

Melton St Audrey CC vs Hetairoi CC at Melton, Monday 31st August, 2026.

A sunny day with a light breeze, and a better looking wicket than the day before. 35 overs. Hetairoi batted first. Hetairoi had a stronger side today, the strongest of the three days, with eight youngsters and only four oldies. Having twelve also gave the possibility of rotating the oldies. Another very strong bowling side, but also this time a decent batting side, and a decent fielding side. Unfortunately Melton were the weakest of our opponents with no first team players in their side. A 35 over game today.

John M hit the first ball for six, and the second ball was four byes down leg -- so we were off to a flyer. But four restrained overs followed and then John M repeated the previous day's loose shot to give an even easier catch to mid-wicket, and we were 11 for 1. Mike Price joined John B and we then became further becalmed, reaching 26 for 1 off ten overs. It looked like the game might be competitive.

John battled away but could not find his timing, reaching 7 in the fourteenth over and 14 in the 20th over. Fortunately Melton were leaking extras, and Mike was picking up some speed as the change bowlers came on, so we were 73 for 1 at drinks. John was told by a stern captain that he had two overs to accelerate or he would be retired. So he hit two fours and was then stumped by the 82 year old keeper, Dougie.

Ed Ball came in, this time not having had his palms pummelled by fast bowling prior to batting, and on the better pitch soon found the timing his father could not locate. His running between the wickets with Mike was also good, and the run rate began to rise as it needed to do with only 13 overs left. Mike hit a four and reached 51 not out, retiring at 50 being one of the rules. Next over Ed was caught at cover trying an ambitious shot. Malcolm Grubb came on for the 29th over, and promptly bowled Simon Evans (sr) for one, and Andrew Wilson for 0, Andrew's long innings of the day before not having played him into form. Suddenly four batsmen had departed in two overs.

There was a long delay before number eight appeared, as players scrambled to put on batting gear, or in some cases to put on whites. Sam B-C came out to join Will Ball at 139 for 5.

Sam pushed forward at the last ball of the 29th over. Six overs left. Mayhem then ensued, emphasising what might have been possible the day before. The ball was smote to all parts, but the running between the wickets of two of the fastest Hetairoi was extraordinary. And the pressure put on the fielders led to a bit of a Melton melt-down. 68 runs in six overs, 49* to Sam and 11* to Will, and Melton now out of the game.

Dot's wonderfully delicious tea, as ever was.

Back on at 3.30. Charlie and Matt opened the bowling, with Charlie taking wickets at will, including two in two balls. Matt again found it difficult to find his line and length, with some massive high no-balls. Ben came on and bowled well at a nice pace, soon

taking a wicket, and giving nothing away. Like Charlie's initial wickets, his wicket was also clean bowled. Matt returned to bowl more slowly and soon produced a lovely in swinging yorker to bowl number 5.

Melton were 16 for 5. At this point Stephen (who still had Sam B-C, John M and Will Ball to call on) turned to Andrew W. Andrew bowled a seven over spell and, able to relax with no real pressure, as Melton were out of the game, Andrew bowled with nice control. His regular lbw appeals were less controlled, but he did manage a clean bowled as well. At the other end, John Ball replaced Matt V. With Stephen taking over from Andrew it was slow bowling through to the end. Melton batted twelve enabling John B to take four wickets, though it is a moot point whether the last (twelfth batsman) should count in the averages. Meanwhile Stephen bowled the most successful Melton batsman round his legs.

That batsman and Melton skipper Malcolm Grubb had lent some respectability and Melton ended up 100 all out, but after Will and Sam's stand the result had never been in doubt.

An early finish and drinks in the bar for most of us, though some skedaddled early.

A good result after the disappointment of the day before, but we had really needed our Monday team to play on Sunday, and vice versa, but tour managing does not always allow such things.

CM 3.9.26