

HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: Shaun Udal James Tomlinson Kevan James

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MEETINGS

Wednesday 12 November 2025 – Meeting

The Society extends a warm welcome to this afternoon's guest, Paul Nixon, formerly of Leicestershire and Kent, and England's one-day team. He was one of those busy and feisty cricketers who, either as a wicket-keeper or as a left-handed batter, demanded the attention of onlookers. In a 23-year career (1989-2011), he achieved much: he was a member of a very fine, yet under-rated, Leicestershire side which won the County Championship in 1996 and 1998. At the start of the modern era, with the introduction of Twenty 20 cricket, his galvanising impact was influential in Leicestershire winning three T20 finals, in 2004, 2006 and 2011; the latter was his last season as a player. Upon his retirement, only Roger Tolchard had exceeded his 766 dismissals as a wicket-keeper in first-class cricket for that County.

PAUL ANDREW NIXON was born in Carlisle, Cumberland on 21 October 1970. He attended Ullswater High School, Penrith. He was good enough to play for England Under-age schools' sides before progressing to Minor Counties cricket in two matches for Cumberland in 1987. From the outer reaches of England, he went on to tour all the major Test-playing nations during his career.

He made his Leicestershire debut in 1989. His impact was instant as he held eight catches against Warwickshire at Hinckley. He was capped in 1994, when he passed one thousand runs (1046) for the only time in his career. Two years later, he shared in a Leicestershire record 6th wicket stand of 284 with Phil Simmons against Durham at Chester-le-Street. His side's innings victory took them to the cusp of the County Championship. Leicestershire were very successful in the next two years, but due to injuries and various other factors, the team broke up in 1999, whereupon a number of players left for other Counties. Alan Mullally joined Hampshire, and Paul Nixon went to Kent on a three-year contract.

In the winter of 2000/01, he was called into the England one-day squad. It was surprising that Kent did not renew his contract at the end of the 2002 season but they wanted to give Geraint Jones more opportunities. Their decision was vindicated when Jones was selected for the famous 2005 Ashes series. Our speaker returned to Leicestershire on another three-year contract. As so often happens when players return for matches against their former Counties, he made his highest score of 173 not out against Kent at Canterbury in 2009. The final four years of his career, starting at the age of 36, were highlighted by 20 international matches – 19 ODIs and one T20. His two predecessors were Chris Read and, ironically, Geraint Jones. When he left the game, he had scored 14498 runs (avge. 34.35), including 21 centuries; and claimed 956 dismissals (ct. 889; st. 67). In List A matches, his figures were 7418 runs, one century, 421 catches and 99 stumpings. He went on to coach Leicestershire.

Wednesday 22 October 2025-Report

Chris Cowdrey gave members a splendidly entertaining afternoon. He reflected on whether following in the footsteps of his father was an advantage, or a disadvantage. He enjoyed celebrity status at his primary school, which made him uncomfortable. He became something of a show off. In one football match, he scored five goals. Colin made his way across to him at the end; Chris was expecting a telling off because of his excessive celebrations, which would have been deserved. Instead, his father complimented him on his near post header!

When he attended trials in three matches at Kent, he recorded single figure scores. Others did better but were discarded. He was given a fourth match and made a century. His name was undoubtedly advantageous when he was awarded the captaincy of an MCC schools side to the West Indies, despite the presence of David Gower, Mike Gatting and Paul Allott, all of whom had already played county cricket. Chris had yet to do so. When he confided to Gower, who became a lifelong friend, that he couldn't figure out why he was selected as captain, the former commented that he thought he knew why! In one of the matches, one of his colleagues was Mankaded. When they fielded, they did the same in retaliation. Hubert Doggart, a disciplinarian, was the manager, and called the players to a meeting. They were expecting a rocket. After telling them that he had never seen such action by an MCC side before, he then said "well done"!

He changed his technique when playing club cricket in Australia. He felt he had to make a change from unfurling the famous Cowdrey cover drive. He therefore became more of an onside batter, and was the better for it, in that he couldn't continually be compared with his father..

He recalled the England tour to India under David Gower's captaincy. Indira Gandhi was assassinated early on; likewise the British Ambassador, Percy Norris. The party then decamped out of harm's way to Sri Lanka. When they returned, after misgivings, they won the series.

He touched upon his selection as England captain. The Chairman of Selectors was his godfather, Peter May.

He also mentioned his late brother Graham. The latter was a naturally quiet individual, but became the dressing room's stand-up comedian. Chris was full of praise for his brother's qualities. Chris' son Fabian attended Surrey trials but when he rolled-out the trademark Cowdrey drive for four, the Surrey coaches thought he was behind the times! Fabian left the game early because he couldn't shake off the Cowdrey legend.

At the end of his talk, which was laced with humour throughout, he recounted his favourite moments: the tour to India: watching Alan Knott and Derek Underwood at close hand. He couldn't remember the former dropping a catch; his taking of the ball as it leapt off a length was remarkable. He reproduced his Eulogy at Derek Underwood's funeral at Canterbury Cathedral. It included his feats at Hastings - only century and best bowling figures. Tony Greig let it be known that Sussex should never play Kent at Hastings again. They didn't do so in first-class cricket, but Sussex still couldn't escape Deadly's clutches in a Sunday League match!

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