

# HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: Shaun Udal James Tomlinson Kevan James

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## MEETINGS

### Wednesday 10 January 2024- Meeting

The Society is pleased to welcome **James Taylor** to this afternoon's meeting, and to thank him for stepping in at short notice when our original speaker, Huw Turbervill, found himself unable to attend because of the production schedule associated with the February edition of *The Cricketer* magazine.

It occurs sometimes that the most lasting impression of a cricketer is the one when people first see them on the field of play. The editor's only sight of James Taylor batting was when he played for Leicestershire against Kent at Tunbridge Wells in 2011. The distinguishing feature was his quick-footed assurance that was so reminiscent of the young Ricky Ponting. On a pitch, on which no batsman could ever feel quite secure, he made 49. Upon his dismissal, the Leicestershire batting collapsed and they were invited to follow on. Second time around, thanks to our speaker's 96, his side did better, but still lost by five wickets. In just over two and a half seasons, he had already set tongues wagging about a future England player in the making, and it was easy to discern the reasons why.

**JAMES WILLIAM ARTHUR TAYLOR** was born in Nottingham on 6 January 1990. He was a prodigy at Shrewsbury School (*alma mater* to Hampshire's President Nick Pocock), played for England Under-19s, and made his debut in county cricket for Leicestershire at the age of 18 in 2008. His transition from schools' cricket on the banks of the River Severn to the county game was seamless. In his first full season in the following year, he saved Leicestershire, after they had followed on, with a revelatory 122 not out in their second match against Middlesex at Southgate. At the end of July, he struck a monumental unbeaten 207 in seven hours against Surrey at The Oval. Only four men had scored a double century at a younger age in an English season; WG Grace, David Sales, Graeme Hick and Edward Craig. Sales was the only one of this elite group to have previously achieved the feat in a County Championship match.

In the following season, he reprised the landmark with 206 not out against Middlesex at Grace Road, during which he shared a Leicestershire record fourth wicket partnership of 360 in 73 overs with the Australian Andrew McDonald (now a World Cup winning coach this winter).

His appetite for records and double centuries remained unabated after he joined Nottinghamshire, his “home” County of course, in 2012. Perhaps understandably, his first season with them proved to be a transitional one, but in 2013 he registered 204 not out against Sussex at Trent Bridge. He made six double centuries in seven full seasons, the final one being his highest score of 291 against Sussex at Horsham, a ground record, in 2015. He scored 20 centuries in all; the percentage of double hundreds in that haul far exceeds that of any player in the history of the game.

He had demonstrated the range of his technique and adaptability when he scored 242 not out for the England Lions in Sri Lanka in the previous winter. He had first gained national recognition as a 21-year old, in August 2011, when he was selected for an ODI against Ireland in Dublin. His rise had indeed been meteoric.

He played his first two tests against South Africa in 2012, but apart from an another ODI, again in Ireland, in September 2013, he was not recalled to the international arena until England’s one-day series in Sri Lanka in December 2014. He immediately made 90 at Colombo, followed by 68 at Pallekele. He was to retain his place thereafter. He enjoyed conspicuous success in the tri-series against hosts Australia and India which followed. He was desperately unlucky to miss out on a maiden one-day international hundred in the ensuing World Cup when he was controversially stranded on 98 not out (off 90 balls), due to an umpiring error, against Australia at Melbourne. Mitchell Marsh had made short work of the England top-order, and our speaker’s ability to influence matters was extremely limited as the home side emphatically romped to victory by 111 runs. He eventually attained an ODI century with an innings of 101 against Australia at Old Trafford six months later. In 27 one-day internationals, he scored 887 runs at the more than creditable average of 42.23. Besides his one three-figure score, he passed fifty on seven occasions.

He was recalled to the test side three years after his last appearance. Scores of 76 against Pakistan in Sharjah, which Lawrence Booth, editor

of *Wisden* was prompted to describe him as “being alert as a pickpocket in a souk”, and 70 against South Africa in Durban in successive tests hinted of a future productive career at the top level. He also earned praise for his outstanding fielding at short leg in the South African series.

As we all know, his playing career was then shockingly cut short by the most serious, life-threatening, heart condition. As part of his recuperation, both physical and mental, from such a life-changing incident, he has actively supported the work of the British Heart Foundation. He has maintained his life in cricket via an autobiography, *James Taylor: Cut Short*, described by one reviewer as “riveting”, Sky television punditry, radio commentary on TMS, test selection, and coaching, thus ensuring that his experience has not been lost to the game. He is currently Assistant Coach at Leicestershire, thus joining Hampshire’s former bowling coach, Alfonso Thomas, where his positive impact has already been demonstrated by their win against the odds in the One Day Cup Final against Hampshire at Trent Bridge last summer. He has also talked to a number of Cricket Societies where his articulacy and insight has attracted the highest praise. Members are sure to enjoy his presence this afternoon and he is assured of the warmest of welcomes.

*Editor’s Note: some of the information in the above paragraph has been drawn from Stephen Chalke’s interview with James Taylor at a meeting of the West of England Cricket Society, as reported in The December 2023 edition of The Cricket Society News Bulletin.*

### **Wednesday 15 November 2023 – Report**

Members enjoyed an informative afternoon with Andy Murtagh, who, in his bright, breezy manner, talked about his early days in the game and his time with Hampshire. He was first spotted by Surrey whilst a schoolboy, but was then signed by Hampshire when he attended Southampton University. He was quite surprised to be promoted to the first team in their Championship year of 1973 so soon after joining the County.

Among his memories were the Bishan Bedi - Barry Richards duel in the sun at Northlands Road in 1973. He felt, that by any test, it was a great innings. That encounter had become, not by design, a common feature of Society meetings in 2023.

He then talked about his career at Malvern College, and his baptism by fire as a housemaster when pupils found all sorts of ruses to escape the

school out of hours. It sounded like plots from some of the PG Wodehouse books.

The Society were very appreciative that he made the journey from the Worcester area to attend. In doing that, he followed Patrick Murphy, and preceded Fred Rumsey, who also travelled from that county.

### **Wednesday 13 December 2023 – Report**



After a splendid Annual Lunch, members enjoyed a riotous afternoon in the company of Fred Rumsey and Stephen Chalke. Stories and humour abounded. With Fred sporting his England tie, the pair began their partnership with the proudest moment of his playing career: his test debut against Australia at Old Trafford in 1964. The Australian captain, Bobby Simpson had never previously scored a test century. He now made three in one innings as he scored 311. Fred had replaced another Fred – Trueman - in the England side. On the flattest of pitches, he was unable to obtain any swing until the final new ball was taken towards the end of the Australian innings on the third day. He then claimed two wickets in his last over before Simpson's declaration with the score standing at 656 for eight. He was the only front line bowler not to concede a hundred: 35.5-4-99-2. (Editor's Note: fellow debutant Tom Cartwright's figures were even more admirable: 77-32-118-2). At the end of the first day, Fred dined with Simpson, an action which earned him a reprimand. He was annoyed to think that the selectors felt that he would

never give less than his best, despite being friends with the opposition. England then totalled 611. The remaining time allowed two overs to be bowled, by Fred Titmus and Ken Barrington, who had earlier made 256!

He was left out for the next test, the final one of the series, at The Oval. Trueman was recalled and famously became the first bowler to claim 300 test wickets. He opened the bowling with his namesake in his next test against New Zealand at Edgbaston in the following summer, before claiming his best test figures of 4 for 25 in the next encounter at Lord's. He played his fifth and final test against South Africa, again at Lord's, in the first of the double-series in this country. He was unsure of his fitness for the next test, was omitted, and never played for England again. His replacement was John Snow, about which he never had any argument.

He was a good friend of Fred Trueman, and was fully committed to the fast bowlers' union. In those days, it was very rare to bowl bouncers at tail-enders. However, in one match, in which Somerset were being held up by the Yorkshire tail, as they pressed for a rare win over the perennial champions of that era, he was instructed by his captain, Harold Stephenson, to bounce the fiery Yorkshire fast bowler. At first, he refused but such was his captain's intensity, he reluctantly bowled one. In his next over, Stephenson asked him to do it again, which, again most reluctantly, he did so. Trueman was furious. He then decided not to bowl any more bouncers. However, in the next over, Trueman was hit on the buttocks, as he turned his back. In the words in his book *Sense of Humour, Sense of Justice*, "I learned all about my parents, my mother, my family and friends". The saga still had some way to run. Yorkshire had now saved the game. Stephenson then mischievously informed Fred that he was opening the batting. Brian Langford laughed, only to be told that he would go in with him. When they reached the wicket, Trueman was already waiting at the end of his run. Brian Close then intervened. He asked for the ball, and tossed it to John Hampshire, and England's premier fast bowler was left to stew at third man. Doug Padgett, definitely a non-bowler who had not taken a first-class wicket to date, then bowled at the other end. Shortly afterwards, Fred Rumsey became his first victim.

There were several stories of his colourful lifestyle and nocturnal activities. One of his coaches told him that he didn't mind what he did off the field, but wished he wouldn't tell everybody!

Both of his endeavours in forming the Cricketer's Association (Players was added later), and ensuring that players were properly remunerated

when the Sunday League was introduced, drew applause from the audience. The Association, initially, was his own initiative. The MCC were appalled but were properly put in their place by the Somerset Chairman, "Bunty" Longrigg, ex Rugby School and Cambridge, who, given his background, proved a most unlikely ally. During the summer of 1966, he wrote to all the Counties and their senior pros, and then organised meetings with the players. Jack Bannister provided much needed administrative assistance. The first formal meeting of the Association was held in September 1967 when they were addressed by Jimmy Hill, Chairman, of the Professional Footballers Association. All the Counties were represented, except Worcestershire who were engaged on a world tour. Hampshire's delegate was Danny Livingstone. John Arlott became their President.

When the Sunday League was formed, the MCC proposed that players' salaries should be increased by £200 for the entire competition. Our speaker told them the CA would accept nothing less than £400, which equated to £25 per match. He conducted negotiations whilst playing for Somerset at Gravesend. First, he was called to the telephone; Billy Griffith, Secretary of MCC, offered £200; the latter was forcibly told that it must be £400. He then took the field again. A few minutes later he was summoned again; the offer had been increased to £250. Again, Griffith was told that the position remain unchanged. Fred then took the field again. When he was recalled a third time, umpire Bill Alley (formerly of Somerset) said "you may as well stay off the field". Fred Rumsey and the Cricketers Association won the day; MCC offered the full amount.

Fred Rumsey and Stephen Chalke could undoubtedly have talked for much longer. Stephen's skilful questioning enhanced Fred's fund of humorous stories for the benefit of an appreciative audience. It was a thoroughly entertaining afternoon, which will long be remembered. The Society had been pleased to welcome our Patron, Kevan James, and Fred's wife, Coleen and Thorunn Gower, David's wife, for lunch and the meeting. The two families have been friends for many years.

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