



Outside-edge

Issue 105 Spring 2020

The magazine of the Gloucestershire Exiles
News and views on and about Gloucestershire County Cricket Club



GCCC Captain Chris Dent's trademark cut shot

Welcome to the Spring 2020 issue of Outside-edge

A Message from the Gloucestershire Exiles, April 2020:

Writing in early April, the coronavirus situation is very grim as we are all either self-isolating or social distancing and the prospects look worse still. The cricket season has been delayed until at least 28th May which currently seems optimistic....The County Ground is locked down, with the players having to make their own preparations for the season - whenever that may be.

As distribution of booklet copies of Outside-edge is not currently possible, **we have taken the decision to go ahead and publish this issue in an online format.** Gloucestershire Exile members who have provided us with an email address will receive it in an email message via a link from our database. We know that this is not ideal, but also know how much you all look forward to starting what should be the cricket season with news and views from the Exiles! So we do hope that you will bear with us. If possible, we will have a small print run of this issue later in the year, for those members who cannot access it online or for any members who let us know they'd like one. We hope that, by the 'end of the season', our autumn issue will be back in print form and arriving through your real, not virtual, letterboxes.

We are also **making this issue available to any Gloucestershire Cricket Club member or fan via the GCCC website.** So - welcome to anyone finding our magazine this way! We hope that this latest Outside-edge content will provide some light relief from the constant stream of harrowing news and also provide an escape into the wonderful world of sport which we miss so much. In a couple of days, Gloucestershire should have been making the trek north for a Championship match v Yorkshire at Headingley...the way things stand, we'll all be making up our own score line for the game in our imagination – a massive Gloucestershire win, of course!

Sarah Blowen & the Gloucestershire Exiles committee

From the Editor

In the 150th year of Gloucestershire County Cricket Club we are all hoping for a successful season whenever it begins. Tuesday 7th July is the date reserved for the Exiles' Day at Cheltenham but this will, of course, depend on the reorganisation of the season due to the current disruption.

Once again, I am grateful to our wonderful contributors who continue to enrich this magazine with their articles. They are Howard Allen, Sarah Blowen, Mark Brunt, Nigel Dean, Gareth Fielding, Simon Ireland, Robert Moreland, Ian Randall and Robert Whitchurch who gives a wonderful view of the game from Brussels. As ever, Tony Hickey, the Gloucester-based photographer who many of you will know as a fixture at the Cheltenham Festival, has supplied most of the photographs featured. Thank you all.

Like all Gloucestershire supporters, I was looking forward to seeing **Cheteshwar Pujara** in action. The Indian batsman would have given us valuable batting experience with his reputation for building big scores – 206 not out against England in 2012 and a career best 352. Unfortunately, he is only contracted for the first six matches of the County Championship so it is unlikely that he will appear. More promising is the



Jerome Taylor could add some pace to our attack

signing of **Jerome Taylor** who will be with us for three years. Jerome made his Test and ODI debuts in 2003 and has been a regular wicket-taker ever since with best Test match figures of 6-47 and 5-48 in ODIs.

Most exciting is the signing of the 19-year old Afghanistan leg-spinner, **Qais Ahmad** for the 2020 season. He will be available for the T20 blast and the last six games of the County Championship. Richard Dawson has said, "We had a very strong season in 2019 and Qais will help take us to the next level in both the long and short formats with his game-changing skills. He's one of the most exciting young spinners in the world and I'm looking forward to seeing him add a new dimension to our T20 and County Championship squads." We can only hope that we can get to see Qais make a considerable impact on the season.



Qais Ahmad

Having been on regular loans from Yorkshire, **Josh Shaw** signed a three-year deal for Gloucestershire in August 2019. Josh has been a very popular figure in recent seasons with his whole-hearted approach and best figures of 5-79 against Sussex in 2016. Another interesting signing is **George Scott** from Middlesex who has shown considerable promise as an all-rounder but has only had limited opportunities.

The Exiles' fundraising is dedicated to supporting the Academy and emerging players, so it was very pleasing that **Ollie Price, Tom Price and Don Goodman** have been elevated from the Academy and signed professional contracts. Also, two other Academy graduates, **Ben Charlesworth and James Bracey**, have shown good form for the England U19s and Lions respectively.



James Bracey is congratulated on his England Lions call-up by Marcus Trescothick



Ben Charlesworth in action for England U19s

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150 years in 150 words!

No doubt many Exiles have their own particular highlights from the Shire's century and a half. If so, what about capturing them in around 150 words and sharing them with the readership of Outside-edge? We'd love you to have a go! Here are some examples.

Simon Ireland recalls a white hot Gillette semi-final from 1973....

For an impressionable 19 year old, the sell-out semi at New Road on one of the hottest days of the year could hardly have offered more drama. Having opted to bat, Gloucestershire found themselves in another crisis situation at 29-2 after 9 overs and then my new-found hero, Mike Procter, was dropped in the slips from the first ball! Amid excruciating tension he survived another chance in a scratchy start before finding his feet, and the boundary, more convincingly in compiling a crucial century which underpinned a competitive total of 243-8.

Copious ice creams later, my heart rate was soon rising after an opening stand of 123, but Gloucs were squeezing and when Imran was out Worcs. still required 56 to win off 8. The Herculean Procter somehow found the energy to bowl a match clinching spell which included three wickets in three overs. Jack Davey did the rest and at a still scorching 7.40pm Gloucs had earned their golden ticket to Lord's! What drama!

...and Sarah Blowen thinks back to another scorching 1970s Procter performance against Worcestershire...

Cheltenham Festival, July 1977

It's a boiling hot Saturday morning: my childhood hero Mike Procter has just come in to bat. From the start, it's obvious that he's on form. My parents have just joined this thing called the Gloucestershire Exiles and should be heading off to the Sills restaurant tent for their annual lunch, but no-one dares move. The news that Procter might pull off something special has spread up and down the Bath Road and the queue for lardy cakes at Leopold's vanishes as all the fans rush back to the ground. A whisper goes round the crowd, now standing many rows deep in front of the College Gym: Procter could score a century before lunch! Up goes the roar as he does – and then he goes on to destroy Worcestershire taking 13 wickets for just 73 runs.

...Now over to you!

The Lord's Dinner February 2020

Nigel Dean reports on another highly successful Exiles' fundraising evening – our biennial event at Lord's.

A landmark year for Gloucestershire as the county celebrates its 150th anniversary. There is plenty to be proud of: a club rich in history. Famous names through the eras trip off the tongue. W.G.Grace, Gilbert Jessop, Charlie Parker, Wally Hammond, Zaheer Abbas, Mike Procter, Courtney Walsh, Jack Russell. There are many more.

So the historic Committee Dining Room at Lord's was the appropriate venue for the Gloucestershire Exiles' biennial dinner. A 'full house' of 60 diners gathered on February 6th to raise money for the Gloucestershire Academy, nurturing the young players whose development will hopefully lead the club into an even brighter future.

With pictures of famous players and administrators adorning the walls, including one W.G.Grace, Exiles' chair Sarah Blowen welcomed Gloucestershire Captain Chris Dent, a successful product of the Academy himself, and Ryan Higgins, twice voted Exiles Player of the Year. She added how marvellous it was to celebrate the 150th anniversary with a place in the County Championship Division One following promotion last season.

Sarah also thanked Exiles' Treasurer Jon Paine, who has made a great success of organising the Dinner in recent years, and former Gloucestershire chairman Roger Cooke, a key person in its success. The Dinner is much anticipated and tickets for this year's event sold out especially quickly.



2019 Exiles' Player of the Year Ryan Higgins and GCCC Captain Chris Dent

Guest speaker was Ian Lovett, president of the England and Wales Cricket Board and former Middlesex chairman. Ian gave a highly entertaining speech mixing humour with serious points before taking questions from the floor.

Ian covered many areas of concern in the game; including the decline of Test cricket in many countries, the marginalisation of the County Championship to bookend the season and the forthcoming new competition launched by the ECB, The Hundred. Ian said that the ECB had to try something new, hence 'The Hundred' to underpin the funding of the game into the future and attract more families and younger spectators. It will also bring cricket back to terrestrial TV in the UK. He said that four-day Test cricket for some fixtures was only a consideration at the moment.

The Dinner proved a great success financially, raising an overall profit of £3353-00 from ticket sales, a raffle and auction of items, as well as profits from a silent auction.

Exiles' Hall of Fame: Gloucestershire Greats Remembered

In every Spring issue of Outside-edge, we pay tribute to a Gloucestershire Great and induct them into our virtual Hall of Fame with appreciations from members and fans:

- Spring 2013 **Mike Procter**
- Spring 2014 **Walter Hammond**
- Spring 2015 **W.G. Grace**
- Spring 2016 **Mark Alleyne and Tom Graveney**
- Spring 2017 **Arthur Milton**
- Spring 2018 **Zaheer Abbas**
- Spring 2019 **'Jack' Russell**

Who is going to be inducted in Spring 2020....?

Exiles Hall of Fame 2020 – Michael Klinger



Maximum Commitment

A Tribute to Michael Klinger from Simon Ireland

When it was announced that Michael Klinger would be the County's new captain and overseas 'name' for the 2013 season, I was one (among many, perhaps) whose pulse hardly quickened at the news. After all, was this journeyman top order batsman not already in his thirties and, moreover, had not his stint at Worcestershire hardly proved the stuff of headlines? Well, like so many, and I could include the Australian selectors here, I had already fallen into the trap of underestimating a gritty and talented cricketer, one who would go on to prove himself a worthy heir to the likes of Procter and Walsh. His commitment to the Shire and his determination to bring through the youthful cohort now enjoying its moment in the sun must surely be deserving of the utmost respect and the gratitude of a generation of supporters. His commitment to his family in the most difficult of circumstances also speaks volumes for his integrity.

Statistics can often be misleading but that first summer brought 1100 Championship runs at an average of 52, a staggering 700 runs at 87 in the 40 over competition and 360 runs at 52 in the T20. Talk about leading by example! If the 2014 season was relatively quiet, by comparison, it was almost as if there was a girding of loins in preparation for the one-day miracles which would be wrought the following year. If one man's efforts could ever be said to guarantee success, this was the embodiment of such an achievement as Gloucestershire secured their first silverware for some eleven years.

Although the Shire narrowly missed out on a quarter final berth in the 2015 T20 competition, 'Maxy' enjoyed phenomenal success in the qualifying stages: three centuries, four fifties and 650 runs at an average of 81 made him the stand out performer in the country. His performances in the Royal London Cup were equally amazing as three centuries and two fifties brought 530 runs at an average of over 100. Ironically, of course, the Lord's final saw his only failure but his work had been done in a way as having carried his team mates on the broadest of shoulders to that point; he was able to watch the torch being picked up by others as a classic Gloucs. squeeze was effected to wrest the trophy from Surrey's grasp. His match winning century at the semi-final stage against Yorkshire had been a classic of its kind and fully vindicated the decision to fly him back from Australia for the game the Tykes had fully expected to win.

Unsurprisingly, several enquiries had been made by First Division clubs around this time as Klinger's feats garnered rave reviews; it says a great deal about the character of the man that he chose to commit his future to the Gloucestershire project and, in alliance with Richard Dawson, continued to nurture and give confidence to the young talent coming through. At Cheltenham that season I was fortunate to spot him on the boundary edge next to the covers and somehow sensed that he would be willing to share his thoughts; after batting under lowering skies in the most testing of circumstances against a Leicestershire attack led by McKay and Shreck he had grafted for an hour and a half for his 24 runs and confessed that he had never experienced such challenging conditions in a lengthy career. Modest and polite, here was the epitome of professionalism prepared to spend fifteen minutes with a supporter and admit that the game still offered new challenges that excited him.

From then on he opted to concentrate on the one-day game, understandably putting his family first, but the hundreds continued to flow and in 2016 he was again the country's top T20 run scorer. If the bare statistics hinted at a tapering off in career terms from that stage on, it is worth remembering the huge success enjoyed Down Under with the Perth Scorchers and the fact that 'Maxy' has only just been overtaken as the all time leading scorer in the Big Bash League. Now approaching his forties, the hundred that Michael Klinger scored against Kent on August 29th 2019 could well be the template for the perfect innings in this format. Pacing his knock sublimely, hitting through the line and manipulating the field throughout, hitting a six off the final ball meant finishing 102 not out and ensuring that his team would live to fight another day. Therefore, Michael finished as he started for the Shire, a skipper leading by example and setting the highest professional standards. How could I ever have had misgivings almost seven years before?



Seven Summers

The well known West Country journalist and commentator - and Bristol match-day announcer - Ian Randall has watched Michael Klinger from the press box since his arrival in Bristol. He gives us his thoughts on Michael's effect at Nevil Road.

Michael Klinger's seven summers with Gloucestershire didn't end the way his contribution at the club deserved. Yes, it was at the Bristol County Ground in a T20 quarter final, but Derbyshire proved too efficient on the day to deny the 39 year old Australian a "Finals Day" send-off at Edgbaston.

Uncapped by Australia when he arrived in 2013, he scored over 7,000 runs across all the formats despite only playing white ball matches for his last three years in England, finally achieving international selection for his country in part due to his glut of runs in county cricket.

Klinger's red ball record for Gloucestershire shows 11 Championship hundreds, only one fewer than in his limited overs appearances where time and again Michael's judgement of pace in an innings was the difference between victory and defeat. His wiry frame relied on timing rather than outright power, and whilst the drive either side of the wicket was there when he needed it, Klinger scored heavily both square with and behind the wicket with a deft mix of cuts and pulls, deflections and glances.

His captaincy, too, was a strong suit, as was his catching, even in the autumn of his career. In one T20 game at Canterbury, his leadership and three catches sucked the life out of Kent in pursuit of a small total to secure Gloucestershire victory, and it was on the same ground in 2019 that he made his last Gloucestershire hundred. After a run of low scores earlier in the tournament, it was a reminder of Klinger in his pomp.

His lasting image at the club will, however, be remembered beyond the dressing room. He always had time for the media, and was an ideal representative for Gloucestershire Cricket off the field with sponsors and supporters. In terms of value for money, Michael Klinger's time will go down as a sound investment.

Gloucestershire Exiles' Player of the Year 2020 – Ryan Higgins

Not only do Gloucestershire Exiles nominate past greats as candidates for the Hall of Fame: members also vote for their Player of the Year who has impressed them in the previous season and awards them the Ron Lev Memorial Trophy.



Ryan Higgins was an overwhelming choice with over 90% of the votes. Many commented on Ryan playing in all formats of the game during his very successful 2019 season. Others commented that he lifted the performance of team mates around him. The conclusion of the Members was that without Ryan, we would not have been promoted...

Ryan Higgins - Gloucestershire Exiles Player of the Year – was interviewed by Gloucestershire Exile committee member Gareth Fielding - assisted by Felix aged 10 – on a cold day in February at that great Nevil Road watering hole, the Sportsman Annexe:

● Congratulations Ryan on a great season. What are your thoughts looking back on it?

The best way to describe it I think would be to say that we got off to a slow start. Slow for the team. Slow for individuals. Everyone really, bar Chris Dent who was exceptional all the way through. David Payne was injured. But once he came back, everything started to swing. A lot of things fell into place. Once those two started a great run of form together and combining, that really kick started it for the rest of us. It was always our aim to get promoted last year and I think everyone genuinely believed we could. We felt that was the year it was going to happen. We just didn't know exactly how. By the time we arrived at Cheltenham we were still only mid-table but then everything started going our way, it spiralled: the weather, some decisions.... I wouldn't say we were lucky; it was just that the hard work really started paying off. There were still some bumps - like losing to Sussex at home - but after Cheltenham our belief just grew and it became clear to us all what would happen.

Personally I was pretty confident going into the season. I had learned what I needed to do in my first year in order to be able to execute better. I started taking more responsibility with the bat. Not just trying to score runs, but to make sure the team was in the best situation possible, so playing not just for myself but to perform in a way that gave the team its best chance. With the ball I started quite slowly too but eventually just gave myself a kick, basically, and began to take wickets.

● Can you explain a little more about your bowling? Does being such a good batsman help you be a better bowler?

Every time I bowl at a batsman in the nets I'm thinking hard about how to get them out, even my own team mates. They know my bowling better than anyone so I think if I can get them out, I can get anyone out. I genuinely work hard to try to outskill or outwork batsmen.

It's not really about thinking like a batsman. It's about looking really closely at each batsman and what they do, seeing what they're good at and at all the little things. Some play outswings better than inswing for example. Noticing that, and taking into account their technique, and looking at angles - whether I should be bowling wide on the crease or close to the stumps, or in the middle, is something I've been working on a lot with the coaches. And also if the ball is swinging or not. One thing last year I was working on was bowling an outswinger but shaping it so that it holds up a little. It's been really interesting talking to, and working with Denty on this. The point is that outswing that doesn't swing as much as expected, will challenge both the pad and the outside edge. It creates an element of doubt in the batsman's mind. It's much more difficult to left-handers though. I'm still working on that!

● How did you celebrate promotion?

So on the day, Durham had to beat Glamorgan to stop us being promoted. There were lots of phone calls early on between our players and friends at other Counties comparing notes. Cameron Steel, a friend of

mine who plays for Glamorgan, had texted me at 8.30am to say his game was off. So we knew we were looking likely. I arrived at our Ground at about 9am and it was pretty wet so we knew then really. We were pretty sure we'd done it. When it was confirmed we all got together in the dressing room and sang the team song. We just really enjoyed what we'd done together as a team. Northants had already been promoted so we filled the baths with beer, and invited them into our dressing room. There was a fantastic team spirit. I think it was my best moment in cricket actually. At the same time though, we all knew we had only been promoted in third place, so there was this thought - what can we do more of, what can we do better next time. It was a pretty amazing day.



Felix was able to ask Ryan some probing questions.

• What of team spirit?

That spirit was one of the main reasons for our success last year I think. There are no big egos in the dressing room. No big International players. It's a bunch of nice people. In fact even those guys who have played a lot of international cricket like Maxy Klinger or AJ Tye are really down to earth. Just such nice people. Not too serious about life maybe, but they are very serious about cricket. That's a great attitude for sports. It's one of the really good things about Gloucestershire cricket, I think. People coming into our environment seem to have been well vetted I suppose - to make sure they are good blokes as well as good cricketers.

• How did you get started?

I was really young. I don't even remember starting. I think I was about 2 when my Grandad gave me a bat. That's what my Dad told me. He spent a lot of time throwing the ball at me when I was young. He even built a net in the garden and we had a tennis ball machine so I'd use that, just hitting balls for hours. I wouldn't go a day without hitting balls. By the time I was about 10 or 11, I knew I wanted to play cricket so - and I wouldn't recommend this - I virtually gave up everything else and just played cricket. I gave up tennis, BMX, skateboarding and just concentrated on my cricket. We moved to England and I started at a local school, Park House in Newbury and through one of my friends there, met Julian Wood who had played for Hampshire and was coaching. He really encouraged me, and put me forward for a sports scholarship at Bradfield from 13. I boarded there and basically played cricket every day.

- What have you been up to since September?

We had a month off in October, and spent quite a lot of that celebrating promotion to be fair, then came back to pre season training in November. It's a mixture of weights and cardio and generally just trying to get our bodies back in the state they should be after a long hard season. There's a lot of running, and also yoga which more and more sportsmen are using, and which I find really helpful. The whole squad goes to Yoga Fury just down the road (on Ashley Down Road) - I'm not very good at it but it's really good for your body. Since January 10th official training has started and the focus is much more on cricket. Amongst other things, we've been going to Millfield School to use their facilities. There's a longer indoor run up for the bowlers there so they can get off their full runs and we have already played some really serious cricket there. We should be there maybe ten times before April. The facilities are just exceptional. And we are heading to La Manga like last pre-season for 10 or 11 days to get some time outside just before the season starts for some really intensive training. [Unfortunately, now cancelled]. And also I got married in December!

- Congratulations on that! Is your wife a cricket fan?

Well we met about 5 years ago and she knew nothing about cricket... absolutely nothing. But she's getting there now. I think she understands the game.

- How is your average (married) day in the off season?

I'm usually up at 6am. Take the dogs for a walk. I have two Sprocker Spaniels. Leave home by about 7am. Training is 8am to 1pm. Personal training can be 1-2 hours and then group sessions. Then most afternoons I attend University. I'm taking a part time degree in Sports and Business Management. My daily routine is really dogs, cricket, running and University.

- You were runner-up to someone called Ben Stokes in the PCA player of the Year for 2020 - (first won by Mike Procter in 1970) back in October. Congratulations again! Does that mean you start getting calls from the Big Bash, the IPL and the other various T20 competitions?

No. Not yet anyway. I'm interested of course and I wouldn't rule out playing in those but I'm a bit of an unknown in the T20 game. In County Cricket I have a very good understanding of what my game is, what my role is. I think in the Franchise tournaments the selectors are looking for batters or for bowlers. The role is more defined. That is something I need to focus on in the next few years in the shorter formats. The current thinking is that you need players who are really exceptional at either batting or bowling and my style as an all-rounder is that at the moment I'm just not exceptional enough at either. Maybe I'm a bit unfashionable at the moment for those big T20 tournaments.

- You are in the Hundred this summer though playing for Welsh Fire. Have you ever been to Wales?

Laughs

- What do you think of that though? And playing with Steve Smith and Mitchell Starc?

It's going to be awesome, I think. A really amazing tournament. I'm very happy to be part of it and really excited to be playing with such big names. Look I don't know, maybe I'll just be bringing the drinks on for a few games, but it would still be fantastic just to be doing that. I don't know Steve or some of the other players so we will have to see how we all get on and how the team performs. The whole thing is an unknown. It's an interesting dynamic for sure though.

- Season ahead: Hopes and ambitions?

I don't tend to set personal targets really. I think that can be a distraction. The all-rounder double of 1000 runs and 50 wickets would be great but it isn't a target in itself. I just want to keep improving, do better for the team, and keep winning. So no set goals, just keep it day to day.

I like winning. I think about winning a lot. Winning the Championship would be awesome. Obviously that would be very, very difficult and a lot of people might think that's out of reach for us but I think if everybody can put in a performance.... Just go for it!

Robert Moreland's Diary from South Africa

Following Robert Moreland's tales of Ashes-watching the winter before last, he now offers us his diary notes from his trip to follow England in their winter tour to South Africa.

1st Test at Pretoria

So, tomorrow is Boxing Day and I am transported to The Centurion Ground, Pretoria from my hotel in Johannesburg (Pretoria is about 35 minutes from Johannesburg and is basically attached to it). I don't know what to expect. As far as one can tell the general view here accepts that England are favourites to win. But with Pope, Leach and Woakes off with a bug – it seems like flu (have they had the flu inoculation?) - England may be marginally damaged.

Johannesburg reminds me of Perth, Australia in its opulence - from vast shopping centres with expensive jewellers to a Woolworths which makes Waitrose look dowdy. I drove through large affluent residential areas with independent schools and fantastic sports grounds. Of course, there is another side - the deprived areas and shanties. But no sign of the colour discrimination I found in 1980. Interestingly, the number of British supporters is very small in contrast to the masses going to Cape Town. But, generally agreed, the image of Johannesburg is not strong.

Walking through the Nelson Mandela Shopping Mall whom should I literally bump into walking with his 6 or 7-year old son but Ben Stokes. I mumbled something. He remained expressionless and speechless. So I moved on. It must have been shortly before his father was sadly taken into hospital. My only other bit of greatness was my chat with Jonathan Agnew largely about his (favourable) experience speaking to the Cheltenham Cricket Society.

The Centurion Pretoria is a really nice ground. Much of the area around the field of play did not have stands and loads of people came to sit on the grass often under colourful umbrellas.



There was a jazz band near us which played much of the day..... and there was the Barmy Army. We started with the flags and the national anthems. Yet again we had the football flags and God Save the Queen and the South Africans had their colourful flag. All of the South Africans hugged to sing their national anthem. This was followed by the Barmy Army singing Jerusalem.

England won the toss and decided to bowl. Immediately De Villiers, the SA captain, said if he had won, they would have decided to bat. Indeed the wicket was not difficult and the ground was fast (i.e. tap the ball and a four was scored). I had noticed that the England team had five fast bowlers. Indeed there was a short spell of spin from Root and Denly (who has no wickets in Test cricket). First ball, Anderson got Elgar caught behind the wicket. At 111 for 5, we were talking of a four-day even three-day match but then de Kock knocked up 95 with uses of sixes and fours on the fast field. The bowling did not seem that exciting particularly Archer. The fielding seemed better. But they ended 277 for 9. Maybe a stronger South African team would have done better. But the game seemed a bit stodgy at the end.

There might be some questions about umpires - some appeals against out were successful. In one case it was very clear from the cameras that that there was no lbw as the ball obviously hit the bat. Stokes did not bowl and was off for some time having medical attention... but made two excellent catches.

The jazz band continued to play and play and became irritating rather than fun. Rain was predicted for the following day.

Day 2 opened with the Barmy Army singing Jerusalem.



Fifteen wickets fell -Only one batsman just reached 50 (Denly). One wicketkeeper(de Kock) caught six batsmen out. There was a plethora of referrals to the third umpire.....and England did not go home very happy.

England got South Africa's last batsman out leaving South Africa on 284. England struggled eventually to 181 but had some consolation in getting four South African second innings wickets including that of Du Plessis for 72 runs before close of play. There were no real stars (well a brief Ben Stokes twinkle for 35 and Philander 4 wickets for 16). The public put much down to the wicket which demonstrated how bad Root's decision was to put South Africa in to bat.

Day 3 opened with another Jerusalem from the Barmy Army.

South Africa continued batting. Van der Dussen (in his first Test at age 30) got a 50 and his partnership with the night watchman Nortje made 92. That, plus 46 from Philander, got them to 272 leaving England needing 376 to win. The bowling was ok. Archer got five wickets but was expensive. Stokes got 2 for 22.

The openers rallied to the task and put on 92. In essence it was really Burns as Sibley never looking comfortable in only his second Test and was out for 29. Rather unkindly the scoreboard flashed when he was on 22 that this was his highest score in Test cricket. In came Denly. At the end England were 121 for one now with 255 to get. Again today, more referrals to the third umpire were overruled by umpire's decision.

The day ended with a medley from the Barmy army including a flat "Volare" while the jazz band played a version of "When the saints go marching in", which didn't inspire me about Heaven.

I saw the honours list for cricket. In reporting to others I am not sure anyone really understood the difference between CBE, OBE and MBE. Boris thought that Stokes deserved a Dukedom. But I was really pleased that the wonderful and charming Clive Lloyd was given a knighthood. Unfortunately many of the English here seem to talk too much about football, but glad to see this flag from my former constituency.



I went to bed thinking how could a Test team which had lost only one wicket and, of the remaining 10 batsmen, eight had made Test centuries, possibly not make a further 255. I ask that question again now. All credit to the South African bowlers but the answer lies with the England players. Well one can say it was overcast and again needed the lights. Maybe the wicket was a little less easy.

But the batsmen reminded me of rabbits caught in headlights. This was underlined by the number of bad shots starting with the skying of the ball for a catch by Burns. Apart from 48 from Root there was

nothing remotely favourable to say. Root at the end said it was pleasing to see us put in a better performance in the second innings than in the first!

Result: South Africa 284 and 272, England 181 and 268. South Africa won by 107 runs.

2nd Test in Cape Town

Cape Town cricket ground has one of the most attractive settings for cricket in the world with the wonderful background of Table Mountain. So it was no wonder that it seemed half the ground at least was full of tourists from England.

New Year's Eve on the Waterfront was wonderful, the food and drink was wonderful, the atmosphere and the sun were wonderful. But will the cricket be wonderful?

South Africa made only one team change - an opener. England dropped Bairstow for Pope. The sick Archer was replaced by the Somerset spinner Bess and Burns ("poor Burnsy"), injured playing football, was replaced by Crawley. Playing football is now banned. Unfortunately, only for cricket practice.

We went through the usual rituals: flags, national anthems etc.

The toss was won by Root. England batted ("always bat first in Cape Town").

Crawley was out quickly. From there on it seemed like a procession, getting on for say 50 minutes and batsmen, once settled in, then getting out. The best was Stokes with 47. So England reached 221 for 6 wickets leaving Pope in with the tail. 234 for 9 wickets, then in comes Anderson aged 37 who played his first game for England when he was 20. (One of the ladies on my tour from Burnley said she remembers his aunty streaked his hair red and blue in those days... "But he is a grown up lad now"). Anderson showed that he is the most experienced last wicket batsman in the world. But the revelation was Pope. He showed his talent in ensuring he got most of the batting which he used both sensibly and adventurously. Thus the pair survived the day eventually adding 35 runs for the last wicket with Pope on 61 not out and the total 269.

Apart from the last pair there was not too much to excite in terms of batting and bowling. One of the appeals to the third umpire revealed a no ball and there was some concern that there were more no balls missed by the umpires.

The Barmy Army seemed quiet but maybe because they were on the other side of the ground from me!

After England's departure for 269, South Africa lost three wickets for 40 including that of du Plessis. Then there was a stand of over a century between the opener Elgar and van der Dussen. But once Elgar departed, miss hitting a ball from the spinner Bess for 88, the rot set in for South Africa who ended the day with 215 for 8, 54 runs behind England. Indeed apart from Elgar (88) and van der Dussen (68) there were no scores of significance from other South Africans. The stars for England were the bowlers especially Anderson and, as a fielder, Ben Stokes who held four great catches. Perhaps one should add that a South African bird, an ibis, stayed much of the afternoon eating insects near the wicket unperturbed by anything going on. But it was the dullest day so far with the South Africans scoring at only 2.5 average per over.

Today the Barmy Army were lively, encouraged by a South African equivalent group which hit back.

This was England's best day of the series so far.

South Africa started the day 215 for 8. First ball from Anderson 215 for 9 and, two overs later, Anderson again... 223 all out. Anderson five wickets for 40 runs. England 46 ahead.

The Barmy Army sang Jerusalem.

The stars of England's innings were Shipley and Root both seemingly more confident. After the loss of Crawley and Denly, they took the score from 101 for 2 to 217 when Root was caught off Pretorius for 61 to be followed by the night watchman Bess caught behind on the last ball of the day for 0. So, with Shipley on 81 England were 218 for 4 and 264 ahead.

The South African bowling was fine but perhaps the wicket was getting easier. If there were any criticisms of England: Shipley seemed to get bogged down near the end and the batting could have been a touch quicker.

Apparently, the crowd was around 17,000 of which about half were British tourists.

The ibis reappeared and totally disregarded the play.

The exciting part of the play was the first hour or so. Stokes knocked 70 in as many minutes and Sibley got a century in his third test for England. Then the rest did not do much and Root declared leaving South Africa with 438 to win. Significant on the bowling side was the considerable use of Maharaj the spinner who bowled 43 overs, 2 for 160. This was mirrored by England in the following innings with the uses of Root, Denly, and especially Bess. This was possibly because the wicket was becoming very easy for batting. Indeed, I wondered if Root had been slightly premature in declaring.

South Africa reached 124 for 2 but with Malan on 63. Their scoring was only 2.2 runs per over which possibly indicates a draw is their main hope. A great deal will depend on the next three wickets.

Next day, we arrived at the cricket ground to find the entrance - a tunnel under the railway line - was flooded. So everyone had to go into the rail station and clamber over the line. The Barmy Army in full voice with a South African equivalent singing in Afrikaans loudly.

The ibis returned.... this time with a mate. The cricketers - shamefully English - tried to shoo them off. This was unpopular with the crowd and they were allowed to stay. Kevin Pietersen was around with one of those haircuts shaved around side and hair piled on top, like an upturned rag doll.

The wickets gradually fell: the key ones being Malan 84, Du Plessis, the out of form captain, for 19, Van der Dussen for a very slow 17 and de Kock for 50. Once they were out I felt an England victory was on the cards. England followed the practice of a spinner one end and a quick bowler the other end. From lunch onwards, the South Africans were resigned to the hope of a draw. Indeed progress was at less than two runs an over. Shortly before 5pm, Philander was caught off Stokes bowling and England won by 189.

There were three candidates for man of the match: Anderson for his five wickets in the first Innings, Sibley for his century and Stokes for his 47 and 72, his three wickets in the second innings and his remarkable fielding. It had to be Stokes.

The Barmy Army was in ecstasy. Drink flowed. We drifted to our buses in varying states of euphoria. The birds stayed away. Far fewer South Africans were present leaving the crowd predominantly English.

The first victory in Cape Town for sixty years and the only team to beat South Africa in Cape Town except for the Australians since the end of apartheid. Now one-all in the current series.

Result: England 269 and 391-8 dec., South Africa 223 and 248. England won by 189 runs.

England went on to win the 3rd Test in Port Elizabeth by an innings and 53 runs, the 4th Test at Johannesburg by 191 runs and the series 3-1. This was the first time that the England cricket team had won three Tests on a tour to South Africa since 1913–14.



Benny Howell

A tribute to one of Gloucestershire's most colourful players and supporters' favourite.



Benny Howell is a citizen of the world who, for a while, felt he belonged nowhere: born in Bordeaux, educated at the Oratory School in Berkshire and with Australian and UK passports, he was almost lost to the game. Instead, alongside his middle-order batting, his individualistic, experimental medium-pace has gained such prominence at Gloucestershire that he can fairly be regarded as one of the world's most innovative T20 specialists.

When he was a child he was diagnosed with ADHD and, with Gloucestershire's support, he turned to medication and meditation. "It feels like I have a million thoughts going on in my head," he said in 2018. As a T20 bowler, he turned it to his advantage: an impulsive experimenter who batsmen found impossible to predict.

A holiday in America changed Howell's career. He went to a Miami Marlins v Philadelphia Phillies game and became obsessed with the duel between pitcher and batter. He got a role as a reserve pitcher for a Melbourne baseball club during his time there in district cricket. This interest in baseball influenced his bowling technique in T20 as he concentrated on shifting pace, increasing his change-ups - his knuckle-ball was particularly effective - and moving the ball in the air. He claimed in *The Cricketer* that he had 50 variants of slower ball. But England have ignored him, concluding that his slower balls were too samey.



Benny bowling v. Kent 2017

Howell took 24 wickets in the NatWest Blast in 2016 and became the first English professional to sign up for the Bangladesh Premier League that day, a typically independent act, in defiance of PCA advice that security could not be guaranteed; others followed his lead as England's tour, highly protected, passed off without incident. Gloucestershire gave him a new three-year contract at the end of the season. He topped the county's T20 averages again in 2018: 17 wickets this time.

He had been on Hampshire's books for several years - initially through their academy as an opening batsman - before his first team debut in limited-overs cricket in 2010. He travelled with Hampshire to the Caribbean T20 in January 2011 and made his first-class debut against Lancashire later that summer, scoring 71 in the second innings. But that turned out to be his only first-class match for Hampshire, alongside 26 limited-overs games, as he was released at the end of the 2011 season. He left with a reputation for being brash and over confident.



Benny v. Middlesex 2019

Benny successfully restarted his career with Gloucestershire and made his 2nd XI debut in April 2012, making a double century at Bristol. His performance earned him an immediate first-team debut at Canterbury, where he made 44 and 10 in a drawn game. He played the entire first-class season in 2013 and contributed nearly 600 runs and took 30 wickets. He posted a gritty maiden Championship hundred against Leicestershire at the Cheltenham Festival in 2015 (on Exiles' Day!) and his three wickets the same season

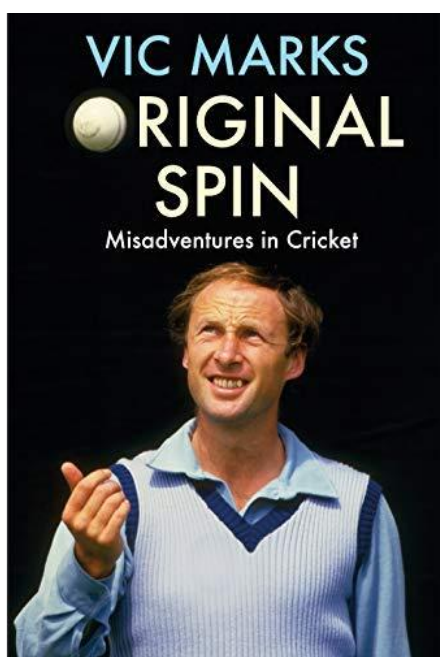
helped turn a Royal London Cup semi-final against Yorkshire at Headingley - a competition that Gloucestershire went on to win, their first trophy since 2004. He was ranked 2nd in the PCA (Professional Cricketer's Association) MVP (Most Valuable Player) rankings behind team mate Michael Klinger for his performances that year after averaging 42.8 with the bat and taking 15 wickets. Benny was also the top wicket-taker in the 2016 NatWest T20 Blast competition with 24 wickets.

Championship opportunities were rare, however, as he became known as a T20 specialist. When he got a chance near the end of the 2017 season, he responded with a career-best 163 in a largely drab affair against Glamorgan in Cardiff.

Given Benny's spectacular record as a one-day specialist, it was no surprise that he was quickly signed up by Birmingham Phoenix for the 100 ball competition.

Sources: ESPN Cricket and GlosCricket

Book Review by Simon Ireland: 'Original Spin' by Vic Marks



It was something of a mixed blessing to be a Gloucestershire supporter living in Taunton in the mid 1980s but I was happy enough to be teaching English at Taunton School and even happier to be joined by Vic Marks one winter term as he appeared in the Classics Dept on what might be called a temporary contract! He was a thoroughly modest and likeable individual and these qualities shine through in what is an entertaining and shrewd assessment of his 'misadventures' in a golden age of the sport.

'Original Spin' falls neatly into three parts with Vic's educational experiences leading seamlessly into his county and international career before we are treated to a revealing insight into the deadline demands of the jobbing journalist and a behind the scenes tour of the world of Test Match Special. There are plenty of links to Gloucestershire names with Jeremy Lloyds being a contemporary even at Prep School and then Blundell's and Alastair Hignell proving an intimidating opponent at representative rugby level. As Marks wryly reports of his rival scrum half, 'There was always only going to be one winner in that particular physical battle!' Most revealing of all, perhaps, is Marks's depiction of Arthur Milton's effect on the Oxford University team of 1977. Marks and his peers adored Arthur for his laid back yet expert approach which gently teased the best from players rather than proscribing a rigid tactical framework. This was something of a golden era for Oxbridge cricket as Imran Khan, Chris Tavaré, Peter Roebuck, Alastair Hignell and Paul Parker were all plying their trade with Marks.

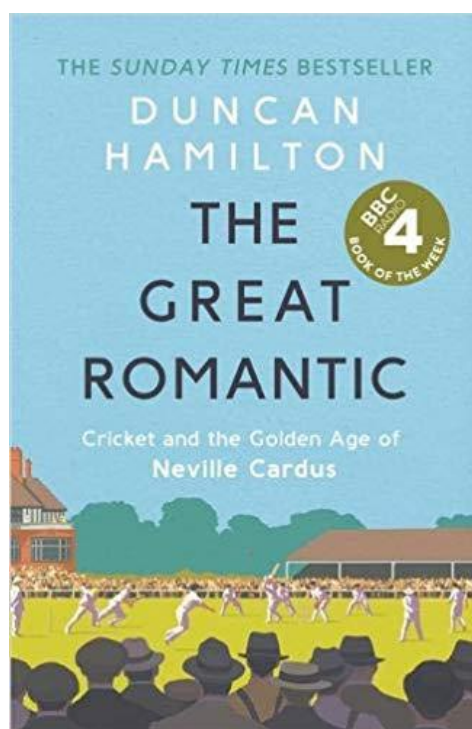
One senses that Peter Roebuck must have been emotionally taxing for Marks to write about because of their long standing friendship, the Shepton Mallet affair at Somerset and, of course, Roebuck's tragic demise. Certainly, the section devoted to Marks's county career will prove gripping reading for any fan of the game as the cast of larger than life characters featuring Botham, Garner, Richards, Close and co. clamours for attention and the last of these definitely dominates the book's funniest moments.

Marks is very honest about his own abilities, playing them down a shade too much perhaps, but rather like Mark Nicholas he is able to write admiringly of the game's Titans in a very human way and so capture their magic almost as a fellow fan. He is equally star struck when analysing the gifts of the media world's best writers and broadcasters and reminds us, of course, of the eternal joys of TMS. In the book's final pages he offers some trenchant views on the present state and organisation of the sport we love to show that though he may speak softly, he can wield that big stick when required.

A Cricket lover's delight!

Book Review by Howard Allen:

The Great Romantic: Cricket and the Golden Age of Neville Cardus by Duncan Hamilton [Hodder £20]



Ten years ago I encountered the classic writing of Duncan Hamilton through his magnificent biography of Harold Larwood. This book won a Wisden Cricket Book prize. I shall be very surprised if his splendid full-length biography of Cardus does not receive the same degree of recognition.

The Great Romantic has a strongly personal flavour. The author catches one's attention immediately with his account of how John Arlott in the 70s, occupying Cardus's old post as the Guardian's cricket correspondent, tutored Hamilton in an appreciation of Cardus. No one before Cardus had conceived of cricket's literary possibilities. However, he was given an opportunity to report on Lancashire's first peacetime match in 1919 and he won instant fame for his cricket writing and eventually considerable acclaim for his musical criticism. The story of the rise of Cardus from an impoverished background in the poorer streets of Manchester c 1900, with an absentee father, a mother and aunt who, to make ends

meet, were working as part-time prostitutes, leaving school at 13, to fame as a writer and critic is a remarkable one. In addition in 1967 he received a knighthood and in the 1970s he was the president of the Lancashire club.

The book contains passages of much splendid writing on the various tours that Cardus covered in Australia. His great love of his native Lancashire players and the Roses battles takes pride of place. He much admires the sheer majesty of the stroke-play of our own Walter Hammond amongst other great players especially from the Golden Age.

Whilst Hamilton covers so well and with great sympathy the considerable achievements of Cardus, he is also candid in his comments on the strange personal life of his subject. His infatuations with younger women and neglect of his own wife and mother, his depression and major breakdowns are all given full analysis. He writes too of the latter years of his life when Cardus was a lonely and frankly grumpy old man. Duncan Hamilton has succeeded splendidly in casting much new light on an enigmatic and complex character and reviewing the considerable achievements of a remarkable all-rounder. I commend his book without reservation.

Following Gloucestershire from Brussels

Exile Robert Whitchurch sends his views from abroad...

It is in fact not so hard to keep up to date with Glos, modern communications being so good. *Cricinfo*, of course, means that every ball can be followed.....though it is rather a sad existence if you are reduced to sitting watching the bare text summary. Sometimes the BBC website gives an additional element of commentary, especially for example during the end of season games when promotion and relegation are at stake. The Gloucestershire club website is pretty good too, giving plenty of information concerning what is going on. *The Cricketer* magazine and website is also well informed on the county game.

Best of all is the new live streaming that is available via YouTube, direct from the County Ground in Bristol, and other county grounds. Not any of the one-day games, unfortunately, but the 4-day Championship games are streamed, sometimes with a live commentary from BBC Radio Bristol. This is great; being able to watch away games is also excellent. So I could see James Bracey (of Bitton, I think, a ground I knew well) play a brilliant innings to win the game against Derbyshire at the end of August, which kept Gloucestershire near the top of the table. And of course, parts of the Northamptonshire game, last of the season. They leave the cameras on even when it is pouring down with rain; though there are more exciting things to see than rain pouring down on the covers on a wet late-September Thursday in Bristol, it has to be said.

But in fact I can get a cricket fix here in Brussels. I live about twenty minutes' drive from the Royal Brussels Cricket Club, which is just near Waterloo to the south of the city. The club was founded in 1885 (though there is a record of a game played at Enghien between two sides of the Guards, just before the battle in 1815; a match attended by the Duke of Wellington!). At a slightly less exalted level, David Graveney was here in 1973 with the Whitbread Wanderers. Other touring sides come here too; this summer there was a team from Sonning visiting. Their motto is "Who cares, who wins?"



The match re-enacted in 2015

RBCC have a beautiful ground in the country south of the Belgian capital. It is mostly expats who play, but less and less of British extraction and more and more from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. I went to watch a game the Club played against Ghent CC.....a team composed entirely of Afghans. It was the day that Afghanistan were playing Pakistan in the World Cup and the Ghent team were so riveted by what was happening on the TV in the pavilion that they sat with their backs to the field outside! But they did get up and go out to bat when it was their turn.

On another visit there was a T20 international between Germany and Belgium, won fairly easily by the Germans, who like the Belgian team are mostly a mix of Aussies, Brits and Asians. This game, like some other games between European teams, is streamed live by the European Cricket website, camerawork and commentary done by two keen members of the German set up, an Australian and a Kiwi from Munich. They recently broadcast a tournament from Utrecht in Holland.

I have also been to watch another local team, Twelve Stars. Whenever I go, I always get invited to stay for the innings interval (I am the only spectator) and to share their curry and naan bread with them. No tea and cucumber sandwiches here.

My one unmissable contact with Glos, though, is the annual pilgrimage to Cheltenham. Fascination with cricket started young, going with my father to watch Gloucestershire at the Bristol County Ground. Tales of Hammond and Goddard. I recently reread Stephen Chalke's marvellous book of Bomber Wells' reminiscences, "One More Run", and was surprised that I could identify all the players in the photo of the 1957 team without looking at the caption. I was 9 years old. A team of very English names – Smith, Brown, Mortimore, Cook, Allen..... Thirty years later, sat at midwicket down the slope, watching Courtney Walsh from one end, and David Lawrence from the other, hurling high speed missiles past bemused batsmen, with Jack Russell catching them, seemingly just inside the boundary rope.

This year at Cheltenham was fascinating cricket in beautiful weather; I was able to manage a couple of days of the match against Worcestershire (not able to coincide with Exiles Day, unfortunately!). An annual visit to taste the atmosphere and enjoy the magic of the Festival keeps me going through the Belgian winter. A four-day game for preference, time to wander round the boundary, watch play from different viewpoints, see if they manage to get the electronic scoreboard working, visit the second hand book tent, buy a coffee from the red Citroen fire truck from Troyes in France where we used to live. And best of all a couple of years ago, watching Hammond score a century in Cheltenham!

Computer update – Exiles! Send us your email address!



The great value of modern communication is shown by this edition of Outside-edge initially being sent electronically to our Members for whom we have e-mail addresses. If you are an Exile, and presumably not received this edition electronically, but would like to receive information from us via e-mail in the future please send your e-mail address to Mark Brunt, our Secretary, at: mbrunt@solventis.net . All Exiles will continue to receive hard copies of Outside-edge once more normal times resume.

JK Lever

Following John Lever's appearance in our last issue of Outside-edge, Simon Ireland tracked him down to give his unique insight of playing against Gloucestershire in the 1970s



John (JK) Lever with John Snow at Cheltenham 2019

“My early memories go back to the days before Gloucestershire changed its name to Proctershire. Characters who were a pleasure to play against and a great help in my young career. Arthur Milton’s name springs to mind; he took me to one side after one of my early games and explained that not bowling the ‘in-swinger’ (as a left arm - over) would reduce the number of wickets I hope to take dramatically - how right he was. A couple of international umpires and an off spinner became lifelong friends – BJ, Shep and DA - as Gloucester followers you will know who I mean! DA captained me after retiring from the first class game and played for an Old England XI. Great fun with a few memorable performances but the fielding was dreadful !!!

The “friendly games” of championship cricket with Gloucestershire ended with the arrival of the South African bombshell. He ran in to bowl with tremendous pace and smashed boundaries like the T20 masters of today. He wasn’t averse to “try” and out-drink us in the bar after the game... we put that right! We didn’t, however, win the battle at Westcliffe in 1972. Proccie came charging in from the High Road end to destroy us. Without exaggeration, he pushed off from the sight screen and completed a “hat trick” of LBWs. This was only part of the destruction - the rest was far more painful. A ball from round the wicket hit our captain, Brian Taylor, a sickening blow in the groin area. As number 11, I stayed away from the changing room long enough for the physio to do his work. Stuart Turner was also a casualty after fending a short ball off with his arm; the services of the physio were again in demand. Panic stations – 10 & 11, Ray East and myself, looked like a pair of Michelin Tyre men straight from the advert. We survived but Essex lost. Proccie was a fine cricketer who helped improve the standard of the county game.

Good luck this year in the first division but that call is tempered when Essex are the opposition!

Fond memories, John Lever”

1972 Procter 18 matches: Top of batting 1215 at 41.89

Top of bowling 58 at 16.44

The Career of Walter Hammond in *Wisden*: Howard Allen looks over Wally's career in statistics and quotes

Selections from First Class Records in *Wisden* 2018 and
Keith Gerrish - *GCCC First Class Records 1870-1997*

Part 1

1] Two Separate 100s in a match most times

Seven Times-only two other batsman have exceeded this feat.

2]. Most 100s in a Season

WRH (1938) **15 x100**

WRH (1933) **13x100**

WRH (1937) **13x100**

3] Most Double Hundreds in a Career

WRH achieved this feat in **36** of his innings.

Bradman with **37** exceeded him and the nearest to Hammond was 'Patsy' Hendren in 22 innings.

4] Most Hundreds in a Career

WRH scored **167** centuries in 1005 innings.

Jack Hobbs with **197** centuries in 1315 innings and 'Patsy' Hendren with **170** centuries in innings exceeded him.

5] Most Runs in a Season

WRH (1933) scored **3323** runs at **67.81**.

He exceeded 3000 runs in a season on three occasions.

6]. 2000 Runs in a Season most times

WRH did so in **12** seasons.

7]. 1000 Runs in a Season

WRH did so **22** times.

8]. Most Runs in Career [1920-1951]

WRH scored **50,551** runs at **56.10** in 1005 innings

Jack Hobbs scored **61237** runs at **50.65** in 1315 innings.

9]. 1000 Runs in May

WRH between 7th and 31st May, 1927 in 25 days with **1042** runs at **74.42** equalled W. G. Grace's record.

10]. Catches in Tests

110 with **1.29** catches per match

11]. Most Catches in a Match

WRH holds the record with **10** taken during 'Hammond's match' against Worcester at Cheltenham in 1928.

12]. Most Catches in a Season

WRH with **78** catches in 1928 holds the record.

13]. Most Catches in A Career

WRH is placed in fourth place with **819** catches.

14] Bowling in Tests

83 wickets at 39.40 BB 5/36

15] Bowling for GCCC

504 wickets @ 29.36 BB 9/23 Worcester at Cheltenham 1928
5w/15 times 10w/3 times

Part 2

WRH – The Test Captain [1938-1946]

1938 Australia (H)

P4 W1 L1 D2 Av 67.16 1x100 2x50

1938-1939 South Africa (A)

P5 W1 L0 D4 Av 87.00 3x100 2x50

1939 West Indies (H)

P3 W1 L0 D2 Av 55.00 1x100

1945 Victory Tests (H)

P5 W2 L2 D1 Av 46.12 1X100

1946 India (H)

P3 W1 L0 D2 Av 39.66 1x50

1946-1947 Australia (A)

P4 W0 L2 D2 Av 21.00

1947 New Zealand (A)

P1 W0 L0 D1 Av 79.00 1x50

Captaincy Summary Including Victory Tests: P22 W6 L5 D13.

Hammond lost one series of the seven played under his captaincy.

Scores as Captain: 5x100 6x50 16x20-40 5x0-20

Batting Average as Captain: 56.28

Hammond: What of his England captaincy?

Traditionally the summation of the career of Hammond has been that of the most handsome batsman of his age, the most accomplished player of his time on a turning wicket and the finest of slip fielders ever seen in Test cricket. In addition his medium paced bowling was held in the highest regard by Les Ames who kept to him in Tests.

But too often his performances as captain have been lambasted. Not least this criticism stemmed largely from the disastrous tour of Australia in 1946/47. As the Australians established their supremacy, the Press singled out Hammond and he received much personal criticism. The team's poor performance was attributed to Hammond's ineffective leadership and lack of tactical nous. However, it must be recalled that the ill-fated tour came too early for a team whose members were still suffering from the ravages of the Second World War. Hammond at the age of 43 was not fully fit and also he was experiencing a crisis in his marriage that culminated in divorce. The team was outclassed by the strong Australian side that was to become one of its best ever teams. Hammond may be criticised on occasion for his lack of strategic foresight or ineffective man-management or his degree of remoteness from his players. But the failures in the first four Tests in the series when he was the captain cannot in fairness be laid solely at his door.

Prior to this disastrous tour well-respected writers had painted a rather different picture of Hammond's captaincy. In *Wisden* (1942) R.C. Robertson-Glasgow, ever a stylish and informed writer commented:

"As a strategist he (Hammond) would not rank among our great leaders; but he was safe, observant and experienced. His colossal achievements commanded the respect as his social nature invited the confidence of every sort of cricketer."

Ray Robinson, a doyen of Australian cricket writers, commenting in 1946 of the Anglo-Australian captains in the inter-war period, actually placed Hammond first among Englishmen - ahead of Chapman, Wyatt and even Jardine. He wrote:

"Hammond carried his poise into his captaincy. There has been nothing fidgety or ostentatious to irk his players. He gives them credit for knowing the game, does not regiment them with detailed orders, and he gets the response such understanding leadership deserves."

Robinson wrote subsequently after the disastrous 1946/47 series in *The Cricketer* thus:

"More exasperating was the luck of the umpiring. Usually debateable decisions work out fairly evenly over a Test rubber, but weight of evidence suggests the umpires were mistaken in giving Bradman not out caught for 28 in the First Test, Edrich out leg before wicket for 89 in the Third Test and Washbrook out caught behind for 39 in the Fourth Test. These decisions came at such points in England's bid to gain an advantage that they could almost be termed turning points of the three games."

In 1946 Norman Preston, the distinguished editor of *Wisden*, wrote of the Victory Tests played in 1945 thus:

"All five games were contested by each side, under the admirable captaincy of W.R. Hammond and A.L. Hassett, in a spirit of fellowship and goodwill."

Then in *Wisden* (1948) he commented:

"Whereas a successful captain is rarely criticised, Hammond was not allowed to escape.... Hammond was not the same inspiring leader as at home against Australia in 1938. I believe his batting failures upset him."

These observations of Robertson- Glasgow, Robinson and Preston help to provide a more balanced analysis of the quality of Walter Hammond's captaincy. He may not have possessed the flair or vision of Bev Lyon, Mike Brearley or Richie Benaud but at best he could be viewed as a shrewd captain and as the outstanding cricketer of his time the inspirational leader of his teams.

As Richie Benaud, a captain of flair once said:

"Captaincy is 90% luck and 10% skill. But don't try it without that 10%."

Unfortunately in his swan-song years (1946/47) Hammond had precious little of that former commodity going his way.

Postscript

In another context Hammond won his own band of admirers. In 1939 he took over the captaincy of Gloucestershire and here his tactical shrewdness came to the fore. The county won 18 matches, drew five and lost seven. They came second in the championship to the powerful Yorkshire team. After the war in the season of 1946 – his final season - he played too few games for the county due to his Test commitments and his recurrent bouts of fibrositis. His presence was badly missed and the county dropped to fifth place in the table.

I cherish to this day the two occasions that I saw Hammond batting albeit in testimonial games at Badminton after his retirement in 1947. The sheer grace and power of his off-side drives I shall never forget. My major regret is that I was too young to be at Lord's in 1938 when he scored his majestic 240 against the Australians.



Calling prospective Gloucestershire Exiles' Committee Members!

- Do you love Gloucestershire cricket?
- Fancy getting a bit more involved in the Exiles?
- Can you find your way to a pub in Ealing about three times a year?

Then we'd love you to join us!

Your Exiles' Committee is on the lookout for new members. We have enjoyable meetings where we plan our events, publications and discuss news from the club: as the *de facto* representatives of all GCCC members outside the county boundaries, Bristol looks to us to inform policy as well as raise vital funds for the Academy and Emerging Players programme. Why not come along to one of our meetings and join us for the evening to see if this is for you?

For further details on membership, please contact Mark Brunt on 07802773650 or mbrunt@solventis.net



STAY AT HOME 

**PROTECT
THE NHS**

 **save
lives**

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (where this absolutely cannot be done from home)
- Stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home