

**It seems my comments in the last VW were met with almost unanimous approval and after this mornings fourth Test defeat (inside three days) I have come to the conclusion that I could not care less what happens to the England team - Unpatriotic, shameless, disgraceful - yes I know and so am I.**

I am fed up to the back teeth of excuse after excuse, batting collapse after batting collapse, bowlers who 'lack confidence,' and those who come home after two hours of 'really hard running around' because they need a rest - I am done with England. I will not be cheering on any one who plays against England, nor will I be sending back my passport (so unused it has developed an inferiority complex) to Boris nor will I be giving up on the cricket that matters to me, county cricket, but England, no, good riddance,

I am a Wisden man. I love the almanack and it has been firstly my hobby (a rather obsessive one for many-a-year) and for the past almost-twenty years my passion and my business. My cricketing allegiance began with the 'yellow tome' and not, oddly I am told, with cricket itself. I have often found myself at odds with some of the things associated with cricket - the constant craving for 'new' fans with things like The Hundred - and the lack of respect for those fans who financially support the counties through annual membership - what has been done for the County Championship to make them feel appreciated?

Over the years the link between the England players and me as a supporter of the game has become non-existent. My daughter Abbey is a season-ticket holder at Northampton Saints RFC. Twice during the last year a Saints player has called her to ask how she is doing. Saints have around 9,000 season-ticket holders and every one of those who could be contacted was contacted, at least twice. That is a phenomenal undertaking. Despite being a professional sport instances such as that tell me that the club need and want supporters to feel appreciated.

It wouldn't take long for the Northman's CCC team to do the same, in fact, Northants, Derbyshire and Leicestershire could probably do all their calls in a couple of days....I apologise for being flippant, but we have to be realistic. The money pumped into cricket is not in proportion to the interest in the country and when a very high proportion of that money goes into a Test team that has under-performed around 2/3rds of the time since Central Contracts began and later SKY TV started its association with the game questions need

to be asked. It is wonderful that there is a 'road map' out of the current pandemic and with the 2021 Wisden out next month and the English county season about to start, things are feeling positive and brighter.

My promise remains the same as it has been since last March -20% off all Wisdens (but not the 2021) until we are out of this. Click [here](#)

to be asked.

This week the government announced an extra £300m of funding for sport and according to the ECB cricket was in line for a good slice of that, why??

Cricket, sadly, is no longer the summer sport. Football is a twelve month sport, Rugby League over the course of a season attracts more fans (when allowed) than cricket and Horse Racing, Formula 1 and Golf generate more local revenue and each individual sport employs more people, both directly and indirectly than the game of cricket...so why is cricket given extra funding?

This is not simply about England failing to come to terms with the best Test team in the world at the moment. It is just one more occasion when all the frustrations come to the fore.

Terry Wogan used to call his army of older listeners GOGs (Grumpy Old Gits) and many of us cricket fans could well fit into that description, but we are also realists and quite knowledgeable - we know that Twenty20 and The Hundred bring lots of money into the game, but the constant marginalising of the County Championship and I expect all longer forms of the game worldwide leaves us confused and lost, and angry.

I will wake up tomorrow and probably feel a little calmer, but I do find it incredulous that in the times we are in we are giving more money to a sport that is constantly turning its back on those who truly want it to be a joy.

On Friday I had my first jab - I felt emotional and truly grateful. Every single person around the medical centre apart from those actually giving the vaccine was a volunteer. Those directing people outside, those in the centre, those taking down details as I sat in the room, the lovely woman who gave me a sticker outside - I counted 28 people - unpaid and making a difference, making a truly remarkable difference. The experience just put everything into perspective.

Oh and I must apologise to John Wisden and Co for publishing the entire 1961 Editor's Notes in the last VW. I wasn't allowed and quite rightly they told me off.

Forgive my rant - I am mostly a very nice GOG! Bill and the Furmedge Girls (the rant is mine, not theirs)

# The Bowler's Holding The Batsman's Willey

In the first Test match between India and England at Madras (1964), R. G. Nadkarni a slow left-arm bowler, delivered 21 consecutive maiden overs and 131 balls in all without conceding a run in England's first innings. This is a new record for six-ball maiden overs in first-class cricket, the previous best being 17 by H. L. Elazell for Somerset v. Gloucestershire at Taunton in 1949 and by G. A. R. Lock for M.C.C. v. Governor-General's XI at Karachi in 1955/6. Both players were also slow left-arm bowlers and delivered 105 and 104 balls respectively without conceding a run.

Nadkarni did not succeed however in obtaining the record for the most balls delivered without conceding a run. This is held by H. J. Tayfield with 137 balls for South Africa v. England at Durban in 1956/7, bowling 16 16 eight-ball maiden overs in the process. In passing, it is of interest to mention that when at last a run was scored off Nadkarni, he was taken off by the Nawab of Pataudi, giving rise to the comment that he had become too expensive!

At the end of the day his analysis was 29-26 3-0 and next day he bowled a further three overs to finish with the figures of 32-27 5-0. This is the only instance on record of a bowler delivering 25 or more six-ball overs in an innings and conceding less than 10 runs, although there are instances in the days when the over consisted of four or five balls. Nadkarni, however, delivered 192 balls, whereas the previous largest number of balls bowled for less than 10 runs on record is 166 by A. Shaw for Nottinghamshire v. M.C.C. at Lord's in 1875, his full analysis being 41.2-36 7-7.

It must be remembered Stewart, Knight, Titmus and Parks were all unwell and that Bolus and Barrington, who were batting throughout Nadkarni's long spell of bowling, were concerned with staying in as long as possible in order to give the other players a chance to recover on the following day, which was a rest day.

*Michael Fordham, Playfair Annual, March, 1964.*

**On the whole England's openers have not been impressive...Malone to Boycott, he gets that one away,** wide of Thomson at mid-on for a single. And he leads brearley by 39 to 37. Ans this at the moment bears close resemblance to a pursuit of my youth which was known as the 'Slow Bicycle Race' and the winner was the last one to cross the finishing line. I must say, these two are not so much neck and neck as bottom to bottom.

*John Arlott, England v Australia, The Oval 1977.*

**As this book is in Dutch we were unable to review it,** but we think it will be of considerable interest to those who are interested in its content. (?)

*R.G. Inglse, 1952.*

The first part of the extensive cricket library of Mr. J.W. Goldman of Egham, was sold by auction at Hodgsons, Chancery Lane, on November 24, 1966, when 31 lots realised a total of £3,147 10s - a record figure for a single day's sale of cricket books.

The highest prices were:

John Wisdens' Almanacks for 1864 - 1895, £425.

Britcher's Scores 1794 - 1805, £350.

Lillywhite's Guides, 1850 - 1866, £195

JM Barrie's 'Allahakbarrie Book of

Broadway Cricket for 1899,' £70

The equivalent 2021 prices just taking into account inflation are:

Wisdens - £6792.

Britchers - £5593

'Allahakbarrie" - £1118.

As of 2021, Prices most recently realised:

Wisdens - £94,500.

Britchers - £16,400

'Allahakbarrie" - £245

**A Japanese company has registered the word "Boycott"** as a trademark for a new range of leisure goods, including sunglasses, goggles and caps.

*WCM, July 2000.*

**"My aim is to make an impact and I want to score a County Championship century, that would be my first in first-class cricket."**

*Shane Warne upon his arrival at Hampshire...his first four CC innings were 0,0,0 and 0.*

How Times Have Changed

**The Indian tourists refused to play under floodlights as the First Test against New Zealand was abandoned** without a ball being bowled in Dunedin on December 18-22. They also turned down a request to reschedule the start of the Test. The alternatives form part of ICC's experiment in making up for lost time. 'The red ball gets dirty much faster and it is not practical,' said India's coach, Aunshuman Gaekwad. 'We are happier playing under natural light than artificial light. It is all right if it is a white ball.'

Indian manager S.D.A. Drabu also lodged a protest to Chris Doig, the chief executive of New Zealand Cricket, over remarks made by Steve Rixon after New Zealand's coach accused the tourists of being negative. 'We're supposedly the underdogs,' he said in the Otago Daily Times. 'I would have thought they would have been keen to get out there...'

You can't win games of cricket sitting in the dressing-room.' The match was abandoned after three days of persistent rain. A limited-overs exhibition match was scheduled between the two sides on December 21 instead.

*The Otago Daily Times, 1999*

## It Happened in March

1861:

W. N. Rose was born at Closworth, near Yeovil, on March 21st, 1861. He gained his Blue at Cambridge in 1883 and played for Somerset between 1879 and 1899, but his chief claim to fame was his innings for Emmanuel L.V.C. v. Caius L.V.C. at Cambridge on July 12th and 13th, 1881. Rose was only included in the former's team because they were one man short, but he hit 415 not out - until that time the highest score ever made in any class of cricket.

Rose was one of those batsmen who counted his runs as he made them, and he was annoyed that the scorer actually credited him with one run less than he had scored - one would have thought it a small matter, 415 and 416 is very alike in the scorebook.

1911:

Although the leading South African cricketers were still in Australia, ending their first-ever tour to that country, the Currie Cup Tournament was held, all the matches being played at Durban during the course of the month. Natal, who won all their six matches, became Champions, with Transvaal runners-up with five wins and a defeat. H. W. Taylor, then a young and promising player, hit the highest score for Natal with 173 against Griqualand West.

1936:

Australia ended a successful tour of South Africa by winning the fifth Test at Durban by an innings and 6 runs. V. Y. Richardson, the Australian captain, ended the match by holding catches to dismiss five of the last six batsmen to lose their wickets. An oddity of the rubber was that J. H. Fingleton hit a century and C.V. Grimmett took ten wickets in each of the third, fourth and fifth Tests.

1951:

T. E. Bailey hit his only century (134) in Test cricket for England against New Zealand at Christchurch. It was an innings of parts, as he batted 270 minutes to reach fifty, moved on to his century in only a hour, and in all batted 390 minutes. He shared with D.V. P. Wright in a ninth wicket stand of 117 in the only quick scoring of the match.

1868:

W. H. Lockwood was born on March 25th. After a trial for Nottinghamshire in 1886, Lockwood joined Surrey and became one of the outstanding members of the great Surrey sides of the 1890s. Although Tom Richardson was regarded as the better fast bowler day in, day out, some judges regarded Lockwood on his day as a more difficult bowler to play. When he finally retired in 1904 he had taken 1,376 wickets at an average of 18.34 and had done 'the double' twice.

1987:

Sunil Gavaskar became the first batsman to score 10,000 Test runs.

1918:

Three first-class matches were played in New Zealand between Otago and Southland, Auckland and Wellington and between Canterbury and Otago. In the latter match Otago defeated Canterbury for the first time since 1906/7.

1943:

A charity match took place at Bombay for the Bengal Cyclone and Bijapur Famine Relief Fund, the two teams bearing these names. Most of the leading Indian players took part and a total of 1,647 runs were scored for 30 wickets, the match being drawn. The Bengal Cyclone XI made 703 in their first innings (V. S. Hazare 264) and the Bijapur Famine XI replied with 673 (K. C. Ibrahim 250). Three other centuries were also scored.

1958:

On March 1st, West Indies declared at 790 - 3 in the third Test match against Pakistan at Kingston. The declaration was made when Sobers had scored 365 to beat Sir Leonard Hutton's record score of 364.

1866:

A match took place at Hamilton, Victoria, between the Hamilton Club and an Australian Aboriginal team called the Edenhope Blacks, the latter winning by 50 runs. During one of the intervals between innings a race of 100 yards for £5 a side-bet was held between two of the Hamilton cricketers and two Aboriginals called 'Tar-Pot' and 'Johnny Mullagh', the latter being described as winning easily.

1916:

W. J. Edrich was born on March 26. In a career lasting from 1934 to 1958, Edrich scored 36,965 runs (42.39), held 522 catches and took 479 wickets (33-31).

1864:

G. Parr's touring team beat XXII of New South Wales by four wickets at Sydney. The match was played on the 16th, 17th, 18th and 24th March, there being no play on the intervening days owing to rain.

1958:

21 year old West Indian cricket all-rounder Gary Sobers turns his maiden Test century into a world record 365no in the Windies' 3rd Test win over Pakistan in Kingston, Jamaica; Sobers and Conrad Hunte (260) 446 run partnership for 2nd wicket.

1999:

Daryll Cullinan scored a South African record 275\* in the drawn 1st Test against New Zealand at Eden Park, Auckland

1896:

The first nine wicket haul in cricket history - George Lohmann takes 9-28 as England defeat South Africa by an innings and 197 runs in the 2nd Test at Johannesburg.

## It Happened in March

1867:

Canon William Rashleigh was born on March 7th. Educated at Tonbridge School, he subsequently obtained Blues at Oxford from 1886 to 1889, captaining the side in 1888 and also obtained Blues at Rugby in 1887 and 1888. He played for Kent from 1885 to 1901. A stylish batsman he scored over 5,000 runs in a limited career with eight centuries. He subsequently became a Minor Canon of Canterbury Cathedral and held the living of certain parishes before his death in February 1937.

1917:

T. L. ('Tom') Pritchard was born in New Zealand on March 10th. Possibly the fastest bowler in post-war English cricket until the arrival of Statham and Trueman, Pritchard played for Wellington from 1937/8 until 1942/3. He qualified for Warwickshire after the war and when he retired in 1956 he had taken 818 wickets at an average of 23.30.

1942:

Bombay (506 - 9 dec.) defeated Mysore (66 and 157) to win the Ranji Trophy by an innings and 283 runs. This was Bombay's first appearance in the Final since winning the first two competitions in 1934/5 and 1935-6, and the first of two occasions that Mysore reached the Final.

1957:

South Africa (164 and 134) defeated England (110 and 130) by 58 runs in the fifth Test match at Port Elizabeth on an inadequately prepared pitch. This enabled them to share the rubber 2 - 2 after losing the first two matches. H. J. Tayfield took 6 - 78 in England's second innings to establish a record for a South African bowler of 37 wickets in a series.

1941:

Maharashtra won the Ranji Trophy for the second year running by defeating Madras by six wickets. In the four matches they played prior to the final their lowest innings total was 460—3, but in the latter they were dismissed for 284 and scored 210—4 in the second innings to win the match.

1956:

After 26 years and 44 Test matches, New Zealand won their first-ever Test match, defeating West Indies at Auckland by 190 runs in the last Test match of the series. Their victory was achieved after having lost the first two matches in the series by an innings and the third by nine wickets.

1954:

"The Three Ws" of West Indian cricket each score centuries in one innings; Clyde Walcott scores 124 following Everton Weekes (206) and Frank Worrell (167) in the first innings of the drawn 4th Test v England at Port of Spain.

1914:

The Australian touring team in New Zealand, immediately after the match in which V. T. Trumper and A. Sims had created a new record for the eighth wicket partnership in first-class cricket, scored 922 - 9 in a two-day match against South Canterbury XI. Batting first the local side scored 180 and the Australians then batted for the rest of the match. With the score at 284 - 6, J. N. Crawford came in and proceeded to score 354 with 14 sixes and 45 fours. With V. T. Trumper, who batted at No. 9 and scored 135, he added 298 for the eighth wicket in the fantastic time of 69 minutes before Trumper was out. The innings lasted for just over 5 hours.

1939:

The fifth Test match between South Africa and England at Durban was drawn, after lasting for ten days, owing to the English team having to leave to catch the boat home from Cape Town. Rain prevented any play on the eighth day and also after tea on the tenth day, when England needed only 42 runs to win. In all 1,931 runs were scored, the scores being South Africa 530 and 481, England 316 and 654 - 5.

1954:

England won the third Test match against West Indies at Georgetown by 9 wickets, L. Hutton miking 169. The match was marred by the crowd throwing bottles and wooden packing cases on to the field after disagreeing with an umpire's decision. The fourth Test later in the month was drawn after the West Indies had made what was then their highest score in Test cricket, 681 - 8d. In the six days of the match 1,528 runs were scored for the loss of 25 wickets.

1898:

Chasing winning target of 275, Australian cricket batsman Joe Darling bashes 160 in 171 minutes with 30 fours to lead Australia to a six wicket Fifth Test win over England in Sydney; completing a 4-1 series rout.

1904:

Australian cricket spin bowler Hugh Trumble dismisses England batsmen Bernard Bosanquet, Plum Warner and Dick Lilley for his second Test hat-trick in the Fifth Test victory in Melbourne - Trumble's final Test.

2018:

Captain Steve Smith and David Warner are suspended by Cricket Australia for 12 months, and Cameron Bancroft (9 months) for their part in the infamous ball-tampering scandal in South Africa.

1980:

Australian wicket-keeper Rod Marsh bowls ten overs for 51 runs as the Australia v Pakistan Test Peters out to a draw.



I was born in Stafford in 1906. My mother was a Geordie and my father a Lancastrian - so I was born betwixt and between.

For my earliest recollections of cricket, and especially my interest in it, I have to go back to 1910 and even a little earlier, when I would spend a great deal of my time playing with my brother on our small lawn in the manner of many generations of mustard-keen youngsters.

We played with a hard ball, a stump and no pads, so keenness of eye, especially for the batsman, became pretty essential! My brother as the bowler would inevitably be Foster and I as the striker would be Hobbs, Trumper, Faulkner or whoever's name had made headlines in the day's sporting press. In fact most of my cricket knowledge was gleaned from the press, and it was not till 1912 that I had occasion to read my first Wisden.

I remember well the Sunday afternoon when I feigned a heavy cold to avoid Sunday school and was packed off to my grandfather's house close by in Lichfield Road. As I sat in the drawing-room by the fire, listening to my grandfather snoring in an enormous armchair, my mind began to wander towards dreams of striding confidently to the wicket at Lord's and crashing four after four to the boundary to the delight of a capacity crowd and the amazement of the Australians.

Suddenly my eye was caught by a bright yellow brand-new book resting in the nearby bookcase among the works of Dickens, Shakespeare and Chaucer. Curiously,



I walked over and flipped through the pages and was delighted to find a complete chronicle of cricket facts and figures for 1911.

I had, of course, heard about Wisden from my father and grandfather

but this was the first time that I had found myself confronted with the cricketer's "Bible." I was desperately keen to study it more closely and so, being most careful not to wake my grandfather, I slipped out

Walter Robins (Pictured, far Left) was a renowned first-class cricketer, a Test selector from 1946 to 1949, and later in 1954, a tour manager and a professional footballer for Nottingham Forest. Whilst a selector he also once sent out an instruction to cricketers to 'play aggressively at all times.'

The article opposite was first printed in the 1967 Cricketer Spring Annual and the Editors' introduction reads - 'This brief essay is unique, since though Mr. Robins, throughout his career, has always been very forthcoming as regards the press, he has never previously contributed an article to a newspaper. We hope this effort will give him a taste for writing - for there is probably no one living with a more complete knowledge and understanding of the game.' Sadly less than two years after its publication he passed away.

The opening words of Robins' obituary in the 1969 Wisden.

*Robert Walter Vivian Robins, who died at his home near Lord's on December 12, aged 62, will live in history as one of the most dynamic all-round cricketers of his time.*

#### Walter Robins: First-Class career.

Batting -	Mths	Inns	NO	Runs	HS	Av
Tests	19	27	4	612	108	26.60
FC	379	565	39	13884	140	26.39

Bowling	Balls	Runs	Wkts	BBi	BBM	Av
Tests	3318	1758	64	6-32	7-68	27.46
FC	43215	22580	969	8-69		23.30

*Robins scored 12 Centuries including one in a Test and 77 half-century. He took 229 FC catches.*

of the room and into the street with the Wisden under my arm. I literally ran down the road, only pausing a moment in order to by-pass the Baptist Chapel next door to my home.

Over the next few days, I spent almost all my spare time in my room studying thoroughly the performances of all my favourite players: Aubrey Faulkner's great batting in the 1910/11 series in Australia, culminating in a remarkable 204 at Melbourne.

The many records of Victor Trumper, or "Our Vic" as he is still remembered in Australia, and the triumphs of Warwickshire, the county champions, thanks to the fine all round cricket of F. R. Foster, their aggressive captain.

Here was new scope for my boundless interest in the

game, and I soon found myself memorising the scores of famous matches and generally absorbing a vast amount of detail. Ensuing weekends would find me back at my grandfather's house borrowing more and more Wisden's and all in the same way as the first - but being careful to replace the previous one so that there weren't too many gaps in the bookcase.

Nevertheless, he was bound to find out, which he obviously did, for when he died he left me his complete set of Wisden's.

However, that 1912 Wisden is still one of my favourites, and as I flip through the pages today, I still feel a deep regret that I never saw Victor Trumper, "W. G." or Gilbert Jessop play—but I did play against

Sydney Barnes at Porthill in 1932 for Julien Cahn, when the great man was 59.

He was playing for Staffordshire and I was sent in first to face him. In the first over he bowled three out-swingers and two leg cutters - all but one of which beat me comprehensively. The last ball of the over was a quicker one and I got an edge and was caught at the wicket.

However, I was given not out by the umpire, much to Barnes' obvious disgust. My partner came down the wicket and suggested that I ought to change my bat because it must have surely cracked as I hit the last ball so hard! I suppose I should have walked. But that would not have been Robins in those days!

These memories and so many, many others are locked between the covers of those "bright yellow books," but come flooding back to me as I read through their pages — especially my very earliest ones, because it was they that taught me to love cricket and know my records, something which I have treasured throughout my life.

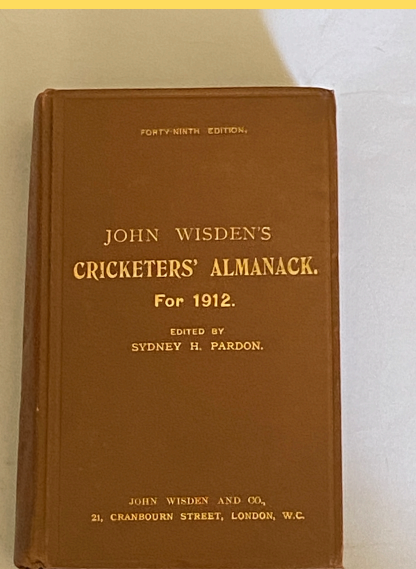
*This article from 'Walter' Robins was first published in The Cricketer Spring Annual 1967. The information on current Wisden prices is from Bill Furmedge and does not form part of the article.*

#### The 1912 Wisden.

As most collectors will appreciate the further back you seek to explore the more expensive editions become and the past twelve months have seen such a massive increase in interest for all years that it is fair to say that the prices for the rarer editions will only go up.

#### Hardback

Currently there are eight hardback Wisdens listed across a number of sellers. Sadly the lack of up-to-date catalogues or indeed up-to-date website information from a couple of sellers means that I cannot say if those sellers have any 1912 editions.



My experience tells me that the hardbacks listed vary from (my) rating of 5 up to a possible 8 and the prices range from £750 up to £1800. This range in price is certainly not unusual for rarer hardbacks and as always the things to look out for when contemplating such an edition are - in order of importance -

The internal front and rear hinges - as any deterioration or even slight breaking will most definitely result in issues down the line. The quality of the boards - again any damage, staining or noticeable scuffing or rubbing will impact more as time goes on.

The spine gilt and overall condition of the spine.

#### Paperback:

Currently seven paperbacks of note are advertised and these do vary in quality. One important factor when considering any Wisden from this era - indeed any Wisden up to the last 'paperback' in 1937 - is the condition of the spine and I would suggest that do look for editions with exceptional spines or spines that have been professionally strengthened.

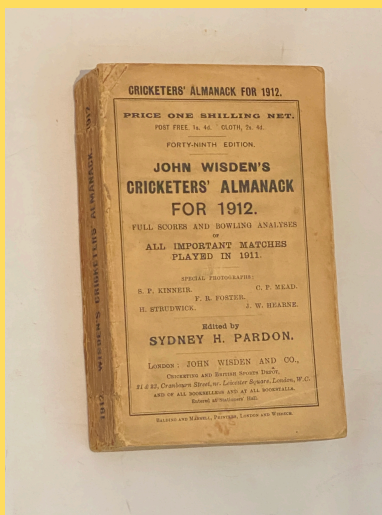
The large majority of Wisden paperbacks do tend to need spine strengthening. In the good old days collectors had little choice but to have distressed almanacks rebound, but until a few years ago there was an option to have the spine restored and these editions are becoming scarce.

The price range of the paperbacks spotted is between £110 and £275.

Strong, firm spines are the key. Professional restoration is fine.

#### Willows

Both Willows editions for this year are now in the 'becoming scarce' category, so expect to pay between £70 and £95 for the light tan version and up to £130 for the hardback version.



## Len Hutton's 364

**"Where were you at 12.45pm on Tuesday, August 23, 1938?" can be answered by older cricket-lovers as precisely as the same question about 11am on September 3, 1939. The answer, of course, pertains to the moment when Len Hutton (Pictured, Below) passed Don Bradman's record Test score of 334 by cutting a Fleetwood-Smith spinner to the third-man boundary in the fifth Test against Australia at The Oval. I can still recall playing out that stroke with my sixpenny bat, taking my directions from the Howard Marshall commentary that floated across my grandmother's sunlit lawn from the big wooden Ultra by the open window. I can still hear the crowd singing For He's a Jolly Good Fellow, and hear the cornet being blown from near the gasometer.**

Even as a child, I knew I was sharing the greatest innings of the century, even if the 1939 Yorkshire CCC Handbook spared Hutton's feat only 15 words. But time has put Hutton's 364 into true perspective: it remains the highest score in the England v Australia series, and two of the stands compiled in its making are still records — 382 for the second wicket with Leyland, and 215 for the sixth (since equalled) with Hardstaff.

The story of Bradman's whirlwind 334 at Leeds in 1930 being watched by the 14-year-old Hutton gives the youngster' dogged beating of it eight years later a nice Boy's Own Paper touch. However, if Bradman's huge total was ever to be exceeded, there were special forces at work in 1938 that made it the year. The Oval the place and Hutton the man whereby it would be done.

Whoever broke Bradman's record would have to be young and fit, with the strength to endure an extremely long Test innings, yet be fairly experienced, to cope with an Ashes-winning Australian team led by the great Bradman himself and including the world's best bowler. Bill O'Reilly, all in front of a huge crowd — 92,202 in four days.

Hutton was 22 on June 23, 1938, his youth enabling him to bat throughout Saturday, Monday and Tuesday to 2.30pm, for 13 hours and 17 minutes, during which he received 900 deliveries and ran six miles. When he had made 50, his right middle-finger, broken five weeks earlier against Middlesex, began to swell alarmingly, keeping him in constant pain for the rest of the match. He got little sleep from Friday to Wednesday owing to a mixture of excitement and sudden awakenings from dreams of being out early next day, especially on the Monday night when his score was 300.

But for the Sunday break at Bognor and the devoted attention of Sandy Tait, the Surrey masseur, even the fit Hutton may not have lasted the course. Denis Compton recalls how Hutton lay exhausted by the wicket while McCabe's injured leg was being massaged on Monday afternoon, and Len has described how he went out to bat on Tuesday morning 'stiff all over and with aching legs'. After

Thank you to Phil Whittle who sent in this article, written by Brian Rowe - it first appeared in '364' - a charity publication from 1991.

his dismissal he sat 'for ages' in the dressing-room, unable even to take off his pads.

But Hutton was very experienced. He had been opening for Yorkshire since 1934, at 18 becoming the youngest batsman to score a century for his county — 196 v Worcestershire — and by 1938, under the stern tutelage of Herbert Sutcliffe, Hutton had shared 14 century first-wicket stands, including one of 317 against Leicestershire in 1937. In 1937 also, Hutton began to open for England (v New Zealand at Lord's) and in June 1938 joined the elite eight who had made a century in their first Tests against Australia, scoring exactly 100 in the Trent Bridge Test during an opening stand of 219 with Barnett. And Hutton was still only 21!

His upbringing and temperament also prepared Hutton for his mammoth task at The Oval. He came from a non-sense Moravian community near Pudsey, where pride in honest toil was stressed. His father was a builder, and young Len was destined to be a carpenter. In his radio interview at the end of his innings he said, 'It was a hard and tiring job. It was difficult to get those last runs and I was glad when it was all over.'

Also, the whole tradition of Yorkshire cricket made Hutton into a more cautious, grafting batsman than his nature decreed. At the start of his career Bobby Peel instructed him, 'Don't think about scoring runs. Wait for a loose ball. We don't want fireworks from a

Yorkshire opening batsman.' When Hutton did provide fireworks, with many boundaries in his first century against Worcester, he was dropped for nine matches to teach him a lesson — one reinforced by the England selectors' unwillingness to choose fast-scoring openers like Fagg and Gimblett.

'For patience, perseverance and stamina, Hutton's innings is among the best I have ever seen,' wrote Denis Compton. Consequently, by 1938, Hutton's batting, according to Ray Robinson, had become 'the embodiment of correct English style', perfectly tailored to deal with all pre-war bowling, before leg-side, chest-high, head-aimed bowling produced today's batsmanship and new gear. His comfortable stance, with a more planted right foot, the result of the wetter Yorkshire pitches, was ideal for the 140 overs of offspin, topspin, legspin and googlies he received from Fleetwood-Smith and O'Reilly, over whose leg-stump attack Hutton 'showed a wonderful technical mastery'. His 'rare gift', noted by Robertson-Glasgow, to delay his stroke or alter it very late with hands before blade in a beautifully controlled forward stroke saw Hutton through days of testing spin.

Pitches were at their easiest in 1938 and Bosser Martin, the Surrey groundsman, was proud to announce 'a perfect pitch' at The Oval. Too perfect, according to EW Swanton, who





attacked its lack of pace, the result of 'ceaseless watering and rolling. When the turf is saturated you get a surface that acts like a thick hearth rug,' so that patience alone would bring runs. 'There would be no excuse for me if I failed this time,' wrote Bill Edrich, Hutton's opening partner. 'The pitch was full of runs.' Bill O'Reilly was to wear his spinning finger raw trying to get turn out of it.

Nor was there any pressure of time in the final Test. Hutton could build up an innings as slowly as he pleased, exhorted by Hammond never to forget that they were involved in a timeless Test. Even on the third day, beginning with England at 634 for 5, Hammond intended to bat all day, he so feared the Australian total on such a pitch; and he declared at the tea interval only because Bradman's ankle injury had put him out of the game. Making the last Test 'timeless', to force a result if the teams were drawing, or to prevent the winning team playing for a draw, went back to 1926, and had been agreed before the 1938 series began, to Hutton's advantage.

The super-slowness of the Oval Test was due to Bradman's defensive field setting, making fours hard to get, while some suspected Hammond of trying to kill off Timeless Tests which seriously disrupted cricketers' lives.

All these factors contributing to Hutton's record innings were organic developments in cricket, giving it an almost historic inevitability; but chance also played a part in the match, helping Hutton towards his triumph. Never was an England batsman to meet a weaker Australian attack, and though O'Reilly was a world-beater, he was tired at the end of a season covering up the thin Australian bowling, especially when Grimmett, whose googlies Hammond thought would have won the Oval Test, had been inexplicably left in Australia. The fact that Phil Mead's record score for England against Australia in this country was beaten four times in 1938 (Paynter 216 not out at Trent Bridge, Hammond 240 at Lord's, Leyland 187 and Hutton 364 at The Oval) emphasises the point Bradman made after only the first Test, which 'revealed more than ever the weakness in our opening attack'. His one really fast bowler, McCormick, never recovered from being no-balled 19 times by umpire Baldwin in his first three overs at Worcester, and had run out of form in August, taking only one wicket in four easy matches, as well as developing neuritis of the shoulder; so Bradman dropped him.

Since he was one Test up, Bradman was also tempted not to lose the last Test rather than to win it. He packed his side with batsmen, omitting Ward and White, who took 123 wickets during 1938, and opened on the Oval featherbed with medium-pacers McCabe and Waite. Consequently, he was forced to bring on his spinners before Hutton and Edrich had even reached double figures!

Hammond, too, packed his side with batsmen. After losing the fourth Test at Leeds through his obtuse bowling of Bowes and Fames on a damp wicket instead of Wright and Verity, he became intent on avoiding defeat, especially after losing Ames with a broken finger the day before the Test. At least, the grotesque situation of Hardstaff batting at No. 7 ensured that Hutton did not run out of partners in his record bid. Hammond also chose half his side from the champion county, Yorkshire — Hutton, Leyland, Wood, Verity, Bowes — which must have buoyed up Hutton when the going was tough.

The weather throughout was generally good, helping Hutton along. Bill Bowes recalled 'the lovely blue skies', and when it did rain, as before play on the Monday, the showers bound the pitch together and made it easier. Hammond won the toss, as he had all the previous ones, totally against the laws of probability, as photographs of the occasion show — Hammond in his whites, expecting to field, Bradman, in suit and trilby, expecting to bat. Bradman even asked if the coin was 'quite OK', but Hammond claimed that he always used any half-crown.

Hammond's inspired decision to send in Leyland instead of himself at No. 3 meant that Len had a teammate to see him through the most dangerous part of the Australian bowling, with England at 29 for 1, and a left hander to boot whom Hutton considered the best player of O'Reilly's legspin he ever saw. From his first words, 'Keep it up, young Leonard!' Leyland sheltered him from 'The Tiger' for the greater part of 6 1/2 hours.

This was also Hutton's lucky year. In the opening overs of the first Test, a ball from McCormick rolled against his leg stump but did not dislodge the bail. At The Oval Hutton was badly missed when he had scored 40. A ball from Fleetwood-Smith completely beat him well outside his crease, but Ben Barnett could not gather it cleanly and Hutton just scrambled back. Had Oldfield been playing, it was generally felt, Hutton's innings would have ended then and there and Bradman's record would still be intact.

As Bradman had a large say in the composition of his team and rejected Oldfield on the grounds of age, about which he had something of a fixation, O'Reilly at 32 being the 'grandfather' among the tourists, it is ironic that he played a major part in his own dethronement. No wonder Bradman's face as the match wore on gave Hutton more and more pleasure, and that Bradman eventually seemed to self-destruct, putting himself on to bowl and inevitably badly twisting his ankle in O'Reilly's footmark, playing no more cricket in the 1938 season. He had not intended to tour England again, but Hutton's innings, which he described as 'not attractive' on his return to Australia, made him eager for revenge, and England were to pay a terrible price for it in 1948.



## Sun and Success Go Hand in Hand

**S**un and success go hand in hand for West Indies this summer. The skies cleared just in time for the Headingley Test when most people were expecting a 'seamy' repetition of Edgbaston. Instead, we had another Manchester, for the clouds lifted, and with them. West Indian doubts. Sobers was able to play, despite a septic third finger on the right hand, and was a hero for his side, while Worrell won an important toss.

Three and a half days later, England succumbed. The margin of 221 runs was no more than West Indies deserved in breaking a sequence of six successive home victories in Tests at Leeds. So West Indies took a two-one lead in a series they could not now lose. They had established themselves beyond question the more powerful side under fair weather conditions. A telling gap in that respect has appeared, and now widened, since Peter May's team returned from the Caribbean with the rubber early in 1960.

Worrell, as ever gracious in victory, went to lengths to explain the importance of first use of a pitch that played extremely well, if generously receptive to spin by the fourth day. He thought that England's first innings collapse was in some measure due to the fact that they were jaded after a hot and fatiguing day and a half in the field.

Dexter did not think comment from a losing captain was opportune at this stage - how times have changed in a short span since the wordy exchanges in Australia! - but obviously he must have felt concerned about England's batting. Heavy with cold himself, Dexter was twice dismissed cheaply by Griffith and the rare occurrence of a double failure by the captain further exposed the shortage of true batting class. It has been accentuated, of course, through May not being available and Cowdrey being unfit. Mostly, however, this embarrassment has been revealed because England have been confronted in this series with one of the best-equipped attacks of modern times.

No visiting side since the 1948 Australians have carried as many guns as this West Indian attack. The highest score against them at this stage was less than 350 and when England set off on the task of scoring 453 to win they seemed foredoomed.

England lost when they collapsed to Griffith (Pictured, Right) in the first innings. His pace changes and a bouncer that proved as disconcerting as his yorker undid England and brought him nine

### England v West Indies, 1963 - The Battle for the Wisden Trophy - The Fourth 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 Fourth Test played at Headingley on July 25, 26, 27 and 29. Written by Ron Roberts and this first appeared in The Cricketer in August 1963.

wickets in the match. Some muttering inevitably arose about the difficulty in sighting Griffith's bumper, and linking this with the fact that he has been no-balled for throwing back home.

Since the early part of the tour, he has quickened up; his fastest ball will not satisfy some purists but he has satisfied the umpires on all occasions—and that's that. We must remember that he is possessed of exceptional strength and control, and his advance to become one of the cleverest fast bowlers of the era has handsomely compensated West Indies at a time when Hall, though still formidably fast, has been temporarily out of the wickets. They have proved as a pair, however, that in true Test match conditions a side is only as strong as its fast bowlers. Two are needed, and England overlooked this in neglecting adequate fast support for Trueman after Statham was discarded.

England, of course, had still not lost the series at this point. There was still The Oval to come, and they have come from behind before. But one was left with the clear impression that they needed some help from the weather.

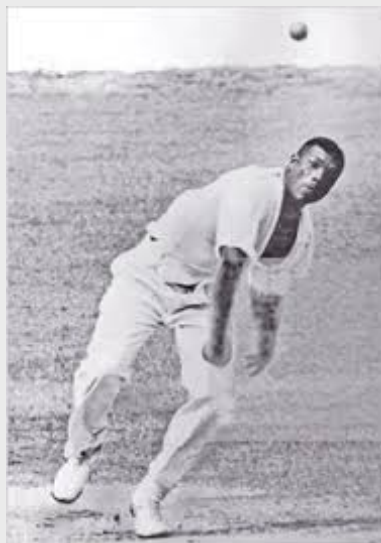
In sunshine, Worrell and his men were supreme and an aggregate attendance for the four days of 107,000 generously recognised their skill and entertainment value in a match that was certainly one-sided but, because of its brisk tempo, never flagged for want of interest.

#### FIRST DAY

West Indies' two most brilliant stroke-makers, Kanhai and Sobers, neither of whom had yet made a Test century in this country, and who seldom prosper in partnership, rescued their team with batting of high quality for the third wicket. It proved a good toss to win, for the pitch was not as green as was popularly supposed, and was very reasonable in pace.

Nonetheless, England had reason to be pleased with the morning's work, the wickets of McMorris, Hunte and Butcher being a fair exchange for 2 hours of

concentrated seam effort, especially as early snicks either did not go to hand, or if they did, popped out



again.

Barrington did atone for one glaring miss by his second-attempt effort to catch McMorris off a hard slash, but from most points of view the cricket of the morning carried little indication of the stimulating action that followed. A good opening spell by Trueman was the only genuine trace of hostility, which was not surprising for with the clouds high and a breeze that prevented them closing in, there was nothing in the atmosphere to encourage swing.

The character of the play after lunch, however, took on a different tone as first Kanhai, then Sobers (Pictured, Right), whose septic finger gave seemingly little discomfort, established themselves with strokes of vivid design and exciting execution.

Kanhai is often an impetuous little man, but he has a flair for the big occasion, and his judgment this day, once he had given vent to his initial nervous impulses, was well nigh faultless. Sobers also played himself in with studied care and impeccable taste.

Then, when Titmus came on, he opened up with a withering broadside of perfectly timed sweeps. The partnership put on 143 in 160 minutes, before Kanhai hit over the first ball he received from Lock. This was a quicker one, coming on with the arm, and a brainy piece of bowling since this was the first time the pair had come face to face. As it was the 81st over of the innings, most onlookers were at a loss to understand why Dexter had waited this long to use Lock.

He ended up by bowling only 4 overs in that spell but had to be recalled to break a stand of 73 with Solomon for the next wicket after Sobers had quickly removed the shine from the new ball. Lock struck by having

Sobers caught and bowled, low and wide and hard to his left; a catch of wonderment, even by Lock's standards (Pictured, Right). Sobers, who had just completed a four-hour century (no English batsman has yet done this in the series) could not believe the evidence of his own eyes, and stood there dazed before he accepted he was out.

At the day's end, with Solomon entrenched and a score of 294 - 5, West Indies had no second thoughts about their batting first - though England might well have done.

## SECOND DAY

Events moved so swiftly that by tea-time on a day of

improved weather England were squirming uneasily to evade a repetition of Manchester. West Indies' last five wickets added over 100, and a sound start was essential against the formidable first innings score of 397 with the spinners already able to get some purchase from the turf. Yet Griffith and Hall burst through. Some occasional early failures must be accepted against the fastest pair in the world and I was sorry the selectors had been jostled into making so many changes concerning the first wicket batsmen.

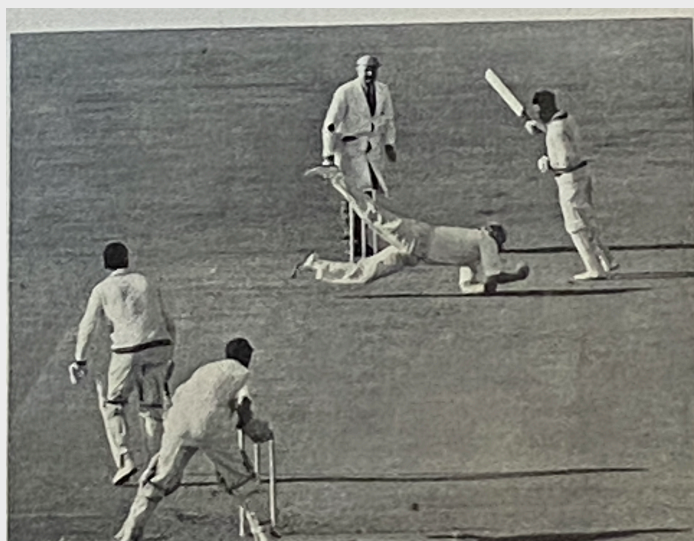


Already, we had had three separate partners for Stewart, and the one thing that is necessary against these fast bowlers is regular practice, and a sense of familiarity. Poor Bolus, gamely though he tried to carry the fight into the enemy camp, was

flung into the deep end, for he had never previously set eyes on the West Indian opening attack. He seemed to play too much on the move against them and soon, predictably, followed Stewart, who was out of form in edging a catch.

Unlike England, whose catching remained of a chameleon quality, West Indies were holding their catches with notable consistency. One of their chief advances is their collective fielding ability.

Griffith put in one of the most spectacular fast bowling feats in Test history. In seven overs, he had the wickets of Stewart, Dexter and Close (who were yorked by successive deliveries) and Sharpe. In his 10th over Parks was caught off the glove and Griffith was 5-20, Barrington and Trueman, one felt, were out to loose strokes to short balls from Gibbs, and England were 93 - 8.



If all this was bewilderingly sudden, Lock and Titmus emphasised the value of steady nerves and the relish for a tough scrap. But this was not merely a triumph of temperament, for Lock's driving, in particular, came straight out of the M.C.C. coaching manual. In adding

76 these two took England reasonably clear of the danger of imminent defeat, and Lock completed his second successive half century.



### THIRD DAY

The gates were closed early on, and the 'full house' had a day of absorbing action, including 16 wickets, though unfortunately England were still running a poor second. England's last two wickets fell for 5, and with a lead of 223 Worrell decided to bat again. It seemed the more timid course, for England were on their knees, and the bowlers refreshed by the night's rest.

Worrell later admitted he had a positive mistrust of batting last, and added that he felt going in again sapped the English effort, both psychologically and in the physical sense. Anyway, his batsmen so savagely implemented his policy to score as quickly as possible, the West Indian bowlers were back in action immediately after tea. West Indies sprinted to 181 - 4 in 45 overs before there were some quick wickets for Titmus.

After Trueman had got both opening batsmen early, Kanhai and Sobers again, this time with the help of Basil Butcher saw West Indies move further and speedily along the highway to victory. It was an ideal situation for them. A ceiling of blue above, a calm pitch and a reassuring knowledge that attacking strokes could be launched with impunity. No one could have had any lingering doubts for Sobers' pre-eminence among the world's all-rounders.

### FOURTH DAY

Two Yorkshiremen, Close and Sharpe, were not out, and a remarkably good crowd of 20,000 (considering the state of the game) came along to see them resume. Sharpe was soon caught off bat and pad, but Parks joined Close in an attractive if forlorn partnership.

As on Saturday, Sobers could enjoy himself in a different role without fear of consequences. He

bowled some loose ones that Close flat-batted away to leg, but his googly was evidently hard to pick. In 75 minutes he and Gibbs bowled 34 overs. But Sobers took some stick, and Gibbs changed ends to allow Griffith to come lumbering up.

In another hour it was all over.

Griffith hit Parks on the funny bone (what a misnomer) and Close was caught off a despairing swish. In neither instance did the batsmen seem to sight the ball, though the light was perfect.

Close had made his third half century in successive Tests, and Parks, with the aid of a six that Solomon caught inside the playing area but carried outside to contravene the experimental law, his first of the series. In the last over of the morning, Parks was lbw pushing forward protectively to Gibbs.

In 20 minutes afterwards, Titmus was stumped in several dimensions and Lock caught off the glove off another ball that Griffith slammed in short. Griffith did bowl quite a few short ones in this spell, as though letting off steam after the umpires had refused a repeated chorus of earlier lbw appeals. Anyway, with Trueman lashing Gibbs high to deep mid on it was all over in early afternoon.

Once again, Leeds had been on short rations for a Test; but what there had been was very much worth while. After this, the West Indies cannot come again soon enough for the public in these parts. As for West Indies themselves-Tests north of the Trent seem to suit them!

### Fourth Test:

West Indies 397 (Sobers, 102. Kanhai, 92. Trueman 4-117) and 229 (Butcher, 78. Sobers, 52. Kanhai, 44. Titmus 4-44). England 174 (Lock, 53. Titmus, 33. Griffith 6-36) and 231 (Parks, 57. Close, 56. Bolus, 43. Gibbs 4-76)

West Indies won by 221 runs.

### I bet you didn't know that Wisdenworld did this!

As you know the marketing department here at Wisdenworld and the Wisden Collectors' Club (when I say department, it is more a spare chair in the garage) work tirelessly to always think 'out of the box,' to explore 'blue sky' ways of doing things, 'throw the Ideas Punchbag' around and then, generally, Bill wakes up and decides to do something....well, little known to the rest of the world, Wisdenworld did not need to do a thing, apparently as the photograph opposite shows we have been doing stuff for years to tell the world all about us and we didn't even realise it.

I even heard mention during the BBC Test match commentary that a few years ago the name 'The Wisden World Test Championship' was proposed...of course, as a small little outlet in little Cambridgeshire we would not dare to comment on any involvement whatsoever, mainly because there isn't/wasnt any.

or even Duncan Fletcher or Phil Neale, to seek their views on successful process, but seems not to understand this review of his performance.

### WISDEN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

#### England pull away from Zimbabwe

England's victory over Zimbabwe, in the first series between the two in this country, fills in one of the empty squares on our table and sees off any immediate danger of any further embarrassing "Worst Team in the World" headlines. And if England can now go one better than the drawn 1995 series against West Indies, they will move up to joint-seventh with India. West Indies' last-gasp defeat of Pakistan kept them in third place, replacing another home win, in 1992-93. *Test reports: page 56*

Posn/Team	A	SA	WI	SL	P	NZ	I	E	Z	P	W	D	L	Pts	Ave
1 Australia	-	1-0 97-98	3-2 96-97	3-0 95-96	3-0 99-00	2-0 97-98	3-0 99-00	3-1 98-99	-	15	12	1	2	25	1.67
2 South Africa	1-2 96-97	-	5-0 98-99	2-0 97-98	1-1 97-98	2-1 94-95	2-0 96-97	2-1 99-00	1-0 99-00	15	11	1	3	23	1.53
3 West Indies	2-2 98-99	-	-	1-0 96-97	1-0 99-00	1-0 95-96	1-0 96-97	3-1 97-98	2-0 99-00	14	6	4	4	16	1.14
4 Sri Lanka	1-0 99-00	0-1 97-98	0-0 93-94	-	0-0 96-97	2-1 97-98	0-0 97-98	1-0 98-99	2-0 97-98	16	7	4	5	18	1.13
5 Pakistan	0-1 98-99	0-1 97-98	3-0 99-00	1-2 97-98	-	1-1 96-97	-	-	0-1 98-99	14	5	3	6	13	0.93
6 New Zealand	0-3 99-00	0-1 98-99	2-0 99-00	2-0 96-97	0-1 95-96	-	1-0 98-99	0-2 96-97	2-0 97-98	16	5	2	9	12	0.73
7 India	2-1 97-98	0-2 99-00	1-1 94-95	0-0 97-98	0-1 98-99	1-0 99-00	-	3-0 92-93	1-0 92-93	15	4	3	8	11	0.73
8 England	2-3 1997	2-1 1998	2-2 1995	0-1 1998	0-2 1999	1-2 1996	1-0 1999	-	1-0 2000	15	4	2	9	10	0.67
9 Zimbabwe	0-1 99-00	0-1 99-00	-	0-1 99-00	0-1 97-98	0-0 97-98	1-0 98-99	0-0 96-97	-	14	2	2	10	6	0.43

This is a prototype of the table we have been urging ICC to make official. It is based on the latest meetings, home and away, between each pair of teams (provided they have met since September 1992; details WCM March 1999, page 40). Home teams are given down the left-hand side. Two points for a win, one for a draw. \*For the purposes of this table, matches between the Indian continent in 1988-89 were treated as those between India & Pakistan. Col 1 under India: Pakistan & Col 1 under Pakistan: India.

**I**n around a month the 2021 will be delivered to me and it is fair to say that it is one of the most eagerly-awaited editions for many-a-year. There is every likelihood that the 2021 will sell out - I might be wrong, but the pre-orders for this years edition have been the highest since I began offering each years new Wisden almost twenty years ago.

The 2021 Wisden is available to pre-order and if you would like to order please click one of the links below. If you have already paid for your edition there is no need to do anything else.

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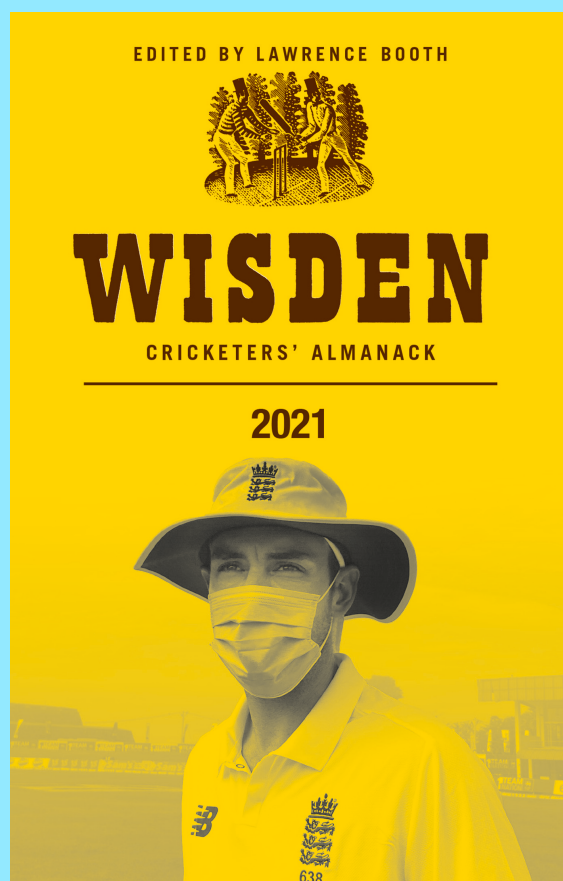
If you would rather pay by card or bank transfer please contact me.

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."*

**Once again - If you have already paid me for your 2021 then you do not need to make contact.**



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The Virtual Wisdener is the publication of the Wisden Collectors' Club and the WCC would like to thank all the publications including John Wisden & Co for allowing us to reprint extracts and articles from their wonderful archives.



## Tony Lock - Always In The Game

Lock should be a first choice for any team for which he is qualified to play, so long as he is physically fit, with eyes to see. He is one of those rare cricketers who are 'always in the game', whatever he chances to be doing, bowling, fielding, batting. And he is no superfluity with the bat. I have seen Tony Lock defending, on a bowler's wicket, with the scientific straight bat of a Hutton. And he has fine forcing strokes. Like his great colleague Laker, he could, given the time and need, have made a useful name as a batsman.

Tony Lock, of the balding brow on which the sun gleams, making it look not genial (like most bald pates), but as hostile as the rest of him. He is, I am told, a friendly approachable man really, off the field and at home, and on Sundays. In his flannels, at Kennington Oval, especially during the years of 1952 and 1958, he always seemed in my eyes a fellow of infinite antagonism, ready to get you out of the way, back to the pavilion almost before you had taken guard at the wicket, or knew exactly where you were. If he didn't happen to be bowling when you were taking your first ball, as likely as anything he'd catch you out at close short-leg, a pickpocket of a catch, bare-faced daylight robbery.

Not quite as tall as he looks, Tony Lock of the rather stiff high shoulders, is the finest, cleverest, left-arm spin bowler ever to play for Surrey. He bowls frequently with his sleeves down - another feature in his appearance which frankly should cause misgivings in the minds of batsmen. During the period of Surrey's continuous championship supremacy - 1952/8 - Lock could pitch a ball at just over medium-pace on the leg-stump and threaten the off at a raspish speed from the ground. Often he was, as they say, unplayable. It was his good fortune, of course, to play at the Oval at a time when the turf there was of a nature calculated to conspire with spin.

A cricketer - or any other craftsman or artist - should take care to choose a favourable environment or soil for the blossoming of his talents. If Lock had arrived at the Oval in, say, 1930, with all of his present great dower of gifts, we should have heard little of him, not much more than we heard of his famous namesake 'Bert' Lock, cleverest and wisest of our groundsmen, and himself, once upon a time, a skilful spinner of the ball, but doomed to twist his fingers in vain on pitches rolled and doped to stupefaction; though in Sam Apted's reign the Oval turf could be fast in dry weather, and treacherous after rain and sun. On an Oval 'sticky' pitch before 1914 'Razor' Smith, right-arm spinner, off and leg, was a terror to the greatest batsmen of the day, all of them more accustomed to spin than batsmen of 1963. In 1910, Smith took 247 wickets,

During the 1960s Neville Cardus contributed extensively to *Playfair Cricket Monthly* and the following is a wonderful piece on Tony Lock. A bowler who Jim Laker described as being a better bowler than Laker himself and an extremely unlucky bowler in that he managed one wicket in the match in which Laker took 19 despite, again according to Laker "he bowled better than I did."

average 13-05. Lock has so far twice taken 200 wickets in one and the same season - 212 at 12 02 in 1957, and 216 at 14 - 39 in 1955. He owed much to Bert. In fact, Surrey may fairly be said to have won the championship seven years consecutively because of Surridge's leadership, 'Jim' Laker, and a joint Lock coincidence of circumstances.

### A First Choice

Lock should be a first choice for any team for which he is qualified to play, so long as he is physically fit, with eyes to see. He is one of those rare cricketers who are 'always in the game', whatever he chances to be doing,



bowling, fielding, batting. And he is no superfluity with the bat. I have seen Tony Lock defending, on a bowler's wicket, with the scientific straight bat of a Hutton. And he has fine forcing strokes. Like his great colleague Laker, he could, given the time and need, have made a useful name as a batsman.

He is a character, to be seen and picked out at once. In the field, near the wicket, he is a living embodiment of tense acquisitiveness, the clutching hands, squatting under the batsman's very nose, a body-snatcher, a picker up of

really good strokes or lightning lucky snicks off the edge. All come alike to him. I have seen him hold quite sinful catches, catches which were not there until his rapid hungry eyesight created them. Such a fieldsman has the power to win a match himself, even if he bowls not a ball or scores not a run. He will appeal for a leg-before-wicket when he is bowling (and when he isn't) with a concentratedly passionate 'H'zat!' - leaping in the air quite vindictively.

I have known people who haven't liked Lock's perpetual show of high-voltaged aggression. For my part, I'd like to see more of it from our day-by-day and too much routined county cricketers. 'The rigour of the game', so long as the rules are observed. Tony had to face a crisis a few years ago, the worst of all crises for any bowler. His action became 'suspect'. He was 'called' in first-class cricket. I refer to this incident or period in Lock's career, best forgotten, to emphasise the man's character and determination ; for he set

himself arduously to amend this occasionally dubious quick last-minute movement of the arm. Many great spin bowlers have found themselves unself-consciously giving a flick, an 'extra' flick, to lend to the ball a final decisive vitality. The fault might easily befall any quickish spinner, as much to his dismay as anybody else's. Lock's bowling was on the whole too skilful, is too skilful yet, to suffer a general indictment, merely on the evidence of recurrent lapses from strict conformity. By all means let us have fair play. But the tendency at the present moment is to stiffen legality, so that it hinders a bowler's legitimate freedom.

#### Technical Product

After all, considering cricket, and especially bowling, as art, the fact that matters most is the technical product, the quality of the ball which comes to the batsman to be played. When Ernest Jones was the fastest of Australian bowlers in the late 'nineties, his action also aroused umpires' suspicions for a while. He was attacking fiercely one day at Sydney in a match between New South Wales and South Australia.

When M. A. Noble arrived at the wicket, captain of N.S.W., he received a ball which came back at lightning speed on a flawless wicket, just missing the leg-stump. At the over's end, Noble went down the pitch to talk to the other batsman, a young colt of promise. 'Say, son,' asked Noble, 'don't you think Jones is "chucking" one or two?' 'Yes, sir,' replied the young colt, 'I think he is. But don't say anything about it. They might take him off' The young colt was Victor Trumper. No batsman of Tony Lock's time has for a moment wished that Lock should be kept on.

He has seldom sent down a ball that hasn't been willed to destroy, willed with all his heart, soul and nerve. He exults and he suffers. He rejoices openly at a conquest. He expresses disgust if luck betrays him, if a poor stroke frustrates a great ball. He throws back his head; he silently relieves himself by all sorts of lettered words not actually spoken; at any rate, not overheard by the distant spectators. Dull cricket is not to be seen when Lock is on the job. Into the most drifting match he will put a vehement purpose.

#### High Class Ability

At the beginning of the present season of 1963 he had taken 2,092 wickets in top-class cricket, average 18-01 each. No other bowler playing regularly today in county cricket has taken more. His bag in Test matches is 164, average 24.45. Thrice he has done the 'hat-trick'. Against Kent, at Blackheath in 1956, he took all ten wickets in an innings for 54.

In Tests against Australia his rewards have not been extravagant - some 31 wickets at round about 36 runs each. Figures often do no more than send out indications of high-class ability. I have watched Lock, 'on his day' (and on his, or his Surrey namesake's wicket), bowl the unplayable left-arm spinner's ball - quick to the leg-stump, the low flight disallowing any positive movement by the batsman to the pitch of it; then it has turned quicker than thought across to the off, always threatening the stumps, always demanding a stroke of some sort.

Charles Parker, of Gloucestershire, shared this secret amongst left-hand spinners of our time, so did Hedley Verity. Nobody else. Today, at the age of 34 last month, Lock is still the only left-arm spinner who can be mentioned without some blasphemy in the context of the names of Parker and Verity. Playing for Western Australia last Australian season, his form of attack was unique, a survival, apparently, from a bygone classical age.

We have heard much lately lamenting the decline of leg-spin. A just lamentation, too! But slow left-hand spin is the more classical of these two orders of the bowlers' arts, coming down from Peel (to go no farther back) and Briggs, and Rhodes, and Blythe, inherited by Parker, Verity and - is he at the moment the last of the great and fascinating line? — - Tony Lock.

The curving flight, the left-arm swoop, the supple fingers, the spin off the earth away from the bat, wicketkeeper and slips alert and gleefully avaricious! Is this beautiful skilful sort of spin destined to go out with Lock? The very thought of such a loss to cricket should make every lover of the game pray for more and more power to Tony's elbow.

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 BIG SPRING QUIZ

**T**he BIG SPRING QUIZ is up and running and thank you so much to everyone who is taking part. An astonishing 263 entries so far received and a massive apology if I missed you off the leaderboard below. Below you will see the next twenty questions and the current league table. I will be printing all the correct answers at the end of the quiz. 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 in the forth coming issues the better your chance.

I look forward to receiving your answers and the deadline for your answers to the questions below is next Saturday, March 13th - 6pm GMT.

## Round Three and Four Questions:

- 1: Name the last batsman to make centuries in 5 successive Test Matches?
- 2: Who, with figures of 14 for 87, has the best match bowling figures in a Sheffield Shield game since World War II?
- 3: Which Test Match ground is closest to the Equator?
- 4: Name the last man to score a century and take 10 wickets in a County Championship match?
- 5: Who was the last man to be stranded on 99 not out in a Test Match?
- 6: Which batsman scored the most runs in Test cricket during the decade of the 1990's?
- 7: Name the bowler who once dismissed his cousin in a Test Match?
- 8: Name the 2 England opening batsmen who both scored centuries in the same innings on the last occasion this happened in a Test Match?
- 9: Who is the only wicket keeper to score a double century on his Test Match debut?
- 10: Who made 230 consecutive appearances in the County Championship from 2001 to 2015?
- 11: Name the batsman that scored the one millionth run in Test Match cricket?
- 12: Who is the youngest man to score a double century in the County Championship?
- 13: Name the 2 opening batsmen who were out for 97 and 93, it was the first instance of openers both being out in the 90's in the same innings in Test Cricket?
- 14: Name the bowler to take the most wickets in a single Sheffield Shield season?
- 15: Who is the only New Zealander to take 5 catches in an innings in a Test Match (none wk)?
- 16: Name the first Test cricketer to die on his birthday?
- 17: Who hit the winning run in a World Cup final and took a catch that ended the next final?
- 18: Who played only 3 Test matches for England and was man of the match in 2 of them?
- 19: There have been 3 New Zealand born bowlers who have taken over 1000 first class wickets, Richard Hadlee and Clarrie Grimmet are two of them - name the third?
- 20: Who has batted the most innings in Test Match cricket without being run-out?

## Current Leader board after the first twenty questions:

- |            |    |
|------------|----|
| 1: Allan F | 20 |
| Stephen R  | 20 |
| Elaine T   | 20 |
| Simon A    | 20 |
| 2: Sean J  | 19 |
| Chris G    | 19 |
| John W     | 19 |
| Mike Y     | 19 |
| 3: Lynda N | 18 |
| Jason K    | 18 |

Please accept my apologies if I have missed you off the current leaderboard. Please contact me and I rectify any errors.



**THE NEXT QUIZ - Once our Spring Quiz finishes there will be a DIFFERENT QUIZ starting in April - further details will be announced in April**



## The Virtual Tea Interval



'There are so many Coronavirus jokes out there, its a Pundemic.

Two grandmothers were bragging about their precious grandchildren. One of them said to the other - "Mine are so good at social distancing, they wont even call me."

My mum always told me I wouldn't accomplish anything by lying in bed all day. But look at me now! I'm saving the world!

What's the difference between Covid-19 and Romeo and Juliet? One's the coronavirus and the other is a Verona crisis!

Nail salons, hair salons, waxing centres and tanning places are closed. It's about to get ugly out there!

The World Health Organisation announced that dogs cannot contract Covid-19. Dogs previously held in quarantine can now be released. To be clear, WHO let the dogs out"

Traditional French Joke -

"A plane crashes on a desert island. There are only a few survivors: three Spanish people, three French people and an Englishman. Six months later: one of the Spanish men has killed the other and is now living with the Spanish woman, the three French people have decided to become a threesome and the Englishman is still waiting to be introduced to the others."

This edition of The Virtual Wisdener  
has been sent out to  
8,129 people

The current membership of the  
Wisdener Collectors' Club is  
2,794 people

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

I swear, the other day I bought a packet of peanuts, and on the packet it said "may contain nuts." Well, YES! That's what I bought the buggers for! You'd be annoyed if you opened it and a spanner fell out!"

There was a man who entered a local paper's pun contest.. He sent in ten different puns, in the hope that at least one of the puns would win. Unfortunately, no pun in ten did.

Farewell Doris, wife, mother, Magician's assistant.



I feel very strongly about graffiti in toilet cubicles, so Ive signed a partition.

Man - "I haven't spoken to my wife in three weeks...I didn't have the heart to interrupt her."

I saw a Dalek walking around my village the other day and I said

"You're not from around here are you?"

The Dalek replied, "No, Exeter Mate."

### BREAKING NEWS

News reporters around the World  
are shitting bricks as the new  
Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogogoch  
Covid variant has been identified  
in Wales.

After hot passionate sex with my new girlfriend last night, she snuggled up next to me and said -  
"You know you are by far the biggest I've ever had"  
Apparently 'Ditto' is not the right response.

My mate can only sleep on old newspapers and things like The Wisdener, apparently, he has back issues.

STOP PRESS\*\*\*\*\*  
Little red Riding Hood has been found in a critical condition. Paramedics have stabilised her...But she is not out of the woods yet!!





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