

**A**s some of you may know I tend to survive on around 4-5 hours sleep and unlike our youngest daughter, Libs, I don't nap - trust me if there was an Olympic sport for napping she would have the Gold Medal well and truly nailed — so during the Olympics I got into a little habit of watching from 5am until around 7.30am, then wandering into the office to do *Wisden* stuff.

What has this got to do with anything, I hear you ask..well, that is a good question and it deserves to be answered? The Olympics ran over 17 days, the recent European Football Championship ran for 30 days and the 2019 Cricket World Cup for 46 days....The Cricket World Championship ran for around 1200 days, something tells me the latter is missing a trick.

So, whilst waking up early and celebrating an incredible feast of sport from Tokyo I thought to myself, could it happen that a World Test Championship could take place in one country, over a set number of days? What would it take? Commitment, money, belief, intent and desire.

Just imagine if it could happen. How about this for an idea: Firstly, choose a country to host it and an honest appraisal of the weather needs to be made so sadly England would not be feasible. It would have to be India, maybe Australia or even the UAE. Of the Test playing countries it is fair to say that at the moment Sri Lanka, or maybe the West Indies would be the 8th ranked, but for this little idea let us just suppose it is England who are ranked 8th.

According to the latest ICC list, there are four more Test playing countries below the eight - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ireland and Zimbabwe. We begin the competition with a preliminary round, with the four nations above drawn to play in a one-off Test, lasting five days with a spare sixth-day if needed. The games would be played at the same time.

Bangladesh v Zimbabwe  
Ireland v Afghanistan.

Five days later the two winners play each other:  
Bangladesh v Ireland.

Four days later, the winner plays the eighth ranked Test side (England) in the final qualifying match  
Bangladesh v England.

The winners of the final qualifier join the seven other nations, again each match is a five-day Test and each will be given an extra day.  
Imagine a 'quarter-final' line up of the following four Test matches:

England v New Zealand  
India v South Africa  
Australia v Pakistan  
West Indies v Sri Lanka.

Winners play in a semi final and then onto the final.

Logistically there are hundreds of reasons why this couldn't happen. But even allowing six days per match and with 4-5 rest days in between, it would need a maximum of around 54 - 56 days and think of the occasion, think of the publicity for Test match cricket, think of the demand to watch it, think of the world's best players competing in a true competition to find the world's best Test side.

The sponsorship would more than cover the costs for each team to attend. If the tournament was in India or Australia there are more than enough grounds and if given enough notice and with stringent guidelines the pitches could be made fair and honest.

A pipe-dream I know, but what if? What if those who run the game had the commitment, the belief, the intent and the desire to do it...the money is not the issue.

As I write this it is lunch on the fifth day of the second Test at Lord's and I have to admit that yesterday's fourth day was enthralling and the session this morning has been riveting. Proper Test cricket but unfortunately the tactics of England in the field this morning have been unbelievably awful.

I hope you enjoy this edition and keep well one and all.

Bill

## AN APOLOGY

**On the Wisdenworld website from March 2020 to August 3 I ran a 20% off sale. I always said I would end it when things eased and life was back to some kind of normality.**

**Please accept my apologies, the 20% off should not have ended. So many of you have supported me and my business over the past 18 months that it actually feels wrong to take away the discount, it does not sit at all comfortably with me.**

**To all of you who have bought from me since August 4 you will be receiving a refund of 20% and the discount on the site has been re-instated.**

**I love what I do and sometimes I make a bad decision and ending the discount was one of those decisions.**

## It Happened in August

**1941:**

R. (Bobby) Peel, one of the greatest slow-bowlers of all time, died on August 12 aged 84. Peel played for Yorkshire from 1882 to 1897 until he was sent off the field by Lord Hawke for appearing in what is described as 'a condition not fit to play.' He subsequently appeared in one first-class match for an England XI v Australians at Truro in 1899. Peel took 1,754 wickets (average 16.21) during his career, including 102 in 20 Tests, as well as scoring 12,135 runs (av. 19.46) with seven centuries.

**2015:**

On August 7 Ben Stokes bowled the millionth ball in Test cricket in England.

**1993:**

The England women's team win the Women's World Cup for the first time since the first World Cup in 1973.

**2000:**

Michael Atherton and Alec Stewart both win their 100th Test caps in the match against the West Indies at Old Trafford.

**1965:**

Wicket-keeper and captain Alan Smith, playing for Warwickshire against Essex at Clacton, responds to a bowling crisis by taking off his pads and bowling himself. He takes four wickets in 34 balls before conceding a run, including a hat-trick.

**1970:**

Leading Test umpire Syd Buller collapses and dies during break for rain in a match between Warwickshire and Nottinghamshire at Edgbaston.

**1997:**

Brothers Adam and Ben Hollioake make their Test debut, playing for England against Australia in the fifth Test at Trent Bridge.

**1914:**

W. G. Grace played his last match in club cricket at the age of 66 for Eltham at home to Northbrook.

**1987:**

Pakistan record their highest Test innings, 708 against England at the Oval.

**1967:**

Bill Woodfull, Australian captain during the Bodyline series in 1932-33, dies aged 67 while playing golf.

**1902:**

Gilbert Jessop scores 104 in 77 minutes as England wins the Fifth Test of the 1902 series against Australia by one wicket. The Test would become known as 'Jessop's Match.'

**1841:**

Johnny Mullagh, star of the Australian Aboriginal cricket team during their tour of England in 1868 is born near Harrow, Victoria.

**1948:**

On the first day of the Fifth Test at The Oval, Don Bradman was bowled for a duck in his last ever Test innings.

**1979:**

Mike Proctor hits six successive sixes off Somerset's Dennis Breakwell at Taunton.

**1968:**

England win the fifth and final Test of the Ashes series to square the rubber with six minutes to spare after a final day in which The Oval is flooded by a lunchtime storm. Mopping up by staff and spectators enables play to resume with 75 minutes left and five wickets to get. Derek Underwood took four of them to finish with seven for 50.

**1920:**

Percy Fender of Surrey hits a 100 in 35 minutes against Northampton at Northampton. His century is still regarded as the fastest 'authentic' century.

**1900:**

Start and finish of the only Olympic cricket match in Paris: GB beat France by 158 runs.

**1920:**

A week before his 22nd birthday Don Bradman scores 232 in the Fifth Test win over England at The Oval. In the same match, Australian slow-medium bowler Percy Hornibrook takes 7-92 as England are dismissed for 251 in an innings defeat: Australia regain the Ashes with a 2-1 series win.

**1878:**

Surrey wicket-keeper Ted Pooley completes a then First-Class cricket record 8 stumpings in a county match against Kent at The Oval.

**1865:**

Kent (159) defeated Yorkshire (59 and 30) by an innings and 70 runs in two days at Bramhall Lane, Sheffield. G. Bennett and E. Willshire bowled unchanged for Kent for match figures of 7-58 and 12-28 respectively. Yorkshire were a weak side throughout the season owing to five of their professionals refusing to play against Surrey due to a long-standing dispute and as a result they were not chosen for other matches.

**1866:**

A match took place at Chippenham, Wiltshire between the local club and a team comprising a father and ten sons with the unusual but rather appropriate name of Brotherhood. The latter won by nine wickets in a two-innings match. Although there are numerous instances of families producing a team for a cricket match (e.g., the Graces, the Robinsons and the Edrichs). Such a combination is unique.

## How Test Cricket Almost Died

**S**ecret British government papers now available in the Public Record Office show that conflict over the planned South African tour in 1970 raised the possibility of the end of Test cricket. A dramatic revelation which makes it cricket's gravest political crisis — worse than Bodyline in 1932-33.

Long before the South African cricket team was scheduled to arrive on June 1, 1970, the Stop the Seventy Tour campaign had begun its offensive. They had a charismatic leader in Peter Hain, and an articulate following. Members had secretly snapped up most of the Test tickets and were planning, among other things, to shine mirrors in batsmen's faces. A London University student planned to let 100,000 locusts loose at each Test. "They will ravage every blade of grass and green foliage," he claimed.

The tourists would play — or try to play — five Tests and seven other matches on grounds heavily ringed by barbed wire, in front of crowds consisting mostly of antiapartheid demonstrators. Outside grounds, thousands of others — including 100 Labour and Liberal MPs — were to press home their opposition to apartheid. Mike Brearley and Peter Lever, the Lancashire fast bowler, were against the tour. Colin Cowdrey and 80% of professional cricketers polled that spring were in favour.

The Ministry of Defence got in on the act, lending Yorkshire 200 coils of barbed wire, to protect the Headingley pitch and ground from attack. But the then junior defence minister, Roy Hattersley, declared that they were on the wrong side. He ordered the return of the wire, and rebuked the senior general responsible for a breach of Army policy.

Strong pressure was building on Harold Wilson's Labour government in April 1970. On April 30 the Home Secretary, James Callaghan, minuted: "Pressures on the Cricket Council to cancel the tour seem to me likely to mount during the next few weeks and, although some members of that body would die in the last ditch rather than call the tour off, there are almost certainly those whose only desire now is to get off the hook — especially if the Government could be made the scapegoat for cancellation." Callaghan recommended an intensification of pressures "by all the unofficial means we can find in the hope that the nerve of the Cricket Council will crack".

The unofficial means included David Sheppard, the former England captain who had recently become Bishop of Woolwich, who played a part almost as heroic as that of Hain. Sheppard's Fair Cricket campaign galvanised moderate opposition; and it is now clear that he acted as a crucial intermediary between the Government and his old cricketing

The Wisdener has included many articles over the past year on the 1970 season in England, and comment and analysis on the proposed tour by South Africa. In 2010 Charles De Lisle wrote the following article, after secret government files — concerning the proposed South Africa tour to England of 1970 — were made open to the public. This highlights how much was going on behind the scenes.

friends. One Sheppard meeting with the Cricket Council lasted three hours, after which a Government record spoke of "hard-liners" on that body led by Aidan Crawley, the chairman of London Weekend Television. Vice-chairman Gubby Allen, however, was seen in Whitehall as more moderate; though there was shock when it emerged, through Sheppard, that the administrators had never even heard of the community relations commission (the predecessor to the commission for racial equality).

The council's leaders were, therefore, widely viewed in Whitehall as being out of touch, insensitive, and lacking political astuteness (they were sometimes without the latest international information). In a minor concession they said, a little grandly, that they would be prepared to discuss community-relations issues if they were put to them directly by the Home Secretary or other ministers.

In a minute of May 6, 1970, Wilson — no cricket lover — was told by a senior minister that selected High Commissioners in London, like those from India, Barbados and Jamaica, should be sounded out about "the possibility of their Governments saying that if the Cricket Council goes ahead it means the end of Test match cricket".

But Maurice Allom and Billy Griffith, respectively chairman and secretary of the Cricket Council, appeared deaf-eared to private pleas in a May 21 crisis meeting with Callaghan. He urged them, in vain, to abandon the tour "on the grounds of the potential damage to race relations, the Commonwealth Games and the interests of the coloured community" in the UK.

The saga ended the following day however, when the council finally caved in to overwhelming pressure. The Government had, at last, intervened directly and insisted the tour be abandoned, "On grounds of broad public policy". The cricket authorities very reluctantly acquiesced.

What happened next was an England v Rest of the World series, in which Sir Garry Sobers's all-stars defeated Ray Illingworth's very capable side 4-1 and, many years later, Nelson Mandela told Hain that the Stop the Seventy Tour campaign "delivered a decisive blow against apartheid".

## The Don at 80

**T**his month Sir Donald Bradman reaches the age of 80. That event will be celebrated in Australia for he is their cult figure as no English cricketer has ever been in this country — not even W. G. Grace. After all, WG was overshadowed by Queen Victoria. There is no Australian, though, to take the limelight from Donald George Bradman there.

He has been saluted in books, films, radio and television programmes to a degree that no other sportsman has known in that country. In fact, he has filled a need for Australia, which cried out for a focal figure. He has also a considerable reputation in England. He came on four tours of this country — in 1930, 1934, 1938 and 1948. On the last occasion he did it again — a century at Worcester to start the tour, and finished top of the batting averages. Nostalgia and the end of war affected the crowds to some extent and, wherever he went, people flocked to see him in what seemed, at times, almost like a royal progress. It is not an easy situation for any man but, on the whole. The Don has carried it off extremely well: after all, he set out to be a cricketer and it is not his fault nor, truly, his responsibility to live up to the demands of a major public figure.

Figures tell something, but by no means all, about most cricketers. The statistics of Sir Donald's career, though, are quite remarkable because they show him in that respect far beyond reasonable competition. That is best illustrated by quoting his figures and then those of the next man in the non-race. For instance, he has Test figures of 6996 runs at an average of 99.94. But for that googly of Eric Hollies' at The Oval in 1948 surely Bradman's Test average would have been over 100. The next comparable average is that of C. S. Dempster — 723 runs at 65.72.

In all first-class cricket Bradman scored 28,067 runs at 95.14. Next behind him comes Vijay Merchant, 12,876 at 72.74. It has been said that Bradman could not play on bad pitches, and perhaps he was not the sticky-wicket master that, for example, Sir Jack Hobbs was. On the other hand, 1938 was a wet summer in England, yet Bradman averaged 115.66 (the first time anyone had exceeded 100 in this country) for his 2429 runs. The next-best average was Walter Hammond — 75.27 for 3011 runs — but from 16 more innings. Perhaps most impressively of all, he scored a century roughly once in every three innings (including his first on his debut for New South Wales against South Australia in 1927-28): he reached 100 hundreds in his 295th innings; next behind him is Denis Compton who achieved it in 552 innings.

The tactic which was called 'Bodyline' was designed specifically to deal with the threat of Bradman, yet in that 1932-33 series he was still top of the Australian averages with 396 runs in eight innings (he missed one Test) at 56.57. He captained his country in five Test series between 1936 and 1948; he never lost one and four were won by considerable margins. Most record-breakers at some time sacrifice speed for scores but, despite all his double-centuries and his six scores of over 300, only 12 of his innings lasted as long as six hours.

A wonderful article from John Arlott celebrating the 80th birthday of Sir Don Bradman. First published in 1988.

Certainly he was the most infallible punisher of the bad ball the game has ever known. He had, too, virtually all the strokes and once, in the Folkestone Festival of 1934, he struck 30 — 466464 — off a single over from Tich Freeman. He had few physical advantages; only 5ft 7ins tall, tests showed that his eyesight was quite normal — though many a bowler would find that hard to believe in view of his speed of reaction. Simply enough, he was an ordinary human being with a capacity for batting that can only be described as phenomenal.

As a human being, he was extremely courteous to this writer, willing to discuss the game, fairly certain — with good justification — of the rightness of his own opinion, but often humorous and invariably considerate. Once when the two were dining together, and The Don was actually in the act of drinking soup, a man came up and said 'Will you sign your autograph in my book?' Without heat but with more than justifiable irritation Don said 'Can't you see I am eating?' The man swung on his heel and walked away muttering, and not pleasantly either. The Don put down his spoon and said 'Now I suppose he will go away and tell his friends what a rude man I am.' Useless to tell him he was perfectly justified; he knew that; but he was hurt in anticipation of what would be said about him. This is a degree of sensitivity which it is difficult to carry at that level of standing.

He has had to stand a high level of pursuit particularly, as he recently regretted, from the currently growing number of people of many nations who write unsolicited to the famous. He has borne this with more than usual patience but it must be said that he has suffered much in this direction, for cricket enthusiasts can be extremely importunate.

The first Australian cricketer to be knighted, he settled in Adelaide and achieved all the honours that might come to a cricketer in his country. Chairman of the Australian Cricket Board and the selectors, he also became a highly successful businessman. He proved, too, one of the most penetrative cricket-writers in his major book on the game. The Art of Cricket. He wisely resisted the temptation, which must have been considerable in financial terms, to go far beyond that, and commit himself to a no-holds-barred autobiography. Indeed, more than four times as many books have been written about him as he himself has published.

Remarkably for a public figure and in Australia, he is virtually untouched by scandal. A dutiful family man, he must have been deeply grieved when his son found himself unable to continue under the burden of his father's name and altered his own to Bradsen.

It has all been very exciting; stimulating yet at times a fount of anxiety. If he were asked if it was all worth it he would probably answer just a trifle ruefully 'Yes', and several million Australians, for their part, have no doubt about it.



*(Eric Morecambe, one of a long list of celebrities who have contributed to The Lord's Taverners Sticky Wicket Book, draws a typically tongue-in-cheek picture of life with the Taverners.)*

**In the last ten years I have been involved with the most wonderful businesses in the world: show business and sport.**

But I'm not the only entertainer to do this. Take Elton John — he'll go — affectionately known as the Watford Gap. He's sport-orientated (it's the way he walks). Pete Murray . . . he's the one who supports Arsenal. Well, the first four letters are right. How many people who have borrowed this book know that Marty Feldman is a tennis fanatic? He can actually go to Wimbledon and watch a game without moving his head . . . Ernie Wise, who once thought Billy Bremner was the Chancellor of West Germany . . . now Ernie follows Clydebanks, Barclays Bank and Nat West Ham.

How many times have we watched the pro-am golf on television? Wonderful matches, with people like Gary Player and Lee Trevino playing little Olga Corbett of the Two Ronnies, and Sean Connery. Is it generally known that Patrick Mower follows both Bristols, so that he can see the game home and away? Larry Grayson goes to Queens Park . . . Henry Cooper is a pugilist. (He doesn't know, he thinks he's a boxer.) Every morning Henry's wife has to count up to ten before he'll get up!

It's like the old saying 'Actors want to be comics, and comics want to be actors'. Well, it's the same with sport. Showbiz people want to be sportsmen and sportsmen want to be show people . . . Freddie Trueman is well known for his after-dinner speaking. When he speaks he's usually after dinner. It's also a well-known fact that Rachael Heyhoe Flint knows more dirty jokes than Freddie . . . and that's saying something.

At the mention of Rachael, we seem to forget that sport is not all men. For sport you need women (well for the sport I play). Women play cricket, football, tennis — almost every game. And in my opinion they bring glamour into any sport. Look at the minute amount of clothes they wear . . . my grandmother went to bed in more clothes than Virginia Wade won Wimbledon in!

The Lord's Taverners have a list of names from both sport and show business personalities, longer than Nelson's right arm. (It's hard to realise that he used to live with David Hamilton.) Mr Tim Brooke-Taylor — there's three for a start. John Alderton . . . what a fine actor that man is. In that wonderful series *Thomas and Sarah* he played Sarah . . . he couldn't play Thomas, not

Eric Morecambe was undoubtedly one of the finest comedians of not only his, but any generation and he was also a big supporter of The Lord's Taverners. He contributed to the Taverners' 'Sticky Wicket Book' and to promote the book he penned this article for *Wisden Cricket Monthly*.



with a name like John. Willie Rushton, with his flaming red beard: the last time I saw anything like that on a face the whole herd had to be destroyed! Another name comes to mind — Fiona Richmond. But that's got nothing to do with you! Tim Rice, co-author of such great hits as *Patrick Moore Super Star*, and *Ryvita* . . . anyone in showbiz who is anyone, is in the Taverners. And don't forget that behind every star is a surprised wife.

As I've already said, not everyone in the Taverners is in show business. There are many famous sportsmen and women. I mean, how's this for name dropping . . . The Nawab of Pataudi — eh? Be honest . . . how about that. I remember once having a drink with his Sirocco . . . I was on neat gin and crisps and he was on Indian tonic and poppadums.

As always, the conversation got round to cricket and I asked him a direct question about a certain English player. Now for at least half a minute he couldn't answer. He just looked at me with his face going slowly red and his eyes bulging . . . Evidently a piece of poppadum had slipped down the wrong way. I slapped his back and the offending object flew across the room and landed in the mynah bird's cage. The bird ate it and never spoke again. I repeated the question 'What do you think of Bedser?' and Nawab said, 'I don't sleep on bed sir, I sleep on rush mat.' Nawab lives in New Delhi near India and next to Nicholas Parsons.

Of course, the Taverners have certain rules. Two that I can remember: one is Deaf O'Connor can never be a member, and the second is we do not allow political jokes because sometimes they get elected.

All our members wait eagerly for April, knowing that soon we will thrill to the sound of leather hitting Brian Close. Prince Charles was our last president, while at the moment I'm your last . . . (that doesn't sound quite right) . . . president.

Prince Philip (by the way he can verify the Nawab story — next time you see him, just ask). He's our Twelfth Man. That means if we are ever short we ring up the Palace and ask the Queen if he can come out and play. She's usually very good about letting him come with us on Sundays, except if he has to mow the lawn before one of the garden parties.

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Every Sunday in the cricket season we play a team for charity, and the kindness and hospitality shown to us by our hosts is tremendous.

You could bump into Barry Sheene, John Conteh, Reg Simpson, Bill Edrich or John Snow, even Denis Compton. And if you're lucky you could bump into Pauline Collins (She plays Thomas in George and Mildred.)

She may be there because John Alderton is there. Because they have been pronounced 'bed and breakfast'.

You might bump into Patrick Moore. Now he has a devastating googly, which in all probability has been caused by his run-up ... or the fact that he's put his cricket box on upside down. You might bump into Ronnie Barker or trip over Ronnie Corbett. You could share a joke with the Earl of Ranfurley, KCMA: eat a waiter with Donald Pleasance: have a drink with Colin Milburn: write a song with Michael Margolis, FRSA, MSTD, MADCC, MISA: pick a fight with Noel Gordon.

After lunch, the game starts. You, through having two name tabs and a piece of lemon, can go and stand in the enclosure, a roped-off area to stop people from touching or getting too near the stars. It will be packed, because the ropes are now on the ground. The man whose job it is to keep them up and stop the people from touching the stars is also their umpire. You may be fortunate to stand next to an ex-England cricket star and watch him be sick. Let me add this is not caused by drink. This is what, at some time or another, we all suffer from — nerves. Here is a man who has in his

time stood up to Lindwall and Miller, Lillee and Thomson, Adelaide and Sydney, even Little and Large. But now in front of maybe fifty to sixty people he has to face Arthur Askey, who is 5 for 77. (That's his height and age.) I would advise you to go back into the marquee and watch a fight between the actor who got the part, and the one who thought he should have got it. Suddenly you hear the rapturous applause as Askey has claimed the sick ex-England star cricketer's wicket. The latter is now swaying back to the pavilion. The next man is due in . . . no . . . no, we've declared: 151 for 13.

You rush towards the tea urn. The woman serving looks directly at you. It's the same woman who served you the g and t She hands you your tea: it's as cold as a mother-in-law's kiss.

One of our stars has been hurt. A cake has fallen on his foot. An ambulance man comes over to attend to it. He must be all of ninety-five ... he couldn't put a dressing on a salad.

You hear scattered conversation.

Male: 'What's your husband getting for his birthday?'

Female: 'Bald and fat!'

Star: 'What's on my plate in case I have to describe it to a doctor?'

Female: 'If he'd really loved me he'd have married someone else . . .'

Today you have been part of the Lord's Taverners . . . you have mixed with stars, you have talked to beautiful women, you have contributed. It does not matter who wins the game as long as we do. It's getting towards dusk, it's going-home time. A star gets into his chauffeur-driven Rolls with a beautiful lady. The car won't start, the chauffeur lifts the bonnet, the star and the beautiful lady go back to the marquee . . . the Taverners' motto is being taken down — 'Sleep is best, next to a beautiful woman'.

There are three options if you wish to take out a Wisden Collectors' Club membership. For details of the benefits included please click on one of the links below.

A Full Membership until December 31 2021 £10, please click [HERE](#)

A Full Membership until December 31 2022 £18, please click [HERE](#)

A Full Membership until December 31 2023 £30, please click [HERE](#)

## MEMORABLE or UNUSUAL

**R**ow upon row of excited people are standing in their seats, shouting and cheering with an abandon that is almost delirious, the tremendous volume of 25,000 cheering voices vies for loudness with the noise of nearly 50,000 hands clapping like the crackle of musketry; above the heads of the vociferous crowd those hands not applauding are wildly flourishing hats and newspapers; while the assemblage of company directors, pastoralists, and retired professional and business men—Australia's nearest approach to a nobility in the seats of the select pavilion at the Melbourne cricket ground have thrown off their habitual reserve and are giving expression to their delight with as much vigorous freedom as the rowdiest barracker in the shilling section of the enclosure.

And all because a cricketer who really isn't a batsman has clipped past point for three runs a ball from a man whose bowling cannot be classed higher than the 'useful change' type!

But such is the glamour of a record score that it would not have mattered to the crowd if the hit had been made with the back of the bat as long as the runs were scored, for that cut for three broke a world's record. It carried Victoria's score against New South Wales past 1,059, and gained for the State the distinction of having made the highest total ever scored in one innings in first-class cricket.

As the youthful New South Wales team had won magnificently by four wickets against a strong South Australian eleven at Adelaide on December 22, after having been set 446 in the fourth innings, such a trouncing at the hands of Victoria a few days later came as a shock. So well had the 'colts' performed in Adelaide that many people lost sight of the fact that the team had been hamstrung by the absence of Collins, Bardsley, Macartney, Taylor, Kelleway, Gregory, and Oldfield. T. J. E. Andrews, Arthur Mailey, and Alan Kippax were all that were left of last season's all-conquering combination.

Winning the toss, the New South Wales batsmen began batting on an almost perfect wicket at 11.30 a.m. on December 24, and at 5 p.m. they had all found their way back to the dressing-room with only 221 on the board.

It was Arthur Liddicut (Pictured, Right) one of Victoria's near-veterans, who did the damage. For some years Liddicut had been a devotee of that school of so-called off-theory bowlers who persistently send down good-length balls at fast-medium pace about two feet outside the off stump,



A while ago I published a report from a Great Match. The match was New South Wales v Victoria played at the MCG from December 24 to 29 1926. Victoria scored 1,107 runs and I am indebted to Alan Hesketh for sending in this article from back in 1927, believed to have been first published in *The Cricketer* and penned under the pseudonym, 'Third Man.'

and rely for their wickets on either the impatience or disgust of the batsmen. In this match, however, he bowled with more than his usual energy and pace from the pitch, and changed the direction of his deliveries from fine slip to on and near the off stump. Always a master of direction—he can bowl for hours without putting a ball nearer the on side than the middle stump—Liddicut got a whip from the wicket which caused the visiting batsmen many moments of discomfort.

Boxing Day revealed the weakness of the New South Wales attack, a weakness which W. H. Ponsford (Pictured, Right) promptly discerned. His flashing bat commenced to punish the visiting bowlers from the start, and he accomplished the phenomenal feat of batting all day (322 minutes' actual play) for 334. He passed the century in 125 minutes, and 200 went up in 203 minutes.



Using a wide variety of strokes Ponsford frustrated every attempt to place the field for him. For placing and timing his forceful driving could hardly have been excelled, but the stroke which demoralised the bowlers more than any other was his wonderful pull. Anything on the short side, no matter of what pace, was despatched like lightning to the leg fence. In making this stroke Ponsford would step quickly across in front of the ball with his right foot and whack it around, bringing nearly every muscle in his body into play as he met the leather sphere with the middle of his bat.

A phenomenal scorer even when his methods were not the best, Ponsford now has a sound style which makes him a better batsman than ever before. His first wicket partnership with W. M. Woodfull realised 375, a record for Sheffield Shield matches. Taking only 285 minutes to reach 300, he eclipsed Warwick Armstrong's record for the highest score by a Victorian in Shield games (250), and W. L. Murdoch's 321—the record individual score for matches between Victoria and New South Wales.



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That wonderful run-getter, Woodfull, gave him valuable support, contributing a solid 133. It was a pronounced case of artist and artisan. Whereas Ponsford hits 50 per cent harder than when he left for England, Woodfull has not advanced much, and the contrast provided by his rather stiff movements and Ponsford's freedom and better timing was striking. Woodfull should have been run out easily before he made 10—a disastrous mistake for New South Wales.

Joining Ponsford after the tea adjournment, Hunter Hendry (Pictured, Below) played the correct game for his side by going for everything that could be hit. He was dropped behind the wickets when six, but the pair added 198 in 97 minutes, bringing up 573 for one day's play—an unprecedented scoring feat in Australia. Ponsford had hit thirty-six 4's in his 334, Woodfull five out of 133, and Hendry seven in 86.

In anticipation of seeing Ponsford get the additional 32 runs necessary to pass Clem Hill's record score for Shield cricket (365 not out), a big crowd attended next day. But it was not to be. I shall never forget the regretful 'Oh'—more like a sigh than an exclamation—which came simultaneously from thousands of throats when he hit outside an off ball and deflected it into his wicket.

Ponsford had added 18 to his overnight score, and his partnership with Hendry created a second-wicket record for Victoria against New South Wales. Ponsford had made 214 against South Australia a fortnight earlier, and his feat in making two scores of more than 200 in one Australian season is the first on record. The lion's share of the credit for the gigantic total which was reached later is Ponsford's. He not only laid the foundation for the later batsmen to build on by making 352 runs, but made the task of building it up easy by pulverising the bowlers with his aggression. What a pity that illness prevented England from seeing him at his best in 1926!

After Hendry had reached 100 in 113 minutes he tried to drive Mailey, but did not get far enough out to kill the break and nicked it to first slip. Hendry's innings was exactly the sort of batting required for the situation. To New South Wales's sorrow, his dismissal did not mean the end of the hitting, for Jack Ryder (Pictured, Opposite, Right) soon became set, and broke the badly-bent back of the bowling. With Hartkopf's aid, he augmented the total by 177 for the sixth wicket at the rate of two runs a minute. They raised 724—better than any previous score by Victoria in Shield



matches—and 800 was signalled after the innings had been in progress for 479 minutes. New South Wales's tally of 815, the highest of a series of gigantic scores by that State against Victoria, was the next mile-post passed.

Ryder's batting was of the hurricane type. He was so well set that he seemed to be able to do anything with the ball. When a big, powerful man who is in form goes for nearly every ball it is not long before the scorers' pencils need re-sharpening. Crude, no doubt; no innings made by two strokes could be otherwise. But those two strokes—mighty drives and pulls—gave the numerous outfields no respite.

Such a display of pure and simple hitting had never been seen on the ground before. If the tired bowlers pitched the ball up Ryder, with his long-handle grip, would move out from his crease and send it crashing to the fence with an irresistible drive between the fields-men. Short balls, even if well over to the off, were mown around to the leg boundary at a pace which gave the outfields no hope of stopping them.

When 918, the highest score ever made in Sheffield Shield cricket (By New South Wales against South Australia in 1901), went by, Ryder was on the 200 mark. He had passed the 100 in 115 minutes and the 150 in 147 minutes. By 4's and 6's his tally increased to 250 in 223 minutes, and the 1,000 for the side was posted, amid cheers, in 574 minutes.

Overworked Mailey, off whom more than 300 runs had been hit, came on again, and Ryder promptly smacked him into the pavilion for his fourth 6. At 1,043 he was out to a mis-hit to mid-on, after having taken only 245 minutes to make 295, in which six 6's and thirty-three 4's were included.

Excited by the sensational hitting, the crowd cheered every stroke as the last pair, Jack Ellis and Don Blackie, strove to carry the score past the first-class record of 1,059. None of the bowlers made any serious attempt to block Ellis's only good stroke—a cut behind point—and, when he made this shot for 3 off Andrews, and Victoria's total was 1,061, a roar of almost frantic cheering went up. Ellis and Blackie were not separated until 1,107 runs were on the board, ten hours and a half after the innings commenced. It was fast scoring, indeed, to make this colossal total in two days' play.



In the face of such terrific battering the New South Wales players stuck to their task so gamely that the crowd cheered them again and again. Even after the 1,000 had been signalled the fieldsmen were running in to meet the ball and racing round the fence with the same dash and keenness as during the first hour of the innings.

Peerless Andrews was an insuperable barrier at cover-point to the hardest hits from first to last, and greater certainty in gathering in the ball on the fence than that shown by Hogg has never been seen here. The other men were all practically faultless, except for the returns to the wicket, which were sometimes two or three yards from the stumps.

Wicket-keeper Ratcliffe was so agile, however, that no runs were given away by overthrows. He was never still for a moment, dashing from the stumps to meet inaccurate returns on the full, and springing into the air for those thrown too high. Ratcliffe is as good as fine-leg, silly point, and close mid-on. He darts after the ball like a flash, and frequently sprints almost to the fence when no other fieldsman is near.

Mailey had too much work, plenty of pluck, and little luck. Called on to bowl 512 balls because of the innocuous character of the rest of the attack, he stuck to his guns with remarkable tenacity, and never ceased spinning them and keeping them well up until the end. With an ounce more good fortune his bag would have been six wickets for a great deal less than the 362 which were hit off him. His worst stroke of misfortune was when Ryder was 135. Mailey completely deceived him with his flight, and trapped him yards out of his crease to a ball which pitched fairly short and broke past the bat. Ryder was a mile out (cricket distance), but the ball popped out of Ratcliffe's gloves, and the batsman scrambled back and continued to give the bowlers a torrid time while he added another 160.

Mailey bowled against the wind throughout, and at times it was a stiff breeze. I am still wondering why, in such a big score, he did not have a turn with the wind, so that the hitters would have to contend with it. Apparently he thought it more advantageous to have the aid it gave him in flighting the ball. His tactics against firm-footed Hartkopf were not quite what one expected from him. With a packed off-field, he bowled on the off peg with his leg break taking the ball away. Hartkopf was quite at home against this mode of

BATSMEN OUT. FALL OF WKTS. BATSMEN. RUNS.							
WOODFULL	C	7	133	1	FOR	37	5
HENDRY	C	3	100	2	"	59	4
PONSFORD	B	6	352	3	"	61	4
LOVE	S	3	6	4	"	63	1
KING	S	3	7	5	"	65	7
HARTKOPF	C	3	61	6	"	83	4
LIDDICUT	B	2	36	7	"	91	5
RYDER	C	7	295	8	"	104	3
MORTON	R	0	0	9	"	104	6
				10	"		

attack, but when a leg break pitched on the leg stump occasionally, he was far from comfortable.

A true sportsman, Mailey took his buffeting good-humouredly. 'It was rather a pity Ellis got run out at 1,107, because I was just striking a length,' he said, drily, after the

match in which he must have been exceedingly weary. 'Very few chances were given,' he added, 'but I think a chap in a tweed coat dropped Jack Ryder near the shilling stand.'

New South Wales's second attempt with the bat was no more successful than their first. Andrews tried to turn the second ball he received — a straight one — to the on, and missed. Kippax, who usually stultifies slow bowling by using his feet, made the elementary mistake of scraping forward at a good-length leg-break and missing the turn.

The only bright patch in the innings was when Andy Ratcliffe and Jackson were together. Ratcliffe is a left-hander with good footwork, and he drove crisply

before making a mis-hit. The visitors only crumb of comfort was that eighteen-year-old Archie Jackson (Pictured, Below, Centre) confirmed the good impression he had made in Sydney. He showed that all the qualities necessary to make a first-class batsman are his.

'Glad I was there when they made it, but I hope I never see it again.' Mingling with the crowd as it streamed from the ground, one heard this remark on every side. While delighted with their State's achievement in establishing such a colossal record, and highly pleased that all the huge scores run up against Victoria by New

South Wales had been surpassed, the spectators could not fail to realise that the fewer such prodigious totals there are the better it will be for the game.

In this country, where there is no time-limit whatever, it would be tragic if cricket should degenerate into a struggle to break records instead of remaining the most delightful of all games.

Melbourne, Dec 24 - 29 1926 (25 & 26, rest days)  
Sheffield Shield.

New South Wales 221 (Phillips, 52. Andrews, 42. Hogg, 40. Liddicutt 4-50) and 230 (Jackson, 59\*. Ratcliffe, 44. Hartkopf, 6-98. Liddicutt, 4-66.)  
Victoria 1107 (Ponsford, 352. Ryder, 295. Woodfull, 133. Hendry, 100. Ellis, 63. Hartkopf, 61. Mailey 4-362).

Victoria won by an innings and 656 runs.



## New Zealand's First Test Series

**I**n 1927, 63 years after an English team first played in New Zealand, the New Zealanders were invited to tour England. For various reasons, not the least of which was the fact that it had always taken second place to rugby in the national consciousness. New Zealand cricket had developed much more slowly than the game in England, Australia and South Africa, and the NZCC decided that the tour should be primarily an educational one. They therefore instructed the selectors to pick players with at least 10 years cricket ahead of them, which meant, of course, that they had an inexperienced squad. They hoped, they said, to put up something of a show against the less strong counties.

Perhaps their modest approach was a cunning scheme to lull the opposition. In the event, of 26 first-class games played seven were won (admittedly only one against a strong county, Derbyshire, but it was a real thrashing) and only five were lost, while persistent bad weather accounted for a string of draws. Their most significant game of all, though, had been their opening first-class one, against MCC at Lord's. Pitched straight in at the deep end, their batsmen had done them proud; 1,502 runs had been scored in the match to set a record for a three-day game in England, and the New Zealanders had come out of it with a very honourable draw. Perhaps the bowling and fielding were not up to the standard of the batting but it was clear that they were more or less ready for Test cricket, and that admitting them to the exalted ranks was the best way of ensuring their development.

In one respect they were lucky indeed — exactly the right man was available to lead them. Tom Lowry, the brother-in-law of the current England captain, Percy Chapman, was a powerful attacking batsman with a shrewd cricketing brain who was much liked and respected by his men for his firmness and steadiness, and who had the priceless ability to get the best out of them with his positive approach to the game. For Robertson-Glasgow he was 'strong, versatile, courageous, original, and a leader in a thousand. His comments on the run of play, had they reached the spectators, would alone have justified the Entertainment Tax... He was a man first and a cricketer second, but it was a close finish'. Strange as it may seem now he believed that the game should be about such things as enjoyment, sportsmanship, friendliness, entertainment and so on, and his teams left an excellent impression on the British press and public as a result. What can we do now except sigh for such lost innocence? Had they had a lesser captain on the 1927 tour, though, New Zealand's entry to the Test arena may well have been delayed for a number of years?

The winter of 1929-30 saw two England teams on tour for only the second time (the first was in 1891-2), and if the team that went to New Zealand was not as

When England lost the Test series (of two matches!!) To New Zealand I was contacted by a customer from Auckland who kindly sent me this article. It was written in 1980 by Gerry Cotter, but I am afraid I do not know where it was published. I hope you like it and thank you to Bob Morris for recommending it.

strong as that to West Indies it still contained the likes of Woolley and Duleepsinhji. It was captained by Harold Gilligan, the Sussex all-rounder whose only Tests came in this series; his playing ability may have been relatively modest, but he was a good, sound leader and the tour was happy and successful, with nine wins and eight draws in New Zealand. Before reaching there they had had five games against Australian State teams which the Australians agreed to stage to help meet MCC's costs, and against this sterner opposition two matches had been won and two lost. The weather had been wet enough to earn them the title of drought-breakers, and it didn't improve in New Zealand.

On January 10, 1930, at Lancaster Park, Christchurch, New Zealand formally became a Test-playing country. Lowry won the toss and Dempster and Foley walked proudly out to open the innings. By the end of the first over Foley was back in the pavilion with just two to his name. Before long they were 15-3, all three wickets falling to Morris Nichols, one of six Englishmen making their debuts. And then his partner and fellow-debutant, Maurice Allom (Pictured, Below), produced one of cricket's more remarkable overs: from the first ball Blunt was almost lbw but got a leg bye; the second ball bowled Dempster; Lowry played and missed at the third and was lbw to the fourth; James was caught behind off the fifth and Badcock was bowled off the sixth. True, the pitch was fast, there was a strong wind and Allom was swerving the ball — but 21-7! He was to play in only five Tests and take only 14 wickets, but that over gained Maurice Allom immortality; in well over a thousand Tests only one other bowler, Chris Old against Pakistan in 1978, has taken four wickets in five deliveries, and as the third of those deliveries was a no-ball he missed the hat-trick.

From these depths some honour was saved, principally by Roger Blunt, the all-rounder who in 1928 had become the first New Zealander to be one of Wisden's five cricketers of the era. Helped by Dickinson and Merritt his 45 not out saw his team to 112, and perhaps hope flickered when England fell to 20-2, Matthew Henderson taking a wicket with his first ball. Duleep, Woolley and Legge put together some runs, though, and at the close on the first day England were strolling along at 147-4. The





Second day, Saturday, was lost to the weather. Monday morning saw a curious time for Lowry; fine captaincy had wickets tumbling and England were all out for 181, with Blunt on a hat-trick at one point, but he was barracked by the crowd for wearing his club cap rather than the national one. Given the historic nature of the match it does seem an odd thing to have done.

In the second innings only Dempster (Pictured, below), Page and Lowry gave any account of themselves. Three wickets were down before the deficit was erased, and although Lowry top-scored with 40 his team could total no more than 131, Allom



finishing with match figures of 8-55. As these were three-day games England were left with 105 minutes to make 63, and an eight-wicket victory was accomplished in an hour under

two days. After the batting success at Lord's in 1927 it was a sad story for New Zealand.

The second Test at Wellington came close to being a very different story. Jack Mills had had to withdraw from the First Test but now he opened with Dempster, and on a lively pitch it wasn't long before Dempster got a leg-bye for a ball that came off his head. They stuck it out, though, and had made 113 by lunch. By tea it was 227 and both had their centuries; to Dempster fell the honour of the first century for New Zealand and to Mills that of the first century on debut. They put on 276 before they were parted, 136 to Dempster and 117 to Mills, 67 from Page and 36 from Blunt helped the total to 440, with Woolley recording his best Test figures of 7-76. Allom and Turnbull, in their Book of the Two Maurices which describes the tour, suggest that one of the few tactical mistakes Gilligan made was not to put Woolley on earlier.

When England fell to 149-5 the New Zealand adrenalin must have been racing. Too much, perhaps, for catches began to go down. Mills made his second crucial contribution when he dropped a straightforward one off Nichols, and the 78 not out that he went on to make helped England avoid the follow-on, finishing with 320 on the third morning. In the second innings Dempster, almost out first ball, had made an undefeated 80 when Lowry declared at 164-4, but with only 110 minutes left and a deficit of 284 there was only one result. Had the catching been better New Zealand could have lost their 'poor relations' tag much earlier than they did; but at least the game did project one player to the front of the world's cricketing stage.

Stewie Dempster is not a name with which many present-day English fans will be familiar. That is a pity, since for a few years around this time he was one of the very finest batsmen in the world. Fairly short and stocky, he was an orthodox, graceful batsman who hit the ball with enormous power and no little style; he loved the off-drive in particular, but hooking, cutting,

glancing all came easily to him. He played just 15 innings in 10 Tests but scored 723 runs at nearly 66, and was by a long way New Zealand's best pre-war batsman. The only criticism was that he was not fully committed to the national cause, in that for much of the 1930s he chose to play league and county cricket in England, which under the New Zealand regulations of the time meant that he was ruling himself out of international selection. His Test career finished against Jardine's team in 1932-33 and left him with the remarkable claim to fame that his innings had delayed the sailing of a passenger liner; he was due to leave on a business trip to England, but since he was so clearly the only class batsman in the side — he had made an unbeaten 83 in his team's first innings of 158 — the captain announced that the boat would not be sailing until midnight on the day the game finished.

The first two days of the Third Test at Auckland were washed out. Gilligan was asked if he would agree to add two days at the end, but said that instructions he had had from MCC forbade this. Just before play began on the third day, however, a message came from England telling him either to agree to an extension or to arrange an extra game, and the latter was decided upon. The Third Test still had to be played, though, and Lowry having won the toss, decided to field so that the crowd could enjoy the English batting. Bowley, Duleep and Woolley duly obliged, the first two scoring high-class centuries, and in three and a half hours England reached 330-4 before Gilligan declared. Even then the fireworks weren't finished as Dempster took over, rattling up 62 not out and hitting the last ball of the match into the crowd.

The additional Test, also at Auckland, produced plenty of runs as Gilligan won the toss. Geoffrey Legge, all 16 stones of him, took advantage of a missed stumping chance at 47 to run up 196, his one Test century. Once again the runs were made quickly, 540 of them coming in 445 minutes, so for the game to be saved two or three of the home team would have to put their heads down. Weir was the first to do so, helped by Dempster and Page, and by the close on the second day they were 171-4. Early on the last morning two wickets fell quickly, but Lowry and McGirr staved off the collapse, the captain making his highest Test score of 80. In the end the New Zealand innings lasted exactly the same time as England's; their 387 was three runs short of the follow-on target, but there was little time left and Gilligan did not enforce it. There was time, though, for England to lose three wickets for 22, including Legge for a duck.

Of the three full matches played, New Zealand's first Test series produced, a comprehensive defeat, an honourable draw and a draw that may well have been a victory had the catching been better. By and large it was to become a pretty familiar pattern for many a long year.



## Nineteen Wickets

**O**n the day before the match, we went to Old Trafford for some practice and to have a look at the wicket.

Don Bradman reported that Australian tour for the Daily Mail, and when I walked over to the middle he was standing there. I took one look at the track and thought that the ball would turn six inches for me on the first day. Not quickly, but it would turn. I asked the Don what he thought of it.

'Just the one we're looking for,' he said. 'A nice, flat, hard wicket.'

The Australians had just been beaten by an innings at Headingley on a soft pitch in the Third Test and I had got a few of them out, and they had not liked the pitch at all. I did not say anything until Peter May asked me what I thought.

'Whatever you do, win the toss,' I said.

He did, and we made 459. We should never have got so many, but the Australians did not know how to bowl on a wicket like that. Ian Johnson never bowled well in this country. He hadn't the variety. He had to have a hard wicket. He had the flight and he needed some bounce, but in this country you've got to be able to bowl on green 'uns, puddings, wet ones, crumblers, slow turners, lifters and even, occasionally, a good one!

Colin McDonald (Pictured Batting, Below) and Jim Burke went in and started steadily. Brian Statham and Trevor Bailey bowled nine or ten overs between them and then Tony Lock and I went on. We did not get anywhere at first, so we changed ends. I moved to the Stretford end.



At that stage the wicket was a slow turner. A good county side would have made 250 or

270 on it, or something like that. Then I got Colin McDonald caught at short leg. Well, I'd got a right to get one of them out!

Neil Harvey was in next, and this was the turning point of the whole match, because I bowled him first ball

My first experience of a cricket match came the BBC and coverage of the John Player Sunday League and one of the first commentators I came across was Jim Laker (Pictured, centre). He was calm, knowledgeable, assured and like the majority of his contemporaries spoke only when words would add to the pictures being broadcast.

I recently found this article, in which he was interviewed by John Reason in May 1966 about his 19-wicket haul in the 4th Test of the 1956 series against Australia at Old Trafford. His humility shone through on TV and even more so in this article.

with the best ball I bowled all season. It pitched on the leg and middle to the left-hander, on a pushing forward length, and it turned enough to beat the edge of the bat and hit the top of the off-stump. If he had been in for 15 minutes he might have stopped it, but it was the first ball and it did him.

That caused panic stations in the Australian dressing-room. I remember looking up at their balcony and I saw people rushing in and putting on pads all over the place.

Well, we all went in and had some tea, and that gave them a bit more time to think about it, and what followed was just about the worst exhibition of batting I have ever seen. It would have been disgraceful for a school side.

They were in such a mess psychologically that they were all out in another half an hour. They made 84.

Lockie got the first. Then Ian Craig played back, which is the wrong way to go about it, and was l.b.w. Keith Miller fell all over the place, Ron Archer gave me the charge and got stumped, 'Slasher' Mackay hadn't a clue, Richie Benaud had a belt, of course, and got caught at long-on, Ian Johnson did not know how to start and Lennie Maddocks had as big a 'gate' as anybody in the business.

I got 9-37, and this, as I say, on a wicket where a good county side should have made at least 250.

The Australians followed on, and McDonald had to go off with a knee injury. So in came Neil Harvey again. He was on a pair, of course, and he had given me some stick down the years, so I thought I would intimidate him! I called Colin Cowdrey up to silly mid-on.

I then bowled him about the worst ball I bowled all year. It was a slow full toss, and Neil could have hit it anywhere in or out of the ground, and he hit it straight at Colin. He was out for a first-ball pair.



At the close of play that day the Australians were 50-odd for one in the second innings. Then the weather changed and it rained for most of Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. I got Burke out in the one short session we had on the Saturday, but although we went out twice on the Monday, we did not get any more wickets.

On the last morning there was nothing in the wicket at all. The rain had deadened it completely. It was a pudding, and McDonald and Craig batted until lunch. Then in the afternoon, and in Manchester of all places, the sun came out and it was quite fierce. Within an hour the wicket started to wake up and we started to bowl them out.

I never thought of breaking any records, or of taking all 10, or anything like that. You never thought of taking all 10 while Tony was trying as hard as he was at the other end. The only thing we had in our minds was to win the match, and with it make sure of keeping the Ashes. Time was our biggest problem. We had so little left, but as the afternoon wore on, that lovely sun bit deeper and deeper.

Ian Craig had been playing well, but when I got him out (again playing back, and again l.b.w.), Miller, Mackay, and Archer went in no time. Keith had a lunge and was bowled and the other two were caught close in. McDonald and Benaud lasted until tea. We still had four wickets to get to win the match.

By then the pitch was really spiteful and I got McDonald out with the second ball after tea. It turned and jumped and he hit it to Alan Oakman at short leg. That was the fifth catch that Alan took off me—more, even, than Lockie— and it was virtually the end.

I still had no idea of taking all 10, although when I got Ray Lindwall out, Frank Lee, who was umpiring at my end, turned to me and said, 'I think that's a record, isn't it?'

I was not sure. We still had two more to get out. Then I bowled Richie Benaud and finally Frank Lee said, 'Out' when I asked for an l.b.w. against Lennie Maddocks. I had taken 10-53 and 19-90 in the match. It is all written down on a silver salver which was presented to me by M. C. C. As we walked off the field, Trevor Bailey said, 'It's incredible, incredible. Nineteen wickets in a Test match! We shall never see anything like it again.'

I was naturally very happy, but I think I walked off just as I would have done if I had taken 0 for 100. I tried to, anyway.

The impact did not really hit me for a couple of days, but, looking back, I still think that the remarkable thing was not that I got 19 wickets but that Tony (Lock, Left and Laker, walking out together at Old



#### *Some rather interesting Obituaries...*

**ALLWORK, MATTHEW JULIAN** was killed in a helicopter crash in Dubai on March 26, 2003, aged 39, while filming a horse race. Allwork was an innovative cameraman credited with the invention of the stump-cam.

**KUBUNAVANUA, PETERO**, who died on November 20, 1997, became a first-class cricketer retrospectively when the Fijian tour of New Zealand in 1947-48 was given first-class status more than 30 years later. He was a dashing left-handed bat and spectacular outfielder whose saves and spear-like throwing, barefoot and with his suit, (knee-length skirt) flying, delighted the crowds.

His fielding action was depicted on a postage stamp to mark the centenary of cricket in Fiji. Kubunavanua had a fine solo voice and performed in concert halls on the tour; he made an impressive sight as well, with a ferocious countenance under a bush of hair. After fighting the Japanese in the Solomon Islands, he served in Malaya. Fielding at square leg in a state match there, he was irritated by a swallow flying round him, stuck out his hand, and put the bird in his sulu pocket.

**MILLIGAN, Lieut. FRANK W**, (Yorkshire). Born at Aldershot, March .9,1870, died whilst with Colonel Plummers force endeavouring to relieve Mafeking), March 31,1900. An excellent all-round player, a splendid field, fast bowler, and hard hitter. Represented the Gentlemen v. the Players in 1897 and 1898. He made a successful first appearance for the Gentlemen - at The Oval in 1897 - scoring 47 and 47, and obtaining two wickets for three runs in the second innings of the Players. In the Scarborough match in 1898, he took in the second innings seven wickets for 61 runs.

**TUCKER, WILLIAM ELDON**, CVO, MBE, TD, FRCS, who died at his home in Bermuda on August 4, 1991, aged 87, was a distinguished orthopaedic surgeon, who chose to specialise in sporting injuries. The cricket-loving public and especially admirers of Denis Compton may not have realised that the extension of his career beyond 1949 until 1957 was entirely due to Tucker, who performed a series of operations on the most celebrated knee in the land. Tucker himself was a sportsman, who played rugby for England, winning three caps.

## A Page in the Life of a Professional Cricketer

**T**hose who simply watch cricket professionals in action seldom know anything of the drama or routine of their lives. Often they care less, for the modern outlook towards cricketers is lapsing dangerously near to the point where they are regarded as mere puppets, due to 'do their stuff' and subject to scathing criticism if they fall short of so many runs (or so many balls) a minute. Too much stress is laid on their gladiatorial qualities. The human element in their make-up is too often totally disregarded.

Between June 26 and July 17, 1946, Cyril Washbrook (Pictured, centre), of Lancashire, had a truly remarkable three weeks. Those who merely dip into, or even dredge thoroughly, the cricket columns of the morning papers were very aware of this. In seven matches his figures were:

Innings: 12. Runs, 1021. Not outs, 5.  
Average: 146.

During that time he was only once dismissed for under 50. Then he got himself out with his score at 48! He scored centuries in 4 matches, and he made over 100 runs in every one of the 7 games in which he played. He was, at least during this period of prolific infallibility, unquestionably the best batsman in England.

But examination in greater detail is needed in order to understand the real magnitude of Washbrook's performance. He did not only score a great number of runs with invariable ease, charm and distinction. There is an underlying drama to the story of these three weeks about which the great mass of the cricket public know nothing whatever. These are the simple facts:

Against Notts at Old Trafford Washbrook made 137 not out and 51 not out—a wonderful 'double' in cold, damp weather and on a wicket which the Notts batsmen (on paper a formidable combination) found so heavy that they could only muster 120-odd runs in their second innings. Washbrook, it may be added, was on the field while every ball of this match was bowled. This was a first severe test on his constitution.

From Old Trafford Washbrook went to Liverpool, where Lancashire met India on June 29. Washbrook, it must be remarked at this point, lives at Timperley, a town-village about seven miles out of Manchester, on the Cheshire side. To get to Liverpool he had to travel by electric train to the middle of Manchester, change trains there and complete a tiresome and crowded journey which lasted nearer three hours than two. Five and a half hours' train-travel a day is not calculated to relax a man's muscles or sharpen his eyesight.

I came across a wonderful book recently, *Lancashire Hot-Pot* by The Hon. T. C. F. Prittie who is described on the front cover as 'Formerly Cricket Correspondent of the Manchester Guardian.' I must admit to being fascinated by this book and I will be reproducing articles from it in future *Wisdeners*.

It is subtitled 'Accounts of important matches and pen portraits of players. I hope the essay reproduced here is of interest and whilst comparisons between eras can never be true, this does shed light on the workload and the level of expectation on cricketers long gone.

Terence Cornelius Farmer Prittie (1913 - 1985) was a journalist and author, and son of the 5th Baron Dunally. He wrote several cricket books including *Mainly Middlesex*, written when he was a prisoner-of-war in Germany.



Moreover, at Liverpool Washbrook had an additional responsibility, for he deputised for J. A. Fallows, the regular Lancashire captain, who was suffering from a chronic thumb-injury which impaired his batting during the whole season. This was the first time that Washbrook captained his county side—never an easy task for a professional—and it could not be said that his willing colleagues backed him up very efficiently. In the first innings he made 48 out of a total of around 150; in the second, 58 out of just 200. Save for Ikin in the second innings, he had very little support.

Now began his real Odyssey. With the rest of the Lancashire team he left Liverpool at four o'clock on the afternoon of July 2 shortly after finishing fielding out in the Indians' second innings beneath a particularly blistering sun and in damp, breath-smothering heat. They travelled by motor-coach and confidently expected to arrive at Colchester, their destination almost in the farthest corner of England, by eleven o'clock that night. Even then they were none of them likely to suffer from sleeplessness—least of all Washbrook.

But here the driver of the motor-coach took a hand. He managed at once to lose his way—in his native Lancashire! And what was now a most unhappy and apprehensive band of pilgrims found themselves being rudely rocked and jolted round Warrington and Runcorn and other more irritatingly nameless places on the seaward reaches of the Ship Canal.

The coach made fair progress through the Midlands, but its driver faltered at Huntingdon and played ring-a-roses round Cambridge. The party arrived stiff in every joint—for nothing jars bones, cramps muscles and utterly ruins the backside like a motor-coach—at 3.30 a.m., just as a grey dawn was creeping over the



mudflats of the Essex coast. They were uncomfortably, as it happened, in bed by half past four, and by eleven o'clock on the same morning they were out on the ground. Needless to say, they lost the toss and had to field!

Again Washbrook led the side, and excellently too. Essex were cheaply dismissed on a wicket which was expected to give equal trouble to the Lancashire batsmen, but Washbrook if tired was quite undaunted. Place gave him gallant support, and the pair put on 238 and batted almost until time. Place made 122, Washbrook 128 not out. It is not in his nature to give up his wicket even at this sort of stage of a game.

Rain interfered with the match, and there was a desperate rush to finish off the Essex second innings on July 5. It must have been a wearing day for Washbrook, for one false move in his management of the bowling must have cost Lancashire the match and vital championship points. As it was, the game was won and the players were back in their motor-coach and on their way to Manchester at half past three in the afternoon.

They arrived, with only minor hitches this time, at one in the morning. Washbrook, of course, had to get to Timperley, and he must have slept heavily and dreamlessly into those unsatisfactory hours when the sun has already risen. But he was up in good time on the morning of July 6 to catch his train to Old Trafford, and there he went in first and took 108 off the Indian bowling. He was severely hit on the ribs—about the only damage the Indian fast bowlers did during the whole tour—but it was a high-scoring game and he had every reason to hope that he would not be required to bat in his side's second innings.

Lancashire made just over 400; the Indians, thanks to a great innings by Merchant, gained a lead of 40 and declared. On the last day the Lancashire order was changed and Washbrook held himself back. Place began with the utmost confidence. Then, sure enough, the batting began to crack. 5 men were out for just over 100. There were two hours left for play and Washbrook had to go in after all.

He played a most untypical but, in the circumstances, quite invaluable innings. In an hour and twenty minutes he made 27 not out, and he held the quivering tail together just long enough to foil the Indians' match-winning effort. The Lancashire score limped to 172, and there was not enough time left for the Indians to attempt the task of scoring the 130 runs needed for victory. Without Washbrook's pain-filled second innings, Lancashire would certainly have lost the match.

Washbrook left Manchester at five o'clock that evening on his way to the second Test Trial at

Canterbury. He and his companions, Pollard and Ikin, had to break the journey in London, where they were in bed by the early hour of midnight, but they were up at six in the morning after a very short night's sleep, caught the 7.18 train and arrived at 9.30 a.m. in Canterbury—without any breakfast. They managed to get something to eat at the ground, and at eleven o'clock Washbrook, inevitably, went in to bat against two fast bowlers who were playing for a place in the England side and were all out for blood.

He made 120 and he did not hurry himself. It is indeed doubtful whether he could have hurried himself. His ribs were still painful, he was stiff and sore from everlasting train-travel, and he was so tired that a moment's relaxation of his unwavering concentration might have left him curled up on the ground asleep.

Of his partners only Hardstaff gave him any help at all, but Washbrook was criticised by various sections of the Press for his lack of brightness. As well criticise a general who has had no time to go to bed for not giving a cheery 'good morning!' to all and sundry!

The Test Trial at Canterbury was arranged on the spur of the moment so, almost inevitably, there were no beds to be had in the badly blitzed town. Washbrook stayed at Folkestone, fifteen miles away, and this entailed more bus and train journeys when every muscle in his body must have been crying out for rest.

England were all out early in the morning, and during the short Rest innings Washbrook fielded as brilliantly as ever in his life. Then, at tea-time, he had to go in again, and this time not a single man on his side gave him any support whatever. Hutton was injured, Hardstaff was out hitting indiscriminately at every ball, Compton was 'lent' to the other side.

Washbrook made 81 not out, of a total of 136 for 7 wickets. Rarely in cricket history has a side owed more to one man, but one daily paper called him 'unrepentant' and others remarked that he 'only' scored at the rate of 30 runs an hour. That his fresher, fitter, less responsibility-weighted partners 'only' scored at the rate of 19.5 runs an hour apparently called for no comment on their lack of initiative and success.

Washbrook was soon out on the last morning of the match, but only to a brilliant catch by Compton at cover-point off what looked like a certain boundary. He must almost have breathed a sigh of relief at the thought of resting his head and his legs in the pavilion. But he fielded up to five o'clock in baking summer weather, while Robertson and Compton made a great effort to snatch victory for the weaker side, and at 5.30 p.m. he was already on his way back to Manchester.



He arrived at two o'clock in the morning, too late to catch a train out to Timperley. He had to search for a taxi, was lucky enough to find one (unlike London, Manchester is a veritable city of the dead at two o'clock in the morning) and actually got to bed shortly after four o'clock. At eleven, of course, he was on the field at Old Trafford, and at four in the evening he went in to bat and made 68, top score, on the bumpiest pitch of the year against the inaccurate but dangerous attack of three fast bowlers, Copson, Gladwin and Rhodes.

Such were the dangers of the wicket that some critics considered this to be his best innings so far during the season. Even if this were true he went one better in the second innings when he made an absolutely flawless 82 not out, and carried his side (which he still had the responsibility of captaining) to a 9-wickets victory.

Then once more he was off to London in the evening, and next morning he hit up a gay and commanding century for the Players against the Gentlemen at Lord's, making run for run in a long first-wicket stand with the fast-scoring Fishlock, and setting the seal on what may remain the most wonderful three weeks of his career.

To drive the truth of this statement home his scores shall be set out in full:

- v. Nottinghamshire at Old Trafford, 137 not out and 51 not out;
- v. India at Liverpool, 48 and 58;
- v. Essex at Colchester, 128 not out;
- v. India at Manchester, 108 and 27 not out;

- v. The Rest of England at Canterbury, 120 and 89;
- v. Derbyshire at Manchester, 68 and 82 not out;
- v. The Gentlemen at Lord's, 105.

For these runs he travelled roughly 1500 miles at an average rate of, say, 20 miles per hour. Each run took him 1.5 miles on road and rail. He spent at least 75 hours sitting in the crowded and uncomfortable conveyances which our apt civilisation has evolved. He must have suffered millions of jars, jolts and muscular twinges.

He should have had a couple of dozen severe headaches. The state of his digestion does not bear thinking of, at least not for those who have suffered the full horrors of present-day restaurant-car meals. He could have contracted half a dozen colds from the ten to twelve hours waiting for the forty-odd trains which he boarded.

Tough, wiry, hard-bitten physically, resolute and enduring in character, Washbrook, I believe, is the only man in England who could have put up so astonishing a record. He achieved it without a groan or even a minor grunt. His is an uncomplaining, unswerving character. That is why—all technical skill apart—he is going to open England's innings for many years to come.

T. C. F. Prittie, 1946.

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# The Tea Interval

A batsman was playing in a very important match when he saw a funeral passing the cricket ground and he held up his hand to stop the bowler from bowling. Then he removed his cap and stood at the wicket with his head bowed in silence until the funeral cars had passed. Afterwards he replaced his cap and continued batting, hitting the next ball for six, clean out of the ground. At the end of the over the wicket-keeper said to him, "That was a very kind gesture of yours, paying such respect to the funeral procession." "Well," said the batsman, "it's the least I could do, I was married to her for 30 years."

'My Husband and I divorced over religious differences. He thought he was God and I didn't agree.'

For those who don't want Alexa listening in on your conversations, they're making a male version...it doesn't listen to anything.

There are many stories about Yorkshire, Somerset and England player Brian Close's total belief in his own infallibility and one of the most quintessential was recalled by Peter Roebuck when Close was captain of Somerset. Roebuck, right at the start of his career was batting pretty well, unlike the veteran Close at the other end, who could barely lay bat on ball. At the end of an over Close wandered down the pitch for a chat and Roebuck fondly imagined that he might just be in for a word of encouragement, if not praise. 'I don't know lad,' sighed Close. 'Don't understand it. It's bloody unplayable at my end, but they're bowling complete rubbish to you.'

'Getting Past Irish Immigration' - Click on this [link](#) and ignore the advertisement at the beginning.

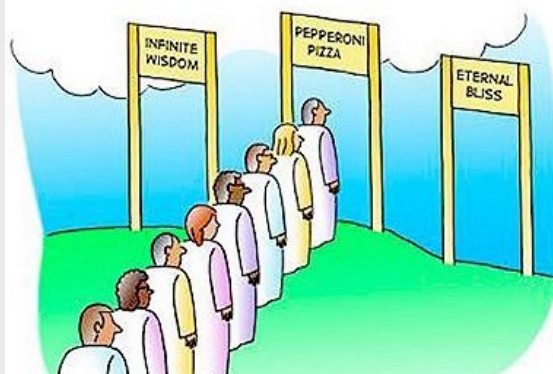
Some 'Blonde Man' Jokes...

A blonde man is in the bathroom and his wife shouts "Did you find the shampoo?" He answers — "Yes, but I'm not sure what to do...it's for dry hair and I just wet mine."



"I hope this is the right wine for reading and ignoring each other."

A blonde man spots a letter on his doormat. It says on the envelope "Do Not Bend". He spends the next two hours trying to figure out how to pick it up.



A blonde man shouts frantically into the telephone, "My wife is pregnant and her contractions are only 2 minutes apart!" "Is that her first child," asks the doctor. "NO!" he shouts, "it's her husband."

Teacher - "What is the best thing about Switzerland?"

Pupil - "I don't know, but the flag is a big plus."

Did you hear about the mathematician who is afraid of negative numbers?

He will stop at nothing to avoid them.

Helvetica, Times New Roman and Calibri walk into a bar.

"Get out of here!" Shouts the bartender, "We don't serve your type."

A bear walks into a bar and says, "Give me a whiskey and.....Coke."

"Why the big pause?" Asks the bartender.

The bear shrugs and answers, "I'm not sure: I was born with them."

Why did the chicken go to the seance?

To get to the other side.

What do you call a parade of rabbits hopping backwards?

A receding hairline.

David Steele was brought into the England team in 1975 by new captain Tony Greig. When opener Barry Wood was out LBW to Dennis Lillee, the grey-haired right-hander from Northamptonshire arrived at the crease to hear Lillee being ribbed for not telling anyone that his dad was playing in the match. Steele ignored everything, looked straight past the Aussie wicket-keeper Rodney Marsh and muttered, "Take a good look at this arse of mine: you'll see plenty of it this summer." Test innings of 50,45,73, 92, 39 and 66, and then a century for Northants against the Aussies proved him right.

In his first season of opening regularly for Lancashire, Graeme Fowler was batting with Clive Lloyd. Lloyd called Fowler down mid-over, Fowler, surprised asked 'What?'. Lloyd looked down at the fresh-faced young man and said 'My piles are killing me!' And he turned and walked back to the non-strikers end.

Fowler asked Lloyd after the close of play, 'What on earth did you do that for?' To which Lloyd replied, 'Well, I thought you were looking a bit tense.'