

AUSTRALIA v ENGLAND

Fifth Test Match

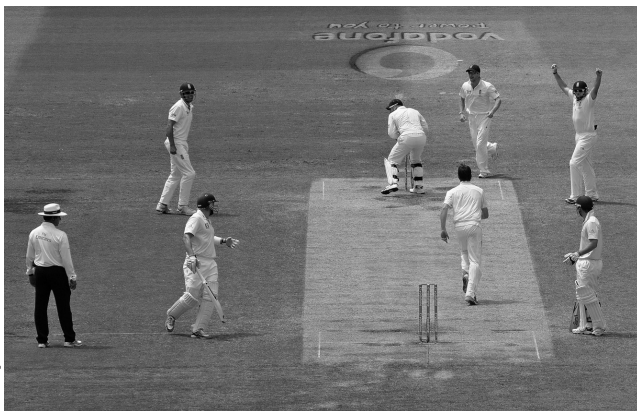
MIKE SELVEY

At Sydney, January 3–7, 2011. England won by an innings and 83 runs. Toss: Australia. Test debuts: M. A. Beer, U. T. Khawaja.

The ground was empty now. It was late as Andrew Strauss led his team, most of them in their cups and deservedly so, to the middle of the Sydney Cricket Ground one last time in order to toast one another and contemplate the immensity of what this band of brothers had achieved. Many hours earlier the side of the ground opposite the pavilion had been heaving with the fervour of thousands of England supporters assembled to witness the completion of another crushing Australian defeat. Then minutes before midday, it fell strangely silent as Billy Cooper, the Barmy Army trumpeter, sounded a ringing Last Post. As he did so, right on cue, the man-mountain Tremlett splattered the stumps of Australia's debutant Michael Beer, to complete victory in the final Test and spark the celebrations: three Australian innings defeats in four matches, an unprecedented humiliation for them on home soil.

This final match was one England simply had to win for total endorsement of the way in which Australia had been outplayed, out-thought, out-selected and out-planned from the day the touring party arrived at the end of October. A draw here would have secured the series although, in the fullness of time, the margin would have hinted at closeness. A loss on the other hand would have been unthinkable, blowing asunder the idea of dominance, and leaving the retention of the Ashes as a technical footnote. Following their Melbourne win, England remained unchanged while the wind of necessity blew through Australia, with the young left-hander Usman Khawaja replacing the injured Ponting, and left-armed Beer a spin substitute for the damaged pace bowler Harris.

England might reflect that, with the exception of a potential blip midway through their own first innings, they had the match under control from the moment that Strauss called



Patrick Eagar

"Shouldn't you be...?" Shane Watson and Phillip Hughes meet at the bowler's end.

SYDNEY NOTES AND QUOTES

As England's New Year celebrations approached in Sydney, *Warmie* bit the dust. Channel 9 ditched Shane Warne's chat show early – its audience had fallen from 850,000 to 500,000. The broadcasters were quick to say that there was no slight on the host, but the resolution of the Ashes before the final Test meant there was no appropriate vehicle for the programme's scheduled concluding episode.

Warne still grabbed a share of centre-stage, though. Even as Alastair Cook was cementing England's position on the second day, the crowd was captivated by the sight of the world's greatest leg-spinner bowling, in front of the Bradman Stand, to *Baywatch* star – and Swann diary contributor – David Hasselhoff. "The Hoff" was in town to promote an ice-cream company, and did not look a natural with bat in hand.

"POWER URN THE GLORY" – The Ashes took on religious connotations in *The Sun's* moment-of-victory headline.

"The joy after Australia's 24-year monopoly on their home turf was there for all to see as the team went into a huddle and danced on the grave of Australian dominance." Derek Pringle, *Daily Telegraph*.

"The Sydney Cricket Ground, that most famous of all Australian sporting stages, stood as a monument to English excellence as this humbled, chastened and – yes – humiliated nation came to terms with the reality that their era of greatness has finally come to a crushing end while another takes hold. The era of English dominance." Paul Newman, *Daily Mail*.

"In 1948 we sent the Invincibles, now we have the Unwatchables." *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane.

"The Australian bobsleigh team have asked the Australian cricket team for advice. They want to learn how to go downhill so fast." One of the jokes doing the rounds after the Sydney Test.

incorrectly at the toss. Whatever induced Clarke, Australia's 43rd Test captain, to bat first is unknown. Perhaps it was the residue of the paranoia existing in Ponting since his 2005 Edgbaston blunder – there had been not one single insertion by Australia since – or maybe a fear of what Swann might do on a fifth-day Sydney pitch. Certainly England looked up and saw overcast skies, looked down and saw dampness and patchiness in the pitch that might make early strokeplay difficult, and were overjoyed to be bowling first. They were right. The first morning was a struggle for survival. If Paul Simon identified 50 ways to leave your lover, then Watson, with great skill and fortitude, found as many to leave the parsimonious England seam bowlers, while Hughes battled against his attacking instincts, surviving to the very stroke of lunch before relapsing when the initial job was all but done and poking a gentle catch to slip.

"Bowling dry" – attritional cricket – had been England's catchphrase throughout the series, and here they were arid. There was a brief flurry from Khawaja to set the Australian crowd aflutter, swivelling as if on castors to pull his second ball to the boundary and racing to 15 from eight deliveries before the reality of international cricket took hold: a further 87 deliveries brought no more than 22 runs, the pressure applied by England bringing his downfall as he tried to sweep Swann and was caught backward of the umpire. The ovation as he returned to the pavilion was disproportionate to the achievement. By then Watson's vigil had ended at slip, and the captain had sliced to gully.

From 134 for four after a day restricted to 59 overs, Australia were able to extend their first innings into the second afternoon thanks to a robust 53 from Johnson – allowed space by generous, ill-conceived field settings – and a ninth-wicket stand of 76 that helped them to 280. England's response was robust against impoverished bowling, Strauss leading the way by flaying dross for 60 from only 58 balls, and Cook digging in once again, to play the innings that was both to seal the series and to establish him as an Ashes phenomenon. Good fortune followed him. When 46, keen not to let Beer settle, he attempted a leg-side

hit, only for the ball to skew to mid-on. But as he walked off, Billy Bowden, suspecting a tight no-ball, called for a replay which confirmed as much. England finished the second day at 167 for three, 113 adrift.

The following morning, looking for the single to take him to his third century of the series, Cook turned Beer low and straight to short leg, where the fielder Hughes at first appeared to claim the catch before indicating he was uncertain whether it had carried. Once more the replay relieved Cook. By then, the nightwatchman Anderson had gone and, shortly after reaching his hundred, Cook lost Collingwood as well, Brigadier Block attempting one last uncharacteristic grand hurrah in what was to prove his last Test innings but falling foul of mid-on instead (he announced his retirement on the fourth morning). At 226 for five, the game was in the balance. These were the situations where once England might have buckled.

Instead, the breach was filled by Cook, whose 189 gave him 766 runs in the series, second only to Wally Hammond (905 in the 1928-29 Ashes) for England; by Bell with 115, his first Ashes hundred, an innings of great significance in terms of his development and one that in the easy richness and variety of strokeplay surely confirmed him as the most naturally gifted English batsman since David Gower; and by Prior, whose 118 came from 130 balls, England's fastest Ashes hundred since Ian Botham's 1981 Old Trafford epic. With help from Bresnan they produced stands of 154 for the sixth wicket, 107 for the seventh, and 102 for the eighth, an unprecedented sequence of century stands for those wickets in Tests. Bell had made 67 when he was given out after an appeal from an inside edge against Watson: the snickometer, by no means infallible, later appeared to confirm it; but the equally temperamental Hot Spot, used for the England referral, detected no contact, so the batsman was reprieved. By the time Hilfenhaus finished the England innings after lunch on the fourth day, it was their highest ever in Australia, beating 636 on the same ground in 1928-29.

But for an unlikely eighth-wicket partnership of 86 between Smith and Siddle, which saw Australia through the extra half-hour claimed by England, the game would have been done inside four days. Australia had subsided to 171 for seven, a decline sparked by the farcical run-out of Watson, the third of the series in which he had been involved but the first where he was the victim. It was then rammed home by the wicked reverse swing – a skill largely beyond the Australian bowlers – of the brilliant Anderson (too soft for the Ashes contest in 2009, according to Justin Langer's notes), Tremlett and Bresnan, and the



Graham Morris

"We did it." Andrew Strauss and Alastair Cook after the Test – and before the celebrations.

ENGLAND'S HIGHEST TEST TOTALS AGAINST AUSTRALIA

903-7 dec	The Oval	1938	620-5 dec	Adelaide	2010-11
658-8 dec	Nottingham	1938	611	Manchester	1964
644	Sydney	2010-11	595-5 dec	Birmingham	1985
636	Sydney	1928-29	592-8 dec	Perth	1986-87
627-9 dec	Manchester	1934	589	Melbourne	1911-12

wicketkeeping of Prior, who equalled the England record of 23 catches in an Ashes series. This was a record series for records.

Man of the Match: A. N. Cook. *Attendance:* 179,004.

Man of the Series (Compton–Miller Medal): A. N. Cook.

Close of play: First day, Australia 134-4 (Hussey 12); Second day, England 167-3 (Cook 61, Anderson 1); Third day, England 488-7 (Prior 54, Bresnan 0); Fourth day, Australia 213-7 (Smith 24, Siddle 17).

Australia

S. R. Watson c Strauss b Bresnan	45	–	run out	38
P. J. Hughes c Collingwood b Tremlett	31	–	c Prior b Bresnan	13
U. T. Khawaja c Trott b Swann	37	–	c Prior b Anderson	21
*M. J. Clarke c Anderson b Bresnan	4	–	c Prior b Anderson	41
M. E. K. Hussey b Collingwood	33	–	c Pietersen b Bresnan	12
†B. J. Haddin c Prior b Anderson	6	–	c Prior b Tremlett	30
S. P. D. Smith c Collingwood b Anderson	18	–	not out	54
M. G. Johnson b Bresnan	53	–	b Tremlett	0
P. M. Siddle c Strauss b Anderson	2	–	c Anderson b Swann	43
B. W. Hilfenhaus c Prior b Anderson	34	–	c Prior b Anderson	7
M. A. Beer not out	2	–	b Tremlett	2
B 5, 1-b 7, w 1, n-b 2	15		B 11, 1-b 4, w 3, n-b 2	20

1/55 (2) 2/105 (1) 3/113 (4)	(106.1 overs)	280	1/46 (1) 2/52 (2)	(84.4 overs)	281
4/134 (3) 5/143 (6) 6/171 (5)			3/117 (3) 4/124 (4)		
7/187 (7) 8/189 (9) 9/265 (8)	10/280 (10)		5/161 (5) 6/171 (6) 7/171 (8)		
			8/257 (9) 9/267 (10) 10/281 (11)		

Anderson 30.1–7–66–4; Tremlett 26–9–71–1; Bresnan 30–5–89–3; Swann 16–4–37–1; Collingwood 4–2–5–1. *Second Innings*—Anderson 18–5–61–3; Tremlett 20.4–4–79–3; Swann 28–8–75–1; Bresnan 18–6–51–2.

England

*A. J. Strauss b Hilfenhaus	60		G. P. Swann not out	36	
A. N. Cook c Hussey b Watson	189		C. T. Tremlett c Haddin b Hilfenhaus	12	
I. J. L. Trott b Johnson	0				
K. P. Pietersen c Beer b Johnson	36		B 3, 1-b 11, w 5, n-b 4	23	
J. M. Anderson b Siddle	7				
P. D. Collingwood c Hilfenhaus b Beer	13		1/98 (1) 2/99 (3)	(177.5 overs)	644
I. R. Bell c Clarke b Johnson	115		3/165 (4) 4/181 (5) 5/226 (6)		
†M. J. Prior c Haddin b Hilfenhaus	118		6/380 (2) 7/487 (7) 8/589 (9)		
T. T. Bresnan c Clarke b Johnson	35		9/609 (8) 10/644 (11)		

Hilfenhaus 38.5–7–121–3; Johnson 36–5–168–4; Siddle 31–5–111–1; Watson 20–7–49–1; Beer 38–3–112–1; Smith 13–0–67–0; Hussey 1–0–2–0.

Umpires: Aleem Dar and B. F. Bowden. Third umpire: A. L. Hill.
Referee: R. S. Madugalle.

Details of England's limited-overs matches in Australia, including two Twenty20 internationals and seven one-day internationals, can be found in The Commonwealth Bank Series (page 859).

◀NOTE: cross reference.