

**HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY**  
**Patrons: Shaun Udal James Tomlinson**

**NEWSLETTER No. 411 – MARCH 2022 (2)**

**MEETINGS**

**Wednesday 18 March 2022 – Report**

The Society extends a warm welcome to **ISABELLE DUNCAN** to this afternoon's meeting. She is one of the foremost authorities on the women's game. Only on Tuesday last week, she hosted a Q & A session at a Symposium at Lord's to celebrate the Evolution of Women's Cricket in a special event to mark International Women's Day.

Educated at Charterhouse and Durham University, she first came to the attention of the wider cricketing public on her appearance on the front cover of *Wisden Cricket Monthly* in October 1998 – the first woman to be so featured. She was wearing an MCC sweater as part of the debate to admit women to the club. She has since fulfilled a number of roles for the MCC, both on and off the field.

Our speaker's cricket career has been a varied one. She captained an all-male side at Albury CC in the Surrey League and has played for numerous men's and women's teams over the past 25 years. Besides the MCC, she has turned out for the Bunburys, and an assortment of Wandering Clubs: The Heartaches, the Invalids and the Nomads. She has therefore broken into yet another previously exclusive male domain. A qualified coach, she has run her own cricket organisation for boys and girls aged 4 to 13, been closely involved with Chance To Shine, and sat on a Committee for "Girls on the Front Foot", which aims to empower girls through cricket. She has also been heard on the BBC Radio's ball-by-ball coverage of county cricket.

This is Isabelle Duncan's second visit to the Society. Her first was in November 2015. Her address on that occasion was a comprehensive resume of the growth of women's cricket throughout the world, based on her landmark book *Skirting The Boundary: A History of Women's Cricket*. Her subject this afternoon will be the remarkable Australian women's cricketer Elizabeth – Betty – Wilson, who was regarded as "the female Don Bradman". She was born just over 100 years ago and was recently featured on the front page of *Scoresheet*, the Newsletter of the Australian Cricket Society.

**Wednesday 18 February 2022 - Report**

The meeting opened with members standing for a minute's silence in memory of Don Crossley. Thereafter, they enjoyed a nostalgic hour viewing Michael Burns' film *Shifting Boundaries – Cricket in the 1960s*. The film was made mostly from newsreel footage, as well as cine-film made by two former players of the era, Alan Oakman (Sussex) and David Sydenham (Surrey).

The County programme in the decade comprised two three-day games a week with Sundays reserved for golf and benefit matches. The latter occasionally included football matches with showbiz personalities and league footballers and so we were able to see Tommy Steele and Danny Blanchflower in action. Showbiz characters

who played cricket included comedians Norman Wisdom and Bernard Bresslaw. Matches were also played by Oxford and Cambridge Universities (there was rare footage of players emerging from the old pavilion at Fenner's); public schools played at Lord's. Country House cricket was still prevalent. There was still a romanticism attached to village cricket. Another feature was Counties' Spring coaching sessions. There were also official overseas tours and private tours, particularly to the West Indies. We saw clips of Tom Graveney and Frank Worrell.

Film of Stradey Park, Llanelli, St. Helen's at Swansea, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Lydney, Hastings, Bradford and Clacton-on-Sea were reminders of the prolific use of outgrounds. Chesterfield and Guildford thankfully still remain. Essex used many grounds and provided a double-decker bus for use as the ladies' toilet!

The season's first matches hosting the tourists were played at Arundel (one day) and Worcester. We saw the great West Indies side of 1963 and the Australians of 1968 file into view. Trent Bridge operated the first electronic scoreboard which was operated by the legendary Bill Voce.

The throwing controversy was a feature of the early 1960's. The Griffin incident at Lord's in 1960 was covered extensively, via interviews with Geoff Griffin himself and the South African captain Jackie McGlew. Griffin was no balled twice in two different matches on the same day; once for throwing in the test and again in a "beer match", when the test had finished earlier. On the latter occasion, he was no-balled for failing to notify the umpire, Sid Buller, that he was switching to bowling underarm. The poor man was totally humiliated. The film then switched to Alec Bedser being used as a model for a legal action at Alf Gover's Indoor School in Wandsworth.

That great test match at Lord's against the West Indies in 1963, was also covered. We saw Colin Cowdrey receiving the sickening blow on his arm from a ball by Wes Hall, which meant he had to retire hurt; Brian Close's bravery; the race to the bowling end between two 39 year olds - Derek Shackleton and Worrell, which the latter won to effect a run out ("Shack" reacted late to David Allen's call as the ball went through to wicketkeeper Deryck Murray), and Allen blocking the last ball from Hall, with Cowdrey, arm in plaster, at the non-striker's end. Members of each team were later presented with a medallion. In the following season, Worrell was in the press box at Hove, accompanied by Hampshire's Secretary, Desmond Eagar, as Ted Dexter made a century against the Australians. There were several shots of The Queen being presented to test teams at Lord's.

Others to be featured were Reg Simpson, Fred Trueman taking his 300<sup>th</sup> test wicket, Sonny Ramadhin bowling for Lancashire at Liverpool, the incomparable Garfield Sobers with bat and ball, Richie Benaud, John Edrich, Micky Stewart, Ken Barrington impersonating WG Grace, Ray Illingworth and David Sheppard. Two non-cricketers shown, having a picnic, presumably at Hove, were the playwright Terence Rattigan (whom we also saw on film opening the innings with one of the Rothschilds for Harrow against Eton at Lord's in 1924) and that fine writer/poet Alan Ross. Mention was also made of the last Gentleman v Players match at Lord's in 1962.

It was indeed a decade of changes in society. The opening of the film showed holiday makers wearing coats and mackintoshes in deckchairs at Blackpool. Soon afterwards, we saw The Beatles, Carnaby Street, and Twiggy. How quickly things

moved on. We also saw Ted Dexter on the General Election campaign trail in Cardiff in 1964 and Fred Titmus serving in his sweet shop.

Disturbingly, we learned of racist comments directed by the Surrey team towards the 1963 West Indians. Understandably Worrell and Sobers were very upset. None of our audience were aware of the incident, but in the debate afterwards, some were aware of racist attitudes at the time, and the editor certainly came across the issue on the cricket field in the mid-sixties.

For those who love artistry and imagination in sport, perhaps the highlight was not related to cricket but Richard Sharp's dazzling try for England against Scotland in that pivotal year of 1963, when he left half of the opposition in his wake as he weaved, fainted and dummied his way to the line.

At the end of the film, there was a wide – ranging and hugely enjoyable discussion as members exchanged their own memories of cricket in the 1960's. What wasn't mentioned in the film, were Hampshire's first championship in 1961 and Worcestershire's inaugural two titles in 1964 and 1965.

### **MORE ON RACISM**

There is a revealing interview in this month's *The Cricketer* magazine with Andy Roberts. He said that in his first three years in the County game between 1973 and 1975, "I never thought I was black - nobody said anything to me about my colour". He never heard a racist remark. The first time he encountered racism was on the West Indian tour of 1966, "when the floodgates opened".

---

### **A DAY AT THE CRICKET**

The Committee has been investigating the feasibility of resuming the Society's Day at the Cricket. However, we have been quoted £78 each for such an event. Given this sum is double the pre-Covid price and as most Society members will also be Hampshire members, and therefore will already have been paying for a day's play, it has been decided, regrettably, not to pursue the matter further.

### **JOHN WOODCOCK MEMORIAL SERVICE**

A Memorial Service is being held for John Woodcock at his former school, St.Edward's, Oxford on Saturday 4 June. The memorial service will be held in the morning, followed by a cricket match between a "John Woodcock XI" and a "Martyrs President's XI" (old boys) in the afternoon. John attended the school from 1940 until 1945 and remained an influential and active supporter of the school, on and off the cricket field, for the rest of his life.

### **Skerryvore Writes:**

### **WHAT DOES THE COMING SEASON HOLD? A PERSONAL VIEW.**

Does the traditional game have a future? In September 2017 John Symons the then Editor of the News Bulletin of the Cricket Society stated that he was seriously

concerned that the game as we know it is slipping away from us and there seems to be nothing that we can do about it. For many, this continues to be a disturbing question which remains relevant now, and perhaps more so.

Let us consider the schedule for first class cricket for the coming season. It offers a slight improvement on the shambolic one of last season; however nine Championship games are still taking place in April, May and September. Whether this will help the development of the Test team is questionable. It is very difficult for groundsmen to produce good wickets during April, and this can very much depend on the weather. If there is a dry early Spring then this can help in producing wickets suitable for Championship cricket, which then offers the chance of bringing spinners into the game particularly in the second innings.

The basic problem in my view with the schedule is that four competitions is one too many. There is so much cricket that wickets produced in September for the final Championship games are tired and in many cases not fit for purpose. At The Ageas this is a particular problem for the groundsmen, however good he is, with the amount of games played there during the season, involving as it does, the men, the women, The Hundred and International fixtures. The importance given to Championship cricket has been diminished in recent years not least as a result of the introduction of The Hundred. It is Championship cricket that will produce players equipped to compete and make their mark in the Test arena. The inevitable disaster that occurred in Australia in December and January demonstrates that there is a long and difficult road ahead for real improvement in the performance of the Test team. It has to be recognised the income generated from the white ball game keeps the first class game afloat financially. Nevertheless, the game is possibly at a crossroads in its history. This has been said before, but this time it does somehow feel and seem different.

What then are the prospects for Hampshire for the forthcoming season? The first Division of the Championship can be anticipated to be fiercely competitive with potentially little to choose between many of the teams. Hampshire have a good all-round squad. Two or three of the batsmen have to do well. I think it is a big season for Joe Weatherley and Tom Alsop to bring their obvious talent to the fore. It is difficult at the top of the order, and exposes technique particularly. I think that Ben Brown is a terrific signing for a Championship challenge adding ballast to the batting particularly following any early collapse. With Sussex he demonstrated that he has a sound technique with an ability to score heavily when set. He is also a fine wicketkeeper so it will be interesting to see if he is used in this role in the Championship side. Fingers crossed it just might be our season. A solid start is needed. With regard to the Vitality Blast T20 competition you never know what you are going to get. There is plenty of talent in the squad, strengthened by the acquisition of Ross Whiteley from Worcestershire, and the recent announcement that Ben McDermott a talented Australian batsman in the shorter form of the game has also been signed. There is every reason to look for a serious challenge. The 50 over competition will be the same as last season and some enjoyable all day games can be anticipated, including one on the Isle of Wight.

It looks as if we may see the return of Aneurin Donald to the fray. We wish him well following his horrendous injury, and it has proved to be a long and difficult struggle to regain full fitness. Tom Prest has this winter had the honour of captaining the

England Under 19 team in their World Cup campaign in the West Indies, and reaching the final. He is a tremendous prospect and let us hope that his batting continues to flourish. He looks to have the potential to be the best batting prospect produced by Hampshire since James Vince. Let us hope so, and see him develop over the next season or two into a top class player.

Anyway, enjoy the season, and hope for lovely weather to go with it.

## **ANOTHER HAMPSHIRE SIGNING**

Hampshire have signed the Australian batsman, **BEN McDERMOTT**, aged 27, for the coming season's t20 Blast campaign. He is an opening batter and therefore seems to be a like-for-like replacement for D'Arcy Short. Unlike his predecessor, however, he bats right-handed and does not have any bowling credentials.

Born in Caboolture, Queensland on 12 December 1994, **BENJAMIN REGINALD McDERMOTT** is the son of the former Australian fast bowler, Craig McDermott, who played in 71 tests and toured England in 1985 and 1993. His brother, Alistair, enjoyed a brief career before succumbing to a series of injuries.

Ben made his debut in state cricket for the Brisbane Heat in the Big Bash League in January 2014. He played his sole first-class match for Queensland in October of the same year. He then moved to Melbourne for a year before finding a more permanent home in Tasmania. He seems to have moved his batting up a notch this winter, by scoring two centuries and two fifties for Hobart Hurricanes in the BBL. Earlier in his career, he hammered 114 off just 52 for the Hurricanes against Melbourne Renegades at the Etihad Stadium, one of the fastest hundreds ever scored in the BBL.

He originally played for Australia in t20 international matches in October 2018. He featured in their five matches against Sri Lanka in February, making his best score of 53 at Sydney in the first game. Thereafter, he made double figures only once. He has played in 22 t20 internationals scoring 247 runs (avge 14.52). It must be hoped that he can reproduce his winter Big Bash form in this summer's t20 Blast.

## **TOM PREST**

The Society congratulates Tom Prest on leading England to the ICC World Cup under-19 Final in Antigua. Though they lost to India by four wickets, it was a creditable performance. India have been dominant in the competition for years, and, by dint of population, are likely to remain so in the future. Throughout the competition, he led his side astutely and in the group stage, scored 154 not out against the UAE Under-19s at Warner Park, Basseterre, St. Kitts. Unfortunately, in the final, he was dismissed without scoring.

## **SONNY RAMADHIN**

Sonny Ramadhin died on 27 February. He was the last surviving member of the West Indian team that won both their first Test series in England in 1950, and who played in that match against Hampshire at the County Ground in the same year,

which has since passed into folklore. The first day batting of Roy Marshall (135), on his first appearance in the County for which he later played, and Everton Weekes (246 not out) has often received mention in the pages of the Newsletter. Sonny Ramadhin left his mark in Hampshire's sole innings on the third day. He dismissed four of the first five Hampshire batsmen, bowled thirty overs, and finished with figures of four for 46. For some of the time, he bowled in tandem with Roy Marshall. The latter bowled 24 overs of off-spin, and claimed the wicket of Jimmy Gray, his future opening partner for the County. The diminutive spin bowler was generally known as a "mystery bowler" but he held no terrors for Neville Rogers, who scored a century before lunch.

Ramadhin also played against Hampshire in one match for Lancashire at Old Trafford in 1964. He took four wickets as the game was drawn.

### **RODNEY MARSH**

Australia's former wicket-keeper/batsman, Rod Marsh died on 4 March, the same day as Shane Warne. He played three matches in first-class cricket at the County Ground, on the 1975, 1980, and 1981 tours. He made his highest score of 72 not out on the ground in the last of those years; it was a typically pugnacious Marsh effort as, in partnership with Ray Bright, he retrieved the Australian innings after their first six wickets had fallen for 126 runs. The rain ruined match was drawn. In the previous year, he played with Dennis Lillee. Strangely perhaps, though the County were bowled twice, no batsman was ct Marsh b Lillee. The match in 1975 was a run-fest with Barry Richards (twice), Gordon Greenidge and Ian Chappell all batting memorably. Neither Jeff Thomson nor Andy Roberts, the fastest bowlers in the world at the time, took a wicket.

He also appeared in the Australia - Zimbabwe encounter at the County Ground in the 1983 World Cup. His aggressive 35 off 28 balls at the end of the Australian innings enabled them to post a competitive 272 for seven in their 60 overs. The Zimbabweans, thanks to a fearless 84 from David Houghton, looked at one stage if they would claim a surprising victory but their aspirations were upset by a late burst from Rodney Hogg. They eventually finished 32 runs short.

Marsh later became Director of the England Academy. In a newspaper interview, Chris Tremlett, said that Marsh was instrumental in making him aware of the attributes that were required of a test cricketer. Many who were at the Academy under the watchful eye of Marsh were in the England side that won that pulsating Ashes series of 2005.

© Copyright Alan Edwards 2022 ([NewsletterEditor@HantsCricSoc.org.uk](mailto:NewsletterEditor@HantsCricSoc.org.uk))