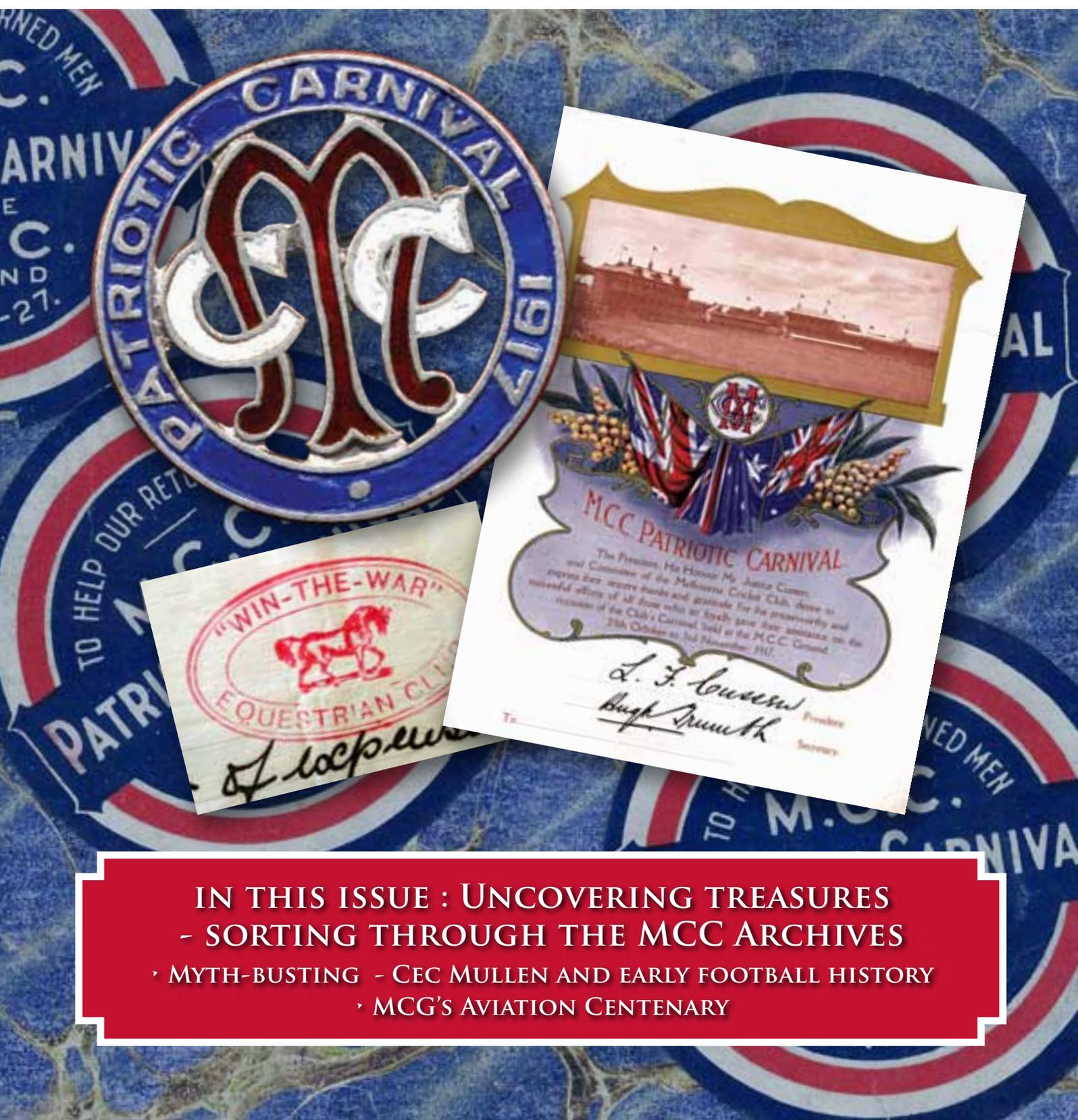


THE YORKER

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IN THIS ISSUE : UNCOVERING TREASURES
- SORTING THROUGH THE MCC ARCHIVES

- › MYTH-BUSTING - CEC MULLEN AND EARLY FOOTBALL HISTORY
- › MCG'S AVIATION CENTENARY

THIS ISSUE

For our spring 2010 issue we commemorate a centenary (of flight at the MCG), a passing (Major Everett Pope, the Medal of Honor winner based at the MCG in WWII) and an unveiling (of the MCC Archives). The Club's archive was established as a separate heritage collection in April 2009 with the transferring of the corporate records collection to the L2 store room and the appointment of Patricia Downs as our first professional archivist. Patricia had extensive knowledge of the collections from her work on the MCC Museum inventory project, as a member of the National Sports Museum production team and on a digitisation project in the MCC Library. As part of her two year pilot project Patricia, assisted by an enthusiastic team of MCC Library

volunteers, has been sorting through the records uncovering a real treasure trove of primary source material. Access to the archives is closed while material is sorted and inventoried and we finalise the access policy. However, we take great pleasure in sharing some of these treasures with our readers, with three pieces helping to shed new light upon our club's history. On the topic primary sources and research, our other feature article (starting this page) shows the importance of historians going back to check original sources themselves, as Roy Hay examines long-held myths on early football espoused by pioneer Australian Football historian Cec Mullen.

THE EDITORS

CEC MULLEN, TOM WILLS AND THE SEARCH FOR EARLY

INTRODUCING CEC MULLEN: PIONEER SPORTS HISTORIAN

Clarence Cecil Mullen was born in Richmond in 1895. As a boy he gained an interest in football and "helped to bag grass and sell papers" at the Melbourne, East Melbourne and Richmond cricket grounds.¹ Mullen's love of sports history developed further after he was employed by the *Argus* and a number of local Richmond papers and had access to their newspaper archives.²

By 1922, when he moved to Abbotsford, Mullen had developed strong interests in music, sport and local history. He regarded sport as a means of providing wider opportunities for underprivileged children and promoting an ethical approach to life in general.

With these goals in mind, Mullen organised teams for Richmond boys, forming a non-denominational club that later evolved to include

boys and girls from neighbouring suburbs. Among his protégés were footballers Laurie Nash, Tom Lahiff, Clarrie Vontom and Ron Richards, as well as Test cricketer Neil Harvey.³

Mullen's passion for history and sport led him to become a football historian. Unlike other pioneers in that field (such as R.H. Campbell and Percy Taylor), Mullen dealt with the game's deep history, its origins and early development. However, in working on this subject in the first half of the 20th Century, he had few colleagues to assist him (one notable exception was W.L. Floyd). With limited access to primary resources and critique, Mullen made some basic historical errors.

Modern scholarship has shown that his work contains many anomalies, such as phantom matches, anachronisms, exaggerations and omissions. Despite their inaccuracies, or perhaps because of them, *Mullen's Australasian Footballers' Almanac* (1950), *Mullen's Footballers' Australian Almanac 1951*, and his *History of Australian Rules Football: 1858-1958*, are fundamental to the study of football historiography.

In addition to Mullen's published material, the MCC Library has a large number of his unpublished works, including his *History of the Essendon Football Club 1873-1907*, notes on histories of various football clubs, *Victoria's Contribution to Cricket (Vols. I & II)*, and notes on women's cricket in Victoria. The Library also has some of his correspondence and ephemera.

Mullen's writings popularised and preserved many myths and pieces of folklore. Football scholarship has outgrown his pioneering attempts at constructing a history of the code, and although much of his work has been superseded a critique is still necessary. Some of the myths and phantoms he created, such as the so-called "Champion of the Colony" first published in *Mullen's Australasian Footballers' Almanac* (1950), are still cited in current reference texts.⁴ Mullen's work may be unreliable but its legacy endures.

Mullen's scholarly mistakes should not detract from his generous community work. He gave tirelessly without expecting recognition for his efforts with youth sport and music.⁵ Cec Mullen died in 1983.

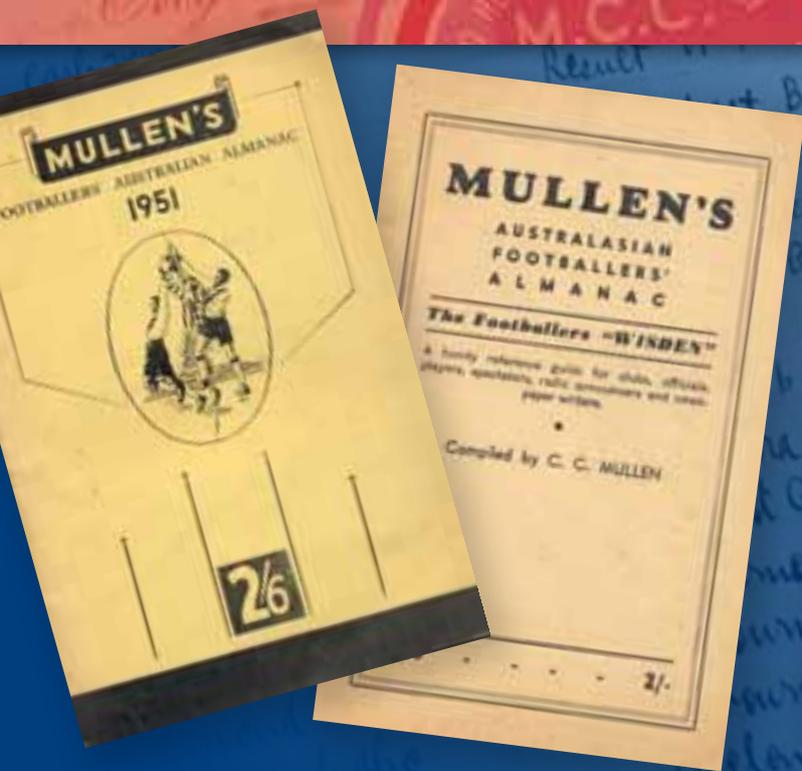
TREVOR RUDELL

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- 2 "When Was It That.. (Just ask C. C. Mullen)" in *Football Life*, April 1969. pp.20-23.
- 3 Ken Linnett "A Mentor Steps In", *Game for Anything: The Tommy Lahiff Story*. Allen & Unwin, St Leonards (NSW), 1999. pp. 21-35."
- 4 Ross Smith created a web page in 2009 that analyses and debunks Mullen's "Champion of the Colony" honour thoroughly. Titled "The non-existent Champion of the Colony award [1856-1945]" it may be found at <http://sportandhistory.com/footballawards/champion.html>
- 5 Tom Wanliss, "A Man to Remember - C.C. Mullen" in *Pavilion 1994-95*, Australian Cricket Society, [Camberwell], 1994. pp. 35-38.



Cec Mullen with his scrap books. *Football Life*, April 1969.



Roy Hay is an Honorary Fellow of Deakin University where he taught for 25 years. Roy is a partner in Sports and Editorial Services Australia and joint editor with Bill Murray of *The World Game Downunder*. He also has written histories of Deakin University, the Geelong Chamber of Commerce and St Joseph's College, Geelong.

He is a member and former president of the Australian Society for Sports History. He was football (soccer) writer for the *Geelong Advertiser* from 1991 to 2002 and since has had a regular (non-football) column there. He contributes to *Goal Weekly* and other football papers.

His interest in early football in Victoria and Geelong in particular has led him to re-examine some assumptions other historians have made on the subject. His most recent publication is *A tale of two footballs: the origins of Australian Football and Association Football revisited* (Sport in Society, Vol. 13, No. 6, August 2010, pp. 952-969).

GEELONG FOOTBALL

CEC MULLEN, TOM WILLS AND THE SEARCH FOR EARLY GEELONG FOOTBALL

BY ROY HAY

In 2008 Gillian Hibbins suggested to the editor of a new history of the Geelong Football Club that I might be approached to write the first chapter on the origins of the game in the area. It was a task I took on with some concern, since the bulk of my research had been on the history of Association football rather than Australian Rules.

However, my interest in the emergence of the modern codes of football in the United Kingdom and around the world led me to accept the challenge and the result is now in print in a chapter titled "A Club is Born" of the book *We are Geelong: The Story of the Geelong Football Club*.¹ A fully referenced version of that chapter is available for anyone who wants to follow my tracks as I tried to tease out what happened in the middle of the 19th Century.²

Needless to say there are many parts of the story which remain unclear, including the precise role of a number of the key persons who contributed to the foundation and early development of the Geelong club, not least Tom Wills. It might help those who want to try to take the research further if I outline what I understand to be the state of play regarding one of the sources which still has an influence on the existing early history of the game.

There is nothing more frustrating than chasing down historical references which turn out to be non-existent or inaccurate. Cec Mullen has given me more grief in relation to the Geelong Football Club and early football in the area than any other author.³ Mullen was a journalist and amateur historian, involved in a range of sports and youth activities in Melbourne.

Most recent historians have ceased entirely to rely on Mullen and have effectively written him out of their work.⁴ Geoffrey Blainey was one of the first to query Mullen's work,⁵ and MCC assistant librarian Trevor Ruddell mounted a gentle but devastating critique at an Australian Society for Sports History meeting⁶. Mullen is not cited in the authoritative history of the game by Rob Hess

and colleagues, and Gillian Hibbins makes no reliance on Mullen in her studies of the early game.⁷ When I sent Trevor Ruddell a copy of my draft for critical comment, he advised removing all references to Mullen from it. Robin Grow admits to selective use of Mullen, though I suspect never without checking thoroughly.

However, Russell Stephens, whose *Road to Kardinia* was the standard work on the history of the Geelong Football Club, apparently relies on Mullen for several pieces of information including at least two lists of the names of clubs which are claimed to have existed in the area in the 1850s and 1870s.⁸

In 2009, after his death, Russell Stephens' family published *Wills Way*, which was subtitled: *Three Generations of the Wills Family and a New Game - Australian Football*.⁹ This is a beautifully produced work aimed at non-academic readers and as the author disarmingly admits contains much of his own imaginings of what Wills and his family were feeling, thinking and doing when the historical evidence is silent.

From internal evidence it appears clear that Stephens continued to rely on Mullen, though since there are no references in this latest work it is not always possible to be certain. The contrast with Gillian Hibbins' evocative reconstruction of the memoirs of William Hammersley, where her truth resides in the footnotes, is total.¹⁰

Since I have been insistent on finding evidence to support claims made about Aboriginal influence on the origins of football, I can do no less than demand the same for any other proposed source of material. So I have almost spent more hours trying to track down and confirm or deny Mullen's claims than I have researching other aspects of the early game. So far this has proved an entirely negative exercise.

In Mullen's *History of Australian Rules Football: 1858 to 1958*, he says: "The Corio Cricket Club was playing in 1857-58 in East Geelong near the Botanical Gardens in what is now known as Eastern Park and we read in 'THE GEELONG ADVERTISER' in August, 1858, that at the meeting of the Cricket Club it would probably become the Geelong Cricket and Football Club and would keep its players in



Roy Hay consulting the work of Cec Mullen

condition during the Winter months by playing football. It was hoped to secure the services of Mr Tom Wills as cricket and football coach.”¹¹

This passage is quoted verbatim as fact by Russell Stephens and seems to underlie all his subsequent argument about Wills being involved in playing with and coaching Geelong football clubs from 1858 onwards. The weasel words “probably” and “it was hoped” should give one pause.

A close search of the hard copy of the paper kept in the *Advertiser* offices reveals no mention of the Corio Cricket Club in editorial or advertisements during August. Some previous reader has cut at least two pieces out of the paper and there is another torn hole on one page, but otherwise I think my search has been complete. The microfilm copy of the paper at Deakin University is missing the months of July and August.

There is an advertisement for a meeting of the Geelong Cricket Club dated August 31 over the name of Sam Moore, Hon Sec in the issue of Wednesday September 1, 1858 (page 4) but I could find no report on what transpired in the next few days.¹² During August there were advertisements for meetings of the Hunt club, the Volunteer Rifles and the Geelong Sea Bathing Company. The Aborigines held a corroboree at the beginning of construction of the Geelong to Ballarat Railway in August 1858.

On Tuesday September 7, 1858 (page 2) the *Advertiser* ran an article from the *Argus* under the heading Cricket Conference, which had been organised by the Melbourne Cricket Club to promulgate and find out whether other clubs in the colony would accept and play by the change to Law 10 governing the bowling action.

Tom Wills, as one of the delegates of the Richmond Cricket Club, moved a motion to circulate clubs to see if they are agreed to adopt the change to Law 10. The issue of players playing for more than one club was raised but deferred.

But there was no mention of football in any of the issues of the paper I consulted. So where did Mullen get his information from? He surely must have had something from the contemporary papers, unless he simply made it up. If not, did he get his dates wrong or did he just skim the material without taking specific notes which would have enabled him to cite specific dates?

In May 2009, thanks to David Studham, I was able to consult some of the Mullen material preserved in the Melbourne Cricket Club Museum. One volume consists of a fair copy of the information derived from Mullen’s research notebooks entitled “Interesting Records of the History of the Australian Game of Football”.¹³

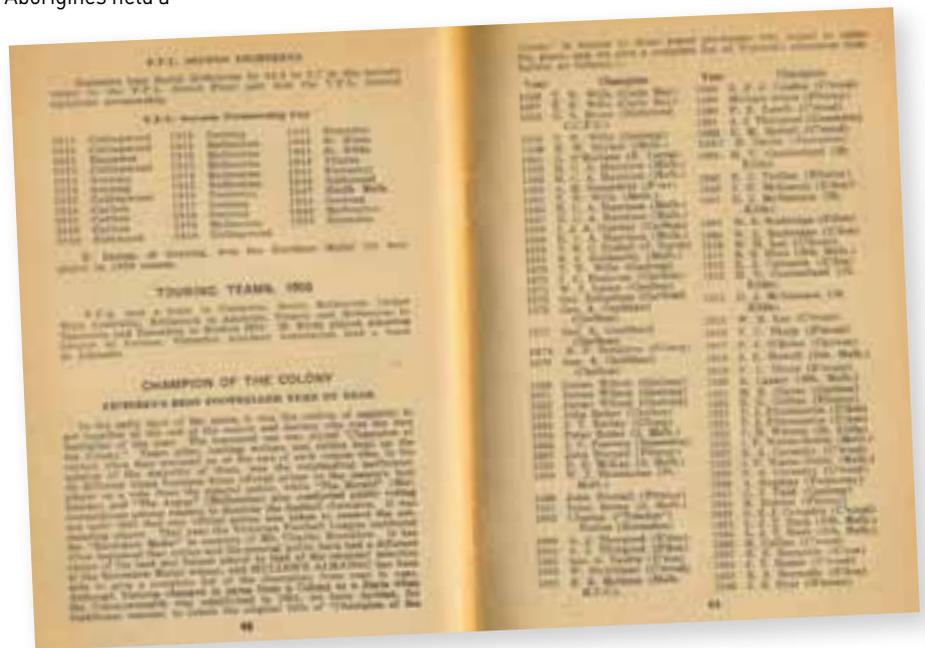
According to the handwritten title page it was compiled in 1922 and contains most of the information on which the later published

works were based. Reconstructing Mullen’s research methods on the basis of this material is difficult, but it appears that he did look at contemporary newspapers and talked to a number of people who had memories of the early game.

Those memories seem to have been assertive and forthright as to names of influential individuals but very hazy as to specific dates, as one might expect some 60–70 years after the events took place. So it is not surprising that Mullen and his informants may have run together episodes which took place at different times. The manuscript volume has dates and names of clubs overwritten and changed, sometimes more than once. It is not absolutely certain that all the changes were made by Mullen, but it seems likely that the majority of them were.

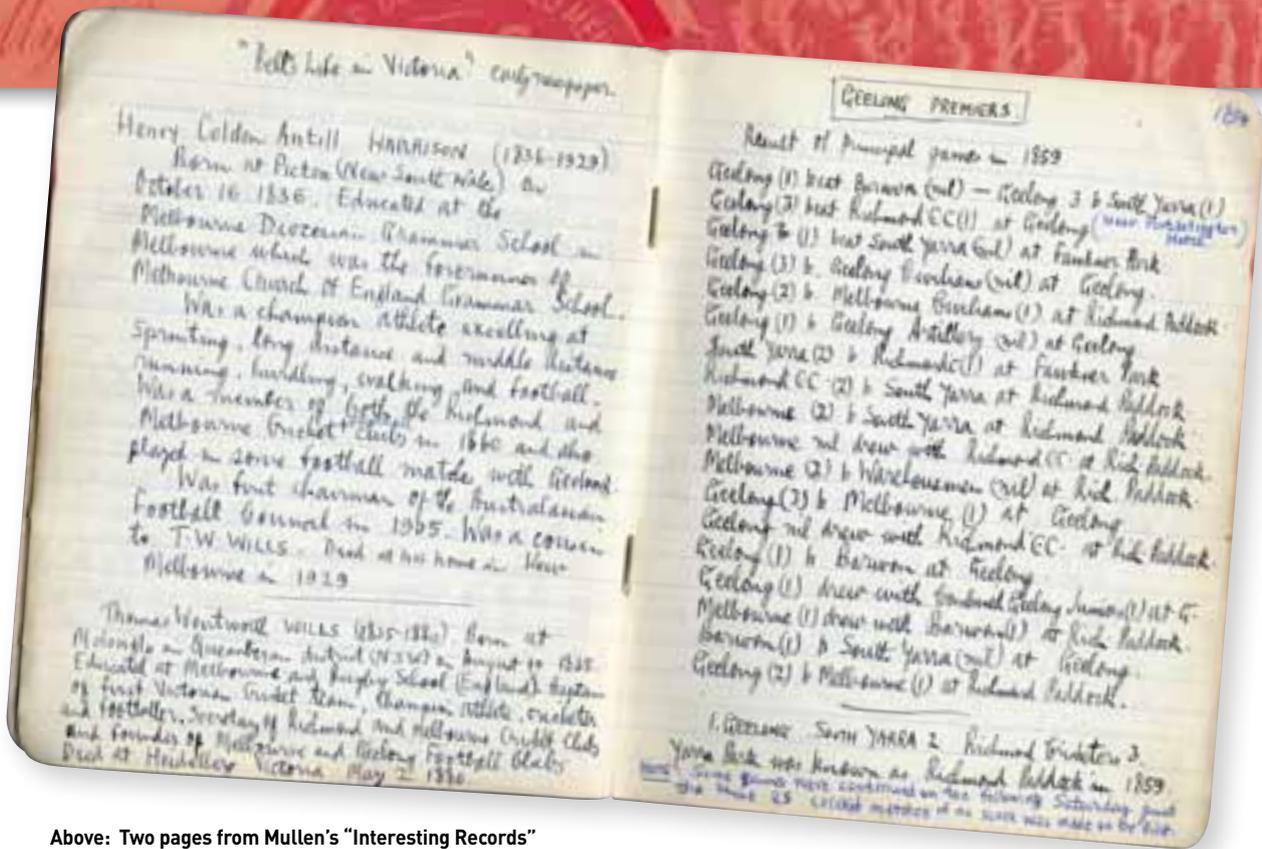
Subsequently, Mullen seems to have repeated this information in his published works. Inconsistencies in the originals remained and other pieces of information were changed in significant details. Mullen’s original notes may well have been made when he was very young, possibly still at school. He was born in Richmond in 1895 so his fair copy of his notes in 1922, the year he moved to Abbotsford, was made when he was around 27.

Having got some results for each year, it is likely that he compiled his own league tables and awarded the title of the champion team. In 1864 he had Melbourne as champion, Ballarat second and Geelong third. But that year Geelong won the Caledonian Cup and at the start of the 1865 season a member of the club writing to *Bell’s Life* said, apropos Geelong: “The members of the champion club, to the number of twenty, met on Tuesday last for the purpose of holding their annual general meeting.”¹⁴



Cec Mullen’s Champion of the Colony list from *Mullen’s Footballers’ Australian Almanac 1951 pp.62-63*. The table continued on the following page and lists players from 1856 to 1950. Such a list initially appeared hand written in Mullen’s scrap books and was titled “Champion Footballer Year by Year”. It was first published in the 1950 edition of Mullen’s almanac.

Mullen did the same with what he termed the champion of the colony, an honorific title he claimed was awarded to the best football player each year from 1856 onwards, a sort of proto-Brownlow Medal. Tom Wills gets the award in 1856 and 1857, voted on – according to Mullen – initially by the captains of the teams and later by the football writers in the media. Wills gets the gong again in 1859, and Russell Stephens says that “Wills was chosen as the unofficial champion of the colony.”¹⁵



Above: Two pages from Mullen's "Interesting Records"

Stephens also implies that Wills arranged for the Melbourne club's footballers to visit Geelong in 1859 but no record of such a game can be traced apart from it being listed by Mullen among 19 principal games of that year.¹⁶

Of the 19 games listed, 12 are claimed to involve Geelong. Between its foundation in July 1859 and the start of the cricket season, at least four intra-club games were played by Geelong, though so far no game against another club has been traced.¹⁷

For the following year, 1860, we get another clue about what might have confused Mullen and Russell Stephens. There is a paragraph in the *Argus* on Saturday August 25, 1860 which mentions that "A scratch match at football will be played this day on the Richmond Cricket Club ground by sides chosen by Messrs Woolley and Harrison from all comers.

"The game will commence at half-past 2. It is probable that the suburban clubs will pay a visit to Geelong next Saturday, to have a friendly game with the Corio Football Club."¹⁸ In fact this match took place on Saturday September 1, but it was with the Geelong Club.¹⁹

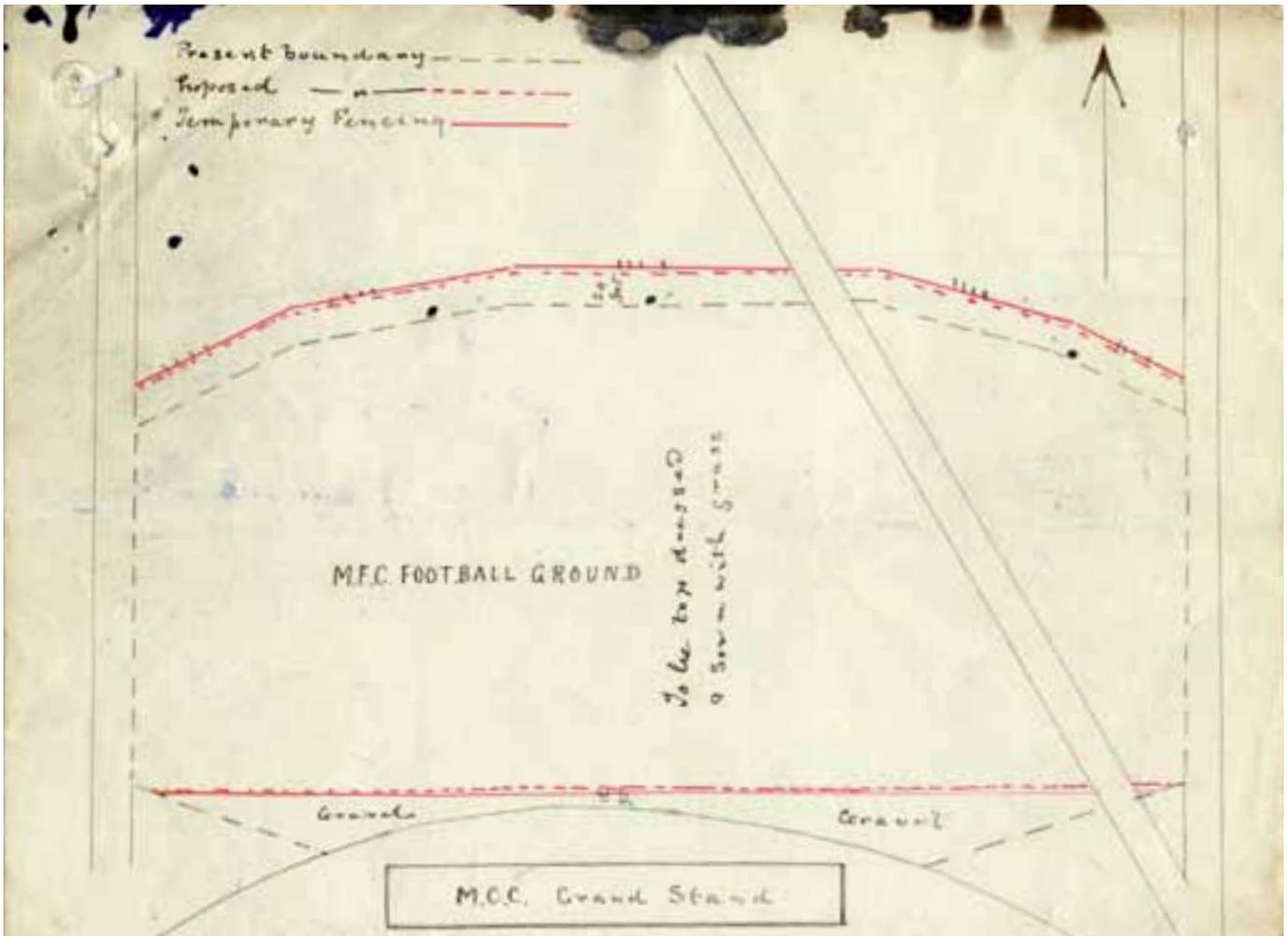
In Mullen's defence it should be mentioned, as Trevor Ruddell did in his presentation, that at the time when he was writing his original notes the historical profession had not begun to consider Australian sport in any serious way.

The other message one might draw from this exercise is that the skills of the professional historian are important when it comes to disentangling what was taking place even just 150 years ago. The past was a different country, and present day imaginings are not quite enough to determine what was happening then.

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- 1 "A Club is born" in John Murray, ed., *We are Geelong: The Story of the Geelong Football Club*, Geoff Slattery Enterprises, Melbourne, 2009, pp. 23-31.
- 2 I can be contacted at haysoc@bigpond.com.
- 3 Cec Mullen, *History of Australian Rules Football, 1858-1958*, Horticultural Press, Carlton, Melbourne, 1958; Cec Mullen, *Mullen's Footballers' Australian Almanac, 1951*, 187 Langridge Street, Abbotsford, 1951 Cec Mullen, *Australasian Footballers Almanac*, 1950. These sources contradict or differ from each other on a number of points of detail.
- 4 Rob Hess, Matthew Nicholson, Bob Stewart and Gregory de Moore, *A National Game: The History of Australian Rules Football*, Penguin, Melbourne, 2008; James Weston, ed., *The Australian Game of Football since 1858*, Geoff Slattery Publishing, Melbourne, 2008; Rob Hess and Bob Stewart, eds, *More than a Game: An Unauthorised History of Australian Rules Football*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1998; Rob Pascoe, *The Winter Game: The Complete History of Australian Football*, Text, Melbourne, 1995. See also Rob Hess, Case Studies in the Development of Australian Rules Football, 1896-1908, PhD thesis, Victoria University, Melbourne, 2000, pp. 5-6, and Greg de Moore, In from the Cold: Tom Wills—A Nineteenth Century Sporting Hero, PhD thesis, Victoria University, Melbourne, 2008, Appendix, pp. 315-21; W.F. Mandie, 'Games people played: Cricket and Football in England and Victoria in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Historical Studies*, vol. 15, no. 60, April 1973, pp. 511-35; Leonie Sandercock and Ian Turner, *Up where, Cazaly? The great Australian game*. Sydney: Granada, 1982.
- 5 Geoffrey Blainey, *A Game of Our Own: The Origins of Australian Football*, Information Australia, Melbourne, 1990; new edition, Black, Inc., Melbourne, 2003.
- 6 Trevor Ruddell, 'Cec Mullen, Australian Football Historian: The Man and his Collection,' paper delivered to Australian Society for Sports History, Victorian chapter meeting at the MCC Library, 2006.
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- 8 Russell H.T. Stephens, *The Road to Kardinia: The Story of the Geelong Football Club*, Playright Publishing, Sydney, 1996.
- 9 Russell H.T. Stephens, *Wills Way: Three Generations of the Wills Family that Provided a New Game - Australian Football*, Caringbah, NSW, Playright Publishing, 2009.
- 10 Gillian Hibbins. *Sport and Racing in Colonial Melbourne: The Cousins and Me: Colden Harrison, Tom Wills and William Hammersley*, Lynedoch publications, Melbourne, 2007.
- 11 Russell Stephens, *Wills Way*, p. 137.
- 12 Geelong Cricket Club: Members and those desirous of joining for the approaching season are requested to meet at the residence of Mr W Thompson, Ryrie Street East (opposite immigrants depot) on Saturday evening next September 4th at 7 o'clock. Sam. Moore, Hon Sec. Geelong, August 31st 1858. *Geelong Advertiser*, 1 September 1858, p. 4. An A Moore played football for Geelong in 1861 and 1862. *Geelong Chronicle*, 27 July 1861 & 19 September 1862.
- 13 Cecil Clarence Mullen, 'Interesting Records of the History of the Australian Game of Football', Melbourne Cricket Club Museum, Registration Number, M15485.
- 14 *Bell's Life in Victoria*, Saturday, 6 May 1865.
- 15 Russell Stephens, *Wills Way*, p. 151.
- 16 Mullen, 'Interesting Records.'
- 17 *Daily News*, 30 July, 1, 13, 15 August 1859.
- 18 *Argus*, Saturday 25 August 1860, p. 4. My colleague Ian Syson of Victoria University spotted this mention of football in his research on the early history of the round ball code.
- 19 *Bell's Life*, Saturday, 8 September 1860, p. 2. On 1 September 1860 a combined team from the Melbourne and Richmond clubs came to Geelong to play a match near the Argyll Hotel in Aberdeen Street [There is an account of growing up in the 1860s near the Argyll ground by Frank Armstrong, who mixed with 'the giants of the football world' at training, including H C A Harrison (Frank Armstrong, 'Boyhood memories of Geelong', *Investigator*, vol. 22, no. 1, March, 1987, pp. 25-6)]. Thirty-four players were named to make the rail journey to Geelong, but no more than twenty took the field against twenty-five of Geelong, the previously agreed number per side. Three hours hard kicking, and no goal either side; such was the unsatisfactory termination of the match', said *Bell's Life*. Allowing for some metropolitan disdain for the country cousins, this was probably a fair enough comment. The pitch was 'anything but suitable for football, being much too confined, the ball being as often out of bounds as in'. An oval ball was used and this upset the Melbournians who were more used to a round one. A fair muster of spectators was present, including a sprinkling of ladies, but they all supported the home team and ignored 'the splendid play and long kicks' of Melbourne's Mr [Thomas Henry] Smith. William Hammersley, the Melbourne captain, came in for some rough treatment but got no sympathy. One-eyed Geelong supporters were in evidence from the start! A M Mason led the home team and Tom Wills was a notable absentee.

UNCOVERING THE TREASURES OF THE MCC ARCHIVES



Hand drawn sketch by H. C. A. Harrison of proposed area where football was to be played.
MCC Archives, acc 445

MCC archivist Patricia Downs embarks on an exciting journey as she works diligently through a huge resource of material pertaining to the MCC and its wonderful ground.

Exquisite handwritten correspondence, rare letterheads, priceless documents, photographs, maps and papers are gradually being unearthed in the newly established Melbourne Cricket Club archives section. The fascinating history of the MCC and the rich heritage of its corporate memory have lain in dusty files and boxes for decades. Now its secrets are being rediscovered.

Until the beginning of 2009, there had been no resource or responsibility officially designated for the management and development of the MCC archives. However, the appointment of an archivist has paved the way for a professional appraisal of the wealth of historical material collected by the club since its inception. Strategies have been developed to safeguard these fragile archival documents for present and future generations and to provide access to their storehouse of knowledge.

About 30 years ago, one of the greatest treasures of the MCC collection was discovered by chance among a trunk of archival material being sorted through by Bill Gray, a former honorary curator of the MCC. This document proved to be the original handwritten set of rules of the Melbourne Football Club of May 1859. Currently displayed in the MCC Museum, this document is a real destination piece for visitors.

Boxes of correspondence and printed matter from 1905 to 1912 relating to "The Great Split" in the cricket world have also surfaced. These original documents retell the drama over the control of international cricket teams, especially surrounding the MCC and the formation and establishment of Australian cricket's Board of Control.

The memorabilia and documents illustrating Alf Batchelder's absorbing article on the 1917 Patriotic Carnival – published in this edition of *The Yorker* – were among the first glimpses of the secrets of the MCC archives until its establishment this year as an entity.

Other documents uncovered include a treasure of minute books, notably the 1872-1878 minute book which has been missing for some years and, hence, was never microfilmed during the microfilming project undertaken in the 1990s.

Also extracted from storage are the plans to renovate the Melbourne Football Ground in the 1880s and the most fascinating of these artefacts is a handwritten original diagram – drafted by the notable early Australian Rules football player and administrator, H.C.A Harrison – which depicts where football was to be played.

This was the original area used outside the MCG for football and the area indicated in the plan would have been used in conjunction with the famous reversible stand which enabled spectators to watch cricket in summer and have the seats turned around to watch football in winter.

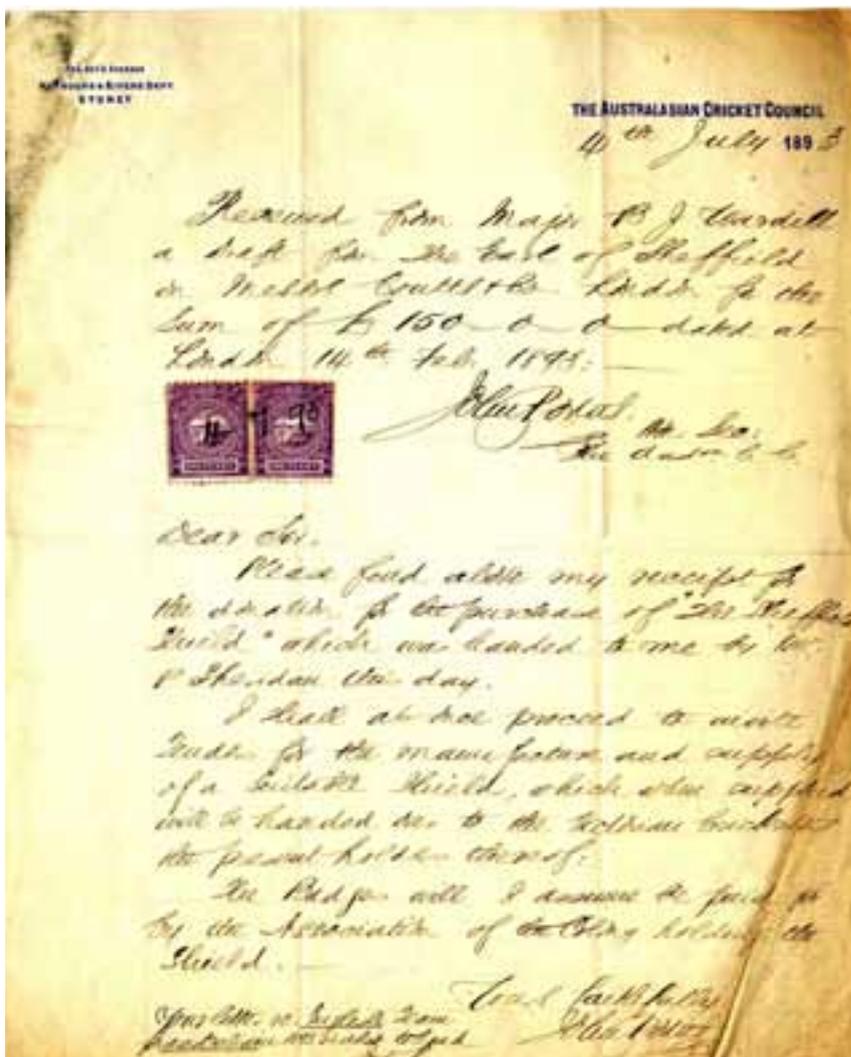
One of the many fragile letter books examined so far contains a captivating handwritten account of life in Victoria in which Curtis Reid (the first paid secretary of the MCC) invites “a team of gentlemen cricketers from England to play a series of matches in these Colonies during the Australian summer of 1878 and 1879”. The letter sets out to attract the English visitors with evocative descriptions of a proposed sightseeing tour of Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania.

A large batch of Ben Wardill’s personal papers relating to his employment with The Reiwa Sugar Company has been unearthed and research has identified the national importance of these items, which were listed some years ago on the Register of Australian Archives & Manuscripts. The correspondence depicts a very differently paced and organised world before the introduction of the telephone or the motor car.

Other items include a selection of fascinating correspondence from the 1890s between MCC secretary Ben Wardill and the secretary of The Australasian Cricket Council. These documents refer to the proposed donation of 150 guineas for an intercolonial trophy, later known as the Sheffield Shield, and foreshadow the arrival of Earl of Sheffield in Australia in 1891/92 as the promoter of the English team which played three Tests in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide, led by W.G. Grace. At the conclusion of the tour, Lord Sheffield donated £150 to the New South Wales Cricket Association to fund a trophy for an annual tournament of intercolonial cricket in Australia.

The impact of original documents cannot be overstated. They are the living material trace of the life and times of past generations recreated vividly and evocatively on fragile paper fragments. The stories preserved in the archives not only transport us to the past but remind us of our shared humanity. Archives record our experiences – the triumphs and the failures, the challenges and aspirations.

The holdings of the MCC archive consist of more than 87 linear metres of shelf space comprising about 500 bound volumes and 300 boxes of loose correspondence including financial, administrative, cultural/social and historical records such as ledgers, minute books, letter books, membership books, receipt



Receipt for £150 donated on behalf of the Earl of Sheffield by Major B. J. Wardill for manufacture of the Sheffield Shield.

MCC Archives, Acc 631

books, stile books, scorebooks, scrapbooks, maps, sketches and personal and business correspondence.

Some dedicated volunteers have been assisting in the long task of identification, preservation and researching of material. Their time and effort is extremely valued and appreciated in the uncovering of the secrets and the significance of the MCC archive. It is anticipated that active collecting will begin as soon as the necessary procedures for the smooth working of the archives have been installed.

Archives are authentic evidence of our past. They preserve the personal, corporate and social memory of society and inform the search for our identity and our place in the world. Archives are valued for their administrative, legal and historical function and as such they document the growth and development of our environment and our culture.

The research potential of the MCC archives is tremendous. There is a wealth of historical information and a storehouse of memories to be unearthed which open a window to the beginnings of the Melbourne Cricket Club and the development of its vital and dynamic role in the life of Australian society.

Acknowledgements: David Studham

**PATRICIA DOWNS
MCC ARCHIVIST**

THE 1917 PATRIOTIC CARNIVAL

On August 5, 1914, "a dull, damp day, with conditions all against good football", Xavier played Melbourne Grammar at the MCG. As newspapers arrived announcing that Australia was at war, boys read silently in the rain, wondering what it all might mean for them. The war would have a profound effect on the Melbourne Cricket Club, bringing a severe loss of income that would confront secretary Hugh Trumble with a battle to ensure the club's survival.



From the outset, the MCC encouraged recruiting and spearheaded moves to curtail any sporting activity that might hinder enlistment. The ground was made available for numerous charitable and patriotic events, including Melbourne's first Anzac anniversary commemorations in 1916. One of the most emotional moments in its history occurred on July 4, 1916, when a capacity crowd, estimated at "between 50000 and 60000 people", attended a massed bands performance. With the playing of the *Dead March* from *Saul* "in honour of the soldiers who had given their lives at the Dardanelles", the gathering rose as one:

In an instant, every head in the vast audience was bared, and as the rolling of the drums and the music of the instruments ceased, three bugles sounded *The Last Post*. It was an impressive performance, and brought tears to the eyes of many.¹

Throughout the war, Melbourne Cricket Club members and their families strongly supported the countless fund-raising campaigns spawned by the conflict. In the first year of fighting, the MCC donated more than £800 to patriotic funds. The substantial contributions continued, even as finances dwindled. Gifts of sporting equipment to soldiers at home and overseas ended only when supplies ran out. By 1917, more than 800 members were in uniform, and naturally it was for these men that the club felt its deepest concern, closely following their fortunes and expressing its firm moral support at every opportunity. Despite the MCC's financial tribulations, the committee desired to do even more for all who had enlisted by holding a "Special Club Fete" at the ground.²

Following the announcement that the Patriotic Carnival aimed to raise "Funds for the Benefit of Australian Soldiers and their Dependants", one member donated a car from Kellow-Falkiner as first prize in a raffle. Others provided a Bijou billiard table, a gold wristlet watch, a diamond ring, a travelling rug, and "a sleeping out bungalow", as well as a bullock and "a valuable dray horse". In the case of this animal, Hugh Trumble was anxious that it did not appear at the club's Collins Street offices, suggesting that it should be "consigned to Kirk's Bazaar". Five large drapery firms each donated goods to the value of £5.³

When Mr. Trumble asked whether the wives of several prominent members "would feel disposed to take charge of one of the various stalls to be erected at the Ground", his letters were not addressed the ladies – at that time, it was clearly "not done" to approach them directly. Honorary organiser Harley Malcolm carefully identified areas where the ladies would require assistance, insisting that each stall "should have its full complement of men, who should be prepared to aid in the general supervision and management and assist in the decorations or fittings." In those days, clerical work was the domain of men and even boys. Since very few women were trained in accounting procedures, each stall-holder was required to "appoint her own man-treasurer, who should be made responsible for all moneys collected by that stall". However, the Carnival would provide some surprises for Mr. Malcolm – after managing their stalls confidently and flawlessly, the ladies also presented him with some impressive balance sheets.⁴

The Patriotic Carnival opened on Saturday October 20, 1917, but wet and violent weather cast a pall over the day. Indeed, the outlook of the entire community was gloomy – the second conscription referendum was causing bitter division, and there was no sign of an end to the carnage in France. On October 22, the Melbourne Town Hall was used for eleven hours to offer prayers "for the Empire and Australia, for the victory of the Allied cause, for a righteous peace, and of contrition, consecration and intercession."

Nevertheless, every effort was made to create a cheerful mood at the MCG, where sixteen decorated stalls had been set up just inside the fence. To create "a carnival character", Harley Malcolm suggested the use of Chinese lanterns, small flags, and "fashions of other periods or fancy dress," but there was no room for extravagance. Stall-holders were reminded that "any proposal involving the expenditure of money, unless substantially reproductive, cannot be entertained." From a stall that had been made into a bower of wistaria and asparagus fern, Mrs. Johanna Cussen offered a tantalising range of home-made preserves and "sweets of all kinds alluringly displayed in baskets, boxes and bags, the majority fashioned from pretty pieces of silk or ribbon."



Top: Stalls at the Richmond end.
Centre: Advertising Sticker, Refreshment Rooms Attendants Bottom: Mrs. A.H. McKean's Black-and-White Sweets Stall



Statement of expenses Kiosk Stall M.C.C.
 October 1914
 Major's Account (Prelud) £ .. s .. d
 3 .. 15 .. 3
 Ditto Lunch (2 paid Delivery) 11
 Receipts All Paper Boxes 8
 14 tickets (Papers) 12 .. 6
 12 flags for kiosk (bushes) 4

 6 .. 13 .. 4
 Accounts enclosed.
 Esme Alley
 18, St. Andrew's Road, Pinner, Middlesex
 9/11/14



Myer's
 WELBOUTNE

110, The New Building,
 5/6 New Building,
 "WELBOUTNE"
 110, The New Building,
 5/6 New Building,
 "WELBOUTNE"

DATE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	CASH	DEBIT	CREDIT	BALANCE
11	11					
17	17					
18	18					
						1 15 3

With two other stalls also specialising in sweets, the Carnival was sheer bliss for those who liked confectionery. Mrs. Zella Mackey's booth was attractively decorated with white chrysanthemums and asparagus fern, but Mrs. A.H. McKean's kiosk, with its black and white latticed canopy threaded with pink blossom, stole the show with a masterpiece of colour co-ordination:

The delicious home-made sweets were enclosed in black and white boxes, tied with pink, and the assistants were dressed in harmony with the boxes. They had black and white frocks, black hats, tied with pink, and pink aprons.⁵

At a stall that offered "a tempting display of produce", Mrs. Minnie Mailer was assisted by several workers from the Voluntary Aid Detachments, "all wearing white and green costumes, with hats trimmed with appliqué in the form of kitchen garden products." Whether it was the goods or her team's intriguing appearance, Mrs. Mailer was far and away the Carnival's most successful fundraiser, returning a profit of £1391/3/4½.

At the ABC Stall, patrons "could buy everything from lovely green asparagus at sixpence a bunch to a squeaking balloon at twopence." *Punch* reported that Mrs. Gatehouse and her ladies from the Sandringham district, "all prettily dressed in white, with red, white and blue aprons, ... are making the sale of asparagus a speciality at the stall, and have fresh supplies each day." Mrs. Cora Cronin managed a stall that was "artistically arranged":

A number of stately waratahs reared their brightly-tinted heads in the forest of beautiful pot plants ... Pretty wild flowers and settings of the hand flags made effective additions to the stall.⁶

Selling cut flowers and pot plants, Mrs. Cronin made a profit of almost 300 per cent from an outlay of £23. At a cost of 6/8, she even had three boxes of flowers shipped by train from Albury. Mrs. Cronin apparently sold more than 800 pot plants during the Carnival, for she had to send several repeat orders for stocks of assorted pot plants to the Carrick Vale Nurseries in Glen Huntly Road.

The Carnival also boasted a Floss Machine, and a booth that sold nuts. The "Win the War" Equestrienne Club operated what *Punch* termed "a very picturesquely arranged Knutts' Stall."⁷ The women lawn tennis players operated the refreshment rooms under the grandstands, and the Elsternwick Cricket Club sold soft drinks from the scoreboard at the eastern end of the ground. High tea and luncheon were also available every day, and two ladies went around with an ice-cream cart. In the afternoons and evenings, sideshows featured the Handcuff King and a fortune-teller. Other highlights included merry-go-rounds and fireworks, displays by the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, massed bands, clock golf and shooting galleries.

The unfavourable weather continued on the Monday and Tuesday, and all of the sporting events arranged for those days were cancelled. Attendances were poor, with only 186 coming on the Tuesday afternoon. However, number rose once conditions improved. The arena was used for the first time on the evening of Wednesday 24th. The *Australasian* described the spectacle:

... a brilliant scene was presented. Myriads of electric coloured lights made an effective illumination. The side-shows were all well patronised, whilst the Palais de Danse attracted the majority of the young people, for the night was a perfect one for open-air dancing. A feature of the evening on the arena was the battle of flowers between motorists in gaily decorated cars and a large section of the onlookers, who were enabled to purchase flowers and boxes of rose leaves for the contest.⁸

On Friday 26th, 8345 people attended the Carnival, most of them probably attracted by the six track events for boys from the Associated Public Schools. However, the biggest day came on the second Saturday, when the crowd exceeded 21315. Of these, more than 15000 came in the evening. The enormous attendance owed much to the fact that, for the remaining days, the Police Charity Festival was being conducted in conjunction with the Carnival. With this, there was now plenty of spectacle on the oval. Cadets from Richmond gave a display, horsemen in military uniforms and ladies in jackets and ankle-length skirts took part in a musical ride, a parade of marchers carried the flags of the Allies, and girls with hoops and garlands of flowers appeared in a physical culture display.⁹

When the Melbourne Cricket Club's greatest single fund-raising effort for the war closed on Saturday November 3, almost 68000 people had attended. Of these, 27220 had purchased Carnival Badges that, at a cost of 2/6, provided unlimited admission. (A special souvenir badge, made of silver and enamel, was also available for half a guinea.) After expenses were deducted, the club donated £7762/19/6 to the State War Council. While the 1917-18 Annual Report described the Carnival as "successful in every respect", Hugh Trumble was disappointed, writing that "Owing to adverse weather we have not done nearly so well as expected."¹⁰

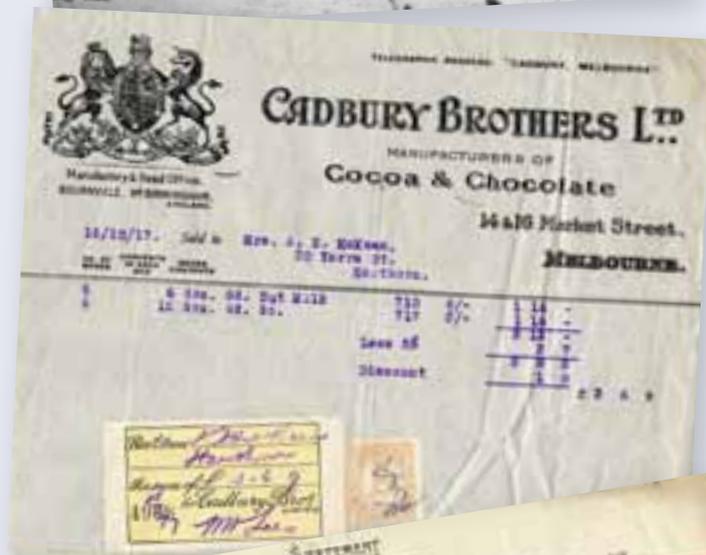
Early in 1918, the MCC ordered 750 souvenir cards to be presented, as a token of appreciation, to those who had assisted in the organisation and running of the Carnival.¹¹ For most, the cards were mementoes of a time of earnest effort and solid achievement that had briefly revived something of the spirit of life as it was before the war.

In late 1917, such moments were all too fleeting – in the world away from the united purpose of the Carnival, division and conflict were growing ever stronger. Late in October, the final triumph of the Bolsheviks ended any doubtful hopes that Russia might remain an effective player in the war. On Monday December 10, a pro-conscription rally attracted an estimated attendance of "75 to 80000" to the Melbourne Cricket Ground, topping the record 59556 that had watched the 1913 Grand Final.¹² The evening produced what was, without doubt, the rowdiest gathering ever at the ground, a frightening example of the anarchy generated by wartime strains and the conscription issue. Many wondered if, indeed, things could ever be the same again.

ALF BATCHELDER

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7. *ibid.*
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"PROUD TO EMULATE"

A TRIBUTE TO MAJOR EVERETT POPE MOH

Sometimes, when the occasional cool day struck Amelia Island, Florida, an old man, with white hair and a quick smile, could sometimes be seen sporting a Melbourne Cricket Ground sweater as he took his afternoon walk. Once he had worn the forest green of the United States Marine Corps, but that was long ago.

Now, in his twilight years, he was reluctant to talk about those days. Instead, he preferred to discuss the weather or his grandchildren. When he was asked for his thoughts about the young men being sent to fight in Iraq, tears welled in his bright blue eyes, for Everett Parker Pope understood only too well the dreadful and enduring price exacted by war.

A couple of generations earlier, he himself had been one of the young men who went off to war. Just after graduating magna cum laude from the prestigious Bowdoin College in 1941, he had enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. When the 1st Battalion of the First Division's 1st Regiment landed on Guadalcanal on August 7, 1942, Second Lieutenant Pope was in charge of a machine gun platoon. He was 23.

The "Canal" changed Everett Pope and his fellow Marines forever. Combat left an indelible mark on them, replacing their innocence with a hardness that would have been incomprehensible a year before. In his diary, 21-year-old Jim Donahue asked:

"How does it feel to kill someone?" You don't stop to think. There is a man intent on killing you so you kill or be killed.¹

In his book *Helmet For My Pillow*, Robert Leckie wrote that the eyes of the young Marines quickly acquired "that aspect peculiar to Guadalcanal, that constant stare of pupils that seemed darker, larger, rounder, more absolute." Leckie also showed that, as men like Pope struggled to survive in the thick and humid jungle, they understood the terrible truth that every army had items that could, if necessary, be sacrificed:

Men are the most expendable of all. Hunger, the jungle, the Japanese, not one nor all of these could be quite as corrosive as the feeling of expendability.²

While the First Division contained a core of veterans who knew their weapons and tactics, too many Marines on Guadalcanal were untried recruits with, at best, eight months in uniform. Everett Pope was leading men equipped with weapons of World War I vintage as they faced experienced Japanese troops in a bitter struggle that was well defined by historian Samuel Eliot Morison:

Guadalcanal is not a name but an emotion, recalling desperate fights in the air, furious night naval battles, frantic work at supply or construction, savage fighting in the sodden jungle, night broken by screaming bombs and deafening explosions of naval shells.³



As John Joseph, a fellow member of Pope's 1st Regiment, put it, "The 'Canal' was as bad as it has been written by many historians." According to William Manchester:

The typical Marine on the island ran a fever, wore stinking dungarees, loathed twilight and wondered whether the US Navy still existed. He ate mouldy rations and quinine. He alternately shivered and sweated ... If he was on his way back to the line, he struggled through shattered, stunted coconut trees, scraggy bushes, and putrescent jungle, clawing up and down slopes ankle-deep in mud, hoping he could catch a few hours of uninterrupted sleep in his foxhole. Usually he was disappointed ...⁴

At the height of this nightmare, Lieutenant Pope probably shared the view of Jim Donahue, who wondered "if any of us will get back." By the time First Division was evacuated just before Christmas, 1152 Marines were dead, 2799 were wounded, and 95 percent of the original landing force was unfit for combat, mostly through malaria. Everett Pope and his fellow survivors sailed from Guadalcanal to Australia with "a spirit of cohesion that binds a unit together and binds people together." They also took with them mental scars that would later prevent them from freely discussing the war.

When the First Regiment took up their quarters at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in January 1943, one officer described the 3600 Marines as "ragged, still dirty, thin, anaemic, sallow, listless." On top of that, they were undernourished and dehydrated. However, after their terrible experiences on the Canal, and despite the cold, spartan conditions in the stands, Everett Pope and the First Regiment regarded the MCG as "Heaven".

Pope and some other officers from the 1st Battalion's D Company rented an apartment at 11A Queens Road. Sixty years later, he would fondly remember great times shared with "about ten of us in a two-bedroom flat!" Among the neighbours who joined the merriment was wool broker Jock Anderson who "used to attend our gatherings in his kilts." Everyone in Queens Road "treated us kindly", even though "we were probably noisy!" In short, "the living was great!"

For warriors, such soft times can never last. In September, Everett Pope left the MCG, destined for Cape Gloucester in New Britain. Many who were at the Cape believe that historians have neglected the First Division's efforts there. To the horrors familiar from Guadalcanal, this campaign brought another nightmare, as the Cape possesses one of the heaviest concentrations of rain that falls anywhere on earth.

Division historian George McMillan wrote that when a fighting man finds that "the plant and animal life and the climate are as much or more of a menace to his existence than the armed human opposite him, [he] will feel he is the victim of an injustice."⁵

After leading his company in quagmires, unrelenting downpours and clothes that never dried out, Everett Pope undoubtedly felt that there was enormous injustice at Cape Gloucester. In one day of mopping-up operations, he led a 14-man patrol that killed 20 Japanese and captured another seven during a 12-mile trek over jungle trails.

In mid-1944, about 40 percent of the Division's veterans were sent home. Captain Pope was not among them. Instead, he was leading Company C of the 1st Regiment in the invasion of Peleliu, a coral island in the Philippine Sea. In his kit, he carried a picture of his wife, a prayer book and a volume of anti-war poems by Siegfried Sassoon that, fortunately, his superiors never saw.

The operation was expected to last only four days. Instead, it dragged on for two months, for the Marines were facing 10,000 entrenched Japanese whom Robert Leckie described as "ten thousand men as brave and determined and skillful as ever a garrison was since the art of warfare began."⁶

Peleliu brought the highest casualty rate of any battle in the Pacific war. In six days, Pope's regiment suffered 80 per cent casualties. Jim Wilson, in the 2nd Battalion, said that Peleliu made Guadalcanal seem like "a walk in the park." To make matters worse, the island's strategic value was dubious, a subject that angered Sergeant Charles Kelty for the rest of his life:

Taking that island was a mistake. They could bypass it with no trouble without a cost of one life of a young Marine. This was the biggest mistake made in WWII ..."

Bob Barton blamed the debacle on "poor planning, poor leadership, a very poor job by the Navy in softening up the defences and a tenacious bunch of Japs who were very well dug in (many, many pillboxes) and well trained." While Pope readily

acknowledged the pointlessness of the Peleliu campaign, he firmly believed that, as a Marine, he had to follow his orders, saying, "We had a job to do and we did it. And if we hadn't done that, we'd be capturing some other island, some other airfield."

On September 19, with only 90 men at his disposal, Captain Pope was directed to take Hill 154, described as "an ugly chunk of charred, denuded, stump-covered coral, very steep, with little for a Marine to hide behind." Only 24 men reached the top, where they came under fire on three sides from Japanese on the higher ridges. Cut off from the rest of their battalion and heavily outnumbered, Pope and his men were determined to hold the hill.

Throughout the night, they faced relentless attacks. Eventually, the Marines were so short of grenades that they hurled "three or four rocks, then a grenade." By dawn, they were using their bare fists and empty ammunition boxes to repel the Japanese. When Pope was ordered to withdraw, only eight American riflemen remained. During their month on Peleliu, the First Division suffered over 6500 casualties, more than one-third of the entire division.



Everett Parker Pope
July 16, 1919–July 16, 2009

So severe were these losses that the First remained out of action until the Okinawa invasion of April 1945. By then, most of the veterans from Guadalcanal and the MCG had returned to the United States. However, as they sailed from Peleliu, they did not fully comprehend their situation. As Bill Finnegan observed recently, "We were not aware of what had happened to us, only that there were not many of us left to talk about it ... We were simply grateful to get the hell off that rock in one piece..."

For his "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty" during that night on Hill 154, Captain Pope was awarded America's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor. The citation was signed by President Roosevelt on April 11, 1945, the day before he died. The medal, with its distinctive light blue ribbon, was presented by President Truman at the White House on June 15.

During the ceremony, the Marine hero reputedly remarked that he would rather have the medal than be President of the United States. In his usual forthright way, Truman replied that he would prefer to have the medal.⁷ Everett Pope did not view the medal as something that was his alone:

I wear it proudly, not because of anything I did to deserve it. But out of respect for my men who died up there, and to prolong, at least for a moment of time, their place in our nation's history. As you know, it was twelve days before my dead on that hill were recovered.⁸

No one can truly appreciate the place held by that hill in Pope's soul. When he revisited what he termed "that terrible island" in 1994, locals claim that, despite his 75 years, he ran to the top of the hill, where he collapsed and wept.⁹



Ambassador Laurence E. Pope and Mr. Ralph H. Pope accept a folded flag from Inspector General of the Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Kenneth J. Lee during their father's burial ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

Major Pope resigned his Marine Corps commission in 1951. When he became president of the Workmen's Co-operative Bank in Boston in 1953, he was New England's youngest bank president. For many years, he was seen as a leader in the savings and loan industry, pioneering the use of interest-bearing checking accounts. Between 1961 and 1988, he was active on the governing board of Bowdoin College where, in 1987, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. In a 2002 interview, Everett Pope said:

I have had a happy and satisfying life. We did what needed to be done during the war. I have no regrets, no sense of recrimination. I sometimes question the tactics.¹⁰

In 2008, failing health forced the 89-year-old and his wife to move from Florida to Maine, so that they would be nearer their sons.

In January 2009, a month before their 67th wedding anniversary, Eleanor Pope passed away. Pope himself died on the morning of July 16, his ninetieth birthday. Two months later, Everett and Eleanor Pope were buried together in Arlington National Cemetery.

Everett Pope very much admired Bowdoin's sixth president, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, who had received the Medal of Honor for his tenacious and decisive leadership on Little Round Top at Gettysburg in 1863. Pope once declared that Chamberlain's "was a life that any one of us would be proud to emulate." The very same can be said of Everett Pope.¹¹

Lest We Forget.

ALF BATCHELDER

Notes

In writing this tribute, I have relied heavily on correspondence from several USMC veterans, including Bill Finnegan, Lou Imfeld, John Joseph, Jim Wilson, Bob Barton and Charles Kelty. I am particularly grateful to Major Everett Pope for reminiscences in his 2004 letter.

(Endnotes)

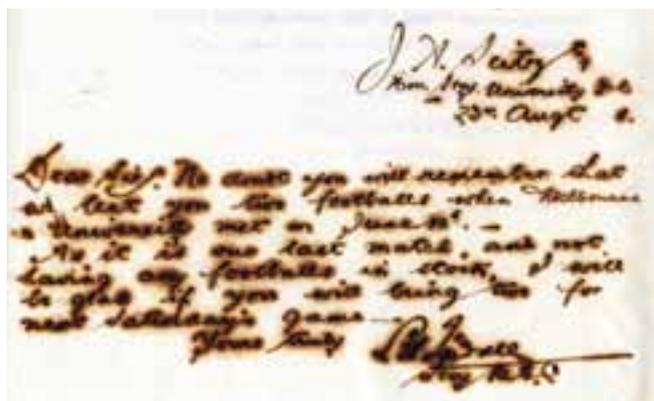
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CAN WE HAVE OUR BALLS BACK?

Since its establishment last year, the MCC archives section has been carefully unearthing fragile papers and fascinating handwritten documents which connect us directly to the thoughts and experiences of our predecessors. They are raw primary source material from which we can interpret the past.

Old letters give us information about the times in which they were written, their writers and their readers and the physical environment. They also tell us about business and administrative practices and technological ingenuity.

Archives are unique. They enable us to reconstruct the past, capture a moment and bring it to life. They also present mysteries. Illustrated here (with an accompanying transcription) is a letter digitised from a page of one of the many letterbooks preserved in the club's archives.



MCC Archives Series A1.21_p37

Transcription:

J A Seitz Esq
Hon Secy University FC
23rd August 1911

Dear Sir,

No doubt you will remember that we lent you two footballs when Melbourne & University met on June 10th.

As it is our last match, and not having any footballs in stock, I will be glad if you will bring two for next Saturday's game.

Yours truly,
S. M. Tindall
Secy MCC

This letter was written on August 23, 1911 by MCC secretary Sidney Tindall on behalf of the Melbourne Cricket Club Football Club (MCCFC). As one of the sections of the club (it was a section of the MCC until 1980), the MCCFC – known locally as “the Melbourne team” – was closely associated with the MCC.

The recipient of the letter, John Seitz, was the honorary secretary of University Football Club. He also was a Rhodes Scholar and a fine cricketer (Victoria 1912-13) and Australian Rules player who later served as VCA president from 1947-1959. The letter requests the return of two previously borrowed footballs for use during the Saturday match at the ground because the MCC had no balls available.

Mysteries cause us to speculate. What were the circumstances surrounding the apparent scant supply of footballs at the ground in August 1911? After all, footballs had been manufactured at the nearby Collingwood factory established by Thomas William Sherrin since 1879 and presumably there would be a readily available supply.



Cigarette Card - University Football Club

From a series produced in Saxony (Germany) c1908-1914. MCC AGOS Collection 1989.2125.13

Note that the guernsey designs are inaccurate because when the University Club names and colours were sent to the printers instructions regarding the guernsey designs were not included. As a result the printers improvised



MCC Archives Acc 615_367

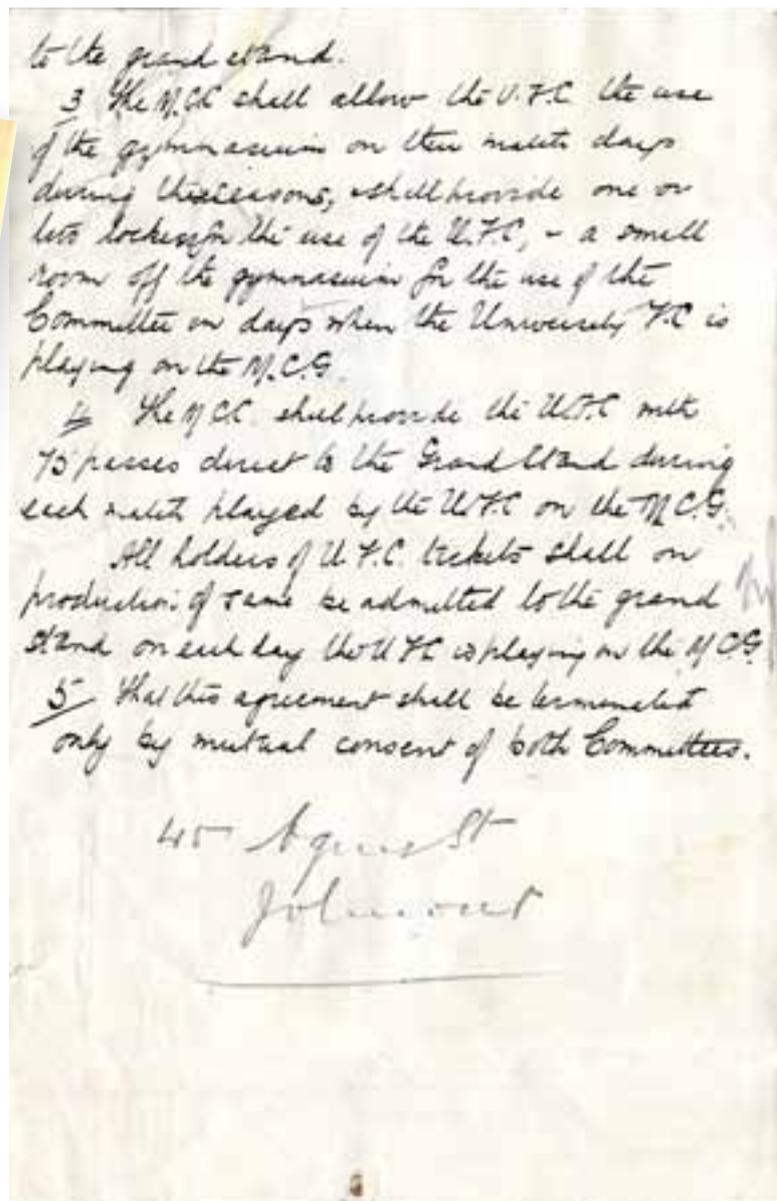
The MCCFC were customers of T.W. Sherrin at the time and reproduced here from MCC Archives is a Sherrin receipt debited to the Melbourne Football Club in 1893.

We might hypothesise that there was a problem with the factory keeping pace with demand or perhaps there had been an error in estimating quantity by the club when placing a previous order. Consultation with MCC football historians, however, reveals a probable alternative scenario.

It was the practice for match balls to be provided by the home team and it is likely that the purpose of Mr Tindall's note was not only to prompt University to bring back the balls they had borrowed for the match in Round 8, 1911 but to remind them of their obligations regarding the supply of match balls generally.

Other interesting facts enrich this correspondence. The footballers of University Football Club (known as "the Students") often regarded the League games as recreation and some would miss matches when course work, field trips, exams and holidays took priority. University played in the Victorian Football League from 1908 to 1914 and the Students were co-tenants with Melbourne at the MCG from 1911 to 1914.

Illustrated here with accompanying transcription is an example of the first correspondence written in 1910 relating to the use of the ground by University Football Club.



MCC Archives Series A4.p24.4

General Correspondence - Incoming;

MCC Archives Transcription:

Melbourne University Football Club September 5th 1910

Terms on which the MUFC are willing to play their home matches on the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

- 1 The Melbourne Cricket Club shall allow the UFC the use of the necessary accommodation for the purpose of playing their league football matches on the MCG during the football seasons of the years 1911, 1912, 1913.
- 2 The University Football Club are to receive 1/3 (one third) of the net charges of admission to the ground and of the first sixpence of each eighteen pence to the ground paid for direct admission to the stand, after deduction from these charges of all expenses for advertising, printing, police attendance - any other reasonable charge incidental to or in connection with the football matches played by the UFC on the MCG. In addition to this the MCC shall pay to the UFC 1/6 (one sixth) of the gross takings from the extra shilling paid for admission to the Grand Stand.



Copy
Melbourne University Football Club.

September 5th 1910

Terms on which the M.U.F.C. are willing to play their ^{home} matches on the Melbourne Cricket Ground: -

1 The Melbourne Cricket Club shall allow the U.F.C. the use of the necessary accommodation for the purpose of playing ^{the home} matches on the M.C.G. during the football seasons of the years 1911, 1912, 1913.

2 The ^{University} Football Club are to receive $\frac{1}{3}$ (one third) of the net charges of admission to the ground & of the first ^{part of} entrance ^{fee} paid for direct admission to the stand, after deduction from these charges of all expenses for advertising, printing, police attendance & any other reasonable charge incidental to ^{any} connection with the football matches played by the U.F.C. on the M.C.G.

In addition to this the M.C.C. shall pay to the U.F.C. $\frac{1}{2}$ (one sixth) of the ^{gross} takings from the extra shilling paid for admission



MCC Archivist Patricia Downs unpacks the secrets of the Club's archives

University 5.9 [39] was defeated by Melbourne 9.13 [67] in Round 8, 1911 and went on to take the wooden spoon. In fact, University was last on the ladder from 1911 to 1914 and the club holds the record of 51 consecutive losses – from Round 4, 1912 to Round 18, 1914.

Many questions arise when reading the letterbooks in the archives and opportunities abound for further research. There are also interesting historical administrative processes to be rediscovered. The letterbooks, for example, illuminate the era of business handwriting. To retain copies of letters written, a letterpress copy was produced by pressing a damp sheet of paper against a handwritten original in a copy press.

To make the text right-reading in the copy, thin paper was used, and the transferred copy was read through the reverse side. This novel process devised to create a facsimile of the original eliminated the unavoidable human error which occurred when clerks made their careful handwritten copies of correspondence.

Archives can be reinvented and used as a powerful financial asset and business resource. They hold primary-source evidence of change and growth and are full of ideas for marketing and creative interpretation. MCC archives is being made accessible through a newly installed database and the painstaking process of examining old receipts, minute books and correspondence is bringing the club's intriguing and valuable history to light.

Acknowledgements: David Allen, Marie Pernat, Eric Panther and Celia Drummond

- 3 The MCC shall allow the UFC the use of the gymnasium on their match days during the seasons, and shall provide one or two lockers for the use of the UFC – a small room off the gymnasium for the use of the Committee on days when the University FC is playing on the MCG.
- 4 The MCC shall provide the UFC with 70 passes direct to the Grand Stand during each match played by the UFC on the MCG. All holders of UFC tickets shall on production of same be admitted to the Grand Stand on each day the UFC is playing on the MCG.
- 5 That this agreement shall be terminated only by mutual consent of both Committees.

**PATRICIA DOWNS
MCC ARCHIVIST**



THE FLIGHT THAT WAS TOO DARING

In 1898 it was claimed that "one person out of every dozen" in Melbourne and its suburbs watched the Austral Wheel Race at the MCG. Moreover, the £1200 takings from the 30,000 spectators were "only a few pounds behind the record for the biggest cricket match".¹

For a time, the Austral was the ground's major drawcard, regularly attracting crowds larger than any generated by football or cricket. After 1900, though, the event's lustre gradually dimmed. Apart from the Melbourne Cricket Club's opposition to the professionalism and gambling that came with the Austral, the public was also growing tired of the spectacle.

To lure patrons, the organisers resorted to novelties. Pigeon flights appeared in 1907. A year later, the *Leader* maintained that ballooning and parachuting had "more to do with drawing the big crowd than the afternoon's racing, which was very tame." In mixtures of spectacle and foolish insanity, balloonists clung to trapezes, performed parachute jumps and even tried to glide to earth while mounted on a cycle.²



At the first favorable opportunity during the Afternoon
... Sensational ...
Balloon Ascent
By the World's Greatest Aeronauts
Messrs. O'Donnell and Beebe's
Highest Flyers on Earth.
PARACHUTE RACING—
Thrilling and Daring ascent and Race from the clouds
return to the Ground for the First Time in this State.
A special motor car will follow the Aeronauts who will
be thrilling in the excitement. The man will be perfectly
safe, as the use of the "Lieber Folding" Parachute
reduces the danger to a minimum.
Ladies, do not be nervous, as although the performance
is thrilling in the extreme, the man will be perfectly
safe, as the use of the "Lieber Folding" Parachute
reduces the danger to a minimum.

It was hoped that the 1910 Austral would provide cycling with a fresh start. Advertisements promised a "Revival of the Pastime", as the sport was now "Clean" and "Straight", with "All the Old Element Passed Out." On top of that, just 10 months after Australia's first powered flight, the Melbourne Bicycle Club planned to delight spectators with the rare spectacle of an aeroplane taking to the air.

In 1910, the combination of aeronautics and cycling was not as incongruous as it appears now. In the *Australasian*, for example, these fields (and motoring) were jointly covered under the heading "Wheel Notes", while the French, in particular, regarded aviation contests as sporting events.³

Surprisingly, aviation historians have shown little interest in the appearance of Gaston Cugnet and his Blériot monoplane at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on December 3, 1910. However, the occasion deserves to be remembered as something more significant than a passing novelty, for Monsieur Cugnet was not in Australia by chance.

The Wright brothers had made the first successful heavier-than-air powered flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, in December 1903. Their achievement did not bring serious attention from the press. Between October 1905 and May 1908, they neither flew nor allowed anyone to inspect their machines.

In the meantime, France had emerged as the hub of aviation pioneering. In July 1909, the French dominance was emphatically displayed when Louis Blériot crossed the Channel in his Blériot XI monoplane. As H.G. Wells observed, Britain was "no longer ... an inaccessible island."⁴

The 37-minute flight brought the self-trained pilot more than enormous acclaim. For several years he had been developing his own aircraft designs. His feat immediately had a powerful effect on military and political thinking which, in turn, boosted the demand for his machines.

Unlike the Wrights, Blériot very quickly became known throughout the world. A month after the Channel was conquered, France's leading champagne manufacturers sponsored the first great aviation contest, a week at Rheims that attracted about half a million spectators.

Not surprisingly, it has been described as "the major international sporting event of 1909, eclipsing even the great automobile races that had captured sporting attention each summer since the turn of the century". Rheims changed attitudes to aviation. On both sides of the Atlantic, disbelief and astonishment gave way to "visions of an aeronautical paradise just around the corner, with aeroplanes replacing automobiles and 'aerial buses' to convey commuters."⁵

It was in this climate, with its "sudden sense of epochs shifting",⁶ that Wesley headmaster Lawrence Adamson sent Colin Defries "to England and France for the purposes of introducing aviation into Australia, a Blériot monoplane and a Wilbur Wright biplane being the outcome." The Wright Model A, reputedly the first powered, fixed-wing aeroplane imported into Australia, arrived in Sydney from France in November 1909.

Named "The Stella", the aircraft had been acquired with Adamson's financial support and the backing of theatrical entrepreneurs J & N. Tait. With Defries at the controls, the machine made Australia's first powered flight at Sydney's Victoria Park racecourse on December 9.

Defries' controlled journey in a short, straight line was not nearly as spectacular as the flights that were then being made in Europe. It was therefore left to escapologist Harry Houdini to demonstrate "the practical possibilities of the aeroplane" by performing Australia's first controlled, circling flight at Diggers Rest, on March 18, 1910.⁷

Lawrence Adamson's foray into aviation left the Melbourne Cricket Club member frustrated. His aircraft puzzled customs officials, for such machines were "obviously not on the list of dutiable articles". After much argument, it was decided that the Wright Model A "was a vehicle, n.e.i. (not elsewhere included), and as such was liable to 33 per cent. ad valorem duty".

The Wesley headmaster had also imported a Blériot monoplane, "but the difficulty and expense of getting someone to fly either machine proved insuperable and involved Adamson in a heavy loss." This came in the form of heavy duties – £798 was levied on the Wright and £250 on the Blériot.

Adamson's aircraft met an ignominious fate. In 1912, *Flight* reported that "they were eventually dismantled of their engines, and the remaining parts ... cast into the sea." Since the machines were no longer "being retained permanently", their destruction at least retrieved Adamson's money from H.M. Customs.⁸

Meanwhile, at Mia Mia, in central Victoria, John Duigan was also wrestling with the problems of powered flight. After constructing an unsuccessful kite and what he described as a "½-size Wright glider", Duigan and his brother Reg built a biplane fitted with a 20-horsepower vertical air-cooled engine. He reported that, "after sundry experiments on July 10th, 1910, I did, amongst others, a hop of 24ft."

Various modifications "increased the lengths of flights" until, on October 7, "before half a dozen spectators, I successfully covered a distance of 196 yards, rising about 12ft. high." Unlike many of his contemporaries, John Duigan was not a self-promoter. With a touch of reservation, he claimed that: "These flights, as far as I know, were the first to be made in Australia by an Australian-built machine."⁹

Four days after Duigan made what was his longest flight so far, the Melbourne Bicycle Club asked the MCC committee to permit an aeroplane flight during the 1910 Austral. At that point, it



would seem that the organisers wanted Duigan as their special attraction, for he later wrote:

... I received an offer of £100 to make a flight from the Melbourne Cricket Ground in December on the day of a big cycle meeting. This I was forced to refuse, the ground being totally unsuitable.¹⁰

However, when the MBC approached Gaston Cugnet, the Frenchman was only too willing to provide his services. For him, the prospect of performing before a large crowd, in what was then the temporary centre of national government, had enormous appeal.

Born in Mauritius on January 20, 1879, Cugnet held the 140th flying licence granted by the Aéro Club de France. Shortly after the certificate was issued on July 19, 1910, Cugnet had sailed for Australia, where the press reported on August 31 that a Blériot monoplane would soon be seen "whirring over Melbourne":

Such a flight is contemplated by M. Gaston Cugnet ... [who] has been sent out to Australia by M. Blériot, the great airman ... He is one of Blériot's best aviators. He will while in Australia study with M. Dupont, who accompanies him, the possibility of establishing a permanent aviation business in this country. If this establishment promises well, aviation schools will be formed, with a branch for the manufacture and repair of monoplanes.

On October 13, Cugnet accompanied Maxime Dupont, the "representative of M. Blériot in Australia", and Mr Erskine Scott, who represented the Pathé Frères film and recording company, to a meeting with Senator George Pearce, Minister for Defence, "to ask if he could see his way to start an aviation corps." The French deputation made a very attractive offer:

M. Dupont was prepared to supply machines at the lowest prices, and, should the Minister see his way clear, M. Cugnet, who had a diploma from the Aéro Club of France, would teach the corps free of charge.

Over the following days, Scott and Cugnet argued in the press that the Blériot monoplane was superior to any biplane. Contending that the monoplane offered easy storage and assembling, they hailed a recent order for 30 machines as evidence that the French government now considered that the Blériot was the best type for speed "and general all-round suitability".

On the day that the *Argus* published his letter, Cugnet told an Alliance Française soirée that "it would seem as if flying-machines would in France soon become as common as motor-cars." The aviator illustrated his talk with "some capital pictures of ascents and descents".¹¹

Late on November 15, Cugnet backed his words with "the most successful flight in the Commonwealth up to date" when he "soared" across the Altona property of MCC member (and VRC committeeman) William Henry Croker. After taxiing down the paddock, "the aeroplane slipped forward, dipped, then rose, and shot up to a height of 30ft." Much excitement followed:

Back over the course it had just traversed it came as steadily as a soaring eagle. The splutter of the engine came nearer, and as he passed over the heads of the spectators Mr. Cugnet shot up still higher. In answer to the ringing cheers that greeted his successful flight, the aviator waved a hand, then sped on in the direction of Williamstown. After travelling a mile in under two minutes the aviator took a turn to the north, then came back again along a two-mile course, during which he reached the height of between 100ft. and 200ft. Turning gracefully a mile away to the west, Mr. Cugnet soared over a clump of trees, swooped down and cleared a fence, and then coming back to the middle of the paddock again ended his brilliantly successful flight by landing safely.

After "a continuous flight of seven minutes" that covered "a distance of slightly over six miles", the Frenchman had landed "with all the Australian aviation records in his possession."¹²

Cugnet's achievement aroused enormous interest, leading to the promise of "a public trial of the aeroplane" on the Altona Estate on Saturday November 26. The occasion would also boast a military band and several refreshment marquees.

The Victorian Railways and a steamship company made "special arrangements ... for the carrying of visitors to the aerodrome." The *Argus* noted that the flight would be "under the patronage of both the Federal and State Ministry, and other distinguished citizens". In addition, Glen's music warehouse offered a hundred tickets for the vice-regal reserve at a guinea each.

Thousands flocked to Altona "to witness what was announced as the first public air flight in Victoria". Since the occasion was regarded "as of such importance as to warrant the christening of the flyer", William Morris Hughes was invited to perform the honours. Naming the aircraft "Australia", the acting Prime Minister "smashed a bottle of champagne, which poured over himself and he splashed the machine with a few drops."

Unfortunately, as the breeze changed from "a light southerly into a sharp wind coming in freshening gusts", Cugnet decided that "the wind was so strong that any attempt to fly would have been to risk serious injury to the only machine ... we have in Australia." The result was that the crowd became "bad tempered and sarcastic". Amid "fears for the safety of the machine", Cugnet reminded the press that he was "not a showman". Instead, his purpose was "to establish a school of aviation" in Australia. Nevertheless, he promised "another attempt within a week."¹³

The forthcoming Austral Wheel Race therefore presented an ideal opportunity for Cugnet to advance his cause. On November 29, the MCC committee discussed a letter from Mr McCullagh, secretary of the Melbourne Bicycle Club, about the "ascent" of the Blériot on both days of the Austral Wheel Race.

When asked back in October "to approve of the use of the Ground for Aeroplane flights", the club had been reluctant to agree "without further information". Now, by a margin of one vote, and with the demand for "a proper guarantee", the committee gave their permission. A day later, the MBC announced that Gaston Cugnet, "the Blériot flier" would give a display at the MCG on December 3.

Though the promoters would accept no responsibility "should the weather conditions be unfavourable", an accompanying

advertisement promised "The most sensational flight ever attempted in any part of the universe". Intending spectators were also assured that Monsieur Cugnet was "most anxious" not to disappoint the public, for he "feels that his reputation as an AVIATOR is at stake."¹⁴

The Frenchman had more than his reputation "at stake". Though the dignitaries assembled at Altona would have understood his reasons for not taking to the air, his failure to fly had not improved prospects for the sale of Blériot machines to the Australian government. Another such episode would only further damage the interests that had sent him to Australia.



Awaiting the Flight.

On the first afternoon of the Austral, the crowd of at least 10,000 enjoyed "a mild breeze from the south". As the *Argus* observed, "probably not a hundredth of them considered that the breeze ... would be an obstacle to the aviation display." In such conditions, a common remark among the spectators was, "If the thing can't go up on a day like this, what is the use of it?" Around 5.30, with the cycling events completed, signs of impatience appeared:

"Come on, monsieur!" "Let her go!" shouted men at the eastern end of the enclosure, to which the aeroplane was nearest.

In some quarters, "a grumble of discontent" could be heard. By six o'clock, conditions had worsened, with the flag over the Pavilion floating "well out in the breeze". In these early years of aviation, wind was a fearsome enemy for pilots. In a frail Blériot, the risk could certainly not be ignored. (In 1927, after his epic transatlantic flight, Charles Lindbergh would tell Monsieur Blériot that he "wouldn't go up in your aeroplane for even one minute.")¹⁵

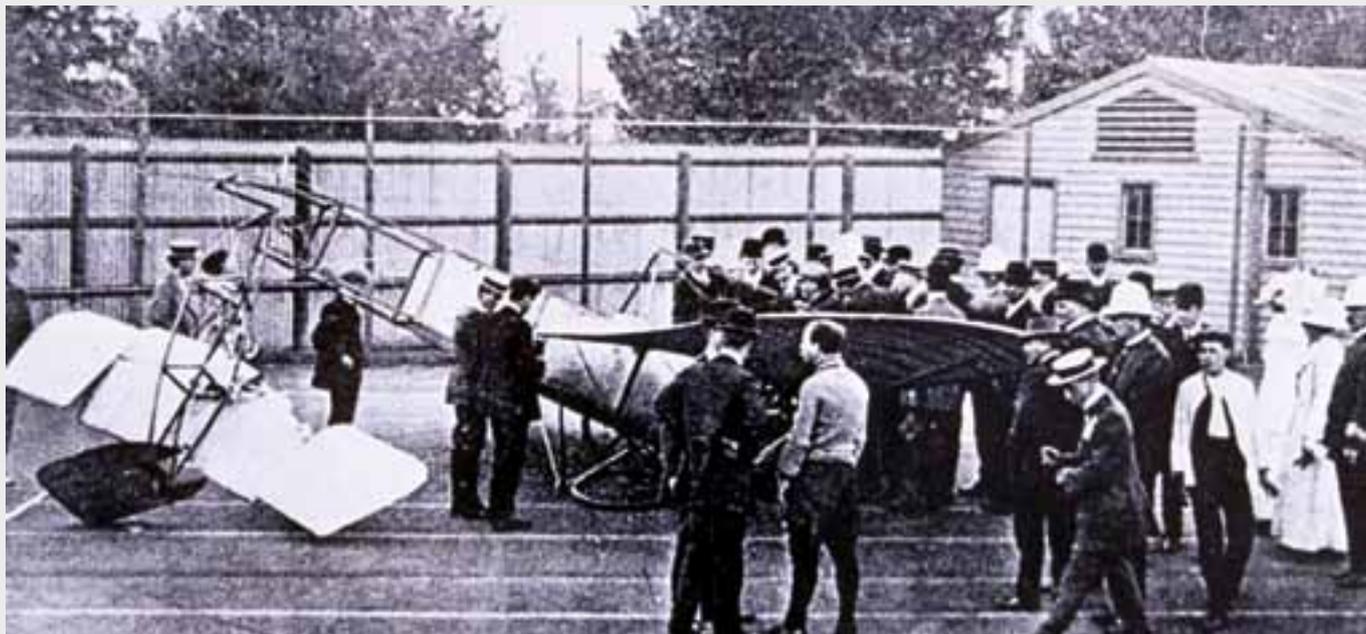
Nevertheless, windy though it was, Cugnet decided to fly. Though he later admitted that "it would be dangerous", he "was anxious not to disappoint the spectators" and he simply had to seize this precious opportunity to display his monoplane's merits. At about 6.30, to the strains of *La Marseillaise*, he appeared on the arena.

Usually, Cugnet "had a stern, sad expression"¹⁶ but he was now skipping "along like a school girl". The Blériot's engine was started, and soon the aeroplane was running forward "on its three pneumatic tyred wheels towards the western end of the enclosure":

After wheeling for about 40 yards, it rose into the air. But it had flown only some 40 yards at a height of about 15ft., when it wheeled to the left, stopped, and alighted again on the grass ...

The monoplane was then taken back to the eastern end of the arena, "and again faced westward":

This time the aeroplane ran on its wheels to within about 80 yards of the western boundary of the enclosure, heading outward for a gap between the new members' stand and the



Standing in the MCG tennis courts, Gaston Cugnet surveys the wreckage of his monoplane.

big scoring board. Then it soared up to a height of about 20ft. but in passing over the spiked ironwork fence at the top edge of the cycle track ... the aeroplane dropped several feet. The end of the elevator, projecting behind like the body of a dragon fly, caught in the iron spikes, and the aeroplane came down like a steeplechaser at Flemington.

According to Cugnet, "the back wheel remained on one of the spikes." As the monoplane "fell into a tennis court", Richmond lads Roy Wills and Horace Crawford had a narrow escape. They had been picking up tennis balls on the MCC courts, and were lying on a brick ledge beside the court "at the very moment at which the tail caught, and the wreck went down." The unexpected arrival of the Blériot also interrupted the match in progress, much "to the astonishment of the players."

A great roar of dismay went up. From all parts people rushed in a converging stream, which the police could not check, towards the iron fence ...

Unhurt, the pilot "nimble climbed out of his seat" to find a sorry sight:

The propeller was broken to pieces, and the whole of the metal undergear was crumpled or broken. Only half of the elevator remained attached. The rear half was broken off, save for a useless connection of a few twisted wires.

Standing beside the wreckage, Cugnet explained that, as he cleared the fence, "there was a gust, an eddy. The aeroplane was depressed by the wind ... and we came down ... You see the rest. But I have tried." The *Adelaide Advertiser* correctly described his effort as the "Flight That Was Too Daring".

Even in ideal conditions, the notion of flying between the scoreboard and the members' stand, through an opening that was "only about two and a half times as wide as the machine", was hazardous, to say the least.¹⁷

The implications of the crash were considerable. Shattered with the Blériot were hopes that the Austral Wheel Race could regain its former glories at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. A week later, the final of the event drew only a poor crowd. Many years would pass before cycling's fleeting return to the arena where it had once reigned supreme.

At the invitation of Charles Lindsay Campbell, founder of the Queensland Aero Club, Cugnet took the aircraft to Brisbane but, in exhibiting the first powered aircraft in Queensland, his display was limited to ground running. The Blériot drive for eminence in the Australian market was over.

ALF BATCHELDER

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BOOK REVIEWS

Duncan Hamilton

Harold Larwood

London: Quercus, 2009
ISBN: 978 1 847249494 (hbk)

It is rare that I find fault with a book that has won accolades and prizes. And this is so particularly so for a work of high literary quality and, moreover, of manifestly extensive and thorough research.

Hamilton's generally amiable demeanour, however, is marred by certain comments that are almost defamatory of certain cricketing people whose overall qualities are thought by most judicious judges to be admired.

The most blatant of these animadversions was aimed at Sir Donald Bradman, who is accused of all kinds of disagreeable flaws, behaviour and attitudes.

The foreword sets the tone: Apart from the vulgarity of its title, the caption, "Kicking Bradman up the A...", it is merely neither polite nor accurate to assert that Larwood admitted that Bodyline was designed and executed solely (sic) for one purpose, "To Kick Bradman".

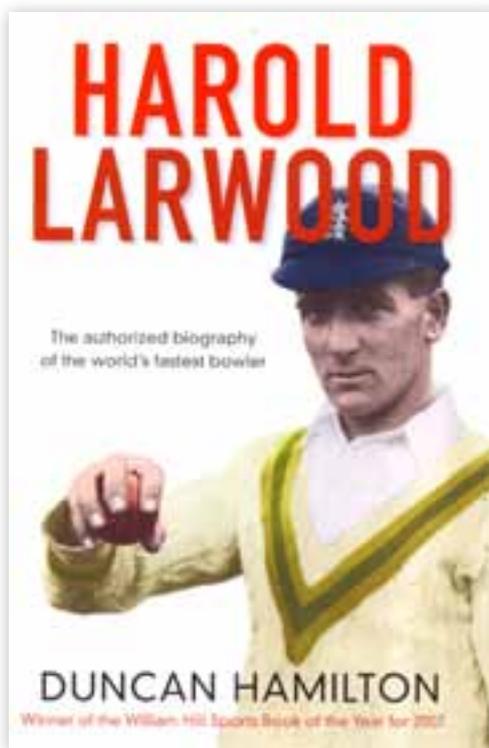
After all, Bradman did not exactly fail, with an average of 58! And Bodyline was directed at every other specialist batsman in the Australian Test teams, and even some non-specialist batsmen.

It is distasteful to the point of cruelty to criticise Bradman for wearing a name badge at the Centenary Test Match dinner "as if one of the famous men in Australia needed to be identified".

Indeed, it is rather an insult to derogate from the truth that Bradman is the most famous Australian who ever lived! Hamilton then gratuitously lampoons Bradman's "anodyne" and over-long dinner speech! He even accuses Bradman of insulting Larwood by specifically not talking about Bodyline.

Another iconic giant of cricket history who is constantly pilloried – indeed, defamed – is Sir Pelham Warner, who after all founded "The Cricketer", the best cricket journal of the 20th Century, as well as captaining England successfully in 1903/04. Hamilton describes him as "pompous, pious, duplicitous – put simply, a bastard". (p.79)

Sir Julian Cahn, no minor champion of cricket, is described as a "lackey" of the MCC, a "toff who really knew nothing about professional cricket or cricketers".



But the most blatant faux pas, in my estimation, is Hamilton's consistent praise of hostile fast bowling. His credo is that "fast bowling is a bloody affair and the fast bowler is like the slaughterman in the abattoir" (p10). He lauds Larwood for being a "devastatingly brutal and physically intimidating bowler, who routinely inflicted pain" (p11).

And, he likens Larwood to the following bowlers who epitomise that encomium – Lillee, Thomson, Marshall, Garner, Miller, Snow, Trueman, Tyson, Hall, Lindwall, Brett Lee et al (p10).

Who is missing from that list? The greatest of them all, Brian Statham, who did not have the slightest element of the "slaughterman's purpose". Statham was the perfect gentleman fast bowler. And, if the reader thinks that that statement is special pleading by a Red Rose supporter, let him peruse the judgment of Sir Neville Cardus. (To avoid that criticism, I am inclined to add Richard Hadlee, Graham McKenzie and Stuart Clark.)

The judgment of Hamilton that Larwood was the finest of all fast bowlers, and was proved harshly treated, is not justified by statistics. The case is not proved by comparison with Statham but by a perusal of the book's appendices.

Larwood took 78 wickets in 21 Tests. Of these, 33 were taken in two Tests of the Bodyline Series, arguably by foul means. Thus, from his remaining 16 Test matches he took only 45 wickets. Statham took 252 wickets in Test cricket, 60 per cent of which were bowled or LBW. And he never bowled a bouncer!

Despite the sympathetic tenor of Hamilton's thesis, I cannot accept that Larwood has been underrated. Moreover, I rather think that he enjoyed bowling Bodyline.

Duncan Hamilton has also published a book on the soccer players and coach, Brian Clough, who must go down as one of the most unpleasant, disagreeable footballers of all time. And that book also is replete with expletives!

J. NEVILLE TURNER

BJ Penn with David Weintraub

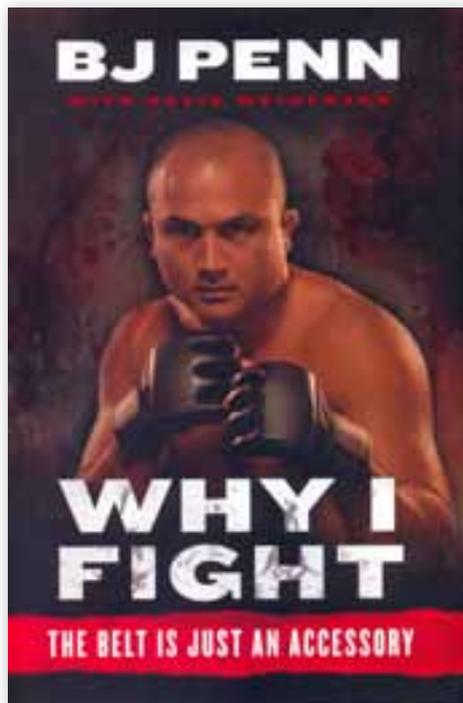
Why I Fight: The Belt is Just an Accessory

New York: Harper Collins, 2010
ISBN: 978 0 06180365 9 (hbk)

Why I Fight, by Ultimate Fighting Champion BJ Penn, is the story of how a young boy from a town in Hawaii, grew to become one of the best fighters to ever enter the Octagon in the UFC. The UFC, or Ultimate Fighting Championship, has risen in recent years to become the biggest stage for all Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fighters all over the world.

From the start, BJ Penn writes of the overwhelming support he received from his family, support that is still evident ringside at all of his bouts through two of his brothers. Through the support and the closeness of his family during his upbringing, BJ reveals how he learnt discipline, respect and honor – attributes that are almost essential for fighters all over.

Through the book, it is evident early on that BJ was born to fight, a point which was made in the opening minutes of his life, when the umbilical cord got wrapped around his neck. BJ survived against all the odds, and from the moment he entered the world he carried the fighting spirit that has led him to two UFC World Championship titles.



This, however, was not evident to BJ until he was 17 years old. In the summer of 1996, BJ met Tom Callos. Up until that time, BJ was a skilled soccer player and apart from the occasional street fight and sparring on his porch at home with his brothers and friends, BJ Penn had no other experience in any form of fighting.

Tom introduced BJ to the world of Brazilian Jujitsu and, with some slightly forceful encouragement from his father, BJ began to train heavily and soon realised his passion for the sport.

From here, BJ explains how Brazilian Jujitsu created a world of opportunity for him – from the lows of leaving home to chase his dream, to the highs of being crowned the best fighter in the world in two different classes, only the second fighter to achieve that feat. This book draws attention to the blood, sweat and tears that surround MMA fighters, and the determination, grit and hunger required to reach the top, to be the very best. Twice.

For MMA fans, especially fans of the UFC, Why I Fight provides a great insight to the world of Mixed Martial Arts and is highly recommended whether you are a fan of BJ Penn or not. As he puts it: "The belt is just an accessory."

**REVIEWED BY RMIT PLACEMENT STUDENT
MOHAMMED ALI BASHIR.**

John Murray (editor)

Our Great Game: The Photographic History of Australian Football

Docklands (Vic): Slattery Media Group, 2010
ISBN: 978 0 980744712 (hbk)

Many might mistakenly regard this volume as just another "coffee table book". It is a lot more than that.

John Murray and Geoff Slattery have put together a wonderful selection of more than 250 photographs from numerous sources, including newspapers, libraries and private collections that provide the reader with an insight into the history, the humour and the emotion of our national game.

To a large degree it focuses on the individuals, which is shown by the division into chapters entitled Team, Play, Coach, Portrait, Joy, Despair and Fans. It covers not only the past and current Australian Football League teams but also includes a number of historic photographs of early Victorian and interstate sides, both metropolitan and country.

Historically the game has changed enormously since its early years in the 1850s and the images of the local teams and the grounds on which they did battle give an outstanding sense of the atmosphere that existed in those earlier days.



However, there are several errors in the captioning of the photographs. The photograph on the title pages to the chapter entitled "Coach" (pages 126-7) is clearly taken at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, not the Adelaide Oval. The photograph on page 131 of Charlie Sutton addressing his Footscray side has the players wearing white "away" shorts which would indicate it was not taken at the Western Oval as the caption states.

The photograph on page 303 is probably not at Victoria Park as stated, again because the Collingwood players are wearing away shorts. The opposition player in the same image, noted as being from Footscray, is actually representing Fitzroy.

These small blemishes aside, anyone who has followed Australian football for any length of time will find a number of photographs, some already familiar, others never seen before, that will bring back memories, happy or otherwise.

QUENTIN MILLER

Norman Harris

What Are You Doing Out Here? Heroism and Distress at a Cricket Test

Hamilton (NZ): West Side Publishing, 2010
ISBN: 978 0473 163310 (pbk)

One of the most spectacular rail trips in the world is the train that runs between New Zealand's former capital and its present one. The NZ Tranz Metro that may be taken either through the night or by day traverses typical New Zealand mountainous terrain, stopping at charming stations en route.

Its spectacular hills and dales may be absorbed to the fullest if the passenger is lucky enough to obtain a seat in the final carriage, which consists of large glass windows. The carriages are rather quaint and they are drawn by an even quainter diesel engine. So rugged and winding is the journey that, at one point, its route surveys a complete circle in order to take in a mountain.

I took this journey in March 2010 so as to arrive at the venue of the Second Test match between New Zealand and Australia. Both grounds, those at Basin Reserve at Wellington and Seddon Park in Hamilton, are exceptionally attractive.

But the train journey is notorious for a tragedy of unprecedented horror, which gave rise to an occurrence that has become one of the most memorable acts of heroism in the entire history of cricket.

This situation has now been the subject of a recent book, the launch of which I attended during the Hamilton Test match. The book was admirably launched by my delightful friend, David Mealing, the curator of the New Zealand Cricket Museum (situated at Basin Reserve, Wellington), who has worked wonders in developing that museum as one of the finest in the cricket world, and who himself is granted special acknowledgement by the author. (I also saw a play on the theme at a theatre in Wellington. It was, in fact, a monologue, the actor acting as Bob Blair.)

The facts are these: A New Zealand team was touring South Africa for the first time in 1953/54. The Second Test, held at Ellis Park, Johannesburg, began on Christmas Eve. South Africa won the toss and scored 271. Meanwhile, the fiancée of Bob Blair, New Zealand's 21-year-old fast bowler, had taken the day train to Auckland with a girlfriend.

Having left Tangiwai Station, it approached a bridge to cross the Whangacku River below the River Ruapehu. Unbeknown to the



train driver, the ice cave of this mountain had collapsed. Water poured down the slopes, picking up sand and rocky debris and gravitating towards a gorge in the Whangacku River.

The bridge was buffeted by the torrent. When the train was half way across the bridge, supporting piers gave way, and six of the carriages were dragged into the river. Bob Blair's fiancée was in the third carriage and lost her life.

This news reached Johannesburg on Boxing Day as New Zealand was about to begin its innings. The recognised batsmen were, with one exception, uprooted by an outstanding South African attack, which comprised that country's finest ever spinner (Hugh Tayfield) and a dangerously hostile young fast fowler, Neil Adcock. The latter contrived to injure two batsmen, Lawrie Miller and Bert Sutcliffe, both of whom had to retire hurt. But both later returned, anxious to avoid the follow-on.

Sutcliffe was in magnificent form. But when the ninth wicket fell at the other end, he walked back to the pavilion, certain that Bob Blair in his sorrow would not be in any mood to bat. (Blair was, in fact, a tailender of little batting skill.)

To the surprise of Sutcliffe, South African fielders and the whole crowd, however, Blair appeared, insisting on "playing for his side". Sutcliffe and Blair succeeded in saving the follow-on. Before Blair was stumped off Tayfield, Sutcliffe hit six sixes, and was not out for 82.

Although New Zealand lost the match, Sutcliffe and Blair were lionised for their courage. This event is rightly glorified in New Zealand as perhaps the greatest sporting moment in its history.

Bob Blair continued to play for New Zealand with success. He married, and continues to live in Cheshire, England.

The author, Norman Harris, who was born in Hamilton, has lived some years in Durham, England where he reports cricket for that recently successful county. He is a prolific and versatile writer – among his books are a biography of New Zealand's finest singer, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, and a book on the footballing brothers, Bobby and Jack Charlton.

"What Are You Doing Out Here?" is a moving and inspirational account of this heroic event. Its launch in Hamilton met with sorrowful reception, not least from the delightful John Reid, New Zealand's greatest captain, who was in tears.

J. NEVILLE TURNER



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