

Barnards Green Cricket Club – 2008 Tour report.

"Never go North on a cricket tour, it always rains up North" Those are the words of the late great Philosopher Richard Wilberforce Brown and whilst there may be an element of truth in that statement, there is no denying that tours up North provide a welcome and hospitality second to none. So as 21 intrepid cricketers (well 21 tour party members) from Barnards Green Cricket Club travelled North up the M6 to Bolton, it was with some expectancy that the sky would be laden with clouds rather than decked with sunshine.

The first game was at Middleton CC the former club of Michael Vaughan, but the signs were not good on arrival, as the bar was found to be closed. Undeterred, the Green batted first on a somewhat moist wicket in overcast conditions. At 16 for 3 off 11 overs in a 40 over game with James Scullion, Tom Clack and Lewis Hooper all back in the pavilion, things looked much like the weather, somewhat bleak. Mat Shimmell and Liam paddock then put on 16 before the latter perished when looking comfortable and Shimmell was joined by Phil Harris. these tow then batted with great maturity to take the score to 94 before Shimell was caught for 53 off Highton who picked up 5 wickets. Tom banks and Rich Brown came and went before Dave White joined Harris who batted superbly for his 61 before being stumped off overseas star Coetsee. Sam Spencer and Ian Scullion then helped White to a total of 163 which was not a bad score on a difficult track to score on. After an excellent tea Middletons openers found run scoring somewhat difficult thanks to some excellent bowling from Ian Scullion (5 overs for 1 run) and some superb fielding by the Greens youngsters. They too could muster just 16 runs from their first 11 overs. The introduction of Mat Shimmell saw then break through with Deakin well caught at slip by Ian Scullion off Shimell for 13. Lewis Hooper then picked up 2 wickets to leave Middleton on 39 for 3 off 17 overs. walker 28 and S.Fitton 50 then moved the score along before wickets started to tumble and with the final over to bowl, Middleton needed 19 to win with Coetsee and the excellent youngster Copeland at the wicket. Coetsee clearly relished the task of facing the final over from Phil Harris and with two huge sixes and a couple of twos, two runs were required off the last ball to win, but just one could be made and a tie was called by umpire Bill Tansell. An excellent game of cricket and superb hospitality from Middleton CC set the tone for a most enjoyable tour.

With some sore heads and empty wallets, the tour moved to Heywood CC the former home club of Tour leader and Cricket Chairman Andy Lamb. This club must have one of the biggest squares in the country and as with previous tours they always offer a heartfelt welcome. The ground was very wet and rain greeted the touring party at the ground, but this did not diminish the enthusiasm of the home club to get the game on and a 30 over game was to take place. batting first the Green found runs hard to come by and only Lewis Hooper 45 and Liam Paddock 48 really mastered the conditions. a total score of 151 never really seemed enough and so it was to be as Pawson played an elegant innings to finish on 98 not out and wrap up the game in the 20th over. Thanks must go to Umpires Bill Tansell and Ken Lee for standing out in the wet for most of the afternoon. A slightly more subdued night followed in the confines of Bolton town although one member of the party found better entertainment was to be had in Hull.

Thursday saw the party travel to Worsley CC and things looked up as the first sign of sunshine was to be seen for all of 27 seconds. However, an experienced home team batted first and in 40 overs rattled up 200 with overseas star Shah top scoring with 89no and Hope 61no. The highlight for the Green was the catch of the tour, a one handed effort from Dave Price swooping low to his right after making good ground from mid off. In reply, Phil Spencer decided attack was the best way forward and hit a two a four and then was cleaned bowled all to the same shot. Tom banks looked comfortable before being caught for 10 and Ian Scullion perished soon after for a dogged 5. Mat Shimell 58 and Liam Paddock 37 looked like taking the Green to victory with Paddock in imperious form before he edged one to slip. James Scullion 17 and Chris Hill 22 tried to push the score along and support Shimell, but when Lewis Hooper and Tom Clack both departed without troubling the scorer, the task became an uphill one. Dave Price was caught and bowled for 4 and then Shimell perished for a hard fought 58 leaving tailender Robin Longmore to think what might have been. The Green fell 34 runs short, but more excellent hospitality followed and the bright lights of Bolton were enjoyed by one and all, before Friday morning saw the trip back down the M6 to a bright and sunny Malvern. Another tour has been and gone and many fond memories will be mulled over at the clubs HQ through the winter months, but as all good tourists know, what goes on tour stays on tour to protect the innocent!