

'They are not going to set the Thames on fire ...'

The All-India Cricket Tourists 1911

Gerry Wolstenholme

LIMITED EDITION of 100 signed copies



Organised cricket was relatively slow to develop on the Indian sub-continent but by 1886 a Parsees side was touring England., albeit winning only one of its 28 games. They toured again in 1888, this time winning eight of their matches, and these visits were followed by English sides touring India in 1889/90, 1892/93 and 1902/03. Thereafter there were two abortive attempts for an Indian side to tour England again but in 1910 plans were put in place for a full tour of an All-India side in 1911. It was hoped that the

great Ranjitsinhji would be captain but he was unavailable so the young Maharaja of Patiala took charge with his secretary, the best left-handed batsman on the sub-continent, K M Mistri as his second in command. Unfortunately, due to other commitments in the year of the Coronation of George V, the pair only played three games before departing the cricket scene for the London social scene! Two other players were drafted in and the tour continued but as had been predicted by the main mover behind the tour, Mr J M Framji Patel, the success rate was not good. Indeed the Indians lost the opening 11 games before they defeated Leicestershire in July. This began a run of four successive victories before defeat by Northumberland and then, in Scotland and Ireland, defeats by the Scottish Counties and Woodbrook Club and Ground brought the tourists back to earth. They finished the tour with a close defeat by Sussex and a backs to the wall draw with Gloucestershire, all of which meant that they had won two first-class matches and overall six of their 23 games. But the main aim of the tour was for their players to learn. This they did with Palwankar Baloo the best of the bowlers, taking 114 wickets in all games, and the likes of Meherhomji, Warden and Kanga also performing creditably. They were, indeed, the precursors of today's great players of the sub-continent.

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