

## ISLIP CRICKET CLUB



At last, a glimpse of summer and for much of June cricket was played under clear blue skies. Late May was, however a different story and the “wet Thursday” syndrome that has hit junior cricket continued, though we did eventually entertain Banbury CC’s under 13s at Islip on a very damp June 17<sup>th</sup>.

First, the senior side. Overall a better month with two wins and two defeats. Unlike the juniors, we have yet to lose a match to the weather although Nomads visit to Islip on June 23<sup>rd</sup> was a near thing. On a gloomy grey day with periods of drizzle, Islip batted first. Things started well with Teijas Anand’s solid 20 taking us to 43-0 before disaster in the form of the season’s second Islip Batting Collapse struck. 43-0 became 43-3 and 60-7. Happily, Ben Crawford was still there and the arrival at the crease of 12 year old William Goodfellow in the grey gloom disrupted the rhythm of Nomad’s fast bowlers who felt obliged to switch to spin. William looked very comfortable at the crease, making 6 before being caught. Ben was then out for 45 with the score on a more respectable 116-9. Islip’s last man, Rick Green, did not trouble the scorers and the innings closed on 116.

The following week, at home to Osler CC, it was Kaito Bremner’s turn to shine. Opening the bowling for Islip, he moved the ball off the pitch and took 26-3 in 5 overs before beginning to tire a little. The other wickets were shared around – Ben Crawford taking 2 wickets for 15 in his five overs – and the metronomic Kevin Crawford posting figures of 9-1 from 7 overs.

June ended with a visit to Marsh Baldon to play on reputedly the largest village green in England, with the main road through the village crossing the outfield just in front of the old wooden pavilion and offering fielders chasing towards the boundary the challenges of both avoiding the traffic and staying upright when spikes suddenly hit tarmac.

For many years, Marsh Baldon’s club was sustained by the efforts of former Master of the Rolls Lord Denning’s son Robert, an eminent chemistry professor at Oxford University. After Robert’s death, Lord Denning’s grandson Mark kept the club alive for several years but eventually it folded. Islip was one of the last clubs to play at Marsh Baldon whose teas were a thing of club legend; their loss was greatly regretted.

Early in lockdown, Cosmo Taylor found himself at home in Marsh Baldon. Somehow, he managed to get both local help and grants from various bodies and set about restoring the cricket square, first tackling the hoof marks left by horses who had taken a keen interest in it and then restoring it more generally. Cricket there restarted last summer and although we were not able to fit in a game in 2020, we were invited to play there this year.

The game was in some ways a tale of two birds. The previous week, peering through the misty drizzle at Islip, several of Islip’s hardened talent-spotters had noticed a young man and his mother in the nets. It turned out that Kidlington-based Ethan Bird plays in the same school cricket team as Shreyas Anand, and so it was that 15 year old Ethan came to Marsh Baldon to make his Islip debut.

Islip batted first and after a shaky start (7-2 after 3 overs, 23-3 after 7 overs), things settled down, setting Baldons 151 to win in 30 overs (Ben Crawford 28, Jack Launchbury 17, Ludo

Bennett-Jones 18, Kevin Crawford 22 not out). When batting, Ethan had been unlucky, making 5 before an unplayable shooter hit his wicket (Cosmo, still a little work to do on the square), but now, with ball in hand his left arm inswing tilted the match Islip's way as he took 23-4 in his six overs, twice hitting the top of off stump, nearly taking a fifth wicket with a near-impossible caught and bowled and regularly bowling unplayable balls. Meanwhile, the game was delayed for around five minutes by the arrival of the game's second bird, a magnificent red kite which was extremely interested in a patch of ground somewhere near midwicket. The kite's failure to make a catch in at least half a dozen attempts as it swooped down repeatedly while we all watched was reassuring for some; it is not only fielders that have trouble making catches. Despite the distraction, Baldons batted on, ending their innings on 109-7, an Islip victory by 41 runs.

June 13<sup>th</sup> saw us visit Middleton Stoney CC who play on a delightful ground in a private estate. For the first time in quite a while, we played a timed game in which one side bats until tea and then bowls 20 overs after 6.30. If the side batting after tea does not feel capable of making the run target it has been set, it has the option of batting for a draw by avoiding being all out before play ends, a complexity that Ollie Black avoided by choosing to bat first. After your correspondent fell for an early duck, Ollie was the star of the show, making a run a ball 39 before being caught. The Islip innings ended on 133, marred only by a brief and inappropriate discussion of the front foot no-ball rule between umpire Nigel Mason and a Middleton Stoney bowler which Nigel curtailed by leaving the field. After tea, for a long time we were very much in the game with Ethan Bird bowling some unplayable balls to take 2-23 in 8 overs and Kevin Crawford, metronome working impeccably, taking 4-26 in 16 overs but somehow Middleton Stoney escaped, going from 52-8 to a winning 134-9.

The pandemic has compressed most junior sports seasons into a much shorter time than ever, so we did wonder whether the junior sessions at Bletchington would lose out to other sports. We need not have worried. There were nearly 30 children at early sessions, many of them from Islip and Doctor South's. For the visit to Islip of Banbury CCs U-13 side on June 17<sup>th</sup>, six of the ten man Bletchington side were either at Dr South's, had been at Dr South's and/or lived in Islip. Many have been seen practising in the Islip nets, putting the older generation to shame. The match was a success despite the drizzle, but Bletchington lost by about 60 runs against bowling that was a bit too quick for our young players (especially in virtual darkness). Thanks go to those who helped organise the game, particularly David Goodfellow and Jamie Goss, and to the Village Shop for their support of the junior scheme.

4 <sup>th</sup> July	Cumnor	Away
11 <sup>th</sup> July	Bicester & North Oxford	Away
18 <sup>th</sup> July	Blenheim	Away
25 <sup>th</sup> July	Ascott-u-Wychwood	Away
1 <sup>st</sup> August	Isis	Home

The seniors have still lost more games than they have won, although results have started to go our way. Perhaps we are more suited to sunny days rather than the cold early months of the season. Sunday cricket - with a 2pm start to games - continues in July. When we

next play at home in August we hope that the Terrace Room bar will have reopened for spectators and players alike, a small compensation for the Red Lion's decision not to open on Sunday evenings. The full 2021 fixtures are on the club website at

<https://www.pitchero.com/clubs/islipcricketclub>. and the club can be contacted via [islipcricketclub@gmail.com](mailto:islipcricketclub@gmail.com). Do get in touch if you'd like to know more – we welcome players of all ages, abilities and experience – or if you'd just like to get involved.