

# THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

**Patrons: John Woodcock Shaun Udal**

**NEWSLETTER No. 356 – OCTOBER 2016**

## **ANNUAL DINNER**

**An application form for the Society's Annual Dinner, to be held at the Ageas Bowl on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December (starting at 7pm), is enclosed with this Newsletter. Would members please complete and return the form, with cheque, to Susanne Marlow by Friday 18 November. The speaker will be Jim Troughton, the former Warwickshire captain and England One-Day International player, and a member of the well-known theatrical family.**

## **MEETINGS**

### **Wednesday 26 October 2016 – Meeting**

This evening's speaker is Sean Ervine, Hampshire beneficiary in 2016, to whom the Society extends a very warm welcome. He celebrated his benefit season in style by scoring 1000 runs in a season for the first time: 1090 runs at the impressive average of 57.36. His aggregate would have been even higher had he not missed four matches through injury. He enjoyed a glorious end to the season. In the last four Championship matches he struck 513 runs at the almost Bradmanesque average of 85.50. He began the sequence with a century in each innings (103 and 106) at Taunton, followed it with 80 against Yorkshire at The Ageas Bowl and then 158 at The Oval. He finished with 50 and 16 versus Durham at home. He had earlier made 123 Yorkshire at Headingley and 93 at Chester-le-Street.

He has always been the most watchable of batsmen. He seemingly has time to spare and is a very clean striker of the ball, with shots all round the wicket. He has the ability to change the tenor of a match in a short of space of time. It is strange that he has never reached the 1000 run landmark before. His figures and performances are reminiscent of George Brown, that great character in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Like Brown, he is left-handed, at his best in a crisis and capable of batting on occasions in a manner which lifts him to a level considerably above the normal county cricketer.

In the four-day game he has proved himself time and again to be one of the best shepherds of a tail. Whilst making his maiden century for Hampshire, 103 not out against Lancashire at Old Trafford in 2007, he shared a last wicket stand of 53 with David Griffiths. Our speaker scored all the runs. Against the same side at the Rose Bowl two years later, he battled his way to 114 out of the last 148 runs in Hampshire's innings. Three of his partners failed to score. His highest score of 237 not out against Somerset at the Rose Bowl in 2010 included a reprise of his previous last wicket stand with Griffiths. In the summer of 2012, in making 109 not out against Glamorgan at the Rose Bowl, he and David Balcombe (39) put on 85 for the last wicket.

There are two others innings in first-class cricket for which he will be fondly remembered by the Hampshire faithful. Perhaps his finest knock was his 94 not out against Durham at Basingstoke in 2008 which steered Hampshire to an unlikely victory on a wicket favouring the bowlers. The County successfully chased a victory target of 240, by far the highest total in the match, with two wickets in hand. No less memorable was his 107 against Glamorgan at Cardiff in 2014. It was a match that Hampshire needed to win to secure promotion but on a misty first morning their total stood at 53 for five when he walked to the wicket. However, he and James Vince (144) then added 225 in 58 overs. The County never looked back and, aided by a resourceful second innings bowling performance by James Tomlinson, went on to secure a famous win by 291 runs.

Our speaker has, of course, transferred his skill to limited-overs cricket also. His shrewd partnerships with Neil McKenzie in 2010 and with Simon Katich in 2012 were significant factors in both of Hampshire's T20 triumphs, and success in the CB40 at Lord's in the latter year. He holds the record for Hampshire's highest individual innings record in a List A match at the Ageas Bowl: 167 not out v Ireland in 2009.

However, two other one day innings earned him an indelible niche in the County's history. He played both in 2005, his first season with Hampshire, as the side won the C & G Trophy. First, he scored a very fine and superbly judged 100 in the semi-final against Yorkshire at home. He then played an even better innings in the final at Lord's. Driving supremely off the front foot, and whipping the ball through mid wicket, he made 104. Another feature of his innings was excellent placement and using the pace of the ball to push several twos. He and Nic Pothas put on 134 for the second wicket off only 20 overs. (The pair had also added 147 for the same wicket in the semi-final). Our speaker remains Hampshire's only centurion in a Lord's Cup Final.

Hampshire's fielding performance in the match against Yorkshire was arguably the best in the County's history. The catching, picking up and throwing and athleticism were a wonder to behold. Sean Ervine was one of those very much involved. His hundred at Lord's was also notable for his very quick running between the wickets.

However, shortly after the final, he injured his knee whilst bowling against Warwickshire at the Ageas Bowl. He has had to cope with the effects of that injury ever since. Happily, he has held some blinders at slip in the interim and caught securely in the outfield, none more so than when he held a boundary catch (off Adam Wheater) at Chelmsford to bring about a two run win in the Championship in 2012.

He has been a useful partnership breaker with his right-arm medium bowling, with a best bowling performance of five for 60 against Glamorgan at Cardiff in 2005. The fact that he claimed 42 wickets in his first season, prior to his injury, demonstrates just how good a bowler he might have become. As it is, however, he is the only man to have scored 8000 runs and taken 200 wickets in the Rose/Ageas Bowl era.

SEAN MICHAEL ERVINE was born in Harare on 6 December 1982. Cricket was in his genes; his grandfather, father, and uncles all played first-class cricket. His younger brother Craig is a current Zimbabwe international and made his maiden test century (146) against New Zealand at Bulawayo in August.

Sean made his first-class debut at the age of 19 for the CFX Academy in March 2001. Interestingly, he skippered the side. Prior to joining Hampshire he had appeared in five tests (HS 86 v Bangladesh at Harare in 2003/4) and 42 ODIs (HS 100 v India at Adelaide in 2003/4). He had also bowled regularly and with some success, particularly in ODIs. He therefore forsook a potentially long international career to join Hampshire.

Playing at the Rose Bowl was not a new experience for him. He played twice on the ground when touring with Zimbabwe in 2003, one of the matches being the inaugural ODI staged there. Little could he have imagined just how much he would become embedded in the consciousness of Hampshire supporters in the years ahead. We have been lucky to see him play.

### NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at Test Valley Golf Club, on Wednesday 16 November, starting at 2pm. The speaker will be Dean Allen, whose subject will be the politics associated with early cricket in South Africa. A bar meal will be available to members, subject to prior booking. Members wishing to eat beforehand should contact Susanne Marlow as soon as possible (telephone number on the Society's fixture card) so that she can apprise the Golf Club of likely numbers.

### HAMPSHIRE PLAYED THERE ONCE (3) ESSEX

	First Match	Last Match	P	W	L	D
Leyton	1895	1961	17	1	7	9
Colchester, Castle Park	1920	1995	7	3	2	2
Southend-on-Sea	1925	1987	7	3	2	2
Chelmsford	1927	2014	19	4	9	6
Colchester, Garrison Ground	1931	1931	1	-	1	-
Brentwood	1938	1953	3	-	2	1
Westcliff-on-Sea	1946	1971	5	1	2	2
Romford	1950	1965	5	1	1	3
Clacton-on-Sea	1954	1958	2	1	-	1
Ilford	1963	1999	6	2	3	1
			72	16	29	27

When researching this piece it was noticeable that so many of Essex's best players influenced matches between the two sides hugely, thus contributing to Hampshire's poor record on their grounds.

With the ball, **Walter Mead**, brothers **Peter and Ray Smith**, and in more recent times, **John Lever**, **Neil Foster**, **Ray East**, **Peter Such** and **John Childs** all enjoyed themselves. Batsmen **Percy Perrin**, **CAG "Jack" Russell**, **Jack O'Connor**, **Graham Gooch**, **Ken McEwan**, **Nasser Hussein** and **Mark Waugh** did so similarly.

However, the two men that stand out above all others with both bat and ball were **Morris Nichols** (in the late 20s and early 30s) and **Trevor Bailey** (in three decades from the 40s to the 60s). They terrorised Hampshire, turning match after match into a virtual benefit to increase their run and wicket tallies and improve their averages. Nichols' performance in the sole match at Colchester's Garrison Ground in 1931 (see below) was indicative of his hold over Hampshire during his career. Strangely, the record of that other Essex great all-rounder, **JWHT Douglas**, was muted.

There were no matches between the two sides in 1901 and 1902, and from 1904-1911.

Essex's main ground, from their admission to the County Championship in 1895 until 1933, was **Leyton**. They later returned to play there between 1957 and 1977. Hampshire's only victory at the venue was in 1896. Even in their championship season of 1961, the County's performance at Leyton was in direct contrast to the verve with which they otherwise played; they were soundly defeated by 8 wickets in their lowest key performance of the season by far. Bailey emphasised his hold over the County, claiming match figures of 11-107. The ground was a hoodoo over a period of more than 60 years. However, Hampshire did enjoy a few days in the sun there, none more so than in 1913. After a rumbustious century by Lionel Tennyson, Cecil Abercrombie (165) and George Brown (140 not out, batting at eight) flayed the Essex bowling, putting on a Hampshire record of 325 for the seventh wicket in three and a half hours. The match was drawn.

#### COLCHESTER, THE GARRISON GROUND, 1931

The first day's play was extraordinary as 27 wickets fell on a rain affected pitch. Hampshire were dismissed in 90 minutes. Only Jim Bailey (31), who batted an hour, made any headway. Essex fared no better. Giles Baring took three wickets before lunch and went on to bowl unchanged in the innings. Alec Kennedy took the other wicket to fall. Essex's innings lasted the same time as Hampshire's had done. By the close of play, however, Essex looked to have gained the advantage by reducing Hampshire to 113 for 7. But for a typically aggressive bout of hitting by Tennyson (30 in 18 minutes), Hampshire's plight would have been even more precarious.

Hampshire were eventually dismissed by 12pm on the second morning. Needing 151 to win, wickets fell steadily but Hampshire were unable to dislodge the redoubtable Nichols, whose watchful innings over 135 minutes, steered Essex to victory.

Baring's first innings figures remained a record by a Hampshire bowler until Bob Cottam took 9-25 against Lancashire at Old Trafford in 1965.

#### SCORES:

Hampshire 69 and 150 (Nichols 5-48)

Essex 69 (Baring 9-26) and 151-8 (Nichols 53 not out)

Essex won by two wickets.

## LEO HARRISON

Members will be aware that Leo Harrison died on 12 October, aged 94.

Those who were there still go misty-eyed when they recall his brilliant fielding against the West Indians at the County Ground in 1950. Alan Rayment, who was 12<sup>th</sup> man for the match, recalls the wonderful timing of his runs to retrieve the ball just as it reached the boundary ropes, and his accurate throws into the wicketkeeper's gloves over the top of the stumps. It is worth mentioning that the boundary was constantly reduced during that first day to accommodate the vast crowd who came to watch the visitors' glamorous batting line-up.

Leo Harrison was, of course, Hampshire's wicket-keeper in their championship summer of 1961. In his early days, he usually kept wicket only if Neil McCorkell was absent. When the latter retired, Harrison played second fiddle to Ralph Prouton and, briefly, David Blake. Remarkably, he did not become Hampshire's regular 'keeper until 1954, when he was approaching 32 years of age. Such was his prowess with the gloves that he was selected for the Players against the Gentlemen at Lord's in 1955, and for the MCC v Australians in the following summer. In 1959, he claimed a Hampshire record of 83 dismissals (76 ct; 7 st). Twenty seven of those came in August; Brylcreem rewarded him with two sets of gold cuff links as the leading wicketkeeper for the month. Given the continued reduction in the programme, it is certain that his season's tally will never be exceeded. He was the County's first choice behind the stumps until 1962, when he was succeeded by Bryan Timms. He made his final appearance in 1966 against Surrey at Basingstoke, when Timms was injured. He was then 43 years old.

He was a schoolboy batting prodigy, who switched from being a left-handed batsman to a right-hander. He made such an impression that one leading ex-player and cricket writer thought he had seen "the new Bradman". He graduated to the first team at the age of 17 in two matches at the end of the 1939 season. He was to become the penultimate surviving cricketer to have played in the first-class game prior to WW2. John Manners, now aged 102, and also of Hampshire, made his debut 80 years ago, in 1936.

When cricket resumed after the war, it became cruelly apparent that he had developed sight problems and that his precocious talent would not be fulfilled. He took to wearing glasses but struggled with the bat for the next five years. Hampshire, though, no doubt because of his expertise with the gloves, persevered. They were rewarded when he scored 1000 runs in both 1951 and 1952. In the former, he batted with great skill to make 122 against Worcestershire at the County Ground, a performance for which he was awarded his county cap. His highest score of 153 against Nottinghamshire at Bournemouth was compiled in the following year. Inevitably, though he scored another century in 1954-his last, his productivity tailed off as he concentrated on wicket-keeping. Significantly, he recorded his highest aggregate in seven years in Hampshire's championship summer. In the run-in against Warwickshire at the County Ground in mid-August, he made a crucial contribution to his side's eight wicket victory. Hampshire were second best for the first day and a half. At one stage, they were 140 for five in response to their visitors' first innings total of 343 for nine declared. Mike Barnard and Peter Sainsbury then

took the score to 217 before the latter was out; he was quickly followed by his captain, Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie. The County were in a precarious position once more. At that juncture, Leo Harrison joined Barnard and the pair put on 101 runs in only an hour. Harrison's contribution was 34. Barnard went on to an undefeated 114. The advantage had now swung Hampshire's way. The captain declared directly his team had edged in front. With only 40 minutes batting time remaining, Butch White and Derek Shackleton shot out four Warwickshire batsmen for 20. The die was cast. The pair ran through the remainder of the batting on the next morning and Jimmy Gray's 74 not out eased Hampshire to victory with plenty of time to spare.

After Leo Harrison's death, Alan Rayment commented that he was a "great team man". This is borne out in an interview that John Arlott conducted with the team after they had secured the Championship. The long serving wicket-keeper said that he did not want to say too much as he was "more or less emotionally upset, but I do thank everybody for the magnificent way they fought this year and I cannot think of anything nicer than to say it couldn't happen to a better captain than we have at the moment".

After he stopped playing, he became Hampshire's coach from 1964 until 1967 but left because "the pay was so poor". His most notable contribution in that capacity was that through his insistence on the genius of Barry Richards after seeing him play against Hampshire 2<sup>nd</sup> XI in 1965, the County eventually signed the great South African.

John Arlott wrote in his autobiography "Basingstoke Boy" that Leo was his best friend in cricket". That sentiment was reciprocated. He undoubtedly helped the great commentator in analysis of players' techniques and the finer points of the game. Arlott immortalised him by conveying his send-off to batsmen when they were out: "Hard luck mate; it ain't half a blooming game". Leo Harrison was also a boon companion of Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie. When his captain went racing or enjoyed his late nights, he always seemed to be accompanied by his wicket-keeper. He had the ear of his skipper and was a constant source of sage advice.

He was already employed by a building firm in Bournemouth when he left the game and became a full-time employee until his retirement in 1987. By then, he was a director. He had obtained his interest in the trade from his father and built his own house with his benefit money in 1958. His benefit had realised £3,200, which was a Hampshire record at the time. His other great love was fishing. He owned a boat in Christchurch Harbour in which he used to go to sea until an arthritic knee – undoubtedly caused by wicket-keeping – forced him to sell it in 1996.

He always attended any Players' Reunion; as he aged, the love and esteem in which he was held grew correspondingly. He always possessed a twinkle in his eye. He was born in Mundeford, and died there. Though his village became part of Dorset during his lifetime, Leo Harrison was most assuredly a Hampshire man.

Just for the record, he played in 387 matches for Hampshire, scored 8708 runs (avge. 17.66), including six centuries and 27 half centuries, and claimed 666 dismissals (567 ct; 99 st).

