

Bernard Whimpress & Nigel Hart, *Adelaide Oval Test Cricket 1884-1984*. Wakefield Press and the South Australian Cricket Association, Adelaide, 1984. Select bibliog. pp.262. \$29.95, deluxe ed. \$75, leatherbound \$299.

There have been, and will be, many books written about cricket. In recent years cricket writers and publishers have been seeking something different, if not unique, in order to retain the interest of avid cricket devotees as well as capture potential readers and purchasers. Bernard Whimpress and Nigel Hart have thoroughly researched, carefully described and appropriately illustrated one hundred years of Test cricket played at Adelaide Oval and, in doing so, have provided a positive contribution to the history of cricket in Australia.

The book is organised chronologically with each chapter providing a detailed account of matches, which include scores, notable personal performances and significant events and issues. Of course, there were some remarkable Tests played at Adelaide Oval, including the infamous 'bodyline' match of January 1933 when Australian captain Bill Woodfull is purported to have stated that there were two teams on the field but only one of them was playing cricket (p.92). Great memories came flooding back also when I read of that magic day (1 February 1961) when Ken Mackay and tail-ender Lindsay Kline batted for 102 minutes to force a draw against the West Indies.

Although reading the details of such matches as these was, in the main, a delight it was often frustrating. Reading about one match in a series without the benefit of it being placed within the events, strategies, issues, significance and meaning of other international and Test matches was dissatisfying. Although there

were attempts by the authors to provide brief accounts of previous and subsequent Test matches to those played at Adelaide, this lack of 'context' was a disappointment. To use the same examples as above, the politics of imperialism of the 1932-33 series against England and the excitement generated by the colourful and explosive West Indians in 1961 was not forthcoming in those respective chapters. Of course, from the title, one could not have expected it to be.

The book is well-presented with appropriate illustrations, 'scoreboard' summaries and interesting descriptive reports of matches. There is little attempt at analysis throughout and perhaps an introduction and a conclusion would have enhanced its value as a contribution to sport history. However, cricket lovers, especially those for whom the Adelaide Oval means something special, will gain a great amount of enjoyment from it.

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