

London Erratics v Chelsea Arts Club

With various regulars unavailable, the squad recruited by match manager James Rivington was boosted by two more Jameses – Jamie Scudamore (who had played at Tarbarrow in 2006), and John Butcher’s 12-year-old nephew James Hill. And on the day, John’s 8-year-old son Oscar was a last-minute addition. As last year, James R handed the captaincy to Tony Poulter. The opposition had insisted that the Erratics be there for an 11.00 start, so inevitably the game started at noon – though at least the light rain had stopped by then. Chelsea Arts Club (CAC) won the toss and after some deliberation elected to field.

Curiously CAC didn’t start with a new ball – their skipper thought it would be a waste to get one wet – but their West Indian quick still managed to get plenty of bounce with the one he was given. However, it was the bowler at the other end who, seemingly more innocuous, sent four Erratics trudging back to the picturesque pavilion wondering quite how they had managed to get out. At least Andy Hosken had hung around long enough for John to score the bulk of a partnership of 30, which got the Erratics’ score moving.

James H now joined his uncle. The quick came off, as the oppo eased the pressure on the youngster; but Jamie played with an ability and determination beyond his years, and it was quickly apparent that his was no easy wicket. At the same time John, who had had an unluckily modest season so far, was rediscovering his confidence, and he was quick to dispatch anything loose to the short boundary. The Erratics had got to 92 for 4 by 1.30, when it was time to wander over to the Sun Inn for a scrummy lunch.

As the teams prepared to resume, the CAC skipper now declared that their ball had gone out of shape, and produced a ‘used’ ball that was as new and shiny as they come. Fortunately this ball flew off the bat nicely, as the family pairing continued to flourish. Finally the quick returned and Jamie H was caught behind, bringing to an end a marvellous partnership of 93. Tony again found a captain’s knock elusive, but Michael Stephenson enjoyed himself with some big hits.

The fantasy in the minds of the Erratics on the boundary that they should bat on and on was dealt a blow when at last John was out – his innings promises much for the future. The tail wagged a bit, with Oscar demonstrating the depth of cricketing ability in the Butcher clan.

In the light of the previous year’s events, 184 seemed much too small a total. But after a breezy start by the opening bats, the Erratics were buoyed by three nice catches – courtesy of Bill Bush at deep square leg, John at midwicket, and Jamie S behind the stumps – with the score still under 30. However, the man who did the damage last year, today batting at 5, had started to restore CAC fortunes by the time tea was taken.

After the break, the game looked to be sliding away from the Erratics when, off his own bowling, Michael dived to his left to catch a fierce low drive from the danger man. Again, the Erratics’ joy was short-lived, as the next pair brutally punished any errors in length – sixes off James R merely serving to waste time in long hunts for the ball.

Brian Berrigan and young James H tightened things up. But with CAC needing only 45 off the last 17 overs, it was going to take something special to turn the game: James R’s one-handed diving effort at mid-wicket was deemed by team mates to be a worthy way of recording his 100th catch for the Erratics; and he held a simpler one off Brian’s next over. The visitors were now suddenly into an extended tail, and James H picked off one of these. The left-handed No. 4 was still a potent threat, but a miscued pull shot was well caught running back by Andy, who had been fielding tigerishly since tea. James H immediately accounted for the next man, and with the final CAC pair still needing 13, the Erratics were looking at a gloriously improbable win.

It is much to young James H’s credit that the CAC captain, who had come in at 11, now (rather lamely) queried the length of his bowling spell, and had him taken off. Fine, Tony called back Michael for a final burst. The batsmen seemed quite incapable of scoring at the required rate of under 2 an over off the bat, but their cause was decisively aided by one of their umpires who determined that anything a millimetre down the leg side was a wide (there would be 17 wides in the innings). And in the penultimate over, the No. 9 squirted a wide ball from Michael through the close field to the short boundary, to give CAC a frustrating victory with nine balls to spare.

JR

LONDON ERRATICS — batting

		4s	6s
Rivington	bowled	1	
Butcher J	bowled	78	7 3
† Scudamore	bowled	0	
Berrigan	caught	3	
Hosken	c & b	1	
Hill	caught	33	4
* Poulter	bowled	0	
Stephenson	caught	23	4 1
Bush	bowled	0	
Heller	caught	8	
Butcher O	NOT OUT	1	

184 all out

Fall of wickets: 1(Rivington)–3, 2(Scudamore)–3, 3(Berrigan)–8, 4(Hosken)–38, 5(Hill)–131, 6(Poulter)–134, 7(ButcherJ)–164, 8(Bush)–175, 9(Stephenson)–177, 10(Heller)–184

CHELSEA ARTS CLUB — batting

1	c Bush	b Stephenson	14
2	c Butcher J	b Heller	14
3	c Scudamore	b Stephenson	0
4	c Hosken	b Berrigan	66
5	c & b	b Stephenson	37
6	c Rivington	b Berrigan	20
7	c Rivington	b Berrigan	6
8		b Hill	2
9	not out		5
10	lbw	b Hill	0
11	not out		1

185 for 9

LONDON ERRATICS — bowling

Stephenson	12.3	1	49	3
Heller	5	1	43	1
Rivington	5	0	40	0
Berrigan	10	2	23	3
Hill	7	1	26	2

Fall of wickets: 1–23, 2–29, 3–29, 4–78, 5–140, 6–158, 7–166, 8–172, 9–172

ERRATICS LOST BY 1 WICKET