

= Wally Hammond =

Walter Reginald " Wally " Hammond (19 June 1903 ? 1 July 1965) was an English Test cricketer who played for Gloucestershire in a career that lasted from 1920 to 1951 . Beginning as a professional , he later became an amateur and was appointed captain of England . Primarily a middle @-@ order batsman , Wisden Cricketers ' Almanack described him in his obituary as one of the four best batsmen in the history of cricket . He was considered to be the best English batsman of the 1930s by commentators and those with whom he played ; they also said that he was one of the best slip fielders ever . Hammond was an effective fast @-@ medium pace bowler and contemporaries believed that if he had been less reluctant to bowl , he could have achieved even more with the ball than he did .

In a Test career spanning 85 matches , he scored 7 @, @ 249 runs and took 83 wickets . Hammond captained England in 20 of those Tests , winning four , losing three , and drawing 13 . His career aggregate of runs was the highest in Test cricket until surpassed by Colin Cowdrey in 1970 ; his total of 22 Test centuries remained an English record until Alastair Cook surpassed it in December 2012 . In 1933 , he set a record for the highest individual Test innings of 336 not out , surpassed by Len Hutton in 1938 . In all first @-@ class cricket , he scored 50 @, @ 551 runs and 167 centuries , respectively the seventh and third highest totals by a first @-@ class cricketer as of 2015 . With the ball , he took 732 wickets .

Although Hammond began his career in 1920 , he was required to wait until 1923 before he could play full @-@ time , after his qualification to play for Gloucestershire was challenged . His potential was spotted immediately and after three full seasons , he was chosen to visit the West Indies in 1925 ? 26 as a member of a Marylebone Cricket Club (M.C.C.) touring party , but contracted a serious illness on the tour . He began to score heavily after his recovery in 1927 and was selected for England . In the 1928 ? 29 series against Australia he scored 905 runs , then a record aggregate for a Test series . He dominated county cricket in the 1930s and , despite a mid @-@ decade slump in Test form , was made captain of England in 1938 . He continued as captain after the Second World War , but his health had deteriorated and he retired from first @-@ class cricket after an unsuccessful tour of Australia in 1946 ? 47 . He appeared in two more first @-@ class matches in the early 1950s .

Hammond was married twice , divorcing his first wife in acrimonious circumstances , and had a reputation for infidelity . His relationships with other players were difficult ; team @-@ mates and opponents alike found him hard to get along with . He was unsuccessful in business dealings and failed to establish a successful career once he retired from cricket . He moved to South Africa in the 1950s in an attempt to start a business , but this came to nothing . As a result , he and his family struggled financially . Shortly after beginning a career as a sports administrator , he was involved in a serious car crash in 1960 which left him frail . He died of a heart attack in 1965 .

= = Early life and career = =

= = = Childhood and school life = = =

Hammond was born on 19 June 1903 in Dover . His parents , William ? a corporal in the Royal Garrison Artillery ? and Marion Hammond (née Crisp) , lived in the married quarters at Dover Castle where Walter was born . They had wed the previous December . Hammond spent his early years in Dover , often playing cricket . When he was five years old , his father was posted to Hong Kong to serve on the China Station and promoted to sergeant . The family remained there until 1911 , followed by a posting to Malta until 1914 . Hammond later recalled playing cricket in Malta using improvised equipment , including a soldier 's old bat which he believed taught him to strike the ball powerfully .

When the First World War broke out , the Hammonds returned to England with the rest of the 46th Company of the Royal Garrison Artillery . William was subsequently posted to France where ,

promoted to major , he was killed near Amiens in 1918 . Marion settled in Southsea and sent Walter to The Portsmouth Grammar School , before moving him in 1918 to board at Cirencester Grammar School , believing that he would benefit from living away from home and hoping to encourage a career in farming . He did not enjoy an easy relationship with his mother , often staying with friends during holidays in preference to returning home .

At both Portsmouth and Cirencester , Hammond excelled at sports including cricket (playing for the Portsmouth Grammar School second eleven) , football and fives . At Cirencester , he played football for the school first eleven in his first term . He quickly reached the school cricket first eleven , where he outperformed the other players and became captain in his second season ; his headmaster , quickly spotting his potential , encouraged him . His first century was scored in a match against a parents ' team from the school . In an inter @-@ house match , he scored 365 not out , albeit against very weak bowling . These achievements brought him some local acclaim . Hammond enjoyed less success in the classroom ; his marks were usually low , and he preferred to be out playing cricket .

Leaving Cirencester in July 1920 , Hammond planned to go to Winchester Agricultural College , following the path into farming mapped out by his mother . However , his plans changed when his headmaster wrote to the captain of Gloucestershire , Foster Robinson , reporting Hammond 's school cricket record and suggesting that they take a look at him . Hammond , who scored a century in his first appearance in adult cricket days after leaving school , played in a trial match for the Gloucestershire Club and Ground , scoring 60 runs , taking two wickets and impressing the local press . Subsequently , two members of Gloucestershire 's committee visited Hammond 's mother in an attempt to sign him for the club . Hammond 's mother was initially reluctant , but his eagerness finally convinced her and he signed a professional contract .

= = = First years with Gloucestershire = = =

Hammond made his first @-@ class debut for Gloucestershire in August 1920 . Although his first four innings yielded only 27 runs , the local press saw enough to predict a great future for him . He spent the winter working on a farm on the Isle of Wight , then moved to Bristol for the start of the 1921 English cricket season . Playing only two first @-@ class matches in 1921 , both against the powerful Australian tourists , Hammond scored two runs in three innings , overwhelmed by fast bowler Jack Gregory . In between these games , Gloucestershire arranged his appointment as assistant coach at Clifton College , Bristol , where he worked on his batting technique with former county cricketers John Tunnicliffe and George Dennett .

Gloucestershire gave Hammond an extended run at the start of the 1922 season . He played five matches without passing 32 runs in an innings at a batting average of under ten . He did not have the opportunity to improve his record as Lord Harris , the Marylebone Cricket Club (M.C.C.) treasurer , noticed that Hammond was born in Kent . He had not resided in Gloucestershire long enough to be eligible to play for the team under County Championship rules , and was barred for the rest of the season . The press criticised the ruling for interrupting the career of a player seen as very promising , despite his lack of success thus far . Hammond spent the rest of the summer , which he later described as the most miserable of his life , watching county games , although Gloucestershire continued to pay him in full .

= = = Football career = = =

In the winter of 1921 ? 22 , Hammond , needing work , signed to play professional football for Bristol Rovers F.C. in Division Three South , following his success at school and in the Bristol Downs Football League . After some time in the reserves , he made four appearances for the first team that season . He played in ten games the following season , and four times in 1923 ? 24 . His usual position was on the right wing . Despite scoring twice in his career , he never showed much enthusiasm for the game and was cautious around tackles , mindful that his main career was cricket . He was criticised in the local press for his role in two defeats shortly before his final appearance .

After he was left out of the team , he never played again and left the club , deciding that he could not play two sports professionally . Even so , the Rovers ' trainer , Bert Williams , and manager , Andy Wilson , believed that Hammond , one of the fastest players they had seen at the club , would have had the potential to play international football .

= = = Making an impression = = =

Conscious of the need to improve after his uncertain start to first @-@ class cricket , Hammond scored his maiden first @-@ class century in the first match of the 1923 season , making 110 and 92 opening the batting against Surrey . He did not reach three figures again that season , but his performances and batting technique impressed several critics , such as cricket correspondent Neville Cardus , former England and Middlesex captain Plum Warner , and The Times correspondent ; Cardus described him as a future England player . In all first @-@ class matches that season , Hammond scored 1 @, @ 421 runs at an average of 27 @.@ 86 . With the ball , he took 18 first @-@ class wickets at an average of 41 @.@ 22 , including figures of six for 59 against Hampshire . Reviewing the season , Wisden 's correspondent declared that Hammond " has all the world before him and there is no telling how far he may go " .

Hammond reached 1 @, @ 239 runs in 1924 , scoring a century against Somerset and reaching fifty against Oxford , Essex and Hampshire . In the final County Championship match of the season , against Middlesex , he scored 174 not out after Gloucestershire had been bowled out for 31 in their first innings . He finished the season with an average of 30 @.@ 21 and supplemented his batting with 29 wickets . He improved on this record in 1925 with 1 @, @ 818 runs at an average of 34 @.@ 30 and 68 wickets at an average of just under 30 , more than doubling his career aggregate of wickets . His bowling performances led critics to describe him as a potentially good all @-@ rounder . Hammond was not satisfied with his batting form in 1925 , but against Lancashire at Old Trafford , he scored 250 not out , repeatedly hooking the short @-@ pitched bowling of Australian Test bowler Ted McDonald . Cardus described it as " one of the finest innings that can ever have been accomplished by a boy of his age " . Over these two seasons , Hammond increasingly batted in the middle order , where he remained for most of his career .

= = = Serious illness = = =

Hammond 's performances earned him selection for the M.C.C. winter tour of the West Indies in the 1925 ? 26 season . At that time , such tours were popular with amateur cricketers , who were often chosen for social rather than cricketing reasons . The touring party contained only eight professionals , who were expected to do most of the bowling and provide the cricketing quality . The West Indies team did not have Test status , so no official internationals were scheduled , but a series of representative matches against a West Indian team were played . Rain disrupted much of the cricket , but Hammond enjoyed the experience . In first @-@ class matches , he scored 732 runs at an average of 48 @.@ 80 , with two hundreds and two fifties , and took 20 wickets at an average of 28 @.@ 65 . He scored 238 not out in the first representative game against a West Indies side . Following the tour , he won praise from Warner and the captain of the M.C.C. team , Freddie Calthorpe , and was believed to be close to the full England side .

Towards the end of the tour , Hammond fell seriously ill ; according to him , a mosquito stung him in the groin area , close to a strain he had suffered , causing blood poisoning . Playing against Jamaica , he moved awkwardly and his team @-@ mates observed him to be in pain . He missed the remaining matches of the tour , and none of the doctors he saw were able to help . On the journey home , during which no doctor was available , his condition worsened , confining him to his cabin with a severe fever for most of the trip . The day after his arrival home , in April 1926 , Hammond had the first of 12 operations at the nursing home to which he was taken . His condition worsened to the point where the doctors believed he would die ; they considered amputating his leg , a suggestion vetoed by his mother out of concern for his career . Hammond later claimed that his illness remained a mystery to those treating him . A visit from Warner encouraged Hammond to

believe recovery was possible , and he began a slow return to health about a month after his return to England . By July , he could watch Gloucestershire playing in Bristol , though he missed the entire 1926 season . No official announcement about Hammond 's illness was made , other than to say he was in a nursing home . Although the cause of the illness was never made clear , David Foot has argued that it was syphilis or a related sexually transmitted disease . He has also suggested that its treatment , which in the days before antibiotics probably involved mercury , adversely affected Hammond 's subsequent character and personality , leading to moody and depressive behaviour . Rumours of this nature circulated among his contemporaries for many years before Foot published his theory . That winter , Hammond coached in South Africa , where it was felt the climate might aid his recovery .

= = Test cricketer = =

= = = Test debut = = =

On his return to first @-@ class cricket in the 1927 season , Hammond made an immediate impact , becoming only the second man , after W. G. Grace , to score 1 @,@ 000 runs in May , traditionally the first month of the English cricket season . This sequence included another effective performance against Lancashire , regarded by some observers as one of the best innings ever played . He scored 99 in the first innings and 187 in the second to ensure the match was drawn . He again hooked McDonald effectively , at one point hitting five consecutive fours . Hammond played in the prestigious Gentlemen v Players match at Lord 's for the first time , although he neither batted nor bowled , as well as two Test trials . Coming close to scoring 1 @,@ 000 runs in June as well , he finished the season with 2 @,@ 969 runs , including 12 centuries . His average of 69 @.@ 04 was the fifth highest in first @-@ class cricket . He won selection for the M.C.C. team that would tour South Africa in the winter and the accolade of being named one of the Wisden Cricketers of the Year .

While on tour in South Africa in 1927 ? 28 , Hammond did not dominate as expected . Still recovering from his illness , he was worn out from the strain of a long season . He showed good batting form , but once George Geary was injured , a strong but not fully representative side found itself short of bowling , forcing Hammond to play as an all @-@ rounder . In all first @-@ class matches on the tour , he scored 908 runs at an average of 47 @.@ 78 , and took 27 wickets at an average of 23 @.@ 85 . His Test debut came in the first match of the series , as he scored a quick 51 in his only innings and took five wickets for 36 runs in the South African second innings . At one point , he took three wickets for no runs and his bowling was described by Wisden as a key factor in an England victory . His best innings came in the third Test as he reached 90 . He had some good bowling spells , and in the fourth Test he removed both South African openers . An innings of 66 in the fifth and final Test left him with 321runs at an average of 40 @.@ 12 in his debut series , while his 15 wickets cost 26 @.@ 60 runs each . All of Hammond 's batting appearances were at number four in the order ; of his 140 career Test innings , 118 were at number three or four . The series was drawn 2 ? 2 .

In the following season of 1928 , Hammond scored 2 @,@ 825 runs (average 65 @.@ 69) with three double centuries , took 84 wickets (average 23 @.@ 10) , his highest total in a season , and held 79 catches , a single season record . These performances helped Gloucestershire to mount a rare but unsuccessful challenge for the County Championship . At the Cheltenham festival , in six days , Hammond scored 362 runs , took 11 wickets and held 11 catches . Against Surrey , he scored a century in both innings and held ten catches , including six in the second innings , which remains a first @-@ class record as of 2015 . In the following match , against Worcestershire , Hammond scored 80 . Bowling off @-@ spin on a testing pitch , he then took nine wickets for 23 , the best bowling figures of his career . He followed up with six for 105 as Worcestershire followed on . He played in a Test trial and in the Gentlemen v Players match at Lord 's for the second time , before participating in the three Test matches against the West Indies cricket team . While England

won the series 3 ? 0 , Hammond had mixed success . Despite scores of 45 in the first Test and a careful 63 in the second , he made just 111 runs in the series at an average of 37 .

= = = 1928 ? 29 tour of Australia = = =

In the winter of 1928 ? 29 , Hammond toured Australia with the M.C.C. The side was a strong one which overpowered Australia , winning the five @-@ match series 4 ? 1 . Hammond was remarkably successful in his first campaign for The Ashes . Wisden described his batting as a " series of triumphs " . He scored 779 runs in five consecutive Test innings , totalling 905 runs at an average of 113 @.@ 12 in the series , a record passed only by Don Bradman since . In all first @-@ class matches , he scored 1 @,@ 553 runs (average 91 @.@ 35) . However , except for one inspired spell in the final Test , in which he bowled the first three batsmen , Wisden described his bowling as disappointing . He began the tour with a century and a double century before the Test series . He scored 251 in a seven @-@ hour innings in the second Test . This was his maiden Test century and the second highest Test score between England and Australia . In the next Test , Hammond scored 200 against an accurate attack , again taking around seven hours . In the fourth Test he scored 119 not out and then 177 , in what Wisden judged his best innings of the tour due to his mastery of the bowlers and the difficult match situation when he came in to bat . Hammond had altered his usual batting style , playing more carefully and avoiding risk as runs were certain to come in the easy Australian batting conditions if a batsman did not get out . He eliminated the hook shot entirely from his repertoire and rarely played the cut shot . Unless the bowler bowled a bad ball , he limited his scoring between extra cover and midwicket , as the Australians unsuccessfully tried to block his shots in that area . Wisden stated that , even with his more cautious play , his batting on tour had shown skill and beauty .

Hammond married Dorothy Lister almost immediately after returning home , just before the 1929 season began . Gloucestershire 's inspirational new captain , Bev Lyon , led another Gloucestershire challenge for the County Championship . He used Hammond 's bowling less due to the emergence of Tom Goddard , but Hammond was less dominant with the bat than was expected . In first @-@ class cricket , he scored 2 @,@ 456 runs at an average of 64 @.@ 63 . He played in four of the five Tests against South Africa , missing the fourth due to injury ; he also suffered an injury in the second Test which required him to use a runner . Adopting tactics similar to those with which he had success in Australia , he scored two centuries ? an unbeaten 138 in the first Test , and a match @-@ saving 101 not out in the final Test which gave England a 2 ? 0 series victory . His only other innings over fifty was played in the third Test . He ended the series with 352 runs at an average of 58 @.@ 66 . At the time , critics considered him the best batsman in the world .

= = = Career in the early 1930s = = =

The 1930 season saw the Australians tour England , Bradman 's first tour . Over five Tests , the young Australian scored 974 runs in a flawless batting display to break Hammond 's record run aggregate and average set in the 1928 ? 29 series . While Bradman dominated , Hammond found it very difficult to play the leg spin bowling of Clarrie Grimmett , who dismissed him five times . Hammond scored 306 runs at an average of 34 @.@ 00 , passing fifty just twice . He batted over five hours for a match @-@ saving 113 in the third Test . On a difficult pitch and with little support , he made a hard @-@ hitting 60 in the final Test in a losing cause . The visitors took the series 2 ? 1 , and the newspapers unfavourably compared Hammond 's scoring with Bradman 's . Later in the season , Hammond scored 89 for Gloucestershire in a tied match against the Australians which he described as the most exciting of his career . One player said that he had never seen Hammond as excited as he was at the conclusion of the game . In all first @-@ class cricket that season , he scored 2 @,@ 032 runs (average 53 @.@ 47) and for Gloucestershire , he came top of the batting averages as the club finished second in the Championship . He took 30 wickets , including match figures of 12 for 74 against Glamorgan .

Hammond toured South Africa in the winter of 1930 ? 31 , in a weak M.C.C. side without some of

the best English players . The tourists were short of opening batsmen , frequently forcing Hammond into the role . Although successful , he brought a more wary approach than usual to his unaccustomed position . In all first @-@ class cricket , he scored 1 @,@ 045 runs (average 61 @.@ 47) . In the five @-@ Test series , which South Africa won 1 ? 0 , he scored 517 runs (average 64 @.@ 62) , passing fifty five times in nine innings . A very cautious approach batting at number three saw Hammond score 49 and 63 in the first Test . Opening the batting in the second Test , he scored two fifties to save the game ; he also kept wicket for a time following an injury to the regular wicketkeeper . Hammond continued to open in the third Test , playing more aggressively for 136 not out , before returning to number three and making 75 in the fourth Test . In the final Test , he opened both the batting and the bowling .

In 1931 , Hammond increased his first @-@ class wicket total to 47 , and scored 1 @,@ 781 runs at an average of 42 @.@ 40 . Although he remained a key batsman for Gloucestershire , both his aggregate and average fell , at least partly due to wet weather that often led to difficult batting conditions . In the three Tests against New Zealand , their first in England , he made an attacking century in the second Test , England 's only victory . He did not pass fifty in the rest of the series , ending the victorious campaign with 169 runs at an average of 56 @.@ 33 . In 1932 , Hammond was appointed vice @-@ captain of Gloucestershire , but it was noted in Wisden that he sometimes failed to inspire his team . Hammond himself felt unable , as a new captain , to take the same risks that Lyon had done . He scored 2 @,@ 528 runs (average 56 @.@ 17) , including his then highest score of 264 , and his first hundred for the Players against the Gentlemen . He also took 53 wickets .

= = = Bodyline tour = = =

Hammond was selected for the M.C.C. tour of Australia in 1932 ? 33 . Known as the Bodyline series , it became notorious for the controversial English tactic of bowling short on the line of leg stump , making the ball rise towards the batsman 's body to create deflections that could be caught by leg @-@ side fielders . Hammond , one of the first players selected , was part of the selection committee on tour , and the M.C.C. captain , Douglas Jardine , may have discussed tactics with him on the outward journey . Hammond disapproved of Bodyline bowling , believing it to be dangerous , although he understood some of the reasons for its use . He kept his feelings hidden during the tour , preferring to go along with his captain and the rest of the team . It was not until 1946 that he openly voiced his opinion .

Wisden described Hammond 's campaign as successful , although he failed to reach the heights of his previous tour . In the Tests , Hammond scored 440 runs (average 55 @.@ 00) and took nine wickets (average 32 @.@ 33) , while scoring 948 runs (average 55 @.@ 76) and taking 20 wickets (average 28 @.@ 90) in all first @-@ class matches . Although Wisden said that Hammond accomplished little with the ball , team manager Plum Warner praised his bowling , claiming that during the first Test it was comparable to that of revered former England bowler Sydney Barnes . His best performance was in a match against New South Wales , where he took six for 43 , including the wicket of Bradman . In an early game on tour against Victoria , Hammond was instructed by Jardine to attack the bowling of Chuck Fleetwood @-@ Smith , who was on the verge of making his Test debut . Hammond scored 203 , freely punishing Fleetwood @-@ Smith 's bowling and in effect delaying his Test debut for several years .

In England 's victory in the first Test , Hammond scored 112 , playing powerfully through the off side . He took two wickets in two balls in the second Australian innings , making the ball move around . In the second Test , he bowled spin , as England left out Hedley Verity , their specialist spinner ; his bowling impressed Jardine and the Wisden correspondent . His bowling against Bradman , who scored an unbeaten century , produced a personal duel that struck observers as particularly tense . Hammond took three for 23 in the second innings but achieved little with the bat as England lost the match . In the third Test , he appeared uncomfortable facing Tim Wall 's fast , short bowling , and was heard to say , " If that 's what the bloody game 's coming to , I 've had enough of it ! " He scored 85 in the second innings before being bowled by a full toss from Bradman , to his annoyance .

Hammond did not pass 20 runs in England's Ashes @-@ securing victory in the fourth Test , attracting criticism from Wisden and others for overcautious batting . He returned to form in the final Test at Sydney , a ground on which he was often successful , scoring 101 and 75 not out . Wisden praised his style and brilliant play , and he ended the match with a six , securing England's third successive victory and a 4 ? 1 series win .

A short tour of New Zealand followed ; Hammond scored 621 runs in three first @-@ class innings . In the first Test , he scored 227 , and in the second and final Test , he broke the world record for a Test innings on 1 April by scoring 336 not out . His record innings began cautiously , but against a weak bowling side , he increased his scoring rate after making his century and again after reaching 200 . As he passed Bradman's record of 334 , he shouted " Yes ! " He hit ten sixes , then a Test record , including three from consecutive balls . However , the weakness of the bowling compared to that faced by Bradman and the importance of Ashes matches meant that Hammond's record was not as prestigious as the Australian's . When Len Hutton broke the record in 1938 , he considered Bradman's 334 the score to beat .

= = = Loss of Test form = = =

The Bodyline controversy continued into the 1933 season . Bodyline tactics were used in several matches , including by the West Indian tourists in the second Test . In all first @-@ class cricket , Hammond , no longer vice @-@ captain of Gloucestershire , scored 3 @, @ 323 runs , passing 3 @, @ 000 in a season for the first time . With an average of 67 @. @ 81 , he topped the first @-@ class tables for what would be the first of eight successive seasons . He also took 38 wickets . However , his highest score in three Test innings was 34 . In the second Test , unsettled by Bodyline , Hammond was cut on the chin by a short ball , causing him to retire hurt . He again commented that he would quit rather than face such bowling ; soon after his return , he was out . Les Ames , who played in the three @-@ match series , won by England 2 ? 0 , believed that the West Indian pacemen worried Hammond , who showed a weakness against short , fast bowling .

Hammond spent much of the 1934 season troubled by sore throats and back problems which restricted his appearances for Gloucestershire . His form for his county was good and in all first @-@ class matches , he scored 2 @, @ 366 runs (average 76 @. @ 32) , although he took fewer wickets at a higher average than the previous season . Awarded a benefit match , which raised just over £ 2 @, @ 600 , Hammond was idolised by the press and public for his achievements . In Tests , it was a different story ; according to Wisden , he failed badly . England lost the Ashes , 2 ? 1 , in a series overshadowed at times by the Bodyline controversy . Hammond played in all five Tests against Australia but his top score was 43 ; he scored 162 runs at an average of 20 @. @ 25 , and took five wickets at an average of 72 @. @ 80 . Although the press and selectors supported him , there were some suggestions he should be left out of the side , and Hammond felt under great pressure .

The pattern of failure in Test matches but success elsewhere continued during the 1934 ? 35 tour of the West Indies . In all first @-@ class cricket he scored 789 runs , averaging 56 @. @ 35 , with an innings of 281 not out the highest of his three centuries . The four @-@ Test series , which England lost 2 ? 1 , was another matter . Wisden noted that the West Indian pace attack , considered the best in the world by Bob Wyatt , unsettled the English batsmen ; the home bowlers were accused of intimidation by some of the England side . Hammond had a top score of 47 and scored 175 runs at an average of 25 @. @ 00 . He played well in difficult batting conditions , which he believed were among the worst he ever faced , in the first Test . In the first innings he scored 43 , before dominating the bowlers at a critical time in his unbeaten 29 in the second innings , winning the match with a six .

Hammond's health remained poor at the start of the 1935 season . He developed septic tonsillitis which made it difficult for him to breathe , eat and sleep , and ultimately required an operation to remove his tonsils in early 1936 . Hammond's form was indifferent and he believed it was his worst season . In first @-@ class matches , he scored 2 @, @ 616 runs (average 49 @. @ 35) and took 60 wickets (average 27 @. @ 26) . He became the ninth player to reach 100 first @-@ class

centuries , emerging from a run of bad form against Somerset . Long a regular in the side , for the first time he captained the Players against the Gentlemen at Lord 's . In the five @-@ Test series against South Africa , a run of low scores again brought press speculation about his place in the national side . He did not pass fifty until the third Test , when he scored 63 and 87 not out , ending a run of 22 innings without a fifty , in which time he averaged 23 @.@ 47 over 14 Tests . Hammond made two more fifties in the last two Tests , although they were insufficient to prevent England from losing 1 ? 0 , their third successive series defeat . He finished the series with 389 runs at an average of 64 @.@ 83 , but remained unsatisfied with his form .

= = = Return to form = = =

As the 1936 season began , Hammond remained weak from the recent removal of his tonsils . Returning to cricket too soon , he was in poor form ; he took a longer rest , which caused him to miss the first of three Tests against India . It was July before he felt fully well . In all first @-@ class cricket that season , Hammond scored 2 @,@ 107 runs , averaging 56 @.@ 94 , and took 41 wickets . In county cricket , Gloucestershire appointed a new captain , Dallas Page . Hammond had been offered the joint captaincy with Bev Lyon , conditional on his becoming assistant secretary at the club to enable him to play as an amateur , but declined for financial reasons . Hammond returned to the England side for the second Test , making 167 , his first century in 28 innings , scoring quickly throughout . He was praised by Wisden for his control . Hammond continued to score heavily in the third Test , making 217 after being dropped twice early on . His highest score came in the last county match of the season , at Gloucestershire , which was Tom Goddard 's benefit match . A difficult pitch meant that wickets tumbled on the first day , prompting fears of an early finish which would possibly lose money for Goddard . Hammond batted all of the second day , ensuring the match lasted the full three days , to score 317 out of a total of 485 .

Selected for the M.C.C. tour of Australia in 1936 ? 37 under the captaincy of Gubby Allen , Hammond was again part of the tour selection committee . He was successful with bat and ball , scoring 1 @,@ 206 runs (average 67 @.@ 00) and taking 21 wickets (average 24 @.@ 57) in all first @-@ class matches in Australia (he played two more in New Zealand at the conclusion of the tour) . In Tests , Hammond scored 468 runs at an average of 58 @.@ 50 and took 12 wickets at an average of 25 @.@ 08 . His tour began with four consecutive first @-@ class hundreds against the state teams , but Wisden reported that he never recaptured this form during the remainder of the tour , owing to the bowling of Bill O 'Reilly . Hammond could not overcome O 'Reilly 's use of slow leg theory in the later Tests which restricted scoring . England won the first two Tests , although Hammond did not contribute in the first , making a first ball duck . In the second he scored an unbeaten 231 , then took three for 29 with the ball in Australia 's second innings , during a period when the other bowlers lost control . From this point , his contributions fell away , although he believed that the best innings of his life , on one of the most difficult pitches he ever confronted , was his 32 in the third Test . Neville Cardus , who saw it , described it as remarkable . However , his free @-@ scoring 51 in the second innings was not enough to prevent defeat in the face of an unrealistic target . In the fourth Test , Hammond took five for 57 in Australia 's second innings , but his dismissal on the final morning by Fleetwood @-@ Smith ensured that Australia won the match to level the series . One of Hammond 's team @-@ mates opined that Bradman would not have been dismissed as easily in a similar situation . In the decisive final Test , he was restricted by O 'Reilly 's leg theory attack and failed in the first innings . His 56 in the second innings was not enough to prevent Australia 's third win in succession to take the Ashes 3 ? 2 .

In the 1937 season , Hammond scored 3 @,@ 252 runs at an average of 65 @.@ 04 , passing 3 @,@ 000 runs a second time , and taking 48 wickets . In the three Tests against New Zealand , he passed the previous record number of England appearances , overtaking Frank Woolley 's 64 Tests . While scoring 140 in the first Test , he passed the total number of runs scored by Jack Hobbs to become the leading run scorer in Tests , a record he held until it was broken by Colin Cowdrey in December 1970 . This innings was his only score above fifty in the series , in which he scored 204 runs (average 51) . At the end of the season , in November 1937 , it was announced that he had

accepted a job , joining the Marsham Tyres board of directors , meaning he would play as an amateur in the future . This led to immediate speculation that he would be made captain of England in the 1938 Ashes series . The chairman of selectors , Plum Warner , later wrote that there was never any doubt from then that Hammond would be captain .

= = Amateur cricketer = =

= = = England captain = = =

In the 1938 season , his first as an amateur , Hammond scored 3 @, @ 011 runs at an average of 75 @. @ 27 . During the season , he was elected to life membership of Gloucestershire and membership of the M.C.C. , which barred professionals . He captained the Gentlemen against the Players at Lord 's ? having previously led the Players , he is the only person to skipper both teams . Early in the season , he led England in a Test trial before , as expected , being given the role full @- @ time against Australia . His leadership during the series , which was drawn 1 ? 1 , won him praise . He was criticised , however , for his handling of bowlers , specifically for not giving enough work to spinners Hedley Verity in the first Test or Doug Wright in the fourth . In the second Test , he scored 240 , briefly a record for an England batsman playing at home , to rescue the side from a poor start . This innings was lauded by observers including Warner , Bradman and Cardus , and The Times correspondent pronounced it one of the best ever . The match , like the first , was drawn and with the third Test completely washed out by rain , the crucial match proved to be the fourth . In a low @- @ scoring game , Hammond scored 76 , holding England 's first innings together . In the second innings , however , he made a first @- @ ball duck ; an English batting collapse allowed Australia to win the match and retain the Ashes . England had some consolation with a massive victory in the final Test ; following Hammond 's instructions to be cautious , the side slowly amassed a record total of 903 for seven , with Hutton beating Hammond 's Test record innings by scoring 364 . Hammond scored 59 , giving him 403 runs at an average of 67 @. @ 16 in the series .

In the 1938 ? 39 season , Hammond captained the M.C.C. tour of South Africa in a five @- @ match series . Wisden criticised both sides for slow play , and the almanack 's correspondent felt Hammond was reluctant to try to force a win . In general , though , judgements on his captaincy were positive ; his team @- @ mates and opponents believed he had firm control of the side and E. W. Swanton complimented his tactics . In the Tests , he used the cautious batting method which had been successful in Australia . He scored three Test centuries , making 181 after a shaky start in the second Test , a quick 120 in the third and 140 in the fifth . England won the third match , the only one in the series with a result , and Hammond was praised for his use of bowlers . The final match , in which Hammond lost the toss , having previously won it eight consecutive times , was drawn after ten days ' play . In the fourth innings , England faced a victory target of 696 . Hammond was credited with nearly forcing a remarkable win , first by promoting Bill Edrich , who had failed thus far in the series but scored 219 , and then by playing himself what Wisden described as " one of the finest innings of his career " before rain forced the match to be abandoned . Hammond also tallied two fifties in the series to score 609 runs in total , at an average of 87 @. @ 00 . In all first @- @ class tour matches , he scored 1 @, @ 025 runs (average 60 @. @ 29) . While on tour , he met Sybil Ness @- @ Harvey , who was to become his second wife .

Appointed as Gloucestershire captain for the 1939 season , Hammond led the team to third in the County Championship and recorded a rare double victory over Yorkshire . While Wisden commended his adventurous style of leadership , others such as Basil Allen , his predecessor as captain , did not approve ; their main criticism was his failure to encourage his players . In first @- @ class cricket , he scored 2 @, @ 479 runs at an average of 63 @. @ 56 . He placed at the top of the first @- @ class averages for the seventh successive season , although some critics detected a decline in his abilities . While he led England to a 1 ? 0 series victory over West Indies in three Tests , Wisden reported some criticism of his captaincy . R. C. Robertson @- @ Glasgow said that " Hammond does not rank among the more imaginative England captains " , although he concluded

by defending Hammond as " experienced and sound " . In the second match , he took his 100th catch in Tests , and in the third , he scored 138 , his final Test century . In the series , Hammond scored 279 runs (average 55 @. @ 80) . The impending war overshadowed much of the season ; throughout the Tests , Hammond made public appeals for citizens to join the armed forces . On the outbreak of the Second World War , he joined the services and was commissioned as a pilot officer in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve (RAFVR) in October 1939 .

= = = Career in the war = = =

Hammond was posted to a training wing of the Royal Air Force (RAF) at Hastings in Sussex before he moved with his unit to Torquay . He had mainly administrative duties , including instructing recruits , for whom he made life hard . He played some games of cricket in 1940 for various teams before being posted to Cairo in December . His responsibilities in Egypt included organising , promoting and playing in cricket matches . Posted there until 1943 , he was promoted to flight lieutenant and then to squadron leader . While Hammond may have helped to raise morale , Cairo was an easy posting during the war and he was not involved directly in combat . He also spent much time in South Africa , where he played cricket and was reunited with Sybil Ness @- @ Harvey . At the beginning of 1944 , Hammond was posted back to England , where he lectured and drilled cadets . Playing as captain in many one @- @ day cricket matches , he was praised by Wisden for encouraging exciting contests . Others applauded his batting , including his hitting of many sixes , fitting the games ' relaxed atmosphere . In December 1944 , Hammond , suffering from fibrositis , was discharged from the RAFVR on health grounds and returned to work at Marsham Tyres . Once the war ended in Europe in May 1945 , several first @- @ class matches were organised . Hammond played in six , scoring 592 runs at an average of 59 @. @ 20 with two centuries . In a match for an England team against the Dominions at Lord 's , he made a century in each innings , becoming the first man to do this seven times .

= = = End of career = = =

During 1946 , the first full season after the war , Hammond played only 26 innings but scored 1 @, @ 783 runs at an average of 84 @. @ 90 , topping the first @- @ class averages for the eighth time in succession ? still an English record as of 2015 . At times , he began to show technical weaknesses . Captaining England to a 1 ? 0 victory in a three @- @ Test series against India , he scored one fifty , making 119 runs at an average of 39 @. @ 66 . He batted fifth in the order in the final match , as he would in four of his five remaining Tests . Gloucestershire fell to fifth in the County Championship , and Hammond , after enthusiastically making the team very competitive at the start of the season , became increasingly affected by pain , particularly in damp weather . As captain , he could be irritable and consciously created remoteness and division .

Remaining captain of England , Hammond led the M.C.C. side which toured Australia in 1946 ? 47 . The visit was unsuccessful as England lost the five @- @ match Test series 3 ? 0 . According to Wisden , Hammond 's inability to make large scores was one of the reasons for the failure . Nor was he a success as captain . He was criticised for his field placement and people at home wondered if he had lost control of the team . While he suffered some ill luck , Wisden said that he " was not the same inspiring leader as at home against Australia in 1938 " . Other journalists noted that he did not consult his players , one of whom later commented that he showed little imagination in his use of bowlers . Hammond approached the tour as an exercise in goodwill , promising his men an enjoyable time . It was noted that Bradman , the Australian captain , took a more competitive attitude towards the series . Team spirit was good on the outward journey , but Hammond 's forthcoming divorce and other domestic concerns caused him to become isolated from the players and increasingly moody . He had poor relations with the press , who were very critical of his captaincy and reporting details of the dissolution of his marriage . As the tour progressed , he lost his dynamism as a leader , gave poor advice to the batsmen and made poor selections for the team .

As a batsman , Hammond started the tour well , scoring 208 in an early game , but lost form once the Tests began . One of the turning points of the series was a disputed catch in the first Test . Bradman , who looked in poor form and uncertain to continue his cricket career for much longer , had reached 28 when the English team believed he had edged the ball to Jack Ikin at slip . Bradman , as was his entitlement , waited for the umpire 's decision instead of leaving the field . The fielders were certain that he was out , but the umpire said he was not , believing the ball had bounced before it was caught ; opinion among other participants and spectators was divided . However , Hammond was extremely angry , saying loudly , either to Bradman or the umpires , " a fine fucking way to start a series " . Afterwards , relations between Hammond and Bradman deteriorated and there was a coldness between them . Bradman went on to score 187 and Australia won the match and , ultimately , the series . In that first Test , Hammond played two good innings on a very difficult wicket , but in the series , he did not pass fifty , scoring 168 runs at an average of 21 @. @ 00 before missing the final Test . In all first @-@ class cricket , he scored 633 runs (average 45 @. @ 21) . He suffered increasing pain from fibrositis throughout the series , and later admitted that he felt close to a breakdown . Hammond played his last Test in New Zealand at the end of the tour , scoring 79 in his final innings . He ended his career with 7 @, @ 249 Test runs at an average of 58 @. @ 46 . His 22 centuries remained an English record until surpassed by Alastair Cook in December 2012 .

Hammond decided to retire from all cricket after the tour , not returning for Gloucestershire in 1947 . Within 24 hours of his arrival back in England , he married Sybil Ness @-@ Harvey . He played only two more first @-@ class games . He scored an unbeaten 92 for the M.C.C. against Ireland in 1950 . To help boost a Gloucestershire membership drive , he joined his former side for a match the following year . Although given an excellent reception by the crowd , his tired appearance and struggle to score seven runs before being dismissed embarrassed many of those present . In all first @-@ class cricket , Hammond scored 50 @, @ 551 runs at an average of 56 @. @ 10 with 167 centuries . He remains seventh on the list of highest run scorers in first @-@ class cricket and has the third highest number of centuries , as of 2015 .

= = Style and technique = =

Wisden 's obituary described Hammond as one of the top four batsmen who had ever played , calling him " a most exciting cricketer The instant he walked out of a pavilion , white @-@ spotted blue handkerchief showing from his right pocket , bat tucked underarm , cap at a hint of an angle , he was identifiable as a thoroughbred . " Throughout the 1930s , the public and critics regarded Hammond as England 's best batsman , succeeding Jack Hobbs , and next to Bradman , the best in the world (although George Headley also had a claim) . Among English batsmen , only Herbert Sutcliffe , with a higher Test average , was similarly successful . According to Alan Gibson , however , although Sutcliffe was dependable in a crisis , " his batting never gave quite the same sense of majesty and excitement that Hammond 's did " . More recently , Hammond was one of the inaugural inductees into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame , launched in January 2009 , and was selected by a jury of cricket journalists as a member of England 's all @-@ time XI in August 2009 .

Balanced and still at the crease , Hammond was known for the power and beauty of his driving through the off side , although he could play any shot . A very attacking player early in his career , he later became more defensive , playing more frequently off the back foot and abandoning the hook shot as too risky . He was particularly effective on difficult wickets , scoring runs where others struggled to survive . Many of his contemporaries believed that he was the finest off @-@ side player in the history of cricket . In the words of Patrick Murphy , fellow players considered him " on a different plane ? majestic , assured , poised , a devastating amalgam of the physical and mental attributes that make up a great batsman . " County bowlers who played against him considered it an achievement merely to prevent him scoring runs .

However , Australian bowlers such as O 'Reilly and Grimmett troubled him by bowling at his leg stump , restricting his scoring as he had fewer effective leg @-@ side shots . Occasionally , he displayed discomfort against the fastest bowlers . His team @-@ mate Charlie Barnett said that he

did not relish fast bowling , although he was capable of playing it well in the initial stages of his career . Other colleagues , such as Les Ames , Bob Wyatt and Reg Sinfield , believed that he did not like to face the new ball , and he was occasionally happy for the other batsmen to face the difficult bowling .

His bowling was smooth and effortless , with a classical action . He could bowl fast , but more often bowled at fast @-@ medium pace . He could make the ball swing in humid weather , and deliver off @-@ spin when conditions were suitable . However , Hammond was reluctant to bowl , particularly for Gloucestershire . Bill Bowes believed that he was a very good bowler who would not take it seriously . In his obituary , Wisden said that " at slip he had no superior . He stood all but motionless , moved late but with uncanny speed , never needing to stretch or strain but plucking the ball from the air like an apple from a tree . " He was also able to field further away from the batsmen than was the norm , particularly in his younger days , as he could chase the ball quickly and had a very good throwing arm .

= = Personal life = =

= = = Personality = = =

Hammond struck his contemporaries as a sad figure , a loner with few friends in cricket . He rarely encouraged young players or gave out praise . He liked to mix with middle @-@ class people , spending money he did not really have , leading to accusations of snobbery . Team @-@ mates regarded him as moody , private and uncommunicative . Often silent in the company of others , he could be arrogant and unfriendly . Charlie Barnett and Charles Dacre , two of his Gloucestershire team @-@ mates , came almost to hate him . Dacre often played in a reckless way of which Hammond disapproved ; Hammond , in turn , may have been jealous of him . Hammond once tried hard to injure Dacre by bowling fast at him while he was wicketkeeper . Barnett began as a close friend but fell out over Hammond 's treatment of his first wife and later his refusal to play in Barnett 's benefit match . Other players who were involved in disputes with Hammond included Denis Compton , whose cavalier approach Hammond disliked , and Learie Constantine , who believed Hammond insulted him in the West Indies in 1925 , although the two later made peace . Hammond 's ultimate rivalry was with Bradman , who overshadowed him throughout his career , and with whom he developed an increasing obsession . It was not enough for Hammond to be the second @-@ best batsman in the world , and he disliked the constant comparisons made between them in Bradman 's favour . He felt not only that he had to do well , but also that he had to score more than Bradman .

= = = Marriage = = =

David Foot quotes an unnamed cricketer saying that the two ruling passions of Hammond 's life " were his cricket bat and his genitals " . His strong desire for women was noticed by team @-@ mates from early in his career . Foot believes that Hammond had sexual relationships with many women , sometimes several contemporaneously , before and during his first marriage , some of which led to marriage proposals . This was widely known in cricket circles , prompting disapproval from figures such as Barnett .

In 1929 , Hammond married Dorothy Lister , the daughter of a Yorkshire textile merchant , in a highly publicised ceremony at a parish church in Bingley . They met at a cricket match in 1927 but spent little time together before the wedding , having little in common . When married , they rarely communicated or got on well . Acquaintances believed Hammond treated her badly , particularly once her father lost nearly everything in the Depression , causing them financial worry . She remained loyal , but their relations gradually broke down , even after she sailed to South Africa , joining Hammond on tour in 1939 in an attempt to save the marriage . By that time , he was already seeing his future second wife , Sybil Ness @-@ Harvey , a former beauty queen whom he had met

while on tour .

During the war , Hammond spent much of his leave with Ness @-@ Harvey in South Africa . In 1945 , she followed him back to England , but did not like it . When Hammond left to tour Australia in 1946 ? 47 , Ness @-@ Harvey remained behind with his mother , with whom she did not get along . This was one of the factors which led to Hammond 's problems on the tour . His divorce went through , and on his return , he and Sybil married at Kingston Register Office . She had already changed her name to Hammond by deed poll . Their first child , Roger , was born in 1948 . Carolyn was born in 1950 and Valerie was born in 1952 .

= = = Business = = =

Hammond was involved with several businesses . In 1933 , to ease his financial concerns , he took a job with the Cater Motor Company . He was used as a sales promotions manager , which mainly involved publicity and meeting customers , although he also test @-@ drove cars . Taking a job with Marsham Tyres in 1937 enabled him to become an amateur cricketer . He joined the board of directors and was again used for publicity , but he was never a hard worker or determined salesman . Returning to Marsham 's after he was discharged from the RAF in 1944 , he supplemented his income by working as a journalist . He wrote for The Star during the 1948 Test series and penned three books with the assistance of a ghostwriter .

In 1951 , Hammond resigned from Marsham 's ; his wife was homesick , leading Hammond to plan a business in South Africa with a partner . However , after moving to Durban , they realised they had insufficient money . He took a job with Denham Motors in Durban , where he was forced to work much harder than in England . He lost his job in 1959 when the firm went out of business , and the Hammond family again found themselves in financial trouble .

= = = Final years = = =

At the end of 1959 , Hammond was offered a job as a sports administrator at University of Natal with the aim of developing its sports facilities . In February 1960 , he was involved in a serious car crash . It was uncertain whether he would survive , but he pulled through . Three months after the accident , he returned to work and became involved with coaching . In 1962 , Hammond visited England as part of a drive to recruit new members for Gloucestershire . He showed some interest in taking over a pub , but nothing came of it . On the M.C.C. tour of South Africa in 1964 ? 65 , he joined the England dressing room , becoming popular with the players . On 1 July 1965 , he had a heart attack and died after a few hours ' illness .