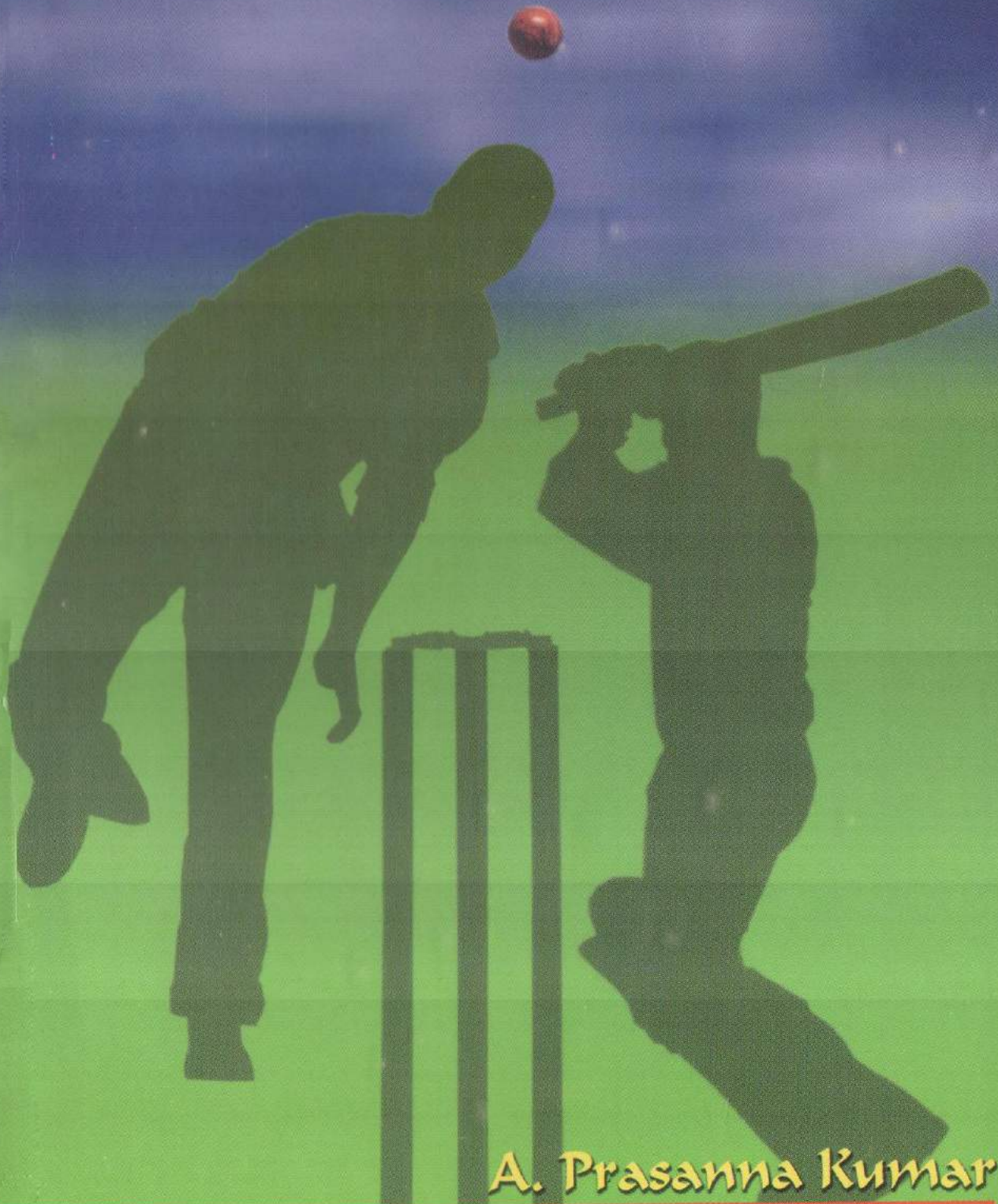


GAME OF MEMORIES

A Cricket Anthology



A. Prasanna Kumar

foreword by G.R. VISWANATH

GAME OF MEMORIES

A Cricket Anthology



A. Prasanna Kumar

foreword by G.R. VISWANATH

Copyright

A. Prasanna Kumar

MITHILA

74/8 M.V.P. Colony,
Visakhapatnam - 530 017

Published 2002

Copies available at :

Akshara

8-2-273

Road No. 2

Banjara Hills

Hyderabad - 500 034

&

Ashok Book Centre

opp. Maris Stella College

Vijayawada - 8

Printed at :

Sathyam Offset Imprints

46-18-10

Visakhapatnam - 530 016

Ph: (0891) 735878, 713440

Price : Rs. 90/-

To the memory of my brother A. Radhakrishna, founder-president, Masulipatam Cricket Club and founder-secretary, Visakhapatnam District Cricket Association.

and

to the memory of my cousin K.V. Gopala Ratnam, vice-president, Andhra Cricket Association, member, Andhra Pradesh Sports Council, journalist, writer on cricket and promoter of the game.

	<i>page</i>
Game of Memories - <i>about this book</i>	iv
Foreword	viii
Preface	x
Where East and West Met - <i>India's 'princely' gift to cricket</i>	1
The Bradman Legacy	3
C.K. Nayudu - <i>India's first test captain</i>	5
Vijay Merchant - <i>embodiment of class</i>	7
Lala Amarnath - <i>the stormy petrel of Indian cricket</i>	10
Vijay Hazare - <i>the master batsman</i>	13
Mushtaq Ali - <i>unorthodox but brilliant</i>	16
Vinoo Mankad - <i>a great allrounder</i>	17
C.S Nayudu - <i>purveyor of a difficult art</i>	19
Nayudu receives honorary doctorate degree	21
Ghulam Ahmed - <i>a spinner of class</i>	23
P.R. Umrigar - <i>Felicitation Address</i>	25
Nawab of Pataudi - <i>prince charming of indian cricket</i>	27
D.G. Phadkar - <i>a gifted allrounder</i>	28
Nawab of Pataudi - <i>a cricket matador</i>	29
Chandu Borde - <i>a fine allrounder</i>	30
N.S. Tamhane - <i>a wicket keeper of class</i>	31
Hemu Adhikari - <i>another name for discipline</i>	32
Jai (M.L. Jaisimha) - <i>a colourful cricketer</i>	33
Abbas ali Baig - <i>blue eyed boy of Indian cricket</i>	35
Gupte..... <i>a great leg spinner</i>	36
Abid Ali - <i>a useful all rounder</i>	37
Bedi - <i>mesmeriser with the ball</i>	38
Prasanna - <i>a great off spinner</i>	40
Promise and Performance	41
B.S. Chandrasekhar - <i>from wicket taker to team maker</i>	42
Venkataraman - <i>a class bowler and shrewd leader</i>	44
Ajit Wadekar - <i>skipper with a difference</i>	46

Viswanath - <i>debut in Ranji trophy</i>	47
Gundappa Viswanath - <i>a supreme artist</i>	49
Amar Singh and Nissar	50
Sunny's day at Chepauk	51
A 'Sunny' day at Vizag	53
"Close to Bradman"	57
Durrani, Engineer and Patil - <i>three 'romantics' of Indian cricket</i>	58
Kapil Dev arrives	60
A National Triumph	62
Mohinder Amarnath - <i>the ever dependable all rounder</i>	64
Arlott on cricket	65
Krishnamachari Srikanth - <i>never a dull moment</i>	66
Syed Kirmani - <i>an outstanding keeper</i>	69
Brijesh Patel - <i>brilliant stroke player</i>	71
Dilip Vengsarkar - <i>the willowy colonel</i>	73
Ravi Shastri - <i>able and astute</i>	74
Mohammed Azharuddin - <i>India's most successful captain</i>	76
Sanjay Manjrekar - <i>like father like son</i>	78
A.G. Kripal Singh - <i>a fine allrounder</i>	80
Balan Pandit - <i>backbone of Kerala cricket</i>	83
The immortal doctor W.G.	85
Bill Ponsford - <i>awesome consistency</i>	87
Walter Hammond - <i>an all time great</i>	89
Norman Yardley - <i>captain courageous</i>	91
Len Hutton - <i>a great knight</i>	92
Denis Compton - <i>idol of the crowds</i>	94
Leslie Ames - <i>solid behind the stumps</i>	96
Godfrey Evans - <i>always spectacular</i>	98
Jim Laker - <i>spinner and breaker of records</i>	100
Alec Bedser - <i>a famous fast bowler</i>	101
Brian Statham - <i>great on all wickets</i>	102
May and Cowdrey - <i>gifted batsmen</i>	104

Fred Trueman - <i>a colourful personality</i>	106
Ted Dexter - <i>'Lord' Edward in the saddle</i>	107
Windies - <i>true exemplars of the game's spirit</i>	109
Gomez over radio - <i>a pleasant surprise</i>	113
Sir Garfield Sobers - <i>the greatest allrounder</i>	115
Clive Lloyd - <i>twenty years at the top</i>	117
Alvin Kallicharan - <i>a stylist</i>	119
Geoff Boycott - <i>a master batsman</i>	121
Arjuna Ranatunga - <i>earns lasting place for his country</i>	122
Neville Cardus - <i>the pen is mightier than the bat</i>	123
When Arlott is at the mike	124
N.S. Ramaswami - <i>upholder of a noble tradition</i>	125
K.V. Gopala Ratnam - <i>a cricketologist of renown</i>	127
P.S. Rangaswamy - <i>a rare editor</i>	129
Madras's maiden triumph in Ranji trophy	131
Some famous spin bowlers of Madras....	133
Maharajkumar of Vizianagaram - <i>a patron of the game</i>	134
Kommireddis - <i>the pride of Andhra cricket</i>	136
Bhavanna - <i>scarlet pimpernel of Andhra cricket</i>	138
Vizag - <i>torch bearer of the Andhra tradition</i>	140
Venue - <i>the pride of Andhra</i>	143
The Cup of Joy!	145
D.V. Subba Rao - <i>gentleman administrator</i>	146
Welcome to Visakhapatnam	148
N. Venkata Rao - <i>able organiser</i>	150
Umpiring	152
Birds and Animals & <i>Termites in Cricket</i>	153
Steve Waugh - <i>special links with India</i>	155
Sachin Tendulkar - <i>"God's gift to Indian Cricket"</i>	157
On Tendulkar	158
Illustrations	159-169

Game of Memories - about this book

In 1946 the arrival of a huge eight-band radio set brought us many joys. Chief among them was the BBC radio commentary on cricket which my eldest brother was fond of listening to and as a boy of ten I happened to hear the voices of Rex Alston and John Arlott. The cricket bug bit us severely and 'the noblest game' has since remained a magnificent obsession with me. Playing cricket those days did not find favour with elders and my noble father said no more than "Hello' Mr. Bradman" when I failed in the school examination in 1947. I loved the cricket commentary so much that I began to give imaginary commentaries, even while studying. That must have amused my brother to such an extent that one day I received 'an offer from All India Radio, Madras' to do a running commentary on a Test match- a fast one pulled on me by my brother who enjoyed watching me jump for joy on seeing the 'AIR offer' mischievously mailed by him.

Cricket gave us other things too, not always pleasant. On two occasions in 1948 I could not fight tears — first on January 31 when Melville de Mellow's radio commentary on Gandhiji's last journey and funeral made us weep and later on August 14, 1948 when the great Don Bradman's last Test appearance and farewell to cricket was movingly narrated by Arlott and Co. over the BBC. Cricket also caused feuds, sometimes bitter, among members of our families and friends. It was Hutton vs Compton, Sobers v Kanhai, Gavaskar v Viswanath and now Tendulkar v Lara - who is greater of the two? Everytime Denis Compton, my hero then, failed my brother a Hutton fan, used to make my life miserable with his taunts. Two close relatives stopped talking to each other over an argument about the captaincy skills of Pataudi and Wadekar! Great players seldom encourage their fans and admirers to indulge in comparisons and controversies. Gavaskar always held Viswanath in high esteem and even wrote that Viswanath was a better player while the charming Vishy never claimed superiority over the Little Master just as today Sachin Tendulkar, despite his superlative skill and genius, remains an embodiment of humility. An anecdote should be mentioned here. In 1964 Conrad Hunte, the famous West Indian opening batsman, visited Vizag as a member of MRA and at a function organised by the Visakhapatnam District Cricket Associa-

tion, he spoke for an hour on cricket. The inevitable question was put to him - - who was a greater batsman Sobers or Kanhai? For more than fifteen minutes the articulate Hunte spoke on the strokeplay of Sobers and Kanhai, explaining with characteristic humility how he was inferior to both of them. At the end Hunte said that both Sobers and Kanhai were great in their own way though Sobers could produce an extraordinary stroke against a most dangerous delivery.

One-day cricket and live telecast of matches have made cricket a hugely popular and vastly different sport from what it used to be. Cricket's spell over people has become hypnotic. Some contests generate heated arguments and hysterical situations. Television has transformed the culture of cricket. The viewer has become the expert and in his view the commentating expert a bore! The commentator is criticised, on the radio for too many pauses and too little talking and on the telly for talking too much. Pity the umpire in the middle whose mistakes, sometimes caused by the deafening roar of the crowd and the bullying appeals by the players, are shown in action replay as if he is the villain of the piece. Old timers may find modern cricket vulgar and violent. Sir Garfield Sobers has recently expressed his anguish over the way the players appeal and at the reluctance of batsmen to walk when they know they are out. The cacophony on the field annoys the many who associate the game of cricket with values and gentlemanly conduct. Fabulous fees and rewards and media glare are among the causes for cricket losing some of its grace and dignity.

Still, cricket continues to fascinate. As John Arlott beautifully summed up, other games are skin-deep but cricket goes to the bone. It touches a chord in every heart. Cricket, like life, is unpredictable. Like death it is a leveller. Cricket is its own teacher wrote W.G. Grace. Neville Cardus and John Arlott have hailed it as 'the noblest game'. That is why poets and philosophers like the game. Don Bradman hoped that cricket would foster international goodwill and that its heritage would "stand as a beacon light guiding man's footsteps to happy and peaceful days."

Cricket is a game of memories, says a recent publication ("Through the Covers" Ed. Christopher Lee) How true it is! Every city in India, for that matter many towns too, like the village in

England, has its own lore. The player, the scribe and the fan, each has a story to tell and all of them enrich the culture of cricket with their own memories, not necessarily the deeds of great players; at world famous venues and in World Cup matches. It could be something that happened in a little known place in a small match in India, like the stumps left in their place on the ground at the end of day's play, being devoured by termites overnight leaving the players dazed the following morning when they arrived at the ground to resume play only to find the match abandoned!.

Yes, cricket's hold on me has been intense for over half-a-century. Many memorable moments have been there during the long journey of life. Cricket has given me many opportunities to meet some famous players, writers and editors. An evening with Lala Amarnath at his house in Delhi, listening to his wonderful narration of some great moments and matches, an hour with the equally famous Syed Mushtaq Ali, sharing the microphone in the AIR commentary box with the suave Ghulam Ahmed and genial M.L.Jaisimha, interviewing Hemu Adhikari, Venkataraghavan, Prasanna, Chandrasekhar, Gundappa Viswanath on his historic double century debut in Ranji trophy, Sunil Gavaskar and C.S.Nayudu on receiving honorary doctorate degrees from the Andhra University, talking to Alvin Kallicharan at Hyderabad in 1974 the day before he made a superb century and again twenty five years later at Prashantinilayam, felicitating Polly Umrigar at one function and Kapil Dev at another and writing on celebrities and local players for newspapers are among the many memorable occasions that come to mind. Two editors of Indian Express, both admired for their knowledge and integrity, Mr P.S. Rangaswamy and Mr N.S.Ramaswami, not only shared their rich experiences with me but encouraged me to write for The Express. All India Radio gave me opportunities to interview famous players over the radio and I cannot forget how daunting the task was to interview, with practically no time to prepare even the questions, one of the sharpest minds in the game, Sunil Gavaskar. I knew I would be clean bowled facing him across the table. As we waded through the crowd that assembled to see Gavaskar I made some mental notes recollecting the letter I wrote in a newspaper on Len Hutton's article in the Observer that Gavaskar's double century at Leeds was the greatest double century he had seen, greater than Stan McCabe's

232 at Trent Bridge and Walter Hammond's double century at Lord's. In the cramped AIR studio at Visakhapatnam that evening in November 1986 during the interview which was progressing quite well (though I was ready to be 'clean bowled' by the Little Master) I asked Gavaskar which was his best double hundred - - the one at Leeds or in the West Indies and two other famous knocks. Pat came the reply- "The one you missed out! The double century I made at Bombay against England I consider as my best because the wicket was favouring bowlers and my task then was very hard".

This small book is a collection of my newspaper articles, souvenir editorials and other publications on players and events. It is dedicated to the memory of my brother Shri. A. Radhakrishna who initiated us into cricket, founded the Machilipatnam Cricket Club and served the game for long years as the founder - secretary of the Visakhapatnam District Association and to the memory of my cousin Shri K.V. Gopala Ratnam, journalist and a well known writer on cricket and a dear friend of such celebrities as C.K. Nayudu, Vijay Merchant, Lala Amarnath and Mushtaq Ali.

While my eldest brother Radhakrishna promoted cricket in Masulipatam and later in Visakhapatnam, my cousin K.V. Gopala Ratnam was responsible for the birth of the Andhra Sports Club in Delhi in the 50s. Jawaharlal Nehru was the chief guest at the inauguration of the Andhra Sports Club. My elder brother Chakravarthi and RVS Rama Rao, both all rounders, C.N. Nayudu, son of the great C.K.Nayudu, K. Krishna Murthy of IAF, C.S. Rao of Indian Express and V. Balaji Rao who later played for 5 states in Ranji Trophy, were leading members of the Andhra Club which played in Delhi A division against teams that had players like H.T. Dani, Madan Mehra, Manmohan Sood and Akash Lal.

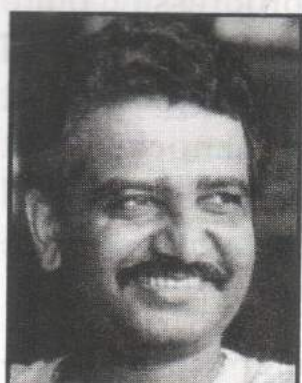
I offer this little work as an expression of gratitude and love for the game that taught me many wonderful things with absolutely no claim to either eminence or expertise.

A. Prasanna Kumar

Visakhapatnam

March 15, 2002.

FOREWORD



Passion for fine arts could be depicted in various styles. Each cricket lover expresses his/her craze for the game in a fashion that comes naturally and fluently to him/her.

Sri A. Prasanna Kumar, one of the most respected and loved personalities of Andhra cricket, speaks and writes on cricket. After all, that comes naturally and fluently to him. For the last five and a half decades, he has been following the game with astounding fervour and has been speaking and writing on this fascinating subject with amazing degree of clarity and control. There lies the essence of this man's passion for the game.

Here is a man from the famous coastal city of our country who has collected all his expressions in print not only to reveal his sense of gratitude and love for the game, but also to contribute his mite handsomely to the future generation of cricket lovers. Practitioners of all spheres of human activities must know the history and of those who got into the history of the sphere that they practise. A career is not complete without that.

An aspiring cricketer is always advised that he should study the deeds of the giants of the earlier decades and keep himself well informed on the great events of the sport. I would strongly suggest that cricket lovers too should cultivate this habit. Without the knowledge of the history of the game and its heroes and immortals, a cricket

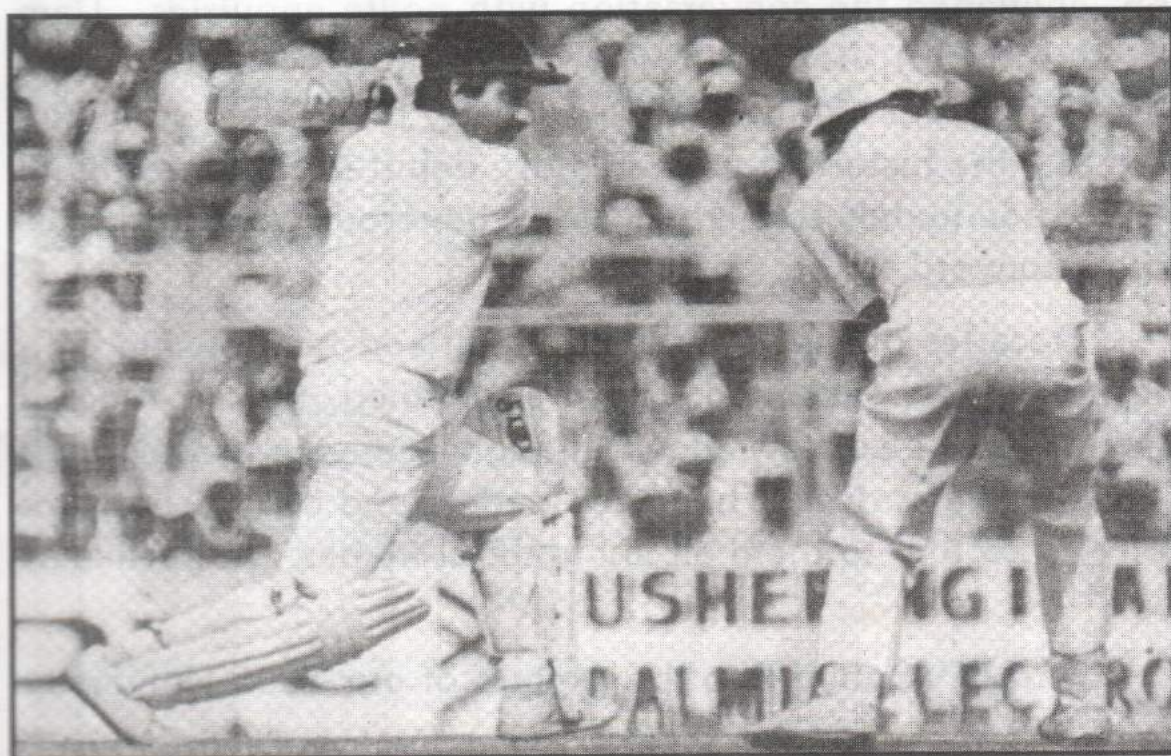
fan cannot reach the glorious group called "fanatics". Sri Prasanna Kumar's collection of cricket essays would serve this purpose to an appreciable extent.

Cricket's influence on my character is enormous. I understood life and fellow-human beings with sound logic and high degree of affection. Thanks to cricket that took me to the international level, I met and gained a lot of friends belonging to almost all walks of life. One such person is Sri A. Prasanna Kumar whose passion for the game and sense of commitment increase the degree of respect I have for him.

This anthology must find a special corner in the bookshelves of cricket lovers. I am sure that the current and future generation of cricket lovers in India would be benefitted by this worthy effort by Sri Prasanna Kumar. Wishing the author to emerge with more such inspiring works.

G.R. Viswanath

Bangalore, Feb 16, 2002.



PREFACE

This anthology, a collection of articles published in newspapers and editorials done in cricket souvenirs during the last three decades, along with some recent additions, does not claim to be a comprehensive volume on cricket. It contains thumbnail sketches of some famous players and description of selected events and anecdotes. The underlying idea in compiling this small work is to recall the deeds of famous players of yesteryears and express gratitude to them and to the 'lovely game' of cricket. As a scholar wrote in another context "We are what we are because they were what they were." The obvious shortcoming of such a work is that many famous players have been left out, not deliberately, and even the details about the players and persons covered here are not exhaustive. Dates of articles published and sources of information, wherever available, are given at the end of each piece.

When I approached Shri G.R.Viswanath at Prashantinilayam on November 23, 2001 for a foreword he and his gracious wife Smt. Kavita received me with kindness and courtsey while the charming Daivik, their seven year old son, enlivened the conversation with polite enquiries. I am grateful to Shri Viswanath who has always been kind to me ever since I met him in Vijaywada thirty four years ago when he made the historic double-century debut in Ranji trophy. I cannot adequately thank him for his generous gesture in writing a foreword to this small work.

Decades of friendship with many and relationship with the near ones, sustained, if not sweetened, by our love of cricket must be acknowledged, though briefly, in a book titled 'Game of Memories.' The cheer-leaders and well wishers are quite a few and to them all my grateful thanks. In particular to :

Shri D.V.Subba Rao the captain of our 1955 University

Colleges Cricket team who led us to victory in the inter-collegiate championship and who, ever since, leads by example emphasising that humility is the real lesson that cricket teaches us,

Shri K.V.V. Subrahmanyam I.P.S. (Retired Home Secretary) who 'captained' our team when we went to Chennai and Hyderabad to watch cricket matches with schoolboyish fervour,

Shri A.S.Chakravarthi, my elder brother and an all rounder, who played in Delhi and had the privilege of meeting many cricket giants of yesteryears,

Dr. Aswini Kumar, my cousin, himself a star performer of his Medical College team and a doctor of enormous goodwill always in the service of the poor,

Prof. H. Anjaneya Prasad, Retired Director of Physical Education, whose affection has, during the last fifty years, been a source of immeasurable strength,

Shri Srimanth Prasad, my childhood friend, who is not tired of repeating the fifty-year old claim that he was superior to me in cricket,

Shri V. Panduranga Rao (Ranga), advocate and my senior partner in batting whose call for a run at the crease was always a command,

Shri R. Prabhakar Rao I.P.S., (Retired Director General of Police) and a promoter of sports and culture,

Shri V. Seetaramiah, Shri M. Varahalu Chetty and a cricketer and Professor of English, Dr. M.S. Rama Murthy, eminent in their own professions, for patiently going through the proofs and for offering valuable suggestions,

Shri N.Venkata Rao, Secretary ACA, and a valued friend, Shri P.R. Narayanaswami, Shri K. Parthasarathi, national umpire, and Shri R.V.V.K. Prasad and the VDCA officials and members for their goodwill,

Prof. B. Mallikharjuna Rao, Shri K. Jagannadha Rao sports chief of PTI and Shri K.R.K. Vithal, my cousins, for their interest in the work,

Ramamurthi, my nephew (son of Radhakrishna) and Iswara Dutt, another nephew (son of Gopala Ratnam) who never traded heated arguments over cricket like their fathers did, for providing valuable photographs,

Rama Murthy and Narasimha Prasad, my sons, the elder an adorer of Viswanath whose joy knew no bounds when Viswanath along with Chandrasekhar greeted him on his 11th birthday in 1975 at Visakhapatnam and the younger, an adorer of Gavaskar, for their support and for not carrying their cricket rivalry beyond the boundary of our house,

Shri L.V. Subrahmanyam I.A.S., Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh for taking interest in the book and its release at Hyderabad, despite his hectic schedule in connection with the preparation for the 2002 National Games. Subrahmanyam, worthy son of a well known Professor of English and a dear friend the late Dr. L.S.R. Krishna Sastry, is himself a sportsman and I remember his telling me in 1983 that most of the questions at his civil services examination interview were on cricket because he mentioned cricket as his hobby in the application,

Shri M.K. Kumar of Sathyam Offset for the care and interest with which he took up the entire publication of the book Ms.Hima Bindu, of Sathyam Offset, for diligently preparing the text on the computer. I must also, on this occasion, recall my long association with and gratitude to Prof. N. Krishna Rao, alas no more, who would have been overjoyed to see this work.

The responsibility for any shortcoming or error is entirely mine.

A. Prasanna Kumar

Where East and West Met *India's 'Princely' gift to cricket*

"In Ranji East and West met" wrote a newspaper in England in April 1933 when Prince Ranjitsinhji passed away. Cricketers will never see the like of Ranjitsinhji, said Neville Cardus adding that 'there is nothing in all the history and development of batsmanship with which we can compare him.' To the famous writer Ranji's was not just personal genius but the genius of a whole race. Ranji's skill was shaped in Rajkumar College, Kathiawad and perfected at Cambridge. The young prince who made his debut in English first class cricket in 1893 'executed every stroke to perfection and delighted crowds wherever he played.' The flowing silk shirt buttoned at the wrist and the ease and elegance with which he played his 'inimitable leg-glance' and dazzling cut fascinated the English crowds so much that A.G.Gardiner described Ranji's genius as 'supreme art' achieving 'maximum result with minimum expenditure of effort.' Hailing the Jam Sahib as 'a batsman in a class by himself' Gardiner famously wrote that Ranji 'has brought the East into the hearts of our happy holiday crowds.' Cardus lavished praise on the Prince and the land from which he came as 'the land of Hazlitt's Indian jugglers where beauty is subtle and not plain and unambiguous.' Ranji added 'Eastern romance and colour to cricket'. Yorkshire's Ted Wainwright who played against Ranji said that Ranji 'never made a Christian stroke in his life.'

The Indian Prince played regularly in England from 1883 to 1904, with the exception of 1898. After succeeding his father in 1904 as the ruler of Nawanagar, Ranji went to England to play cricket in 1908, 1912 and in 1920 and played for Sussex three more games despite being blind in one eye. Making his debut for Sussex in 1895 Ranji scored 77 and 150. His highest for Sussex was against Northamptonshire 285 not out in August 1901 after spending the previous night fishing! In 1899 he scored 3,159 runs at an average of 63.18. In 1900—his best season—his average was 87.57 with a total of 3065 runs in 40 innings. That was the season when Ranji scored two double centuries in successive innings—222 and 225. In 1901 he scored two double centuries

285 and 204 and in all he made 14 double centuries and topped 2000 runs in a season on five occasions. Punch called Ranji, "Runget-sinhji". In a line that became a classic in cricket literature Gardiner wrote: "All other batsmen are labourers in comparison". Ranji combined "oriental calm with occidental swiftness the swiftness of the panther with the suddenness of its spring." The oriental magic that Ranji's wand created in England was described by Cardus as "lovely magic, and not prepared for by anything that had happened in cricket before Ranji came to us". Ranji to the English was 'more than a cricketer and more than a game that did it for us.'

Worthy nephew of a great uncle Kumar Shri Duleepsinhji gracefully stepped into Ranjitsinhji's shoes. Like Ranji, Duleep began his first class career in England with Cambridge University and Sussex. He, like his illustrious uncle, was endowed with natural gifts. Duleep was a batsman of class who was affectionately called 'Mr. Smith' in England. Ill health restricted this gifted cricketer's career to only eight seasons. But in that brief career Duleep amassed 15537 runs at a high average of 50.11. Duleep made 49 centuries with a highest of 333 for Sussex against Northamptonshire, for long a county record. In 1931 he scored four successive centuries. Duleep played in 12 Tests for England and had an average of 58.52 in these matches. His highest was 173 at Lord's against Australia.

Prince Duleepsinhji was loved and respected both on and off the field. He was for sometime India's High Commissioner in Australia. Ranji was 61 when he died and Duleep was only 54 when he passed away in 1959. Ranji was in Wisden's best five in 1893 and Duleep in 1929. Ranji and Duleep were India's princely gifts to cricket. They gave to English cricket 'eastern romance and colour'. In them east and west met and thanks to them cricket became all the more lovely to the delight of "happy holiday crowds" in England.

★ ★ ★

India's 'Lily of a Day' Shri Duleepsinhji whom Keith Miller described as "a Prince, a great cricketer and an even greater man"

- R.S. Whittington "Simpson's Safari" 1967.

The Bradman Legacy

August 14, 1948 at the Oval in his last Test innings Don Bradman walks up to the wicket amidst thunderous applause and takes guard against Hollies. Hardly did the cheering subside when the legendary batsman starts walking back to the pavilion, clean bowled for a duck. The crowd was stunned into silence and those listening in to BBC radio commentary were too shocked for words. John Arlott's moving description when Don Bradman bade farewell with the entire crowd at the oval giving him a standing ovation brought tears to millions of cricket fans. The next morning newspaper –headlines screamed: "Bradman out for a duck." Fifteen years earlier Neville Cardus ended his essay *Bradman in 1930* with a prophetic line: "Perhaps by making a duck someday, Bradman will oblige those of his critics who believe with Lord Bacon that there should always be some strangeness, something unexpected, mingled with art and beauty." That duck is as much remembered as the many glorious knocks that flowed from Don's magic bat. Another four runs, instead of that duck, would have fetched Bradman a Test average of 100. The duck has settled it at 99.94, a figure that remains so resonant that the Australian Broadcasting Commission uses it as its Post Office Box Number!

Donald George Bradman, born on August 27, 1908, started his career at the age of 19 with a century on debut in first class cricket. In his second season for New South Wales, for which he played from 1927 to 1934, he made 340 not out against Victoria. From 1935 till his retirement in 1949 he played for South Australia and his first three Sheffield Shield innings for South Australia were 117, 233, 357. He made 200 runs in 37 separate innings and crossed the 300 mark six times. His highest score was 452 not out for New South Wales against Victoria at Sydney in 1929-30. "In 338 first class matches he made 117 centuries, a strike rate of more than one in three, better than twice the ratios achieved by such greats as Jack Hobbs, Len Hutton or Walter Hammond. His first class average was 95.14, his nearest rival's is 71" wrote Matthew Engel of the Guardian. India's Vijay Merchant was that nearest rival with an average of 71.64.

In 1930 in England he made 1000 runs before the end of May and repeated the feat in 1938. In 1930 he made 974 runs—

254 at Lord's 338 at Leeds, and 232 at the Oval. At Leeds he made 309 in a day. In the 1938 tour of England Bradman averaged 115.66, only three figure average for an English season. Bradman's Test match record contains 29 centuries, 13 half centuries, 2 triple centuries and 10 double centuries. His double century against England at Leeds remains the fastest (214 minutes) in test cricket. He scored a century in every 2.8 innings. In a minor match he got a century off 22 balls. His 'powers of endurance and sheer genius were almost inhuman' said Maurice Golesworthy. His batsmanship delights one's knowledge of the game observed Neville Cardus who aptly called 'his every stroke a dazzling and precious stone in the game's crown.' The Australian newspaper Canberra Times rightly summed up the Bradman legacy: "There is no man, woman or child who has suffered, who has not received anything but inspiration or happiness from the career of Bradman."

In cricket the 20th century was undoubtedly the Bradman century. Last year Wisden voted with 100 out of 100, Bradman 'Cricketer of the Century.' Beneath the tough exterior and glowing genius, there was a philosophy that shaped the mind, the man and the art of Sir Donald Bradman. He set for himself two paramount ends: 1) to try and elevate the standard of play along sound and attractive lines and 2) to foster international goodwill through cricket. These noble ideals stemmed from his unwavering faith in the heritage of cricket which he described thus: "Without doubt the laws of cricket and the conduct of the game are a great example to the world. We should be proud of this heritage which I trust may forever stand as a beacon light guiding man's footsteps to happy and peaceful days." As the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan explained the Bradman spirit "Sir Donald Bradman matched his extraordinary record of accomplishments on the field with grace and honour off it. He stood for the values of fairplay and international cooperation that are at the heart of the United Nations."

Through cricket Don Bradman aimed to promote international goodwill and peace in the strife-torn 20th century. He breathed his last in the second month of the 21st century and his legacy and spirit are cherished with gratitude and admiration by millions of people all over the world.

C.K. Nayudu - *India's first test captain*

He was 58 when he came to Andhra on invitation to be the first President of the Andhra Cricket Association in 1953. Many Andhras believed that C.K. was born in Masulipatam, in Andhra. In fact a road in that small town of great history bears Nayudu's name. His mother hailed from Masulipatam. Andhras were unwilling to concede that Nayudu was born in Nagpur, not Masulipatam. C.K. came to Guntur along with his brother C.S. and disciple Mushtaq Ali for the inauguration of the Andhra Cricket Association. The occasion was memorable and the celebration appropriate. It did not end there with the festival cricket match played on the occasion at Guntur.

C.K. led the first Andhra team playing in Ranji trophy against Mysore served by Kasturirangan, one of the few feared pacemen then in the country. As the Andhra batsmen wilted under the fury of Mysore attack C.K. made a blistering knock of 74 including 10 fours and a sixer off Kasturirangan. That was the first and last time the legendary C.K. Nayudu played for his 'homestate'. (Holkar was, of course, his homestate) Nayudu played for another four years after that and Edward Knight wrote that at the age of 62 "Nayudu is still a wonderful cricketer." He played in 1963 also in the company of the sons of his contemporaries Nawab of Pataudi Jr. and Ashok Mankad. That places him at the top of cricketers with the longest career span. His career began in 1916-17 and lasted till 1963-64 - a span of 48 years !

Nayudu's first scoring stroke in big cricket was a sixer when at the age of 21 he made his debut in first class cricket in September 1916 playing for the Hindus against the Europeans. From then on for almost half a century sixes flowed from his bat like sparks from the anvil. His 153 for the Hindus against the M.C.C. in December 1926 contained 11 sixes and 13 fours in just an hour and 55 minutes. "The best I have seen," wrote Vijay Merchant "in this country or elsewhere from the bat of an Indian". Lala Amarnath said that C.K. "was the greatest cricketer India has produced." Another great innings of C.K., according to Edward Knight, was his 162 against Warwickshire at Birmingham in 1952. All India were 91 for 7 in their second innings when N.D. Marshall joined Nayudu and the two added 217 runs in 140 minutes. Nayudu hit six 6s and 13 fours and a hit from Nayudu carried the ball into the adjoining

river. C.K. Nayudu scored 26 centuries including a double century and took 411 wickets in his career.

The Test career of India's first Test Captain began at Lord's in 1932 and ended at Oval in 1936. He made his Test debut at the age of 37 coinciding with India's entry into Test cricket. Most of his innings were played after he crossed forty and his only double century was made when he was fifty. Nayudu was the first Indian cricketer to figure in the Wisden when in 1933 he was selected as one of the Five Cricketers of the Year.

Douglas Jardine compared Nayudu with Woolley and Walter Hammond likened him to George Headley. Frank Moraes wrote that Nayudu was 'public benefaction' while M.Chalapathi Rau saw 'dignity even in his duck.' Radhakrishnan from whose hands Nayudu received a purse on his sixtieth birthday, admired Nayudu so much that as Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University Radhakrishnan invited him to come to Waltair and train cricketers of the university. From Oxford where he was lecturing, Radhakrishnan once went to see a cricket match in London saying. "Nayudu I have come to see you in action."

Neville Cardus objected to the description of Nayudu as 'the Bradman of India' saying that 'Nayudu has stupidly been called the Bradman of India. He shows no resemblance to Australia's great and flawless rather steely master. Nayudu is lithe and wristy and volatile. Bradman is sturdy and concentrated, he never suggests that elusive and poetic quality which is called sensitivity. Nayudu is a very sensitive batsman; for each of his strokes you get the impression of a new born energy, of a sudden improvisation of superb technique. Nayudu is not at all mechanical. Watching him from the ring you get a delicious suggestion in his play of fallibility. Unlike Bradman his skill is his servant, not his master. The glorious uncertainty of cricket is not endangered by Nayudu." Vijay Merchant as straight and superb with his words as he was with the willow, called Nayudu India's greatest cricketer. "Whether it was bowling, batting, fielding, captaincy, physical fitness or positive approach to the game, there will never be Nayudu's equal amongst Indians" wrote Merchant, himself one of the greatest batsmen of India. Inarguably C.K.Nayudu was the first among the greatest cricketers India has produced.

Vijay Merchant - embodiment of class

The similarity between life and cricket looks more pronounced when one looks into the careers of some cricketers and tries to explain why some reached the top in the game of uncertainties while the others, despite possessing skill of a high order, failed to reach the top. Some seize the opportunities that come their way and establish themselves while the others either do not get their due or fail to encash the few chances that are given to them. That apart, illness and injury keep some away from the game at a crucial time in their careers. One often wonders how many records Don Bradman would have set up but for the World War that lasted for almost seven long years between 1939 and 45 during which time many cricketers and sportsmen lost opportunities to show their skill. One such 'unlucky' cricketer who missed many opportunities was Vijay Merchant who turned 75 last October. (1986)

Vijay Merchant was 21 when he should have gone to England on India's maiden tour of that country. But Merchant, a disciple of L.P. Jai, declined to go to England in deference to the mood of public opinion then that Indians should not associate themselves with the British in any activity. In 1947 Merchant was to lead the Indian team to Australia but injury and ailment kept him away from the tour and also against the West Indies that toured India a year later. And in 1951 at the age of 40 Merchant sustained an injury while fielding against England in the Delhi Test and that was the last big match he played in.

Yet, despite these missed opportunities, Vijay Merchant played cricket in a manner that won the acclaim of people all over the world. Seeing Merchant's magnificent century on a bad track at Manchester in 1936, C.B. Fry remarked: 'Let us paint him up and take him to Australia. He will solve our problem of opening batsman.' Douglas Jardine, one of England's greatest captains, described Vijay Merchant as 'the soundest batsman' in India. Wisden in which Merchant figured in 1937 hailed his class. The 1936 tour of England saw Merchant amassing 1745 runs in 40 innings (six times not out) averaging 51.32. He got centuries against Somerset and Lancashire and carried his bat through the innings at Manchester in the second Test scoring 114.

Ten years later, Vijay Merchant was again in action in England and he and Syed Mushtaq Ali set the Thames on fire with their exploits. It was one of the wettest seasons in England. Still, Merchant made 2,385 runs averaging 74.53, second only to Walter Hammond in batting averages and above Washbrook who scored more number of runs and Denis Compton who was then in great form. Incidentally, recalling those days and making a comparison between Gavaskar and Merchant, Denis Compton who spoke over the BBC last summer when India were playing against England in England, said that both Merchant and Gavaskar were great opening batsmen with Merchant being 'a little more venturesome'.

Vijay Merchant scored another century against the Commonwealth team during 1949-50. Between 1929 and 1951 Merchant scored 42 three figure knocks. On 11 occasions he made more than 200 runs in an innings. His highest was 359 not out against Maharashtra during 1943-44. In Pentangular cricket Merchant scored four double centuries and missed the fifth by just eight runs. Out of these five innings he remained not out in three. In Ranji trophy Merchant scored 3639 runs in 47 innings averaging 98.35 with the help of 16 hundreds. Merchant scored heavily in other matches too and in his last innings at Delhi in 1951 he made 154 against England. Merchant used to bowl too in his early days and once took three wickets in Ranji trophy. Merchant decided to call it a day even though he had the stamina and skill because he believed in the dictum that people should ask 'why he has retired from cricket' and not the other way.

Vijay Merchant was a batsman of pure class. In the words of A.E.R. Gilligan: "He was a lovely stroke player and delighted everyone with his off-drives and beautiful timing of the ball." S.K. Gurunathan, a writer of repute, called Merchant 'a cricket immortal' and N.S. Ramaswami another writer of yesteryears, described Merchant's batting as 'pure, flawless, breathing the spirit of classicism.' Merchant was famous for his late cut. He possessed a repertoire of strokes including the hook and glance. A strict disciplinarian Vijay Merchant was a dedicated cricketer who upheld values dear to him. He made it a habit not to read in train and moving vehicles as that would impair his eyesight. He even kept away from movies when he was in active cricket.

A man of great courtesy Merchant could be frank and forthright in expressing his views. And in doing so he incurred at times the displeasure of his seniors and colleagues. As an expert commentator over the radio Merchant was always lively, crisp and highly knowledgeable. A decade ago the late K.V. Gopala Ratnam, a well known cricket-writer, asked Merchant to write his memoirs. Merchant turned down the proposal with characteristic modesty saying that all that would not be relevant for today's cricketers and even for the lovers of the game. As a writer once observed Merchant was like Bradman in many things, being run hungry, technically sound and temperamentally best suited for big scores. Merchant like Bradman lost precious years of cricket due to the Second World War. Yet, like the great Sir Donald, Vijay Merchant took the ups and downs in his stride, never finding fault either with individuals or the events of his time.

7-1-87

* * *

"Let us paint him up and take him to Australia. He will solve our problem of opening batsman." C.B. Fry on Vijay Merchant after watching him in 1936.

"At his best his batsmanship was sculpture of Mahabalipuram, pure, flawless, breathing the spirit of classicism".

- N.S.Ramaswami

India's Vijay Merchant was the nearest rival to Don Bradman in averages in first class cricket with 71.64 (Bradman's was 95.14)

Lala Amarnath

the stormy petrel of Indian cricket

Lala Amarnath's name conjures up memories of a great past. Few cricketers began on such a high note of promise as the Lala had done. He was the first Indian to make a century on debut in Test cricket and also the first of half-a-dozen Indians who made a century on debut and never reached the three figure mark again in Test cricket. Lala began as a wicketkeeper, became a batsman of repute and bowled off the wrong foot. He was the first captain to lead India to victory in a rubber. He was sent back from England as 'a disciplinary measure' but recalled to Test cricket shortly after. He was banned from cricket, made a captain later when he was about to retire and given a 'rough deal' for sometime. Lala Amarnath was a colourful personality who was "as much a problem to the batsman as to the bowler." He was no less a problem to the selectors and the establishment.

With all his 'faults' Amarnath was a cricketer of class whose abilities and courage were admired even by his hardest critics. Wrote N.S. Ramaswami of the Lala: "Amarnath was a pure romantic, the Byron of Indian cricket. His violence, his theatricality, his outbursts belonged to more spacious days than ours...Amarnath at the wicket was less a batsman than something like a storm. He would pounce upon the hapless bowler and scatter him to all parts of the ground." The Lala was a born fighter, an innovator and one of the most aggressive cricketers of modern times.

Some years ago this writer spent long hours with the Lala at his house in Delhi. The Lala is a fine raconteur of the past. He told me how as the captain of the Indian team playing against the great Bradman's team in Australia, poor fielding let India down often. Rangachari troubled Bradman, Barnes and others. "Our fielding was always sloppy and such batsmen would not give too many chances. Bradman should have got out quite early twice. But he was dropped in the slips." Indian players were not known those days for their fielding. Further the adage that great players need not necessarily make a great team was proved by the Indians

who never made a fine team though such players as Merchant, Mushtaq, Amarnath and Hazare were all there.

Amarnath came into limelight when he made a century for South Punjab against the visiting England team led by the famous Douglas Jardine. Lala made 103 and he began his Test career with a brilliant 118 against the Englishmen at Bombay in 1933-34. Recalling that memorable knock S.K. Guruswami wrote: "No one who saw that knock can forget it. He cut and hooked Clark and Nicholas with amazing speed and precision and drove Verity and Langridge with surprising power and on light feet. He batted in all for three and half hours and reached the boundary 21 times. His fame was made at once and without warning. A new star had risen in the cricket firmament of India. Alas, such a bright star often came under a cloud of controversy or bad luck."

Born on September 11, 1911, Lala Amarnath made history in 1933 and also on the 1936 tour when he scored 613 runs and took 32 wickets before he was sent home for 'misconduct'. The following year against Lord Tennyson's team he scored three successive hundreds. In 1946 Amarnath was in great form with the ball taking 5 for 118 against England at Lord's and 6 for 96 at Old Trafford. His victims included Len Hutton, Walter Hammond and other famous batsmen in form that season. Made Captain of the Indian team touring Australia the following year Amarnath started off with a dazzling 228 not out against Victoria at Melbourne. He took 13 wickets in the Tests in which he was outwitted by that genius, Don Bradman. Recalled to Test cricket after a period of ban, Amarnath led India to victory against Pakistan in a Test series for the first time.

In Ranji trophy Amarnath made 2162 runs and took 190 wickets. He and Modi were concerned in a record third wicket partnership of 410 runs with the Lala making 262 of them, for India against the Rest at Calcutta in 1946-47. His highest was 241 for Hindus against the Rest in Pentangular cricket in 1936. In 1938 he captured 26 wickets in a season for South Punjab. Among his remarkable bowling performances were 4 for 2 against Sind in 1938 and 4 for 0 for Railways against Patiala in 1958 when Lala was in his 47th year!

Lala Amarnath was one of the stalwarts of Indian cricket. His son Surinder too began his Test career with a century but never reached that figure again in the few Tests he played. Mohinder too has been in and out of Test cricket though he played a stellar role in India's triumph in the 1983 World Cup. Rajinder, on whom Lala pinned great hopes, did not live upto his promise as a cricketer. Probably there is a jinx on the cricketing fortunes of the family. All the same the Lala and his sons are a courageous folk. Only recently the Lala was seriously ill and when doctors gave up all hope, the Lala staged a miraculous recovery.

As in cricket so in life or perhaps as in life so in cricket. Life and cricket are famous for their uncertainties and that is why cricket is so popular with young and old alike!

18-2-87

+++

Lala Amarnath one of the finest all-rounders was 'as much a problem to the batsman as to the bowler ...'

Lala was a 'pure romantic, the Byron of Indian cricket..' -N.S. Ramaswami.

'Alas, such a bright star often came under a cloud of controversy or bad luck..' S.K. Gurunathan.

In 1937-38 he scored three successive centuries against Lord Tennyson's English team

Vijay Hazare - *the master batsman*

Great players do not necessarily make great teams. That applies to the Indian Cricket team of yesteryears when there were such stalwarts as Merchant, Mankad, Mushtaq, Amarnath and Hazare, all of whom were world class cricketers. Yet, they could seldom make a world-class side and the Indian team was generally good in parts with team spirit being conspicuous by its absence. Sadly enough when most of these worthies were over the hill India's performances on many occasions were woefully poor. Batting collapse or hopelessly dismal start to an innings evoked harsh comments in the English and Australian press several times.

In those difficult times there was one great batsman whose rock-like defence and dedication to the cause of Indian cricket 'shone like a lamp in darkness'. Few batsmen have served Indian cricket with such dedication for so long as Vijay Hazare has done. Vijay was a master batsman who curbed his spirit of adventure for the sake of his team. He often came to the crease when India was in difficulty and had to pull the team out of the woods. Critics accused him of being too defensive. But there was no other way out. He had a repertoire of strokes that was the envy of other batsmen. Yet, as N S Ramaswami wrote 'the technique in him triumphed over the spirit'. Later when he was made the captain of the Indian team 'the cares of captaincy', 'weighed heavily on him'. NSR felt that Hazare was 'Merchant's unintended rival most of the time' Yes, Hazare was too good to be a rival to anyone. 'Remarkable for his unruffled concentration at the wicket...' as Maurice Golesworthy wrote Hazare provided stability to Indian batting.

Vijay Hazare came into prominence in the late thirties when he became the first Indian batsman to score a triple century in first class cricket. Hazare, playing for Maharashtra then, scored during 1939-40, 316 not out against Baroda which later became his home state in Ranji Trophy. Hazare had another triple century in Pentangular tournament. Prior to this feat Hazare was also known as a bowler taking wickets regularly with his medium pace and occasional off spin bowling. He took 6 for 89 against Rajputana in 1936 a year after making a fine century in first class cricket. The

year that followed saw Hazare making useful scores and taking wickets including 7 for 94 against Western India and 5 for 79 against Southern Punjab. All these performances were for Maharashtra for which Hazare played in his younger days.

It was in 1941 that Hazare switched over to Baroda and thus began his long association with the Baroda team. Runs flowed from his bat in a torrent and wickets were claimed in almost every match in which he played. Nobody could prevent Baroda from winning the trophy in 1946-47 thanks to Vijay Hazare's consistent performances. During that year he took 8 for 90 against Maharashtra, 6 for 86 against Bombay and 6 for 85 against Holkar. More significantly Hazare and Gul Mohamed established a record partnership for the 4th wicket putting on 577 runs. Twelve seasons later Hazare and D K Gaekwad put on a record 204 partnership for the 3rd wicket. Statisticians recall with delight that two decades earlier in 1939 Hazare and Nagarwala put on 245 for the 9th wicket, in a record breaking partnership.

Hazare's appetite for runs was insatiable, though his appetite for food was said to be poor. (It used to be said that Hazare rarely ate anything during a cricket match except taking a cup of tea). In 1946-47 he made 200 against Holkar, 204 not out against Gujarat in 1954-55 and 203 against Services during 1957-58 when he was 43. He scored a century in each innings against Maharashtra in 1944-45 and against Holkar during 1949-50. The most memorable feat of his was scoring a century in each innings against Australia in 1946-47 at Adelaide against the most reputed pace bowling in the world then. Hazare on that tour had the honour of claiming Don Bradman's wicket in a Test match. Another record that stands in his name is the three figure partnership in both innings by the same pair. This he and Adhikari had done twice. Hazare scored many hundreds in Test matches both official and unofficial. In Ranji Trophy he amassed 6312 runs, inclusive of 22 centuries at an average of 69.36. In bowling he had the distinction of taking 291 wickets in the national championship. In 1942, 1946 and 1949-he took over 25 wickets in a season with the highest being 38 in 1946.

During India's tour of England in 1946 Hazare scored 1344

runs and achieved a similar distinction six years later when India toured England in 1952. He headed Test batting averages for India in 1946-47, scored two centuries against the West Indies in 1948 and 146 not out against Pakistan in 1952. He averaged 47.65 in Test cricket. As a bowler Hazare took 20 wickets for 1220 runs in Test matches. He captained India in 14 Tests. In the words of Alex Bannister "He was a man of action, not of words, a world class batsman with a Test average of 55.50 ...at the Oval he made 38 out of a total of 98... the rest was rain ...there is a score of 309 out of 387 ---a record of 80 percent. His bowling like his batting was tidy. There were no loose ends, no irritating gesticulations, no histrionics."

Vijay Hazare was a gentleman-cricketer who shunned publicity. A strict disciplinarian Hazare was never fussy about that aspect of the game. When G R Viswanath rose on the Indian cricket scene getting runs with his superb cover drives critics hailed him as another Vijay Hazare. There were some values which both shared and the message of their deeds and style is that cricket is a gentleman-sport. Vijay Hazare is one of the 'fathers of modern Indian cricket'. Now in his 74th year this great cricketer and gentleman leads a quiet life.

1-7-87



Vijay Hazare's batting 'shone like a lamp in darkness' Hazare was 'Merchant's unintended rival most of the time...' 'remarkable for his unruffled concentration at the wicket.'

Mushtaq Ali - *unorthodox but brilliant*

Merchant and Mushtaq were aptly described by Cardus as prose and poetry of batting. They were a formidable opening pair popular in both India and England. On his first tour of England in 1936 Mushtaq scored a brilliant century at old Trafford in a record partnership of 203 runs with Merchant. Mushtaq followed it up with a fine half century at the Oval. His unorthodox yet aggressive style won wide acclaim and he became an instant hit 'for breaking the rules of batsmanship with impunity.' Mushtaq loved to break the rules because 'he did not believe in them.' As Ramaswami observed Mushtaq did not wait for the ball to come to him. He went to meet it.

Ten years later Mushtaq was in England again. He made 46 in the second Test at Old Trafford and 59 at the Oval in the third Test. Pity it was that he did not get many opportunities to play in Tests and in the 11 Tests he played Mushtaq scored 612 runs inclusive of 2 centuries and three half centuries. In the 18 unofficial Tests he played he scored 1031 runs which included two centuries and 5 half centuries. In Ranji trophy matches Mushtaq made 5013 runs with a high average of 49.14. Mushtaq Ali, the popular right hand batsman, bowled left arm and took 3 wickets in official Tests and 6 in unofficial Test matches.

Mushtaq was a star performer for Holkar, his home state. C.K. Nayudu was his guide and mentor and Nayudu had high admiration and affection for Mushtaq. One of the memorable occasions was when Mushtaq scored a century in each innings for Holkar against Bombay in the Ranji trophy final in 1954-55. Denis Compton who made 249 not out in the second innings at one end and Mushtaq who made a century at the other produced vintage batting that sent the crowd into raptures.

Thanks to K.V. Gopala Ratnam whose house Mushtaq often visited this writer had the privilege of meeting the tall and handsome cricketer who delighted crowds with his dazzling strokeplay and annoyed and even irritated the bowlers with his unpredictable footwork and cavalier hitting.

Vinoo Mankad - a great allrounder

Before the advent of Kapil Dev, Vinoo Mankad was hailed as the 'greatest all-rounder' India has produced. Though pundits may argue that Kapil is streets ahead of the late Vinoo Mankad in achievements, few will contest the fact that Mankad was a great all-rounder and has a permanent place in Indian cricket's history. The two-Vinoo and Kapil-provide a world of contrast. Mankad was originally a right-arm bowler and right hand batsman. Coach Wensley changed him into a left-arm bowler, a spinner. Kapil arrived in a big way as a speed merchant and batsman of tremendous power. Vinoo was technically sound and very professional in his approach. John Arlott hailed Mankad as "a player of rare type, most rare and most needed in Indian cricket. He follows in the tradition of English professional allrounders". If Kapil Dev had played a lot of cricket in just nine years and achieved record breaking feats with the bat and ball in less than eight years Vinoo Mankad came into prominence a year before the Second World War which robbed him and his contemporaries of seven precious years of cricket. It was during the 1937 tour of India by Lord Tennyson that Vinoo Mankad was 'discovered' and Vinoo soon became a regular member of the Indian team. Earlier Mankad playing for Nawanagar scored 185 runs against Bengal and helped the former in winning the Ranji trophy. He was then, as in the years that followed, among wickets and runs in the national championship. 10 for 69 against Gujarat, 7 for 86 against Western India and 4 for 34 against Baroda were among his feats with the ball during his early years. Taking not less than four wickets in matches in Ranji trophy was Mankad's common feat and Vinoo was also known for his economical spells of bowling. Centuries and double hundreds flowed from his bat in national and international events. During 1957-58 he scored 221 against Vidarbha.

Born on April 12, 1917 Vinoo Mankad scored in Ranji trophy 3,124 runs averaging 36.74 and claimed 170 wickets at an average of 23.15. A record first wicket partnership with Mankad making 231 against New Zealand and another double century against New Zealand were among his memorable feats with the bat. Mankad scored two centuries against Australia led by Bradman in 1947. - 116 in the third Test and 111 in the fifth. But the most important

achievement was his performance against England at Lord's three decades ago when he made 72 in the first innings and a masterly 184 in the second, after bowling 97 overs taking five wickets for 231 runs. It was one of the memorable feats at the Mecca of world cricket. Of that Wisden wrote "His powers of endurance seemed inexhaustive". Against the Commonwealth cricket team visiting India in 1951 he took 34 wickets at an average of 16.97. India beat the visitors at Madras thanks to Mankad's 8 for 55 in the first innings and another four wickets in the second. In 1946 when India toured England Mankad became the first Indian cricketer to achieve a double, scoring 1120 runs and taking 129 wickets. Seven years later playing against Pakistan Mankad completed his 'Test double' making 1,000 runs and capturing 100 wickets and became the fifth cricketer in Test cricket to do so the other four being Noble, Giffen, Rhodes and Tate. In the Delhi Test against Pakistan Mankad took 13 wickets for 131 runs. Yet, Mankad was not able to achieve similar success against the West Indies who treated his bowling with less respect than did the Englishmen and the Pakistanis. Mankad could capture only 36 wickets against the Windies in the three Test series conceding 1,802 runs off 709.3 overs. The great all rounder made in all 2,109 runs in his 44 Tests and took 162 wickets at 32.31 apiece.

He retired from Test cricket during 1958-59. N. S. Ramaswami wrote that "Mankad the bowler was vital for Indian cricket. Mankad the batsman was not so important. But there was so much to admire in his pragmatism. Never a stylist, he grew more and more utilitarian." As a captain Mankad was not successful and all the 5 Tests were drawn when India visited Pakistan in 1954 under Vinoo Mankad's captaincy. Vinoo Mankad was chosen by the Wisden in 1947. One of the all-time greats of Indian cricket Vinoo Mankad was highly respected for his skill and dedication to the game. He belonged to an era of great players like Merchant, Hazare, Mushtaq and Amarnath. He was also a bridge between that period and the modern era that began in the sixties. It was in the month of August nine years ago that this great cricketer passed away leaving behind memories of his great feats with both the bat and ball.

26-8-87

C.S Nayudu – purveyor of a difficult art

The art of leg spin bowling is arguably the most difficult aspect of the game of cricket. Bowling the googly is undoubtedly very difficult. It was in 1900, almost a hundred years ago, that Bosanquet took the first wicket with the googly. In Australia the googly is still known as the 'bosie' named after Bosanquet, the inventor of the googly. The fact that not many purveyors of this art are found in cricket confirms the point that it is an art difficult to practise and more difficult to get command over.

C.S.Nayudu, who turned 73 last month, (April, 1987) was a fine exponent of this art. Younger brother of the great C K Nayudu, C.S. arrived on the Test scene with a bang in 1933 at the young age of 19 years, playing against England when England toured India during 1933-34. Three years later C.S. went to England to join the team when Lala Amarnath was sent back following a controversy. The war affected C.S. too and though he played for over a decade and half after the end of the war, C.S. was past his prime and did not get the attention he deserved in Test cricket.

Few cricketers were so disciplined both on and off the field as C.S Nayudu and many Andhra cricketers still remember how C.S. used to give 'marching orders' to cricketers of his side for violating any norm or etiquette of the game. C.S. was uncompromising in his approach and no wonder he could stay for so long in the game as a bowler and all-rounder. He was twice named 'Cricketer of the Year' in 1940 and 1950 by Indian Cricket.

In the inaugural year of Ranji Trophy 53 years ago (1934) C.S. Nayudu captured 11 for 144 against Northern India in the semi-final. Nayudu played for Central India then and took 16 wickets that year. The following year he took 9 wickets for 84 runs against Rajputana and made 85 runs and made 68 and 51 against Bengal besides taking 5 for 150. During the 1939-40 season he took 13 wickets for 176 against Nawanagar and made 55 runs. Among the other fine performances of C.S. were 10 for 163 against Western India, 12 for 56 and 127 with the bat against Hyderabad and 7 for 160 against Bombay during 1943-44. He took 9 for 55 against Bihar and 10 for 204 against Baroda when Holkar won the Ranji trophy in 1945-46. Nayudu took 9 for 202 against Baroda four

years later and a year before he and his brother came to play for Andhra he made 119 runs against Assam besides taking 6 for 54.

C.S. Nayudu played for Andhra for three years and led the Andhra team in six matches. He made in all 256 runs for Andhra in seven matches and bowled 212 overs claiming 21 wickets for 784 runs. He was coach, selector and captain of the Andhra team during these three eventful years. For Andhra his best was 6 for 113 against Mysore and 62 with the bat against Travancore- Cochin. Later he played for UP and MP and among his notable feats were 6 for 120 against Rajasthan in 1958 and 13 for 144 against Vidarbha the same year. During 1960-61 he made 73 against Vidarbha and took 3 for 51 and 9 for 71 against Uttar Pradesh.

Few cricketers stayed for so long in the national championship taking wickets every year. For almost 30 years Nayudu was among wickets every season. In 1940 he took 40 wickets for Baroda, in 1944, 33 wickets for Holkar and held the record for bowling the highest number of overs in an innings. He bowled 88 overs , 15 maidens, gave away 275 runs and claimed 5 wickets. In the match between Holkar and Bombay Nayudu's figures were 152.5 overs (917 balls) 25-428-11. In all Nayudu took 295 wickets in Ranji trophy and made 2575 runs. Nayudu hit up a century against the England team that toured India in 1933-34. Almost 25 years later Nayudu was still among wickets and runs and took 14 wickets in a match against Vidarbha in 1957. As a member of the touring Indian team Nayudu performed a hat - trick against Surrey in 1946. In Test matches Nayudu's success was not high. In the 11 matches he played, he was either under-bowled or brought on against well-set batsmen. Nayudu's best was perhaps before the war when he did exceptionally well in the pentangular and quadrangular matches. He played for the Hindus. Though a bowler of class who was compared to Grimmett, Nayudu's skill was not matched by success in Test cricket just as honour has not equalled renown even though he has served the game loyally for over 30 years. It is time the Board of Control for Cricket in India and the Andhra Cricket Association, for that matter the Andhra Pradesh Government too, did something to honour this famous Andhra sportsman who now lives in Indore, a place that gratefully remembers the Nayudu brothers.

6-5-87



Nayudu receives honorary doctorate degree

A veteran Indian cricketer who was in oblivion for years suddenly received attention when the Andhra University honoured C.S.Nayudu with the honorary doctorate degree at the 61st Convocation of the University last month. Where was C.S. Nayudu all these days? Did anyone think of him at all? C.S and his family live in Indore which has treated the famous C.K. with reverence. In fact the huge statue of Colonel Nayudu in front of the Indore Stadium reminds one of the greatness of the first Indian Test captain and one of the greatest all rounders the game has seen. C.S.Nayudu is the youngest of five brothers with C.K. being the eldest.

It was revealing to be told that two other brothers too played well though they could not get into prominence. "My second brother C.R. Nayudu was equally brilliant", said C.S. in a chat with this columnist. Were C.K. and C.S. born in Masulipatam as is generally believed? No, they were born in Nagpur. Their mother was born in Masulipatnam and their ancestors did belong to Masulipatnam. But they migrated to Nagpur and C.K.'s father was a high official in the service of the British Government. It was he who wanted his sons to play cricket on his return from England where he had seen the game. That was the beginning of the famous story. The rest is history laced with legendary tales. C.K. was a genius who showed the way and C.S. the youngest of the brothers was the youngest to play for India then when he made his Test debut in 1933 at the age of 19. Nayudu chose to be a right arm leg spinner, a difficult field to succeed in the game of cricket.

"I am a trend setter in a way" he said quietly referring to it. He always bowled long spells and in fact holds the record for bowling the highest number of overs in Ranji Trophy in India. To maintain line and length with wrist spin bowling calls for more than ordinary effort and endurance and Nayudu persevered with it for almost three decades in his long career. He may not have taken a large number of wickets in Tests but was always a bowler who commanded respect from the best of batsmen in the world. "I felt proud when I beat the great Don Bradman four times in my first over against him" he said. That was a moment he would always cherish.

The C.K. story is almost a legend. The C.S. Story is not as

fabulous as that of the more famous elder brother. But it is no less inspiring to the young. C.S. was an exemplar of discipline and dignity on the ground. He never smoked nor allowed his players to smoke or fool around. He was a hard task master and a highly respected leader. That was what he and his brother brought to Andhra in 1953 when they came to inaugurate the Andhra Cricket Association at Guntur.

They came up the hard way and wanted every youngster to work hard and concentrate on the game. About the other things that have made cricket so popular today C.S. frankly asked "Did we of the generation, play for money or publicity?" And he replied with conviction. "The game is always greater than the players and success comes through dedication and hard work." At 76 C.S. Nayudu looks amazingly fit. There is no secret about it. He belongs to that class of players who upheld the dignity of the game through disciplined work.

5-8-90



When C.K. Nayudu was helpless

Presenting the purse raised by the C.K. Nayudu Shastipoorthi Fund Dr. S. Radhakrishnan said on the occasion: "I have always had great respect for Col. Nayudu as a cricketer and captain. I hope he will live to give training to our youth and inspire them with his own example.... the money given to Nayudu is in no way commensurate with the happiness provided by Nayudu to the millions." Nayudu replied "Sir, I have played on sticky wickets and fiery wickets, faced the world's fastest bowlers and wiliest of spinners but never did I flinch. Today succeeding you at the mike, I feel as if I am facing four of the world's fastest bowlers, all at a time on a sticky wicket."

- K.V. Gopala Ratnam, Secretary C.K. Nayudu Shastipoorthi Fund, in Sport & Pastime December 15, 1962.

Ghulam Ahmed - a spinner of class

When M.L. Jaisimha regarded, not the brilliant century he made against Australia at Brisbane or the marathon innings he played in the Calcutta Test match in 1960, but an innings of 80 and odd runs in Hyderabad league as his best knock ever because he had to tackle the guile of Ghulam Ahmed on a turning track it only showed the esteem in which India's ace off-spinner was held by the best batsmen of those times. 'On Indian wickets off-spin bowling was a vanity' wrote an expert. But Ghulam Ahmed demonstrated the art of spin bowling to perfection troubling not only the best batsmen of India but world class batsmen as well.

Tall and handsome Ghulam Ahmed was twenty one when he hit the headlines with a deadly spell against Madras in Ranji trophy in 1947. He took 9 for 47 in the first innings and five wickets in the second to finish with a haul of 14 wickets. The next year, 1948, he played in Test cricket, and was voted 'the cricketer of the year.' He played in unofficial Tests against the visiting Commonwealth teams and in the six Tests he played he claimed 31 wickets with the best figures of 7 for 42 in an innings. Between 1948 and 1958 Ghulam Ahmed played in only 22 Test matches and claimed 68 wickets at an average of 30.11 with the best bowling figures being 7 for 49. Among his good performances were 4 for 94 and 2 for 87 against West Indies at Calcutta in 1948, 5 for 70 against England at Kanpur and 4 for 77 at Madras in a match that India won in 1951-52. On the English tour of 1952 he took 5 for 100 at Leeds, 3 for 106 at Lord's and 3 for 43 at Old Trafford. He took 80 wickets for India in England on that tour. Against Pakistan at Dacca in 1955 he took 5 for 109.

Ghulam Ahmed bowled to a line and length so consistently that it was hard for batsmen to score freely off him. He was always economical and was known for bowling most maiden overs in a match. Against Holkar in Ranji trophy in 1950 his figures were 92.3-21-245-4 in just one innings! He captured 146 wickets in the national championship.

Both on and off the field he was most pleasant to watch and to interact with. "Few Indian bowlers" wrote Ramaswami "were

so pleasant to watch in action; the curving ball was a thing of beauty. He had limited opportunities in Test cricket and yet he claimed 68 wickets for 30.11 each." This writer had the privilege of sharing the microphone with Ghulam Ahmed, as an expert in the box, during AIR's running commentary on the matches between England and South Zone at Hyderabad in 1972 and West Indies and South Zone at the same venue two years later. The genial Ghulam came to the rescue of the three commentators when rain stopped play for half an hour with the commentary team being asked 'to continue the description' - one of those dreaded moments for commentators to keep talking with no action taking place! Ghulam talked about spin bowling past and present, seldom referring to his fame and feats. In 1978 September during the Irani match at Bangalore Ghulam again came to the rescue of the commentary team. As the selector of the Indian team then being named for the Pakistan tour of that year Ghulam graciously came to the box and passed on the list to the commentators very eager to announce the team over the radio, as if they had chosen the team! Ghulam Ahmed held a high position in the Government of Andhra Pradesh. He was highly respected and popular in government service too. He always carried gently on his broad shoulders honours and positions, indeed a gentleman to his fingertips.



Merchant on Mushtaq :

"He played for the love of cricket and the pleasure of playing and records were something that did not mean anything in his life. That was Mushtaq Ali all over."

'law unto himself' :

"I don't know where to pitch the ball....he is a law unto himself" Prior Jones the West Indies fast bowler in 1948-49 in the Calcutta Test match between India and the West Indies. Mushtaq scored 54 in the first innings and 106 not out in the second.

Felicitation Address in Honour of P.R. Umrigar

“Well played, Polly” sang the crowd in a memorable rhyme as a young college cricketer returned to the pavilion after scoring a brilliant century against the West Indies led by John Goddard in 1948. For Umrigar it was the dawn of a glorious career that dominated Indian cricket for over fifteen years. “P.R.”, the initials meant not only Pahlan Ratanji but also ‘Prolific Rungetter’ as Polly demonstrated at home and abroad with outstanding performances. A run of 46 consecutive appearances in Test cricket marked by centuries and fine bowling feats and, after a break, another string of splendid displays placed Umrigar in the company of all time greats in Indian cricket.

He not only dominated the scene with his all round prowess but gave to Indian cricket solidity and stability during a crucial phase. Umrigar could reach a century with two consecutive sixers in a Test match and could dourly defend for six hours in another Test match to save India from defeat against the Australians. A century in each innings in a Test match against Pakistan in 1954 and a double century against New Zealand a year later were among the many memorable feats that flowed from his broad blade. He headed the Indian batting average against the West Indies in 1962 and though stricken with fever, he scored 172 not out and took 5 for 107 at Port of Spain as Gary Sobers and company watched in admiration the feats of the Indian all rounder. No wonder Sonny Ramadhin and Alfred Valentine, the most feared spin duo of those times, saluted Polly with folded hands as he thrashed them with fours and sixers. Polly Umrigar’s century at Old Trafford against England in 1959 was rated as one of the finest innings seen there and on that tour he scored 800 runs in May and finished the tour with 1826 runs including three double centuries and two centuries, equalling the feat of Sir Donald Bradman. Polly Umrigar had equalled Bradman’s feat on the previous tour also. His 252 against Cambridge in 1959 is the highest individual score by an Indian batsman against England in that country.

It is no easy job to chronicle in a citation the many feats of

Umrigar nor is it possible to choose for special mention any one of his numerous centuries and double centuries, 3 Test hundreds against England, 3 against West Indies, 5 against Pakistan and a double hundred against New Zealand, or the successive hundreds and double centuries in Ranji trophy. In 70 innings of Ranji cricket Umrigar amassed 4102 runs at an average of 70, joining the select band of Indian Cricketers like Merchant, Modi and Mankad and captured 140 wickets with his two pronged attack-medium pace and off spin. In the 59 Tests he played he made 3631 runs with an average of 42.22 and captured 35 wickets including nine wickets once in a Test match.

Born on March 28, 1926 Polly Umrigar is not only a great cricketer but a natural sportsman. He has the rare honour of being associated with Indian cricket in various capacities for half a century since his debut in first class cricket in 1944. The tall and handsome gentleman is charmingly humble and wears lightly his years like the many honours conferred on him. He has recently crossed another milestone, the Biblical span of three score and ten. The Andhra Cricket Association, the Visakhapatnam Cricket Association and the entire City of Visakhapatnam wish Polly Umrigar all the best in the years to come. May he reach the glorious century mark in life with the same ease and grace as he has done on the cricket field so many times in the past. May the country be privileged to sing again that beautiful rhyme... Well played Polly!

The Andhra Cricket Association and The Visakhapatnam District Cricket Association.

Visakhapatnam,

August 30, 1996.



P.R. Umrigar was one of the most prolific run getters, he batted with 'great self-assurance' ... his 252 against Cambridge is the highest ever made by an Indian on tour of England.

Nawab of Pataudi

prince charming of Indian cricket

Today (January 5) the Nawab of Pataudi Jr. better known as 'Tiger Pataudi' in India and Pat in England, completes 51 years. To say that Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi does not look his years is stating the obvious. The princely charm he exudes is still there and age has not withered his style or elegance much of which is seen these days in TV advertisements. Pataudi and his wife Sharmila are familiar figures in India's public life and they draw people wherever they appear, whether it is in India or abroad.

Mansoor All Khan was born in 1941, when his father, the Nawab of Pataudi Sr. was at his best, playing mostly in England. The proverbial silver spoon and the cricket bat were the endowments that the junior inherited from his father. Pataudi Jr, like his father, played for the Oxford University, but chose Sussex instead of Worcestershire for which his father had played. Sussex had a special fondness for Indian genius. Ranji and Duleep played for Sussex and Pataudi was the third Prince from India to play for it. He made his debut for Sussex as a schoolboy in 1957 and was its Captain in 1965 and 1966. A road accident in England robbed Pat of vision in one eye. But he overcame it with tremendous will power and rose to become a fine batsman and a superb fielder. Many wondered how much greater his feats would have been if he had not lost an eye.

Making his Test debut at an early age Pataudi became the vice-captain of the Indian side led by Nari Contractor in West Indies where Nari was seriously injured by a nasty short pitched ball. In the 46 Tests Pataudi played (in 83 innings) he scored 2793 at an average of 34.91 and a highest of 203 not out against England besides four centuries. In Ranji trophy he scored 2562 in 54 matches with an average of 37.67 including five centuries. He also made 2 centuries and a double century in Duleep trophy. In English county cricket he scored 6083 runs. He captained India in 40 Tests.

Pat has not been heard much in the recent past over the

radio or TV and cricket lovers do miss his expert views on the game made with brevity and aptness. As a radio and TV commentator Pataudi was highly popular even when he cut someone to size in description. Numerous instances can be recalled about that but one or two might indicate how crisp he was on such occasions. When a TV commentator once asked Pat what he thought of the ball that clean bowled a batsman describing it as a very good ball, Pat simply replied 'obviously'. Once when a journalist asked him why Borde did not bowl much in a match Pat's reply was that the Captain did not ask him to! The Prince Charming of Indian cricket was always dignified on the field as a player and Captain and over AIR and TV as an expert commentator.

5-1-1992

D.G. Phadkar - a great allrounder

One of India's brilliant all rounders, popular both on and off the field, was Dattatreya Gajanan Phadkar, better known as Dattu Phadkar. Chosen to play for India on the 1947-48 tour of Australia for his pace bowling, Phadkar surprised many with his fine batting. A great all rounder was discovered during that tour and his 123 against Bradman's team in the Adelaide Test match in 1947-48 was widely acclaimed and Phadkar who played in only four Tests headed the batting averages for India with 52.33. His 7 for 159 against the West Indies in 1948-49 was one of the best performances by an Indian paceman. A year later Dattu Phadkar scored 217 for Bombay against Maharashtra in Ranji trophy. Phadkar was in great form with the bat and the ball in the early fifties and was a star performer for India against the Commonwealth teams. During the 1952 tour of England Phadkar's best was 7 for 26 against T.N. Pearce's XI at Scarborough. The handsome all rounder was admired all over for his skill and qualities of head and heart. Dattu Phadkar's premature death was a serious loss to Indian cricket.

Nawab of Pataudi - a cricket matador

Sporting history was made the other day when Mansur Ali Khan, the Nawab of Pataudi, assumed the role of a matador in the Ranji Trophy match at Vijayawada. He pulled out a stump to chase away a bull that had strayed into the ground where the Andhra-Hyderabad match was in progress. Many princes in the past had a passion for cricket and shikar. Mansur had ceased to be a prince, but he can continue to be a shikari, though only occasionally on the cricket field. The late Maharajkumar of Vizianagaram, who also led India in Test cricket, was a well-known shikari. Bagging tigers was a Vizzy speciality.

Straying animals are not always unwelcome visitors on a cricket field. At Waltair recently during the Andhra-Kerala Ranji match, a dog ran into the ground at a time when the game was suffering from want of action. While some players tried to chase the animal out of the ground, a section of the crowd was keen on keeping the animal in. A long chase by a volunteer, however, put an end to the interesting interlude.

I read in my childhood a story which I can recall though not with hundred per cent accuracy. Lions passing by cricket fields were quite common in South Africa. Once when a match was in progress in a South African town a lion strode into the ground and squatted a few yards inside the boundary as if the game of the flannelled gentlemen interested him. A hit from the batsman carried the ball near the visitor. The fielders tried in vain to scare His Majesty away. Meanwhile, the batsmen whose side till then was in difficulties started collecting runs. By the time the police came and led the Lord of the Jungle away they added 60 odd invaluable runs and put their side on top. This was perhaps a confirmation of a long-held belief that the arrival of royal visitors, especially at Lord's would bring about a change in the complexion of the game.

Seven years ago there appeared an amusing news item. (Indian Express, July 19, 1963). A man calling himself "Tarzan" went on a rampage in a park releasing rattle snakes, pythons, ferrets, lizards and scores of other birds and animals. He feared that there would be an earthquake if these were not let out. After a mile-long chase the police caught him. That was nothing compared with the hours the officials and the police spent in rounding up most of these reptiles and animals!

23-11-1970

Chandu Borde - a fine allrounder

A standing ovation was given to young Borde as he returned to the pavilion, unlucky to miss the second century by four runs, after making 109 in the first innings against the mighty West Indies in the final Test at Delhi in 1959. That was Chandu Borde's first series and the youngster, displaying correct technique and cool temperament, tamed the fury of Hall, Gilchrist and others. Borde was out, hit wicket, trying to avoid a bouncer from Gilchrist. A fine player arrived on the Indian scene and experts hailed Chandu Borde as another Hazare, another Manjrekar.

Borde was a fine leg spinner too. He played a notable part in India's triumph over England led by Ted Dexter in 1961-62. He claimed 16 wickets in that series and with Salim Durrani he formed formidable spin bowling combination. He played in 55 Tests for India, 49 of them consecutively, and made five centuries aggregating 3061 runs. As a bowler he claimed 52 Test wickets. In Ranji trophy he totalled 4338 runs at an average of 52.90 and claimed 103 wickets at an average of 22.26. His highest in Tests was 177 not out against Pakistan at Madras in 1960-61. Borde played for Maharashtra and Baroda in Ranji trophy and his highest was 207 not out against Bengal in 1972-73. He was vice-captain of the Indian team to Australia, New Zealand and England and captained India in one Test match against Australia. He was honoured with the Arjuna award in 1967.

Now Borde is the Chairman of the National Selection Committee.



Brilliant but unlucky

Nari Contractor, a brilliant left-handed batsman, captained India in 12 consecutive Tests before he fell a victim of a bumper which struck on the head during the 1961-62 tour of the West Indies. Contractor began his first class career in 1952-53 with a century in each innings for Gujarat against Baroda. He was one of India's consistent and prolific run getters. He made a fighting 81 against England at Lord's in India's total of 168 in 1959. Tragedy it was that Contractor could not return to Test Cricket.

N.S. Tamhane - a wicket keeper of class

The wicket keeper is often the unsung hero in the game of cricket. The goal keeper is much better off in football because the few good saves he makes are remembered, at least for sometime, and he goes off the ground to a hero's ovation. Probably the problem centres round the fact that in cricket it is all in hundreds whereas in football it is a low single digit affair generally. Otherwise how can one fail to recollect the feat of a wicket keeper who did not concede a single bye in a total of 380 runs? The man too is not much remembered. There was a touch of poignancy when N S Tamhane introduced himself, the other day at Visakhapatnam during the first one day international and when a few enquired who Mr Tamhane was! The veteran Tamhane, now a selector, was one of the best wicket keepers India produced and has quite a few feats to his credit. To have played for the Indian Universities first before playing for his University, (Bombay) and to have played for India before donning the State colours were among Tamhane's many achievements.

Born in 1931, Tamhane was originally a slow bowler playing in Bombay league and had to wear the gloves in one match when the regular wicket keeper failed to turn up. He did so well behind the wickets in that match that he was advised to continue as a wicket keeper. M K Mantri gave timely guidance to Tamhane and moulded his career as he later did to Gavaskar.

Tamhane's Test debut was historic in a way. He did not concede a single bye, a feat he repeated later in Pakistan. But that was an unofficial Test match and so it did not get the importance it deserved. Touring Pakistan with the Indian team, Tamhane claimed 20 victims in the 3 Test matches and was an instant success. He bagged 7 victims in the unofficial Test against the Silver Jubilee Overseas Cricket team. In 3 Ranji matches in that year, he claimed 19 victims and in all had over 102 victims in his bag. Among his other feats were 7 victims in a match against Baroda and 5 against Maharashtra.

Tamhane played in 21 official and 2 unofficial Test matches. Keeping wickets to the bowling of Mankad, Gupte and Ghulam

Ahmed was no ordinary task and Tamhane rose splendidly to the job. Till he came on the scene, wicket keeping was considered a weak spot of Indian cricket, though such worthies as Hindlekar and Sen preceded him. Tamhane was a good batsman too with a couple of centuries to his credit in first class cricket. People liked his skill and unostentatious bearing both on and off the field. No wonder, he continues to be so quiet and dignified playing ably his role as a national selector.

21-12-88



Hemu Adhikari **another name for discipline**

A man for crisis, a soldier by profession, Hemu Adhikari was known for his discipline and stubborn resistance. He made his debut at the age of 17 playing first for Gujarat and then for Baroda, before becoming captain of the Services team in 1950. His 230 for Services against Rajasthan in 1951-52 was a record. He was the vice-captain of the Indian team that toured England in 1952. He captained India in one Test against the West Indies in February 1959 and in that match he scored 63 and 40 besides taking 3 for 68. His highest in Test matches was 114 not out against the West Indies at Delhi in 1948-49. Hemu Adhikari was one of the best fielders in the Indian side and he excelled at cover point. He was a coach also and spent more than a month at Visakhapatnam coaching boys of Andhra.

Jai (M.L. Jaisimha) - a colourful cricketer

M.L. Jaisimha is a colourful personality, both on and off the field. Currently the Captain of the Indian veterans team playing against Pakistan veterans, Jaisimha has played the roles of a captain, selector, and radio and television commentator with commendable skill and grace. Sunil Gavaskar adored Jaisimha's technique and elegance as a batsman. The Maharajkumar of Vizianagaram (Vizzy) was never tired of calling Jaisimha 'The Lion of Victory' in his reference to Jai as a batsman. Jack Fingleton wrote a memorable piece on Jaisimha's magnificent Test century at Brisbane during India's tour of Australia in 1967-68. N.S. Ramaswami called Jaisimha 'the batsmen's batsman'. Everyone conceded that Jaisimha was one of the shrewdest leaders the country has produced.

He was a boy of fifteen when he made his debut in the national championship for his home team Hyderabad at Hyderabad, in 1954-55. He would have begun his career with a record if only he had not missed the century mark by just ten runs against Andhra in his first Ranji match. But those 90 runs showed in clear terms the potential and the prowess of a rising star on the Indian horizon. His technique was perfect and his driving immaculate. His on-drive was a thing of beauty, a stroke that Sunil Gavaskar, as a boy, loved to emulate. Jai was both a mediumpacer and an off-spinner. The Hyderabad star was among runs and wickets every season and people went miles to see the young all-rounder in action. Strangely enough the stylist in him gave way, at times, to the determined batsman committed to saving the match for his side. He has the distinction of batting on all the five days in a Test match! On another occasion he spent nearly 400 minutes to score a meagre 74 against a visiting side. Against Pakistan he once stayed at the crease for eight hours scoring 99 before being run out. The occasion demanded Jai's stubborn presence at the crease and he had the skill and temperament to do it. He played for India in 39 Tests (71 innings) scoring 2056 runs at an average of 30.68. He scored two centuries against England during 1961-62 and 1963-64 and one against Australia four years later. In Tests he took 9 wickets for 829 runs. In Ranji trophy Jai totalled 5227 runs at an

average of 45.85. His highest was 259 against Bengal at Hyderabad in 1964. He made 17 centuries in Ranji Trophy and scored most hundreds in a season in 1964, a year in which he made 713 runs. With B. Mahendra Kumar he added for the 5th wicket a record total of 332 runs against Bengal that year. In addition to these he scored 3 centuries in Duleep Trophy, two in Moin-ud Dowla, one in Irani Trophy and one in an unofficial Test, in all a total of 30 hundreds in first class cricket.

As a bowler he took 235 wickets in Ranji Trophy at an average of 21.11, 31 wickets in Duleep Trophy and 48 wickets in Moin-ud-Dowla. He took ten wickets or more than ten in a match against Madras twice and against Leeward Islands in the West Indies. He played for Hyderabad without a break in Ranji Trophy for 23 seasons and in Duleep Trophy for 12 years. He was the skipper of the Hyderabad team for 14 successive seasons from 1963-64 till his retirement in 1976-77. He captained South Zone in Duleep Trophy for seven years. Under his captaincy South Zone won the trophy thrice and shared it once. In 1978 he was made honorary life member of the MCC. Incidentally another MCC (Maredpally Cricket Club) owed its success to Jaisimha for years in Hyderabad league.

When asked to name his best moments - the Brisbane knock or the tons against England or the feat of staying at the crease at one time or the other on all the five days in a Test match (Calcutta during 1959-60) - Jai once told this writer that he remembered most the 80 and odd runs he made in Hyderabad league for MCC against an attack comprising Ghulam Ahmed, then at his best. "The wicket was treacherous and Ghulam was toying with the batsmen. I got runs in the most difficult conditions against some superb bowling", he replied.

M.L. Jaisimha was an excellent team-leader. Abbas Ali Baig, Abid Ali and others formed a fine group under Jai's inspiring leadership. Very courteous in his conversation Jaisimha is one of the most articulate figures in Indian cricket. At 49 Jaisimha is now one of our leading veterans endowed with rare insights into the game.

23-9-87

Abbas Ali Baig

blue eyed boy of Indian cricket

Few cricketers made such a brilliant debut in cricket at all levels as the charming Abbas Ali Baig of Hyderabad. Fewer still, perhaps, had the embarrassing distinction of being publicly kissed by an admiring girl while returning to the pavilion as Abbas Ali Baig. A century on debut in his first Ranji season, a century in his first match on tour in England and in the first Test appearance are indeed extraordinary feats performed by this Oxford Blue of handsome demeanour.

The year 1954 marked the beginning of a new era in Hyderabad cricket. Two gifted youngsters, both born in March 1939, made their debut in Ranji trophy for Hyderabad. Jaisimha was just a fortnight older than Abbas. E.B.Aibara, a gentleman-cricketer, a solid batsman and patriarch of Hyderabad cricket was the leading light guiding the debutants in the national championship. Jaisimha playing in his first Ranji match missed the coveted century by just ten runs, falling leg before wicket for 90 runs against Andhra. Abbas Ali Baig who also had his debut in Ranji trophy in that match made a century against Mysore two weeks later at the same venue in Hyderabad. Aibara who also made a century against Andhra that season was most pleased to see the two teenagers make such a fine debut for Hyderabad in the national championship.

As an Oxford Blue Abbas Ali Baig joined the Indian team touring England in 1959 and in his first match he got a hundred (102) against Middlesex. Baig created history by scoring a century in his first Test match scoring 112 against England at Manchester that year and in so doing he became the youngest Indian cricketer (20 years 131 days) to score a century in Test cricket. He received the Visitors Award that year and in English league he played for Somerset. His highest in English league that year was 221 not out against Free Foresters.

Abbas Ali Baig played in only ten Test matches and aggregated 428 runs with an average of 23.72. In all he made 19 centuries, 8 in Ranji trophy, 2 in Duleep Trophy and 6 in English league besides the only hundred he got in Test cricket on his debut. He

made 3524 runs in Ranji trophy at an average of 39.59 and 4387 in English league at an average of 33.41. He would have amassed a lot of runs if only he had chosen to stay at home and concentrate on cricket. Studies abroad and career interests came in the way of Baig's active involvement in the game at home. Still, his style of play and the quality of his batsmanship left a deep impression on Indian cricket, Hyderabad in particular.



Gupte..... a great leg spinner

Subhash P. Gupte, one of India's great leg spinners, was born in 1929. He made his first class debut in 1948-49. In 1954-55 he became the first Indian to take 10 wickets in an innings - 10 for 78 for Bombay against Pakistan Services and Bahawalpur XI. In Test cricket his best was 9 for 102 against the West Indies in the Kanpur Test in December 1958, in first innings. Against the West Indies at Port of Spain he took 7 for 162 in one innings and topped India's bowling averages with a tally of 24 wickets in 4 Tests on that tour of the Caribbeans. The same year at home Gupte claimed 25 wickets for 456 runs in four tests against the SJOC team. He and Ghulam Ahmed who took 21 wickets for 208 runs had the visiting side in all sorts of trouble with their guile, spin and accuracy. India won the series 2-1 thanks largely due to the superb bowling of Gupte and Ghulam. In the 36 Test matches he played, Gupte took 149 wickets.

Abid Ali - a useful all rounder

It was always a pleasure watching Abid Ali in action. His long run up to the wicket, smooth bowling action and clever variation of pace constituted one aspect of his all round talent. Once he completed his over he would take up his favourite close-in position in the field, bringing off spectacular saves and splendid catches. Then his skill as a batsman was characterized by a tenacious spirit and fighting qualities. With Abbas Ali Baig he added 234 runs for the second wicket in Ranji trophy against Kerala in 1968 and almost as many (231) for the same second wicket with Jaisimha two years later again against Kerala. His 71 against Australia at Sydney, his highest in Test cricket, showed his skill and fighting spirit under difficult conditions. His 6 for 55 at Adelaide on debut in 1967-68 was his best feat in Test cricket.

Jaisimha, both the brain and the backbone of Hyderabad cricket, had immense faith in Abid's abilities and he used to turn to Abid Ali whenever Hyderabad was in difficulty. Making his debut for Hyderabad in 1959-60 Abid Ali made 3812 runs in Ranji trophy including 7 centuries. His highest was 173 not out against Kerala in 1968-69. He claimed 118 wickets in Ranji trophy at an average of 21.69. In the 29 Test matches he played he made 1018 runs. Abid Ali was one of the star performers during India's successful tour of England in 1971. He scored a century on that tour and he along with Solkar and Venkataraghavan excelled in the field.

Abid Ali captained Hyderabad during 1977-78. He aggregated 8619 runs and captured 393 wickets in his first class career and brought off a number of catches, some of them sensational, at home and abroad. Always admired for his discipline and dedication to the game, Abid Ali has never made an enemy nor lost a friend.



C.K on Nissar

"Mohammed Nissar could be easily faster than even Larwood in the first few overs."

Bedi - mesmeriser with the ball

Cricketologists and columnists were never tired of using superlatives in describing the mesmerism of Bishan Singh Bedi's bowling. Few spin bowlers of modern times compelled such attention of the viewing critic and the batsman on strike at the other end as the turbaned master of spin. This writer remembers the memorable way in which the famous Australian commentator Alan McGilvray went lyrical once in describing the art of bowling—the ease with which Bedi would move up and turn over his arm gently before sending down another of his famous deliveries. To the spectator bowling looked so easy that he might be wondering at the agony of the batsman facing upto Bishan Bedi. Only the batsmen knew the subtleties and nuances of that curve and curl which constituted the magic of Bedi's spin.

Bishan Singh Bedi came on the scene at a time when three famous spinners were already at their peak. Bedi added a new dimension and extraordinary sharpness to the Indian spin attack that wrecked the careers of some of the best batsmen of the sixties and seventies. Bedi was a tormentor of the slow-footed. But the quick footed were seldom sure as to what the master bowler would do if they took liberties with his craft. Many perished in the web of spin that Bedi wove like a spider that deftly draws its victim into its web. Bedi was among the foremost exponents of our spin attack which was as deadly as the speed of the West Indian or Australian attack without ever being aggressive. It was fearsome but not fiery. That was why critics hailed this type of attack which looked so gentle an art yet so dangerous to tackle.

Statistics do not always explain the genius of a player adequately though in the ultimate analysis they do count. Bedi's figures too were highly impressive. 266 wickets in Test cricket off 21,364 balls costing only 7,637 runs! These include 85 wickets against England, 62 against West Indies, 57 against New Zealand and 56 against Australia. During the tour of Australia in 1977-78 as the Captain of the Indian side he took his career best number of 31 wickets at a cost of 23.87 runs each. On 14 occasions he took more than five wickets in a match. He was sacked after the tour of Pakistan during 1978-79 where he took only 6 wickets for 449 runs and a year later Bedi's exit from Test cricket took place.

In Ranji trophy he took 402 wickets off 17496 balls conceding only 6072 runs. 52 wickets in Duleep Trophy and 17 in Irani Trophy were the other important figures. Bishan Bedi is the first Indian bowler to cross the 200-wicket mark in Test cricket. During 1974-75 he established a record by taking 64 wickets in Ranji Trophy the highest for any bowler in a season. 13 for 34 in a match including 7 for 5 runs was another feat of Bedi. In Test cricket his best figures were 7 for 98 against Australia in 1969-70 and 10 for 94 against Australia again eight years later. Bedi has a hat-trick to his credit in Ranji Trophy. His highest was 61 with the bat in the national championship and in Test cricket 50 not out against New Zealand in 1976-77. Bishan Singh Bedi toured Australia with Sir Gary Sober's Rest of the World team in 1971-72. A knowledgeable critic and writer Bishan Singh Bedi is a popular star on T.V. too whose 'quicker one' has the person at the other end in all sorts of trouble.

16-3-88



Bishan Bedi is the first Indian to take more than 200 wickets in Test Cricket.... He claimed 5 or more wickets in an innings on 14 occasions.

Captain at 72 ..

When Raja Maharaj Singh captained the Bombay Governor's XI against the Commonwealth team in November 1950 at Bombay, he was 72.

Record distance

Bails (record distance) In first-class cricket the record is held by R.D. Burrows of Worcestershire when bowling Huddleston of Lancashire at Manchester on June 29, 1911 he sent a bail a distance of 67 yards 6 inches.

(From Maurice Golesworthy's Encyclopaedia of Cricket)

Prasanna - a great off spinner

Alan McGilvray, the famous Australian cricket commentator, once went lyrical over the air while describing Bishan Bedi's bowling. The veteran commentator lavished high praise on Bedi's style of bowling. The ease with which the turbaned purveyor of the art of spin bowling sent down maiden after maiden and the deceptive curve of his left arm off spin bowling were a delight to the connoisseur of the game. Bowling looked so easy to do when Bedi was in action.

A perfect foil to Bedi at the other end was Erapalli Prasanna one of the greatest off spinners of modern cricket. A few steps followed by a gentle hop preceded the smooth delivery and the only exercise that Prasanna was seen doing often was rolling his shirt sleeve as he went back to the bowling mark. In that seemingly gentle exercise of rolling the hand over, Prasanna concealed a bagful of tricks. He would vary the flight, send down a quicker one or throw a curving noose around the batsman's neck. "He could spin on glass" wrote Rajan Bala. "He is a picture of grace" hailed another. "He is world class" was the chorus one heard when the master bowler was at his peak.

How many batsmen failed to read his spin and curve it is hard to recollect. Whether it was in Australia or in the West Indies or England on helpful tracks or lifeless pitches, Prasanna bowled with rare skill. He was at times mauled badly. Which bowler escaped it? The West Indies batsmen tore more than once the Indian attack to pieces. Once in England Prasanna had a poor season and even in India I saw ten years ago a young allrounder by name Kapil Dev hitting Prasanna for sixes and on one occasion in that Irani trophy final at Bangalore the ball sailed over the huge stadium never to be recovered. Prasanna took all that in his stride and bounced back into form, once the storm blew over.

Born in Bangalore in May, 1940 Prasanna shot into prominence in the early sixties and learned a lot during India's tour of the West Indies. Sixteen years later he said good bye to test cricket during India's tour of Pakistan where Prasanna took his last Test wicket, the 189th. In between he was dropped several times and

the Indian selectors found it hard to choose between Prasanna and Venkataraghavan. His 189 Test wickets cost him 5,742 runs at an average of 30.38. Against Australia Prasanna took 25 wickets in the 1967-68 series and 26 during 1969-70 series. His best in Tests was 11 for 140 (8 for 70 in one innings) against New Zealand at Auckland. He took 371 wickets for 6,399 runs in Ranji trophy, 83 wickets for 1,856 runs in Duleep trophy and 25 wickets for 555 runs in Irani trophy. In his long and distinguished career Prasanna took in all 927 wickets. His highest score in Tests was 37 and in Ranji trophy 81 and also has to his credit two half centuries. A shrewd observer of the game Prasanna has held many positions off the field with distinction, as a manager of team and as a selector. He was honoured with Arjuna award in 1969. Prasanna authored 'One More Over'.



PROMISE AND PERFORMANCE

There was great disappointment in Visakhapatnam in 1970 when the Bombay University batting sensation, Sunil Gavaskar, opted out of the inter-university cricket tournament being hosted then by Andhra University, as he was getting ready for the tour of the West Indies. A Punjabi lad, by name Madanlal Sharma, Captain of the Guru Nanakdev University, however, hogged limelight by his all round prowess and aggressive leadership. With his bowling, batting and fielding Madanlal led his side into the semi-final. Many in Visakha who saw Madanlal in action predicted a bright future for him. It did not take him long to establish his credentials as a fine all rounder. 1042 runs and 71 wickets in the 39 Tests he played for India and 73 wickets in one day internationals besides the stunning catches he took bear testimony to his skill. Madanlal was a member of the 1983 champion side that won the Prudential World Cup.

Around that time another young sportsperson from the north attracted attention in Visakhapatnam. Kiran Peshwaria won laurels in the inter-university women's tennis tournament hosted by the Andhra University. That champion tennis player was later to become a national celebrity as Kiran Bedi!.

B.S. Chandrasekhar

from wicket taker to team maker

The appointment of B S Chandrasekhar as a member of the Indian cricket selection committee is a matter for rejoicing because nobody deserves this honour more richly than the 'freak' leg spinner. Chandra as he is endearingly called all over the world was a great bowler who overcame a physical handicap through sheer will power and rose to become one of the finest leg spin bowlers of all times.

Twenty three years ago a teenager rose from oblivion (when he was not considered good enough for higher division league cricket) to become one of the youngest cricketers to make debut in a Test match when he at the age of 18 was chosen to play against England at Bombay during the 1963-64 series. That year marked the beginning of an illustrious career in Indian Test cricket. Chandrasekhar became a regular member of the Indian side and few people could read his spin. Even media persons covering Test matches wrote that Chandra clean bowled the batsman with a googly while in fact it was a sharp leg break and this was one of the complaints of Chandrasekhar against cricket correspondents.

No bowler had such a hold over batsmen as Chandra in full cry. He had the great Gary Sobers in all sorts of trouble several times. Chandra rates Ken Barrington high among the batsmen most difficult to bowl against. He has high regard for Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi as a Captain and V. Subrahmanyam of his own state who gave him immense encouragement. Chandra felt at times that he was overbowled, probably when he was not in his element when batsmen took liberties with his wayward line and length.

As far as records go Chandrasekhar took more than 25 wickets in a season during eight years from 1965 to 1971 with the highest number being 46 in 1970. In Ranji Trophy he claimed 436 wickets at an average of 19.15. He took 79 wickets in Duleep trophy and 58 in Irani Trophy. His remarkable figures were 4 for 4 against Andhra in 1965, 4 for 6 against Kerala in the same year and 9 wickets in an innings against Kerala in 1969.

In Test cricket Chandra claimed 242 wickets at an average of 29.74. His best haul was 35 wickets against England during 1972-73. How many times he helped India win test matches it is not easy to recall but it was only Chandra who could make the breakthrough after Bedi, Prasanna and Venkat threw the noose around the batsman's neck. Chandra was the trump card on most occasions. He had the honour of being chosen by Wisden in 1972. If Chandra was one of the most feared bowlers in the world, as a batsman he was an easy prey to any bowler. In 80 innings he scored just 167 runs and was not out on 39 occasions. His highest in a Test match was 22. Chandrasekhar's tally was 1063 wickets from the 246 first class matches he played.

Chandrasekhar was a 'freak' bowler. He was too quick for a spin bowler. His flippers were at times as fast as the good ones sent down by India's medium pacers. He was unplayable at his best when he mixed his leg breaks and flippers with deadly effect. An appropriate end to a great career it was when he took a wicket off the last ball of his career in Karnataka's match against Haryana in March, 1980.

Bhagawat Chandrasekhar is a modest chap whose broad smile puts one at ease. Chandra is a fan of the late Mukesh. He has over 800 spools of the songs of Mukesh. Such a fine person and great bowler has now rightly become a Test selector. In his days B S Chandrasekhar was a match winner. There is no reason why he should not continue to be so though in a different capacity now, picking match winning Indian teams. From a match winning wicket taker to a match winning team maker the success of Chandrasekhar will be India's success. In the words of John Arlott "There will never be another like him."

12-8-87



Discovery by India...

Some famous players who made their Test debut against India were Alec Bedser and Fred Trueman of England, Clive Lloyd, Viv Richards and Malcolm Marshall of the West Indies and Steve Waugh of Australia.

Venkataraman

a class bowler and shrewd leader

Very few cricketers have had so many ups and downs and fewer indeed who bounced back into the Test side, as Srinivas Venkataraman in the annals of Indian cricket. He arrived on the scene in a big way at a time when B S Chandrasekhar was in the news as "a freak bowler" and when Erapalli Prasanna was growing in stature as a great off spinner. Venkat was only 19 when he was included in the Indian side against New Zealand. Venkat helped India register her only win against New Zealand in that series by taking 12 wickets for 152 in the Test match at Delhi. His bag of 8 for 72 in the first innings was a rare feat for a youngster which has been recently emulated by Hirwani at Madras. Venkat was then a shy youngster sans the moustache and his ascent in Indian cricket was turbulent for a variety of reasons. He had to content himself with irregular inclusion mainly because a more crafty purveyor of the art, Prasanna, had also to be accommodated. Comparing two fine bowlers or batsmen would be a risky venture. In India it was Prasanna v Venkat or Gavaskar v Viswanath for a long time. In batting a side can have two equally gifted batsmen. But in bowling it is a different proposition and two off spinners in a side (right arm or left arm) are considered unnecessary. That is why only one of them was mostly preferred and the result was that either of them had to suffer injustice. In a way both of them had hard luck often.

Yet there is no denying the fact that Venkat was a class bowler whether it was in India or in English league where he played with considerable distinction for Derbyshire. He had to labour on hard and lifeless wickets at times. But his perseverance and hard work always kept him in good stead. Gary Sobers had high regard for Venkat's abilities as a spinner. Perhaps the selectors overshot the mark when they made Venkat the Captain at a time when the going was none too smooth for the Indian side. Captain today, twelfth man in the next match-- such was Venkat's luck one year. He took all that in his stride. In Test cricket Venkataraman took 156 wickets at an average of 36.11 and made 748 runs in 57 Tests with the highest being 64. In Ranji trophy Venkat took 530

wickets- second only to Rajinder Goel's 640 wickets-at an average of 18.23. Venkat scored over 2,000 runs in Ranji trophy including a century (137) which was his highest. He had the distinction of taking more than 25 wickets in a season on seven occasions between 1964 and 1984 with the highest being 46 in 1967. He took wickets in almost every Ranji match he played during the 20 years.

Venkataraman was one of finest fieldsmen in Indian test side. Ajit Wadekar could win a Test series abroad mainly because of the brilliant fielding of Solkar, Venkat and Abid Ali. Venkat had excellent reflexes and a pair of safe hands and in the slips and at gully he was at his best. Articulate and of cheerful disposition Venkataraman now in his 43rd year speaks with clarity on many subjects ranging from cricket to engineering. Only a week ago a benefit match was played for him in Madras.

3-2-88

Venkataraman is now one of the leading umpires in world cricket.



Rebels in Cricket

"It sometimes seems that cricket, considered to be the most gentlemanly of games, produces more rebels than any other. How strange!.... Let us prefer rebelliousness -- or if you like, provocative charm ---to subservient stoogery." Arthur Mailey, former Australian Test cricketer and cartoonist (Sport & Pastime 29-11-1958)

'THE KING OF GAMES'

Cricket is "the King of Games in that it holds its sway over its followers from boyhood to old age. Boyhood, manhood and old age are the three stages we set up in human life, and it is the peculiar influence Cricket has on them that to my mind gives Cricket as a Sport a position above all others."

- W.G. Grace

Ajit Wadekar

skipper with a difference

Ajit Wadekar hitting Hall for a six at Chepauk in January 1967 sent the entire stadium into ecstasy. India lost a wicket in the second innings without a run on the board. The great Wesley Hall was bowling menacingly when the young Bombay left hander strode up to the wicket and soon lifted Hall effortlessly for a six. That provided immediate relief to all of us though we least imagined then that a fine batsman and brilliant captain was in the making. Wadekar sparkled that day with a breezy 67. A few years later Indian team under Wadekar's leadership made history in West Indies and England. The first three of the four Test series he captained, India won and Wadekar's astuteness as a leader was hailed all over.

Interestingly Wadekar made his Test debut for India against the West Indies, opening the bowling for India. Those were times when genuine fast bowlers were scarce. One dominant theory then was that with such a crop of class spinners being there in the side fast bowlers were an avoidable luxury.

Wadekar arrived on the national scene with a bang. He performed brilliantly in inter-university and Ranji Trophy matches. A triple century, a double century and five centuries were among the many big knocks he made in inter-university cricket. His 324 against Delhi was a record which Sunil Gavaskar broke in 1970-71. For three seasons Wadekar topped batting averages for Bombay in Ranji Trophy and became the only batsman to have scored more than 600 runs in two successive years in the national championship. He scored consistently in Tests and scored more than 1000 runs on the short tour of England in 1971. Wadekar's highest score in Test cricket was 143 and he was out in the nineties four times. He aggregated 2113 runs in the 37 Tests he played for India. In Ranji trophy he totalled 4388 at a high average of 59.29. Wadekar scored 35 centuries in first class cricket. He was honoured with the Arjuna award in 1968 and Padma Shri in 1972. Wadekar was only 33 when he announced his retirement.

Viswanath's debut in Ranji trophy

The cricket fans of Vijayawada were understandably disappointed on the eve of the Ranji trophy tie between Andhra and Mysore in the second week of November 1967. Test stars like Prasanna, Chandrasekhar and Subramanyam dropped out of the Mysore team that came to Vijayawada. As many as eight youngsters made their debut under the leadership of emergency captain Y.B. Patel. On that cloudy morning of November 11 Patel won the toss and elected to bat.

Andhra's new ball bowlers, the well-built R.P. Gupta and N.Venkatarao, bowled with fire against the Mysore opening batsmen, Vijayakumar and Nagabhushan. At 10, Venkatarao bowled a beautiful inswinger that uprooted Nagabhushan's middle stump. After five runs were added by the new batsman Kirmani and Vijayakumar, Venkatarao trapped Vijayakumar leg before and Mysore were in real trouble when eighteen-year-old Viswanath joined Kirmani. Viswanath's good performances in junior cricket that year got for him a place in the State side. He had made 75 against Hyderabad, 50 against Kerala and 44 and 30 not out against Madras in junior cricket.

Gupta and Venkatarao spurred on by their early successes and cheered by the home crowd, bowled a number of bouncers in an aggressive manner that reminded one of Hall and Griffith who had a few months earlier demonstrated on Indian grounds their bowling prowess. There was in the minds of the spectators at Vijayawada pity and concern for the two tiny Mysore batsmen. Viswanath and Kirmani, although the Mysore batsmen farmed the speed of the Andhra bowlers with maturity far beyond their years. Kirmani fell at 42 to slow bowler Raju.

Viswanath after defending for a while, began to unleash a number of gorgeous cuts and pulls. To the short ball, he lay back and cut with elegance. To the flighted ones, he came down the pitch to execute neat drives and deflections off his toes to the on-side. P.S. Rangaswamy who has been watching cricket in India since the thirties remarked to me in the press box then that this youngster was going to be another Hazare.

With Nataraj he added 139 runs for the fourth wicket and later was concerned in another century partnership for the sixth wicket. His century was completed with the help of twelve boundaries. He went on to score freely and at 198, some youngsters watching the game, thinking that Viswanath had reached his double century, ran onto the ground and garlanded him. The double century however, did come after he drove Mahendrakumar to the on side.

At stumps, Viswanath was unbeaten on 209. The next morning, he broke Abell's record of 210 on his debut in 1934. Viswanath was eventually out for 230. More than half of his score came in boundaries. It was a chanceless innings.

The shy Viswanath, eluding the few photographers there sneaked into the Mysore players' tent after making that historic knock. He would not come out to pose for the cameramen. Then Patel, his skipper, and a few other Mysore players literally pulled Viswanath out of the tent and made him oblige the photographers. The little hero gently raised his head and smiled coyly as a shy bride. That was seven years ago....

9-2-1975



'Viswanath exhibits classical elegance
..... underlying his skill which moves the
senses' - N.S. Ramaswami

One of the two batsmen in the World to
have made a hundred on debut in both test
and first class cricket.....

Gundappa Viswanath - a supreme artist

It was said of the great English batsman, Frank Woolley, that even when he hit a bowler for fours in an over, the bowler would not feel hurt. In his inimitable style Neville Cardus described Woolley's batsmanship. "He is the soul of courtesy, of proportion, as he drives his boundaries. He will hit a bowler for fours in an over and not give him reason to feel bruised or affronted. It is all done so quietly, so modestly". These words also apply to Gundappa Viswanath. The ease and grace with which he caressed the ball to the fence when he was in flow was a matter of aesthetic joy. Viswanath was a supreme artist whose mastery over the willow reminded the cricketologists as well as the connoisseurs of the artistry of such immortals as Ranjitsinhji, Vijay Merchant and Vijay Hazare.

As in the national championship, Ranji trophy, so in Test cricket his debut was historic – a record breaking double century in the former and a century in the latter. The gentle giant of Indian cricket was for many years its backbone. He made 6080 runs in Test cricket at an average of 41.93. His 14 Test centuries and 35 fifties were made against the best bowling sides of those times, mostly Australia, England and the West Indies. This writer was among the privileged spectators who rose to their feet to give the *little master* a standing ovation on two occasions at Madras—once in 1975 when he defied the fury of Andy Roberts & Company to remain 97 not out and seven years later when he returned to the pavilion after making 222 against England. Both were great innings, one made at the peak of his career, and the other a year before he bade farewell to Test cricket. In Ranji trophy he made 5653 runs at an average of 45.95 with the help of fifteen centuries. In all he has to his credit 44 centuries in first class cricket. He received the Padma Shri in 1977 and Arjuna Award in 1978.

The style is certainly the man in the case of Viswanath. The gentleman - cricketer upheld the ideals of the game both on and off the field. Which modern day cricket captain would recall in Test cricket a batsman when wrongly given out? Viswanath once did it and not only lost the match for that gesture but also his cap-

taincy. In February 1980 he, as India's Captain, requested England's Taylor to continue after the umpire gave him out. Taylor and Botham went on to add 175 runs. Not just Indian cricket but cricket in general and its spirit have been enriched by the little master's style and deeds. The lines of John Arlott written in another context apply to Gundappa Viswanath.

"Recorded centuries leave no trace
On memory of that timeless grace".

* * *

AMAR SINGH AND NISSAR

Amar Singh played in only seven official Tests and claimed 28 wickets at an average of 30.66 and made 292 runs averaging 22.55. Wisden described Amar Singh as the "best bowler seen in England since the war." Amar Singh had a peculiar bowling action but as Neville Cardus wrote: "He swung the new ball now inwards, now outwards. His pace from the ground was vivid. A short run, a sudden rush of energy from a loose wheeling arm and the ball flashed down the wicket like a javelin." Vijay Merchant testified thus: "His comparatively short run deceived the batsman completely regarding pace, and even in the air he was not so fast as he appeared off the pitch. This was the greatest attribute and one which made him one of the finest bowlers in the world."

The other great bowler of those times was Mohammed Nissar who played in only 6 official Tests claiming 25 wickets for 707 runs. C.K. Nayudu wrote that Nissar was faster than Larwood in the first few overs. Cardus observed that "Nissar's speed during half a dozen overs was really capital." In the Lord's Test in 1932 Nissar clean bowled Holmes and Sutcliffe, with just ten runs on the board, evoking the admiration of all.

(From N.S. Ramaswami's *Indian Willow*)

Sunny's Day at Chepauk

The mark of good batsmanship lies not only in choosing the right ball to hit but also in the ability to leave judiciously the ball moving away from the line of the stumps. That is where the great batsman scores over the ordinary ones. Sunil Gavaskar's masterly knock at Chepauk in the fifth Test match against Pakistan was unique in many ways. As the top batsman in the side and as the skipper of the Indian team he played to a strategy, after Kapil Dev with the ball and Kirmani behind the stumps did not allow the Pakistani batsmen to dominate on the first day.

Gavaskar dropped anchor first. He neither flashed at the ball outside the off stump nor lost his cool when Imran Khan and Sikander Bakht released a barrage of bouncers, like air pilots carrying out sorties. The ease with which he moved into the line of the ball was indeed an object lesson to all youngsters. As long as he was at the crease—he stayed there for almost ten long hours—the pace and fury of the two reputed Pakistan bowlers looked ordinary. It was Gavaskar who inspired confidence in the non-striker and though four wickets fell for 160 Yashpal Sharma defended dourly by emulating his hero at the other end. The nagging accuracy of Iqbal Qasim made as little impression as the pace of Imran and Sikander. Often did Gavaskar go down the wicket to smother the spin of Qasim. Not once did the ball rise an inch from the ground. Such was his footwork.

An interesting aspect of Gavaskar's batting is the manner in which he corrects himself, whenever he makes a mistake or loses concentration. When he edges the ball, he is seen the next moment practising the shot teaching himself how to avoid the mistake. At Chepauk only once did a bouncer from Imran graze his hat and the next moment Gavaskar was seen demonstrating how he should have moved away from it. When he mistimed a hook the shot was seen being rehearsed. And the shaking of the fist was another gesture which indicated his warning to himself. As he came back to the pavilion after that great knock which took the wind out of the sails of the Pakistani bowling, Gavaskar was cursing himself perhaps for not finishing the task he had set before himself, on Wednesday, January 16.

There were many in the packed stadium who thought that Gavaskar was too dour and should have scored faster. But the skipper in him seemed to have got the better of the master batsman he is. The advantage that Kapil Dev and others brought for India, to the surprise of many, had to be driven home. And if Kapil Dev, as the BBC said, tore the heart out of Pakistan's batting Gavaskar completed Pakistan's demoralisation. Every run he made and every moment of his stay at the wicket took India away from danger and difficulty and towards safety first and victory later, leading to India's brilliant triumph in the series.

The innings that Gavaskar played at Chepauk may not have been his best knock, nor perhaps the best seen on the ground. Gavaskar will, of course, make equally historic, if not more memorable, innings in the future. But what one should remember is that the innings he played at Madras marked the resurgence of Indian cricket. When Sunil Gavaskar arrived on the scene ten years ago it heralded a new age in Indian cricket. We could neither face the new ball confidently nor use it effectively. Since Gavaskar's advent, facing the new ball ceased to be a problem to Indian batsmen. Now after ten years we have in Kapil Dev one who has magnificently solved a chronic deficiency in Indian cricket. Under Gavaskar's leadership, with an all rounder like Kapil Dev being there, the resurgence of Indian cricket took place in the series. That was what one felt at Chepauk.

Meanwhile his twenty third century takes Gavaskar closer to beating first the record of that Grand Knight of cricket Sir Garfield Sobers and later to that of the Knight of Knights, Sir Donald Bradman. Surely it was Sunny's day at Chepauk and one of the sunniest moments in the annals of Indian cricket. And this has been Sunil Gavaskar's decade in Indian cricket.

27-1-1980



"The beauty of cricket is that the small gentle man can be a champion."

- Len Hutton on Gavaskar.

A 'Sunny' Day at Vizag

The City of Destiny accorded a glorious welcome to India's 'Man of Destiny' in cricket, Sunil Manohar Gavaskar, when he came to Visakhapatnam yesterday to receive from Andhra University an honorary doctorate degree. Gavaskar has thus become the University's first 'Kreedaprapoorna.' The District Cricket Association seized the opportunity to present an address and a memento to the fabulous run-getter whose feats have become the warp and woof of modern Indian cricket.

Every time the 'Little Master' walked down the pavilion steps, at home or abroad, it was a moment of pride for the home team and an occasion to fear for the rival side. Right from the day when he arrived in a big way on the cricket scene, Sunil Gavaskar, has been an idol and unfailing hero of millions of people all over the world. From the immortal Sir Donald Bradman to the invincible Clive Lloyd, great skippers and players as well, saluted Gavaskar and hailed his unparalleled feats. Runs have flowed from his bat in torrent while records have tumbled in rapid succession.

Cricket is undoubtedly the Englishman's gift to India and the world. Probably there would not have been the revolution in France, as a writer once said, if the French nobility had played cricket with the peasantry. If cricket is England's gift to India, world records set up by Sunil Gavaskar are India's handsome gift to world cricket. Close to reaching the 10,000 mark in Test cricket, Gavaskar has most centuries in Test cricket and several other 'mosts' and 'highests' in test and first class cricket. As a scribe remarked he would have got more hundreds if he were playing for another country in which case India might have been at the receiving end. For decades after Merchant and Mushtaq, 'the prose' and 'poetry' of Indian batting, retired, Indians were unable to provide a good start to their innings.

Gavaskar's advent brought India her first win in a series abroad. On four tours, once against the West Indies and thrice against England, he has scored over 1000 runs. Over six times he has topped 1000 runs in a season and on three occasions in Tests he has scored a century in each innings. He scored 236 in Test

cricket, the highest for an Indian and was concerned in 52 century partnerships, another record. Gavaskar has led India 47 times, winning 9 Tests, losing 8 and drawing 30.

These records apart, which has been his greatest innings? Experts may not agree on that and even the Little Master may not be able to find a ready answer. Among the best tributes to his innings the one from Sir Leonard Hutton in the Observer of September 9, 1979 is indeed memorable. Gavaskar scored 221 at the Oval in 1979 in an innings which Sir Leonard described as "an epic innings that ranks with the finest of all time". In the words of the greatest postwar batsman of England, Sir Leonard Hutton: "I have seen many double centuries in Test cricket but this superb innings by Gavaskar could well be the greatest of all time, taking into consideration his team's hopeless position at the start of the final innings. At the very least it can be bracketed with Stan McCabe's 232 at Trent Bridge and Walter Hammond's double century at the Lords both in 1938 which were truly the innings that only great batsmen can play. I saw both of them and the strokes which they played are still in my memory." Comparing Gavaskar with the greatest batsman of all time Sir Donald Bradman, Hutton said then: "Gavaskar is a small compact man, thicker set than Don Bradman but of similar height. The beauty of cricket is that the small gentle man can be a champion. Gavaskar, like all great players and I put him in the category, can play off both feet. He cuts, pulls and drives the half - volley beautifully. His batting is a perfect model for a schoolboy hoping to be a cricketer. Sir Leonard prophesied seven years ago that Gavaskar had the "skill, patience and stamina to become the greatest record breaking Test batsman of all time." Hutton's reference to 1938 was significant in that it was in 1938 at the same venue, the Oval, that Hutton made 364 which stood as record for decades before another great knight of cricket Sir Garfield Sobers broke it. When Hutton made that epic knock the great Don Bradman who was the rival captain walked up to Len Hutton and congratulated him on achieving the feat.

Sunil Gavaskar has faced the most furious pace bowling of all time. Pakistan's Imran Khan admitted that Gavaskar "is the most compact player I have ever bowled toterribly difficult to dis-

miss... his greatness lay in the fact that he knows his limitations". Calling Gavaskar 'a more refined version of Boycott' Imran described Sunil as a 'shrewd and unruffled captain'. The West Indies have always held him in the highest esteem and Clive Lloyd gave the number one spot to Gavaskar in his all time World XI. Robertson Glasgow, who like Neville Cardus, elevated the level of cricket-writing to eminent literary heights, once said of Frank Woolley that Woolley was "easy to watch, difficult to bowl to and impossible to write about. When you bowled to him there were'nt enough fielders, when you wrote about him there were'nt enough words". These words apply to Gavaskar too, with of course, the addition that it is more difficult to talk about or to him as Gavaskar's humour and repartee are as broad as his willow.

The late Neville Cardus who with John Arlott called cricket 'the noblest game', once said that "Prince Ranjitsinhji translated the noble English game into oriental wizardry, loveliness and strangely hidden power" and that Ranji brought a gleam from the orient. Sunil Gavaskar, almost a century later, transformed the gleam into a glow in the glory of which millions of Indians have been basking for 16 long summers. If Ranji's batting was, as Cardus praised, 'a midsummer night's dream of cricket' Sunil Gavaskar's art and dedication have been the high noon of Indian cricket. Gavaskar has, like Hobbs and Hammond, that judgement that flashes from brain to limb not only on the field but also off it. Few cricketers have such sharp intellect as he and fewer still are so articulate as the Little Master.

At 37 Sunil Gavaskar has lot of cricket still left in him. Everyone knows that Bradman and Merchant retired only after crossing the 40th year. Of course, they did not play this much of cricket, day and night and almost round the year. A celebrity like Dr. W G Grace made 1000 runs in a season in his 47th year and another legendary figure, the great C K Nayudu scored a glorious 74 in his 58th year . What is unique about Sunil Gavaskar, besides the many unique things that have gone into record books, is his will to fight and overcome adverse situations. How many times he has fooled the naive scribe and the doubting selector eager to write him off, with feats of endurance and skill that are the envy of his younger

team mates, is difficult to recall. Everytime one says that Gavaskar is 'getting over the hill', Gavaskar makes a record tumble and the writer eat his own words. "Runs or Ruins" One-Day Wonders" or 'Five-Day Feats' (his next book?) the 'idol' must stay on to guide and inspire, to make cricketologists rewrite the pages of history and above all, to show to the world that the Indian willow can not only charm but also conquer and that the Indian is not inferior to any in the world, east or west or north or south. No person has done so much for so long to make every Indian feel proud of himself or herself as Sunil Gavaskar. Not lovers of cricket or sport alone but everyone hails this great master.

(when he was conferred the honorary doctorate degree by the Andhra University on November 15, 1986.)

15-11-86

* * *

Asif Iqbal on Gavaskar

"There are some people the game can never replace and Sunil Gavaskar is one of them."

- Asif Iqbal.

Jaisimha on Gavaskar

"Gavaskar who has brought pride and honour to our country and to the game of cricket by his magnificent achievements against the toughest opposition.... is one of the greatest cricketers and sportsmen of our time."

On the 1983 triumph in the Prudential World Cup David Lemmon writes: "It was the greatest day in the history of Indian cricket. It was also a day to savour, a monument for the greatest of games."

"Close to Bradman"

Recently I read an article on Gavaskar by Sir Leonard Hutton in "The Observer" (September 9). It makes fine reading.

Sir Leonard wrote "He is not as good as Don Bradman but very close. Had Bradman been batting at his best with him on Tuesday India would have won in a canter". England's greatest post-war batsman wrote his article under the heading "Gavaskar's knock - the greatest", and described Gavaskar's innings as 'an epic innings that ranks with the finest of all time.'

"I have seen many double centuries in Test cricket but this superb innings by Gavaskar could well be the greatest of all time taking into consideration his team's hopeless position at the start of the final innings. At the very least it can be bracketed with Stan McCabe's 232 at Trent Bridge and Walter Hammond's double century at Lord's both in 1938, which were truly the innings that only great batsmen can play. I saw both of them and the strokes which they played are still in my memory".

Comparing Gavaskar with the greatest of them all, Sir Donald Bradman, Hutton wrote: "Gavaskar is a small compact man, thicker set than Don Bradman of similar height. The beauty of cricket is that the small, gentle man can be champion. Gavaskar, like all great players and I put him in the category, can play off both feet. He cuts, pulls and drives the half - volley beautifully. His batting is a perfect model for a schoolboy hoping to be a cricketer".

Hutton said Gavaskar hits the ball hard without making it go out of shape and was "by far the most superior batsman of both sides in the recent Test series". The absence of Hendrick was a great handicap to England according to Hutton for Hendrick's outswinger only could have taken the little master's wicket that day. The great Len Hutton whose record Gavaskar broke in England opines that Gavaskar has the skill, patience and stamina to become the greatest record breaking Test batsman of all time". Sunil Gavaskar who is just 30 will send many records tumbling before he decides to hang up his gloves.

(The author's letter published in the Indian Express)

Durrani, Engineer and Patil

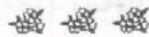
three 'romantics' of Indian cricket

Lala Amarnath, in the words of Ramaswami, was a romantic, 'the Byron of Indian cricket' as the eminent cricket writer described him. The romantic does not outright reject tradition and discipline. He transcends them lifting the game from the ephemeral realm of figures and records to the ethereal world of aesthetic joy. It is art for art's sake. One such popular cricketer was Salim Durrani whose brilliance was perfectly matched by natural elegance. Durrani whom this writer had the pleasure of meeting in 1971 spoke with childlike innocence as wicket keeper P.Krishnamurthi, a member of the Indian team that registered a sensational win in the 1971 Test series against the West Indies, was extolling Durrani's skill. "Even the great Sobers was unable to read Salim's deceptive flight and subtle variation and I too had a hard job behind the stumps," said the late Krishnamurthi. Salim Durrani's brilliance cannot be revealed by statistical figures. The youngster who as a schoolboy arrived on the national scene with a century in his first Ranji trophy match, scored 1202 runs in the 29 Test matches he played including a century against West Indies and 90 against England. He took 75 wickets at an average of 35.42. He scored 3617 runs in Ranji trophy and claimed 241 wickets at an average of 19.88. He has 14 centuries in first class cricket against his name and also the fastest fifty in Test cricket by an Indian when he made it in 29 minutes against England at Kanpur in 1963-64. He became the first cricketer to win the Arjuna award (1962). The handsome Salim Durrani acted in films too and was hero in 'Charitraya'.

Farrokh Engineer was in his nineties and the huge crowd at Chepauk was sitting on the edge of seats in January 1967. We were among those thousands of spectators praying that the dashing Indian opening batsman achieve the feat of scoring a century before lunch against the West Indies in the third Test match. Engineer was six short of that coveted mark at lunch break though he later added 15 more runs in getting his first Test hundred. Engineer, as an opening batsman, was a forerunner to Srikanth. Both believed in attacking the fast bowlers from the word 'go'. Farrokh

Engineer totalled 2611 runs from 87 innings (46 tests) with an average of 31.08. He got another hundred in Tests when he made 121 against England in 1972-73. Engineer was a smart wicket keeper with 82 victims against his name --- 66 caught and 16 stumped. He was equally popular in English league.

Sandeep Patil has amazing feats to his credit and as a natural stroke player he has very few equals in modern cricket. His 174 against Australia at Adelaide in 1980 was one of the finest innings seen 'down under'. More than half of those 174 runs came in boundaries as Patil thrashed the great Lillee, Pascoe and others in that memorable innings. At Manchester in 1982 against England he made history by smashing fast bowler Bob Willis for six fours in an over. The same year in the Ranji final against Karnataka Patil hit 4 sixes and 14 fours to score the fastest century in Ranji trophy. A year later in the Prudential World Cup semi final against England Patil hit up a breezy 51 not out and with Yashpal Sharma who top scored with 61 he helped India beat England in that crucial match. In the final against the West Indies Patil was the second top scorer for India with 27. Sandeep Patil was also a useful bowler. That he played for India in only 29 Tests is one of those paradoxes of Indian cricket!



Cricket's uniqueness ..

"There's something about cricket that defeats snobs and conquers the press gang."

-E.V. Lucas

"There is no royal road to success in cricket. It is a rough, hard road and only a few can win through"

- Jack Hobbs.

Kapil Dev arrives

Kapil Dev, the big lad from Haryana, has arrived on the Indian cricket scene in a big way. His performance with the bat and the ball in the Irani Trophy at Bangalore last month clinched for him a place in the Indian team now touring Pakistan. He and Barun Burman were the most talked about new ball bowlers then. But Burman was injured while bowling his fifth over in the match and took no further part. Kapil Dev bowled well, troubling even Viswanath often, batted lustily and impressed as a fielder too.

In a way Kapil Dev is the most eagerly awaited cricketer in Indian cricket. A genuine fast bowler is India's long felt need. After Dattu Phadkar we had Ramakanth Desai, the others were just ordinary in post-war cricket. We have a crop of gifted spinners, some of whom are getting over the hill.

Kapil Dev has a long run-up and a good bowling action. He is quite fast, at least by Indian standards. He bowls the away-swinging well and brings the ball into the batsman with equal ease. He seldom pitches short and is a great trier. His physical strength and cheerful disposition should take him far. He is under twenty and that augurs well for the future of Indian cricket. The current tour of Pakistan will give him the much needed experience.

(October 20, 1978)

(Incidentally the author was one of AIR commentators on the Irani Cup match at Bangalore in which Kapil played and the Indian team to tour Pakistan was first announced over AIR when the list of selected players was sent by Ghulam Ahmed to the AIR box)

The rest is history. June 18, 1983 Tunbridge Wells, World Cup match India v Zimbabwe- India were 4 for 9-- and 17 for 5 Gavaskar 0, Srikanth 0, Amarnath 5, Patil 1 and Yashpal Sharma 5. India reached 106 thanks to Kapil Dev's 50 but lost two more wickets but managed to close on 266 for 8 ..Kapil remained not out on 175 with 6 sixers and 16 fours... "Kapil hit with majesty and power that never suggested violence nor threatened to profane the beauty of the game or the venue" wrote a scribe. India won the match eventually by 31 runs ..exactly a week later June 25, 1983 at Lord's the cup favourites West Indies, were 56 for 2 chasing

India's modest score of 183 when Kapil caught Vivian Richards sensationally off a hit that was described as 'the most expensive skier in the world'. Kapil led India to a memorable 43 run win and the Wisden wrote "The Indians by winning the World Cup brought warmth and excitement in the place of dampness and depression." June 25 was hailed as the Golden Summer Day and back home it was another midnight celebration at every home and street matching the scenes of jubilation at the Lord's.

The Haryana Hurricane whose feats with the bat and the ball have been written in letters of gold epitomised 'the beauty of the blast and the grandeur of the gale.' The youngest Indian to score a Test century when he made 126 not out against the West Indies at Delhi in 1979-80 at the age of 20, he also became the youngest player in Test cricket to complete the all rounder's double --100 wickets and 1000 runs-- at the age of 21 years and 27 days. He holds the record of most wickets in a Test rubber 32 against Pakistan and the record of best bowling 9 for 83 against the West Indies. He has scored 18 centuries in first class cricket, including 8 in Test cricket and claimed 434 wickets in Test cricket and 241 in one dayers including a hat-trick against Sri Lanka in Asia Cup final. He has over 12000 runs and 816 wickets to his credit in Ranji trophy. Kapil played in 225 One Day Internationals making 3782 runs and claiming 253 wickets. Honoured with Arjuna award, Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan by the President of India Kapil Dev is one of the finest all rounders in cricket and a living legend of Indian sport.

(From the author's felicitation speech at Eluru in February 1999 when Kapil Dev received the Gupta Award)



.....

Tony Becca on Kapil Dev: "The man of the series was certainly young Kapil Dev. The twenty year old University student has taken Indian cricket like a storm and is certainly the best thing that has happened to it since the coming of Gavaskar himself. A fast bowler of nippy pace, Dev is a sound fielder and swashbuckling batsman to boot....his very presence on the field, whether batting or bowling demonstrates quality. It is so refreshing to see a young batsman playing with a free, relaxed attitude and all the time looking as if he can do whatever he wants".

Tony Becca during the West Indies tour of India in 1978-79

A National Triumph

Like many cricket fans of Visakhapatnam I too went to Kakinada to see on the Television the Prudential World Cup final between the 'minnows' of world cricket India and the favourites the West Indies. Whoever was responsible for Kakinada getting the TV hats off to him. For it is a wonderful thing that has happened to this lovely quiet town with a long sporting tradition. On June 25 afternoon almost every house was flooded with people, some of them who travelled miles to see the match. The setting in every house in Kakinada must be like the setting in every Indian home having a TV set, with the young squatting on the floor and sneaking into the corners of the hall and the elderly glued to the chairs as the ladies of the house acted as cheer leaders for the viewers bringing them cups of tea and coffee in addition to snacks. Such goodwill and bonhomie among total strangers was something not seen in the recent past. It was cricket, lovely cricket that brought them all together.

During the lunchbreak at Lord's we in Kakinada shifted to a club to watch the match on a colour set. The difference in the setting was marginal. Otherwise the same superstition reigned over the place and the same sentiment was voiced all over. "Don't change position of the chair, don't put your legs on the table or don't change position of the set or don't get up from your seat," were the canons issued by the knowledgeable and the experienced viewers. Otherwise an Indian wicket might fall or a West Indian wicket would not! Submission to such dictates was instant and none would dare violate them. There were many who were seen with drink glasses in their hands, anxiously shuffling between the bar and the hall, holding up the glass as the others danced and cheered everytime a West indian wicket fell. That too must have happened in countless number of places in India.

Later in the night as India moved from difficulty toward success one heard over the radio BBC commentator Christopher Martin-Jenkins say that India's win was "going to be the greatest upset in the history of the sporting world". Yes, the experts could not explain how a side that could not boast of at least two "world class

cricketers" could grow into a champion side scoring emphatic wins over the three top teams. Over the BBC Trevor Bailey rightly pointed out that Indian's bowling more than her batting surprised everyone. Ordinary players combining into an extraordinary team that crushed champion sides!

This was an Indian summer in England and scribes would now be vying with one another in portraying the heroic deeds of the 'meek' Indians. How one wishes there were a Gardiner or Cardus so that Indians can read with pride for the next hundred years about the achievement of Indian cricket. Or an Arlott to describe it over the radio as he had so sympathetically and superbly done when India beat England in England 13 years ago!

Two things stand out foremost in one's mind as one reflects on the glorious win. Not since the midnight of August 14-15, 1947 when 'India made a tryst with destiny' has there been such national rejoicing at the midnight hour as on June 25-26. Our national spirit has seldom soared so high. Kapil Dev, Kirmani, Balwinder Singh Sandhu and Roger Binny are not symbols of a fragile secularism, but members of a champion side that did the nation proud. They are there not because one is a Hindu, the other a Muslim, the third a Sikh and the fourth an Anglo-Indian, but because they are all Indians first and foremost. A little boy viewing the match on the TV was surprised to see Sikh brothers waving the tricolour in jubilation at Lord's after India won the match". Don't they support Khalistan?" he asked. "Don't ever have such narrow ideas" he was shouted down. "India Zindabad" shouted the Indian supporters in London as did the people watching the TV and hearing the radio in India.

If cricket could do, even if it was for a fleeting moment, what politics has not been able to achieve all along, let us salute the game. How soothing it is to learn that a game bequeathed to us by the English and played so memorably by our boys there could bring us all such cheer and boost our sagging national pride. Three cheers to the game, three cheers to the Indian heroes and three cheers, of course, to the millions of cricket lovers.

1-7-83

Mohinder Amarnath

the ever dependable all rounder

Thanks to Gopala Ratnam, this writer had the pleasure of spending a couple of hours with Lala Amarnath and his sons at their residence in Delhi. Gopala Ratnam's ability to draw Lala out into lively conversation on cricket was matched by Lala's capacity for long narration peppered with anecdotes and comments. Surinder, Lala's eldest son was the rising star then with a century at Lord's as school cricketer, followed by a fine debut in Test cricket. Rajinder, the youngest of Lala's sons and father's favourite, promised much. Interestingly the one between them, Mohinder, performed the best of them all. Young Mohinder, then in his teens, appeared quiet and even reticent. Later as one came to know him better and watched him in action, one understood that behind the quiet exterior lay steely resolve which served India well in many a crisis in international cricket.

Memories of the 1983 World Cup triumph remind us of the solid contribution made by Mohinder Amarnath to India's dramatic win over the West Indies in the final. In fact in both the semi final and final Mohinder was declared the Man of the Match. He made 46 priceless runs before he was run out and took 2 for 27 against England in the semi final. In the final against the West Indies he scored 26 in that low total of 183 and claimed 3 wickets for 12 runs in 7 overs to bag the second successive Man of the Match award. He made 238 runs from 8 innings and took 8 for 178 in the 1983 World Cup. That year he was named "the Cricketer of the Year" in India. Two years later in the Rothmans Cup final at Sharjah, Australia was getting into the groove when Mohinder dismissed Alan Border and Kim Hughes, both caught and bowled, in quick succession the former for 27 and the latter for 11. Chasing a target of 140 India were 103 for 5 when Mohinder went to the crease. Gavaskar fell at 117 but Mohinder steered India to win with an unbeaten knock of 24. Another such crucial knock came from Mohinder in the Asia Cup final in 1988 at Dhaka. Chasing a Pakistani target of 143 India lost quick wickets with Imran dismissing three Indian batsmen early. Mohinder stood bravely amidst the

ruins and led India to win with a fighting unbeaten knock of 74 while the seven other Indian batsmen contributed only 69 runs as India coasted to a three wicket win.

Many were the occasions when the quiet all rounder came to India's rescue either with the bat or with the ball, at times with both. In the 1983 tour of West Indies when India found the West Indian pace attack too hot to handle Mohinder topped both batting and bowling averages totalling 1080 runs in Tests with a highest of 117 and an average of 77.14 and claiming 7 for 142 in bowling with an average of 20.29. In the 69 Test matches he played for India Mohinder made 4378 with the help of 11 centuries and 24 fifties with an average of 42.50. His highest was 138. In Ranji trophy he totalled 4016 runs from 76 matches at an average of 43.65. In bowling he took 124 wickets in the national championship. Born on September 24, 1950 Mohinder was 19 when he made his Test debut against Australia in 1969 at Madras and for twenty years thereafter he was India's ever dependable allrounder.

* * *

Arlott on cricket

"Cricket has been a skill and a spectacle, in England since the middle of the 18th century. It has developed from a game in which the ball was 'bowled' along the ground at a low, two stump wicket defended with a long bat shaped like a hockey stick to the sport we know to-day...Many people are familiar with its history without realising that cricket grew up as an integral part of English life, developing as the aristocrats joined the countrymen who had first begun the game, until it became established at all levels of society....Cricket in England is a symbol, a part of life even to folk who have never been on a first class ground or handled a bat." (The Changing Face of Cricket - John Arlott - Sport & Pastime October 1, 1966)

Krishnamachari Srikkanth

never a dull moment

Srikkanth and Gavaskar, as India's opening pair, conjured up, for many of the older generation, memories of Mushtaq and Merchant, described by Cardus as the poetry and prose of batting. The nuances may have changed when Srikkanth and Gavaskar came together three decades after Mushtaq and Merchant had charmed crowds in India and England but the style and spirit were almost similar. The unorthodox but brilliant improvisation of the former and the class and perfect technique of the latter were delightful to watch. Srikkanth would daringly go after the bowling while Gavaskar dropped anchor and tamed the most dreaded pacemen of those times into submission. Gavaskar was generally the quiet and admiring non-striker at one end while Srikkanth attacked the bowling at the other. A few occasions were also there when they reversed roles as when Srikkanth adoringly watched Gavaskar racing away to a breezy 103 in a total of 136 against New Zealand at Nagpur on October 31, 1987 in the Reliance World Cup match.

Krishnamachari Srikkanth, one of the colourful cricketers of modern times, did not receive recognition commensurate with his talent and popularity. 'Lack of temperament' was the cause according to some critics, for his career being 'chequered.' But a close look at the quality and cruciality of his performances with the bat and the ball and also as a fielder reveals the immensity of his contribution to Indian cricket. His role in India's triumph in the 1983 World Cup and success till the semis in the 1987 World Cup was substantial. His 38 in the 1983 World Cup final, the highest individual score, against the awesome battery of West Indian fast bowlers like Holding, Roberts, Marshall and Garner, gave India the momentum for achieving a historic win. The manner in which he counter attacked the West Indian pacemen infused tremendous confidence in the team despite Gavaskar's early dismissal. Four years later in the Reliance World Cup Srikkanth aggregated 248 from seven matches and in the crucial semi final match that India lost to England he was the second top scorer with 31. An interesting instance of Srikkanth's batting is that in a match he was on 26 and

Gavaskar on 27 when Srikanth took off racing to 79 before Gavaskar could add a single to his 27. Srikanth clobbered Holland in one over for 22 runs-- 406444. He made a dashing 102 against Australia at Jaipur in the first one dayer in September 1986 helping India beat Australia by 7 wickets.

Srikanth was in peak form in 1987 and 1988. He made a sparkling 123 off 149 balls against Pakistan led by Imran Khan in the first Test match at Chennai, hitting 2 sixes and 18 fours. Imran and Wasim Akram came in for rough treatment from Srikanth. A week later at Calcutta in the second one day international on February 18 the same score of 123 by Srikanth and the same treatment was meted out to Imran & co that must have reminded the great Pakistan captain of Srikanth's quickfire innings of 39 including two sixes off Imran at Lahore in the first one day international in 1982. At Sydney Srikanth made 116 off 97 balls. In the tied Test match at Madras against Australia Srikanth made 53 and 39. Against New Zealand he headed the test batting averages. In the three Test series against Richard Hadlee & Co, his scores were 1 and 58 not out in the first Test, 94 and 0 in the second and 69 and 18 not out in the third Test at an average of 60. Almost the same average Srikanth achieved in the World Championship of Cricket in Australia in February-March 1985. In the prestigious event that India won Srikanth made 238 from five innings and his scores include 93 not out against Australia 57 against England and 67 against Pakistan in the final. Dilip Vengsarkar topped the batting averages with 67.50 and Srikanth finished second. Against the West Indies he made 53 in the fifth one dayer at Ahmedabad and a brilliant 101 in the eighth one dayer at Trivandrum in January 1988.

How many times he and Gavaskar gave India a flying start putting on at least 50 on the board for the first wicket, it is not easy to recall. In the 1987 Reliance World Cup they crossed the 50 mark in four of the six preliminary matches India played. If they scintillated with their strokeplay against New Zealand in the 1987 World Cup putting on 136 for the first wicket, in Test cricket Srikanth and Gavaskar put on 200 without being separated against Pakistan led by Imran at Madras. This writer had the pleasure of

giving radio (AIR) commentary and talking to him in December 1988 when Srikanth won the Man of the Match award in the first one day international against John Wright's New Zealand. Srikanth topscored for India with a dazzling knock of 70 and later claimed 5 for 27, helping India go one up against the visitors at Visakhapatnam. Five days later at Indore in the third one day international he bagged 5 for 32. In the Asia Cup final at Dhaka on November 4, 1988 Srikanth bowled superbly claiming 3 for 12 from 3.2 overs against Sri Lanka and scored 23 before he was run out. 42 catches, some of them spectacular, in the 146 one dayers he played and 40 catches in the 43 Test matches he figured in were among his feats on the field where he always excelled. Srikanth scored 2062 runs in Test matches including two centuries and twelve half centuries. In one day internationals he scored 4092 runs with four centuries and 27 fifties and took 25 wickets.

Srikanth was made Captain of the Indian team to Pakistan in 1989. While his leadership on that hard tour marred by a few ugly incidents came in for praise, his batting failures were cited as the reason for Srikanth losing his place in the Indian team. Such things happen, sadly quite often, in Indian cricket. But the affable Srikanth, always a crowd puller, took it in the stride with that smile that made him hugely popular on and off the field.



The Srikanth style ..

"If Srikanth could sustain his bold, attacking, powerful cricket for more than an hour and a half, he would be the most exciting player the game has ever known, but, like the moth, he flirts with danger, preferring the excitement of the moment to the boredom of longevity."

- David Lemmon in Great One-Day Cricket Matches

Syed Kirmani - an outstanding keeper

Whenever I watched Syed Kirmani in action memories of that Ranji trophy match in November 1967 would come back to me. As many as eight youngsters made their debut in that Ranji match because Test stars like Prasanna, Chandrasekhar and Subrahmanyam dropped out of that team and Mysore skipper Y.B.Patel led a pack of tender looking teenagers against Andhra. When the well built Andhra pace bowlers Gupta and Venkata Rao sent the Mysore opening batsmen back with the score reading 15 Viswanath and Kirmani came together and the spectators did not conceal their sympathy and concern for the two small built youngsters at the crease. Little did the crowd at Vijayawada imagine that it was going to be a historic debut for Viswanath and Kirmani, heralding the advent of two famous careers, the former to become one of India's great batsmen and the latter an outstanding wicket-keeper.

Like Viswanath and Gavaskar, Kirmani was born in 1949—Vishy in February, Sunil in July and 'Kiri' in December. But unlike the two master batsmen, Kirmani had to wait for seven years to make his Test debut. After he kept wickets in his first Test for India against New Zealand in 1975-76 for almost a decade Kirmani was India's number one keeper. He is the only Indian wicket keeper to have performed the wicket keeper's double—100 victims and 1000 runs in Test cricket. In fact he almost doubled that record when he hung his gloves with 198 Test victims and 2759 runs in the 88 Tests he played—an outstanding record indeed. In Ranji trophy he claimed 102 victims and his total tally was 409. Kirmani made 2057 runs in Ranji trophy and his aggregate was 6919 runs and average 27.13. He scored five centuries including two in Test matches. His first Test hundred came against Australia in 1979-80 at Bombay when he was sent in as 'night watchman'. The next day he completed his first Test century and remained 101 not out. Bombay was lucky for him as he got his second century at the same venue in 1984-85 against England. In Ranji trophy his highest was 116 against Delhi. Kirmani was always dependable for precious runs. In the World Cup (Prudential) final on June 25, 1983 at Lord's India were 130 for 7. Thanks to Madanlal 17, Kirmani

14 and Sandhu 11 India reached 183 with the last three wickets adding 53 valuable runs. Among his famous performances was the one in the Faisalabad test match when he did not concede a single bye in Pakistan's mammoth total of 652. He was honoured with the Arjuna award and Padma Shri in 1982. Kirmani is a lively chap without any trace of hubris. In a friendly chat when someone once said that Kiri has no airs, a teammate of his quipped Kiri has 'no airs or hairs'.

The World Cup Triumph ..

'Kapil Dev's achievement in extracting the best out of his players, both individually and collectively, represents one of the most heroic victories by a team of underdogs'. Robin Marlar on India's World Cup win in 1983.

Wisden on C.K. Nayudu: "Tall and well proportioned, Nayudu is eminently fitted by nature to be a good cricketer. He was a very strong player in front of the wicket, his driving both to the off and on being an outstanding feature of his batting." Wisden in 1933 when Nayudu was named one of the five cricketers of the year.

Brijesh Patel - brilliant stroke player

Last year it was G R Viswanath. This year it is Brijesh Patel who has called it a day. A golden era ends for Karnataka with the exit of one of its most prolific run-getters and brilliant cricketers. As B S Chandrasekhar remarked Brijesh timed his retirement as perfectly as his drives, though he is still good for a few seasons more. Brijesh Patel has said goodbye to first class cricket after serving his state for over 19 years with great distinction as a player and also as its skipper.

It was in 1969-70 that Brijesh Patel arrived on the cricket scene as a lad of 16 summers. His fluent strokeplay and brilliant fielding in the covers attracted wide attention and there has been no looking back since then. Patel hit up a record number of 23 hundreds in the Ranji Trophy totalling over 6,530 runs with an average of 55.81 (till 1987). His highest was 216 in Ranji Trophy for Karnataka against Baroda, his place of birth. Patel made his first appearance in Test cricket against England in 1974 at the age of 22 and played in 21 Test matches. His brilliant 115 not out against the mighty West Indies in that historic Port of Spain Test match in 1975-76 was among his best innings. In all Patel hit up 35 centuries including 6 in Duleep Trophy and 5 in other first class matches. Patel led Karnataka in 15 matches in Ranji Trophy and other major events. He went with the Indian team to England, New Zealand, Australia, Sri Lanka and the West Indies.

During 1978-79 Patel made five centuries in a season in Ranji Trophy and equalled Rusi Modi's feat. Between 1973 when he scored over 500 runs in a season and 1986 when he again achieved that feat Brijesh Patel joined the select band of Indian cricketers to have achieved such a feat on five occasions. Brijesh was involved in many big partnerships, some record breaking for Karnataka in the national championship.

The tall and handsome Brijesh Patel is known for his attractive strokeplay. He is a fine player off the backfoot besides being strong in forward play. Once he starts settling in, he becomes very difficult to contain and is among the hardest hitters of the ball in the game in the country. Sixes flow from his bat as

easily as fours. Brijesh Patel has been one of our best middle order batsmen though his test appearances have not been higher than just 21. He was a little suspect against genuine speed. He lived it down with a splendid 115 at Port of Spain against the awesome pace of the West Indies fast bowlers. As a fielder Brijesh Patel has few equals in the covers. Tomorrow, November 24, Brijesh Patel celebrates his 36th birthday. This charming Brijesh has been one of our outstanding cricketers during the last 20 years. His retirement creates a void that is hard to fill.

23-11-88

☆☆☆

Roger Binny - another Karnataka star

Roger Binny, one of India's fine all rounders, was a member of the victorious Indian team that won the 1983 Prudential World Cup. Binny achieved the all rounder's double of scoring over 1000 runs and capturing over 100 wickets in Ranji trophy. Binny played for Karnataka and later for Goa. A remarkable aspect of his career was that he was for his side both the opening batsman and opening bowler. In the 71 Ranji matches he played he totalled 4519 runs with a highest of 211 at an average of 43.44 and claimed 115 wickets. In the 27 Tests he played Binny aggregated 830 runs with a highest of 83 not out and captured 47 wickets with the best haul being 6 for 56.



The catch P.G. Wodehouse missed

"Henceforth my game shall be golf

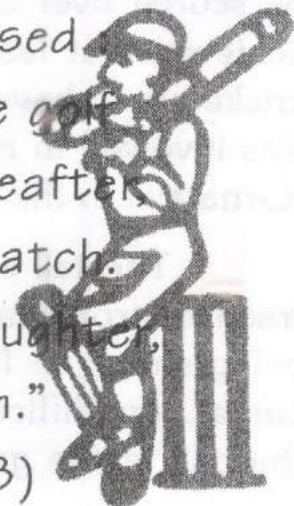
If I'm asked to play cricket hereafter

I am wholly determined to scratch

Life's void of all pleasure and laughter,

I bungled the easiest catch."

P.G.Wodehouse (1908)



Dilip Vengsarkar - *the willowy colonel*

Visakhapatnam has a special reason for remembering Dilip Vengsarkar. On December 10, 1988 in Visakhapatnam he led India to victory in the first one dayer in that series between India and New Zealand. Cricket lovers of north Andhra were overjoyed to witness for the first time in the City of Destiny a one day international cricket match and not many imagined then that it would be followed by many such events including a World Cup match. Vengsarkar led India to an emphatic win over New Zealand in that series. Incidentally he made his debut in Test cricket against New Zealand at Auckland in 1975-76.

It was his big hitting -- the ease with which he hit bowlers to and over the fence -- that earned for Dilip Vengsarkar the petname 'colonel' after the celebrated colonel C.K. Nayudu. The number three spot in the batting order was for long a difficult position to take up. Till the arrival of Sunil Gavaskar, Indian opening batsmen were known for their vulnerability against fast bowling and the number three batsman was expected to be ready from the very first ball of the innings. To bat between two little masters, Gavaskar and Viswanath, trying to match the perfection of the former and the artistry of the latter was equally daunting. Still, Dilip rose manfully to the occasion. Tall and elegant, Vengsarkar possessed a wide range of strokes with the drive being the strongest weapon in his armour.

Among his numerous feats with the bat are the three consecutive hundreds at Lord's beginning with 103 in the second Test in 1979, followed by 157 in the first Test in 1982 and 126 not out in the first test in 1986. He was in great form that year as he scored 102 not out at Leeds --- two consecutive unbeaten centuries against England in England. Wisden named him that year as one among the best five and the President of India honoured him with Padma Shri eight months later in 1987. 17 Test hundreds and 35 fifties with an average of 42.13 in a total of 6868 runs in the 116 Test matches he played speak for his class and consistency. He made 3508 runs in one day internationals with an average of 34.73 and 4080 runs in Ranji trophy with a high average of 74.18. In his first class career Vengsarkar amassed 18080 runs from 396 innings with a high average of 53.02 containing 56 centuries and 88 half centuries. His retirement, as in the case of some famous Indian cricketers, was perhaps premature. Dilip Vengsarkar took up the challenge of training youngsters and also began to write a column and in both he has been quite successful, straight and elegant as always.

Ravi Shastri - *able and astute*

Alan Border, the Australian skipper, lavished special praise on Ravi Shastri for his consistency with both the bat and the ball. Shastri has been in splendid form and is receiving high praise from many experts. A year ago Asif Iqbal, the former Pakistan skipper, wrote: "I rate Ravi Shastri as one of the finest all-rounders in world cricket today and specially since so much of accent is on limited overs cricket. He is not a dasher as a batsman and neither is he Test winning spinner. But in one day cricket he is a champion since he knows what the game is all about and how to go about the job." (Indian Cricket 1985)

Trevor Bailey, BBC's expert commentator, once described Ravi Shastri as a batsman with 'the straightest bat' in the Indian side. Shastri's cricketing skill is of the highest order. Added to that is his shrewdness. He is brainy and brilliant. He can hit a bowler for six sixes in an over and can defend for an hour without scoring a run! That Shastri excels in one day cricket has been acknowledged by all. Thanks to superb television coverage millions of Indians were overjoyed to see Ravi Shastri receiving the Champion of Champions trophy in the World Championship Cricket One Day International Series in Australia and the triumph and victory celebration of the Indian team a year ago. Shastri at the wheel of the Audi car he won in that tournament with his team mates seated in and even on top of the automobile was shown on that memorable occasion all that in less than two years of the World Cup triumph of 1983. (November 5, 1986)

Ever since his sensational test debut in New Zealand when young Ravi Shastri, who was flown in as a substitute for the injured Dilip Doshi, captured 3 wickets in four balls of the same over at Wellington in 1980-81 he has performed brilliantly as one of India's best allrounders. His 206 against Australia at Sydney in 1992 was a splendid knock. More famous was his knock of 200 not out against Baroda for Bombay in 1984-85 as he equalled one world record and created another on the occasion. In that knock Shastri equalled Gary Sobers's world record of hitting six sixes in an over and it was also the fastest double century, made in just 113 minutes off only 123 balls. On 16 occasions Shastri took five or more than five wickets in an innings including twice in Test matches. 5

for 75 against Pakistan in a Test match at Nagpur in 1983-84, 7 for 49 for his county Glamorgan against Lancashire in English league in 1988 and 11 for 147 (9 for 101 in one innings) for Bombay against Rest of India are among his best bowling performances. Shastri has 29 centuries against his name including 11 in Test cricket and four in one day internationals. In the 80 Test matches he has played for India he scored 3830 runs at an average of 35.79 and claimed 151 wickets at an average of 40.96. He played in only 37 matches in Ranji trophy scoring 2223 runs at an average of 52.93 and claimed 112 wickets at an average of 24.51. Ravi Shastri captained India in one Test match and 11 one day internationals. Today as TV commentator Ravi Shastri is highly popular for his shrewd observations and also for being frank and forthright when the occasion demands.



Birth of cricket in India : "The earliest cricket to be played in India was probably at Bombay towards the end of the 18th century as there is record of a game between old Etonians and Parsees in 1784. On the other side of the continent a club was formed as early as 1792. In 1804 the old Etonians met the Rest (all civil servants of the East India Company) on part of the famous Eden Gardens at Calcutta.

A cricket club was established by the Parsees in Bombay in 1841 and it is this religious sect which has done most to establish the game on the Indian continent. The Hindus formed their first cricket club in 1866 and the Mohammedans in 1883. The first cricket team to visit England from India was the Parsees team of 1886 but they met with little success winning only one of their 28 matches and losing 19. The first representative India side visited England in 1911 under the captaincy of H.H.Maharaja of Patiala. The first team to go out to India from England was that under the captaincy of G.F.Vernon in 1889-90..... in a tour of 13 matches including two in Ceylon they suffered one defeat-by the Parsees." (From the *Encyclopaedia of Cricket* compiled by Maurice Golesworthy)

Mohammed Azharuddin

India's most successful captain

Hyderabad has every reason to feel proud of Mohammed Azharuddin. No Hyderabad cricketer has earned such fame (and wealth too) as Azharuddin. His sensational debut, brilliant performances with the bat and in the field and long spell of captaincy have made the Azhar story read like a fairy tale. The tall, thin, unsophisticated lad of eighteen summers when he made his debut for Hyderabad in 1981 against Karnataka at Bangalore in the national championship, becoming in as many years a world famous cricketer with many records to his credit, confidently facing media glare and handling sensitive issues with the coolness of a diplomat provide matter enough for cricketologists to write on and fans to admire. To his critics, of course they are quite a few, it is all a 'bang and whimper' story.

Azharuddin needed no patronage or help to draw selectorial attention. His bat spoke for him and the message was loud and clear. On his debut in Duleep Trophy at Dhanbad in 1983 he made 226 for South Zone against Central Zone. In Ranji trophy in 1984 at Machilipatnam he scored a century in each innings against Andhra. He stormed into Test cricket with a brilliant century against England in his first Test match at Calcutta scoring 110, and followed it up with 105 in the Madras Test match and the third century, 122, at Kanpur -- three successive hundreds in his first three Tests! He is the only Indian to have scored a century in one session of a days's play when he moved from 59 at lunch to 162 at tea at Manchester in 1990. He also holds the record of scoring the fastest century by an Indian in one day international when he smashed 100 off 62 balls against New Zealand in 1988-89. He scored a world record total of 9378 runs in one dayers from 334 matches at an average of 36.92, with the highest being 153 against Zimbabwe at Cuttack on April 9, 1998, since broken by Sachin Tendulkar. In Test cricket Azhar scored 6215 runs from 99 Test matches (147 innings) with an average of 45.04. His highest was 199 and Azhar has 22 centuries and 21 fifties against his name in Test cricket.

As India's Captain for almost a decade Azharuddin has achieved considerable success and is hailed as 'India's most successful captain.' He led India in 47 Test matches, winning 14 and losing 14 with 19 being drawn. In the 174 one day internationals under his captaincy India won 90 matches and lost 75 with 9 being drawn games. He played for Derbyshire in English league and topped that county's averages in 1994 - 44.50 from 712 runs. In the five years of cricket in English league he made 2485 runs at an average of 51.77 with 8 centuries and 212 against Leicestershire in 1991. He received Padma Shri and Arjuna awards in 1988 and was in Wisden's five in 1990.

To have led India to many triumphs at home and abroad and to have played for the country in four World Cup tournaments -- thrice as India's Captain - is an extraordinary achievement. The great game of cricket that catapulted this gifted player to dizzy heights also landed Azharuddin in controversies. An American baseball coach once famously said that the higher up one climbs the flagpole the more is one's underwear seen. Surely the game and its spirit are far greater than the player and the fortune he earns through it.



Birth and growth of cricket in Pakistan ...

"That within the short time of five years Pakistan were able to raise a team of Test calibre was a matter for wonder. It spoke much of the organising skill that was available in that country then. But, it was only after the return of Kardar from Oxford, that Pakistan really began developing into a Test match combination." S.K. Guruswami (Sport & Pastime September 20, 1958) Abdul Hafeez Kardar, Pakistan's first Test Captain to lead a team to India, had played for India in Tests against England in 1946. After partition he, like another famous cricketer Fazal Mahmood, went to Pakistan and became the captain of Pakistan team.

Mushtaq Mohammed's feat ...

Mushtaq Mohammed of Pakistan was the youngest player ever to play in first class cricket ... he was 13 years 41 days when he made his debut on first class cricket.. Mushtaq was also the youngest to play in Test cricket.. he made his debut against the West Indies at Lahore in 1959 when he was 15 years and 5 months...

Sanjay Manjrekar

Like father like son

When young Sanjay Manjrekar came to Visakhapatnam in December 1987 to play for the Board President's XI against the West Indies, he evoked instant attention all over. His illustrious father, the late Vijay Manjrekar had coached Andhra cricketers and even played for the Andhra team in Ranji trophy as he did for four other states also. "Class and character are in their blood" said some knowledgeable veterans after watching Sanjay in action and many predicted that he would be a worthy successor to his father. It did not take long for Sanjay to prove them right. Hanif Mohammed, Imran Khan and many Pakistani stars were among those who showered praise on Sanjay Manjrekar.

It was not just coincidence. The hard fact was that Sanjay, like his father Vijay, had to prove his mettle against the awesome pace and fury of the most feared bowlers of his time. The Indian vulnerability against genuine pace was never more in such embarrassing evidence than when Vijay Manjrekar arrived on the scene. Trueman and Statham of England and Hall and Griffith of West Indies were among the giants of those times who sent shivers down the spine of the batsman. The 1952 tour of England was a disastrous one for India. Vijay Manjrekar, displaying technique and temperament of a high order defied the English attack and his 133 at Leeds salvaged India's pride to some extent. Four years later in England Vijay Manjrekar achieved the distinction of scoring over a 1000 runs that season. In 1961 Vijay made 189 not out against England at Delhi, his highest in Test cricket. His century against England at Madras in 1964, 118 against the West Indies and three centuries against New Zealand were among the other memorable knocks of Vijay Manjrekar. In Test cricket he made 3209 at an average of 39.13 and in Ranji trophy he averaged 57.58 with the highest being 240 not out against Saurashtra.

Into the shoes of such a famous father Sanjay Manjrekar stepped, making his debut for Bombay in 1984-85. A century against Baroda and another against the visiting Pakistani side led by Imran Khan confirmed his talent. On India's tour of West Indies in 1989 Sanjay headed the Test averages. He scored a century at Bridgetown in the second Test match, against the West Indies at-

tack comprising Marshall, Bishop, Walsh and Ambrose. Sanjay's best was reserved for the tough Pakistan tour in 1990. Pakistan led by Imran Khan had two other stalwart pace bowlers in Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis. In the first Test at Karachi Sanjay Manjrekar made 113 not out and in the second at Faisalabad he made 76 in the first innings and 83 in the second. In the third at Lahore he was run out for 218 and in the fourth he made 72. He topped the Test series with 569 runs at an average of 94.83. The Pakistan captain said that Sanjay Manjrekar stood between Pakistan and victory.

Sanjay Manjrekar scored 2043 runs in the 37 Tests he played at an average of 37.14. In Ranji trophy he made 3764 runs in 51 matches at an average of 68.44 with the highest being 377. There are 31 centuries against his name in first class cricket. Sanjay Manjrekar is popular among his friends and team-mates as a crooner. As a commentator too he has made a mark with apt comments and soft humour.

* * *

The highest individual score ..

The highest individual score ever made in one day's cricket is 345 by C.G. Macartney for the Australians v Nottinghamshire, at Nottingham in 1921. He reached the total in just under four hours and the innings included 4 sixes and 47 fours.

In Test cricket the record is held by Don Bradman with 309 for Australia against England at Leeds in 1930.

The first televised match ..

The first Test match to be televised was that between England and Australia at Lord's in June 1938.

The gentleman player ..

"The real gentleman player has no love for these miserable and most hateful labels and distinctions." (Mr.etc)

- A.E. Knight (Complete Cricketer)

A.G. Kripal Singh - a fine allrounder

"It is possible", wrote Indian Cricket Almanack of 1954-55, "that in recent seasons no player has dominated the Ranji Trophy matches so completely as Kripal Singh, the Madras all-rounder, did last year. In match after match beginning with a triumphant double century against Travancore - Cochin upto the thrilling finale at Indore, he acquitted himself as a most accomplished batsman and efficient bowler. Madras owed their success mainly to this most promising cricketer." That season Kripal Singh scored 636 runs in Ranji Trophy besides taking 13 wickets.

"Any team in Madras, if Kripal was their opponent, used to give him 100 runs in advance. They used to feel very happy if they could get his wicket below 100 runs", says V Sridharan who played for Madras along with Kripal Singh. Another Madras star of those times, who like Sridharan lives in Visakhapatnam now, M.K. Murugesh, writes in a touching tribute to his former team-mate: "So the 3rd wicket of the victorious Ranji side from Madras has fallen, the two other wickets which fell earlier being those of SV Vaidyanathan and BC Alva". Sridharan quotes former India Captain Nari Contractor who said: "There are very few cricketers who could exhibit batsmanship as that of Kripal Singh. Name a stroke and Kripal can play it". Sridharan adds that Kripal Singh deserved to play for India more often except for the reason that selectors of those days had a quota system by which Kripal could play only in the Tests played in southern centres. Kripal was a master batsman against both fast and slow bowling".

Like father like son in more ways than one. If the famous A G Ram Singh, a much neglected player was not given enough chance to play for India when he was in peak form, Kripal Singh too was ignored for selection at the national level at a time when he was in great form with the bat and the ball. Even when he played for India he was always underbowled. One might recall the comment of an English scribe that in a match India was playing in England, Pankaj Roy who was then leading the side 'forgot' that there was an off spinner in the side by name Kripal Singh and did not give him even an over!

Born on August 6, 1933 A G Kripal Singh shot into lime-light when he became one of the few Indian batsmen to score a Test century on debut. Kripal Singh made 100 not out against New Zealand at Hyderabad in the first Test match in 1955. He was already a prominent cricketer having helped his side Madras to its maiden triumph in the national championship when Madras lifted the Ranji Trophy. Kripal Singh played for India in 14 Test matches, scored 421 runs, being out on five out of 20 occasions and took 10 wickets conceding 584 runs in 253 overs. In Ranji Trophy Kripal averaged almost 50 scoring 2581 runs in 58 innings. In bowling he took 115 wickets giving away 2362 runs from 1170 overs. His best was 4 wickets for 5 runs against Andhra in 1960. Incidentally his father Ram Singh claimed 164 wickets conceding 300 runs more than Kripal off 1050 overs. Kripal Singh was a prolific run getter and a fine bowler and everyone admired his gifts and astuteness as a player.

A friend of Kripal Singh for 44 years M.K. Murugesh says that 'Pali', as Kripal was known to his friends and dear ones, missed getting the coveted three figure mark in four consecutive innings- 98 and 99 against Bengal in the semifinal of 1954 Ranji trophy, and 90 and 91 against Holkar in the final at Indore. Kripal, says Murugesh, was a brilliant student, a good administrator, an astute captain, a great allrounder, a lovable person who could draw people to him with his humour and witty anecdotes'. In Madras league Kripal played for the same club in A division from 1956 to 1976. He was at his best in making the flick to the on side, leaning back to execute the cut or while dancing down the wicket to drive the slow bowler.

Kripal Singh possessed a shrewd cricketing brain. Recalling a small incident of the past Murugesh says. 'I remember once in a league match two youngsters were batting so well that we found them difficult to dislodge. Both were playing with only one pad each. After sometime Kripal went up to them and asked them if they were wearing abdomen guards. When they replied in the negative he told them to put them on and come back so that his bowlers could attack with their fastish stuff. The boys did as told and in the process lost their concentration and were out immediately after-

wards'. Kripal, according to Murugesh, loved coffee, betelnut and cigarettes. 'Knowing Kripal as a fighter I feel that his last attack did not give him any time to study it and it must have been very sudden. Otherwise my friend would have driven it away as he did to the cricket ball', says Murugesh.

As a selector too Kripal Singh was highly respected. He played no mean part in the resurgence of Indian cricket and in the rise of several young cricketers, particularly of the south. His sudden death last week is a big blow to Indian cricket.

29-7-1987



New Zealand's first tour of India... 1955

Though New Zealand lost the rubber to India during that series, Bert Sutcliffe one of the best left - handed batsmen in the world and all rounder John Reid delighted the crowds with their prowess... Sutcliffe scored 230 runs and Reid 119 not out in the third Test at Delhi

age no bar ..

The oldest player in Test cricket between England and Australia was W.G. Grace who captained England at Nottingham in June 1899, when he was one month short of 51st birthday.

C.K. Nayudu was 62 when he made his last appearance in first class cricket in 1958.

"aesthetic morality"

Using the padded leg as a 'first line of defense' was "an affront to aesthetic morality" according to C.B.Fry.

Balan Pandit - backbone of Kerala cricket

“My mission in cricket now,” says Balan Pandit veteran Kerala cricketer and selector, “is to encourage youngsters and help the weaker sides like Kerala, Andhra in getting recognition at the zonal level.” An Andhra cricket official testifies that Andhra’s R.Vivekanand was picked up by Balan Pandit for the South Zone team and today Vivekanand is among the promising youngsters in the South Under-19 team. If only Kerala and Andhra had the necessary pull some boys from the two ‘weak’ South Zone teams would have got opportunities to display their talent at a higher level of the game.

Balan Pandit himself suffered for want of encouragement and it was widely believed that he was ignored by the national selectors when he was one of the best wicket-keeper batsmen in the country. He was called for the Test trials in 1953 but was not considered for the Indian side and Pandit chose to leave for England to play in the Lancashire league where he ably served the Seaham Cricket Club. Pandit made his debut in 1947 for Western India Cricket Association team in the Ranji Trophy against Gujarat at Ahmedabad as a wicket-keeper. For four years he played in the west zone. He was in the Saurashtra team that played against Maharashtra in 1948 when B.B.Nimbalkar was on 443 and the former conceded the match. Pandit was the wicket keeper for the Saurashtra team and he kept wickets for three and a half days. “Hardly a dozen balls came to me during those long three and a half days because the wicket was a sleeping beauty and the batsmen played almost every ball that was bowled”, he recalls.

Pandit returned to his home State Travancore-Cochin for which he played in the Ranji Trophy and later Kerala when the state was formed. He was a regular run getter and missed several hundreds narrowly. Besides the four centuries he made in Ranji Trophy, Balan Pandit hit up 262 not out against Andhra at Palghat in 1960. He made 86 and 43 against Madras in 1953 and kept wickets admirably. Pandit was then called for the Test trials.

Pandit feels that his best was against Karnataka in 1966 when he made 87 and 53 at Fort Cochin and helped his side draw the match against the star studded Karnataka side. Pandit also bowled

in a few matches and captured 3 wickets against Andhra in Ranji Trophy at Venkatagiri.

In his 25 years of first class cricket Balan Pandit scored many runs and in Ranji Trophy he totalled 2240 runs in 78 innings. He played for the South Zone against New Zealand in 1954 at Bangalore. Between 1952 and 1966 Pandit also coached boys as the NIS coach after himself undergoing coaching under the Rajkumari Amritkaur Coaching Scheme. He attended a refresher course in 1961. Balan Pandit served on the zonal and national selection committees and for eight years was the Chairman of the Vizzy Trophy Selection Committee.

Eleven years of cricket in Lancashire league, ten years of Captaincy of the Kerala team and nearly a quarter century of first class cricket are undoubtedly hallmarks of a fine cricketing career. That is why Balan Pandit is one of the respected figures in South Zone cricket. For twenty years he served the FACT (Fertilizers and Chemicals Travancore Ltd) as Sports Superintendent and has now settled down after retirement at Parur in Alwaye district. Still, the 66 year old stalwart Kerala veteran goes out with cricket teams and attends meetings mainly to encourage and guide young cricketers. Now in Visakha with the Kerala under 19 team (playing against Andhra) Pandit keenly watches the game throughout the day. When asked to specify the reasons for Kerala (like Andhra) being always at the bottom of South Zone cricket Pandit pointed out four main causes. First, there is no facility for regular coaching at the local level where schoolboy cricketers make a mark as in Bombay or Madras. Secondly, there are no turf wickets in Kerala and the boys find it hard to adjust to turf tracks when they go out. Thirdly, rains in Kerala make it difficult for the game to be played for at least six months in a year. Fourthly, most boys like to study and seek jobs rather than spending their time on the playground as job opportunities are limited in Kerala. There is no encouragement from the industry or other quarters. Balan Pandit did not hesitate to stress the point that Andhra and Kerala boys have to struggle a lot to get recognition at the zonal level though he modestly avoided making any reference to his own travails three decades ago when he was a top class wicket keeper-batsman.

16-12-90

The immortal doctor W.G.

If cricket evolved into a gentleman's game, a 'virtuous' game, reflecting the values of Victorian England, it was largely because of the contribution made by celebrities like Dr W.G. Grace, the immortal doctor of the game. The famous Dr Grace was a legend in his own lifetime and few cricketers commanded such respect and admiration for so long as the great Dr William Gilbert Grace who played the game for 58 successive seasons!

Grace was a boy of 9 when he played for West Gloucestershire Cricket Club in 1857. In 1914 a year before he breathed his last the Grand Old Man of English cricket wielded the willow for Eltham against Grove Park in the company of his son. Dr Grace played his last first class match at the age of 60. At the age of 47 he achieved the rare distinction of scoring a thousand runs in May. His towering physique, large flowing beard and approach to the game were objects of admiration for the high and the mighty as well as the common folks of the English society. Stories about his genius, not all apocryphal, abounded all over and Grace's exploits enriched the literature of Victorian and Edwardian England. "Easily the most spectacular man that ever played the game" wrote Sir Neville Cardus about Dr Grace. The inimitable Cardus touch was provided in this line; 'He was the Dr Johnson of cricket-as full of his subject, as kindly and as describable and just as dogmatic in his dispensations of authority.'

Born in a family of cricketers, Grace displayed extraordinary skills at a tender age. He was born at Downend, Bristol in July 1848. He was just 15 when he played for England XI and at the age of 16 he made his debut at the Oval. Grace scored the first ever Test century against Australia. He scored the triple century on three occasions with 344 being the highest for the MCC in 1876. Ten times he scored the double century and a century in each innings in three matches. In all he made 126 centuries and aggregated 54,869 runs and claimed 2,876 wickets. Those centuries and batting records were made on very difficult wickets. Grace never bagged a pair in his long career.

For him, 1871 was the most memorable year when he hit up

2739 runs at an average of 78.25 and took 78 wickets. Grace captained Gloucestershire from 1871 to 1898 and led England in 13 Tests against Australia. Dr. WG bowled slow medium leg breaks and was a fine fielder off his own bowling. He also excelled at point as a fielder. There was a great void when he passed away in 1915. Eric Midwinter, biographer of Dr. Grace, wrote that 'arguably cricket and Grace died together.' This does not mean that cricket, as a sport, was played no more. A clearer statement is that cricket atrophied then and has not, in any major way, evolved further since that time. The game had completed its development and was practised at its highest degree of competence. The famous writer E.V. Lucas wrote in Punch an obituary on Grace in which he said that "there will never be another not only to play cricket as Grace did, but to be cricket as bodied all that cricket stands for."

4-11-87

★ ★ ★

" I know of no game in which a father can so safely leave his boy to himself as the game of Cricket, for his all-round education goes on of itself year after year;but I know a few that very quickly develop priggishness, conceit and self-sufficiency. Cricket is a healthy, invigorating sport, for is it not as a rule played in sunny weather and on a green field?"

- W.G. Grace

*"Dr W.G. Grace
Had hair all over his face
Lord! How all the people cheered
When a ball got lost in his beard!"*
E.C.Bentley
(From Arlott and Trueman On Cricket)

Bill Ponsford - *awesome consistency*

A great Australian cricketer has died last week, quietly in his sleep. Ponsford who passed away in his 91st year must have wished such an end to his long life. One of Australia's prolific run getters has passed into history. His cricketing career had come to an end long ago and not many knew that Ponsford moved into his nineties till the newspapers reported his end recently. Ponsford born in 1900 was nine years older than Bradman. The great Don arrived in this world in 1908. Woodfull, another famous Australian batsman, was three years older. Victor Trumper, a greater and more stylish batsman, was at the peak of his form when Ponsford was a toddler. Trumper became a legend in his lifetime. Ponsford was made of a different stuff as far as run getting was concerned. He was stylish though not as great as Trumper and one who could always be relied upon to score runs.

Rightly hailed as a 'veritable scoring machine' Ponsford came into prominence with a record breaking score of 429 for Victoria against Tasmania at Melbourne during the 1922-23 season. Interestingly enough he broke that record on the same ground with a score of 437 against Queensland four years later. He remained the only batsman to have twice scored over 400 runs in first class cricket.

William Harold Ponsford scored a century on his Test debut in 1924-25 against England at Sydney. A year later he made his first tour of England which, however, was unlucky for him as illness prevented him from playing well. His second tour of England was a little better but Ponsford came into his own only on his third and last tour in 1934. He touched fine form scoring 181 in the fourth Test at Leeds and scoring a brilliant 266 in the final Test at the Oval. As in the previous Test innings he was out 'hit wicket' this time too. He and Bradman put on 451 runs for the second wicket. In the 1934 Test series Ponsford registered a batting average of 94.83. In 29 Tests between 1924 and 1934 Ponsford made 2122 runs at an average of 48.22 and in first class matches his average stood at 65. He and Mayne put on 456 for Victoria which was a record in Australia. He and Stan McCabe put on 389 for the third wicket against the MCC at Lord's in 1934 and that was a record for long. Ponsford then made 281 not out.

Bill Ponsford scored runs heavily and with great consistency and was one of the most feared batsmen of his times. A famous era has come to an end with his death, nine short of what would have been a really coveted hundred.

14-4-91

○ ○ ○

The first test century ..

The first century in a Test match was 165 (retired hurt) by C.Bannerman for Australia v England at Melbourne in 1877.

Century before lunch ..

Three batsmen have succeeded in scoring a century before lunch on the first day of a Test match. They are V.T. Trumper, Manchester 1902; C.G. Macartney, Leeds 1926; and D.G. Bradman, Leeds 1930.

the first to do so....

Victor Trumper scored the first century before lunch in Test cricket at Old Trafford in 1902 on a rain-affected pitch. What Grace was to Englishmen Trumper was to Australia. Neville Cardus compared the batting of Trumper with that of Bradman as the difference between the flight of an eagle and an aeroplane.

'A Fantastic Partnership'

"Larwood and Jardine, a fantastic partnership. Larwood was the sword which pierced the heart of Australian cricket, but Jardine was the swordsman, a master of his craft, fortunate enough to be blessed with the most deadly weapon I have ever seen used in Test cricket. One of Larwood's most treasured possessions is an ashtray, inscribed simply enough 'For the Ashes---- from a grateful skipper.' That ashtray demonstrates so very clearly the high regard Douglas Jardine had for Harold Larwood, the tremendous debt he owed to the first of the cricket 'martyrs'."

- W.H. Ferguson (Mr Cricket)

Walter Hammond - *an all time great*

Twenty five years ago died Walter Reginald Hammond at the age of 62 and cricketologists were unanimous that Wally Hammond was one of the great cricketers the world has seen. Hammond was Don Bradman's worthy rival and like those ill-fated careers affected by the World War Hammond too missed the opportunity of re-writing record books because of those war ravaged six years. Still, Walter Hammond's place in the books of cricket is assured and deservedly high. There were some who hailed him as 'the greatest' all rounder England produced. There were many who were fascinated by his stroke play, especially the glorious cover drive, and his all round display. There was no doubt that he was in the class of such immortals as Ranji, Grace, Trumper and Bradman. 'I cannot' wrote Neville Cardus 'remember batsmanship of surer and more careful technique than Hammond's. There was no strain, even though he carried the team, no haste and no lagging; every stroke and every movement of feet and arms were now the instinctive expression of a mastery which worked almost like a force in nature, needing to labour as little as the sunshine for the full light it shed over the England innings. The harvest was in his bounty. His batsmanship ripened like fruit. It was cricket of moving dignity'. That was the great writer's tribute when Hammond got his double century at Sydney in the second Test against Australia during the 1936-37 series. Bradman said that he had "the greatest admiration for Hammond's cricket".

Hammond amassed 50,492 runs in his career at an average of 56.10. He made, in all, 167 centuries with 336 against New Zealand being his highest. He scored two separate hundreds in a single match on seven occasions. Thrice in his career did Hammond top the 3000 mark in a single season and the years were 1933, 1937 and 1938 and hit up 317 against Nottinghamshire in 1936. Only Hitler's war could stop Hammond. On his first tour of Australia in 1928-29 he scored 779 runs in five successive Test innings and averaged 113.12, a record for an Englishman against Australia. Hammond scored more runs in Test matches than any other English batsman apart from Colin Cowdrey. He was among the 20 English cricketers to have taken most Test wickets for En-

gland-83 in all at an average of 37.67. Hammond also held the record for the highest number of catches in a single match and a single season. He took 78 catches in 1928 and held ten catches that season for Gloucestershire against Surrey. Hammond's favourite position was in the slips where he ended the innings of countless number of batsmen.

Born in 1903 W. R. Hammond played for Gloucestershire which he led between 1939 and 1946. He became England's captain and led his country in 20 Test matches. Powerfully built Walter Hammond was one of the most attractive batsmen who excelled in executing the cover drive. Hammond's picture executing that shot adorns many cricket books and magazines. He was a medium pacer who varied his pace intelligently. Few cricketers had in them so many all round abilities as Walter Hammond who retired in 1947. Against India in 1936 Hammond made 167 in the second Test at Manchester and 217 at the Oval in the third Test. (He did not play in the first Test match) Hammond made only 35 in the only Test match between India and England in 1932 and 12 in the second innings. In the 1946-47 series Hammond who was 44 years old was on the decline. Hammond scored 33,69 and 9 not out in that Test series. Indians saw Hammond in full flow in the 1936 series and every Indian who saw the great batsman in action was all praise for the superb technique and stroke-play of the master batsman. No wonder Don Bradman was one of Walter Hammond's admirers.

22-4-90

* * *

Betting in cricket in the past ..

Cricket in the 18th and early 19th centuries was the object of much wagering and at one period this grew to such proportions that it brought the game into disrepute. ...it was not uncommon for fighting to break out at cricket matches among the betting fraternity. The Gentleman's Magazine wrote: "It is a notorious and shameless breach of the laws, as it gives the most open encouragement to gambling."

Norman Yardley - *captain courageous*

Many might have failed to notice that last month Norman Yardley passed away in his 75th year. Newspapers in our country did not carry this item prominently probably due to the pressure on space during the hustings. More than forty years rolled by since Norman Yardley led England against the mighty Don Bradman & Company and all that is history now. It was a daunting task for Norman Yardley to lead England against a side that contained the immortal Don Bradman and all-time-greats like Brown, Barnes, Lindwall and Miller. Yet Yardley did not flinch having stepped into Walter Hammond's shoes on the 1946-47 tour of Australia. Yardley performed a feat by taking Don Bradman's wicket in three successive innings and eventually topped the English bowling averages with ten wickets.

Norman Walter Dransfield Yardley was born on March 19, 1915. He grew into a stylish batsman and medium pacer and was a Cambridge triple blue between 1935-38 playing cricket, hockey and squash. He became North England squash champion on six occasions. In cricket he came into limelight when he scored 189 for Young Amateurs against Young Professionals and 63 for Public Schools against the Army at Lord's. Norman Yardley toured India with Lord Tennyson's team in 1937-38 and a year later went to South Africa where he made his debut in Test cricket.

He started playing for Yorkshire in 1936 and led that famous county for 8 seasons. Under his leadership Yorkshire shared the championship title once with Surrey. He captained England in 14 of the 20 Test matches he played leading his country to victory against South Africa in 1947.

He, however, lost the series to Australia and the West Indies in the series that followed. His highest was 99 against South Africa in Test matches. As Len Hutton aptly summed up "a kinder or more considerate captain never walked into a cricket field". After retirement Yardley was President of Yorkshire Cricket Club for some-time. This well known English cricketer of yesteryears breathed his last on November 4 this year.

10-12-89

* * *

Len Hutton - a great knight

Sir Leonard Hutton, who breathed his last on Thursday last, will be remembered with gratitude by the British and with admiration by cricket fans all over the world. Len Hutton typified the English spirit and few were more resolute in a crisis than the post-war giant of English cricket. His feats and courage in adversity remind one of the Churchillian dictum: Resolution in war and defiance in defeat. Len was magnanimous too as he rated Sunil Gavaskar's double century greater than his own famous knock of 1938 and even considered the Indian master batsman superior to himself.

Hutton brought to English batting character at a time when everything looked bleak. His record breaking innings of 364 in 13 hours and 20 minutes at the Oval was hailed by many and the great Don Bradman walked upto Len Hutton to congratulate him. Hutton's 19 Test centuries and aggregate of 6,971 runs at an average of 56.67 place him in the company of all time greats. But no less important were the many other knocks that came from his gallant bat. Frank Worrell, another famous knight, rated Hutton's knock of 67 for Yorkshire against the West Indies as among the best he had seen and Worrell even called it greater than the many centuries Len made. "But if one thing was guaranteed to bring out the best in Len Hutton" wrote Worrell, "it was a sticky wicket and a difficult situation. He made 67 which was more valuable and worthy of more praise than many a century." Alec Bedser, one of the finest pace bowlers of post war cricket, placed Hutton in the company of Bradman in making runs under adverse conditions. The worse the situation was the better Len batted, according to his contemporaries. Lindsay Hassett observed that Hutton was second only to Don Bradman. And that was the highest tribute Hutton could ask for from another great player and Australian captain like Lindsay Hassett.

English batting revolved around two great opening batsmen in the last century. One was J.B.Hobbs and the other was Len Hutton. Both of them were knighted. Both were great masters of the willow and both of them lost precious years of their careers because of World Wars. Hobbs played his last great innings of a century at the age of 51 in 1934, the year in which Hutton made

his debut at the age of 18. The Times wrote of the 18 year old thus "He is a young batsman who applies himself to batting with the passionate concentration of a scientist dissecting a beetle." There was no wavering from this approach throughout his long career and Hutton became the most feared English batsman. Maurice Golesworthy wrote thus of Hutton in the 'Encyclopaedia of Cricket: "A determined batsman of classical elegance, Hutton would have shone at any period in the history of Test cricket, but in the immediate post-war seasons, he stood out like a beacon when England's batting often looked shaky."

There were stories in circulation that Bradman planned a strategy to get rid of Hutton, Australia's main foe in batting. Lindwall was the executioner of the tactic which worked well on some occasions. But Len would come back with a stronger determination to defy the Aussies. Frank Worrell recorded that the West Indies always celebrated Hutton's dismissal. The great Hutton was, however, ill at ease against Sonny Ramadhin. He admitted his weakness against Ramadhin and said to his team mates: "I can't pick him." An amusing sidelight is also there to this episode. Once when Ramadhin got Hutton out the West Indian players rushed to the freak bowler in jubilation. Innocently Ramadhin asked: "Who was that fellow who got out?"

Hutton's class and Compton's gutsy genius made English batting famous during those hard days when Bradman & Co slaughtered their arch rivals with massive scores and successive wins. Len Hutton amassed 40,140 runs in first class cricket with a high average of 55.51. He retired from first class cricket in 1957 and shortly after that his record of 364 was broken by another knight, Gary Sobers, against Pakistan. Hutton played again in 1960 and had two more innings. He visited India several times after his retirement and evinced a keen interest in the progress of the game in this part of the world. One of his articles was on Sunil Gavaskar's innings in England. Sir Leonard Hutton was a generous knight off the field though on the field he played to fight and win by means of hard work and tenacity of purpose. One of the immortals of the game, Len Hutton, has now become a part of cricket history. His deeds will continue to inspire, Englishmen in particular.

9-9-90

Denis Compton - *idol of the crowds*

"He was the idol of the crowds," wrote Ian Peebles, Denis Compton's county captain and biographer, "not only at Lord's but all over the cricketing world". Compton was a hero for the crowds in India also when the Second World War brought him to the sub-continent. 'Gay cavalier' 'instinctive cricketer' and 'cheekiest batsman' were some of the terms used to describe the genius of Denis Compton. He was so popular that when he suffered a knee injury it was said that 'Compton's knee became a matter for national concern!'

The popularity of Denis Compton soared after the Second World War when he scored the highest number of runs, 3816, in the 1947 Season at an average of 96.80. 12 of his 18 centuries were made for Middlesex, besides the double centuries he made against Rest of England. Among his famous exploits was the century he made in 1948 after being hit nastily by a Lindwall bouncer on the head. Compton was led off the field to have several stitches put on his head. Returning to the ground at Old Trafford the same day with a plaster on his forehead Compton received a standing ovation when he completed his century and remained 145 not out.

Compton, like his famous contemporary Len Hutton, made a century on his first appearance against Australia. Like Hutton he had to face the fiery Australian attack led by Lindwall and Miller and the ruthlessness of Don Bradman's captaincy. The mighty Australians against whom Compton made many fighting knocks always had high respect for Compton's abilities. Compton made his first class debut at the age of 18 and scored 1004 runs in his first season. He bowled left arm spin and the chinaman was his secret weapon as a bowler.

In 1948 Compton made 300 in just 181 minutes in South Africa, the first hundred in 66 minutes the second in 78 minutes and the third in just 37 minutes, 'outraging every canon of the game.' In India he played both football and cricket. Denis Compton played for Holkar under C.K. Nayudu's captaincy. In the Ranji final against Bombay in 1944-45 Compton made 249 not out. It was a feast for the eye when Compton and Mushtaq, who scored a

century in each innings, were pounding the Bombay attack in a huge partnership. His highest in Test cricket was 278 in 290 minutes against Pakistan in 1954 at Nottingham. Compton played football in English First Division league for Arsenal and figured in some international matches also. A feat of this legend of his times was the way he ran out Vijay Merchant in a Test match with 'a football kick' of the cricket ball that hit the stumps before Merchant could reach the crease!

In his tribute John Arlott wrote that this 'cricketing genius' in his 'heyday could have picked up his bat at any time, in any place, on just about any kind of wicket if he was feeling like it and without any practice at all make a century.' In his prime, wrote Harvey Day, no player gave greater delight than Compton. He will "always be remembered for the spirit in which he played cricket and for the joy he gave. The game hasn't known a finer sportsman."

✦ ✦ ✦

⊙ Donald George Bradman ⊙

August 27, 1908 - February 25, 2001

"The greatest batsman in cricket history. He was also arguably the most famous of all Australians, and among the most influential. In 338 first class innings he made 117 centuries, a strike rate of more than one in three, better than twice the ratios achieved by such greats as Jack Hobbs, Len Hutton or Walter Hammond. His first class average was 95.14 - his nearest rival's is 71." (Matthew Engel in the Guardian Weekly) India's Vijay Merchant was that nearest rival with 71.64 average.

"Batting for Richards is strokes, more strokes and even more strokes" - Arlott.

Leslie Ames - *solid behind the stumps*

The news of the death of Leslie Ames a few days ago comes as a shock to cricket lovers in India and revives memories of the second Commonwealth team's tour of India in 1950-51. Leslie Ames was the captain of that side which contained such great players as Frank Worrell and Jim Laker. Frank Worrell's genius and artistry delighted the Indian crowds and the Commonwealth side was once troubled by the batting talent of a youngster, the school-boy cricketer named Vijay Manjrekar, who scored a gallant 91. Alas, neither Worrell nor Manjrekar lived long and now departs Leslie Ames, though full of years and honours. Ames was 85.

Interestingly Kent produced two great wicket keepers in succession, Ames and Evans who served England most efficiently for a long time. Those were the times when the wicket keepers had a torrid time waiting for long hours to get a chance against Don Bradman and Co. For 25 years Ames was in active cricket, keeping wickets for Kent and England before lumbago forced him to retire from first class cricket. Ames was then 45 and but for the ailment he would have gone on for a few years more in first class cricket. Evans, his worthy successor was by then firmly established as the number one wicket keeper for England. Ames was efficient while Evans was spectacular, a delight for the photographers. Many critics held that Ames was the best wicket keeper England ever had though some disagreed with that view.

Leslie Ames was born in 1905. He made his debut in first class cricket for Kent in 1926. By 1929 he was a Test player having made his debut against the West Indies. Ames made a mark as a fine batsman too. His Test cricket was restricted to a mere 10 years as the war intervened. By the time the World War ended Evans, the younger and more sprightly stumper, came on the scene with a bang and Leslie Ames's Test career had come to an end.

In 1933 he equalled the Test record of dismissing eight batsmen in a match (that record has since been broken). He played in 47 Tests and made 2438 runs at an average of 40.63. His feats behind and in front of the stumps were many and at times amazing. He scored two separate hundreds in a match on three occasions.

He once hit up 295 for Kent against Gloucestershire. He scored more than 2000 runs in five seasons with the highest being 3058 in 1933, the best year in his career. He achieved the wicket keeper's double of 1,000 runs and 100 dismissals in three seasons. His career aggregate of 415 stumpings is an all time record which he achieved by 1938, his last year in Test cricket.

In Test cricket, he had a bag of 96 dismissals, 23 stumped and 73 caught. In other words there were at least two victims on average in every Test match he played. Leslie Ames made as many as 37,245 runs in first class cricket at an average of 43.56 including the feat of scoring over 1000 runs in a season 17 times.

In 1933 his bag of victims behind the stumps contained 66. Leslie Ames served English cricket as a selector too. He was the first professional to receive such an honour. He was also secretary-manager of Kent Cricket Club. He was always admired for his manners and dignity. No surprise that the team he led to India was one of the most popular sides to tour the subcontinent.

4-3-90



The Royal help !

In 1930 King George V visited Lord's for the second England v Australia Test Bradman made 254 ... Woodfull and Ponsford were the batsmen doing most of the damage when the King arrived. Play was held up while the players met King George, but immediately after the resumption Ponsford was caught by Hammond for 81. The King turned to his neighbour and suggested 'I shall have to come again, and get some more wickets.' (Woodfull, the King's favourite went on to make 155 runs!)

superstition in cricket ...

"Cricketers are notoriously superstitious, if you ever ask one to dinner before a big match make sure that duck is not on the menu; while if your guest has failed to score in either innings pears for the dessert are most unwelcome." (Trevor Bailey)

Edrich and Hobbs put on the left pad first.

Godfrey Evans - *always spectacular*

This year Godfrey Evans completes the Biblical span of three score and ten. Forty four years ago T.G. Evans made his debut in Test cricket when he was chosen to play for England against India in the last Test match of that series. That marked the beginning of a brilliant career in modern Test cricket and critics opine that Godfrey Evans was England's greatest wicket-keeper. He succeeded Leslie Ames his county (Kent) mate and without doubt Ames and Evans were among the all time greats in Test cricket.

Unfortunately for Evans and for the connoisseurs of the game there was no television then. Otherwise TV replays of Evans's acrobatic feats behind the stumps would have been most delightful to watch. Some lensmen could capture Evans in spectacular poses and one could learn from those pictures what a great keeper Evans was. He used to dive on both sides with amazing speed and effect lightning stumpings.

A picture of Evans showing the great keeper airborne almost of the height of the three stumps is among the best photos in cricket journalism. One such feat ended Neil Harvey's stay at the crease when Evans brought off a splendid catch off Tyson to send Harvey back when Australia looked well set to beat England in January 1955. That catch turned the tide in England's favour and England won the Test match and the Ashes too. That was perhaps Evans's greatest catch. Ironically enough Evans dropped a sitter off the same Harvey two years earlier in England when Harvey was not yet in double figures and Harvey went on to make 122.

For twenty long years Evans served Kent ably like his illustrious predecessor Leslie Ames. Evans played for England in 91 Test matches and made 2439 runs including two centuries besides effecting 219 dismissals. In his career Evans had a rich haul of 1020 victims behind the stumps - 734 caught and 236 stumped. He and Cowdrey put on a record 7th wicket partnership of 174 runs for Kent in English Country Cricket. He scored over 1000 runs in four seasons and in 1952 he made 1613 runs. In first class cricket Evans made 14620 runs. His highest was 144 against Somerset in 1952.

In 1959 Godfrey Evans was getting ready to go to the West Indies with the English team when he was omitted from the team. Evans felt terribly disappointed and at once decided to call it a day. A great cricketing career came to an end. Cheerful both on and off the field Evans was a lively fellow. His team mates used to enjoy his witty remarks and effervescence. He was 39 when he retired from big cricket.

18-3-90



first radio commentary ..

“The first running commentary of a cricket match to be broadcast was of the Essex v New Zealanders game at Leyton in 1927. This commentary was made by the Rev. F.H.Gillingham. The first Test match to be broadcast was England v Australia at Nottingham in 1930.

Richie Benaud a great captain and commentator ..

When Richie Benaud retired in 1964 he created an Australian record by captaining Australia in 28 tests (he never lost a rubber) and bagging a total of 248 wickets at an average of 27.03. Richie Benaud is, inarguably, the most popular and knowledgeable television commentator.

to another great captain

Richie Benaud to Frank Worrell after presenting the Frank Worrell Trophy in 1961: “You will remain in the hearts of cricket lovers in this country for many a long day!”

Cardus on Benaud : “Not only by his skill but by spirit and love of all that is best in cricket, he has enriched the game and has left us gloriously and deeply in debt.”

Jim Laker - spinner and breaker of records

The year was 1956. Jim Laker performed so brilliantly that the entire English press acclaimed his feat while a British newspaper named him the 'Man of The Week' an honour rarely given to a cricketer. Laker took 10 wickets for his county (Surrey) against the visiting Australian side in one innings and repeated the feat against the Aussies in the Manchester Test match claiming 10 for 53. It was the first time in Test cricket for a bowler to capture all the ten wickets in an innings and Laker finished with 19 for 90, another record in first class cricket. The wicket at Manchester was dusty and Laker exploited it to the fullest advantage.

Laker had played in the 1948 Test at Leeds against Don Bradman's team and finished 0 for 93 as Bradman hammered 173 not out in Australia's score of 404 for 3. Laker made his debut for Surrey in 1946 when he captured 8 wickets in 60 overs and though the beginning was good he found the going hard with the Australians, led by the great Don Bradman, descending on England in full might.

For almost 14 seasons in succession Laker took over 100 wickets with the highest being 166 wickets in one season before he prematurely retired from first class cricket. If his best year in county cricket was 1950 his best in Test cricket was the 1956 season when he captured 46 wickets at an incredibly low cost of 9.60 apiece. Though he retired in 1959 he made a comeback in 1962 and played for three more seasons this time with Essex. In all Jim Laker took 1944 wickets averaging 18.40.

The orthodox right arm off spinner was hailed as an all time great placed in the company of O' Reilly, Grimmet and Ramadhin. Spin bowlers could not make much headway those days against batsmen endowed with good footwork. Players like Don Bradman and Neil Harvey used to dance down the track in playing flighted off spin or leg spin bowling. Yet Laker, after early grinding against the mightly Aussies, had his day and was among the most feared slow bowlers of yesteryears. The tall, well built Jim Laker was born in Yorkshire in 1922.

24-12-89



Alec Bedser

a famous fast bowler

Alec Bedser took 221 wickets in 47 Tests at an average of 24.58 which was a world record surpassing Grimmett of Australia's 216 wickets... Bedser made a record debut in Test cricket by taking 11 wickets in each of his first two Test matches--- 11 for 145 at Lord's and 11 for 93 at Manchester against India in 1946. He took 14 for 99 against Australia at Nottingham in 1953 against Australia.

In the course of a year between 1950 November and 1951 August he took 62 Test wickets.

Bedser on television ..

Bedser wrote in 1954 in his book *Following On*: "Television has come to stay and it is useless fighting against the fact. Cricket has proved one of the most photogenic of all sports, and I think it has the means of increasing interest, particularly among the ladies. The effect might well be to encourage their husbands and friends to play. Although I am a bachelor, I understand ladies exercise no small influence on the home! I have no doubt television is on the side of cricket; it is helping to popularize the game. Television has added by thousands the legion of armchair critics (in the literal sense of the term) and hardly a day passes without letters arriving telling the players what they should have done.... I am sympathetic with umpires who are now being told that they should have given out so-and-so out leg before. The umpire has a hard enough job without any additional worries and it should be remembered that he still enjoys the best and most privileged position to judge no matter how well placed are the cameras. Moreover, the umpire's decision is final and will remain so even if a thousand TV cameras attempt to prove him wrong."

WHEN TRUEMAN CLEAN BOWLED A COP

When Fred Trueman was once caught for car speeding the policeman said:

"Aren't you Trueman, the cricketer?" Fred nodded, and the officer added: "Well, you were driving as fast as you bowl." "No I weren't" replied Fred, "tha wouldn't caught me if I had."

Brian Statham - *great on all wickets*

"He was a great bowler on all wickets", wrote Fred Trueman of his famous contemporary adding: "We made a great pair because there was always something about the one or the other of us that most batsmen disliked. They would try to get away from one of us, to the other end and if they allowed themselves a feeling of complacency, we had an extra chance to strike." - two great fast bowlers indeed of post war cricket, Statham and Trueman, though dissimilar in many ways. Statham was modest, always self-effacing. Trueman was fiery, boisterous and at times deliberately mischievous, if not aggressive. Another famous fast bowler who was their contemporary and who did much for the rise of English cricket after the end of the Bradman era was Tyson.

Abbas Ali Baig was once asked to compare Trueman and Statham and state who was the more dangerous of the two. Baig unhesitatingly replied that it was "Statham, every time". Trueman gave the batsmen a chance, trying the bouncer (which Walcott once hit to the fence on three successive occasions making Trueman use unparliamentary words) or something that did not compel the batsman to concentrate all the time, Statham was machine-like in his accuracy and control. His slim figure and bowling action earned for him the name "The Greyhound" and Statham used to generate much faster pace than did Trueman or Tyson when the occasion demanded. His control over the swing was superb. Not many were willing in the beginning to accept that Brian Statham would grow into a great fast bowler. His shoulders were not broad and his build unsuited for a real fast bowler. In fact, Statham did not even have sound coaching as a boy

Yet just after playing for a season for Lancashire, he was flown out to Australia to join the MCC side touring Australia during 1950-51. He made his Test debut against New Zealand in March 1951 nine months after playing his first country cricket match. Statham, the Test player then, it seems had not even seen the famous Lord's cricket ground. Statham was able to move the ball both ways and his accuracy was such that critics called him 'the best' since the legendary Harold Larwood, if not more accurate

than Larwood. Statham worked hard for success without making any fuss. His motto has all time relevance; "There's only one place to learn and improve and that's in the middle".

John Brian Statham was born in 1930. He played for England in 70 Tests and bagged 252 Test wickets, a feat bettered by only three or four bowlers, for England. In 1960 he captured 27 wickets against South Africa in the Test series at an average of 18.18. His best bowling in Test cricket was 7 for 39 against South Africa at Lord's in 1955. South Africa containing many powerful batsmen needed just 183 runs to win the Test match and England's chances of saving the match looked slim. Bowling unchanged Brian Statham ripped through the South African batting line up claiming 7 wickets and helped England bundle out South Africa for a mere 111. It was said of Statham that for every catch taken off his bowling two were dropped. In all Brian Statham took 2,260 wickets at an average of 16.30 and was Lancashire's all time great wicket taker. His best was 15 for 89 against Warwickshire in 1957 including 8 for 34 in one innings. Brian Statham was a left handed batsman who got runs for his side at crucial times. His highest score in Test cricket was 38 and in first class cricket 62 and he totalled 5,424 runs in the 647 innings he played. He was not out on 145 occasions. He played for Lancashire for 18 years and for England from 1951 to 1965. A fine outfielder Brian Statham was a gentleman cricketer who never lost his cool both on and off the field. He was honoured with the C.B.E. and recently a fund was raised to help Statham in his fight against chronic illness.

27-5-1990

* * *

Women's cricket ..

The first women's cricket match of which there is any record was that played between eleven maids of Bramley and eleven maids of Hambledon (Surrey) on Gosden Common near Guildford on July 26, 1745. Hambledon won by eight notches. A return match was played eight days later.

May and Cowdrey - gifted batsmen

The names of May and Cowdrey come to one's mind as the latter's son Chris takes over the reins of England following his nomination to Captaincy by the former and other selectors. Today Peter May is the Chairman of the Selection Committee in England while Colin Cowdrey must be feeling proud to see his son assume leadership of the English cricket team.

Three decades ago May and Cowdrey were among the best batsmen in the world. Critics like Sir Neville Cardus and Jack Fingleton lavished praise on these two batsmen hailed as 'Eagles in the Sun'. They played for England at a time when the English batting looked rather suspect against some brilliant pace and spin attack of Australia and the West Indies. Both of them scored heavily and came to the rescue of their team. More noteworthy is the fact that they were stylish and highly accomplished cricketers.

Peter Barker Howard May born in 1929 donned the Cambridge colours in 1950, 51 and 52 and made his debut for Surrey around that time. Between 1952 and 1958 May headed the batting averages in English County Championships six out of seven seasons. Chosen to play for England in 1951 against South Africa, May made 138 in the first innings. From then on he played for England in 52 test matches without a break and 38 of them as the Captain. He aggregated the highest individual score in 1951 scoring 2,339 runs in a season at an average of 68.79. He and Cowdrey were involved in a record fourth wicket stand of 411 against the West Indies with May making 285 not out on that occasion. He scored a fine 106 against India at Nottingham in 1959. Peter May scored 4,537 runs in the 66 Tests he played. Ill health came in the way of this great batsman and he had to be away from the Test scene for sometime.

Three years younger than May is Michael Colin Cowdrey whose initials M.C.C. enhanced his popularity when he arrived on the scene at the age of 13. As a scholloboy cricketer Cowdrey scored 75 and 44 in 1946. Five years later he earned the county cap playing for Kent in 1951 and Cowdrey made 1,189 runs that season.

Cowdrey became an Oxford Blue and captained his University side . In 1954 Cowdrey made his Test debut in Australia at the age of 21. Making 40 in the first Test Cowdrey got his maiden hundred in his third Test match on that tour of Australia. Cowdrey led England in 27 Tests and held the record of playing in 113 Test matches. He got two hundreds in a match on three occasions and holds the record of making the highest score by an Englishman in Australia when he made 307 against South Australia. He scored a century against all countries in Test matches and his three 100s against India in 1959 and 1964 are among his best. The stylish English batsman was particularly popular in India because of the fact that he was born in Bangalore. May and Cowdrey embodied the essence of English character both on and off the field.

20-7-88



Worrell on Laker ..

"Laker has always been a great bowler, a spinner who varies his pace and flight magnificently."

Ranji on bat:

"Really good bat is a work of art, ... it is by far the most important instrument an individual cricketer has to select. It must be remembered that no two players are exactly alike and that consequently nearly every cricketer requires a particular make of bat to suit him."

Fred Trueman - a colourful personality

Fred Trueman is without doubt one of the most colourful and outstanding personalities of modern cricket. Both on and off the field Fred Trueman was a lively person. That he shared the privilege of writing jointly a book on cricket and the microphone for BBC radio with the celebrated John Arlott enhanced Trueman's reputation and popularity. Sir Neville Cardus reviewed Arlott's book on Trueman for the Guardian which of course was vintage stuff. The fiery Fred's comments over radio were always lively and Arlott's resonant voice and rich prose provided a perfect foil to Trueman's sharp wit and mirthful comments in typically Yorkshire accent now immensely popular all over the world thanks to Geoff Boycott.

Against India in 1952 he made his famous test debut taking 29 wickets in less than 120 overs at an average of 13.31 a piece. In the first Test at Manchester Trueman's figures were 8.4 overs 31 runs and 8 wickets! When India was devastated by the fury of Trueman critics hesitated to lavish high praise on the twenty year old Yorkshireman because India was 'a weak' side. Trueman did not take long to show his class as a great fast bowler. Ten years later at Edgbaston in 1963 he took 5 for 75 and 7 for 44 against the West Indies. In one deadly spell he took 5 for 0 in just three overs and Trueman claimed 34 wickets at an average of 17.47 in that series. He became the first fast bowler to cross the 300 mark in test cricket and his 307 remained a record for many years. He was not just a tailender but a strong hitter of the ball and in county cricket his highest was 104.

Fred Trueman will be remembered for his fiery fast bowling and lively expert comments over the radio. He has also an enduring place in cricket history and literature thanks to John Arlott.

A Trueman bouncer

"Once at a party at Aden, Trueman was introduced to the local Sheikh. Introducing the Sheikh, the host said: "He's got a hundred and ninety six wives." "Has he?" asked Trueman "Does he know that with another four he could have a new ball?" - John Arlott- (Fred-Portrait of a Fast Bowler.)

Ted Dexter

'Lord' Edward in the saddle

Edward Ralph Dexter, better known as Ted Dexter, has succeeded Peter May as the Chairman of the Selection Committee in England. In a statement Dexter has vowed to put English cricket back at the top and has proposed several measures to tone up the quality of the game in England. Dexter is a man of strong views and he may succeed in reviving the status of England in international cricket, though a mere change at the top may not generally produce radical alterations in status and performance.

When Dexter arrived on the cricket scene first as a schoolboy cricketer and later as the Cambridge Blue around 1955, there was a lot of excitement. Critics hailed him as "one of the most exciting discoveries" in post-war cricket. Dexter got his 'Blue' at Cambridge for cricket and golf. In 1958 he made his debut for England against New Zealand and made 53 in his first Test appearance. Later he scored a brilliant 141 containing 24 boundaries at Christchurch against New Zealand. He became the captain of Sussex in 1960 and blossomed into one of the hardest-hitting batsmen of modern cricket. That year he hit up his highest aggregate and helped Sussex rise from the lowly 15th place in county cricket to fourth place. During 1961-62 he became England's captain and scored a memorable 126 not out against India at Kanpur. He went to Australia as England's captain in 1962.

Dexter played for England in 60 Test matches captaining his country in 30 of them. His highest was 205 against Pakistan at Dhaka during the 1961-62 tour. Dexter got a century against all the countries he played and later fulfilled his ambition to get a hundred against South Africa also. The best knock of his was, however, the 70 he made against the West Indies at Lord's in 1963 which was described by Alan Ross as "one of the greatest innings seen at Lord's." Dexter thrashed Hall, Griffith and other West Indian bowlers who looked unusually innocuous when Dexter was hammering away at their bowling.

Dexter is a colourful personality with varied interests. When

he wanted to jump into politics in 1963 on a Conservative party ticket, Sir Neville Cardus wrote thus: "Apparently he (Dexter) is undecided at the age of 28, whether he is (a) a great batsman, (b) an unpredictable bowler, (c) a journalist, (d) a television star (in Australia) (e) a potential golfer, or (f) a future leader of the Tory Party It is beyond me that Dexter, a young man with his talents as a great cricketer, should think for a moment of giving up any of his days or nights to Westminster and politics".

Dexter was a crusader against throwing and throwers. He once wrote: "I beg umpires all over the world to care for the art and beauty of the bowling action, pure and simple and splendid as it is". All that is needed is honesty and courage, he added. He admired Richie Benaud as a 'great Captain'. At 53 Ted Dexter has begun a new innings which will be watched with keen interest.

1-3-89

o o o

Cricket and Politics :

"Word Games and Game Words" "Tony Blair is batting for Britain abroad... can expect a long innings from him unless some crisis catches him on a sticky wicket... he has a safe pair of hands..."

-The Economist, June 14th 1997.

American Appreciation of Don Bradman

"He simply keeps hitting and running until some sensible person in the stands suggests a spot of tea"

**New York Times on Don Bradman
(From The Economist March 3-9,2001).**

Windies

true exemplars of the game's spirit

"I would not have missed" said Vivian Richards, "the experience of playing in India for the world. Of course, I had to learn to cope with the Indian spinners. Those guys there turn the ball a mile even on those hard wickets... I learnt a lot in India. It is a great place to play cricket". Thirteen years ago Viv Richards, coming in the place of Lawrence Rowe, made his Test debut in India, a baptism he would never forget. He has since grown into the most brilliant batsman of contemporary cricket. In a way his team is a one-man army that cares more for the quality of the combat than for its consequences.

The West Indies truly embody the spirit of the fascinating game of cricket. On top today they could be down and out tomorrow, unpredictable, volatile, yet attractive all the time. The great West Indian team of 1957-58 hit up a massive score of 790 for 3 wickets in one Test match against Pakistan and almost the same team crashed to 76 all out a year later in Pakistan. World Cup champions of 1975 and 1979 fail to qualify for the semis in 1987!

Forty years ago the West Indies made their first tour of India, twenty years after they played their first Test match in 1928 against England. Between the two world wars the West Indies team was less known than some of the brilliant players who hailed from the Caribbeans. G. Challenor of Barbados was described as one of the finest batsmen of his times. Learie Constantine known as 'electric heels' was a brilliant all rounder while George Headley was hailed as 'Bradman of the Caribbeans'. Headley scored more than a quarter of all the runs scored by the West Indies in Test matches between 1930 and 1939.

The arrival of the three Ws marked the rise of the West Indians as a major force in world cricket. Fred Trueman who rightly observed that the West Indies produced a line of instinctive geniuses summed up appropriately the plight of the team playing against the West Indies thus. "After Worrell came Weekes and after Weekes came Walcott, each a great batsman in his own right".

Nature or God perhaps ordained that these three should bat in that order. For, Worrell was born in 1924, Weekes in 1925 and Walcott in 1926 and the order was kept in batting too. All the three Ws came from Barbados. All the three were good footballers in their school days. Worrell was a forward and Walcott a full back. These three celebrities enjoyed playing bridge. The tall Worrell, the short Weekes and the hefty Walcott were natural cricketers. The drive of Worrell, the square cut of Weekes and the hook of Walcott were pleasing to watch though heart breaking to the one bowling to them.

Trueman felt that Walcott was the most powerful batsman off the backfoot he had seen. Denis Compton wrote that Worrell's technique "stemmed from his feather balance and ability to get into position very quickly. A clear brain and nimble feet worked in harmony and he had a very straight and correct bat". Worrell's languid style cast a spell over cricket fans and his rivals on the field too. His inspiring leadership and magnanimity even in a crisis made him a legend in his own lifetime and few cricketers received such an ovation from the public as he did during that famous tour of Australia. The British Monarch honoured Worrell with a Knighthood. The Gods out of jealousy for the hero or perhaps out of love for the young man, called him back to the pavilion in March 1967 when Sir Frank was just 42.

Few in India can forget the way Everton Weekes scored in India during the West Indies first tour in 1947-48. The sequence of Weekes's scores (after his century against England in the last Test match) was 128 at Delhi, 194 at Bombay, 162 and 101 at Calcutta, 90 runout in Madras and 56 and 48 at Bombay in the last Test-a total of 779 runs at an average of 111.28. Walcott too got centuries against India, two in succession five years later, and Worrell emulated his two team mates later. Their Test averages ran close to one another-Worrell's 49.48, Weekes's 58.61 and Walcott's 56.68. About Weekes and Walcott Sir Frank had this to say. "There isn't a bowler in the world who needs reminding that there is little, if anything, to choose between Weekes and Walcott as batsmen". About the friendship of the three Ws Worrell wrote. "We are all three firm friends and we have always been frank about our cricket". The modest Walcott, however, felt that he would not have been put

in the same class as the other two if his name had not started with the letter W.

The mantle of the three Ws fell on Kanhai, Sobers and Hunte who along with Hall and Griffith helped the West Indies stay at the top for a long time. One of the finest all-rounders the game has produced Garfield Sobers achieved the rare feat of scoring nearly 8000 runs in Test cricket besides taking over 200 wickets. Sobers, knighted like Frank Worrell, strode the scene like a Colossus. Pace or spin Sobers was the master at the crease. Sobers gave a classic display of the art of batting against the best spin bowling in the world when he led the Windies team twenty years ago. Against Chandrasekhar at his best, Bedi, Prasanna and Venkataraghavan, Sobers played brilliantly denying India the chance of a win at Madras in a memorable Test. Kanhai was a dazzling stroke player and the great line continued-of brilliant entertainers and dazzling strokemakers.

Goddard, Alexander, Sobers, Lloyd, Kallicharan and Richards have captained the West Indian sides to India. Every tour of India helped the West Indies in discovering a new star. Among those 'discovered' on Indian soil are Clive Lloyd and Viv Richards. Malcolm Marshall was a young fast bowler when he came to India a decade ago and today he is among the best speed merchants of the world.

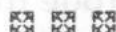
The present side from the Caribbeans has quite a few youngsters of promise. Richards's army is licking its wounds after the debacle in the Reliance Cup. They are determined to bounce back as the world's best team. Pacemen Patterson, Walsh and Davis are already in the limelight with their speed and accuracy. Richards, Greenidge, Haynes, Harper and Dujon are among the seniors of the team. The tour of India should help the West Indies in rediscovering their strength while for the Indian team in transition after the great Gavaskar's retirement this will be a severely testing time.

Visakhapatnam is hosting for the first time a three-day cricket match involving a foreign team. The Andhra Cricket Association and the twenty-five-year-old Visakhapatnam District Cricket Association, the joint hosts, are keen on staging the match in a big

way. All eyes will be not only on the West Indian stars led by Richards but also on the young aspirants for places in the Indian Test team-Rajput, Sidhu, Manjrekar, Sanjeev Sharma and the likes.

A warm welcome awaits the Caribbeans as they come here for a three day sojourn on the Coromandel coast.

18-12-87



EVERTON WEEKES and FRANK WORRELL

Weekes is at his most majestic when he is square cutting a ball His timing is superb and the power he has in his wrists is incredible (Worrell).

Everton Weekes made five successive hundreds in tests .. one against England in 1947 - 48 and four against India, followed by 90 in the fifth.

Frank Worrell "I shall always consider that 223 at Kanpur my greatest innings, far better than my two more famous ones at Trent Bridge". Worrell made 223 not out on the matting wicket and 83 not out in the second innings. On the Madras test that followed he made another brilliant knock of 161.

Robertson-Glasgow on George Headley: "Great batting often has the beauty of the blast and the grandeur of the gale. When he walks down the pavilion steps you expect in hope or fear."

Gomez over radio - a pleasant surprise

It was indeed a pleasant surprise to many cricket lovers, especially veterans, to hear the voice of Gerry Gomez over the radio as an expert commentator during the oneday international match between India and the West Indies last week. Gomez recalled, during the course of the commentary on the match, the names of several former Indian stars and drew comparisons between medium pacers of those times like Rangachari, Shute Banerjee and Dattu Phadkhar and today's stars like Kapil Dev and the other new ball bowlers. Gomez's comments were quite interesting and revealed the depth of his knowledge.

Gerald E. Gomez came to India as a member of the 1948 West Indies side led by John Goddard. Though Weekes and Walcott cornered much of the attention then, players like Gomez, Christiani, Stollmeyer, Rae and Goddard himself won fans all over India. The allrounder from Trinidad was brilliant in all the departments of the game. He was a medium pacer who could effectively bowl slow medium and spin too. He was immaculate in his line and length and seldom allowed batsmen to take liberties with his bowling.

Gomez was especially known for the number of maiden overs he bowled in each innings. Among his best bowling feats was 9 for 24 against the South Zone at Madras. Three years later he claimed 7 for 55 against Australia in a Test match at Sydney, bowling unchanged in that long spell. About his bowling prowess the late N S Ramaswami wrote thus: "Gomez, it was he who carried the team on his shoulders. He swung the ball more cleverly than any other bowler seen in India so far. Extremely resourceful, he adapted his style to the conditions. If his medium pace did not serve, he bowled off-spinners. He had many successes in the Tests...".

Gomez was a fine batsman too. The West Indies were in a bad position in the first Test at Delhi losing the first three wickets - all to Rangachari - quite early. Then Gomez helped Walcott build a partnership of 267 with both the batsmen making centuries. Though Gomez did not get another hundred against India, later he helped Weekes in putting on 107 for the 4th wicket in the second Test match at Bombay. Gomez played a major part in the only victory

the West Indies scored in that series in the fourth Test at Madras. He, Jones and Trim ran through the Indian batting.

The handsome Gerry Gomez, a superb fielder, was among the most feared men in the field. Born in 1919 the Trinidad all rounder has many records and feats to his credit in domestic and international cricket.

15-3-89

* * *

The highest for West Indies ..

Highest score in Test cricket for West Indies was 790 for 3 declared v Pakistan at Kingston in 1957-58. Hunte run out 260, Sobers not out 365, Walcott not out 88, Fazal Mahmood took the two wickets.

CLYDE WALCOTT

"Few men have ever been able to hit a ball with such power and such accuracy off the backfoot as Clyde Walcott" Frank Worrell.

'The hardest hitter of the ball off the backfoot I have ever seen'. Fred Trueman.

Clyde Walcott made 15 hundreds in Test cricket and 40 in all, made five centuries against Australia in 1954 - 55, twice scoring a hundred in each innings of the match.

CONRAD HUNTE ..

Conrad Hunte scored 142 in his first Test appearance against Pakistan at Bridgetown in 1957-58. He was West Indies vice-captain in 1963 and topped their Test averages with 58.57 that season. Known for his concentration and superb fielding Hunte was a popular member of the team.

Sir Garfield Sobers

the greatest allrounder

As expected Garfield Sobers has been knighted. He is the third West Indian cricketer to have been so honoured, the other two being Learie Constantine and Frank Worrell. It is an honour to the game of cricket. For over two decades Sobers has been a living legend.

Born in 1936, Sobers made his Test cricket debut against England in 1953-54 at the age of eighteen. Since then he has performed incredible feats with the bat and the ball. Hailed as the game's finest all rounder, Sobers led the West Indies to victory against almost all the countries. Several times he headed the batting and bowling averages. In English league in 1968 he hit Nash of Glamorgan for six sixes in an over.

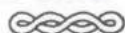
Genius, it is said, never wilts under pressure. The way the great genius, Gary Sobers, has come out of an eclipse and redemonstrated his gorgeous prowess in batting, bowling and fielding is not a mere gain to West Indies cricket. It is one of those very few occasions when a game becomes an art that enchants the eye and ennobles the spirit. Everything that Sobers does has the mark of unrivalled genius. Was it not interesting to hear on the BBC radio commentary Norman Yardley saying that Sobers "ducked beautifully against a bouncer from Willis"? Yardley explained that Sobers had all the time in the world to do so.

The genius of Garfield Sobers has earned for him fabulous praise and millions of admirers all over the world. This reminds one of the memorable piece the celebrated J.B. Priestley wrote on "The Lesson of Garfield Sobers" in the *New Statesman* a few years ago. After watching Sobers on TV for hours wrote Priestley: "Always I have stared at him out of a mixture of apprehension and admiration. He frightened me and enchanted me by turns. Batting, bowling, fielding, captaining his side, he seemed to be pronouncing often with a grin, the doom of England eleven. More than once--in the bitter hours facing defeat-- I wished he would sprain a wrist or turn an ankle. But even so, admiration came

seeping through these mud walls of partisanship. And it was not only his feats with bat and ball that compelled my applause; it was his style and manner, the way he carried himself, the way he moved." Priestley described the game of Sobers as 'largest result from smallest effort.' Indeed here is an essay that should be prescribed in textbooks for our youth.

Barry Richards wrote that Sobers is "the only 360 degrees player in the game. His pick up starts off at the same point as the follow through ends. The bat swings right through every degree on the compass. Most players are 180 degrees men." Conrad Hunte once told this writer that the genius of Sobers lay in his inventiveness. He could make an extraordinary stroke, bowl a rare delivery and take an astonishing catch. The game of cricket may not for a long time to come produce such a wizard as Sobers, now Sir Garfield Sobers.

8-1-1975



Worrell's legacy

"Frank Worrell was the acme of grace and possessed immaculate strokes which were at no time an effort to this natural cricketer off the field he earned so much respect that a hotel porter turned to me one day, 'Mr Worrell is one of nature's gentlemen.' W.H. Ferguson - *Mr Cricket* 1957

Courtney Walsh and Brian Lara epitomise that gentlemanliness. The former with the highest number of wickets and the latter with the highest individual score in Test and first class cricket are always endearingly modest despite their world records.

Clive Lloyd - *twenty years at the top*

The privilege of stepping into the shoes of a great player and captain and staying there at the top for almost 20 years should indeed be a rare one. The legacy that Clive Lloyd inherited was rich and he in turn left behind an equally sound legacy for his successors. If the West Indies are today regarded as the best side in the world, despite their defeats in two successive world cups and in the recent one day matches to England, it is because of their exploits during the last fifteen years.

No man has done so much by his leadership and personal contribution as Clive Lloyd has to put the West Indies at the top. Lloyd not only led the mercurial West Indies to triumph in the first two world cups but has made 14 of his 19 Test hundreds as the captain of the West Indies team. To have led the West Indies in as many as 74 Test matches is an extraordinary feat. Under his leadership the West Indies won 11 Test matches in succession, blackwashing England 5-0 in the 1984 Test series.

It was at Bombay in 1966 December that Clive Hubert Lloyd made his debut in Test cricket under the guidance of that legend Gary Sobers whose mantle he later wore with distinction. Lloyd made 82 and 78 not out in that first Test of his. Nine years later he massacred the Indian attack at the same venue, Bombay, to make 242 not out in the last Test match. Later in 1983 Lloyd came again to India leading the West Indies side.

In Calcutta on that tour the West Indies were 41 for 4 as the supercat stepped in to bat and were shortly afterwards reduced to 63 for 6. Lloyd then took charge of the situation and hit up 161 not out in that match leading his team eventually in that series to a 3-0 win over India. That was Lloyd's last tour of India as a player and captain though he has come again in the recent past to report on the West Indies tour of India. He averaged 56.75 from 3 Tests in 1966-67 tour of India, 79.50 from 5 Tests on the 1974-75 tour and 82.66 from 6 Tests on his last tour of India.

Lloyd made runs all over the world scoring in all 7,515 runs from the 110 Test matches he played. He made over 30,000 runs

in Lancashire league and was a great hit in the English county cricket. He held 90 catches in Test matches, most of them in the slips and scores of catches in other matches.

Among his memorable centuries in Test cricket are the centuries he made against India at Calcutta, Bombay, Bangalore and New Delhi, 118 and 113 not out against England in the Port of Spain and Bridgetown Tests, 178 against Australia at Georgetown besides the two centuries he made at Perth and Melbourne, 151 against Pakistan and the double century against India at Bombay.

Clive Lloyd is among the shrewd and successful captains of post war cricket. He has included Sunil Gavaskar in his all time world eleven in his recent book.

8-6-88

☆☆☆

The Caribbean Bradman

George Headley known as the 'Bradman of the Caribbeans' had a Test average of 60.83. Headley made 176 in his first Test match, a century in each innings in his third Test and 223 in his fourth. On his first tour of Australia he scored 193 at Brisbane and 105 at Sydney. At Lord's he created a Test record for the ground in 1939 by scoring two separate hundreds. His highest Test score was 270 not out against England at Kingston in 1934-35.

Alvin Kallicharan - a stylist

A left hander in action is generally pleasing to watch in the game of cricket. More so if he is a diminutive batsman of class like Neil Harvey or Alvin Kallicharan. It is the left handedness, said an authority on the game, that increases the charm of batting. Alvin Kallicharan is one of the small built batsmen of modern cricket. But the power of his stroke play is awesome. The wrists have immense strength and once he gets going there is no stopping him. The great Dennis Lillee was thrashed in an over with such ferocity by Kallicharan that Lillee had to convert his anger into admiration.

When Kallicharan made a century on his debut at Georgetown, Guyana, in April 1972 against New Zealand, he was hailed as "the left-handed Kanhai." In the next Test at Port of Spain he scored another century and that was a unique instance of a batsman scoring two successive hundreds in his first two Test innings. It was in 1974 that Kallicharan came to India as a junior member of Clive Lloyd's team. Four years later he led the West Indian side of several unknown players after Lloyd and the senior players stayed out, thanks to Kerry Packer. This writer had the pleasure of meeting Kallicharan at a party at Hyderabad in 1974 in the company of Gundappa Viswanath. It was a zonal match that the West Indies played at Hyderabad. Both Kalli and Vishy got hundreds. What a feast it was watching the left handed elegance of Kallicharan and the artistry of Viswanath. The ball was never whacked. It was sent to the rope with the delicate touch of the bat as though a painter was giving a few touches here and there with the brush. Since then Kallicharan was one of the most popular West Indian cricketers to visit India. Kallicharan was known as a "glorious cutter off the backfoot".

Kallicharan has over 32,000 runs in first class cricket. In Test matches he scored 12 centuries and totalled 4,399 runs at an average of 44.43. Probably Kallicharan was sacked prematurely. He played in only 66 Tests. Strangely enough he is still among the sought after cricketers in English league cricket. Those who watched Kallicharan make that brilliant century at Bangalore in 1974 against such bowlers as Prasanna, Chandrasekhar and Venkataraghavan still

describe it as one of the best knocks seen in India by a West Indian batsman. Later Kallicharan scored well in Pakistan too getting 115 in one Test and missing the hundred mark by six runs in another. His knocks against Lillee and Thompson, the famous fast bowling duo, during, 1975-76 confirmed his greatness as a batsman. That he had the technique to counter furious pace attack as well as crafty spin was admirably conceded by every scribe in the world.

Two things came in the way of Kalli's further rise on the firmament-a shoulder injury and a tour of South Africa. His career took a sudden turn and Kalli began to slide down into oblivion as far as Test cricket was concerned. But England wanted him still and that is why Kalli plays cricket though at a lower level. He played for Warwickshire in English league. Certainly a great and a charming player of modern cricket.

23-6-88

* * *

Frank Worrell on 'The Three Ws'

"Our West Indian team of 1950 was a heaven-sent gift to the newspaper writers. Worrell, Weekes and Walcott were selected as three of the chief batsmen. So no wonder that before we put a foot on the shores of England the cricket writers were referring to 'The Three Ws'. Always we 'Three Musketeers' as we have often been called, have approached every problem with both eyes on the benefit of the whole team, and no one has ever tried to steal all the glory. The three of us have each had our fair ration of success, and that success has been due in no small measure to the help we have given one another. We have always remained friends, there have been no petty jealousies, no cross words between us."

(from Worrell's *Cricket Punch*)

Three in One ..

Conrad Hunte when asked to name the best three players in his team replied: "Sobers, Sobers, Sobers - the batsman, the medium pacer, the spinner."

(at a meeting at Visakhapatnam in 1964)

Geoff Boycott - a master batsman

BBC's Sports Round-Up broadcast over the radio thrice every day is the main source of information on sports for millions of listeners all over the world. It was amazing to hear, one day, that Geoff Boycott, after scoring a century in Yorkshire's paltry score of 130 and odd runs, went straight to the nets for practice after the day's play ended. No wonder Boycott's powers of concentration and hard work made him one of the finest opening batsmen of the century. In 1971 he topped the English league batting figures with more than 100 average.

Boycott was 23 when he got his Yorkshire cap in 1963. He made his Test debut in June 1964 against Australia. Seventeen years later in July 1981 at Lord's against Australia he played his 100th Test match. He was the oldest player to join the 100-Test club at the age of 40 years 8 months. In Test cricket Boycott's highest was 246 against India at Leeds in 1967.

"What mixed emotions the man (Boycott) has aroused in his long, distinguished and controversial career" wrote an expert. As Christopher Martin-Jenkins has astutely observed Boycott is "a profoundly sensitive man for whom outstanding success and world-wide fame have created intense personal problems. He was dropped from the Test side after scoring 246 not out against India (for slow scoring!) His utter dedication to the perfection of his own batting technique, the eradication of all error, has not always won him the approval of his fellow professionals who have interpreted his approach as being selfish and contrary to the demands of the team as a whole."

According to David Lemmon "his 146 against Surrey in the Gillette Cup final at Lord's on September 4, 1965... many felt that it was the greatest innings ever played in a limited-over match. Some of us believe that it was the finest of Boycott's illustrious career." Geoffrey Boycott is immensely popular in the sub-continent for the manner in which he airs his views on the telly as an expert commentator. He speaks with the authority of his rich experience in typically Yorkshire accent, never hesitating to call a spade a spade. "He is my good friend, a jolly good fellow... but not a good opening batsman." is an example of Boycott's frankness. If any evidence is needed to show that cricket is highly volatile, Boycott's career provides the answer.

Arjuna Ranatunga *earns lasting place for his country*

- J.B. Priestley, the celebrated writer, wrote twenty five years ago an article titled "The Lesson of Garfield Sobers" - in The New Statesman. It was mostly on Sobers the genius, not just on the great cricketer. "It was not only his feats with bat and ball" wrote Priestley "that compelled my applause: it was his style and manner, the way he carried himself, the way he moved." Priestley described the game of Sobers as "largest result from the smallest effort." That applies to the Sri Lankan skipper Arjuna Ranatunga who has been leading the tiny island to fabulous wins in cricket.

Ranatunga has given to the 'noblest game' as much, if not more, as he received from it. His success and the manner of achieving it have put the game back on the rails, reminding every cricket lover that cricket is more than a bat versus ball game. One day cricket, despite its stunning success and growing popularity, has generated tension all over, for the competing and shouting players, the focussed umpires, the delirious and often partisan crowds and the millions of television viewers. To many one day cricket might mean aggressive competition, glittering prizes and instant success or numbing disaster. In this turbulent sea of noise and emotions Arjuna Ranatunga is an island of tranquility, upholding the pristine glory of the game of cricket. No cricketer in living memory has carried so much of weight with such ease and so much of success with such humility. Sunil Gavaskar, another living legend, aptly wrote that if Rantunga makes 57 it consists of 50 walks and 7 runs!

He has earned for his country a lasting place in the history of the game. For enriching the culture of the game Ranatunga will be gratefully remembered for long all over the world. That he belongs to this part of the world, South Asia, is indeed a matter of particular satisfaction. 'Oriental wizardry' and grace cannot be dimmed by the passage of time or onslaught of media hype and lure of wealth.

- (The author's letter published in The Hindu)



Neville Cardus

the pen is mightier than the bat

Cricket, like music, has suffered a grievous blow in the death of Sir Neville Cardus. The celebrated writer on music and cricket who died last Friday was held in the highest esteem since he began his journalistic career in 1916. It was a 'glorious' innings spread over fifty five years. Sir Neville was a link between the romantic past and the present, between the golden age of Grace and Ranji and the modern era of Bradman and Sobers.

Born on April 2, 1899 Cardus never had formal education. As a boy he did "all sorts of menial jobs" to earn his daily bread. A review of a music recital by Ernest Newman in the Birmingham Post which Cardus happened to read in a free library in Manchester kindled his interest in music. His appetite for reading books, particularly on music, increased by leaps and bounds. He joined the Manchester Guardian in his twenty eighth year. Then began his career as a music critic. He once said that he never wrote a musical review "except for the purpose of self-enjoyment and self-enlightenment". In 1919 he began his cricket writing. Cardus was for sometime a cricket coach.

Neville Cardus was a great friend of India. He had high admiration for Ranjitsinhji whom he called "a Midsummer Night's Dream of cricket." His writings were literary masterpieces, marked by a style of his own and a philosophical touch. Commenting on modern cricket he wrote in his work 'The Noblest Game' thus: "But never again shall we watch cricket set against a background of green trees, haystacks, barns and a landscape of peace and plenty, remote from a world too busy getting and spending." One may add never again shall we read such literary gems in cricket writing. (March 5, 1975).

* * *

Cricket then and now

"A polite 'No' is the answer to the eternal question -- Is modern cricket as good as the game played in the Hobbs and Bradman era?" (Cardus)

When Arlott is at the mike

When Arlott is at the microphone, there is never a dull moment for the listener - no matter what the tempo of the game. Gifted with an extraordinary power of expression and a pleasantly gruff voice, John Leslie Thomas Arlott is among the geniuses the British Broadcasting Corporation has discovered.

Listeners of all ages of all countries where cricket is popular seldom miss his commentary. He has been the doyen among cricket commentators for over three decades. Arlott, born in Basingstoke on February 25, 1914, worked in a hospital and even did a stint as a police detective before he joined the BBC. He became producer in the BBC in 1945 and later worked as General Instructor in the BBC Staff Training College.

Much interested in two different fields 'poetry and politics' he made a name in the former. "Of period and place" and "Clausentum" brought him fame in mid-forties. But, contesting as a Liberal in 1955 and 1959, he failed to get elected to the House of Commons. Arlott wrote a number of books and has been The Guardian's cricket correspondent and general writer. In 1970, he was awarded the OBE. An admirer of Gladstone, he likes playing golf and drinking wine.

Which was Arlott's best performance in his long 'innings' so far? Was it when he, raising his voice amidst thunderous applause, described the moving scene as the immortal Bradman bade farewell to cricket in 1948? Or when a bowler like Lindwall or Hall, blending human energy, fury and rhythm, shattered the English batting? Or when the graceful Worrell danced down the pitch to hit the ball to all corners of the green field? Or when India, casting tradition aside, marched to victory over England in 1971? It is very difficult to say.

This architect of English prose handles phrases as easily as the great batsmen handled the bowling, with the indomitable mastery of Bradman, the graceful elegance of Worrell or the sparkling ease of Kanhai. His is not just cricket commentary. It is prose tinged with poetry.

- 24-11-1974

N.S. Ramaswami

upholder of a noble tradition

The allure of the game of cricket is without doubt everlasting. What happens on the ground is of absorbing interest because of the unpredictable nature of the game and the performance of the players on view. No less important is the literature that has grown with the game. Writers and poets have added to its charm. A.G. Gardiner, Edmund Blunden, Neville Cardus, Jack Fingleton, Robertson-Glasgow and CLR James are among the many famous names that come to one's mind when a reference is made to the vast literature on cricket. A.G. Gardiner on Ranji, Cardus and Arlott on the Noblest Game and its star performers, Fingleton on Bradman, Robertson-Glasgow and CLR James on the game and cricketers of their times are among the literary masterpieces that writers and cricket lovers recall with indescribable joy.

Among those who enriched the game of cricket in India with their writings, N.S. Ramaswami occupies a high place. His love of cricket was so intense that he denied himself top and lucrative positions elsewhere in the field of journalism. An authority on South Indian history, temples and monuments in particular, Ramaswami's articles and books in this area were marked by scholarly thoroughness and lucid interpretation. For many years he was an assistant editor of the Indian Express and seldom sought positions or financial gains. His simplicity was disarming. As special correspondent on cricket he travelled widely and went abroad to write on cricket matches. But he was different from most others in many things including dress, eating habits and style of writing. He adored Neville Cardus and wrote under the pen-name 'Cardusian.' He had a rich collection of books including some rare works by English and Australian writers and players.

Ramaswami was a literary bridge between two generations of players and two important eras. He watched the giants of yesteryears and the stars of the sixties and seventies and categorised them into 'classicists' and 'romantics.' Romanticism, he defined, as "that part of aesthetics which is based on a denial of mere accuracy or decorum. It despises accuracy as starving the soul." His

style of writing was straight and simple, devoid of adjectival excesses and cliches. Among the modern day cricketers Gundappa Viswanath was his favourite. In Viswanath's style of batting he found a blend of Merchant's classical grace and Hazare's stolidity. Viswanath's famous knocks at Madras against the West Indies and England drew high praise from Ramaswami and in print and conversation Ramaswami made no secret of his special fondness for Viswanath's artistry. Eminent writers and journalists of those times chose to be discreetly away from the heroes and celebrities of the game. I once asked Ramaswami whether he personally met and congratulated Viswanath at Chennai or on tour. "I have not met him so far," he replied quietly.

N.S. Ramaswami was an unusual journalist. A voracious reader of books and journals, he carried his learning and experience lightly on his shoulders. Neville Cardus was an authority on cricket and music. Ramaswami was an authority on cricket and history. He was a perfectionist who took meticulous care in writing on archaeological details and historical dates as well as on cricket scores and batting and bowling averages without the help of calculators and computers. Not many are there who wrote for so many years with such ease and felicity of style as N.S. Ramaswami in the history of Indian cricket.



Ramaswami on the origins of Indian cricket :

"The game remained a mystery to the Indians. They must have seen the Englishmen enjoy themselves on the cricket ground somewhat as a villager who has strayed into a city today regards the match in progress. The first steps towards initiation appear to have been taken when some English professors in some of the colleges introduced the game to the students. Presidency College in Calcutta organised a club in 1878. The game developed in many parts of the country more slowly. The historian is baffled by the paucity of records. In 1881-82 a match was played between Bangalore and Madras and another in 1888-89. In 1886-87 Bombay Presidency North played South. In 1846 Madras Cricket Club was formed. In 1847 the game was being played in Karachi and about 1850 it was being 'regularly played' in Lahore. Records are somewhat fuller for the development in Bombay. There the game made an early appeal to the Parsis, and for some time to come the history of Indian cricket is mainly the history of Parsi cricket in the western province. In 1850 was founded the young Zoroastrian Club with financial assistance from the house of Tata's and Wadia's..." (Indian Willow)

K.V. Gopala Ratnam

a cricketologist of renown

For over twenty five years, from the early fifties till 1977 when he prematurely died at the age of 52, K.V. Gopala Ratnam was a popular and sought after cricket writer in the Capital of India. His knowledge of the game was vast and association with famous players very close. It was an open secret that Gopala Ratnam was 'the ghost writer' for some of the celebrities of Indian cricket. Radio and television, then in its infancy, sought his expert views and comments whenever an important event took place in Delhi. He wrote regularly for newspapers and sports magazines on cricket and cricketers. Cricket was a passion with him and he spent long hours reading books on cricket and talking to veteran players. Among those who liked and respected Gopala Ratnam's talents were C.K.Nayudu, Mushtaq Ali, Lala Amarnath, Vijay Merchant and the Maharajkumar of Vizianagaram. 'Vizzy' as a radio commentator preferred to have Gopala Ratnam by his side in the box for instant help in recalling anecdotes and coining phrases.

Gopala Ratnam's illustrious father, K. Iswara Dutt, a leading journalist and editor, provided a good launch-pad for young Gopala Ratnam to rise as a journalist. Iswara Dutt possessed an excellent personal library which was the envy of journalists and scholars. Gopala Ratnam chose to be a writer on cricket and even if his decision did not please his father or could not take him far in the profession, it did enrich cricket literature in India and helped the cause of many cricketers languishing for want of recognition. Two things in particular stand out when his services to the game are recalled. First he helped in raising money for many stalwart cricketers of the past by organising benefit matches and bringing out souvenirs. He was the Secretary of the C.K.Nayudu Shastipoorthi Fund. Secondly he encouraged many young and promising cricketers by drawing the attention of selectors and authorities to the talent and potential of these players. Facts and figures of matches and players were on his fingertips. The cricket correspondent of the Guardian called him 'a walking encyclopaedia of cricket.' For many years he was the sports correspondent of the

Hindustan Times and later he became the chief of Sainik Samachar. He brought together prominent Andhras living in Delhi and launched the Andhra Sports Club. T.D. Rangaramanujam, the well known sports promoter and chief of Table Tennis Federation of India, lent active support to Gopala Ratnam in his efforts to promote table tennis along with cricket.

Gopala Ratnam took cricket writing beyond the boundary of the game. He loved to organise cricket matches for a cause and for the benefit of those in distress. He wrote a series of articles in the Sport & Pastime on famous leaders as cricket players and these include Pandit Nehru as a Cricketer, Rajaji as a Cricketer and Radhakrishnan as a Cricketer. He held some important positions like membership of sports bodies and was a Vice President of the Andhra Cricket Association. As early as 1958 he floated the idea of a world cup in cricket and corresponded with some leading lights of England. Not only famous cricketers of those times but also tennis players and the hockey wizard Dhyan Chand were among his friends and admirers. Till his last breath Gopalaratnam strove to serve the game of cricket and the cause of cricketers and it was an innings cut short when he just crossed the half century mark.



“Vizzy has not ‘laid aside’ anything substantial in the score books But then his was not a philosophy of accumulation but of freely scattering ‘his talents’ for the greater good of all.”

- K.V. Gopala Ratnam

“He brought life to cricket in India and played cricket in his own life.”

- K. Iswara Dutt

K.V. Gopala Ratnam on Mankad “The secret of Mankad is his sincerity and his anxiety to know and rectify his mistakes. He did not even hesitate to ask his adversary about it.”

P.S. Rangaswamy - a rare editor

Whoever said that it was easier to write than to edit made a profound utterance. Amazing indeed that in India a number of eminent persons accepted the challenge of editing newspapers and journals under highly adverse conditions. What was unique about that class of journalists was that they blended the standards of English journalism and the values of the freedom struggle and that meant enormous personal sacrifice. The giants of the Fleet Street like Massingham and Garvin were their heroes in journalism and the values upheld by Gokhale, Tilak and Gandhi moulded their lives. The synthesis of these two streams became an enduring and significant influence on India's public life. Editors and journalists were as much in the forefront of the nationalist movement as the acknowledged national leaders. From the South to distant places in the north went editors like Chintamani, Rama Rao, Iswara Dutt and Chalapati Rao. It was P.S. Rangaswamy's good fortune that he came under the influence of stalwarts like Khasa Subba Rau, K.Rama Rao and M. Chalapati Rau.

At a very young age Rangaswamy went to the north and worked under senior editors in papers like the National Herald for many years before joining the Indian Express. Thanks to Sri. C.P. Seshadri, the Vijayawada edition of the Indian Express began to make a mark in the Andhra districts. The turning point, however, came when P.S. Rangaswamy succeeded Seshadri as the News Editor of the English daily. Rangaswamy, cast in the mould of Khasa as far as values were concerned, possessed a deep knowledge of Telugu literature and culture. He transformed the Express into a powerful vehicle of opinion attracting the attention of Andhra intelligentsia in all the three regions of the State. It was the only English daily issuing from Vijayawada with a wide circulation from Srikakulam (even Berhampur in Orissa) to Hyderabad, the State capital. Scholars like Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar wrote articles for it while on Rangaswamy's persuasion Prema Nandakumar, E.N.Purushotaman, R.M.Challa and S.R.Rao ran weekly columns, which became very popular.

In 1964 Rangaswamy asked me to do a sports feature for

the Indian Express and I titled it "Sports Parade" which became a weekly feature for twenty years. He encouraged me in writing a series of articles on "Footballers of Andhra" and "Tennis Players of Andhra". "Be simple and straight in your writings" was his advice, as he believed in "economy of words".

For seventeen years Rangaswamy was the Editor of the Vijayawada edition which contributed significantly to the enrichment of the intellectual and cultural life of this part of the country. He laid down office in 1978 and did not accept any offer though many were keen to enlist his services in the field of journalism. His Spartan simplicity and adherence to Gandhian ideals endeared him to many sections of the people. He gave all his time and energies for the paper and the field of journalism. For an hour in the morning he used to play tennis at the Vijayawada Gymkhana courts. His knowledge of tennis and cricket was profound.

When G.R.Viswanath scored the record breaking double century at Vijayawada Rangaswamy was there at the ground. He was one of the very few who knew that Ramanathan Krishnan's forehand was more lethal than his highly admired backhand. When I asked Ramanathan Krishnan once to clarify, the great maestro replied "Yes, I used to impart a lot of underspin into my forehand shots". Whenever I was giving radio commentary on Davis Cup matches he would listen to it and write to me later in his inimitable style. His letters were always crisp devoid of adjectival excesses. From 1933 to 1993 Rangaswamy watched cricket and tennis matches, all with the same interest whether it was a Test match or a local league tie.

P.S. Rangaswamy was one of our ablest editors and respected journalists. He had an incisive mind and a facile pen. Pity indeed he did not choose to write. He always believed that an editor should avoid publicity for himself. Firm and uncompromising in his convictions and commitment to values, Rangaswamy was both respected and loved by all those who had the privilege of knowing him. He will be remembered for long with gratitude and admiration, as one who embodied the lofty ideals of journalism and the values of the Gandhian era.

Madras's maiden triumph in Ranji trophy

When R.B (Balu) Alagannan lifted the Ranji trophy at Indore on April 6, 1955, it was a moment of great joy and pride for the Madras team as it was their first triumph in the national championship. They beat Holkar, led by Mushtaq Ali, in a keenly contested match and Madras emerged winners by just 46 runs. Gopinath who had made a century earlier in the semi-final against Bengal, a day after his return from the Pakistan tour, scored another fine century in the final. The ever-reliable Kripal Singh made 75 in the first innings and 91 in the second, besides taking 7 Holkar wickets for 223 runs in the final. M.K. Murugesh took 8 wickets for 211 runs. For Holkar veteran Mushtaq Ali their skipper, got a half century in each innings and another veteran Sarwate claimed six wickets.

Madras possessed a good all round side. D.L. Chakravarthi, Balakrishnan, Suryanarayan and Alagannan were among the run getters while Murugesh, Alva, Ramakrishna and Sarangapani took wickets at crucial times, A.G. Kripal Singh was the season's outstanding all rounder and his aggregate of 636 runs from 6 innings at an average of 106.0 was the best for the entire season. Kripal Singh also took 13 wickets that season. Murugesh was the best bowler that season with a haul of 23 wickets for 449 runs with an average of 19.52. In C.D. Gopinath Madras had one of the best batsmen of those times. Gopinath was a brilliant stroke-player, excelling in the cover drive and square cut. Pity indeed that he played in only 8 test matches and in the 12 innings he played he made 50 not out against England and 49 against Pakistan. In unofficial tests, he made 66 not out against the Commonwealth XI of 1950-51 and 67 not out against the SJOC team in 1953-54. In Ranji trophy he scored 2349 runs from 52 innings with an average of 51.07 including four centuries and a double century. Among his other memorable knocks were 130 not out against combined schools in Pakistan and 175 against New Zealand for south zone. Gopinath served Indian cricket as a selector and as the Chairman of the National Selection Committee too he earned a good name.

M.K. Murugesh and V. Sridharan, two former Madras players, came to Visakhapatnam when the two companies they were working for transferred them to this place. Murugesh became a cricket commentator and here also he created a record when he and his talented daughter, Meenakshi, gave running commentaries together on a few Ranji matches played in Andhra. Sridharan, a fine batsman, later took to tennis and became a champion in both singles and doubles in a number of local and national tournaments for veterans. Their recollections and reminiscences continue to enrich 'the game of memories.'



A way of life....

"Bliss must it have been in those early, formative summers to be alive while, imperceptibly, a game of bat and ball evolved into a national appurtenance, a part of England's way of life, inseparable from summer - rain or shine." Arlott and Cardus in *The Noblest Game*.

no END....

John Arlott ends his book "Indian Summer" thus (Published 1946): "The one genuine conclusion is the conclusion of this book. Not with those tragic words THE END which have concluded so many better books but with an Appendix..... I pass the remainder of this book to those statistically-minded readers who suffer from Appendicitis".

Mushtaq Ali off the field ..

Lindsay Hassett called Mushtaq Ali 'an ugly batsman'. Later in Madras Lindsay struggled to a century as if batting were the hardest thing on earth.... Mushtaq quipped 'Hassett, full of grace as usual!'

- R.S. Whittington (Simpson's Safari) who described Mushtaq as 'that cat on hot bricks of a batsman'

Some famous spin bowlers of Madras....

S.K.Gurunathan, one of the ablest writers on cricket in India, recalled the class of three famous spin bowlers of yesteryears thus.

“Of Ram Singh’s exploits with the ball as well as the bat, a whole book can be written. In the Presidency matches, he was an ogre to the eyes of the Europeans, for he not only scored consistently against them, but found himself freely among their wickets. He was the architect of each one of Madras’s victories in the Ranji Trophy championship and in the period 1934-46, he claimed 164 wickets. He played for India twice in unofficial test matches -- against Ryder’s team at Madras in 1936 and next against Lord Tennyson’s XI at Lahore in 1938.... Hasset the great Australian remarked, “We could do with a bowler like Ram Singh who is in the same class as Mankad...”

“The first authentic googly bowler that Madras ever produced or even saw, was G.Parthasarathi, till recently India’s Ambassador in China. I would rank him among the best that India has produced though his first class career was very limited. G.P.bowled faster through the air to be called slow and while his leg breaks would kick from the pitch, his googlies would shoot through at some speed. In the Ranji Trophy match against U.P. in 1941 he took two wickets in one over and won the match for Madras when U.P. needed only 27 runs. Joe Hardstaff considered the bowling of G.P., one of the finest in his experience ...”

“V.V.Kumar’s success in the fifth and last Test between India and Pakistan at New Delhi last season, when he took five wickets for 64 runs in the first innings and two for 68 in the second, did not surprise those who have been following his career closely during the last five seasons for, year after year, he has been taking over 25 wickets in the Ranji Trophy Championship. In that he had the Pakistani batsmen, from Hanif to Intikab, guessing all the time and nearly carried India to victory.”(Sport & pastime, August 19,1961) Kumar took 417 wickets in Ranji Trophy.

Maharajkumar of Vizianagaram

a patron of the game

It was in the fitness of things that a cricket stadium has been built in Vizianagaram in memory of the Maharajkumar of Vizianagaram popularly known as Vizzy. Many foreign teams that played in Benares, at Vizzy's instance, thought that Vizianagaram was a part of Benares! From Douglas Jardine to Ted Dexter all Captains of England and most players of that country knew about the great contribution made by Vizzy for the promotion of the game of cricket but very few knew about Vizianagaram, the home of the famous princely family. A cricket stadium in the once famous town of Vizianagaram, conceived and executed with care by Anand and Ashok, worthy sons of their illustrious father the late Shri P.V.G.Raju, is an appropriate expression of gratitude to the Maharajkumar of Vizianagaram who breathed cricket till the last.

Such was Vizzy's passion for cricket that he brought many players from England and made them play in Benares and elsewhere in India and even inflicted defeat on a visiting English side comprising some famous players. He encouraged several Indians and helped them financially and many remained grateful to him for his munificence and unfailing support. Vizzy led India in Test cricket and later became a cricket administrator. The Willingdon pavilion built at a cost of Rs. 50,000/- (those days) at the Ferozeshahkotla in Delhi was his gift. He was elected President of the Board of Control for Cricket in India and also as the President of the U.P. and Andhra Cricket Associations. He was India's representative at the Imperial Cricket Conference (Imperial became International later) and was largely responsible for India, Pakistan, West Indies and New Zealand getting parity in voting right with South Africa, England and Australia. He was made member of the MCC and also knighted by King Edward VIII (he returned the honour in 1947). The President of India honoured him with Padma Bhushan in 1958. He became a member of Parliament and as Dr. S. Radhakrishnan said: "He was so full of cricket that even his speeches in Parliament were reminiscent of cricket. A good man, he did his best for his country in his own field."

He loved doing cricket commentary for All India Radio and depended on K.V. Gopala Ratnam for statistical information and anecdotes. He had a penchant for coining phrases and petnames and one such Vizzy special was 'Lion of Victory' for Jaisimha! A prince who dined with Kings, Queens and Princes was always warm towards the common folks and ordinary men when they called on him at the cricket ground or at his palatial residence.



Vizzy on cricket :

The craving to play the game is almost insurmountable and the essential quality of cricketer is to seize whatever change is afforded. He never quarrels with his tools and makes the best of the bargain. I am reminded of Victor Trumper who once accidentally brought his son's bat (small size) for a match. When somebody remarked that he had not the standard bat Trumper said, "What does it matter, as long as one knows how to play the game"? With that small bat he went to the wicket and scored over 300 runs. We have another instance, when W.G. Grace played against F.Townsend's XI at Cheltenham in August, 1874. Grace, whose pride and arrogance was only on a par with the latter day intellectual superiority of George Bernard Shaw, preferred to use a broom stick cut down to suit him. With that he became a menace to rival bowlers and scored 35 runs, the second highest in the match!

In Lok Sabha :

"In spite of being caught on the sticky wicket of foreign policy, Prime Minister Nehru the batsman, successfully dealt with the leg spinners of the communists, and the off spinners of the socialists to score an unbeaten century"

"Peace is to Nehru what truth was to Gandhiji, and non-alignment is to Nehru what non-violence was to Gandhiji"

- Extracts from Vizzy's speeches in Lok Sabha.

born with a cricket bat in hand ..

".....Vizzy was born not only with a golden spoon in his mouth but also with a cricket bat in one hand and a rifle in the other.....He convinced the other members at the Imperial Cricket Conference in London that India Cricket has passed the stage of boyhood and entered the adolescent stage and that it deserved to play against the top ranking cricket playing countries of the world... .."

C. RAMASWAMI

(who had the distinction of playing for India in cricket, tennis and hockey)

Kommireddis - the pride of Andhra cricket

The Kommireddis of Kakinada are the romantics of Andhra cricket-daring, innovative and most exciting to watch "Romanticism is that part of aesthetics which is based on a denial of mere accuracy or decorum. It despises accuracy as starving the soul," wrote N.S. Ramaswami, the famous cricketologist in his book, "Indian Willow." The Kommireddis, in action, breathed life into the game. There was something spectacular about their game and also much that was aesthetically delightful. They played the game with gay abandon and carved a niche for themselves in the hearts of cricket fans in Andhra and South India.

From a family of sportsminded elders descended suddenly on the cricket scene a bunch of boys, nearly three decades ago, causing eyebrows to be raised with their exploits in bowling and batting. They came to Visakhapatnam to play in the popular Ebden Memorial Cricket Tournament on the uneven surface of the Andhra Medical College grounds. Gopanna, the elder statesman of the lot, hit the ball out of the ground countless number of times sending the crowd into raptures. Bhavanna, handsome and strikingly original, hit sixes with equal ease and broke the stumps several times with his pace and swing. K.V.R. Murthy, then known as 'baby' was a shy boy except at the wicket where he looked invincible. Nayana, the opening batsman, showed scant respect for any new ball bowler and once hit the much feared Mysore fast bowlers to all corners of the ground. Thambu, Thammu, KPR Murthy and the second generation comprising KBR Murty and Kamaraju (Gopanna's sons) performed well at the University and State levels.

Kommireddi Gopalakrishna (Gopanna) played for Andhra in Ranji Trophy in 1953-54 under CK Nayudu. He played for Andhra for eight years and scored 400 runs in 33 innings, with the highest being 64 against Madras in Ranji Trophy. Gopanna twice captained the State team. Gopanna has been actively associated with the East Godavari district association for the last 10 years. He is also a selector of the State cricket teams. Gopanna plays tennis and billiards now, in his home town, Kakinada.

KVR Murthy who has played for three States in the national championship almost made the national grade. He was called for the Test trials in the sixties. Murthy has 1179 runs to his credit in Ranji Trophy having scored a century against every side in the south zone. No other Andhra batsman achieved this feat. He was the captain of the Andhra team on two occasions. Highly attractive in his strokeplay, Murthy possessed a fine technique. He was also a useful right arm leg spinner.

K.V.Ramabrahmam, better known as Nayana, was a right hand batsman who attacked the bowling from the very first ball. He was also a good wicket keeper and was chosen for the South Zone team as a wicketkeeper batsman. Nayana scored 1060 runs in Ranji Trophy with one century against Mysore. Nayana captained the University team thrice and also played hockey for the varsity side. K.Bhaskara Rama Murthy (Thambu) played for the Andhra team in 1956-57. He was among runs when he played for the University team during 1953-57.

K.Bhavanna who died prematurely in 1977, was a top class cricketer who should have played at higher levels but for his lack of ambition. A splendid off-spinner who was once bracketed with Prasanna and Venkataraghavan, Bhavanna was a popular cricketer in Madras league. He took 64 wickets and scored over 400 runs in Ranji Trophy in the 18 matches he played.

K.Prabhakara Ramamurthy (KPR Murthy) scored 746 runs in Ranji Trophy with the highest being 91 against Kerala during 1966-67. KPR Murthy played for South Zone schools in 1963.

On the young shoulders of KBR Murthy, Kamaraju and other juniors rests the burden of upholding the Kommireddi spirit in Andhra cricket and the boys are doing quite well indeed.

October 26, 1985

* * *

K.B.R. Murthy and the Andhra boys created history in Andhra cricket by topping the South Zone league and by entering the knock out stage for the first time in 1986. Fifteen years later, in 2001-2002, India's wicket keeper and Andhra captain M.S.K.Prasad and the Andhra lads, under the able guidance of coach Abid Ali, repeated the feat. They won the Sounderrajan trophy for topping the table in South Zone and entered the knock out stage.

Bhavanna

scarlet pimpernel of Andhra cricket

In the death of K. Bhavanna who breathed his last prematurely on September 16, Andhra cricket has suffered a grievous blow. Kommireddi Bhavanna was one of the finest cricketers of Andhra whose undoubted brilliance was tragically marred by sluggishness in the early years and intemperateness later. He was a natural sportsman who excelled in everything he did. He achieved remarkable success as a cricketer and when he casually took part in State athletics he became the champion breaking many a record. Nature endowed him with extraordinary strength of body and handsomeness of frame and face. Yet Bhavanna was unwilling to apply his mind seriously to the games he chose to play. He was cruel to himself (and now his family in his untimely death) and in the process was unkind to Andhra cricket.

Brought up by sportsminded parents Bhavanna grew up with his cousins-Gopanna, Nayana and K.V. R. Murthy and others- who stormed into Andhra cricket and enriched it by their exploits. They were the Kommireddis of Kakinada. Wherever they performed, be it the noisy hill-top ground of the Andhra Medical College where they first made their mark or the ground near the coal-fields at Kothagudem, they always drew crowds and delighted them with their memorable performances. Yet the Kommireddis with perhaps the lone exception of K.V.R. Murthy were generally sluggish. Bhavanna was more so. He had not the perseverance of K.V.R. Murthy. In talent Bhavanna was like Murthy a cut above the other Andhra cricketers.

He was an all-rounder of class. Endowed with a smooth and lovely bowling action he bowled seamers with the new ball and switched to off-spin in the second spell and thereafter. At times he bowled non-stop. It was as an off-spinner that he almost made the national grade. When Bhavanna was in selectorial eyes, Prasanna was rising and Venkataraghavan was yet to arrive on the scene in the South. Bhavanna took 12 for 119 with an average of 9.91 in 1957-58. But the next two years he chose not to play. In 1963 he helped Andhra restrict Hyderabad to 220 at Kothagudem and

worried Hyderabad when they aimed at an easy win by taking Jaisimha's wicket. After taking 9 for 71 against Kerala the following year he gave a brilliant performance against Hyderabad at Visakhapatnam.

After Andhra were shot out for 111 Bhavanna dismissed Jaisimha, Baig and Sultan Saleem in quick succession. Later when Andhra were in batting doldrums in their second innings Bhavanna made a fighting 61 not out. When Jaisimha set an attacking field with two men very close to the bat, Bhavanna struck hard and the ball hit Habeeb Ahmed in the thigh and he had to be carried off the field. That reminded one of Pollard's hit that hospitalised Syd Barnes in a Test match in 1948. To many Englishmen it symbolised the defiance of the British spirit against the 'insolent' Aussies. Jaisimha always considered Bhavanna as a cricketer of rare ability, N.S. Ramaswami regarded him as a brilliant all-rounder and one of the best slip-fielders. Cricketologists and cricketers were full of praise for him. The Indian Cricket Annual then wrote thus; "K. Bhavanna the off-spinner with his 28 wicket bag effort proved to be the most successful bowler in the zone. In fact his effort stood on a higher level than that of Venkataraghavan as he did not have the same support from his fielders as the latter had. Bhavanna displayed flight, spin and a penetrative straight ball".

Bhavanna did play subsequently and was among runs and wickets, hitting the ball out of the ground and breaking stumps, as usual. But it required a lot of persuasion and coaxing to make him come to the ground and play. Once he chose to play none could stop him. His daring and ingenuity made him the cynosure of all eyes. He was the Scarlet Pimpernel of Andhra cricket. He had the C.K. touch in him- something that compelled admiration. But he lacked in that most essential quality-commitment to the game. That was why he failed to reach the top which was within his grasp. It is hard to think that dapper Bhavanna is no more. A towering Andhra cricketer and a romantic of South Indian cricket has gone leaving behind memories of his sparkling genius.

23-9-1977

Vizag as the torch bearer of the Andhra tradition

Cricket in Visakhapatnam, like the city itself, grew from modest beginnings. Football, certainly not cricket, was the most popular game with soccer stars from here making a mark in Calcutta, the Mecca of Indian football, Hockey, thanks to the Anglo-Indian community, now almost extinct, was second to football in popularity. Cricket arrived much later. A tall gentleman by name G.S.N. Rao, affectionately called Ayya, formed the Visakhapatnam Cricket Club and the Visakhapatnam Port, in spite of its infancy, encouraged the game in the early thirties.

Not many know that Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, then Vice Chancellor of Andhra University, invited Col. C.K. Nayudu, India's first Test Captain, to come to Waltair as a cricket coach. The idea, writes Sarvepalli Gopal in his biography of his illustrious father "fizzled out after Radhakrishnan's departure." Fifty years later Andhra University conferred an honorary doctorate degree, the first to be given to a sportsman, on India's greatest opening batsman Sunil Gavaskar at its Convocation. Incidentally that was the first University honour that Gavaskar received. At the glittering function both the University administration and local police ensured Gavaskar's quiet exit from the ceremony, after receiving the honour from the Chancellor, so that the huge crowd would not disturb the proceedings. Later in the evening when Gavaskar apologised to the Convocation orator for slipping out in the middle of the ceremony the latter remarked that he did not notice it. And Sunil with characteristic sharpness quipped: "That is the advantage of being short, Sir...." C.S.Nayudu became the second cricketer to receive such an honour from the Andhra University.

The birth of the Andhra Cricket Association was a historic event in the annals of Andhra Sport. C.K. Nayudu and C.S. Nayudu, two famous Andhras, along with Mushtaq Ali came to Guntur and played in a festival match in 1953 marking the birth of ACA. The Andhras became famous in Madras as cricketers, tennis players and footballers and the Ramaswamis and Krishnaswamis were rarely seen in action in Andhra towns. C.K. Nayudu led the first Andhra

side in Ranji trophy when the little known Andhra team played against Mysore. When Andhra batting began to crumble against the pace of Kasturirangan & Co. C.K. at the age of 58, hooked Kasturirangan for a six and gave all those who were privileged to watch him a few lessons in batting with a sparkling knock of 70 and odd runs. Till then the only Andhra cricketer who attracted public attention was Vizag's G.S.N. Raju who scored the first century for Andhra University in Inter University cricket. The Kommireddis of Kakinada brought a new dimension to Andhra Cricket. Gopanna led the clan with aggressive batting while KVR Murthy who played for three states in Ranji trophy was among test probables in the early sixties. Bhavanna, who was one of the most popular all rounders in Madras league, was the Scarlet Pimpernel of Andhra Cricket and at one stage was bracketed with Prasanna and Venkataraghavan as among the best off-spinners in the south. N.S.Ramaswami, the eminent cricketologist, described him as the best close-in fielder in the entire south.

The formation of the Visakhapatnam District Cricket Association in 1962 by the dynamic Superintendent of Police the late Mr. C.G.Saldanha was a shot in the arm for Andhra cricket. Saldanha assisted by Secretary A. Radhakrishna founded both the District Cricket and Tennis Associations and got the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Gen. Srinagesh, to inaugurate the association. The Governor, a former General and Army Chief, wielded the willow on the occasion. District Collectors, police chiefs and local elders backed up by public patronage raised the stature of cricket and tennis and tennis stars like the Amritraj brothers, Gulyas and Metreveli played here during the last 37 years. Andhra cricket's finest hour was when KBR Murthy, son of Gopanna, led Andhra to the top of the table in South Zone cricket in 1985. That was the first time for Andhra to enter the knockout stage. Some Andhra players have played for South Zone in national tournaments and against visiting foreign sides. The latest, knocking at the doors of Test cricket, is M.S.K. Prasad, the wicket-keeper while Ramkishan has come close to being considered for national honours.

The ACA and the VDCA have successfully hosted eight international events in the last ten years including a World Cup tie in

1996. The Indira Priyadarshni Municipal Corporation Stadium has been the venue for all these events.

Dilip Vengsarkar and John Wright, Viv Richards and Anshuman Gaekwad, Sachin Tendulkar and Mike Atherton, Courtney Walsh and Azharuddin, Mark Taylor and Maurice Odumbe, and Rahul Dravid - Captains all, going out into the middle for the toss at this venue against a lovely backdrop of hill range, with the crowd cheering with enthusiasm.

As Wasim Akram, the man with many tricks in his 'hat' and the cool and crafty Arjuna Ranatunga step out into the middle, today March 27, for a combat between the 1996 and 1992 world champions, it will be yet another moment of joy for the cricket lovers and a milestone in the annals of Vizag and Andhra cricket. It has been rightly said that cricket is a game of memories. Its memories are always sweet, fragrance fresh and allure everlasting !

March 27 1999



Botham on Richards ..

"Viv and I are very much the same sort of people, only he was left in oven a bit longer and I've got hair. That's my philosophy" - Ian Botham (Guardian weekly, 2-10-1994.)

The only time when Lawry walked ..

"Bobby Simpson regards Bill Lawry as the finest opening batsman in the world better than Conrad Hunte. Lawry like the Test batsman of old, doesn't believe in 'walking' when appeals are made against him. Simpson says that the only time Bill 'Walks' is in his sleep. The rest of the time he either ambles or runs."

- R.S. Whittington "Simpson's Safari"

Venue - the pride of Andhra

When 'King' Richards, leading the West Indies against the Board President's XI, stepped out into the middle of the Indira Priyadarshni Municipal Corporation Stadium in November 1987 history was made at Visakhapatnam, a city flanked on one side by a silent hill range and on the other by the roaring sea. People rubbed their eyes in disbelief as not many had ever hoped to see an international cricket match here.

In that match after Jeff Dujon hit up a century, Viv Richards, in response to the persistent appeals of the crowd came out with the bat and swung a few balls to and over the fence and departed after a brief stay at the wicket. For the Andhra Cricket Association and the Visakhapatnam District Cricket Association it was a moment to cherish as that match heralded the birth of a lovely venue for hosting major cricket matches. What happened in the years that followed has put Vizag firmly on the map of big cricket.

A year later, in December 1988 to be precise, that great crowd-puller the ebullient Krishnamachari Srikanth walked away with the 'Man of the Match' award with a haul of 5 for 27 and a brilliant knock of 70, when Dilip Vengsarkar led India to victory over New Zealand in the First One Day International at Visakhapatnam. ACA's Secretary and backbone N.Venkata Rao wisely chose Visakhapatnam as the venue for major cricket matches. Just at that time a lucky circumstance was the election of D.V.Subba Rao as the city's Mayor. The former University cricket captain and leading advocate completed the task of constructing the municipal stadium in the heart of the city and presented it to the people of the area an excellent facility fifteen years after the foundation stone had been laid by Chief Minister Vengal Rao.

If Duleep and Deodhar trophy matches brought to the city the rising stars of Indian cricket, benefit matches provided an opportunity to see in action celebrities like Gavaskar, Kapil Dev. Viswanath and Mohinder Amarnath. Sachin Tendulkar made at the venue his debut as captain against an international side when he led the Rest of India XI against Mike Artherton's England team. If Artherton had earlier been described by the English press as FEC

(Future England Captain) Sachin became here FIC (Future Indian Captain). It was a treat watching Sachin, then just 19, and the elegant Sanjay Manjrekar in action as they put to sword the English attack. Mohammed Azharuddin led India to a thrilling four run win over Courtney Walsh's West Indies in a one day international in 1994.

Navjot Siddhu with 114, Sachin with 54, and Azhar himself with 44 helped India reach 260 for 4. As long as Carl Hooper was there the Windies appeared to be overtaking India. But they failed to make it in a nail-biting finish. Shane Warne and Vizag made their debut at this venue in World Cup cricket in 1996 when the city had the honour of hosting a World Cup match even if it was a fight between David and Goliath, Kenya and Australia.

Mark Waugh scored a classy 130 and put on 207 runs with his brother Steve. Great players of yesteryears including match referee Clive Lloyd descended on the city which to the Australians was not known at all till a Pakistani located it for them on the map before the Aussies left for India! How happy Mark Taylor was to be back in Vizag just two years after the World Cup tie to play a three day match against Board President's XI led by Rahul Dravid.

Beginning with the West Indies led by the great Viv Richards many foreign teams such as England, Australia and Kenya have played at this venue.

Two champion sides are now in action in a crucial tie for the 1996 World champions. Hearty welcome, say the cricket lovers of the city and Andhra, to Pakistan and Sri Lanka! A contest between two powerful sides on the eve of the 1999 World Cup generates considerable excitement. Over a thousand million people of the sub-continent-the peoples of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka - will watch this match with interest. For they hope that the World Cup will stay in the sub-continent for four more years. Who will hold aloft in England the 1999 World Cup-Arjuna or Akram or Azhar? Or the fancied Hansie Cronje or Steve Waugh. Perhaps none of them. That is what cricket is all about. Expect the unexpected to happen. The Sri Lanka - Pakistan tie in the triangular series may prove a point at Visakhapatnam.

March 27, 1999

The Cup of Joy!

Historic occasion! The coming together of three continents for a cricket match! Africa and Australia separated by a distance of over 9000 kilometres meet in Asia for the World Cup Cricket match and the venue is Visakhapatnam, on the east coast of India. Cricket shows that the world can change for the better--- from a cauldron of hate and misery to a cup of joy and hope.

The 'noblest game' provides more than a feast for the eye and the mind. It fosters the spirit of goodwill and kindles hope, even if it is a ray, that countries will hereafter aim for victories on playgrounds rather than on battlefields. The World Cup, appropriately born in England, has travelled far and wide, going twice to the Caribbeans, twice to Asia and once to Australia, confirming its sweep across the length and breadth of the globe.

The performing player, the supervising official, the cheering spectator, the narrating scribe and the commentating expert are all vital components of the game, upholding its radiant spirit. We welcome all of them and the mighty Australians and the courageous Kenyans! Visakhapatnam, nestling between the sea and the mountain, greets the teams and the visitors from far and near. Viv Richards, Kapil Dev and Sunil Gavaskar were among the many celebrities seen in action at the venue where, Aussies, 'Taylor-made' (led) to lift the Cup? begin their bid to regain the title with a match against the gallant Kenyans.

David may not be able to outwit Goliath, but the Kenyan Steve (Tikolo) is as delightful to watch as the Australian Steve (Waugh), and Maurice (Odumbe) as fluent with the willow as his counterpart Mark (Taylor) or the other outstanding Mark (Waugh). Cricket, the great leveller, has a charm of its own and Visakhapatnam, like debutants Shane Warne and Kenya, is making its debut as a centre for World Cup Cricket. The Andhra Cricket Association, the Visakhapatnam District Cricket Association, the city and its people will be justly rewarded if the players and the visitors carry back with them pleasant memories of their 'Visakha Safari'.

- VDCA World Cup souvenir 1996 February

* * *

D.V. Subba Rao

gentleman administrator

“Cricket had a profound influence on my life. It, in a way, has become a part of my life. Cricket stands for gentlemanly conduct and this badge of honour has become my guiding spirit. In a nutshell cricket made me what I am,” says D.V. Subba Rao, President of the Andhra Cricket Association and Chairman, Bar Council of India. A prominent member of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, Subba Rao is also the Chairman of Committee for Drafting of code of conduct for players, umpires and officials and Member of the Committee for Amendments to the Constitution of BCCI.

Subba Rao's family had deep roots in the game of cricket. His grandfather and uncles were very close to the Vizianagaram house and hence to Sir Vijaya Anand more popularly known as Vizzy. Subba Rao recalls that cricketing talk was part of the dinner since childhood and that he was exposed to the game very early in life. Referring to its impact he says that cricket fosters team spirit which has made him understand “that we will have to work with others. Cricket is a game where you play with others but you do not play for yourself. This has taught me a lesson that you should not be self-centred but should be broadminded, share everything with others, care for others. The game says that you should stand upright. This concept of the game has ingrained in me that you can only be tall if you stand straight. In good old days a batsman used to walk out if he knew he was out, without waiting for the umpire's decision. This conveyed to me a message that I must be judge of my own conduct. Whether I am right or wrong I should not wait for the judgement of others for deciding whether my conduct is right or not. In many ways the game has a profound impact on my entire life, career and behaviour”.

In every high position he held and every success he achieved D.V. Subba Rao has displayed the quintessence of cricket. Right from the college days when he led the Andhra University team to victory in inter-collegiate tournament in 1955, Subba Rao has been a torch bearer of the game's spirit. Called to the bar in 1957, he

has reached the top as an advocate and is the first mofussil lawyer to become the Chairman of the Bar Council of India. He interacts in his profession with nationally renowned judges and legal luminaries in Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai. He became Lions Governor at an early age and continues to be actively involved in service and welfare activities.

Among Subba Rao's lasting gifts to the city as its popular Mayor from 1987 to 1992 is the Indira Priyadrashini Municipal Corporation Stadium where eight international and six national cricket matches have been played including the Australia-Kenya World Cup tie of 1996. Most of the great cricketers of the world and all leading cricket teams except South Africa and New Zealand have played at this venue. Subba Rao has completed an eventful decade as President of the Andhra Cricket Association. Few persons in Visakhapatnam have held so many positions with such dignity as Subba Rao and fewer still who have achieved such all round success with utmost humility as he has done. D.V. Subba Rao is a cricketer and gentleman to perfection.



the feat of Arthur Morris ..

A.R. Morris of Australia played 100 consecutive first-class innings without failing to score. He made his first 'duck' in his 101 st innings in the first Test of the 1949-50 series against South Africa.

Bedser on Trueman who also made his test debut against India (in 1952). "He seems to be one of the fortunate few who are not overawed by the big occasion; in fact I believe he enjoys it and is all the better bowler for a big crowd".

- Alec Bedser.

Arlott on W.G. Grace and cricket ..

"He has absorbed the strategy of the game as naturally as breathing."

"Cricket is first referred to by that name as being played in about 1550." Arlott and Trueman On Cricket.

Welcome to Visakhapatnam

This time the Aussies need no help to locate Visakhapatnam. Only in early 1996, on the eve of the World Cup, they were helped out by a Pakistani when the Australian cricketers tried to spot Visakhapatnam, the venue of their first World Cup match, on the map. They not only enjoyed their visit to the City of Destiny but also enthralled the crowd with their display as the Waugh brothers put on 207 runs for the third wicket against Kenya. Shane Warne and Vizag as a venue, made their debut in the World cup on February 23, 1996. Two years later the Aussies played here again against the Board President's XI in March 1998 and in that match Slater and Ponting emulated the Waugh brothers by adding 206 runs for the second wicket. A double century by the former, 155 by the latter and a century by Kanitkar for the home team marked the three day batting feast. Incidentally Harbhajan Singh played here for the first time against the Australians, claiming the prize wicket of Slater.

For the third time in five years the Aussies are here in Visakhapatnam, this time to play against a resurgent India led by Sourav Ganguly. The Prince of Calcutta is playing at Vizag for the first time as India's captain and Sourav knows well that the City of Destiny is second only to the City of Joy in importance on the Coromandel coast. Anshuman Gaekwad in 1987, Vengsarkar in 1988. Tendulkar in 1993, Azharuddin in 1994 and Rahul Dravid in 1998 led Indian sides against visiting teams at this venue.

It all began with the great Viv Richards in 1987 when he led the West Indies team against the Board President's XI. Since then what a galaxy of players have been seen in action here - Kapil Dev, Mohinder Amarnath, Gundappa Viswanath, Sunil Gavaskar, Srikanth, Manjrekar, Ravi Shastri, Azharuddin, Mike Atherton, Courtney Walsh, Mark Taylor, Shane Warne, Wasim Akram, Aravinda de Silva and Arjuna Ranatunga and almost all the great teams of contemporary cricket. Kenya made its debut here in World Cup in 1996.

Today's tie generates tremendous excitement as a confident India takes on mighty Australia. That too at a crucial stage in the current ODI series for Pepsi Cup. The Indians know how tough it is to beat the Australians in one day cricket. The Australians are not unaware of the Indian potential. Millions of viewers in the

subcontinent and 'down under' would be watching on the small screen this tie focussing on, among other things, the coolness of Iceman Steve Waugh, the speed and rhythm of McGrath, the artistry of Mark Waugh, the class of Tendulkar, the grace of Ganguly and the elegance of Laxman.

V.D.C.A. Souvenir

3-4-2001



Leading by example ..

On Kapil Dev's 175 not out at Tunbridge Wells on June 18 against Zimbabwe in the Prudential World Cup 1983.

"Often Kapil hit in the air, but he hit with majesty and power that never suggested violence nor threatened to profane the beauty of the game, or indeed, of the venue. In the 49th over he reached his century and, in the last eleven overs of the innings, he scored at the rate of seven runs an over. Kirmani was a magnificent partner, running furiously, batting forcefully and elegantly and ever offering his captain the strike. In thirteen overs of brilliant batting they added hundred runs. India 9 for 4 in the 10th over when Kapil Dev came to the wicket closed on 266 for 8. The Indian captain has hit six 6's and sixteen 4's in his innings of 175 not out)

- David Lemmon

UNUSUAL WORLD RECORD

Bapu (R.G) Nadkarni created an unusual 'world record' when in the first Test at Madras against England in 1964 he bowled a spell of 21 overs without conceding a single run. In that innings his figures read: 32-27-5-0--- just five runs from 192 balls!

N. Venkata Rao - able organiser.....

“I shall try my best” declared Mr. N. Venkata Rao last year at the end of the three day cricket match between the West Indies and the Board President’s XI at Visakhapatnam “to get for Visakhapatnam the one-day international between India and New Zealand”. Today if the city is all set for staging this match, it is a vindication of the claim the ACA secretary had made about a year ago. For Venkata Rao this is not the first time to have succeeded in getting for Andhra major cricketing events. Three years ago the Deodhar Trophy and a year earlier the Duleep Trophy matches were staged for the first time in Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam, and Venkata Rao is determined to continue in this direction and one need not be surprised if he gets for Andhra many more major matches in the near future.

Equally significant is his commitment to the motto; “Catch’em young”. The ACA has been conducting seven categories of inter-district and inter-zonal tournaments ranging from the senior event prior to the State Ranji team’s selection to under 13 Nutrine Trophy tournament. These include under 25, under 22, under 19, under 17 under 15. This constitutes a lot of burden on the ACA and the district associations. But Venkata Rao says that the ACA will not go back on this score and will strive to spot and encourage talent in every possible manner.

At the national level, Venkata Rao is a member of the Board of Control’s Fixtures and Programme Committee for Duleep and Deodhar Trophy teams. He visited Australia in 1986 as the manager of the under 19 Indian team which had such players like Narendra Hirwani and was in Sharjah as a representative of the Board in 1988. Venkata Rao is associated with many wings of the BCCI. Since 1987 when Mr P.Ashok Gajapathi Raju took over as the President of the ACA, the Ashok - Venkata Rao combination has infused into the ACA dynamism that assures Andhra of many new opportunities for the development of the game.

Born in West Godavari in September 1942 Nekkanti Venkata Rao played for his school, Balabharathi, in Madras and for the Andhra Loyola College, Vijayawada and Hindu College, Guntur

where he studied. He grew into a good medium pacer and hard hitting right hand batsman. He played for the Andhra University team in inter-varsity tournaments and made his debut in Ranji Trophy in 1963 against Kerala. Venkata Rao played for 8 years in Ranji Trophy and captured 26 wickets for 249 runs besides scoring 252 runs. This writer was a witness to the famous Andhra-Karnataka Ranji match in 1967 when G R Viswanath scored his record breaking 230 on his debut. Venkata Rao claimed two quick wickets and clean bowled the then in-form Nagabhushanam reducing Karnataka to 40 for 3 wickets. Then came the little master Viswanath who aided by Syed Kirmani, also playing his first Ranji match, turned the tables on Andhra and rewrote the record books.

N Venkata Rao has, since his retirement, been associated with various games in different capacities during these eventful 16 years. Cricket, volleyball, football, hockey and kabaddi are among the many games the organisations of which have him as a member. His wife Mrs. Preeti is a source of support to him in his hard work for sports promotion and a matter of satisfaction is the fact that his son Madhukar is coming up well in cricket and has captained last year the ACA's under 12 team. Mr. Venkata Rao is here in Visakha for over three weeks looking after the arrangements for the one-dayer coming up at Visakha this Saturday. "We will achieve many more in future", he says exuding an air of confidence.

7-12-1988

(The ACA has since hosted seven international matches at Visakhapatnam including a World Cup match in 1996. Except South Africa all major countries were seen in action at this venue.)

* * *

Sidhu's sixers and sizzlers....

Navjot Sidhu famous for his big hitting with over 30 centuries and five double centuries to his credit in first class cricket delighted the crowds with his sixers. Today as TV commentator his sizzlers, marked by colourful choice of words symbolic of his penchant for hitting the bowler over the fence, with the glint of Punjabi humour showing through his remarks, have made him a popular TV star... though for many it is all beyond 'the boundary'! As CLR James wrote : "What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?"

Umpiring

Umpires then: There used to be only one umpire in the 15th Century. Till the 18th Century, before the popping crease was introduced, it was necessary to touch the Umpire to record a run. Umpires used to carry sticks or bats to lean on." Umpires then were not only respected but addressed with reverence.

And now: Umpires get from players --- shouts, stares and expletives... and, of course, TV replay of their decisions.

A Lordly Appeal!

When an appeal against bad light was turned down Lord Tennyson called to his partner at the nonstriker's end: "Can you hear me, Newman?"

And was answered "Yes, my Lord, I can hear but where are you speaking from?"

The Greatest Umpire

Frank Chester officiated in more Test matches than any other umpire. He officiated in 48 tests when he retired in 1955. He began his career in 1912 as a cricketer. Chester lost his right arm in the First World War in service in Middle East. In 1922 he became a first class umpire and in more than 30 years built up a reputation as a great umpire. He officiated in over 1000 first class matches.

The wrong nick..

There used to be a wicket keeper in one of the local teams who was famous for his vociferous and indiscriminate claiming. It once so happened that he himself as the non-striker led a strong appeal on a close decision. The umpire raised his finger without the least hesitation. When the batsman given out returned to the dressing room, we asked him if he really nicked the ball. He said, "Why will the umpire have any doubt when my own partner leads the appeal!"

Contributed by Prof. M.S. Rama Murty.



Birds and Animals

But for the sparrow killed in flight by a delivery from Jahangir Khan his death a few days ago in Pakistan would not have received such world wide attention. Jahangir Khan was a fine bowler. Yet his death at the age of 78 would not have received the publicity it has now obtained but for the 1936 incident. The sparrow was stuffed and is still preserved in the Long Room at Lord's. The sparrow thus became immortal. Jahangir Khan was then bowling to T.N. Pearce in the Cambridge University v MCC match. Khan not only lived for 52 years after the event but also earned a name as the father of the stylish Majid Khan and an uncle of the great Imran Khan.

The encyclopaedia of Cricket edited by Maurice Golesworthy narrates a few more instances like that. A sparrow was killed at Cambridge on August 12, 1885 by a ball from Cordeaux in a cricket match. Almost a hundred years prior to that a dog was killed by a ball bowled by G. Brown, one of the fastest bowlers of his times. Dogs have become notorious for their intrusions into the ground. Sometimes crowds lustily cheer them for the unintended fun they cause and also for relieving the spectators of boredom. Umpires must be good dog chasers. Otherwise play can be held up for several minutes. The Nawab of Pataudi once pulled out the stump to chase away a bull that strayed onto the ground when the match was in progress. Strange indeed that a field mouse held up the game for several minutes at Birmingham in 1962 when England and Pakistan were playing a test match when Cowdrey and Dexter were in a century partnership.

Cricket stories, some of them must be apocryphal contain a lot of such 'animal' stuff. Long ago when the 'usual' visitors to the ground in South Africa, the lions, overstepped the boundary line and squatted a yard inside the ground, the batsmen, it seems, took nearly 70 runs after the ball went near the lordly animal visitors. By the time the lions were chased away the match was over with the batsmen getting enormous benefit of the presence of "Their Majesties".

A dog once helped a Sussex cricketer in getting bonus runs

by carrying the ball over the boundary line off a stroke made by him. Animals are not always unwelcome at playgrounds. The poor sparrow and the dog did not have any helmets. The batsmen of today wear the protective headgear, the helmet, against fast bowling. The helmet came into vogue in the 70s. Old players ridiculed the batsmen wearing helmets as gutless wielders of the willow. It would be of interest to know that when the pads were introduced for the first time in the 19th century older players then gave the pad-wearers 'a contemptuous reception'.

A C.K. Nayudu might laugh at those who wear helmets just as players two hundred years ago made fun of those who tried to guard their legs with pads. "Use your brains, not your skull", he might have said.

27-7-88

Termites in Cricket

"During a cricket match in India in 1949, the stumps were left out overnight. They were immediately attacked by termites which ate away the inside and left thin shells of wood covering the hollows they had made.

When cricket was resumed the next day the stumps looked perfectly normal. But the first ball shattered the stumps at one end into tiny fragments. As there were no more stumps available the match had to be abandoned".

From " The Guinness Book of Animal facts and feats". By Gerald L.Wood FZS. 1972 [page. 286] [Guinness Superlatives Ltd, London]. Contributed by Shri P.L. Narasimha Rao, Masulipatam.



Lindwall and Miller ----- a great pace duo

Lindwall 61 Tests 228 wickets 5257 runs ... averaging 23.05 scored 1602 runs including including 2 centuries.

Miller 55 Tests 170 wickets for 3905 runs averaging 22.97 and scored 2958 runs including 7 centuries.

Steve Waugh's special links with India

Melbourne, December 1985 - Stephen Rodger Waugh, a twenty year old youngster, in fact a young star on the ever glorious Australian horizon, makes his debut playing against India. Since that historic moment, India has, for a variety of reasons, been dear to Steve. Two years later in the Reliance World Cup, Steve was consistent with the bat and the ball, an average of over 55 in batting and 11 wickets to his credit. "His athleticism and exceptional ability provided Australia with a phenomenal one-run win over India at Madras and three run hijack of New Zealand at Indore," wrote Mike Coward. He was Man-of-the-Match against Zimbabwe at Chennai. In the final at Calcutta at the famous Eden Gardens before 95,000 cheering spectators, Australia beat England in a thriller by a mere 7 runs. Steve Waugh effected the crucial breakthrough twice for Australia clean bowling Lamb for 45 and later the dangerous-looking DeFreitas for 17. Waugh cherishes that moment most and in his own words. "the venue I consider to be the Lord's of the sub-continent.... it was a significant moment for Australian cricket."

The 1996 World Cup brought the Aussies to Visakhapatnam for their first match and February 23 belonged to the Waugh brothers. Mark, younger than his twin brother by 4 minutes, got the first of his three 1996 World Cup hundreds at Vizag and the two added 207 runs for the 3rd wicket. Steve achieved an average of 45 in batting and took 5 wickets including that of Brian Lara in the 1996 World Cup.

In 1998 the Aussies came again to India. At Calcutta, the visitors were beaten in 4 days and Steve was disappointed not to get a hundred. He was run out for 80. To put it in his own words it was 'providential' as Steve went out and met the poor children at Udayan. He won the hearts of those destitute children with his spontaneous and noble gesture. Since then he is "Uncle Steve" to the children at Udayan.

"I think, if you are in a privileged position and can influence other people, then you can certainly help out. That's my case, but I have done very little work and need to contribute more. This involvement with charity certainly mellows you and makes you aware

of what is going on around the world. What's happening here puts everything in perspective; cricket is important, my family is very important and what's happening here is also important," says the Captain of the Champion side.

To have played in three World Cups and figured in three finals is a rare honour. Greater honour is to lead the team to triumph, twelve years after being a member of the champion side, in the third World Cup, scoring a magnificent hundred against South Africa in a crucial tie at Leeds. Hailed as "Iceman Steve" for his extraordinary ability to perform brilliantly in most stressful conditions, Steve has become a living legend, evoking inevitable comparisons with the game's immortals. Be it the roaring crowd at Calcutta or the terrific pace of the West Indian fast bowlers-Steve once made a fighting double century in the Caribbeans with bruised hands and almost broken ribs -- Steve Waugh's outstanding skill and nerves of steel pulled Australia out of a crisis.

Millions of cricket lovers admire Steve Waugh for his feats with the bat and the ball and astute leadership. Modest in victory and defiant in defeat, Steve is a role model to cricketers all over the world. The complete cricketer will be admired for long by Indian fans too. But the children at Udayan and thousands of people all over India will always remember 'Uncle Steve' for a different reason altogether. What the immortal Don Bradman wanted cricket to achieve, his worthy legate, the legendary Steve Waugh is doing with grace and quiet dignity. The Captain of the world conquering cricket team has won the hearts of the meek, the poor and the downtrodden. Steve Waugh shows why cricket is 'the noblest game'.

3-4-2001



joining the select band of 100 Test club

Steve Waugh joined the select band of players having played their 100th Test at Sydney (January 2, 1998) twelve years after his debut in Test cricket against India in December 1985.

Sachin Tendulkar

'God's gift to Indian Cricket'

"He is fabulous...the best thing that has happened to Indian cricket... God's gift to Indian cricket" said Kapil Dev, India's greatest all rounder. Speaking with emotion Kapil Dev lavished superlatives on the genius of Sachin Tendulkar in a chat with this writer at Eluru where Kapil was felicitated in February 1999.

"He will be Sachin Tendulkar, not another Gavaskar," quipped Sunil Gavaskar in 1991 when the BBC sports correspondent asked Sunil over the radio whether the teen-age sensation then making waves in Pakistan, would be another Sunil Gavaskar for Indian cricket. What the Little Champion, as the Little Master calls him, has done or is doing since then is living history. No Indian has done so much to make so many people so happy for so many years as Sachin Tendulkar.

He is the quintessence of Indian batsmanship combining in his art the grace of Ranji, the class of Vijay Merchant and the perfection of Sunil Gavaskar. He is an artist at work, lost in his creative pursuit unmindful of the din around. Success and applause, always in abundant flow when he is in action, seldom get into his head nor do the bowler's howls and screams upset his concentration. Outrageously wrong decisions against him, as for instance in Bradman's land recently, cannot provoke him into loss of temper or make him seek umbrage for his failure. His humility has immeasurably raised his celebrity status.

When Sachin was playing for Yorkshire in English league, the Guardian cricket correspondent (perhaps it was the brilliant Matthew Engel) wrote that girls planned to elope with the teenager while women wanted to mother him. That charming boy has grown into a mature role model for millions of people all over the world, admired and adored as much for his cricketing genius as for the qualities of his head and heart. The best, of course, is yet to come.

"This fellow is playing much the same way as I used to play; his compactness, his technique, his stroke production, all seem to gel as far as I was concerned."

- Sir Donald Bradman

On Tendulkar

"I am an unabashed admirer of his batting and have been so since I saw him as a 15 year old make his debut in first class cricket. His is a rare combination of classical correctness combined with power and grace and this is why he draws people to the grounds like honey draws bees."
- Sunil Gavaskar

Cardus compared the Australian batsmen to being "lost souls in a fog, being led by the Bradman torch." Tendulkar is like that in Indian cricket.
- K.N. Prabhu.

"Fantastic! Tendulkar is certainly the best player in the world at the moment. Why I've always liked him is that batsmen tend to be negative at times and I think batting is not about not getting out - it is to play positively. I think you have got to take it to the bowlers and Sachin is one such player."
- Graeme Pollock

"Bradman came on the scene during the dark days of the depression of the thirties to lift the spirits of his countrymen. By his exhilarating strokeplay Tendulkar has done as much to take our minds off the sad state of affairs in this land."

- K.N. Prabhu

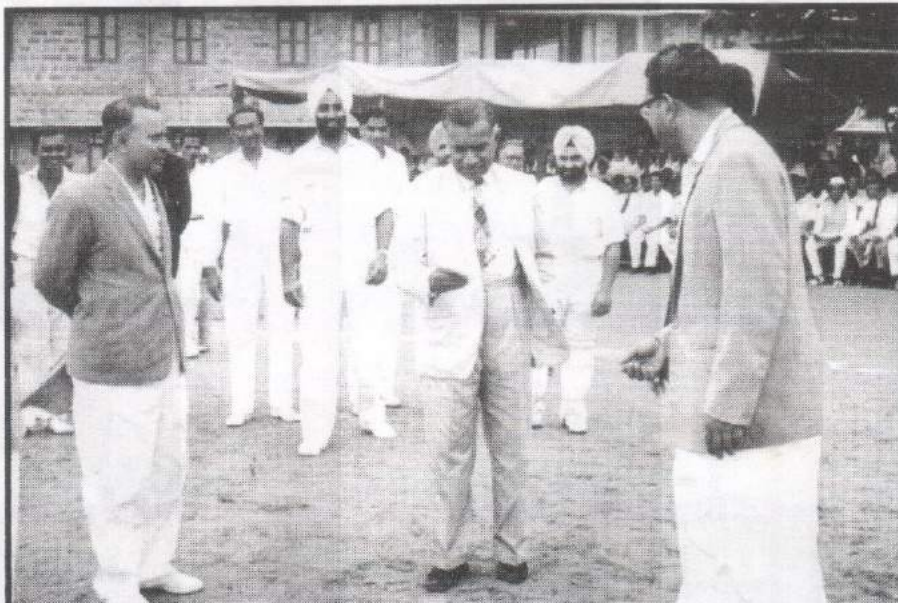
"Tendulkar is the best by streets. His appetite for runs and joy when batting, bowling, or fielding is a pleasure to behold. Money, fame and a 'God' like status has not changed his love of the game and desire for success. Till Sachin can stay motivated to bat, nobody can take his crown away. He is the King."
- Geoff Boycott

"Not since the days of Bradman has cricket seen a batsman like Tendulkar."
- Bill O'Reilly

Birth of Visakhapatnam District Cricket Association on August 15, 1963.



Chief Guest Gen. S.M. Srinagesh governor of Andhra Pradesh being received by the VDCA Founder-President C.G. Saldanha and Founder-Secretary A. Radhakrishna on August 15, 1963. at the inauguration of VDCA.



Governor Srinagesh looking at the coin before the toss at the inaugural match between Collector's XI led by Collector K.I. Vidyasagar and S.P's XI led by Superintendent of Police C.G. Saldanha on August 15, 1963.



VDCA inaugural cricket match teams with Gen. S.M. Srinagesh, Governor of Andhra Pradesh at the AMC grounds on August 15, 1963.

Collector K.I. Vidyasagar, SY Kotwal, A.Radhakrishna, C.G. Saldanha joint collector J. Mathur, AVN Jagga Row and DBK Railway Project Chief UGK Rao are among those standing. Kneeling are K.Narayana, physical director, GSN Raju K.Muralidhar, RVS Rama Rao, K.Nayana, Ibbu Bhai, DVV Gopala Raju, K.Jayabharata Reddy (sub collector) and Dr Y.Krishna.



The first VDCA executive committee with President C.G. Saldanha IPS and vice presidents S.M. Chakravarthy Divisional Engineer SE Railway. SY Kotwal. Standing are DVV Gopala Raju, A.Radhakrishna, George Abraham (who played for Kerala and Andhra) and GSN Rao (Ayya) founder of Visakhapatnam Cricket Club.

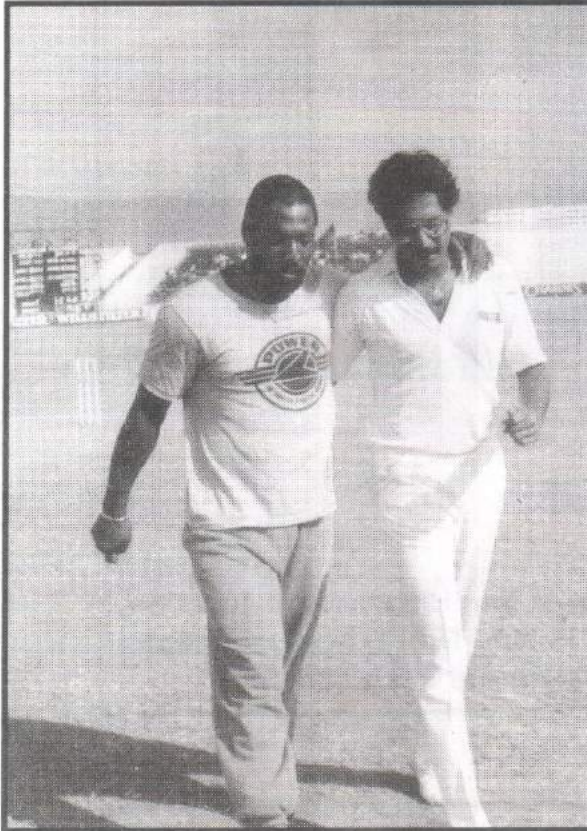


Collector Abid Hussain speaking at the 1965 annual function, Chief guest AKK Nambiar, IG of Police, DIG R.Narayanaswami and VDCA Secretary A. Radhakrishna are seen seated.



VDCA's first annual league tournament (1965) winners with office bearers and Chief Guest Shri AKK Nambiar IPS, IG of Police along with Shri R.Narayanaswami DIG of Police, Shri KVV Subrahmanyam, Superintendent of Police, Collector Shri Abid Hussain, VDCA Secretary Shri A. Radhakrishna, treasurer K. Ramakrishna Rao, Vice President Shri SY Kotwal, Shri H.Anjaneya Prasad, Shri GSS Ramachandra Raju, Shri RVS Rama Rao, Shri KSN Murthy, Dr.Paranjpe, Dr P.Chinnadri Rao and Ranapratap Gupta and RVVK Prasad.

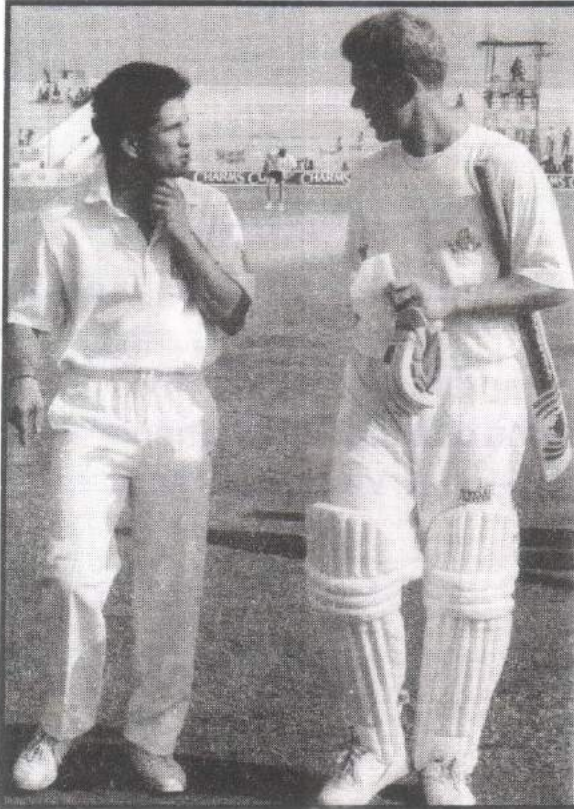
Cricket in Vizag over the years



Viv Richards the West Indies Captain and Anshuman Gaekwad Captain of the Board President's XI in the middle for the toss at Visakhapatnam on December 18, 1987, before the commencement of the three day match.



India's Captain Dilip Vengsarkar and New Zealand Captain John Wright going out for the toss at Visakhapatnam on December 10, 1988 at the First One Day International.



England's Alec Stewart having a word with India XI Captain Sachin Tendulkar in February 1993 at Visakhapatnam.



G.R. Viswanath, Mike Gatting and Anshuman Geakwad at Visakhapatnam in February 1993 when India XI led by Sachin Tendulkar played against England led by Mike Atherton.



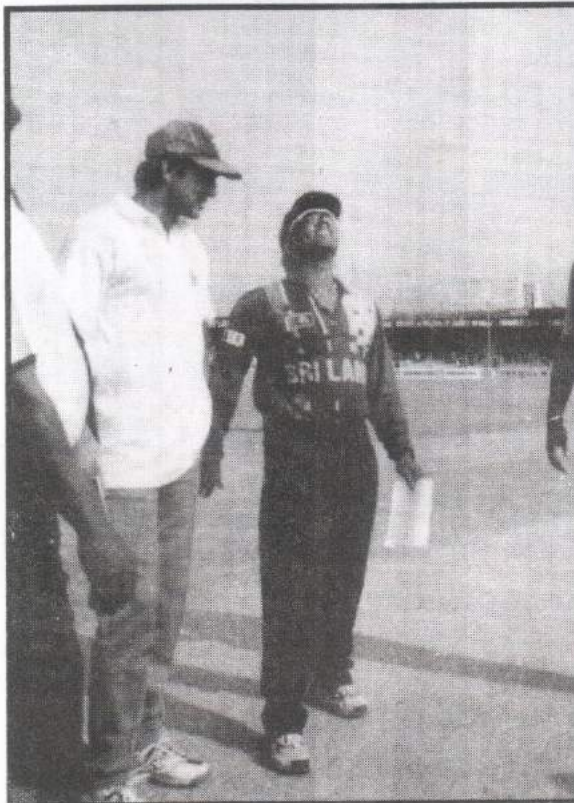
Mohd. Azharuddin and Courtney Walsh the rival captains after the toss in the one day International in 1994 at Visakhapatnam.



ICC match referee Raman Subbarao with ACA President D.V. Subbarao and ACA Secretary N. Venkatarao in Visakhapatnam.



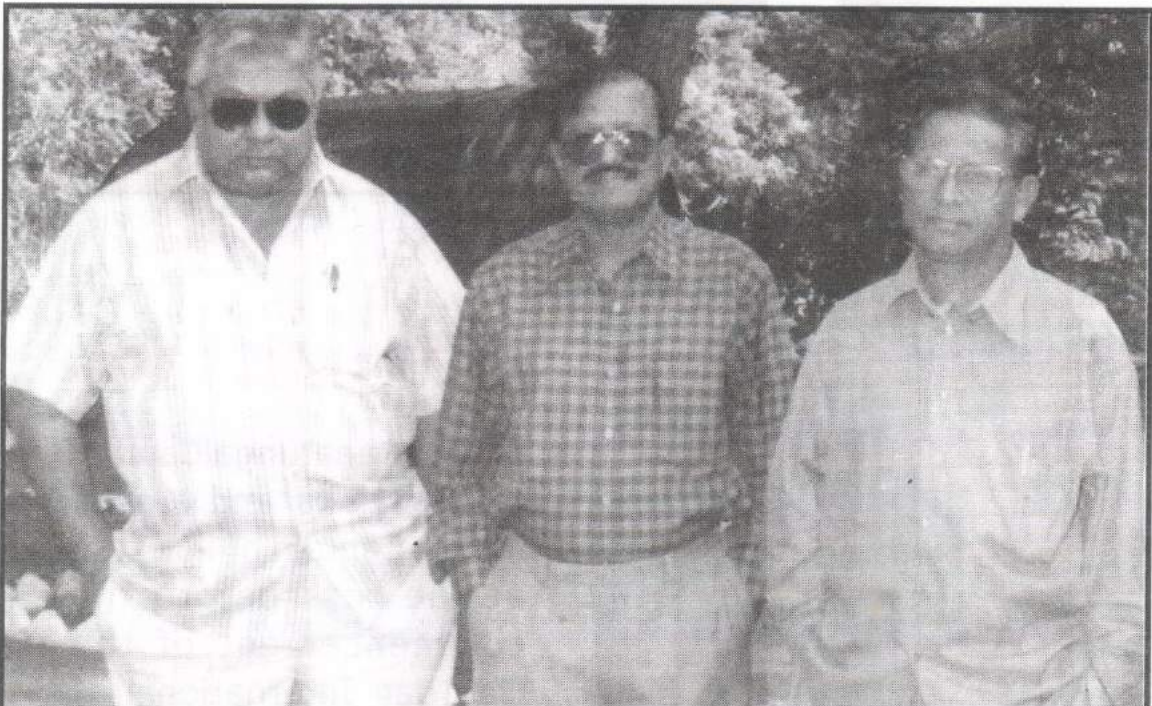
ACA President D.V Subbarao greeting ICC match referee Clive Lloyd.



Arjuna Ranatunga Captain of Sri Lanka and Wasim Akram Captain of Pakistan at the toss before the commencement of the One day International at Visakhapatnam in March 1999.



Steve Waugh the Australian captain going to the nets on the eve of the one day international against India on April 2, 2001 at Visakhapatnam.



VDCA's Backbone : Treasurer R.V.V.K. Prasad, North Zone Secretary, P.R. Narayanaswami and Secretary, K. Parthasarathi.

Parthasarathi is a Test umpire who has officiated in two Test matches and eleven one day internationals.



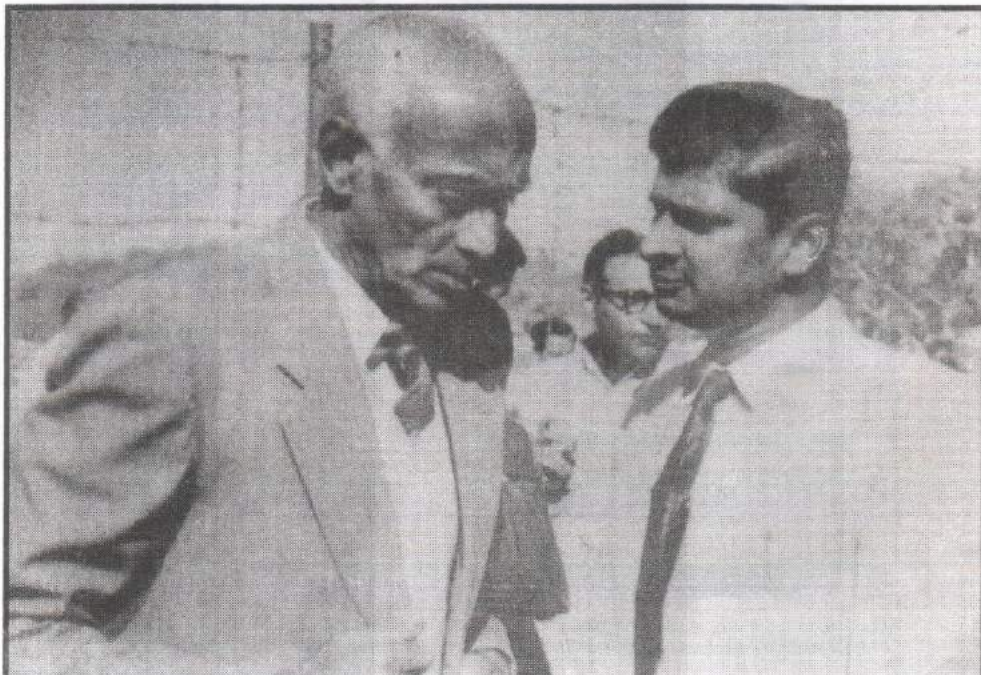
Governor Kumudben Joshi conferring honorary doctorate degree on Sunil Gavaskar at the Andhra University Convocation on November 15, 1986. Gavaskar became the first sportsman to be honoured by the University with a doctorate degree.



Dr. Sunil Gavaskar at the Andhra University Convocation after receiving the honorary degree.



Governor Krishan Kant conferring honorary doctorate degree on C.S. Nayudu at the Andhra University Convocation in July 1990.



K.V. Gopala Ratnam with C.K. Nayudu.



The author interviewing S. Venkataraghavan for AIR Vijayawada in 1975.



The author with Kapil Dev when Kapil received the Gupta Award at Eluru in February 1999.

A.Prasanna Kumar, former Rector and retired Professor, Andhra University, is All India Radio's sports commentator since 1964 on tennis, cricket and badminton. Among the running commentaries by him are: ASIAD 82, First and Second Masters and Grand Prix in badminton, over ten Davis Cup ties and ATP Challenger tennis tournaments, and several cricket commentaries on zonal, national and international matches.

He was sports columnist for Indian Express (Vijayawada) from 1964 to 1985 and Deccan Chronicle (Visakhapatnam) 1985 to 1992. Among his publications are *Tennis Players of Andhra* with a foreword by Ramanathan Krishnan (1990) and *Ramanathan Krishnan... portrait of a supreme artist* (2000)

This book contains

pen-portraits of some famous cricketers

from Ranji and Duleep, India's 'princely' gift to cricket

to Sachin Tendulkar "God's great gift to Indian cricket"

and some interesting events and anecdotes of 'the noblest game'

and thumbnail sketches of some who promoted the game as writers and administrators

Not every cricket fan knows

- *that C.K. Nayudu was once really helpless, caught on 'a sticky wicket'*
 - *that Bradman's Test average of 99.94 became the Post Office Box Number of Australian Broadcasting Commission*
 - *that Vijay Merchant's first class average of 71.64 was second only to Bradman's 95.14*
 - *that Sunil Gavaskar became the first sportsman to receive an honorary doctorate from the Andhra University*
 - *that termites caused the cancellation of a cricket match in India*
- all this and more in this anthology which*

G.R. Viswanath, in his foreword says, "must find a special corner in the bookshelves of cricket lovers."