

Jas Scott, *Early Cricket in Sydney*, edited by Richard Cashman and Stephen Gibbs, Sydney: New South Wales Cricket Association, 1991. Ports., illus., index, scores, maps, appendices, pp. xviii+243. \$29.95. Available from S. Gibbs, NSWCA, 60 York Street, Sydney, 2000.

The New South Wales Cricket Association has reinforced its modern reputation of being the leading State body in the field of historical research with this fascinating study of early nineteenth century cricket in Sydney. Phillip Derriman's *True to the Blue*, published in 1985, has only since been emulated by South Australia in purpose, and now we have a detailed analysis of club cricket in Sydney from the earliest times to the first match between New South Wales and Victoria in 1856. There is much scope for catching up by the other States.

The research was actually carried out by a little-known student of the game, James Scott, so that by 1931 he was offering the manuscript to the NSWCA for publication. Despite a move by the Australian Cricket Board to get a series of State cricket histories underway in the 1930s, Scott was unsuccessful in his aim, and it was not for another 60 years, well after his death, that his mission was achieved. In the meantime, his daughter donated the handwritten manuscripts to the NSWCA, where students of cricket history have been able to peruse it for the past twenty years.

The manuscript has been prepared for publication by Richard Cashman and Stephen Gibbs, both well-known for their respective contributions to serious cricket study. Faced with the choice of either reproducing parts of two volumes that took the story up to 1861, or one volume in its entirety, they took the correct turn, so that we are faced with the prospect of perhaps another publication in the future.

Scott's work is a chronological foray into the evolution of club cricket in Sydney, as he was able to glean it from the newspapers of the day. He mixes a readable narrative with some keen analysis, and has provided 'full' scores of many matches, given that it was not the norm of

those days to keep bowling analyses, or even to note the bowler for dismissals other than 'bowled'. Other aspects that come under scrutiny include the rise and fall of cricket clubs, the changing attitude of the press to reporting cricket events, the evolution of bowling styles, from underarm to round-arm, patronage and organisation of the game, the struggle to secure land for cricket grounds, and even crowd behaviour.

Scott concludes his study with brief biographies of thirty seven of the more prominent players of the age, and Cashman and Gibbs then provide two appendices, one a list of Scott's writings and other pertinent publications, and the other a list of the matches whose scorecards appear in the book. A publication that might otherwise have been devoid of illustrations has been graced with a selection of contemporary prints depicting landscapes, buildings and portraits of leading cricket identities, gleaned from a variety of sources. Smaller diagrams used as space-fillers throughout the book also enhance considerably the presentation, as do the attractive colour prints that adorn the outside covers.

This excellent publication lends itself to many uses, not the least of which is an appreciation of how the game has evolved over the last century and a half. Contemporary views are well aired through the inclusion of direct excerpts from the newspapers of the day, as well as letter to the editor, while statisticians will no doubt find considerable food for study in the plethora of scorecards provided. For the reviewer, however, most interest was aroused by discovering that a small number of the players whose names appear in the scorecards also feature in the early cricket history of Hobart, which indicates a perhaps not surprising degree of mobility. As an example, Scott cites the record of Vernon Puzey, who played in Sydney between 1835 and 1840, as 'remarkable... for one who played for such a comparatively short time'. Research shows that Puzey was conducting a public house and playing cricket to a good standard at Hobart in the months before he left for Sydney. While the movements of RS Still and G Cavenagh have been previously documented, the appearance of C Evans and J Mace in some scorecards

fills a gap in the knowledge of these players who eventually became involved in fast-class cricket in other places. If similar studies of early cricket in the other centres of population in early Australia were to be undertaken, no doubt more information would come to light. It is to be hoped, therefore, that this study is the first of a series of similar projects that might be conducted by like-minded researchers around the country.

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