

## Institute of Commonwealth Studies

### *'The Significance of Cricket to the Windrush Generation and the Legacy of the West Indies Tours of the UK (1950s to Present)'*

29 May 2020

## Introduction

### **Philip Murphy**

Welcome everyone. A very warm welcome to this witness seminar about West Indies cricket and the West Indies diaspora community in the UK. We've got a wonderful line-up, and thank you all so much for coming and participating. Just a little bit of housekeeping: as Juanita said, if you could keep your mics muted while the main session is going on, and if you can probably turn your video off, that tends to help reception. We'll be recording and transcribing these sessions. Obviously, we'll ask your consent before we put anything up online from this. We'll send out consent forms after the seminar.

What's really important about these sessions is to get the questions and comments from the audience as well as hearing from the speakers. So, I think the best way we can do that is by using the chat function. If you waive your cursor over the bottom of the screen you'll see a little chat bubble in the middle of the various options, and you can click on that and you can then just write a little question or comment, or simply say, 'Philip, I'd like to be called to make a contribution.' And after the speakers have finished, I'll go back over these, and Colin will also be able to – Colin Babb, who's chairing, will be able to see the questions as well on the side of the screen. And so between us we'll bring people in, and, when we do, please remember to unmute your microphones and turn your video on, if you like.

If the speakers could keep to within about 10 minutes each, that would give us plenty of time for questions. There will be lots of opportunities for thanks,, but just very quickly let me thank my colleague, Juanita Cox, for doing an awful lot of work behind organising this, and my colleague, Sue Onslow, who's also been heavily involved in bringing this together. Thanks to them both.

And without further ado, to make a proper introduction, I'm going to ask Lizzy Conder to say something. Lizzy will be known to many of you, some of you very well, but she is here in a dual capacity. She is Finance Director of the University of London, and hence a colleague of mine, but she is also a qualified cricket umpire and was a member of the first all-female officiating team to umpire a T20 match at Lords in 2018. She has a fantastic background screen, reminding us of what we would have seen had we been able to go to the Oval as we'd originally planned. Lizzy helped make the link between us and Surrey Cricket Club, so we're incredibly grateful to her. Lizzy, over to you.

### **Lizzy Conder**

So I had been hoping to welcome you all to my favourite place in London, which is Surrey County Cricket Club and the Oval, which was the picture you could see in my background before. This event joins two of my favourite places, Surrey County Cricket Club and the University of London, and my two passions in life, which are history and cricket. I've been very fortunate to be part of Surrey's General Committee now for over a year, and one of the lead projects that we have launched this year was the ACE programme, which was designed to get young cricketers from the Afro-Caribbean community involved with cricket, and in particular to identify those whose talents may have been

lost if it wasn't for this programme. We were delighted to have the two free open days in March before lockdown, and even more delighted that the plan to have scholarships was expanded from 10 to 24, given the sheer amount of talent that was identified at those training sessions.

My passion for cricket has been lifelong since I was a very small child, and growing up in the '90s my memories are filled by the bowling actions of Curtly Ambrose and Courtney Walsh. I for one was very glad that I was not, like Alec Stewart of Surrey County Cricket Club, facing the bowling in that spring of 1994, particularly when they were all out for 46. Not a great moment for an England cricket fan but definitely one to savour for all cricket fans worldwide. More recently I was fortunate enough to be in Antigua to celebrate a significant birthday, by going to the Viv Richards Stadium for the first time to watch England versus the West Indies, a real pleasure for me. And I had hoped that we would all be celebrating next week the start of the first Test of the West Indies series at the Oval, a first time for a very long time that the Oval has hosted the first Test of a series. Instead, we are now all hopeful that, given the relaxation of the lockdown, we will see international cricket this summer in England, with the West Indies hopefully playing in July of this year.

And now, at this point, I'm going to hand over to my colleague, Juanita, and I hope that you all enjoy a really interesting webinar.

### **Philip Murphy**

Thank you very much.

### **Juanita Cox**

Thank you so much, Lizzy. So, on behalf of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, I'd like to extend my thanks to the Surrey County Cricket Club for enabling us to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first West Indies Test series victory in England. This event was originally meant to be hosted, as Lizzy mentioned, at the Kia Oval, on 30 March – many thanks to the club's generosity – but had, for obvious reasons, to be cancelled and then now rescheduled as an online occasion, but that should not make this event any less exciting. West Indies cricket was, at its high point, the front and centre of Caribbean life. To witness the West Indian audience at a cricket match was, I would argue, almost as exciting as watching the cricket, as well immortalised, as some of you may know, by Trinidadian comedian Paul Keens-Douglas. He did a skit on Tanti Merle at the Oval – actually the Oval in Trinidad – but the idea – I still have the idea in my mind of Tanti Merle sharing out her basket of food, sorrel and ginger, with bad John sitting in the front of she, and then standing to wave the empty basket as the match started heating up.

I think too of Booker T and the MG's instrumental piece 'Soul Limbo', the soundtrack for cricket coverage on BBC TV and latterly BBC Radio's Test Match Special, and feel it speaks to the energy and the style that the West Indian players brought to the sport of cricket.

So before we start I'd like to extend my thanks to all of the discussants, who agreed to participate in this Zoom event at short notice. So my thanks to Mike Phillips OBE, to John Holder, to Robert Bradford, Derek Gift-Simms, and also Ronald McIntosh, and of course to Colin Babb; I'm very grateful to him for agreeing to chair. Colin is the author of *They Gave the Crowd Plenty Fun* – I think he published it in 2012 – and also *1973 and Me*. The first book is an account of how important the achievements of West Indian cricket were to the self-respect and sense of identity of West Indian people in Britain. His second book, newly published, is available to purchase – I'm doing a plug for Colin here – via his website, so if you go to [colinbabbauthor.com](http://colinbabbauthor.com). Alternatively you could connect with him via email, [colin@colinbabbauthor.com](mailto:colin@colinbabbauthor.com), and via his Twitter handle, which is [@gavethecrowd](https://twitter.com/gavethecrowd).

So Colin has had a varied career, working as a radio producer, a website producer, broadcast journalist, and as a photographer working in locations such as Antigua, Barbados, St Lucia, Guyana, Trinidad and Dominica, for an education book publishing company. He was also, amongst many other things, co-owner of an independent music company called Waaaah!/Bring on Bull. His family are from around the Caribbean region, including Guyana, Guadeloupe and Barbados. As such he describes himself as a BBC: British-born Caribbean. He's also been a guest on a variety of TV and radio shows in the Caribbean and the UK, but I'm guessing the two standout moments for him were as lunchtime guest with the BBC Test Match Special commentary team. His first appearance was with Tony Cozier and Simon Mann, was at the West Indies v Pakistan 2013 ICC Champions Trophy group at the Oval. His second appearance was with Jonathan Agnew at the England v New Zealand 2015 one-day international at the Riverside Ground in Durham.

So, again, it looks like everybody is following the audience rules, but, just in case, a reminder that this event is being recorded, and also, if you aren't part of the central discussion, just a reminder to keep your videos switched off and your mics on mute. Over to you, Colin, for the discussion on the significance of cricket to the West Indian generation and the legacy of the West Indies tours of the UK (1950s to present). Thank you.

## **The Significance of Cricket to the Windrush Generation and the Legacy of the West Indies Tours of the UK (1950s to Present)**

*Participants*

*Colin Babb (Chair)*

*Robert Bradford*

*Derek Gift-Simms*

*Mike Phillips*

*Ronald McIntosh*

### **Colin Babb**

Thank you very much, Juanita. I won't talk too much about myself because Juanita has just given an absolutely magnificent introduction; I can't follow that. Basically how I'm going to try and run this is I'm going to just talk a wee bit about the books I've written and my connection with Caribbean cricket, and then maybe move on to the panel for them to introduce themselves, if that's okay. And then, on the back of that, we can throw out a few discussion points and get something going until the Q&A session.

First of all, just to say thank you again to Lizzy, Juanita and everyone for getting this event up and running. It's a pleasure to chair this event surrounded by – well, virtually surrounded by an excellent panel of guests, some of whom I suggested heavily and seriously to Juanita to contact, so I'm really happy to see the panel get together. And what I like about the panel is that it represents different areas of the Caribbean, including Guyana, Trinidad and Jamaica. Oh, and Barbados. I can't miss Barbados. My father is a Bajan, so I've got to say Barbados.

My background is having a Guyanese mother and a Barbadian or Bajan father. The Guadeloupe connection comes from my maternal grandfather, who lived in Guadeloupe for many years. I've always felt slightly more Guyanese in many ways because most of my family in this country were Guyanese. So I've always felt more absorbed by a sense of being Guyanese, hence my interest in cricket was very much connected with Guyanese cricketers that I grew up hearing about in the 60s and 70s: Rohan Kanhai, for example, Basil Butcher, a bit later Alvin Kallicharran, and then Clive Lloyd. So these are the people that I grew up hearing about.

Just to say that one of the people on the panel, Mr Mike Phillips, was one of my lecturers at the Polytechnic of Central London many years ago. He saw my early entry into journalism, which I think is quite interesting. Also, just to say that it's the fiftieth anniversary of Hansib Publications, who have published three of my books, and I just want to give a big shout-out to Hansib, if that's okay.

The difference between the two books that I've written – *They Gave the Crowd Plenty Fun* was very much aimed at looking at the history of the relationship from the 1950 Test victory at Lords, when the West Indies won their first series in England and their first match in England, up to the present day. So, what I was trying to do was to examine that relationship – the highs and the lows of it. And I think when we talk about the relationship between West Indies cricket and, in particular, the Caribbean community in England or in the UK, I like to highlight the 60s as an important period. The '63 tour, the '66 tour, the ups and downs of the '69 tour. For me, it isn't just about what happened in the 70s and 80s, which are very important moments in the history of West Indies cricket, with the dominance of the West Indies, but that connection that was made between the West Indian community, who were trying to find their feet after coming here en masse, you might say, after the Second World War, was very important to me, being born in the 60s and growing up in Britain in the 70s, and I felt a real connection with that period. And I think that's something that gets a bit lost when people think about that relationship between West Indies cricket and the Caribbean community in Britain in particular.

*1973 and Me* is autobiographical. It's a book that looks at my life growing up in the 70s, but also other people, friends and acquaintances who grew up in the 70s as well. And '73 is a crucial year for me because that was when I really got to grips with the understanding of the importance of West Indies cricket. The '73 tour, which was a three-match tour in England by the West Indies, was the first tour that I really remembered watching on television as a young person, and it completely gripped me. The bomb scare at Lords in the third Test, Frank Hayes making his century at the Oval – not just about the West Indian players but about the English players as well, because even though I was a West Indian fan, I was always interested in players that fascinated me from other countries, like Zaheer Abbas from Pakistan, Frank Hayes from England, Dennis Lillee from Australia, for example.

So *1973* is about that year and how it really inspired me to connect with West Indies cricket. And it was also the year that a colour television arrived in our flat in south London, which was an amazing moment. I could actually see the ball was red and the grass was green on television, which for people of my generation was absolutely an amazing thing.

The other thing I'd just like to mention – perhaps it will be discussed later – is the relationship between West Indies cricket and what you might call the Caribbean community and how that relationship has become a little – I'm trying to be diplomatic but I'm not going to be diplomatic – it's completely disappeared for many different reasons, which I'm sure we'll discuss today and in the Q&A sessions. But for me, cricket was mainly initially a television experience. It was by watching the West Indies in England in '73 and in following tours, and later I started going to grounds, including the Oval and Lords and Old Trafford, to watch cricket. But for me it was a television

experience, and watching live international cricket for free on free-to-air TV in England since – well, the last five, six, seven, eight, 10 years, is not available. So I think that's an important thing. It was television that introduced me to cricket, and now that idea of having free-to-air TV and sitting in your living room and getting that experience doesn't exist anymore.

At the moment, that's all I'm going to say for now, but I'd like to move on and pass the baton on to one of the other members of the panel who'd like to talk for a little bit. That could be John Holder, Robert Bradford or anybody else. Who wants to step in next?

### **Philip Murphy**

Colin, shall we take speakers – we've got a list of speakers. So the order that I've got is John Holder, Robert Bradford, Derek Gift-Simms, Mike Phillips and Ronald McIntosh. Shall we bring people in in that order?

### **Colin Babb**

Yeah, why not? Yes.

### **Philip Murphy**

So, John, would you like to come in first?

### **John Holder**

Yeah. I'm from Barbados originally. I learned my cricket there, and, having left school, aged about 19 I came to England. I was one of the many recruited by London Transport, and around about then I could bowl very fast, and I played cricket for a team in London called The Caribbean, and then I also played a bit for the BBC, and Dr Bertie Clarke, a Barbadian doctor who played a bit of cricket for the West Indies, introduced me to Hampshire, and that was the start of a professional cricket career. So I had seven years with Hampshire, and then I had a back injury. Then I had an opportunity to come up north and play cricket in the leagues professionally, which I did for nine years. And then, reaching my mid-thirties, I started to miss first-class cricket. I had a job which didn't give me any satisfaction, and so I decided then to join the first-class umpires' panel. Some West Indians up here – there were a lot of West Indians up here – one or two of them said they didn't know why I was trying to join the panel because they don't want black people doing jobs like that. And I thought that was a nonsense: that if we adopted that attitude we would never progress.

So I applied and got on, and I did 27 years of first-class umpiring, and I also umpired 11 Test matches and one-day internationals, and so on, and had a fabulous time. I really loved it – loved it – with a passion. Yes, I think there is no doubt that cricket is the one thing that West Indians have done together; it is the one thing that we do as a group of islands – play cricket. And coming here after the war, etc, and being almost treated as second-class citizens, and then to see our team – because England and Australia were the two top teams in that time – and then to see our boys, away from home, beat England comprehensively in 1950 would have given West Indians here a massive boost, West Indians who, in reality were treated almost like second-class citizens. So that would have been – that would have given them a massive boost.

### **Philip Murphy**

Thanks.

### **John Holder**

Are you still receiving me?

**Philip Murphy**

Yeah, we're still receiving you.

**John Holder**

Yeah, that would have given West Indians a massive boost. And I remember in my years at Hampshire the 1966 tour – that's the year I joined Hampshire, in 1966. And in a Test match at Headingley, Leeds, the West Indies were struggling a little bit in their second innings. And Kanhai and Butcher on the Saturday – because in those days they would play Thursday, Friday, Saturday, rest day Sunday, finish off on Monday, Tuesday, and on the Saturday the West Indies were struggling in the second innings, facing bit of a first innings deficit, and Kanhai and Butcher got their heads down and really grafted and really cut out all the big shots and just played some seriously professional batting, really. And one of my Hampshire teammates said to me, 'But I thought you boys were calypso cricketers.' I said, 'Calypso cricketers?' I said, 'You want us to go out there playing lots of attacking shots and get out and lose this Test match.' And sure enough, on the Monday morning when the game resumed Kanhai and Butcher, in the pre-lunch session they carried on in the same vein, building, and then after lunch they cut loose on the England bowlers, and declared and set England a target, and won the match. So it was great to see our boys really learn to play according to the situation of the game rather than play just attacking cricket.

So that really was, following the 1950 – really, was the start of an improvement in the whole mental approach that West Indian players had to professional cricket, to Test cricket.

**Colin Babb**

Yes. Thank you very, very much, John. Shall we move on to another panellist?

**Philip Murphy**

We've got Robert next.

**Colin Babb**

Mr Robert Bradford.

**Philip Murphy**

Robert Bradford, are you there? Shall we go to Derek Gift-Simms? Derek, are you there?

**Derek Gift-Simms**

Good afternoon, everyone.

**Philip Murphy**

Good afternoon.

**Colin Babb**

Good afternoon.

**Derek Gift-Simms**

Before I begin I think I'll begin at the start. I just want to pick up on something that Lizzy said earlier. Lizzy, this is not personal, but when you defined this as Afro-Caribbeans, I want you to just take a look at Colin's head, my head, and a few more of us.

**Lizzy Conder**

I do apologise for that.

**Derek Gift-Simms**

We're African Caribbean –

**Lizzy Conder**

Yeah, I apologise for that. I have to admit all of my notes that I was trying to read off had crashed, so I do apologise for that.

**Derek Gift-Simms**

No problem. Right, now as I say, I'll start at the beginning. I was born in the UK. My parents are both from the Caribbean. My mum is Jamaican and my dad's Kittitian. So, at the tender age of four, I was shipped off to the Caribbean to be brought up by my grandparents. That's where you get discipline. And at that very early age I suddenly decided that no, I will not become a cricketer, because when I went to school, the minute you step into school in the Caribbean and you're not from there, you're an alien. And although I left to return to England, I was known as the Englishman. So the only good thing about it is when we had a recess, once we got outside it would be England, or the West Indies versus the rest, so I would always get to play in the team of the rest.

But on returning to England, I joined my local cricket club, and I played for them for around 15 years. But by career I'm a technologist. I worked in the City. I worked for Goldman Sachs for 15 years. And on leaving Goldman Sachs I decided – this was in 2001 – that I would spend as much of the rest of my life supporting my community. So I started off initially with helping SMEs, not just to become web-savvy but also to implement technology in their business, and I continue to do that. Outside of that I would attend a number of meetings for my cricket club at the Kia Oval. And at one such meeting I was asked if I could put together a group of West Indian teams and bring them down to greet the West Indies team that was coming.

And at the time I said, 'Well, I'm not sure about this West Indian team because I'm not West Indian. I would like to come down to the Oval when England are playing Pakistan, Australia or whoever it is, not just when the West Indies are coming here.' And I did get together a number of guys and brought them down, and at that meeting we had Alf Langley, from the Club Cricket Conference, and a number of other people had asked if they could come along. And the idea of putting together a representative group for that community came about, and we started the African Caribbean Cricket Association. That's how it was born.

And with that, our aims and objectives are all published on our website. What we're aiming to do is to get that community more involved, not just in playing cricket but to be also at cricket matches, because after the banning of musical instruments, etc, a lot of our community went off the sport.

**Philip Murphy**

Derek, sorry to interrupt you. Your video isn't on. Did you intend to leave it off, or would you like...

**Derek Gift-Simms**

Yes, I'll put it on.

All right, apologies. I was saying, after the West Indies team started to lose and the instruments left the stadiums a lot of people from the African-Caribbean community stopped going to cricket

matches. So we started asking questions, and some of the questions we were asking is, 'Why?' And apart from the cost of getting in, we found that the atmosphere was lacking. And discussions started going around that what we were doing is what the Barmy Army are doing. So on that side of it we thought, 'Okay, we'll keep pressing and see if we can get that to change.'

But my main concern was not seeing anyone looking like me, not just representing the counties but not playing for England. I will see the odd black guy playing for England, but he was an import. And in all the time that we've been here since the 50s we've only produced five cricketers who were born here who have represented England, and I thought, 'That's not good enough.' So I'm going to be setting about to work with the youth here to try and change their perception of the game and get them involved. So I've been spending a lot of time working with the African Caribbean Cricket Association, and with my background in technology, I've tried to simplify the administration as much as possible. I've tried to get a number of the clubs and individuals involved, and we've set about by looking at how we can put programmes together outside of playing the game to bring our community in.

So, again, everyone knows the inconvenience of corona, but we have a number of events that we do each year aimed at bringing the community together. We have worked with the Mayor of Merton and put together an event which encourages youth within the borough of Merton, specifically schools in Merton, to become involved in playing cricket. And for that we looked at using the Mitcham Cricket Green, which is allegedly the oldest cricket ground in the country which is still in operation, so we have that game there annually.

We also looked at another way to bring our community in by holding an annual Emancipation Day event. And for that event we look to bring anyone in from the community, stallholders, businesses, and anyone who wants to know more about our culture. The whole idea is to educate, entertain and inform. That's the target of that day. This year that event will not be taking place for obvious reasons. What we do with that event is rather than seek to have a single or two sponsors, we seek to get businesses in the community to sponsor a player. So that player will wear that business's name on the back of their shirt. That's worked. We've also had members of the communities look after the players' teas and also give them a little token at the end of the match.

So that has been working. We've done a lot of work with Surrey, for which I'm very, very appreciative. They've provided a home for us to have our meetings. As Lizzy already mentioned, the ACE programme was an idea that was shared with us and we supported that. We went out and got the families and the kids. We're looking forward to what will happen. Out of the success that generated, we were originally targeting 12 kids and then had to increase it. So, as I say, it's something I'm looking forward to us moving, not just from Surrey, but across what I call the four home counties, which is Kent, Middlesex and Essex. And then we would like to see that expanded out across the country. So when I was asked to be involved with today, I thought I'd come along to listen in, to pick up more on the things that happened before I was born, and to see how I can help, with our youth, to continue that into the future.

You may have noted that as my holding[?] page I've got a copy of the statistics of West Indies cricket 1865 through 1899. That's something that I tend to go through occasionally. But there are a number of other cricketing books, including one of yours, Colin, that you signed and gave to me some time ago, which I have here in my library. So I'll be sitting in – hopefully purchasing your next book, but I'll be sitting here and listening to the contribution of everyone else, and I hope that my information in part has been useful. Thank you.



**Colin Babb**

Thank you very much, Derek, and hearing that you have roots in Saint Kitts was important because I want to have a good representative spread of people from the Caribbean involved in this discussion and hopefully in the audience. I think Robert is raring to go. I think the technology is working. Robert, would you like to step in if that's okay now?

**Philip Murphy**

I've unmuted Robert but I can't – he doesn't seem to be coming through.

**Colin Babb**

I know he was having some technical difficulties, so maybe we can move on to Mike now, Mike Phillips, and go back to Robert later, if that's possible. Mike, sir, are you there?

**Mike Phillips**

Hi, I am here now.

**Colin Babb**

Good to see you, Mike.

**Mike Phillips**

Yeah, can you see me?

**Colin Babb**

I can see you. I can see you, and you're in front of a television with a still from a cricket match.

**Mike Phillips**

You bad little boy.

**Colin Babb**

Mike, please proceed.

**Mike Phillips**

It's not often, Colin, that I get a chance to boast about my former students, but here you are. It's a funny thing you mentioned a colour TV, and I'm deliberately sitting under this, which is a painting by Errol Lloyd. It's a painting of a cricket match – I think it's at the Oval – England versus the West Indies, and you can recognise all the players. And what you said reminded me of exactly that: just looking at that painting which is a record of how it felt to be a West Indian and a West Indies fan in 1977.

But the thing is that being a West Indies cricket fan in those days wasn't just a matter of television. I got what you said and what you felt about seeing it in colour for the first time, and so on, but I remember going to the ground, and it was an occasion when you could go there and encounter people who you hadn't seen for a long time, people that you had heard of but never met and so on. And there was a consciousness of not simply enjoying the match but actually taking part in a kind of ritual that told you what you were. I remember sitting with Clive Lloyd in Manchester and feeling reassured and reaffirmed as if he had the power to tell me who I was. And there is something about that, at the heart of your work as well, because the way that you capture the importance of West

Indies cricket to us, 'They gave the crowd plenty fun,' but of course it wasn't just a question of the fun they gave the crowd, but something that they said at the beginning in the 50s – it was an emergence of the West Indies, on the only platform that we had – an emergence to say that – when the team could come out and say, 'We are important, we are part of the world of the sport. We are the most important players,' and that was very, very reassuring, very important to us.

And I remember that, as a young man, being so very powerful all the way through the 50s and the 60s and 70s. And a number of things have happened since which I wouldn't bother to go into, because it's not exactly germane to what we're discussing. But I think what's important was the way that those people who were in the West Indies teams brought together West Indians, especially the West Indians in Britain, and said to them by their actions, if nothing else – said to them, 'You are part of us, you are important, and this is what we're going to do.' I like that very much. And once again – I'm sorry – congratulations to you, Colin.

### **Colin Babb**

Thank you very much, Mike, and thanks to everyone listening to Mike as well. He contributed to my first book, *They Gave the Crowd Plenty Fun*. And just to say that, talking about 1950, as that's the baseline for the discussion today in terms of where the history starts in a way, I actually stole the line from 'Victory Test Match' and used it as a title for my first book: 'They gave the crowd plenty fun.' Does anybody know the next line? 'Second Test and West Indies won.' So I kind of casually used that for the title of my first book. Of course, it wasn't just about fun. There was a lot more going on, but I think, as Mike said, the idea of the cricket ground being a centre of – an open-air meeting point was crucial. And for me TV was my introduction into West Indies cricket, and going to the West Indies as a young boy. But later on, it was certainly being at the ground and sharing the joy, the fun, the anguish, the frustration of watching the team. And also a very important point which I want to make before I move on to the next member of the panel is that West Indies cricket, for me, was a kind of a bonding agent, because we have to remember we came here from different parts of the Caribbean. Often a Jamaican would never have met someone from Saint Kitts, often someone from St Lucia would never have met somebody from Guyana, somebody from Antigua would never have met somebody from Trinidad and so on. It was in Britain, for example, where people from different parts of the region met each other for the first time, and even though we had similar migration experiences and faced similar challenges, cricket was something we could all unite around more often than not.

I'm trying to call in Robert Bradford if Robert is available. Robert, are you there? If Robert's not there, can we move on to Ronald McIntosh, if that's possible? Ronald, are you there?

### **Ronald McIntosh**

Hello, Colin. Yes, I'm here. Can you hear me?

### **Colin Babb**

Yes, I can Ronald. I just want to say Ronald made a brilliant contribution to *They Gave the Crowd Plenty Fun* and came up with some excellent points about why the audience for cricket has changed and the reasons why. Ronald, take the floor, please.

### **Ronald McIntosh**

Thank you very much indeed, Colin. Thank you for that warmest of welcomes. Good afternoon everyone, good afternoon the panel.

**Philip Murphy**

Good afternoon. Sorry, Ronald, would you like to turn your video on?

**Ronald McIntosh**

I'll put my video on, one moment. Hello, can you see me?

**Philip Murphy**

Yes, we can.

**Ronald McIntosh**

Hello, yes. So again, I will just give my thanks to Colin. As Colin was saying, my name is Ronald McIntosh. I'm a sports broadcaster and commentator. Given my profession and my personal passion for sports, it's almost impossible to overstate the significance of West Indian cricket in my life, both from a personal perspective and in what I ended up doing as a profession. I've been privileged enough to cover sport on six continents around the world. I've covered world heavyweight title fights, global Olympic sprint finals, Olympic boxing gold medal bouts, but still, among the most exciting moment in all of sports for me is on the opening day of a Test match, preferably in bright sunshine, when you have got a skilful, hostile, aggressive fast bowler with a rock-hard red ball with a prominent seam, an obdurate, aggressive, skilful batsman at the crease waiting for the delivery, a wicketkeeper standing yards and yards back, flanked by four slips, a gully, a point, and a square leg, all waiting for the miscued shot. That moment, as the bowler turns before his hopefully long run into the batsman remains one of the most exciting in all of sports, rivalled only by the moment before the opening bell for a big world title fight, or the call to a blocks for a major 100 metre final for both men and women. And I think why that image is so vivid in my mind is because that represented something of my introduction to cricket, when the West Indies had a famed four-pronged pace attack, and that is invariably how the day of cricket would start if the West Indies were bowling.

Now, I'm the son of Jamaican parents. I'm the youngest of four children, and my father, like many men of his generation, was an ardent sports fan, an avid sports enthusiast, with boxing and cricket and track and field enjoying primacy, so much so that on the interior of the house, on the wall where you entered, was this photograph – I don't know if you can see that – which is a signed, framed image of a touring West Indian cricket team, featuring Frank Worrell, Garry Sobers, Wes Hall, Charlie Griffith, Alf Valentine. Now, all of these are way before my time, but it was an introduction to who these people were. There was also a picture of Jack Johnson, the Galveston Giant, the first black heavyweight champion the world, from Galveston, in Texas, who reigned from 1908 to 1915.

And it is perhaps worth introducing a bit of context at this point because I was raised in the archetype, or African-Caribbean tradition where everybody of a certain age, the big people, as they were generically referred to by the friends of my family, were either aunts or uncles. And so, in my child's mind's eye, when you consider that there were other pictures on the wall around the house of family members, some of whom I'd never met because they were over in Jamaica – in my child's mind's eye the West Indian cricket team depicted in that photograph and Jack Johnson were friends of my father, which would therefore make them uncles. Now, I was soon disabused of that notion, but, while I learned of their non-familial relation, I did learn of their prowess, their sporting excellence in their particular realm. And so images of sporting excellence achieved by black people have been fervent in my imagination and a fixture in my life for as long as I can remember.

In terms of West Indian cricket specifically, one of the first sporting events I was taken to was to see the West Indies play against England, and I don't really remember much about the match, but what I do remember is the occasion, the sense of occasion, where the section of the crowd where we sat

was filled with black people from across the Caribbean. Many Jamaicans, lots of accents that was similar to Jamaican but weren't Jamaican, and I was intrigued as to where those people came from. The Tupperware that was filled with fried chicken, fried fish, roast breadfruit, hard dough bread wrapped in foil, a carnival, a festival of Caribbean food, and a cacophonous noise, where there was a soundtrack provided by bells and whistles and horns and drums, and cans being chinked together, all of these things making it a magnificent carnival atmosphere and a joyous cacophony.

Now, even though I don't remember that tour of 1980 I have vivid recollections of what became known as the 'blackwash tour' of 1984. By that time I was already a sports-crazed kid who was playing everything under the sun that I possibly could, principally boxing, running track, playing cricket as well, and I was either playing it or reading about it at home. Now, that West Indian side, as everybody knows, represented the high point of the dominance of that run of excellence, from the mid-70s through to the early 90s, resulting in that clean sweep, and playing in a manner that was compelling and captivating. And, again, to provide some context, younger viewers who may be tuning in may not have an idea of how different the world was back then. As Colin has alluded to, there were just four television channels, no pay TV, only terrestrial TV, no internet, no social media. And so the way one could learn, because the world was far less connected – the only way one could feel and reach out to these sporting icons, these sporting superheroes, as I viewed them, was through the live action, on television or radio, and then when there was no live action through books and magazines and periodicals.

So, my images of these guys were formed through those mediums. And one of my dad's favourite quotes was, 'Go read a book', 'Go and read a book.' Sometimes it was a sanction. If I was running up and down, playing too much sport, and he didn't think I was concentrating on my homework, I wasn't going anywhere but I was sitting down and going to read. Now, my dad been something of an autodidact, there were books – an eclectic selection of books all over the house, from *National Geographic*, to *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, but I bypassed all of that and what I went for his sport section, the *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack*, boxing news annuals, *Ring* magazines, big fight previews. So I'm indulging myself in all of this knowledge and information about sports that was invariably well-written.

And it's perhaps worth pointing out at this point that when I'm learning about the game and learning about history, just to provide a bit of context again, C.L.R James said in his book, *Beyond a Boundary*, that cricket plunged him into politics long before he was aware of it. And my parents were heavily involved in community activism. My mum was a founding member of a Black theatre group that wrote, researched and performed plays, ranging from side-splitting comedies, through to searing social commentaries on apartheid and the systemic injustice taking place in South Africa, whereas my dad was a staunch trade unionist and very active, a staunch member of the African-Caribbean community, so much so that upon retirement he was elected as a Labour councillor, such was his relationship with the people, and that gave him a position, a chance to speak for those who didn't have a voice to authority, to power, in between ballot boxes, ballot box markings at the elections, in that role. And in that role he was elected – eventually selected - as the Sheriff of Nottingham, an ambassadorial post, where he would welcome dignitaries, ranging from Prime Ministers and Cabinet Ministers, and Olympic athletes from all over the world.

So I was surrounded by the politics of identity, culture, consciousness, social justice and inequality from a very early age. But when I was told to go and read a book, and I would read a book about cricket, it served as a conduit for me to grasp these abstract concepts in a form that I could understand. And the late Dr Janet Hamilton PhD, who was a friend of the family – her two sons were like brothers to me when I was growing up – she gave me a signed copy of a book by Henderson Dalrymple, entitled *50 Great West Indian Test Cricketers*, and the foreword was by Clive Lloyd. It included many of the cricketers who were on that '84 tour, such as Viv Richards and Michael Holding. But it

was the first time I read about a cricketer by the name of Lawrence Rowe. And I read that this guy made a hundred and a double-hundred in his first two innings in Test cricket, apparently making the game seem incredibly easy. His average after that first Test was a remarkable 314. And I read this and my mind was just blown. ‘How can a guy be that good in a game as challenging as this?’ But Dalrymple also wrote of Lawrence Rowe’s decision to go on a tour to apartheid South Africa – that it was a shameful act of treachery. And so that piqued my interest and led to further study and further conversation, and gave me a deeper understanding, from a child’s perspective of course, about the overt injustice of the South African apartheid regime.

And again Jack Johnson, the other athlete who was depicted on a wall in the house, after reigning from 1908, when he beat Tommy Burns of Canada, on Boxing Day, through to 1915, when he lost to Jess Willard, under the Havana sun in Cuba, no black challenger, no black contender was allowed to fight for the heavyweight championship of the world until Joe Louis in 1937. Then you consider, ‘Well, why is that?’ Because a colour bar had been drawn, because the heavyweight title, heavyweight championship of the world was such a symbolic crown, such a symbolic prize, that those in positions of power in the boxing business didn’t want a black fighter to hold that crown. As you probably know, there were race riots ensuing when Jack Johnson beat Jim Jeffries, who would come out of retirement to try and take the title back for the white race. And in challenging for the title Joe Louis and his managers had to sign a contract governing his conduct. So, again, your interest is just piqued as to why all of these inequalities, injustices are taking place, and I was getting a lot of the information that I could understand through the realm of sports, which I was incredibly passionate about.

I possessed a game called Top Trumps, which was Mike Brearley’s Batting Aces, and Top Trumps is a game where you have to get the best statistic in the category. And the best card you could draw in Top Trumps, Mike Brearley’s Batting Aces, was Garry Sobers – highest Test score, 365 not out, the world record cricket score held by a West Indian.

Now, another pretty good card that you could draw was George Headley, because if you drew George Headley and went to averages, only two players could top his average of 60.83, and that was the incomparable Don Bradman and Graeme Pollock from South Africa, so two out of 52. If you drew George Headley and called that, chances are you’re going to inherit the pile. And so I learned to – and again, in further reading about George Headley, often it’s convention that the best player on the team becomes the captain, but then you learn that George Headley was only allowed one Test in charge. And again, why is that? Why were white cricketers leading a West Indian side when the best player on the team, a man who made 10 of the first 14 West Indian centuries, was George Headley? And then you come to learn that perhaps it’s because appointing a black man to captain a West Indian side would have flown in the face of the logic of colonialism. And so he was given just one Test in charge of the West Indian cricket team.

And my father, perhaps unsurprisingly, given this imbalance, would speak so evocatively about the appointment of Frank Worrell to the captaincy for the first series of West Indian cricket, because I suppose in his mind - I don’t know whether it went any way to erasing past injustices, but it certainly would have eased current anxieties – was among the things that he explained to me – and that it would brighten future expectations. And in my own life experience, I can only relate that, even though it’s perhaps on a far grander scale the comparison I’m about to draw, but I imagine what my father was explaining to me about the appointment of Frank Worrell as captain of the West Indies – which is again way before I was a part of this earth – I imagine it’s comparable to what I felt when Barack Obama was elected as President of the United States, namely that it presents and introduces possibilities that were previously inconceivable, when you are aware of the history of that country, for a black man to rise to the position of President of the largest, perhaps most powerful country on earth, that it just redefines what is possible.

And so, that West Indian cricket team in 1984, in the midst of that run of 11 straight victories, at the zenith of their power, from the mid-70s through to the early 90s, represented for me qualities that I hold dear and have been anchors for whatever I've chosen to pursue. Namely teamwork, a commitment to excellence, skill, discipline, determination, persistence. This is what I saw represented by a group of cricketers, under the leadership of Clive Lloyd, during that '84 tour, which is the first one that I have vivid memories of. I made a documentary for the BBC, which was called *Blackwash and Me*, and this was broadcast, I think, in 2014, so a 30-year anniversary detailing the ups and downs and getting a range of perspectives, from journalists, from everyday fans, from players, from the public address announcer at Lords, to photographers, gathering a whole range of perspectives as to what that seminal tour meant to different people from different cultures, and different connections to the game. And in the closing of that documentary I concluded that the West Indies tour, which became dubbed as the blackwash, the 5-0 clean sweep, to me strengthened my association with Caribbean culture and a sense of Caribbean identity.

And in addition to that, as my thirst for sports and their associated histories grew, further studies revealed, to me, and indeed direct experience, because now I'm at a point where I've commentated on sports in six continents across the world, and in engaging with conversations with other journalists and sports fans and aficionados from across the black diaspora on those six continents, it's often interesting to me how sporting achievements accomplished by black athletes represents more than just the game for the spectators and enthusiasts. Because for those who lived under colonial rule, for those who have experienced apartheid, for those who have a memory of segregation and the Jim Crow south of the United States of America, sports perhaps represented the one area of life where we as black people have been on a level playing field, where the rules are clear for all, equally applied, and the rules are the one area – sorry, I'm hearing something in the background at the moment.

### **Colin Babb**

Yes. Robert is connected, our next member of the panel.

### **Ronald McIntosh**

Oh, sorry.

### **Colin Babb**

But please continue, Ronald. Don't let me interrupt this important flow.

### **Ronald McIntosh**

Yes. The one area for those who were subjugated, either by sports administration or political legislation, the one area which represents a level playing field and an equality of opportunity and application of rules that are the same for all is the arena of sports. Now of course, it's not the same – it doesn't naturally apply in every event, but so often in my conversations with people across the black diaspora on those six continents, that is why sport tends to resonate so deeply with black people. And when presented with that opportunity of competing on a level playing field in areas where you are subjugated by political legislation, or by sporting administration, or by a conventional consensus, as former Prime Minister of Jamaica Michael Manley said in his book, *The History of West Indian Cricket*, when talking about George Headley, what we see with the West Indian cricket team is a demonstration of black capacity, black excellence personified. And so for me, relating it back to those 1984 West Indian cricketers, where I knew everything there was to know about them at that time, from the names on the scorecard – Desmond Leo Haynes, Cuthbert Gordon Greenidge, Hilary Angelo Gomes, Isaac Vivian Alexander Richards, Clive Hubert Lloyd, Peter Jeffrey Leroy Dujon,

Malcolm Denzil Marshall, and on and on. I knew everything there was to know about them. It just presented an opportunity to then learn about others in the game at that time.

But to see excellence, the very best of the best, personified by a group of cricketers who looked and sounded like my fathers – excuse me, sounded like the men in my family, principally my father, but those who were uncles by blood and by bond, that to me is incredibly important. And that team served as a gateway to learning about so many other things, in terms of politics and identity and culture and social justice, and you see that this kernel of unity and connectivity is something that is shared by so many people across the black diaspora. But cricket was the gateway into all those things for me.

### **Colin Babb**

Ronald, absolutely magnificent. I'm glad you mentioned the documentary because I was going to mention that in the segue to Robert. But is that still available in the UK on iPlayer, your documentary? I'm not sure.

### **Ronald McIntosh**

I think it's on BBC Sounds, if you have –

### **Colin Babb**

Okay. If you have a root around you might be able to find it then.

### **Ronald McIntosh**

Yes. I think you can find *Blackwash and Me*.

### **Colin Babb**

Got to say, Ronald, I can't say – you can sue me for this but my next book, my new book's called *1973 and Me*. Maybe there was a bit of borrowing there, but maybe not. Thank you very, very much, Ronald. Before I move on to Robert, I just want to point out what Ronald said about Frank Worrell, because 1963 was the tour where Frank Worrell led the West Indies on a tour of England, and Frank Worrell was the first black captain to lead a team in England. So, in many ways he was more than a cricket captain; he was a regional statesman, in many ways more than one. And Derek Murray told me during an interview for the last book and this one that it was the aim of Frank Worrell to unite the team, because of course the team comes from different islands and different regions and with different experiences, and unite the team would help the diaspora to unite, i.e. make that connection.

I just want to say, going back to 1950, what's very important is to talk about the team then and the team I grew up with in '73, in terms of being West Indians and not necessarily African-Caribbean, because in 1950 that team was led by John Goddard, a Barbadian of European ancestry, and Sonny Ramadhin made his debut during that series, the first Indian-Caribbean from Trinidad to make his debut. Alright, we can talk about the social, political and racial differences and colonial representations, but it was still a team of people from different backgrounds, and remember in '73 Inshan Ali, an Indian-Trinidadian, Deryck Murray, of Portuguese-Indian descent, Alvin Kallicharran, of Indian-Caribbean, from Guyana, and the captain was Rohan Kanhai. And '73 was very important because it was the year that the first Indian-Caribbean captain led the team in England, Rohan Kanhai, from Berbice, Guyana.

So these elements of cricket and the Caribbean are very important because cricket is the only thing which reveals a sense of diversity, or the Caribbean diverse nature of different races and ethnicities to the wider world. I'm not saying it's something which is regularly discussed, but I'm saying it's

something which should be discussed more often. Now, Robert, are you standing by and ready? If so, turn on your mic, and I'd like introduce Mr Robert Bradford, please.

**Robert Bradford**

Colin.

**Colin Babb**

Yes, we can hear you.

**Robert Bradford**

Right. How you doing? Good afternoon.

**Colin Babb**

Good to see you and hear you speak to the audience. Thank you.

**Robert Bradford**

Hello to everybody, and listening to some great stuff up to now, loving the passion. And I really thought that was a nice touch that your schoolmaster could say how proud he was of you. That was a really nice moment, especially as it was a cricket-related thing between two English-resident West Indians. I really liked that, Colin.

I have to say I'm interested that you mentioned 1950. I, despite this accent you're hearing, am actually a Trinidadian. I'm an English-Trinidadian now. And you mentioned dates. You mentioned obviously 1973 for your book, but my cricket story starts, I think, in 1974, but in fact it starts in 1950, because my dad, as a 14-year-old Englishman, went to Sheffield to watch the West Indians play Yorkshire, at Bramall Lane, the Sheffield United cricket ground. And he was absolutely mesmerised by what he saw that day. I mean, I'm not – I don't know this, but it may well have been his first experience of black people. And funnily enough 10 years later, or 14 years later, he married a Trinidadian nurse, the result of which was myself and my younger brother, and we lived in Diego Martin, in Trinidad, and I had very idyllic years growing up there. And one of the things my dad couldn't wait to do was introduce me to cricket, which he did on 1 February 1974, which was the first day of the England-West Indies, or West Indies-England Test match at the Oval in Trinidad. And I was smitten from before a bowl was bowled. I can remember every detail, every smell, every sight, everything.

We went back the next day. That day was famous because on the last ball of the day Tony Greig threw down Alvin Kallicharran's wicket, and there was quite a commotion, one that's passed down into folklore. I would say that it's passed down with a little bit of embellishment. I don't think it was quite as rough as some people have been reported. But anyway, I'm one of the people who can say I was there, and I'm very proud of that.

I followed the whole of that 1974 series on the radio, the tests in Barbados, in Jamaica, when Yagga Rowe scored 302. I can remember sitting in the rain, on a rainy afternoon in Trinidad, listening to that. I went to every day of the fifth Test of that series, which was a Test match that lasted nearly a week, because there was a rest day, and it was six days to ensure a result, and England actually snuck a result in the last hour of that match, which was a tearful heartbreak to me but such is life – a good lesson in life, I'd say.

So anyway, two weeks after that match finished we emigrated to England, or my father came home, brought his family, for, in inverted commas, 'the want of a better life'. And the first two years were



utterly miserable for a sunshine-loving boy who had no idea of what the cold was. Certain things in the mid-1970s didn't make England a great place for a little naïve, innocent Caribbean little boy. But cricket was pretty much the saviour. My English family, my aunts, my uncles, my cousins, indulged my passion for cricket. They introduced me to football and rugby, and so there were some good times. One distinct memory I have was I would have been 10 years old in 1975, playing against boys three years older than me at cricket, and I put in a Garry Sobers performance, where I scored – I can't remember how many runs, but I took seven for 11, which is a pretty good bowling analysis, off a run-up, bowling at a very hostile pace. And after the game the master of the other team, a village called Caistor in Lincolnshire, came over to me, and he said to me, 'It was an absolute privilege to witness your performance today. I hear you're from the Caribbean. I'm not surprised that you're so good at cricket.' It brushed off my back a little bit, but I did like the fact that he associated my Caribbean heritage with my then ability on the cricket field.

My life in England got better in 1976 because the West Indians came to town, and we were living in Lincoln, and the first Test match, the first day was in Nottingham. And I went into Trent Bridge and it was like I'd gone back two years. There were maroon caps, there were people in the crowd like me, with a similar accent, and Vivian Richards scored a double-century, Alvin Kallicharran scored a 90, and it was just a fantastic day. And it set up the most – as anyone who can remember 1976 – the most wonderful summer of cricket, especially if you're a West Indian, because we absolutely came of age. We whooped England in the end. The record book says 3-0; it says we gave them a thrashing. It is always forgotten that that series was close. England could have won the second Test, they could have won the fourth Test, but they didn't. And there were individual performances by the West Indians that are still talked about today – Michael Holding, obviously, Vivian Richards – and just the whole that summer, where it was as hot as Trinidad, and it made me realise that everything was good in the world, that the world wasn't such a bad place.

So the years move on. I mean, it's hard to believe that that is so many years ago now. Lads like Colin and me, we look back on our childhoods, and really West Indian cricket was a continuing passion in my life. The 1980 series was disappointingly rain, 1984, where we were really did put down a marker as a cricketing nation, and I think as a people, and it's gone on from there. Since 1995 it's been a huge disappointment. Luckily for me, I've been able to indulge my passion for cricket. I go back to Trinidad on a very regular basis. I used to make it a point of attending the matches there when I did, and there have been – it's still part of our culture and our identity.

And I would say three years ago I was on train, going from Leeds to King's Cross, and I found myself sat next to Harold Bird, who John Holder would know, or we all know, as Dickie Bird. And I introduced myself to Dickie, who, as John I'm sure will confirm is as mad as a box of frogs. And once we'd got Brendan Rodgers and Liverpool out of the way – who he was not a great fan of – we had the most wonderful conversation for an hour and a half, from Leeds to Peterborough, where I was getting off. And Dickie told me lots of stuff, lots of stuff he probably shouldn't have told me, and we had a great time.

And at the end of the train ride a lady was sat by us. When I stood up she said, 'I've really enjoyed listening to you two.' And Dickie said to this lady, 'Madam, this gentleman is from Trinidad. He's a proper cricket person. He knows cricket. He understands cricket.' Well, that was the best compliment I've ever been paid in my life, especially by somebody as important in my life a Dickie Bird, because Dickie was obviously the umpire in the first World Cup, and in fact in the final, and he was also our hangman when we lost in 1983, but that's with his crooked finger giving – was it Holding out to Jimmy Amarnath?

So there you go. It's the cricket, the passion, it's everything. And the parents are older today, but we still sit down and we talk, and we remember all the cricket that we've seen. Mum's a Trini. I

still consider myself a Trini. Dad's an Englishman; he even supports the West Indies today. So it's been really great to share my little West Indian cricket experience with you, and I look forward to hearing some more.

### **Colin Babb**

Robert, you said something really interesting to me a while back, and I think I recorded it in *They Gave the Crowd Plenty Fun*. You said something really interesting, where you said that cricket helped you to settle into the country, connect you. Cricket helped you to almost – not assimilate, but to almost settle yourself in to England.

### **Robert Bradford**

Yeah. I mean, probably a psychologist could get to the bottom of this, but it was almost like taking an aspirin or taking some medication when the West Indies came, and you were seeing – I mean, down to the fact that I would say Trent Bridge, in feel and look, in 1976 wasn't too dissimilar to the Oval, a big scoreboard to one side, quite an open ground, open two-tier stands. But I think one of the things with my peers in 1976, because I had supported the West Indies very vocally, very vividly, and people recognise excellence when they see it. And I think they found me a bit of a curiosity, and they were quite happy to indulge – and of course, the West Indies entertained. That's the one thing the West Indies so often did. They entertained. No disrespect to any other cricketing nation, but does another side entertain like a West Indian side when it's performing? Is it something in our culture and our way that makes us play cricket the way we do? But we entertain, and that is important. So yeah, I will never know what my life story would have been without 1976, but I'm glad it happened. I'm glad we won as well.

### **Colin Babb**

Fantastic, absolutely magnificent. That's a very interesting testimony. And why I wanted you to be on the panel, sir, is because of your background, having an English and Trinidadian, Indian and whatever else mixed up background. You're, in ways, a real Western Indian cook-up. And you know what? We need to appreciate that's part of our heritage, whether we like it or not.

## **Questions and Answers**

### **Colin Babb**

Basically, I just want to move on to perhaps reaching out to the audience to fire questions to the panel. Would I be correct, Philip, in saying this is the right time for that?

### **Philip Murphy**

Yes, absolutely. As I say, at the bottom of your screen, towards the right, there's a little reactions button, and you can have a thumbs-up sign, which might be easier for Colin to see on the screen, or you could just chat just to indicate.

### **Colin Babb**

Yeah, maybe if people can write their questions in the Zoom chat that might be easier, and I can throw it out, or answer them myself.

**Philip Murphy**

I can see Juanita wants to come in.

**Juanita Cox**

I actually thought that was a clapping sign. I was just going to do a round of applause for such a fascinating listen.

**Philip Murphy**

You've been caught out. You've been caught out, Juanita.

**Juanita Cox**

I've been caught out. So I didn't actually have a question. I just wanted to thank everyone for what was a really fabulous discussion. But yeah, carry on, somebody else. Thank you.

**Colin Babb**

I mean, I want to throw something out, which might get a reaction from the audience today. For me, being brought up in a mainly Guyanese household, I was brought up by my Guyanese mother, my Guyanese great-grandmother and my Barbadian father, but two strong, dominant Guyanese women in the house. And also, most of my family in England were Guyanese, and in the last 10, 15 years I've been going to Guyana quite a bit. But I think for me it was quite important to see – I mean, I know we talk a lot about the ins and outs of Caribbean representation, but for me it was extra-special when I started watching cricket in the 70s, and in particular in 1973, to see a Guyanese person in Rohan Kanhai, captain the West Indies team, followed by Clive Lloyd. So I'm just trying to put it out there whether that was important to you, the idea that wherever we came from in the Caribbean, whatever our routes and history, and whatever island or territory, that the team – and when they came to England, to me it was a unifying force. It doesn't matter where you were from. You could support a Jamaican bowler or an Antiguan batsman. It didn't really matter, and all the prejudices and sectarianism just fell away. I don't know whether anybody else wants to come in on that.

**Robert Bradford**

Well, I would say, Colin, that when I started watching cricket, because the West Indies won almost from the off, my first hero was Yagga, was Lawrence Rowe, and so it remains, despite everything. So, I never had – I always had an idea in my head that this was one team, and nothing ever changed that. It's West Indies or bust for me, and that's the way it is, and that's the way it always will be.

**Colin Babb**

That's interesting, because another thing I'd like to put out there is that: does it really matter that we have a team which is called the West Indies? Whether I believe that or not I'm going to keep that under my deck of cards, but I'm just throwing it out there because we are all different in the Caribbean, anyway. We are all individual nation states. Okay, we have CARICOM, but does it really – is it as important now as it was in the 70s to support a West Indies team?

**Robert Bradford**

Absolutely.

**Colin Babb**

Rather than connect with your individual island team or the island franchise, would you see in CPL. In the CPL these crowds are packed in to watch these tournaments. If you go to the ground in Providence, in Guyana, everybody's fervently supporting that Guyanese team even though the CPL teams are made up of players from different islands anyway and from outside the Caribbean. I'm just throwing it out there. What do you think?

**John Holder**

Yes, I think it's vitally important. It doesn't really matter which island you are from. The thing is that as the game's become more professional also, your pride will dictate that you want to win, and part of winning is being together, so all 11 players are singing from the same hymn sheet. So, you have to forget the fact that you're from – the fact that you're from Guyana or from Trinidad or whatever is totally immaterial. Without that unity and that sense of oneness you're not going to perform. And the one thing you have to have as a professional – I realised that when I started to become an umpire, and I wanted to become a good umpire – you have to have a lot of pride. When you go out there on the field as an umpire you want the players to respect you. You want to be as good as you can be. And the fellas in previous years, maybe the team hadn't performed as well as it should, and there's a realisation that to perform well you have to be as one.

And I think one of the things that I forgot to mention was the fact that we are all from the Caribbean. I grew up in seeing white people in a superior position. The whites were always the bosses and the black people sort of subordinate. And to come here to England and almost to come into the lion's den, for the 1950 team, for example, against the white people, a white team, probably the best team in the world at that time. And coming into the lion's den, and in conditions which are completely foreign, because playing cricket in the Caribbean is nothing like – playing cricket in England is tough. You've got pitches where the ball moves around, etc; the weather can be cold. So to have performed as well as they did in 1950 was absolutely outstanding. And one of the reasons why the team in the 70s and so on were so successful is that oneness and that pride. And one of the proudest cricketers I've ever come across was Viv Richards. Absolutely he's a lion, he's a real battler, and whatever he did, he wanted to be best at. And he didn't want to appear to be inferior to anyone else.

So with fellas of that sort of strength of character and ability, Gordon Greenidge, Desmond Haynes, Clive Lloyd, and the bowlers, etc, that's why we were so successful.

**Colin Babb**

John, you're talking about that setting very high standards for yourself, which is something Deryck Murray mentioned to me in a couple of books I've written – this idea that it wasn't just about fighting the legacy of colonialism; it was demonstrating that people from the Caribbean could be as professional as people from Australia and England.

**John Holder**

Well, I mean I said in my introduction that when I decided to go on the first class umpire – to apply, a couple of West Indians up here – I live up in the Manchester area – they were saying that, 'We don't know why John is going to apply to go on the first-class umpires' panel, because they don't want black people.' And I thought, 'Well, hang on a minute. In the history of cricket, in the history of Test cricket, some of the greatest pleasures have been black players. If we can have great black players why can't we have great black umpires?'

**Colin Babb**

Well, why not indeed? Yeah.

**John Holder**

I have always felt that I don't regard myself as being a black man. I'm just a man, and I don't regard white people as being superior to me in any respect. They're just human beings like me. So, why should I feel inferior?

**Colin Babb**

Fantastic, John. I'm just going to move on to some of the questions that are coming in the Zoom chat. Also, just to say in *1973 and Me* I interviewed Vanburn Holder, who eventually became an umpire, John, as you know.

**John Holder**

Vanburn Alonzo Holder.

**Colin Babb**

Exactly.

**Robert Bradford**

He wasn't as good as John.

**Colin Babb**

I'm not going to compare the two in terms of accurate decision-making, but, you know... Just reading some of the Zoom group chats, from Eric McClymont: 'I spoke to Richie Benaud in 1999 – this is Eric – 'And he told me the best Test side he saw was the 1948 Aussie side, led by Bradman,' which were called the Invincibles, I think, 'And the 1984 Windies side led by Clive Lloyd. He said Lloyd's side was the best.' An interesting one from Rob Hales. 'A fascinating talk about Test cricket but how much impact did the West Indies' presence in club cricket, particularly in the north of England, have?' That's quite interesting. I've referred to that in some of the articles I've written, and particularly the West Indians who played in the Lancashire League in the 60s and 50s. I spoke to Basil Butcher, who played for Bacup, and I remember him telling me what a great experience he had learning the trade.

Also, what was important for West Indian players then was that it was one of the few ways they could earn money by playing cricket.

**John Holder**

That's right.

**Colin Babb**

It was by coming to England and playing in the Lancashire League. It was very, very important. It was a money-earning experience, because at that time the counties weren't open to overseas players, and it wasn't until the 70s that you saw, or maybe the late 60s, you saw a flood of West Indians moving into the counties. Thanks, Rob, for that. I don't know whether anybody else wants to come in on that one.

**Philip Murphy**

Just to say also, Colin, that Michael Collins and Raf Nicholson have got their hands up to ask questions.

**Colin Babb**

Oh, okay. Can I just spin through the Zoom chat questions very, very quickly?

**Philip Murphy**

Yeah, sure.

**Colin Babb**

One from [Karen Hunte], saying, ‘When does the panel think the West Indies will reach some kind of a long-term dominance again? Anybody else want to come in on that?’

**Robert Bradford**

The year 3000.

**John Holder**

Not in my lifetime. I’ve been asked that question repeatedly, and until our fellas start to be able to think on their feet, because however – I mean, the West Indies, in the last 20 years, have had a plethora of coaches and it’s made no difference at all. When you step on to the field of play, however good the preparation that you’ve received from the coach has been, when you step on to the field of play, you’ve got to be able to think on your feet, you’ve got to be able to think for yourself, and our fellas seem unable to think for themselves. And watching the World Cup performance last year, we had this – our players seemed to have the – our batsmen, they wanted to hit fours and sixes constantly, and our bowlers bowled halfway down the pitch bouncers all the time. We had no plan B. So as I said, when you step on to the field of play as a player and your initial plans, if they don’t work, you’ve got to resort to something else, and our fellas don’t seem able to do that. They just want to be hitting fours and sixes when they’re batting and bowling bouncers. So there is no thought. You’ve got to be able to – you have to want to be successful, and if you want to be successful you’ll do whatever you need to do. You need to be able to adapt, and our fellas aren’t doing that.

**Colin Babb**

Thank you very much, John. Just skipping through to a question from [Martin Earle?] here, on the chat, very quickly, talking about the ACE programme. ‘What else can we do to try to engage with the African community again, African-Caribbean community again?’ I would just say how can we connect with anybody really, not just the African Caribbean community but the Caribbean community in general, just trying to take the race element out of that. I think cricket struggles to connect with a lot of younger people in general, for various reasons. That’s just my throw out there. I don’t know whether anybody wants to come in.

**Derek Gift-Simms**

Yeah. Colin, I’d like to come in on this one. As I alluded to earlier, we set up the African Caribbean Cricket Association to bring more youth in, because what we found was generations before us, those guys who arrived here in the 50s and 60s, they did not think about succession. As it was said earlier, in those days there was a black-and-white TV in the houses, and what would happen is dad would walk in, especially when the West Indies were playing.

**Colin Babb**

‘Put the cricket on.’

**Derek Gift-Simms**

He would switch over to cricket and we would have to leave the room. So not only that, but on a Friday night he would pick his cricket bag up, he’d go to a party, Saturday he’s off to a game, Sunday he’s off to a game, and we’d see him Monday morning. Those things did not go any way towards encouraging a lot of my generation to take up the sport. And as I said, I lived away from the UK, so I got involved. When I came back to the UK I joined my local cricket club, and it just disgusted me to see that most of my generation were not encouraging their kids. And after that it turned out that we’ve lost a generation. I wanted to ask Robert, when he spoke earlier, when he mentioned that his dad was the Sheriff of Nottingham, whether he himself was born in Nottingham.

**Colin Babb**

That was Ronald McIntosh.

**Derek Gift-Simms**

Ronald.

**Ronald McIntosh**

Yes, I was. And you’re talking about the West Indian sides; there were a few West Indian cricket clubs that were prominent in Nottingham. The Afro-Caribbean National Artistic Centre, the acronym ACNA. They were the West Indian Caribs, and then to the Marcus Garvey Centre, on Lenton Boulevard, they were the West Indian Cavaliers. And again, that was a huge part of my childhood. I ended up playing for the second team of the West Indian Caribs, and then eventually somebody had the foresight to pool the resources and try and capture young talent. So, at a junior level the West Indian Cavaliers and the West Indian Caribs amalgamated, and we had one junior team representing those two sides, the ACNA Centre on Hungerhill Road, in St Ann’s, and the Marcus Garvey Centre on Lenton Boulevard.

So, again, those two teams, just as you were talking about, a huge part socially, culturally – I had no idea that there were so many – there was so much that one could discuss the importance of a straight ball at such length, but I would sit in a locker room [inaudible] with these older players and just hear them discuss the importance of a straight ball, the intricacies of an off-swing, the intricacies of a leg cutter, the two-speed bouncer that Andy Roberts used to [inaudible]. And I’m just soaking all of this in.

But I have to say that I am perhaps emblematic of what a lot of youth of my generation actually went through, because I ended up – basketball ended up taking me overseas and I ended up being a professional basketball player. And just as names such as Jackie Robinson, Bill Russell, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Willie Mays don’t really resonate here, when you go to North America the names of Viv Richards, Clive Lloyd, Alvin Kallicharran, Michael Holding mean next to nothing. So, I lost touch with cricket for a long period of time. But on returning to complete my postgraduate studies I did reconnect with the game, and the fervour that I had for cricket was suddenly inserted into basketball, and it was a great thing, reading and playing every minute I could.

And so, again, I was lost at a crucial period, where instead of pursuing cricket I ended up playing the sport basketball, and apocryphally, if not empirically, that is what happened to a large number of my generation, both in the diaspora and in the Caribbean, because there was a prospect of an education

if you become a track athlete or a basketball player. All education in the United States is paid for as long as you represent them on the field of play. Now, we all know cricket is a very expensive game. The reward at that time, prior to T20, weren't as lucrative as they could be in those other sports. So, again, as much as cricket was a part of my formative years and was part of my identity, and was part of – instilled the values that I have now, to a large extent, as did other sports as well, but [inaudible] left cricket and pursued the sport of basketball.

### **Colin Babb**

Ronald, can I just say we might need to move on to the other questions in the feed, but thank you for that, and thank you for actually talking about the Nottingham connection, because cricket and the Caribbean community isn't just a London thing; it's a wider thing across the whole of UK, including Kittitians in Leeds, Jamaicans in Nottingham, Bajans in Reading and such like. I just want to stress it is a national thing, not just restricted to London. Can I just say – Michael Collins wants to ask a question. Michael, if you're around, still around in the chat, please ask your question. Thank you.

### **Michael Collins**

Okay, thank you very, very much. It's a huge privilege to hear all of the speakers, and my three boys have gone to the park this afternoon to play cricket, and they said, 'Dad, what are you doing?' I said, 'Oh, I've got to work this afternoon, I'm afraid.' If work was always like this, it would be a much greater pleasure. So I'm a historian of modern Britain at UCL, the University College London, and very, very briefly I have a similar experience of 1984, which, strangely, because I was a little Anglo-Irish immigrant boy growing up in the west country of England, completely turned me on not only to cricket but also, somewhat retrospectively, to politics and history. I was seven years old, I was watching those Test matches on the TV, and I was completely captivated by the atmosphere of those games, and what I've subsequently understood to be the politicised nature of that contest that was taking place. So, amazing memories, and it's just fantastic to hear you all speak.

But I have a very particular question, which speaks to my own academic research interests. So I'm running a project out of UCL History, with Hackney Council, called Windrush Cricket, which is seeking to capture a slightly different aspect of this story that we've been talking about today, although it's been touched upon, which is what I would call the metropolitan experience of playing and organising cricket within England and, specifically for my purposes at this point, within London.

So my colleague at UCL, newly-acquired colleague, Paul Gilroy, a very famous theorist of race and cultural studies, refers to the concept as the Black Atlantic. And what I'm interested in capturing is the way in which cricket constituted a part of a specifically black British identity from the 1950s and 1960s onwards, in the sense not of necessarily valorising and supporting the West Indies cricket team, but actually playing cricket in the way that Mr John Holder described, for teams like London Transport, for teams like the Hackney Cavaliers and other teams that people have mentioned. It seems to me that that was the real interface between people who were immigrants or born in immigrant families from the Caribbean, who were forging lives and new identities, often complex and mixed identities, in England, often not necessarily with a view to moving away, so it's a process of settlement. And my hypothesis is that actually cricket clubs and all of the social and cultural life that went on around cricket clubs was a central part of the process of establishing black British identities in the 60s and 70s.

I wondered if anybody has any kind of comment on that. Perhaps Mr John Holder, I don't know; you mentioned the London Transport teams, and to me this is a very fascinating story which I'd like to hear more about.



**John Holder**

Yeah. For hundreds, probably thousands of people from the Caribbean who came here in the 50s and 60s, playing cricket in the Caribbean – cricket is almost a way of life, and a lot of very, very good cricketers came from the different West Indian islands to Britain, obviously the majority to London, and in many instances they set up their own teams. They created their own teams because it was difficult to get into some of the clubs. So they set up their own clubs, their own teams around London and different parts of the country, and they played cricket of a very, very high standard. I mean, really very high-quality cricketers. And over the years that has gone. That has gone because these fellas have got old and the young West Indians, their children, haven't replaced them. But cricket was a means really of helping us to settle in.

I mean, I came here in '64, in November, and in the summer of 1965 I was living in Battersea, and I went on to Clapham Common, and I was a cricket fanatic as a youngster, and I saw a group of West Indians playing there on the grass, and I joined in. And then nearby I was lucky enough – I was bowling pretty quick in those days – and I was in – West Indians used to go to Alf Gover's indoor school in Wandsworth, and in the winter of 1964/65, we went in and spent a lot of time in there playing cricket. And that really – I mean, once I started playing cricket in 1965, because the first months of coming to England from a different environment were very, very difficult, very tough.

**Robert Bradford**

Hear, hear.

**John Holder**

From the summer of 1965, once I started playing cricket, life took on a completely different complexion, an absolutely different complexion. And then I was lucky enough and I was good enough. I was recommended to Hampshire, and I joined Hampshire in 1966 and left London, and never lived in London again. That was the start of my involvement in cricket. So, cricket really – and cricket by its very nature is a fantastic vehicle for making friends and so on. So I have had a really privileged life in cricket, really, first as a player and then as an umpire.

**Colin Babb**

Before we move on, Michael, and just thank you, John, for answering Michael's question. Before we move on to the other questions that have been coming in, John, can I just follow up, if you don't mind, by saying that some of the stuff I've written about in the past has been about the importance of cricket clubs in Britain being social centres, cultural centres, areas where, if you were Jamaican, you could go to a cricket club and an Antiguan would help fix your car. And Tony Bowry, who kindly has dropped in a couple of comments, talks about the Leeds Cricket Club in – well, I almost said Saint Kitts, but there's so many Kittitians there in Leeds. But I know – I've been to that club a few times, because I spend a bit of time in Leeds, and I know for a fact that Harwood Williams – I don't know whether he's still involved in the club there – once said to me that years ago, particularly in the 70s – the 60s and 70s – the cricket club in Leeds, the Caribbean club, was almost a migrant point; you'd come from Saint Kitts, you'd arrive in West Yorkshire or Leeds, you'd turn up at the club and they'll be little posters in the club advertising jobs and accommodation. So these were very, very –

**Michael Collins**

Social capital.

**Colin Babb**

Exactly, very important at these clubs.

**Ronald McIntosh**

Colin, could I add a point to what you're saying? Sorry to interrupt, but when you finish can I add on?

**Colin Babb**

Yeah, sure. Just the other thing is that, having visited a lot of these clubs recently, particularly the Leicester club, the Leeds club and the Bristol club, and clubs in London, you're quite right; a lot of these clubs are struggling to recruit players of Caribbean descent, and in fact every single one of these clubs has told me that most of their players are players of south Asian descent, particularly in the Leicester club and the Leeds club.

**John Holder**

That's right.

**Colin Babb**

The kids are born here, of Indian, and Pakistani, Sri Lankan and Bangladeshi decent, are joining these clubs in the droves. So this is another issue: why South Asian communities have retained that passion and why Caribbean communities haven't. There's a number saying it's a migration story there. It's lots and lots of things. I just move on to –

**Ronald McIntosh**

Sorry, Colin. Could I just make –

**Colin Babb**

Sorry, Ronald. I'm sorry. I'm just conscious of time, but please get in.

**Ronald McIntosh**

What I was going to say is just you were talking about the migration story. I live in London. I live in north-west London, in Wembley, and the migration story that you have alluded to is evident in parks around here. Prior to the lockdown every time there's a hint of good weather you'll see bunches of Afghan people, people from Pakistan, people from south Asia, playing either games together or just pick-up games, where one person will come with a set of stumps, another person will come with a bat. But notably there are no Caribbean people playing in those games. But those who have just arrived, using sport, using cricket as a social hub, as you say, as a means to find jobs and accommodation, is still very much evident, particularly among the Afghan community here in north-west London.

**Colin Babb**

Yes. I know you've spoke to me about the importance of the cricket club scene in Nottingham during the period you grew up, so I suppose you can make that connection with Michael's question about the importance of cricket clubs as well, through that as well, I suppose.

I'm just looking at Juanita's question, which is, 'I heard that young white lads sought revenge on black Brits whenever the West Indies won their Test matches.' My experience wasn't like that.

When I went to watch the West Indies play in the 70s and 80s, if they beat England none of my white friends wanted to have a fight with me about it. Maybe I might have been attacked for other reasons, but certainly not cricket. In fact, one of the interesting things about the cricket story in the 70s, in terms of the crowd – I see a lot of messages in the chat about audiences and crowds and why West Indian people don't attend matches anymore – was that I remember, certainly a lot of the school boys that we used to hang out with, the crowds – before you ran on the pitch and got chased back off again – certainly was that it seemed to be a mixture of English and West Indian boys hanging out together. That certainly was my experience of the 70s and the 80s. People would go to cricket together, support their different teams, run on the pitch to celebrate together.

If you look at a lot of the videos in the 70s of young boys invading the pitch, they're a pretty diverse bunch. So I haven't had that experience. I didn't have that direct experience of hostility from English people which turned violent because of cricket – for other reasons, but certainly not cricket. I don't know whether anybody else had quite –

### **Robert Bradford**

Colin, could I just say there that one of the things that I distinctly remember when the West Indies were at their peak was the respect afforded to us from our English peers – that they genuinely were in awe of the ability of the West Indian team. One thing I do recall in 1976 and 1984, the atmosphere in 1976 inside the ground was a lot friendlier than it was in 1984 from both sides. In fact, no, I would say from both sides, particularly from the West Indian side. I think West Indians, the English-Caribbean population, were a lot of angrier in 1984. I mean, we were about to go into the Broadwater Farm things and the Cherry Groce era and all that sort of thing. But 1976, even after Tony Greig made his comments, the atmosphere was jovial in the ground. I was at Trent Bridge and The Oval, and I'll never forget when Tony Greig grovelled to the crowd on the second last day, after Greenidge and Fredericks had scored 182 in 20 overs – think about it – and Greig knelt down and grovelled, and everybody roared with laughter, and that was at the Oval. There was very little malice. There was certainly a hint of malice in 1984.

### **Colin Babb**

Thank you for that. I've got a question here from Dingaan Stephenson, saying, 'Colin Babb, why have you stolen my shirt[?]'? Well, I can say that I bought this in Guyana about four or five years ago. I didn't thief it from anybody!

### **John Holder**

Could I just make a quick comment on one thing that Robert said about the West Indies, what the West Indies team brought to international cricket? About 15 or 20 years ago the West Indies had just been beaten in Australia, again been thrashed in Australia, almost humiliated. And Ian Chappell, a former great Australian captain – he made a comment which really interested me. He said, 'It's so sad to see the state of West Indies cricket.' He said, 'The West Indies bring a certain element to cricket, to Test cricket, that no other country brings.'

### **Robert Bradford**

No other country. Hear, hear.

### **John Holder**

And he said, 'It's really important for West Indies cricket; it's important for world cricket to have a strong West Indies team.' So it's really sad to see what is happening now.

**Robert Bradford**

John, very quickly...

**Colin Babb**

Yeah, sorry. I just wanted to try to move on to others questions after this one, Robert.

**Robert Bradford**

Very, very quickly.

**Colin Babb**

Thank you.

**Robert Bradford**

I converse with a lot of cricket fans around the world now through these modern medias of Facebook and that sort of thing. One thing Australians of my age – I'm 55 – so Australians of my age, a little bit older, a little bit younger, what do they want to talk about the whole time, the one subject of conversation? The West Indies.

**John Holder**

Yes.

**Colin Babb**

Exactly. I've got to move on to a question from Raf Nicolson. Raf Nicholson, do you want to jump in and ask your question, please?

**Raf Nicolson**

Hi.

**Colin Babb**

Hello.

**Raf Nicolson**

I hope you can hear me okay.

**Colin Babb**

Yeah. Sorry it took you a while. I'm just trying to organise the questions in a way that everybody gets their time to have a shout.

**Raf Nicolson**

That's fine. Thank you for a really interesting discussion. I guess there's a lot of talk about role models here and the importance of that in terms of identity, but we're talking about exclusively men's cricket here. Do you think it's problematic that the West Indian women's team has been very invisible until very recently? And if you were an African-Caribbean woman coming to the UK, coming to England in the 70s, I guess who would your role models have been, or were you also following the men's team with the same kind of enthusiasm despite not seeing your own identity reflected?

**John Holder**

I can say that as a youngster growing up in Barbados I have actually – a cricket-mad youngster who played cricket at every opportunity. And there was a lady's cricket team that practised in Bridgetown, the capital, and I used to bowl at them. On dozens of occasions I bowled at them, but for some reason cricket never took off among the women; it was just predominantly a men's game. But there were good women cricketers in Barbados, and going back into the late 50s, early 60s. So there was good cricket and good women players, but obviously for whatever reason it just didn't take off on the other islands.

But I can say that, looking and having been involved in cricket now for a long time, in my umpiring career especially, the standard of women's cricket, ladies' cricket, has just improved out of all recognition. The first time I umpired a lady's cricket match was a Test match, a one-day match at Kidderminster, between England and Australia, and the Australians overpowered England massively. But since the ECB has taken over running and financing the women, the standard of cricket has improved out of all recognition... In terms of skill, it's just improved out of all recognition, and it's really a very, very high standard, and it needs – and maybe black ladies, for whatever reason, don't see themselves as wanting to play cricket. I don't know.

**Colin Babb**

I personally would like – thank you, John, for that. Before I move on, it would be great to see more cricketers from a Caribbean heritage somehow break through to the women's England's team as well. Ebony is a family friend of mine, so I do meet her very, very occasionally and, as far as I'm aware, she's the only player of Caribbean descent to have represented the England team, Ebony Rainford-Brent. It would be great to see more. I mean, that's something I'm thinking about in terms of monitoring. Just to say that another question has come in. Well, somebody called Marcia. Marcia, I didn't see your surname, but Marcia wants to come in and ask a question. Marcia. Are you there? No sign of Marcia yet.

**Marcia Haynes**

Hi, Colin.

**Colin Babb**

Oh, Marcia's here. Thank you.

**Marcia Haynes**

Just one second. I'll see if I can turn my video on as well. But I suppose can you hear me?

**Colin Babb**

Yes, we can. Feel free to fire away.

**Marcia Haynes**

I suppose Juanita's been asking me to speak because she knows that my father came over here in the late 60s.

**Colin Babb**

Your sound is a bit – there's some background noise. I think you need to come nearer to the mic or move away from the noise. Sorry, we can't hear you.

**Marcia Haynes**

Is that a bit better?

**Colin Babb**

Oh, okay.

**Marcia Haynes**

My father came over here in the late 60s, followed by my mum and me and my sister. And one of my earliest memories was my father teaching his daughters how to play cricket in the garden, followed very quickly by the rules of the game, and followed very quickly by taking us to some of the earliest matches at Lords and then the Oval. And I suppose that the title of this seminar is the significance of cricket to the Windrush generation, and I would say that for my father and his friends, and my mother and my aunts and uncles, it was hugely significant. It was a time when I saw my father and mother and their friends get together, whether it was around the TV, at the Oval, at Lords, or around the radio. And the dominance of the team had a lot to do with it, and the fact that my father was from Guyana, he knew Clive Lloyd, they grew up in Kitty together. And like most Guyanese who grew up with Clive Lloyd, he always told me that he was a better cricketer than Clive Lloyd as well.

But it was hugely significance significant, and I don't know how now – I miss the atmosphere in the pavilion at the Oval, where, up to 15 years ago, there would be as many as 40 West Indian supporters sitting at the Oval. And when I went last year – of course, this year we weren't aren't going to be able to go – I think there were five. And I think – my father passed away in 2016, and for me it is so sad that what I had when I was growing up, which was a huge part of my upbringing, will be lost to the current generation. I don't know what the answer is, and it's not just a question of cost. I think that young children have so many other options – I had no choice but to partake and enjoy cricket with my family. But yes, I think Juanita just wanted me to say that for me, and growing up in this country and coming from Guyana, the significance of the West Indian cricket team, whether playing in this country or around the world, was a huge part of bringing Guyanese and the wider West Indian community together.

**Colin Babb**

Marcia, that's really interesting. I'm glad you managed to come through. I managed to hear most of that. And my mother's Guyanese, and I spend a bit of time there, and I was brought up by a Guyanese mother and grandmother and a Bajan father, so I understand the Guyanese point there strongly. My mother was in the year below Clive Lloyd at school in Georgetown. Just to say that I think what made cricket so important to me and people of my parent's generation was that it was a direct connection to the places that they left to come to England. I've heard the stories – I know Mike Phillips has told one or two of these stories – of people going to cricket in the 60s and meeting people from Guyana or Barbados that they hadn't seen for years, because the cricket ground was a place where you met people.

The other thing I think is that for people who were born or came here as young children, like me and some of the others in the audience, cricket was important because it made that connection with our families in the Caribbean, who we might see every four or five years, or who we grew up with. So I think it was all part of making a connection with what you might call home. Now, if you're 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and you're born here and you have some Caribbean heritage, home is not the Caribbean, because your parents were probably born here, or one of your parents is probably Caribbean and born here, of Caribbean descent. A lot of people I meet, when I go into schools, or when I did a job where

I went into schools a lot, I'd meet people who say, 'Oh, my grandparents are from Jamaica but my mother was born here and I was born here.' So a lot of people who have Caribbean heritage probably don't have that sense of being Caribbean or West Indian, or making that connection. So cricket is less and less and less and less important. I don't know what you think about that.

### **Marcia Haynes**

Yes, I agree. Cricket is less important with the children. There are so many other diversions. I expect – to look at my children, and I think a lot of Caribbean parents' children would benefit greatly by a successful West Indian cricket team to ignite a passion. So maybe that's what they're all looking for, because I think the current world problems, seeing a successful West Indian cricket team, politically and socially, would just help so many young black children to look on at TV and see something that's successful. But also, going back to what other people have said, funnily enough I think the English people, Australians, and maybe other nations, may have their home team as their English team, but their second team is always the West Indians. So I think worldwide a lot of people just want to see a successful West Indian cricket team, and maybe that is the first step to igniting more people, girls and boys, playing.

### **Colin Babb**

Yeah. I mean, I do get that, and I think that's a hope that many people have, that a team will come here and play brilliantly and beat England and ignite passion. Maybe that might happen if the series does get under way in July. I think they're playing three matches in July scheduled. I'm not sure whether that will happen – two in Manchester, one in Hampshire – because of the general ongoing situation. I mean, I'm not very optimistic that even if England came – sorry, even if the West Indies came here and did well, that it would ignite passion, because I think that connection has fallen away. But for us who grew up with that connection, there's always that hope of a better future.

I'm just looking at some of the chats that have come in, and they're quite interesting. One from Derek Gift-Simms, obviously who spoke earlier, talking about the idea of cricket being a unifying force, not just particularly for one race or another, particularly when it comes to clubs teams. That was very important; thank you for that. This other thing – how other teams, South Africa, India, treated West Indians. The question was quite vague, but what I want to say is that, for me, it wasn't just about the West Indies beating England; it was about the West Indies beating everybody. England was just part of the whole general, wider picture. I wanted the West Indies to beat Pakistan so I could laud it over my Pakistani friends. I wanted the West Indies to beat India so I could laud it over my Indian friends. I wanted the West Indies to beat everybody. England was just one part of a general puzzle. And also, there were many English players that I liked, like Frank Hayes, for example, John Snow. I mean, it wasn't just about appreciating West Indian players. I appreciated players from other countries but obviously supported the West Indies at the same time. Any other questions coming in?

### **Robert Bradford**

Just on that point, Colin, having come to follow cricket in the mid-1970s and watching the West Indies get, or seeing the West Indies get that hammering in Australia in 1975/76, I can tell you that in the subsequent years my delight was reserved for – every victory over Australia was Christmas Day.

**Colin Babb**

Exactly. I'm just following some of the other chats about different types of clubs and different ethnic backgrounds. Just to underline the point I made from the visits I've made to clubs over the years, it just seems that clubs that were initially built or constructed to be Caribbean cricket clubs and a centre for the Caribbean community, in various towns and cities, which was very important in that time – the players have changed because there is a need to keep the club going. So, therefore, they just want to welcome players from wherever they come from. It's just a way of keeping the club going, and it seems as if a lot of south Asian young people are joining these clubs, and that's just the way it is, for better or for worse.

**John Holder**

Part of the problem is that the West Indian clubs don't have any ground. They don't have any club houses; they don't have any grounds. So there is no succession there, no youngsters, young West Indians joining the club and being coached from the youth to joining a team. The clubs are travelling clubs and there's no youngsters joining. So you've got a bunch of old men who came here – well, old men now – who in the late 60s and 70s are still trying to play cricket. But because there's no youngsters joining, the clubs are just deteriorating, really. So there is no longevity, and the clubs very soon will fall into nothingness, really, and that's a sad thing.

**Colin Babb**

Well, maybe some other work that people like Derek Gift-Simms are doing may move the thing forward. I think we might have to come to an end soon. I think Philip Murphy may be saying something sooner, a vote of thanks, perhaps.

**Philip Murphy**

I mean, does anyone want to add any final remarks, or ask a final question?

**Colin Babb**

I'm just going to – sorry.

**Philip Murphy**

Yeah, Colin.

**Colin Babb**

I'm just going to put my website in the chat, cheekily, so people can find out more about the stuff that I've been writing. Obviously, I'm using this as a very low-level marketing exercise. Can I get away with that?

**Philip Murphy**

Oh, you can.

**Colin Babb**

Thank you very much.

**Philip Murphy**

You definitely can.



**Colin Babb**

Juanita says somebody wants to contribute. Dingaan, please come in. One more person, I think. Can we just get a very quick question in?

**Dingaan Stephenson**

Hi, Colin.

**Colin Babb**

Hello.

**Dingaan Stephenson**

I found my shirt. I just wanted to talk about the importance of the Windrush generation, because I was born here but went back to Guyana when I was two, and then I came back in 1986. And I, like the guy who was from Trinidad, I listened to Yagga make that 302 not out from my grandmother's kitchen while she made bread. As boy I lived not too far from Bourda Ground so I was there when the West Indians played, when fans almost set a stand alight after the Australians didn't come out to play allegedly because of field condition but everyone knew it was because they had been partying and drinking hard the previous night. I used to go to cricket with my dad, who was fanatical enthusiast, and everything that has been said today has been echoed in the sense that for my dad cricket was part of a greater achievement, when they were, in the late 50s, early 60s, fighting against colonialism. And to beat the English at Lords, as I said, he left my mum and three-month year-old daughter to go to Lords to see the West Indies play.

But having come back over here in 1986 my passion was no less. I mean, it meant a lot to me, and it was at the time when there were few, in my view, good things about West Indians in the public eye. There was of course the Brixton riots, then Winston Silcott affair, and there was always something negative in the media about blacks and West Indians around that time. And when the West Indies thrashed England it was the one opportunity you could go to work with a broad smile, from ear to ear, and no one would have anything to say to you. While I know that players of that era knew what that meant to us over here I don't think a lot of the players in the current team, really appreciate what that meant us. So it meant a hell of a lot to me. And I remember when I was at Law School Colin Bobb-Semple was teaching me, and the West Indies lost to Kenya in that World Cup match. I remember staying home and crying – I was probably about 31 then – crying like a child when we lost to Kenya, and I couldn't go to college for about two or three days because I felt so sick.

**Colin Babb**

Are you talking about the '83 final?

**Dingaan Stephenson**

No, it wasn't a final. We didn't get to the final. But I cried for that also.

**Colin Babb**

Oh, against Kenya. Sorry, I'm sorry.

**Dingaan Stephenson**

Against Kenya in 96, yeah. I couldn't face the fact of having to go in and meet my colleagues and have them laud it over me. So cricket, again, for us who came back in the 80s, had a similar passion,

and now we can barely look at the television when we see the current state of affairs. So, it meant – it was just as significant to, I think, the post-Windrush people who grew up over here as it was to those who didn't grow up over here.

### **Colin Babb**

Thank you. That's a fantastic contribution. I just want to make that connection with that shirt. I bought this shirt about six or seven years ago, in Regent Street. I don't know where you got yours.

### **Dingaen Stephenson**

The same shop in Regent Street, near Camp Street, on the left-hand side, downstairs. I have three of these shirts, a white, a blue in short sleeve and a white long sleeve.

### **Colin Babb**

Fantastic. Interesting, the things you were saying there about your connection with cricket and everything else, but you talked about crying when the West Indies lost to Kenya. One or two people who I interviewed for my last book, *1973 and Me*, were telling me how they were crying when the West Indies lost to India in the '83 World Cup final. And when I interviewed one person last year about that, I think he was still crying, which is quite incredible. But you know, that's a passion for cricket. I spoke to Winston Davis about that. Some of you may remember Winston, who was a fast bowler from Saint Vincent. Sadly he now lives in a wheelchair, and he revealed to me that one or two players – he didn't name them – were in tears in the dressing room after the '83 defeat. Thank you for that. There are one or two things coming in. I think there may be one more question. Are we okay to do one more, Philip?

### **Philip Murphy**

One final question.

### **Colin Babb**

Tony Bowry's here. I know he's from the Leeds club, and he's a Kittitian. Tony, do you want to fire a quick question?

### **Tony Bowry**

It's Tony Bowry here, from Leeds Caribbean. I'd just like to add that, since we had that all-conquering West Indian side in the 70s and 80s, we've had nothing underneath that, in terms of development, to copy what went on in the past. As we know, most of the team that represented the West Indies in those days, 80% of them was playing county cricket. So county cricket has got a lot to do with the development of our players when it comes to playing at the highest level. Can we ever see that happening again?

### **Colin Babb**

Well, I know in 1973 it was the first time a touring team in England – and that was a West Indian team – had 11 players, all of whom were playing for a county club. That was in 1973, in the second Test, at Edgbaston, when Vanburn Holder replaced Inshan Ali, because Inshan didn't play for a county. Now, if we look from there to now, where there are very few players on the county circuit, I would like to suggest maybe that's because there's so many different ways a West Indian cricketer can earn their money now, particularly in the T20 leagues. If you're earning all that money playing

–well, I don't want to denigrate T20 cricket, but quick-fire cricket – why would you want to play on the county circuit and work harder and get much less money?

**John Holder**

But there was opposition to the West Indies. A number of – when the West Indies were thrashing England people like Fred Trueman, Trevor Bailey, etc, commentating, they were opposed to our boys coming to England to learn the trade and then beat England, so there was a deliberate ploy; there was a deliberate decision not to engage West Indians in playing county cricket because we were beating them.

**Colin Babb**

Yeah, you're right, John. Yeah, there was a lot of discussion around that time. It seemed to be quite polarised between those who wanted these players to stay because they benefitted the game, and I know I spoke to Dennis Amiss about that, and he says that playing with Rohan Kanhai and Deryck Murray improved his game, so it seemed a bit of a conflict between some of the players and some of the administrators. But you're right: that was probably the birth of a bit of discontent about West Indian players playing in the English county game. But as Tony is saying, I think now the reasons why they don't play has broadened out a lot more. And I don't think you get many top-class cricketers playing a full season in county cricket because there's so many other distractions for top-class cricketers. How many would play a full season of first-class cricket in England? I would say not many, unless you count the South Africans, who seemed to come here on the Kolpak route, and end up leaving South African cricket to play for the counties.

**John Holder**

But I think that part of the problem – reason why we don't have many West Indians in county cricket is the standard of cricket in the Caribbean is not very good, and I think that's one of the reasons why the West Indies team is not successful.

**Colin Babb**

You're talking about the first-class game, the long form game, aren't you?

**John Holder**

Yeah.

**Tony Bowry**

I agree with John on that point, because a lot of the youngsters who come over to England during the summer from the Caribbean – they don't play enough cricket in the Caribbean. Some of the guys who come over, when you ask them, 'How much cricket have you played this year in the island that you came from?' they'll tell you something like, 'Less than 10 games.' 'What sort of stats have you got?' And they can't tell you what stats they've got. They can't tell you how many wickets they took, how much runs they made, what was their bowling or batting average, but when they get here they're playing about 30 games, at least 30 games a season, and that is the difference.

**Colin Babb**

Can I just say something else, sorry, before we move on to wrapping up? A message from Colin Pryce in the feed here, which I've just noticed. Sorry, Colin, it took me a while to get to it, but

definitely it would be worth everybody paying a much delayed respect to Keith van Anderson. I think some of you may remember him as the Pipe Man.

**John Holder**

Absolutely.

**Colin Babb**

He travelled to watch the West Indies through thick and thin, through the thick years and the thin years, and the good years and the bad years, who passed away. I think he passed away last year, right?

**John Holder**

Yeah.

**Colin Babb**

Yes. So, thanks for Colin to for reminding us to pay attention to his legacy as a supporter, and I did actually make a point of writing about that in *1973 and Me* as well. Philip, is that it?

## Closing Remarks

**Philip Murphy**

That's pretty much it. I can see that Sue has turned her video on. Sue, would you like to say anything at the very end?

**Sue Onslow**

I just wanted to endorse what everyone has said in the chat line of what a fantastic, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, enjoyable discussion this has been. It really has ranged across the board, emphasising how important sport, and particularly cricket is, in building identity, building confidence, building communities and sustaining them. So thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone. And a particular –

**Philip Murphy**

And we've done a lot of witness seminars at the Institute, but this is the first time that we've done something on Zoom and had all our speakers Celebrities Squares-style – that ages me a little bit – up on the screen. But I'll tell you something that almost invariably happens when you get a group of people together who have a shared experience. There is a sort of magic that happens, that people's memories spark off one another, and in a way, however excellent an individual interview might be, this has a kind of magic of its own, and I can't tell you how much I enjoyed that and how valuable it is. We're recording it and we're going to transcribe it and make this session available. I'm sure it will be – so many people will watch it with huge fascination, and not only scholars but anyone interested in the game of cricket. So thank you all so much, and if this has sparked memories, we have an ongoing mission at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies to record the experiences of the Windrush generation and their descendants. And this is an ongoing project for us, so please keep in touch with us.

It's been wonderful to have you all together. Thank you, Juanita, so much. Thank you, Lizzy, for suggesting this in the first place. Thank you so much, Colin, for fantastically well-informed chairing. Juanita, would you like to say – would you like to come in?

**Juanita Cox**

A very quick thing that I needed to say, is that everybody who's contributed from the audience I'll need to contact you to get permissions to actually use your comments. So if you don't mind, you'll be hearing from me. If you've left your emails with us, I'll be in touch. But thank you so much to everyone; it's been amazing.

**Philip Murphy**

Thank you, everyone.

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