

# **HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY**

**Patrons: Shaun Udal James Tomlinson Kevan James**

**NEWSLETTER No 429 – SUMMER 2024**

## **HAMPSHIRE'S CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON 2024 (April – July)**

Hampshire's start to the Championship season stretched the emotions of their supporters. After five matches, they seemed to be potential relegation candidates, despite losing only one match - the usual ritual hiding against Surrey at The Oval in round four. To add insult to injury they were deducted two points for their slow over rate, giving them a net one bonus point in that match.

The first match at Chester-le-Street was abandoned without a ball being bowled. The following two were home draws at the newly named Utilita (ex Rose, Ageas) Bowl. The first was against Lancashire, in which both sides scored their runs at a torpid rate, due to the slow pitch, aided by the Kookaburra ball which gave the pace bowlers no assistance whatsoever. This situation regarding the kookaburra was replicated all over the country. The only man who seemed pleased was Rob Key. One would have thought that the overseas bowlers in the Hampshire side, Mohammad Abbas and Kyle Abbott would have been able to make something of it but even they were unable to counter the wicket. Entertainment was at a premium. The most pleasing aspect of all three innings, only two of which were completed, was that Nathan Lyon and Liam Dawson bowled 65 and 49 overs respectively. Those watching had to pinch themselves that it was barely mid-April. Dawson then turned his arm over for a further 40 overs in the following match against Warwickshire.

The Hampshire batsmen, Nick Gubbins (50, 69 not out, and 119), James Vince (56), Tom Prest (65), Dawson (86) and Fletcha Middleton (a maiden Championship century of 116) were in reasonable form, though it has to be said that, with the exception of Prest, runs were scored too slowly.

Round Five produced a slight improvement in the scoring rate, with new recruit Ali Orr making his first Hampshire century (126), and Prest a more impressive 102 and Ben Brown 67. Hampshire ran up 503; Durham replied with 432 (David Bedingham 144). Durham had packed

their side with seam bowlers to little avail. When they batted, Dawson bowled a scarcely believable 66 overs (taking five for 184) and Felix Organ, 42.5 overs (four for 101). It was the latter's longest spell in his career.

And so to Trent Bridge for Round Six. An excellent firm wicket, with bounce and carry, produced a traditional, recognisable game of county cricket. Hampshire threw away the advantage in each of the first three innings – twice with the ball and once with the bat, though they were disadvantaged when they were required to bat without Tom Prest who had incurred a broken shoulder fielding at slip in the Nottinghamshire first innings. It was announced fairly soon afterwards that he would be out for six weeks. It was a situation which holed Hampshire's ensuing t20 campaign below the waterline.

Hampshire eventually required 168 to win, one of those tricky totals where batsmen are often in conflict whether to stick or twist. When they subsided to 44 for five deep in the final session on the third day, Nottinghamshire appeared to have decisive advantage. However, James Fuller then walked to the wicket. His game is always a simple one. If the ball is there to hit, he will do so. There was a calmness in his demeanour which gave cause for optimism. Middleton, having opened, was still unbeaten as the pair added an assured 40 before close of play.

There was hope for the morning. So it proved. The pair went on to add an undefeated 127 in 111 minutes to take their side to a five wicket victory, and their first, much needed, win of the season.

The first match, against Surrey at home, before the season's t20 break was the stuff of dreams. Surrey's hitherto serene progress to a third successive title seemed inexorable. But Hampshire produced a commanding performance the like of which the editor has never seen from them since he watched his first match in 1961. Surrey skipped to an untroubled 36 without loss. And then the fun started. Dawson, taking the ball before the first hour was out, dismissed Sibley, Pope and Burns fairly quickly, before Kyle Abbott took a hand. He has always taken time to find a rhythm at the start of the season, but in the previous three matches it was evident that he was approaching his best. In the next hour's play he produced one of his magical, unplayable spells of prodigious late in-swing, so similar to that unforgettable occasion against Somerset five years ago. He finished with five for 25. Michael Neser, on his Hampshire debut, claimed the other two wickets. Surrey were bowled out for just 127. The mobile phone network was working overtime as the news spread.

Hampshire's opening pair of Toby Albert, making his season's debut in the Championship game, and Middleton then opened with a stand of 51 (untold riches recently) before the latter was caught at the wicket for 35. It has been obvious that, in the one day game, Albert is an accomplished batsman. He won game after game, often from very tight instructions, in the One Day Cup last season. He now revealed he possesses great powers of concentration. With the prolific Gibbons, he now added on 201 for the second wicket.

The Surrey bowlers gave him a severe test as they bowled short, bodyline, wide of the wicket on either side and continually adjusted the field to probe for a weakness. He was rarely found wanting. It was an innings of the utmost skill and class. Hampshire continued to bat remorselessly. The admirable Gibbons fell shortly after reaching his hundred; Vince made 52 at a run a ball. Liam Dawson now joined Ben Brown. Dawson had batted with increasing freedom throughout the season. But Brown was a revelation. With shots all around the wicket, including that come over pull shot so reminiscent of Peter Sainsbury all those years ago, he added 183 for the fifth wicket with Dawson, who then surprisingly perished on 81 off only 93 balls next morning. Brown went on to an undefeated 165, the third highest ever score by a Hampshire wicket-keeper. James Vince eventually declared with the score on 608 for six. Surrey had long since given up the ghost as they spread their field to distant parts.

Though facing such a colossal deficit, a Surrey rearguard with their seasoned internationals, still seemed possible. However, the dismissal of Rory Burns opened the door for Felix Organ, an unlikely hero perhaps. He disposed of Sibley, Pope, Smith and Lawrence – the last three all clean bowled. With the pitch beginning to dust up increasingly, the rest of the innings belonged, inevitably to Dawson. He finished with four for 45 off 25.1 overs off niggardly accuracy. After some rough treatment from Dan Worrall (48), Organ's final figures were five for 10. After scoring a century in the previous match at The Oval, Joe Clark failed to get off the mark in both innings.

Hampshire's win by an innings and 278 runs was a record for the County; that scale of defeat was an unwanted Surrey record in the Championship.

Until now, whilst other batsmen had all scored a century. James Vince's season had been low key. He had scored only two fifties; his season's

tally was a meagre 303 runs in 15 innings. It was later learned that he was having to cope with vandalism to his home, and the consequent concerns about his wife and family. When the first-class programme resumed, after a month's break, he recaptured his best form spectacularly. In two vintage innings, he scored 166 not out in the second innings against Warwickshire at Edgbaston, and 211 at Kent's expense at the Utilita Bowl. In the former match, he shared a long partnership with Liam Dawson (120). Wiltshire's finest added 225 in 194 minutes to put Hampshire in an unassailable position. In the latter match, he put on 259 in even time with Ben Brown (110).

Hampshire failed by just one wicket to defeat The Bears. Not for the first time, they were held up by Sam Hain (111 not out) for virtually the whole of the final last day. A Hampshire victory looked a certainty just after lunch, but Hain and Michael Burgess (79) added 183 in 224 minutes for the seventh wicket to take their side to what seemed relatively safety. However, after Organ had dismissed Burgess, James Fuller quickly rolled over Chris Woakes and Craig Miles. One wicket was now required in the last half an hour. However, in the final twist of a match which was another splendid advert for county cricket, Oliver Hannon-Dalby steadfastly supported Hain until the end. Earlier, in the first two innings of the game, Fletcha Middleton made 74, and Keith Barker, against his old County, took six for 74.

Hampshire were not to be denied by the Kent batsmen. In scoring their total of 505 for seven declared so quickly, they gave themselves the opportunity to bowl out Kent in two and a half days. Jack Leaning (118), again showing a taste for the Hampshire bowling at the Bowl, enabled his side reach 343; they were just 12 runs short of avoiding the follow on. Vince, predictably, asked Kent to bat again. Hampshire's tiring attack immediately received a setback when Barker limped off with a hamstring injury. Hampshire's spin pair filled the void admirably on a good batting wicket but it was the tireless Kyle Abbott who bowled the most overs and was rewarded with five for 84. What a competitor he is. Kent were dismissed on the stroke of tea for 340, (Ben Compton 92, Harry Finch 84), a lead of 178. Hampshire therefore required 178 in 29 overs. They romped home in ruthless fashion in only 22.1 overs, scoring their runs at two a minute, for the loss of five wickets. In days of yore, before the advent of t20 cricket revised the art of the possible completely, such a scoring rate to achieve victory against the clock would have become the stuff of legend, but now such events have become commonplace.

And so, with five matches still to be played by all teams in late August and September, the Championship table stands thus:

	Pts
Surrey	157
Somerset	134
Essex	128
Hampshire	120
Durham	102
Nottinghamshire	102
Lancashire	101
Warwickshire	96
Worcestershire	91
Kent	66

Hampshire still have to play Essex (H), Lancashire (A), Kent (A), Worcestershire (H) and Somerset (A).

## **FORMER SPEAKERS OBITUARIES**

### **FRANK DUCKWORTH**

Frank Duckworth, co-devisor of the ground-breaking Duckworth-Lewis scoring system which is now an integral part of cricket's landscape all over the world, died on 21 June. **He spoke to the Society on 12 January 2005.**

Despite a disappointing low audience at Test Valley Golf Club, his enthusiastic address elicited a non-stop barrage of questions from the floor. The editor commented that the meeting would have gone on well into the night had not our chairman Susanne Marlow, called time. Frank Duckworth's biographical details and a fuller report of the meeting can be found in Newsletters No. 251 and 252 on the Society's website.

### **BARRY REED**

Barry Reed, who died on 2 July, aged 86, made a number of contributions to Hampshire in various guises and in somewhat unusual circumstances. Born in Southsea on 17 September 1937, he was a neat, trim, diminutive opening right-handed batsman who was the perfect foil for two incomparable Hampshire greats in Roy Marshall and Barry Richards. He spent his early years in Southsea and then, when his parents went to the Far East, lived with his grandparents on Hayling Island. He did not play any cricket until he attended a private school, as a boarder, at the age of eight. He started off as a leg break bowler batting at ten. Like many boys, he lost the art of spin bowling as he matured physically and bowled with a larger, heavier, ball. He, therefore,

concentrated on his batting and made his first XI debut for Winchester College wearing brown boots and grey flannels, on Coronation Day in 1953. He remembered his Winchester days affectionately: he was surrounded by first-class cricketers. Two were from Sussex. His coach was Ted Bowley and his master Hubert Doggart; Harry Altham kept more than a watching brief. He then went to Alf Gover's Indoor School under the tutelage of Arthur Welland (ex Somerset) before making his bow in 2<sup>nd</sup> XI cricket at Ditton in Kent. He made his first-class debut against Cambridge University at Portsmouth in 1958. Upon his father's advice, he then worked in the City. This course was also partly determined by an injury which took years to heal. His interest in cricket was rekindled after watching his first Gillette Cup Final between Sussex and Worcestershire in 1963. By this time he was married and living in Brighton, and wrote to both Sussex and Hampshire. Much to his astonishment he received a letter from Hampshire Secretary, Desmond Eagar, informing him that Hampshire still retained his registration!! He won his second XI cap in 1964 and joined the Hampshire staff as a non-contracted player in 1965. He retained this status throughout his career. He therefore played as an amateur two years after the abolition of the amateur/professional divide.

On his return to the first-class game in 1965, at the age of 27, and which came about after Jimmy Gray's retirement and departure into teaching, he made an immediate impact by scoring five fifties in the nine innings he played that year; he headed the Hampshire averages by a wide margin (334 runs, avge 41.75). He passed one thousand runs in his first full season in 1966 and repeated the feat the following year when he scored his first century – 104 against Glamorgan at Portsmouth, and was awarded his county cap. He again ended reached the 1000 run milestone in 1968. Thereafter, the advent of Richard Lewis, ten years his junior, and, decisively, with Gordon Greenidge waiting in the wings, restricted his opportunities, though he made the highest score of his career – 138 against Oxford University in The Parks in 1970, his last season. He also made two List A centuries including 143 not out in the Gillette Cup in that year.

When he returned to farming, he had played in 123 matches, scoring 4,962 runs (avge 24.32). He also gained a reputation as a fine cover fieldsman, where he accounted for many run-outs, and held 61 catches. He put much into the game; he was a Hampshire Committee member for many years, served on the Cricket Committee and performed conscientious work in managing the Hampshire Under-19 side. Moreover, he captained the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI team in 1976 following the tragic early death of Geoff Keith.

Barry Reed addressed the Society, accompanied by Keith Wheatley, at Basingstoke Rugby Club, on **21 March 1990**. Much of the material in the early part of this obituary was drawn from his address. As can be seen, though his playing career was brief, his contribution to the County's cricket was considerable indeed. Poignantly, he died in a nursing home not far from where he was born.

**DEREK UNDERWOOD**, who died on 14 April 2024, aged 78, was the bane of Hampshire throughout his career. He took more wickets against them (179 – avge18.27) than any other County. Whilst he was generally regarded as arguably the best bad wicket bowler of all time, his command of length, spin, variations in pace, and patience made him a threat even on good wickets. The Bournemouth wicket was always a slow turner; he took 60 of those wickets there including a career best against the County of eight for 28 in 1979. He claimed 11 wickets in that match and went on to take another 11 in 1984 (8 – 87 and 3 – 34) as well as 10 in 1982 (7 – 79 and 3 – 45). Notwithstanding these performances, he made his most startling impact at Maidstone in 1967 when Hampshire were bowled out for 95 and 31 (Underwood 7 – 35 and 5 – 15) and then a year later, he took seven for 17 at Gillingham whilst the County were dismissed for 58. (Barry Reed top-scored in each innings with 24 and 17).

When he addressed the Society on **12 January 1994** at The Grange, Netley, he mentioned that this reputation as being a wet wicket bowler robbed him of many test appearances. However, with his natural charm, modesty and sense of humour, he talked long into the evening, enthraling members with a full account of his playing career.

He talked about the great batsmen of his era. He regarded Garry Sobers as the best and the two Richards – Barry and Viv – as the most destructive. Barry was an innovator. He was the first to move about the crease to disrupt bowlers.

It was a cold evening but that wonderful, unique man, Arthur Holt, only a few months before his death, travelled from his home in Southampton to renew his acquaintance with Derek Underwood. The warmth and respect which both men, from different generations, held for each other was very evident.

## **CHARLES TUCK**

**Written jointly by Alan Edwards and Mike Vimpany**

One of the Society's original members, Charles Tuck, died on 24 June, aged 81. He attended the Society's inaugural meeting in January 1976 and served on the Committee from 1978 to 1983. He regularly attended HCS meetings all his life; his last was to listen to Derek Pringle at our meeting in March.

The editor last spoke to him in the pavilion on the first day of the Surrey match. We nostalgically recalled the early days of the Society with great affection. One of his fondest memories was the privilege in hosting the astronomer Patrick Moore. Charles lived in Fareham; Patrick in Selsey; and the meeting was held in Basingstoke. He was concerned about the long journey with such a distinguished guest. Would they have anything in common? Would there be long pauses in conversation? He need not have worried. He found his passenger to be very companionable and the conversation flowed all evening. In the last few years, he also became a member of Dorset Cricket Society, and helped them with their programme of speakers last winter.

Charles was Yorkshire-born, and attended Doncaster Royal Grammar School, and then Carnegie College. He taught at St. Peter's GS, where one of his pupils was Kevin Keegan. He was appointed Head of PE at Price's Grammar School, in Fareham, in 1968 and totally revamped sport there, especially cricket and rugby. He was a very strict disciplinarian, whose approach earned the huge respect of pupils. Whilst there, he taught Steve Moran, another future Southampton footballer. He was a hard hitting opening batsman, who played for Yorkshire Academy and Doncaster CC in the Yorkshire League. When he came to Hampshire, he joined Gosport Borough, but his playing time was restricted due to school commitments. When Sixth Form Colleges were introduced, he became disillusioned with teaching and set up his own sports kit clothing company business (Allez), doing cricket/rugby shirts/sweaters besides supplying countless benefit ties around the sporting circuit. He was a passionate Saints and Wasps rugby fan, who loved his tennis and attended all the grand slams more than once. He led a rich sporting life indeed.

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