



SUSSEX CRICKET SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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Patron: John Barclay DL

President: David Bowden MBE

Chair: Vacant

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

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2022/2023 Society Programme

The programme for next winter is still being worked on. The aim is for all being afternoon events, almost certainly lunches.

Actual dates, speakers and arrangements will be advised as soon as they are available.

Renewals

Thanks to all who have renewed so far and to those who have made donations either to Society funds or Sussex Youth Cricket.

A reminder to any who have not renewed so far that they can by using the form previously supplied and return it with payment to Chris Scovell. Subs £20 Single, £25 Family plus a £8.00 postal fee if you wish to receive the monthly newsletter by post.)

Roger Knight Afternoon Tea Event

Over fifty members were present for the "Afternoon tea with Roger Knight event". Roger spoke about his highly rewarding cricket career and alongside this continuing his teaching career, adding how fortunate he was to combine the two with schools enabling him teach (modern languages) in the winter terms and then play County cricket in the summer term. His first teaching role was at Eastbourne College, and his first professional cricket came at Surrey after graduating from Cambridge University. But being unable to have a regular spot in Surrey's first team he moved to Gloucestershire, with Eastbourne allowing him the same teaching terms. At Gloucestershire he mentioned beating Sussex in the 1973 Gillette final adding that then Gloucester with the likes of Mike Procter were a fine side. But with a new child the Knights (Roger and his wife Chris) decided to live near either Eastbourne or Bristol on a full-time basis. Hence the move to play for Sussex where Roger said that he enjoyed the time at Hove before accepting the captaincy of Surrey. That too had connections with his teaching role. Eastbourne were keen for him to take on summer term roles and another fortunate appointment at Dulwich College arose which would allow him to combine cricket and teaching. So captain at Surrey for seven years before retiring from cricket and accepting as position at Worksop College which ended after a couple of years when asked to take offered the role of MCC Secretary (he had served on the MCC committee for a couple of years). This being a full year appointment saw the end of his teaching career.

We heard about some of his major steps at Lord's not least pushing through the change to allow women to be MCC members and have access to members' areas of the ground. Another key topic was his relationship with TCCB / ECB where he saw the introduction if a contract between MCC and ECB firmly stating the requirements on both sides, a valuable and key step in the relationship between the two for major matches.

Roger is a firm believer in the eighteen counties continuing their current status, a point of value with current views in the media about the counties. To cap all of these achievements came the presidency of MCC.

Then after the tea interval (tea or coffee plus a scone and piece of cake) Roger answered some questions from the audience before a book selling / signing session to end a highly enjoyable afternoon. This was the first such event the Society has held, well certainly in my memory, and seemed to be well received by those present. An excellent talk covering a very varied and thoroughly satisfying career.

Prior to Roger's talk, David Bowden announced that Jon Filby had been elected to succeed Bob Warren as County Chair, an appointment widely applauded by members. Acknowledging this Jon said that his three main goals were, possibly in no great order, (1) having a cricket team that would win matches, (2) representing members, and (3) building on the relationship with ECB on many important issues. These sound like good aims, the Society wishes Jon well in his new role.

The opening day of the 2022 Championship season at Hove was blessed by sunny weather but was pretty, no very cold with a stiff wind. It was of course still early in spring and during an unusually dry spell. Some have asked whether it is this too early to stage County matches? Well possibly yes, but how else to fit so many games into a limited period with so many other commitments, both white ball matches, the Hundred plus other events Counties want to promote such as concerts, valuable those these are financially.

New Members – Welcome to Paul Johnson, Brighton and Edward McLeish, Lewes

Sussex News Firstly the captaincy positions have been announced. Tom Haines (as though he does not have enough on his plate cementing and improving his place at the top of the order) taking on the championship and well as the 50 over roles, with Ravi Bopara following Luke Wright as the T20 captain.

It has been a disappointing start losing twice by big margins, 10 wickets and an innings either side of a rear-guard effort to draw at Derby. Conceding scores of 534/9, 505/8 and 491 indicates that the bowling has been weak even allowing for a number of absences due to injury and illness. This weakness has now been compounded with Kent recalling Grant Stewart from what was a one-month loan arrangement which effectively became one game! Such are the perils of the loan system. Otherwise, it is a youthful bowling line up requiring the two Toms, Haines and Clark, to fill in to assist the front-line seam bowlers when in reality these two should probably be concentrating on their batting. A return of Robinson, who surely needs some practise if going to represent England this summer, would be a boost but that will be England's call once he is fit.

The batting has been better, Orr continues to impress, Clark made an elegant debut century against Notts combining stoke play with sensible accumulation, there must be something to work on here. Tom Haines has made a fine start not least with a double century against Derby. After this innings there was talk of Tom being on the England radar or at least consideration. Whether he is ready for an international call up yet I am not sure, but do feel he deserves an opportunity and possibly the First Class Counties Eleven match with New Zealand in May (at the start of the T20s and follows Sussex's game with the tourists) would be an ideal chance / step up. Cheteshwar Pujara has also shone with a double century and century. A fine player to watch, playing the ball late and seemingly a rock to build the innings around, much as he did for India at his best. His presence has been a real bonus given that he was a late replacement for the very different Travis Head.

The partnership between Haines and Pujara at Derby, 351, surpassed numerous records but the value of it was not so much to do with numbers and records, but rather in transforming what looked like a probable loss (even on a good batting pitch) into what turned out to be a comfortable draw. Incidentally I seem to recall that the record third wicket partnership for Sussex (Goodwin and Yardy v Warwickshire, 385) came in a similar situation with the same outcome both in match result and the batting well on top in the latter stages of the partnership.

In the Derby game the Sri Lankan Shan Masood made 239 and followed this with another double against Leicestershire and now has scored 611 this season in four innings. With Derbyshire having another three games before the end of May, could he reach the 1,000 mark by then?

Women's World Cup Rather as expected Australia, whose depth of resources in the women's game must be the envy of other countries, followed up their Ashes series win by winning all their matches to regain the WWC in New Zealand. In the final England may have been gallant losers but no match for the Australian side for whom Alyssa Healy made 170 with fine strokeplay off back and front foot all-round the ground. Nat Sciver replied with an impressive 146 but it was not enough on the day. Australia were not just reliant on Healy with likes of Meg Lanning, Ellyse Perry and the impressive newcomer Alana King also shining through the tournament. The final was blessed with a sunny day for so late in the year, a good-sized crowd at Christchurch's Hagley Oval enjoying the grassy banks around the playing area. One other sidenote was the actual pitch which seemed true in bounce and with some pace, the latter I feel is even more important in the women's game. Credit to England for getting to the final after a poor start and the semi final win owed much to Sussex's Danni Wyatt's 129 in beating the well fancied South Africa. The final capped a tournament which did much to promote the women's game while also leaving many countries with work to do to match Australia.

Clubs— All players, league or non-league, will be looking forward to a season now seemingly free from the Covid restrictions of the last couple of years, many clubs had friendlies in mid-April ahead of 2022 Sussex League season starting for most on 7th May. This year the League comprises of as many as thirty-six divisions including in total 363 teams, many clubs field more than one side. There is an increase on 2021 both in term of clubs and teams. In the Premier League my early thoughts are that Preston Nomads, the defending champions, Roffey, East Grinstead and the improving Three Bridges are likely to be challenging for the title. Pre-season it can be hard to predict much before seeing the extent of player recruitment, both locally and any "overseas" players, joining or returning. Promoted last year were Bognor and Horsham.

Hastings who remain in the Premier Division after a run of wins late in 2021 have had to move grounds again. Having for so long played in the historic, evocative, and much-loved Central Ground before moving to Horntye Park when the Central Ground was transformed into a shopping centre, are now on the move again, this time to Claremont School a few miles further north. Horntye which hosted a couple of Sussex one day games is due to be developed for housing.