

# THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

**Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal**

**NEWSLETTER No. 346 – SEPTEMBER 2015**

## **JIMMY ADAMS**

The Society extends the warmest of welcomes to this year's Beneficiary and Hampshire's Club Captain, Jimmy Adams.

Hampshire supporters have always regarded him as one of their own. He was born in Winchester, and though he went to Sherborne School, he was an integral part of the Hampshire youth set up from the age of 11. Besides his loyalty to Hampshire, he has remained steadfast to St. Cross CC in Winchester who nurtured him in his formative years. He has always returned there to play when circumstances permit and, indeed, scored a century for them in the Southern League this summer. He is also the only Hampshire captain to be born in the county since 1939, though the second to lead the County to a title, stand-in skipper Shaun Udal having preceded him in 2005.

His career has also been synonymous with the history of the Ageas Bowl. He received the first ball ever bowled in a competitive match at the new complex when playing for Hampshire 2<sup>nd</sup> XI against Sussex 2<sup>nd</sup> XI on the nursery ground in 2000. In fact, that landmark event was an all Hampshire affair. The opposing bowler was Southampton-born Billy Taylor.

He personifies the early 21<sup>st</sup> century batsman. *Wisden* is littered with references to his patience and powers of concentration. He holds the record for the two longest ever innings by a Hampshire player in first-class cricket. Indeed, he has batted over eight hours in an innings on no fewer than *seven* occasions. Yet, his adaptability is such that he has thrashed two centuries in t20 matches. He has also made two centuries in List A matches.

He has set benchmarks for current and future Hampshire batsmen in four-day cricket, passing 1000 runs in a season on five occasions, a County record since the format was introduced in 1993. He is also the first batsman to reach 10,000 runs in the Ageas Bowl era. Only Michael Carberry (25) has exceeded his 19 centuries in four-day cricket for the county. In 2013, he became the only Hampshire batsman, apart from Phil Mead (another left-hander), to register two double centuries in a season. He is the only Hampshire captain to perform the feat. He has five double centuries to his credit, another record for the modern age. He has also twice carried his bat in an innings. He is an unselfish cricketer; he has always batted in accordance with the needs of his side. The recurring comment from contributors in his Benefit Brochure is that he is one of the nicest men in county cricket.

Moreover, he is an excellent all-round fielder. He can be found close to the wicket or at mid-off in the four-day game; until recently those watching t20 cricket will have seen him at short extra cover, where he was outstanding.

**JAMES HENRY KENNETH ADAMS** was born on 23 September 1980. His talent was recognised early on. He was a regular for England Under 15s in the late summer of 1996. The Editor recalls him making a composed half-century for St. Cross against Hursley Park in the Southern League in the mid-90s when he was still in his mid-teens. He made his debut for Hampshire 2<sup>nd</sup> XI in 1999. He went to University College, London and Loughborough and in May 2002 cut his teeth in first-class cricket for British Universities against the Sri Lankans at Northampton. One of his team mates was James Tomlinson, who was also making his first-class debut. Monty Panesar was also in the side. His inaugural first-class appearance for Hampshire came at the end of that summer.

Loughborough UCCE were granted first-class status matches in 2002 and in the first of those he struck his maiden century – 107 against Somerset at Taunton. A year earlier he had scored 103 and 113 for the University in a non-first-class match against Kent's full county side at Canterbury. He was in the Loughborough side between 2003-04, and made occasional appearances for the County during the summer vacations. He was in and out of the Hampshire side in 2005.

In 2006, however, he played two exceptional innings which gave firm notice of his credentials as a genuine county cricketer. With Hampshire chasing 404, an unbeaten innings of 168 in nearly seven and a half hours against Yorkshire at Headingley rewrote the record books. The White Rose County had never conceded over 400 to lose a championship match in their entire history. It was an innings of great concentration and awareness. Throughout the marathon knock, he was always aware of the tempo required to achieve an unlikely win. Having acquired the taste to bat long, he then made a career best 262 not out in just under ten hours against Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge three matches afterwards.

Notwithstanding these innings, he looked to increase the rate of scoring and add to his repertoire. He suffered a blip in the next two years, but from 2009 his approach to batting became imprinted on the minds of Hampshire followers and bowlers. They viewed his trademark bat-up stance, and little jump into position at the crease. (It became a step in 2015). He genuinely builds an innings as he cautiously assesses the bowling, pitch and conditions. Once set, he unfurls his shots. He drives imperiously through the covers. If the ball is dropped short he cuts and pulls with certainty. He is always aware of the possibilities of picking up singles. Between 2009 and 2014 he was one of the most consistent and prolific of all county batsmen.

In 2010, he played two quite extraordinary innings. He reprised his two efforts of 2006, only more so. Yorkshire were again at the receiving end. At Scarborough, he batted for 428 minutes in making 196, sharing a Hampshire record fourth stand of 278 with James Vince (180). It was the latter's maiden century. The loss of the first day to rain effectively consigned the match to a draw.

In the following match against eventual County Champions Lancashire at Liverpool, Hampshire faced an uphill challenge to save the game after being bowled out for 160 (Adams 5) in the first innings. Second time round, he ensured their opponents would need to fight hard to prize him out. He defied the Lancashire attack for 10 hours 35

minutes before being last out for 194 at tea. It was the longest innings ever played by a Hampshire batsman. However, Lancashire chased down the eventual target of 168 in 33 overs. His herculean effort deserved a more positive reward. In the first match of the season, he had batted for eight hours in making 169 against Essex at Chelmsford. The next highest score in the total of 354 was Neil McKenzie's 39.

Those two innings against the northern Counties, both towards the end of the season, were at a time when there was advocacy for both his or Michael Carberry's inclusion in the England side, as Alistair Cook was enduring the first of his long troughs. However, the future national captain made an uncharacteristically aggressive century against Pakistan in the final test at The Oval to bring the drought to an end. Cook retained his place for the ensuing Australian tour, where, of course, he batted memorably and voraciously in the test series.

Our speaker also enjoyed himself in t20 cricket during the summer, scoring two undefeated centuries at the Ageas Bowl and finishing as the country's highest runscore. It was, though, his innings of 61 against Somerset, also at home, that will always be retained in the memory. The wicket was famously even more roguish than the early days at the ground. By the time Hampshire batted second, the ball would either shoot along the ground or threaten chest and head. No other batsman was remotely interested in attempting to counter the conditions, or so it seemed, but he brought his innate nous and intelligence to bear and proved strokemaking was still possible in the most treacherous of conditions. He stayed leg side of the ball and cut, pulled or drove on length and direction. No other batsman made double figures. He was eventually caught on the leg side boundary. It would have been six if the trajectory of the ball had been a foot higher. Perhaps his club cricket, for St. Cross, who once possessed one of the more variable Southern League wickets, helped him to come to terms with the conditions.

Hampshire, of course, claimed their first t20 title in that year. It was the first of three t20 finals in which he played over a six month period. He helped Auckland Aces win the HRV Cup in New Zealand in early January 2011 before captaining Hampshire in the Caribbean t20 final against Trinidad and Tobago in Bridgetown three weeks later. It was his first experience of captaining the county side and he did marvellously well tactically, and just as importantly, moulding an inexperienced team of young players. Hampshire were without Carberry, Dominic Cork and Dimitri Mascarenhas for the tournament.

A fine match double of 142 and 72 for the England Lions in Bridgetown shortly after the Caribbean t20 jaunt kept him in the England frame, but given Cook's renaissance and his own disappointing form for much of the 2011 season, probably due to fatigue, he slipped down the pecking order. It was towards the end of that summer that he was formally appointed captain in place of Cork. He responded to his new responsibilities immediately by making 207 against Somerset at Taunton in his first match as captain. It was another effort of formidable concentration over 520 minutes, during which he participated in another Hampshire record wicket partnership. On this occasion, he added 373 for the second wicket with Michael Carberry (182). Hampshire, struggling at the foot of the table, won the match by an innings. However, the win only delayed eventual relegation to Division 2.

2012 season was memorable for a Clydsdale Bank 40 Final triumph at Lord's and a second t20 title. Dimitri Mascarenhas led the side in the latter, but Jimmy Adams reserved his best performance in the CB40 for the Final. He top scored with 66 to help his side to 244 for five, and then skilfully marshalled the bowling attack, which was without Danny Briggs and Mascarenhas, to restrict opponents Warwickshire to the same score. Crucially, seven batsmen had perished and so Hampshire emerged winners by virtue of losing fewer wickets. He deservedly won the man of the match award. It was his second Lord's winners' medal. In 2009, in the Friends Provident Final (50 overs), he again top scored, with 55, as Hampshire sped to victory over Sussex by six wickets. In his two Lord's final appearances, therefore, he had emphasised his equable temperament, and finished on the winning side. .

In the four-day game, he is a captain very much in the modern idiom. He has played hard. Any successful captain these days is determined by his bowlers. Also, the bland, batsman friendly, nature of most pitches, has normally mitigated against entertaining any declarations, unless the odds are weighed heavily in the bowling team's favour. In 2014, with Kyle Abbott and Matt Coles at his disposal, as well as the lion-hearted James Tomlinson, Hampshire possessed their most potent bowling attack since the days of Shane Warne. With the batsmen also thriving, he led Hampshire to a well merited promotion.

Jimmy Adams has thoroughly deserved his benefit. Any benefit year is onerous and he has experienced a loss of form this summer. Another long match-saving hundred against Somerset at Taunton gladdened the hearts of all his many supporters.

In this year's Hampshire Handbook, David Allen referred to Jimmy Adams exemplifying the county's spirit. He has played for the county during a period when there has been a phenomenal turnover of players. He has played with nearly 90 men in first-class matches for Hampshire. The fact that he has survived and thrived speaks volumes for his ability and talent. Dave Allen also mentions that The Ageas Bowl is still too young to have any "ghosts". However, the spirit of Jimmy Adams will surely pervade after he leaves the county scene. A match at the Ageas Bowl will be very strange without him on the field. However, he will, no doubt, still be found on occasions enjoying his cricket at St. Cross.

## . SOCIETY NEWS

### MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2016

Members will be aware from the Programme Card that a speaker for the meeting on the above date had still to be confirmed. The Society is pleased to announce that **JAMES TOMLINSON** has agreed to speak at that meeting, which will still be held at Test Valley Golf Club, starting at 8pm.

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