

NEWSLETTER No. 267 - NOVEMBER 2006

MEETINGS

Wednesday 8 November 2006 – Meeting

Tonight's speaker is **David Rayvern Allen**. This is his second visit to the Society, the first being nearly twenty years ago, in December 1986. He is best known for his definitive biographies of those two broadcasting giants – John Arlott and E.W. Swanton. His book on the latter was awarded the Cricket Society's Book of the Year in 2005. He also edited a number of anthologies of their respective works, including two on John Arlott's radio commentaries. He has written and edited over 20 books including The Punch Book of Cricket, A Song for Cricket, Sir Aubrey: A Biography of C. Aubrey Smith, The Field Book of Cricket and Samuel Britcher, the Hidden Scorer. Our speaker is a former BBC Radio producer. He has also spoken at a Hambledon Club dinner and is therefore well acquainted with the County.

Wednesday 18 October 2006 – Report

Will Kendall received a very warm welcome from Society members at their October meeting which was held in the Richards Room in the Rose Bowl's Conference Suite, formerly the Fitness Centre and Squash Courts. He began by commenting that his career coincided almost exactly with the period between the County's last two Lord's appearances. As a schoolboy he played in alternate years for Surrey and Berkshire schools sides but, having an ambition to play county cricket, a deal was struck and he was allowed to play for Surrey on a full-time basis.

However, on finishing school, he perceived that Surrey's glut of talented youngsters – Mark Butcher and Adam Hobbins were his contemporaries – would prevent him from fulfilling his ambition at The Oval and he decided to look elsewhere. Hampshire were the logical choice given Bradfield's connections with the County through Mark Nicholas and Rupert Cox.

He joined Hampshire just as their formidable batting line up was beginning to edge towards retirement. He felt sorry for some of his predecessors as their development had stalled whilst awaiting opportunities that rarely came. He quickly earned a reputation for his fielding and, with Shaun Udal, he was sent as a substitute to Edgbaston for the Ashes Test in 1993. He fielded for two overs, on separate days.

He felt his time at Oxford was an invaluable part of his development. Among his team-mates were Richard Montgomerie and Ian Sutcliffe. However, he found his baptism in county cricket a tough one, being bowled for a third ball duck against Durham on his debut and then edging a solitary single, off Shaun Udal, in his next before being caught by Paul Terry at slip off Cardigan Connor. He then described his membership of the Combined Universities side that lost to Hampshire by one wicket

(via a Jonathan Batty overthrow) off the last ball in 1955. The latter won by losing fewer wickets with the scores level.

His first two matches were also a significant step up as he found himself facing Andrew Caddick and Courtney Walsh in his first two matches. (Editor's note: our modest speaker omitted to mention that he scored 77 in the latter match)

He then touched upon the fact that Hampshire were in a transition period during his career. He felt the move to the Rose Bowl gave the County great scope for the future. He thought that "Happy Hampshire" had to become more hard-nosed to be successful; they had done so, despite upsetting umpires and the opposition en route.

He then concluded by speaking at great length on the structure of the game and other topical issues. Two Divisions had increased standards; 20/20 was good for the game but the format for 1 – day competitions clearly needed reviewing. He thought that the England A side should be a genuine reserve side, and include players such as Mark Ramprakash, rather than being an Academy team. His view was that there was no harm in Counties fielding overseas and Kolpak players, as long as there were 8 England-qualified cricketers present.

He then contributed to the debate on drugs and agents.

He was now working in the financial investment field for a firm in Winchester and had picked up a bat only rarely since leaving the game.

Will Kendall then answered a barrage of questions on a number of further issues, including captaincy, walking, glued wickets, recreational, public school and state schools' cricket, central contracts (very important but felt batsmen should play more often), Shane Warne, Mushtaq Ahmed, The Oval saga, and 2000, the year he was HCS Player of the Year.

Our speaker held his audience throughout with his modesty and self-deprecating humour and thoroughly deserved his resounding applause at the end of the evening. It was clear that Will Kendall occupied a very special place in the hearts of Hampshire cricket followers.

BARRY RICHARDS IN AUSTRALIA 1970-71

As Kevin Pietersen (at least nominally a Hampshire player) sets off for Australia it is perhaps appropriate to recall a season enjoyed by one of his fellow countrymen some thirty-six years ago.

Hampshire batsmen have never found Australia a particularly happy hunting ground. Philip Mead (twice) and Robin Smith performed only moderately on their tours there. Remarkably, even Gordon Greenidge required five visits and thirty-two attempts before he recorded his only Test century in Australia – 104 at Adelaide in 1988-89 – on his final innings in first-class cricket in that country.

The one glorious exception to the rule was Barry Richards. By the time he arrived to play for South Australia in 1970-71, his reputation as the world's finest attacking

opening batsman was well founded. He had already conquered county cricket by scoring over two thousand runs (2395) in his debut season for Hampshire in 1968. He had put Australian bowlers to the sword in what proved to be his only Test series by running up 508 runs at an average of 72.75 in 1969-70. His 140 at Durban, during which he scored 94 before lunch, was one of the most commanding innings ever played by an opening batsman in the history of Test cricket. He also made a total of 1172 runs in that season – a record for a home player in South Africa at that time, and one which he was to surpass twice in the next five years.

He went to Australia as preparation for a scheduled tour by his country in the following year (1971-72). It was, of course, never to take place. Coca-Cola provided him with a car and a salary, an addition to which was sponsorship at a dollar a run. The firm were also going to pay him 10 dollars a wicket but with two very fine spin bowlers already in the side – leg-spinner Terry Jenner (now famous as Shane Warne's mentor) and off-spinner Ashley Mallett – his opportunities to enhance his salary were always going to be limited. In the end he did take five wickets at the very creditable average of 29.

Strangely, considering his unassailable reputation as an opening batsman, he batted at 4 in his first match. It was a 1-day game against Victoria. Before a crowd of 7000 at the Adelaide Oval he was caught at the wicket for a second ball duck. It was to be his shortest stay at the wicket by some margin.

On his first-class debut he made 7 and 44 not out against Western Australia on his "home" ground. If South Australians had harboured any doubts about his ability, they were well and truly dispelled in the following match, as he majestically stroked 224 in six and a quarter hours against the MCC tourists who were, of course, destined to regain the Ashes. In his autobiography Richards commented that he "set about batting professionally and responsibly and did not slog until I had passed 200".

He then moved on to Melbourne where, on a damp wicket, he made 52 against Victoria.

Barry Richards then flew on to Perth for the return against Western Australia to play the innings of his life and that he was to confer on him immortality status in the eyes of Australians. In the nets beforehand he was quite apprehensive because of the lightning pace of the wicket, which was to be replicated in the middle. He played and missed at his first ball, delivered by Graham McKenzie and with the young Dennis Lillee at the other end, he took 15 minutes to get off the mark. His first runs came from a square drive off the back foot "which I hardly struck but the ball flew past point for four". By lunch, after 90 minutes, he had reached 79 but in the next session in tandem with Ian Chappell, with whom he shared a stand of 308 in an improbable 170 minutes, he battered the spinners, Tony Lock and Tony Mann. He reached his hundred in 125 minutes but then sailed to his double-century in only 84 minutes more. After reaching 150 he started to slog and should have been caught at mid-on when he had reached 169, Ian Brayshaw grassing an easy chance off McKenzie. Little could the Western Australian bowlers have imagined that the miss was to prove enormously expensive. He went from 200 to 300 in 108 minutes. He scored 137 in the final session and reached his triple century with a miscued cross bat shot to cover which flew off the edge to third man where Bob Meuleman hared around the boundary and

got a hand to the ball without holding it. It was the second and final chance he offered.

Richards' 300 had taken only 317 minutes and he reached 325 not out in 330 minutes for the day when he casually strolled down the wicket to hit Lillee straight to the sight screen for four. He continued his walk without breaking stride to the pavilion.

He batted on to 356 the next morning when he was given out leg-before, attempting a "paddle", off a full toss, to fine leg off Mann; most observers felt the ball was missing leg-stump. He had batted only 372 minutes, and hit one 6 and forty-eight 4's. It was the second highest score in Australian cricket since the war.

Thereafter it was a royal progress as he made the MCC bowlers suffer again with an omnipotent 146 in 280 minutes. On a rain affected first day, he was stumped off the last ball by Bob Taylor, giving Derek Underwood the charge. He then turned his attentions to Queensland (35 and 155), New South Wales (6 and 178) and Victoria (105 and 72). He thus scored centuries against all the states, as well as the tourists.

It was, however, in the last match against New South Wales at Adelaide, that he cemented his standing as a batsman of valour and bravery, qualities endeared by Australians. After suffering a broken finger whilst making 55 in the first innings, his team started to lose wickets at an alarming rate in their quest to set a challenging declaration. He therefore went in at nine, and though in agony and able to use only his left-hand, he conjured 32 magical runs in only 31 minutes adding 66 with the dashing Ken Cunningham. For the most part he played his strokes with only his top hand on the bat handle and yet, such was his innate timing, he struck five boundaries. However, the fast bowler Dave Renneberg was recalled to the attack and with his first delivery struck Richards a telling blow on the fractured finger and he had to retire hurt. His efforts allowed Ian Chappell to declare and South Australia eventually won by 127 runs on the final day to clinch the Sheffield Shield.

He ended the season with 1538 runs at an average of 109.80 and set a new season's run aggregate for South Australia for both the season and the Sheffield Shield. Both of the previous records were held by Sir Donald Bradman. It was through his remarkable batting during the season that Bradman was moved to nominate Barry Richards as one of the opening batsmen in his "All-Time XI". There surely can have been no higher recognition of Richards' prowess.

That Australian summer was to have a number of important influences on Barry Richards' life and future career. He met his wife, Lorna, and also joined Richie Benaud, Les Favell and E.W. Swanton and Murray Tippet in the commentary box for the sixth Test of the Ashes series. He also returned to the country to live when he retired in 1983 and worked in coaching and cricket management in South Australia and Queensland.

SOCIETY NEWS

HCS PLAYER OF THE YEAR 2006

HCS members have nominated John Crawley as their Player of the Year in 2006. An article celebrating his excellent season will appear in a future edition of the Newsletter.

WALTER HADLEE, CBE

Walter Hadlee, who died on 29 September, at the grand age of 91, was one of cricket's finest administrators and, of course, father of three sons who played for New Zealand. His son, Richard, was indisputably one of the finest fast bowlers ever to grace the game.

He was a tall, bespectacled and versatile left-handed batsman who was at his happiest playing attacking cricket. He made two tours of England, in 1937 and 1949. He played against Hampshire on both. In the first of those years, he made only 1 and 2 – bowled in each innings – at Dean Park in a drawn match.

He was more productive with the bat in 1949 but, as captain, was responsible for producing one of the most astoundingly successful run chases in the game's history.

In the January 1973 edition of Playfair Cricket Monthly, Basil Easterbrook gave a vivid account of an extraordinary encounter:-

“I remember it with affection still solely because it was a marvellous game of cricket which fluctuated violently.

The first half of the match threatened to be hopelessly one sided with Hampshire disappointing in the extreme.

The Kiwis had come straight from the first Test at Leeds and they rested their main bowlers Cowie and Cave. Hampshire winning the toss and getting first use of a hard, true pitch should have capitalised accordingly but they batted poorly and were all out for 129, Cresswell had 4 for 28, Burke 3 for 40, Hayes 2 for 45 and Burt 1 for 5. Sixty-nine overs were enough to see Hampshire off.

When New Zealand replied Verdun Scott and Bert Sutcliffe, the opening pair, passed the Hampshire score by thirteen before the left-handed Sutcliffe was bowled by Charlie Knott for 71. Scott went on to equal the Hampshire total off his own bat and none of the men who followed failed. Wally Hadlee hit a breezy 33, John Reid hit 50 and Martin Donnelly, that prince of left handers was 100 not out when Hadlee declared at 430 for 5.

Facing arrears of 301, Hampshire lost Rogers and Guard for 24 and when Jim Bailey was caught off Tom Burt, the slow left arm bowler who took 128 wickets on the tour and headed the bowling averages, Hampshire were booked for an overwhelming innings defeat. At this point a one sided game suddenly crackled into life and fire as Hampshire began to fight. Neil McCorkell and Desmond Eagar started the recovery with a splendid fourth wicket stand. When Burt got rid of McCorkell for 67 and

Burke bowled Eagar for 82, Johnny Arnold who had earned his solitary cap for England against New Zealand eighteen years earlier made 110, his only century of the season. Shackleton and Walker made useful contributions and when Gerry Hill the No. 9 made 49 not out Hampshire's second innings finally reached 409.

A member actually congratulated Eagar at the end of the innings on the way Hampshire had saved the match and no-one who heard him thought he had spoken prematurely. When Burt got Charlie Knott for a duck with the second ball of his forty-third over to finish with 6 for 76 it meant that after the compulsory ten minute interval between innings the New Zealanders had just thirty-five minutes on the Friday evening, before setting off for London and their second match with Surrey at The Oval, to score 109 runs.

Hampshire having recovered so unexpectedly and to such an unlooked for degree were in no mood to give the tourists anything and they employed their regular new ball bowlers Ransom and Shackleton. Hadlee sent in his two left handers Sutcliffe and Donnelly. Ten minutes after they took guard the score board was showing 50 for no wicket. Three minutes later Sutcliffe edged a catch to Eagar off Ransom but in his thirteen minutes at the crease he had scored 46. Thirty-four of those runs came from seven strokes, three of which had soared over the boundary. It says everything for the grand spirit in which this game was contested that Hampshire bowled their overs as fast as they could. They could have wasted precious minutes retrieving the ball after those sixes of Sutcliffe's but that was not the way things were done in 1949. Eagar would have banished any man from the side who had attempted it for one thing, but in fairness I doubt if the thought ever occurred to any of his players.

Reid came next to join Donnelly. He grabbed a single, belted a couple of fours and was bowled by Shackleton. F.B. Smith, a hitter was sent in after him. He swung at Shackleton before he had either got his eye adjusted or opened his score and over went his wicket too.

But Donnelly, at the peak of his form and fitness in a season in which he scored nearly 2,300 runs in twenty-nine matches to top the batting averages, was keeping the runs flowing from his end and Hadlee joined him to finish the job. When the last run was successfully scored to give New Zealand a 7 wickets victory the tourists had actually left themselves five minutes to spare.

In half an hour Hampshire had bowled seventy-one balls off which the New Zealand batsmen scored 109 runs. A great win but the result did not matter a damn. As the two captains came in together Hadlee, eyes twinkling behind his spectacles said to Eagar 'By God, Desmond that was FUN wasn't it?' Eagar, his harlequin cap nodding vigorously and his eyes shining as brightly as Hadlee, replied 'Tremendous'."