

# **THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY**

**Patrons:** John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

**NEWSLETTER No. 294 – NOVEMBER 2009**

## **MEETINGS**

### **Wednesday 18 November 2009**

The Newsletter Editor, Alan Edwards, will be speaking to members this evening on the life of Hesketh Vernon Hesketh-Prichard. Though best known in cricket circles as a Hampshire fast bowler in the Golden Age, Hesketh-Prichard was a man of many other parts. He was an author of detective stories, a traveller and explorer, and conservationist. He often fulfilled all these various facets of his life simultaneously. In the last few years of his life he gained heroic status – though it has only latently been recognised – for his work in training snipers in the First World War.

### **Wednesday 30 September 2009- Report**

The Hampshire Captain, Dimitri Mascarenhas, entertained a packed Rose Bowl audience in a Q & A session. He fielded no fewer than 50 questions on 35 different topics on the contemporary game. All questions, including a fair number of googlies, were answered in a very frank and open manner. His performance was as breezy as one of his innings and as shrewd as his bowling. The Society were especially fortunate that he was able to attend, as he was to fly out to Bangalore to play for Otago in the Champions League the next morning, as acknowledged by our Chairman, Susanne Marlow, in her vote of thanks.

### **Wednesday 13 October 2009 – Report**

It is always interesting to listen to speakers from other Counties and the Society was fortunate in that Tony Cottey was able to give an account of life with both Glamorgan and Sussex. He currently works as Business Relationship Manager for the latter County.

He spoke about his Championship success with each County. Both included top-class bowlers (Waqar Younis and Mushtaq Ahmed), batsmen who scored their runs quickly, thereby leaving themselves time to bowl out sides and were influenced by great coaches. Each of the coaches went on to the England post in that capacity. Duncan Fletcher paid good attention to detail. He felt that Peter Moores was the best coach he ever worked with. He was an inspirational figure and an excellent man manager. He also mentioned that 11 (out of 14) of Glamorgan's Championship sides were ex Welsh Schools representatives.

He also mentioned Glamorgan's victorious Sunday League side of 1993 and the massive influence of Viv Richards. He was the best cricketer he ever played with and he taught Glamorgan how to win. They also played on 8

different home grounds in that season, but that resulted in the attraction of very partisan crowds.

These were some of the more serious parts of his talk, but for the main part it was spiced with an enormous fund of humorous stories about his former team-mates. As an example, he related the Sussex Initiation Ceremony where players are required to walk into the sea up to their necks and return to the beach. He did not have to walk anywhere near as far as Robin Martin-Jenkins! Robert Croft and Stephen Barwick also provided a source of memorable stories.

Tony Cottey emerged as a natural speaker with a distinct talent for comedy rivalled by few in the Society's history. He also came across as a very perceptive personality with a huge reservoir of cricket nous.

### **SOCIETY NEWS**

The speaker for the last meeting on 31 March 2010 will be **MATT JONES**, who is the environmental consultant for the Rose Bowl's expansion project. It should prove a most interesting adjunct to the address given by Stuart Robertson at the Society's meeting in September 2007. Among his responsibilities will be the preservation of wildlife habitats during the construction work.

### **BILL AND OLIVE LEADBEATER**

Society members will be sorry to learn that Bill and Olive Leadbeater have passed away. Bill was one of the Society's founder members. He was the Society's Publicity Officer upon its foundation in 1975 before serving as Chairman for three and a half years until March 1982. It was through his aegis that the Society held its early meetings at Basingstoke Sports Centre. A wise and kindly man, with a highly developed sense of humour, Bill was always tremendously supportive of the Society's activities. On a personal note, although he was no longer Chairman, he was especially helpful to the Editor when he assumed responsibility for the Newsletter in April 1982. At his last meeting as Chairman the previous month, the Society launched the prestigious HCS Player of the Year Award which has always been highly valued by the Hampshire players.

Olive also gave unstinting support to Bill and the Society and was a familiar face at meetings.

Both Bill and Olive continued to take a keen interest in the Society's affairs when they returned to their beloved Yorkshire Dales in February 1986.

## **HCS PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

HCS members have voted **MICHAEL CARBERRY** as their Player of the Year for 2009. An appreciation will appear in the January Newsletter.

## **DONATION TO HAMPSHIRE YOUTH CRICKET**

In the absence of a County Beneficiary in 2009, the Society will be making a donation of £200 for Hampshire Youth Cricket.

## **BOOK REVIEW**

**The Bodyline Hypocrisy: Conversations with Harold Larwood by Michael Arnold (pub. Knowthescore Books)**

Australian based Society member Mike Arnold whose work will be familiar to long-standing members, has written the above book which is based on several conversations with Harold Larwood with whom he struck up a friendship in the latter's later years. The book explodes a number of Bodyline myths and will add a latent understanding of cricket's most controversial tour. It is available on Amazon or can be ordered from local bookshops.

## **HAMPSHIRE'S CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON 2009**

A mere glance at this summer's Championship table will confirm that Durham were so much better than all the other Counties. They won half of their matches; twice more than the best of their competitors. Their pace bowling quartet of Steve Harmison, Graham Onions, Liam Plunkett and Callum Thorp, dominated the top of the bowling averages, to give credence to the maxim that bowlers win matches. Even when Onions and Harmison were called upon for Test duty, their places were filled ably by Mark Davies and the emerging Australian born Mitchell Claydon. When the wicket took spin, then Ian Blackwell proved a potent force. He was surely the signing of the season.

If they have a weakness it is their batting, which seems over reliant on Michael Di Venuto at the top of the order and former captain, Dale Blenkenstein in the middle.

However, they were never in danger of defeat and like the great Yorkshire side of the 1960's, they always scored enough runs for their formidable bowling attack to go about their destructive business. It was clear from Durham's demolition of Hampshire in the C & G Final two years ago that a new force was emerging in the land. It has proved to be the case and, barring a long injury list, they will remain the County to beat in the future.

The other Counties were much of a muchness, apart possibly from Somerset. Their batting, led by Marcus Trescothick, is awesome; their bowling, unfortunately, is at the other end of the scale. Much of the cricket was bland. Pitches were too perfect and yet, despite compiling huge scores, much of the batting was pedestrian. Too many batsmen are content to wait for the bad ball. Very few *make* things happen. A glorious exception was Matt Prior at the Rose Bowl who drove on the up time and again during the course of his century for Sussex.

The strategic plan for most sides seemed to be to avoid defeat, beat Worcestershire twice and try to sneak a win elsewhere. A two Division Championship has undoubtedly increased the standard of cricket (those who decry Championship Cricket do the game a great disservice), but the fear of relegation creates a psychological negative barrier.

So, what of Hampshire? They did indeed twice beat Worcestershire and also enjoyed a rare win against Lancashire. With productive batting after the Basingstoke debacle against Yorkshire, they did just enough to stay up. It was, though, too close for comfort, which would have been unthinkable before the start of the season.

Apart from the performances at Chester-le-Street and Basingstoke, the batting was generally reliable, though the fact that the top order twice struggled on lively wickets may point to technical deficiencies. However, for the first time since the days of Chris Smith, Paul Terry and, briefly Tony Middleton, two openers were able to kick start the innings by seeing off the new ball and enabling momentum thereafter. Michael Carberry and Jimmy Adams were wonderfully effective. Both genuinely built their totals. The former hit the ball extremely hard and such was his dominance, it was always a surprise when he was dismissed. His front foot driving – both square and in front of the wicket – was formidable – and he hooked and pulled with authority. His double century against Warwickshire at the Rose Bowl was one of the most commanding innings played by a Hampshire batsman since Robin Smith in his halcyon days. Adams came on in leaps and bounds and it was heartening to see the Winchester-born St. Cross opener establish his place. His high back lift was the catalyst for rasping front foot drives. He also demoralised bowlers by scoring boundaries in clutches. In his younger days, his best shots invariably found the field; suddenly, those fielders no longer seem to be there. Sean Ervine usually batted fluently, particularly at the Rose Bowl. Michael Lumb less so; his innate ability, however, is so obvious from his quite extraordinary performances in limited-overs cricket.

If the County were ever in any trouble then Nic Pothas would nearly always provide a rescue act. Time and again Hampshire put their lower order eggs in his basket and he rarely let his side down. He is, indisputably, the beating heart of the side and the finest wicket-keeper/batsman in the County's history. And he plays his cricket so uncompromisingly; he gives no quarter, nor seeks it. It was no coincidence that the County struggled in his absence. It is difficult to compensate for the loss of some 75/100 runs per match.

Liam Dawson experienced the archetypal difficult second season. He is though a rare talent with a maturity and cricket acumen far beyond his years. In James Vince, Hampshire have an absolute jewel. So exciting and penetrating are his elegant, well timed strokes that it is difficult not to express high expectations. He clearly still has to work on his defence but his attacking shots and placement, based on orthodox principles, should serve him well.

Apart from the Lord's Cup Final victory, the most positive aspect of Hampshire's season was the introduction of young, locally-born cricketers in the season. Towards the end of the season, as many as eight appeared in the one-day side. No other County, not even Durham, could match that figure. One holds one's breath for the future. Durham's great and unique strength is that the County has an identity within the community.

Hampshire's problems stemmed from their bowling and their episodic unreliable catching. The attack looked horribly threadbare for much of the season after the shine was off the ball. The almost total eclipse of Chris Tremlett, dogged by injury leading to lack of confidence, was the saddest feature of the season. Only in the first innings at Liverpool did he look his true self. However, he was joined at the foot of the national averages by James Tomlinson, Dimi Mascarenhas and Sean Ervine. The former, however, took more wickets than any other pace bowler for the County, ran in hard throughout and endured more than a fair share of misfortune as he often beat the bat without finding the edge. It was also mystifying that he was omitted from the side at May's Bounty, where conditions favoured swing, rather than seam bowling.

Imran Tahir claimed over 50 wickets, but they were at a much greater cost than in 2008. He was undoubtedly overbowled but probably because he was the only bowler to carry a consistent threat. A habitual propensity to run onto the pitch on his follow through must have played on his mind and reduced his effectiveness also. Nevertheless, he was instrumental in Hampshire's crucial defeat of Lancashire at Liverpool, where he took 6 for 108 in the second innings. With Dominic Cork, he was also responsible for Hampshire's victory at New Road. Cork also gave his County the upper hand in the opening match against the same County at the Rose Bowl. He fulfilled his propensity for the dramatic by claiming three wickets in four balls on debut. Hampshire never relinquished their grip thereafter, though, as it turned out importantly in the fight against relegation, they were docked three points for a slow over rate.

The emergence of Isle of Wight bowlers – David Griffiths and Danny Briggs towards the end of the season also gave hope for the future. Griffiths bowled with real pace and verve on occasion.

Hampshire's fielding cost them dear. Catches dropped in the two home defeats to Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire, undoubtedly contributed significantly to the final outcome.

Next year's Division 1 will be even more competitive. The shoal of autumn movements of players from the Second division to the First, or to wealthy Surrey, is a sign for the future. The gap in standards between the two divisions is sure to grow. It is unlikely that Kent and Essex will be as weak as Worcestershire this season. Whilst the County undoubtedly wish to be competitive and indeed win all Competitions, the experiences of Kent and Sussex in the last two years provide food for thought. One suspects both Counties would have gladly swapped their one-day successes for retention of their place in the First Division of the Championship. It really matters.

### **FAREWELL TO BILLY TAYLOR**

Members will be aware that Hampshire have released Billy Taylor. He was a great favourite of the Rose Bowl faithful. They will miss his determined, smooth run to the wicket with his towel flapping from the back of his trousers. Through his whole-hearted efforts on the field of play the refrain of "There's only one Billy Taylor" often rang out around the Rose Bowl as he was called upon to bowl. It is difficult to remember another player who has spurred Hampshire crowds into song.

Many Hampshire supporters will feel that he was an unlucky player. There were a number of occasions during his career, including those in the period of his one-day contract, when an extensive injury list meant that the County might have benefited from his experienced right-arm medium fast bowling, and yet he was excluded. His recall to the side for the game against his former County at the Rose Bowl earlier this season was greeted with universal approval by those sitting outside the boundary.

Besides the chorus that greeted his arrival at the bowling crease, he will go down in Hampshire history for three other reasons. He bowled the very first ball on the Rose Bowl complex – to Jimmy Adams – when appearing for Sussex 2<sup>nd</sup> XI at the Nursery Ground in 2000. He went on to take the first wicket when he trapped Andy Sexton leg-before, before wreaking destruction on the Hampshire second innings with 7 for 34. He finished with match winning figures of 10 for 99.

Having transferred to Hampshire – the County of his birth – in 2004, he claimed the first ever hat-trick at the Rose Bowl en route to career best figures of 6 for 32 against Middlesex. He first induced Nick Compton to edge to John Crawley, before bowling both Paul Weekes (middle stump) and Ben Scott. He was then omitted from the next match and played in only five further matches that season, when Chris Tremlett was injured.

He also became the first Hampshire bowler to be awarded a contract for one-day cricket only in 2007. During his career with the County he was virtually an ever present in one-day matches, though despite playing in some matches in the earlier rounds he was unable to gain a place in Hampshire's three Lord's finals sides in recent years.

He can, however, look back on Sussex's historic first County Championship success in 2003. He was an important cog in that team. His timely performance against Lancashire – eventual runners-up, at Hove in mid-August, when he dismantled their opponent's top-order (his victims included Carl Hooper and Stuart Law) in the second innings was a very important factor in the final triumph.

### BILLY TAYLOR'S CAREER FIGURES FIRST-CLASS CRICKET

	<b>Mtch</b>	<b>Balls</b>	<b>M.</b>	<b>Runs</b>	<b>Wkts</b>	<b>Avge.</b>	<b>Best</b>
Sussex		4672	194	2493	71	35.11	5-90
Hampshire		3740	119	2042	65	31.41	6-32
Career (1999-2009)	54	8412	313	4535	136	33.34	6.32

#### LIST A MATCHES

For Sussex		3422	55	2496	109	22.89	5-28
For Hampshire		2829	33	2160	73	29.58	4-26
For Wiltshire		60	2	43	0		
Career	142	6311	90	4699	182	25.81	5-28

#### TWENTY20 CRICKET

Career	37	713	2	883	30	29.43	2-9
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With the festive season approaching, **Terry Crump** reviews cricket's connections with the time of year.

### CHRISTMAS, CRICKET and CRICKETERS

I know that some will think it a bit early to link cricket with Christmas but as the December Newsletter is traditionally a brief affair, I have submitted this one to steal a march on the Festive Season.

Clarrie Grimmett, the great Australian legspinner, was born in New Zealand on December 25 in 1891. Grimmett had reached the age of 33 before he made his Test debut in a game against England, in the 1924/25 Ashes series. Grimmett was the first bowler ever to take 200 Test wickets, which he managed in only 37 matches. When he retired, he had taken 216 at 24.21

England players born on Christmas day include Walter Lees (1875), Walter 'Tich' Cornford (1900), Marcus Trescothick (1975), Simon Jones (1978) and Alastair Cook (1984).

Below is my poem called, 'Christmas Eve at The Rose Bowl' (a take on the famous poem written by Clement Clarke Moore), a tenuous link to the fact that one of the greatest English Cricketers, Colin Cowdrey, was born on 24 December 1932. In addition to being born on the day before Christmas, when playing against South Australia at Adelaide in 1962, Michael Colin Cowdrey made the last 63 runs of his highest First-class score of 307 on his 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. After this feat, Colin bought and used a special number plate and for many years drove a sports car displaying the famous MCC 307. A version of this number plate is on a wall of the Arundel Castle Cricket Pavilion, along with other memorabilia of this great Kent and England cricketer, who was a great supporter of the Arundel Castle Cricket Foundation – Youth and Education Scheme. And now for the promised poetry.

### **Christmas Eve at The Rose Bowl**

'Twas the night before Christmas and down at the ground  
No cricketing action, no cricketing sound,  
The kit all forlorn, hung from the pegs,  
With an ECB handbook left open at Reg's.

The supporters were nestled all snug in their beds,  
Visions of trophies danced in their heads  
And Rod in a Blazer, and Glen in a Kilt  
Checked out the Debentures so Stands could be built?

When out on the pitch there arose such a clatter  
That all the directors asked, "What is the matter?"  
Then there on the boundary a sight they did catch  
Of some white ghostly figures, just starting a match.

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