

The Cowen/Hook Memorial Cup

Scratchers Vs Sad Fat Dads With Pads

Friday 9th July 2021
The Sandridge Bowl

The History

On Bank Holiday Monday, 25th August 2008 Phillip Cowen & Tim Randall approached a bunch of Dads bowling in the Clarence Park bowling nets (which were then down near the croquet green) with their sons about raising a team to play the Scratchers; this rag-tag bunch were some of the original Saddos. A game was duly arranged for Sunday 7th August, but this was unfortunately rained off. Phillip stayed in touch with the Saddos and turned out for them occasionally, as well as joining them for the odd beer or two.

A year later (July 2009) Scratchers finally played their first fixture at Rothamstead Park, with full cricket lunch and tea provided by April Cowen. It was a full day of fun and saw John Cowen Senior square up against Jonathan Hook for the first time; they both took wickets and Jonno scored 24 off the bat. It was such a great day, that Sgt Wilson wrote in the Saddos match report; "Just when you start losing faith in the game [they'd just played Fishers!] along come a team like Scratchers....."

In fact, everyone had so much fun that a return match at the same venue was arranged for later that same year in September.

The fixture was again played in May 2010 and May 2011; but fell into abeyance for several years and only started again in July 2019; and again in July 2020, before this latest fixture.

John 'WG' Cowen Snr. sadly died in January 2015 and Jonathan 'Jonno' Hook in 2020. Both men were characterised (amongst their other qualities) for their love of life, family, open and friendly nature, but both could reserve especial ire for certain things. In the case of Jonno this definitely included Fishers CC and their approach to the game; and in the case of Mr Cowen Snr. any lack of manners or courtesy. Both men played the game with an open spirit and a smile on their faces.



May 2010, Verulamium Scratchers & SFDWPs,

Jonno is 3rd back left and J E Cowen Snr. 2nd from back right, next to a young Jacob who umpired with Alfie Button. Nine of those shown were at this year's memorial match.

The Build Up

The match was eagerly awaited with both team's whatsapp group full of anticipation and generally professional, sportsman-like comments in readiness for what was surely going to be a stern test of cricket all round. Phillip, the Scratchers Skipper and long-term Saddo (note the capital) had finally procured a trophy; fittingly from the antique shop from whose proprietors JC Snr had bought his last car. The **Cowen/Hook Memorial Cup** is a Victorian pewter tankard and is reckoned to be from the local White Horse in London Colney and would have been saved at some stage from being turned into a gun or similar in the great 'pewter round-up' of 1916, when all pubs were forced to changeover to glass. The tankard bears two Victorian 'weights and measures' stamps, which is a fitting tribute to both teams extra-curricular antics!

Near disaster loomed early afternoon as the heavens opened and meteorological maps and other helpful messages were shared a-plenty. Thankfully, the rain abated after no more than 45 minutes or so and the scene was set for a splendid match....

The Match

Both Skippers, Curtis and Cowen, arrived shortly after 4pm and set up, for some extraordinary reason, about as far from the bar as is possible. Admittedly, this is where the scoreboard and nets are but really: priorities, fellas! There were plenty of spectators, including several old Saddos (that sounds great!), Scratchers and some of Jonno's family, including his wife, Catherine and son, Matt and daughter. A surprise appearance of Joe Button meant that remarkably the Scratchers had 12 (the Skipper having made sure to also snaffle Jacob!) But there was a clamour of volunteers to stand down, so all was well.

John Cowen Snr's Grandaughter and son strode out to open the batting for the Scratchers and the Corporal manfully opened the bowling for the Sads. Coming off the back of two ducks (those accursed SACC Colts), it was a slightly nervy start for the Scratchers' Skipper as a couple of forward defensives were rightly jeered by the throng. But he soon worked one away for 2 and then 3, bringing Jessica into the attack to face her St Albans coach...*licking her lips as the pie neared* she took swipe, missed and was clean bowled! Oh the shame as she trudged back to the pavilion, but there was better to come from her later.....and, indeed, from the Corp'....

This bought Joe B to the crease who started brightly with some quick singles and a 4 but was trapped by The Corp' LBW, bringing Jacob in. The Skipper's hopes of getting a Button/Winfield combination in had been dashed! No matter, the runs came reasonably steadily when **Tim W clean bowled his son** for a fairly cheap 11 - bragging rights in the Winfield household to the old man!

Out strode new man Ian S, making his Scratchers debut, but he was clean bowled by a jubilant Sergeant Wilson, who was putting down some good stuff. Sgt W was to strike again with the scalp of Phillip one short of retiring (an agreed reduced 20 runs) top edging one that went high, high in the air, to be easily claimed by Pointer, who was having an excellent day behind the stumps. This, we were to learn later in the bar was **Simon's 50th wicket for the Saddos!!** The Sarge' struck again, dismissing the hard-hitting Brett for 3 through the gate.

Tim R, absent for some 10 or more years, but one of the Scratchers originals and also one-time Saddo, strode out. We had once mused about an appearance on Dragons Den with our patented 'Twat-Stop' device, which was principally intended to stop Tim from trying to knock the leather off every ball; however, true to his old form and after hitting his first two balls for boundaries he was clean-bowled by Longbottom.

One of these 4s heralded the **comedy moment of the match**, or the mutton-late-dive-and-miss-incident. Jonesy had been sent down to deep backward square and was making glacial like progress when the cherry was rifled towards him. "**Corporal!**" "**Jonesy!**" "**Oy, Cloth Ears!**" everyone shouted and eventually he turned, dived and looked to have duly smothered the thing, only for it to somehow have continued its progress, unhindered to the rope! God Bless you Michael and all that you do ;-)

New Saddo Rob 'all the kit' Roffers, turning out for his true team, went for nought, bowled by Winners; as was Ian C making not only his Scratchers cricketing debut, but his actual cricketing debut. He claims darts is more interesting! Ian's agricultural demise brought another new lad, Ram, into the mix; who scored 5 before falling to everyone's favourite little Aussie, Glenno.

James T, another part-time Sad, was going nicely and was duly joined by a returning Jessica - some leniency and surely a no-ball (!) allowed her to stay for a better knock than first time around, but not before she had conspired with Curtis to dismiss JT in the cruellest way possible: Tuckers was backing up at the non-strikers' end when Jess fired one back down the pitch; **Chris must have fallen over or something** because he managed to get a hand to it and in doing so directed it onto the stumps, leaving the hapless JT stranded, but with a credible 11 to his name.

Phillip returned to join his daughter, but was promptly run-out by some sharp work from Glenno with a direct hit; even Jonno's widow later cited this as one of the moments of the match! Jessica went on to hit some nice strokes on her way to a credible 14. "How did you enjoy running out your Dad?" Catherine asked her later!

It was sporting of the Saddos to once again allow Scratchers to use all their 20 overs **making a credible 115 target**, with Mr Extras again featuring large.

So to the **Saddos innings.....**

The Corp and Winfield Snr opened, but after a few nurdles it was back to the hut for Jonesy, who was run out; too short in the leg, alas. This brought Kneesy out, or rather in; but he too was soon returning having been trapped LBW by Jessica: back leg plumb against the middle stump - well done Mr Umpire, Sir! Perhaps he was still dazed from being hit on the bonce by Curtis in the warm-up!

King of the Tinder managed only 3 singles before being clean bowled by the rocket-fuelled Button junior and Private Frazer joined us, who played spendidly for his 17, with a good mix of shots, but was eventually caught. Winners Snr. meanwhile was having a good game all round, eventually carrying his bat for 20.

The Sarge' managed 9 but was trapped LBW by future-Saddo, Ram, who was looking very sharp with ball in hand.

It was also a decent fielding performance by Scratchers; at one point Jacob remarked to IanC that they called JoeB '*the Cannon*'; "Why's that?" asked the new lad; "Just watch when he gets the ball." The next thing the ball is struck to the far boundary, where Joe somehow got to the thing and in it came, flat and fast - one run only; and they needed to be sharp!

The *Skipper was all at sea* as he was bowled by Brett first ball; bringing JLB into things and he scored pretty fluidly, but fell to Jacob fetching a wide-ish ball back onto his stumps, for a decent 12 although perhaps a touch too cheaply by his usual high standards.....

Things were getting tight as *the last two overs honed into view*, with the Corp' keeping up a regular commentary on whatsapp: the match stood at 89 for 7 off 18 overs.....

Glenno hits a 6 first ball. 95...

Pointer hits a four continuing his remarkable form from the Colts game, to add to his excellent day with the gloves....

9 balls left....

3 no balls..."That's the way to win it" posted one wag.

Glenno another 4...107; 6 balls left.

We'd forgotten the change of wides/no balls ruling for the last over during the Scratchers innings, so there really was just 6 balls to face.....the Skipper had kept JoeB to only one over, so he had him in the pocket for the last one....

3 wides (harsh, I thought!) brought the score to 111 (on one leg all you Cornishmen!)

Pointer facing...dot ball....single taken 112....

Glenno clean-bowled!

Bondi comes in needing to hit a 4...."Classic Saddos" posts another Wag.

No ball, one run, 3 runs means a TIED game!!!!!!! (Shhh about the wickets!)

Honour is satisfied and I fancy our Dearly departed are looking down with approval!

Thanks to all the supporters, the Saddos for hosting & April for scoring (aided by Joe B et al).



The Cowen/Hook Memorial Cup, July 2021. Scratchers and Saddos, old & new (ish)

The Aftermath

And so to the bar, where a large tab awaited us, along with some delicious although damnably spicy fodder.....but not before a moving presentation where Phillip said a few words of introduction and about his Dad, then Matt Hook did his Dad and everyone proud with an excellent short speech and presentation of the new trophy - still to be engraved accordingly. He hopes to join us again for next year's game and might even play.



Matt presents the Cowen/Hook Memorial Cup ~ a tie, but cricket is surely the winner!

A terrific evening was had by all and it was nice to see more mingling than is usual between two sides and the increasing mixing of the teams and new recruits coming into the Saddos ranks from Scratchers is testament to the excellent history between these two sides; the respective Skippers even managed to down a pint in the new trophy, although (and whisper it quietly) I fancy Curtis was the quicker!

Here's to successive generations of Cowens, Hooks, Scratchers and Saddos turning out for many years to come - hoorah!