

## Sutton CCs inaugural Women's Softball Festival - a view from the boundary by Malcolm Davenport

The first cricket festival tournament hosted by Sutton Women's Cricket Club, took place on the Sunday of the bank holiday weekend at Gander Green Lane and a roaring success it was too. Six teams of 8 competed during the festival, creating an atmosphere of competition, but also of friendship and fun, amongst ladies uniting to lift the profile of the female game and give players of any age relatively new to the game the chance to spend a whole day playing cricket in a friendly and supportive environment.

In addition to the Sutton Women's squad divided into two teams A and B, fetchingly nick-named the Adorables and the Beauties, the Festival welcomed the ladies teams of South Nutfield, Godalming, Bushy Park and Outwood.



*-The competing teams group picture-*

Walking around the three pitches named after sponsors Romida Sports, Leaders rental estate agents and Mr India an Indian food take away who provided a mouth-wateringly delicious lunch, there was some excellent cricket being played. Some of the teams such as South Nutfield have been formed only a short while and many players were in their first season, but it was difficult to tell as there was much skill on show. With a limited game of 7 overs and batter and bowler restrictions to ensure game time spread for the players and batters retiring at 20 runs, racking up the scores quickly was the order of the day. Fielding teams took points for taking wickets too so there was a need for an element of caution, but that was not evident. Boundary 4s were a-plenty and there were loads of 6s in there too. No spectator picked up the 'Down the Hatch for a Catch!' free drinks on offer for catching of a 6 outside the boundary, although there were some entertaining efforts from the crowd!

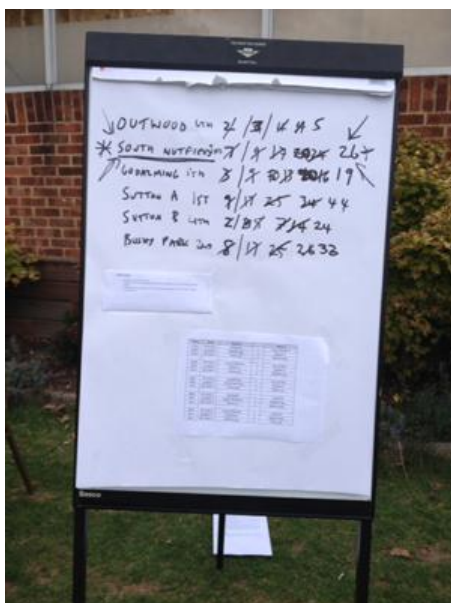
The weather played its part. The blue skies set the scene perfectly and the sprinkling of cloud cover was a bonus at just the right time. Lunch came at the right time too; lovely and plentiful Indian cuisine was laid on, courtesy of game partner Mr India, but could productive cricket, after such a lunchtime feast, also be on the menu after such a feast? You bet!



#### *-Bushy Park vs Godalming-*

There was a good strong commitment in the Sutton Adorables' game against Bushy Park as a result of the player set up (Sutton's Becky was playing for the oppo, which contained her friend Amy, more on her later) so there was an added edge, with the Adorables prevailing in a game which effectively decided the end positions in the tournament, as both had won all their games up to that point; a draw was never on the cards.

As the overs and games ebbed away, the teams were paying much more attention to the scoreboard. Despite the friendliness of the occasion, no-one wanted the wooden spoon, but that honour was eventually awarded to Outwood, with Godalming and Sutton Beauties filling in the places above. Sutton Adorables came out as tournament winners, captained impressively by Sam Hulcoop, with Bushy Park runners up and the addictive, fun-loving ladies of South Nutfield, capping a successful first year with a good third. It must have been their friendly graffiti on the score sheet at the end!



*-South Nutfield "graffiti" the scoreboard to highlight their 3rd place!-*

Finally, medals were presented to the top three teams and after a few kind words from club President, Ian Phillipe, commending further the effort and application of all the ladies and complimenting them on their fun and friendly approach, as well as the obligatory thanks to the umpires, score boys and the hard work put in to set the tournament up by coaches Clive Quinton and Peter Edwards in particular, matters turned to who achieved what commendations in the tournament.



*-2014 softball festival tournament winners "Sutton Adorables"-*

Highest scorer went deservedly to Amy Richford from Bushy Park with an excellent 74; best bowler was Abi Parrott from Godalming with an impressive 11 wickets for a paltry 44 runs, figures any professional would have been proud of; two of her wickets were golden ducks in succession! Shot of the day, decided upon by the umpires was a well-deserved cover drive awarded to Laura lent from Outwood and the bowling champagne moment of the day went to a fabulous hat-trick from Lorraine Evemy of the Sutton As.

No-one wants to wish time away, but the festival was a great place to be and we can only look forward to the next one as although this was the first, it should not be the last. Well done to all the ladies for such an excellent tournament without whom none of this would be possible. From feedback received it has already encouraged some ladies into the game, cemented cricketing friendships and has upped the profile that the ladies game deserves. All teams and spectators are also thanked for their generosity: over £100 was raised for the St Raphael's Hospice. Any girls or women interested in taking up cricket in the Sutton area do visit [www.suttoncricketclub.com](http://www.suttoncricketclub.com) for more information and Roll On the new season!