

It has been announced today that cricket in England will not resume until July 1st at the earliest, which given everything going on around us all is both sad and sensible. My hope is that discussions are on-going as to what form of cricket will take place if any can be played at all.

An interesting report that received widespread media coverage (it took off many front pages the picture of a cat dressed as a dog impersonating a pigeon and doing a hand-stand to Beethoven's Fifth) was that the government were having talks with those who hold the football screening rights to ascertain whether, if football returned, some matches could be free-to-air. It goes without saying that the same idea for cricket would be enormously well-received, we shall see.

'Poker', I hear you say, 'What is happening with Poker?' - A very good question and one that I can talk about with some knowledge. On Wednesday morning Abbey sent the three other members of the Furmedge family an invitation to a Poker tournament in Las Vegas (the dining room). The start time was 3pm. I was asked permission by Abbey if she could use the cards and chips that I received as a Christmas gift from Lorraine (in a rather flash case that looks like something from the Prohibition era). This would be the first time the Poker set would be used.

Arriving at the pre-determined time, we were welcomed by the greeter (Abbey), who looked like someone out of Men In Black. We were given two drinks tokens each and escorted to our seats. On the internal doors, walls and patio doors we had pictures of various scenes from Vegas, the mood was set.

The game of Texas Hold'em commenced. I won't explain the rules because even now they are still a bit vague, but I will say that I was well and truly taken to the cleaners. The youngest member of the family, Libs, even said prior to the final round, that if I wanted to put my car up as collateral no one would mind.

I read somewhere a while ago that a man from London had always held the desire to get every penny together he could and go to Vegas to place a single bet on red or black in a casino. He sold his flat, his car and pooled his savings and off he went. Just to let you all know, I will not be doing the same, after my performance in Abbey's Vegas Extravaganza, I think if I was to do as he did, go to Vegas and bet on both colours, I would still lose.

The project that Richard Lawrence and I have been working on - to publish a Leaves from the Past virtual book, is complete. I am hoping to send it out in the same way as The VW is sent, on Monday.

Given the circumstances, have a wonderful weekend, be as kind as you can to as many people as social distancing and isolation allows, and keep safe. By the way, the man put all his money on red and won.

The Furmedges; Bill and Lorraine and Dead-Eye Abbey and Fleece-Dad Libby

Mr Harold Wilson confessed that he was no cricketer, but he remarked: "I am a Yorkshireman, and cricket is never far from a Yorkshireman's thoughts."

Then he amused us with an account of the last time he played cricket. He said it was in Moscow when he was there for trade talks with the Russians.

"There was one Sunday afternoon, during a lull in the negotiations, when my delegation repaired to some woods not far from Moscow..."

Mr Wilson told the story: "My second over was interrupted by a gentleman from the NKVD or OGPU, who was appointed to follow us around and see that we came to no harm. He stood in the middle of the pitch and remonstrated with us in a very long Russian speech which I understood came to this - that we could not do that there!

"He was supported by two men who came up on horseback with rifles. I persuaded him, after some negotiations, to take up his position at square leg, out of the way of even my bowling. The episode closed with the NKVD man's failure to make any attempt to catch a ball - and after that my opinion of the Russian secret police fell even lower."

Mr Wilson suggested that the incident should be recorded in *Wisden* as the "only case of a catch being missed at square leg by a member of the NKVD off an off-spinner by a visiting British minister".

Harold Wilson - a biography by Ben Pimlott

Quiz

Please let me know if you haven't already, if you would like to take part in the next Isolation Quiz.

Please email or call me (contact details on the third page)

Desert Island Wisden

I am constantly amazed that when I ask a question or set a challenge the responses come flooding in and the feedback from the Desert Island Wisden poser was no exception...but, I want more. So, a special plea to anyone who has not contributed previously, just tell me what is your favourite Wisden - the one you would take with you onto a Desert island. Be as lyrical or as brief as you like.

You might get your name in print!

Back in 2013 the Wisdener reproduced, over four issues, an article written by Murray Hedgcock for Wisden Cricket Monthly in 1992. The article appeared in the December 1992, January, February and March 1993 issues of WCM. Murray - member of the WCC since, has given me permission to reprint it again. Since 2013 our membership has increased five-fold so hopefully older members wont mind seeing it again. The Survival of Wisden Part 3.

The Directors of John Wisden & Co. made a rare trek to the suburbs on Dec 5th 1938 to meet at the Spartan Fitzgerald Works (Did they have trouble distinguishing between Barnes and Mortlake, and in finding the property they had recorded as being at NO. 28 rather than between NO.s 14 and 16?).

It was agreed to seek an extension of the bank overdraft, but despite gloom expressed about the tennis-ball market (increasingly dominated by Slazenger and Dunlop), turnover was reported up.

There was good business understanding of the international situation (it was 10 weeks after Neville Chamberlain's Munich agreement with Hitler), and its opportunities: the company had been asked by the war office to tender for '6000 handles for bomb-boxes'. These would be made of steel-wire cable with a leather cover, and the good news was that the factories held adequate waste leather for such an order (presumably off-cuts from cricket balls, footballs, boxing gloves and a range of other sports gear).

H. A. Tipper, one of the new senior staff, was 'doing everything within his power, already with success, to get on the best terms with the War Office authorities, as it was clear that in the event of the normal trade of the company diminishing owing to war or economic difficulties, it would be greatly to the advantage of the company if it could look to the war office for orders'.

Mr. Tipper was rewarded (with two management colleagues) by being appointed a director – at no extra fee beyond salary. Sadly, on 10th Jan 1939 – again at the works - directors were told that the war office had not issued the order for the bomb-box handles; 'but the company had submitted a tender as a result of which a promise had been made by the War Office that the company should receive the next order to be placed for such handles.'

All seemed set fair: turnover was around the figure forecast to allow the company at least to break even; the company was now 'running normally on oiled wheels'; there had been no capital expenditure for six months; the write-down of stock at Mortlake would not exceed £100 – and stock at Mortlake and Penhurst was 'entirely fresh and satisfactory'.

Director R. J. Clough said the cash position was satisfactory and it gave him 'no anxiety'.

Just 20 days later, a special board meeting was called 'to consider the serious cash position which had arisen'! Clough said the position had changed vitally in the last fortnight' owing to suppliers restricting the length of credit allowed, whereas it was found impossible to obtain more prompt credit for debtors'. Firms previously offering five months credit now gave two months' only: creditors were owed £15,000 while the company could expect no more than £11,000 from its debtors.

On Feb 6, Chairman A. E. Tilley went to the head office of Westminster Bank to advise that they could not continue. The Bank appointed accountant P. J. Chaplin, FCA, of Singleton Fabian & Co. as a receiver and manager, to carry on the Business.

The company battled on through the war. On July 8, 1943, Chaplin was named chairman and managing director, expressing the hope that 'the company would now go forward with enhanced prosperity.'

Four months later, the minutes give a glimpse of the company's war work: 'certain aeroplane sub-sections' were likely to be built at Penhurst: on Jan 6, 1944, Mr. Tipper reported discussions with Mr. Welsford (presumably of the War Office) on a proposal to manufacture jettison fuel tanks, but labour could not be found.

Meanwhile the poor old cricket-ball makers, still turning out sports gear for the forces, were battling once again about pay: they were given a 7.5% extra bonus on the 1919 rates, to end when peace came.

On March 2, it was reported that a contract to build stretchers did not happen. But a further contract for camouflage netting had been received (a logical product for a firm making netting for practice pitches, soccer goals, and tennis and badminton nets).

It was at this board meeting – at Penhurst – that the Chairman reported baldly:

'The factory at Mortlake had been destroyed by enemy action on the night of Feb 18th & 19th, and Henry Butcher & Co. have been instructed to lodge the claim for loss of plant and machinery with the War Damages Commission. Temporary alternative accommodation in the district was being negotiated for, and arrangements for a temporary (bowls) testing table or floor were being made.'

It was decided that Mr. Rolph – No doubt of the Taylor- Rolph Bowls division – be asked to visit Mortlake 'in order that his advice on the new testing table and other technical points could be obtained'.

In 1944 the Co-operative Wholesale Society acquired John Wisden & Co. Ltd, rebuilt by Chaplin's' efforts to the point that it was a viable property, even with the war continuing. By 17th Oct 1945, two months after the war's end, a dividend of 6.66% was approved, 10 years since the company had last done well enough to pay out.

By 16th October 1947, the world of Wisden had returned to such normality that directors could receive 'with satisfaction' a letter of thanks from the private secretary to King George VI for the leather-bound volume of *WISDEN* just delivered. (The next editions were sent - again in leather – to both the King and his brother, the Duke of Gloucester: where are these treasures today?)

There is very little other detail available of Wisden's wartime activities: 1939 brought tight emergency controls on production of sports goods except for armed forces recreation. Wisden notes that only cricket bats and balls, and footballs, could be made on anything like the old scale, large shipments being sent to every war theatre where servicemen could enjoy sport. Squash and badminton became especially popular at RAF stations where these sports were possible in hangers, but tennis and bowls manufacture stopped.

Veteran craftsmen carried on as younger men were called up, and many sports factories switched largely to munitions production or other war output.

There is no information apparently available on the life of Fitzgerald Works during the war, and precious little as to its end, as the company minutes underline. The Borough of Barnes had enjoyed six weeks without bombing until at 1.16 on the morning of Feb 19, 1944, bombs fell on the Willoughby's – two large houses in Upper Richmond Road (now the site of flats of the same name), one occupied by Barnes council's treasurer's offices, and across White Hart Lane and Fitzgerald Avenue. Eight people died and 45 were injured in the second incident, the only bombs to fall in the borough that night, but the start of a series of raids, which included 11, separate blasts the following night.

The near-anonymous part played by John Wisden at Mortlake is emphasized by the mere passing reference – with no name – in an account of the Blitz 1940-1944 recorded by a 1990 newsletter of the Barnes and Mortlake History Society. Local historian Leslie Freeman refers simply to the air-raid damage as being 'houses destroyed and eight people killed, and one

of the small local factories burned down'. (This same year, 1944, saw the destruction also of the Twort cricket-ball factory in Southborough, Kent, when a V2 rocket hit it.)

The brief company history, *A Wisden Century*, written by John Hadfield in 1950 to mark the centenary, records: 'The Fitzgerald Works were entirely destroyed, with heavy loss of life. Only three or four firewatchers, who were sheltering in the central control room, were miraculously rescued alive from the ruins.'

This implies a workforce on night shift, presumably making equipment for the armed forces. It is believed the actual Wisden sports goods works may have been disused at this stage, with the Taylor-Rolph bowls section still in use.

Richmond Register Office lists those bomb deaths as all women, with no occupations given: were they part-time staff, or was there no works death toll at all?

Barnes Council Minutes are tightlipped about the raid: there were restrictions on published information, which might tell the Germans the impact, their attacks were having, or which could affect civilian morale.

It was not until 1960 that the council decided to build flats on the priests bridge frontage, taking in the area of the abandoned works. And it was only in 1969 that Brook Court went up – a four-storey block of a dozen flats, with garages behind on the old Fitzgerald Works site.

The next part of The Survival of Wisden will be in the next Virtual Wisdener

The Wisden Book of Test Cricket, first published in 1979, is well established as an invaluable and unique source of reference essential to any cricket library. This new volume includes full coverage of every Test match from late 2014 to the end of the 2019 season in England. Each Test match features Wisden's own scorecard, a detailed match report, details of debutants, close of play scores, umpires and referees, with number of appearances, and Man of the Match winners. Also included is a complete individual Test Career Records section and player index.

Edited by Steven Lynch, this new volume brings collectors' libraries up to date, ensuring they have a complete and accurate record - essential for any truly self-respecting cricket enthusiast.

The new volume of The Wisden Book of Test Cricket is planned for release in mid-May. That may change, but as with the brilliant efforts of all concerned (not just Wisden, but warehouse and delivery folk) to get the 2020 edition out, let us hope that tall will be well with his new volume.

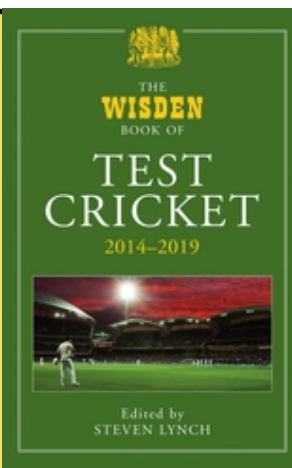
The RRP of this volume is £40

I am able to offer this edition for the following:

For delivery to within the UK - £35 including postage

For overseas delivery - £ 41.50

If you would like to pre-order a copy please let me know either by email, furmedgefamilly@btinternet.com or furmedgefamilly1864@gmail.com or by telephone, 01480 819272 or 07966 513171



I contributed the 1971 Wisden to Bill's 2015 book (as did others, we obviously have several Kent supporters in the circle!). So I would like to write about my second favourite Wisden, 1965. This is partly because it was the first one I bought, reviewing the first season I followed. But it has many features worth noting. It has still my favourite article ever, "The Pleasures of Reading Wisden", by Rowland Ryder, son of the longstanding Secretary of Warwickshire. I think it is also the one with the obituary of Peter, the resident Lords cat.

Worcestershire deservedly won the Championship for the first time, with a team of mainly experienced players. Graveney and Kenyon led the batting, Flavell, Coldwell and Gifford the bowling. Not one member of the team was selected for the winter tour of South Africa, whereas Middlesex had five and Warwickshire four. Graveney scored his hundredth hundred. Neville Cardus wrote a warm article concluding that "Graveney has been accused of letting England down on occasions, but he has never let cricket down."

England were going through an interesting time of change. They had a strong middle order and spin attack, but the slots for opening batsmen and bowlers were up for grabs. Boycott made his debut in 1964, scored his first Test century, and went to South Africa in the winter, as did Barber in his renaissance as attacking opener, and the young Brearley. They pipped Edrich, who had scored a century at Lords, Russell, the first to 2,000 runs, Bolus, who was never out for single figures in his Test career, and Stewart.

Several opening bowlers were tried without any of them really making it. And the four chosen for South Africa - Thomson, Cartwright, Brown and Price - made little impact. It was a long wait until Higgs and then Snow.

The mention of the winter tour is again a historic moment, the last by England until the 1990s. The 1965 Wisden also includes the last South African tour of Australia, featuring Benaud's last Test. The series was drawn 1 all, Australia lucky that rain almost certainly saved them in one of the draws. A 19 year old Graham Pollock won plaudits for his 175 in the Third Test.

The 1964 tourists were Australia, billed as the weakest squad they had ever sent. Well, the batting was strong with Simpson, Lawry, O'Neill, Booth, Burge and Redpath. The bowling was led by Mackenzie with a lot of new faces. Three of the Tests were ruined by rain, and the Fourth Test wins the award as the most boring and pointless ever. Australia 656 for 8 declared, England 611. According to Fred Rumsey's superb recent autobiography, a deal was struck with the Australian bowlers towards the end to keep England in, but they got out, and Australia had to go in for all of 2 overs!

The series was won and lost in one session at Headingley when Dexter took the new ball with Australia 178 for 7 against England's 268, and Trueman and Flavell failed to deliver. Burge scored 160 and Hawke and Grout each scored 38 to take Australia to 380 and an eventual seven wicket victory. One memory of the tourists is listening to the radio commentary of

their game against Surrey, and the commentator saying that Bernie Constable had started his cricket career with Surrey in 1939, before several of the tourists had even been born!

Another was listening either side of lunch on the Saturday of the Fifth Test. Trueman had ended the morning play with two wickets in consecutive balls and 299 Test wickets. He didn't get a hat trick after lunch, but did get Hawke out shortly after, caught by Cowdrey at slip. The first man to get 300 Test wickets. Asked later if he thought anyone else would achieve it, he replied that whoever did would be b...y tired!

Wisden includes a photo of Dexter making a drive and his bat splitting, half ending in his hand and the other half at cover!

The 1963/64 tour had been to India. The Second Test has gone down in history as the one where England were so hit by injury that they fielded every available player. The 10 man team comprised four fast bowlers, two spinners, two wicket keepers and two batsmen. India were so defensive minded that the result was a draw. The eleventh player, Mickey Stewart, had to withdraw on the first day from injury. He had been a doubtful starter, and it is a true story that a young journalist called Henry Blofeld had been asked to stand by in case Stewart had not been able to start.

So many memories come back of that season. An indication of the number of games played is that 8 players did the double including Knight, Pressdee, Titmus, Illingworth, the evergreen Trevor Bailey and Mortimore. Looking at the players given the selectors' nod and then overlooked. I always felt Phil Sharpe was particularly unlucky, only ever seen as a slip fielder replacement for Cowdrey when injured, but who had an average well in to the 40s.

1964 was a significant year for my county, Kent. From 1948 to 1963, they were second half finishers, but they ended up as 7th and continued to climb from there. The 19 year old Derek Underwood took a hundred wickets for the second year in succession. Two newcomers who Wisden thought worthy of note were a wicket keeper called Alan Knott and a 6 foot 7 inch fast bowler called Norman Graham.

I saw my first county match at my home town of Dover. On a filthy wicket favouring spinners, Illingworth scored 135 not out of Yorkshire's 256 and then took 14 wickets to help bowl Kent out twice on the second day! My Bradford born father was delighted.

Keith Russell

The 1965 Wisden was the first to have a yellow dust wrapper, and finding an edition with a pristine jacket is difficult. Expect to pay around £100 for such an edition.

A 1965 with a colour replacement dust jacket should be around £55-£60>

A soft back edition in pristine condition can usually be found for between £42 and 338.

(See the piece on the next page re the 1965!)

Cricket in Firelight

By Richard Binns, first published 1935, Sportsman's Book Club reprint 1955, pp182

'No cricket match is ever played but once only.' So writes Richard Binns in the Epilogue to *Cricket in Firelight*. Matches, he says, are replayed every time cricket-lovers meet together 'and the fire of human companionship and common interest begins to glow'. Maybe not every match, but the finest are replayed in the minds of the players, of the spectators, of those who listened to the commentary: Headingley '81; Edgbaston '05; the World Cup Final 2019. Or indeed literally in the case of Headingley '19, which was re-run in its entirety in April 2020 on Sky Sports and Test Match Special to fill the gap created by the Covid-19 lockdown.

With no live cricket being played at the time of writing (April 2020) anywhere in the world except the back garden, a book that specifically celebrates the cultivation of cricketing memories seems singularly appropriate for our times.

So when Bill very kindly offered a whole host of books as free giveaways on the WCC website, this seemed the obvious choice for me – and it only seemed right that I should offer a little article on the book for *The Wisden*er by way of saying thank you!

Binns explores the solace that is to be found in 'the replaying of the games of the past' for the cricketer no longer able to play the game because of age, ill-health or a combination of the two. For Binns, the tragedy was two-fold. Firstly, the loss of his childhood friend Jeremiah Murgatroyd (whose personality would appear to have been far from the Dickensian gloom the name suggests). Binns shared many of his early cricketing experiences with 'Jerry', including a vividly-recalled visit to Headingley to see the Australians play Yorkshire in 1902. But Jerry had his health, his zest for life and his love of cricket all shattered by the First World War, and died soon afterwards.

Binns himself was also profoundly damaged by the War and after a short while playing and watching the game without his friend, his own 'wartime legacy of broken health' put an end

to his playing days; he writes movingly of the emotions this evokes and the sense of loss in 'summer days yet to be' that will not involve playing cricket.

Thus it is that Binns' little book, constructed from memories of fireside chats with Jerry about the game, has a sweep that takes the reader from house matches at his first school, with the memory of a hit that broke a chapel window, village cricket in industrial Yorkshire, Roses matches (with a particular focus on one he witnessed in 1922), and on to the pinnacle, Test matches between England and Australia.

Recalling a conversation with Jerry over which was the greatest first-class match ever played leads him to reconstruct two great Test series: 1894-95 and 1902; four candidates for this accolade occurred during these series. His final conclusion is unimportant. It is the process that matters: the joy that is to be found in contemplating the game at its finest.

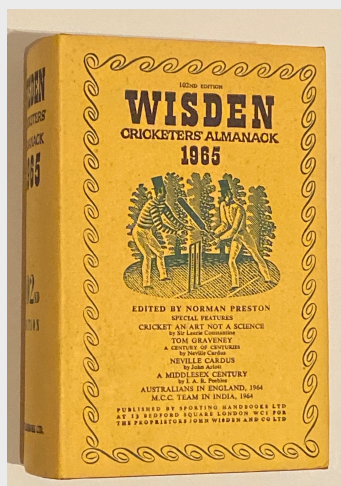
This is cricket not in the fresh air and sunshine but in the glow of one's own hearth: the firelight is a metaphor for a sense of peace and wellbeing that can come despite profound loss. For Binns, looking back from the perspective of 1935 with his health and his closest friend both lost to the First World War, the memories of playing cricket matches with Jerry, of watching the best players in action, and the reconstruction in his mind of matches he never witnessed, provide his consolation. And is this not part of why we read *Wisden*? Most of us, perhaps, on opening the new edition for the first time, turn to the pages of our favourite county and the matches that we ourselves watched, to bring back the memories of days in a deck chair at Hove or a bucket seat at Lord's.

Then to the section on England's home series to recollect the previous year's Test matches, which perhaps we only witnessed on television. But do we not also turn, especially during the longer winter months when there is no cricket, to older volumes, to matches played before we were born, and in our mind's eye reconstruct those far-off events which perhaps no living eye has now seen?

Richard Lawrence

The 1965 Wisden and its dust jacket

The traditional hardback was augmented by a yellow dust wrapper or dust jacket (pictured, left). The yellow dust wrapper included on its cover a list of contents and the 'two Victorian gentlemen': the linen cloth edition had been using this image since 1938. The printing of the main contents on the cover since the first edition had been a feature of the paperback edition and in 1965 the yellow dust wrapper meant that hardback collectors would see the same. It is generally accepted that some traditional hardback buyers treated the yellow dust



wrapper with disgust and discarded it; indeed, over 500 dust jackets were returned to the editor in disgust. To this day, finding an original 1965 hardback with a yellow dust wrapper free of any damage is unusual, making one expensive. It is believed that the prime reason for adding the yellow jacket was pressure from retailers, who argued that the brown boards of the hardback were dull and uninspiring. They argued that with a lack of visibility on the shelves, sales would not increase. If this is an accepted reason or a part-reason for the dust jackets' arrival, then it could be argued that the retailers had no understanding of *Wisden*: it was not, nor has it ever been, an impulse buy.

Signatures on Wisdens is a topic that cropped up during a conversation with Andrew Renshaw, author of 'Wisden on The Great War', and after chatting to a couple of WCC members a feeling was gleaned that in most cases a signature or an annotation adds provenance to an almanack. Some collectors insist that no scrawling of any kind infringes on the hallowed copy, and this is perfectly acceptable, although an internal name does often lead to a quick search on Google or a flick through the births and deaths section to see if A.N. Other was indeed the very same player who scored 876 runs in a session in that famous Test match long, long ago.

Does a signature have an adverse consequence on a Wisden's value? The general opinion is that pre-1949 it does not, but in the following years, depending on the position and severity of the annotation, it would not add to the value and could possibly detract.

Of course, there are those who collect the signatures of the Five Cricketers of the Year and who seek out the players to sign across their photographs; again, this may not detract, and quite possibly it would enhance, but it is a personal choice and not one that all collectors would want.

The various conversations do offer an interesting sub-plot. Is it the provenance of a signature that is of interest or are we, as collectors, interested to know who held the Wisden in our respective collections in the past? Personally for me it is the latter. I am quite intrigued by the previous owner or owners, and that brings me in a long-winded way to an idea that has been brewing for a while. What if each Wisden came with a loose ownership card, simply naming as many previous owners as are known. For instance, between 2014 and 2017 on the Wisdenworld website there was a full collection of almanacks (1864 onwards) from the collections of both Rowan Scrope Kerr and his daughter, Diana Rait Kerr.

It is known that from 1950 onwards Diana bought her books direct from Wisden, so a card within say a 1950 edition could simply put her and then me (temporarily) as the previous owners. Other editions will have little or no information, but the process needs to start somewhere.

Fred Trueman had a mixed collection of editions that were sold at auction, indeed sold across a few auctions. In some almanacks there are bookshop stamps and it is not known whether these 'general bookshops' (and not specific Wisden sellers) would have bought them from the publisher directly or from a private collection. What is known is that Fred Trueman once owned them.

Unfortunately, not all sources would adhere to this policy of including a card within each Wisden, but it would certainly help if it was started and the individual collector could, with each new purchase, slip a little card inside, and even if it simply said that it was bought on eBay in 2014, the process would begin. The card could be simple enough so as not to create an issue with the pages within.

Not every signature in Wisden is a famous one, but that is not the point – just knowing that H. Taylor owned and physically picked up and read the 1934 hardback in my own collection is something that gives me great satisfaction. Eighty years ago H. Taylor was reading about a Test series that was still having repercussions just over a year after it was finished, and now I can read and enjoy the very same words knowing what has been written and divulged since.

Will someone be doing that with your latest Wisden long after the leading protagonists have long gone? So how will they know that it was once digested and enjoyed by you?

Bill Furmedge, originally 2014, updated 2020.

Before you buy the 1864 - Look What Could Happen...

Mrs Mildred Rowley, a nursing sister, of Helming Drive, Wolverhampton, was granted a decree nisi yesterday on the grounds of her husband's unreasonable behaviour. She had complained that he was "cricket mad".

After the hearing at Wolverhampton Divorce Court, Mrs Rowley said: "Cricket was not just a hobby – it was a total obsession. I had just had enough of it." Her husband, Mr Michael Rowley, was not in court as he was on tour in the West Country with Stourbridge Cricket Club. (Worcester Star, 1976.)

Letters to The Wisdener...

Sir,

Prior to the first One-Day International between England and South Africa, Sky TV was constantly making the point that if South Africa won, then they would replace England as the Number 1 country. Prior to the final One-Dayer, the trailers were asking, "Can England regain the Number 1 position?" This confused me. In fact, it annoyed me. It seems that league tables are drawn up after every match. Maybe this could be expanded to having them updated after every innings, or every wicket – better still, after every over.

Nick Loot

Sir,

Has anyone else spotted the 1969 Wisden in Stanley Kubrick's "A Clockwork Orange?" It is on the prison governor's desk as he informs head droogie Alex of his selection as a guinea pig for a government experiment.

I think it was Derek Pringle writing in a national newspaper who once said

"Kubrick was a well-known obsessive and the yellow tome, a 1969 edition, would not have been there by accident. My guess is that it was a visual metaphor used to depict both authority and the establishment."

Steve Coleman