

HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Shaun Udal James Tomlinson

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MIKE BARNARD TRIBUTE



Many sport followers will know that Mike Barnard was a cricketer/footballer, though perhaps not quite aware that he was one of the relatively few to have played over 100 matches in both the County Championship and the top football league in England. And, almost uniquely, he attained these milestones playing for teams in the County of his birth. Those fans may know that he was a member of Hampshire's Championship title winning side in 1961, though perhaps not quite acquainted with his crucial contributions in the last few weeks approaching the climax of that momentous summer. He was also one of the best slip fielders in the County's history and scorer of a century against three different touring sides, including the Australians.

The Hampshire cricketing fraternity, especially those who watched the County play in the 1950s and 1960s, will not only recall his achievements, but remember him as a man of great fortitude and courage. After his top flight sporting career was over he suffered life changing injuries in April 1969 when a vehicle in which he was travelling was involved in a crash whilst returning from a cricket tour in Germany. The driver had fallen asleep at the wheel. He incurred serious head injuries, with a broken neck, jaw and cheekbone, when he was thrown from the vehicle, which left him with permanent mobility problems. If he had been wearing a seatbelt, he would have been killed, a tree trunk having come through the windscreen to the seat in which he had been sitting. His life hung in the balance immediately afterwards but, almost miraculously he returned to take charge of Hampshire's 2nd XI in the summer of 1970. He lived for another 49 years, and though rarely free from pain, never dwelt on his ill fortune.

He spoke to the Society three times (in June 1980, September 1982 and January 1997). His last appearance at Netley typified the man. With Graham Gooch unable to travel because of fog bound motorways, he stood in at an hour's notice.

At that meeting, he talked about his early life. Mike was the youngest of four boys by some eight years. His father owned a garage near to the gates of Portsmouth Dockyard, but at the outbreak of war, the family moved to Havant. The risk of staying near to such a prime target for German bombers was just too high and, in the light of subsequent events, thoroughly vindicated. His former house received a direct hit. He was a schoolboy sporting prodigy excelling at cricket, soccer and rugby union. He left Portsmouth Grammar School to do his National Service just after being offered a place on the Hampshire ground staff, and terms with Portsmouth Football Club, in 1951.

He made his first-class debut for Hampshire against Glamorgan at Swansea whilst in the Army in 1952. He hit his first ball for four, but then failed to add to that score. After a "pair" in his next match against Warwickshire in the following summer, he gained a regular place in the Hampshire side from 1954.

He counted himself privileged to have played against the great players of the fifties at both football and cricket. He had first played for Portsmouth on Boxing Day in 1953, and went to make 116 league (all in the old First Division) and seven Cup appearances (scoring 26 goals). He would have played more often but at Roker Park, Sunderland, in

October 1956, in a match in which he had already found the net, he was on the receiving end of a malicious, late tackle, He suffered both cruciate ligament and cartilage damage. His knee always felt unstable thereafter. That injury, coupled with his disenchantment over the man management skills of Pompey boss, Freddie Cox, led to him leaving the club at the end of an unhappy 1958/59 season, when they were relegated to Division 2. He treasured memories of Len Phillips, Jack Froggatt, Jimmy Scoular and Jimmy Dickinson of the Portsmouth side, and the Busby babes among his opponents. The maximum wage when he left football was still £20 per week, and he continued to earn that sum when he subsequently signed for Chelmsford City. He was still only 26 years old, and decided to concentrate on his cricket and train as a teacher in the winter months.

He had scored his maiden century in his home City against Pakistan five years earlier in 1954. He was the only batsman to play fluently on a slow, seam bowler's wicket; the next highest score by any batsman on either side was 47. He also made 128 against India in 1959 and a splendid 123 against Australia in 1964, which only just failed to take his side to victory.

Indisputably, though, his two best innings were in Hampshire's Championship summer of 1961. Throughout much of the season, Hampshire had generally given precedence to Denis Baldry, but when his form tailed off in late July/early August, Mike Barnard was brought in for the match at Derby. The County had not gained any points from their two previous matches; and Derbyshire had been their bogey side in eight matches since 1955. On this occasion, however, they ran out winners by 58 runs. In partnership with Henry Horton (141), he scored 45 to help steady the first innings and lay the foundations for their eventual victory.

It was in the following match at the County Ground that he secured his place for the rest of the summer. In reply to Warwickshire's 343, half of the side were back in the pavilion for 140 just after lunch on the second day. The innings stood on a knife edge. He then joined Peter Sainsbury (64) and, in a precursor to events later in the month, the scoring rate increased. Barnard then took over as the dominant partner when joined by Leo Harrison (34). The pair added 101 in an hour He went on to 114 not out. The report in the Hampshire Handbook commented "Barnard's innings was the best he has ever played and the most important". He batted for only 155 minutes and had overseen 204 runs being added for the loss of four wickets. Directly a first innings lead, and bonus points,

had been secured, Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie declared with nine wickets down. In the remaining 40 minutes play, Butch White (with three) and Derek Shackleton (one) captured four wickets. In a calculating innings, Mike Barnard had transformed the match completely. Hampshire romped to victory by eight wickets by mid-afternoon on the third day, a situation which had seemed impossible 24 hours earlier. With confidence now flowing through his veins, he then scored 59 against Leicestershire at Portsmouth, and 78 at Trent Bridge, where he added 117 in 91 minutes with Horton, in the next two matches.

The County then played the Australians (Barnard 5 & 4) before that famous match against Derbyshire at Bournemouth when they claimed the Championship. There were many key performances from Hampshire players in that match, and none more so than Mike Barnard's partnership with Peter Sainsbury on the final morning. Hampshire were seeking quick runs to set a declaration target. After the early dismissal of Roy Marshall, he joined Peter Sainsbury. In between hitting the odd boundary, the two Hampshire born batsmen virtually played "tip and run" as they stole improbable singles in adding 99 in only 68 minutes (Sainsbury 76; Barnard 61), thus enabling Ingleby-Mackenzie to declare half an hour before lunch. When interviewed by John Arlott after the match he told him that he had said to his partner "Don't take any quick singles". He had "a slight pull in the leg muscle". Sainsbury's response was "You're probably quicker than me anyway". The comment settled him down. Derek Shackleton (six for 39 in 24 overs), aided by Alan Wassell and Sainsbury then administered the coup de grace.

In those final five Championship matches, all of which were won, Mike Barnard had been in the form of his life in making 380 runs at an average of 63.33. He had played a vital role in each of them. He modestly told Arlott "I've had a bit of luck" but acknowledged "things have gone rather well the last month I've been in the side".

Moreover, he held seven catches at slip in those games. He was one of Hampshire's great slip fieldsman. In fitting with his character, he unobtrusively snaffled 312 catches in 276 matches, an average of 1.13 catches per match. Only Barry Richards, Gordon Greenidge and Paul Terry - distinguished company indeed - have a better ratio.

He had, finally, won a much coveted winners medal after three occasions when he had come close to doing so. In 1954/55, Pompey had finished third in Division 1. They effectively missed out on the title by winning only one of their final seven matches. Interestingly, he missed

six of those seven games. Pompey were four points behind Champions Chelsea, who were managed by former Hampshire cricketer, Ted Drake. In 1955, when he made his maiden Championship century – 116 against Leicestershire at Bournemouth – Hampshire were third, the highest position they had yet attained. Three years later, Hampshire were second to the powerful Surrey side of the 1950s. Hampshire's title aspirations had evaporated in a bizarre match at Burton-on-Trent, in which 39 wickets fell on the second day. Hampshire were dismissed for 23 and 55. Mike Barnard top scored in each innings with 5 and 16!

In an interview on Isle of Wight Radio many years later he commented that his game was more suited to one-day cricket as he lacked the concentration to convert fifties into hundreds. His assertion is borne out by his stats as he stroked 56 half centuries but scored only six hundreds. To reinforce his limited overs credentials, in Hampshire's first-ever Gillette Cup tie against Derbyshire at Bournemouth, he scored 98, in a six-run defeat. He was last man out, attempting a big hit with three balls remaining. He received a special award of a silver medal, the only Hampshire player ever to receive one. That innings remained the highest by a Hampshire player against a first-class county in the competition until 1972, when Barry Richards surpassed it with a gloriously inventive 129 against Lancashire at Bournemouth. When he left the game in 1966, his limited overs average approached 40, far more than any other Hampshire player.

The fact that he played football in his early career also probably mitigated against him realising his great gifts. He passed 1000 runs in a season only once -in 1963- when his footballing days were over. By now, he was opening the innings with Roy Marshall, having previously spent his career batting in the middle order. He also held 37 catches in that season. His career aggregate was 9314 runs (avge. 22.07). In his early days, he bowled useful medium pace, capturing some very notable victims, including Hanif Mohammed, Don Kenyon, Tom Graveney and Ted Dexter. He took 16 wickets (avge. 35.18); all but three of his dismissals were claimed prior to August 1955.

He was capped in the above year and would normally have been entitled to a benefit ten years later. However, he had to make do with a Testimonial in 1968, which totalled just over £4,000.

After the accident, he embarked on a number of careers. When BBC Radio Solent first broadcast in 1970, he was persuaded his old school friend Lawrie Bloomfield to give expert comments on their sports

coverage. He was one of the first ex-sportsmen to be recruited for the task; it is, of course, now commonplace. He remained behind the microphone, lending an expert and, if necessary, critical eye, for some thirty years. He also assisted with hospital broadcasting for several years.

His main work was as a Sports Officer at the School of Navigation at Warsash where his capacity for hard work in arranging activities etc. became a byword and hugely appreciated by the maritime community. When he retired at the age of 60 in 1993, he worked for the Sports Council Drugs Testing Unit, and undertook voluntary work in the rehabilitation Unit at Southampton General Hospital. Through his own earlier experiences, he was of inestimable help to patients.

Other activities included bowls at The Atherley Club in Southampton and organising Hampshire players' reunions and Portsmouth's "50 Club", for those players who had appeared in 50 or more matches in Division One.

Wherever he went or whatever he did, he endeared himself to people with his innate modesty, cheerfulness and bravery. Only last summer he attended a dinner organised by Dorset Cricket Society to celebrate Alan Rayment's 90th birthday, and was greeted most warmly. Mike Barnard was a very special, and exceptional, man indeed.

Henry Michael Barnard
Born Portsmouth 18 July 1933
Died Southampton 18 December 2018

MEETINGS

Wednesday 9 January 2019 – Meeting

The Society extends a warm welcome to **MICHAEL STIMPSON** this evening. He is the author of ***George Brown: England's Most Complete All-Round Cricketer***, which was published last summer. He has lived in the Oxford area, where, of course, George Brown was born, most of his life. He has played club and village cricket locally and has two things in common with Gordon Greenidge: they were both opening batsmen and played for Berkshire Bantams, that County's Under-19 side. He remembers playing against Hampshire Under-19s twice, once being pinned leg before by Tim Tremlett. The book on George Brown is his first, and was written as a retirement project. And an extremely well written and interesting book it is too.