

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

NEWSLETTER 334 – March 2014 (1)

Wednesday 5 March 2014 – Meeting

The Society is very pleased to welcome **ANDREW RENSHAW** to tonight's meeting. Andrew is a Society member. He was born in Leicester in May 1947. After his father, a priest, was killed in a road accident in the city in 1955, he went to St. Edmund's School, Canterbury (formerly known as the Clergy Orphan School), where Robin Jackman was a contemporary. The family moved to Haywards Heath and Andrew supported Sussex – his heroes were Ted Dexter and Jim Parks – and saw them win the first one-day final at Lord's in 1963. He studied sociology at Essex University where he captained the cricket team in his second year and met his wife Rosalind. Her family had founded Yateley Manor Prep School and because of this connection they moved to Yately and Andrew joined Eversley CC in 1972; a hip operation forced his retirement after 25 years as a player, but today he is president of the club. Since 1976 they have lived on a small farm in Winchfield, where Andrew is chairman of the parish council.

He worked as a journalist firstly on the Aldershot News and in the 1980s was Editor of the Basingstoke Gazette. It was at this time that thanks to Frank Bailey's encouragement Andrew started to edit the Hampshire Members' Newsletter; he was then elected to the committee and also took on editorship of the Handbook, producing 14 editions from 1995 to 2008, plus the "missing" 1954 Handbook which appeared, in the style of its time, 45 years late. This was described by Wisden editor Matthew Engel as being perhaps "the most remarkable cricket publication of the year."

For the 1998 Handbook, Andrew wrote an article detailing the Hampshire players who died in the First World War; this resulted in a phone call from military historian Mike Spurrier, and the start of a great friendship. An article in the 2012 Wisden explained how, en route for a day's cricket at Arundel, they had visited the grave in Chichester of Wisden's "Unknown" Cricketer – a boy who had inscribed a copy of a 1912 Wisden, in Andrew's collection, only as "Niel". Having discovered his identity as being 2nd Lt Niel Fagan, who was mortally wounded at the Somme in 1916, aged 20, Andrew was inspired to research *Wisden on the Great War: The Lives of Cricket's Fallen 1914-1918*. This will be published on 8 May, and contains a great deal of fascinating new information about the 1,800 men whose obituaries appeared in Wisden during the war years. Since Hampshire lost 24 men who had played first-class cricket – more than any other county – there are many stories to tell.

Wednesday 8 January 2014 Report

Dave Allen and Alan Edwards talked on various aspects associated with Hampshire's 150th Anniversary. Alan began by giving a synopsis of those eleven men who played in the inaugural match in 1864 which was against Sussex at The Antelope Ground on 7 and 8 July. That team was John Lord (a Tasmanian), Charles Lucas, Henry Holmes, Henry Frere, Revd Charles Ridding, George and Edward Ede (still the only twins to play in the same side for Hampshire), William Humphrey, George Ubsdell and Samson Tubb. His researches, which he hopes will be published during the summer, have taken him in many unexpected directions about 19th century England, and indeed further afield.

Dave Allen's forte was the modern era and he contrasted his approach to Alan's. Dave's books were based on interviews with players rather than archival material. He wondered where Hampshire's future historians would come from as, due to the working patterns of modern life, it was difficult for people to spare the time for such research.

He also gave an update on the proposed development of a museum in the Shane Warne Stand which he hopes will be opened in July.

Wednesday 5 February 2014 – Report

Andy Murtagh thoroughly entertained his audience at the Ageas Bowl. He commented that after retiring from teaching after 30 years at Malvern College, he sought another career in a different field and decided upon writing. He has now written two books, on George Chesterton (see previous Newsletter) and Tom Graveney. Through the former, he met Graveney, who agreed to him telling his story. The book was being launched at Lord's in the ensuing weekend.

Having completed these two biographies, he then wondered about a third subject, and, as a result of a discussion at a dinner party at which he was asked who was the greatest batsman he ever saw, he alighted upon Barry Richards. The pair roomed together in their playing days. Andy Murtagh therefore approached his former team mate who cautiously agreed to collaborate.

Our speaker's talk therefore majored on the great South African opening batsman. It was evident that he had amassed a wealth of information from interviews with his ex-Hampshire colleagues and luminaries such as Graeme Pollock, Vincent van der Bijl, Greg Chappell and Mushtaq Mohammad. He had begun by talking to Martin Tyler, Richard's ghost writer for his autobiography *Attack to Win*. He and Tyler had played together for Surrey 2nd XI at the start of his career. Our speaker knew Pollock, van der Bijl and other South Africans from the winters he spent playing there. There were stories aplenty. The book is bound to evoke fond memories for those who saw Richards effortlessly destroying bowling attacks in England, South Africa and Australia. Our speaker gave a comprehensive account of his upbringing, schooldays, his early appearance in England for South African schools and

Gloucestershire, his only test series against Australia in 1969-70, South Africa's cancelled tours to England in 1970 and Australia in 1971-72, and his extraordinary season for South Australia in 1970-71. He recounted how many of the conversations with his subject, who has now returned to live in South Africa, were via Skype.

MORE ON 1914

Alec Kennedy was the first bowler to take 100 wickets in the season. He reached the target on 10 July in the match against Gloucestershire at Bristol.

In the above match, Kennedy (4 for 19 and 6 – 36) and Jack Newman (6-14 and 4-55) took all the Gloucestershire wickets. They hustled out the home side for 34 and 117. Hampshire made 216, with Philip Mead making light of the difficult conditions by scoring 104 (12 fours) in 150 minutes. He batted on the first day, during which 20 wickets fell. The next highest score in the match was TC Langdon's 39 in Gloucestershire's second innings. Arthur Jaques was absent as he was playing for the Gentlemen against the Players at The Oval.

KYLE ABBOTT

Hampshire's overseas registration for the forthcoming season is Kyle Abbott, a South African right arm fast-medium bowler.

KYLE JOHN ABBOTT was born in Empangeni, Natal on 18 June 1987. He made his first-class debut for KwaZulu-Natal in February 2009. His record was one of gradual improvement, culminating in a memorable season last winter (2012/13), in which he took 65 wickets (avge 14.29) and made a sensational test debut against Pakistan. Coming in as a replacement for the injured Jacques Kallis in the third test at Centurion Park, he captured seven for 29 in 11.4 overs in the first innings. He then claimed two for 39 in 17 overs in the second. It was a very impressive performance indeed. A former South African bowling coach has described him as "combining good pace with control and some swing". In the Daily Echo, Neil McKenzie commented that he bowls "an English length".

It was in 2012/13 that he also claimed career best bowling figures of eight for 45 (12 – 96 match) for Dolphins against Cape Cobras at Newlands. He was also selected for South Africa A against their counterparts from Australia and India in July and August 2013, but was unable to reproduce his test form (seven wickets @ 57.28).

In the current South African season he has taken 22 wickets (avge. 13.09). In his last match towards the end of February, he returned figures of five for 60 and seven for 65 against the luckless Cape Cobras at Paarl. This earned him a call-up to the South African squad for the deciding test against Australia at Newlands. In 47 first-class matches to date (28.2.14) he has taken 179 wickets at the impressive average of 21.23.

He is reputed to be a useful batsman, his career figures being 1032 runs at an average of 18.42. He has made four fifties, the highest of which was 80 for Dolphins against Titans at Benoni in 2010/11. He claimed five for 53 in the same match. His strike rate in one-day and Twenty20 matches is a healthy 100.31 and 105.55 respectively. He has played one Twenty20 match for South Africa against Pakistan, also at Centurion Park immediately after his test appearance.

He gained experience of English conditions in club cricket prior to starting his first-class career. In 2006 and 2007, he played for Clevedon in the West England Premier League. In both years he played 2nd XI cricket for Somerset. Interestingly, he made his debut against Hampshire Seconds at Basingstoke. Current Hampshire players to appear in that match were Jimmy Adams, James Tomlinson and David Balcombe.

OTHER HAMPSHIRE SIGNINGS

Besides Kyle Abbott, Hampshire have made two further signings during the close season:-

JOE GATTING

JOE STEPHEN GATTING was born in Brighton on 25 November 1987. He is the son of Steve Gattling who played in an FA Cup Final for Brighton and Hove Albion in 1983, and the nephew of Mike Gattling. His father also played for Middlesex 2nd XI.

He started his sporting career as a professional footballer. Like his father, he also played for Brighton as a forward before his release in 2008/2009. He had made his first team debut against Southampton.

He then turned his attentions to cricket. Initially, he was startlingly successful. A tall, well built right-handed batsman, he scored a century for Sussex on debut against Surrey in a one-day tournament in Dubai. He then made 152 off 156 balls on his first-class debut against Cambridge UCCE at Fenner's. This score remains the highest of his career. However, he has since struggled to reproduce that impressive start and hold down a regular place in the Sussex batting line-up. In 35 matches in five seasons he has scored 1376 runs (avg 29.91). He has, though a championship century under his belt – 116 not out at Worcester in 2011. His other hundred was 106 against Oxford UCCE in The Parks in the same year.

His one century in List A matches was 122 against Worcestershire at Horsham in 2011. He is a batsman who likes to score his runs quickly. Hampshire are undoubtedly aiming to harness his attacking instincts to better effect.

WILL SMITH

Many who watched county cricket in the 1970s and 80s will remember a succession of players who made the journey from the north-east down the M1 to play county cricket. Among them were Geoff Cook and Peter Willey. Will Smith travelled in the opposite direction, with a stopover in Nottinghamshire en route.

WILLIAM REW SMITH was born in Luton, Bedfordshire on 28 September 1982. Educated at Bedford School, he first played in senior cricket for Bedfordshire and Nottinghamshire 2nd XI in 1999. His latter debut was at the age of 16 years 309 days. He continued to play for the minor county until 2002, in which year he made his first appearance for Notts, against West Indies A at Trent Bridge, scoring 38 not out. He then broadened his experience by representing Durham UCCE from 2003 to 2005. He was captain in 2004-05 and made his maiden century with 156 against Somerset at Taunton in the second of those years. Though a bit player in Nottinghamshire's championship triumph in 2005, and scoring his championship century towards the end of the following summer—141 against Middlesex at Lord's, he moved to Durham in 2007. He was to become a regular in their championship winning sides of 2008, 2009, when he was captain, and 2013. In the first of those years he made his highest score of 201 not out against Surrey at Guildford, and averaged a season's best 51.38.

His most memorable year must have been in 2009 when he led Durham to their second championship. Wisden commented that "by throwing his heart and soul into the captaincy, he sacrificed some of his 2008 batting form". Nevertheless, he scored a creditable 834 runs (avge 37.90), including 150 against Hampshire at the Ageas Bowl. However, his batting fell away at the start of 2010 and after Durham suffered their first defeat in 24 months at Trent Bridge, he stood down by "mutual agreement". Wisden mentioned "He later said that he wished it to be known that he wasn't a quitter". He then played Twenty20, the odd one-day game, batting down the order, but mostly 2nd XI cricket for the rest of the summer.

To demonstrate his strength of character, he returned in 2011 to enjoy a season's best of 978 runs (avge 39.12) including three centuries. Only Dale Blenkenstein scored more runs for the county in the year. After another difficult year in 2012, he enjoyed another fine summer (889 runs @ 32.92) last season.

A right-handed batsman, who is five feet nine inches tall and slimly built, he joins Hampshire with a record of 6004 runs (avge 31.27) and 14 centuries in 122 matches. He has held 67 catches and taken 15 wickets (avge 51.20) with his off-breaks. He has also scored two centuries in List A matches, the highest of which was 120 not out against Surrey at Chester-le-Street in his final one-day appearance for Durham. Batting at six, he celebrated his farewell by making his runs off only 79 balls and striking five sixes.

MORE WINTER THOUGHTS

About an hour after the February Newsletter was delivered to the printers, Andy Flower resigned as England's cricket coach. It was a sad end to a tenure of high achievement. Speculation inevitably followed with indecent haste about his successor. Ashley Giles seemed to be the media favourite and yet, after the Ashes series, he presided over another walloping at the hands of Australia in both the one-day (1-4) and T20 (0-3) series. He hardly appears to be an ideal candidate.

Kevin Pietersen's exclusion from all England squads followed soon afterwards. Despite being England's leading run scorer in the tests in Australia, the manner of many of his dismissals was clearly a factor in the decision. Whilst the editor has never been a Pietersen apologist-indeed far from it-it feels somewhat uncomfortable that England's "senior players" seemingly played a prime role in initiating his removal. That fact might say as much about them, as it does about Pietersen. Only Stuart Broad did himself credit in Australia. All the other senior players were found wanting. How many of them will, or even should, be picked again?

Just how good are Australia at the moment? They went to South Africa in February and destroyed South Africa in the first test at Centurion Park, but were then soundly thrashed in the next at Port Elizabeth. The result of the final test will be determined on the day of this meeting. Thankfully, the Australians behaved themselves in the first two tests.

DON BRADMAN AND 334

As this Newsletter is number 334, mention must be made of the innings of the same figure by Don Bradman at Leeds in 1930. It was the highest individual test innings at the time. He made 309 on the first day, which is still the most number of runs made by a batsman in a test match in a day. Neville Cardus wrote: *Bradman announced his right to mastership in a few swift moments. He made 72 runs during his first hour at the wicket, giving to us every bit of cricket except the leg glance.....The crowd once applauded Maurice Tate because he bowled a maiden to Bradman.* George Duckworth, England's wicketkeeper, said that after the first ball (when Tate nearly bowled him) "*I might just as well have been keeping wicket sitting back in a deckchair*".

Next month's Newsletter will include a biography on Hampshire's new coach, Dale Blenkenstein, and a few words on Glenn Maxwell, who has been signed for the T20 tournament.

© Copyright Alan Edwards 2014 (NewsletterEditor@HantsCricSoc.org.uk)