

**So, what do we think of The Hundred?
I have watched bits of matches and I must say that the commentators are very enthusiastic and the crowds are enjoying it, oh and the grass looks very green and the kits are very bright...and it is bringing money into the game, but what do I think of it?**

To be absolutely honest I think that it is an opportunity missed. The aim according to the ECB was to attract new spectators to the game and with that I expected some explanation of the game. Just because the commentators know what a slow-ball is, or that there are four fielders on the leg-side...for someone coming to the game with no knowledge, it means nothing.

It is a massive chance to introduce 'new' spectators to a game - but with that comes a degree of responsibility to inform and educate those who know nothing.

Maybe I am missing something, but rather than hearing the same old over-excited TV folk bang on, why not spend 10-15 minutes just explaining some simple rules of the game, the different types of bowlers and what the terminology means, the fielding positions and even something as simple as explaining how runs are scored.

Just because you put a black block on either side of the screen showing balls faced, balls remaining and wickets doesn't educate anyone and I am sorry but hearing the constant garbage coming out of Kevin Pietersen and his co-screamers mouths' is just embarrassing. It seems as if world peace depends on every ball.

Thank you very much to everyone who supported us in our Macmillan walking marathon on Saturday. It was a brilliant occasion, with around 1700 fellow walkers and according to the PA guy at the start, over £700,000 was raised for a fantastic charity. If you want to know how much we raised then please click [here](#)

I was very hesitant about mentioning the walk to you all, so thank you so much for all your support and kind words. I was fine when we finished then we sat on a coach back to our car park and by the time I got off it, I was in agony, but Lorraine patched me up and yesterday we celebrated Abbeys' 24th birthday.

The walk was worth it.

Pictured left to right, me, my lovely Lorraine, Sandra and Paul and we all say, 'Thank You.'

If you are receiving this newsletter for the first time, I hope you don't mind receiving it and I hope you enjoy it. I apologise if it is intrusive in any way. You are receiving it because you have purchased from Wisdenworld and this newsletter is hopefully something a little different and a little bit interesting

The Hundred is here to stay, and in the coming years when more and more of the best one-day cricketers in the world can take part it will become a stronger event, but it will only attract more and more spectators if they are told more and more about how the game is played and how it works.

I have lost track of the proper game in recent weeks, but I do know that the England v India Test series is about to start. After the New Zealand Tests it will be interesting to see how the England side play. Will the home side have players who are rested and raring to go?

One player who won't be taking part is Ben Stokes and it is a massive loss for England, but also for the game. He has done more than most to excite and entertain and no one knows what kind of pressure he is constantly under. A few years ago I mentioned in the Wisdener that I was told a story about Ben Stokes during the IPL.

On his days off from playing in what is always a hectic schedule he was one of the few players who went to local clubs and schools to help and promote the game. He wasn't contracted to do it and he could have simply spent his time off relaxing and doing what the majority of players were doing - this story never reached the general press and I am guessing it didn't because it didn't fit the profile the press had created for him, which is something that is sad, awful and a disgrace.

If you get the chance to take part in the England v India Test Competition on Page 10, please do.

Bill



The Victory Tests

Aptly, we heard the news in a cricket pavilion. We were on the veranda, watching the rather desultory last overs of a game across the dappled shadows of a fresh May evening. The old secretary, a figure after the style of John McLeod, holder of a similar office with Hugh de Selincourt's Tillingfold club, approached. 'Gentlemen,' he announced, with that dogged dignity which was not entirely an invention of the war film genre, 'the war in Europe is officially at an end.' There was no Mafeking reaction. As was to be the case generally, the news was received with a quiet murmur of constrained relief.

1945 was an oddly two-tone summer. *Wisden* records almost 270 games, almost all of them lively one-day affairs, after the wartime fashion of providing solace to war-weary troops and civilians, with funds for charity a bonus. But, suddenly, after the announcement of peace, came MCC's decision to accredit the 11 three-day games planned as first-class. For a sub-generation of cricket lovers, now aged from late 50s to mid-60s (and, as Vic Oliver was wont to remark in the wartime radio show 'Hi Gang' - 'that's me, folks') genuine experience of first-class cricket began in 1945, after what had been a long wait. It is noticeable how many people date their love affair with cricket from the Victory Tests of 1945 against Australia.

There were five of these, plus a prestigious clash between England and the Dominions, with the other five first-class encounters made up of three festival games at Scarborough, a 'Roses' clash, and a curious Victorian-sounding Over-33s v Under-33s fixture. The glib and oft-quoted comment that 'there was no first-class cricket in England during the war' is slightly off beam. Britain was in a sort of reverse Tolstoyan position of being neither at war nor peace, for the war against Japan continued.

So these first-class matches were played while Britain was officially at war. Indeed, the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima during the Fourth Test and the second at Nagasaki just afterwards. Official surrenders were not made until early September, so that, effectively, the 1945 cricket season was played out between the German and the Japanese capitulations. There is no more resonant emblem of this than E.W. Swanton's poignant memory, on leaving a Japanese prisoner of war camp, of hearing commentary on the Old Trafford Test on a crackling wireless in a Thai village.

Walter Hammond, then a civilian, invalided out of the RAF with fibrositis, and Lindsay Hassett, an army

In this article from 1995, Eric Midwinter looked back at the 'Victory tests of 1945,' a series of five three-day matches against Australia which provided a feast of cricket hungrily devoured by the public.

warrant-officer who refused a commission, captained the two sides, both bristling, ironically enough, with commissioned officers. The First Test, at Lord's in May, saw England reach respectability in both innings, with Leslie Walter Robins and Wally Ames, Jack Robertson Hammond stride out to bat at Lord's. and Bill Edrich in solid form. But the Australians (Pictured above at Lord's) demonstrated what was to be the English problem until the 1950s - brittle bowling.



Keith Miller and Lindsay Hassett built the platform for a huge first innings total, and then, with minutes remaining, Cec Pepper violently clubbed the Australians to a six-wicket win.

The Second Test was a well-balanced tourney at Sheffield. Wally Hammond and Cyril Washbrook batted well for England, and, soundly as R.S. Whittington and J.A. Workman battled in the second innings, the canny bowling of George Pope and Dick Pollard saw England home by 41 runs.

Back at Lord's for the Third Test, an English experiment with youth, in the innocent shapes of the Hon L.R. White, D.B. Carr and J.G. Dewes, was a dismal failure. Len Hutton played enchantingly in both innings, and Bill Edrich and Dick Pollard enjoyed good games, but the power of Keith Miller, with assistance from Lindsay Hassett and S.G. Sismey, along with the accurate bowling of D.R. Cristofani, was too much. England lost by four wickets.

The Fourth Test was also at Lord's, with England fielding rather more familiar faces, and Field Marshal Montgomery, renowned for his cricketing metaphors, | was a heartily received guest. | The batting of both sides prospered - Miller, Pepper | and Sismey again for the visi-® tors; Hutton, Washbrook, | Edrich, Fishlock and * Hammond responding competently — and the match was drawn.

The Fifth Test was at Old Trafford. It had been requisitioned for war service and it was bomb-scarred - a sentry had been killed at the main gate by air raids ('Greater love...'). German POWs were paid three farthings an hour to tidy and paint the ground, but the heavy roller was still on active service in the Western Desert, helping to prepare air strips.

Living close by, I had passed the ground often on the train, noting the damage and the emptiness, spotting on one occasion sheep grazing, a most unusual 'Gabriel Oak' scene so close to the largest engineering estate in Europe, and staring at the bulbous barrage balloon (a reminder, said the wags, of Richard Tyldesley) on the waste land next door. This was the moment we had been waiting for: the first first-class match many of us had ever seen.

As our local anti-hero, George Formby, might have cooed, it 'turned out nice again', and England won an enthralling game by six wickets. The bowling of Eddie Phillipson and Dick Pollard put the Australians under substantial pressure, until Cristofani scored a wonderful century on the third day, but the batting of Hammond, Hutton and Washbrook was sufficient for England's needs.

A day or so later that fascinating England v Dominions match was played at Lord's: 'one of the finest games ever seen' was the *Wisden* verdict, as 1,241 runs and four centuries (two from Hammond, one each from Keith Miller and Martin Donnelly) were scored, as 40 wickets fell, 10 of them to D.V.P. Wright, and as the Dominions won by 40 runs with just eight minutes to spare.

It was an exciting and busy return for first-class cricket.

370,000 paid to watch the five Victory Tests, an average of 25,000 a day. Would that the powers-that-were had heeded the lessons, listened to the several sane voices which urged reform, recognised that 'reconstruction', from broadcasting to the National Health Service, was the mantra of the hour, and believed that people had fought not to turn back but to go forward. Skilful surgery of first-class cricket then might have avoided the later crises.

As for the cricket itself, England teams of high ability were held in check by a team of Australian servicemen, several of whom were never to star in first-class cricket. Keith Miller (Pictured, Right), of course, was the heroic find of 1945, but watchful cricket fans may have read the writing on the wall that Australian cricket was superior. World War II robbed several leading players of six full seasons of their gifted careers, but there was also a telling negative, a kind of black hole. This was the generation of never-was cricketers, who had little or no chance of first-class development.



For most years since 1900, about 30 first-class cricketers have been born annually. For the period

1915 to 1930 the average is little more than 20, and for the critical phase 1924-28 - those who would have been 18 to 22 in the first post war season of 1946 - the yearly figure drops to 13. Only 16 England cricketers were born in that quinquennium, and they share only 151 caps, a woeful record, compared with, for instance, the 687 caps collected by those England players born in 1929/32.

Tom Graveney, his genius towering above his contemporaries, won 79 of those 151 caps - no one else reached double figures. That was the real measure of the deprivations of warfare on cricket, and they were not to be made good until the May-Sheppard-Statham-Tyson-Trueman (1929-32) cohort emerged around the early 1950s.

Eric Midwinter - the author of The Lost Seasons: Cricket in Wartime, 1939-45.

First Victory Match - Lord's, May 19,20,21.

England 267 (Sqn.-Ldr. L.E.G. Ames, 57. Sqn.-Ldr. W.J. Edrich, 45. Capt. J.D. Robertson, 53 & 294 (Capt. J.D. Robertson, 84. Sqn.-Ldr. W.J. Edrich, 50. Sgt. C.G. Pepper, 4-80.)

Australia 455 (P/O K.R. Miller, 105. W/O A.L. Hassett, 77. W/O R.G. Williams, 53.) & 107-4 (Sgt. C.G. Pepper, 54*)

Australia won by 6 wickets.

(In *Wisden* the Australia second innings is recorded as 107-4 declared.

Second Victory Match: Sheffield, June 23,25, 26.

England 286 (W.R Hammond, 100. C. Washbrook, 63.) & 190 (L. Hutton, 46.).

Australia 147 (D.K. Carmody, 42. Pope 5-58.) & 288 (R.S. Whittington, 61. J.A. Workman, 63. Pollard 5-76.)

England won by 41 runs.

Third Victory Match: Lord's, July 14,16,17.

England 254 (L. Hutton, 104. Cristofani, 4-43) & 164 (L. Hutton, 69. W.J. Edrich, 58. Cristofani, 5-49)

Australia 194 (A.L. Hassett, 68. Pollard, 6-75.) & 225-6 (K.R. Miller, 71*, S.G. Sismey, 51.)

Australia won by 4 wickets.

Fourth Victory Match: Lord's, August 6,7,8.

Australia 388 (K.R. Miller, 118. S.G. Sismey, 59. C.G. Pepper, 57. Pope, 4-83. Pollard, 4-145.) & 140-4.

England 468-7 dec. (C. Washbrook, 112. W.R. Hammond, 83. W.J. Edrich, 73*. L.B. Fishlock, 69.)

Match Drawn

Fifth Victory Match: Old Trafford. August 20,21,22.

Australia 173 (K.R. Miller, 77*. Pollard, 4-78.) & 210 (D.R. Cristofani, 110*. Phillipson, 6-58.

England 243 (L. Hutton, 64. W.R. Hammond, 57. Cristofani, 5-55.) & 141-4 (W.J. Edrich, 42*)

England won by 6 wickets.

The Rise and Fall of 'Mr Roberts'

Madrid in January 1938 bore testimony to the aerial and artillery bombardment it endured during the Spanish Civil War. In a conflict which claimed a million lives, the death in a nursing home of a 93-year-old Englishman was of little moment.

John Roberts had been a successful Madrid businessman who had forged links with Spain's royal family. Like many of his kind he had suffered the vicissitudes of war. But he had lived a long life and there seemed little cause for regret. What remained of his family and a few friends recalled happier times when the small, dapper man was one of the capital's most accomplished tailors. And there were some at home in England in the world of cricket who also had their memories. For John Roberts was the name assumed by Sam Richardson, captain of Derbyshire in their initial first-class match, when he sought sanctuary in Madrid after one of the biggest scandals ever to rock the county circuit and the embryonic world of soccer.

He was born at Siddals Road, Derby on May 24, 1844, within sight of what was then the town's premier cricket ground, The Holmes, near the present bus station. His father owned a men's outfitting store and the young Richardson stepped early into the world of tailoring via the family business. But it was cricket which became his ruling passion. He began at a young age. When he was 10 he played for Morning Star, a club which practised on Chester Green, Derby, before business hours started. At 11 he was playing for Derby Town 2nd XI, and at 12 he was engaged by two of the founding fathers of the county club, Walter and Henry Boden, lace entrepreneurs, as a bowler in the evenings on their Grange estate. Richardson also appeared for the Excelsior Club at Derby against a Nottinghamshire team in a match which included four players named Fogg, Frost, Snow and Winter.

As time passed, Richardson developed into a very useful allround cricketer. A medium-paced bowler, his batting was described as, 'exceedingly pretty and at times very effective. Never a big hitter, he could yet punish slow bowling with admirable judgment. What he particularly excelled in was the late cut and at this pretty stroke he had very few superiors'. His real forte, however, was behind the stumps and he became incontestably the best wicket-keeper in Derbyshire.

While never a prolific run-maker, he appeared in most of the important matches in the years preceding the formation of the county club, for Derby Town, Burton-on-Trent, South Derbyshire, games against the All England XI and so on. W.G. asked him to play for the Gentlemen but business commitments prevented him from accepting the invitation.

I am grateful to Stephen Pooke who sent in the following article. It first appears around 1992.

John Shawcroft recalled the association between Derbyshire and Sam Richardson, which ended with revelations of fraud and deception.

himself with club cricket, making an unbeaten 67 in the Tradesmen v Police match at Derby in 1887 when he was 43.

Derbyshire counted themselves fortunate that they were able to continue using Richardson's vast experience. In 1880 he was appointed Assistant Secretary at a small salary under William Boden, the Hon. Secretary. When Boden resigned he was succeeded by Arthur Wilson, Richardson continuing as assistant. He was eulogised in the 1888 edition of the Derbyshire Cricket Annual. 'His long and varied experience in the cricket field has caused him to be looked upon as an authority on the game and when any intricate or knotty point arises, he is generally the person selected to settle the question or dispute.'

When Derby County Football Club was formed in 1884 as an offshoot of the cricket club, Richardson was appointed Hon. Secretary. In 1886 Blackburn Rovers defeated West Bromwich Albion 2-0 in the FA Cup Final replay at the County Ground. So pleased were the Football Association with the arrangements made by Sam Richardson that they presented him with a silver salver in appreciation of his services. A successful tradesman, family man, respected figure in the town and in the world of football and cricket, he appeared on course for a lifetime of success in business and in sports administration.

But all was not well with Derbyshire cricket. At the end of the 1887 season they were deemed second-class after a disastrous season. The club seemed afflicted by a general malaise, the only glimmer of light being the arrival of the Australian 'demon' bowler F.R. Spofforth. Fred Spofforth had married Phillis Cadman, daughter of a successful tea merchant who lived at The Cedars, a grey mansion on a hill above Breadsall. Sam Richardson was a guest at the wedding in Breadsall Parish Church. After a spell in Australia, Spofforth and his bride came to live in Derby in July 1888. Spofforth became the Midlands representative of his father-in-law's company. He was available to play in a few games for Derbyshire and in February 1889 became a member of the committee.

There was obviously great interest in Spofforth's performances on the cricket field but the businessman in his character led him, as a committee member, to examine closely the club's books. In February 1889 the amount owed to the bank had increased from £227 to £800.

As the year wore on Spofforth uncovered serious deficiencies in the club's accounts. Sam Richardson admitted systematically robbing the club for the past nine or 10 years. He had issued tickets for soccer and cricket, pocketed the cash and not entered the transaction in the accounts. He had also helped himself to 'considerable portions of the receipts from matches'. The committee had had implicit trust in him. His lifelong connection with cricket in the county had placed him almost beyond suspicion, and consequently he was able to continue his frauds long after they would otherwise have been detected. The accounts showed £1,018 due to Crompton and Evans' Bank. The estimated adverse balance was £861, besides £148 due from Richardson's ticket account.

It had not been a good year for the club. In January 1889 a key all-rounder, William Cropper, died following a soccer accident at Grimsby. Then came the Richardson revelations. The management structure was changed. Instead of an Hon. Secretary and an assistant, a paid secretary, W. Barclay Delacombe, was appointed. Of Richardson there was now no sign. He had absconded, with around £1,000 of the club's money.

At the annual meeting in the Bell Hotel, Derby, on February 25, 1890 some blame was attached to the committee 'whose duty it was to control Mr Richardson and to investigate the accounts'. There were reports about professionals failing to receive their money. Arthur Wilson commented on the 'extraordinary, almost imperial power' which Richardson had had over the destinies of the professional cricketers of Derbyshire. When he asked one player why he had not told the committee he had not been properly paid he was told: 'I didn't like to say anything. I thought Mr Richardson had more to do with putting me in the team than anybody else'.

In the meantime, Sam Richardson had assumed the name John Roberts and fled to Spain - a forerunner of some of the denizens of the Costa del Crime, although his base was Madrid. He seems to have invested his ill-gotten gains wisely, establishing a tailoring and

outfitting business in the city which soon began to flourish.

Richardson had a large family which he left behind in Derby. One of them became the wife of Haydn Morley, a former Derby County left-back who had been the first player signed by the club. His father William Morley played a prominent part in the Rams' formation. Haydn, a solicitor by profession, played once for Derbyshire when they were second-class in 1891 - the year he succeeded F.R. Spofforth as captain of Belper Meadows.

As Richardson prospered several members of his family joined him in Madrid. These were turbulent times. Maria Cristina, widow of Alfonso XII, was Regent until her 16-year-old son became Alfonso XIII in 1902. During the 1914-18 war neutral Spain entered a period of rich prosperity. The conflict brought riches she had not known since the wealth of the Indies arrived on her shores in the 16th century. Whole districts were industrialised to meet the needs of the belligerents and stock of all kinds attained unheard-of prosperity.

Sam Richardson did remarkably well. He was patronised by the court, John Roberts becoming court tailor to King Alfonso. Under the military directory which replaced Parliament in the 1920s his success continued, as he entered mellow old age. But the boom years were drawing to a close. In 1931 the monarchy collapsed, the Republicans sending Alfonso into exile. The best part of John Roberts' custom vanished into thin air and, nearing 90 years of age, he was too old to begin a recovery. Again he fell on bad days.

The Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936 and Madrid came under siege. Sam Richardson, the oldest British resident in the city, moved into the Anglo-American Nursing Home where he spent his last few months and, on January 18, 1938, he died. He was a long way from home and even in death the link was not to be re-forged. The British cemetery in Madrid was in the war zone so the old cricketer was buried in a Spanish civil cemetery.

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Lord Hawke - True Gentleman

Lord Hawke, President of Yorkshire, Treasurer of MCC and stern disciplinarian of English cricket, died over eighty years ago on October 10, 1938. With his death, the forces that had shaped county cricket began to fade, until the radical changes of the 1960s ushered in the present era of the game, culminating in the unhappy events of this 50th anniversary year.

In 1938, county cricket comprised teams of moderately paid, decent professionals with a strong sense of county loyalty, captained by affluent amateurs responsible to powerful committees - a kind of Golden Age for which there is still great yearning. Youngsters came into the game for the love of playing for county and country. Discipline was rigid, manners correct. A few surplus professionals, like Mercer of Sussex, were allowed to drift to weaker counties, like Glamorgan, but once established, they became immutable: Paynter always played for Lancashire, Compton for Middlesex, etcetera.

In large part this settled state of affairs was due to the influence and example of Lord Hawke and his club, Yorkshire. Born in August 1860 in Lincolnshire of all places, after Eton and Cambridge he became captain of the White Rose county in 1883, inheriting a bunch of talented, free-wheeling players who had won nothing since county cricket officially began in 1873. Identifiable in the field by their shabby appearance, some professional cricketers led short, improvident lives given to drink. Hired only for the summer, rewarded with talent money for 50 runs or six wickets, and sometimes a benefit, many quickly frittered away these unpredictable sources of income to end up in the workhouse.

Lord Hawke set out to change all this, retaining the one unwritten law that only men born in Yorkshire could play for it. Immediately, he abolished talent money which often resulted in the team suffering, as favourites were given unfair opportunities to gain cash, and substituted a points system with points for good fielding and wicketkeeping, small crucial innings and low-cost bowling, as well as high numbers of runs and wickets. Then, everyone was rewarded and, in his patrician way, Lord Hawke was amused by his men's surreptitious efforts to open their 'points' envelopes at their annual party at Wighill Park, Tadcaster, his stately

Looking back at late nineteenth and early twentieth century Wisdens a name that keeps on appearing is Lord Hawke. Recently I came across an article written in 1988 by Brian Rowe which looked back at the career of one of the game's foremost ambassadors, reformers, administrators and disciplinarians whose 51 year reign at Yorkshire brought twenty championships.

home. At five shillings a point, the most any player received for a season was £52- 10s. to George Hirst in 1903.

Yorkshire's winning the Championship twice in three years, 1893-96, saw Lord Hawke reward his professionals with the increased security of winter pay at £2 a week. He went on to reorganise their benefit money to prevent penury in old age. His scheme -

beneficiaries to receive a third of their money at once, the rest being invested by Yorkshire trustees for them and their wives to draw the interest for life, children inheriting the remaining lump sum - caused uproar among the players, but he charmed them into accepting it at a round-table conference.

Consequently, by 1904, Lord Hawke could write in C.B.Fry's magazine, 'professionals were beset by spectators asking them to have drinks and all that. But now, a professional pays for himself and resents offers from admiring strangers. Look, too, how neatly and smartly they turn out on the ground. They live soberly and thriftily: they are good citizens: they are good husbands and fathers. You never see a bad-minded, vile-living professional: good, straight chaps, some of the very flower of the land'.

His ideas on discipline and pay were copied everywhere and appreciated by players, John Tunnicliffe writing, 'things are better and different now in every way. Differences between amateurs and professionals are not so marked. We are brothers fighting for the county we love so well.' Lord Hawke established the idea that Yorkshire was the premier county, their poor performances over recent years being quite disorientating to those, like me, who watched them thrash their boyhood heroes without mercy. From 1883, he began a long process of instilling discipline into Yorkshire. 'This team', he announced, 'will never pull its weight until every man is proud of his appearance'.



He designed a cap for them modelled on Lancashire's red rose and inspected them daily. According to John Tunnicliffe, he kept Emmott Robinson out of the side until he was 35 because his bowed legs would spoil the team's looks (he then went on to take over 800 wickets!).

His points system sharpened up Yorkshire's overall performances and his care for their welfare, based on the officer-soldier system of the Militia in which he served, made them obey him implicitly. His aristocratic background - he was a descendant of Admiral Lord Hawke, victor of Quiberon Bay - allowed him to run his team with a rod of iron.

In 1887, in only his second full season of captaincy, he sacked one of the best players in the country for lack of commitment - Edmund Peate, sorrowfully admitting that Peate 'was blessed with the most perfect action of any man I have ever seen' and that his eight wickets for five runs v. Surrey was 'the very best bowling feat to which I ever fielded'. In 1897, he dismissed on the spot the best all-rounder in the game at the time, Bobby Peel, for being drunk on the pitch at Chesterfield. 'They'll have to send for me,' Peel said to George Hirst. 'They can't do without me,' - but they did! 'It had to be done for the sake of discipline and the good of cricket,' wrote Lord Hawke later. 'I did not care for the fact that, by dispensing with our foremost all-rounder, we were losing the Championship'. Would any captain dare to behave like that today?

By the end of the 19th century he had turned a troupe of talented individuals into a tightly knit unit based on a fanatical spirit, superb fielding and penetrative bowling - the kind of Yorkshire I grew up with. They were champions in 1893 and, after the competition was expanded in 1895 to include Derbyshire, Essex, Hampshire, Leicestershire and Warwickshire, they won the Championship in 1896, 1898, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1905 and 1908, during his captaincy. In the 52 years when Lord Hawke was either captain of Yorkshire or president (or both!), Yorkshire were champions 20 times and runners up six - something every other season!

During his 26 years as captain, Lord Hawke fully justified his place in the team, where he was often the only amateur (according to Plum Warner, other amateurs 'were not encouraged'). Batting lower in the order, he scored 16,506 runs, averaging 20.25. He scored 13 centuries, typified by hard-driving and good late-cutting, with a highest score of 166. His eighth wicket stand of 292 with Bobby Peel against Warwickshire at Birmingham in 1896 is still the English record (Peel 210 not out, Lord Hawke 166); and the highest English county score remains Yorkshire's first innings in that match of 887, being beaten in this

country only by England's 903 for seven v. Australia at The Oval in the year of his death.

He commanded his team by personality. Tall, shrewd-looking, with dark brown eyes that quickly twinkled with laughter, he played the game in a generous fashion. A newspaper report of 1903 states: 'His blue cap is jerked back on his head until it looks like a biretta.

Bulky of frame, loosely knit and strong, with a handsome open face, his dark eyes scan searchingly around, but his smile wins every man. If he is a strict disciplinarian, he practises a high standard and never preaches.' The Bulawayo Chronicle in 1895 said that he had 'no side whatsoever', and professionals were allowed to speak straight to him.

When George Hirst was left with three young professionals to get the 30 runs needed for victory at The Oval so that Lord Hawke and others could leave early for York, George only just made the runs with the last man in and was hit badly on the toe. When he found Lord Hawke at Kings Cross, having missed the train after all, George had a real cuss at his Lordship, much to his captain's amusement. 'His affability explains his popularity with the professionals,' said the Bulawayo Chronicle, and, as Lord Hawke did not marry until after his mother's death in 1916, when he was 57, his team was his family and received his undivided loving attention.

However, it is as a power at Lord's, as President of MCC, 1914-1919, Treasurer of MCC 1932-1938 and England selector 1899-1909 and after 1933, that Lord Hawke is chiefly remembered today. As MCC's importance as a playing club declined under the pressure of county cricket, its legislative and ethical influence increased. At the request of the counties, in 1899, MCC set up a Board of Control to oversee the game, a power extended to overseas countries, and Lord Hawke played as important a part in this process as W.G. himself. For the first time, MCC also took over from those counties hosting Test matches and the responsibility of organising the England Test XI, with Lord Hawke as a founder selector, as he was of the first MCC team sent abroad, to Australia in 1903.

As Chairman of the Selection Committee, he insisted that the England captain should not be included in its deliberations and he instigated a system of a 'balanced side' - four bowlers, an all-rounder, the best available wicket-keeper and then the batsmen who could not be left out. His system worked well; only when he was absent ill in 1909 did the selectors abandon it and completely change the victorious England team into one which eventually lost the series. 'They betrayed the English!' cried Bailey's Magazine - a cry that has often been heard since.



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It was as an MCC representative that Lord Hawke made his famous statement in reply to Cecil Parkin's article about England faring better under a professional captain. 'I hope and pray', said Lord Hawke, that I may never see the day when a professional will captain England.' There have been many interpretations of this statement since, some seeing it as the quintessence of autocratic amateur snobbery, some as expressing 'anxiety that English cricket should not fall below the high standard he thought it should maintain', (Sir Francis Lacey), while others agreed with Hubert Preston in the 1939 Wisden, that the outburst revealed 'his strong desire that there would always be a Gentleman good enough a cricketer for the high position as leader of our Eleven', - and the debate continues.

Whatever Lord Hawke meant, times were changing in his last years. Educated professionals like Wally Hammond and Cyril Washbrook were emerging at a time when the First World War had depleted the numbers of amateurs who could afford the game. Agreed, Hammond had to become an amateur to captain England in 1938 but, he insisted, 'I was the same man as before.' Had Lord Hawke lived on into the 1950s he 'might have prayed for a professional to captain England,' according to Hammond, since 'not more than three amateurs in England understood the game as most professionals did'.

Lord Hawke always felt that professional captains could not act with the spontaneity and independence of amateurs, but with the social levelling since his death and the abolition of amateur status in 1962, his values have been left far behind - whether for the better, after events in the last 12 months, is another matter!

Inspired by his belief that 'matches played in the proper spirit of sportsmanlike unselfishness and earnest endeavour' bring people together, he used his position in MCC to take the game and its mores abroad under his own colours: light blue, dark blue and yellow. Between 1887 and 1912, he took teams to Australia,

India, America, South Africa and Zimbabwe, the West Indies, Canada, New Zealand and Argentina, on the basis that 'Cricket is a pure game and one that does most good.' P.F. Warner has told how 'Lord Hawke was regarded as a kind of god.' Bowlers were urged to, give de Lord a duck! and how cartwheels, dancing and drumming always greeted his dismissal. The mosquitoes, of course, left Lord Hawke alone as they terrorised everyone in sight! The fact that India, New Zealand and the West Indies now play Test cricket better than the English shows that he succeeded only too well in his aims.

So what is left of Lord Hawke's influence on the game today, when there are no more amateurs, the players are well paid with all manner of perks, sponsored cars, equipment, etc.; where youngsters seem to me, as a committee man, to come in to the sport for personal fame (notoriety?), money and travel only; where income and sponsorship dominate the game's thinking, and team loyalty is secondary to personal advancement? It lives on in many spectators' stubborn belief that cricket is still a sport, that the way the game is played is as important as the result, that to win is fine but to lose gracefully is even finer, and that, if the game becomes merely pouring more and more money into the players, it will wither, like soccer has done, dominated by half-a-dozen rich clubs. 'I think that sometimes cricket is too serious', said Lord Hawke, 'that by becoming so important as a pursuit it loses its flavour as a sport. The moral character of my men is of infinitely more importance than their form.'

Hence the deep distress caused to cricket lovers by all the assaults on the game in recent years: intimidatory fast bowling, 'sledging-off in the field, reluctance to walk, quarrelling with umpires, player-poaching and sudden county switching, misbehaviour off the field and scruffiness on it. Lord Hawke would have been appalled, and set about those at Lord's and in the TCCB, who are sacrificing this great game's ideals for short-term gains.

The Virtual Wisdener: Contact details.

By email: furmedgefamily@btinternet.com

By Telephone: 01480 819272 or 07966 513171

By Mail: PO Box 288, Buckden, Cambridgeshire PE19 9EP

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England v India Test Competition

I hope you have liked the slightly different cricket-related competitions that have been appearing since the season started. This one is in the same mould.

There will be a first prize of a £100 Tesco Gift Voucher, a second prize of a £50 Tesco Gift Voucher and a third prize will be a 12-month subscription to The Nightwatchman.

In the event of more than one entry being tied for a prize, the tie-breaker will come into play and the entrant with the exact or then closest to answer will be the prize winner.

Here you go:

- 1: In the First Test in which over will the first 4 be scored (a boundary, not an all-run four)? (5 points)
- 2: In the first inning for both teams in the First Test how many fifties will be scored? If someone scores 100, 150 etc that counts as one fifty scored. An example answer - If you think England will have three batsmen who score a fifty and India have four, your answer is seven. (Correct Answer 5 points)
- 3: How many maiden-overs will be bowled in the First Test? (one point for each one and a bonus of five points if you forecast the exact number)
- 4: Across the first Two Tests, how many ducks will there be? (one point for each one and a bonus of five points if you forecast the exact number)
- 5: How many batsmen in the first Two Tests will be out 'Bowled?' (one point for each one and a bonus of five points if you forecast the exact number)
- 6: In the First Test, how many wickets will have fallen by the end of Day Two? (5 points for a correct forecast)
- 7: Across the first Two Tests how many times will a bowler take four or more wickets in a single innings? It is not the number of bowlers who do this, but how many times it happens. (one point for each one and a bonus of five points if you forecast the exact number)
- 8: How many batsmen will be 'Run Out' across the first Two Tests? (5 points for a correct forecast)
- 9: In the first Two Tests, how many times will a bowler concede 50 runs or more in an innings? ((one point for each one and a bonus of five points if you forecast the exact number)
- 10: Across the first Two Tests which side will score the highest innings total? (5 points).
- 11: Across the first Two Tests which side will score the lowest innings total? (5 Points)

Tie breaker: What will be the total number of runs scored in the first innings of the first Test by the opening batsmen of both countries?

Please email your answers to furmedgefamily@btinternet.com

'The Man of Mendip'

Peter 'Dasher' Denning was a more complicated person than he let on. He was apt to disparage his own skills and was genuinely embarrassed by compliments, of which there were deservedly many in his native Somerset. He hated headlines when they praised him, haughty committee members who fawned, posh accents (so different from his own) and social pretensions.

Yet he went to Millfield School, where he was captain of cricket and showed an intelligent grasp of tactics to impress his headmaster, Colin Atkinson. He was inclined to airbrush signs of privilege from his background or that once or twice he rode with the Mendip Hunt. He deliberately dressed down, didn't appear to acquaint his unruly flaxen hair with a comb and liked to consider himself a village boy. And so he was at Chewton Mendip, where he grew up and his dad, Tom, a capable club cricketer himself, was the butcher.

He was called Dasher because of his fielding and the way he hurtled for singles, pads often seemingly too big for him. He was singularly effective in the one-day games, a regular collector of match awards. But during his career, his adaptability was one of his valued virtues. He could demonstrate the cussed unshakable 'Man of Mendip' fibre when it was a matter of saving the game.

As a left-handed bat, frequently at the top of the order in partnership with Brian Rose, his strokeplay and deportment were hardly made for the poets. Coaches tried to give him more style; in the end they simply encouraged him to capitalise on his natural, instinctive flair. Peter reckoned he always gave gully a fair chance of getting him out. He enjoyed his unorthodox liberties, renowned in the West Country for a shot variously called the Chewton Carve or Chop, apposite descriptions for a butcher's son Dasher remained loyal to Ian Botham, Viv Richards and Joel Garner during the club's ugly internecine battles. In 1980 at Taunton he created with Beefy a record fourth-wicket stand of 310 for the county. "I just leaned on my bat and let him get on with it," chuckled Denning, conveniently forgetting to mention that he scored 98 himself.

There were eight hundreds for Somerset during a career of 269 matches which extended from 1969-84, passing 1,000 runs in a season half a dozen times. At Trent Bridge in 1980 he made a feisty 184. He didn't go in much for personal records and shrugged off the achievement. His team-mates warmed to him for his unaffected modesty. They also noticed that he hardly ever complained when he was given out, maybe to a contentious decision. He was a staunch team man. After leaving the game his appearances back at the county ground weren't frequent. He worked as the

regional transport manager for a farming cooperative and his cricket conversations were sparing. During his recent battle with cancer he was transferred from Musgrove Park Hospital to the local hospice where he died.

He ranks with Somerset's most popular players.

Peter William Denning was born on December 16, 1949 and died on July 18, 2007, aged 57.

Randall's pants for £20

(A report from a cricketing auction held at Trent bridge in 1988)

With items ranging from Derek Randall's trousers, through a complete set of the caps of the 17 first-class counties, to Geoff Boycott's bat and the obligatory Wisdens, the auction staged by Messrs Walker, Walton & Hanson on behalf of Notts County Cricket Club in the Long Room at Trent Bridge on the evening of August 9 was one of great variety — a description which fitted the lots and the attendant audience.

Some 180 lots raised around £5000 for the club. The oldest item, a hand-coloured lithograph by J. C. Anderson of J. Bickley, in fair condition, realised £55, which was perhaps the bargain of the evening, whereas the 1862 photograph of the Notts XI produced some keen bidding and went for £140.

The highest price paid for a bat was £220 for J. A. Dixon's bat of 1877. A 1949 bat used by Reg Simpson reached £100 and the bat with which Richard Hadlee scored 99 against England at Christchurch made £70.

Several items in the Clothing section failed to reach reserve, including Dusty Hare's England rugby blazer, but Reg Simpson's England blazer fetched £140 and a set of four sweaters — England, Yorkshire, Notts and Derbyshire — owned by Brian Bolus reached £90. Randall's coloured night-cricket trousers, which were lotted in with his shirt, realised £20, but no-one seemed interested in Bob Willis's trousers!

Most of the Wisdens were bought up by one Henry Blofeld, all at considerably more than the current prices shown in the dealers' catalogues, the exception being a lot of half-a-dozen post-1960 editions which realised only £24.

The item which had aroused most interest before the sale was Sir Donald Bradman's MCC tie. Sir Don had written to say that one of his ties had recently fetched \$A6000 at auction in Australia, and this information was printed in the present auction catalogue.

This may have deterred would-be purchasers. At any rate, the bidding was negligible and the lot withdrawn. Mr Dady, the auctioneer, coped with the varied lots with admirable efficiency despite the TV arc-lights, and the sale ended, after two hours, at about 10 pm, with both purchasers and Notts CCC very satisfied.

The Kit Bag

There was embarrassment at the Aigburth ground, Liverpool on July 14 (1979) when, after a quarter-hour's play during which Bob Wincer bowled six no-balls, it was discovered that the wickets were out of alignment. Lancashire had reached 15 without loss against Derbyshire, but the match was restarted after the stumps at one end had been shifted across by two inches. Lancashire went on to make 406 for 4 off their 100 overs.

Somerset say 'Farewell' to 'Jock'. (By Alan Lee)

ON April 13, 1984, Somerset cricket lost one of its most engaging characters, writes Peter Roebuck. In his 47th year Peter McCombe died in Antigua where he was staying with his close friend Vivian Richards.

Theirs was a remarkable intimate relationship which began in 1974 when McCombe offered a cold, lonely Richards the warmth and hospitality of his home. Richards never forgot this early favour and returned McCombe's loyalty and trust, certain that in McCombe he had found a source not only of fun but of strength.

This was McCombe's greatest quality. At Somerset and in the area he was valued for the generosity with which he gave his time, his ear and his support. His duties in the cricket club ranged from the humble to the grand but whatever his tasks he remained full of rough humour.

It was fitting that his coffin was borne by Richards, Botham, Denning and Popplewell — a tribute to a 'fellow of infinite jest' who will be missed.

Alan Lee writes: He was a kind and generous man, whose latest scheme was to raise more funds by shedding some of his own weight.

I spent a day with him in Antigua just before he died and he was, as usual, full of plans. He was considering a new job outside cricket, though whether he would ever have left Botham and Richards, whom he regarded with such colossal respect and affection, I rather doubt.

As the sad Botham said later: "It only happens to the good guys."

The Cricket Match - by Hugh de Selincourt.

The order of batting on the Tillingford side required much consideration from any conscientious captain, because far more than cricket "was involved. As a matter of sad fact there was no steady and reliable batsman upon the side; with the exception of John McLeod, and he was apt to play with such extreme caution that the bowling looked amazingly difficult, and his example of caution would sometimes prove so infectious that fellows who were almost sound when they forced the game, began to play back to half volleys that should have been quietly put out of the ground, and were soon bowled by them or feebly caught in the slips: whence a doleful procession to and from the wickets ensued.

The whole team would have liked to have gone in sixth, say, or seventh. But someone must always go in first: someone must also go in last: and no one felt quite the right man for either place. The last two men, to show their broad-mindedness, were inclined to take wild, glad shots, reckless even beyond their natural recklessness, in their wish to have one hit, at any rate, before the other fellow got out.

Over two hundred years ago, William Pitt the Younger referred to cricket when introducing his Defence Bill. Pitt lived at one time in Baker Street, close to the original Lord's in Dorset Fields. That same year cricket was being played regularly in Sydney far from the threats of a French invasion, whilst back in England Lord Frederick Beauclerk averaged more than 61 in important matches.

In the same period, there seems to have been some sharp practice going on in village cricket. The Reading Mercury for October 3, 1803 reported on a match between Binfield and Wargrave, in which it rained so heavily that Wargrave refused to play upon their arrival. Several of the Binfield players went home, whereupon Wargrave then said they would play and 'went on the ground and called the game'.

On their return home they obtained the two half-guineas' deposit money from the stakeholder at the halfway house (although the latter had stated that he would not part with the money until both parties were agreed). The crafty Wargrave players then spent

The 25% - OFF Sale on Wisdenworld will end on August 3rd at midnight GMT