

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

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MEETINGS

Wednesday 30 September 2009 – Meeting

The Society is proud to welcome the current Hampshire captain, **DIMITRI MASCARENHAS** to this evening's meeting. He has been an integral part of the Hampshire team for the past decade, progressing from being a raw newcomer to an England international. His mark on Hampshire cricket has been significant and history is sure to regard him well.

His appearance on the radar screen was sudden. He came to Hampshire, from Australia, where his family had lived for some years, in 1996 to spend a season playing club cricket for Bournemouth and to train with the County. The arrangement was made by Paul Terry with whom he had struck a close friendship whilst the latter was player/coach for our speaker's Melville Club, Perth, in the preceding winter.

Hampshire were sufficiently impressed to select him for some early 2nd XI games. Though he did not get off the mark until his fourth innings and proved expensive with the ball, he proved to be a very quick learner. No fewer than 22 players appeared for Hampshire that season, thirteen of them front-line bowlers. With a mounting injury list and several suffering loss of form, and never to play for the County again, he was thrust into the first-class arena in September. It was a truly meteoric rise. His baptism, against Glamorgan at Northlands Road, could also hardly have been more dramatic. He took 6 for 88 in 32 overs in his first innings and 3 for 62 in the second. He followed up this performance with match figures of 7 for 147 at Canterbury. He had thus taken 16 wickets with lively bounce and late away swing in his first two matches. To cap a memorable summer, he also helped Bournemouth with the Southern League title.

After an injury -plagued 1997 he cemented his place in the county side in the following year with a series of explosive performances with the bat in particular. HCS members were so taken with his joyous approach that they voted him as their Player of the Year that season. He was still only 20 years of age and remains the youngest-ever recipient of the award. He was already gaining a reputation as an "impact player" in one-day cricket. Before a national television audience, he frightened the powerful Lancashire side in the Nat. West Trophy semi-final at Northlands Road with an innings of 75 after his team stood on the brink when 28 for 5. Though Hampshire eventually fell short, it was clear that a new talent had emerged. His name was propounded

by Hampshire supporters as worthy of an England one-day place from that day forward.

It was to be another nine years – his Benefit Year of 2007 – before he received national recognition. As England experimented with a succession of lesser all-rounders, he should surely have been selected earlier. It is even debatable that he would have been selected at all had not his Hampshire captain, Shane Warne, advocated his cause in the media. In the meantime he had established a reputation as the best “finisher” in limited-overs cricket, as well as being one of the fastest runners between the wickets in the game and the shrewdest exponent of bowling with a new white ball. He did, of course, become the first player to take a hat-trick in a Twenty20 match at Hove in 2004.

Upon making his international debut against India, who possessed one of the most talented batting sides the world has ever seen, his impact was immediate. He bowled economically and, at Lord's, penetratingly, and in two matches lit up the international arena with pyrotechnic batting displays. He hammered 52 off only 32 balls (including five 6's) at Bristol and then achieved cricketing immortality when he launched all the final five balls of England's innings over the boundary ropes at The Oval.

The selectors have since largely had a strange love-hate relationship with him. Time and again he has been left out of England's limited-overs teams, usually at their expense. It is ironic that his one-day expertise should have been recognised by the Indian Premier League. He was the first English professional to win an IPL contract. Warne was undoubtedly instrumental in the arrangement but he has usually delivered when selected. He was also hugely successful for Otago in the New Zealand one-day competition last winter.

Our speaker's success in one-day cricket has curtailed his appearances for Hampshire and also masked the excellence of his play in first-class cricket. Right-handed, he bats with style and panache. He has a keen eye and the confidence to back his judgement. He also possesses a proven record as a fighter, able to score runs on difficult pitches and in troublesome circumstances. The Rose Bowl wickets in the early years were renowned for their unpredictability but the honour fell to our speaker to make the first century on Hampshire's new ground in the inaugural match there. With the County precariously placed at 79 for 6 in the first innings, he proceeded to stroke a calculating 104.

He is also capable of building an innings. In the match against Kent at Canterbury in 2007, Hampshire lost a clutch of early wickets to the swing and pace of Yasir Arafat. When our speaker came to the wicket the County were 83 for 5 in the evening sunshine, in response to Kent's modest 199. He took over half an hour to score his first run and continued to bat watchfully until the close of play. The next morning, he threw off his self-imposed shackles and played his more natural game. His final score of 90 was made off only 146

balls. He had recorded his highest score – 131 – at Canterbury in the previous season.

He also has the ability to score runs when he has a point to prove. After being dropped from England's Twenty20 team in their final World Cup match he returned to county cricket to strike a thrilling 108 against Lancashire at Liverpool. The County went on to record a rare Championship victory against their northern opponents.

He has always batted well in tandem with Nic Pothas. They have become one of Hampshire's most unsung pairs with their ability to pull an innings round and swing the match in the County's favour.

Dimitri Mascarenhas has long been one of the most economical bowlers in terms of runs per over in county cricket. Slightly taller than he appears from the boundary – he is 6 ft 2 ins – and wiry of frame, he swings the ball both ways at medium-fast. Batsmen always have to be respectful and watchful. He is at his most effective with the new ball. He also has stamina in abundance and is able to keep going for long periods, though there were signs this season that his body is beginning to rebel against his all-year round schedule. His most successful summer was in 2004 when he took 56 wickets, which included his career best figures of 6 for 25 against Derbyshire at the Rose Bowl. He also won the Society's Player of the Year Award for the second time that year.

He was, of course, Hampshire's captain in their Friends Provident Trophy triumph at Lord's this year. He also played in the successful C&G Final side of 2005, when his canny, controlled bowling in the middle of the Warwickshire innings, was an important factor in the win. He also batted bravely when the County were overwhelmed by Durham in 2007.

Wednesday 8 April 2009 – Report

John Grimsley's highly informative and enthralling address explained the work of the Bradman Museum as well as recounting various aspects of the great Australian batsman's life. As a member of Worcestershire, our speaker's fascination with Bradman stemmed from a photograph which hung in the pavilion (demolished and rebuilt during the winter) for many years. After a discussion at a dinner of the Hambledon Club he decided to go to Bowral as a volunteer to sort out the England cricket memorabilia donated to the Bradman Museum. He is now their UK representative and has enjoyed four further extended visits of 4 – 6 weeks at the venue since.

He then spent some time describing Bradman's boyhood. Bowral is located in the Southern Highlands and has a largely English-type climate. Many retired Scotsmen live in the town, on the Sydney-Canberra motorway; it has doubled in population, 28,000, in the last few years. It is also the tulip centre of Australia, the bulbs blooming in October and November. Bradman was raised in the hamlet of Yeo-Yeo, seven miles of Cootamundra. The family then moved the twenty or so miles to Bowral because of his mother's health; she suffered from asthma. The former was dry and dusty; Bowral's climate was

much more benign. He scored for Bowral but, in time honoured fashion, made his debut when his team was a man short. He scored 37 and 28 not out. After a further match, his father sawed off the bottom of the adult bat he had been using. It then went missing but turned up in the 1980's having been discovered in the attic of a distant relative. He was called to the Sydney nets in 1926, made a century on his first appearance at the St. George Club, and continued to commute, by train, the 70 or so miles from Bowral to Sydney until he moved to Adelaide in 1934.

Such was his continued connection with Bowral, through the Bradman Foundation in his later years, that the ashes of he and his wife, Lady Jesse, who also originated from the town, are scattered in the rose garden next to the pavilion. Our speaker also reminded his audience that in his formative years Bradman had to choose between cricket and tennis. He was equally good at both. How cricket history might have been different had he opted for the latter!

The Bradman Foundation was originally created in the mid-80's. There had been an earlier attempt to establish a permanent memorial but Bradman had turned it down. However, later presented with a Business Plan and with support and finance, he relented but stipulated that it must be devoted to cricket rather than himself. The museum was opened in 1989 and a further phase came to fruition in 1996. A grant of \$6.5m has now been received from the Australian Government, which is earmarked for an International Hall of Fame. There are now twenty full-time staff and sixty volunteers. Two former Australian captains, Ian Craig and the legendary Richie Benaud, are heavily involved in the project. The former, an ex-Chairman of the Foundation, now acts as a volunteer.

The Museum receives some 25 pieces of memorabilia each day. The most recent bequest was the very large one of Harold Larwood's collection. The Nottinghamshire fast bowler saved literally every memento from his distinguished career; his daughters Enid and Freda, have donated all 700 items to the Museum. Larwood, of course, made his home in Australia, where he was extremely popular – quite different from his Bodyline tour when he was actually twice threatened with physical violence when he made his way home. He had to make that journey alone owing to the injury sustained in the final Test at Sydney; the rest of the party travelled on to New Zealand. Larwood made many friends, none more so than with Bert Oldfield, the Australian wicket-keeper whom he hit on the head, to his genuine sorrow and regret, in the cauldron of the Adelaide Test.

Our speaker then outlined the tour of the Museum. The first floor is devoted to early cricket and actually includes some Hambledon memorabilia. The first floor is all about Bradman, though there is a space for temporary exhibitions. That floor also includes two cinemas.

John Grimsley concluded by talking about Bradman the man. His unique place in Australia's sporting heritage stemmed from the time in which he lived. The country was in recession. Poverty was prevalent everywhere. England

was blamed for the woes. Bradman was a normal man from a humble background who came along and through his feats, mostly at England's expense, brought rays of light and hope to his country.

It will be very surprising if those present will not now visit, or revisit, the Museum in the year ahead. In the Questions and Answers, our speaker also touched upon the very extensive Museum at the MCG.

MORE ON THE 1880 AUSTRALIANS

Neil Jenkinson, Chairman of Hampshire's Heritage Committee has kindly notified the Editor that photographs of the exterior of the Antelope Ground can be found on pages 12-13 of "Images of Sport: Hampshire County Cricket Club" (pub. Tempus). The photographs emanated from the football book "Grounds for a Change", by Dave Twydell. Southampton Football Club played at the Antelope from 1887, prior to a brief move to the County Ground in Northlands Road in 1896, from which they then transferred to their famous old ground at The Dell.

In his excellent new book "Inside Out: Writings of Cricket Culture", Gideon Haigh sheds light on the rather resplendent blazers worn by the Australian team in the photograph. The stripes were magenta and black. Interestingly, the celebrated green and gold colours, and green cap, did not emerge until the 1899 tour. The "baggy green" cap was introduced, virtually as a fashion statement, for the 1921 Ashes series.

THE ASHES 2009

Has there ever been a more unpredictable Test series than that of this summer's Ashes series? The dominance of each side oscillated wildly between Tests. The statistics were paradoxical. Australian batsmen scored 11 centuries and six averaged over forty. England passed the 100 mark twice, and ignoring Jonathan Trott who only played in the last Test (but what a debut!), only Andrew Strauss' average was equal to that of his opponents. Four Australian bowlers averaged 33 or less, compared with two by England's. Australian bowlers took a total of 81 wickets and England's only 69 wickets.

So how did England emerge victorious? Crucially, Australia failed to seal victory in the first Test at Cardiff. The efforts of Collingwood, Swann, Anderson and Panesar in the last two hours of the match will undoubtedly enter Ashes mythology in the years ahead. For all their run making, Australia's batting was remarkably vulnerable in the first innings of three Tests. Their collapses at Lord's and The Oval ultimately lead to their eventual defeat.

Perhaps the most important of all the factors, was that, for the first time in eons, England's lower order, mostly in the form of Stuart Broad and Graeme Swann outscored Australia's tail. Without a Steve Waugh, Gilchrist, Warne

and Lee to pilot the lower order, England's bowlers were able to restrict their run scoring to reasonable proportions. The contribution of the two Nottinghamshire all-rounders (Broad 234 runs and 18 wickets; Swann 249 runs and 14 wickets) was probably, in the final analysis, the difference between the two sides. The last two matches would appear to mark Broad's coming of age as a Test cricketer. His figures already exceed those of Andrew Flintoff's at the same stage in his career. If the former continues to develop, then, for the future, England have a major cricketer indeed.

There must also be special praise for Andrew Strauss. As captain and opening batsman, he was the prime target for the Australian bowlers. He met the challenge with an air of calmness and authority, and batted beautifully. His captaincy also improved as the series progressed.

Finally, on the Australian side, it must be questioned whether their selectors have lost their way a little. They have always been sound on the basic principles yet they chose only two opening batsmen, one of whom (Hughes) clearly carried a flawed technique and omitted a front-line spin bowler for the first time in living memory at Headingley and The Oval. They got away with it in the former Test but it proved to be a serious error of judgement at The Oval. Johnson, who looked a world-class all-round cricketer over the winter, never looked like achieving the same level of performance as he had against South Africa.

HAMPSHIRE'S AUSTRALIAN CONNECTIONS

The Australian side in the last two Tests, at Headingley and The Oval, featured five players who had appeared for Hampshire – Shane Watson, Simon Katich, Michael Clarke, Marcus North and Stuart Clark. The credentials of Katich, Clarke and Clark were well established. North played only half a match for the County at Edgbaston earlier this year; it is clear he is a considerable batsman with an acute cricket brain. It was evident that Ricky Ponting often turned to him for advice.

However, it was the transition of Shane Watson from middle-order batsman to opener that took the eye. He never failed, though the Australian selectors will now look to him to convert his good starts and attractive fifties into centuries.

E.G. WYNYARD AT THE OVAL, 1896

Wisden Cricket Monthly mentioned that Jonathan Trott was England's first debutant in an Ashes decider since Hampshire's E.G. – Teddy – Wynyard in 1896. Wynyard partly owed his selection to a players' strike. The convoluted series of events that lead to his selection were described in Newsletter No. 115 (Summer 1989). On a very difficult, wet wicket – virtually on a different planet from that of this summer – Wynyard made 10 and 3. In the second innings he initially batted for 45 minutes without scoring before close of play on the second evening; he averred that he never batted better than in that period.

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