

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Shaun Udal

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**THE SOCIETY'S DAY AT THE CRICKET
SATURDAY 3 JUNE 2017**

Society members enjoyed another splendid day at the cricket on 3 June. Some members renewed acquaintances from the inaugural event in 2016; new friends were also made as the conversation flowed around the tables at breakfast, lunch and tea.

As with last year, the occasion coincided with eventual Hampshire victories. In 2016, the county overcame Nottinghamshire to record their first win of the season. Their only other win in the Championship last year was also against the same opponents at Trent Bridge in mid-August.

On the day itself, members watched Jimmy Adams move from his overnight 104 to 166, scoring prolifically on the leg-side, and Sean Ervine complete the second double century (203) of his career. The pair added 367 for the third wicket, a partnership for that wicket exceeded for Hampshire only by the Michael Carberry/Neil McKenzie epic of 523 against Yorkshire at the Ageas Bowl in 2011. Also noteworthy was the performance of the young Warwickshire off-spin bowler Sukhjot (Sunny) Singh, who bowled 50 overs and finished with figures of six for 144 on only his second Championship appearance. Is he one for the future?

Many thought Hampshire had batted too slowly in progressing from their overnight 294 for three to 515 all out. However, they quickly made up for any potentially lost time by reducing Warwickshire to 49 for six by the close. The post-tea session was therefore the pivotal session of the match when debutant Mark Salisbury claimed two wickets, as did the exciting Mason Crane; Australian raised, Wisconsin-born Ian Holland also took a wicket; Michael Carberry contributed in the field with a superb run out. It was a most thrilling passage of play.

Despite a defiant century (101) by Jonathan Trott on the next day, and rain interruptions, Hampshire went on to secure victory by an innings and 94 runs.

Richard Griffiths, Hampshire's affable and conscientious Joint Archivist, added interest to the day by bringing along *The Cricketer* binder for 1922, and some of his most impressively well annotated files. That year was, of course, the one in which Hampshire were famously bowled out for 15 at Birmingham by the day's opponents Warwickshire. Richard had spotted that HV Hesketh Prichard had died on the same day as that innings, and he prompted a discussion on whether the two events may have been connected. Hesketh Prichard played for the County between 1900 – 1912 and was one of the most penetrative fast bowlers ever to appear for the County. He was also an explorer, writer, conservationist, and decorated soldier in the First World War whose contribution to the Allied success through his organisation

of sniping has still to be fully acknowledged. He was also much liked and respected in the county as a whole and had played with or against a number of the Hampshire players who were in the team at Birmingham.

MEETINGS

Wednesday 5 April 2017 – Report

Darren Bicknell brought the Society's 2016/17 season to a close with an entertaining address on his life in the game. As is often the case with so many brothers who eventually make their way into first-class cricket, his first matches were in the back garden. In an early indication of what was to follow, Darren – the oldest - generally batted and Martin bowled. They were fortunate in that they had supportive parents. They learned discipline from their father. Darren went on to play at Normandy CC and then Guildford. His career developed more slowly than Martin's. The latter was included in Surrey youth teams from the age of 11. Darren was first selected at Under 15 level, as an opening bowler who batted at ten in the order.

He scored a century for Surrey U19s against Surrey 2nd XI and was offered a contract by Mickey Stewart on the following day. Thereafter, his progression into the county side was swift. He was selected for the 1st XI after just six weeks on the staff and made an immediate impression by hitting his first ball to the boundary. He was proud of his first century, against Hampshire. He had been 95 not out overnight but nerves did not affect him. After his dismissal, he was congratulated by Malcolm Marshall on his way back to the pavilion. The great fast bowler had run halfway around the boundary to shake his hand.

He went to Australia the following winter to play club cricket; one of the key elements in the offer was that of a promise of a job. It transpired that the job was a bouncer. His subsequent overseas tours with England representative sides were all memorable, for differing reasons. He went down with salmonella in Kenya. He loved Zimbabwe and was saddened by later events on the political scene there. He thought Pakistan was a wonderful place, but the team were unable to leave their hotel because of demonstrations in favour of Saddam Hussain. In Sri Lanka, the Defence Minister was blown up two and a half miles from the hotel. A vote was taken on whether to stay or return home. The temperatures were also incredibly hot. When he toured the West Indies and Bermuda, there were no soldiers or guns, but the West Indies' opening attack comprised Courtney Walsh, Kenny Benjamin and Tony Gray, all genuinely fast bowlers. He felt privileged to have played during a period when the best cricketers in the world came over to play county cricket.

He elucidated on his final seasons with Surrey. He suffered a stress fracture of the back and, during his absence, other players came in and did well. He scored a century in his penultimate match at Hove but was then dismissed for a duck by Dominic Cork in his last innings.

He played at Notts because he felt he could make a difference. They won the Championship in 2005, the year after the departure of Kevin Pietersen. He recounted the match at Canterbury which Notts famously won after a seemingly generous

declaration by the Kent captain, David Fulton, and thereby become County Champions. It came about after a canny negotiation by the Notts skipper, Stephen Fleming, who knew that Fulton had to respond in the interests of his team, who were themselves in with an outside chance of winning the Championship. The match was followed by much celebration. The Notts team had already checked out of their hotel. They tried to check back in, but could not. They therefore slept overnight in Margate prior to returning home. In the final match, Notts played Hampshire, who overwhelmed them. Facing an impossible task to avoid defeat, most of the Notts team lost their wickets in quite short order. Our speaker, however, persevered, much to the annoyance of Shane Warne who was by now bored with the proceedings and wanted to get off the field. The latter enticed Bicknell to reach a well deserved century as quickly as possible. Ironically, he was eventually dismissed for 97, caught at the wicket attempting the stroke which would have brought up his hundred. He retired at the end of the following season, at the end of which Notts were relegated. .

Other snippets worth recording were that brother Martin dismissed him five times in eight innings (!), that his one t20 match was an occasion at Derby when he was called up late and arrived 10 minutes before the start and that his most prized wicket was that of Nasser Hussein.

Finally, he touched on the work of the Belvoir Trust. Over 3000 primary school and disabled children have benefitted from their scheme to date.

DOUGLAS INSOLE

Members will be aware that Doug Insole died on 6 August, aged 91. The obituaries referred to him being in the eye of the storm in two of cricket's most notable schisms of the 20th century: the D'Oliveira Affair (when he was Chairman of Selectors) and the Court case involving Kerry Packer (when he was Chairman of the Test and County Cricket Board). It was worth noting that both posts were voluntary; he was unpaid.

Doug Insole addressed the Society on 18 November 1992 in the Desmond Eagar Suite at the County Ground, Southampton. He began by recalling the great Hampshire players and administrators of his early years, notably Harry Altham, Cecil Paris, Neville Rogers, Jimmy Gray, Derek Shackleton and Vic Cannings. He then spent a considerable time recounting the then recent successes of Essex. (They won the County Championship six times between 1979 and 1992, never previously having won the competition, and were also successful in two Lord's Cup Finals and three Sunday Leagues up to the latter year). The foundations to their success was laid in the sixties, when the club took the radical decision to reduce the number of playing staff to 12 (!) and buy the County Ground at Chelmsford.

He possessed an endearingly ironic sense of humour. His only Sunday League appearance was the famous occasion at Yeovil in 1969, when Somerset's Brian Langford bowled eight successive maidens. Insole said that Brian Ward always claimed he was farming the strike. To add insult to injury a young lad urinated in his cricket bag on the train back to Paddington and when he reached his car, he found he had a flat tyre!

At the time of his death, Essex seemed almost certain to be crowned County Champions again for the first time since 1992. If it does transpire, the title will be a fitting tribute to his long association with the County, and undoubtedly dedicated to his memory.

HAMPSHIRE PLAYED THERE ONCE

(5) GLOUCESTERSHIRE

	First Match	Last Match	P	W	L	D
Cheltenham College	1907	2005	17	3	9	5
Bristol, County Ground*	1909	2014	53	22	10	21
Clifton College	1920	1921	2	1	1	-
Gloucester, Spa Ground	1923	1923	1	-	-	1
Gloucester, Wagon Works Gr +	1926	1990	12	3	3	6
Cheltenham, Victoria Park	1929	1929	1	-	1	-
			86	29	24	33

*Also called Ashley Down Ground

+Later named Tuffley Park

The first match between the two Counties was not until 1907, but from that year on, they played each other home and away in every season of three-day championship cricket until its cessation in 1992. From 1993 until 1999, Counties played each other once, with home and away fixtures in alternate years.

Since the introduction of two divisions in 2000, the two Counties have been in the same division for only six seasons: in division 1 in 2005, and division 2 in 2001, 2003, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

In researching Hampshire's matches against Gloucestershire, it was easy to fall into revelry as the performances of the great names in the latter's history were revealed. The years leading up to the First World War, were dominated by Gilbert Jessop and George Dennett. The former scored 92 in the inaugural fixture at Cheltenham College. He then confirmed his reputation as one of the fastest scorers in all cricket history by hammering rapid centuries in each innings - 61 in 95 minutes and 129 in 98 minutes - in the first encounter at Bristol in 1909.

Hampshire managed to salvage a draw. In 1911, he moved to 108 in 83 minutes. Even Jessop, though, was outdone by Hampshire's captain, EM Sprout, who blasted the County's fastest century in an improbable 45 minutes. He and AE Fielder put on 147 for the tenth wicket which laid the foundations for Hampshire's eventual victory by an innings and 103 runs.

It can be seen that Hampshire possess an excellent record at Bristol. They were defeated by 76 runs (Dennett taking 8-72, and 8-74) in 1912 but were not beaten on the ground again until 1937. Walter Hammond's record against Hampshire was strangely muted but he made his only century (117) against the County on a home ground in this match. Gloucestershire's eventual match winner was, though, Tom Goddard (8-80 and 6-66).

Goddard was a towering figure in every sense. He claimed more wickets (264) against Hampshire than any other County. His tally is also a record for any bowler against Hampshire. Tall (six foot three inches), his capacious hands and long fingers enabled him to give the ball a prodigious tweak. Batsmen were invariably greeted with a posse of fielders in the leg trap. He took 2979 wickets in his career. It seems almost bizarre that early on he was released by Gloucestershire. He was originally a pace bowler. He went to Lord's ground staff, experimented with off-spin and returned in 1929 to become the most prolific bowler in county cricket in the 1930s and 1940s. Looking through the scores it seemed as if matches against Hampshire were played solely for his benefit. He took five wickets in an innings against the County on his home grounds on 15 occasions and claimed ten in an innings five times. (He was only marginally less prolific on Hampshire grounds where his respective figures were 11/4). In 1939, he took 24 wickets against the county – 12 at both Bristol and Bournemouth. He was a thorn in Hampshire's side until his retirement in 1952. His capability is shown by the fact that Philip Mead was virtually his rabbit. Goddard dismissed him on no fewer than 17 occasions. The only Hampshire batsman who seemed to make any sense of him was John Arnold, who registered four centuries on Gloucestershire grounds between 1932 and 1948.

Goddard's presence prompted a run of four consecutive wins at Bristol for Gloucestershire between 1937 and 1947. As Goddard's powers waned, Hampshire resumed their dominance. In the twenty years between 1949 and 1968 (inclusive) they never lost a match there. The two matches in 1958 and 1959 revealed Derek Shackleton (9 – 59 and 9 – 81) and Roy Marshall (122 and 150) in their best form. Shackleton also ran through the Gloucestershire side with eight for 27 in 1964 when the home side was bowled out for 50 in their first innings. Gloucestershire's lowest score against the County, was however, 34 at Bristol in 1914 when Alec Kennedy (4 – 19) and Jack Newman (6 – 14) bowled unchanged in the first innings. Mead then scored 104 not out; the next highest score in the match was 39.

Gloucestershire players to prosper in the post war years were George Emmett, Tony Brown and, particularly with the ball, John Mortimore.

Inevitably, Mike Procter also figured prominently upon the introduction of overseas players. He scored three centuries between 1968 and 1977. In that latter year, Gloucestershire had to beat Hampshire in the last match of the season at Bristol to gain their first County Championship. The great South African all-rounder performed heroically with 115 and 57, as well as taking six for 68 in Hampshire's first innings. However, he was thwarted by a pair of 94s by Barry Richards (in the first innings) and Gordon Greenidge (in the second) and Hampshire eventually cantered home by six wickets. Procter never spared himself in his county's cause. Zaheer Abbas was regarded in awe by his Gloucestershire contemporaries but he never made a century against Hampshire on his home grounds.

Hampshire's fortunes at Cheltenham were in direct contrast to those at Bristol. On pitches invariably receptive to spin, Dennett, Charlie Parker, Goddard, Mortimore and David Allen subjugated Hampshire batsmen over a period of some 60 years. The home side didn't quite have everything their own way towards the end of that epoch. In his splendid Indian Summer, Peter Sainsbury (10-86 Match) carried Hampshire to within one wicket of victory in 1971. Latterly, the lion-hearted Courtney Walsh enjoyed some memorable matches there to prove his adaptability, none more so than in 1986. Needing only 116 to win, Hampshire sailed to 63 for two. Walsh would not be denied, however. He claimed six for 38 as Hampshire were bowled out for 98.

Hampshire first won on the ground in 1908 but were not victorious again until 1970, courtesy of a Richards masterpiece (94) in the final innings. No Hampshire player scored a century there until 2005. In yet another remarkable match, they were 81 for seven in their first innings. Andy Bichel then joined Nic Pothas. The former was dropped off a stinging caught and bowled chance before he had scored. It was an unlikely prelude to a record Hampshire eighth wicket partnership of 257 (Pothas 139; Bichel 138). Hampshire eventually ran out winners by 78 runs. Shaun Udal took six for 61 in the final innings to confirm that batting last at Cheltenham is always a hazardous pursuit.

Perhaps appropriately, as he was born in Wiltshire, which borders the two counties, David Turner made Hampshire's highest score on a Gloucestershire ground when he made 184 not out at Tuffley Park in 1987. He and Greenidge (163) shared a third wicket stand of 311, a Hampshire record against their west country rivals.

There were two grounds on which Hampshire played once:-

1923 Gloucester Spa Ground. Match Drawn.

Gloucestershire 113 (Kennedy 7-40)

Hampshire 145 (Parker 6-69)

Rain was a constant factor and no play was possible on the final day.

1929 Cheltenham, Victoria Park. Lost by 114 runs.

Gloucestershire 212 (Kennedy 6-58) and 117 (Kennedy 5-52, Newman 5-43)

Hampshire 167 (Goddard 4-78, Parker 5-38) and 148 (Goddard 7-46, Parker 3-72).

Hampshire's formidable pair of bowlers were upstaged, not for the only time, by Gloucestershire's destructive spin twins.

Hampshire have also played away to Gloucestershire at four other grounds in List A matches: Moreton-in-Marsh (1972), Lydney (1974), Trowbridge (1989) and Swindon (1991).

BOOK REVIEW

The Kings of Summer by Duncan Hamilton (pub Safe Haven) Price £9.99

This book's dedication is "For those who love the County Championship"

Duncan Hamilton begins with a brief discourse on Sir Neville Cardus, only partially because he is writing his biography. Against the backdrop of last year's thrilling Championship decider between Middlesex and Yorkshire at Lord's, he captures perfectly not only the unique essence of Championship cricket, but the rituals and routines of those who came to watch a day's play or, indeed an entire match. Hamilton nails it absolutely. It is nothing less than a fulsome love letter to the competition. Never has a book's dedication been so apt. Given this summer's reduction in the number of Championship matches and the proposals for franchises from 2020 onwards, the slim volume (117 pages) may well become an indispensable and nostalgic timepiece, fit to rank with the works of Cardus, Arlott, and among others, Alan Gibson and Stephen Chalk on a much loved competition which has meant so much to so many for over a century, but which is now being systematically dismantled.

DAY/NIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP MATCHES AND THE PINK BALL

History was made on Monday 26 June when a full round of Championship matches started at 2pm, and with a pink ball. Was it a success? The jury must still be out.

Hampshire's match against Somerset produced the lowest number of runs (229) scored in a full day's play that the editor has ever seen. Jimmy Adams (49) and Liam Dawson (53) started reasonably brightly in an opening partnership of 84, but neither was able to accelerate. Was it the pitch? Or the pink ball, which by all accounts softened quite quickly? Or both? Liam Dawson was critical of the ball. And yet many more runs were scored elsewhere. There were 389 at Hove, 374 at Headingley, 352 at Chelmsford, 326 at Northampton and 315 at Trent Bridge. George Bailey thankfully added interest to the day by imaginatively declaring the Hampshire innings at 211 for 8 so that Somerset had to negotiate six overs with dew on the turf. With the ball hard, they negotiated that potentially difficult period with ease and finished on 18 without losing a wicket.

Less than a fortnight earlier, the country had been sweltering in temperatures in the 30s. However, with rain now around, the match continued in chilly, wet conditions, with play being interrupted and runs hard to come by. There was some compensation in that the match produced an exciting conclusion with Somerset on 88/8, well short of their victory target.

It was hoped that the match would attract a large evening crowd. There was a slight spike round about 6 o'clock on the first day, but the chilly weather resulted in the crowd drifting away long before the end.

And so, in Hampshire, the experiment was a literal damp squib. It seems sure to be repeated, but it must be hoped that, if it is played at home, a faster pitch will be prepared.

THE BIG BLAST (t20)

One of Cricket's other "Big Ideas" this summer was to play the Big Blast (t20) tournament during most of July and all of August, with one round of Championship matches scheduled early in the latter month. It meant, that over a 56-day period, there was only a maximum of 18 days play, with an additional one or two days for the eight Counties who reached the final stages of the Big Blast. It was easy to forget that a cricket season was in progress.

The competition coincided, of course, mostly with the school summer holiday period for those attending state schools. If the notion was that it would lead to large crowds then the outcome would have provided much food for thought for those marketing the proposed new franchise tournament. Lord's and The Oval, situated, of course in London, the only city in the country to compare remotely with the size of cities in India, were mainly sold out, though there were sparsely populated terraces at the latter in one televised Sunday match.

The matches at the Ageas Bowl demonstrated that the working patterns in Society influence the size of the audience profoundly. The two Friday matches (against Middlesex on 14 July) and (Somerset on 18 August) that the editor attended attracted the largest crowds. Far fewer people attended the Tuesday and Thursday games. People work extraordinarily long hours from Monday-Thursday these days; this factor will always limit attendance during the evenings of day/night Championship cricket also. In a wet, miserable summer, many opted to leave the country in search of sunshine. The latter part of the competition also coincided with the start of the football season. A large number of sports fans in Hampshire invest in season tickets in their football club and that will always be first priority on the family purse.

As in previous years, it was instructive to see a multi-generational audience at the Big Blast matches. They enjoyed a good evening's entertainment for the whole family (of all sexes), over three generations in many cases. The age range was 5-75 or even older. There were also a very large number of Hampshire members. Those propounding franchise cricket always talk about attracting a new audience. One wonders if they know what is already happening.

Finally, on the field of play, no overseas player consistently influenced the outcome of matches. With very few exceptions, the general standard of players in world cricket these days is much lower than those who played in the County Championship from 1970-1990. English county cricketers more than held their own in the t20 format this summer. The two men who mostly determined Hampshire's matches were James Vince and Mason Crane, though Shahid Afridi, in his one telling contribution of the summer, propelled Hampshire to finals day with a marvellous display of calculated hitting at Derby, reaching a century in a season's best (at the time) 43 balls. This piece is written on the eve of finals day. Can Hampshire lay their Edgbaston hoodoo?

A fuller article on Hampshire's season will appear in the next Newsletter.

