

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

NEWSLETTER No. 289 - MARCH 2009

MEETINGS

Wednesday 11 March 2009 – Meeting

Tonight's speaker is the **REVEREND CANON ALAN HAYDOCK**. He is a member of the Nottinghamshire General Committee.

He was ordained in the clergy on 13 June 1965 and was a minister for 42 years, 26 of which he spent serving the Borough of Rushcliffe. He has always been an enthusiastic cricketer. A left-handed batsman and wicket-keeper, he played over 300 games for Club and Clergy.

Among his other activities are supporting Notts. County and amateur dramatics, where he has been known to play a vicar!

The Rev. Canon Haydock has visited a number of Cricket Societies this winter and the Society extends a warm welcome for his visit to Hampshire tonight. His address will be preceded by the Society's Annual General Meeting.

Wednesday 7 January 2009 – Report

The evening in the company of Bob Herman and Richard Lewis was almost worthy of a book. As David Fish mentioned in his vote of thanks, the evening was akin to a warm fireside chat in the company of friends. The two ex-Hampshire cricketers spoke for over an hour and a half and one feels that, if time permitted, they would still be going some twelve hours later as the editor has sat down to draft his report. It was an evening of the very essence of Society meetings as they recalled the on and off field exploits of their former team-mates and their opponents.

Their accounts of some of their experiences with their colleagues in that great Hampshire side of the early 70's will live long in the memory. They told of the car sharing journeys where it was revealed that Richard Gilliat obviously drove in the manner of a grand prix motor racer and John Holder's sense of direction would have benefited from a sat nav.

They spent some time revealing little known incidents about Hampshire's two fast bowlers of the era, Butch White and Andy Roberts. The former once chivalrously kicked away a grass cutter delivered by Bob Herman, after the ball had slipped from his hand, only to be given out on appeal by wicket-keeper John Murray. Butch never stopped muttering about the injustice he suffered, commenting that he did not want to hit the ball, delivered by a fellow member of the fast-bowlers' union, for four. He was undoubtedly a man of

principle. He also possessed a long memory. Gordon Greenidge, when he arrived on the staff was painting the wooden stands at Northlands Road at the start of the season. Butch rested on the seats, during middle practice, not realising they had been painted; he stood up with green stripes on a brand new pair of trousers, for which players had to pay in those days. He gained his revenge when he later ushered the future West Indies Test opener into the boot of his car prior to crossing the Severn Bridge into Wales, informing him that he required a passport to enter the Principality. Richard Lewis also recounted his futile attempts “to look after” the fast bowler on one evening at a Worcester hotel when at 3 am, much the worst for wear, his ward ran amok with a fire hose. The incident arose as again he felt, though wrongly this time, he had been unjustly affronted. Our speakers both confirmed that Butch White loved his golf and that it was apt that he should pass away on a golf course and, indeed, he would have appreciated it.

Both men spoke in awe of the speed, accuracy and control of Andy Roberts. Richard Lewis remembered his first encounter with him at middle practice, when wearing ill-fitting clothes. The first two balls went well wide of either side of the wicket. The third ball was very quick indeed, took the edge off the opener’s bat, but the slip catch was dropped by Trevor Jesty. Lewis explained that Roberts injured second XI batsmen all over the country that year (1973) and mentioned the famous match against Gloucestershire 2nd XI at Bournemouth in which the fall of wickets masked the fact that at least two batsmen had retired hurt with bruises inflicted by the Hampshire pace man. By the following season he was the finished article, and gave an insight into the now-famous Cowdrey incident at May’s Bounty. Goaded by Barry Richards, who felt that Cowdrey had conned Roberts into showing the great England batsmen too much respect, he bowled him his “slow” bouncer which Cowdrey only just evaded. The whole Hampshire team knew the inevitability of the outcome of the following ball – his quick bouncer. It pole axed Cowdrey. Who, of course, fell on his stumps to be dismissed hit wicket. It should not be forgotten that Cowdrey was one of the best players of fast bowling there has ever been. Notwithstanding this incident, Bob Herman felt that he was the finest English batsman to whom he ever bowled. Richard Lewis also referred to a net at Derby where he was designated to face Roberts as the latter was undergoing a fitness test. He hesitantly sparred at the first ball whereupon he was told by his protagonist to get well forward. Such was his control, the great West Indian proceeded to bowl eleven consecutive half volleys, all which Lewis creamed through mid-off. The corollary to the story was that the whole exhibition was witnessed by a large crowd assembled behind the net who must have thought, in his own words, that the Hampshire batsman was a world-class performer, thanks to Andy Roberts’ mastery. There were numerous other stories in the same vein.

Richard Lewis gave his own unique insight on the fear and impact on the nervous system in facing genuinely quick bowling in the pre-helmet era. When the West Indies visited Northlands Road in 1976, the Hampshire team, depleted by injuries, were glad to learn that Andy Roberts was not playing. However, their deadpan team-mate then informed them that his good friend, Michael Holding, would be opening and that he was even faster than he was!

Lewis, graphically described how he and his opening partner, the late Peter Barrett, who appeared to suffer from chronic nerves in any event, endured the long half hour of the opening day. The experience clearly left a profound imprint.

The Q and A session revealed the little known fact that Gary Sobers once guested for Hampshire in a match against the island side in Jersey. Both men recalled his penchant for gambling but also his innate generosity. Bob Herman thought he was the best batsman to whom he ever bowled; he also confirmed that he was one of the finest of all left-arm opening bowlers and a high-quality left-arm spin bowler. He (Herman) was once told that if Sobers resorted to his chinaman it invariably meant he was bored and wanted to move the game along!

There were so many other fond memories of an evocative evening, not least for those acquainted with club cricket of Richard Lewis' memories of the Rams, a team of largely ex-Hampshire players who played against the leading clubs on Sundays for many years and his recollection of the picturesque grounds in North Hampshire, including Oakley, Longparish and Hurstbourne Priors. Geoff Keith, Lofty senior and Arthur Holt were also remembered with nostalgic affection.

(Editor's Note: Bob Herman's best career figures were 8 for 42, and not as stated in the January Newsletter)

Wednesday 11 February 2009 - Report

At the start of the meeting, members stood in silence in memory of Jack Moore and Bill Frindall.

Thereafter, those fortunate enough to be present enjoyed a superb evening in the company of Allan Stuttard, an ex-player and authority on Lancashire League cricket. The Lancashire League and Central Lancashire League are only two of a number of leagues in the north of England where clubs employ professionals from all over the world. However, it was Learie Constantine who brought an aura to the two Lancashire Leagues.

Our speaker recounted that he played for Todmorden with the young Derek Shackleton. The great Hampshire player always retained his links with the town of his birth and, upon his death, his ashes were scattered there. The Todmorden pitch straddles both the Yorkshire – Lancashire boundary; indeed the boundary runs through the middle of the ground. Both Counties still play 2nd XI matches there. In the early 1950's, the club's membership numbered 1500 and crowds were about 2500. They predominantly came to see the overseas professional. He recalled that his first away trip was to watch the Australian Sid – S.G. – Barnes. However, he was dismissed for a duck, whereupon the ground emptied and went down the road to Nelson where West Indian, Bruce Pairaudeau, then playing as an amateur, benefited from a collection of over £100 in scoring a fifty. Allan Stuttard mentioned crowds

were now sparse but there was an occasion in the 1980's when the Walsden ground was filled with day-trippers from the Asian community in Bradford. They did not come to watch, though, the professional Mohsin Khan, but his wife who was a Bollywood film star. Mrs. Khan had to be smuggled out of the ground at the end of the match. He also told the story of how Peter Lever's brother, Colin - who made a career as a school teacher – received a larger sum from a collection for taking 5 wickets and scoring a fifty - than his sibling's win bonus for Lancashire in the John Player League.

Our speaker then recalled his own early life in the game. He received good coaching as a youngster from Essex's Morris Nicholls and Derbyshire's Stan Worthington. He was then conscripted into the Army and sent to Korea. Thankfully, hostilities ceased two days after his arrival which gave him an opportunity to play for the British Army against the New Zealand Army, in a field surrounded by Centurian Tanks.

He recalled the professionals in the Leagues in 1955. Among their number were Cec Pepper, Colin McGol, Polly Umrigar, Vijay Hazare, Vinoo Mankeid and Subhash Gupte. He then moved on to the famous Wood Cup Final of 1954 between Walsden and Middleton which strains credibility. Walsden, had never won a trophy. The Final started on 4 August and finished a month later on 1 September. It was played over 3 nights a week until the finish. The original venue was Rochdale but after two weeks of rain, and no play, the match was switched to Werneth. Chasing a total of 220, Walsden were at one stage 46 for 6. Everton Weekes, who had been recruited from Bacup owing to the injury to Walsden's professional, Ronnie Wood (brother of Barry), then played an outstanding innings of 151 not out. Weekes also took 9 for 92. However, the man of the match award went to Walsden's Jim Wilkinson who scored only 17 runs but kept up his end whilst Weekes flayed away.

He then recounted some of the most distinguished cricketers in the Leagues during his era. The most memorable and colourful was Cec Pepper; he was convinced Roy Gilchrist was the fastest bowler of all time. In one season he took 98 wickets, out of a total of 145, without the assistance of a fielder. Sonny Ramadhin was a prolific wicket-taker and faster off the wicket than he appeared. Basil D'Oliveira was the most admired professional. The keenest player was Andy Bichel who was such a key figure in Hampshire's C & G Final triumph in 2005.

It was an evening at which Society members were privileged to hear a natural speaker bring to life the history, lore, mores, and the stars, and indeed the lesser known names, of an almost mythical era of the game's past.

MORE ON

DIMITRI MASCARENHAS

The Final of New Zealand's Twenty20 Competition between Otago and Canterbury was abandoned without a ball being bowled. Dimi, however, received his winner's medal on the basis that Otago finished top of their group in the round-robin stage.

MARCUS NORTH

Hampshire's new signing for the early part of next season found himself catapulted into the Australian Test team in South Africa. Originally selected as reserve batsman for the tour he made 52 not out and 50 retired out in the prologue against the South African Board President's XI at Potchefstroom. Crucially, he also returned career best figures of 6 for 69 in the second innings, comprehensively outbowling Imran Tahir in the process. He was therefore selected for the First Test at the New Wanderers, Johannesburg, effectively as Australia's first-choice spin bowler. He proceeded to make 117 in just under six hours, sharing a match-winning ninth wicket partnership of 117 with Mitchell Johnson.

Whilst undoubtedly pleased with his achievements, Hampshire will now be viewing the next few weeks with some trepidation. If he is selected for the Ashes tour, it is probable that he will not be allowed by the ACB to play for the County. On previous occasions when an overseas player has been unable to appear for the County at short notice, Hampshire have generally suffered, at best, a problematical season.

(Editor's Note: In previous years the Editor has compiled biographies of two Australian cricketers who eventually were unable to play because of injury, ie. Bruce Reid and Mike Kasprovicz. Milton Small and Shoaib Akhtar were similarly original choices but no biographies were drafted)

IMRAN TAHIR

Imran Tahir, who is married to a South African, is now qualified to play for that country. He has enjoyed a good season to date in first-class cricket there this winter, taking 27 wickets (avge. 26.33) in six matches. This tally includes 5 – 103 for Titans v. Dolphins at Durban and 7 – 94 (10 – 132) for Easterns v. Boland at Paarl.

ICC HALL OF FAME

The ICC has linked with the Federation of International Cricketers' Association (FICA) to formally launch the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame. The initiative is part of the ICC's centenary year celebrations. There are 55 initial inductees, which include five former Hampshire players, ie. **DAVID GOWER, GORDON GREENIDGE, MALCOLM MARSHALL, BARRY RICHARDS and ANDY ROBERTS.**

It is proposed that new players will be added each year, to be announced at the annual ICC Awards.

DEPARTURES

Hampshire Cricket have not renewed the contracts for Greg Lamb and Kevin Latouf.

Both men were key figures in Hampshire's stunning fielding display against Yorkshire in the C&G Semi-Final at The Rose Bowl in 2005. KEVIN LATOUF kept his place for the Final; he did not bat but nervelessly held the boundary catch offered by Warwickshire century maker, Nick Knight, in front of The Tavern which secured victory. South African born and right-handed, he batted intelligently in the quarter-final against Surrey at The Oval when he consistently worked the ball into the ground's open spaces. His 25 on that occasion was his highest score in eleven List A matches for the County. He also played for England in three Under-19 Tests against Sri Lanka in that summer. He batted consistently, striking half centuries in each of the three matches. He also won the Hampshire Young Cricketer of the Year award in 2005, but went on to play in only one first-class innings when he scored 29 against Loughborough UCCE at The Rose Bowl in 2006.

GREG LAMB played in all the C&G Matches in 2005, except for the Final. A tall right-hand batsman and right-arm off-spin bowler he made his first-class debut in his native Zimbabwe against England A in 1998-99. He compiled his only first-class century – 100* for the CFX Academy v. Manicaland in the following year but then left the country. He made his first appearance for the 2nd XI in 2003 and then struck 94 on his first-class debut for the County at Derby at the end of the following season. However, as with Latouf, he never made the required volume of runs thereafter though, when opening the innings in the Totesport National League he hit an undefeated 100 against the Northamptonshire Steelbacks in 2005. He was given an opportunity to develop his off-spin bowling - he once took 7 for 73 in an innings in Zimbabwe – last summer, following Shaun Udal's departure, but after scant success, he lost his place. He played in 22 matches for the County, scoring 684 runs (avge. 21.37), taking 13 wickets and holding 22 catches. Though his limited overs record was more impressive, the County's performances towards the end of last season inevitably meant that his place on the staff was at risk.

BOOK REVIEW

Lady Worsley's Whim by Hallie Rubenhold (pub. Chatto and Windus £25)

This book was a BBC Book of the Week in November. It is of interest to cricket followers because it concerns the life of one of the Hambledon Patrons, Sir Richard Worsley, majoring on the scandalous - and salacious – circumstances surrounding the separation from his wife, Seymour, and the subsequent divorce proceedings.

The book is one of the many recent publications giving valuable insights on the moves of the English aristocracy in the eighteenth century. Though cricket is not mentioned, the editor believes it is the first in-depth biography of a Hambledon patron – and a very unflattering picture emerges.

The pace and clarity of the writing makes it an excellent read.

THE REAL WORLD

2009 will be remembered as the year that cricket moved into the real world. Just as it seemed that sport in general, and cricket on the Indian sub-continent in particular, was recession-proof, the Stanford Affair broke. And then the dreadful events in Lahore when terrorists (yet again) moved into a sphere previously considered sacrosanct from such occurrences. The motives of those responsible for the attacks are, at the time of writing, very unclear but it would seem that cricket in Pakistan was, in itself, the target. It was not only the Sri Lankan team coach that was attacked but also the car carrying the ICC officials, ie the match referee (Chris Board) and the umpires to the ground. The fourth official, a local umpire, was seriously wounded and the driver of the car lost his life as, of course, did five of those policemen guarding the coach. The perpetrators clearly meant business. AK47s are one thing; rocket propelled grenades quite another. It is difficult – and indeed naïve - for any authority to propound that sports teams are guaranteed safety in the face of such armoury. The ICC and other cricketing Authorities are, thankfully, undertaking a reality check about security arrangements.

Both the Pakistan and Sri Lankan Boards have been blighted by significant political interference for years now. They have received the ultimate comeuppance. The players on both sides must feel very let down. On their part, it will be regarded as nothing less than a breakdown in trust. Given the money available in the IPL, and events in Lahore, it is probable there will now be a significant shift in player power. Perhaps it is also time for the ICC to look at the FIFA model, where at least in theory, governments are excluded from the management of soccer.

With the country descending further into anarchy by the week, it is inconceivable that cricket teams from outside of the country will play in Pakistan for years. Those hoping that regime change will alter the political situation and outlook are in dreamworld, given that the Taliban and their multifarious allies are now entrenched within a hundred miles of the capital, Islamabad.

In his brilliant book Pundits from Pakistan, Rahul Bhattacharya described how many of the criminal elements in Afghanistan decamped to Karachi upon the United Nations backed invasion. The wonder is therefore that the Test in that city passed off without incident. However, the situation there adds to the

scope for Pakistan imploding. The impact on the Sub-Continent can only be imagined but the potential implications for the world as a whole are spine chilling.

The whole Sub-Continent is currently more of a tinderbox than at any time in the past, except perhaps in 1947. Bangladesh seem unable to shake off the recurring short-term cycle of military coups and democratically elected regimes. Sri Lanka itself is subject to an increasingly bitter civil war. The plight of the Tamils there is beginning to show signs of spilling over into Tamil Nadu on the Indian mainland. The political parties espousing Hindu Fundamentalism are causing major rifts in the political system and horrific criminal violence elsewhere in the country and their influence was one reason for the unpreparedness for the Mumbai massacre as the end of last year. Those running the Indian Premier League seem to be more than a little complacent about security issues potentially affecting their tournament in the next few weeks. One hopes that their view on safety is not being skewed by the substantial financial losses they will incur if the tournament does not go ahead.

One has to feel sorry for the multi-talented Pakistan cricketers. It seems as if their future appearances will be limited to Tests in other countries, with home Tests being played in the Emirates. Whilst the latter have hitherto been secure, the recession, coupled with Iran becoming more bellicose in the area, could yet make the Gulf States much more unstable than in the past and perhaps sooner rather than later.

As for Stanford, it is easy to be wise after the event. If there was a fault it must lie with the regulators in the United States and the Caribbean who only made public their concerns when the storm broke. And it should be remembered, that as at the end of February, no criminal charges have been laid against the Texan billionaire. It is still a civil matter. There may well have been some innate concerns – in the final analysis, brazen behaviour always raises suspicion - but if the regulators have not taken any action then it adds to the difficulty of rebuffing such approaches, especially as his Twenty20 Competition in the West Indies was a resounding success. The positive impact created by his money must be partially reflected in the West Indian resurgence against England in the past few weeks.

If the ECB were culpable in any way at all, it was in their haste to stage a Twenty20 tournament to rival the IPL. Almost a year on, such a tournament in England is not really any further forward. And, given the recession which is clearly a very deep one, it is difficult to see major sponsors coming forward. And does it really matter now?

©Copyright Alan Edwards 2009 (alan.edwards60@ntlworld.com)