever attempt to influence events? When David Goodfellow shelled a catch a few minutes later we began to wonder.

Runs came slowly for Blenheim and with the score at 19-2 after 10 overs (one batsmen each bowled by Ben and Kevin Crawford), there was optimism in the Islip camp. In retrospect it was probably the next 10 overs that changed the match, with an Islip attack weakened by the loss of Ludo Bennett-Jones to a badly sprained ankle going for a further 28 runs. But in the 20th over Harry Brock whose first three overs had cost 18 runs dismissed Blenheim’s most dangerous batsman and went on to take three wickets for eight runs in four overs and trigger a collapse from 47-2 to 59-5, helped in part by nagging pressure from his cousin Joe Thomas’s seven overs of left arm spin for seven runs. A final ten overs of scrambling and two run outs saw Blenheim reach 88-9 with just two of their batsmen making it to double figures.

Any optimism in the Islip camp evaporated quickly. After four overs we found ourselves 6-2 before Harry Brock took the score to 17 at the start of the 9th over, in the process becoming one of Islip’s two batsmen to make double figures, before being out caught. The other was Joe Thomas who, with 31 runs, was the game’s top scoring batsmen and, like Harry, one of bowler Spearman’s five victims. Once Joe had departed the crease, Kevin Crawford fought hard before being out lbw to a full toss for nine, but with Islip’s last four batsmen out for ducks as the run pressure told, the innings closed on 73 in the 34th over, 15 runs short. A defeat, but the sun shone, the setting was wonderful, the few American tourists looked confused and cricket was back to something approaching normal.

Another part of the new normal was the garden at the Woodstock Arms and the mysteries of QR code based menus. That apart, it was a bit like old times, with reminiscences and enquiries about past players. Without a doubt the winner of the “most enquired about Islip

absentee” at such events is Brian Deeley. Brian is rarely seen in Islip’s batting line-up these days, his increasing dedication to driving buses and travelling the world having led to a dramatic decline in his appearances. There are rumours that he is being courted by Tom Gilman and the Royds Withy King midweek side who, Jenny Gilman reports, are desperately in need of reinforcement but in any case, for the time being at least, Islip Cricket Club has lost an irreplaceable character. Arguably, his role has been split; his batting replaced by the runs of Ollie Black and his showmanship by the “never knowingly inconspicuous” Harry Brock who backed up his on-field performance at Blenheim with an off the field astonishing pink Lycra top which certainly helped to light up the pub garden.

So cricket is back and thriving. We had nearly enough players for two teams for our first game. Long may that continue. There are nine more games scheduled, eight at home, and we may try to add one more game on September 27th. Here is our updated fixture list which is also available on the club website at <https://www.pitchero.com/clubs/islipcricketclub>. The club can be contacted via islipcricketclub@gmail.com

Sunday	26 th July	Stonesfield	Home (2:00 PM)
Sunday	2 nd August	Isis	Home (2:00 PM)
Sunday	9 th August	OCCSCC	Home (2:00 PM)
Sunday	16 th August	Kempsford	Away (2:00 PM)
Sunday	23 rd August	FFTMCC	Home (2:00 PM)
Sunday	30 th August	Brock's All Stars	Home (1:30 PM)
Sunday	6 th September	Kempsford	Home (1:30 PM)
Sunday	13 th September	Wolvercote	Home (1:00 PM)
Sunday	20 th September	Holton	Home (1:00 PM)

Anthony Dandridge is hoping to open the Terrace bar (outside seating only at present) for the home games. We very much hope that you will come and join us there in the new normal.