

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie

NEWSLETTER No. 254 - April 2005

BUSINESS AS USUAL

Those who were anticipating a decline in Australia's fortunes since the last Ashes series will now be aware that they remain just as formidable as they have been for- the past 10 years or so. The projected downturn was largely based on the expectation that Glenn McGrath and Shane Warne would be in decline. There was no such evidence during the winter as Australia carried all before them in both forms of cricket (as well as the inaugural 20120 international in New Zealand). The only indication of a chink in their armour was that Matthew Hayden clearly struggled for fitness and form, and after a breathtaking start to his Test career in India, Michael Clarke was found wanting for runs thereafter. However, Simon Katich filled one of the potential batting places in almost seamless fashion.

England did wonderfully well to win the Test series in South Africa with virtually only half the team firing on all cylinders. That situation will certainly not be enough to test Australia. The ensuing one-day series also showed that the England side is seriously destabilised when Flintoff is absent.

England's prospects are therefore a series of "ifs". If Harmison can find the form of last season, if England can find a reliable batsman at 3 and if they hold their slip catches, then England could yet cause an upset. They also have undeniable class, in the shape of Ian Bell, who should receive the nod ahead of Kevin Pietersen, waiting in the wings.

However, with McGrath and Wame, Gillespie staying fit and healthy competition between Kasprowicz and Lee for the remaining bowling slot they still possess a formidable attack. Even if England manage to dismantle or disrupt the Australian top-order they must still face the remarkable Adam Gilchrist, perhaps the finest attacking batsman the game has ever seen, coming in at 7. The head says that Australia will emerge as comfortable winners.

Hampshire will undoubtedly be seeking early victories to seal the Championship as quickly as possible and certainly to be in the box seat before Warne's scheduled departure in July. Much will depend on the openers, both batsmen and bowlers. If Michael Brown and James Adams are able to get a start then the later batting line-up looks formidable. If Chris Tremlett stays fit then early wickets are bound to be secured. There also seems, at least on paper, more overall strength in the squad. Shane Warne's captaincy will be as beguiling as his bowling. Hampshire undoubtedly look better equipped than on the previous occasions they were in

Division 1 of the Championship. Virtually all the other Counties are also in transition. It should prove to be a more fascinating summer than usual.

6th April 2005 - Meeting

The Society is very pleased to welcome **DAVID ALLEN** to this evening's meeting. Members will be familiar with his contributions, by way of interviews with former players, to the Hampshire Handbook. Recollections of their careers, their contemporaries and the matches they played in, are almost an extension of the Society's own winter season when members come to listen to and enjoy the reminiscences of cricketers, past and present. Tonight's meeting is therefore bound to be a very enjoyable and evocative one.

David Alien is a native of the County and first became a Hampshire member in their glorious championship year of 1961. He has since acquired an encyclopaedic knowledge of the County's history and its players. He has always taken a very keen interest in cricket in South East Hampshire and, indeed, is a "Mastermind"! on the subject. He edited the Hampshire Exiles Newsletter, also served on the County's Museum Sub-Committee before becoming Chairman of its successor the Heritage Sub-Committee.

He is a former Hampshire League player and a qualified coach, who earns his living as a Principal Lecturer at Portsmouth University.

9 February 2005 - Report

Society members spent a splendid evening in the company of Vic Isaacs as he recalled his 30 years in the game. He told of car journeys with David Turner with whom he formed a great friendship, of scoring for Kenya in the World Cup and a visit to Pakistan where he lectured on computer technology to officials there. He was just about to leave for South Africa to help the Cricket Board sort out their records. He was proud of scoring three Lord's finals victories and his remaining ambition was to score a County Championship.

The scorer's life is a very busy one nowadays and his duties now extend far beyond the hours of play. He is Hampshire Cricket's webmaster and always ensures that a report of the day's play is available on the website later on the same evening.

The most memorable of his erudite fund of stories was, however, not a cricket one. He recounted how, on a free day in the World Cup in India he and some colleagues made an appointment to visit Mother Teresa's orphanage in Calcutta. She not only answered the telephone but also welcomed them at the door which she opened herself, and showed them round. It literally was an experience of a lifetime.

9 March 2005 - Report

Douglas Miller, in a charismatic address, covered the book he had written on the great former Glamorgan bowler Don Shepherd, and the work of the Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians, of which he was Chairman. He was fortunate with the book on Shepherd as he had got to know him well whilst his subject hosted spectators on England's tours abroad. He was commissioned to write the work by Stephen Chalk, with Shepherd's agreement. The latter was such a legend and so popular in the Principality that the very mention of his name opened many doors. Our speaker had been privileged to visit and interview among others, Jim McConnon, Allan Watkins, Phil Clift, Alan Jones, Peter Walker and Bernard Hedges, with whom Shepherd roomed for 18 years. Both his former living captains, Ossie Wheatley and Tony Lewis held Don Shepherd in the highest regard. He possessed a big heart and always wanted to bowl, no matter the circumstances.

SOCIETY NEWS

At the Society's AGM preceding the March meeting those seeking re-election to the Committee were returned enbloc. However, a vacancy exists on the Committee following Phil Lockett's resignation after 23 years distinguished service for the Society. Phil received profound thanks for his immense contribution. Susanne Marlow invited members to put themselves forward to **fill** the vacancy.

It was also reported that in view of a significant escalation in cost the Society would not be returning to Basingstoke Apollo Hotel next winter. The replacement venue will be **TEST VALLEY GOLF CLUB at OVERTON**, a 10-minute car journey from Basingstoke. A map giving the location of the venue will be circulated with the Summer Newsletter.

SIMON KATICH AT THE AUSTRALIAN CRICKET SOCIETY

The Summer 2005 edition of Scoresheet, Newsletter of the Australian Cricket Society, reported on Simon Katich's appearance at their meeting at the MCG on 24 November. Two of the questions he was asked were on his county cricket career with both Durham and Hampshire, and Michael Clarke.

His answers, which will be of obvious interest to Hampshire supporters, were as follows:-

County Cricket: I learnt a lot playing cricket for Durham. For a start, at the time I was over there David Boon was captaining Durham. He taught me a great deal about how to bat on the much slower and more varied English wickets where the ball swung considerably more than it does here in the clearer and less murky air which you

encounter in Australia. English wickets assist the bowlers to seam the ball more effectively off the pitch than is the case here in Australia. I learnt quite quickly how to counter these weapons used by many bowlers operating under English conditions. Durham was a great learning experience for me as a young batsman. When I went to Hampshire a few seasons later I was older and wiser (hopefully). I continued my education in cricket from where I left off at Durham, and as a result experienced considerable success both with my batting and my bowling in English conditions.

Michael Clarke: he is a gifted, confident, attacking stroke maker. For one so young his judgement about what balls to play and which balls to leave, and when playing, what shot to make, is quite uncanny. On top of this he has a sound defence and an excellent temperament. He has fitted into the Australian team very well indeed, despite the fact that he is a good deal younger than many of the other players in the team.

HAMPSHIRE'S TRIPLE CENTURIANS

Last September's Newsletter (No. 247) contained a piece on Hampshire's triple centurions. The editor is grateful to two Society members for providing additional information on the subject.

Robby Wilton, who represented the Society at the recent Council of Cricket Societies quiz, has written with additional information on W.E.W. Collins. He did not quite slip into obscurity as originally suggested by the editor, as the following piece from Robby Wilton indicates:-

William Edmund Wood Collins was born in Cheriton, Glamorgan, on 16 June 1848 and died Summerhill, Heacham, Norfolk, on 7 January 1932. He was primarily a fast left-arm bowler - at first-class level he was no more than a tail end hitter. He was 5 years in the Radley XI, captain in the last 2, but did not get a blue at Oxford. He played only 7 first-class matches, highest score 56, with his best bowling performance in the first-class cricket 6 for 35 for Oxford Past & Present v. the Australians in 1888 when he was 40 years of age. He took 19 wickets in total in first-class cricket. Apparently, when he made his 338* there were no boundaries so every run was actually run! Besides "Leaves From.... An Old Country Cricketer's Diary" he also helped to compile "Annals of the Free Foresters". He also wrote on animal life. He played for Free Foresters and also represented Shropshire, Northamptonshire (1 867) and Hertfordshire (1 875). He was nicknamed "Colenso".

Neil Jenkinson also spotted that Horatio Dumbleton made 325 for the Royal Engineers against the Royal Marines at United Services Ground in Portsmouth in 1884. On the strength of that innings he was selected for his sole first-class match for Hampshire four days later at Taunton. He made 7 and 9 (ran out) as the County were overwhelmed by an innings and 63 runs.

HORATIO NORRIS DUMBLETON was born at Ferozepore, India, on 23 October 1858. He was educated at West Cowes on the Isle of Wight and Wimbledon School before becoming a professional soldier. Described in Scores and Biographies (Vol.

XIV) as being 5 ft 9 ins tall and weighing 12 stone 7 pounds, he was a prolific performer with both bat and ball in Services Cricket.

A "good and free hitter' according to Haygarth, and a middle-order right-hand batsman, he played his great innings on 15 August 1884. In the corresponding fixture in the previous year he had scored 146. The Bonham Carter family were influential in Hampshire cricket circles at the time. One of their members was Honorary Secretary of the Royal Engineers Cricket Club and it was undoubtedly through that connection that he played for the County.

He was also a force with his slow right round-arm bowling in Services Cricket; in his one match for Hampshire he bowled two overs for 14.

He was obviously a good golfer, later designing the Royal Hong Kong Golf Club.

Dumbleton died in Winchester on 18 December 1935.

GROUNDSMAN OF THE YEAR

The Society would like to offer Chris Westbrook of Hursley Park Cricket Club its congratulations for being awarded Groundsman of the Year by the ECB's Pitch Care Committee in 2004. Chris has been groundsman at Hursley Park for over 30 years. He won the Club Ground category and will receive his award at Lord's during the Middlesex - Warwickshire match at Lord's on 20 April.

Other winners were Jersey in the Local Authority category and Oundle School carried off the Public Schools award.

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Hampshire will play their **first** ever match at Stratford-upon-Avon this summer.

Until last year, the sole first-class match at Stratford took place in 1951, when as part of the Festival of Britain programme the Borough of Stratford, being one of the three main centres for the Festival, organised two matches in which Warwickshire played the Royal Navy, and Oxford University, and the latter match was accorded first-class status. Despite reasonable weather, the crowds were disappointing and with a financial loss being suffered, Warwickshire did not play there again until last summer.

On that occasion they played out a high scoring draw against Lancashire, with Mark Waugh making 167 and Mal Loye replying with 184 for the visitors.

EDITORIAL

The Editor would like to thank the Committee and members of the Society for their continued support during the winter.

No Play

It's a great game, I've watched it on the telly,
it's a great shame we can't play it at school.
Dad bought me a bat and I've got a tennis ball,
I play with my pals or I bowl against the wall.
But it's a grass-game, the ball should be of leather,
we should have pads and gloves, eleven in each team,
we need some stumps and bails, an umpire and a coach.
At school, I've begged and begged, but each time I've been told
there's nowhere you can play, the cricket field's been sold.

Sir says .,

you've got soccer and judo, athletics and gym,
tennis and volleyball, you all learn to swim,
you've basketball, trampoline, abseiling the wall,
I've no time to coach you at cricket at all.
I'm a family man with kids of my own,
can't stay after school, I've got to get home.

There's a field at the end of our road
where the grass and the weeds straggle high
and rusty old goal posts stick up
though the sightscreens have rotted away.

Grandad says

he played there at cricket and soccer,
Gran played there at tennis as well.
The scoreboard, with rusting old numbers,
was worked by two lads (one my Dad),
the pavilion, though primitive, echoed
with curses of men out for nought.
There was snooker and ping-pong and whist drives
and darts, and a hall with a stage;
they'd bring out their drinks from the clubhouse
and watch bowls in the evening sun.

In the end.....,

they hadn't a groundsman, they hadn't a coach,
the steward was sacked and the Club was closed down.
They pulled down the buildings, they padlocked the gates
and now there's no cricket for me and my mates.