



**Church Game**  
**St John's, Hurst Green vs. St Mary's, Oxted**  
**Sunday September 10<sup>th</sup> 2017**

This annual fixture—the **25<sup>th</sup> in this series**—took place last Sunday afternoon at Master Park and proved to be unique in several ways! Normally I have no problem getting our team together but this time I contacted **25** people (honestly—**25** again) to end up with only 10 players.

The match was delayed by inclement weather but started **25** minutes late (that **25** again!!) St John's batted first and started with a good partnership between father and son Jon and Louie Steel who put on 44 together. Jon scored **25** and Louie got a very good 19. Rob Merry scored yet another hard hitting 50 and retired as the rules of this game dictate. After our **25** overs batting St John's had 136 runs for the loss of 8 wickets.

Usually we play 30 overs a side but Richard Adamson and I were guided by an opposition player who had a “rain-radar” app to tell us *precisely* when the rain would arrive!! When we started we decided a T20 was appropriate but after a while “rain-radar app man” said we would be OK to play **25** overs a side so we changed to that format. Unfortunately, this technology proved to be inaccurate as rain set in towards the end of our innings. To speed the game up the usual break for tea was abandoned and St Mary's went out to bat with a very short break between innings. Richard's wife Juliana had made a very large and tasty anniversary cake so I had the honour of ceremonially cutting this with Richard before dashing out into the rain with my team to field.

As last year Adam opened the bowling—he already had to cope with a wet ball and bowled creditably taking 2 wickets in his 5 overs. Both his wickets were a result of exceptional catches by Louie and James—amazing considering how wet the conditions had become. The other bowlers used were Dan—2 wickets, Keith (James' brother) who took 1 wicket, Jon and a final over from Alex. Rob performed at a high level as our wicketkeeper Towards the end the conditions were atrocious and at one point the Umpires offered us the chance of ending early. I asked my team and they all agreed to remain fielding in the heavy rain and less than ideal light. By the time Jon came on, and subsequently Alex, it was almost impossible to grip the ball and quite difficult to run up!! After 15 overs, the Umpires Gerry Carpenter and David Weightman called a halt when one of St Mary's batsmen lost his grip and his bat went flying through the air—fortunately nowhere near a fielder. We had reduced St Mary's to 86 runs for the loss of 5 wickets so I would like to think we would have gone on to win. **Nonetheless I am extremely proud of EVERY member of my team**—and our supporters too—who toughed it out in very adverse conditions. A special mention for Keith who agreed at short notice to help us out and acquitted himself very well in the field--Alex who only volunteered to play a week before the game and our youngest player Leo who saved several runs by his chases in the outfield.

So for the first time in 25 years the match was officially **ABANDONED—NO RESULT.**

**Ian Wilks**

**P.S. This year I want to sincerely thank Gerry and David for standing as our Umpires in increasingly unpleasant conditions for a total of 40 overs. I think they were both almost hypothermic at the end.**

**St Johns v St Mary's 2017**

**Our Team**

Jon Steel

Louie Steel

Rob Merry-wicket keeper,

Dan Gauntlett

Keith Saunders

James Saunders

Adam Wilks

Ian Wilks-Captain

Leo Steel

Alex Starr