

## **Devon Dumplings v Ashford CC at Budleigh Salterton 27<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

On a cool and blustery day Dumplings renewed an old fixture against a touring team from the venerable (1855) Ashford CC. They came from Middlesex for the first time in 1947, but had not played Dumplings since 1988. Ashford won the toss and invited Dumplings to bat.

The decision looked to be a good one when James Horler suffered a golden duck and was replaced by Ben Abrahams. He and Rob Newing proceeded cautiously at first but Newing made the most of a fast outfield, racking up five fours in his 22 before being caught behind. Luke Davies suffered almost the same fate as his Exmouth club-mate Horler, which brought Roger Wensley to the crease. He and Abrahams set about consolidation and added 46 runs before Abrahams was inexplicably bowled just short of his half century. He had played some exquisite wristy cover drives and taken toll of anything short.

Another stand of 40 with Freddie Creer ended with a brief confusion and Wensley being run out. He had scored a useful 35, all the more admirable for his having broken a finger the week before in a Devon Seniors game. Bertie Creer joined his brother and they added 48 in swashbuckling style. Freddie was bowled and it only remained for Chris Ferro to hold an end while Bertie went on to score a rapid 40 off 24 balls.

Ashford had used 7 bowlers, but it was the two as first change who had restrained the Dumplings innings with 16 overs for only 34 runs. Combined with some fine enthusiastic and athletic fielding, a total of 195 seemed insufficient on a fast outfield and one short boundary.

Following a substantial and very tasty tea, Chris Ferro decided to try an alternative tactic and asked Paul Berman to bowl his slow left-arm spin alongside the conventional pace of Bertie Creer. The tactic worked to some extent as, although no wickets fell, the scoring was kept within bounds, bearing in mind that one opener, Chris Evans, is the England 60s vice-Captain. Freddie Creer broke the partnership at 82, inducing a false stroke with his leg-spin. Evans eventually played a slightly tired shot and was bowled by Bertie Creer for 57, but by this time the score was 137-3. Two wickets followed in close succession and just briefly there was a suspicion that 166-5 might be turned into a Dumplings victory.

However, Gareth Evans and Connor Cousens held firm and took the score to 189-6. Ferro's pace and bounce induced a catch behind and Freddie took a third wicket, but at 191 Ashford were too close to let victory slip through their fingers.

From Dumplings' point of view, it was both satisfying and reassuring to see valuable contributions from both the senior element and the gifted youngsters. It bodes well for the future. After the game it was mooted that next year it might be a good idea to extend the fixture into an all-day declaration game, given the success of today's contest and the agreeable surroundings at Budleigh and its proximity to the beach.

**Devon Dumplings 195 for 8 (B Abrahams 48, F Creer 42, B Creer 40, R Wensley 35, Beressem 3-53).**

**Ashford 196 for 7 (C Evans 57, T Evans 31, F Creer 3-44).**