

THE YORKER

OF THE MELBOURNE CRICKET CLUB



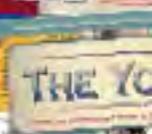
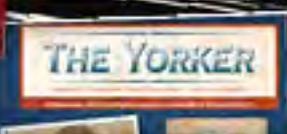
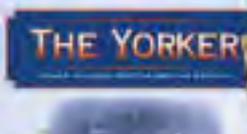
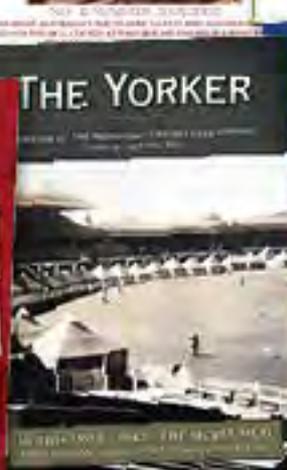
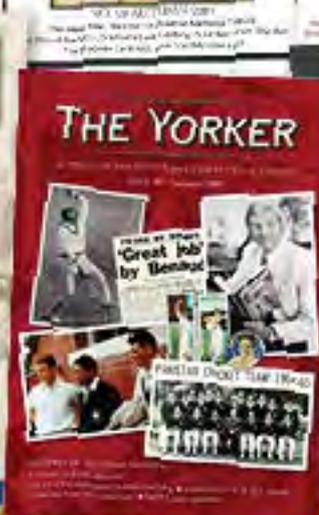
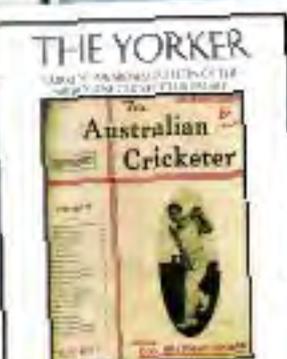
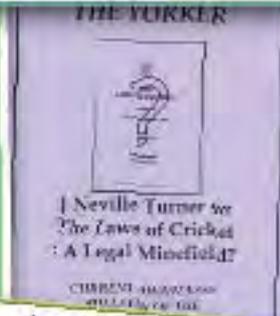
THE YORKER

JOURNAL OF THE MELBOURNE CRICKET CLUB LIBRARY ISSUE 50, AUTUMN 2013

CURRENT AWARENESS BULLETIN OF THE MELBOURNE CRICKET CLUB LIBRARY

The Yorker

THE YORKER



Commemorative 50th Issue

The Yorker 20 Years and 50 Issues On
 The Hunt for the First M.C.C. News
 Bluey Truscott, He Shall Grow Not Old
 Twenty Pennants Part 1, 1914/15 and 1919/20

Current Awareness Bulletin

Neville Turner on



THE YORKER



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Published three times a year, the Summer issue traditionally has a cricket feature, the Autumn issue has a leading article on football, while the Spring issue is multi-sport focused. We accept supporting articles on other sports or general sport related topics. Contact the library to discuss your contributions.

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

Covers of *The Yorker*.
MCC Library collection.



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THE YORKER

From Newsletter... to Journal

Celebrating 20 years of publishing for the enjoyment of our Members and all lovers of sports history

The Library's journal was established in July 1993 as a 'current awareness bulletin' to publish some of the research being produced by the library volunteers as well as to review some of the recent acquisitions.

As the cover of the first edition noted...

Not only is the MCC Library a great repository for the past, it is growing all the time. This Bulletin will appear regularly and include book reviews and a list of major recent acquisitions, purchased out of the Library's small budget or donated by friends of the Library.

As interest in the bulletin grew amongst library clientele and across the MCC membership extra resources were offered by management and *The Yorker* evolved from a black and white photocopied newsletter into a magazine and then a professionally published and produced journal.

A full bibliographic index of *The Yorker* is being produced for the 20th anniversary of publication. This resource for researchers will be loaded onto the library pages of the MCC Website.

Displays highlighting the evolution and highlights from 50 issues of *The Yorker* will be on display in the MCC Library Foyer from April to September and the display case at the Eastern end of the Frank Grey Smith Bar from August to November.

The next issue of *The Yorker* will celebrate another milestone, the 175th anniversary of the MCC.

The Yorker 20 Years and 50 Issues On

While the MCC is celebrating its 175th anniversary, the club's Library also has a major publishing milestone to acknowledge in 2013. For the 20th anniversary issue of *The Yorker*, David Allen and David Studham discussed the journal's origins and development with the MCC librarians who founded it, Annie McGlade (MCC Librarian 1993-94) and Ross Peacock (MCC Librarian 1994-97 and Assistant Librarian 1993-94 and 1997-99).



MCC Librarian Ross Peacock in 1996.



Issue 1, July 1993.



MCC Librarian Annie McGlade in 1994.

Tell us about your background at the MCC Library and your involvement with The Yorker.

AM: I had only been qualified for a short time when I applied for the position of librarian at the MCC Library. I didn't think I had enough experience, but gave it a shot because I love cricket and love the 'G.

I honestly think I was the only applicant who understood what Wisden was and that may have swung it my way, that and being experienced with the particular cataloguing software. It was a one-year contract to fill in for the librarian on maternity leave. There were 13 great volunteers and two wonderful part-timers in Lesley [Turner, Library Technician 1992-1996] and Ross.

With their collective help in that year we got a lot done and changed the library significantly, creating the first edition of the Mullins catalogue and raising the library's profile with the celebration of its birthday and the birth of *The Yorker*.

RP: I assisted a group led by Rex Harcourt to revamp the library from the early 1980s. When Annie McGlade was appointed librarian during Catherine Geary's maternity leave in 1993, I took a paid role as assistant librarian and worked there through to August 1999.

What led to the creation of the publication, why was it called The Yorker and who came up with the emblem of a cricket ball on fire?

AM: I created *The Yorker* to provide a medium where we could publish some of the great research that the volunteers were doing and to publish reviews of the library's new acquisitions. The volunteers all had different areas of expertise that hadn't always been used to their full potential and this gave them an outlet.

It was a bit of fun at first and only really accessible to MCC Library people. Ross and I discussed possible names and I

think I came up with *The Yorker*, but it might have been Ross and was definitely a reference to the cricket ball bowled close to the stumps in the block hole.

It seemed more interesting than the MCC Library Newsletter or similar. We needed something for the front cover and had limited software so I used Paintbrush and drew a flaming cricket ball. It somehow seemed appropriate and may be a subliminal reference to Australia's great fast bowlers.

RP: I have been a bit legendary in my working career in that I have always had a newsletter on the boil – at Woodville (SA) and Lilydale public libraries, at the Northcote Football Club, Fairfield Methodists Cricket Club and, more recently, 11 years as editor of the newsletter at U3A Nunawading.

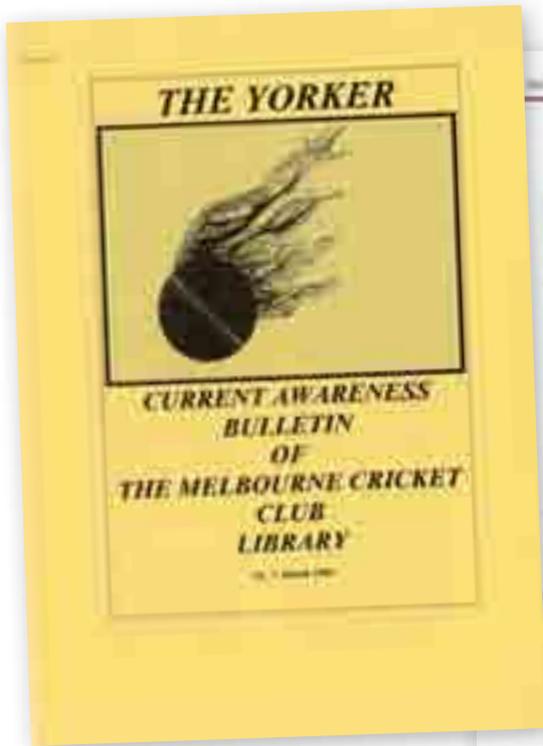
So *The Yorker* was no exception, and as the original first full title reflected, it aimed to be a current awareness bulletin, information for people in the field and for our members and users.

I received good feedback from people like the Australian Society for Sports History academics John O'Hara and Richard Cashman, as *The Yorker* provided a listing of recently acquired and catalogued material at the MCC, plus a series of book reviews.

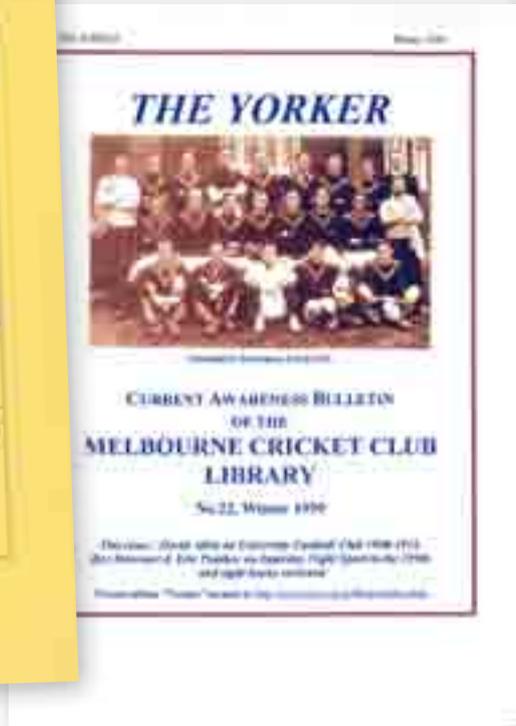
In regard of the title, as well as the obvious cricket reference, it was a parody of the famed high-class magazine the *New Yorker*. Annie McGlade came up with the cover graphic which looked like a smoking Michael Holding delivery.

What processes took place to get The Yorker out? What would you consider to be some of the most interesting content from your time with the magazine?

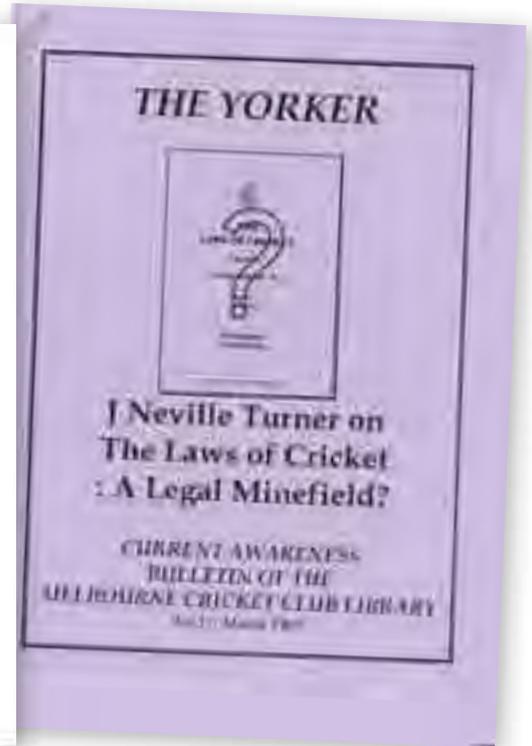
RP: We had the first couple of editions copied outside the organisation, but thereafter relied on the club's high-volume



Issue 7, March 1995.



Issue 22, Winter 1999.



Issue 17, March 1998.

photocopier. There always seemed to be a deadline relating to an MCG event that hurried us along. We worked on the premise of four issues per year, with certainly one for the AFL grand final and one for the Boxing Day Test.

The MCC Library volunteers provided a great deal of the content. Bill Watt used to come in every Thursday and he wrote a good number of the book reviews in the early period. Bill used to love to get his head down and work a solid morning, but like all the volunteers he had a story to him, and I enjoyed his tales of working for Healing selling records as a travelling salesman in the 1950s. (I forgave him for not liking Elvis!)

Bill's enthusiasm was matched by the other volunteers. I was really taken when Alistair Wilson, as a reasonably recent addition to the volunteer team at the time, wrote some great little short descriptive pieces on curling and coursing. Research volunteers Alf Batchelder and David Allen began to come up with longer items, and gradually the publication was morphing into something quite special.

AM: Originally Ross [Peacock], Lesley [Turner] and the volunteers would submit the articles and reviews and I would edit them into a word document and print it out. The front and back covers were done on coloured paper and we tried to use a different colour for each edition. That's about as high-tech as it got. It was all done on the library printer.

It is such a long time ago now so I really can't remember any specific content. It was all 'good stuff' but I think it was more the idiosyncrasies of the different writers that made it interesting for me. All of them came from different backgrounds so there was a broad spectrum of approaches that were just very natural and entertaining.

RP: Susan Cook, a library studies student with an interest in children's literature, wrote an overview of 'boys' cricket literature in the Mullins collection [No.7, March 1995], while Alan Flowers contributed a piece on the MCG scorers' box relocated to Brunswick City Oval in about 1907 [No.22, Winter 1999].

J. Neville Turner's feature 'The Laws of cricket' in the March 1998 edition [No.17] was a direct precursor to the actual changes made to the laws in 2000.

What is your opinion of the current Yorker?

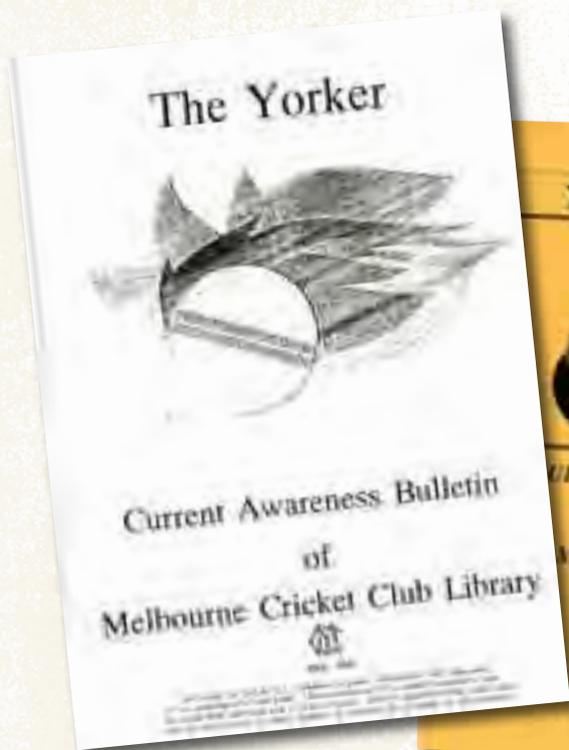
AM: I am stunned by what David and his team have done with *The Yorker*. It is a tribute to their dedication and love of their domain that it has turned in their hands from a rustic little newsletter to an award-winning publication that can stand against any in the world.

RP: Under David Studham and Trevor Ruddell's tutelage, it has obviously gone ahead in leaps and bounds, and its present status as an award-winning glossy "journal" is borne out by its extremely pleasing visual layout and lots of great historical photos.

It also has top-notch professional writing of people like Ken Williams and Ray Webster, and the occasional 'guest' appearance of old friends of the library such as Bernard Whimpress and Gideon Haigh. Twenty years on, long may it prosper.

Annie and Ross, thank you for your time, and of course for founding our journal.

Changes through the issues: a timeline of *The Yorker*



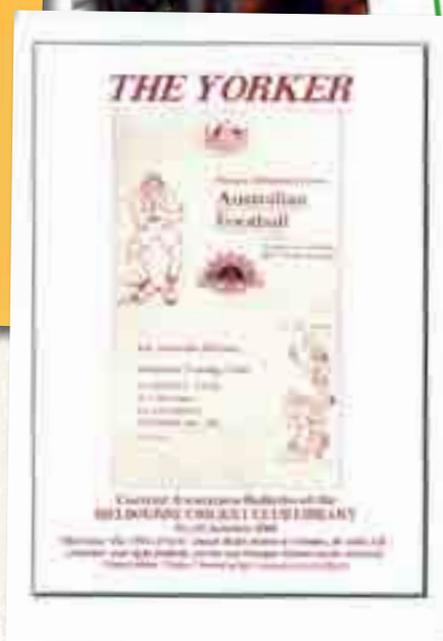
Issue 1, July 1993.



Issue 3, January 1994.



Issue 16, November 1997.



Issue 25, Autumn 2000.



Issue 26, Winter 2000.

Issue 1, July 1993 a newsletter for library volunteers and staff, was eight pages (four double sided A4 sheets stapled together) containing five books reviews, a summary of recent donations and a four page listing of new additions. First appearance of the flaming cricket ball illustration.

Issue 2, October 1993, the first designed for sharing beyond library personnel, for issuing to friends of the library, regular clients and visitors. It contained the first news item which described the MCC Library's 120th birthday celebrations and featured the revised flaming cricket ball image on the cover – which was printed on coloured paper (blue) using the library printer and photocopier.

Issue 3, January 1994. The volunteer profiles series started with a piece on Alan Chegwin.

Issue 7, March 1995 contained Susan Cook's article 'Books for the boys'. This was the first feature story to be published.

Issue 8, June 1995. Format set for run through to issue 15 July 1997. Each issue contains a volunteer profile, short feature articles, library news, exhibition details, book reviews and new acquisition lists.

Issue 16, November 1997, first dramatic change in design. The first photograph appeared on the cover, showing Ray Webster with Lindsay Kline and Ian Meckiff at the launch of *First-class Cricket in Australia Volume 2* in the Library on 30 October 1997. Issue 16 also contained the first cover illustrations for book reviews. It was the first issue to be published on the MCC's new internet site. Archived copy available at <http://tinyurl.com/mccyorker>

Issue 18, March 1998 was the last to contain a list of new acquisitions.

Issue 19, July 1998 contained a feature article 'The first football matches on the Melbourne Cricket Ground' by Alf Batchelder which developed into the library's first eBook published in 2003. <http://tinyurl.com/firstfootballmatches>

From **Issue 21**, Autumn 1999 *The Yorker* was issued seasonally.

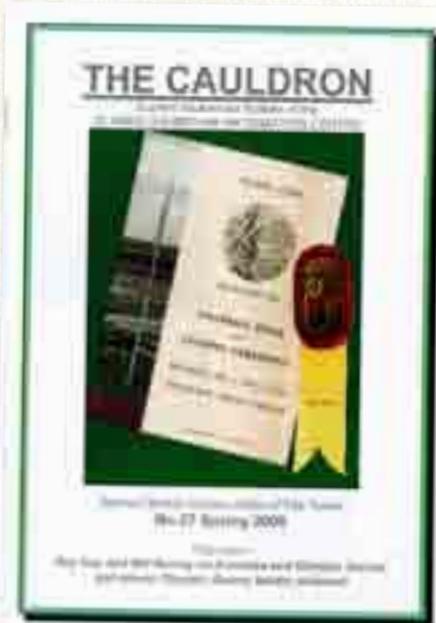
Issue 25, Autumn 2000 a special full colour edition was trialled in a limited run for ANZAC Day 2000. *The Yorker* was first recognised internationally at the 2000 International Association of Sports Museums and Halls of Fame's communications awards with an 'honorable mention' certificate for this issue. To celebrate the award, an additional run of colour copies were produced.

Issue 26, Winter 2000 saw the introduction of full colour for the entire print run, with *The Yorker* printed in a book-fold edition on A3 copy paper on the Museum's Department colour printer/copier.

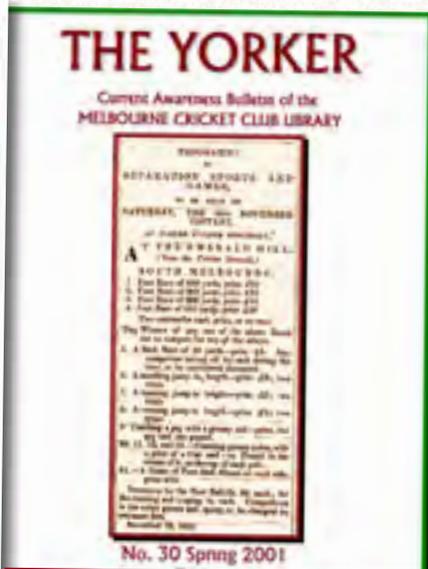
Issue 27, Spring 2000 special Sydney 2000 Olympic Games edition renamed *The Cauldron*. Issued during the six week period that the



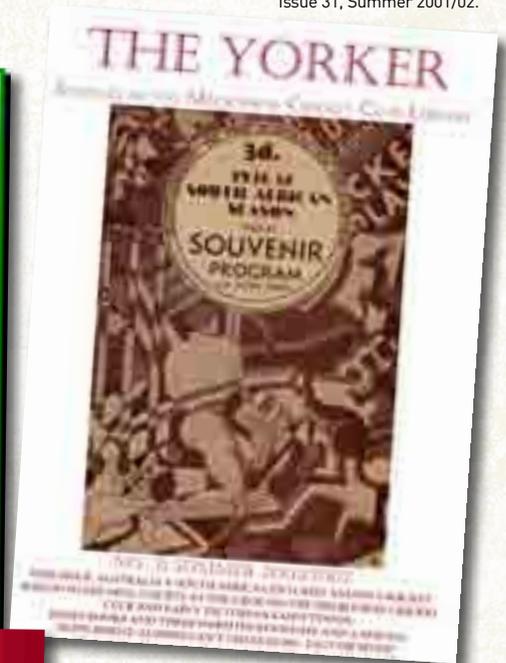
Issue 27, Spring 2000.



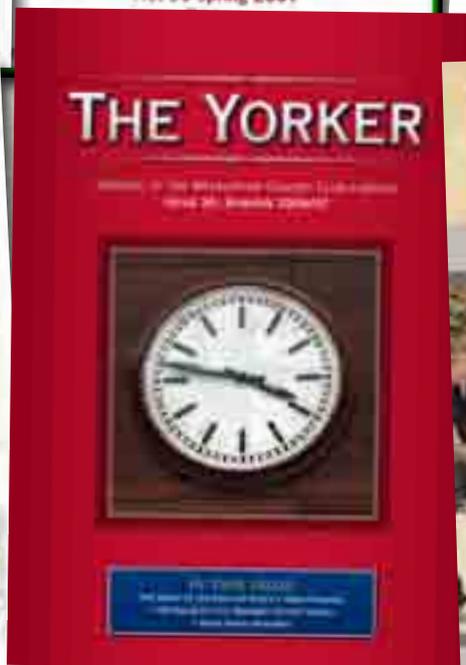
Issue 30, Spring 2001.



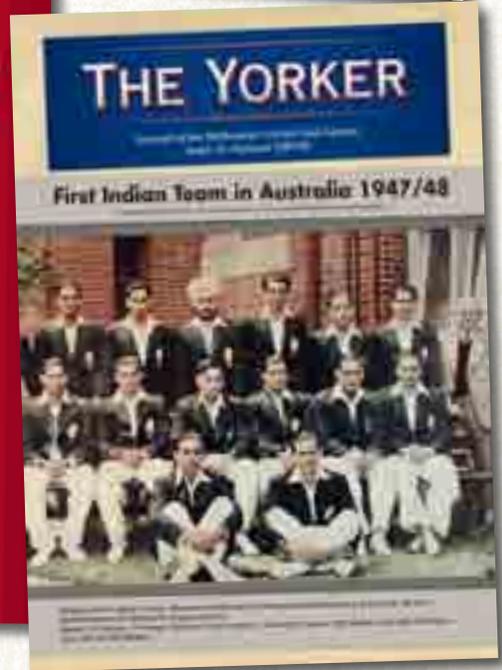
Issue 31, Summer 2001/02.



Issue 35, Ashes Supplement.



Issue 36, Summer 2006/07.



Issue 37, Summer 2007/08.

library operated out of the Australian Gallery of Sport & Olympic Museum's resource centre as an Olympic history reference service for SOCOG.

Issue 30, Spring 2001 was the last to be subtitled 'current awareness bulletin'. This issue contained the first webpage reviews.

Issue 31, Summer 2001/02 saw *The Yorker* issued for the first time as the 'journal of the MCC Library'. Ross Perry's article 'Australia's Poor Performance Chasing Runs to Win in Tests – Myth or Fact' was the first *Yorker* supplement.

Issue 35, Summer 2002/03 was a special double-sized 'flip-over' edition printed to include research produced for the cancelled Marylebone Cricket Club ashes exhibition of 2002/03. This landmark work formed the core for the library's publication *In Affectionate Remembrance* published in 2006/07 to coincide with the delayed exhibition.

Issue 36, Summer 2006/07 saw the revival of the journal after an hiatus during library relocation and closure for the redevelopment of the northern side of the MCG. This was the first issue commercially printed edition with graphic design by George Petrou Design replacing in-house layout in word processing software. Public sales commence when this 12-page issue was offered for sale to the general public through the MCG Superstore for \$5.

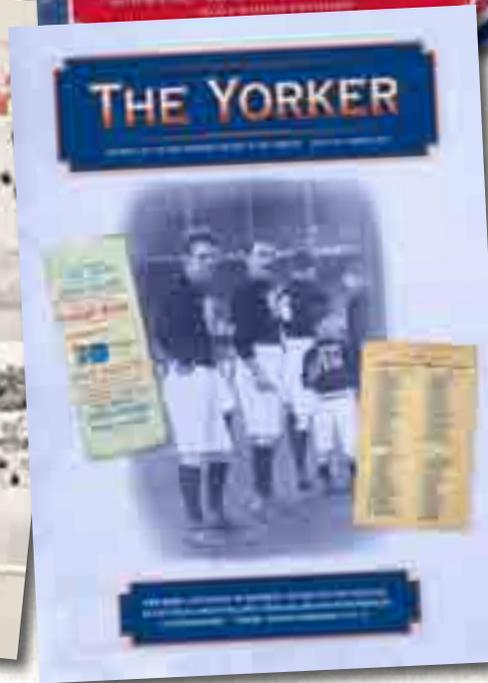
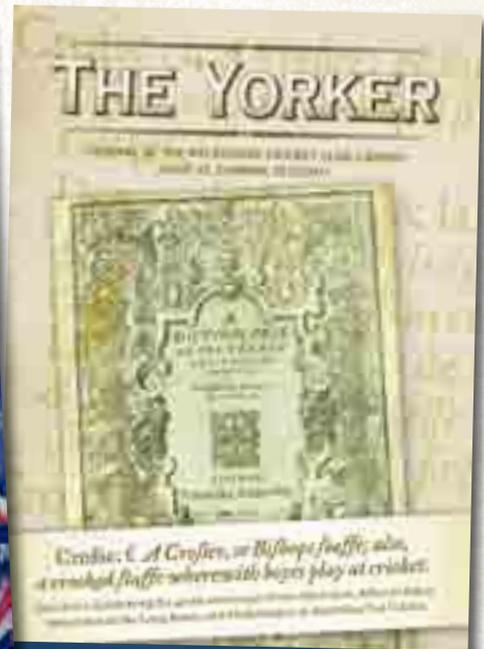
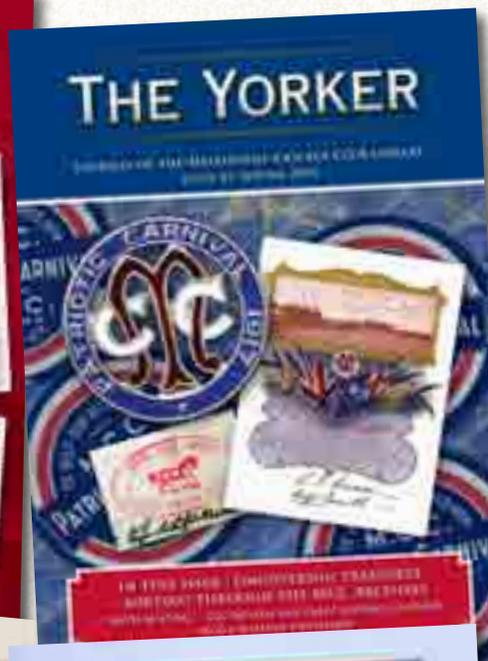
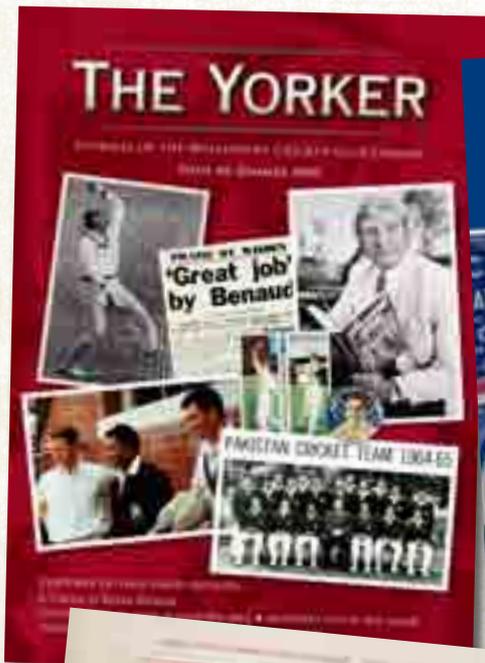
Issue 37, Summer 2007/08 celebrated the diamond jubilee of the first Indian Test tour to Australia with a 40-page edition. Due to wide-spread coverage and review by the visiting Indian cricket media, extensive interest in the second annual issue saw it sell out in record time.

Issue 40, Summer 2008/09 saw the journal return to a more regular publishing cycle with issues produced for each Summer, Autumn and Spring.

Issue 40, Summer 2008/09.

Issue 42, Spring 2010.

Issue 43, Summer 2010/11.



Issue 44, Autumn 2011.

Issue 45, Spring 2011.

Issue 47, Autumn 2012.

Issue 42, Spring 2010 celebrated the recent establishment of the MCC Archives with a special issue looking at treasures contained in the files of the Archives' collection.

Issue 43, Summer 2010/11 was published as an extended 40-page edition as a *de facto* catalogue for the library's award winning *Crooked Staffe* exhibition, celebrating 400 years of cricket in print.

Issue 44, Autumn 2011 was the final of four issues that qualified for the International Sport Heritage Association's communications awards in 2011. In October 2011 it was announced that *The Yorker* was presented with the 'ISHY' Award for 'Best Programs, Annual Reports or Magazines'.

Issue 45, Spring 2011 contained Howard Hanley's 'Silent Voices from the Lord's Pavilion', our first jointly published collaboration with Marylebone Cricket Club's *MCC Magazine*. Subscriptions for MCC Members and the general public were introduced from this issue.

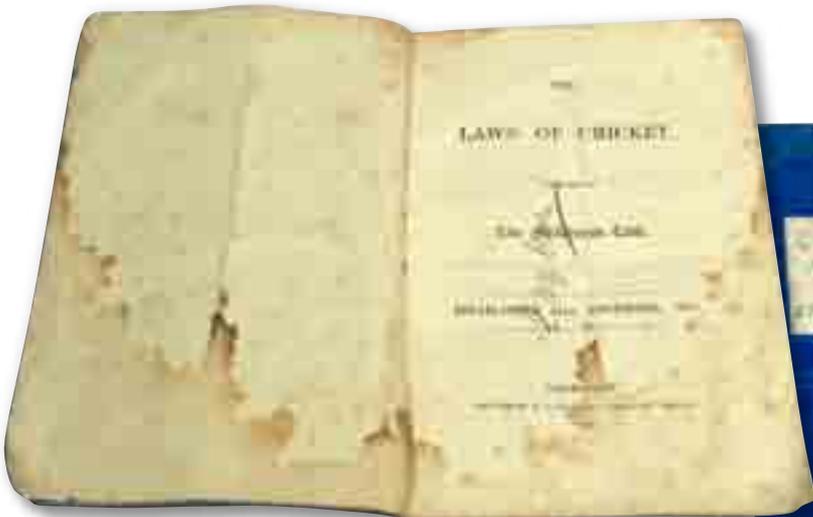
Issue 47, Autumn 2012 saw the introduction of advertising from regular library suppliers and sponsors. This issue was the last of three that qualified for the International Sport Heritage Association's communications awards in 2012. At the ISHA conference in October 2012 the MCC Librarian accepted *The Yorker's* second consecutive ISHY Award for 'Best Programs, Annual Reports or Magazines'.

The current format has continued through issues 48, 49 and now 50. However, given the changes that have occurred in the first 50 issues, and the desire to keep improving the journal, it will be interesting to see what changes will occur between now and a 100th issue.

David Studham
MCC Librarian



The hunt for the first *M.C.C. News*



Regulations of the Melbourne Cricket Club, 1846.
MCC Museum (M9078).



The Laws of Cricket, 1841.
MCC Museum (M9904).

The Yorker is one in a long list of newsletters and periodicals that have been published by the Melbourne Cricket Club in its 175-year history. The MCC's first publication was *The Laws of Cricket* from 1841 followed by the *Regulations of the Melbourne Cricket Club* in 1846.

The club's annual report, which has been published since the 1860s, is the longest-running serial. However the most popular and well known of our publications is *MCC News*, which now numbers 153 issues. This journal of record for the club started in June 1957 with the publication of "Issue 1".

But did it take nearly 119 years into the club's history before a newsletter was released? Well, no! As an article in Issue 5 of *MCC News* in 1958 pointed out, there was an earlier incarnation known as... *M.C.C. News*. There were at least two issues published as it was Vol.1 No.2 that was referenced. Searches of the library and museum collections over the years failed to unearth the copy referred to in the December 1958 article. Nor were any other issues donated through the call for members to assist in completing the club's holdings, and the newsletter remained a mystery to researchers of club history.

That is until the donation of two items in June 2012 by Raymond Calder and his daughter Robyn that included a copy of *M.C.C. News* Vol.1, No.2, 27 January, 1919.

The discussion about that donation started with a telephone call offering a couple of early issues of *MCC News*. This is a rather common occurrence in the library and as we do have two complete sets of the newsletter, one bound and one loose, it normally ends with a very polite 'thank you for considering us for your donation' and discussion about some possible alternative place to donate the item, such as the National Library.

However, in this case I was stunned when Robyn mentioned that the items were pre-1920! Here was the (almost) mythical early newsletter.

We gladly accepted their kind offer and it is a charming little bulletin that the Calders donated.

Of the eight pages, it was mostly club news. However, the front and centre pages do list detail of the artists and the programme of 15 numbers for the 'Second M.C.C. Grand Open Air Concert' of Monday 27 January, 1919.



Detail from MCC News, No 5, 1958, p.12. MCC Library Collection.

THE FIRST M.C.C. NEWSLETTER

The NEWSLETTER is other than we thought.

Secretary Eric Johnson recently unearthed a copy of a Club Newsletter ("M.C.C. News") dated January 27, 1919.

It is numbered Volume 1, No. 2. It featured notes on cricket, football, bowls, tennis and rifle shooting. A photograph and short biography of a youthful Vernon Stanford, and a letter from Colonel D. McLeish, in service in Egypt, thanking Mr. Tomblin for "a very welcome parcel of exciting material" and an historical flavour.

Three features of the newsletter are unique. It announced the "Second M.C.C. Grand Open Air Concert", with well-known artists, "The M.C.C. Military Band of Thirty Performers" and "Bioscope Pictures".

A cautionary footnote noted—"should a postponement of any concert be necessary owing to adverse weather, a RED LIGHT will be displayed from the Western End of the Grandstand."

It ran a tricked competition "Twenty-four questions relating to first-class cricket in Australia will be set by Mr. R. H. Campbell, well-known Cricket Statistician—three in each issue of the "M.C.C. News". No entrance fee. Prize—a cricket bat presented by the M.C.C.

And it published advertisement-like notices—from "Melbourne's Biggest Hardware Store" (SHE is business in Elizabeth Street), "Eclipse Cacao—the Drink for Athletes." And "Two-garment suit in neat striped and plain Grey Saffron Cloth, strap back and patch pocket on coat; cuff buttons on trousers . . . 38/-."

The M.C.C. Committee would like to have a complete file of this early newsletter. It would be glad if any Member had other copies of the "M.C.C. News" that he was willing to donate.

M.C.C. NEWS January 27, 1919

For these Hot Days You Need a LIGHT SUIT

W. & A. STUART & CO. LTD. MELBOURNE

101, 103, 105, 107, 109, 111, 113, 115, 117, 119, 121, 123, 125, 127, 129, 131, 133, 135, 137, 139, 141, 143, 145, 147, 149, 151, 153, 155, 157, 159, 161, 163, 165, 167, 169, 171, 173, 175, 177, 179, 181, 183, 185, 187, 189, 191, 193, 195, 197, 199, 201, 203, 205, 207, 209, 211, 213, 215, 217, 219, 221, 223, 225, 227, 229, 231, 233, 235, 237, 239, 241, 243, 245, 247, 249, 251, 253, 255, 257, 259, 261, 263, 265, 267, 269, 271, 273, 275, 277, 279, 281, 283, 285, 287, 289, 291, 293, 295, 297, 299, 301, 303, 305, 307, 309, 311, 313, 315, 317, 319, 321, 323, 325, 327, 329, 331, 333, 335, 337, 339, 341, 343, 345, 347, 349, 351, 353, 355, 357, 359, 361, 363, 365, 367, 369, 371, 373, 375, 377, 379, 381, 383, 385, 387, 389, 391, 393, 395, 397, 399, 401, 403, 405, 407, 409, 411, 413, 415, 417, 419, 421, 423, 425, 427, 429, 431, 433, 435, 437, 439, 441, 443, 445, 447, 449, 451, 453, 455, 457, 459, 461, 463, 465, 467, 469, 471, 473, 475, 477, 479, 481, 483, 485, 487, 489, 491, 493, 495, 497, 499, 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M.C.C. News, Vol. 1, No. 2, January 1919, pp. 4-5.
MCC Library Collection.

season. Neither club annual report nor minutes for that season make any mention of a club newsletter. However, the minutes of the General Committee meeting held on 11 February 1919 are enlightening as they reported that unfortunately 'the Musical Committee had decided to postpone the usual weekly concerts for present owing to prevailing epidemic', the 'epidemic' in question being the Spanish Influenza. The annual report for 1918/19 records their curtailment.

In all, four concerts were held in 1919 but owing mainly to the causes mentioned above a loss of almost £100 was sustained. Therefore, perhaps only four issues of *M.C.C. News* were published that year.

The concerts returned the following summer for one final swansong, although no mention is made of programs or newsletters from that season. Unfortunately the 1920 concerts made an even larger loss for the club - nearly £200. The annual

Concerts—After a lapse during the war period, the usual weekly Monday evening Concerts were again resumed on 20th January of this year, but had a short run owing to the influenza epidemic raging at the time, and the consequent restrictions imposed by the Health authorities necessitating a curtailment of the season.

Detail from the *Melbourne Cricket Club Annual Report, 1918/19*, p.27.
MCC Library Collection.

report notes that the open-air concert had 'lost a good deal of its former popularity, and from present-day experience it certainly does not appear a payable proposition.'² The concert season was not revived again, and it would be 37 years before another club newsletter was re-established.

If anyone has any other copies of *M.C.C. News* from this period, the library staff would be very pleased to hear from you.

Cover of Official Programme Season 1914-15 9th Annual M.C.C. Grand Open Air Concert. MCC Library Collection.

Official Programme Season 1914-15 9th Annual M.C.C. Grand Open Air Concert, pp. 8-9. MCC Library Collection.

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CARSON'S EXCLUSIVE CONFECTIONERY

Programme (Continued)

13th February, 1915

8. Song "The Goodbye Song" by Miss E. Treweek

12. Song "The Goodbye Song" by Miss E. Treweek

13. Song "The Goodbye Song" by Miss E. Treweek

14. Song "The Goodbye Song" by Miss E. Treweek

15. Song "The Goodbye Song" by Miss E. Treweek

16. Song "The Goodbye Song" by Miss E. Treweek

17. Song "The Goodbye Song" by Miss E. Treweek

18. Song "The Goodbye Song" by Miss E. Treweek

19. Song "The Goodbye Song" by Miss E. Treweek

20. Song "The Goodbye Song" by Miss E. Treweek

SMOKE "MILD" CIGARETTES

CRICKET-GROUND CONCERT.

After the great heat of the day large numbers of people gathered at the Melbourne Cricket-ground for the ninth open-air concert of the season. In the cooler and fresher atmosphere at the cricket-ground the audience thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment prepared for them. Miss Ely Treweek and Miss Ida Osborne sang some pretty songs nicely, and their efforts were loudly applauded. Mr. Fred Collier's songs also appealed to the audience. Several attractive pieces were played by the M.C.C. Military Band, and were greatly appreciated. Interspersed with the musical items were a number of cinematograph pictures, shown by the Amalgamated Pictures Limited, and these were not the least interesting parts of an entertaining concert.

Argus, 16 February 1915, p.8. MCC Library Collection.

BOND'S CHOCOLATES OF QUALITY

Official Programme

Season 1914-15

9th M.C.C.

Grand Open Air Concert

MELBOURNE CRICKET GROUND

MONDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 15th, 1915, 8 & 9 PM

Artist:

MISS ELY TREWEEK, Soprano

MISS IDA OSBORNE, Alto

MR. FRED COLLIER, Baritone

SMOKE "MILD" CIGARETTES

Detail from Official Programme Season 1914-15 9th Annual M.C.C. Grand Open Air Concert, p.3. MCC Library Collection.

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David Studham, MCC Librarian,
with the assistance of Marie Pernat and Patricia Downs

End Notes

- Melbourne Cricket Club Annual Report, 1915/16, p.7.
- Melbourne Cricket Club Annual Report, 1919/20, p.37.



He Shall Grow Not Old



Squadron Leader Keith 'Bluey'
Truscott, D.F.C. and bar.
RAAF Museum.

Only a few can now claim to have seen 'Bluey' Truscott in his days as a Melbourne footballer. For the aged handful who can still picture his efforts on the field, mention of his name always evokes special memories. In the team's star-studded line-up of the late thirties, he became a useful but not outstanding footballer. Nevertheless, Truscott held 'a peculiar place of esteem' with Victorians.

Like many lesser lights, Bluey earned a rare affection from spectators 'because he gave everything to the side and he never knew defeat.'¹ Unlike those who remember him, Bluey remains ageless, a smiling and dashing young man whose achievements in World War II won considerable renown, a brilliant talent inseparable from the sad thought of 'what might have been' had he not died in the conflict.

Keith William Truscott was born on 17 May 1916, the second child of William Truscott, a South Yarra perambulator manufacturer, and his wife Maude. In writing references for him, teachers at South Yarra State and Melbourne High Schools would portray Keith Truscott as conscientious, reliable and trustworthy, as well as a leader with high moral standards, an open, frank personality and a great willingness to serve.

The head teacher at South Yarra noted that the red-headed lad was 'physically strong', with 'an extraordinary ability to bear pain.' Sometimes known to his peers as 'Ginger' or 'Meggsie', Truscott could be lazy and somewhat cheeky - he once received 500 lines after asking his history teacher whether the Florentine monk Savonarola 'was the inventor of the hot dog.'

When found hiding in a cupboard, he calmly assured the teacher who had been searching for him that 'I often get in here for relaxation.' The only master to have full control over Truscott and his classmates was Test captain Bill Woodfull. As fellow student Lin Browne explained, 'the awful majesty and celestial glory of the Australian captaincy reduced us, even Bluey, to dumb adoring pilgrims at the Shrine of Cricket'.

Browne also noted that Truscott 'was no dunce, for all his low percentages. He had a very quick brain very well impregnated with the art of fun.' At Melbourne High, the young Truscott stood out as a 'great personality, known by everyone in the school'. To his biographer, Ivan Southall, he 'shone like a light in darkness, an inexhaustible source of energy and ingenuity':

No wilder plant grew in any garden, yet none exacted more admiration or affection. Gentle as a dove, cunning as a fox, effortlessly he moulded the world to suit himself.²



Captain of the Melbourne High School First XVIII, 1933.
Private collection.



Bluey, seated behind the shield, led the 1933-34 Melbourne High School First XI. Standing at right is future Test cricketer Keith Miller.
Private collection.



Keith Truscott, front left, in the Melbourne High School League of Nations Council.
Private collection.

Within that world, Keith Truscott produced scholastic results that were 'outstandingly good, and indeed, brilliant'. In 1933, he obtained his Leaving Certificate, with passes in British History, European History, Geology, Economics, English, Commercial Law, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry and Calculus.

A year later, he gained honours in his two history subjects. Truscott was also a prefect, captain of the First Eleven and First Eighteen, as well as a member of the school's athletics, baseball and lacrosse teams. In 1933, he was included in the first Victorian schoolboy baseball team to visit Adelaide.³

He was just the sort of young man that Power House organisers sought for the annual Lord Somers Camp, where the intention was to gather 'boys who have not met each other before and who, through having some common experience together, may form an acquaintance which will later mature into real friendship and respect.'

Keith attended the 1935 and 1936 camps and continued his involvement with Power House for some years, representing the club in amateur athletics and often winning high jumps with a leap of 5'4". Twice, he appeared on stage with the Power House Dramatic Club. At the Princess Theatre in 1937, he played a policeman in the comedy thriller *Someone at the Door*; a year later, he performed at the Apollo in *The Unguarded Hour*.⁴

After leaving school, Truscott was a student teacher at Spensley Street State School, Clifton Hill, but he resigned early in 1936 to take up a position as a clerk with William Angliss & Co in Lynch Street, Footscray. During this time, he played cricket at junior level, ultimately winning selection in the Victorian Presbyterian Interstate Eleven.

From the sketchy reports that were published, he seems to have appeared for various teams, including South Yarra and possibly Kooyong Road Methodists. Hailed in 1936 as 'the champion of the Friendly Societies competition', he was named in Prahran's team for the Victorian Cricket Association's District final, but scoresheets indicate that he did not take the field.⁵

While still at school, Truscott played football for Melbourne High School Old Boys in C section of the Metropolitan Amateurs' competition. In 1934, he was selected for Victoria against South Australia. In August, he produced remarkable form, kicking 10 goals against Old Caulfield Grammarians and another 10 the following week against South Caulfield.

A few days later, the *Argus* announced that the Melbourne Football Club, to whom he was residentially tied, had obtained a permit for his services.⁶ More than likely, it was at Melbourne that the nickname 'Bluey' gained currency. While the name undoubtedly related to his red hair, it was possibly also linked to the fact that, around 1930, a Bluey Truscott had boxed at the Fitzroy and Prahran stadiums.

Since winning the first recognised premiership in 1870, Melbourne had tasted success infrequently. However, by 1935 when Bluey arrived, the Second Eighteen had won four consecutive flags, and moves were underway, with the appointment of the experienced Richmond men Percy Page as secretary and Frank 'Checker' Hughes as coach, to bring similar success to the Firsts.

Consequently, Truscott found himself in a developing and potentially exciting football environment. In the Seconds, his fighting spirit was at its best against Carlton in the first semi-final. In a tight finish, he booted a goal just before the bell to



At the Lord Somers Camp in 1935. Truscott is sixth from the right. Private collection.

Melbourne Football Club Second XVIII, c.1935. Truscott sits fourth from the left, with Ron Barassi senior at far right. Private collection.



get his team home by four points. Three weeks later, he was in the team that won the Seconds' fifth premiership in a row.

However, it was not until 1937 that Bluey broke into the First Eighteen. Replacing an injured player against North Melbourne on 5 June, he kicked three goals, but his future at Melbourne was uncertain as club officials were proposing to trade him to Hawthorn. The *Argus* said the plan was dropped 'at his father's wish.'

With its impressive array of talent, Melbourne simply could not find a regular place for him in the team. Late in the season, sports writer Percy Taylor noted that, in his 12 matches for the Firsts, Truscott had been 19th man seven times. Nevertheless, the respected columnist sensed that the 21-year-old was a good prospect, commenting that the move to Hawthorn 'would have been tragic for Melbourne.'⁷

Bluey's promising form in the 1938 pre-season practice matches raised thoughts that he might be used in the centre, a move that would allow the brilliant Alan La Fontaine to strengthen the forward line. Unfortunately, before he could cement his place in the Firsts, he tore a leg muscle at training and was forced to rest for four weeks. On his return, he was in and out of the team, again appearing several times as 19th man. In all, he could manage only 10 games and four goals for the season.⁸

In rebuilding Melbourne, Checker Hughes placed heavy emphasis on teamwork and strong team spirit. To develop those qualities, the coach endorsed the idea of the footballers fielding a team in the Melbourne Cricket Club's inter-club matches. In the 1938-39 season, Truscott was fourth in the competition's batting averages with 44.83 and a top score of 112 not out.

According to Ivan Southall, his relationship with Hughes had not started on a warm note. In their first encounter at training, the coach had questioned Bluey's fitness: 'What are you panting for? Short in the breath?' Bluey replied, 'No ... But there's a lot of me. I need a lot of oxygen.'

This, and some of his other retorts, could have sounded a little too smart to a disciplinarian like Hughes, but he liked the solid look of his recruit, and finished the exchange with 'You can come back again tomorrow night.' Eventually, a rare affection developed between the pair, with the coach coming to regard Truscott as an irrepressible 'skylarking kid' whom no-one could dislike:

"Bluey" – the very name suggests an imp – the scrapes that fellow got into and out of – just like that. [Once] I said to the fellows: "No grog Friday nights. If I catch you, you're for it." Went all right for a while, then I got it on the snake wireless that the



Listening to the coach: Bluey and Ron Barassi senior, c.1940.
Private collection.

lads were meeting at a certain hotel in the city after dinner and having a few noggins. So in I go. There's one fellow with a pot. Then in breezes "Bluey". "What, are YOU on the grog, coach?" he hails me. "Me - I've just come in to pay an SP bloke" ... If there were any shenanigans "Bluey" got the blame and he was at the bottom of it most times.

Whenever the players gathered for a 'sav' night, Bluey 'considered it his unchallenged right to supply the hot dogs - yards of them.' The saveloy undoubtedly came from the premises of William Angliss & Co, one of the British Empire's largest meat enterprises. One can only wonder whether they were obtained by legitimate means.⁹

By 1939, Melbourne's blend of 'experience and skill' and 'the enthusiasm of pace and youth' was bringing the team's revival close to fruition. In the process, though, Truscott again found himself on the edge of selection. Troubled by a thigh injury at the start of the season, Bluey was in and out of the Firsts.

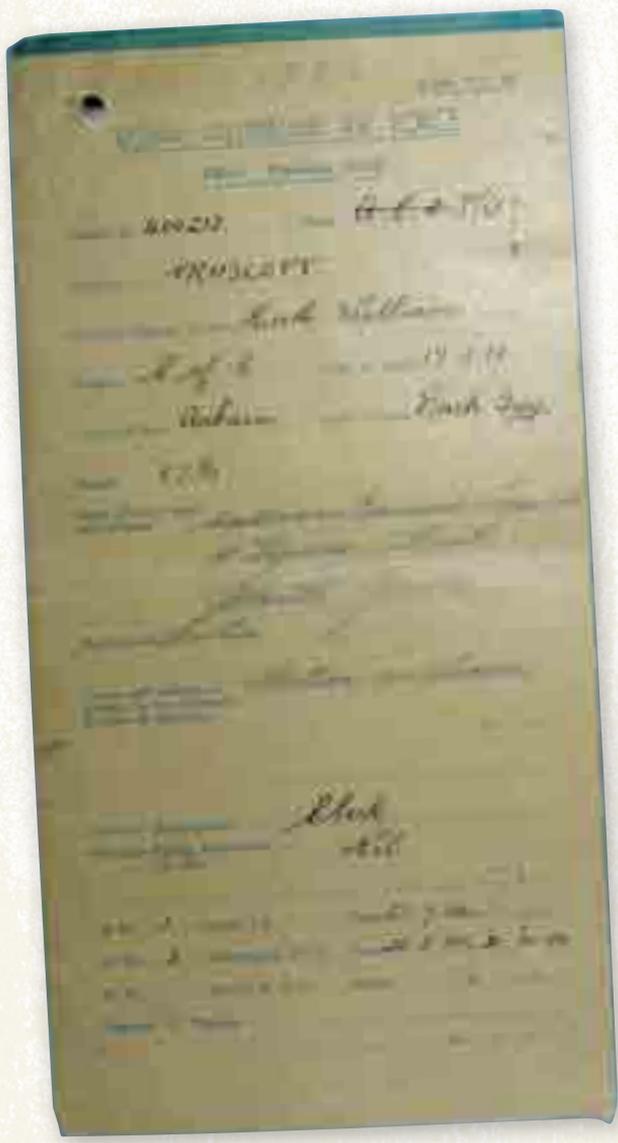
When he spent six matches out of seven on the sidelines as 19th man, there were reports that he was planning to leave, but MFC chairman Joe Blair quashed the rumours with a remarkable statement: 'Truscott's value is shown by the number of times he has been 19th man. He is too good a player to lose.' Indeed he was. In the last half of the season, he finally became a regular member of the team:

... he made up for all God-given deficiencies with a reasonably quick "first couple of yards", a beautiful pair of hips and thighs, infectious enthusiasm and a ton of determination. Whilst not destined to be rated a champion, Bluey's endeavour and courage shone through ...

Once, Truscott received two stitches in his face after colliding with a teammate. Even after an arm infection prevented him from training, Bluey still took the field on the following Saturday.¹⁰

On 22 July, he played very well but was reported by boundary umpire Munton 'on a charge of having elbowed Maslen (St Kilda) in the last quarter'. At the tribunal hearing Bill Maslen supported Bluey's innocence, admitting that, while he had been bumped, he 'was not elbowed' and was in fact surprised 'when the umpire spoke to him.' In the face of such evidence, the charge was dropped.

A few weeks later, in the second semi-final, Collingwood's Ron Dowling was reported for striking Truscott 'with his open hand'. The pair maintained that nothing had happened. When Bluey insisted that he 'threw his head back because he thought he might be pushed in the face', the Collingwood man explained that, in the process, his hand had 'slipped beneath Truscott's chin.' Nevertheless, the tribunal suspended Dowling for four matches.¹¹



His 1940 Pilot's Training Card described Truscott as 'outstanding in all essential qualities as officer.'
National Archives of Australia.

In the Grand Final, Truscott was at his best. Collingwood had started splendidly, but during the second quarter, as Melbourne fought back, Bluey handballed to Ray Wartman, who scored a goal.

Moments later, after a shot from Ron Baggott dropped short, Truscott came 'tearing in from the wing', grabbed the ball from the ensuing scrum and snapped the goal that put Melbourne in front for the first time. It was the moment that turned the game as Collingwood, 'wilting under pressure, collapsed and became easy victims' to give the Demons their first premiership since 1926.¹²

By then, Australia had been at war for nearly a month. Before the year was over, Keith Truscott had decided to enlist. He had grown up in a city where the frequent sight of maimed survivors of the Great War was vivid proof of the horrors and slaughter of the Western Front. Consequently, many young men, who were quite prepared to fight, did not want to be soldiers.

Exciting RAAF displays reinforced their preference, as did the deeds of aviators like Kingsford Smith and Hinkler, and the air stories that appeared in the weekly boys' magazines from England. By March 1940, 11,550 had applied to be aircrew. Less than one in five had been selected, and there was a waiting list of more than 1700.

The idea of becoming a pilot would certainly have appealed to the daring, independent and adventurous side of Bluey's character. Submitting his application on January 5, 1940, he indicated at his interview that he wanted to 'serve his Country', a desire that his papers emphasised with one word: 'WAR'.¹³

On 22 March, in a charity cricket match between the RAAF and footballers from the Victorian Junior Cricket Association, Truscott "played some good shots" in an aggressive 71-minute display to make 57, with six boundaries. Though he top scored for the footballers, the airmen won by 14 runs.

Three weeks later, he opened the 1940 VFL season by kicking two goals against Essendon. Early in the following week, No.1 Recruiting Centre notified him that 'you will be called up for training as a trainee Pilot on Monday 22nd July, 1940'.¹⁴

Knowing that his days in Melbourne's number five guernsey would soon be interrupted, he seems to have played with even more zeal than usual. However, in earning accolades for his good play, Bluey suffered two serious injuries. After colliding with Carlton's Don McIntyre, he was taken to hospital.

The *Argus* reported that 'He may have a fractured skull and an X ray will be taken to-day'. Returning to the team a fortnight later, he suffered an ankle injury at Hawthorn and did not play again until the Saturday before he was due to formally enlist and go to No.1 Initial Training School at Somers.¹⁵

Although he returned in time for the finals, Truscott lacked match practice, having missed 11 games 'because of injury, illness, and the claims of military service'. For the second semi-final against Richmond, he was therefore cast in his familiar role as 19th man.

In a torrid clash, Richmond skipper Jack Dyer was 'never afraid to use his considerable weight', flattening Melbourne forward Norm Smith, who collapsed in the dressing room at half-time. Replacing Smith, Bluey was soon 'kicked solidly on the leg'. Despite another knock to the leg, he revelled in the heavy clashes to finish with four goals.

After missing the Preliminary Final, Truscott had not fully recovered when the Grand Final side was chosen. Even so, Melbourne wanted his aggression on the field against Richmond. Though not in sparkling form, he kicked a goal to help Melbourne to another premiership.¹⁶

In his month at Somers, Truscott made a strong impression. He passed with special distinction and was seen as 'outstanding in all essential qualities as officer.' So far, there was no sign that, early in his air force career, he would face the most difficult time of his life.

On August 22, Leading Aircraftman Truscott had his first flight at No.3 Elementary Flying Training School, Essendon. As usual, his personal qualities impressed his superiors, who regarded him as a 'very good type', 'very keen' and possessing 'determination and fighting spirit'. In the air, however, he had countless flaws.

Instruction in the DH60G Gipsy Moth and the DH82A Tiger Moth showed that, along with a 'tendency to roughness', he was 'rather unsteady generally', 'heavy' on the controls, 'in

doubt all the time' and 'apt to do anything silly at any time.' His reactions seemed 'very slow or else he thinks unnecessarily over what he is doing.'

His main instructor, Pilot Officer Roy Goon, noted that, while Bluey required 'nursing through all manoeuvres', his greatest problems were that his landings were 'bumpy' and that his 'judgement of height during landings' was 'very poor'.¹⁷

While most pilots flew solo after eight or 10 hours' instruction, Truscott's logbook shows that he took 16.25 hours. It has even been suggested that, unofficially, the figure was closer to 25 hours. Goon, who had risked a 'carpeting' for his leniency with Truscott, later revealed that he persevered only because his struggling student had eventually learned to 'handle the aircraft extremely well' at altitude.

Moreover, he had sensed that Bluey's landing problems resulted from a visual aberration that enabled him to 'report sightings before anyone else' but 'upset his judgement for close proximity to the ground during landings'.

Ian Johnson felt that, since the Australian-Chinese instructor was something of a 'reckless rebel', his support for Truscott stemmed from the fact that he saw something of himself in Bluey's personality.¹⁸

It has also been claimed that the press, 'under pressure from armed-service recruiting officials, gave maximum publicity to prominent people who joined up so they would become role models'. Consequently, 'scrubbing' a well-known footballer could have adversely affected recruiting. According to Ivan Southall, Flight Lieutenant Leigh Forsyth, the chief instructor at 3EFTS, told Truscott, 'We'd like you to be with us because you'll bring after you the type of young man we want'.¹⁹

When Bluey finally went solo on 20 September, he had many watchers sharing 'the drama, the anti-climax and the overwhelming relief of an historic occasion.' On his second approach, after bumping the Tiger Moth's wheels "lightly", he made a landing that was 'quite good'. In a place of solitude, Keith Truscott wept.²⁰

To be continued ...

Alf Batchelder RAAF Museum Volunteer

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Making Their Mark: The MCG's Record Holders

MCC deputy librarian – research Trevor Ruddell tells us of a new attraction on Level 3 of the MCC Pavilion during the football season.

On 27 August 1983 Kevin Bartlett played his 403rd and last game of league football at the MCG. It was also his 200th game at the ground, and he is still the only football player to reach that magic mark. To acknowledge the 30th anniversary of Bartlett's unique milestone, the Melbourne Cricket Club Library has installed *Making Their Mark: The MCG's Record Holders*, an exhibition of items relating to Bartlett's record as well as other MCG records and record holders.

The biggest stadium in Australia has attracted football's biggest attendances and since the first match at the MCG in 1859 many individuals and teams have excelled here. The home of football has hosted many extraordinary record-breaking achievements, among them Gary Ablett Jnr's ground record 53 disposals as he captained the Gold Coast Suns to a 97-point loss in 2012.

His father Gary Ablett Snr kicked an MCG record 14 goals in a VFL/AFL match twice (John Longmire has also kicked 14 at the venue). However, the record number of goals for a senior match at the MCG is 18 by Laurie Nash for Victoria against South



The *Football Record* of 6 August 1983 celebrated Kevin Bartlett's 400th VFL/AFL game, his 199th on the MCG. MCC Library Collection.

Detail from the *Melbourne Cricket Ground Stile Book 1970 to 1973* showing the Australian football attendance record of 121,696 for the 1970 VFL grand final. MCC Library Collection.

Australia in 1934. Nash was not selected in the team initially but was a replacement for another player who withdrew.

Among objects exhibited are the MCG's stile books that record the ground's official attendance figures. These show the Australian record attendance at a football match of 121,696 for the 1970 grand final, as well as the home and away match record of 99,256 for the Queen's Birthday holiday game between Melbourne and Collingwood in 1958.

Similarly, John Longmire's 14 goals are unofficially recorded by a supporter in a *Football Record* which is also on display. Matthew Richardson (most VFL/AFL career goals at the MCG), Hawthorn (highest score and greatest winning margins at the ground) and Norm Smith (most games coached at the venue) also feature in the exhibition which runs through to the end of the football season.



1914/15 premiers team.
 Standing: P.G. Henty,
 W.M. Flintoft, H. Ironmonger,
 L.T. Mullett, A. O'Donoghue,
 R.S. Rodgerson, H.H. Bowden.
 Seated: F. Vaughan,
 W.W. Armstrong (captain),
 R.G. Johnstone, H.C.A. Sandford.
 MCC Museum (M310).

Twenty Pennants:

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

Part I – 1914/15 and 1919/20

The Melbourne Cricket Club recently completed an extraordinarily successful season in which both its men's First and Third elevens completed clean sweeps by winning their respective two-day, one-day and Twenty20 competitions. In addition, the MCC also secured the coveted J.A. Seitz Club Championship, awarded annually to the club with the best record across all four elevens.

By defeating Ringwood in the 2012/13 Premier final, the First XI annexed its 20th premiership since the commencement of the District cricket. As the club approaches its 175th anniversary, it is now a most appropriate time to celebrate the accomplishments of its First XI. Surprisingly little has been written on the topic, despite the fact the club's premiership sides have contained such well known names as Warwick Armstrong, Bert Ironmonger, Vernon Ransford, Bill Ponsford, Hans Ebeling, "Chuck" Fleetwood-Smith, Keith Rigg, Jack Iverson, Colin McDonald, Lindsay Kline, Paul Sheahan, Dean Jones and, in recent years, Brad Hodge.

In what is planned as an ongoing series of *Yorker* articles focusing on the club's premiership-winning seasons, the first instalment examines the background to the establishment of the competition and the club's inaugural District first XI triumphs of 1914/15 and 1919/20.

Early inter-club cricket

Inter-club cricket in Melbourne dates from November 1842, when a side from the Melbourne Cricket Club, then only four years old, travelled to Brighton to oppose the local team. The Brighton players proved victorious on that occasion and repeated their success in a return match at Melbourne's Batman's Hill venue three weeks later.

Although a series of matches between the two clubs developed from those contests, the vast majority of matches in the early years involved members from the same club playing against each other. One imagines that in many instances members wanting a game would simply turn up at an appointed time and be allocated to one side or the other.

During the 1850s, with the huge influx of population transforming Melbourne into a thriving metropolis, many new clubs came into existence and inter-club contests became common, but in the absence of any controlling body there was no organised competition.

The impetus to start a formal competition came from the well-known actor and entrepreneur, George Coppin, who presented a handsome trophy, the Coppin Challenge Cup, for matches between local teams.



Richmond became the first holders of the cup when it defeated Melbourne in the inaugural contest which concluded in May 1859 and successfully defended the trophy until it was unexpectedly defeated by the recently formed East Melbourne club in March 1861.

The competition proved short lived, however, as an argument broke out in the return engagement between the teams, which resulted in East Melbourne returning the cup to its donor. Many years later, Coppin's daughter took it back to the Richmond club, which holds it to the present day.

A regular series of Challenge Cup matches that began in the early 1870s ushered in an era of more structured competition which continued through the 1870s and 1880s. The modern arrangement of regular home-and-away fixtures and accompanying premierships ladders took shape towards the end of the latter decade.

Much research needs to be undertaken into the early years of Melbourne club cricket, especially in relation to matches played prior to 1890. Victorian Cricket Association annual reports of the past included a list of First XI premiers dating back to 1860/61.

But in the absence of a proper competition in many of those seasons, it is likely that some of the teams listed were simply those determined by the sporting press as having the best record over the season in question, rather than being actual premiers.

During the 46 seasons from 1860/61 to 1905/06, the list credits Melbourne with having won 14 premierships (plus one shared), a record slightly inferior to that of its chief rival, East Melbourne, with 18 (plus one shared). It is hoped that more may be written about this period in later issues of the *Yorker*.

The MCC and the commencement of District cricket

The motivation behind the implementation of district cricket was the view that the introduction of residential qualifications would even out the playing strengths of the clubs (and hopefully thereby create more spectator interest), and provide more incentive for clubs to encourage promising players in their local area.

Melbourne was, by some years, the last mainland capital to implement a district competition. Sydney led the way, introducing electorate cricket (based on electoral districts for the colony's Legislative Assembly) in 1893, followed by Adelaide and Brisbane in 1897 and Perth a year later.

After prolonged discussion and the formation of a committee in 1903, Melbourne finally followed suit in 1906/07. Hobart had adopted residential qualifications for its local competition a season earlier.

The 11 inaugural First XI District teams in Melbourne were Carlton, Collingwood (which was a brand new club), East Melbourne, Essendon, Fitzroy, Hawksburn (which changed its name to Prahran in 1907), North Melbourne, Richmond, St Kilda, South Melbourne and University.

The Melbourne Cricket Club was not one of them. Despite it being included in the draw and playing against the other teams, its matches did not count towards the premierships. The reasons behind the club's initial exclusion from the reorganised competition (it was eventually admitted in 1914/15) are complex.

At a simple level it resulted from The MCC's deep-seated opposition to a system which would prevent players from

belonging to the club of their choice and its dissatisfaction at the proposed inner-city district that had been allotted to it.

In reality, however, far deeper issues were involved, for it coincided with the eventful period when the club, supported by the leading players, was in the throes of a bitter struggle with the recently formed Board of Control and its principal backers, the state associations of Victoria and NSW, over the right to run Australian cricket.

An analysis of the issues involved in the dispute lies beyond the scope of this article. Much has been written about it from various angles and readers wishing to learn more may consult sources such as Alf Batchelder's *Pavilions in the Park*, which examines the conflict from the MCC's viewpoint, Bob Coleman's substantial history of the Victorian Cricket Association, *Seasons in the Sun*, and Gideon Haigh and David Frith's history of the board, *Inside Story*.

For some years the Melbourne Cricket Club's regular applications for admission to the competition were turned down, but by 1914 tempers had cooled a little. The dispute involving the Board of Control had reached its peak in 1912, when six of Australia's leading players, including MCC representatives Armstrong and Ransford, refused to tour England unless the board approved their choice of manager.

The board refused to back down, however, and it was soon apparent that further confrontation would be futile as it had achieved a comprehensive victory in its battle to gain control of Australian cricket.

In addition, the MCC's long-serving secretary, Ben Wardill, who had been at the forefront of the club's battles, had retired in 1911 and the office was now occupied by the more conciliatory and widely respected former Test bowler, Hugh Trumble.

Moves for the club's admission to the District competition were initiated by the VCA's honorary secretary John Healy during the 1913/14 season, and a meeting was arranged between MCC president Mr Justice Cussen and committeeman Dr Ramsay Mailer and the VCA's Ernie Bean and Harry Rush.

The talks could not have been easy, as Bean, a longtime powerbroker in Victorian cricket, was known to harbour a hatred of the Melbourne Cricket Club that bordered on paranoia.

Nevertheless, after difficult and protracted discussions, with Cussen no doubt having to employ all his renowned tact and negotiating skills, an agreement was eventually reached whereby the MCC was permitted to take part in the District competition from the start of the 1914/15 season.

The 1914/15 premiership

The inclusion of Melbourne meant that 13 teams took part in the 1914/15 competition (Northcote had been added to the original 11 in 1907/08). In a format that remained largely unchanged for many years, the season began on the first Saturday in October and comprised 11 rounds, each of two days' duration, followed by semi-finals (in which, incidentally, first played third and second, fourth) and a final.

With an odd number of teams taking part, most teams had a bye, Melbourne's falling in the fifth round. Three points were awarded for an outright and two for a first-innings win, with none allocated for a draw.



Bert Ironmonger (left) and Don Blackie. On opposing sides in the 1914/15 final, the two men became team mates at St Kilda in 1922 and went on to form the most successful bowling competition in the history of Melbourne District cricket. In their 13 seasons together at St Kilda they captured 997 wickets, during which time the club won six premierships and was runner-up twice. Both made their Test debuts in 1928/29 at the age of 46. MCC Museum (M7394).

In addition, three points were deducted for an outright loss and two for a loss on the first innings, which meant that lower-placed teams invariably finished with negative tallies (for example, the 1914/15 wooden-spooners, University, ended the season on minus 16).

With most employees being required to work Saturday mornings, hours of play were much shorter than nowadays, matches not getting under way until 2 o'clock, with stumps normally drawn at 6pm. It is unclear if a tea break was taken. Possibly it was not, with refreshments being brought out to players while they remained on the field. Six-ball overs were employed, and from available evidence it appears that around 80 overs were delivered in a full afternoon's play, suggesting a rate of at least 20 overs an hour.

If one of the intentions of introducing residential qualifications had been to even up the competition, it appears to have borne fruit. Five different clubs had won the pennant over the previous eight seasons, including newcomers Northcote and Collingwood, while the reigning premiers St Kilda had never previously finished in first place.

Although war with Germany had broken out nearly two months before the start of the season (on August 3), there seems to have been little or no suggestion at the time that the season should not be played out in full.

Melbourne's leading players at the time were Warwick Armstrong, Vernon Ransford and Bert Ironmonger. Armstrong, the captain, had played for the club since 1900/01 and was undoubtedly the finest all-rounder in Australia at the time. Aged 35, he had already played 40 Tests and would appear in a further 10 after the war, when he famously led Australia to victory in eight successive Ashes Tests.

The 29-year-old Ransford had first represented the club in 1902/03 and was a polished left-handed batsman who appeared in 20 Tests. A highlight was his match-winning 143 not out against England at Lord's in 1909. Never robust, he was unable to play after Christmas because of illness.

Ironmonger, an outstanding left-arm spinner, came from a very different background. Brought up on a small rural

property near Ipswich in south-east Queensland, he had been recruited by Melbourne during the 1913/14 season after representing his state against Victoria at the MCG.

Frustrated by his repeated omission from Queensland sides, he joined the club soon after being offered a position as a ground bowler and made an immediate impact, taking 20 wickets in 8.65 in four matches late in the season, including figures of 9/30 against St Kilda.

Despite his late start – he was now aged 32 – he would eventually become the highest wicket-taker in Melbourne District cricket with 862 victims. Making his Test debut in 1928/29 when he was 46, he went on to play 14 Tests, the last four in the 1932/33 Bodyline series at the age of 50.

In its 10 home-and-away matches this season, Melbourne carried virtually all before it, winning eight matches (including two outright) and losing only once. Armstrong and Ironmonger set the pattern in the season's opener at Northcote, where they captured 5/20 and 5/27 to rout the home side for 47.

In the next match, Fred Vaughan, a 37-year-old opening bat who had played since 1903/04, struck a career-highest 248 not out as his side amassed a total of two for 403 against Carlton. The momentum continued. In the next match, Armstrong recorded match figures of 10 for 31 to take his team to an innings victory over University.

Against South Melbourne, in one of only two home-and-away matches played at the MCG (the other home fixtures being at the Albert Ground), middle order batsmen Gordon Johnstone and Henry Bowden both made hundreds. Ironmonger took 5/86 in that match and continued his good work with match-winning hauls of 6/44 against North Melbourne and 6/31 against Richmond in later rounds.

The only reverse occurred at the hands of Prahran at the Albert Ground in early February. With play starting at 11 o'clock on the first day (Foundation Day), Prahran amassed the huge score of 6 for 444 declared, with Fred Flewelling and Gerald Healy both making centuries.

Melbourne managed 215 in reply, with future Test off-spinner Don Blackie taking five wickets. Armstrong and Ironmonger



Warwick Armstrong wears his MCC cap on the cover of *Pals: An Australian Paper for Australian Boys*, Vol. 1, No. 13, 12 February 1921. MCC Library collection.

With Armstrong, Ransford and Ironmonger all in top form, Melbourne won 10 of its 11 home-and-away matches, including an outright victory over Northcote, and lost only once, in a high-scoring encounter with North Melbourne late in the season, when Armstrong and Ransford were away.

The last-named pair scored five centuries between them, and took part in an unfinished eighth wicket partnership of 371 against St Kilda that is still a competition record – Armstrong scored 265 not out and Ransford, who came in late because he had been unwell, 124 not out.

Armstrong's other hundreds were 166 against South Melbourne, when he almost single-handedly guided his team past its opponent's total of 244, and an unbeaten 107 against Carlton.

Ransford made 188 not out against University in the last home-and-away round, and narrowly missed another hundred when he was dismissed on 99 against Richmond at the start of the season. Other century-makers were Sandford, who was still recovering from surgery to repair an arm shattered by shrapnel while serving on the Western Front, and Basil Onyons.

It appears no photograph was taken of the 1919/20 premiership side. The below shot, most probably taken on the first day of the match against Fitzroy on 1 December 1918, contains several players who appeared during the 1919/20 season.

Standing: G.D. Edwards, D.G. Rodgeron, W.A. Stokes.

Seated: F.L. Butler, V.S. Ransford, W.W. Armstrong (captain), F. Vaughan, H.M. Wilson.

In front: E.G.M. Hood, E.K. Tolhurst, G.V. Mylius.

H. Ironmonger is missing, although he played in every game during the 1917/18 season. D.G. Rodgeron, who did not play against Fitzroy but participated in most matches during the summer, appears in the photograph. MCC Museum (M1356).



Despite the excellent records of Armstrong and Ransford, Melbourne's outstanding performer was Ironmonger who captured 67 wickets in the home-and-away rounds and 79 for the season as a whole. He took five or more wickets in an innings on no fewer than 12 occasions, twice taking 11 wickets in a match (11/85 against Richmond and 11/71 against Collingwood), the latter including his best innings figures of 8/35.

As a result, Melbourne, as it had done in 1914/15, finished on top of the ladder with 19 points, well clear of Fitzroy (11) and with North Melbourne and Northcote (both 6) occupying third and fourth places.

Melbourne's semi final opponent was North Melbourne, the match being scheduled at the MCG on Easter Saturday and Monday, April 3 and 5. Because of wet conditions, no play was possible on the Saturday, and when play got under way on Monday, North Melbourne's skipper, Bill Johnson (father of Ian), had no hesitation in sending Melbourne in to bat after winning the toss.



1919/20 FINAL

FITZROY v. MELBOURNE

Played at Brunswick Street Ground on April 10 (Friday), 11 & 12 (Sat & Sun) 1919
Melbourne won by 157 runs.

Melbourne		Fitzroy	
W. R. Armstrong (144)	74	J. S. Kiernan (14)	1
S. R. Farnsworth (41)	24	H. C. Snowy (1)	1
H. J. S. Snowy (23)	23	H. C. Snowy (1)	1
T. H. Ironmonger (23)	23	H. C. Snowy (1)	1
C. A. McDonald (23)	23	H. C. Snowy (1)	1
L. W. Levin (23)	23	H. C. Snowy (1)	1
S. S. Rodgers (23)	23	H. C. Snowy (1)	1
Total 187		Total 66	

MELBOURNE 1st XI AVERAGES 1919-20

Batting & Fielding	W	R	W	R	W	R
W. R. Armstrong (144)	10	10	3	100	1000	10
S. R. Farnsworth (41)	10	10	3	100	1000	10
H. J. S. Snowy (23)	10	10	3	100	1000	10
T. H. Ironmonger (23)	10	10	3	100	1000	10
C. A. McDonald (23)	10	10	3	100	1000	10
L. W. Levin (23)	10	10	3	100	1000	10
S. S. Rodgers (23)	10	10	3	100	1000	10

On a difficult pitch, the home side did well to make 150, the only batsman to make a significant stand being Armstrong, who survived two early chances to make 52 (88 minutes, 4 fours), easily the highest score of the match. Ransford (23) was the only other batsman to reach 20.

With the wicket no easier, North Melbourne never looked like making a game of it. With Ironmonger and Armstrong both taking early wickets, five wickets were down for 28 before Harry Bracher and Ernie Cameron, both left-handers, put on 32 for the sixth wicket. Despite their efforts, the total reached only 66, Ironmonger taking the bowling honours with five for 30, his 11th five-wicket haul of the season.

Melbourne's opponent in the final, Fitzroy, was a strong combination which included in its team fast bowler Ted McDonald, whose famous partnership with Jack Gregory would commence next season, the fine all-rounder Arthur Liddicut and wily leg-spinner Bill Cannon who, despite being 48 years of age, was still one of the top bowlers in the competition.

The match, which was played at Fitzroy's Brunswick Street ground, was scheduled to start on Saturday 10 April, but as was the case with the semi final, it was badly affected by the weather. As no play was possible on the 10th because of steady rain, it was decided, in the hope of obtaining a result by next weekend, to play on the following Friday.

Although rain kept falling during the week, the wicket was well protected and play was able to get underway on schedule. Before a healthy working-day attendance of 2000, Armstrong won the toss and decided to bat, and in three hours of play before bad light caused stumps to be drawn early, Melbourne reached 187 for the loss of six wickets.

Armstrong was again top-scorer, making a chanceless and uncharacteristically sedate 74 in 143 minutes with 6 fours. The next best contribution came from Onyons (24), with whom Armstrong put on 40 for the first wicket.

As more rain prevented any play next day, the match had to be extended by another week, play resuming on Saturday 24

April. With 3000 present, Melbourne's not out batsmen, Le Roy Levin and Stan Rodgerson (who made 49 in 73 minutes with 5 fours), made an excellent stand, taking their seventh wicket partnership to 68, and with Ironmonger taking nine off an over from McDonald, the total reached a most satisfactory 267.

Fitzroy commenced its innings at 25 minutes to four and had a poor start, losing its experienced opening pair of Chris Kiernan and 'Snowy' Atkinson almost at once. The new batsmen, Les Cody and George Spicer, held firm, however, and by the time stumps were drawn following a light appeal at 5.30, they had put on 71 for the third wicket.

The match finally concluded on Monday the 26th, a public holiday. As the Fitzroy Football Club was due to commence a match on the ground mid-afternoon, play started early, at 10.30 in the morning. Fitzroy's hopes were dashed when Cody and Spicer were soon out, and although Liddicut kept his wicket intact to the finish, no-one else could stay for long, eight wickets falling for just 30 on the last morning.

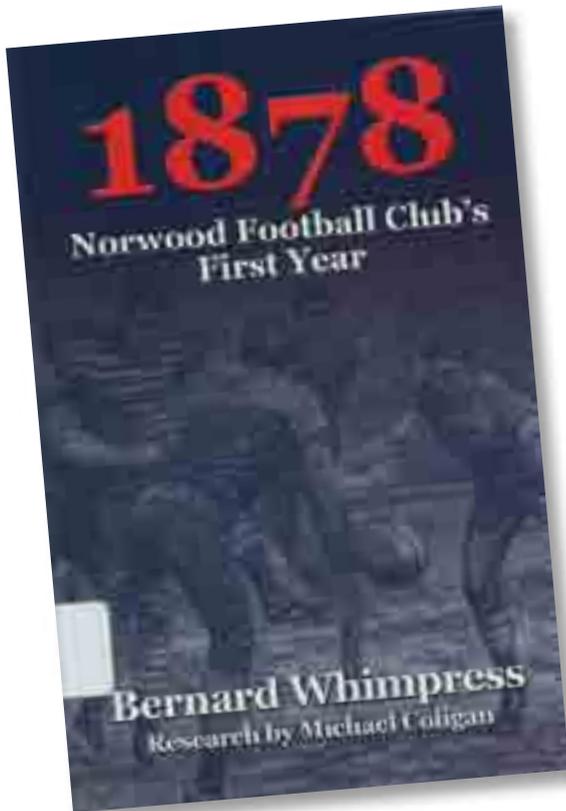
As result, Melbourne ended up winners by 157 runs on the first innings to claim its second District premiership. Fittingly, Ironmonger was the hero, taking five wickets at a cost of just 10 runs on the last morning, to give him overall figures of seven for 48. Melbourne's fielding and the work of its keeper, Campbell Brady, drew praise.

Melbourne did not participate in another final until 1929/30, when it defeated St Kilda to win its third District premiership, having in the intervening period endured the frustration of suffering six semi final losses in nine seasons.

To be continued...

Ken Williams

Book Reviews



Bernard Whimpress, research by Michael Coligan

1878: Norwood Football Club's First Year

Norwood Football Club History Group, Norwood (SA), 2013
ISBN: 9780646594309

As this fascinating new publication attests, there is very little that is unknown and undocumented about the birth of the renowned Norwood Football Club in Adelaide.

We are, however, left to ponder whether the club's distinguished and visionary forefathers were, in one respect, prescient or fearful.

Suffice it to say the Latin phrase they adopted as the club motto, *fortis in procella* (strength in adversity) has proved apposite.

From its inception the club has needed to show unwavering faith in its maxim to meet the most daunting challenges, the most compelling of the past 22 years being the fight to maintain a strong identity in the wake of the Australian Football League's spread into South Australia.

This has not been achieved without considerable heartache but success in 2012 – the club's 28th premiership and 15th since the South Australian National Football League was formed

in 1907 – suggests that bleak and barren winters may be something of the past.

Given the preoccupation with the trifling and transient in contemporary sport, it is pleasing to note the Norwood Football club has a most active history group. Its formation and vibrancy is testimony to the vision of Wally Miller, the club's legendary and revered administrator from 1968 to 1991.

An indefatigable member of this group is Michael Coligan, who in youthful and sprightly days was the club's leading goalkicker in 1970 and 1972.

While living in Melbourne in 2011 and 2012, Coligan used the renowned resources of the Melbourne Cricket Club library to investigate Norwood's first year and so add to the rich material this reviewer published in *Red and Blue Blooded* (1978) and *Men of Norwood – the Red and Blue Blooded* (1992).

Armed with detailed and engaging research, he worked in association with noted South Australian sports historian and author Bernard Whimpress to produce *1878: Norwood Football Club's First Year*.

Norwood's first year was fraught. There were clashes of conscience and personality, misunderstandings and controversies aplenty involving not only those destined to wear the colours of the new club but office-bearers of considerable reputation who occupied significant positions in wider society.

And, as one would suspect, the links with the local cricket community were inextricable and the incomparable George Giffen had the distinction of kicking Norwood's first goal.

And it will be of particular interest to the readers of *The Yorker* that it was a former Melbourne Football Club player, Lou Suhard, who recommended the "costume of the Norwood Football Club shall be blue guernsey and knickerbockers, red cap and stockings."

In 2013 the Redlegs are attempting to win consecutive premierships for the first time since 1922-23. And with pride the men of Norwood will wear a guernsey bearing the numeral 1878 – another nod to the rich history of a football club known for its generosity of spirit, philanthropy, stability and entrepreneurial flair and success.

Mike Coward



Mark Pennings

Origins of Australian football: Victoria's Early History. Volume 1: Amateur Heroes and the Rise of Clubs 1858 to 1876

Connor Court, Ballan, 2012

ISBN: 9781921421471

This is the book which anybody researching early Victorian football has wanted for years to have at his or her elbow. Statistics for 1858 to 1876 on who played where, when and for which club, take up two thirds of this nearly 500-page book.

The work involved in putting these figures together was enormous. Mark Pennings consulted as many sources as possible to provide the most accurate account of the game at the time. It was a daunting task. Reports of goals and behinds varied as did the naming of goalkickers.

Pennings consulted *The Australasian* and *The Sportsman* first and then goes along with the most consistent accolades of the thriving football press which existed in Melbourne.

More than the statistics, a review of football in any particular year is wonderful. Pennings devotes 115 pages to describing the highlights of football for each of these years, the characters and classic encounters.

There are numerous anecdotes which give a picture of the times, what it was like to attend a football match and how the players, umpires and spectators behaved. The occasional quotation both enlivens the narrative and informs the reader.

The grounds were not always the best. In 1865 at the matches on the Richmond paddock (Yarra Park) 'the gum trees some of which are most disgustingly close to the goals are six feet in diameter. Great amusement was caused... by one of these huge monsters of the forest holding the ball in its arms, much to the annoyance of players from both sides, who surrounded the base, anxiously watching for a free kick; a good many pebbles were sent up to the rescue, one of which directed with steady aim, brought the globe to grass,' wrote a critical newspaper reporter from Geelong. He was perhaps more used to amenable neighbours close to the game. In the same year University played Geelong at Geelong and both teams retired to the Argyll Hotel for lunch in the middle of the contest!

Women were early fans. 'A good many ladies enjoyed the scene and any deed of daring, a clever dodge, or a good kick was duly appreciated by a round of applause from the on-lookers.'

By the end of this period crowds reached five to six thousand and Pennings claims a 1875 match between dominant rivals Carlton and Melbourne attracted the biggest sporting crowd in the world.

Along the way, important changes and innovations are noted and explained. There was the running with the ball rule in 1866, goals and behinds in 1869, the recognition of an official premier in 1870 and the enforcement of a change of ends at half time in 1872.

There was a raft of rule changes in 1874, including a rule which meant players could only play for one club. During this time changes in clothing and boots are delineated from the coloured caps and ribbands of the sixties to the banning of spiked boots and the wearing of knickerbockers in the seventies.

It is most pleasing to find Pennings damning as non-existent the Champion of the Colony awards often repeated from a 1958 list made by the historian Cec Mullen, a list which Pennings kindly describes as Mullen's personal opinion about the best players over the early years.

Pennings admits to his own subjective accounts but, based as they are in much more general terms and on his exhaustive research, they are arguably as near to factual as possible at this stage.

My only niggle lies in using remembrances made some 40 or more years later. For example, Theophilus Marshall's entertaining reminiscences of 1896 lend lively detail to the scratch matches of 1858 in which he may possibly have participated.

But Marshall's dubious claim to have been captain of the Royal Park team which brought the runaway sprint champion Harrison back to the field in July 1865, and led to the historic and unique Australian rule that the ball must be bounced when run with, is not supported by that month's colonial sporting paper *Bell's Life in Victoria* which reports M. Smith as the active captain, sadly a player about whom little is known.

A complication arising from the use of reminiscences lies in the word rugby. Rugby before 1871 refers to Rugby School Rules, first set out by the pupils in 1845 and copied in a variety of ways by various teams throughout England.

In 1871 a rugby code was agreed upon and much later divided into rugby union and rugby league. The distinction between the earlier *rugby-style* football and coded Rugby was soon casually fused over the years both by commentators and later by historians. When the Melbourne rules were framed in 1859 there was no definite rugby code (or soccer for that matter).

This is not a book to read right through but one to skim with delight and it is a research tool of the highest order. Pennings plans to continue this format into four volumes, finishing in 1896. These will be eagerly awaited.

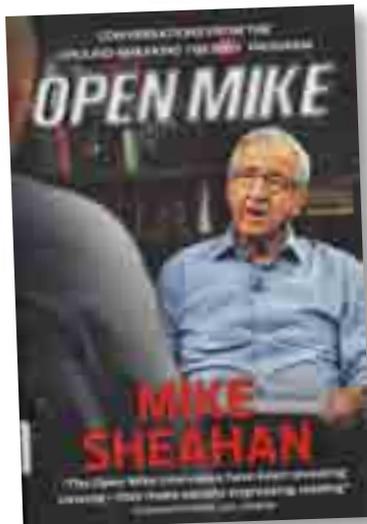
BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

In 1861 Victoria's population had risen to a huge 540,000 and 42 per cent were on the gold diggings. Of these diggers, about 300,000 had come from England and from a background which had not already organised rugby (1871) and soccer (1863).

The migrants had played in scratch matches with very basic rules or with the elite private schools with more complex rules specific to each school. What we need now is more information about our goldfields and the football which was played there.

Pennings provides information from Geelong, Ballarat, Sandhurst (Bendigo), Castlemaine-Chewton and Maryborough. Information about any other goldfields football games or teams in the early days would be gratefully received by the MCC Library football researchers.

Gillian Hibbins



Mike Sheahan
Open Mike: Conversations from the Ground-Breaking Fox Footy Program
Slattery Media Group, Richmond (Victoria), 2013.
ISBN: 9780987420541

Last year was a significant year for AFL football broadcasting. There was a billion dollar five-year television rights deal, the football diehards' gospel channel *Fox Footy* reappeared on our screens and we saw ruthless tit-for-tat talent poaching between football broadcasting stations.

Yet behind the glitzy deals and headlines, a stalwart of football journalism, Mike Sheahan, decided to hang up his pen and pull back from full-time duties at the *Herald Sun*.

Mike's book *Open Mike* is a transcript of his own one-on-one, Andrew Denton-like interview show on *Fox Footy*. In what was his most publicly praised work in 2012 while in semi-retirement and certainly his least controversial (Mike's Top 50 anyone?), Sheahan interviews past and present players and coaches and even the great Tony Charlton.

After seeing *Open Mike* on TV and in print, the interviews can be enjoyed on both platforms. In the book, neat career summaries are provided before each interview. Sheahan's strengths as an interviewer, like his short and direct questioning, are very evident in his book.

Occasionally we are hit with some eye-opening reading such as Robert Wall's admission that he deserved to get the sack from Carlton and emotion-stirring moments like Dermot Brereton's personal struggle with two family members committing suicide.

While a number of interviews don't necessarily reveal anything new, startling or shocking, Brereton's interview was particularly illuminating. 'The Kid' or 'Judge Dermie' can sometimes be portrayed as just the big-headed blonde media personality, but Dermie's interview showed a complex, reflective and candid side to him that the general public are not exposed to.

Mostly, this book is an opportunity for footy lovers to reminisce over their champions and villains and, in a few cases, understand them from beyond the boundary.

Michael Collins.

Graeme Patterson
The Man in White: Country Connections: 80 years of umpiring with the VFL Umpires' Association.

Australian Football League Umpires' Association, Carlton (Victoria), 2012.

In 2009 the Australian Football League Umpires' Association celebrated its century with the substantial publication of *The Man in White*, its official history of 100 years of umpiring with the VFL and the AFL.

This new book is a companion to the official history with a focus on umpiring in the country regions of Victoria, southern New South Wales, eastern South Australia and parts of Tasmania. The VFL Umpires' Association was created in 1909 and from that time provided umpires to country competitions.

This publication is a true labour of love with many former umpires providing anecdotes and nostalgic recollections. Author Graeme Patterson has utilised the fine research of a steering committee, volunteers and the accounts of those umpires involved.

A large proportion of the 265 leagues listed in the appendix no longer exist. Some competitions had umpires provided for home and away games, finals and grand finals, while others could not rely on such full servicing.

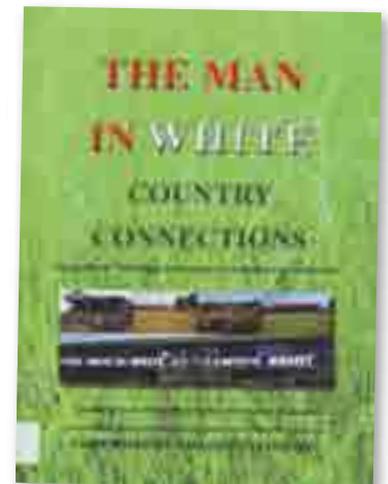
The logistics of getting umpires to games was complicated. They could arrive by train, bus, aeroplane or taxi. Groups of umpires would leave early on Saturday morning to travel to the games and return late at night, the next day, or even Monday. The stories stress the rigour of getting to venues and the time involved, but most of all the close-knit camaraderie of the umpiring fraternity and the enjoyment gained from the experience.

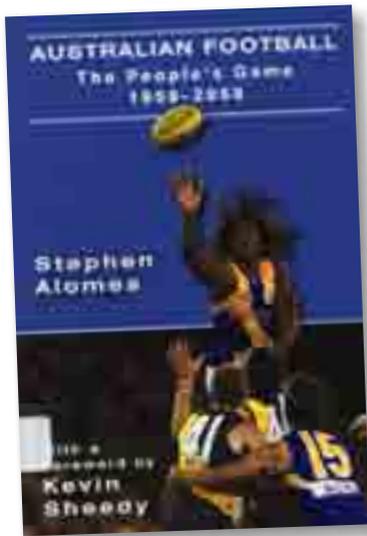
Readers discover VFLUA members sang *The Man in White* with the lines: 'Send a cheer over here, when the men in white appear.' The umpires regularly trained at different city venues during the week.

The book includes umpire awards, detailed biographies and an extensive list of VFLUA country field umpires from 1909 to 1991, which includes many who went on to senior level. This work is so thorough that it provides interesting snippets on individual umpires including those who were talented in other sporting fields and those who were related.

This history of the Victorian Football Umpires' Association includes fond memories of umpiring in the country and the involvement of the people of the bush, including minders, officials, players and members of the football public. The book contains interesting and appropriate illustrations with one catch-phrase ringing throughout the book: 'The men in white are always right.'

David Allen and Eric Panther





Stephen Alomes

Australian Football: The People's Game 1958-2058

Walla Walla Press, Sydney, 2012

ISBN: 9781876718169

The AFL is the alpha-male of Australian sport and its expanding commercial grip in footy heartlands like Victoria and non-traditional football states like Queensland begs one seemingly simple question: What will the AFL look like in the future?

Will 'The Game of the People for the People', or *populo ludus populi*, remain an affordable weekend family venture or will the game be the plaything of corporate elites? Or even worse for football loyalists, could the game be dead?

Sports journalist Peter McFarlane bleakly predicted in the late 1990s that 'the game could be dead in 50 years.' If we look at today's record crowd attendances and club membership tallies, the game has never been more popular, culturally diverse and commercially viable. *Australian Football: The People's Game 1958 - 2058* proposes that by Australian football's bicentennial year, 'the world's most exciting form of football' will remain Australia's dominant and most thriving game.

Stephen Alomes' book is unique and will provoke conversation and debate among journalists, local clubmen, scholars and madly passionate footy fans alike. As Australian football books can be sometimes underwhelming and wrought with sporting clichés, Alomes' combination of conversationalist writing style and detailed research makes this a refreshingly thought-provoking examination of football's history and future outlook.

Alomes does not just carefully speculate on the AFL's state of play in 2058. He also dissects the game's historical commercial rise. He reminds us that Aussie Rules, both at the grassroots and at the professional level, reflects Australia's rapidly changing cultural identity.

Australia's rich and rising multiculturalism has shaped the identities of football clubs, from Carlton's "Little Italy" support base in Lygon Street to the Western Bulldogs' affiliation with the western suburbs' growing Asian community.

Football has become more than just a sport to keep cricketers fit in the winter and an outlet for raw masculine expression. Aussie Rules has become an articulation of positive national identity at a time when defining an Australian identity is not so clear. Hence, Alomes' book appropriately develops into a football and cultural study.

The book is laced with footy nostalgia and insightful anecdotes from journalists, media identities and athletes, even as far back as the early 1900s English Test cricket captain C.C. Fry, which helps to strengthen Alomes' contention that Australia's indigenous game is the supreme code.

Alomes understands that the AFL and local football go hand in hand and there is always a trickledown effect from professional to local amateur leagues. Will the game simultaneously remain a popular spectator and participatory sport by 2058 or will the AFL alienate the common supporter when 'The Game of the People for the People' becomes just a forgotten ideal?

Today, we are spoilt with access to the global sports market, or 'sportainment'. Due to the rapid advances in technology, we can track scores and watch live action from any sport around the world with as much ease as turning the kettle on.

While the colonial cultural cringe fuels the cynics, I tend to share Alomes' contention that the AFL will continue to flourish and grow with the globalised market and further strengthen its international presence. If the book were to be revisited in 2058, its subtitle *The People's Game* would still be apt to describe Australian football but perhaps with a more international context.

Michael Collins.

MELBOURNE SPORTS BOOKS

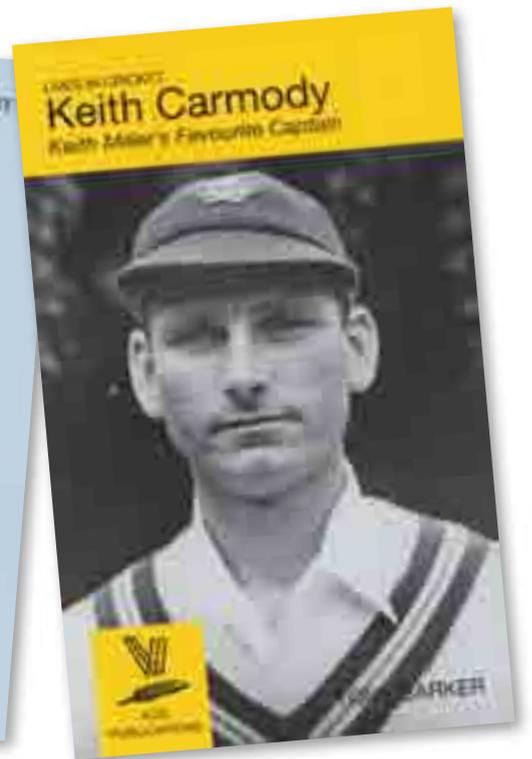
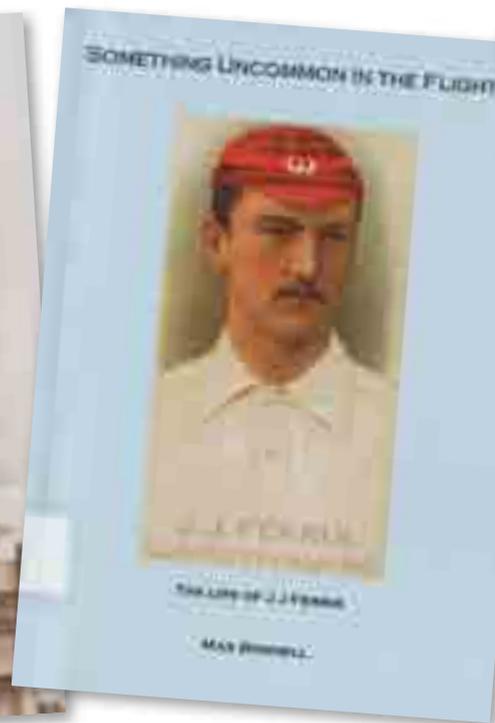
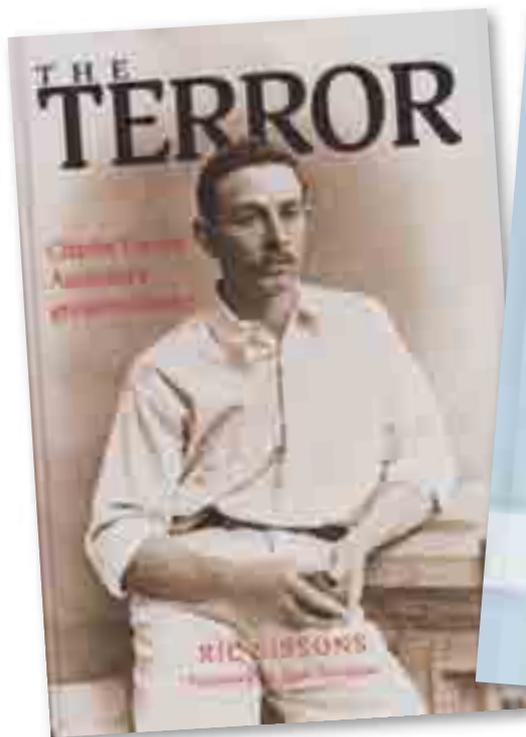
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Ric Sissons

The Terror: Charlie Turner, Australia's greatest bowler

Cricket Books.com.au, Mount Eliza (Victoria), 2012

ISBN: 9780646588308

Max Bonnell

Something Uncommon In The Flight: The life of JJ Ferris

Roger Page Cricket Books, Yallambie, 2013

ISBN: 9780646900162

Tony Barker

Keith Carmody: Keith Miller's Favourite Captain

ACS Publications, Cardiff (UK), 2012

ISBN: 9781908165268

Aficionados of Australian cricket history have been blessed in recent months with the publication of several fine biographies of past players.

The Summer 2012/13 edition of *The Yorker* included a review by Jim Blair of James Brear's interesting biography of T.J. Matthews, *Cricket's Unsung Legend: the Jimmy Matthews Story*, while an upcoming issue will contain Ray Webster's appraisal of Max Bonnell and Andrew Sproul's award-winning *Tibby Cotter: Fast Bowler, Larrikin, Anzac*.

Since the publication of the Cotter biography we have seen the appearance of first-rate studies of the lives of Charlie Turner, Jack Ferris and Keith Carmody, the last-named as a recent addition to the Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians' excellent *Lives in Cricket* series.

The long overdue biography of Charlie Turner is particularly welcome as he, along with Glenn McGrath, was inducted into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame in February this year. A magnificent medium-paced bowler, Turner captured 101 wickets at just 16.53 runs apiece in 17 Test appearances between 1886/87 and 1894/95.

The first Australian to claim 100 Test victims, his wicket-taking feats were astonishing. He is still the only player to take 100 wickets in an Australian first-class season (106 in 1887/88) and on his three tours of England, in 1888, 1890 and 1893, he captured respectively 283, 179 and 148 wickets in first-class matches.

His staggering tally in 1888 will remain for all time as a record for a touring player in England – he and Ferris (199) actually took 482 of the 605 first-class wickets that fell to Australian bowlers on that tour. No suggestion of player rotation or 'informed player management' in those days!

Some may quibble at the choice of subtitle, *Australia's greatest bowler*, but as Sissons emphasises in his introduction Turner possesses easily the lowest bowling average among Australians to have taken 100 or more Test wickets, while his strike rate of 51 balls per wicket ranks him equal first with McGrath.

Furthermore, he has the best economy rate and highest number of wickets per Test of all players listed. Sissons goes on to point out that Turner's Test wickets were all taken against strong England batting sides.

With an exceptionally easy action which contemporary writers found difficult to describe, Turner's stock delivery turned sharply from the off, but he could also move the ball the other way and possessed a fast yorker which surprised many batsmen.

Despite his sobriquet, 'The Terror', he was not a fast bowler, however. On the 1888 tour his speed was measured electrically at just 55 miles (88.5 km) per hour, which would be regarded as not much more than slow medium by modern standards.

Best known for his work *The Players: A Social History of the Professional Cricketer*, which won the English Cricket Society's Silver Jubilee Literary Award, Sissons is an accomplished writer and researcher who has uncovered much previously unknown material about Turner's life and career.



It could not have been easy task, for Turner was a man who avoided controversy, never sought the limelight and apart from his prodigious feats on the cricket field left little of a tangible nature for researchers to examine.

Thanks to Sissons' exhaustive work, however, we learn about many interesting aspects of his life, including his family background and formative years in Bathurst, his move to Sydney, his on-field triumphs and personal tragedies (how many players have been widowed by the time they made their Test debuts?), his business career and reasons behind the sudden end to his Test career.

This is a handsomely produced and splendidly illustrated hardback volume. It contains more than 200 pages of text, which is complemented by a brief but comprehensive statistical section, a bibliography and an index.

Having welcomed the biography of Turner, it is most timely that we should see the publication soon afterwards of a beautifully written and exceptionally well-researched biography of his most famous bowling partner, Jack Ferris.

Max Bonnell has been responsible for some excellent biographical studies of past cricketers, including his engrossing account of four 19th century Australian Test players (Tom Garrett, Sammy Jones, Rowley Pope and Reg Allen) in *Currency Lads*, and his recording of the tragic life of aboriginal fast bowler Jack Marsh, *How Many More Are Coming?*, which won the Australian Cricket Society's Jack Pollard Award in 2003.

This latest work, in a modestly produced softback edition limited to 125 copies, fully maintains the author's high level of scholarship. A slow orthodox left-arm spinner, Ferris played eight Tests for Australia between 1886/87 and 1890, in which he captured 48 wickets at just 14.25 runs apiece.

He also took 13 wickets for an England touring side in South Africa in a match which was retrospectively granted Test status. His bowling feats in partnership with Turner were extraordinary. As pointed out previously, he took 199 first-class wickets (at 14.74) on the 1888 tour of England, he and Turner capturing nearly 80 per cent of the wickets taken by Australia's bowlers.

On his second tour, in 1890, he was almost as successful, taking 186 wickets at 14.28, the pair on this occasion taking almost 70 per cent of wickets falling to bowlers in first-class matches.

Ferris' cricket career was quite remarkable. He made his Test debut at 19 in his first season of first-class cricket, having been playing in Sydney's Junior Cricket Association only two years earlier.

Yet, having established himself as one of the best bowlers in the world, at the age of 23 he turned his back on Australia to play county cricket with Gloucestershire, whereafter his career slipped into a bafflingly slow and steady decline.

Bonnell recounts the fluctuating fortunes of his career in absorbing detail without falling into the trap of resorting to repetitive match-by-match summaries, while his deep understanding of cricket history comes across throughout. As with Turner, Ferris could not have been an easy subject to research.

He died young, never having married, and virtually nothing is known of his life away from cricket. Yet by intelligently piecing together various fragments of information, the author has succeeded in producing a remarkably full and interesting account of a most unusual life.

One of the most intriguing sections in the book relates to Ferris' death in South Africa at the age of 34 in November 1900. Past short accounts of his life have always stated the same "facts" – that he went to South Africa to fight in the Boer War, and that while serving there he died of enteric (or typhoid) fever.

In reality, when he arrived there in August 1899 the war had not started and it was by no means certain that it would. It is possible that, having made contacts when he toured there with an England team in 1891/92, his reason for travelling to South Africa was simply to play cricket or perhaps look for business opportunities.

Whatever the reason, he did not enlist until sometime after his arrival and by the time of his death was no longer in uniform, having left his regiment (either through a dishonourable discharge or desertion) a month earlier.

Intriguingly, Bonnell makes it clear that the cause of his death could not possibly have been typhoid fever. In relation to this he makes some most interesting observations which are best left for the reader to discover.

The book is well illustrated, with the text, including photos, running to around 115 pages. It contains a comprehensive statistical section as well as end notes, but no index.

The third biography featured in this review is that of Keith Carmody, who played for New South Wales, Australian Services and Western Australia in a first-class career that extended from 1939/40 to 1955/56.

Although he never played Test cricket and was a specialist batsman whose career batting average ended up on the wrong side of 30, he is a worthy subject for a detailed biographical study. Academic historian Tony Barker has produced a compelling portrait of a very able and intelligent man who had a major influence on post-Second World War Australian cricket.

Carmody is best remembered today for his role in the introduction of a crescent of close catchers behind the wicket to support his pace attack which became known as the "Carmody field" and later the "umbrella field".

Writing many years later, renowned author and critic Ray Robinson nominated its introduction as the sixth great innovation in the game's development, after round-arm, over-arm and googly bowling, leg-side hitting and wicketkeeping over the stumps.

As with his history of the Western Australian Cricket Association, *The WACA*, and his earlier book in the ACS *Lives in Cricket* series on Ric Charlesworth, Barker has deeply researched his subject, having received co-operation from family members and conducted interviews with many who knew Carmody and in some cases played with him.

Brought up in humble circumstances in suburban Sydney, Carmody broke into the NSW team at the beginning of the Second World War before enlisting in the RAAF in October 1941.

An accomplished pilot who flew dangerous missions over the English Channel and North Sea, he also captained RAAF sides in England with considerable flair (the introduction of the umbrella field is said to date from this period), before he was shot down off the Dutch coast in June 1944.

Liberated from a German PoW camp 11 months later, Carmody was almost immediately playing for Australian Services in the 1945 Victory Tests. Following a successful return to the NSW side in 1946/47, the highlight of his cricket career occurred in 1947/48

when he led Western Australia to the Sheffield Shield in its first season, his confident batting and imaginative captaincy earning particularly high praise.

At the same time he was a pioneering coach, whose innovative approach, especially his emphasis on very young cricketers, was considered controversial by some but was later felt to have laid the foundation for the state's future success.

Unfortunately, the rest of the Carmody story is a rather sad one. Barker does not gloss over his drinking problem or the fact that he could be difficult to deal with. These issues, combined with gradually declining form, eventually led to his total alienation from WA's cricket establishment.

Returning to NSW in the mid-1960s following the breakdown of his marriage, Carmody was appointed as NSW's professional coach for the 1969/70 season, the first such appointment since 1940, but was replaced after only one season by Brian Taber. Thereafter he faded from public view and died from cancer at the age of 58 in 1977.

Despite his failings, Carmody was highly regarded by many of his contemporaries. Keith Miller, who played under his leadership for the RAAF, held him in especially high esteem when he named him as captain of the hypothetical eleven he would like to play for, hence the book's subtitle. Miller once told Ray Robinson: "Carmody had a big impact on me. ...When I became captain of New South Wales I thought of things Carmody's way."

There are many fascinating details in this book. The account of his time in the RAAF is particularly interesting, especially his experiences as a prisoner of war (Barker had access to his PoW log), as are the different assessments of him as a captain and coach during his time in WA.

Particularly intriguing is the account of Carmody's initially tenuous but later close relationship with John Rutherford, who went on to become the first WA representative to play for Australia.

The 28th publication to appear in the ACS's *Lives in Cricket* series, it runs to 144 pages and like its companion volumes contains a comprehensive bibliography and statistical section as well as an index.

The series seeks to feature lesser-known but nonetheless significant cricketers about whom biographies might otherwise not be written and has so far succeeded in its objective, Carmody being an excellent example of a suitable subject.

Ken Williams

ROGER PAGE

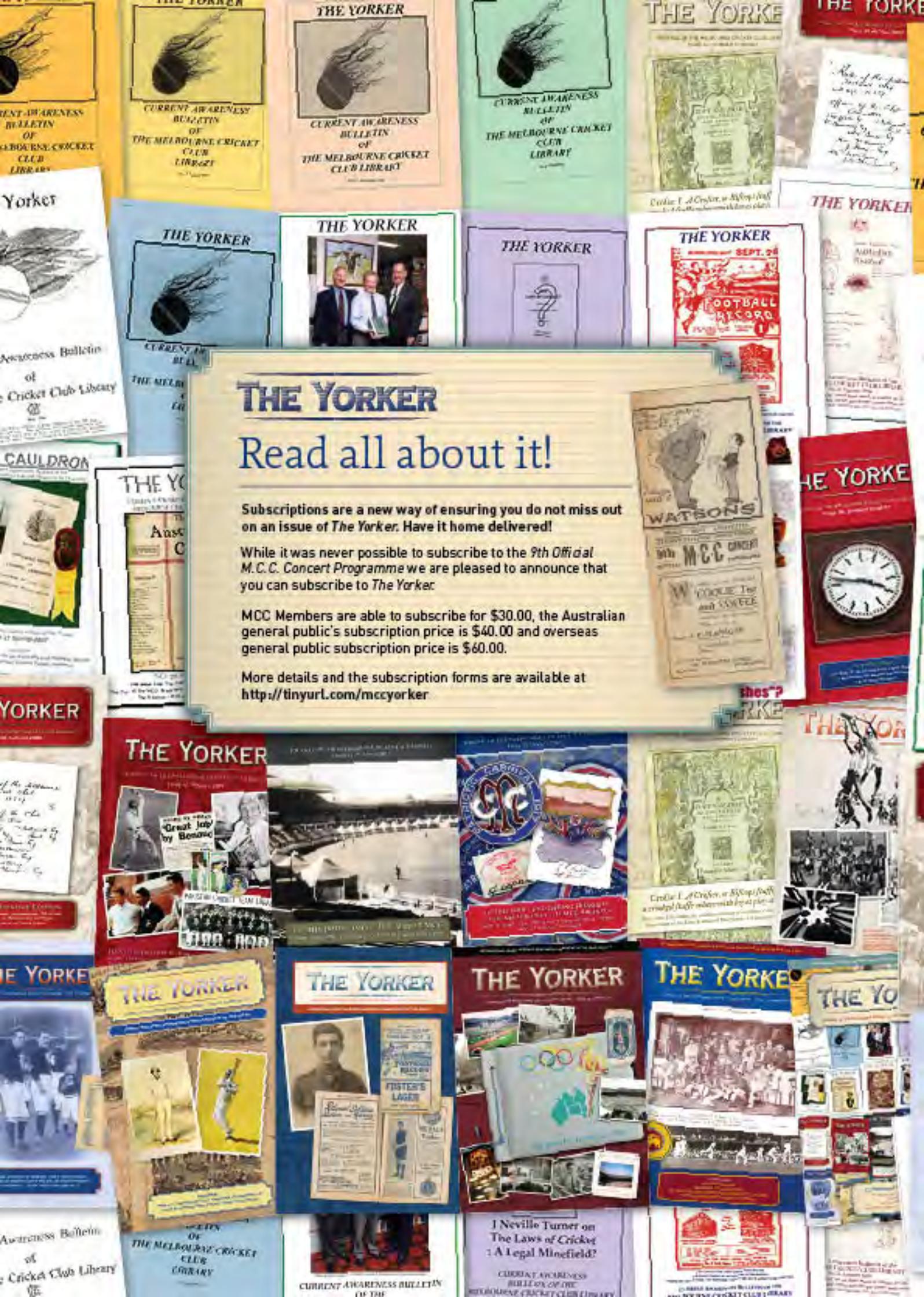
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