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## THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 2

### **CRICKET HISTORY: ITS SPREAD, SOPHISTICATED AND MODERNISATION OF THE GAME**

*(Author's note : Part 1 of this narrative, completed an account of the "pre-history" of the game as played in England. This second episode continues the historical development and social context of events which, within the last quarter of the 18th and first quarter of the 19th centuries, accelerated rapidly as the game emerged from its infancy to its years of maturity.)*

During this period, there were three sports which commanded the attention of the greater part of the population of England : Racing, Boxing and Cricket. Each had their different appeals but Cricket was the only team game then, (and for the ensuing sixty years), which had anything like mass support. Only in the 1890s did football (soccer) seriously rival Cricket as a game to play and watch nationally. Moreover, Cricket had a certain hieratic, if complex, quality. This, combined with its special Code of Laws (the basis of which was "fair play" and sportsmanship – quite unlike either Racing or Boxing at that time – set it apart and made it something which could appeal to those members of the public at all levels which has continued to the present day.

Sir John Major in his book *More than a game* (2007) has written: "It delights the eye and touches the soul. Part of this is physical: the smell of linseed oil on willow, the feel of ball on bat, the pleasure of holding a shiny new red ball, the clatter of disturbed stumps, the snick and catch that

turns heads, and, on the best of days, the scent of newly-mown grass under the warmth of the rising sun. There is no cricketer alive who has not enjoyed these sensations and cherished the memory of them".

The poet, A.A. Milne, also found it joy enough for him to be on a cricket pitch for him to write :

"...But what care I ? It's the game that calls me – Simply to be on the field of play; How can it matter what fate befalls me With ten good fellows and one good day!"

It also has had more positive attractions i.e. a fascinating, complicated, method of scoring, perhaps more so than any other team game known even today. In addition, it provided the opportunity for displaying a great variety of different physical skills during actual play, and it was - and still is - (outside of the current fashionable single-innings matches), the only game where you could, "come again", i.e. it was possible to have a disastrous first innings but subsequently recover and even win by an improved performance in the second innings.

This is surely one of the game's most attractive features and why those who advocate single-innings cricket are in danger of ridding it of one of the major keystones of its attraction.

The games "popularity was assisted by its sophistication" which took place to an enormous extent in the last part of the 1700s and early 1800s, so that with the approach of the dawn of the latter century, only three great changes had still to occur - LBW as a form of batsman's dismissal (1795), over-arm

bowling legalised (June 10, 1864) and declarations first permitted (1889). From a rustic game, with Laws only just emerging from the rural, it was now virtually flourishing to something like what we now recognise to be the modern game, in a span of only fifty years.

The Laws that were generally accepted were by then being laid down by the Marylebone Club but there is also clear evidence that these Laws were not the only Laws in existence. Unofficial Laws circulated in the following century which enshrined local variations of long standing and it seems more than likely that different versions of the game were being played in different parts of England during most of the 18th Century, and that it was only as the 19th Century approached that there was something like uniformity. (Even then, uniformity was not - and is yet to be completed in the early years of this 21st century - as we bow to the edicts of supplementary "Special regulations".)

It would be interesting to compute precisely how many matches each season nowadays over the whole country are played strictly according to all the official Laws. A glance through any Sunday newspaper with its coverage of Cricket in a particular region will demonstrate this. How many matches are finished on the completion of one innings each (or on a limited number of overs) with a great deal of time still to play, or by taking a "Duckworth/Lewis" computation into consideration when adverse conditions of ground, weather or light otherwise thwart a more

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natural conclusion, notwithstanding that the Laws, per se, clearly state that a match should be played out if there remains time to do so?

Consider what had been done within a few years of the formation of M.C.C. (which succeeded the former White Conduit Club in 1787). From hereon, and ever since, M.C.C. has been recognised (even internationally) as the sole authority for drawing up Cricket's various Codes and of approving subsequent amendments made to them, as has been deemed appropriate. It is perhaps astonishing that despite the many refinements that have been made to the successive Codes and their notes over the years, the basic fundamentals of the game have altered very little since the first Laws were made public in 1744.

As has already been seen and references made to in earlier paragraphs, very many tomes have been written about the origin and development of Cricket and its Laws, but until the publication (1987) of Teresa McClean's theme : *The Men in White Coats*— some thirty-four years after the foundation of The Association of Cricket Umpires — nowhere has the present researcher been able to trace a single volume which gives an ordered and specific account of, arguably, the most fundamental aspects of the game i.e. the need for, its genus and the evolutionary development of cricket umpiring and scoring. It is astonishing, too, that in his famous tome on the *History of Cricket*, Harry S. Altham is many pages into his text before the word "umpire" makes its first appearance, almost as an

afterthought. He tells us quite surprisingly perhaps that:

"Originally, there was probably only one umpire: the word itself means "an odd man" (non pair), called in to settle a difference and the text of the 1744 Code of Laws certainly suggested that the "oral tradition" only provided for one. But the exigencies of double wicket demanded a second and William Goldwin of Eton and King's College, Cambridge, speaks naturally of "Bini Moderatores".

In all the early prints, the umpires appear - to judge from their clothes (top hats, particularly) - as figures of some distinction; gentlemen, perhaps, "interested" in the match and chosen one by each side, the universal practice in early cricket history.

Two points about them call for special notice : the "square-leg" umpire is almost universally depicted, not where we should expect to find him, but in a position of imminent personal peril, at very "silly leg-slip" and both are always shown "fustibus innixi", leaning on their bats. Now (wrote H. Altham), in my own preparatory school days we invariably took along with us a bat "to umpire with", not, I believe, from motives of self-preservation, but simply from some unquestioned tradition."

Confirmation and explanation of this is to be found from two sources: in Old Etonian, William Goldwin's poem — the first narrative description of a game that survives — we read : "There stand the two umpires leaning upon their clubs whom the Law bids us to touch with a definite tap or we shall lose in vain the labour of our run", and the 14th

Article in the agreement for the Duke of Richmond's matches with Mr. Broderick also reads: "The Batsmen, for every run they count, are to touch the Umpire's stick". It would seem that this was the regulation practice, after the abolition of the popping hole, and before the definition of the popping crease, cited in the 1744 Code, rendered it obsolete. Tradition could well account for the umpires continuing to take bats along with them and for the "square-leg" umpire standing as close as the early pictures show him.

The most arduous of the umpire's duties — the LBW consideration — did not trouble William Goldwin's "moderators", nor their assessors for many a year to come. With the old type of long-curved bat the batsman would have had to stand so far from the wicket and to have used it like a hockey stick, that no question of "obstruction" could arise.

However, with the evolution of straight-bat play, what is now considered as "gamesmanship" intervened. John Small of Hambledon is said to have first introduced the straight bat (1771), designed with a slope, from handle to blade, in the manner of a champagne bottle. Its blade had shoulders almost square, yet, surprisingly, the overall size of the bat had no specific limitations. The following year, one "Shock" — how appropriate! — White of Reigate went to the crease armed with a monstrosity that was wider than the wicket! One of the opposing Hambledon players produced a knife and the bat was whittled down to respectable proportions, whilst White stood angrily by. It seems astonishing, in retrospect, that

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the necessity of defining a fixed size had not been realised earlier and it has to be assumed that, hitherto, the possibility had been covered by some unwritten custom and practice, that “Shock” White had chosen to ignore and thereby had precipitated a crisis.

The obvious absurdity eventually stirred authority (the M.C.C.) into action, as a result of which, the maximum width of the bat became limited to four and one quarter inches and has remained unaltered ever since. (N.B. An iron frame of the statute width was constructed and kept by the Hambledon Club, through which any bat of suspected dimensions was passed and allowed or rejected accordingly. This was the prototype of “gauges” which were later to become items of standardised equipment made available to umpires (particularly in the room provided to them for personal security purposes when officiating in matches involving “First-class” County cricket).

It was to be several years later (May 20th 1835), that a revised Code of Laws now limited the length of the bat to 38 inches overall and this dimension has not been altered since. It remains a point of interest that, within this limit, its blade may be as long as any batsman cares to choose. i.e., there is nothing to prevent him wielding a bat entirely composed of blade, should he feel such a weapon might suit his personal style!

Additional “gamesmanship” had arrived at much the same time (just prior to 1774) when one of the best hitters was so shabby as to put his leg in the way and take advantage of the bowlers, with the result that, in the 1774 Laws revision, the first reference to

LBW as a method of dismissal appears, although the offence was not specifically recorded in the score sheets as such until twenty-one years later when in August, 1795, in a match between Surrey and England at Moulsey Hurst, the Hon. John Tufton was recorded as “LBW, bowled Wells” for 3. Hitherto, such method of dismissal had been credited to the bowler as “bowled”.

This year (1774) was also important for other reasons in Cricket’s development when the weight of the ball was established at between five and a half and five and three-quarters ounces and from thereon until 1809, the visiting side had the choice of pitch and innings. (In 1780, Dukes of Penshurst made the first six-seamed ball and presented it to the Prince of Wales, later, George IV. (Farington in his diary of 1811, says that the Duke family had then been making cricket balls for 259 years – not impossible if a distinction is made between family and firm). The price of Duke’s best cricket ball in 1811 was now seven shillings (i.e. equivalent to 35p in today’s currency!).

The third stump was not introduced until 1775, by which time the wickets had grown in measurement to 22 x 6 inches, to be further increased in 1798 to 24 x 7 inches. The need for a third stump arose from another incident at Hambledon, where several deliveries from “Lumpy” Stevens were seen to pass through John Small’s wicket without disturbing the “furniture”. So, the need for the introduction of the third stump arrived as a sequel to restore justice to the bowler. Once again, with hindsight, it now seems

incredible that such gross injustice had not been removed long before. A year later (1777) saw the first record of a bowler being credited for catches off his own bowling.

There was no “lost ball” until 1809. With the introduction of two bails in 1816, the stumps were made two inches higher and, a year later, a further inch was added to both their overall length and width. (This size remained as standard until 1927, when MCC made it permissible for a wicket measuring 28 x 9 inches to be adopted – “if desired”).

“Wides” and “No Balls” were not put down as such in the score until 1827 and 1830 respectively, being formerly included as “byes”. The bowling was underarm, all along the ground (hence “bowling”, Drake style, but generally much faster), whilst owing to the prevailing curved shape of the bat, cutting was yet an unknown art. In 1797, “Handled Ball” was first recorded.

The Scorers – there were generally two (no doubt to watch each other!) sat together on the ground, well inside the field of play, and “notched” the runs on a wooden stick, cutting a deeper groove for every tenth run (to facilitate a tally at the end of an innings).

Since there was no universally accepted suggestion as to how the scores were to be recorded, it was left very much to the local preference of the individual.

One early West Indian method was to place a leaf into a hat for every run scored in the first innings and one leaf would be removed for every run scored during the second innings. When

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the hat became empty, one run would then be required by the side batting second to win, or the side batting first would have won by as many runs as leaves remained in the hat at the conclusion of the second innings.

Until the “scientific revolution” arrived, run-getting ruled so low that the method served, but it made no provision for individual scores and it is not until the Press began to find good copy in Cricket that we arrive with a detailed score-sheet, the first being that of the famous match, Kent versus All England in 1744. Even this account is economical of words as to the modes of dismissal. Gradually, as the 19th century progressed, more particulars were recorded but it is not until that century became considerably advanced that the bowler’s name is identified when a man was caught or stumped.

As from 1809, umpires were henceforth to select the pitch and the choice of innings was decided by the toss. However, in perhaps the first enduring classic of cricket literature: *The young cricketer’s tutor* by John Nyren, (first published in 1833) its author recognises the developing complexity of the Laws now necessitates the appointment of adjudicating umpires as early as his third paragraph, when he says “Umpires for the two parties must be chosen. All questions of dispute must be referred to them, whose decree must be final. These should be men of known competence to judge all points of the game; also of good repute for honesty of mind – free from partiality and prejudice. The umpires take their post, one at each wicket: he where the striker is should be partially behind it, so as not to interfere

with the fieldsmen; and the umpire at the bowler’s wicket should place himself directly in a line behind it, in order that he may perceive whether the ball be stopped by the striker’s leg; for if such accident should happen, and the ball have been delivered straight to the wicket, and the batter not have touched it with his bat, any of the adverse party may require the umpire to pronounce whether he should be out or not. If the ball has not been delivered straight to the wicket, and strike the batter, he is not out.”

Nyren then went on to include these Laws “according to the Revision of them by the Marylebone Club.” At this time, M.C.C. had not got around to numbering the Laws and there were no explanatory notes to accompany them, nor yet, any specific reference to the duties or even appointment of “Scorers”. The tenth section had this to say about umpires: “The umpires are the sole judges of fair and unfair play and all disputes shall be determined by them; each at his own wicket: but in case of a catch, which the umpire at the wicket bowled from cannot see sufficiently to decide upon, he may apply to the other umpire, whose opinion shall be conclusive. The umpires in all matches shall pitch fair wickets, and the parties shall toss for the choice of innings. They shall allow two minutes for each man to come in and fifteen minutes between each innings, when the umpire shall call “Play”. The party refusing to play shall lose the match. They are not to order a player out, unless appealed to by the adversaries. But if the bowler’s foot be not behind the bowling crease, and within the

return crease, when he delivers the ball, they must, unasked, call “No Ball”. (It was not until 1816 that such be applied for acts of “throwing”.) If the striker runs a short run, the umpire must call “one short”. The umpire at the bowler’s wicket is to be the first applied to to decide on all catches. The Umpires are not to be changed during the matches, except by the consent of both parties.”

(Since the guardians of the Law have been responsible for five total revisions of the Code of Laws: on May 19th 1835; 21st April, 1884; 7th May, 1947; 21st November, 1979; with a fifth revision coincided to make its appearance with the 2000 Millenium.)

In 1790, Hambledon bowler, Tom Walker, took the Law into his own hands by raising his arm in delivering the ball from his formerly traditional underarm position. This action caused such a furore that he hastily lowered it again to resume more conventional deliveries. But a seed had been sown and it was not long before other bowlers were seen to emulate his experiment.

In 1806, a Kentish bowler, John Willes, realised the potential of this new style of round-arm delivery and from hereon “chanced his arm” although M.C.C. had repeatedly warned against doing so. Despite all kinds of admonition, once Willes had reintroduced it, round-arm bowling made steady progress in the game, to such an extent that M.C.C. tried to prohibit it in a new Law which was so cumbrously worded as rather to have the opposite effect desired i.e. “The ball must be bowled (not thrown or jerked, and be

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delivered underhand, with the hand below the elbow. But if the ball be jerked or the arm extended from the body horizontally, and any part of the hand be uppermost, or the hand horizontally extended when the ball is delivered, the Umpire shall call "No Ball".

It seems strange to us now, with the hindsight of another 200+ years, why Law 10 was re-drafted in a way that was not clear to all., but as we now know from the investigations made into the legitimacy of bowling actions of such as Tony Lock and Muttiah Muralitharan, official opinion often comes up with "compromise" recommendations which are not universally supported.

Thus, despite the primacy of M.C.C., the Willes dispute simmered on and although frowned upon by many, round-arm bowling continued – and prospered – in informal games with even umpires approving its use where both sides agreed. The M.C.C. disapproved, but simply looked on with a subsequent crunch becoming inevitable.

The showdown came on 15th July, 1822 when a match at Lord's was arranged when round arm bowling would feature and be judged. As judges, came two old players, now umpires, Harry Bentley and Noah Mann. Everyone knew what was at stake and it would have been astonishing if the umpires had not been primed for the impact of their decisions. M.C.C. won the toss and elected to bat. Ashby completed the first over and was not called for a "No Ball", so round-arm bowling had passed the first part of its crucial test but in the second over, bowled by John Willes, he was

called for making illegal deliveries by Umpire Bentley. Willes saw that, for all his efforts, he had been lured into a trap. He had lost his gamble with round-arm bowling being outlawed at the High Court of Cricket.

Frustrated, angry and racked with disappointment, he deserted his team, marched from the pitch, mounted his horse, galloped from Lord's vowing never to play cricket again and , according to Harry Altham, "rode out of Cricket's history". Not quite true, since he soon took up umpiring himself, promoted matches and coached cricketers at Sutton Valence, Kent. He would live to see his argument won and within three years he would discover and coach one of the games great icons, Alfred Mynn – and Mynn would bowl round-arm!

Despite the intransigence exhibited by the M.C.C. traditionalists in regard to round-arm bowling, many bowlers increasingly demonstrated their preference for such deliveries and, in 1827 the problem was to be re-visited with the arrangement of three experimental matches between Sussex and England at Cricket's H.Q. with the result that the round-arm bowling action perfected by W, Lilywhite and James Broadbridge became legalised as an alternate form of delivery to the conventional under-arm lob. (It was also in this year that "Wides were first recorded as such.) Encouraged by the official dispensation which now allowed round-arm bowling, it was only a year later (1828) that, in search of greater lift, the bowler's hand was permitted to be raised level with his elbow, and, later still, to shoulder level.

Some, bowlers were even more adventurous and, if they could get away with it without being called by discreet umpires for infringement, elevated their arms even higher to the over-arm or "throwing" position.

Indeed, by the 1840s, over-arm bowling, although not yet legalised, was almost universally practised. Beyond saying that, it has not been possible to trace a specific date when underarm bowling generally ceased to be the primary method of delivery with the pitched ball taking its place, but so far as the great games were concerned, the practice of underarm deliveries continued much longer - (indeed, they have never been totally outlawed, even today, and ESCUSA umpires will already know that if and when any current bowler is consistently "called" for illegal infringement, in order to complete his over and, to avoid continued penalty, he may be advised to notify the umpire (and batsman) of his intended change in method of delivery to underarm).

Many self-respecting umpires of that period resented the fact that Authority ( M.C.C.) was turning a blind eye to the raging controversy by making the determination of permissiveness of the over-arm deliveries their responsibility. The majority of umpires' opinion was that M.C.C. should take appropriate action against illegal bowlers directly, believing that minor Clubs would then follow the directive and, thereby, the problem would solve itself. Umpire Robert Thoms (who was to umpire the first Test Match in England at the Oval in 1880) took it upon himself to talk privately to those individual

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bowlers whose actions he thought to be illegal. He pleaded with them that it was up to them rather than umpires collectively to save the game from anarchy by bowling with orthodox actions. Other umpires, notably William Caldecott and John Lillywhite, were made of sterner stuff. The former, "honest" Will, made his name by fearlessly "no balling" all over-arm deliveries, and in the M.C.C. v Sussex match at Lord's in 1839, consternation developed as he repeatedly "called" Hodson, an over-arm Sussex hero, when his colleague, Bartholomew Good, did not.

In 1829, "No balls" were to be scored as such and debited as one run, and a year later, shown separately on the score sheet. In the Yorkshire v Norfolk fixture for 1834, the first full bowling analysis was recorded, and included, for the first time, "maiden" overs. In 1835, the length of the bat was now limited to 38 inches and a follow-on became compulsory after a deficit of 100 runs (reduced to 80 from 1854 and 60 in a one-day match). 1838 saw the circumference of the ball established between 9 inches and nine and one quarter inches.

In 1840, the interval between innings now reverted from 15 to 10 minutes, but in practice often remained longer until the 20th Century.

In 1845, M.C.C. felt moved to re-define the wording of dubious deliveries warranting the call of "no ball" and forbade umpires to take part in fixtures where obedience to the Laws might be suspect. However, the official crusade was fighting a losing battle and deliveries with the action of a "conceded throw"

continued to be generally tolerated without penalty in the country at large. By 1851, M.C.C. backtracked again (!) when the Umpires were told: "As it is impossible to define a "throw" or "jerk", each Umpire must form his own opinion." However, the power of fact overcame conjecture of theory as M.C.C. eventually allowed the bowler's hand to be raised to a higher level.

1846 saw the telegraph score board introduced at Lord's, where score-cards were sold for the first time that season. (Also about this time (1850/55), the mowing machine began to be used on cricket grounds but sheep continued to graze at Lord's for several more years to keep the grass sufficiently cropped to facilitate play.)

In 1862, an All England team met Surrey at the Oval. England had amassed 503 runs – the highest total on record at this time – when Edgar Willsher, opened the bowling. Umpire John Lillywhite instantly called the bowler for "throwing" i.e. having his hand higher than his shoulder, whereupon Willsher strode angrily from the field, in similar fashion to John Willes forty years earlier. On this occasion, the bowler was supported by the whole England team who walked off the field as the crowd of five thousand rushed on.

Pandemonium raged and play was suspended and resumed the next day with a fresh umpire, Lillywhite refusing to revise his opinion. Willsher was to bowl untroubled for the remainder of the match.

A year later, M.C.C. sought the opinion of the County Clubs over the vexed question of

throwing/bowling. The response to the enquiry was overwhelmingly in favour of over-arm bowling, but typically indecisive, M.C.C. decided to ignore things for a further season! So it was on June 10th, 1864 when the final switch was made by the Laws' guardian, permitting the bowler's crane-like arm to climb to the vertical. The volume of "Scores and Biographies" of that time bewailed: "This new rule would never have been passed or found favour with any having pretensions to the least knowledge of the noble science, only it was found impossible to obtain umpires (not only at Lord's but all over the country) who could, would or "dared" impartially carry out the Law as it existed previously."

The advent of over-arm bowling had now marked the arrival of the modern game. The over-arm action rendered possible not only a synthesis of all the attributes of lob and round-arm bowling which were (and are still!) extant – witness the action of the current Sri Lankan World Cup finalist, Lasith Malinga! – it also lent scope for fresh tricks. The break-back for example, which cannot be exploited with a low arm, sprang naturally from a high delivery. "All the virtues inherent in former styles are given to the over-arm delivery; and a far greater number of different balls is possible to it alone; different in flight and pace; in pace off the pitch to the angle at which it leaves it, to an almost infinite degree. Hence the development of batting skill, of new strokes, which followed this most important change. We often forget, however, that the "best" of any method is the best, and

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although the possibilities of over-arm are so great, the actual realised may be, and often is, inferior to what is highest in a method of lower rank." These are words from Albert E. Knight's sadly neglected book *The Complete Cricketer* (Methuen, 1906). They seem to sum up in a sentence or two all that happened of lasting significance in that period, when the bowler learned to raise his arm, without throwing, from the round-arm to what Frederick Gale described as "the Catherine wheel" action.

The reader will have noticed that this was the second time in the 19th Century that authoritative legislation had defined what should, in future, be regarded as the definition of a legal delivery. (An additional earlier attempt had also been made to insist upon only the status quo of the original underarm delivery following the disputed deliveries of John Willes, but Law 10, as redrafted, was unclear and made little difference to this interim revision being universally supported). However, this latest revision, in spite of continuous "traditionalist" opposition, had moved legitimate bowlers' deliveries from the original under-arm grubs, lobs or "length" bowling through to the over-arm ("high arm") of Ned Willsher (1884) via the "round-arm" of John Willes.

All three methods of delivery, as defined, caused problems of interpretation for umpires, largely because authority had not been sufficiently diligent in accurately describing what should be outlawed as a "throw". In this respect, it is helpful to revisit a suggestion first made by G.B. Buckley in his publication (1744) : *First light on 18th century*

*Cricket*, further amplified as follows by Roland Bowen (1970); "Bowling has two meanings : one is the original meaning of rolling a ball along the ground, and the other is its special Cricket meaning of the bowler delivering a ball to the batsman within the definition of the current Laws. Throwing also has two meanings : one is the normal straightforward meaning of propelling a ball other than by rolling it and the other is its special Cricket meaning, which has altered with the years, of a bowler's delivery which is not in accordance with the current Laws. Until the mid-18th century, all cricket bowling was true bowling. What we had then was called "underarm" and this may be "Cricket" bowling but it is not true bowling – it is true throwing ! If anyone doubts this, let him "bowl" "underarm" and "throw" "underarm" and he will be hard put to find any difference, for there is none. "Round-arm", when it first appeared before the eighteenth century was out and before it was legalised, was at first called "cricket throwing", as its delivery did not differ from the "underarm delivery" which was true throwing, save only that the arm was raised outwards from a vertical, or near vertical, plane in which the "underarm" had been delivered. It followed that it was not only "cricket throwing" it was also true throwing, like "underarm". But "underarm" was not regarded as throwing by cricketers; nor, when "round-arm" was legalised was it regarded as throwing by cricketers. We thus reach a stage where "round-arm" was recognised as "cricket bowling" but also true throwing ! It is

fascinating that it was originally condemned as "straight-armed" bowling"! In due course, "round-arm" became "over-arm": and, as with "round-arm", "over-arm" at first was regarded by cricketers as throwing. In so far as the delivery was no more than a more vertical "round arm", it was indeed true throwing. At some unknown stage, the idea took root that "cricket bowling" involved a straight arm. In due course, "over-arm" was legalised as "cricket bowling" but it was not true bowling; having become legalised, after a period of time cricketers began to discern two types of "over-arm" bowling: one, which was not to be distinguished from "round-arm" and which was a throw, a true throw, and one which became what cricketers regard as legitimate bowling, but which is, all the same, still truly a throw. The former came to be penalised as "cricket throw"; the latter is accepted as being correct. Note that all the way from the beginning of "under-arm", all "cricket bowling" has in fact been true throwing ! The distinction that cricketers make is an artificial one, and, if, for example, "over-arm" were suddenly made illegal, what they call throwing would prevail in almost every delivery, and in fact every delivery would be a true throw, as it is now. But a true throw is not a "cricket throw" and a "cricket bowl" is not a true bowl!"

(Author's note: ESCUSA members may wish to re-read and digest the above paragraphs a number of times before arriving at a consistent interpretation of what Buckley and Bowen were attempting to convey!)

Nevertheless, the outcome of

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this indecisive saga was far reaching for umpires. It encouraged them to be more self-sufficient, since there seemed little point in looking to ineffective authority for leadership and support. Even those umpires less concerned with objective considerations made their reputations as strong-willed individuals (if they were consistent in their adjudications). John Bayley of Surrey's famous Mitcham Club (again!) became much respected as one of this new breed of quiet and self-effacing umpires. Increasingly, from hereon, umpires' names began to appear in match notices and reports, as the game's enthusiasts wanted to know who the appointed officials were to be, in order that they might give the fixture a proper assessment.

Despite the responses to the need for change, highlighted by the several Code revisions, in confirmation of the sage words of Harry Altham; "Cricket is endless in its appeal to all who come to love and understand it". This becomes further endorsed by those, who, at one time or another, have donned the white coat to stand in a match as umpire. Yet players, umpires, administrators and spectators- indeed all those in any way "involved" who "came to love the game" - also knew well enough that part of the charm, affection and fascination for this, arguably, the best of all team games given and refined by Englishmen to the world, was derived from the fact that it is both difficult to understand and no less complicated in its execution.

Whether "appointed" or "volunteered", history records that the lot of an umpire is not

always a happy one. In a match between Richmond and Reigate on August 29th, 1833, the last man on the Richmond side, C. Aris, was given "run-out" by the "Reigate" umpire. This decision was considered so unfair by H. Aris - brother of the above - that he appealed to the crowd to seize the umpire and duck him in the river! The umpire would have been so ducked had it not been for the interference of his friends and the respectable portion of those present.

The 18th and 19th Centuries saw the popular appeal of cricket blossoming throughout all levels of Society as the preferred summer pastime, firstly at boys' schools and colleges, then later, at Universities and the Counties and eventually on an international basis.

In researching Cricket's origin and development, the literary genius, Neville Cardus, reminds us so vividly in "Cricket" (1930) that: "More than any other game, I take it, does a man play Cricket throughout his life, from infancy to mature age. He takes to Golf, often enough, when youth is far behind, also to lawn tennis. He is almost born into Cricket, and when he has become short in the wind and rather immovable in the flesh, he sits in the pavilion (or in the shilling seats) and plays the game by proxy, saying of Hobbs: "There, but for the Grace of the Lord, go I". As a child, he bowls underhand grubs - even as in the early days of Cricket were bowled by the great players. On the sands, by the seaside, every English boy has defended a wicket as primitive as the ancient hurdle - and has defended it with a bat not far removed from the curved weapon used in the distant past.

To say the truth, most Englishmen live over again as they play Cricket, boy and man, for years its technical history and development. The day a boy first attempts overhands is as epochal in his life as the day was in cricket history when, in 1807, John Willes bowled with his arm as high as his shoulder. When a boy can boast a control of the overarm ball, the day is as important to him as the day on which he first wears long trousers- the day to be remembered throughout his longest years .....

.....And the boys who have the best of the fun are those so poor that they have to begin at the very beginning, with crude sticks and lumps of wood. There is an old print which depicts a group of ragged boys tossing for innings in a meadow. It is not a coin they have sent spinning into the air but a war-worn cricket bat. If it falls down with the hump of the wood facing upwards, the lad who called "round" will take first knock. "Round or Flat?" I once asked Sir James Barrie if he ever tossed for innings in this way. "What other way is there?" he replied. Watch any group of poor lads on a common playing Cricket together and you are not far from Cricket's first and eternally flowing source, the font of baptism, now and always, and forever. The Law was not administered by umpires in our youthful matches; often a decision was put to a trial of strength. The bat was regarded as a symbol of office by the boy who happened to be holding it when the argument began. Perhaps there were no bails in use and or, perhaps, the contention was whether the ball had hit the wicket or not. "You're out!"

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“No, I’m no !” “It hit the middle stump!” “No it didn’t !” It was at this point that we would put the dispute to the arbitrament of force. The attacking side descended upon the batsman and sought to sunder him from the bat. Once he had let go of it he was understood to have given up his last right to remain at the wicket – that mysterious and indefensible right which is based upon possession.”

So, even this early picture, penned from the memoirs of Cardus’s schooldays, confirmed the developing need for some form of umpiring jurisdiction !

In 1868, the first overseas team to tour England arrived from Australia to promote a prolific interest in the game and stimulated a great enthusiasm which was being mirrored in towns and villages with a centrifugal-like distribution of local cricket clubs throughout the length and breadth of the country, some of which arranged their matches at most unorthodox times of the day. Mr. Frederick Gale, in his interesting : *Echoes from old cricket fields*, published the following cricket Bill : “Novel Match - A Cricket match between the “Upper Mitcham Early Risers” versus “Lower Mitcham Peep-o-Day Club” will be played on lower Mitcham Green on Wednesday mornings July 6th and 13th, 1870. Wickets will be pitched at 3.30 a.m. Play to commence at four precisely. Stumps to be drawn at seven o’clock each morning”. Surely, no greater proof is needed to show how great a hold the game had upon cricketers of that time generally ?

As the developing game became more sophisticated, additional

duties, involving increased understanding and supervision by the Umpires were necessary. In 1870, the heavy roller was first introduced at Lord’s and a bowler was allowed to change ends twice during an innings, provided he did not bowl more than two overs in succession. (Previously, the 1744 Code only permitted him to change ends once in an innings.) In 1889, this Law was further amended to permit him to change ends as often as he liked. In 1872, Lord’s experimented for the first time in covering the pitch before the start of the match. This period saw many changes in the style of cricketers’ dress. By the 1880s coloured shirts were no longer in vogue and had been replaced by plain white, made from a variety of materials, while the white trousers remained. Belts were now disappearing as the trousers now had an elastic support at the back of the waist. Later, it became fashionable to hitch up the trousers with a sash tied around the waist displaying club colours. Gaiety was introduced by the wearing of multi-coloured blazers with caps to match. These caps with small peaks had taken the place of the billycock and pillbox, though straw hats were still worn by some players. As a safeguard against adverse weather conditions, the pullover or sweater began to appear. In footwear, shoes were gradually superseded by boots (initially brown coloured but these in turn gave way to white buckskin or canvas type). Batsmen wore batting gloves ranging from the glove type to the open palm and finger-stall design with a layer of rubber on the back. The gauntlet form of glove was used by wicket keepers. Leg guards were made of cane and padding, covered with

white leather. Umpires dress became similarly sartorially elegant. They were now wearing cloth caps and white coats in place of the early tall black top hats and, later, “bowlers”, black coats and matching trousers.

In 1884, the new Laws specifically mentioned boundaries for the first time, although the practise had been operating long before with varying allowances. The allowance of six was only given for hits out of the ground. The same Code also legalised five or six ball overs for one-day cricket, but this practice was also widely observed long before.

A further five years were to elapse (1889) before 5-ball overs were legalised for all Cricket. Also introduced during this year was a permitted declaration, although this was limited to one-day matches, or the third day of a three-day match. This limit was gradually lessened but it was not until 1957 that the restriction was abolished altogether to allow a declaration to be allowed at any time. From now on (1889), a bowler could no longer bowl two overs in succession, but otherwise could change ends whenever he pleased.

To counter any problem an umpire might have of a bowler who had a doubtful action, he was instructed to call “No Ball” if not absolutely satisfied with the fairness of a delivery – either umpire could make this call. In further addition, the ball now became “dead” whether struck with the bat or not if it lodged in a batsman’s clothing.

The first mention of a specified interval for tea came in 1892 in a match at Glasgow between Scotland and Yorkshire.

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In 1900, six ball overs were now legalised for all matches. The follow-on became optional after 150 runs deficit in a three-day match, 100 in a two day match and 75 runs in a one-day match.

Another amendment in 1902 extended the bowling crease from three feet to four on either side of the wicket which provided the bowler with a little more room to vary his angle of delivery.

It is probably true to say that much of the intense euphoria for the game that by now was developing nationally, was stimulated largely by the skills and feats of one man, a medical practitioner, Dr. William Gilbert Grace, born in the small Gloucestershire village of Downend, near Bristol on July 18th 1848. (and who, throughout his fruitful playing career consistently bowled with a most effective “round-arm” action, most probably because he recognised that it was generally more difficult for his opposing batsmen to score off round-arm than over-arm deliveries, since direction could not be maintained consistently from the former method of delivery).

“W.G.” did more than any other man who has ever lived to popularise Cricket – at least Harry Altham was convinced of this as he wrote in his *History of Cricket*: “His genial personality, his jovial form, his inexhaustible vitality, stamina and enthusiasm, all combined with his prodigious prowess to make him the focus for an empire’s devotion to the game. He was incomparably, the greatest “draw” of all the sportsmen of history. He was the nearest approach to a living embodiment of “John Bull” that England has seen and however

much H.G. Wells may sneer at “the tribal gods for whom people would die”, I can believe that the Bishop of Hereford read deeper into the heart of man when he spoke of “W.G” the words with which his memorial biography so closely fits: “Had Grace been born in ancient Greece, the Iliad would have been a different book. Had he lived in the Middle Ages, he would have been a Crusader and would now have been lying with his legs crossed in some ancient Abbey, having founded a great family. As he was born when the world was older, he was the best known of all englishmen and the king of that english game least spoilt by any form of vice”.

In 1907, a new ball was permitted for the first time after 200 runs had been scored off it. Hitherto, it had been customary to take a new ball only if its predecessor had been damaged. Three years later, six runs were henceforth awarded for hits over the boundary (not only for those hit out of the ground).

Despite all the aforementioned changes and amendments to the Laws in respect of which Umpires would have been expected to be knowledgeable and competent in applying, there was no recognised body of such officials at this time, even at first-class level. Each County brought its own to the match and “W.G” was known to remark that in his young days, those from Lancashire and Nottingham generally knew which side was batting ! Moreover, he himself, also knew well enough that the umpires’ very being was testimony to human weakness and that players, like all other mortals, at times are tainted with original sin and have known from

time immemorial that there are limits beyond which they must not be tempted. Even the humblest of these, with the best of intentions, admitted that he was not fitted to be a judge in his own cause. Thus, the necessity arose for the two-man conciliation and arbitration service – the “team” of cricket umpires – the most respected of whom are those whose decisions are recognised as being highly consistent, born of a detailed knowledge of the Laws and coupled with a sound field technique in applying them, nurtured from increasing vocational experience.

Despite this salutary truth, the demand for the satisfactory supply of competent umpires at any period of cricket’s history has never been matched numerically. It has been reliably estimated, that by the turn of the 19th Century, less than half of one percent of all cricket played in the United Kingdom had been designated “first-class” and this imbalanced ratio has not materially altered even as time has now moved beyond the arrival of the millennium. It has been seen as the game evolved, that awareness of, as well as respect for, changes and modifications in Cricket Law had increased and that “first-class” matches came to be directed ably and impartially by (predominantly) retired ex-professional players, just as it is today.

In his introduction to Teresa McCleans book: *The Men in White Coats* (1987), E.W. Swanton adds : “ The one rider to this tribute which has always applied is the extreme reluctance of even the best umpires – N.b. he is referring here to those operating

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in First-Class cricket alone – to make a moral judgement in respect of unfair play. Whether it be “throwing” or intimidation or the niggling gamesmanship that is so irritating today, umpires are seldom prepared to apply Laws which would land their fellow professionals into serious trouble, deprive them even of their livelihood.”

Despite the remarkable advances made in technology applied to Cricket over recent decades, the recruitment of umpires in the lower echelons of the game, is still often left to chance and the overall standard of umpiring can thereby be unacceptably low.

As this narrative has, at last, reached the early years of the 21st century, it seems appropriate (if somewhat belated) to quote the thoughts expressed by “The Master” of English Cricket made in 1935. The following is an extract from *My Life Story* by the first Knight of Cricket, Sir John Berry Hobbs, published by the Star Publications Department, Fleet Street, London, EC4: “The umpire is in the field all the time that the match lasts. The value of good umpiring to a player cannot be overstated. The batsman has no qualms: he can go in with all confidence and play his natural game. Moreover, the bowler knows how useless it is to make frivolous appeals. Thus the game becomes more enjoyable. Bad umpires fray the temper of players. My sympathy goes out to the Saturday afternoon and Club players, who, I am told, suffer from umpiring of a very different character. The unfortunate batsman is given out LBW whenever the ball hits him and wherever it pitches. Many umpires do not understand the LBW rule and do not attempt to;

yet it is so simple that the failure of so many to grasp it is amazing. A mistake by a football referee is seldom fatal – say, for instance, a wrongly given free kick. More often than not it comes to nothing. In the case of a batsman it is either “in” or “out”.

Obviously, it isn’t “cricket” for a cricketer to take advantage of poor umpiring, when it is clearly a case of “not out”. I fear that Club Cricket is often spoiled by the partiality of umpires and the remedy would appear to lie in having a properly constituted Umpires’ Association.”

In retrospect, one has to wonder if the pragmatic hopes expressed by Jack Hobbs at the time of the gathering storm which was the precursor to World War II, was the specific seed sown in the mind of his disciple, Tom Smith, which led the latter to found (1953) the very organisation that Hobbs had in mind some eighteen years later, with the predominant objective of “improving the standard of umpiring”.

*(Author’s note: The opening salvos of Tom Smith’s incredible crusade will continue to be addressed in the next issue of the ESCUSA Newsletter).*

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