

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> May**

**Old Rutlishians CC 1<sup>st</sup> XI v Stoke D'Abernon CC 1<sup>st</sup> XI**

**ORCC 175 – 7 beat Stoke D'Abernon 91 a.o by 84 runs**

**'Moves like Jagger'**

'Save £30 on the 6x4 Blooma shiplap flatpack shed from £169!' screams the local B and Q in Morden. Unfortunately, Kam's mum's rush to search out the latest DIY bargains on offer Saturday morning scuppered our early 11am meet time, and by the time Kam and the late comers had arrived, our warm up at Stoke D'Abernon was going to be hampered with a rather late departure. Never mind, cars were stocked up with equipment and off we went. Regardless of the stresses of waiting for people to turn up, it is a pleasure steaming around in Sonny's white 'N' reg BMW, even if you are under constant threat of being pulled over by the Old Bill on suspicion of dealing crack out the back of it.

Stoke D'Abernon holds many happy memories for the Ruts; losing to a bunch of their 15 year olds in their first ever Surrey Trust game in 2007, selecting Darren Noonan for the fixture purely because he had a van, watching Bricey on my debut for the club in 2005 opening up, he patted the first ball to cover, walked off expecting to be caught, was dropped and then run out with a direct hit (to which the scorer wrote the abbreviated version of See U Next Tuesday in the 'how out' section of the score book). Could such high quality cricket be replicated again in 2013, well yes, yes it could!

After a quick B and Q affected warm up, we were asked to bat first and Joe Hart and Elsdon Wood opened up. We received the excellent news that their overseas had just arrived, a South African quick, I was quite keen to umpire and watch Dom hop around a bit. However, he wasn't that quick and the Ruts got off to a cagey start until the Aussie was bowled soon after getting off the mark. He got a good nut to be fair. The skip joined Elsdon for what has to be one of the most oddly bodily shaped batting partnerships in the Surrey Championship – Lankey and Spike - it looked like a scene out of a Quentin Blake illustration. However, this didn't get in the way of their often superb batting, really patient and consistently putting the bad ball away for 4. After a partnership of 61, Elsdon went to a sharp catch for 44 which brought the promising Mapp to the crease. With a swagger that would make Mick Jagger jealous and moves that would make many a young Wimbledon ball girl weak at the knees, Mappy started confidently and kept the score moving.



Mapp warms up before swaggering to the wicket.

Riches soon brought up his 50 with a towering 6 off the overseas, however, the very next ball he was yorked coming down the track looking to continue pushing the score on. After their 50 partnership, the wheels fell off slightly, although there was time for Mapp to take a couple of boundaries from the South African. With Sonny, Henry and Flanners all falling cheaply, a couple extras and eccentric running from Day and Kam saw us to 175 – 7 from the allotted 45 overs. A good score on a tough track, but with slightly more success at the end of the innings, we could have posted an even more competitive 200.

After a tasty tea, we took to the field knowing a good start was vital, especially with the dangerous Lo opening up. With the new ball in his hand, Sonny got us off to the perfect start reducing Stoke to 6 for 3 and then with a wicket from Day, 30 for 4. It was good to have Daisy back and he bowled with his usual guile and control. The Teddy Sheringham of the Old Ruts. Then a potential game changer. Picture the scene: the oppo struggling to get the ball off the square at 40 odd for 4, opening bowlers backed up by some sharp fielding, a pre season friendly played in a competitive yet respectful spirit! Yes, this was the perfect time for Sonny to york their number 5 full on the boot in front of the stumps, the umpire shaking his pony tail signalling 'not out'. This was also the perfect time for our big hearted opening bowler to well and truly throw all of his toys out of the pram; his rattle, his dummy, his lovely little lace sun hat, EVERYTHING was thrown onto the Stoke square. It took a bit of time to get it all back in order, but once he did, he collected great figures of 6-35 from 9. It was a great spell of bowling and, with all due respect, simply too hot for the Stoke D'Abernon top order to handle. We do hope he didn't cause too much trouble for the Groundsman to pick everything up afterwards.



Sonny opening up

With Barnicott and Woolland into the attack, we survived a small partnership and some good hitting by Tom Gudgeon until he was caught by Barnicott on the long off boundary from a Woolland delivery. The game was largely over and with one wicket for Barnicott and two for Woolland, Stoke D'Abernon were bowled out for 91 from 27.2 overs.

Another good performance by the Ruts with the bat, and apart from two drops in the field, it was a steady, clinical performance. Next Saturday will be a different kettle of fish, a whole new ball game, new hoops to jump through... but winning is habit forming. Like the B and Q flatpack Blooma shed, if we follow instructions, stick to plans and don't panic, we will construct steady foundations and build a successful season.

**Alex Barnicott**