



Cricket Society and MCC Book of the Year 2021

Date: Wednesday 20 October 2021

Release time: Immediate

- The Long Room at Lord's saw Australian author Ashley Gray announced as winner of the 2021 Cricket Society and MCC Book of the Year Award.
- The Stephen Fay Award 2021 was presented to Wisden Cricketers' Almanack for services to cricket publishing.

Ashley Gray's *The Unforgiven, Mercenaries or Missionaries? The untold stories of the rebel West Indian cricketers who toured apartheid South Africa* is the winner of the 2021 Cricket Society and Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) Book of the Year Award.

Chair of judges Robert Winder commended the book for "telling the little-known stories of a group of cricketers who truly never were forgiven their choices, in contrast to their English and Australian counterparts." Gray, following the relaxation of travel rules from Australia, was able to attend the ceremony to accept the award in person, which took place at Lord's Cricket Ground.

Gray said: "I want to thank all the cricketers who spoke to me for this book. I hope my work has helped them to find their place in history."

The 2020 joint winners were Duncan Hamilton's *The Great Romantic: Cricket and the Golden Age of Neville Cardus* and Christopher Sandford's *The Final Innings: The Cricketers of Summer 1939*.

Stephen Fay, a former editor of *Wisden Cricket Monthly* and a former judge of this competition, was a prolific and hugely respected author and journalist in fields including finance, the arts, and cricket.

Fay sadly passed away in 2020 and the inaugural award in his memory was presented to the *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack* for services to cricket publishing.

In accepting the inaugural Stephen Fay Award, Wisden Editor Lawrence Booth said: "Wisden 2021 was a slimmer edition than usual, more than 200 pages shorter in a year

without much cricket. But we discovered that with cricket there is always something to write about, and we tried to make it something special.”

To download a hi-res image of Ashley Gray at Lord's with his publication for use with this story, please click [here](#) (Credit: MCC)

Notes to editors:

The Cricket Society and MCC are grateful to Barry Kitcherside for his sponsorship of the 2021 award, which has prize money of £3000.

The 2021 shortlist of six reflected contemporary foci on race, gender, match-fixing and short form cricket with books about the legacy of the 1970 South Africa tour and the fates of West Indian rebels, the 2010 spot betting scandal, women's cricket in Britain and the IPL. The recollections of an English cricketer turned commentator completed an eclectic list.

The six books on the 2021 shortlist were (alphabetically by author):

A New Innings – How the IPL's reinvention of cricket provides lessons for the business of sport: Manoj Badale and Simon Hughes, Clink Street

The Unforgiven, Mercenaries or Missionaries? The untold stories of the rebel West Indian cricketers who toured apartheid South Africa: Ashley Gray, Pitch Publishing

The Thin White Line, The inside story of cricket's greatest scandal: Nick Greenslade, Pitch Publishing

'Oi Key', Tales of a Journeyman Cricketer: Robert Key, Pen and Sword Books

Ladies and Lords, A History of Women's Cricket in Britain: Rafaele Nicholson, Peter Lang

Barbed Wire and Cucumber Sandwiches, The controversial South Africa tour of 1970: Colin Shindler, Pitch Publishing

The 15 other books long listed were (alphabetically by author):

Spirit of Cricket, Reflections on play and life: Mike Brearley, Constable

Beyond the Pale, Early black and Asian cricketers in Britain 1868-1945: Andy Carter, Troubador Matador

Ted Dexter, 85 Not Out: Ted Dexter, Quiller

Gunner, My Life in Cricket: Ian Gould, Pitch Publishing

Commonwealth of Cricket: Ramachandra Guha, HarperCollins

One Long and Beautiful Summer: Duncan Hamilton, Riverrun

That Will be England Gone, The Last Summer of Cricket: Michael Henderson, Constable

Morgan's Men, The Inside Story of England's Rise from Cricket World Cup Humiliation to Glory: Nick Hoult and Steve James, Atlantic Books

Kent County Cricket Grounds, 150 Years of Cricket Across the Garden of Eden: Howard Milton and Peter Francis, Pitch/Kent CCC

If Not Me, Who? The Story of Tony Greig, The Reluctant Rebel: Andrew Murtagh, Pitch Publishing

The Hollow Crown, England Cricket Captains From 1945 to the present: Mark Peel, Pitch Publishing

Cricketing Caesar, A Biography of Mike Brearley: Mark Peel, Pitch Publishing

The Breadth of Sadness, On Love, Grief and Cricket: Ian Ridley, Floodlit Dreams

Bob Willis, A Cricketer and a Gentleman: David Willis, Hodder and Stoughton

Men who Raised the Bar, The evolution of the highest individual score in Test cricket: Chris Waters, Bloomsbury

The competition's judges are Robert Winder (Chairman), Chris Lowe, Emma John, and John Symons. Nigel Hancock is the competition's administrator.

About The Cricket Society

The Cricket Society – www.cricketsociety.com and Twitter *@CricketSociety* is 76 years young and going strong. It encourages a love of cricket through playing, watching, reading and listening. It supports young cricketers, makes annual awards, holds regular meetings, publishes an acclaimed Journal and Bulletin and has its own cricket team. A national organisation with 1,700 members across the UK and beyond, it also has branches based in Bath, Birmingham and Durham.

About Marylebone Cricket Club

There are few clubs in the world that have made as big an impact on any sport as MCC has made on cricket. From its iconic ground in north-west London, MCC has led the game for over 200 years and helped take it from a national pastime to a global obsession.

At our heart is Lord's, the Home of Cricket. Taking care over every detail, we're dedicated to growing its reputation as the most celebrated and admired venue in cricket. Everything we do is for the good of the game; from working with local communities to growing cricket's global influence.

Founded in 1787, MCC is recognised as the sole authority on the game's Laws. There are approximately 18,350 Full and 6,000 Associate Members of MCC.

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