

## NEWSLETTER No. 277 – DECEMBER 2007

### Wednesday 5 December 2007 – Meeting

The Society extends a very warm welcome to this evening's speaker, **PETER BAXTER**. He will, of course, be familiar to Society members as the long-term Producer of Test Match Special and the man who was responsible for that most evocative of audio tapes "John Arlott – The Voice of Cricket". Members will recall that John was one of the Society's original Presidents

Peter Baxter first worked on Test Match Special as a Production Assistant 40 years ago, and became the programme's Producer in 1973. Born in Derby in 1947 and educated at Wellington College, he joined the BBC with Radio Derby in 1965 after a short spell in the British Forces Broadcasting Service in Aden. As well as cricket, he was a rugby producer for 8 years, produced the coverage of the annual University Boat Race for 10 years and has worked on almost every other type of radio outside broadcast – sporting or otherwise.

This is our guest's second visit to the Society. He previously spoke at Basingstoke Sports Centre in February 1982.

Members will enjoy the Society's Annual Dinner after Peter Baxter's address.

### 14 November 2007 – Report

Jon Hardy enthralled a large Rose Bowl audience with an account of his life in cricket. It was a journey which started with helping to prepare the wicket at Hyde Cricket Club in the New Forest, and now continues as a business man, designing and selling cricket helmets.

From Hyde, he moved to Lymington in the Southern League and, when made captain, lead them to their first title in 1983. By then, he had joined Hampshire, where he was privileged to be one of Arthur Holt's colts, and had made his first-class debut. He recalled that he learned of his selection for one match, with Robin Smith (when Gordon Greenidge and Trevor Jesty were injured), whilst the pair were on an illicit break in the South of France. They had only 24 hours to make their way back and arrived half an hour after the start of play!

Whilst he did well for Hampshire, the competition was such he was not guaranteed a regular place, and so moved to Somerset. Joel Garner was his landlord and so he was in close proximity to the events that unfurled at the end of his first season. He felt that the situation regarding "The Big Three" had been very badly managed.

He also covered his playing days in South Africa. Again competition for places was strong at his club in Cape Town by virtue of their membership including no fewer than 13 players who had appeared for Western Province, and four who had gained Springbok caps (Peter Kirsten, Garth le Roux, Steve Jefferies and Craig Matthews). Nevertheless, he became a regular for the provincial side and the crowning moment of

his career was when he made 80 as Western Province won the Nissan Shield at The Wanderers in Johannesburg in March 1989.

His talk was littered with references to the great players of his era with whom he played. He referred to a match against Lancashire, in which Malcolm Marshall, after a quiet first innings, then roared into bowl in the second, and decimated the top order. It was one of those famed occasions when he was predicting how he would dismiss his opponents.

He also recalled an amazing innings by Viv Richards against Glamorgan. The latter had just returned from the West Indies after making the fastest ever century in Test cricket. It was a hard, fast and green wicket on which the ball moved around alarmingly, and bounced steeply. No other batsman lasted for long but Richards, seemingly totally unaware of the conditions, raced to a very rapid century. He also recalled the big-hitting exploits of Ian Botham, and the class of Martin Crowe and Jimmy Cook. He lived with Steve Waugh in his Somerset days, and had great respect of the Australian's straightforwardness and honesty. He recalled a partnership with Waugh at The Oval, against Sylvester Clarke in full cry. The pair batted for a considerable time and earned the grudging respect of the fearsome West Indian. Waugh described the spell of bowling as the fastest he ever encountered during his career. Our speaker also jousting with Clarke in South Africa. Whilst at Gloucestershire, Jon Hardy played with Eddie Barlow.

Whilst coaching in South Africa, he worked with Bob Woolmer, coached the young Jacques Kallis and helped Gary Kirsten considerably whilst the South African opener was trying to cope with Glenn McGrath.

He touched on Minor Counties Cricket with Dorset. He thought the first-class Counties tended to underestimate the performances of their Minor Counties colleagues. He had particular regard for Julian Shackleton and Vyvian Pike. He recalled a day when Shackleton embarrassed Hampshire in a Nat. West Trophy match at Dean Park and wondered what might have happened if the number of overs he was able to bowl was not restricted. Revealingly, he regarded Pike, a leg-break bowler who played briefly for Gloucestershire, as the finest spinner with whom he had ever played.

He formed his helmet company in South Africa. He gambled, bought a thousand helmets at the outset, and sold three to David Boon, Geoff Marsh and Dean Jones, and the remainder to 3D Sports. He has never looked back. More recently, thanks to the influence of Matthew Hayden, he has gained a foothold in the Australian Test camp and four players now wear his product. Jon Hardy is also the brains behind Chase Bats. He therefore has a thriving business empire. Shrewdly, he has now moved his manufacturing base from South Africa to India.

All present thoroughly enjoyed his unassuming address and his memories of a golden decade. It was an evening that members will remember for many years. One also felt that a book of his reminiscences would make extremely interesting reading. There is certainly enough material.

## **HCS PLAYER OF THE YEAR 2007 MICHAEL CARBERRY**

Arthur Holt once stated that it was unusual for a man to be released by one County and be successful with another. If it did occur, then there were generally special circumstances. Michael Carberry must surely be a man who vindicated the view, expressed in a different era, of Hampshire's former coach, the only exception being that he found fulfilment with a third County. The left-handed Carberry first made his name for his consistent performances for the England Under-19 side. He then played well for Surrey but generally found his way barred by England men in their formidable batting line-up. He therefore moved to Kent. He again proved a model of consistency until ousted by overseas signing Michael Bevan.

He therefore sought pastures new for a second time. When he signed for Hampshire his CV suggested an unlucky cricketer, having made over two thousand runs at an average approaching 39. In 2006, his inaugural year for the County, he played a full season for the first time and, almost uncannily, maintained his career average as he just failed to reach the thousand run landmark. His performances during the season were rewarded with selection for the England A tour of Bangladesh. He impressed with his batting early on, scoring 100 (retired) versus the Bangladesh Academy before making a conscientious 70 in the first "Test" against the Bangladeshi A side. Thereafter, hesitant starts impeded his progress. However, he excelled in the field throughout. The question before last summer was therefore whether he would be able to push on to the next level.

The start to his season was frustrating as he spent it on the treatment table. Michael Brown replaced him. Like Carberry, he went on to enjoy a career best season. James Adams prospered in the first few weeks, and, therefore, when Carberry returned for the match against his previous County at Canterbury, it was as a middle-order batsman. He was, though, no stranger to the position having batted there frequently before. As in the preceding year, the pitch improved markedly as the match progressed; he struggled to 7 in 45 minutes on an eventful first day when all the quicker bowlers enjoyed themselves immensely, and made one run less in the second innings. However, he kept his place and top-scored with 52 in Hampshire's first innings total of 169 in the ensuing match at Edgbaston. The County were to continue to find runs scarce in the first innings for virtually the whole season, a major factor in their ultimately abortive Championship challenge. He also passed fifty in the next match at Arundel, though it was the second innings, the County having been "Mushed" – yet again – in the first.

Jimmy Adams was dropped as Hampshire hosted Durham at the Rose Bowl. Carberry was promoted to open, and remained there for the remainder of the season. He celebrated the end of the Twenty/20 interlude by playing Hampshire's innings of the summer, and indeed his life, as the County successfully chased 331 off 92 overs against Warwickshire on the final day at the Rose Bowl. Circumspect and sketchy early on, he battled to his first century off 183 balls. Thereafter, he pummelled the Bears' bowlers to such effect that his next fifty was made off only 32 balls. So violent was the assault that he suffered from cramp and required a runner. The target was still far from simple as he was joined by Dimitri Mascarenhas. The pair required 86 off the last 23 overs. However, by shrewd placement and running between the

wickets, they stayed together and reached their target with just three balls to spare. At the end, Carberry was undefeated on 192, made in 371 minutes (24 fours and a later six). The feature of his innings had been his powerful driving through the off-side.

It was the Worcestershire bowlers who suffered the weight of his bat thereafter. First, on a hot day in early August, he made a determined 116. For once, Hampshire's first innings prospered. Carberry and Brown launched the innings with a first wicket stand of 133, a Rose Bowl record. He then made a century in each innings – 127 and 120 – in the return match at Kidderminster. On this occasion he and Brown added 111 and 199 for the first wicket; the latter partnership was only five runs short of the County's record opening stand against Worcestershire. He wore a black armband in honour of his grandfather who had passed away in Barbados; Michael Carberry had paid a fulsome family tribute. Though detractors might point to the paucity of the opposition's bowling, both innings were worthy, mature and considered efforts.

He was now nearing the cherished 1000 run landmark, but was still 46 runs short after the penultimate match against Kent at the Rose Bowl. Before the rain finally washed out the last two days at Headingley, Hampshire dismissed Yorkshire for 161 and then made 244 for 4 off 60.3 overs. Carberry was the lynchpin as he made his fifth century of the summer. On a still unpredictable wicket, he played carefully for his first fifty, made off 104 balls. By now he had reached his goal and despite being dropped at first slip on 55, played with freedom to reach his hundred off only a further 45 balls. Once, again, his cover-driving had been the signature stroke of his innings, though one correspondent paid him the compliment of liking his one-legged pull shots to that of Gordon Greenidge. Praise indeed. Any lingering doubts of the merit of his centuries against Worcestershire must surely have been laid to rest. It was an innings of the highest quality, played on a wicket with which virtually every other batsman failed to come to terms.

Michael Carberry finished the season at the top of the Hampshire innings having scored 1067 runs at an average of 50.80. Throughout the season he fielded brilliantly, his speed to the ball, power of his arm and Viv Richards-like athleticism being a joy to watch.

He is a most deserved winner of the HCS Player of the Year nomination.

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