

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

NEWSLETTER No. 297 – FEBRUARY 2010

Wednesday 3 February 2010 – Meeting

Tonight's speaker is **GRAHAME LLOYD**, author of Six of the Best: Cricket's Most Famous Over, which is a detailed account of Gary Sobers' six 6's at Swansea in 1968. It is sure to be an evocative evening. Our speaker has also written A Hundred Years of the Bluebirds, a history of Cardiff City, biographies of the footballers Jan Molby and Terry Yorath and an official celebration of Glamorgan's 1997 County Championship triumph.

Our speaker went to school in Lincolnshire before joining the Western Mail in Cardiff in 1972. He gained an English and politics degree at Sheffield University in 1978 and then became a BBC Wales staff news producer. After turning freelance in 1981, he has accumulated a wealth of varied media experience, ranging from covering news, current affairs and sport for BBC Wales, as well as making TV and radio commentaries. He has also presented conferences, and interviewed authors at the world renowned Hay Literary Festival.

The Society extends a very warm welcome to Grahame Lloyd to this evening's meeting.

Wednesday 18 November 2009 – Report

The Newsletter editor, Alan Edwards, gave a well received talk on the life and cricket career of Hesketh Vernon Hesketh-Prichard, one of the most extraordinary men ever to play the game. It is proposed to put a summary of the talk on the Society's website in the near future.

Wednesday 2 December 2009 – Report

ANGUS FRASER entertained members at their Annual Dinner at the Rose Bowl with an insightful talk on the bowler's lot, and character vignettes of various personalities with whom he played. He mentioned that his last game of professional cricket was played at the Rose Bowl. Rule changes had always favoured batsmen. As a bowler, he was conscious that he could ruin a day's play if he dismissed the crowd's favourite batsman. As for net practice, bowlers were always guinea pigs if the wicket was dodgy; he also failed to understand the logic of a bowler, whose average was substantially below that of a top-order batsman, acting as a night watchman.

Those present were very privileged to have obtained such an informed "fly on the wall" account of his career. He promised to wear the Society's tie on Sky TV the next morning (he could have had very little sleep), and duly did so.

The Society were pleased to host our newest patron, Shaun Udal, who has enjoyed such a wonderful Indian Summer to his career at Middlesex, and the Rose Bowl's Chairman and Chief Executive, Rod Bransgrove.

Wednesday 31 March 2010 Speaker

A reminder that the speaker at the above meeting will be **MATT JOHNS**, environment consultant to the Rose Bowl redevelopment project. The meeting will be held at the Rose Bowl, starting at 8pm. Given the high profile now enjoyed by environmental issues it should prove to be a most interesting evening.

HAMPSHIRE AT SCARBOROUGH IN FIRST-CLASS CRICKET

Hampshire will make a rare visit to Scarborough for a Championship match this summer. They have played there on only four previous occasions in the competition.

The County were not awarded a match at the North Marine Road Ground until 1946. It proved to be an astonishing, low scoring, rain affected affair in which the hosts eventually emerged winners by 56 runs in less than a day and a half of actual play. Rain, which flooded the ground, reduced play on the first day to two and a half hours, during which Yorkshire reached 109 for six. The events of the following day exemplified all the perils of batting on a drying pitch as the remaining 34 wickets fell for only 309 runs. Alec Coxon's forceful 51 not out allowed Yorkshire to complete their first innings on 168, Lofty Herman returning figures of 7 for 77. Only two men – opener John Arnold, who also made 51, and David Guard (20) made double figures in Hampshire's replay of 97. The day was already being dominated by spin bowlers, Ellis Robinson and Arthur Booth, taking 5 for 29 and 4 for 32 respectively. 1946 was Booth's only full season in first-class cricket. Remarkably, he was 43 years old and went on to head the first-class bowling averages for the season.

With the pitch progressively worsening, Yorkshire then eked out 69 in 33 overs. Herman (4 for 29), bowling spin, and Charlie Knott (5 for 35) bowled unchanged. Hampshire never had a hope of achieving their victory target and were bowled out for 84 in 46.5 tortuous overs with Robinson administering the coup de grace with 7 for 24, giving him the startling match figures of 12 for 53.

Hampshire's next visit in 1952 was played in dry weather but, as in the previous match, Yorkshire were victorious – this time by 17 runs – with their spin bowlers again prevailing.

Hampshire gained a first innings lead (294-270) with Ted Lester (109) and Leo Harrison (101) scoring centuries for their respective sides. Neville Rogers also made 91 for Hampshire, sharing a third wicket stand of 124 with Harrison. Half centuries by Billy Sutcliffe (70) and Brian Close (a fiercely struck 55) paved the way for a Yorkshire declaration at 217 for seven, setting Hampshire 194 in 165 minutes. Johnny Wardle (5 – 93) and Close (3 for 92) had already enjoyed themselves in the first innings and, with the wicket now

crumbling, they bowled unchanged for 61 overs to harass and eventually defeat the Hampshire batsmen with seven minutes remaining. Close, who completed the double during the match, finished with 6 for 94 and Wardle 3 for 46.

It was to be another 32 years, in 1984, before the County returned to the historic old ground for a Championship fixture. On this occasion Hampshire came within a whisker of breaking their duck. After the first day (of three) was lost to rain, both sides contrived to stage an excellent game of cricket. Captain Mark Nicholas (70) shared an opening stand of 113 with Chris Smith (47), and after a typically robust 62 from Robin Smith, declared at tea with the total of 254 for 6. Yorkshire then declared overnight, 146 runs behind. The latter were eventually set 302 in 73 overs. Both sides set about their respective task with relish. Yorkshire dominated early on as they raced to 86 for 2 but then Nigel Cowley (3 for 36) induced a collapse. With their opponents standing at 133 for 6, Hampshire were now favourites. However, the two Phils - Robinson and Carrick - then staged a mini recovery but Hampshire eventually needed only one wicket with 11 overs remaining. As the excitement mounted, Steve Oldham was caught off a "no ball", Stephen Andrew could not hold a stinging return chance and the County were denied a confident bat – pad catch appeal in the last over bowled by Cardigan Connor, as Yorkshire finished on 252 for nine.

Hampshire's last encounter was in 2003. Again, rain intervened, washing out the third day. On the first, Yorkshire's captain, Matthew Wood (155) made the most of a perfect pitch and shared a brisk partnership of 154 with Michael Lumb (64). Facing a total of 384, Hampshire's innings was in tatters before lunch on the second day as they fell to 7 for 3, all the batsmen who were dismissed failing to score. Simon Katich then played a magnificent innings of 143 not out, punctuated with an array of wonderful attacking shots. He made his runs out of 237 from the bat. Extras accounted for a further 52 to lift Hampshire to 289. However, the wicket was too benign to produce a result. On reaching 211 for 4, of which Lumb scored 59, Yorkshire set the County 307 in 66 overs. Early alarms, especially the dismissal of Katich, precluded a concerted run chase and the game finished in a tame draw with Hampshire on 180 for six.

Hampshire have played one other first-class match at Scarborough. This was in 1961 when as Champion County they played Runners-Up Yorkshire at the end of the season. Rain brought the match to a premature end but not before Henry Horton (160 not out) in the first innings, and Roy Marshall (104 in only 98 minutes) in the second, had left an impression on the festival crowd.

HAMPSHIRE APPEARANCES ON YORKSHIRE GROUNDS

Bradford, Park Avenue	1897	1899	1907	1910	1922	1928	1930
	1934	1947	1950	1954	1955	1958	1960
	1962	1966	1979				
Dewsbury	1919						
Harrogate	1896	1901	1913	1924	1926	1968	1996
Huddersfield	1898	1911					
Hull	1900	1905	1914	1925	1931	1935	1937
	1949	1956	1959				
Leeds, Headingley	1904	1920	1923	1929	1932	1936	1951
	1961	1963	1973	1977	1987	1990	1992
	1994	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2007
	2008	2009					
Middlesbrough	1965	1981	1985	1988			
Scarborough	1946	1952	1961	1984	2003		
Sheffield, Bramall Lane	1895	1906	1912	1921	1927	1933	1938
	1939	1970	1975				

HAMPSHIRE TO PLAY AT ABERDEEN

Prior to the Championship match at Scarborough, Hampshire will play their away fixture against Scotland in the ECB 40 League at Mannofield, Aberdeen. It will be the County's first appearance at that ground.

Mannofield is probably most famous for being the ground on which Don Bradman played his last match on British soil. Several thousand turned up to watch him bid farewell with an innings of 123 not out in 87 minutes. That match was over 2 days and the Australians have twice since visited the ground – in 1956 and 1964 – for matches of similar duration.

Scotland have hosted 9 List A Matches at Mannofield. The two previous Counties to play there were Worcestershire in 1983 (who won by 5 wickets) and Derbyshire in 1985 (who won by 93 runs); both fixtures were in the Benson and Hedges Cup.

Mannofield dates from 1880. Among the most notable professionals to play for Aberdeenshire have been Schofield Haigh, later of Yorkshire, the South African leg-break and googly pioneer, A.E. Vogler, and the great mercurial West Indian batting genius Rohan Kanhai.

Terry Crump writes on some of the financial issues arising from winter developments on the County scene

With the announcement that Abu Dhabi is to host English cricket's season opener it seems that the age of commercialism in cricket is really here to stay with no chance of denial. Abu Dhabi will stage the 2010 English domestic season opener between county champions Durham and the MCC under floodlights and with pink balls. Lord's traditionally hosts the English curtain-raiser and the move to the UAE was cloaked in comments designed to make cricket lovers believe that the change was prompted by a desire to play the game in a warmer climate and to test out pink balls under floodlights.

The four-day match between Durham and the MCC will be played at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium from March 29.

"Ultimately, this match is being played in Abu Dhabi for two reasons," MCC head of cricket John Stephenson commented. "Firstly, we felt that the proposed fixture schedule for Lord's (April 3-5) was far too early in the year to play meaningful cricket, with poor weather a very likely possibility."

Well, maybe the authorities that govern English cricket should reflect on the fact that it is they that have cluttered the fixture list with an elongated Twenty20 programme and are effectively stifling the traditional game. Whilst the introduction of Twenty20 may well fund other forms of cricket for a limited time, the over use of this stunted format will actually reduce interest in cricket as a game for the thoughtful and knowledgeable practitioner, rather than the bludgeoning bully only interested in winning.

It seems that commercialism in sport is more and more dominated by the dismal short-termism that relies on buying success rather than developing talent. Arguably English Association Football is now dominated by six 'rich clubs' in the Premiership with an influx of foreign money funding our national sport. In seeking to buy success, association football clubs are endangering themselves by accumulating massive debts that in the end may well be the death of some football clubs.

Is cricket soon to be dominated by transfer fees, with agents demanding ever larger sums, while counties attempt to buy success; even though in order to pay, they might jeopardize the very existence of the club they seek to promote?

The trend towards domination by those prepared to pay for success in football culminated in the formation of a Premier League, and funded by the massive sums of money paid for the right to screen games on television. The ever upward spiral has so far culminated in heavily indebted Manchester United accepting an £80m bid from Real Madrid for Cristiano Ronaldo. It is a far cry from the first £100 transfer in 1893 or even the first £m transfer just over thirty years ago in 1979.

Rugby Union has had difficulties and seeks to maintain a system to control 'buying in' the best players by 'rich' clubs to ensure success. In 2009 the salary cap for England's top rugby union sides was increased to £4m. Premier Rugby, the umbrella organisation that represents the 12 Premiership clubs, also set up a new department to ensure that no club spends more on player wages than they are allowed. Rugby League seems to have things under control with salary caps maintaining some regulation and offering the less well off clubs a chance to find success.

Take a quick look at Surrey's line-up for next year, after some big signings at the end of last season. They can clearly afford them as they are tied in to a long term financial deal to stage Test matches. However, the small Counties are now unlikely ever to be able to compete with the wealthier ones. Rod Bransgrove leans towards "exciting signings of both new and home grown talent" as a successful formula and cites a "dual strategy"; the development of our home grown players, helped by experienced high quality professionals. He is on record as saying "There's plenty to celebrate here at Hampshire in the youth category." He is also quick to point out that the club benefits financially, given that from next season the Counties will be awarded extra money for fielding young England qualified players.

That Monty Panesar, as part of his move to Sussex, has donated a tidy sum (reputedly £10,000) to Northants, as a thank you for all their work in developing him during his career, is heart-warming.

County Cricket Clubs have, by and large, so far resisted the rush towards an imaginary pot of gold. There are always winners and losers and what makes sport interesting and engaging over the long term, is the belief that the underdog can achieve and have its day. Certain County Clubs have dominated cricket over the years but once in a while the smaller fry have won honours without massive payments to engage the best from other sides. It is evident in the last 3 years, however, that Durham are now the leaders of the English cricket world, through pursuing the same policy as Hampshire. They have set new standards, both on and off the field, for others to follow.

Money is now the major motivation in sport and cricket is no exception. The IPL and television rights rule the game of cricket at present and the grasp around the throat of traditional cricket is tightening.

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