



SUSSEX CRICKET SOCIETY. NEWSLETTER

FOUNDED: 1965

CHAIR: DAVID BOWDEN MBE

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

www.sussexcricketsociety.org

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Future Dates 2024/25

March 19 Vic Marks

Previous 2024/5 speakers

July 7 Barry Richards

Sept. 25 Jeff Thomson

Oct 23 AGM plus Jon Filby
& Peter Fitzboyden

Nov 20 John Barclay,
John Snow &
Peter Graves

December 11 Christmas
lunch Graham Gooch
OBE

January 15, Jonathan
Agnew MBE

February 19, speaker
John Simpson, with
Paul Farbrace

The next and indeed final event of the Society's 2024/5 season will take place on the 19th of March, 2:00pm when Vic Marks, the former Somerset and England allrounder as well as being a respected journalist both in the written press (Guardian and Observer) and a regular contributor to Test Match Special.

Places for this event are still available, price £22 per head. If interested in attending please contact Ivor Evans by **9th March** (his contact details are email sussex.scs@btinternet.com (note the full stop between Sussex and scs), phone 07976 754411, post Beauchamps, Littleworth Lane, Partridge Green, RH13 8JF

When applying please provide Ivor with the following details: your name; telephone number; names of anyone coming with you or who you would like to sit with (every effort will be made to meet such a request but it cannot be guaranteed); any dietary / food allergy requirements for each person; and finally your selected payment method.

Payment can be made by Bank Transfer to Sussex Cricket Society (Sort Code 60-13-09 Account No. 57843570) showing your NAME & MARTEA e.g. Smith MarTea as the payment reference, or by cheque payable to Sussex Cricket Society sent to Ivor with your application. Transfer is our preferred payment option.

Even if you pay by transfer, it is essential that you let Ivor know that you have paid and are booking. Members who pay by bank transfer should make the transfer at the same time as they book.

After the close date for booking (9th March) there will be no refunds for any cancellation advised post 9th March (Reason: the caterers require final numbers by the cut-off date and charge the Society for that number. Car parking will be free within the Ground for the Tea subject to availability with the normal parking warden being stood down. Members or guests must not leave their cars at the Ground post event, especially overnight.

New Member Welcome to Martyn Thear

Deaths, It is with sadness to record two deaths in recent weeks.

Wouter Wilton a long-standing society member and a regular at recent society events. Our thoughts and condolences go to his family and many friends.

Nicholas Sharp another long-standing Society member and until recently regularly attended Society events. He was involved with the Sussex Cricket Museum and a key person in the development of the Museum reaching its current excellent status. Again, our condolences and thoughts go to his family and many friends.

Annual Renewals This year's annual subscription rates are the same as last year so £20 single £25 for a family/ joint plus an extra £23 if you wish the newsletter to be sent by post. Subscriptions are due on the 1st of April. This does not apply to members who have either joined via the society website, or the last year renewed via website - in these cases the annual renewal subscription will be collected automatically 12 months after the last payment (but only after the Society contacts you to advise you of the upcoming collection). Nor do annual renewals apply to those who are members via the Sussex Cricket Foundation. For all others with the subscription due on the 1st of April a renewal notice is enclosed. Some of you pay by standing order please make sure that your bank remits the correct amount

The other payment methods are cheque or preferably bank transfer. Alternatively, you can elect to join others and renew via the Society website this year even if you did not use this method last year. A note below describes how to do this.

For those paying by cheque please make the cheque payable to Sussex Cricket Society and return it with a completed renewal form to Chris Scovell contact details on the renewal form. Even if cheques are received before the 1st of April they will not be banked until after that date.

For those paying by bank transfer the payment details are account name Sussex Cricket Society Sort Code 60-13-09 Account No. 578435700 and please show as the payment reference SCSRNL with your surname e.g. SCSRNL SMITH. Please can you delay making transfer payments until the 1st of April. Please also advise Chris Scovell that a transfer payment has being made either by completing and returning the renewal form email or post) or simply by emailing Chris Scovell with the details so the type of membership and the amount and date of the payment along with your contact details.

To renew via the website for the first time, go to the Society website. www.sussexcricketsociety.org Choose the "Join Us" option and basically follow the steps for a new member, so firstly select the category (single or joint), then register on the site adding your contact details then your chosen payment detail – a debit or credit card. Once completed you will receive an automated email thanking you and welcoming you to the Society – the standard email issued to new members. A benefit will be that future renewals will be collected automatically exactly twelve months after this one via the website. As an annual payment has been created, the Society will contact and remind you in advance of the next scheduled collection, when you will have the option to cancel before renewing.

As in recent years membership cards will not be issued, if you require acknowledgement of your subscription payment, it can be sent on request by either e-mail or post, if the latter please provide a stamped addressed envelope for the reply.

Nathan McAndrew. Having last month mentioned Daniel Hughes and Jaden Seales, some comments about Nathan McAndrew's winter performances. In the Big Bash McAndrew helped his franchise Melbourne Renegades (late order hitting and competitive seam bowling) to reach the final where they came unstuck losing to Hobart Hurricanes. The Hurricanes took the Renegades bowlers including McAndrew to task in particular Mitch Owen hitting a blistering 108 from just 42 balls. He plays State cricket for South Australia who won the 50 over competition (named after Dean Jones) McAndrew taking three wickets in the final. He has also so far had a productive Sheffield Shield season including second innings bowling figures of 7/11 when SA beat Western Australia in a very low scoring first class Sheffield Shield match with conditions considerably bowler friendly at the WACA ground in Perth. (The WACA is still used for State and women's matches, while Big Bash and mens Test matches are held at the much larger 60,000 seater Optus stadium just across Perth's Swan River.) South Australia with five wins from eight matches currently top the Shield table with a couple of rounds still to play so barring unforeseen results they are likely to contest the final at the end of March.

John Simpson and Paul Farbrace - February 2025

Thanks to Ivor for the review and photographs

Eighty nine people booked for this event. Sussex Legends was excellent. Graham Gooch was excellent. Jonathan Agnew was excellent. However, for your reviewer this event was perhaps the best of the lot. Why may you ask? The answer was that it was different. The reason that it was different was that it wasn't just anecdotes and stories. We were taken behind the scenes; we learnt about the relationships between coach, captain and the team. The respective roles of coach and captain. How they work and interact with each other. Their roles with the team, developing it, creating a team spirit. When to call out a player, gee them up or put the metaphorical arm around them. In summary, it was a master class.

A departure from the usual formats of a speaker either talking for forty minutes or being interviewed in a question and answer session. We were taken into coach's office, the dressing room and on to the field in the form of a conversation between John Simpson and Paul Farbrace.

The Conversation



To start at the beginning with the recruitment of John Simpson. It began at Ashford International in Autumn 2023. They had known each other a long time. Paul was selling Sussex's vision for the future; he spoke about winning. John was entering the final year of his contract at Middlesex and wanted to maximise his remaining career. Sussex were offering a three year contract. It didn't take John long to realise that Sussex was the place that he wanted to be. Agreement was practically reached later that same evening.

On John's part there was some trepidation leaving Middlesex after so many years. It has turned out to be a very special move. His personal objective was to make an impact as both captain and player on the field but likewise also for the team on and off the field. Sussex has a good crop of young players who have all grown up together, most of them with good cricketing brains. John is passionate about helping improve them further. Paul commented listening to John's answer was that it wouldn't surprise anyone to know why he wanted him at Sussex. You heard the passion and determination to do well but also the pride of someone who leaves no stone unturned to be the best he can be every day.

Paul continued by saying that John was the person he wanted as captain to set the right standards. He openly admitted in his first season as coach that he made mistakes by trying to coach the team from the side lines. He could set up the team. He could prepare the team, and he could set up the team, but John was the person he could absolutely trust to translate that on the field. John is also one of, if not the fittest member of the squad.

The captain and coach roles are so important along with their personal relationship. Trusting each other is so important. Having been around cricket for so long, that in reality with that collectively cricketers could be bracketed into a limited number of characteristics. It generally did not take too long to work out where each player lay. You can almost work out what may happen before it actually does. You work out how you will speak to individual players. Paul may give them the proverbial kick up the backside and John will put the metaphorical around them to ensure that they understand what the message was about. The last thing you want is a captain undermining a coach. You don't want the

captain telling a player when he has received a rocket from the coach that it was down to the coach feeling grumpy that day. The captain needs to have the conversation with the player why he thinks the coach is on his case and why he is giving him a hard time.

Coach and captain communicate near enough on a daily basis often six or seven times a day. They do not necessarily agree all of the time and it was important that they didn't, but the maintaining and continual level of trust was both essential and important. They gave the example of the last season's game against Northampton and a difference of view as to playing Sean Hunt or Danny Lamb. Sean Hunt played, took some crucial wickets and Sussex ended up winning the game.

The captain/coach relationship was the most important in any club. The key intention was to set up a team that represents, the club, coach and captain with the intention of winning the game. They may not get it right every time but that was life.

Captain and coach are constantly looking/reviewing players with the aim of improving them and getting that extra ten percent out of them on a continual basis. Also, another objective was to improve and maintain discipline on the field.

Over the previous two seasons Sussex selection had been very consistent. Both Paul and John were of the view that they would rather select a player for a game or two more than a game or two less. The set up was two front line bowlers, two all-rounders and two spinners. For the coming season, with players returning to fitness and overseas players available, captain and coach have been contemplating having three front line bowlers and one all-rounder but continuing to play two spinners. One reason being the return to fitness of Tom Clark and Jack Carson's continued improvement with both bat and ball. The batting nearly always takes care of itself. However, it is important that the captain has the final say on the bowling line up. If there is someone the captain does not want in the side there is the strong possibility they will not see too much of the ball. It should also not be forgotten that Sussex have four young spinners and different techniques e.g. Jack Carson at 6'2" and over the top, whilst Bertie Foreman at 5'6" with a different angle of attack.

Paul reflected on his days starting out a young coach; the coaches were dictatorial, and they continually told you that you were rubbish. When he first arrived at Sussex, he had to learn how to become a coach again. Previously he had been a director of cricket for four years. He had to learn all over again how to work with young people. Dealing with young people today and how one interacts with them has changed. It is not straightforward, and it is getting harder and harder. Agents are now involved. He cited contract negotiations with one player. They had been interminably long. It got to the stage where they were told as they were entering the final year their contract would not be renewed. The player wanted to stay, he was upset and just wanted it sorted. His angst wasn't aimed at Paul but rather the people who were supposed to be giving him good advice. There was always the danger that players think that the club were selling you short and not giving them what they thought they deserved. Players are being continually told that it is in the best interests of the club to stay for the longest possible time. You have to help players manage their emotions. On the field it must be clear to players what is expected of them and provide them with a clear and simple plan.

John compared young players with himself as a young professional. Yes, he may have used a Play Station, but social media wasn't really around then. John would pick up his phone and call or use WhatsApp. Young players use Snap Chat. John doesn't mind them using mobile phones in the changing room but would prefer them not to do so in the viewing area. He would rather they were watching the cricket and learning.

It was really enlightening to hear John talking about last season's debrief he had with each player individually. John wants them to be the best players they can possibly be. He didn't want them to have distractions during game time. He asked some of the younger players what they had learned from last season and many of them were not able to answer the question. With a bit of prodding and poking he asked them what were their goals and what had they achieved. It wasn't always easy to get answers. Sometimes they need a kick up the backside. Paul reflected that his own father would tell him when he played well and when he had not. He liked the honesty but these days it was not always possible as criticism might well affect their confidence. Players have to understand that criticism they receive is because coach and captain want them to do well and they believe that they have the talent to do so, not only in county cricket but hopefully later on in International cricket.

One really interesting point John made, and I am sure that Club and Society members would concur with is that for several recent years, young Sussex players had few senior players to look up to, influence, and motivate them. All of which leads to a lack of confidence. They were turning up for training and not much more. When challenged about training and preparation the answers were not very positive. They certainly could not answer the question, 'so what was the impact on you and club if you injure yourself.' Having individual conversations with players, they know now what is expected of them and to drive both themselves and Sussex forward to winning trophies.

Paul talked about team spirit amongst the players. He cited the example when Tom Clark scored a hundred at Hove last season, he had never seen so many players watching and desperate for him to get the hundredth run. When he did the balcony doors were opened and everyone streamed out on to the balcony and were genuinely pleased for him. For Paul this was a clear sign that the club were going in the right direction. Similarly, when Oli Carter failed in the 'nineties' the whole team were desperately sorry for him.

It was so pleasing to see players genuinely wanting others to succeed. Sussex now had a very close knit squad/team. Both Paul and John had been in dressing rooms where this had not been the case and waiting desperately for people to fail and get it wrong so that they could play - these were the people who did not care about the team ethic.

Paul ended the first part of the afternoon by observing just how important Sussex cricket was to people. Hove was a special place with special people. The current chair and past chair were in the room, along with people who have done so much to support all formats and levels of cricket throughout the county. Sometimes he has to take decisions that aren't necessarily popular with everyone, but Paul stressed they were taken for the good of the club and not him personally, but in taking them he knew that he had the support of the Chair.

Questions and Answers with Roger Dakin

Paul – Why did you choose cricket. He started off as a goalkeeper at Coventry City. He spent a year there and was called into the office by the then manager, Bobby Gould, that height and ability was required, and he didn't have either(!) – and that was the end of his career as a professional footballer. However immediately following on he was offered a one year contract to be a wicketkeeper at Kent.



John – Both his great grandfather and grandfather played rugby league for England while his father played lacrosse for England, so why did he choose cricket – First thing, he didn't inherit the rugby league genes. Initially he played for Bury FC academy. He quickly realised that he wouldn't be good enough and decided to pick up a cricket bat.

Paul – Started his career coaching under 15s football at Hampton School football. This morphed into cricket coaching, followed on by teaching A level business studies. For business

studies it was the first time he had ever stepped into an A Level class as he had none himself. In addition, he took PE and was a form tutor. In all he spent seven years there both part time and full time.

Learning is a continual process, and one lesson Paul has learned is that a coach doesn't need to know everything, he didn't need to be across everything and didn't need to make every decision. What was required was the right people in the right job that you trust them and empower them. It brings more success, and it enables people to learn and develop.



John – State school educated. He started his cricket in the Lancashire League sides. Started at the Lancashire Academy and later moved on to Middlesex. He now has a degree in Sports and Business Administration.

Figures suggest that increasingly cricketers are public school educated. That may be true, but often only in the last two years of their education. They are often picked up because they are good at cricket and offered a scholarship, and what parent wouldn't say no to such a chance, having their child educated at a facility that offered good facilities and opportunities.

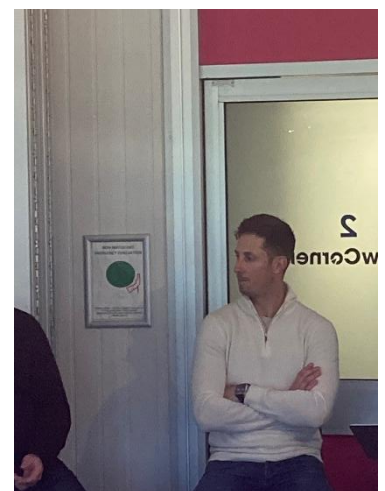
Paul commended Brighton Aldridge Cricket Academy (BACA) for the wonderful work they do with children and the facilities they have available on offer at Falmer.

Paul – Was asked about his solitary wicket in first class cricket (1/64) – It was while playing for Middlesex at Lords - a thin edge to deep square leg – the batsman – Graham Gooch.

Paul – James Coles and Henry Crocombe were selected for the English Lions. Twelve other players are in various parts of the world. Such a high number of players reflects well and is also a wonderful advert for Sussex cricket. It brings a lot of pride and kudos to the club. Paul has either a phone call or video chat with all these players every couple of weeks.

Paul – Talks to a lot of coaches in different sports. Graham Potter (ex-Albion) came in and spoke to the players during the season. He talked a lot about his time out after leaving Chelsea. He spoke brilliantly about what it takes to succeed at the top level and sharing what coaches are looking for from individuals.

Managing Pressure - Following England's loss in the Champions Trophy against Pakistan in 2017 after the game the conversations weren't about losing that game but more about winning the 2019 World Cup. England's Rugby World Cup coach, Stuart Lancaster asked was about the successes and regrets leading up to and during that competition. From there-on a key focus was managing the various



components of Pressure. People have asked whether the main objective of 2025 is to survive in Division One. No, the answer is thrive. You don't want to put unnecessary pressure on the players to succeed. It's going to be tough, but the ambition should/must be to succeed. In the opening county games of the season players should not fear going to Notts and Warwickshire away and entertaining Surrey and Somerset at Hove.

Questions From The Floor

Jofra Archer – Although he hasn't played much for Sussex in the last few years, his contribution to the squad has been immense. On the pre-season to India in 2024, he spent time with all of the players, he contributed to every team meeting. In Bangalore (Bengaluru), Sussex had been asked to visit a school. Sussex thought that they might have to cancel the event due to time constraints as it was a training day. Only a very short conversation was required for Jofra to take a two and half hour car journey, spend one and hours handing out tea shirts, talking to the children, having photographs taken followed by another two and a half hours back to the hotel.

Jofra gives a lot back to cricket. He may not be playing but he is involved in the game and perhaps what the most important thing members wanted to hear was that he is passionate about Sussex cricket.

Daniel Hughes update – He fractured his elbow twice over the winter. He is now fully fit and will be arriving at Hove on or around 20th March.

What Part Does Alcohol Play in Cricket Today – An entirely different culture from when Paul was a player. Also, the overall levels of team fitness are incomparable. Compared to yesteryear, alcohol is not the issue that it once was. As a coach, Paul has to balance celebrating a win and celebrating it in the right way. When Sussex win away from Hove they will try to get back to BN3. One reason being with such a strong bond in the squad. not only team will the winning team be present but non travelling players make the effort to come in from home and will join in the celebrations.

Observation From Your Reviewer – Should Paul and John ever want to move on from cricket they should look to move into business consultancy; how to develop and motivate individuals and develop organisations. Equally important and which is tended to be overlooked develop an individual/organisation team spirit and ethos to enable both individual and organisations thrive. It remains a complete mystery how much any of the this can be achieved when individuals spend a significant proportion of working from home with communication via e-mail and Zoom.

Heads & Tails

This month, Head and Tails raised in excess of £300. The winner was Mr Robin Oliver. He guessed correctly the time shown by Big Ben on a bottle of HP sauce. If you want to know the answer, look in your kitchen cabinets or alternatively pay a visit to your local supermarket. Members attending society events, please consider joining in. It is a valuable source of funds to enable the Society to attract speakers like Graham Gooch, Jonathan Agnew and Vic Marks.

Until the next time.