

The Virtual Wisdener

No 30. January 30 2021.

The Newsletter of the Wisden Collectors' Club

I am going to be honest with you - I felt a little embarrassed when I sent out the last edition of The Virtual Wisdener, embarrassed because I was so eager to get it out quickly that I was not happy with it, so I apologise.

Well, it finally had to happen didn't it? Or has it been going on a while and I have simply missed it? A ten over-per-side competition, or to give it its unique, ingeniously thought through title, 'the T10 League', according to The Cricketer, "It's only the inaugural T10 League (formerly known as the T10 Cricket League) because the 'Cricket' bit got removed for copyright reasons."

Confession time, I turned on the TV in between bites of my sandwich at lunch (it was actually a mini-bagel with Philadelphia owing to Lorraine's strict instructions that I need to lose a pound by March, or something like that anyway)..and I saw a live match from the UAE with some batsman being bowled after hitting the bowler for two sixes and then receiving a barrage of yelling and abuse from the bowler that was quite disgusting.

Witnessing some over-excited yob screaming whatever abuse he could at the batsman as he walked off was pathetic. It reminded me of long-ago nights out near Borough Market in London. Maybe the wicket earned him a bonus, maybe he had just been told that his T5 contract for the competition in Baggawaroo in 2022 had been cancelled...no matter, it was just sad and utterly unjustified. The removal of the word 'cricket' from the aforementioned 'thing' is the only consolation.

I turned it off and later saw the highlights of a fabulous performance by Pakistan to defeat South Africa. The same afternoon I spoke to David Hutchinson who set the Bumper Christmas Quiz who told me that he was thoroughly enjoying watching highlights and live action from overseas domestic cricket matches...and my faith in the game was restored.

Let us hope that the garbage I watched from the UAE is not a taster of what The Hundred might become. Every passing day there seems to be good news about one vaccine or another and with a full programme of domestic and international cricket planned in England for 2021 we may well get to actually attend some of it. I am chuffed to bits that our readers in Australia

Special Quiz running through February and March

After the success of the Bumper Christmas Quiz I hope you all like this next one..If you would kindly look at Page 15, you will find more details of The Wisdeners' February and March Quiz.

and New Zealand are able to go to the cricket and thank you to those of you who have let me know how much you are enjoying it..seriously, I am not at all envious!

A couple of things have intrigued me recently, firstly, England going to Sri Lanka and Anderson and Broad only playing one Test each. This riled me especially as like 99.99% of the population (of the UK) we are told not to travel, but England pop over to Sri Lanka and some of them have a little holiday. *Seriously!* Will both bowlers be alternated in India?

The other thing was the news that India are going to play what I first thought were two matches against two counties prior to the series in England in the summer, but then I read it again and it seems that India A will play India B at Northampton and Leicester. A Northamptonshire spokesman said " "Some of the world's finest international cricketers will be on show at The County Ground this summer as we welcome India and India A."

Why can't India play Northamptonshire and Leicestershire - I'd rather go and watch either game than the India B team. Again, *seriously!*

We all know that for years not a single tour match was watched by a single spectator - we know this because the ECB (and any other body with different initials) kept on telling us. The same way that North Koreans are told they are the wealthiest and happiest people in the world.

Rather than patronise the cricketing public with an exhibition game try giving us something meaningful to watch. Make it interesting by giving the counties a cash incentive to win the game. Think it through - it is a win-win. Competitive matches, competitive cricket and fans, vaccines permitting of course.

Please continue to stay safe, I can see the wicket at the end of the pitch and the pint in the bar...

Bill, Lorraine and The Furmedge Daughters.

The winner of the teaser in issue 29 was Paul Hardwick who correctly named Kevin Pietersen and Jonathan Trott a the missing names - and the link between them was that they had all been opening Test partners during Alastair Cook's career.

The Bowler's Holding the Batsman's Willey

Glenn McGrath took time off from demolishing England's batsmen to help save the house of his captain, Steve Waugh, from the bushfires around the suburbs of Sydney on December 4.

Waugh was in Melbourne at a book-signing when the fires came within 40 yards of his home at Alford's Point in one of the worst droughts in living memory in New South Wales. McGrath answered a distress call from Waugh's wife, Lynette, and worked with her father Phil Dowdy to keep the flames at bay.

'The fires came up towards the back of the house and I just did a bit of spotting, keeping an eye on the embers coming into the yard and over the roof,' he said. 'The radio was going all the time and a few houses had gone up nearby, so that was a bit scary. All I did was get smoke in my eyes. I had a mask on but I still inhaled quite a bit and I felt a bit shabby.'

Melbourne Age, January 2003.

Bradman blamed

Ian Chappell, the former Australian captain, has laid part of the blame for the fractious exodus of international cricketers to the Kerry Packer camp in the late 1970s on Sir Donald Bradman. In the ABC television series *Cricket In The Seventies: The Chappell Era* he said Bradman refused to improve players' pay and conditions.

'Bradman had as much to do with starting World Series Cricket as anybody because I got the feeling that he treated the Board's money as though it was almost his own,' said Chappell. 'He wasn't going to shell out anything.' After a tour of India during which they were billeted in poor hotels and paid match fees of £130 per player, Chappell called for greater benefits for the players. Though Bradman was no longer chairman of selectors, he dominated two meetings with the Australian Cricket Board on the issue.

'When (Bradman) was a player, he opposed the Board and I knew what had gone on, and the hypocrisy didn't escape me,' added Chappell. 'In fact at one stage he wasn't going to be playing in the Bodyline series because he was contracted to write a newspaper column, but the Board obviously persuaded him to play before making him a selector while he was still playing and then appointing him as chairman.'

Ian Chappell, The Cricketer 2004.

Lord MacLaurin, the outgoing chairman of the ECB, publicly criticised Andrew Flintoff for arriving in Australia unfit after a double hernia operation in September. 'I think players have got to take responsibility for their own fitness and maybe Freddie did not take his recuperation as seriously as he should have done,' he said.

The ECB reportedly set up an inquiry into the conduct of Flintoff and Darren Gough while they were officially supposed to be rehabilitating at the National Sports

Centre in Lilleshall prior to the Ashes tour. Complaints were allegedly made by others who were using the facilities.

Gough defended his team mate vehemently. 'I was disgusted with what Lord MacLaurin said. Andrew is looking the best he's ever looked in his whole career. He had surgery pretty late because yet again he was doing things to please England. He played in one more Test for his country to try to help the team get a result and a series win,' he said, referring to the Headingley Test against India in August for which he delayed surgery.

The Telegraph, March 2003.

A Sri Lankan forced his wife to stay under the a bed for hours without food or water for hours every day because she refused to 'worship' pictures of the Sri Lankan batsman Roshan Mahanama.

The Times of India, March 1998.

South Africa's captain Hansie Cronje has sent a letter of apology to the Australian Cricket Board following an incident in which he speared a stump through the umpires' room door at the conclusion of the Adelaide Test. His act was prompted by the decision to give Mark Waugh not out after he had hit his wicket while walking away after being hit by a bouncer.

The Sydney herald, 1998.

Geoffrey Boycott, who was found guilty of assaulting his mistress, Margaret Moore, in a French court on January 20 1994, has been circulating a petition among cricketing alumnae, asking them if they think he is an honest man and if they have ever known him to be violent. The statements may be used when Boycott tries to overturn his conviction at a retrial later this year.

The Cricketer, March 1994.

This edition of The Virtual Wisdener has been sent out to
8,134 people

The current membership of the Wisden Collectors' Club is
2,789 people

If you are receiving this newsletter and you would details on how to become a member of The Wisden Collectors' Club please contact me - details are to the left.

It Happened in January

1862:

Victoria and New South Wales met at Melbourne in the only first-class match of the overseas season. Victoria (182 & 5-0) won by ten wickets after compelling New South Wales (76 & 109) to follow-on. J. Huddleston (44) hit the best score of the match while S. Cosstick (1-11 & 5-22) took the most wickets.

1930

West Indian cricket batsman George Headley scores 157 of 176 on debut on the 4th day of the drawn 1st Test against England in Bridgetown, Barbados.

1912:

F. E. Woolley scored 305* for M.C.C. against Tasmania at Hobart, still the highest score by an Englishman in Australia. He went in to bat when the first wicket fell at 62 and was still there when the innings was declared closed, having hit 2 sixes and 43 fours in scoring 305* out of 512 in 210 minutes and set a new record by reaching 300 in only 205 minutes.

He shared in two large partnerships, adding 206 for the second wicket with W. Rhodes (102) and 264 for the third with J. W. Hearne (97). It is worth noting that M.C.C.s total of 574-4d was scored off 88.2 six-ball overs.

1993:

Brian Lara scores his maiden Test century, eventually making 277 for West Indies against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

1895:

Australian cricket spin bowler Albert Trott takes 8-43 on debut to end England's 2nd innings at 143 in 3rd Test in Adelaide; Australia wins by 382 in 4 days.

1937:

W. N. Carson, playing in his second match in first-class cricket, went in to bat second wicket down for Auckland v. Otago at Dunedin and shared in a world record. Hitting 38 fours, Carson scored 290 out of a third wicket stand of 445 in 268 minutes with P. E. Whitelaw (195 in 5y hours). Carson scored at a good speed for most of his innings, reaching 100 in 136 minutes, 200 in 210 minutes and adding the last 90 in only 58 minutes.

This partnership passed the previous best of 389 in 1934 and might have been beaten in its turn in 1948, W. J. Edrich and D. C. S. Compton having already added 424 for Middlesex v. Somerset at Lord's when a declaration cut short their attempt.

1929:

Future Australian cricket captain Don Bradman scored an unbeaten 340 for NSW v Victoria (488 mins, 38 fours); then highest individual score in a Sheffield Shield match

1952:

S. C. Guillen, deputy wicket-keeper with the West Indies team in Australia, had a haul of fourteen victims in a week in the two matches against Tasmania. In the first game at Launceston he dismissed eight batsmen (3 ct., 5 st.), six of them in the first innings, and in the second at Hobart he claimed a further six victims.

1864:

The second English team to tour Australia under the captaincy of George Parr opened their tour on January 1st with a drawn match against XXII of Victoria which lasted for four days.

A further four matches against local sides with twenty-two players were played during the month, all of which were won, before the side departed for New Zealand.

1914:

England beat South Africa in the third Test match by 91 runs at Johannesburg to win the rubber. The South Africans, who had lost each of the first two Test matches by an innings, put up a far stronger fight in this match. After being set 396 to get a win, they made 304 with the aid of a first wicket partnership of 153 by H. W. Taylor and J. W. Zulek.

1939:

Sir Donald Bradman equalled the record C. B. Fry created in 1901 by scoring his fifth and sixth consecutive centuries in first-class cricket and both for South Australia in the Sheffield Shield competition. E. Paynter scored 243 in the third Test match between England and South Africa at Durban, his second double century in Test cricket in less than a year.

1954:

West Indies beat England by 140 runs in the first Test match at Kingston, G. Headley making his last appearance in Test cricket at the age of 44. New Zealand made their highest score in Test cricket—505—in the third Test match v. South Africa at Cape Town which was drawn.

1902:

Australian cricket spin bowler Hugh Trumble dismisses England batsmen Arthur Jones, John Gunn and Sydney Barnes in successive balls to complete 2nd Test rout by 229 runs in Melbourne; Trumble's first of 2 Test hat-tricks.

1997:

Zimbabwe cricket fast bowler Eddo Brandes takes a ODI hat-trick as the home team scores another upset against England in Harare, winning by 131 runs and sweeping the series 3-0

1925

England cricket opening batsman Herbert Sutcliffe follows his 1st innings 176 with 127 in the 2nd innings but his team cannot avoid an 81 run defeat to Australia in the 2nd Test in Melbourne.

It Happened in January

1933:

Australian batsman Bert Oldfield's skull fractured by delivery bowled by Englishman Harold Larwood during the third test in Adelaide

1879

Australian fast bowler Fred Spofforth dismisses 3 English batsmen with consecutive deliveries during the 3rd Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground for Test cricket's first "hat-trick."

1967:

Second day's play in the 2nd Test in Calcutta between India and West Indies is cancelled by riots; ticket holders denied access start trouble outside the ground and this escalates with fires in the stands and pitch damage.

1978:

Indian cricket spin bowler B. S. Chandrasekhar becomes first in Test history to register identical figures in both innings (6 for 52) in Indian innings win over Australia in 3rd Test in Melbourne

1995:

Mike Gatting (207) and Graeme Fowler (201) become the first pair of England batsmen to complete double centuries in the same innings during the nine wicket 4th cricket Test win against India at Madras.

1988

19-year-old Indian cricket leg-spinner Narendra Hirwani records the best bowling figures on debut in Test history with 16-136 in Indias' 255 run 4th Test victory over the West Indies in Madras. Hirwani takes eight wickets in each innings.

1867:

The Cambridgeshire team played Twenty-two of Swavesey on ice at Swavesey, near Cambridge. The match took place in a field which had been deliberately flooded and the players wore skates. Swavesey made 92 and Cambridgeshire 126 (R. Carpenter 57).

1917:

E. J. Tyler, a slow left-arm bowler with a suspect action, died on January 21st at the age of 50. He played for Somerset regularly between 1888 and 1900 and in a few subsequent matches. His bowling assisted Somerset considerably in securing first-class status in 1891. In his first-class career from this date until 1907, Tyler took 895 wickets (avge. 22-10).

1908:

Jack Hobbs makes his international debut in England's 2nd Test win over Australia at the MCG, scoring 83 and 28 in his two innings. Goes onto become the leading run scorer and century maker in 1st-class cricket history.

1942:

Two matches were played at Port-of-Spain between Trinidad and Barbados, Trinidad winning both of them. Sir Frank Worrell and Clyde Walcott, who played for Barbados, were making their debut in first-class cricket at the ages of 17 years 5 months and 16 years respectively.

1957:

England defeated South Africa by 312 runs to win the Second Test match at Cape Town and to lead 2-0 in the series. W. R. Endean was dismissed 'handled ball', the first time this had occurred in a Test match. The Third Test match, later in the month at Durban, was drawn. H. J. Tayfield created a record by bowling fourteen consecutive 8-ball maiden overs in England's first innings and took 8 - 69 in the second innings.

1866:

William Brockwell was born on January 21st. Brockwell was a member of the great Surrey side of the 1890s. In a career lasting from 1886 to 1903 he scored 13,285 runs at an average of 27.00 with 22 centuries. After heading the batting averages in 1894 he was chosen to go to Australia with A. E. Stoddart's team and played in all five Test matches. He also played twice against Australia in this country.

1916:

Sir John Leslie, first Bart., died at the age of 93. He was the last surviving original member of I Zingari and played for Oxford in the University match of 1843. He was described as the oldest Blue and the oldest member of M.C.C., having been elected in 1841, at the time of his death.

1949:

Don Bradman is knighted; first time a cricketer is bestowed with the honour solely for his contribution to the game.

1941:

D. G. Bradman was dismissed first ball in the match between his XI and S. J. McCabe's XI at Melbourne. This was the second time in successive matches that Bradman had suffered this ignominy, and it was the last of the six occasions in his career. In fairness it must be admitted that at this time he was suffering from muscular trouble in his back.

1956

India defeated New Zealand in the fifth Test match at Madras by an innings and 109 runs to win the series by two matches to nil. V. Man- kad and P. Roy had a first-wicket partnership of 413 which is the record for all Test cricket as well as for India in all first-class cricket. Mankad's innings of 231 and the Indian total of 537—3d were new records for India in Test cricket, surpassing those which had been created in the earlier Tests the previous month.

Cricket during World War II was morally and socially acceptable as a leisure activity in a way it had not been in World War I. While the first-class game in England ended on Friday, September 1st, 1939 teams such as the British Empire XI, London Counties and numerous Service sides made substantial contributions.

Elsewhere, spasmodic first-class cricket was to be found in the West Indies, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Nothing matched the amount played in India. The early years of the war made little impact on the subcontinent where some politicians took the view that it had nothing to do with India. It would, ironically, be the arrest of Gandhi in late 1942 which led to the cancellation of the Pentangular Tournament and to Bombay's withdrawal from the Ranji Trophy, but the war-clouds were ones of Anglo-Indian conflict between Raj and Congress.

So far as cricket in India was concerned, normality had been restored by the start of the 1943-44 season and the first-class cricket played in December 1943 saw some striking performances by the two great players of that golden era of Indian batting, V.S. Hazare (pictured to the left on the photograph opposite) and V.M. Merchant (Pictured to the right on the photograph opposite). They were the batsmen above all else whom the Indian public flocked to watch and whose personal rivalry, though friendly enough, captivated the imagination.

Hazare had set the scene with 248 for the Rest against the Muslims. A week later, at the beginning of December, the two were on opposing sides when the Hindus met the Rest at Bombay in the Pentangular Final.

Merchant made 250 for the Hindus while the Rest collapsed. After following on, nearly 400 runs behind, they had lost five wickets for 60 when Hazare responded with a triple century, uncharacteristically bringing it up with a six, and his 309 out of 387 (79.84 per cent) beat a record set by W.G. Grace as far back as 1876.

It was the more extrovert Merchant who persuaded the retiring Hazare to appear on the balcony before his admirers whose presence at such an occasion conferred on them some spiritual grace.

One week later the two met yet again, this time in the opening zonal contests of the Ranji Trophy. Bombay met Baroda at Bombay and on Sunday, December 12 - the day on which World War II exceeded World War I

A big thank you to 'Kim' Ahamed for sending in this article about two insatiable run-scorers. One of the striking aspects is the reference to cricket played during World War Two. Whilst matches between representative sides were played in our own back-yard it is interesting and enlightening to hear about matches overseas.

in length - it was Merchant's turn to make a century. Hazare replied in kind on the Monday and, as so often, the match was decided on the first innings.

Elsewhere, in a busy weekend of cricket, Western India beat Nawanagar on first innings and Sind beat Gujarat. Throughout the month the various zonal matches took place and on the last day of the year Bombay, under Merchant, met Maharashtra - led by Professor D.B. Deodhar, who died in 1993 aged 101 (in the following season, at the age of 54, he averaged 86.25 in the Ranji Trophy).

Before the old year was out, Merchant had completed yet another century and by January 2 he remained undefeated with 359 out of 735. He had made his runs in 640 minutes (Hutton took 797 for his 364 in 1938). His partnership with R.S. Modi of 371 set an Indian sixth-wicket record and his opponents conceded the match on first innings - when they had lost nine wickets for 298.

In the end it would be Hazare who got a thousand runs in the season, injury confining Merchant to 865 and an average of 288.33.

There would be a coda to their wartime performances a year later when, batting together, each made a double century for the Cricket Club of India against a Services XI. Both had prospered on Indian wickets which had grossly favoured batsmen.

They had made the same folk-appeal as Bradman had done to Australians in the 1930s and it was Bradman's ruthlessness, patience and reluctance to loft the ball which Merchant, in particular, had emulated. And it would be Merchant, rather than Hazare, who fulfilled the expectations of the British public when the Indians toured in 1946.

Despite a summer of wet and cold, his batting (said Wisden) 'touched the height of brilliance' and he averaged 74.53. But it was Hazare who made a century one day in Edinburgh when I saw my first first-class match, Scotland versus India.





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West Indies, after thirteen Tests against England without a win, swung the pendulum as sharply as it is possible to do here at Old Trafford.

The winning margin of ten wickets is, perhaps, better measured statistically. West Indies scored 502 - 6. England scored 501 - 20 and, on balance, West Indies were certainly 14 wickets the better side.

They batted infinitely better, they bowled with penetration and they fielded with greater zest, though some of England's fielding was not without merit. Gibbs proved himself to be a fascinating prospect as a world-class off-spinner. On a wicket which gave him some help he bowled with mature intelligence, not to mention a high degree of skill and subtle variation of pace. His match figures of 11 - 157 in 75.3 overs were no more than he deserved. Old Trafford is certainly lucky when it comes to seeing great spin bowling. Was it not here that Laker set up a Test bowling record never likely to be equalled let alone surpassed?

Murray, who was only 20 years old in May, capped a magnificent display behind the stumps by holding 3 catches in each innings. Hunte played a Test innings of the highest quality, Kanhai showed that he is approaching the field of greatness, and Worrell put on a show of stroke-play which had all the inherent charms and culture of West Indian cricket. Hall ripped open the England innings on Saturday morning with a sustained burst of controlled speed and Worrell led a fine side with dignity and the touch of a master tactician.



Now to England. It was a grievously unhappy occasion for Statham, and must conjure doubts as to his future, though one imagines that he is sure to play at Lord's. Allen bowled with a great heart and economy, yet nothing in the England attack looked potent enough at any given point to win the game. The batting - perhaps the least said, soonest mended! Dexter did all that he could. Stewart established himself, and Edrich and Close, with lesser contributions probably earned their places at Lord's. Barrington and Cowdrey made 40 between them in 4 innings; this was the crux of the matter.

FIRST DAY

When Dexter lost the toss - he seems to lose it roughly two in three - there was every reason to believe that West Indies would take full advantage of a beautiful looking wicket. Admittedly, the proof of the pudding is always in the eating, but in this case it proved to be as good as it looked, although by the end of the day this easy-paced wicket had given occasional indications that the ball would turn on it. West Indies began with Hunte and Carew against the old firm of Statham and Trueman. Carew, given preference over McMorris, presumably because Carew was considered to be the batsman in form, looked strangely ill at ease throughout his innings, anxious to go for runs which were never on the

A couple of things happened recently - I was in conversation with someone about the West Indies Tests last summer and I sent a 1964 hardback to a man celebrating his 50th birthday who was living in Ukraine. He had requested the '64 for it contained the cricket from the year he was born including the West Indies tour of 1963 - when they competed with England for the Wisden Trophy. Not only was last season's series against the West Indies a tremendous achievement with everything that was and still is going on, but so was the 1963 series. I am delighted to reproduce the contemporary full reports of each of the five Tests in 1963, beginning with the First, played at Old Trafford.

cards, and when he skied a ball from Trueman to Statham at mid-wicket with his score 10 and the total 25, the end which had always seemed imminent appeared to have come.

Statham, considered to be the safest of catchers, caused a wave of dismay to sweep through his own devout followers at Old Trafford by putting the catch on the floor. Carew, having slipped over in going for the run, was able to regain his balance and get back safely. Carew rode this luck by continuing to play and miss at Trueman like a man

unsuccessfully swatting a fly. He got one edge and the ball flew rapidly past the slips for four. What Trueman was muttering in undertones was clearly not for public ears, though most of his supporters could hazard a rough guess as to his general theme.

The partnership between (*Conrad*) Hunte (Pictured, Left), always looking as safe as houses, and Carew, in a diametrically opposed situation, prospered for an hour until justice was finally done and Trueman seized Carew's wicket, Andrew holding a catch behind the wicket.

(*Rohan*) Kanhai (Pictured, Right) joined Hunte and from

the very first ball looked completely in command of the situation; composed, fluent, stroking the ball with effortless grace, and then occasionally unleashing a cut or a drive through the covers with ferocious intent. Hunte was content just to soldier on, and take runs as and when they came.



The 2 hours before lunch produced 82 runs, of which Hunte had made 36 and Kanhai 30. In the afternoon sunshine the runs began to flow more freely and just after 3 o'clock, Kanhai had overhauled Hunte with a score of 58 to Hunte's 57. Kanhai, striding out majestically, hit one scorching four, but everyone's hearts were in their mouths when he skied a ball from Allen; it fell to earth, however, in open country between Stewart at mid-wicket and Titmus, roughly in a deep square-leg position.

By ten past three, the association had produced 100 runs. Presently, with the score at 170, Hunte was let off the hook when he flicked a ball at Trueman, standing at backward short-leg, and the catch went down, a piece of ill-luck for

(David) Allen (Pictured, Centre) who had bowled consistently well. It was Allen, however, who finally took the stand. Kanhai hit a tremendous blow in the direction of the deep mid-on, and set off down the wicket, as most of the crowd thought, to get a closer look at the ball speeding on its way to the boundary. Allen flung himself on the ball in the manner of a goalkeeper smothering a penalty shot, and had to pick himself up and hurl the ball to Andrew at the top of the pitch with Kanhai making no attempt to get back. He was about 20 yards, at least, down the wicket. Hunte, apparently not listening, called quite firmly 'No'; Kanhai, wrapped in admiration for the shot, was oblivious to the call, and was thus out short of the 100 that it seemed only an earthquake could prevent him from scoring.



The total was then 188 after a partnership of 151 and high time England got a wicket which, frankly, they had scarcely looked like doing. The bowling was certainly good enough to restrict the scoring to reasonable limits but never penetrative enough to suggest any form of break through.

At 211, the new ball was taken, but this could not prevent Hunte from reaching his fifth Test century. He had scored 101 out of 237 in 4 hours and had hit 15 boundaries.

Butcher, his new partner, was moving along nicely until he tried to hook a short-pitched ball from Trueman which did not seem to rise to the expected height, and he was out leg before wicket with the total 239.

By now, it was a quarter past five. The sun had long since departed, a Manchester haze descended upon the ground, there was every suggestion that a thunderstorm was lurking not very faraway, and the light became most unpleasant for batting. It was surprising that Hunte and Sobers stuck it out as long as they did. Finally, at 25 minutes to six, they lodged an appeal, which the umpires had no hesitation in upholding. In some respects, Sobers was lucky still to be there, as Trueman had bowled him his best over of the day. Sobers played and missed at three of them. All three were good enough to have beaten so great a player as Sobers even in favourable batting conditions let alone in this murky light. Almost as soon as the players had disappeared from view rain began to fall, and once again, rain and bad light stopped play at Manchester for the day. This sort of thing has happened here before!

The day had naturally belonged wholly to West Indies. England had bowled reasonably well without ever looking very dangerous; some of the ground fielding had been excellent; the throwing to the wicket-keeper had been good, bad and indifferent in turn, and one or two catches had gone down. Summed up, from an England point of view, it was a nondescript day which contained little to commend it to posterity. No reputations were made and none irreparably lost.

SECOND DAY

After a warm night an industrial haze hung above the ground when play began, but in due course the sun took command of the situation and play ran an uninterrupted course in front of a shirt-sleeved crowd.

...d, bathed in sunshine, is always a warming sight. The match began at 244 - 3, with Hunte 104 and Sobers 3. At the time there had been relatively little change in the position. The West Indies were still very much on top, but they were not exerting any noticeable pressure.

The total had mounted to 336, 92 runs in the 2 hours and 20 minutes. Hunte, having taken his score to 148 (44 runs in 2 hours) and Sobers to 51 (48 in 2 hours). It had been a steady attempt to wear down our bowlers, presumably by a heavy artillery assault later on. The straightness of the ball and his dedicated application made him the ideal man for such a process; anything a shade up to him was usually 4 runs; anything which conformed to the dimensions of a length was given a fair amount of respect.

The 300 had taken 6 hours and 20 minutes. Just before lunch Sobers picked up a ball from Statham and swept him into the crowd for 6 - a glorious piece of timing which was generously clapped by the bowler. Poor Statham; nothing would go right for him. At a quarter past two, Hunte passed 150 - he had scored 153 out of 341, and at that point had hit 22 fours.

Sobers, gradually accelerating in pace, hit Allen a tremendous blow over the bowler's head for six, and when Hunte took his sweater off for the first time with a score of 158, to suggest that he was contemplating getting down to serious business, England's position, already getting well out of hand, looked bleak in the extreme.

Of all the bowlers we had seen since the start of play - and there were six of them - Allen had bowled with the greatest economy; he was not spinning a great deal, but his flight and length were capable of tantalising a batsman even as well set as Hunte, and Allen toiled and spun for over after over. At last, Sobers, bent on moving things along by now, hit Allen into the deep without quite timing his shot to perfection and Edrich took the catch.

The partnership had produced 120 to which Sobers had contributed 64. Apart from the one particularly good over from Trueman on the previous evening, and one dangerous over from Statham (bowling again without as much as a crumb of luck) towards the end of his innings when he played and missed a time or two, Sobers had never looked in trouble; what a fine player he is. With a score of 359 - 4 the time had surely come to quicken the pace. Surprisingly, Solomon arrived and conducted himself almost as if he had a crisis on his hands. Disapproval was ultimately shown and Solomon backed away from the wicket to allow the slow hand-clapping to subside. Solomon's contribution in his first three-quarters of an hour at the crease was 4 runs.

Meantime, Hunte spurned any sort of a risk, although he did strike Titmus for a couple of boundaries in the same over. When the score had reached 398, Hunte, essaying to force Allen away off his legs, was well caught by Titmus. He had batted for 8 hours and 25 minutes and hit 27 fours. What a situation for tired bowlers, with a score of 398—5, to see Worrell emerging from the pavilion; the imminence of the

new ball was meagre consolation.

(Frank) Worrell (Pictured, Right) proceeded to play an innings of intrinsic beauty. It is true that he was dropped twice - Close should have taken a reasonable slip catch when Worrell was 14, but failed to hold the ball to the displeasure, once again, of Trueman, but the crowd seemed happy to settle for the miss in the light of what Worrell subsequently provided for them. He put up 50 in an hour with ten boundaries of all denominations included. His eye - as sharp as ever with the advancing years - his flexibility of wrist and fluency of stroke produced some gems, one late cut, so gentle that it could have been stroked by a feather, prompted Cowdrey and Dexter to go through the motions of playing it themselves, and proud of it they would have been. At other times, Worrell's bat was not a feather but a rapier. His pulling had the power of an ox in it. Statistically, the innings was of interest, too. Worrell hit 15 fours and 14 singles - 74, before calling a halt to the innings at 501 - 6. Worrell had taken an hour and a half over 74, Solomon had dwelt for 2 hours and 20 minutes over 35 before Titmus mercifully got him l.b.w.

Hall and Griffith were thus offered a stint of 55 minutes to do their worst. They had sat in the pavilion for the best part of two days and were duly rested for the



managed to stave off disaster, and were 31 at the close, Edrich having made 20 and Stewart 7.

THIRD DAY

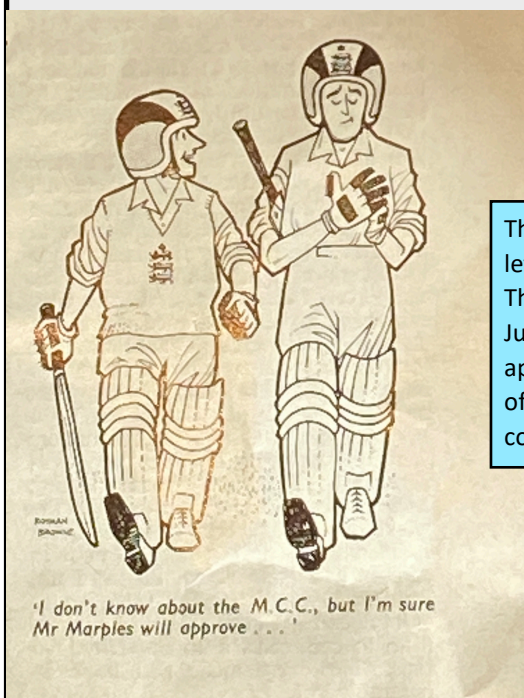
In the light of the day's events it seems appropriate to express the feeling in the English camp before play began. It was, simply, that this was an excellent wicket, and there was no earthly reason why England should not bat all day and well into Monday. This belief narrows down the causes of England's unhappy display to two factors - bad batting, primarily, and good bowling.

Certainly, the wicket took a measure of spin, but our players should be well capable of playing a slightly turning ball. Gibbs bowled magnificently, but he is not a Laker yet.

The England innings had been well nigh laid in ruins by lunchtime, 31 - 0 at the start, 108 - 4 at lunch. Moreover, our morale had suffered considerably when Cowdrey moved across his wicket to allow a ball from Hall to pass down the leg-side ... or so he thought, but the crowd had the shattering experience of seeing the leg stump uprooted and sent cartwheeling with Cowdrey shouldering arms on the off-side. The ball, apparently, had begun life on the leg stump and had never deviated; it was purely a tragic error of judgment by a very great player. This was the third wicket that England had lost during the morning for a paltry addition to the score of 36 runs, for both Edrich and Barrington had sparred at Hall and touched the ball into the wicket-keeper's gloves.

Stewart had survived by the skin of his teeth and a fair sprinkling of courage, and Dexter arrived to make a valiant effort to steady the ship and ride the storm. Hall, bowling immeasurably better than he had done on the previous evening, had virtually forgotten the bumper, was bowling at the stumps or thereabouts, and was generating enormous pace. His bag of Edrich, Barrington and Cowdrey had cost him only 21 runs, and he bowled solidly for an hour and a half before taking his sweater with England's score 94 - 3. Griffith ended his stint five minutes and two runs later. Having seen these two off, Dexter and Stewart seemed well capable of holding the fort until lunch but five minutes before the interval Gibbs made a ball pop, Stewart turned it round the corner into the hands of Sobers, who failed to hold it, but Murray grabbed the re-bound. Sobers jubilantly hugged the little man playing in his first Test match, and having taken three catches during the morning's play. Murray's first appearance in first-class cricket was as recent as 1961 for Trinidad against British Guiana at Berbice. England were thus 108 - 4, Stewart having battled grimly for nearly 3 hours for his 37 - how foreign to his usually unfettered spirit.

Close, on trial to redeem himself as an England player, was provided with an ideal situation to prove his mettle in adversity. Slowly, in the afternoon sunshine, Dexter and Close began to take a grip on the situation. Dexter, exciting cricketer that he is, played some lovely strokes, especially



The illustration, left, appeared in *The Cricketer* in July 1963 - an apt premonition of 'equipment' to come.

task, yet neither bowled particularly well. Hall principally because he was too inclined to let go the bumper which, if the batsman is able to duck comfortably underneath it, is surely a wanton waste of a new ball. Had Hall directed his speed in the general direction of the stumps, Stewart and Edrich would have found it far more difficult to stand their ground and survive than they did, not that conditions were very pleasant for either of them.

Hall left little doubt as to just how quick he was, but England

Three fours off Worrell in the same over to reach his 50 in a couple of hours. Worrell rang the changes with his bowlers striving for this vital breakthrough.

If they could prise Dexter out the England innings would have had the backbone removed from it, and may not have had the means to have stood up for much longer. At last, things seemed to be going well for England. Dexter hammered Gibbs straight for six and then, alas, Close was splendidly caught on the off-side by Hunte having failed properly to get hold of Gibbs.

Dexter (Pictured, Below) , scorning Gibbs' properties, aimed him for another six ... and got it, mainly because providence



was on his side at this stage. Hunte actually got his fingers to the ball before it dropped over the line. Titmus prodded a time or two at Gibbs before handing Sobers a catch on a plate round the corner - the first duck of

the match - and then West Indies became cock-a-hoop ... for they got Dexter. Sobers made one ball lift quite sharply, it struck Dexter's glove, and the leaping Worrell took the catch in the slips.

At one moment England had been 181 - 4 with Dexter and Close going well. Now they were 192 - 7 with both Dexter and Close having perished, and 13 runs later, this innings, such as it was, had capitulated, Gibbs rounding off a superb piece of bowling by pushing through a quicker one to Statham which shattered the stumps. Statham's cup was now full - a dropped catch, no wickets for 121, and 0. What a cruel game this can be at times.

Gibbs, the man who has done the hat-trick against Australia, finished with 5 - 59 on what had been described as a batting wicket. Gibbs is an intensely interesting player with a varied repertoire - he might almost be described as a three-way bowler, as he throws in an occasional piece of mystery to mix with two-way orthodox spin.

Hall's initial burst, when he had torn asunder the beginning of the innings, and Gibbs performance had

brought about the fall of ten England wickets during the day for 174 runs, and had blown sky-high the theory that England would still be going strong by Monday. They would still be batting on Monday, but fighting to avoid an innings defeat!

Edrich and Stewart made a sizeable contribution to raise England's fallen fortunes from the ashes of the first innings, and just when they were on the fringe of knocking off 100 of the arrears, Hunte, as if he had not done enough in this match, scooped up Edrich at leg-slip off 'Captain' Worrell. 'Captain' Worrell was duly hailed by his little colony of supporters.

Andrew was sent in to keep the night's vigil and succeeded. Stewart was 44 not out and the total 97 - 1, this meant that 199 runs were needed to save an innings defeat. A long and tedious climb lay ahead.

FOURTH DAY

Play began with a general feeling of hope, if not of great expectations. The conduct of the wicket had been generally good, leaning towards spin, though nothing like the tailor-made wickets of 1957 which might easily have been prepared according to a specification outlined by Lock and Laker.

For nearly an hour England's hopes were kindled by a sensible performance by Andrew, who batted a good deal better than many of his colleagues had done before him. Stewart, with fortune favouring the brave, enjoyed one or two pieces of luck. He had reached his 50 at 10 minutes to 12, survived an appeal for a catch at the wicket, and then got a touch to the very next ball, but Murray, after a desperate attempt, could not gather the ball. Umpire Elliott was leaning sideways to get a better view of what would unquestionably have been a catch.

Subsequently, Stewart got under a rising ball and presented

Carew with a catch in the fine leg area. Carew put it on the floor so Stewart was let off a second time.

At 116, Gibbs appeared. Every ball he pitched was watched as intensely as a cat stalking a mouse as everyone asked, 'Just how much will he be able to make it turn?' ... herein lay the answer to the problem of whether or not England could survive. Stewart, at least, had the right idea; he was using his feet.

When Sobers came on Andrew fell to the wiles of wrist-spin. A defensive prod

on the on-side resulted in the ball being cocked up. Murray, this little jack-in-the-box of a



The West Indies XI for the Old Trafford Test: Back Row, left to right: Joe Solomon, Lance Gibbs, Joey Carew, Charlie Griffith, Deryck Murray, and Basil Butcher. Front Row, left to right: Rohan Kanhai, Conrad Hunte, Frank Worrell, Garfield Sobers and Wes Hall.

wicket-keeper, was round in front of Andrew in a flash, dived flat on his stomach, and took the catch at full-stretch. Andrew had done a first-rate job and his departure was not one of dismay as it would have been in the case of an accredited batsman. 131 - 2 was a good enough position as Barrington arrived to take strike; soon the 150 was passed, but at one o'clock came the first of three telling blows which put England finally out of the hunt; by lunchtime all hopes of saving the game had ebbed away.

Barrington was so palpably bowled by Gibbs as to begin a discussion on precisely what type of ball it was; some said the leg-break, what is certain, however, is that Barrington moved out to the attack almost before the ball was bowled. Gibbs pushed one through a little quicker and hit the wicket. Now it was 160 - 3. Five runs later Stewart fell. He had ridden his luck, was batting with confidence, and playing the normal strokes (the hook included) from his repertoire, free and naturally. At this stage he seemed admirably placed for his first Test hundred until he cut Gibbs into the ever ready hands of Murray, who was certainly having a match and a half.

Cowdrey's failure was almost as dismal as his misdemeanour in the first innings. Never at any time the Cowdrey we have known so well over these postwar years, he stood firmly rooted to his crease and spooned up a catch to silly mid-off to be splendidly taken by Hunte, who held the ball aloft for all to see, 186 - 5. At lunch the score was 191—5, and the waitresses in the luncheon room were asking whether or not we were all likely to stay for tea. The prophet who said that he would like to take tea when the match was over about 4 o'clock won further acclamations for his accuracy. For a time the crowd hung excitedly on to the prospect of

Dexter giving them some entertainment and this did seem a possibility, and then, at 20 minutes to 3, the Gibbs-Murray combination did it again. Gibbs was now on the crest of the wave. He got Close and Allen, and then Sobers bowled an unhappy looking Titmus, 268 - 9.

All was over bar the shouting. It was then the whole of Lombard Street to a china orange that England were on the end of an innings hiding. The irrepressible Trueman, however, gave the crowd some compensation for sending them home before 4 o'clock. He struck a couples of mighty sixes, one off Gibbs, one off Sobers. For good measure, Statham hit a six as well, and they actually forced West Indies to bat again, to score 1 run for victory!

Griffith had been brought back to attend to the frolics and got his first wicket in the match when he bowled Statham. At this point, a number of spectators, whose mathematics had obviously been affected by several days of continuous sunshine, rushed on to the field of play and one even succeeded in grabbing a stump. The strong arm of the law wisely intervened and gave them an opportunity of a re-count.

Presently, Dexter led out his beaten army, Allen bowled with the old ball, Hunte clouted it away on the on-side, and West Indies had beaten England . . . out of sight. A quarter to 4 and nothing else to do but go home.

England v West Indies. Old Trafford: June 6,7,8, 10 1963.

Toss: West Indies.

Debuts: England - JH Edrich. West Indies - MC Carew, DL Murray.

West Indies 501-6 dec (Hunte 182, Kanhai 90, Sobers 64, Worrell 74*. Trueman 2-95). & 1-0.

England 205 (Dexter 73. Gibbs 5-59. Hall 3-51) and 296 (Stewart 87, Edrich 38. Gibbs 6-98).

West Indies won by ten wickets.

Also in 1963 -

Lancashire v Leicestershire - The First Knock-Out Cup match - Preliminary Round: Old Trafford, May 1, 2, 1963.

In order to reduce the competition to an even number of teams it was necessary for one county to be eliminated before the First Round, and it had been ruled that Lancashire and Leicestershire, the two bottom teams in the County Championship table in 1963, should meet to fight for the one place.

This match took place at Old Trafford, and in character with Manchester's reputation for weather (just or unjust!) rain interfered on the first day and the match was thus spread over two days, May 1st and 2nd.

Booth, of Lancashire, got the competition off on the right foot by scoring a single off the first ball bowled, after Lancashire had been put in to bat.

Play did not begin until three o'clock after the necessary mopping up operations had been conducted throughout the morning, and this left sufficient time for play for Lancashire to complete their innings with a handsome total of 304—9, in the prescribed number of 65 overs. Marner scored 121 of

Lancashire's total in under 2 hours, and at that stage was admirably placed to qualify for the Gold Medal and £50 which Frank Woolley was to present to the Man of the Match (Photograph, below).

Leicestershire fought bravely on the second day, and none more than their captain, Maurice Flallam, who scored 106, a defiant innings when most of his colleagues were falling by the wayside around him.

Leicestershire, despite Flallam, could reach only 203, and Lancashire thus drew first blood in Cup cricket to win by 101 runs. A fine piece of bowling by Statham (5 - 28) contributed



to Leicester's downfall, but could not prevent Marner from receiving the award. Subsequent to this match, Gillette, sponsors of the competition, introduced a silver medal and a cheque for £25 as a special award, and this award was back-dated, as it were, to be given to Flallam, not only for his 100, but also for the spirit in which he played the game.

Result: Lancashire beat Leicestershire by 101 runs.

The Virtual Tea Interval

That bizarre moment when you pick up your car from the garage and you realise that the breaks are still not working, but they made your horn louder.

Dentist: "You need a crown."

Patient: "Finally someone who understands me"

I got all sentimental when I saw my husband looking at our marriage certificate for half an hour. Then I found out he's been looking for an expiry date.

Sunil Gavaskar had decided to relinquish his opening position and come in at no 4 for the Test. But, Malcolm Marshall fired out Anshuman Gaekwad and Dilip Vengsarkar for ducks, setting the stage for Gavaskar to walk in at 0/2. And he thought there would be less pressure!

"Man, it doesn't matter where you come in to bat, the score is still zero."

Viv Richards to Sunil Gavaskar at Madras 1983.

Tom Goddard, of Gloucestershire, once bowled 42 consecutive overs under heat wave conditions. Finally, he complained about his unthinking captain,

"Why the hell! doesn't the bloody bugger take me off?" raved Goddard.

At that moment it was gently pointed out to him, by amused team-mates, that skipper Basil Allen had left the field hours earlier. Allen had in fact asked a colleague to lead the side in his absence, the colleague being Goddard himself!!

It's been raining for days now and my husband seems very depressed by it. He keeps standing by the window, staring. If it continues, I'm going to have to let him in.

What to give a man who's got everything?

A woman.

She'll tell him how everything works.

A little boy looks at his mum at a wedding and says, "Mummy, why is the girl dressed all in white?"

His mum answers, "The girl is called a bride and she is in white because she's very happy and this is the happiest day of her life."

The boy nods and then says, "OK, and why is the boy all in black?"

Police officer:

"Your car is too heavily overloaded. I simply cannot let you continue like that. I'm going to have to take away your driver's license."

Driver:

"You're kidding me, right? The license can only weigh one



And there was me thinking it was a nasal swob!



I asked my daughter Libby if she'd seen my newspaper. She told me that newspapers are old school. She said that people use tablets nowadays and handed me her iPad. The fly didn't stand a chance.



A police officer called the station on his radio. "I have an interesting case here. An old lady shot her husband for stepping on the floor she just mopped." "Have you arrested the woman?" "Not yet. The floor's still wet."

Any attempt to look forward into the English cricket season of 1962 must begin with the admission that the season following an Australian visit is inevitably something of an anticlimax. Indeed, there is no doubt that we shall be told on all sides that it is a disappointing season. Yet it is equally certain that thousands of us—the ordinary cricket enthusiasts—will enjoy it immensely.

Wherever one goes in the cricket world these days, a committee is likely to pop up out of the ground and deliver a report remarkably like every other report that has ever been delivered on making cricket attractive.

One is tempted to ask 'Attractive to whom?' It seems that there is, somewhere in the administrators' minds, the picture of a man hesitating as to whether or not he shall go to a county cricket match. But he eventually decides 'No, the scoring will be five runs an hour too slow: I will go and get drunk (or married) instead'. I, for my part, do not believe that man exists - certainly not in such numbers as to make county cricket clubs self-supporting through gate-money. Yet one day, I fear, cricket may damage itself in trying to woo this non-existent marginal voter. Aesop's dog, seeing the bone in its mouth reflected in the water and losing the reality in trying to snatch the reflection should be an abiding warning. If Benaud's Australians could not reverse the trend of falling gates, it is certain that no device will do so - and maintain the feat.

A few simple facts decide the situation. The first is that, in a country of rising personal wealth, the car and the television - both family property, to be enjoyed by the non-cricketers as well as the cricketers - are a much stronger attraction to the majority than a county cricket match. The fall in cricket attendances is apparent in Australia, England and South Africa - the countries where increased incomes give the average member of the public spending money and a car. Gates are high in the West Indies, Pakistan and India where cricket is local entertainment for a less motorised community.

What is happening to cricket nowadays is not something which can be altered by anything within cricket itself; it is part of the course of social history. Television and the family car have closed down most of the music halls and provincial and repertory theatres, and many cinemas.

If it is not to go the same way, cricket needs subsidising; but it always has. Of old, its deficit was underwritten by the county gentry; now that is done by the supporters' club football pools. What has



Writing in *The Cricketer* in March 1962 John Arlott's look ahead to the following summer of cricket rings true now as it certainly did back then.

happened is a redistribution of wealth. In former days the rich counties were those with the high memberships and Test match grounds. Now these are not so well off as the first to move in on the football pools - Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Glamorgan, Northants., Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Somerset. Hampshire is the only county which has never been on either band-waggon. In addition, of course, while gates have fallen, membership has increased.

The repertory and variety theatres drop out, but cricket goes on. It is hard pushed to get by - but no theatre manager has half the money for building and extensions and decorations as Warwickshire have spent in the past few years. Indeed, they have made membership of Edgbaston—with its dining rooms, extensive seating, bars and general facilities - a genuine, and reasonably priced luxury. But even so, disappointingly few people - even among the paid up members - take full advantage of it.

The encouraging fact for cricket is that, through television, more people follow the game and discuss it than ever before. The same is probably true of acting, but the small cinemas and theatres cannot reap the profits of the re-alignment of interest. Cricket can, and does: £45,000 was shared between the first-class counties from television fees in 1961.

What of the Committee of Enquiry's advocacy of one-day matches in a knock-out competition? To many it will savour of the dog with the bone: or another attempt to woo that un-wooable - indeed, barely existent - man. It may attract a few people but, surely, not enough, after the novelty has worn off, to make any appreciable, or sustained, difference to county finances. If it is 'successful', then, presumably, our entire cricket play and economy must be geared to it. That would alter the entire method and character of our first-class cricket.

What then would happen to England in the Test field? For the difference between knock-out cricket and first-class cricket is vast. The players know it, and so does anyone who watched the travesty of the game in the over-limit match fill-ins after early Test finishes - a completely unhappy experiment.

In matters of detail, it is interesting to note that the suspension of the follow-on in county cricket is to continue. No one seems to argue that the change did any good whatever. Certainly, in 1961, it produced

four freak results, absolute contradictions of cricketing justice. In the long run it must create draws where there would otherwise have been wins. The follow-on had become a part of the game. It is one of the minor mysteries of recent cricket as to who wanted the follow-on suspended, and why.

The year 1962 ought to be another wide-open year in the county championship, with Middlesex and Yorkshire joint-favourites. It is a pity that the ordinary cricket follower has been conditioned to believe that the touring side and the Test are the real hub of our cricket. Certainly the most exciting play of the post-war period in England has taken place in county matches.

Indeed, the one safe forecast on the season of 1962 is that the regulars on the county grounds will find as

much to argue about, and to relish, as ever, The recommendation that, at last, in 1963 every county should play the same number of championship matches is sensible, equitable and long overdue: its weakness lies in the fact that the figure is to be fixed at 28 matches and not 32: so a side could still win the championship without playing the decisive home and out matches against its nearest rival.

Cricket is a game for enthusiasts: it always has been. It would be a shame if, for the sake of the non-enthusiast's (problematical) gate-money, the game the enthusiast follows were ever debased. The marginal spectator might come once to see cover point fielding on roller skates, but he would not return. And when he went out, he would be followed by the old regulars.

Rain Stopped Play' - One of the most familiar phrases in the whole realm of sport, yet it is not only rain that has sent players chasing off to the pavilion. Sussex have been held up by every possible trick the Weather Clerk can play. . . .

Some examples:

SNOW AND SLEET stopped play - and the Swansea ground looked like a Christmas-card scene, with the Glamorgan and Sussex players trying to keep warm, on May 18th, 1955.

FOG ('sea-fret' we call it in Sussex) stopped play - and the Australians, playing at Hove, had seen nothing like it. Cables were dispatched telling the amazing cricket story, at least one of their cricket writers being told by a Sussex member that he could see the ghostly figure of Maurice Tate in the sea-fret, bowling from the sea end!

GALE stopped play . . . the bails in a match at Hove were blown to all points of the compass, and finally it was decided to play without them.

SUNSHINE stopped play - yes, really! At the Central Ground, Hastings, the reflection of the sun on large windows of a nearby building made it impossible for the batsmen to see at one end, and an early lunch was ordered, until the sun moved on!

SHADOWS stopped play - long shadows from tall trees by the pavilion at the Saffrons, Eastbourne, crept

The Wisdeners are grateful to Alan Goodman who sent in the following from a little booklet published in 1968 simply called 'Rain Stops Play' - he has no idea how he came about it and half the pages are missing, what else it may have contained. He is certain of one thing - it was intended to raise funds for a local cricket side in Sussex and it was written by Jack Arlidge.

closer and closer towards the wicket, until the batsmen said they were distracted, appealed, and off came the players!

CAR HEADLIGHTS stopped play - when a spectator at Leicester, where Sussex were the visitors in 1949, forgot to turn off his lights on a very gloomy morning, probably because buses and cars outside the ground had headlights.

Every conceivable type of rainstorm has ended play, of course, with grounds resembling lakes in some cases, but the Sussex secretary, Colonel Patrick Williams, can top all these stories. . . .

'We were playing in a Services match in Poona, and I was the skipper of one of the teams. A dispatch-rider roared up to the ground and rushed to hand me a telegram. . . . Hostilities had started against Germany - WAR had stopped play!' he says.

I repeat—it's not only the rain...

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The Virtual Wisdeners is the publication of the Wisden Collectors' Club

Remember Mike Witney?

“ Nobody is ever a certainty to make a cricket tour. I thought I was about 99.9 per cent certain to go to England and fight for the Ashes. At least that was what everybody told me. Well, I've missed the tour - the Ashes series that would have fulfilled a life's ambition for me - and as the hurt, the disappointment and the bewilderment eases a little, I'm left to ask why. Why was I left out?



Age? It can't be age. Both Terry Alderman and Geoff Lawson are older than me, and by several years.

Performance? No, I'm the best performed bowler in Australia this year. Most wickets... best strike-rate. The bottom line about bowling is getting people out.

Fitness? There's nobody fitter. I haven't missed a game in four

years - a social game, a grade game with Randwick, a trial, a Sheffield Shield match. I'd stack that record up against any pace bowler in the world.

So does it get down to whose toes I've trodden on? It upsets me that I've got to write an article like this to prompt one of those guys to call me.

Playing for Australia is my passion. There are better bowlers who've worn Australia's colours, plenty of them, but none with more pride. Well, I heard the team read out as I drove home and I just went numb. My sister, Christine, let go with a few expletives I've

Australian bowler Mike Whitney who had been controversially omitted from the Australian touring party to England for the 1989 Ashes series, in a revealing interview in the (Australian) Sun-Herald at the end of March 1989.

never heard her utter before. My mother was waiting for me and she said she was sorry for me and she put her arms around me.

The phone at my Clovelly flat started ringing and I put it on answer. I didn't feel like talking to anybody. Twenty minutes later Geoff Lawson walked in. He was totally fazed. He said to me: "I thought you'd be the first one picked... in front of everybody" I think he had cried a little."

Witney a left-arm fast-medium bowler played 94 first-class matches for New South Wales from 1980 to 1993 and he remains one of only three bowlers to take over 300 first-class wickets for the state.

In 1981 Witney was playing cricket for Fleetwood in the Lancashire League and occasional county cricket for Gloucestershire when injuries to Rodney Hogg and Geoff Lawson resulted in a call-up for the Australian side for the final two Tests of the series.

He was recalled to the Australia Test side in 1991 and went on to play eight more Tests, the highlights being match figures of 11-95 against India at Perth in 1992.

He was not an accomplished batsman, indeed he was a typical 'No. 11' but in the Boxing Day Test against New Zealand he survived 18 deliveries, defying Richard Hadlee, to help secure a draw.

The 2021 Wisden is available to pre-order as follows:

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The prices above are guaranteed for all Pre-Orders received and paid for by February 19th 2021.

FEBRUARY/MARCH QUIZ - so good it's in CAPITALS

Starting on Friday February 5 and then running for 8 weeks until the end of March a set of 10 different questions will be sent out every week. So, 80 different questions in total.

The aim is to do something to pass away a bit of time and I am grateful to David Hutchinson who will be setting the questions (but please don't blame him, he is acting on my instructions).

The answers to each set of questions need to be with me by the closing date that will be highlighted when they are sent out.

Hopefully this will be a bit of fun and there will be a prize but I will not be putting together a league table...I would rather you entered and just enjoyed doing so.

The first set of questions will be sent out on Friday. Enjoy!