

HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Shaun Udal James Tomlinson

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DIARY DATE

THE SOCIETY'S DAY AT THE CRICKET 2020

The Society's Day At The Cricket will be held at The Ageas Bowl on Sunday 14 June, which is the first day of Hampshire's Championship Match with Warwickshire. Further details will be circulated in due course.

MEETINGS

Wednesday 5 February 2020 – Meeting

Members will recall this afternoon's speaker, **ALAN FORDHAM**, as part of a powerful Northamptonshire batting line-up some thirty years ago. How easily the names trip off the tongue: Geoff Cook, Wayne Larkins, Rob Bailey, and Allan Lamb-test players all. They would be a match, or even more, for any County line-up today. Tall and right-handed, our speaker batted first in the middle-order and then opened the innings upon the retirement of Cook.

Born in Bedford on 9 November 1964, he was educated at Bedford Modern School before becoming one of a number of cricketers to graduate from Durham University in that era. He played Minor Counties cricket for Bedfordshire from 1982 to 1985.

He made his Northamptonshire debut in 1986. When he retired in 1997, he had played in 167 matches, scoring 10939 runs (avge. 40.06), including 25 centuries, and passed 1000 runs in a season five times. He was awarded his county cap in 1990. It was in this year that he recorded his highest score of 206 against Yorkshire at Headingley, sharing in his County's record third wicket stand of 393 with the vibrant Lamb, his newly appointed captain, in the process. In the following season, he returned a season's best aggregate of 1840 runs (avge. 47.17). And then in 1992, he earned the man-of-the-match award in the Nat West Trophy Final; he made a majestic 91 as Northamptonshire skated to an eight wicket victory over neighbours Leicestershire. He played in three further Lord's finals but finished on the losing side on each occasion, Northamptonshire being twice defeated by the legendary Lancashire side.

Our speaker continued to prosper until his retirement at the age of 32. Few batsmen in recent years have enjoyed such a high career average without playing for England. He harboured test ambitions but encounters with Malcolm Marshall persuaded him to leave the game with two years to run on his contract.

He took up the appointment as the ECB's Cricket Operations Manager immediately afterwards. It is a post he still holds today, though no doubt in a modified form.

Given the advent of The Hundred, and the consequent knock-on effects on the scheduling of the County Championship, it is doubtful that his work has even been so challenging. An interesting afternoon is assured.

Wednesday 15 January 2020 – Report

Claire Taylor and Keith Walmsley enthralled their audience with an absorbing presentation on their respective areas of expertise. At first sight, Claire, an international cricketer, and Keith, a statistician and historian, appear to have little in common but by the end of the evening, members had received a random potted history of cricket, with some classical music thrown in. And yet, they had only fulfilled two-thirds of their proposed presentation. They based their talk on the three C's: Cricket, Crotchets and Committees. They never reached the latter but none of their audience minded, such was the interest and enjoyment they had conveyed.

Keith opened the batting but soon handed on to Claire. She first played for England, due to an injury to Janette Brittan. She had watched Hampshire play at all their three grounds on the Isle of Wight. Her sporting parents met at Liverpool University. Claire played all sixteen sports available at her schools; she felt it was best not to specialise too early! She attended a state school and then a Montessori School, where girls and boys played the same sports. She most excelled at hockey and cricket with the latter finally gaining precedence whilst she was at Oxford.

She first watched England play when they won the Womens World Cup Final at Lord's in 1993. Throughout her career, she was never paid. Initially, the game was a hobby. She worked for a Management Consultancy, which involved travelling. She made it her ambition to be the best batsman in the world, so she left work, sold her flat, and returned to live with her parents. She became totally obsessed with that objective, but when England were knocked out at the semi-final stage of the World Cup in South Africa in 2005, she returned to work and changed her mindset. (Editor's Note: And became the best batsman in the process). By way of relaxation, she took up music again, and now plays in three orchestras. Throughout her talk, she gave some profoundly insightful comments on coaching, technique, psychology and management of the game. She was clearly a "business cricketer" in more ways than one.

Keith joined the Hampshire Cricket Society so that he could represent us in the Association of Cricket Societies Quiz. He played mid-week evening league cricket as a wicket keeper because he owned the gloves! He spent much of his time watching his wife play; she was an opening batsman, and an off-break bowler, good enough to play for Thames Valley Women. He had first met Claire in those days and made his only visit to Northlands Road to watch her play her first match for England. The first county game he viewed was Hampshire's match against Warwickshire at Portsmouth in 1958, whilst he was on a family holiday in Southsea. His interest has always been the esoteric. Clem Hill, the Australian left-hander, became a firm favourite when he discovered he had been dismissed in the 90's in three consecutive test innings. Fred Hyland, who was on the field for less than ten minute in Hampshire's rain ruined match at Northampton in 1926, was another. Hill became the subject of a book he wrote and a chapter on Hyland was included in another of Keith's works, *Brief Candles*. He was also particularly interested in Worcestershire's Thomas Straw, who was twice dismissed for obstructing the field, both times against

Warwickshire. He was in awe of WG Grace's record. He felt Grace must have been the best of ever all-rounder.

He first became interested in statistics at an early age, by reading the books of Roy Webber, the pioneering BBC scorer. He joined the Association of Cricket Statisticians in 1975. He was now Chairman and gave a resume of their extensive work and publications. He later joined The Cricket Society and became their statistician after Derek Lodge passed away.

Classical music was a joint interest of both Claire and Keith. Keith mused on cricketer musicians. Among them were Colin Blythe of Kent who was renowned as a violinist. Frank Parr of Lancashire was a professional jazz musician.

The preparation for the meeting made by Claire and Keith was immense and they were rewarded with the warmest of applause from an appreciative audience.

IN PRAISE OF COUNTY CRICKET (3)

CRICKET ALONG THE SOUTH COAST

Whilst the Ageas Bowl was commandeered by the ICC for a period of some six weeks during the World Cup, there was still much cricket for lovers of the County Championship to watch elsewhere. After an interval of some 57 years, Hampshire became reacquainted with the Isle of Wight by playing at Newclose, just outside Newport. It was a successful venture, both in terms of the result (Nottinghamshire were vanquished by 244 runs), and their staging arrangements, which received universal approval from those who travelled across the Solent (see Newsletter No. 383). It is a pity that next year's programme at the ground is confined to one Royal London match.

During that period, Sussex made their annual visit to Arundel and played two matches at Hove. Arundel has long been an indispensable fixture on the cricket lovers' calendar, starting from the season's opening encounter between the Duke of Norfolk's XI and the tourists in 1956, the opening John Player League fixture in 1972 and the first Championship match, between Sussex and Hampshire, in 1990. It was in that game that our Patron, Shaun Udal made his debut. The tree lined ground, with the grand horse chestnut tree partially shielding the wooden pavilion, and the evocative view from the famous "gap" overlooking the Arun Valley and the South Downs beyond, remains unmatched on the county circuit. After the Great Storm of 1987, the Cathedral was also visible, but, such is nature's capacity to renew, this is no longer the case. There is also an extensive bookstall. Moreover, the staff have always been friendly to Hampshire members when they present their card to gain admission at a reduced price to the ground. The opening day of the Championship fixture, against Gloucestershire, which the editor attended this year, was most memorable for the weather. After lunch, there was not a cloud in the sky, the temperature rose to 20+C (a very rare event in the Spring/early summer) and spectators gradually peeled off their winter layers. He left with the sun still shining; the weather gradually deteriorated on the homeward journey and it was pouring with rain by the time he reached Swaythling and beyond. Apparently, it had been raining all day in the Southampton area.

It was the second day of Sussex's match with Durham at Hove that will be long be etched in the memory. The rail journey along the south coast is always one to savour, especially the views of Portchester Castle, the distinctive church tower at Bosham, Goodwood Downs, Chichester Cathedral, Arundel, with its meandering river, Castle and Cathedral, Lancing College and the Adur Valley at Shoreham. The walk to the ground from Hove station along The Drive with the view of the sea is also uplifting. The light is brighter and the air clearer than at home. The experience appeals to the senses.

The ground itself is more intimate than most. The wicket always ensures interest. Matches at Hove are almost incapable of being boring. On a rain interrupted first day, the visitors were 259 for five. At one stage, they were 90 for five, after having won the toss and deciding to bat. Their captain, Cameron Bancroft (120 not out) and wicketkeeper Ned Eckersley (70 not out) then effected a recovery. On the second morning, in very warm, intermittently sunny weather (the sun never appeared at home) the two Durham batsmen gradually ticked off individual milestones against tight, accurate pace bowling. Eckersley reached his century, and Bancroft attained 150 shortly afterwards, without quite suggesting he was test class. It was good to witness Eckersley's rehabilitation after his surprising, at least outwardly, departure from Leicestershire. He has always been a rugged, durable batsman, who sells his wicket dearly. In the past, he has been a thorn in Hampshire's side on more than one occasion. Bancroft's landmark was greeted warmly. (On the same day, the other two participants in the infamous ball tampering incident at Cape Town, Warner, and Smith still attracted the ire of the crowd in the ODI against Lord's). As their partnership exceeded 250, many spectators started reading their *Playfairs*. The pair were approaching a new sixth wicket partnership for Durham (previous best 278). They duly passed it, but shortly afterwards, after having added 282, they were dismissed. The Sussex captain, Ben Brown, had turned to leg spin in the shape of first Will Beer and then Luke Wells from the Sea End beforehand, and it was the latter who accounted for Eckersley (118). However, it was the introduction of the slow left-arm spin of Delray Rawlins, from the Cromwell Road End that brought the Durham innings to a rapid conclusion. He made the ball grip and bounce. He dismissed Bancroft (158), leg before, three balls after Eckersley had departed, and then made short work of Raine and Carse. His final figures of three for 19 in six overs were a career best. A recalled Beer finally reaped a reward for his teasing flight and accuracy when he induced Weighell to edge behind on the stroke of lunch. Durham had lost their last five wickets for 12 runs in some 20 minutes. Their final total was 384; the scorecard bore a distinctly lopsided look. It had been an absorbing morning's cricket, enlightened by those final minutes before the break.

The afternoon session was just as topsy-turvy, only in reverse. In the absence of the injured Phil Salt - a talented opener who looks to score his runs quickly - the Sussex top-order did not inspire confidence. Almost predictably, they quickly lost three wickets for just two runs. Wells and Finch fell to Chris Rushworth, who is still a force to be reckoned with in possession of the new ball. Brydon Carse, a South African whose father played briefly for Northamptonshire in 1983, bowled with genuine pace and away swing. The former South African test batsman, Stiaan Van Zyl, and Laurie Evans appeared to be rebuilding the innings quite nicely before both fell in quick succession. It was left to Brown, who is proving to be a worthy

wicketkeeper/batsman in succession to Jim Parks and Matt Prior, and David Wiese, another South African who played an astonishing innings in the Royal London at the Ageas Bowl earlier this season, to guide their County to tea.

The final segment of the day began with the loss of two quick wickets, courtesy of Carse. Brown did not add to his afternoon tally; Chris Jordan followed soon after. The score now stood at 110 for seven. The follow on target of 235 looked distant indeed. It was at this juncture that the day's interest became even more intense, encapsulating the very essence of county cricket. Rawlins had made an unforeseen impression with the ball earlier in the day. However, his forte is undoubtedly his batting. He is the most natural and fluent of strokemakers. Coming in at nine in the order, he started frenetically. However, with Wiese, another free spirit by inclination, at the other end the pair gradually began to pick off the runs with a judicious mixture of singles and boundaries. They saw off all the bowlers. The one that caused them most concern was Liam Trevaskis, who bowls slow left-arm. Despite the Cornish name, he hails from Cumberland. He gave the ball a real rip as it turned waspishly on more than one occasion across the bat's face. Durham had fielded excellently and continued to do so.

To make up for lost time on the first day, another 12 overs were added on the second. At six o'clock, the normal scheduled finishing time, most of the crowd stayed rather than go home, so engrossing had the partnership become. Those that did leave the game, were replaced by a flock of some forty seagulls whose body clock and routine had clearly indicated that it was the normal time for scavenging the pickings left by the crowd. After looking confused for some ten minutes, they all flew away. Wiese and Rawlins were though continuing to tackle the task in hand diligently. They registered the century partnership. The former was first to his fifty and promptly celebrated by swinging a boundary to mid wicket. It proved to be his last contribution. He was then dismissed leg before to Trevaskis for 56. The score now stood at 219, 16 short of saving the follow on. Rawlins had become largely becalmed in the forties but reached a richly deserved half century. He finished the day on 56 not out. By the close of play at seven o'clock, still in gloriously warm sunshine, Sussex had lost another wicket-the newly signed Aaron Thomason from Warwickshire - some 15 minutes earlier, but Ollie Robinson had batted in untroubled fashion in company with Rawlins. His side were still a tantalising four runs short of their target.

The day had proved most rewarding. Interest was maintained throughout. Three young players - Rawlins, Trevaskis and Carse had caught the eye. The third day offered intriguing possibilities.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

Rawlins was dismissed by Carse (five for 43) early next morning without adding to his overnight score. Bancroft decided not to enforce the follow-on, after which his side batted Sussex out of the game. Alex Lees scored 143 as Durham totalled 284 for three. In the remaining two hours before close of play, the Sussex top order collapsed once more and finished the day at 59 for three. The outcome had become largely academic though there still some interest on the fourth day. Ollie Robinson scored 59 as night watchman and Rawlins made an unbeaten 20. Sussex were bowled out for 240 (Rushworth 4-44; Raine 6-27 in 22.3 overs), leaving Durham

victors by 196 runs, a marvellous turnaround from 90 for five on the first day. Carse was banned from bowling for running on the pitch.

The result lifted Durham off the foot of the table. Sussex's promotion challenge had suffered what proved to be a fatal setback.

CRICKET SOCIETIES ASSOCIATION

On 9 November 2019 Garry, Susanne and myself attended the half-yearly meeting of the above Association, held in the Charles Palmer Suite at Grace Road, Leicester. After the usual Association business, the main part of the meeting was taken up by representatives of the 19 societies present, giving an update on their individual wellbeing. Membership figures vary from 50 for the Merseyside and Herefordshire societies, and 300 for the Wombwell Cricket Society and the Sheffield Cricket Lovers' Association. However, the latter's representative bemoaned the fact that some years ago, they offered life memberships, with the result that currently half of their total are life members and thus do not pay an annual subscription. The other societies have an average of 160 members. The Worcestershire Society has the highest number of female members, 48 out of a total of 206. They have experienced the highest increase in the numbers of new members in the last two years, with 83 alone this year.

Members attending meetings average between 50 – 60, apart from the Leicestershire Society, which averages 140 out of their 160 members, and Worcestershire, which averages 150. Attendance highlights the 240 people for a talk by Mike Brearley at the West of England Society and 176 people for the Christmas lunch and a talk by Simon Hughes at Sheffield. The meetings of the latter, which include a pie and pea supper are proving popular too! The lowlight was 10 people for a recent talk at Wombwell, due to the flooding in Yorkshire.

The Merseyside and West Lancashire Societies hold their meetings on successive evenings with the same speaker, thereby saving on costs. Subscriptions range from £10 - £20, but some societies charge an additional sum for attending each event. The Sheffield representative quietly stated that they have just raised their subscriptions from £5 to £10!

The more successful societies receive considerable support from their respective counties in the form of meeting facilities, ie room free of charge and speakers from within the club ranks. The most popular speakers on the circuit for 2019/20 are Stephen Chalke with Fred Rumsey, Phil de Freitas, Derek Pringle, Devon Malcolm and Pat Murphy. After an excellent lunch Patrick Eagar produced a slideshow of some of his best photographs taken over the past fifty years, and gave us the background stories behind them.

John Hooper