

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

NEWSLETTER No. 311 – OCTOBER 2011

MEETINGS

Wednesday 16 November 2011

Members will be aware that in the Society's programme card a speaker for this meeting was still to be confirmed. We are delighted to announce that **PATRICK FERRIDAY** has agreed to come. He is the author of "Before The Lights Went Out". It is a book about the 1912 triangular tournament. David Frith has commented that this book is one of the most lucid and penetrative studies of the period that he has ever read. This is a very firm endorsement indeed from one of cricket's most distinguished historians. Mr. Ferriday will also be bringing along some memorabilia relevant to the book. This will be the first time that any speaker has ever covered this era and it should therefore be a most interesting evening.

Wednesday 19 October 2011 – Meeting

We are pleased to welcome Alan Oakman to this evening's meeting. He is a man who has virtually given a lifetime to the game.

His career has been divided into four distinct phases. **ALAN STANLEY MYLES OAKMAN** was born in Hastings on 20 April 1930. He was educated at Hastings Grammar School and made his debut for Sussex as an off-spin bowler in 1947. Those were, of course, the days of National Service, during which he had the honour of being on sentry duty at Buckingham Palace. Once 'demobbed' he quickly established a place in the side and two fine bowling performances at the end of July 1951 earned him his county cap. The following year he claimed 79 wickets, including a hat trick against Somerset at Hove. In 1953 he had taken 63 wickets by late July but then a broken thumb kept him out of the game for the rest of the season. He returned career best bowling figures – seven for 39 against Glamorgan at Eastbourne – in 1954 and finished, tantalisingly with 99 wickets. It was his most successful season as a bowler and yet, paradoxically, the advent of Robin Marler restricted his opportunities in both that season and thereafter. By the time the eccentric Marler had left the game (it is said that as captain his players followed him out of curiosity!) Alan Oakman was established as a most talented batsman who had played Test cricket.

He had first scored one thousand runs in a season in 1952 but then endured two lean years. However, as Sussex's need for his bowling diminished he made such rapid progress with the bat that he was selected for England in two Tests in 1956 and for the MCC tour of South Africa the following winter.

These were the highest points of his playing career. He earned a permanent place in cricket history with five catches in Jim Laker's leg trap at Old Trafford.

However, despite a fluent 150 for the MCC against Orange Free State at Bloemfontein, a back injury prevented him from revealing his best form on tour and, crucially, virtually wiped out the whole of the 1957 season. He never came close to Test selection again but continued to give Sussex marvellous service as an opening batsman and prehensile close fielder. His height and reach made him a formidable close catcher, particularly at slip. He held over fifty catches in both 1958 and 1959. His best season with the bat was in 1961 when he amassed 2,307 runs (avge. 36.61) and made his highest score – 229 not out against Nottinghamshire at Worksop. In all, he passed one thousand runs in a season on nine occasions.

Towards the end of his career Sussex had need of his bowling again to provide much needed variety to a predominantly seam attack. He responded by taking over fifty wickets in 1963, 1965 and 1966. He also continued to score useful runs.

When he left the game in 1968 he had played 497 matches for Sussex, scored 20,117 runs (avge. 26.09), taken 707 wickets (avge. 27.16) and held 561 catches. These are figures that speak for themselves. In all first-class cricket his figures were 21,800 runs (avge. 26.17), 736 wickets (avge. 27.63) and 594 catches.

Other highlights were a tour to the West Indies with E.W. Swanton's team in 1955-56 and an appearance for the Players v Gentlemen in 1956.

After a year as a first class umpire in 1969 he entered the fourth phase of his career as Warwickshire's Chief Coach.

This is Alan Oakman's second visit to the Society. He last spoke on 24 February 1988 in Winchester, when his address was much enjoyed by all. He is currently president of Sussex Cricket society.

Wednesday 14 September 2011 – Report

This year's beneficiary Nic Pothas entertained a good-sized Rose Bowl audience with an account of his career in cricket. His father, who had obtained a PhD in engineering, majored on football and basketball. His mother was an ex air hostess who spoke seven languages and played tennis. His family has a heritage of being long-lived. His grandmother is now 103 years old. His father instilled a high work ethic. At one stage, our speaker had to assimilate his university studies, cricket practice and working for his father – all at the same time.

He was brought up in a deprived area of Johannesburg. The legacy was that he felt his face never fitted with the South African selectors. It was after being overlooked whilst Mark Boucher was struggling for form and fitness over a prolonged period that he decided to leave South Africa and play elsewhere. His career until that point had been quite an adventure. He played for

Transvaal primary schools as a leg-spinner. He played premier league men's cricket at fourteen years old. It was a hard school and he grew up quickly. He was signed by Transvaal, where Neil Mackenzie's father was Convenor of Selectors, at the age of 18 as a seamer. He did not keep wicket until a year later. His rise to the international scene was a 'keeper therefore was a meteoric one.

He had twice played in England before joining Hampshire. He played club cricket in 1994. It was a great experience. He could pick up games virtually at will but he had to work hard off the field. He learned life skills such as cooking, cleaning and washing clothes. At his club, he worked at the bar and helped prepare the wicket. He became even more independent. He then returned in 1996 representing South Africa A. In their side was Jacques Kallis, Herschelle Gibbs and Paul Adams. He also toured Sri Lanka in 1998, and headed the tour averages. On his return, he scored two centuries against the touring West Indians, the only man to do so. He was by now vice-captain of South Africa A, the skipper being Dale Blenkenstein.

His call up to the South African side for a one-day series in Singapore (see previous Newsletter) involved several air journeys of thousands of miles. He had gone to the U SA to play baseball. He mentioned earlier that he played cricket for enjoyment whilst developing interests elsewhere. When the call came he had to fly home to South Africa, then to the West Indies where the first team were playing and then on to Singapore.

He signed for Hampshire because Jimmy Cook was coach, as well as being his hero for his batting exploits in South Africa and England. His arrival coincided with Hampshire transferring to the Rose Bowl. He had to reinvent his technique on the newly laid wickets which were still settling down and proving difficult. These wickets hastened the end of the careers of Jason Laney, Giles White and Will Kendall. (Editor's note: he could have added Derek Kenway). He worked out a technique to play on leg stump. Later with Kevin Pietersen, he developed a method to play spin bowling in front of his pads where turn was slow and bounce was low. He also found county cricket generally a 'fantastic' learning experience. Early on in the summer, the wickets favour swing and seam bowlers. Batsman then generally cash in on flat wickets in mid-summer. In the late season, batsmen have to counter spin bowling.

Hampshire's relegation had been confirmed in the hours prior to his address and he concluded by giving his thoughts on playing in Division 2. A different ball, which swings prodigiously early on, is used. Teams are not as strong and if Hampshire are to return to Division 1 quickly then they need to get on a roll immediately.

It was a spellbinding talk. It included a virtual Who's Who of South African cricket, friendships with players from all countries in the world of cricket and insights into his Hampshire team mates. It also embraced a fascinating account of the post-Apartheid cricket world in South Africa, particularly the

financial and social implications of positive discrimination in the selection of sides/squads in provincial cricket.

Nic Pothas came across as a great team man and an individual who is straightforward, very honest, positive and intelligent. He also talks very fast! He delivered his address with scarcely a break or hesitation, and without notes. It was a wonderful start to the Society's 'season'.

The above report was compiled immediately after Nic Pothas' address. The press confirmed two days later that Hampshire would not be renewing his contract.

HAMPSHIRE'S VETERANS

At the time of writing, NEIL McCORKELL is the longest lived first-class cricketer. He was born in Portsmouth on 23 March 1912. After his Hampshire career (1932 – 1951) he moved to Johannesburg to work as a coach. He still lives there. An appreciation of a very fine wicket-keeper and a batsman good enough to open the innings regularly will appear in a future newsletter.

Leo Harrison is currently 89 years old. He was born in Mundeford on 5 June 1922 and still lives there. He made his debut just prior to the second World War and he played his last match for the County in 1966. He succeeded Neil McCorkell as Hampshire's regular wicket-keeper.

Sandwiched between the two wicket-keepers is John Manners. He is 97 years old, being born in Exeter on 25 September 1914. His career was a most interesting one. He made his Hampshire debut in 1936 when he played in the last four matches of the summer. He was at the wicket when Philip Mead played his last match. His next appearance was not until August 1947. He marked the occasion by scoring 121 against Kent at Canterbury. It was therefore almost eleven years since his first four appearances. He was a naval officer who saw active service and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in the Second World War. He made his final two appearances for the County in 1948, though he continued to play very successfully for the Combined Services.

The only centenarian among Hampshire cricketers is E.A.English, who played 18 matches for the County between 1898 and 1901. He died in September 1966 at the age of 102 years and 248 years old.

GOODBYE TO MICHAEL LUMB AND DOMINIC CORK

It was announced in August that MICHAEL LUMB would be joining Nottinghamshire in 2012. He will probably be most remembered as the batsman who set the gold standard for the County in Twenty20 cricket. He

played fearlessly as he scored Hampshire's first century in the seventh year of the Competition in 2009. He raced to 124 not out off only 69 balls against Essex at the Rose Bowl. His form that season was to have both a positive and negative impact on the South African born left-hander's career. It led to a contract with the Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League, from where he was propelled into the England squad for their successful World Cup T20 campaign in the West Indies. However, on his return to county cricket in the summer of 2010 he often looked distracted, probably due to fatigue, and was eventually dropped from both the T20 and the side in the Championship. It was the supreme irony that he was omitted during the later stages of the County's memorable T20 triumph.

When he did return to the team in first-class cricket, he batted soundly and with increasing confidence, culminating in a glorious 158 against Durham at Basingstoke. The Durham bowling attack was rendered impotent as he and Michael Carberry (162) did virtually as they pleased in an exhibition of calculating batsmanship. They added 314, seven runs shy of the County's highest third wicket partnership. However, in another twist of fate, an injury incurred in the next match at Taunton put him out of the side for the rest of the season. He then kicked his heels for virtually the whole of the ensuing IPL season before yet another injury, sustained in a pre-match football warm up at Hove, brought his career with Hampshire to a close. It seemed as if the Fates determined the destiny with the County.

He played for Hampshire in two Lord's finals. In the first, against Durham in 2007, he was dismissed for a golden duck. The second, however, was memorable for a more positive reason as he (38) and Jimmy Adams (55) launched Hampshire's victory drive against Sussex two years later with an opening partnership of 93. It was in 2009 that he recorded his best score for Hampshire in first-class cricket, with 219 against his new club Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge.

He played in 54 first-class matches for the County scoring 2,997 runs (avge. 36.54), including four centuries.

DOMINIC CORK has left Hampshire having enjoyed a wonderful Indian Summer to his career. He certainly knew how to make an impact. He took four for ten on his first appearance for Hampshire against Worcestershire at the Rose Bowl. This included a spell of three wickets in four balls. Later on in the summer he claimed five for 14, as well as 43, against the same County which set Hampshire on their way to a ten wicket victory. It was in that year that his opening spell against Sussex in the Friends Provident (FP) Trophy Final at Lord's, where he took three early wickets, paved the way for Hampshire's eventual triumph. He then captained the side in the nail-biting FP Twenty20 final success at the Rose Bowl last year. His final over in the Somerset innings, in which he conceded only five runs, but more importantly, put the big-hitting Kieron Pollard out of the game, was crucial. He then captained the County to the cusp of another T20 Final appearance last

summer. The County's highly proficient run ended with a Semi-Final Super Over defeat at the hands of their vanquished opponents of the previous season.

The fires still burned in championship cricket last summer but he had lost that crucial edge to his pace. Nevertheless, he still proved that he was a force that could not be ignored with five for 75 (in 37.4 overs) and three for 51 against Yorkshire at Headingley. He then fired the final shot in his locker when taking four for 78 against his previous County Lancashire at the Rose Bowl. It was apparent, though, that in missing the final month of the season, his Hampshire career was drawing to an inexorable conclusion. However, he has left a myriad of memories.

If this proves to be the end of his career he will have just failed to fulfil his cherished ambition of scoring 10,000 runs and taking 1,000 wickets in first-class cricket. His current tallies stand at 10,114 runs and 989 wickets.

In 35 matches for Hampshire in first-class cricket he took 94 wickets (avg. 27.77), and scored 987 runs (24.07). His fielding remained excellent until the end. He held 32 catches.

SIMON KATICH RETURNS

Simon Katich will be returning to Hampshire as their overseas player in 2012. He previously played in 24 matches for the County between 2003 – 2005, scoring 1,923 runs at the impressive average of 53.41. The only year in which he could play regularly was 2003 in which he headed the Hampshire batting averages with 1,143 runs at 60.15. His four centuries included a magnificent knock of 143 not out against Yorkshire at Scarborough. HCS members nominated him as their Player of the Year for his efforts. He has now played for five counties, the others being Durham, Derbyshire, Yorkshire and Lancashire. Given Imran Tahir's departure, it is quite possible that his left-arm chinaman bowling will be very useful.

ANDREW HODD

The November edition of The Cricketer mentions that the Sussex wicket-keeper Andrew Hodd has joined the County. More details will follow in a future Newsletter.

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