

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Shaun Udal

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THE SOCIETY'S 40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Members will be aware that 2016 marks the Society's 40th anniversary for holding a programme of meetings. To celebrate the event, it is proposed to organise a "day at the cricket", so that Society members can enjoy a day in the company of other members whilst watching Hampshire play.

Those members who attended the AGM were very positive in their support for the proposal. A booking has therefore been made of a suite in the Shane Warne Stand on Monday 23 May 2016, which is the second day's play of Hampshire's match with Nottinghamshire. Members can enjoy a bacon roll and coffee on arrival, and a two course meal during the lunch interval. The current cost will be £30 for Hampshire County Cricket Club members and £35 for Hampshire CCC non-members. Hampshire Cricket Society members will be able to bring family and friends to the event.

Further details will be circulated in due course.

MEETINGS

Wednesday 23 March 2016 – Meeting

This evening the Society extends a warm welcome to **KEN BURNEY**. He lives in Cheltenham and is a mainstay of the Cheltenham Cricket Society. He has been a member for 20 years, a committee member for almost 15 of those and has been their Programme Organiser for the past five years.

A history graduate, he is a member of the Cricket Memorabilia Society who has exhibited cricket memorabilia at the county grounds of Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. His collection of memorabilia includes books, ceramics, cigarette cards, photographs, pictures, prints, programmes and scorecards.

He has accumulated about 100 items relating to WG Grace. He will be bringing a selection and displaying them at this evening's meeting. In the Society's 40-year history, there has only ever been one meeting covering cricket's greatest player and so it should be a most interesting evening.

Wednesday 2 March – Report

The conventional image of David Steele in his playing days was of a serious and even dour cricketer, presumably reflecting the character of the man himself. He revealed that this was not the case as he entertained his audience royally with great humour and a fund of interesting anecdotes. He recalled an early encounter with Hampshire at Southampton in 1964 when Derek Shackleton seemed to be bowling all day. (Editor's note: on checking the match concerned, Shack bowled unchanged for 29.2 overs, taking 6-31)! He said that the great Hampshire bowler was faster than it appeared. The ball merely kissed the surface but it carried through to the wicketkeeper. Our speaker's own contribution was 1 and 74 not out. He then gave his impressions of the other Hampshire players of that era: Roy Marshall was "a man apart"; Peter Sainsbury was a "bread and butter" professional - always completely reliable; he recalled "Butch" White's whirl of arms and legs as he bowled the ball; Bob Cottam, who later joined his own county, and then on to Barry Richards – a "wonderful player," Gordon Greenidge "tigerish and like a coiled spring", and Trevor Jesty, who, facially, looked no different in his last match against him than he did in his first. He recounted a match at Kettering in 1966 when Hampshire were 6 for 5 overnight. However, Sainsbury (45) and Marshall (94) then took Hampshire to respectability. It was all very evocative.

He talked about the cavalcade of fast bowlers he played against. He had no fears, as demonstrated by his performances against Dennie Lillee and Jeff Thomson in 1975. He always took them on with the hook. However, two in particular did make him feel uncomfortable: Andy Roberts, with his two-speed bouncer, and Joel Garner, against whom he was always watchful for his devastating yorker, delivered from such a great height.

His great year of 1975 coincided with his benefit. He spent all the season in a bubble. Things came naturally; he never had to think about it. When he walked to the wicket on his famous Lord's debut, he never felt better in his career.

One of his favourite players was Tom Graveney. He was a marvellous player of spin bowling. He felt it was a great privilege to be on the field when Graveney registered his 100th century. He also recalled the occasion when his Derbyshire team-mate, Peter Kirsten, said on the morning of one match, that he felt like scoring a double century. He duly did so.

All those present will never forget the story of the noose which awaited him in the Derbyshire dressing room after a run out incident with Geoff Miller. Later in the year, the latter won the Nat West Trophy final when he made his ground for the winning run by diving over the line off the last ball; Steele told him that he had gained a yard in pace since the earlier occasion! The evening in David Steele's company was a long one, like that with James Tomlinson beforehand, but few seemed to mind.

Wednesday 3 February 2016 – Report

James Tomlinson entertained his audience hugely as he revealed himself to be full of fun and a real character. Answering questions from the floor he covered a host of subjects. He was proud of Hampshire's recovery to stay in the first division at the end of last season. He said it was some months before they felt good enough to

compete in the division. Players had tinkered with their techniques to meet the perceived requirements, but once they reverted to basics, coupled with being energised by Fidel Edwards and Mason Crane, confidence returned and they started winning matches.

To prepare for the current season all the players, bar himself and Ryan Stevenson (injured) were playing abroad in the sun. He was coaching Hampshire's pace bowlers in all age groups.

He was asked about the new provisions for the toss, where away captains could choose to bat or field. He felt it was not necessary in division one as the pitches were generally good. He thought Yorkshire and Durham, because of the normal prevailing cloudy weather could be disadvantaged; opposing captains would invariably ask them to bat in bowler friendly conditions. He thought the new arrangement for the toss would be more relevant in the second division where pitches were more variable.

On the subject of batsmen, he felt Marcus Trescothick was still the most difficult to bowl to. He held Johnny Bairstow in high regard. He also discussed the difficulty in making the transition from county cricket to test cricket. For batsmen, the biggest factor was the speed of the bowlers. The extra five mph made a tremendous difference between hitting the ball in front of the wicket and edging the ball into the slip cordon. He thought Michael Carberry was very unlucky to be left out after the last Ashes tour. He had faced Mitchell Johnson, the fastest bowler in the world at the time, and had coped better than his successors who had faced lesser bowling.

He gave some fascinating insights on all facets of pace bowling. He delivered, in effect, a verbal thesis on the matter. His rendition of techniques and psychology was wide ranging, erudite and of an extremely high level of subtlety and intelligence. He learnt much from Bruce Reid, Shane Warne and Dominic Cork.

He bemoaned the lack of cricket in state secondary schools, though it was still being played in primary schools. The modern school curriculum meant little or no time was available for cricket in the former. The modern epicentre of youth cricket was in Winchester, based around St. Cross and Easton and Martyr Worthy Cricket Clubs. Some 300 children from the area attended a two-day session last summer. Any youth cricket in Hampshire's big cities of Portsmouth and Southampton was on a much smaller scale.

The best moment of his career was Jimmy Adams taking the catch at short leg off his bowling to end the Kent innings at Canterbury in 2010 to ensure Hampshire stayed in the first division for another season.

Of his career best eight for 46 at Taunton in 2008, he modestly said luck played an important part. As Hampshire bowlers fell by the wayside he led an attack where, apart from Sean Ervine, the combined number of first-class wickets taken by he and his team-mates in their careers up to that time was below 50. On a damp pitch, his first wicket pitched middle and hit off stump. Justin Langer then hit a long lop straight to point. From that point on, he felt it was going to be his day.

James Tomlinson held court for over 100 minutes and was quite prepared to carry on talking. He had provided a most memorable evening.

HAMPSHIRE PLAYERS IN THE EMIRATES (2)

As part of pre-season preparation, Hampshire played five matches in Sharjah in March/April 1989. They won all of them, two of which were limited-overs affairs against Surrey. Their other opponents were an esoteric mixture: The Emirates Gentlemen, the Hilton Hotel staff and the Bank of Oman.

Hampshire's young reserve wicketkeeper, Lewis McManus, played two Under 19 ODIs for England against Pakistan, at Sharjah and Abu Dhabi, in 2013.

James Vince and Liam Dawson were, of course, in the Emirates with the England Lions this winter (see previous Newsletter).

Also, **Vince, Michael Carberry, Sean Ervine, Ryan McLaren and Shahid Afridi** (see below) were signed for the inaugural Pakistan Super (t20) League which was played in The Emirates in February.

As mentioned in the previous Newsletter, **Reece Topley**, played there in four ODIs and one t20 international match, all against Pakistan, this winter.

FORTY YEARS ON (4)

In 1976, of course, the County Championship comprised three day matches. Hampshire found difficulty in adjusting to four-day cricket when the format was introduced in 1993. Hampshire's captains had generally turned the art of declaring into an art form. In four-day cricket, declarations became almost obsolete. The strongest teams bowled out the opposition twice. Hampshire did not possess the firepower to take 20 wickets in a match. Despite the presence of Robin Smith, the batting was weaker than in the 1980s. It was not until 1988 that they achieved a finish in the top half of the table. In that year they were sixth, and then seventh in 1999. The latter position allowed them to be placed in the new upper tier when the two division championship was introduced in 2000. For the next five seasons, until 2004, they endured a see-saw existence between the two divisions. However, in 2005, they finished runners-up in the first division just 2.5 points behind champions Nottinghamshire, whom they defeated twice. But for a controversial match between Notts and Kent at Canterbury in the penultimate programme of matches, which Nottinghamshire won, Hampshire may well have taken the title.

In the six seasons between 2005 and 2010 Hampshire, under the captaincy of Shane Warne (until 2007) and Dimitri Mascarenhas, enjoyed their most consistent spell in their history, as they finished second, third, fifth, third, sixth and seventh respectively. They were relegated again in 2009 and then stayed in division 2 until 2014. In 2015, of course, the County pulled off a great escape to finish seventh and retain their place for this summer. It is a sobering thought that in 1976, to have finished seventh would have been considered quite an achievement. Nowadays, that position is just enough to maintain a first-division place. It demonstrates just how competitive the Championship now is, and how times have changed.

Since 2005, Hampshire have enjoyed a golden period in white ball cricket, reaching four Lord's finals, and winning three and an unequalled six t20 finals days in succession. They won the tournament in 2010 when it was played at the Ageas Bowl and again two years later in Cardiff. Their four losses have all been incurred at Edgbaston. We must therefore applaud the achievements of the side in all forms of cricket in the last ten years. They deserve a place in the pantheon of Hampshire's best teams.

In 1976, Hampshire had never staged international cricket. Since 1993 the Club and their supporters had been in clover, especially since the move to the Ageas Bowl. The County have now hosted two test matches, 22 one-day internationals (the first three at Northlands Road), three t20 internationals and three Women's ODIs (the first at Northlands Road) and three Women's t20 internationals. Heady days indeed!

WOMEN'S CRICKET SUPER LEAGUE

In 1976, the profile of women's cricket was barely on the radar screen. It now enjoys significant prominence. That profile has also increased in the county, though the Hampshire Women's Team has still not achieved top flight status. However, the County's supporters will be able to enjoy a new Women's Cricket Super League in 2016. Hampshire have been chosen as a host for one of the six teams, each of which will be selected by the ECB, to take part in a t20 competition in July and August. The bid to host the matches was enhanced by the county's local partners: Berkshire, Dorset, Isle of Wight, Oxfordshire, Sussex and Wiltshire's Cricket Boards, as well as Southampton Solent University. The name of the local team is the **Southern Vipers**. They will play three matches at the Ageas Bowl: on 31 July (v Surrey Stars), 8 August (v Yorkshire Diamonds) and 14 August (v Loughborough Lightning). The other two sides are Western Storm (based at Somerset) and Lancashire Thunder. Chelmsford will host finals day on 21 August.

HAMPSHIRE NEWS

Members will fondly recall Southampton born **Billy Taylor**, who played for Hampshire from 2004 – 2009. Since leaving the game, he has worked as a tree surgeon, falconer and a dog walker. When the Editor last saw him, he had a magnificent golden eagle on his hand and a dog at his feet at the Sparsholt village fete, whilst he was working as a falconer at nearby Lainston House, a luxury hotel. He gladly spared his time to be talk fascinatingly on falconry. After being on the reserve list since 2011, he has now been promoted to the ECB full umpire list. He was a Championship winner with Sussex in 2003 and has already officiated in six Championship matches, including Sussex against Nottinghamshire at Horsham. The Society wishes him every success in his new career.

Brad Wheal, who made a favourable impression in his four Championship matches last season, was selected for Scotland's ODI side this winter. Born in Durban on 28 August 1996, he joined Hampshire with the long-term aim to qualify for England through the seven-year residency rule. He had previously represented KwaZulu Natal's Under 19 side. He qualifies for Scotland through his mother, who was born there. He still has close relatives in the country in Glasgow and Kilmarnock.

Hampshire have re-signed **Shahid Afridi** as their second overseas player for this summer's domestic t20 competition. He previously played for the county in the tournament in 2011. His calculating innings of 80 against Somerset in the semi-final at Edgbaston was one of those rare t20 innings that will live long in the memory. He also usually made crucial, match winning, contributions with his leg spin bowling. He will be captain of Pakistan's team in the forthcoming t20 World Cup. Afridi remains one of the world's great free spirits as well as being the most natural and appealing of cricketers. His presence at the Ageas Bowl will be one to savour.

Hampshire's other new signing is of course **REECE JAMES WILLIAM TOPLEY**. Born in Ipswich on 12 February 1994, he made his debut for Essex in 2011, taking 5-46 against Kent at Chelmsford in his first Championship match. He was capped in 2013. His career hitherto has been punctuated by injury, having played only 31 first-class matches to date. Nevertheless, a tally of 125 wickets (avge. 25.78) bears testimony to his undoubted quality. He is now clearly on the fringes of the England team but, when available for Hampshire, he will form a mouth-watering new ball bowling partnership with Fidel Edwards.

MARTIN CROWE

The death of Martin Crowe on 3 March at the age of 53 was mourned throughout the cricket world. A stylish and classical batsman, he is generally regarded as the best New Zealand have produced. The editor will never forget his first sight of him at Bournemouth in 1983. On a cold, windy day, the ball seamed on a grassy wicket from start to finish. Hampshire were bowled out for 149. Virtually every batsman got a start but could not go on. The highest score was Trevor Jesty's 29. The New Zealand batsmen replicated their efforts, except for Martin Crowe. His judgement of what to leave alone was almost perfect. When he played a shot, every ball seemed to hit the bat's middle. He had so much time to spare. By close of play, he had watchfully made his way to 33. He eventually made 70, by far the highest score of the match, as his team won by nine wickets. It was clear that an exceptional batsman was in the making. For good measure, he also claimed five wickets in the match.

AGM NEWS

The Society's AGM resolved that there would be no increase in subscription fees for the Society's 2016/17 programme.

It was also reported that two afternoon meetings would be held at Test Valley Golf Club in 2016/17, for the November and February meetings respectively.

EDITOR'S NOTE

I would like to express my appreciative thanks for all the kind comments I have received following production of my 300th Newsletter. I would also like to thank the Committee for their generous book token which was presented to me at the AGM.

Alan Edwards

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