

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

NEWSLETTER No. 332 – JANUARY 2014

MEETINGS

Wednesday 8 January 2014 – Meeting

At the first meeting of the New Year, **DAVID ALLEN**, Hon. Curator, Hampshire Cricket, and **ALAN EDWARDS**, Newsletter Editor, will be talking about Hampshire's 150th Anniversary.

Wednesday 13 November 2013 - Report

Alan Rayment provided an evening of wonderful entertainment as he reflected on his career. He commented that though he was a professional, he was always an amateur and club cricketer at heart. He was often admonished by senior pros for smiling too much, even after a duck. Desmond Eagar often told him to take the game more seriously. His wages as an uncapped player were revealing - £5 a week, which left him a disposable income of £2 per week. Hampshire capped him in 1952. He recalled Harry Altham, who was a great orator, particularly on the history of the game.

He then recalled the most memorable match and season of his career. From 1946 to 1954 Hampshire were always in the bottom half of the table. But in 1955, they rose to the unprecedented heights of third in the championship. He said they were a very good fielding side. Also, there was stability of personnel. Only 14 men played all summer, one of whom was Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie who played just once. The match he remembered most was against Yorkshire at Bradford. Despite the fact that it was played in June, there was a coal fire in the dressing room. There was no sightscreen at the pavilion end and sighting of the ball was made more difficult by the black hats worn by spectators. On the first day, Saturday, Hampshire were dismissed for 234 at tea, with Roy Marshall scoring 52. Our speaker recorded a duck. Yorkshire were 23 for two before rain brought an end to the day's play. It then rained all day on Sunday. With the wicket being uncovered, Yorkshire were shot out for 62 on a drying wicket on Monday, Peter Sainsbury taking five wickets (for 19) and Roy Marshall three (for 6) with his quickish off-breaks. Following on, the county dismissed their opponents for 119. Sainsbury took another four wickets (for 43) and Marshall six (for 44). Yorkshire's top scorer was Billy Sutcliffe, whom Alan Rayment caught just behind square, diving to hold on to the ball from a full-blooded sweep off Marshall. Peter Sainsbury dismissed Len Hutton twice during the day. It was Hampshire's first win in Yorkshire since 1932. He could not remember a man as joyous and ecstatic as Desmond Eagar afterwards. He detailed 12th man Henry Horton to organise beer, Guinness, gin and whisky in the dressing room, and wine in the hotel. It proved to be a toxic mixture for the normally non-drinking side. At 10.30 Mervyn Burden, Horton and Alan Rayment took Henry's car, a Morris Minor with a split windscreen, to Harry Ramsden's fish and chip shop. The

result was predictable. They became very ill. Two men were unfit to drive the long and tortuous journey home. It was before the days of motorways.

He then recalled the return match at Bournemouth a few weeks later. On that occasion, Johnny Wardle, who had missed the encounter at Bradford, took nine wickets, and Ray Illingworth seven, as Yorkshire ran out winners on another spin bowlers' wicket by 96 runs. However, it was the dismissal of Len Hutton in the first innings that our speaker remembered most. He caught his hero at point – a dolly catch – off Derek Shackleton in the first over. It was a tired stroke by a tired man, still exhausted after leading England to victory in the Ashes series in Australia in the previous winter. It proved to be Hutton's last championship match (*Editor's note: he was ct Harrison b Marshall 2 in the second innings*).

Alan Rayment has never been afraid to tell a tale against himself and he recounted a fixture at Taunton. He dropped Harold Gimblett in the first over; so hard did the Somerset opener hit the ball, that it went through his hands of mid-off. Gimblett went on to score a century. In the second innings, he was on 94 when Eagar invited Rayment to bowl. His first ball disappeared out of the ground and into the river Tone. In 2008, whilst our speaker was on a visit to the ground with Dorset Cricket Society, a builder found the alleged ball and handed it to him.

He also recalled a brilliant century by Neil Harvey for the Australians in 1953. It was a diabolical surface, the top having come off the wicket after the third ball. He recalled that he was living at the top of Hill Lane in Southampton at the time. He cycled to the ground and left his bike chained at the back of the pavilion for each day's play.

He ended by touching on his book "*Punchy Through The Covers*". He wrote an outline in Malibu in 1987 but did not pick it up again until 2004. He was grateful to Stephen Chalke for advice and commented that he signed several copies, with Stephen present, at the Grosvenor Hotel in Stockbridge. John Barclay did similarly for his book "*Lost in the Long Grass*" at the same time.

HCS PLAYER OF THE YEAR 2013 MICHAEL CARBERRY

HCS members voted Michael Carberry as their Player of the Year for 2013 by an overwhelming margin. He becomes the first player to win the award three times, the previous occasions being in 2007 and 2009. An essay on Michael Carberry's rise to international cricket was included in last October's Newsletter.

Five players have won the award twice: Chris Smith (1983 and 1991), Mark Nicholas (1985 and 1995), Robin Smith (1988 and 1989), Shaun Udal (1993 and 2002) and Dimitri Mascarenhas (1998 and 2004).

HAMPSHIRE'S ROAD TO WAR 1914

Hampshire's season of 100 years ago was the most successful in their history up to that time. They won 13 of their 28 championship matches to finish fifth in the table. It was not until 41 years later, in 1955, that they bettered that position (third) and surpassed the number of victories (16). Also, their four defeats remained the lowest they suffered until the championship year of 1973 when, of course, they went through the year unbeaten.

The county won seven of their first thirteen matches and lost only one; they endured a sticky patch in mid-summer losing three times, but at the end of the season with Britain already at war, they won five of their last six games.

In a summer of blissful sunshine, Philip Mead finished third in the national batting averages (2374 runs for Hampshire @ 53.95), behind the two Jacks, Hearne of Middlesex and the immortal Hobbs of Surrey. Only Hobbs scored more runs in the season. Alec Kennedy took 160 wickets - a Hampshire record at the time and Arthur Jaques 117. From a cricket viewpoint, it was therefore a most memorable summer. Unfortunately, the events in July and August removed the shine from their achievements. Indeed, it is fair to state that they have never been properly acknowledged.

Two servicemen who prospered in 1913, Lionel Tennyson and Cecil Abercrombie, were absent but their non-availability was not due to war preparations, but normal service duties. Tennyson, the designated vice-captain, had been informed by his commanding officer that if he was to realise his promotion aspirations as an army officer, he could not combine soldiering and first-class cricket. In the event, he was released to play three matches for the county in July and August. Abercrombie, a Royal Naval officer, was unable to play at all.

The revelation of the season was Arthur Jaques. Born in Shanghai and aged 26, he was a tall (six foot three inches) and powerfully built right-arm fast-medium bowler. His in swingers were aimed at leg stump to a packed leg side field. It was a revolutionary tactic, and one that he seems to have forged for himself. He captained the county in their first four matches (three in the championship) in EM Sprot's absence and went on to skipper the side in 11 matches in all, of which eight were won and only one lost. He obviously possessed a fine cricket brain. Other captains whilst Sprot was unable to play were JG Greig (twice), an army officer, and HC McDonnell (twice), a schoolmaster at Winchester College. Jaques led the side in those last six matches of the season referred to above (the other, incidentally, was drawn). Was he Hampshire's greatest captain?

His bowling strategy was widely criticised at the time because it cramped the batsman. It just wasn't regarded as cricket. However, Jaques was often irresistible. He twice took 14 wickets in an innings; against Derbyshire at Basingstoke (8-67 and 6-38) and Somerset at Bath (6-33 and 8-21). In the latter match, he and Kennedy (6-64 match) bowled unchanged throughout as Somerset were swept aside for just 83 and 38. Jaques earned selection for

the Gentlemen at Lord's. Though his county colleague, CB Fry (who himself played only four matches for Hampshire in the year) was captain, he bowled only three overs in the first innings as Frank Foster (five wickets) and Johnnie Douglas (13) dominated proceedings. The Gentlemen won by 134 runs.

On Sunday 28 June Archduke Ferdinand and his wife Sophie were assassinated by the Bosnian Serb nationalists, Gavrilo Princip, in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo.

Hampshire were in the midst of their encounter with Worcestershire at Dudley. On the preceding day, the latter had amassed 474 for six, with Fred Bowley plundering 276 in 290 minutes. His innings remained the highest for Worcestershire until surpassed by Glenn Turner in 1982. The home side progressed to 493 on Monday but a fine double by Jimmy Stone – 83 and 100 not out – secured a draw for Hampshire.

For just under a month cricket progressed as if it was a normal summer but events took a sinister turn on the first day of Hampshire's match with Surrey at Portsmouth on 23 July. *Austria-Hungary issued an ultimatum to Serbia as Vienna demanded that its own representatives be allowed to investigate Serbian nationalist conspirators behind the assassination of the Archduke. Also, the Irish republican issue was gathering pace in Dublin. On 26 July, the day after completion of the match at Portsmouth, members of the Irish Citizen Army and British troops clashed over weapons smuggled into Ireland by Roger Casement and Erskine Childers. Three civilians were killed and 38 wounded.*

Hampshire's next game (a draw) at Leyton did not start until 30 July. *Two days earlier, Austria-Hungary had declared war on Serbia. On 1 August, the last day of the match, Germany declared war on Russia. It also signed a Treaty with Turkey to bring Turkey into the war.*

By the time Hampshire completed their following match with Middlesex at Southampton on 5 August, Britain was at war. *On 2 August, Russia had invaded Germany in the east. A day later, Germany declared war on France. On 4 August Britain announced it was at war after German troops entered neutral Belgium. War was declared at 11pm following the expiry of an ultimatum. Half an hour later, Nigel Haig and EL Kidd resumed the Middlesex innings at the start of the second day. That match was also drawn.*

On 6 August Austria-Hungary declared war on Russia. Two days later the British Expeditionary Force landed in France. On 10 August France declared war on Austria-Hungary and two days later Britain declared war on Austria-Hungary.

Hampshire felt the impact of the declaration of war immediately. On 6 August during the first day's play against Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge, their South African (though English-born) Cambridge student Basil Melle was called upon to join his regiment. He left instantly. He had already bowled six overs but Jimmy Stone was allowed to replace him as a full substitute. Interestingly

Melle was playing instead of Jaques. The home side enjoyed much the better of the match and would certainly have won had play not been possible on the final day.

The match between Somerset and Northamptonshire scheduled for 10-12 August was cancelled. All Surrey's matches were transferred to Lord's as The Oval had been requisitioned for military purposes. Kent's match against Worcestershire at Dover was transferred to Canterbury.

Hampshire also had to implement alternative arrangements. The United Services Ground at Portsmouth was similarly required by the services and the county's forthcoming matches against Warwickshire and Lancashire were transferred to Southampton and Bournemouth respectively. Against a backdrop of dwindling attendances Hampshire completed their programme, though cricket had long lost any pretence to normality. *Gloucestershire could only field ten men against Surrey and the Scarborough Festival was cancelled.*

On the evening of Sunday 23 August, Lionel Tennyson left for France with 120 riflemen from Southampton Docks only to be delayed by thick fog off the Isle of Wight. He eventually arrived at Le Havre on the following afternoon. It was the first day of Hampshire's match with Lancashire at Bournemouth. It is unlikely he would have known that Alec Bowell was 194 not out overnight, and went on to 204 on Tuesday. By 5 September, three days after Hampshire's final match against Kent at Dean Park, he was engaged in battle in the retreat from Mons.

In that match against Kent, Hampshire's match winner was Arthur Jaques. Captaining the side, he took six for 55 and three for 31. He was killed in action at Bois Hugo, Loos, in France little more than a year later, on 27 September 1915. His brother lost his life with him. Another member of that side, ACP Arnold, who scored 54, also did not survive the war. He was killed in France in July 1916. Of the eleven men who played for Hampshire in that match, only three were on the field when the county played their next match in June 1919: Philip Mead, George Brown and Alec Kennedy. Lionel Tennyson, who somehow survived the war, was captain. His fellow comrade-in-arms in 1913, Cecil Abercrombie, had been killed at the Battle of Jutland in 1916 when his ship, HMS Defence, was lost with all hands. Those evocative final sunlit days of the pre-War Golden Age must have seemed a very distant memory.

The editor profoundly thanks Andrew Renshaw for assistance with information for this article. Members will be aware that Andrew will be speaking at our Meeting on 5 March at Test Valley Golf Club on his forthcoming publication: Wisden Book on First World War Cricketers. Andrew has amassed an incredible welter of information on the subject and it is sure to be a most interesting evening.

ASHES THOUGHTS

At the time of writing, Australia are 4-0 ahead in the Ashes series. A whitewash seems inevitable. The outcome should not really have come as any surprise. The England three-nil win last summer was misleading; towards the end of the rubber, the momentum was with Australia. History also provides a lesson. After the 2005 and 2010/11 wins, England gave lack lustre performances in Pakistan and at home to South Africa. Though they managed to draw the ensuing series in South Africa (one-all) after the 2009 series, the home side were only one wicket away from winning the two drawn tests. At least, though, England showed some fight in that series. It appears, however, that those teams were exhausted physically and mentally after those Ashes series and had little left in the tank. It has obviously been the same in the past few weeks.

At the start of the series, it was reported that England were shell-shocked by Mitchell Johnson after the first innings at Brisbane. Instead of bowling to the left and to the right, he bowled very straight and very fast. The mental scars were prevalent throughout. England's batsmen have also shown a startling frailty against pace in the last three years. They were decimated by Dale Steyn and Morne Morkel at Johannesburg in January 2010 and by Johnson himself at Perth at the end of that year. The current series has evoked memories of those catastrophic series against the West Indies in the 1980s, especially in the way that the tail made no contribution at all with the bat. When England were five wickets down, they weren't far from being all out. However, the concern was that the failure was collective. Batsmen, bowlers and wicketkeeper were systematically dismantled by the Australians. The catching was also horribly fallible. England have much repair work to undertake and notwithstanding the rhetoric in the English press about the strength of the reserves, it could be a very long job indeed. The worry is that the players in this series are significantly better than those in the Lions squad. At the current time, Graeme Swann is as difficult to replace as was Shane Warne to the Australians when he retired.

The series should not detract from the Australian performance. With bat and especially ball they were disciplined; it is a pity that discipline did not extend to the spirit in which the game was played. The behaviour of some of their players in the first two tests had no place on a cricket field. All teams should remember that their behaviour will be copied by the youth of the day. Who would wish to continue umpiring at club level if such conduct is replicated?

Part of the blame must rest with the ECB and the Australian Boards. Ashes series provide the most intensive cricket. To play a series within a few weeks of the previous one gave no time for festering tensions and sores to heal. And we have to go through it all again in about 18 months time in 2015. The England side may well be very different then.