

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY
Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

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PETER SAINSBURY TRIBUTE

Photograph by
Innes Marlow

Members will be aware that Peter Sainsbury died on 12 July, aged 80. Few men served Hampshire for so long. As player and then coach he was with Hampshire for a remarkable 38-year period. For a whole generation born in those years following WW2, he was a virtual ever-present in their cricket watching lives. He made 758 appearances for Hampshire in first-class and limited overs cricket, a figure exceeded only by David Turner (791).

Peter James Sainsbury was born in Chandlers Ford on 13 June 1934 and attended Bitterne Park School in Southampton. He made his Hampshire debut against Oxford University at The Parks in 1954 whilst on National Service. He had, in fact, been chosen for Hampshire a year earlier but he could not be released from his service duties. From the moment he left the army, until his retirement in 1976, he was a constant presence on the Hampshire scene as the County's first choice all-rounder. He was not a bits and pieces all-rounder; he was the genuine article, a man able to hold down a place as a batsman or bowler. He was a slow left-arm bowler who

teased batsmen with drift, flight and changes of pace, a shrewd middle-order right-handed batsman who was always at his best in a crisis, and a quite magnificent

fielder, particularly at backward short-leg. After his playing days, he was the county's coach until 1991.

He took 102 wickets in his first full season in 1955, during which he performed the distinction of dismissing Len Hutton twice in a day at Bradford on his 21st birthday. In acknowledgement of his feat, the great Yorkshire batsman presented him with the ball and a signed copy of his book *Cricket Is My Life*. He was duly awarded his county cap later on in the season.

At the end of that season he was selected for the England A tour of Pakistan. In an effort to emulate Tony Lock, who was a team-mate on the tour, he came back bowling flatter but without any real increase in spin. Also, during subsequent years, Hampshire gave increasing precedence to their potent pace attack, comprising at various stages Derek Shackleton, Vic Cannings, Malcolm Heath, Butch White and Bob Cottam. The spin bowling was shared between himself, Mervyn Burden and Alan Wassell. By the late 60's, all of these players had left the scene with the exception of Cottam. Hampshire's bowling attack then entered a long transition stage, whereupon Peter Sainsbury therefore had to share a much greater burden of the bowling than hitherto. He then rediscovered the art of flight and became an even better bowler for it.

In 1971, he attained the 100 wicket landmark for the second and final time. It was a marvellous summer for him. He claimed a season's best 107 wickets, took his 1000th wicket for Hampshire, as well as collecting ten wickets in a match on three occasions-the first time he had done so-and returned his career best innings and match figures (eight for 72, and 12 for 127, against Gloucestershire at Portsmouth). Sixty of those wickets came in a purple patch over the last eight matches. He was also second in the national averages, behind Surrey's Geoff Arnold. He also scored 959 runs to miss the double by only 41 runs. It is still the closest any Hampshire player has come to recording the feat since Jim Bailey in 1948.

As if to give credence to the theory that spin bowlers mature with age, he headed the Hampshire bowling averages three times in the last seven years of his career. The first time was in 1971; he then repeated the feat in the championship season of 1973 and his last year, 1976.

His batting improved season by season. He scored his maiden century in 1958-105 at Worcester-and reached 1000 runs for the first time in 1960. He went on to score seven centuries (highest score 163 v Oxford University in The Parks in 1962) and achieve the 1000 run landmark on six occasions (best 1533 in the championship summer of 1961). He also gradually increased the range of his stroke-making and as he reached maturity in the early 60s he always kept the scoreboard ticking over with intelligent placement and quick running between the wickets. These attributes were demonstrated on the final morning of Hampshire's Championship clinching match against Derbyshire in 1961. He (73) and Mike Barnard (61) put on 99 in 68 minutes with a judicious mixture of boundaries and breath-taking running between the wickets to enable Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie to declare. He then took the wicket which decided the Championship when Bob Taylor holed out to Danny Livingstone on the mid-wicket boundary.

He was always at his best when the chips were down. He compiled the last of his seven centuries in that second triumphal summer of 1973. Hampshire's position was precarious when he came to the wicket against Somerset at Taunton. His side were 41 for four, which then became 78 for seven not long afterwards. With David O'Sullivan (45), he added 107 in 49 overs to turn Hampshire's fortunes. After being stuck on 99 for half an hour, he recorded his first century since 1964 and was eventually unbeaten on 120, having been at the wicket for 315 minutes. Towards the end of the summer, he was at the wicket when Hampshire claimed the batting point with which they secured the title, again at Dean Park. He is the only Hampshire player to be a member of two Championship winning sides. In reviewing the 1973 season, *Wisden* commented that at the age of 39, "he had lost little in enthusiasm and fitness and was also an ideal first lieutenant". He was also one of *Wisden's* Cricketers of the Year.

It should also be recorded that he was a member of sides that finished second in the Championship on two occasions (1958 and 1974), and third twice (1955 and 1975). No other Hampshire player remotely approaches these landmarks. It emphasises just what a fine player he was, and his critical influence to the team effort.

His 56 catches in 1957 and career haul of 668 catches are both Hampshire records which will surely stand the test of time. He was regarded as one of the best of all short leg fieldsmen. He was, though, a fine fielder anywhere. Of medium height and trimly built he moved athletically and fluently over the ground away from the wicket.

He was one of cricket's most notable "nearly men". Only 20 players have completed their careers with 20,000 runs and 1,000 wickets. Peter Sainsbury was the only member of that group never to have played Test cricket. A panel of experts commissioned by *Wisden Cricket Monthly* named him in their best post-war team of county cricketers never to play for England. He was originally chosen for the 1958/59 tour of Australia but, upon overnight reflection, the selectors changed their minds and Gloucestershire's John Mortimer travelled instead. He therefore had to settle for that controversial England A tour of Pakistan in 1955/56 and two appearances as 12th man against New Zealand in 1958. He gained some reward at towards the end of his career when he was selected for an International Wanderers tour of South Africa.

He was one of the few of the old school to adapt to one-day cricket and was an integral member of Hampshire's first one-day trophy side, the John Player League in 1975. He demonstrated the value of spin bowling in limited overs cricket from the outset. He still holds the record for the best bowling figures and all-round performance in List A matches when he scored 76 and then took seven for 30 against Norfolk at Southampton in a Gillette Cup Tie in 1965. Among his victims were future TMS commentator Henry Blofeld and England legend Bill Edrich. He naturally won the man of the match award and did so again in the following tie against Kent at Portsmouth, during which he scored another 70 runs, took three for 45 in his allotted 13 overs and claimed a catch. The editor remembers that catch vividly. Brian Luckhurst turned Jimmy Gray off his legs; most of the spectators looked towards the long leg boundary. However, Peter Sainsbury had intercepted the ball and pocketed it with the minimum of fuss. It was all so typical of the man.

There was never any ostentation. In the first John Player League season in 1969 he took 28 wickets, the most by any Hampshire player. That tally remained a County record until Shaun Udal, another spin bowler, took 31 wickets in 1992. In the winter of 2012 Peter Sainsbury was named in a best Hampshire Eleven since the introduction of one-day cricket in 1963. A Lord's Final eluded him but he was Hampshire's coach when the County won the Benson & Hedges Cup in 1988 and was in his final days in office in the 1991 Nat West Trophy triumph. It was a fitting way in which he to end of his cricket career.

In all forms of cricket he scored 21,655 runs and took 1447 wickets for the County. By any test, Peter Sainsbury was a considerable cricketer. His all-round talent will be remembered with much nostalgia and affection.

MORE ON PETER SAINSBURY

Whilst at Bitterne Park School, he represented Southampton Schools, Hampshire Schools and was included in the South XI against the North.

He first played for Hampshire 2nd XI, against Kent 2nd XI at Broadstairs on 21 June 1950 in a *Minor Counties Championship match*. He was still therefore only 15 years old. He did not bat (he was listed at 10); his inaugural bowling figures were 2-0-3-0 in the Kent second innings.

He made his Hampshire debut against Oxford University on 2 June 1954. Among his opponents were MJK Smith, Colin Cowdrey and the South African JP Fellows-Smith. His bowling figures were 41-16-99-1 and 10-2-38-0. His first wicket was that of JM Allan (also Scotland and Warwickshire), whom he bowled for 118. Batting at 10, he scored 20 not out in his first innings. In the second, he was bowled by Cowdrey for 4. Almost incredibly, the great Kent and England batsman dismissed him again in a county match at Tunbridge Wells 19 years later, in 1973. On that occasion, he was caught by Asif Iqbal at slip. Cowdrey bowled leg-breaks.

He played two first-class matches for Combined Services in 1954, against Pakistan and Yorkshire. In the first match he claimed 4-37 in 26 overs in the second innings. In the days of National Service, it is not surprising that the Services fielded strong teams. Among his team-mates were Peter Richardson and Martin Horton (Worcestershire) JT Murray (Middlesex), Peter Marner (Lancashire), Doug Padgett (Yorkshire) and Terry Spencer (Leicestershire).

On his Championship debut against Nottinghamshire in 1954, he was out for a prolonged duck in the first innings, batting to orders. Happily, in the second, he made an unbeaten 69, adding 90 for the eighth wicket with Desmond Eagar. Hampshire were 83 for seven at the start of the alliance. Hampshire supporters had already received a foretaste of the characteristic mark he was to leave on matches in the ensuing years.

On the England A tour to Pakistan in 1955-56, he played in two of the four representative matches against the full Pakistan side. His tour figures were nine matches, 130 runs (avge. 21.66), 16 wickets (avge. 16.75) and five catches. In those

representative matches, he returned figures of 41-22-52-0 at Lahore and 10.3-5-11-1 and 13-6-22-2 at Peshawar. He certainly did not let England down.

His only other tour was with a very strong International Wanderers team to South Africa in 1974/75. He played in two matches. After a quiet game against Rhodesia at Salisbury he achieved figures of 17-11-18-1 and 14-4-48-2 against Transvaal at Johannesburg. His team-mates were Glenn Turner, Eddie Barlow, John Shepherd, Graeme Pollock, Younis Ahmed, Ian Chappell, Tony Greig, Barry Richards, Graham McKenzie, Graham Roope, Brian Close, Roger Tolchard, and Gloucestershire's Tony Brown. Only Brown and Peter Sainsbury never played in a test match.

He was unfortunate that both of his tours were controversial. The Pakistan trip raised a diplomatic incident regarding umpire Idris Begh whom some of the players dowsed with water in a prank that misfired badly. The Rhodesian leg of the South African tour was regarded as "sanctions busting" though none of the players realised at the time!

HAMPSHIRE'S ALL-ROUNDERS WHO WAS THE BEST?

Where does Peter Sainsbury rank in the pantheon of Hampshire all-rounders? The accepted criteria for assessing the quality of all-rounders is the difference between their batting and bowling averages, where the former is the higher. As far as the Editor is aware, this exercise has never been undertaken for Hampshire players. The analysis below has therefore been compiled on the basis of those men who played 100 matches for the county, and scored 5,000 runs and took 300 wickets in first-class cricket:

	Batting	Bowling	Difference
MD Marshall	25.20	18.64	+6.56
TE Jesty	31.79	28.62	+3.17
CB Llewellyn	27.58	24.66	+2.92
PJ Sainsbury	27.03	24.14	+2.89
JR Gray	30.83	30.02	+0.81
KD James	31.01	32.47	-1.46
J Bailey	24.93	26.97	-2.04
AS Kennedy	18.51	21.16	-2.65
AD Mascarenhas	25.07	28.22	-3.15
WLC Creese	24.01	27.78	-3.77
D.Shackleton	14.43	18.23	-3.80
JA Newman	20.90	24.82	-3.92
SD Udal	22.95	32.12	-9.17
GS Boyes	14.42	23.96	-9.54
NG Cowley	22.57	32.89	-10.32
G Hill	18.13	29.92	-11.79

It will be noted that three of the five men "in credit" were Hampshire born and the other two were outstanding overseas players. It is indisputable that Peter Sainsbury was in the very top rank of all-rounders to have played for the County.

Perhaps the most interesting statistic concerns Kevan James. The current Radio Solent Sports Journalist was often never quite sure of his place in the side.

SOCIETY MATTERS

The Society's first meeting of its new winter season will be held on WEDNESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER at the Ageas Bowl starting at 8pm.

Enclosed with this Newsletter are:-

- 1. The Society's Programme Card for 2014/15. The Society will be holding its first afternoon meeting - at Test Valley Golf Club on Wednesday 12 November, starting at 2.30pm. This is a "trial" to establish the potential demand for afternoon meetings. Members are encouraged to take a meal at Test Valley Golf Club beforehand to help make the occasion a success for both our hosts and the Society. For Sat Nav purposes the post code for each venue is included on the first two dates.**
- 2. A pro forma for subscriptions and nomination for HCS Player of the Year. Subscriptions remain unchanged. The pro forma should be returned to the Society's Hon. Treasurer - John Grapes, Iona, Pooks Green, Marchwood, Southampton, SO40 4WP.**
- 3. Outline biographies of this winter's speakers.**

At a recent meeting of the Society's committee, it was decided to re-establish a fourth meeting at Test Valley Golf Club for the 2015/16 season. This means that from 2015/16, the Society's meetings will return to the former pattern of four meetings each at the Ageas Bowl and Test Valley Golf Club. It is not possible to implement the changes for 2014/15 as venues and speakers have already been booked.

NEW VICE-CHAIRMAN AND HON. TREASURER

At the AGM, Gary Lane was voted as the Society's new Vice-Chairman. Gary has been a Society member for many years and is a frequent attender of meetings. He originally joined the Committee at the start of the last winter season. John Grapes, who became Hon. Treasurer temporarily in September 2013 was confirmed in the role on a permanent basis.

WEBSITE

The Society's website is www.HantsCricSoc.org.uk. The website is updated continually by Andy and Sue Ray, and will keep members up-to-date with developments concerning meetings, speakers and other Society matters.

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