

HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Shaun Udal James Tomlinson

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COVID SUMMER 2

The ECB have published next season's fixtures for the County Championship (see below). The season will start on 8 April. When will we be able to see live cricket again? This Newsletter was originally written in the week when a new lockdown was imposed. That week coincided, of course, with Trump's shenanigans in Washington. Since then, Covid cases continue to rise exponentially, hospitals are genuinely creaking with capacity problems, and approaching 2,000 people are now dying each day – a truly shocking statistic. The long term mental health effect on doctors and nurses, and their loved ones, is unimaginable. There are floods in the north and the midlands, with the result that some have had to leave their homes. It is still not known when children will return to school. Those scheduled to take exams in the summer remain in limbo. All these circumstances place the cricket season in perspective. It is clearly peripheral.

Whilst a vaccination programme is now being rolled out, it seems certain that the lockdown will not be relaxed until the capacity pressures on hospitals are reduced to manageable proportions. And even then, when will crowds be allowed to watch live sport? And will there still be restrictions on numbers? At this stage, whilst players may be taking the field on 8 April, facilitated by testing, the admission of spectators to our grounds still looks, given the events of last summer, some way off, beyond that date.

Nevertheless, last year's matches were followed very closely by a large number of people via live televised feed and on local radio stations. It must be hoped that similar coverage will pertain this summer.

In the meantime, the Society continues to embrace the virtual world by facilitating members' access to the Simon Hughes/Simon Mann zoom sessions every Thursday evening, and to the Pitch Publishing sessions on every other Friday evening. The stellar cast list for the two Simon's sessions has been most impressive (see December Newsletter). Since that Newsletter was produced, there have been interviews with Isa Guha, who was in Australia, Jos Buttler, Ian Bell and Andrew Strauss. All came across as highly personable and engaging individuals, and provided a memorable evening. Isa Guha is extremely intelligent academically, and now enjoys a successful media career on television and radio all over the world. Buttler must be one of the nicest men in world cricket; he is so modest and unassuming. Bell is currently working part time with the England Under-19s as a batting coach at Loughborough. In an insightful session he gave a penetrating

discourse on the mental side of batting. He is clearly a coach of the future. Strauss' interview provided, in effect, a dissertation on leadership at the highest level. He was a firm believer in players taking responsibility for their own game rather than being coach-led. His clarity of thought and analysis was reminiscent of Mike Brearley. He spoke from Barbados, where he intends to remain until the Covid situation improves in the UK. (However, the editor read in *The Economist* this week that the island is now awash with the disease).

There were two common themes in all the talks. One was England's success in Australia in 2010/11, which by common consent was a triumph of planning and execution. The "Boot Camp" with the Army in Germany beforehand stretched the players mental and physical capabilities to the limit. They formed an unbreakable bond, though one player (KP) left early, citing a pulled leg muscle. Enough said. The other common theme was England's World Cup win in 2019. These two events are clearly landmarks in the history of English cricket. A third factor worth mentioning concerned Graeme Swann and Ian Bell. Both, of course, are recently retired from the game. The former gave a masterclass on off spin bowling, challenging many conventions. It seems odd that he hasn't been approached by England to work with Dom Bess and Jack Leach. As mentioned above, Ian Bell's knowledge, skills and expertise have been brought to bear. His approach is very much in the Strauss mould.

Simon Hughes must be congratulated on his hard work. As mentioned in previous Newsletters, the cost of £6 per month (plus VAT) to listen weekly to individuals whom Cricket Societies would find it almost impossible to attract is exceptional value for money. Hughes has also edited a number of very interesting editions of *The Cricketer* magazine during the Pandemic.

The last Pitch Publishing interviewee was Alan Butcher, whom many members will recall spoke to the Society at Test Valley Golf Club in November 2017. His was a discourse on Zimbabwean cricket, based on his autobiography, *The Good Morungu: A Cricketing Tale of the Unexpected*. He spoke very warmly of former Hampshire bowler, Heath Streak, whose ranch overlooks a game reserve. It sounded a most idyllic location.

Another common subject during the winter has been Mike Brearley. He featured in two of the Pitch Publishing talks, given by author Mark Peel. He was interviewed on *Cricketing Caesar*, his biography of Brearley (see Newsletter No. 392 – June 2020), and another work *The Hollow Crown: England's Cricket Captains* which were both published by Pitch during the summer of last year. Brearley himself has also been busy. His latest work *Spirit of Cricket* formed the subject of an interview by Stephen Chalke on Zoom earlier in the month as part of The Cricket Society's programme.

Members are encouraged to support these sessions, which were initially arranged to fill the void left by Cricket Societies having to cancel their meetings because of

Covid. Hughes, Mann, and Paul Camillin and Mark Church of Pitch Publishing deserve considerable praise for their conscientious efforts.

HAMPSHIRE FIXTURES 2021

Thursday 8 April	Leicester	The Fischer County Ground, Leics
Thursday 15 April	Middlesex	The Ageas Bowl
Thursday 22 April	Gloucestershire	The Ageas Bowl
Thursday 29 April	Surrey	The Kia Oval Leicester
Thursday 6 May	Somerset	The Ageas Bowl
Thursday 13 May	Middlesex	Lord's
Thursday 20 May	Leicestershire	The Ageas Bowl
Thursday 3 June	Somerset	Cooper Associates Ground, Taunton
Sunday 4 July	Surrey	The Ageas Bowl
Sunday 11 July	Gloucestershire	Cheltenham

Division Stage Dates

Round 1	30 August - 02 September
Round 2	05 September - 08 September
Round 3	12 September - 15 September
Round 4	21 September - 24 September

Bob Willis Trophy Final

27 September - 01 October

Dates for other competitions are due to be announced in early 2021

ROBIN SMITH AT COLOMBO – MARCH 1993

During the first day of Sky's coverage of the first test between England and Sri Lanka at picturesque Galle, Michael Atherton recalled a "wonderful" hundred by Robin Smith at Colombo in 1993. The comment was made in the context of the humidity which always seems to pervade the island. On the occasion referred to, "Judge" opened the innings and batted for seven and a half hours in scoring 128. Wisden reported that the temperature soared into the 90's and the humidity became quite exhausting. In his autobiography, he mentioned he changed his shirt 13 times and ran out of dry batting gloves. Atherton recalled that Robin left a row of gloves outside of the pavilion to dry. The latter felt it was his best innings against spin (one of his protagonists was Muttiah Muralithiran) and "possibly his best overall in terms of concentration, fitness and resilience". He also mentioned that he was so dehydrated that he didn't visit the toilet for two days.

JOHN EDRICH AND ROBIN JACKMAN

It was a sad Christmas for Surrey supporters and, indeed, all those who retain fond memories of county cricket in the 1960's and 1970's. John Edrich died in Scotland on 23 December; Robin Jackman in Cape Town on Christmas Day. Their feats and figures will be found in the various tributes/obituaries in the newspapers. This piece will major on their performances against Hampshire.

The left-handed, stockily built John Edrich will be remembered for his concentration, courage and unflappability. With these assets, plus a sound defence, a straight bat, and discerning shot selection, his single-minded purpose was to score runs. Three of his 103 centuries were scored against the County, two of which were in memorable matches. In 1961, Hampshire's first Championship year, he made 105 in Surrey's first innings at The Oval. The match was extraordinary. Surrey scored a total of 497 runs for the loss of only six wickets; another Surrey and England great, Ken Barrington, scored 151 not out in their first innings, adding 105 for the second wicket with Edrich. Hampshire were dismissed for only 190 in their first innings, 166 runs behind. Ordinarily, Peter May would have enforced the follow-on, but under an experimental rule which was in force for that season only, he was unable to do so. May eventually set Hampshire 308 to win in 320 minutes. With the wicket still true, Roy Marshall made nonsense of the target. In a glorious exhibition of strokeplay, he galloped to 153 in 220 minutes, putting on 180 for the second wicket in only 135 minutes with Henry Horton (84). Hampshire won by five wickets with time to spare.

Ten years later, in 1971, Edrich scored 113 (run out) in the first innings of the last match of the season at the County Ground, which was packed for the occasion, the attendance swelled by train and car loads of Surrey supporters. It was a game in which Surrey gained their first Championship in 13 years - since the end of that famous succession of titles in the 1950's. Surrey wobbled after Edrich's dismissal and gathered only three batting bonus points, and still needed two bowling points when Hampshire began their response. They clinched the crown upon the fall of Hampshire's fourth wicket. It was a cue for champagne and glasses to be brought on to the field by twelfth man, Robin Jackman. Captain Micky Stewart's wife came forward to embrace her husband. There was still plenty of interest for the remainder of the match. The omnipotent Marshall made 142 not out, adding unbeaten 126 in 85 minutes with Peter Sainsbury for the fifth wicket before Richard Gilliat declared the innings closed when "Sains" reached his half century.

John Edrich had scored a century in each innings early in the season against Warwickshire at The Oval. The Bears went on to finish second in the table, with the same number of points. Surrey won the title by virtue of recording one more victory than their rivals. He nearly repeated the feat in this match, playing a lone hand in the

second innings as he scored 95 before being bowled by none other than Gordon Greenidge. The young opening batsman, in the only extended bowling spell during his career, claimed five for 49 in 17 overs; together with Sainsbury (four for 28) the pair held the batting of the Champions elect in check, as they limped to 187. Needing 162 to win, Barry Richards' serene unbeaten 95 ensured Hampshire eased home by four wickets two hours later.

Edrich's other century against the County was 123 at The Oval in 1968, his benefit year. In 20 matches against Hampshire between 1959 and 1978, he scored 1538 runs (avge. 41.56). Derek Shackleton (six times) and "Butch" White (five) took his wicket on most occasions.

ROBIN JACKMAN, much to his chagrin, had been left out of the side for that landmark match in 1971, as Stewart reasoned that because the pitch was hard and fast, the greater pace of Bob Willis would be more effective. Ironically, the latter moved to second-placed Warwickshire for the start of the following season, though he had to serve a short qualification period.

Thereafter, it was not often that Jackman was left on the sidelines. He formed a quintessentially English opening bowling attack with Geoff Arnold – both right-arm fast-medium with a range of skills at their command. Arnold departed to join Sussex in 1978. In the final three years of his career, Jackman was joined by the fearsome Sylvester Clarke. It was certainly a partnership of contrasts. Jackman overcame the disadvantage of lacking height for an opening by pitching the ball up; the much taller Clarke was very fast and a maverick. Batsmen were never quite sure what length the volatile West Indian would bowl.

Jackman achieved cricketing immortality when the writer Alan Gibson dubbed him "The Shoreditch Sparrow". He was attracted by his subject's chirpiness, sheer enthusiasm, and loud appeals. Jackman could never be ignored as he hustled to the wicket or to retrieve the ball in the field.

In the 1970's, he was the most formidable bowler in county cricket, his wicket tally was 731. Next on the list was Derek Underwood, somewhat distantly, with 654. The editor always thought that his epic duels with Barry Richards were one of the highlights of the season. He dismissed both Richards and Greenidge eight times in first-class cricket. They scored their centuries against him but Jackman was never overawed. In 20 matches against Hampshire between 1968 and 1982 he took 97 wickets at the healthy average of 20.06. The Oval and the County Ground were generally good surfaces, thereby reinforcing his quality. His best bowling performance against Hampshire was eight for 79 at The Oval in 1976; he took the first seven wickets to fall.

JAMES VINCE IN THE BBL

James Vince has been playing for the Sydney Sixers in Australia's Big Bash League. In his side's first match of the tournament, away to the Hobart Hurricanes, he rolled out a commanding 67 off just 41 balls. The innings was vintage Vince. He was business-like from the first ball, which he tucked away to the onside for a single. Thereafter, whilst the fielding restrictions were in place, he simply flayed his opponent's attack. It was all so elegant and effortless. Even Ricky Ponting was purring at its simplicity, placement and timing. Vince spent time with Jimmy Adams in the nets at the Ageas Bowl beforehand. There were minor adjustments to his stance; he now stood at the crease motionless until the ball was in the air. He produced his trademark cover drive, on the ground and over the top. As is usual, no fielder moved as the ball sped to the boundary. He eased the ball off his legs to the mid wicket boundary more than once; and pulled to square leg. There were two sixes, a top-edged six behind square leg (a rare blemish) and lofted a six over wide off. As is often the norm with James Vince, he played and missed only once – when he was out. He looked a little unfortunate to fall to a leg before decision, as the ball seemed to be going down the leg side. Notwithstanding his efforts, the Sixers were defeated.

However, at the time of writing, they headed the table. Later on in the tournament, he guided his side to victory against the Adelaide Strikers, with a most cultured unbeaten 45. In what seemed a pre-planned batting response, he played the anchor role as his testosterone-fuelled team-mates blazed away at the other end. Nevertheless, he still scored at better than a run a ball. He then scored 52 off 35 balls against the Perth Scorchers in Canberra. He had made only four off his first nine balls but quickly made good the deficit. A notable feature of his batting throughout is that he plays proper cricket strokes demonstrating it is possible to score quickly by doing so. In this innings, he struck a glorious six over wide mid-off. By the nature of t20 cricket, there will always be occasions when a batsman fails (think Jason Roy) and he was twice dismissed for nought. Let us hope we can watch James Vince live in the coming summer. Half an hour of him at the wicket is always worth our membership fee, though the disappointment of him being dismissed is always audible as the crowd sighs.

MASON CRANE

Mason Crane was called up late for the England squad in Sri Lanka and played in the only warm-up match, an internal one-day affair because of Covid, to be completed. As he did at Canterbury last summer, he claimed the wicket of Zak Crawley. With the selection of Dominic Bess and Jack Leach being almost guaranteed, it seems unlikely he will play in either of the two tests.

AN EXTRAORDINARY TEST SERIES

AUSTRALIA v INDIA 2020/21

As this Newsletter was being completed, India recorded a most extraordinary victory at Brisbane to win the Test series against Australia by two matches to one. Chasing 328 on the final day, they won by three wickets. By any test, it was an achievement of the highest order. Overnight, most of the media talk was about whether Australia would have sufficient time to bowl them out on what was the final day. Whilst Australia were at full strength, the Indian side was severely depleted. Due to the absence of their captain, Virat Kohli, who flew home to be with his wife for the birth of their first child, and fielding what was not far short of a reserve side, because of injuries, an Indian victory looked unlikely. And yet they batted fearlessly, particularly the young opener, Shubman Gill (91), and the flamboyant Rishabh Pant (89 not out), and won with three overs to spare. Stuart Clark, who spent a season with Hampshire in 2007, tweeted that Pant “played some of the most insane shots you will ever see”. No test side had ever chased down so many runs at Brisbane and it was Australia’s first defeat there for 35 years.

The fact that India were able to bowl out Australia twice in the match was in itself amazing. All their first team bowlers were absent. Thangarasu Natarajan (aged 29) and the exotically named Washington Sundar (21) were making their debuts, whilst Shardul Thakur (29), Mohammed Siraj (26) and Navdeep Saini (28) possessed only four previous caps between them. Sundar and Thakur had kept India in the game in the first innings with the bat. With the innings on the verge of imploding, at 186 for six, they added 123 for the seventh wicket, thus limiting Australia to an eventual first innings lead of 33 (369-336). Thakur, who had made 67, then completed a notable personal match, by taking four for 61 in Australia’s second innings. Siraj also took five for 73 as Australia were bowled out for 294.

All this after Australia had dismissed India for 36 in the first test at Adelaide! Kohli then departed. Much credit for India’s comeback must go to stand-in captain, Ajinkya Rahane, who played five matches for Hampshire in 2019, making 119 in the second innings of his first match, against Nottinghamshire at Newclose on the Isle of Wight. He scored 112 at Melbourne, where India won by eight wickets. The third test at Sydney was a rain interrupted draw. Throughout the three tests in which he was in charge, he managed his bowlers with perception and skill.

The series captured the imagination of the whole cricket community. By common consent, it was one of the most pulsating and best ever seen. One can imagine Richie Benaud saying precisely that!

MEET THE MEMBER

JOHN HOOPER

An experimental new feature in the Newsletter will give members the opportunity to relate their lives in cricket, which it is hoped will be of interest to other members. Our Hon. Secretary, **JOHN HOOPER**, kindly accepted the editor's invitation to start the ball rolling.

Earliest Memory - Our cul-de-sac had fourteen houses. There was a lamp post outside No. 7 that served as our wicket in summer and a goalpost in winter.

School Cricket – The highlight was the annual match against The Old Boys, my first all day match, which meant lunch and tea were included.

First Young Adult Cricket – Sunday cricket for John Allen Sports, tractor makers, in Oxford. Played on some university college grounds, with pitches as smooth as a billiard table.

Although primarily a batsman, I was given the chance to bowl one afternoon and took a couple of wickets bowling medium pace. Our captain said he would have to take me off but I persuaded him to let me continue if I bowled leg spin. I took two more wickets in the next over and was promptly removed from the attack. A useful lesson learnt at an early age about the principles of friendly Sunday cricket.

University Cricket – None. I enquired about nets and trials but discovered that Frank Hayes, later of Lancashire and England, was captain and realised that I would have been completely out of my depth.

Adult Cricket – I opened the batting for Bishopthorpe in the York League with Bill Pearson, a former professional footballer who guested for Manchester City during the war. Whilst with Grimsby Town, he played against Stanley Matthews and described the experience as like chasing shadows.

Return to Cricket – Due to changing jobs, living in The Netherlands for three years in the seventies (the nearest club was in The Hague, some sixty miles away) and family commitments, I did not play for 12 years. When I changed jobs in 1984, my leaving present was a cricket bat so I joined Romsey CC that summer.

Proudest Moment – Captaining Romsey II's to winning a league title in 1988.

Best Innings – An evening cup match for Sportsman of Romsey against BAT Sports. Chasing 126 to win, we had made 40 runs after 10 overs and then scored 86 runs in the next 6.3 overs to win. I scored 85 including four sixes, a performance sadly never to be repeated.

Biggest Hit – I once hit a boundary batting in Hampshire with the ball ending up in Wiltshire. We were playing against Nomansland when the road that ran through the outfield was the official boundary between the two counties.

Best Match Played – A league match where the opposition required six runs to win off the last three overs and we won by three runs. I was lucky to have a first XI bowler who had fallen out with his captain and a student returning from university to bowl the last three overs. I remember placing all ten fielders on the boundary for the last ball when they required four runs to win and they only managed a single.

Well Remembered Moment – Batting in a match against a touring team whose South African opening bowler kept bowling bouncers. Eventually my batting partner walked down the wicket and told him that if he were to hit his head with the ball, he would reciprocate by hitting his head with his bat.

Biggest Regret – I never scored a century.

Best Teas – Always played in Romsey's midweek matches against touring sides, when our captain's wife made wonderful teas including fantastic homemade cakes. Otherwise Wherwell, where we were even served strawberries and cream after tea.

Best Match Attended – England v West Indies at Lords in 2000. I had tickets for days two and three; it finished on the third day after England had bowled out the West Indies for 54 and chasing 188 to win, won by 2 wickets.

Biggest Coincidence – Bumping into Sir Vivian Richards in the toilets at St. Johns, Antigua in 2004.

Scariest Moment – Watching Yorkshire v Northants at Bramall Lane in 1967. Colin Milburn hooked a ball for six, which just missed me but hit the perimeter wall and rebounded into the back of a nearby spectator who was laid out.

Biggest Disappointment – Going to Australia in 2006/7 and watching as we were humiliated by Australia at Melbourne and Sydney.

My Wife's Most Exciting Moment – being introduced to Phil Tufnell at the Ageas Bowl.

MEET THE MEMBER

If any other members wish to tell of their life in cricket, then please contact the editor at newslettereditor@hantscricsoc.org.uk

Contributions should be between 500-1000 words. The editor reserves the right to edit any submissions.

Without wishing to be prescriptive, the following talking points would undoubtedly be of interest:-

Earliest Cricket Memories/School Cricket

Teenage/Young Adult Cricket/Adult Cricket

Best innings, best bowling, most memorable match, biggest regret

Hampshire County Cricket Club memories (first match, most memorable, favourite players)

International cricket and highlights (first match, most memorable, favourite players)

Other high/low/memorable experiences

Hampshire Cricket Society, date joined, memorable speakers

Changes to the game over your lifetime and future changes

EDITORIAL

The production of this Newsletter has been a genuine team effort. The editor would like to thank John Hooper, Sue and Andy Ray, and his wife, Jennie, for their help.