

NEWSLETTER No. 276 – NOVEMBER 2007

MEETINGS

Wednesday 14 November 2007 – Meeting

Though he played the majority of his cricket for Somerset and in South Africa, tonight's speaker, Jon Hardy, was a familiar figure on the local scene for almost twenty years. He played all his early cricket in the County and continued to play for Lymington in the Southern League, as well as Dorset, after he left the county game.

JONATHAN JAMES EAN HARDY was born in Nakuru, Kenya on 2 October 1960. He lived in Kenya for 13 years before coming to England for his education at Canford School. He joined the Hampshire staff in 1981 and first played for the County in a John Player League match at May's Bounty, Basingstoke, in 1983.

Tall, fair-haired, and left-handed, he made his first-class debut at Fenner's in 1984 and created a profound impression when he played his first Championship match at Taunton some two months later. With his side in trouble at 47 for four, he garnered a mature 94 not out (14 fours) and was denied his century only because he ran out of partners. He then went on to hit three more fifties, including an innings of 95 at Edgbaston, in his next five innings. He could not quite sustain that form – it would have been remarkable if he had – but he still ended the season with 513 runs (avge. 36.64).

He again impressed the following year when he compiled his maiden first-class century against Essex at Southampton. Hampshire had made a solid start after Malcolm Marshall and Tim Tremlett had bowled out the opposition for only 96 just after lunch. Chris Smith and Paul Terry put on 97 for the first wicket but the County then subsided to 153 for 6. Our speaker first retrieved the situation with Tremlett and then piled on the runs to secure a winning position in tandem with Bob Parks. He was unbeaten on 107 when Hampshire declared. The County subsequently won with ease, by an innings, with Marshall and Tremlett again being responsible for inflicting the most damage.

1985 was an excellent season for Hampshire as they finished second in the Championship. Despite averaging 35, Jon Hardy was unable to secure a regular place. With a top five of Gordon Greenidge, Terry, the Smith brothers and Mark Nicholas, and himself, David Turner and Kevan James vying for the extra batting spot, competition for places was probably keener than in any period in Hampshire's history – before or since. At the age of 25 he understandably felt he would have to move Counties to ensure regular 1st XI cricket and he asked to be released. Hampshire assented, though with a heavy heart, and he joined Somerset. Our speaker had played in only 29 matches for the County (1255 runs – avge. 35.88) but had become a popular figure with his powerful, clean hitting and his knack of making runs whilst under pressure. He had also been debilitated on occasions by the tropical Bilharzia's disease, which made his achievements even more noteworthy.

His initial year with his new County coincided with the famous schism involving Viv Richards, Joel Garner and Ian Botham. Under a new captain, Peter Roebuck, the situation simmered just under the surface for much of the summer. With Somerset looking forward to the future, and impressed by Martin Crowe's contribution - particularly his positive impact on the younger players - when Richards was on tour with the West Indies in 1984, they decided to dispense with the latter's services in favour of the classy, gifted New Zealander. The subsequent events have been well documented. The situation must have been distracting, and Jon Hardy never quite got going. However, with the inspirational Crowe present for much of the following season, our speaker responded by scoring 1089 runs, and being awarded his county cap, and making another century - 119 against Gloucestershire at Taunton. (Interestingly, Crowe's "replacement" in the first few weeks of the season was the young Steve Waugh).

He had been working in Durban during the winter as a coach for some time and in the preceding months had made his debut for Western Province. He enjoyed his most successful season in that country in 1989/90 when he stroked 550 runs, averaging 61.11 in the process. After a notable match double of 102 and 64 - both unbeaten - in the Castle Bowl for Western Province B against Griqualand West at Kimberley, just before Christmas, he gained promotion to the first XI and put together a well struck 119, shepherding the tail, against Transvaal at The Wanderers in Johannesburg.

After his form tailed off for Somerset, he joined Gloucestershire in 1991, but then left the first-class game at the end of the summer, having scored 6120 runs (avge. 29.85). He then played Minor Counties cricket for Dorset until 1999. In the previous year, he played against Hampshire in the Nat. West Trophy.

During a relatively short career Jon Hardy had brushed shoulders with some of the greatest names in the game's history. The Society is very pleased to welcome him this evening.

26 September - Report

Stuart Robertson, Hampshire Cricket's Commercial Director, gave members a mouth-watering preview of future developments at The Rose Bowl. He felt the ground was one of the sport's most exciting ventures.

Hampshire Cricket was about to embark on major ground improvements, based on the ECB's highest standard model facility for a venue to be eligible to stage Test cricket. In a graphical presentation, our speaker illustrated the major features. The upgraded ground would have 15,000 permanent seats, with the capability to add a further 10,000 temporary ones. The capacity of 25,000 would set it in third place, behind Lord's and the future redeveloped Oval.

At the northern end of the ground a Resort Hotel, comprising 175 beds would be constructed, half of which would face the ground. The hotel would incorporate a Spa and leisure facilities, as well as a Conference Centre and a large 18 - hole golf course, landscaped with four lakes. Some of the rooms would be convertible for use as a

Media Centre at international matches; others would also be converted into hospitality boxes. The hotel would also accommodate walk-in catering and WC facilities when major events were being staged.

The Pavilion End would be twinned with two more covered stands, incorporating additional 4,000 seats, hospitality boxes, and a smaller Media Centre for County matches. The redevelopment would also include turnstiles, dedicated purpose-built disabled facilities and a 300 square metre shop.

Mr. Robertson then turned his attention to the much vexed issues of the pitch and access and egress "Visitor Management Plan" which were so essential if The Rose Bowl was to stage Test Matches. It was evident that the quality of the square was improving. It had progressed from 18th (last) place in 2005 to 9th in 2006: there was every reason to assume that further improvement had been made in 2007.

After the events following the end of the England – Sri Lanka Twenty/20 match last year, a computer model had been applied to formulate the best means of egress. The County had been able to test the results for the England – Pakistan one-day international match in the Autumn. It proved successful with all egress targets being met within two minutes of the planned times. Unfortunately, the reputation acquired at previous international matches was still difficult to shake off, and therefore a charm offensive with the media was still required to change their view. Hampshire Cricket was confident that the Visitor Management Plan would now work.

Their optimism was enhanced by three important proposed access/egress physical developments. There will be a new emergency road into the ground from the motorway; a new pedestrian access into Botley Road which will enable vehicles to travel both ways along Marshall Drive and a new vehicular access across the Golf Course onto the A27.

Planning applications for the various improvements would be made between November 2007 to March 2008. Construction of the two new stands would start at the end of next season (Hampshire's last two Championship Matches will be staged away from The Rose Bowl to facilitate the start) and be completed for the 2009 season. The hotel complex would be ready in 2010.

The County had applied for a Staging Agreement to host Test cricket from the latter year. The Rose Bowl was already a provisional accredited Test ground.

The questions at the end of Mr. Robertson's presentation included drainage of the outfield, the scoreboards, tannoy system and handrails. The County were aware of all the defects and plans were in hand to rectify them.

17 October 2007 – Report

John Barclay entertained his audience in his unique inimitable manner. It was a joyous evening which will be long remembered by those present. He began by declaring his passion for fly fishing and had been very pleased to be invited to a

location in the Test Valley, with its worldwide reputation for trout (our speaker's nickname of course).

At the start of the evening, members stood in silence in memory of Derek Shackleton. Our speaker vividly recollected the latter's recall to the England side in 1963. Shack's opening partner, Vic Cannings, was his coach at Eton. He gave an insight on Shackleton as an umpire. He described him as a "bowler's friend" rather than a "batsman's friend" and so he always made sure that he bowled at Shack's end. He also seemed to score runs when the great Hampshire bowler was officiating and so he was a firm favourite.

He went on to recall his England tour, as Assistant Manager, to South Africa in 1995. It was politically important, being the first by an England side since Nelson Mandela's release. The side had the great honour of meeting him at Soweto. He arrived by helicopter. John Barclay recalled his tall and strong stature; however it was his humility which left a profound impression. Our speaker then walked around the ground with Devon Malcolm. The pair were inveigled into giving an impromptu coaching session to some 60 children with the rawest of implements. Malcolm – one of the world's most natural number elevens – promptly declared he would give a batting masterclass, whereupon he induced his pupils to reproduce every cross bat shot imaginable. All the balls were lost in minutes and their host – one of South Africa's foremost coaches – was concerned that the England fast bowler had ruined a generation of potential batsmen.

Our speaker then majored on the spirit of cricket. He was increasingly concerned about behaviour, particularly of players in club and school matches. The most notable facet was the amount of noise and hand clapping as fieldsmen encouraged bowlers. He never felt it was necessary when captaining Garth le Roux and Imran Khan at Sussex!

He also touched on the international programme. There was too much cricket which was exhausting the players. He felt that countries possessed insufficient resources to sustain the current programme. He also commented that the programme needed to be balanced, and avoid too much Twenty/20.

In the Question and Answer session he talked about the Arundel Foundation. It was created for those children with disabilities and special needs. It was not therefore exclusively about cricket, but designed to give such children more life experiences. Arundel was well blessed with amenities and facilities, with the Castle, the Wild Fowl Trust and the nearby beach at Littlehampton.

HCS PLAYER OF THE YEAR 2007

Members have nominated Michael Carberry for the above award. An appreciation will be included in the next Newsletter.

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