

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

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MEETINGS

Wednesday 25 March 2015 – Meeting

The Society is very pleased to welcome the Reverend Canon **TIM BILES** to this evening's meeting. His talk will be on Sir Donald Bradman, for whom he once worked. Our speaker is a published author on theological matters and has also written a book on his subject this evening.

Tim Biles is the fifth member of the clergy to address the Society. His predecessors were the Reverend Mike Vockins (November 1983 and April 2011), Reverend Andrew Wingfield-Digby (September 1990), Reverend Malcolm Limmer (January 2005) and Reverend Alan Haydock (March 2009).

Wednesday 4 March 2015 – Report

After the Society's AGM (see below), members spent a riveting evening in the company of Ronald Allison. He recounted his early cricket memories. He was born in Weymouth, where his father was a schoolmaster at the town's Grammar School. His father was an umpire in village cricket; our speaker told of an incident where the bowler removed his cap and sweater and handed it to his father and then his glass eye! Allison Sr, fainted after which his mother, who had been alerted, interrupted making the sandwiches for tea and ran to the wicket still holding the breadknife. Almost inevitably, with the glass eye in the same pocket as the marbles, a seven ball over ensued. Ronald Allison first became a Hampshire member in 1946. His father became a friend of Desmond Eagar. Later, he (Ronald) and Desmond's son, Patrick, became friends. He remembered watching a Dominion XI, whose team included Keith Miller, playing at Dean Park in 1945. The first county match he saw was Hampshire's first after the war, against Worcestershire at Southampton. He still remembered the Hampshire team: Arnold, McCorkell, Holt, Eagar, Bailey, Rogers, Herman, Dean, Hill, Knott and George Heath. He fondly remembered Leo Harrison in his early years when he was a wonderful cover fieldsman.

He had taken four great institutions as his theme. The first was cricket. He then moved onto provincial newspapers. After National Service, he worked for the Hampshire Chronicle for five years. It was generally boring but he learnt the important virtues of accuracy and getting the facts right.

He then started his career with the third institution, the BBC, first as a local radio broadcaster. One of his first assignments was to interview people arriving and leaving Southampton on the great liners. He then moved from Southampton to

London as a news broadcaster; his colleagues were Robert Dougall, Kenneth Baker, Kenneth Kendall and Michael Aspel. He was proud to have twice presented Grandstand whilst David Coleman was on holiday.

He finished with the monarchy. He became the BBC's Court Correspondent, succeeding Godfrey Winn. He was wary about taking up the offer but required little persuasion once he knew that he would be covering the Queen's visits to the Far East, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Oceania and the West Indies. He was in the role for five years before becoming the Queen's Press Secretary. The highlight was the 1977 Jubilee Year, when he spent 191 nights away from home. He confirmed that Her Majesty possessed an unparalleled knowledge of horseracing.

He later mentioned that because it was so off the cuff he was particularly proud of his coverage of the massacre of the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972.

AGM MATTERS

The main issues arising from the AGM were:-

- Subscriptions to remain unchanged
- The Officers and Committee were returned unopposed. It was agreed that, Ian Henderson, after being proposed and seconded, would fill a long-standing vacancy on the committee
- That another afternoon meeting would be held at Test Valley Golf Club next winter
- That from next winter, the Society would revert to four meetings at Test Valley Golf Club and four at the Ageas Bowl

NEW PLAYERS FOR 2015

At the time of writing (16 March), Hampshire have signed five new players for the coming season:-

JACKSON MUNRO BIRD

Jackson Bird is the county's new overseas registration. His career has been a most interesting roller coaster. A tall (6 feet 4 inches) right-arm fast-medium bowler, he was born in Sydney on 11 December 1986. He was unable to break into the New South Wales side and, therefore, made his way to Tasmania, for whom he made his first-class debut, at the age of almost 25, in November 2011. He made a dramatic impact in his first season, capturing 53 wickets (avge 16.00), as his side reached the Sheffield Shield Final. His tally was the highest by any bowler and he was named Sheffield Shield Player of the Year. He was duly selected for an Australian A tour of England in the forthcoming months, though his performances were low key.

Returning to Australia for their 2012/13 season, he again prospered with 38 wickets (avge 19.28) and played in two tests against Sri Lanka. In the second of those appearances in his native Sydney he was nominated man of the match when he

claimed four for 41 and three for 76. He then toured England again with both Australia A and the full test side in 2013. He performed well away from tests and played in Australia's defeat at Chester-le-Street (two for 58 and nought for 67).

He was injured for much of 2013/14. He has, however, again been productive in recent matches in the current Australian season.

In terms of experience, he is lightly raced having played in only 29 first-class and seven List A matches to date. An Australian friend has informed the Editor that whilst he is not express, he generates both swing and bounce. Due to his injuries, he has slipped down the Australian pace bowling pecking order. He has joined Hampshire for the first part of the season to play in all forms of cricket. What happens if he is omitted from the touring party is unclear. In t20 cricket he has played for the Melbourne Stars with Luke Wright and Kevin Pietersen.

In first-class cricket, he has taken 130 wickets at the most impressive average of 21.36, with best figures of six for 25 against Western Australia at Hobart in November 2012. Cricketinfo states that he studied a Bachelor in Business, specialising in marketing. The website adds that his father keeps tabs on his career by watching live streaming of matches from Romania, where he works as a grip in the film industry. A career batting average of 9.66 suggests he is a natural number eleven, thus giving James Tomlinson the opportunity to be promoted! In 2008, he played for Ealing in the Middlesex Premier League.

ANDRE ADAMS

Another man joining Hampshire for the first half of the season is the New Zealander, ANDRE ADAMS. He will be coming as a Kolpak registration for three months before taking up a coaching role in Auckland, where he was born on 17 July 1975.

He is, of course, an experienced county cricketer. He originally played for Essex from 2004 to 2006, scoring a rapid 124 at Leicester on his debut. This innings remains his highest score in first-class cricket. He joined Nottinghamshire in 2007 and played for them until the end of last season. He was a member of the championship winning side in 2010, and indeed headed the county's bowling charts with 60 wickets. Back injuries in particular have blighted his career, limiting his appearances to a single match against England at Auckland in 2002. He has played in 42 ODI and four t20 matches for his country.

At his best, he is a crowd pleasing explosive cricketer with both bat and ball, with the ability to take wickets in clusters and score runs very quickly.

Right-handed, career aggregates of 44.82 runs (avge 21.44), including three centuries, 683 wickets (avge 23.74) and 111 catches bear testament to his all-round ability.

He underwent knee surgery during the winter but hopes to be fit for the start of the season.

YASIR ARAFAT

Hampshire have signed the Pakistan all-rounder Yasir Arafat for their t20 campaign. He is one of the world's most experienced cricketers in that format. In this country, he has played t20 cricket for five Counties: Sussex, Kent, Surrey, Lancashire and Somerset. He was a member of Sussex's t20 winning side in 2009 and in the recent winter was an integral part of Perth Scorchers' success in the Big Bash League in Australia. He was especially effective with the ball in the last few overs when his wide variations of pace both put a break on the scoring rate, and accounted for wickets. With Michael Carberry as his partner, he also hit the winning run off the last ball when Perth Scorchers defeated Sydney Sixers in the BBL final. His experience has taken him to the Champions League, New Zealand and the Bangladesh Premier League. Given his nationality, he is excluded from playing in the Indian Premier League. He has also played for Pakistan in thirteen t20 matches.

YASIR ARAFAT Satti was born in Rawalpindi on 12 March 1982. He made his first-class debut in Pakistan in 1997/98 and has played in his native country in every season since. He first came to this country to play for Sussex in 2006. They won the county championship in that year, in which he took 41 wickets (avge 24.85), his best tally in an English season. To demonstrate his skill and adaptability with the ball he has taken 50 wickets or more in a Pakistan season on four occasions, including a remarkable tally of 91 in 2001/02. Interestingly, his best bowling figures in first-class matches in this country are six for 86 for Kent against Hampshire at Canterbury in 2008.

He is also a fine strokemaker who has scored centuries in first-class cricket and List A matches. He has played three tests and 11 Limited Overs Internationals for Pakistan. He has also made tours with the test side to India and with Pakistan A to the West Indies and Sri Lanka (twice).

GARETH BERG

GARETH KYLE BERG joins Hampshire from Middlesex on a one-year contract. In 2014, he missed all but one match of the first-class season when he injured his right arm whilst making a routine dive on the boundary. The injury resulted in surgery on his shoulder. The rehabilitation has been lengthy but he is expected to be fit for the start of the season.

Berg was born in Cape Town on 18 January 1981. He is six feet tall and a right-handed all-rounder, who bats in the middle order and bowls medium-fast. He originally arrived in this country to play club cricket and is now England qualified by residency. He did not make his Middlesex debut until he was 26 years old, though he had previously played for Western Province Academy and West Province B. In all first-class cricket, his figures are 1980 runs (avge 29.80) and 140 wickets (avge 32.17). He has scored two centuries, the highest being 130 not out against Leicestershire in 2011. His best bowling figures of six for 58 against Glamorgan at Cardiff were recorded in the same season. It was a landmark summer for both he and Middlesex. He averaged 41.87 with the bat and 19.96 with the ball as his county

were promoted to Division 1 of the championship. His figures indicate he is a very useful performer in limited overs and t20 cricket.

The *Cricket Paper* indicates that he has a tattoo of a Batsman on his left arm. His bat includes a Batman badge. No prizes for guessing his nickname!

A further idiosyncratic feature of his career is that by virtue of holding an Italian passport, he played for Italy in the World t20 qualifiers in both 2012 and 2013.

OWAIS SHAH

The former Middlesex and Essex batsman, OWAIS SHAH, will again play for Hampshire in t20 cricket this summer. He gave good value in the county's early matches in 2014 before making way for overseas registration, Glen Maxwell. He then reappeared on final days at Edgbaston, having flown in from the West Indies for the occasion. He is a very experienced player in t20 cricket. He has appeared in a total of 213 matches in six counties, viz: the Indian Premier League, New Zealand, Australia, Bangladesh, the West Indies and, of course, England. He has also played in 17 t20 international matches for England.

His last first-class appearance was for Essex in 2013, since when he has played in t20 cricket only. Owais Shah was born in Karachi on 22 October 1978.

MATT COLES LEAVES HAMPSHIRE

Members will be aware by now that Matt Coles has left Hampshire by mutual consent, with two years remaining on his contract. The club statement said he had not "settled as he, or we, would have liked". Still aged only 24, he has returned to Kent, which would suggest that his centre of gravity is still located in the hop county.

Since departure, many Hampshire supporters have posted mainly negative comments about him on social media. However, despite his indiscipline with the bat in particular, and off the field, his contribution to Hampshire cricket must not be overlooked. He will be missed. In 20 matches for the county, he took 62 wickets at the impressive average these days of 26.91. He was a potent game changer. Also, despite his bulky build, he possessed a very good fitness record. Last season, he claimed 41 wickets. Hampshire would not have gained promotion without him. His departure leaves a sizeable hole in the strength of their bowling resources.

His best bowling performance was six for 71 (10 for 154 match) against Essex at the Ageas Bowl in the final match of the 2013 season. He signed for Hampshire in the expectation of leading the bowling attack and, opening, he captured 21 wickets @ 24 in his five matches at the end of that season. However, the new ball skill and craft of James Tomlinson and the cutting edge of Kyle Abbott relegated him to first, and sometimes, second change in 2014. His body language suggested some disenchantment. When Abbott returned to South Africa on international duty, though, he then enthusiastically took the new ball again for the final five matches. Hampshire won three of them as he took 20 wickets (avge 25.05).

He always bowled with great heart. When the Hampshire bowlers wilted in the face of the onslaught of the Kent batsmen (the final innings total was 507), and in energy sapping heat at the Ageas Bowl in the penultimate match of the season, he never flagged and was rewarded with figures of four for 84 in 31 always hostile overs.

He was also a constant threat in t20 cricket, though he lost his bearings completely in the t20 semi-final against Lancashire at Edgbaston. It would be invidious, though, to apportion sole blame to him for the loss, as the batting suffered a collective failure.

It is unarguable that his left-handed batting was maddeningly inconsistent as he often fell to skied catches, mainly on the boundary. He just seemed unable to rein in his attacking instincts. Nevertheless, the small ground at Chelmsford was the ideal location for big hitting exploits and he duly raced to fifty off only 18 balls in a televised t20 match there. His highest first-class score was 83 against Leicestershire at the Ageas Bowl in 2014.

It will be more than interesting to see what he achieves in the future. He remains a massively talented cricketer. His captain, Rob Key, is very confident of “managing” him. Joe Denly, who scored such a wonderful century against Hampshire at Canterbury in 2007, has, of course, also returned to Kent after a sobering spell at Middlesex to demonstrate that the oft quoted assumption that cricket is now shadowing the football transfer system is not wholly accurate. If the cases of Coles and Denly are indicative, then many cricketers retain an emotional allegiance to the counties that nurtured them in their formative years.

MORE ON DEAN PARK, BOURNEMOUTH

After some initial uncertainty during the winter, there is the good news that cricket will continue to be played at picturesque Dean Park, at least for the coming summer. Dorset Cricket Board has taken over the running of Dean Park for the season. The highlight will be a t20 match between Hampshire and Dorset as part of the county’s preparations for that competition. The game will be on Bank Holiday Monday 4 May, commencing at 2.30pm. AFC Bournemouth’s manager, Eddie Howe, has agreed to attend and toss the coin for choice of innings.

This game will form the final part of a four-day Festival of Cricket. On Friday 1 May, a Mayor’s Select XI will take on Dorset Ladies, on Saturday Parley CC entertain Wimborne & Colehill in the Dorset League and on Sunday, Dorset face Devon, who were last year’s Unicorn Knock-Out Trophy Winners.

Dorset will play all their home matches in the Minor County championship there. Later in the summer, Dean Park, will host charity matches involving the Barmy Army, the Lord’s Taverners and the star studded Lashings World XI.

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