

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

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MEETINGS

Wednesday 9 March 2011 – Meeting

The speaker for this evening will be Geoff Cook who has enjoyed two distinct careers. The first was as a highly accomplished opening batsman for Northamptonshire who gained Test recognition. The second, of course, has been that of a highly influential figure in Durham's latent irresistible rise.

GEOFFREY COOK was born in Middlesbrough, Yorkshire, on 9 October 1951. Educated at Middlesbrough High School, he became one of a number of men from the North East to migrate south to play county cricket. Those who played for Northamptonshire included Colin Milburn and Peter Willey. He made his Northants debut in 1971 and received his county cap in 1975, when he passed 1,000 runs in a season for the first time. He was to reach that landmark on twelve occasions, his best summer being 1981 – his first year as county captain – when he scored 1759 runs (avge. 43.97).

He was chosen for the England tour to India and Sri Lanka in the following winter. Typically cultured centuries at Indore and Kandy took him into the England team for the inaugural Test against Sri Lanka at Colombo – an auspicious occasion on which to make a Test debut. He retained his place for the three Tests against India in the ensuing summer, making 66 at Old Trafford, during which he shared an opening stand of 106 with Chris Tavare, and 50 at The Oval. However, he then lost his place for the three Test series against Pakistan, as England experimented with Derek Randall in an opening batsman's role. He was selected for the tour to Australia in 1982-83 and though performing well in the state games, in which he scored four 50's, including 99 and 77 against New South Wales' Test-class attack (Lawson, Whitney, Holland and Bennett) in Sydney, he was unable to reproduce that form in the 4 Tests in which he played.

In county cricket, he proved to be an outstanding captain for Northamptonshire. Always astute, calm and assured, he took them to the Nat. West Trophy Final in his first season where they lost, heartbreakingly, to Derbyshire. The scores were level but the latter won by virtue of having lost fewer wickets. The result must have been even more galling for our speaker as he scored 111, sharing a rousing stand with his long-term opening partner, Wayne Larkins, of 111 in the first innings.

Almost unbelievably, his County lost by the same result when they reached the Benson and Hedges Cup Final in 1987. On this occasion, they were thwarted by Yorkshire who lost one fewer wicket in attaining the Northants total of 244 (for 7).

At least, however, Geoff Cook could be consoled by participating in two winning Lord's finals, when his County triumphed in the Gillette Cup against favourites Lancashire in 1976 and the Benson and Hedges Cup against Essex four years later. In the first-class game, he also played in Northants' famous victory over the Australians in 1972, making a crucial 62 in the first innings, in which only three batsmen achieved double figures.

It is perhaps his opening partnerships with Wayne Larkins for which he will most be remembered. They were feared as any pair in the game. Larkins provided the fireworks as he flayed away at the bowling with little footwork. Geoff Cook, by classical matches, was the ideal foil, though he was quite capable of scoring quickly himself. Six feet tall, and right-handed, he genuinely built an innings.

His highest score was 203 against Yorkshire at Scarborough in 1988. Two years earlier, he had shared in the County's record second wicket stand of 344 with Robin Boyd-Moss versus Lancashire at Wantage Road. He stands second, behind Dennis Brookes, in Northants' all-time run-making list. He retired in 1990, having made 23,277 runs (avge. 31.97) including 37 centuries. He held 419 catches, mostly at slip, as well as claiming 3 stumpings as an emergency wicket-keeper. He also made over 8,000 runs, and a further 4 hundreds in limited-overs cricket. His contribution to Northamptonshire cricket was therefore prodigious.

Geoff Cook then started a second career in cricket which was no less immense. In December 1990, he joined Durham CCC, as Director of Cricket, at a time when they were planning to join the County Championship. They graduated from a Minor County to a First-Class County in 1992. Their early struggles have been well documented. After years of relying on imported players from other Counties to become established, Durham, or rather Geoff Cook, slowly put together a basically home-grown team, supported by the inestimable Dale Blenkenstein and Michael Di Venuto. The County made the big breakthrough when they comprehensively outplayed Hampshire in the Friends Provident Trophy Final in 2007. The County Championship title followed in the next two seasons. During that period, Durham also supplied a succession of players, particularly fast and fast-medium bowlers, as well as Paul Collingwood to the England team. Durham's progress has been a spectacular and famous one. They also play cricket that is entertaining and watchable. Much of the credit must go to Geoff Cook, to whom the Society extends a very warm welcome this evening.

Wednesday 30 March 2011 - Meeting

Those present when tonight's speaker, the REVEREND MIKE VOCKINS, first addressed the Society in November 1983 will never forget it. In the grand surroundings of the Banquet Hall in Winchester Guildhall he took members on a majestic tour through the history of Worcestershire County Cricket Club. He served his County as Secretary and Chief Executive from 1971 to 2001, during which time they won both the County Championship and the Sunday

League three times, and the Nat West Trophy and Benson and Hedges Cup once each.

Michael David Vockins was born in Cumberland in July 1944 but was educated at St. Bartholomew's Grammar School, Newbury. He then gained an honours degree in Agricultural Bio-chemistry at University College of Wales, Aberystwyth and captained the University Cricket XI. At University, he was in the Soil Science Unit at the time that Dr. Vic Stewart and Dr. Bill Adams were extending their work on scientific assessment of cricket pitches (and sports grounds generally) for which they justifiably gained a wide and much-respected reputation.

Between leaving school and entering University, Mike worked for five years in the Biochemistry Department (studying animal diseases) at the Agricultural Research Council. After gaining his degree, he joined the staff of an Orthopaedic Hospital in Oswestry, Shropshire as a research biochemist and worked in the field of rheumatoid arthritis.

During the time that Mike lived in Shropshire he became Secretary of the County Cricket Association and at that time (1970) devised the game of 'Indoor Cricket' which was quickly taken up by the National Cricket Association and which now has a wide following both here and overseas as well.

He has contributed to a host of journals and newspapers on a number of topics, as well as broadcasting on local radio stations. He is clearly a renaissance man. He is now working on a biography of Arthur Milton, the last cricket/soccer double international, on whom Stephen Chalke has spoken so affectionately on his visits to the Society

Mike was awarded the OBE for his services to cricket in 1996. He also obtained a permanent place in the game's pictorial gallery when he was featured in Jocelyn Galsworthy's "Lords of Cricket" (pub. 2005).

Mike Vockins also managed five international tours – to Australia (twice), New Zealand, Zimbabwe (the side being captained by Mark Nicholas) and Pakistan – as manager of England Under 19 and England A teams. He retains an active involvement in top-level cricket as a member of the England and Wales Cricket Board's major match group, responsible for the allocation of Test matches, one-day internationals and other big games.

He enjoyed a long cricket career. In his early days he played in Hampshire for Highclere CCC in the shadow of the Castle (now, of course, renowned as the setting for Downton Abbey). He also gained his MCC coaching qualification on a course run by Arthur Holt and Leo Harrison.

Ordained in 1988, he is the College Chaplain of Hereford Sixth Form College, a role he has held since February 2005 and which he finds challenging, fulfilling and fun. He also plays a part in the College's marketing and PR activities.

Alongside his role in College, Mike is Hon. Curate of three small parishes on the north-west slopes of the Malvern Hills (where he lives, in a cottage formerly used by Sir Edward Elgar as a quiet retreat where he could compose), and also Rural Dean of Ledbury, exercising pastoral oversight over 22 parishes there and their clergy.

He and his wife Eileen have two adult daughters, both married, and they relish time spent with their family and with their new grandsons.

The Society extends Mike Vockins a very warm welcome to this evening's meeting.

Wednesday 9 February 2011 – Report

Derek Brewer's address, accompanied by a visual presentation, was a tour de force and thoroughly informative, enjoyable and inspirational as he described Nottinghamshire's community developments. In January, Peter Parfitt provided a history of the game in the last fifty years. Derek Brewer outlined a host of issues about the contemporary game, demonstrating just how rapidly cricket is changing.

He recounted some of his early memories of Hampshire cricket. He played at Northlands Road, captaining Berkshire Under 19's. His opposite number was David Rock, whom he remembered as being a very clean striker of the ball. Earlier, he had watched every ball of the Sussex – Hampshire match at Hove in 1974. He recalled John Snow and Andy Roberts bowling at the Sea End, and an exceptional innings by the Hampshire captain, Richard Gilliat. Sussex eventually prevailed. He also commented on the wonderful T20 Finals day hosted by Hampshire at the Rose Bowl last year.

He began with a photograph of the impressive Abu Dhabi Stadium where Nottinghamshire begin the 2011 season with a match against the MCC. He then talked about the thin line between success and failure. One of his illustrations of the point was Notts winning the Championship in 2010 on equal points with Somerset. He missed the final game at Old Trafford when they clinched the title as it was his 25th wedding anniversary. Nevertheless, he was able to watch the match on Sky in Sorrento! He subsequently moved on to leadership citing Andrew Strauss, Stephen Fleming, Chris Read and Mick Newell as possessing exceptional management skills, both on and off the field. He showed photographs of the redevelopment of Trent Bridge, including evocative displays of the game under lights. The building work was crucial to the ground retaining Test status.

He attended a meeting of cricket Chief Executives in Johannesburg during the first ICC World Twenty20 tournament before moving on to Cape Town. There, he was tremendously impressed by the Positive Futures Programme for underprivileged children in the Townships and returned wishing to initiate a similar scheme in Nottingham. The objective was to promote social inclusion in Cotgrave, a deprived area of the city. Notts secured funding of £400,000 for the project (£200,000 from the local authority with matched funding from

Notts. and other businesses). As part of the recruitment process, the leader of the project was interviewed by children living in the area. The results have been spectacular, with crime figures reduced by 70%/80% and agencies involved in the community now working together, rather than disparately. The project won two prestigious Local Government awards from the Local Government Chronicle and the Municipal Journal. Nottinghamshire have also realigned their core business so that community work and participation is at the heart of everything they do. In the year 2010, they set themselves to have 2010 children playing cricket simultaneously, a feat they achieved on one fine summer's day on Nottingham racecourse. The Club also linked with the Lord's Taverners to introduce table cricket for people with disabilities. It is small wonder that they have won an ECB award for the best community programme as well as website.

The Club's bid to host matches in the ICC World Twenty20 tournament in 2009 was wrapped around their community work. Derek Brewer estimated that it generated some £6.5m into the local economy, with a further £5.7m through television rights with a global audience.

He ended by mentioning Akhil Patel (Samit's brother), Sam Woods, Jake Ball and Alex Hales as players for the future.

After such an inspirational address, it was inevitable that the Q & A session should be lively. It covered virtually every issue arising in the last year or so, with primary emphasis on programming (for Test and County cricket) and finance. He had significant concerns that cricket as a whole, but particularly the Test grounds, were over borrowed. One interesting snippet to arise was that Counties now have a salary cap (including National Insurance and Pensions) of £1.8m p.a.

At the start of the evening, Society members wished our Chairman, Suzanne Marlow, a speedy recovery from her recent knee operation.

KEITH ANDREW

Keith Andrew passed away on 27 December 2010. He addressed the Society in April 1989 at Basingstoke Rugby Club. He told a story of a mischievous Leo Harrison cementing his (Andrew's) gloves together in an end of season encounter at Dean Park, spoke about his extensive work with the National Cricket Association (NCA), and gave an appreciation of Colin Milburn, whom he regarded as a genius – the only man who could hook Wes Hall in front of square.

Keith Andrew's lasting legacy to the game was his work as a coach. Many of the techniques of players in the modern game originated from his foundation work. He wrote two books "The Skills of Cricket" and "Coaching Cricket",

which were coaching bibles, and was the subject of a biography “Guess My Story” by Stephen Chalke published in 2003.

The former Northamptonshire and England wicket-keeper was renowned for his unobtrusiveness. He was regarded by virtually all his contemporaries as the best keeper in county cricket in the 1950s and 1960s.

TREVOR BAILEY

Trevor Bailey, who died in such sad circumstances on 10 February, was a continual thorn in Hampshire’s side throughout his career. Over a twenty year period, from his first appearance for Cambridge University at Aldershot in 1948 when he took seven wickets in the match, until the last at Ilford in 1967, he generally made a crucial contribution to the outcome of the match. This is reflected in his statistics against the County.

In 16 matches, he made 1228 runs at an average of 40.93. He only bettered that average against Kent and Northamptonshire. He scored two centuries – 141 not out at Westcliff-on-Sea in 1956 and 146 at Bournemouth three years later.

With his high action, he took 123 wickets at a cost of 15.86 each, his best average against any County. Hampshire were fourth on his shopping list in terms of wickets taken. The top three were Somerset, Yorkshire and Warwickshire. Interestingly, Roy Marshall remarked in Test Outcast “For a number of years Essex had some notorious green wickets, especially when Trevor Bailey was playing”. To counter balance Marshall’s statement, he twice produced five wicket returns at Dean Park, Bournemouth which was renowned as being more conducive to spin bowling. He was, therefore, an all-purpose bowler, able to perform on any surface.

However, he demonstrated his class when he dominated the encounter on a difficult wicket at Romford in 1957. Playing with a damaged hand, he top scored in each innings (59 out of 130 and 71 not out out of 141) as well as taking 6 for 32 and 8 for 49. The next top score in the match was Jimmy Gray’s 40 in Hampshire’s second innings.

Two of Hampshire’s finest batsmen of his era were among his “rabbits”. He dismissed Gray on 14 occasions (only exceeded by Tom Graveney’s 15) and Henry Horton on 11. On the other hand, Derek Shackleton generally had his measure, obtaining his wicket 10 times.

In Championship Cricket, he described matches against Hampshire as being dull affairs. Again, statistics bear this out. Of the twenty-seven matches between the counties during his career, only eleven finished positively.

Trevor Bailey also wrote prolifically. ‘Championship Cricket’ is regarded as an invaluable reference work for its insight on the techniques and

personalities on the leading players in county cricket in the post-war years up until the book's publication in 1961.

HAMPSHIRE'S NEW SIGNINGS

FRIEDEL DE WET

Friedel de Wet, the South African right-arm fast bowler joins Hampshire as a Kolpak registration for 2010.

Many will remember him for his Test debut against England at Centurion Park in December 2010, when in the second innings he swept away post-tea resistance to put his country on the brink of victory. Famously, Graham Onions survived the last over bowled by Makhaye Ntini who, in his 100th Test, had been entrusted to claim the last wicket. If de Wet had bowled that final over, the outcome may well have been different. Friedel de Wet finished with 4 for 55 in 23 accurate and hostile overs.

His run up and action are uncannily similar to that of Dale Steyn, for whom he substituted in that Test due to the latter's injury. Steyn returned for the second Test but de Wet played again in the third at Cape Town. It was there that his long-standing back injury reoccurred and he was unable to take the field again in that series. He now seems to have fallen out of contention on the national scene and these remain his only Tests. Nevertheless, he had revealed tantalising glimpses of his capabilities.

His back has necessitated a couple of operations and at one stage limited his career to such an extent that he turned away from cricket to seek a secure living in a nursery and landscaping business. He is, therefore, lightly raced. Born in Durham on 26 June 1980, he has made his debut in 2001/2 but has played only 52 first-class matches in that period; taking 206 wickets at the handsome average of 23.80. When free from injury, he is an irresistible force. His best seasons were in 2005/6 and 2006/7. In the first he took 42 wickets, including a career best 7 for 61 (11 – 152 Match) for Lions v. Cape Cobras at Newlands. He was even more of a threat in the following season, dismissing 61 batsmen – a high return in a South African season. The latter aggregate incorporated 6 for 41 and 5 for 57 for North West v. Free State at Potchefstroom. 21 of his 52 matches were played in these two seasons.

In the current South African summer, he has taken 12 wickets (avge. 27.33) – his lowest return since 2004/05.

He has scored 933 runs (avge. 16.66), with a highest score of 56 for Lions v. Titans at Centurion Park in 2007/08, and held 22 catches.

He has previously played in this country, as a Kolpak, for Middlesex in 2nd XI cricket in 2008, before moving to the Lancashire League to play with Chorley.

SHAHID AFRIDI

Shahid Afridi, surely the world's most explosive cricketer, will join Hampshire for the T20 competition. He was, of course, due to play for the County in the tournament last year but whimsically made himself available for the Test team, whom he captained at Lord's, and then opted out again.

However, for all his vagaries, he is a cricketer who will have crowds sitting on the edge of their seats. He is a "one-off" – a turbo-charged aggressive batsman who will change the course of a match in a couple of overs and a bowler of quickish leg-breaks and arm balls capable of running through a side. It is small wonder that his nickname is 'Boom Boom', though Mark Nicholas and Geoffrey Boycott christened him 'The Gunslinger'. Both epithets embrace the way he plays his cricket.

His volatile career is worthy of a book that would read like a fast-moving adventure story. He has been in demand all over the world, playing not only in his native Pakistan but also in South Africa, Australia, Ireland and England. Hampshire will be his fourth County – the others being Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Kent. He has already made telling interventions in the current World Cup. His limited-overs career as an all-rounder is unrivalled. Strap yourselves in; Hampshire's T20 journey could be another memorable one.

JIMMY ADAMS AND DANNY BRIGGS

A mention must be made of the exploits of Jimmy Adams and Danny Briggs this winter. Both excelled for the Performance Squad in Australia and the England Lions in the West Indies. Adams also played a key role in the Auckland Aces success in the New Zealand T20 competition. Both, of course, also played for Hampshire in their sojourn to the West Indies in the domestic T20 competition there. More details of their splendid performances can be found on the Cricinfo, Cricket Archive and Rose Bowl websites.

IMRAN TAHIR

Imran Tahir announced his arrival on the international stage by taking four for 41 for South Africa against the West Indies in Delhi in the World Cup.

DOMINIC CORK

Dominic Cork has been appointed Hampshire's Captain in all forms of cricket for 2011. He thus becomes only the 25th Captain since the County's entry to first-class cricket in 1864.

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