

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Shaun Udal James Tomlinson

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Wednesday 28 March 2018 – Meeting

The society extends a warm welcome to this evening's speaker, Adrian Aymes, on his return to the Society. He first addressed members in September 2000, during his benefit year.

ADRIAN NIGEL AYMES was born in Southampton on 4 June 1964, and attended Bellemoor School. He came late to first-class cricket. He joined the Hampshire staff when 21 years of age in 1986 but did not gain a regular place until he finally displaced Bob Parks some four years later.

He gave notice of what was to follow on his first-class debut against Surrey at The Oval in 1987. With Hampshire in trouble, he battled to 58 not out. Subsequently, no player in the first-class game during the 1990s sold his wicket more dearly. He was undefeated in a high proportion of his innings, which spoke volumes for his technique, temperament and sheer cussedness. With Robin Smith, he became the beating heart and consciousness of the Hampshire batting. If he took root and dug in, Hampshire were generally assured of a competitive total. All of his eight centuries were made in adversity. Of all Hampshire's wicket-keepers, only his successor, Nic Pothas, has a higher batting average. He was a passionately proud professional, and never gave less than his best.

He was fortunate to keep wicket to two of the genuinely great bowlers in the history of the game. At the start of his career, he stood back to the incomparable Malcolm Marshall; latterly, he kept to the unique Shane Warne. He showed he was equally adept against pace and spin alike. Many felt that he was one of the best all-round wicket-keepers in County cricket during his career. He was somewhat unlucky not to have been selected for the tour to Australia in 1998/99. He started the previous summer in fine form but, unfortunately, then found it elusive in the crucial run-up to selection in August.

He was one of the team that won the Nat West Trophy in 1991. There were several memorable performances during that triumph over Surrey: Tony Middleton's well-paced innings, Robin Smith's controlled hitting and Jon Ayling's square cut into the tavern in the evening twilight. Perhaps, though, the most crucial moment of the match was his decision to stand up to the stumps to the dangerous David Ward just as he was beginning to cut loose and take away the game from Hampshire. The latter became so inhibited that he gave a soft catch to Raj Maru at gully shortly afterwards, thus paving the way for Cardigan Connor to restrain the later Surrey batsmen and keep the total within reasonable bounds.

It was a memorable return to a Lord's final. In 1984, he had been on the losing side for his beloved Hursley Park in the National Village competition. He returned to the club after his enforced retirement in 2002 due to a persistent knee injury.

He played in 215 matches in first-class cricket for the County, scoring 7338 runs (avge. 31.22) with a highest score of 133 against Leicestershire at Grace Road in 1998. He assisted in 560 dismissals (516 catches and 44 stumpings). In 221 list A matches, he made a further 2210 runs and claimed 268 victims, including 53 stumpings, a high number in limited overs cricket in the modern era.

In recent years, he has carved out a career as a manager and coach in senior non-league football.

Wednesday 7 March 2018 – Report

Members spent a delightful evening in the company of Bob Parks and two of Hampshire's young women cricketers, Charlie Dean and Emily Windsor. Both girls live in South-East Hampshire. Charlie is still in full-time education at Portsmouth Grammar School; Emily is at Portsmouth University. They were the youngest speakers to talk to the Society by some margin. Charlie was influenced by her father, Steven Dean, who was a prolific batsman for Staffordshire in Minor Counties cricket. She now has a contract with Southern Vipers and is in the England Academy side. Emily started playing in the back garden with her brother, to whom she bowled. She now plays for Havant 2nd XI (men's cricket) in the Southern League on Saturdays and Hursley Park Ladies who play in the regional league on Sundays. She has recently gained a place in the MCC Academy at Lord's.

Bob Parks is now Head of Women's Cricket, a role which includes being Head of Performance for Hampshire Women's Cricket. He also manages the Southern Vipers. The Vipers have now selected their squad for 2018. The numbers will include three members of the current England side; the team will be captained by the New Zealander, Suzie Bates.

He gave a brief outline of the international game. England have 19 players on central contracts. They are full-time professionals, who are able to boost their contract income if they are selected to appear in the Australian women's version of the Big Bash. Australia possess the largest number of full-time professionals, followed by New Zealand and South Africa. The other test playing nations, though, are beginning to develop quickly.

The women's game in schools broadly mirrors that of the men's. State schools are reducing their commitment to cricket but independent schools are expanding their activity. They are also establishing good links with local clubs and Hampshire. The All Stars campaign, funded by the ECB, attached to clubs and aimed at 5 – 8 year olds, is beginning to attract recruits. (The Editor can vouch for the success of this venture as both a grand-daughter and a grandson are enjoying themselves immensely at a Hampshire club). Unfortunately, the structure for the women's game is poorly funded vis-à-vis that for the men's game.

The interaction between all three of our guests produced an illuminating evening, enhanced by a flood of questions from their audience. The sheer enthusiasm of Charlie and Emily for their cricket shone through. Both were very clear minded about their ambitions and it is certain that those members present will follow their careers with more than passing interest.

MORE ON SOUTHERN VIPERS AND HAMPSHIRE WOMEN SQUADS AND FIXTURES

The Ageas Bowl website has an excellent section on both the Southern Vipers and Hampshire Women squads for 2018. It contains both photographs and pen pictures of each member. The latter can be found by clicking on to the relevant photograph.

Southern Vipers Fixtures

Sunday 22 July	Surrey Stars	Guildford CC
Wednesday 25 July	Loughborough Lightning	Ageas Bowl
Sunday 29 July	Lancashire Thunder	Aigburth, Liverpool
Tuesday 31 July	Western Storm	Arundel
Thursday 2 August	Yorkshire Diamonds	York CC
Saturday 4 August	Loughborough Lightning	Loughborough
Wednesday 8 August	Yorkshire Diamonds	Ageas Bowl
Saturday 11 August	Western Storm	Brightside Grd, Bristol
Tuesday 14 August	Surrey Stars	Ageas Bowl
Saturday 18 August	Lancashire Thunder	Ageas Bowl

Hampshire Women Fixtures

Royal London Women's One Day Cup

Sunday 6 May	Nottinghamshire	Home
Monday 7 May	Warwickshire	Home
Sunday 13 May	Somerset	Kings Bruton
Sunday 20 May	Kent	Home
Sunday 27 May	Yorkshire	Away
Monday 28 May	Lancashire	Away
Sunday 3 June	Middlesex	Home

At the time of completing the Newsletter, the Editor was unable to locate the relevant venues on the internet except the Somerset away fixture.

KATIE GEORGE

One of Hampshire's players, Katie George, has been selected for the forthcoming England tour of India. It will be her first tour. Aged 18, she was born in Haywards Heath, but plays her county cricket for Hampshire Women. She made her County debut in 2013, aged only 14. She is a left-handed all-rounder, bowling medium pace, and was a regular member of the Southern Vipers side in 2017. As far as the Editor is aware, she is the first member of the Hampshire Women's side to gain international recognition.

HAMPSHIRE IN THE WEST INDIES

As mentioned in the February Newsletter, Hampshire participated in the West Indies Super 50 Cup in January and February. Without six regulars from last season's side, it was no surprise that the County finished bottom of their group and did not qualify for the final stages. They won only two of their eight matches, both against Combined Campuses and Colleges (CCC).

The tournament, however, enabled Hampshire to give extended opportunities to younger members of their squad. Two in particular did well, with both bat and ball. Joe Weatherley made three half centuries, two of which were against Barbados, the eventual beaten finalists. He finished with 218 runs, second to Jimmy Adams (285) in aggregate. He also took four for 25 with his off-spin against Trinidad and Tobago. Brad Taylor, who missed much of last season with injury, scored 198 runs (avge 39.60) which included 69 against CCC, and then four for 26 in the return against the same opposition. The leading bowler was Fidel Edwards (16 wickets). Chris Wood returned the best bowling figures with five for 38 against the Windward Islands, who went on to win the tournament. Adams (83) made Hampshire's highest score against the same opposition.

Both Felix Organ and Asher Hart made their Hampshire debuts in List A matches.

In the other group, Kent finished second, but were defeated by Barbados in the semi-final.

THE GAME HAS CHANGED FOREVER

In Newsletter 350, in a survey describing how the game had changed since the Society was formed in 1976, the Editor wrote that the implications of the formation of the Indian Premier League (IPL) were still unravelling. There have been a number of developments this winter which have given more than a sense of foreboding for the traditional game. It seems to be a winter in which the game has changed forever.

The auction for the 2018 version of the IPL resulted in England's best test batsman, Joe Root, being unsold. On the other hand, Jofra Archer of Sussex, who has played two seasons of county cricket and will not be eligible to play test cricket for England until 2022, sold for the eye-watering sum of £793,200. (Ben Stokes fetched £1.4 m). He was such a success for the Tasmanian Devils in Australia's Big Bash League that his recruitment by one of the Indian franchises (the successful bidder was Rajasthan Royals) seemed a foregone conclusion. Also picked up in the IPL auction were three Afghans and one Nepalese. The changes in cricket's landscape could not have been illustrated more starkly.

The ICC, belatedly, are now so concerned about the plethora of t20 tournaments worldwide that the published proposals are to limit the appearances of players, to three separate tournaments per year. The proposal has more than an element of whistling in the wind. First there is the legal issue of restraint of trade, though, admittedly, Indians are already prevented, contractually, from appearing in t20 tournaments elsewhere. Also, what is to stop the wealthy franchise holders

worldwide combining to organise all t20 tournaments, in the process operating outside the orbit of the ICC?

In England, Alex Hales and Adil Rashid have opted out of all forms of red ball cricket. Surely, the joys of playing the longer forms of cricket are the prospect of batting a long time and/or bowling many overs. Will batsmen and bowlers really be satisfied in a career of white ball cricket only? How long would such a career be? Will fitness and skills levels be maintained? Auctions are also risky. Tymal Mills, who sold for over £1m in the IPL in 2017, did not find a buyer this year. The New Zealander, Mitchell McClenaghan relinquished his central contract in the expectation of finding an IPL franchise. He didn't do so.

These developments will undoubtedly affect first-class county cricket. The standard has already been diluted with the rare, or non-appearance, of English test cricketers. The opting out of such as Hales and Rashid dilutes the standard even further.

The championship schedule becomes less appealing with each passing year with the majority of matches being played in April, May and September when conditions are more conducive to seam bowlers. The latter do not have to work overly hard to take wickets. Spin bowlers have become virtually redundant unless, like Somerset, wickets are prepared to aid spin bowlers. Given the seam friendly wickets prepared by Hampshire in recent years, one fears for the future of the prodigiously talented Mason Crane. How are batsmen meant to develop? Generally, batsmen from Australia are much more fearless because of the sunny climate and hence hard wickets on which batsmen can play their shots. Bowlers also have to work harder for their wickets. One reason for the decline of the West Indies is, despite the sunshine, the dreadful pitches in the Caribbean on which neither batsmen nor fast bowlers have generally prospered.

As for the future of some counties, there was the divisive statement by the ECB of subsidising those test counties who have staged test cricket to the tune of half a million pounds per year in the event of their not being selected to host a test match in any year. The "non test ground Counties" have reacted furiously; it seems as if this issue is far from settled. The implicit message from the subsidisation decision, of course, is the long-term future of those clubs who will not receive a subsidy. They must now be at risk. The future of county cricket has been referred to in *Wisden*, and the print media for over a hundred years. After this winter's developments, that issue now seems very real. The decision of Somerset's Chairman to resign his seat on the ECB board, was widely applauded. If only others were so principled.

Amidst all the developments is the future of test cricket. A friend of the editor, a Society member, expressed concerns about its future a year ago. The editor thought that was a far too pessimistic assessment. It no longer appears so. Test cricket may disappear sooner rather than later.

There are two more issues that may yet impact on cricket's finances. Football's administrators have now actively started discussion on a mid-winter break. That can only mean the encroaching on the cricket season. It should also be remembered that the World Cup in Qatar in 2022 will be played in the European winter. Inevitably, the football league season will be extended well into the summer of that

year. Also, as investment in a number of industries is being delayed because of Brexit and the uncertainty of the outcome of the next General Election in 2020, will businesses feel inclined to continue to sponsor the various cricketing tournaments and clubs?

It is doubtful if cricket has ever faced such huge challenges, some of them self inflicted. Can the ICC or ECB meet those challenges and thus ensure that the needs of all their constituent members are met?

REECE TOPLEY - WHITE BALL CONTRACT

Reece Topley will play for Hampshire in white ball cricket only in 2018. Unlike Hales and Rashid, his move to the limited overs game is for one season only, as part of his rehabilitation programme. He has given glimpses of his undoubted ability during his two years with the club and it must be hoped that he succeeds.

MORE HAMPSHIRE NEWS

By now, members will be aware that **Mason Crane** had to return home from New Zealand with a stress fracture in his lower back. It is probably a case that he has bowled too many overs, bearing in mind that he has only just turned 21 years of age. The only cure is a long rest, which one report thought would be at least 10/12 weeks.

Liam Dawson (Peshawar Zalmi), Rilee Rossouw (Multan) and Kyle Abbott (Lahore Qalanders) have all been appearing in the Pakistan Super League taking place in the UAE. Dawson has been enjoying a quietly accomplished winter. His performances for England in the t20 tournament in Australia caused one observer to remark that he deserves his place in that format in the England team.

IAN WATSON

Much has been made of Tommy Charlton, brother of Sir Bobby and Jack, attending trials to play for England's International Walking Football Over-70s side. Hampshire have their own Peter Pan. Ian Watson, who played one match for Hampshire against the 1973 West Indians, has been playing for England's Golden Oldie Cricketers against Australia in Over 70's Ashes Test cricket Down Under. He holds a unique record of having made one appearance for three different counties; the others being Middlesex and Northamptonshire. He was, though, a prolific run-scorer in club cricket in Hampshire, for Deanery and Hursley Park. Only last season, at the age of 70, he made a century for Hursley Park fourth XI in Hampshire League cricket. In the first test of the series, batting at seven, he made an unbeaten 34 at the Tea Tree Gulley Ground at Adelaide. He held the lower order batting together, but his side fell 14 runs short.

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