

London Erratics v Peper Harow

A gloriously warm spring day, with azure skies empty of both clouds and aircraft (courtesy of the Icelandic volcano). A 40 overs match. Peper Harow won the toss and elected to field.

The young opening bowlers produced lots of swing, and in the 6th over Peter Andrews found his intended shot to leg in the hands of point. Jim Head and James Rivington took the score to 65, and a big total looked achievable. But the seemingly more innocuous change bowlers removed them both, and between them Brian Berrigan (first ball, swatting at a leg-side wide), all without further addition; and when Tony Poulter heaved and missed, last year's modest total of 104 appeared distant.

In these desperate circumstances, Michael Stephenson waited for the bad ball with remarkable composure, and he had got the innings going again when a youthful spinner sneaked past his forward defensive. Richard Down, who had been struggling with his timing, followed shortly afterwards, in the 28th over – 87 for 7.

Richard Langley and Chris Dunabin got their heads down in order to use up the remaining overs: by the end of the 34th the score had crawled to 92. Skipper James (now umpiring) gave them the nod and runs suddenly flowed freely. In fact the partnership blossomed so well that Bill Bush, held back for a final onslaught, did not get to the crease until the penultimate over – just time to smack a four and be caught off the last ball of the innings.

The opposition politely held back while the Erratics got at the excellent tea first.

Brian and Richard L bowled with their normal meanness to keep the rate below 3 an over, and the opening bats seemed content to keep them out. In the 13th over, Brian found the edge and Jim pouched comfortably at first slip.

Michael complained about having to bowl uphill, but in his first over the other opener could only steer a lifting ball to a well-positioned Tony at backward point. When drinks were taken after 20 overs, the game was nicely poised at 62 for 2 – but who could have predicted the excitement to come?

The second ball of the 21st over wiped out the No. 3. The incoming No. 5 snicked his first ball, but keeper Bill couldn't hold on and a single was scrambled. Ball 4 clean bowled the tiny No. 4, leaving Michael musing about missed hat-tricks. It was all the more educational for him to witness his last two deliveries smacked back over his head for six (where the ball engaged the interest of a grazing sheep) and through mid-wicket for four.

At the other end, the young No. 5 was so appalled by the change in his luck when his firm pull off Richard D was excellently held by Tony at mid-wicket that he hurled all his kit to the ground and stomped off. And, when Michael re-engaged the belligerent No. 6, he not only knew that he should bowl a swinging yorker, but was able to execute it perfectly – 74 for 6.

The oppo skipper introduced a little stability, but Richard D took two in two (the first courtesy of another cool slip catch by Jim) to stifle any hope of recovery. Richard Heller turned his arm over (ensuring that only people called Richard bowled from the pavilion end). But there was no taking the ball off Michael and he knocked over the stumps again; Richard D wrapped things up with the first ball of his second spell. Congratulations to these two youngsters of the travelling party (aged 47 and 48 respectively), who both achieved best bowling figures for the Erratics.

A super day. Thanks to Mike Long for scoring. Robert Waller turned up to watch much of the second half, but sneaked off before he could be quizzed for his election predictions.

JR

LONDON ERRATICS — batting

		4s	6s
Head	bowled	27	3
Andrews	caught	7	1
* Rivington	bowled	14	1
Berrigan	caught	0	
Poulter	bowled	2	
Down	caught	2	
Stephenson	bowled	14	3
Langley	NOT OUT	18	2
Dunabin	bowled	12	
† Bush	caught	5	1
Heller			

125 for 9 in 40 overs

Fall of wickets: 1(Andrews)–16, 2(Head)–65, 3(Berrigan)–65, 4(Rivington)–65, 5(Poulter)–67, 6(Stephenson)–85, 7(Down)–87, 8(Dunabin)–111, 9(Bush)–125

PEPER HAROW — batting

1	c Poulter	b Stephenson	19
2	c Head	b Berrigan	12
3		b Stephenson	9
4		b Stephenson	0
5	c Poulter	b Down	1
6		b Stephenson	10
7	not out		10
8	c Head	b Down	4
9		b Down	0
10		b Stephenson	4
11		b Down	0

94 all out in 31.1 overs

LONDON ERRATICS — bowling

Berrigan	8	0	20	1
Langley	8	1	23	0
Stephenson	8	3	19	5
Down	5.1	2	10	4
Heller	2	0	10	0

Fall of wickets: 1–37, 2–49, 3–62, 4–63, 5–74, 6–74, 7–81, 8–81, 9–87, 10–94

ERRATICS WON BY 31 RUNS