

# HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Shaun Udal James Tomlinson

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Despite the weather, there were (people) on Saturday at Old Trafford for whom the first of the season's visit to a place with happy memories meant a sudden release from all the winter's bondage to the things of this world .....Conversation in the pavilion went on about bygone days.

Extract from *The Roses Matches 1919-1939* by (Sir) Neville Cardus, when the first day's play between Lancashire and Yorkshire on 19 May 1923 was washed out.

**People had small targets: getting out into the country, doing the garden, going to cricket.**

Tom Cartwright, ruminating on the outlook of people in the 1950's in Stephen Chalke's *Runs In The Memory*

**Tony Lewis on Barry Richards' 189 for Hampshire v MCC at Lord's in April 1974**

How did he produce such majesty on this first unpropitious day of the Lord's season? The winds howled through tunnels and **empty** stands. It was a cheerless freezing theatre; **no crowds**, and certainly not set for a virtuoso performance. Ground staff workers padded around, hunched up in the cold. The scorers froze stoically in their loft and the barmaid at the Tavern went short of good company.

Yet Richards gave them an unbelievable day, if they knew their cricket, and I remember thinking at the time **it was if Yehudi Menuhin had called into the Festival Hall of a morning, taken his fiddle on stage and reeled off faultless, unaccompanied Bach all day – just for the pleasure of the cleaners, box-office clerks, odd electricians or a carpenter who chanced to be there - without central heating, of course - without taking off his coat."**

From *The Cricketer-November 1974-Journal of a Season*.

(Editor's note: Richards made his runs out of 249, and batted three and a half hours, hitting two sixes and 31 fours. His share of a partnership of 132 for the sixth wicket with that fine stroke maker, Trevor Jesty, was 107).

The Society hopes that all members are staying safe and healthy at this unique time. For most of the period since the scheduled start of the season, the sun has shone mockingly from a largely cloudless sky. At the time of writing, there have been only four days on which it has rained.

Cricket's supporters, and many, many others, have been confined to their homes, thinking of the world outside. A new, significant, phrase – social distancing – has entered the lexicon.

The future of the season since members received the last Newsletter is still unknown. There have been five major developments. No cricket will be played before 1 July, which means that nine rounds of the Championship have effectively been cancelled. It is accepted that when, and if, the game does resume, matches will be played behind closed doors. Will any batsman play an innings such as that by Barry Richards described on the previous page? There will be no swapping of stories of winter happenings in the pavilion. Many contracts for overseas players have been cancelled, and other playing and backroom staff furloughed. The Test series against the West Indies has been postponed. Finally, The Hundred has been deferred until 2021. The financial consequences and other implications for the future of the game, are profound but further analysis must await another day. What is evident is that cricket has never faced so many far reaching challenges, as does Society itself.

In the meantime, we are planning a programme of speakers in the hope that meetings can be held from October. Through the Society's website, and this Newsletter (which the editor intends to continue to produce until cricket resumes - in whatever format), members will be kept informed of developments.

## **LATE WINTER NEWS**

With the spread of the Coronavirus, James Vince, Rilee Rossouw and Liam Dawson flew home early from the Pakistan Premier League. The final stages of the tournament were postponed shortly afterwards, with the Multan Sultans in pole position. Shortly before leaving, Vince plundered 61 off 24 balls for the Sultans against Islamabad United at Rawalpindi to earn the Man of the Match award. An article in the May edition of *The Cricketer* revealed Multan Sultans played before crowds of 30,000.

Sam Northeast finished the England Lions tour to Australia on a high. In the final match of the tour against New South Wales at Wollongong, he made an undefeated 77. It will come as no surprise to Hampshire supporters that he made his runs with his side in trouble. He came to the wicket with the score on 23 for 2. He batted for 183 minutes and hit two fours. It was clearly a typically gritty effort. Rain washed out the final day. The Lions were 202 for five at the end.

## MAY MEETINGS

Whilst, of course, this Newsletter does not coincide with a meeting, the Society has met twice in May. On 15 May 1977, **Barry Richards** conducted a coaching clinic at Basingstoke Sports Centre. Eleven years later, on 20 May 1988, the Australian **John Inverarity**, addressed the Society. The report of the meeting stated that he “totally captivated his audience with his easy charm, enthusiasm and sincerity as he first played excerpts from “The Bradman Tapes” and then recalled some of the highlights of his own career (1963-85), and many of his great contemporaries. It was easy to understand why he was such an outstanding captain. All those present were in no doubt that they were in the presence of a quite unique individual.”

## OBITUARIES

### PETER WALKER

Peter Walker, the former Glamorgan and England all-rounder, passed away on 5 April. He will probably best be remembered by Hampshire supporters for accompanying John Arlott and Jim Laker in the commentary box during the BBC's coverage of the John Player (Sunday) League during the 70's and 80's, and for conducting interviews with players, administrators and celebrities during the tea interval. He was with the Hampshire team when they won the trophy at Darley Dale in 1975 and The Oval in 1986. Those interviews formed the basis of his book *Cricket Conversations*; one of his interviewees was Barry Richards. A photograph of the pair formed the front cover of the book. .

He spoke to The Society in January 2007. The report in the Newsletter commented that the evening was an “absolute joy” and that he was a “natural storyteller”. His autobiography “*It's Just Not Cricket*”, was published by Stephen Chalke's Fairfield Books in the previous year.

### BOB CAPLE

The former Hampshire player, Bob Caple died in South Africa, where he had been living for many years, in December, but his death did not come to attention until early May. Robert Graham Caple was born in Chiswick on 8 December 1939. He was an all-rounder, who batted left-handed and bowled occasional right-arm off-spin. His introduction to first-class cricket was unusual. He made his debut in 1958 for MCC and for Middlesex in two matches in 1959. All three matches were against the Universities. He joined Hampshire in their Championship year of 1961, and played his first match against Oxford University at Portsmouth. His next was against the same opposition two years later at Bournemouth. At this stage of his career, therefore, he had played for five years, all on different grounds, for three separate

teams and only against Oxford (four times) and Cambridge (once). He was then given an extended run in August 1963, beginning with a match against Surrey at Southampton. After a first innings duck, he scored 31 in the second, sharing a fourth wicket partnership of 117 with Roy Marshall (161 not out); Caple's contribution was 31. He played regularly in the next four seasons but, whilst obviously a batsman of some talent, he was never a prolific run scorer; he made only five fifties in 57 matches, the highest of which was 64 not out against Surrey at The Oval in 1964, and his best season's aggregate was 443 runs in 1965. He bowled more in 1966 and 1967, taking a career best five for 54 against Oxford at Bournemouth in the latter year but Hampshire never really needed another spin bowler in those days other than the evergreen Peter Sainsbury. Ironically, in his last match at Leicester he batted well in a low scoring match with 23 and 42. That enigmatic performance somehow encapsulated his career.

He went on to coach at Bedford School for 20 years before moving in a similar capacity to St.Alban's College in Johannesburg for 16 years, where his opposition coaches included South African test greats "Tiger" Lance and Dennis Lindsay. He was highly popular and his death was widely mourned in that country.

### **LEE NURSE**

Lee Nurse, who died on 9 April, became cricket's first victim to COVID-19. His death sent shock waves throughout the Hampshire club scene, and beyond. His untimely end was all the more shocking in that he was fit and healthy, and only 43 years of age. He had been admitted to Basingstoke Hospital a fortnight beforehand. A right-hand batsman and wicketkeeper, he played underage cricket for Hampshire Schools, West of England under 15 Schools, Glamorgan, Derbyshire and Hampshire 2<sup>nd</sup> XIs and then Minor Counties cricket for Berkshire, for whom he scored two centuries and played in seven List A matches. Most of his club cricket was played for Basingstoke and North Hants. However, his contribution to the game went far beyond these details and statistics. He was an immensely popular and much respected individual in league cricket; he always played with a smile on his face and gave a reminder that cricket was a game to be enjoyed. He was the subject of an emotionally charged obituary on BBC South Today. His great uncle was Seymour Nurse, that colossal Barbados and West Indies test batsman, who passed away last year.

### **THE CRICKET COLLECTIVE - A NEW WEBSITE**

A new cricket website focusing on County Cricket, the women's domestic game and the National (formerly Minor) Counties was launched in May. Members are invited to visit <http://www.thecountycollective.co.uk> to see the first edition.

Follow @the CountyC on both Twitter and Instagram

Email – [cricket@thecountycollective.co.uk](mailto:cricket@thecountycollective.co.uk)

## BOOK REVIEW

### **That Will Be England Gone: The Last Summer of Cricket by Michael Henderson (Pub. Constable - £20).**

If members are pining for county cricket, or are missing outdoor life generally, then look no further than this book, It was clearly written last year with a view to being launched at the start of this summer's cricket season. "The Last Summer" is, of course, a reference to The Hundred which will undoubtedly have changed cricket in this country for ever. It is the ultimate irony that the tournament was postponed in the wake of Covid-19, which arrived to change the world, let alone cricket, perhaps irrevocably. The latter event gives this book remarkable power, poignancy and resonance, at a time when cricket the world over has been put on hold.

Michael Henderson is a very fine, if at times controversial, writer as regular readers of *The Cricketer* will attest. In this book, which is effectively an autobiography, he gives full rein to his very special gifts. It is clear that he is a Renaissance Man with a seemingly effortless recall of poetry, literature, music (classical and pop), paintings and film. Reference to Auden, Larkin, Shakespeare, Schubert, Elgar and Vaughan Williams, among others, abound. Only in the works of Sir Neville Cardus would a cricket book take in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, and Manhattan. His friends form a "Who's Who" of the upper echelons of the Arts: Harold Pinter, Simon Gray, Michael Kennedy, and Ken Dodd – all sadly now departed – Sirs Tim Rice and Simon Rattle, to name but a few.

He is also a lover of landscape. In the first chapter, he stands atop the grand Malvern Hills and gives his reader a 360 degree tour highlighting the places which have influenced British culture, including Stratford, Shropshire and Oxford. The reader receives illuminating insights on the County of Lancashire: its buildings, engineering accomplishments and people.

What of cricket? All the above provides a context for his cricket memories, which started by watching Fred Trueman bowl against Derbyshire in 1965. He begins his tour at his beloved Trent Bridge, before going to Repton, where he attended school, Ramsbottom, or "Rammy", for a discourse on the Lancashire Leagues, the three great Festivals at Scarborough, Chesterfield and Cheltenham, Leicester and The Oval at which the flavours of the game could not be more contrasting, Lord's, Canterbury, Old Trafford (with which his disillusionment is of almost tragic proportions), and Taunton, where he wished to bade farewell to Marcus Trescothick, and to pay tribute to Ian Botham, Viv Richards and Joel Garner. Somerset has always been a place of diversions and he ponders on the characters and suicides of Harold Gimblett and Peter Roebuck.

Throughout the book, he doesn't dwell overlong on the past. He has admired and made friends of cricketers from successive generations. Others have written about

the game when it is on the threshold of profound change, but none has done so as interestingly, powerfully and as well as the author of this book.

### **HCS SPEAKERS – ENGLAND XI**

Since the Society's first meeting on 29 January 1976, 44 speakers who have played test cricket for England have addressed us. The editor has been looking at those concerned and selected his own England XI, and the reserve team.

#### **FIRST ELEVEN**

**Graham Gooch**, 118 tests, 8900 runs (avge. 42.58), 20 centuries, 23 wkts

**Dennis Amiss**, 50 tests, 3612 runs (avge. 46.30), 11 centuries

**David Gower**, 117 tests, 8231 runs (avge. 44.25), 18 centuries

**Tom Graveney**, 79 tests, 4882 runs (avge. 44.38), 11 centuries

**Robin Smith**, 62 tests, 4236 runs (avge. 43.67), 9 centuries

**MJK Smith, capt.**, 50 tests, 2278 runs (avge. 31.63), 3 centuries

**Godfrey Evans**, 91 tests, 2439 runs (avge. 20.49), 2 centuries, 173 ct, 46 st

**Chris Lewis**, 32 tests, 1105 runs (avge. 23.02), 1 century, 93 wkts (avge.37.52)

**Derek Underwood**, 86 tests, 297 wkts (avge. 25.83)

**Angus Fraser**, 46 tests, 177 wkts (avge. 27.32)

**Alec Bedser**, 51 tests, 236 wkts (avge. 24.89)

#### **RESERVE TEAM**

**Mike Denness, Jack Robertson, John Crawley, Doug Insole, Derek Randall, Peter Parfitt, Jim Parks, Vic Marks, Chris Tremlett, Bob Cottam, Pat Pocock**

Due to the number of matches played by them, compared with the reserve team, the first XI almost picks itself. A case could be made for Denness, Parfitt or Randall to play instead of Smith but the editor has selected the latter as he is generally considered to be the best captain of all those listed. However, Randall's electric fielding would certainly be missed. Parks' batting average is some ten runs per innings above Evans, but the latter was the better wicketkeeper and he would be more likely to take the match turning/winning catch or stumping. It will be noted that Tremlett and Cottam have been selected above Derek Shackleton. Tremlett's performances in The Ashes winning series in Australia in 1910/11 cannot be ignored and Cottam's average in county and Test cricket was better than Shackleton. However, he could replace Pocock if it was decided to select only one spinner.