

# THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

**Patrons:** John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

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## **Wednesday 7 December 2011 – Meeting**

The Society is honoured to welcome Nick Pocock, Hampshire's current President, to our Annual Dinner. He was, of course, the County's captain from 1980 – 1985. His record was an enviable one. Hampshire's third place Championship finishes in 1982 and 1983 were bettered at the time only by sides captained by Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie and Richard Gilliat.

His first season could hardly have been more disastrous. He inherited a largely inexperienced side whose strength was further diminished by the absence of Gordon Greenidge and Malcolm Marshall on West Indian tour duty. Consequently Hampshire won only one Championship match and finished at the foot of the table for the first time since 1905. However, as Tony Mitchener wrote in the Newsletter of December 1980, he never dwelt on disappointments and always remained 'approachable, philosophical and optimistic.'

These qualities started to bear fruit the following season. With Greenidge back in harness and Marshall beginning to realise his potential, Hampshire were not defeated until mid-July when Sylvester Clarke decimated them, in more senses than one, at Portsmouth. He broke our speaker's hand and he played in only three more matches in the season. Nevertheless, the County's rise to seventh place in the Championship represented a distinct improvement.

The next two seasons were memorable. In 1982 Malcolm Marshall and Kevin Emery carried virtually all before them and aided by consistent batting, notably by Trevor Jesty, Hampshire rose to third place. The County maintained their place the following year and might have fared even better had not rain curtailed the last two matches.

He was an imaginative captain. He revived the lost art of declaring behind sides, even if it meant forfeiting bonus points, in order to try and obtain a positive result. Many teams enjoyed playing against Hampshire because invariably it meant an open and entertaining game of cricket. When he retired from the game he went to work full-time in insurance, where his boss was none other than Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie. As captain they shared many traits.

His captaincy embraced a transitional period in Hampshire cricket and he left it in good health having formed the nucleus of a team for a generation. The cricket of Chris Smith, Paul Terry, Mark Nicholas, who succeeded him as

captain, Tim Tremlett, Bob Parks and Marshall took root and flowered during his leadership.

He was always an utterly unselfish right-handed batsman who often sacrificed his wicket in the best interests of the side. His two centuries – 143 not out against Middlesex at Southampton in 1979 and 164 versus Lancashire at Southampton in 1982 – were made against two of the most feared fast bowlers of the time in Wayne Daniel and Colin Croft respectively.

He was also a prolific slip-catcher averaging virtually one catch per match. Many off the redoubtable Marshall required phenomenal reflexes.

Born in Maracaibo on 15 December 1951, Nick Pocock remains county cricket's only Venezuelan-born player.

### **BASIL D'OLIVEIRA**

The newspapers paid handsome and appropriate tribute to Basil D'Oliveira in the wake of his death on 18 November. He was one of the few sportsmen who changed the course of history.

The catalyst to the "D'Oliveira Affair" in 1968 actually took place at Portsmouth in Hampshire's match with Worcestershire between 27 and 29 July. It was not with the bat that he made a mark (he scored 0 and 16) but with the ball. He took five for 39 in windy, overcast conditions, and then six for 29. His efforts, together with Alan Ormrod's 123 (retired hurt), provided the foundations for Worcestershire's victory by 115 runs. He then claimed six for 51 and four for 29 a fortnight later at Cheltenham. These performances led his recall to the England side for the final Test against Australia at The Oval. Apart from 89 against Warwickshire at Edgbaston, he had not passed fifty between the Hampshire match and the Oval Test. Ironically, he replaced an opening batsman, Roger Prideaux who had to stand down on the eve of the match. And so began an unprecedented chain of events.

### **LEG SPIN BONANZA**

Hampshire followers have just enjoyed the most productive era of leg spin bowling in their entire history. In the period from 2000 to 2011, Shane Warne (276) and Imran Tahir (124) took exactly 400 wickets between them.

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