HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: Shaun Udal James Tomlinson Kevan James

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Since the last Newsletter, Hampshire have embarked on a period of unparalleled success. They won an unprecedented fourteen consecutive matches in a row: three in the County Championship, five in the t20 Blast, including two on that unforgettable Finals Day at Edgbaston, and five in the Royal London Cup. They also defeated Dorset in a List A warm-up match prior to the latter competition. Whilst it is easy to decry that performance, Lincolnshire defeated Durham, and Bedfordshire frightened the life out of Northamptonshire, who just eased home by seven runs. Remarkably, it has all been achieved with three distinct teams and three different bowling attacks. It has been a triumph of planning and execution by Giles White, Adrian Birrell and Graeme Welch, Jimmy Adams and the players involved.

In the Championship, there were victories against Warwickshire at the Ageas Bowl, Gloucestershire at Cheltenham and Yorkshire at Scarborough. In those three matches, Kyle Abbott claimed 23 wickets at the indecent average of 9.17, took a hat-trick at Cheltenham to break Gloucestershire's stubborn resistance, and then returned a ten wicket haul at Scarborough. In each match, he bowled himself into form. The longer he bowled, the more threatening and imposing he became.

Keith Barker and Mohammad Abbas, the latter the epitome of metronomic accuracy, both took 11 wickets in the three matches; they invariably made inroads into the top order batting, before Abbot went about his business. The triumvirate were well supported by Liam Dawson (8 wickets), though he was only called upon to bowl eight wicketless overs at Scarborough.

Felix Organ was the sole century maker, with 118 at Cheltenham. However, three men made it into the nineties: Ian Holland (99) – a season's best and Liam Dawson (92) against Warwickshire and James Vince (a battling 95 at Cheltenham). The Hampshire captain never quite looked in touch in any of the three matches but, in the second innings in each of the matches, scored at a rapid rate to ensure his side were not deprived of victory because of nerves or weather. Ben Brown and Keith Barker each posted two fifties, thus ensuring Hampshire posted competitive totals with the side in trouble. They represented different styles. Brown genuinely built an innings before expanding his stroke range; Barker, strong off the back foot and driving resplendently, took the attack to the bowling directly he came to the wicket. At Scarborough, he changed the tempo of the innings to restore Hampshire's psychological advantage after Yorkshire looked to be getting back into the game. Organ (72) and Holland (71) posted an authoritative 135 for the first wicket as Hampshire chased a tricky looking victory target. Though they both fell on that total, and Joe Weatherley followed almost immediately afterwards, Vince - aggressively – and Nick Gubbins – more measuredly – ensured there were no further hiccups. Their triumph at Scarborough was their first there. They also completed a rare double over Yorkshire; the only other year in which they performed the feat was in 2016.

Hampshire have now won eight of their eleven championship matches, more than any other County. It is a percentage win ratio unmatched in their history and yet because of the points awarded for draws, they are still second to Surrey in the table and could yet be caught by third placed Lancashire, who have won three matches fewer. Hampshire's remaining three matches (v. Northamptonshire and Kent at home and Warwickshire at Edgbaston) are definitely winnable. But Surrey, whose overall form remains imposing, must be favourites to carry off the title.

Hampshire also laid a bogey on t20 finals day at Edgbaston. Their win against Somerset in the semi-final was their first ever at the venue on finals day. There was consistent batting by the first five batsmen, all of whom scored at a rate exceeding 125 runs per 100 balls, with Tom Prest (64 off 46) and Ben McDermott (31 off 17) leading the way. The latter drove mightily, whilst Prest worked the ball around intelligently into the gaps. It is difficult to believe that he is still only 19 years of age, and won't leave his teens until next March. Somerset's batting throughout the tournament was fearsome but savvy bowling, and a quite sensational run-out effected by Mason Crane's exocet throw from cover point to break the stumps at the bowler's end to dispense with Tom Banton early on, meant that they gradually fell behind the required task. Another Crane throw, this time from the boundary, to McDermott beat Jim Lammonby to the batter's end later in the innings. In a foretaste of what was to follow in the final, Chris Wood and Nathan Ellis conceded only three runs off the final nine balls.

Scores: Hampshire 190 – 6; Somerset 153 (19.3 overs)

The final against Lancashire will be talked about for years. On a pitch that had deteriorated from that earlier in the day, Hampshire's total of 152 for eight was built around another beefy effort by McDermott (62 off 36 balls) in the first part of the innings and streetwise batting by Ross Whiteley (22 off 20) and Wood (20 off 17) in the remainder. The latter had played for the County in their first finals win, at the Ageas Bowl, as long ago as 2010 and has been an indispensable member of the t20 side ever since. Lancashire looked to be cruising to victory as they reached 104 for three, with 96 balls still in hand. However, two brilliant catches, and a direct hit, by James Vince, and mean bowling by James Fuller and Ellis meant the outcome went to the wire. Lancashire needed a boundary off the final ball. Ellis then bowled Richard Gleeson comprehensively and wheeled away in celebration – only for the umpire to call no ball. Lancashire now needed only two runs to win. James Vince calmed things down by gathering his side together to focus on the last ball. Ellis, once again kept his head and bowled a slower ball. Gleeson swiped, missed and attempted to run two byes. McDermott demolished the wicket at his end and was then handed a stump by Mason Crane from the bowler's end. Amongst the pandemonium, the umpires declared the ball dead after McDermot's first action. Hampshire had won, deservedly, by one run. Their bowling unit was by far and away the best in the competition. In James Vince they possessed the most prolific batsman and best captain. Predictably, despite all the evidence in his favour, he was not selected for the England t20 squad shortly afterwards.

A MEMORABLE MONTH – AUGUST 2022

Though the ECB and the media shamefully succeeded in relegating the Royal London Cup matches to a footnote against the garish Hundred, the exploits of Hampshire's young side provided their supporters with a month they will never forget. In match after match against more experienced opponents, they held their nerve to bring victory against the odds.

In the first match against Worcestershire at the Ageas Bowl, both sides struggled to cope with bowler-friendly conditions. Patient batting by Ben Brown (47), Fletcha Middleton (49) and, crucially, a rapid 43 not out from Scott Currie took Hampshire to 236. Ian Holland (3 for 17), Currie and John Turner quickly reduced Worcestershire to 37 for five. Hampshire's position looked healthy. But Ed Barnard (85 not out) and Taylor Cornall (43) then added 130 for the sixth wicket. However, upon the latter's dismissal, Felix Organ, Turner and Currie quickly accounted for the rest of the batting and Hampshire ran out winners by the comfortable margin of 44 runs.

The next match at Beckenham, where Hampshire had never previously won a game, was one for the record books. As the temperature rose at the start of the heatwave, they amassed a massive 396 for five, with the captain Nick Gubbins (117 in 107 balls) and Tom Prest (181 in 138 balls) putting on 207 for the second wicket in 171 balls. It was Hampshire's highest total in a List A match. Prest's innings had only been exceeded by James Vince. Kent never threatened and were bowled out for 233. Jack Campbell (four for 44), previously of Durham but Portsmouth-born, was the leading bowler.

Hampshire then travelled with a good following to Newclose on the Isle of Wight to play Northamptonshire. The temperatures continued to soar. Hampshire made their first team change, Keith Barker coming in for Holland who had been called up by the USA for the ICC World Cup Qualifying Tournament. Hampshire batted first again but made only 199. Prest continued his good form with an innings of 51. Their opponents looked to have the game won as they reached 177 for five requiring only 23 runs with overs to spare. However, Rob Keogh (74) then holed out; Campbell then claimed two victims in successive balls, before taking another wicket shortly afterwards. Turner administered the coup de grace. Northants had lost their last five wickets for 11 runs, and Hampshire had won by the same margin. Hampshire's supporters enjoyed a happy journey back across the Solent, apart perhaps those on the coach that fell victim to diversion signs on the M27 west of Portsmouth.

Derbyshire were next at The Incora County Ground. This time around, Hampshire batted second. Needing 247 to win, they subsided to 68 for five in the 17th over, four of the wickets being taken by Ben Aitchison. Surely they could not pull this match out of the fire. But they did so. First Middleton (64) and Toby Albert added 104 for the sixth wicket. Keith Barker (15), and Currie (24) then helped Albert to take the score to 232. Sixteen runs were still requited. Turner (six not out) then held his end whilst Albert (84 not out in 96 balls) completed the job. It was a measured knock by the Basingstoke-born right-hander. He had demonstrated throughout the season that he possessed an all-round game capable of scoring runs quickly or adopting a more considered approach. He has a natural, commanding, presence at the crease and, like Prest, is undeniably one for the future.

The following match, against Lancashire at the Ageas Bowl, was another thriller. Campbell and Turner dismissed the first three batsmen for only seven runs, but those doughty warriors Steven Croft (47) and Rob Jones (84) then put on 119 for the fourth wicket, before Campbell dismissed Croft. Apart from Jones, Lancashire struggled thereafter against both Currie - three wickets in four balls - and Turner (five for 25). They limped to 183.

Apart from Brown, all the Hampshire batters made a start, but when they lost their seventh wicket at 128, defeat looked inevitable. However, Albert was still at the crease. He was now joined by 16-year-old Dominic Kelly, born in Winchester, a right-arm medium pace bowler, left-handed batsman and a Millfield School pupil. He had made his first-class debut, along with Turner, Middleton and Albert, earlier in the season against a Sri Lanka Cricket Development XI at the Ageas Bowl. He defended nobly for 17 whilst Albert went about his work at the other end. On the fall of his wicket at 166, 20 runs were still required. Albert now monopolised the strike almost completely. He was undefeated on 65 off 73 balls in 118 minutes when Hampshire completed their second successive two wicket victory.

Hampshire's sole defeat in the group stage was against Glamorgan at The Gnoll, Neath. Hampshire had last played at the venue fifty years ago, in 1972. This was their inaugural List A match there. Only Gubbins (93) and Holland (63 not out), returning to the side, stayed long, and the innings closed at 228 for nine. Though Holland claimed an early wicket, the bowlers, for the only time, failed to make any impact. Thomas Bevan (134), another product of Millfield School, and Colin Ingram (78 not out) took Glamorgan to the brink of victory with a second wicket partnership of 203. Their eventual margin of victory was seven wickets, with eighteen overs to spare. Adrian Birrell, when interviewed afterwards, felt that the loss of the toss had been decisive.

The next match, against Essex at the Ageas Bowl, was another with twists and turns. Hampshire looked to be in full control when the seventh Essex wicket fell at 134 but then the Zimbabwean, Shane Snater (64) wrested the initiative as he dominated a partnership of 94 with Jamal Richards. Essex eventually reached 257 for eight. Hampshire's reply was built around Prest (76), Donald (31), Organ (30) and Albert (34). Snater's dismissal of Albert caused a few collywobbles when 33 runs were still needed off 26 balls. However, Holland (21 not out off 10 balls) calmly took Hampshire over the line.

The above win meant that Hampshire would finish at least in second place and guaranteed them a place in the quarter-finals. However, if they were able to win their last match and thus finish above Lancashire in the table, they would have a direct route to the semi-finals.

For Hampshire it meant another trip to Scarborough. Gubbins (38) and Brown (60) gave Hampshire much early momentum but the match winning performance came from Aneurin Donald. There were signs in the previous match that, after a two year gap, he was returning to form and finding his feet in the format. His innings at North Marine Road was quite sensational. After playing himself in for a few balls, he launched a furious, calculated assault, on the Yorkshire bowlers. At one stage, he

hit five sixes off consecutive balls (in two separate overs). His partnership with Prest (55) realised 93 runs off 50 balls. Perhaps distracted upon Prest's dismissal, he surrendered tamely with an easy catch to cover immediately afterwards. He left the crease after striking 76 off 31 balls in only 36 minutes. After another swift cameo from Albert (23 off 17 balls), Hampshire amassed 313 for nine. The Hampshire bowlers then made regular inroads; the only time an upset seemed possible was when Dom Bess and Matthew Levis were together. Unfortunately, Bess was then struck on the head by a throw from the outfield, and had to retire hurt. Though Yorkshire were allowed a concussion substitute, and thus actually batted with twelve men, Hampshire ran out comfortable winners by 72 runs. Turner mopped up the tail to finish with five for 25. Hampshire were now in the semi-finals.

And so to the semi-final against Kent at the Ageas Bowl. Though Gubbins (75) and Brown (36) put on 106 for the first wicket, there was always a sense that Hampshire were never quite able to post enough runs to put the match beyond their opponents. They kept losing wickets at the point when they were well placed to accelerate. Prest suffered a first ball dismissal directly following Brown's. Donald after batting sublimely without any hint of concern reached 50 without breaking sweat. He was obviously eyeing a large score. However, he was then bowled, reverse sweeping during Alex Blake's only over. Gubbins was earlier dismissed similarly off Joe Denly. One instinctively thought what John Woodcock often said. He thought the reverse sweep was an abomination and ought to be banned. It was on days such as this that one could see his point. Albert, after a delightful cameo of 45 off 30 balls, was unfortunate to play on. Organ (54 off 38) was caught on the long-on boundary. Hampshire's eventual total was 310 for nine.

Holland, Turner and Currie each took early wickets, the latter accounting for Joe Denly. The Kent innings was delicately poised at 68 for 3. It was now that Ollie Robinson played a very fine innings. His timing (the ball barely made a sound on the bat) and placement were quite outstanding, Harry Finch, more ruggedly, looked assured. Kent were now cruising. The pair added 108 off only 17 overs before Jack Campbell changed the complexion of the match, when Robinson (95) miss-timed a pull shot to Donald at mid wicket. Having previously been looking out of sorts and short of confidence, the tall left-armer found an extra gear and bowled with genuine pace and venom. He bowled Finch (52) in his next over.

The score was now 181 for five. Kent still needed 130 runs to win in 18 overs, with only Darren Stevens, who had now arrived at the wicket, and the tail to follow. Campbell, Currie and Turner did their best to remind the veteran all-rounder that he was 46 years old, peppering him with short pitched deliveries. He survived, not without a few alarms, and began to look more assured, ominously so. The writing was on the wall. He gradually began to dominate the scoring and find the boundary with regularity. He drove imperiously and dealt brutally with the short ball. His last two scoring shots, both off the unfortunate Currie, were a huge six over mid-wicket and back foot swat through the covers. He was undefeated on 84 as he won the match for his side with the last ball of the 49th over. The crowd may have seen his penultimate innings. He has long been a favourite cricketer of many. He is a man who has always conveyed a sense of enjoyment, and in such a relaxing manner, whether batting, bowling, or fielding in the slips, he has transformed game after game.

Hampshire's young bowlers finally met their match but there is no shame in that. They will have been disappointed about the result and will reflect on the 30 extras conceded. They will, however, have learned from the experience. Nobody with a love of county cricket will begrudge Darren Stevens a final day in the sun at Trent Bridge on 17 September.

Hampshire's young team, so ably led by Nick Gubbins, who was a calming and considered influence throughout, provided a treasure trove of uplifting memories for their supporters. The journey they shared was such a pleasurable one.

A few facts and figures:

Those who played in the competition were:-

Nick Gubbins (aged 28) 386 runs; 2 wickets
Aneurin Donald (25) 227 runs
Tom Prest (19) 402 runs; 1 wkt
Ben Brown (33) 191 runs
Fletcha Middleton (20) 219 runs
Felix Organ (23) 140 runs
Toby Albert (20) 339 runs
Ian Holland (31) 113 runs; 8 wkts.
Scott Currie (21) 122 runs; 18 wkts
Jack Campbell (22) 1 run; 17 wkts
John Turner (21) 23 runs; 20 wkts
Keith Barker (35) 57 runs; 4 wkts
Dominic Kelly (16) 17 runs

OBITUARIES

VIC ISAACS

Members will probably be aware that Vic Isaacs passed away on 15 July, aged 77. Vic was Hampshire's scorer from 1975 until 2005, a period of 31 years – a record for the County. He proudly scored seven one-day trophies, from the John Player League in 1975 and finally in the C&G Final at Lord's in his last season. His statistical legacy was immense as he rewrote the County's records for first-class cricket and for limited-overs (now categorised as List A) matches; he also contributed to the Hampshire Handbook, Benefit Brochures and biographi.es on the Club's players.

He was born in Glasgow in August 1944, the son of German and Polish Jewish refugees. He scored for the Army from 1964 to 1971, and enjoyed a short spell with Romsey Cricket Club before his long career with Hampshire. Afterwards, he scored for Ramsbottom, briefly in the short-lived Indian Cricket League, and then returned to his original roots with the UK Armed Forces. Whilst with Hampshire he scored for satellite television in the 1966 World Cup and for Kenya in the same competition three years later. Also, in recognition of his 25 years' service with Hampshire he was awarded the honour of scoring the England/Zimbabwe Test at Lord's in 2000.

Vic was one of the pioneers in the use of computers for scoring, and worked tirelessly for the Association of Cricket Statisticians in its formative years. He was also a great supporter of the Hampshire Cricket Society. He addressed us on three occasions at three different locations: October 1982, November 1995 and February 2005. Moreover, he kindly maintained the Society's website on its introduction. He was also supportive of the editor; he was always available to answer his questions on statistical and historical matters.

The editor will always retain fond memories of Vic. Cricket in Hampshire as a whole owes him a great debt, which has now only been fully acknowledged on his passing.

His son, Richard, followed in his footsteps, spending many years scoring for Sky television.

RONALD ALLISON

Ronald Allison, best known as the BBC's former Court Correspondent, and the Queen's Press Secretary, died on 26 July aged 90. He addressed the Society in March 2015 when he recalled his early days in village cricket in Dorset, watching Keith Miller playing for a Dominion XI at Dean Park, Bournemouth in 1945, becoming a Hampshire member in 1946 and his friendship with the Eagar family, and memories of the fielding prowess of Leo Harrison. Perhaps his best cricketing story concerned a match in which his father was an umpire in village cricket; the bowler handed him his cap, sweater and then……glass eye!!

After National Service, he worked for the Hampshire Chronicle in Winchester for five years. He later read the BBC News, and twice presented Grandstand whilst David Coleman was on holiday. The highlight of his years with Royalty was the 1977 Jubilee Year. He confirmed Her Majesty possessed an unparalleled knowledge of horse racing. He also mentioned that because it was so off the cuff, he was particularly proud of his coverage of the massacre of the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972.

RICHARD PEMBERTON

Members will be sad to learn that Richard Pemberton, who originally joined the Society some twenty years ago, has passed away. Despite living at Goring-on-Thames, he rarely missed a meeting. He was proud to recall that he opened the innings with Neville Rogers for his club Trojans. The latter is still undoubtedly the most unsung of Hampshire's great batsmen. He was a hard task master who let Richard know in no uncertain terms that cricket was a serious business.

In October 2015, Richard wrote to the editor with a memory of Richie Benaud, who had died in the preceding summer. In 1961 Trojans had set up a hospitality tent on the Hulse Road side of the ground for the Australian match. The tourists were invited there after close of play. He managed to engage Benaud in a conversation, during the course of which the latter was stung by a wasp on his drinking and

bowling hand. “He (Benaud) showed no pain but then boosted my ego by asking if I was from the Press. I was asking him for his opinion as to whether Roy Marshall should be playing for England; he had qualified by virtue of his residence. His short answer was ‘no’, as he considered Marshall would be too risky for test match cricket”.

RAY COOK

Shortly after the last meeting, the death was announced of Ray Cook. Ray was one of the Society’s founder members.

He contributed a series of very interesting articles for the Newsletter in 1982 and 1983, on his holidays in India and Australia. His observations included the scoreboards at the WACA in Perth and Sydney. The electronic one at Sydney cost 4.5 million Australian dollars and included an instant replay. He met Harold Larwood at his home in Sydney, during which his host reminisced about matches against Hampshire and remembered Basingstoke’s “pretty little tree lined ground”. It was also evident that the legendary fast bowler possessed a very keen sense of humour. Ray’s stay in Bombay coincided with spats between Sunil Gavaskar and Imran Khan on neutral umpires.

Ray Cook’s delightful account of his meeting with Harold Larwood will be available for members to view on the Society’s website.

PATRICK SYMES

Patrick Symes, who died in July at the age of 71, was one of the south coast’s most notable sports journalists. He never addressed the Society, though he was booked to do so at our Buffet Supper in December 1984. He withdrew, though, as he had been commissioned at short notice by the Daily Mirror to fly to Italy to interview English soccer’s man of the moment, Mark Hateley. The tall skilful centre-forward had transferred from Portsmouth to AC Milan during the summer.

Pat Symes made a significant contribution to Hampshire cricket via his reports in Wisden for the past 25 years. His reviews of the year, which incorporated an eventful period when Hampshire made as much news off the field as on it, through their transfer from Northlands Road to the Rose Bowl (as it then was) and the fundamental change in their business model. His reviews of the year were always objective. He also collaborated with Gordon Greenidge, Malcolm Marshall and Shaun Udal on their respective autobiographies. He also wrote two books on Portsmouth Football Club during Harry Redknapp’s memorable first term, as well as lecturing on Sports Journalism at Solent University.

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