

Ashes to Ashes: Cricket's Cracking Rivalry

Former Australian captain and outstanding batsman Greg Chappell today launched a new exhibition in the National Sports Museum at the MCG which will trace the history of cricket's cracking rivalry - The Ashes.

Officially opening to the public on Friday November 12, *Ashes to Ashes: Cricket's Cracking Rivalry* pays homage to one of cricket's oldest and most famous rivalries with a unique collection of memorabilia.

Each item in the exhibition represents one of the series played between Australia and England, dating back to the earliest international tour in 1861/62. The objects are drawn from the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) Museum and Library collections, the Australian Gallery of Sport and Olympic Museum and the National Sports Museum.

The collection includes two very special pieces recently acquired by the MCC – a gold cravat pin engraved by Hon. G. Coppin MLC, and Bruce French's Bicentennial Test cap (1988) - which were revealed for the first time at the launch.

The cravat pin was presented by Coppin in 1862 and has his name engraved on the reverse. Coppin was instrumental in setting up the first international tour, encouraging Spiers & Pond to bring the English cricketers to Australia.

English cricketer Bruce French's Bicentennial Test cap is a rare example of the Test caps awarded to members of *both* the Australian and English teams who played in the one-off Test match at the SCG in January 1988 to commemorate Australia's Bicentenary. Presenting the cap to both teams was symbolic of the strong binding link cricket had brought the two countries.

"It is extraordinary that the MCC's collections can display an item from each of the 79 series played between Australia and England to date," said Bob Lloyd, Vice President of the MCC.

"These highly significant new items make wonderful additions to our Ashes exhibition. I encourage everyone with an interest in cricket to visit this show over the summer," he said.

Other highlights of the exhibition include:

- A gold and diamond brooch containing leather cut from the ball with which Australia first defeated England on English soil at The Oval in 1882). The brooch was made for Australian wicketkeeper Jack Blackham to present to his employer.
- Caricatures from the Australian press in the 1880s and 1890s.

- A selection of delicate silk handkerchiefs produced to commemorate the Australian teams of the 1880s - 1900s.
- A bat used by Victor Trumper in 1899 and his diary from the 1902 Ashes tour of England.
- A trophy presented to Hugh Trumble in 1902 to commemorate the first of his two magnificent Test hat tricks against England at the MCG.
- Iconic baggy green caps belonging to leg-spinner Clarrie Grimmett (1926) and fast bowler Alan Connolly (1968).
- England cricket team touring cap worn by Bill Voce, who took 17 wickets in the first two Tests in 1936.

Ashes to Ashes: Cricket's Cracking Rivalry
National Sports Museum
November 12, 2010 - March 20, 2011
Entry is included in general museum admission

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