

NEWSLETTER No. 241 – DECEMBER 2003

3 December 2003 - Meeting

There were few more arresting sights in county cricket in the 1960's than **DAVID WILLIAM WHITE**, always known as "Butch". Whether bowling, batting or fielding he simply demanded attention.

He roared to the wicket, his energetic run up culminating in a crescendo of activity in his bounding delivery stride as he hurled the ball towards the batsman as fast as was humanly possible. With the exception of Harold Rhodes he was the fastest bowler in county cricket in the early 60's. Only those two great West Indian pace men, Andy Roberts and Malcolm Marshall, have bowled faster in the County's cause.

"Butch" White was capable of quite vivid, match-winning spells of bowling. Many will recall his final over of the second day against Sussex at Portsmouth in Hampshire's Championship season of 1961. Sussex's batting, despite the presence of their two illustrious strokemakers in Ted Dexter and Jim Parks, was torpid in the extreme. The weather was bitterly cold with a biting, strong wind freezing spectators to the marrow. It seemed more like February than August. Many of the day's large crowd had drifted quietly away before stand-in captain, Roy Marshall, in his benefit match, threw the ball to him just before the seven o'clock close.

His first ball bowled Parks and his next was edged by Ian Thomson to wicket-keeper Leo Harrison. He achieved the hat-trick – Hampshire's first since 1939 – when he clean bowled Don Smith. He was still not finished. Graham Cooper managed a thick edge off the fourth ball to Jimmy Gray who dived but just failed to hold on to a difficult offering. The fifth ball was a bouncer. Cooper anticipating it, tried to hook but merely directed the ball to Henry Horton standing at gully. Butch had taken four wickets in five balls and effectively sealed the match. Those who left the ground just a few minutes before could scarcely have believed their eyes when they read next morning's newspapers. Dexter, the non-striker, must have experienced similar emotions. Sussex lost their last six wickets for just one run and Hampshire cantered home to an easy six-wicket victory.

Sussex were on the receiving end of another hat-trick the following year, this time at Hove.

In 1965, at Middlesbrough he took 6 for 10 (in 10 overs) as Yorkshire crashed to an all-out total of 23 – their lowest ever score in first-class cricket, and the smallest by any side against Hampshire.

His best analysis in first-class cricket was also an explosive effort, again at Portsmouth, in the following year. After taking three wickets on the first day, he polished off the Leicestershire innings early on the second morning with a spell of 6 for 15 in 8 overs to finish with 9 for 44. He thus confirmed a distinct liking for the Leicestershire batting. Three years earlier, in 1963, he had returned figures of 7 for 43 and 7 for 76 at Loughborough.

He also gave glimpses of his burning fires on the unsympathetic wickets of the Indian Sub-Continent on his one overseas tour with the M.C.C. He took four wickets in five balls against Services in a post-lunch spell at Calcutta and in his only two Tests – surely he deserved more – he dismissed both opening batsmen, the redoubtable Hanif and Imtiaz Ahmed in the first and bowled Imtiaz – who had a proven Test record, with his first ball in the second.

“Butch” White was also capable of batting with equal ferocity. His sole aim appeared to be to hit the ball as often, as hard and as high as possible. He was the classic tail-end hitter. Cricket is much the poorer for their passing. Left-handed, and of a good eye and immense strength, when allowed to free his arms he could drive the ball prodigious distances over long-off and long-arm.

He once hit former Hampshire off-spin bowler Dan Piachaud for 28 runs in one over (066664) in The Parks. He made three half centuries in first-class cricket, none of which took him long. His 51 not out detained the Sussex bowlers for only 20 minutes in Henry Horton’s benefit match at Portsmouth in 1965. When he scored 50 not out (four 4’s and four 6’s) against Surrey at Basingstoke in the following year his partner Mike Barnard was a complete bystander. The pair added 53 – the other runs were all extras.

However, his most valuable innings was at Portsmouth – how he must have enjoyed playing there – in that unforgettable match against Gloucestershire in 1961. Even now, the events of that final day seem barely plausible. After rain had interrupted the first day and washed out the second, it seemed at the start of play as if only first innings bonus points were at stake. Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie had other ideas. After Roy Marshall and Jimmy Gray had added 96 in only 70 minutes, the Hampshire captain then declared, thereby sacrificing the points and a first innings lead of 80. Both batsmen were furious. The County were eventually set 199 in 137 minutes, a tall order in those days. Hampshire lost wickets at regular intervals and when White came to the crease 39 runs were still required in 22 minutes with 3 wickets in hand. With instructions to “thrash on” he followed Ingleby-Mackenzie’s instructions to the letter. Despite losing Bryan Timms almost immediately, he hit powerfully, mainly off the back foot, to make 33 not out and take his side to victory with only 2 minutes remaining.

His fielding was equally wholehearted. Fielding on the boundary, where a pint was sometimes near to hand when he was bowling, he would chase after the ball with gusto before unleashing a strong throw to the wicket-keeper.

Born in Warwick on 14 February 1935, "Butch" White came to Hampshire via Warwickshire 2nd XI and the Army in which he was a driving instructor. He made his Hampshire debut in 1957, and upon the retirement of Vic Cannings gained a regular place and was capped in 1960, when he took 124 wickets. Statistically, it was to remain his best season. He again passed the century mark (117) in Hampshire's Championship year. In harness with Derek Shackleton and Bob Cottam he formed a formidable pace attack in the 1960's. A cartilage injury in 1970 effectively ended his career and he left Hampshire at the end of the following season. He went on to play for one season, mainly in limited overs matches, with Glamorgan in 1972 before obtaining the post of cricket coach at Christ's Hospital.

However, his love of playing cricket remained undiminished. He became a notable performer in Hampshire League cricket. He played for New Milton for a number of years and headed the overall league averages in 1973, 1976 and 1977.

Jimmy Gray once averred that Alan Castell had the greatest potential of any young cricketer he had ever seen. It could be said he became Hampshire's equivalent of the Dodo. He was the last of the County's English-born leg-spin bowlers. After making his debut in one match in 1961 at the age of 17, he played in three matches the following year before grabbing the headlines with some eye-catching feats in 1963. He returned match figures of 10 for 102 in 54 overs against Somerset at Bournemouth, a performance which prompted Bill Alley to remark that he was a better leg-spin bowler than was Richie Benaud at the same age. He then took 5 for 90 against Gloucestershire at Bristol a week later.

He had already given notice of his batting prowess at the end of the preceding season. On his Championship debut at Dean Park he frustrated the Yorkshire bowlers, including Fred Trueman with the new ball, to earn Hampshire an exciting and creditable draw. With Danny Livingstone he then added a record 230 for the ninth wicket against Surrey at Northlands Road. The West Indian strokemaker made 200; Castell 76, which was to remain his highest score.

He had also fielded brilliantly. He seemed to have the world at his feet. And then it all went horribly wrong. A week after his Bristol effort, Middlesex piled on 409 for 8 declared at Portsmouth. Yet he was entrusted with only six overs which cost just 14 runs. He was then left out of the following match but returned to perform reasonably against a strong Surrey side in the next game. He travelled with the County to Wellingborough. Roy Marshall had now taken over from Ingleby-Mackenzie, who had struggled against hepatitis all summer, and informed the young leg-spinner that he had no place in his plans. The hard-headed Marshall, whose captaincy was the antithesis of his batting, simply felt leg-spinners were too risky and potentially expensive. Alan Castell returned home on the train on the first morning. He played only once more that season.

Though he was selected for a Cavaliers side in the West Indies that winter his confidence had been dealt a shattering blow. He took only one wicket in 1964, did not play at all in 1965 and when he returned to the side in 1966 it was mainly as a seamer.

He played with some success for the next five years, until, like “Butch” White, he left Hampshire in 1971. His best year was in 1969 when he took 50 wickets, including a career best 6 for 22 against Somerset at Bath.

ALAN TERRANCE CASTELL was born in Oxford on 6 August 1943. He subsequently worked for Gordon’s Gin, from whom he retired some five years ago.

Our third speaker tonight Keith Wheatley, was a contemporary of Alan Castell on the Hampshire staff. Educated at Lord Wandsworth College, alma mater to Jonny Wilkinson, he joined Hampshire as an off-spin bowler in 1963 and made his debut in 1965. Invariably during that period the County played only one spin bowler, the experienced and dependable Peter Sainsbury, and it was difficult for a youngster to establish a regular place and develop his game. However, he worked on his batting but the advent of the incomparable Barry Richards and Gordon Greenidge, as well as Richard Gilliat and David Turner- four of the finest batsmen ever to play for Hampshire – thwarted his aspirations. Nevertheless, the game against Essex at Bournemouth in 1970 – his last season – demonstrated his undoubted talent. In the absence of four first team regulars he made 73 and took 3 for 49 (in 21 overs) and 2 for 17 (in 10 overs). His highest score was 79 not out against Kent at Maidstone in 1969. During the course of that innings he and Alan Castell added an unbeaten 83 in 47 minutes!

KEITH JAMES WHEATLEY was born in Guildford on 20 January 1946. Upon leaving Hampshire he joined the family business before becoming involved in the property market. This is his second visit to the Society; he previously addressed us, in company with Barry Reed, in March 1990.

OUR SPEAKERS IN FIRST-CLASS CRICKET FOR HAMPSHIRE

	M.	I.	N.O.	Runs	H.S.	Avge.	50	Ct
Butch White	315	374	101	2967	58*	10.86	3	103
Alan Castell	110	138	38	1600	76	16.00	4	87
Keith Wheatley	79	110	14	1781	79*	18.55	6	32
				Runs	Wkts	Avge	5wI.	10wM.
Butch White				25630	1097	23.36	56	5
Alan Castell				6903	225	30.68	8	1
Keith Wheatley				1954	69	28.31	-	-

The Society is very proud to welcome these three fine Hampshire cricketers to the Annual Buffet Supper.