

## Caught in a twist at Alfaz - 2003

A "twister", a small cyclone, stopped play in one of the Forty Club matches in Spain last October, a first for the Club. The wind suddenly strengthened and the powerful, swirling wind knocked over two sightcreens, made of canvas and metal frames. Some of the stronger members helped to right the screens and play was eventually resumed.

The only win in a wet interrupted thirteen day tour came from Roly Walton's side's eight wicket rout over Ron Hart's side, a fixture which was hurriedly added to the fixture list after two matches against the locals were cancelled. Three matches were lost, comprehensively in two, and the XL side were 100-3 off 22 overs against Sporting Club Alfaz when rain ended play.

The home side's quicker bowlers - much quicker than ours except for newcomer, 44 year old Duncan Innes from Tonbridge - were slipping and sliding and several fell over. The cricket ground doubles as a golf range and the lush, watered grass kept the run rate down. When the ball was hit into the pools of water umpires called dead ball.

Nomads, Mike Blumberg's club which was celebrating their 100th anniversary, arrived at Alfaz, the seaside town round the bay from Benidorm, halfway through our tour and three Forty Club members thought they would have a final game to revive their spirits by joining them. But at 103-2 the Nomads-XL combo was forced back to the small but charmingly decorated pavilion for prolonged refreshments before another deluge flooded the artificial pitch, which is being replaced this summer.

One of the many ex-pats now living in this area is 64 year old Paul Taylor, who was on the books of Nottinghamshire between 1958-69. He used to be a quick bowler but is now an elegant slow left hander with a beautiful loop.

Just under a year ago, he fell forty feet from a ladder at his residence and was told by Spanish doctors that he would never play sport again. . "I told them they were wrong," he said, "but it was pretty close. My heel was smashed and I now have a reconstructed heel. My back, shoulder, knee and foot were damaged too but with the help of a wonderful physiotherapist I was back playing within six months. I love the game and I don't want to pack up."

It was a heartening story, an object lesson for all veteran cricketers. The moral has to be "if you want to do it, you can ..... just keep working!"



Light fades over the mountains of Alfaz as Duncan Innes studies the action, Alan Luff (right) slumbers, Clive Huggins (left) reflects and Alex Houlgate sticks his nose in.