

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

NEWSLETTER No. 345 – SUMMER 2015

RICHIE BENAUD - TRIBUTE

The obituaries that followed the death of Richie Benaud on 10 April tended to major on his distinguished broadcasting career, particularly in television. “The Voice of Cricket” was the main strapline.

Richie Benaud was, however, a great cricketer, both as a leg-spin bowler and a captain. Concentrating on those two aspects of the game detracted from his talent as a stroke playing batsman, who made his runs quickly and could turn a game in a very short space of time.

He brought all of these assets to bear when Australia visited Southampton’s County Ground on 26 – 28 August 1961. The first day at least was televised on ITV. It was the tourists’ last match against a county on the tour. Benaud had first toured England in 1953 and 1956. On both occasions, his batting and fielding were more memorable than his leg-spin bowling.

By the time he came to England in 1961, he was captain and the world’s premier leg-spin bowler. Indeed, he was virtually the only major leg-spin bowler in test cricket. Subhash Gupte was still purveying his trickery for India, but his test career drew to a close in the following winter.

FIRST DAY

With Hampshire’s championship defining match against Derbyshire at Bournemouth due to start on the following Wednesday, the county rested their two opening bowlers, Derek Shackleton and ‘Butch’ White. In his book *The Australian Challenge*, John Arlott commented that both were “tired and muscle strained”. Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie in *Many A Slip* said that they were both “suffering from genuine injuries, and I certainly had no intention of playing half-fit players at this stage, whatever the opposition”. Nevertheless, according to David Mathews in his biography on Shackleton, the county came in for some criticism for the decision. Their replacements were two former “Holt’s Colts” and cheerful cricketers, who both took 50 wickets or more in the season: the tall right-arm fast-medium Malcolm Heath (63 wickets) and the floppy haired off spinner Mervyn Burden (50). Both were to enjoy their moments during the match.

At the end of a long tour (which started at Worcester on 29 April and finished in Dublin on 19 September), and with the end of a successful test series four days earlier, the Australians fielded an intriguing side. It contained only four specialist batsmen (Bill Lawry, Neil Harvey, Brian Booth and Peter Burge), two all-rounders (Ken- Slasher – Mackay and Benaud) and four bowlers (Frank Misson and Ron Gaunt and two spin bowlers Lindsay Kline and Ian Quick). The wicket-keeper was Wally Grout. All except Kline and Quick had played in the test series.

After heavy over-night rain, Benaud won the toss and invited Hampshire to bat. The match was to be played in glorious sunshine. Arlott commented that “the Australiansenjoyed their cricket in three days of sunshine as bright and unbroken as they have had on their tour”. It should be remembered that 1961 was a generally fine summer. The Australians took full advantage of a drying pitch which was difficult early on. Gaunt and Misson both made the ball leap off a length and Hampshire were soon 24 for three before the first hour had been completed. Their prolific top trio of Roy Marshall, Jimmy Gray and Henry Horton were those dismissed. Thereafter, the county were indebted to Danny Livingstone (52) in holding the innings together. Peter Sainsbury (18), Ingleby-Mackenzie (21), Leo Harrison (25 not out), and the unlikely Heath (28) who boasted a career average of under six, enabled Hampshire to reach 194. Benaud had contented himself by bowling just one over, a maiden. He left the spin bowling in the hands of Kline (2 – 71) and Quick (2 – 40). The other three bowlers to be used, Misson, Gaunt and Mackay also took two wickets each.

The Australians opened their innings with the novel pairing of Bill Lawry, who scored nine centuries on the tour including two in the tests which Australia won (at Lord’s and Old Trafford), and wicket-keeper Wally Grout, who batted at ten in four of the five tests. The Hampshire Handbook indicates that Mackay opened the innings but this was definitely not the case. The swing of Gray accounted for Grout (12), with the score at 18 and Lawry, now running out of steam, edged Burden to Leo Harrison at 72. Neil Harvey (70 not out) and Brian Booth (25) then batted serenely and the day closed with their side at 128, 66 runs behind.

On Sunday Hampshire played a Benefit match for Roy Marshall at Highclere Castle.

SECOND DAY

The Monday marked the Editor’s first appearance at a tourist match. He sat with his uncle on the grass at the Hulse Road side of the ground. There were no flats in 1961. The area behind the white wall was a wood. Through reading the back of sweet cigarette cards, Neil Harvey had become one of his favourite cricketers and he was looking forward to the great Victorian left-hander scoring a century. After adding just two runs to his overnight score, however, he was bowled comprehensively by Heath. The rest of the innings was marshalled by Booth (79). Big hitting by Misson (33) also enabled Australia to reach 255, a far lower score than looked likely at the start of play. Heath also accounted for Benaud for one, caught at slip by Mike Barnard. The end of the innings was hastened by Burden, who took the three final wickets, to end with figures of four for 39.

When Hampshire batted, Marshall and Gray saw off the new ball, though not always looking comfortable. It was at this stage that Richie Benaud made his influence felt for the second time in the match (the first being winning the toss). He brought himself on to bowl. Marshall was itching to attack him but the ball was never quite there to hit. Benaud bowled him for 31. In his book, Test Outcast, Marshall recalled a conversation between Benaud and Gupte in which the latter bemoaned the fact that batsmen could read his googly. Benaud retorted that he knew his was easy to spot also, but the batsman still had to play it. The Australian captain, with the possible exception of the 1962/63 Ashes series in Australia, always adopted a

positive approach. The editor's disappointment of seeing Harvey's demise was compensated by Benaud bowling a long spell in the afternoon. Shortly after dismissing Marshall, he trapped Livingstone leg-before for five. He had neutralised Hampshire's capability to score large runs quickly in a trice. Thereafter, only Horton (58), Sainsbury (44), who added 81 for the fourth wicket, and Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie (28) made double figures. Hampshire finished the day on 209 for eight. For the fledgling onlooker it had been a marvellous day's cricket with 346 runs being scored at a run a minute for the loss of 16 wickets, and watching Benaud bowl 20 overs (for 41).

THIRD DAY

Misson and Gaunt quickly accounted for the last two wickets, leaving Australia 161 runs to win. Grout was out of traps quickly, hooking Heath for two sixes in the first over. When Lawry (23) fell at 46 Australia seemed well on their way. However, they then descended from 74 for one to 110 for five. Alan Wassell dismissed Grout (42) and Mackay (for a duck), Burden sent back Harvey (10) and Burge (22) was run out. Australia therefore still needed 51 with their last recognised batsmen – Booth and Benaud – at the crease and a long tail to follow. Could Hampshire pull off an unlikely victory? It was now that Benaud made his third intervention. According to the Hampshire Handbook "Booth was very steady and Benaud fought hard". The Australian captain eventually sealed the match with a six. He finished on an unbeaten 32; Booth was 36 not out..

POSTSCRIPT

Richie Benaud had effectively settled the match in his side's favour with his two cameo contributions, one with the ball and the other with the bat, in the second half of the match. In the 1962 Wisden, he was lionised by the editor Norman Preston, and Jack Fingleton, as well as being nominated as one of The Five Cricketers of the Year. Preston commented that "the tour was a personal triumph ...(he) was possibly the most popular captain of any overseas team to come to Great Britain". As soon as he arrived Benaud emphasised that he and his men wanted to play attractive cricket wherever they went. Moreover, he stressed that, no matter what their opponents did, his side would not detract from striving for the type of cricket which would please the onlookers. He was certainly true to his word at Southampton.

Benaud's popularity with the Hampshire team was cemented afterwards. In *Many A Slip*, the Hampshire captain wrote "The tourists were very slow changers after the match and we had a great party in their dressing room as we sealed the bonds of Commonwealth with gallons of the Carlsburg Lager that the Aussies always bring with them". And to think Hampshire were starting that iconic match against Derbyshire which sealed the championship next morning!

Scores: Hampshire 194 (Livingstone 52) and 221 (Horton 58)
Australia 255 (Booth 79, Harvey 72, Burden 4 – 39) and 165 – 5
Australia won by five wickets

Brian Booth, a lay preacher in 1961, officiated at Richie Benaud's funeral.

When Australia came to the then Rose Bowl in 2001, they again opted, as Benaud had done, to play with four specialist batsmen. They were, of course, bowled out for 97 on the stroke of lunch on the first day, and went on to lose by two wickets.

CLIVE RICE

Comment must be made of the passing of Clive Rice on 23 July. Though deprived a test career because of South Africa's ban, he confirmed that he was an all-rounder in the top rank during his thirteen year career with Nottinghamshire (1975-1987). There were very few matches against Hampshire on which he did not leave his mark, and usually a very deep one. His four matches against the County between 1978 and 1981 illustrate his powers. In the first of those years he scored 130 at Trent Bridge, the first of three centuries against the County. In 1979, at Bournemouth, he made 81 and 46 and for good measure, claimed six for 49 in Hampshire's first innings. In the following year, Notts made only 180, but went on to win by an innings. The Trent Bridge wicket in those days was as notorious a green-top as any in county cricket history. The era was also renowned for Rice's pairing with both bat and ball with the great New Zealander, Richard Hadlee. In Hampshire's second innings, the county were shot out for 58. The pair bowled unchanged and shared the spoils (Rice 5-25 and Hadlee 5-32).

His most astonishing feat came in 1981, when Hampshire turned the tables in emphatic fashion at Bournemouth. Nick Pocock won the toss and elected to field. Malcolm Marshall and Keith Stevenson took four wickets each and Trevor Jesty two, as they justified their captain's decision by bowling out their opponents for 143. Scarcely credibly, Clive Rice, batting at four, was undefeated on 105! Of the other batsmen, only Tim Robinson (10) made double figures. The Hampshire Handbook commented that he might even have scored more had he not unselfishly protected his 17 year old wicket-keeper, Chris Scott (6) in a ninth wicket stand of 53. The Notts total was the lowest to have ever included a hundred. Hampshire made 190 in reply – Hadlee and Rice both claiming four wickets – and then dismissed Notts for just 99, with Marshall (5 – 64) and Stevenson (5 – 32) bowling unchanged. On this occasion, Rice fell to Marshall for nine. The only resistance came from Hadlee (40). As the match coincided with the Lord's Ashes Test, in which Ian Botham famously failed to score in either innings, thus generating infinite newspaper columns about his continued captaincy of the England side, Rice's innings received scarce coverage and has done so since. Hampshire won by nine wickets in two days but it was Notts who went on to win the County Championship under Rice's captaincy. He led them to a second Championship win in 1987, his last year in the county game.

Rice's other century against the County, was 101 at Trent Bridge in 1985. The County's fixtures against Notts during his career were nearly all stirring encounters.

After spending his career playing against Gordon Greenidge and Malcolm Marshall, a situation which always stimulated his competitive juices, he eventually appeared in the same side with them in the MCC Bicentenary match at Lord's in 1987. Determined to enjoy his day in the sun, he fought his way to 59 not out, during which he shared a sixth wicket stand of 201 with Mike Gatting (179).

THE 2015 NEW ZEALANDERS

It is a very long time since a touring side has left such a warm glow as did the New Zealanders this summer.. They played the game positively, attractively and in the right spirit. There was no sledging, querying of umpires' decisions or controversy of any kind. It was such a refreshing change. Much credit must go to their captain Brendon McCullum, who stipulated very firmly how he wanted to see the game being played. Their side followed his guidelines to the letter and won friends everywhere. His approach was reciprocated by the England team and a fine test series and a quite outstanding one-day series ensued. McCullum must surely be invited as a future speaker to deliver the MCC Spirit of Cricket address.

THE ASHES REGAINED

At the time of completing this Newsletter, England have regained The Ashes after taking an unassailable 3 – 1 lead at Trent Bridge. Apart from the Lord's debacle, they continued to play with the style and panache that they showed in both the tests and one-day series against the New Zealanders. Two of the tests, at Edgbaston and Trent Bridge, were won in three days, the latter barely so, an astonishing indicator of their superiority over a dysfunctional Australian side. It was a situation that few would have predicted at the start of the series. At international level, it has truly been a summer for revelry and joy.

THE GREAT ESCAPE?

England's test win at Trent Bridge coincided with an upturn in Hampshire's fortunes in the county championship as they unexpectedly recorded an emphatic victory over Warwickshire at the Ageas Bowl. As both the batting and bowling struggled to come to terms with life in Division 1, Hampshire looked a certainty for relegation. They now have a chance to stay up, though Durham (away), Yorkshire (home), and Nottinghamshire (away) are not opponents that they would ideally wished to have faced in the run-in in September. Much may hinge on the match against fellow strugglers Somerset at Taunton. The bowling has shown definite signs of improvement as the season has progressed and with Fidel Edwards now providing a cutting edge, and the young 18 year old leg-spinner, Mason Crane, coming to the fore, Hampshire now look to have the capability to bowl sides out twice. Ryan McLaren will replace Jackson Bird in September; his experience of county cricket should also prove beneficial.

There have been latent signs that the batsmen are joining the party. Prior to the Durham match at the Ageas Bowl, starting on 19 July, Hampshire had been unable to claim a single batting point in the previous three games over a six week period. There has been some advance since, though it has been unconvincing. The team must have gained some confidence, however, from their second win of the season. One heartwarming feature in recent weeks has been the maturity and form of Joe Gattling. He has struggled for so long that his improvement has been unexpected, and uplifting. He deserves much credit for his fortitude and perseverance.

By the time members receive this Newsletter, they will know if Hampshire have reached t20 finals day and gained a place in the quarter final stage of the One Day Cup.

THE HAMPSHIRE LIBRARY

Sundial In The Shade – The Story of Barry Richards: The Genius Lost to Test Cricket by Andy Murtagh (Pitch Publishing)

Those of us who saw Barry Richards unfurl innings after innings of sublime majesty in his time with Hampshire knew we were watching a very special batsman and that when he left, watching cricket would never quite be the same again. He left a void which has still not been replaced. Andrew Murtagh, who roomed with Richards, has now partially filled that gap splendidly with this biography. Virtually all of those wonderful innings are recalled at first hand in the author's inimitable conversational style. Andy Murtagh is a very fine writer and his reputation is enhanced by this book. It would have been easy for him to descend into headlong hagiography, such is his admiration for the batsman he regards as the best he ever saw. But he does not duck some of the more controversial issues of Richards' career, principally the oft mentioned criticism that he was a mercenary. The narrative places all these allegations into perspective. He also deals sensitively with the darker aspects of his subject's personal life. It is, in effect, an exceptional psychological study. The chapters on South African cricket, pre and post-Apartheid, are enlightening as is the lengthy discourse on World Series Cricket. In that latter cauldron, with his eyes failing, Barry Richards' average stood considerably above all others in the "Super tests". He could not reproduce the commanding strokeplay which dazzled onlookers in his time with Hampshire, but his run scoring in WSC confirmed his greatness. The chapters on his Hampshire career also contain much information that is new and adds fresh light on a golden age of the county's cricket. His duels in the nets with Andy Roberts make for riveting reading. One learns that he was not only a great batsman but also unbeatable at squash. He did not take up golf until he was 40, but at the age of 67, still plays off a handicap of four. Andrew Murtagh has captured the essential Barry Richards and in the process, has made a significant contribution to cricket's biographical literature.

Summer's Crown – The Story of Cricket's County Championship by Stephen Chalke (pub Fairfield Books)

It will be very surprising if this publication does not become Cricket Book of the Year. Any book written or published by Stephen Chalke bears the stamp of quality. This one is exceptional even by his exacting standards. The breadth and depth of the book is astonishing. After a brief historical essay on each county, he then dissects each decade from 1890 onwards with a year by year narrative on the game's developments, accompanied by events in the country at large, in-depth analysis of the county champions in the decade concerned, biographies of most prominent players and valuable statistical tables. The narrative contains some wonderful stories of memorable matches, batting and bowling feats, character studies, the game's evolution, grounds, and a whole raft of interesting miscellaneous incidents. Hampshire is well represented. The many photographs add to the work. It is impossible to praise this book too highly. The current leaked proposals for the reorganisation of county cricket will add to its value. However, as mentioned on the dustcover, "somehow the championship has survived, reinventing itself regularly to meet the needs of each age". Stephen Chalke is scheduled to address the Society at their meeting on 14 October. It is sure to be a wonderful evening.

HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY
THE SOCIETY'S 2015/16 PROGRAMME

The Society's first meeting of its new winter season will be held on **WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2015** at the Ageas Bowl, when our speaker will be the 2015 Beneficiary, **JIMMY ADAMS**. The meeting will start at 8pm.

Enclosed with this Newsletter is the Society's Programme Card for 2015/16. As mentioned in previous Newsletters and again at the AGM, this winter's meetings will be split equally between the Ageas Bowl and Test Valley Golf Club. Each venue will therefore host four meetings.

Such was the success of last year's afternoon meeting at Test Valley Golf Club in November, the meeting on Wednesday 11 November 2015 will again start at 2.30pm. The speaker will be Isabelle Duncan who will give an authoritative account on the history of women's cricket in the major test playing countries. Members are encouraged to take a meal at the Golf Club beforehand to help make occasion another success for both our hosts and the Society. A bar meal or sandwiches will be available. Would members please contact our Chairman, Susanne Marlow (see membership card for telephone number) by 4 November so that she can appraise the Golf Club of potential numbers.

For Sat Nav purposes the post code for each venue is included on the first two dates on the programme card.

Also enclosed is a sheet giving outline biographies of this winter's speakers.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A pro forma for subscriptions and nomination for the HCS Player of the Year for 2015 is enclosed also. Subscriptions remain unchanged. The pro forma should be returned to the Society's Hon. Treasurer – John Grapes, Iona, Pooks Green, Marchwood, Southampton, SO40 4WP.

WEBSITE

The Society's website can be found at www.HantsCricSoc.org.uk. The website is updated continually by Andy and Sue Ray, to keep members up-to-date with developments concerning meetings, speakers and other Society matters. In particular, the site is always worth visiting prior to meetings.

TWITTER

The Society's Twitter address is [twitter@HantsCricSoc](https://twitter.com/HantsCricSoc) The purpose of the page is to encourage friendly discussion about current cricketing topics along with keeping everyone updated on forthcoming meetings and events. It is not to be used to make personal comments about individuals, antagonistic comments about organisation or critical comments that can affect the Society's excellent relationships with Hampshire Cricket.