



BRADMAN AND THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD

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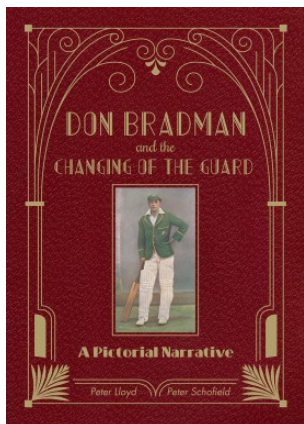
Published: 2021

Pages: 512

Author: Schofield, Peter and Lloyd, Peter

Publisher: Private

Rating: 5 stars



Does cricket literature need another book dedicated to the subject of Donald Bradman? Probably not is my view on that, so it is just as well that the two Peters, Lloyd and Schofield, have not produced one. Of course it is true that the great man's name figures in the book's title, and then crops up on almost every page, and regularly looms large in the narrative. But this isn't really a book about Bradman, as there is very much more to it than him.

In fact it is somewhat understating the position to describe *Bradman and the Changing of the Guard* simply as a book. It might be fairer to describe it as a work of art. Printed on high quality paper, bound in leather and presented in a custom made slip case it really is stunning to look at. And on this occasion its beauty is not just skin deep. Every single one of the 512 numbered pages and another 24 of preliminaries, are printed in full colour, and the font and design are, in keeping with the period the narrative covers, art deco at its very finest.

But, I suppose, anything that has the appearance of a book has to be read as well as admired, so if not the man who retired with that 99.94 average what is *Bradman and the Changing of the Guard* all about? The answer to that is it is two things. The first is a history of Australian cricket between the wars, primarily the international game, which, of course, is why the name Bradman in the title is entirely appropriate.

It is a decent history too, which combines a detailed summary of a period with which most readers will already be familiar with some astute observations and one or two, if not exactly revelations, then original ideas. But even that isn't the main point of the project. The real purpose of *Bradman and the Changing of the Guard* is to showcase the many hundreds of illustrations it contains.

Some cricket tragi-comics collect books, and many of them are also in the habit of acquiring tour brochures, pamphlets and anything else that concentrates on the written word. Others go in for cards, be they of the cigarette, trade or post variety. There are cricket themed philatelists, collectors of photographs and scorecards. Then there are ceramics, ornaments, items of equipment and clothing. Finally there are the unique historical records, such as original scorebooks and items of correspondence.

To illustrate what is involved the Bodyline series of 1932/33, unsurprisingly, gets a chapter to itself, 34 pages long. I much enjoyed the narrative and, as a man who has read every single account of that fascinating series, can say that I suspect whichever of the two authors was responsible for this one has done so as well. It is an excellent summary. And the illustrations? I have totted them up, and there are 76 altogether. Photographs account for 24 of those, and assorted items of printed ephemera another 14. There are ten scorebook pages, seven cartoons, six booklets, five newspaper images, three cards, two books and five other sundry items of memorabilia.

To go with the dedicated chapter there is something more on Bodyline, and more specifically Bradman's relationship with the English tactics. The vehicle for that is a superb foreword from a man who knew Bradman, veteran journalist Mike Coward, who gives a further demonstration, if such were needed after his superb biography of Frank Tarrant, that anno domini cannot of itself dull a fine writer's talent. There is a second foreword as well, from historian Bernard Whimpress, and that too is well worth reading albeit it does not quite have the impact of Coward's masterpiece.

And the rub? Well there are two actually. The first is the price, although the opulence of the finished product is such that that can't really be jibbed at, and I would be surprised if the book generated any revenue beyond covering its costs. The other is the availability. The book appears in a limited edition of 117 copies and they have all been sold already, which is not to say the book is unprocurable, but anyone interested had better get on to [Boundary Books](#) or [Roger Page](#) pretty damned quick, because one or other of those emporia are the only places you are going to find a copy of *Bradman and the Changing of the Guard*.