

10 for 66

AND ALL THAT



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10 for 66

AND ALL THAT



ARTHUR MAILEY



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
BY THE AUTHOR

Foreword by Mike Coward




ALLEN & UNWIN

This edition published in 2008
First published in 1958

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National Library of Australia
Cataloguing-in-Publication entry:

Mailey, Arthur.
10 for 66 and all that.

ISBN 978 1 74175 532 9 (hbk.)

Mailey, Arthur.
Cricket players—Australia—Biography.
Sportswriters—Australia—Biography.
Cricket—Australia.

796.358092

Internal design by Joanna Palmer
Illustrations by Arthur Mailey
Set in 11/15 pt Warnock Pro by Midland Typesetters, Australia
Printed in China at Everbest Printing Co.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

GLOUCESTERSHIRE V AUSTRALIA

At Cheltenham, August 1921

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

(2nd Innings)



C.S. Barnett b. Mailey	25
A.G. Dipper b. Mailey	4
R.P. Keigwin c. Mayne b. Mailey	65
H. Smith c. & b. Mailey	0
W.R. Hammond b. Mailey	1
F.G. Robinson b. Mailey	4
W.H. Rowlands b. Mailey	23
F.J. Seabrook c. & b. Mailey	30
P. Mills c. Pellew b. Mailey	3
C. Parker n.o.	8
J.G. Bessant b. Mailey	0
Extras	<u>12</u>
Total	175

In Gloucestershire's first innings Warwick Armstrong, going on early, took 2–53; Mailey, given the ball when the tail-enders batted, got away with 3–21.

In the county's second innings, Armstrong, after being belted around for a few overs, threw the ball to Mailey saying rather sarcastically:

'Here, you can have a go at the good batsmen now and I'll have a crack at the tail-enders.'

RESULT: 10 FOR 66 AND ALL THAT—and all this.

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FOREWORD

to the 2008 edition

BY MIKE COWARD

Years ago, during a television tribute to composer Stephen Sondheim, singer Dorothy Loudon paused during a key change of 'Broadway Baby' and thundered: 'I bet you didn't know what you had when you wrote this one, Steve.' As obscure as it may seem, this quotation sprang to mind as I happily revisited *10 for 66 and All That*, which Arthur Mailey wrote in the autumn of a remarkable life and saw published just nine years before his death at the age of 80.

Perhaps the wisdom gained from living so many summers gave Mailey an inkling that his uplifting story and observations on cricket would comfortably stand the test of time. Much like the game that seduced him from boyhood, there is a simple beauty, a joyfulness and timelessness about Mailey's work.

10 for 66 and All That is best known for containing arguably the most beautiful and poignant observation in all Australian cricket writing. Recounting his dismissal of his childhood god, Victor Trumper, Mailey wrote: 'I felt like a boy who had killed a dove.'

These few unforgettable words open a window to the soul of one of the most endearing characters in Australian cricket: one who did not take life or himself or his art too seriously.

10 for 66 and All That

More than anything, it was his generosity of spirit and heartfelt gratitude for the smallest of blessings that enabled him to rise from a humble dwelling with hessian walls in Waterloo in inner southern Sydney and to scale the heights of sport and society.

He had no need to call upon a colleague from the fourth estate he served so admirably as a cartoonist and journalist to write the foreword to the first edition of *10 for 66 and All That*. Bob Menzies, a friend and admirer who also happened to be the prime minister of the country, undertook the task. What better illustration could there be of the egalitarianism of Australia in the 1950s? Such was his faith in Mailey and his abilities on and beyond the cricket ground that Menzies penned his very warm foreword in March 1956 when *10 for 66 and All That* was still a work in progress. Describing Mailey as ‘one of the great human beings of cricket; the genial humorist even to the onlooker’, he foretold a ‘delicious book’. And he was right.

There is, however, much more to the work than its deliciousness. Most striking to cricket’s cognoscenti is the book’s relevance today in a country unrecognisable from Mailey’s time. With a deft touch and the wit and self-deprecating humour for which he was renowned, Mailey addressed matters that have so often preoccupied his successors—be they cricket players or craftsmen poised above a sketchpad or keyboard.

When he was plying his trade as a leg-spin and googly bowler the ball was bigger, the stumps were smaller and, to use his words, ‘there was no offside l.b.w. concession’. He had to bite his tongue when Herbert Sutcliffe, to name but one distinguished batsman of the day, pushed his pads out to counter a ‘wrong ’un’ pitched fractionally outside the off

stump and spinning quickly and so threateningly towards the middle stump.

Clearly of the view that the bowler was a persecuted species Mailey roguishly and unapologetically flouted new rules that forbade using resin to allow a better grip on the ball and lifting the seam with the fingernail.

The self-confessed peaceful and meek citizen became a rebel. Indeed he confides that his captain Herby Collins was a co-conspirator and that England captain J.W.H.T. (Johnny won't hit today) Douglas was responsible for similar acts of skulduggery. How naïve to think such trickery is new. Indeed, the reading of his chapter 'Tinkering with the Rules' will no doubt bring a wry smile to the face of many contemporary players and to erstwhile England captain Mike Atherton in particular. Atherton had dust not resin in his pocket at Lord's in 1994.

Aside from ball-tampering, the greatest blight on the game since the World Series Cricket revolution of the 1970s redefined every aspect of the game has been match-fixing and the gambling of sums of money almost beyond calculation and imagination. The monetary stakes were not as high but nevertheless Mailey and Collins were exposed to these nefarious practices at Adelaide in January 1925 during an Ashes series. With the England team requiring 27 runs to win with two wickets in hand on the seventh day of the match, Collins was visited by 'a fabulous-looking racecourse man'. Collins said to Mailey: 'This fellow says it's worth a hundred quid if we lose the match. Let's throw him downstairs.' The man took his leave before he was manhandled and Australia won by eleven runs.

10 for 66 and All That

As Mailey observed, there were times when Collins, bookmaker and gambler, found gambling repulsive. Mailey's respect and affection for Collins is beautifully encapsulated in his description of his favourite captain: 'Herby was an enigma, a paradox, a riddle, a parcel of sharp contrasts, a model of inconsistency, a collection of discords, which harmonised and made an interesting and likeable character.'

The player of the 21st century will find *10 for 66 and All That* as instructive as it is entertaining. And he will also find it inspirational, for Mailey defied odds beyond the understanding of the middle class of the modern era to prosper at a game which gave him an identity and, ultimately, such a fulfilling life.

Of course, each generation is sufficiently arrogant to believe it is breaking new ground and taking the game where it has never been before. *10 for 66 and All That* exposes this as a falsehood, and provides richly rewarding insights into the game as it was governed, played and followed in less complicated days. The modernists believe they were responsible for structured team meetings and the forensic analysis of opposing players. Not so. Mailey and his colleagues spent countless hours away from the middle theorising how best to combat the master batsman Jack Hobbs—who in 2000 was adjudged by the *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack* to be the third greatest cricketer of the 20th century behind Don Bradman and Garfield Sobers.

With an acid touch that would no doubt be heartily endorsed by Clarrie Grimmett, 'Chuck' Fleetwood-Smith, Bill O'Reilly, and, latterly, Shane Warne, Mailey bemoaned the ineptitude of captains unable to set a field for a leg-spinner and decried the ubiquitous medium-pace trundler and his deleterious impact on the game. With very few exceptions the

great spin bowlers of cricket were personalities and men of character—not always pleasant but invariably interesting.

Mailey may well have been irked by Warne's well-documented excesses away from cricket but he would have revelled in his extraordinary ability, enjoyed aspects of his rebelliousness and applauded his preparedness to help friend and foe alike. When once reproached for sharing tips with England's leg-spinner Ian Peebles, Mailey made it clear that his art was international. Warne was of the same view and possibly has never received appropriate acknowledgement for the assistance he rendered leg-spinners the world over throughout his career. In this regard he was as selfless as Mailey.

10 for 66 and All That is abundantly rich in humour and Mailey paints wonderful pictures of the giants of the game, dissecting their personalities and techniques along the way. Mailey's philosophy of life and cricket is for the ages. He was eternally grateful for the good things that cricket gave him and with characteristic generosity passed it on. And the cricket community is greatly in the debt of Allen & Unwin, which is in the happy position to ensure it is passed on further. That Mailey's story is as fresh, uplifting and rewarding as it was in 1958 says much about the glorious game and this fine man who adorned it so.

Long may *10 for 66 and All That* sustain us.

Mike Coward
Sydney, January 2008

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FOREWORD

to the 1958 edition

BY THE RIGHT HON. R.G. MENZIES
P.C., C.H., Q.C., LL.M., Prime Minister of Australia

Humour which, according to the Oxford Press, is 'that quality of action, speech or writing which excites amusement' is at one and the same time universal and local. It is universal because in all countries laughter is one of the saving and balancing faculties of mankind. This is, no doubt, as true among the Esquimos as it is among the Hottentots. But humour is also local, because what is funny in one country is frequently a matter of gravity in others. Hollywood's humour, which in my own lifetime began with the excruciating wit of the well-thrown custard-pie, has now developed the mystery of the rapid fire and (to the foreigner) unintelligible wisecrack. The wit of the Frenchman, who loves nothing so much as a crisp epigram, is quite different from that of the Englishman who, particularly in the late eighteenth century, loved nothing more than a whimsical epitaph. The sophisticated word-turning of the New Yorker has little in common with the earthy chuckles of Yorkshire and Lancashire.

There have been those who used wit when the sun shone, and who reserved the accents of high tragedy for the tragic occasion. On the contrary there have been those (and there were many of them in England during the Blitz) who

could take their pleasures sadly but met their disasters with defiant fun.

An essay could be written on such matters. But I am not writing an essay. I am introducing a book by Arthur Mailey.

Arthur Mailey was a great cricketer; one of the bowlers of the century. He was a slow bowler. He was not as slow as J.M. Barrie claims to have been; but he was a slow bowler of ingenious prodigality. He didn't bowl to keep an end but to begin, for the batsman, an ending. The simple and opulent full toss outside the leg stump, duly despatched with eagerness to the leg boundary, was the mere preliminary to the ball which looked like a high and floating full toss but ended by dropping and twisting and letting the wicket-keeper come into his own.

But why should I speak of Mailey the cricketer? More competent people have done this, and even more will, I hope, as the years go on and as memory mellows with the years, do it again.

The truth is that my friend, Arthur, didn't ask me to do this job because he respected my expert cricketing opinion; behind his puckish façade he has far too much sense for that. Arthur Mailey asked me to write a foreword for what I know will be a most delicious book for two admirable reasons. One is that, though he is no political partisan and perhaps votes against me when the spirit (or some other ingredient) moves him, he feels in the goodness of his heart that it would do an Australian Prime Minister no harm if it became known that he was on friendly terms with a famous cricketer. The second reason is that he thinks that I understand something of his nature as a human being. Both reasons are valid. Of the first, I need say no more. Of the second, all I need say is that no living man has had

more human benefit from great cricketers and great cricket than I have. And, from what I have said, it will be obvious that I am Arthur Mailey's debtor. For the truth is that cricket is a game not only of skill but of character. It is not something to be hustled through. It requires time, the setting and the delicacies of art to achieve its full expression. That is why every great cricketer is not only a member of a team but an individual endowed with the fascinating faculty of conveying by bat or ball or gesture his personality, far across the distant ropes or pickets and into the very hearts and minds of the spectators.

Arthur Mailey was one of the great human beings of cricket; the genial humorist even to the onlooker; the sardonic humorist even to the Woodfulls and the Ponsfords. I was just about to think of him in the past tense, when I saw him at the Testimonial Match to himself and Johnny Taylor on the Sydney ground come out at the interval and please the vast assemblage, including myself, by knocking over Johnny's middle stump. Many years as it may be since Arthur Mailey bowled in a match, it was fascinating to see him take the ball and spin it up from his hand and amble up to the wicket and take the middle of the house. He was dressed in ordinary clothes, as Johnny was. The whole thing was dramatic and delightful. To explain Arthur Mailey's character to you all I need say is that when he finally came back and up to the Committee Box he looked at us and said, 'You know, I made a great mistake that time I took four wickets for 362 on the Melbourne ground; I should have bowled with my coat on.'

One of the glories of being a lover of cricket is that one never meets an old cricketer of international renown without mentally recapturing a sort of cinematograph of him playing at

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his best. But the even greater glory is to enjoy the friendship of a great and famous cricketer who touched nothing in the game that he did not adorn, and whose rich and chuckling humour made friends not only in his own time and on his own playing fields but in the memory of many thousands to whom he brought admiration, pleasure and a rich contentment.

R.G. Menzies
28 March 1956

1.
DREAM
DAYS

Why did I take up cricket? What cell in a partly developed brain caused me to possess a fanatical ambition to succeed at cricket? When and where did it happen?

It could not have been prompted by a desire to become rich or glamorous, two of many states which to my young mind were far beyond the reach of a slum kid like myself. Even if I had cherished such desires they would have been quickly dissipated, so far as cricket was concerned, after I saw one of my heroes, Reg Duff, meandering down the Chinese quarters in Haymarket, Sydney, shabbily dressed and with his hair poking through his straw hat. I had seen pictures of this compact figure, wearing the short, turned-up-at-the-ends Kaiser-like moustache, which made his handsome features even more attractive, opening Australia's innings with the great Victor Trumper. Seen in the street that day he looked merely forlorn—certainly there was no wealth or glamour about him—but the sight did not depress or disappoint me. That dapper little man had walked out with Trumper which was reason enough for him to remain one of my idols, if only a lesser one.

No, it was something else that made me want to become a cricketer, something far more intangible than a desire for wealth and fame. And, when you think of it, what prompts a person to try to succeed at anything?

At what age does one get a desire to become a collector of butterflies or postage stamps or pewters; to climb Everest, swim the English Channel or hurl the discus further than anyone else?

These ambitions are seldom hereditary. My father didn't know the first thing about cricket; the first game he condescended to hesitate in his walk to watch was a minor one in which I played. As far as I know nobody on either side of my family had played *any* game, let alone cricket. Prenatal influence certainly cannot be blamed because my mother, I remember, seemed to spend all her time cooking over an open fireplace or washing clothes in the backyard, sixteen feet by sixteen in area. She had no time to think of frivolities like cricket.

Therefore, the mystery of the origin of my desire for cricket must remain as obscure as the germ which sent the brave Hillary to the top of Everest or the curious Picard to the bottom of the ocean.

My environment, from the days when instinct and reason were suspicious of each other, pointed the way to crime or at least to the life of a confidence man, rather than that of a cricketer. There was sufficient poverty and frustration to destroy the germ of ambition in any form.

Even a better sense of values would have been a hindrance rather than a blessing, causing me to be discontented with the life around me and sowing a bitter envy for the possessions of other people.