

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

NEWSLETTER No. 320 – OCTOBER 2012

MEETINGS

ANNUAL DINNER

Pleased find enclosed form for the Annual Dinner, which should be returned to Susanne Marlow, with a stamped addressed envelope. Susanne's address is on the form.

Wednesday 17 October 2012 – Meeting

The Society extends a warm welcome to Barry Rickson. He is well known in cricket society circles, having previously been Honorary Secretary of the Council of Cricket Societies for 11 years. He is a retired English teacher and a Life Member of Lancashire CCC. He is author of a biography (published in 2005) on the great Sussex and England batsman, K S Duleepsinhji, nephew of Ranji. Our speaker has also written articles for cricket magazines and books on Hedley Verity and Len Hutton in the Famous Cricketers series of the Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians.

Wednesday 19 September 2012 – Report

Those who attended Nigel Gray's address at the Ageas Bowl were treated to an absorbing and most enjoyable evening. He talked about how and why the pitches at Hampshire's headquarters were allocated for the matches played there. It transpired, perhaps not surprisingly, that the catalyst was provided by Sky television. They had already asked which pitches (there are 20 across the square) would be used for next year's three international matches (two LOIs and a T20). The information was needed for Sky's forward planning of tv cameras, including the subsidiary cameras around the ground. It also determined ticket /seat numbering and location of sightcreens. Nigel commented it was proposed to use pitch numbers 10/11, the same as the past five years for international matches.

The next step was the publication of the fixture list. In the not-too-distant past it was announced before the current season's end. However, due to the increasing complexities arising from the various competitions, that timetable has shifted to anytime between November and January. Sky then present a list of probable and possible domestic matches they will cover. The Sky gantry has a coverage range of only six pitches, of which only four are operable because of pavilion structure issues. He then consults the captain/coach for the remaining matches. The pitch plan is then put on his computer though it is invariably subject to alteration. He always has to keep adjacent pitches clear whilst the match is in progress. Hospitality plans also need to be taken into account to ensure sponsors can see the cricket whilst dining. The dates for the start and end of a season will also determine grass growth and therefore pitch availability on certain parts of the square. 2013

pitch allocation will also be determined by hotel building works, which will need to avoid getting into the eyeline of batsmen. A different approach for wicket preparation is likely to be adopted for T20/CB40 4-day games though one common factor is the composition of the bowling attack.

The nursery ground was no less complex. He needs to have regard to the 2nd XI and Academy fixture lists. The general practice is to try and avoid both the main ground and the nursery being used simultaneously. International matches affect use of the latter, due to the metal tracking for storage of heavy tv equipment on the nursery outfield. Days are also allocated for practice prior to international matches.

After a lively Q and A session, John Young, in his vote of thanks, paid tribute to Nigel and his team. Nigel was then presented by Susanne Marlow with the Society's cheque for £250 for his testimonial.

HAMPSHIRE'S CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON

Is it possible for a County to win, or compete on T20 finals day, as well as a Lord's final, and achieve their Championship goals? History suggests not. In 2009, Sussex won the T20, reached the final of the Friends Provident Trophy at Lord's, when they lost to Hampshire, but won the Pro 40 League, which was decided on a league basis. However, they were relegated from Division One of the Championship. In the previous year, Kent reached both the T20 and FPT finals, lost both and were similarly relegated. 2010 was, of course, Somerset's "bridesmaid" year when they were defeated in both the T20 and CB40 finals, and were second in the Championship. There is little doubt, therefore, that the emotional intensity of T20 finals day, which has always preceded the end of other cup/league competitions, is draining and has adversely affected a team's performance for the remaining part of the summer. In that context, Hampshire did extraordinarily well to win the CB40 final at the end of the season.

However, their Championship challenge after T20 finals day fizzled out dramatically. In particular, their batting imploded. Prior to finals day in Cardiff, they were second in the Championship with three matches remaining. They proceeded to lose all of them by wide margins.

In truth, that second position was misleading. The County were unconvincing in the four day game throughout the entire season. Of their four victories, three were by narrow margins. They defeated Glamorgan by two wickets at Cardiff, and then won the return at home by 31 runs in a match that was nip and tuck throughout. They won at Chelmsford in the most exciting match of the season by two runs, taking the last wicket by means of a boundary catch. Their final victory, against Northamptonshire at the Ageas Bowl, was obtained by losing only two wickets whilst obtaining 329 in the last innings. The result, though, masked the fact that Hampshire had been outplayed comprehensively on the first three days, Northants setting the victory target via a declaration.

The batting, so strong on paper, was almost universally disappointing throughout the summer. They reached 300 in the first innings five times only, going on to 400 just once (at Headingley). Their average total in completed first innings was 265. In eight of the 12 matches when both sides completed their first innings, they were headed for the lead on eight occasions. It was not the form of promotion contenders.

It was ironic that the County possessed the leading run scorer and highest wicket taker in the Division in Jimmy Adams and David Balcombe respectively. As for fielders, Liam Dawson held the most number of catches (37) by any fielder in the country, and, similarly, Michael Bates was the most prolific wicketkeeper.

The Hampshire captain passed 1000 runs in all matches. However, the form of Michael Carberry, who missed some games through a serious knee injury in mid-season, Simon Katich, James Vince and Sean Ervine was in inverse proportion to their assured efforts in the shorter game. Whilst all except Carberry scored at least one century, much more was needed. Carberry was unable to add to his record number of centuries (20) by a batsman in the Rose Bowl era. He looked to be getting into his stride with an unbeaten 84 against Leicestershire at home before injury intervened, but rarely found form on his return. The only time the batting looked anywhere near convincing was when Neil McKenzie was available. In five matches, he scored 406 runs, averaging 67.16. He made two significant contributions to two of the victories, making 139 in the first innings at Chelmsford and then helped his captain post 150 for the opening wicket against Northants. Liam Dawson, though recording a career best 134 not out at Tunbridge Wells, also found form elusive. Bilal Shafayat scored a most attractive 93 on debut against Derbyshire at home, but did not pass fifty again until the last match of the same season, against the same opponents. The failure of the batting was therefore collective.

Of the bowlers, no praise can be too high for David Balcombe. He bowled well over 500 whole hearted overs, of which some 20% were maidens, testament to his accuracy. He was well supported by James Tomlinson, who after missing the opening four championship matches, took a creditable 43 wickets. Both men were specialist 4-day bowlers and therefore had, effectively, two starts to the season. As with the batting, though, the support to the lead performers was inconsistent. Towards the end of the season, Sean Ervine pitched the ball further up at a higher pace and was far more menacing than at any time in his career. Chris Wood bowled well on occasions. He is a developing all-rounder, taking both five wickets in an innings and scoring his maiden century (at Leicester) during the season. Dimi Mascarenhas, as always, was economical but took only seven wickets. Kabir Ali struggled for form and fitness again. Hamza Riazuddin started the season well, gaining a career best 5 for 61 in the win at Cardiff, but then lost his place on Tomlinson's return. He had also given tantalising glimpses of batting talent. David Griffiths ended the season well.

As for spin, Danny Briggs was as rarely sighted as the cuckoo was heard. He played in only four championship matches as Hampshire decided to leave the

grass on wickets at the Ageas Bowl. Weather conditions also usually meant an array of seamer friendly wickets away from home. In terms of his development, he cannot really afford a similar season in 2013. Liam Dawson stepped into the spin bowler's role creditably, taking 26 wickets (avge 32.19), including a career best 5 for 29 against Leicestershire at the Ageas Bowl in early season. The season was, though, a generally difficult year for English spin bowlers. The experienced Monty Panesar (Sussex) and David Wainwright (Derbyshire) stood out above all others, being the only native spin bowlers to claim more than 50 wickets.

Michael Bates kept wicket splendidly. His final tally of 57 dismissals (56ct; 1st) was the best in the country. At the start of the season, he achieved the near impossible by batting so well that Nic Pothas was barely missed. After a 93 against Loughborough, he made a most mature 87 against Gloucestershire. Chasing 290, Hampshire subsided to 72 for six. A defeat by an embarrassing margin seemed inevitable. With a wonderfully positive approach, borne out of innate confidence, however, Bates, Wood (65), and Riazzuddin (28) then took the County to within 31 runs of victory. A maiden century (103) at Headingley followed a month later. Unfortunately, but perhaps predictably, the strain of a long season for one so young took its toll and his run making had almost ground to a halt in the final month of the season. He should, though, be better equipped to cope with the relentless demands of the modern wicketkeeper/batsman next summer. He always remained a class act behind the stumps and in the CB final at Lord's delivered a masterclass which even had the old pros in the Sky commentary box purring. He was most unlucky to miss out on selection for the Lions and the ECB development squads.

The highlights of the season in all cricket? David Balcombe and Chris Wood figure prominently. Their pulsating tenth wicket partnership at Grace Road was featured in the September Newsletter. There was also the Bates/Wood partnership of 118 for the seventh wicket against Gloucestershire in the first Championship fixture against Gloucestershire at the Ageas Bowl (see above). Balcombe returned Ageas Bowl record figures of 8 for 71 earlier in the same match. Wood's last over on T20 finals day against Yorkshire, in which he took three wickets, was also memorable. The captaincy of Mascarenhas throughout finals day, and similarly Jimmy Adams in the CB40 final, was outstanding. Adams scored three centuries, all at the Ageas Bowl, and all in adversity. His last was a marvellous single handed effort of 139 not out, when he carried his bat against Essex. Liam Dawson batted on all four days for his century at Tunbridge Wells. And let us not forget Kabir Ali's last maiden ball at Lord's.

The season's champagne moments must rest, though, with Dawson. He twice dismissed Kevin Pietersen first ball for golden ducks. He will be able to dine out on that feat for the rest of his days.

1000 RUNS IN A SEASON SINCE 1993

The introduction of four-day championship cricket in 1993. has reduced the number of times batsmen have scored 1000 runs in a season dramatically. By reaching the landmark in all first-class matches in 2012, Jimmy Adams has now performed the feat four times, which is a post-1993 record. The full list for the period concerned is:-

- 4 Jimmy Adams
- 3 Michael Carberry, Robin Smith and Paul Terry
- 2 John Crawley, Will Kendall and Mark Nicholas
- 1 Michael Brown, David Gower, Matthew Hayden, Neil Johnson, Michael Lumb, Neil McKenzie and Giles White

The most number of runs scored in the last twenty years is 1737 (avge 66.80) by John Crawley in 2006.

50 WICKETS IN A SEASON SINCE 1993

50 wickets in a season is now the accepted landmark for a bowler since 1993. Those bowlers to have performed the feat in the period concerned are:-

- 6 Shaun Udal
- 4 Shane Warne
- 2 Cardigan Connor and Alex Morris
- 1 David Balcombe, Peter Hartley, Dimitri Mascarenhas, Nixon McLean, Alan Mullally, Heath Streak, Imran Tahir and James Tomlinson

David Balcombe's 64 wickets last summer puts him in sixth place in the post-1993 list.

Shaun Udal	74	(1993)
Cardigan Connor	72	(1994)
Shane Warne	70	(2000)
Shaun Udal	69	(1994)
James Tomlinson	67	(2008)
David Balcombe	64	(2012)
Nixon McLean	62	(2001)

MOST CATCHES BY A FIELDER IN A SEASON SINCE 1993

37 Liam Dawson in 2012

Dawson's tally was the most claimed by a Hampshire fielder since Paul Terry (39) in 1989. Terry played in 23 matches that year.

50 DISMISSALS BY A WICKETKEEPER IN A SEASON SINCE 1993

58 - Nic Pothas (56 ct; 2st) in 2006

57 - Michael Bates (56 ct; 1st) in 2012

56 - Adi Aymes (53ct; 3st) in 1995

55 - Adi Aymes (53ct; 2st) in 1998

53 - Adi Aymes (51ct; 2st) in 1999

51 - Nic Pothas (48ct; 3st) in 2005

50 - Nic Pothas (45ct; 5st) in 2004

A LOOK AT 100 YEARS AGO – 1912 THE WETTEST SUMMER OF THE 20TH CENTURY

In a summer when rainfall records have tumbled, a reflective piece by The Times Weather Correspondent mentioned that the summer exactly one hundred years ago was the wettest in the 20th century.

Five matches were abandoned without a ball being bowled in 1912, though none involving Hampshire. One of those that was washed away was Yorkshire's match against Surrey at Sheffield. Nevertheless, the former still won the championship. In second place were ...Northamptonshire. The latter County, along with Gloucestershire and Somerset, still has to top the championship table since the competition was expanded in 1895.

Despite the volume of rain, more matches (six) were abandoned without the sides taking the field in 1903. Hampshire were the victims on three occasions, at The Oval, Bath and Leyton. They may, though, have been glad of the respite. They won only one match all season and finished bottom of the table jointly with Leicestershire, who were also only once victorious.

In case anybody is wondering about 1954, another notoriously wet summer, no matches were washed out completely that year.

In 1912, Hampshire lost 12 full day's play – two in June, three in July and seven in August. Six of their matches, more than any other County, were designated as "no result" as neither side was able to complete their first innings. They suffered such a fate at Bath, Lords, The Oval, Southampton (v Gloucestershire), Canterbury and Leyton.

The wet wickets also produced the inevitable harvest for bowlers. Early on in the season George Dennett, Gloucestershire's slow left-arm bowler, routed Hampshire at Bristol, by taking eight wickets in each innings. His match figures of 16 for 146 were the best by any bowler in the season. Alec Kennedy returned figures of six for 68 and six for 67 at Aylestone Road, Leicester, but almost surreally, Hampshire were defeated by 152 runs. In the last two championship matches at Bournemouth, 23 wickets fell in a day twice. Hampshire won the first against Warwickshire, before hanging on for a draw against Surrey.

And yet, despite the downpours, it was a summer to treasure for Hampshire supporters. They finished sixth in the championship, to equal their previous best position established in 1910. They famously defeated the Australians by eight wickets in July. Charles Burgess Fry, Alex Johnstone and Phil Mead filled the first three places in the national batting averages. And Fry captained England to victory in the Triangular Tournament against Australia and South Africa.