

SAMPLE EDITION

31

AUTUMN 2020

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.

There are several different ways to get hold of and enjoy *The Nightwatchman*. You can subscribe to the print version and get a free digital copy for when you're travelling light. If you don't have enough room on your book case, you can always take out a digital-only subscription. Or if you'd just like to buy a single issue – in print, digital or both – you can do that too. Take a look at the options below and decide which is best for you.



Full subscription
Annual print
subscription (with
free e-book versions)
£29.95 (+P&P)

[Click to Buy](#)



Digital subscription
Annual e-book only
subscription
£15

[Click to Buy](#)



Digital single copy
Single issue
(e-book only)
£4

[Click to Buy](#)



Single copy
Single issue (with
free with free
e-book version)
£10 (+P&P)

[Click to Buy](#)

ISSUE 31 - AUTUMN 2020

Matt Thacker introduces issue 31 of the *Nightwatchman*

Matt Cleary hero-worships Dennis Lillee

Rod Edmond remembers a legend of the scorebook

Harry Pearson on a debate that divided his family

Francis Neate reflects on a game that glued generations together

Simon Barnes sees agony in village cricket's comedies

Tom Jeffreys reveals cricket's place in modern art

Peter Hoare tunes in to *Desert Island Discs*

Garry White on Percy Chapman, a man out of time

Julian Baggini doesn't think cricket's virtues are quite so obvious

Snehal Pradhan charts the rise of female officials in India

Pandemic pictures – cricket in the time of Covid

David Owen transports us to the Windy City in the 1980s

Mike Phillips wonders about the place of fast-bowling-induced fear

Luke Alfred takes us back to the County Championship of 40 years ago

Santokie Nagulendran tells the story of India's indentured labourers in the Caribbean

Richard Hobson re-opens a family heirloom

Mike Jakeman chats to Rob Moody about his staggering library of cricket footage

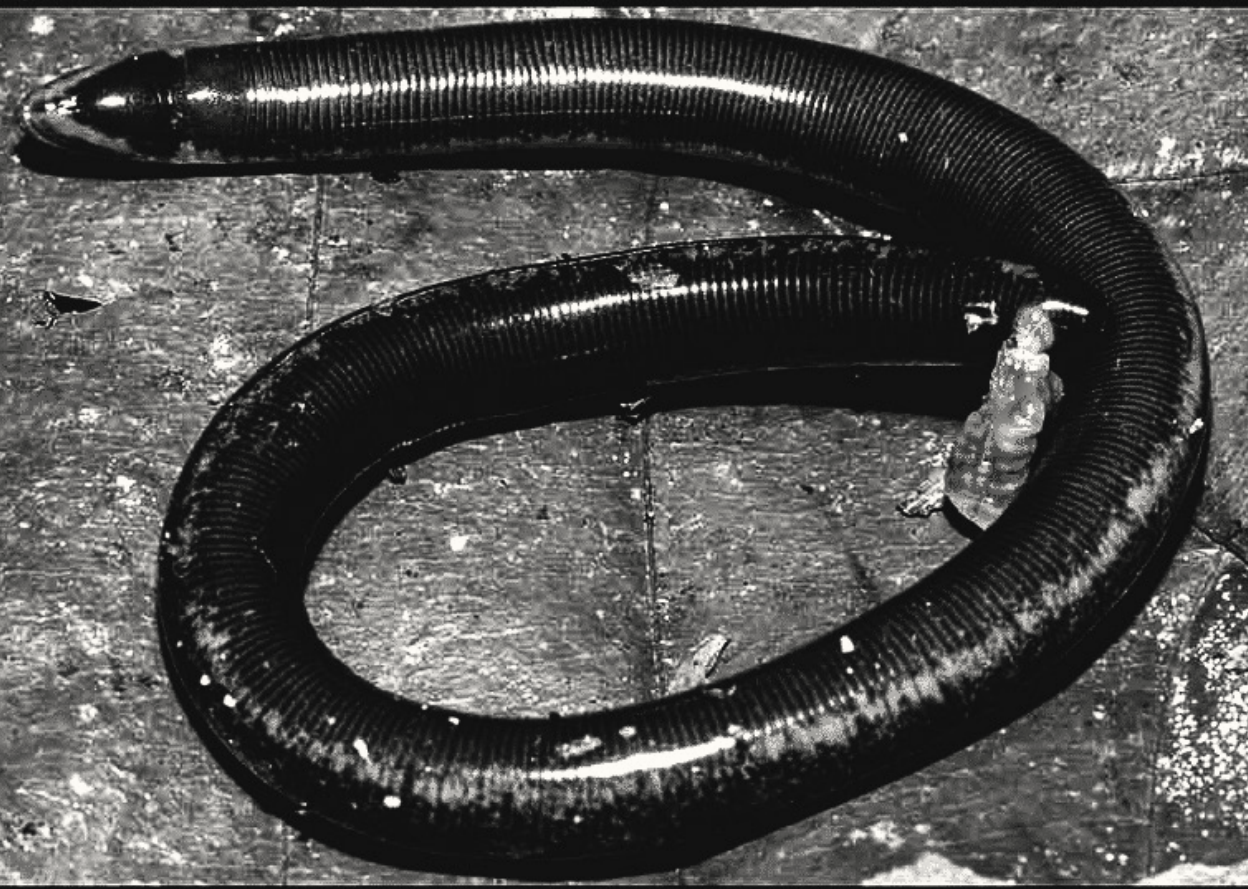
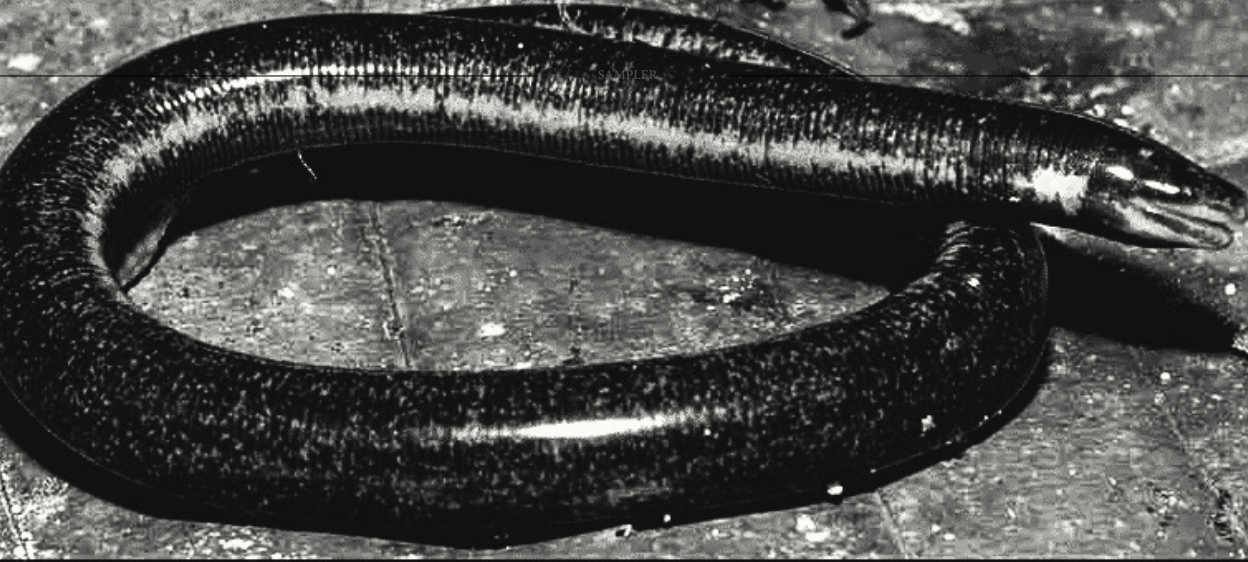
Kevin Owens relates how he fell in love with cricket all over again

Brian Carpenter has been holding the radio close to his ear throughout his life

Stephen Gregory reminisces about cricket in Brunei

Liam Herringshaw tells the surprising story of Shiv, the limbless amphibian





A PHIB CALLED SHIV

Liam Herringshaw on limbless amphibians, jumping spiders and David Gower

What do you need to do to achieve cricketing immortality? Run out the Australian captain as a substitute fielder at Trent Bridge? Win Player of the Tournament at a victorious home World Cup? Score 6,996 Test runs at an average of 99.94?

It's not really a question of immortality, of course, but longevity. Even the most famous players of their era will last only so long in the public memory. Ask a person on the street to name a 19th-century cricketer other than WG Grace and they'll be stumped. You might as well request their favourite South American amphibian.

There is another route to securing your place in the annals of remembrance, though, and it's one that very few cricketers have pursued – or been offered the chance to pursue. And being biological, internationally standardised, and officially recorded, it is certainly long-term.

• • •

The Swedish city of Uppsala has a cricket team but they're yet to make their mark on the world stage. For that, you'd better turn to Uppsalan natives Ingmar Bergman, who peered through a glass darkly, or Anders Celsius, who did it more warmly. Or to Carl Linnaeus, founder of the binomial system of biological classification; the man who gave two-part Latin names to natural things.

Linnaeus was an exceptional botanist, medic and zoologist who scrutinised an astonishing number of organisms to group them into species, genera, families, orders and kingdoms. He distilled an unwieldy and confusing 18th-century system of Latin descriptions into a pithy taxonomy: a one-word Latin species attached to a one-word Latin genus.

His status as the type specimen of *Homo sapiens* is contentious, not least because he classified "varieties" of humans according to their skin colour, geography and perceived characteristics. Nonetheless, Linnaeus's



Systema Naturae still pervades our approach to classifying life on Earth more than 260 years after the crucial tenth edition was published.

Today, if you think you've discovered a new species – be it of plant, fossil, gryllid (true crickets) or nyctophilid (a genus of Australian cricket-eating bats) – you can name it, Linnaeus-style, but there are rules you have to obey. The tentacles of the ICC hold no sway here. The ICs you need to concern yourself with are the ICN and ICZN: the International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants, and the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature.

To pass their scrutiny you must provide a full description of your candidate's distinguishing features (*diagnosis*); define a typifying specimen against which all others can be compared (*holotype*); ensure your description and data are accessible, peer-reviewed and archived (*publication*); and give it a *binomial* that is “appropriate, compact, euphonious, memorable, and do[es] not cause offence”.

No matter how inoffensive *you* may be, you mustn't name a species after yourself. People have done, but it's just not cricket. You can, however, honour someone else, and Canadian biologist Stephen B Heard's recent book *Charles Darwin's Barnacle and David Bowie's Spider* offers many excellent examples. Some species names are personal, some political, and some are purely publicity-seeking. Surprisingly few are sporting. But the total isn't nought.

• • •

“Quite a lot of my overseas research has been in India and Sri Lanka,” says David Gower, merit researcher in herpetology at London's Natural History Museum, “and my name causes more of a stir there than in the UK. I play friendly cricket for Strongroom CC in London and I have managed to tag on some science during our tours to Sri Lanka and Nepal.

“I have an Indian colleague, Indraneil, who is also a cricket nut. We had spoken before about naming species after cricketers and I hoped that naming this species would prompt him to respond, but he hasn't yet met that challenge.”

The species Gower is referring to is a Guyanese caecilian: a limbless, burrowing, tropical amphibian. Just over a decade ago Gower was working on some specimens of the genus *Rhinatrema* (“nose without holes”), collected in Guyana by some colleagues who realised they were so distinctive that they probably represented a species previously unknown to science.

“I generally prefer names that say something about the appearance of the species or where it comes from,” says Gower. “However, I was not familiar with this animal in life, or its exact habitat, so this allowed my mind to wander more than usual.

“I love cricket as well as biology, and one of my co-authors, Mark Wilkinson, is also a major cricket fan. We both admired Shivnarine Chanderpaul as a skilful and generally under-appreciated cricketer, and he had recently become International Cricketer of the Year and Guyana's

highest-scoring batsman. We knew his nickname and liked the sound of *Rhinatrema shiv*. We suggested the name to our other colleagues and they agreed.”

Thus a cricketing amphibian entered the (Linnean) world in 2010, in the journal *Zootaxa*. Its diagnostic characteristics are: a longer tail than other species of *Rhinatrema*, a shorter head, a different colour pattern and distinctive teeth. When his cricket-loving brother found an email address for Chanderpaul's agent, Gower sent him a copy of the paper. They received a reply saying that Shiv was “delighted and honoured and had always liked nature”.

That might have been sufficient, but in 2018 Gower was contacted by Christine Carrington, orator of the University of the West Indies at St Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago. “They were about to award Chanderpaul an honorary degree and wanted to know whether there was anything about the animal that reflected his abilities. All I could come up with was that, because *Rhinatrema shiv* is a burrowing amphibian, it was probably good at digging in. Christine seemed to like that, so I hope they used it in the speech!”

Gower himself has a species of snake named in his honour – *Rhinophis goweri* from the Eastern Ghats of Tamil Nadu in India – but no one has yet seen fit to immortalise any of that state's cricketing stars. In 2019, however, a chap from Mumbai became the second batsman to acquire specific Linnean recognition.

Diminutive, with excellent eyesight, great patience, and swift, nimble

footwork, *Marengo sachintendulkar* is an Indian jumping spider found in Gujarat, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. It was discovered in 2015 by arachnologist Dhruv Prajapati of the Gujarat Ecological Education and Research Foundation in Gandhinagar.

“My research interest is in jumping spiders,” Prajapati says, “so in the field I am actively searching for them. In the case of *M. sachintendulkar*, two of my colleagues got the same species from two other states.”

Their discoveries came two years after Prajapati's, and together they confirmed the spider to be a new species in need of a new name.

“I am a big fan of Tendulkar,” adds Prajapati, “so I always wanted to name a species after him. It doesn't really have any similar characteristics to Sachin Tendulkar, but as a jumping spider perhaps it shares the behaviour of Jonty Rhodes!”

• • •

They may be the only living cricketer-species, but *Rhinatrema shiv* and *Marengo sachintendulkar* do have fossil company. In early 2011 Dan Mantle and Jim Riding were working in Canberra, describing some new Jurassic marine plankton from rocks beneath the North West Shelf of Australia.

Of the many sub-disciplines of palaeontology, palynology (the study of fossil pollen and spores) is the Timeless Test to dinosaur hunting's T(. rex)-20. Few go into it for the glamour, but a palynologist's work is vitally important. Much of geological time is defined using microfossils.

Careful identification of their remains enables the correlation of strata from distant parts of the world and the reconstruction of ancient environments. The colour of fossil spores can also reveal the temperature to which the rocks have been heated during burial.

To identify species of ancient plankton, such as the dinoflagellate cysts that Mantle and Riding were studying, you need to examine the shape of their body (test), compare them with other species (match) and see if they are unique (special). The initialism of The Micropalaeontological Society is surely no coincidence.

"It was shortly after England had won the 2010-11 Ashes in Australia, captained by Andrew Strauss, and including some timeless batting from Alastair Cook," remembers Mantle. "We decided to slip in the specific epithets *straussii* and *cookii* to new species in their honour."

Possibly to avoid rubbing their Australian colleagues' noses in it, Mantle and Riding didn't specify for whom the fossils were named in their published paper. However, it's pretty unambiguous from the descriptions:

Meiourogonyaulax straussii - "A species of *Meiourogonyaulax* which is ellipsoidal in dorsoventral outline; an apical horn or protuberance is entirely lacking. The autophragm is robust, thick, comprehensively rugulate to irregularly reticulate and locally may bear elements of low-relief ornamentation such as baculae, denticles/echinae, tubercles, and verrucae."

Valvaeodinium cookii - "A small species of *Valvaeodinium* with a squat, subspherical outline and normally a flattened antapical margin. The autophragm is moderately thick (ca. 1-1.5µm) and dark brown; the surface is scabrate to granulate with a variable density and distribution of short processes. These elements may be baculate, short capitate spines or rarely spines with blunt, bifurcate tips. The latter features are only resolvable using high-power objectives."

It's remarkable that no one from the ECB spotted this and turned it into a big story in the build-up to the subsequent Ashes series.

"It wasn't much of a secret though," says Mantle, "as Jim informed *Test Match Special*."

"I did write to Aggers," confirms Riding, "and he mentioned the species and the paper during commentary with Michael Vaughan. They were very amused and likened the microfossils to pancakes as I recall."

Controversially, two micropalaeontological colleagues of David Gower's at the Natural History Museum - Giles Miller and Steve Stukins - remember that the specimens were actually compared to omelettes. Such descriptive arguments demonstrate neatly why precise Linnean taxonomy is necessary. Either way, *TMS* have egg on their face: these were two long-lived and uniquely tough individuals that bloomed over seas (sic), coped with high temperatures and couldn't be dismissed easily, as the *Wisden* edition for the Volcanic Ashes series (Middle Jurassic) reveals:

ENGLAND 2nd INNINGS

<i>M. straussii</i>	st Haddin b Celsius	110°C
<i>V. cookii</i>	not out	235°F
I.J.L. Trott	not extracted	135m years
	from the rock	
<i>K. pieterseni</i>	did not fossilise	
Extras	(17 sieves, 4 microscopes, 6 labs, 10 months' work)	37
TOTAL (for 1 biozone declared)		517

• • •

In 2015 a champion breeding buffalo from northern India was given the epithet "Yuvraj"; Don Bradman has a hybrid tea rose. If we allow these non-Linnean forms, we're beginning to put the XI in taxonomic. *M. straussii*, *V. cookii*, T. Rose Bradman, *M. sachintendulkar*, R. Shiv, and Buffalo Yuvraj is an outstanding top six. Poor Gary Pratt doesn't seem to have received any

recognition yet. The Palaeontological Association's head office is in Durham: perhaps they could look into this.

There's a scandalous lack of bowling, though, so it's good to learn that one of the greats hasn't gone entirely unnoticed. When a team of five geologists (two of whom I was sitting with at the extraordinary finale to the 2005 Edgbaston Ashes Test) discovered a suite of extinct Jurassic volcanoes, buried beneath a kilometre of rock in central Australia, they searched for an appropriate moniker.

Given the enormous volumes of hot air that would have been emitted, and the explosive, spinning bombs that must have been tossed up, they decided there was only one name for it.

The Warnie Province.

• • •



EXTRACTS

When Dennis Lillee walked into the Kingston Hotel in October 1995, it was as if Dennis Lillee himself had walked into the Kingston Hotel. It was, for a Canberra kid, flat-out unbelievable.

Dennis Lillee! In the Kingo! Our local! Even at 25 years old and six schooners deep, I was the fan kid in *Almost Famous* when he clocks David Bowie. Lillee! It's Dennis Lillee!

My mate Pagey was unfazed. He bounded straight over.

MATT CLEARY

• • •

This was the first of his 41 tours, scoring for a range of national sides. By the time of his last tour, half a century later, he had seen more Test matches than anybody else, including every Test innings that Bradman ever played. He had also become a full member of every team he travelled with, one of the first names on any team list and sharing in all the off-field activities. There's a photo of him during the 1953-54 New Zealand tour of South Africa, his last gig, the team clustered around a piano, Fergie and his wife Polly in its midst, singing while Bert Sutcliffe plays – as light-fingered at the piano as he was nimble-footed at the crease.

ROD EDMOND

• • •

My grandad's snort was more powerful than my dad's, filled with the rich, rolling phlegminess that comes from a lifetime of working in a chemical plant. He sounded like a sea elephant expelling two turnips from its nostrils, a lovesick bull moose imitating Édith Piaf. When my grandad snorted, crowds fell silent. "Wilfred Rhodes?" my grandad said in a tone that was as close as a working-class bloke from Middlesbrough could get to mimicking Dame Margaret Rutherford saying: "A handbag?" "George Herbert Hirst, more bloody like."

HARRY PEARSON

• • •

Uncle Joe was a big, bearded, jovial man with a slightly wild demeanour. Even in his mid-fifties, as he was then, my grandmother described him as "naughty". So when my father was recovering from TB and it was learned that, by law of seniority, Uncle Joe would captain the President's XI in his stead, my brother Pat and I were disquieted. In the first place, Uncle Joe played cricket only once a year. In the second, he gave little sign of understanding it, contributing only a barrage of rude commentary about his own team from a permanently upright position 20 yards too deep at first slip. At the time, Pat and I were at the peak of our own Berkshire careers and thought we knew a thing or two about the game (although, curiously, seldom the same as each other).

FRANCIS NEATE

• • •

Village-green cricket can be anything in the world you like except tragic. Its comic nature is part of a great literary tradition: Hugh de Selincourt, Arthur Conan Doyle, LP Hartley, Siegfried Sassoon, AG Macdonell; gently amusing tales laced with sweet nostalgia. The tradition continues, sometimes in these pages: and it gives us all a quiet, knowing pleasure. It is the English pastoral: Bottom and the players in *Midsummer Night's Dream* making their play as best they can. They didn't think they were funny either.

SIMON BARNES

• • •

If you went strolling through a public park in suburban Brisbane on a certain day in 2013 you may have come across an unusual sight: a man in cricket whites bowling over and over again at a set of children's stumps. From the look of his action, and the multiple cameras filming his every move, this is not a cricketer honing his craft through hours of dedicated practice. Something else is going on, but what?

TOM JEFFREYS

• • •

Desert Island Discs is older than one-day cricket, *Test Match Special* and covered pitches. It was born on the BBC Forces Programme in 1942, the same year as Mike Brearley, one of the 20 or so cricketers to have been stranded on the island with eight records, a book and a luxury, the works of Shakespeare and a Bible. The format was devised by Roy Plomley when the thought of being swept away to a desert island would have had great appeal in a country at war, but it has endured for almost 80 years and an invitation to appear on the programme has become better than a place on the honours list for some.

PETER HOARE

• • •

People did not know where to look. It didn't matter that many of them had seen it countless times before. Blazered men in egg-and-bacon ties stooped to forensically examine a speck of dust on their shoes, or fiddled uncomfortably with their cufflinks. Others craned their necks, suddenly eager to view an invisible event somewhere far across the outfield. The uncharitable among them merely sipped their drink and silently spat their contempt.

Young men didn't recognise him; they doubted he was or ever could have been anyone of note. The older among them pretended not to know him. Once he had been worth knowing, the sunshine of his fame and presence something to luxuriate in. But now he was an embarrassment. Or worse: an object of pity or ridicule.

GARRY WHITE

• • •

The virtues many believe to be unique to cricket are claimed by devotees of every other sport. That's the first clue that we should be sceptical. Albert Camus, the philosopher and goalkeeper, once wrote: "After many years in which the world has afforded me many experiences, what I know most surely in the long run about morality and obligations, I owe to football." It must have been a very different sport in Camus' day. Has there ever been a game played by bigger egotists and which involves as much routine cheating? If football teaches you about ethics, why did probably the greatest player in history punch a ball into the net and claim a goal, and later leave behind him a trail of unpaid taxes and cocaine?

JULIAN BAGGINI

• • •

Throughout my 15-year career as a professional cricketer I never learned the names of more than a handful of umpires. Which strikes me as odd, seeing as they were a constant presence: my sunglasses sitting on the back of their hats, and their raised finger sealing so many of my scalps. I remember their faces and their quirks: the one who chuckled every time I appealed too much, the one with the lazy eye, the one taller than my own six-foot frame. But I rarely bothered with their names.

In a way this is a compliment – the standard of umpiring was consistently excellent; when it's not, we bowlers remember the names. But perhaps there's another reason why I didn't know the umpires by name; nearly all of them were former cricketers and middle-aged. And, without exception, male.

SNEHAL PRADAN

• • •

I could feel rather than hear the bass the moment my foot touched the sidewalk. I wondered momentarily if they would hear the knock, but the door was quickly opened by a shortish man in an Alcan Jamaica baseball cap. I had spent the previous two years revelling in the job of "assistant editor (non-ferrous)" at *Metal Bulletin*, a commodities journal, so this, believe it or not, was a welcome sight. I imagined bonding over bauxite and Dennis Lillee's metal bat. This is when he said it: "Montrose."

I was clearly not as laid-back as I liked to believe. I pouted like a guppy. I could not think how to reply. Was this some sort of code word? The only Montrose I could think of was a lower-division Scottish football club. But this was Chicago. Even so, I was on the verge of blurting out, "Er, Hamilton Academicals?" or possibly, "Er, Alloa Athletic?" when he came to my rescue. "Montrose," he repeated, this time extending a hand. "My name is Montrose."

DAVID OWEN

• • •

The Ashes, Lord's, 2019. Which side were you on? I don't mean England or Australia.

You know, when Archer was purring in and it was whipping off the surface and the batters couldn't read it and Smith had been hit and the crowd was baying for someone else to be felled as soon and as abruptly as possible. Which side were you on? Was this OK? Or was it not?

By way of introduction, let me assert that I don't have a clue. I've never felt more conflicted as a writer. That passage of play was gripping and unforgettable. I couldn't watch it, because I couldn't get Phil Hughes's face out of my head, but it sounded gripping and unforgettable. And that makes it alright. Doesn't it?

MIKE PHILLIPS

• • •

In 1980, within weeks of each other, Vintcent van der Bijl, Robin Jackman and Peter Kirsten arrived in England for pre-season training with their respective counties. All three were in their pomp as cricketers, and all three were destined to have seasons sprinkled with stardust.

The summer was wet, pitches for the Schweppes County Championship were uncovered, and the season was crammed with cricket. The three-day Championship was buttressed by the Gillette Cup, the Benson and Hedges Cup and the John Player League, so when cricket wasn't being played it was being travelled to and discussed.

LUKE ALFRED

• • •

The story begins in 1838, the start of mass migration from India to the Caribbean. With slavery abolished in 1833, the British Government found itself scrambling for a means of cheap labour to continue the harsh working conditions of sugar-cane plantations left void by the emancipation of African slaves. British-controlled India was their source. From 1838 to 1917 an estimated half-a-million Indians left their home nation, often involuntarily, to go to islands across the Atlantic that some of them had never heard of. Many were lured on false promises of what awaited them, while others were desperate to escape the unemployment and poverty they faced in India. Trinidad and Tobago, as well as Guyana, received the highest influx of Indian labourers, but some ended up on islands such as St Lucia, Grenada and Martinique.

The voyages from India to the Caribbean were horrific: it took six months to get from Calcutta to Jamaica and, with disease rampant on board, Indians died at an alarmingly high rate on the squalid ships.

SANTOKIE NAGULENDRAN

• • •

To a young child with limited perception of time, grandparents might as well have roamed with the dinosaurs. Their stories and memories compel, especially when interests are shared. I remember listening to my own mother's dad telling me how he would cycle from his village of Wollaston to watch Northamptonshire (but not, as he would say ruefully, on the occasion in 1920 when Percy Fender scored his 35-minute hundred for Surrey, still the fastest recorded in terms of time against non-declaration bowling). In the summer holidays, not yet a teen, I took the train alone from Long Eaton, in Derbyshire, to stay with him for the week coinciding with Northamptonshire's visit to nearby Wellingborough School. I can imagine Kenneth and his grandad having conversations like ours. As Hallows moved through May towards his thousand with hundreds against Northamptonshire, Glamorgan and three against Warwickshire, Grandad and Grandson might have discussed whether the selectors would pick him for England, just as we tried to convince ourselves the selectors would pick Peter Willey in 1979. They did, both times.

RICHARD HOBSON

• • •

On a drizzly November day in 1993 the former England captain Tony Greig was sitting in a studio at the Channel Nine offices in Melbourne. The channel was broadcasting a Test match between Australia and New Zealand at Hobart when a call came through from the security gate. Greig was told that there was a young man looking to talk to someone about getting hold of cricket footage. Greig picked up the phone and, in his unmistakable voice, shouted: "Listen son, I've got no time for this, we're in the middle of a Test match!" The line went dead. The young man, barely a teenager, got back on his bike and cycled the three hours home in the rain. His name was Rob Moody and he was undeterred.

MIKE JAKEMAN

• • •

After playing my first proper game of cricket at the age of 13, my weekends had been devoted to the sport. The Saturday ritual started with discussion of meeting times, debates about how many juniors fit into the back of a car, and the inevitability of having to negotiate a path through a gridlocked Ilkley in West Yorkshire. This was followed by six hours of running around the field (with varying degrees of success) and then a long spell in the clubhouse after the match (also with varying degrees of success). Regular. Familiar. Predictable.

Until it wasn't.

KEVIN OWENS

• • •

Many people who weren't alive at the time have seen the Holding over to Boycott at the Kensington Oval in 1981 on YouTube. I have too. But my memory of it is mediated through radio. In my mind it is a grey Saturday afternoon in the London suburbs - many of my teenage days in the suburbs were like that - and I am at home listening to *Test Match Special*. Strangely, the BBC Genome website, which carries transcribed copies of the *Radio Times* back to the year dot, has no mention of *TMS* in the schedules. But it was there. I listened to it.

BRIAN CARPENTER

• • •

Sunday evening... a golden two hours, between five and seven o'clock, in Brunei Darussalam, the Abode of Peace.

A tropical evening, just north of the equator, and the world is cast in gold. We're in the tiny sultanate of Brunei, on the coast of Borneo. We hear the gentle insistence of waves on the shore, the South China Sea lapping on a long beach. And the voices of women and children, the occasional staccato cries of men at play and the impact of leather against willow and ripples of polite applause.

STEPHEN GREGORY

• • •

THE
Nightwatchman
THE WISDEN CRICKET QUARTERLY

The thirty-first edition of *The Nightwatchman* is published at the beginning of September 2020 on a limited print run. So subscribe or order now to ensure that you get your copy.

Click to visit
thenightwatchman.net

