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HAMPSHIRE - C & G TROPHY WINNERS 2005

Hampshire's fine victory in the C & G Trophy emanated from sustained brilliance over a 4 - month period. It was all the more noteworthy as the first three matches were difficult encounters away from home, and achieved with constant changes of personnel. The captains, Shane Warne and Shaun Udal, and manager Paul Terry, therefore, must take considerable credit for the final triumph.

Even the first of those away games, against Shropshire at Whitchurch, was not a foregone conclusion. In the early stages of the season Hampshire were having difficulty building competitive totals, due to the frailty of the top and early middle-order batting. The match was therefore a potential banana skin. However, thanks to the efforts of ex-Nottinghamshire pair, Richard Logan (3 for 37) and Kevin Pietersen (76), the County prevailed by 7 wickets.

Just under a fortnight later Hampshire travelled to Sophia Gardens to play Glamorgan. The Welsh County have enjoyed a very good record in recent one-day fixtures between the two sides and the venue, where the pitch tended to be on the slow side, was, on paper, not conducive to Hampshire's strokemakers. It was in this match that Sean Ervine and Nic Pothas gave notice of the enormous influence they were to stamp on the competition. First Ervine claimed 5 for 50 in Glamorgan's total of 214. And then Pothas, the County's regular opener in limited-overs matches this year, scored 114 not-out - his maiden one-day century in this country. (He had previously done so in South Africa almost a decade ago). He raced to 50 off the equivalent number of balls and then reached 100 off 120, before finishing the match by lofting Dean Cosker for a straight six. He was more than ably abetted by Pietersen in an unbroken fifth-wicket stand of 130. The latter struck 69 not out, which included 4 sixes, one of which was off England's new talismanic fast bowler Simon Jones to his favourite mid-wicket area.

In a most lopsided season, all Counties had to wait two months for the quarter-finals, until after the Twenty/20 regional rounds. Hampshire had been drawn away to Surrey at The Oval. At this stage of the season, Shane Warne and Simon Katich had joined the Australian tour party and Pietersen was with the England one-day squad. The respective placements were Shane Watson, Craig McMillan and the young Kevin Latouf. Billy Taylor replaced Logan. On paper the side was weaker for the changes. Also a month earlier with Warne present, Surrey had thrashed the County by an innings, in well under two days playing time at the Rose Bowl.

The portents were not therefore propitious and that feeling was reinforced as Surrey flogged each of the Hampshire bowlers in turn to post a mammoth 358 for six. When Hampshire batted they lost Greg Lamb without a run on the board and Pothas (27)

with the score at 41. They were also behind the scoring rate required. Shane Watson, who had been unable to bowl in the Surrey innings because of a thigh strain, then played one of the County's great one-day innings - one that was fit to rival Robin Smith's heroics of ten years or so ago. He hit a truly magnificent 132 off 115 balls (3 sixes and 13 fours) which put the County so far ahead of the run rate that skipper Shaun Udal hit the winning run with 13 balls to spare. The Surrey players were totally shell-shocked. Watson had added a total of 159 in only 22 overs with John Crawley (45) and McMillan (42). Kevin Latouf also showed great promise with an intelligent 25, during which he frequently nudged the ball into The Oval's wide open spaces for two. The Hampshire captain finished on 44 not out. It was a famous victory and the confidence it inculcated was to sweep the County through the semi-final against Yorkshire a month later at The Rose Bowl.

By the semi-final McMillan had been replaced by Queenslander Andy Bichel. Jono McLean, the young South African batsman replaced the luckless Taylor. The ultimate 8 wicket victory was memorable for an illuminating century by Sean Ervine and perhaps more so for Hampshire's quite sensational fielding. The editor, in over forty years of watching cricket, has never seen an exhibition from any side to rival it. Latouf and McLean set the tone early on with astonishing stops in the square of the wicket positions. The Yorkshire batsmen missed several potential singles thereafter by not running a single when the ball went within yards of them. Direct hits by Watson (after Ervine had imaginatively dummied the batsmen by giving the impression that he had fielded the ball) and then by Ervine himself, allied to a brilliant two-handed slip catch away to his right by Watson, an equally breathtaking effort by the irrepressible Pothas as he clung on to the ball, low to his left, after it had passed him and then Lamb, near to the boundary, taking a high overhead catch and making it look ridiculously easy, completed the Yorkshire rout. It was an astonishing fielding display, the quality of which is almost impossible to over-emphasise. After Crawley's dismissal, Ervine, after some early problems against the pace and steep bounce of the impressive Gideon Kruis, scored a wonderful century. He scored mainly in the V, driving with full-bladed authority, was never afraid to loft over the infield, and if the ball was dropped short, he pulled with some relish. A beautifully timed and effortless slog sweep, high into the stand over square leg, catapulted him into the 90's and he completed his century soon afterwards. He reached his hundred off 96 balls, with his second fifty coming off only 37. It was a superbly judged innings. Anti-climactically he fell tamely immediately afterwards. Nic Pothas kept him company throughout. He eventually finished on 73 not out, having added 145 with Ervine. However, the innings served to indicate the immense talent within the exiled Zimbabwean.

The pair were at it again in the Final against Warwickshire. Hampshire's only change was Pietersen, released for the day by England, in for McLean. After losing the toss and being put into bat, Pothas and Crawley found difficulty with their timing early on. The latter was dismissed, gloving a hook to the wicket-keeper, just as he had found his feet. Ervine then almost replicated his innings against Yorkshire. He unfurled a number of superb front foot drives, whipped the ball well off his legs, hit Giles repeatedly with the spin towards mid-wicket and long on and lofted Loudon slightly straighter into the vacant areas behind the bowler. His placement and pace of the ball were excellent as he pushed several two's. He also confirmed he is a good, very fast runner between the wickets. He faltered only twice, as he approached 50 and then 100, the latter being exacerbated by the hype and freneticism which greeted

Pietersen's arrival after Pothas' dismissal. The latter fell in the identical fashion to Crawley after scoring 68 off 99 balls (1 six and 5 fours). Despite his ungainly stance, the Hampshire wicket-keeper played each ball on its merits. He drove crisply, never more so than when he struck a huge six over extra cover off Carter into the Warner Stand. His Lord's innings took him to 289 runs in this year's C& G competition, at the staggering average of 144.50. He also kept wicket supremely well throughout. He and Ervine had added 134 off only 20 overs. At one stage, a total well in excess of 300 looked likely but then a succession of Hampshire players, including Ervine and Watson, fell to catches on the boundary. It took a huge six, to the left of the pavilion, by Chris Tremlett to lift Hampshire to their eventual total of 290.

Nick Knight and, more particularly Neil Carter, laid into Tremlett and Bichel with a vengeance at the start of the Warwickshire innings. Carter, who had earlier taken one of the more unusual five fors in a Cup Final, heaved 32 off only 23 balls. Udal continually changed his bowlers but Knight and Ian Bell went efficiently about their business. The Hampshire captain had Bell dropped at mid-off but there were very few other alarms. It looked as if Warwickshire were going to stroll to victory with some ease. However, as he approached a cultured half century, Bell began to suffer from cramp. It was at this stage that Udal threw the ball to Shane Watson for a second spell. He simply roared in and Bell hit him to mid-off, where Tremlett, atoning for his earlier miss, gobbled up the chance. The door was now ajar and Watson and then Andy Bichel swept through it, with great heart and passion. With Tremlett, also catching the mood later, they demolished the remainder of the Warwickshire innings. When Latouf caught Knight in front of the Tavern stand - a very fine catch under pressure - it was virtually all over. Earlier, Watson in a reprise of his exploits in the semi-final at The Rose Bowl, threw down Trott's wicket with a direct hit. Despite a late 6 - run penalty for a slow over rate, Hampshire emerged winners, by 18 runs. The three Hampshire fast bowlers had captured the last 8 Warwickshire wickets for 68 in 12 overs.

After presentation of the Cup and interviews by a proud Mark Nicholas for Channel 4, the team went round the ground, reverberating to the chants of the vociferous and appreciative Hampshire supporters for a deserved lap of honour.

The victory made it, of course, 4 out of 4 in Lord's finals. However, it was the sequence of events and victories and the sheer quality and joie-de-vivre of their cricket in the earlier rounds, that made this triumph so memorable. Even if Shane Warne, who has instituted an extraordinary belief into the County's cricket, was not on the field of play for the last 3 matches, his spirit was very evident.

MEETINGS

28 September 2005 - Meeting

The Society is very pleased to welcome this season's beneficiary, Alan Mullally. Now retired, he has been that increasing rarity in county cricket, a left-arm fast-medium bowler. Certainly very few have played Test cricket for England in recent years. However, our speaker's career touched the heights. He played in 19 Tests for England between 1996 and 2001, taking 58 wickets at the tidy average of 31.24. His

best figures were 5 - 105 against Australia at Brisbane in 1998-99. He also played in 50 Limited Overs Internationals over the same period, during which he earned widespread respect for his economy. At one stage, just before the Millennium he was number 2 in the world rankings in international cricket. He eventually claimed 63 wickets at the very creditable average of 27.42. But for constant and varying injuries which afflicted his slim frame he would have undoubtedly achieved even more.

However, he enjoyed a successful career in domestic cricket and earned a number of honours. He made his first-class debut, for Western Australia, in the Sheffield Shield final of 1987-88 and, whilst with Leicestershire, he was an integral member of those two sporting sides that carded off the County Championship in 1996 and 1998.

ALAN DAVID MULLALLY was born in Southend-on-Sea on 12 July 1969. His family emigrated to Australia whilst he was young and he first came to prominence with the Australian Under - 19 side. He spent the new few months after his bow in first-class cricket with Hampshire, for whom he played one match - against Oxford University in The Parks - at the start of the 1998 season. He returned to Western Australia for the next two seasons, and then after joining Leicestershire in 1990, he returned to Australia for one season with Victoria. From 1992, when he played in the losing side of the Nat. West Trophy Final at Lord's, until the end of his career, he was one of the most prominent figures in the county game.

Six foot 5 inches tall, blond haired, long-limbed and languid of walk he was a real handful when the force was with him. On occasions, he gained too much extravagant movement off the seam, such that the batsman did not have to play him. However, the wicketkeeper and the slip cordon were always in the game when he was on song.

After a highly productive decade with Leicestershire, for whom he took over 50 wickets in a season on four occasions, he joined Hampshire in 2000. In his first season he returned career best bowling figures of 9 for 93 (14 - 188 Match) at Derby. His best season for the County was the following year when he not only took 64 wickets, but he also left his mark with two startling performances at Hampshire's new Rose Bowl ground. First he routed the Australians by taking 5 for 18, helping to dismiss them by lunch on the first day, thus paving the way for a famous victory. A fortnight later, he dismissed eight Warwickshire batsmen for 90, which remains a ground record bowling analysis. Injury restricted his appearances thereafter but for these two performances his name will remain in the record book and annals of Hampshire cricket.

6 April 2005 – Report

David Allen's address to the Society at their final meeting of last winter's programme was a stimulating one. He began by mentioning the legacy of Hampshire's historians starting with John Nyren through to Harry Altham, Desmond Eagar, John Arlott and, more recently, Vic Isaacs, whose work on Hampshire's uniquely informative website, was an indispensable resource for historians and researchers.

Our speaker was influenced massively by the evocative and nostalgic radio commentaries of John Arlott. David Allen then recalled his days at Portsmouth Grammar School, where he was a contemporary of former Hampshire player Richard

McIlwaine. He now spent every available moment interviewing old Hampshire players.

After a quick trot through the great professionals of the 1920's and 1930's he majored on reminiscences of the 1955 Hampshire side. The County attained their highest position to date in the Championship that year when they finished third behind Surrey and Yorkshire, almost perennial champions and runners-up during the 1950's. On uncovered wickets the average total against Hampshire that year was 176, compared to the County's average of 214.

He then compared the derivations of the 1955 team to the 2005 squad. No fewer than half of the latter learnt their cricket in Australia and South Africa. However, the 1955 team comprised a much more pronounced local flavour. Jimmy Gray, Mike Barnard, Peter Sainsbury, Leo Harrison, Vic Cannings, Mervyn Burden and Malcolm Heath were all born in the County. Hampshire, due to their impoverished finances, effectively had no option but to invest and develop local talent - hence the famed "Holt's Colts" Sainsbury and Burden had replaced two very experienced spin bowlers in Gerry Hill and Charles Knott.

The only non-Englishman in the side was West Indian Roy Marshall, who also thrived as a spin bowler in that season. He was supplemented by Henry Horton, ex-Worcestershire who played no first-class cricket for Hampshire until aged over 30, the enigmatic and talented Alan Rayment, a Londoner and ex-Middlesex 2nd XI, Desmond Eagar, who originally played for Gloucestershire before the Second World War and Derek Shackleton, born in Todmorden on the Yorkshire/Lancashire border.

Hampshire possessed an aggressive opening batsman (Marshall) and a tall, quick bowler in Malcolm Heath, who was faster than anyone who had played for the County for many years. Only 13 players appeared all season. The other not previously mentioned was Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie, who played in one match when he deputised as wicketkeeper for Leo Harrison when the latter was selected for the Players v. Gentlemen at Lord's.

The 1955 team was to form the basis of the side that carried off Hampshire's first County Championship title in 1961. There were three important additions in Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie's captaincy, Danny Livingstone as a number four batsman and the fast bowling of David White who had replaced Eagar, Rayment and Cannings respectively. The latter two had been discovered in National Service cricket.

David Allen then closed with an analysis of the longevity of careers of Hampshire players in more recent years. No Hampshire player who emerged through the colts system in the 1990's will have enjoyed a sustained career. Only six players who came through the County's system via 2nd XI cricket have been capped since 1988. The six players concerned are Shaun Udal, Jason Laney, Will Kendall, Derek Kenway, Dimitri Mascarenhas and Chris Tremlett. Neither Kendall nor Mascarenhas learnt their cricket in Hampshire's colts system but played 2nd XI cricket for the County. Imported players from overseas and other Counties were also subject to similar turnover. 23 full players had arrived in the past 10 years, of which 15 have already left. Food for thought.

David Allen's talk was indeed an excellent one and, like all good University lecturers, he allowed a great deal of audience participation.

Earlier in the evening, Dimi Mascarenhas received his Player of the Year award for his performance in 2004.

HAIR TODAY - GONE TOMORROW?

Though K.P., 's a batsman of flair
I really am nuts on his hair
and could make a long speech
on his strange use of bleach,
which gives him a coiffure so rare.

K.P. to the barber's has been,
his hair is now ultramarine.
Scoring just twenty-one,
(that's far short of a ton) –
tomorrow he's dying it green.

Oh, dear! Out first ball for a duck,
his hair flom his head he'll now pluck
and he'll wander the shire
like a penitent friar,
a dunce's cap on his head stuck.

Next, he drives and just misses a catch
(a draw's the result of this match!)
Will subsequent clashes
bring sackcloth, not ashes
and K.P. without any thatch?

Wow! A ton and a half to his name
and England have drawn the last game.
The blond streak is back,
it's a broad golden track
which leads on to glory and fame.

Imogen Grosberg