



# SUSSEX CRICKET SOCIETY.

## NEWSLETTER

FOUNDED: 1965

CHAIR: DAVID BOWDEN MBE

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www.sussexcricketsociety.org

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### Dates for 2024/25

July 7 Sunday afternoon  
Tea with Barry Richards  
as the speaker

**Wed Sept 25 afternoon  
Tea with Jeff Thomson  
as the speaker**

October 23 AGM followed  
by speakers Jon Filby &  
Peter Fitzboyden

November 20 speakers  
"Sussex Legends"

December 11 Christmas  
lunch speaker Graham  
Gooch

January 15, speaker  
Jonathan Agnew

February 19, speaker  
John Simpson

March 19 speaker to be  
advised

*Any views expressed in the newsletter are those of the writer, not those of the Committee of the Society.*

The afternoon tea at the beginning of July when Barry Richards was the speaker was a success and all comments I heard were very positive, and in particular with regards to the excellent talk Barry Richards delivered. Ivor Evans has contributed an extensive account of the afternoon, this appears later in the newsletter.

Buoyed by the success of this event the Society will be holding an extra afternoon tea event on **September the 25th when the speaker will be Jeff Thomson** the former Australian fast bowler. Price for this event will be £22 per head, which is the amount the caterers are charging the Society. Booking details appear below.

Jeff Thomson, one of the fastest bowlers possibly ever, and certainly in his early days, possessed an unusual action tilting back in the style of a javelin thrower. He played 51 test matches for Australia between 1972 and 1985 often in company with Dennis Lillee making a fearsome fast bowling pair. In these he took exactly 200 wickets. He played his first Test match after just six Sheffield Shield games going wicketless against Pakistan in 1972. But the following Australian season he was unleashed on Mike Denness's England side taking 33 wickets in the five-match series, then another 16 English wickets in four matches the following English summer before another 29 against West Indies in Australia in 1975/6. So a dramatic three series before he suffered a shoulder injury. He continued playing for Australia if not possibly with the same potency. His last test being at Edgbaston in 1985 when dismissing Graham Gooch enabled him to reach 200 Test wickets.

### Booking Details

The cost will be £22 per head. The event will be held in the Spen Cama Pavilion dining room starting at 2.30pm with the tea following Jeff Thomson's talk. Tea will comprise a selection of sandwiches followed by a range of cakes, and scones Vegetarian gluten free options will be available (see booking details). Followed with tea or coffee.

To apply please contact on this occasion Barbara Eagles (phone, 01273 778988, email [eagles202@btinternet.com](mailto:eagles202@btinternet.com) post 4 Champions Row, Wilbury Ave, Hove, BN3 6AZ) by 13<sup>th</sup> September at the latest. Please provide Barbara with your name, address plus phone and /or email details; along with names of anyone coming with you and any dietary requirements and finally your selected payment method. Payment can be made by either cheque payable to Sussex Cricket Society sent to Barbara, or by Bank Transfer (Sort Code 60-13-09, Account No. 57843570) please show "SEP TEA plus your name" as the payment reference. Transfer is our preferred method. Even if you pay by transfer, please ensure you let Barbara that you have paid. The normal cancellation comment - if a booking is cancelled after 13<sup>th</sup> September any payment will not be refunded. Free Car parking will be available within the ground subject to availability, it may be worth calling in at the Club Reception / shop to collect a free day parking permit.

The November speakers likely to be "Sussex legends" – the names are still to be confirmed likewise the March speaker information will appear in the newsletter when known.

**New Members** welcome to Martyn Collins, Hove and Mr & Mrs D Robinson, Reigate

**T20 Blast** Sussex having won nine of their 14 group games with the other five losses, not only qualified for the quarter finals but also gained a home draw which will be against Lancashire set for 4<sup>th</sup> September. With all four quarter finals being played on different days in that week another Sky TV appearance seems likely. Having a home game should in theory give some playing advantage but should also quite crucially be a boost for supporters and a significant revenue raiser. During the Blast group stages some key performers were Harrison Ward who frequently got the innings off to a rapid start, the bowling of Ollie Robinson (who had not featured much in “white ball” games in recent years); all round performances from Jack Carson. But above all the batting of the Australian Daniel Hughes - 560 runs at an average of 43.07 with five half centuries and an impressive strike rate of 170.21. He has certainly proved his worth as an overseas signing and in fact is the leading run scorer in the country in this year’s Blast. Crucially he should be available for the quarter final and I believe the remaining championship matches. I read that Jofra Archer despite not playing in any of the group games might also be available for the quarter final - a real boost.

One oddity in terms of the Blast schedule was that the 14-game group stage started back on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May, concluded on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July (albeit with the two week break for a couple of championship rounds) with two back-to-back matches on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> for most counties. Sussex faced an evening game at Taunton on the 18<sup>th</sup> and then had to return to Hove to play Middlesex on the final evening. And now there is quite a break until the knockout stages.

**One Day Cup.** The 50 over One Day Cup is underway, it will take up most of the next few weeks. Sussex have players contracted to Hundred franchises this year such as James Coles, Harrison Ward, and Ollie Robinson as well as Jofra Archer and Tymal Mills. I see that Sussex have given a debut to 24-year-old left arm seamer Jack Campbell who previously was on the Hampshire and Durham books, he has played some second team games for Sussex this year. So this competition gives a chance for youngsters to step forward. Sussex had two warm up matches against National Counties, or as they used to be called, Minor Counties. The first was with Hertfordshire and played at Arundel with a healthy attendance. On a fine day, the ground looked a picture as it usually does not least without the advertising boards around the boundary that we are used to seeing at Hove and other county grounds.

**Sussex Second Eleven.** Winning four of their group games was not sufficient for Sussex seconds to progress to The Second Eleven T20 “finals day” on 16<sup>th</sup> July when Somerset proved victorious beating Yorkshire seconds in the final. In the first week of July Sussex seconds had two games (a T20 won by Sussex followed by a drawn three day game) with South Asia Cricket Academy at Horsham. The SACA is now based in Birmingham with the intention of providing Asian cricketers who may not have gone through county academies a route into professional cricket. One of their coaches at these games said that in the last year eight players from this Academy have been given county contracts, so it shows that the initiative it's working.

The T20 game Sussex won quite comfortably (Tom Clark teeing off at the top of the innings and top scoring with contributions all the way down). The following three day game was drawn with SACA performing far better and indeed looked in a winning position on the third day. Here some standout batting performances came from Charlie Tear in the first innings and in the second Henry Rogers with an unbeaten 82 again looking a quality player in the making, a crucial innings as Sussex trailed by 136 on first innings and looked as though a defeat was in prospect. For SACA Amit Bazra made 152 and an interesting bowler was Arjun Tendulkar (son of Sachin) with four for 70 in Sussex’s first innings.

**Clubs-** With five games of the league season still to play Preston nomads lead the Premier League ahead of Three Bridges the latter would have been virtually level but for a narrow last over loss to Horsham on 3<sup>rd</sup> august. Cuckfield (who cannot be written off in terms of the title) have had a couple of losses dropping them to 3<sup>rd</sup> just ahead of Middleton who had a good month. Nomads still look to Roffey on 3<sup>rd</sup> August. Both Three Bridges and Middleton have performed creditably. At the other end of the table Worthing are still bottom with fellow promoted side from 2023 Hastings joining them in the current relegation spots. Haywards Heath continue to top Division Two.

## Barry Richards – 7<sup>th</sup> July 2024 Tea event

Thanks to Ivor Evans for the following review



For once it wasn't raining, the skies were a milky blue and the temperature was just about right. The sight greeting people was an army of groundsman on the outfield – lawnmower and covers were to the fore; no doubt repairing any damage caused following Sussex's disappointing defeat to Glamorgan on Friday evening and in anticipation of the England Women v New Zealand Women's game on the following Tuesday evening (when the heavens did open).

There were a number of firsts for the Society for tea with Barry Richards, the first to be held during the summer (no, I haven't forgotten the garden parties of yore); it was on a Sunday; and it was open to anyone involved or who followed Sussex Cricket at any level and in any form and lastly it was a Q& A session led by Roger Dakin a Man of Sussex who is regarded as one if not the best MC in the Country. As this was a new venture the Society didn't know whether it would be ten people booking or seventy five, similar to the Geoff Miller lunch. In the event fifty four sat down to tea. On the day people were spoilt for sport with both Wimbledon and the British Grand Prix being on the television.



Barry Richards with Roger Dakin

For those not familiar with Barry Richards' statistics, here is a potted history. Born in South Africa in 1945, Barry played four test matches for South Africa before the country was excluded from participating in international cricket. South Africa beat Australia 4-0. Barry scored 508 runs (average 72.57). In 1965 he had a season with Gloucester 2nds but is best known for his time with Hampshire between 1968-1978 where he formed the truly stupendous opening partnership with Gordon Greenidge (reviewer – has there been a better county opening partnership since and was there better one since 1945 – answers on the proverbial postcard please?). Barry also spent time playing for South Australia and World Series Cricket (WSC). Barry scored 100 before lunch, ten times in his career.

In 2009, Barry was inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame. Also, he was chosen both by Dickie Bird in his all-time Dream Team and Sir Donald Bradman in his 20<sup>th</sup> century one.

Barry first came to England in 1963 with South Africa schoolboys. He came again in 1965 along with Mike Proctor and had a season with Gloucester seconds. As a youngster his aim was to bat at No. 4, which he regards as the 'cream' position where the greatest batsmen played).

Barry wanted to pay tribute to Mike Proctor who died in February this year. He was a great guy and an absolute committed individual in everything that he did. Along with everyone else, he remembered Proctor bowling off the wrong foot, the six successive centuries and the Gloucestershire team of the 1970's and early '80's that also included another great player, the Pakistani, Zaheer Abbas. What people may not have known was that in nets he was a more than competent slow left arm bowler. In later years, in South Africa, he ran a charity for under privileged children.

For Sussex cricket fans of a certain age there is the well-known story; did Barry Richards nearly come to Sussex as opposed to Hampshire – fact or fiction. The answer is in the affirmative. 1968 was the first year overseas players could play in County Cricket, Sussex offered Barry £700 for the season. It was thought Clive Lloyd would be going to Hampshire for £900. However, Lancashire topped that offer. Off Clive went up north and Barry didn't come east along the A27 and as we know, the rest is history. Looking at the outfield, Barry thought that the view at Hove was far better than the old Southampton ground.

Barry recalled some of his memories of 1968. He arrived at Southampton on a Union Castle liner. He expected to be met by someone from the Club but was disappointed to find no one there. He was asked at the onset about his ambition for the season which was to score 2000 runs. He didn't start the season opening but at No 3. One of his early games was against Sussex at Hove. It was quickly 10-2 which soon became 10-3 with Barry being bowled by a peach from Mike Buss. One of Hampshire's pros was Butch White, an interesting character by all accounts who told Barry that as he was getting all the money, you can get all the runs – or words to that effect. And yes, by the end of the season, Barry has scored 2000+ runs.

Barry told the audience about Gordon Greenidge's first game for Hampshire against Warwickshire. It was about 5.40pm and they were told to take no chances before stumps. Barry took strike and at the end of the first over it was 0-0. At the end of the second it was 16-0. Greenidge's mantra was – it you see it; you have to hit it. In a one-day game Greenidge had pulled a leg muscle and told Richards – I'm not running, and neither are you.

In the County game, in his day he found the quality of umpires variable. He thought too often that they were not paying sufficient attention to the game; often bouncers and beamers often went unchecked, and wides not called and as to LBWs! Dickie Bird was his favourite and didn't think that David Constant was in the same league.

In terms of fast bowlers, he found Jeff Thomson and Joel Garner the most challenging, not only their speed but also for the bounce that they achieved through their arm action – it also helped Garner, being 6'8" tall. He also recalled a full throttle net with Andy Roberts at Southampton – in the fifteen minute session Barry managed to avoid being out.

Barry touched on the anti-apartheid movement and in particular a walk off by the players at the start of a match at Newlands cricket ground in Cape Town in April 1971 between Transvaal and Rest of South Africa. Barry and Brian Bath walked in to open the innings. Mike Proctor bowled the first ball to Barry and by previously arranged agreement all thirteen players left the field. The players did return after a few minutes. The walk off made worldwide news. This and larger events helped to accelerate the imposition of a world-wide ban on South Africa in international sport for twenty years.

World Series Cricket was the next subject covered. With South Africa banned it gave him the opportunity to play with and against international players and teams. Kerry Packer helped

revolutionise cricket; day/night games, floodlights, drop-in pitches, the white ball, coloured clothing, the development and use of the helmet.

WSC were banned from using grounds such as the MCG or SCG. The use of non-cricketing venues brought about the introduction of drop-in pitches. These were of variable quality and certainly challenging if a fast bowler hit the seam sections of the drop in-pitch. In turn nighttime games weren't helped by the quality of floodlights, the illumination being uneven. At the beginning, white balls were used along with white clothing. Some of the cricket could be pretty hairy especially the white ball getting 'lost' against the white clothes. This pretty quickly brought about the introduction of coloured clothing; Australia in yellow; Rest of the World, blue and West Indies, Pink. The pink didn't last long, as the West Indies players objected to it and changed to the maroon that is still worn forty five years later.

There had been a number of experiments with protective headwear, but WSC accelerated its development. Dennis Amiss had been involved with a company and it evolved from a lookalike motorcycle helmet to one with a perspex visor, The only trouble was that it misted up very quickly. Holes were drilled in the perspex only for this to reduce its strength and shatter very easily. It took about six iterations to get to the helmet with the grill which has continued to evolve since the 1970's.

After finishing his playing career, Barry became Chief Executive of Queensland Cricket. In his time The Gabba went from a 12,000 capacity stadium to a 45,000 all-seater. One fact that may have passed people by that in an all-seater stadium it is easier to control a crowd that have had a beer, or several sat down than if they were standing.

Barry talked about the current state of South African Cricket. Schools cricket remains very strong, but the senior game is struggling and is in transition. In recent times for contractual reasons South Africa were obliged to send an understrength team to New Zealand at the same time as their T20 competition was taking place. The quota system also throws up challenges with not necessarily the strongest players being picked. Barry was of the view that there should be a move to a merit system. He remains confident that eventually, South African cricket will win through.

Next Barry talked about the future of cricket. He made several points which are summarised:

- India is the country able to generate the most amount of money (approximately 37% of all income) and has immense influence.
- The governance of international cricket needs to change. Every country has an input. Barry's radical approach would be for five directors voted by playing countries, five non-executive directors and a chief executive.
- The number of international countries needs to be reduced to six.
- However regrettable, he thought that the days of Test Cricket were numbered with evermore short forms of cricket being introduced, both domestically and internationally.
- If cricket takes off in America and especially with the profile that it is likely to receive at the 2028 Olympics, it would be a tremendous opportunity but only if managed correctly and the money is used wisely. Cricket to date has generated an amazing amount of income but he thought not all of it has been spent wisely.
- Technology is likely to play an ever increasing role in the game.
- In the coming year there will be 500 cricket days. A challenge for players both domestically and internationally along with the likely over exposure of the game and impact on players and their time and availability.
- Cricket has to be viable. It has to have context i.e. a competition for which players are competing.



- The Hundred should be developed for Women's' cricket. Already there had been considerable benefits for the game in England. These should be exploited on the international scene.
- With the potential for ever increasing amounts of cricket being played, Barry could foresee, instead of broadcasters paying to show cricket, roles would be reversed with cricket paying the broadcasters.

Next was questions from the audience. The first one was the standing one from Society meetings – memories of playing against Sussex or Sussex players. Tony Greig figured large especially his role in, and playing with him in World Series Cricket. Imran also got a mention, again with WSC playing together in the rest of the World team. He thought that was the time where he'd never seen, Imran happier. He went on to say that in South Africa he lived close to another Sussex icon, Garth Le Roux. Garth had kept in touch with Imran Khan and up until his imprisonment when all contact was stopped, he found him to be in pretty good spirits.

Barry was asked whether he had ever considered qualifying for England. No was the answer. Back in 1965 the qualifying period was seven years. He would have to remain in England both summer and winter. He said he would have found the winter a bit too much. More seriously, back then he had aspirations of playing for South Africa and their international ban was still five years away.

Another question about the highlight of his career. Without doubt, WSC. And the opportunity of playing cricket at a higher level and in the WSC series he had never played a better standard of cricket. He would be forever grateful to Kerry Packer.

One last question; did he have any regrets. Barry said perhaps one. In 1978 he wrote a biography which included a piece about the daily grind of county cricket. Today, he would not have written it; it was more out of frustration due to the lack of international cricket. And with that, it was over. Barry received tremendous applause from the audience. The Chair, David stood up to thank Barry and Roger for a tremendous afternoon, A thoroughly stimulating afternoon, looking back at Barry's career, those he had played with and against, along with his humour and his thoughts on the future of cricket.

David said that the upcoming programme was still being finalised but could say that for the Christmas meeting, Graham Gooch would be the speaker and early in the New Year Jonathan Agnew would be joining us.

Members, friends and guests left the pavilion having had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

Until the next time.