**Early Canterbury Cricket 1840 to 1870**

Turning to the South Island, and a world quite removed from the bellicose firmament of the north, the progress of cricket was altogether more secure. The structure of Canterbury cricket during its first three decades, and the consolidation of Christchurch as the 'spiritual' and administrative home of the New Zealand game by the turn of the century, is a direct reflection of the founding Canterbury Association. It is perhaps significant that the Association was formed in 1848 - the year of European revolution; its mem­bers readily embraced Wakefield's gloomy preoccupation with a breakdown of democracy and a threatening industrial proletariat. To this they added more personal and deeply religious perceptions of a declining moral stan­dard and excessive politicisation within the Church of England. While the Wakefield principle provided the basic mechanism of social order in the new colony, Canterbury was also to be a diocesan settlement complete with bishop, cathedral chapter and clergy and denominational schools.

The Canterbury Association possessed considerable status and influence from the outset. Its initial list of 59 members included 2 archbishops, 7 bishops, 4 baronets, 14 other peers and 16 members of parliament. Canterbury was also the best organised and planned Of the Wakefield settle­ments. Emigration selection criteria were somewhat strictly geared to the objective of providing a sober and industrious labouring class to serve the cultivated elite who could afford Wakefield's 'sufficient price'. If Canterbury could not quite obtain a noble family to place at the top of its colonial hierarchy, it is still safe enough to say that it attracted a dispropor­tionate number of English public school and Oxbridge graduates who arrived in New Zealand in the years 1850-80.48

Ultimately, though, the Canterbury ideal collapsed as it did everywhere else. Initially slow land sales created a deterrent for later investors, and it was soon found that - even more than in the north - the land of the Canterbury plains was suited to pastoralism rather than close agricultural settlement. Thus pragmatism contributed to a broadening of social attitudes among even the most dedicated Canterbury Association colonists. Nevertheless, L.e. Webb's verdict on Canterbury is a reminder of how rela­tively successful the settlement was: 'Wakefield's aspiration to found a colony which would reproduce the social gradations of an English county was more nearly realised in Canterbury than in any of the other settlements in Australia or New Zealand, chiefly because upper middle class colonists were attracted to Canterbury and flourished there' .49 It is also worth noting that even when estrangement developed between the Canterbury Association and its colonists during the early 1850s, a majority of

Association supporters were returned in the first Provincial Council election in 1853.50 Their ideals may have been eroded, but they set a lasting social and administrative tone.

The inauguration of cricket in Canterbury was signalled by an advertise­ment for the Christchurch Cricket Club (CCC) in the *Lyttelton Times* on 21 June 1851, seven months after the arrival of the first settlers. The club had apparently secured a designated ground in Hagley Park and the subscription and initial entrance fees were a relatively preclusive IOs.6d.

The membership of the club during its first two years could not have pro­vided a more deliberate embodiment of the Canterbury hierarchy, and the first match left no doubt as to the proposed social order. On the first anniver­sary of the settlement, 16 December 1851, the club played a 'Working Men's XI'. When play ended owing to darkness, the club required 34 to win ­having scored 131 and dismissed their opponents for 72 and 93, high scores for the period in New Zealand. John Robert Godley, Harrow-educated High Church Tory and leader of the settlement, contributed 24 - the second highest score. But, more importantly, the occasion exhibited many familiar characteristics of 'home':

It was difficult to believe that the occasion was not much more remote than a mere twelve month, so English was the appearance of that part of the great grassy plain in which the revellers assembled themselves: the scene bore no unapt resemblance to the open air hol­iday-making in the neighbourhood of some country town at home. The only major differences were the wide open spaces and the much more orderly conduct of spectators compared to England.

Despite the egalitarian strains of this inaugural contest, the majority of early matches were internal 'Married' against 'Single' members-only affairs, and the 'Working Men's XI' of 1851 reappeared only once more, in early 1852.53 Without exception, the members of the club were 'gentleman' of status who did a great deal to shape the future of the province and the colony as a whole. Of the 41 players who appeared consistently during a season or seasons in the first five years (1851-56), 15 were at some time members of the Canterbury Provincial Council and 9 served in the New Zealand General Assembly, either in the House of Representatives or Legislative Council. While many assumed these positions after their active playing days, it is clear enough that the club was inextricably bound to both landed wealth and political influence - what might be termed the 'elite of the Canterbury elite'. This patronage was also sustained rather than sporadic, indicative of a genuine interest rather than a social necessity.

Breaking into this circle entailed having the time and resources to play cricket. Working men encountered difficulty gaining leave from employers and it was unlikely that they could easily afford an annual subscription that climbed as high as £2 in 1867.The greatest barrier, though, was that entry to the club was by nomination, and this process was certainly operated with discretion. When a new incarnation of the Christchurch Cricket Club sought to secure the lease for a new Hagley Park ground at the end of 1860, revised provincial gov­ernment regulations dictated that it could only do so if it' abandoned existing membership restrictions and became 'quite public'. The constitution was accordingly revised and the name of the club changed to the Canterbury Cricket Club.However, the change was cosmetic rather than actual.

Implicit in the club membership system is some explanation as to why Canterbury cricketers, and sporting enthusiasts generally, had much less dif­ficulty than those in other centres in securing funds and, above all, perma­nent or semi-permanent playing fields. By the time the second major match, 'Married Gentlemen' against 'Single', was played in April 1852 a £30 sub­scription had been raised for improvements to the Hagley Park ground. By September 1854, further generous subscriptions had enabled more improve­ments and the erection of a pavilion, possibly the first in New Zealand. The *Lyttelton Times* reported that every arrangement had been made for the com­fort of members and visitors, and hinted that a groundsman had been employed to maintain facilities during the winter.

It is equally apparent that the Christchurch club had the resources and leisure to travel further afield reasonably regularly. Matches were being played against Kaiapoi by late 1853, Lincoln by late 1854 and Rangiora by February 1855. While these areas are virtually within the confines of modern Christchurch, they constituted a long and arduous journey during the early 1850s. Indeed, the efforts of the Club at Rangiora did not go unno­ticed by the *Lyttelton Times.* 'Their energy in getting up cricket so far up the country, will give a spirit to this thoroughly English game, which it is to be hoped will not flag'.

Such initiatives from Christchurch were the basis for a strong cricketing tradition among Canterbury pastoralists. Mid-Canterbury cricket reveals a close relationship between country players and the elite United Canterbury Cricket Club. During the 1860s there were a number of games at Rakaia involving 'Hills' and 'Plains' XIs, Ashburton, Ellesmere and visitors from Christchurch.58 At least a third of the 31 players who represented 'Hills', 'Plains' or Ashburton in 1866-67 were pastoral runholders, 4 others were run managers and many of the remainder were almost certainly their employees. While a number of so-called runholders in the South Island were more realistically managers financed by sleeping partners, several of those identified in a cricketing context display prosperity on their own account.59 Among them were William Campbell Walker, an Oxford MA who served as Minister of Education and Immigration in the Seddon Ministry during the 1890s, and Alfred Cox, an Australian-born runholder and land speculator who accumulated a solid fortune and served both the Provincial Council and the House of Representatives.

The earliest cricket in South Canterbury rests on an equally prominent foundation. A club was formed in Timaru in 1862 and played its first game against Arowhenua on 14 January 1863. Clubs existed at Burkes Pass and Winchester by the early 1870s and at Geraldine, Temuka and Waimate by 1884. The leading Burkes Pass player was e.G. Hawdon, a runholder and Rugbean. Cricket in Waimate owed most to the patronage of Robert Heaton Rhodes Jr. and the Studholme brothers - all of whom followed an Oxford education with the accumulation of vast landholdings in South Canterbury. The public school influence was such that an annual match between Christ's College, Christchurch, and English public school old boys was still being played at Geraldine in the early 1950s.62

Later in the century North Canterbury cricket was initiated by Duncan Rutherford of the Amuri who had been captain of the Christ's College XI during the 1860s. With his brothers he established the Amuri Cricket Club in October 1875, which provided the stimulus for frequent matches between Rotherham and Waiau and with Kaikoura. As most of the leading players were prominent runholders or their employees, there were also regular matches between stations. Moreover, there is some suggestion that this enthusiasm for the game also embodied more complex relationships of social status and attempted social control between employers and employees in rural districts. Certainly, the Revd W.R. Campbell's response to R.A. Chaffey's efforts to foster North Canterbury cricket among farm workers is revealing: 'Go ahead with your scheme; the men are better playing cricket than two-up, or drinking whisky'. At the same time, one suspects that WJ. Gardner's verdict on station cricket is equally applicable: 'The pitches were rough, and the bowling ragged; the batsmen had one aim: to send the ball soaring over woolshed or plantation' .

**Early Canterbury Cricket 1870-1914**

Christchurch cricket, because it did not suffer the problems of playing space endemic to Dunedin and Wellington, produced nothing during the nine­teenth century to match the animosity of its southern neighbour. There were established and secure facilities at Hagley Park, Lancaster Park and, later, Sydenham Park, and a general abundance of flat land. The collective influ­ence of Canterbury cricketers from 1850 onwards ensured that the prevailing concern was less a matter of finding suitable grounds as improving those they had. This, though, is not to suggest that Christchurch was entirely immune from controversy. Disputes between the United Canterbury and Albion clubs during the late 1860s, and between the successors of the same clubs and the CCA in 1905 and 1907, demonstrate that class consciousness was never far removed from the game.

The United Canterbury Cricket Club (UCCC) was the most enduring club in New Zealand, maintaining continuity from 1860 until at least 1907. It was generally debt-free, had an excellent ground and its matches were usually well patronised. The only thing it lacked in Christchurch was strong opposition. Moreover, Canterbury had not experienced the influx of new players seen in Otago during the peak gold era. While the revival of the working-class Albion club at the end of 1867 went some way to broadening the strength of Christchurch cricket, relations between the two clubs were variable. The first point of tension came over the matter of selecting provin­cial teams. An innings loss to Otago in February 1867 prompted the UCCC to announce that henceforth the provincial selection committee should be determined at a public meeting, but such damage control came too late. A letter to *The Press* from 'stumps' implied that the loss to Otago was in large part due to petty jealousy. The UCCC selectors had invited Albion players to attend practices for the interprovincial match, but they had not done so. Further, they were guilty of cricketing 'martyrdom' for their failure to assist with preparing Hagley Park for the match. In reply, 'Bat' insisted that Albion players had never been asked to attend practices and had not been considered for selection.That this dispute was perceived as a conflict of class is evident in the tone of 'stumps' first letter:'

Cricket is one of those games which ought to generate a sort of freema­sonry among all those who take part in the game, no matter be they rich or poor, professional men or mechanics, as long as they conduct them­selves in a respectable manner all differences of position should be thrown off with the ordinary everyday costume, and when the flannels are put on everyone should be equal, all striving to excel each other in the game.

But 'stumps' determination to portray the UCCC as anything but exclusive did not sit easily alongside the decision of the club in 1868 to charge Albion £25 rent for practice and matches on its Hagley Park ground as against £5 paid by Christ's College - a body with a much sounder financial base. Although the rent was reduced to £20 during the 1869/70 season, the UCCC reserved for themselves all use of the pavilion.7] It is also revealing that Albion, despite its meagre resources, arranged a wide variety of matches against clubs and surrounding districts while almost all of the UCCC fix­tures were internal or scratch matches involving Christ's College players.

The UCCC altered little over subsequent decades. The XI of 1884/85 contained at least 9 Christ's College old boys, and the 15 players who appeared in the senior team during the 1899/1900 season comprised 5 solic­itors and a law clerk, 4 bank officers, an estate agent, a journalist, a secre­tary, a schoolmaster and a clerk. The last named was Arthur Sims, soon to become one of the wealthiest and most significant benefactors of New Zealand cricket during the twentieth century. The other increasingly domi­nant club, the Midland Canterbury Cricket Club (MCCC), which had evolved from the former Albion CC around 1870, was always a more 'open' body. The leading players of the 1880s and 90s included a bricklayer, a car­penter, a draper, a salesman, a boot-maker, a compositor, a miller, a telegraphist, various clerks and a schoolmaster - all of whom had played for the Canterbury provincial team. By the turn of the century, though, the mem­bership had become more middle class in character. It included L.T. Cobcroft, a solicitor and the New Zealand captain on the 1899 tour to Australia, and Daniel Reese, an engineer and - at the age of 20 - already regarded as New Zealand's most talented player. From the 1883/84 season these two clubs were joined in a formal senior competition by the Lancaster Park CC, composed almost exclusively of clerks, and by various and more sporadic Addington and Sydenham teams drawn from the new industrial areas of the city. By 1905 there were at least 4 grades and in excess of 25 teams under the auspices of the CCA.

In March 1905, probably under the influence of Charles Bannerman - the former Australian Test batsman who spent three years coaching at Christ's College, the CCA established a subcommittee to initiate district cricket. At further meetings in early June, Frederick Wilding stated that such a scheme would increase the number of senior cricketers, promote rivalry between them and increase public interest in the local competition. Obed Caygill added that there were certainly sentimental difficulties regarding the long­ established clubs but the district cricket scheme was a progressive one and opposition to it was selfish and unworthy of cricket. By a margin of 15 to 5 the CCA formally adopted district cricket in late July.73 The working-class Addington and Sydenham clubs quickly endorsed the scheme by majority vote and Lancaster Park, under Wilding's influence, did so unanimously. But the MCCC rejected the scheme outright, and the UCCC only adopted it on the votes of its junior members. A later motion to have this decision reversed was rejected. The general consensus was that district cricket would be given a two-year trial.

After the first season, the CCA had no doubt that it had made the right move. As the 1906 Annual Report stated, 'The inception of District Cricket has produced the greatest change that has yet taken place in connection with our local cricket. Yet as the third season approached, the UCCC began to agitate for change. At a club meeting on 6 July 1907 it was claimed that dis­trict cricket had been given a fair trial, but there was little interest in the scheme and all clubs were now happy to revert to the old order. Keith Ollivier, soon to represent New Zealand, suggested that district cricket had been introduced 20 years too-soon and that there were many incompetent players in the senior grade. Eric Harper, a leading solicitor, added that there had been far more sociability among the old clubs than now existed. Despite some objections from junior members and accusations of disloyalty to the CCA, a motion to revert to club cricket was carried 15 to 7.

Critics of the UCCC had no doubt that the central issue was class rather than cricket. Writing to *The Press* on 9 July Abed Caygill criticised former players for trying to make decisions for younger club members. With six senior teams rather than four, district cricket ultimately exposed more players to a higher standard of cricket, and the social side was a small sacri­fice against the improvements that were becoming evident.77 D.H. Thomson, sometime Otago delegate to the NZCC, stressed that the social aspect of dis­trict teams would evolve in time. “It is a question really for the members themselves, and if class distinction will only be set aside there is no fear for the social element”. Ironically, though, the strongest criticism of the UCCC appeared under the pseudonym 'Old Christ's College Boy':

There are a lot of good fellows in the UCCC, and first-rate sports who always play the game, come what may: but yet one finds also 'a heap of rotters' who deem it infra dig [sic] to play cricket nightly with men who earn their bread by honest toil ... Men of the calibre mentioned are not sports in the true sense of the word, but would be better termed social cricketers. If they would accept a hint from me, I would suggest that they quickly acquire part of the Exhibition buildings in North Park and get the front lawns and form a 'Rounders club' where their tribe might disport themselves and drink tea ad lib. Let us improve our cricket and sink the motives so apparent among the few. The writer also accused UCCC members of disrupting the St Albans district club and failing to attend practices.79

Class was also the primary concern of a rather less sarcastic criticism of the UCCC by 'sporting Patriot'. He suggested that the old club system had produced strong cliques among Christchurch cricketers and certain feelings of 'caste', and 'unless one could claim possession of a distinct social status, a member of such a club would feel as much out of place as a salmon on a sidewalk'. Sporting Patriot went on to add that the advantage of district cricket was that it gave an opportunity to any player of suitable ability regardless of his background and that it would be unfair to abandon the new club system after two seasons in which it had not been possible to give it a fair trial, especially as one of the seasons had been very wet and the other was disrupted by the Christchurch International Exhibition of 1906-07.80

In reply to accusations of exclusivity, a member of the UCCC coupled the introduction of the district scheme - and the accompanying loss of club traditions - with the spectre of radical industrial unionism which was begin­ning to appear in New Zealand:

Now ... a socialistic feeling ... a feeling akin to trade-unionism has even crept on to the cricket field, and cricketers are subject to dictation and can no longer follow their own inclinations. If cricket is to be a business, and nothing more than a business, then preserve your district scheme and curtail the liberty of the cricketer. If it is to be a combina­tion of cricket, good-fellowship and sportsmanship, then preserve the old club.

Certainly, as long-established bodies, the UCCC and MCCC stood to lose more through district cricket than many younger, less secure clubs.

The MCCC presented more pragmatic objections to the district scheme, claiming that it was subject to abuse in that players were deliberately moving between districts in search of better clubs. Not even a plea from Daniel Reese, the New Zealand captain and a strong advocate of district cricket, could prevent a motion being carried 14 to 4 to revert to the club system.

Finally, the CCA decided to resolve the matter once and for all by holding a plebiscite on the future of the district scheme, with voting to be restricted to current players from the competing clubs. A combined meeting of the MCCC and UCCC then insisted that voting should be open to school players and recent players. Furthermore, they threatened to withdraw Hagley Park from use by district clubs unless the CCA arranged a conference to dis­cuss voting procedures. The CCA stood firm, insisting that it had its dignity to maintain and would not meet the two disgruntled clubs until their threat was withdrawn. The CCA position was overwhelmingly vindicated when the plebiscite endorsed district cricket by 262 votes to 40. At this point the two clubs conceded defeat, and faded quietly into obscurity.

Feelings, however, did not die completely. In October 1911 the CCA found it necessary to alter the district boundaries to assist the East Christchurch and West Christchurch clubs, which were both struggling for members. Shades of the old debate resurfaced as critics claimed that district cricket had done little to increase the popularity of the game or satisfy players. Before the dispute could escalate, the CCA made East Christchurch an 'open' club and pointed out that the real obstacle to district cricket was a lack of suburban grounds for each club. As long as all cricket was concen­trated on Hagley Park, Lancaster Park and Sydenham Park, boundaries between the clubs appeared a little arbitrary, but the CCA did not have the necessary finance to develop more suburban grounds in order to resolve the dispute by such means.

**Interprovincial Cricket**

The only series of New Zealand interprovincial first-class matches to be sustained was that between the neighbouring provinces of Canterbury and Otago. This can be explained in terms of both relative geographical proximity and the altogether more deliberate approach taken by the influential cricketing elites of Christchurch and Dunedin. As a prelude to the visit of. George Parr's All England XI in February 1864, a tournament was staged Dunedin between Canterbury, Otago and Southland. This marked the first of 56 meetings between Canterbury and Otago during the 50 years until the outbreak of war in 1914. The fixture was always the most widely reported and keenly debated in New Zealand cricket. Team selections were a subject for much speculation, and numerous column inches were devoted to the cur­rent play and to results of previous encounters. The intensity of public interest may also be judged from the amount of money changing hands on the sidelines. Individuals and newspapers frequently organised 'Calcutta Sweeps' in which substantial amounts were invested on the highest score in an innings or the outcome of a match.

From the outset the Canterbury/Otago fixture was intended to replicate elite English traditions. A committee composed of Edward Stevens and H.P. Lance (Canterbury), and John Kissling, James Fulton and Gibson Turton (Otago), agreed in 1865 that the two provinces should adopt the Oxbridge playing colours - the dark blue of Oxford for Canterbury and light blue of Cambridge for Otago." Explicit emphasis was also placed on the social and political importance of the fixture - not least in an *Otago Daily Times* edi­torial of 14 February 1866, almost certainly penned by its cricketing editor and future New Zealand Premier, Julius Vogel.

It brings people together in a friendly unformal manner - the very thing which should be most carefully cherished in a society of waifs and strays like that of a colony. It is the isolated conditions of individuals that is the greatest bar not only to good society, but to good govern­ment. It unites Otago, for instance, against Canterbury, but unites it in a courteous, chivalrous, generous antagonism ... Nor is it a small thing that cricket draws men from one province to another. Whatever our Canterbury friends may think of our climate, let us hope that they will depart not without feeling that they were very welcome, and not without discovering that Dunedin has attractions sufficient to induce them on their next visit to make arrangements for a longer stay.

The spirit of gentlemanly camaraderie and healthy rivalry that was thought prevail between Canterbury and Otago is in sharp contrast to the tensions between Auckland and Wellington, or the constant bickering with umpires that marred the Nelson Wellington matches of the 1880s. In contrast, Canterbury and Otago remained on uniformly harmonious terms: the jubilee fixtures in 1914 were accompanied by veterans matches between earlier participants and lengthy press accounts of the cricketing history of the twoprovinces.

With the Canterbury/Otago link firmly established the next major contribution to the fabric of inter provincial cricket was an Auckland tour to Christchurch, Dunedin, Wellington and Nelson in November and 1873. In practical terms, the tour did not make a lasting impact. Auckland only played one other game in the proceeding nine years Canterbury/Otago and Nelson/Wellington fixtures did not increase in frequency. Yet by providing a common standard from which all could measure their performances, Auckland served to raise the interprovincial cricket. At the same time, the tour produced a n appreciation of the potential of cricket in bringing the isolated settlements together. More than one editorial expressed the hope that cricket would establish common reference points in a disparate colony dogged by provincial antagonism and precarious communication.

When Auckland's southern tour was first mooted at a meeting I June 1873 it was argued that even a moderately unsuccessful venture would be of considerable advantage in reviving Auckland cricket. To the contrary critics insisted that any tour should come after the revival, rather than as a catalyst for it. There was only a muted response from Auckland clubs to the tour proposal, and it lapsed for several months until taken up by WF, Buckland and J. Mumford, two of Auckland's best players. Even then the endeavour only gained momentum when it became apparent that overtures to Wellington and the South Island had been successful. With Otago guaranteeing £40 and Canterbury £25, Auckland subscriptions raised 170 in six weeks. Cricketers in the Thames goldfields area also took interest, with one, W.W. Robinson, eventually appointed captain of the touring team.

True to custom, the team selection was a signal for bickering and complaints that those chosen were not practising hard enough. For their part the team objected to a practice match against an Auckland CC XI ­declaring that a XVI would make for a more even encounter. In response talented players who were unable to tour objected to being part of XVI.

The *New Zealand Herald* also viewed the tour with a certain diffidence. It suggested that Auckland was perhaps being over-ambitious conducting such a major tour. But neither would it be justifiable to those who had put so much energy into the venture. Whether it succeeded or failed was somewhat secondary to the role it might play in bringing Auckland and the rest of the colony closer together:

We are extremely glad to think that it is our cricketers who have inaugurated a series of matches which we trust will be of yearly recurrence. It is by intercourse such as this and similar matches generate, the distant communities are brought closer together, and become intimately connected in friendly relationship. Auckland from 0tago and Christchurch is at this present moment as far distant socially as miles, and if by means of these annual cricketing matches a mate social relationship than at present existing is established, representative team who proceed south today will be entitled to the thanks of the community, whether they return as conquerors or as defeated men.16

The focus on both geographical and social distance confirms that despite two decades of dramatic expansion there was a continuing perception of New Zealand as a collection of unconnected settlements.

In terms of playing ability, the initial pessimism of many Aucklanders proved groundless. The team defeated Canterbury by 7 runs, Otago by 4 wickets, Wellington by 3 wickets and Nelson by an innings and 56 runs. The H*erald happily* reported considerable public interest in the matches. Large crowds frequently gathered at its Auckland office for the latest telegraph news, and the victory over Canterbury was celebrated in the streets. When the team returned to Auckland they were conveyed from Onehunga by coach to be greeted by a large Queen St crowd and accompanying band; the Thames players received an equally enthusiastic reception.

To the *New Zealand Mail* the value of the tour lay in a positive compar­ison with WG. Grace's team then touring Australia. While the 'amateur' race was paid £1,500 for the tour, New Zealanders could be content that a spirit of genuine English amateurism had pervaded their cricket and enhanced the quality of society as a whole.

The visit of the Auckland team round the colony a few months ago, and the interest which the various matches played with them excited amongst the lovers of cricket, have had a healthful effect upon the progress of the game generally. Their visit was of a nature very dif­ferent from that of the now famous All England Eleven in Australia, and the effects have been different in proportion. There, where the con­duct and tone of all the matches in which the Englishmen have played have been the subject of not very complimentary allusions both by the press and private persons, the result of a tour which was to infuse an altogether new spirit into the game of cricket, has been to produce a hearty dislike of the mention of the name, which will take some time to wear off, and an ennui in all matters relating to it very different from what the bargaining promoters promised. In New Zealand the genuine love for the game, and the fair spirit in which it was played by all throughout, have made just the opposite impression, and, instead of a relapse, there has been rather a new life exhibited.18

There is no evidence that the Auckland tour, or any subsequent interprovin­cial venture, owed anything to the ambition of commercial speculators.

At a time when provincial unity and cooperation ran a poor second to political and economic rivalry and antagonism, cricket emerged as a rare tonic. Unfortunately, this did not translate into a sustained or balanced programme of matches.

**Economics**

It is clear that the line between profit and loss was a very fine one, and that failure during one season could severely restrict opportunities for the next. After posting a healthy profit on their match against Australia in 1881, Canterbury was left heavily in overdraft after the rain-ruined Tasmanian tour three years later. Bad weather caused a loss on the England matches in March 1888, and the New South Wales tours of 1894 and 1895-96 both produced heavy losses for the province that had done most to organise them. Indeed, only one touring team - Lord Hawke's England XI in 1902-03 - matched financial expectations: Canterbury increased its bank balance by £190 and Otago by £150. Auckland also profited from the Australian team of 1905, but Canterbury was back in overdraft by the end of the same season. Following the MCC tour of 1906-07, marked by extravagance on the part of the tourists and a lack of public enthusiasm for their mediocre performances, all of the major associations were left with substantial overdrafts.

As its cricket activities continually produced losses, the WCA was forced to take direct action. At the beginning of the 1911/12 season the Association announced a levy of 1 shilling on every senior player and 6d on every junior player for each Saturday on which they played. It was hoped that this would net the Association £150 for the season, but the scheme did not meet with general satisfaction, and failed to address a wider problem. The Annual Report of 1913 lamented the fact that a scarcity of interprovincial matches was placing great financial strain on the WCA. In response, Daniel Reese organised a Canterbury XI to play. Wellington at the end of the 1913/14 season.

Despite its far more ambitious interprovincial programme, or possibly because of it, the Canterbury Cricket Association was financially no better off than Wellington. In 1886, after declaring a balance of £O.Os.Od, the CCA organised a two-day fundraising fete at Lancaster Park that included a well­ patronised tennis tournament. Within two years, and carrying an overdraft of £8.3s.11d, the CCA announced that it could not afford to pay the travel and accommodation expenses of leading players. Consequently a weak team consisting of players could afford the trip was sent to Dunedin for the inter­provincial match.The Association's debts were finally cleared in 1895, but the Annual Report of 1898 again stressed the need for income generating schemes. Arrangements were made in 1901 to amalgamate with the Canterbury Lawn Tennis Association for a floral fete, but it was cancelled amid mourning for the death of Queen Victoria. No such consideration existed when the event was tried again in 1909, but it ended disastrously. Initial plans for an Anniversary Day floral fete to reduce the CCA overdraft were postponed due to bad weather, so the fete was held the following week - and made a £40 loss. Some of this was recouped by a performance from the Christchurch Comedy Club, which raised £10.18.6, and an Art Union lottery in 1910, which produced a very healthy £241.3.5. In 1911, though, a public subscription was still required to send the Canterbury team to Auckland for a Plunket Shield challenge. Their victory signalled a gradual financial recovery, but the CCA was still saddled with debts relating to the purchase of Lancaster Park in 1904.

**The Rise Of Canterbury Cricket**

The new confidence of Canterbury cricket proved well founded when the first Australian XI toured New Zealand during the following season. Canterbury originally proposed to meet the Australians on even terms. The visitors, con­scious of prolonging the match in the interests of gate receipts, insisted on the usual XXII. A compromise was reached in which Canterbury fielded a XV, which then proceeded to dismiss Australia for 46 and 143. The Canterbury XV replied with 135 and 57 for 8 to achieve victory by 6 wickets.

Reactions to this performance were more indifferent than ecstatic - as if victory by a New Zealand team was somehow beyond comprehension. *The Press* suggested that the Australians had taken Canterbury 'too cheap' as a response to their presumption in playing only 15 men. The *Evening Post* described the result as 'simply one of those phases of cricketing fortune by which the best teams are liable to be overcome. Moreover, if the Wellington XXII was defeated by Australia after its defeat by Canterbury, such would reflect 'grave discredit' on Wellington cricket.

Australian observers were ultimately no more encouraging. In its first report of the match, the *Australasian* suggested that the Canterbury victory 'shows us that cricket in that part of New Zealand at all events is not nearly so backward as we in Victoria are generally disposed to believe'. A week later, though, the same source attributed the result to bad pitch conditions, cold weather and the tiredness of the Australians after a long journey to Christchurch. Two further weeks later, the *Sydney Mail* appeared to concur with this less favourable view when referring to 'bad wickets, bad weather and bad umpiring'.

Despite these muted responses, Canterbury lost no time in seeking to capitalise on its performance. In December 1878 a reasonably strong provin­cial team left for Australia to play against club sides in Hobart and Melbourne. Although most observers felt that the results of the tour would be somewhat secondary to the main purpose of establishing links with Victoria, *The Press* did raise some hope that a strong provincial team might pose a challenge to the Victorian XI.

In Australia the team were commended for their enterprise in under­taking a venture that would hopefully be 'the prelude to many similar friendly encounters between the cricketers of Victoria and New Zealand'. 'A Bohemian', the cricket correspondent for the *Australasian,* felt that although one or two weak players reduced the reputation of the team as a whole, they generally had very little to learn from Australia in the art of playing cricket. At the end of the tour, *The Press* concluded that 'future cricketers of New Zealand will have every reason to be proud of the doings of the first team which left the shores of the colony to throw down the gauntlet to its more advanced neighbours’.

Yet circumstances conspired against the Canterbury team. The com­peting attractions of the Australian XI, who were still playing matches after their return from England, and of Lord Harris's England XI, ensured that Canterbury remained very much on the periphery. They did not secure a match against Victoria, and the tour did very little to raise the profile of New Zealand cricket or the colony in general. Indeed, the lack of public interest contributed to severe financial difficulties. Funds had to be remitted from Christchurch to enable the team to return home, and, in a somewhat evasive reference to the outcome of the tour, the CCA passed a motion stating 'That this Association does not hold itself responsible for any criticism on matches or matters connected with cricket which appear in the local press, unless authorised by the Association. Furthermore, promises by Victoria and by several of its club sides to visit New Zealand during the 1879/80 season were not kept.

Canterbury's progress during the late 1870s was a microcosm of the process by which Australia had advanced from XXIIs to Test status. The response to W.L. Murdoch's 1881 Australian team highlights some signifi­cant parameters to the Canterbury and New Zealand outlook engendered by this progress. Unlike the 1878 Australian team that had come to New Zealand *before* their pioneering tour of England, Murdoch's 1881 team arrived fresh from an English tour in which they had eventually done much to build on the reputation of their predecessors.

The difference between the two tours was not lost on the *Otago Daily Times:*

As we expected, the present match excites more interest than that of 1878 when the public attended in but scant numbers. Yesterday, how­ever, the attendance was capital ... Many of them we believe were attracted by curiosity quite as much as by cricket - they wanted to see eleven colonials who have not only proved themselves 'the cricket monarchs of Paciflc's main' ... but very nearly of Atlantic's also’

In short an Australian team that had achieved successes on English soil was recorded a great deal more kudos than that of 1878 which had been ling of an unknown quantity to the New Zealand public. While that team had beaten Lillywhite's XL in the first Test match, it had done so under alien conditions and not at 'home.

This attitude to the Australians is evident in Canterbury's preparations for the 1881 match. Some certainly felt that the victory of 1878 could be repeated by a team that had had more practice and contained equally talented players, but others argued that Canterbury should acknowledge the proven strength of its opposition and increase the size of its team from XV to XVllI. What finally persuaded Canterbury to persevere with a XV was; a statement of faith in its ability as a sense that it had a moral duty to test the match on the same terms as previously.

As *The Star* put it: Having beaten the first Australians with fifteen, it would have shown a lamentable want of confidence - a most undeniable case of 'peake' ­for the cricketers of Canterbury to have sent in eighteen. It remains for the Australians to prove that they can beat a fifteen of Canterbury before our boys surrender the position which they have achieved against them.50

Canterbury duly surrendered their position by an innings and 100 runs as the Australians scored 323, including a century from Murdoch. *The Star,* which had been one of the more confident pre-match advocates of Canterbury's prospects, now suggested that their heavy defeat may have been a good thing: There are those indeed who hold that a victory for Canterbury would have been a most unfortunate thing for cricket amongst us, and they do not hesitate to affirm that 'our boys' needed the sweet lessons of a rough adversity to teach them to be more constant in practice and more attentive to the niceties of the game.

Clearly, then, from the highs of 1878 some Cantabrians had reverted to a deferential mind set akin to that of the l860s. When the next Australian XI arrived late in November 1886, there were generally gloomy predictions and no debate over the Canterbury decision to field XVIII. When the team managed a more than favourable draw, the *Lyttelton Times* remarked that 'If our cricketers have not quite conquered an Australian Eleven, they have quite conquered or reconquered their place in the public estimation here. Two more creditable draws against CA Smith's England XI during the following season ensured that Canterbury finished the decade in confident mood. Indeed, there were proposals for another tour of Victoria and Tasmania and this time involving Otago. The plan foundered when the leading players declared themselves unavailable for business reasons.

**Footnote.**

In the match leading up to the game against Australia in 1886 there was a number of practice sessions at which AM Ollivier attended all in order to help his selection. A note was placed in the Star paper November 24 1886 “stating that the chosen team will be posted at Warners Hotel at 8pm that evening. As the team will have a meeting immediately afterwards to elect a captain it is advisable for every man in practice for the match to be at the Commercial Hotel at the hour mentioned”.