

NEWSLETTER No. 253 - MARCH 2005

MEETINGS

9 March 2005 – Meeting

Tonight's speaker is **DOUGLAS MILLER**, author of the highly-acclaimed Born to Bowl: The Life and Times of Don Shepherd. Mr. Miller was born in Cheshire in 1937 and has spent most of his working life in market research. He is a keen cricketer, still playing village level and umpiring in the Thames Valley League. He was Quiz Champion of the Association of Cricket Societies in 2000. Anyone who has attended that event will appreciate what a splendid achievement this represents. He is on the Committee of the Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians, for whom he wrote a short, but comprehensive, book on the history of Gloucestershire's grounds. The Society extends to Douglas Miller the warmest of welcomes.

9 March 2005 – Annual General Meeting

Our speaker's address will be preceded by the Society's AGM. At the time of writing there will be a vacancy on the Committee. The work is not at all onerous. Committee members enjoy the privilege of hosting one speaker during the winter prior to a meeting and there are two business meetings a year (in September and February). If any member would like to discuss their involvement in the Society's affairs then please do not hesitate to contact any Committee member (see the Society's Programme card for details).

HAMPSHIRE'S NEW SIGNINGS (2)

KEVIN PIETERSEN

By far the highest profile of Hampshire's new signings during the winter is that of Kevin Pietersen. The tall (6 feet 4 inches) right-handed batsman, with the dyed blond streaked hair and stud in each ear, has attracted the headlines with his breathtaking strokeplay upon his introduction to international cricket in the last few months. He was originally selected only for the Zimbabwean leg of a long and tiring tour for those who stayed throughout. However, so assured was his performance, that, when Andrew Flintoff returned home for surgery after the Test series, he was called up for the one-day internationals against South Africa. He was originally omitted from the final leg of the tour because the England selectors were concerned about the anticipated hostile reception he would receive from crowd and opponents alike. He indeed received more than his share of boos, jeers and sledging but he responded in magnificent fashion. In an extraordinary display of sustained consistency he

plundered runs at better than a run a ball in the seven-match series. With his colleagues repeatedly failing he often played a lone hand, especially at Newlands. However, he amassed 454 runs, at more than a run a ball, scoring centuries at Bloemfontein, East London and Centurion Park. His East London hundred was made off only 69 balls, the fastest ever for England in one-day internationals. The feature of his batting was his clean leg-side hitting, he swatted some enormous sixes over mid-wicket.

KEVIN PETER PIETERSEN was born in Pietermaritzburg in Kwazulu-Natal province on 27 June 1980. Before the last month or so, most people in Durban's cricket fraternity remembered him as an off-spin bowler. It was in this capacity that he made his first-class debut, for Natal B, in 1997-98. He made steady rather than spectacular progress in the following three seasons and he never drew newspaper headlines until he played for Kwazulu-Natal against the touring England side in December 1999. First, batting at 9, he made an unbeaten 61. Then, in England's reply, he took 4 for 141 in a marathon spell of 55.5 overs. His notable victims were Michael Atherton, Nasser Hussain, Michael Vaughan and Chris Adams.

Shortly afterwards, he decided to pursue a career in county cricket. He played only 10 first-class matches in South Africa and felt that the quota system, whereby first-class sides were required to positively discriminate in favour of black players, was restricting his opportunities. It was a decision that has wrangled with South Africans ever since and he did not really win over players and spectators alike until his splendid innings at Centurion Park.

His mother had been born in Canterbury and he was therefore eligible to play county cricket without any qualification period. His first season for Nottinghamshire, in 2001, was a personal triumph. He rarely bowled but scored 1275 runs (avge. 57.95). The highest of his four centuries was a memorable 218 not out at Derby, during which he cleared the boundary ropes on no fewer than 9 occasions. In a high-scoring encounter, which yielded 1655 runs for the loss of only 25 wickets, he shared an undefeated sixth wicket stand of 372 with ex-Derbyshire favourite John Morris. The latter made a century in each innings. When Derbyshire played at Trent Bridge, Pietersen totally dominated a last wicket stand of 57 with Nadeem Malik, scoring all 55 runs made from the bat.

He performed unevenly in the following season. Though he averaged 62.21, he scored only 871 runs and made a significant number of those runs in just 4 innings when he passed a hundred. He failed to score a single 50. Among those four centuries, however, was a knock of 254 not out against Middlesex at Trent Bridge – the highest post-war score for Nottinghamshire.

With the traditional difficult second season behind him, he assimilated the lessons learnt and plundered 1546 runs (avge. 51.53) in 2003, among which was yet another double-century – 221 against Warwickshire at Edgbaston. It seemed, though, that not all was well in the dressing room. A well-publicised, and somewhat public, contretemps with his captain Jason Gallian, and the ensuing possibility of proceedings for unfair dismissal filled the sports pages for weeks.

He had been selected for the England A tour to India that winter and, putting his travails behind him, earned the plaudits with both his on and off field commitment. He was always the last to leave the nets and was eager to learn about and experience the local culture. On the field he stole a match on all his rivals for international recognition. He hit four centuries, three in first-class cricket, including 104 and 115 against South Zone at Gurgaon. When making 131 against India A in a one-day match earlier in the tour, he cover-drove the first ball of the match for four, reached his 50 off 32 balls with a trademark six over mid-wicket and finally made his runs off only 122 deliveries. He might have produced even more startling figures had he not been required to marshall the innings virtually single handedly. The next highest score was 29 and his side only totalled 228. It was a foretaste of what was to follow in South Africa this winter.

Whilst, on the surface, his relationship with Nottinghamshire was patched up prior to last season, the smart money was always on him leaving the County upon the expiry of his contract. He just failed to reach 1000 runs but still averaged over 50 as Nottinghamshire claimed the Division 2 title in style.

Kevin Pietersen therefore comes to Hampshire having scored 5512 runs at the impressive average of 54.03, and as a man who has made a most confident and assured start to his international career. The three obvious questions are just how good is he? Will he play against the Australians in the Test matches (his place in the one-day side seems unassailable. And just how much will the Hampshire faithful see of him? There is an understandable clamour for his inclusion in the Test side. The Rose Bowl wicket and the Australians will, though, provide a severe examination of his technique; the latter will not need to study too many videos to know how and where to bowl to him. However, he has passed, with flying colours, every test set on each occasion he has moved to a higher level. He will certainly not be found wanting in confidence which he appears to possess in abundance. His progress will undoubtedly be one of the most intriguing and well publicised aspects of the coming season.

Two players have joined Hampshire from Nottinghamshire during the winter. The other is Richard Logan, a tall (6 feet 1 inch) right-arm fast medium bowler. A former England Under-19 international, his career, like so many young quick bowlers, has been hindered by injury and loss of form. He has played only six first-class matches in the last two seasons. However, Hampshire were obviously struck with his potential when he claimed eight wickets in Nottinghamshire's emphatic victory at The Rose Bowl last summer.

RICHARD JAMES LOGAN was born in Stone, Staffordshire on 28 January 1980. He made his debut in first-class cricket for Northamptonshire in 1999 but, after taking 19 wickets in eight matches, he joined Nottinghamshire for the 2001 season. Though a shoulder injury sidelined him for six wickets he enjoyed some success taking 5 for 24 against Suffolk in the C & G Trophy and a career best 6 for 93 versus Derbyshire at Trent Bridge. He took 43 wickets that year and followed it with a further 35 in 2002.

In 37 first-class matches to date he has a career record of 107 wickets (avge. 34.79). In his youth he was a useful hockey player, having represented Staffordshire and the Midlands at junior level.

Another of Hampshire's signings has a South African upbringing. **JONATHAN JAMES McLEAN** is a right-handed batsman who was born in Johannesburg on 11 July 1980. He made his debut for Western Province in 2001/2. He played in two matches that season and in two the following year during which he made his only first-class half century to date – 57 against Free State at Bloemfontein. It was a well-constructed innings. In partnership with Ashwell Prince (98) they rescued their team's innings from a precarious 30 for 3 with a partnership of 121. Prince went on to enjoy a highly successful season which took him to the fringes of the South African Test side. However, after making only 9 in the next match against Griqualand West at Kimberley, McLean's career has largely been held in abeyance. He played another two matches in 2003-04 and, therefore, in 6 matches to date he has scored 162 runs at an average of 20.25. He would seem to be a very useful fielder having held 7 catches in his embryonic career.

Hampshire have signed him, though, on the basis of his highly successful season with the 2nd XI last season when he averaged 80. Known as "Jono" he has a British passport. He is therefore eligible to play for the County from the start of the season. He arrived early in February and has spent some of the time since in helping the Rose Bowl ground staff in pre-season preparations.

The County have also signed the highly-promising **DAVID GRIFFITHS**, a right-arm fast-medium bowler from Havant, on a one-year contract. Nineteen years old, he is a product of the Hampshire Academy who was in the England Under-19 squad for the tour of Malaysia and India this winter.

The popular **SIMON KATICH** will also be returning to Hampshire as the County's second overseas player. This will, of course, be his third consecutive season with the County. One of the most noteworthy issues of late was the decision of the Australian selectors to give Katich precedence over Michael Clarke to fill the vacant opening batsman berth left by Matthew Hayden's shoulder injury in the recent one-day series against New Zealand at Auckland. The precocious Clarke, who enjoyed a phenomenally productive VB series as an opening batsman, when Hayden was rested, was reportedly unhappy with his lack of time at the crease when he returned to the lower middle-order following the Queenslander's reinstatement.

Katich grasped his opportunity as he held the Australian innings top order together with 58 before Clarke (71 not out off 75 balls) and Mike Hussey (an unbeaten 65 off 73) battered the New Zealand bowlers at the end of the innings.

The regard with which Katich is held by the Australian selectors would seem to point to his inclusion in at least the 1-day series this summer, and possibly for the Test matches also. However, Hampshire reportedly have contingency plans for such an eventuality.