

NEWSLETTER No. 262 – March 2006

PHIL LOCKETT

Society members will be saddened to learn of the death of Phil Lockett. Phil conscientiously fulfilled the post of the Society's Honorary Treasurer for the major part of the Society's history for twenty years from 1982. He kept the Society's finances in splendid order over a period when membership tripled. His wise counsel in Committee meetings was always much valued.

He was a devoted and enthusiastic Somerset follower, steeped in the history of that County's cricket and always well informed on the modern players and developments there. Fittingly, his last appearance at a Society meeting was last November when he came to listen to Neil Mallender. Phil rarely missed the Bath Festival, talked nostalgically of bygone days at Weston-super-Mare and made frequent trips from his home at Hartley Wintney to his beloved Taunton.

Phil fought courageously against the incidious growth of cancer to the end. Despite a leg amputation nearly four years ago he always remained philosophically stoic and positive. His life was claimed far too early.

The Society extends its sincerest condolences to his wife and family.

MEETINGS

Wednesday 8 March 2006 - Meeting

After this evening's AGM, the speaker is David Allen. David was originally going to interview Shaun Udal but with the latter on tour with England, he has very kindly stepped into the breach on a solo basis. His subject for the evening will be the interesting one of Hampshire's spin bowling heritage.

When he addressed the Society last April, David spoke eruditely on Hampshire's 1955 side and the current dearth of Hampshire-born players. It was an absorbing, as well as a nostalgic evening, and tonight's address is sure to be in the same vein.

Wednesday 9 February 2006 - Report

With the aid of slides, Stephen Green, former curator of the Lord's Museum and MCC librarian, took members on an authoritative trip through the history of cricket and Lord's. He started with a photograph of a bat and ball game in a 13th century publication in the British Library, and then a painting in a Norman window in Cocking church (located north of Chichester) displaying a shepherd carrying a crook like the original cricket bat. He then referred to the first authentic reference to cricket, in a court case in 1598 in which one of the participants recalled playing the game in his schooldays at Guildford Grammar School in 1550. He then spoke about a number of men who were instrumental in developing the game, including Frederick, Prince of Wales, who made cricket a "respectable" pastime and the Earl of Winchelsea.

He also covered the men who were instrumental in the development of Lord's. Starting with Hayman's painting of cricket at Marylebone Fields (now Regents Park) in 1740, he moved on to a 1793 painting of the first Lord's ground before reminiscing on such important characters as Thomas Lord (buried at West Meon), William Ward, a Wykehamist with Isle of Wight connections, J.H. Dark, Lord Bessborough (whose home was at Stansted Park, near Rowlands Castle) and R.A. Fitzgerald. There was much more besides including a painting of cricket at Christchurch, against the backdrop of the Priory, an early representation of Kennington Oval, the All England XI travelling around the country by stagecoach in the mid-19th century, the first England touring teams to America, and then Australia, the 1868 Aboriginal tourists, the Old Tavern, Middlesex's move from Prince's Ground to Lord's and an early photograph of W.G. Grace, resplendent in a huge, bushy beard even at a young age.

At the introduction of his address, he recalled his previous visit to the Society, when he attended John Arlott's farewell appearance in his native Basingstoke (December 1985).

DOMINIC THORNELY

Dominic Thornely, from New South Wales, has joined Hampshire on a 1 – year contract.

His career to date has been the classic case of a slow burn. He was regarded by Rod Marsh as one of the best-ever graduates as a top order batsman from the Australian Cricket Academy. He played there in 1997-98 and 1998-99. He toured India and Sri Lanka with the Academy side in the first of those seasons. In those days he was mainly an opening batsman. Later in that winter he played against a touring Pakistan Under-19 side, before going on to represent his country in the World Youth Cup in South Africa, during which he scored 126 against Zimbabwe Under-19s at Potch University, Potchefstroom. He and Marcus North put on 228 for the first wicket in only 136 minutes in that match. In Australia's last match of the tournament he played against Richard Logan whom he will, of course, join on the Hampshire staff this summer. England were eventual winners of the competition. During that winter he encountered many players who are now regulars in Test sides.

However, Thornely's career then stalled for a while. He did not emerge again until 2001/2 when he gained a place, as an all-rounder, in his state's limited-overs side, capping the season by winning the Man of the Match award in the ING Cup Final against Queensland. He first made 20 not out (at nine) and then cut the heart out of his opponent's batting, with 3 for 36 in eight overs.

In the following season he was again an important cog in the New South Wales one-day side. At Perth he ran amok by scoring 74 off only 71 balls, and then returned figures of 2 – 29 against Estonia at Sydney, figures which won him the man of the match award.

Wisden Australia commented that "he proved a magnificent fieldsman in the deep, fearless in attempting to save boundaries". The publication then gave an insight of why he had not progressed as first envisaged by Rod Marsh five years earlier, stating

that “concern about his technique against fast bowling is abating” before suggesting “his ambition of Pura Cup selection is close to fulfilment”.

That ambition was finally realised when he made his New South Wales debut the following season, 2003/04. He played in six matches scoring 343 runs (avge. 28.58). He made a maiden first-class century against Victoria at Newcastle. He scored 143, adding 198 for the third wicket with Simon Katich (126), who recommended him to Hampshire for the coming summer.

His career then took off in spectacular fashion last winter. He was one of four batsmen – the others were his team mate Phil Jaques, Justin Langer and Michael Bevan – to score a 1000 runs in the season. He finished with 1065 runs (avge. 62.64)

His second career century was destined for the annals of Australian cricket history. In making 261 not out against Western Australia at Sydney he struck 11 sixes – a record for a first-class match in Australia. It was an innings that started slowly. Coming to the wicket on the first day when his side were in difficulty at 34 – 2, he scored only 23 runs between lunch and tea. He then blazed away in the last session, scoring a staggering further 157 runs before close of play. When the declaration came on the following morning he had batted for 404 minutes, received 367 balls and, besides his record-breaking number of sixes, had penetrated the boundary on a further twenty-one occasions.

He went on to score three further centuries during that summer. He made 74 and 102 (off only 130 balls) against South Australia in Adelaide, 100 (142 balls) against Western Australia in the return match at Perth and 135 not out (in 307 minutes) in a tight match against Tasmania in Hobart.

He first appeared on Hampshire’s radar screen when appearing for Surrey last summer. When standing in for a few matches as replacement for Azar Mahmood he clubbed an attractive 73 (batting at seven) as his County overwhelmed Hampshire in little more than two days at The Rose Bowl.

He also played for an International XI against Asia in the Tsunami 20/20 Charity Match at The Oval.

When he returned to Australia this winter he initially carried on his form of the previous season. He made 92 against the hapless Western Australian bowlers in Perth before making 123 against Tasmania in Sydney. He then scored a two further half centuries – 86 against Queensland at Brisbane and 69 versus Victoria at St. Kilda. His last two outings have been low-key affairs.

Nevertheless, he is now an established State player and at the age of 27 – he was born in Albury on 1 October 1978 - **DOMINIC JOHN THORNELY** should now be embarking upon his most productive years. He is tall, of raw boned, strapping appearance with sandy hair. He is an attacking right-handed batsman with an obvious penchant for seeking to clear the boundary ropes. Very few of his longer innings do not include sixes. He has an excellent record in limited overs cricket and is therefore well-equipped for both forms of the game. Though mention has been made of his

medium-pace right-arm bowling, it is now a negligible part of his armoury. He rarely bowls in state cricket.

ROBIN SMITH IN INDIA

If Kevin Pietersen and Shaun Udal play for England in India this Spring, they will be hoping for better fortunes for their team than their immediate Hampshire predecessor in Test Matches for England in that country. Robin Smith played in all three Tests on the 1992-93 tour and finished on the losing side on each occasion. In his words, in Quest for Number One: “This was the England tour that most people, myself included, would rather forget

The start of the previous tour in 1984-85 was played in the shadow of the murders of the Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, and a senior diplomat in Bombay. Smith’s tour was played against a backdrop of the periodic religious turmoil that erupts in the country. Bombings in Bombay and the imposition of a curfew in Ahmedabad attracted headline news at the outset of the tour.

Robin Smith also had his own problems. He injured his toe in pre-tour nets at Lilleshall which delayed his departure by a week. On landing, he immediately succumbed to an upset stomach. Whilst he had not been able to practise as intensively as he would have wished he felt good about his form as he went into his first match at Lucknow. However, it quickly became apparent that the disruption to his tour preparations had set him back more than he imagined.

He struggled with the slowness of the wickets and there was indecisiveness in his normally positive foot movements. “One or two doubts began to creep in”. In the first one-day international in Jaipur, he failed to find the boundary in his 39 ball (and 58 minute) stay. Given his normally forceful strokeplay it was clear he was out of sorts.

In the next international in Kapil Dev’s hometown of Chandigarh he was dropped off the local hero before he had scored. He used the opportunity to regain some form by scoring 42 and then in the next match - a three day encounter against an Indian Under 25 XI at Cuttack - he dropped anchor for six and a half hours in scoring 149 not out. “I had realised that I was never going to take the spinners apart on this tour, so I knew that if I was going to score runs in the series I was going to have to bat for a long time. My concentration was tested to the limit by the heat and the unfamiliar conditions, and I was thrilled by the way I came through”.

He therefore felt in good form going into the first Test at Calcutta, and his confidence was enhanced by his batting in the nets, on fast wickets, in the two days leading up to the match. Perhaps not surprisingly, the wicket for the Test proved more uneven. Mohammad Azharuddin, however, mastered the conditions brilliantly, composing a magical 182. Worryingly for England, occasional off-spinner Graeme Hick was their best bowler with figures of 3 for 19. Smith scored one, caught off bat and pad (“a poor shot”), and 8 (after nearly an hour). He was adjudged caught behind, though he felt he never touched it. The three Indian spinners, Kumble, Raju and Chauhan, reaped a 17-wicket dividend as England were defeated by 8 wickets.

Smith and his team mates left the teeming City feeling low, but the former's morale was restored after taking 82, 68 of which came in boundaries, off the Rest of India at Vishakhapatnam.

If England thought that Calcutta represented the tour's low watermark then they quickly disabused during the following Test at Madras. On this occasion, England's tormentors with the bat were the aggressive opening batsmen Navjot Singh Sidhu (106) and the little, 19 year old master technician, Sachin Tendulkar, who compiled a sublime 165 in only six hours. Facing a total of 560 for 6 declared, England responded with 286 and 252. The margin of defeat – an innings and 22 runs - was a record for England in Tests against India. Only Chris Lewis, with a joyous 117, really left any impression. Once again the three Indian spin bowlers harvested seventeen wickets.

Robin Smith fared better in this game. He was required to open as captain Graham Gooch fell to a stomach disorder, courtesy of a rogue dish of prawns, on the eve of the match. He fell leg-before to Kumble in the first innings for 17 after batting for nearly an hour and a half, and then made a much more characteristic 56 in the second. "My 50 came up quite quickly, whereupon I decided to consolidate because I didn't want to throw my wicket away through being too aggressive. This was a mistake; I became more tentative once more, and was caught off bat and pad pushing at Kumble."

In the final Test at Bombay, a restored Gooch opened and Smith reverted to his normal position at four. He fell quickly to Raju – caught behind for 2 – in the first innings. "The ball turned more on the first day than at any time in the match, and the writing was on the wall when we lost our first six wickets for only 118". This was after England had won the toss and decided to bat. "I was out playing tentatively again, getting a thick edge which travelled via several parts of my anatomy to the keeper". The only man to make anything of the Indian bowling was Hick, who made a very fine maiden Test century, scoring 178 (he was 99 not out overnight) out of 347. India then ran up a massive 591 with Vinod Kambli, in his third Test and batting in his home City, stroking a 10 – hour 224. The innings total remains the highest for India against England at home and Kambli's score is still the best ever for India in Tests between the two countries. He and former schoolfriend Tendulkar added 194 in 44 overs together.

Smith was determined to leave a mark in the second innings and did so in a 210 minute stay, top-scoring with 62. "Even so, I had fallen short of my own high standards". He had scored 146 runs (avge. 24.33 in the series) – the same as Alec Stewart. To emphasise just how England's batsmen had failed to master the conditions Graham Gooch scored only 47 in four innings. David Gower had been controversially omitted from the tour. The Indian spinners Kumble (21 wickets), Raju (16) and Clauhan (9) emerged from the series with no fewer than 46 of the 58 wickets that fell to bowlers.

Despite his disappointing Test series, he had some consolation in heading the tour averages in first-class matches by scoring 416 runs (avge. 52.00).

There were still four one-day internationals to be played in which Smith scored 29 and 17 before finishing on the highest of notes with 129 and 72 at Gwalior. It is

interesting that in his book he omits any mention of these two innings. He simply stated “.....by the time we reached Gwalior many of the players had had enough”. That fact may be confirmed by the results. England lost both matches, having previously held a 3 – 1 lead in the series. The rubber therefore finished level.

England then moved on to Colombo in Sri Lanka for one Test. Opening the innings, Robin Smith excelled with a long, energy-sapping, but magnificent 128. He batted 448 minutes, faced 338 balls and hit 20 boundaries. It was his eighth Test century, and his first outside England at the time.

“The heat was debilitating and concentration was hard to maintain..... I was thrilled to bat through an entire day for the first time but I was shattered at the end of it, and my dismissal the next day (bowled Muralitheran) was simply due to exhaustion. Still very tired after spending hours in the field he was bowled round his legs by Sanath Jayasuriya in the second innings for 35. Sri Lanka eventually recorded their first victory against England in a Test Match, by five wickets.

He had finished a difficult tour on a high note. Little could he have known that, after his travails against the spinners on the tour, a young Australian leg-spinner by the name of Shane Warne was awaiting him the following summer.

Robin Smith made two further visits to India. One was near the start of his career. After a highly successful Test series against the 1989 Australians he was selected for the Nehru Cup squad in the autumn of that year.

He performed brilliantly. In 6 matches he scored 244 runs (avge. 61.00), to finish fourth overall in the Competition averages. His punishing batting did much to propel England into the semi-finals, where they lost to Pakistan – the eventual winners of the tournament.

On his debut on Indian soil, he made 81 not out against Sri Lanka at Delhi, before recording 65 versus the West Indies at Gwalior, surely his favourite ground, and, finally, 55 in the semi-final at Nagpur.

His final visit was in the World Cup of 1995-96. His two appearances in the latter stages of that tournament were confined to Pakistan. England played in one match in India in the tournament, at Ahmedabad, which was in fact their opening encounter, and for which he was not selected. When he eventually reappeared, as an opening batsman, later in the competition against Pakistan, he scored 75, and then reached 25 before being adjudged run out by the third umpire (somewhat unluckily so, as the latter did not have a clear view), in the quarter-final against Sri Lanka in Faisalabad.

It was a controversial way for one of the most successful players in the English history of limited overs cricket to end his career. Robin Smith still holds, of course. England’s highest-ever score in international cricket – that memorably compelling 175 not out against Australia at Edgbaston in 1993.