

HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Shaun Udal James Tomlinson

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MEETINGS

Wednesday 4 March 2020 – Meeting

The Society is delighted to welcome one of county cricket's most redoubtable and respected performers during the 1990s. David Millns was a right-arm fast bowler who was an integral part of that very fine, unsung, Leicestershire side that won the County Championship in 1996 and 1998. In those three years (including 1997), Leicestershire lost only two matches. In that first year, they used only 13 players. They were undefeated in 1998. That side left a host of memories. They played cricket in the right spirit. They appealed only if they thought the batsman was out. And the "Leicestershire huddle", where the players formed a circle, upon the dismissal of each opposing batsman, passed into cricket folklore. The team was famed for its camaraderie. The most influential player was the West Indian Phil Simmons with bat, ball and in the field. Very few cricketers have ever contributed so much to a Championship trophy as he did in 1996 (1186 runs, 56 wickets and 33 catches). However, all the batsmen invariably guaranteed competitive totals. The bowlers, led by David Millns, and Alan Mullally, who formed a potent opening bowling attack, invariably ensured that their work was not wasted. It was a golden era for Leicestershire cricket, rivalled only by that of the side led by Ray Illingworth twenty years earlier.

DAVID JAMES MILLNS was born in Clipstone, Nottinghamshire, on 27 February 1965. He played for his native County in 1988 and 1989, but finding his opportunities limited, moved to Leicestershire for the ensuing season. Mullally joined the same year. Six foot three inches tall, and strongly built, he initially vied for a place with Gordon Parsons, Chris Lewis, Winston Benjamin, Jonathan Agnew and Mullally, and played only eight Championship matches, but still headed the bowling averages in his first season. The retirement of Agnew and departure of Benjamin at the end of the year meant he was given more exposure in 1991. He took his chance brilliantly. He became a first choice, and took 62 wickets (in 19 matches). He placed himself firmly in the limelight by returning what proved to be his career best bowling figures of nine for 37 (12-91 Match) at Derby. Those analyses were also the best by any bowler during the season.

The following year (1992) was the one in which he cemented his future in the game. He started the season with a one-year contract but such was his progress that he was given a five-year one during the course of the summer. It was strongly rumoured that he was in line for a test appearance against Pakistan at The Oval but he then suffered an injury which sidelined him at the critical moment. Nevertheless, he took 74 wickets (avge. 20.82) and was rewarded with selection for the England A tour to Australia in the ensuing winter.

The decade was one in which England's revolving door selection policies gained considerable notoriety. He was generally considered unfortunate never to be

selected for a test or full tour but perhaps the selectors considered injuries also seemed to intervene at an inconvenient time. He missed much of the 1993 and 1995 seasons because of that factor. However, when fully fit, he was a force to be reckoned with. In 1994, he enjoyed his most productive season with 76 wickets (avge. 25.01).

In 1996, he claimed four fewer when Leicestershire won the first of those Championships. It was in this year that he began to be considered as a genuine all-rounder. Left-handed, he always batted late in the order. In the match against Essex at Grace Road, he enjoyed an all-round performance that relatively few men in the current era have achieved. He not only scored his maiden century (103), but also took ten wickets in the match (four for 74 and six for 54). He went on to make two further centuries, his highest being 121 at Northampton in 1997.

In 1998, his County were in contention to win all four competitions. As in 1996, they were unbeaten in the Championship. They also reached Lord's for the Benson and Hedges Cup Final, but were defeated in a rain affected match, lost their Nat West semi-final match against Derbyshire, snatching defeat from the jaws of victory, and finished fourth in the Sunday League. Our speaker was not as prolific in the Championship as he had been two years earlier (34 wickets and played in only 10 of the 17 matches). The final match of the season, against Surrey at The Oval, was effectively a shoot-out for the title. Leicestershire's batsmen made hay as they ran up a mammoth 585 for six declared (Ben Smith 204, Aftab Habib 114 and Paul Nixon 101 not out). In the Surrey reply, he and Mullally reduced the top order to eight for four; both men took two wickets. There was no way back for the home side and Leicestershire eventually triumphed by an innings.

Leicestershire were always careful to nurse their prized fast bowling asset. David Millns played little one-day cricket (though he did play in that Lord's final referred to above).

He was rewarded with a deserved benefit in 1999, but he endured another injury-hit season and was able to play in only six Championship matches. Nevertheless, he still gave glimpses of his best as he topped the bowling averages, averaging only 16.17 in taking 23 wickets.

He rejoined Nottinghamshire for the 2000 season. Initially, all seemed to be going well. He took five for 58 in the first match against Northamptonshire at Trent Bridge and was taking wickets regularly until the injury hoodoo struck again. David Millns finally called it a day in July of the following year after failing to regain fitness after a close season operation. His final figures were 553 wickets (avge. 27.35), 3082 runs (avge. 22.01) and 76 catches.

He is, of course, now a well-known figure on the county circuit as an umpire, decisive in his decision making. He has been a reserve umpire in six tests and one ODI. He has officiated in 133 Championship matches to date, umpired Hampshire's victory over Kent in the Royal London Cup Final at Lord's in 2019 and stood in the Vitality Blast Final at Edgbaston last summer. He has recently been appointed to the ECB's international panel for 2020. He has also umpired in first-class cricket in India and the West Indies, as well as the Bangladesh Premier League.

He will be the sixth former Leicestershire cricketer to address the Society. His predecessors were MJK Smith (twice), Peter Willey, David Gower, Allan Mullally and Chris Lewis.

Wednesday 5 February 2020 – Report

Alan Fordham's address was full of interest. He started by recalling his career, beginning with his progression from club cricket for Bedford Town to the Northants' staff. He was in and out of the team initially but then blossomed under Allan Lamb's captaincy. He enjoyed five good seasons in the early 1990s. He became supremely confident and could not wait to play. And then suddenly it all changed. He realised he would not play for England, nor captain his County. These factors affected his mental attitude; he thought he would fail and was afraid of being hit on the head. It was a fascinating insight on the psychological pressures facing cricketers.

He left Northamptonshire to join the ECB and is now responsible for all aspects of the first-class game "outside of the ropes", particularly registration and fixtures. Brexit would affect registration as the Kolpak ruling would no longer apply. He felt it was likely that as from the 2021 season Counties would be allowed to play only two overseas players; the other nine would have to be qualified to play for England (Editor's Note: the PCA announced that the 9 + 2 equation above would be their preferred option on the following day. It seems that the Counties would need to resolve these situations where existing overseas/Kolpak contracts ran beyond the forthcoming season).

As regards scheduling of fixtures, there are two "fixed factors". The first priority is the Future Tours Programme which means that, as from 2020, six tests would need to be scheduled in every summer. The second priority was the decision made by the ECB three years ago that The Hundred would be played in July and August. The timetable in 2020 was influenced by the Tokyo Olympics. He asserted that the T20 competition would never be abandoned. The remaining two issues were therefore the scheduling of the Championship and the 50-overs tournament. It was felt undesirable to denude the former because of absence of players to The Hundred. He cited Sussex who have lost virtually their first team to The Hundred in 2020. Championship cricket therefore had to be fitted in within the parameters created by the scheduling of Tests, The Hundred and T20 cricket. As for the Women's game, the scheduling of International cricket was governed by the coverage of those three facts.

The ECB justified The Hundred on the basis that, apart from in the UK, and the Ashes in Australia, Test cricket has little or no attraction. He mentioned that New Zealand cricket revenues were kept afloat from television income from Indian tours, when matches were beamed to India. The ECB view was that The Hundred would create a new audience in terms of television viewers and those unable to watch live cricket at the moment. There was a commitment to maintaining 18 Counties, and ensuring the sustainability of not only county cricket, but the sport as a whole. The ECB had the opportunity to improve the game's finances in a five year window created by the television contracts for The Hundred.

Alan Fordham's address inevitably created a lively Q & A session. He never evaded any question, responding in a measured manner and with an informed appreciation

of the importance of all facets of the current game. Whilst there were many unanswered and contentious issues about the future, members left the meeting with a much better understanding of how the cricketing programme in 2020 had evolved.

At the meeting, Alan Fordham received a donation of £100 for the PCA Trust. He expressed his warm thanks and gave a full explanation of how contributions to the PCA supported former players. He mentioned Winston Davis, a former County colleague and West Indian test cricketer, who is now paralysed following a fall from a tree. His quality of life in terms of being able to leave his home to participate in social and other activities is largely dependent on a specialist vehicle. His previous vehicle had gradually become unsustainable; a new one was funded by PCA members undertaking sponsored bike rides.

The meeting was held at The Red Lion in Overton, a mile or so north of Test Valley Golf Club, who had given some 24 hours notice that they were unable to host the meeting. However, they had nominated the Red Lion as a possible alternative venue and thanks to the efforts of our Hon. Secretary, John Hooper, who liaised with the pub, and our webmaster, Andy Ray, who notified members of the change of venue via email and the Society's website, the meeting was able to proceed as planned. Moreover, despite the short notice, some 45 members attended the meeting, the highest total in North Hampshire since November 2018.

JAMES VINCE - MULTIPLE T20 WINNER

Hampshire captain James Vince has now been a member of the winning side in t20 tournaments in four different countries. During this winter, he helped Paarl Rocks win the Mzansi Super League in South Africa. The Rocks were coached by Adrian Birrell. Vince made his best score of the winter when he struck an unbeaten 86 off 53 balls in the first match of the competition on his team's home turf at Boland Park.

Ten days after the Final in South Africa, he was playing for Sydney Sixers at the Sydney Cricket Ground in the KFC Twenty20 Big Bash. The Sixers went on to defeat Melbourne Stars in the Final. He thus completed a unique quartet, having previously played for victorious finalists in England, and Pakistan (see below). He earned fulsome praise from his team's coach, Greg Shipperd. In an interview in The Daily Mail, Shipperd said he was a template of how to bat for the club's youngsters, adding "there is no better technique in the game". Shipperd also paid tribute to his influence in the dressing room, commenting on his deep thinking, great cricket brain and willingness to share his knowledge. He said that Vince had played a number of strategically important innings during the tournament. Like Tom Graveney before him, another batsman of style, it seems that James Vince is more highly thought of in Australia than in England. Nathan Lyon, Hampshire's new signing for the summer, was also a member of the Sixers side.

At the time of writing Vince is about to play for Multan Sultans in the Pakistan Super League, for whom he played in their winning 2019 campaign. The Sultans must seem like a home from home. Other members of the squad include Rilee Rossouw and his former Hampshire team-mates Shahid Afridi, Sohail Tanvir and Imran Tahir.

Cricket in Multan was the subject of two fascinating articles in the March edition of *The Cricketer*.

Vince was, of course, a member of England's winning t20 side in New Zealand, prior to playing in the domestic tournaments mentioned above. In 27 t20 matches prior to the start of the Pakistan Super League, he has scored 659 runs, including three half centuries.

LIAM DAWSON is enjoying a third consecutive season for Peshawar Zalmi in the Pakistan Super League.

MASON CRANE

Mason Crane has been playing for England Lions one-day squad in Australia. In a rain interrupted tour – New South Wales has suffered flooding after the cataclysmic bush fires – he played in three 50-over matches, taking five wickets. According to Cricket Archive, none of the matches was given official List A status.

During November, Crane played for Deccan Gladiators in a T10 tournament in Abu Dhabi. According to some reports, the performances in that 10-over slogathon influenced selection for England's t20 squad.

RILEE ROSSOUW, who will only play for Hampshire in t20 cricket this summer, appeared for Bangla Tigers in the above tournament. Crane dismissed him caught and bowled when the pair opposed each other. Rossouw is also playing alongside James Vince for Multan Sultans in the Pakistan Super League (see above), and scored a devastating century off just 44 balls last weekend.

SAM NORTHEAST

The prolific Sam Northeast was also selected for the England Lions' side in Australia. He had been included in the squad for their first-class programme. In the first match, against a Cricket Australia XI at the Blundstone Arena, Hobart, he suffered the misfortune of being dismissed without scoring a run. His colleagues piled up a mammoth 613-8d, with Dominic Sibley, Keaton Jennings and Dan Lawrence (Essex) all scoring centuries; the latter was particularly impressive in making 190 in four and a quarter hours. However, in the second innings, Northeast scored an unbeaten 46. The match was drawn. In the second match, the Lions recorded a nine wicket victory against Australia A; Northeast made only a single before being dismissed shortly before the close of the first day's play. Lawrence again stole a march on his rivals for a place in the England side by making 125 in three and a half hours. Northeast's fighting qualities are familiar to those who follow county cricket but, strangely, he has yet to do himself justice in representative matches. He was also not selected from any of The Hundred squads; far less gifted batsmen were. There is no doubt about his talent and pedigree. His record in domestic cricket in the last few seasons speaks for itself. Surely he will prosper soon.

CRICKET IN NEPAL

Two Hampshire cricketers have played in Nepal this winter. **JIMMY ADAMS** managed an MCC tour party to the country just after the end of last season. He played in five one-day matches, four of which were won. Their sole defeat – by five wickets - was at the hands of the full Nepal side. The tour finished with a first-class fixture against Nepal, from which Adams omitted himself, which MCC won by 208 runs.

The other Hampshire player to appear in the country was **IAN HOLLAND** - for the USA. His appearances there were the culmination of a trip which took in the Caribbean and the Middle East. Holland was born in Wisconsin, but raised in Australia. He played one match for Victoria but then came to Hampshire by virtue of English parentage. He was recruited by the Americans for the Regional Super-50 tournament, played in Trinidad. His best score was 59 not out off 37 balls against Guyana, when the USA recorded an unexpected eight run victory in a match determined by Duckworth/Lewis.

The USA then travelled to the Emirates for eight ODIs in League Two of the ICC World Cup. Their opponents were the UAE, Scotland, Oman and Nepal. Holland made his international debut in the first of those matches and went on to play in all eight fixtures. His team started well, winning their first three matches. They twice defeated the UAE and, surprisingly, Scotland. The cavalcade then travelled to Nepal for the last four matches, all played at Trithuvan University International Cricket Ground in Kirtipur. Holland thus became the first Hampshire player to appear in an ODI in Nepal. His eight matches yielded 244 runs (HS 75 v Nepal in Kirtipur) and seven wickets (BB three for 11 v UAE in Dubai). The USA ran out of steam at the end, conceding 276 runs to the Oman batsman (Holland was one of two bowlers to stem the flow of runs), before being bowled out for 35 by the Nepalese.

It will be interesting to see how cricket develops in both Nepal and the USA in the future. The former, like their near neighbours Afghanistan, are clearly a developing force. One of their players, Sandeep Lamichane, has won IPL and Hundred contracts respectively, for the Delhi Daredevils in 2019, and Oval Invincibles this summer. He will be paid £100,000 for the latter assignment. He is clearly a considerable cricketer.

As for the USA, notwithstanding the stadia capable of hosting the game, the organisation of cricket in the country has always been chaotic. One assumes that as Ian Holland possesses a UK passport, he can continue to play county cricket in the summer.

NEW SIGNINGS

Hampshire have signed **SCOTT WILLIAM CURRIE**, **AJEET SINGH DALE** and **THOMAS ANTONY RHYS SCRIVEN** on rookie contracts for 2020.

Currie was born in Poole on 2 May 2001. A right-handed batsman and right-arm fast-medium bowler, he made his 2nd XI debut in 2018. He enjoyed a fine all-round match against Glamorgan at The Ageas Bowl last summer, scoring 127 not out and taking

four for 43. He toured the Caribbean and South Africa with England's Under-19 side this winter, and has played Minor Counties cricket for Dorset since 2017. His brother, Bradley, has played for Somerset, Hampshire and Surrey 2nd XIs.

Dale was born in Slough on 3 July 2000. Another right-arm fast-medium bowler and right-hand batsman, he made his 2nd XI debut last summer. He originally progressed through the Surrey schools system. His club cricket has been with Andover and the Hampshire Academy side.

Scriven is the only one of the three with first team experience, having played one t20 match against Gloucestershire at The Ageas Bowl in 2018, when he bowled one over and did not bat. RHB and a right-arm medium pace bowler, he was born in Oxford on 18 November 1998, and made his 2nd XI debut in 2016. He toured Namibia, South Africa and New Zealand (where he played in the World Cup) with the England Under-19 side in 2017/18. He played for Berkshire last summer, and has appeared in club cricket for Henley in the Thames Valley League and the Hampshire Academy.

Hampshire have signed Pakistan's **SHAHEEN SHAH AFRIDI** for their t20 campaign. He is a current member of the Pakistan squad for all formats. Six foot six inches tall, he is a left-handed batsman but his main forte is his left-arm fast-medium bowling. Born in Khyber Agency on 6 April 2000, he made his first-class debut in September 2017. He played only one more first-class match in the following month, but was selected for the Pakistan A side against the England Lions in Abu Dhabi in November 2018, taking seven wickets in the match. He was catapulted into the Pakistan test side, against New Zealand, at the same venue, shortly afterwards. He has been a virtual regular ever since, touring South Africa, Australia, Zimbabwe and England in the process. Eight of his 13 first-class appearances have been in test matches. He has also played for his country in 19 ODIs, and 12 Twenty20 matches. He has already played one match at the Ageas Bowl: in that exciting ODI against England in May of last year, when Pakistan lost by 12 runs, whilst chasing a mammoth 374 for victory. After Hampshire's domestic t20 fixtures, he will be playing in The Hundred for Birmingham Phoenix, which will earn him £60,000.

SKERRYVORE writes with more views on the major contemporary issues facing the game

2020 is sure to prove a pivotal year for the future of the game, with the introduction of The Hundred into the domestic schedule and the shape of Test cricket being actively reviewed. The arguments in favour of the former are being increasingly well rehearsed in *The Cricketer*, newspapers and a concentrated charm offensive being launched by the ECB and the hosting venues. Notwithstanding all the assurances

given, there remain concerns about the future of Championship cricket generally, particularly as a source for future England players, as well as those Counties not hosting The Hundred. The eye-watering financial sums that have been consumed in promoting and managing the tournament are, by common consent, a significant gamble, having consumed much of the ECB's reserves.

What does the future hold for Test cricket? Statements from the ECB indicate that Test match cricket is being treated as a priority. However, they seem to be approaching it in an odd and contradictory way. Look what is going to happen this coming season. Centrally contracted players will be taking part in the opening rounds of The Hundred and then they will go straight into the First Test match against Pakistan to face their excellent fast bowling attack. It could turn out to be a quick game.

Test cricket can only survive in a country if people watch it. Looking at the current series in South Africa the crowds would be very sparse if it was not for the travelling English support. Attendances at matches outside of England, Australia and India continue to diminish and this also happens in these countries where another country is involved, for example with the recent series involving Australia and New Zealand. We have just enjoyed an enthralling five day game at Cape Town going down to the wire on Day 5. There were no interruptions for bad weather or inferior light and a significant plus marker was put down for the five day game, certainly where major Test playing nations are involved. Generally it is a result game with five days duration and that is fine. Time can be made up if there are interruptions to play. It was interesting to note that for the recent two Tests in New Zealand against England smaller boutique type venues were used where a crowd of say 5,000 made the ground look at least reasonably full. Moving to four days for all Test cricket would in my view be an awful decision.

As a final thought, if it was four days for a Test match then the next thing would be three days for a Championship match. However, with so many Championship games in April, May and September perhaps an argument could be made for this at least for the games played during these months and the high percentage number of results being achieved in three days. This would allow all counties to play each other home and away, and to have nine teams in both Divisions.

EDITORIAL

Opinions and views expressed in this Newsletter are those of the editor except for signed articles; neither represent the official view of the Hampshire Cricket Society.