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THE
Nightwatchman

THE WISDEN CRICKET QUARTERLY

WISDEN



THE Nightwatchman

THE WISDEN CRICKET QUARTERLY

Cricket's past has been enriched by great writing and Wisden is making sure its future will be too. *The Nightwatchman* is a quarterly collection of essays and long-form articles and is available in print and e-book formats.

Co-edited by Anjali Doshi and Tanya Aldred, with Matt Thacker as managing editor, *The Nightwatchman* features an array of authors from around the world, writing beautifully and at length about the game and its myriad offshoots. Contributors are given free rein over subject matter and length, escaping the pressures of next-day deadlines and the despair of cramming heart and soul into a few paragraphs.

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Issue 18, out now, features the following:

Matt Thacker introduces issue 18 of *The Nightwatchman*

Yvette Walker joins Don Bradman aboard the *SS Orford*

Bharat Sundaesan on the fascinating life of Ashantha de Mel

Benj Moorehead has a magical weekend with Brian Close

Noah Levick is a Pakistan fanatic from far, far away

James Runcie gives the *Wisden* address 20 years on from his father's

Memories – Children at the cricket

Lawrence Booth winkles out nine special cricketers

Tim Cooke is captivated by Derek Birley

Luke Alfred on the murky world of match-fixing in South Africa

Jaideep Varma takes a fresh look at India's great batsmen

Liam Cromar examines cricket's real-tennis moment

Jackie Litherland on the vandals of Durham

Tanya Aldred wonders if cricket has forgotten silence

A wrinkle in time – The winners of the MCC photo competition

Peter Hanlon rejoices in a Fleet Street XI

Paul Edwards tackles cricket through the lens

Patrick Ferriday on the intriguing Robin Thorne

PaajivsPunter can't forget the days when supporting India was a lost cause

Jarrod Kimber crosses the line

Stephen Connor finds his relationship with cricket has become virtual

Jonathan Liew sees magic in Shane Warne's mural

Jon Hotten salutes those who rocked The Oval





A MURAL IN TIME

Jonathan Liew dreams up Shane Warne's ultimate party

The film crew had been through almost every room of the house, and were just about to leave when the producer spotted the mural. At first, she thought nothing of it. Shane Warne's house in the Melbourne suburbs was like a shrine to bad art. The motivational posters featuring tropical sunsets and soaring eagles. The Matisse rip-offs that looked like a child's school macaroni project. The Barack Obama "Hope" poster, but with Merv Hughes in the main role. This, however, was on an entirely different scale.

The cameras started rolling. "I'll run you through a couple of the names," Warne said. "So there's Bruce Springsteen and myself just chilling in the corner, having a drink. Springsteen's got a cricket ball in his hand, he's just asking questions about cricket. The legend Mick Jagger, he's just sitting in the pool chilling. Then you've got Frank Sinatra and Muhammad Ali having a bit of a tune, just singing along. Then JFK's just mixing with Sharon Stone and Marilyn Monroe. Two of my closest friends, Chris Martin and Michael Clarke, just

having a bit of a chat. I tell you what, the artist has looked after Pup with those guns!"

When the programme eventually aired on Sky Sports in 2015 under the title "Shane Warne: Living the Dream", Warne was widely ridiculed for his vanity. Warne feigned indifference, but deep down he allowed himself a wry chuckle. Sure, he could be a touch outspoken at times, perhaps even unsubtle. But vanity was the last thing you could accuse him of. Besides, he knew the truth. The mural was not some fanciful imagining of an idealised poolside reverie. It had been painted from life.

• • •

Darkness washed over The Oval like a cruel sea. The champagne corks on the outfield would not be seen again until morning. The confetti danced alone. Moths flapped at the pavilion window, the only square of light left in the ground. Inside the Australian dressing-room, however, illumination offered no solace.

For much of the evening, they had laughed and drunk away the pain. The English came in to visit, but had not stayed long, eager to clamber into their waiting taxis and begin the festivities in earnest. And so the Australians commiserated alone, flipping open the bottles of Victoria Bitter that had been purchased for victory but would do just as well in defeat.

A taut and awful silence gripped the room. Simon Katich stared at the backs of his hands. Shaun Tait blew a one-note tune across the neck of his bottle. The silence was momentarily broken by a cricket ball rolling off the bench and hitting the floor with a thud.

"Well, fellas," Adam Gilchrist began suddenly. "At least we can tell our grandkids we played in the greatest Test series of all time."

Ricky Ponting harrumphed. "How can it be the greatest of all time?" he retorted. "We lost."

The click of a cigarette lighter interjected before Gilchrist could respond. From behind a tall stack of pizza boxes, the slumped and cetacean figure of Warne slowly winched itself upright. Warne inhaled slowly and exhaled with violence, an angry cloud of smoke pouring from his mouth.

"Yeah, we lost," he spat. "But we're still Australia. They won, but they'll wake up tomorrow morning and they'll still be England. Ian Bell will still be Ian Bell. Ashley Giles will still be Ashley Giles. The ginger bloke who came in and made seven, he'll still be the ginger bloke. Who's going to remember these guys in 20 years' time?"

Warne paused for effect. "Nobody, that's who," he said. He had developed a habit of answering his own rhetorical questions, a trait that grated on colleagues to an unfathomable degree, and which they would occasionally remark upon when he was out of earshot. But before they could dwell on their irritation, Warne continued.

"Yeah, they're having a bit of a party tonight," he said. "But if Warne throws a party, it's going to be the greatest party the world has ever seen."

Already, Warne's mind was racing quicker than his tongue could follow. Warne was often this way when a grand idea seized him: catalysed, almost to the point of breathlessness. "In fact," he continued, "that's what I'm going to do. Soon as we get back home. Biggest party in the southern hemisphere. Who's coming?"

Again, there was a certain sceptical silence. Every single person in that room had first-hand experience of one of Warne's "mega-parties". Invariably, they failed to live up to their advance billing. Often, spectacularly so. One time, the promised "A-list celebrities from the world of acting" had turned out to be Alf and Ailsa from "Home and Away". Then there was the time, a few years earlier, when most of the Australian team and their partners had turned up in anticipation of a "sumptuous moonlight dinner". When they arrived, they found that Warne's hot tub had been drained and filled with chips.

But it had been a long summer. Playing in the greatest series of all time takes a toll on the body, but it takes a toll



on the mind as well. Nobody was in the mood to arrest Warne's flight of fancy. Many were already allowing their thoughts to wander homewards, to their own beds and home-cooked food and towels they had chosen themselves.

"You know those games where you have to pick your ideal party guests?" asked Warne, to nobody in particular. "Of course you do. Well, it'll be like that, except for real. Elvis Presley. James Dean. Frank Sinatra. Bruce Springsteen. Muhammad Ali. JFK. Marilyn Monroe. Princess Di."

It was at this point that John Buchanan, the coach, piped up: "Shane, you do realise half of these people are dead?"

Warne glowered at him. "Now that," he retorted, "is the sort of negative thinking that's been holding back Australian cricket for years. 'No nightwatchman.' 'No Hooters the night before a Test.' 'You can't invite this bloke to your party, mate, he's dead.' That's your problem: it's always 'can't' with you, John."

An unidentified yawn from the back of the dressing-room - it may have been Justin Langer, who had been up since 4am doing tai chi - seemed to spread like contagion. One by one, the Australians started stretching and rubbing their eyes and picking up their bags and drifting towards the door. "We'll have a barbecue," Warne announced as their descending footsteps cast echoes back up the stairs. "How's second week of October suit everyone?" But nobody was listening any more.

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"Have you ever read *A Brief History of Time*?" Jason Gillespie asked. "Basically, it says that all time is a form of matter. It has a frequency and a position and a weight all of its own. If you could somehow create a gravitational field stronger than any field that currently exists in the universe, you could enter and exit the time curve at any point you choose. Are you going to have that side salad?"

Warne pushed the plate across the table, rapt in thought, or perhaps the lack of it. It was six months after the Ashes defeat and his party plans had yet to find any kind of definite shape. October had been a non-starter; most of the team had discovered immovable prior arrangements that prevented them from attending. So too November. December and January, at the height of the summer, were no good for anyone.

Meanwhile, a quick blast on Wikipedia had proven Buchanan right. Many of the prospective guests were now dead. But over a hastily arranged lunch in Fitzroy, Gillespie was enthusing about a potential solution.

"You know when you fizz one three feet outside leg stump?" Gillespie said. "And the ball kind of stops in the air? And it seems like time is standing still? That's not an effect. That's the gravitational field created by the revs on the ball. If you harness that, find a way to keep the ball spinning indefinitely, then essentially time is your servant. You can go wherever you want, in whatever direction you want, for as long as you want."

Warne looked unconvinced. It was not that the prospect of time travel was

unappealing to him, or that the science underwhelmed him. It was more that he did not see the point. Why live 200 years in the future when you could live now, with the certainties of the present, when you knew where everything was in your fridge, and you had a pretty good idea what would be on TV that evening? Besides, people in the past would never have heard of him, and people in the future might already have forgotten him. He banished this last thought with a violent, involuntary shake of the head.

"What that means," Gillespie continued through a mouthful of rocket, "is that you can delve into history and grab anyone you want for this party of yours. JFK. Elvis. Leonardo da Vinci. Genghis Khan."

Warne nodded, a gesture that concealed a comprehension that was only partial. Over the months, the guest list had grown in his head. It now included Marlon Brando, Martin Luther King, Buddy Holly and Mother Teresa. But in his head it had remained, until Gillespie had called up out of the blue and asked to meet. Now he was talking about valvetrains and drive belts and hooking a spinning cricket ball up to his motorcycle engine.

"Remember the time I won a motorbike in that tour game in India?" Gillespie asked, spearing a radish with his fork. "It's still in the garage. So you attach the ball to the drive belt - that keeps it spinning - rig it up to a capacitor, beef up the hydraulics, spark it up, lift the throttle, and suddenly you're surfing the highways of time."

Warne pondered as he lit a cigarette. All sorts of thoughts were running

through his head. What if Dizzy could actually pull this off? Even if he could go back in time and find JFK and Elvis Presley, how would he convince them to come to a party in Melbourne? And who was Genghis Khan? He could have sworn he had heard that name someplace. Indian? Off-spinner? 1950s? "Not famous enough," he thought to himself, and mentally scrawled his name off the guest list.

• • •

Once Gillespie got the bike running, things started to move pretty quickly. Warne sat pillion and operated the spinning motor: leggie to go back in time, slider to go forward. "It's so quiet," Gillespie remarked breathlessly as the years began to tick away, as the sharp edges and definite shapes of the garage around them began to blur and melt and warp and fade. The only sound was the ambient fizz of the Kookaburra ball behind them, wobbling furiously on its own axis, held in place only by its own eerie volition. "It's like a county game," Warne scoffed.

Some guests were easier to persuade than others. Mother Teresa refused on grounds of taste. Princess Diana offered her apologies, but she was due to be appearing in a haunting in Bristol later that afternoon and she had always prided herself on being a lady of her word. Buddy Holly had, for some reason, developed an aversion to long-distance travel. Monroe was sceptical, but agreed to come when she found out Kennedy would be there. Kennedy instantly agreed to come when he found out Monroe would be there. He told Jackie he was going to a Pacific trade summit.

But the big fish was Elvis Presley, who agreed to meet them at Graceland in 1972. Sprawled across his luxurious white-leather sofa, Presley refused point blank to accompany Warne and Gillespie to the future. The present was where his life was, and it contained all the food and prescription drugs and heartbreak he could ever want.

It took all Warne's powers of persuasion to lure Presley off his sofa and into the 21st century. "What are future generations going to say," he said in a vaguely scolding tone, "when they find out that the end of the world was coming, and you could have prevented it?" He paused for effect. "I think they'd find that pretty ordinary, if you ask me," he added.

• • •

And so, there it was. The weather was glorious, as glorious as it is in your dreams. Mick Jagger and Sharon Stone arrived first, having shared a cab together. "Incredible who you bump into in cosmetics," Stone remarked. Next came Jack Nicholson, bearing a giant slab of Victoria Bitter and with his 1998 Oscar for Best Actor in his pocket. He was followed in close order by Sean Connery. "Let me guess," Warne beamed. "Martini, shaken not stirred?"

"I'm driving," Connery grumbled. "Do us a Diet Coke for now."

Chris Martin was simply delighted to be there. Everyone he met was greeted with a fusillade of effusive compliments. "You're a fucking legend!" he shouted to Kennedy on meeting him. "I saw that Kevin Costner film about the Cuban Missile Crisis. I

mean, what an amazing experience that must have been. Just, you know, knowing how close we were to nuclear war. It would have been major. So fucking... fair play, man. Fair play. Do you like cricket?"

"Not as such, no," Kennedy replied.

Dimitri Mascarenhas looked, if anything, a little lost. He tried to strike up a conversation with Presley, but seeing as Mascarenhas had never listened to Presley's music and Presley had never watched a Hampshire CB40 game, their chat quickly fizzled out, and Mascarenhas spent most of the afternoon picking at a bowl of Doritos and wondering what on earth he was doing there.

Sinatra requested some music: "Connie Francis, if you have it." Warne said he would search his iTunes library but might have to resort to one of his playlists. Sinatra, polite to a fault, had no objections. And so it is that in the painting, the tune that Sinatra and Ali are belting out is "Somebody Told Me" by The Killers.

Warne circled the party in quiet contemplation, quietly marvelling at the tableau he had brought together. It all felt too surreal for words. Was that really Muhammad Ali reaching for the prawn skewers? Was that really Angelina Jolie lounged half-naked over a chair he had never seen before in his life? Was that really Anthony Hopkins in the character of Hannibal Lecter, flipping brains over on the barbecue?

In a funny way, he still had his doubts. Ever since he was young, he had always had a vivid imagination. It helped him

as a bowler, too: not until late in his career did he realise that his ability to envisage what a batsman would do before he did it was not a skill all humans possessed, but a preternatural, almost supernatural, talent. There were times when he felt like an actor, in a film he had already seen many times before.

His reverie was broken by Martin, grabbing his shoulder and gushing about the ball that he had bowled to Andrew Strauss at Edgbaston. "It was fucking awesome," he said. "We were on tour all that summer and we've got the cricket on in the tour bus, and I'm sitting there thinking, 'fuck,' but it was an absolute genius ball. Seriously, what a genius. You, Freddie Flintoff and Curtly Ambrose are my absolute favourite cricketers of all time. And Botham, obviously. Martin Crowe. Lara. Shaun Pollock. Kumble. Sachin Tendulkar. What's he like to bowl at? I mean, Tendulkar, what a fucking genius..."

It had all gone more perfectly than Warne had dared to hope. Everybody was getting on famously. Sinatra and Michael Clarke exchanged telephone numbers and agreed to go for a drink the next time they were passing through the same spacetime. Bruce Springsteen learned how to bowl a googly and promised to teach the E Street Band when he got back home. Everybody was having so much fun, in fact, that nobody even noticed the two

large trucks pulling up outside the back gate; one bearing a giant water pump, the other carrying 150 industrial-sized bags of chips.

Later, after the last of the guests had left and the sun was finally receding, Warne went back inside the house. He saw his phone on the dining table, and instantly a cold dread settled over him. Even before unlocking the home screen, he knew what he would find. There were 19 missed calls and eight unread texts from Gillespie. He had been at the front door all day, pleading for someone to let him in.

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"OK, that'll be a wrap," the producer announced, checking her phone for the time of her next shoot, a bunch of AFL players visiting a petting zoo in Collingwood. "That was great, thanks. We'll just take some cutaways of the exterior, and then we'll be out of your hair."

"No worries," Warne said, but the film crew were already opening the door by that point. Warne fancied he saw a couple of them smirking conspiratorially to each other. They left promptly and without a second glance, and so they did not see the cricket ball above the garage door, hovering a few inches below the ceiling, still furiously spinning.

• • •



EXTRACTS

Bradman sipped his tea and didn't seem uncomfortable at all. He asked me to join him, so I sat down. I put my novel and notebook down on the deck, took off my hat. Bradman asked me my opinion on Morton's books and I said they were wonderful, a first-rate way to get to know England and the English way of life. He asked me if I was Australian Imperial Force. and I said yes, 29th Infantry Battalion, then the 32nd. I told him how water was so scarce in the trenches, we would use our hot tea ration to shave with – well, I did anyway. I said to Bradman that the Australian players were enslaved to their tea. Bradman chuckled and agreed. He said that their unofficial team slogan was "Win the Test with tea!" He didn't think the Australian team would last very long without tea. "Do you want to see how I take my tea Atwood? It's become a bit of a joke amongst the team." Bradman brought his tray around in front of him and got busy with the tea things. "No one can brew it the way I like it, you see. First, I fill my cup with a third of milk... Then I add a depth of half an inch or so of tea from the pot... Then I go on filling the rest of it with hot water. See?" He showed me the tea. It was the most anaemic brew I had ever seen. It looked like someone had dissolved chalk in hot water. "I wouldn't ask anyone else to make it like this for me. I take it as it comes in hotels, but the tea I really like is the one I brew myself. This is the oddest place I've ever made a cup; on the deck of an ocean liner, but I'm quite enjoying myself." Bradman did look happy, sitting on the deck with his insipid tea, the sunlight flicking over his young face.

YVETTE WALKER

• • •

On 27 February 1985, two West Indian batsmen retired hurt at the MCG. Both walked off spitting out blood after being struck on the mouth. Larry Gomes lost a few teeth; Richie Richardson had his jaw fractured and was sporting a golf-ball-sized lump on his right cheek by the time he was helped off the field. A few deliveries after Gomes was felled, Clive Lloyd nearly had his spectacles smashed before the back of his bat miraculously came to his rescue. The next over, the West Indian captain exchanged his sun hat for a helmet.

BHARAT SUNDARESAN

• • •

But, as I came to learn, there was never any ice to break with Brian; you were always straight in. In a flash the Closes had swept me up as if I was their grandchild, and on the escalators Brian's tongue was wagging about the 1964 tour to the USA, when Garry Sobers played for Yorkshire for the one and only time.

BENJ MOOREHEAD

• • •

Once upon a time in Barcelona, people treated me like God – at least the Pakistani immigrants did. They kissed my shirt, offered me cake, and begged me to take cans of Bud Light as I tried not to stare at topless women on the beach. The reason for this adulation was my attire. I wore a bright green jersey with "Pakistan" across my chest, and a sweat-soaked hat with a yellow star.

NOAH LEVICK

• • •

And, if you can measure a life by the games you have seen, you can also prepare for a death. When my father was diagnosed with cancer in 1997 I suggested we flew to the West Indies to watch the cricket, and so we went to Antigua for the sixth Test – a rain-interrupted game in which my dad used a gap in play to pop out and consecrate a bishop.

JAMES RUNCIE

• • •

Cricket anoraks are familiar with the story of Andy Ganteaume, the West Indian whose Test career consisted of a single innings – 112 against England in Trinidad in 1947–48 – and who thus finished, uniquely, with a higher average than Bradman. But Ganteaume had the memory of 49 other first-class matches to sustain him into old age. The nine in this list had or have no such luxury. Or perhaps it didn't bother them: they dipped into a world beyond the reach of most, excelled instantly, then moved on to more pressing matters. Still, a hundred in your only innings: it's the kind of CV detail some of us would kill for.

LAWRENCE BOOTH

• • •

The majority of Birley's writing about sport – which seems, in comparison to his main line of work, to have been little more than a hobby – came during the twilight of his life. His style was at once spiky, amusing and scholarly, with the occasional hint of poetry, which must surely have arisen from his love of literature. His books contain plenty of astute and enjoyable references to literary figures, about many of whom he was clearly passionate: there's William Blake, Lewis Carroll, Homer, and myriad more. He once told the Independent that he preferred plays and poetry to prose, and that he absolutely adored Shakespeare. Combine all this with his tangled appreciation of the game and you have the ingredients for a seriously interesting take on cricket.

TIM COOKE

• • •

There he courted people, renewing old friendships, baiting his hook. In some cases he met players in parking lots; on other occasions the preferred hang-out was at upmarket Johannesburg strip joints with fixers. The ultimate aim of the meetings was the same: to hide behind his jokey, often charmingly incompetent persona to establish if the person being spoken to was prepared to corrupt the integrity of the T20 matches in which they would later play. In a haphazard, make-it-up-as-you-go-along kind of way, Bodi's plan was coming together.

LUKE ALFRED AND TRISTAN HOLME

• • •

In Indian cricket's 85-year-long history, three men stand tall for their longevity, volume of runs and batting average: Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid and Sunil Gavaskar. The trio is head and shoulders above the rest, followed by VVS Laxman and Virender Sehwag – the former with the most memorable innings in Indian history, the latter with the biggest ones. If you consider pure averages, Virat Kohli features high on the list among batsmen who have played over 50 Tests (the minimum criterion for this piece). Considerably behind Kohli are Mohammad Azharuddin, Mohinder Amarnath, Polly Umrigar, Sourav Ganguly, Dilip Vengsarkar, Navjot Sidhu, Gundappa Viswanath and Gautam Gambhir (in that order). Just shy of 50 Tests (48 to be precise), Cheteshwar Pujara will soon be an inevitable entrant on this list – though at a much higher average than Azharuddin's 45.03 – so we must mention him too.

JAIDEEP VARMA

• • •

An anachronistic oddity or a captivating spectacle? A sport disastrously out of touch with the public, or one proving faithful to its traditions? A game of alienating confusion or of enchanting subtlety? Wait, are we discussing real tennis or cricket? Both sports have a long and proud background, that much is understood; what is less recognised is how their stories intertwine, including the tennis connection to Lord's. Yet this shared history is no mere quirk, analogous to two people discovering their ancestors fought side by side in some ancient battle. In fact, real tennis's past may provide a glimpse into cricket's future.

LIAM CROMAR

• • •

We are dark lords. High winds racing above the earth
are turning clouds into scarves, the moon loses her shawl,
the ground is a shrine to the faithful, blessed by pilgrims.
Who will bring spear and sword? Jerusalem
was builded here among dark satanic mines.

S.J. LITHERLAND

• • •

In the haste to embrace the 21st century – for data, for noise, for interactivity – it seems we are starting to forget something fundamental: that watching and playing cricket has always had a meditative quality. The sheer size of the physical space in which the game takes place and the relatively slow-moving action plus interspersed periods of quietness – silence even – have always given spectators the freedom to be physically present while their spirit disengages. There is uninterrupted bliss in sitting quietly and reading a book, in talking to friends with cricket somehow easing the way to understanding and intimacy. For some, being able to watch every ball of a two-hour session whilst scoring with a stub pencil and balancing a tin-foiled square of peanut-butter sandwiches on a white fold-up seat is a special kind of heaven.

TANYA ALDRED

• • •

Brian Taylor recently turned 70, stands tall at the crease and cover drives with an elegance bettered only in his imaginings. His old Nottingham High School friend Simon Brodbeck reached the same lofty score a couple of months earlier, finished last season with two wickets and a run-out in a tight win, and remains as hard to shift at the crease as he is a genteel presence either side of the boundary. Peter Patston is 67, indomitable, but concerned that Parkinson's disease is sapping the fizz from his off-breaks. They've known each other for 40 years, because they were then and are still teammates. Moreover they are Fleet Street Strollers, and when this is your boast, why ever would you consider stopping?

We don't have cricket clubs like the Strollers in Australia, more's the pity. It's easy to pass this off as a function of cliché – to conclude that in a boisterous, hairy-chested sporting landscape the sole motivation for playing at any level is to win, and all other considerations are pushed to the margins. It's easy to imagine that in such an environment, cricketers at the bottom of the pyramid are bound to similar use-by dates as those at the top.

PETER HANLON

• • •

Lord's, 5 April 2017. I am attending the Wisden dinner and it is perhaps my favourite evening of the year. All the fragile, bright incipience of an English cricket season is concentrated into a few hours. I enjoy the occasion so much that I arrive as early as possible and stroll around, trying to avoid the necessary attention of closed-circuit TV and amenable stewards. On the big screens at each end of the almost deserted ground are shown the shortlisted contenders for the Wisden-MCC Cricket Photograph of the Year. Here, too, there is something of Fry and Beldam's "glow and glory" of cricket, not least in Saqib Majeed's winning picture of an autumnal game in Srinagar, Kashmir. Taken from high vantage somewhere on the point boundary, it shows a seemingly informal match taking place on a brown field with the overhanging trees wearing a confection of red and gold leaves. The cricket is framed by its environment, rather as Fry had been when he posed for Rouch nearly 120 years earlier.

PAUL EDWARDS

• • •

Robin Thorne was still a few months shy of his 19th birthday when he made his debut for Border at the Jan Smuts ground in East London. The opposition was the 1948-49 MCC touring side, leading a five-match series 1-0 after three games and halfway through an arduous 22-match tour. When Thorne took the new ball just before the close on day one, Border had struggled to 156 off the MCC front-line attack minus a resting Alec Bedser. The opening batsmen were Len Hutton and Cyril Washbrook, who had taken 359 off South Africa in the second Test before being parted. The task facing the teenager could fairly be described as daunting.

PATRICK FERRIDAY

• • •

The 1990s in Bangalore were quaint. Before "Bangalored" – losing one's job to outsourcing in India, specifically Bangalore – entered the global lexicon, it was a genteel town, content in itself. It had not grown to today's unmanageable extent: one could commute between two ends of the city within half an hour. Kids made their way to school every day armed with a half-ticket, heavy bag and lunchbox. Bangalore was also a lot cooler back then: hibernal reinforcements routinely appeared over school uniforms post-November. These scenes were quite common to most of urban India.

PAAJIVSPUNTER

• • •

Luckily for me, Cricket Hong Kong is one of the most progressive organisations in cricket, which is not saying much, but still. Their ex-CEO is a proper member of the cricket Twitterati, they have managed to start their own T20 league and get big players, and in only a few years they've changed the culture of cricket on the island. They had also once asked me to be their media manager, so I figured they liked me. However, when they agreed that I could be with the team – for two List A games against the Netherlands – I had no real idea what to expect, how warmly I would be accepted, where I would sit, or how it would all work.

JARROD KIMBER

• • •

I, too, have my own fond memories of watching cricket, both live and on TV. And yet, cricket for me is now almost entirely non-visual. I don't have Sky Sports and wouldn't have time to enjoy it even if I did. Family commitments and distance from a first-class county mean that I haven't been to a cricket match in nearly a decade. The background hum of Test Match Special is a joy, but it only goes on when certain circumstances allow – my three-year-old has surprisingly little time for Agnew and co. But I still consider myself a keen cricket fan. I will be following England's Test matches this summer as avidly as before despite struggling to picture what most of the protagonists look like. My consumption is now mainly text-based, through websites and messaging services. This also means that – unlike the past, when I could dedicate myself to watching a game on holidays and weekends – it's at work that I'm now able to enjoy matches to the fullest extent.

STEPHEN CONNOR

• • •

In 1971, cricket's rock 'n' roll years were still half a decade away – Lillie and Thommo, Clive Lloyd's Windies war machine, Kerry Packer's funky clothes and floodlights all lay ahead. Rock 'n' roll's rock 'n' roll years, however, were in full swing. Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, The Who, Black Sabbath, ELP, Deep Purple, David Bowie, Yes, Neil Young and the rest were doing their thing. Jimi, Brian and Janis were fresh in the grave, already myths, with Jim Morrison, the Lizard King himself, bloated and dazed in Paris and just about to join them.

JON HOTTEN

THE **Nightwatchman**

THE WISDEN CRICKET QUARTERLY

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