

THE YORKER

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MORE THAN GREEN & GOLD

AUSTRALIA'S
SPORTING COLOURS



175
Celebrating 175 Years

In This Issue

Australia and the Development of a Green and Gold Identity
Thomas and Walter Carre Riddell, Two 19th Century Sporting Brothers
Village Cricket Melbourne Style
Twenty Pennants – Part 3, 1934/35 to 1937/38

THE YORKER



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COVER IMAGERY

CENTRE: The prototype boxing kangaroo flag designed for *Australia II's* America's Cup campaign of 1983. [N2013.66.1. Kindly on loan to the NSM from the Western Australian Museum.]

TOP LEFT: Ben Acton's 1960 Olympic ice hockey jersey. [AGOSOM collection, 1986.4.2.]

TOP RIGHT: The cap of Australia's first international rugby union team, 1899. [N2013.50.1. Kindly on loan to the NSM from the Australian Rugby Union Heritage Collection.]

CENTRE LEFT: Harry Williams' Australian (alternate) FIFA world cup jersey, 1974. [N2013.38.11. Kindly on loan to the NSM from Football Federation Australia.]

CENTRE RIGHT: Gracie Elvin's Orica-AIS national champion's jersey, 2013. [N2013.40.2. Kindly on loan to the NSM from Orica GreenEDGE.]

BOTTOM LEFT: Ian Chappell's World Series Cricket gold cap. [MCC Museum collection, M16235.]

BOTTOM RIGHT: Autographed Australian team helmet worn by Ruby Ribcrusher as captain of the first Australian roller derby team, 2011. [N2013.5.1. Kindly on loan to the NSM from Ruby Ribcrusher, aka Ruth Garry.]



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The Yorker takes a hat trick

It is with great pleasure that we inform you that on 17 October the International Sports Heritage Association (ISHA) announced that for the third year in a row their ISHY award for 'best program, annual report or magazine' was won by **The Yorker**.

The association's annual communications awards were presented during the Evening of Champions dinner at their annual conference hosted by the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame in Denver. Winners in other categories included the Babe Ruth Birthplace Museum, Bobby Orr Hall of Fame, Cincinnati Reds Hall of Fame, National College Baseball Hall of Fame, Pro Football Hall of Fame, Sports Museum of New England and Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.

The MCC is proud of its library staff and all contributors' achievement with the journal being acknowledged three years running. Published each summer, autumn and spring, ISHA committee chairperson Paula Homan commended **The Yorker**, 'for providing in-depth articles researched from the archives, featuring original historic materials'. We are delighted that issues 42 to 50 of **The Yorker** have now been honoured by the International Sports Heritage Association.

THE YORKER Read all about it!

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The three issues in the 2013/14 subscription will start with Number 52, Summer 2013/14 (the current issue) and run to Number 54, Spring 2014 (published in September).

MCC Members, and those on the waiting list, are able to subscribe for \$30.00, the Australian general

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MORE THAN
**GREEN
 & GOLD**
 AUSTRALIA'S
 SPORTING COLOURS

Australia and the Development of a Green and Gold Identity



Australia is one of the few nations in the world whose official colours differ from their national flag. The origins of those colours are embedded in the nation's sporting history, and have evolved alongside politics, commercialisation and national identity.

From colonial days, international team sport was one of the earliest ways that Australia presented a united identity to the outside world. The development of the Australian cricket team uniform from 1878 to 1899 is analogous with the political development of the Australian colonies.

The colours and emblems progress from representing the allegiances of the team (other sporting clubs, military references and commercial supporters)¹ to a more cohesive set of symbols (such as coats of arms and colour choices) that signify the coming together of the colonies.

From 1897, Australia's international sporting interests diversified and team uniforms began to represent more than just cricket. In 1897, Australian baseballers toured the USA wearing a blue and gold uniform similar to the cricketers'.² In 1899 the first Australian rugby union team sported a uniform that symbolised the different identities of two of the Australian colonies.

In the same year the Australian cricketers chose green and gold as their colours, coinciding with a time of strong national sentiment as Australia pushed towards federation. Native flowers and animals were popular patriotic symbols, appearing in official documentation as well as in local businesses cashing in on patriotic sentiment.

The cricketers' green and gold uniforms – whether chosen for their link to Australian flora or not – soon became identified as the colours of the gum tree and the wattle.³

The following group of essays address key developments of the national colours, taking as their starting point objects on display in the National Sports Museum, *More than Green and Gold: Australia's Sporting Colours*. Richard Cashman discusses the adoption of the cricketers' colours by the Australian Olympic team in 1908 and the later adaptations.

Michael Fahey recounts how the codes of rugby union and rugby league evolved from colonial colours. Roy Hay looks at Australian soccer uniforms from the game's earliest international forays in the 1920s, and Greg Hunter investigates the links between Australian colours and the broader traditions of national colours in international cycling.

The prototype boxing kangaroo flag designed for *Australia II's* America's Cup campaign of 1983.

[N2013.66.1. Kindly on loan to the NSM from the Western Australian Museum.]

Each of these essays reflects on developments that built momentum towards a certain tipping point in the late 1970s and early 1980s when the colours transformed from being purely a sporting uniform to being a signifier of the Australian social identity.

As Jeremy McEachern writes in his article, the addition of colour to the World Series Cricket uniforms brought the national colours to a highly commercialised television audience. This coincided with the growth of merchandising, the increase in national fandom and the growing prevalence of green and gold official merchandise for such patriotic campaigns as the 1982 Brisbane Commonwealth Games and the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

When the underdog crew of *Australia II* won the America's Cup in 1983, a proud nation eagerly adopted their boxing kangaroo battle flag as a symbol of Australia's sporting might. The victory was adopted by the new Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, as a metaphor for his vision for Australia: a plucky youngster able to match even the most established foes on the world stage.

Hawke reinforced this link on 9 April 1984 when his cabinet formally declared green and gold as Australia's national colours.⁴ In a subsequent rebranding exercise the Australian Bicentennial Committee unveiled a new green and gold logo, which became the symbol of officially sanctioned patriotism during the 1988 bicentenary.

The colours are not without their dissenters, of course. Detractors argue that they are jingoistic, conveying an aggressive, win-at-all-costs attitude that borders on racism. Others argue that the colours are uninspiring, outdated and make national uniforms ugly.

Despite these arguments, though, even the most recent sports to enter the pantheon of Australian representation – such as Roller Derby, as Michael Collins reflects on in his essay – join in the legacy of gum-tree green and wattle gold.

Helen Walpole

End Notes

1. For example: 1878 – pale blue for allegiance to the East Melbourne Cricket Club; 1882 – red, black and yellow in homage to the 96th Regiment of Foot; 1886 – red, blue and white in acknowledgement of the sponsorship of the Melbourne Cricket Club, with the MCC monogram on the cap. The origins of each uniform are mentioned in more detail in my article 'Cricket's Contribution to Australia's Sporting Colours', in the previous edition of *The Yorker*, Issue 51, Spring 2013, pp.16-18.

2. *The Argus*, 19 March 1897, p.6.

3. See my article 'Cricket's Contribution to Australia's Sporting Colours', *The Yorker*, Issue 51, Spring 2013, pp.16-18.

4. A decision subsequently formalised as a proclamation by the Governor General on 19 April 1984.

Ben Acton's Olympic Ice Hockey Jersey, 1960



Ben Acton's 1960 Olympic ice hockey jersey.
(AGOSOM collection, 1986.4.2.)

Australia is one of the minnows of world ice hockey with a tiny player base — 2821 registered players and 895 registered juniors in 2012 — and boasting only 20 ice rinks.

The sport has not had a long history in Australia, the first recorded one-off match taking place on 12 July 1906 when a team of interested locals and sailors from the USS Baltimore met at the Melbourne Glaciarium.

An Australian ice hockey team qualified only once for Winter Olympic competition, at Squaw Valley in 1960. The Australian team finished in last place (ninth), Olympic historian David Wallenchinsky recording that while the Australian team scored 10 goals it conceded 88.

However, ice hockey has contributed significantly to the evolution of Olympic uniforms with a unique green and gold design. Ben Acton's jersey is a rare item because, being captain of the 1960 Australian ice hockey team, he was the only player entitled to wear this jersey, the 'C' standing for captain. Because no other Australian ice hockey team has qualified for this event in the Winter Olympic Games, this particular jersey has never again been worn in Olympic competition.

The Olympic green-and-gold colours date from the London 1908 Olympic Games, which was the first occasion that athletes marched in national teams, with Australia joining New Zealand as Australasia. Athletes literally sewed on the country's sporting colours to their uniforms at a late stage given the limited notice.

The team followed the lead of the Australian cricketers who had adopted the green and gold colours in 1899, the green deriving from the eucalyptus (gum tree) and the gold from the acacia tree (wattle). A green and gold flag fluttered at the London hotel of the cricketers in 1899.

There are a number of unique design features of the 1960 ice hockey jersey. First, it combines the Australian colours with a North American jersey design, since ice hockey has long been popular in North America, and Canada in particular.

Canada won six of the first seven Olympic gold medals in ice hockey from 1924 (when it became part of the Winter Olympics program) to 1952. Canada, along with the Soviet Union, remains one of the powerhouses of world ice hockey.

Secondly, this jersey makes greater use of gold than many other Australian sporting uniforms in which green was the dominant colour. Gold is at the centre of the ice hockey jersey design and frames the uniform at top and bottom. By contrast, green was given prominence over gold in the Australian cricket cap – the baggy green cap – and Olympic blazers of the 1920s.

Perhaps ice hockey drew on the tradition of the Australian rugby team, the Wallabies, which played in gold jerseys with a green band for the New Zealand All-Black's tour of Australia in 1938. However, it was as late as the 1960s that the Wallabies first donned gold jerseys as a preferred strip, rather than as an alternative. It is likely that the Australian ice hockey team was the first Olympic team to make greater use of gold in its uniform.

The third unusual feature of the jersey is that the name of the country (as well as the 'C' denoting captain) appeared prominently on the front of the jersey, which was not a common practice in Australian Olympic uniforms, though the Australian baseball team adopted it in 1956. Acton played in the No.8 jersey, this number appearing on the back and sleeves.

Ben Acton, who was born in Footscray in 1927, was a plumber by trade and represented Australia in both field hockey and ice hockey even though he was one of the smallest and lightest (67 kg) players on the ice.

Acton had the opportunity to play for Australia in the field hockey side at Rome and the ice hockey team at Squaw Valley. However, he could not afford to participate in both so he chose his first love, ice hockey. Ben donated his jersey to the Australian Gallery of Sport and Olympic Museum (now the National Sports Museum).

**Richard Cashman – Australian Centre for Olympic Studies,
University of Technology, Sydney**

Australian Representative Rugby Union and Rugby League Jerseys and Caps



The cap of Australia's first international rugby union team, 1899. (N2013.50.1. Kindly on loan to the NSM from the Australian Rugby Union Heritage Collection.)

Just as the separate colonies approached federation from individual directions, so too each sport adopted different symbols and colours from alternative palettes when creating their new 'national' team's colours and uniforms.

The Australian cricketers adopted colours which specifically were not those of any of the various colonies. That is, green and gold were seen as neutral and were not worn by any state.

Reflecting not any particular colony but rather – quaintly in fact – chosen to honour and foster 'Australianness', wattle gold and eucalyptus green were adopted for the 1899 tour to England.

Rugby Union and then, following its formation in 1907, Rugby League took a completely different route when they created their national caps and jerseys.

The cap awarded to the first Test players of 1899 was blue and maroon, saluting the colours of the two Unions which comprised the team – blue of New South Wales and maroon of Queensland.

Rugby Union initially appeased the home state by wearing either NSW's sky blue or Queensland's maroon when playing another country. In some cases an 'A' was placed on the jerseys to indicate it was an Australian jersey.

The colour scheme for the first overseas tour to NZ in 1905 was solved by simply combining both colours, and for the next 19 years variations of either colour or combinations in 'hoops' or 'butcher's stripes' were used.

In 1908 for the first Wallaby tour (when the term Wallaby was first coined) the Australian side adopted the sky blue and waratah of NSW but with 'Australia' embroidered underneath.

Presumably this was done as the Southern Union (NSW) was the dominant body when the invitation was issued. It should be noted that, incredibly, the Australian Rugby Union was not formed until 1949.

For a period New Zealand, for which provision had been made in the Australian constitution for it to be the seventh state of the new Federation, combined with Australia to form Australasia in a number of forums.

Rugby League, which was formed by Union players, adopted the same colour schemes for its national garb. In 1910, after the Australian side had played the touring Great Britain team, an Australasian team also played an international. To signify New Zealand's participation, the commemorative cap included two black panels as well as blue and maroon.

The antipodean Rugby League representative sides that toured the UK in 1911/12 and 1921/22 contained Australian and New Zealand players and both were named 'Australasia'. They carried the silver fern and a black segment on their caps as well as the kangaroo.

(Interestingly, at the 1908 and 1912 Olympic Games our representatives and those of New Zealand also participated under the Australasian banner.)

The inclusion of black and the silver fern again reinforced the fact that Rugby Union and Rugby League included the colours and/or symbols of all the regions which made up the side.

In the late 1920s a major realignment of Australia's sporting colours was made and Rugby Union and Rugby League both adopted the green and gold, first worn as 'neutral' colours by the cricketers in 1899.

The Rugby League side wore green with small gold hoops in 1928 but then switched to their now traditional green with golden chevrons a year later when the Wallabies also adopted a green jersey with white collar.

Highlighting the state of flux concerning colours, symbols and crests, in 1929 both codes wore the pre-federation symbol still worn by the Australian cricket team rather than the Commonwealth Coat of Arms which featured the emblems of the six states. The cricketers' symbol depicted a ship, sheep, wheat, pick-axe and shovel around the Southern Cross.

The 1928-1929 change to a dark bottle green immediately caused clashes of colours. The Wallabies reverted to sky blue when they toured South Africa in 1933. The dark bottle green of both codes was thought to be too close to New Zealand's black and both codes adopted alternative jerseys in the 1930s when playing the Kiwis, bringing gold into the design.

Rugby continued to need alternative jumpers when the 'Boks played the Wallabies. In 1953 the South Africans wore white at home and we repaid the courtesy here in 1956 when the Wallabies adopted the plain jersey. The 1961 South African tour's alternative jersey of solid gold was adopted permanently in 1962 by Australia and has remained the colour since.

Michael Fahey – Sports Memorabilia Australia

Harry Williams' Alternate FIFA World Cup Jersey, 1974



When Harry Williams took the field in Berlin in West Germany on 22 June 1974 in the FIFA World Cup final tournament, he carried a significant amount of cultural symbolism with him. He was already the first player of Aboriginal heritage to represent his country at association football at senior international level, and now he was the first to do so at the pinnacle of the world game.

The shirt he wore and the name the team carried were much more recent additions to Australia's symbolic lexicon. The nickname 'Socceroos' was only coined in 1972. Exposure at the World Cup gave it wider currency.

Team uniforms emerged in the latter part of the 19th century and the numbering of players in the 20th. Gradually teams adopted specific and peculiar combinations of colours and designs. The symbolism of the outfit grew with each passing year and club and national team colours evolved and developed a mystique of their own.

The Australian soccer team played its first international match against New Zealand in Dunedin on 17 June 1922. The Australians wore a light blue top with white shorts and blue socks. The letter 'A' appeared on the left side of the top. That was retained for the return series in Australia in 1923.

When the Canadians arrived in 1924 the Australians adopted dark green tops with the Australian coat of arms and white shorts and dark socks with white tops. This was probably the first time an Australian representative team of any of the football codes had chosen green. New Zealand returned in 1933 and this time the Australians plumped for a yellow or gold top.

When football resumed after the Second World War Australia played in dark green but switched to gold when playing South Africa in 1947. In 1949 against Hajduk Split, billed as Yugoslavia, Australia had a dark green top with double gold v-shaped yoke and a badge. The shorts were white and the socks hooped.

At the Olympic Games in Melbourne in 1956 the Australian strip was designed to be consistent with those worn by the other athletes. It was basically white with a diagonal green and gold sash and a map of Australia as badge. The shorts had green and gold stripes and the socks green and gold hoops.

In the World Cup final tournament in 1974 Umbro made the main strip with a gold body and round neck with a dark green band and green bands at the ends of short-sleeved shirts. The shorts were dark green and the socks white with green and gold bands.

Harry Williams' Australian [alternate] FIFA world cup jersey, 1974. (N2013.38.11. Kindly on loan to the NSM from Football Federation Australia.)

The change top reversed the colours as in the version attributed to Harry Williams on display at the National Sports Museum. Green and gold were now fairly well established as the appropriate colours for the national soccer team.

In the 1990s strip design went crazy and for a while Australia wore a shirt made by local firm Kingroo which looked as if a pot of paint, admittedly mostly green and gold, had been thrown at it. The shorts remained dark green with a variegated band on the side, while the socks were green with a yellow band.

Later in the 1990s Adidas turned the strip into their brand, so the top and shorts had three green diagonal bands across a gold background. Apparently this got around FIFA stipulations about advertising on uniforms. In 1998 dark blue appeared as an alternative strip. The main gear at the World Cup in Germany in 2006 was a gold shirt, green shorts and gold socks. The change strip was dark blue shirts, socks and shorts, with white trim.

Soccer strips have become items of regular wearing apparel for fans and their support is exploited by changes to designs. By 2011 the Nike top had a yellow body with green neck, shoulders and sleeves. There was a white dividing band across the front. The socks were yellow with a single green band.

The change strip had a dark blue body with a slightly lighter blue for the neck, shoulders and sleeves. In 2013 Australian teams have worn a gold shirt with a green asymmetric vertical stripe and green half-band on the right sleeve with green shorts and yellow socks.

Most of these are variations on a green and gold theme which is now firmly associated with a range of Australian sporting teams, not just football.

Roy Hay – Sports and Editorial Services Australia

Gracie Elvin's Orica-AIS National Champion's Jersey, 2013



'It's a dream to win the national jersey. I'm in disbelief, I am shaking.' – Gracie Elvin, 2013

In January 2013, Orica-AIS's Gracie Elvin claimed victory in the women's road race at the Australian national championships. In the process, Elvin not only joined a select group of Australian cyclists to be crowned national champion, she also earned herself the highly sought-after honour of wearing the Australian national jersey during the following racing season.

In a tradition unique to cycling, all national champions are required to wear their national jersey 'in all events in the discipline, speciality and category in which they won their title' for the following racing year. The design of the jersey is determined by the relevant national cycling body and must be approved by the International Cycling Union (UCI).

The jersey can resemble the design of the actual jersey issued by the relevant national cycling body (as Elvin's does), but is more often customised according to the wishes of the rider and their professional cycling team. These designs often vary greatly, and are a constant source of discussion in world cycling.

The current Australian national championship jersey is simple yet effective in design, consisting of three horizontal stripes in alternating green and gold on the torso of the jersey with matching bands at the cuff. This design has been used on occasion within Australian cycling to signify not only national champions but also national representative teams.

At the 1980 Moscow Olympics, track cycling star Kevin Nichols sported a very similar jersey to Elvin when competing for Australia in the team pursuit event. As with Elvin's jersey, Nichols' jersey carried green and gold bands around the torso with matching bands around the cuffs and neck. The notable difference, of course, is the lack of advertising on the Olympic jumper.

Australian cycling teams have, however, not always carried the green and gold. In 1931, for example, an 'Australian' team consisting of four Victorian riders, one of whom was the legendary Hubert Opperman, participated in the Tour de France. The team was sponsored by Malvern Star Bicycles, and throughout the race the team wore a uniform consisting of 'white caps, blue jerseys, broad blue and red belt, black pants and white socks.'

Gracie Elvin's Orica-AIS national champion's jersey, 2013. (N2013.40.2. Kindly on loan to the NSM from Orica GreenEDGE.)

The colours of red, white and blue were emblematic of the Malvern Star brand and also carried clear links to the colours and design of the Australian flag. In a further nod to their home country, the 1931 team had 'a lucky Joey mascot' throughout the Tour, which was provided by Mrs Opperman and travelled with the team's manager in the official car. Although they were not an officially sanctioned Australian team, there was certainly no disputing where the hearts of the 1931 team lay.

For those such as Elvin who are talented enough to conquer the cycling world and claim a prized national championship during their career, it is also a case of once a champion, always a champion. In recognition of their feat, cycling regulations dictate that all former national champions must 'wear piping in national colours on the collar and cuffs of their jersey' in the discipline in which they claimed their title for the rest of their racing career. A national title in cycling is a difficult thing to forget!

In claiming the 2013 national road race championship jersey, Gracie Elvin earned herself a proud place in Australian cycling history, and a tangible, fascinating piece of contemporary Australian sporting history which we are delighted to display at the NSM Reception Desk for the *More than Green and Gold: Australia's Sporting Colours* exhibition.

Greg Hunter

The Introduction of 'Pyjama' Cricket, 1979



Ian Chappell's World Series Cricket gold cap. (MCC Museum collection, M16235.)

When Kerry Packer strode into his appointed meeting with the Australian Cricket Board on 22 June 1976 he was confident his bid to secure the rights to air Test match cricket on his GTV-9 and TCN-9 networks would be successful.

A man who had never shied away from throwing money at a problem, Packer was incredulous when informed that the Australian Broadcasting Commission's offer of \$210,000 for the three-year contract had been provisionally accepted.

'Come on now, we're all harlots... what's your price?' was his now famous response, followed by an offer of \$1.5 million for the rights upon the expiration of the ABC's contract in three years. When told that this would be considered at the appropriate time, Packer stormed out of the meeting and determined to ignite a war which would rock the cricketing world to its core.

What resulted was World Series Cricket, a rival competition set up by Packer containing many of the world's most recognisable players. Despite poor attendances for the majority of the first season in 1977/78, WSC went on to pioneer a wave of innovation, many aspects of which have come to define modern cricket.

The first use of helmets, the introduction of drop-in pitches, multiple cameras capturing the action from a plethora of angles and the emergence of day-night matches can all trace their origins back to a competition which, at the time, was derided by many as a circus.

These novelties were backed up by an aggressive marketing campaign which highlighted the gladiatorial nature of WSC: the raw pace of Lillee and Holding versus the technical guile and acumen of Richards and Hookes.

A cornerstone of this unprecedented campaign was an attempt to drum up support for the teams, the most iconic and long-lasting of which was the hit single *C'mon Aussie C'mon*.

Early on, however, the WSC hierarchy had been faced with a critical dilemma. Prevented from referring to his side as 'Australia' and unable to make use of the iconic Baggy Green, Packer was in need of a way in which to readily identify the WSC Australian XI to a dubious public.

What better than gold? With green, gold had come to define Australia on the sporting stage since the late 19th century. An early incarnation was the use of whites with coloured trim but the white ball was getting lost in the traditional clothing. In addition, WSC was meant to be loud and brash. Coloured trim wasn't loud or brash enough.

It wasn't until the second season of WSC that the 'pyjamas', as they were termed by the press, first made their appearance. And so it was on 17 January 1979 before 45,523 spectators that Kepler Wessels and Ian Davis strode out to the middle of the SCG wearing a very canary yellow 'gold' of Australia. One of the symbols of modern, limited-overs cricket had arrived.

For a competition deemed anti-establishment to its core, in the end WSC endowed the establishment with many a cricketing legacy. Of these, coloured clothing remains one of the most prominent.

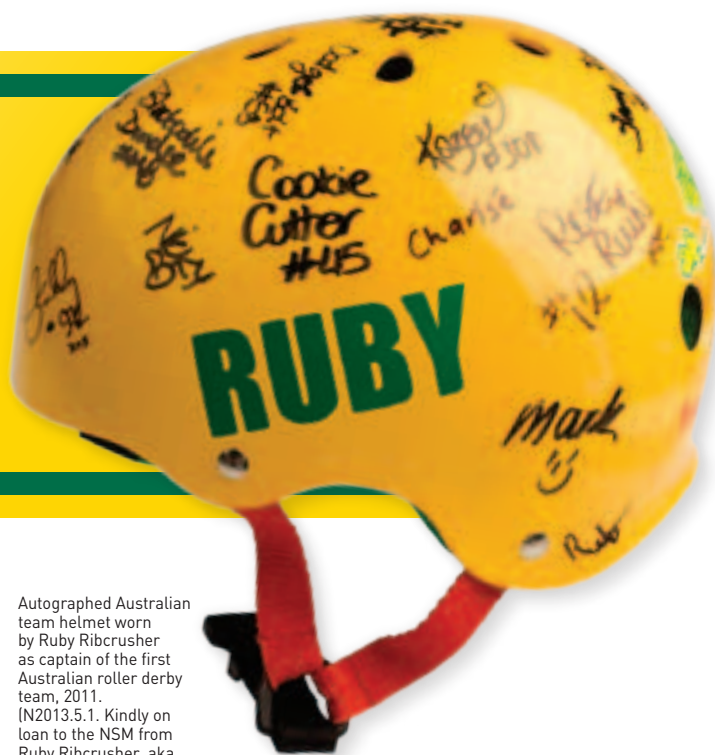
When the tournament returns to these shores in 2015 for the first time since 1992, the Australian cricketers may well have reason to think back and reflect on that momentous day in 1979 when donning those national colours.

Jeremy McEachern

More than Green and Gold: Australia's Sporting Colours is a rare and valuable collection of artefacts illustrating the evolution of Australia's national colours, from the experimental colour palette of the nineteenth century through to the contemporary use of the colours to define the broader Australian identity.

More than Green and Gold is on display in the NSM until Sunday 20 April 2014, and entry is included in the standard museum entry.

Ruby Ribcrusher's Roller Derby Helmet, 2011



If we were to piece together the necessary qualities that mark a green and gold Australian athlete, what would they be?

On the surface, Australians love a winner. Who doesn't? Winning makes you think you'll score a century at Lord's, land the promotion and bank the big cheque. Yet, peering into the average Australian sports fan's DNA, we find that they warm to the resilient underdog and the dogged competitor who flies the green and gold.

Roller derby, the fastest growing women's sport, joined the long list of sports played by Australians on the international stage in 2011. Competitors from 13 countries travelled to Toronto, Canada, for the inaugural 2011 Roller Derby World Cup.

While the all-conquering Americans won the World Cup, Australia, which entered the competition as something of an unknown quality, finished a spirited fourth. The sport, played on rollerblades with two teams of five skating in the same direction around a track, requires ferocity, skill and strategy.

Each team relies on a designated scorer, known as the 'jammer', who tallies points by lapping members of the opposing team. The hip 'n' shoulder might be a thing of the past in the AFL, but in roller derby it's a beautiful thing. Each player skates under an eccentric pseudonym such as 'Bambi Von Smasher', 'Ruby Ribcrusher', 'Lady-killer' and 'Blockidile Dundee'.

Despite the roller derby sharing the same birthplace as the Twinkies and deep fried chicken, there is something distinctively Australian about a sport that is both quirkily brilliant and reliant on community support.

The green and gold helmet donned by the 20 Australian representatives at the 2011 Roller Derby World Cup might not have the sanctity of the Baggy Green or the fame of Cathy Freeman's body suit, but it still carries its own unique identity and embodies the Australian values of strength, community and tenacity.

The inaugural Australian team decided to follow more than a century of Aussie sports tradition by donning green and gold uniforms.

Autographed Australian team helmet worn by Ruby Ribcrusher as captain of the first Australian roller derby team, 2011. (N2013.5.1. Kindly on loan to the NSM from Ruby Ribcrusher, aka Ruth Garry.)

The evolution of women's roller derby has been propelled by the do-it-yourself ethos of 'by the skaters, for the skaters'. This means the participants own and operate the majority of roller derby leagues. However, this philosophy is not about individualism.

Instead, roller derby's surge of popularity is driven by a sharp focus on a collective community effort. The 'by the skaters, for the skaters' mantra was particularly apparent in Team Australia's preparation for the 2011 World Cup.

The national team's uniform and merchandise supplier, Ghost Points (created by Australian team member, Haterade), played the dual role of designer and major sponsor.

Although growing up in America, Ruby Ribcrusher (aka Ruth Garry) expressed her deep sense of pride about captaining Australia at the World Cup in a sincere interview on Roller Derby Australia's website:

'I feel very privileged and extremely lucky. Since I began skating my goals have progressed from being the best on my team, to the best in my league to being a top 14 skater in the country – all these goals have been motivated by my desire to represent Australia.'

For those such as Ruby Ribcrusher who compete in one of the 126 leagues nationwide, sporting the green and gold helmet is the driving motivator and the final destination.

Michael Collins

Two 19th Century Sporting Brothers

In 2012 MCC member John Carre Riddell brought a number of items from his family's collection to the MCC Library. His grandfather Thomas Carre Riddell and great uncle Walter were both prominent Victorian sporting pioneers. The MCC Library is delighted that John wrote an article to accompany the images of the artefacts and shed light on these prominent MCC people.

In 1839 John Carre Riddell emigrated with his cousin to 'the great south land' from the Riddells' ancestral home in Roxboroughshire, Scotland. Two of John's sons would make their mark on early Australian sport.

After a four-month voyage on the 450-ton sailing ship *Abberton*, they landed at Port Jackson (Sydney) and by horse followed the mail route (now the Hume Highway) towards Melbourne, in the south of the colony of New South Wales. In 1840 they squatted at what is now the town of Riddells Creek, near Gisborne.

In 1860 John stood successfully for the Legislative Assembly for the electorate of West Bourke. He remained an MLA until 1877. At one election meeting he told his constituents that 'the duties of a representative are not light, including late hours, bad atmosphere, and listening to long speeches that are frequently to no purpose'.

John's cousin, Thomas Ferrier Hamilton, was president of the Melbourne Cricket Club in 1852-53 and 1859-68, and his portrait now hangs in the Long Room.

In October 1846 John married Mary Anne Sibella, daughter of Judge Sir Sidney Stephen. They had six children. John died in 1879. John's third child was Thomas, born in 1852. He attended Melbourne Grammar School where he captained the cricket team for four years and the football team for three years.

At Melbourne University he was awarded a blue for cricket in 1876 and captained the St Kilda cricket team. In 1874 he was described as 'a very good bat and an active field'¹, but it was possibly his time at the St Kilda Football Club that was best remembered. He captained the University Football Club in 1875, but from July that year the team played as a combine with St Kilda, the football club he would lead from 1876 to 1879.

The Footballer of 1877 described Thomas Riddell as 'a hardworking and energetic captain; uses great judgement in placing his team to the best advantage, and backs it up



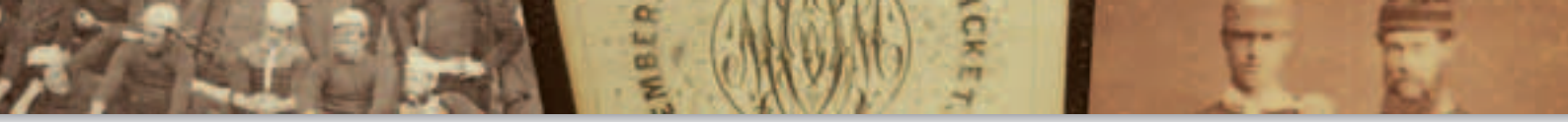
Brothers Walter (left) and Thomas Carre Riddell were photographed wearing their football uniforms for an 1877 match between Melbourne Grammar and the Old Melbournians. Thomas, in his St Kilda uniform, captained the Old Melbournians while Walter led Melbourne Grammar.

with really excellent all-round play. Second for the Skinner Challenge drop kick competition with 55 yards.² The previous year he came second with a drop kick of 63 yards.

In 1877 he captained the St Kilda football team's first tour to another colony, playing the Adelaide Football Club and a combined South Australian team in Adelaide. Injuries to several of the Adelaide players during the first game were balanced by the fact that most of the visitors were severely sea-sick before disembarking on the morning of the contest.

The match was watched by no fewer than 3500 people including the Administrator (Governor) and attended by a brass band. The *South Australian Register* of 20 August 1877 reported:

For the first half of the game, while the Adelaide ball was being used, the game was pretty even,... but after change, when the visitors used their own ball, to which



The St Kilda team in South Australia in 1877. The captain, Thomas Riddell, is holding the football.



Three of Thomas' MCC membership cards dated 1871/72, 1876/77 and 1892/93 and Walter's 1881/82 card. Each one is signed by the club's secretary and/or treasurer.

the Adelaides were unaccustomed, the game was confined... to the Adelaide quarters...

At 2.20 pm Riddell (blue and white), St. Kilda, called to Twopeny (red and black), Adelaide, and tossing the coin, fortune decided in favour of the locals, who elected to kick northward, with a good breeze to assist them, for the first half.

...one of the St. Kilda secures it, and running too far without bouncing the ball the required five yards, on an appeal a free kick is awarded to the Adelaides... by a fine place kick the ball flies high and fair through the centre – an unmistakable goal for the Adelaides. A storm of cheers resounds from the whole ground...

Twopeny kicks off, and calling on his men to rally up, the reds responding to the cry of their leader, despite all opposition, force the blues back on their own goal... no further score is made till half-time, when the game stands at Adelaide, 2 goals; St. Kilda, 1.

...Riddell makes a brilliant catch, and rushing forward with one of the prettiest and most effective runs of the day, lands the ball in the arms of Amess, who neatly passing to Fessenmeyer, plays it on with a high kick to Little, who marks it, and safely pilots it through the Adelaide posts, so making matters even.

...It being now within twenty minutes of time the Adelaide captain implores his men to wire in, while the St. Kilda skipper shouts, "one more goal, lads." ...Time being now called the game stood – St. Kilda, 5 goals; Adelaide, 2 goals.

Two days later St Kilda faced a combined team of South Australian-born players in the second game of the tour on Monday 20 August. St Kilda was again victorious, seven goals to two, and despite the large margin the *South Australian Register* again reported that Riddell's 'voice was heard encouraging his men to play for another goal' as darkness set in.



Intercolonial lawn tennis tournament at the Sydney Cricket Ground in 1886. Walter Riddell represented Victoria.



The New South Wales doubles championship challenge cup.



Walter Carre Riddell



The Mars Buckley Cup, for the lawn tennis championship of Victoria. It was first held by Walter Riddell.

Later that year Thomas captained the Old Melburnians football team against the Melbourne Grammar School boys team, captained by his young brother Walter (born 1859), an event captured in a photo of the brothers, Thomas on the right wearing the St Kilda colours. The match was played on the St Kilda Cricket Ground.

Thomas became successively a judge's associate, stock agent, commission agent and broker. He served on many school, shire and church committees and was aide-de-camp to three Victorian governors.

He enlisted in the Victorian Mounted Rifles (VMR), founded in 1885, to repel an expected Russian invasion to steal the Victorian gold reserves, and later commanded the 9th Australian Light Horse Regiment. He died in 1930.

Thomas's younger brother Walter became one of Victoria's most versatile sportsmen. At Melbourne Grammar School he captained the cricket team for two years and the football team for three years.

As a footballer he was described as a 'very neat player; runs, dodges, and kicks splendidly; is a sure mark; knows the game thoroughly'.³ In 1878 Walter played under his older brother Thomas on the wing for St Kilda and in 1879 vice-captained University's football team.

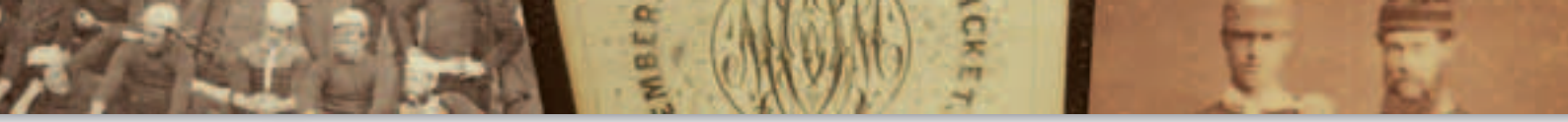
At tennis he was the Victorian colonial singles champion in 1885 and 1886, doubles champion in 1884 and 1886 and mixed doubles champion with his sister in 1884. He captained the Victorian team five times against NSW. He used a Tate laminated wood racquet made in London. It cost him £5, expensive but the best available.

Walter held the Mars Buckley Cup in 1890, for the 'Grass Championship of Victoria' that was hosted by the MCC. The trophy was donated by Mars Buckley, founder of the Buckley & Nunn retail store. Another trophy for the national interstate team championship from 1906 to 1960 bore Buckley's name as well.

Walter was also awarded the NSW Challenge Cup in 1887 and 1890 for winning the NSW doubles championship. He was chairman of the Lawn Tennis Association of Victoria in 1893.

In the 1870s he took up social golf. In those early days golf was not accorded the same deference it commands today, as exemplified by a reference in his father's diary: 'Took Mary Anne to see Walter play a new Scotch game called golf. A most harmless species of entertainment it certainly is.'

During the 1890s Walter's advancing years compelled him to give up competitive tennis, and he began playing competitive golf. He won the Victorian Interstate golf championship in 1901, 1903 and 1906, as well as the doubles four times.



Watch presented to Walter Riddell as the "inter-colonial lawn tennis tournament" singles champion, Melbourne 1886.



Walter at the Royal Melbourne Golf Club.



Cigarette case presented to Thomas by H.R.H. Duke of Cornwall and York in 1901.



Thomas Carre Riddell

He was twice runner-up in the Australian Amateur Championships. He captained the Victorian State team almost every year from 1902-14.

The Victorian Golf Association was formed in 1902. Walter was its chairman 14 times between then and 1929. He was a RMGC councillor for 25 years, and many times president and club captain. In 1902 he was president of the Bohemians Club, 'that club of elegant and cultivated Melbourne sportsmen that flourished from 1875 until 1931'.

From 1881 he was a member of the MCC like Thomas and in the 1890s he took up trap shooting, becoming he said 'a good wing shot' and won the Melbourne Gun Club Championship.

Walter practised as a solicitor from 1885, and from 1891 until 1927 he was a commissioner of the newly formed Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW, now called Melbourne Water), being chairman for the last 20 years.

In 1901 he attended the Australian Federation ceremony in the Exhibition Building in Melbourne as well as several other official functions. On these occasions Thomas commanded the Victorian Mounted Rifles mounted escort to the Duke of Cornwall and York (later King George V). I have the inscribed cigarette case the Duke presented to Thomas in thanks for his services.

In his retirement address Walter said: 'In my opinion, no man can come back in any sport unless he is meeting players very inferior to those he tried conclusions with when at his top.' Referring to his MMBW chairmanship he said: 'Melbourne's greatness is to be achieved only by having men of vision and a capacity for hard work at the head of affairs. Success doesn't "happen", it is organised, pre-empted, captured by concentrated common sense.'

Walter never married, he probably didn't have time! At his death aged 71, a Melbourne judge stated that he was 'an expert in every sport, and one of the finest officials we have ever had.'

Writing as a tennis battler I can only admire my ancestors' sporting prowess. Truly, 'many are called but few are chosen'.

John Carre Riddell

Objects and photographs from the collection of John Carre Riddell.

End Notes

- 1 T.W. Wills, *Australian Cricketers' Guide for 1874-75*, Geelong, 1875, p.67.
- 2 Thomas P. Power (ed.), *The Footballer: An Annual Record of Football in Victoria and the Australian Colonies*, Melbourne, 1877, p.39.
- 3 Thomas P. Power (ed.), *The Footballer: An Annual Record of Football in Victoria and the Australian Colonies*, Melbourne, 1877, p.39.

VILLAGE CRICKET MELBOURNE STYLE:

Aussie big hitter who made a pitch for cricket immortality in an English backwater



Lionel Robinson's XI v Australians 4-6 May 1921

Standing: J.B. Hobbs, A.P.F. Chapman, P.G.H. Fender, G.E.C. Wood, J.C. White, C.H. Gibson.
Seated: E.H. Hendren, J.W.H.T. Douglas, A.C. MacLaren (capt.), V.W.C. Jupp, D.J. Knight.

A hundred years ago, the little village of Old Buckenham in Norfolk, UK, sported a cricket brand from Melbourne that lit up the country house game in England either side of the dark years of the First World War and culminated in one of the most incongruous and colourful international fixtures ever staged.

Old Buckenham is best known for having the largest village green in England (40 acres). It also boasts a magnificent windmill (the largest circumference of any windmill in England) and a thatched church with octagonal tower.

But perhaps its greatest claim to fame is that, over the three rain interrupted-days (4-6 May 1921), more than 10,000 spectators flocked to a cricket match in this tiny village with a population of a few hundred. They came to what has been referred to as the 'Private Test Match' between Australia and Lionel Robinson's XI.

Lionel Robinson, an ex-Scotch College (Melbourne) boy and a one-time member of the Melbourne Cricket Club, owned Old Buckenham Hall where he built himself a fine cricket ground and appointed the former England captain Archie MacLaren as his cricket manager.

The two men assembled an almost full-strength England side to play the touring Australians led by Warwick Armstrong. In effect it was a Test Match rehearsal and as such received a lot of interest and publicity.



Old Buckenham Hall.

Robinson gained his vast wealth as a stockbroker and financier in the mining boom. His brother and close business associate was the great Australian industrialist and diplomat William Sydney (W.S.) Robison. Lionel moved to England in 1899 and became a member of the London Stock Exchange, setting up his country seat at Old Buckenham seven years later.

Although Robinson's vast wealth failed to gain him full acceptance as an English gentleman, 'he did reserve a tiny niche in history for himself' by staging the match, according to writer Barry Wilson in a 1977 article for the UK's *Sunday Times Magazine*.¹

The teams comprised many of the leading cricketers of the day. Gideon Haigh suggests that it was a mystery that the 'swashbuckling financier Lionel Robinson' had managed to attract the Australian team to squeeze this match into their already hectic schedule: 'It is a fair guess money played a large part.'²

Patrick Ferriday goes further: 'The fact that Australians were technically amateurs mattered not a jot... Their status as amateurs was not officially besmirched by earnings of up to 800 Pounds for seven months' work.' (That's approximately A\$190,000 in today's wages.)³

In fact, the match was not entirely without precedent. It was the second time that an Australian representative team had played at Old Buckenham Hall at the opening of a tour.

When first-class cricket restarted in the aftermath of the horror of the Great War, that claimed the lives of so many fine cricketers, the Australian Imperial Forces lined up against a Lionel Robinson team in the very first match of the AIF team's tour of England in 1919.

Some of the Australians who represented the AIF were returning to Old Buckenham for the more prestigious fixture two years later, notably Herbie Collins, Johnny Taylor and Jack Gregory, the last named having made his first-class debut at Old Buckenham in 1919.

The 1921 line-up:

Australians:

W. Bardsley, H.L. Collins, C.G. Macartney, J.M. Taylor, W.W. Armstrong (captain), J.M. Gregory, J. Ryder, H.L. Hendry, J. Carter (wicketkeeper), E.A. McDonald, A.A. Mailey.

Mr. Robinson's XI:

J.B. Hobbs, D.J. Knight, V.W.C. Jupp, E. Hendren, A.P.F. Chapman, J.W.H.T. Douglas, P.G.H. Fender, A.C. MacLaren (captain), G.E.C. Wood (wicketkeeper), C.H. Gibson, J.C. White.

Lionel Robinson the Person

At Scotch College, records indicate that Lionel was academically an outstanding student, although often runner-up to his contemporary, John Monash, later General Sir John Monash. He had to leave Scotch early because his father could not afford the fees to educate all five Robinson boys.

Despite his flair for finance, it was not all plain sailing for the young Robinson in the business world and, in the early 1890s, he was briefly bankrupt (details will be revealed in Stephen Musk's upcoming biography). That he recovered to prosper so mightily is a testament to his acumen, hard work and self-belief.

His move to Old Buckenham in 1906 must have been something of a culture shock for both the brash and ostentatious Robinson and the locals, who had grown accustomed to the 19-year tenure of the previous occupant of Old Buckenham Hall, the quietly regal intellectual, Prince Frederick Duleep Singh.

Lionel was the complete antithesis of the charming 'Prince Freddy' and, try though he might, he demonstrated that he was not only 'temperamentally unsuited to a bureaucratic career', but also to achieving high station in the snobbish Edwardian establishment. 'He never quite made it – he had the money but not quite the style.'⁵

He was a hard man to please, as those charged with the construction of the new hall soon discovered. 'Twice the building was pulled down and started again.'⁶ No wonder it cost him about \$150m in today's money.

He was cantankerous, obstinate and often abusive to staff. 'Stories of his irascible nature abounded. On arriving at Eccles Road station by train from London, he would phone the hall to demand the entrance gates be opened so he could drive through without hindrance. Once, when his instructions went unheeded, he tempestuously rammed his car through the gates causing much damage to the vehicle and the obstructive portals.'⁷



Lionel Robinson wearing High Sheriff Robes in 1918.

The Match

Day 1, Wednesday 4 May 1921, attracted 2000 spectators but play was limited by the weather to a mere 15 minutes in which the Australians scored 18 for 0.

Day 2, Thursday 5 May 1921, 'The second day, by contrast, was bright, sunny and warm and from the early morning all roads in the vicinity were thronged. Estimates of the crowd that day varied between 7000 and 10,000. *The Eastern Daily Press* reported, "This was one of the most wonderful days in the history of Norfolk cricket... Ranged behind the deep human wall were hundreds upon hundreds of motor cars, the roofs of which were converted into stands and from these lofty perches distant views were obtained of the play. The park trees, now in their May glory of leaf, alone were sacred"⁴

On the other hand, he entertained lavishly, assisted by his 'superior butler' William Boyce, and was a generous host, particularly to the sporting fraternity. In addition, despite his reputation for ill-tempered rants, he inspired much loyalty and even respect among staff and other locals. He was probably a fair man underneath it all, and was popular in the village as a benefactor and for never charging for admission to cricket matches.

Estate workers and villagers turned out in force for his funeral at Old Buckenham Church, where the mourners included his illustrious brother, W.S., and lifelong friend and business partner Bill Clark. The local paper reported: 'Old Buckenham mourns the loss of a friend.'

Lionel and Mary, his wife who died in 1947, lie buried in a tomb by the west door of the church and there is a memorial to the Robinson family inside the church. Another memorial, in the form of a drinking fountain, was erected at Scotch College where he established the Lionel Robinson Scholarship which remains to this time.

While Robinson himself 'never quite made it' in English society, his descendants certainly did. Lionel and Mary had two daughters, both of whom married army officers from well-to-do families. The elder daughter, Viola, married Captain J.J. 'Jimjack' Evans. Their son was Humphrey Evans, who became Captain Humphrey Drummond after marrying a Scottish aristocrat and taking her family name.

Drummond, who died in 2009, and his wife, Baroness Strange, were both colourful characters. He was a falconer, author and collector of fine books. She became a Member of the House of Lords in the English Parliament. Lady Strange posthumously made headlines in the UK when she changed her will on her deathbed, leaving the family seat, Megginch Castle in Perthshire, to her youngest daughter instead of the eldest son and heir to the title.

Capt. Drummond was a source for Barry Wilson's 1977 article in the *Sunday Times* and provided photographs that appeared with the article, some of which are also reproduced here.

Lionel and Mary's younger daughter, Eirene Marguerite, known as Queenie, married Col. John G. Brockbank. Their granddaughter Celia Marguerite also married into nobility, her husband being the 2nd Baron Norrie, although they have subsequently divorced.



Lionel Robinson hosts lunch at the thatched pavilion.



Players (left to right): P.G.H. Fender, A.P.F. Chapman, A.C. MacLaren, G.E.C. Wood and W.W. Armstrong (batting).

It should be remembered that only a few months earlier the English team had been beaten 5-0 in the Test series in Australia and there was concern that even the great Jack Hobbs might not be able to cope with a formidable bowling attack led by Jack Gregory and Ted McDonald.

As Wilson writes, 'Astonishingly, the star-studded Australians were bowled out an hour after lunch for a feeble 136. This was the team's lowest score of the tour.' J.W.H.T. (Johnny Won't Hit Today) Douglas, the then England captain, took 6 for 64. (Only Armstrong offered firm resistance, scoring 51 not out with some powerful driving and dogged defence.)

'When Lionel Robinson's team batted, Donald Knight was out in the second over but then Jack Hobbs and Vallance Jupp went on the attack on a wicket made difficult by the drying conditions. Both batsmen were hit several times and both were eventually forced to retire hurt, Jupp (56) with a broken thumb and Hobbs with a recurrence of a thigh strain.'⁸ Hobbs' initial injury had been sustained while scoring 131 against Victoria a few months earlier. Its recurrence was to put him out of action for two months and forced him to miss the first two Test matches.

Hobbs scored 85 runs in just over 90 minutes with what the *Eastern Daily Press* described as 'an array of elegant shots' which included 'some beautiful strokes in front of the wicket'.⁹ In an interview many years later when asked which was the finest innings of his career, the then Sir Jack said, 'It was in a minor match in Norfolk against the Australians in 1921. Always when I look back that was one of my best innings – if not the best. Everything went right that day; all my strokes came easily.'¹⁰ This is quite remarkable given that Hobbs scored more first-class runs and centuries than any other batsman, the totals being 61,237 runs and 197 centuries according to *Wisden* and *Playfair*.

Day 3, Friday 6 May 1921, Jupp's broken thumb caused him to retire to the thatched pavilion (see photograph of Lionel entertaining) and, like Hobbs, he played no further part in the match.

Douglas and Hendren were together when McDonald and Hendry were the attack. McDonald was bowling rib height at times, and from 5 overs only 4 runs were

scored. A slight drizzling rain for a few minutes further affected the wicket and the batting continued cautious. Hendry dropped Hendren who, however, was caught by him at second slip next ball off McDonald, at which stage Douglas was 16 and the total 101 for three wickets. Fender, who joined Douglas, had scored 10 when he was caught by Hendry off McDonald, and his successor, Wood, lasted only long enough to score 2 before he was taken by Gregory off Hendry. Five wickets down for 212. Carter was cheered for his work behind the wicket for taking Gregory's deliveries bowled to the leg. Gibson, after scoring a single, was out to a fine catch by Mailey off Gregory high up at second slip, and six were out for 225. White was bowled by Gregory first ball, the first man clean bowled for the match... The veteran A.C. MacLaren had a great reception when he went to the crease, and opened with two fours at the expense of Hendry... MacLaren, who is in his 50th year, showed excellent driving power and wonderful timing on the leg side. The crowd were much interested in the partnership of the old and new captains. When rain finally caused the abandonment of the game Australia had lost one wicket (Collins') with a total of 25.¹¹

The Cricket Pitch at Old Buckenham Hall

Lionel Robinson purchased Old Buckenham Hall and its 500-acre estate from an Indian Prince, Frederick Duleep Singh, whose guardian was Queen Victoria.¹²

He demolished Prince Frederick's grand house and went about spending one million pounds¹³ on building an even more impressive mansion, complete with 14 bathrooms.

Setting out to establish himself as a sporting country gentleman, he expanded the estate to 2000 acres, built a racehorse stud, entertained grandly with lavish weekend shooting parties, and laid out two cricket pitches with thatched pavilions. According to the Scotch College archives, Robinson did not excel at sport and did not represent the college in any sporting endeavour. He might be classed as a cricket tragic. He occasionally played in country house games at Old Buckenham, but always as a tail-ender and never turned his arm over to any effect.

AUSTRALIANS								
W. Bardsley c White b Douglas	10	not out		5				
H.L. Collins c Knight b Gibson	23	c Funder b Gibson	15					
C.G. Macartney c Wood b Douglas	11	not out		1				
J.M. Taylor run out	20							
W.W. Armstrong not out	31							
J.M. Gregory lbw b Douglas	2							
J. Ryder c Knight b Douglas	0							
H.L. Hendry c Chapman b Gibson	5							
H. Carter c Jupp b Gibson	2							
E.A. McDonald lbw b Douglas	0							
A.A. Mailey lbw b Douglas	4							
82 RS 6								
Total				136		(1 wk)	25	
	O	M	R	W	O	M	R	W
Douglas	22	3	64	6	7	1	17	0
Gibson	16	3	33	3	9	8	1	1
Jupp	2	0	19	0				
White	4	2	12	0	4	0	8	0

MR L. ROBINSON'S XI							
J.B. Hobbs retired hurt				81			
D.J. Knight lbw b McDonald				1			
V.W.C. Jupp retired hurt				29			
E. Hendren c Hendry b McDonald				20			
A.P.F. Chapman c Hendry b McDonald				0			
J.W.H.T. Douglas not out				41			
P.O.H. Fensholt c Hendry b McDonald				10			
G.E.C. Wood c Gregory b Hendry				7			
C.H. Gibson c Mailey b Gregory				1			
J.C. White b Gregory				0			
A.C. MacLaren not out				25			
to 10 cb 2				12			
Total (8 wks dec)				226			
	O	M	R	W			
Gregory	13	1	45	2			
McDonald	25	4	82	4			
Macartney	5	1	18	0			
Hendry	30	10	73	1			
Mailey	6	0	40	0			
Match drawn.							



Archie MacLaren as a young man.

He signalled his ambitions as a prominent figure to be reckoned with on English soil, however, by appointing Archie MacLaren, who had captained England until 1909, as his 'Personal Cricket Manager', providing him and his family with a house on the estate. Wilson describes MacLaren as 'somewhat boozy but still very shrewd', an apt summary that might also have included 'hopeless with money'.

Robinson, who had already laid out one cricket pitch on his estate, initiated the construction of a second, better-appointed ground by clearing an area of woodland 200 metres or so from the hall. He craved the fast, bouncier wickets of Australia,

and took great pains to produce the desired result in careful preparation of the new square. The ground was ready by the start of the 1912 season and the inaugural first-class match was L. Robinson's XI v South Africa, beginning on 5 September 1912.

There are telling descriptions of the wicket that was created. Ferriday says: 'A young [23 years] Patsy Hendren [England 1920-1935] was amongst the gathered XI on a pitch that had been so well protected that it was hard and fast enough to shock everyone into submission', while the *Manchester Guardian* described the wicket as 'rather fast'.

Business Background

Lionel Robinson, a nephew of Australia's first Prime Minister Sir Edmund Barton, was a shrewd and bold financial operator who amassed his fortune as a stockbroker during the heady wheeler-dealing of the mining boom in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The eldest brother in a family that made a considerable impact on Australian business and political life, he had a major influence in the rise to prominence of his more famous sibling, the industrialist William Sydney (W.S.) Robinson. In 1899 Lionel transferred to the London Stock Exchange where his company Lionel Robinson, Clark and Co. became hugely successful in the Australian mining sector.

The following extract is sourced from Peter Richardson's entry on W.S. Robinson in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

Lionel Robinson was born on August 29, 1866 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, was educated at Scotch College, Melbourne [1878-81], (of which he was later a benefactor), and later joined the militia and Victoria's fledgling Defence Department. Temperamentally unsuited to a bureaucratic career, he resigned and took a job as a clerk with the Melbourne stockbroking company of Donaldson & Co. His flair as an operator was quickly displayed in the boom of the 1880s and when 22 he purchased a seat on the Melbourne Stock Exchange. In conjunction with Bill Clark, Lionel established a major business in mining shares during the Broken Hill and Kalgoorlie mining booms. In 1895 the partnership transferred to Adelaide and in 1899 to London. Within two years, Lionel Robinson, Clark & Co. was the largest broking house in the Australian section of the mining share market. However,

the collapse of the Western Australian gold boom in 1901-02 forced the company to diversify away from gold shares. An across-the-board rise in base-metal prices in 1905 encouraged Lionel to sponsor the visit of major Melbourne investors to the Broken Hill mining field which resulted in the offer of a partnership to W.S.

Following the successful identification of major opportunities at Broken Hill, the group of investors associated with Lionel Robinson was enlarged to include W.L. Baillieu, [Francis] Govett and [future American president Herbert] Hoover, the latter two having worked closely together on the Western Australian goldfields, particularly at Kalgoorlie. The nature of Lionel's involvement with Australian mining thereafter began to broaden from that of a provider of equity capital to that of an investor and director of the concerns with which he was associated. By 1914 Lionel Robinson or his colleagues were to be found on the boards of many of Australia's largest mining companies... The outbreak of World War I put a halt to the development of Lionel's career as his company struggled to come to terms with its disruptive effects. In 1915-21 he was a committee member of the London Stock Exchange and in 1916 became High Sheriff of Norfolk... Lionel Robinson died of cancer... [at Old Buckenham] on 27 July 1922, [aged 55] having taken little part in financial affairs after the war. His wife Mary, née James, whom he had married at St Jude's Anglican Church, Carlton, Victoria, on 12 March 1890, and two daughters survived him. He left an estate approaching £240,000.¹⁴

Archie MacLaren

As Lionel Robinson's personal cricket manager, former England captain Archie MacLaren played a key role in helping his patron bat high in the order of luminaries on the English country house cricket scene. Robinson provided the money and set the strategy, but he could never have got his more ambitious projects off the ground without MacLaren's considerable influence.

Harrow-educated Archibald Campbell MacLaren became Lancashire captain at the age of just 22 and went on to play 35 Test matches for England, 22 of them as captain, though he never managed to win a series against Australia.

As Tom Walshe pointed out in the *Eastern Daily Press*, 'He was one of the great amateurs of the Golden Age, but his approach to the game was, in today's parlance, highly professional. He analysed opposing teams to spot weaknesses in players' techniques, always went into battle with a game plan, and was one of the first captains to put an emphasis on quality fielding.'¹⁵

No account exists as to how Lionel Robinson and Archie MacLaren first met. In some respects they had similar personalities, in others they were totally different. Both could be 'arrogant and overbearing', both were perfectionists. Yet while Robinson possessed immense wealth and business acumen, MacLaren, the gentleman cricketer, was invariably short of funds and lurched from one failed business venture to another.

Walshe sums up their relationship thus:

From Archie's point of view, the arrangement was doubtless a financial godsend. He was perpetually short of money which severely hindered the lifestyle he liked to lead. It was rather an odd partnership, though. Robinson, the rich, volatile Aussie who insisted on things being done his way, and MacLaren, the hard-up but equally stubborn and opinionated English gentleman cricketer who also thought he knew best about everything. It would have been interesting to have been a fly on the wall during some of their more heated discussions!¹⁶

In *Archie*, his biography of MacLaren, Michael Down says, 'Archie was a tactless man and would say what he wanted with little regard for the consequences. Such was his way with everything, especially money.' Yet he could be charming and 'remarkably generous on the infrequent occasions he came into money'.¹⁷

MacLaren was selected in Stoddart's team to tour Australia in 1894. On the voyage out to Australia he met and fell in love with Kathleen Maud Power, the daughter of the wealthy Robert Power of the Dalgety pastoral empire. Robert Power was an MCC member and also represented Victoria on two occasions (for an average of 1.50). He was also a founding member of the Victoria Racing Club.

Archie and Maud married at Christ Church, Toorak, on 17 March 1898 at the end of the next England tour. 'The wedding was a highlight of the social calendar and the local gossip columns were full of the event.' There was a large and unruly crowd some of which entered the Church causing the 'Reverend Tucker to admonish the congregation for standing on the pews and chattering'.¹⁸



Robinson (standing second from left) and MacLaren (standing far right) in front of the Old Buckenham pavilion in 1910.

Punch listed the main wedding guests and the presents given. Mr and Mrs Power gave a cheque (apparently sufficiently large to purchase a 'delightful old country mansion in Wokingham').¹⁹

As a batsman, Archie MacLaren enjoyed much success in Australia. He must have loved playing at the MCG given that his first three visits to that ground included scores of 228 (against Victoria) and 120 in a Test match.

In 1895 Archie was made an Honorary Life Member of the Melbourne Cricket Club. Archie, Lionel and Robert Power were thus simultaneously members, so it is quite likely Lionel and Archie would have met. It is also conceivable that Mrs Robinson and Mrs MacLaren were acquainted in Melbourne society.

Whatever the antecedents, the relationship between the Robinsons and the MacLarens appears to have prospered and endured at Old Buckenham. Archie, Maud and their family spent 10 years living on Robinson's estate (excepting the time Archie was away serving with the Royal Army Service Corps during the war), and Archie made a ton of runs for Lionel's teams in the country house fixtures.

After the 1921 season, with Lionel's health failing, Archie left Old Buckenham and resumed a rather peripatetic lifestyle, until Maud finally came into a big inheritance from the Power estate in their old age. Archie died in November 1944 and Maud four months later.

Below is an extract from the *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack 1945* obituary on A.C. MacLaren which sums up his life.

An immaculate batsman possessing the grand manner, he would have gained still higher renown on the playing field but for periods of poor health and calls of business. Expert knowledge, obtained by careful study of every intricacy of the game, besides experience in leading his school (Harrow), his county (Lancashire), the Gentlemen and England, might have made him supreme as a captain, but he lacked the buoyant optimistic temperament so necessary for complete success in cricket and was easily upset by disagreement with selectors in being given players whom he did not consider suitable to the occasion.²⁰

Having been an Melbourne Cricket Club member from 1881-1898, Robinson had been a regular spectator at the MCG. 'He watched a lot of cricket in England and he was sick of the slow English pitches. He wanted to build a hard, fast Australian type wicket...'²¹

He dredged a lagoon on the estate for fine clay. The soil mixture was reinforced with chicken netting (personal communication from Tom Walshe who suggests that bricks from the demolished mansion were also used in the foundations of the square).²²

Walshe, who knows the pitch intimately having captained the Old Buckenham side in the 1970s, says that in his playing days one side of the square was christened 'the Australian end' by long-serving groundsman Bill Lancaster because the wickets there were truer and faster than elsewhere on the square, though nowadays improvement work on the whole playing surface has negated any difference.

The late Bill Lancaster (who scored a century for Old Buckenham in 75 minutes in 1951) maintained that the original square was smaller and slightly offset from the later playing surface. He was quoted in Wilson's *Sunday Times* article as saying: 'It's when we use the Australian end that runs really come.'²³

As to whether turf or soil was imported from Australia is open to conjecture and just when this was done we may never know. Wilson writes of Robinson: 'After the First World War, to further improve the pitch, he actually imported turf from Australia.'

The *Eastern Daily Press*, in a preview of the 1921 match, reported:

The match will be played on the second and best of the two cricket grounds Mr Robinson laid out in the Old Buckenham park and there are few, if any, more picturesque or better kept grounds in the kingdom.

In the preparation of the wickets, groundsman Porter, who was wounded in the war, has had the benefit of the sound advice of Mr A.C. MacLaren, whose house is almost within a golf-shot distance of the cricket pitch. Some of the special mixture used in the making of the pitch was imported from "down under" where the world's best wickets are to be found.²⁴

This is as near a contemporary reference to the use of Australian soil as can be found, although it gives no date as to when the 'special mixture' was employed. The use of the words 'used in the making of the pitch' could refer to the original construction or to the preparations for the 1921 match. It does, however, tell us that MacLaren had a key role in the latter and therefore Wilson's reference to the wicket having been improved post-war may well be correct.

However, there are other references, both pre- and post-war that refer to the quick playing surface. Unlike the 1921 game, the AIF match in 1919 was played in perfect weather, and the *Eastern Daily Press* referred to 'a fast pitch' and concluded: 'Over 1000 runs were scored and the wicket looked good for many more hundreds.'²⁵

Tony Ware, the Melbourne Cricket Club executive manager – turf development, who has looked after the most important 22 yards of dried couch grass in Australia for 30 years, in an interview for this article was highly complimentary of the reported construction of the pitch saying that 'they knew what they were doing'.

He favoured the notion of soil being imported because it would be more manageable. Keeping turf alive on a 6-8 week sea voyage would have proved difficult. Ware also suggested that in the early part of the 20th Century large quantities of wool were being exported to England so transport may not have posed a problem.

As MacLaren's father had been a wool importer, and Robinson's family were closely linked to mining activities in Australia, it is possible that a few tons of Merri Creek soil may have been shipped to England, given Robinson's wealth.

From where would Robinson and MacLaren have got their technical advice to construct an 'Australian wicket'? It is likely that they would have sought advice from the MCC or the curators at the MCG, although there is no archival evidence to support such. However, it stands to reason given that:

- Robinson still had family connections in Melbourne and in the MCC.
- MacLaren was an MCC Honorary Life Member and had married Maud Power of Toorak. Maud was the daughter of...
- Robert Power, a wealthy landowner and part of the Dalgety pastoral empire, a founding member of the Victoria Racing Club and also an MCC member (1884 to his death in 1914). Power also played for Victoria on a couple of occasions but without distinction.
- William Clark, Lionel's business partner, was also an MCC member.

Lionel Robinson did not enjoy good health after the First World War and died of cancer at Old Buckenham Hall on 27 July 1922, aged 55.

Below is an extract from Ronald Mason's *Warwick Armstrong's Australians* which is a fitting legacy to the man who left Australia to settle in England and to take with him a piece of Melbourne:

The match at Old Buckenham Hall stands alone and apart at present, a curious and interesting portent, a sad indication of unrealised hopes; it also remains as a happy memorial to the founder of the feast, Mr Lionel Robinson himself, whom nobody now remembers at all. He died not many months later, not very old... without his generosity there would have been no game to remember, no irony, no glory, no muted transitory hope, no disappointment. We owe him a lot.²⁶



Watercolour of the 1921 match by Arthur Batchelor.

Horse Racing Links

Horse racing, cricket and shooting were Lionel Robinson's sporting passions and at Old Buckenham he saw the ideal opportunity to indulge all three. A major investment took the form of a racing stud for the breeding of thoroughbreds to race in the colours of Robinson and his partner Bill Clark, or to sell on to owners who used training facilities at nearby Newmarket.

Following is an extract from *The Register* (Adelaide), Saturday 6 September 1913, p 13.

'All the Australian sportsmen who have toured England, return with glowing accounts of the hospitality and thoughtfulness displayed regarding their welfare by the studmasters in the old country... One of the pleasure visits of which all Australians speak is that to Old Buckenham Hall, where an old Australian, Mr Lionel Robinson, is quartered and has established a small, but very select stud. Every Australian – for that matter, every one – is made welcome at Buckenham, and any sportsman from these parts who may at any time be touring England may rest assured that no matter at what hour he may call at Buckenham Hall he will get a hearty reception and will be shown over the stud, and every facility displayed for his convenience in inspecting other breeding establishments in England. Buckenham Hall is handy to Newmarket, and may be reached in an hour's run in a motor. There is no denying the fact that Mr Robinson is gradually getting together a lot of picked mares, and no one would begrudge him winning a Derby or an Oaks or a Two Thousand Guineas with one of his own breeding. The current English mail brought from Mr Robinson a handsome booklet



The Victory in the colours of Robinson and Clarke (Eric Panther collection).

setting out full particulars of the stud. It is well got up, and is decorated with that sportsman's colours.'

Also from *The Register* (Adelaide), 29 July 1922, pp.9-10.

As a sportsman, or to be strictly accurate, sportsmen, because Mr Clark was associated with him, the names of "Robinson and Clark" were held very high. They were well known patrons of the turf, and Hainault carried their colours to victory in the (English) Derby, and The Victory captured the Melbourne Cup for them in 1902. They raced in a big way in Australia, and one of their earliest successes was with Niphetos in the Maribyrnong Plate. During the War they sent out many horses to Australia, and won several big events, including the Caulfield Cup, with Lucknow and King Offa, and several weight-for-age events with Magpie.

Now the extraordinary history of the pretty little ground that still flourishes as a cricket venue is being told by Norfolk-based author Stephen Musk who has written a biography of the cricketing life and times of the big-hitting Aussie tycoon. The book is due for publication in 2014 in the 'Lives in Cricket' series of the Association of Cricket Statisticians under the title *Lionel Robinson: Cricket at Old Buckenham*.²⁷

Lionel Robinson might not have achieved all his ambitions as a powerful figure in the sporting world, but the matches he organised at Old Buckenham made a significant contribution to links between England and Australia at a time when both nations looked to cricket to help heal the terrible wounds of war.

A hundred years ago it was more commonplace for ideas to be sent out to the colonies. Lionel did something different. He created an 'Australian' cricket wicket in a tiny village in England and, in all probability, exported a little piece of Australia to make it happen.

Colin Riley is a NSM volunteer and lived in Old Buckenham for a time before settling in Australia in 1977.

Tom Walshe is a Norfolk journalist, vice-president and former chairman of the Old Buckenham Cricket Club.

Thanks to Stephen Musk whose book on Lionel Robinson will be published shortly and Celia Drummond, formerly of the MCC Library who provided the original encouragement for the research.

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Twenty Pennants:

The Melbourne Cricket Club's First XI Premierships since the commencement of District Cricket

Part 3 — 1934/35 to 1937/38

Melbourne Cricket Club's First XI enjoyed a golden era in the 1930s when, in the space of nine seasons from 1929/30 to 1937/38, it won no fewer than six premierships. The second instalment of the series on the club's pennant-winning seasons in the previous edition of the *Yorker* covered the first two of these premierships. The third instalment in this issue surveys the club's remarkable sequence of four successive titles from 1934/35 to 1937/38.

Melbourne's powerful premiership-winning side in 1932/33 which included current or future Test players Bill Ponsford, Len Darling, Lisle Nagel and skipper Hans Ebeling, was further strengthened in 1933/34 by the acquisition of Keith Rigg, who had previously played with Prahran, University and Hawthorn-East Melbourne, as well as Leslie 'Chuck' Fleetwood-Smith, formerly of St Kilda.

Rigg, a stylish opening batsman, had represented Victoria since 1926/27 and appeared in five Test matches to date, with a best score of 127 against South Africa at the SCG in 1931/32.

Fleetwood-Smith, a state player from 1931/32 and a future Test representative, was a brilliant but erratic left-arm wrist spinner whose sharply spun mixture of off breaks, wrong'uns and top-spinners made him virtually unplayable on his best days. Both made major contributions to the club's successful era in the mid-1930s.

Remarkably, despite its talented line-up and an excellent start to the season, Melbourne failed to reach the finals in 1933/34. In the opening match, at Northcote, Melbourne closed its innings after Ponsford (137*) and Rigg (100* in his first innings for his new club), had taken part in an unbroken opening stand of 238 and then bowled the home side out for 94. In the next match, Ebeling, Fleetwood-Smith and the Nagel twins (Lisle and Vernon) combined to dismiss the Colts for 69 and 103 to give Melbourne an easy outright win. Thereafter the side faltered, winning only four of its 10 remaining games to leave it just outside the four.

Part of the reason was the absence of leading players for many matches – Ponsford and Darling each played in only four games, Fleetwood-Smith in five and Ebeling and Rigg in six. At the end of the season Ponsford, Ebeling, Darling and Fleetwood-Smith all gained selection in the Australian team that toured England in the following winter.¹

The 1934/35 premiership

The 1934/35 season was dogged by appalling weather, with Melbourne enduring its wettest spring on record, culminating in terrible floods which inundated wide areas of the city at the start of December. Two of Melbourne's scheduled home-and-away matches were abandoned without a ball bowled and others were badly affected by the wet conditions.

A further problem for the club was the absence of leading players for much of the season and it was not until the last home-and-away match that it was able to field a full-strength XI. The 1934 Australian team in England did not leave for home until 29 September, which meant that the club's four members of that side were not available until mid-November.

In fact Fleetwood-Smith did not appear until mid-February and skipper Ebeling, who also led Victoria in the Sheffield Shield competition this season following the retirement of Bill Woodfull, took part in only two home-and-away matches. Vern Nagel led the side in Ebeling's absence. A bonus, however, was that Ponsford, following his retirement from first-class cricket, was able to play regularly after his return.

Not surprisingly, Melbourne began the season quietly, and with two matches to go before the finals stood in fifth place with only three wins. Ponsford had set up two of those victories with scores of 140 against University and an unbeaten 86 against St Kilda.

Needing to win its remaining home-and-away matches to make the finals, Melbourne's second-last match was against Northcote. With the first day of the match coinciding with Victoria's Shield game in Adelaide, the club's selectors decided to leave a place for Fleetwood-Smith on the second day.

Top: Bullion embroidered badges presented to Keith Rigg as a member of Melbourne's 1934/35 to 1937/38 premiership teams.
(MCC Museum collection, M7202.1, M7202.2, M7202.3, M7202.4.)

1934/35 FINAL

COLLINGWOOD v. MELBOURNE

Played at Richmond Cricket Ground on April 1, 4 & 5, 1935.
Melbourne won on first innings. Toss: Melbourne.

Melbourne			
W. H. Ponsford lbw b Murphy	1	* H. L. Ebeling at Baker b Rayson	11
K. E. Rigg c Britt b Rayson	162	J. D. Kinnear c Pearce b Rayson	0
L. S. Darling b Murphy	114	L. O. Fleetwood-Smith not out	1
J. Thomas b Ryder	56	B-4, B-6, ab-1	11
C. A. Gardner c & b Ryder	0		
* K. M. Campbell b Murphy	17	1/4 2/193 3/326 4/338 5/342	404
B. Conry b Rayson	11	6/368 7/374 8/402 9/402 10/404	
L. E. Nagel c Pearce b Ryder	20		

Bowling: Murphy 24-2-90-3; Britt 17-4-53-0; Rayson 21-0-86-4; Grangell 12-0-57-0; Ryder 12.5-3-41-3; Pearce 19-1-66-0.

Collingwood			(followed on)
C. H. Scott c Kinnear b Ebeling	8		
A. G. Andrew Street c Darling			
b Fleetwood-Smith	4	not out	4
M. W. Rayson c Gardner b Fleetwood-Smith	9		
* J. Ryder not out	43	(1) not out	2
* E. A. Baker lbw b Fleetwood-Smith	10		
H. H. E. Grangell b Fleetwood-Smith	4		
B. T. Bird at Campbell b Fleetwood-Smith	2		
L. Murphy c Thomas b Fleetwood-Smith	8		
J. Henry c Kinnear b Fleetwood-Smith	0		
F. H. Pearce b Nagel	9		
H. J. Britt b Nagel	4		
		B L, w L	2

1/12 2/26 3/25 4/39 5/43 6/45 101 (0 wkt) 8
7/59 8/64 9/75 10/101

Bowling: First Innings — Ebeling 9-1-24-1; Nagel 9-7-0-30-2; Fleetwood-Smith 13-0-47-7.
Second Innings — Darling 2-0-5-0; Kinnear 1-0-1-0.

Close of play scores: 1st day — Melb 2/237 (Rigg 96, Thomas 19); 2nd day — Coll (1) 1/13 (Andrew Street 4, Rayson 1).

Umpires: A. N. Barlow & G. A. Hala.

MELBOURNE 1st XI AVERAGES 1934/35

Batting & Fielding

	M	I	NO	R	HS	Avg	100	50	Ct/St
W. H. Ponsford	8	8	2	470	140	78.33	2	2	0
L. S. Darling	5	5	0	347	127	69.40	2	1	1
K. E. Rigg	8	8	0	454	162	56.75	2	2	0
J. Thomas	12	12	0	393	65	32.75	-	5	5
K. M. Campbell	10	8	2	146	47	24.33	-	-	7/5
B. Conry	6	5	2	71	45*	23.66	-	-	4
P. J. Beames	8	8	0	184	73	23.00	-	1	6
V. G. Nagel (vice-capt)	8	8	2	124	53	20.66	-	1	1
L. E. Nagel	9	7	0	137	33	19.57	-	-	5
W. H. London	6	6	0	95	27	15.83	-	-	2
J. D. Kinnear	9	5	2	34	10*	11.33	-	-	4
C. A. Gardner	12	12	1	123	46	11.18	-	-	10
L. N. Ley	5	4	0	27	13	6.75	-	-	1

Also batted: A. E. Alvey (4 matches) 1*, 0*, 1* (ct 1); E. P. Dakin (3 matches) 8, 10, 0; H. L. Ebeling (capt) (4 matches) 8, 0, 11; L. O. Fleetwood-Smith (4 matches) 6, 1* (ct 1); R. M. Freemantle (1 match) 1; T. G. Mather (2 matches) 3; A. Moore (5 matches) 0; L. Plasted (1 match) 4; A. Roberts (1 match) 11; E. K. Tolhurst (1 match) 12.

Bowling

	O	M	R	W	Avg	Best	5wI	10wI
L. O. Fleetwood-Smith	85.6	10	348	24	14.50	7/40	3	-
L. E. Nagel	128.1	17	377	24	15.70	5/27	2	-
H. L. Ebeling	58	8	145	9	16.11	4/23	-	-
V. G. Nagel	+96	9	361	19	19.00	5/77	1	-
J. D. Kinnear	+66	17	179	9	19.88	2/14	-	-

Also bowled: A. E. Alvey 24.1-4-73-3; P. J. Beames 0/20; E. P. Dakin 0/1; L. S. Darling 13.2-2-27-3; C. A. Gardner 0/0; T. G. Mather 3/51; A. Moore +14-2-73-3; A. Roberts 2-0-11-0; J. Thomas 0/10.

+ excludes overs and maidens v. VCA Colts.

Total for	2825	98	28.82
Total against	1783	108	16.50

Batting first on a good wicket at the MCG, the home side was rescued by an eighth-wicket stand of 87 by Bernard Conry (45*) and keeper Keith Campbell (47) which enabled the score to reach 241. The decision to play Fleetwood-Smith on the second day was amply vindicated when the left-arm spinner took 7/40 to rout Northcote for 98.

The last home-and-away game was against top-placed Richmond, and again a win was needed for Melbourne to play in the finals. Fielding virtually a full-strength eleven for the first time this season (the only absentee was the recently injured Vern Nagel, who was forced to miss the finals as well), Melbourne won comfortably, taking it to third place on the ladder. After Ebeling, Lisle Nagel and Fleetwood-Smith combined to dismiss the strong Richmond batting line-up for a modest 198, a sparkling innings of 127 in 142 minutes by Len Darling enabled Melbourne to comfortably pass its opponent's total.

Melbourne's semi final opponent was Fitzroy, which had moved into top place following Richmond's defeat. In difficult, showery conditions on the opening day, Fitzroy, having won the toss and batted, struggled to six for 138, with four of those wickets falling to Fleetwood-Smith. Next week, with Fleetwood-Smith (5/119) proving expensive, Fitzroy recovered to make 233 and set Melbourne a challenging target.

Melbourne was equal to the task, however, and by stumps had reached 107 for the loss of Ponsford (50). Next day it passed Fitzroy's total with six wickets in hand and went on to make 316. The star was Keith Rigg, whose patient 102, his first century of the season, occupied 300 minutes and included only 4 fours. He and Joe Thomas (54) put on 92 for the third wicket.

In the other semi final, Collingwood caused an upset when it overhauled Richmond's total of 251 with two wickets in hand. This was largely due to a magnificent unbeaten 113 by its 45-year-old skipper Jack Ryder, who recorded his 37th and, it turned out, last District hundred.

Collingwood's effort in reaching the final was especially praiseworthy as it had been forced to stand out of the District competition in the previous season, a result of a tenancy dispute involving its home ground at Victoria Park.

The final, which was played on the Richmond Cricket Ground, began on Monday 1 April. Winning the toss and batting first in perfect conditions, Melbourne suffered an early setback when Ponsford was trapped lbw for one by Collingwood footballer Len Murphy, but that was almost the only joy for Collingwood's bowlers on the day, for by stumps Melbourne's score stood at two for 237.

Rigg and Darling added 189 in a punishing second-wicket stand, towards which Darling contributed 114. Batting for 155 minutes, he hit the ball with terrific power and struck 12 fours. On the following Saturday, in glorious weather more typical of December than April, Rigg, 96 not out overnight, and Thomas (56) carried their third-wicket partnership from 44 to 133 in 135 minutes, to place Melbourne in an impregnable position.

Rigg, who took nearly four hours to reach his hundred, cut loose on the second day and went on to make 162, batting for 329 minutes and hitting 15 boundaries. Following his dismissal, the remaining wickets fell relatively cheaply, with Max Rayson, a former Melbourne player whose son Roger played for Melbourne and Victoria in the 1960s, taking four wickets and Ryder three.

With 24 minutes to stumps, Collingwood lost one of its openers, Charlie Scott, to Ebeling just before the close. Any chance it may have had of making a fight of it on the following Saturday was dashed by overnight rain. Although the pitch was covered, the wintry conditions and soft outfield made batting difficult.

Flighting the ball cleverly into a stiff southerly wind, Fleetwood-Smith bamboozled all the Collingwood batsmen with the exception of Ryder, to finish with the excellent figures of seven for 47. Ryder, who contributed 43 not out of his team's total of 101, played a lone hand, 24 of his runs being scored in a last-wicket stand of 28 with Harold Britt. Only three overs were bowled in Collingwood's second innings before dull light brought the match to a merciful conclusion.

With 470 runs at 78.33, Ponsford won the club's batting average for the second time. He scored two centuries, as did Darling and Rigg, both of whom also averaged over 50. Next

1935/36 FINAL

FITZROY v. MELBOURNE

Played at Melbourne Cricket Ground on April 11, 13 & 14, 1936.
Melbourne won outright by 5 wickets. Time: Fitzroy

Fitzroy		Melbourne	
L. A. Wynne c Ebeling b Thoms	51	c Kinneer b Thoms	2
R. Gardner b b Thoms	69	b Nagel	19
E. A. Williams c Nagel b Ebeling	9	c Campbell b Ebeling	5
J. W. Scoble c Ebeling b Thoms	5	c Campbell b Nagel	21
H. J. Plant run out	1	b b Ebeling	1
H. C. Lansdown c Campbell b Nagel	19	(R) c Rigg b Nagel	18
A. E. O'Brien b Thoms	12	(R) not out	2
A. E. Liddicut c Brown b Kinneer	5	c Kinneer b Thoms	4
J. Frederick c Thoms b Thoms	4	(11) b Ebeling	1
* F. D. Chapman c Campbell b Thoms	4	(R) c Campbell b Ebeling	5
* C. E. Crawford not out	1	(7) b Nagel	9
lb-L, sb-S	2	lb-L, w-L, sb-S	4
1/88 2/112 3/121 4/122 5/151 6/172	185	1/3 2/18 3/46 4/51 5/51	89
7/173 8/185 9/182 10/183		6/58 7/84 8/77 9/88 10/89	
Bowling: First Innings — Ebeling 12-7-31-1; Thoms 22.5-6-36-6; Nagel 18-1-47-1; Kinneer 20-8-40-1. Second Innings — Ebeling 18.2-3-26-4; Thoms 11-1-38-2; Nagel 10-4-12-4; Kinneer 5-2-8-0.			
Melbourne		Fitzroy	
W. H. Ponsford c Wynne b Chapman	2	b b Frederick	43
K. E. Rigg c Wynne b Chapman	1	c Williams b Liddicut	18
J. Thomas c Brown b Liddicut	83	c Chapman b Plant	9
R. W. Brown c Chapman b Liddicut	0	(3) not out	37
P. J. Beames c Crawford b Frederick	7	(4) c Crawford b Frederick	15
C. A. Gardner c Crawford b Frederick	3	c & b Chapman	10
* K. M. Campbell c b Frederick	3	not out	21
* H. E. Ebeling b b Frederick	2		
V. G. Nagel c Crawford b Frederick	0		
J. D. Kinneer c Plant b Chapman	1		
R. Thoms not out	3		
B 2	2	lb-L	2
1/2 2/3 3/4 4/26 5/40 6/56	115	1/46 1/57 3/91 4/96	(5 wks) 162
5/68 6/98 9/107 10/111		5/107	
Bowling: First Innings — Liddicut 9-1-18-2; Chapman 11.3-4-29-3; Frederick 9-0-48-5; Plant 5-0-16-2. Second Innings — Liddicut 10-2-27-1; Chapman 12-1-44-1; Frederick 12-1-33-1; Plant 10-0-54-1; Brown 9-1-49-3-0.			
Close of play scores: 1st day — Fitz 113/5 (Gardner 66, Brown 61); 2nd day — Fitz 215/3 (Chapman 3, Crawford 3).			
Umpires: A. N. Barlow & C. Dwyer.			

MELBOURNE 1st XI AVERAGES 1935/36

Batting & Fielding

	M	I	NO	R	HS	Avg	100	50	Cl/50
W. H. Ponsford	13	14	3	829	175*	75.36	4	1	5
R. W. Brown	8	9	4	321	101	64.20	1	2	7/1
P. J. Beames	9	9	1	502	154	62.75	1	3	4
J. Thomas	13	14	1	666	152	51.23	1	5	5
K. E. Rigg	9	11	2	257	158*	28.55	1	-	3
C. A. Gardner	14	17	3	337	52	24.07	-	1	5
F. P. Dakin	8	10	3	153	45	21.85	-	-	3
K. M. Campbell	14	11	3	119	25	14.87	-	-	19/4
V. G. Nagel	14	9	2	89	27	12.71	-	-	6
H. E. Ebeling (capt)	8	5	0	59	24	11.80	-	-	4
R. Thoms	14	7	4	34	11*	11.33	-	-	5
B. Conry	5	5	1	10	7	2.50	-	-	1
J. D. Kinneer	13	6	2	4	2	1.00	-	-	8

Also batted: L. S. Darling (1 match) 15; F. W. Lawn (1 match) 28 (ct 1); L. N. Ley (2 matches) 42, 11 (ct 3); T. G. Mather (2 matches) 5; H. C. A. Sandford (2 matches) 2, 15. Did not bat: G. Andrew (3 matches); L. O. Fleetwood-Smith (1 match) (ct 1).

Bowling

	O	M	R	W	Avg	Best	5wd	10wd
H. E. Ebeling	121	32	245	19	12.89	6/21	1	-
V. G. Nagel	193.7	26	757	41	18.46	6/70	1	-
R. Thoms	184.5	22	664	35	18.97	6/56	3	-
J. D. Kinneer	227.5	30	773	39	19.82	6/39	2	-

Also bowled: G. Andrew 19-0-104-2; P. J. Beames 5-0-49-0; R. W. Brown 2-0-20-0; L. O. Fleetwood-Smith 2/36; F. W. Lawn 1/34; L. N. Ley 0/11; T. G. Mather 0/58; W. H. Ponsford 5-0-31-0; K. E. Rigg 3-0-24-1; J. Thomas 3-1-22-0.

	Runs	Wks	Avg
Total for	3601	105	34.29
Total against	3032	149	20.34

in the averages was Thomas who ended the season with four successive half-centuries. Fleetwood-Smith, who captured 24 wickets at 14.50 in his four appearances, narrowly won the bowling average from Lisle Nagel, who also took 24 wickets.

Melbourne's success represented a double triumph for Hans Ebeling, who also led Victoria to victory in the Sheffield Shield. In the latter, he earned high praise for his attacking captaincy and especially his handling of the temperamental Fleetwood-Smith, whose tally of 60 wickets in six matches set a competition record which stood for more than 60 years.

The 1935/36 premiership

Melbourne's senior side was weakened by the absence of several leading players, as Len Darling and Chuck Fleetwood-Smith were members of the Australian XI which toured South Africa and were available for only the first match, while Lisle Nagel, who toured India with the unofficial Australian side led by Jack Ryder, missed the entire season.²

Despite their absence, Melbourne won eight of its 12 home-and-away games and lost only twice, enabling it to finish in third place, just behind St Kilda and Fitzroy. The outstanding performance was recorded against University in late November when Bill Ponsford (165*) and Keith Rigg (158*) took part on an unbroken first wicket stand of 331, which still stands as a club record. On the following Saturday, University was dismissed for 147 with Ebeling, who had also been chosen to tour South Africa but withdrew for business reasons, capturing six for 21.

In the home-and-away games Ponsford also recorded unbeaten innings of 121 against St Kilda and 175 against the Colts. Other century-makers were Joe Thomas (152 against North Melbourne) and Percy Beames whose 154 against Northcote in the final home-and-away round ensured a finals berth.

With Ebeling, who again captained Victoria this season, missing for six matches mid-season through interstate commitments, the attack was carried by Vern Nagel, Bob Thoms and Joe Kinneer. Thoms, an experienced opening bowler from Brighton who joined the club this season, proved an ideal replacement

for Lisle Nagel, while Kinneer, a left-arm medium-paced bowler who had transferred from Carlton in 1933/34, enjoyed his best season with the club to date. Kinneer, who also played for the Melbourne Football Club, was employed by the MCC for 45 years as a painter and is fondly remembered as the long-serving operator of the old MCG scoreboard.

Melbourne's semi final opponent was St Kilda. In a one-sided contest, St Kilda was bundled out for 102, with Thoms and Kinneer each taking three wickets, in reply to which Melbourne made 345. Ponsford top-scored with 148, his fourth hundred of the season which occupied 367 minutes and included nine fours.

He and Rob Brown shared a fourth-wicket stand of 236, towards which Brown contributed 101, having batted for 280 minutes and hit 12 fours. A newcomer to the side, having been promoted from the second XI after Christmas, Brown showed great promise in his first season but this was to be his only first XI hundred. With no prospect of winning, St Kilda batted out time in the three-day match to make 5/255 in its second innings.

In the other semi final, Fitzroy amassed the huge total of 548 to easily beat Carlton. Roy Gardner made 214 for the winners while Bill Woodfull, in his last District innings, top-scored with 78 for the losers.

The final against Fitzroy, which was played at the MCG over Easter, was an enthralling contest in which the fortunes of both teams fluctuated widely. Following rain during the preceding week, the wicket was slow and the outfield heavy and play started an hour late because of soakage from the covers.

For a time, Fitzroy, having won the toss and elected to bat, seemed to be carrying on from where it had left off in the semi final, as openers Gardner and Lester Wynne put on 88 for the first wicket. As it turned out, this was easily the highest partnership in the match. Although Gardner remained at the crease, Fitzroy had slumped to five for 163 before the first day's play was called off because of bad light.

1936/37 FINAL

MELBOURNE v. RICHMOND

Played at Melbourne Cricket Ground on March 30, April 3 & 11, 1937
Melbourne won on first innings. The Richmond

Richmond	
L. P. J. O'Brien c. Collier b. Ebeling	1
C. G. W. Stuckey c. Fitzwood-Smith b. Nagel	4
G. H. Sturtevant c. Campbell b. Ebeling	1
J. A. Leeward not out	85
R. G. S. Williams c. Rigg b. Nagel	31
L. J. Sauer b. Nagel	14
J. A. H. Alibey b. Fitzwood-Smith	16
F. Henderson b. b. Fitzwood-Smith	7
S. A. J. Smith c. Lay b. Fitzwood-Smith	17
J. L. Keating b. b. Fitzwood-Smith	13
E. S. McCannock b. b. Nagel	0
H. E. B. Ash b. b. 12	
114 2/7 3/8 4/36 5/70 6/100	394
7/112 8/160 9/191 10/194	

Bowling: Four Innings — Ebeling 13-1-14-2; Nagel 23-3-11-62; Fitzwood-Smith 18-3-112-4. Second Innings — Keating 1-1-0-0; Lay 3-5-8-0

Melbourne	
M. H. Ponsford c. Leeward b. Ebeling	100
E. B. Rigg c. Smith b. McCannock	13
J. D. Kinneer c. Alibey b. McCannock	7
L. E. Nagel b. b. Ebeling	0
P. J. Beames b. McCannock	13
J. A. Lay b. Keating	2
C. A. Gardner not out	75
G. M. Collier b. McCannock	0
114 2/7 3/8 4/36 5/70 6/100	394
7/112 8/160 9/191 10/194	

Bowling: McCannock 16-1-63-5; Leeward 9-0-45-0; Keating 11-0-58-0; Henderson 1-0-10-0; O'Brien 1-0-17-0; Smith 6-3-4-47-2

Close of play scores for day — Rich (1) 1/0; (Leeward) 1; Williams (1) 2nd day — Melb (1) 194 (Ponsford 17; Keating 1)

Umpires: A. M. Barlow & C. Dwyer

MELBOURNE 1st XI AVERAGES 1936/37

Batting & Fielding

	W	R	AVG	100	50	100	50
M. H. Ponsford	9	7	1	117	100	56.18	1
P. J. Beames	12	11	1	94	143	56.00	1
C. A. Gardner	11	11	3	298	77	37.25	1
E. S. Darling	4	4	0	148	87	37.00	2
R. E. Rigg	8	8	0	280	188	33.00	1
L. N. Lay	10	9	0	109	122	34.33	1
R. W. Brown	13	13	4	174	69	30.46	2
L. E. Nagel	14	12	0	149	109	29.75	1
V. G. Nagel (four caps)	8	5	3	38	15	19.00	1
J. D. Kinneer	14	9	3	86	37	16.85	1
S. E. Collier	5	4	0	13	23	13.75	1
R. M. Campbell	14	12	3	148	107	13.00	1
H. J. Ebeling (capt)	7	5	0	15	13	7.00	1
C. W. Spang	8	5	1	27	11*	6.75	1
E. P. Dalton	8	4	0	18	11	6.00	1
S. S. Ross	8	4	0	18	9	2.00	1

Also bowled: R. G. Baxter (1 match) 17; G. M. Collier (1 match) 17; P. J. Beames (1); L. E. Kinneer (4 matches) 6, 17 (1); G. C. O'Brien (1 match) 0 (1); J. Thomas (1 match) 11 (1); Did not bat: R. Thomas (2 matches)

Bowling

	W	R	AVG	100	50	100	50
L. E. Nagel	129	89	860	70	13.00	6/53	9
L. D. Fitzwood-Smith	97	2	418	23	19.04	7/60	1
J. D. Kinneer	177	4	32	142	24	22.58	1/37
H. J. Ebeling	115	4	27	289	12	24.08	4/58
V. G. Nagel	80	13	160	10	24.00	1/37	1
C. W. Spang	47	1	196	5	39.20	2/66	1

Also bowled: R. G. Baxter (21/17); Beames 74-0-40; S. E. Collier 1-0-4-0; R. M. Campbell 1-0-13-0; E. P. Dalton 1-0-12-0; S. Darling 1/79; C. A. Gardner 1/9; L. N. Lay 13-0-36-0; J. D. Kinneer 2-0-4-0; R. E. Rigg 0/12; R. Thomas 1/75

	W	R	AVG
Total	709	114	27.37
Total against	1141	168	18.92

When play resumed on Easter Monday, Gardner was soon dismissed and in difficult conditions, with the ball occasionally playing tricks in the heavy atmosphere, Fitzroy added only 22 runs to its overnight score. Thoms, who bowled at a good pace and made the ball lift awkwardly, took the bowling honours with six for 56, his best figures for the club.

Melbourne's first innings was sensational. After five overs the score stood at three for 4, openers Ponsford and Rigg having fallen to medium-pacer Fred Chapman before he had conceded a run and Brown to veteran Arthur Liddicut one run later.

Undeterred, the left-handed Joe Thomas, who came in at the fall of the first wicket, played a most remarkable innings. Ninth out with the score at 107, he scored 85 of the 105 runs added while he was at the crease, having batted for 118 minutes and hit 11 fours. Most of his runs came from straight and cover drives, with his good footwork enabling him to loft the bowling safely into the outfield.

He and Kinneer put on 49 for the ninth wicket, of which Thomas, running cleverly for the strike, scored every run. Percy Beames with 7 was the next best scorer. Diminutive and bespectacled leg-spinner Jack Frederick did most damage, taking three wickets in one over and finishing with five for 48.

Having gained an unexpected first innings lead of 72, Fitzroy made a poor start to its second innings, losing Wynne in the first over and Eddie Williams soon after. Gardner and Jack Scaife then made a brief stand but both fell to Nagel and at the close Fitzroy was struggling at 5 for 47, an overall lead of 119. In a remarkable day's play, 20 wickets had tumbled for 192 runs.

Fine weather greeted the players when play resumed on Tuesday, but Fitzroy was able to add only 32 runs to its overnight total on a wicket that was two-paced with the occasional ball lifting sharply. Needing 162 in three-and-a-half hours to win, Melbourne got away to a sound start but a collapse after the dismissal of Ponsford for 43 saw the pendulum swing Fitzroy's way.

However, Brown, who survived two chances and was not afraid to use his feet to spinners Frederick and Joe Plant, and the

experienced Keith Campbell took Melbourne to victory with an unbroken stand of 55, the winning runs coming with more than an hour to spare.

Ponsford again won the club's batting average and with 829 runs at 75.36 was the highest runscore in the competition. In a strong batting line-up, Brown, Beames and Thomas also ended up with batting averages over 50.

Ebeling won the bowling average for the seventh (and last) time with 19 wickets at 13, although the honours in that department really belonged to Vern Nagel, Thoms and Kinneer, who captured 115 wickets between them at under 20 runs apiece. Keeper Campbell, with 23 dismissals, also played his part.

This season marked the last appearances in the first XI of Horrie Sandford. Now 44 years of age, he had not appeared regularly since 1932/33 but was brought back for two matches late in the season when Rigg was on interstate duty. In a splendid first XI career for the club which began in 1910/11, he had played in four premierships XIs and scored 7297 runs at 34.09 with 14 centuries.

The 1936/37 premiership

Despite being seldom able to field its strongest side, Melbourne finished in second place at the end of the home-and-away rounds, one point behind top-placed Collingwood. Fleetwood-Smith, Rigg and Darling, who all appeared in this summer's Ashes series as well as representing Victoria, were unavailable for many matches as was state skipper Ebeling.³

Ponsford missed a number of games mid-season and the side suffered further losses with the retirement of Darling, who left abruptly in February to take up a business appointment in Adelaide, and Joe Thomas, who had enjoyed his best season in 1935/36 but played only once.⁴ Furthermore, the injury-prone Vern Nagel missed the second half of the season.

The principal match-winner was Lisle Nagel who captured no fewer than nine five-wicket hauls in the home-and-away matches. His best performance was against Carlton at the MCG where he took 6 for 52 and 6 for 33 to give his side a rare outright victory. The most successful batsman was Percy

Remarkably, no team photographs appear to have been taken of any of the MCC's four successive premierships-winning teams from 1934/35 to 1937/38. The only available image of the team relating to this period is this frequently reproduced photograph showing the side taking the field in about 1937. According to the *Australian Cricketer* magazine of March 1980, p.41, it was taken on 30 October 1937 and if this date is correct it shows the Melbourne players taking the field on the first day of a two-day match against Prahran at the Albert Ground.

Players who can be positively identified (left to right) are Hans Ebeling (captain), Keith Rigg, Keith Campbell, 'Chuck' Fleetwood-Smith, Bill Ponsford and, third from right, Percy Beames. The player fourth from right is believed to be Norman Ley – close examination of the photo suggests that his image was inserted later. The players to the right are probably Joe Kinnear and Charlie Gardner. The two hidden players (behind Ebeling and Beames) are most likely to be Lisle Nagel and 17-year-old Eric McKneil who are known to have played in the match.

Melbourne defeated Prahran outright by 10 wickets, Fleetwood-Smith taking 6/14 and 5/86 to finish with match figures of 11 for 100.



Beames, who hit three hundreds – 135 versus University, 105* against Prahran and 145 against Hawthorn-East Melbourne.

In the last-named match, at the Albert Ground, Lisle Nagel (108, his only District hundred) and Norman Ley (122) also made centuries as Melbourne ran up the huge score of 5/435. Next week Lisle Nagel (6 for 64) and Ebeling (4 for 59) bowled unchanged to dismiss the visitors for 135.

In its semi final, Melbourne played Northcote at the MCG. On the first day Fleetwood-Smith, fresh from recent triumphs in the Test series, took 7 for 60 to dismiss the visitors for 115. By stumps Melbourne, with Ponsford and Rigg in charge, had scored 130 without loss.

Next week Rigg, who had managed only 79 runs at 13.16 in the home-and-away games, batted brilliantly to take his score to 188 (227 minutes and 20 fours). He and Ponsford (88) put on 174 for the first wicket. Trailing by 235, Northcote did better in its second innings with the Miller brothers, Ivan and Colin, putting on 100 for the first wicket, but with Fleetwood-Smith taking another five wickets to finish with match figures of 12 for 180, it failed by one run to avert an innings defeat.

Melbourne's opponent in the final, which was also played at the MCG, was Richmond, which had won a hard-fought semi final against Collingwood. Because of rain, only 50 minutes of play was possible on the first day. In that time Richmond made a disastrous start, losing Test batsman Leo O'Brien, Charlie Stuckey and skipper George Newstead with only 8 runs scored, Ebeling taking two wickets and Lisle Nagel one.

Next week a bright fourth-wicket stand by Jack Ledward and Bob Williams improved Richmond's position somewhat, but despite a fine innings from Ledward, who remained unbeaten on 83 (205 minutes, 10 fours) the total reached only 194. Lisle Nagel (4 for 52) took the bowling honours. Fleetwood-Smith, who bowled unchanged for 24 overs on the second day, also took four wickets but was erratic and expensive.

Beginning its reply at 5pm, Melbourne lost the important wicket of Rigg shortly before stumps. A tense struggle ensued in perfect conditions on the third day. Resuming at one for

36, Melbourne lost early wickets with Test fast bowler Ernie McCormick bowling with fire and aggression, while at the other end veteran Les Keating kept a good length and flighted his slow-medium deliveries cleverly.

With Melbourne in serious trouble at five for 76, Ponsford, who had bravely withstood some severe blows to the body from McCormick, was joined by Charlie Gardner and the pair became involved in a match-winning sixth-wicket partnership of 109 in only 69 minutes, which took their side to within 10 runs of victory.

Showing all his old authority with well-timed drives and powerful on-side shots, Ponsford was dismissed immediately after reaching his 10th hundred for the club, having batted for 148 minutes and hit 11 fours.

Two more wickets, both to McCormick, then fell in quick succession with Melbourne still short of victory but Ebeling, who came in at the fall of the eighth wicket, was unperturbed and he and Gardner calmly took Melbourne past Richmond's score. Gardner, who had never quite lived up to the promise he had shown when he first appeared six seasons earlier, played a most valuable innings, remaining unbeaten on 75 (128 minutes, four fours).

Ponsford's century in the final enabled him to win Melbourne's batting averages for the third time in a row with 337 runs at 56.16, just ahead of the leading runscore Beames, with 543 at 54.30. Lisle Nagel, with 70 wickets at just under 14 runs apiece, won the bowling average and was easily the leading wicket-taker in the competition.

He took nearly three times as many wickets as the club's next highest wicket-taker, Joe Kinnear (24). Fleetwood-Smith, who took 16 of his 23 wickets in the finals, was second in the bowling averages. Keith Campbell (23 dismissals) was his usual unobtrusive self behind the stumps. By also leading Victoria to victory in the Sheffield Shield competition this season, Ebeling repeated his double triumph of the 1934/35 season.

1937/38 FINAL	
FITZROY v MELBOURNE	
Played at Melbourne Cricket Ground on March 19, 20, 21, April 2 & 6, 1938	
Melbourne was captain for 17 runs. Two Melbourne	
Melbourne	
W. H. Ponsford (captain)	127
V. G. Nagel	181
F. J. Beames	134
L. G. Bath	106
S. S. Blair	120
E. P. McKinnell	106
L. N. Ley	51
J. D. Kinneer	50
K. M. Campbell	42
L. E. Nagel	35
G. M. Collier	35
R. E. Rigg	32
C. A. Gardner	22
Extras	17
Total	1171
Fitzroy	
J. D. Kinneer (captain)	47
M. A. Morrie	42
M. H. Sievers	37
L. A. Williams	35
E. A. Gardner	35
R. E. Rigg	32
J. G. Bath	30
S. S. Blair	27
L. E. Nagel	25
V. G. Nagel	25
Extras	17
Total	391

MELBOURNE 1st XI AVERAGES 1937/38	
Batting & Fielding	
	1937/38
W. H. Ponsford (captain)	127
V. G. Nagel	181
F. J. Beames	134
L. G. Bath	106
S. S. Blair	120
E. P. McKinnell	106
L. N. Ley	51
J. D. Kinneer	50
K. M. Campbell	42
L. E. Nagel	35
G. M. Collier	35
R. E. Rigg	32
C. A. Gardner	22
Extras	17

Bowling	
	1937/38
L. E. Nagel	31
L. G. Bath	27
J. D. Kinneer	25
G. A. C. Miller	21
V. G. Nagel	19

The 1937/38 premiership

By winning the first XI District competition for the fourth successive season, Melbourne equalled the feat of St Kilda which had done so from 1923/24 to 1926/27.⁵ Melbourne went through the season undefeated but had to stage a remarkable recovery to beat Fitzroy in the final to secure the premiership. No semi-finals were played this season, with provision that the final could be played over five days if needed.

As in previous seasons, Melbourne had to do without leading players for much of the season. Fleetwood-Smith, who made a second tour of England in the following winter, appeared in only the first four matches while Rigg, who replaced Ebeling as Victoria's Sheffield Shield captain this season, also missed many matches.

Vern Nagel, absent for the second half of the previous season, did not reappear until after Christmas. On the other hand Ebeling, who retired from first-class matches early in the season, was able to play regularly, as was Ponsford, in what proved to be his last season with the club.

The closest Melbourne came to defeat in the home-and-away matches was in the opening fixture against North Melbourne. After the latter, sent in to bat on a rain-affected pitch, had declared at 8 for 102, Melbourne appeared hopelessly placed at 8 for 51 before Ebeling and Joe Kinneer both made fifties and added 104 for the ninth wicket. It was Kinneer's only half-century for the club and Ebeling's first for five seasons.

Otherwise Melbourne was untroubled, winning nine matches, including two outright, and drawing four. It finished comfortably clear of Fitzroy, which edged out Richmond in the final round to finish in second place.

Both Ponsford, with scores of 127 against Collingwood, 181 not out against Northcote and 106 against Richmond, and Beames, who made 134 not out against Collingwood and 120 against Hawthorn-East Melbourne, were in fine touch throughout the season.

Others to do well with the bat were Sid Blair, a 21-year-old who had first played two seasons earlier, who made 134

against Hawthorn-East Melbourne, and two teenagers – 17-year-old Eric McKneil and 15-year-old Graham Bath.

The latter, a fourth form student at Melbourne High School, made 66 not out against Northcote on his first XI debut, and in his second match became the youngest-ever player to make a first XI century in Melbourne District cricket when he made 105 against the Colts on January 29.⁶ Born on 3 September 1922, Bath was 15 years and 148 days, making him 48 days younger than Michael Klinger (born 4 July 1980), when he compiled an unbeaten 125 for Prahran against St Kilda on March 17, 1996.

Lisle Nagel was again the mainstay of the attack, although he did not strike his best form until late in the season. His best performance was against Richmond at the MCG in February when he and Ebeling bowled unchanged to dismiss the visitors for 35 and 78 to give Melbourne its second outright win for the season.

Nagel had match figures of 10 for 60 and Ebeling nine for 52. Melbourne's other outright win for the season was against Prahran in early November, when Fleetwood-Smith took 6 for 14 and 5 for 86.

The final, which was played at the MCG commencing on 19 March, was long remembered as a game of extraordinarily fluctuating fortunes. Electing to bat first on a pitch which was slightly damp, Melbourne was dismissed for the meagre total of 117, with only Rigg, Beames and Blair reaching double figures.

Fitzroy's captain Joe Plant used his bowlers cleverly and took the bowling honours with three for 6. By stumps, Fitzroy's openers Morrie Sievers and Roy Gardner had put on 42 without loss to place their side in a strong position.

Next Saturday, excellent bowling by the Nagel twins put Melbourne back into the game as Fitzroy slumped to six for 90 before a resolute innings by leg-spinner Jack Frederick led a spirited recovery. With support from Cec Ruddell, Bill Jacobs and Bob McCracken, he reached his half-century shortly before the close, by which stage Fitzroy had gained a lead of 99 runs with two wickets in hand.

On the third day, Easter Monday, play resumed at 1.30pm. The Nagels, who each finished with four wickets, combined to end the Fitzroy innings for the addition of 14 runs. Trailing by 111, Melbourne needed to make a substantial total in its second innings to have a chance of winning.

But although Rigg, Ponsford (who batted confidently to make 43 in his last innings for the club), Lisle Nagel and the youthful McKneil shaped well, wickets fell at regular intervals, and when the eighth fell at 149 Melbourne appeared in a hopeless position, as its overall lead was only 38.

Then Keith Campbell and Vern Nagel, who eight years earlier had been responsible for a match-winning ninth-wicket partnership in that season's final against St Kilda, became involved in another excellent partnership.

Not afraid to use his feet, Nagel revealed an excellent temperament in choosing the right ball to hit while Campbell, not for the first time in a crisis, batted steadily. They put on 63 for the ninth wicket to give their side a glimmer of hope and at the close, with Campbell still at the crease, Melbourne had an overall lead of 119.

On the following Saturday Melbourne added a further nine runs, the last pair of Campbell and Kinnear having put on a valuable 27 runs. Needing only 128 to win, Fitzroy's opening pair of Gardner and Sievers were back in the pavilion with only 8 runs on the board. Frederick, after his fine first innings knock, was promoted to first wicket down.

He and Merv Harvey stemmed the collapse for a time before superb bowling by Lisle Nagel triggered a major middle-order collapse which saw the score slide to six for 52. Amid great tension, Frederick with support from Plant and Jacobs edged Fitzroy closer to Melbourne's total, but Jacobs and Frederick, the latter having batted with great courage against a well-directed attack, both fell with the score on 109, 19 short of victory.

The last pair of Bob McCracken and Keith Campbell (no relation to the Melbourne player) survived until stumps, with a further six runs having been added. In a nail-biting day's play, only 124 runs were scored in 215 minutes.

After an anxious wait, the match resumed on the following Saturday, with Fitzroy needing 14 runs to win with their last pair at the crease. Only nine balls were needed to end the match. After Campbell successfully negotiated the opening over from Ebeling, McCracken edged the first ball from Lisle Nagel to Kinnear at second slip who safely held the catch, leaving Melbourne victors by 13 runs.

Fully 1000 spectators turned up to see the final stages, a total of 10,535 having been present over the first four days, making it the best-attended final for eight years.

Nagel, who bowled superbly throughout, took six for 46 in the second innings to give him overall figures of 10 for 123. He finished the season with 51 wickets at 14.45, enabling him to win the club's bowling average for the third time. Ponsford, who won the batting award for the fourth successive season with 744 runs at 82.66, and Beames (665 runs at 55.41) were the top batsmen.

Melbourne enjoyed an outstanding season overall and, with its second and newly formed third XI also playing off for premiership honours, the club became the first winners of the inaugural VCA Championship, now known as the J.A. Seitz Club Championship.



Clock presented to the Melbourne Cricket Club for winning the inaugural VCA Club Championship in 1938. The trophy is displayed outside the Membership Services area in the MCC Pavilion.

Hopes that the club would win a fifth consecutive premiership in 1938/39 were not realised as it won only four matches and slipped to 10th place on the ladder. Shortly before the start of the season Bill Ponsford had announced his retirement, bringing to a close a stellar career which included 3235 runs at 77.02 for Melbourne.

Then, shortly into the season, Hans Ebeling, who had been reappointed captain, also retired, ending a wonderful career for the club which yielded six premierships, five as captain, and 447 wickets at 16.17. Another to depart was Keith Campbell, whose reliable keeping and steady batting had contributed to several premierships.

Some fine players still remained, however, and in 1939/40 Melbourne went desperately close to winning another flag, going down by just 7 runs on the first innings to arch-rivals Fitzroy. Lisle Nagel took an extraordinary 86 wickets this season, a tally that has been exceeded only once, by Carlton's Fred Freer, who took 88 wickets in 1943/44 when the home-and-away season comprised 23 one-day games, followed by three finals.

Melbourne's next first XI premiership was in 1948/49, by which stage the club was represented by a completely new side.

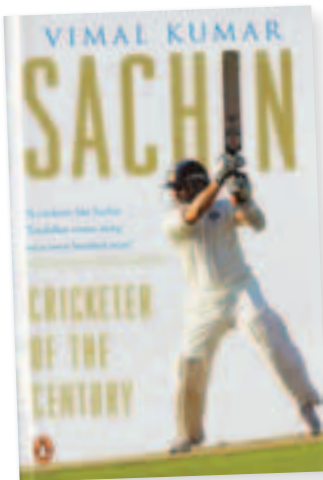
To be continued.

Ken Williams

End Notes

- Ponsford, who announced his retirement from first-class cricket at the end of the tour, ended his Test career in a blaze of glory, finishing above Bradman to top the Test batting averages after scoring 266 in the decisive Fifth Test at The Oval and sharing a record-breaking second-wicket stand of 451 with Bradman. Ebeling, who made what proved to be his only Test appearance at The Oval, also contributed to Australia's Ashes-winning victory by claiming three good wickets in England's first innings and hitting a brisk 41 when his side batted a second time. Darling, although doing little in the Tests, was one of six tourists to pass 1000 runs while Fleetwood-Smith enjoyed great success in the county matches, capturing 106 first-class wickets at under 20 apiece. With Clarrie Grimmett and Bill O'Reilly taking 53 wickets between them in the five Tests, however, he had to wait until the 1935/36 tour of South Africa before making his Test debut.
- Darling enjoyed a successful tour of South Africa, playing in all five Tests and recording a batting average in the mid-40s. Fleetwood-Smith made his long-awaited Test debut in the opening match of the series at Durban and captured nine wickets in the first three Tests before a finger injury suffered in a provincial game ruled him out for the rest of the tour.
- Fleetwood-Smith and Rigg each appeared in three Tests and Darling one. Still recovering from the finger injury he had suffered in South Africa, Fleetwood-Smith missed the first two Tests before, with Australia two-nil down in the series, he was recalled for the Third Test at the MCG where he took five for 124 in the second innings. In the Fourth Test at Adelaide, he returned match-winning figures of four for 129 and six for 110 which enabled Australia to level the series. In the deciding Test at the MCG, he dismissed the last two English batsmen with the only deliveries on the final day to give Australia victory and the Ashes. Rigg was recalled to the Australian side after a five-year absence for the Third Test at the MCG and made an important 47 on a sticky-dog wicket. He held his place for the remaining Tests, being preferred to Bill Brown for the deciding Fifth Test (he made 28). Darling played in the Third Test where he made only 20 and 0 but held two memorable catches to dismiss Wally Hammond and Maurice Leyland.
- Both Darling and Thomas had fine records for the club. Darling, whose career with Melbourne was restricted to 27 matches because of representative commitments, scored 1208 runs at 48.32, while Thomas made 3168 runs at 43.39. Both made four centuries.
- St Kilda also won four consecutive first XI premierships from 2002/03 to 2005/06.
- After a successful District career, mostly with University, Bath was for many years a prolific runscore in country cricket and represented Victorian Country XIs against England touring teams at Euroa in 1950/51, Yallourn in 1954/55 and Wangaratta in 1958/59.

Book Reviews



Vimal Kumar
Sachin: Cricketer of the Century
 Penguin Books: New Delhi, 2013
 ISBN: 9780143417408

The cricket world has seen many champions over the years that get written about in golden ink in history books. Many have risen above others for the breathtaking performances on the world stage, for the records achieved on the way to greatness and for the impact they had on their team's winning in this great game we adore.

Sachin is one such champion and *Sachin: Greatest Cricketer of the Century* is one such book, written by sporting journalist Vimal Kumar, among many that have him as the focus. West Indian great Sir Vivian Richards provides an earnest foreword for this book while champion bowler Courtney Walsh adds a special word.

This is not another biography. Vimal Kumar's *Sachin* is a book written to revisit some of the great innings the great man has played, some of the landmark centuries he has made on his way to becoming the highest runscore of Test and One Day International cricket as well as making a century of centuries.

What is striking about this book is that it has become a platform for many notable names in international cricket to reflect upon the illustrious career of the man known as the little maestro. Kumar has captured insights, reflections and praises of a number of cricketers and coaches as well as some well-known journalists across a wide spectrum.

The book takes on a flow of picking out a memorable innings with a brief summary that highlights the impact Sachin had on that particular game. This is complemented by a reflection from a cricketer who played in that match or someone who watched it.

It is inevitable that comparisons are made with the likes of Sir Donald Bradman, Sir Vivian Richards, Brian Lara and Ricky Ponting. The book entices its readers to keep turning the pages to find out who is the next big name and what he thinks about this great batsman.

It's an easy read that takes you on a journey down memory lane.

Nilupa Mahanama

(Curtin University Librarianship and Corporate Information Management student)



Martin Smith (ed.)
The Promise of Endless Summer: Cricket Lives from the Daily Telegraph
 Aurum Press Limited: London, 2013
 ISBN: 9781781310489

The Promise of Endless Summer is a collection of writings on those whose lives have enhanced the world of cricket. The works or words of more than 80 people include not only great Test players but also much-loved broadcasters and commentators, well-respected county players, umpires and those whose contribution to cricket has influenced others in the game.

Edited by Martin Smith, all have appeared in the pages of the *Daily Telegraph* since the mid-1980s when the paper's editor, Max Hastings, introduced a daily obituaries page. Hugh Massingberd was appointed to oversee this and Martin Smith claims that obituary writing was revolutionised under his direction.

Cricketers became 'a staple of the new order' and this selection has been compiled from this period. Hence greats from before this time are not included. The collection not only comprises obituaries but also tributes and memoirs by those who played for or against the subject and who knew him well and which appeared in the sports pages of the *Daily* and the *Sunday Telegraph*.

As this is an anthology of cricketers' lives, it is a book for the reader to dip into, not necessarily to be read as one would a biography. One may select a piece from the well-presented contents pages of a person of special interest and then find after reading it that one continues to read others near it in the collection.

The *Daily Telegraph* was, and is, blessed with having excellent writers led by E.W. Swanton, whose entries among others include Bill Ponsford, Bill O'Reilly, Bill Edrich and Peter May. Derek Pringle has written on Graham Dilley and umpire David Sheppard as well as Peter Roebuck and Christopher Martin-Jenkins.

Michael Henderson contributes pieces on Colin Cowdrey, Brian Statham and Godfrey Evans. Denis Compton and Colin Cowdrey are the only two cricketers accorded two essays each, the former by John Major and Michael Parkinson while Henderson's item on Cowdrey is complemented by an interesting piece by David Sheppard, who not only played with him but was also a close friend.

The title chosen by Martin Smith, *The Promise of Endless Summer*, is taken from the first paragraph of the tribute to Colin Cowdrey by Michael Henderson. This paragraph also provides the preface to the book.

After reading this collection one can only agree with the final sentence of the flyleaf: 'For any cricket lover, this little book is an endlessly browsable testament to the sheer richness and variety of the cricketing life.'

Ann Rusden



Suresh Menon (ed.)
Wisden India Almanack 2013
 Bloomsbury Publishing India
 Pty Ltd: New Delhi, 2013
 ISBN: 9789382563082
 (soft cover)
 ISBN: 9789382563112
 (hard cover)

Bloomsbury, which took over the publishing of Wisden Cricketers' Almanack in 2011 (the 148th edition of the annual many cricket lovers refer to as the yellow bible), has now introduced an Indian equivalent at a time when the game has never been more popular among the countless millions of devotees in the sub-continent.

The general appearance and format mirrors that of its distinguished English progenitor, apart from the choice of the national team's colour of blue for the cover. Seasoned Wisden readers will immediately identify with a number of the sections.

There are extensive editorial notes, feature articles by quality writers which include Rahul Bhattacharya, Mike Coward, Gideon Haigh, Dileep Ramachandra, Mike Selvey and Anand Vasu, and a comprehensive and detailed obituaries section, although the naming of six Cricketers of the Year is a departure from its yellow parent's customary five.

The introduction of the Wisden India Hall of Fame, with Sunil Gavaskar, Kapil Dev and Mansur Ali Khan, the Nawab of Pataudi, as the three inaugural inductees, is a significant as well as interesting initiative.

From this point there is a significant departure from the traditional Wisden coverage of the previous year's cricket, with suspicions immediately aroused from noting that Wisden India has only half as many pages as its 2013 English counterpart – 755 compared to 1584. There are full scores and satisfactory coverage for all Test matches and One-Day Internationals played worldwide, both men's and women's.

It is a different matter, however, for other levels of the game, both domestic and international, where only the scores of finals are given in full, with all other matches in a very brief potted format.

Even allowing for the vast amount of cricket played today and that this information may be available via archived material on the internet, the reviewer believes that the primary intent of any country's annual should be to provide a permanent and comprehensive record of all matches played in its major domestic competitions, in addition to those by all its representative teams. The short-lived Wisden Australia is a good example of what can be achieved in this regard.

Overall, the records and statistical sections are similarly disappointing. Mohandas Menon, formerly the Board of Control for Cricket in India's honorary statistician, provides an extremely useful listing of key dates in Indian cricket, followed by the potted scores of all 462 Test matches played by India up to the date of publication.

One would have anticipated the inclusion of tables of exclusively Indian records, but only very basic information relative to world cricket is given on the 13 pages devoted to Tests, four to One-Day Internationals, two to Twenty20 Internationals and six to first-class matches.

Only little more than three pages cover those for India's principal first-class domestic competition, the Ranji Trophy. Another surprising omission is that of a register of India's Test representatives (its English counterpart actually includes one for each of the 10 Test-playing nations).

Why take the trouble to provide details of every Indian Test played without giving the players who appeared in them some recognition?

Despite the shortcomings, Wisden India Almanack fills a void left since the 2004 demise of a predecessor, *Indian Cricket*, which for most of its 57 editions from 1946 faithfully provided the only record of the country's domestic competitions albeit, as a reviewer once observed, in "its own idiosyncratic manner".

The new annual, bearing the iconic Wisden imprint and catering to arguably the largest cricket market in the world, nevertheless promises to become a successful and important addition to the literature of the game.

Ray Webster

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Russell Holmesby
**Strength Through Loyalty:
 Saints at Moorabbin and
 Beyond**

St Kilda Football Club:
 Seaford, 2013
 ISBN: 9780987484703

Journalist and author Russell Holmesby has previously written a history of the St Kilda Football Club, deftly titled *The Point of it All*. Co-authored by Jules Feldmann, it covers the period between the club's formative years and 1991.

Strength Through Loyalty (which is the English translation of St Kilda's motto *Fortius Quo Fidelius*) is not volume two, the author explaining in his introduction that 'the book does not attempt a week-by-week chronicle of wins and losses. It seeks to analyse and explain events and people that have made the club what it is today, tracking from the move to Moorabbin up until now.' Having undertaken a wide-ranging program of interviews, Holmesby was well placed to achieve his aim.

St Kilda Football Club was a foundation member of both the VFA (1877) and the VFL (1897). Its poor record of just one flag from eight grand final appearances is, therefore, difficult to fathom. After all, the other five original VFL clubs which are still based in Victoria boast a combined total of 68 premierships from 139 grand final appearances.

It is to his credit that the author does not shy away from what is commonly assumed to be the main reason for the Saints' humble record - a below-par 'club culture'. In fact this is the first issue he tackles, making a decent fist of arguing that all clubs have been criticised from time to time in this area, and that St Kilda has too often been unfairly singled out. Still...

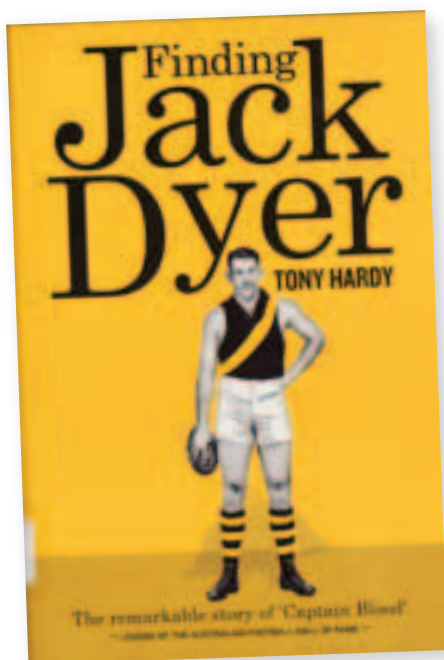
An analysis of St Kilda's trail-blazing move to Moorabbin comes next. After decades of being treated as a poor relation by St Kilda Cricket Club at the Junction Oval, it was hoped that relocation would secure the football club's financial future.

A premiership was delivered in just the second year at Moorabbin, so long suffering supporters could have been forgiven for anticipating a golden era. Why that didn't eventuate is clearly and honestly examined in the book.

The author then goes on to cover a range of other issues, including the Ballarat and indigenous connections, financial crises and near misses in grand finals. The passing parade of coaches in recent decades also provides a rich source of material. Ken Sheldon, Stan Alves, Tim Watson, Malcolm Blight, Grant Thomas were all sacked. Ross Lyon then reversed the process by sacking the club.

St Kilda supporters will find this book fascinating, and for followers of other clubs it will be informative and entertaining. *Strength Through Loyalty* is a handsome tome, the text being complemented by many high quality photographs.

Dennis Carroll



Tony Hardy

Finding Jack Dyer: The Remarkable Story of 'Captain Blood'
Slattery Media Group: Richmond (Vic), 2013
ISBN: 9780987500212

Tommy Hafey might have immortalised the words 'there's nothing more tigerish than a wounded tiger', but it was Jack Dyer who embodied these words more than any other player who donned the yellow sash.

In today's era of nine-year multimillion-dollar contracts and antler-deer-spray, revisiting the good old amateur days and the characters who helped shape each club's identity – for better or worse – is like relishing a spot of whiskey in front of the fire.

Jack Dyer's life has been recounted numerous times through a combination of myths, legends and half-truths. We all cackled at the Dyerisms and marvelled at Captain Blood's ruthlessness on the football field.

The Richmond hordes all lovingly knew Dyer as Captain Blood but who was the man? Were Captain Blood and Jack two different entities or were they more intrinsically connected? Tony Hardy's book, *Finding Jack Dyer*, uncovers the man and the legend.

Hardy's account of Dyer's life, from his schooldays at St Ignatius to his role in 'Save our Skins', is laced with insightful perspectives from Richmond heavyweights such as Tom Hafey, Kevin Bartlett, Francis Bourke and Paddy Guinane.

Yet the book is no definitive encyclopaedia of Dyer facts. Instead, Hardy stays true to Dyer's famous knack of embellishing the truth by occasionally inventing conversations, characters and sometimes shifting chronology. Importantly, Hardy's imaginative style doesn't impact on the book's overall ability to convey a genuine and accurate depiction of Dyer.

While Jack is the book's obvious protagonist, Sybil Dyer is the headline-supporting act. Sybil is the steadfast wife, mother, businesswoman and the Dyer family's plucky full back. It's

through Hardy's account of Sybil's sudden death at the age of 50 that we get a raw insight into Captain Blood's heart and vulnerability.

Jack's larrikin tone and off-the-cuff storytelling defined his media career at TV's *World of Sport*. In *Finding Jack Dyer*, the power of storytelling conveys the challenging climate of post and pre-World War Two Australian life, and in particular the working class suburb of Richmond.

For instance, Hardy tells the story of Jack's compassion for Richmond's impoverished and struggling citizens. Each night, Jack left his car unlocked for a homeless man to sleep in, much to the bewilderment of his daughter Jill.

Jill recalls Jack's lecture to her about showing respect and giving time for the Richmond strugglers: 'It was my Richmond supporters that put you through college because they saw me on the ground playing football... I've had a terrific ride, and I've had that ride because people like that drunk yelled for me.'

Any football enthusiast will enjoy Hardy's easy conversationalist style and constant reference to a character named 'The Patient' who represents all long-suffering Richmond supporters. Collingwood fans may take a more perverse pleasure in reading that 'Collingwood, Collingwood, Collingwood is The Patient's ongoing nightmare'.

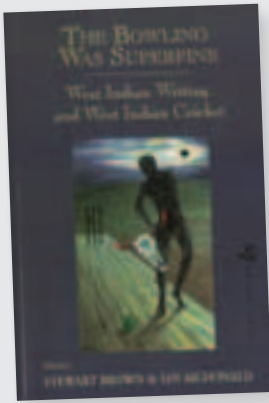
Yet for those Tigers fans who still seek solace from Carlton's destruction of Richmond in this year's elimination final, then advice is plentiful: 'His legs are crossed, forearms resting on his inner thighs, thumb and index fingers pressing. The match is bad for his and every other Richmond's supporter's health, but he focuses on his breathing and manages the anxiety.' (Relaxation technique duly noted!)

However, *Finding Jack Dyer* is not without its imperfections. For example, Brother Peter Duffy, who played a key mentoring role in Jack's childhood at St Ignatius, was not a Jesuit brother as stated in the book but a De La Salle brother (a religious order based on the teachings of Jean-Baptiste de la Salle).

Furthermore, Hardy tends not to take a definitive stance on contentious issues, such as Dyer's 1932 best and fairest award. Despite Punt Road's Jack Dyer statue and the club's honour board relating that Dyer won the 1932 best and fairest, there is no evidence to suggest that any player won the award. MCC librarian and football historian, Trevor Ruddell, asserts in the book that Dyer's "win" was a fiction concocted years later.

Jack Dyer played 312 games, kicked 443 goals for the Tigers and broke 364 collarbones. As a Richmond supporter and pessimist (both go hand in hand), reading the tales of Captain Blood gave me comfort that there was a time when the Punt Road boys would not embrace mediocrity and surrender a comfortable five-goal lead in an elimination final!

Michael Collins



Stewart Brown and
Ian McDonald (eds.)
***The Bowling Was Superfine: West
Indian Writing and West Indian Cricket***
Peepal Tree Press: Leeds (UK), 2013
ISBN: 9781845230548

The Bowling Was Superfine is an anthology of poetry, fiction and essays about the West Indian experience of cricket. Ian McDonald, one of the editors, sets the scene. His foreword is the text of the Frank Worrell Memorial Lecture of 2005

in which he compares Worrell's late cut to Gerard Manley Hopkins' famous poem *The Windhover*.

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn
Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level, underneath him steady air,
and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! Then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend:
The hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird, - the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

So, there is a fine selection of cricket poetry. This selection of titles shows the great variety: homage, humour, culture. *Song for Lara, For Rohan Babulai Kanhai, on cricket sex and housework, Reggae fi Dada, I'm a West Indian in Britain, Prospero Caliban Cricket*. A few excerpts may show this better.

From *Viv* by Faustin Charles

Like the sun rising and setting
Like the thunderous roar of a bull rhino
Like the sleek quick grace of a gazelle,
The player springs into the eye
And lights the world with fires
Of a million dreams, a million aspirations.
The batsman-hero climbs the skies,
Strikes the earth-ball for six
And the landscape rolls with the ecstasy
Of the magic play
...
The volcano erupts
And blows the game apart!

From *Cricket (A-We Jim)* by Ann Marie Dewar

What a carry-on a Sturge Park!
How de crowd stomp and roar!
Fo Combine play Guyana,
An a-we Jim tap the score!

Lek water from a bus pipe,
Like bullet fram a gun,
Lek how lang-foot Sue mek baby,
A so Jim put on run.

You shoulda hear how Montserrat neaga
Shout an clap out dey a Park!
You shoulda see how neaga proud off
When Jim reach de hundred mark!
...

So me joyful and me head up high!
Me heart cyan full no more,
For Combine play Guyana
An a-we Jim tap the score.

This poem celebrates one of the very few first-class matches played at Montserrat. Jim is Jim Allen, a Montserrat cricketer who played for the Combined Leeward and Windward Islands. He did not make the West Indies side but was part of the Kerry Packer World Series Cricket Tour.

For West Indian humour I really enjoyed Trinidadian entertainer Paul Keens-Douglas' *Tanti at the Oval*, a hoary tale of a man taking his 65-year-old aunt to the cricket. For those who are interested in hearing it there is an excellent version on YouTube. Just search for the title.

There are no songs in the collection. The editors hope to have a separate collection for them, but there is one calypso from which comes the title of the book: *Victory Calypso, Lord's 1950*, by Egbert Moore (Lord Beginner). It has the famous chorus :

With those two little pals of mine
Ramadhin and Valentine.

Which later becomes

The bowling was superfine
Ramadhin and Valentine.

The importance of this 1950 victory can hardly be overstated in the history of West Indian cricket and society. This was at a time still some way off from decolonisation and gave the people great satisfaction at beating their colonial masters. Cecil Gray's poem on Ramadhin asserts:

What you sent down over after over
was not a ball with stitches of red leather,
It was an orb investing us with power.

In this review I have concentrated on the poetry because that is what sets this anthology apart from other collections of cricket writings I have encountered. In the other sections we have contributions from the West Indian Nobel Laureates, Derek Walcott and V.S. Naipaul.

Walcott has a short extract from his *Leaving School* where he describes why he couldn't play cricket. V.S. Naipaul describes 'Hat' taking a load of children to the cricket in Trinidad. He also has a fine essay, simply titled *Test*, describing the famous 1963 Test at Lord's which finished with Colin Cowdrey batting with a broken arm in the last over. He writes:

Cowdrey comes in, his injured left arm bandaged. And this is the ridiculous public-school heroism of cricket: a man with a bandaged arm saving his side without having to face a ball. It is the peculiar *style* of cricket, and its improbable appreciation links these dissimilar people – English and West Indies.

Learie Constantine recalls his childhood Trinidadian experiences in the essay *Village Cricket*. There is also the almost mandatory extract from *Beyond a Boundary* by C.L.R. James. This one is about his recollections of his childhood in Trinidad where his house overlooked the cricket ground.

If I have any criticism of this fine collection it is that nearly all contributors are over 50 years of age. It would have been interesting to hear more from the younger generations.

Jim Blair