HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

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October Newsletter - Number 447

Guest Speakers

The AGM preceded our first meeting of the new season.

Garry welcomed Daniel Norcross and “interviewed” the broadcaster and TMS commentator.

Daniel fell in love with the game due to his cricket mad father. Watching the England v The West Indies test match at the Oval in 1976, aged just 7, sealed the deal.

Daniel spoke of his own cricketing prowess including being part of an U10 team bowled out for 4. Decent enough to enjoy it was how he described his career in club cricket.

Post university, Daniel used his trivia knowledge and a “system” to earn money from pub quiz machines before moving into gainful employment in project management for start up companies.

It was however the love of cricket that took him into broadcasting via “Test Match Sofa” which was his own concept, an online commentary programme to rival TMS albeit in a less conventional format. Its popularity resulted in a sale to The Cricketer. Daniel colourfully explained how the success of “Test Match Sofa” irked the BBC, so it was ironic that Daniel ended up working for them after he approached the producer, Adam Mountford for an opportunity. Originally covering county championship and women’s cricket, Daniel eventually became part of the TMS team. Some entertaining, behind the scenes, insights into the secrets of the commentary box followed.

As you would expect from a natural broadcaster, who just loves talking about cricket, the delivery was superb and interspersed with the occasional slip into the character of the TMS colleague who was the subject of his story. Thank you, Daniel.

Our next speaker on 28th October is Norman “Flash” Cowans.

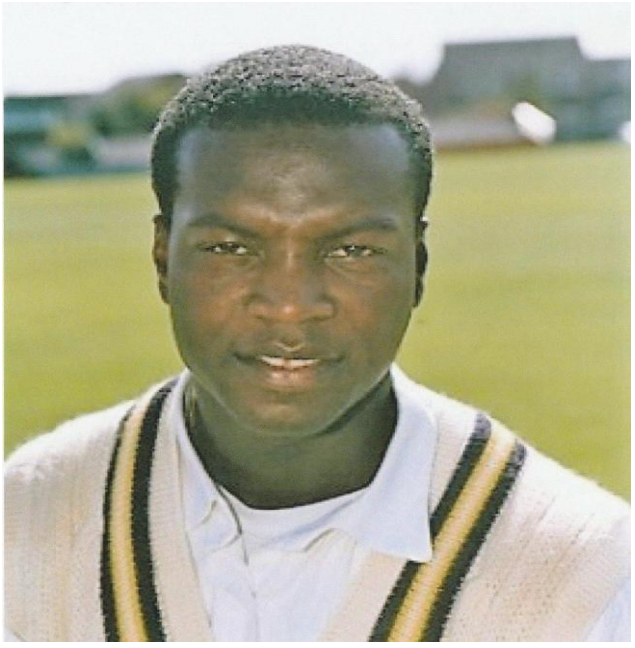


Photo courtesy of Hampshire Cricket Heritage.

Jamaican born, Norman Cowans, a right arm fast bowler had a successful career with Middlesex taking a combined 925 first class and List A wickets.

In 1982, aged 21, Norman became the 500th England test player when he made his debut at the WACA. On that tour played in one of the closest matches in test history which we will no doubt hear about. His last test match was also in an Ashes series, in 1985. He played just 19 tests and 23 ODI’s for England taking 36 and 23 wickets respectively in each format. He left Middlesex after his benefit year in 1993 having helped them win multiple county championships and one day trophies. For Hampshire he played 12 first class games in 1994 games across the 1994/95 seasons helping Hampshire to a B & H semi-final in 1995 against

Worcestershire where a Robin Smith hundred and bowling figures of 11-2-36-4 from Cowans could not prevent a three-wicket defeat.

County Championship – The last rites

The September newsletter left one round of matches uncovered. Hampshire, already relegated, only had pride to play for and the opportunity to give fans some optimism to hang on to over the winter with a win.

Defeat by 197 runs in three days, made it 6 losses at home (three by an innings) and just one draw. Red ball followers at The Bowl have not seen a win since April 2025.

Dull cricket on turgid pitches by a team in transition has not been a pleasurable experience and I doubt membership numbers would be at the level they have been in the last two years without the "carrot" of priority for Ashes tickets.

Kyle Abbott lost his top spot on the leading wicket takers list to Ethan Bamber whose 69 wickets, combined with 1048 runs at 75 from Sam Hain helped Warwickshire to the title.

Kyle finished with 64 wickets at 16.15 and a remarkable economy rate of 2.44 compared with the overall team rate of 3.34 having sent down over 23% of the overs bowled by the team. Kyle's 64 wickets represent over 31% of the wickets taken by bowlers.

Jake Lehmann did not play in the last game and finished as Hampshire's leading runs scorer with 965 runs at 48.25.

Leicestershire will drop to Division 2 with Hampshire unless they win their appeal against the points deduction for a poor pitch and get at least 18 points back. Durham convincingly won Division 2, whilst Kent recovered from a slow start to the season to win a close tussle with Northants for the other promotion spot.

PCA Awards

Congratulations to Sonny Baker the winner of the Men's "Young Player of the Year" award.

Kyle Abbott was included in the Men's team of the year. The Women's team of the year included Bex Tyson, Amanda Jade Wellington, Georgia Adams (for a record 5th time) and Maia Bouchier, who was shortlisted for the Women's "Player of the Year" award which went to Somerset captain Sophie Luff.

The other award winners were:

Men's Player of the Year – Craig Overton

Women's Young Player of the Year – Tilly Corteen-Coleman

Umpires of The Year – Ian Blackwell and Gabi Brown.

Outstanding Contribution Award – Heather Knight

Special Merit Award – Tammy Beaumont

Men's Domestic Overall MVP – Craig Overton

Women's Domestic Overall MVP – Jess Jonassen

People on the move

Freya Kemp is moving to Surrey on a long-term contract. Freya made her professional debut at seventeen and during her time with The Vipers helped them win the Charlotte Edwards Cup and the Rachel Heyhoe Flint Trophy.

Freya became an integral part of the Hampshire team following the restructure of women's domestic cricket despite battling a back injury which has restricted her bowling. Her batting has gone from strength to strength with the reduced workload and finding the patience to build an innings.

Her international career is on an upward trajectory since her England ODI and T20 debuts in 2022, highlighted by her 44* in the T20 World Cup Final against Australia at Lord's in July 2026, albeit in defeat.

Nancy Harman is joining Glamorgan at the end of her contract and Megan Sturge is returning to the Welsh county after her loan spell with Hampshire.

Moving in from Essex is bowling allrounder Eva Gray who won the Hundred with London Spirit in 2024.

Academy players Eve O'Neill (leg spinner) and Shristi Patil (batter) who have both played for England U19's, have earned their first professional contracts.

Hampshire men welcome Rishi Patel from Leicestershire and Finn Hudson- Prentice from Sussex.

Rishi is a product of the Essex Academy who made his move to Leicester in 2020.He is an all-format opening bat (he has made 100's in all formats) and occasional leg break bowler. He has made close to 4000 first class runs at 34 including 1000 runs in 2023. This season he made 747 runs at a touch under 34 including 164 at The Oval in April. He also made One Day Cup centuries against Northants and Surrey.

Finn is a Sussex born, seam bowling all rounder. He made his debut for Sussex in 2015 and apart from a 2-year loan spell at Derbyshire (2019-2021) has been at Hove ever since. He has made just over 3000 first class runs at a touch under 28 and taken 125 wickets at 35. Hampshire supporters will remember his 74 at The Bowl in a match winning partnership with John Simpson in 2025.

Injury has restricted Finn to just 7 games this season in which he made 227 runs at 25 and took 14 wickets at 35.

Hampshire legend Jimmy Adams is leaving the club to take up a coaching role in Tasmania. This ends a 25-year association with Hampshire as player and coach. Jimmy made his debut in 2001 (the first year of cricket at the Rose Bowl) and retired in 2018 after 462 matches in all formats and a spell as captain. Jimmy slipped straight into coaching at Hampshire in a multitude of roles. A more detailed look back at Jimmy's time at the club will follow in the next newsletter.

Retirements

There have been a substantial number of retirements from English domestic cricket during and at the end of this season.

Former international cricketers Scott Borthwick, Joe Denly, Dean Elgar, Colin Ingram, Kate Cross, Tash Farrant, Fi Morris and Fran Wilson head the list. Some stalwarts of the county game have

also hung up their boots including Chris Cooke, Rob Keogh, and Chris Rushworth.

The forced retirement of John Turner through injury was a sad end to a promising career for the young South African born fast bowler who was impressing Hampshire followers and the England set up. We wish him well in his future endeavours.

Another South African born Hampshire fast bowler has also just announced his retirement from professional cricket due to injury. Brad Wheal made his debut in 2015 and played 131 games across all formats taking 239 wickets. He played 44 games for Scotland including participation in four T20 World Cups.

2026 also saw the retirement of one of the most popular cricketers to have played for the Rose and Crown in the recent past. Keith “The King” Barker has hung up his boots due to injury after returning to Warwickshire this season.

A talented footballer who played just one football league game for Rochdale and one game for England U19’s before settling on cricket as a professional career. He made his debut for Warwickshire in 2009 and when he left them at the end of the 2018 season, he had taken 357 first class wickets with his left arm swing bowling and hit 6 hundreds to underline his all-rounder status.

In his first season with Hampshire in 2019 he took 38 wickets at 26 and made 357 runs at 25.

After COVID wrecked the 2020 season “The King” had stellar seasons in 2021 and 2022.

Career best figures of 7-46 in a win against Notts at The Bowl contributed to a 2021 season return of 41 wickets at 18 to go with 379 runs at 27 which won him the Hampshire “Red Ball Bowler of the Year Award”. Keith, Mo Abbas and Kyle Abbott shared 128 wickets that year.

Despite that career best I am quite sure the win at Edgbaston was more satisfying. After Hampshire made just 89 in the first innings of the match, Keith (5-29) and Mo Abbas (5-43) restricted Warwickshire to a 27-run lead. “The King” then top scored with 75 as Hampshire set the hosts 296 to win and they fell 60 short.

2022 saw Abbas, Abbott and Barker all surpassing the 50-wicket mark. “The King” added 595 runs to his 52 wickets. The team played some fantastic cricket winning nine matches and finished third. Hampshire recovered well from a heavy defeat to eventual champions Surrey in April but a 12-run defeat to Essex in June and defeats in the last two games ruined any title hopes.

A season best 6-27 from Barker helped bowl out Somerset for just 69 in their second innings to set up a 10 wicket win at Taunton. A second red ball bowler of the year award (shared with Kyle Abbott) followed as well as the “Fans Player of The Year Award”.

His red ball performances in 2023 and 2024 did not reach the same levels partly due to injury but there were still plenty of highlights. At Edgbaston in June 2024 Barker took his 500th first class wicket during his 6-74 against his former county. Warwickshire’s last wicket pair hung on to deny Hampshire the win they desperately needed to follow up their innings victory over Surrey at The Bowl (remember that anyone) to keep the pressure on the eventual champions. Hampshire finished as runners up.

Keith managed only two championship games in 2025 and re-signed for Warwickshire for the 2026 season but managed only two games before announcing his retirement because of recurring knee problems.

554 wickets and 5554 runs in red ball with a county championship winners medal combined with 158 wickets and 1000+ runs in white ball only tell part of the story of Keith's career. Hampshire fans will remember that Keith provided variety to the attack, gave it everything on the field, played with a smile on his face and was always encouraging and supportive of teammates, especially the younger players. Thank you, Keith.

Winter call ups

The England ODI squad for the trip to Pakistan, which has just begun, includes Liam Dawson and Sonny Baker as well as former Hampshire leg spinner Mason Crane.

Dawson and Baker featured in the recent ODI and T20 series wins over Sri Lanka who they meet again in the tri-series with Pakistan.

Crane, born in Shoreham made his Hampshire debut in all formats in 2015. In 2017 he played two T20 internationals against South Africa. On his debut at The Bowl, he dismissed AB de Villiers for his first international wicket.

In 2018 Crane made his one and only test match appearance to date in the 5th Ashes test at the SCG. The England team also included Hampshire legend James Vince and Mark Stoneman, who briefly played for the club in 2025.

Crane picked up his solitary test wicket when he had Usman Khawaja stumped by Jonny Bairstow for the small matter of 171. Australia amassed 649-7 with Crane recording figures of 48-3-193-1. Australia won the match by an innings and 123 and the series 4-0.

Crane won the One-Day Cup with Hampshire in 2018 and the T20 Blast in 2022. Through the early 2020's Hampshire had a strong seam bowling attack supported by Liam Dawson's all-round skills which restricted Mason's opportunities. Consequently in 2024, he moved to Glamorgan, originally on loan and then permanently. He has flourished in Cardiff and has enjoyed a fantastic season with bat and ball. Mason took 34 wickets at 35 and made 595 runs at an average of 33 includes two centuries, including his maiden first class hundred, and a 99. Impressive figures which have caught the eye of the England management.

Sonny Baker and Liam Dawson are also in the recently announced ODI squad for the upcoming series in Australia in November. There is a surprise call up in the T20 squad travelling to Australia. Eddie Jack joins Liam Dawson in that squad.

New England Lions coach Jonathan Trott has announced his first England Lions ODI and T20 squads for a Caribbean tour in November. Eddie Jack and Ben Mayes are in both squads with Scott Currie in the T20 squad.

Hampshire Women's all rounder Eliza Bristowe and batter Shristi Patil have been selected for the England U19 squad which will play a five match T20 series in India and will then take part in the U19 World Cup in January/February 2027 in Nepal and Bangladesh.

Member contribution – "What a Treat"

In my first newsletter I invited contributions from members and referred to John Winter's book "My Favourite Game"

My friend and Society member Colin Bradbury has covered both bases with this piece.

"During his talk at the Society 50th Anniversary lunch Mark Nicholas spoke about a match which

captured his imagination as a youngster. It was Hampshire's match against the touring Australians in 1975.

It struck a chord with me as this match similarly caught my imagination. I had just finished sitting my O Levels so no school from late June onwards, so with like minded friends we made plans to attend all three days and the end of June/start of July.

Armed with my junior membership card, scorebook, autograph book, and a picnic box prepared by mum, I met my friends at Fareham station on Saturday morning for the train trip to Southampton. I remember our excitement as we walked past The Dell to Northlands Road. We had only ever seen the likes of the Chappell brothers, Rod Marsh and Jeff Thomson on the television and now we were going to see them up close.

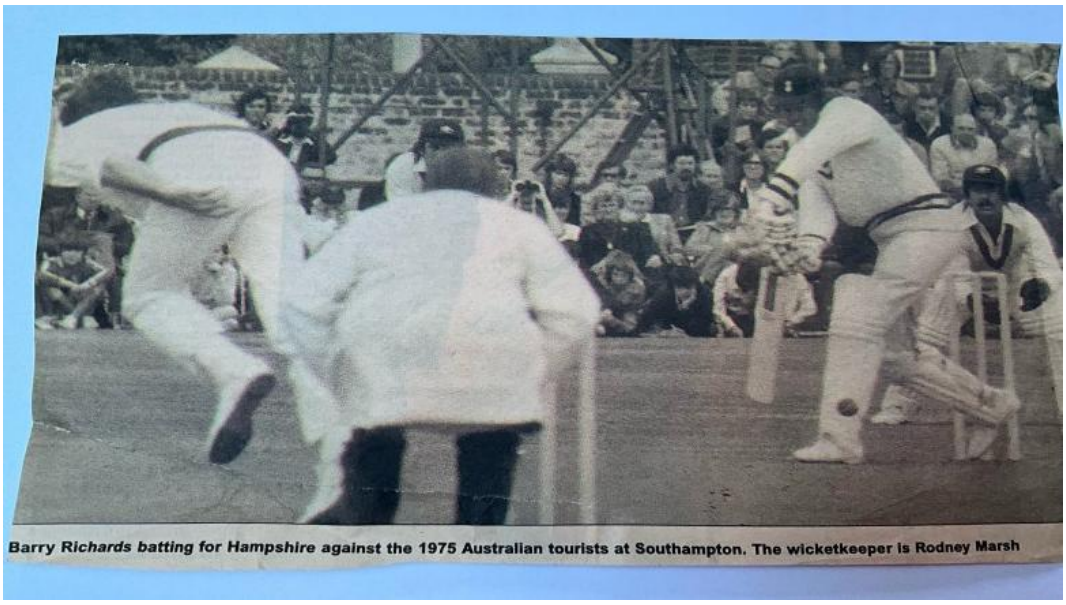
Close we were. The old ground at Northlands Road was full to overflowing and I remember we sat on the grass near the boundary edge where you felt right in the game.

The Aussies had just, narrowly, lost the inaugural limited over World Cup Final to the West Indies on 17th June and were preparing for the first Ashes test on 10th July.

Hampshire fielded close to their championship team with Barry Richards captaining the team in place of Richard Gilliat. Richards won the toss and Hampshire batted first on what proved to be a good pitch. Like many others, I have always thought Richards saw these matches as an opportunity to show the cricketing public what he might have achieved in the game had he been able to pursue a longer test career. The ban on South Africa playing test cricket from 1970 to 1991 denied Richards and many other top players the opportunity to play at the highest level in that period.

Richards did not disappoint. My scorebook (yes, I still have it) records he scored 96 in just under 3 hours before he was out, caught at deep square leg trying to reach his hundred in the grand style.

With David Turner (87) and Trevor Jesty (79) also batting beautifully Hampshire declared on 351-7 just before the close. Jeff Thomson bowled 23 wicketless overs for 80.



Barry Richards batting for Hampshire against the 1975 Australian tourists at Southampton. The wicketkeeper is Rodney Marsh

Australia reached the close without any mishaps. No school on Monday so back at Northlands Road on Monday where we watched (and scored) as the Aussies progressed steadily through the day to declare on 344-6 at 5.35pm.

Greg Chappell top scored with a beautiful and typically elegant 86 supported by Ross Edwards who made 74 not out. “Tommo” hit a belligerent 44 not out as the Aussies looked to declare. We had all been looking forward to how the Aussies coped with Andy Roberts. Although the Aussies had difficulty scoring off him, the pitch which had blunted Thomson’s effectiveness, did the same for Roberts who finished with figures of 19-8-46-0.

So late on Monday evening Richards and Gordon Greenidge opened for Hampshire, saw off the new ball, and took the score to 68-0 at the close.

Another day with no school and cricket watching in the sun followed on Tuesday albeit in front of a much smaller crowd. Richards took his score rapidly to 69 before retiring hurt, hit amidships by Jeff Thomson who was bowling seriously fast, having already forced David Turner to retire hurt with a broken finger.

Greenidge hit a well made 74 to allow Hampshire to declare at 2.30pm on 247-3 setting Australia 255 to win.

Ian Chappell took the Aussies to the brink of victory with a century. Batting in a robust style in stark contrast to the elegance of his brother, he was out caught at cover by Gordon Greenidge for 127 off John Southern. At just gone 6pm Jeff Thomson hit a boundary off Southern to win the game for the Aussies for the loss of 6 wickets off 54.2 overs.

These three scorching summer days watching some world class players performing in the flesh with my school mates cemented my love of cricket. With my exam results not due for a couple of months it felt the world could not get any better.” – Colin Bradbury

Editor’s notes.

1. I was one of Colin’s mates on this and many other trips to Northlands Road in those days.
2. The trips also ignited Colin’s love of trains. He still has his train-spotting book as well.
3. I also still have my scorebook from this game, which is also one of my favourites.
4. Colin’s O-Level results were good. We both did well.
5. Andrew Murtagh, who played in this game, and wrote a biography of Barry Richards, has penned an interesting account of this match in “My Favourite Game” which includes a less generous reflection on Ian Chappell.
6. Jeff Thomson and Dennis Lillee (who did not play against Hampshire) helped the Aussies win the Ashes series 1-0 and then go on to help them smash the West Indies 5-1 in the test series that winter. This was the series which persuaded Clive Lloyd to implement the 4-man pace attack strategy leading to the West Indies dominance of test cricket through the 80’s and early 90’s.7
7. Picture is from a press cutting I took from Portsmouth News in 1975. Apologies for the quality of my photo of the press cutting. My view is that it captures the feel of Colin’s article. It could easily be us in the background sat on the grass.
8.

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