

THE DON

BEYOND BOUNDARIES



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The Don: Beyond Boundaries

by Roderick Easdale

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CONTENTS

- [1.](#)
- [2.](#)
- [3.](#)
- [4.](#)
- [5.](#)
- [6.](#)
- [7.](#)
- [8.](#)
- [9.](#)
- [10.](#)
- [11.](#)
- [12.](#)
- [13.](#)
- [14.](#)

Place in history

“Is Don Bradman still alive?” is the first thing Nelson Mandela was alleged to have said when he left prison. Bradman transcended national boundaries in terms of respect and affection in a way few sportsmen have. Part of this was for his sheer dominance of the cricket scene, but partly also for the way he conducted himself. In 1985, as one of the inaugural inductees into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame, Bradman explained his own attitude towards assessing “an athlete or for that matter any person. I set great store in certain qualities which I believe to be essential in addition to skill. They are that the person conducts his or her life with dignity, with integrity, courage, and perhaps most of all, with modesty. These virtues are totally compatible with pride, ambition, and competitiveness.”

Sir Donald Bradman is a cricket phenomenon. No-one, statistically, has come near to approaching his achievements. He averaged 99.94 in test cricket. The next highest test averages by a player who has completed his career, and has played at least 20 test innings, are by Graeme Pollock, who averaged 60.97 from 23 tests, and George Headley, with 60.83 in 22 matches. Of those who had similar length careers to Bradman, who played 52 tests, the highest averages are by the Englishmen Herbert Sutcliffe (60.73 from 54 tests) and the West Indian Everton Weekes (58.62 from 48).

Translate this statistical domination to another sporting field. Imagine a hundred metre race between the best runners of all time. Imagine then the winner crossing the line while the second placed man is still at the sixty metre mark. You cannot. But in cricket terms, this is what Bradman did.

How can one reduce his achievements to something more comprehensible? Was the bowling worse in his day? Any examination comparing bowling averages runs into an obvious difficulty: the bowlers who bowled at Bradman are going to have their averages dented by dint of Bradman plundering so many runs from them. However, venturing tentatively down this path, Bradman did not face the best of England's bowlers on a purely statistical definition. He was never opposed by any of the top dozen England bowlers either by average or strike rate (applying a criteria of at least 50 wickets taken). These 24 spots are occupied by seventeen bowlers in all. The best bowler, by average, that he faced, was 13th-placed Jim Laker, who Bradman played against thrice towards the start of Laker's career - the off spinner took 9-472 in these games. In terms of strike rate, the best bowler was Walter

Robins, 15th, who played six tests against Bradman.

Perhaps it is unfair, and not instructive to compare records across the generations, because of differences in attitudes, fitness, pitches, playing conditions and rules. WG Grace's first-class average of 39.55, and test average of 32.29, is exceeded by many later, lesser, cricketers. Yet, as Peter Hartland points out in his excellent *The Balance of Power In Test Cricket*, aged 25, WG Grace had scored over 10,000 runs at 61, an average over twice as much as any cricketer at that stage. Statistically WG Grace was then twice as good as anybody else who had played the game to date. Bradman was not able to match that domination.

Bradman played in an era of test cricket where large totals were unusually frequent. There has never been a better time in all test history to be a batsman than when Bradman played. England's seven highest-averaging batsman - of those who have retired having played at least 20 innings - include six whose careers overlapped with Bradman's: Sutcliffe (1924-1935), Eddie Paynter (1931-1939; who averaged 59.23 in 20 tests), Duleepsinhji (1929-1931; 58.52 in 12), Wally Hammond (1927-1947; 58.45 in 85), Jack Hobbs (1908-30; 56.94 in 61), and Ernest Tyldesley (1921-29; 55.00 in 14). The odd one out is third-placed Ken Barrington (1955-1965; 58.67 in 82). England's highest individual innings, Len Hutton's 364 at the Oval in 1938 was made in a series in which Bradman played. In 1935 the administrators recognised that batsmen had become too dominant, and changed the lbw rule to make it is easier to be dismissed.

Bradman was a consistent scorer throughout his career. His lowest first-class average in the seventeen seasons at home or abroad in which he played at least half a dozen games was 61.33, in 1932-33. That year also saw his lowest average for a test series, 56.57. His next lowest series average was 66.85, in his debut rubber. Bradman batted 230 times in his side's first innings, averaging 93.16; his average in the second innings, when he batted only 108 times, was 100.84.

Perhaps it should be reputation rather than figures that one should compare. Yet here one encounters another circular argument. Can you examine the 'validity' of reputation by merely looking at reputations? It is a self-regarding exercise.

Harold Larwood, who Bradman faced in 11 matches, is generally considered one of England's best bowlers. Indeed Bill Frindall, clearly someone of a statistical bent, described him in *England Test Cricketers* as

“the most feared and accurate fast bowler of all time”. Yet Larwood's reputation relies heavily upon the Bodyline series. You do not have to know much about cricket to have heard of Bodyline and Harold Larwood. Coming into the Bodyline series, his last, Larwood had played in 16 tests, taking 45 wickets at an average of 35 - unspectacular figures. With 33 wickets at 19.51 in the Bodyline series, his final return is 78 wickets at 28.35 with a strike rate of a wicket every 64 balls. John Lever's return, from the same number of tests, is 73 wickets at 26.72 with a strike rate of 61.

How do you equate such similar records with such dissimilar reputations? Was it more of a batsman's game in Larwood's day? Were the pitches better? But Lever played a third of his tests on Indian pitches unfavourable to pace bowling. Were bowling conditions worse when Larwood played, with lower seams and the shine lingering for less time? Was Larwood one of many beneficiaries of the cult of the fast bowler?

Did the era of timeless tests aid the batsman? Yet Bradman scored his runs quickly. Were field positions less subtle? Almost certainly. But this would be the same for all players of that era. In his first-class career he scored nearly a quarter of his sides' aggregate runs, his runs coming at a rate of 42 an hour, and made 39% of the hundreds scored by his sides. He top scored in 128 of his 338 first-class innings, and in 30 of his 80 test innings. In six test innings, and a further 14 first-class ones, he scored over half of his side's runs. It has been calculated that, had he been dismissed to the first chance he gave in each innings, he would still have averaged about 78, an average still higher than any other batsman who has scored at least 10,000 first-class runs has managed.

Technically, the only exceptionable aspect about his batting was his grip. His left wrist was behind the handle of the bat and, instead of the handle running across the palm of the right hand and resting against the ball of the right thumb, he twisted his right hand round so that the handle pressed against the ball of the right thumb. This meant that his bat naturally angled downwards, and in playing cross-bat shots the wrists would automatically roll over the ball, and in driving the ball the left hand would act as a brake against lofting the ball. However, as the batsman himself admitted, this grip handicapped him when playing the ball in the arc between point and mid off.

Bradman was still in his stance, in which the bat would be placed between his feet, and would move late. HS Altham remarked that he "sees the ball sooner, watches it longer and plays the stroke later than anyone else." 'Plum'

Warner wrote that "it is strikingly apparent how absolutely still Bradman stands until the ball is halfway down the pitch." Jim Kilburn described his reactions as "abnormal." Allied to the quickest of his reactions was a fierce determination to succeed, and intense concentration.

Bob Wyatt, who captained England at the Oval in 1930 when Bradman made a double century said: "He was a genius of which, as run-making machine, the like had never been seen before. He was short and slimly built and didn't look particularly strong, although he had considerable stamina. Perhaps his greatest strength was his wonderful eye, able to judge the length of a ball exceptionally early in its flight. This allowed him to play strokes which other batsmen wouldn't even attempt."

Bradman was no stylist. He himself once remarked "Style? I know nothing about style. All I am after is runs." A former England captain, Archie MacLaren, after watching Bradman make a rapid hundred remarked: "I wouldn't give sixpence to bat like that." Bradman's genius regarding run making was not how but how many. His batting was a part of his life. His life was organised, considered, and fuelled with a determination to succeed. So was his batting.

"Many cricketers who had more ability than I had, why they didn't make more runs than I did, I don't know," he confessed. He saw much of his own style reflected in that of Sachin Tendulkar's, explaining that "I saw him playing on television and was struck by his technique, so I asked my wife to come look at him. Now I never saw myself play, but I feel that this player is playing much the same as I used to play, and she looked at him on television and said yes, there is a similarity between the two...his compactness, technique, stroke production."

Early life

Bradman's paternal great grandfather Charles, a farm labourer, had emigrated from the East Anglia area in 1852, aged 18, and worked as a farm labourer in New South Wales while saving to buy his own farm in Cootamundra. His grandson was always to feel an affinity, emotionally and politically, with 'the mother country'. Charles' third son, George, married Emily Whatman, also from farming stock, when he was seventeen. His bride was five years older, and she was aged 37 when she gave birth to her fifth child, Donald George, on 27 August, 1908 in Cootamundra, 220 miles south west of Sydney, at the home of the local midwife. The family home was in Yeo Yeo, where Bradman's father farmed. When Bradman was two, the family moved to Bowral for his mother's health, and his father turned to carpentry for a living.

Much of Bradman's early 'cricket' took place behind his new home against the 'bowling' of an 800-gallon water tank on a 45cm brick stand. Bradman would throw a golf ball against the stand and try to hit the rebound with a cricket stump. More often than not he connected. Another solitary game was to throw a golf or tennis ball against a rounded stake on a fence from around fifteen yards and to catch the rebound. This is a game he would play near his home and when walking home from school. To make the game worthwhile he must have been a very accurate thrower. He would also play 'tennis' against the garage door. A choirboy, he learnt to play the piano, which he continued to play in adulthood.

Bradman was ten when he made his first hundred. Playing his first game for his school, on a rugby pitch, he came in on a hat trick and made 55 not out. This earned him selection for the next match, this time played on a concrete wicket with a matting cover. He made 115 not out from his side's 155. That year he scored for the Bowral team. When one player failed to show up for an away fixture, he was drafted in to make up numbers. Coming in at number ten, he made an undefeated 37. In recognition, one of the players presented him with an unwanted second-hand bat. Dented, cracked and too big, it was the first bat he owned and, when three inches had been cut off the bottom, he began to use it.

Later that season of 1920-21 his father took him to Sydney to see the first two days of the test. Bradman's imagination was fired, and he told his father "I shall never be happy until I play here."

In 1922-23 he played no cricket, and the following year he played only a little, towards the end of the season. His main sporting interest at this time was tennis. In 1925-26 he became a regular member of the Bowral Town Cricket Club. On the Saturday before Christmas, Bowral started their game with Wingello, holders of the Tom Mack Cup from the previous year. An early Bowral wicket fell, and Bradman came in. In the opposition side was Bill O'Reilly, who was already making a name as a bowler and who later recalled the entrance of the new batsman and "the difficulty he seemed to be having in taking normal steps to the wicket. His pads seemed to reach right up to his navel. His bat was small and had reached the sere and yellow stage where the yellow was turning to drab tobacco." At the close of play Bradman, dropped twice before making 50, was on 234. When the match was resumed a week later he was dismissed by O'Reilly first ball. In the following game he made 300, a feat which earned him a new bat as a present from his mother.

These performances brought Bradman to the attention of the New South Wales selectors, and they invited him to a trial in Sydney. In his first innings on a turf wicket he made 37 not out in 97 minutes for the Possibles. It was not enough to gain selection for the state side, but he was offered a trial for the Southern Country Week team. An innings of 62, retired, and a return of 4-35 ensured selection for the Southern Districts team.

It was at this point that he had to make a decision between tennis and cricket. He had also been selected for the country tennis week in Sydney and Bradman's employer would only allow him one week away. After leaving school, with a report from the headmaster that he was "truthful, honest and industrious, and an unusually bright lad", Bradman had gone into the employ of Percy Westbrook, a local real estate agent, where he became a clerk. Westbrook recalled that he kept his books "clearly written, neatly ruled, and without trace of a blot or smudge".

Bradman chose to play in the cricket week, in late November, as cricket was his dominant sporting interest. Playing a match a day for the first five days he returned steady scores of 43, 24, 41, 27 and 25. His captain in these matches, LW Sieler recalled Bradman as "a silent worker, obviously at his age a deep thinker, a fine boy, a good sport with quick reflexes. The game was treated by him as a business, with a great ambition to succeed." On the Saturday he played his first first-grade cricket match, for St George in Sydney. Batting at number five, he made 110 with eight fours in 110 minutes. Over the next seven seasons he was to average 91.57 for St George. On the Sunday, the

culmination of country cricket week, he played for the combined Country side against the City team, which was the showpiece match of the week. He made 98, with nine fours, before being caught off the last ball of the drawn match.

On New Year's Day Bradman played for New South Wales 2nd XI against Victoria 2nd XI and top scored in the first innings with 43. On successive Saturday afternoons in late May he broke his own local record score, making an undefeated 320 out of Bowral's 480 in the final of the Picard Cup against Moss Vale, who totalled 73 and 114.

First-class debut

Bradman began the 1927-28 season disappointingly, making 4 and 7, both clean bowled, in his first two matches for St George and he was not named in the squad of 29 who were brought together to practise for the state side. His next match after this announcement was for St George against Paddington, who had Test all-rounder Jack Gregory. State selector Dick Jones watched from the other end, and then from the pavilion, as Bradman used his feet to drive the spinners in scoring an undefeated 130, the highest score in grade cricket that weekend. The next night the state selectors met to pick the side to play the New Zealanders and Jones pushed for Bradman's inclusion, but was outvoted. NSW made 578 in 278 minutes against the New Zealanders, Archie Jackson scoring 102 in 72 minutes.

While Bradman was making 87 for St George, NSW were dismissed for 167 against Queensland. An innings of 125 in country week kept Bradman's name in the selectors' minds, although he was not selected for the southern state tour, but when two players dropped out, he was called up as a replacement, and named as twelfth man. It was to be the first time that he had been outside New South Wales.

On the long train journey he caught a cold, joining Jackson, who had a boil on the knee, as a doubtful starter for the practice match against the Barrier District. Bradman sweated out his cold overnight and, with Jackson declared unfit, played. On a concrete wicket, Bradman had to play in his street shoes and made 46 from number four, putting on 97 with Kippax. He bruised his finger in the match, but gained selection against South Australia as Jackson was less fit than he.

NSW won the toss on a good batting wicket, and he came in to bat two overs before tea with the score at 250 for four, with Kippax having retired through heat exhaustion. Clarrie Grimmett was on, with six balls of the over left. The batsman held up the bowler as he carefully surveyed the field. Grimmett came in and the batsman came forward and blocked the ball. Bradman danced down the wicket to the second ball which he played to cover. The third delivery he heaved to mid wicket against the spin. The fourth was blocked and was fielded at mid on, the fifth was blocked and the sixth, tossed up, was hit for four, between mid on and mid wicket. Bradman reached his fifty after tea in 67 minutes and by the close he had put on 65 of

the 150 runs scored in the hour and three quarters that he had been at the wicket. On the morrow, after 161 minutes batting, he went to his century with another boundary - one of around 3,000 he was to hit in first-class cricket. Bradman therefore became the sixteenth Australian to make a century on debut. If this suggested a successful career ahead, a sobering statistic was the fact that none of the previous sixteen had gone on to play for Australia.

Bradman remained in the side for the rest of the season and made another century in the final game, a second innings 134 not out in 225 minutes, against Victoria. In that first season the nineteen year old had batted ten times, once remaining unbeaten, and averaged 46.22. He was named as one of three stand-bys for the touring party to New Zealand.

Test debut

In October 1928 APF Chapman's touring side arrived in Australia. A month before Bradman had moved to live in Sydney. Playing grade cricket matches in Sydney had involved a 5am start from Bowral, and his employer, Percy Westbrook, had opened an office in Sydney, under the name Deer and Westbrook, and Bradman was offered the job as company secretary.

His first first-class game that season was for The Rest in a test trial. He made 14 and 5. A week later he played his first Sheffield Shield game of the season and made 131 in 212 minutes with fourteen fours in the first innings. In the second innings, in which NSW were set 399, he played the winning stroke, bringing his score to 133 from 212 minutes' batting. The following week NSW played MCC. Bradman made 87 and 132 not out, virtually guaranteeing his place for the first Test.

England won the toss and batted. Bradman ran out Hobbs from the boundary, but England went on to make 521. On the third morning Bradman went in at 71-5, and departed half an hour later for 18. Australia made 122. Chapman batted again before making the first declaration in a test in Australia at 342-8. Australia lost Ponsford just before close on the fourth day. That night it rained. It was the first time Bradman had seen a rain-affected wicket, and he had to ask a team-mate how it would play. He was out second ball as Australia lost by 657 runs.

He was dropped for the next test. One of his team-mates from the test side remarked that he clearly wasn't up to test standard. Injury brought the debutant back into the team for the third Test, in which he became the youngest man to score a test century: 79 in the first innings was followed by 112 in the second.

There were two Sheffield Shield matches for Bradman between the third and fourth Tests. In the first he played as an opener. The result was scores 5 and 2. In the second match against Victoria at Sydney, Bradman went in first wicket down. The majority - 240 - of his 338 first-class innings were played from the number-three position. Eleven times he opened and five times he scored centuries. His overall record from this position was 1,071 runs at 107.10. He was marginally more successful as an opener than as a number three, from where he made 89 centuries and averaged 103.19. Statistically his best position was number seven where he made two centuries in five innings

for an average of 115.50.

He went in to bat against Victoria just before lunch on the first day; soon after tea on the third day NSW declared at 713-6, with Bradman 340 not out. It was the longest innings and the highest score by a NSW player in a Sheffield Shield match and the highest score in a first-class match at Sydney. Bradman had also become the youngest Australian to score a triple century.

Australia lost the fourth Test by 12 runs, to go four down in the series, despite 164 from Archie Jackson on debut. Jackson was considered by many a better prospect than Bradman. Jackson was a stylist, as opposed to the more functional Bradman. In *Australian Cricket* Jack Pollard described Jackson as having "a flair for inventive shot-making which probably only Victor Trumper has matched." Although Bradman beat him into test side, Jackson had beaten him into the state side. Jackson had made 500 runs at 50 in his debut season in 1927-28, and the following year, aged 18 years and 125 days, made two centuries in the match against South Australia. Plagued by ill-health, he died aged 23, having played in only eight Tests, in which he averaged 47.40.

Bradman had made 40 and 58 in the fourth Test. Matters looked ominous for Australia when England made 519 in the final test. Bradman came in to bat just after lunch on the fourth day to join Woodfull, who was out almost immediately to leave Australia 203-4 and bring Alan Fairfax to the crease. They put on 183, with Bradman making 123 as Australia came within 28 of England's total. A second innings of 247 by the visitors set the hosts 287 to win. When Bradman entered on the eighth day at 204-5 he joined Jack Ryder and together they took Australia to victory.

In February of this year Bradman had taken up new employment in the public relations department of Mick Simmons Ltd, his previous job having been lost when the Sydney branch of Deer Westbrook was closed in the economic downturn. His new job was one he took from economic necessity, as a stop-gap, as it was not really in keeping with his personality. Bradman, by nature, was quiet and shy with little inclination to project himself as a 'personality'. One advantage was that he was allowed as much time off for cricket as was required. His duties for his company were not onerous, and involved signing autographs and holding cricket and fishing lessons.

The cricket season of 1929-30 had four highlights for Bradman. The first was his performance against a MCC team, en route to New Zealand, against whom he made 157. Ten days later Bradman played in the Test trial for

selection for the tour to England. He made 124 and 225. A month later he made the then world-record score in first-class cricket, his 452 not out against Queensland, surpassing Ponsford's 437 made on the day Bradman had played his first first-class innings. At the end of his innings, brought about by a declaration which set Queensland 770 in nine and three-quarter hours, Bradman was chaired from the field by the fielders. His century had taken 104 minutes - the slowest hundred of his innings, as the succeeding ones took 81, 103 and 89 minutes. The innings contained 49 fours and lasted 415 minutes, and was the highest he played in his career.

The final highlight was selection for his first Ashes tour: a mere formality after a season in which he made 1,440 first-class runs and four centuries in 13 innings at an average of 127.27. The next highest aggregate was McCabe's 632; the next highest average Jackson's 75.87. Jackson was also selected for the tour. Despite Bradman's success to date, the press were in general accord that the more classical Jackson would fare better on English wickets than Bradman's unorthodox, occasionally cross-batted shot making, which might be all right for hard Australian wickets, but would be ill-suited to softer English pitches. In fact, in retirement Bradman reflected that: "being short of stature, I was predominantly a back foot player and I always found that, if anything, the English wickets suited me more than the Australian ones." Around 60 per cent of Bradman's runs came from back-foot strokes.

England 1930

The tour began badly for Bradman: he was sea-sick. It was to be ever thus. Later in life he recalled that "I never became used to sea travel. If the sea was rough on the last day of a voyage I was as likely to be just as seasick as one the first."

The first match of the tour was played at Worcester, to begin a tradition. When the counties had been asked, prior to the 1930 tour, whether they would be prepared to host the opening fixture, only Worcestershire had said yes. Worcester batted first and made 131. Bradman came to the wicket with the score at 67, and an hour and half's play remaining. By close he was on 75. He went to his century the next day in a further half hour, and ended up with 236, made in four and a half hours.

In the following match at Leicester after the home side were bowled out cheaply, Bradman came in at 18-1 and had proceeded to 185 when rain ruled out any further play. Bradman scored heavily throughout a wet and windy May: 78 v Yorkshire, 9 & 48* v Lancashire, 66 & 4 v MCC, 252* v Surrey and 32 against Oxford University left him 46 runs short of a thousand runs by the end of May. Only four men had previously achieved this: a 47-year-old WG Grace in 1895, Tom Hayward in 1900, Hammond in 1927 and Charlie Hallows in 1928.

On May 31 the Australians began their match with Hampshire. Hampshire won the toss and batted. It seemed that Bradman would not get a bat but after he had run out Hampshire's opener with a thirty-yard throw, the remainder of the batting collapsed against Grimmett. Sent in first, Bradman had made 28 by tea. During tea the heavens opened and no more play seemed likely in the face of steady rain. But eventually the rain let up and the players returned to the field at 6pm. Bradman had made eleven more runs when it began to rain again. It was soon pouring down, but Hampshire's captain, Lord Tennyson, stayed out. He tossed the ball to his bowler with careful instructions. The bowler delivered a full toss and a long hop. Both were despatched and the players fled the field. Within five minutes the ground was under water.

Bradman's fame was spreading throughout England. In Australia his exploits were being followed closely due to the opening in April of a radio telephone link with Australia, which allowed news from England to be relayed to 350,000 radio listeners in Australia, almost instantaneously. When

the test matches began the English commentaries would be relayed by radio telephone to Australia, where an Australian commentator would narrate them in his own words.

Bradman entered the first test already with 1,230 runs to his name during the season. No tourist, before or since, has been so prolific before the opening test of a series. (In 1928 Hallows had scored 1,273 runs before the first test. His was a product of 19 innings, compared with Bradman's 14, and the first test that year was on June 23, as opposed to June 13 in 1930.)

The unbeaten Australian side lost the toss and England went to 241-8 at close of the opening day. It rained overnight and after England were dismissed for 270, Bradman came in to bat in front of a full house of 23,000 on a wet wicket which was being dried by the sun. He played uncertainly for a quarter of an hour, was given a life when he had made 7, and played on to Tate when he had made 8. "Tyldesley bothered him, Tate tormented him," reported Cardus. Bradman departed with Australia 16-3, which she eventually took to an all out 144. Hobbs and Hendren helped England set a final innings target of 432. Woodfull fell early, but Bradman played out the remainder of the third day and by lunch on the fourth day had moved to 88 not out, having been given a life by Tyldesley off Tate. After three and an half hours of batting he raised his century, the first of eleven he was to make in England in 19 tests, and he eventually fell for 131. As he went out he passed Robins: "Bad luck, Don," said the bowler. "Just you wait 'til Lord's" came the reply.

At Lord's England made 425, with Duleepsinhji contributing 173 of them, before he fell to a running catch by Bradman. Woodfull and Ponsford put on 162 for Australia's first wicket, whereupon Bradman came to the crease. He went down the pitch to his first ball from the slow left armer, and England selector, Jack White and hit him on the full to long off. Looking back, Cardus described this "impertinent crack" as "the beginning of the most murderous onslaught I have ever known in a Test match." His first fifty took 46 minutes, and his century only 106. By close on the second day he was on 155. At tea he was 54 so he had scored a hundred runs in a session, something he was to do a further five times in his test career. In all first-class cricket he achieved this on 38 occasions.

Cardus, who had been amongst those uncertain of Bradman's ability, now had no doubts. That evening he wrote that "young Bradman knocked solemnity to smithereens and attacked with a bat which might have appeared

excessively carefree even on the smooth lawn of a country house match."

On Monday, after a rest day, Bradman took his total to 231 by lunch, adding 76 runs in the session. On 254 he launched into a drive through extra cover off White; the ball flew hard and low and Chapman hurled himself across the turf to take a catch a full stretch. Bradman's innings had occupied 325 minutes and contained twenty-five fours. It was, at that time, the highest Test score in England.

Bradman considered his innings "the best of my life in a technical sense. Every ball went where it was intended, even the one that got me out." Percy Fender described it as "as perfect an example of real batting, in its best sense, as anyone could wish to see." Frank Chester, who umpired the game, later recorded of Bradman that he left Lord's "firmly convinced that he was the best batsman of all time."

Australia won the Lord's test by seven wickets, with Bradman falling for one in the second innings, and the harbour ferries in Sydney celebrated the victory by playing 'cock-a-doodle-does' on their sirens at three o'clock in the morning. There were still many in the streets at that time watching the test scores being posted.

Bradman played against Yorkshire in the Australians' next match, and made only one in a ten-wicket victory. He was rested from the next game and he went sightseeing around London and watched the Wimbledon finals, before motoring up to Leeds to prepare for the third Test at Headingley. In this match Bradman was to shatter the record books.

Woodfull won the toss and Jackson fell to the fifth ball of Tate's opening over, bringing Bradman to the crease with the score on 2. Ninety-nine minutes later he hit Larwood to leg for four to reach a century before lunch, becoming the third test batsman, along with fellow New South Welshmen Victor Trumper and Charlie MacCartney, to do so on the first day of a test. In 1976-77 Majid Khan joined this select group. Bradman brought up his century 13 minutes before lunch, the same margin of time as with Macartney's innings; Majid had seven minutes to spare and Trumper five. It is worth recording - in view of modern over rates - that England bowled 46 overs in the pre-lunch session. In modern terms Bradman's century before lunch would equate to a century before mid to late afternoon. Thirty-one of Bradman's first-class centuries were reached within two hours of going to the crease.

On 141 and 202 he skied deliveries to mid on, but no fielder touched them.

His double century came in three hours and thirty-four minutes. On 273 he gave his sole chance, 'keeper Duckworth putting down a hard catch off Geary. When he passed Foster's 287 he achieved the highest score in England/Australia test matches, something he had set his sight upon during his first innings at Lord's. Bradman had been batting for five and a quarter hours at this point; Foster had taken seven hours for his innings. After five hours and thirty six minutes at the crease he reached his treble century, and when he off drove the last ball of the day for his 42nd boundary he became the youngest player to score two thousand runs in a season.

Leaving the pavilion the next day to resume his innings he was passed a telegram: "Your house is on fire and your girl needs you." He passed Sandham's test record of 325 in adding a further 25 runs before edging Tate to the wicket-keeper. His 334 remained his test best.

Relations between Bradman and his team-mates were slightly strained, and two incidents surrounding his achievements at Headingley maintained this state. At the close of the first day his team-mates expected Bradman to go to the bar to celebrate with them, whereas he remained in his room writing letters and listening to music. In the field later in the match he was handed a telegram informing that a rich Australian in England wanted him to accept £1,000 as a gift to mark his innings. Bradman pocketed both the telegram and, later, the money. He did not share any of his bounty with team-mates, and when they suggested he took them to dinner to celebrate his gift, some were not impressed when he declined.

The third test was drawn due to weather interference and the fourth test was also ruined by the rain, Bradman batting for an uncomfortable half hour on a damp pitch before being caught off the leg-spinner Peebles for 14.

With the series at one-all the final Test was to be timeless. The match, which Australia won by an innings, was to be significant for international cricket not because of Bradman's 232, but because of events on the fourth day. On a drying pitch, the Oval track became a flier and Larwood, bowling with hostility, hit Bradman and Jackson. Jackson was struck under the heart, and Bradman on chest and wrist. Some claim that Bradman was frightened by the attack; Larwood was to claim that this innings was the genesis for Bodyline and England's captain, Bob Wyatt later wrote of the Bradman's innings that he "showed signs of disliking the short ball intensely."

Homecoming

On his return, Mick Simmons Ltd milked Bradman's new-found fame hard. Although Bradman was quick to praise his team-mates in all his public appearances, it was only human that many of his fellow tourists resented the way Bradman was being promoted above the team. It was not as though was popular with all of his team-mates in the first place. He, for his part, disliked the public attention.

Although he could unwind in private with people he trusted, in public he was reserved yet courteous. He learnt to deal with the requirements of his fame, and through application and dedication, he became a good public speaker. His attitude to his high public profile was ambivalent: he had not sought it, and was not always comfortable with it; but he did use it to his advantage. His jobs outside cricket, whether for Mick Simmons or later as a stockbroker and company director, have their basis in his fame as a cricketer.

Another source of concern to Bradman was the fuss over his book. Whilst in England he had signed a contract to write a book called simply *Don Bradman's Book*. His touring contract stipulated that he was not able to publish anything about the tour while it was going on. The serialisation rights to the book were sold to the Star, who published the first extract on August 4 when the tour was still in progress. The extract concerned Bradman's early life, and did not refer to events of the summer. Extracts concerning the recent English season were only published in the newspaper when Bradman was sailing home. The book itself was published in November. The eventual outcome was that, after a two-day meeting at the end of December, the Australia Board of Control withheld £50 of Bradman's good conduct money from the tour.

Another book which caused Bradman trouble around this time was one by Geoffrey Tebbutt, a journalist who had covered the tour to England. In this he mentioned Bradman's aloofness and unpopularity with some of his team-mates, quoting one of them as saying of Bradman that "he is not one of us." These criticisms received their public airing on the first day of the maiden Australia versus West Indies test series. Bradman made 4 in the opening test.

A small consolation to Bradman was his first test wicket, that of number eight Barrow in the second innings. His analysis of 1-8 was to remain his best in test cricket. This meant that in 1930 he achieved his career bests with bat

and ball in both test and first-class cricket as he had taken 3-35 against Cambridge University on the tour of England.

His next match was against South Australia, from whom he took 258 runs in a day, before he was clean bowled by Vic Richardson. This wicket comprised half of Richardson's career haul in the Sheffield Shield. In the next match, against Victoria, he was dismissed for 2, and in the second Test he made only 25. The third Test was his next match, and he had made when 4 when second slip dropped him, the ball going straight into, and then out of, the fielder's hands. By close of play Bradman was on 223, a total he failed to add to on the morrow.

152 in the fourth Test meant that in his first 100 first-class innings Bradman had scored 7,948 runs at 93.50 with 29 centuries, breaking Ponsford's record. Ponsford had notched up 7,196 runs at 77.37 over the same number of innings, with 28 centuries. Bradman was to achieve records, too, for the most runs in 200, and 300 innings: respectively 16,339 (at 92.31 with 60 centuries) and 25,050 (at 95.61 with 103 centuries). Bradman finished the West Indies series with scores of 43 and 0. His series average was 74.50. As these five tests were the only occasion when he faced the West Indies, it meant they were the least yielding opponents of his in test cricket. He also played five tests against South Africa and India, averaging 201.50 and 178.75 respectively, and he averaged 89.78 in 37 tests against England.

Bradman wanted to marry and sought to provide security for him and his wife. The options were to learn a trade or to use his cricketing fame to make money. The problem with the first option was that Australia was in a depression and many skilled workers were unable to find work. The second option seemed the better one, in that it could tide him over the depression at least, and he might be able to learn a trade in more prosperous times when he would be able better to employ it.

An approach was made for him to play for Accrington in the Lancashire League. The offer was attractive financially, both for the money the club offered and that which he could make from sponsorship and journalism in England. A Don Bradman billiard table was even mooted. However Bradman's touring contract prevented him from returning to England to play within two years of the tour. The tour finished in September 1930, and Accrington wanted him from Spring 1932. The Australian Board's response was clear: if he went to England he would not be picked for Australia. In the end a consortium in Australia offered him a deal which he accepted, although

it was for less than the sum he could have earned in England. They were the newspaper the Sydney Sun, the radio station 2UE and the retailers FJ Palmer & Son. He was to write for the first, broadcast for the second and promote the goods of the third.

In 1931-2 Bradman struck perhaps the best form of his career. He made centuries in each of the Tests he batted in against the South Africans. Having been dropped in the slips on 11 and 15 he went on to make 226 in only four hours 37 minutes in the first test; in the second he made 112, in the third 2 and 167, and in the fourth Test he compiled 299 not out, with the last man run out in an attempt to hoist Bradman's triple century. He tripped in the dressing room at Melbourne and sprained an ankle and was unable to bat in the final Test.

In November 1931 Bradman and his childhood sweetheart Jessie Menzies had announced their engagement and they were married on 30 April 1932. Twenty-six days after their marriage Bradman went on a private tour of America and Canada. The tour was organised by Arthur Mailey and captained by Vic Richardson. The bulk of the tour was to Canada and the promoters made it clear that Bradman had to be one of the players. Bradman was not keen to begin married life with a lengthy separation from his wife, so Jessie came too. It was a demanding tour: 51 fixtures were played, and the touring party was only a dozen strong and Bradman played in 49 of the games. He scored 3,782 runs on the trip and took 26 wickets in 52 overs, including six in an eight-ball over against the XV of Vancouver Island on a matting wicket. By failing to take wickets with the third and sixth deliveries he missed out on a hat-trick. None of the matches were first-class.

Bodyline

The 1932-33 tour by England to Australia was played out against a backdrop of economic depression. Some Australians looked towards England for help in their financial difficulties, but English financial support was hard to come by. The British economy had its own problems. So the English were not the flavour of the month even before the team, under Douglas Jardine, an Indian-born son of a Scot, had unveiled their Bodyline tactics. Jardine had toured Australia in 1928-29 and he and Australian crowds had formed a mutual dislike.

The spectre of Bradman loomed over English planning, understandably so. Jardine reckoned he had discovered a weakness in Bradman against the short ball. The eventual outcome was fast leg theory. England's quicker bowlers were to bowl bouncing deliveries angled in at the batsman's body with a cordon of slips, gullies and short legs on the leg side for any catches that might be offered by the batsman fending off rising deliveries, and one or two men out on the boundary to defend the hook shot. The concept of leg theory was not new, but Jardine implemented it ruthlessly and with bowlers of great pace. The idea of bowling quick deliveries at the batsman's body has remained an active tactic, and was a central strategy of the dominant West Indies' bowlers in the late 1970s and 1980s. But the field positioning has changed for an outcome of Bodyline is that only two fielders are now allowed to stand behind square on the leg side.

Prior to the tour, Bradman applied to the Australian Board asking for permission to write for the press. The board had a condition that those who wanted to play for Australia and write for the press had to receive its permission. In Bradman's case, it was refused, as journalism was not his sole occupation. Bradman announced to the press that: "I have signed a contract to write articles, and I must keep it. I cannot let cricket interfere with my work." Bradman further announced that he would honour his contract, and was prepared to stand out of test cricket for two years if this is what was required to honour his contract.

The board's views on players writing about series in which they were involved were firm. They were remembering the 1920-21 tour when the writings of two MCC players, cabled back to Australia, had caused ill-feeling as well as the unsettling effect of writings by their own players had had in the

past. On the MCC tour of 1928-29 four of the Australian team had written their selections for the test side in the press. This caused ill-feeling among their team-mates who they had left out, and in one case lead to blows and one player left the hotel where the team were staying.

A test series against England without their best batsmen was not a notion which appealed to the Australian cricketing public and the board were isolated in their stand. But they were resolute in it. One of the curious matters of the affair was that had Bradman taken up an offer to play league cricket for Accrington he would have been unavailable for selection for the Australian national side. To avoid this fate three companies had come together to give Bradman employment. But this employment itself also meant that Bradman would be unavailable for selection by the Australian national side. The board knew of Bradman's contract, which he had signed in 1931, and Bradman knew about the board's views on players' journalistic activities. It seems strange therefore, viewed from this distance, that such a situation had been allowed to arise, and both parties should have been forewarned of a potential conflict.

Bradman offered a compromise in that he would not write for the papers until the board met again, which would be before the second Test. This would make him available for the first test. Meanwhile he travelled to Perth to play against the MCC in their second match. Against an attack without Larwood, Voce and Bowes he was dismissed for 3 and 10 inside a day. A week later he made 258 in three hours and twenty minutes in a Sheffield Shield game. Playing for an Australian XI against the MCC, Bradman came in with Leo O'Brien at the other end. O'Brien recalled that "they attacked him remorselessly and he was certainly upset; there was no doubt about that. The wicket was on the green side and they had him in bit of trouble." Jack Hobbs reported that at one stage "Bradman sat on the wicket with his bat somewhere over his left shoulder and the ball hit it, going for a single between the umpire and mid-on." Bradman was dismissed after an hour's batting in the first innings, to a questionable lbw decision off Larwood, and made 13 in the second innings, bowled by Larwood trying to cut. In the next game, for NSW against the MCC, he made 18 and 23, rising from his sick bed to play the second innings. This knock ended when, facing a Bodyline field of four or five short-legs and two men deep on the leg side, he went over to the leg side to let a short ball pass and he was bowled middle stump as it went through lower than anticipated.

The English had hopes that Bradman was defeated. He had played six innings against them without any success. Moreover he did not seem well, and was in dispute with his national cricket board. Jessie Bradman, worried about Don's health, reported it to the board. It decided that he must undergo a medical examination by two doctors appointed by it who reported that, although Bradman was constitutionally fine, he was run down and suffering the after effects of 'flu. The board announced the day before the Test that Bradman was unfit to play. The timing of the announcement, as much as the judgement, led to a spate of rumours ranging from the fact that Bradman was suffering from a fatal disease, was undergoing a nervous breakdown, much like the one which had delayed Tate's arrival in Australia, that he was 'burnt out' and that he was scared of facing Larwood.

Bradman watched the first test, and at close of day broadcast his evening commentary. A verbal commentary the board did not object to, only a written one. Jack Hobbs came across Bradman in the pavilion and reported: "I talked to the Don for a few minutes. He does not look well, and has a drawn look... somehow I felt he has not had a square deal."

After the test, which Australia lost by ten wickets despite a battling 187 by McCabe, the Bradmans went away to stay at a cottage on the coast, Don to undergo his rest cure. There he formulated his plans to deal with Bodyline. He reasoned that conventional shots were not going to be of much use against such an unconventional form of attack. Instead he would take leg guard and seek to play the ball through the under-populated off side. Having thought through his proposed policy, he 'bounced it off' his old mentor AG Moyes on his return. Moyes pointed out that it was open to the risk that Larwood might bowl a full-length ball on the stumps. Bradman reckoned that his reactions were quick enough to pick up Larwood's length early enough to be able to counter this. After a detailed discussion, Moyes was convinced.

Two weeks before the second Test was due to start, Bradman played against Victoria in the Sheffield Shield and made 157, in the process of this, his 126th innings, he passed 10,000 first-class runs. This broke Ponsford's record for the fewest innings to reach 10,000 runs. Ponsford required 161 innings.

Right up until the day before the second Test Bradman's inclusion in the side was in question through the continuing dispute over his press commitments. The Board were firm that he could not write and play, Bradman was resolute, in that case, that he would not play. The editorial head of Associated Newspapers offered to release Bradman from his contract.

Bradman declined this offer and stated again his intention to honour his contract, not that he had yet written anything. Bradman then made a counter offer that he would write instead for a London newspaper - who hearing of Bradman's dispute had offered him large sums to write for them - and hand the fee over to Associated Newspapers. In the end Bradman accepted Associated Newspapers' offer to release him from his contract. On the day of the test he released a statement: "The Board of Control continues to prevent me from earning an honourable and permanent living from journalism... the difference between journalism and radio work is so small as to make any distinction appear ridiculous... their legislation means they are able to dictate to players the means whereby they shall earn their living.. I must emphatically protest against the Board of Control being allowed to interfere with the permanent occupation of any player... only through the generosity of my employers am I able to play today... it is certainly no encouragement to any player to remain in Australia when such restrictions are brought in."

Bradman went in to bat on with Australia at 67-2. A record crowd of 63,993 cheered him to the wicket. As he passed Sutcliffe the Yorkshireman made a comment on his welcome. "Yes, but will it be so good when I'm coming back?" He was soon to find out. To his first ball, a ball wide of off-stump from Bowes, he played a pull shot which dragged the ball back onto his stumps. It was the first ball that Bowes had bowled to Bradman in a test. It was also the only test wicket Bowes took in Australia. Bowes recalled the moment later: "Jardine, the sphinx, had forgotten himself the one and only time in his cricketing life. In his sheer delight at this unexpected stroke of luck he had clasped both his hands above his head and was jiggling around like an Indian doing a war dance." Listening on the radio in a hotel was a Mr Hancock. Disgusted by Bradman's dismissal he went for a walk. This took him past a river where three boys - the youngest only two and half - were playing and had fallen in. Mr Hancock dived in and rescued all three. Bradman perhaps never played a more important innings.

On the third day the attendance record of the previous day was broken, with 68,188 watching. Some had camped out all night to ensure admission; two had even tried to break into the ground during the night. Bradman came in at 27-2, with the lead 86. He got off the mark by hooking Bowes for four, but, strangely, in an innings of 185 minutes he only faced six balls from Bowes. In his 146-ball knock, he faced up to Larwood and Voce a combined 83 times, as England went into a test for the first time in their history without a

recognised spinner on an easy-paced pitch. Looking to hit the Bodyline deliveries into the vacant off side, Bradman withstood the attack while wickets fell regularly at the other end. He was on 98 when Australia's last man, Bert Ironmonger came in.

Ironmonger would be number eleven in a team of number elevens, and of his batting AG Moyes wrote that "he went to the wicket mostly as a gesture to convention." In his 21 test innings he averaged 2.62. Bradman went to meet him when he came to the wicket, to offer words of advice, but the 50 year old got in first: "Don't worry son, I won't let you down." Ironmonger survived the last two balls of Hammond's over and Bradman hit Voce for three in the next over to bring up his century. Three minutes later Ironmonger was run out in an attempt to give Bradman the strike. 52 of Bradman's 103 had been scored off Larwood and Voce. Bradman returned to a rapturous reception. Australia made 191, their lowest total against England to include a century.

After Australia had won the test by 111 runs, Bradman argued with his board that now was the time to protest against England's bowling tactics. To do so at this juncture would be to do so from a position of strength: Australia had just had a victory by a comfortable margin and Australians had made centuries in both the tests. To do so later might run the risk of appearing bad losers. But the board ignored Bradman's advice, complained later and suffered the inevitable accusations.

Bradman was not to repeat his Melbourne success in the rest of the series. In the third Test he made 66 in the second innings out of 88 in 73 minutes. He was out the ball after hitting Verity for six - his first in a first-class match in Australia and his first in a Test. He had scored quickly without ever looking sound and it was rumoured that Woodfull favoured dropping him after this effort. In the fourth Test he was 71 not out at close of the first day. Next morning Larwood opened with a Bodyline field and Bradman showed extreme discomfort in adding five more runs before he was out trying to cut a ball from leg stump. Warwick Armstrong reported that "I have to say candidly that Bradman showed unmistakable signs of fright when facing every ball from Larwood today and that his last shot was shockingly bad." Scores of 48 and 71 in the final test meant that he made a half century in each of the Tests in which he had played in the series, and he headed the Australian averages. His average was 56.57, far less than could have been expected without Bodyline bowling. Bradman scored at 75 runs per 100 balls,

a rate quicker than England's batsmen and quicker than all bar tailenders Lee and Alexander, who both only played the final test, on the Australian side. He faced 151 balls from Larwood, scoring 115 runs off him, and 64 balls from Voce, scoring 42 runs. Larwood dismissed him four times, Verity twice and Bowes once. His average against Larwood therefore was 28.75. Larwood could be said to have won the personal battle, although the other bowlers to take Bradman's wicket did so more cheaply - Verity at 22 and Bowes at 9.

In 1933-34 Bradman scored a thousand runs for the sixth successive season, making seven first-class centuries. In the Sheffield Shield he made 922 runs at 132.44 in his final season for New South Wales. His two most spectacular performances had come against Queensland. In the first game against them he took 92 minutes to reach his century and moved from 150 to 200 in 24 minutes, taking 23 from one over. After hitting 26 fours he deliberately skied a catch on 200. In the second match against the same opposition he made 253 in 204 minutes including four sixes and 29 fours.

Early in 1934 New South Welshmen were dismayed to learn that Bradman would be leaving them. With his contract with Associated Newspapers, 2UE and Palmer's due to expire Bradman was looking for a profession away from cricket and journalism. Stockbroker Harry Hodgetts, a member of the Australian Board of Control and of the South Australian Cricket Association offered him a position in his firm. After much debate, Bradman accepted the offer. He signed a six-year contract which committed him to work for Hodgetts' firm, and to play in any matches for which he might be chosen by Kensington (the club with which Hodgetts was associated), South Australia or by the Australian selectors. In return, Hodgetts agreed to teach Bradman stockbroking and allow him the necessary time off work for his cricketing activities.

England 1934

Despite his problems with the board, Bradman was appointed vice-captain for the 1934 tour to England. He was still plagued by poor health: a generalised malaise for which no doctor could find the cure. The Board of Control doctors passed him fit to tour, but Bradman was not so sure. He obtained, at his own expense, another opinion from a specialist in Adelaide. His diagnosis was that Bradman was 'extremely run down' and advised him to rest as much as possible and not play any cricket until he reached England.

In England Bradman still did not feel a hundred per cent, but played in all the test matches. In the fifth test, at the Oval, he made 244, adding 451 in 316 minutes with Ponsford, who was playing his final test. Their partnership remained a world record for any wicket until 1991 when Andrew Jones and Martin Crowe put on 467 for New Zealand's 3rd wicket against Sri Lanka at Wellington. Bradman's innings took 316 minutes and contained a six and 32 fours. Australia made 701 in their first innings and won the timeless test by 562 runs to regain the Ashes. Ponsford and Bradman broke the partnership record for Ashes matches which they had established in the previous test, at Leeds, when they had added 388 runs together, with Bradman finishing on 304, having batted 403 minutes, hitting two sixes and 43 fours. Ponsford made 181. At Leeds Bradman had scored 271 runs in a day, one of 27 occasions when he made 200 in a day in first-class cricket. That evening, perhaps mindful of criticism four years ago, and aware of his position as vice-captain, he dined that evening - the Saturday - with a large party of fellow cricketers and friends.

Bradman had been in convivial mood that evening, but many reports of that summer report him looking pale and drawn. After scoring 160 against Middlesex on May 26 he had to wait until July 14, when he made 160 against Yorkshire, for his next century. The 13 innings in between comprised the longest period he ever went without scoring a century. (The longest period in his career without a half century was six innings, in 1927-28.) During the test at Leeds he had pulled a muscle in his thigh while fielding. He entered the Park Lane nursing home of Sir Douglas Shields where he stayed for three weeks, although the period of recovery for his thigh was ten days, such was the state of his general health. In the third week of September the Australians were in London, having completed their playing engagements, and were

attending a round of farewell entertainments. On the afternoon of Saturday 22 September, whilst entertaining an old Bowral school friend, opera singer Elsie Corry, he felt the slow onset of abdominal pains, steadily growing more intense. He told the captain that he would not be well enough to attend that evening's dinner. At that dinner was a Harley Street surgeon, Mr John R. Lee, who Woodfull asked if he would look at Bradman. Lee could not reach a diagnosis that night nor the next morning. He took himself off for a drive in the country to ponder the question. When he returned he had decided that the symptoms Bradman had were indicative of a long-standing appendicitis. He sought a second opinion from Sir Douglas Shields who agreed with his recommendation that an operation was needed. On the Monday at 4pm Sir Douglas's younger brother, Clive, opened Bradman's abdomen. He found a badly infected appendix. At first the operation seemed successful, but continued pain and rising temperature showed the presence of peritonitis, an infection of the abdominal lining. At that time the condition was usually fatal. At 8pm on the Tuesday the hospital issued a bulletin.

The press prepared obituaries and that night rumours circulated that Bradman had died. When news reached Jessie she cabled "It's alright Don, I'm coming" and set out from her home. When she got to Melbourne she was informed that her husband had died. A radio telephone call to London established that this was not so, and she caught a liner to Europe. Its departure had been delayed for her.

The King asked to be given regular updates of Bradman's progress. After three days Bradman pulled through the worst, and his stay in hospital extended to four weeks. Bradman was told to take six months rest, and not to play cricket for twelve months. His doctor said he was not sufficiently recovered to tour South Africa in 1935-36, and Bradman was never to play cricket in that country.

Bradman had come very close to death, as he admitted. Lee said that were it not for Jessie's cable which "meant a great deal to the patient at a critical stage" then he might not have pulled through. Had Bradman died in 1934 his reputation in history as a test batsman was secure. By this stage of his career he had played 28 tests, scoring 3,849 runs at 98.69, and had already played his highest three test innings; also his highest first-class innings. What history would not have recorded was his success as a captain.

Captain of Australia

The next time Bradman played test cricket was as skipper. Vic Richardson was made captain of the tour to South Africa. Not well enough to tour, Bradman stayed behind and played in Australian domestic cricket. In Richardson's absence he was made captain of South Australia. The team and he flourished. Bradman's average for that season's Shield matches was 130.33, and his season included scores of 233, 226, 357 (in seven hours and a minute) and 369 (in four hours and 13 minutes). South Australia won the Sheffield Shield. South Australia had last won the Shield in 1926-27, the first season in which Queensland had taken part, joining South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales. The 1935-36 success for South Australia was only their fifth compared with Victoria's 15 victories and NSW's 20. In guiding South Australia to the title, Bradman had shown himself to be a most able captain.

Meanwhile in South Africa Richardson was proving to be an astute and successful captain. The tour was a happy one, with one of the main reasons for this considered to be Richardson's handling of his players. In *Australian Cricket* Jack Pollard described Richardson as "so obviously a born leader, with qualities that inspired his players." Australia won the series 4-0, with one test drawn. But although a successful and respected captain, an impressive performer in first-class cricket and an excellent field, Richardson was unsuccessful as a test batsman. In 19 tests he had scored only 706 runs at 23.53. His top score was 138 but on only one other occasion in his 30 innings had he reached 50. In a similar situation, the English selectors would almost certainly have persevered with Richardson, as they traditionally favoured captaincy ability to playing ability in weighing up potential captains; Australian selectors preferred that the captain to be one of the best eleven cricketers. As such it was almost inevitable that Richardson would be replaced as captain.

McCabe had been the vice captain in South Africa, but the announcement that Bradman had been made a national selector - one of three - for the forthcoming Ashes series, gave a clear indication of who would be the next captain. This was logical as Bradman had been Woodfull's vice captain in 1934.

Bradman's 1935-36 season opened with a testimonial match for former test

players Bardsley and Gregory. It was to be a match between Richardson's triumphant tourists and the Rest, billed as VY Richardson's XI v DG Bradman's XI. Richardson's team were expected to win, but Bradman, from number six, made 212 in 202 minutes, with two sixes and 26 fours, and as Bradman recalled the Rest "went on to beat the tourists quite comfortably and I don't think they were very happy about that. They thought they were a great side until we beat them."

Bradman's success in this match stored up further trouble for him. Already disliked by some of his previous team-mates in the national side for the way he, unwittingly, dominated public and media perception of the side, they had had a chance to gain some recognition for their own talents by a comfortable win in South Africa without Bradman, only to return to Australia and be promptly trumped by Bradman's deeds in this match.

Furthermore in South Africa a group of players - Fingleton, O'Reilly, O'Brien, McCabe and McCormack - had formed a form of anti-Bradman alliance. They were different from Bradman in terms of background, religion and politics, being all of Irish descent, Roman Catholic and, on the whole, Labor supporters.

Bradman was duly appointed Australian captain, to face an England side under Gubby Allen which was expected to lose the series. When the English won the first two tests the knives came out for Bradman.

In the first test Australia was set 381 to win in the final innings, and, on a wet wicket, was hustled out for 58, Bradman going second ball to a stroke, in Cardus' words "as purposeless as a man flicking at the gyrations of a wasp or mosquito." In the second Test, again caught on a wet wicket, Australia were dismissed for 80 in the first innings, Bradman falling to nought to a stroke in Cardus' view "not fit for public consumption." In the second innings he made 80 before falling to a long-hop from Verity which had CB Fry reporting that "the greatest run-getter in the history of cricket has made the worst stroke in the history of cricket. A wild hook with his eye off the ball." Australia lost the second test by an innings and 22 runs.

The press queried Bradman's ability to act as selector, main run-getter and captain. Anti-Bradman critics griped at his captaincy and said he should step down, and even some pro-Bradman critics suggested that he might be relieved of the burden of captaincy so as to safeguard the flow of runs Australia had come to expect, and demand, from him.

Former test team-mate Alan Fairfax fuelled the debate with some comments

to a reporter from the Daily Express which were reported thus: "You have to mother a cricket team and Bradman is no mother. He is too brilliantly individual. Armstrong, Woodfull - they were skippers to study the players' interests and get the best out of them. Don simply does not come up to that."

Bradman believed that test players did not need 'mothering.' If they did then they were not temperamentally suited to test cricket. If captains can be divided into two broad categories then perhaps it would be the man-managers and the technicians. The former deal with the people under their command whether it is by striving to gee up the players, or boost confidence or create a positive atmosphere. The latter are more tactically orientated, more interested in getting the technical aspects of the cricket right: their captaincy takes place mainly on the pitch not the dressing room. All captains will have facets of both styles, and the best will probably have large amounts of both. If Bradman had to be placed in only one of these categories it would be the latter. As Alan MacGilvery wrote: "Tactically and technically, Bradman was a superb captain. He could sum up the weakness and the strengths of players in an instant." Bradman was shy, and often kept himself to himself. As such it would not have sat easily with his character to rampage around a dressing room, slapping backs, geeing up the quick bowlers. His would be a quieter form of captaincy. A keen mind, an analytical brain and attention to detail would be features of his captaincy.

Woodfull, who had recommended Bradman for the captaincy, kept his views quiet in public during the controversy - although after England's first innings of the series he had written that "Bradman impressed me in a very marked degree with his captaincy and field placing" - but privately told people that "O'Reilly and Fingleton want McCabe to be captain and with Australian 2-0 down they have decided that this is the moment to lobby against Bradman."

Arthur Mailey aired his views publicly writing that "Some members of the team have not been giving Bradman the co-operation that a captain is entitled to expect. There is definitely, and has been for some time, an important section of the team that has not seen eye to eye with Bradman, either on or off the field."

Both Bradman and McCabe made statements expressing that the team was united, Bradman saying that "more good would accrue if the Englishmen were given due credit for well-deserved victories."

It was a difficult time for Bradman, especially as his one-day-old son had

died only a few weeks before. But Bradman had reached the nadir of his fortunes as captain, having lost his first two tests he was only to lose one more of his 24 tests in charge.

Australia won the third test, this time benefiting from the weather. Moreover, Bradman was considered to have won the tactical duel with Allen. Bradman won the toss and batted. At 200-9, with Bradman out for 13, the rain came and he declared. England were caught on a wet wicket and Bradman later commented that "it was a terrible pitch. England had got to 68 and they had lost three wickets. Now that, I believe, was the crucial point; if Allen had closed at that point - and there was some considerable time to play that day - we would certainly have lost three or more wickets before play ended that night." Allen continued England's innings, without great success, as England collapsed to 78-9 despite Bradman's instructions to his bowlers not to get the batsmen out. With some time to play before the close, Bradman sent in two tailenders, O'Reilly and debutant Fleetwood-Smith. When Fleetwood-Smith queried Bradman's decision Bradman explained that "you can't get out unless you hit the ball. Now you can't hit the ball on a good wicket so you've no chance of hitting it out there." O'Reilly was dismissed quickly but Fleetwood-Smith survived until the close of play. With the pitch easing, Bradman and Fingleton put on 346 for the sixth wicket, Bradman scoring 270, in seven hours and 38 minutes, and Australia ran out winners by 365 runs.

During the test the Australian Board made a decision to summon the players they saw as being trouble-makers, and at the end of the match McCabe, O'Brien, O'Reilly and Fleetwood-Smith were called to a meeting. Fingleton, who Bradman considered the ringleader and had the longest history of disliking Bradman, was not. The four listened to a typewritten document being read to them which alluded to insubordination and unfitness but gave no examples. The meeting ended in some confusion. Bradman was furious that he had not been told about it. The board replied that that way Bradman could not be blamed for instigating the meeting. Bradman replied that the players would not believe that. They didn't. O'Reilly, who had surprised the board members by answering back in the meeting, said shortly before his death that he had still not forgiven Bradman for not being at the meeting and not facing the players.

Australia won the next two tests as well, Bradman making 212 in the second innings of the fourth test, won by 148 runs, and 169 in Australia's only

innings in a final test victory by an innings and 200.

England 1938

Bradman began the tour with a double century at Worcester on April 30, for the third successive time, and went on to make a thousand runs by the end of May in seven innings. Throughout the tour Bradman had problems with his health. He often felt tired and was troubled by his back. With the third test at Manchester totally rained out, a first innings century in the fourth test, after second innings ones in the first two, meant that Bradman had scored a century in each of the last six tests.

His century in the first test, at Trent Bridge, was in a successful rearguard action as Australia had been made to follow on 247 runs adrift on first innings, and was the slowest of his career. His hundred came after 4 hours 13 minutes' batting. Only 17 of his first-class centuries took over three hours. In contrast, his quickest century came in only an hour and 10 minutes, against Tasmania in 1935-36, in an innings in which he went on to make 369.

Australia retained the Ashes in the fourth test by winning by five wickets after the first two tests had been drawn. This was the playing highlight of the Australian's tour as they went down in the fifth test by an innings and 579 - still a record test victory margin. Bradman took a turn at the bowling crease while England were compiling their 903-7 and broke his ankle and did not bat. Fleetwood Smith took 1-298 in England's innings. His had been a controversial selection for the tour, as Grimmett was left out for which Bradman was blamed in some quarters, with people claiming he had a grudge against the bowler, which Bradman denied.

The other controversy which Bradman was embroiled in during the tour was more of his making. He wanted his wife to visit him at the end of the tour and travel back to Australia with him. Woodfull had made a similar arrangement for his own wife in 1934. The board declined to sanction this, the news being relayed to Bradman during the middle of the tour. His contract, which forbade his wife visiting him, also forbade him to make a statement without the manager's consent. As this consent would not be forthcoming, Bradman got Moyes to give a statement that Bradman could not comment on the decision, but if he could he would say he was distressed by the decision which was in contrast to the treatment afforded his predecessor and would not play for the Australian Board again. He was in effect saying that unless Jessie could join him he would not play for Australia again. The players were behind him - he had obtained their sanction for his request before he made it -

and so were the press. The board backed down and allowed all the players to have their wives join them at the end of the tour, thus ensuring that Bradman was still not afforded the exceptional treatment given to Woodfull in 1934.

O'Reilly later wrote of the Oval test: "we didn't see Bradman again on the tour. We waved him goodbye as he left the field, never laid eyes on him again until we got on the ship to come home." Bradman had spent the rest of the tour at the home of Walter Robins before, against the advice of friends and the travel agent, he travelled across France and caught the boat home at Toulon. Travelling across by train they heard the guard banging on the doors shouting 'pas de guerre!' The Munich Agreement had been signed. Bradman was not convinced, he was expecting a long and bloody war.

However Australia was not. Away from Europe, Bradman found there was not the same foreboding. The government allocated only a modest part of their expenditure to the armed services, meanwhile the Board of Control was making preparations for England's tour in 1940-41 and the Melbourne Cricket Club needed a new secretary. The job offered a £1,000 annual salary; and, barring an upset, was virtually a job for life. Bradman did not seek the job, but a committeeman persuaded him to put himself forward for it. Bradman won through, out of 150 applicants, to the final two, when the casting vote of the chairman of the meeting of the full committee went to Vernon Ransford, a long-standing committeeman and former Australian test player. Had Bradman been appointed it would have prevented him from making any more tours, also probably preventing him continuing as Australia's captain and a player in home tests. It is interesting that these considerations did not deter him from putting up for the job. He had already decided that his 1938 tour to England had almost certainly been his last.

While the Melbourne Cricket Club was debating his candidature Bradman was completing his sixth consecutive first-class century. 118 for his XI in the match to celebrate Melbourne Cricket Club's centenary had been followed by 143 v NSW, 225 v Queensland, 107 v Victoria, 186 v Queensland and 135 not out against NSW. He had equalled CB Fry's record for consecutive centuries, set in 1901. The crowd at the Adelaide Oval was at capacity to see Bradman attempt the record but he was out for 5. He returned to the pavilion grinning. He received a cable: "Genuinely sorry. Superlative skill merits absence of bad luck. Fry."

South Australia won the Sheffield Shield for the second time under his captaincy. Bradman averaged 153.16 for the season and had even kept wicket

in one match. When Walker injured himself before the game Bradman was named as wicket-keeper. He 'kept in the first innings, taking one catch, before passing on the duties for the second. He had also 'kept wicket the previous season against NSW when Walker broke a finger during the match, and took three catches and made a stumping. Bradman's talents as a batsman have tended to overshadow appreciation of him as a fielder: the nimble footwork which served him so well as a batsman did so also as a fielder, and he had a good throwing arm. This nimbleness contributed to him only being run out four times in first-class cricket.

On 10 July 1939 Jessie Bradman gave birth to a son, John Russell, and the Bradmans had become a family again. To keep fit, Bradman entered the South Australian squash championships. He won, but declared that the hour-long final was “more exhausting than a full day's batting” and never played competitive squash again.

War years

When Britain declared war on Germany, so did Australia. Not all Australians - particularly the Irish Catholic community - saw why this should be so. But 'the mother country' still dominated much Australian thinking. However Australian troops were not to be sent abroad straightaway, as they might be required to defend their own country against the Japanese. Recruitment to the armed forces was slow, and voluntary. The Australian Prime Minister declared it was business as normal, and the Sheffield Shield programme continued. In this Bradman became only the second man, after Ponsford, to score a 1,000 runs in a season. In all first-class cricket that year he averaged 132.75.

Bradman did enlist. He later wrote: "I felt the urge of all patriotic citizens to do my duty in a sterner sphere." On 28 June 1940 he enrolled in the Royal Australian Air Force. He made it known that he would only play cricket for patriotic purposes. In the air force he had little to do, although he attended classes with regard to his duties as an observer. Realising that Bradman was being little utilised by the RAAF, the Army sought a transfer, and opened negotiations with the RAAF.

Bradman was consulted as to what he wanted to do. He asked, in turn, Lord Gowrie, the Governor General of Australia, who recommended that a move to the Army job, that of a physical training instructor, seemed more appropriate. So Bradman moved services, and was given the commission of Lieutenant., to some disquiet among the Australian population. Bradman had volunteered for active duty, and now was being moved away any potential front line. Some thought that those on high were protecting Bradman as too important a national asset to be risked in warfare.

It was a bad move for Bradman personally. His body was not up to the physical demands placed upon it. His '1934 troubles', as he called them, returned. His eyesight began to fail him. He played two first-class class matches in 1940-41 and was twice out first ball, and made 6 and 12 in the other two innings. The first match, against Victoria (0 & 6), was one of only two occasions in his career when he was dismissed for single figures in both innings of a match. His back started going into spasms, and, on May 1 he was discharged as an official semi-invalid. He developed 'frozen shoulder' which meant that he could not lift his right arm above his shoulder, and Jessie had to

shave him and brush his hair, and he lost feeling in his thumb and finger of his right hand. It took him nine months to recover.

In 1942 he rejoined Hodgetts' firm, although there was little stockbroking work available. The market was depressed, and few transactions were made. In 1943 Bradman bought a seat on the Adelaide Stock Exchange. Although still an employee, this enabled Bradman to trade in his own right in the future if he so wished. It was to be a shrewd, and perhaps fortuitous, move by Bradman, especially as the price was low, reflecting existing stockbroking conditions.

In 1945 Adelaide society was scandalised when Hodgetts' firm went bankrupt overnight, and Hodgetts was arrested, and later imprisoned, for fraud. Bradman's reputation was dented by Hodgetts' downfall. Bradman's name had attracted many clients to the firm and, as the staff numbered only five, many thought it surprising that Bradman was unaware of Hodgetts' situation. In an interview shortly before his death, when asked what he wished to be remembered for, Bradman replied: "integrity." But many questioned his integrity over this business. He could not win either way, in some people's eyes: either he knew and was complicit or ignorant and incompetent, or at least inattentive. Why Bradman had bought his own seat on the stock exchange could now be open to a less flattering interpretation.

Bradman moved quickly, set up his own business and within 48 hours was trading in his own name from Hodgetts' offices and trying to rescue some of the mess caused by Hodgetts' bankruptcy. Bradman himself was one of the 238 creditors, as was the Governor General of Australia. He worked long hours, aided by Jessie. It was a difficult time for the pair of them, especially as their daughter, Shirley, had been diagnosed with mild cerebral palsy. That Bradman was able to move so swiftly upset members of the Adelaide Stock Exchange, who believed that the official receiver had behaved irregularly in both not allowing time to evaluate properly the distorted accounts and see whether the firm could continue to trade, and also in making over the client list and lease on Hodgetts' offices to Bradman gratis, when normally both would be put out to tender and the sum raised paid to Hodgetts' creditors.

Ikin incident

England were touring Australia in 1946-47, and there was much public clamour for Bradman to lead the Australian side. Bradman had played two first-class games the previous season, making 68 and 52 not out against Queensland, and a run-a-minute 112 against a Services team. Bradman, still in poor health, was not confident of his form and fitness and declined to tour New Zealand where Australia played one test and gave seven debuts in the process.

The English players who had known Bradman in 1938 were surprised at his appearance when they met him at the beginning of the tour. Compton later recorded that "some of us wondered whether or not he was due for a nursing home rather than a cricket pitch." Indeed, just prior to the Englishman's arrival Bradman had spent ten days in hospital.

Encouraged by Jessie, who argued that it would be a shame if John, then aged seven, never saw his father play in a test match, and by his own feeling that "it was my duty to do whatever lay in my power to assist my country", Bradman declared himself available for selection by South Australia. He had only had his first practice of the season eight days before the South Australian match with the MCC, and had only declared himself available two days later after he had made 42 not for his club side. He made 76 in the first innings but was out to the eighth delivery he received in the second. Bradman was "a shadow of myself, physically, mentally and in cricket form." But doubts as to his physical ability were assuaged when he made 106 for an Australian XI against the MCC and 119 against Victoria in the Sheffield Shield. He might not be as good, or as fit, as he was, but he could still perform at the highest level.

He was named captain for the first Test. He won the toss and entered at 9-1. He scratched out seven runs in the first 40 minutes, with Alec Bedser proving especially difficult to play. Half an hour later, just before lunch, he had taken his score onto 28, playing more fluently when Voce bowled an away swinging yorker outside off stump, Bradman cut down on it and the ball flew to Ikin at second slip. Bradman looked towards square leg, then down at the ground and prepared to face the next ball. The Englishmen reacted as though they had expected Bradman to walk, and when he did not, they appealed. The umpire at the bowler's end turned down the appeal, without consulting with

his colleague. Hammond, captaining England from first slip, was stunned.

Bradman thought it had been a bump ball. The Englishmen disagreed, and press opinion was divided. Matches will always have debatable decisions, but this one had potentially far-reaching consequences. First, after the incident relations between the captains were hostile. Secondly, and more importantly, it has been argued that this decision perhaps ensured that Bradman toured England in 1948. Out of form, and lacking in confidence, had Bradman been dismissed for an unconvincing 28, the case for him being able to play Test cricket with something approaching his previous dominance would not have been made. As it was, Bradman played what Cardus described as a Lazarus-like innings, putting on 276 in 278 minutes with Hassett, his partner prior to lunch, making 187 himself, from 305 balls with 19 fours. He had reached his fifty in just under two hours, but after that he began to find form, reflecting later that he was himself 'physically and mentally', and moved to his century after a total of 194 minutes batting. Australia were bowled out for 645 on the third day. England reached 117-5 by stumps, before overnight rain ensured they were caught on sticky wicket and lost by an innings and 332 runs.

Bradman found himself in trouble with the Adelaide stock exchange during the test. The newspapers showed a picture of some men who, seeking to heighten the emotion of the moment, had travelled to his office to celebrate outside. As the name of his office was shown in the photograph, the committee of the Adelaide stock exchange summoned him on the belief that he was indulging in advertising. There had been a similar complaint against Bradman when the newspapers carried the story of him setting up his own stockbrokers.

Bradman played the second Test with stomach trouble and a strapped thigh. He went in late, at number 6, but made 234, mainly off the back foot as a result of his torn muscle, and put on 405 with Barnes, as Australia won by an innings and 33 runs.

Bradman played only four more first-class matches that season, and he stood down from Sheffield Shield games against NSW and Queensland to tend to his business. In the third Test at Melbourne he made 79 and 49, the first time he had failed to make a century in a Melbourne test. He was bowled by Bedser for nought in the fourth by "the best ball ever bowled to me" and finished the series with 680 runs at 97.14 as Australia won 3-0.

Century of centuries

The tourists to Australia in 1947-48 were India. Bradman announced that he would be available for the series, but that it would be his last home test series and his last season in first-class cricket in Australia. He said he had not yet decided whether he would tour England in 1948.

The Indians were not expected to put up strong opposition. Their manager announced on arrival in Australia that they were there to learn, particularly from Bradman and they would "prefer to lose every match and see Bradman play than win every match and not see him." They also expressed a desire that Bradman might score his 100th hundred in a match against them.

Bradman began the season on 97 centuries. His 98th took 98 minutes against the Indians for South Australia. His 99th came in the only Sheffield Shield game he played that year, and his next match was against the Indians for an Australian XI at Sydney. Bradman said "I had set my heart on making that century on Sydney Cricket ground. Throughout my years no cricket ground in the world had supplanted Sydney in my affections. I always thought that the crowds were sympathetic to me."

When he reached 99 the Indian captain gave the ball to Kischend, who had not bowled on the tour. A push to leg took Bradman to his century. The crowd and the Indians celebrated. "I think of all my experiences in cricket, that was the most moving one," Bradman said.

Bradman had taken 295 innings to reach a hundred hundreds, thereby beating Hammond as the quickest to this mark. Hammond had taken 680. The nearest century centurion to Bradman's innings total is Denis Compton, who took 552 innings to reach the century mark. Within 23 days Bradman had scored three centuries in four innings to move to his hundredth hundred. When he retired his total of centuries - 117 - was over twice that of any other Australian. Warren Bardsley's 53 was the next best.

Bradman made 185 in the first Test, 13 in the second, 132 and 127 not out in the third (the only time he scored two centuries in a test), 201 in the fourth and he retired hurt on 57 in the fifth when he tore a cartilage under the rib. His test average, which stood at 97.85 before the series, was now 102.98.

Before the final test of the series Bradman had announced that he would tour England in 1948, but after that would retire from first-class cricket. His decision to tour was met with much rejoicing in England. Bradman set off for

England with a record number of eight centuries in an Australian first-class season, despite his very limited involvement in the Sheffield Shield, and with a seasonal average of 129.60. The next best average was Lindsay Hassett's 68.69.

The Invincibles

The Australian team of 1948 was one of the best-ever sides. Bradman set out at the beginning to go through the tour unbeaten, and he achieved this. Australia won 25 of the 34 matches, 17 of them by an innings. Bradman was determined, even ruthless, in this aim. He played a full-strength team, or one near it, for most matches, doing so even after the test series was over. In the final game, against Leveson-Gower XI's he insisted that their opponents fielded only six test players. He put out his full test team in return.

Seven players made a thousand runs, the least productive of the seven averaged 47; Bradman heading the averages at 89.92. Seven players took 50 wickets or more, Johnston surpassing the hundred mark. They dismissed the opponents for under 200 34 times, and, outside of the tests, no-one made 300 against them. The Australians scored 300 or more in 27 innings.

RC Robertson-Glasgow wrote that "next to Winston Churchill, he was the most celebrated man in England during the summer of 1948. His appearances throughout the country were like one continuous farewell matinée," and that "we want him to do well. We feel we have a share in him. He is more than Australian. He is a world batsman."

Bradman enjoyed this tour more than any other for "at last was the great opportunity which I had longed for: a team of cricketers whose respect and loyalty were unquestioned, who would regard me in a fatherly sense and listen to my advice, follow my guidance and not question my handling of affairs... there are no longer any fears that they will query the wisdom of what you do. The result is a sense of freedom to give reign to your own creative ability and personal judgment."

For many commentators the tone of the tour was set - or declared - in the match against Essex. Bradman scored 185 in two hours and five minutes and Australia made 721 in the day. The News Chronicle reported: "Bradman has not changed one whit... he remains the coolest and most ruthless strategist in cricket... that mammoth 721 total... was all part of his deliberate, merciless, efficient plan, brilliant in its execution to build up the biggest possible psychological advantage." Bradman had decided to conserve his strength and not play any long innings outside of the tests; he said later that he had decided not to go for the double hundred on that tour.

In the first test, in the words of Hammond, Bradman passed from

immortality to mortality, as he was twice caught by Hutton at backward short leg. He did however make 138 runs in the first innings. In the second he fell for a duck - his first in a test in England - but it hardly mattered as Australia needed only 98 to win.

In the second innings at Lord's Bradman again fell to a catch by Hutton at backward short leg, for 38, having almost been caught by Hutton when on 13. In the second innings he made 89 before Bedser had him caught in the slips. Bedser had dismissed him in the last six innings that they had opposed one another, a feat unparalleled by any other bowler. Australia won the test by 409 runs.

The third test was at Old Trafford, where Australia had not won since 1902. Seven balls into his innings, Bradman fell lbw to the Lancastrian Pollard. On the final day he batted two hours for 30 runs, spending 28 minutes on nought - the longest time he had spent getting off the mark. This innings was his highest in tests at Old Trafford. It was the only one of the ten grounds on which he played that he had failed to get a test century.

Bradman's most famous innings on tour was his least successful; his most successful innings was at Headingley. Bradman and Headingley and Headingley crowds had a special relationship. Tickets went on sale on January 1 for the match, and the entire reserved accommodation was sold out by first post.

England made 496 and Bradman came in at 13-1. EW Swanton wrote that he was "greeted like an emperor by the crowd." Not out 31 at close on the second day, he was bowled early on the third for 33. Harvey scored a memorable hundred in his first test in England but Australia were set 404 to win on the fifth day when England declared early that morning. Australia started their innings at 11.46am and Bradman came to the wicket at one o'clock to a tumultuous reception. Later, in September, speaking when accepting honorary membership of Yorkshire CCC Bradman described this reception as "the greatest I have ever received from any public anywhere in the world." Bradman had previously instructed the coach driver to be at the ground by mid-afternoon, so pessimistic was he of Australia's chances of batting out the draw. As it was, he and Morris were still there at tea, Australia on 288-1. Bradman had had some luck: missed in the slips off Compton when 22 and 30, he could have been caught at deep point on 59 and stumped on 107. He and Morris had put on 301 for the second wicket at 83 an hour - the fifth triple century stand in which Bradman participated in test - when Morris

fell. Bradman made sure Harvey scored the winning runs, he himself finishing on 173, in four and a quarter hours, with 29 fours. Bradman reckoned that, had England played a top-quality leg spinner, Australia would not have reached 250.

Bradman played in the next match against Derbyshire, and made 62 in four hours before he was bowled. Derbyshire was one of only four counties Bradman failed to score centuries against during his career, Glamorgan, Gloucestershire and Northamptonshire being the others. Derbyshire, historically, have been given an easy ride by the leading centurions: WG Grace, Colin Cowdrey, Peter May, Ranjitsinhji and 'Plum' Warner, 450 centuries between them, are others not to have scored a century against them.

Bradman then skipped a trip to Wales, and returned to the side for the match with Warwickshire. Warwickshire's leg spinner, Eric Hollies, took 8-107 in the first innings, including the wicket of Bradman, for 31, bowled by a top spinner. Bradman went in for a second innings, with the Australians needing only 22 to win, to have another look at Hollies. Hollies deliberately did not bowl any googlies at Bradman as Australia coasted to victory. When Hollies was selected for England for the fifth Test he decided that he was going to bowl Bradman a googly second ball, knowing that Bradman had not read his googly in the first innings.

England were bowled out mid-afternoon of the first day of the test for 52. Bradman entered at 117-1. It seemed likely that this was to be his last test innings, such was Australia's lead already. It was his third innings of the season at the Oval, his previous two had brought him 146 and 128. His three previous test innings there were 232, 244 and 77. England's captain, Norman Yardley, lead his fielders in three cheers for the new batsman. Hollies was bowling, and his first delivery, around the wicket, was a leg break which Bradman played defensively. The second was the googly, which took Bradman's off bail. The crowd, stunned, recovered and cheered Bradman back to the pavilion. Hollies turned to Jack Young and remarked "best bloody ball I've bowled all season and they're clapping him!"

EW Swanton was in the press box and noted the reaction of O'Reilly and Fingleton: "I thought they were going to have a stroke - they were laughing so much."

This duck was Bradman's 16th, and final, one in first-class cricket. Six of them had been first ball, and three second. Bradman had entered with a test average of 101.39, and departed with one of 99.94. Bradman did not bat

again as Australia ran out winners by an innings and 149 runs. RC Robertson-Glasgow wrote: "Don Bradman will bat no more against England, and two contrary feelings dispute within us: relief, that our bowlers will no longer be oppressed by this phenomenon; regret, that a miracle has been removed from among us."

Retirement

After the tour Bradman had declared he would retire, but he played three times in the next Australian season, in benefit matches. The first of these was his own testimonial, and he made 123, his final first-class century, which had involved being deliberately dropped by McCool when on 97. His final first-class match, like his final test one, was anti-climactic, he made 30 in the first innings, not timing the ball, and sprained his ankle on a sunken water tap and was unable to bat in the second. By this time he was Sir Donald, having been knighted in the New Year's Honours list of 1949. Only he and Richard Hadlee have been knighted while still playing first-class cricket. "About the last thing I ever wanted in life was a knighthood," he said in an interview late in life, "and even today some forty years after the event, I find it difficult to come to terms with a life where old and valued friends insist on calling me 'Sir' instead of Don, simply because they think it is protocol. But I have consciously shouldered these burdens because I felt that I was the medium through which cricket could achieve a higher status and gain maximum support from the people, not only in Australia but throughout the world."

"The game of cricket existed long before I was born. It will be played centuries after my demise," Bradman had also said in retirement. "During my career I was privileged to give the public my interpretation of its character in the same way that a pianist might interpret the works of Beethoven."

After his playing career ended Sir Donald concentrated on his business and family. He gave up his stockbroking work in 1954 in order to concentrate on the various directorships he had by then accepted. He served as cricket administrator, chairman of the Australian Cricket Board and as a national selector, made a hundred break at billiards and reduced his golf handicap to scratch.

His wife was a keen golfer and he had taken up the game in the 1920s. A 1930s report of him the final of the club championship at his club, which Bradman won with his opponent failing to cope with "the nervous strain" induced by a 250-strong crowd following the match, described Bradman as having "no regard for the theory of orthodox golf style. He makes use of cricketing positions. He plays some of his golf shots with his left foot well forward, as if shaping up for a powerful drive to the boundary. His putts, which are the strongest feature of his game, are played from a cricketing

stance.”

His wife died of cancer in 1997, ending a successful and happy 65-year marriage, which Bradman had described as 'the greatest partnership of my life.' On February 25, 2001, he died peacefully in his sleep at his home in the Adelaide suburb of Kensington after a bout of pneumonia.

Among the tributes paid after his death was one by Malcolm Gray, president of the International Cricket Council: "Sir Donald never compromised his standards in any walk of life or in any field in which he became involved. Because of these qualities and achievements he was revered throughout and beyond cricket.” Indian cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar reflected that “to Indians, for most of whom cricket is a religion, Sir Donald Bradman was god. There will be immense sadness all over the cricketing world at his passing away," Sir Alec Bedser said: "There was no-one like him, and I don't think there will be anyone like him again. He was a wonderful credit to the game. He was the best."