

London Erratics v Not the MCC

Supposedly an 11.30 start. The Erratics won the toss and elected to field – although they were by no means complete, and the start was delayed as stragglers dribbled in. Might have been a nice setting beside the Thames, but it was a pretty horrible municipal park, with swarms of other people doing Sunday things.

The Not the MCC clearly knew that the only way to bat on a pitch of alarming unpredictability was to heave at anything hittable. Runs therefore flowed quickly – punctuated by dismissals to unplayable deliveries. After drinks, the Erratics started to tighten things up through the bowling of Richard Langley and Brian Berrigan (who had come via Battersea Park), and some coherent field settings. George Dabby took an awesomely cool catch at long-on to dismiss the hard-hitting No. 2. At lunch, the opposition were 149 for 6.

As sandwiches were munched, Richard Heller signed up a dreadlocked spectator, Shawn Lawrence (who had played at some level for Grenada), to bring the Erratics up to eleven.

An experiment with spin at the restart saw the score race ahead again – though Peter Osborne did remove one brutal hitter with his second ball. James called on unknown quantity Shawn, who bowled ‘spin’ off a long run-up, which went for a succession of byes until the skipper put himself at long stop on the boundary. But another harsh lack of bounce did mean that Shawn prevented the opposing captain from reaching his ton. An increasingly ragged performance was finally ended when George calmly claimed another skier.

Honourable mention for Matthew Neal who stood in as keeper at the last minute, and did a commendable job in awful conditions.

The Erratics openers survived six overs before tea. But in the first over after tea, George was bowled and Chris Dunabin cut his first ball to backward point. Brian may have been unlucky to depart lbw: 14 for 3.

Matthew Eltringham hung around long enough to score a couple of boundaries, but then he too was heading back, cursing the impossibility of knowing what the ball would do next: 27 for 4. Shawn looked aggressive, then disappointed as he was adjudged stumped after a heave. Peter gave the faintest of snicks behind. Richard L, who had been resolutely defending one end, had a more cavalier swish at one and was caught at short leg. When Matthew N was bowled, the innings had imploded at 30 for 8, and was in danger of reaching a record low for the Erratics.

Skipper James had pushed himself down the order so that he could block for the draw, but would have hoped not to be going in with all the final 20 overs to survive. He and Lester Alvis dug in for 15 of them, and dragged the score towards fifty. But with the return of the opening bowlers, Lester and Richard H were plumb lbw to successive deliveries.

A defeat by 223 runs is the largest within Erratics recorded history. Only the folk tales passed down through the generations of the massacre at Kirdford exceed its shocking grandeur. The opposition have cheerfully recorded their account of it at: <http://sites.google.com/site/notthemcc/fixtures/10may2009>

Worse, in this new era, the spoken and the written word now give way to the moving image, and much of the awfulness is captured on video at:

<http://sites.google.com/site/notthemcc/Home/albums/10may2009>

and on YouTube itself (if you search for ‘Not the MCC’).

There you can see why the Erratics lost. With a treacherous pitch to exploit, the Erratics’ bowlers served up too many full tosses (then clutched their heads in shame). The more able opposition bowlers put the ball there or thereabouts, and the gremlins did the rest.

NOT THE MCC — batting

1		b Eltringham	7
2	c Dabby	b Langley	38
3		b Dabby	7
4		b Dabby	0
5	lbw	b Lawrence	99
6	lbw	b Berrigan	12
7	c Neal	b Langley	4
8		b Osborne	38
9	c Osborne	b Langley	18
10	c Dabby	b Langley	0
11	not out		3
			270 all out

LONDON ERRATICS — bowling

Dabby	12	0	54	2
Eltringham	6	2	34	1
Langley	9.5	0	42	4
Berrigan	7	2	35	1
Alvis	2	0	34	0
Osborne	2	0	23	1
Lawrence	2	0	22	1

Fall of wickets: 1–19, 2–36, 3–42, 4–87, 5–132, 6–149, 7–205, 8–248, 9–???, 10–270

LONDON ERRATICS — batting

Langley	caught	3	
Dabby	bowled	5	1
Dunabin	caught	0	
Berrigan	lbw	2	
Eltringham	bowled	10	2
Lawrence	stumped	0	
Osborne	caught	0	
† Neal	bowled	0	
Alvis	lbw	2	
* Rivington	NOT OUT	8	2
Heller	lbw	0	
			47 all out

Fall of wickets: 1(Dabby)–12, 2(Dunabin)–12, 3(Berrigan)–14, 4(Eltringham)–27, 5(Lawrence)–28, 6(Osborne)–28, 7(Langley)–30, 8(Neal)–30, 9(Alvis)–47, 10(Heller)–47