

# THE YORKER



## In This Issue

The John Landy Collection  
Cricket on "The Swamp": The First MCG  
Olympic Cricket  
Ross Gregory Remembered  
Ballpark Figures: A MCG Crowd Myth  
Billiards at the MCG



MELBOURNE  
CRICKET CLUB

# THE YORKER



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## COVER IMAGERY

John Landy was the cover story in America's most widely circulated sports magazine *Sports Illustrated* for May 21, 1956. This copy was one of the 1700 individual items that John Landy donated to the MCG recently – see pages 15-19. [John Landy collection, MCC Library].

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## In This Issue

The cover story of the Spring 2016 *The Yorker* focuses on one of Australia's champion athletes, and true gentlemen, John Landy AC, CVO, MBE. John recently donated his archival memorabilia collection to the MCC Library. This donation, a small portion of which feature on pages 15 to 19, was greatly appreciated, having both a personal significance to John and a broader significance to world sport.

Issue 60 also profiles one of Australian cricket's great tragedies (page 12); Ross Gregory's cricket career and service as a Wellington bomber navigator during World War II, which culminated in his death in action, are discussed by his award winning biographer David Frith.

The display cases outside the Frank Grey Smith Bar and in the MCC Library on Level 3 of the Pavilion focus on demonstration sports and sports that are no longer a part of the Olympic program. To recognise these displays articles on a former Olympic sport – cricket (page 9) and a 1956 demonstration sport – baseball (page 20) also feature. Rounding out the issue are our *Yorker* articles on the MCC and its ground as well as book reviews.

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## THE YORKER

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## Cricket on “The Swamp”:

### The First Melbourne Cricket Ground

By James Brear

On September 22, 1846, the Melbourne Cricket Club re-formed for the 1846/47 season. Among the many tasks of the new committee, a priority was “to select ground for the club’s practice.”<sup>1</sup> The first practice session on September 26<sup>2</sup> was at Batman’s Hill where the club had played its matches in the preceding season, but then a move was made to the south bank of the Yarra, somewhere in the vicinity of where Crown Casino is today.

The first practice south of the Yarra took place on October 3, 1846, following which the *Port Phillip Herald* reported, “The Melbourne Cricket Club had an excellent game of practice on the other side of the Yarra, on Saturday afternoon; the spot pitched upon is admirably suited for the purpose, and we believe it is the intention of the club to apply to the government for permission to retain it.”<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, the report could not have been more wrong regarding the suitability of the site, and in just eight years the club was on the move. The influence of the weather would prove to be an all too common problem on the south side, and would lead, in part, to a move to the Richmond Police Paddocks. Before that was to happen, however, the ground would host some important matches and historic events.

The club scheduled its first match on its own ground on the south side of the Yarra on October 31, 1846. The match featured the married men of the club against the single men, and such was the occasion that hotelier James Murray, of the Prince of Wales Hotel, obtained a temporary licence to sell refreshments at the match.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately the elements intervened and the match had to be postponed to the following week,<sup>5</sup> with a return match on December 5.<sup>6</sup> Right

from the start the weather, and the inability of the ground to drain, proved to be hurdles to the club’s continued existence south of the Yarra.

Despite the weather the club and players maintained their enthusiasm and scheduled another match for November 14. The “muffs” versus the “crack hands” was how *The Melbourne Argus* described the match, but more importantly *The Port Phillip Patriot* advised that “A cricket match will take place at eleven o’clock this day, on the *Melbourne cricket ground*.”<sup>7</sup> The site at Batman’s Hill had previously been referred to as the “Melbourne Cricket Ground”, but it was parkland, also used by others. In time, the improvements the club made were obvious signs that the new site was the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

One of the most anticipated early matches was to have been played on December 12, 1846 with the MCC playing the Brighton Cricket Club. Among the players were the following:- MCC - Lieutenant Rush, Messrs Gurner, Musgrave, Walker, Dalmahoy Campbell, F. Stephen, Gillies, Cavenagh, Marsden, R. and W. Philpot, and for Brighton - Brown, Baker, Durrant, Andrew, Coleman, Patterson, Lindsay, Gregory, Booker, and H.B. Foote and W. Brickwood (who were members of both clubs).<sup>8</sup> The club obtained permission from the Crown Lands Commissioner to erect a building upon the ground “which will save the necessity of putting up and pulling down tents every match that is played.”<sup>9</sup> The weather was again not kind, with this match postponed until December 19.<sup>10</sup>

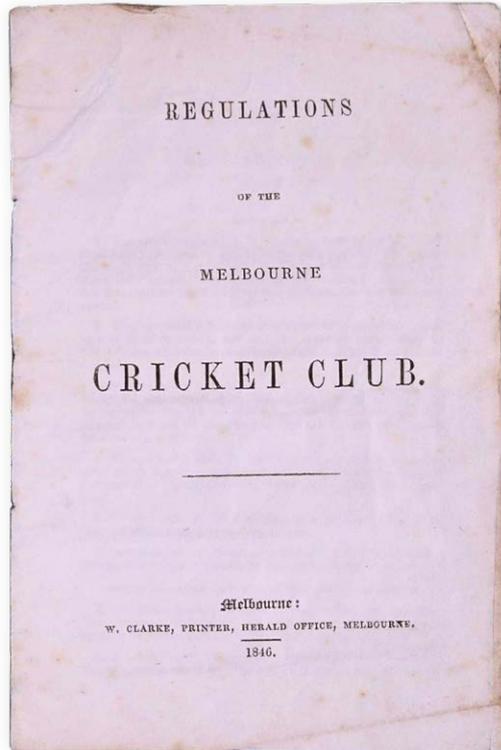
**Top:** *Melbourne from the south side of the Yarra*. Painting by MCC member Robert Russell, c.1850. The view overlooks the area where the Melbourne Cricket Ground was situated from 1846-54. [State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H25167]

On this date the contest was a close affair. When stumps were drawn, however, the match was declared a draw with Brighton requiring 26 runs with five wickets remaining. "Everything went off in the most satisfactory manner" except for a "few grumblers, who were not allowed within the sacred precincts of the Club Tent."<sup>11</sup> This led to a "Special General Meeting" on December 22 where it was "unanimously carried that no party resident in the town can be introduced by a member into the Melbourne Cricket Club tent."<sup>12</sup>

The next week the MCC was to play the Melbourne Tradesmen's Union Club. This had also created much interest in the town as, although the Melbourne players were considered "better in the field, the eleven of the Trades Union had the superiority in batting." In a close contest the "Tradesmen" won by three wickets. Perhaps the highlight of the day, however, was the entertainment provided by Mr Passmore, the purveyor of the MCC, "at which the Trades Union eleven expressed their unqualified approbation."<sup>13</sup> The return match was played on February 10, 1847, also on the MCC ground. Despite requiring only 46 in the second innings for victory, the MCC was bowled out for 41 to lose by 4 runs after "an animated struggle."<sup>14</sup>

In March 1847 the MCC sailed on the *Aphrasia* to Geelong, a six hour sail if conditions were favourable. A strong southerly, however, meant that the trip extended beyond eight hours and the match against the Geelong Cricket Club could not be completed. A return match was planned to be played in Melbourne on Easter Monday, April 5.<sup>15</sup> On this day the weather "was the finest for a cricket match we have witnessed this season, and the sport excellent." The MCC prevailed by 92 runs to end the club's first season south of the Yarra. Despite the poor weather at the start of the season, it had been relatively successful, with the club now boasting 125 members.<sup>16</sup>

The 1847/48 season was probably the best to date from a cricketing point of view, and certainly the best reported. The MCC played matches against the Brighton, Tradesmen, Corio (Geelong), and the newly formed Albion Cricket Clubs, with their intra-club matches now being reduced to almost practice match status. The state of the ground was again a problem with the club's early practice being in the vicinity of Flagstaff Hill or Batman's Hill.<sup>17</sup> By November 13 the club was able to use their ground and a match between the "married" and "single" members of the club caught the eye of the



Top: *Regulations of the Melbourne Cricket Club 1846*, printed by W. Clarke, Herald Office, Melbourne, was the second of the club's publications. At the MCC's annual meeting on September 22, 1846 it was decided, "That the Committee be instructed to draw up a set of Laws for the government of the club; to select a ground for the club's practice, and to defray from the club's funds any expenses necessary for the purchase of bats, balls & c." (MCC Museum collection, M9078)

reporter from the *Port Phillip Gazette*. He claimed the "married" members' defeat was "as good a drubbing as their better halves could have given them."<sup>18</sup> The ground was also used by other teams, with the Corio and Tradesmen Cricket Clubs playing a match on April 3 on the Melbourne Cricket Ground.<sup>19</sup> Such was the success of the season that the *Port Phillip Herald* suggested an all-star match to end the season. "The present season should wind up with two elevens selected from the Melbourne, Brighton, Tradesmen, Albion and Geelong Clubs. As the match would necessarily contain the best players in the province, a rich treat to the lovers of this favourite game would be the result."<sup>20</sup> Despite the *Port Phillip Gazette* supporting the idea, and an "An Old Cricketer" writing a letter of support, the match did not come to fruition.

To consolidate on such a successful season, MCC Secretary Alex Broadfoot wrote to Superintendent Latrobe requesting permission to fence the ground. Permission was granted to fence ten acres. The club set to work to "enclose the whole immediately

with a circular three-rail pig fence; turf about 40 yards square for the wickets, and plough up the rest, which is to be sown with grass seed. It is estimated that 50 pounds will cover all expenses, and as the funds of the club are in a flourishing condition, the expenses will not be felt."<sup>21</sup> The club finances may well have been "flourishing" but to make sure, at a special committee meeting on May 13, it was agreed that "a call be immediately made on the Members of the Club to pay next year's subscription now in advance."<sup>22</sup>

The first general meeting of the club for the 1848/49 season was held on September 30 at Passmore's Hotel. The Chairman advised members of the work that had been undertaken during the "recess". The committee had succeeded "in erecting a good substantial four-rail pig fence at a cost of 30 pounds, 13 shillings and

—We annex an alphabetical list of the members who it will be seen number no less than 127 names; and as there are several gentlemen anxious to join the club, the list will be much longer this year than last.

Patrons—His Honor C. J. La Trobe and His Honor the Resident Judge.

Aid in J. C.

Brickwood William, Broadfoot A. A., Bowler John, Bell W. G., Butterfield E., Belcher W. R., Belcher George, Bell John, Bear J. P., Bennett John, Bell Edward, Barnes Charles, Barnes Edmund, Bailey James, Barber George, Barchett Henry, Black Dr. Thomas, Black Niel.

Cardiff —, 11th Regt., Cavenagh George, Campbell D. S., Campbell Dr. W. H., Clarke John, Clark Thomas, Clow J. M., Campbell Dalmahoy, Cunningham H., Campbell Colin, Creswick H., Cooper D., Conrain L., 11th Regt.

Dalgaty F. G., Duerdin John, Danyon James, Donald W.

Ellis James, Erskine J. A., Elms J. W., Ebdon C. H.

Ferlong —, Foote W. B., Foxton J. G., Fennell R., Faircloth G.

Gottreux W., Gurner H. F., Gillis O. H., Griffin E.

Higgett W., Horns Arthur, Hodgson J., Haines W. C., Hall C. B., Hawdon J., Hogg E., Hamilton W. B.

James George, Jamieson Robert.

Knight A. H., Kay Robert.

Langhorne A., Lane F., Lyons Charles.

Moor Henry, M'Lachlan James, Blair W., M'Lachlan Archibald, M'Creddie Robert, Musgrave A., M'Combie Thomas, Marsden F. W., M'Lachlan John, Meek William, Murphy James, Morris A., Malpas J.

Nantes Charles, Nankerville F.

Orr Matthew, O'Cock R., O'Dell Thomas.

Phillipott R., Phillipott W., Power James, Powllett F. W., Pincock J. D., Phillipott C.

Russell Robert, Ross Alfred, Riddle J. C.

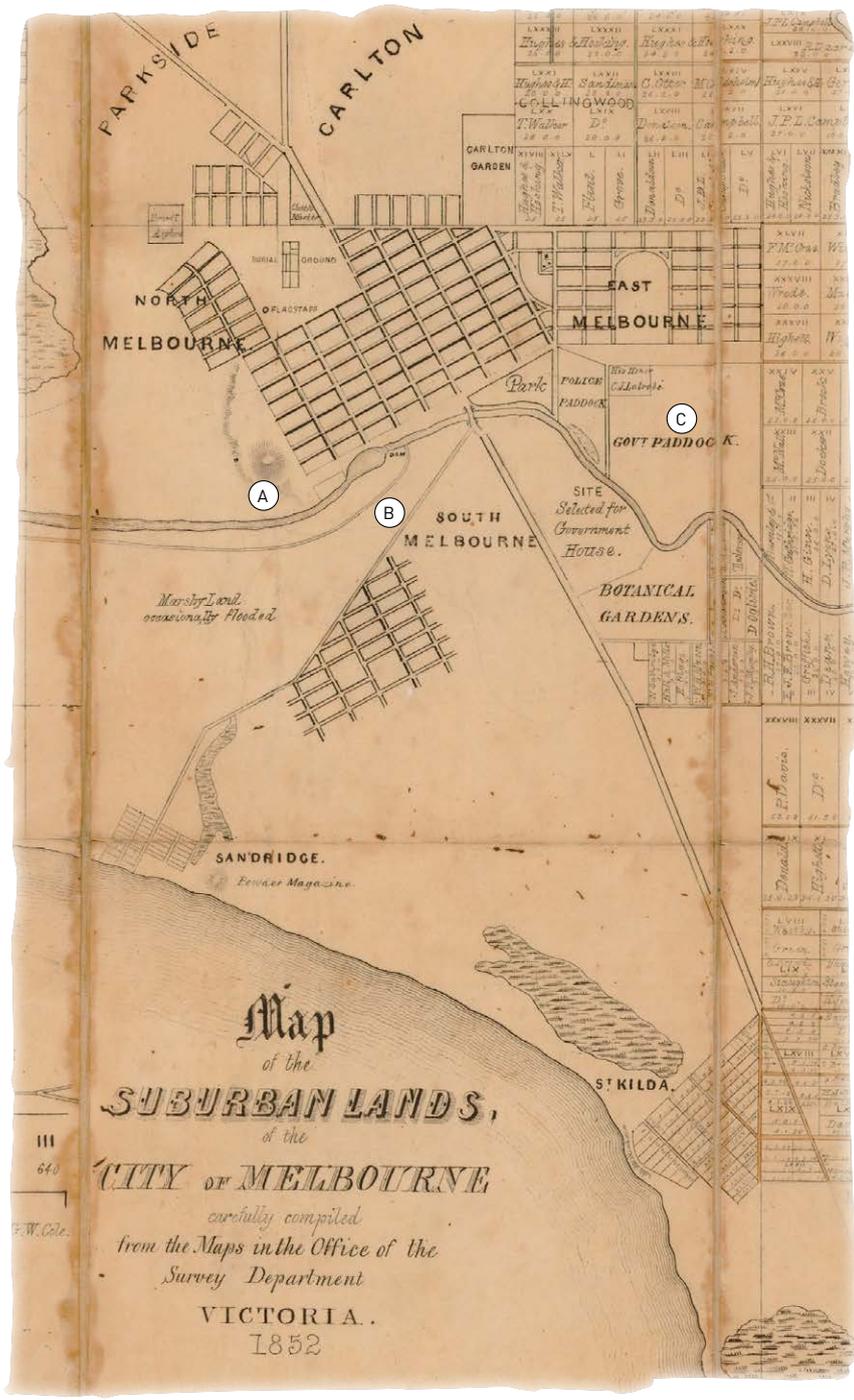
Smith H. A., Stoddart M. P., St. John F. B., Salmon E. H., Shaw George, Sladen Charles, Stewart James, Smith J. P., Stephen E.

Thorpe S., Thorpe T., Turnbull George, Turnbull David, Turnbull Patrick, Turnbull Phipps, Thomas Dr., Thompson A. T., Temple E. M., Thompson Harry, Tapholm R.

Umphelby C. W., Urquhart W.

Wero George, Wildman —, Wedge J., Wedge C., Wedge R., Wildash —, Wight E. B., Watson John, Wilson David, Wright W., Settler, Walker Hugh.

Yorke E.



be played "on their temporary ground below the Flag-staff",<sup>25</sup> while the season opener against the Trades Union Cricket Club was delayed until January 2. This was extremely unfortunate after such a strong season in 1847/48, as the papers had openly discussed which team would be "champions of the colony" in 1848/49.<sup>26</sup> With a victory over the Tradesmen and another over the Corio Cricket Club the scene was set for a showdown with the Brighton Cricket Club, which had not been defeated since its inception. This match took place on January 20, "the day was beautifully fine, the play on both sides good, and the bowling of Mr. Hamilton in particular, not only very excellent, but very successful."<sup>27</sup> Thomas Hamilton took 12 wickets for the match to help the MCC win by 7 wickets. A return match was suggested for the following week but did not take place, and, having beaten the three opposition teams, (the Albion Cricket Club did not re-form this season) the MCC, "in the absence of any challenge, which by the way they would feel obliged"<sup>28</sup> played an intra club match on February 3.

The 1849/50 season began like the previous one. Following a general meeting of the MCC at the start of October the *Port Phillip Herald* advised that "the moment the weather will admit of it, the Club are ready and eager to take the field. Their ground is in beautiful order, forty pounds having been laid out on it in turfing."<sup>29</sup> It may have been "beautiful" but it was still too wet as "the spot selected for play, for the present, (until their own ground is sufficiently dry) is, we believe, below the flag-staff, where the club commenced the season this time last year."<sup>30</sup> By October 27 the ground was dry and the club played an intra-club match alphabetically, surnames starting with the letters A to M took on N to Z. At the end of November on St. Andrews Day the Scottish members were to do battle against the English, but flooding again interrupted proceedings, with the match moved to the Tradesmen's ground behind the gaol. The flood was so bad that "the top of the building erected upon the cricket ground was barely discernible."<sup>31</sup> In fact it was not discernible because "the refreshment and scoring sheds have been carried away."<sup>32</sup> No matches had yet been organized against the other clubs, and it was feared that Brighton, the MCC's strongest opponent, might not field a team this season "owing to the absence of their champion

Coldman, who has, we grieve to say it, gone to California."<sup>33</sup> With the Albion Club again not re-forming, there was a lack of competition forcing the club to play more in-house matches. An example was the match on New Year's Day when eleven "picked" members played against 22 of the "muffs" "on the Swamp".<sup>34</sup> The ground had now achieved notoriety in its own right. The lack of opposition teams had one positive result. A challenge was sent to Launceston for "eleven Port Phillipians to play eleven Vandiemonians, the first week in April next."<sup>35</sup> This match, the first inter-colonial, did not happen until February, 1851, but at least the dialogue had been started between the opposing colonies.

Detail from *Map of the suburban lands of the City of Melbourne*, carefully compiled from the maps in the Office of the Survey Department, Victoria, Ham Bros., Litho, Melbourne. 1852 (State Library of Victoria, Maps Collection, MAPS 821 BJE 1852 HAM). **A:** indicates the approximate location of the informal recreation ground at Batman's Hill. **B:** Melbourne Cricket Club's ground south of the Yarra River, 1846-54. **C:** Melbourne Cricket Ground from 1854.

four pence, and had turfed 1116 yards of ground at a cost of 24 pounds, 13 shillings and sixpence."<sup>23</sup> *The Port Phillip Herald* reported that there were now 127 members and published a list of all members (left). As the proprietor of this paper was George Cavenagh, President of the Melbourne Cricket Club, the club received extensive coverage of its activities not seen in other papers. Cavenagh paid a price for this coverage, however, as he was lampooned in the rival newspaper, the *Melbourne Daily News and Port Phillip Patriot*, and called "Buggins" in several demeaning articles.

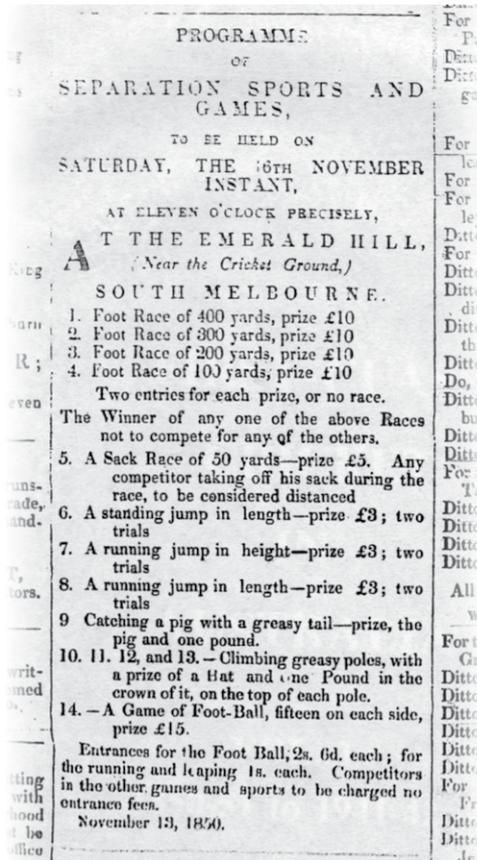
The season did not start well due to extensive flooding, "which placed the club's ground three feet under water."<sup>24</sup> The first intra-club match was delayed until November 30 and then had to

Unlike the previous two seasons the MCC was able to practice on its ground at the start of the 1850/51 season. Already there had been discussion of the role the ground would play in one of the biggest events in the colony's short history – separation from New South Wales. In September *The Argus* had reported that the "Games and Sports were to commence at the Cricket Ground, between the Yarra and the beach"<sup>36</sup> as part of the "Public Rejoicings" to celebrate separation. There were a variety of events from running and jumping, to novelty events, such as catching a pig with a greasy tail and climbing a greasy pole, and, finally, a 15-a-side "foot-ball" match played "on the MCC ground, which had been lent for the occasion."<sup>37</sup>

Among the stewards were MCC stalwarts Dal and D.S. Campbell, who, when "there were not many aspiring youths whose vanity lay in ascending a greasy pole" provided "a hogshead of porter" which led to "a little elevation of the spirits" and "considerable competition".<sup>38</sup> (For more on the football match see Alf Batchelder, "Football on the Header: Melbourne Cricket Ground 1850", *The Yorker*, No. 30, Spring 2001, pp. 3-4.)

Despite the lure of gold, Brighton was able to field a team this season. They lost to the MCC by just 4 runs on December 14, although they did have to "borrow" three players from the newly formed Australian Cricket Club. This club also played against the MCC on January 1, 1851, the "ground... in first rate order."<sup>39</sup> Although the ground was in excellent condition there was little cricket played in late January and February as some of the club's best players were in Tasmania to play in the first intercolonial match. With the ground vacant there was the opportunity for other sports. In February, 1851, Mr. McLeod from Edward River, and Mr. H. Manuel of Melbourne ran over 100 yards "for 10 pound a side". Mr. Manuel won by inches but the cricket ground must have been extremely hard and fast, as "the distance... was accomplished by both the competitors within 10 seconds of time."<sup>40</sup>

The other sport to benefit from the lack of cricket, although unofficially, was "show jumping". Several "sporting gentlemen are in the habit almost every morning of galloping over the bridge for the purpose of trying their horses in leaping the Melbourne Cricket Club fence". Unfortunately "the lubberly fellows in most cases smash the top rail", the top rail of the four-rail pig fence being too high for the average horse and rider. This led to an advertisement offering a two pounds reward for information leading to the conviction of such offenders (right).<sup>41</sup>



PROGRAMME  
OF  
SEPARATION SPORTS AND  
GAMES,  
TO BE HELD ON  
SATURDAY, THE 16TH NOVEMBER  
INSTANT,  
AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK PRECISELY,  
AT THE EMERALD HILL,  
(Near the Cricket Ground.)  
SOUTH MELBOURNE.

1. Foot Race of 400 yards, prize £10
2. Foot Race of 300 yards, prize £10
3. Foot Race of 200 yards, prize £10
4. Foot Race of 100 yards, prize £10

Two entries for each prize, or no race.  
The Winner of any one of the above Races not to compete for any of the others.

5. A Sack Race of 50 yards—prize £5. Any competitor taking off his sack during the race, to be considered distanced
6. A standing jump in length—prize £3; two trials
7. A running jump in height—prize £3; two trials
8. A running jump in length—prize £3; two trials
9. Catching a pig with a greasy tail—prize, the pig and one pound.
10. 11, 12, and 13. — Climbing greasy poles, with a prize of a Hat and one Pound in the crown of it, on the top of each pole.
14. — A Game of Foot-Ball, fifteen on each side, prize £15.

Entrances for the Foot Ball, 2s. 6d. each; for the running and leaping 1s. each. Competitors in the other games and sports to be charged no entrance fees.  
November 13, 1850.

*The Argus*, November 14, 1850, p.3.

When the team returned from Tasmania there was still a dearth of cricket. The *Port Phillip Herald* noted "The Melbourne Cricket Club members are anxiously waiting on a challenge to take the field again."<sup>42</sup> A challenge was forthcoming from the Australian Cricket Club, but the season finished with several intra-club matches.

Despite the cricket season being over, the ground remained in the news. The fence remained a target for a little "show jumping", with one such episode ending up in the Supreme Court. The case involved a Mr. Allen and a Mr. Purcell who were returning from a day out at the beach, apparently somewhat the worse for wear. As they approached the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Mr. Allen proffered a five pound bet that that no-one would jump the ground's fence before he did. Mr. Purcell accepted the challenge and immediately ordered his overseer (presumably a crack horseman), "Jemmy, put your horse over that fence!" Allen then exclaimed "Oh no! I'm not going to be done like that!", and withdrew the bet. Clearly he thought the bet was to be among the gentlemen, not the hired hands. Purcell took exception and allegedly called Allen "a low perjured scoundrel". It was the use of the word "perjured" (which Purcell denied) that Allen objected to and led him to take action in court for slander. The jury however found on the side of Purcell, as although it was clear

that "such language... that is not a characteristic of decent society" had been used, the use of the word "perjured" had not been proved.<sup>43</sup>

In August, 1851, the ground was flooded again. This was followed at the end of the month by a much bigger threat to the ground's continued existence. Mr. Amman, a British railway engineer, "raised the question of establishing a railway to the beach" and "laid his plans before the Governor from whom he has received every encouragement."<sup>44</sup> The wheels were in motion, and the following month over 100 of the town's businessmen (including some MCC members) wrote to the Mayor requesting that he "convene a public meeting to take into consideration the constructing of a jetty, and a railway between Melbourne and the beach, for the landing and better transit of goods and passengers from the Shipping, and to form a company for carrying out the same."<sup>45</sup> Other options were debated, the construction of a canal, and the deepening and widening of the river. The former was thought to be too

expensive, while there was considerable opposition to the latter as "Melbourne would be contaminated by the close proximity of sailors."<sup>46</sup>

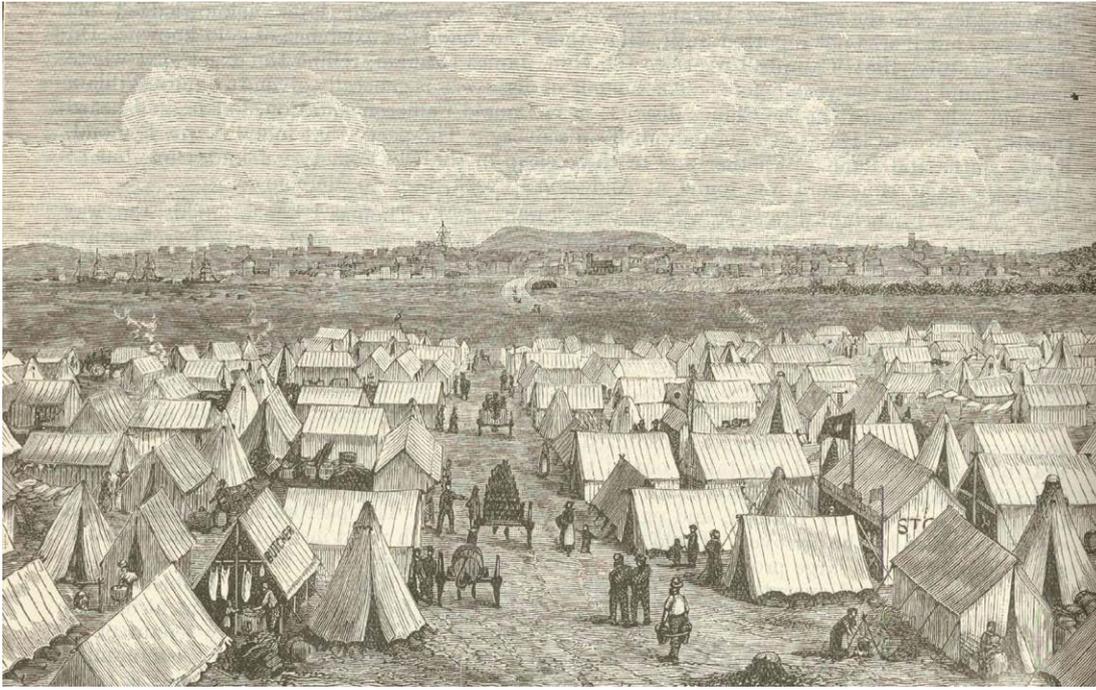
The 1851/52 season started late owing to the "gold mania raging". The *Port Phillip Herald* reported that they hoped the Tasmanian team, due to travel to Melbourne for the return

**£2 REWARD.**

**PARTIES** trespassing on the Melbourne Cricket Club Ground, by riding over the fences, or damaging the same, are cautioned that they will be prosecuted; and the above reward will be paid to any person who may give such information as will lead to the conviction of the parties so offending.

**W. H. HULL,**  
Secretary.  
**M.C.C.**

Club Room,  
10th January, 1851. 1447



"Canvas Town, Emerald Hill, 1854", in Isacc Selby, *Old Pioneer's Memorial History of Melbourne*, Old Pioneers' Memorial Fund, Melbourne, 1924, p.140.

match, waited "til the gold fever subsided, for should they come soon, it would be impossible to muster an eleven to meet them."<sup>47</sup> The MCC did not hold its first practice session until October 18 and then again on November 1, 8, and 15, but after a month of the scheduled season "little had been done – all a consequence of the diggings."<sup>48</sup> By November 22 heavy rain had rendered the ground too soft and practice was cancelled. This left the ground vacant for an "audacious villain" who "has been trying his lubberly hand at galloping his horse over the ground, and on to the fence, breaking down a couple of panels." As the promise of a reward had failed to stop such activity on the hallowed turf, the *Port Phillip Herald* suggested that "a compound fracture of both legs would scarcely be sufficient punishment for so unsportsmanlike an act."<sup>49</sup> Consequently, at the end of the season, tenders were called for to repair the cricket ground fence.

Until February the club had to be content with intra-club matches. A scheduled match against Corio was cancelled and it was not until a challenge was accepted from 11 Adelaide cricketers on February 21 that the MCC was able to test its players. With the Tasmanians now expected in March it was important for the club to have some serious competition but unfortunately that was not provided by the Adelaide XI.

The match of the Victorians against the Tasmanians, the second intercolonial match and the first in Victoria, was the most important match to take place on the first Melbourne Cricket Ground. It took place on March 29 and 30, 1852. The weather was ideal, and "the ground, which was in perfect condition, had been carefully prepared and rolled for the occasion."<sup>50</sup> In addition to the club's "shed", a marquee was erected for the invited guests to be entertained in, and the caterer, Mr. Yewers, of the Albion Hotel, also erected refreshment tents at either end of the ground for the general public. A brass band played at intervals, and greeted the arrival of the Governor with the national anthem. It was estimated that "the spectators outside must have numbered a couple of thousand", despite the match being played on a Monday and Tuesday. In accord with the match's importance, it was also the best reported to date with the *Port Phillip Herald* providing a full match report and scores,

including batsmen's individual scoring shots.

Just a few days after such a celebrated and festive occasion, a newspaper reported of activity that would become the third threat to the ground's existence. A tent "city", which would become known as "Canvastown", had grown up on the south bank of the river adjacent to the club's ground. Consisting mainly of the newly arrived gold seekers, they camped while organising their transport to the gold fields and purchasing the necessary equipment. It became "the fashion for those

parties who occupy tents near the Cricket Ground, to fire guns and pistols loaded with ball, night after night, with what object we do not know."<sup>51</sup> New regulations had to be introduced by the Crown Lands Commissioner limiting camping to eight days "in consequence of some disreputable vagabonds having obtained a shelter. The accommodation is... for the convenience of persons lately arrived in the colony."<sup>52</sup> While the lead shot was a concern, the real threat to members lay in the possibility of disease due to a decline in the site's hygiene.

Like the previous season, the 1852/53 season was slow to start, with teams still depleted by the gold rush. The MCC began practising in November anticipating another match against the Tasmanians, but in January it was able to play two matches against both the United and Brighton Cricket Clubs. This was followed in March by a match against the "Mary-le-bone" Cricket Club (Australia), and in April the "pedestrians" again used the ground for a 100 yard match race with a purse of 20 pounds. The Tasmanian match was delayed a year until the 1853/54 season, but of more importance was the loss of the ground to the Melbourne and Hobson's Bay Railway. To compensate the club, The Argus reported that the Governor "to show his approval of such manly sports, intends, it is said, to make a free grant of 10 acres to the club for the purpose of 'playing the game'".<sup>53</sup> This was to be in the Government Paddocks, Richmond. In addition the club requested compensation from the railway company of 250 pounds for the buildings and fencing erected on the ground.<sup>54</sup>

The idea of using the "Government Paddocks" for "the recreation and amusement of the citizens" had been raised as early as 1850. Councillor Hodgson had requested that the Mayor apply to the Superintendent "to reserve and set aside the eastern portion of the police paddocks, consisting of about 180 acres." He envisaged that cricket clubs could play their matches there, the Separation Sports could be held, and a playground for Sunday school children could be established. In addition, a retreat for citizens, serpentine walks, and carriage drives were all on his agenda for this "delightful spot". The Mayor concurred but suggested that instead of 180 acres

they should ask for "the whole of the land from the north-east corner of the police paddock, westerly in the direction of Flinders St., on the north bank of the river."<sup>55</sup> No doubt Councillor Hodgson would be delighted with the sporting and cultural precinct we have on this site today.

Preparation of the police paddock site commenced late in 1853. There was a considerable amount of work to be done which resulted in the continued use of the ground south of the Yarra for meetings, practice and matches in the 1853/54 season. The ground was referred to as "the old cricket ground" to distinguish it from the new site, with practice on October 15 and a match against the Marylebone Cricket Club on November 19.<sup>56</sup> Gold fever still dominated the season with

few matches played south of the Yarra, while the departure of the colony's best players to Tasmania for the third intercolonial in March also had an adverse effect.

The club's occupation of the ground south of the Yarra ended as it had begun. The final intra-club match between the Government and non-Government employees of the club scheduled for April 29, 1854, was cancelled "owing to the late rains and consequent bad condition of the ground."<sup>57</sup>

The ground would remain for several years under the auspices of the Emerald Hill Cricket Club, but for the MCC cricket on the "Swamp" had come to an end.

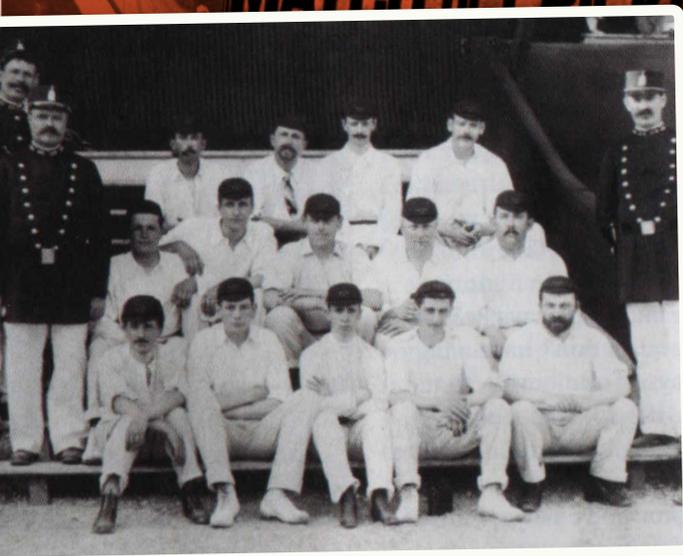


- 20. Government House.
- 27. Elec. Tele. (Head Office.)
- 28. Emerald Hill Cricket Ground
- 29. Northern Assurance Co.
- 30. Bank of Australasia

Detail from *Bradshaw's map of Melbourne & Suburbs*, drawn by Blackburn and engraved by Frederick Grosse, c.1857. In the latter half of the 1850s the old Melbourne Cricket Ground was used by the Emerald Hill Cricket Club and referred to as the Emerald Hill Cricket Ground (28. on the map).

**Endnotes**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, September 24, 1846, p.2</li> <li>2 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, September 25 1846, p.1</li> <li>3 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, October 6, 1846, p.2</li> <li>4 <i>Melbourne Argus</i>, October 27 1846, p.2</li> <li>5 <i>Melbourne Argus</i>, November 6 1846, p.2</li> <li>6 <i>Melbourne Argus</i>, December 4 1846, p.2</li> <li>7 <i>Port Phillip Patriot</i>, November 14, 1846, p.2</li> <li>8 <i>Port Phillip Gazette</i>, December 12 1846, p.2</li> <li>9 <i>Melbourne Argus</i>, December 4 1846, p.2</li> <li>10 <i>Melbourne Argus</i>, December 15 1846, p.2</li> <li>11 <i>Melbourne Argus</i>, December 22 1846, p.2</li> <li>12 <i>Melbourne Argus</i>, December 25 1846, p.3</li> <li>13 <i>Melbourne Argus</i>, December 29 1846, p.2</li> <li>14 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, February 11 1847, p.5</li> <li>15 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, Mar 16 1846, p.2</li> <li>16 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, April 8 1847, p.3</li> <li>17 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, October 5 1847, p.1</li> <li>18 <i>Port Phillip Gazette</i>, November 17 1847, p.3</li> <li>19 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, May 14 1848, p.3</li> <li>20 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, Mar 23 1848, p.4</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, May 11 1848, p.2</li> <li>22 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, May 16 1848, p.4</li> <li>23 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, October 3, 1848, p.3</li> <li>24 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, November 9, 1848, p.5</li> <li>25 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, November 30, 1848, p.5</li> <li>26 <i>Melbourne Daily News and Port Phillip Patriot</i>, November 2, 1848, p.2</li> <li>27 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, January 22, 1849, p.3</li> <li>28 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, January 31, 1849, p.3</li> <li>29 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, October 3, 1849, p.4</li> <li>30 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, October 4, 1849, p.1</li> <li>31 <i>Melbourne Daily News</i>, November 29, 1849, p.2</li> <li>32 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, November 29, 1849, p.4</li> <li>33 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, October 30, 1849, p.3</li> <li>34 <i>The Argus</i>, January 2, 1850, p.2</li> <li>35 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, January 25, 1850, p.3</li> <li>36 <i>The Argus</i>, September 28, 1850 p.2</li> <li>37 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, November 19, 1850, p.4</li> <li>38 <i>Melbourne Daily News</i>, November 19, 1850, supplement p.1</li> <li>39 <i>The Argus</i>, January 2, 1851, p.2</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>40 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, February 22, 1851, p.1</li> <li>41 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, January 10, 1851, p.1</li> <li>42 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, Mar 6, 1851, p.4</li> <li>43 <i>The Argus</i>, May 6, 1851, p.2</li> <li>44 <i>Melbourne Daily News</i>, Aug 28, 1851, p.2</li> <li>45 <i>The Argus</i>, September 2, 1851, p.3</li> <li>46 <i>The Argus</i>, September 6, 1851, p.4</li> <li>47 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, October 6, 1851, p.6</li> <li>48 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, November 3, 1851, p.3</li> <li>49 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, December 2, 1851, p.4</li> <li>50 <i>The Argus</i>, March 30, 1852, p.2</li> <li>51 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, April 5, 1852, p.2</li> <li>52 <i>Port Phillip Herald</i>, April 14, 1852, p.4</li> <li>53 <i>The Argus</i>, July 28, 1853, p.5</li> <li>54 <i>Minutes of Melbourne and Hobson's Bay Railway Company</i>, Public Record Office, VPRS 1281, Unit 2: Thirty-fifth Meeting of Directors, October 10, 1853</li> <li>55 <i>Melbourne Daily News</i>, September 6, 1850, p.2</li> <li>56 <i>The Argus</i>, October 7, 1853, p.8</li> <li>57 <i>The Argus</i>, April 29, 1854, p.5</li> </ul> |
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# Olympic Champions for over a Century

By Alan Hill

**The bravado of the Twenty20 frolic has presented its calling card for the renewal of cricket in the Olympic Games. The shorter form of the game – and the excitement it engenders – appears to offer a swift and ideal solution. Moves are now afoot to make this a likely pursuit in a future Olympic programme.**

A revival is long overdue because it is now 116 years since Great Britain became cricket victors in the traditional format at the first and only appearance of the sport in the Olympics programme.

The ironic twist to the situation is that a team of part-time players, under the banner of the Devon County Wanderers, were then on tour in France. According to a report in *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, their appearance in the 1900 Olympics came about by pure chance. The tourists were in the right place at the right time. Many of the team had taken a fortnight's holiday and could hardly have been aware that they were about to gain the distinction of Olympic stardom. Qualification for the team appeared to depend on their availability. Belgium and Holland should have co-hosted the tournament, but their entries went astray and it was left to France to represent continental Europe in the final at the Velodrome de Vincennes east of Paris, in August 1900.

Keith Gregson, in his booklet – *A Great Day for England* – wrote: "So it was just us and France. It was sheer luck that the Devon and Somerset Wanderers were on tour in France at the time, so they represented Britain and won."

Cricket and the Olympics might seem an unlikely combination but it was one of the original sports listed in the Olympics programme, *Des Jeux Olympiques de 1896*. It fitted the ideal as an archetypal "play-hard-but-fair game". Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the father of the modern Olympics, was a keen devotee of the sport and sought to introduce it in Athens in 1896 but the bid failed because of a lack of entries. Coubertin's cricket passion was sparked when in 1890 he attended the Much Wenlock games in Shropshire – widely considered to be the birthplace of the modern Olympics – where cricket was one of the featured events.

The Olympics at that time were far removed from the spectacular modern extravaganzas. The haphazard nature of the cricket tournament was mirrored throughout the rest of the 1900 Olympics. Events took place between May and October at 16 different venues and the word, Olympics, was infrequently used. The Games themselves were often considered part of the Exposition Universelle World's Fair held

in Paris from April 15 to November 12. Those newspapers that bothered to cover the various events referred to them as "International Championship", "World Championships" and the "Grand Prix of the Paris Exposition". De Coubertin was reported to have told friends: "It's a miracle that the Olympic movement survived that celebration."

The Great Britain team of 1900 was not a nationally selected eleven. It included old boys of Blundell's Public School in Tiverton. "Only two of the team went on to play cricket at any sort of level," commented Keith Gregson. The side was captained by Charles Kay (Beachcroft), who was described by one observer "as one of life's great charmers." His early life, after his father died in 1877, was spent in Devon. He grew up to become a county level player in rugby, hockey and cricket in which he opened the batting for Exeter. Kay was a maverick personality, equally at home as a hotelier and vaudevillian. He was at one time a declared bankrupt but, undeterred, he changed course for a life on the stage, becoming a variety artist, actor and pantomime villain. He joined a touring company visiting theatres throughout England and Scotland. Kay was married twice and fathered 13 children. He emigrated to Australia in 1921 and appeared in theatres in Australia and New Zealand until his death in Melbourne in 1928.

The Devon Wanderers side had been formed by William Donne in 1894 for a tour of the Isle of Wight. The Wanderers primarily consisted of players from the Castle Cary Cricket Club, five of whom played in the match. Writing in the *Journal of Olympic History*, Ian Buchanan related that both sides "were made up of distinctly average club cricketers." Only two members of the Wanderers side, and none of the French side, played first-class cricket. Montagu Toller played six times for Somerset CCC, all in 1897, while Alfred Bowerman played for Somerset once in 1900, and again in 1905. There was one omission in keeping with the times. David Jennings, the Exeter professional, was withdrawn, so as not to embarrass the Olympics ideal with his inclusion in the all-amateur ranks.

The French side was officially drawn from all the member clubs of the *Union des Societes Francaises de Sport Athletiques*. In actual fact, this confederation played little cricket and the eventual side was selected from just two clubs: the Union Club and the Standard Athletic Club. Both sides had strong English connections, and the majority of the team that competed for France in the Olympic match were British expatriates. The Standard Athletic Club had been formed ten years earlier by English craftsmen who had moved to the country to help build the Eiffel Tower. The final in Paris was in essence an all-British affair.

This is not to say that the French had little more than a passing acquaintance with cricket. There is historical evidence to the contrary. Cricket has a long and distinguished role as an

Top: Great Britain's Olympic champion cricket team of 1900.

import to the country. One of the many theories is that France could have been the possible birthplace of the game. There is a reference in a French manuscript of 1478 to a bat and ball game called "criquet". It is an old French word meaning "post" or "wicket", but it may refer to an early variant of croquet. The document was found near Calais which was still an English possession and it appears that the game was an expatriate preserve. It can thus be seen that the association with cricket probably stems from the game having been introduced to France by the English invaders.

The story is also told that the MCC had planned an inaugural tour of France in 1789 but, unfortunately, the tour had to be abandoned because of the French Revolution. (The match was finally played in 1889, as part of the bicentennial celebrations of the revolution, with France winning by seven wickets). Further documentary evidence has emerged of cricket in France in the nineteenth century. The match in 1864 was between Paris CC and the Warwickshire Knickerbockers. According to France Cricket, the association that runs the game, a rule book was published in France by Paris CC in the following year when the club president, Drouyn de l'Huys, presented a set of silver-topped stumps, complete with ebony bails, to Louis Napoleon, the son of Emperor Napoleon III.



Advertisement for the 1900 Match de Cricket France contre Angleterre.

Scrolling the years ahead brings us to Olympic adversaries in Paris in 1900. The final was staged in the Vélodrome de Vincennes, a 20,000 seat banked cycling track that also hosted football, rugby and gymnastic events. The match started on Sunday, August 19 before a meagre crowd, including a dozen or so bemused gendarmes, who had been given little incentive to attend the match. The pre-match publicity reported that cricket as a sport was without colour for French people. The reason, observed another writer, was that the lingering pace of the game diffused interest. "French people were too excitable for cricket!" was the verdict of another witness, who added that cricketers in France were looked upon as strangers in a strange land and regarded with mingled

awe and contempt by the average Frenchman. Keith Gregson adds: "Imagine playing a game which nobody was watching apart from a few gendarmes because no-one in France understood the game."

The two-day match had been intended to be a standard eleven-a-side contest, but by mutual agreement from the captains this was increased to twelve-a-side. According to the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, the pitch was "heavily watered" and the outfield "very rough". Play began at 11am on the Sunday, with the Wanderers batting first. They were bowled out for 117, with only four players reaching double figures. Frederick Cumming, one of the four Old Blundellians, top scored with 38 followed by the captain, Beachcroft with 23. Gregson reported that Cumming, with his "shock of blond hair" was strongly built, with a presence, if not the ability, of Andrew Flintoff. The French were then bowled out for 78. Another Frederick - Christian - also an Old Blundellian was the visitors' key bowler with seven wickets. He ensured that the Wanderers rallied to gain a lead of 39 after their earlier reverses.

The Wanderers were a vastly improved batting combination when play resumed on the following morning. The Britons built steadily on their slender first innings lead and 145 runs were added for the second wicket before the declaration with five wickets down. Beachcroft was again successful, reaching a half-century, a feat emulated by Bowerman, who was top scorer with 59 runs.

The French required 185 for victory but lost their first ten wickets for eleven runs. The Devon county cricketer, Montagu Toller, right arm fast, took seven wickets for nine runs and his bowling appeared to presage a quick conclusion to the match. However, it was not quite over as the French attempted to play out time and effect a worthy draw. There is no evidence of the length of the last wicket stand, which more than doubled the score, but only five minutes remained when the Wanderers secured the eleventh and final wicket to achieve victory by 158 runs.

## FRANCE V GREAT BRITAIN

Games of the II Olympiad (1900) - Les Jeux olympiques d'été de 1900  
Played at Vélodrome Municipal de Vincennes (Paris) on 19 and 20 August, 1900  
Great Britain won by 158 runs

### ENGLAND (GREAT BRITAIN) [262] Devon & Somerset Wanderers

1st Innings		2nd Innings	
J. Symes	c Anderson b Robinson	15	c Attrill b Roques
A. J. Powlesland	c Browning b Robinson	10	b Roques
* C. B. K. Beachcroft	b Attrill	23	run out
M. H. Toller	b McEvoy	2	
F. W. Cumming	c Browning b McEvoy	38	c Attrill b McEvoy
A. Bowerman	b Anderson	7	b Roques
H. R. Comer	lbw Anderson	4	not out
A. E. Birkett	b Anderson	1	
F. W. Christian	b Anderson	0	
W. S. Donne	run out	6	
G. J. Buckley	b Attrill	2	
F. R. Burchell	not out	0	
Extras		9	
<b>Totals</b>		<b>117</b>	<b>5 wkts (declared) 145</b>

### FRANCE [104]

Union Club and Standard Athletic Club  
representing Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques (USFSA)

1st Innings		2nd Innings	
T. H. Jordan	c Comer b Christian	11	b Toller
A. J. Schneidau	b Christian	8	b Powlesland
R. Home	c Buckley b Christian	15	b Powlesland
H. Terry, Jr.	c Cumming b Powlesland	2	b Toller
F. Roques	b Powlesland	0	b Toller
W. Anderson	b Christian	0	b Toller
D. Robinson	b Christian	0	b Powlesland
W. T. Attrill	lbw Christian	0	b Toller
W. Browning	b Christian	0	b Toller
A. McEvoy	b Bowerman	-1	c Christian b Comer
* P. H. Tomalin	not out	3	not out
J. Braid	run out	25	b Toller
Extras		13	
<b>Totals</b>		<b>78</b>	<b>26</b>

Umpires: Wilan & Delolme

After the match, the British side were awarded silver medals and the French team bronze medals, together with miniature statues of the Eiffel Tower. The rejoicings after the victory were eventful. The celebrations, as the tourists returned to their hotel, were shared rather too lavishly by the driver of the coach and horses. "The driver had obviously celebrated a bit too robustly because the coach went off the road," commented Keith Gregson. In his excitable state and alcoholic haze the driver had crashed his coach, causing minor injuries to some of the passengers. He had to be driven back in his own carriage!

There was a deadpan postscript to the success in the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*. It reported that the Devon Wanderers had returned home after a most successful trip. "From a social point of view the outing was a complete success," was the droll verdict of the journal. The whereabouts today of the medals and other prizes are shrouded in mystery. Archivists at the Devon County Council would like to solve the puzzle. One member said: "Perhaps they are lying un-noticed in a Devon attic, or maybe someone has old photographs or family records to give us some clues."

The victory match was not formally recognised as an Olympic event until 1912, when the now lost medals were reassigned as gold and silver. A scheduled cricket competition at the 1904 Summer Olympics, held in St Louis, was cancelled at short notice due to lack of facilities and the sport has not been included in the Olympics since.

The sacrifices of the Second World War led to the dissolution of many cricket clubs in France, but an influx of English and South Asian immigrants invigorated the game in the early 1980s. The current French Cricket Association was formed in 1987, and they gained

affiliate membership of the International Cricket Council in the same year before being awarded Associate membership in 1998. In 1997 France played in the European Nations Cup in Zuos, Switzerland, beating Germany by one run in the final. David Bordes ran the winning leg bye with a fractured skull. The match was included in the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack's list on the 100 best matches of the last century.

France's top cricketers are now largely drawn from specific ethnic communities, mostly based around Paris and dominated by expatriates and second and third generation immigrants from the sport's traditional playing nations. The Gymkhana club is exclusively Pakistani, Saint-Brice entirely Indian and others are Sri Lankan.

In a 2010 Harry de Quetteville *Telegraph* (London) article, "Ow iz zat? Cricket catches on in France", David Young, a former England junior representative and French national coach conceded the situation. "In our senior squad, half were born abroad and half in France, but their parents are Asian, Australian and English." He does see this as a problem with expatriate players. "We are no different to all the South Africans playing for England – but simply that the talent pool would be larger if the game were taken up all across the country."

De Quetteville gave an evocative account of a 2010 game in Chantilly, France. "It is a typical English setting: the verdant square, fringed by a line of trees through which peeps the village church; figures in white patrolling the boundary; the sound of willow ringing through the air."

Among the Gymkhana ranks that day was the former captain of France's national cricket team Shabir Hussein. "We can beat such countries as Germany and Israel," Hussein told de Quetteville, "But to improve long term we have to make sure that this is not just a game for immigrants. France has to get organised at school level. This is a great game, and not every child wants to play football."



**Left:** The cricket pitch is visible in this photograph of the Vélodrome Municipal de Vincennes (Paris).

**Below:** A scene from the only official cricket match staged at an Olympic Games.





# Ross Gregory Remembered

by David Frith

**David Frith marks the centenary of the birth of the only Australian Test cricketer killed in the Second World War.**

No scoreline in Test cricket's long history embodies such tragedy:

## **AUSTRALIA v ENGLAND**

*Melbourne Cricket Ground, February 27, 1937*

**R.G. Gregory ..... c Verity b Farnes .....80**

Within seven years all three cricketers would be dead, casualties of the Second World War.

The stories of Englishmen Hedley Verity and Ken Farnes are quite familiar, but details of young Australian batsman Ross Gregory have faded over the years. He played two Test matches, and offered stout resistance in both of them. He averaged 51 in tense fightbacks, making 23 and 50 on debut at Adelaide in that thrilling 1936/37 series. Then came a very patient 80 at Melbourne, where Australia completed a remarkable comeback after having been 0-2 down. New skipper Don Bradman had most to do with it. Following those uncomfortable first two Tests, when soggy pitches hampered Australia, he stroked 270 at Melbourne, 212 at Adelaide, and 169 back at the MCG as his side stole the series 3-2 to retain the Ashes.

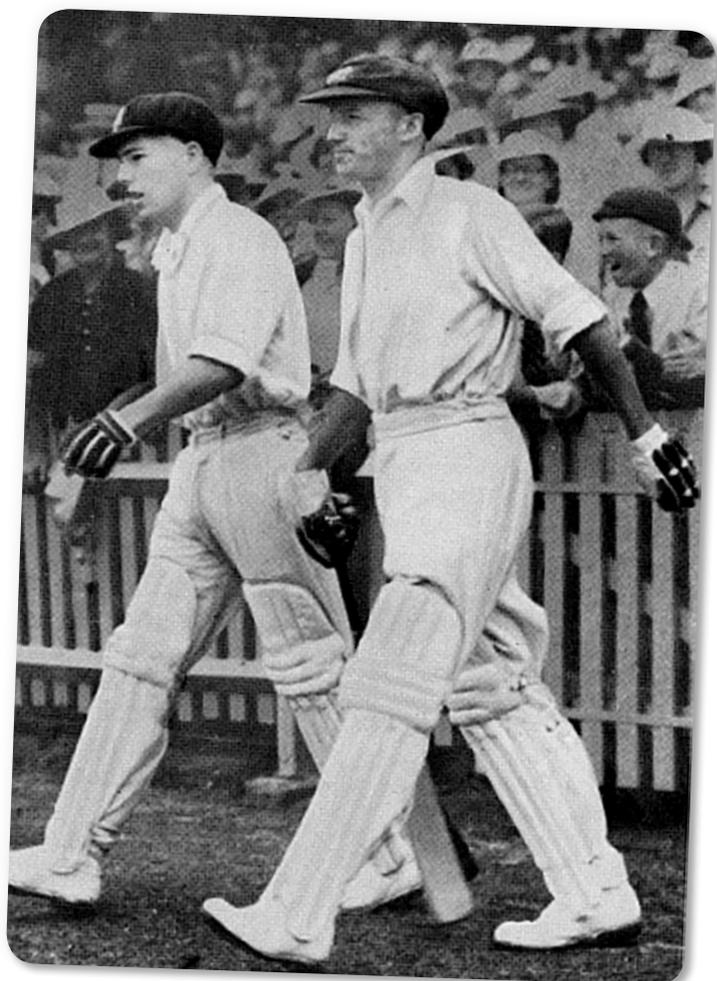
Ross Gregory had won his Test cap after scoring a neat century against the Englishmen for Victoria. He impressed with his second Test innings, a 50 at Adelaide in a partnership of 135 with Bradman, before being run out by a throw from Charlie Barnett after dutifully responding to his captain's call. England may well have regained the Ashes if the youngster had not batted so diligently.

Then, in the deciding final Test at the MCG, before 63,000 onlookers on his home ground, Gregory seemed set for a memorable hundred. He went down the pitch to canny left-armed Verity, and bravely drove fast man Gubby Allen, in a partnership with Jack Badcock worth 161. While the two little Aussies scampered runs, a reporter described them as "the nearest thing to two pixies seen on a cricket field". Gregory seemed certain to reach a popular hundred until caught at short leg for 80 (195 minutes, five fours), delivering to Test cricket that poignant scoreline.

On the rest day of the match, February 28, he had celebrated his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. (His birth certificate records his arrival as on February 27, 1916 – just as it shows his given names as Gerald Ross rather than Ross Gerald, and his birthplace as Malvern, not Murchison). This is but part of the mystique surrounding Ross Gregory: his true date and place of birth, his correct name, and, most teasing of all, the circumstances of his wartime death. All this needed clarification.

He was the only Australian Test cricketer to be killed in the Second World War, and this year marks the centenary of his birth, a landmark which has passed with scarcely any recognition. It has also seen the recent passing of his fiancée Barbara at the age of 96. Her memories of Ross were invaluable to his biographer.

The omission of veteran spinner Clarrie Grimmett from the 1938 tour of England was a shock, but Ross Gregory missed out too, having lost form, perhaps because of an eye problem. He was never to know that when Sid Barnes broke his wrist on the voyage to England, the Board considered rushing Ross over as a replacement. The young Victorian's leg-spin variations had taken Bradman's wicket twice, and cheaply, in a Shield match, so who knows if Len Hutton might have advanced to 364 in the Oval Test had Gregory been bowling? *The Cricketer* referred not only to Gregory's "Sutcliffian thoroughness" with the bat but also to his deceptive dropping



**Right:** Ross Gregory and Don Bradman resume their stand at Adelaide.



top-spinner. Now, having missed tour selection, he could hardly have guessed that he would find himself in England soon enough, wearing a dark blue Royal Australian Air Force uniform and without his cricket bag.

Keith Miller had his last sight of young Ross Gregory at Flemington racecourse. Australia's glamorous post-war allrounder mused in a 2002 letter: "I would love to have been like him. He was a brilliant boy – better than me as a kid. One of the best hookers of the ball, a handsome, dapper little fella. Neat and graceful, cared about his appearance. He was most natural, and a pleasure to know."

During the piecing together of Ross Gregory's life there was frequent comment on his agreeable nature and his sporting abilities. An old Wesley College friend said that he was "a great guy, with a good, mischievous sense of humour. He was very small. He lived for cricket. He wasn't what you'd call a brilliant student, mind you. He wanted to be an accountant." He could scarcely believe that the headmaster had disapproved of the time that Ross took off from school to play for Victoria. Sight of today's Ross Gregory Drive in St Kilda might have changed his mind.

Gregory enlisted in the RAAF and trained as a navigator, being posted at one point to Cootamundra, where a group photograph was taken. Of the ten young men featured, seven did not survive the war. He had just announced his engagement to Barbara. Cousin Margaret said: "He was in uniform, and he looked so handsome."

Soon he was gone, sailing to Britain on June 13, 1941, a young airman off to war: across the Pacific, by train across Canada, then through the perilous waters of the North Atlantic, where sinister U-boats roamed. They avoided torpedoes but struck an iceberg. Arrival at Liverpool was the signal for a pub crawl. He was no angel. His diary plots many a drinking session, with boredom a potent enemy. Recent England captain Gubby Allen, now in uniform himself, showed him London, and he met Plum Warner. Allen later recalled that Ross Gregory "had the stuff of greatness in him".

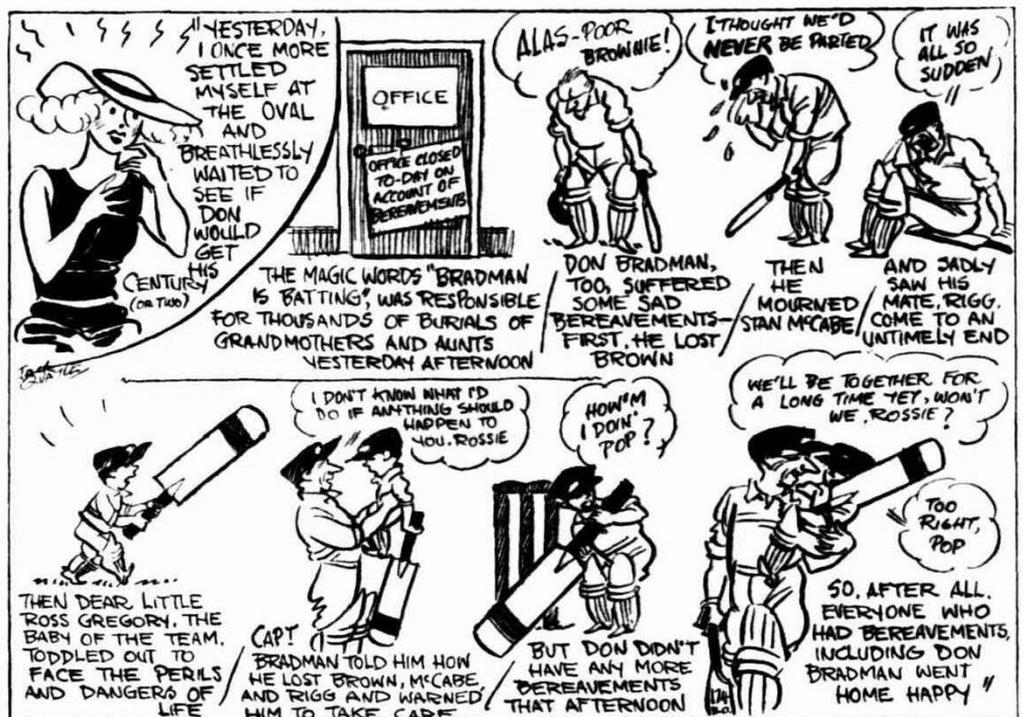
Miserable weeks followed at RAF Lossiemouth in the frozen far north, where he began his training, seldom rising much before lunch.

Top: Training at Cootamundra: only three of this group survived the war. Right: "Dora Admires 'Baby' of Side", Jack Quale, *Adelaide News*, February 3, 1937, p.4.



Early impressions of the Mother Country were not flattering – "All Pommies are numbskulls" and the youths looked pale and weedy.

In November he was posted to RAF Waterbeach, and one night witnessed a horrific crash off the runway as bombs exploded and the crew ran for their lives, not all of them making it. Four days later, while on operations, his own pilot collapsed and the Wellington went into a spin. Ross Gregory was pinned helplessly to the ceiling as the bomber spiralled out of control.



DORA AT THE TEST MATCH—FOURTH DAY—Bradman's wonderful innings and Ross Gregory's striking youthfulness gave Dora plenty of items for her diary last night. Her impressions are illustrated by Jack Quale.



The second pilot saved them. It was nothing that a few more beers wouldn't soothe.

There were other raids and close shaves, and plenty more drinking. Nerves were stretched. Such was the strain that he and a mate even considered ditching off Ireland and disappearing. They quickly recovered their sense of duty. After Pearl Harbor, like all Aussies and Kiwis, he desperately wanted to return to defend his homeland. The long delay in orders frayed his patience.

He got no further than India, via some shocking experiences in Malta, which was being bombed incessantly. He had been unimpressed with Egypt, though he and his mates had some fun. In eastern India he was without his diary, which fortunately he had sent home with a colleague. The final chapter of his war was fought out of the air base at Pandaveswar, near Calcutta, the main mission being to drop vital supplies to the British troops braving it out against the Japanese in the jungles of Burma, with a few bombs on the enemy when identified.

And it was above a remote village, Gaffargaon, on the floodplains about 50 miles north of Dhaka, on June 10, 1942, that Ross Gregory's Wellington bomber exploded in the sky. There will seemingly never be a reliable explanation. Boy witnesses, recalling the incident 60 years later, gave varying accounts. One said that "the aircraft broke into pieces in the air and it was like a red flower". Burning debris was scattered over a wide area of the flood plain, as were body parts and exploding bullets. Two of the local boys found packets of biscuits, which they gratefully ate.



Back in Melbourne, fiancée Barbara (left) was given the shock news while working in the dress-shop, and was sent home in a taxi. Her recent death at 96 has broken a tender link.

Ross Gregory's old cricket master at Wesley College, P.L. Williams, penned a tribute, listing his many college sporting honours, and recalling his triple-century stands and his magical

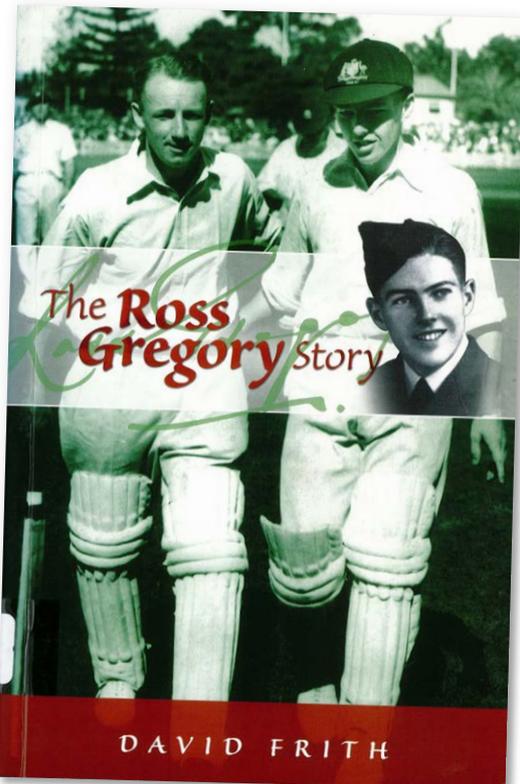
wrong'un and his personal charm and gentlemanly nature. Ross "never drew away from trouble in his life... a gentleman in all things... had a natural courtesy, kindness and friendliness... immensely popular... a man's man."

The newspaper introduced those remarks with an endorsement: "When Ross Gregory walked through the gate onto a Test cricket field he was the very embodiment of youth, vibrant and happy. Now, like many of his peers, he has trodden the path of heroes. Many cannot believe it. It seems too short a while ago to those bright happy days of play and sunshine. But the price has been paid."

Nothing was as piquant as his final letter to his parents: "Should I not return from one of the raids we make over enemy territory, you will derive a certain amount of comfort from the knowledge that I went down doing my duty." Ross went on: "In spite of my plans to marry and settle down to live a normal life in bonny Australia, I thank God that I was fit and able to withstand the more important duty of helping thousands of other freedom-loving people in the cause of justice."

He knew that reading this letter would be a harrowing experience for his parents. He considered them, and not himself, to be "the heroes of this war".

Cricketers who use military metaphors when analysing the beloved game would do well to keep this in mind.



**Top:** Ross Gregory (2nd from right) with his Wellington crew.

**David Frith's** book *The Ross Gregory Story* won the Cricket Society's annual award in 2003.

# The John Landy Collection

By Marie Pernat

The Melbourne Cricket Club Library is extremely fortunate to have acquired a substantial donation of unique and personal material from John Landy, AC, CVO, MBE, champion Australian athlete and former Governor of Victoria. The material traces his athletics achievements from schoolboy days to retirement from sport. The collection is spread across many formats and comprises over 1700 individual items.

John Landy enjoyed a distinguished athletics career, winning the bronze medal in the 1500 metres race at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games, and the silver medal in the one-mile event at the 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Vancouver. He also competed in the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki. He set world records in 1954 for the 1500 metres and one mile distances and was the first Australian athlete to break the four-minute mile barrier. He won five Australian track titles between 1953 and 1956 – 880 yards, three miles, and the one mile on three occasions.

Expert assistance was needed to identify persons in over 400 photographs that form part of the John Landy Collection. For several months, Len Johnson, the Melbourne Age athletics writer for over 20 years, former national-class distance runner and author of *The Landy Era: From Nowhere To The Top Of The World*<sup>1</sup> willingly gave many hours of his time to identify athletes and others in these

photographs as well as categorising telegrams and newspaper clippings.

**Left:** "This is urgent..." brochure published by the Olympic Civic Committee that contained an appeal to Melbourne's citizens to become hosts for visitors to the Olympic Games 1956. The cover has a photograph of John Landy and Roger Bannister during the mile race at the British Empire and Commonwealth Games, Vancouver, 1954, won by Bannister, when both men ran sub-four minutes.



**Above:** Copy of a May 21, 1956 edition of *Sports Illustrated*. Copies were sent to Mr and Mrs C.G. Landy by the Chairman of the Victoria Promotion Committee. The Committee deeply appreciated the fine effort made by John Landy in bringing Melbourne and Victoria before the American public on his trip to California when he competed there in May 1956.

Trevor Vincent, OAM, Commonwealth Games gold medallist and Olympian, also provided valuable input.

Included in the collection are 114 telegrams sent from around the world to congratulate Landy on his achievement in Turku, Finland on June 21, 1954, when he set world records for 1500 metres – 3:41.8 and for one mile – 3:57.9 (rounded up under the rules of the day to 3:58.0) in the same race. Among those who offered their congratulations were Robert Gordon Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia; Hubert Opperman; Maurice Nathan; Roger Bannister; Franz Stampfl; Landy family members; Harry Hopman; Wilfrid Kent Hughes; Geelong Grammar School, and numerous athletics clubs.

Handwritten details of Landy's training program and the effects on his body are contained in his personal diary for several weeks during June and July 1951, when he was rapidly progressing to become a world-class athlete under renowned athletics coach Percy Cerutti. Landy was self-coached from late 1952 onwards and his training regime for the 1953/54 season reveals a varied program which included track and road running, with changes in pace and distance, and weights training. Times run, including lap times, are recorded in detail.

The many photographs in the collection provide a contemporary record of key events during John Landy's career. These include numerous races at Olympic Park, Melbourne, where in excess of 20,000 spectators would crowd the venue to watch his attempts, and success, in breaking the four-minute mile barrier. Each photograph is listed in the MCC Library catalogue with details of the event, location, date, athletes and others pictured, and photographer, where indicated.

Continued p. 19



# THE GREAT FINISH!

One of us had to crack John

WEATHER BUREAU: Fine, few showers in southern districts. Scattered frosts and fogs. Westerly winds.

## The Argus

FOUNDED 1846

MONDAY AUGUST 9 1954  
 Telephone (041) 444444  
 Registered at the G.P.O., Melbourne, for transmission by post as a newspaper.

**LANDY, Landy, Landy all the way — until those last 80 yards, paralysing 150 yards...**

Then, suddenly, it was Bannister!

And the roar of 25,000 voices echoed by radio all over the world as England's champion beat Australia's by 1/5ths of a second in the greatest mile race of all time!

Roger Bannister's time: 3 min. 58.8 sec.  
 John Landy's: 3 min. 59.6 sec.

"I knew one of us had to crack — and in the end I was the one!" gasped Landy.

John says he was beaten fairly on the day, but would have won if he hadn't been forced to lead all the way.

"Someone had to make the pace and I was the one," he said.

"Roger had the advantage of getting in behind me, and I could not pass my mind just how that is."

Bannister agreed he had won because he had been able to "sit" in behind Landy and then sprint past him.

"My most dangerous moment was going around the back stretch on the last lap, when John made a few more men. I had to try and go with him without straining myself and risking one of my teeth," he said.

Exhausted after the race, Bannister also immediately reached by train, motor, and other means.

The full story, back page.

### He robbed police

While police at Bunilton were busy during the police search for an item, he on Saturday night, a thief broke in and stole £25 in cash and other items.

The item found a hidden key in the front door and another hidden key to the entrance.

Other robbery, Page 5.

MAISON MARNAY  
 \*\*\*  
 BRANDY

10



The margin of victory. Bannister about to break the tape four yards in front of Landy. — Argus special radio picture.

... It's water speedo-day mph in built-up and 50mph country. A bit (See Page In 7)

- Menzies so
- They know
- Sir Thomas before

11



7 "The Great Finish", *The Argus*, August 9, 1954. Described as the greatest mile race of all time, Roger Bannister ran the mile in 3:58.8 seconds to defeat John Landy by 0.8 of a second.

8 Telegram from Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies congratulating John Landy on his world record for the mile in 1954.

9 Telegram from Roger Bannister in 1954 congratulating John Landy on beating his world record for the mile, stating that he was "very happy it was you".

10 John Landy (right) trains with Don Macmillan at Portsea Oval, Victoria, while Percy Cerutti holds stopwatch.

11 John Landy (left) pictured with bronze medal, Ron Delany (centre), gold medallist, and Klaus Richtzenhain, silver medallist, after the 1500 metres final at the 1956 Olympic Games, Melbourne.

Posti- ja lennätinlaitos Sähkösanoma Post- och telegrafverket Telegram

Mistä \*) Frän \*) LHT23 CANVERRA 20 23 2015 IMP NORTHERN

Virkahuomautuksia Tjänstemärkningar

Vastaanotettu — Emottaget  
 JOHN LANDY TURKUFINLAND 23 VI 1954

Vastaanotti: Emottog:  
 \*) Numerot lähetyspaikan nimen jälkeen merkitsevät: 1) sähkösanoman numero, 2) sanalukku, 3) ja 4) siinä jättopäivä, -tunti ja -minuuttia.

\*) Silttoina efter avslutningsorten betydja: 1) telegrammens nummer, 2) ordantal, 3) och 4) inlämningsdatum, -timme och -minut.

WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS FROM MYSELF AND MY GOVERNMENT ON A TRULY MAGNIFICENT ACHIEVEMENT = R G MENZIES PRIME MINISTER +

Posti- ja lennätinlaitos Sähkösanoma Post- och telegrafverket Telegram

Mistä \*) Frän \*) LHT122 LONDON 22 21 2136 =

Virkahuomautuksia Tjänstemärkningar

Vastaanotettu — Emottaget  
 ELT = JOHN LANDY CARE SPORTSORGANISER TURKU 21 VI 1954

Vastaanotti: Emottog:  
 \*) Numerot lähetyspaikan nimen jälkeen merkitsevät: 1) sähkösanoman numero, 2) sanalukku, 3) ja 4) siinä jättopäivä, -tunti ja -minuuttia.

\*) Silttoina efter avslutningsorten betydja: 1) telegrammens nummer, 2) ordantal, 3) och 4) inlämningsdatum, -timme och -minut.

HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS ON WONDERFUL PERFORMANCE THRILLED BY NEWS AND VERY HAPPY IT WAS YOU = ROGER BANNISTER + + + +

15 FEET.

... vault kind ...  
 ... at 13 last ...  
 ... at 10 ...  
 ... October 20th ...  
 ... 18th, the Ja ...

Amateurs Mile, and was st



SXP-050901-5/9/56-BERKELEY, CALIF: Australian miler John Landy (foreground) shown working out on the fast Univ. of California cinder track here 5/8 with half miler Lon Spurrier in above sequence photos. Landy said he might possibly break his own 3:58 world record at the upcoming West Coast Relays. UNITED PRESS TELEPHOTO -3-



**Above:** Caricature of John Landy by Tony Rafty, 1956.

**Top Right:** John Landy jogging at the University of California, Berkeley on May 8, 1956, with Lon Spurrier jogging in the background.

**Right:** John Landy with his parents and sister Sue at Essendon Airport, May 27, 1956.

**Below:** Sergeant Des Doyle's letter to John Landy admiring Landy's performance and sportsmanship at the 1956 Australian championships. Landy stopped to help Ron Clarke who had fallen on the third lap of the mile - but Landy still won the race.

11

AS1666 Sgt John D. M  
Bure Squadron,  
Road  
Pearce W.A.

Dear John

Yesterday I listened to your run in the Amateur Mile, speaking was comprehensive and frankly staggered beyond at your performance.

To see the time you did after being so much in helping your friend really makes me wonder what you would have done had there been no mishap. But perhaps you will

if I say that the real credit lies to that you did up your friend. To me that the eyes of every athlete would be on you for that 3.57 established your history. You like a man showed a golden opportunity for the maximum of success must be yours.

12

and I must state that your friend you have, and least, will explain it to you. Without further do, - just I'm not down as another from the down W. Aus. - one who attempt by proud of "Our job" "Dammed West Algeria's" and legends.

particular I will see papers on each future, and will have you probably what you ask my Roman

Des Doyle.

13

10122101111  
1001 2-218 1111  
1001 2-218 1111



There is extensive photographic coverage of John Landy's fine sportsmanship on the occasion when he turned back mid-race to check on the wellbeing of Ron Clarke after having spiked him in the arm while trying to avoid the fallen Clarke who lay in his path, prone on the track. That event was the Australian Championships mile race on March 10, 1956, which Landy went on to win in 4:04.2 despite losing 30-40 yards to the opposition.

John Landy had already been recognised for his sportsmanship. In August 1954 this was highlighted when he received a plaque from the Amateur Athletic Association (England) inscribed "To John Landy from all his friends in Gt. Britain - on his perfect sportsmanship on and off the track".

More than one hundred letters written by local, interstate and international admirers reveal Landy's popularity, with many wishing him success in his life and in his sporting career. All kinds of cures, some highly imaginative, were suggested to assist him to overcome tendon soreness in the lead-up to the 1956 Olympic Games.

Scrapbooks full of newspaper clippings provide contemporary coverage of

**Top:** John Landy pictured with other Australian team members from the Helsinki Olympic Games (1952) at Essendon Airport on their return. (L-R) Bob Prentice, Ray Weinberg, Ron Folds, Ken Doubleday and John Landy.

**Right:** John Landy winning the mile race in 4:04.2 at the Australian championships on January 24, 1953. On the reverse of this photograph, signed to Mr Tulloch, Landy wrote, "Just a note to thank you for your letter & wish you all the best for 1954 - yours sincerely John Landy".



John Landy at the height of his success. Australian journalists writing for the *Age*, *Argus*, *Herald*, *Sun* and *Sporting Globe* feature heavily, and there are contributions from American and New Zealand journalists. The articles reflect the world-wide fame and high regard for Landy during his record-breaking years and offer glimpses of the incredible interest and excitement surrounding his races in 1954 and 1956. A dozen newspaper billboard posters add to this unique collection.

MCC Library volunteers Ann Rusden and Jim Blair organised hundreds of loose newspaper clippings into readily accessible binders, which can be found in the library catalogue. They cover periods and events such as: schoolboy athlete; Helsinki Olympic Games 1952; highlights of Roger Bannister's and John Landy's record-breaking mile races; the thrilling "Miracle Mile" at the Vancouver British Empire and Commonwealth Games 1954; Melbourne Olympic Games 1956, and post-Games.

The John Landy Collection significantly enhances the Melbourne Cricket Club Library's collection of holdings in athletics. It is a valuable resource of primary sources for sports historians and researchers on one of Australia's best and most respected athletes.

MCC members and researchers are welcome to contact the Library to arrange access to the collection. MCC Library does not lend material but it can be consulted within the Library.

The Melbourne Cricket Club Library catalogue is found at: <http://tinyurl.com/mcclcatalogue>, or can be searched from the Melbourne Cricket Club website: <https://www.mcc.org.au/mcc-reserve/mcc-library>.

**Endnotes**

1 Len Johnson, *The Landy Era: From Nowhere To The Top Of The World*, Melbourne, Melbourne Books, 2009 (MCC Library catalogue no. ATH 915.2 LANDY)

I certify that the photograph is a true likeness of the owner of identity card whose name and address are shown above, and who attended the Games of the XVI Olympiad as an Arena Official.

AUST



# Ballpark Figures:

## The MCG's World Record Baseball Crowd Myth

By Trevor Ruddell

Day nine of the 1956 Olympic Games was always likely to draw a massive crowd to the Main Stadium, the MCG. The last day of the athletics program fell on a Saturday and featured the 1500 metres final and women's 4 x 100 metres relay, two events in which Australians were tipped to perform exceedingly well. However, athletics was not the only sport scheduled. Baseball was included on the day's program as an Olympic demonstration sport, with Australia's national side facing a team drawn from American servicemen based in the Far East. The ballgame was staged before the track and field, and although the stadium was far from full when the first pitch was thrown, the MCG was filled to capacity well before the athletics program got underway. This allowed some to assume that a new world record baseball attendance had been established. The excited ground announcer apparently told spectators that they were a part of "The biggest crowd ever to watch a baseball game".<sup>1</sup> Thus began a myth.

Many Australians enjoy the story that, at least for a time, the record crowd for America's game was "ours". Jack Pollard gave this notion some credence and exposure in his book *Ampol Australian Sporting Records*. First published in 1969, he wrote: "**BIGGEST AUSTRALIAN BASEBALL CROWD:** At the demonstration staged during the 1956 Melbourne Olympics before a crowd of 110,000. This was a world record, as even American stadiums are not big enough for such a crowd."<sup>2</sup> It was repeated in subsequent editions but from 1981, under the editorship of John Blanch, it was more explicit. Baseball's attendance entry now read, "**WORLD RECORD CROWD:** Australia can claim a world record crowd when 110,000 spectators witnessed a demonstration game during the 1956 Olympic Games... No stadium in America or elsewhere could accommodate such a large crowd."<sup>3</sup>

The rationale seemed sound. Cleveland's Municipal Stadium's attendance record of 86,288 was set for a Cleveland Indians v Boston Braves World Series match on October 10, 1948. It stood as the Major League record until more than 92,000 attended three consecutive games of the 1959 World Series between the Los Angeles Dodgers and Chicago White Sox at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. The third of these games (game five of the series)

draw 92,706 on October 6, 1959. Though never a baseball world record it is still the Major League record.<sup>4</sup>

The Melbourne world record narrative, albeit with a different figure, was exposed to a global audience in the largest selling copyrighted book, the *Guinness Book of Records*. First published in 1955, ostensibly to settle pub bets, the annual and its successors has become a self appointed arbiter of world records – including sports. The first 21 volumes were edited by brothers Norris and Ross McWhirter, and while baseball attendance and receipt figures were included in these editions, they were mainly confined to the Major Leagues.<sup>5</sup>

It was only after a consultant, Stan Greenberg became the books' Sports Editor (following the death of Ross McWhirter in 1975), that the 1956 demonstration game in Melbourne found its way into this widely consulted reference book. The entry still led with Major League attendance records, but a new paragraph was added directly beneath: "An estimated 114,000 spectators watched a game between Australia and American Services team in a 'demonstration' event during the Olympic Games in Melbourne, 1 Dec. 1956."<sup>6</sup>

In time *Guinness'* 114,000 figure became somewhat of a legend. It was included in many publications as baseball's world record crowd until March 29, 2008, when 115,300 attended a preseason game between the Boston Red Sox and Los Angeles Dodgers at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Craig Muder of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum (Cooperstown, New York) described the Los Angeles ballgame as, "the first documented baseball game to top the 100,000 mark in attendance."<sup>7</sup> Muder's assertion about the 2008 game inadvertently raises questions about the MCG "record". In particular how many people attended the MCG game, and what constitutes an attendance record. If people attended a sporting event but the majority took little interest in the curtain raiser, should the day's attendance be used as the figure for the curtain raiser too? For this is the premise that supports any claim that MCG may have held a baseball world record.

Neither the *Guinness* nor *Ampol* record books acknowledged that athletics (not baseball) was the main drawcard at the MCG for day nine of the Olympics – the final day of the athletic program. Baseball was



**Top:** Blazer pocket issued to Ken Morrison of Australia's Olympic baseball team, 1956. (Kindly donated by the Morrison family, AGOS&OM 2014.4.4)

**Far Right:** Cap used by Australian baseball player Ken Morrison at the 1956 Olympic Games. (Kindly donated by the Morrison family, AGOS&OM 2014.4.1)

**Above:** Bat used by MCC and Australian baseballer Max Lord at the 1956 Olympic Games. (Kindly donated by Max Lord, AGOS&OM 1986.946)



## Baseball and the MCG

The Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) and its ground were pivotal to the establishment of organised baseball in Victoria. The earliest known baseball games in Melbourne were played in the Carlton Gardens in 1857, but it was not until 1885 that the MCG hosted its first baseball game. Officers of the visiting USF Enterprise had challenged the MCC and the Americans defeated a novice MCC team 23 to 17. In April 1888 the MCC formed a baseball club "in anticipation of arrival of visitors [Major League baseball players] from America".<sup>8</sup> The team held "practices" at the MCG, including Victoria's first inter-club baseball match against the Melbourne Baseball Club on May 17, and a game on July 4 against American residents, who largely composed the Melbourne Baseball Club.

Many at the MCC viewed baseball as a beneficial winter sport for cricketers, and it was one of the seven foundation clubs of the Victorian Baseball League (now Baseball Victoria) on July 11, 1889. It hired the Scotch College oval for baseball in 1889 to ease winter demands on the MCG, and in 1890 the MCC obtained joint occupancy of the Warehousemen's Cricket Ground (Albert Ground) for "its cricket, baseball and football teams". From 1890 until 1947 MCC Baseball's first team regularly played curtain raisers to Australian football matches at the MCG. These ceased due to an earlier football start time and the establishment of Under 19 football games as curtain raisers. The last competition game at the MCG was the 1947 VBA A1 seconds final in which the MCC defeated Prahran 10 runs to 9. From 1948 until the baseball season changed from winter to summer in 1976, the team was based at the Albert Ground. However, MCC Baseball played at the oval of Miller's

Rope Works in Brunswick in 1957, due to the Melbourne Football Club's use of the Albert Ground while the MCG was being restored after the Olympics.<sup>9</sup>



Menu to commemorate the first Baseball game at the MCG on October 8, 1885. [MCC Museum collection, M7131]

The MCG has hosted a number of representative and touring American teams. The previously mentioned "visitors from America" were Albert Spalding's All-America team and Chicago White Stockings (now Chicago Cubs). The teams played at the MCG on December 22 and 24, 1888, as well as January 1 and 5, 1889. It was a part of the Australian leg of Spalding's baseball World Tour. The MCC also played the Whitestockings on January 5.

Two and a half decades later another two Major League clubs graced the MCG when the New York Giants (now San Francisco Giants) and the Chicago White Sox played each other, as well as a Victorian side, in January 1914. A highlight of these matches was a 550-foot home run by New York Giant, Jim Thorpe, who was also a dual Olympic gold medallist (pentathlon and decathlon, Stockholm 1912) and a professional American footballer.

The MCG has hosted interstate baseball since 1904 and carnivals in 1919 and 1925, as well as matches between Victorian and Australian sides against teams from visiting US warships. During World War II, the MCG was used as a camp by the US Army Air Forces (1942) and the First Division of the United States Marine Corps (1943) who entertained themselves with softball matches on the field. The last representative ballgame at the MCG was the demonstration for the 1956 Olympic Games – in which the MCC's Max Lord played for Australia.

essentially an inconsequential curtain raiser before some of the greatest track and field athletes on the planet entered the arena to chase rare Olympic Gold. The public's interest in day nine of the athletics is reflected by the multitude of pages in Melbourne's daily newspapers dedicated to the track and field events on the December 1 program. The papers had columns of intricate analysis and celebrations of these athletes' achievements and performances, replete with colour illustrated features and lift outs. Meanwhile the coverage of the baseball game was minimal, maybe the odd 50 to 100 word paragraph including team lists. It is possible that many of the spectators who arrived at the MCG on day nine were unaware a baseball demonstration was even scheduled. Phil Elderkin described it as, "Poorly advertised and poorly timed, only a few thousand fans saw the first innings..."<sup>10</sup> For most of the ballgame the stadium was about one quarter full, however, late in the game, as footage attests, the MCG was close to capacity.<sup>11</sup> Joe Clark's *A History of Australian Baseball: Time and Game*, quoted John Langley, an Australian player who said somewhat cheekily, "During that afternoon, we commenced

our game around 12-12:30 and there weren't 114,000 people there, I must admit. By the time we finished around 3:00, there was... So it would be fair to say that baseball got the crowd for the athletics".<sup>12</sup> It is likely that a few may have attended the MCG for the baseball as well as the athletics, but all attended to watch the athletics.

But what is the basis behind these often quoted round figures of 110,000 and 114,000, and were such attendances possible at the MCG during the Olympic Games? Precise attendance figures have been kept since 1909 in *MCG Stile Books*, now held in the MCC Library and Archives. These books tallied the rotations of each turnstile for all events managed by the MCC. However, the MCC was not the ground manager for the Olympics. This role was held by the Organising Committee for the Games of the XVI Olympiad – Melbourne 1956, and unfortunately they were not rigorous keepers of MCG attendance figures. Instead, the Organising Committee's report only published numbers of tickets sold, and for day nine at the Main Stadium a total of 86,425 tickets were purchased.<sup>13</sup>



**Australian Baseball Team – Olympic Games, Melbourne 1956.**

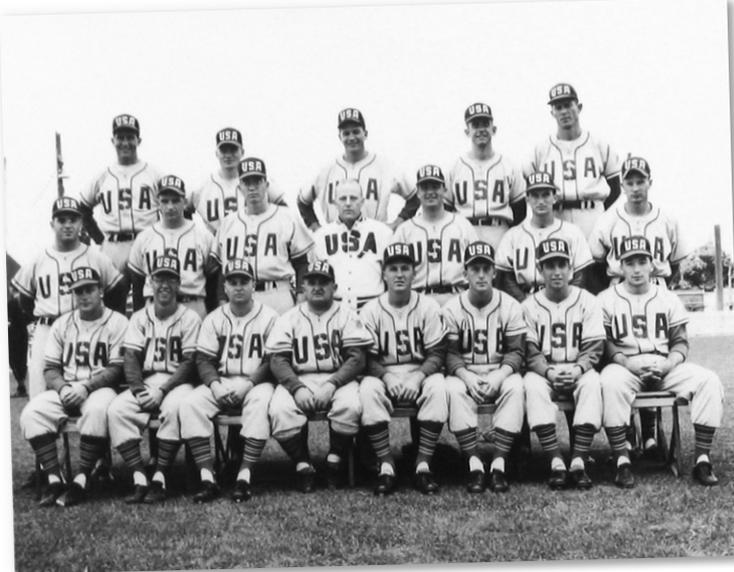
**Back:** Barry Wappett, Max Lord, Peter Box, Peter McDade.  
**Centre:** Colin Payne, Ken Morrison, Reg Darling, Bob Teasdale, Max Puckett.  
**Front:** Eddie Moule, Norm Tyshing, Ken Smith, Ross Straw, John Langley, Neville Pratt, Norm White.  
[AGOS&OM 1990.2330.2]

In November 1981 Bryce Thomas, MCC Assistant Secretary, factored in VIPs, guests, athletes, officials and ticket sales to estimate a “reasonable record of attendances” for each day of the games at the Main Stadium. This document was then pasted onto the appropriate page of the 1954 to 1958 *MCG Stile Book*.<sup>14</sup> According to Thomas’ calculations, approximately 104,400 attended the Main Stadium on day nine.

Thomas’ calculations suggest the bandied figures of 110,000 and 114,000 were inflated. In fact, capacity at the MCG was capped at 102,000 (albeit with some flexibility) for the Olympics. Health and safety concerns stemming from the 1956 Victorian Football League (VFL – now AFL) grand final, for which 115,902 squeezed in on September 15, forced organisers to dramatically reduce the stadium’s capacity. Before the grand final started, thousands had encroached onto the turf and sat some 10 deep hard against the boundary line. Other spectators scaled stands to sit on the asbestos roof of the Southern Stand and the “pillboxes” atop the newly erected Northern Stand. This caused a great deal of concern as the crush led to ambulance men treating a ground record 157 casualties. The MCC and VFL were lucky no one was killed, and had a spectator slipped off the Northern Stand they would have fallen 80 feet.<sup>15</sup>

In response to the grand final’s overcrowding the International Amateur Athletic Federation was informed by the Games Administrative Director, Percy Nette, “...that the Melbourne Cricket Ground will be able to take only 102,000 people on any day of the Olympic Games,... [and] Olympic officials had never stated the ground would hold 120,000. The original figure given to the International

**Right:** Olympic ticket for the Main Stadium on December 1, 1956, signed by Shirley Strickland (later de la Hunty) who was one of the star athletic attractions. Alongside Norma Croker, Betty Cuthbert and Fleur Mellor, Strickland won gold for Australia in the women’s 4 x 100 metres relay that day. (Kindly donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program by a private collector, AGOS&OM 2003.3903.1147)



**United States Services Baseball Team – Olympic Games, Melbourne 1956.**

**Back:** Ken Lowe, Joe Belack, Ken Cochran, Jack Clement, Vane Sutton.  
**Centre:** Floyd Lasser, Gareth Methvin, Tom Black, Steve Weissinger, Jack Riley, George Zucca, Dick Greisser.  
**Front:** Joe Poglasen, Al Pfeffer, Ben Dolson, Walter Koziatek, Bruce Holt, Jesse Finch, Rudolph Martinez, Anthony Denicole.  
[AGOS&OM 1990.2330.1]

Federation was 105,000.” However, the Victorian Health Department’s regulations would still allow 120,000 into the ground, on a calculation of 18in. of seat space or standing room of 2sq. ft. for each person. The Victorian Health Department’s chief engineer John McDonnell said that, “our figure of 120,000 was cut to about 105,000 by Olympic estimates, which allowed standing room of 3sq. ft. a person.”<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, although some crowds at the MCG likely exceeded 102,000 during the games, an extra 12,000 spectators is unreasonable, and Keith Donald’s and Don Selth’s ambitious reference to 120,000 attending day nine in *The Olympic Saga: The Track and Field Story Melbourne 1956*, seems to be based more on pre-games hype than guesstimation.<sup>17</sup> On day nine no spectators sat inside the fence or on the roofs of grandstands – unlike at the 1956 grand final. Bryce Thomas’ estimate of 104,400 therefore seems more credible than 114,000 or even 110,000.

While *Guinness* long accepted the 114,000 attendance, one prestigious sports heritage body, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, did not. Correspondence in 1996 from James L. Gates Jr., the Librarian of the Hall of Fame, to then MCC Assistant Librarian David Studham indicated that it recognised the stand alone baseball demonstration at the Berlin Olympics on August 12, 1936 as the largest attendance for a baseball match. Gates wrote that the “estimated attendance was 110,000 people.”<sup>18</sup> However, the Berlin

ballgame, like that at Melbourne two decades later, has been subject to mythmaking and inflated attendance figures – some ranging as high as 125,000.<sup>19</sup> According to the report for the 1936 Olympic Games a crowd of 92,565 attended the baseball game at Berlin’s Olympiastadion.<sup>20</sup> In 1996 the Baseball Hall of Fame may have overstated the Berlin turnout, and

# Baseball at the Games

Demonstration sports were an official Olympic feature from 1912-1992, allowing host nations to showcase non-Olympic sports to an international audience. At the 1956 Games, Australian football and baseball were each demonstrated in one-off matches at the MCG.

Baseball had already featured twice as an official demonstration sport (1912 and 1936) before its inclusion in the Melbourne Games. Indeed, it would be demonstrated three more times (1964, 1984 and 1988), before becoming an official Olympic sport from 1996-2008 and will return for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. Baseball was regarded as a sensible choice for a "foreign" demonstration sport in 1956. Highly popular in America, it had enjoyed a strong following in Australia since the 1890s.

Australian Test cricketers Neil Harvey, Les Favell and Graeme Hole were keen to compete in the demonstration match, but were deemed ineligible due to their status as professional sportsmen.<sup>21</sup> The United States were invited to send a team, and on December 1 Australia played a team of servicemen from the U.S. Far East Command at the MCG. But, unfortunately the Olympic demonstration was poorly promoted and only a few thousand spectators had arrived in time for the early innings. By the 6th inning however, over 100,000 spectators were in attendance, boosted by the afternoon's athletic and marathon events. Despite the apparent popularity of the sport, the match received almost no local news coverage, and Victorian Baseball Association's secretary Bob Black reported that the play "fell well short of the usual enthusiastic baseball game."<sup>22</sup> The United States led throughout the demonstration to secure an 11 - 5 run victory, a highlight being a bases-loaded home run by Tech. Sergeant Vane Sutton in the 3rd inning.

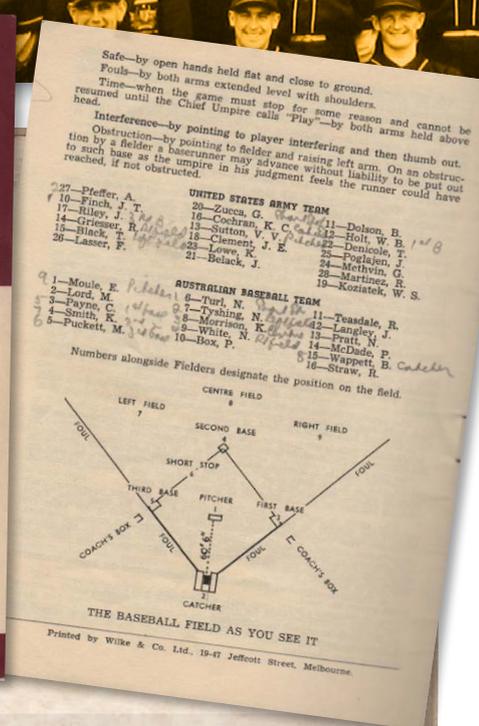
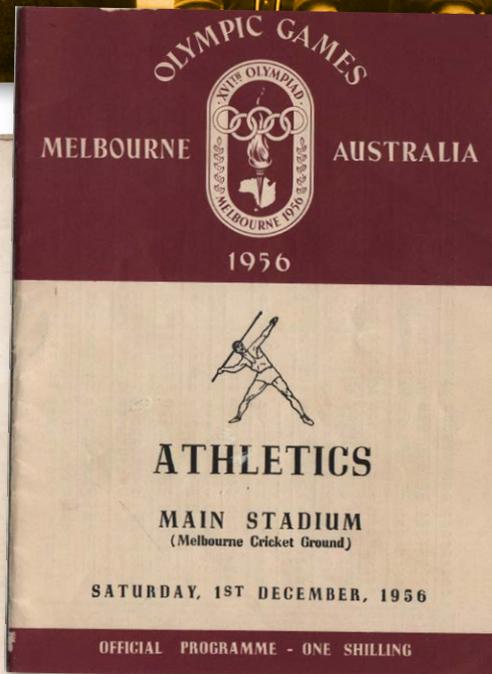
### FINAL SCORES:

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	Runs
UNITED STATES	2	0	4	0	2	3	- 11
AUSTRALIA	0	1	0	0	1	3	- 5

The United States played another three games in Melbourne once the Olympics had formally closed. The Americans met Australia on December 8 and 9, and Victoria on December 10 at the South Melbourne Cricket Ground. The United States won all their matches handsomely, but Bob Black wrote, "the American players and their Manager were amazed at the high standard of baseball in Australia and the organisation behind it." However, "these matches received very little support of our own members, who, if only for the education of seeing the American players in action, should have been out in force."<sup>23</sup>

**An exhibition featuring the 1956 demonstration sports will be on display outside the Frank Grey Smith bar until early December, 2016.**

**Top:** Official 1956 Olympic Games program for "Athletics Main Stadium" on December 1, 1956. Four pages were dedicated to explaining baseball, and the competing teams. (MCC Library collection)



### UNITED STATES

Colonel Leonard A. Weissinger	Officer-in-Charge
Staff Sergeant Walter Koziatek	Coach
Tech. Sergeant Vane Sutton	Pitcher
1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut. Anthony Denicole	Pitcher
Corporal Joe Belack	Pitcher
Seaman Joseph Poglasen	Pitcher
Airman 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Garethe Methvin	Pitcher
Private 1 <sup>st</sup> Class Rudolph Martinez	Pitcher
1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut. John Clement	Catcher
2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Ken Cochran	Catcher
Private 1 <sup>st</sup> Class Ken Lowe	Catcher
Lieut. Floyd Lasser	First Base
Private 1 <sup>st</sup> Class Alvin Pfeffer	Second Base
2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut. John Riley	Third Base
Private George Zucca	Short Stop
Seaman Apprentice Tom Black	Left Field
Airman 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Jesse Finch	Centre Field
Private 1 <sup>st</sup> Class Richard Greisser	Right Field
1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut. W. Bruce Holt	First Base
2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Ben Dolson	Utility Infield

### AUSTRALIA

Reg Darling (Victoria)	Manager
Ross Straw (Victoria)	Coach
Eddie Moule (Queensland)	Pitcher
Peter Box (South Australia)	Pitcher
Robert Teasdale (Western Australia)	Pitcher
Max Lord (Victoria)	Catcher
Barry Wappett (Queensland)	Catcher
Colin Payne (South Australia)	First Base
Ken Smith (Victoria)	Second Base
Max Puckett (Western Australia)	Third Base
Neil Turl (Victoria)	Short Stop
Norman Tyshing (Victoria)	Left Field
Ken Morrison (Victoria)	Centre Field
Norman "Chalky" White (South Australia)	Right Field
Peter McDade (Queensland)	Out Field
John Langley (South Australia)	Utility
Neville Pratt (Western Australia)	Utility

whether Melbourne drew a larger crowd may be debateable as we are without definite figures. Nevertheless, unlike the demonstration at the MCG, people attended the Berlin's Olympiastadion to watch baseball – and only baseball. It was a standalone event.

Perhaps any issues that placed the baseball attendance at the 1956 Olympics in context – that it was far from the main drawcard at the MCG and the nominated crowd of 114,000 was greatly inflated – were unknown to the editors of *Guinness Book of World Records*. It recognised the match in Melbourne as the world record until Saturday March 29, 2008 – the date 115,300 saw the Dodgers v Red Sox preseason game in Los Angeles. Stuart Claxton, a Guinness World Record judge, told MLB.com's Tom Singer, "Records are made to be broken, but this one [the MCG's baseball attendance record] took a while to be outdone." However, maybe the judges should have stripped the MCG of the supposed record long before it was "broken".<sup>24</sup> After all, you would not say the largest attendance for an AFL9s<sup>25</sup> demonstration was 100,007 on September 28, 2013, because almost all those spectators were present at the MCG to watch the 2013 AFL grand final played later that afternoon.

Today the 2008 Dodgers v Red Sox game is universally recognised as the largest baseball crowd, but what the record was prior to this is still disputed. Craig Muder's 2009 article for the Baseball Hall of Fame stated that the previous record was 93,103. It was for an exhibition game between the Los Angeles Dodgers and New York Yankees for Roy Campanella, a paralysed Dodgers player, at the

Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum on May 7, 1959. Muder wrote that it was, "the largest documented gathering for a baseball game to that point in time" and it "stood as baseball's documented attendance record for decades."<sup>26</sup>

Technically the MCG's ground announcer may have been right when late in the sixth innings he said it was the "biggest crowd ever to watch a baseball game". But the match was in effect a curtain raiser, and the announcement could be rephrased more accurately, "biggest crowd ever to watch [a portion of] a baseball game". Records are tied to the wording that defines them, and as a minority of the crowd attended that day for baseball – I would argue it was never a world record baseball attendance. Though it may have been a thrill for amateur baseballers to play for a short time in a 100,000+ stadium at capacity, an overwhelming majority of spectators thronged to the MCG that day for the events that followed the ballgame.



**Right:** The baseball demonstration game at the 1956 Olympic Games. The crowd built throughout the afternoon and although it was large at this stage of the game, the MCG had yet to reach capacity. (Kindly donated by Doris Carter OBE, AGOS&OM 1986.1047.4)

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- Craig Muder, "Fans fill Coliseum for Campanella tribute", <http://baseballhall.org/discover/inside-pitch/record-crowd-for-campanella-night>, (viewed August 10, 2016).
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- Andrew Reid, "Tall Tales and Home Truths", *Games of the XXVII Olympiad : official Olympic Games Sport Program: Baseball*, SOCOG, Ultimo (NSW), pp.36-37.
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- Fax from James L. Gates Jr., Librarian, National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum to David Studham, MCC Assistant Librarian, August 13, 1996. The game was between two teams of American amateurs styled the Olympishesmeisters (Olympics) and Weltmeisters (World Champions).
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- Annual Report and Statement of Receipts and Payments Season 1956*, Victorian Baseball Association, pp.25-26.
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# Billiards at the MCG

By David Studham

While researching an article for the Autumn 2017 edition of *The Yorker* with MCC Archivist Patricia Downs we came across a letter to MCC Secretary Vernon Ransford from the famous Walter Lindrum, holder of the World Professional Billiards Championship from 1933 until his retirement in 1950.

Here was a letter from the man whom the great Don Bradman thought was more dominant in his sport than he in his own. Undated, but stamped as received by the MCC office on "24 Feb 1942" Lindrum referred to the Australian tour he was performing "on behalf of the Australian Red Cross and Comforts Fund".

Throughout World War II Walter Lindrum performed more than 4000 exhibition matches around Australia, raising over £500,000 for charity. His letter requested assistance in holding "a billiards and snooker evening" for these charity funds, with all monies received being credited to our Club.

However, as the Secretary's rather formal reply notes, "unfortunately we dismantled our billiard tables some years ago". Indeed the Club had not had built a billiard room, or

included any table in the third Members' Pavilion that was constructed in 1928.

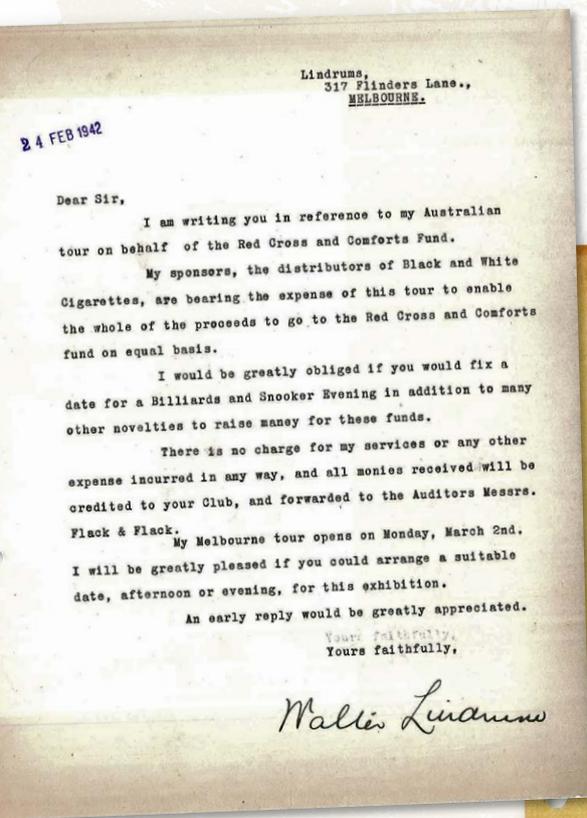


It was upon the completion of the second Pavilion in 1881 that billiards became an activity available for MCC members at the MCG for over 40 years. The *Minutes of MCC Committee Meeting*, held at the Exchange, on May 3, 1881 noted on the plans for the new pavilion,

Resolved that the Architect [Mr. Salway] be asked to prepare specifications at once and call for tenders, the total expenditure on building to be confined to £3500 so as to leave a margin of £500 for Billiard Tables and Architects Commission.

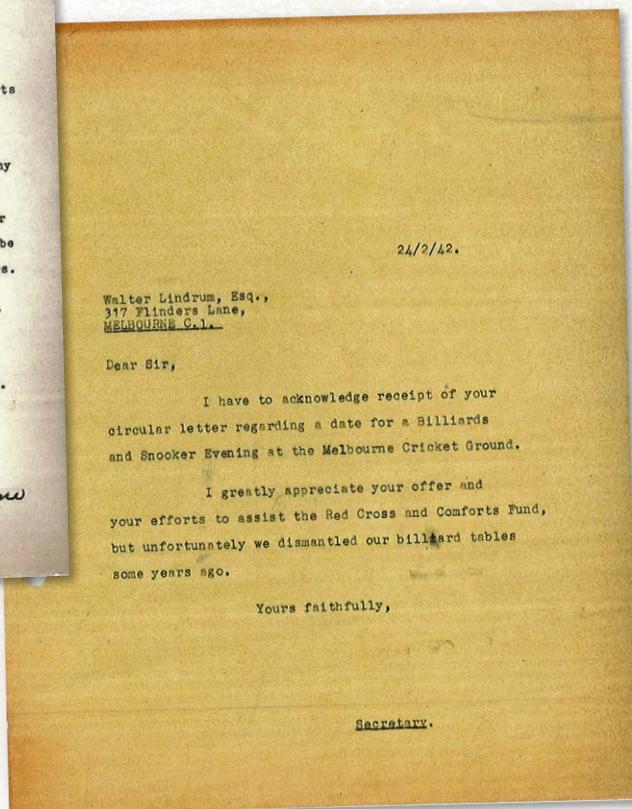
In the *Australasian* of Saturday September 24, 1881, Felix reported extensively on the details of the new pavilion on page 397, including that, "On the first floor, which will be reached by two spacious stairs, there will be a first eleven dressing-room, 18ft by 24½ft., and a similar room for the lawn-tennis players; also a reading-room, 16ft. by 12ft.; committee-room, 16ft by 17ft.; and the pavilion proper, 49ft 3in by 23ft 3in., with a height of 18½ft. besides these there will be a Billiard-room 50 ft by 23½ft., brilliantly lighted from above."

The *Argus*, of Monday December 19, 1881 reported on page 6 about the completed MCC



Letter from Walter Lindrum to the MCC Secretary February 1924 (above) and copy of the reply from Vernon Ransford (right), from MCC Archives

Top: Walter Lindrum by William Longstaff, 1932. (National Portrait Gallery)





Pavilion, noting that "the refreshment department and Billiard room have been let to Mr. A. H. Simmonds for £300 a year". By the middle of the following year the *Minutes of MCC Committee Meeting*, held on July 4, 1882, "Resolved that a prize of £5/5/- be given for a Billiard Tournament, not less than 20 entries to be received at 5/- each". However, members' tournaments took time to be established and a formal annual event was started in 1886. This tournament, accompanied by a mix of other less-regular social events, would run for 26 years.

The *1888/89 MCC Annual Report* in a section headed "M.C.C. Billiard Tournaments" noted that,

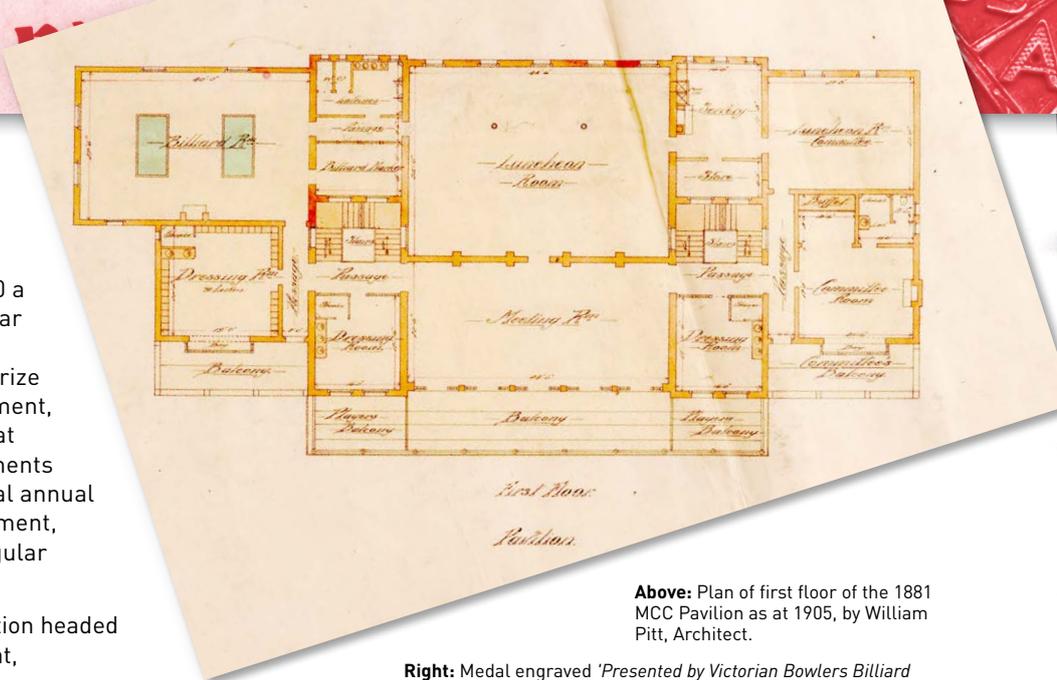
Several billiard tournaments have been played during the season. For the one now in progress 64 entries have been received, and owing to donations from Mr H. Skinner of £10 10s. and of £10 10s. from the Club, substantial Trophies as prizes have been offered, amounting in all to £53.

The report concluded with remarks that,

The room has been lately painted, and the tables put into thorough good order. The Committee believe that the Club has in its possession a most complete room, where the game of billiards can be enjoyed by the members without any objectionable surroundings.

Interest in the annual tournament peaked in the 15 years or so from the last few years of the nineteenth century through to 1910. Elaborate programmes were produced for the event listing the conditions, prizes, entrants (with handicaps) and the draws. All were funded through the extensive commercial advertisements.

The *1911/12 MCC Annual Report* in a section headed "Billiards." noted that,



**Above:** Plan of first floor of the 1881 MCC Pavilion as at 1905, by William Pitt, Architect.

**Right:** Medal engraved 'Presented by Victorian Bowlers Billiard Assn, Championship 1917-18, Won by T.W. Tyrer' the MCC's only winner of the competition.

Owing to the difficulty of obtaining sufficient entries during the winter months, the Annual Billiard Tournament for Members [for 1912] has been postponed until the beginning of the summer, when it is anticipated greater interest will be taken in the event.

A tournament entry did not appear in the following year's accounts, while noting that the 1911/12 season tournament [for 1911] had cost £9/2/6. While the members' tournament did not re-appear again in the reports or the club accounts, the billiard room and tables remained popular with members for social play up to the start of the Great War.

However a new phenomenon soon emerged which took competitive billiards in an entirely new direction for the MCC. As the billiards correspondent of *Winner*, wrote in the August 11, 1915 edition, "Billiards has caught on mightily with bowlers" and the MCC Bowls section had taken up the past-time in winter months and entered teams in the new Victorian Bowlers' Billiard Association competition.

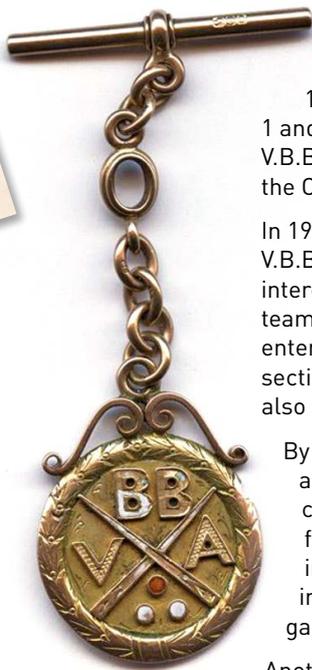


Frank H. Hart of *Winner* outlined the background to the Association on page 12 of the October 14, 1914 issue, Connected with almost every bowling club in the metropolitan area of Melbourne is a billiard room, with, in many instances, two tables. During the winter months, when to roll a ball over the grass is at once unseasonable and impracticable members find agreeable diversion indoors, testing their skill on a "green" of cloth, instead of turf. Inter-club billiard tournaments are by no means a new idea; but strangely enough bowling clubs did not take the matter up until this year.

MCC was one of the 20 inaugural clubs to join the V.B.B.A., playing in section 4 where they finished runner-up to Box Hill with 8 wins and

**Left:** 1909 and 1910 MCC members' annual billiard tournament programmes.

**Facing:** Conditions, prizes and entrants for the 1910 tournament.



2 losses. The following year they were not so lucky, finishing second bottom. By 1917 and 1918 MCC had teams in sections 1 and 4 and in the 1918 MCC's T. Tyrer won the V.B.B.A.'s individual championship tournament, the Club's first, and only, victory.

In 1919 with the end of the Great War, the V.B.B.A. competition experienced increased interest and split into two sections, "A" with teams of two and "B" with teams of four. MCC entered a team in both, and were graded in section 1 of A Grade and section 4 of B Grade, also entering the new snooker competition.

By this time the Association had deemed advisable to introduce a rule that would confine the entries to men who were bona fide bowlers. Before a man could take part in the competition he must have played in three pennant matches or four friendly games.

Another aspect of the post-war era was the Association's desire to partake in inter-association competition and the MCC's billiard room featured in the first such event. *The Ballarat Star* of Wednesday September 29, 1920, reported on page 4,

Inter-Association matches were played between teams representing the Ballarat Bowlers' Billiard Association and the Victorian Bowlers' Billiard Association. The first match was played at the pavilions of the M.C.C. and Richmond Union clubs, 8 a side, on Saturday 4th October, 1919, and was won by the metropolitans by 151. Scores:— V.B.B.A., 2053; B.B.B.A.:1902.

Post play the two teams gathered at the MCC Pavilion for the announcement of results and refreshments. The competition was held prior to the VFL final between Richmond and Collingwood, and the billiard players were invited by the MCC to remain to watch the match.

The Inter-Association match proved the high-water mark for billiards at the MCG and thereafter came a rapid decline. The 1919/20 *Annual Report* recorded that "the Club entered a team for the [1920] V.B.B.A. tournament, and up to the present have won 3 games and lost 3."

In March 1920 the Club proposed re-orientating the two tables in the billiard room to make space for the addition of a small bar. By then the billiards experiment with the MCC bowlers was already on the wane and the bowlers entered a team in the competition

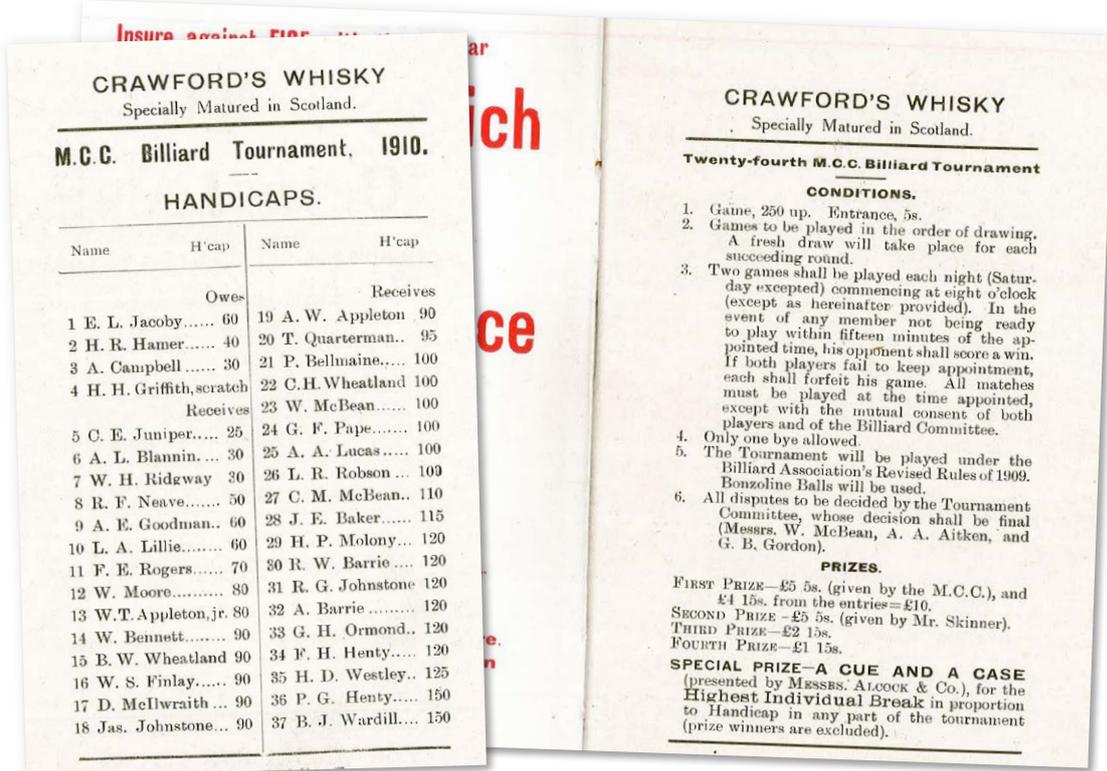
one final time in 1921, which had very limited success. As there were no further formal competitions the use of the tables and room reverted to social billiards.

By the mid 1920s plans were underway to replace the 1881 pavilion and in 1924 the *MCC Committee Minutes* reveal the final plans for the Club's billiard room. At the June 3, 1924 meeting of the Building Committee, "Specifications for redecorating interior of the [billiard] room were laid on the table - [Lowest tender to be accepted]". The minutes of the General Committee meeting held on July 29, 1924 contain a section ominously entitled "Old Billiard Room" which read "refurbishing as Committee Luncheon Room, Carpet, Linoleum, Chairs. Left to Mr Forrester, Mr Johns and Secretary".

The final mention of the room occurred in the Finance Committee meeting minutes for August 25, 1924 under "Billiard Room Refurbishing" with "CB Parks tender to be accepted". What happened to the two billiard tables is unknown; there is no mention of their disposal in the minutes or club financial reports.

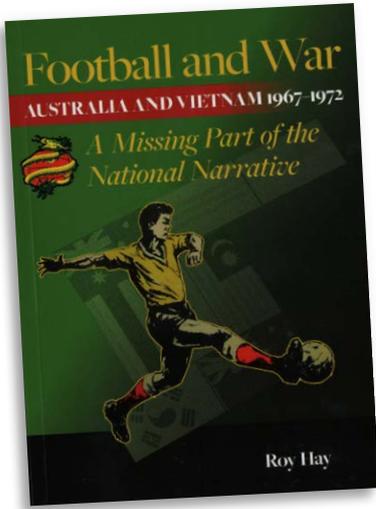
When plans were drawn up for the replacement pavilion, a billiard room was not one of the facilities on the list of the members' essential requirements. When the 1881 Pavilion was demolished in 1927, with it ended the MCG's last link with billiards, and the many happy memories for many of the members who had enjoyed the game. It soon became a distant memory. Mr Lindrum's letter to the MCC proposing a billiards and snooker night was over 18 years too late.

Billiards was one of the inaugural sports of the MCC's Ball Pentathlon with squash, golf, lawn tennis and bowls. The Ball Pentathlon was a multisport tournament open to all MCC members and MCC Sporting Section members from 1971 to 1999. Without facilities at the MCG the billiards leg was played off-site. So when MCC billiards resumed in 1971 (albeit not as a Sporting Section) it was at the Victorian Club, in Queens Street.





# Reviews



Roy Hay  
***Football and War: Australia and Vietnam 1967-1972: A missing part of the national narrative***  
Sports & Editorial Services  
Australia: Bannockburn (Vic), 2016  
ISBN: 9780994601902

This ambitious work by leading soccer scholar Roy Hay draws attention to a largely forgotten 1967 visit of the Australian National Soccer team to South Vietnam at the height of the Vietnam War. This tour culminated with the Australian

Soccer Team winning its first international tournament. Hay explores the rationale for the tour, the reception of the team in Australia and in Vietnam, and why this sporting triumph has been largely ignored in the Australian national narrative. Interwoven with this fascinating story is a wide range of topics including the early history of soccer in Australia and Australia's attempts to become part of soccer's Asian Confederation. Hay also investigates the central role sporting success played in Australian identity from World War II until the 1970s. International sporting successes asserted Australia was no longer, as Hay says, "a sluggish back water at the end of the world." Hay's ambitious, broad work is a successful exploration of a largely forgotten Australian sporting triumph.

One of the strengths of Hay's work is the clear and simple prose. Hay's book is concise and easy to follow. Those who know little about soccer (this reviewer included) will find the explanation and analysis of the matches easy to follow; an entertaining, not overly technical description of the outcome and twists and turns of games.

Hay's research is impressive. Lists of tour statistics, references and notes are included as appendixes. The early history and reputation of soccer in Australia as an "ethnic" game is thoroughly explained in a very readable manner. Similarly the foundation and subsequent struggles of Australian soccer's first national body, the Australian Soccer Federation, is detailed, without being laborious to read. The protracted endeavours of Australian soccer to be included in the Asian Confederation for international soccer events are laid out in a clear and concise manner.

Australia's longstanding desire to join soccer's Asian Confederation was finally realised in 2005. Hay contends that this quest was initiated by the tour to Vietnam, an interesting and well-argued thesis. Hay successfully uses the Australian tour of South Vietnam in 1968 as a microcosm to explore the many issues faced by Australian soccer both then and now.

Hay also investigates the political dimensions of embarking on a soccer tour to South Vietnam, during the Vietnam War. The tour resulted in Australia's first international soccer

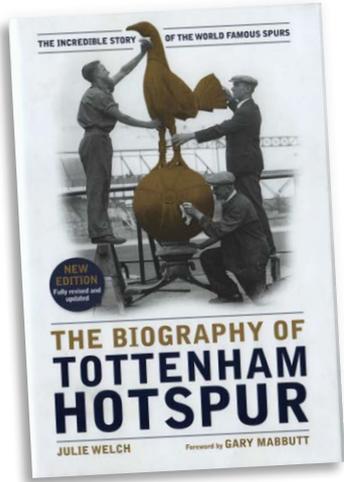
tournament triumph, but is neglected from the Australia's national narrative. Hay aims to discover why this is the case. Hay concludes the tour was approved for three main propaganda reasons; firstly to bolster Australian soldiers' spirits; secondly to help win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people, and thirdly as an exercise in political "soft power", by the South Vietnamese Government attempting to show South Vietnam was stable enough to successfully host an overseas tournament safely. It was hoped a successful tour and tournament would justify other nations' (such as Australia) controversial support and involvement in the Vietnam War.

While soldiers appreciated the presence of the team, the tour did not meet many of its other propaganda goals. While games were well attended, there was little coverage in contemporary South Vietnamese media. Moreover, Hay notes that throughout the tournament players were confronted with mine detectors on the fields, and the sounds of gunfire at night. The day before the Australian team arrived, the Presidential Palace in Saigon was shelled, making a mockery of the safety and stability which supposedly existed in South Vietnam. Using players' testimony, Hay argues that the players were aware of the propaganda nature of the tour, but were focused on increasing the morale of soldiers, not the subtler propaganda aims.

Equally fascinating is Hay's discussion of why the tour was ignored following the players' return to Australia. Hay attributes this lack of recognition to three key developments. Firstly, the tour coincided with changing attitudes towards the war. Public opinion throughout the Vietnam War was highly volatile and anti-war sentiment escalated after the Tet Offensive, which occurred shortly after the players returned. Hay's second reason for the 1968 tour's lack of impact on the Australian national narrative is the players' homecoming coincided with the disappearance of Harold Holt, which dominated the media and public consciousness. Hay's final reason is the prevailing interpretation of soccer as "a wicked foreign game" and not popular with the majority of Australian society. Hay demonstrates this nicely with an anecdote from player George Keith, who, while participating in a parade in Sydney celebrating the team's success, realised that the vast majority of the crowd had no idea who they were.

Hay's book is interesting, well researched, and well-written. *Football and War* covers the trials and tribulations of the Australian Soccer Federation, and Australia's attempts to be accepted into soccer's Asian Confederation. The book also discusses the significance of the absence of the 1968 tour to Vietnam from the national narrative, and highlights the importance historic and cultural context plays on the acceptance and interpretation of events in a nation's consciousness. Hay's work is highly recommended, for soccer enthusiasts and those interested in Australia's national narrative and the reasons behind what is included, and excluded, from this story.

**Jack Matthews**



Julie Welch  
**The Biography of Tottenham Hotspur**  
 Vision Sports Publishing: Surrey,  
 Revised edn. 2015.  
 ISBN: 9781909534506

*The Biography of Tottenham Hotspur* is an extraordinary book. Julie Welch has an entertaining, easy to read style that is peppered with witty and unusual expressions. Even her chapter headings have zest! Her knowledge of her subject is extensive. She was, after all, an award winning

football reporter for *The Observer* and despite her mother's early opposition, Welch has always been an unashamedly passionate supporter of the Spurs.

Tottenham's story begins in 1882 when three boys standing under a lamppost decided that a football club was in order. They named it Hotspur after the Shakespearean Henry IV character, a character based on Sir Henry Percy, killed in 1403 during the Battle of Shrewsbury. The Percy family owned the land where the boys played. Locations and clubrooms seemed to change within the area, usually for dubious reasons, which Welch reveals. However, White Hart Lane was home for most of the club's history.

Welch provides us with an intimate analysis of many games, warts and all, for those who wish to relive the action. The culture at White Hart Lane, a blend of talent, persistence, motivation and a jovial familiarity, might best be illustrated when the Duchess of Kent asked Danny Blanchflower why the Leicester team had names on track suits while Tottenham did not. His response, "We all know each other".

The style of play seemed to take precedence over winning, though clearly both would have been very welcome. Reading the book I discerned that Spurs supporters seem to have an unwavering optimism, an optimism that was frequently dashed at the last hurdle. The team often snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. More cups were won, but the big prizes eluded them and relegation always loomed.

The glamour, sophistication and the intelligence of the players attracted Welch. The elegant, "pass and move" style of play, unfamiliar in southern England, came from the Scottish influence with first, Cameron, then McWilliam, both managing the Spurs to an FA Cup in 1901 and 1921 respectively. Bill Nicholson followed forty years later with the much sought after double. Nicholson provided the Scottish style of play as well as stability. He was loved by all, deservedly so with his forty years of club history. With his departure, the revolving door began to spin with alarming acceleration. Managers, coaches and players were cast aside, usually because of personality clashes and/or a lack of results. Christian Gross lasted three matches. George Graham, an Arsenal man loathed by players and supporters, was a strange and short lived appointment. Martin Jol was sacked at half time during a match.

The book does not just document Tottenham's teams and managerial appointments, it also delves into scandals that have rocked the club. Spurs official Henry Norris not only fiddled the books, he sold the team bus and pocketed the proceeds. The result was a lifetime ban. The financial history

alone is worth the book. The club had humble origins, with players working in a carpet factory, but by the late twentieth century, the wealthy newspaperman Robert Maxwell sought to take over the Spurs before the colourful businessman Alan Sugar provided a rescue package, and Daniel Levy's English National Investment Company took control.

The careers of many of Tottenham's greats are covered, such as internationals like Jimmy Greaves, Alan Gilzean, Martin Chivers, Steve Perryman, Glenn Hoddle and Paul Gascoigne. Danny Blanchflower was a stalwart of the team, as was Harry Kane in later years. Welch also looks at less glamorous footballers such as Steffan Freund, who apparently could neither score nor play, yet his passion and work ethic endeared him to players and fans. Other Spurs are remembered fondly for reasons off the pitch. Walter Tull was the first black man to be an officer in the British Army, while John White died tragically on a golf course.

Soon the scene of so much of Tottenham Hotspur's story will be no more, as the club will move to a new 61,000 capacity stadium in the winter of 2017/18. With the move will travel some tangible memories of White Hart Lane. The ashes of much loved Bill Nicholson and his wife Darkie will be taken from their secret location at the ground and reinterred at Northumberland Park, the Spurs' new home.

This is a brilliant book, beautifully written and researched, a great read for everyone. Tottenham fans will certainly enjoy the story, perhaps with a touch of frustration.

**Lesley Smith**

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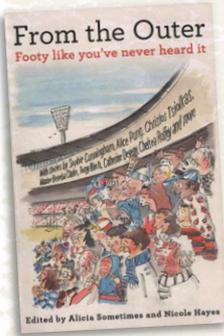
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*Ask for Santo*



Alicia Sometimes & Nicole Hayes (eds.)  
**From The Outer: Footy like you've never heard it**  
 Black Inc.: Carlton, 2016  
 ISBN: 9781863958288

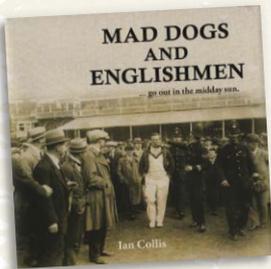
*From the Outer* is a unique book on Australian football. Entertaining, and often thought provoking, it is a collection of 30 personal stories from a widely diverse group of people.

The constant theme is one of demonstrating the amazing effect the game has had on such an array of people from so many backgrounds. Contributions include those from women, the LGBTI community, indigenous Australians and recently arrived migrants.

Chelsea Ruffey, the first woman to officiate as a grand final goal umpire, especially enjoys comments directed at her whilst on duty – including mobile phone numbers called across the fence as she is writing down the score! She gratefully receives the “razor sharp” observations on tight decisions volunteered from spectators irrespective of the number of beers consumed, or the angle from which they were viewing.

Jason Tuazon-McCheyne who wrote, “I knew I was gay when I was five years old”, outlines his very courageous journey through an often hostile environment. His tale culminates in the launch of the Purple Bombers - the Essendon Football Club’s LGBTI supporter group.

Comedienne Catherine Deveny is quite the contrarian! She boldly states, “I hate football!” She outlines how pervasive and



Ian Collis  
**Mad dogs and Englishmen ... go out in the midday sun**  
 New Holland Publishers: Chatswood (NSW), 2015  
 ISBN: 9781742578385

I will admit that it was the name of the book that drew me in rather than its content. Noel Coward’s song of the same title was the inspiration for my final high

school drama assessment and I am proud to say, my dad’s old Gray-Nicolls indoor cricket bat was my main prop. But my knowledge of cricket is firmly of that which is in the collective consciousness of the public. I know of Bradman and the Ashes. I could possibly name

some current Australian and international cricketers at a stretch, but not much more. My knowledge of the history of Quidditch is better than of cricket. So to find myself wanting to flip through the pages of *Mad Dogs and Englishman* once more after going through it the first time for purpose of review is high praise.

115 years of cricket has been represented in pictures, accompanied by the informative and clever captions of Ian Collins. It is not just the actual play of the game shown either. Rare pictures show not only the game itself, but the players off the pitch and society around the game. Pictures of the English team holidaying in Sydney during the infamous “Bodyline” series are a wonderful example of how the game is more than just what occurs on the pitch. Pictures of supporters and groundsman, media and coaches find themselves in amongst the cricketers and the games, along with



Ross Fitzgerald (ed.)  
**Heartfelt Moments in Australian Rules Football**  
 Connor Court Publishing: Redland Bay (Qld), 2016  
 ISBN: 9781925138948

This collection of articles by a disparate group of authors makes good reading for followers of our national game. A variety of views from a number of politicians, players, journalists and supporters take us through their memorable moments and their

emotions brought out by events, good and bad, in which their clubs have been involved.

Players include Essendon champion John Birt who tells of the four grand finals in which he played, Collingwood’s Andrew Ireland takes us through his heartache playing in the two 1977 grand finals, and Michael O’Loughlin writes of his playing days

with Adam Goodes and his admiration of Goodes for his conduct on and off the field. Racism in football is also mentioned by O’Loughlin and is covered in greater detail in a chapter by author and television presenter Dick Whitaker.

Many politicians are included. John Elliott and Jeff Kennett take us through their times at the helm of Carlton and Hawthorn. Amanda Vanstone, Josh Frydenberg, Julie Bishop and Chris Bowen give us their feelings on their support of Port Adelaide, Hawthorn, West Coast Eagles and Greater Western Sydney respectively.

Emotion, or as the title suggests “heartfelt” emotion, is certainly evidenced by articles including those by Barry Dickins about his early days at the Brunswick Street Oval and the eventual demise of the Fitzroy Football Club, the editor’s chapter on the life and death of Darren Millane, Geraldine Doogue’s misery when her beloved Swans lost the 2014 grand final and Gerard Henderson’s description of his heartbreak as a five year old when John Coleman was suspended in 1951 will resonate with all supporters.

Ross Fitzgerald (ed.) – a Collingwood supporter 😊  
**Heartfelt Moments in Australian Rules Football**  
 Connor Court Publishing: Redland Bay (Qld), 2016  
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I mean, REALLY. Would anyone want to read a bunch of chapters written by a number of total megalomaniacs telling us all the wonderful things they have done for their clubs and the world in general. Need any more be said when the contributors include a number of current and former politicians, including such blushing violets as Jeff Kennett, John Elliott, Josh Frydenberg, Julie Bishop and Chris Bowen, all telling us of their heartrending support for their local club, or, in Kennett’s case, how he singlehandedly saved

Hawthorn and got them to the powerhouse they now are. Probably just an oversight, but John Elliott omits to mention the sanctions incurred by Carlton as a result of his outstanding time at the club.

The book consists of a number of players telling us how wonderful they were, supporters telling us how wonderfully they have supported their club through thick and thin and women telling us how wonderfully they have taken on roles at their clubs.

The whingeing is unbelievable - Gerard Henderson about the Coleman report in 1951, Sally Murphy about Fremantle not winning a premiership, Geraldine Doogue about the Swans losing the grand final in 2014, Anthony Cappello about Geelong



ubiquitous it can be. "You could make immediate enemies or an instant friend the moment you reveal your team." The ever constant opening line, "Who do you barrack for?" has forever been an enduring identifier.

Throughout the book, many factors are explored in making the critical decision on which club to follow and, on the rare occasion the need to change such allegiances. Close relatives following different teams can cause all manner of tension! Then there is the match day routine, and the great range of moods the result can engender.

As is made abundantly clear, there are many individuals who may never cross the white line in combat, but their sense of well-being is very much affected by those who do!

**Edward Cohen**

snippets of lyrics from the book's namesake song. They range from the serious to the more comical, allowing for an ebb and flow throughout cricketing history that ensures it isn't a dry read or simple perusal of the pictures.

While the collection of pictures is vast and varied, there is a distinct lack of attribution along with them. For those who want more information, beyond what the captions could provide, there is little in the way of a direction they take in getting that information; especially if it was about the actual photo itself rather than the events surrounding the photo. It is a book designed to be for trivia and nostalgia rather than as a reference. However, given its intent doesn't seem to be anything more than this, it is not a detrimental fact.

**Nikki Imberger**

It is pleasing to note that nearly a quarter of the contributors are women, including the Bulldogs' Vice President Susan Alberti and Richmond President Peggy O'Neill. There is even a piece by Cardinal George Pell on his signing with Richmond, only to decide to follow what may or may not be a higher calling.

The interest this book generates is not only in the recounting a number of events, some of which we have read of previously, but just as much for the small insight of which we are provided of another, more human, side of these public figures and also for illustrating the depth of feeling for their clubs of supporters, young and old.

With short chapters on a variety of subjects, this is a book that can be read in short bursts and will bring back many recollections for followers of our game.

**Quentin Miller**

losing the 1989 grand final, and Barry Dickins about the demise of Fitzroy. I mean – GET OVER IT!

We are all, of course, much better off having been told by George Pell that he signed with Richmond but chose a somewhat lesser calling.

Just think how much better off the world would have been if all the trees that were cut down to produce this drivel had been left to grow.

Thoroughly recommended.

**"Anon"**

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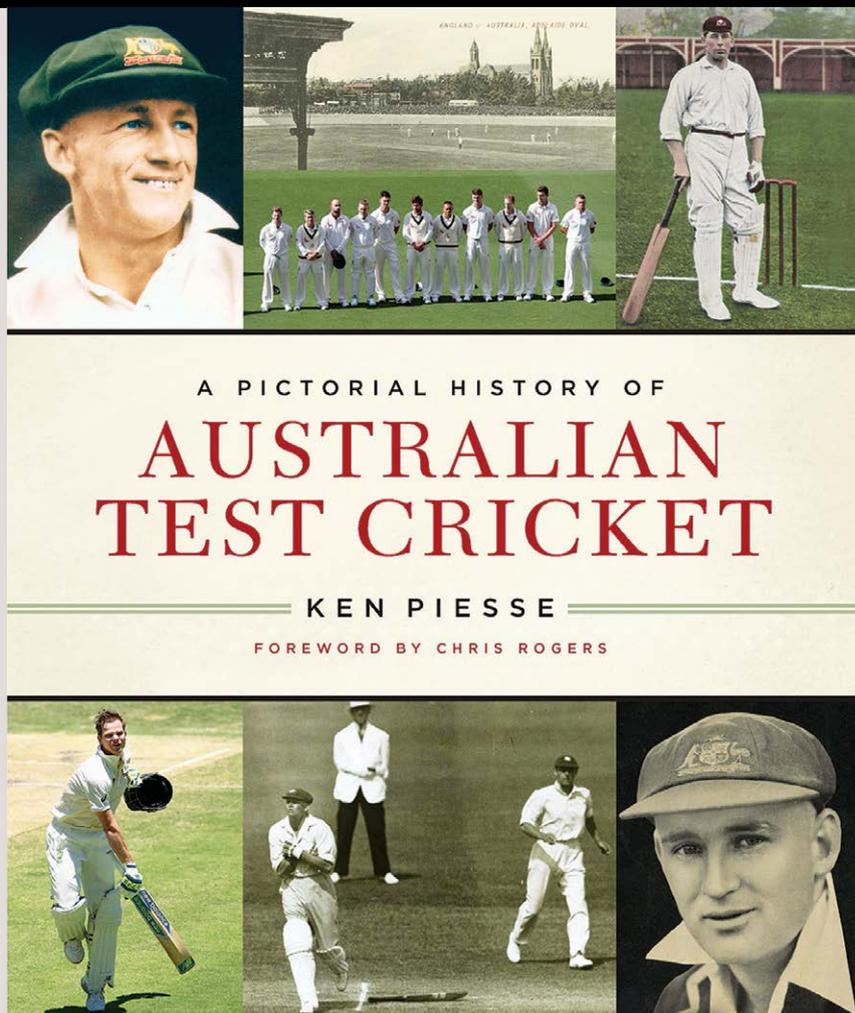


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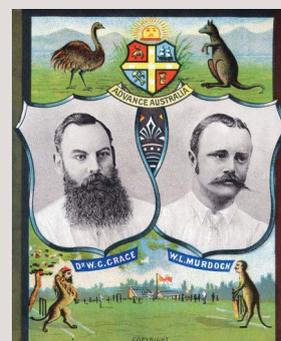
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