

# THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Shaun Udal

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## MEETINGS

### Wednesday 11 November 2015

The Society extends a warm welcome to **ISABELLE DUNCAN**. Educated at Charterhouse and Durham University, our speaker first came to the attention of the wider cricketing public when she appeared on the front cover of Wisden Cricket Monthly in October 1998 - the first woman to be so featured. She was wearing an MCC sweater as part of the debate to admit women to the Club. She has been a full member of MCC since 2002, represents them at both cricket and real tennis, and occasionally sits on a disciplinary panel. Since 2013, she has been one of two women sitting on the Main Committee of the MCC.

Her cricket career has been a varied one. She captained an all-male side at Albury CC in the Surrey League and has played for numerous men's and women's teams over the past 20 years. Besides the MCC, she has turned out for the Bunburys, and an assortment of Wandering Clubs: the Heartaches, which were founded by Tim Rice, the Invalids and the Nomads. These three clubs were featured in the book *Gentlemen, Gypsies and Jesters* by Anthony Gibson and Stephen Chalke. She has therefore broken into yet another previous exclusive male domain.

A qualified coach, she runs her own cricket organisation for boys and girls aged 4 to 13. She is also closely involved with the charity Chance to Shine, which aims to bring cricket into state schools and inner cities, and sits on a Committee for "Girls on the Front Foot", which aims to empower girls through cricket.

Her book *Skirting The Boundary: A History of Women's Cricket* was well received, and occupies a unique niche in modern cricket literature.

Latterly, she has been heard on BBC Radio's ball-by-ball coverage of county cricket, and was in the commentary box for Hampshire's wonderful victory at Trent Bridge at the end of last summer.

Isabelle Duncan is the fourth woman speaker to address the Society, the others being Imogen Grosberg (poet), Jocelyn Galsworth (painter), both of whom had firm Hampshire connections, and Cally Barlow (wife of the great South African test cricketer Eddie Barlow).

## SOME MILESTONES OF WOMEN'S CRICKET IN HAMPSHIRE

- 1811 The first recorded women's county cricket match started at Ball's Pond, Newington in London on Wednesday 3 October. Two unnamed noblemen from **Hampshire** and **Surrey** put up a stake of 500 guineas each in a match between representatives from their respective Counties. The Hampshire side won by "15 notches".
- 1935 Though rustic matches between women's teams were played in villages in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first reference to a Hampshire women's team since 1811 was in this year. Unfortunately, details of scores, the result and venue of the game are unknown.
- 1937 **May's Bounty, Basingstoke**, played host to an international women's cricket match between **Australia** and The West. Patricia Holmes scored 200, before "retiring out" for the tourists, who won the match by eight wickets. The Australians later played a Hampshire side in **Winchester**.
- 1951 **Australia** made their inaugural visit to **Dean Park, Bournemouth**, to play West Women. The visitors again won comprehensively, by an innings and 10 runs.
- 1952 The **County Ground, Southampton**, staged their first women's match: a two-day affair between England Women and The Rest. It was notable for an excellent 141 not out (out of an England total of 222) by the 39-year-old Molly Hide, the most iconic figure in English women's cricket in the previous 20 years.
- 1954 **New Zealand** played a one-day fixture against Western Counties at Dean Park. The match was drawn with the home side hanging on grimly in their second innings with two wickets remaining and still nine runs in arrears.
- 1971 England Women played against a Hampshire men's side at the County Ground. The one-day match was memorable for an outstanding 83 in 93 minutes by Rachel Heyhoe (later Heyhoe-Flint). The Hampshire bowlers included Richard McIlwaine, Andy Murtagh, Mervyn Burden (5-76), Geoff Keith and Tom Mottram. The game finished in a draw.
- 1973 Dean Park hosted a **Women's World Cup** match between Australia and Young England. The latter were shot out for just 53, and Australia cantered home by seven wickets.
- 1997 The first reference to "Hampshire Women" for 60 years, in a match against Middlesex Women Second XI at Eversley. Hampshire Women have played in the Women's County Championship, a limited-overs competition since this year, oscillating between Divisions 2-4.
- 1998 The first **Women's ODI** in the County, between England and Australia was played at the County Ground. The Australians maintained their 100% record in Hampshire with an overwhelming eight wicket victory.

- 2004 **The Nursery Ground at the Ageas Bowl** staged an unusual t20 tournament. The top England players formed four sides: Super Strikers, Knight Riders, Braves and V Team, with a view to preparing the country's elite players for international competition. In the final, the Knight Riders, led by England skipper Charlotte Edwards, defeated the Super strikers by four runs.
- 2005 **The United Services Ground, Portsmouth**, staged its only women's match when England played a warm-up match against England A, prior to their one-day series against India. England won by six wickets but batted on to give their batsmen further practice.
- 2006 **The Ageas Bowl** hosted two **ODIs** between **England and India** on successive days in August. England won both matches, by three wickets and seven wickets respectively. These remain the only ODIs played at the ground.
- 2010 The first **t20 international** was staged between England and New Zealand, which the latter won by four wickets. England have subsequently played two further t20 internationals on the ground, in 2011 and 2013, and won them both. Their opponents on each occasion were Australia.
- 2015 Hampshire Women won Division 3 of the County Championship and will play in Division 2 next year. They also finished runners-up in the t20 competition, losing to Worcestershire in the final.

### **DANNY BRIGGS - AN APPRECIATION**

Towards the end of last season, there was a sense of sad inevitability that Danny Briggs would be leaving Hampshire. It was clear that he had slipped down the spin bowling pecking order behind Liam Dawson and Mason Crane. At the Society's meeting in September, Jimmy Adams mentioned that Brad Taylor would have played towards the end of the season but for problems with a raw spinning finger. Hampshire therefore released Briggs from the last year of his contract so that he could join neighbours Sussex. It seems perverse that he was selected for the England Performance Programme squad in Australia this winter. He joins Sussex for less money (according to an interview in the *Cricket Paper*) on a three year contract.

Danny Briggs achieved an enormous amount during his career with Hampshire and can look back with great pride at his achievements. He had emerged from the Isle of Wight, always a cricketing backwater, to become an international cricketer. He was the youngest player to take one hundred wickets in first-class cricket since the legendary Derek Underwood. He played in Hampshire's two t20 final successes and also in their four other t20 finals days.

After making his debut in 2009, aged 19, he quickly established a regular place in the side. Tall (6' 2") he bowled with remarkable accuracy and maturity. He appeared to be unflappable. Any rough treatment by batsmen appeared not to affect him. After a productive year in his first full season in 2010, he was selected for the England Lions Tour of the West Indies in the following winter. The Lions played all

the Island sides in their domestic first-class competition. He did exceptionally well, taking 33 wickets, more than any other bowler. He claimed a career best six for 45 (nine for 96 match) against the Windward Islands at Windsor Park, Roseau, and then claimed a further nine wickets in the match (five for 121 and four for 56), against Jamaica at Sabina Park a week later. In 2011, he was the County's leading bowler with 38 wickets, cruising past a career tally of 100 wickets in the process. He also returned what were to become his best figures for Hampshire: six for 65 against Nottinghamshire at The Ageas Bowl.

His upward trajectory continued with his England debut in an ODI against Pakistan in Dubai; again he acquitted himself well with two for 39 in his ten overs. At this stage of his career, even with his equable temperament, he must have been pinching himself.

And then it all started to go wrong. In 2012, Hampshire decided to green their pitches and he started only four championship matches. The County placed the spin bowling in the hands of Liam Dawson who until that stage had rarely turned his arm over in four day cricket, despite the precocious record when playing for England Under 19s at the start of his career. Danny Briggs gained compensation with his international t20 debut against south Africa at Edgbaston. The Ageas Bowl pitches favoured neither pace nor spin in the following year and the same was the case in 2014. At the end of that season Hampshire controversially signed Imran Tahir for the last two championship matches as they strived for promotion. Hitherto, Briggs had taken 27 wickets in eight matches at the creditable average of 26.11. His omission must have dented his confidence and affected his sub-consciousness. And so last year, when despite a reasonable record on generally unhelpful pitches, he slipped out of the picture.

It is arguable that his early exposure to international t20 cricket was in his best interests. He was savaged by the Australian Aaron Finch at the Ageas Bowl in 2013 and then again by the Australians in Hobart a few months later. However, he bowled well on a helpful pitch at Chester-le-Street two days after his mauling at the Ageas Bowl.

Nevertheless, comments about him not being a 'big spinner' of the ball became more prevalent and batsmen appeared to be less inhibited in playing him. One of his left-arm spinning predecessors, Peter Sainsbury, was never a big spinner, though like Briggs he did turn it. Sainsbury's career as a bowler bumped along for years before his spectacular Indian Summer in the 1970s. However, of course, Sainsbury was worth his place as a batsman.

It is undeniable that Hampshire will miss Danny Briggs in t20 cricket. The County's wonderful record in the last six years is due to several factors, but one of the most influential was his presence. The number of times he reduced their opponents' momentum and stopped them in their tracks altogether are legion. He has been both a game turner and match winner.

Still only 24 years old, he took 327 wickets in all cricket for Hampshire, a quite splendid achievement. All who have seen him progress in his time with the County, will surely wish him well in the future.

## **LIAM DAWSON**

Liam Dawson's fortunes in the last three months personify the ups and downs of a sportsman's life. In July he was loaned to Essex and many wondered whether it was a prelude to a permanent move. However, he was called back early after just two matches. Upon his return he performed outstandingly, especially in the Royal London Cup, in which he was the country's leading all-rounder. And then, in the last three championship matches of the season in September, he made a dramatic return to form with the bat. He scored 48 and 44 not out at Taunton, a marvellous 140 against county champions Yorkshire at the Ageas Bowl – his first century for two years – and then 69 at Trent Bridge. Earlier in the season, and indeed 2014, it was evident that he was seeing the ball well and hitting it solidly and actually looked more comfortable than the other top order batsmen. However, he kept getting dismissed in the thirties. He would now appear, though, to be on England's radar, having been called up belatedly for the EPP squad in Australia.

## **END OF SPECIALIST SPIN BOWLERS?**

Have events in county cricket in the past twelve months spelt the end of the specialist spin bowler? They are now few and far between. The England team in the Emirates included Moeen Ali, Samit Patel and Adil Rashid. Compared to the specialist Pakistan spin duo, they were found wanting. Moeen and Patel are bona fide all-rounders, but whose batting is better than their bowling. Rashid started out as a leg spin bowler, but his batting has improved to such an extent that he now qualifies as a genuine all-rounder at county level. In a newspaper article this summer, Ollie Rayner of Middlesex (and formerly of Sussex) advised all spin bowlers "to learn how to bat" if they wanted to play regular county cricket. Another sobering commentary on the plight of the spin bowler is that only 17% of wickets in the county championship this summer were taken by bowlers of that ilk.

## **TOM GRAVENEY**

Members will be aware that Tom Graveney died on 3 November. He spoke at the Society's Christmas Buffet Supper on 6 December 2000 which was held in the Indoor School at the County Ground, Southampton. He reminisced about his cricketing life and recalled in particular England's tour of Australia in 1954/55. He also paid affectionate tribute to Colin Cowdrey who had passed away two days earlier. The Editor commented that it was a sad evening, not only because of the recent death of Cowdrey, but it was the last time many would visit Northlands Road. Apart from the Squash and Social Club, all vestiges of the County Ground had virtually disappeared.

Hampshire were not one of Tom Graveney's favourite teams. He scored fewer runs against the county (1272) and at a lower average (25.44) than any other county. Derek Shackleton was his bete-noire, dismissing him on fourteen occasions. His two centuries against Hampshire were both made for Worcestershire. In 1962 his first season with that county, he scored 106 at Worcester. His second century – 104 – was in that notorious match at Bournemouth in 1965. Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie declared 146 runs behind just as the sun came out after heavy rain. Don Kenyon

declared after one ball, bowled by the Hampshire Captain. By now, the wicket was an old-fashioned “sticky” and was unplayable. Hampshire were shot out by Jack Flavell and Len Coldwell for 31 in their second innings in just over an hour.

Latterly, one of Hampshire’s former players, Andy Murtagh, has written a warm and nostalgic book on Tom Graveney, entitled *Touched by Greatness*.

## **UPDATE ON A PREVIOUS SPEAKER**

### **REVEREND CANON ANDREW WINGFIELD-DIGBY**

Longstanding members will remember Andrew (then Rev) Wingfield-Digby’s appearance at the Society’s meeting 25 years ago, in September 1990. He was featured in The Times Religion page on 4 July 2015 with the headline *England’s Cricketers need God on their side to win the Ashes*. The article recalled his role as the England’s team chaplain from 1991 to 2001, and mentioned that industries, armed forces, football clubs and other walks of life have woken up to having a chaplain, but his previous role with the England team has never been filled. Wingfield-Digby felt that the spiritual care he offered during his tenure might have been helpful to Marcus Trescothick and Jonathan Trott, and even Kevin Pietersen. “I was there to listen in a crisis. It can keep people going on tour. Players were able to share their pressures and difficulties”. There were also paragraphs on the presence of Monty Panesar (a Sikh) and Moeen Ali: “All sport should be a force for reconciliation. I think it’s a healthy thing to have people from different faiths in the same team. Often a Muslim cricketer understands what someone like me is trying to do more than an ‘unchurched’ English cricketer. He played at Oxford with Imran Khan who “had tremendous respect for me as a religious person”.

Contemporary coaching manuals etc often reinforce the need to obtain marginal gains in an attempt to seek a competitive advantage over their rivals. After reading the subject’s thoughts, one wonders whether England are missing a trick, despite regaining the Ashes.

## **SOCIETY NEWS**

### **GEORGE KILFORD**

It has been a sad Autumn for the Society. George Kilford, another long standing member, who invariably attended all meetings until the last year, has died. He was also a Hampshire member for many years. His funeral in Reading was attended by our Chairman.

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