

M. Mitchell, (V.-Capt.)
 D. Anderson
 C. Fenton-Smith
 G. Capes
 Collins
 W. Empson
 J. Gill
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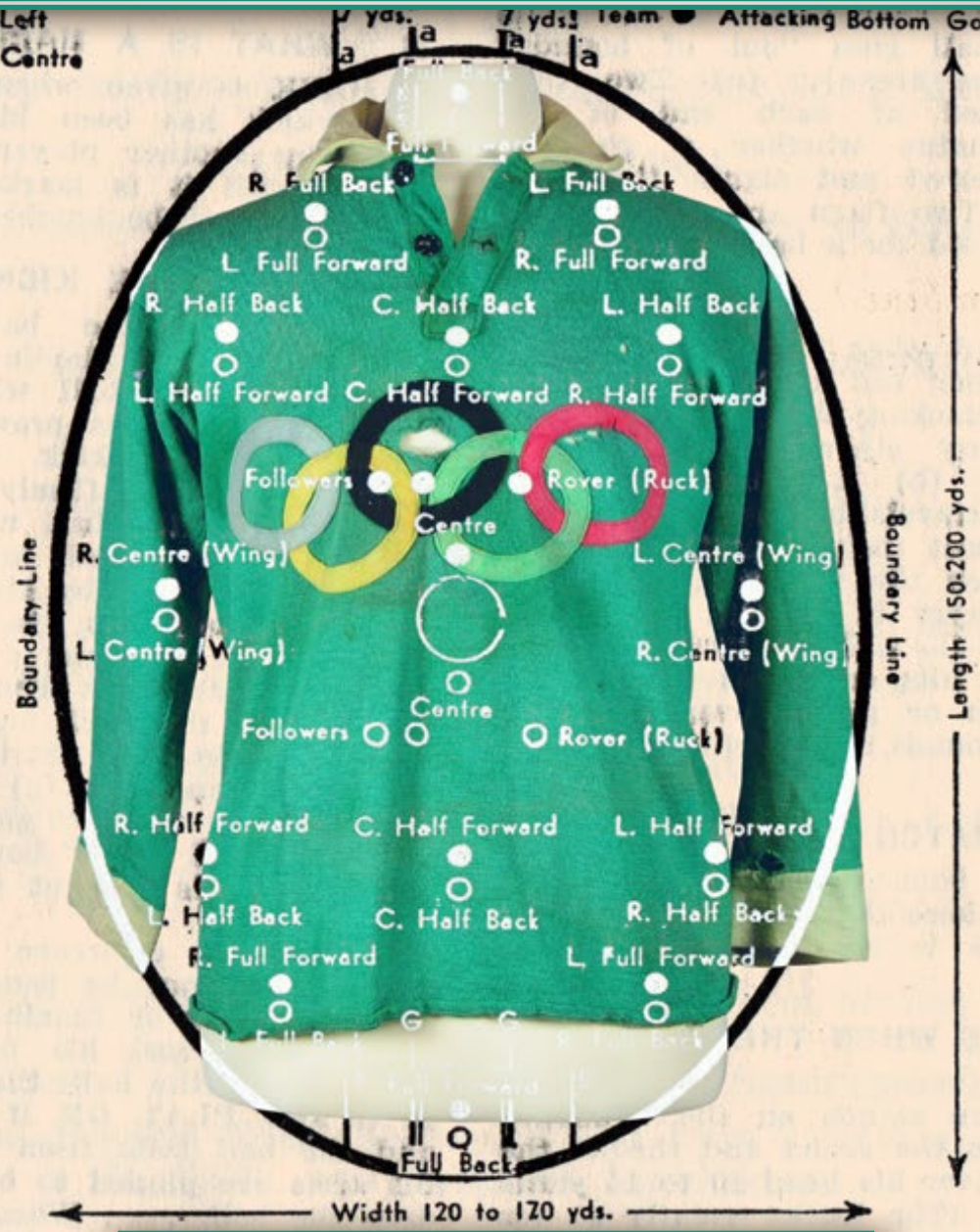
16. P. Rochow
 17. W. B. Thomas
 18. R. W. Tindale
 19. L. J. Wakeling
 20. L. E. Williams

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THE YORKER

JOURNAL OF THE MELBOURNE CRICKET CLUB LIBRARY ISSUE 59, AUTUMN 2016

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In This Issue

Aussie Rules on the World Stage:
 Australian Football at the 1956 Olympics

Conflict on the Home Front: Football in 1916

Drawing a Laugh
 Tommy Horan: Australia's Felix

Footy's First Free Kick



MELBOURNE
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Cordner, (Capt.)
 Woolnough, (V. Capt.)
 A. Allsopp

Follower
 Follower
 Rover
 Half-Back

15. T. J. Hussey
 16. D. T. Tobin
 17. K. E. Turner

Half-Forward
 Full-Forward
 Half-Forward

THE YORKER



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The Yorker uses the Style Guide for MCC Library Publications. A copy of this can be viewed and downloaded from <http://tinyurl.com/mccyorker>. We always welcome submissions of articles and reviews for *The Yorker*, but please adhere to the new style.

Submissions can be made to The Editor, *The Yorker*, MCC Library PO Box 175 East Melbourne 8002 or via email to library@mcc.org.au

COVER IMAGERY

Centre: Denis Cordner's VFL-VFA Olympic team jumper (MCC collection M15774)
Background: Australian Rules football field diagram from the program for Day 7 at the Main Stadium. (MCC Library collection)

BACK COVER IMAGERY

Pages from *Souvenir: Physical Training Display: December 19, 1916*. Published by the Education Department of Victoria. (MCC Library collection)

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Library News



"If Ya Don't Mind, Umpire!" curated by Trevor Ruddell is the MCC Library's football season 2016 exhibition. It uses cartoons to celebrate the 150 years since the first appointment of a central umpire in Australian football. Original works and publications are displayed in the MCC Library foyer with posters of cartoons displayed in the case at the library end of the Grey Smith Bar. It will be on display until July when the 2016 Olympic Games exhibition will be installed.

Interest in back issues of the MCC Library match-day factsheets has led us to make them available on our catalogue webpage see <http://tinyurl.com/mcclcatalogue>. The current ones are displayed on the top right of the page with all of the current AFL seasons displayed in a carousel further down the page. All of the MCC Library factsheets from 2001 are able to be found on our catalogue by searching for "mcc library factsheet"

There are three new additions to the MCC Library's bookmark series. These cover items from the children's collection *The Bumper Book for Girls*, *The Substitutes* and *Teddy Lester's Schooldays*. Copies are available from the reference desk on match days.

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Aussie Rules on the World Stage:

Australian Football at the Melbourne Olympic Games in 1956

By David Allen

“In the first Olympic Games to be held in the Southern Hemisphere, a unique opportunity presented itself in Melbourne. In true antipodean fashion, one of the main attractions to grace the Olympics was an Australian football match, exhibiting the finer points of the game.”¹

– Lynda Carroll



Sixty years ago, Australian football was a demonstration sport at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games. Played on the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the Games' Main Stadium, the match was also historically significant as the first Australian football game to be televised. As Lynda Carroll noted, the decision to stage an Australian football demonstration presented Australian rules officials with a once-in-a-lifetime occasion to promote the sport to a global audience. However, played out of season by amateur footballers, would it be the advertisement footy propagandists hoped? Would it be a fine example of amateurism?

After much speculation from as early as 1949, in 1954 the Australian Olympic Games Organizing Committee followed tradition by selecting two demonstration sports for the programme.² It was explained that, “The general rules for the celebration of the Olympic Games provide that the Organizing Committee may add two demonstrations to the programme: (i) a national sport, (ii) a sport foreign to the organizing country. After careful consideration the Organizing Committee decided, in October 1954, to stage Australian Football as the national sport and Baseball as the foreign sport.”³

It was not the first time a regional football code was played as a demonstration sport at an Olympics. In 1932 60,000 spectators saw American football's best college players face each other on the gridiron at the Los Angeles Memorial Colosseum. At this time the amateur college matches had a far greater profile than professional American football games. Therefore, while remaining true to the Olympic Committee's amateur ethos, this match showcased American football at a very high level.

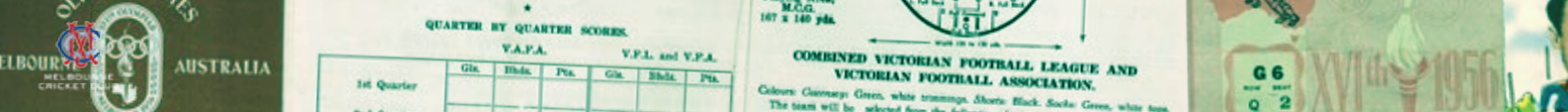
The situation was different in Melbourne during the 1950s, where the senior professional Australian football competitions, the Victorian Football League (VFL) and to a much lesser extent Victorian Football Association (VFA), dominated the sporting hearts and minds of most Melburnians each winter. True to the Olympic ethos, the two teams for the match were selected from players

Bryce Thomas' souvenir photo of the VAFA's Olympic team. (AGOSOM 2008.279)

of amateur status, one side from the Victorian Amateur Football Association (VAFA) and a combined side of Victorian Football League and Victorian Football Association (VFL-VFA) representatives. A strict requirement for the VFL-VFA players was that they sign a declaration that they were amateurs.⁴ It was also suggested the VFL-VFA combined team was conceived out of the shortage of amateur players to select from in the VFL.⁵

The VAFA team was led by Geoff Hibbins from Collegians while the VFL-VFA team was captained by Melbourne's Denis Cordner appearing in his last match on the MCG. The VAFA team was under the direction of Ormond's coach J. W. (Joe) Kelly, a former Carlton player and the first man to coach Footscray to a final. The VFL-VFA team was coached by former Collingwood premiership player and Australian National Football Council (ANFC) secretary and tireless

VAFA	6.1	9.4	11.8	12.9 (81)
VFL-VFA	1.0	6.0	6.2	8.7 (55)
VAFA Goalkickers – R.C. Fenton-Smith 4, R.F. Pettigrove 4, J.D. Anderson 3, P. Rochow.				
VAFA Best – G.W. Hibbins, R.C. Fenton-Smith, J.D. Anderson, W.B. Thomas, R.F.Pettigrove, P.K. Harkness				
VFL-VFA Goalkickers – F.X. Dunin 3, K.E. Turner, K. Woolnough, D.J. Plunkett, D.T. Tobin, R.A. Allsopp.				
VFL-VFA Best – F.X. Dunin, B.C. Edwards, D.T. Tobin, B.T. Collopy, K. Woolnough, L.J. Dwyer, R.A. Allsopp, J.B. Westacott, J.S. Sassella				



footy advocate Bruce Andrew. Many players considered their amateur status important such as Richmond player Vic Naismith who wished to continue competing in amateur athletics (he was one of Australia's leading javelin throwers) or Denis Cordner whose family, including his father Ted, uncle Harry and three brothers Donald, Ted and John, all proudly championed the amateur cause, while playing for Melbourne in the VFL.

The VAFA side were resplendent in a white guernsey with emerald green collars, cuffs and numbers, with the five coloured Olympic rings on the chest, white shorts and white socks with green tops. The VFL-VFA combination wore an emerald green jersey also including the coloured Olympic rings on the chest with white collars, cuffs, numbers and tops of socks. The VFL-VFA wore black shorts. Many players who took part still have this rare guernsey proudly framed. In 2000 replicas of the white jumper with the Olympic rings was produced for sale in conjunction with the Sydney Olympics.

On Friday December 7, 1956 at the MCG the demonstration match of Australian Football commenced at 4:30pm. The match followed the Olympic football (soccer) bronze medal match that kicked-off at 1:20pm. The attendance estimated at 36,200 was for the entire afternoon session and it seems some spectators left after Bulgaria secured the bronze medal with a 3 – 0 victory over India.⁶

To cater for an international audience that may be unfamiliar with the Australian version of football, the programme published for the session not only outlined the teams, but explained the positions, rules and terminology. The MCG's public announcement system was also used to assist those not familiar with the rules as, "During the game, an expert interesting commentary was broadcast, explaining the rules as interpreted by the Umpire."⁷

One visitor in particular was noted by the press. *The Herald* explained that, "The Duke of Edinburgh saw his first game of Australian Rules football at the Main Olympic Stadium this afternoon."⁸ *The Sun* indicated the Duke, who had watched the soccer had, "extended his scheduled visit to the MCG- to see the demonstration of Australian Rules football."⁹ Jack Fullerton, the VAFA's secretary, sat with His Royal Highness and explained the game to him.

The VAFA team dominated from the start, "It was a better combination, it shone in the air. It fumbled rarely, and it seemed faster."¹⁰ *The Age* put it simply when it stated, "League and Association players were beaten easily by a faster, more talented Amateur Victorian Football Association team..."¹¹ The final scores read VAFA 12.9 (81) to VFL-VFA 8.7 (55). VAFA captain, Geoff Hibbins, masterfully led his team and with ruckmen Dick Fenton-Smith (four goals) and Peter Harkness, wingman Bryce Thomas, and dominant forwards Duncan Anderson (three goals) and Ray Pettigrove (four goals) they were just too good. The VFL-VFA team was well served by Frank Dunin, Brendan Edwards, Ray Allsopp, Des Tobin,



Above Left: Bryce Thomas' VAFA Olympic team jumper. (MCC collection M5765)

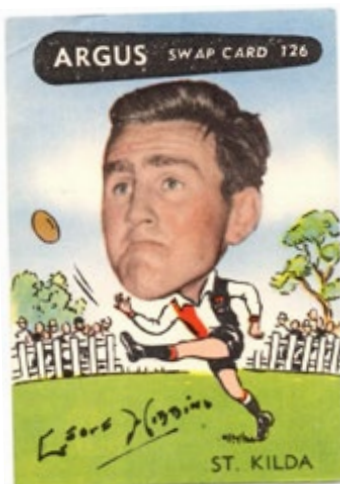
Above Centre: Denis Cordner's VFL-VFA Olympic team jumper. (MCC collection M15774)

Right: Admission ticket to Day 7 of the 1956 Olympic Games.

Page 5 Bottom: Cover and pages from the programme for Day 7 at the Main Stadium. (MCC Library collection)



The Teams



Geoff Hibbins



Denis Cordner

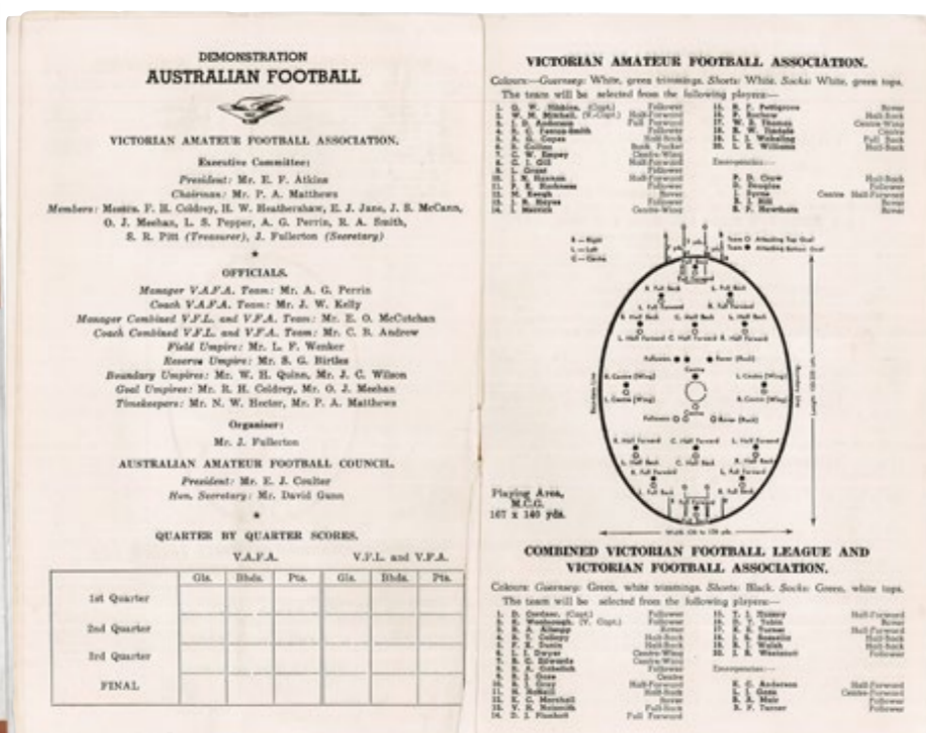
Victorian Amateur Football Association

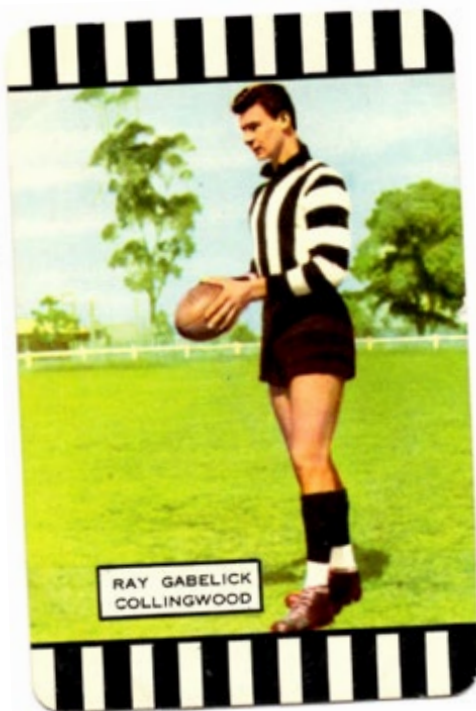
- Geoff Hibbins – capt (Collegians)*
- Murray Mitchell – vice capt (Old Melburnians)
- Bob Collins (MHSOB)
- Gerry Gill (University Blacks)
- Jim Hannan (Old Melburnians)
- Peter Harkness (Old Scotch)
- Laurie Wakeling (Old Paradians)
- Tony Capes (University Blacks)
- Phil Rochow (Coburg Amateurs)*
- Cyril Empey (Commonwealth Bank)
- Dick Tindale (Old Scotch)
- Mick Keogh (University Blacks)
- Lloyd Williams (Ivanhoe Amateurs)*
- Leigh Grant (Power House)
- Duncan Anderson (Old Melburnians)
- Dick Fenton-Smith (Ormond)*
- John Hayes (University Blues)*
- Ian Merrick (Coburg Amateurs)
- Bryce Thomas (Old Melburnians)
- Ray Pettigrove (Coburg Amateurs)

The VFL-VFA Team

- Denis Cordner – capt (Melbourne)*
- Keith Woolnough – vice capt (Northcote)
- Ray Gabelich (Collingwood)*
- Brian Gray (Collingwood)*
- Ken Turner (Collingwood)*
- John Westacott (Footscray)*
- Brendan Edwards (Hawthorn)*
- Brian Collopy (Melbourne)
- Laurie Dwyer (North Melbourne)*
- Ray Allsopp (Richmond)*
- Frank Dunin (Richmond)*
- Vic Naismith (Richmond)*
- Brian Walsh (St Kilda)*
- Neil McNeill (South Melbourne)*
- Dave Plunkett (Box Hill)
- Jack Sassella (Coburg)
- Barry Gaze (Prahran)
- Des Tobin (North Melbourne)*
- T. J. Hussey (Northcote) - Reserve
- Keith Marshall (Sandringham) -Reserve

Note: Players who played VFL games (whether prior to, at the time of, or after the match) are noted with an asterick * after their name.





Keith Woolnough, Brian Collopy, Jack Sassella and John Westacott. The pre-match prediction that the VFL-VFA, had a "lack of a reliable goalkicker" proved correct.¹²

The game was important for the football career of Dick Fenton-Smith who was best on the ground. He wrote, "It was a life changing event for me as not only was I playing as a representative of my country, but I was doing so on the world stage. It expedited my long

awaited promotion to the Melbourne Football Club's senior training list and participation in three VFL Grand Finals including two premierships."¹³ Bryce Thomas, later MCC Assistant Secretary, explained how one bonus for the players was that, "all competitors got free entry to other events..."¹⁴ But the most important observation came when he proudly stated, "It was one of the highlights of my athletic career. The hype of the Olympics was just fantastic. We all received a bronze competitors medal – just the same as Vladimir Kuts (the winner of the 5,000 metres and 10,000 metres) took home with him. He did have a couple of gold medals as well."¹⁵

Some serious obstacles had to be overcome by the players. The cinder track was still evident and some edges were still hazardous. The field games areas for javelin, shot put, hammer and discus throw and the water jump for the steeple chase; with the high jump, long jump and pole vault pits, were filled in with all events having concluded. This made some of the surface

shifty and a minefield underfoot. Tony Capes, a defender for the VAFA, and later the president of Footscray recalled, "The 10-yard square was marked out on the cinders. As I kicked the drop kick, my toe dug into the track and I almost broke my foot."¹⁶

One item which caused comment was the flagpole that was still required for the closing ceremony. It was located in the pocket near the Members' Pavilion. Des Tobin, a 17-year-old with just one game at North Melbourne in 1956 and a VFL-VFA representative, explained, "I remember that flag pole. You'd come flying down the MCC members' wing and the boundary line jutted out and around the flag pole. The official Olympic flag was at full mast. It couldn't come down until the closing ceremony".¹⁷ The morning after the match a staff reporter for the *Age* exclaimed, "And who ever heard of playing football around a monstrous flagpole?"¹⁸

Many of the players for the VFL-VFA team were inexperienced but went on to memorable playing careers. Brendan Edwards (Hawthorn) was in his first season, he would later represent Victoria eight times and play in the Hawks' first premiership side in 1961. Ray Gabelich, Ken Turner and Brian Gray were all members of Collingwood's 1958 premiership side. From Western Australia Gabelich had played with Parkside (VAFA) in 1954 before his Magpie years in 1955 to 1966, which included club captaincy in 1964 and 1965.

Wingman Laurie Dwyer was a champion ballroom dancer appropriately nicknamed, "Twinkletoes." He had started in 1956 as North's Under 19 captain but between 1956 and 1970 won two best and fairest and played 201 games. Brian Walsh was a fine defender at St Kilda. Richmond's rover Ray Allsopp played a 54-game VFL career before devoting a life-time to junior development and football publications. An interesting player for the VFL-VFA side was Melbourne's Brian Collopy who was one of the best players on the day. He had been a fine player with University Blacks and captained the Demon's Second Eighteen premiership side in 1956 but never played in senior ranks.

The match received varied reviews, Percy Taylor in the *Argus*, under the headline "Yes, they saw OUR football" bemoaned that the game being out of season, the fact an exhibition "lacked the fire that makes our game" and the "absence of that partisan spirit, the life-blood of our game."¹⁹

The crowd was however not as pessimistic although some visitors were confused and bewildered by a game they had never seen before. A Melbourne *Age*



Top Left: Trading card of Collingwood's Ray Gabelich (his name misspelt on the card)
(Eric Panther collection)

Left: Photograph of the 1956 Olympic demonstration sports display outside the Frank Grey Smith bar. The exhibit will be displayed throughout the football season.

Page 7: Photographs by Stella Wenker, wife, of the field umpire for Australian Football demonstration game at the 1956 Olympic Games, Leslie Frank Wenker. He was 47 years-old when he umpired the match. (AGOSOM 1997.3313.2-3)



correspondent wrote, "A perplexed American looked down on the Main Stadium turf yesterday, turned in his seat and asked: 'What gives with the guys in the white butchers' coats?'"²⁰ The goal umpires' attire had no comparison in American sport. Jim Dunaway from Chicago commented that. "The player's kicking ability, both for distance and accuracy has amazed me. I thoroughly enjoyed it."²¹

The appearance of amateur football as a demonstration sport, meant, "The VAFA received a boost in its public profile in 1956."²² The *Official Report of the Organizing Committee* explained, "The game was played in the true amateur spirit, with abundance of vigour and speed, plenty of good kicking and high marking, system and other characteristics of Australian Football. The spectator participation which as outspoken 'barracking' is such a marked feature of the game in Australia being missing; this was to be expected, perhaps, as the game was played not so much to spectators of this kind as to overseas visitors, to demonstrate the finer points

of the game. The demonstration, as such, did not suffer a whit from this lack of the traditional Saturday atmosphere; it was soundly played, all members of the teams acquitting themselves with honour."²³

One candid newspaper report suggested the crowd, "found a few opportunities for cheers."²⁴ It went on to announce how, "They booed too, Olympic football or not, the umpire remained an umpire."²⁵

The Victorian Football League in its annual report commented that, "the co-operation of all concerned in the many difficulties experienced in presenting the game out of season is greatly acknowledged."²⁶ W.S. Kent Hughes, chairman of the Games Organizing Committee and a passionate advocate for amateur sport sent the VAFA "a glowing congratulatory letter on a job well done."²⁷

David Allen is a MCC Library Volunteer

Endnotes

1. Lynda Carroll, "Olympic Football", in Stephen Bourbon (ed.), *Olympic Spirit: Australian reflections on the Olympic ideal*, Reclink, 2004, p.189.
2. "Football urged for Games", *The Argus*, November 11, 1949, p.20. "Exhibition for 1956 Olympics", *Sporting Globe*, April 2, 1952, p.12.
3. *The Official Report of the Organizing Committee of the Games of the XVI Olympiad Melbourne 1956*, Victorian Government Printer, Melbourne, 1958, p.713.
4. Minutes of Victorian Football Match Arrangement Committee, Wednesday, August 22, 1956, quoted in Rachel Winterton, "The Amateurs March On: The Victorian Amateur Football Association at the Olympic Games", Victorian Amateur Football Association/Victoria University Essay Prize, 2004, p.4.
5. Lynda Carroll, "Olympic Football", in Stephen Bourbon (ed.), *Olympic Spirit: Australian reflections on the Olympic ideal*, Reclink, 2004, p.191.
6. Bryce Thomas, "Melbourne Cricket Club: Note of Attendances at 1956 Olympic Games", April 23, 1981 in *MCG Stile Book 1954 to 1958*. Unfortunately the MCC was not the ground manager throughout the 1956 Olympic Games and so details of attendances were not kept as rigorously by the Olympic organisers as by the MCC. Bryce Thomas who took part in the game remembered the attendance for the demonstration being "something in the order of 40,000." But only 21,236 tickets were sold for the session. Thomas was later the assistant secretary of the MCC from 1978 to 1993 and in this capacity in 1981 he estimated the attendances for each day at the Main Stadium for the 1956 Olympic Games. Thomas "ascertained from the A.O.F., detail of all public ticket sales for the Main Stadium, and when an assessment of numbers of athletes, officials, V.I.P.'s and guests is added, the following emerges as a reasonable record of attendances." His attendance estimate for the Main Stadium on Day 7 of the Olympic Games was 36,200.
7. *The Official Report of the Organizing Committee of the Games of the XVI Olympiad Melbourne 1956*, Victorian Government Printer, Melbourne, 1958, p.714.
8. "Duke looks at our football", *Herald*, December 7, 1956.
9. "Duke stays to see our football", *The Sun*, December 8, 1956.

10. "Yes, they saw OUR football", *The Argus*, December 8, 1956, p.13.
11. "V.F.L.-V.F.A. team beaten", *The Age*, December 8, 1956, p.1.
12. "Be ready for a shock in Olympic Footy", *The Argus*, December 7, 1956, p.14.
13. Correspondence between Richard E. Fenton-Smith and Jackie Fraser, Curator (Collections), Melbourne Cricket Club, January 29, 2016.
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15. Stephen Phillips, "Olympic Exhibition: The day footy went for 'gold'", *AFL Record Members' Edition*, May 2000, pp.18-21.
16. *ibid*
17. *ibid*
18. "Visitors were rude about our football", *The Age*, December 8, 1956, p.3.
19. "Yes, they saw OUR football", *The Argus*, December 8, 1956, p.13.
20. "Visitors were rude about our football", *The Age*, December 8, 1956, p.3.
21. "Australian Rules voted 'great game, but...'", *The Sun*, December 8, 1956.
22. Joseph Johnson, *For the Love of the Game: The Centenary History of the Victorian Amateur Football Association 1892-1992*, Hyland House, South Yarra, 1992, p.127.
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24. "Visitors were rude about our football", *The Age*, December 8, 1956, p.3.
25. *ibid*
26. *Victorian Football League Sixtieth Annual Report and Balance Sheet Season 1956*, p.14.
27. Joseph Johnson, *For the Love of the Game: The Centenary History of the Victorian Amateur Football Association 1892-1992*, Hyland House, South Yarra, 1992, p.128.

Conflict on the Home Front:

Football in 1916 – An Extraordinary Season

By Peta Phillips and Trevor Ruddell

This year marks the centenary of one of the most extraordinary football seasons ever. Only four clubs competed in Australia's premier football competition and what's more, the premier team also won the wooden spoon! The season was played during one of the most traumatic and divisive times in Australian history. The country debated whether adult men should play sport, and not enlist when needed in the Great War. This impacted heavily on the game, football clubs and individual footballers.

After news of the losses at Gallipoli in 1915 filtered back to Australia, and the realisation that the war in Europe and the Middle East would not end by Christmas, the fear and grief of losing sons and daughters for the British Empire dominated the thoughts of many Australians.

The mythic Australian trope of a happy, laconic, sporting people who were shaped by a bush ethos had gained popularity in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. But a feeling of responsibility as part of the British Empire and the worries of a distant war posed a dilemma for many Australians. Should we continue our normal way of life when our relatives, friends and neighbours, including many sportsmen, were being killed on the battlefields of Europe? Is sport a wasteful luxury in these circumstances? Should adults be encouraged to play at home during this war?

Sporting officials were under pressure to show their support for the Empire and many were contemptuous of professional football at wartime. One of the more widely published arguments declaring these sentiments was a transcript of an address by the Headmaster of Wesley College to his students. Lawrence Adamson's address was published in April 1915 – shortly before the landings at Gallipoli – and it was soon distributed nationally, from Melbourne to Katanning, Western Australia.¹ Adamson's language was passionate and provocative, and he equated professional football with treason. He asked rhetorically:

Now I want you to ask yourselves what association or league of really patriotic Germans here in Victoria could do to benefit their Fatherland in this war?... Why – nothing better than to get into touch with the most physically fit men in this community, the most fitted for war by their practice in mimic warfare, and to pay them from 30s to £3 a week to stay here in Australia, instead of going to fight the Fatherland. I could even admire the ingenuity of a patriotic German who propounded such a scheme to his compatriots, though I would stop him if I could. Well, what less are our professional football authorities doing? All that patriotic Germans need do is to subscribe to the funds of our professional football clubs, and so support our paid gladiators to perform in the League or Association Circus, instead of joining the colours. Deutschland uber alles! Why not Iron Crosses for the premiers instead of medals; it would be cheaper.²



But Adamson was a strong and vocal supporter of amateur sport and football. He was the president of the Metropolitan Amateur Football Association (MAFA – now the VAFA) from 1896 to 1932. Throughout the war Adamson's students at Wesley competed in the patrician Associated Public Schools football competition as enthusiastically as they had before its outbreak. Therefore, his address was not critical of sport and football *per se* – just *professional* sport as a frivolous and profitable allure to fit young men at a time of war.

During 1915 some clubs in Adamson's MAFA found it hard to maintain teams under the pressure of high enlistment levels. The MAFA season was curtailed in July and the competition



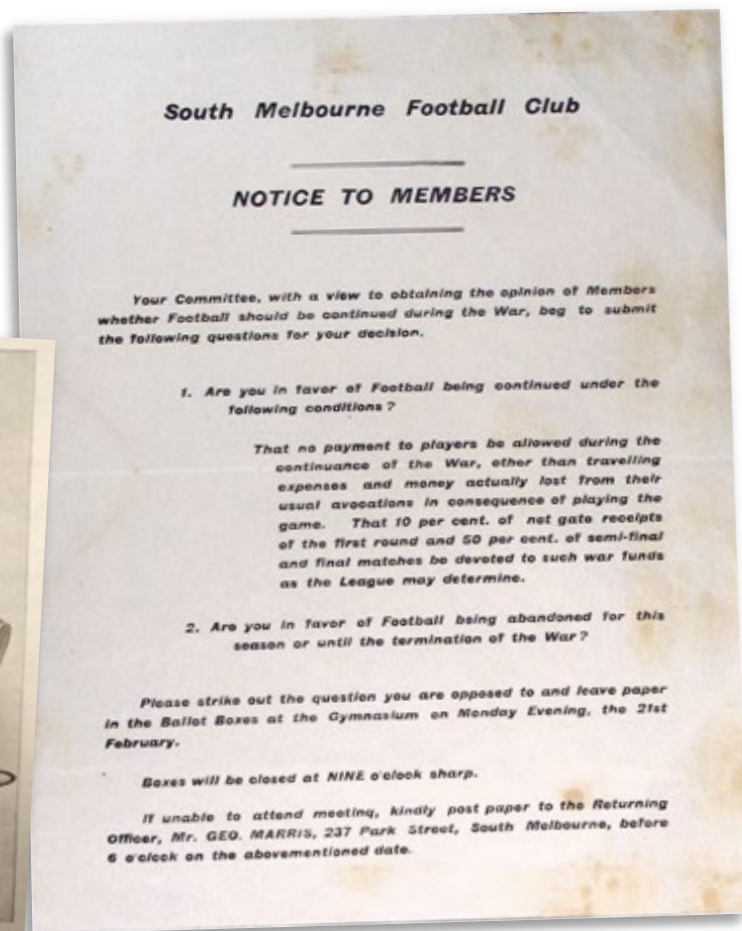
Top: *Melbourne Punch*, February 24, 1916. p.277. (MCC Library collection)

Centre: *Melbourne Punch*, April 13, 1916. p.553. (MCC Library collection)

Page 9: "South Melbourne Football Club: Notice to Members". The handbill was distributed before February 21, 1916 and solicited from South's members their opinion on playing football at wartime. (AGOSOM 1990.2401.6)

went into recess from 1916 to 1919.³ Some officials of professional football bodies seemed to have felt similarly compelled. In February, the Victorian Football Association (VFA) considered, over two meetings, the abandonment of the season. Essendon (Association – not to be confused with the VFL club), Footscray, Williamstown and Hawthorn were “firmly against any football being played” from the outset. However, Brighton, North Melbourne and Brunswick initially favoured playing on an amateur basis, while Prahran and Port Melbourne were divided.⁴ The minutes of a special meeting on February 25 recorded that the VFA resolved to abandon the season for “in the opinion of the Association, the playing of such matches would be detrimental to the Empire in its present crisis.” Many delegates spoke to the motion that was carried unanimously, before the “whole of those present rising and singing ‘God Save the King’”.⁵

The VFA had set a patriotic precedent for professional football in Melbourne but the VFA alone could not end a season. There was a much more popular and wealthier football competition in the city, the Victorian Football League (VFL), and some of its clubs were unsympathetic to the VFA’s course of action.



The VFL clubs debated whether to abandon competitive football the previous year. At the 1915 VFL annual general meeting on March 12 a motion was put calling for the clubs to meet to consider suspending the competition for the entire 1915 season. This motion was lost and the season proceeded with all nine clubs fielding teams. Later that year, a motion to curtail the home-and-away season and proceed straight to the finals was put to a special meeting of the VFL on July 21. Geelong, Melbourne, Essendon, St Kilda and South Melbourne voted in favour, while Carlton, Fitzroy, Collingwood

and Richmond, stressing the economic imposition of such an action, voted against it. As a three-quarters majority was required to pass the motion, it was lost. In 1998 Alf Batchelder, a historian of the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC), commented, “The events of 1915 revealed that at League level the game was divided about its future and by the clash between professional and amateur principles. When the season ended, the tensions relating to football and its place in wartime Melbourne remained unresolved, making it certain that matters would have to be clarified once and for all before the season of 1916.”⁶

During the months leading up to the 1916 season the positions of each of the clubs (and some dissenting opinions within them) had been well publicised. On February 7 the clubs voted to continue, but with player payments suspended, and 10 percent of profits from the gate for home-and-away matches, and 50 percent from finals, going to war funds. Many newspaper columnists were scathing, and suggested the clubs placed profit before patriotism. *The Age* alleged that the clubs most in favour of the league’s resolution had large overdrafts, and sought to “wipe out their deficits at the expense of players and a considerate public.” Soon after the meeting Essendon, Melbourne and South Melbourne, who had argued for the pooling of net proceeds for the benefit of war funds, distanced themselves from the resolution.⁷

The clubs met again on February 18. South’s L.M. Thompson moved (seconded by the Melbourne delegates) that no football should be played in the coming season. However, Richmond’s Dick Kelly and Percy Maybury successfully argued that “it would be robbing the patriotic funds of a large sum” and South’s motion was lost. The VFL resolved to only pay players out-of-pocket expenses, and donate all net profits to the patriotic funds.⁸ But the meeting ended with the VFL clubs still divided.

That evening Essendon’s Frank Reid reiterated that his club would only participate if footballers played as “strict amateurs”, and Geelong resolved that “it considers it undesirable to play League football until after the peace has been declared,” but they would field a team if the season went ahead.⁹ In late February a letter from the MCC’s secretary Hugh Trumble to the VFL stated Melbourne would withdraw from competition. Soon after South Melbourne and Essendon asked the VFL’s match committee “to cancel their [match] arrangements” that were fixed on February 22.¹⁰

However, four of the nine clubs – Carlton, Collingwood, Fitzroy and Richmond – were eager to play and in the week preceding the VFL’s annual meeting Fitzroy’s delegate M.E. Green moved that “the request of the South Melbourne, Melbourne, Essendon and St Kilda clubs not be granted”. With the support of Richmond, Geelong, Collingwood, and Carlton the motion was carried. South Melbourne’s L.M. Thompson argued that this, “is going to drag football through the dirt” while St Kilda’s delegate G.H. Inksip asked that conscientious objections to playing be respected. It was to no avail and all nine clubs were formally obliged to field teams.¹¹

At Richmond’s annual meeting on March 1, Ted Cotter, a club vice president took the chair and expressed the opinion of those that wanted football to continue while defending it vigorously. Having conveyed his sympathies to the families whose sons were lost or wounded at the war on behalf of the committee, Cotter asked,

...did anyone believe that they would bring the end of the war a day nearer by discontinuing football or by going on with it?... But a most extraordinary thing about the newspapers was that while they were all ready to down football, not one of them had yet stood up and said there should be no horseracing. [Applause]... Not one had said that [racing] money should go to the patriotic funds. But they persisted in an effort to discredit football. Why? Because it was the sport of the masses. A working-man had to pay only 6d. to get a good afternoon's entertainment at football, but the newspapers would rob him of that relaxation at the end of a week's hard work...¹²

While Cotter evoked class in football's defence, an official at Carlton's annual meeting in January argued football should continue because, "the club had been accorded great support from women, and the games provided them with an afternoon's entertainment."¹³

At the VFL's 1916 annual meeting on March 10 delegates sparred verbally on whether the five "dissident" clubs

should withdraw from the league and the merits of a four-team competition. League president and chairman, Oliver Morrice Williams suggested representatives of the four clubs in favour of playing retire to discuss it further. Upon their return they "announced that they had decided to play a round of matches together." They also suggested that the other clubs, Essendon, Geelong, Melbourne, South Melbourne and St Kilda, "should still sit on the League, and legislate in the interests of the game." The delegates rescinded the resolution passed at the previous meeting and senior football struggled into its second wartime season.¹⁴

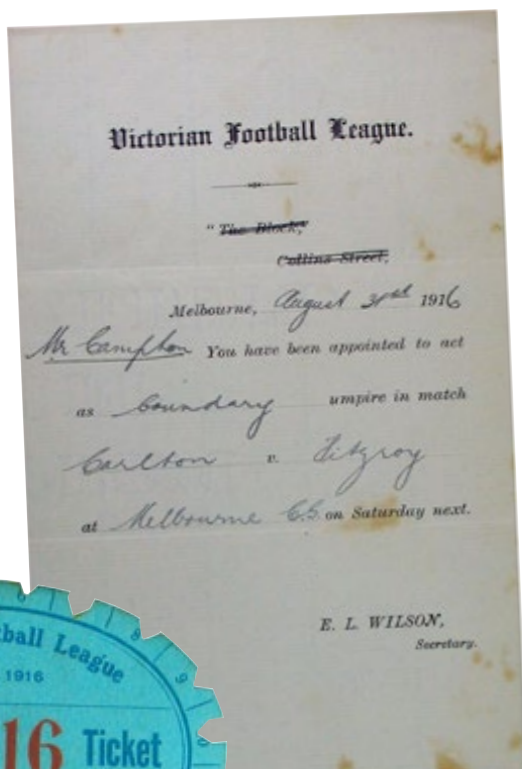
Yet, there was still dissent from commentators outside the VFL. Picking up on elements of hypocrisy in the opinions issued by some newspaper columnists and letter-writers, president Williams defended his clubs in a letter to the press, writing:

In view of the misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the reasons actuating the V.F.L. in proposing to continue, football during the ensuing winter, it may be well to briefly explain their action. They consider that, despite the distressing times through which we are passing, some degree of harmless and healthful recreation is both necessary and beneficial to everyone. They believe, that watching a game of football is pleasurable and harmless to thousands of people, the majority of whom are not eligible for enlistment, and whose means of obtaining recreation are limited... But in any case, if the Defence Department had expressed the view that continuance of the games detrimental to enlistment, there would have been no suggestion of carrying it on... do the critics assert that the promised curtailment of expenses is a fraud and a sham, realise that they are branding football club committees as -not only disloyal, but corrupt? Many of those controlling the game have given their sons and relatives to their country, and can claim to be as loyal and honorable as those who wilfully and ignorantly misrepresent their action. To say that monetary considerations have anything to do with the question is an absolute misstatement.¹⁵

Centre: Notice to Syd Campton that he had been appointed a boundary umpire for the final between Carlton and Fitzroy on August 31. (AGOSOM 1994.3039.96)

Below: Syd Campton's "Umpire's Ticket" for season 1916. Apparently printed before a compromise between the clubs was reached it allows for the expected 18-round home-and-away season, when in 1916 only 12 rounds were played. (AGOSOM 1994.3039.96)

Bottom: The start for the Footballers Handicap at the Soldiers Reparation Fund Carnival at Victoria Park. Melbourne Punch, August 17, 1916, p.255. (MCC Library collection)



The 1916 Home-and-Away Season

A new fixture of games was drawn up. There were just two VFL matches each weekend and each team played each other four times between May 6 and August 5. All four teams qualified for the finals. The first three weeks of finals would be played in August, and should a



grand final be required (only if the minor premier lost an earlier final) it would take place as early as September 2. Therefore, the home-and-away rounds primarily determined who would have the advantage of the minor premiership and a double chance.

The season unfolded with some familiar storylines – such as the reappearance of a veteran. The start of the season saw the return of Alex “Bongo” Lang for Carlton after a five year absence. A rover and forward, Lang created a fine reputation in one of the game’s greatest sides. He was a member of the Blues’ 1906, 1907 and 1908 premiership sides and in 1909 *The Australasian* regarded him as the “most outstanding player in the VFL.” However, he was offered a bribe to play dead prior to the 1910 grand final against South (which he denied accepting) and was suspended for five years.¹⁶ In 1916 Lang played all Carlton’s matches and was one of the Blues’ best finals performers.

Two glamorous forwards in Collingwood’s Dick Lee and Carlton’s Vin Gardiner contested for the VFL’s best “true boot artist” in 1916. Lee bettered Gardiner with 48 goals from 12 games, including two bags of six against the Blues. Gardiner kicked 44 from 15 games.

The play was definitely of a league standard. The bulk of the players had not enlisted and three of the 1915 finalists were competing, including the reigning premier Carlton. However, while attendances still numbered in the thousands, crowds fell. But with no position in the finals at risk a form slump had no damaging effect on a club’s premiership campaign. Fitzroy, having won their first two matches and drawing their third, would lose every remaining match of the home-and-away season. The Maroons would end the home-and-away season in last place. The standout team was Carlton who lost just two matches and topped the ladder earning a double-chance in the finals.

Besides the season being regarded as a farce by many, the major controversy was Richmond habitually playing footballers without clearances. Billy Burns, a former player who had returned after a year in Western Australia, and Geelong champion Alec Eason debuted with the yellow and blacks against Fitzroy on May 13. A Richmond official sought to justify these infringements, stating, “we do not claim them as our players and would never play them without permission in an ordinary premiership match. We want to raise as much money for patriotic purposes as we can, but if we are beaten Saturday after Saturday our matches will have no power of attraction.”¹⁷ By June 17 another three contracted Geelong players – Percy Martini, Harry Marsham and Jim Kearney – were playing in the Richmond side, and the team was dubbed the “Gee-Riches”.

The season was played in the shadow of war. As well as the usual practice games against junior teams, Collingwood, Carlton and Richmond each played against a team drawn from the Pioneer Battalion stationed in Broadmeadows with all proceeds going to patriotic funds. Further charitable games were held during breaks in the season and footballers competed in athletic events for charity, such as the Soldiers Reparation Fund Carnival at Collingwood’s Victoria Park in August. However, although a sizable percentage was intended to be donated to patriotic funds from league matches, Fitzroy could only

Who Won the 1916 Wooden Spoon?

Until 2002 the Australian Football League’s (AFL – formerly VFL) official statistical guide would list Fitzroy as winner of both the league “wooden spoon” and the premiership. But since 2003 the league has recognised Richmond as the “wooden spooner”. To understand this confusion and which club may rightfully claim the league’s booby prize requires an investigation into the history of the term and its designation in football.

The phrase itself is very old. A likely origin stems from the use of spoons made of precious metals as christening presents or as prizes in competitions. Given that a first prize winner may receive a gold or silver spoon, as a joke the last place getter may receive something less precious – a wooden spoon. A famous wooden spoon was presented annually at Cambridge University during the 19th century. The lowest performing student who still earned a third-class degree in Mathematical Tripos, was unofficially presented with a wooden spoon by his peers. The joke, first recorded in 1803, was officially banned by the university until 1875, and persisted until 1909. Over time the spoons became quite large and elaborate and the honour was even celebrated in an 1823 verse titled *The Wooden Spoon*:

And while he lives, he *wields* the boasted prize
Whose value all can feel, the weak, the wise;
Displays in triumph his distinguish’d boon,
The solid honours of the *Wooden Spoon*¹⁸

In an Australian sporting context the phrase was widely used by 1916. From as early as the first years of the 1880s Australian football commentators dubbed the poorest performing team in a season the winner of the “wooden spoon”. The term predates formal competition ladders, but once universally accepted tables were established they lent legitimacy to claims that the team that finished in last place won the euphemistic “wooden spoon”.

Hence the confusion. If Fitzroy finished first in 1916, why were they regarded as the 1916 wooden spooner for decades? In *AFL 2002: The Official Statistical history of the AFL*, Fitzroy’s 1916 wooden spoon was qualified, “Only four teams competed and Fitzroy finally won Premiership.”¹⁹ This suggests that as late as 2002 the AFL regarded the team that finished last on the ladder at the end of the home-and-away season (before the finals) as the “wooden spoon” winner. In most years this would not matter, but 1916 was not a normal season. After the finals Richmond was relegated to fourth place and has been credited with the 1916 “wooden spoon” in the official AFL guides since 2003.

If one were to look at the season dispassionately, and that the “wooden spoon” is given to the team that finished on the bottom at the end of the season then Richmond must, as the AFL recognises, be regarded as the winners of the 1916 “wooden spoon”. However, if you like the juxtaposition that the “wooden spooner” could also be the premier then Fitzroy fits, and many Fitzroy supporters like the notion that the “1916 premiership was the first and last time that a club won the flag after it had won the wooden spoon.”²⁰

find £152 from £918 apparently, Collingwood £40 from £664, Richmond £90 from £614, and Carlton could find nothing at all from £884.

The war was felt deeply and personally at home. It was noted that 15 Richmond players had enlisted in the armed forces at its annual meeting. The sporting and local press carried not only casualty lists, but transcripts of letters from players stationed in Europe and the Middle East. Through these letters, the football public could get a feel for the personality and often the wry sense of humour of their heroes. Richmond's Frank "Checker" Hughes, who was then stationed in Egypt with the 57th Battalion commented in a letter, "I see there are only four teams in the League this year. Richmond are a cert for the first four!"²¹

Footballers were celebrities and their death or injury was felt by people who had no personal contact with them. Of the football casualties during 1916, few were more prominent than George Challis, an intrinsic member of Carlton's 1915 premiership team. On July 15 Challis and his company commander Captain Mair were killed at Fromelles. Mair lost both legs and Challis was blown to smithereens. There was not much left to bury, but bury him they did at Rue Petillon. News of George's death was not received in Australia until August 19. The outpouring of grief was felt far and wide, from his family and friends in Tasmania, to his football team and fans in Melbourne. Carlton was so shocked by this popular young lad's death that many found it hard to cope with. The team wore black arm bands for the grand final on September 2, but it apparently affected their play that day – they had lost their champion.²²

Carlton was not the first team in 1916 to take to the field mourning a team mate killed at the front. Bill Nolan, Richmond's gentle-giant ruckman, died of wounds on July 23 at Fleurbaix in France, about four kilometres from where George Challis lost his life. He debuted for Richmond in 1914 and was remembered as "a pre-eminently fair player. As fair a footballer as ever went on the field. He was so fair that it affected his game, and often the voice of the crowd has called, 'Too fair, Bill Nolan.' That was his character."²³ It was in Nolan's memory that in 1916 Richmond played its first ever VFL final wearing black armbands.²⁴

1916 VFL LADDER (after 12 home-and-away rounds)

	P	W	L	D	PF	PA	%	PTS
Carlton	12	10	2	0	918	669	137.22	40
Collingwood	12	6	5	1	803	803	100.00	26
Richmond	12	5	7	0	792	881	89.90	20
Fitzroy	12	2	9	1	711	871	81.63	10

The 1916 Finals

When the preseason matches commenced it was uncertain where any finals matches would be played, and apparently the four clubs were likely to invite tenders from the grounds "on which they play for the right to host the semi final and final games."²⁵ But by May the league had arranged to play all finals at the MCG, with the MCC handing all monies collected



Front and rear view of Percy Parratt's 1916 VFL premiership medallion. (private collection)

to the VFL for distribution to patriotic funds. The *Football Record* commented,

Melbourne club is run by the Melbourne Cricket Club. It certainly is surprising to hear that although the managing committee was so pronounced in its determination against the club taking part in the League's programme, an offer has been made for the use of the M.C.C. ground for the final matches of the season! It is said that most of the clubs—that means those who were against any football—are in favour of the offer being accepted, but you ought to have heard what an official of one of the playing four said to me about the offer. Oh! I dare not hint at the rude way in which he referred to it.²⁶

The VFL finals were not the first games played at the MCG that year. It hosted public school games and a match in aid of the Red Cross between the University of Melbourne and a combined Public School team. The finals were poorly attended. Just 58,115 attended the four finals in 1916, when twelve months earlier 110,567 people watched three of the four competing teams contest the 1915 finals series.

This indicated a slump in football's popularity generally and some linked poor attendances to the controversy in the lead-up to the season. "As profits are to go to patriotic purposes," a commentator reflected, "the falling away is to be regretted... I hope those that tried to kill the game (although they have not succeeded) will feel sorry for having so badly affected the takings for patriotism."²⁷

The first week of the finals saw Collingwood face Fitzroy. The Maroons had an appalling home-and-away season, and with two wins and a draw from 12 games was easily the worst performed team ever to qualify for the finals. It is unlikely to ever happen again that a team goes into Finals with nine straight defeats. The Maroons began kicking against the wind, and it was twenty minutes before Fitzroy kicked their first goal. However, the match was an upset with Fitzroy at long last finding their "mojo" and defeating Collingwood by six points in a very tough game. Wally Johnson was Fitzroy's best player while Horrie Jenkin kicked three goals. The Roys' win earned them a place in the final against the winner of the second semi final.

1st Semi Final – August 12, 1916

Collingwood	2.1	4.3	4.7	8.9 (57)
Fitzroy	1.3	2.6	6.8	9.9 (63)

MCG Attendance – 9,690

The following weekend Richmond played its first VFL finals match against Carlton, the minor premier. Richmond who had entered the league in 1908 had never before defeated the Blues. Carlton dominated the first half, their greatest lead was by four goals in the second quarter. However, Richmond pushed the Blues in the third and finally gained the lead early in the last. But Carlton rallied. The lead changed hands regularly and Carlton was fortunate to be ahead at the final bell, as nearing the end of the match Richmond's George Bayliss marked in front of goal but missed. Vin Gardiner kicked four goals, and Charlie Hammond three for the Blues. Harry Alessio and Frank Harley each top scored for Richmond with four goals.

2nd Semi Final – August 19, 1916

Carlton	4.2	7.5	8.8	10.15 (75)
Richmond	3.3	4.6	7.9	10.12 (72)

MCG Attendance – 11,728

Under *The Argus* system of finals, the final between Fitzroy and Carlton could have decided the premiership if Carlton won. In Carlton's previous match Richmond wore black armbands in memory of Bill Nolan, but in the final it was Carlton's turn to grieve the loss of George Challis in the war. It was not only the Carlton players who remembered Challis on the field that day. On the half back line for Fitzroy was Ted McDonald who as a youth had played football with Launceston alongside Challis.²⁸ McDonald would later be remembered as the bowler who terrorized the English Test cricket team in 1921.

Tight early, the match was noted for its spitefulness particularly late in the game, with players being cautioned by the match steward repeatedly. Fitzroy dominated the last quarter and the margin could well have been greater. Tom Heaney top scored for Fitzroy with four goals. Two Carlton players suffered broken bones in the first half and the Blues ended with 16 men in the field, while a Fitzroy player was injured early as well. Still, Carlton could redeem itself in a grand final the following week. John Worrall, the Fitzroy champion of the 1880s and 1890s, and Carlton's triple premiership coach, commented, "Carlton are showing signs of staleness... Fitzroy are at their top and, timing their run to a nicety."²⁹

Final – August 26, 1916

Carlton	2.5	4.6	5.10	5.12 (42)
Fitzroy	1.1	3.6	5.7	9.11 (65)

MCG Attendance – 15,567

The grand final was played a week later, with changes to both teams due to injury and illness. Two Carlton players played their first games of the season, while Lal McLennan resumed with Fitzroy after a brief retirement. Fitzroy dominated throughout the game from the first quarter and won the premiership, the Maroons winning more finals in 1916 than home-and-away games. Percy Parratt and Tom

Heaney top scored for the winners with three goals each while Billy Dick also kicked three for Carlton. John Worrall commented "that in winning the premiership for 1916 Fitzroy has accomplished what was freely admitted on all hands to be practically an impossibility."³⁰ *The Weekly Times* columnist wrote, "...any side securing a place in the finals has a chance of the honors, and nothing remains now but to congratulate Fitzroy on a remarkable recovery, of form, and on a persistent maintenance of that recovery, to a victorious end."³¹

Grand Final – September 2, 1916

Fitzroy	4.6	8.8	10.11	12.13 (85)
Carlton	2.0	4.2	6.8	8.8 (56)

Carlton Best – Brown, Daykin, Dick, Fisher, Hammond, Morris

Carlton Goalkickers – Dick 3, Fisher 2, Haughton, Gardiner, Lang

Fitzroy Best – Millen, Johnson, Shaw, Norris, McLennan, Buist, Heaney, Parratt

Fitzroy Goalkickers – Heaney 3, Parratt 3, O'Dee 2, Jenkin, Moore, Holden, Lowrie.

Umpire – Arthur Norden

MCG Attendance – 21,130

Fitzroy's 1916 Grand Final Team - Winners

- B** Bob King, Bert Lenne, Fred Bamford
- HB** Edgar (Ted) McDonald, Wally Johnson (c), Lal McLennan
- C** Teddy Buist, George Holden, Roy Millen
- HF** Bert O'Dee, Tom Heaney, Percy Parratt
- F** Tom Lowrie, Horrie Jenkin, Teddy Purcell
- Foll** Charlie Norris, Fred Moore, George Shaw
- Coach** Percy Parratt

Carlton's 1916 Grand Final Team

- B** Andy McDonald, Steve Leehane, Harry Greaves
- HB** Paddy O'Brien, Billy Dick (c), Billy Robinson
- C** Ted Brown, Jimmy Morris, Dan Keily
- HF** Charlie Fisher, Joe Shortill, Percy Daykin
- F** George Calwell, Vin Gardiner, Alex Lang
- Foll** Harry Haughton, Charlie Hammond, Viv Valentine
- Coach** Norm Clark



Premiership ball presented to Fitzroy's captain Wally Johnson. (Brisbane Lions Australian Football Club collection)

In the 1916 Season's Wake.

After the 1916 season the five other clubs gradually returned to league football, Geelong and South Melbourne in 1917, Essendon and St Kilda in 1918, and finally Melbourne in 1919. Melbourne was possibly the team most disadvantaged by staying out. It was a finalist in 1915, but when the club resumed it won the wooden spoon. The club remained in the lower half of the table until 1925. As for the Adamson's MAFA, its next premiership season was in 1920, while the VFA resumed in 1918.

In the aftermath of the war the teams that played during the 1916 season dominated the VFL premiership. South Melbourne in 1918 was the only team outside the four clubs to win a premiership between 1917 and 1922 and immediately following the end of the Great War in 1919 until 1922 all four of the 1916 clubs comprised a position in the top five, (although South Melbourne were also powerful during this period).

Carlton and Collingwood were established powers before the war, so the big winners from the season were possibly Fitzroy and Richmond. Richmond experienced its first golden era in the league after the war. The Tigers played in the 1919 grand final and won the 1920 and 1921 flags. Alec Eason, one of the 1916 "Gee-Riches", saw indications of Richmond's rise from a minnow to a football power. In 1939 Eason remembered, "I could see, that year, the rise of a great football team at Richmond... There's more to the making of a good team than the possession of good players. Three things are necessary: Are they mates?

Have they guts? Will they stick? The answer all three times is 'Yes' when you talk of Richmond."³²

Fitzroy, like Collingwood and Carlton, was a regular finalist before the war, but the Maroons as the premiers were the main beneficiary of the season. The club next won a pennant in 1922, however, since then the club only won one premiership in 1944, before amalgamating with the Brisbane Bears, to form the Brisbane Lions in 1997. The 1916 premiership soon became fondly remembered as the year Fitzroy won the wooden spoon and the premiership. Quite an extraordinary year indeed.



Fitzroy, the premiers and "wooden spooners" of 1916.

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Drawing a Laugh:

Curating a new exhibition of Australian sports cartoons at the National Sports Museum

By Helen Walpole

There is a risk, when writing about any aspect of humour, of destroying a joke by explaining it.

Sport seems to lend itself to parody, satire and jokes. Perhaps it's because it so closely treads the line between seriousness and flippancy, between emotional intensity and carefree fun. Or perhaps it's the big personalities, the extreme particularities of the rules, or maybe it's just the silliness of its vocabulary. Sport takes itself very seriously while always being "just a game". This makes for rich pickings in the world of humour.

And indeed, sport humour is a vast field, in words as well as in pictures. Readers of *The Yorker* will be aware of the endless range of sport humour in print, from anthologies of cricket cartoons and footy funnies from years past through to books of autobiographical anecdotes by sporting personalities. Artists have looked at sport's funny side since its earliest days, be it through those timeless cricketing illustrations titled "a leg glance" and "bowling a maiden over", or through comical caricatures that bring our sporting heroes down to earth.

Through its long and symbiotic relationship with journalism and newspapers, sport has also developed a tradition of



cartoons that are more closely aligned with news and editorial cartooning than with those genres of illustration, caricature and anecdote. The National Sports Museum has developed an exhibition of sport cartoons from newspapers around the nation, mostly by editorial cartoonists, which take current events at their starting point.

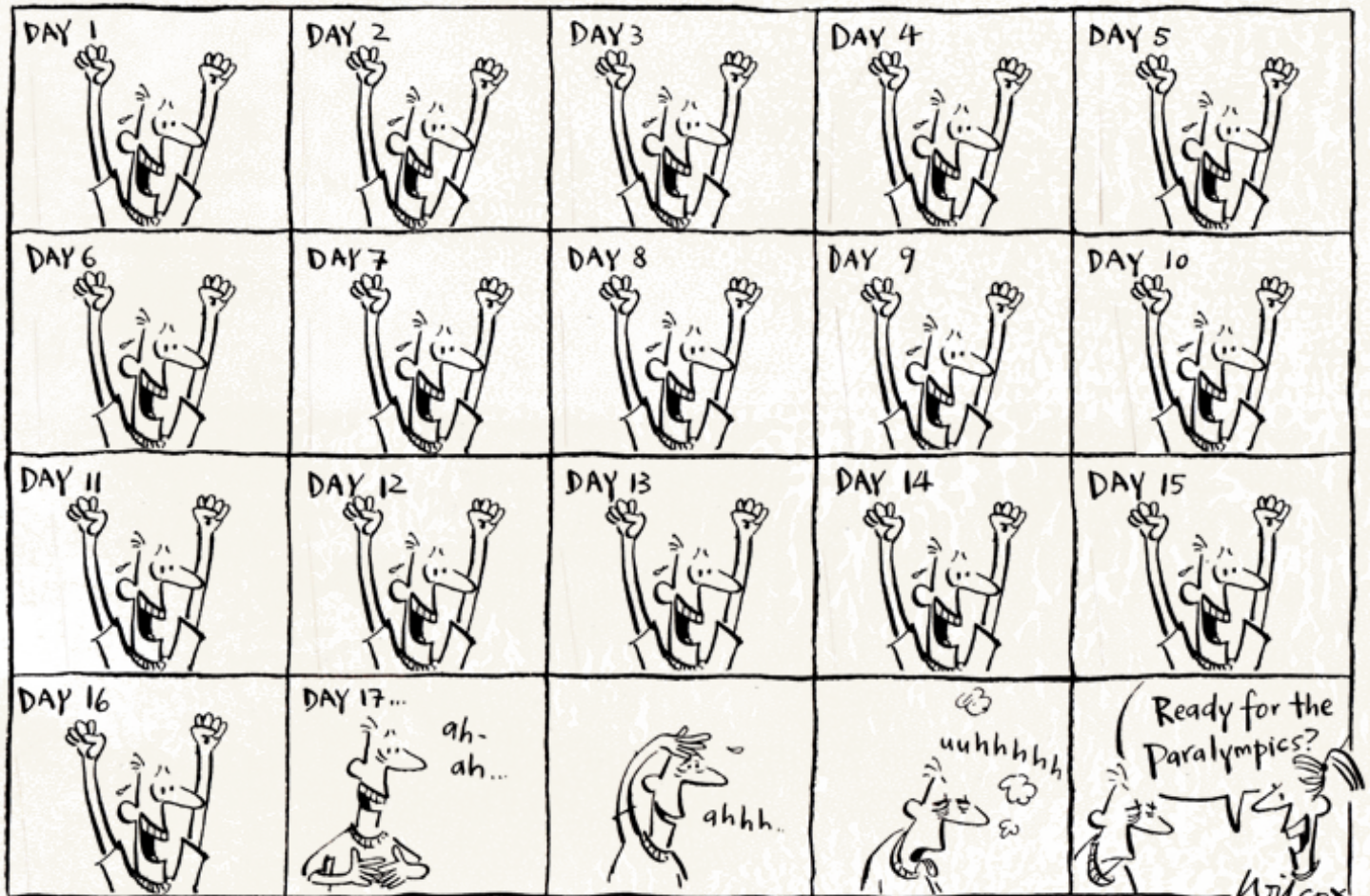
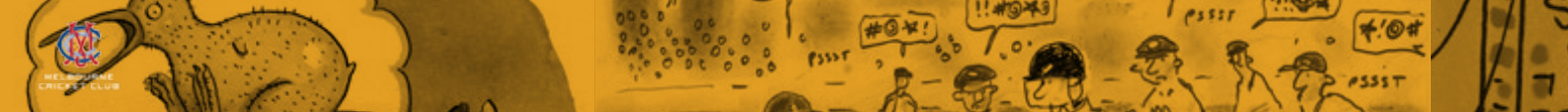
The cartoons use satire to reflect on such diverse sporting themes as sponsorship, cheating, sexism and spectatorship, as well as providing an opinion on last week's results. And in true cartoon tradition, each drawing has some kind of gag or punchline, though it may not always be in words.



These cartoons reflect our sporting values back to us, beautifully drawn and cleverly embellished with exclamation marks. With a subtle prod of their pen, the cartoonists ask: Just how seriously *should* we take sport? Just how level is the playing field? And just how silly do our passions appear, to someone on the outside looking in?

Top: The one-year disqualifications for 12 current Essendon players prior to the 2016 season inspired this cartoon by Matt Golding, published in *The Age*, January 16, 2016.

Left: Dean Alston, published in *Football West*, August 13, 2011.





Page 16: The national anxieties and popular endurance of an Olympic Games is portrayed by Mark Knight and Cathy Wilcox respectively.

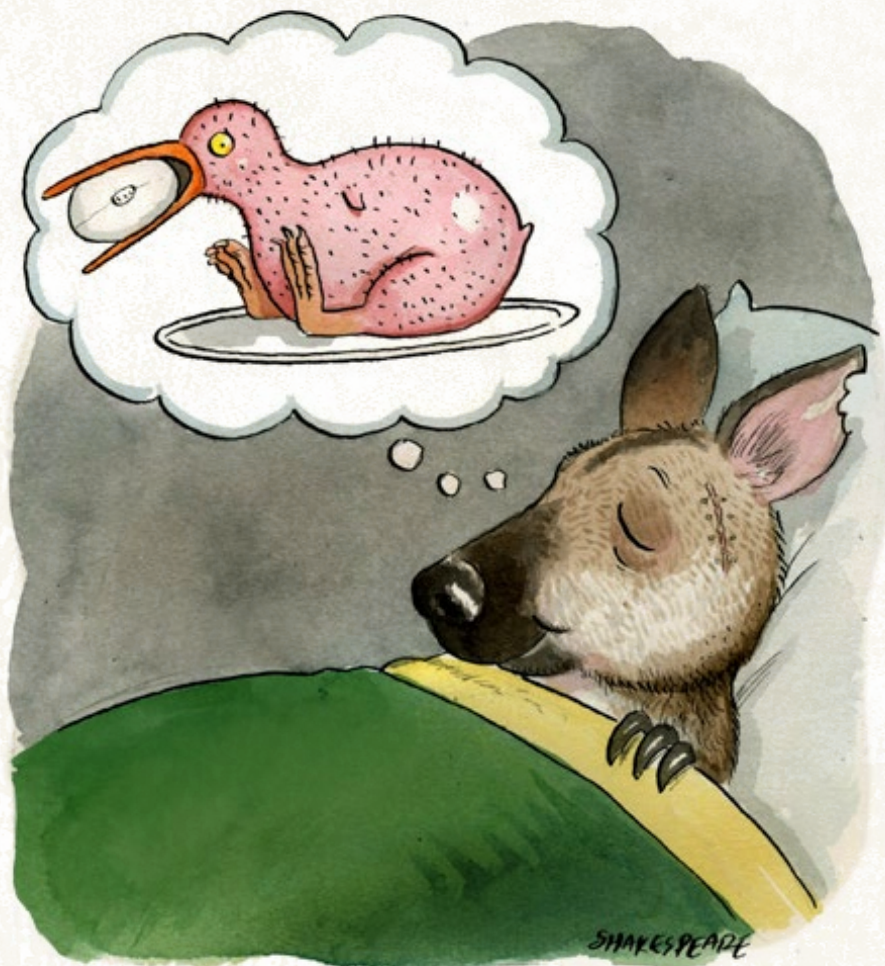
Mark Knight (top), published in the *Herald Sun*, August 2012.
Cathy Wilcox (below), published in *Sydney Morning Herald*, October 3, 2000.

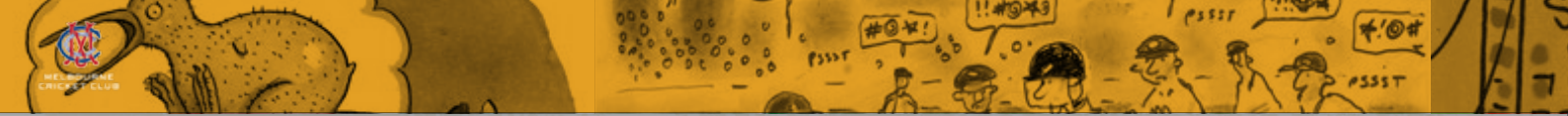
Page 17: Different Rugby codes, different problems. Eric Lobbecke, suggests Rugby League sponsorships should be more "on message" with societal expectations given the embarrassment of players binge drinking. John Shakespeare envisages Rugby Union Wallabies dreaming of plucked Kiwis before facing the All-Blacks.

Eric Lobbecke (top), published in the *Sunday Telegraph*, March 16, 2008.
John Shakespeare, published in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, August 15, 2014.

Page 18: Australian cricketers in the field have gained a reputation. Alan Moir, published in *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 6, 2015.

All images in this article are reproduced courtesy of the artists.





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Tommy Horan:

Australia's *Felix*

By Ray Webster

This year marks the centenary of the death of Tommy Horan, pioneering Australian Test cricketer and much-loved cricket journalist, whose writing graced the sporting pages of the weekly Melbourne newspaper, *The Australasian*, for more than three decades.

Thomas Patrick Horan was born in Ireland on March 8, 1854, at Midleton in County Cork, and emigrated with his family to Melbourne soon after his parents set up home at the inner-northern suburb of Fitzroy, where he attended the nearby Bell Street school. Many years later, he related how as a boy he was among the multitude of well-wishers at Royal Park on August 20, 1860, who witnessed the departure of Burke and Wills on their ill-fated expedition to traverse the continent. During their shared schooldays, Horan began a lifelong friendship with fellow Test cricketer Jack Blackham through their mutual love of cricket, the pair being team-mates first at Carlton and then South Melbourne before dividing their club allegiances, Horan moving to East Melbourne and Blackham joining Melbourne. Their representative careers also ran in parallel, both making their first-class and Test debuts in the same matches.

Of average height (177cm) and sturdy build, Horan had a sound defence, infinite patience and great powers of concentration. Later assessments expanded on those virtues. J.C. Davis of the Sydney *Referee* added a qualification that he "was not a stonewaller, being a sound and keen rungetter at all times." Horan in fact commanded a wide variety of strokes, with a decided preference for the leg side, as Harry Hedley of the Melbourne *Leader* pointed out when referring to his "frequent and effective use [of] the graceful leg glance, of which he is the perfect master" together with "those banging square-leg hits, with which he was wont to make with amazing force and accuracy." Donald Macdonald of the Melbourne *Argus* described the latter stroke as a "free swinging, but very sure, square-leg hit, picking the ball just from the front of his toes."

Horan was also a useful change bowler, especially in favourable conditions, delivering his medium-pace with a round-arm action and maintaining excellent control over both length and direction. The evolution of cricket terminology has players, coaches and commentators these days referring to the latter skill as "keeping the ball in the right areas", the phrasing of which would surely have mystified Horan. Long-serving East Melbourne president, A.E. Clarke, was adamant that "the real secret of his success [as a bowler] lies in the accuracy of his length."

Horan's older brother James was the first of the family to attain prominence as a cricketer, representing Victoria against a Tasmanian 16 at the MCG in January 1867. Had he not died at the age of 21 in the following year, he may well have achieved a similar standing to that of his brother. Writing in the Melbourne *Leader* many years later, Harry Hedley recalled him "as one of the most beautifully actioned batsmen I ever saw."



(MCC collection M2564)

Before looking further at details of Tommy's playing career, a few differences between the game in his time and that of later eras need to be recognised. Throughout his career, run-scoring at all levels of the game was much lower on the unprotected pitches provided, when it was the bowlers who more often than not held the whip hand. First-class opportunities for the honing of skills in representative company were few, no more than two or three domestic fixtures per season, boosted from time to time by the itineraries of visiting English teams. Lesser engagements often involved odds, a form of handicapping in which the respective strength of the two competing teams was assessed, and an additional number of players then allowed for the weaker side.

There was little in Tommy's early representative career to suggest his later level of achievement. He appeared twice in 1873/74 for Victorian 18s against W.G. Grace's England 11, scoring 1 and 5 in his only visits to the crease. Next season, he captured 11/29 in the second innings for a Victorian 11 against 18 of South Australia in Adelaide but again failed with the bat, recording only 5 and 1. Shortly after, he recorded his first century – 119 for East Melbourne against South Melbourne in a local Challenge Cup match – just prior to his first-class debut in late December 1874, for Victoria against New South Wales at the MCG. Although the visiting side completed a comfortable victory by six wickets, Horan contributed a sound 22 in the second innings to a fourth-wicket stand of 54 with Tom Kelly (86). That innings was to remain his highest in first-class cricket for another three years.



For those unfamiliar with Horan's writings, the following are a sample of the variety of his themes and breadth of expression:

Remembering Australia's first Test captain, Dave Gregory - "It was quite a treat to see him enter the field in spick-and-span flannels, his dark handsome face wearing its characteristic pleasant expression, and his well-shaped head graced by a broad-brimmed white felt hat, then quite a novelty on English fields."

Commenting on Billy Murdoch's 279 not out for an Australian 11 at the MCG in January 1884 - "I can only say that it has seldom or never been surpassed as an exhibition of true, scientific cricket, elegant and vigorous in attack, graceful and impregnable in defence, and all through characterised by that unwearied patience and sound judgment which, combined with his skill, have served to make Murdoch the great batsman that he is."

As his own waistline expanded, he from time to time chided other former players similarly afflicted, such as wicketkeeper Fred Burton - "He is, perhaps, a shade

Falstaffian in bulk, but a sharp attack of influenza would soon remedy that."

On former East Melbourne teammate Billy Gaggin - "... now the prince of Jolimont skittlers and an angler of the first water, who knows every nook, and dell, and bend, and bubbling runnel by the haunts of trout, but, aforesaid, a noted knight of the willow, famous as one of the two G's who many a time and oft struck terror into the hearts of the bowlers in days of old..."

Charlie Allee, another East Melbourne favourite -

"Game as a pebble, Charlie Allee was just the man to stop a 'rot', and, in addition to his batting, he could bowl round-arm and under-hand slows much above average form. I well remember how chagrined Alick Bannerman was fourteen years ago, when the 'Smiler' clean bowled him with a slow - one of the Wilkie sort, out of the box."

Charlie Allee again - "Accustomed to iced lemonade and claret, and that sort of thing".

The 1876/77 tour by James Lillywhite's England team marked a watershed for both Australian and international cricket. As with all previous visits by English teams, the program originally consisted entirely of fixtures against odds combinations. It was only after Fred Spofforth had inspired a NSW 15's narrow defeat of the side that the visitors acknowledged the improvement in local playing standards by agreeing to consider some future contests on even terms.

Having had the better of a draw against a NSW 11, the tourists agreed to meet a combined NSW-Victorian 11 in Melbourne after their return from a six-week visit to New Zealand. The intense rivalry between NSW and Victoria was reflected by the latter's insistence of equal representation. The final selection, however, actually comprised six Victorians, including Horan, and five from NSW, following the unavailability of Ted Evans and the withdrawal of Spofforth, both NSW. The northern colony, however, was placated by their own Dave Gregory's unanimous election as captain by the players. Although originally designated as "A Combined Victorian and New South Wales 11", newspapers recorded the teams as Australia and England throughout the match.

The contest, retrospectively recognised 20 years later as the inaugural Test Match, commenced at the MCG on March 15, 1877, and ran into a fourth day before the home side emerged victorious by 45 runs. The outstanding performers with bat and ball were both Australian, opening batsman Charles Bannerman compiling 165 of his side's first innings of 245 before retiring hurt, and left-armed Tom



Tommy Horan with the 1878 Australians.

Back row: F.R. Spofforth, J. Conway (manager), F.E. Allan.

Middle row: G.H. Bailey, T.P. Horan, T.W. Garrett, D.W. Gregory (captain), A.C. Bannerman, H.F. Boyle.

Front row: C. Bannerman, W.L. Murdoch, J.M. Blackham.

Kendall capturing 7/55 in the second innings. Although making only 12 and 20, Horan's match aggregate was the second highest for his side. He was unavailable for the hastily arranged return match a fortnight later, when the Englishmen turned the tables to win by four wickets. Despite his seemingly modest showing, the *Australian Cricketers' Annual* for the season unequivocally declared that Horan was only "surpassed in Australia [as a batsman] by Bannerman himself".

Immediately after Lillywhite's team left for home, one of the promoters of the Test matches, former Victorian player Jack Conway, was urged by the leading Australian players to make arrangements for a team to visit England during 1878. A party of 12 players, including Horan and seven others who had appeared in the Tests, was eventually finalised, playing

preliminary matches around the country and in New Zealand throughout the 1877/78 Australian season to raise funds to support the tour.

On arrival in England, the team undertook an arduous program of 37 matches, of which only 15 were ranked as first-class. Horan played in all 15 of those, taking 5/30 against Nottinghamshire in the opening fixture as the county inflicted an innings defeat on the visitors. At Lord's a few days later, he made the winning hit as the tourists demolished a strong MCC side, which included W.G. Grace, by nine wickets inside the first of three days allocated for the game. The Australians' performance, particularly the bowling of Spofforth and Harry Boyle who had match figures of 10/20 and 9/17 respectively, convinced a previously doubting English public of the side's capabilities. Despite his initial success, Horan managed only 285 runs at an average of 10.96 and seven wickets at 14.28 in the first-class matches, even though recording a maiden half-century at that level – 64 against the Orleans Club. A diary admission that "his effectiveness was marred by the continual travel and his inability to sleep in railway carriages" revealed a possible mitigating circumstance.

The Australians returned home via North America, where they played six matches against teams of varying numbers and standard in the course of their travels from New York to San Francisco, including a first-class encounter with Philadelphia. Eight further games were played after arriving back in Australia, including a Test match at the MCG against Lord Harris's visiting England team, before the Australian side disbanded in January 1879, almost 18 months after its formation. Horan appeared in all 14 games, contributing 10 to Australia's emphatic 10-wicket victory in the Test. He then proceeded to confirm his status as Victoria's premier batsman with successive innings of 26, 69, 46 and 31 for Victoria against the Englishmen.

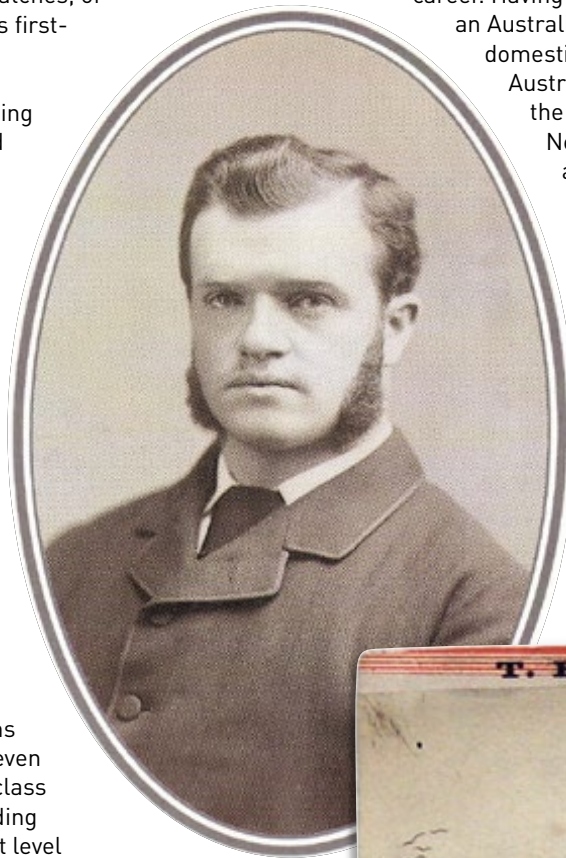
A clerk in the government audit office for most of his working life, Horan began his weekly columns as *Felix* in the *Australasian* on 6 September 1879, adopting the pseudonym in recognition of the famous English batsman, author and critic Felix (Nicholas Wanothrocht – 1804-1876). Three months later, he set the tenor for any future comments he may be required to make on his own performances, following an undefeated 250 for East Melbourne against a visiting Tasmanian team. While having to acknowledge the innings, he then humbly downplayed it: "As an exhibition of unwearied patience and impregnable defence, combined with excellent timing of the ball, Horan's innings may be classed among the best that have been played here; but in other respects the

display was disappointing, for there was an entire absence of dash, brilliance, and hard, clean hitting which tend to make a long innings so attractive to the lookers-on."

The 1880s were the most productive years in his playing career. Having declined an invitation to tour England with an Australian side in 1880, he opened the ensuing domestic season with 113 for Victoria against South Australia at his home ground East Melbourne, in the inaugural first-class match between colonies. Next season, he recorded his only Test century, a faultless 124 at the MCG in the first of a series of four Tests against Lillywhite, Shaw and Shrewsbury's England side and, not surprisingly, was an early selection to tour England during the 1882 northern summer.

Enjoying a much happier tour than four years previous, Horan appeared in 28 of the 33 first-class matches and fell just short of 1000 runs with 986 at 23.47, which included a career-best 141 not out against Gloucestershire. Although he made only 3 and 2 in the one Test played, at The Oval, the match was an extremely low-scoring affair on a difficult pitch, which the Australians ultimately won by just seven runs, after England had reached 2/51 in pursuit of the 86 it required for victory. The result led to the creation of The Ashes as a symbol of Australia-England rivalry, following the insertion of a mock obituary notice in London's *Sporting Times*, mourning the death of English cricket, the cremation of its body and the ashes to be taken to Australia.

Horan later reflected: "Never shall I forget the wild excitement of the moment, how, for instance, our manager Charlie Beal, in rushing out to congratulate us sent the man at the pavilion gate head over heels; how one man dropped dead in the pavilion from over-excitement; how not only the Australians but Englishmen rushed into our dressing room and shook hands with us all round; how they mingled champagne, seltzer, and lemons, and passed the drink



ANE's caricature card of Tommy Horan was published on October 10, 1878. (MCC collection M2495.2)



Felix at the MCC Library

When the cricket was washed out in October 1898, *Felix* [Tommy Horan] sought refuge in the MCC Pavilion and its reading room. His account is below:

In the M.C.C. Pavilion

By Felix

The inclement Wragge tip came out right in Melbourne, with the result that all senior matches had to be postponed. But did we need any expert to tell us that it would be wet, and dismal, and gusty, when we all knew that it was "Guineas" day, which, by custom, has become a synonym for bad weather, the umpires inspected the pitch and found that it was not fit. After waiting until about 4 o'clock for a final inspection, there came a shower which settled



Front row (left to right) Frank Allan, Tommy Horan and Jack Blackham.

the business, and a little later the solitary figure of Tom McCutcheon could be seen striding to the pavilion with the six stumps in his arms, and, no doubt, feeling pleased that his beloved turf escaped a cutting-up from batsmen and bowlers... After the winter spell it is pleasant to be in the old pavilion again, pleasant to look out upon the delicious expanse of greensward, but pleasanter still to chat with old friends on the subject so much to my taste as the prospects of the season, and the probable candidates for intercolonial and Australian eleven honours...

After the umpires decided "no play", I turned into the reading room, and whilst engaged in a pleasing perusal of old time records, Hughie [Trumble] came in, and together we chatted about English and Australian cricket until our interchange of anecdote and reminiscence was interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Baines, with the welcome tidings that Hughie had won five bob in the Major's sweep... To me, Hughie's chat was most agreeable, and, to my surprise, when I glanced at my watch, it was past 6 o'clock, and when we got down below the pavilion was deserted...

In looking at the pictures on the walls in the reading room, I noticed that in 1864-5 the MCC had 274 members and that a sum of £30/4/- was received at the gates as proceeds of a match, Gentlemen v. Players. W. C. Biddle was the hon. secretary, and T. F. Hamilton president, and the patron was Sir Charles Darling. What a contrast between those days and now...

The Australasian, October 15, 1898, pp.861-862.

around in a loving cup; and how, true sportsman as he is, A.N. Hornby came up to Murdoch and said: 'Well, old fellow, it would have been the proudest moment of my life to have won, but I cannot help congratulating you sincerely on the splendid uphill game you played and your well-merited success.'

Arriving back in Australia in December, Horan had the ideal preparation for the forthcoming Test series against Ivo Bligh's England side by compiling a splendid 129 in the annual Victoria-NSW match at the MCG over Christmas. He then unaccountably failed to get going at all in the Test series, playing in all four matches but making only 49 runs at 7.00. His only success came in the Third Test when, although rarely called on to bowl in recent years, he claimed 3/22 from 17 four-ball overs on a rain-affected pitch, including the dismissal of Dick Barlow with his first ball in Test cricket. Next season, he again recorded a century in the annual Victoria-NSW Christmas fixture, but was then unavailable for the 1884 tour of England.

The surfeit of tours continued in 1884/85 with the arrival of another England team promoted by Lillywhite, Shaw and Shrewsbury on the same ship as Billy Murdoch's returning 1884 Australians. The two sides met almost immediately at Adelaide Oval in the first Test to be staged at that venue, from which the visitors emerged victorious by eight wickets. The

Australian 11 then refused to play in the Second Test, at the MCG, after their demand for a 50% share of gate receipts was rejected. Horan was called on to lead a completely new team, nine making their Test debut, five of whom were never chosen again. Needless to say, the side was outclassed by the Englishmen, who won comfortably by 10 wickets, despite first-innings half-centuries from Affie Jarvis (82), Billy Trumble (59) and Horan himself (63). The return of several of the striking players strengthened the home team in the remaining three Tests, enabling it to at first square the series by winning the next two, only to go down by an innings in the last. Horan played in all three, making a significant contribution in the first of those, at Sydney, with career-best first-innings figures of 6/40 from 37.1 four-ball overs. Having been replaced as skipper, first by Hugh Massie and then by Blackham, he regained the captaincy for the last.

The series marked the end of his Test career, but he remained a regular member of the Victorian team for the rest of the decade and did not make his final first-class appearance until 1891/92, when he was 37. The first Victorian batsman to reach 2000 runs in first-class cricket, he represented Victoria on 42 occasions overall, finishing up with 2101 runs at 30.01, including five centuries, and 17 wickets at 29.70. He also served five terms as a Victorian selector from the



1888/89 season. In club competition, East Melbourne records show that he made 4452 runs at 37.10, with six centuries, and captured 208 wickets at 11.04 in first eleven matches.

After retirement, he attended all the major games at the MCG, viewing the play from a favourite position under the elm trees that stood on the southern side of the ground until the erection of the Harrison Stand in 1908 and the Wardill Stand three years later. It was from this vantage point, surrounded by friends and former players, that he not only formed his opinions of the play but also renewed acquaintances and gathered incidental material for his newspaper column, which ran for the best part of 37 years virtually without interruption, the last appearing on 25 March 1916, only three weeks before his death at home in Malvern on April 16, 1916. There had been a gradual deterioration in his health over the previous 12 months, due to the condition of dropsy (the accumulation of fluid in internal cavities and tissue), which eventually claimed him. He was survived by his wife, four daughters and four sons, of which James Francis (1880-1945) and Thomas Ignatius Bernard (1887-1952), also played cricket for Victoria, while the youngest, John (Jack) Raymond (1892-1958) appeared in club cricket with Prahran.

The vast gathering at his funeral in less than ideal weather spoke volumes for his popularity. Warwick Armstrong, Peter McAlister, Hugh Trumble and Jack Worrall were a few of the more notable Test players present, while Frank Allan and Frank Laver were two of the pall-bearers. Cricket officialdom was represented by Ernie Bean, John Healy, Donald Mackinnon, Ramsay Mailer and Harry Rush. Naturally, a host of East Melbourne identities, including Charlie Carr, Charlie Forrester, Tom Groube, Fred Hilcke and Dan

Wilkie, were well to the fore.

Tribute after tribute flowed in the wake of Horan's death, all attesting to the sincerity and warmth of his personality, his contribution as an outstanding player and the quality of his writing. To Australian teammate, George Giffen, "He was one of the best", a sentiment shared and expanded by J.C. Davis of the *Sydney Referee*, who remembered him as "a great cricketer, a fine man in every sense, and the most popular player Victoria has ever given to the game of games." While acknowledging those same qualities, the Melbourne *Argus* switched emphasis: "It was as a cricket writer, however, that Mr. Horan was most famous."

It is this legacy that later generations have come to admire and appreciate just as much as Horan's host of devoted readers did at the time. Under the by-line of 'Cricket Chatter', he drew on his vast playing experience to give an informed critique on all matters relative to the game, interwoven with delightfully written vignettes and anecdotes. He was forever generous in his comments and never severe in his judgments, offering any suggestion for improvement in the most understated terms, as shown in advice to Tom Kendall. "There can be no doubt that Kendall is one of the best bowlers in Australia, but, well as he has done for years, it appears to me that if he were to exert himself a little occasionally he would figure to still greater advantage." Each January from 1893, he included a series, 'Round the Ground', which not only identified the many personalities he encountered at the MCG during the annual Christmas and New Year fixtures, but was also littered with fascinating stories that emanated from those meetings.

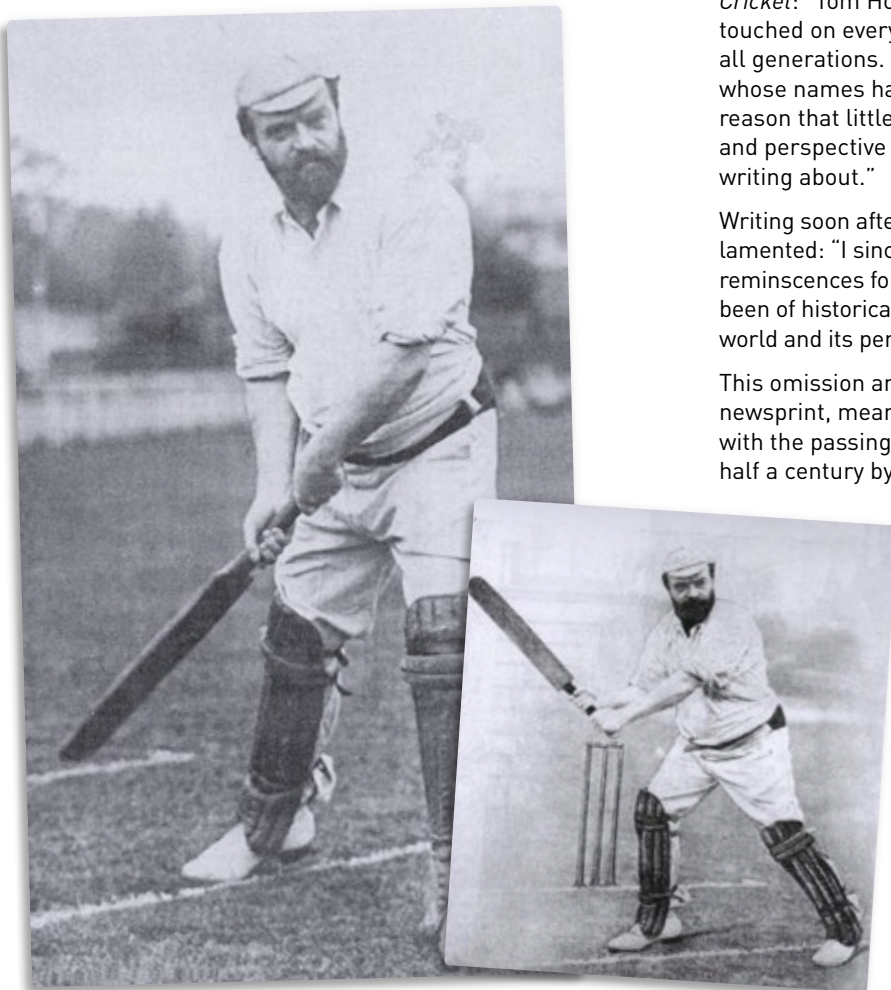
Nobody expressed the essence of his writings better than Bill O'Reilly, in his foreword to *Cradle Days of Australian Cricket*: "Tom Horan was the cricket writer par excellence. He touched on every topic dear to the heart of cricket lovers of all generations. His revealing discussions on great players, whose names have now dimmed for the one melancholy reason that little is heard of them, are brought back to life and perspective by a writer who really did know what he was writing about."

Writing soon after Horan's death, *Rambler* of the *Sydney Referee* lamented: "I sincerely regret that 'Felix' was not able to pen his reminiscences for publication in book form. They would have been of historical value and universal interest for he had the world and its personalities in the game to draw upon."

This omission and the fact that his essays appeared solely in newsprint, meant that knowledge of his writings diminished with the passing of time and lay unappreciated for more than half a century by all but the most ardent students of the game.

That knowledge was revived by Brisbane solicitor and cricket researcher, the late Pat Mullins, whose enthusiasm for Horan's columns resulted in the 1989 publication of an anthology, *Cradle Days of Australian Cricket*. A wider appreciation of Horan's gifts of expression has now been made more readily accessible by the digitisation of *The Australasian* by the National Library of Australia and its consequent availability via the Trove website.

Ray Webster is a MCC Library Volunteer. With thanks to MCC Library Volunteer Ken Williams.





Footy's first free kick:

How we got a game of our own

By Roy Hay

Melbourne and Victoria are very strange places. All through the summer when tennis and cricket occupy most of the media sports space, there's almost as much writing and talking about footy even though there's not a single game being played. So the domestic code has a huge hold on our consciousness and has had since the middle of the nineteenth century. But why is it so? How and why did it all begin?

People in and around Melbourne had been playing a species of football almost since the first Europeans settled in the 1830s. We don't have much detailed information about these games, but some of them were predominantly kicking affairs played by small teams for money or other prizes and hence according to some local rules — you don't risk money unless you know the rules. The same was true incidentally in the United Kingdom from where most of the migrants came, but within a few years a new and distinct form of football had begun to evolve in this part of the world.

Historians have been debating for decades the reasons why we got a unique code of our own, but have ignored the most important one. I'm guilty too. The reason was staring me in the face, but I couldn't see it. I was interested in the migrants and what they brought to Australia, but I never asked, "What happened when the migrants didn't come?" In the 1850s some 313,000 people came to the newly separate colony of Victoria, most of them in search of gold. Over the next twenty years only 28,000 arrived, roughly 1400 a year and not all of them young men of sport-playing age. So for twenty vital years there was never a critical mass of migrants with a background in other forms of football to challenge what the locals were doing. Footy had its first (demographic) free kick.

What the Victorians were doing, meantime, was drawing up a code that resembled closely what was happening in some of the English public schools of the day. In 1859 after a particularly violent kick-about in a paddock near the



current MCG a small group of players drew up a set of rules for the Melbourne football club. Four years later the Football Association in England drew up another set, which were very similar. From then, however, on the rules in the two countries began to diverge. Victoria adopted a handling and running form, while

the UK plumped for what became soccer, entirely a kicking game, and rugby, another handling and running game, both with offside rules. While devotees of rugby came to New South Wales in numbers, next to no soccer or rugby folk came to Victoria.

Within Victoria there is another significant demographic story. Melbourne grew spectacularly at the expense of its rural and urban hinterland. Failed gold-seekers and others flocked to the metropolis. Melbourne's population more than doubled



between 1861 and 1881, reaching a quarter of a million, while Victoria's total population only grew by 60 per cent. Even Geelong, which had ambitions to be the pivot of the Victorian economy stagnated. In the late 1850s its population was just over 23,000 but by 1881 it had only added 145 people. Yet it is Geelong that produces the most successful football team of the first few years of the domestic game and again in the late 1870s. So no migrants, no soccer and the birth and adolescence of the local code.

It was not till the 1880s that migration resumed on a significant scale. "Marvellous" Melbourne had a dramatic economic boom and drew in the newcomers in significant numbers. Among them were many with a background in Association football who formed a number of clubs in Melbourne, played the first inter-colonial games in 1883, and competed for a number of cups and prizes. They had little more than a decade to establish themselves before a long period of economic depression set in and migration virtually ceased again. It was not until the first decade of the twentieth century that renewed migration to Victoria brought people

like Harry Dockerty from Glasgow to re-establish soccer in Melbourne. He presented the cup which is still being played for in 2016 by Victorian Association football teams.

Tony Ward has argued in recent articles that the early achievement of a Saturday half-day in Victoria, initially by the stonemasons, meant more leisure for some skilled workers and hence a chance to attend sporting occasions. Others, like the tramway drivers, worked broken time and had gaps in afternoons. But it was probably the growth of a middle-class with discretionary income and more control over their working hours that enabled men and women to attend matches in significant numbers. My argument here about the key role of the absence of inward migration reinforces the importance of demographic factors in the establishment of football in Victoria.

One other matter needs to be emphasised. The people who promoted football in Melbourne and Victoria in the newspapers of the mid-nineteenth century were, like the framers of the first rules, recent migrants with a knowledge of the English public schools and their games. On the other hand, they knew nothing about the varieties of football already being played in Victoria, and hence, in ignorance, could believe and assert that they were introducing football to the colony. Their unconscious imperialism helped establish the local code and gradually obliterated domestic and overseas rival forms. It's a mindset that hasn't entirely vanished today.

The full story, complete with the relevant statistics, is in an article in the *International Journal of History of Sport*, available on line at (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09523367.2016.1147430>) and later this year in hard copy.



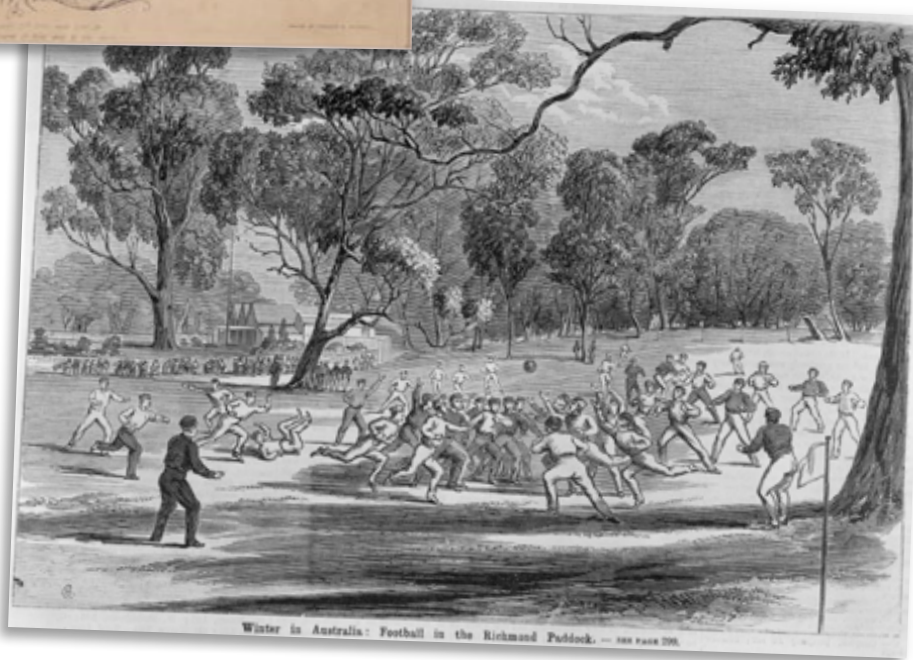
Page 24, Top: By the end of the gold rush Melbourne had a large urban population, and was a booming commercial centre. *View of Melbourne* [looking east], ca.1860, by Charles Nettleton [1826-1902]. (State Library of Victoria, H2497).

Page 24, Centre: *Swanston Street, Melbourne*, ca.1873, by Charles Nettleton [1826-1902]. (State Library of Victoria, H88.21/9)

Above: Many of the Melbourne's cricketers were major proponents and architects of football in the city after the gold rush. All members of the 1860 Victorian cricket team were footballers in winter. *This Sketch of The Victorian - Eleven And The Intercolonial Cricket Ground, Melbourne, Feb'y. 2-3 & 4 1860*", by Edward Gilks, February 15, 1860. (State Library of Victoria, H2084)

Right: The parkland immediately north of the MCG was a major football venue in the late 1850s. "Winter in Australia: Football in the Richmond Paddock." by Oswald Rose Campbell [1820-1887]. *The Illustrated Melbourne Post*, July 27, 1866. (State Library of Victoria, IMP27/07/66/304)

Page 27: *View of Melbourne from South Side of River Yarra*, by J.P. Brown, Walker, May & Co. Printers, 1859. (State Library of Victoria, NLA00/09/59/0)





Football in Victoria to 1860

DATE	ITEM	SOURCE	DESCRIPTION
1844	Football by Irishmen in Melbourne	Finn, Garryowen 667-8 ¹	Football as tailpiece to hurling event see <i>Port Phillip Gazette</i> 13 July 1844
1850	Grand football match for a watch	<i>Port Phillip Herald</i> , 30 March 1850	Sponsored by local publican
1850	Football match at Gymnastic Games	<i>Argus</i> , 27 August 1850 p. 2	Well advertised prior to game, 11 a side football match
1850	Football match at Separation Games	<i>Melbourne Morning Herald</i> , 19 November 1850 p.4	12 a side football match.
1850	Six a side football for a wager	<i>Geelong Advertiser</i> , 21 November 1850 p. 2	Football match in Geelong, described at length
1851	Football match at Gymnastic Games	<i>Argus</i> , 13 August 1851 p. 4; Finn, Garryowen 749	Postponed but played in wet weather
1852	Encouragement to play football	<i>Geelong Advertiser</i> , 31 May 1852 p.2	Borrowed guide to peasant keeping recommending football
1854	Football match for a sweepstake	<i>Argus</i> , 21 December 1854, p. 7.	Part of Christmas sports at Leeds Arms, Lower Collingwood.
1855	Football in Prahran	<i>Argus</i> , 1 January 1855 p. 7	Football among other sports at Johnston's Hotel, Prahran on New Year's Day
1855	Football match in Castlemaine	<i>Argus</i> , 28 May 1855 p. 2	Troops celebrated Queen's birthday with football match in the camp
1855	Football match in Castlemaine	<i>Mt Alexander Mail</i> , 28 Sept 1855 p.3	Football match between troops and miners
1855	Plans for football in Geelong	<i>Argus</i> , 13 December 1855 p. 6	Part of public holiday celebration
1857	Inmates of asylum playing football	<i>Argus</i> , 12 February 1858, p. 6.	Along with cricket & skittles (TR)
1858	Wills' letter advocating football club	<i>Bell's Life in Victoria</i> , 10 July 1858, p. 3.	Football or rifle club, someone else to organize
1858	Football at Smythe's Creek	<i>The Star</i> , Ballarat, 14 July 1858, p. 2.	'Several grown up men playing football as hard as they could' (TR)
1858	Football on Richmond Park	<i>Bell's Life in Victoria</i> , 31 July 1858, p. 3.	Bryant of Parade Hotel will supply ball today.
1858	Boys of Grammar v Scotch College	<i>Argus</i> , 9 August 1858, p. 5.	McAdam & Wills as umpires, match undecided on 7 August. (TR)
1858	Boys of Grammar v Scotch College	<i>Bendigo Advertiser</i> , 10 August 1858, p. 3.	Each party won a game, Richmond paddock, McAdam & Wills umpires.
1858	Boys of Grammar v Scotch College	<i>Portland Guardian</i> , 11 August 1858, p. 00.	From <i>Geelong Advertiser</i> re game on Govt paddock, 'nearly 80 mustered'. (TR)
1858	Football on MCC ground	<i>Bell's Life in Victoria</i> , 14 August 1858, p. 3	Ball on MCC ground, all good 'kicks' expected to show (TR)
1858	Impromptu game at Richmond Park	<i>Argus</i> , 16 August 1858, p. 7.	Grammar no show, so several members of MCC and others played for several hours. People should read <i>Tom Brown's School-days</i> . (TR)
1858	Letter denying no show	<i>Argus</i> , 17 August 1858, p. 5.	Secretary of Grammar denies no show, will be at postponed game on Saturday. (TR)
1858	First mention of match on MCG	<i>Melbourne Herald</i> , 23 August 1858, p. 5.	This is first record of a football match on the current MCG. Schoolboys playing on Yarra Park that day too. (TR)
1858	Football on Richmond Park	<i>Argus</i> , 30 August 1858, p. 5.	50 members of MCC and others took part. Schoolboys match not yet played out. Expected to terminate next Saturday. Likely to be a number of clubs formed. (TR)
1858	Boys of Grammar v Scotch College	<i>Bell's Life in Victoria</i> , 4 September 1858, p.3	Final game will be played today. Talk of football clubs being established next season. Need for good rules to become popular winter recreation. (TR)
1858	South Yarra v Melbourne	<i>Bell's Life in Victoria</i> , 25 September 1858, p.3	Equal numbers, Melbourne more practised, South Yarra have old Winchester & Rugby men, hats and other unconsidered trifles wagered on the result. (TR)



DATE	ITEM	SOURCE	DESCRIPTION
1858	South Yarra v Melbourne	<i>Bendigo Advertiser</i> , 27 September 1858, p.3.	Thirty a side between South Yarra and MCC were to play in Richmond Paddock on Saturday. (TR)
1858	South Yarra v Melbourne	<i>Argus</i> , 27 September 1858, p.5.	26 a side, several public characters, 3 hours ending at 5.30 pm after Melbourne kicked a goal. (TR)
1858	South Yarra v Melbourne	<i>Bendigo Advertiser</i> , 30 September 1858, p.3.	26 a side, 'Melbourne bore off the palm'. (TR)
1859	Plan for football club in Geelong	<i>Geelong Advertiser</i> , 21 April 1859, p.2	Stitt Jenkins proposal. ²
1859	First extant set of rules for football	<i>Argus</i> , 21 May 1859, p.5.	Meeting on 17 May 1859.
1859	Intention to form football club in Bendigo	<i>Bendigo Advertiser</i> , 4 July 1859, p.3.	
1859	Franklyn on football clubs	<i>Age</i> , 13 July 1859 p.5	Franklyn advocating football & cricket clubs turning themselves into artillery, estimating 4000 taking part every Saturday
1859	Football match in Hamilton	<i>Portland Guardian</i> , 24 & 29 August 1859	Match between town and country. Latter won.
1859	Football at Yarraville Fete	<i>Age</i> , 22 September 1859	Football and other sports for youngsters
1859	Football as constant	<i>Age</i> , 22 September 1859, p.4	Reference to football in connection with Caledonian games
1859	Editorial on sports inc football	<i>Age</i> , 15 October 1859 p.4	On Caledonian games, against money prizes, football by place of birth
1859	Footballs for sale in Ballarat	<i>Star</i> , Ballarat, 20 October 1859 p.1	John Little advertisement
1860	Football at Sunbury Fete	<i>Age</i> , 3 January 1860 p.5	Football as one of sports and activities
1860	Women should play football	<i>Age</i> , 3 January 1860 p.3.	Girls should play the same games as boys including cricket & football
1860	Letter to editor on football	<i>Age</i> , 4 April 1860 p.5	Likes to see young men in football clubs but wants more military discipline
1860	Richmond Football Club formed	<i>Bell's Life in Victoria</i> , 28 April 1860, p. 3	Formed on April 25 by 30 members. (TR)
1860	Football club in Ballarat	<i>Age</i> , 24 May 1860 p.5	Plan for football club in Ballarat
1860	Footballs for sale	<i>Age</i> , 18 May 1860 p.8	Small no of india-rubber hollow footballs, Samuel House, Elizabeth St
1860	Formation of Williamstown club	<i>Age</i> , 29 May 1860 p.4	Football (sic) to be established as Williamstown Alliance Club
1860	Lecture on Tom Brown's schooldays	<i>Age</i> , 30 August 1860, p.5	Of interest to members of cricket, football & other clubs
1860	Geelong v Melbourne match	<i>Age</i> , 4 September 1860 p.5	Football match under Melbourne or Geelong rules

Sources: National Library of Australia Trove digitised newspaper collection and microfilm and hard copy material from newspapers and books.

The list is no intended to be exhaustive because in the last three years of the decade the number of references to football grows significantly and it is from this time that the domestic code dates its foundation. Melbourne schools played football matches against each other. Clubs were formed and intra- and inter-club matches took place. I am indebted to Trevor Ruddell of the MCC Library for a number of references to the games played in 1858. In the Table these are indicated by (TR).

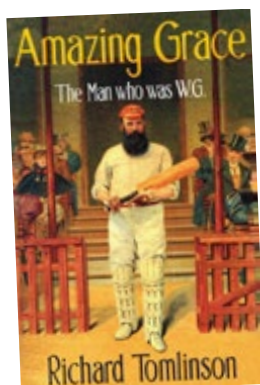
Endnotes

1. Edmund Finn [Garryowen], *The Chronicles of early Melbourne, 1835 to 1852: Historical, Anecdotal and Personal*, Melbourne, Heritage Publications, 1976: 667-8.
2. See also Robin Grow, 'From Gum Trees to Goalposts, 1858-1876,' in Rob Hess & Bob Stewart, *More than a Game: An Unauthorised History of Australian Rules Football*, Carlton South, Victoria, Melbourne University Press, 1998: 12; Blainey, *A Game of Our Own*: 3.





Reviews



Richard Tomlinson
Amazing Grace: The Man who was W.G.

Little, Brown: London, 2015
ISBN: 9781408705179

This, of course, is not the first book on W.G. Grace. It marks the centenary of his death and follows on from the two ghost written autobiographical books in the late nineteenth century, *Cricket* (Bristol, 1891) and *Cricketing Reminiscences and Personal Recollections* (London, 1899) and,

amongst others, The Marylebone Cricket Club's *The Memorial Biography of Dr. W.G. Grace* (1919), Eric Midwinter's *W.G. Grace, His Life and Times* (London, 1981), Robert Low's *W.G. A Life of W.G. Grace* (London, 1997) and Simon Rae's *W.G. Grace* (London, 1998).

There are, of course, many other references to Grace in other people's reminiscences. Many of the anecdotes are apocryphal and cannot be truly verified. I want to begin this review with a discussion on Tomlinson's methodology as explained in the last chapter of the book. "The story-teller needed to be there at the scene and have no interest in inflating their importance. This is why the book does not include any version of the often-told anecdote about Grace refusing to walk after being given out in a match, because the crowd had come to see him." Tomlinson then states that he bends the rules if he trusts the witnesses in the subject they are writing about. He gives the example of C.B. Fry talking about how Grace batted, but not on other matters, such as when Grace dropped himself from the Test team.

This book differs from previous biographies because the author had access to the vast digitised databases of the British Library and The National Library of Australia. Over a period of two years he searched more than 50,000 articles containing Grace's name and scanning for words such as "money", "Bessie" or "Barton Regis Union." In fact, the hallmark of this book is clearly the depth of the research which has been undertaken.

The book is written chronologically and covers several themes, W.G.'s celebrity status, his cricket, shamateurism, family life, his medical career, and some of his less endearing traits such as snobbery, gluttony and his excessive drinking.

Tomlinson asserts "In his day W.G. was more famous than any other celebrity in the British Empire. A search of the British Library's database produces 43,000 articles between 1850-99. more than double the number for Sarah Bernhardt, hailed as the most famous actress the world has ever known." Henry Morton Stanley was upstaged by W.G. on their arrival at Adelaide in 1891 at the start of W.G.'s second tour of Australia.

In cricket he was clearly the best cricketer of his era. By the time he was 27, Grace had scored 50 first-class centuries on wickets which were really very poor. In one match at Lord's he scored a century and in the same match another batsman, George Summers, was killed by a ball that hit a stone, rose

quickly and smashed his head. In the 1870s, he made as many centuries as the next 13 best batsmen put together. He is often compared with Bradman. At first sight Bradman's Test average of 99.4 is so obviously superior to Grace's 32.29. However, Grace did not play a Test match until 1880 when he had passed his zenith. The wickets and the bowling were so different between the two eras that comparisons are almost impossible. Grace was the first batsman to reach 100 first-class hundreds and that was followed by Tom Hayward (1913), Jack Hobbs (1923), Phil Mead (1927), Patsy Hendren (1928) and Frank Woolley (1929). That of these successors only Jack Hobbs could be considered a batting genius demonstrates that the wickets were improving.

C.L.R. James, the great Trinidadian writer and cultural critic, still put it best: Grace was a "pre-eminent Victorian." Through him, "cricket, the most complete expression of popular life in pre-industrial England, was incorporated into the life of the nation. As far as any social activity can be the work of any one man, he did it."

Tomlinson tackles the accusations that Grace was really a professional and was avaricious. Although his father was a doctor, the family was not rich. In fact, it was not until 1891 after his second tour of Australia that his family was even comfortable, and after the 1895 testimonial that they could be considered rich. Most amateurs were landed gentry who could afford a life of leisure. Certainly he was paid expenses that exceeded payments to professionals. He would not be alone in that. Tomlinson suggests that the MCC paid his subscription to the club. He was accepted in to the club because of the gate receipts that he would generate when he appeared for them. So MCC was a business as well as an amateur club, and would turn a blind eye to his professional appearances for other clubs such as United South of England.

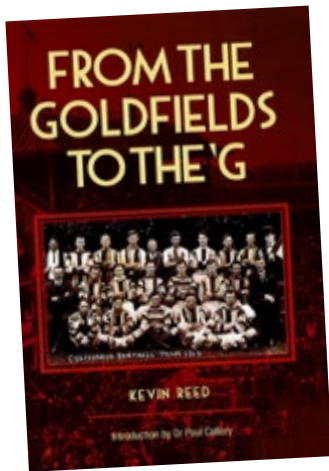
Tomlinson covers W.G.'s family life and his medical career using the newspapers of the time to glean information. His wife, Agnes, is brought out of obscurity to be seen as the major support for W.G., especially in his older age.

Tomlinson describes the tours of Canada in 1872 and Australia in 1873-74. Here, Grace's snobbery is discussed in the way he treated the professionals on these tours. He and his fellow amateurs travelled first class and the professionals second class. It was the same with hotels and lodgings. In the Australian tour this resulted in very poor team spirit and a revolt by the professionals.

By the time Grace was 40 years old he had grown into the figure that we normally associate with him, tall, bearded, large girth and overweight. He was now a liability in the field and had difficulty running a third run. He had become a very heavy drinker and a gluttonous eater.

There are plenty of acknowledgements in the book, including one for our Melbourne Cricket Club archivist, Patricia Downs, and our librarian David Studham. I recommend this book, especially for those who have only been told anecdotes about Grace which may, or may not be true.

Jim Blair



Kevin Reed
From The Goldfields to the 'G
 Connor Court Publishing:
 Ballarat, 2014
 ISBN: 9781925138146

Kevin Reed's *From The Goldfields to the 'G* is a family history seen through the prism football. From school, bush and suburban teams, Reed charts the rise of football and footballers as well as his own progress. In many ways it seems to be a generic football book, with accounts and impressions of famous men

and great teams. However, it is far from generic, for it is a memoir that straddles over a century of Reed's family history. Therefore, is not just about celebrating the big league, but recognising small and local contests, from bush football at the turn of the century to kids meeting Tom Hawkins today.

Reed was raised by Richmond supporting parents in Oakleigh, and for those who love the AFL's Tigers or the Oaks in the old VFA competition, *From The Goldfields to the 'G* treats both with reverence. The book covers all major Melbourne clubs and footballers with respect, but people with more select interests that happen to follow the journey of Reed and his kin throughout Victoria – incorporating for example, turn of the twentieth century Costerfield in central Victoria, Young Christian Workers organizations in Oakleigh and Lalbert footy in the 1950s, Warrnambool footy in the 1980s and women's football with the MUGARS in the 1990s – may also find insights. The book includes a name index, and an extensive bibliography.

A conversational and easy read, each chapter is composed of a number of anecdotes, transcripts and asides. It may seem to veer as a particular story or idea takes Reed's fancy (that is why it is so reminiscent of and why I enjoy memoirs), but it is arranged chronologically and there is an overarching theme and direction. Reed sees football as more than exercise and enjoyment, for it is a phenomenon that can transcend social and generational divisions. Reed wrote, "from my perspective, another plus from my interest in football is that it has provided a source of communication between members of families and people in the community at large." (p.313)

If the book has a message it is that football in Australia bonds. *From The Goldfields to the 'G* has an unashamedly positive outlook on Australian Rules football, although Reed sees in the Oaks' demise one indicator (among many) of game's decrease in market share. But whether you enjoy football as a spectator, a schoolboy battler, a professional player, or one of the myriad of volunteers that makes football happen, the participation in football is in many respects a participation in life.

Trevor Ruddell

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John McCrystal and Lindsay Knight
Eden Park: A History
 Wellington, NZ: Phantom House, 2011
 ISBN: 9780986457135

Every country has its sporting coliseum. Australia boasts the Melbourne Cricket Ground, England treasures Lord's and North America showcases Madison Square Garden and Yankee Stadium. For New Zealanders, whose love affair for rugby grows deep, Eden Park is where they make their weekend pilgrimage.

John McCrystal and Lindsay Knight's *Eden Park: A History* is an account of Eden Park's journey from swamplands to proud host of the world's third biggest sporting event- the Rugby World Cup. In 1900, New Zealand's largest stadium was a sports ground and by 1914, Eden Park became two drained ovals.

The book is filled with delightful anecdotal stories that provide both a social commentary and an amusing read. Reminiscing about the year 1902 when Eden Park was still covered in rocks, blacksmith and Eden Park visionary Harry Ryan recalled, "it was one of the unwritten laws of the club that every member who came to practice should take at least one stone off the ground with him when he went home, and in this way the ground was gradually cleared". These anecdotal gems and the authors' understanding of social history ensure the book is more than just a neat coffee table book.

Eden Park: A History is also every avid sporting trivia fan's encyclopedia, or, at the very least, for Kiwi sport. The ground may be New Zealand rugby's spiritual home and has certainly born witness to more than one Wallaby thrashing, but rugby was not the first football code to be played on the once swampy lands. Amazingly, an Australian Rules exhibition match was first football code to grace the fields.

As a MCG loyalist, trolling through the history of Eden Park triggered my own fond memories of spending a Friday night or a Boxing Day at the mighty 'G. The MCG and Eden Park encapsulate Australia and New Zealand's fierce competitiveness and religious-like commitment to sport. More importantly, the two grounds have the ability, like few other sporting cathedrals, to create an affectionate cult following for the nation's sporting heroes. If it's the crowd at Eden Park chanting "Had-Lee,

Had-Lee, Had-Lee", or MCG's Bay 13 imitating Merv Hughes' stretching and 90,000 Melbournians chanting "Warney"- the two stadiums truly share a unique ambience.

While the book captures the fans' loving perspective and celebrates New Zealand triumphs at Eden Park, McCrystal and Knight dare to illustrate the ground's ugly moments as well. Sport can often be the most reliable means to unify people- but this wasn't the case in 1981 when a Springbok's tour of New Zealand was allowed despite the apartheid regime strangling South Africa. McCrystal and Knight are particularly critical of former New Zealand Prime Minister Robert Muldoon who naively "believed sport could and should rise above politics". Severe hostility and "battle lines" were drawn from outraged protestors once the New Zealand Rugby Union invited the Springboks. Sadly, the tension and rage reached its climax at Eden Park, where the ground resembled a fortified army base instead of a sporting stadium. The book's description of the violent events that took place during the Eden Park Test is tightly done with anecdotes from protestors and telling photographs that shock.

Ultimately, *Eden Park: A History* avoids the typically dull "timeline" account of a stadium's history. Instead, the book is an enjoyable 231-page presentation of New Zealand's sporting heartbeat.

Michael Collins

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Ask for Santo



Chip Le Grand
The Straight Dope: The inside story of sport's biggest drug scandal
Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria, 2015
ISBN: 9780522868500

The Straight Dope by Chip Le Grand covers the supplements saga up until the AFL Tribunal decision of March 2015, which was not comfortably satisfied that the players were guilty of doping. It is a comprehensive work and describes, in great detail,

the actions of the three main protagonists – the Essendon Football Club, ASADA and the AFL. No-one comes out of it well. The governance at Essendon was deplorable, and the key personnel did not have clearly defined guidelines. This culture enabled Dank's activities to flourish.

ASADA was under-resourced and ill-equipped to conduct a thorough and methodical investigation of this scope. Its lack of coercive powers meant that, at the time, co-operation with the AFL was considered to be a practical strategy. Unfortunately, conflict arose between the 2 bodies, with the AFL using the Interim Report as a basis for charging the players. This had not been the intention of ASADA.

The AFL is not depicted favourably - being intent on protecting its "brand" at all costs, and on bringing the saga to a swift conclusion. It mistakenly believed punishment mainly

based on Essendon's exclusion from the 2013 Finals, a \$2 million penalty and draft sanctions, plus Hird's twelve month exile from football (fully paid!) would ensure that the players were protected.

Le Grand, whilst acknowledging Hird's often careless approach to managing his role, makes it clear that he feels that Hird received excessive punishment. This view is perhaps coloured by his collaboration with two other News Corp journalists, *Herald Sun* sports writers Michael Warner and Mark Robinson, Hird's ghost writer and friend. This book grew out of their collaborative investigations.

Unfortunately, Le Grand's normal journalistic writing style was somewhat distracting. The persistent use of the present tense was irritating and the unnecessary fictionalising detracted from the seriousness of the subject matter. For example, on page 86,

Corcoran reads the message then returns to his French tapes, pursing his lips around the romantic vowels.

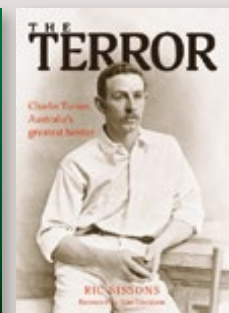
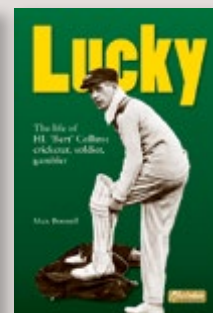
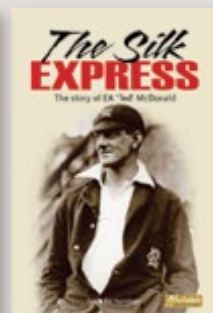
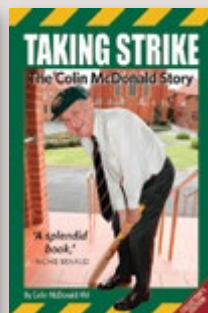
The book has a good index, but a chronology of the main events, coupled with a list of the key "characters" would have been very helpful.

Despite these quibbles, Chip Le Grand's research has resulted in a work which will be of interest to anyone wishing to gain some understanding of how "the blackest day in Australian sport" came about. Will we ever know the truth?

Edward Cohen & Gaye Fitzpatrick

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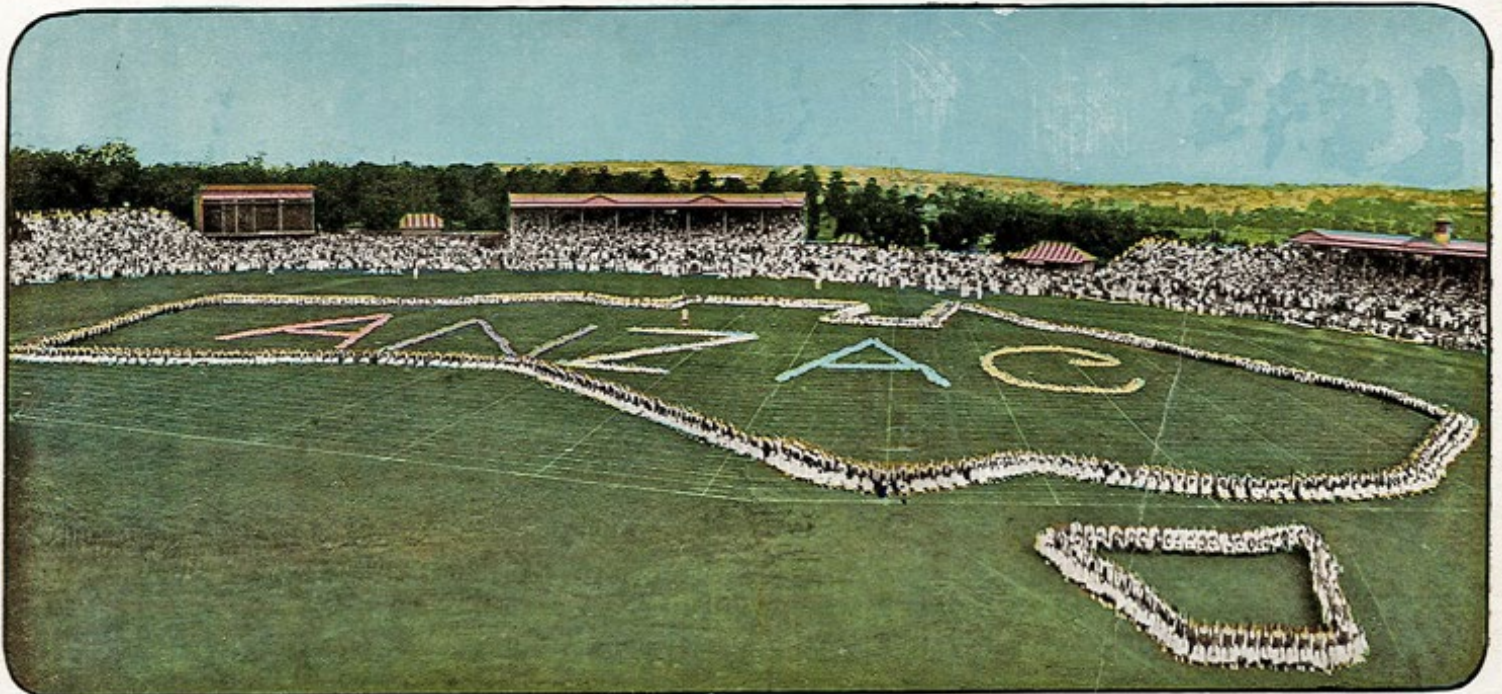
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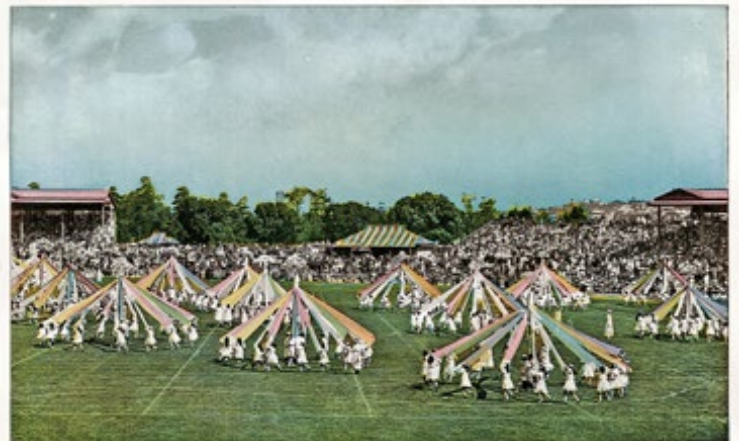
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