HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

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HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Since the last Newsletter, our beloved Queen sadly and unexpectedly died on 8 September. For many people she was the only monarch they have ever known during their lifetime. She was a constant and reassuring presence. We must wish King Charles III a successful reign.

Though the Queen was presented to test match teams on numerous occasions during the tea interval at Lord's, her presence at county grounds were much fewer. The Hampshire players were privileged to meet her at Guildford on 27 June 1957.

There is a delightful vignette of the occasion in Alan Rayment's second volume of autobiography, '*Punchy's Hampshire Years'.* Accompanied by Prince Philip, she was in the city to mark the 700th anniversary of the granting of a Royal Charter to the borough. Their visit coincided with the second day of the match. However, Surrey had already beaten Hampshire by the time of their arrival, whereupon the two Counties staged an exhibition match. She is alleged to have told the Mayor that "this is much more fun than sitting in a stuffy box at Lord's". She also playfully reprimanded the Surrey captain, Peter May. Three days earlier the royal couple were unable to watch some of the Lord's test because England, captained by May, had also already won. "This is the second time you've let me down," she told him. A description of the Surrey match, and the occasion, was included in Newsletter No. 403 – Summer 2021, which can be found on the Society's website.

The Queen's death coincided with the final afternoon's play of Hampshire's match against Northamptonshire at the Ageas Bowl. The weather forecast for the game was unpromising, to say the least. Rain – lots of it – was scheduled. There were many parts of Hampshire where it would not have been possible to play on any day. And yet, the players were able to take the field on all four days. The forecast undoubtedly deterred many supporters from travelling to the ground. Those that did venture out were rewarded. The end was unforgettable.

In the 62.3 overs play on the first day, Hampshire, after losing the toss, made 229 for five on a tricky pitch. The creases were bare and the areas in between were green. The ball moved lavishly off the wicket at times. Felix Organ dug in after Ian Holland fell to Jack White off the first ball he received. He eventually increased his stroke range finally making 71 before being caught behind. Upon his dismissal, Hampshire

were 167 for five. Liam Dawson and Aneurin Donald negotiated the last hour ie the gloaming, as Northants bowled their spinners. Play ended early for bad light when the pace bowlers returned.

Hampshire's batters dominated the pre-lunch session next day. They had obviously decided to seek quick runs, which they did so successfully that they added 171 in only 27 overs before James Vince declared at 400 for nine, having achieved maximum batting bonus points. The main protagonists were Donald who batted in his inimitable luminous manner, scoring 94 off 84 balls, and Kyle Abbott who flayed 57 off 45 balls. The Northants' bowlers found it impossible to stem the flow. Even the normal miserly Ben Sanderson was shown little respect. For Donald, it was the continuation of a rich vein of exciting and fearless form. He deserved a century, but it is not in his nature to be selfish. Hampshire required quick runs. He perished, sweeping, and was adjudged lbw.

Given the quality of Hampshire's triumvirate of new ball bowlers, it was expected that they would make quick inroads. Emilio Gay, born in Bedford and 22 years old, and New Zealand captain Will Young had other ideas. Gay, in particular, was impressive. In difficult conditions, he played with equal facility of both front and back foot, drove crisply and, on the rare occasion when the ball was pitched short, cut and pulled with assurance. He seemed to have time to spare. The pair put on 68 for the first wicket before Young was lbw to Abbott. He departed before the umpire raised his finger. It was the highest opening partnership against Hampshire all season. It was the lion-hearted Abbott's 50th wicket of the season. At the close, Northants were 77 for one.

On the next day, after Gay's early dismissal for 33, the Northants' batting was skittish. Only Luke Procter held Hampshire up for long. He, though, was undone during a vivid spell of fast bowling by James Fuller. He, in tandem with Abbott, made short work of the tail. Northants were dismissed for 173, 325 runs behind. Hampshire enforced the follow-on. The sun was now shining brightly (it poured with rain in Winchester all day). Hampshire's bowlers now had to work hard for their wickets. Gay and Young started with an opening partnership of 98 before Holland induced the latter to edge behind to Donald. Procter again batted stubbornly before falling to Keith Barker, who had bowled a long spell earlier. Crucially, Fuller dismissed Gay, who looked all over a test cricketer in the making, shortly before bad light stopped play. Northants finished the day on 153 for three.

Those who were present will remember the final day for the rest of their lives. It was during the lunch interval that an announcement was made from Balmoral that doctors were concerned about the Queen's health. It was also reported that her closest family were making their way to Scotland as quickly as possible. It all sounded rather ominous. The editor had spent the morning at home because of the changeable weather but, given events on the previous three days, and the fact that the BBC news was becoming more repetitive and speculative, he decided to make his way to the ground. When he arrived, the players were off the field because of heavy rain. Joining the Society's Hon. Treasurer, his wife and another friend, we spent the next hour or so, discussing the emerging news and the Queen's life, reign and family. It was a diverting and enjoyable discussion. There was no conversation about the match.

The sun eventually shone and play resumed. Hampshire needed to take four wickets to win the match and stay in the hunt for the Championship. Three wickets fell, one of them to an exceptional catch by Donald, who dived way to his left to hold an inside edge to dismiss Tom Taylor. By now, however, heavy cloud had returned. Further rain was inevitable. The weather was closing in fast. Hampshire needed to take one wicket; Northamptonshire required four runs to make Hampshire bat again, and given the weather, put the match beyond their reach. The floodlights had been switched on for some time. The area to the east, towards Portsmouth, disappeared from view. Our Hon. Treasurer was tracking a storm from the Poole area on his mobile. The wonders of modern technology. Eventually, the rain arrived exactly on cue. With almost certainly the last ball to be bowled, James Fuller castled Jack White. The batsman was crestfallen. Hampshire celebrated wildly. James Vince, arm raised, ran towards the Shane Warne stand before returning to the middle to leap on the backs of his team-mates. The rain then fell with tropical intensity. There was no question of returning to our cars. We had to wait until the rain subsided.

We eventually made our way home. Within an hour of returning the Queen's death was announced. Cricket dwindled into insignificance.

MEETINGS

Wednesday 5 October 2022 – Meeting

The Society begins its new season by welcoming Roger Knight, who was one of the most respected county cricketers between 1967 and 1984. Whether as a middle-order left-hand batsman, right-arm medium pace bowler or close to the wicket fieldsman, very few games went by without him making a worthwhile contribution. He also became a most perceptive captain. Since his days as an active cricketer, he has made a huge contribution to the game as an administrator.

ROGER DAVID VERDON KNIGHT was born in Streatham on 6 September 1946. Educated at Dulwich College he graduated from Cambridge University where he gained a Blue in each of his four years between 1967 and 1970.He made his debut for Surrey in 1968, moving to Gloucestershire by special registration in 1971. However, after a successful spell in the West Country, he left at the end of 1975 to play for Sussex for the following two seasons. In 1978 he rejoined Surrey as county captain. His moves were determined by appointments in the teaching profession. He was very grateful that a succession of indulgent headmasters allowed him to pursue a cricket career during the summer whilst maintaining a teaching appointment during the close season.

He captained Surrey, where his reign was an eventful and successful one, leading them to four Lord's finals between 1979 and 1982. After three defeats, Surrey eventually triumphed in the Nat. West Trophy in the last of those years. He also captained the side to second place in the County Championship in 1980.

He was also captain when Essex famously bowled Surrey in the Championship in 1983. However, his side batted through the final day to draw the match.

When Roger Knight left county cricket in 1984 he had scored 19,518 runs (avge 32.04) including 31 centuries, taken 369 wickets (avge 35.91) and held 294 catches. He scored 1000 runs in a season on 13 occasions, his best year being 1974 when he accumulated 1350 runs (avge 38.57). His highest score was 165 not out for Sussex against Middlesex at Hove in 1976. His best bowling performance was six for 44 for Gloucestershire versus Northamptonshire at Northampton in 1974.

Our speaker was also a redoubtable opponent in limited overs cricket as figures of 7074 runs and 297 wickets in such matches testify.

He was a well-travelled cricketer. Besides his domestic movements, he toured South Africa with a D H Robin's team in 1972-73, made MCC tours to East Africa in 1973/74 and West Africa (not first-class) in 1975/76 and played for an Overseas XI in India in 1980-81.

Since his playing days, he has been Secretary of MCC and President of both Surrey and MCC. Under his stewardship of Secretary, he presided over £60m investment at Lord's, which included refurbishment of the grandstand, building of the iconic media centre, creating the indoor cricket school, developing a unique library and museum and relaying the outfield. His influence on the game has therefore been profound.

This is our speaker's second appearance at a Society meeting. His first was on 30 January 1986, at Basingstoke Rugby Club, the Society's inaugural meeting at that venue. He will no doubt be bringing along copies of his autobiography *Boundaries.*

HAMPSHIRE'S SEASON – THE END

Hampshire's Championship challenge foundered in an hour of madness against Kent at the Ageas Bowl when they were dismissed for just 57 in their first innings. Twenty three wickets fell on the first day. The pitch assisted the bowlers throughout. A three, or even two day, outcome was guaranteed at the outset when the teams were greeted by a green wicket. Given the common assessment that Hampshire's pace bowling attack was the best in the country, it must be wondered why such an overtly result pitch needed to be prepared. In the event, the Kent trio of Harry Podmore, Nathan Gilchrist and Matt Quinn trumped their more illustrious opponents. Kent, without Zak Crawley, also owed victory to two very fine innings: one by Ben Compton who struck a hard fought 63 (out of a total of 165) in the first innings and a splendid century by their captain, Jack Leaning (112), in the second. But for the former, it was quite possible that his side would have been bowled out before lunch on the first day.

When Hampshire batted, the Kent trio barely bowled a bad ball off line or length. It was one of those occasions when if a Hampshire batter missed the ball, they were bowled, and if they didn't, they were caught. Would Liam Dawson have made a difference? He missed this match, and the next, as he had been called up for England's T20 World Cup squad as a travelling reserve, as well as the seven match t20 tour of Pakistan.

During the season, Hampshire always scrapped hard and they had performed so well all season in adverse circumstances, that the players, and many supporters, felt it was possible that they could pull the game out of the fire, no matter the situation. They eventually required 378 to win. However, the loss of three quick wickets in the last half hour of the second day, after Felix Organ (37) and Joe Weatherley had added 68 for the second wicket and were looking comfortable, made the task problematic. Weatherley (58) fell early next morning; it was his most convincing innings since the start of the summer. Nevertheless James Vince was now at the wicket and looking ensconced. The departures of Ben Brown and Aneurin Donald then brought James Fuller to the crease. Throughout the summer, his unique approach, a mixture of studied defence when playing second fiddle, or aggression when responsibility for scoring runs fell to him, always gave cause for optimism. The pair put on an untroubled 90. Leaning rotated his pace bowlers to no avail. He was compelled to turn to spin by bowling himself and Daniel Bell-Drummond. The change worked. The Hampshire captain elegantly pulled Leaning to mid-wicket, having made 73. It was an unworthy end. Fuller now climbed into the Kent bowling with a vengeance, driving, hooking bouncers, and pulling mightily, although the task now seemed a forlorn one. Last man Mohammad Abbas, a natural number eleven, edged two boundaries which brought a vociferous response of approval from the crowd. But he was eventually bowled by Quinn with the new ball. Fuller was left stranded on 78; Kent had run out deserved winners by 77 runs.

Hampshire had gone into the game only eight points behind Surrey. At The Oval, Surrey proceeded to thrash a poor Yorkshire side, in freefall since mid-summer. They duly received the Championship pennant, and trophy.

The final match of the season against Warwickshire proved a game too far. Kyle Abbott, the great warrior, was unfit. He was replaced by Brad Wheal. Rain ruined the first two days. After winning the toss, James Vince decided to field but in the 70 overs available on these days, Warwickshire's batsmen were in control as they lost only four wickets whilst making 272 for four (Rob Yates 104). Appreciating that they had to win the match to avoid relegation, they batted enterprisingly on the second day, making 134 runs off only 29 overs, before captain Will Rhodes declared. It was evident from the start of the third day that Hampshire's early batsmen were still carrying psychological scars from their travails against Kent. They slipped to 82 for five, before Vince (98), who again changed the mood and tempo of the innings, Donald (38), Barker (a typically combative 76 against his former County) and Fuller (26) effected a recovery. Hampshire were eventually dismissed for 311, a lead of 38. As usual, it was a major surprise when Vince was dismissed off the thinnest of edges cutting a short pitched ball from Danny Briggs, which bounced more than expected. It was the second occasion he had fallen in the 90's during the season, the other being at Cheltenham.

Warwickshire were 62 for two at the close. With Keith Barker injured after his valiant season-long efforts, Hampshire entrusted the new ball to Brad Wheal. He had endured a difficult season hitherto but he responded admirably by removing three top-order batsmen for 68. James Fuller prompted a late order collapse and finished with a season's best four for 34. In his last match for the Bears - he is returning to Surrey next season – Dominic Sibley provided the glue for their innings. He was last out for 77. Warwickshire were 177 all out just before lunch.

Hampshire therefore required 139 runs to win. Many were concerned that given the unreliability of the top order, Oliver Hannon-Dalby and Liam Norwell, who bowled accurately and skilfully in the first innings, might prove a handful. And so they did. After the former accounted for Felix Organ, caught behind with only six runs on the board, Norwell dominated the rest of the innings in quite spectacular fashion. Because of injury, it was only his second match of the season; it was thought he would still be unfit to play a few days beforehand. It was therefore a courageous effort as he claimed nine for 62. Such was his accuracy he only required the assistance of fielders for two of those wickets. Only Nick Gubbins, who batted 160 minutes in making 46, and Fuller, gave Hampshire a glimmer of hope. Gubbins was somewhat unlucky to be adjudged leg before. The ball had just been changed when he was immediately struck amidships. It did seem high. He had added 33 with Fuller, but when the latter's stumps were spread-eagled with six runs still required, the game was up. Their opponents had avoided relegation. Yorkshire, after losing to Gloucestershire at Headingley, were demoted instead.

In previous summers when Hampshire have been pipped for the title, it never quite "felt" that they would be champions. 2022 was different. Especially as they won one more match than Surrey. The media commented that Surrey were worthy champions but had there been a different points system for which draws received less reward, that affirmation will always remain contentious by Hampshire followers. It was galling – to say the least – that they eventually finished third. They deserved better. Lancashire had thrashed a weakened Surrey on the previous day to ease ahead. It was therefore an anti-climactic end to the season. The last two matches exposed issues which need to be addressed in 2023 but in the meantime, let us revel in the current season. The players have left their followers with much to cheer. The club's endeavours have left the warmest of memories which will endure for some time.

SOUTHERN VIPERS

The Southern Vipers just missed out on retaining The Rachael Heyhoe-Flint Trophy. After another season of fine performances, they lost to Northern Diamonds in the final at Lord's by just two runs. Chasing 216 to win, they were 213 for nine at the end.

LIAM DAWSON IN PAKISTAN

Liam Dawson played in three of England's seven t20 matches against Pakistan. In the fourth, at Karachi, the last for which he was selected, he scored 34 off 17 balls - his highest score in t20 internationals - to take England to the brink of victory. However, England then lost their last two wickets for one run and finished 3 runs short. As members will know, England went on to secure the series 4-3. Chris Woakes, returning from a season-long injury, which prevented him from playing for Warwickshire, replaced Dawson in the last three matches.

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