

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

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Wednesday 2 December 2009 – Meeting

Tonight's Annual Dinner speaker is Angus Fraser. In the pantheon of English right-arm fast-medium bowlers he was of the same line as Maurice Tate and Alec Bedser – both indisputably great bowlers. Tall and broad-shouldered, he genuinely hit the pitch. In his early days before injury started to take its toll, it was almost impossible for batsmen to play forward to him without risk of injury to their hands.

He spent virtually all his Test career bowling at some of the greatest batsmen the world has ever seen. And, except on occasions in the West Indies, he had to do so on pristine pitches which gave him little assistance. His West Indian opponents included Gordon Greenidge, Desmond Haynes, Richie Richardson, Viv Richards, Jeffrey Dujon, Carl Hooper and Brian Lara. Allan Border, Mark Taylor, Michael Slater, David Boon and the Waugh twins were present for the Australians. It was also a period when South Africa were readmitted to the Test arena and committed to making a mark, when the young Sachin Tendulkar embarked on his glittering Test career and when the Sri Lankan batsmen started to believe in themselves and fulfil their potential. His record against each country demonstrates his skill and consistency.

Opponent	Tests	Balls	Mdns	Runs	Wkts	BB	Ave	5wl	10wM
Australia	12	3192	103	1383	46	6-82	30.06	3	0
India	3	955	41	460	16	5-104	28.75	2	0
New Zealand	3	756	37	296	7	2-40	42.28	0	0
South Africa	10	2132	95	924	35	5-42	26.40	3	1
Sri Lanka	1	150	3	114	3	3-95	38.00	0	0
West Indies	17	3691	160	1659	70	8-53	23.70	5	1
	46	10876	439	4836	177	8-53	27.32	13	2

ANGUS ROBERT CHARLES FRASER was born in Billinge, Lancashire on 8 August 1965. Educated at schools in Middlesex, he made his county debut in 1984. He secured a regular place in 1988, in which year he was awarded his county cap after taking 80 wickets (avge. 19.37). He did better still the following year, dismissing 92 batsmen. After such a sustained spell of success, Test selection became inevitable and he made his debut against Australia in the third Test at Edgbaston that season. It was a strange baptism in that' after winning the toss, Australia batted first but, owing to rain, did not complete their innings until the fourth morning. However, our speaker justifiably earned praise by taking 4 for 63 in 33 overs. He again bowled impressively in dismal England performances in the fifth Test at Trent Bridge. Geoff Marsh and Taylor opened with a stand of 329, but he countered them heroically with 52.3 parsimonious overs. It was evident that he would be an

integral part of the England team for some years to come, though he was, perhaps not surprisingly, unfit for the final Test at The Oval. He started the following series, in the West Indies, by taking 5 for 28 in a famous England victory at Sabina Park but broke down with a side strain whilst bowling in the nets prior to the fourth Test in Bridgetown. At that stage of the tour England were leading 1 – 0 and looking the best side. In Testing Times, his captain, Graham Gooch commented “None of the West Indies batsmen looked happy when tied down by his nagging accuracy and we had relied on him more than any other bowler”. These words were virtually definitive of his career.

After helping Middlesex lift the County Championship in 1990, a hip injury ruined the next two seasons. On his full return to action in 1993, Middlesex repeated their Championship success. He was ignored by the England selectors until the sixth Test at The Oval. He demonstrated his class, and just what England had been missing, by taking 5 for 87 and 3 for 44. With both Devon Malcolm and Steve Watkin capturing six wickets in the match, England romped home by 161 runs.

He returned his career best figures in a typically lion-hearted display at Port-of-Spain in February 1998. Recalled after a two year absence from Test cricket, he took 8 for 53 in the first innings - the best figures by an England bowler against the West Indies. However, the latter eventually emerged winners by three wickets. England made sure his spells of 5 for 40 and 4 for 40 were not wasted in the next match at the same venue. This was the series in which the first Test, at Sabina Park, was abandoned after only 10 overs because of a sub-standard pitch.

He carried his West Indies form in the next series at home to South Africa. Match figures of 10 for 122 (5 for 60 and 5 for 62), coupled with Mike Atherton’s famous duel with Allan Donald ensured an England 8 wicket victory in the Fourth Test to square the series. He then took 5 for 42 and 3 for 50 in the next (Final) Test as England won an exciting match by 23 runs to clinch the rubber. Prior to the heroics with the ball, he made one of the most famous 0 not outs in the Third Test at Old Trafford. South Africa looked sure-fire victors for almost the whole match before battling efforts by Alec Stewart (164), Robert Croft (37 not out) and Darren Gough (12) eked out time on the last day. Upon Gough’s dismissal, however, England, having followed on, were still 2 runs short of their opponents’ first innings total. However, South Africa were unable to separate the last pair in an atmosphere of quite unbearable tension. Our speaker’s display on that day exemplified his approach to the game, and demonstrated why he was so popular with the cricketing public, and demanded such respect from his opponents.

After a spell in the press box he is now Middlesex’s Director of Cricket.

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