



SUSSEX CRICKET SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

FOUNDED: 1965

CHAIR: DAVID BOWDEN MBE

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Draft dates for 2023 /4

Wed 11 October
AGM 2.30pm
followed by talk from Jon
Filby

Wed 15 November
Afternoon Tea, 2.15pm
speaker Mark
Ramprakash MBE

Thurs 14 December
Lunch, Speakers Patrick
Ferriday & James
Mettyear

Wed 10 January
Lunch, David Gower
OBE

Wed 14 February
Lunch, Speaker tba

Wed 20 March 2.15pm
Afternoon Tea Paul
Farbrace, Head coach,
Sussex Cricket.

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

Society News

The Society's Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday October 11th at 2.30pm in the Spen Cama Pavilion Long Room, First Central County Gound Hove. Please note that this is a Society Members only event.

The agenda, accounts, and minutes of the last AGM are supplied to members with this newsletter.

The Society's Player of the Year will be selected at the AGM, your nominations are requested. These should be sent to David Harrison (contact details on left hand column) by 30th September.

After the AGM Jon Filby, Chair, Sussex Cricket will address the Society with his review of Sussex Cricket in 2023 season.

I am pleased to report that David Harrison has secured David Gower OBE as our January speaker.

Sussex news The 2023 Sussex One Day Cup campaign is now consigned to the history books, just one win (over a severely depleted Somerset) to go with 7 losses, some quite comprehensive. On a positive note, the final game was a very close affair, going down to table topping Warwickshire by just one wicket - Danny Briggs hitting the winning boundary after a hard boundary catch had gone down a few balls earlier. A couple of new players to the first team, both 19, were introduced, the top order batter Zach Lion-Cachet another product of Sussex's link with Oxfordshire who has impressed in various Second Eleven outings both this year and last. Also, Bertie Foreman, a promising left hand bat and off spin bowler (grandson of Dennis who played for Sussex in the 1960s and indeed also for Brighton and Hove Albion, last time I will mention that). Foreman has come through the Sussex age group and Academy route and has also performed creditably for the second team this year.

The message repeatedly coming out of the various Sussex post-match interviews is very much along the lines of "September is the key" and given that Sussex are fourth in the table second division table promotion is still a possibility. With this in mind Sussex have recruited the Indian left arm seamer Jaydev Unadkat but possibly only for the first three of the September games He played in both of India's last two test matches in the Caribbean but went wicketless though it needs to be mentioned that spinners Ashwin and Jadeja did much of the bowling and wicket taking. By all accounts he is a friend of Cheteshwar Pujara, and if the latter has recommended him then that sounds positive. 31 years old, Unadkat in 103 first class matches over thirteen years has taken 382 wickets at 22.58.

Reverting back to the One Day Cup personally I find that 50 over cricket is the most interesting of the limited over formats but suffers with the absence of many first team regulars absent being required for the Hundred.

Arundel – Even without first-class cricket (regrettable but possibly understandable given the County schedule), the Friends of Arundel Castle Cricket Club have put on a varied selection of fixtures this year with a few more scheduled for early September. Recently two of their "bigger days" took place. Firstly on August 13th the Cricketer Cup Final (competition for Public School old boys) when Old Malvernians proved too strong for Old Tonbridgians in a high standard of recreational cricket. Then the following Friday the Duke of Norfolk's side took on and beat a Lords Taverners XI, a more light-hearted affair but one which raises valuable funds for both the Arundel Foundation and Taverners. Those present would surely have enjoyed the "Arundel experience" and joy of watching cricket in these surroundings.

Clubs Sussex Premier League— Congratulations go to Cuckfield who clinched the Premier League title (their first) on the penultimate Saturday of the league season (26th August) with a win at Bognor on a day when their nearest, though possibly unlikely, title rivals East Grinstead and Preston Nomads had to settle for cancelled matches at Horsham and Mayfield respectively due to inclement weather - combination of thunder, lightning and heavy rain. Mayfield and in all probability, Eastbourne will be relegated and replaced by two from Hastings, Worthing (joint top with one game to go) and West Chiltington who probably need one of the top two to slip up. Final news on positions and a more extensive roundup next month.

2003 Season – Sussex win the County Championship for the first time.

Twenty years ago, winning the County Championship for the first time meant that arguably 2003 was Sussex's most momentous year. True Sussex were to win the championship twice more in the decade, in 2006 doubled up adding the Cheltenham & Gloucester Knock Out Cup to a Championship win, and had previously won limited overs Cups, but for me the first Championship Title remains my outstanding memory. Some personal recollections (supported by looking up some details) follow.

Sussex had finished second a few times in the past, for instance in post war years 1953 and more recently 1982 with fine players, indeed greats of Sussex cricket, but now at last the County had in Mushtaq Ahmed a spinner who regularly was a match winner. With due respect to the 1982 side, and possibly also 1953, those sides may have been missing this element. The little magician from Pakistan cast his spell on opposing batters throughout the sixteen match season with magnificent results - 103 wickets at 24.65, (a best of 7 for 85 when Sussex beat Warwickshire by an innings at Hove), ten times taking five or more wickets in an innings and five times ten or more in a match. So Mushtaq's year and much must go to credit here to coach Peter Moores and in particular Chris Adams who recruited him after seeing his ability when playing for Surrey at Hove the previous season even though that day Mushtaq was not the devastating force he was in 2003.

The batsmen largely prospered not least the excellent Murray Goodwin (opening the innings with the admirable Richard Montgomerie) proving to be one of the best in the country and a pleasure to watch. 1,496 runs came from his bat including 335 not out in the final game against Leicestershire at Hove and the same number of centuries from Chris Adams and Matt Prior plus three from Tony Cottee. James Kirtley and Jason Lewry led the seam bowling attack effectively. Kirtley, 49 wickets in only 11 games (his performance resulted in a call up to the England test squad that summer). Lewry 41 wickets often taking key wickets at the top of the order and possibly more surprisingly Lewry hit 70 at Colchester when Sussex beat Essex by an innings.

Yet Sussex started the season poorly losing three out of the first five matches (the other two were won) before embarking on a run of wins only interrupted by two draws, a rain affected draw at Trent Bridge and a high scoring draw with Surrey at Hove. An unusual occurrence arose in the game with Nottinghamshire at Horsham in late May, James Kirtley was included in an England 12 for a Test match against Zimbabwe at Lord's but released from the final eleven, and under the new ECB regulation could return and play in a County game already underway. Kevin Innes who started the Sussex match at Horsham as the nominated "stand-down" player if Kirtley returned went on to make a quick-fire century, 103 not out as Sussex batting first duly declared 619/7. Kirtley returned, and duly rested opened the bowling and so Innes's participation in the game was over! Has any player replaced as Innes was had such a brief but dramatic impact on a game? As for the game, despite a typically belligerent century from Kevin Pietersen, Nottinghamshire had to follow on and eventually Sussex won by 10 wickets - Mushtaq taking six wickets in each innings. As for Kirtley he took two wickets in Nottinghamshire's first innings, and four in their second!

As the season rolled on and entered August with Sussex now in serious title contention, matches were gaining in importance and none more so than the game with then third placed Lancashire at Hove. Chris Adams led the way with two centuries, 140 and 190, but on the final afternoon the game seemed to be heading for a draw when Lancashire started their second innings. But now Billy Taylor made his major contribution taking four early wickets before Mushtaq took another five for a crucial victory with not much time left. Then against Middlesex at Hove when the top order for once stuttered, Mark Davis (168) and Matt Prior (148) added 295 for the seventh wicket – another instance of the team all pulling together.

The return fixture with Lancashire, the penultimate fixture, could have sealed the title but instead Sussex suffered a loss by an innings and 19 runs, their fourth loss of the season (to go with ten wins in 2003). Although disappointing to lose against close title rivals, it did at least allow the championship to be sealed the following week against Leicestershire at Hove when Goodwin on a beautiful sunny September afternoon pulled Phil de Freitas for four to earn the decisive bonus point and the Title. And this in turn prompted an unusual break in play as the umpires allowed Chris Adams and his side to parade around the outfield to acknowledge the support of what was by then a good-sized crowd.

Many fine players and so well led by Chris Adams made for a memorable, and for Sussex supporters, a very happy season, one that sticks in the memory.