

Melton St Audry CC 2026 Match Report by Stephen Matthews

"It's always difficult to judge how a game will go when the opposition captain tells you he has a weak side and invites you to bat. Having accepted the offer, the start, John Megone hitting a loopy full toss for six and the second ball going for 4 byes, might have presaged a run fest. When we were still 10 after 5 overs, the innings had stalled.

Drinks were taken after 20 of the allotted 35 overs and with the score on 71/1 we had made the most of the final 15, John Ball was as close as any Hetarioti has ever got to being retired for slow scoring!! He perked up in the next two overs before being stumped by the excellent 80 year old keeper, 21 in 22 overs was hardly setting the world ablaze. That said Mike Price started circumspectly, but did reach his almost inevitable 50 and retired. Until Mike reached his thirties, extras were comfortably the highest scorer and we didn't think we could retire them if they reached 50!! In the event there were a staggering 46 extras.

The main story of the batting, after a couple of quick wickets following Mike's retirement, was the whirlwind partnership between Will Ball and Sam Brichieri-Colombi, ably started by a brisk 22 from Ed Ball. Many well scampered 2s, big hitting from Sam and a Boycottesque ability to pinch the strike with singles off the last ball of overs, that had otherwise been comfortable 2s. This all resulted in Sam needing 3 off the last two balls to reach 50, alas he crunched the first back at the bowler who rather rued stopping it, and could only manage another scampered two of the last.

This flurry took us to a highly respectable 207.

A delicious tea followed and amongst the good things on offer, cheese and beetroot sandwiches, which, in terms of rarity on the menu, matched the excellent banana sandwiches Jock Hewlett used to produce for the older new college contingent at cricket teas.

Fortified and expectant we took to the field with Charlie Fryer doing the honours at the top end and Matthew Vincent at the other. Charlie bowled an excellent spell and when his third wicket produced a hat-trick chance the writing was on the wall for the home team. Matthew trying to bowl a little too fast first up and was no-balled 4 times for high full tosses, but did get a wicket early on and came off after 2 overs to be replaced by Ben Young who bowled a miserly 5 overs 9 for 1 just too many swinging harmlessly down leg.

Ben was replaced by Matthew whose slower pace was altogether better than his opening foray. Gentle inswingers proving difficult to score off.

Andrew Wilson was the only bowler to complete a seven over allocation, and the Melton batsmen were bemused and unable to attack the gentle floaters on offer. Stephen Matthews replaced him with much the same result and John Ball applied the coup de grace with three late wickets including their number 12, who was allowed to bat.

Every bowler took at least one wicket and their score of 100 all out off 31 overs had at least John Ball seeking some evidence for the pitch being a minefield while he batted (if you say so John 😞)

This is a friendly fixture played in good spirit all round and our thanks to Malcolm their captain for championing it with his Melton colleagues and despite his team being indeed the weaker, we were not always as far ahead as we might have hoped!!"