

Sport and Race in Colonial Natal

C.B. Llewellyn, South Africa's First Black Test Cricketer

As the nineteenth century drew to a close in Natal, a combination of factors led to an intensification of racist attitudes which manifested themselves in all aspects of life including sport and recreation. Cricket, the imperial sport par excellence, carried with it immense moral metaphor and political symbolism deemed to supply the character necessary to rule large populations of subject peoples.¹ Attitudes implicit in cricket engendered a superior sense of group cohesion and feelings of great self-assurance.² Cricket and Empire were conflated in the popular imagination: 'The empire, like cricket, was hard to explain to outsiders, but like cricket it was a game that the British played'.³ Its nobility, sense of fair play and generosity provided, it was popularly thought, a set of symbols for belief and action that created a system in which every white man would get his chance.⁴ Cricket as the British national game provided the 'cultural bond of white imperial fraternity'⁵ and promoted ethnic unity, self confidence and ascendancy while encouraging social distance. Sport differentiated the British from everyone else and encouraged overblown sentiments such as that expressed by 'Cypher' at the outbreak of the Great War: 'with such traditions as Natal now possesses nothing less than a German occupation of the Province will kill the spirit of cricket which prevails'.⁶ There was but a short step from this set of values to open racism and a sense of otherness. The mystique associated with cricket in particular provided psychological comfort in settler societies where the authority of the white minority was always fragile. The myth included not just ability but also style:



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‘the goal was not the back of the net but ascendancy to a higher plane of awareness of one’s individual and *collective* role in life.’⁷ This being so, imperial sport ‘sought to simultaneously impress and intimidate locals with its power and superiority’.⁸ Touring teams from England promoted this ideology: Pelham Warner, having captained England on its 1905–6 tour of South Africa, wrote of ‘fighting spirit’, ‘British manhood’, ‘fair play’ and ‘hearty good fellowship’.⁹

The concept of Home was frequently invoked in relation to sport. A book of biographical sketches of England players on the 1909–10 cricket tour describes them as arriving at the ‘short end of the Dark Continent’.¹⁰ The locals were routinely referred to as colonials and the essential image was that of parent and child: ‘The Mother Country and her sturdy Australian and South African sons’.¹¹ Even when South Africa beat England for the first time in a cricket test match, this was turned to imperial advantage as it was held to show ‘that grit and courage which we are so proud of saying are inherent in the British race’.¹² Local identity manifesting itself as white nationalism thus co-existed with imperial sentiment; although in ways which might be interpreted as deferential, creating a ‘mutual self-congratulation’ also noted in Australian sports history.¹³ Perkin argues that beating England, the Mother Country, was a rite of passage for settler communities and an indicator, perhaps, of suitability for eventual dominion status.¹⁴ Metropolitan approval in the sphere of sport has also been noted in the context of the Caribbean, with ‘white West Indian colonials seeking approval and recognition of their achievements from their “motherland” in this cultural arena...frantic...in the quest for approval from the MCC’.¹⁵ Sport proved a suitably elastic bond, one which was durable but allowed leeway for pupil to beat master, thus ensuring a safety valve for local nationalist aspirations as long as metropolitan ascendancy was maintained overall.

Sport was a major factor in defining British space throughout an empire in which ‘there was little of substance to bind together geographically divided and quite distinctive colonial locales’.¹⁶ Although one quarter of the World’s land mass was British, psychological security required the regularising of local conditions and the familiarity of established customs. As Spufford points out, the red portions of the map were no longer ‘abroad’ in the strict sense of the term: exotic and widely spaced parts of the World were ‘ultimately gathered in a British hand’.¹⁷ Baucom writes about the ‘geographic assurance’ of the Edwardian era which would have been sustained by ‘contagiously English places scattered throughout the British Empire’ making up ‘England’s authentic and auratic architecture of belonging’.¹⁸ One may even go so far as to emphasise the territoriality of the individual sports field and the psychological significance of the boundary. Certainly the club was a ‘comforting enclave of Englishness’ for people who were often, albeit subconsciously, fearful of their colonial surroundings.¹⁹ Anywhere in the world a cricket ground, in particular, would be interpreted as a distinctive space of unquestionable British origin.²⁰ As Barnett puts it, the playing field was ‘a powerful instrument for inculcating common responses, common values and a common outlook’.²¹ The consequential ‘accentuated Englishness’²² produced sentiments of security and togetherness but in the process demanded social conformity and racial exclusivity. Bose notes the same process on the sub-continent: ‘...the British saw cricket as a way of keeping their own community together with little or no place there for the Indians’.²³ As Katz emphasises, imperial psychology was a mixture of insecurity and aggression both of which found meaning in comforting symbols and familiar space. This in turn

induced complacency and ‘protected markets of the mind’ such that ‘The values and beliefs of the imperial world settled like a sediment in the consciousness of the British people’.²⁴ For the British colonial settler, sport was one of the storehouses of national memory. K.S. Ranjitsinhji, writing in the 1890s, captured this well in the South African context: ‘No doubt when people play the game on a rough jumble of veldt-grass and mine-tailings on the outskirts of Johannesburg, half the pleasure they find is the result of association of ideas. The feel of a bat and its sound against the ball bring back memories of the green turf and cool breezes of England’.²⁵

This perpetuated social, and in colonial societies racial, distance. But simultaneously technological change shrank effective geographical distance during the last years of the nineteenth century. In Edwardian England, ‘middle-class bodies established a spatial hegemony, increasing significantly the number of places from which the non-select were excluded’.²⁶ Indeed, this very process in the sphere of recreation may have helped to define the middle classes more tightly. In Natal, of course, a segregationist policy was well entrenched during the nineteenth century and exclusive social institutions were the norm. Where blacks had been integrated into South African recreation as in the Cape they were increasingly removed. Throughout the Empire, ‘Social distances were considered an important and integral part of maintaining order’.²⁷ Marina Warner provides a startlingly apposite example from West Indian cricket which might equally well apply to Natal: ‘the lime demarcation lines in the turf that divided Englishmen from foreigners and natives could be rubbed out in the climate of the islands all too easily by passing feet’.²⁸ As Jarvie points out, the delineation of recreation was not predicated simply upon race but on an ‘ensemble of social relations characterizing the...social formation’.²⁹ Indeed, as cricket’s most famous writer, C.L.R. James, pointed out (before globalisation), sport reflected local society.

The racism of mid-Victorian England, the origin of Natal’s social mores, centred around the acceptance of stereotypes and, illogically in an entrepreneurial age, the denial of individualism and self-improvement. People were confined from birth to pre-determined and rigid groups in what Lorimer describes as a ‘new pessimism about human nature’.³⁰ Paternalist tendencies and a colour-class dichotomy in the colonies engendered amongst ‘the...articulate, influential wealthy middle class the cult of gentility...[and]...a greater social exclusiveness and arrogance’.³¹ In Natal the reaction of a self-perceived beleaguered minority was to assert its homogeneity while exaggerating, via gross stereotyping, the otherness of communities that were not white. The frontier behaviour of South African white society impelled ‘religious, moral and cultural barriers between itself and its neighbours’.³² The emergence of an aggressive nationalism, based on the concept of the British Race, may be described in terms of a sporting metaphor: ‘the Empire was less about “fair play” and equality before the law than about racial differentiation and inequality based on colour’.³³ The spirituality that was assumed to be implicit in the British Empire merged seamlessly into moral superiority,³⁴ nowhere better illustrated than in Natal: ‘feelings of white, if not Anglo-Saxon, uniqueness imbued what was really just another tawdry form of racism with the aura of a religious movement’.³⁵

Policy towards those who were not white in Natal at the turn of the century was characterised by growing control designed to protect the ‘civilised’ population. The perceived threat by immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, particularly those urbanised

free individuals known as ‘Arabs’, led to virulent racism. Stereotypical attitudes held by whites of Indians included disease, lack of sanitation, low moral fibre and a poor standard of living. They were useful as labourers but not welcome as permanent, especially urban, settlers.³⁶ The real, underlying fear was that of commercial competition and the regulatory reaction was fierce. As late as 1880 the by-laws of both Pietermaritzburg and Durban required Indians to have a pass to be on the streets after 9 p.m.³⁷; and they were denied the franchise, subject to harsh licensing laws and legally declared to be ‘uncivilised’. Indians were treated abusively and described as the ‘Asiatic curse’ and the ‘scum of Madras and Calcutta,’ even in the Natal Legislature. In a significant indicator of territoriality they were sometimes pushed off pavements. In the conflict over street trading in Durban, Indians were portrayed as ‘distasteful...repulsive...and an impediment to achieving a “beautiful” modern city’³⁸ in terms of white notions of cleanliness, attractiveness and orderliness. Freund describes anti-Indian racism as ‘often crude, and even violent’³⁹: ‘The British Indian was penalized not for his vices but for his virtues’,⁴⁰ even when he displayed the requisite measure of deference.

Although Indians were vital to the economy of Natal, ‘The coolie is at once the salvation and the danger of Natal’.⁴¹ Neame goes on to point out that the value of Indians as unskilled labourers was resented when they became competitors: ‘He is taking up work which, in the climate of Natal, could be and should be performed by the white man’.⁴² The ambition and ability of Indians also encroached upon clerical work as well as agriculture and commerce and seriously threatened the concept of Natal as a White Man’s country. Sir Abe Bailey, the influential sports benefactor, believed that Indians should have no rights in South Africa. The overall effect of regulations and public opinion was to encourage the idea that the Indian population was not permanent. This idea had popular support, as explained by Huttenback: ‘God had preserved certain unique qualities to the “British race” and they were lacking...in...Indians’.⁴³ Many whites displayed greater antipathy towards Indians than they did towards Africans.

Africans were treated as minors and with a ‘curious blend of paternalism, fear and contempt’ that reinforced their subordinate status.⁴⁴ A writer associated with the Hilton College Mission noted an ‘inclination amongst schoolboys...to be familiar with a Native one minute and kick him the next’.⁴⁵ The bitter controversy that took place in Pietermaritzburg in 1904 and 1905 about the use of pavements is a significant example of the dynamics of the race-space conflict that has a bearing on sport. As the local paper described it, ‘The majority of persons are agreed in condemning the practice of allowing natives and coloured persons generally to walk on the pavements of the City’. Their presence was described as ‘impertinent obstruction’ and a health hazard. There were now enough whites in Pietermaritzburg, it was argued, to ban blacks altogether from the pavements ‘to effectively prevent ladies and white men being impertinently jostled by offensive blacks’. By-law 2 gave the municipality powers in this regard, but enforcement required prosecution under a sympathetic magistrate.⁴⁶ Letter writers to the press panicked about health, complaining about ‘contagion from unsavoury blacks’ and ‘Indians, who are usually filthier and more objectionable than the natives’; and even threatened vigilante action. When one correspondent attacked these racist sentiments, the editor defended them on the grounds that the issue was one of smell, not race.⁴⁷ Another objection was to recreational use made of the street, for instance ‘boys practi[sing] their war dance on the pavement to the strains of a mouth organ’.⁴⁸ Less extreme opinion

argued that blacks needed civilising by drawing them into the market economy as customers at segregated counters; and suggested that pavement segregation could be achieved by the use of a white line.⁴⁹ On 9 November 1904, three black prison warders walking side by side in Church Street, Pietermaritzburg were ordered off the pavement. When they refused on the grounds that they were impeding no-one, they were arrested and charged. Magistrate Moe acquitted them, ruling that by-law 2 could not be applied arbitrarily and unreasonably – if they had been obstructing anyone, they could have been ordered into single file, for instance. He decreed that the constable had exceeded his powers but it is clear that he regretted arriving at this conclusion, advocating a law to prevent ‘outrages on white women’.⁵⁰

A major influence on attitudes towards Africans was provided by the 1905 South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC) chaired by Godfrey Lagden. This took a decidedly paternalistic view of Africans without any real understanding of the social problems attendant upon rapid urbanisation. The emphasis was upon labour supply, the health threat to whites, the fear of low moral standards and the need to limit the drinking of Africans to beer with an alcohol content of less than 4% in view of the fear that intoxication would lead to savagery. SANAC concluded that distance of all types from Africans was the solution except in the case of a selected few capable of absorbing Western mores (the doctrine of ‘equal rights for civilised men’). Integration, SANAC decided, was not feasible because of the tendency of Africans to revert to an uncivilised state thus confirming their status as inferior beings requiring a firm hand and lessons in self control and morality.⁵¹ Urban white Natal was dependant upon African labour but perceived security, sanitation and moral issues required the restriction of its free movement. As the Transvaal magistrate and member of the Aborigines’ Protection Society, A.E. Pease, put it: ‘[The African] was forbidden the sidewalk, footpath, and public park.’⁵² The place of Africans in the political economy of Natal tended to produce amongst whites a level of concern often amounting to hysterical panic. The colony was run by ‘an aristocracy of white men...’ at the time of Union and ‘[Africans] could not venture into most parks or watch sports contests on athletic grounds frequented by whites’.⁵³

The idea of racial segregation in urban areas was well established in liberal thought by the turn of the century in terms of trusteeship and the ‘maintenance of social discipline and control’.⁵⁴ Writing at the end of the Great War, J.S. Marwick put the popular view that ‘...we stand *in loco parentis* to the Natives, whom we must guide and restrain like children’.⁵⁵ The aim of the majority of whites during the first two decades of the century was the simple one of supremacy through domination and a policy of divide and rule.⁵⁶ The broad consensus about this resulted in a demand for

docile labourers at low wages, freedom from their competition in skilled trades or commerce, and protection from their ‘barbarism’ or ‘demoralization’... White popular opinion was almost entirely hostile to African advancement or Indian enterprise, but it was also jealous of its own constitutional rights and economic liberties.⁵⁷

Parallel to, and reflective of, the increasing popularity of the idea of putting geographical distance between white and black was the growing veneration of sport by whites, a tendency which was most noticeable at the leading schools of the colony. Cricket and rugby in particular became icons of white virility. The first headmaster of Hilton Col-

lege, the Reverend W.O. Newnham, 'was a strong supporter of [cricket] which taught a boy to play with a straight bat...and to respect the rules of the game'. His successor, H.V. Ellis, 'welcomed organised games on account of the moral qualities which they were held to inspire'.⁵⁸ The qualities which these men admired and propagated would only be required by those born to rule and lead. In Ellis' view, the Sons of England and the Mother Country had a number of clear and heroic duties: to unify the whites, deal with the barbarism and heathenism of the Natives, and train those of Asiatic descent; all of this 'in spite of the enervating influence of a semi-tropic sun'.⁵⁹

Central to sport in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Natal is the issue of identity. Sport simultaneously played the role of unifier (amongst whites) and separator (from everyone else) and with imperial self confidence and a sense of moral superiority marked off both social and geographical space. Sport amongst whites evoked perceptions of Home but at the same time encouraged a growing local nationalism; two trends which ironically reinforced one another. Underlying these developments was an all-pervasive racism whose foundation was gross stereotyping and led to bizarre attitudes and behaviour towards persons of colour.

Charles Bennett (Buck) Llewellyn⁶⁰ was born in Pietermaritzburg out of wedlock on 29 September 1876. His parents were married in community of property by special licence on 15 February 1877. His father, Thomas Buck Llewellyn, had been born in Pembroke in August 1845 so the question of Llewellyn's race rests on the origins of his mother, born Ann Elizabeth Rich in 1845 at Jamestown, St Helena.⁶¹ In 1833 St Helena had been summarily transferred from the rule of the Honourable East India Company to that of the British Government with the consequence that 'Almost everybody in the island was suddenly thrown into a state bordering on penury'.⁶² From 1838 onwards hundreds of Saint Helenans emigrated to the Cape and some moved on to Natal where they were regarded as being of mixed race.⁶³ In 1871 'About 100 persons emigrated to the Cape of Good Hope, owing to the great distress of traders here' and another two hundred more followed shortly afterwards. Jackson attributes this to a reduction in the British military presence and the opening of Suez.⁶⁴

A Thomas Llewellyn [*sic*] of 16 Berg Street is noted as a house painter and decorator in the late 1870s at the time of Charles' birth. During the 1890s he occupied various premises in Boom Street (including 234 which is still standing today) and by 1904 had offices at 14 Printing Office Street. By 1912 the address was given as 10-14 Printing Office Street suggesting that business was flourishing. In 1904 he bought a house at 5 Stranack Street with a substantial bond of £500. Thomas died in Grey's Hospital on 17 November 1914 at the age of 69 and Anne on 30 March 1920 aged 75. On Thomas's death (his will was signed on the day itself) he left his business to the third son of five, Walter Hunter, but the latter decided to decline the bequest as it carried with it a net debt of £70.⁶⁵ His mother paid this off and continued running the business under the management of her son. Charles and Arthur, the youngest son, were left tokens but the two other sons, John and Joseph inherited nothing and seem to have lost contact with the family.

Wilfred Rhodes, the Yorkshire all-rounder, described Charles Llewellyn as 'like a rather sunburned English player'; and, J.M. Kilburn, the most convincing source on the player he idolised, said of him that he was tidy-looking and of sturdy medium height but 'dark-eyed and dark-skinned and South Africans called him coloured'.⁶⁶ Neverthe-

less, Llewellyn participated in cricket in Natal as a white man for the seasons 1894/5 to 1897/8, during which time he played in seven matches, having made a somewhat ineffective debut (24 and 0 batting last and 1–32 and 3–39⁶⁷) ‘as a dusky eighteen year old’⁶⁸ for Natal against Transvaal in March 1895. The following season he played for a Pietermaritzburg XV against Lord Hawke’s touring England team and impressed the Hampshire batsman Major Robert Montagu Poore with match figures of 7 for 150. For Natal he was prominent as a bowler with a record of 355,3 overs, 115 maidens and 50 wickets at an average of 15,36, tenth in the list of players from the pre-Great War period. Crowley credits him with being the first of a line of South African slow left armers.⁶⁹ In 1897 he achieved match figures of 9 for 128 against Western Province (but still ended up on the losing side by a wide margin) and 11 for 123 versus Eastern Province. Remarkably, he took five wickets in an innings five times out of a theoretical maximum of 14. His batting record was less memorable for in fifteen innings, twice not out, he scored 176 runs (with one fifty, his highest score of 65) at an average of only 13,53. During this period he was employed by the father of the cricketer Herby Taylor in Durban as a Coloured clerk, although there is no evidence that he ever played cricket within that community.⁷⁰ In 1899 he effectively emigrated to England as a professional for Hampshire, details of which are given in the appendix, although he continued to play test cricket spasmodically for South Africa until 1912.

His lengthy, disrupted test career of 15 matches for South Africa (five against England and ten versus Australia) lasted from the second test versus England at Johannesburg in March 1896 aged 19 until the Triangular Tournament of 1912 in England.⁷¹ His test record was a modest one by modern standards: 544 runs at 20,14 (with 3 half centuries and a highest score of 90); 48 wickets at 29,60 (with 5 wickets in an innings on 3 occasions, 10 wickets in a match once and a best bowling analysis of 6 for 92); and seven catches. Of his first appearance for South Africa, Routledge wrote: ‘Although he did not succeed in getting a wicket, he bowled fairly well and deserved a little success’;⁷² and on the same occasion C.B. Fry mentioned him as a ‘boy left-hander’.⁷³ In this match he scored 24 and took 0–71 as South Africa went down by an innings and 197 runs. *Wisden* notes that he was crucially missed in the Cape Town test of April 1899 when South Africa suffered their eighth consecutive defeat and lost to England by 210 runs.⁷⁴ On Bissett’s 1901 tour of England he did not play in the premier match against MCC but headed the overall batting and bowling averages. In the home series against Australia in 1902–3 he scored 94 runs (90 batting first wicket down in the first innings including a second wicket partnership of 173 with L.J. Tancred) and took 9–216 in the first test at Johannesburg (his victims including Gregory (twice) as well as Trumper and Darling); 10–116 in the second test (also in Johannesburg); and another 6, this time for 97, in the third test at Cape Town. His 25 wickets in this series were taken at 17,92 each⁷⁵ thus topping the South African averages; and he opened the bowling in the Cape Town test as he was later to do on the 1910–11 tour of Australia in four of the five tests.

This series has been described as an ‘abject disappointment from a playing and financial point of view’.⁷⁶ It was, however, central to Llewellyn’s identity as a South African test player. An intimation of his ‘otherness’ and mixed ancestry is contained in the suggestion that during the 1910–11 tour he was ‘ostracized and bullied by his team mates’, particularly by J.H. Sinclair from whom he had to hide in the toilet.⁷⁷ The origins of this story are lost in the mists of time but its authenticity is called into question

by the fact that Sinclair had seconded a suggestion by Pegler that Hampshire CCC be cabled asking for confirmation of Llewellyn's availability for the tour. Indeed, Sinclair proposed a salary of £250 plus travel and hotel expenses. Opposition to Llewellyn's inclusion came, significantly, from his home province of Natal which wrote to the South African Cricket Association (SACA) suggesting that 'he can no longer be looked upon as a South African player and the objective... should be to encourage the younger players.' He was later referred to during the Australian tour as a 'naturalised Englishman' and a proposal was put forward that SACA should cease to consider players for South Africa after four years absence from international competition. His selection and salary were confirmed but the expenses were amended, which caused an ongoing dispute and rejection of the idea at the end of the tour that Llewellyn should receive a bonus. A meeting chaired by Pegler on 3 October 1911 subsequently raised the question of his availability for the 1912 tour of England.⁷⁸ His bowling fell away towards the end of his career for South Africa: in the Triangular Tournament it was described as a 'sad failure' with 4–244 at an average of 61,00⁷⁹. He did, however, redeem himself with two half centuries, one each against England and Australia, in a total of 167 runs scored at 18,55, although in his last test he made a pair.⁸⁰

The idea that he was Coloured and had been persecuted by white South African cricketers was hotly denied by his daughter in the cricket press in the mid 1970s.⁸¹ She argued that her grandfather was born in Bootle, Lancashire of Welsh descent and her grandmother in Essex⁸² and that neither was coloured: 'He was of white stock'. She described the claim that he was not on good terms with his fellow cricketers as 'utter nonsense' and said that when playing league cricket in later life in Accrington and in the Bradford League he was visited by members of South African touring teams. Whether or not the latter is true, she had a totally erroneous picture of her grandparents which is hard to account for unless she had been deliberately misinformed. The supposed origins of her grandparents in Lancashire and Essex are hard to fathom unless there was a deliberate attempt to confuse St Helena with the St Helens of the former county which is only a few miles from Bootle. But if this were an attempt at dissimulation, it should have been applied to the grandmother, not the grandfather about whose origins there has never been any question.

At the turn of the century qualifying rules were relatively lax and Llewellyn was named in the England squad of 14 for the first test against Australia at Edgbaston in 1902, although he did not in the end play.⁸³ His call up by England 'would have been acceptable... by the custom and opinion of that time'.⁸⁴ Given that his father had been born in Wales, it would also be acceptable today although he had of course already appeared in test cricket for South Africa. However, at Birmingham in 1902 the Australian batsman Warwick Armstrong is reputed to have passed a sarcastic comment questioning whether he was playing England or South Africa.⁸⁵ By 1905 Llewellyn was being described as an 'ex-South African'⁸⁶, although in 1909 *Wisden*, recording his benefit match in 1908 versus Kent, was still writing about him as 'The South African...'⁸⁷

In his entire first class career from 1894 to 1912, Llewellyn scored 11 425 runs at an average of 26,75 and took 1013 wickets at 23.41 together with over 200 catches.⁸⁸ The scorer of 18 centuries, he took five wickets in an innings 82 times and ten in a match 20 times. He was thus a genuine all-rounder in a Golden Age of cricket – a left arm orthodox slow medium bowler with a high arm action, a forcing left hand batsman who favoured

the drive and the cut (he hit Blythe for 5 sixes at Dover in August 1910) and a specialist mid-off – whose talents unfortunately did not always flourish in tandem.⁸⁹ Possibly he was over-bowled by a Hampshire team lacking resources.⁹⁰ Pelham Warner called him a ‘fine all-rounder’; and *Wisden* as ‘in the fullest sense of the words an all-round cricketer...’.⁹¹ The references to his batting are relatively sparse but *Wisden* commented in 1911 that he was a punishing left hander, his ‘driving power being tremendous.’⁹² On the other hand, his bowling was widely praised: A.D. ‘Dave’ Nourse described him as ‘the best left hand bowler we ever had. He turned the ball so well and kept a wonderful length’⁹³ even on good wickets. As one of *Wisden*’s cricketers of the year in 1911 his ‘medium pace bowling’ was described as ‘full of life and spin’.⁹⁴ His control of length, pace and spin brings to mind a turn-of-the-century Derek Underwood: ‘On the slow side of medium...if the pitch helped him, his spin was vicious.’⁹⁵ Altham names him as the cricketer who ‘until the appearance of Fleetwood-Smith, was the only left-hander known to bowl the googly’⁹⁶ which he describes elsewhere as the Chinaman. He is said to have spent several years practising this based on advice given by Reggie Schwarz, another South African test spin bowler. The quintessential Hampshire man of letters, journalist and cricket writer John Arlott suggests that on plumb wickets where ‘natural’ spin failed to persuade the ball to turn, he bowled wrist spin to induce off breaks and mixed this with the googly.⁹⁷ Kilburn, who had the advantage of having watched him frequently, said he was orthodox left arm and reserved judgement on the question of the googly, commenting whimsically that ‘perhaps...the occasional chinaman was simply an indulgence of Llewellyn’s momentary fancy.’⁹⁸ He also recorded the fact that Llewellyn bowled in a cap, which is borne out by photographs.⁹⁹

Llewellyn broke his thigh in 1960 and was crippled for the rest of his life, dying at Chertsey in Surrey on 7 June 1964 at the age of 87, an event recorded by *Wisden* but ignored by the *South African Cricket Annual* for five years.¹⁰⁰ A South African obituary has yet to appear. It was an interesting reflection on Llewellyn’s anonymity and the deference of the South African cricket authorities to their imperial masters that SACA had quickly noted the death of Lady Warner in 1955.

It is instructive to compare the cricket career of an Australian Aboriginal near-contemporary of Llewellyn, the fast bowler Jack Marsh, who was born at Yulgilbar in northern New South Wales in 1874. Marsh was first involved in the suspect world of professional running but started playing club cricket in Sydney in 1896. The following year, amidst much controversy, he was no-balled for throwing as later happened in a colonial trial match in November 1900, an event which has been scrutinised closely. There is a school of thought that sees Marsh victimised as an outsider capable of dismissing star batsmen like Victor Trumper on good wickets: ‘It is possible that [the umpire] could have felt that retribution was necessary or was prevailed upon to put Marsh in his place’.¹⁰¹ Marsh’s opportunities to play for New South Wales were restricted and he never played for Australia, although he came close to selection against England at Sydney in the 1901-2 season. He was selected for the match between Western Cricket Union v England at Bathurst in February 1902 but the England captain Archie McLaren demanded that Marsh be withdrawn, ostensibly as a danger to his players. The professionals in the England team were, however, prepared to play and there were strong suspicions at the time that this was a matter of racial and class prejudice. It is also possible that undue influence was wielded by the Australian player and New South Wales captain M.A.

'Monty' Noble for whom Marsh was a rival and who was also suspected of throwing. The role of umpire Bob Crockett is also questionable, as other officials consistently failed to no-ball Marsh. There was a measure of popular anger at Marsh's exclusion from the test team and some barracking at the Sydney test. In spite of public questioning, 'A conspiracy of silence prevailed'.¹⁰² The Bathurst incident virtually ended Marsh's career and he played his last first-class game in November 1902. He subsequently excelled in Sydney grade cricket with virtually unplayable fast-medium off cutters that started with movement through the air. He played against the 1904 England touring team, Pelham Warner making no objections to his participation. English players were divided in their opinion of Marsh: some thought him the best bowler in the world; others said that he had an illegitimate action. The case for conspiracy is strong and underlying everything was a consistent strain of racial stereotyping with Marsh described in the press as 'dusky', a 'darkie' and a 'coon' (quoting an England player on the 1904 tour) attributing to him attitudes such as 'devious', 'helpless' and 'childlike'.¹⁰³ His acceptability in grade cricket has been attributed to the fact that his presence had to be tolerated only on Saturday afternoons whereas first-class and test level cricket would have required social contact lasting several days. From 1905 onwards it seems that Marsh led the life of an itinerant casual worker compounded by the restrictions set by the 1909 Aborigines Protection Act which codified segregation tendencies in Australian life. He found work in a circus but by 1909 was in prison in Melbourne convicted of assault. He died in May 1916 aged 42 at Orange after being beaten in a billiard room brawl.¹⁰⁴

What is to be made of Charles Bennett Llewellyn? Clearly he was an ordinary man of humble origins who, sporting ability apart, made no lasting impression upon the long march of history. With sufficient talent to become a successful, long-term cricketing journeyman, he is mentioned frequently and repetitively in the literature but left no real personal imprint. This silence will presumably never be penetrated but the evidence suggests that his experience was emblematic of the time. He and his brothers were undoubtedly, in terms of Natal's social custom, considered to be of mixed blood, although his family was apparently able to pass itself off as white. In late nineteenth century Pietermaritzburg this would not have been difficult as the small Coloured community was relatively well integrated. Evans records the fact that many were store workers passing themselves off as Europeans. According to the same contemporary source, they were recognised as 'good citizens in every sense'¹⁰⁵ although they kept apart socially. St Helenans (and Mauritians) tended to be English-speaking, Roman Catholic, relatively prosperous and 'respectable'. In late Victorian Pietermaritzburg an important distinction was made between people who were Westernised and those who were not, a judgement based on appearance and dress, and cultural similarity placed St Helenans in the former category. In terms of legal standing they profited from this, retaining the franchise when people of Asian origin lost it in 1893.

But race consciousness was deepening for a number of reasons and social custom was beginning to be reflected in law, a process that would end in the mid-twentieth century with the enforcement of apartheid. Coloured Natalians fought in the Anglo-Boer War but from 1904 separate schools were provide for their children and by the 1920s competition with Africans and Indians for jobs was becoming increasingly intense. From 1904 until 1948 Coloured people in Pietermaritzburg were relatively privileged but increasingly segregated. The Coloured population of Natal was small in both absolute

and proportionate terms (in 1906 it amounted to 6 700 persons, or 0,6% of the total) so Llewellyn's awareness of his standing in the racial hierarchy is almost certainly likely to have been suppressed most of the time. The fact that his daughter, then an elderly woman living in Britain in the mid 1970s, vehemently refuted his origins is, arguably, further proof of the very fact she was denying so hotly. The *Natal Almanac* for the last years of the nineteenth century holds a clue to the question of Llewellyn's standing in Pietermaritzburg. Population figures for Natal are given under three headings: European, Indians and Natives. But to the first heading is appended, 'including St Helenans, etc.'¹⁰⁶ Charles Llewellyn, in social if not official terms was deemed 'et cetera', of another category; considered, grudgingly perhaps, a white man but marked as different on account of his mother's origins. The *Almanac* was a well-used reference tool, a compendium of annual information about the province and Pietermaritzburg, and this categorisation of the population would have been widely known. Nor was it simply notional. The Corporation, for instance, made a point not only of classifying its employees of St Helenan origin on the next rung down the ethnic ladder from whites ('coloured persons enjoying European privileges'¹⁰⁷), but also discriminating against them. During the Great War they were awarded just half the 25/- monthly War Bonus granted to white married employees.¹⁰⁸ Dickie-Clarke sums up the situation thus: 'their situation was clearly a marginal one in that there was complete cultural similarity but incomplete acceptance and participation in the White system of social relationships'. Ultimately, 'the claim of cultural similarity to equality of treatment [was] swept aside.'¹⁰⁹

There are indications of the ambivalence of South Africa towards Llewellyn during his cricketing life. First, he chose to go into virtual exile to pursue a professional career as a cricketer at a time when this was relatively rare. Other examples that spring to mind during Llewellyn's playing career are Frank Mitchell (Cambridge University and Yorkshire) but he was English born, stayed in South Africa after the Hawke tour of 1898–9 and served in the South African War; and Reggie Schwarz (Middlesex and Transvaal) whose education was at St Paul's School and Oxford University. Both of these players were amateurs. His absence overseas may of course have been for purely financial reasons and the distinction of South Africa's pioneer professional cricketer is also due to him, but as Crowley puts it, 'Although there is no confirmed record of any strife with his contemporaries due to the colour of his skin, this fine South African player did not return to his homeland after a long professional stint but chose to remain in England...'¹¹⁰ During his playing days in the first decade of the twentieth century there was an air of considerable ambiguity about his nationality. Interestingly, he was persistently referred to as G.C.B. Llewellyn in Britain based on an early error by a captain.

Second, in spite of clear cricketing ability and the praise accorded him by authoritative judges, his career with Natal was extremely short and lasted only four seasons. He tried to play for Transvaal during the 1903–4 season but was debarred by the South African Cricket Association on the grounds that he was a professional. Transvaal argued that in South Africa he was an amateur on the cricket field including the matches he had participated in against Australia during the 1902–3 series. His attempts to resuscitate his South African domestic career foundered on the votes of the three Cape unions opposed by Transvaal and Border and the crucial abstention of Natal.¹¹¹ It is reasonable to assume that Llewellyn would have been aware of the case of J. 'Krom' Hendricks, a Malay left arm fast bowler from the Western Cape. He was more obviously Coloured and from an

ethnically distinctive group. The English batsmen reckoned he was one of the fastest bowlers they had faced in South Africa, taking 4 for 50 in 25 overs in the match against MCC in 1891. In spite of this excellent performance against the MCC, Hendricks was excluded from a side to tour England (having been named in a party of 15, his selection was deemed 'impolitic') as well as from a South African tour of Rhodesia in 1894 and from the Colonial Born versus Mother Country match. By 1897 he was even excluded from his club team, Woodstock, by the Western Province Cricket Union.¹¹² Llewellyn's effective emigration put paid to any possible similar fate.

Third, there is little consistency in his selection for South Africa with 15 tests spread out over 16 years, unusual even by the erratic standards of the time, and of course compounded by his selection for England as early as 1902. The negative attitude of officials of his home province to his selection for South Africa despite the fact that he was good enough to earn a living from county cricket embodies a hostility to a person who was clearly different. It is probable that while the roots of this lay in racial prejudice, it was reinforced by a disdain for professionals in an age of high amateurism.

APPENDIX

Most of Llewellyn's cricket was played for Hampshire between 1899 and 1910, when he left because he could no longer afford to play county cricket. During his qualifying seasons of 1899 and 1900 he stayed at the training ship *Mercury* later owned by C.B. Fry; and in the 1899 fixture against the touring Australians took 8 for 132 in the match and scored 72 and 21. His bowling promise was shown as a member of Ranji's 1900 touring team to North America when he took 22 wickets at 11,13 but batted badly with 39 runs at 9,75. In 1900 he played against the first West Indian side to tour England, scoring 93 in the first innings and taking 13 wickets for 187 in the match. In his initial full county season he scored 717 runs and took 115 wickets in the championship, bowling four times as many overs as any other player, and achieved the double in all matches, the first Hampshire player to achieve this.¹¹³ In doing so he changed 'the face of Hampshire cricket'.¹¹⁴ His bowling average of 23 in that season was the best for Hampshire since it had become a first class county in 1895. At the same time he assisted the touring South Africans in matches versus London County and Liverpool and District: in two matches he took 25 wickets for 371 runs.¹¹⁵ As an all-rounder in 1901 he was considered inferior only to George Hirst (Yorkshire) and J.R. Mason (Kent)¹¹⁶ and the following year he collected 170 wickets. But in mid career with Hampshire he lost his bowling ability and was pronounced 'an utter failure'.¹¹⁷ In the course of his career with Hampshire in 196 matches and 341 innings he scored 8 722 runs at an average of 27,58 (highest score 216, 15 centuries and 37 half centuries); took 711 wickets in 33 407 balls at an average of 24,66 (including 5 wickets in an innings 55 times and 10 wickets in a match eleven times); and held 135 catches. In his last season he and Jack Newman took 299 of the 414 wickets to fall to Hampshire in the county championship. During nine consecutive innings the pair took all but one wicket and in three successive matches no other bowlers were used. Not only did he take 133 wickets at 20,45 in this season but he also scored 1 100 runs at 29,21 with one century, performing in his 35th year at a level as bowler and batsman well above his career average. Overall he captured 100 wickets in a season five times and in four of them (1901 and 1908 to 1910) he achieved the double.¹¹⁸

Llewellyn was described as the 'best all-round player who had yet appeared for the

county¹¹⁹, albeit one of the weakest teams in the first decade of the century, finishing bottom of the championship no less than five times. Highlights of his career were match figures of 10–183 and 153 runs in 100 minutes versus Somerset at Taunton in 1901; 6–105, 216 in three hours (the highest of his centuries with 30 boundaries) and three catches versus South Africa at Southampton also in 1901; 14–171 versus Worcestershire in the same year at Southampton; 102 and 100 versus Derbyshire at Derby in 1905; 130 and 101 not out (in 60 minutes) versus Sussex at Hove in 1909; 91 in an hour against Kent at Dover in 1910 including six sixes. He shared in a number of massive fifth wicket stands, the highest of which was 231 with E.I.M. Barrett versus Derbyshire at Southampton in 1903.¹²⁰ In 1905 he also scored 186 for Players of South v Gentleman of South at Bournemouth.

In 1908 Llewellyn received a then record benefit of over £500. He remained in England after the end of his career with Hampshire and in 1911 signed for Accrington, the first test player to join the Lancashire League.¹²¹ He left Accrington in 1915 and joined Undercliffe CC in the ‘grimy city of Bradford’ at a time when the Bradford Cricket League was able to attract high calibre players as others had closed down on account of the Great War.¹²² He re-joined Accrington in 1921 but finally left the club in 1926 to play for Radcliffe in the Bolton and District League until 1932. Williams records his pay in 1928 as £9 per week plus talent money.¹²³ In 1934 he was playing for East Lancashire again in the Lancashire League. It is unclear how long he remained an active player after 1935 but his association with the club seems to have ended in 1938 when he was 62. As might be expected, he scored freely and proved a devastating performer in league cricket. Over 28 seasons he scored at least 9962 runs at a respectable average of just under 30, over 60% of them in his 12 seasons at Accrington including ten centuries. True to character he established a number of records including the highest score in the Lancashire League (188 not out for Accrington v Bacup, 1913) which stood until 1939. As a bowler he was even more successful, taking 1886 wickets off 7 294 overs at the remarkable average of just over 10. He was at his peak as a bowler with Radcliffe taking 35% of his wickets in eight seasons. He was the first player to reach 100 wickets in a season (1927) for East Lancashire. For Undercliffe against Bankfoot in 1917 he performed the unusual feat of a hat trick, all stumped. The wicketkeeper as a matter of historical interest was William Close, grandfather of the England player of the 1960s, Brian Close.

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