

HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: Shaun Udal James Tomlinson Kevan James

NEWSLETTER No. 412 – SUMMER 2022

KEVAN JAMES – NEW PATRON

Members will have been notified that Kevan James has kindly agreed to become a Patron of the Society. Since his retirement from the game, Kevan has become a highly popular commentator on BBC Radio Solent, covering all of Hampshire's matches in all competitions, both home and away. The Society is glad to have him on board. He has already agreed to attend this year's Christmas Lunch at Romsey Golf Club on Wednesday 14 December.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Our Chairman, Garry Lane, has compiled a mouth-watering programme of speakers for the coming winter. All meetings will be held in the afternoons at Romsey Golf Club, starting at 2pm. The Society's fixture card will be distributed in a few weeks time.

Wednesday 5 October 2022

AGM followed by

ROGER KNIGHT, captain of Surrey, Gloucestershire, and Sussex, Secretary of MCC, President of Surrey and MCC.

Subject: Boundaries, based on his autobiography of the same title.

Wednesday 26 October 2022

PAUL FARBRACE, wicketkeeper with Kent and Middlesex, before pursuing a successful coaching career with Kent, Sri Lanka, England, and, latterly, Sporting Director at Warwickshire.

Subject: My learning and experiences in coaching.

Wednesday 16 November 2022

A member of the Southern Vipers.

Wednesday 14 December 2022

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH, followed by

JOHN BARCLAY, captain of Sussex; Arundel Castle Cricket Foundation, President of the MCC, Chairman of Cricket for Sussex, President of the Cricket Society; author of three autobiographies

Wednesday 11 January 2023

DARYL MITCHELL, captain of Worcestershire, former Chief Operation Officer of the PCA, and author of autobiography “Once a Pear”.

Interview and Q and A.

Wednesday 15 February 2023

BILL ATHEY, Yorkshire, Gloucestershire, Sussex and England and Coach at Worcestershire.

Wednesday 15 March 2023

MARK CHURCH, Cricket Commentator for BBC Radio London, covering Surrey’s matches; also interviewed authors of Pitch Publishing publications during the Covid period.

Subject: How the role of commentating has changed over the years.

THE SEASON SO FAR

As this piece is being written in the first weekend in July, the season in terms of time, is at the halfway mark.

Hampshire have given their supporters much to cheer about. They are second in the Championship, 16 points behind leaders Surrey, despite having won one match more. Lancashire are five points behind Hampshire, despite having won two matches fewer. This year’s points system clearly needs to be revised as there is a disproportionate benefit to sides in drawn matches. Skerryvore writes more on this matter later in this Newsletter. As at 29 June, the table stood as follows:-

	P	W	L	D	Bat	Bowl	Points
Surrey	8	4	0	4	28	19	143
Hampshire	8	5	2	1	20	21	127
Lancashire	8	3	1	4	20	22	122

Hampshire have played positively and ruthlessly throughout. Perhaps they have been inspired by Shane Warne. Spectators were allowed on to the playing area at the Ageas Bowl at lunch on the first day of the season, against Somerset, to view a moving tribute to Shane Warne and the main scoreboard screen. There were film clips from both Hampshire and test matches, together with testimonies from, in particular, Rod Bransgrove, Giles White, Dimitri Mascarenhas and Jimmy Adams. Hampshire duly dispensed the Somerset side, much weakened by injuries and Covid, by an innings. Hampshire’s total of 428 was built around an opening partnership of 180 by Joe Weatherley (168) and Ian Holland (81). However, hitherto, neither has repeated that form, though Weatherley scored a most attractive 87 at The Oval shortly afterwards (see below). Holland also possesses a “golden arm”, having become an invaluable partnership breaker.

Two matches later, they defeated Kent by an innings at Canterbury. This was a match of records. Liam Dawson (171) and Ben Brown (157) added a Hampshire record of 273 for the fifth wicket, thus breaking the previous best of 262 established by Holland and Aneurin Donald against Warwickshire at the Ageas Bowl three years ago. Dawson’s was his highest innings. Brown just failed to pass his personal best.

With James Vince scoring 111, Hampshire eventually made 652 for seven declared, their highest total at Canterbury.

In between, they lost to Surrey at The Oval by an innings, undone by two vivid spells, one in each innings, of genuinely fast bowling by Jamie Overton. It was no surprise that he was called up by England later in the summer. Ollie Pope, as he had done in 2021, scored a hundred (131). The consolation was that the margin of loss was considerably less than last year. Ben Brown demonstrated his durability and grit with 49 and 30 not out. It was the first of several valuable contributions by the new arrival from Sussex.

In the fourth match, at home, to Lancashire, rain washed out the last day completely. Lancashire required 344 to win. Given the events of the previous three days, a close encounter was in prospect, with the odds arguably in favour of Hampshire. Their first innings lead of six should have been far more. At one stage, Lancashire were 105 for seven but three dropped catches in a matter of minutes enabled them to recover. The match saw a significant team change, James Fuller coming in for Mason Crane. The latter was immediately loaned to Sussex. Unfortunately, though his coach there, Ian Salisbury, was a former leg-spin bowler, Crane failed to find form and returned to Hampshire. However, Fuller never looked back, contributing with bat and ball in both red and white ball cricket. Hampshire's man of the match was Nick Gubbins who made a rare century in each innings -101 not out and 130 – against the northern County. The merit of his performance is illustrated by the fact that only the great Gordon Greenidge had performed the feat previously. He also countered James Anderson admirably. Playing in the V more this summer, the left-handed Gubbins is Hampshire's leading batter at the time of writing. He has scored his runs at a good tempo; invariably he has come to the wicket early on.

Gloucestershire were defeated, not without some alarms, in another home game. Weatherley was injured; Felix Organ came in as opener and, with the ball moving around, made a splendid century (107). Hampshire gained a first innings lead of 163, but then slipped to 103 for nine second time around. The decision to use two night watchmen had backfired spectacularly. Aneurin Donald (89), in his first match for two seasons, batting at nine, and James Fuller (32) at eleven, then struck a memorable 101 off 135 balls to give a half decent innings total. This pair always has the potential to create mayhem. Whilst, on this occasion, Fuller was content to play a secondary role, Donald once turned Ryan Higgins to the mid-wicket boundary for three consecutive boundaries towards the main scoreboard, before turning his attentions to Dominic Goodman, whom he hit far over the same boundary, on the other side of the ground, for three successive sixes. He is a batter who always demands spectators' attention.

There then followed three truly marvellous team performances. Somerset, this time at full strength, were dismissed for just 69 between lunch and tea in their second innings and Hampshire won by 10 wickets. Skerryvore's report of this extraordinary match can be found elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Hampshire then went toe- to -toe with Yorkshire at the Ageas Bowl, eventually emerging victors by two wickets. Facing a total of 428 (George Hill, using the inside edge to good advantage making 131, and the in-form Henry Brook a more

convincing 76 before falling in the leg-trap in a preconceived move by skipper James Vince), Hampshire battled their way to 410. Eight batsmen made 30 or more with Ben Brown, going on to 83, Liam Dawson 61 and Nick Gubbins 58. Barker, Kyle Abbott and Brad Wheal, substituting for Mohammad Abbas, who had been recalled by Pakistan, then bowled Yorkshire for 178. In the first innings, Wheal, returning to form, claimed the final four wickets in six overs. Hampshire, needing 198 to win, then subsided to 103 for six. However, Dawson (a measured and responsible 61) and the ubiquitous Barker (21) took the side to the brink of victory. Abbott and Fuller duly steered them home.

The most recent match at Chelmsford encapsulated Hampshire's fighting spirit. On a pitch, tailor-prepared for Simon Harmer (eight for 46 and seven for 161), Hampshire eventually required 294 to win, the highest score of the match by some margin. Thanks to Organ (65) who perhaps was better equipped to bat on less than perfect pitches due to his Southern League experience for St. Cross, led the response and with Holland, Brown, Donald, Barker and Abbott all contributing in their varied ways, Hampshire ultimately fell just 12 runs short. It had been a most gripping and noble effort. Having made the highest score of his career at Canterbury earlier on in the season, Liam Dawson now returned his best bowling and match figures for the County (3-71 and 7-68). He demonstrated, not for the first time, that if conditions favour spin bowlers, he is a force. All too often in his career, he has had to fulfil a holding roll on bland pitches. Hampshire supporters raised their eyebrows when the ECB ruled the pitch was "above average"

The feature of the season has been Hampshire's pace bowling attack. In match after match, Keith Barker, Mohammad Abbas and Kyle Abbott have dominated the opposition. Barker (32 wickets @ 20.19) has taken more wickets than any other bowler in the country, Abbas (26 wickets @ 16.31) heads the national averages, and Abbott (26 wickets @ 25.81) remains a potent threat. It is noticeable that all three have formed a "brain's trust", often discussing strategy and tactics, between balls. Wheal, Holland, Dawson and Organ are all in the top 50 of the averages. Barring injuries, Hampshire seem therefore to be exceptionally well equipped for the remainder of the season. Barker, especially, and Abbott, in recent weeks, have also made crucial runs. The well-built, left-arm, Barker has enjoyed a marvellous summer and must be the country's most valuable player.

Skerryvore writes with his eye witness account of Hampshire's match against Somerset at Taunton on May 19-21:

It was good to be able to go to Taunton once again for a Championship game. Hampshire had won the opening game of the season against Somerset by an innings and plenty. However it was expected to be different this time with the hosts being able to field a full strength team.

On arriving at the ground it could be seen that the wicket was a greenish texture and perhaps suited to the quicker bowlers. An excellent crowd built up to probably around 2000. Somerset won the toss and decided to bat. I suspect James Vince was not unhappy with this. The Hampshire quartet of Mohammad Abbas, Keith Barker, Kyle Abbott and Ian Holland all bowled tidily and made the batsmen struggle for runs throughout. None of the batsmen became established, and it was left to a swashbuckling innings of 44 by Craig Overton to enable Somerset to reach a total of

211. Kyle Abbott claimed 3-60. Mohammad Abbas took 2-21 from 17 overs and was unlucky not to take more wickets, proving to be a handful throughout. Liam Dawson bowled just two overs for 18 runs being hit for three sixes by Overton. Hampshire were left with a tricky period of 18 overs at the end of the day and Felix Organ and Ian Holland did well to survive. The whole day had seen batsmen regularly playing and missing with the ball both swinging and moving off the seam.

Rain delayed the start to Day 2 until 1.40pm. Batting continued to be a struggle. However after the early departure of Felix Organ for 20, Ian Holland and Nick Gubbins batted carefully until the latter fell for 36 to a catch behind the wicket which he was clearly very unhappy with, and he slowly trudged off the field. Ian Holland played stoically until he too was caught behind for 49. James Vince went cheaply, leaving Ben Brown and Liam Dawson, together hopefully to see out the day. Unfortunately Liam Dawson was palpably lbw to Gregory off the penultimate ball of the day leaving Hampshire on 144-5.

The thinking of the Hampshire following was that the first hour on Day 3 was likely to be decisive. Ben Brown was dismissed early and Keith Barker came in to join Aneurin Donald. The latter played a fine knock being positive from the outset and well deserved his 57 before being bowled by Peter Siddle. Keith Barker made 36 including a four and a six off the first two balls he received from Jack Leach. James Fuller was also positive making 38 including all 24 of the last wicket stand with Mohammad Abbas who made 0 not out! 280 looked to be a good score on this wicket and the lead of 69 was seen as useful faced with batting last. Craig Overton was the pick of the Somerset bowlers taking 4-57 from 26 overs. For a man of his build it is surprising he is not quicker. His twin brother Jamie, now with Surrey of course, is definitely the quicker of the two and is having a renaissance this season which might lead to a call up to the Test squad. England need fast bowlers and for them to stay fit.

What happened next was like a fairy tale. Somerset were bowled out for 69. It had to be seen to be believed. Keith Barker was outstanding from the first ball and ended with 6-27 from 13 continuous overs. There was no way he was going to relinquish the ball and it was fitting that he took the final wicket clean bowling Davey. Mohammad Abbas took 2-11 from 6 overs and Kyle Abbott 2-27 from his 6 overs. Craig Overton was again top scorer for Somerset with 13.

Hampshire scored the 1 run needed giving victory by 10 wickets. It was a real team performance and the fielding was of a high standard throughout. Liam Dawson took three fine catches in the slips in the first innings. Ben Brown keeping wicket took three catches in the second innings including an outstanding one to dismiss Banton off the bowling of Mohammad Abbas. Nick Gubbins caught an unbelievable catch at cover in the second innings off a full blooded drive by Jack Leach off Kyle Abbott. A game, then, never to be forgotten by the good Hampshire following at the game. The Somerset faithful were in shock. The noise from the visitor's dressing room could be heard on the other side of the ground.

This game brought to a conclusion the first tranche of fixtures with all counties having played six games. The Hampshire team can be proud of the progress made with four wins, one draw and just one loss. What a shame Day 4 was washed out

against Lancashire. It could have been a classic. Nevertheless it was essential for a good start to be made by Hampshire if they are to prove to be genuine contenders for the Championship. The fast bowling unit of Mohammad Abbas, Keith Barker and Kyle Abbott has delivered and this season thus far the batsmen have scored more runs for them to bowl at. However, one can argue that the Championship table does not fairly reflect the games played to date. For instance Yorkshire have won just one game with five draws and yet are only 12 points behind Hampshire. The main issue is the eight points awarded for a draw which means that 13 or 14 points is achievable from a game. This is illogical when for example in a competitive low scoring game 19 or 20 points may be the total obtained for a win. The gap is not wide enough and I would say that 3 points is sufficient for a draw and certainly no more than 5. Teams need to have the incentive to push for a win and I think that is what followers of all the counties like to see.

One other matter that has been in constant evidence concerns the quality of the balls used. They have constantly been changed. In a post-match interview at Taunton Keith Barker said that it was the one game when he and his colleagues had not sought a ball change. The situation in the Lancashire game at The Ageas was ridiculous at one stage when the fielding side, the batsmen and the umpires were all embroiled in looking at balls for their suitability. Hopefully the problem is sorted going forward.

HAMPSHIRE IN THE T20 BLAST

Hampshire's season in the t20 Blast has, hitherto, been a virtual reprise of their fortunes in 2021. They lost their first four matches but, after James Vince moved up the order to open (he started at number three), they embarked on a run which saw them win nine of their next ten matches in the group stage to qualify for the quarter-finals. So far, Vince has scored 653 runs (avge. 54.41), the most number of runs by any batter in the country. He has also struck the most number of fours, and made two centuries, including 129 not out (off 62 balls including 10 sixes) against Somerset at Taunton, which is the highest innings by a Hampshire player in t20 cricket.

They then overwhelmed the Birmingham Bears in the quarter-finals at Edgbaston. The Australian, Ben McDermott (61) and Vince (31) put on 93 in 9.1 overs for the first wicket. Joe Weatherley (47 off 31) and Ross Whiteley (24 off 16) then ensured Hampshire posted a competitive 186 off their 20 overs. After Hampshire's other Australian, Nathan Ellis removed Paul Stirling early on, Warwickshire never threatened. Fuller removed the explosive Adam Hose (ex Ventnor and Hampshire) in the sixth over before dismantling the middle order. He finished with four for 17. Ellis, who has become more and more influential with his bowling at the end of the innings, took the last two wickets to end with the remarkable figures of three for four off just nine balls. Hampshire ran out winners by 104 runs, to reach their ninth finals day, the same as Lancashire.

Such has been James Fuller's potency with both bat and ball, it came as no surprise when he gained a deserved late wild card selection for the Southern Brave squad in the forthcoming Hundred. He can change games very quickly.

The next highest run maker in the Blast is Rilee Rossouw, now with Somerset. That County are Hampshire's opponents in the semis on Finals day next weekend. It is an intriguing encounter, given that the two Counties met at the same stage last summer; on that occasion, Hampshire controlled the match until the very end. The County have never won on final days at Edgbaston. Can they lay the bogey? They certainly have the team to do so. The other semi-final is a Roses encounter between Yorkshire and Lancashire.

THE SOUTHERN VIPERS

The Vipers have also enjoyed a successful season so far. Coached by Charlotte Edwards, they won the 20-Over Cup bearing her name with some ease. They were unbeaten in all of their six group matches before defeating Central Sparks in the final at Northamptonshire's Wantage Road. Danni Wyatt was their leading batter with 221 runs (avge. 36.83) at the handsome strike rate of 152. Charlie Dean was their most successful bowler with 12 wickets at the miserly average of 8.25. Her career is really beginning to blossom though she was omitted from the test side for the sole match against South Africa at Taunton.

The Vipers have also won their first two matches in the 50-over Rachael Heyhoe-Flint Trophy. In the second of those matches, against South East Stars at Hove, Emily Windsor, in her first outing of the season, ran up 90 off 79 balls.

JIM PARKS

The Society extends its condolences to Bobby Parks, on the death of his father, Jim, who passed away aged 90 on 31 May.

Jim Parks would be on the short-list for any Sussex all-time XI. He addressed the Society at Portsmouth Rugby Club on the 21 February 1990. His earliest recollections were of Lancashire's Eddie Paynter, scoring 322 before 5.30pm on the first day at Hove in 1937. He also remembered the sad fortunes of Hugh Bartlett; his century in 57 minutes, against the 1938 Australians, left an indelible impression on his memory. However, Bartlett lost his best years to the war, during which his experiences as a glider pilot at Arnhem so unhinged him that, unfortunately, he was never the same man again.

Jim Parks entered County Cricket as a leg-spin bowler. His first professional captain was Jim Langridge; he held the County together during his stewardship between 1950-52. He thought the best captain he played under was David Sheppard who, in his only season in charge in 1953, led the County to second place in the County Championship, the highest position they had attained at the time. He also remembered Robin Marljar, who despite his eccentricities as a captain was deceptive enough to turn Jim Parks into a wicket-keeper. Ted Dexter was an outstanding batsman who hit the ball very hard, but was prone to lose interest and, therefore, never quite realised his full talents. As a one-day captain, however, his strategy was responsible for Sussex's early successes in the Gillette Cup.

In 36 matches against Hampshire Parks scored 1936 runs (avge 35.85), which included 17 half-centuries. He never recorded a century against the County. He reached 90 three times, twice for Sussex and once for Somerset. His highest score

was 93 not out at Portsmouth in 1957. Interestingly, he played only one match at Southampton's County Ground, in 1967 when he scored 91 whilst captaining his side. Throughout his career Sussex's matches against Hampshire were played at either Portsmouth or Bournemouth.

He was one of the best players of spin bowling the editor has ever seen. He was always looking to come down the wicket to them. The crease was almost foreign country. He possessed a two-eyed stance and held the bat higher up the handle than virtually anybody else. He exemplified what "long handle" really meant. He was a wonderful stroke-maker. Just how good he might have been had he not kept wicket, will always be a matter of conjecture. His approach made him a favourite of countless schoolboys.

It was no surprise to learn that Derek Shackleton, who took more wickets against Sussex than any other County, was the Hampshire bowler who took his wicket on most occasions (15).

Jim Parks was also partly instrumental in denying Hampshire a second successive Championship title in 1974. In Somerset's match at Bournemouth, his side collapsed to 22 for 4 in their second innings, still over 100 runs behind Hampshire. He then scored an unbeaten 46, occupying the crease with Brian Close, to deny the Hampshire bowlers any further success on the second evening. Hampshire were unable to take the field again during the season. The remaining four days were famously all washed away.

ENGLAND'S CHANGE OF FORTUNES

The biggest talking point of the summer has undoubtedly been England's performances in the three test Tests against New Zealand and the deferred one, from last season, against India. It has been an astonishing turn around in their fortunes stemming from the appointment of the remarkable New Zealander, Brendon McCullum, as coach and Ben Stokes (New Zealand-born) as captain. Joe Root, freed from captaincy cares, Jonny Bairstow, in a series of quite outstanding fast scoring hundreds, three in all, and, to a lesser extent, Stokes himself, have provided the most entertaining cricket ever seen by an England side. It was one thing to plunder runs against a New Zealand side, now in decline after winning the World Championship at The Ageas Bowl last summer. It was quite another to do so against India at Edgbaston. In all four matches, England had to overcome adversity to achieve victory. The Australians have commented that such cricket will be difficult to sustain. England still have some weaknesses in the side, but there is a real spirit of positivity and confidence which may yet paper over any cracks. Whatever happens in the future, it promises to be fun to watch. Who needs The Hundred? And there has been no adverse comment on the quality of county cricket in the past few weeks. Matthew Potts has made the transition from county to test cricket admirably.

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