



Ashes Fever 2009

The much anticipated home Ashes series, England v. Australia, starts on 8 July. *GSM* correspondent Peter Jennings FRPSL, FRGS, helped Isle of Man Post produce a special miniature sheet, 'England v. Australia 2009', to commemorate what promises to be a great test series. Here is his exclusive report

Cricket and stamp collecting make a winning combination. There is nothing better on a hot summer day than hearing the sound of leather on willow, whether on the village green or at one of the famous grounds in this country or throughout the cricketing world.

Watching test cricket is an absorbing, engaging and sometimes a deeply frustrating pastime, because the whole character of a game can suddenly change in just one six-ball over; hinge moments of glory, or disaster, depending on your flag.

There is something magic in an Ashes series between England and Australia that captures the imagination not just of cricket enthusiasts but even of those with little or no interest in or appreciation of the game.

Cricket used to be a quintessential English game played by gentlemen. But no more. Television has played its part in widening the interest in cricket and in particular test matches featuring England.

The interest is not confined to England but permeates the countries listed in the Stanley Gibbons Commonwealth Catalogue and all the countries which are members of the ICC (International Cricket Council)—founded on 15 June 1909. Complete strangers speak to each other in airport lounges and ask; 'What's the latest score?'

Cricket and Stampex

This year being 'Ashes' year, the Village Green area at Spring Stampex 2009, at the Business Design Centre, Islington, featured some wonderful displays of 'Cricket and Stamps', never seen before in public. It was a winner! Many congratulations to the Stampex Committee, Chapman and

Mitchell Covers (Terry Mitchell and John Chapman) and the MCC Museum at Lord's Cricket Ground and others on this initiative to attract and interest new thematic collectors and non-stamp collectors alike.

Among the well-known professional cricketers to visit Stampex was Geraint Jones (England and Kent) who kept wicket and scored runs at vital moments during the triumphant 2005 Ashes series. He didn't have a particular good series with the gloves but he clung on to the one chance that really mattered, at the end of England's sensational two-run win at Edgbaston.



Illustration Geraint Jones (England and Kent) (left) pictured with Terry Mitchell, (Chapman and Mitchell Covers) during Spring Stampex 2009. Picture by Peter Jennings FRPSL, FRGS

Isle of Man Post

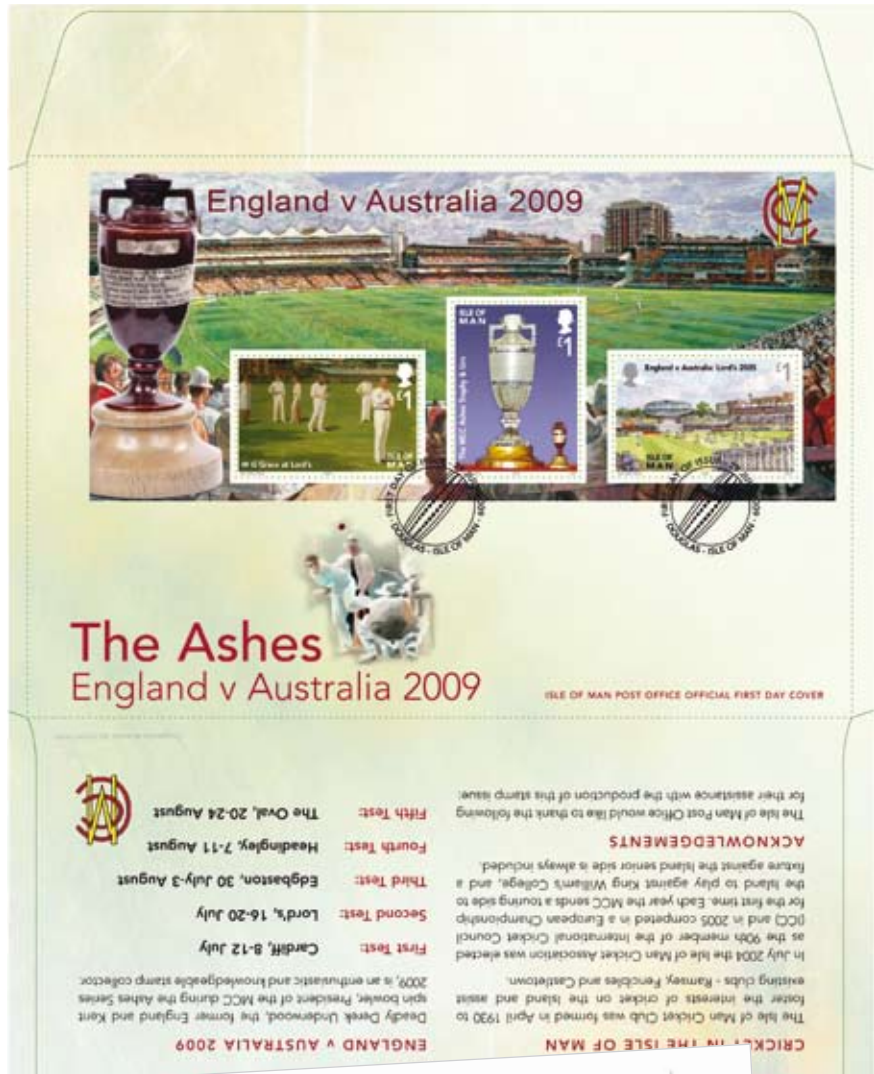
The Village Green inspired me during the opening day of Stampex, 25 February 2009. I learned that Royal Mail had turned down the opportunity to produce a special stamp or miniature sheet to mark the Ashes series 2009.

Overnight I worked on a concept for a stamp and miniature sheet that I would like to see issued by a Postal Authority, preferably one that required Royal approval. The following morning, during a pre-arranged meeting with the Dot Tilbury and Maxine Cannon from the Isle of Man Philatelic Bureau, I suggested my idea. They were enthusiastic and asked me to email my proposals, which I did on 16 March.

Meanwhile, back at Stampex, I involved Terry Mitchell and John Chapman, who produce outstanding limited-edition cricket covers in association with the MCC. Both Terry and John are big cricket fans. Terry is a Northants Panel umpire. John had been involved in playing and coaching but now confines himself to being an active spectator. I worked with them in masterminding what I hoped would be an extremely successful and worthy memento of the Ashes series this summer.

The superb Isle of Man England v. Australia 2009 miniature sheet containing three special postage stamps will appeal to stamp collectors and cricket enthusiasts alike. It will rekindle vivid memories of great cricket matches of the past. Non-collectors stumped for new ideas could do no better than open a new innings: 'Cricket and Stamps'.

Final proofs of the Isle of Man special first day cover and presentation pack
Opposite page: *The miniature sheet*



The Ashes
England v Australia 2009

CRICKET IN THE ISLE OF MAN
The Isle of Man Cricket Club was formed in April 1900 to cater for the interests of cricket on the island and assist existing clubs: Ramsey, Foxcreek and Castle.

In July 2004 the Isle of Man Cricket Association was elected as the 40th member of the International Cricket Council (ICC) and in 2005 competed in a European Championship for the first time. Each year MCC sends a touring side to the island to play against King William's College, and a fixture against the island senior side is always included.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
The Isle of Man Post Office would like to thank Chapman and Mitchell, Cannon and MCC for their assistance with the production of this special issue.

ENGLAND v AUSTRALIA 2009

First Test:	Cardiff, 8-12 July
Second Test:	Lord's, 16-20 July
Third Test:	Edgbaston, 30 July-3 August
Fourth Test:	Headingley, 7-11 August
Fifth Test:	The Oval, 20-24 August



The Ashes
England v Australia 2009

CRICKET, LOVELY CRICKET!
The Isle of Man Post Office is pleased to present a set of stamps featuring Cricket in association with the Marylebone Cricket Club and the Isle of Man Cricket Association. We are delighted to feature the artwork of James Cannon and Maxine Cannon. Each artwork is highly inspired within the world of cricket.

W G GRACE
The legendary Dr William Gilbert Grace, (1848-1915) was the outstanding English all-rounder and one of the greatest batsmen and bowlers who captained England and Gloucestershire. Grace, who qualified as a medical practitioner in 1871, was known as 'The Doctor'. He played first-class cricket for 40 seasons, 1866-1906. Only Bradman stands beside him in cricket's history.

W G Grace - depicted on the first stamp - shown in a painting: *Batting at Lord's Cricket Ground in 1895, played for the MCC, 1868-1906. Gloucestershire, 1875-1899, and London County, 1880-1904. He represented England for 24 seasons.*

MARYLEBONE CRICKET CLUB (THE MCC)
Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) was founded in 1790. Before their arrival and excitement played their cricket at White Conduit Field, at Minchingham, London. Cricket was considered a merely sport for the elite who asked Thomas Lord, a banker with White Conduit CC, to set up a new private ground, Lord leased a ground on Dorset Fields in Marylebone - now Dorset Square.

The first match was played 31 May 1817 and Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) was formed. After a short stay at North Bank, Regent's Park, between 1817 and 1818, Lord's moved to a new rural ground in St John's Wood during 1814. Lord's cricket ground, depicted on the third stamp, in a photograph by Karen Nisbett, remains the home of MCC, known as MCC's Young Cricketers' Area for 2007.

THE MCC ASHES TROPHY & URN
In 1988 MCC commissioned a Waterford crystal trophy modelled on the world famous Ashes Urn - both the trophy and the urn are shown on the second stamp in the miniature sheet - which is now presented to the winner of each Ashes series. The trophy was first presented to the Australians after their victory in the 1988-89 series.

The term 'Ashes' was first used after England lost to Australia for the first time on home soil - at The Oval on 20 August 1902. A day later, the Sporting Times carried a mock obituary to English cricket that concluded: 'The body will be cremated and the ashes taken to Australia.'

A few weeks later an English team captained by the Hon. the 8th Duke of Devonshire set off to tour Australia. The side lost the first of the three scheduled Tests but won the next two. Before Christmas 1902 a fun match was played at the Metropolitan Ground of St William Clark, President of the Melbourne Cricket Club. Lord's Clarke burnt a ball and presented the 'Ashes' in an urn to the England Captain as a memento of his visit.

8th subsequently took the urn back to England, and following his death his widow presented the urn to MCC, where it remains permanently in the Museum at Lord's.

The iconic Waterford urn arrived at Lord's in 1929 and spent its days in the Long Room. It was moved to the museum when that closed in 1953. It has rarely moved from Lord's, but in 2005 it was displayed in an Australian city during a unique 14 week exhibition tour. The Ashes Urn, which was never intended as a trophy, is extremely fragile. Recognising the need for a trophy for the series MCC in 1988 commissioned a magnificent Waterford Crystal Trophy for the 1988-89 Ashes Series. To mark the summer of 2009 only one England Captain - Michael Vaughan of Notingham - has had the honour of lifting the trophy, during the never-to-be-forgotten English summer of 2005.



Marylebone Cricket Club

Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) was founded in 1787. Before then aristocrats and noblemen played their cricket in White Conduit Fields at Islington, London. Cricket was considered a manly sport for the elite who asked Thomas Lord, a bowler with White Conduit CC, to set up a new private ground. Lord leased a ground on Dorset Fields in Marylebone—now Dorset Square.

The first match was played 31 May 1787 and Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) was formed. A year later, it laid down a Code of Laws, requiring the wickets to be pitched 22 yards apart and detailing how players could be given out. MCC remains the custodian and arbiter of Laws relating to cricket around the world.

After a short stay at Marylebone Bank, Regent's Park, between 1811 and 1813, Lord's moved to a new rural ground in St John's Wood during 1814. Lord's cricket ground—depicted on an engaging painting by Karen Neale—remains the home of the MCC to this day.

Karen, MCC young Cricket Artist for 2005, based at Lord's Cricket Ground, told GSM: 'My passion is sketching and painting the world around me.'

The MCC Ashes Trophy and Urn

In 1998 the MCC commissioned a Waterford crystal trophy modelled on the world famous Ashes urn—both the trophy and the urn are shown on the second stamp in the miniature sheet—which is now presented to the winner of each Ashes series. This trophy was first presented to the Australians after their success in the 1998–99 series.

The term 'Ashes' was first used after England lost to Australia—for the first time on home soil—at The Oval on 29 August 1882. A day later, the *Sporting Times* carried a mock obituary to English cricket that concluded: 'The body will be cremated and the ashes taken to Australia'.

A few weeks later an English team captained by the Hon Ivo Bligh (later Lord Darnley), set off to tour Australia. The side lost the first of the three scheduled Tests but won the next two. Before Christmas 1882 a fun match was played at the Rupertswood estate of Lord Clarke, President of the Melbourne Cricket Club. Lady Clarke

burnt a bail and presented the 'Ashes' in an urn to the England Captain as a memento of his visit.

Bligh subsequently took the urn back to England, where it is now owned and displayed by the MCC at Lord's.

The iconic four-inch urn arrived at Lord's in 1929 and went on display in the Long Room. It was moved to the museum when that opened in 1953. It has rarely moved from Lord's, but was displayed in Sydney, Australia, during the bicentennial celebrations during 1988.

The urn is extremely fragile and so the MCC commissioned the magnificent Waterford Crystal Trophy. Up until the summer of 2009 only one England Captain—Michael Vaughan of Yorkshire—has had the honour of lifting the trophy,

during the never-to-be-forgotten English summer of 2005.

Launch at Lord's

The miniature sheet, presentation pack (text by this correspondent) and a special first day cover are being issued by the Isle of Man Post Office on Monday 29 June 2009. The products will be officially launched the following day during a reception in the Long Room at Lord's Cricket Ground. The miniature sheet was designed by Gautam Saha, and printed by BDT in four-colour offset lithography.

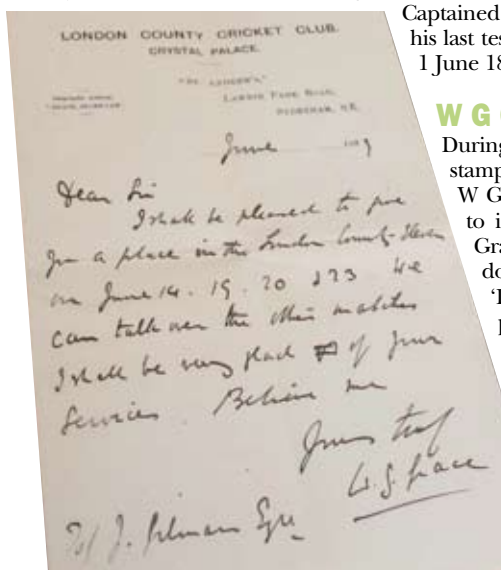
In the presentation pack the Isle of Man Post Office thanked myself, Chapman and Mitchell Covers and the MCC 'for their assistance with the production of this special commemorative stamp issue'.

W G Grace

The legendary Dr William Gilbert Grace (1848–1915) was the outstanding English all-round amateur cricketer—a right-handed batsman and a bowler—who captained England and Gloucestershire. Grace, who qualified as a medical practitioner in 1879, was known as 'the doctor'. He played first-class cricket for 44 seasons, 1865–1908. Only Bradman stands beside him in cricket's history.

Sir Donald George Bradman (1908–2001), the legendary Australian cricketer, widely acknowledged as the greatest batsman of all time, ended his career with a Test batting average of 99.94.

W G Grace—depicted on the first stamp—is shown batting at Lord's Cricket Ground in 1895. He played for the MCC, 1869–1904; Gloucestershire, 1870–1899; and London County, 1900–1904. He made his England Test debut on 6 September 1880 v. Australia. He captained England on 24 occasions and played his last test match, England against Australia, on 1 June 1899.



W G Grace letter

During Stampex, Mark Taylor, the well-known stamp dealer, showed me a letter written by W G Grace that he has kindly allowed me to illustrate in this article. In June 1899, Grace wrote to J Gilman Esq at the London County Cricket Club, Crystal Palace: 'Dear Sir, I shall be pleased to give you a place in the London County Eleven on June 14, 19, 20 & 23. We can talk over the other matches. I shall be very glad of your services. Believe me. Yours Truly, W G Grace.'

Letter from W G Grace written in June 1899.

Picture by Peter Jennings FRPSL, FRGS, reproduced by courtesy of Mark Taylor



Karen Neale holding a cricket cover depicting one of her delightful drawings of Lord's Cricket Ground
Picture by Peter Jennings FRPSL, FRGS

England looked like a team with a purpose against the West Indies, both in the Tests and one-day series. Gifted young players are growing in stature while the two giants, Pietersen and Flintoff, battle for complete fitness.

MCC President

'Deadly' Derek Underwood, the former England and Kent spin bowler and President of the MCC during the Ashes Series 2009, is an enthusiastic and knowledgeable stamp collector.

Underwood was one of the foremost spin bowlers in the world for over a decade, starting from the late 1960s. He made his test debut on 30 June 1966 v. the West Indies and played his last test match on 17 February 1982 against Sri Lanka.

He finished his career just three wickets short of 300 in Test cricket, at the excellent average of 25.83. He famously took the last four Australian wickets in 27 balls in the final half-hour at the end of the fifth Test in 1968, after a heavy thunderstorm on the fifth day had all but ended the match. This squared an Ashes series that Australia were winning 1-0.

Ashley Giles

Ashley Giles, the former England and Warwickshire spin bowler, who played in that victorious England team (now Director of Coaching at Warwickshire County Cricket Club), told *GSM*: 'To play for England in an Ashes Series is a privilege. To win the Ashes is the culmination of childhood dreams.'

In 2005, Giles was named as one of five cricketers of the year by *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack*. In the 2005 Ashes series, Giles captured the wickets of all of the top Australian batsmen at least once during the series. He contributed a Test-best 59 runs and a century partnership with Kevin Pietersen to ensure the draw in the final Test at The Oval and a 2-1 series victory. His 10 wickets in the series came at an average of 57.80.

Giles played 54 Test matches and 62 One Day Internationals for England before being forced to retire due to a recurring hip injury.

Cricket in the Isle of Man

The Isle of Man Cricket Club was formed in April 1930 to foster the interests of cricket on the Island and assist existing clubs—Ramsey, Fencibles and Castletown.

In July 2004 the Isle of Man Cricket Association was elected as the 90th member of the International Cricket Council (ICC) and in 2005 competed in a European Championship for the first time. Each year the MCC sends a touring side to the Island to play against King William's College, and a fixture against the Island senior side is always included.

Sold out

I am completing this article having just returned from Edgbaston where England scored a comprehensive victory over a rather lacklustre West Indies side to win the three-match Nat West Series—reduced to two because the match at Headingley was abandoned without a ball being bowled due to the field of play being waterlogged. Sadly, there were plenty of empty seats in the non-members area of the ground. A home Ashes series is different and tickets for the third Test Match at Edgbaston have long since been sold out.

The Ashes 2009

The Ashes series starts in Cardiff on Wednesday 8 July. Australian players 'go on fire' once they put on the green cap in an Ashes series. They take great pride in representing their country. England will have to fight for every run and every wicket but they will find their own fire too, be sure. It will be 'a close run thing', to quote Wellington, but with every member of the England side playing his full part, and a little bit of luck, I sincerely believe England will win a close and dramatic home Ashes series.

England Winners 2009!

Royal Mail might issue a miniature sheet to complement the 'The Ashes England Winners 2005' sheet released on 6 October 2005 (MS2573). The Isle of Man would have an opportunity to overprint its engaging 'England v. Australia 2009' miniature sheet 'ENGLAND WINNERS'. Cricket, Lovely Cricket!

The Ashes 2009:

- First Test: Cardiff, 8-12 July
- Second Test: Lord's, 16-20 July
- Third Test: Edgbaston, 30 July-3 August
- Fourth Test: Headingley, 7-11 August
- Fifth Test: The Oval, 20-24 August

For further information see the Isle of Man Post website: www.iompost.com
email: stamps@iompost.com