

## NEWSLETTER No. 274 - SEPTEMBER 2007

### **Wednesday 26 September 2007 – Meeting**

The Society is especially grateful to Stuart Robertson, Commercial Director, Hampshire Cricket for stepping in at such short notice in lieu of Dimitri Mascarenhas.

**STUART ROBERTSON** began his career on the Graduate Training Programme of the Milk Marketing Board, receiving a classical and thorough introduction to the marketing sector. After two years he moved from food marketing to sports marketing by joining the Test and County Cricket Board.

Stuart stayed at the Governing Body of Cricket, now called the England and Wales Cricket Board, for nine years where he was responsible for the marketing and commercial development of the recreational side of the game. Our speaker progressed to the position of Marketing Manager from which he was responsible for the creation of the Twenty20 competition. He then spent two and a half years as Head of Marketing at Warwickshire County Cricket Club before joining The Rose Bowl in April 2006.

### **DIMI MASCARENHAS A MEMORABLE BENEFIT SEASON**

Dimi Mascarenhas' absence from tonight's meeting is, of course, for the best of reasons. In his benefit year, he has lived his dream of playing for England, and in the process, has thrilled and captured the imagination of cricket followers all over the country, and, indeed, further afield.

Given the new ball by Shane Warne, he started the season by taking a wicket in his opening over of the Championship match against Surrey at The Oval, but then missed the next, when Yorkshire travelled to the Rose Bowl. However, on his return against Lancashire, he began his sustained sequence of capturing the eye with some quite phenomenally accurate bowling spells. Annual statistics produced in the November editions of The Wisden Cricketer in the past few seasons have confirmed that he is the most accurate of all bowlers in the County Championship, irrespective of whether Hampshire have played in the First or Second Division.

In the first half of the season he confounded batsmen up and down the land with Shackleton-like economy:-

v. Lancashire (Rose Bowl)	10-3-21-0
v. Kent (Canterbury)	15-6-29-2
v. Sussex (Arundel)	20-9-23-0
v. Durham (Riverside)	23-8-33-4

His batting also demonstrated a new found maturity. After Joe Denly's wonderfully mature unbeaten century at Canterbury, Hampshire were struggling against the swing and pace of Yasir Arafat when Mascarenhas came to the wicket in the evening

sunshine with the score on 83 for 5, in response to Kent's 199. Almost unbelievably for such an exciting strokemaker who revels in putting bat to ball, Dimi took over half an hour to get off the mark. Continuing to play responsibly he was unbeaten on 14 at close of play. The next morning, he threw off his self-imposed shackles to reach 90 off only 146 balls before falling leg before to Arafat. Tom Burrows (35), in his second Canterbury appearance, sensibly played second fiddle as the pair added 103 for the seventh wicket. Dimi was one of the few Hampshire batsmen to bat with any freedom against the County's nemesis, Mushtaq Ahmed, at Arundel, before enjoying a fine match double of 34 (second top score) and 60 off Durham at the Rose Bowl.

He has long been regarded in the County as one of the best "finishers" in the one-day game – an asset that was to achieve almost iconic status a few weeks later. He put his unique skills to good effect as Hampshire chased down a victory target of 331 against Warwickshire at The Rose Bowl. In company with Michael Carberry (192 not out), who played the innings of his life, the pair added 32 off the final four overs to see their side home, with five wickets to spare, in the final over.

In the meantime, Dimitri Mascarenhas had been selected to play for England in the Twenty20 matches against the West Indies. Prior to that selection, he had bowled economically and batted explosively for the County in one-day matches. Many in Hampshire felt his recognition was long overdue, a view hardened by England's woeful performances in the World Cup in the West Indies. Shane Warne had long championed his inclusion in his column in "The Times" commenting that he would "freshen things up". In the absence of Andrew Flintoff, he showed sufficient promise to be retained for the ensuing Nat. West series. He had caught and fielded splendidly but, in return, had suffered more than most from dropped catches and fielding lapses.

In the longer, 50 over, version of the game, he was England's most economical bowler at Edgbaston and Trent Bridge, though failed to take a wicket, and never got going with the bat.

However, he was retained for the 7 – match Nat. West series against India. In an interview in the Rose Bowl programme for the first match he stated that he felt like the new boy but wanted another opportunity to prove his worth.

He also commented on the intensity of both the training sessions and the matches themselves, and that the mental and physical effort was at a level that he had not previously experienced.

He missed two matches because of a hand injury, but made telling contributions in four of the five matches in which he played. At the Rose Bowl, as the great Rahul Dravid and the ultra-aggressive Mahendra Singh Dhoni were attempting to rebuild the innings after early strikes by James Anderson, Mascarenhas bowled an unchanged 10-over spell, conceding only 28 runs. He was also rewarded with the wicket of Dravid. Both the latter and Dhoni were attempting to keep the scoreboard ticking over but Mascarenhas made life extremely difficult for them with subtle changes of pace. He had won the mind game.

When he returned to the side at Bristol, England were struggling after Indian pyrotechnics, sparked by a refulgent Sachin Tendulkar. The Hampshire all-rounder

produced a few fireworks of his own as he hammered 52 off only 36 balls; the innings included five sixes. If he had stayed for another few balls England would have undoubtedly won the match.

Strangely omitted at Headingley, he sealed his reputation as a “finisher” in an astonishing display in his next match at The Oval. On a good batting wicket England were still some way off a competitive total as they entered the last over, bowled by left-arm spinner, Yuvraj Singh. In quite astonishingly fearless, calculated manner he proceeded to hit the final five balls of the innings for six. All were straight in the arc between deep mid-wicket and long-off. Each shot was cheered ever louder and he walked off the ground to tumultuous applause, the crowd having recognised that he had given England a winning opportunity. Though he took two for 55 off his full allocation, India romped home memorably in the last over. However, Hampshire’s beneficiary had come of age as an international cricketer, and in the most spectacular fashion.

He was not required to bat in the final match at Lord’s, largely because he had made such a match-winning contribution with the ball. After Anderson and Flintoff had made early inroads, Mascarenhas tightened the screw by taking 3 for 23 off his full ten overs. His figures would have been even better if a snick had not just eluded Paul Collingwood, standing wide at slip, in his final over.

By the end of the summer, Dimitri Mascarenhas was an integral part of the England one-day side. Though not originally picked for the Twenty20 World Cup in South Africa he received a late call-up as a succession of England players fell by the wayside through injury. The short boundaries there will undoubtedly render his bowling more hittable but, from the matches played to date, it is evident that all bowlers will suffer.

England’s gain has undoubtedly been Hampshire’s loss as the County’s title challenges faltered in the final weeks of the season.

Dimitri Mascarenhas has enjoyed the most memorable of benefit seasons. All Hampshire will have revelled in his success.

### **CHRIS TREMLETT**

When Chris Tremlett took the field against India at Lord’s he became the first Hampshire player, born in the County, to represent England in a Test in this country.

It had been a long hard road for Hampshire’s opening bowler. In a stop-start career, at both international and County level, due to a succession of injuries, it seemed that he was in danger of being cricket’s “nearly man”. It is easy to forget that he was England’s 12<sup>th</sup> man in the first five Tests in the exciting Ashes series in 2005. It is ironic that his opportunity arose due to injuries to his pace bowling rivals.

He grasped his opportunity with a controlled performance in taking four wickets in the match, and retained his place for the next two Tests. He was even more impressive at Trent Bridge with figures of 3 for 80 in forty overs, and then as India

cantered to victory, 3 for 12 in the second innings. Wisden Cricketer described his bowling in the latter innings as being “scarily good”.

He went on to take another three wickets at The Oval and so ended his first series with 13 wickets at a creditable average of 29.69. He bowled an impeccable length throughout.

Unfortunately, he suffered yet another injury in the Nat. West series and it is possible that Stuart Broad in particular may have stolen a march on him for the future. He bowled a slightly straighter line, though his length was more variable, in the ensuing Nat. West series. However, though England now have a number of quick bowlers vying for places, most suffer from physical frailties. If, therefore, Chris Tremlett can stay fit, then he can yet still forge a reasonably long Test career and fulfil his much-cherished ambitions at the highest level.

Certainly, his on-field demeanour in 2007 was much improved, and he stayed fitter for longer. Reducing his run, upon the advice of Stuart Clark, seemed to pay dividends.

He remains an enigma with the bat. He opened his Test career with a pair. In the first innings he joined John Arnold and Chris Smith as Hampshire players to make a duck on Test debut at Lord’s. Unfortunately, the former never played for England again. Tremlett undoubtedly possesses the talent to become a genuine all-rounder. If he is able to throw off his inhibitions he may yet do so; he is certainly capable of hitting the ball vast distances.

### **FRIENDS PROVIDENT TROPHY FINAL 2007**

Hampshire lost their long unbeaten run of Lord’s Final successes when they were overwhelmed by Durham by 125 runs. It was a stirring performance by the game’s most northern, and newest, County. They outplayed Hampshire at every turn. They clearly worked to a game plan, which succeeded spectacularly. Hampshire may point to debatable issues such as inserting the opposition upon winning the toss, and team selection, but it would not have made the slightest difference. Durham was magnificent. Their victory was a highly popular one in the cricket world.

Durham’s batsmen played with panache and élan. Phil Mustard, their young wicket-keeper batsman, who Shane Warne feels should be in England’s one-day team, set the tone early on as he tucked into all of Hampshire’s bowlers with considerable relish. He rode his luck – he played and missed on a number of occasions – to produce a number of scintillating shots. He took every opportunity to drive and dealt with short balls outside off stump, which gave him the chance to swing his arms, to devastating effect. By the time he was dismissed in the 13<sup>th</sup> over, the score stood at 69 (Mustard 49).

It was at this stage that Shane Warne attempted to bring a semblance of order to proceedings. He brought himself on and immediately bowled two big leg breaks to the young Scot, Kyle Coetzer. When he received the next ball, the latter skipped down the wicket to plant Hampshire’s captain over mid-off for a once bounce four.

The game was effectively decided at that point. Coetzer (61) genuinely built his innings, founded on an accomplished technique. At the other end, Shivnarine Chanderpaul – surely the signing of the season – had begun hesitantly. He then took a longer stride going forward and enchanted the crowd as he finessed the ball all over Lord's. His touch and timing were exquisite. His innings was also punctuated with unexpected bouts of violence as he twice pulled the ball into the stands for huge sixes. He looked a certainty to reach a century until he was run out by Michael Carberry when on 78.

Upon their dismissal, captain Dale Blenkinsop (61 not out) and Ottis Gibson, who hit his first two balls for four and six, before having to avoid a beamer from Chris Tremlett, took Durham to an imposing 312 for five. Warne returned the best bowling figures by far. Carberry with his Viv Richards-like gait, fielded brilliantly throughout; he had earlier caught a surprised Michael De Venuto low down far to his right at mid-wicket.

Hampshire's challenge was effectively still-born after the first two balls of their innings. Gibson, surely county cricketer of the year, first induced Michael Lumb to edge to De Venuto at second slip, as the ball was slanted across him. His second ball was an action replay as Sean Ervine fell in identical fashion. The pitch on which Durham had thrived now looked a different proposition. Kevin Pietersen fell shortly afterwards, again to Gibson, leg before to a ball which squatted.

Thereafter, only John Crawley (68), required to play a game foreign to his nature, Carberry (23) and Nic Pothas (47) stayed for any time.

The shame of it from Durham's viewpoint was that their supporters were unable to celebrate on Saturday evening. With Hampshire so many wickets down and far behind on Duckworth-Lewis, many wondered if Durham should have been declared victors when the rains came. Only a few hundred spectators were present as they clinched victory in short order on Sunday morning.

Gibson, who must have given Hampshire batsmen recurring nightmares after his all-10 at the Riverside a few weeks earlier, was declared man-of-the-match.

An aspect of the game which was debated in the days after was that of television referral. Mustard was, apparently, not out; the ball pitching outside leg stump. He must have been informed by his colleagues, as he hesitated before ascending the pavilion steps. However, the umpires waved him off. Also, Chanderpaul was apparently plumb leg before to Tremlett when on 18 but Warne accepted the umpire's judgement.

The result will have sent shudders down the spine of cricket's established order. After many fraught seasons since their introduction to county cricket, it is now clear that Durham are a major force. At the time of writing it appears they will just miss out in the County Championship.

## THE HAMPSHIRE LIBRARY

### My Turn to Spin by Shaun Udal (pub. Know The Score)

Shaun Udal's book, written in association with Patrick Symes, is a frank account of his career, and in many ways, also represents an informed history of Hampshire cricket, and some of England's, over the same period. The book opens with four emotional chapters on his Test appearances in Pakistan and India, and the trauma he suffered on his return when he lost his Hampshire place and his son was diagnosed as autistic. Throughout the book it is very clear that his family is the most important factor in his life.

He then describes his Hampshire career, paying fulsome tribute to the unwavering support and sympathetic handling he received from Mark Nicholas. It was on the latter's departure that his career entered an extended trough with the result that several far less talented off-spinners filled what he regarded as his rightful Test place. It was only on Shane Warne's arrival, that his enthusiasm and focus were revived, despite the fact that the great Australian leg-spinner was in effect filling the spin berth for the County.

The book is full of nostalgic reminiscences and unique character studies of the great Hampshire players of his era, especially David Gower, Malcolm Marshall, Robin Smith, Warne and, at the end of the book, Kevin Pietersen. He also dwells on the psychology of cricket and how the mental side of the game prevented other players from realising their outstanding ability and, indeed, accounted for his own travails. He was full of admiration of the single-mindedness and dedication of Matthew Hayden who, upon being dropped by Australia, played county cricket with Hampshire for a year and subsequently never looked back.

He also gives astonishing insights into the internal politicking, subjectivity and irrationality that surrounded the selection of England Test teams in the 1990s. It was no wonder that Australia pulled ahead during that decade. The team was also full of cliques. He also felt that the County's image as "Happy Hampshire" counted against both he, and ultimately Robin Smith. When he returned to the England side a decade later things had changed dramatically. Andrew Flintoff, who seems to be the ultimate team player, receives special praise.

The book recalls all of Hampshire's Lord's finals (prior to 2007). The Hampshire captaincy had eluded the fiery off-spin bowler for some time, a fact that clearly wrangled, and so he was especially proud to lead the County to their C and G final triumph against Warwickshire at Lord's in 2005. He thought it would be the pinnacle of his career but his England Test caps, his famous dismissal of Sachin Tendulkar at Mumbai and his subsequent match-winning performance in that match still awaited him.

Shaun announced his retirement just as this newsletter was going to the printers.

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