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CURRENT LIFE MEMBERS

CORRESPONDENCE AND CONTRIBUTIONS: ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE SECRETARY
GERRY SCHEMBRI, PO BOX 1284, MOUNTAIN GATE 3156 OR EMAIL: GERRY.SCHEMBRI@GMAIL.COM
VCAUSA WEBSITE: http://vcausa.vic.cricket.com.au
FROM THE EDITOR

As I write we await the final selection for the first Test Match of the summer. With Victorian, James Pattinson being ruled out for the final XI, despite being named in the 14-man squad, for a recent on-field offence, the bowling line-up looks fairly certain to comprise a New South Wales attack. But the batting is not quite as clear cut. Certain critics of the initial selection questioned how the name of Cameron Bancroft was even in the fourteen, but I guess given the results for previous members of the “top six”, one might well ask, “Who else?” Nevertheless, we all look forward to the first matches for Australia this summer towards the ICC World Test Championship.

In this issue it is again the turn of The President to deliver his “Musings” in which he has invited any umpire reader to raise with him issues to be brought to the attention of the Umpire and Coach Education Manager during a meeting which no doubt will be scheduled some time soon.

I am grateful to Chris Grant for bringing to my attention the article outlining the T20 International Debut by Shawn Craig. Also, I trust you enjoy the article, introduced via the front-cover picture, on the annual Prime Minister’s XI Match to which Geoff Joshua was appointed as one on-field umpire.

The articles “All Countries Need Appropriate Support for Umpires”, “BBL Teams Take ‘Moneyball’ Approach” and “Funny Game No Laughing Matter” have been taken from a recent issue of Playing the Game, so I trust you find these of some interest.

Some readers may be surprised to learn of the recent resignation from the CV Umpiring Panel by former President and Life Member, John Collins. The more than 450-games of umpiring experience which leaves the panel with John’s departure cannot be immediately replaced but we wish him well for his future in umpiring. He has assured me that the new column, “John Collins’ Wisdom” will continue as a column throughout the season, despite his departure from the CV Panel so again I invite any reader to contribute items of “wisdom” to this column for the remaining issues of this season.

Macca’s Book Review for this issue features Sharpes Tiger – The Siege of Seringapatam, 1799 by Bernard Cornwell, a book which is set in colonial India and we are grateful to Alan McCarthy for maintaining this column for the benefit of readers. But as I have written previously, this is a column to which we would welcome reviews from any reader. As one can see from perusing this column, it does not have to be a cricket book but just something that you have read yourself and found of interest.

I should also like to draw to readers’ attention the advertisement on the back page for “Shrek The Musical” and we thank Sandra Kelly for arranging a batch of tickets for this musical as the result of an advanced block booking at the most reasonable price for a modern musical of $101.00. Any reader interested in taking up this ticket offer in order to go to the musical on 26th February, 2020, should contact Sandra Kelly (Mob: 0431 927 810) before 6th December next, when she must make the final payment for the ticket booking at this price.

Other future items of interest to VCAUSA members are listed in the ongoing calendar on the back page also.

Trevor Finlayson
...AND THE PRESIDENT – PRESIDENTIAL MUSINGS

On Melbourne Cup Day we welcomed 50 members and guests to the Carlton Cricket Club rooms where we again enjoyed the cooking of John Collins and tried to win a few dollars at Trevor Finlayson’s sweeps table. Kim Faulkner led the way with some sculptured fruit platters and donated port (age unknown so it was gifted to the last place getters) and Shane Herbert (retired Northcote scorer) provided some delicious wines. Thanks to all Life members, members and partners who contributed food and time on the day, it was great to see new members chatting to members of long standing and their partners.

Unfortunately, our match against the Australian Cricket Society had to be cancelled due to the weather on Sunday, 3rd November. We will try to reschedule this match. Make yourself available to play, umpire, score or watch our game against the Mount Waverley CC Veterans later in the season. Our committee will be in Penola in June 2020 to plan the 90th Anniversary of the Crockett Shield match against the South Australian umpires and scorers. All our social matches are an opportunity to discover players who will represent us at Easter 2021 in Adelaide.

As the President of the VCAUSA, I meet with the Umpire and Coach Education Manager during the season to discuss issues. If you would like any issue or idea raised please contact a committee member or the Secretary, Gerry Schembri. Members are able to attend and observe VCAUSA Committee of Management meetings. Our next meeting is on Tuesday, 3rd December at 7:30 pm at Doveton College. Just let Gerry Schembri know that you are coming.

While the wet spring has seen a frustrating start to the season, we can only hope that rain is falling in the catchments and filling the dams. With climate change threatening extended periods of drought, we shall need all the water we can get in the future to keep cricket grounds in good condition.

Winston Churchill once said, “Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.” And on the subject of water he said, “This water is not fit to drink; to make it palatable we had to add whiskey!”

Alan McCarthy

A JOKE FOR YOUR AMUSEMENT

The jilted bride drove to the cricket ground and confronted her fiancé who was buckling on his pads.

“How could you do it? Everyone at the church except you. Why didn’t you come?”

“Don’t you ever listen?” He answered, as he pulled on his gloves. “I distinctly said only if it rained!”

(Thanks to John Collins)
SHAWN CRAIG T20 INTERNATIONAL DEBUT

Cricket Australia (CA) National Umpire Panel (NUP) member Shawn Craig stepped out for his T20 International Debut (together with NUP member Paul Wilson, in the third Series Match between Australia and Sri Lanka at the MCG on 1st November, 2019.

Craig is a former First-Class cricketer who played 20 First-Class and 20 Domestic One-Day matches for Victoria. In 2010/11 Craig commenced his umpiring journey in the Victorian Premier Cricket ranks. He was appointed to the 2nd XI Grand Final in his first season and made his 1st XI umpiring debut the following year. In the 2012/13 season, Craig entered the Cricket Australia umpiring pathway on the former “Project Panel” and was appointed to the CA Under-19 Male National Championships in Adelaide. He returned to the CA Under-19 Championships the following year in Hobart. In the same season, Craig stood in his first Women’s One-Day International and T20 International when Australia hosted England. He has stood in a total of seven Women’s ODIs and 10 Women’s T20 Internationals.

Craig was elevated to the Cricket Australia National Umpire Panel in 2014/15 and soon after made his List A Debut in the match between New South Wales and Western Australia in October 2014. Later that month, Craig’s First-Class debut came in the Sheffield Shield match between South Australia and Queensland at the Adelaide Oval. Since joining the National Umpire Panel in 2014, Craig has officiated in 28 First-Class and 18 List-A matches. In the shortest format, Craig has stood in a total of 37 BBL matches since debuting in December 2014. Among the highlights, Craig was appointed to the Final of the 2017/18 tournament between the Adelaide Strikers and Hobart Hurricanes at the Adelaide Oval.

Among his First-Class matches, five have been umpired overseas. Craig has participated in the Cricket Australia Umpire Exchange program for the past three years running. In 2016/17, he travelled to New Zealand, in 2017/18 to South Africa and last season to India. Last season, Craig was awarded the inaugural Ray Isherwood Representative Umpire Award from the Victorian Umpire and Scorers Association (VCAUSA). This award is presented to the best Victorian Representative umpire of the Year. At the beginning of this season, Craig was elevated to the International Cricket Council (ICC) International Panel of umpires.

For the record, the match was won comfortably by Australia by seven wickets, giving Australia a “clean sweep” in the three-match series. After Aaron Finch won the toss and invited Sri Lanka to bat, they made 6/142 from their 20 overs, with Kusal Perera top scoring with 57 and Mitchell Starc, Kane Richardson and Pat Cummins having two wickets each. In reply, Australia made 3/145 in 17.4 overs (Aaron Finch (37), David Warner (57 N.O.) and Ashton Turner (22 N.O.).

(Article courtesy of Cricket Australia Community Umpire Website)
Being a self-confessed right winger, I was pretty excited to be appointed to the Prime Minister’s XI Match for 2019. The match this year was to be a T20 for the first time, and was between the Prime Minister’s XI and Sri Lanka, on Thursday evening, 24th October, 2019. My partner for the game was Troy Penman, who was umpiring his first List A match, as well as Darren Close as the third umpire and the match referee Daryl Harper.

Before I arrived in Canberra, I had to read another set of Playing Conditions, being the ICC T20 Conditions. They differ from other Playing Conditions, especially in relation to timings, weather, and the use of the third umpire, so I had to get to know them.

I arrived in Canberra on Wednesday afternoon, at the same time as Daryl Harper, the match referee. The other colleagues had been delayed, so Daryl and I went to Manuka Oval and did a venue inspection and had a meeting with the match manager and the curator at that time. We established that there was not going to be a video screen during the match, so something that had not been taken into account was how they were going to display the third umpire decisions. The old style lights were actually wired to a different room, so we were able to arrange having the third umpire be moved. This is not something that can be done quickly, so shows the value of venue inspections, especially at grounds that don’t host many professional matches.

One of the previous traditions of the officials and players in the Prime Minister’s XI match, is to attend an evening function the night before the game at The PM’s Lodge. This year they decided to break with tradition, and we were instead invited to a morning tea at the Prime Minister’s private courtyard at Parliament House on the morning of the game. Whilst a tad disappointed that I didn’t get to go to The Lodge, this was still a great honour.

So off we went to Parliament House and enjoyed the hospitality of the Honourable Scott Morrison. Also joining us were the Minister for Sport and Recreation, Richard Colbeck, and the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael McCormack. Michael is actually an absolute cricket tragic and has done some umpiring, which we found out after meeting him.

All selfies done and dusted, it was time to prepare for the match, so we went back to Manuka Oval, especially so Darren could get a look at the third umpire’s box and we could do a very quick pitch inspection, this time with my colleagues for the day. Then a coffee meeting to discuss playing conditions, and other scenarios, and back to our hotel for an afternoon rest.

Arriving at the ground that evening, we got ourselves ready a lot quicker than we normally would because we were going to be having photographs with the Prime Minister along with both teams, as well as the national anthems of both competing countries.
With all the pre-match festivities out of the way, it was time for the match. My first over, being the second over of the match, was an interesting one, as I had a local ACT lad by the name of Djali Bloomfield bowling from my end. Djali was a lovely guy, and a little in awe just to be out there with some of his heroes, so when Danushka Gunathilak took a swat outside the off stump to one and I heard a clear nick, Djali was a little scared to appeal. The wicket keeper, Tim Nielson, threw the ball into the air, as a regulation wicket, and I just had to give it out. As you all know, it is a weird feeling, and a little scary, giving a batsman out when the bowler is not appealing. Luckily for me stump mics and slow-motion replays clearly vindicated the fine edge.

Later, I had another interesting moment, when Chris Green was bowling to Avishka Fernando. He bowled a ball straight down the leg side that beat everyone including the keeper, as the batsman started to get into position to play a reverse sweep, but then let the ball go. Being down the legside I immediately called wide, but as soon as I called wide, I realised that was the incorrect call. I waited for the ball to get down to the boundary, then I came up on the radio and informed the other officials that I was going to change the call and correct it to byes. I then signalled the revoke of my decision to the scorers and then signalled byes and a boundary four. Whilst I have to admit that it wasn’t the cleanest looking piece of work, it was the correct thing to do.

The rest of the match went smoothly and with an exciting finish, the Prime Minister’s XI, whilst 9 wickets down, needed one run to win off the last ball, or a tie, meaning a potential super over. The ball was bowled down leg side and became the winning wide!

Final result – Prime Minister’s XI 9/132 (19.5) defeated Sri Lanka 8/131 (20 overs)

Another quick chat with the Prime Minister after the game (instigated by him) ensured a memorable evening. Another enjoyable honour and an opportunity that I have been extremely fortunate to be granted.

Geoff Joshua

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ALL COUNTRIES NEED APPROPRIATE SUPPORT FOR UMPIRES: TAUFEL

Administrators across the globe were urged to provide appropriate support for umpires, just as they do for players, by having people in administration and logistics to focus on their needs, says former Australian umpire and match officials administrator, Simon Taufel. He made the comments in Mumbai on Thursday while speaking to local umpires about their craft.

Taufel said that when “Sourav Ganguly became the president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India recently, he talked about how important it is to have a strong domestic system, something umpires are also part of.”

He “encouraged every country, not just India, to have an umpires’ manager, to have an umpires’ coach, to have an umpires’ trainer, to have people in administration and logistics to solely look after umpiring and refereeing. If you want people to achieve their potential, if you want them to become world class, they need support, they need an environment of trust, safety and respect, meritocracy and transparency, exactly as the players do. And umpires need to know what is expected of them via an appropriate assessment process.”

Taufel also stressed that umpires are human, saying: “When an umpire gets it wrong, we feel terrible, we feel bad. It hurts because we make an impact on the game.” He also spoke about ‘Mankading’, saying “I know some people don’t like it and I am one of those people. It’s a poor way of playing cricket, but it is a Law of the game. So if you don’t want the umpire to give you out, then don’t leave [your crease] too early.”

(cont’d on page 10)
CUP DAY BBQ REPORT

The Cup Day BBQ, in principle to welcome new panel members and to enable them to meet other members of the Association, was again held at the Carlton Cricket Club. One might have thought that the disturbing news in the press regarding the treatment of old and retired race horses and its effect on both Melbourne Spring Carnival attendances and the monies being “invested” by punters, would have been evident amongst VCAUSA punters. But such was not the case. A record number of seven sweeps was necessary to satisfy the demands of those attending. The results are summarised below and congratulations to all winners but commiserations to losers. One quite senior Association member remarked to me that he had actually picked the winner, Vow and Declare, on the basis of the weight that the nag was carrying but he did not gain financially from his knowledge. But like all horse races, there is little point in guessing the winner if you have nothing invested on the event.

There was a pleasing attendance of over 40 members, partners and families. It was very pleasing to welcome two new panel members, Nick Davies and Bharath Rao. As usual there was a prize for the most attractive fascinator (this year to Sandra Kelly). But in addition, for the first time, awards were made to the best-dressed family, (the Schache Family, Robbi, Glenn, Chysalia and Savannah), the best dressed lady (Heather Holt) and the best dressed gentleman (the Bookie for the day!).

Master Chef, John Collins again barbequed sausages and chicken pieces to perfection and thanks to Sylvie Schembri, Heather Holt, Bernadette Bomford, Tony Ventura, Jasmine Chatten, Sue McCarthey and Chris Dey, there were adequate supplies of nibbles, salads and desserts. Shane Herbert must also be acknowledged for raiding his cellar to provide some excellent wines. As an additional novelty this year, Kim Faulkner brought along several old bottles of port, given to her by one of her “clients” for “a worthy cause.”. The “committee decision” was that they should accompany each “last place” refund in the sweeps. It would be interesting to receive reports from the recipients of these bottles, to learn if they received a quality prize or a bottle of vinegar! May I suggest that any “winner” of these bottles of port, might like to write a “Letter to the Editor” to tell readers about the contents of the bottle which her/her was awarded as a “Last Place” sweep prize.

As for the “Race that stops the Nation”, the protest against the initial second-placed horse for interference in the final 100 m, was the cause of a long delay for the “bookie” in paying out and, as is now history, this long delay was worth the wait, particularly for those who had drawn Il Paradiso.

Sweep Results:

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<th>Sweep 1</th>
<th>Sweep 2</th>
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Ed.

Sandra Kelly is awarded her prize for the most attractive fascinator. (Picture courtesy Will Downey)

Robbi and Savannah Schache, clearly members of “The Best-Dressed Family” (Picture courtesy Kim Faulkner)

The best-dressed lady, Heather Holt and Darrell Downey (Picture courtesy Will Downey)
1. Vow and Declare  
    C. & M. Andrews  
2. Prince of Arran  
    Alan Britton  
3. Il Paradiso  
    Vi Baird  
Last.  
    Twilight Payment  
    Paul Welbourn  
    Tim Dey  
    Jordan Kelly  
    Margaret Andrews  
    Greg Hooper  
    Graeme Finlayson  
    Bernadette Bomford  

Sweep 4  
1. Vow and Declare  
    Emma Kleehammer  
2. Prince of Arran  
    Margaret Andrews  
3. Il Paradiso  
    Tim Horton  
Last.  
    Twilight Payment  
    Jack Green  
    Wally E  
    Andre Conradie  
    Glenn Schache  

Sweep 5  
1. Vow and Declare  
    Teresa Ventura  
2. Prince of Arran  
    Will Downey  
3. Il Paradiso  
    Vi Baird  
Last.  
    Twilight Payment  
    Heather Holt  

Sweep 6  
1. Vow and Declare  
    Emma Kleehammer  
2. Prince of Arran  
    Margaret Andrews  
3. Il Paradiso  
    Vi Baird  
Last.  
    Twilight Payment  
    Jack Green  
    Wally E  
    Andre Conradie  
    Glenn Schache  

Sweep 7  
1. Vow and Declare  
    Teresa Ventura  
2. Prince of Arran  
    Will Downey  
3. Il Paradiso  
    Vi Baird  
Last.  
    Twilight Payment  
    Jack Green  
    Wally E  
    Andre Conradie  
    Glenn Schache  

And a few more Cup-Day Pics!

Master Chef, John Collins (Picture courtesy Will Downey)

The “Bookie” and his assistants, (L→R) Benjamin Denmead, Declan and Lachlan Willis (Picture courtesy Kim Faulkner)

Glenn Schache, proud father of “The Best-Dressed Family” (Picture courtesy Robbie Schache)

Doting Grandparents, Leyann and Scott Olufson (Picture courtesy Will Downey)

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ALL COUNTRIES NEED APPROPRIATE SUPPORT FOR UMPIRES: TAUFEL (cont'd from page 8)

Asked about plans by the Indian Premier League to introduce an extra television umpire whose focus will be purely on front-foot no balls, Taufel did not give a straight answer, saying he was unaware of the details and therefore could not judge whether the proposal was good or bad.

(from Playing the Game No. 2944-14605, 15th November, 2019)

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MORE QUAINTE EXPRESSIONS OF OUR GREAT GAME

Ferret: A terrible batsman, so poor that, as in pest control, he is sent in after the rabbits.

Nelson: Used to denote the score 111, this stems from the common misconception that Admiral Nelson lost one arm, one eye and one leg in battle.

BBL TEAMS TAKE “MONEYBALL” APPROACH

Melbourne Stars will join the Melbourne Renegades with a sharp statistical edge over their Big Bash League (BBL) rivals this season as the “Moneyball” concept spreads throughout cricket. The Stars and the Renegades — who played off for last summer’s championship in an all-Melbourne final — have each signed a data analyst from ‘CricViz’, who will have a direct line to their senior coaches.

The stats boffins will travel from the CricViz base in London to Melbourne next month to deconstruct a wealth of rich Twenty20 data that will be used by captains Glenn Maxwell (Stars) and Aaron Finch (Renegades).

Former Victoria and Renegades coach Andrew McDonald brought CricViz to the Renegades two years ago and put a strong emphasis on data science as he crafted a wily game plan. While the Renegades lacked a heavy dose of superstar talent, they forged a habit of strangling teams as a well-oiled machine last summer. Remarkably, the Renegades’ biggest knock from 16 games was Sam Harper’s unbeaten 56 — one of just three half-centuries — and yet they lifted the trophy.

On McDonald’s advice, Cricket Victoria invested further in CricViz this year and delivered premium analytical packages to Victoria’s Sheffield Shield and one-day teams. High-performance manager Tim McCaskill then brought the Stars into the CricViz deal. McDonald was poached by Australian coach Justin Langer this month with the Renegades still searching for a replacement.

CricViz does offer a service to every BBL club courtesy of Cricket Australia’s (CA) package, although they receive a more streamlined version of data analysis. While CricViz performance analysis is available worldwide so far it is Australia that has primarily tapped in with CA recently inking a multi-year contract, cost unknown.

CricViz services range from player recruitment, a unique 'Match Impact' model and detailed match packs that draw on a mega database that includes ball-tracking, shot types and fielding data. CricViz analyst Freddie Wilde, 25, is expected to sit on the Renegades’ bench for games early in the season while Ben Jones, 24, will spend about ten days with the Stars in pre-season. Wilde and Jones will both work remotely for the bulk of the season.

Indian Premier League powerhouse Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) were the first T20 franchise to strike a deal with CricViz although, unlike McDonald, RCB were unable to unlock the full potential.

McDonald’s buy-in could pave the way for Australia to up their reliance on statistics entering a T20 World Cup year. Langer and Australian analyst Dene Hills used stats to help with selection at this year’s 50-over World Cup, while David Warner said the rise of data-determined match-ups had spread from T20 cricket and was now used in all three formats.

Using stats to develop tactics and list strategies is straight out of the “Moneyball” playbook from Major League Baseball in the United States.

(Article by Sam Landsberger from Playing the Game No. 2944-14609, 16th November, 2019)
SA/Vic Umpire Exchange – Melbourne 2019-20

On the weekend of 9th and 10th November, 2019, SACA exchange umpire Jamaldeen Shakoordeen was appointed to stand with Victorian umpire Ron Birch at Princes Park Oval #1 for the Men’s Premier First-Grade match between Carlton and Frankston Peninsula.

This interstate umpire exchange commenced in 2015-16 and was an initiative of the VCAUSA and SACUSA.

Some of the Executive of the VCAUSA Committee of Management and their partners took the opportunity to meet for dinner with Jamaldeen and Jason Leonard-Scott, during the weekend.

Unfortunately, Melbourne’s unpredictable weather intervened and the scheduled two-day match was changed to a one-day, 50-over match on Sunday. One consequence of this unexpected change was the need for umpires to wear One-Day attire including Black not White shoes and our South Australian visitor decided to do a bit of extra shopping on the Saturday!

Gerry Schembri

For the record the Score Card for the match read as follows:

1st Innings – Frankston Peninsula

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Extras: 19
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1st Innings – Carlton

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Extras: 16
Total 5/219

Ed.
SOME JOHN COLLINS’ WISDOM

“In the end it is only the camaraderie of the team, the lifelong friendships which you forge, and the opportunity for interesting sorties outside the grind of the cricket grounds, which make the experience worthwhile.”

       Bill O'Reilly

“Some women’s cricket at club level is played solely for enjoyment and is perhaps better not seen by the public – but then so is some men’s cricket for that matter.”

(From Fair Play by Rachael Heyhoe-Flint and Netta Rheinberg)

AND SOME MORE FOR GOOD MEASURE!

“Advice is like snow; the softer it falls, the longer it dwells upon, and the deeper it sinks into, the mind.”

       Samuel Taylor Coleridge

“A memorandum is written not to inform the reader but to protect the writer.”

       Dean Acheson

“A lie can be half way round the world before the truth has got its boots on.”

       James Callaghan


A GOOD SLEDGE

Former England captain, Mike Atherton, couldn’t resist a parting sledge at big Merv in his autobiography:

“Hughes was all bristle and bullshit and I couldn’t make out what he was saying, except that every sledge ended with ‘arsewipe’.”

RECENT SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>250 Games</th>
<th>Sammy Muthugounder</th>
<th>Northcote vs Prahran First XI (19/20 October)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200 Games</td>
<td>Jeff Diamond-Smith</td>
<td>Ringwood vs Prahran WP2 T20 (20 October)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150 Games</td>
<td>Mike Rose</td>
<td>Ringwood vs Prahran WP2 T20 (20 October)</td>
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<tr>
<td>100 Games</td>
<td>Viraj Soman</td>
<td>Geelong vs Melbourne Fourth XI (19 October)</td>
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FUNNY GAME NO LAUGHING MATTER

There are more ways than ever for sport to do your head in. If it’s not drugs, it’s head trauma. The US is awake to football brain damage, the soccer world is waking. In the Australian Football League (AFL), mistrust of the processes and protocols around concussion remains high. If it’s not brain injury, it’s mental health. To follow a string of footballers, three Victorian cricketers with forward Australian claims, are sitting out indefinitely to clear their minds. Concerning depression and despair, cricket is a lonely outlier. The game’s history is pock-marked by suicides. David Frith’s 2001 book on them, 'Silence of the Heart', commemorates more than 150.

Until recently, the cricketers best known to be crippled by mental health issues were nearly all English. Suddenly, it’s Australians, too. For some, this is confounding. “Why are Australian cricketers suddenly all soft?” asked an acquaintance the other day, half in jest, half genuinely bewildered. Really, it’s only that we’re now hearing from those who would not have dared to speak up previously. It’s generational, and hallelujah to that. In AFL, a more open policy has been found to be not only manageable, but a secret to success. An open secret in fact. But there’s another aspect. Footballers who take mental health time-outs typically are struggling for form anyway. It all becomes too much. By contrast, cricketers Will Pucovski, Glenn Maxwell and Nic Maddinson all are at or near the top of their games.

Why? Psychologist Phil Jauncey proposed three reasons this week: a too narrow focus in the game’s cloistered pathways, greater and more immoderate scrutiny than ever via the blessing/curse of social media, and proliferation of fixtures. It makes them brittle. I would add to that intensification: once, some games were for beer money only, but now they are all for sheep stations. It’s only for ultras now.

There are no easy solutions. Re social media, it is not just how this generation communicates, but socialises. It’s a gauntlet they have no choice but to run. They are programmed to receive. Re the surfeit of games, a chicken and egg syndrome applies. Players say there is too much cricket, but go and play in their holidays. Authorities mouth platitudes about too much cricket, but continue to tage new events. In both cases, you don’t need ball-tracking to follow the lure. Perhaps even more fundamental to an understanding of what has changed in cricket’s psyche is what has never changed: the game’s unique formulation. More than any other sport, it is predicated on failure. Less than ever is this recognized in the discourse. A batsman is only ever one ball away from the end. It doesn’t even have to be a very good one, and he cannot get it back. A bowler does get a bad ball back, but sometimes that is the complication. The failed batsman’s fate is that he has to go, the failed bowler’s that he has nowhere to go. Even a very good batsman is going to be out more than he is in. Even a very good bowler will be off more than he is on. That’s a lot of institutionalized nothingness. The rest of the time they all spend in the dressing room, sometimes days of it at a time, or fooling around in the outfield. A slips fieldsman might stand there all day and not have one ball come to him. I know, of course, that there are many other subtle involvements, and a continuous moral involvement. That's fine when you’re fine.

It’s the hardest game to conquer, which makes the conquests gratifying but rare. It takes your all. So whether the game is playing on your mind, or something beyond the game is playing on your mind while you’re trying to play the game, in the lulls and longeurs the emotions are bound to pool and swirl and sometimes overflow. It was always said that this was character-building. But for some it was and is character-destroying. Previous generations were conditioned to shut up about it. This one won’t. It’s a funny game, cricket. But sometimes, it’s not.

(Article by Greg Baum, from Playing the Game No. 2944-14610, 16th November, 2019)
MACCA’S BOOK REVIEW


Richard Sharpe is a rogue, a private in the British Army in India in 1799, an army made up of drunkards, pickpockets, murderers and wastrels. He was born in the gutter, has no knowledge of his parents and the only options for him were prison or the army. In the army he has found that, “all that was needed to get ahead in the world was a bit of sense and the ability to kick a bastard faster than the bastard could kick you.”

The author Bernard Cornwell was fascinated by C.S. Forester’s Hornblower series about the fictional Napoleonic naval hero. He wanted to write a story about a soldier of the same era but, not “an officer and a gentleman”. This is the first book chronologically but came 14th in the series. Cornwell wrote his first book, Sharpe’s Eagle, on a kitchen table in New Jersey after finding himself stranded in America when his new wife was unable to return with him to the United Kingdom.

Sharpe knows soldiering and is ordered to infiltrate the army of the Tippoo Sultan of Mysore to rescue a British officer who knows the secrets of the fortress and how to destroy it. The Sultan has allied himself with the French to drive the British out of India and increase his fortune and power. Sharpe deserts the British and is recruited by a French officer training the Sultan’s forces. Sharpe is later betrayed by the hated Sergeant Obadiah Hakeswill and is imprisoned in the dungeons. He awaits the torturers who can break a man’s neck with their bare hands or drive a nail into his skull or the tigers that can slice a man to bits and then eat him alive. Outside his cell an eight-foot tiger patrols each night just waiting for a prisoner to attempt an escape.

Sharpe uses his skills and wits to turn the tables on his captors just before the British attack on the eve of the monsoon. The first British troops, known as the “Forlorn Hope”, breach the outer wall but the Tippoo has prepared a trap that could destroy them all. Sharpe is battling against time and numerous foes, but he doesn’t fight for honour or glory – just himself and the chance to rifle through the pockets of a dead officer looking for coins, jewels or gold.

Bernard Cornwell had no idea at the start of the series what his hero would be called. But he knew that he would become an officer raised from the ranks of the scum of the British Army. To become an officer Sharpe must perform some act of gallantry in order to be given a field commission in Wellington’s Army and must be able to read. While watching the tiger stalk back and forth outside his cell he is taught his letters by a fellow prisoner. Cornwell describes Sharpe as “…so fuelled by anger… the anger of an unhappy childhood, …. a man who has been forced to fight for every advantage that others were given, … that rage has always driven Sharpe.” At the end of this book he has only been made a sergeant but, a sergeant that can read.

Alan McCarthy

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**VCAUSA CALENDAR**

The ongoing VCAUSA calendar for 2019-20, as far as is known at this stage is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, 26 November, 2019, 7:00 pm</td>
<td>CV T&amp;D</td>
<td>CV CitiPower Centre, St Kilda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 3 December, 2019, 7:30 pm</td>
<td>CoM Meeting</td>
<td>Doveton Secondary College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 17 December, 2019</td>
<td>Sausage Sizzle (6:00 pm), CV T&amp;D (7:00 pm)</td>
<td>CV CitiPower Centre, St Kilda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, 9 January, 2020</td>
<td>Restaurant Night</td>
<td>Venue TBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday – Thursday, 13 – 16 January, 2020, 7:00 pm</td>
<td>CV T&amp;Ds, (1st – 4th XI Panels different nights)</td>
<td>CV CitiPower Centre, St Kilda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 21 January, 2020, 7:30 pm</td>
<td>CoM Meeting</td>
<td>Venue TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 11 February, 2020, 7:00 pm</td>
<td>CV T&amp;D</td>
<td>CV CitiPower Centre, St Kilda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, 5 March, 2020, 7:00 pm</td>
<td>CV T&amp;D (Finals Umpires only)</td>
<td>CV CitiPower Centre, St Kilda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, 10 April, 2020</td>
<td>Premier Cricket Awards Night</td>
<td>Venue TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, 8 May, 2020</td>
<td>VCAUSA Dinner and Presentation Night</td>
<td>Veneto Club, Bulleen</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 – 8 June, 2020</td>
<td>Joint SACUSA/VCASUSA Meeting Weekend</td>
<td>Penola, South Australia</td>
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