

This is probably the first edition of the Wisdener that it has been difficult to write a front page for. The pandemic was and continues to be awful and the consequences of it are still being felt not just at home but all over the world and the awful, evil, violent events perpetrated by Russia in Ukraine look like something we have all watched in old news reels from the Second World War - so to talk about cricket and the recent loss of some exceptional former players seems trivial and minor.

Normal life whilst respecting those people under attack in their homes - and whatever your faith, or beliefs, they need our prayers and our support - normal life continues even though we are all worried about what may or may not happen as a result of Putin's invasion.

In the space of a few hours recently former Australian wicket-keeper Rodney Marsh and one of the greatest bowlers of all time, Shane Warne, passed away. Marsh had been ill for some time, but Warne's death was a total shock. In late February we also heard of the death of another great player, Sonny Ramadhin - one of the finest bowlers to come out of the Caribbean.

Words have been penned and interviews given by far more capable people than me on each of those incredible cricketers, but the cricketing community feels a sense of loss. They have been mourned and remembered, their triumphs highlighted. Within this edition I have published words on both Marsh and Warne, which hopefully are of interest. I will endeavour to focus on Ramadhin in the next Wisdener.

The Ashes Epilogue

England left Australia with no tail between the legs, the tail had been surgically removed by the Australian cricket team and then rammed down the throat of everyone involved in the tour and the English game. Quickly the coach went, some other coach went: two bowlers who hadn't really done a lot wrong in Australia (when selected) were ditched and the batsman with the most runs in world cricket in 2021 was moved from batting at 4 (where those runs were scored) to 3, because England don't have a good enough batsman to play at 3....or 1 or 2, for that matter.

So many voices have called for change - arguments about the championship, the lack of talent, the amount of one-day cricket - the same arguments or variations of that people have been using for decades. There is no simple answer but maybe a plan would be nice, maybe some confidence that the people in charge were actually serious about a way forward for

the game. Mike Atherton, speaking on Sky, didn't think the problem was purely



with the county championship structure. Another Sky man, Robert Key seemed to suggest that it was a county championship problem and that England should get players together now to prepare for the next Ashes series and Nasser Hussain - Sky again - thought it was wrong that Anderson and Broad were discarded, with no respect given them. If three leading voices have different opinions then what hope for a structured, meaningful plan for our county game.

We all know we need Twenty20 and The Hundred - I am not saying I like either, but the game needs money. My issue is why give it to counties that have no fan base!

The following counties all recorded average daily attendances of less than 800 in 2019: Derbyshire (just above 500), Durham, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Leicestershire (just above 400), Northamptonshire (around 550) and Worcestershire (around 500). The population in each of these counties, according to 2020 figures was as follows:

Derbyshire, 796,000. Durham (county of), 533,000. Gloucestershire, 640,000. Hampshire, 1.3m. Leicestershire, 698,000. Northants, 750,000. Worcestershire, 592,000.

It is abundantly clear that people in these counties do not give two hoots about county cricket, so let us make those counties Minor Counties who can still compete in the Twenty20 and One-day cups, but not the championship and before anyone mentions about people who cannot attend the games but watch online or listen to local commentaries - in 2020 and 2021 when people could not really attend CC matches, less than 500 a day across all counties watched or listened online.

It is a worrying time and my thoughts and those of my girls are with those suffering in Ukraine and I apologise if talking about cricket seems insensitive and wrong.

Bill

Back in 1990 the great Australian leg- spinner, Bill 'Tiger' O'Reilly, a magnificent servant of the game whose efforts went unrecognised, wrote a column mourning the absence of wrist-spin from his beloved game, an absence he put down to a combination of cautious administrators, dim selectors and the greyness of the age.

Tiger often wrote articles along these lines, for the cause was dear to his heart. He was not a sentimentalist, was merely convinced that any leg-spinner worth his salt would be licking his lips at the prospect of bowling to the flat-footed batsmen around in those days.

Typically he said as much in a booming style that combined Old Testament wrath, Shakespearean allusion and bush Australian. Most of the best cricket writers of the last decade have come from Australia or else India.

Unfortunately Tiger pulled up stumps before he could enjoy the sight of Shane Warne bewildering opponents with his audacious and intimidating deliveries. He did see Warne's first Test appearance as a tubby Victorian and shook his hand sympathetically as the youngster was belted around by Indian batsmen raised on samosas and spin. He wanted the leggie to take wickets both to advance the cause and because he had no time for the battery of fast bowlers fielded in those days.

Tiger liked his cricket full of cut and thrust and did not think that batsmen belonged in a coconut shy.

My O'Reilly always maintained that sooner or later someone would appear to revive his moribund craft. Events proved him right. Most of us could not see his point because we had been raised to believe that pace was the only credible force in this scientific age.

Everything had been reduced to facts and figures. Spin had a part to play only on the Indian subcontinent where the pitches were as cracked as the face of a reluctantly ageing actress. For a long time Tiger was blasting against the breeze. It is easily forgotten how dull cricket had become in those days. Something fresh was needed and then Shane Warne turned up. Now he has hurt his finger in a freak accident and may miss an entire season. Already the working parts of his anatomy have been subjected to surgery. His spinning finger and right shoulder have come under the blade, a setback substantial enough to finish the career of a lesser man. This injury is another blow because it will upset his rhythm, take him further from the game, make the journey back a little longer.

Whatever his faults, Warne has brought the game to life. Every time he peels off his sweater and begins that short, challenging and knowing walk to the crease a wave of expectancy shivers around the ground.

Spectators watch him, trying to predict his next trick, wondering how ridiculously far the ball might turn and find themselves renewed. He challenged the

Peter Roebuck wrote the following article in December 2000. I came across it recently and whilst I am totally unqualified to pen any words on Shane Warne, I did think that the final apt sentence sums up what many cricket lovers are now feeling. The article began with a wonderful former player bemoaning the lack of wrist-spin, but ended optimistically

limitations of the game and still has an aura about him, half gladiator and half cheeky schoolboy.

O'Reilly always insisted that a leg-spinner must attack the batsman's blind spot and Warne did so, drifting to leg and then turning the ball sharply, sometimes prodigiously across the batsman. His deliveries seemed to be controlled by an electronic device and his flipper skidded across the ground like a puck across ice.

Afterwards he would stare, laugh or curse in a manner some thought unsporting - but a spinner cannot bowl bouncers, has nothing except his mouth and his mind. Warne did not want to be subservient. O'Reilly would have liked him.

Nor can Warne's craftiness be missed. He has always known how to work the umpires, conspiratorially involving them in the plot. He is a competitor and not especially scrupulous.

Despite these remarkable skills and his astonishing performances, Warne has never been all that popular in Australia. Partly it has been his own fault as he has tried to scrub up his image. Warne drinks, smokes, punts and follows rugby, all of them with considerable' enthusiasm. It is idle to pretend otherwise. He is a man of extremes who draws extreme reactions. Some say he is a lovable lad, others think him calculating. Of course, he is both.

By restoring an apparently outdated craft, Warne has given the game great service. He has also brought youngsters back to a game whose conservatism has been a block. He wears an earring and seems to think he is still 21. Before the injury he had been bowling well enough to suggest a revival. He had, too, been popular at Hampshire though he had to work hard for his wickets and had been frustrated by the feebleness of his team's batting. Nonetheless, he remained a team man throughout, utterly committed to the cause. Never mind that his personal life has been a little colourful. Leg-spinners have always been the mavericks of the game and sometimes its anarchists. Anyhow he is a cricketer and not a candidate for the cloth.

Englishmen were surprised by the fuss made Down Under about a personal matter mentioned in one newspaper on one day. Alas the Australians suffered from a bout of Puritanism, and its cousin, voyeurism. Warne has been a wonderful bowler and the most influential cricketer to appear in the last 25 years. Perhaps he can recover his full powers; if not he will be missed, even by his detractors. The game will be duller without him.

The Sultan of Spin

Like Kangeroos dazzled by headlights, opposing batsmen around the world have been powerless to stop Shane Warne's record breaking march past Dennis Lillee as Australia's finest performer with the ball.

Until the last World Cup, however, and the events of Edgbaston '99, even Warne himself didn't know if the magic had deserted him. Having forfeited his Test place and been thumped all over Lord's by Zimbabwe's Neil Johnson, he was seriously contemplating bringing his career to an end.

The leg-spinner had hardly spent a day at home since his comeback Test in the New Year of 1999, enduring a succession of controversies from smoking in public to a supposed feud with captain Steve Waugh. He refused to commit himself to an eighth season of international cricket. But three stellar performances changed everything.

Australia's best bowler in the Super Six victory against South Africa, Warne stole the show again in the semi-final, bowling Herschelle Gibbs with a huge leg-break reminiscent of the 'ball of the century' that had castled Mike Gatting at Old Trafford six years earlier. In taking 4 for 29 in 10 overs, he triggered a South African top-order collapse, which led to a tie in perhaps the most exciting one-day finish of them all.

Four more wickets in the World Cup Final revived his fortunes in the Test arena and allowed him to surpass Lillee's all-time Australian record of 355 Test wickets.

His right shoulder and battle-scarred spinning finger now repaired, he has not only been producing his trademark leg-break and flipper with breathtaking control but his googly has returned better than ever. When he started as an overweight 22-year-old, with ear-stud and bleached hair well over his collar, his ambition was to take an important wicket or two. But his horizons have widened. After Lillee, look out Kapil Dev, Courtney Walsh and Co. Here are his 10 favourite Test dismissals:

1: MIKE CATTING (ENGLAND)

b WARNE 4: OLD TRAFFORD, 1993

In his eighth Test and with his first ball against England, Warne produced the Jaffa of his career. It pitched outside Gatting's leg-stump and spun wickedly across him, clipping his off bail.

A thunderstruck Gatting seemed frozen, unable to move. He sought confirmation from the square-leg umpire Ken Palmer that he had in fact been bowled.

2: RICHIE RICHARDSON (WEST INDIES)

b WARNE 52: MELBOURNE, 1992/93

Until this memorable Christmas, Warne's career average of 75-plus was damning. Walking down from

On March 15, 2000 Shane Warne took the wicket of New Zealand's Paul Wiseman (photograph, below) and thus became the leading Australian Test wicket-taker and at the time author Ken Piesse revealed the 'Sultan of Spin's' most treasured scalps - no prize for guessing which came out as Number 1.

the team hotel with wicket-keeper Ian Healy, he confessed his confidence was at an all-time low and if he was hit all over the park again, he would probably never again play for his country. Healy's pep-talk, and the flipper which bowled the West Indian captain minutes before lunch, changed everything. It swung the match in *Boys' Own* fashion, provided the only Test win that summer, and eased Warne's doubts. No leg-spinner since Bill O'Reilly had been as successful in a Melbourne Test. 'I'll wake up soon,' said Warne that day.

3: SHIVNARINE CHANDERPAUL (WEST INDIES)

b WARNE 71: SYDNEY 1996/97

Finger surgery in the off-season had left Warne hesitant and highly protective, even resorting to shaking hands with his left hand. Chanderpaul was playing one of the great cameo knocks of the '90s, scoring at a furious rate, and Australia desperately needed a wicket as Warne began his last over before lunch. With his last ball, Warne decided to give it the biggest possible 'rip'. From round the wicket, the ball pitched almost on the return crease and darted back from the footmarks to hit the leg stump. 'It's one of the best and most satisfying balls I've ever bowled,' said Warne.

4: HERSCHELLE GIBBS (SOUTH AFRICA)

b WARNE 30: EDGBASTON 1999

One of his coach Terry Jenner's all-time favourites, and the ball that turned the World Cup and also revived Warne's career. Chasing only 214, the South Africans were comfortably placed at 48 for 0 before Warne captured three wickets in eight balls without conceding a run. Having made 30 from just 36 balls Gibbs was beaten by a Gatting-type delivery which pitched outside leg and hit off.

A pumped-up Warne's celebration was as emotional as any during his career.

5: GRAHAM GOOCH (ENGLAND)

b WARNE 48: EDGBASTON, 1993

Suggesting to Allan Border that a change of line could upset England's master batsman, Warne produced a spitting leg break which spun from wide outside Gooch's pads to hit leg stump. It effectively ended England's resistance and they plunged to an eight-wicket loss, their fourth during the five Tests of Warne's debut Ashes summer.

6: SAURAV GANGULY (INDIA)**st GILCHRIST b WARNE 60: ADELAIDE 1999/2000**

Bowling with the second new ball for one of the few times in his career, Warne produced a googly which the left-hander read too late as it passed in between bat and pad. Several times earlier he lofted Warne high over cover, refusing to be dictated to. Coach Jenner believes fewer than 20 of Warne's first 350 Test wickets were taken by wrong 'uns.

7: SALIM MALIK (PAKISTAN)**c MCDERMOTT b WARNE 0: BRISBANE, 1995/96**

Relations with Salim were icy during this return series, the Australians refusing to speak to or even acknowledge him - on or off the field - after his involvement in a betting scandal which affected Warne as well as Mark Waugh and Tim May.

Their first encounter since the controversial 1994/95 tour was in Brisbane. He injured his hand early on and did not bat until the second innings. His fourth ball from Warne, a well tossed leg-break, was spooned tamely to Craig McDermott at mid-off.

'It goes to show there is justice in the game,' he said. I've been pretty down. Mum, dad and my wife got me through.

I'd like to dedicate the wicket to them especially.' Australia won by an innings, Warne taking 11 wickets in the match.

8: PAT SYMCOX (SOUTH AFRICA)**b WARNE 7: SYDNEY, 1993/94**

The competitive South African was bowled through his

legs, having just padded the ball away and hollered at Warne, 'You'll never get me there, boy!'

9: DARYLL CULLINAN (SOUTH AFRICA)**b WARNE 9: SYDNEY, 1993/94**

Has any Test batsman boasting an average of 40 plus ever proved as inept against one bowler? Cullinan has been entrenched in the Proteas' top six for years, yet against Warne and Australia he has made a string of low scores. Having hit Warne for two fours in an over on the first day of the Test, he went for another big shot, failed to detect the faster, skidding flipper and was bowled. His send-off, courtesy of Warne, was equally memorable.

10: DEVON MALCOLM (ENGLAND)**ct BOON b WARNE 0:****MELBOURNE, 1994/95**

Warne's only hat-trick in 20 years, including the East Sandringham Boys XI.

As Malcolm ambled to the crease at number 11, the England vice-captain Alec Stewart turned to Warne and said, 'You'll never have a better chance at getting a hat-trick'. After conferring with mid-off fielder Damien Fleming, who suggested Warne should bowl his best ball, his leg break spinning away from the right-hander, Warne delivered a leggie with more over spin than usual. It jumped and caught Malcolm's gloves, David Boon at short leg taking a reflex catch diving full length to his right. With 20 wickets in two Tests, the magic had never been more potent.

Shane Warne	Competition	Test	ODI	First Class	LA
Career Statistics	Matches	145	194	301	311
Victoria	Runs scored	3154	1018	6919	1879
1990-2007	Batting Avg	17.32	13.05	19.43	11.81
Hampshire	100s/50s	0/12	0/1	2/26	0/1
2000-2007	Top Score	99	55	107*	55
Australia	Balls Bowled	40705	10642	74830	16419
1992-2007	Wickets	708	293	1319	473
Rajasthan Royals	Bowling Avg	25.41	25.73	26.11	24.61
2008-2012	5 wkts in inns	37	1	69	3
	10 wkts in inns	10	-	12	-
Melbourne Stars	Best Bowling	8-71	5-33	8-71	6-42
2011-2013	Catches	125	80	264	126

Rodney Marsh

The words “caught Marsh, bowled Lillee” encompassed a world of cricketing pain for batsmen during the 1970s and 80s, as the ferociously fast Australian bowler Dennis Lillee combined with the stockily acrobatic wicketkeeper Rod Marsh to claim more Test match victims – 95 in total – than any other pairing in history.

Marsh, who has died aged 74, was the perfect tough sidekick for Lillee, with whom he shared a scowling, moustachioed Aussie pugnaciousness and a ferocious will to win. While Lillee stood menacingly with the ball at the end of his run, incoming batsmen could expect to be met with a pithy comment or two from Marsh about the future likelihood of their need for emergency dental work or a prolonged spell sampling hospital food.

Even if Lillee failed to deliver on such prophecies, there were good odds on a snick going through to Marsh’s gloves as another statistic was added to the pile.

“I’ve played with Dennis so much that most of the time I know what he’s going to do before he’s bowled,” Marsh once said. The number of their Test victims was matched by a more or less equal total of dismissals for Western Australia, for whom they played in further deadly combination when not on international duty.

During a Test career that ran from 1971 to 1984, Marsh was responsible for more than 350 dismissals – a world record at the time and still the fourth highest tally ever. Although his thickset build was not ideally suited to duties behind the stumps, he was superbly nimble in all facets and at his most impressive when diving full length to retrieve a wayward delivery or take a spectacular catch.

Complementing his athleticism with fierce concentration and a natural belligerence, after a shaky start at international level he was able to make himself into one of the most admired keepers in the history of the game. In addition he was a more than useful left-handed batsman whose stock in trade was the forceful rearguard action lower down the order.

Later on he made a successful transition into coaching and administration, including as head of the Australian [Cricket](#) Academy and, in a surprise move, as a selector for the old enemy, England.

Born in Perth, Western Australia, to Ken, a truck driver,



When a cricketing great passes away there is mourning, the recounting of great matches and great feats and much reflection, when two are lost within hours of each other the feeling is far greater. Rodney Marsh epitomised Australian cricket and even the Australian psyche and he will be remembered fondly and with admiration by cricket fans from every corner of the world.

and Barbara, Marsh went to Kent Street senior high school, captaining the Western Australia schoolboys’ team at 13 and playing for West Perth’s first XI as a specialist batsman at an early age.

He made his first-class debut for Western Australia a year before Lillee in 1968, batting at No 5, and when he was picked for his first Test in Brisbane against England in 1970, again just prior to Lillee, it was as much for his batting as his wicketkeeping.

Marsh had a disconcerting start to his Test career with

the gloves, dropping several chances in his early games and earning himself the derogatory nickname “Iron Gloves” in the press. But his batting was more successful, and in his fourth Test, in Melbourne in 1971, he made 92 not out, only missing out on a century because the skipper,

Bill Lawry, declared the innings closed. Against Pakistan at Adelaide in 1972 he became the first Australian wicketkeeper to hit a century – 118 – and by then, through hard work and application, he had begun to put his keeping mistakes firmly behind him.

As Marsh’s confidence grew, so too did his combativeness, particularly in harness with Lillee but also, from 1972 onwards, with another aggressive fast bowling figure in Jeff Thomson. Any good Test wicketkeeper would have profited from working with such a fine opening bowling partnership, but it would be difficult to imagine anyone other than Marsh serving them with such memorable and feisty impact.

Despite his gladiatorial nature, however, Marsh’s bark was often worse than his bite, and he was capable of great sportsmanship. In the Centenary Test between Australia and England at Melbourne in 1977, with England going well and Derek Randall in imperious form on 161, a ball from Greg Chappell took the edge of Randall’s bat and Marsh tumbled to hold the catch. When the umpire Tom Brooks gave Randall out, the Englishman began to walk back to the pavilion to a

standing ovation, until Marsh stepped in to tell Brooks that he had failed to catch the ball cleanly, bringing the batsman back to continue his innings. It was a heart-warming moment that did much to soften the pantomime villain image he had acquired among many England supporters.

Marsh's last match, against Pakistan in Sydney in January 1984, was also Lillee's swansong, and they walked off the field together (*it was also Greg Chappell's last Test - all three are pictured top right in the SCG dressing room after the match*).

In 96 Tests he had claimed 355 dismissals, including 12 stumpings, and had a batting average of 26.51, with three hundreds. He also played in 92 one-day internationals, where his aggressive batting was especially useful, and was one of the rebel Australian players who spent two years out of the mainstream game playing for Kerry Packer's rival World Series cricket circus between 1977 and 1979. In all first-class cricket he was responsible for 803 dismissals with a batting average of 31.17.

Post-retirement Marsh had a spell as a cricket commentator for Channel Nine (1986-90) before becoming coach and director of the Australian Cricket Academy (1990-2001). There he helped bring through a generation of world-conquering players, including Ricky Ponting, Glenn McGrath and Adam Gilchrist.



In late 2001 he was a surprise appointment to a similar job heading the England and Wales Cricket Board National Academy, the following year also becoming a Test selector and holding both roles until

he left in 2005, having helped England to regain the Ashes.

Later he had a consultancy role with the South Australian Cricket Association and spent time as head coach of the global ICC cricket academy in Dubai before being appointed in 2011 to a newly created post overseeing the entire cricket coaching network in Australia. He served as chairman of the Australia selectors for two years from 2014.

Made MBE in 1981, Marsh was inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame in 1985.

He is survived by his wife, Roslyn, a PE teacher whom he married in 1969, their sons, Dan, Jamie and Paul, and his brother, Graham, the former European Tour golfer.

Rod (Rodney) William Marsh, cricketer, born 4 November 1947; died 4 March 2022

[The Guardian](#)
4th March 2022.

Rodney Marsh

Career details

	Competition	Test	ODI	First-Class	LA
Western Australia 1968 - 1984	Matches	96	92	257	140
	Runs scored	3633	1225	11067	2119
Australia 1970 - 1984	Batting Avge	26.51	20.08	31.17	23.03
	100s	3	-	12	-
	50s	16	4	55	9
	Top Score	132	66	236	99*
	Balls Bowled	72	-	142	23
	Wickets	-	-	1	-
	Bowling Avge	-	-	84	-
	Catches	343	120	803	182
	Stumpings	12	4	66	6

England Rally To A Mann

For years now the modern England team has been stereotyped as little (if no) more than a joke, while critics barely out of their teens are in sharp competition as to whose passion for the halcyon era of the 1940s and '50s is the more heartfelt, or at least can be more shrilly put. If sports writing used to be the realm of loners and iconoclasts, it now adheres to an orthodoxy as rigid as the Kremlin's under Stalin: every 'thought piece' falls in line to tout the golden age of men like Compton, Edrich and Evans.

Yet not for the first time, nostalgia may be warping the cold truth. A closer look at the record shows that in fact the road to post-war recovery was as hard travelled cricket-wise as otherwise. After edging India 1-0 at home in 1946, England were in turn trounced by Australia that winter. The following year, Compton's and Edrich's golden summer and Godfrey's own annus mirabilis, Norman Yardley's side duly beat South Africa to sell-out crowds and in heat such as at times seemed to tire even the tourists.

Yet it, too, proved a false dawn. They went on to lose to West Indies that winter and to surrender not just the Ashes but the sackcloth as well in the home season of 1948. The MCC party that set sail for South Africa that October probably stood third out of six in cricket's unofficial league table; respectable, certainly, but not the unconquerable gods of lore.

George Mann of Middlesex, an artful diplomat, astute tactician and amateur cricketer, was captain of a team which also included Hutton, Compton, Washbrook, Bedser and Evans. Off the field, Mann led with considerable charm and a love of the social side of touring largely forgotten today. As a result — E.W. Swanton would rightly praise 'a visit...no less enjoyable either for those taking part or the friends they made', and when MCC returned home in April 1949 they brought with them a squad nearly as large as their own of English professional coaches who had worked tirelessly throughout the Union. The Nationalist Party had only recently come to power and to men like Swanton there was no evidence of the 'harassment of nonwhites...apparent when MCC next toured South Africa eight years later'.

John Arlott, later so critical of the state regime, detected 'not the slightest hint' of unrest. Evans himself called it 'one of the best series ever', and in later life Godfrey's friends saw his real sadness at South Africa's ban give way to a sense of personal anticipation. He would have loved revisiting the country this winter.

The First Test played at Durban produced one of the classic finishes of all time. With three balls left on the final evening, any one of four results was possible.

I am indebted to Pat Wood for suggesting the following article, written by Christopher Sandford that recalls the MCC's tour to South Africa 1948-49.

The tourists won it when, with the scores level, Cliff Gladwin aimed an almighty heave at the last ball, missed and was called for a leg-bye by his partner, Alec Bedser. Bedser remembers it as 'heart stopping' - mild compared to Evans, who for once failed even to take bets in the dressing-room. 'I could hardly look,' he said.

Drama on the first four days had been largely in the form of thunder, lightning and a protracted debate about whether or not Mann would ask for the pitch to be rolled. In the event, the wicket visibly developed a crust as the match wore on, notably helpful to the leg-spin of Doug Wright and Roly Jenkins. South Africa then began the last day of a low-scoring game two runs behind with six wickets in hand. A dogged fifth-wicket stand saw them through to 219, a lead of 127, and with two sessions to go the looks from the England balcony were anything but sanguine. At the death it was Gladwin who delivered not only the coup de grace but the • great line 'cometh the hour, cometh the man', thus starting the sort of cricketing legend that lasts a lifetime, the kind of legend that can obscure the real story of a workmanlike team who played with a Dunkirk spirit and gritty precision of strokes that won through.

The Second Test, at the new Ellis Park in Johannesburg, completely reversed the tactical balance of Durban. Everything was in favour of the batsmen. In front of the largest crowd ever to watch a match in South Africa, Hutton and Washbrook set up a still standing England record of 359 for the first wicket. In all, 1,193 runs were scored for the loss of 22 wickets, four men hit centuries, four others passed 50 and on the last day one wicket went down in six full hours of play.

The inevitable draw was eked out in 100 degree heat, to capacity houses on a pitch that began, in Evans' words, 'as though rolled by God' and went on from there to get flat. At 6,000 feet above sea level the atmosphere made for neither swerve nor swing.

After England amassed 608 South Africa scored 315 and, following on, 270 for 2 by the close. The final day was leavened by the irony of Eric Rowan's match-saving 156, played in the knowledge that he had already been dropped from the Third Test at Cape Town.

The England spinners never again rooted out the spot that had done for the batsmen in Durban, and on the whole both sets of quicks seemed lacking in pace and power. Those centuries by Hutton, Washbrook,

Compton and Rowan were both beautiful and yet somehow cruel in their utter mastery.

Events in Cape Town made for a crisis in, for one, Evans' career. The match itself dwindled to a draw, South Africa declining Mann's challenge in the final innings. On the last day, England's wicket-keeper accounted for three of the four wickets to fall and characteristically joined in that night's party, where light-hearted fines were levied on those whose performance, either on or off the field, had been thought wanting. Evans took exception and the result was a mug of beer upturned on the imposing head of Brigadier Green, the former Gloucestershire and Essex player serving as team manager. As Godfrey was later to reflect, it was 'not the best career move' of his life.

Returning to the Langham Hotel, Johannesburg on the night of February 12, Evans was met with a handwritten note at the desk. It was from Mann. In delicate, well rounded terms, he informed Evans that he had been dropped. Billy Griffith, who all agreed had done an outstanding job, replaced him for the final two Tests. By then it had become apparent that England were generally the better side.

Although not at his best in the Tests, Compton won through by sheer force of personality and fame. Hutton and Washbrook were on peak form, while Bedser, Gladwin and Jenkins all deserved more numerical reward with the ball. Both teams fielded like dogs fresh from the leash. The difference lay as much as anything else in captaincy. Holding a 1-0 lead allowed Mann his moments of mild experimentation (such as dropping the world's best 'keeper) and the luxury of attacking fields.

For South Africa Dudley Nourse never held the initiative. Frustration in turn led, as it will, to factions forming. Morale in the home dressing-room continued to worsen until in the final Test Nourse was forced to gamble. The upshot was another last gasp result that once again could have gone either way. The Fourth Test, also at Johannesburg, typified the South African tactics. By declining a fourth-innings chase and refusing a challenge that might have been met (376 in nearly five hours) they settled on a third straight draw.

Nourse himself was the batting star of the South African first innings, Eric Rowan of their second. Both sides played good cricket in the match and even the fielders accounted Hutton a master, applauding him both to and from the pavilion. But on a flat track the Test's chief interest lay in the declarations and a willingness to accelerate, neither areas in which South Africa shone. They went into the final Test, at Port Elizabeth, still needing to win.

It was too much for them. England carried the day by three wickets, amid scenes as heady as at Durban.

Exactly a minute remained on the clock when Jack Crapp calmly hit 10 from three consecutive balls. It was a dramatic finale, yet several times on the last day England seemed doomed to lose. Wickets tumbled as they chased 172 and appeals came, on average, twice an over. From there on it was a matter of nerve.

Many of the crowd and most of the England team couldn't bear to watch; as time went by, however, Crapp looked less and less like getting out and more and more like a model for Ken Barrington (solid, in other words). Like Barrington, with his whim for reaching his century off a six, Crapp cut loose at the end, his punishing left-handed drives hit dead in the target's middle, precise and shattering. It was his finest hour.

Earlier Mann had scored an unusually restrained and even orthodox century in the England first innings. Honours were roughly even mid-way through the Test. By the fourth evening South Africa were apparently safe from defeat and moving serenely to yet another draw. Then came the declaration and a challenge that England, to their credit, instantly met (Hutton hit the first ball of the final innings for four).

The last session was a frenzy of whimsicality. Overs were bowled at a wild pace, batsmen came, swung and went for impossible singles. Virtually every ball had some sort of drama to it and no great actor ever timed his exit better than Crapp. There was banana-peel comedy to much of the running (linking the Test to certain latter-day World Cup finishes) and tragedy of a sort for the South Africans.

Above all, it was great theatre. At the end Crapp himself smiled and proceeded, not ran, to the pavilion, where he was met with an ovation from his own side and from the spectators.

England deservedly won the series 2-0. They had the outstanding batsman in Hutton and the bowler most likely to take key wickets in Bedser. Neither of their stumpers put a glove, or foot, wrong. No one could have done more with his team than Mann.

Yet England generally were still in transition. After drawing the 1949 series with New Zealand, they lost their next two rubbers, home to West Indies and away to Australia.

Only then did the golden age dawn, eight years in which no one would defeat them over the full five-Test distance. Even then there would be ups and sorry downs (among them the drawn 1954 series with Pakistan), but the general consensus was that England were the team to beat,

South Africa and the rest merely talented also-rans. So much for the balance of power 50 years ago.

It Happened in March

1898:

Chasing winning target of 275, Australian cricket batsman Joe Darling bashes 160 in 171 minutes with 30 fours to lead Australia to a 6-wicket 5th Test win over England in Sydney; complete 4-1 series rout.

1931:

Don Bradman is bowled for a rare first ball duck by Herman Griffith (4-50) on the last day of 5th cricket Test vs West Indies in Sydney; Windies win by 31 runs but lose series to Australia, 4-1.

1949:

On March 15th, Don Bradman receives his knighthood from the Governor-General of Australia, the Rt Hon. W.J. McKell at the investiture in Queen's Hall, Parliament House, Melbourne.

1954:

"The Three Ws" of West Indian cricket each score centuries in one innings; Clyde Walcott scores 124 following Everton Weekes (206) and Frank Worrell (167) in 1st innings of drawn 4th Test v England at Port of Spain.

1958:

On March 1st, 21 year old West Indian cricket all-rounder Gary Sobers turns his maiden Test century into a world record 365no in the Windies' 3rd Test win over Pakistan in Kingston, Jamaica; Sobers and Conrad Hunte (260) 446 run partnership for 2nd wicket.

1863:

A. E. Stoddart was born at South Shields on March 11th. After a very successful season for Hampstead Cricket Club in 1885 Stoddart made his debut for Middlesex in the same season.

He subsequently played in 16 Test matches for England, all against Australia, between 1887/8 and 1897/8. In eight of the matches Stoddart captained England and he twice took a team out to Australia. On the first tour in 1894/5 England won the series by three matches to two but on the second tour in 1897/8 Australia won the rubber by the decisive margin of four matches to one.

1913:

South Australia beat Victoria at Adelaide by 166 runs to win the Sheffield Shield trophy. J. N. Crawford scored 163 for South Australia in the first innings in 171 minutes after taking half-an-hour to get into double figures and scoring only 25 runs in the first hour.

Crawford followed this up by taking 8—66 in the first innings of Victoria, clean-bowling seven batsmen. New South Wales scored 614—5d v. Tasmania at Hobart, L. Collins (later to captain Australia) making 282, the highest score of his career.

1916:

WJ Edrich was born on march 26th. In a career lasting from 1934 until 1958, Edrich scored 36,965 runs (average 42.39), he held 522 catches and took 479 wickets (average 33.31).

1971:

Indian cricket great Sunil Gavaskar scores first of his 34 Test Cricket centuries; 116 in drawn 3rd Test at Georgetown, Guyana.

1999:

Daryll Cullinan scores South African cricket record 275* in the drawn 1st Test against New Zealand at Eden Park, Auckland; Gary Kirsten scores 128.

2007:

Former England Test cricket batsman, and Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer is found dead one day after his team's defeat to Ireland puts them out of the World Cup in the West Indies; the cause of death remains suspicious

2018:

Australian batsman Cameron Bancroft is caught on camera rubbing match ball with an object during 3rd Cricket Test in Cape Town, resulting in an infamous ball tampering scandal.

1830:

Julius Caesar, an English cricket batsman (who participated in the first English tours to North America 1859-60, Australia & NZ 1864-5), and a Surrey CCC player was born in Godalming, England.

1992:

Under controversial circumstances England defeat South Africa in rain-ruined cricket World Cup semi final. South Africa's victory target after rain being 21 off 1 ball.

1982:

Sidath Wettimuny scores Sri Lanka's 1st Test Cricket century, playing against Pakistan at Faisalabad, he scored 157 in a drawn Test match.

1974:

Australian cricket batsman Greg Chappell makes 247* in drawn 1st Test vs NZ in Wellington; He also hits 133 in 2nd innings and his brother Ian scores 145 and 121 in the same match. Sharing a third-wicket partnership of 264 in the first innings.

1956:

On March 13th, New Zealand bowl out the West Indies in their second innings for 77 and win the 4th Test of the series by 190 runs - New Zealand's first Test match victory (West Indies won the four-match series 3-1).

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A lot of club members have been contacting to ask when the next Wisden Collectors' Club Auction will be starting. I apologise that there hasn't been one yet in 2022, but there will be one imminently.

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West Indies Win - despite Chandrasekhar

This momentous encounter between India and the West Indies, unfolding a new and important chapter in the history of Indian cricket, is of vital importance, as within the span of a year India will be visiting England and Australia.

Our visitors from the Sunny Isles are no longer the unpredictable players of yesteryears, creatures of mood giving themselves up to gay abandon, ready to sacrifice orthodoxy for merry adventure. Under Gary Sobers, the calypso image has taken a more sober outlook. Having played in the Sheffield Shield Tournament in Australia for a number of years. Sobers has acquired some of the ruthless tenacity of the Australians. Hunte, Nurse and Butcher have chosen to follow in the footsteps of their skipper. Only Rohan Kanhai still reminds us of the revered generation of exotic cricketers like Constantine and Headley. Kanhai did not stay long at the wicket, but his batting is always refreshing and joyous, however brief it may be.

The match was played on the centre strip. The wicket was almost shorn of grass and quite a few bare brown patches were visible, but the surface was hard and given a brick foundation. The very first Test match to be played on this strip was the one against Simpson's Australians in 1964. There was uncertain bounce in the initial stages, but by now the soil has consolidated. It would have been a lovely wicket for both batsman and bowler, provided an even layer of grass was left on the surface. But I suppose the authorities did not want to take any chances, especially with Hall, Griffith and Sobers looming in the background!

It was pace against spin. Pace in all its splendour and spin in all its guile. West Indies relying on speed and India on spin, but the slow wicket was a great frustration to the West Indies fast bowlers, and ultimately Gibbs, Holford, and Sobers with his 'chinaman' and googlies came to their rescue.

The highlights of the match were superlative bowling by Chandrasekhar, the magnificent 121 by Borde, Pataudi's two masterly innings in a crisis. Sobers establishing his authority with the bat in the second innings, and two crisp innings by young Lloyd in his very first Test match.

No team can be complete without a pair of genuine pace bowlers and a back-of-the-hand leg-spinner. India must make all efforts to unearth such bowlers. Durrani was completely off the mark and did not bowl to his field. Off-spinner Venkataraghavan kept a tidy length but he lacks the flight and guile required of a bowler of his type. Nadkarni, for a change, was unable to restrain the flow of runs. To have longed for victory with only one wicket-taking bowler—Chandrasekhar—would have been like aspiring for the unobtainable. Chandrasekhar was magnificent.

The Wisden is grateful to WCC member Michael Acheson for recommending this article, taken from the pages of Playfair Cricket Monthly in January 1967 and penned by Ron Roberts - detailing the wonderful First Test match between India and the West Indies played in Bombay.

He established his greatness beyond all doubt by bagging 11 out of the 14 West Indies wickets that fell. He was difficult to read, and had the West Indies batsmen in trouble all the time. He demanded constant watchfulness and vigilance. Chandrasekhar is faster than bowlers of his type. With his present method of bowling googlies and top-spinners most of the time, he is not likely to be such a great force all the time, especially against good batsmen. What a better bowler Chandrasekhar would be on any wicket if he were to increase the frequency of leg-breaks.

Both sides dropped catches, but whereas West Indies have the power and resources to overcome such lapses because of their all round strength, India could ill afford them, and ultimately they proved very costly indeed, resulting in India's first defeat at the Brabourne Stadium.

All eyes were glued on the controversial Charlie Griffith. Throughout this match, however, Griffith's action did not show even the semblance of a doubt. He kept his arm meticulously straight, without revealing his latent devastating powers.

For four and a half days we saw cricket de-luxe, and all credit to India for having held the fort so gallantly till the very end.

FIRST DAY

India at the close of play were 241—6 after being in a precarious position earlier on in the morning, when they lost three quick wickets for only 14 runs.

For this happy turn of events, India owed a great deal to two excellent partnerships of 93, between Pataudi and Borde, and 102 between Borde and Durrani.

The first day's play belonged entirely to Borde (Pictured, below), the chief architect of India's innings, who was unbeaten with a priceless 120. The mantle of responsibility lay heavily on young Pataudi's shoulders as he came in to bat. But with perseverance and courage Pataudi pulled India out of the doldrums with a superbly controlled innings of 44.



He played Hall and Griffith with time to spare, and laid the foundation of the Indian innings with controlled drives and cuts. During Pataudi's stay at the wicket Borde gave him staid support, but after his departure took charge of the game, with brilliant thrusts all round the wicket, quickly picking the right balls to hit. This indeed was batsmanship of international quality.

Hall and Griffith opened the West Indies attack. Within minutes India lost Sardesai, Baig and Jaisimha with only 14 runs on the board. Sardesai played back to an over pitched ball from Hall which came in, and was beaten all ends up. Baig from the very beginning was uncertain of touch, and played across the line of the ball to a yorker from the burly Hall. Jaisimha touched one outside the off stump from Griffith with his head up in the air and his body nowhere near the ball. Unless Jaisimha gets over his weakness outside the off stump, he is not likely to get many runs, especially in England. Durrani made a valuable 55, but was lucky to be dropped by Holford off Sobers when only 11.

After tea Sobers made a tactical error by bringing on Hall who was limping. This just suited Durrani as he was not too comfortable against the West Indies spin attack. Moreover, with the old ball Hall could not generate the speed he had been able to work up earlier in the morning. As the new ball was due shortly, Sobers would have done well to preserve Hall till then. Incidentally 200 runs were scored after exactly 75 overs were bowled. According to the playing conditions agreed upon, the new ball could only be taken after 75 overs. Once Durrani's eye was in, he was very severe on Griffith and scored 15 runs in one over, including a six off a rising ball to fine-leg.

Apart from the opening burst of Hall and Griffith in the morning, the West Indies attack fell short of expectations. After lunch only Sobers and Gibbs attacked the stumps with clever variations of flight and spin. The West Indies fielding was good and, but for the catch Holford missed, they gave away nothing in the field.

SECOND DAY

India were still in the game entirely due to magnificent bowling by Chandrasekhar (Pictured, below), and had Wadekar held Lloyd when he was 9 off Chandrasekhar and had Kunderam stumped Hunte just before close of play off the same



bowler, India would have entered the third day's play with even honours.

A lot was at stake as Borde and Nadkarni walked out to the middle

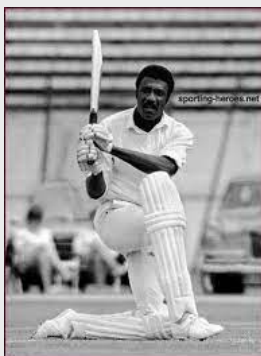
on this delightful December morning. Speculation was rife as to whether India could build up a total safe from defeat. However, Borde with an uncultured shot, dashed all hope. He tried to cut a ball from Sobers which was well beyond his reach and paid the penalty.

Then Griffith struck two mighty blows by getting Kunderam lbw with a beauty, and having Nadkarni brilliantly caught by Sobers in the slips. Young Venkataraghavan, however, stood firm among the ruins and delighted the capacity crowd of fifty thousand with strokes rarely associated with a No. 10 batsman. Hendricks kept wicket well once again, getting right behind the ball. This should be an object lesson to India's wicketkeepers, who have acquired the wrong snatch-and-grab methods.

India's mock opening attack made little or no impression on the West Indies batsmen, and Pataudi wisely chose to bring on his spinners within a couple of overs. Pataudi's quick bowling changes paid rich dividends and Chandrasekhar, a bowler with an element of surprise, accounted for Bynoe, Kanhai and Butcher with only 82 runs on the board. Of these three batsmen, only Kanhai played Chandrasekhar with confidence and in his short stay he gave us glimpses of his brilliant art. Pataudi was not his usual self in the field, and it was Baig who stole the limelight.

A pull or a hook is a grand stroke when correctly played, but the batsman must learn not to hook or pull deliveries he cannot see all the way. Chandrasekhar is quite nippy off the pitch and both Butcher and Kanhai lost their wickets in trying to pull him, without correctly gauging the speed of the ball.

West Indies would have found themselves in a tight corner, but for a superlative innings by Lloyd (Pictured, left), the baby of the side, who scored a scintillating 82 on his debut in 115 minutes, and a solid unbeaten 79 by Conrad Hunte. Lloyd who was lucky to be dropped by Wadekar when only 9 off Chandrasekhar revelled in fluent drives and hooks and treated every bowler with scant respect. Just as he gave hopes of joining the immortals by scoring a century in his very first test appearance, his vigilance relaxed and he was caught behind the wicket by Kunderam off Chandrasekhar.



These two provided a fine picture of contrast. Hunte with a short back lift, mature and dedicated, permitted himself no luxuries, while Lloyd was as frisky as a colt. The running between the wickets of the West Indies batsmen was exemplary, and they stole many virtually impossible singles.

Except Chandrasekhar, who bowled magnificently taking all the four wickets that fell during the day for 84 runs in 27 overs, India's spinners did not live up to

expectations. The wicket played slower and some balls kept low. Sobers who came in at the fall of Lloyd's wicket towards the end of the day was not very comfortable. Chandrasekhar who played his part magnificently sorely needed some assistance at least from the other end.

THIRD DAY

No praise was too lavish for Chandrasekhar's magnificent bowling performance, and it was mainly due to his splendid effort that India were able to restrict the West Indies score to 421.

Venkataraghavan and Chandrasekhar started India's attack, and soon had both Sobers and Hunte (Pictured, right) in difficulty, Chandrasekhar being more aggressive of the two. Hunte's innings of 101 was a result of tremendous concentration and determination.

The new ball was due just one over after the commencement of the game, but our opening attack being a mere parody, Pataudi wisely refrained from utilising it till after lunch.

Sobers could not assert his mastery for quite some time. His was a subdued innings, governed by thought and experience and tempered with sobriety. He was not entirely himself, although at times he delighted with a few personal strokes. He reached a somewhat laboured 50 amid tremendous applause, but a moment later made a rank bad shot trying to steer an over-pitched ball from Venkataraghavan to third man, and was clean bowled. Holford who times out of number had aided West Indies against England last summer, once again contributed a useful 80. His temperament is his main asset. Cool and collected in the most trying circumstances, Holford rarely becomes ruffled, and is quite content to suffer his cricket.

Pataudi, I feel, should have set a more attacking field against Holford and Hendricks to Chandrasekhar's bowling, especially in the initial stages of their innings. His bowling changes, nevertheless, were imaginative and purposeful, enabling him to derive maximum advantage from the limited talent at his disposal.

Chandrasekhar was superb. I have never seen him bowl so well in lengthy spells. He is normally effective for three or four overs, then his direction wavers. Throughout the day's play, however, he kept a correct length and got maximum pace off the pitch. In fact not one West Indies batsman could play him with confidence. His figures of 61 overs, 17 maidens, 157 runs and 7 wickets need no further elaboration. Only Venkataraghavan gave him adequate support. Durrani again failed to impress. Instead of flighting the ball, he pushed it through much faster than expected from a

bowler of his 'genre'. As a result, he made no impression on the batsmen.

In the first innings India scored at a slightly faster rate, obtaining 44-19 runs off every 100 balls, whereas West Indies scored 42-92 runs off every 100 balls. This, I feel, should be the correct way of judging the comparative rates of scoring in modern cricket, and not by the clock, especially as bowlers like Hall and Griffith take approximately five minutes to complete an over, compared to two or three minutes taken by Chandrasekhar or Durrani. Considering the reputation of the visitors, India had so far put up an admirable show.



India made a good beginning in the second innings. However, Jaisimha was lucky to be dropped twice, by Hendricks off Griffith when he was 6 and later by Butcher off Hall when he was 11. Knowing Jaisimha's weakness against pace. Sobers effectively brought on either Hall or Griffith when it was Jaisimha's turn to face the bowling, and put himself on when Sardesai happened to be the striker. This was clever

strategy indeed. Unfortunately, vitiated by his fielders, who frustrated Sobers by missing those two opportunities of getting Jaisimha's wicket.

The wicket was playing easy with hardly any turn and at this stage a draw appeared the most likely result.

FOURTH DAY

After spineless batting in the morning, India once again revealed, in this match, the prowess and fighting qualities which they have acquired over the past few years. For this happy position, India owed a debt of gratitude to Pataudi, Kunderam and Venkataraghavan. It was delightful to watch Pataudi stem the rot, with handsome cuts and drives. He had ample time in which to make his strokes, unlike Borde and Baig, who by not using their feet against Holford and Gibbs, made the mediocre West Indies spin attack appear unduly dangerous.

It was a thrilling day's cricket and had Pataudi not been so impetuous and Durrani so irresponsible, India would have been in a much stronger position, for an additional 70 or 80 runs to the total may have made considerable difference.

Although Gibbs was the most successful West Indies bowler, taking 4—67, I feel that the leg-spinner Holford with 3—94 worried the Indian batsmen more than Gibbs. The wicket had no life in it whatsoever, and Sobers wisely concentrated on his spin bowlers after giving an initial spell of 2 overs to Griffith.

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After the fall of the third wicket, Wadekar came out to join Baig instead of Pataudi. This was a wrong move on the part of the Indian skipper, for if a lower order batsman is thought fit to be the right man to play in a crisis, does it not tend to show that he is in actual fact considered a more capable batsman than the player he is shielding? And so like the proverbial lamb to the slaughter young Wadekar was made the scapegoat. In fact, Pataudi with all the resources at his command should not have shirked his responsibility at such a crucial stage of the game.

After tea, with India's score at 281—8, Sobers took the new ball and Griffith came in for some cavalier treatment at the hands of Kunderam, who scored 4 glorious fours off his bowling in one over. I wonder whether Griffith has ever suffered such humiliation in a Test match.

Kunderam's batting was by no means reckless. An off-drive off Griffith was a model shot. Once again, Venkataraghavan made plain to all present that he is no mean batsman, and that his knock in the first innings was not a mere shot in the dark.

Kunderam steered Gibbs to short fine-leg in the early stages of his innings where Sobers was fielding and the umpire declared him out—caught. But Sobers gallantly signalled that he had collected a half-volley and Kunderam continued his innings. One could not help feeling that Griffith would have done well to refrain from sending down bouncers to the tail-enders Venkataraghavan and Chandrasekhar.

West Indies, requiring 192 to win, were dealt early blows by Chandrasekhar who accounted for Bynoe (brilliantly caught at forward short-leg by Wadekar in almost the same manner as in the first innings), and Butcher with only 25 runs on the board.

FIFTH DAY

A great stand by Lloyd and Sobers enabled West Indies to win the first Test earlier than expected.

For half an hour after commencement of play nothing seemed to happen. Chandrasekhar appeared stale in his early overs, and for no accountable reason bowled round the wicket. But he soon had Gibbs caught at forward short-leg, and this inspired him to great heights.

Once again the Indian fielders were lethargic in holding catches. Kunderam dropped Hunte off Chandrasekhar when he was 38, and Jaisimha let off Sobers, off Durrani, when his score was 34.

Sobers walked confidently to the wicket accompanied by tremendous applause from the crowd. A few strokes off his toes were proof enough that Sobers had come into his own.

He gave a wonderful exhibition in the art of batsmanship, and the score board moved briskly as young Lloyd started lashing out at anything within his reach. Sobers began with the utmost confidence, unlike his performance in the first innings, scoring off nearly every ball. Both batsmen were extremely severe on Durrani who conceded 19 runs in one over. All the 4 wickets which fell in the second innings went to Chandrasekhar.

It was rather unfortunate that India, having fought so admirably throughout against heavy odds, lost this match solely due to irresponsible batting on the part of some of their established batsmen, dropped catches and lack of adequate support to their one and only effective bowler— Chandrasekhar.

At a cocktail party hosted by the young Maharaja of Gwalior for the West Indies-men at the end of the fourth day's play, Gary Sobers was overheard telling Willie Snaith, one of England's leading jockeys, that he and his boys would definitely be witnessing the running of the Indian 1000 Guineas the following day, despite the fact that the West Indians were 25—2, with Chandrasekhar in full cry. When asked what they proposed to do about Chandrasekhar, Sobers quipped: 'Why man, we will bring him along with us to the races as we have an extra pass for him!'

Sobers and his boys did witness the running of the Indian 1000 Guineas, but whether Chandrasekhar was there or not, I cannot say.

India v West Indies - First Test match.

Brabourne Stadium, Bombay

December 13, 14, 16, 17 and 18 1966.

Toss: India

Debuts: India - A.L. wader; West Indies - C.H. Lloyd

India 296 (CG Borde, 121. SA Durani, 55. Nawab of Pataudi, jr, 44. CC Griffith, 3-63. G St A Sobers, 3-46.) and **316** (BK Kundera, 79. Nawab of Pataudi, jr, 51. ML Jaisimha, 44. AA Baig, 42. LR Gibbs, 4-67. DAJ Holford, 3-94.)

West Indies **421** (CC Hunte, 101. CH Lloyd, 82. DAJ Holford, 80. G St A Sobers, 50. JL Hendriks, 48. BS Chandrasekhar, 7-157.) and **192-4** (CH Lloyd, 78* G St A Sobers, 53*, CC Hunte, 40. BS Chandrasekhar, 4-78.)

West Indies won by six wickets.

Innocents Abroad

The great adventure began on April 29, 1927 with Tom Lowry (Pictured, below, centre) leading a selection of players who were considered to have at least 10 years' top cricket ahead of them. This wise policy introduced Stewie Dempster, Jack Mills, Curly Page, Ces Dacre, Ken James and, above all, Bill Merritt, an 18-year-old schoolboy who captured 107 wickets with his leg-breaks in 25 first-class matches. The experience of Lowry and Roger Blunt was invaluable, with six of those above exceeding 1,000 runs, James snaring 64 dismissals behind the stumps, no fewer than 34 being stumped off Merritt.

In the second match, against MCC at Lord's, so brightly did New Zealand bat that they had the better of the three-day game in which a new record aggregate of 1,502 was compiled.

They entered the match with trepidation, Lowry stating that they felt like a 'bunch of schoolboys donning long trousers for the first time'. Lowry added colour by wearing black socks but his eccentricity was accepted, for was he not the man who qualified for Somerset by assuring Lord Hawke he was born in Wellington? By winning seven matches against five lost, the team made a good impression.

Harold Gilligan was prevailed upon to take an MCC side to New Zealand where the first Test match between England and New Zealand started on January 10, 1930, Maurice Allom performing the hat trick on his Test debut and devastating the locals with four wickets in five balls. Dempster and Mills's opening stand of 276 in the Second Test at Wellington still stands as a record, that match and the two remaining in the series being drawn as the bat dominated.

New Zealand's 1931 tour of England included a single Test match, to be played at Lord's. Facing a deficit of 230 New Zealand declared on 469 for 9 and England had to play out time. Dempster led with 120 and then young Curly Page found himself on 99 at lunch on the final day. Later he admitted being so nervous he accepted Voce's invitation to a 'stiff whisky or two', the fast bowler promising to slip him a post prandial full



In 1995 as New Zealand were about to embark on their centennial celebrations, Dave Crowe in a three-part history traced the development of the game on the other side of the world in the islands of The Silver Fern. This is part 2. Part 1 appeared in VW 43)

toss. Page said he was so squiffy he missed it but managed to complete the feat later.

It was such a splendid display by the tourists that two more Test matches were hastily arranged. At The Oval Hammond made the first of a string of centuries against New Zealand, Sutcliffe and Duleep earlier having led the way with hundreds in a stand of 178. A rain-damaged pitch allowed Gubby Allen to wreak havoc amongst the Kiwis and then Peebles finished them off. The Third Test at Old Trafford was washed out but the New Zealand tourists enjoyed another successful tour, this time Merritt capturing 99 first-class wickets in a programme that saw them win six and lose only three matches.

MCC's Australian tour of 1932/33 was extended to include two Tests in New Zealand, during which Hammond cut loose with a staggering 227 at Christchurch before setting a new Test record of 336 not out at Eden Park. South Africa had toured in the intervening season and won both Tests by wide margins. These one-sided matches were in no small part due to New Zealand's decision that those players holding professional engagements in England would not be eligible to play, thereby depriving themselves of the services of the likes of Dempster, James, Merritt and Tom Pritchard, with Dacre already having gone to Gloucestershire.

New Zealand's 1937 tour of England was to be their last for 12 years. Despite the tour failing to bring the eagerly sought maiden Test victory, it was significant in the emergence of Martin Donnelly, arguably the most dependable of all New Zealand batsmen, and Walter Hadlee, who in time became the father figure of New Zealand cricket, having served his country as captain, Chairman of Selectors, Chairman of the New Zealand Cricket Council, and siring three sons who all played for their country.

Another of New Zealand's outstanding batsmen, Merv Wallace, shared the batting honours on the tour with Donnelly. Also outstanding was the fast-medium bowler Jack Cowie with 114 wickets on a tour of 32 first-class matches with nine equally won and lost.

Walter Hadlee, befitting the bespectacled accountant that he was, planned meticulously for the 1949 tour of England, taking with him Cowie, Donnelly and Wallace from the prewar tour. No fewer than five players were rejected on medical grounds from the original selection, for the Second World War had taken its toll, but this allowed Bert Sutcliffe (Pictured, left) and John Reid to launch their long and productive careers.

Donnelly topped the averages and Sutcliffe the aggregates, each with well over 2,000 runs, and no fewer than eight batsmen passed their 1,000. In a glorious summer

dominated by the batsmen, Tom Burt wheeling away for 1,231 overs to take 128 wickets, Hadlee placing seven on the off side as he invited England's batsmen to penetrate an excellent fielding side. Burt bowled almost 200 overs in the four Tests for 17 wickets. The nimble-footed Wallace, considered by 'Tiger' O'Reilly to be one of the two best batsmen he had encountered, scored 910 runs in the month of May alone.

After eight months and with £17,000 profit in their pockets the team returned home unbeaten, save for losing to Oxford University. All four Test matches were drawn, proving conclusively that three days were plainly insufficient. Thenceforth New Zealand were to command four days for their Tests, while Australia continued their disinclination to engage in regular contests.

A fiasco had occurred in March, 1946 when Australia saw a chance to blood their post war players in conditions similar to England's. They sent a strong side - only Bradman was missing - and played a curious 'Test' on the outfield at the Basin Reserve.

Rain had soaked the prepared strip, so rather than disappoint a crowd of more than 20,000, another was hastily rolled in the outfield. The Wellington players Rowe and Tindill were given leave from their jobs at their 10am tea break and travelled by tram to the ground, arriving just in time for the start of the match at 11am. The spinners, O'Reilly and Toshack, were unplayable, as was Cowie when Australia batted. Somehow Bill Brown, Australia's captain, and Sid Barnes contrived to add 109 which proved to be the difference between the two sides, except that New Zealand had two innings to Australia's one. The loss by



an innings and 103 entrenched Australia's stance against New Zealand cricket, and it was not until 1949 that the match was officially confirmed as a Test.

So Australia sent a promising side in 1950 which drew the unofficial representative match, Fenwick Cresswell taking 8 for 100 as wicket-keeper Don Tallon made a century for Australia. Freddie Brown's MCC Australian team followed in 1951, Trevor Bailey racing to his Test century in seven hours in the First Test after Sutcliffe had made a fine hundred in half the time. This was drawn but England won the second

easily.

By 1951 a demand had arisen for a mechanism to bring country-based players to national recognition. After much pressure from Central Districts the domestic competition was widened to include them, and in justification they took only two seasons to win the Plunket Shield. By 1961 the format which exists today was completed with the addition of Northern Districts, who required only one season to become the trophy winners.

West Indies came for the first time in 1951/52, bringing a full side including their celebrated 'three Ws' and those two 'pals o' mine, Ramadhin and Valentine'. They won the First Test comfortably and then were obligingly sent in to bat in slippery conditions at Eden Park. At 26 Allan Rae slipped but Moir kindly held the ball and Rae celebrated his survival by scoring 99, he and Stollmeyer opening with 197, to which the three Ws added a half-century and two hundreds. Mercifully the match was ultimately washed out.

It was a chivalrous period, for Hadlee had personally intervened to call back Washbrook at Christchurch the year before when given out lbw. Hadlee in that series also pulled a whimsical trip, contriving to bowl Alex Moir in two successive overs, before and after tea on the first day.

As the country bathed in the reflected-glory of the mountaineer Edmund Hillary's conquest of the peaks of Everest, New Zealand's cricketers plumbed the depths. The South Africans visited, paving the way for a return visit in 1953/54. Jackie McGlew's 255 not out at Wellington had ensured an innings win, so a party of

14 with many new faces set off on another pioneer tour. Their results were unimpressive, five matches won and four lost if two wins in three state games in Australia are included on the way back.

The Tests were lost 4-0, but another courageous chapter was written in sporting history at Ellis Park, Johannesburg, when Bert Sutcliffe, swathed in head bandages, returned from hospital to hit seven sixes in a dramatic counter attack. He was joined at the end of the innings by Bob Blair, who was not expected at the ground after the news of the tragic death of his fiancée in a major rail disaster at home. These two smashed 25 off a Tayfield over, a Test record, and were cheered loudly by an awed crowd, especially those in the non-European section. Hutton's MCC side came to New Zealand after retaining the Ashes in Australia, and humiliated New Zealand by dismissing them for 26 in an all-time low Test innings.

Then Harry Cave took his group on another pioneering tour, for 16 matches in the subcontinent of which eight were Tests. Only once were the selectors able to choose from a full complement, as illness and exhaustion struck down the plucky Kiwis. Pakistan and India each won 2-0. So enervated were the players that Cave and Sutcliffe were amongst those unable to play a full part in a five-match series with a touring West Indies team, who arrived in New Zealand before the tourists got home. West Indies led 3-0, but almost exactly a year after that dreadful 26, New Zealand finally chalked up its first ever Test win, at the 45th attempt.

There was a tour to England again in 1958, best forgotten. It was wet and many of the tourists were tyros. Reid and Sutcliffe did their best but England were much too strong. The 1960s were approached diffidently, until a second tour of South Africa reaped

unexpected rewards. Reid's men, with the captain setting a new tour record aggregate of over 2,000, drew the Tests 2-2 and restored real national pride.

If it could not be maintained during the England visits led by first Peter May, then Dennis Silk, Ted Dexter and finally Mike Smith, New Zealand had at least enjoyed the odd win over India, at Christchurch and Nagpur, West Indies at Wellington, and a series win over Pakistan in that country in 1969. Even Australia had bent to the extent of sending the occasional development team, and had been beaten in New Plymouth fair and square. Then they sent a full Test side, although still not agreeing to official Tests, to play a drawn series. New Zealand were inching towards recognition.

Illingworth's MCC tourists of 1970/71 let Derek Underwood loose on a wet pitch at Christchurch, the left-armers needing only 94 deliveries for his 6 for 12. But by then newer players were becoming established, men like Mark Burgess, Bruce Taylor, Geoff Howarth, Graham Dowling, Bev Congdon and Glenn Turner, who were to have a signal effect on the next tour of the West Indies in 1972. Turner produced four double centuries, including two in the Tests, where he and Terry Jarvis set a new record opening partnership of 387, then the second highest ever.

Only a failure to seize winning chances prevented New Zealand from converting at least one of the five drawn Tests into a win. Many considered this side the finest fielding combination to visit the Caribbean and it was clear that the Kiwis were now genuinely competitive.

The influence of the professionals, led by Turner, was beginning to be felt. New Zealand's cricket organisation could now boast seven Test wins and could take its place in the country's eyes as the premier summer sport.

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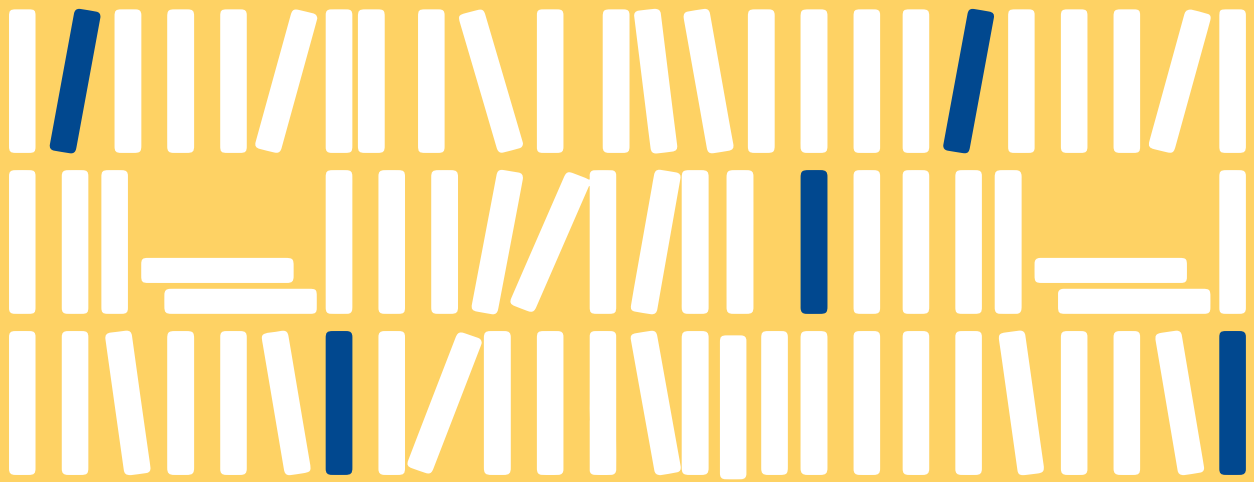
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