



## Putting a different spin on cricket, where waves stop play

Hampshire may be playing host to new cricket competition, The Hundred, in 2021, but the county is also home to the world's most quirky match - played in the middle of the sea.

This summer, Southampton's Hampshire Bowl is set to be one of the UK venues for The Hundred, a new family-friendly, action-packed 100 ball cricket competition featuring some of the world's best players.

But every year Hampshire - often called the 'cradle of cricket' thanks to a club founded in the 1750s - is also home to one of the strangest games of cricket played anywhere in the world.

It all happens during the year's lowest spring tide, usually in late summer, when two sides take to the field, or, in this case, a sandbar, which surfaces in the middle of The Solent.

The annual Bramble Bank cricket match takes place in the sea between Hampshire and the Isle of Wight on a stretch of sand that only becomes visible once a year.

Believed to have started in the 1950s, this quirkiest of cricket matches sees local yacht clubs from either side of the Solent play against each other until play is stopped, not by rain, but waves.

And, putting yet another spin on everything, the match winner is always decided beforehand, although in true cricket fashion, the teams take it in turn to scoop top honours.

For most of the year, the Bramble Bank is covered with shallow water, making it a well-known shipping hazard, but it emerges above the surface when the tide drops to its lowest point.

When it does, the Royal Southern Yacht Club, based in Hamble, Hampshire, and the Island Sailing Club, based in Cowes on the Isle of Wight, turn up for the Bramble Bank Cricket Match. The match usually lasts around half an hour or so, before the sea reclaims the pitch.

While the Bramble Bank match is one of cricket's quirkiest sporting events, the more traditional game returns to Hampshire when The Hundred arrives this summer. Scheduled to run throughout the summer, it will be staged at a number of UK venues. One of the tournament's eight teams is 'The Southern Brave' and the men's and women's teams, featuring world class talent, will be based at The Ageas Bowl (<https://www.thehundred.com>).

Hosting The Hundred is just the latest cricketing success story for Hampshire, which is widely known as "the cradle of cricket", thanks to Hambledon Cricket Club. Founded in the 1750s it became one of England's most powerful cricket clubs and was instrumental in

helping to develop many of the early rules of the game before the focus switched to Lord's at the end of the 18th century.

Matches were played on Broadhalfpenny Down, where a permanent monument marks the links ([www.broadhalfpennydown.com](http://www.broadhalfpennydown.com)), while The Bat and Ball pub, which became Hambledon's clubhouse, today draws cricket fans from across the world to see historic memorabilia adorning the walls ([www.batandballclanfield.co.uk](http://www.batandballclanfield.co.uk)).

Start planning your cricket short break at [www.visit-hampshire.co.uk/cricket](http://www.visit-hampshire.co.uk/cricket)

For general tourist information about Hampshire, and for the latest updates on what's open, see [www.visit-hampshire.co.uk](http://www.visit-hampshire.co.uk)