

# THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

**Patrons: John Woodcock Shaun Udal**

**NEWSLETTER No. 355 –SEPTEMBER 2016**

## MEETINGS

### **Wednesday 28 September 2016-Meeting**

This evening's speaker is Don Topley, to whom the Society extends a very warm welcome. In the wake of Hampshire signing his son, Reece, he has already become a familiar face to many in the Arlott Atrium, and has undertaken commentary work on BBC Radio Solent with Kevan James.

**THOMAS DONALD TOPLEY** was born in Canterbury on 25 February 1964, and educated at the Royal Hospital School, Holbrook, Suffolk. He had cricket in his genes as his older brother, Peter, had played for Kent (1972-75).

He first became known to cricket followers on the biggest stage possible. In 1984, whilst on the Lord's ground staff, and in front of the television cameras, he came on as a substitute fielder (for Chris Broad) for England against West Indies and took a marvellous left-handed catch on the boundary off a Malcolm Marshall hook shot. Unfortunately, he put one foot over the rope in the process, thus earning the flamboyant all-rounder a reprieve.

Shortly afterwards, he made his debut against a first-class county when he played for Norfolk against Hampshire in a Nat West Trophy match at Lakenham, in which he claimed the wicket of Tim Tremlett.

He made his first-class debut for Surrey against Cambridge University at Fenner's in 1985, but shortly afterwards began a ten-year association with Essex. A tall (6 ft 3 ins) right-arm medium fast bowler, with a mop of black curly hair, he went on to take 367 first-class wickets (avge. 27.64), and a further 197 wickets in List A matches. His time with Essex coincided with a golden era in their cricket as they lifted three championship titles (1986, 1991 and 1992) and won both the Nat West Trophy and Sunday League in 1985. He took 50 wickets in a season on three occasions: 65 in 1988, which included a career best 7 for 75 against Derbyshire at Chesterfield, 77 in 1989 and 55 in his county's championship triumph in 1991. Writing in Wisden Cricket Monthly, Rob Steen described our speaker as being "effort personified" in that season, a phrase that would be apt for his whole career.

He also enjoyed a productive spell playing for Griqualand West in South Africa in 1987/88 when he took 29 wickets at the excellent average of 22.45.

A forceful right-hand batsman, his top score was 66, coming in as a night watchman, against Yorkshire at Headingley in 1987. He also held 70 catches in first-class cricket (and 20 in List A matches).

Towards the end of his career, he coached in Zimbabwe. Upon leaving the game, he returned to his former school as coach. He also became the first man to make a

much publicised allegation about match fixing. It led to both a TCCB inquiry, and later, when such allegations were becoming fairly commonplace and of genuine concern, one by the Police, but no action was taken on either occasion.

### **JAMES TOMLINSON**

As he was last seen on the field of play in first-class cricket at the end of Hampshire's match against Middlesex at Merchant Taylor's School on 31 May, it came as no surprise that James Tomlinson announced his retirement in September. What was surprising though, was the manner in which the statement was made. The club allowed him to write his own notice on their website. And a most delightful and original piece it was too. For those who may have not seen it, an extract is reproduced below:-

*I remember years ago watching a nature documentary that followed a pack of wild dogs on a hunt. At the front of the pack there were the young and keen dogs who couldn't wait to get stuck in, then in the middle were the experienced, healthy dogs who knew what they were doing and held the pack together. But I will never forget the image of one old dog at the back of the pack trying to keep up. He had half a leg missing and an ear hanging off from what must have been years of previous battles. When he finally arrived at the scene all that was left were scraps. Although I was once both the young dog at the front and the healthy dog in the middle, I feel now is the right time to head back to the den.*

Graeme Swann tweeted "this could be the greatest retirement statement in the history of English cricket".

His statement confirmed all the impressions of those who were privileged to listen to his address at the Society's meeting in February. It was full of character, fun, his love of cricket, commitment to Hampshire and insight.

To continue with the dog analogy, he then stated:-

*I now have the opportunity ..... to look after all the young dogs coming through. A job I already love and cherish.*

In his ability to relate to people there is something rather in the manner of the late Arthur Holt. It would be very surprising if he doesn't make a success of his coaching career. He will be a marvellous mentor for aspiring young cricketers.

His biography appeared in Newsletters 351 and 353. His final wicket tally for Hampshire was 380 (avge 31.61).

### **A ROBIN SMITH RECORD ECLIPSED**

When making 171 against Pakistan at Trent Bridge on 30 August, Alex Hayles recorded the highest score by an England batsman in one-day International Cricket. In doing so, he surpassed Robin Smith's 167 not out, against Australia at Edgbaston in 1993. Given the heavier bats and generally shorter boundaries, especially

overseas, in the intervening period, it is remarkable that “Judge’s “ record lasted as long as 23 years. He has often expressed his own surprise that his record lasted such a length of time.

It was worth going back through the files to ascertain what was said about his innings in 1993. In *The Times* that great sports writer Simon Barnes commented “he penetrated that rare, seldom-visited country that most batsmen only dream about; a land where no bowler can bowl at you and all the balls are bad.”

It was heartening that many newspapers contained heart-warming articles recalling Robin’s career in the ensuing few days. Writing in the *Cricket Paper*, Peter Hayter commented that it reminded those who saw his Edgbaston innings “just how much fun it was to watch him bat.” He then said “he was one of those characters in whose presence life always seemed a little better”. Both Hayter and Michael Atherton in *The Times* recalled his bravery against the West Indies fast bowlers.

### **ADAM WHEATER**

Adam Wheater rejoined Essex on loan for the last two matches of this season, prior to signing a two year contract for his former county.

The start and end of his career for Hampshire were controversial. He was originally signed a matter of days before the start of the 2013 season. Finding his way blocked by James Foster, indisputably the best wicket keeper in the country, he was looking to further his career with another county. Hampshire already possessed a precocious wicketkeeper, Michael Bates, who was arguably only second to Foster, and also the best that many members had seen behind the stumps for the County. Wheater joined, though, with a better batting record.

At the end, although relieved of his wicketkeeping duties by the emerging Lewis McManus, he stated that he wanted to continue to play in that capacity. McManus batted and kept wicket so well that it was evident that Wheater was not to regain the berth. There was, therefore, an inevitability about his departure. It seemed ironic that he should rejoin Essex, for whom Foster was still performing as impeccably as ever this season. Is the latter’s retirement imminent?

In between, Adam Wheater’s batting for Hampshire was splendidly diverting. He was an entertainer. He was always looking to move the game along. Given his height, good length balls were short to him and he therefore prospered as he pulled and cut with relish. If the bowler overpitched in an effort to compensate, he drove with certainty. He was also an inventive batsman. In an era of grey batting, he was one of those who often lit up the day. There were groans when he gave his wicket away when well set or at crucial times. Nevertheless, he was clearly a most talented strokemaker. To add to the irony of his departure, he seemed to be gradually balancing risk and productivity in 2016. At the time of his leaving, he had scored more runs during the season than any other player. He had demonstrated that he could bat a long time, without sacrificing flair, by making a career best 204 not out (234 balls; 373 minutes) against Warwickshire at Edgbaston in July. He made his second hundred off only 83 balls and his last 50 off just 29. A normally penetrative and well balanced Warwickshire bowling attack was simply unable to check his

increasing momentum. It is worth mentioning that he was not keeping wicket in the match. His innings enabled Hampshire to reach 531, their highest at Edgbaston, surpassing their 521 in that great match in 1922 when the county had been bowled out for 15 in their first innings.

He had made another memorable century against Sussex at Hove in 2015. With the Hampshire innings in the balance, he struck 111 in an innings full of improvisation, at better than a run a ball, adding 165 for the eighth wicket with Gareth Berg (99). His innings helped set up a healthy first innings lead and eventual victory.

And yet there were doubts about his wicketkeeping almost from the outset. He was good standing up, but there were inexplicable lapses of concentration, particularly in white ball cricket, and there was sometimes a tardiness about his work.

Adam Wheater played in 56 first-class matches for Hampshire, scoring 2760 runs (avge, 36.80), which seven centuries. He claimed 91 dismissals (84 ct; 7 st). His figures in 30 List A matches were 796 runs (avge. 34.60) and 21 dismissals (13 ct; 8 st). He scored two centuries in the latter format, his best being 135 against Essex at Chelmsford in 2013. Yet another irony.

### **SOUTHERN VIPERS**

The Ageas Bowl-based Southern Vipers won the inaugural Kia Women's Super League at Chelmsford on 21 August. After winning all but one of their matches, to finish top of the six-team league, they qualified for the final as of right. Their opponents were Western Storm, who defeated Loughborough Lightning in the semi-final. The Storm were the only team who had beaten the Vipers in the league. The former's match-winner on that occasion was the West Indian, Stefanie Taylor (78 not out off 53 balls), who emerged as the player of the tournament, scoring the most runs (289) and taking the most wickets (11).

Taylor's strength was in chasing runs in the second innings. However, in the final, Vipers Captain, Charlotte Edwards, won the toss and elected to field. The Storm made 140 for five in their 20 overs (New Zealander Rachel Priest 57 and Taylor 35). The Vipers passed their total with seven balls to spare, finishing on 143 for three, to win by seven wickets.

Edwards (24) and New Zealand's Suzie Bates (52) put on 78 for the first wicket in 9.4 overs to set their team on the way. Bates, who was Wisden's Leading Woman Cricketer of the Year for 2015, emphasised her status by being the Vipers' most consistent player throughout; she finished behind Taylor both in the run (232) and wicket (9) aggregates.

The organisers were delighted at the tournament's following. Some 16,000 spectators watched the 16 days of play. It will be played again next year, but on a 50 over basis.

## HAMPSHIRE PLAYED THERE ONCE

### DURHAM

Durham are, of course, the newest first-class county, having gained that status in 1992. Under the supervision of Tom Flintoft, who was formerly groundsman at Southampton's County Ground, a new ground was developed at the Riverside, Chester-le-Street. The first match at the latter was in 1995. In the meantime, Durham played at various venues, two of which- at Feethams, Darlington and Stockton-on-Tees – hosted matches against Hampshire. The county's record on Durham grounds is tabled below:-

	First Match	Last Match	P	W	L	D	A
Darlington	1992	1992	1	-	-	1	-
Stockton-on-Tees	1993	1995	2	-	1	1	-
Chester-le-Street	1997	2016	14	7	3	3	1
			17	7	4	5	1

Hampshire's first match at Chester-le-Street was abandoned without a ball being bowled, the only such occurrence in the county's history in four day championship cricket. Their first match on the ground where play was possible was in 1999. There have been a number of notable performances there in matches between the two counties. In 2003, the Australian Martin Love scored 273, the highest individual innings for Durham in first-class cricket. Four years later, Ottis Gibson took 10 for 47, the best bowling analysis for Durham. It was in that match that Hampshire's Michael Brown batted through both innings -56 not out (when the county were bowled out) and 126 not out (when nine wickets were lost). He almost single-handedly salvaged a draw. In 2008, Hampshire won by 4 runs, with the New Zealander, Shane Bond, claiming nine wickets (5-57 and 4-74). He took the vital last wicket to break a lengthy last wicket stand with the final ball he bowled for Hampshire.

### DARLINGTON

The match in 1992 was the first time Hampshire had played in Durham. Rain was the deciding factor in consigning the four day fixture to a draw. In Hampshire's first innings, Tony Middleton scored his sixth century of the season in an innings punctuated by the weather. Durham recovered from 44 for 3 in their reply before rain again intervened. The Hampshire Handbook stated that "friendly bowling was required to set the match up into a contest". Durham eventually required 283 runs to win in 57 overs, but after losing their first three wickets for 44, it became a question of whether Hampshire could claim the spoils. Phil Bainbridge again batted well before Kevin Shine swept away four wickets for just 9 runs. Critically, rain returned to deprive Hampshire of nine overs.

Scores:

Hampshire 303-6 dec (Tony Middleton 127\*, Jon Ayling 90) and 229-5 dec (Mark Nicholas 95\*, Kevan James 57)

Durham 250-4dec (Paul Parker 95; Phil Bainbridge 84\*; Ian Smith 68\*) and 194-8 (Bainbridge 83; Kevin Shine 6-68).

Match Drawn.

## TALKING POINTS ON NEW STRUCTURES

Longstanding Society member David Parker has tactfully reminded the editor that although the second division of the championship will comprise ten teams from 2017, each side will only play 14 matches, and not 18 as mentioned in the previous Newsletter. All sides will not therefore play each other twice, unlike Division 1. This seems totally illogical. A situation could very well arise that the best team may not actually win the division, depending upon who their opponents have been, and be promoted. All teams who have gone up from the lower league will know just how difficult it is to be competitive in Division 1. The bowling is tighter; the second and third change bowlers are better and sides bat further down the order. It really is a different world to Division 2, exemplified by those Counties who have experienced a “see saw” existence between the two divisions (eg Worcestershire and Hampshire) or have simply been unable to cope (eg Derbyshire and Northamptonshire in recent years). A de facto hierarchy has emerged with Middlesex, Yorkshire, Durham, Somerset and Warwickshire having enjoyed long stints in Division 1. The current young Surrey team has enormous potential and the financial muscle to recruit new players. It will not be surprising if they become a major force for the next decade, unless the team is decimated by international calls. Lancashire have also tended to oscillate between the two Divisions.

Nottinghamshire’s relegation was a shock. It will be interesting to see whether they can regroup and go back up immediately. They will face a stiff challenge from Sussex, Hampshire, Kent and Worcestershire, which demonstrates that there is much quality in Division 2. There’s just more of it in Division 1.

The proposed eight team city franchise t20 tournament has received much publicity. Is the business case evidence based? The plan is to play over a three week period in August as the perception is that more people will watch during the school holiday period. Has it been market tested? August coincides with the start of the football season and families’ expenditure will always be geared towards that sport. It must be highly unlikely that families will arrange their holidays to take account of the tournament. Notwithstanding the current economic situation, many families still take their holidays abroad. It is alleged that the prevailing view is that franchises will contain only three overseas players. It is not that different from the current format where two are allowed. Indian players, who will surely be the main drawcard, will be excluded because of the protectionism employed by the IPL. Several big name Australians who have prospered in their Big Bash have made only a muted impact in our t20 tournament. Our County players are being continually undervalued. The location of the franchises will also be interesting. Some cities with larger populations than those rumoured to be included may very well be excluded. Brighton has a larger population than Southampton. Leicester is Britain’s fastest growing city economically. To paraphrase Nick Hornby it seems as if it is “all about the ground”. Counties without a franchise will receive some £1.3m per year. Much of that may be required to pay for a larger staffing complement to replace those drafted into the franchises. The future of many counties is clearly at risk, as there is an all pervading logic to the eventual outcome of the new proposals. No wonder there is considerable restlessness among cricket followers, and not just members, in the shires. Cricket’s managers bear a heavy responsibility to get it right. Football lost its soul years ago. Will cricket follow? It is comforting that Surrey are resisting the proposal.

