

The Virtual Wisdener

No 30 February 7 2021.

The Newsletter of the Wisden Collectors' Club

Is it fair to say that any doubts about Joe Roots' indifferent form or even his captaincy are being slowly but surely removed? A wonderful double hundred against India following his 186 and 211 in Sri Lanka cannot be under-played, and let us not underestimate the achievement by talking about the frailty of the opposition...he has amassed over 600 runs in about a month and let us hope that England continue to look strong and focussed for the rest of the series in India. Wins breed confidence and allowing Bess and Leach to bowl with big scores in the locker can only help them and we need variety, we need a strong set of bowlers for all conditions. With a really interesting summer of Tests ahead and a certain series less than a year way, we need plenty of options.

County Championship

On Page 6 I have reproduced an article that first appeared in The Cricket Paper. Written by Richard Clarke it sums up what I know a lot of us have been feeling about the disregard and let's be honest, disrespect that the people who run the game, have for the County Championship. There is absolutely no doubt that the championship is put up with, it has no support and absolutely no promotion and if those in charge could do even less to encourage it they would.

In the end its all balls

I had a socially distanced walk with a mate on Saturday and he asked me what the difference was between Twenty20 and The Hundred and after a few seconds I came back with, in retrospect, is one of my better replies, "20 balls" I said. And in a simple way, that is it...nothing more, nothing less. So it has been created allegedly to attract a new audience to cricket...people who under no circumstances whatsoever would go to a 120-ball game, but would definitely be interested in a 100-ball game. I will leave that one with you. Oh but have no fear, every single bit of cricket promotion between now and the spring will be 95% The Hundred or Twenty20...

Wisden 2021

Talk about a front cover for the times we are living in. The image on the 2021 is both stark and captivating and it is a credit to Lawrence Booth for choosing it. Whilst the match content will be reduced I would put a small wager on the fact that when we open it we will be a little surprised at how much cricket has actually taken place in the past year.

As you may have guessed after looking through this edition of The Virtual Wisdener I think I might have discovered how to put links into articles so you, if you wish, can click and read further. I hope they work. Here is a tester if you click **here** you will see the new Wisdenworld website. If the links do not work or prove to be an inconvenience, please tell me.

1963 - the best of years

I was one day old when the England v West Indies second Test began at Lord's on June 20th 1963. I did not realise that until I was putting together the piece on the match (Page 9).

Obviously despite my unbelievable memory my actual recollection of the game is vague, indeed I am not sure if we owned a TV or whether my parents listened to the radio a lot, but I do know that cricket would not have been on their list of 'essential' listening and that brought a question to mind. I wonder how many Wisden collectors or cricket lovers developed an interest in either or both without any influence from the family? I'd be interested to know. So please, let me know.

The Big Spring Quiz.

I was amazed by the response to The Bumper Christmas Quiz so with the very-much appreciated help of David Hutchinson a new quiz has begun. Please have a look at Page 15 for the questions and how it will work. Hopefully you will enjoy taking part and I promise a nice prize.

Lorraine has finally convinced me to do Pilates and she warned me that I would yawn a lot, well thats an understatement and then she laughs at me when I do...which is just plain rude.

Abbey convinced me to watch the Rugby, England v Scotland...but she politely refused my offer for her to join me at 4am for Day three of the India Test! Stay safe and thank you for putting up with my ramblings

Bill (and the Furmedge girls)

This edition of The Virtual Wisdener
has been sent out to
8,116 people

The current membership of the
Wisden Collectors' Club is
2,792 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 on page 15.

The Bowler's Holding The Batsman's Willey

West Indies, despite being badly beaten by an innings in the First Test at Peshawar, played no further first-class cricket before the Second and Third Tests after they called off a scheduled match in Hyderabad because their hotel was deemed to be 'sub-standard'.

A three-day game against Habib Bank from November 24- 26 was cancelled after the West Indian team went back to Karachi, 100 miles away, the night before. They had been relocated to a guest house after their original accommodation had also been described as inadequate. The team then returned to Hyderabad to play a 50-over match against the bank on November 25, which was cancelled when the covers leaked. Clive Lloyd, West Indies' manager, thought that they had been booked into the Indus Hotel next to the Niaz Stadium, but local officials said the plans had been changed six weeks before as the hotel could not guarantee sufficient room for the tour party, and that the Pakistan Board had informed their Caribbean counterparts of the change.

The Cricketer, 1998

Shivnarine Chanderpaul, the Guyana and West Indies batsman, was arrested in Georgetown in mid-June after he fired a gun at a policeman, who shone a torch on him and his girlfriend, and hit him on the wrist. A licensed gun-holder, he claimed he thought they were under attack.

Guyanese Times, 1999.

Dean Jones, the outspoken former Australian batsman, was asked to stand as a candidate for the Liberal Party in Victoria by state premier Jeff Kennett, with a view to being minister of sport. He would assume a safe semi-rural seat at Gisborne.

The Age, 1999.

The South African Cricket Academy toured Scotland instead of South Africa A, as scheduled, in July. The hosts thought that an A- tour would be too one-sided.

Press Association 1999.

If someone buys a house by a cricket field, surely they must expect the game to be played at most hours of the day? But residents in Scholes, Holmfirth, drew the line at an impromptu game being played on the local pitch and called the police.

The problem here was nothing to do with match-fixing, but that stumps were not pitched until 4am. And that the participants were naked. Police quickly called a halt to proceedings.

The Daily Express, August 2002.

India's top golfer, Arjun Atwal complained of his country's indifference despite unprecedented success on the USPGA tour: "I have gone to every possible sponsor, But they say 'You don't play cricket.'"

Times of India, July 2005.

England's first gay cricket team - The Graces, are harbouring high hopes of playing league cricket after creating a little bit of history in being accepted as members of the Surrey Cricket Board. After winning nine out of 10 friendly matches in the last year, The Graces' captain Ian Crossland decided it was time to try to play some serious cricket which would do justice to his team's ability. 'People think we're just a load of old queens who think they look good in white, but actually we can and do play well,' he said.

The club are currently a wandering side, but are looking for a base from which they may play home fixtures. But not everyone has been impressed, notably the descendants of W.G. Grace, from whom the team have drawn their name. 'We are not gaybashers,' said Morny Grace, widow of W.G.'s great-grandson, Major Hamish Grace. 'But we are the Graces and we object to them using our family name.'

Crossland, who has played league cricket in Yorkshire and Surrey, was unconcerned. 'Grace is a cricketing term and we can use it if we like. He was a pioneering figure in his time, just as we are now.' The Graces are following in the footsteps of the King's Cross Steelers rugby league team and Stonewall football club. Despite their early successes the team are still looking for new players in the hope they can field a second team next season.

The Times July 2000. (www.gracescricket.org)

Achieving the Impossi-ball

How does a bowler take a wicket without bowling a ball? Scorers at a school game between Reigate Grammar and St John's, Leatherhead, were baffled when St John's bowler Kieran Burge came on with Reigate Grammar nine wickets down.

Burge's first ball was a wide, but in attempting to reach it, the Reigate batsman stumbled out of his ground and was stumped. So Reigate were all out and Burge had taken a wicket without having bowled a legal ball, giving him the extraordinary figures of 0.0-0-1-1. A spokesman for the ACU&S scorers' committee confirms that these were the correct bowling figures; the batsman had not technically faced the delivery. 'But if noting the number of balls sent down by the bowler, a single delivery should be noted, as wides and no-balls are later deleted from this tally,' said the spokesman. Simple, really.

Two days after starting an art class in Brighton, Phil Tunes sold his first painting to disc jockey, Fatboy Slim, for £1,000. The piece entitled. Spinning, 'a red, whirling window into Tufnell's soul' was bought as a gift for Slim's wife, TV presenter, Zoe Ball.

The Times, December 2007.

'His Excellency is a conscientious objector.'

Douglas Jardine remark when Nawab of Patudi refused to join the leg-side field, Bodyline series, 1933.

It Happened in February

1916:

D. Tallon of Queensland was born on February 17th. Tallon was a member of the 1948 and 1953 Australian teams to this country and played in 21 Test matches. He shared with E. Pooley of Surrey the record of most dismissals (12) in a match by a wicket-keeper.

1941:

A. J. Webbe died on February 19th aged 86. Webbe was captain of Middlesex from 1885 to 1898 and President of the Club from 1922 to 1936. In a career lasting from 1875 to 1900 he scored 14,236 (av. 24.71) with a highest score of 243 not out for Middlesex against Yorkshire at Huddersfield in 1887.

1941:

Maharashtra scored 798 v. Northern India at Poona in a Ranji Trophy match. This was a new record innings total in Indian first-class cricket, the previous record of 675 having been created by Maharashtra against Bombay only three months earlier.

1956:

E. D. Weekes scored five consecutive centuries for the West Indies team in New Zealand, an achievement surpassed only by Sir D. G. Bradman and C. B. Fry with six centuries. Two of Weekes' centuries were in the first and second Test matches, each of which was won by West Indies by an innings.

1867:

In New Zealand, Otago beat Canterbury by an innings and 37 runs and Wellington beat Nelson by 56 runs. In the seven innings played the highest total was 94 by Otago and only eight batsmen made double figures in the two matches. Canterbury's first innings total of 25 is still their lowest- ever in first-class cricket.

1917:

J. D. ('Jack') Robertson, the former Middlesex opening batsman, was born on February 22nd. In a career lasting from 1937 to 1959, Robertson scored 31,914 runs (av. 37.50) including 67 centuries. His highest score was 331 not out scored in one day against Worcestershire at Worcester in 1949. He was unlucky in that his best years coincided with Hutton and Washbrook and he played in only eleven Test matches.

1942:

Auckland-beat Wellington at Auckland by 8 wickets. In this match Bert Sutcliffe made his debut in first-class cricket at the age of approximately 18 years 3 months, scoring 11 and taking 1 wicket for 14 runs.

1957:

South Africa (340 and 142) defeated England (251 and 214) by 17 runs in the fourth Test match at Johannesburg. In England's second innings H. J. Tayfield bowled unchanged for 4 hours 50 minutes on the last day to take 9—113, the best bowling analysis ever for South Africa in Test cricket.

T. F. Shepherd who played for Surrey as a batsman between 1919 and 1932 died on February 13th at the age of 66.

1857:

Otago (86 and 18—1) beat Canterbury (46 and 56) by nine wickets in a match that lasted for three days at Dunedin. The Canterbury side has practised hard for four months, some of the players living in the pavilion so as to get practice night and morning.

1943;

Two matches were played at Port of Spain between Trinidad and Barbados. Sir Frank Worrell at the age of 18 scored 188 and 68 in the second match, his century being the first of his 39 first-class centuries.

1860:

In a low-scoring match at Sydney, Victoria (68 & 71) beat New South Wales (74 & 44) by 21 runs. Samuel Cosstick, of Victoria, ended with a match record of 11 wickets for 48 runs (5-25 & 6-23). One of the best of early Australian bowlers, he was born at Croydon on January 1st, 1836, and went out 'Down Under' as a youngster. This match marked Cosstick's debut in first-class cricket. G. Gilbert, who played for New South Wales in this match, was a cousin of W. G. Grace.

1911:

The game between the South Africans and New South Wales at Sydney, was very high-scoring, each of the four totals passing 400—New South Wales (436 & 458) beating the tourists (408 & 442) by 44 runs. C. G. Macartney scored a century (119 & 126) in each innings, and G. A. Faulkner (144) and A. D. Nourse, sen., (160) added 318 for the third wicket when the South Africans were going for victory on the fifth day.

1936:

Yorkshire (325 & 214-5) beat Jamaica (280 & 257) by five wickets at Kingston, in a short tour of Jamaica by the White Rose County. It is still rare for a first-class county to make an overseas tour, so far only Kent (to U.S.A. in 1903), Yorkshire (to Jamaica in 1935- 36) and Surrey (to Rhodesia in 1959-60) have undertaken such a venture. Three players did most of the work for Yorkshire, A. Mitchell (66 & 101*) and E. P. Robinson (68 & 63) scoring well in both innings and H. Verity taking ten wickets (5-34 & 5-62) in the match.

1851:

On Feb 11th Tasmania played Victoria in the first, first-class match in Australia.

1882:

February the 17th, the first ever Test match begins at the Sydney Cricket ground, Australia v England.

It Happened in February

1951:

On the last day of the month England beat Australia by eight wickets at Melbourne, in the fifth Test of the rubber, and thus gained their first post-war victory against the 'old enemy'. Sir Leonard Hutton, who scored 79 and 60*, made the winning hit—a very appropriate gesture. In England's first innings a batting slump saw the score change from 171-1 to 246-9, but R. T. Simpson (156*) and R. Tattersall (10) added 74 for the tenth wicket and made eventual victory possible.

1912:

In the fourth Test at the MCG, Hobbs (178) and Rhodes (179) put on 323 for England's first wicket. England went on to win the match by 225 runs.

1930:

West Indian batsman George Headley completes twin tons (114 & 112) in the 3rd Test win against England at Georgetown, British Guiana. It was also West Indies first Test win.

1948:

In his last Test innings in Australia (Sir) Don Bradman retires hurt on 57.

1958:

In reply to Pakistan's first innings score of 328, the West Indies end day three of the third Test on 508-1. In a final innings total of 790-3 declared (Sir) Garfield Sobers is 365* following CC Hunte's score of 260. The West Indies win the match by an innings and 174 runs.

1963:

The fifth Test against England at the SCG marks the final Test match appearance for both Neil Harvey and Alan Davidson.

1981:

On February 1st Australian cricket captain Greg Chappell sensationally instructs younger brother Trevor to bowl underarm to Brian McKechnie with New Zealand needing 6 from last ball to tie the 3rd World Series ODI in Melbourne; Australia won the match by 6 runs.

1982:

On February 17th Sri Lanka's first ever Test match begins, against England.

1864:

In two first class matches at Wellington, New Zealand, Wellington beat Nelson by 6 wickets in each match. Nelson were dismissed for totals of 108, 67, 65 and 37, W. Brewer taking 9 wickets for Wellington in the first match and 11 wickets in the second match.

1914:

In the fourth Test match against South Africa at Durban, S. F. Barnes took 14 wickets for 144 runs to bring his total for the series to 49 wickets for 536 runs (average 10-93). This is still the highest number of wickets taken in a test rubber by a bowler. Barnes did not play in the fifth Test match at the end of the month and so missed the opportunity of being the only bowler to take 50 wickets in a Test series.

1914:

V. T. Trumper (293) and A. Sims (184) added 433 runs for the eighth wicket for the Australians against Canterbury at Christchurch, to create a new record for this wicket partnership and which to this day remains unsurpassed. This was Trumper's last century in first-class cricket.

1939:

In the semifinal of the Ranji Trophy, Sind were dismissed by Southern Punjab for 23, the third lowest score (the others being 21 and 22) in first-class cricket in India.

1939:

After scoring six consecutive centuries, Donald Bradman was dismissed for 5 in his next innings, for South Australia v. Victoria at Adelaide.

1954:

M.C.C. beat Barbados by 1 wicket and obtained their first victory over the colony for fifty years. They subsequently lost the second Test match by 181 runs, but afterwards beat British Guiana by an innings and 98 runs, W. Watson (257) and T. W. Graveney (231) adding 402 runs for the fourth wicket, in an innings total of 607.

1887:

George Lohmann takes the first eight-wicket haul in Test cricket. In Australia's first innings he has figures of 25-12 8-35, he takes two more in the second innings as England win the Second Test at the MCG by 71 runs to win the two-match series 2-0.

1961:

Pakistan batsman Mushtaq Mohammad (101) hits his maiden Test century in the first innings of the drawn fifth Test against India. He is 17 years old.

1978:

Needing 137 to win, New Zealand bowl England out for 64 to win the first Test in Wellington. R.J. Hadlee has figures of 13.3-4 6-26 and only two England players IT Botham and PH Edmonds reach double figures. G. Boycott captained England in the absence of JM Brearley.

The First Ever One Day International

Melbourne.

Wednesday, December 30 1970.

England name the same twelve as at Perth where Underwood stood down, and the ground is so wet, the weather and forecast so liquid that the authorities seriously considered 42 postponing the start by one day.

Thursday, December 31, 1970.

1 The game became technically in motion when, at 1.20 precisely, the teams were exchanged (Fletcher being omitted from the England team, Thomson from the Australian) and the toss was made. Illingworth won, asked Australia to bat and the rains returned.

Friday, January 1, 1971.

Today the authorities of both countries thought long and earnestly about making up time by taking in the Sunday but decided against it on the grounds that the match was theoretically in progress.

Saturday, January 2, 1971.

For the third successive day no play—but now a decision. The Australian Board of Control (Sir Donald Bradman and Bob Parish) and the Cricket Council (Sir Cyril Hawker, chairman, and G. O. Allen, vice-chairman) with David Clark concurring scrapped the last two aborted days, agreed a one-day limited-over match on Tuesday and announced a further Test, making seven including this waterlogged one, in place of the return match between MCC and Victoria.

Hooray! Approval of this imaginative move proved universal in Australia and all but so among English critics: not however among the English team, who forthwith decided first that their chances of getting back the Ashes had been scuppered and simultaneously that, for the added strain, they deserved more money.

This they asked for with precipitate haste. Let me not condemn the whole team or even the majority for their short-sighted reaction to the situation. Even their militants might, however, have given authority credit for not having overlooked their interests.

Sunday, January 3, 1971.

A day of team meetings and conferences in an atmosphere which Clive Taylor described as being a cross between the United Nations and the Trades Union Congress. Lord's were first asked by telephone whether Alan Ward could be flown back (*he had flown home injured prior to Christmas 1970*), though why it should be thought he was fit no one knows.

Next, could David Brown hold himself in readiness? The obvious insurance to reinforce a jaded or depleted attack seemed to be Robin Hobbs. What happens for instance if Illingworth fails to last the pace of three Tests in three and a half weeks, four in less than six? Or if Underwood proves ineffective? However, the

In a recent VW it was mentioned that the first ever One Day International took place in Australia in January 1971... well a big thank you to Andy Page who sent in this article. It is the pages from the diary kept by EW Swanton on the days leading unto the match and it gives a little insight into how the match came about, which I am sure might be known to many but hopefully still of interest.

obsession is with speed—even when no one except Snow has the real authentic fire.

Monday, January 4, 1971.

The tour selectors asked for Tony Greig currently coaching in South Africa at St. Andrews, Grahamstown and playing for Eastern Province to stand by. This at least is a more logical decision since he is fit and acclimatised: his presence in the first place would have helped the balance of the side enormously.

There is no doubt that the addition of the extra Test does decrease England's chances since Australia can refresh their side as they wish while England depend so much on Snow and have so little slow bowling. However, who will blame the triumvirate of Hawker, Allen and Clark from taking the larger view?

Tuesday, January 5, 1971.

History was made today with the first one-day match between the full international strength of England and Australia. It was made before 46,000 happy people who paid \$A33,323 (£16,500) for the pleasure.

Instant cricket is almost new to Australia for the Vehicle and General knock-out between New Zealand (who won it) and the States last year coincided with the absence of the best players in South Africa. Today's game would have been a better one if England had made another 30 runs; but spectators could see the merits of this version of the game and it will be surprising if the Australian Board of Control, now showing considerable enterprise in their determination to hold and extend the cricketing public, do not act on the evidence of today.

Rothmans, who have been good friends to the game for so long, provided \$A5,000 for distribution as the board and the MCC management saw fit. As a result the winning side took \$A2,400, the losers \$A1,200 and the man of the match, John Edrich, \$A200. England were undone by the spin for which they themselves have so little use. Edrich played very well indeed but it was significant that the Australians hit the ball that much harder: eight fours on one side, seventeen fours and a six on the other, if one considers the matter in that way.

Note: the 1972 Wisden hardly mentioned this match, giving it the same space as the NSW Country XI v MCC played two days later

Promoting The County Championship (or Not)

One of the major moans of County Championship devotees is that the red-ball game is never marketed.

'OK, it is not well attended,' they say, surveying the wide-open spaces in the stands. "But there is no promotion at all and, these days, little media coverage. How are we sure if people don't like it or they just don't know about it?"

A month ago, there was hope of the Bob Willis Trophy changing this situation with a high-profile, televised showpiece final at Lord's collecting eyeballs from the passionate and those... ahem... 'working from home'.

The tournament had been excellent and, as it transpired, the cream rose to the top to set up a final that promised quality, tension and just a little needle.

But, as the game approached, where was the promotion? Where was the television coverage? Where were the adverts and emails telling me what I had to do to watch or building the story?

The ECB peppered my in-box this week to push the England women's T20 games meanwhile the Hundred started spamming me a full year before the bloody tournament was set to begin.

I have never bought a ticket to either yet I was clearly on a mailing list somewhere. As a ticket-buying, merch-purchasing, home-and-away travelling Essex member, I got an email on the morning of the final but that was merely preaching to the converted. Surely this game was about widening the audience.

Less than 24 hours from the first ball at Lord's there had been deafening silence.

So I decided to market the game myself.

I set up a page on my website aggregating all the major stories and videos I could find ahead of the final. You can still see it by clicking [here](#). Then I went into Facebook and quickly cobbled together a very simple slideshow advert. It was rushed, beyond basic and only targetted to those people who 'follow' the County Championship and the first-class counties. I budgeted a nominal £10 in the 24 hours between noon on Tuesday and noon on Wednesday, just after the final had begun.

And my clunky, hurried, poorly-cropped advertisement delivered.

It was shown to over 2000 people on Facebook who had 'liked' the County Championship and the first-class counties. Precisely 207 people went to my page, that's a very economical 5p per click.

The demographics say 97% of these were men, 33% were 25-34 years-old and 29% were 35-44. Only three per cent were over 65, although this may be a result of the age range using Facebook.

I came across an article this week, a random find, that first appeared in The Cricket Paper last year. The article was to put it bluntly 'right up my street' because it bemoaned the total lack of marketing and promotion for the Bob Willis Trophy Final last September between Essex and Somerset. I contacted the author, Richard Clarke who has given me permission to reprint it in full.

Richard also produces a county championship newsletter - The Grumbler's County Cricket Newsletter. My first impressions of the newsletter were it reminded me of County Cricket's equivalent of 'The Week' - a place to find the weekly stories about the format of the game that we all love - and in one place.

On the next page I have put together a collection of some of the stories and articles from his newsletter and the links to the full articles, which come from amongst the sources county websites and news outlets. One of the frustrations of clicking through to something is that advertisements and promotions (not about the County Championship though) are in abundance, but they are worth putting up with).

If you would like to subscribe to The Grumbler's County Cricket newsletter, please use the link at the foot of page 7. Any feedback would be appreciated.

This was not a scientific experiment, I am no guru on Facebook advertisements and my artwork disappointed even me. However, my £10 did suggest there is more interest out there than you might think. What would have happened if I was a proper designer, copywriter, had produced a page full of stunning videos or could throw in more budget?

Two hours after the advertisement went up (and less than 24 before the game would begin), it was announced that, although the Bob Willis Trophy final would not be on television, there would be a strong array of streaming options, including BBC iPlayer and Sky Sports' YouTube channel. All very heartening but very, very late.

Modern sport needs a narrative built over time. In the frantic world of football, big games are flagged up weeks in advance and a crescendo is carefully constructed. In boxing, the story is even more layered with the fight announcement, press conference and weigh-in all helping to create a grudge match.

Essex and Somerset have been bashing away at each other for a few years now with the pride of Chelmsford normally taking the spoils. Revenge or repeat, redemption or confirmation - there was a story to create but no-one decided to do it so I had a go.

It proved nothing except maybe, just maybe, the moaners are right - a little marketing could go a long way.

Nottinghamshire membership passes 4,000

If Notts are making a story of this and including the numbers that suggests they are pretty happy. This figure is just over 50% of last year's figure but, remember, they had a terrible Championship season despite their success in the Blast. Many members leave it late to join, let alone when we are in the middle of a pandemic and seeing any play is far from guaranteed. The biggest plus - 900 new members...

Click [here](#) to read more of this article (Notts CCC website)

ECB secure LV=General Insurance sponsorship deal for England Tests and County Championship.

This is by far the biggest news of the last fortnight. An old friend returning to sponsor English cricket, including the domestic game, for three years. Despite the pandemic, failing to find a replacement for Specsavers would have been a huge blow. I would urge all county fans to thank their club sponsors at any opportunity. They are not polluting the game, they are helping to keep the lights on right now.

Click [here](#) to read more of this article (The Cricketer).

When I was young cricket was my passion. Now it is my therapy.

I always enjoyed a meandering relationship with the game; learning and playing in adolescence, playing and watching in adulthood then watching occasionally in maturity. But now, just after raising a metaphorical bat for my half-century, our bond has taken a sudden, unexpected turn.

I used to have an enviable job, equitably replete with respect and remuneration. But 'the company pivoted' and, ever since, I have been floundering upon a freelance scrapheap that provides too little work, too much time and a total loss of control.

Click [here](#) to read more of this article (Richard Clarke).

Will Steve Kirby fill the missing piece of the Somerset Puzzle?

One of the most potent attacks in county cricket will be led by their former bowler, who knows the Taunton pressure-cooker all too well.

Few would describe Steve Kirby the bowler as philosophical. They may have other choice words for the feisty quick but deep thinker is unlikely to be among them. He was a man who embodied white-line fever, although 797 wickets in the professional game suggest there was merit to his methods.

Click [here](#) to read more of this article (The Cricketer).

Hampshire plot audacious coup of signing Kyle Jamieson...

with the giant New Zealand fast bowler impressing on Test match stage after man-of-the-match display against Pakistan.

Click [here](#) to read more of this article (Mail Online)

Phil Edmonds Ruined My Teenage Years

Click [here](#) to read more of this article. (CricketNetwork)

As One Door Closes, Graham Onions starts out on his coaching journey.

Onions has been preparing for this moment for some time, even if it came prematurely; a back injury picked up on the eve of the Bob Willis Trophy left him no choice but to hang up his well-worn bowling boots

Click [here](#) to read more of this article (The Cricketer)

The Making of Jack Leach - Video documentary

Click [here](#) to watch the documentary (Somerset CCC)

More on Somerset - 2.7m views on live streaming service.

It was, without doubt, the most unique of times here at the Cooper Associates County Ground this summer. From being based at home throughout large portions of the year, feeling consigned to an empty fixture list, to broadcasting and reporting on 28 days of cricket under the strictest of safety protocols in the space of seven weeks. It has been a challenging period, but one in which I hope we have managed to provide some entertainment.

Click [here](#) to read more of this article (Somerset CCC)

Glen Chapple - The Leader who inspired Lancashire to Championship glory.

Chapple is the absolute epitome of a superb county player who was considered just below international class.

He hit 8,725 runs at 24.16 and picked up 985 wickets at 26.71 in 315 first-class games. So, although considered primarily a bowler, his stats suggest he was nearly an all-rounder. His solitary international appearance came in an ODI against Ireland in 2006.

Click [here](#) to read more of this article (Wisden)

Charlie Hemphrey calls for ECB 'compassion' to save his career.

The Glamorgan batsman is caught between two nationalities and, sadly, it may end his career. He draws a comparison with Jofra Archer but, alas, the England team had a vested interest in making that switch happen swiftly.

Click [here](#) to read more of this article (Cricinfo)

If you would like to subscribe to The Grumbler County Cricket Newsletter begin by clicking [here](#)

The Yorkshire Cricketer who rode the Grand National Winner

It was in my schooldays, 1925 to be exact, that Double Chance won the Grand National. I remember it well because firstly, ever a gambler, I had a shilling each way on the horse and won myself a bob or two, and secondly, the jockey was a cricketer who had played for Yorkshire.

His name—Major John Phillip Wilson (Pictured, Below, as Double Chance pasts the finishing post).

It is mainly because of the second reason that Double Chance stays in my mind. Major Wilson played occasionally for the Yorkshire Gentlemen on their old ground at Wigginton Road, York, and some of us in the 1st XI at St. Peter's School, played for the Y.G.'s, as they were familiarly known, too. So of course I had met Major Wilson. What more natural when the Grand National came round that those of us who had played cricket with him should back his horse?

I seem to remember the horse was trained at Malton and was a fine point-to-pointer. All this came back to me the other day when a friend showed me some old cricketers' autographs. Among them were those of several Yorkshire players, including 'J. P. Wilson'. I had never seen his signature before.

He had signed his name alongside R. D. Dick. I repeated to myself, 'R. D. Dick'—did he play for Yorkshire then? I must confess I had not heard of him. But I checked in the record book and found he had.

Major Wilson played for Yorkshire in the 1911/12 era at the same time as some amateurs whose names are probably unknown even to the most avid Yorkshire supporter. J. Tasker, J. H. B. Sullivan, and E. Loxley-Smith, as well as R. D. Dick, are among the amateurs' names appearing in the Yorkshire sides of that period. After an education at Harrow, Major Wilson went on to Cambridge University, but he did not win a blue. His first appearance for Yorkshire was at the age of 22 against Leicestershire in August 1911. He batted at number eight and only managed four runs in his two innings.

But he did better in the next match against Middlesex at Bradford, hitting four boundaries in a score of 36.

I thought this article, from 1967 and first published in the Yorkshire Post, might be of interest. It was written by Ron Yeomans.

Despite Yorkshire's fantastic cricketing talent at that period, he kept his place in the side, led by Sir Archibald White, for the rest of the season. Alas he met with no success and even bagged a 'pair' against Kent at Canterbury. Kent won the match by 10 wickets, the winning hit being a four off Major Wilson's one and only delivery, after a maiden bowled by Schofield Haigh.

But perhaps he would have found considerable amusement in finishing above the great Wilfred Rhodes in the Yorkshire bowling averages that season—by the fraction of a run! In an earlier match he had

taken one wicket for 20 runs against Surrey—his one wicket in first-class cricket. The next season saw him play only three matches for Yorkshire—one against the South Africans and one at the Scarborough Festival. He met with no more success than before and he departed from the county cricket scene.

Major Wilson, whose home was at Tickton Grange, near Beverley, proved a fine soldier

and while serving with the Royal Naval Air Service in August 1914, he brought down a zeppelin over Belgium and was awarded the D.F.C. He had chased the zeppelin after it had bombed Hull. He remained an aviator after the Royal Naval Air Service amalgamated with the Royal Flying Corps and he was awarded the A.F.C.

On October 3rd, 1959, he died at the age of 70 and is buried in Welton Churchyard.

I wonder how many students of cricket history could remember that a Yorkshire cricketer once rode the winner of the Grand National? Only recently I tried the question out on a couple of cricket quiz experts. Neither of them could tell me

But one man did know—John Nash, the Yorkshire secretary.



The Virtual Wisdener has been published since April 3rd 2020 and every edition along with the three 'Special Newsletters entitled - Leaves From The Past (by Richard Lawrence - a look of some unique and unusual matches from the nineteenth century onwards) - can be found and read by clicking **here**

'The Wonderful game of Cricket provides A Lifetime Memory'

The Second Test at Lord's was drawn. This bare statement of fact conceals one of the greatest games of cricket which England has ever seen in her long history.

From the very first day, when Hunte hit the first three balls of the match from Trueman for four, until the unprecedented climax on the last evening, fortunes swung sharply, they ebbed and flowed from hour to hour; we had seen skill, bravery and a gay and wildly enthusiastic crowd which gave the whole match the exciting atmosphere of a Cup Final. It seemed right and proper after so much effort that neither side should win; certainly neither deserved to lose.

One can look back now and see half a dozen incidents which, if handled differently at the time, could have altered the whole course of the game, and given victory to one side or the other, but how easy it is to be wise after the event; to take a decision in retrospect after the opportunity of clear and meditated thought; how different in the heat of battle when the pressure is on.

Did England miss Dexter's bowling when he was incapacitated; was it wise to leave Close bowling spinners on the Saturday evening when Butcher and Worrell were in full bloom? Was Worrell right in not taking the new ball in the closing stages, or was he correct in believing that a swinging new ball could have been edged for four much easier than an old one or that Close could have seen a new ball better against the background of the pavilion? All this matters very little. What does matter is that the players played in, and the crowd of over 150,000 watched, a game of cricket never to be forgotten. It has given the game of cricket a vigorous new life.

FIRST DAY

West Indies, as they had done at Manchester, won the toss; some of England's followers seemed contented that West Indies were batting and that our batsmen were not obliged to face Hall and Griffith on a Lord's wicket which has the reputation for helping pace a good deal. No Test can have had such a surprising opening when play began at five minutes to twelve after rain had delayed the start.

Hunte hit the first three balls from Trueman for four, and took a single off the fourth ball. Thirteen runs in four balls; this, however, was not to be the general pattern—only 34 runs were scored off the next 188 balls.

Shackleton bowled admirably but without the gods smiling upon him; near misses have little realistic compensation, and at lunch West Indies were 47 for none. A satisfactory enough position, but for the rest of the day it was a dour battle against Trueman (Pictured, above, Right), who bowled superbly to take

England v West Indies, 1963 - The Battle for the Wisden Trophy - The second Test

Thank you for your feedback on my decision to print the contemporary match reports of the England v West Indies 1963 Test series. I am delighted to reproduce the contemporary full reports of each of the five Tests and this continues with the second Test played at Lord's on June 20, 21, 22, 24 and 25. Written by Gordon Ross and this first appeared in The Cricketer in July 1963.

five wickets. He got McMorris at 51 and Hunte at 64. The loss of two wickets quite quickly repeated itself twice in the subsequent play, wickets falling at 127 and 145, and two more at the same score of 219.

Kanhai's 73, a priceless innings in terms of runs as events turned out, was the day's highest score, and with Solomon (34) and young Murray (12) standing their ground at the end of the day to raise the score from 219 for 6, to 245, the game was left intriguingly in the balance - no side at that point had any material advantage.

A quick breakthrough on the second morning could have placed England in a good position; on the other hand a total of over 300 on the Lord's wicket was likely to secure West Indies from defeat though not necessarily giving them victory.

Looking retrospectively at the day's play one wondered why Titmus was not given a bowl. Was it that he was being played for his batting? Trueman, admittedly meeting with considerable success, was kept going for 32 overs, a fair stint for any bowler, let alone one who puts so much muscular energy into every ball he bowls; he probably slept well, if nothing else. The pity of it was that Trueman was not fresh enough when the new ball became due, and it had to be postponed for eight overs before it was considered he had regained his second wind for another assault. A day dominated by Trueman but with little else as the game slowly took its shape.

SECOND DAY

As yesterday had been Trueman's day, this one belonged overwhelmingly to Dexter, who played an innings which will long remain untarnished in memory. It was the sort of innings he might conceivably have played against Cambridge University when Sussex had already got plenty of runs on the board. To have played it against West Indies in a Test match when England, in reply to a score of 301, had lost two wickets for twenty, brings the innings into a line with some of the great



innings of the past, and yet, ruefully and nostalgically, one asks whether a Bradman, a Hammond or a McCabe would have got out for 70 when they were so much in command. Would not each one of them have set his sights on 170, at least, and how England could have done with it. Are we to condition ourselves to vintage Dexter in terms of seventy or eighty? He stayed whilst the score was raised from 20 to 102 - and made 70 of them himself - and all off 15 overs.

No wonder the pavilion rose to him like a hero returning from the battlefield. Barrington, in these circumstances, was an admirable foil and after Dexter had fallen he tackled a tricky situation with great fortitude. Looking much more his old self than he had done at Manchester; when he was caught for 80 with England 206 for 6, once again a hundred in a Test match in England had eluded him.



Parks played a most valuable innings of 35, and Titmus (Pictured, Left) defending with the stout heart that we all know he has, was 23 and living to fight another day. At 244 - 7 England were still in the hunt. A happier day, too, for Shackleton, who reaped the generous reward of three wickets in four balls, to find that there is justice in the world after all!

THIRD DAY

Before play began in front of this huge crowd, it was announced that because of an injured knee and on the advice of a specialist, Dexter would not field, although it was hoped that forty-eight hours' rest might permit him to bat when necessary. This, of course, meant that England were a bowler short, a handicap which they were to feel quite noticeably before the day was out. Cowdrey took over the leadership of the side in the field and seemed inspired by the responsibility, holding three slip catches to dismiss Hunte, McMorris and Kanhai, and looking over all an alert general in the field.

Play began with England 244 - 7 in reply to the West Indies' total of 301, and not too well placed since the new ball was due in two overs' time. Its arrival signalled the departure of Trueman who lost his off-stump to Hall at 271. Three runs later Allen was leg-before to Griffith, and the end appeared nigh at hand when Shackleton arrived, but Titmus by this time was in command, and after Sobers had failed to hold a thick edge from Shackleton at 289, the score gradually crept up, and at ten minutes to one Titmus reached an invaluable 50.

It took Hall and Griffith 16 overs of the new ball to finish England off; Shackleton, after a brave resistance,

finally succumbing to the pace of Griffith, who finished up with 5 for 91. England were only four runs behind, and it was anybody's game.

In the half an hour before lunch the balance was tilted firmly England's way when Cowdrey caught Hunte off Shackleton and McMorris off Trueman.

West Indies took their meal at 15 for 2 and there was much food for thought. Only a few minutes before Hunte had hooked Trueman into the Mound Stand for six and then been dropped by Cowdrey. Kanhai and Butcher began the afternoon with West Indies precariously poised. A major battle was about to be fought and they naturally trod warily, Kanhai strangely out of character with himself, placid and subdued. At twenty minutes to four Titmus was set in motion for the first time in the match as a bowler, but it was the ever-lasting Shackleton who took a vital wicket when Kanhai's run of luck finally petered out, and Cowdrey completed a hat-trick of slip catches. Now it was 64 for 3. Twenty runs later it was 84 - 4 and another 20 it became 104 - 5.

Worrell came in to a warm-hearted ovation, and momentarily played like a man who knew he was on a pair. The English star was in the ascendancy, any moment West Indies could have been on the run; only Butcher had appeared confident enough to stem the tide, inevitably, one thought, flowing towards an England win. Butcher had reached his 50 by hitting Allen many a mile for a six of most impressive proportions which sparked off a Caribbean carnival in the area in which the ball came to earth. Worrell, off the mark, grew in stature, and was soon to play some lovely forcing shots for four. Butcher had one life at 76. Allen must have pitched a ball in some rough. Butcher had advanced down the wicket and got an edge, but the ball flew sharply over Parks's shoulder, robbing him of a double chance - a stumping or a catch; he got neither.

Butcher was not to be unsettled by such a trifle as this, and at a quarter to six Lord's exploded as if the whole of the population of the Caribbean Islands was there to a man.

Butcher (Pictured, Right) reached his century



with a boundary off Shackleton. He had scored 100 out of 169. Between then and the close Butcher continued to play strokes of rapturous beauty. This had been a daring innings in adversity, an innings of technical

merit: brave in concept and adventure, and remarkable entertainment for a remarkable crowd, whatever their denomination.

Instead of being well on the way to defeat, West Indies had risen aloft and were 214 for 5, with Butcher 129 and Worrell 33. So ended a memorable day of absorbing cricket with the advantage swaying to and fro like waving palms from hour to hour.

FOURTH DAY

The dramatic first half-an-hour on this Monday morning shaped the whole pattern of the tense and pulsating finish which we were privileged to watch on the last day.

West Indies began with a score of 214 - 5, with Butcher and Worrell well capable of a good many more runs. It was vital for England to achieve a comparatively early breakthrough because it was generally felt that a target of 250 would provide England with a task which could well be beyond them. The greatest optimist, however, would never have forecast such a swing in England's favour.

Without any addition to the overnight score, Trueman, bowling from the pavilion end, made a ball lift and Worrell pushed it straight at Stewart, crouching on his haunches, a yard or two from the bat. Only a man with the swiftest possible reactions could afford to lurk so close and Stewart showed just how quick his mind works when he knocked the ball up, falling backwards as he did so. But instead of breaking his fall with his hand, he kept both free, and clutched the ball to his stomach as he lay on his back when it came down. Not many players would have held this one, and it was a tremendous fillip for England.

At 224 Parks caught his opposite number, Murray, also off Trueman, and 2 runs later, Hall went the same way. The triumphant Trueman had taken 3 - 4 and the ground had been cut from underneath Butcher's feet, as with eight wickets down there seemed no-one left capable of lasting him out.

Then came the death knell of the innings. Shackleton had Butcher lbw, quite emphatically according to the umpire, but this was not confirmed by large West Indian contingents in various parts of the ground, especially those at square-leg! They had no comment, however, when Shackleton clean bowled Griffith, so that 214 - 5 had become 229 all out, leaving England to get 234 to win. Trueman had taken 5 - 52 and Shackleton 4 - 72.

Now England's tail was up, but in character with the ebbing and flowing of fortune in this magnificent match, despair soon set in. With the England total 15, Edrich flicked a rising ball on

the leg-side from Hall into the hands of Murray; at 27, Stewart must have lost sight of a bumper from Hall and although he ducked to safety he left his bat in the firing line, and the ball went off his glove into the slips, and then the major calamity, a strangely ill at ease Dexter was bowled incomparably by Gibbs, head up and all the rest of it.

Cowdrey arrived to join Barrington and weathered the storm before lunch. Afterwards he began to look the fluent Cowdrey we know and admire so well. Then came disaster. With the score 72 - 3, Cowdrey was felled like an ox by Hall from a short pitched ball which broke his arm just above the wrist. This was one of a number of balls which Hall aimed very short but since the umpire did not intervene one presumes this was considered within the laws of the game though not necessarily within the spirit.

Bad light played a major part in halting the proceedings, particularly when the Queen arrived and the teams were presented to her, but a gallant Barrington struck two fine sixes off Gibbs and lived to fight on with Close. England were 116 - 3 at the close with Barrington (Pictured, Right) 55.

FIFTH DAY

There can never be anything in Test cricket to match the breathtaking drama of the last few overs of this day, ever to live in memory.

Cowdrey, arm in plaster, prepared to bat only in a dire emergency, and then left-handed, because he couldn't position himself to hold the bat in any other way, was called upon in the direst emergency, and though, happily, he was never called upon to face the bowling, the fact that he was able to walk to the wicket saved the match for England.

I say 'happily' he was not called upon to face the bowling because although Hall would have been fully entitled to do all he could to get Cowdrey out and so win the match for West Indies, had he bowled short and hit Cowdrey again, there would have been a wave of indignation which could have enveloped Hall for the rest of the tour.

That England were able to fend off defeat and come so close to a gripping victory was due to an innings of infinite courage and skill by Close. Bruised and battered, his body covered with welts and imprints (Pictured, Left), Close took England perhaps within one ball of victory. Had he connected with the ball that got him out



for 70 England would almost certainly have won. Hall, considerably restricting his use of short-pitched balls, performed a fast bowling marathon of the greatest distinction, bowling from 20 minutes past 2, when play was permitted to begin by the weather, until 6 o'clock. Can there be anything comparable to this? As long as Barrington stayed England were well in the hunt, but he went with the score 130 after an invaluable 60.

Parks followed at 158, but the 200 was passed still with only five wickets down (to all intents and purposes this was six as Cowdrey would not be a great deal of use). England were fairly well positioned. But at 203 a double blow virtually sent our hopes crashing to the floor. With 50 minutes left, England needed 31 with five wickets intact, but at 203, Titmus and Trueman went off successive balls from Hall.

Now it was desperate. Close remained, audacious enough to walk down the wicket to Hall, designed purely to upset his rhythm, and hoping to produce a bad ball or two.

Slowly but surely the runs came. England could still win, but at 219, the irrepressible Close was caught at the wicket slashing bravely for victory. Now could we survive?

Allen and Shackleton played intelligently, taking singles as and when they could. The last over began with spectators too gripped by the occasion to move a

muscle. Shackleton missed the first ball; took a single off the second. Allen scored one off the third. Three balls to go - six runs needed.

Shackleton played and missed at the fourth which ran through to Murray. Allen decided to pilfer a run and set off like a hare; not so Shackleton. Murray threw to the stumps at the end at which Allen had arrived. Worrell took the throw and ran ahead of Shackleton to break the wicket the other end and win by about two lengths!

Two balls to go; six runs needed; a maimed and severely handicapped Cowdrey reaching the wicket (Pictured, Below) - a situation much too far-fetched for a schoolboy thriller, but this was reality. Cowdrey could do nothing more than to defend. All Allen could do now was save the match. Could he honestly have been expected to hit Hall for a four and a two at that stage in the game?

Allen survived two balls, and so the greatest Test Match ever to be played in England was over



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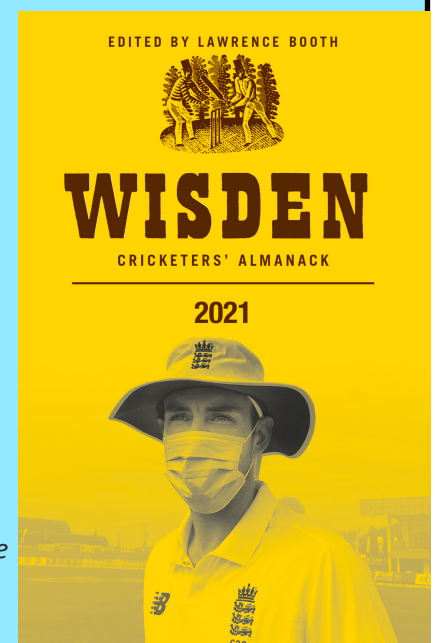
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The 2021 is due to be published on April 15th.

Wisden Editor Lawrence Booth says of the choice of the front cover image for the 2021.:

"It was a year when cricket, like the rest of the world, was dominated by the coronavirus – and no single item symbolised the pandemic more starkly than the mask. It seemed to make sense that the cricketer wearing it should be Stuart Broad, England's player of the summer. Dropped from the First Test against West Indies, he returned for the Second, and immediately proved his class. By the end of a season in which he became only the fourth seam bowler to pass 500 Test wickets, Broad had taken 29 at an average of just 13, and helped England to series victories over West Indies and Pakistan."



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Everywhere the question was constant with most people feeling that the Mother Country had not been: 'Why is England not here?' Try telling the Bangladeshis that the County Championship was in its final stages. Some of them did not know if they had a home to return to or even if relatives were still alive. How insular can you be?

Soon, however, the weather became the main topic of conversation at the 16th Commonwealth Games in Malaysia, as tropical downpours every afternoon threatened to wash out the tournament. But the 'Bomoh' (the local mystic) did his stuff. It was breathtakingly humid, but the rains receded.

At the outset Australia and Sri Lanka seemed good bets for the final; both won their early games convincingly. But then the world champions, albeit with a B side minus such stars as Jayasuriya and De Silva, nearly came unstuck in a thrilling encounter at the TNB Sports Ground at Kilat, against Zimbabwe.

In reply to 266 for 7, Sri Lanka lost their first five wickets for just over 100 runs, but the talented, attractive islanders never countenance defeat and they just kept playing their strokes. Despite losing three wickets near the end, they triumphed by one wicket.

The teams that did venture from British soil experienced mixed fortunes. Scotland's clash with Pakistan (also a B side, due to the Sahara Cup) was declared a no-result. Within minutes a tropical storm made the attractive Victoria Institution Ground in the centre of Kuala Lumpur more suitable for water-polo.

Scotland had contained Pakistan with parsimonious bowling, and after 40 overs they were for 112 for 5. But, as became apparent with all the part-time sides, the last 10 overs undid the locks. None of Akhtar Sarfraz's lusty aerial shots went to hand as Pakistan nearly doubled their score. A charming feature of this game was the tannoy announcer: 'Ladies and gentlemen, for your information there has been a bowling change at the South End of the ground three overs ago. The bowler who bowled was Mr James Brinkley.'

For a time Northern Ireland seemed capable of pulling off the shock of the tournament. Playing South Africa at the Sikh Kelab Aman at Lorong Damai, they had only accumulated 89 for 5 from 38.1 overs when the heavens opened. Duckworth and Lewis set South Africa a target of 131. Soon the disbelieving spectators were witnessing a potential debacle: 18 for 3; Andrew Hudson run out, 23 for 4; danger man Jacques Kallis caught for 18, 56 for 5. Could this really be happening?

A defiant Herschelle Gibbs lofted a six over a three-storey wire fence from whence the ball disappeared down a drain which was part of the city sewer system. That and the long grass on either side, a natural

David Rayvern Allen was a cricket writer, historian, producer and much more. I first met him about 15 years ago and he was a strong supporter of the Wisden Collectors' Club. David passed away in 2014 and prior to his passing he sent me a wonderful collection of his books and articles and I particularly like this one. A piece he wrote on the 1998 Cricket tournament in the Commonwealth Games.

habitat for cobras, dissuaded the fielders from retrieving it.

For Ireland, Ryan Eagleson was the hero, sporting a bandana for his pony-tail and pawing at the start of his run-up in a manner reminiscent of Wayne Daniel. South Africa won, of course, Dale Benkenstein and skipper Shaun Pollock steadying the ship, but as a less-than-happy coach Bob Woolmer said: 'It was the wake-up call that was needed.'

The rain in these games and, indeed, the general climatic conditions drew attention to a tactical limitation whereby a team is unable to declare its innings closed. The stronger sides might have fancied their chances of hoisting a total of 150 from 20 overs, given the lush outfields, and dismissing lesser opposition.

The semi-finals pitched Sri Lanka against South Africa and Australia against neighbours New Zealand. Zimbabwe impressed and came close; Barbados seemed likely to go all the way until South Africa played their one good early game; India were outgunned when it came to a real test; Pakistan lost their flair against New Zealand; Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, Bangladesh, Canada, Kenya, Malaysia, Northern Ireland and Scotland had their moments but lacked sufficient firepower.

In the first semi-final South Africa faltered again, or was it that admirable Sri Lankan never-say-die spirit? Set just 131 to win, South Africa collapsed to 96 for 9. But the final cadence was interrupted. The last pair, Nicky Boje and Alan Dawson, sensibly garnered their ones and twos. After such an escape one did not have to be a clairvoyant to know South Africa's name was writ in gold.

And so it proved. The kangaroo annihilated the kiwi in the second semi-final. Brad Young (Pictured, Right) taking a hat-trick with his left-arm spin.

But when the final showdown arrived, a dogged, unbeaten 90 from Australian captain Steve Waugh (he totalled 215 runs overall without being dismissed) could not prevent a resilient South Africa from winning by four wickets in a dour, one-sided game. The 7,532 spectators at the PKNS ground at



Kelana Jaya was the largest crowd at a Malaysian cricket match.

The King, Yang di Pertuan Agong, was an enthusiastic on-looker at many matches and always stayed until the end. The Malaysian Cricket Association and their secretary, Karu Selveratnum, are to be commended for the enormous effort they put into making the cricket a success. Seven grounds, excluding the historic Royal Selangor Club which was deemed unfit at a fairly late stage after an ICC inspection, made for delightful venues, and 22.2 million Ringgits (£3.4m) have been spent in the last three years upgrading facilities, a colossal sum in a land where a meal for four can be purchased for around £5.

All of which, when cricket was making its first appearance at the Games, made the non-appearance of England all the more reprehensible. What a chance to blood young players in an international ambience. The Commonwealth Games is essentially about taking part and friendship is the overriding theme. If cricket is not present at Manchester in 2002, we shall know who to blame.

The ICC website -

The 16th Commonwealth Games and the first to be held in an Asian country took place in 1998, with Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, providing the setting for the two-week jamboree.

It was considered at the time to be a hugely successful event, with sporting standards increasing and no controversy to steal the headlines. The final medals tally, accumulated over 15 sports, was topped by Australia, with Canada, England and Malaysia behind them.

The make-up of the competing teams differed slightly from a conventional 50-over cricket tournament. To begin with, the Games were held in September, thus impinging on the end of the English county season and therefore precluding England from entering a team. Jamaica, Barbados, and Antigua & Barbuda each represented themselves rather than the West Indies itself.

The practice facilities, according to South Africa's



Shaun Pollock (Pictured, Left), were modest, and the pitches "a touch underprepared" – not surprisingly, he would say later, given that the Malaysian authorities had had just a year to lay and condition turf pitches. But the quality of the fare and the closeness of many of the contests ensured that cricket would be one of the success stories of the event.

The quality on show was enhanced by the presence of a number of high-profile world stars. India boasted Sachin Tendulkar, Anil Kumble and Harbhajan Singh in their ranks; New Zealand were steered by Stephen

Fleming and Daniel Vettori; Mahela Jayawardene was the star of Sri Lanka batting at the time, and Pakistan's Shoaib Akhtar the quickest bowler in the world. Zimbabwe were led by Andy Flower, Antigua & Barbuda could call upon Curtly Ambrose and Richie Richardson, and Australia and South Africa had selected basically full-strength squads.

The final, attended by 7,532 people, a record for a cricket match in Malaysia, was a tense and nervy classic. "We had nothing to lose," Pollock recalled. "The Aussies had their full team, we were already guaranteed a silver medal and we were the underdogs. We decided to pick three spinners in the line-up because the wickets had been turning quite a bit."

"Standing up on the podium, receiving the medal and singing our national anthem is an experience I will never forget and will always treasure," Pollock recalled.

Matches

Group A:

Jamaica 142 lost to Zimbabwe 144-4 by six wickets.

Malaysia 109 lost to Sri Lanka 112-3 by 7 wickets

Sri Lanka 211-5 beat Jamaica 144-8 by 67 runs.

Zimbabwe 309-9 beat Malaysia 88-9 by 221 runs.

Zimbabwe 265-7 lost to Sri Lanka 266-9 by one wicket.

Malaysia 84 lost to Jamaica 87-4 by six wickets.

Group B:

Antigua & Bermuda 164-9, India 30-2. No Result - rain.

Canada 60, lost to Australia, 61-1 by nine wickets.

Antigua & Bermuda 99, lost to Australia, 101-3 by seven wickets.

India 157-9, beat Canada 45, by 112 runs.

Antigua & Bermuda 254-7, beat Canada 135, by 117 runs.

Australia 255-5, beat India 109, by 146 runs.

Group C:

Jamaica 142, lost to New Zealand 144-4, by six wickets.

Bangladesh 144-7, lost to Barbados 160-6, by 4 wickets (D/L method)

Northern Ireland 89-5, lost to South Africa 133-6, by four wickets (D/L method)

Bangladesh 79, lost to South Africa 80-5, by five wickets.

Barbados 296-5, beat Northern Ireland 120-7, by 176 runs.

Barbados 254-8, lost to South Africa 257-6, by four wickets.

Northern Ireland 177, beat Bangladesh 63, by 114 runs.

Group D

Pakistan 201-5, Scotland 31-3, Match Abandoned.

Kenya 144-8, lost to New Zealand 145-5, by five wickets.

Pakistan 189-8, beat Kenya 60, by 129 runs.

New Zealand 278-6, beat Scotland 101, by 177 runs.

New Zealand 215-8, beat Pakistan 134, by 81 runs.

Scotland 156-8, lost to Kenya 157-5, by five wickets.

Semi Finals:

Sri Lanka 130, lost to South Africa, 131-9, by one wicket.

New Zealand 58, lost to Australia 62-1, by nine wickets.

Bronze medal play-off:

New Zealand 212-7, beat Sri Lanka 161, by 51 runs.

Final:

Australia 183, lost to South Africa 184-6 by four wickets.

Cricket has not been included in any Commonwealth Games since 1998, but in 2022 a Women's Tournament will be included.

THE BIG SPRING QUIZ

The BIG SPRING QUIZ will run until the end of March...There will be 10 different questions in each of the next eight issues of The Virtual Wisdener and I want as many readers as possible to take part. How it works is quite simple. Please send in your answers by the closing date on each set of ten...that way I won't get confused and you are helping me out, but also I will try and give the answers to each set in the following issue with the next set. Simple, eh!!!

The person with the most correct answers after The BIG SPRING QUIZ finishes will be the winner, so the more questions you answer correctly over the next eight issues the better your chance.

I look forward to receiving your answers and the deadline for the set below is Saturday February 13th, by 6pm GMT.

There might be a prize and there might be a running table. A massive thank you to David Hutchinson who has put these questions together.

1. Who was the first bowler to be hit for 200 sixes in Test cricket?
2. Who was the last man to umpire in a Test Match under the age of 30?
3. Who was the last Australian batsman to be out for 99 in a Test Match?
4. Who was the man who scored 1 run and 5 ducks in his first 6 innings in Test cricket but later went on to score 6 double centuries?
5. Which bowler took the most wickets in Test cricket during the decade of the 1970's?
6. Who was the first man to captain 3 state teams in the Sheffield Shield?
7. Who was the first man, born in South Africa, to score a century against South Africa in a Test Match?
8. Who is the youngest man to captain England in a Test Match since World War II?
9. West Indies fast bowlers dominated Test cricket during the 1980's, but which 2 men scored double centuries against them in this decade?
10. Who was the last batsman to be given out 'handled the ball' in the County Championship?

Please send your answers by email or letter, or telephone me. If you do telephone then I will not be allowed to tell you if you are right or wrong, that's because I am really horrible and I will enjoy hearing the uncertainty in your voice.

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

Happy Quizzing to one and all

The Virtual Tea Interval

A loud pounding on the door awakened a man and his wife at 3:00 am. The man gets up and goes to the door where a drunken stranger, standing in the pouring rain, is asking for a push.

"Not a chance," says the husband, "it is 3:00 in the morning!"

He slams the door and returns to bed.

"Who was that?" asked his wife.

"Just some drunk guy asking for a push," he answers. "Did you help him?" she asks.

"No, I did not, it's 3 am in the morning and it's bloody pouring rain out there!"

"Well, you have a short memory," says his wife. "Can't you remember about three months ago when our car broke down, and those two guys helped us? I think you should help him, and you should be ashamed of yourself! God loves drunk people too, you know." The man does as he is told, gets dressed, and goes out into the pounding rain. He calls out into the dark, "Hello, are you still there?"

"Yes," comes back the answer.

"Do you still need a push?" calls out the husband.

"Yes, please!" comes the reply from the dark.

"Where are you?" asks the husband. (I love this part) "Over here on the swing!" replied the drunk.

A man walks into a doctor's office. He has a cucumber up his nose, a banana in his left ear and a parsnip in his right ear.

The doctor says, "You're not eating properly."

"I regret rubbing ketchup in my eyes, but that's Heinz sight."

"I've got an Eton-themed advent calendar, where all the doors are opened for me by my dad's contacts."

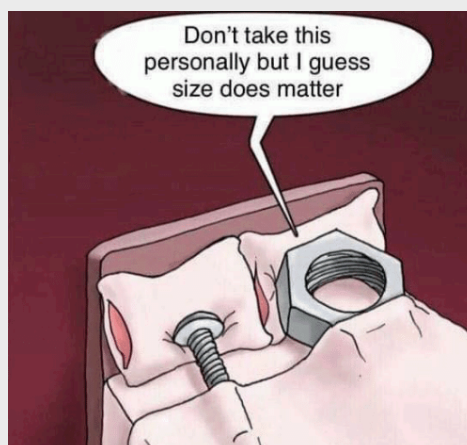
"My friend doesn't like to talk about his psoriasis. He'd rather just sweep it under the carpet."

"Maybe this is the beer talking, but I'm an alcoholic drink made from yeast-fermented malt flavoured with hops."

"Life Hack: When too tired to do all the things on your To Do list, try a To Don't list. Simply write all the things you're not going to do and then... don't do them. Huge sense of achievement with none of the effort."

"In his job my dad's never lost a case. That makes him Gatwick's top baggage handler."

"British people are like coconuts. Hard on the outside but sweet once you crack us. Also often found full of alcohol and holding an umbrella."



"I asked for a wake-up call at a hotel and they said, 'You're a drug addict and you're killing yourself.'"

"They say some people 'inhale books'. I know someone who injects books right into his veins. Particularly ones with female protagonists. He's a heroine addict."

"I bet there's never any workers' strikes at a stress ball factory."

"I tell my friends I'm here for them 24/7 because it sounds better than saying I'm only here for them on 24 July."

"A cowboy asked me if I could help him round up 18 cows. I said, 'Yes, of course. That's 20 cows.'"

"In my school, kids thought I was posh because I had a Playstation and a dad. Not in the same house. I'm not royalty."

"You're supposed to say 'Break a leg' to actors. Break a leg? It's not even relevant. That's like saying to a 100-metre hurdler, 'I hope you forget your lines!'"

Just heard a Doctor on the radio saying that during this time of Coronavirus while staying at home we should focus on inner peace. To achieve this we should always finish things we start and we all could use more calm in our lives. I looked through my house to find things I'd started and hadn't finished, so I finished off a bottle of Merlot, a bottle of Chardonnay, a bottle of Baileys, a bottle of wum, the remainder of Valiumun scriptuns, and a box of chocletz.

Yu haf no idr how feckin fablus I feel rite now. Sned this to all who need inner piss. An telum u luvum. And two hash yer wands, stafe day avrybobby!!

(Lorraine Furmedge, my wife, told me this one)

During the 1991 Adelaide Test, Javed Miandad commented that Merv Hughes looked like a fat bus conductor. Big Merv dismissed the Pakistani soon after, allegedly running passed the batsman yelling, "Tickets please!"

"In the future I shall always be able to tell when the cricket season has started. All I have to do is listen to the sound of Brian Close being hit by a cricket ball."

Eric Morecambe, after Close (once again) undertook a barrage of West Indian bouncers on his emergency return to Test match cricket in 1976.

"Fast bowlers wearing earrings, I don't know what the game is coming to."

Fred Trueman on Derek Pringle's Test debut in 1982.

Paul, Ali, Steph, Lorraine, Liam and Chris - thank you!