



# SUSSEX CRICKET SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

SCS Founded : 1965

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President: David Bowden MBE

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## 2020/2021 PROGRAMME

### ALL EVENTS CANCELLED

#### 2020

~~Aug 24<sup>th</sup> Garden Party~~

~~Oct 14<sup>th</sup> AGM (7pm) Evening Meeting~~

~~Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> Evening Meeting~~

~~Nov 25<sup>th</sup> Autumn Lunch 12noon~~

~~Dec 8<sup>th</sup> Afternoon Meeting~~

#### 2021

~~Jan 12<sup>th</sup> Afternoon Meeting~~

~~Feb 10<sup>th</sup> Afternoon Meeting~~

~~Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> Evening Meeting~~

~~Mar 17<sup>th</sup> Spring Lunch 12noon~~

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Normally we would be asking for renewals this month, but as mentioned before subscriptions are being waived in 2021 for "paid up" members given that the Society were unable to offer any events in the last year. Please put standing orders on hold.

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

The 2021 English cricket season is now only a matter of weeks away, Sussex have a couple of two-day pre-season friendlies, against Surrey (March 30/31) and then Hampshire (April 1&2) in advance of the Championship starting on April 8<sup>th</sup>. All cheery news, and unlike last year there is a real prospect that spectators will have the opportunity to see games in person, though not at first as the Country continues to move out of Covid lockdown restrictions which is due in no small measure to the successful vaccination programme.

The two friendlies as well as the first six rounds of the Championship will be played "behind closed doors", including three Sussex home Championship matches, the on paper attractive, and in recent years, rare fixtures with Lancashire, Yorkshire and Kent. (The last time spectators were allowed entry when Sussex hosted these counties in the Championship was respectively 2014, 2015 and 2017.) The Government "Roadmap out of Lockdown" looks to allow a limited number of spectators (based on a proportion of ground capacity) from mid May for about five weeks – home games in this time are Northants in the Championship, two lucrative home T20 Blast games (Hampshire and Somerset) and likely also the Sri Lanka T20 match on 20<sup>th</sup> June, the day before conditions are due to further ease.

Then things seem likely to get easier for cricket watchers, and Counties, from 21<sup>st</sup> June when the Government Roadmap indicates a widespread reopening of activities, and hopefully for cricket easing restrictions on attendances. Well that looks to be the current aim, and it seems as though Counties (and England) seem to be anticipating the full return of crowds looking at some statements being made on ticket sales. Home matches from that date are firstly in the Championship Glamorgan (start of July) plus two more in the second stage post the August Bank Holiday (opponents and dates yet to be confirmed), the remaining five home T20 Blast games, all the Royal Life 50 over games plus the knockout stages of the "white ball" competitions.

I hope these targets can be met and while aware of the words "not before than" in the Roadmap. We need the current positive news regarding both vaccinations and the reduction in cases to continue, and if all goes well, spectator admission gets the full go-ahead, it will be good to be able to see county cricket live again.

Players too will be pleased to see the return of crowds and the atmosphere they bring. For Sussex and other Counties they too will be pleased to eventually welcome back members and also paying spectators, and of course the opportunity to re-open their valuable catering, hospitality and events markets.

It could be that the middle spell with some restrictions may be hardest to manage as could be the case if any further "social distancing" is imposed later in the summer. And certainly hard, almost impossible I suspect, for the three outgrounds. Sussex are yet to announce if any games are played away from Hove. While many will be disappointed, it would be understandable if Sussex decide this year not to use Arundel, Eastbourne or Horsham, not least as the early Hove matches will be "behind closed doors" or with restricted attendances. Hopefully these three can be used on 2022 even if not this year.

On top of County cricket there comes the new, and as yet seemingly unloved by many, "Hundred" in July and August. Here I am taking an open-minded approach here if it attracts new interest in cricket. There is a full season of international cricket, Test series against New Zealand and India (these two are also set to contest the final of the World Test Championship in June, probably at Southampton's Aegis Bowl with its on site hotel). Between the two Test series are "white ball series against Sri Lanka and Pakistan – a busy year in prospect.

**Society News** - We hope to be able to start holding events again with much depending on Government regulations relating to indoor events and of course Sussex having facilities available for our use. Already David is looking at a draft schedule though nothing can be finalised or announced yet. News will be announced here when dates / speakers are confirmed.

**Distribution of the Newsletter.** Over 2/3<sup>rds</sup> of members now receive the newsletter by e-mail. If you currently receive the postal version but would like the e-mail one then please contact Chris Scovell, details on page 1. That said I know that some members either do not use e-mail or prefer the paper version sent by post.

On the subject of the newsletter, any **contributions from members** would be welcome, please contact Chris Scovell with anything that you would like included in future editions (in the region of up to 300 words)

**Death** –With regret we announce the death of long term Society member John Hayward, Lewes. Our condolences and sympathies go to his wife, family and many friends.

**Sussex News** The 2020 side included many youngsters and this year is likely to be strengthened with the addition of two experienced left handed batsmen. The Australian Travis Head and the return of Stiaan Van Zyl. Head's arrival seems likely to be delayed with his existing commitments with South Australia who he captains - their final Sheffield shield game looks likely to be played roughly when Sussex open their campaign against Lancashire. So, it could be well into April before he arrives. It will be interesting to see how the youngsters have developed.

Sussex have also appointed two further coaches – Sarah Taylor to work with the club's wicket-keepers and Ashley Wright as assistant batting coach. Sarah's was the headline news in the wider media, I suspect both have plenty to offer. Sarah won 226 England caps (Test and Limited Overs) during which her glovework was of the highest standard, and a more than competent batter. Ashley will assist head batting coach Jason Swift.

The Foundation held another entertaining Zoom evening on 8<sup>th</sup> March with much of the emphasis on the Foundation's highly commendable project aimed at improving wellbeing and mental health in the community. A recording is available at <https://we.tl/t-Vgini7LM1b> (note it lasts about two hours). Another event is scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> April with Eoin Morgan the "headline interview". Also on zoom will be Sussex's AGM, set for March 30, second year a row in this format. (I know many do not like or use zoom or see it as a necessary evil, though personally I have got quite used to Zoom in the twelve months or so.

### **England in India.**

After a good start winning the first test, things "turned" round in the next three all won by the hosts. Three turning and difficult pitches allied to India's far superior spin bowling (Ashwin and Patel were outstanding) - key factors. In these games few on either side batted with any ease, possible exceptions being Rohit Sharma and Rishabh Pant and to a lesser extent Virat Kohli though even he did not dominate as might have been expected. India certainly took full benefit of home advantage, as to an extent do other countries in their local conditions.

Pant's exuberance and skill shone, and now in recent months contributed outstanding innings in Sydney, Brisbane and now three times in this low scoring series. Many will recall an incredible, but very modern shot off Jimmy Anderson, reverse sweeping / scooping a boundary over slip in the final test. My favourite Pant moment, also from that innings, came when England took the new ball with India six wickets down and leading by just 18, Pant advanced to the first delivery and drove Anderson to the long off boundary for four, a shot of real daring and adventure which types his exciting talent.

The new stadium in Ahmedabad seats over 130,000, by some way the most of any cricket venue worldwide was admired by many but for me it looked a giant bowl in the design of say Melbourne and Perth, without any obvious break in the bowl, not my preferred design. A cricket stadium, not a cricket ground. And as for the pitch well it may well in time be a fine surface, but was it ready? The stadium was only recently completed and given the struggles batsmen had had me looking to see results from recent games at the venue. Somewhat to my surprise when looking at the Cricket Archive database the venue had not hosted a first class match since the recently completed rebuild, the last listed was a Ranji Trophy game in January 2015 (though in October 2016 a non-first class Under 23 four day fixture was held there). Both interestingly were high scoring games. There may have been recent minor matches, but if so not listed by Cricket Archive. I suspect in time it will be an impressive international venue.

Test series over, England started the T20 series in fine fettle, the likes of Jos Buttler and Jonny Bairstow looking almost different players not now subjected to trial by spin at the hands of Ashwin and Patel. England have taken an early lead in this series which is a stepping stone to the World T20 tournament due to be held in India later this year. There has been much talk about the "rotation" policy England adopted. I am sure players are keen to play as much as possible, but in these days with the requirement to stay in "bubbles" equally sure that the breaks were welcome. That said I wonder about some of the rotation timings and the priorities given to Red or White ball.

As for television coverage Channel Four offered full TV exposure showing every ball which was good for UK terrestrial watchers, I understand that their viewing numbers exceeded the Sky figures for the earlier series in Sri Lanka (although of course that would not have been as popular). But against that C4 and any watchers to cricket would have been disappointed that there were only fourteen days cricket (out of twenty) with just one game (the first going to five days). Now it is back to Sky for the T20s and ODIs. With C4 showing this Test series, they, Sky and BT (Australia, New Zealand and West Indies home games) have broadcast live cricket this winter.