

# HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: Shaun Udal James Tomlinson

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## MEETINGS

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As mentioned in the Society's Fixture Card and other papers circulated to members recently, the Society's Annual General Meeting will precede John Emburey's address this afternoon. The Society welcomes back all existing members and warmly welcomes new members.

#### Wednesday 6 October 2021 – Meeting

As the Society reconvenes after an 18-month hiatus, we are very glad to welcome **JOHN EMBUREY** at our inaugural meeting at Romsey Golf Club. Members will recall that he was England's premier off-spin bowler for over a decade in the late 1970's-1980's, and beyond, Tall, with a classical high action, he turned the ball sharply when conditions permitted, was a master of variations of flight and pace, and possessed the priceless skill to drift the ball away from right-handers. The latter was undoubtedly an asset he developed from observing his long-time predecessor in the Middlesex and England side, Fred Titmus.

Born in Peckham on 20 August 1952, he began his career on the Surrey staff, but unable to break into the side (Pat Pocock, another off-spinner, was an automatic first choice) he crossed the river to Middlesex in 1972. Titmus was still in residence, and though making his debut in 1973, he had to wait until 1977 before gaining a regular place. In the following season, he made his test debut against New Zealand at Lord's, and with his fourth ball, claimed the wicket of Bruce Edgar, caught at short leg.

He was selected for the forthcoming winter tour of Australia, where he excelled, capturing 16 wickets (avge. 19.12) in four tests. He went on to play in the "Botham" series of 1981. He was originally in the side for the famous Headingley test but Bob Willis pronounced himself fit and played instead, as we all know, to devastating effect. Nevertheless, our speaker was selected for the following test at Edgbaston. Australia seemed they were inching towards victory but his overthrow of Graham Yallop and Allan Border on that gloriously sunlit Sunday afternoon opened the door for Ian Botham to deliver yet another unlikely victory with an irresistible spell for five for one. What is generally forgotten is that but for an unbroken partnership of almost an hour between the great Alan Knott (70 not out) and John Emburey (5 not out), Australia may well have won the sixth and final test at The Oval. Perhaps his

greatest moment, notwithstanding that England lost the test, was in the final match of the 1986/87 series in Australia. He scored 69 in England's first innings and then claimed seven for 78 in Australia's second. In England's second innings, he was last man out for 22 as Australia eased home by 55 runs.

In county cricket, he formed a memorably artistic and potent spin bowling duet with Phil Edmonds. The pair were, of course, an integral part of a hugely successful Middlesex side. Under the captaincy of Mike Brearley and Mike Gatting, they won five County Championships and shared another, six Lord's Cup Finals and a Sunday League title during his career. That Middlesex side is often grouped with Yorkshire in the 1930's, Surrey in the 1950's, and their contemporaries Essex (between 1979-1992) as the greatest of all County teams.

In his Q & A session, our Secretary, John Hooper, will be taking John Emburey through the other highlights of his career which included his 63 tests (two as captain in that chaotic summer against the West Indies in 1988), four visits to Australia and multiple tours to all the other test playing nations at the time, as well as two infamous trips to South Africa, when they were barred from the test arena.

It is worth mentioning that he recorded his career best bowling figures against Hampshire - eight for 40 (12-115 Match) at Lord's in 1993. He also enjoyed two memorable moments at Bournemouth's Dean Park. He scored 111 not out in 1990, even more noteworthy for an unbroken eighth wicket stand of 60 with Phil Tuffnell, and in the last ever first-class match at Dean Park in 1992, he took 5 for 105.

He ended his career with a phenomenal 1608 first-class wickets, (and another 647 in List A matches). His final tally of 12021 runs bear testament to his all-round qualities. He was also a brilliant fielder mainly in the gulley, holding 458 catches.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 27 October, again at Romsey Golf Club, starting at 2pm. The speaker will be Richard Ellison, the former Kent and England all-rounder. He will be talking to members about the background to his cricket career.

If members would like to book a meal prior to his address, would they please contact our Secretary John Hooper, by 20 October please on [secretary@hantscricsoc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@hantscricsoc.org.uk)

### HAMPSHIRE'S SEASON (3)

Whilst the County Championship just eluded them, and they were unable to reach the final of the t20 Blast, Hampshire gave their supporters much to cheer about, as they continually found news levels of resourcefulness and resilience. Their top order batting was generally a constant source of concern but their pace bowlers and, eventually, their spinners, performed heroically. They proved the adage that bowlers win matches. Hampshire started the season with Sam Northeast in situ, but his enigmatic departure towards the end of the group stage of the Championship was a profound loss. The County then played the final three matches without Kyle Abbott. Not even that most whole hearted of men could overcome his foot injury to take the field. When historians examine the table in future years, they will find Hampshire finished fourth. However, that bare fact will conceal that they fell short of claiming the title by one wicket. Nor will it reveal that they were involved in pulsating cricket throughout the season. Supporting the County was not for the faint-hearted, or those with high blood pressure and heart conditions.

The final four matches followed a pattern. A low first innings score was followed by a recovery, generated by the bowlers. All the matches were played on green or tricky surfaces. The pitch in both home matches was of the same hue as the surrounds. In many ways, the pitches were a throwback to the days of uncovered wickets. They demanded the tightest of techniques and concentration by the batsmen. They were not designed for run scoring at headlong speed. Also, the light was often murky throughout each match. With the cloud cover and the green wickets, as well as the 10.30 starts for the last three matches, the odds were stacked in favour of the bowlers. Nevertheless, the ensuing cricket was often absorbing.

In the first against **YORKSHIRE** at the Ageas Bowl, James Vince won the toss and elected to field. The opposition batsmen gritted their teeth, scored at barely two runs an over until tea on the first day, played and missed times without number and eventually reached 243 on the second morning. Abbott, who virtually bowled himself to a standstill, and Brad Wheal both took three for 47. It seemed a good total. So it proved. Hampshire were dismissed for 163. In a foretaste of what was to follow until the season's end, only Vince (49) made any headway. Also, the two bowlers mentioned above combined to add 40 for the final wicket. Worryingly, Abbott did not take the field again and his partner bowled only four overs. Yorkshire took full advantage and made an untroubled 312 for six. They declared once Garry Balance had completed yet another hundred on the ground. With Hampshire losing two wickets for 26 before close of play, it seemed they could only play for a draw. Even that seemed a long shot. But then Mason Crane, as nightwatchman, played the innings of his life. Displaying Amla-like qualities, he resisted until after tea in scoring 28 off 197 balls. Only Joe Weatherley (43) and Vince (42) accompanied him for long; both batted for three hours or more. Even so, it took an unbroken last wicket stand of 46 balls between the two injured bowlers to secure the draw. It must have felt like a win.

In the next match, against **WARWICKSHIRE** at Edgbaston, Hampshire, after losing the toss, were shot out for 89 before lunch. Surely they could not recover. But Mohammad Abbas (five for 29), who could not play in the previous match, and Keith Barker (five for 43), against his former County, kept Hampshire in the game as they dismissed Warwickshire for 116. Sanity then prevailed as Weatherley and Ian Holland took Hampshire to 44 without loss by close of play. The two openers, Tom Alsop (keeping in the absence of Lewis McManus who had fallen foul of the Covid protocols), Vince (another cameo of 48), all made starts but when James Fuller was dismissed with the score on 173 for seven, Warwickshire still seemed favourites. However, Felix Organ - not the first time in the season - dug in for two hours before the ubiquitous Barker (75) and Wheal (46 not out) then added 93 for the ninth wicket. Warwickshire's eventual target was 295; they had progressed to 139 for two at the end of another topsy-turvy day. It was anybody's match. However, after Rob Yates (77) was dismissed early on the third day, Hampshire chipped away and eventually won by 60 runs. Liam Dawson (three for 42), Abbas (two for 32 in 21 accurate overs) and Fuller (two for 22) were the main protagonists in the Hampshire victory. The County were back in the hunt.

In the third match, at home, Keith Barker, having previously made what proved to be the highest score by a Hampshire batter (sic) in the truncated first division, then returned the best bowling figures, when he took seven for 46, as **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE** subsided to 155. Hampshire had previously totalled 226. It was the only batting bonus point garnered by Hampshire in the final stages. Nick Gubbins (54) made the highest score; Vince, Dawson and an aggressive Organ all perished in the 30's. The latter always adapted his approach appropriate to the occasion. If their supporters were of the view that Hampshire now held an unassailable advantage, they were quickly disabused as they collapsed to 28 for four second time round. Vince (52) and Dawson (29) then steadied the ship in a stand of 82. The introduction of the slow left-arm spin of Liam Patterson-White (five for 41) halted their progress and they fell away to 178. The pitch was clearly now receptive to spin. After Abbas took the first two wickets, Dawson (five for 45 in 17.3 overs) and Organ (three for 22 in 11 overs), ran through the Nottinghamshire batting. Hampshire had won by 122 runs. They were now heading into the final match of the season leading the Championship. It was only the second such occurrence in their history, with the fate of the competition still being in the balance. The previous occasion was in 1974.....

And so to Aigburth, Liverpool. Hampshire faced a daunting task, only ever having won eight away matches to Lancashire since 1870. **LANCASHIRE** won the toss and decided to field. The Hampshire innings was a familiar tale. As the ball moved around, they struggled to 143 in 73.2 overs. The outcome of the match was determined by a number of fine margins. The first was the unfortunate dismissal of Liam Dawson; James Vince drove to the other end, only to see the bowler, Tom Bailey, stick out a hand to divert the ball onto the wicket, with Dawson out of his ground. Hampshire's two senior batsmen had seemed to be embarking on repairing the innings after the loss of four early wickets, three of them to the 20 year old medium pace bowler, George Balderson. He had come on as second change and immediately changed the course of the early Hampshire innings as they fell away from 43 for one to 48 for four. Vince, perhaps distracted, was caught behind four balls later. Significantly, in the light of future events, the leg spin bowler, Matthew Parkinson, claimed the final three wickets, including Organ (22) and top scorer Mason Crane (25). The latter had been omitted from the two previous matches, coming into the side for this game for James Fuller.

Lancashire found batting just as difficult. From an overnight 25 for three, they were reduced to 47 for seven. However, aggressive batting by Steven Croft (40), Luke Wood (37) and Bailey (23) eventually ensured virtual parity as they reached 141. Once more, Abbas (five for 48) and Barker (four for 51) caused most damage. The other wicket was taken by Wheal. The match was now a one innings shoot-out.

The match could have conceivably finished in two days as Hampshire collapsed to 24 for four. However, Jo Weatherley batted well scoring 33 before succumbing to Bailey, who had now taken four of the first five wickets. The tall Preston – born fast-medium bowler claimed eight wickets at the Ageas Bowl three years ago. He looked most impressive on that occasion. He was now making the odd ball rise alarmingly; others seemed to get stuck in the pitch. A batsman could never feel secure. Undaunted, James Vince (69) and Liam Dawson (49) now repaired the innings to the extent that with two overs remaining of the second day, they had added 80. The former was then trapped lbw by Parkinson. Almost predictably, following events in the previous two innings, Dawson fell five balls later followed by Bailey.

And so to the final day. Hampshire batted for an hour adding a further 35 runs. Bailey finished with a career best seven for 37 off 24 overs. Lancashire required 196 to win. Many predicted a close finish. In 2018, Alex Davies played a memorably effervescent innings of 97 off 92 balls at the Ageas Bowl. He now raced to 44 off 43. The pitch seemed to have flattened out and he had now shifted the game's momentum considerably, though Barker eventually dismissed him. Hampshire's two opening bowlers no longer posed the same threat as they had in the first innings. Lancashire proceeded to prosper. Josh Bohannon (18) and the angular Luke Wells, formerly of Sussex, added a further 55 for the third wicket. Lancashire needed 78 when Wells left the scene. Dane Vilas and Croft appeared to be steering Lancashire to victory before Mason Crane began one of his magic spells. Croft fell leg before to

the leg spinner with 45 runs required. Though Crane caused problems at one end, Vilas continued to control the chase at the other. However, with 19 runs still in arrears, Crane induced Daniel Lamb to edge to Weatherley at slip. Wood fell in the same manner 10 runs later. Then Crane, who could not be kept out of the action, ran out Bailey with a direct throw. Three runs were now needed. Two wickets were still in hand. Inexplicably, Jack Blatcherwick now took a single off Dawson to face Crane. The latter would not be denied, he lasted only four balls before Weatherley again held a chance. With Vilas at the other end, Mason Crane had, realistically, two balls to win the match and with it the Championship. The second of those fizzed off the wicket; the batsman Parkinson was dragged into playing it but it missed the outside edge. Vilas duly swept the second ball of Dawson's next over for four. Crane had taken five for 41 in a marvellous display of leg spin bowling. Lancashire were ecstatic; Hampshire forlorn. And yet James Vince's side had provided a month of imperishable memories. Every member of the side had played their part. It was also evident that the captain enjoyed their full support.

On the following day, Warwickshire secured the Championship when they defeated Somerset at Edgbaston. Hampshire members have very fond memories of Danny Briggs, whom the county released in 2015. After a four year spell with Sussex he joined Warwickshire and enjoyed an excellent season in 2021. Many Hampshire supporters would have been pleased for him.

### **HAMPSHIRE IN THE T20 BLAST**

It had been the end of a disappointing week for Hampshire. On the Saturday prior to the start of the match at Aigburth, Hampshire played Somerset in the semi-finals of the T20 Blast at Edgbaston. They dominated the match until the very end. Hampshire scored 150 with Jo Weatherley, who had enjoyed a highly successful run in the competition, smacking 71 off 50 balls (including five 6's). He has undoubtedly perfected his legside play in white ball cricket, particularly a punishing slog sweep. With three overs to go, Somerset still required 48, with 20 balls remaining, to win, and a Hampshire victory seemed a formality. However, Ben Green, Craig Overton and at the end Josh Davey blitzed the remaining runs and Somerset emerged victors with two balls to spare. Edgbaston has become a hoodoo ground. The County have now played there on Finals day on six occasions, and have yet to win.

In the final, Somerset were well beaten by Kent by 25 runs.

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