

# HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

**Patrons: John Woodcock Shaun Udal James Tomlinson**

## **NEWSLETTER No. 381 – SUMMER 2019**

### **ROYAL LONDON CUP 2019**

The main highlight of the first two months of this summer was Hampshire's performances in the Royal London Cup. Even more than they did during their successful 2018 campaign, Hampshire played with great certainty and panache during the group matches. Out of the nine matches, eight were won; their only defeat was at Chelmsford, which in recent years has become a hoodoo ground for the County.

Qualification from the group matches was built around a series of formidable batting displays, potent bowling and disciplined fielding. It was a fine team effort throughout. They posted five scores in excess of 300; six centuries were scored and six batsmen averaged 39 or more. Sam Northeast initially led the way with 105 not out against his former County, Kent, at Canterbury in the first match. Tom Alsop, batting with great maturity, then posted 130 not out against Glamorgan at home and later made 124 in a memorable match against Sussex, also at the Ageas Bowl (see below).

James Vince was Hampshire's heaviest scorer with 509 runs at the princely average of 72.71. In company with Alsop, he scored 95 and added a match defining second wicket partnership of 161 in that Glamorgan fixture. Barely a week later, he played the innings of the County's one-day season, with a record 190 against Gloucestershire on home territory. In doing so, he exceeded his own record for the highest individual innings for Hampshire in List A matches. It was the usual sublime Vince effort which is so familiar to the Hampshire faithful. Uncanny timing was matched to placement and power. The innings was born out of adversity. At one stage, his side were 65 for four but then he embarked on a fifth wicket partnership of 186 with his former Wiltshire colleague Liam Dawson (73), - another Hampshire record. Vince's innings was timely. It coincided with Alex Hales' exclusion from the England World Cup squad for recreational drug taking. The Hampshire captain became the logical selection as Hales' replacement.

There were two candidates for the best all-round display by a Hampshire player during the competition. In the next match, Dawson ran up an astute 108 against Surrey at The Oval. He then strangled the home side's reply by taking two for 39 in his allotted ten overs. Whilst batting he had been assisted by Aiden Markram (88). The South African had earlier enjoyed a fine all-round match against Middlesex, scoring 88 and then taking three for 39, with his part-time, under-rated off-spin. Markram gave the Hampshire top order a welcome solidity. Runs became almost guaranteed.

After The Oval, Markram scored 130 in an extraordinary match against Sussex at the Ageas Bowl, when Hampshire raced to what appeared to be an unassailable total of 355. After losing five wickets for 103, the Sussex task seemed hopeless. It was

then, however, that the free spirited David Wiese hammered a vivid 171; in partnership with his captain, Ben Brown, he added 232 runs off only 26 overs. Eventually, Sussex required 20 off the last two overs. The game then took its final, dramatic twist. Kyle Abbott, who had taken so many match winning wickets throughout, intervened with two wickets in his final over, including that of Wiese. Mason Crane held his nerve better than the Sussex tail-enders, taking two wickets in the final over, both with the aid of Alsop stumpings. The visitors had lost their last five wickets for 11 runs, as Hampshire emerged winners after a thrilling day's cricket by nine runs.

The other batsman to prosper was Rilee Rossouw. His highest score was 93 at Chelmsford, where he largely played a lone hand. Such is his capacity for quick scoring, no match is ever quite lost whilst he is at the wicket. He passed fifty in three more matches.

Hampshire's dominant bowler had been the whole hearted, skilful, Kyle Abbott. Throughout the summer, opposing batsmen underwent a severe examination as he probed their techniques mercilessly. Time and again, he made early inroads, and usually picked up a wicket or two at the end. He finished with 20 wickets; his main assistance came from Dawson (18) and Crane (14). Hampshire's fielders had also run out no fewer than eight batsmen during the competition.

Gareth Berg joined the party in the televised semi-final against Lancashire. The latter's batting started brightly but the popular all-rounder (five for 26) and Crane (three for 42) restricted them to 241. Vince (79) and Rossouw (85) in a calculating partnership of 122 for the fourth wicket, then ensured that Hampshire's marvellous performances in the group stages were not wasted. The County eventually eased home by four wickets.

Unfortunately, Hampshire went into the final at Lord's against Somerset with a much weakened side. Vince, Dawson and Markram (who had missed the semi-final) had been selected for their respective World Cup squads. Under ICC rules, no player could appear for any other side during the tournament and, therefore, the trio were ruled out of the final. Hampshire's strategy had been fatally undermined; they were bound to miss the trio's runs, and Dawson's ability to restrict the run rate, and take wickets along the way.

Stand-in captain Sam Northeast (56), who filled in most capably in those matches in which Vince was unavailable, and James Fuller (55 not out) batted well but, throughout the innings, wickets fell at inconvenient times, just as partnerships were beginning to build. Hampshire's total of 244 (for eight) was never enough. For once, Abbott was denied by the openers, the precocious Tom Banton (69) and Azhar Ali (45), who put on 112 before they were separated in the 20<sup>th</sup> over. James Hildreth (69 not out), always so prolific against the County, guided Somerset to a comfortable six wicket victory. Hampshire will have reflected that they beat Somerset with equal ease by seven wickets in their final group match.

Nevertheless, Hampshire left a warm place in the hearts of their supporters through their play in the previous six weeks. Indeed, their fearless displays in both 2018 and 2019 had rarely been exceeded in their one-day history. Their track record in Lord's

finals was also enviable. After taking 25 years to make their first appearance, they subsequently won seven of their nine finals there. When they defeated Warwickshire in 2005, it was planned that there would be no more finals at Lord's. After all the hype about "The Hundred" has dissipated, will there be a change of heart again? For those county cricketers who never played test cricket, a Lord's final was a highlight of their careers.

Finally, after England having won the World Cup this summer, it defies all logic that in 2020 and beyond, the domestic 50-Over competition will be relegated effectively to not much better than 2<sup>nd</sup> XI standard, followed by probable extinction. No further comment is required.

### **JAMES VINCE AND GORDON GREENIDGE**

When Gordon Greenidge left Hampshire, most thought his one-day records would never be exceeded for the County. His fast scoring exploits, stemming from quickness of feet, eye and hand were the stuff of legend. Indeed, he was usually at his most dangerous when he was limping. He once scored a Championship century against Northamptonshire at the County Ground in 1985, virtually batting on one leg and with one hand.

However, James Vince has now exceeded the great opener's highest scores in one day cricket. He holds the record for the two best individual scores - 190 v Gloucestershire in 2019, and 178 v Glamorgan in 2018. Greenidge's previous record was 177 v Glamorgan at The County Ground in 1975. The pair have recorded the six highest scores for the County in one-day matches.

Greenidge, of course, was one of the finest of all openers in international cricket. One hopes that there is still time for James Vince to make a similar mark. He is far too good a player not to. He *belongs* on the big stage. Perhaps, one day, we'll find out why it has not yet happened.

### **OBITUARY**

#### **TOM MOTTRAM**

Most members will be aware by now that Tom Mottram passed away on 26 July 2019. He was a man who will be remembered very fondly by Hampshire supporters. He came to county cricket late, at the age of 26, his stay was brief and, in the latter stages, plagued by injury, and yet his achievements were considerable. He was an integral part of the side that won the County Championship in 1973, an important presence in the run-in to the first John Player League title in 1975, and a member of the teams that won the Fenner Trophy at Scarborough in 1975 and 1976.

He was in some respects a throwback to a bygone era in that he mainly played on a match-by-match basis as he was a practising architect. This fact makes his feats even more noteworthy.

He was a tall (six feet four inches), lean, right-arm fast-medium bowler. As with many players of his era, his hair and side burns were fairly long. His gait was such that,

with a minimal swing of his arms whilst walking, he was dubbed “The Pink Panther” by his team-mates.

His priceless assets were that he bowled very accurately and possessed the happy knack of dismissing opening batsmen with the new ball. On his first-class debut against the Australians at the County Ground in 1972, he took the wickets of their openers Keith Stackpole and John Inverarity in the first innings, and finished with figures of three for 45. The weather conditions were cloudy; he received a stark reminder that first-class cricket was not a hard school in the second innings when, with the sun out, Stackpole and Graeme Watson (no relation to Shane of the same surname but a similar type of all-rounder) put on 301 for the first wicket as their side raced at indecent speed to a nine wicket victory.

In that Championship season a year later, his victims were a virtual Who’s Who of county top-order batsmen as time and again he, with Bob Herman, made early inroads into the opposition. He missed the first three matches whilst the newly arrived Mike Taylor (from Nottinghamshire) took the new ball with Herman. Mottram then came in against Yorkshire at Headingley and made an immediate impression by claiming the wickets of Richard Lumb, John Hampshire and Phil Sharpe in the first innings; he then bowled Geoffrey Boycott - a rare event indeed - and dismissed Lumb again in the second. Thereafter, his scalps included Arthur Milton, Roy Fredericks, John Jameson, Alan Jones, Barry Wood (twice), Imran Khan (batting at three), the Australian Bruce Francis of Essex, Tony Borrington (twice) and Mike Page, Roy Virgin, David Steele (twice) and Colin Milburn, Mike Harris, Roger Knight, Brian Luckhurst and Mike Denness - a most impressive array. For those who were at the County Ground on that sunny Saturday morning, the wicket of Northamptonshire’s Roy Virgin will forever remain the memory. Virgin punched the ball, not far off the ground, to the right of the stumps at the bowler’s end; Mottram checked his follow through and dived across the full length, and more, of the wickets to effect the catch one handed. For a man of his height and who would not rank as a natural athlete, it was a simply astonishing catch. The crowd, once they realised what had happened, rose as one to applaud him. It was the first Northamptonshire wicket in what was in effect a Championship decider, and set the scene for an unforgettable match and victory. He took career best figures of six for 63 in the second innings against Warwickshire at Coventry.

Hampshire started the season at odds of 66-1 to win the Championship. They had lost Butch White, Alan Castell and John Holder, who between them had taken 1461 wickets for the County, at the end of the previous season. However, the unsung quartet of Mottram (57 wickets), Herman (64), Taylor (64) and Trevor Jesty (36) gave the seam bowling attack a real cutting edge. Towards the end of the season, David O’Sullivan (47) and Peter Sainsbury (53) took full advantage of turning wickets on home grounds.

Mottram and Herman had first bowled together in the previous season and, though not many had thought much of it at the time, had given notice of a most effective partnership. In Mottram’s second match, nearly three months after his debut, the pair had bowled out Worcestershire for 90 in the second innings (Mottram five for 45; Herman four for 28), at Portsmouth. Mottram had bowled Basil D’Oliveira in the first. Some three weeks later, they took all the wickets in Kent’s first innings at Folkestone

(Herman five for 55; Mottram five for 80). However, they were unable to prevent Denness (146) and Asif Iqbal (97 not out) taking Kent to an eventual five wicket victory as they chased down 338 for the second innings.

In the following season, when Andy Roberts terrorised batsmen up and down the land, Hampshire were cruelly robbed of the Championship when they were unable to start their final match of the season due to monsoon weather at Bournemouth. Mottram was unable to play at all during the season because of an Achilles tendon injury, and it must be wondered whether his lack of availability, and similarly in 1975 (again mainly due to injury), deprived Hampshire of three successive Championships. His presence was clearly crucial to the side. However, in 1975, he played in seven matches in the John Player League campaign. Only one of those matches was lost and he took five for 21 in the final, title clinching, match against Derbyshire at Darley Dale.

Though he played in all Sunday matches in 1976, when he headed the averages by a country mile, and all List A matches in 1977, he could only play in seven Championship matches in 1976 - his final season in first-class cricket. He again showed his liking for Yorkshire batsmen by taking five for 51 in the first innings at Headingley, when he dismissed both opening batsmen yet again. The fact that his appearances in 1977 were restricted to List A matches only, meant that he became the first Hampshire player to earn what these days would be termed a "white ball contract". (Derek Shackleton and Peter Haslop had previously been similarly recruited, but to play in Sunday League matches only).

Tom Mottram had come to Hampshire virtually out of the blue after playing league cricket in Liverpool, where he was born on 7 September 1945, and for Lancashire 2<sup>nd</sup> XI. He played his first match in a JPL encounter against Somerset at Glastonbury in 1971. He batted at seven, a lofty position, as he was a genuine number eleven. Despite playing in only 35 first-class matches (111 wickets @ 24.11), his presence in those two major trophy winning sides in 1973 and 1975 earned him a permanent place in Hampshire's history. He made 83 List A appearances (135 wickets @ 18.69).

After his playing days, he wasn't quite finished with Hampshire. His firm was commissioned to build the Squash and Social Centre at Northlands Road, which became a hub of sporting and social activity until the Club's transfer to the Ageas Bowl.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **The Great Romantic: Cricket and the Golden Age of Neville Cardus by Duncan Hamilton (pub. Hodder & Stoughton-price £20).**

Just once in a while, a sports book is published that transcends its subject to become part of literature. This biography of Neville Cardus, still generally regarded as the greatest of all cricket writers, is one of those. Under the stewardship of Duncan Hamilton, the book spills over into literary criticism, exposing not only the well-established merits of the Cardus' canon, but also the excellence of Hamilton's own work. His biography of Harold Larwood, was indisputably one of the best cricket

books in recent years. The Great Romantic is destined to become a classic, which is sure to receive a number of “Book of the Year” awards.

The book charts Cardus’ life through the cricket and characters he portrayed in his various articles and books. Cecil Parkin, the Roses matches in the inter-war years, Emmott Robinson, Sir Donald Bradman all feature prominently. His early life in a Manchester slum, errant female relatives, journalism career, very strange marriage, love affair with Australia, and music, which he also covered for the Manchester Guardian, are all slotted seamlessly and skilfully into the narrative. One reviewer felt that more mention should have been made of his life in music. This is, however, chiefly a book about cricket. His music career would occupy a book nearly as long again. The book also reinforces the social mores and attitudes of the period. His treatment by the MCC regarding his application for membership was positively antediluvian, because his mother was a prostitute. In his research, Hamilton must have read almost every piece written by his subject. The extent of his research, aided by interviews with those still living who knew him, is colossal. He ascertained much about his finances. Once wealthy, chiefly because of the royalties from his acclaimed “Autobiography”, published in the 1940’s, he died in financial straits. John Arlott did much to assist him in his later years, through suggesting or finding work for him. There is a strand of hero worship running through the book. Arlott idolised Cardus; Hamilton likewise regarding Arlott.

(During the summer, the editor managed to buy Arlott’s first book: Indian Summer which is about their 1946 tour here. Cardus’ influence on Arlott’s prose is easy to discern).

The Great Romantic is a book to savour time and again. It would not be surprising if it prompts republication of much of Neville Cardus’ work.

**Last of the Summer Wickets: Tales from the Scarborough Cricket Festival by John Fuller (pub. Great Northern-price £9.99).**

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the forbidding shadow cast by The Hundred on the future of county cricket from next season, a number of articles have been written in the journals and newspapers on what makes the current game so special to tens of thousands of cricket followers.

The above paperback is a homage to the Scarborough Cricket Festival and describes its place not only in Yorkshire cricket, but in the game as a whole. It is a good read which covers all aspects of the Festival including its history and what it means to players, coaches, scorers, announcers, the press, spectators and the town as a whole. It is laced with a number of entertaining stories.

As for the Fenner Trophy (see the Tom Mottram obituary above), it is clear that it was an important competition (played between Yorkshire and three other Counties) that helped to sustain the Festival when its future looked insecure during the 1970’s. The author concludes that The Hundred presents threats and opportunities for the future of the Festival. The challenge is that Scarborough “needs to stay relevant and unforgettable”.