

Alan McGilvray, *The Game is Not the Same*, as told to Norman Tasker. ABC, Sydney, 1985. Illus., pp.188. \$19.95.

This is an excellent and most readable book. Norman Tasker, the amanuensis to whom the narrative is told by the author, has achieved a high degree of invisibility and a commendable identity with the attitudes and thought patterns of Alan McGilvray and for this achievement deserves the highest praise. Throughout its pages the author's love of the game of cricket and of the people who play the game and make their living from it shines through, even although it is perfectly obvious from the outset that McGilvray prefers the state of the game in the '30s, '40s, '50s, and '60s to that of today for a number of reasons which become more apparent the longer the reader pursues the theme throughout the book. This habit of looking back to the golden era of his youth or years of maturity is nowhere more in evidence than when the author is dealing with the crisis of World Series Cricket and its aftermath. Here McGilvray

is quick to condemn the way the television entrepreneur, Kerry Packer, cleverly exploited the vulnerability of the modern cricketers to the pot of gold which was dangled temptingly in front of them. And yet, McGilvray, despite his traditional loyalties and establishment preferences, is surprisingly understanding of the determination of the Chappell brothers, Marsh, Lillee, and company to make the most of their short period at the top of the cricket tree. And he can recognise and acknowledge the contribution which the one-day game and the professional management of cricket, to take but two of the innovations commonly attributed to the so-called Packer Revolution, have brought to the sport too, which demonstrates his basic fairmindedness even when dealing with a phenomenon in the game of which he basically disapproves.

McGilvray is a wholehearted admirer of the great Sir Donald Bradman and the early chapters of the book contain a thorough-going and most comprehensive analysis of Bradman's contribution to cricket in general and Australian cricket in particular.

Perhaps the most fascinating part of the book is represented by those chapters in which McGilvray describes his pioneering days as a radio commentator on the Test matches played by Bradman's team in England during the winter of 1938 when a team of intrepid broadcasters led by the resourceful and indomitable Victor Richardson contrived to create the illusion of immediacy in their descriptions of what was going on over 12,000 miles away. They relied on a series of cables which were relayed to the A.B.C. studios in Sydney at the conclusion of each over in the match, backed up by the knowledge, imagination and ingenuity of the team of broadcasters, prominent among whom were Richardson himself, Monty Noble, Alan McGilvray, and Harold Hooker, and the creative genius of an unheralded sound effects man, who is the real unsung hero of this pioneering venture. Reading these chapters makes you realise just how far the art of sports broadcasting has progressed in the lifetime of anyone now in his early to middle fifties.

The subsequent chapters, in which McGilvray describes and analyses the personalities and the contributions of such famous cricket broadcasters as Victor Richardson, Arthur Gilligan, John Arlott, Brian Johnston, and Lindsay Hassett, just to name a few of the men with whom the author worked in a lifetime of cricket broad-

casting, are rich in value and nostalgia for all those who have spent countless hours dwelling on the words of these consummate artists as they conveyed to an enthralled audience the waxing and waning fortunes of the great battles which they were describing and interpreting so expertly.

For the rest, there are interesting but fairly conventional chapters on cricket in England, the West Indies, and South Africa, and perceptive accounts of Australian teams on tour in these and other parts of the world. McGilvray is always fair and considerate in his judgements and at all times he handles the game of cricket, which has given him his main interest in life and his livelihood, with reverence and care.

The book suffers from a certain peripatetic darting hither and yon in its dealing with different eras and different personalities in the game, but is held together by a loose fidelity to the chronological career of its author. *The Game is Not the Same* is well produced and has some excellent photographs, although it suffers somewhat through not having an index, which is rather unusual in a cricket book published in 1985. Taken as a whole, however, the book is well written and well researched, and as such would make a worthy addition to the library of the discerning cricket book collector. It is particularly valuable for the insights which it throws on the history and development of cricket broadcasting, and for the understanding which its author displays throughout his narrative of the place which cricket enjoys as an expression of the social history of the times in which it is being played.

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