

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

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MEETINGS

Wednesday 29 September 2010 – Meeting

The Society is proud to welcome Trevor Jesty to this evening's meeting. Members will recall with affection his attractive strokeplay and his valuable right-arm medium pace swing bowling. He remains one of the County's finest batsmen, and indeed, all-rounders. Even today despite the growth of one-day cricket, his all-round figures in the shorter form of the game stand above any other.

Trevor Jesty will figure prominently in any debate on the best Hampshire cricketer born within the County. Only three Hampshire natives – Jimmy Gray, Peter Sainsbury and Neil McCorkell, scored more than his 14,753 runs in first-class cricket for the County. None, however, has bettered his average (31.79). Only Gray (30) scored more than our speaker's number of centuries (26), though he had increased that tally to 35 in his latter career with Surrey and Lancashire.

Hampshire have always been better blessed with bowlers born in the County, particularly spin bowlers. He stands tenth in that list, though only Vic Cannings and Malcolm Heath of bowlers of higher pace have taken more wickets. Trevor Jesty could therefore justifiably be regarded as the most prolific of the Hampshire-born medium-pace bowlers.

It was worth paying the price of admission just to see Trevor Jesty walk to the wicket. It was brisk, confident (though not cocky) and reminiscent of a yacht under sail in the Solent. Irrespective of whether he made nought or a hundred the return to the pavilion was just as arresting.

He was of medium height, fair haired and good-looking, admired by many women around the boundary. A smile was never far away. His strokeplay matched his countenance. His glory was the cover-drive which was so reminiscent of the princely Barry Richards that it was often difficult to tell them apart. There can be no higher praise.

Our speaker was the Society's first-ever Player of the Year, in 1982. That summer was his benefit year. A number of players experience a dip in form in that season but Trevor Jesty responded in the most positive fashion, posting a career best aggregate (1645 runs), (average 58.75) and number of centuries (8). The latter figure remains a post 1945 record, though it was equalled by Gordon Greenidge four years later. It was the manner of the making of the runs that was so impressive in that golden summer. It represented a step

change in shot selection, responsibility and patience, but without a loss in the engaging appeal of his strokemaking. Formerly regarded as a “dasher”, his great gifts were now tempered on steel.

He made his centuries against eight different teams that summer, thereby not only demonstrating his impartiality but also his all-round batting prowess. Two of the hundreds were against the tourists – India (164 not out at Southampton) and Pakistan (133 at Bournemouth). In the second of those matches he launched a withering assault on the great Abdul Qadir, who later mesmerised the England batsmen in the Test series, striking him for 26 – 5 fours and a six – in one over. He ended the season with a flourish, scoring a 64 minute century against Warwickshire, who included England captain, Bob Willis, on a glorious sunlit afternoon at Northlands Road.

Though Wisden was to nominate him one of their Five Cricketers of the Year, the England selectors failed to acknowledge the change in his approach. His subsequent omission from the England touring party to Australia that winter caused a furore. He was passed over in favour of Derek Pringle and Ian Greig, neither of whom was remotely in his class as a batsman, and it was arguable that the latter was even as good a bowler. Apart, possibly, from David Gower's omission from the tours to India and the West Indies in the early 1990's (he was, of course, also a Hampshire player at the time) it is difficult to remember any selection which has consumed so many column inches. He was subsequently flown out as a replacement batsman for Derek Randall for the one-day series against Australia and New Zealand and appeared in nine of the ten internationals. Ironically Randall was subsequently fit to play. John Arlott wrote “It is difficult to escape the conclusion that it was an attempt partly to repair the original unintelligent choice.”

Despite the complete lack of experience on Australian pitches, he acquitted himself well with both bat and ball. He suffered more than any other player from England's appalling catching lapses, though left his mark with a rapid 52 not out (off only 34 balls) against New Zealand at Adelaide, reaching his fifty off the last ball of the innings with a six into the pavilion. He also played one further international match against Pakistan in Sharjah on the way home. Though he was in England's World Cup squad in 1983, these remained his only representative honours. He deserved far more recognition. Indeed, he was one of the selections by a panel of experts in *The Wisden Cricketer* (May 2009) for the best post-war England team from players who never won a cap. His contemporary, Peter Sainsbury, was also one of the choices.

TREVOR EDWARD JESTY was born in Gosport on 2 June 1948. He was an outstanding schoolboy cricketer, who occasionally kept wicket. He found himself in Hampshire's team in highly unusual circumstances, against Essex at Portsmouth in late August 1966. With Butch White, Bob Cottam, Alan Castell (by now having largely converted from bowling leg spin to medium pace) as well as Peter Sainsbury all absent through injury, he made his debut as an opening bowler. He shared the new ball with the incomparable Derek Shackleton. Though he was wicketless he bowled economically. After five

further appearances – two against the Universities in 1968, he became a regular in the following year. He batted brightly, invariably scoring his runs at a rapid pace. He gained his cap in 1971. However, despite being an ever present in Hampshire's unlikely but exhilarating Championship side in 1973, he never made the weight of runs his talent suggested. He was then hardened by two winters in South Africa, during which he registered his maiden century. After a more productive season in 1975, when Hampshire won their first Sunday League title, he really started to realise his innate talent in 1976. After two near misses earlier on in the season, he hit his first century for the County – a glorious 134 against Gloucestershire at Northlands Road, during which he shared an effulgent partnership with his captain, Richard Gilliat, of 237 in only 147 minutes. A second followed in difficult circumstances at Bournemouth a few weeks later. After Ian Botham had taken six wickets for only 1 run, he steadied the ship with Sainsbury and, next morning, rushed on to 159 not out, out of a total of 296. He reached one thousand runs for the season for the first time and went on to reach that landmark on seven occasions for Hampshire (ten in all).

He enjoyed a wonderful all-round season in that year, taking 42 wickets and recording his best bowling figures of 7 for 75 against Worcestershire at Northlands Road. He finished, though, on the losing side, Hampshire twice being on the receiving end of inspirational spells by Imran Khan.

As mentioned previously, he was a most influential all-rounder in one-day cricket and two feats in particular will always be remembered by those who saw them. The first was against Surrey at Portsmouth in 1983 when he batted in harness virtually all afternoon with Gordon Greenidge, the arch exponent of quick scoring. Greenidge, as usual, put body and soul into all his shots and though he made a century, had difficulty in finding the gaps. By contrast, our speaker steered, stroked and caressed the ball through – and over – the field and displayed great gifts of timing and touch. It was scarcely surprising that he should finish his innings on 166 not out – the highest ever scored by a Hampshire player in the competition at the time (it was subsequently exceeded by the great West Indian opener in 1987).

The other was against Middlesex at Bournemouth in 1978. Hampshire needed to win the match to take the John Player League title. In the afternoon they had made 221 for 4 thanks to a brilliant hundred by Greenidge and two quick fire innings by Richard Gilliat and Jesty himself. In the setting evening sun Middlesex were coasting to victory. Gilliat had tried all his five normal bowlers and almost in desperation threw the ball to Trevor Jesty. Throughout his career he was always a better and more penetrative bowler in the first innings than when having to help defend a target but on this occasion he truly took hold of the match by the scruff of the neck. He took 5 for 32 in 7 overs and with three of his victims he required no assistance from his fielders. Hampshire eased home by 26 runs to win the title for the second time.

After his sad departure from Hampshire at the end of the 1984 season he gave excellent service to Surrey between 1985 and 1987, captaining that County on 39 occasions, and registering his highest Championship score –

221 against Essex at The Oval - and Lancashire from 1988 to 1991. He left first-class cricket with an innings of 122 not out for Lancashire against Oxford University.

Our speaker has, of course, since become a first-class umpire. He was appointed to the list in 1994 and, at the time of writing has officiated in 222 first-class matches, has been the reserve umpire in Tests and one-day internationals, stood in Women's Tests as well as the Indian Cricket League.

This is Trevor Jesty's second appearance at a meeting of the Society. He originally came, with Peter Sainsbury, thirty-three years ago, in September 1977. Tonight, he returns to his spiritual home among the Hampshire faithful and he is assured of the warmest of welcomes.

HAMPSHIRE'S REMARKABLE TWENTY20 SUCCESS

Richard Nyren, the famed Hampshire captain of the Hambledon epoch, once reputedly remarked "Do not bet against such men as we are". That sentiment surely resonated with the County's T20 displays and ultimate final victory at the Rose Bowl in mid-August.

The odds against Hampshire's triumph were immense. The County's injury list was forbidding. Kabir Ali and Dimitri Mascarenhas (apart from one match) were absent for the whole campaign. Simon Jones could only be considered for six matches. As the competition progressed Nic Pothas also fell by the wayside.

Michael Lumb, so influential in England's T20 World Cup victory in the West Indies earlier in the year, was slow in recovering from his winter exertions, struggled to find any sort of form and was eventually dropped. A season with the Rajasthan Royals did not help his or Hampshire's cause. The same applied to Mascarenhas. By the time that Lumb came back into contention for Finals Day, after two classy recuperative innings in the first-class match against Durham at May's Bounty, his season was cruelly terminated when he was struck on his foot whilst fielding at silly point in the next match at Taunton.

Hampshire also left that match at Taunton with three other genuine injury concerns. Dominic Cork and Sean Ervine were nursing suspect backs; Dan Christian had been struck in the face batting early on in his second innings.

All these events were preceded by the farcical saga concerning Hampshire's overseas players, though they were not the only County to encounter such experiences. The days of the Test playing overseas signing in county cricket are clearly but surely creeping to a conclusion. Indeed, 2010 may well prove to be an historical watershed. The County's two original signings were Abdul Razzaq and Shahid Afridi. The latter lived up to his mercurial billing by reversing his decision to retire from Test cricket, was made captain of the touring Pakistanis, played two quite bizarre innings in the Lord's Test and then retired again. Hampshire, quite rightly then rejected his blandishments to make himself available for the remaining T20 matches. Brett Lee was also

trumpeted as a possible signing but never arrived, emulating the County's original player, Sri Lankan Ajantha Mendis. Given his winter travails – in these days of video analysis, mystery spinners do not retain their magic for very long – Mendis' non-arrival may well have been a blessing in disguise.

Kevin Pietersen was released by England for the Surrey fixture at the Rose Bowl but immediately afterwards declared that his interests lay in London and that Hampshire was too far for him to travel. When England released him similarly for Finals Day, Hampshire, as they had with Afridi, rejected the approach, again to the approval of their supporters, who were by now revelling in the performances of the youngsters who had filled the void created in the absence of senior players. Hampshire's T20 campaign was therefore always newsworthy. Perhaps the most crucial of all the developments, however, was that of Dominic Cork assuming the captaincy from Nic Pothas, who voluntarily decided to stand down early on in the group matches. It was probably the season's key moment.

However, Hampshire never hit the straps until they reached their "must win matches" stage. Despite the maddening inconsistency hitherto, there was a hint that something special might be unravelling. Chris Wood and Danny Briggs, both aged 19, at the outset of the competition had bowled so productively that they cemented their places quickly. They both clearly possessed very fine temperaments and just kept on improving. There was little, if any, discussion about their injured team mates, so well did they bowl. James Vince, also aged 19, usually batted fluently maintaining a scoring rate of more than a run a ball. The real star throughout was James Adams, who made two sparkling centuries, against Surrey and Glamorgan at the Rose Bowl, as well as a quite exceptional innings of 61 on a treacherous, indeed dangerous, wicket against Somerset. No other Hampshire player reached double figures.

As the group matches reached their climax, Hampshire had to beat Sussex, the holders, at the Rose Bowl to qualify for the quarter-finals. Thanks to a fine collective team effort they duly did so. Giving a foretaste of finals day, Adams and particularly Sean Ervine scored runs at express speed; Neil McKenzie provided the glue. With the ball, Briggs, Wood and the superlative Cork were aided by Razzaq, Ervine and Christian, who coming on as fourth change, proceeded to bowl at nearly 90 mph! The Sussex batting line up, of match winners on paper never threatened. Michael Bates, yet another 19 year old, called up in the morning to replace the influential Pothas who had finally had to concede to a debilitating knee injury, gave a wicket-keeping exhibition of startling precocity, exemplified by his legside dismissal, standing up, of the hard-hitting Luke Wright. It was the first wicket to fall and set the standard and tempo for Hampshire's display in the field, which matched the quality of their batting and bowling. There was an obvious "togetherness" about the whole performance that augured well for the future. Dominic Cork and Giles White had clearly forged a team in every sense of the word.

In the quarter-finals the County were drawn against Warwickshire at Edgbaston, who had won the Midlands group with some ease. However,

Hampshire's effervescent captain virtually put his side in unassailable command in the first quarter of the match as he removed pinch hitter Neil Carter, who had caused Hampshire so many problems in the C&G Final at Lord's in 2005, in the first over. He then threw out his opposite number, Jim Troughton, - a fine runner between the wickets - from gully! Briggs chimed in with three more wickets. Warwickshire were well behind the run rate and on the point of collapse. It took an unbroken sixth wicket stand of 58 between Tim Ambrose and Rikki Clarke to steer them to 153. Adams and Razzaq got Hampshire off to a flier. Vince (66 not out) in an astonishingly mature batting display, saw Hampshire to victory in the last over. His placement was flawless; more particularly his judgement in continually assessing the state of play and his side's progress was way beyond his years.

And so to Finals Day. Three of the four finalists were from the Southern group, reinforcing yet again the strength of sides that Hampshire have had to encounter since the competition's inception. The first opponents were Essex who had famously recruited Wayne Bravo at an alleged cost of between £8,000 - £10,000 for the day and defeated Hampshire in the group stages. However, Cork's side were now ready for anybody. A rapid first wicket stand of 79 between Mark Pettini and Alastair Cook appeared to put Essex in firm control but Danny Briggs then intervened. He bowled Pettini, induced Ravi Bopara - a consistent thorn in Hampshire's side - to edge and then dismissed Ryan ten Doeschate. For good measure he had also caught Cook on the boundary off Christian. Essex never recovered and limped thereafter to 156 for 7. Bravo, looking distracted, was run out for 5.

As at Edgbaston, Adams and Razzaq littered the early part of the innings with a volley of boundaries. The talented Pakistani had come to the party late - his performances in the early group matches were very low key - but once he was promoted to open the innings he gained confidence and demonstrated his class. After a typically forthright innings from Ervine, Neil McKenzie and Michael Carberry took Hampshire over the line.

Their opponents in the Final were Somerset, who with their plethora of fast-scoring batsmen were the competition favourites from the outset. However, Hampshire's bowlers held them in check. Razzaq accounted for Marcus Trescothick early on and that seemed to inhibit Craig Kieswetter. He was uncharacteristically tentative. Though he eventually made 73, the runs took him a long time. Only when Kieron Pollard came to the wicket three overs from the end did Somerset threaten to post an unassailable. Once again, it was irrepressible Cork who made the match's most telling contribution, this time in the final over. He conceded only three runs and in the process had sent Pollard, who had hitherto scored 22 off only 7 balls, to hospital as a ball got stuck in his grill. The powerfully built West Indian and in essence the world's only T20 specialist was totally unprepared for a short pitched delivery. The injury looked horrific - a clearly concerned Cork called for medical attention immediately - but he was discharged later.

Adams and Razzaq took the score to 60 before the latter was caught behind. He had been threatening to win the match virtually single-handed as he

unfurled a flurry of boundaries in the latter part of his innings. Vince and Adams were then dismissed in quick succession and the situation looked a little dicey at 84 for 3. However, McKenzie and Ervine then brought all their experience to bear. The former batted sublimely, scoring a run off virtually every ball. He was totally cocooned in a serene world of his own. Ervine battered the boundary ropes when required. They seemed to be piloting their side to a comfortable victory. Only 11 runs were required off two overs. However, the penultimate over, bowled by Phillips who had earlier taken some fearful hammer from Razzaq and Adams, conceded only 3 runs. More importantly, he had dismissed both McKenzie and Carberry.

Eight runs were therefore required off the last over to be bowled by Zander de Bruyn. Ervine and Christian were only able to scamper singles, two of which were byes as the ball travelled direct to wicket-keeper Kieswetter who subsequently missed his shies to the stumps. With two balls remaining, three runs were still required. Christian then seemed to have won the match as he swung to mid-wicket. However, brilliant fielding saved the boundary and restricted the score to two. Two runs were notionally required though Hampshire would still win the game if they managed only a single, by virtue of losing one few wickets.

Only one ball remained. Almost unbelievably, it took well over 5 minutes for it to be delivered. Christian had pulled a hamstring and required a runner. Trescothick, not unreasonably given the circumstances, asked for creases to be painted where the runner, Jimmy Adams, was to be located. In unbearable tension, the last ball struck Christian on the pads, marginally outside leg stump. As Somerset appealed, Ervine ran to the business end, and Christian forgetting his injury, left his crease (he would have been run out had the Somerset fielders the presence of mind to throw the wicket down) and made it to the bowler's end. The last over had taken over fifteen minutes to be completed but Hampshire were home.

Dominic Cork deservedly held the trophy aloft before his home crowd - the first captain to do so. Hampshire's youngsters and coterie of experienced batsmen, and the two overseas all-rounders, had given their supporters a day to remember and a team with which they could identify. The County had proved it was possible to win trophies without fielding megastars.

The last word though must rest with the marvellous Cork. He had added yet another dramatic chapter to his almost legendary career with Hampshire.

THE COUNTY SCHEDULE

Has there ever been a season that has generated so much negativity as 2010? The County programme was criticised by many even before the season started. As the summer unfolded, it was roundly condemned by virtually all stakeholders. T20 overkill, a Lord's final – so important to a player – created almost as an afterthought, a seemingly endless diet for one-day International and a Championship which was played, in effect, at the start and end of the season when weather conditions are often at their most

problematical. In the event, the weather was mainly kind though stoppages for bad light, which for example dogged Hampshire's final game against Warwickshire, was an ever present threat

The admission charges to Tests, particularly at Lord's, were also quite scandalous. It is small wonder that the paying public confounded the T20 and Test match marketing men by refusing to pay either exorbitant prices (for Tests) or by attending just a (very) few T20 matches. The economics, recession or not, were simply unaffordable. Those in power alleged that the expanded T20 programme emanated for an extensive consultation exercise. It must be wondered what, or more likely, how, questions were asked. The Soccer World Cup was blamed for poor attendances in some quarters; if that was the case why were the T20 group matches during that tournament's duration?

So what is the solution? Players have been complaining for years that they play too much cricket. It may be necessary to go back to the future and reinstate a knock-out competition, preferably of 50 overs, with a Lord's final... Given central contracts, the argument that playing a reduced number of limited overs matches will place England at a disadvantage in the World Cup is not really valid. There have been numerous recent cases of players coming straight into the Test side from county cricket and holding their own. And some, eg. Trott and even Strauss to an extent, have graduated from Test cricket to LOIs, rather than the other way round.

The T20 will always create a problem of scheduling. If the 2010 workload has to be maintained, it seems a question of paying your money and taking your choice. However, the public clearly can only afford to pay for a certain number of matches. Battle lines would appear to be drawn between those Counties who do not stage Tests and those that do, and in the process have an alternative income stream. The only factor that ought to be tackled immediately is to ensure 4-day matches are kept well away from the T20 programme. To expect players to change from one format to another on consecutive days is grossly unfair on them.

As for the Championship season, Nottinghamshire were deserved winners. They won most matches and reached the requisite number of points in the final match at Old Trafford after playing "proper" cricket on the 4th day after rain had largely washed out the first three. Somerset came terribly close and, of course, finished as runners-up in all three competitions. It is worth recalling that after being bridesmaids in the Gillette Cup and Sunday League in 1978, they won both these competitions in the following season. Given they have already strengthened their bowling attack with the shrewd signing of Steve Kirby next season, they might just go one better again in 2011.