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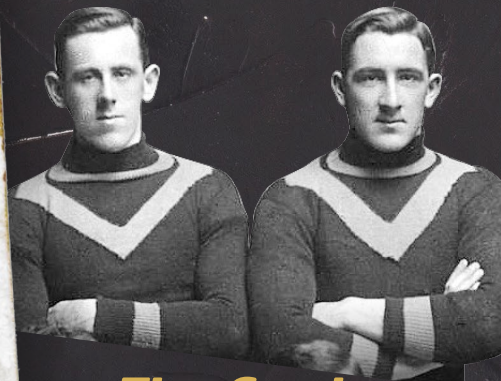
The YORKER



**Frank Laver's
Piano**

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Piano



**The Cordner
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Family

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Bookmark**

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Take a

Bookmark

**The Old
Richmond
Racecourse**

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The Old

Richmond

Racecourse

Richmond Racing Club



Richmond

Monday, 17th Feb., 1913.

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

**J. WREN,
General Manager.**

ISSN 1839-3608

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

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

The **YORKER**

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VALE TOM WANLISS 1925-2019

The Library was saddened to receive the news that Tom Wanliss had died on May 3, 2019 aged 93. A MCC Library volunteer and *Yorker* contributor, Tom was instrumental in creating the early MCC Library Fact Sheets with Stan Bannister. In the pre-internet era this required painstaking research. Fact Sheets began as speech notes for the Committee Room that were later distributed from the old Library for members and their guests.

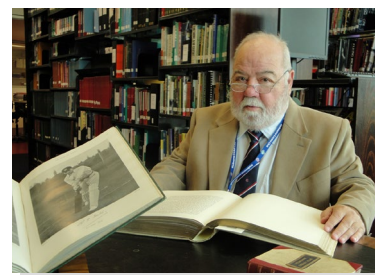
Tom worked for the Commonwealth Bank from 1942 and later the SEC, retiring in 1982. He was an active volunteer for the Library from 1988 to 2007. He was also a member of the Australian Cricket Society, volunteered with the Collingwood Football Club archive, and the Australian Jazz Museum. While Tom is gone, he will always be remembered at the Library as a genial man and parochial Magpie supporter who would recall details of cricket and football matches from the 1930s – as if they were yesterday.

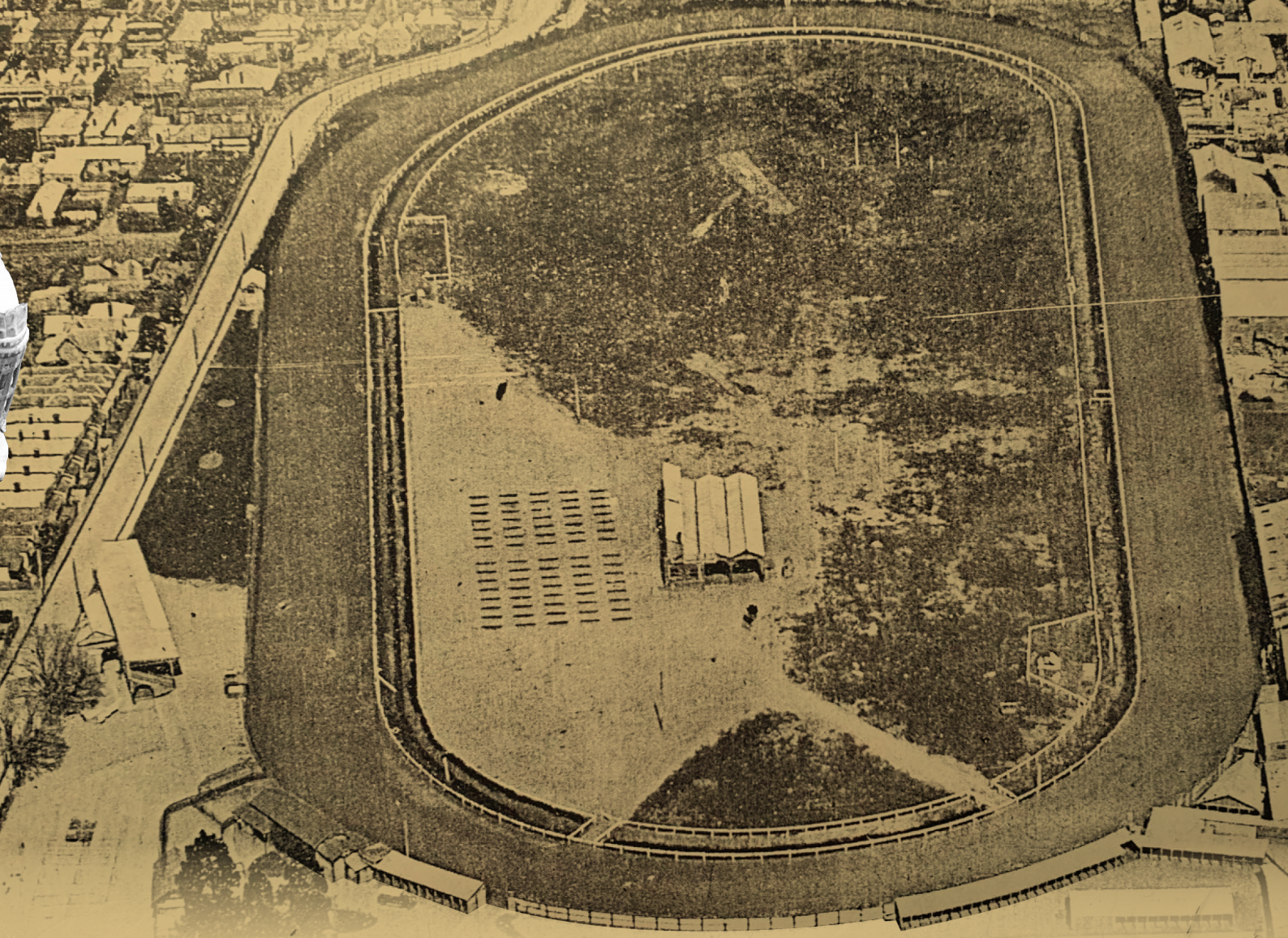


VALE JIM BLAIR 1941-2019

Jim Blair joined the MCC Library volunteers in June 2008. A charming Scotsman, with a BSc from the University of Glasgow, Jim immigrated to Australia in the early 1970s. He worked for 40 years in developing and implementing computer software, and 10 years in the introduction of electronic office systems. He was an Associate of the Securities Institute of Australia.

Jim was one of the Library's Thursday volunteers, and alongside Ann Rusden, he would assist with exhibitions for the Library foyer, or the Grey Smith display cases. This would involve the selection of objects, or the writing of text panels. Jim also wrote research articles for *The Yorker* and was a regular reviewer of books for the Library as well. Jim's knowledge of sports history and his dry wit are greatly missed. All from the Library send their sympathy to his widow Anne.





The Old Richmond Racecourse

Wren, Pony Racing and Sport

By David Langdon and Trevor Ruddell

In the 1890s the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) struggled to meet the demands of its increasing number of sports teams. As a result it cast about for suitable fields and playing spaces. One venue the club considered leasing at the turn of the twentieth century was the Richmond Racecourse. Ultimately the MCC opted not to lease it, but what and where was the now long demolished Richmond Racecourse?

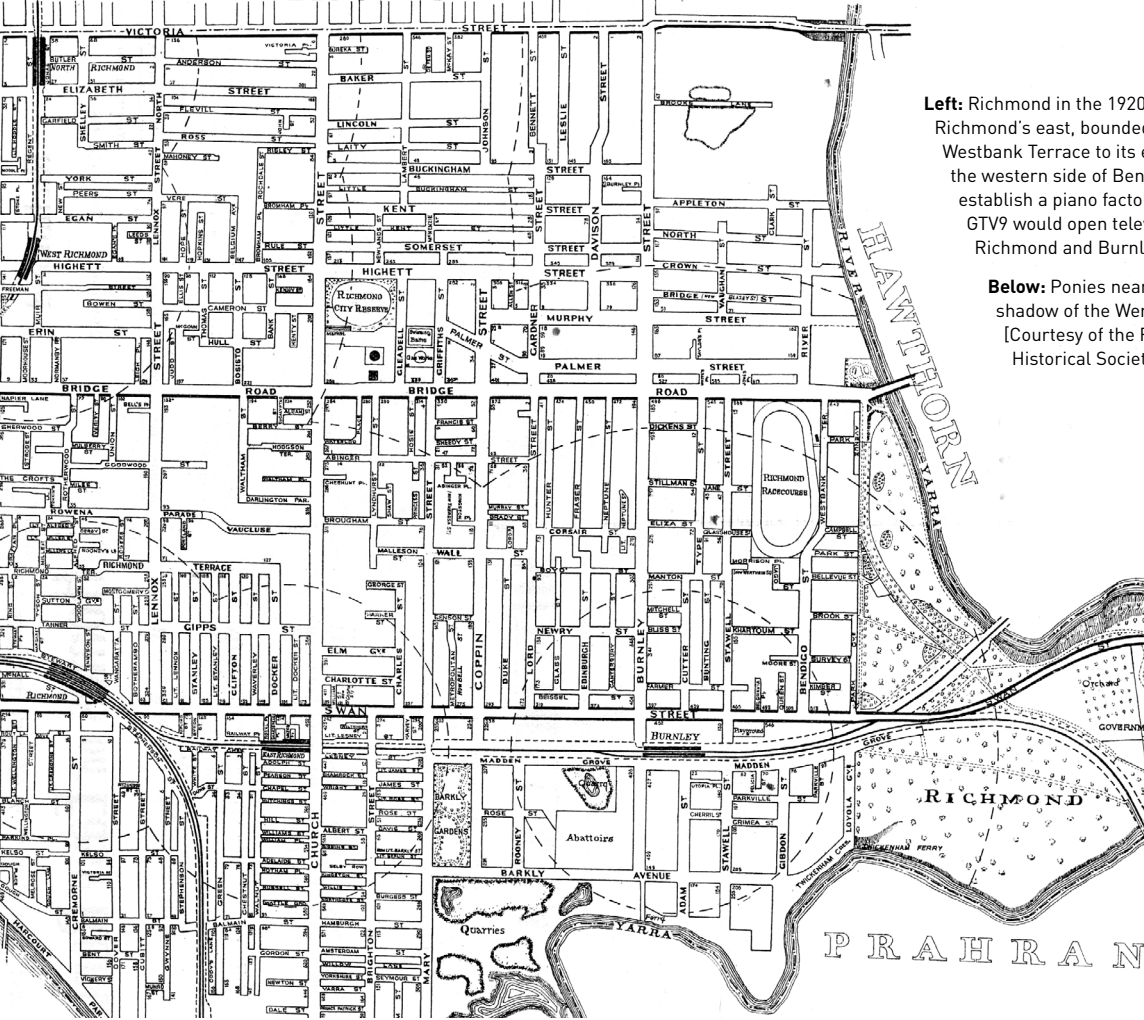
Richmond Racecourse had an area of 16 acres. It was on land originally owned by Benjamin Baxter, who purchased the 25-acre subdivision on October 3, 1839. The land was further subdivided and the racecourse site was known as O'Connor's paddock.

Above: Aerial view of the Richmond Racecourse c.1932. The southern part of the track is at the top of the page. The grandstand is on the left (eastern side) alongside Westbank Terrace. At the southern end of the infield, a set of Australian football goalposts and a cricket pitch are visible. [Courtesy of the Richmond and Burnley Historical Society]

Below: A mixture of jockeyed and sulkied pacers pass the Richmond Racecourse's winning post before a large infield crowd. [Courtesy of the Richmond and Burnley Historical Society]



COLLINGWOOD



Left: Richmond in the 1920s. The Richmond Racecourse is in Richmond's east, bounded by Bridge Road at its north and Westbank Terrace to its east. South of the racecourse, on the western side of Bendigo Street, Hugo Werthiem would establish a piano factory in 1908. In these buildings would GTV9 would open television studios in 1957. [Courtesy of the Richmond and Burnley Historical Society]

Below: Ponies near the winning post at Richmond in the shadow of the Wertheim Piano Company's chimney. [Courtesy of the Richmond and Burnley Historical Society]

wide, and though designed to accommodate 660 people "with comfort... it could hold 2000 without failing."¹

The first day of racing was on Monday November 2, and the winner of the first event, the 30 sovereign Richmond Handicap for ponies of 12 hands, was the Mr Hayes owned Vade. Within a few weeks events at the course were also promoted under the auspices of the Richmond Pony and Galloway Racing Club.

The pony track in Richmond was not unique, as there were others located at Box Hill, Brighton, Camberwell, Elsternwick, North Melbourne, Port Melbourne, South Yarra and St Kilda.

However, these courses were in direct competition to the establishment's thoroughbred Victorian Racing Club (VRC) at Flemington, which refused to recognise or register any of them.

From the 1890s the Richmond Racecourse was not just a race venue but an arena for a variety of sporting and social events. As early as December 1891 it was used for baseball. In the 1890s the venue also hosted coursing (a type of dog racing involving live rabbits) and Melbourne Polo Club tournaments. A precursor of the Hawthorn Football Club also played its matches at the racecourse during this decade. The current Hawthorn Football Club was founded in 1902, and it played its matches at the Richmond Racecourse in 1903. Hurling was introduced to the venue in 1902, and by the summer of 1903/04, a turf wicket suitable for club cricket had

Horseracing, one of the early pastimes in Melbourne, had grown in popularity from the 1830s. Early hoteliers often organised race meetings on rural landscapes and streets, until made for purpose courses were constructed. Firebrigade Hotel in Church Street, Richmond, held meetings along Abinger Street.

In 1891 a syndicate of Richmond residents, headed by JW Scott (who would be the course's first handicapper) and Joseph Webster (the first secretary) styled the Melbourne Pony Racing Association and established the first pony and trotting course on the Richmond Racecourse site. The sand track covered a distance of four furlongs and 38 yards, and a straight being less than half a furlong. The "neat little course" had a "well-appointed stables stewards' room," as well as a jockeys' room, a weighing room, lavatories, and a grandstand. The grandstand was 83 feet long and 23 feet



been prepared. Later, under John Wren, it became a venue for boxing and he let it to a variety of other sporting organisations. It was from the 1910s that the Victorian Amateur Athletic Association (VAAA) and local harrier clubs started using the venue. It was retained as a VAAA venue for distance walking events as late as 1932.

In the midst of the 1890s depression the first night racing programme was staged at Richmond Racecourse in August 1893. On Wednesday August 30, 1893 a festival was held at the racecourse to raise funds to relieve the distressed and unemployed of the suburb. Among the events was a grand display of 300 costumed Chinese colonists with a 300 foot long dragon and a Chinese football match ("Under Chinese Rules"). Also included on the programme were donkey races, bicycle races, and a Darktown (blackface) Fire Brigade display, among other novelties. However, the highlight was a football match between Richmond and Collingwood under electric light in the evening – the first night match these clubs played.

As the Richmond Racecourse became entrenched in the local community, in nearby Collingwood another figure was making his fortune. John Wren moved into SP bookmaking, and operated an illegal tote in Collingwood after his £180 win on Carbine in the 1890 Melbourne Cup. Wren had both wealth, and influence.

Wren's name was also regularly tied to scandals and allegations of race fixing. One notorious example was the 1901 Austral Wheelrace at the MCG, when it was alleged that bribes enabled the famous American cyclist, "Plugger" Bill Martin, to win. Another scandal occurred in 1904 when Wren won the thoroughbred Caulfield Cup with Murmur. It was suggested that bribes had been paid to riders. These allegations were not substantiated and Wren is believed to have collected around £50,000.

His illegal tote in Collingwood was making a weekly profit of up to £2,000 and around £20,000 per year, until legislation covering the operating of totes was amended in 1906. This in effect closed the business.

Later, the Victoria Racing Club had refused to accept three horses nominated by Wren. Wren approached the VRC to open a new racecourse at Eltham, with stakes that would almost double that of the Melbourne Cup. This was quickly squashed. Wren, therefore, turned his interests to boxing and trotting.

The trotting scene in Melbourne was in a dishevelled state of affairs by 1906. Victoria's leading trainers sought to have

their best horses race in New Zealand and Sydney. The lack of leadership and enthusiastic officials, as well as the terrible financial position of the Melbourne Trotting Association, provided the opportunity for John Wren to step into this arena.

The administration was relieved to have John Wren undertake the financial responsibility of promoting and staging meetings at his own track in return for having a controlling say in all matters. Wren made a promise to lift the standard of Melbourne Trotting to at least the best seen in Sydney and New Zealand.

Wren's ability to organise and promote a sporting fixture was undeniable. In March 1907 he promoted a boxing match at the Richmond Racecourse between Richmond footballer and heavy weight boxer, Bill Lang, and future World Heavy Weight Champion, Jack Johnson. A rain soaked crowd of 15,000 saw Johnson knock out Lang in the ninth round.

Wren teamed up with Ben Nathan to lease the Richmond, Ascot, and Fitzroy racecourses. He staged his first trotting program in Richmond on May 11, 1907. There were five events. The honour of winning the first race went to Lou Robertson, driving Vermont Patch. The event was worth £25. Wren had set aside a purse of £100 for the feature event over one mile on the opening day. This was won by Abeilbah.

With his new position and responsibility, Wren sought to "tidy up" and legitimise his racing business. He stopped bookies from taking bets from jockeys and minors, kicked out welters and introduced independent stewards.

Below Left: Competitive cricket had been played on the racecourse's infield since 1903. In 1910 it was the venue for the first women's interstate match between Victoria and New South Wales. The Victorian Vera Ratigan (later Cutter) is the batter, while the wicketkeeper is New South Wales' H. Hough. *Melbourne Punch*, April 7, 1910, p.472. [MCC Library collection]

Below Right: Richmond Racing Club program of February 17, 1913. [Courtesy of the Richmond and Burnley Historical Society]



Still, small racing tracks drew some notorious underworld characters. Theodore Joseph Leslie Taylor, better remembered as "Squizzy" Taylor, and also known as the Turk, was a versatile little crook and a member of the Bourke Street Rats. He was a clever pickpocket and made Richmond his stomping ground. Early in the twentieth century he was given mounts as an apprentice jockey at the pony meetings at Richmond and Ascot. He doublecrossed trainers, owners and his stable-mates. He was thrown out as a pony rider and then turned his hand as a book-maker on these courses. John Wren knew of Squizzy's reputation and warned him off all his courses. Taylor was killed in a gunfight in 1927.

Wren's initial years promoting trotting at Richmond were an outstanding success, fulfilling his promise to promote trotting to be bigger and better than Sydney and New Zealand. Within weeks of standardbred racing coming to Richmond, the crowds were bigger and better than they had been at any trotting venue in the country.

The Richmond, Fitzroy (Northcote/Croxton) and Ascot (on Epsom Road opposite the showgrounds) racecourses were part of John Wren's horseracing empire. These racetracks were close to working men's homes, a short brisk walk home. The races were on tight tracks with easy visibility from the stands, and the weekly meetings (or more) provided a sense of excitement and a chance to lay small wagers.



Pony races were not without detractors. In 1906 a delegation of Richmond residents approached their council, "to ask for its assistance and co-operation in presenting a petition to Parliament, praying that legislation be passed to stop pony racing 'and its attendant evils' at the Richmond Racecourse."² Still, as the cordial manufacturer and Richmond MP, George Bennett, said in parliament, "Owing to the long lease of the Richmond Racecourse by Mr Wren, property in the locality had improved in value," and that he "had been informed that Mr Wren had tried to make pony racing as pure as possible."³

While tracks registered with the VRC could only race on allocated days, the unregistered pony tracks could race as often as they chose. The race meetings continued to grow in popularity and were more affordable for working men to attend and to place their bets.

Competition for Wren was the establishment of the Epsom Trotting Club. It only lasted three meetings, as the public and the majority of owners and trainers saw Richmond as the most prominent track. Pony racing was so popular that they conducted at least one meeting every week at these tracks, holding around 156 meetings per year. The success of Richmond led to the phasing out of other tracks around Melbourne, which in the past had been used for the occasional program of trotting.

Top: John Wren c.1919.
[Australian War Memorial, P01383.002]

Below: The entrance to the Richmond Racecourse on the corner of Bridge Road and Westbank Terrace by John Kinmont Moir in 1934.
[State Library of Victoria, H5461]



In 1911 Wren became concerned when the NSW Trotting Club obtained their own racecourse. He predicted that this would occur in Victoria. Only a few years earlier, in 1907, to coincide with the arrival of the United States Great White Fleet, the VRC staged a special racing program at Flemington, the home of thoroughbred racing in Victoria. This event was to include one race for the trotting fraternity, the Fleet Trotting Cup.

Richmond trotting was making money and Wren had no intention of giving it up. Therefore, he introduced a glamour event, the Melbourne Thousand. It caught the interest of standardbred owners throughout the country. The race took place on November 16, 1911. It drew a field of many of the best horses racing in the country. Delavan Chimes had the honour of winning the first Melbourne Thousand. It was another three years before Sydney had such an event. In 1914, when the Australian Trotting Club introduced the Sydney Thousand at Victoria Park on its one-mile track.

Some of Wren's desires to promote trotting were stymied. While night trots were introduced to Perth in January 1914, Wren was blocked from following suit until legislation could be passed in Parliament. The Victorian Parliament further tightened the controls on trotting and reduced the number of meetings per year.

Below: As well as equestrian, field, and motor sports, the racecourse hosted events such as dog shows and rodeos. These scenes are from the "buckjumping" exhibition at the Richmond Racecourse on March 7, 1908. Top left is the cattle tying contest, top right is the buckjumping competition, and below a rider chases a bullock in the throwing contest. [Leader, March 14, 1908, p.27. MCC Library collection]

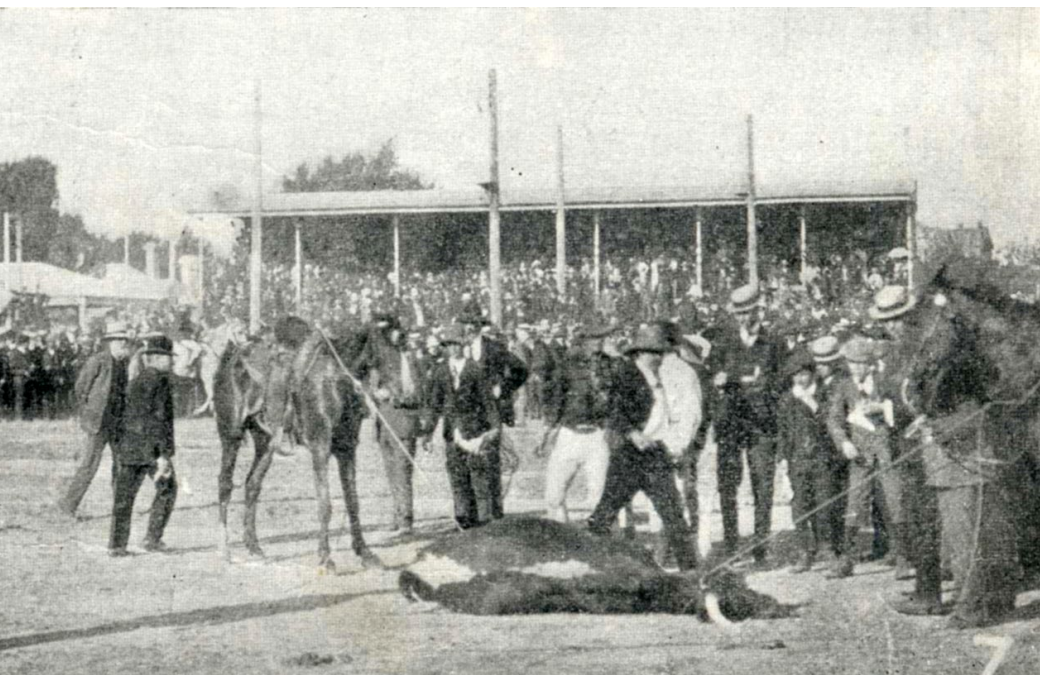
Not all the horses at Richmond were well bred. Tradesman's Trots were included in programs to cater for horses that did their training during the week between the shafts of butchers, bakers and hansom cabs carts.

To deal with the large fields these events attracted, Matt Higgins, the track supervisor, invented a starting gate in 1911 that was later adopted at all tracks.

John Wren introduced the Melbourne Trotting Derby in 1914, and Charles Meehan, who founded the first dedicated trotting paper in the country, the *Australian Trotting Record*, in 1906 gave Wren the fullest support when Richmond was given over as a trotting centre. The *Trotting Record* was known as the Bible for the trotting man, and when the Victorian Trotting Association's (VTA) secretary, Charles Russell, passed away in July 1914, Meehan, the VTA's president, filled that role, until he too died in September 1918.

In 1919 Captain G.J.C. Dyett was appointed secretary of the VTA and immediately entered into negotiations to purchase Wren's three Melbourne racecourses, including Richmond. While the courses were now owned by the renamed Victorian Trotting and Racing Association, Wren would continue as the manager until they were free of liabilities.

In October 1929, the State Government passed legislation giving it power to close down racecourses from August 1931. Richmond was closed for trotting on July 24 1932, and trotting in Melbourne suffered a sharp decline, from 150 meetings a year to just 16. Trotting was now carried out at Ascot.



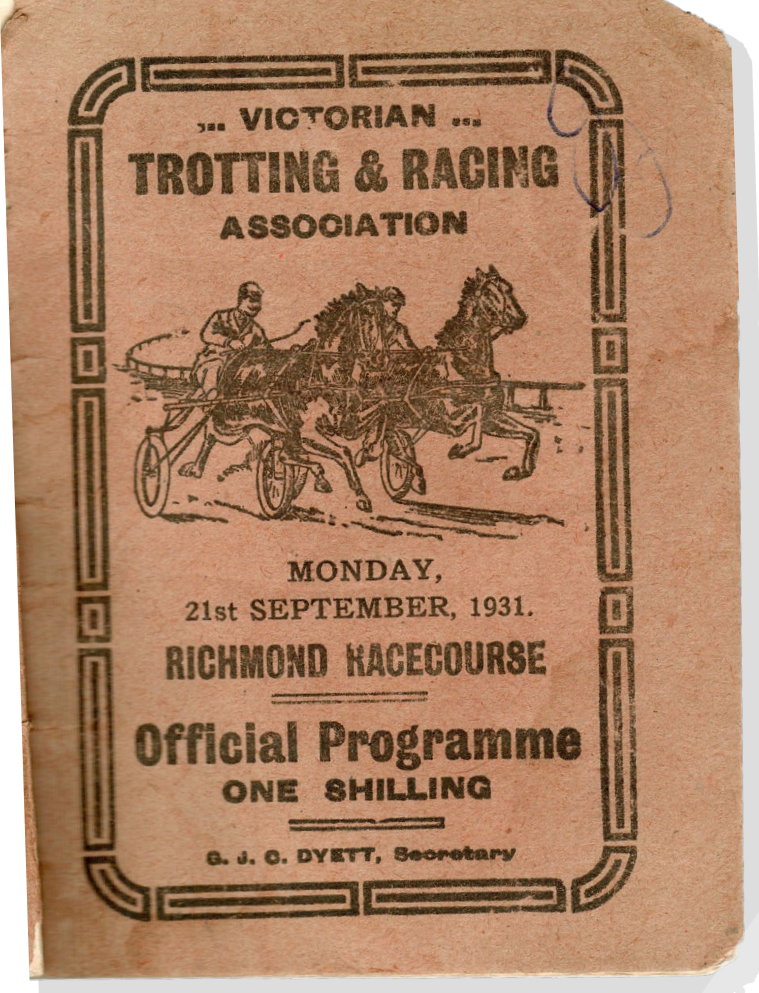
The last sporting events at the old Richmond Racecourse were motor sports. Car and motorbike races were first staged at the venue on November 22, 1913 – when the sport was regarded as somewhat new. Another Motor Gymkhana was held in 1915. On November 5, 1932, the Richmond Racecourse entered a new phase when it was reopened as the Richmond Autodrome – and promoted as “Australia’s longest dirt motor racing track.” The turns were banked four and a half feet. While it held a few light car and motorcycle events, the last were recorded in 1933.

With the then lease for the site set to expire in February 1936, a tobacco factory was proposed for the site, and the British Australian Tobacco Company obtained title to it in March. However, it was ultimately reserved for residential housing. In June 1940 the Housing Commission took over the land and erected 138 houses.

Authors:

David Langdon is president of the Richmond & Burnley Historical Society.

Trevor Ruddell is Deputy Librarian, Melbourne Cricket Club.



Endnotes:

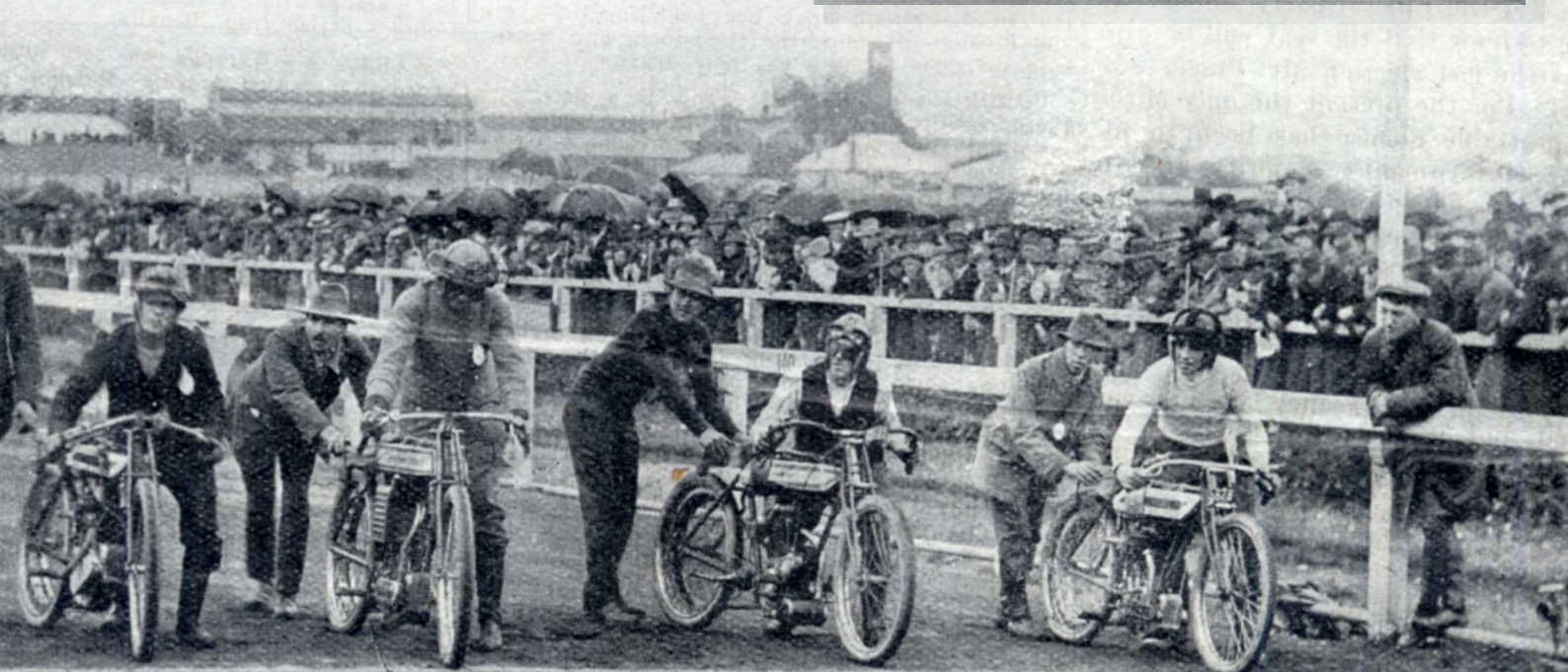
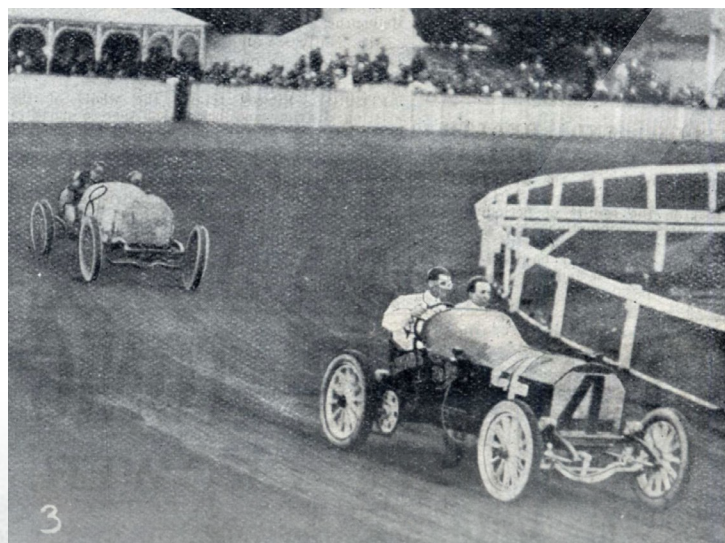
1. “A New Racecourse”, *Herald*, October 31, 1891, p.2.
2. *Herald*, July 10, 1906, p.1.
3. *Herald*, October 31, 1906, p.6.

Top: The Victorian Trotting & Racing Association’s programme for the Richmond Racecourse on September 21, 1931. The venue was soon to be closed to horse racing.

[Courtesy of the Richmond and Burnley Historical Society]

Right: The first motor racing events held at the Richmond Racecourse were in 1913. The race pictured was of the main event, a “match race” between the Australian Doug Campbell in number 8 and an American Rupert Jeffkins in number 4. [*Leader*, November 29, 1913, p.27. MCC Library collection]

Below: Motorcyclists are at the starting line for their event in 1913. [*Leader*, November 29, 1913, p.27. MCC Library collection]





Frank Laver's Piano

Intrinsically linked to Australia's developing national identity.

By Peter Humphreys

The Melbourne Cricket Ground proudly displays a baby grand piano. It was made in Stuttgart, Germany about 1913 by the piano maker Richard Lipp & Sohn.

The piano was presented to the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) in 1941 by Frank's children, Myrtle Patricia Laver and Eric Geoffrey Laver. It had been a gift to their father Frank on the occasion of his wedding to their mother Katie Myrtle Adele Major in 1914.

At this time in Australia, pianos typified a new country and its peoples searching for a national and social identity. Frank Laver, whose life exploits would fill a "boys own" magazine, typifies a new Australian idealism. And, in this window of time, both are linked – directly and indirectly - to Australia's rising middle class and aspiring working class who desired markers of their enhanced social status, to nationalistic endeavour, rabid patriotism and even the White Australia policy.

Frank and his piano provide a lens that helps us discover a rich tapestry of stories about Australia and its development as a nation.

Frank Laver – Cricketer, baseballer, entrepreneur, adventurer, raconteur.

Frank Jonas Laver is best remembered as a popular Australian cricketer but much more than that. His father, Jonas Laver, a farmer from Somerset, England, arrived in Melbourne in 1846 and married Mary Ann Fry there in 1854.

Top: Frank Laver as photographed by George Beldham in 1905. [MCC Library collection]

Below: The Lavers' Lipp and Sohn piano, which is currently located in the Melbourne Cricket Club Museum. [Melbourne Cricket Club collection M16027]



They settled at Chinamans Creek near Castlemaine, Victoria. Mary Ann, was connected to Elizabeth Fry the prison reformer. Frank's mother Mary had eleven children, four of whom died in infancy. That left seven brothers, Frank being the fifth, being born of December 7, 1869. The family was particularly talented.

After his education at Castlemaine Grammar School, Frank worked for a period as a clerk in the Law Department (1887-95) before joining brother Ralph's successful fruit preserving business ("Laver Bros" - Cambridge Street, Collingwood), but it was Frank's cricketing skills that earned him wide acclaim.

He first learned cricket at his local Grammar School and the Wattle Flat Club.¹ He arrived at the East Melbourne Cricket Club from Castlemaine looking for a game in season 1887/88. Two years later he hit three centuries and captured 52 wickets, and in 1892/93 he hit 352 not out in a club fixture against St Kilda.

A decade later, in early 1903, he played a hand of 341 against Fitzroy as an opening batsman in an astonishing score of 2/744. He and Peter McAlister made an opening stand of 366 and Laver and Harry Stuckey added 247 before Laver was out with the score on 613.

Laver, McAlister and Sam McMichael formed the backbone of the great East Melbourne team that competed with Melbourne's other senior cricket clubs for the Victorian pennant. Between 1887 and 1910, they contributed 25,198 runs between them in 705 innings, together averaging 41.24.

He captained the first XI for 17 years, during which time Easts were either premiers or runners-up on 15 occasions. He was a committee member and selector for most of his time with the club.

He was a Victorian selector in 1903 and, as an East Melbourne delegate, he was deeply involved in the creation of the district competition which eventuated in 1906. He stood firm by claiming at a special meeting that it would be improper for one club (the Melbourne Cricket Club) to dominate all the other clubs.

Frank Laver was described as a "very solid, though ungainly batsman, a baffling bowler, and as a fieldsman at point he had no superior".² Considered one of the three best point fieldsman of the day, this account from the *Bulletin* summarises why he appealed to the cricketing public:

"Laver, the elongated Victorian fielding at point in the recent test match, did work right up to the best form of Harry Trott and Ranji in that position. The catch by which he dismissed "Noss" Iredale was one of the best ever seen on the ground. "Noss", who is good at the cut, got fair on to it, and when Laver threw out one large hand and gathered it in the crowd was electrified. Laver, who has the careless appearance of a "good sort," is a big favourite with the Sydney crowd."³

His batting style in particular was effective but so unorthodox as to cause humour, if not consternation:

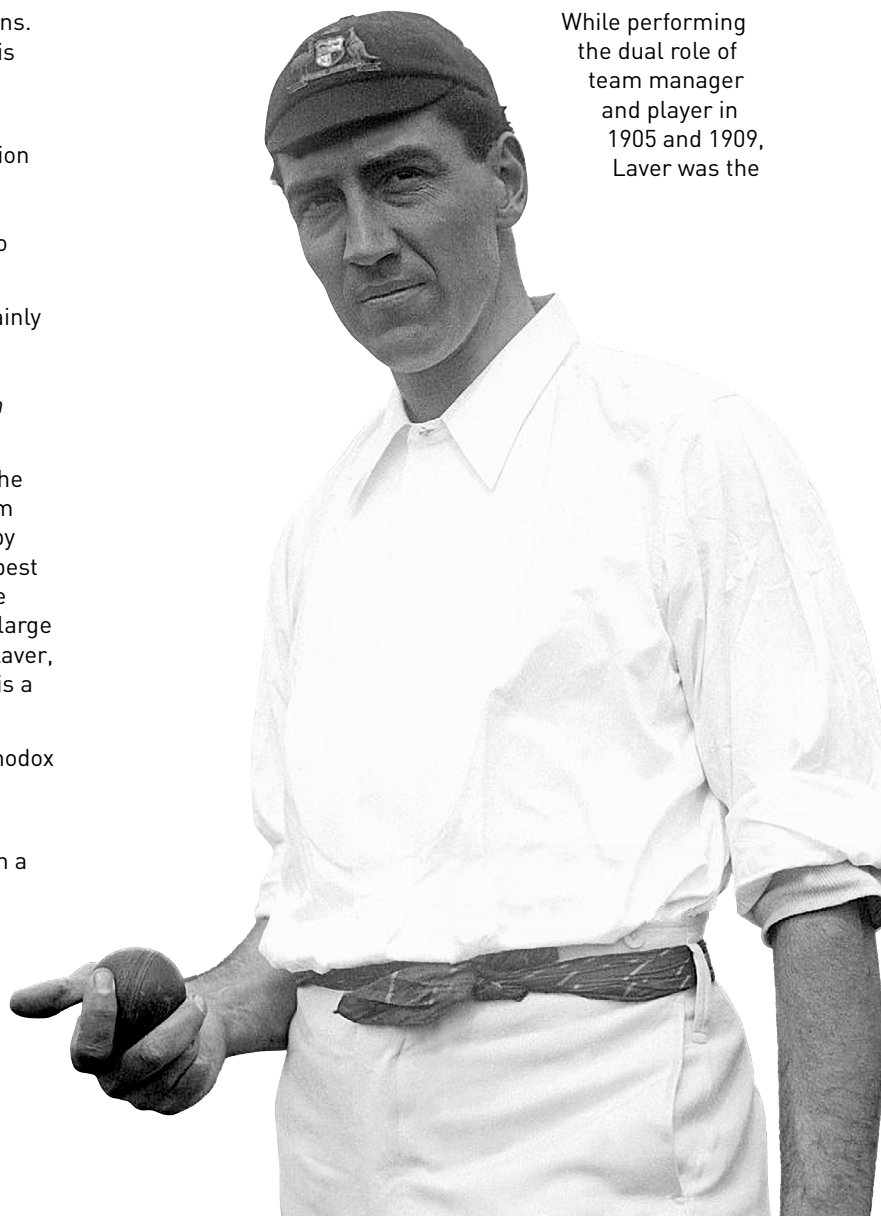
"I remember on one occasion, at Leeds, in the third test match of 1899, when runs were badly wanted on a rain-damaged pitch, he and Victor Trumper made a valuable stand in the second innings, which

put our side from a weak into a strong position. After Victor, who was then only a boy, had got out, he said to "Joe" Darling in the dressing-room, "Never put me in again with Frank Laver." "Why?" said the astute captain. "Because," was the reply, "my heart was in my mouth all the time I was in with him. He jumps half-way down the pitch with his left foot, and you feel positive that he will be stumped; he keeps his right leg behind the crease, but the fright one gets is a shock to the nerves."⁴

The 1899 side was one of three Australian teams of which Frank Laver was a member, the other two being 1905 and 1909. On the last two occasions he also acted as manager.

His first Test match was between Australia and England at Nottingham on June 1-3, 1899, and this match, the first to be played at Trent Bridge, was also notable as it was W. G. Grace's last Test, as well as the first for Victor Trumper and Wilfred Rhodes. In 1899 he had a batting average of 30.67, but as that Australian team was full of star bowlers, Ernie Jones, Hugh Trumble, Monty Noble, Bill Howell, and Charlie McLeod, Laver had little opportunity with the ball. Nevertheless, the return of the ashes to Australia was probably due to his bowling⁵. In the only Test match on the tour played to a finish, a draw looked certain at Lord's before Joe Darling put the Victorian on to bowl. In a few moments he completely changed the aspect of the game, disposing of Johnny Tyldesley, Tom Hayward, and Gilbert Jessop in quick succession, and enabling Australia to claim the victory.

While performing the dual role of team manager and player in 1905 and 1909, Laver was the



Right: Frank Laver as photographed by George Beldham in 1905. [MCC Library collection]

most successful bowler in Test matches, and in 1905 he led all bowlers on tour, averaging 13 runs per wicket.

Although he took seven wickets in a Test game in 1905, the greatest feat of Laver's career was his bowling against England in 1909. Hugh Trumble held the view that the English wickets were more suited to Laver's bowling.⁶ Coming in to bowl with England being two wickets down, and aided by a breeze, he swung ("swerved") the ball to such an extent that he secured the next eight English wickets for 31 runs. Laver's victims included the flower of English batting, Tyldesley, Archie MacLaren, Dick Lilley, Kenneth Hutchings, Wilfred Rhodes, and George Hirst. Such was Laver's bowling dominance at times that one article claimed he "bowled 115 English batsmen with his right arm, after dislocating the other onboard ship."⁷

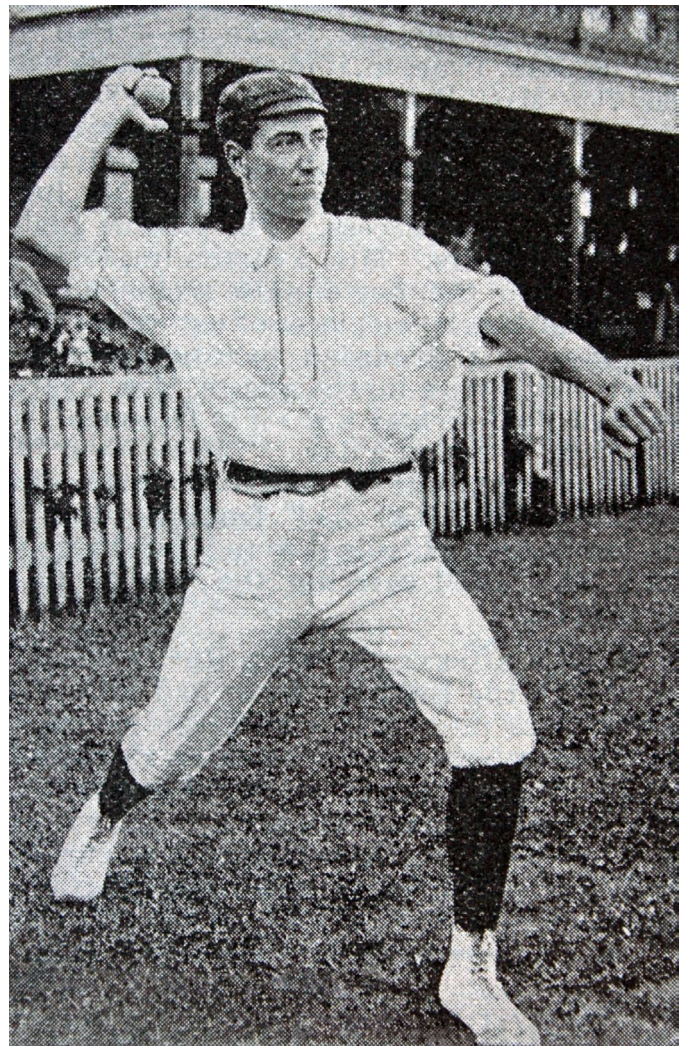
Until 1909 the Australian XI players derived income directly from their tours and largely funded their personal expenses. They also had a constitutional right to select a player-manager. Laver, who was a players' person and immensely popular with them, was selected for the 1912 tour. An astute and successful businessman, he had previously kept meticulous books for the players and managed expenses and receipts to the satisfaction of his team mates. However, the Board of Control was intent on wresting control of money management from the manager and allocated the treasury function to the board's delegate.

Laver argued that the Board of Control was not only reverting back to an old arrangement but also that their revenue estimates for the 1912 tour - £17,000 or £18,000 - were unrealistic. "These figures are not a correct estimate..." he wrote, "... The estimate of £6000 expenses is about correct - that is - for current expenses, but it must be remembered, that there are hotel charges to be accounted for in addition."⁸ Laver had experience in the cost of touring, even arranging a loan with his own bankers in London for the players on the 1909 tour when the board hadn't made sufficient financial arrangements.

Even so, he was accused of "disloyalty", in part because he was arguing that the right people were not on the governing bodies. He responded to the criticism, "I consider I am loyal, for I am a believer in a Board of Control, and, though many people will be surprised to hear it, I am practically the founder of the board."⁹

Laver's "friend" and fellow Test player Peter McAlister and the Australian Board of Control for International Cricket Matches ignored the players' wishes and appointed another manager (G. S. Crouch) to lead the Australians to England in 1912. A player revolt, led by Australian Captain Clem Hill, ensued and, along with Vernon Ransford, Warwick Armstrong, Victor Trumper, Hanson Carter, and Albert "Tibby" Cotter all withdrew from the side in support of Laver. The Board of Control remained unmoved by the player strike and, in spite of a heated selectors' meeting in which punches were thrown - including a 20-minute fist fight between McAlister and Hill¹⁰ - Laver remained out of favour with the Board. "Any suggestion that the players could have a free hand in selecting the manager was so much poppycock", declared journalist and cricket commentator Alban ("Johnny") Moyes.¹¹ However, Laver did manage a non-Test tour of New Zealand in the 1913/14 season. Only the "Big Ship" Armstrong played for Australia again.

Laver ended his administrative association with cricket in 1912. He believed his East Melbourne club secretary had



canvassed against him in the poll for the committee when he was defeated for the first time in more than a quarter of a century's service to the club, which included 15 as captain, a long stint as a Victorian Cricket Association delegate and 12 years as a state selector.

Altogether, Laver played 163 first-class matches in his career between 1891 and 1914. From his 15 Test matches he scored 196 runs at an average of 11.52 and took 37 wickets at an average of 26.05. Laver also played for Victoria captaining the side in later years, scoring 2,760 runs and taking 108 wickets.

But cricket wasn't the only sport for which Frank Laver was famous. He was also a key figure in the development of baseball in Australia. He was considered "the best purely Australian pitcher in baseball this country has produced"¹² and captained the "ill-fated baseball team"¹³ that went to America in 1897.

During his public dispute with the cricket Board of Control in 1912, he was in Sydney playing baseball with the Australian team against the American Fleet.¹⁴ Perhaps disillusioned with his cricket experiences, when addressing a meeting of the Junior Baseball League in 1914, Frank Laver proclaimed that baseball was a "better game than cricket."¹⁵ Others recognised that it was baseball, however, that had most

Top: Frank Laver pitching at the East Melbourne Cricket Ground to promote the forthcoming Australian team's tour of the United States in 1897. [*Australasian*, February 13, 1897. p.320. MCC Library collection]

likely helped his cricket skills. Contemporaries hypothesised that he probably acquired the art of “swerving” the cricket ball through playing baseball,¹⁶ and his batting might also have benefitted:

“It may have been a natural gift, as was the mowing act, or it might have been the result of his batting practice at baseball. Whatever the reason, his execution was deadly, as he could hit even a bowler like Jones out of the ground to square-leg off a full toss.”¹⁷

Laver was president of the Victorian Baseball League and vice-president of the Victorian Baseball Union and his influence on the game was described as “great.”¹⁸

Frank was a business partner with his brother Ralph in Laver Bros. and Co., food preservers, of Cambridge Street, Collingwood, which they established in 1893 on Ralph’s return from Germany, and with the help of Ralph’s guardian Otto Jung. The firm developed a large trade throughout Australia and with England and China.

The State Government recognised the success of Laver Bros.. When the Victorian Director of Agriculture, Dr Cameron appointed a committee to advise the state cabinet on “the establishment of canning factories for the treatment of vegetables and fruit grown in the irrigation districts”, the committee visited Laver Bros. to inspect the factory and gather information for their enquiry.¹⁹

Frank Laver’s interests were wider than cricket and business and his world travels show us a person that was curious, enjoyed new experiences, but didn’t feel out of place at any level of social interaction.

Bill Ferguson, Australian touring cricket side scorer-baggage master from 1905 to 1954 - and creator of cricket’s wagon wheel - noted that, “England was a very sedate country in those days. Manners, etiquette and breeding were the paramount virtues, and, wanting to be taken for a gentleman of distinction, our manager, Mr Frank Laver, followed the English fashion of the day by appearing frequently in top hat and frock coat.”²⁰

In one letter home he tells us he “had a shot at the tables” at Monte Carlo on the way to England.²¹ In another letter dated October 29, 1909 while on board RMS *Mongolia* at Colombo,²² and published in the Melbourne press, Laver regaled Australians back home with his experiences of receptions through Scotland, Ireland, Wales and England, and visits to castles and royal estates. He wrote that he had received a stag’s head from the Duke of Fife. He had also “pratted with the Prince of Wales and the Lord Chief Justice of England” and had “been entertained by the nobility of the old country.”²³ It was also reported that “The Duchess of Sutherland was one of the Englishwomen who took a great liking to Frank, and corresponded with him ever since the last Australian tour.”²⁴ He sought out adventures in less refined parts of the world too, picking up artefacts from Papua New Guinea²⁵ and other Pacific locations, and being a charming raconteur, Laver carried:

“... his hearers not only along hackneyed tourist routes, but tells of weird and wonderful spots, far from the beaten track. His descriptions appeal to the imagination. Coaling scenes at Colombo ; the luxuriant

foliage of tropical Ceylon, seething hordes of Singalese salesmen and gaudy Hindus ; hot and languid Port Said, with its statue of the heroic De Lesseps, long piers, ships of all nations from ocean liners to Arab dhow ; the medley ashore, Arabs, Egyptians, Somalis, acrobats, fortune-tellers, jugglers, beggars, and tall Sudanese police, black as ink, a veritable human melting-pot.”²⁶

In May 1914, the 44-year-old Frank Laver became engaged to Katie Myrtle Adele Major, who hailed from Kiama (NSW).²⁷ Myrtle, as she was more commonly addressed, was thirty-five years old. It is not reported how they met, but there are several possibilities. It might have been in Melbourne during the spring horse racing season as Myrtle nearly always accompanied her sister (and Sydney socialite) Lilian Keogh, who “comes down for all the big race meetings and goes over to Flemington at Cup time”,²⁸ and where Lilian also had many Melbourne friends.²⁹ Another possibility is they met through Myrtle’s brother-in-law, Mr William Keogh who was, “... a leading New South Wales sportsman, and the owner of several race horses.”³⁰

Myrtle’s local paper, the *Kiama Independent and Shoalhaven Advertiser*, proclaimed that, “Those who know Miss Major well, can feel how warmly she is to be congratulated, for beside great charm of manner, she possesses more than a fair share of the qualities that go to make perfect womanhood....”³¹

It might seem that Myrtle and Frank may have been well-matched as it was reported Katie was an enthusiast in sport. “Cricket always appeals to her, perhaps more strongly than any other outdoor sport. For years she has never missed an interstate or international cricket match in Sydney. When the American baseball matches were played, she was keenly interested in that game, too.”³²

At a pre-wedding celebration with friends at Scott’s Hotel, 444 Collins Street, Melbourne, on Friday September 11, Frank was presented with a piano – a Rich. Lipp & Sohn baby grand – “on the occasion of his marriage” to Myrtle. In Victoria, the principal agents for Lipp at the time were Allan & Co. (Allan’s Music Warehouse), who from 1877 had a large musical warehouse in Melbourne. The Allan’s store, where Laver’s piano was probably bought, was located at 276 and 278 Collins Street, Melbourne.³³



Right: The *Herald* celebrated the marriage of Frank and Myrtle Laver with this image on September 15, 1914, p.7

Scott's Hotel itself holds some interesting links in relation to Frank and Myrtle's union. It was originally known as "the city home of country people" and was renowned for the pastoral property auctions held there, as the gathering place for racehorse owners and breeders, as the Melbourne residence of English cricketers such as WG Grace and as Dame Nellie Melba's favourite hotel.³⁴

Frank, "one of the most unassuming men in the Commonwealth"³⁵, and Katie Myrtle Adele Major, "one of the most popular girls in Kiama,"³⁶ married on September 15, 1914 in the Church of England, Kiama (NSW). As Myrtle's family were engaged in a wide range of community activities, and were prominent in both business and land holdings in the area, the wedding attracted a lot of local interest.

Myrtle's father Stephen Major had died in December 1913³⁷, so her brother, Sidney Major, gave her away. Keen to introduce his new wife to his other interests, Frank had arranged a tour of New Zealand, Tonga, Samoa, and Fiji for their honeymoon, but owing to the war they spent their time away instead at Mt. Kosciusko.³⁸ Myrtle finally got to explore some of the Pacific with Frank when the couple managed a nine to ten week holiday "through the islands" in 1915.³⁹

Frank gets a piano... and a family

The presence of a piano is presumptive evidence of civilisation, although abstinence from playing it is sometimes a proof of the highest altruism. Its possession is now very much what the ownership of a gig once was — an unmistakable — indication of respectability. Whatever else may be missing in a well-appointed ménage, the most popular of all musical instruments must needs be there. It may be only in the 'cottage' form, and it may lack its full compass, but so long as it is present the situation is saved. This, of course, is eminently satisfactory to Stuttgart...

— *Kalgoorlie Miner*, April 2, 1903, p.2.

In Australia... the foreign-made piano has an astonishing popularity.

— *Sunday Times*, February 5, 1911, p.4.

Pianos command a special place in the Australian psyche and in nation building. As such, pianos were the dominant musical instrument in the period between the 1870s until the 1930s in particular.

Demand for pianos soared with the rising prosperity (and middle class) in Australia in the latter part of the 19th Century, and most notably in Victoria where the gold rushes from the 1850s stimulated affluence and social progress. It has been estimated that 700,000 pianos were imported to Australia prior to federation in 1901. This is a phenomenal number considering that, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, there were only 786,331 dwellings in Australia at that time, which nearly equates to one piano for every dwelling!⁴⁰ "Australia would become a colony of pianos, with its rising middle class and aspiring working class desiring the instrument as a prestigious object and a potent marker of enhanced social status."⁴¹

Of course, Frank and Myrtle's Rich. Lipp & Sohn baby grand reflected their own social status. Made in Stuttgart, Germany, about 1913, the wedding gesture would have cost Frank's friends approximately 200 guineas⁴² – a little under four months' wages on an average employee's salary.



Above: Wertheim, seen in this picture of the German Hall at the Centennial International Exhibition, 1888 in Melbourne, are awarded a gold medal for sewing machines but will become synonymous Australian piano manufacturing.

[National Library of Australia: #PIC/8064/1-67]

Fine piano making had been a mark of Stuttgart from 1809 when the "Stuttgart school" was founded. Established in 1831 with two employees, Richard Lipp & Sohn was among the noteworthy firms of the "school".

The 5ft. Frank Laver piano, now displayed in the MCC Museum, was the most common grand made by Richard Lipp. Lipp set the standard in piano manufacture and the firm was known for building high-quality, hand-made durable instruments of superior touch and rich, warm and very powerful tone. Lipp pianos were skilfully crafted from the world's finest materials, including hand-selected seasoned woods, most likely sourced from the conveniently located in the Black Forest.

Lipp was respected as one of Germany's most prestigious "old world" piano manufacturers, the firm enjoyed a great deal of success throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Pianos made between 1895 and 1930 – which includes Frank Laver's piano - are considered to be some of the best built pianos in the world, ranking alongside Steinway, Bluthner, Bechstein and other great makers. By 1873, the company produced about 400 pianos a year. While steam-engines were used in their piano factory, Lipp insisted that the most important parts would be made by hand because the machine had "no intelligence, no feeling, no thought". Instruments made by Richard Lipp & Sohn were primarily marketed in Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Vintage instruments by the firm are rarely encountered in the United States.

Right: Frank Laver leaving Powell's Creek Post Office. The photos are from negatives taken by him, shortly before his death, on a memorable trip across the Northern Territory in company with Alf Laver and Dr. Roly Pope in 1919.

[Northern Territory Library, PH0820/0088]

Lipp & Sohn pianos held two Royal Warrants – one of which was a patent as manufacturers to the Court of Würtemberg – and their South Australian agent claimed the piano maker deserved the title of, "King of all Pianos," as they had won fame at "every Exhibition of consequence throughout the world". Lipp & Sohn Pianos had secured no less than 20 gold medals and awards dating back to 1854, at the following Exhibitions: Melbourne (1888 and 1889); Sydney (1879); Adelaide (1887); Stuttgart (1881 and 1896); London (1862 and 1864); München (1854 and 1895); Wien (1873); Batavia (1895); Chile, (1875); Detmold (1881); Barcelona (1888); Brussels (1888); Charleroi (1895); Antwerp (1885); Graz (1880); and Amsterdam (1883).⁴³

Frank and Myrtle, with their two children - Myrtle Patricia (b. 1916) and Eric Geoffrey (b. 1918) – lived in their private residence "Ripvan" which delivered one of the most picturesque scenes on the Yarra from Young Street, Kew (Melbourne). The property comprised many acres of low-lying and sloping land east of Walmer Street Bridge and Studley Park. By 1916, Laver had spent both a considerable amount of money and three years effort in preparing the ground and installing an irrigation system, reticulated from the Yan Yean water supply, for the cultivation of asparagus, which had just been put down.

Unfortunately, in 1916 the Yarra flooded and ruined the crop although the damage was not as serious as Laver expected. While the Lavers' bungalow home was above flood level and his Lipp piano safe, two houses he owned off Young Street were flooded out. The tenants had been able to remove their furniture before the water came down and were given accommodation at the Lavers' home for the duration.⁴⁴

The family had to endure another Yarra river flood in 1918. Although the second flood wasn't as high as that in 1916, it still had an impact. Their cultivated grounds (adjoining the bridge at the top of Burnley Street) were again submerged. Laver estimated he lost 20,000 strawberry plants.⁴⁵

It is unlikely that the Lipp piano would have been positioned in the billiards room, but if it had, it would have been sitting among the artifacts Frank Laver had collected on his journeys through "strange, wild places."⁴⁶ Among the gruesome collection were included "fearsome weapons with deadly past, from knobby skull-smashers to spears whose



touch is death, a bloodstained dagger that has slain many men (there are nine nicks in the handle), and a cannibal's fork (a ghastly, four-pronged thing)" and "an idol from the temple of a band of head-hunting savages." Fortunately for the peace of his small children, also displayed were "scores of beautiful presentations bearing eloquent testimony to the eminence attained by Laver in the peaceful fields of sport".⁴⁷

Frank, as was his trail-blazing nature, acquired a remote pastoral interest, covering 2000 square miles of cattle country near Brunette Downs. The "War to end all Wars" was still fresh in a nation's mind so the press were keen to point out "the principality of Luxemburg, invaded by the Germans at the beginning of the war, covers 998 square miles".⁴⁸

In May 1919 Frank set out to inspect the property with two travelling companions, his brother Alfred Laver, superintendent of the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum, and Dr. Roly Pope, a Sydney friend and eye specialist and international cricketer of the 1880's. In June they left Darwin after preparing for the trip overland.

"The little party encountered much that would have curbed the ambition of many adventurers, but the three companions persevered in the face of many hardships."⁴⁹

Hardships were a factor that needed to be taken into account with piano purchases too. Pianos made for more temperate, or less changeable climatic conditions, often suffered when exposed to the harsher Australian environment. However, the central Australian cattle pastoralist, Sir Sidney Kidman, who at one time owned 68 properties with a total area larger than the British Isles, was himself a champion for Lipp & Sohn pianos. In a testimonial for Kuhnel's piano merchants he wrote, "we beg to state that our TWO PIANOS that we have purchased from you have given me every satisfaction, and we have pleasure in recommending anyone to purchase a RICH. LIPP & SOHN."⁵⁰

It's complicated.

What about the Toorak baker whose family play 'Rule, Britannia,' on the piano while he serves loyal Britishers? Gee, Weiss!

— Graphic of Australia, June 30, 1916, p.2.

Germany's imperial ambitions had a strong impact in Australia. During the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, German-speaking immigrants constituted the largest ethnic community in Australia that originated outside the British Isles. From the 1850s German settlers escaping the rising nationalist sentiment in Germany began arriving in the Australian colonies looking to start a new life. German Australians maintained strong cultural ties with their German heritage up until the Great War.

By 1895, the overall number of German-Australians, including the descendants of migrants, had been estimated at approximately 100,000, a figure which remained stable until 1914. The total Australian population was approaching five million at the outbreak of war, but the percentage of Germans in Australia was only about 2% – hardly a statistically significant number.⁵¹

With the rising tension between the British and German Empires, attitudes and relationships began to harden and German-Australians often found themselves subject to suspicion and animosity. When war broke out in 1914, this changed to outright hostility.

Following their patriotic duty to the Mother Country, England, Prime Minister Fisher pledged Australian support of the British Empire, "to the last man and the last shilling"⁵² In 1915 the *Trading with the Enemy Act* was introduced with the aim of prohibiting trading, directly or indirectly, with the "enemy".⁵³

Attorney General (and Prime Minister) Billy Hughes issued Schedules listing specific firms which were considered to fit the "enemy" criteria and these appeared in the Government Gazette. The ban of Frank Laver's piano maker, Lipp & Sohn, appeared in Issue 4 of the Gazette in January 1916.

Right: The notice in the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* of January 12, 1916, notifying the Australian public that the importation of Lipp pianos are prohibited.

While Australia enjoyed a surplus of trade with Germany in 1913 of about £7,209,791 (2018 prices \$ 880,591,835), pianos played an important part in the £7,153,609⁵⁴ (2018 prices \$873,729,859) of German imports coming into Australia in the full year before the outbreak of hostilities.

As far back as 1873, Germany had undertaken a strategy of industrial revival. Otto von Bismarck, the conservative Prussian statesman and first Chancellor of the German Empire (1871 and 1890), not only initiated a protectionist policy for the home market, but he also organized a consular service where each consul was a servant of German commerce and industry. Bismarck also subsidized the merchant marine and lowered the costs of land transportation in order to give German manufacturers a greater trade advantage.

Even so, Germany was considered favorably in Australia. In 1888 when Frederick Louis William, King of Prussia and German Emperor, died, the Victorian Government directed that "91 minute guns" be fired "as a mark of respect to the memory of the late Emperor of Germany",⁵⁵ flags in rural towns like Horsham "were placed at half-mast as a token of respect", and "in the local churches on Sunday, brief allusion was made to his lamentable death and to the deep loss the world had sustained."⁵⁶

The German piano industry exploited both the colonial mood and Bismarck's trade strategy with the result being that over 20,000 pianos were shipped from Germany to England during 1909

The image shows two pages from the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette. The left page is the front cover, dated Wednesday, 12th January, 1916, No. 4. It features the coat of arms of Australia and the title 'Commonwealth of Australia Gazette'. The right page is a schedule of trademarks, titled 'THE SCHEDULE' and 'Representation of Mark'. It lists several trademarks with their respective representations and classes:

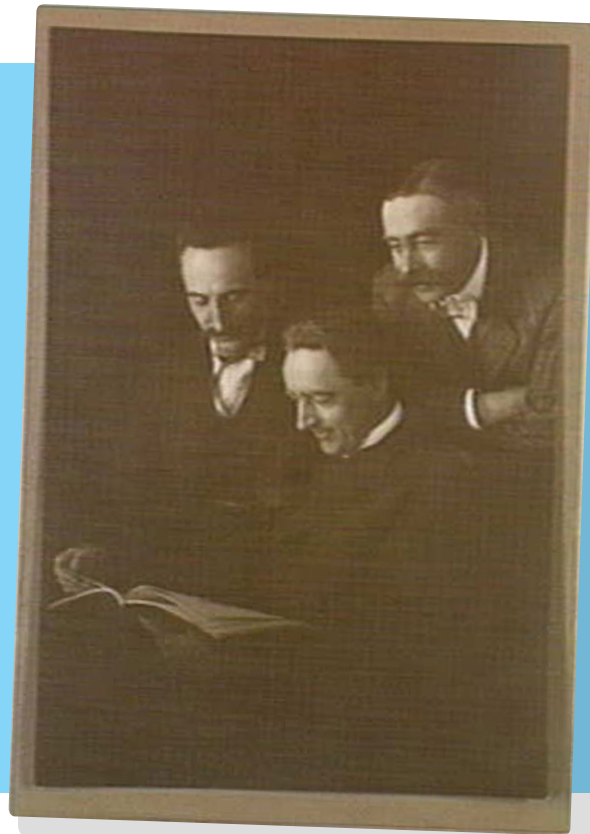
- 10610:** FAFNIR (Agricultural and horticultural machinery and parts of such machinery).
- 10611:** FAFNIR (Carriages).
- 7225:** APOTA (A Natural Mineral Water, Mineral waters, natural and artificial).
- 1287:** BECHSTEIN (Pianos).
- 11606:** PEBECO TOOTH PASTE (Tooth paste).
- 10603:** LIPP (Pianos).
- 10604:** RICH LIPP & SOHN (Pianos).
- 10605:** R. Lipp & Sohn (Pianos).

The Gazette text on the right page includes a notice regarding the importation of Lipp pianos, stating that they are prohibited under the Trading with the Enemy Act 1915. The notice is signed by W. M. Hughes, Attorney-General of the Commonwealth.

William Laver

At the age of 14 or 15 Frank Laver's brother William was recognised for his musical talent and offered tuition in Germany at the Hoch Conservatory of Music in Frankfurt. In 1882, his mother took the journey to Germany with William and three other sons Arthur, Rudolph and Ralph. They were accompanied by an old family friend, Otto Jung, who had become guardian of the under-age boys when their father died in 1880, and who continued to care for them after their mother's death at Frankfurt-am-Main in 1885 or 1886. In 1938, as Ormond Professor of Music, he opened the Grainger Museum at the University of Melbourne. It is probable that Percy Grainger's attendance at the Hoch Conservatory in 1895 initially stemmed from William Laver's advice.

Right: Henri Verbrugghen (right), William Laver (centre) and Ennis, c. 1910. [State Library of Victoria, H38782/1020]



alone. Until 1860 England was the world leading piano maker, but on the eve of the Great War, Germany had about "300 piano factories, some of them producing from 3,000 to 7,000 pianos per year" and the "total output of all factories is estimated at about 170,000 pianos annually... while the total production of Great Britain hardly exceeds 75,000 pianos a year."⁵⁷

The German piano industry was on full show at the 1888 Melbourne Centennial International Exhibition. The German Court ranked third in size, occupying 137,179 square feet,⁵⁸ and "on due examination, scores of interesting exhibits of general manufactures are found, (but) the visitor is inclined to think the German Court is all pianos."⁵⁹

Eighty⁶⁰ of the ninety-six exhibitors in Class 13 [Musical Instruments (Organs, Harmoniums, and Pianos)] were piano makers and sixty-eight of these were German.⁶¹ Almost every maker of note in Germany was represented.

In the six years ending in 1906, German piano imports into Australia were "... eleven times as many as were supplied by Great Britain, and 19 times as many as were sent here by all other countries combined."⁶² By 1914 the situation had not changed. In the

1913-14 period alone, 14,737 pianos were imported, of which 12,379 (84%) were German⁶³, though some claims were that the figure was closer to 90% of imports.⁶⁴

The seemingly insatiable Australian demand for pianos was stimulated not only by the desire for social status and entertainment, but also for two other reasons. Firstly, the prices of German pianos – by virtue of Bismarck's trade strategies – were ridiculously affordable⁶⁵ and secondly, the Australian innovation of time payment brought the cost of pianos within reach of a working class. This was important as the average nominal rate of weekly wages paid to a male employee in the manufacturing industry was only £2/9/3⁶⁶ and 77% of weekly household expenditure was on basic needs.



Right: The Wertheim Piano Factory Bendigo Street, Richmond.

[State Library of Victoria, H425499]

However, the market opportunities encouraged entrepreneurs to start piano manufacture in Australia, notably Beale & Co. in NSW and Wertheim in Victoria. Both companies began as importers who took risks during the 1890s depression to tool up for large-scale manufacture. The founders of both companies were immigrants – Octavius Beale an Irish Quaker who would later become a Freemason; Hugo Wertheim a German Jew who would convert to Christianity and become a naturalized Australian.

Octavius Beale, after a brief association with Hugo Wertheim in Melbourne selling sewing machines, bicycles, and pianos, moved to NSW where he established a piano factory in Annandale, Sydney. As an advocate of 'Empire preference', Beale had lunched with Joseph Chamberlain in London in 1906 and pushed for tariff protection for the Australian piano industry, particularly against German pianos. Beale & Co. designed pianos for Australian conditions, made all their own components and introduced revolutionary improvements which were granted patents.

In the 30 years from when Beale began manufacturing pianos in Australia, they had sold over 60,000 instruments.⁶⁷ With a newly federated Australia trying to develop industry bases that furthered its international presence, Australia's second Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, would often stay at Beale's house, Llanarth, in Burwood.

Such was the political focus on nation-building that Deakin also laid the foundation stone for Wertheim's official factory, opening on October 21, 1908.

Hugo Wertheim invested £70,000 – an absolutely astronomical sum at the time – to build a red brick piano factory at 22 Bendigo Street, Richmond, Melbourne. The factory's 50,000 squares of space sat on 4½ acres of land just over the back from John Wren's pony track on Bridge Road. It hosted its own power generator and tram line, and at its peak, employed up to 300 people and had the capacity to produce up to 2,000 pianos a year, including 12 grand pianos.

Wertheim had migrated from Frankfurt, Germany to Melbourne, Australia in 1875 as a reasonably wealthy man. He was sent by his father, Meyer Wertheim, to travel the world as an agent for the family's sewing machine business. He opened two showrooms in Bourke & Collins Streets, importing German goods such as pianos, harmoniums and bicycles, but later focused his attention on the demand for pianos in the then, new markets of colonial Australia. Wertheim began importing cheap German pianos and re-badging them as "The Planet" and "Habsburg Wertheim", possibly as early as 1880.

Before the war the lobbying of music merchants such as Allans Music and W.H. Paling was incessant. They could import German-made instruments that were cheaper to manufacture than those made by Beale, Wertheim and other smaller Australian manufacturers. The industrial debate at that time reflected and stirred up patriotic and nationalistic sentiments surrounding Australian-made products, local employment and wages⁶⁸, not nationality.

Evidence of the importance of pianos in the vision to create an Australian industrial economy and a "striking example of the fostering influence on industry of a high protective

tariff such as that recently introduced by the Federal Government"⁶⁹ is provided in the list of attendees for the opening of Wertheim's piano factory. It was a grand affair with prominent business people in addition to politicians who, as always, were anxious to associate themselves with the creation of a large number of new jobs. This piano factory in Victoria was considered to be an important demonstration of the importance of the Commonwealth Government's "New Protection" policies designed to encourage local manufacturing.

As an importer of pianos and sewing machines, Wertheim had been a strong opponent of the protectionist policy in the early days of federation, but after hefty piano duties were imposed by the Commonwealth Government, he decided to manufacture pianos in Australia instead of importing them⁷⁰, prompting Prime Minister Deakin to felicitously welcome Mr. Wertheim "as a convert from free-trade to protection."⁷¹

At the lavish opening Prime Minister Deakin commended Hugo Wertheim's courage and enterprise in launching a new industry.⁷²

Mr. Wertheim, in a response detailed his reasons for embarking on this great enterprise, which "would link his sons' future with the future of Australian industry."⁷³

Thomas Bent (1838–1909), the twenty-second premier of Victoria declared that he had personally seen to it that the land had been made available for the factory and, 'to reported cheers', said he found Hugo Wertheim 'as good a Briton as any in promoting industry'.⁷⁴



Right: Percy Grainger

[Grainger Museum, University of Melbourne]

Present also were the soon-to-be prime minister, Andrew Fisher, and the occasion was given musical credibility by the attendance of the avowedly nationalist composer, Percy Grainger, a pianist and musician of international repute, together with composer, conductor and University of Melbourne professor of music, George Marshall-Hall, who was University colleague/rival of, but also friend to, Frank Laver's brother William.

Like Beale, Wertheim pianos were designed for the south-eastern Australian climate and were a popular all-purpose piano. All pianos were hand-crafted using predominantly Australian materials and were used in a range of settings such as schools and public halls, as they were renowned for their ability to stay in tune for prolonged periods of time, requiring little maintenance. They were also used by piano teachers and for professional live performance, the most famous of which was for performances by Nellie Melba, who frequently requested that Wertheim Pianos be used during her performances.⁷⁵

The building of a concert hall (Melba Hall) for music studies at the University of Melbourne's Parkville campus was always planned, and it was opened in 1913, following a fundraising concert hosted by Dame Nellie Melba. Frank Laver's brother, William, became the University's Ormond Professor of Music a year or so after the opening of Melba Hall, and was also the Director of the University Conservatorium.⁷⁶

In 1914 patriotic fervour was a motivating factor in Australia's war fever and people were keen for ways to get involved to 'do their bit'.⁷⁷ One consequence was that during the war and until August, 1922, imports from Germany were prohibited though a few pianos were admitted under license.⁷⁸

Anything perceived to be German was attacked. Prime Minister Billy Hughes had told Australians that "no person of enemy origin, whether naturalised or otherwise, will be permitted to hold shares in companies incorporated in Australia."⁷⁹ Wertheim weren't exempt from this: "The Wertheim Piano Factory Proprietary Ltd. is another company which will be very badly affected, while the Hugo Wertheim Pty. Ltd. will be in the same position. With names like Hugo Wertheim, Herbert Wertheim, and Herman Bodenheimer on the directorate of the former company, the authorities will have to watch to see that the shareholders' list is properly cleared, and that the shares are not merely given over to someone else temporarily."⁸⁰

And these spurious claims appeared more than a year after Hugo Wertheim had written to the editors of many newspapers everywhere calling for "British fair play and justice" and pointing out that not only were his sons - who were "Australian natives" - the subject of untrue rumors regarding their loyalty, but that he himself was "a naturalised British subject of over 35 years standing"⁸¹

There was a ripple effect through other parts of the piano industry too. Piano owners who had purchased their pianos on time payment were questioning whether they were legally obliged to fulfill their payments if their debt was to a German company.⁸²

Feiss Bros. Piano Tuners and Repairers felt compelled to write a letter to their local newspaper to point out that not only was their surname of Swiss origin, not German, but they

had come "to Australia 37 years ago" and were "naturalised 26 years ago."⁸³

But incredible paradoxes also prevailed. Allan & Co "music warehouse men", who had been one of the biggest pre-war importers of German pianos, published a new conscription song "Yes! Yes!! Yes !!!" which was endorsed by none other than Prime Minister Billy Hughes who said, "I commend this song to the people of Australia. Let them tell in music the patriotism which is in their hearts."⁸⁴

So, as Attorney-General, Hughes ordered a ban on German made goods - including Lipp & Sohn pianos in January 1916 - and, as Prime Minister in October 1916, he was urging Australians to buy a patriotic song from Allan's, a business which had prospered through the sale of German pianos.

In 1915 Frank Laver received a letter from his brother Rudolph who was trapped in Berlin due to the War. The letter was sent out with an American tourist soon after the declaration of war.

Rudolph was under contract until April 1916 to manage Bergmann's electrical and engineering works in Berlin, but the war had changed his status and instead of visiting the works, he and his wife were required to report twice daily to police bureau, and remain inside their house all night between the hours of 8pm and 7am. Fortunately, being an Australian he was not interned, as English-born residents were, but as Bergmann's were producing material for Germany's war effort, Rudolph automatically lost his position.⁸⁵

Laver family post-script. The Melbourne Cricket Club gains a piano

On Frank Laver's journey to inspect his Northern Territory property in 1919, and just 100 miles short of the party's goal, Laver contracted an illness and was seized with paralysis.

Having missed a waterhole that they had been making for, no water was obtainable till next day.⁸⁶ The party's alarm was accentuated by the inability to secure him decent and comfortable transport. Being a very tall and heavily built man, it was impossible for them to move him far without the aid of an appropriate vehicle. Alfred Laver sent a dozen telegrams from Powell's Creek seeking help, but it took eight days for a car to reach the stranded explorers from Camooweal, on the border of Queensland and South Australia.⁸⁷ (In 1914, in that part of the country a vehicle could average 41 miles/day).

"Fortunately, Mr Frank Laver was a man of strong constitution. The ordeal would have killed a weaker man. Though helpless, he retained his memory, and was able to converse with his comrades, who were set a difficult task to get him safely back over the thousands of miles separating him from home."⁸⁸

Frank Laver never fully recovered from complications associated with his illness, and a cerebral haemorrhage proved fatal. He died at Crathie House, a private hospital in East Melbourne, 24 September 1919.⁸⁹

After Frank's death, Myrtle Laver took their children Patricia and Eric back to her "old home" in Kiama, "Warrana, to live with her mother, Katherine Major. When Frank died, so did Myrtle's love of cricket. In 1921 the children were seen playing in the Reserve at the Sydney Cricket Ground but



Above: The Laver piano situated in the old MCC Museum in the third pavilion.

Below: The Laver piano in its location since the opening of the current MCC Museum in 2006.

it was reported that “Mrs. Laver never goes to watch the cricket — says she never will again.”⁹⁰

Myrtle’s mother Katherine suffered a series of heart attacks over the last year of her life, and Myrtle spent her time caring for her.⁹¹ Katherine died in August 1931 and Myrtle died a year later in July, 1932.⁹²

Left with no parents, Frank and Myrtle’s children Patricia (15) and Eric (13), stood to inherit about £11,000 but being underage they moved to Melbourne to be near Professor William Laver, their uncle and guardian.⁹³ While in Melbourne they lived with their aunt Florence Laver in Glen St. Hawthorn and went to school from her home.⁹⁴ Florence Laver was the wife of Frank’s brother Arthur, who had died in 1927.⁹⁵

Frank’s piano was donated to the MCC in 1941 by Frank’s children, Myrtle Patricia Laver and Eric Geoffrey Laver. After leaving school Patricia had trained to be a nurse and in 1944 she married Mr Norman Trounce of Narromine. The bride was given away by her uncle, Mr. Oscar Major.⁹⁶

Eric studied to be a doctor at the University of Sydney, and received his qualifications as a legal medical practitioner on July 7, 1943.⁹⁷ At that time he was based at the Ryde District Soldiers’ Memorial Hospital, and in May 1943, a few months before formally receiving his qualifications, he enlisted in the Army on May 6, 1943, and gained the rank of Captain in the 8th Battalion (discharged November 3, 1947).⁹⁸ In 1950 he married Miss Gwen Ryman in Newcastle (NSW).⁹⁹

Throughout the Second World War Stuttgart was bombed 53 times as part of the strategic air offensive of the Allies against Germany. Around 142,000 bombs were dropped on Stuttgart during the course of the war and 39,125 buildings were damaged or destroyed by the attacks.¹⁰⁰ It is unknown whether the Lipp & Sohn piano factory was part of the 46% of Stuttgart’s built up areas destroyed.¹⁰¹

Of the Australian piano makers, the Wertheim factory was struggling by the late 1920s. None of the third generation of the family was interested in running the business, and the 1929 depression had a severe impact. The Wertheims struggled on by sharing the Richmond site with three competitors Allans, Paling’s and Sutton’s. In the early 1930s, the popularity of the wireless decreased demand for pianos and the factory was closed in 1935 after producing around 18,000 pianos over 27 years.

The Wertheim property was sold to Heinz to become the site for food preserving. With the advent of television in the 1950s, the then disused factory became the studios for the GTV 9 television station in 1956. About 40% of the original site has been converted to a mix of townhouses, apartments and retail. There are plans for the remainder to be developed into retirement and aged care accommodation.



In 1946, following the conclusion of the Second World War, Frank Laver's brother, now aged 73, applied to British authorities for Australia to take him "home" on the basis that "his 'constitution is weak" and that his wife suffers from 'child failure' and 'overdosisses [sic] of morphium.'" ¹⁰²

According to the reporter from the *Mail* (Adelaide SA), his application was refused because not only did he provide a flimsy excuse for citizenship – the *Mail* claiming he became a naturalised German in 1915 – but he had also "made electrical equipment for Germany in both World Wars", which, given Rudolph's letter to Frank in 1915, might have been incorrect. ¹⁰³

And the company that made Frank Laver's piano? From 1985 to 1992, Richard Lipp & Sohn pianos were built under

license of the Bentley Piano Company, Ltd. In 1993, the firm was purchased by Whelpdale, Maxwell & Codd, Ltd., and the Richard Lipp & Sohn product continued to be manufactured until 1998. Today, Richard Lipp & Sohn pianos are being built by the Hyundai Corporation of South Korea, one of the world's largest piano manufacturers since 1956.

Author:

Peter Humphreys serves on the committee of the MCC Bowls Section and a partner in start-up Pianos Recycled.

Peter wishes to thank Mike Hendry for his assistance.

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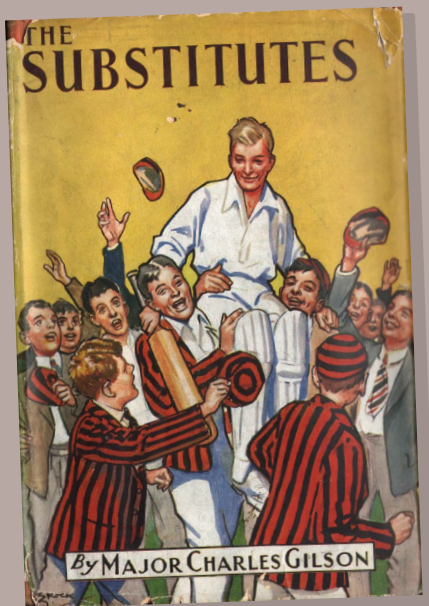
Take A Bookmark

By Lynda Carroll and Gaye Fitzpatrick

A favourite feature of any Library visit, the bookmarks on the front desk provide a vivid introduction and reference point for regular patrons and occasional tourists alike. On the back, they're all practicality, providing information regarding opening hours and contact details.

On the front, however, it's a bit more fun. The images have been carefully chosen to bring a bit of the Library to life. The leader of the pack, of course, is the cover of the 1873 Wisden, referencing the birth year of the MCC Library, as well as one of the most treasured volumes in the collection.

The other three varieties of bookmark, however, are a bit more quirky, heading into the Library's children's collection for their source material. Let us introduce you to them, and take you well beyond the images of each book's spine:



Gibson, Major Charles [James Lewis]

The Substitutes – Major Charles Gilson.

Warne & Co.: London, 1935

Charles James Louis Gilson (1878-1943), who published variously as Major Charles Gilson and Captain Charles Gilson, was a British officer who served in China following the Boxer Rebellion. His output was diverse, covering everything from

science fiction to boys' own adventures. *The Substitutes* falls into this latter category, dealing with the controversy and machinations of a cricket game in coastal Salcombe Bay.

Assorted rivalries are established early, along with a reminder that this book was published in 1935, and that 'Old Guppy', who hires out boats on the beach, therefore resembles a 'South African bushman'. A couple of similar eyebrow raisers aside, most of the language is slightly archaic, albeit eminently readable. Unfortunately, there are seemingly few females in Salcombe Bay apart from the Wayne family matriarch; or if there are, they are frying the fish and laundering cricket whites. Mention is made of "them summer gals as wears them beach pyjamas", but not much else.

Of course, Guppy – never obsequious – is the enemy of the Squire. Sir James Symes and his son Ronald are widely disliked by the local residents, and with Guppy winning an ancient battle over foreshore rights, the old fisherman and the gentry are at loggerheads.

This is bound to end in a contest, and what could be more fitting than a cricket game? Enter Dick Wayne and his reverend father. Dick is best friends with Joe Guppy – the grandson of

Guppy – and neither Dick nor Joe can bear the sight of Ronald Symes. Relatively successful at cricket, young Symes struts about the district as if he "imagined himself to be Don Bradman and Harold Larwood in one." What a combination, and – given the recent nature of Bodyline at the time of publication – what a dangerous idea.

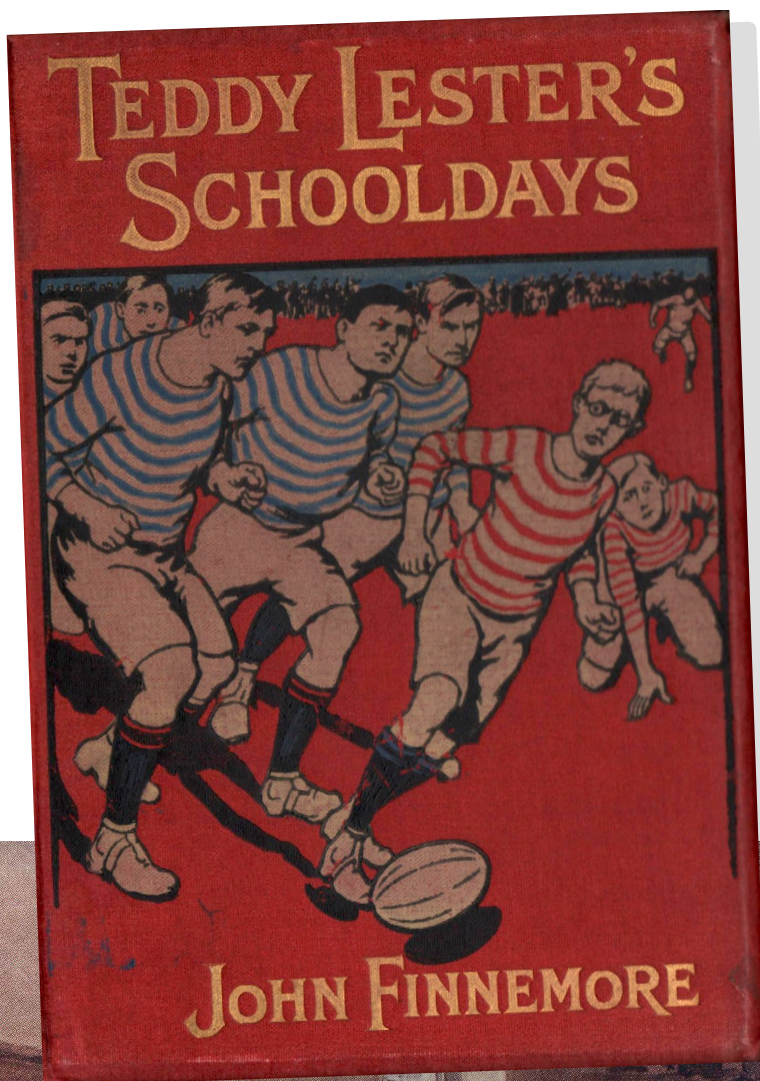
Moving along at a brisk pace, Captain Evans – a Military Cross winner, and stalwart of the local cricket team – enlists Dick, Joe and Ronald to take part in a match against Gladeham, a local side complete with Wansborough, the Cambridge Blue. Dick is a capable batsman, Joe a handy bowler, and Ronald has success on his side. Dick is dubious about this, concerned that Ronald "plays for himself more than his side."

The scene is set for a memorable occasion, and one of the stars of the show is Joe Guppy, highly entertaining in his batting to help take Salcombe to 152. However, the tenor changes when Ronald shows his true nature upon bowling, appealing for lbw every time he hits a batsman's pads, and sneering at the umpire, who happens to be the Reverend Wayne. Ronald throws a temper tantrum when admonished, and leaves the field to hide at his father's side, whereupon the Squire threatens court action and associated mayhem.

A man short, Salcombe's only remedy is to call for a substitute. Enter Old Guppy, who not only fields with his hat, but also takes "the catch that turned the tide". With Joe collecting six wickets to take Salcombe to a nineteen-run victory, it is truly a special day for the locals.

The scene is set for multiple fisticuffs, family reconciliations and realisation that boarding schools do not necessarily gentleman cricketers make. With Ronald's Willingbury taking on Dick's Oakhurst, the story rumbles to an end courtesy of dying light, underarm bowling, another substitution twist and an unexpected six. Who wins? Suffice to say that good will always out, and that Ronald Symes, he of the bad attitude and ungentlemanly play, can be found, just a year later, "rounding up sheep on a station in the heart of Tasmania."

The Substitutes is an absorbing and atmospheric read, one for a quiet summer afternoon at local cricket, when everyone is behaving just as they should.



John Finnemore

Teddy Lester's Schooldays - John Finnemore

W. & R. Chambers: London, [1914]

John Finnemore (1863-1915) was a schoolmaster and author of many non-fiction and fiction works, including the Teddy Lester series, set in Slapton Public School at the start of the 20th century.

School fiction tended to follow the common themes of friendship, loyalty, honour, sporting prowess and sportsmanship. Class distinctions, racism, sexism, jingoism and cultural imperialism were also implicit, being symptomatic of the times.

Teddy Lester's Schooldays ticks some of these boxes - women are almost invisible, appearing as servants or shrieking wives of poachers, and the lower classes have small roles as villains, unless they are decent men in need of rescuing from danger. On the other hand, two of the main characters are from "minority groups" - Ito Nagao being "a little Jap", accompanied by the squinting, bespectacled stutterer, Jimmy "The Bat" West, who is "cool and plucky, honest and straight". They, and their chum Teddy Lester, are all top sportsmen and are "the idols of the school". Finnemore makes the point that West was not mocked or jeered.

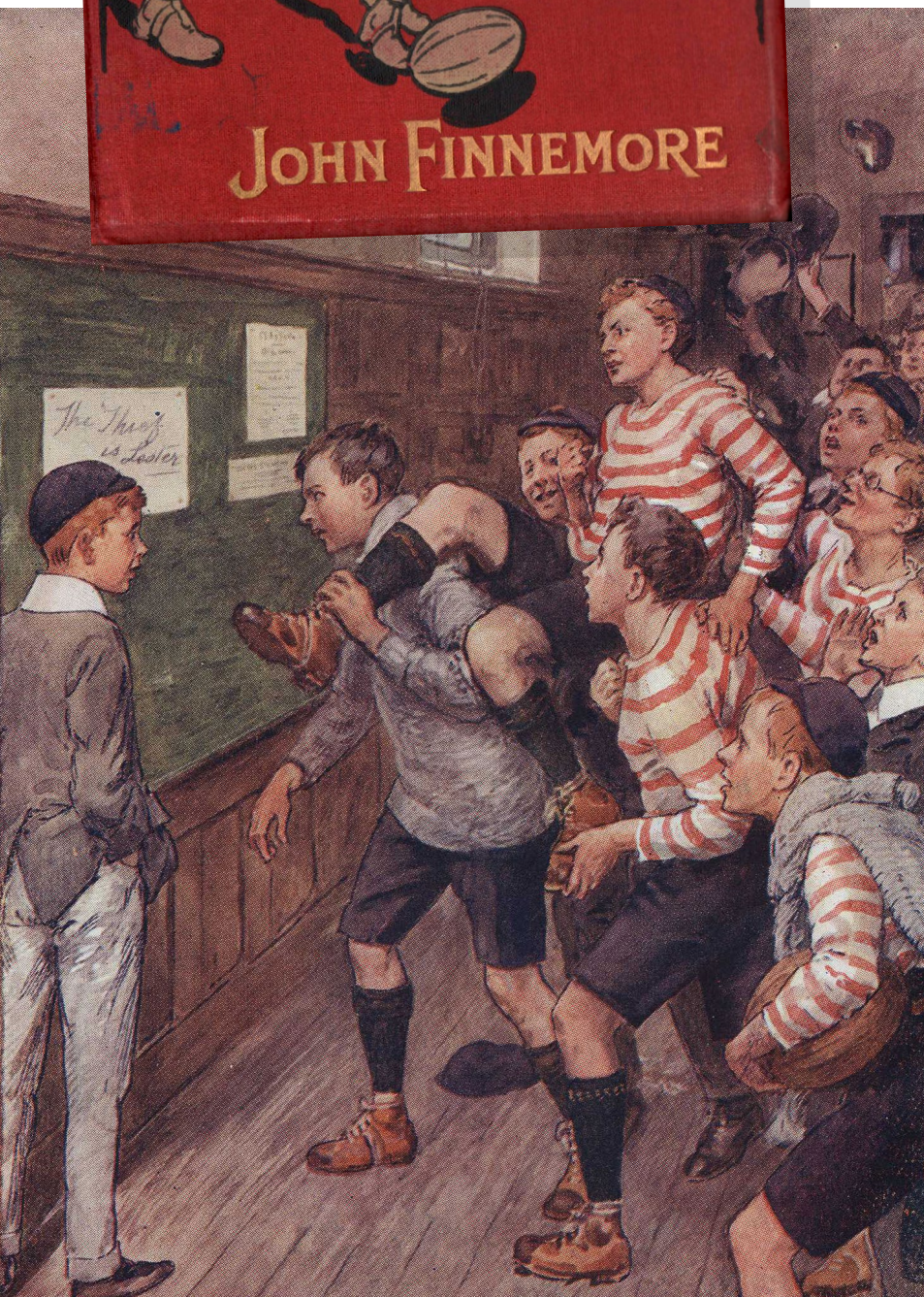
Teddy himself is "jolly fond of a cheerful rag" especially against the Bedlington Club (a pale imitation of a Varsity club) led by Cheriton - "a conceited lad" - who was "destined to blossom into a fussy, conceited, and not very useful Member of Parliament". Some of the most entertaining passages are when Cheriton is receiving his just dues from Teddy and his friends. Bullying, pomposity, lying and stealing are not to be tolerated! Much of the punishment (corporal) is meted out by prefects and senior students, though the whole House is involved in punishing one miscreant by forcing him to "run the gauntlet".

Adults are mainly incidental to the plot - useful when needed!

There is never a dull moment at Slapton and the term is filled with rags, sporting events, including a very exciting rigger match where our heroes star, plenty of feasts (a frequent occurrence, even though they do seem to be fed regular school meals), solving mysteries, preventing burglaries, as well as moments of great danger when Teddy and his chums use all their resourcefulness to rescue the two gamekeepers from certain death at the hands of angry poachers. Teddy, Ito and The Bat are certainly not saints as they frequently steal off out of bounds to go ferreting, buy supplies at the shop (for the next feast), get to the bottom of problems, or just generally explore and find ways of thwarting the Bedlington Club. Schoolwork barely rates a mention - and there don't appear to be any teachers other than Housemasters and the Principal.

This is a highly entertaining and amusing read, and I can just imagine a group of young boys begging their teacher to tell them another one of his stories about Teddy Lester and his chums.

Left: *Teddy Lester's Schooldays* included six coloured plates by William Rainey, the first of which is left and titled, "Teddy is confronted with the words 'The thief is Lester!'" [MCC Library collection]



The MCC Library is a facility for reference and research and is open to Club members and the general public for browsing. For research it is essential that the user makes an appointment first with the Librarian.



COLLECTION

The collection of volumes is particularly strong in the area of sports history, especially cricket. Other subjects include golf, tennis, Australian Rules football and general Australian history

HOURS

The Library is open Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm.

STAFF

It is staffed by a full-time Librarian and a Library Technician.

VOLUNTEERS

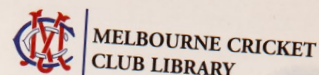
A number of volunteers assist with research projects and information provision on selected days.

MCG, Yarra Park, Jolimont
Phone: 657 8876



The MCC Library's inaugural bookmark was designed in the early 1990s when the Library was under the stewardship of Ross Peacock. It was one sided and all opening times and contact details were on the front.

The introduction of eight digit local phone numbers in 1996, and a fax machine at the MCC Library necessitated the introduction of a new bookmark. The Librarian David Studham decided to have them professionally designed and contacted George Petrou Design (GPD), who was designing some books for the Library. All MCC Library bookmarks since have been created with the assistance of GPD. The card was still one sided and had the Library's details printed over a faded image of Bill Ponsford – a MCC great and an inaugural Australian Cricket Hall of Fame inductee in 1996. The Ponsford family have been great supporters of the Library.



The MCC Library is a facility for reference and research and is open to Club members and the general public for browsing. For research it is essential that the user makes an appointment first with the Librarian.

Collection

The collection of volumes is particularly strong in the area of sports history and biography, especially cricket. Other subjects include golf, tennis, Australian Rules football, Olympic Games and general Australian history.

Hours

Non Match Days - The Library is open Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm. **Match Days** - Opening of members gates until end of the tea/dinner break (cricket) or half time break (football).

Staff

It is staffed by two Librarians.

Volunteers

A number of volunteers assist with research projects and information provision on selected days.

MCG, Yarra Park Jolimont
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www.mcc.org.au/library



MELBOURNE CRICKET CLUB LIBRARY

The Melbourne Cricket Club Library was founded in 1873 and is a cornerstone of the club's commitment to its heritage activities.

A facility for reference and research, it is available for MCC members and their guests to browse the collection and use the resources during opening hours. On non-match days it is also open to the general public by appointment.

Collection

Covering the sports played by the MCC and at the MCG, the collection's strengths are cricket, Australian football and the Olympic Games, with substantial holdings in a number of other sports. As a reference library it does not lend collection items.

Hours

Non-match days
Monday to Friday: 10am to 4pm.
Saturday and Sunday: by special appointment.

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Staff

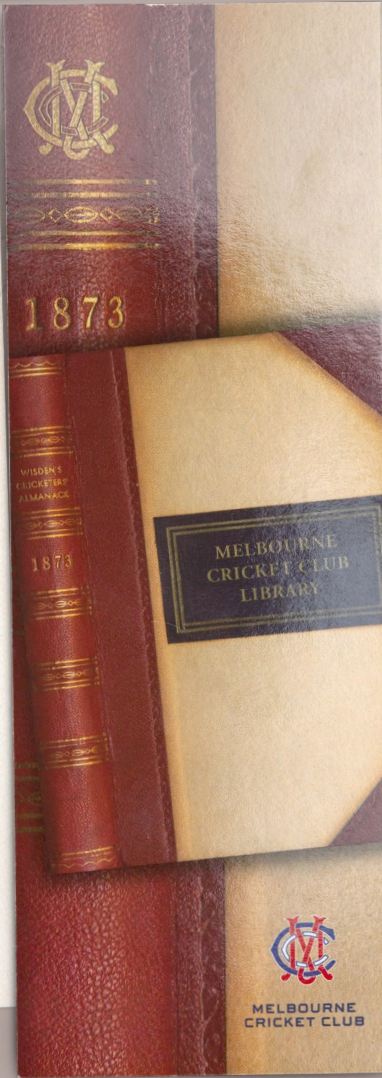
The club librarians are backed by support staff and specialist volunteers who assist with research projects and information provision.

MCC Library

Level 3, Members Pavilion,
Melbourne Cricket Ground, Jolimont.

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Fax: 9654 6067
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MCC Library

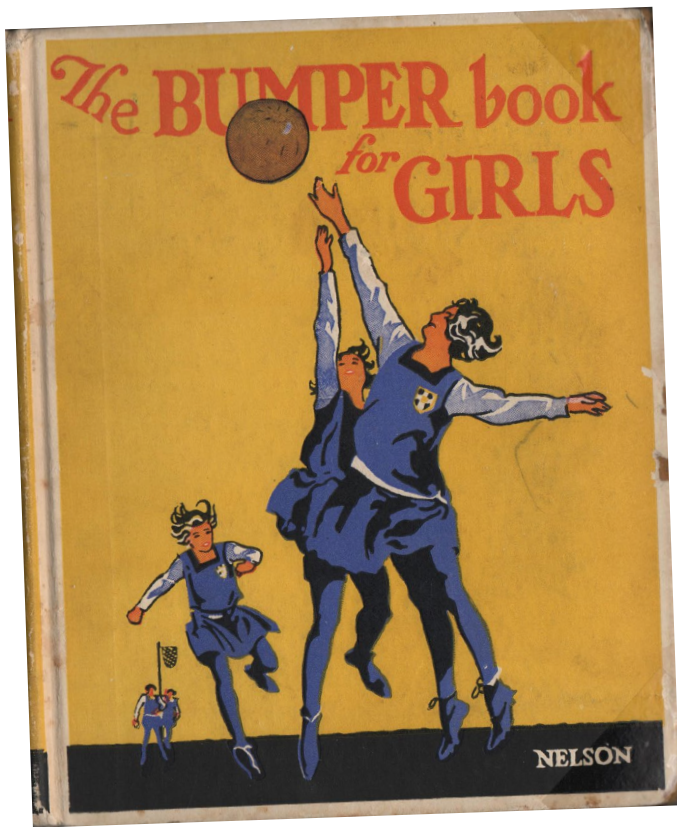
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The MCC Library was closed from 2003 until 2006. With the introduction of a club website and a Library email address another bookmark was required for its reopening in the new pavilion. This design is based on the cover and spine of the MCC's bound *Wisden Cricketers' Almanacs*. The issue on the spine "1873", refers to the foundation year of the Library. The MCC Library bookmark was also two sided with all contact and hours of opening details on the back. The 2006 bookmark design has proved very popular. When the general Library bookmark was updated in 2015, to include the Library's social media accounts, the design on the front was retained.





C. Bernard Rutley, Phillipa Francklyn, Jessie Leckie Herberton, Major J.T. Gorman, Ethel Talbot, et al.

The Bumper Book For Girls

London: Thomas Nelson & Son, [ins.1929]

Published by Thomas Nelson and Sons, this volume is a typical sample of "girls' literature" from the late 1920s and early 1930s, as captured by the likes of Angela Brazil in many classics.

This collection covers all of the typical targets, from Girl Guides to distant, rich grandfathers; from cattle rustling (the wrongdoers naturally being nabbed by a young slip of a lass) to the normal dramas of boarding school life. Whether it's a looming first aid exam, where "little skinny Joyce" fails on the day but goes on to save the doctor from a car crash, or tennis matches

and trips to Egypt, adventure awaits every young lady involved in these often captivating, often amusing stories.

The language used is one of the main ingredients for mirth, with "old thing" a favourite of every contributing author, and "rotten luck" predominating for the always daring main characters who turn out to be superb explorers, drivers and pilots despite falling foul of authority. Typically, this is represented by a harsh headmistress or guardian, who – as is fitting – finally recognises Millicent/Dora/Ethel's "pluck" and humbly thanks her for saving the day.

One of the unexpected features of the collection is a story with an Australian focus – "The Kangaroo Hunt". Set on a large rural property, its portrayal of the local indigenous population is typical of the era. It's an unfortunate stretch for drama in a story that does provide a sense of the amazing setting in which the station is located, albeit showing the security of the "passion flower shaded veranda" as opposed to the not so great outdoors.

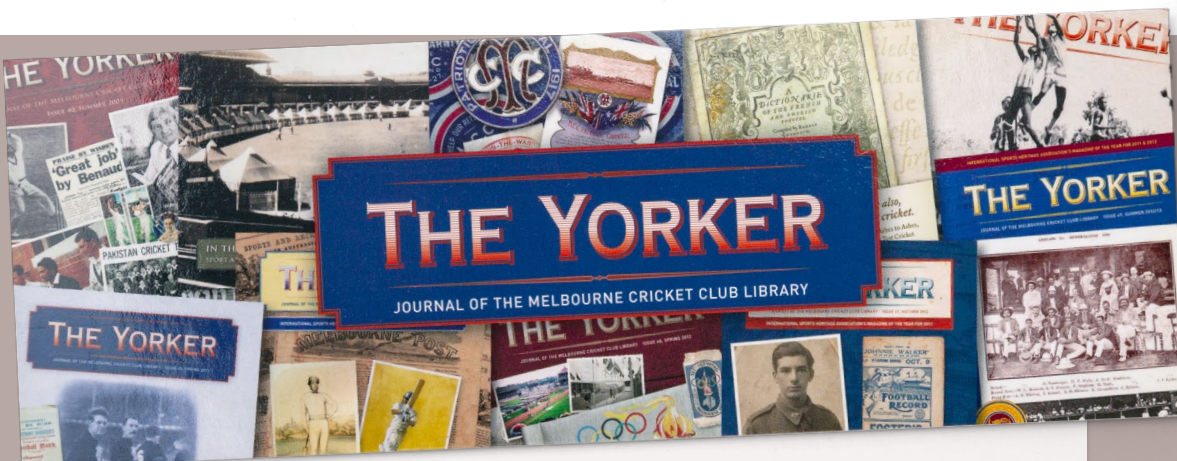
Of course, all good books should finish with puzzles, and this volume does not disappoint. If you have a spare couple of hours to apply your mind to draught and geometric puzzles, this is the place for you. Once again, the fact that this is a 1930s publication is brought home by the use of one of the symbols challenging readers to make it into a square. Described as a "cabalistic sign" – in effect, secret or mysterious – to a modern audience it immediately appears as a swastika.

The Bumper Book For Girls, then, is as intriguing as it is entertaining; as inadvertently educational as it is a little time travel machine, and well worth the read, albeit with 21st century expectations held somewhat in check.

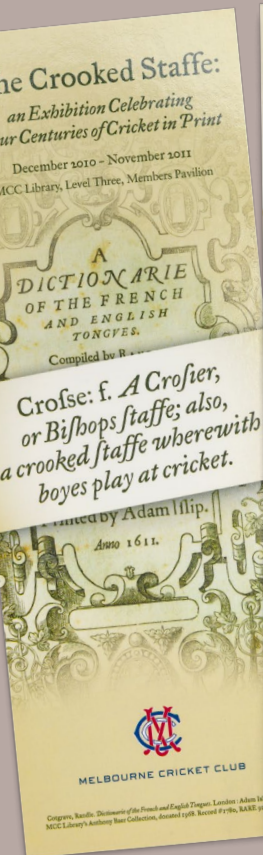
Authors:

Lynda Carroll is a member of the MCC Library's match day casual staff. She has published extensively on sport and the Melbourne Football Club in particular.

Gaye Fitzpatrick is a trained school librarian and a MCC Library volunteer.



A *Yorker*-themed bookmark was created to celebrate the *Yorker* winning the International Sports Heritage Association's 2011 communication award for "programs, annual reports, magazines" – nicknamed "The ISHY". The banner on the bookmark was from issue 45, Spring 2011. Further success in the following two years enabled the *Yorker* to complete a hat-trick of ISHY wins. The MCC Library received another one in 2015, for the design layout of our online catalogue.



The year 2011 was the 400th anniversary of the MCC Library's oldest book, Randal Cotgrave's *Dictionary of the French and English Tongues*. This book contains the oldest known publication of the word cricket. To recognise this the MCC Library curated *The Crooked Staffe: an Exhibition Celebrating Four Centuries of Cricket in Print*, for the summer of 2010/11. Collateral for the exhibition included a special edition of the *Yorker*, and two themed bookmarks. One bookmark featured the title page of Cotgrave's dictionary, while another had a page from an eighteenth century book. "The great I play: Cricket" was from *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book, intended for the instruction and amusement of little Master Tommy*, written and published by John Newbury c.1760. This single leaf is in the MCC Museum [M6142], and both items were donated to the MCC by Anthony Baer in 1968.



The MCC Archives was established as a separate collection in 2009, with public access through the MCC Library. In 2013 then MCC Archivist Patricia Downs won a contest at a records management convention for a retractable banner for the archives. GPD was called upon once again to design the banner. Patricia and the librarians were so impressed with the design, that to promote the MCC Archives and to publicise public access, it was used as the front of a bookmark. This was distributed both by the archivist and also at the MCC Library reference desk.



In 2015 the deletion of our fax number and the Library's expansion into social media required the creation of new bookmarks. While the classic 2006 design was retained, the opportunity was taken to produce three more colourful designs to promote the historic children's collection. The use of old book spines in the design of bookmarks had proved popular at other libraries. With this in mind deputy librarians Deborah Schrader and Trevor Ruddell, chose three decorative spines as the basis for the children's bookmarks. Each represented a different sport - cricket, netball, and football (in this particular case rugby as antiquarian English children's books are more readily accessible than those published in Australia).

Dynasty

The Cordner Family

By David Allen

The Cordner family name is synonymous with Australian football and the Melbourne Cricket Club. When you enter the ground you may pass through the Cordner family entrance, opened in 1993.

"The 'founding father' of the Cordner family in Australia was Henry Cordner (1831-1916) who was born on 26 February, 1831, in Lisburn, County Antrim, Ireland."¹ He arrived in Melbourne as a passenger on the maiden voyage of the *Great Britain*. He married Martha Diggles Hislop (1835-1922) on May 29, 1854 at Prahran in Victoria. Their family included son Edward James Cordner (1856-1930) who married Helen ("Nellie") Rae (1860-1952) at St Paul's Cathedral in 1883. They had a family of seven children. Their children Harry and Ted, their grandchildren Ted, Donald, Denis, and John, their great grandson David and their great great granddaughter Harriet have all played football at the highest level. When Edward James Cordner moved to Melbourne from Bendigo, and two of his sons excelled at football and cricket, he developed an interest in sport administration, becoming University Football Club vice president, a club delegate to the Victorian Football League and a member of the Melbourne Cricket Club committee from 1911 until 1929.²



Above: Brothers John, Donald and Ted Cordner, outside the Cordner entrance of the third Members' Pavilion. The member's entrance of the redeveloped Members' Stand was similarly named after the Cordner family. [Melbourne Cricket Club collection, M16450]

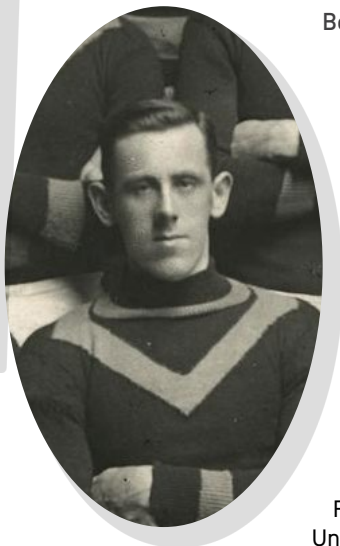
Below: The Cordner family at home in the 1950s. At the back are (left to right) Edward Rae Cordner and his son Edward Pruen Cordner. Seated are Denis Cordner, Donald Cordner, and John Cordner. Inset are Edward James Cordner and Henry Cordner. [Melbourne Cricket Club collection, M756]



The focus of this study are the members of the Cordner family who have played in the VFL/AFL or AFLW and are related. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize the significant contribution made to the Melbourne Cricket Club by this family sporting dynasty.

Henry Cordner

Born 17 June 1885 (Sandhurst, Vic.)
Died 14 November 1943 (Hobart, Tas.)



Henry Cordner was a son of Edward James Cordner and popularly known as Harry. He was educated at Melbourne Grammar School where he was Head of the School in 1902.³ Harry Cordner played one match with Melbourne in 1903 and ten matches in 1905 when, as a forward, he led the team's goalscorers with 16 goals and represented Victoria against New South Wales. In 1906 and 1907 Harry Cordner captained University's premiership teams in the Metropolitan Football Association. Following the

University team's entry into the Victorian Football League in 1908, he played 29 games and kicked seven goals with the Students in 1908 and 1909. He captained the side in 15 games in 1909. The *Argus* explained that: "As a centre player (he) regards that position as the pivot on which the work of the side depends."⁴ Opposition player Rod McGregor (Carlton), who was a member of the Blues' premiership sides in 1906, 1908, 1914 and 1915, recounted: "Harry was always a great footballer and one I consider my toughest opponent in the centre."⁵ In 1910 Harry played one season with Perth FC and was also a District cricketer with University between 1902/03 and 1910/11.⁶ During his time at University he received a double Blue for football and cricket. In 1914 he accepted a commission in the Royal Army Medical Corps, and saw service in France and Mesopotamia during the First World War. When serving in France as a captain, he was

Mentioned in Despatches in 1917.⁷ After the war, Dr Harry Cordner was medical officer at the Electro-Zinc works at Risdon Vale in Tasmania.

Edward Rae Cordner

Born 18 June 1887 (Sandhurst, Vic.)
Died 21 July 1963 (Greensborough, Vic.)

Ted Cordner was captain of Melbourne Grammar School in 1904 and 1905.⁸ A versatile sportsman, he was the youngest brother of Harry. At school he captained the football XVIII and cricket XI, and was both swimming and boxing champion. Aged 17



years he appeared with Melbourne in 1905 in two games. In 1906 and 1907 he played with University in the Metropolitan Football Association and, with his brother Harry, was a member of the premiership teams in those two seasons. Following the Students entry into the Victorian Football League, he played from 1908 until 1912 in 60 games, kicking eight goals. A centre half-back, he was regularly among the Students' best players. He was the club vice-captain in 1909 and 1910. Ted Cordner was popular with fans, scoring well in public polls. He was also a District cricketer with University (1905/06 to 1910/11) and Fitzroy (1914/15).⁹ During his years at University he gained a Blue for both football and cricket. Advancing from the rank of captain to major during the First World War, he served with the Australian Army Medical Corps in Egypt, Gallipoli and France. For most of his career, Dr Ted Cordner was a general practitioner at Diamond Creek and Greensborough. He and his wife Margaret Constance (nee Pruen) were the parents of Ted, Donald, Denis and John.¹⁰

Joseph Alan Cordner

Born 6 May 1890 (Bridgewater on Loddon, Vic.)
Died 25 April 1915 (Gallipoli, Turkey)

The son of National Bank manager Isaiah Joseph ("Joe") Cordner (1860-1934) and his wife Jessie, Alan Cordner was a cousin of Harry and Ted Cordner. Alan Cordner's father "Joe" had captained Sandhurst Football Club in the 1880s.¹¹ Alan Cordner was educated at Hamilton College between 1902 and 1906; in his final year he captained the school and both the cricket and football teams. He was also actively involved in the school's cadet corps.

Recruited from Warrnambool, he played three matches with Geelong in seasons 1911 and 1912. He then joined Collingwood in 1913 and 1914, recording 20 games and two goals. Alan Cordner was 6ft (183cm) tall and weighed 12st 8lb (80kg); he was a solid defender either at full back or in the back pocket. Alan, at the time, worked as a clerk in the stove department of the Metropolitan Gas Company.

Private Alan Cordner enlisted early in August 1914. He was, "said to have been the first VFL footballer to enlist", having the early service number of 180.¹² Upon news of their



Left Top:

Detail of Henry Cordner when captain of University in 1909. [University of Melbourne Archives, 1175]

Left Bottom: Ted Cordner when vice-captain of University in the VFL. [private collection]

Right: Private Joseph Allen Cordner [Australian War Memorial collection, P03483.009]

enlistment, Collingwood president, Jim Sharpe, presented Alan Cordner and team-mate William Matheson with gold watches¹³

A member of the 6th Battalion AIF, Alan Cordner was Killed in Action during the chaotic Gallipoli landing on April 25, 1915. He was one of six players with Victorian Football League experience killed that day.¹⁴ For over a year his family's anguish was compounded by lack of information about his fate. The newspaper *Winner* explained, "ever since the original landing at Gallipoli he has been reported missing."¹⁵ On June 14, 1916, as a tribute, Collingwood players wore crepe arm bandages against Fitzroy to recognize the death of both Alan Cordner and Lord Horatio Kitchener.¹⁶ Collingwood had responded immediately when news of his death was officially recognized. "A letter of sympathy was ordered to be sent to the parents of Alan Cordner..." and "his photograph was ordered to be placed in the committee room."¹⁷

In 1916 his school magazine the *Hamiltonian* stated he "was not found wanting when the Umpire sounded the whistle for the great game."¹⁸ Private Joseph Alan Cordner has no known grave; his name is commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial, Turkey.



Laurence Osmaston Cordner

Born 7 February 1911 (Warrnambool, Vic.)
Died 11 July 1992 (Penshurst, Vic.)

Larry Cordner was the half-brother of Alan Cordner. His father, Isaiah Joseph "Joe" Cordner, had remarried after the death of his first wife. Larry attended Scotch College between February 1921 and December 1928.¹⁹

He was a member of both the 1st XVIII and 1st XI. Scotch College won the Associated Public Schools' cricket competition in 1928. He also played with the powerful amateur football team Old Scotch Collegians.

Cordner was a right arm leg break and googly bowler and late order batsman. He played District cricket with Melbourne (1928/29-1931/32) and Hawthorn-East Melbourne (1933/34-1939/40).²⁰ In season 1930/31 he represented Victoria against South Australia and the touring West Indies team. His last match for Victoria was in the 1933/34 season against Western Australia.

In Round 10, 1933, Larry was selected at full-forward in his only VFL match (for Hawthorn). He kicked one goal but Hawthorn were defeated by Collingwood at Glenferrie Oval. "After injuring an ankle in that match his employer forced him to choose between football and work and he opted for the latter."²¹ Larry Cordner was only four when his half brother Alan went to war and when he played his one match with Hawthorn it was nineteen years since Alan had played his last match.

Captain Laurence Cordner served with the 2/11 Field Regiment in the 2nd AIF from 1939 to 1945. He saw service in the Middle East and New Guinea. In working life, Larry Cordner was a stock agent working in various locations such as Newmarket and Sale. He later became a farmer at Penshurst near Hamilton in Victoria's Western District.

Top: Laurence Osmaston Cordner [private collection]

Right: Easi-oats trade card of Donald Pruen Cordner [private collection]

Edward Pruen "Ted" Cordner

Born 31 January 1919 (Cheltenham, England)
Died 4 March 1996 (Diamond Creek, Vic.)

Ted Cordner was the eldest of the four brothers who played with Melbourne. He was educated at Melbourne Grammar School where he excelled academically and was cricket captain, football vice-captain, athlete and boxer.²² At Melbourne University he studied medicine. (MB, BS, 1942, MD, 1951). Ted was a premiership player with University Blacks in 1939, the same season he represented Victoria at amateur level. He also played District cricket with University in 22 matches between 1939/40 and 1941/42.²³ He gained a Blue for football and a half Blue for cricket.

At Melbourne he played from 1941 to 1943 and in 1946 in 52 games (0 goals). At 6ft 2½ (189cm) in height and weighing 14st (89kg) he was a strong and dashing centre half-back. In his first year, 1941, he was among the Demons' best players in their premiership win against Essendon. His last season in 1946 saw him play nineteen games and represent Victoria against South Australia. Many critics considered he would have won the Brownlow Medal in 1943, but the award was in recess because of the war.²⁴ Ted then played with amateur side Old Melburnians for a further three years and finally with the local Greensborough team, where he played in the club's first premiership and became club president.

His VFL career was interrupted by war service. He joined the Royal Australian Navy, serving on the HMAS *Vendetta* in the Pacific. He was later seconded to the Royal Navy, seeing service in England, the Far East and the Pacific. He rose to the rank of Surgeon Lieutenant.²⁵ "He spent VE Day in London and VP Day in Co Chin in India, still attached to the R.N."²⁶ He later gained the rank of Surgeon Lieutenant Commander in the Naval Reserve. Dr Ted P. Cordner had a 40 year active association with the Alfred Hospital and from 1960 to 1975 was an assistant physician at the Austin Hospital. He was devoted to his medical practice at Greensborough. Ted's son David played with both Melbourne and Sydney in the VFL/AFL.



Donald Pruen Cordner

Born 21 January 1922 (Diamond Creek, Vic.)
Died 13 June 2009 (Point Lonsdale, Vic.)

Donald Cordner attended Melbourne Grammar School for ten years from 1930 to 1934 as a boarder and then as a day boy till 1939.²⁷ He studied medicine at Melbourne University and gained a Blue for football. In 1941 he was a member of the undefeated University Under 19 team. He debuted with Melbourne in the 1941 second semi-final victory against Carlton. His second

match was the 1941 Grand Final victory against Essendon.

The Brownlow Medal award was reintroduced in 1946, following a wartime break from 1941. Playing as an amateur, Donald Cordner won the award with 20 votes. Tall and sleek at 6ft 2in (188cm) and weighing 14st 4lb (90.5kg), Cordner was a fine



awarded the perpetual Corder-Eggleston Cup. "He was a member of the Melbourne Grammar School Council for 15 years until 1989, and chairman from 1984 to 1989".³² Other football honours included selection as back pocket/ruckman in the Melbourne Team of the Century in 2000 and as a member of the club's Hall of Fame in 2001; he was elevated to Legend status in 2008. Other awards included Victorian of the Year in 1993, and Life Membership of both the Melbourne Football Club and the Melbourne Cricket Club.

George Denis Pruen Corder

Born:- 28 June 1924 (Diamond Creek, Vic.)
Died:- 17 October 1990 (Kew, Vic.)

Educated at Melbourne Grammar School, Denis Corder was a versatile sportsman, an athlete, cricketer and footballer.³³ Denis Corder debuted with Melbourne while on leave from the Navy in Round 5, 1943. This was the only time that Ted, Donald and Denis played together at VFL level. It was also an eventful match against Richmond at Punt Road Oval with Denis Corder knocked unconscious by Jack Dyer soon after the start of the game. Denis went on to kick two goals. After serving in the Navy in the Pacific as a Sub Lieutenant, he completed

a Bachelor of Science (1949) and a Master of Science (1951) in metallurgy. At Melbourne University he gained Blues for cricket and football, and also a half Blue for athletics. In 1948, after a successful season with University Blacks, he

knock ruckman and brilliant high mark. He was the first winner of the Keith "Bluey" Truscott Memorial Cup as Melbourne Best and Fairest in 1943. The award saw the Best and Fairest renamed "to keep fresh the memory of our beloved Pal, Bluey - Sqd. Ldr. Keith Truscott, DFC and Bar."²⁸ Don Corder was vice-captain of Victoria in 1947 against Western Australia and captain of Victoria in 1948 against South Australia. He played with the Demons from 1941 to 1950 in 166 games and kicked 23 goals. He was team captain in 1948 and 1949. In 1948 he skippered the team against Essendon in the drawn grand final and to the premiership the following week.

After retirement as a player, he was a member of the Melbourne Football Club match committee (1957-58 and 1964-71) and the Victorian Football League Tribunal (1962-64). Dr Donald Corder served on the Melbourne Cricket Club committee from 1964 until 1992. He was president from 1985 until his retirement in 1992.²⁹ Corder was instrumental in "the removal of long-standing restrictions on club membership for women."³⁰ He led negotiations with the AFL regarding fixtured matches at the MCG and for the building of the Great Southern Stand in 1992. It was no surprise that, after his presidency, he became a volunteer guide, who provided excellent tours. He was a great advocate and supporter of the MCC Library, helping to rejuvenate it. "He was particularly proud of his service to the Diamond Creek community where he was the local GP for 46 years, delivering 2000 babies over the journey."³¹

Since 1989 the winner of the annual football match between Melbourne Grammar School and Scotch College has been



Top: Donald Corder demonstrates kicking out from the Punt Road goal of the MCG in the 1940s. [National Archives of Australia, 11942732]

Below: Donald Corder's 1946 Brownlow Medal. [AGOS 1987.1702]

Right: Denis Corder's "Big V" (Victorian) interstate jumper. [AGOS 1992.2664]



returned to the VFL with the Demons. He had won the VAFA A Grade best and fairest award that year and had been a premiership player with University Blacks. Then, with only one VFL match to his credit, "he was part of one of football's most audacious gambles when Melbourne brought him back to the grand final side..."³⁴ He played at centre half-back in the 1948 drawn grand final against Essendon and the premiership victory the following week. With

two grand finals with University (who exercised the right to challenge) and two with Melbourne, Denis appeared in four grand finals in 1948.

At 6ft 3 ½ in (191cm) and 14st 3lb (90.5kg), Denis Cordner became a fine tap ruckman whose big knocks at the centre bounce put the team into attack, or whose deft touch, gave ruck rover Ron Barassi the ball. This was influential in changing the second ruck's role to a more mobile ruck rover. Denis Cordner was Melbourne's Best and Fairest winner in 1950 and 1954 and finished second in four other seasons. He was the Demons' best vote-getter in the Brownlow Medal on eight occasions, registering 93 votes overall, and was Melbourne's leading goalscorer in 1950.

At Melbourne he played in 1943 and from 1948 to 1956 in 152 games and kicked 82 goals. He was captain of the Demons from 1951 to 1953 and a member of the 1948, 1955 and 1956 premiership teams. He represented Victoria on eight occasions.

Denis Cordner's last senior football match was as captain of the amateur VFL/VFA team defeated by the Victorian Amateur Football Association side in the demonstration Australian rules football match at the 1956 Olympic Games, played on the MCG. Denis Cordner also had a District cricket career with University in 40 matches between 1946/47 and 1953/54.³⁵

Denis Cordner became a member of the Melbourne Football Club match committee and was a panellist on the Sunday Tony Charlton Football Show. He worked in Australia, New Zealand and England as an industrial chemist, and as a managing director and chairman of various companies. Denis Cordner became Australian Consul General in New York from 1982 to 1984.³⁶ "Cordner studied naval history in his spare time."³⁷ Prints of ships adorned his office wall and he studied shipping vessels entering Port Phillip heads when at the family holiday home at Point Lonsdale.

Denis Cordner served on the Melbourne Cricket Club committee from 1956 until 1964 and 1968 to 1973.³⁸ He was honoured with selection as a ruckman in the Melbourne Football Club Team of the Century in 2000 and inducted into Melbourne's Hall of Fame in 2001.

Top: Argus Swap Card of Denis Cordner [private collection]
Right: David Cordner [private collection]

John Pruen Cordner

Born 20 March 1929 (Diamond Creek, Vic.)
Died 10 December 2016 (Hornsby, NSW)

At Melbourne Grammar School "John obtained the nickname 'Jock' after the North Melbourne footballer of the time, Jock Cordner (no relation)."³⁹ He completed a Bachelor of Science (1950) and a Master of Science (1952) at Melbourne University. He represented the University Blacks from 1948 to 1950, being a member of VAFA A section premiership teams in 1948 and 1949. He was awarded a Blue for football and a half Blue for cricket.

In 1951 John became the fourth brother, along with Ted, Donald and Denis, to play with the Demons. He played six games (0 goals), his brother Denis being the Demons' captain at the time. Like his brothers, he was tall at 6ft 1 ½ in (187cm) and weighed 14st (89kg).

Between seasons 1949/50 and 1954/55 he played 39 matches for University in the District cricket competition.⁴⁰ A left arm fast-medium pace bowler he represented Victoria three times in the 1951/52 season, against Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia. While working in England he played for county team Warwickshire against the Indian tourists in 1952.

He was a gifted nuclear scientist and industrial chemist who worked in both England and Australia. He also served on a number of boards.

John Cordner was a keen sports historian who wrote: *The world of football's various codes from their origins to today*. in 2002.⁴¹ He was one of five writers who completed *Black & Blue: the story of football at the University of Melbourne* in 2007.⁴² When in Melbourne he often visited the MCC Library. He was chairman of the Lord's Taverners in New South Wales, and was also a keen painter and family genealogist.⁴³



David Baillieu Cordner

Born 25 May 1962 (East Melbourne, Vic.)

The son of Ted P. Cordner, David was educated at Melbourne Grammar School (1973-77) and Geelong Grammar School (1978-79).⁴⁴ From Old Melburnians he joined the Melbourne Under 19 team in 1981. That season he kicked over one hundred goals and was an

important member of the Demons' premiership victory against Geelong when he booted five goals. He was a tall forward at 6ft 3 ½ in (192cm) in height and weighed 13st 8lb (86kg). With the Melbourne seniors from 1982 to 1987, he played 53 games and kicked 61 goals. His best performance was seven goals in a victory against Fitzroy at the MCG in Round 1, 1987. A move to Sydney in 1988 saw him play five matches with three goals. The Swans wanted a key forward to cover the loss of Warwick Capper to the Brisbane Bears. David Cordner's playing career was often seriously interrupted by injury. David has worked as a stockbroker, bank executive and sales executive. He is currently a senior level director in the media sales area.⁴⁵



Harriet Kate Walsh Cordner

Born 22 July 1992 (East Melbourne, Vic.)

Harriet Cordner is the granddaughter of Dr Donald Cordner. Her father, Christopher, was a talented amateur footballer with University Blacks.⁴⁶ Educated at Carey

Baptist Grammar School, Harriet was keenly involved in soccer and athletics. She was a talented soccer player with Alamein in the Women's Premier League. After a talent search by the AFL, her grandmother Moyle (Donald's wife) was excited by Harriet's prospects and suggested: "You'll have to play with Melbourne."⁴⁷ Harriet was selected by Melbourne as a category B Rookie in October 2016. Delisted at the end of the first AFLW season in 2017, she was re-signed by the Demons as a free agent, returning to the side for the last four games in 2018. Her AFLW career with Melbourne has included 18 games and one goal from 2017 to 2019. In 2018 and 2019 Harriet was also co-captain of the Casey Demons in the VFL Women's competition. At Casey and Melbourne, she has developed into a defender who can also play in the ruck.

Harriet Cordner is the eighth Cordner and the first female family member to play football for Melbourne. "No wonder this Cordner had instinctive football talents too after endless kick-to-kick sessions with family, particularly at Point Lonsdale where

Left: Harriet Cordner badge.

Right: Harriet Cordner's Melbourne AFLW guernsey. [Melbourne Cricket Club collection, M16885]

her grandparents lived until Don Cordner passed away in 2009."⁴⁸ Harriet has successfully combined part-time study for a Master of Education at Curtin University with work in administration at RMIT and football. For International Women's Day celebration in 2017 she spoke at her old school encouraging students "to embrace the women's game, now and into the future."⁴⁹ It seems very appropriate that Harriet Cordner wears number 21, the same guernsey number as her grandfather Dr Donald Cordner.



Author:

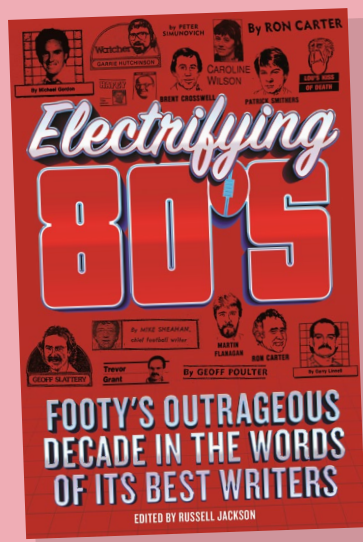
David Allen is an MCC Library volunteer and author.

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BOOK REVIEWS



Russell Jackson (ed.)
*Electrifying 80s: Footy's
Outrageous Decade in
the Words of its Best
Writers*

Slattery Media Group:
Melbourne, 2019
ISBN: 9780958528665

"The Electrifying 80s" and "Footy's Outrageous Decade" perfectly describe the Victorian Football League competition in the 1980s. It may not, as editor Russell Jackson points out, have had quite the

same level of football brilliance as the following decade, and the Premiership spoils were shared among just four teams, but the '80s still boasted nine century goal-kickers and contained characters to rival those in any decade before or since. Kevin Sheedy, Tony "Pluggie" Lockett, Ron Barassi, Kevin "Hungry" Bartlett, Gary Ablett (snr.) and "Lethal" Leigh Matthews are some who have become household names through their exploits on and off the field. The articles selected for this book tell of many of these adventures. There are also many stories of the not-so-well-known, but still highly entertaining players, including Bruce Doull, Leon Baker, Peter Bosustow, Brad Hardie, Paul Van der Haar and Rene Kink. In the '80s individuality had not been totally eroded by the football club machine, those with that streak or flair provided a wealth of material for this body of writers, who, collectively, are possibly the best football writers of any era. The stories selected are not simply all about players but cover many aspects of the game, from the tribunal, to club mergers, players' wives, the grounds, and the state of the game.

There is a chapter dedicated to each year of the decade which Russell Jackson opens with a brief summation of some of the highlights of the year in question. Not necessarily the big victories, more often the stories footy readers enjoyed the most. The decade opened in sensational style. Alex Jesaulenko, who just six months earlier had captained-coached Carlton to the 1979 premiership, left Carlton following a dispute with president George Harris and joined St.Kilda. Within a month he was given a two year coaching contract at St. Kilda. Geoff Slattery (the *Age*) wrote about these stories, the emotional upheaval for the Carlton stalwart, "Jezza laments his lost friends", and, tellingly, the job he faced at St.Kilda, "First Job: Discipline!"

The end of the decade was no less sensational than the start. 1989 ended with one of the most acclaimed grand finals of all

time between Hawthorn and Geelong. Caroline Wilson (*Sunday Age*) in her article on Norm Smith medal winner Gary Ablett, "Ablett: from exile to centre stage", wrote, "Simply, he was magnificent!", but the article also traced Ablett's troubled journey from Hawthorn, through the reserves, and a year with Myrtleford in the Ovens and Murray League, before he became a Geelong champion. Rohan Connolly (the *Age*) summed up the match succinctly in the title of his article, "A sporting contest that had the lot".

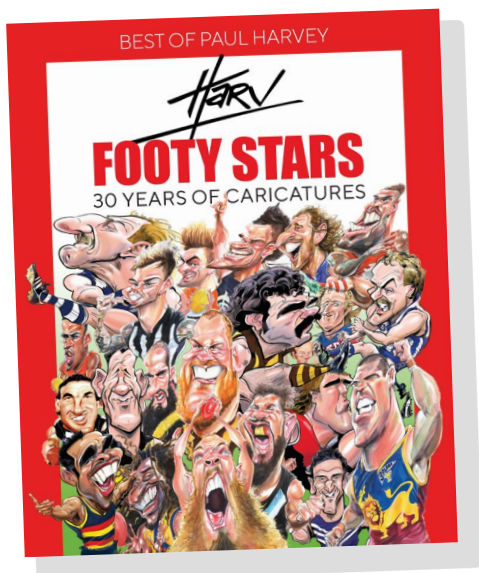
The book contains over 160 articles from 41 different writers which were published in the *Age*, *Herald*, *Sun*, *Sunday Press*, and *Sunday Observer* newspapers. Many of the writers are well known journalists including Greg Baum, Peter McFarlane, Alf Brown, Mike Sheahan, Ron Carter and Mike Coward, but the list also includes stories from football identities such as Kevin Sheedy and Brent Crosswell.

The subject of many will be familiar to readers who, like me, stood on the terraces of suburban grounds every Saturday afternoon through these years. The "stoush" between rival coaches, Percy Jones and Tony Jewell; Neale Daniher's second knee operation; Kevin Bartlett's 350th game (the first to reach that milestone); the suspension of Collingwood reserves player, John Bourke, for 10 years; the antics (and suspensions) of Mark "Wacko Jacko" Jackson; the 1989 State of Origin match that attracted over 91,000 to see Lockett and Dunstall destroy South Australia at the MCG; and the move of South Melbourne to Sydney, are all featured.

Perhaps my favourite article was Brent Crosswell's (the *Age*) homage to his boyhood hero, Ted Whitten. The article, titled "Here's to the toughest son from the west", paid tribute to Whitten's brilliance as a footballer from an early age, and his legendary toughness. A delightful story is told of Ted out walking very early one morning and being stopped by police. "Police: Where are you going? Whitten: Home. Police: Where have you come from? Whitten: Home. Police: Don't get smart buddy? Whitten: I'm not. Police: What are you doing? Whitten: Walking." As Crosswell points out, a typical Whitten self-parodying story. The other article that greatly appealed, and demonstrated the old adage - history repeats - was Mike Sheahan's (*Herald*) "What's wrong with footy?" Sheahan wrote, "A lot of wise old heads believe it's time to get back to basics, to settle the problems which are eroding the structure of the game." He continued, "There is growing disenchantment with the VFL, (read AFL) seen to be interested in little more than money..."

A thoroughly enjoyable collection of some of the best football stories of the 1980s, this book will appeal to all sports aficionados, not just those with a penchant for Australian Rules football. It is highly recommended.

James Brear



Paul Harvey

Best of Paul Harvey: Footy Stars: 30 Years of Caricatures

Wilkinson Publishing: Melbourne, 2019
ISBN: 9781925642858

“Caricature” is defined as “A picture, description, or imitation of a person in which certain striking characteristics are exaggerated in order to create a comic or grotesque effect.” The invitation to the launch in the MCC Library of Paul Harvey’s recent publication *Footy Stars – 30 Years of Caricatures* tells us that Paul is “one of the country’s pre-eminent exponents of the art”. It goes on to tell us that his caricatures are “poignant statements about the player, the fluidity of his movement, his idiosyncrasies, the skills and his achievements”.

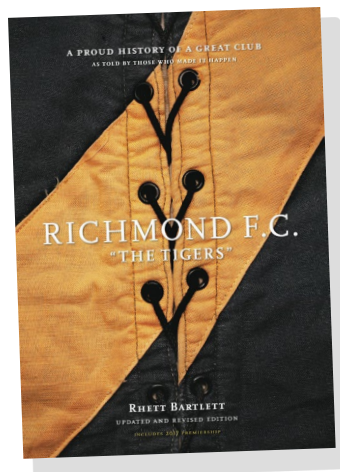
Harvey is known throughout the entertainment industry, working for corporate clients, for private and school functions, for most leading newspapers, as well as, amongst many other initiatives, producing a presentation for the winner of the Brownlow Medal each year. These Brownlow certificates are finely detailed and bespoke to the recipient, with representations of his club’s iconography.

Harvey’s formal certificates are beautifully painted, but this book primarily consists of his equally well drawn caricatures of VFL and AFL players published over the last 30 years. It includes footy cards and various posters celebrating, amongst others, premierships, Coleman medallists and Brownlow Medal winners. In the manner of his predecessors like Jack Wells and Bill Green (WEG) and contemporaries such as John Spooner and the *Herald Sun*’s Mark Knight, Harvey’s works are not just likenesses, they colour our game and help create our perceptions of these larger than life footy celebrities.

There is a vast number of depictions of players in many characteristic poses. His irreverent “masterpieces” are worth the cost of the book alone. A fun book, and being a collection of drawings rather than the written word, this can be picked up and delved into whenever the whim takes you.

This is a coffee table sized volume (more along the lines of a Jonathan Brown than a Caleb Daniel), but it will make a great birthday or Christmas present for a football loving mum, dad or children of all ages. It takes a well-earned place amongst the history of recorded images of our national game.

Quentin Miller



Rhett Bartlett

Richmond F.C.: The Tigers: A Proud History of a Great Club

Slattery Media Group:
Melbourne, 2019
ISBN: 9780958029063

This very entertaining production, *Richmond F.C., “The Tigers”*, is now in its third edition. As the cover says, it is “as told by those who made it happen”.

The 2017 premiership, after a 37 year drought, makes this book ever more appealing

to Richmond’s vast following. Chapters from Brendon Gale, Peggy O’Neal and Damien Hardwick – the CEO, President and coach in 2017, provide a wonderful climax to this work.

Rhett Bartlett (the son of Kevin - one of the club’s most iconic figures), has a unique insight and sensitivity. Many of his interviewees are people he has grown up with as associates of his father. Those from earlier times were interviewed in their latter years where possible or interviews were conducted with those who had a close affinity with them.

Over sixty players and officials, from the storied Jack Dyer and Tom Hafey, to many much less celebrated, have their recollections and anecdotes recorded. One interesting fact I discovered was the origin of the renowned Richmond club song. Jack Malcolmson, a cabaret singer of the day, and a performer at club functions, tells how in 1962 he wrote the lyrics over a few days. It very quickly became the most rousing football theme of its time. It remains so today.

Amusing anecdotes add so much to the book. Ian Wilson, famed club president in the boom 1970s era, explained his “Octa” nickname. He says it was derived from being a plump youngster at school learning Latin. It was shortened from “Octa bellies” a reference to his more than adequate girth.

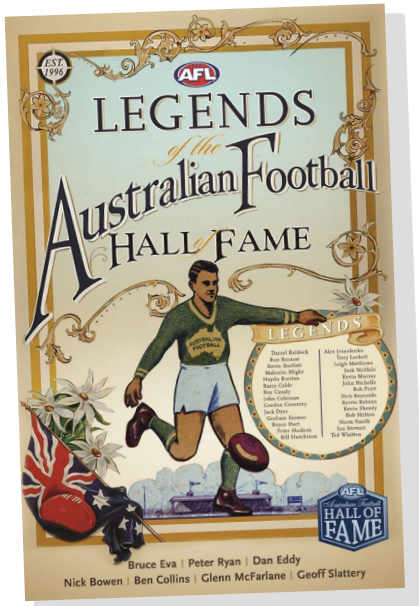
The major themes and events over the journey are covered in the chapters written by Trevor Ruddell (MCC assistant librarian, sports historian and importantly a Richmond “tragic”). They provide valuable historical context and clarity. The selection of a wide array of photographs, along with ephemera from the club’s museum, greatly add to the book’s appeal.

All players who represented the club from its 1908 admission to the VFL to the completion of the 2018 season are listed. The tables are presented alphabetically with the years played, games, goals scored and their number in order of selection. There is also another table listing senior officials, senior coach, captain, best and fairest, highest goal kicker and ladder position.

A must for the Tiger Army, the format of personal stories and recollections makes for much greater readability than for many similar type volumes. It can be read in “one sitting” or as a reference to an individual “who made it happen”.

Edward Cohen

Disclaimer: The editor of *The Yorker* Trevor Ruddell was a contributor to *Richmond FC*.



Geoff Slattery (ed.)
**Legends of the
 Australian Football
 Hall of Fame**

Slattery Media Group:
 Melbourne, 2019
 ISBN: 9780958029094

A classification of Legends of the AFL Hall of Fame, is applied “to honour players and coaches who have had the most significant impact on the game of Australian football”, and those “who immediately come to mind at the very pinnacle when players and coaches are discussed”.

Legends of the Australian Football Hall of Fame (updated edition 2019) encompasses diverse biographies of the select 28 who have achieved this exalted status.

There is something in this book for even the most one-eyed of football barrackers. Of the 28 Legends there is at least one, and

in most cases multiple inductees from each of the twelve “traditional” Victorian clubs, as well as Barrie Robran, whose club career was confined to North Adelaide in the SANFL competition of the pre-AFL era. It is a reminder that the Australian Football Hall of Fame is a celebration of the greats of the game, and not just a parochial Victorian-based league.

The remarkable talents of these men are explored. Kevin Murray, who was raised to Legend status in 2010, for instance, recalled that Darrel Baldock, St. Kilda’s first, and to date only premiership captain, who was raised to Legend in 2006, had the unique skill of being able to run and bounce two balls at the same time.

But such skills, even if one is innately coordinated, were honed and improved through training by many of the Legends. Graham “Polly” Farmer polished his exquisite skills by utilising his down time as a car salesman. He would handball through open windows of the cars on sale. Luminaries of the day, John Nicholls and John Schultz, had to adjust their play to accommodate Farmer’s innovative skills. Royce Hart claimed his extraordinary marking ability stemmed from his sustained high jump training at school.

For some Legends it was less about skill or determination but an ability to read the play as it unfolded, that made them so impactful upon the game. Peter Hudson never gave the impression of being an elite athlete. Yet, this was more than counteracted by his innate body positioning, anticipation and concentration.

However, the book is not just a celebration of the abilities of this select few on the football ground. It contains stories and anecdotes that evoke their personalities and insecurities. Gordon Coventry (1299 goals and 306 games – both long standing records) for instance was convinced he wasn’t good enough to play “for your team” when he, as an unproven youngster, was speaking to the Collingwood selectors. He was so nervous before his first training session with the club that he nearly turned around and went home from Victoria Park Station. Richmond and St Kilda centre-man and triple Brownlow Medallist, Ian Stewart, put immense pressure on himself. He was “near terrified” before games, and felt that whatever he did was “never good enough”.

Character can in some cases be seen as more important than honours. John Coleman’s family was very proud of his momentous place in the Australian football pantheon but were equally so “about his humility and impeccable personal conduct.” They said they never had cause to be embarrassed by his behaviour “which was testament to the man he was”.

Ted Whitten, is fittingly the subject of the last chapter. An elite player for Footscray, dominant media personality/showman, he was also the unequalled champion of the “Big V” cause. He fittingly had the sobriquet of “Mr. Football”.

The analysis of each legend and why they were so good makes this a compelling read for any fan of Australian football.

Edward Cohen

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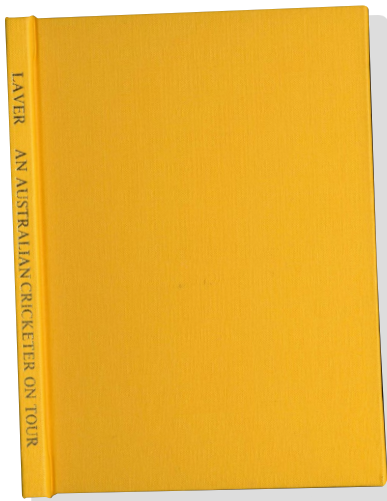
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Frank Laver
An Australian Cricketer on Tour: Extracts from his Reminiscences, Impressions and Experiences of Two Trips 1899 and 1905

Ancora Press,
Monash
University:
Melbourne, 2014.

This little book is no. 34 of a limited edition print of 150. It is bound in full yellow cloth with green end papers; a very nice touch to use the Australian cricket colours.

Brian J McMullin began the introduction by briefly outlining Frank Laver's life – birth 1869, education, business career and his death 1919. However it is his career as a cricketer for which he is remembered. As a long outstanding member of the East Melbourne Cricket Club meant he was selected to play for Victoria and then to tour England with the Australian teams of 1899 and 1905. Following these tours Frank Laver wrote the book *An Australian Cricketer on Tour: Reminiscences, Impressions and Experiences of Two trips; with records of matches and views on English Cricket*, which was first published in 1905.

The preface from Laver's book in this publication has been included in full. In it he explains his object was to describe the social aspect of the two tours, his experiences and adventures. This small publication comprises fourteen extracts from Laver's book with the page references from which they were taken. Also included are nine of the eighty-seven illustrations from the original work. Laver was a keen photographer as can be seen in the Laver Collection displayed in the MCC museum.

The extracts chosen for this special publication make most interesting and entertaining reading not so much for the cricket content but for the recorded incidents and anecdotes. One example (page 23) is the description of the team's visit to Covent Garden to accept Madame Melba's invitation to hear her sing in 'La Traviata'. After this thoroughly enjoyable performance the team "sent a bouquet of flowers arranged in the form of cricket stumps with the word 'Australia' written across them".

Reading this excellent little publication will undoubtedly encourage the reader to return to the original Laver book to gain much further entertainment and enjoyment from learning what travelling with the Australian cricket team meant more than a century ago-so very different to touring today.

Ann Rusden

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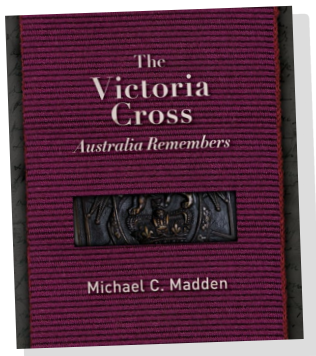
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Michael Madden
The Victoria Cross - Australia Remembers

Big Sky Publishing: Melbourne, 2018
ISBN: 9781925520989

This is one magnificent book! The presentation, quality, collaboration, research, and photography are extraordinary. Australia's 100 Victoria Cross recipients'

stories are told. While Citations (some edited) describe the actions which catapulted these remarkable men into this exclusive club, backgrounds are also explored. They are a diverse group of individuals.

The author, Michael Madden, is the son of a Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) Vietnam veteran, and this enormous task of compiling such a publication was supported by The Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen and Women's Association of Victoria, the proceeds from book sales benefitting TPI servicemen and women. However, many other people and organizations were involved and are acknowledged. The foreword is beautifully written by Doug Baird, father of Corporal Cameron Baird VC MG, our 100th VC recipient who was killed in Afghanistan.

At the time of the Crimean War, Queen Victoria was passionate about recognizing her soldiers' bravery as France had done with the Legion of Honour. There would be no distinction between class and ranks. The Queen dictated the terms and style of the award, all documented in her private diaries and accessed by Madden. The London firm, Hancocks, had the responsibility of designing, casting and, when required, engraving the Cross. This continues today. Hancocks' Guy Burton explains the progression from the bronze cannon cascabel, maintained under tight security at a military facility in Donnington, to the handing over of the finished Cross. A myth is dispelled. Hancocks are also the custodians of The Victoria Cross Records which contain the issue numbers.

Six Australians were awarded the VC in the Boer War, 64 in World War I, two during the Russian Revolution, 20 in World War II, four in Vietnam and four in Afghanistan. There are several common themes among these men. Getting the job done and looking after their mates was more important than receiving awards, and, many were almost embarrassed that they were singled out for the VC, citing their peers were equally, or more, deserving. As for their communities, these extraordinary men were lauded as heroes and recognized in many different ways. The relatives of VC recipients tell of the huge responsibility, and even the burden, they feel for having a VC in the family.

The stories are inspiring. Melbourne Cricket Club Member, William Newton VC, was the only RAAF serviceman in the Pacific to be recognized in World War II. His story is chilling, ending with his execution in a ritual beheading. He is acknowledged in the MCC Museum, with a replica VC Medal.

The story of Ben Robert-Smith VC MG, is also interesting. His commanding officer, Colonel Paul Burns takes us on the journey, from the initial witness statements right through to presenting the documentation to Queen Elizabeth, all without Ben's knowledge. Ben's first reaction to the Queen's invitation to join the VC ranks may surprise.

The awarding of this, the most noble of military medals, is not a rubber stamp operation for the Queen. She sees it as her duty to protect the reputation and integrity of the VC award, just as her predecessors have done. Certain members of her family assist with the decision. The Queen has intervened at times. The wording in the citation for "Dasher" Kevin Wheatley, she deemed to be inappropriate, ambiguous and in need of clarification.

This is not a light-reading, in-bed, book. For a start it is big and far too heavy. This is a book to be left on the table, open, so that when you need a dose of awesome inspiration you can go straight to the source. You won't be disappointed.

Lesley Smith

The YORKER

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ISSUE 69 FRONT COVER IMAGERY:

Main Image: Richmond Racing Club program of February 17, 1913. [Courtesy of the Richmond and Burnley Historical Society]

Top Right: Frank Laver as photographed

by George Beldham in 1905. [MCC Library collection]

Middle Right: Detail of Henry and Edward Rae Corder in 1909. [University of Melbourne Archives, 1175]



MELBOURNE CRICKET CLUB