

As cricket seasons go the one reaching its climax over the next few weeks may well be remembered for not just cricketing reasons, but the situation the country and most of the world found itself in.

England, under a new captain, seem to have found a way of playing that may result in sequences of emphatic wins and emphatic defeats: the review into our cricket — and I use the words 'our cricket' deliberately and with a sense of anger — has concluded with pretty much what everyone thought it would conclude with: the cash league started and finished and the marketing folk claimed it to be a tremendous success, was it?: the championship was once again put aside for money and the season seemed to drift and meander along.

Harsh? — Here is why I think not.

The clamour for Tests to be reduced to four-days grew after the first two Tests against South Africa produced three-day finishes — under-prepared pitches with batsmen lacking technique, the skills and the application owing to the lack of long-form matches could be real factors behind this, but four-day Tests will come, it is but a matter of time.

The reason behind the demand for four-day matches is to gain extra days in the calendar...it is also a financial consideration. Venues having weather-insurance for four days is cheaper than five, staff would be needed for a day less and naturally the prices would go up to compensate for any loss of revenue on the old 'fifth day.' I doubt very much if the match itself would gain much.

Prior to the report coming out on English cricket, Andrew Strauss was asked on SKY TV did he see the number of games in the County Championship being reduced. He did not answer the question at all, but he said something like this..he wanted the best players to play against top quality opposition to prepare them for the step-up to Test cricket.

Now, I have to be careful here because I could be sued, but I have never heard such @£&%\$£@ in my life. How can the championship players play against the best when the best (the England team) do not play county cricket and counties no

longer spend money on bringing top quality players from overseas into the championship squad as they would rather spend the money on overseas players for one day players.

I have said this previously but if you keep on telling people a lie and giving out false information it soon becomes fact. High attendances and public love for 100-ball thing and twenty20 are not true.

Strauss and the cronies at the top have to keep the ferryman happy otherwise he will stop paying them exuberant amounts of money — simple and the ferryman loves the new slogathon.

The Hundred - three matches throughout the entire competition, THREE, produced a finish that can be classed as 'close.' In the Twenty20 competition, SIX matches. Both had less attendances than in 2021 when the demand to get out and ENJOY ourselves again was high, so after popping along to games last year the public voted with heir feet and LESS people went to both competitions.

The 50-over competition saw an increase in attendances and as a result it is likely to be re-scheduled to April-May in future seasons — a real pat on the back (not) for a game that allowed players to build an innings, bowlers to bowl properly and a match to develop.

Once again the Championship is an after-thought, we all know it is sandwiched in between the important stuff (tongue firmly in-cheek), no wonder the players are mentally tired if they have to play in the cold of April and in Autumnal September. Oh and did I mention the lack of ANY player putting pressure of Lees and Crawley as openers?

Too much is wrong with our game but every part of it could be fixed, with passion, care and determination — but we all know those things are lacking. Why can't someone start a campaign asking for county members everywhere NOT to pay their 2023 subscription. I wonder, I wonder indeed whether if enough did not pay if the counties and the ECB would finally lift their collective heads out of the clouds and listen.

Bill

Maurice Tate by Neville Cardus

Maurice Tate was not only a great bowler. He was a character, a Sussex character, and the last of the truly rustic cricketers coming down from Tom Sueter and Lillywhite and Southerton.

Today the professional cricketer, taking him by and large, has entered the urbanised middle-class social stratum and comes to the ground in his car, and very likely wears suede shoes and engages an agent.

Maurice was brown with Sussex (and Adelaide) air and sunshine. He was big-shouldered, of more than average height and weight, yet he gave an impression of spindle-shanks and gawkiness. He might have walked out of a hayfield. Yet rustic though he was in appearance and presence, his use and command of the new ball fascinated the game's scientists at a period of cricket's history when the manipulation of seam remained generally in the experimental stage. Tate was one of the first cricketers to cause a new ball to swing late, now in, then next ball, out.

At Lord's, in 1923, playing for England v. The Rest in a 'Trial' match, he took five wickets for no runs in, if I remember well, two overs. He set his field - or his captain set it for him - with four slips and two short legs.

After he had performed this astonishing piece of bowling I met him in 'the Long Room', sweater over his shoulders, a smile of a happy sandboy on his face. I pointed out to him that he had been swinging the ball in and away alternately, very late, and that only at the last split-second did the swing occur—at least so it seemed to the watcher looking through Zeiss glasses. 'Have I?' said Maurice, apparently the recipient of strange news. He didn't himself know, every time, which way a ball, propelled from his strong right arm and supple finger, was likely to turn. I therefore at once concluded that here was a great bowler just out of the chrysalis. If Tate himself couldn't know exactly which way his own bowling was about to turn, then God help the batsmen.

Tate played in twenty consecutive Test matches against Australia and in nineteen other Tests, taking 155 wickets. Thrice he took 200 wickets in a season, and eight times he achieved the 'double a thousand runs and a hundred wickets in a season. In all he took 2,784 wickets, average 18.12 each and scored some 22,000 runs, with 21 centuries, averaging above 25 an innings. I have been told that he did not bowl a single no-ball in



all his professional career — and I can scarcely believe it, though, to say the truth, his enormous splay feet and boots covered a vast space or territory.

His run to bowl was short, a few steps, then a superb swivel of the shoulders. He expected - with reason - that he would take a wicket every ball; and as he shaved the stump, leg or off, or the outside or inside edge of the bat, his arms went up in jerked impulsive surprise that another victim had not fallen to him.

As I have suggested, he was not a theorist. He bowled and batted by instinct— - instinct supported by experience. It was generally thought by batsmen of Tate's day that he could make the ball accelerate speed after pitching.

A Professor of science in Sydney wrote to the press pointing out that it was against all known laws of ballistics to suppose that any missile could add to its velocity at a point twenty yards beyond its moment of initial projection. Whereupon Charles Macartney wrote a letter to the editor replying to the effect that no doubt the said professor was an expert in his own way but had he ever played forward at Maurice and lost his leg-stump almost as he was * picking up ' his bat? The professor did not take up this point, rightly believing, no doubt, that abstract science has beauties not known to the practical and applied sciences.

At his best, Tate's pace was quick-medium, much the same as Bedser's, but with a slightly lower line of flight. I never saw Tate bowl a full-toss, and though he had the stamina to keep on for hours, I seldom saw him looking tired or beaten.

In 1919, when he was twenty-four years old, he came to Old Trafford, one of the Sussex XI, the others, Joe Vine, Robert Relf, Albert Relf, H. L. Wilson, V. C. W. Jupp, George Cox, A. H. H. Gilligan, E. C. Baker, R. A. T. Miller, and N. J. Holloway. Tate then bowled slowish medium off-spinners and was asked to send down only 8 overs in Lancashire's two innings. But, batting No. 5, he scored 108 in Sussex's second innings.

For two seasons Maurice was no more than a useful change bowler, then by sheer chance, he found his real style and method. It all began in the nets. 'Maurice bowled me several of his slow deliveries so Arthur Gilligan has testified, ' then down came a quick one which spreadeagled my stumps. He did this three times. I went up to him and said "Maurice, you must change your style of bowling immediately", My hunch paid'. It certainly did.

In 1923, Lancashire, having played Sussex at Hastings, were travelling on to Dover or somewhere in Kent. Cricketers in those days condescended to go up and down the country by railway, in third-class carriages. (Richard Tyldesley, no relation to the great J. T. T.' or to Ernest, never forgot to ask the baggageman, before the train started, 'Ast got beer aboard?') And as we journeyed from Hastings to London that summer evening we discussed contemporary bowlers - who was the best of the medium pacers, Parkin, Macaulay, Geary, Root? And Ernest Tyldesley said, 'We've been playing against the best bowler in England today, the best of his sort since Sydney Barnes - Maurice Tate'. In the season of 1923 Tate took 219 wickets, average 13.97 in 1,608 overs and five balls.

He was the son of poor Fred Tate, who in 1902, at Old Trafford, missed a catch most direly crucial and was bowled, tenth man out, when England wanted four to win after he had snicked a boundary, trusting to God, with his eyes prayerfully closed. The gods, being not without irony or justice, had no alternative but to let Maurice score a century seventeen years later, on his first appearance at Old Trafford.

In the rubber against Australia, in Australia 1924-25, Tate took 38 wickets at an average of 23.18 against some of the greatest batsmen the game has ever known. Moreover, he took them on absolutely flawless turf. 'Herbie' Collins, shrewdest of Australian captains excepting only M. A. Noble and Sir Donald, told me that in this rubber of 1924-25, a ball from Tate that was anything like loose came as so startling a surprise that once or twice a batsman was * astonished - out'.

Tate's heavy thud of his front foot, as his arm wheeled round and over, was the source of much physical pain to him on the hard sun-caked Australian grounds. He wore out the strongest and most capacious boots in the world, so that his big toe became as famous as Jenkin's ear. But nothing could diminish his energy and eagerness. At the feel of a new ball he was like a dog on a leash within reach of a pigeon. And he was nearly as dangerous with the old ball as with the new.

He bowled at Leeds in 1930 when Bradman amassed 334, 309 on the first day. He bowled 39 overs and had 5 wickets, including Bradman's, for 124. When Australia's sixth wicket fell with the score above 450, Maurice beamed and said, 'We've got 'em on the run, boys!'

In his years of retirement a certain young England player of these days asked him, * Maurice, you were bowling that day when the Don scored 300 before close?' * Yes, I was', replied Maurice proudly. ¹ But', inquired the young international, 'when you knew you couldn't get him out why didn't you "close him up" and bowl down the leg side?' And Maurice, bless his

innocence, answered, * It never occurred to me. I tried to get his wicket every ball'.

He was a lovable son of Sussex with a heart as big as Beachy Head. His batting, though, was not without a certain science. He 'wielded' the willow, no doubt; he wielded it with gusto, a sort of scientific windmill. But, let it not be forgotten, he had enough defence to open the innings for Sussex many times. He was indeed a natural cricketer who loved cricket, good days or bad. His happy face, his gangling gait and his conversation - he was one of the game's most loquacious conversationalists, and would frequently go on at the pavilion end in the middle of a sentence. He would, between overs, approach a player and talk to him out of the side of his hand. One day I saw him go to his captain and, out of the side of his hand, convey to him what looked like some very secret information. Tactics? At lunch I asked A. E. R. Gilligan what had Maurice said— something about moving forward short leg an inch or two? * Oh, no', replied Arthur, 'Maurice often comes up to me and, behind his hand, whispers to me that "it's a fine day, skipper"'.

During the war, while a club match was in progress somewhere in Sussex, a German plane returning from London dropped a 'stick' on the ground, while the cricketers were taking improvised cover. After the plane had gone and the bomb had made a hole in the outfield, Maurice emerged from behind the nearest cow and said to Gilligan, * Fancy, skipper—fancy bombing us! 'Rare Maurice, England hath need of thee in this unhumorous scientific hour!

Neville Cardus, 1962.

Maurice Tate

Bowling

39 Tests, 12523 balls bowled, 4055 runs conceded
155 wickets taken at 25.16.

Best Bowling 6/42.

679 First Class matches, 150461 balls bowled, 50571 runs conceded, 2784 wickets at 18.16.

Best Bowling 9/71

Batting

Tests 39 Tests, 52 innings, 5 Not Outs, 1198 runs scored at 25.48

*Highest Test score 100**
1 hundred and 5 fifties.

679 First Class matches, 970 innings, 103 not outs, 21717 runs scored at 25.04

Highest score, 203.
23 hundreds and 93 fifties.

1882 and Before - Spofforth

When Mr. Warner asked me to write an article for him, he said he wanted something about the Test match at the Oval in 1882. It is a long time ago; yet I can recall almost every incident in that famous game as well as if it had been played last week.

The first great match that an Australian team played in England was against the M. C. C. eleven in 1878 at Lord's. This has not been counted as a Test match, but it really was; for in those days cricket was almost solely managed by the Marylebone Club, and they had the call of any cricketer they wanted. It was a fine eleven, and when we arrived at Lord's, fresh from our first defeat at Nottingham, we were not very confident.

Dr. W. G. Grace and Mr. A. N. Hornby started the batting, and our bowlers were Messrs. Boyle and Allan. Now, although the latter got Grace caught at short leg, off a shocking bad stroke, he was changed and I was deputed to bowl. The fun then commenced, and the strong M. C. C. team were out for 33 runs, I myself taking six wickets for 4 runs, and Boyle three for 14 runs. But more was to happen. Australia only made 41. M. C. C. commenced again with 'W. G. ' and A. N. Hornby. I began the bowling to 'W. G. ' and Mr. Murdoch, behind the wickets, missed him off my first ball, much to my sorrow; but the next ball knocked his leg bail thirty yards, and I screamed out 'Bowled.'

My third ball clean bowled A. J. Webbe, Boyle quickly disposed of C. Booth and A. W. Ridley, and A. N. Hornby had the misfortune to be 'cut over' and had to retire. Mr. Boyle then bowled Wild and Flowers, and G. G. Hearne and Mr. Vernon fell to me. A. N. Hornby then resumed, but could only just stand, and Boyle bowled him.

Boyle's analysis read six for 3 runs, and nine for 16, total 19. We had 12 runs to get, and lost C. Bannerman in getting them. Thus four innings, including luncheon and intervals, occupied only five and a half hours. The news spread like wildfire, and created a sensation in London and throughout England, and our hotel was almost besieged. The next day I read the following in a paper:

'The progress of the Australian eleven is dramatic. Their tame debut at Nottingham was in the nature of an unpretending overture; but the curtain fell to the first act at Lord's to rounds of applause when Grace, the far-famed batsman, went out for four and nought, and the wickets went flying right and left, so that the

This lovely article first appeared in The Cricketer, it was written by F.R (Fred) Spofforth (Pictured, left)., who played in the series he talks about - the Australian tour of 1882.



last fell for a ridiculously small score. It is evident that they will more than hold their own in this country. Their fielding is the admiration of all. Left-handed Mr. Allan is known as the "Bowler of a Century," Mr. Boyle is described as the "Very Devil," but Mr. Spofforth as the "Demon Bowler" carries off the palm. His delivery is quite appalling, the balls thunder in like cannon shot, and yet he has the guile, when seemingly about to bowl his fastest, to drop a slow which is generally fatal to the batsman.

Mr. Spofforth is a Yorkshireman by extraction. His father was well known as a sportsman, and rode as straight as the best with the York and Ainsty and other packs.'

I found myself famous almost at once, and always regarded this match as one of the most interesting I ever played in. I think the most exciting game, however, was the Test match at the Oval in 1882. They were two splendid teams, and both thought they would win. Mr. Murdoch won the toss, and sent in H. H. Massie and A. C. Bannerman, but we made a sorry show, being all out for 63, and were most disappointed.

I might speak for myself, and say I was disgusted, and thought we should have made at least 250; but when England went in they did very little better, only making 101. Australia's second innings started well enough, Massie and A. C. Bannerman putting on 66 before the former was bowled by A. G. Steel for 55. On returning to the pavilion Massie, disappointed, told me he was very sick, because he had no right to hit at the ball; but he said Steel was commencing to bowl well, and he thought another four would cause him to be taken off.

The second wicket fell at 70, and with the exception of our captain, run out 29, no one did anything, and we were all out for 122, leaving England 85 to win.

An unfortunate incident occurred in this match, namely, the running out of S. P. Jones, but so much has been written on the event that I merely mention it. Anyway, it seemed to put fire into the Australians, and I do not suppose a team ever worked harder to win. With only 85 to make to win, W. G. Grace and A. N. Hornby commenced England's second innings. I bowled Hornby at 15, and Barlow at the same total, but then W. G. Grace, who had been missed by A. C.

Bannerman, fielding very close in at silly mid-on, and Ulyett made a stand, and reached 51 before another wicket fell, Ulyett being caught at the wicket by Blackham. I had before asked Murdoch to let me change ends, as I was having no luck, and Boyle then got 'W. G.' caught by Bannerman.

Then came the most exciting cricket I ever witnessed. Four wickets were down, and only 32 runs required; but I must confess I never thought they would be got. A. Lyttelton and A. P. Lucas then came together, and at one time Boyle bowled no less than nine overs for one run, and I ten overs for two runs. Then we agreed to let Lyttelton get a run, so as to change ends.

Bannerman was to allow one to pass at mid-off, which he did, and Lyttelton faced me, when I bowled him. This was the real turning-point, as Lucas, getting opposite to me again, turned the first ball into his wicket, and six wickets were down for 63, and we all felt we were on top.

With seven more runs added I bowled M. Read, and Boyle got Barnes caught. A. G. Steel then came in. I pitched a ball about four inches outside his off stump,

he started to play forward to it, before he had touched the ball I was off in the direction of silly mid-on, and Steel quietly played the ball right into my hands. C. T. Studd and Peate then came together, and Boyle bowled Peate for two, and Australia had won by 7 runs.

England v Australia

August 28, 29, 1882.

Kennington Oval, London.

Toss: Australia.

Australia 63 (Blackham, 17. Murdoch, 13. Boyle, 10. Barlow 5-19. Peate 4-31) and 122 (Massie, 55. Murdoch, 29. Bannerman, 13. Peate, 4-40. Steel, 2-15)

England 101 (Ulyett, 26. Read, 19*. Steel, 14. Barlow, 11. Spofforth, 7-46. Boyle, 2-24) and 77 (Grace, 32. Lyttelton, 12. Ulyett, 11. Spofforth, 7-44. Boyle, 3-19).

Australia won by 7 runs.

The Men of Whom Most Was Expected Did Least

It will not come as too great a shock to most people to learn that the first day of Test cricket at Old Trafford, just 100 years ago, was washed out by rain. Rather more surprising was the performance of the Lancashire captain, A. N. Hornby, who captained England, opened the batting with W. G. Grace, and was out to the third ball he received . . . stumped!

Only two previous Tests had been held in England, both at The Oval, in 1880 and 1882. The first Test at Lord's was still nearly two weeks away. In those days the committee of the club staging the match chose the England team, and five Lancashire players were in the 12 for Old Trafford. As a member of the committee, Hornby helped to select himself, a decision that met with far from universal approval. But the criticism, generally, was subdued as befits a gentleman.

Said Wisden: 'His presence as captain was appropriate enough on the Manchester ground but I do not suppose the Lancashire captain himself would consider that he had, on this season's play, earned his place. However, he is an excellent captain of a mixed team.'

Another writer, J. N. Pentelow, said the English side was a very good one 'though perhaps the claims of Walter Read and Lord Harris were greater than those of Mr O'Brien, Mr Lucas or Mr Hornby.' And James Lillywhite talked of Hornby's selection as a courteous thing of the Lancashire executive although it was not

This article was written in 1984 by Brian Bearshaw who at that time was the Manchester Evening News cricket correspondent. It is such a lovely piece.

to be pretended that he was in the best representative eleven of England.'

Hornby's selection, however, was a minor irritation compared with that of Jack Crossland, the Lancashire fast bowler with the questionable action. Only that summer Notts had refused to play Lancashire because they believed they had, in the previous season, played in their eleven at least two men as to the fairness of whose bowling there is grave doubt.'

The Lancashire committee treated Notts' declaration with disdain. After a full discussion, it was unanimously resolved that no notice be taken thereof and no answer returned thereto.'

The team for the Test match was chosen at the committee meeting held at the Queens Hotel in Manchester on July 7, three days before the game. The 12 were: A. N. Hornby, A. G. Steel, W. G. Grace, A. P. Lucas, and Lord Harris, with Peate, Ulyett, Barnes, Crossland or Barlow, Shrewsbury and Pilling.

The committee, however, had a problem. Lord Harris, too, was not happy with Crossland's delivery and had earlier written to the committee expressing his feelings. Lancashire's secretary, S. H. Swire, read the letter from Lord Harris and was instructed to send the following reply: 'July 7, 1884. Dear Lord Harris, My committee have decided to play Crossland against the

Australians, therefore we suppose under the circumstances the English team will lose your valuable assistance, which we regret very much.'

So the team, when announced, did not include Lord Harris — who was to captain the team in the remaining two Tests — and in his place was a dashing young batsman from Middlesex, Timothy O'Brien. The coming game attracted little attention in the newspapers. The announcement of the greatest match ever staged outside London was of six lines among the advertisements on the front page of the Manchester Guardian: 'Cricket — Grand Match. England versus Australia. On the county ground. Old Trafford, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, July 10, 11 and 12. Wickets pitched at twelve o'clock. Luncheon at two. Admission — Pavilion side 2s 6d, rest of the ground 1s.'

The advert took its place alongside Beaty Brothers, offering cricket trousers at 7s 6d, Lewis's with 30-shilling suits, a berth on the American line from Liverpool to Philadelphia for £8 8s, a show at the Folly Theatre . . . 'delightfully cool, being illuminated by the Electric Light', and Beecham's Pills for cold chills, flushings of heat, giddiness, fulness and swelling after meals, scurvy, blotches on the skin, disturbed sleep and frightful dreams.' It had been a beautiful summer and Wisden later reported that the Australians had found cricket in England this year much harder work than they ever found it before', and said three days' rest before the Manchester Test was warmly welcomed.

The Manchester weather, of course, had just been teasing them. A storm broke the day before the match and returned just before play was due to start. Hornby, however, had time to win 'in the spin of the coin and looked to take innings'. It was estimated that about 10,000 people were present and when it was decided to abandon any hopes of play at 4.5 the crowd indulged in some rather noisy protest'. Play was able to start on time on the second day, when England went into the match without the controversial Crossland. The Australians were received with a hearty cheer when they took the field. Hornby and Grace, the England openers, 'left the pavilion at five minutes past 12 and were cheered as they walked to the wicket'.

W. G., bless him, kept the first three overs from Spofforth and Boyle all to himself. 'The last ball of the first over he put inside point for a single and from the other end he played Boyle in the same direction for another couple,' reported the Manchester Evening News. The last ball of the over he played past point for a single and thus once more got the bowling. Spofforth's third ball he again cut late for a couple. Mr Hornby now got his first ball and after playing two balls from Boyle the third one beat him and Blackham had his bails off in an instant.'

Grace soon followed and England were 13 for 2 when rain held up play. The game resumed after 15 minutes

and after two maidens Spofforth bowled Ulyett with a 'breakback' that made England 13 for 3. Reported the Manchester Guardian: 'Cricket is a notoriously "uncertain" game, but there was no uncertainty about the fact that up to this point the batsmen had exhibited wretched form.' Steel was quickly out, leaving Arthur Shrewsbury, the experienced Notts professional, to hold England together with 43 before being bowled by Palmer 'with a curly one from leg'.

The crowd grew after lunch, the weather improved, and one estimate put the gate at 12,000. Another report said that when play was resumed there was scarcely a seat unoccupied'. England, however, disappointed the crowd by being dismissed for 95. a performance that brought the following comment from the Manchester Guardian: 'After the retirement of Shrewsbury the wickets fell with a ridiculous rapidity.'

Australia batted with much more assurance and overtook England with only four wickets down, finishing the second day at 141 for 7. George Bonnor, the big hitter, played dangerously close to his stumps two or three times before knocking one of the bails off when facing Edmund Peate, the Yorkshire left-arm spinner. Some difference of opinion appeared to exist with regard to the point and Bonnor remained at the wicket for half a minute until he was given out.' Australia were all out the following morning for 182, a lead of 87. and at 108 for 5 in their second innings England were in a critical position. A useful 20 from Lord Harris's replacement, O'Brien, turned the scale, but it was 5.15 before England were safe from defeat, with Dicky Barlow, the Lancashire allrounder, playing stubbornly at the end to guide England through a difficult patch.

Declared the Manchester Guardian: It will be remarkable if either Ulyett or Barnes is included in the next English eleven. The two professionals were either totally out of form or had no desire to distinguish themselves against the Australians.'

And the Manchester Evening News: 'The achievements of our champions were even in the best cases moderate, whilst in too many they were altogether contemptible. The men of whom most was expected did least. That Mr Hornby, Ulyett and Barnes should have two innings each and should score amongst them only 18 runs is astonishing to the very verge of incredibility.'

There were four changes to the England team for the second Test at Lord's, which they won handsomely by an innings and five runs after a magnificent 148 from Steel. The Manchester Evening News was elated: 'Excited patriots may breathe again. The old country has held its own and something more. We won so easily that argument and fine-spun theories of criticism are useless.'

The Future of English cricket

Another cricket season draws to a close, and despite the presence of the West Indians nobody can deny that it has been anything but a financial and cricketing failure which has caused one county at least (Leicestershire) to have serious thoughts about its future first-class status.

At the end of each summer it is now customary for most leading players and critics to agree that county cricket cannot survive in its present form, and that the championship must be drastically overhauled if it is to become anything near a financial proposition. Yet the likelihood is that next season the game will go on in much the same unsatisfactory way as it has this year with perhaps a few token rules changes of minor significance which will strike only at the symptoms, and not the causes, of county cricket's troubles.

Two very significant innovations have, however, been made recently, in 1963 and during this year, which have been outstandingly successful in attracting the spectator—the Knock-out Cup (The winners, Sussex, pictured, below) and Sunday cricket. These innovations have shown clearly that there still are many people willing to pay to watch cricket if they have the time at their disposal and if there is some guarantee of interesting play. The problem is



therefore to arouse this latent spectatorship by making cricket more conducive to watch, and this I believe can be done by adopting a championship system, which as well as drawing the crowds might also go a long way towards rehabilitating the name of English cricket in the eyes of the world.

The Basis

The basis of this system would be a four-day championship match played over the week-end and beginning on Saturday. This would necessitate halving the number of matches played at the moment, but even under present conditions it is doubtful if there would be all that much financial loss, for whether you play a four-day match over the week-end or two three-day matches on the six weekdays there are only two days either way on which most of the general public are able to watch it. As there would only be

Something came up in a conversation recently with a customer of mine, he made the comment that the issues that have surrendered cricket have been fairly much the same throughout the game's history.

He then sent me the following article and if a few tell-tale references were removed, this could be from any period from the 1900's to the 1990's. It was actually written in 1966 by a Playfair Cricket Monthly reader, Mr. E. A. Davey.

one home or away match with each county, questions might occur with regard to the fairness of the fixture list, but it would be no more unreasonable than the present arrangements where a county may only play the strong Worcestershire side once and have two matches against lowly Nottinghamshire whilst another county may suffer from a reverse arrangement.

Comedy Matches

Any disadvantage of playing, say, the Yorkshire match away from home might be lessened by the making of hard, true wickets on every ground where county cricket is played, an obvious essential of four-day games. This is easy to ask for, I know, but an all-out effort must be made to ensure that two-day comedy matches on crumbling strips are a rare occurrence. Even if they did occur in matches scheduled to last four days, at least the action would take place on Saturday and Sunday when people could watch it. But good lasting wickets are vital for the rejuvenation of English cricket, for the promising young batsman who must be encouraged to play his shots, for the good of the spin-bowler who would get a long afternoon stint and would come into his own again, and for the development of genuine fast bowlers who would be able to make an impact on an Australian tour. Four-day cricket on good wickets would also be far better preparation for the rigours of five-day Tests than the present three-day matches, as Australians well know.

Another not inconsiderable advantage of four-day matches is that an extra day could be allotted to games to compensate for any loss of time caused by interference from the weather. This would do much to alleviate the intense frustration felt by all cricket followers when the rains come tumbling down. The big disadvantage of course appears to be that with so much time in the game batsmen may be tempted to dig in and make a laborious job of taking advantage of the opportunity to amass mammoth scores.

This sort of thing, however, apparently does not happen much in the four-day matches of the Sheffield Shield, and it could be prevented from happening here by awarding a substantial number of bonus points for faster scoring in the first innings.

Under a four-day match system there would be more scope for the Knockout Cup, and the early rounds in this competition need not be played, as they are now, in the chill of late April and early May. Nor would players become so jaded towards the end of the season, as they cannot help but become by playing six days a week from May into September and often performing in Sunday matches as well.

A most important subsidiary innovation necessary would be the allowing of one or two overseas players to appear for each county without having to wait two years for a residence qualification.

Mushtaq Mohammad of Northamptonshire (Pictured, right) has had to do this and in consequence has been forced to waste two years in second-eleven cricket and has yet to regain the spark of genius that made him one of the world's most attractive batsmen. Gary Sobers (Pictured, below), it is reported, might well have joined Lancashire, not currently a strong side, for 1967 if the two-year qualification rule was not in force. If Sobers and other leading overseas players came here to perform for the



assumption that they do not need county practice to enable them to produce results in a Test match. Barrington and Titmus, on the other hand, were till recently the bulwarks of the English side, but under the strain of year-round Test cricket, in the case of Barrington since 1959 and Titmus since 1962, they have now tired so much that they have dropped out of the Test match running from sheer exhaustion.

It is criminal that members of the press should find it necessary to have to label them as finished when they each ought to have a good ten cricketing years left in them.

With a winter's rest no doubt they will come to the fore again and claim the Test places they each deserve by virtue of their skills, but they should never have had to be dropped as they had to be. Can you blame Barber and Dexter for not being keen to play all the time when they see how the fortunes of Barrington and

Titmus have waned? It is not only business considerations they have to take into account. Suppose Amiss of Warwickshire makes the grade in the England side—if the present state of affairs continues he will alternate the rigours of a full English county and Test season with playing in foreign climes not always congenial to Englishmen, with hardly a break till, about the time he is thirty, however strong physically and mentally he may be, he will be exhausted and publicly declared an official wash-out.

At their Peak

This situation is appalling and little notice seems to be taken of it. We cannot afford to continue letting our few really good players grind themselves into the dust when they should still be at their peak.

With a four-day match system, less first-class cricket would be played, and there would be less likelihood of players becoming jaded. Abroad, surely Australia, for one, could be encouraged to send far more touring teams to New Zealand and the Indian sub-continent to encourage the game there, where England at the moment does more than her fair share.

And when England did make a full tour to Pakistan, for example, she might be able to pay the host-country



not-so-strong what a boon it would be for the

championship! It would mean a levelling up of the sides with a consequent title-race involving far more sides, whereas in the latter stages of this year only Yorkshire, Worcestershire and Kent have had a real interest in the pennant. And it is no secret that there will be more support for a team that is in with a chance of the title than for one jogging along even as high as fifth or sixth but with nothing special to aim for.

Less Touring

English cricket would also benefit from less touring overseas. This can be shown by referring to two significant classes developing amongst top English cricketers - one group includes Bob Barber (Pictured, right) and Ted Dexter, the other Ken Barrington and Fred Titmus. Barber and Dexter are criticised for their half-hearted attitude towards whether they actually want to play the game, for not wanting to go on overseas tours (though Barber has yet to turn one down, it seems likely that he would not be keen to go on another Indian tour) and for seeming to act on the



the compliment of parading all her leading players. As for South Africa, the case of D'Oliveira should have brought home to everyone what a tragic state of affairs exists there. If she would only abandon her contemptible and pointless laws of sports segregation she could do a valuable job by taking teams to, for example, India, and so by relieving the load on others would help to achieve a more balanced circuit of international Test series. This, alas, is wishful thinking, but it is the only unrealistic suggestion in this article. But if the game is to carry on in its present form, then the least cricket could do would be to try a little inexpensive public relations.

When I go to Lord's the first thing I see is a sign on the wall saying grimly that play is not guaranteed and no money is returnable. If there are clouds in the sky, this sign is enough to make anybody think twice before going in.

The precaution at Lord's against people losing their money is that if it is raining at the start of the day's play the gates are not opened and one is obliged to wait in a miserable wet queue. I am sure that most would prefer to pay and wait in a covered seat, even if money was not returnable, but surely money should be returned if there is no play, or a voucher issued giving free admittance to another day's play?

How can one justify paying for nothing? Also I would like to be able to buy a scorecard at the beginning of

play, and not have to go and get one at 11.40 to find out who has opened the batting for the visiting team. If the exact side is not chosen till after the toss, then print twelve or thirteen names on the scorecard and announce the omissions over the loudspeaker, an instrument which although it can be over-used is certainly under-used on most grounds.

An unfortunate class of spectators, at Lord's anyway, are often the schoolboys, who if they go to sit on the grass behind the boundary are peremptorily moved back to the seats by attendants. What harm is done by sitting on the grass? Rather it should be remembered that in the hands of these boys lies the future of cricket as a game and spectator-sport. It would take little trouble on anybody's part to make the spectators feel welcome at a match, and not, as they are at Lord's, made to feel intruders into a mysterious citadel, where even though they have paid their four-shillings they get the impression that it does not matter whether they are there or not.

This then is an outline plan for the rehabilitation of English county and Test cricket. There are doubtless many flaws which might be awkward to overcome, but it does attempt to make proposals that are practicable. Although it does not pretend that it will make county cricket solvent the writer suggests that its adoption might stop cricket's current inevitable downward slide and revitalise interest in the game amongst both players and spectators.

A Cricketing Encounter'

As a lover of travel I've made some interesting journeys, one being from Manchester to Hong Kong - by RAIL! . The Channel Tunnel was open but not in what they call revenue earning consequences so Harwich Parkstone Quay to The Hook of Holland was done by ferry.

I was wearing a Lancashire/Old Trafford sweat shirt when a stranger came up and asked if I was 'into' cricket. I said yes (of course) and he then asked if I'd heard of his dad. A quick glance at the name badge he was wearing prompted me to reply 'But only if your dad was Norman Preston - editor of Wisden.' He confirmed that was the case and seemed pleased that some idiot in Siberia knew of him.

A bit of google work shows there were two sons of Norman Preston and I've no idea which one I was talking with. We were chatting on the Trans-Siberian railway (or Rossiya as the locals would have it) and were just short of Irkutsk - the so called capital of Siberia.

Another part of the same trip was a delay just after leaving Mongolia when we were allowed to get off the train and I indulged in a bit of slip catching with three Aussies - there's not much else to do on the edge of the Gobi!

You Cad Moriarty

I and she who must be obeyed managed an enjoyable long weekend in London recently. We stayed for the sake of pampering in a five star hotel and attended a posh dinner held by The Sherlock Holmes Society in the House of Commons Members dining room.

Getting there involved a walk along the corridors of power and was quite an experience, the guest speaker was Professor Moriarty - there is a real one!

He is at Cambridge University but is an authority on French Medieval Literature rather than Mathematics and organised crime, but he did tell a good tale rather like Sir Arthur was himself.

Bend it Like a Postman

Bill, I don't know if you have read Christopher Matthew's book 'The Diary of a Somebody'. Simon, the erstwhile hero, who was to social relationships what Genghis Khan was to peaceful international relations sent for a language course which came on records. The retailer narked the package 'Records - Do Not Bend', the postman appended 'Oh yes they do!' and having bent them in two delivered them through the letter box.

Wisden reader Tony Martin has been sending me some lovely snippets, and above are just a few.

The Boxing Day Game at Alwoodley

Maintaining the sequence of games, which has remained unbroken since the first match in 1949, the Northern Cricket Society again visited Alwoodley - a suburb of Leeds - for their annual Boxing Day fixture.

The extremely cold day did not attract quite so large a crowd as in 1963 but, apart from an occasional snow shower, the weather remained fine throughout the game. It is, indeed, a remarkable fact that in the whole series only one game - the 1955 match against Alwoodley - has remained unfinished because of heavy rain.

Brian Close (Pictured, below) again captained the Society side - fitting in the game between cricketing visits to India and Ceylon in December and January respectively - and the fact that he had recently been engaged in the middle probably gave him an advantage over his colleagues and opponents.

In any event, after he had elected that the Society should take first knock (it previously having been



decided to play the match on the basis of 26 overs per side), Close opened the innings with L. N. Cartwright and soon began to score all round the wicket. Alwoodley did not have to wait long for their first success, though, for with the score on 34 Cartwright mistimed Radford's first ball and was bowled for 11.

Lawrence, the former Somerset player (maintaining his record of having played in every Boxing Day fixture), batted at No. 3 and he soon settled down with Close to provide the crowd with some really attractive batting.

Runs came freely and both batsmen despatched loose balls to the boundary with such regularity that their century partnership came in the remarkably short time of 34 minutes. Griffiths, the Alwoodley skipper, made frequent and sensible bowling changes but could not prevent either batsman from scoring a half century. In arriving at his 50, Lawrence created yet another record, as he became the first player to have 50 to his name in three successive Boxing Day fixtures.

There is, of course, always an element of risk in big hitting and Lawrence was eventually bowled by Pickard after the pair had added 138 and his own total stood at 72 - a score which included 2 fours and 5 sixes, and which was made in only 52 minutes. As so often happens after a big partnership, Close also fell to Pickard, in the latter's next over, when he was well

This is a delightful article from 1965 describing the annual Boxing Day match in Alwoodley (the report refers to the 1964 match). At the foot of the article there is a link to a film of the game - I cannot find any information as to when the annual event stopped, if indeed it has ceased to be played.

caught by Ackroyd for 73.

There was only time for one more over when Richardson joined Millett, the Cheshire captain (whom many will remember for the fine way in which he led his side against Surrey in last season's Gillette Cup competition), but the new batsman soon fell to Berg. Berg deserved this success, for in a spell of four overs his medium fast bowling had had the other batsmen in some trouble. It was unfortunate, therefore, that the last over should have been his, for Millett and Turner, who replaced Richardson, could afford to hit out at every ball and, in fact, they added a further 14 runs so that the Society's innings was closed with the score standing at 199 - 4.

In batting second, Alwoodley held the dubious advantage of knowing the required scoring rate - 7.6 per over - and could, as a result, plan their innings accordingly. However, as has so often proved to be the case in the Gillette Cup, the fielding side were able to adequately restrict the run rate and one was ultimately left in little doubt that in such games the winner of the toss is in by far the best position from which to control the game.

Berg and Dyson opened for Alwoodley and had a promising opening partnership which, if slow by the Society's standards, laid the foundation for a possible onslaught later in the innings.

Close had replaced both the opening bowlers, Fearnley and Maston, by Lawrence and Richardson and it was in Richardson's first over that Berg got a touch to a rising ball that was well taken by Chadwick behind the stumps. Dyson was joined by Don Wilson - guesting for the local side, as he had done in previous years - but the partnership soon ended when Dyson was run out for 16.

Griffiths, the Alwoodley captain, joined Wilson and the pair quickly made an attempt to retrieve the situation by sharing in a whirlwind partnership of 46 in 16 minutes. Both players looked well set and would, no doubt, have continued in their free-scoring vein had not Close decided to give himself an over in an attempt to take the wicket of his county colleague. The ruse worked; Wilson was stumped with 29 to his name after Close's first ball - and the object of the exercise having been accomplished, the captain promptly took himself off at the conclusion of the over.

Griffiths continued to score freely but was unable to find another partner to stay with him, as neither Pickard nor Ross had played themselves in before they lost their wickets to Carter's bowling.

Griffiths ultimately fell to Millett for an attractive 42 - and Millett became the third player in the match to take a wicket with the first ball he delivered; no doubt some kind of record - but the excitement mounted in his second over when Millett took two further wickets with successive balls.

Fortunately for Quick, the No. 10 batsman, his immediate predecessor at the wicket had been caught off a skier and the batsmen had crossed, so it was Mitchell who had to face the 'hat-trick' ball. Far from losing his wicket, Mitchell despatched the ball over the rails for 6 and he appeared to be in such fine form that Alwoodley might conceivably have brought off a surprise victory if the openers had been able to score more freely in the early stages of the innings. However, as it was, the Society ran out winners by 42 runs at the conclusion of an interesting and well fought match and

thus retained the Featherstone Trophy for a further year.

Such is the enthusiasm for the game in Yorkshire that tentative plans were already being discussed for the 1965 fixture at the Dinner which followed the game. Observant readers will have noticed that December 26th falls on a Sunday this year and the game will almost certainly take place on Monday, December 27th, which has already been declared a Bank Holiday.

Alwoodley, December 26th.

Northern Cricket Society

199 - 4 innings closed, 26 overs (D. B. Close, 73. J. Lawrence, 72. G. Pickard, 2-18)

Alwoodley

157 - 8 innings closed, 26 overs (D. Griffiths, 42. D. Wilson, 29. F. W. Millett, 3-19. G. Carter, 2-12.)

Northern Cricket Society won by 42 Runs.

[Click Here](#)

Wisden 1922:

Board of Control of Test matches at home: regulation 17.

No player on the fielding side shall leave the field for the purpose of having a rub-down or shower whilst a match is actually in progress.

Wisden 1903.

Kennington Oval, April 28, 29, 30, 1902. Fry, who only two days previously had taken part in the Final Tie for the Football Association Cup, showed surprising good form, assisting Grace to put on 130 for the first wicket.

Wisden 1935.

During the season a suggestion was made that Leicestershire should amalgamate with Lincolnshire, but naturally nothing came of the proposal and the Leicestershire authorities decided to carry on in the hope of better support in the future.

Wisden - Deaths in 1934.

Correction: Mr. E. J. Bartlett, West Indies, of whom an obituary notice appeared in last year's issue of the almanack, wrote from Bridgetown in march with he assurance, "that I am very much alive and fit." It is a pleasure to publish this message.

Wisden 1936.

At Leicester, June 12, 13, 14, 1935. Leicestershire, on Wednesday, made their first bowling change since June 3, Smith and Geary having bowled throughout four successive innings.

Wisden 1956. Notes by the Editor - Norman Preston. The gradual decline in Australia's cricketing strength since the retirement of Sir Donald Bradman at the end

of his triumphant tour of England in 1948 was not halted by the team of 17 players led by Ian Johnson in 1956. Although they lost the rubber by the bare margin of two wins against one, they were more or less outplayed in four of the five Tests and gave a disappointing display against the majority of the counties.

Wisden 1997.

At Pune, February 29, 1996. Kenya v West Indies: Group A Cricket World Cup.

Kent won by 73 runs. Kenya's victory was hailed as one of the biggest upsets in cricket history. It was the more extraordinary for being the work of their bowlers, rather than their highly rated batting. Captain Maurice Odumbe thought his team were done for when he lost the toss: once they were all out for 166, he was certain of it. But his amateur attack dismissed West Indies for 93, their lowest World Cup score and their second worst in any one-day international. West Indies nightmare began with Richardson being bowled leg stump by Rajab Ali. The collapse became critical when Lara was caught behind by Tariq Iqbal, whose stout figure and village-standard juggling had hitherto caused much mirth.

The last wicket went the same way as the first - Cuffy was bowled by Rajab Ali, who fell into his team-mates arms. As the Kenyans ran an exuberant victory lap, cheered by local spectators, West Indies realised that, level on points with Kenya and Zimbabwe, they could no longer be certain of reaching the quarter-finals. The future of their captain, Richardson, looked even bleaker.

Wisden Cricketers Almanack

Synopsis of the Decade 1970-79

It was always going to be difficult for this decade to live up to the champagne culture of the sixties and it didn't. In Britain the country was plunged into a three-day working week for industry, to preserve energy, and the government was forced to apply to the IMF for a \$3.9 Billion loan, not a large sum today but huge fifty years ago.

Problems with Northern Ireland festered and included IRA assassinations of Lord Mountbatten and Airey Neave a WW2 hero and conservative MP. Rolls Royce declared itself bankrupt and with the odd exception of the halfpenny the pound converted to decimal currency.

Early in the decade there was a six-week coal strike. Industrial unrest simmered throughout the entire ten years. It was against this backdrop that the country joined the European Common Market. Voting in the parliament was 356 to 244. The major protagonist to Britain's entry had been the French President Charles de Gaulle who died in 1970.

Toward the end of the decade amid strikes and general disillusionment Britain endured its "Winter of Discontent". Rubbish resulting from a garbage strike piled up in the streets of London. A no confidence vote in the parliament caused a change of government and Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister.

Elsewhere, the USA became embroiled in the Watergate scandal. Racial issues dominated life in South Africa. The Vietnam war ended marking its first military defeat for the USA. India became a nuclear power. Richard Nixon resigned the USA Presidency. Countries rich in oil, played havoc with their pricing, creating rampant inflation world-wide. East and West Germany joined the UN. Rhodesia now Zimbabwe declared its independence and the Governor General of Australia dismissed its elected prime minister, causing a general election and a change of government.

Literature and the arts recorded several significant obituaries including E.M. Forster, Erich Maria Remarque, Noel Coward, J. R. R. Tolkien, W. H. Auden, Pablo Picasso. Jacob Bronowski, Agatha Christie and P. G. Wodehouse. Amongst the authors the Russian Solzhenitsyn stood tall winning the Nobel prize for literature and publishing several books.

Other authors prominent in the decade included J. G. Farrell, Alvin Toffler with "Future Shock", Fredrick Forsyth, Richard Adams with "Watership Down", Iris Murdoch, Graham Greene and John LeCarre. Musicians to pass away included Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Igor Stravinsky, Jim Morrison, Duke Ellington, Dimitri Shostakovich, Benjamin Britten, Elvis Presley, Maria

Over the years one of the Wisdeners' most loyal and supportive readers, John Pratt, has contributed regular articles and comments and at the bequest of me (Bill) John embarked on writing a series "Wisden Decade by Decade."

I am delighted that the next in the series, the 1970's is published on the following pages.

John who would describe himself as a £10 Pom has lived in Australia since the 1960s, but I would struggle to find anyone who would cheer louder at an England century or the fall of an Aussie wicket in an Ashes Test. Thank you John.

Callas, Bing Crosby and Aram Khachaturian. If you want a long life, it would seem classic practitioners have it all over pop stars! The most successful recording musicians were, The Rolling Stones, Rod Stewart, Bob Marley, Neil Diamond, David Bowie, Elton John, Abba and Fleetwood Mac. Kris Kristofferson, Cat Stevens, Simon and Garfunkel and Carly Simon were also active during the decade.

The Beatles split up in 1970. Mention should be made of Don McLean with "American Pie" and Billy Joel with "Piano Man" Late in the decade Kate Bush recorded "Wuthering Heights" and The Village People "Y.M.C.A." On stage and screen musicals made a big recovery. Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber introduced "Jesus Christ Super Star", "Evita", Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat", Richard O'Brien "The Rocky Horror Show" and Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey "Greece".

The big movies took on a sombre tone for the most part 'Clockwork Orange', 'The Godfather', 'The Day of the Jackal', 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest', 'Marathon Man', 'Star Wars', 'The Deer Hunter', 'Kramer v Kramer' and 'The Go Between'. There was so much more but unfortunately space does not permit.

So now at last to cricket and Wisden. The seventh decade of the twentieth century redefined the game we call cricket completely.

An Australian media baron, Kerry Packer (Pictured, right) laid siege on Lord's, demanding access to the game for his television station.



Long, protracted negotiations commenced between him and the M.C.C. executive which were eventually presided over by the crown and were resoundingly won by the media baron.

It's all covered in Wisden, although one must be aware, that Wisden had for many years, marched to the tune of the powerful men at Lord's and that, their reporting of events may favour them.

Whatever your preference may be, there is no doubt the game of cricket we watch today, the money and innovation at work in the game, the various styles of play offered to us all stem from these events of the 1970's. The greatest gain made by Packer has, ironically, been best enjoyed by professional cricketers who are no longer seen as the poor relations of other sports celebrates.

During the decade the price of Wisden increased by 4 pounds sterling from £1.75 in 1970 to £5.75 in 1979. The 1970's was the first decade not to be able to record an all-rounders double of 1,000 runs and 100 wickets in a first-class season since W.G. Grace first achieved it in 1886.

In the 1970 issue one day cricket at the first-class level is a major topic of conversation for the editor, he also outlines some changes to the lbw law. South Africa take a caning from him for continuing apartheid policies in international sport, and there is speculation on the makeup of the England party to tour Australia later in the year.

The new lbw law receives qualified approval from the editor in the 1971 issue. The cancellation of South Africa's tour of England was offset by a successful "Rest of the World" Test series. Fine weather prevailed throughout the summer and Lancashire emerged from many years of struggle to take off two titles and to threaten in the third. Wisden informed us that none of the first-class counties made a profit in 1970 and there is some debate concerning changes in the structure of the County Championship. The selection of Ray



Illingworth (Pictured, left) to lead England is discussed in the light of knowledge the tour was proceeding successfully.

Benson and Hedges introduced a new one-day competition in England in 1972, The Saturday League

Cup. To make space for it in the calendar the County Championship was again reduced, this time by another 4 matches down from 24 to 20.

The editor is seen to approve the move, saying, "The one-day game is leading to more attractive cricket." He certainly did not agree with Ray Illingworth's finger waving at an Australian umpire, calling it "A breach to the spirit of cricket." He then poses a question, how much longer can the 40 old Illingworth continue in the job, and to whom should the captaincy go? In fact, Norman Preston is full of questions, should tours be by England or M.C.C? Certainly not both. Well, we know the answer to that one now. Are England's Test pitches too slow? Apparently, they were and the Lord's square was about to be re-laid.

Significantly he signals the emergence of India at last as a formidable world power in the game, how right he was. We are also informed that the lbw law has reverted to the 1969 interpretation and that The T.C.C.B. has amended overseas player registrations from 5 to 2 per county.

By 1973 Wisden is blaming one-day cricket for a fall in the standard of batsmanship along with an overcrowded cricket calendar, an increase in the number of forms of the game and tedious travel on crowded motor-ways. Reports of foul language, bad behaviour and gamesmanship come under scrutiny but no solution is offered to deal with the indiscretions. Lancashire cricket and their captain, Jack Bond again meet with approval from the editor.

Although there will always be differences of opinion on when the County Championship commenced, the 1973 Wisden celebrated the centenary of its formation. There is also an insight into the manufacture and quality control of the top of the range cricket balls produced in England.

We now move to the 1974 issue. The editor, possibly not Ray Illingworth's most ardent admirer, reviews the England captain's era of 36 Test matches, his successor is Mike Denness, a Scotsman from the county of Kent. He is seen as an unknown quantity, not having previously been a regular member of the England Test team.

The incident between umpire Arthur Fagg and the West Indian Test captain Kanhai during the 1973 Test series gets aired, apparently Kanhai persistently baited Fagg after he had declined an appeal against Boycott for a catch at the wicket. Whatever happened to the old maxim, the umpire's decision is final?

There was some tinkering with the laws pertaining to the County Championship in an effort to produce more attractive play. Changes in the management and staff at Lord's are enumerated at some length and the increasing incidents of sponsorship in cricket are gratefully acknowledged, especially since they seem to have taken some of the financial burden off the counties. The work on grassroots cricket by the

foundation is particularly appreciated. South Africa has at last come to realise it will remain in isolation until it invites coloured tourists into its grounds, Wisden welcomes this change in attitude.

In 1975 the Almanack introduced team photographs of all the counties for the first time. Something for idle speculation is the boycott by Boycott of the England Test team in the early seventies, it will always be a mystery. Surely, it was not merely the barrage of very fast bowling from Australia and West Indies that drove him to it, although he may have weighed this nightmare against the alternative of feeding on the less fearsome offerings of the county circuit. I often wonder is Geoffrey the only person who lives with the truth of this strange decision?

The Australians used to send telegrams to Lord's when their opponents had the very quick bowlers. In 1974-75 the English tourists absorbed the furious punishment of Thomson and Lillee in silence. There were no whingers, no complaints, no telegrams, just bruises and broken bones. I was at the entire Sydney Test and walked away proud to be an Englishman even though the match and series were lost. There are 4 pages in the editors notes of 1975 about extreme pace.

The English summer of 1974 was a wet one which inflicted a heavy loss of income and hardship on the threadbare county coffers. Counties bowling less than 18.50 overs per hour incurred a fine which was shared between the club and the players. Today 15 overs per hour is acceptable in Test cricket. When Bradman scored 300 in a day at Leeds the England bowlers averaged 22 overs per hour. Spectators want brighter cricket but what they are getting is less cricket. We can thank the DRS for that. The editor takes some space in his notes to appraise Brian Close, who captained England, Yorkshire and Somerset and whose career in cricket stretched from the late 1940s well into the 1970s.

The first ODI World Cup was the highlight of the very hot summer of 1975. The final was a thrilling contest between Australia and West Indies at Lords. It was won in the dying embers of a warm summer evening, by the latter. After 565 runs had been scored and only 17 separated the two teams. It was a wonderful inauguration tournament and a fitting conclusion.

The one-day game had become a worthy attraction of cricket on the international stage. A. E. Grieg (Pictured, right) succeeded M. H.



Denness as England captain in 1975. The editor's notes include a further page of condemnation for intimidatory fast bowling, the late 1970s saw the introduction of batsmen's helmets.

A rare incident occurred during the Leeds Test of 1975 when the pitch was vandalised, the act was justly condemned but the damage was enough for the match to be abandoned (Ian Chappell, Australia captain and A.W. Greig, England captain, pictured below, examining the pitch). The future of the County Championship and the financial burden on the clubs who participate in it is causing concern and this in spite of them sharing 625,000 pounds between them, from the summer's takings. Wisden reports a change

of wind in South Africa with the concept racial cricket being debated but there are many hurdles to be overcome before it can occur.

The underlying theme in the editor's notes for the 1977 almanack are English cricket's need for grassroots coaching and training of young players

and the need to give promising youths opportunities at a higher level once they have been identified. There is an interesting accusation of ball tampering by England during their successful tour of India under the leadership of A. E. Grieg. However, it was unable to be proved. The West Indies cop some flack for their bowling tactics against England in the 1976 Test series. Several stalwarts of England's Test and county scene retired at the end of the 1976 season notably F. J. Titmus, B. W. Luckhurst, P. J. Sharpe, P. J. Sainsbury and J. A. Jameson.

The last two almanacks of the decade deal extensively with the Packer versus Lord's crisis and this was covered in the opening notes. If you need any more information on the subject these two Wisdens are full of it.

Cricket articles average about eight per almanack and cover a wide range of subjects. There are a number of regular professional journalists supplemented by a few blow-ins and old players, the latter two usually have interesting, amusing or off beat subjects to impart. Richie Renaud, Gordon Ross, John Woodcock, Roland Ryder, J. M. Kilburn and Basil Easterbrook are all regulars. Neville Cardus was too until he became the subject of a final appreciation by Alan Gibson in 1976. There are two beautiful appreciations in



the 1979 almanack, one of Herbert Sutcliffe and the other for Frank Woolley.

Basil Easterbrook is always a good read and he features in pretty well every Wisden of the decade. There is no league table for correspondents, they all maintain exceptionally high standards. HRH the late Duke of Edinburgh claims a couple of pages in the 1975 issue.

Why it is I do not know, but Wisden's obituaries are always one of my early browses upon receiving a new almanack. We know some of the names by their fame but every now and again somebody you really did know pops up. This can be sad but the expectation and surprises can make it worthwhile.

As the population rises the longer the section becomes so in these notes we have to restrict it to test players and notables like the odd groundsman, secretary or Test umpire of considerable fame. It is a section of Wisden that has improved in recent years, every now and again you find a warm hearted piece about a player you liked and admired.

The obituaries of the decade

1970 Wisden

V. Y. Richardson, South Australis & Australia aged 75
Emmott Robinson, Yorkshire Aged 86.

1971 Wisden

T. J. E. Andrews, NSW & Australia Aged 79
J. S. Buller, Yorkshire and Worcestershire. A Test match umpire Aged 60
J. H. Lyon, Oxford Uni & Gloucestershire Aged 68
Probir Sen, Calcutta Uni, Bengal & India Aged 43
G. Stevens, Oxford Uni, Middlesex & England Aged 69.

1972 Wisden

H. Strudwick, Surrey & England Aged 90
J. A. L. N. J. Christy, Transvaal & South Africa Aged 66
L. N. (Lord) Constantine, Trinidad & W Indies Aged 69
W. H. Copson, Derbyshire & England Aged 62
L. O. Fleetwood, Smith Victoria & Australia Aged 60
P. Holmes, Yorkshire & England Aged 85
H. Ironmonger, Victoria & Australia Aged 88
J. M. Taylor, NSW. & Australia Aged 75.

1973 Wisden

C. Hallows, Lancashire & England Aged 77
A.F. Kippax, NSW. & Australia Aged 75
E. A. Martindale, Barbados & West Indies Aged 63
S. J. Pegler, South Africa Aged 84.

1974 Wisden

S.G. Barnes, NSW. & Australia Aged 57
J. C. Clay, Glamorgan & England Aged 75
Miss M. B. Duggan, Worc, Yorkshire & England Aged 48
J. M. Gregory, NSW & Australia Aged 77
J. B. Iverson, Victoria & Australia Aged 58
J. A. Newman, Hampshire Aged 89

W. Rhodes, Yorkshire & England Aged 95
A. J. Richardson, South Australia & Australia Aged 85
F. M. Sibbles, Lancashire Aged 69
J. M. Sims, Middlesex & England Aged 68
H. W. Taylor, Natal & South Africa Aged 83
T. S. Worthington, Derbyshire & England Aged 68.

1975 Wisden

E. H. Bowley, Sussex & England Aged 84
C. S. Dempster, Wellington, Leics & N. Zealand Aged 70
H. W. Longrigg, Cambridge Uni & Somerset Aged 68
K. G. Viljoen, Western Province, Orange Free State & South Africa Aged 63
W. J. Whitty, NSW. & S. Australia & Australia Aged 87
H. Yarnold, Worcs & a Test match umpire. Aged 57.

1976 Wisden

Sir Neville Cardus OBE, Cricket correspondent and writer Aged 85
The 16th Duke of Norfolk, Cricket Patron Aged 66.

1977 Wisden

Dai Davies, Glamorgan & a Test match umpire Aged 79
A. E. R. Gilligan, Sussex & England Aged 81
Major James Gilman, Cambridge Uni & London County Aged 97
W. A. Oldfield, NSW & Australia Aged 73
K. J. Wadsworth, Wellington & New Zealand Aged 29.

1978 Wisden

C. J. Cobham (The Hon. C. J. Lyttelton), Worcs Aged 67
A. E. Fagg, Kent & England also a Test match umpire Aged 62
R. S. Grant, Cambridge Uni & West Indies Aged 68.
J. L. Johnson, Queensland & Australia Aged 68
A. D. G. Matthews, Northants, Glamorgan & England Aged 72.
W. E. Merritt, Northants & New Zealand Aged 68
E. P. Nupen, Transvaal & South Africa Aged 75
J. O'Connor, Essex & England Aged 79
C. J. Oliver, Canterbury & New Zealand Aged 71
R. T. D. Perks, Worcestershire & England Aged 66
J. Ryder, Victoria & Australia Aged 87.

1979 Wisden

G. R. Dickinson, Otago & New Zealand Aged 74
G. Jaysingh, India Aged 47
A. H. H. Gilligan, Sussex & England Aged 81
H. Gimblett, Somerset & England Aged 63
H. C. Lock Head groundsman at the Oval in the 1950's & 1960's, Aged 75
M. H. (Vino) Mankad, India Aged 61
G. A. E. Payne, Middlesex, Warwickshire & England, aged 69.
A. W. Roberts, New Zealand Aged 68
W. H. H. Sutcliffe, Yorks & England Aged 83
F. E. Woolley, Kent & England Aged 91
P. A. Gibb, Cambridge Uni, Yorks, Essex & England Aged 64
J. I. Nash, Yorkshire secretary Aged 71

Competitions Domestic

New competitions are cropping up and disappearing all over the world. Here we will record the reliable reports of the major competition of each country.

England. The County championship:

Two titles:

Kent and Middlesex

One title:

Glamorgan

Surrey

Warwickshire

Hampshire

Worcestershire

Leicestershire.

Australia. The Sheffield Shield:

Five titles:

Western Australia

Three titles:

South Australia

Two titles:

Victoria.

South Africa. The Currie Cup:

Five titles

Transvaal (one shared with Western Province)

Three titles:

Western Province (one shared with Transvaal)

Natal.

West Indies. The Shell Shield:

Five titles:

Barbados (one shared with Trinidad)

Three titles:

Trinidad (one shared with Barbados)

Two titles

Guyana

One title

Jamaica.

New Zealand. The Plunket Shield:

Three titles:

Otago

Two titles:

Wellington

One title:

Auckland

Central Districts.

In 1976 the name of the competition seems to have changed to The Shell Trophy and Canterbury, Otago and Auckland won one each.

India. The Ranji Trophy:

Eight titles:

Bombay

Two titles:

Karnataka.

Pakistan. Trophy winners in this country have been omitted because so many trophies come and go and the understanding of what constitutes first-class is extremely dubious.

Sri Lanka. The P. Saravanamutto Trophy was won by The Sinhalese Sports Club in 1978. This was the first and only report from Sri Lanka.

Test Cricket

There were 209 test matches played during the decade.

Australia 36

England won 33

West Indies 20

India 16

New Zealand 7

Pakistan 7

The Rest of the World 6

South Africa 4

Draws 78

Abandoned 2

All the Wisdens of the 1970's are excellent and not expensive to acquire. The 1978 & 79 are a must for people to understand properly the Packer invasion.

Thank you once again to John Pratt

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The Tea Interval

A ham sandwich walks into a bar and orders a beer, the bartender says - "I'm sorry, we don't serve food here."

Yesterday I saw a man spill all his scrabbles letters on the road, I asked him, "What's the word on the street?"

A man walks into a library and asks the librarian for books about paranoia. She whispers, "They're right behind you!"

What should you do if you're attacked by a group of circus performers? Go straight for the juggler.

A grasshopper sits down at a bar. The bartender says, "We have a drink named after you!" The grasshopper replies, "Who names a drink 'Barry?'"

So, the Pope is very early for his flight so he asks his driver on his way to the airport if he could drive around for a while because they have time to kill and he hasn't driven a car since becoming the pope. Naturally, he's a bit rusty, so he's driving poorly, when suddenly he sees police lights behind him. He pulls over and when the officer comes up to the window his eyes go wide. He says to the pope "Hold on for a minute," and goes back to his car to radio the chief. Cop: "Chief we have a situation. I've pulled over an important figure."

Chief: "How important? A governor or something?"

Cop: "No sir. He's bigger."

Chief: "So, what? a celebrity or something?"

Cop: "More important, sir."

Chief: "A major politician?"

Cop: "No sir, he's much more important."

Chief: "WELL WHO IS IT!?"

Cop: "Well actually I'm not sure. But the pope's his driver."

Ray Lindwall never bowled a bouncer at me. He said that if he couldn't bowl out a number nine then he oughtn't to be playing for Australia.

Jim Laker

The batsman was out first ball. On the long walk back tot he pavilion he had to pass the incoming batsman. "Hard luck," sneered the new batsman. "Yes. Its a shame that I had to be in the middle of a hat-trick."

The bowler had just gone out to bat when the telephone rang in the pavilion. A player answered it to be told it was the bowler's wife and she needed to speak to her husband.

"I'm sorry, but he's gone out to bat."

"Oh, thats all right," replied the wife, "I'll hold on."

The bowler got the batsman to snick a fast rising ball and the first slip took it cleanly. The umpire said, "not out." The next ball was also caught, this time by the wicket keeper. "Not out," said the Umpire again. The

bowler's next delivery was unplayable and completely uprooted two of the three stumps, the bowler looked at the umpire and remarked, 'That must have been quite close.!"

It was his first match for the second eleven and the batsman was lucky to have survived the first over. As the square leg umpire moved in, the batsman said nervously, "I suppose you've seen worse players." The umpire fiddled with a pencil he had in his hand. The batsman spoke again, "I say, I expect you've seen worst players."

"I heard you the first time," said the umpire, "I was just trying to recall."

The captain refused a request from a player to miss the four-day county match.

"I can't excuse you. If I did I'll have to do the same for every player who wins £7 million on the lottery."

They were short of an umpire so the captain walked into the bar and asked if there was an umpire present.

One woman

stepped forward,

"I'm an umpire."

"Have you stood before?" asked the captain.

"Of course I have and my three friends here will vouch for that" came the reply.

"Thank you for offering, but I don't think we'll accept."

"You don't think I'm an umpire" said the lady.

"Quite frankly, I don't, because i've never heard of an umpire having three friends."

The touring captain called the batsman to one side.

Tomorrow's Test is

going to be tough. These West Indian quickies are super fast and I want to talk to you because I need a batsman with great concentration, good eye, strong constitution, a battler with exceptional technique and who can really stand up to fast bowling, so thats why i'm making you twelfth man.

