

.HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Shaun Udal James Tomlinson

NEWSLETTER No. 397 – December 2020

The Committee wish all members a safe and healthy Christmas and the same for 2021.

Members will be aware that, after consultation with members, it was decided not to hold any meetings for the remainder of 2020. The Committee will be meeting (via Zoom) on 8th December to discuss actions (if any) for the remainder of the winter.

At the AGM of the Cricket Societies Association, again held on Zoom, Societies submitted reports on their activities during the Autumn. As regards holding meetings it was a mixed picture. London based The Cricket Society held a full programme of meetings via Zoom. Some Societies had decided not to hold any meetings. Others were thinking of experimenting with Zoom. There was an acknowledgement that the main attraction of “live” meetings was the social interaction.

PITCH PUBLISHING

Pitch Publishing events have become a popular event with many cricket lovers. They have been reaching out to members of Cricket Societies since May. The Interviews with authors, warmly conducted by Mark Church of BBC Radio London, have always been full of interest. It is worth tuning in just to listen to Mark. Subjects covered in the books they have published have proved very wide-ranging: the cancelled South African tour in 1970, the West Indian rebel tours to South Africa in the 1980's, England Cricket Captains from 1946 - date, Ian Gould, Tony Greig, Mike Brearley, Franklyn Stephenson and Luke Fletcher, the ICC Associates, the Pakistan Cricket Scandal at Lord's in 2010, Essex, and an interview with one of the country's leading orthopaedic surgeons on the treatment of injuries. Gould, Stephenson (from Barbados) and Fletcher were all interviewed on screen regarding their autobiographies. It will not come as a surprise, given the way they play (ed) their cricket that Gould and Fletcher turned out to be highly entertaining characters. Stephenson was a giant, in every sense of the word, in Lancashire League cricket. He was, of course, the last man to perform the “double”. He was never selected for the West Indies and rarely for Barbados. His career coincided with Malcolm Marshall, Joel Garner, Wayne Daniel and Collis King. Pitch have two events programmed: on 4th December, Jonathan Northall will be talking about his book on the 1992 Cricket World Cup (at which England were runners-up) and David Tossell, a prolific author on both cricket and football, is talking on 11th December. His cricket books have been on the England Women's Cricket team, England's under - 19 team that won the World Cup in 1998, and what happened afterwards, Tony Greig, and the 1976 West Indies tour to the UK.

Pitch have already organised a series of talks running, mainly every other week, from 8th January until 19th March. Andy Ray, our webmaster, will continue to notify members of each event with instructions on how to “join”. Members are able to watch many of the interviews on the Pitch Publishing website. Just google Pitch Publishing to enter their website. Instructions are easy to follow. All talks are free of charge. The editor has enjoyed the evenings immensely.

SIMON HUGHES AND SIMON MANN

THE ANALYST INSIDE CRICKET CLUB

Andy Ray has also been informing members of evenings in the company of the two Simons every Thursday night, starting at 7pm. Interviewees to date have been Angus Fraser, Stuart Broad, Joe Root, Mark Wood, Phil Tuffnell, Jack Leach and Sophie Ecclestone (world’s no. 1 player in t20 international cricket). One member commented, accurately, that is “the only place you can chat like this with cricket superstars”. Members who have joined also receive email newsletters at least once a week (a recent one was a moving tribute by Simon Hughes on Graham Cowdrey and exclusive film footage on the world’s best players. The latest one featured Steve Smith. Future speakers include James Anderson and Isa Guha, Given the quality of the speakers, the cost of £6 + VAT per month represents genuine value for money. The proceeds go to the Cricketers Trust.

DOWN MEMORY LANE AT CHRISTMAS.

The Society’s Annual Dinner has long been the highlight of our year. In the society’s early years, we held an Annual Buffet Supper for the December meeting. Then, as now, we were blessed with delightful speakers for the event. The editor has been looking through the files for those early meetings, and reproduces extracts from the relevant Newsletters, which he hopes will entertain members at the end of this most strangest and challenging of years.

1976 Judge Arthur Lee

Judge Lee played one match for Hampshire in 1933 and in three further games for Oxford University. He was awarded the DSO in WW2. He was the Society’s first speaker in December. “He reminisced in his relaxed and eloquent way on the time when he was seven and had made 146 not out on the lawn with the great cedar tree as a wicket and a young sister as a reluctant fielder, to that terrifying day in 1935 at Oxford when wearing a fancy coloured cap, he had to face Larwood, and the ball hit the peak of the cap and turned it round on his head so he looked like an old-fashioned dustman”.

1977 Arthur Holt

“Arthur began his talk by apologising for the absence of his former business partner, Reg Haskell, who was an Alderman and the Mayor of Southampton in 1966. When

Reg was Mayor, he asked Arthur to accompany him to Buckingham Palace, where the Queen's Garden Party used to take place. Our speaker infers that he's more used to donning clips with his bicycle than riding in a limousine, and that he would be more at home in a terraced cottage than the Palace, but although he might be dazzled by the Mayoral chain and overawed by this trip to London and his possible proximity to the Queen, the Mayoral arrangements for the journey were made: the Mayor's car TR1 was first to proceed to 94 Upper Shirley Avenue to pick up the Mayor and Mayoress and then to 16 Ripstone Gardens to collect Mr and Mrs Holt, drive to Buckingham Palace, where the Mayor and Mayoress will attend the Queen's Garden Party. The Mayor's limousine will then take Mr and Mrs Holt to the zoo".

1978 George Cox, Sussex

"Perhaps it is justified to try to reproduce just one of the many verbal cameos conjured up by Mr Cox, of those he had come across on the cricket field. Reviewing the Sussex captains under whom he had played, he recalled one (who must be nameless) who always had great difficulty on deciding on his batting order and on occasions had the whole side padded up before deciding "right, you go in next". If there are x numbers of ways to arrange eleven players in batting order, then, said Mr Cox, this particular captain could have produced x plus 1. It was the same captain who, the ball being skied in the direction of cover, called loudly "Smith" (or some other name), whereupon the ball fell harmlessly to ground, because "Smith" wasn't playing that day".

1979 Murray Hedgcock

"The highlight of the speaker's own club cricket in Australia would appear to have been the annual fixture between the *Adelaide News* and the *Melbourne Herald*, in conditions of near farce, in which their ground was shared with two games of soccer, a cycle meeting, a pop concert and a bagpipe band rehearsal simultaneously".

1980 Nick Pocock

"His talk could not have been more topical since only one hour earlier the TCCB had announced their changes for 1981, such as the abolition of the 100 – overs limit in Schweppes Championship matches and the introduction of fielding "circles" in the Benson & Hedges Cup".

1981 "Lofty" Herman

"He recalled a number of amusing moments from his career, such as his very first match at Lord's for which he had bought a new pair of flannels, but could not understand the crowd's laughter as he took the field, until it was pointed out that the price tags were still clearly prominent on the back in another match, a sudden flurry of Warwickshire wickets in the last half hour caused confusion in their dressing room as most had already changed. At the fall of another wicket ,Bob Wyatt, as non-striker, himself recovering from a quick change, called out the name of the player he wanted to come in next, only to be greeted by the reply "I can't, I've already batted.

Nottinghamshire was another County to provide some stories, especially when their attack boasted Larwood and Voce in the 1930s. Hampshire often played a number of amateur batsmen in those days, but Lofty Herman recalled that how many were unavailable for the match at Trent Bridge; as he told Ted Drake, the soccer

international who was hoping for the occasional Hampshire match “you’re bound to get one game!” On another occasion, Lofty moved a ball sharply back to hit Larwood painfully inside the thigh; Umpire Bill Reeves announced “Oh dear! That’s done it, there’ll be murder here later well, don’t just stand there Lofty, go down there and rub Harold’s leg for him.” He remembered another time when Hampshire were 150 for three with Mead not out, when a telegram announcing a new birth was brought out to Larwood; immediately he returned to the attack and dismissed Hampshire in short time, upon which Phil Mead was heard to say, “thank goodness it wasn’t twins!”

1982 Bob Parks

“He spoke with great affection about his Grandfather and Father. The former was a reticent, humble and quietly spoken man who talked warmly about Bradman, and the days of Larwood, Voce etc. In later years, he could never bring himself to watch limited-overs cricket”.

1983 “Bomber” Wells

Like Arthur Holt and Lofty Herman, Bomber was one of cricket’s great story tellers. Some of this stories may have been apocryphal but few cared. “He talked about the characters like Alex Skelding, Roley Jenkins and Eric Hollies, who once rode a bike from his fielding position to the crease. Bomber thought the fastest bowler he ever faced was Frank Tyson. The best batsman he bowled to was Denis Compton because “he made you bowl where he wanted you to put the ball”. He was not afraid to cause a laugh at his own expense. He recalled that the first ever time he fielded a ball in first-class cricket, the batsman ran five and he was later involved in innumerable run-outs, so many in fact that the bowlers complained they were being deprived of the opportunity of taking his wicket”.

Some years later, the editor was introduced to Bomber on that lovely Kings School, Gloucester ground. The Cathedral provided an evocative backdrop. He remained a devotee of spin bowling, so much so that the School 3rd XI, which he coached, performed with only four spin bowlers!

1984 Marcus Williams

Patrick Symes was originally due to talk but had been asked at short notice by the Daily Mirror to fly to Italy to interview soccer’s man of the moment, Mark Hateley (who had recently been transferred from Portsmouth to AC Milan).

Marcus Williams, at the suggestion of our Patron John Woodcock, filled the breach more than admirably with a fascinating talk on the history of cricket philately, a subject on which he is undoubtedly the country’s foremost authority. He revealed that cricket philately stretched back to the 1870s, almost one hundred years before the first post-office stamp. The original stamp depicting a cricketer was issued, by of all countries, the Cape Verde Islands in 1962 the first cricket stamps in Great Britain emerged during the postal strike of 1971 when many private services filled the void.

1985 John Arlott (10th Anniversary Buffet Supper)

Never in the then brief history of the Hampshire Cricket Society was there an occasion to rival the 10th Anniversary Buffet Supper at the Carnival Hall,

Basingstoke. It was an event blessed with a cocktail of emotion, nostalgia and topicality. The Society's Patron John Arlott, was the provider of the first two ingredients. Standing in what used to be his school playground, he fondly recalled his Basingstoke childhood at Fairfield School, located in front of the Carnival Hall, and his early cricket watching days at May's Bounty situated behind it. He then waxed warmly and lyrically on two of the giants of Hampshire cricket, Philip Mead and George Brown, and went on to recall the other great Hampshire names until the early 60s. He concluded by conveying his thanks to cricket for the wonderful memories and fellowships it had given him, and remarked that if his audience was half so lucky then they were very fortunate indeed. It was a very moving speech, it took only fifteen minutes, yet its value was inestimable. Such is the genius of the man. The Society were very pleased and honoured that 26 previous speakers to have addressed the Society accepted invitations to attend.

ALAN RAYMENT

Most HCS members will be aware by now that Alan Rayment passed away on 27 October aged 92. The bare statistics of his Hampshire career tell little of the man, for he possessed a hinterland few cricketers could have rivalled.

Whilst at Hampshire, Alan started a School for Dancing with his then wife. It quickly gained popularity, and made the venture very profitable indeed. When he left cricket due to marital problems and a mystical experience, he originally thought of entering the clergy. But with his agile and restless mind, he alighted on Hinduism and Buddhism before deciding that a religious calling was not for him. He spent a summer coaching at Lord's and was offered the position of Head Coach of MCC. He thought, though, that he would quickly become bored.

Thus began a course which, for many people, would have filled several lives: estate agency, real estate development in Spain, Hawaii and California, mental health social work, mature student and psychotherapist.

When Alan returned to Hampshire, some 50 years after he left, he threw himself into the cricket scene by attending Players' Reunions, talking to Cricket Societies and joining the Dorset CS and, for a time, HCS. The Australian fast bowler Rodney Hogg once famously said that Mike Brearley had a degree in people. So did Alan. He possessed an enquiring mind and was genuinely interested in people. One journalist who phoned Alan for his memories and other information found himself being interviewed. To spend any time in his company, or on the telephone, was an uplifting, stimulating and positive experience. He endeared himself to people. They always felt better afterwards. He conveyed a sense of enjoyment.

He was always willing to share his memories. He always felt the best innings he ever saw was Neil Harvey's 109 on a broken wicket at the County Ground in 1953. He thought the great Australian moved on dancing feet. Alan always looked at people through the eyes of a dance instructor. He remained passionate about dancing throughout his life.

He was interested in all aspects of Hampshire cricket, including the youngsters making their way in the game. Whilst watching the game, he missed little, if anything

at all. He would query tactics, and field placings and why batsmen were not running more quick singles.

In 2013, at the age of 85, he published his first volume of autobiography "Punchy Through The Covers". It was a prodigious work of 152,000 words covering only the first 21 years of his life. Cricket therefore featured fairly infrequently; the remainder formed an excellent social commentary on the backdrop to his early life. His second volume, which will embrace his time with Hampshire' is being brought to fruition by Dave Allen and Stephen Chalke, drawing on Alan's voluminous notes, and will be published next year.

ALAN WILLIAM HARRINGTON RAYMENT was born in Finchley on 29 May 1928. He made his first-class debut for the Combined Services against Northamptonshire in 1947. Given the strength of the Middlesex batting line-up (has there ever been a stronger one in the history of county cricket?), he joined Hampshire in 1949. Capped in 1952, he played until 1958; he appeared in 198 matches, scoring 6,333 runs (avge. 20.36), with four centuries and 19 wickets with his occasional leg spin. He twice scored 1000 runs in a season.

He often said he should have scored far more runs. He described himself as an amateur professional. But to him, the game was one to be enjoyed. Irrespective of whether he was out first ball or much later, he left the pitch with a smile. It was an approach that wasn't always appreciated by the senior pros and the Hampshire hierarchy. They wrongly assumed that he didn't care. Alan was a very proud professional cricketer, but he always wanted to play the game on his terms.

Perhaps his best innings was at Weston-super-Mare in 1955. It was on a broken pitch on which Derek Shackleton famously claimed 8 for 4 as Somerset were bowled in their first innings for 37. He then made a dazzling century (104). Only two other batsmen Henry Horton (59) and Harold Stephenson (52) reached fifty. His most memorable match was when Hampshire defeated Yorkshire at Bradford in the same year, their first victory in the White Rose County since 1932. Roy Marshall and Peter Sainsbury (both of whom took nine wickets in the match) starred with the ball.

He also remembered vividly a match against Gloucestershire at Bristol in 1953, not because he scored a century (126), adding 246 with Cliff Walker for the fourth wicket, but as it coincided with the Queen's Coronation. Play was suspended until after lunch as the teams were allowed to watch the ceremony on a small television in the Gloucestershire dressing room.

In an era in which players were not known for their fielding prowess Alan stood out as a shining exception. He was a brilliant cover fielder, one of the best to play for Hampshire. He once told the editor that when Derek Shackleton was operating on a green top he often felt lonely. With a phalanx of slips and short legs, and a gully, he was often the only man in front of the cricket. For one who revelled in conversation, it must have been purgatory.

Alan was a unique man, who will be much missed by all who knew him.