

There was good game of cricket on Sunday, 24th January, 2010, at the Annual *Viv Ash Cuba Libre Invitational* Cricket Match. The captains, Mike Soulsby and Viv Ash, managed to muster nine players for their respective sides. It was agreed beforehand that the tussle should be a 25-over game, with each bowler allowed a maximum of five overs and batsmen to retire if they reached 30 runs unscathed, the aim of the latter being to ensure as many people as possible got a chance to sling the willow. On the whole, the batting was of a decent standard with some nice stroke play in evidence. However, the bowling was largely below par, with the notable exception of new Indian medium-pacer Vishal, who, playing for Mike's team, bowled 3 maidens and, despite claiming no scalps, only gave away 9 runs from his allotted five overs. He is definitely a good and welcome contribution to Peruvian cricket.

Viv won the toss and decided to bat first. His side started very positively (in fact their first five batsmen, including Tony Sanford and Simon Walter, all retired on 30) but petered out in the tail where, despite commendable keenness on the part of Peter and Willy, inexperience unfortunately told. However, hopefully they will not be discouraged by this bump in the road and will continue to come to games, as they definitely show promise and can only improve with practice. Ultimately Viv's IX stuttered to a disappointing 167 after initially looking as if they would reach 200 comfortably. Standouts with the bat were openers Chris Abbot and Tim, the new Aussie, who actually came back in to face the last ball, and Mark Bowie, who made his 30 not out in very short order, including 3 gargantuan sixes.

On Soulsby's side, Dave Murphy, opening the batting with John Bell, got off to a cracking start, hitting four boundaries in the first three overs, including a 6 off a wincingly awful delivery from Simon Walter in his first and thankfully short spell. Mark Bowie, who opened the bowling, acquitted himself quite well with the ball and was rewarded with the only wicket for his side after letting fly a Yorker that struck Mr. Murphy's off stump, sending him packing on 28, two runs shy of the retirement total and true cricket glory. Tony Sanford bowled a usefully economical spell but was unable to penetrate the batsmen or their defences. Monsieur Bell, weathering rock-like the relentless bowling onslaught (?) played a pivotal anchor role for his side before retiring on 30, his wicket intact. Coming in after him, Chris Hodgson, Mike Soulsby and Will McKenzie all produced the goods with some lusty blows, some of which would have made the agriculturally minded proud, and easily reached their target with five overs in hand. In fact it was Will McKenzie who smashed a cross-batted straight six to bring his side home and a fitting end to his sadly short cricketing career in Peru. We wish him and his growing family all the best back in the UK.

Perhaps the single most memorable incident of the match came towards the end of the second innings when Viv, with no apparent regard for his own wellbeing, threw himself in a heroic attempt to intercept a well struck ball that was airborne and boundary bound at

slightly less than subsonic speed. He managed to stop, though unfortunately not catch, the ball but injured his hand in the process. Some say it was deliberate and that with the writing on the wall the nothing-if-not-proud Viv couldn't stomach the thought of watching someone else lift the coveted cuba libre prize. As a result he was receiving medical attention when the man of the match award ceremony was held, at which John Bell was deservingly adjudicated the hallowed beverage for his solid batting performance. The formalities out of the way, all present then repaired in good order to the Cricketers Arms for a well-earned beverage of their own.